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Concord Kannapolis Area Transit



CONNECTING CABARRUS

Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transit Plan

May 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

Connecting Cabarrus, the Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transit Plan, represents a coordinated effort by Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS) and Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider Transit) to define a clear, data-driven vision for the future of mobility in Cabarrus County. As the county continues to grow in both population and economic activity, the need for a more responsive, connected, and efficient transportation system has become increasingly apparent. This plan reflects not only existing conditions and operational realities, but also the perspectives, priorities, and lived experiences of the community it is intended to serve.

A principal component of this effort is a comprehensive understanding of how people currently travel within and beyond the county. Cabarrus County functions as part of a broader regional economy, with strong travel flows between local communities and neighboring employment centers. Travel patterns are shaped by a combination of concentrated activity along key corridors and more dispersed development in outlying areas. These conditions create a complex mobility environment in which traditional fixed-route transit is effective in serving key corridors, while other areas require more flexible and innovative service approaches.

Equally important is an understanding of who is traveling and how their needs vary. The county's population of nearly a quarter of a million residents continues to grow and diversify, with demographic characteristics that directly influence transit demand. Younger adults, older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, and households with limited or no access to vehicles represent key transit-supportive populations. Additionally, many residents with access to personal vehicles may still benefit from alternative transportation options, particularly as congestion increases and travel becomes less predictable. These overlapping needs highlight the importance of a system that is not only efficient, but also equitable and adaptable.

The analysis presented in this plan demonstrates that Cabarrus County's transit market is shaped more strongly by these traditional transit-dependent populations than by density-driven discretionary ridership. While higher-density areas (primarily within Concord and Kannapolis) offer the greatest opportunity for fixed-route service, much of the county's development is suburban or rural in nature.



These conditions limit the effectiveness of a one-size-fits-all approach and reinforce the need for a balanced system that integrates fixed route, demand response, and emerging mobility solutions including microtransit.

Public input played a defining role in shaping this plan. Through an extensive outreach process conducted throughout 2025, including stakeholder interviews, community workshops, surveys, and discussion groups, the project team engaged hundreds of residents, transit riders, and community leaders. Feedback from these efforts revealed several consistent themes: limited awareness of existing transit services, gaps in geographic coverage, and a strong desire for expanded service hours, increased frequency, and improved reliability. Participants also expressed significant interest in new service models, including microtransit, particularly in areas not well served by the current network.

Survey results further emphasize the critical role transit plays in the community. A substantial portion of current riders indicated that transit is their only available means of transportation. They rely on it for essential trips such as work, medical appointments, and other daily needs. Furthermore, responses from the general public indicated strong support for expanding and improving transit services, even among those who do not currently use them.

Operational insights from transit staff and operators provided an additional layer of understanding. Feedback emphasized the need for improvements to scheduling, staffing, and infrastructure, enhanced passenger amenities, and on-time performance. These perspectives, combined with rider input, reinforce the importance of aligning service planning with real-world operating conditions.

Considering these findings, while it is evident that Cabarrus County's existing transit services provide essential mobility, they are not currently positioned to meet the full range of present and future demand. *Connecting Cabarrus* responds to this challenge by identifying opportunities to strengthen the overall transit network through a combination of service enhancements, operational improvements, and strategic investments. This includes expanding access to key destinations, improving regional connections, and introducing more flexible service models to better serve lower-density areas.

This document outlines a forward-looking strategy that is grounded in data, informed by community input, and responsive to the county's unique characteristics. It establishes a 20-year framework for implementing improvements over the short, medium, and long term, ensuring that transit can evolve alongside the community it serves.

Beyond just convenience, mobility in Cabarrus County is a fundamental component of economic opportunity, social connectivity, and quality of life. As growth continues and travel needs become more complex, the ability to provide reliable, accessible, and effective transportation options becomes more critical. Through the implementation of this plan, Cabarrus County is positioned to move toward a more connected and resilient future.

2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A simple yet essential component of any successful public outreach effort is the ability to listen effectively and meaningfully incorporate public input into the planning process. The most impactful plans are those that include engagement activities tailored to the local context and that reflect an understanding of both community and regional characteristics. Rider Transit, CCTS, and the consultant team recognize the importance of meaningful public and stakeholder engagement and have developed a comprehensive outreach strategy to ensure participation from residents, key stakeholders, and partner agencies throughout the LRPTP process.

The following section provides an overview of the public outreach and summarizes the engagement activities conducted as part of the LRPTP effort.

FIGURE 2-1: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GRAPHICS OVERVIEW



2.1 Public Outreach Activities Summary

The following were identified as the methods of communication that best serve the needs of Cabarrus County, aligning with goal of reaching and hearing from as many people and organizations as possible to ensure that their voices were heard throughout the LRPTP process. The following outlines the public involvement strategies utilized in the LRPTP:

- Development of the Project Guidance Committee (PGC)
- Stakeholder interviews
- Transit patron survey
- Transit operator/staff interviews
- Discussion group workshops
- Online Survey
- Community workshops/Pop-up Events
- Social media, online project materials, and video testimonials
- Virtual room



2.1.1 Outreach by the Numbers

The entire public engagement process for Connecting Cabarrus had a total estimated reach of nearly 35,000 interactions, as explained by Table 2-1 and Table 2-2. This figure is comprised mostly of engagement through social media, but also includes other engagement through online surveys and materials, and extensive in-person outreach. The first phase of public outreach (Table 2-1) occurred through May and June of 2025, and was conducted with the objective of understanding the demographics, current mobility needs, and desired transit improvements of Cabarrus County residents, transit users, and stakeholders, along with other pertinent input. The second phase of public outreach (Table 2-2) was conducted between September and November of 2025, and was focused on eliciting feedback from the public on the proposed transit improvements developed in response to study analyses and the first phase of public input.

TABLE 2-1: TOTAL REACH AS A RESULT OF PHASE 1 OF PUBLIC OUTREACH (MAY-JUNE 2025)

Outreach	Phase 1
Virtual Room	209 views (~2-min duration)
Stakeholder Interviews	26
Transit Operator Interviews	Rider (15) and CCTS (18)
Paratransit & CCTS Interviews	41
Discussion Groups	6 (36 participants)
Pop-Up Events	8 (405 contacts)
Public Surveys	229
Rider Surveys	565
Social Media postings, both paid and unpaid	25,201 total social media interactions, including views, reach, impressions, clicks, reactions, and comments.
TOTAL REACH:	26,745

TABLE 2-2: TOTAL REACH AS A RESULT OF PHASE 2 OF PUBLIC OUTREACH (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2025)

Outreach	Phase 2
Virtual Room	264 views (~2-min duration)
Pop-Up Events	7 (500+ interactions)
Transit Improvements Survey	110
Video Testimonials	18
HOAs/Community Groups Contacted	9 contacted (met with Centerview Community Center as pop-up event)
Social Media postings, both paid and unpaid	6,938 total social media interactions, including views, reach, impressions, clicks, reactions, and comments
Church Outreach	Push cards to 3 groups, including St. Joe's Catholic Church Spanish push cards
TOTAL REACH:	7,842+

2.2 Project Guidance Committee (PGC)

The Project Guidance Committee (PGC) serves as the project’s guiding committee, providing strategic oversight and direction throughout the planning process. The PGC is composed of key agency representatives, stakeholders, and the project team. The PGC meets at major milestones to review progress, discuss findings, and provide feedback on technical materials related to the study. Over the course of the project, four PGC meetings were scheduled, offering both in-person and virtual participation options to ensure broad accessibility and engagement. These meetings serve as key touchpoints for aligning project objectives, confirming priorities, and ensuring that deliverables reflect the collective vision and needs of the participating agencies and communities. PGC meeting presentations can be found in Appendix A of this plan. The four PGC meetings were held to guide the LRTP development:

- **Kickoff Meeting** - Initiates the project and reviews key existing conditions and services.
- **Existing Conditions and Engagement** – Analyzes additional existing conditions and services, reviews the first round of outreach.
- **Alternative Service Recommendations** - Reviews and refines proposed transit improvements.
- **Implementation & Financial Planning** - Approves key assumptions before finalization.

Table 2-1 below highlights members of the PGC their respective affiliation.



TABLE 2-3: PROJECT GUIDANCE COMMITTEE LIST

Name	Organization/Company	Title
Erin Shoe	Cabarrus Health Alliance	Public Health Director
Ed Hosack	Cooperative Christian Ministries	Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Measmer	Cabarrus County	Chair of the Board of Commissioners
Kenny Wortman	Cabarrus County	Commissioner
Larry Pittman	Cabarrus County	Commissioner
Sean Newton	Cabarrus County	County Manager
Aalece Pugh	Cabarrus County	Assistant County Manager
Robert Anderson	Cabarrus County	Community Development Manager
Samantha Grass	Economic Development Corporation	Project Manager
Ann Benfield	Cabarrus County Partnership for Children	Executive Director
Mary Carr	City of Concord	Community Development Manager
Barbi Jones	Cabarrus Chamber of Commerce	Executive Director
Timbs Fulghum	Atrium Health	Strategist
Saundra Torres	El Puente Hispano	Executive Director
Dennis Brown	Cabarrus Reentry Program	Director
Betty Stocks	City of Concord	City Council Member & CKTC Member
John Sweat	City of Concord	City Council Member & CKTC Member
Dianne Berry	City of Kannapolis	City Council Member & CKTC Member
Darrell Jackson	City of Kannapolis	City Council Member & CKTC Member
Phil Conrad	Cabarrus Rowan MPO	Director
Theron Smoutherson	Cabarrus County Branch of the NAACP	President
Gwen Stowers	Multiply Church	Prayer & Outreach Pastor
Denisha Nesbit	NC Works	Career Center Leader
Chuck Collier	Racial Equity Cabarrus	Co-founder
Wilmer Melton	City of Kannapolis	Assistant City Manager
Josh Smith	City of Concord	Assistant City Manager

2.3 Stakeholder Interviews

To enhance the understanding of local conditions and recommendations, we gathered perceptions and attitudes related to public transportation and mobility needs from key stakeholders, business leaders, and other interested parties in the county. Stakeholder interviews were conducted to obtain input from policy, workforce, education, and community leaders on the future transit needs of Cabarrus County. The feedback gathered through these discussions provided valuable context for understanding local conditions, as informed by the perspectives of individuals representing the broader public. A total of 27 stakeholders completed interviews with the project team. Although the interviews were initially planned to be conducted in person, participants were also given the option to join virtually to better accommodate their schedules. Table 2-2 below provides an overview of the stakeholders who were invited to participate in the stakeholder interview process.

TABLE 2-4: STAKEHOLDER LIST

Name	Title	Agency
Robert Anderson	Community Development Manager	Cabarrus County
Mary Carr	Community Development Manager	City of Concord
Stephanie Burleson (and Samantha Grass)	Local Business Support Manager	Economic Development Corporation
Doug Cremer (and Tom Versey)	Vice President of Events	Charlotte Motor Speedway
Sherry Gordon	Community Development Program Administrator	City of Kannapolis
Katie Kutcher	Assistant Aging Programs Director	Centralina Area Agency on Aging
Tony Gonzalez	Director	Salvation Army
Theron Smoutherson	President	NAACP
Erin Burris	Assistant Town Manager/Planning Director	Town of Mt. Pleasant
Elizabeth (Elie) Landrum	Assistant to the Town Manager	Town of Harrisburg
Tim Hagler	Chief Public Affairs Officer	Camino
Obdulio Oden	General Manager	Transdev
Patrick Graham	CEO	WeBuild Concord
Robert (Bob) Anderson	Co-Chair	Concord United Committee
Dennis Brown	Director	Cabarrus Reentry Program
Heather (Timbs) Fulghum	Strategist	Atrium Health
Irene Wong	Director of Economic & Community Development	City of Kannapolis
Kenneth Wortman	Commissioner	Cabarrus County
Laura Lyerly Godwin		Community Free Clinic
Darrell Hinnant	Mayor	City of Kannapolis
Page Castrodale	Sr. Director Government Affairs	Eli Lilly
Donna Carpenter	President and CEO	Conv. & Visitors Bureau
Kelly Sifford	Interim County Manager	Cabarrus County
Dustin Shoe	Chief of Staff	Cabarrus County Schools
Sandra Torres	Executive Director	El Puente

2.3.1 Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the stakeholder engagement process, interviews were conducted to gather qualitative input on the current and future transit needs of Cabarrus County. As mentioned, a total of 27 stakeholders representing policy, workforce, education, and community partners participated in the interviews.

The interview questions were designed to explore a range of topics, including community perception and usage of transit, barriers to transit access and expansion, concepts for improving transit in the near-term, and their respective long-term vision for transit in Cabarrus County. The insights collected through these discussions provided valuable context to supplement the quantitative analyses completed as part of this study.

Figure 2-2 below summarizes feedback from stakeholder interviews, which revealed several reoccurring themes related to the current state of transit in Cabarrus County. Figure 2-3 highlights key insights shared by participants, including limited awareness of available services, gaps in geographic coverage, and concerns regarding community support and funding for future transit investments.

FIGURE 2-2: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW FINDINGS – CURRENT STATE

General Perceptions and Usage of Transit	Barriers to Transit Access	Barriers to Expansion
• Limited awareness among community members about available transit services • Interviewees had not used local transit because of inconvenience, long wait times, or lack of route coverage • Empty buses reinforce the belief that transit is only for those without other options	• Significant gaps exist in rural areas and newer developments • Hourly buses and limited evening/weekend schedules hinder usability, • Stops are often too far from homes, schools, and employers • Lack of shelters	• General support among stakeholders for expanding service • Concern exists about community resistance to new taxes. • Lack of interest or commitment from the local governments' leadership to champion transit investments

Figure 2-3 below highlights key ideas and longer-term considerations identified through stakeholder interviews. Participants shared a range of improvement strategies focused on strengthening regional connections, expanding on-demand and microtransit options, and enhancing public awareness of available services. In addition, stakeholders emphasized the need to align future transit investments with anticipated population growth, economic development, and workforce mobility priorities.

FIGURE 2-3: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW FINDINGS - FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Ideas for Improvement

- Strong support for better links to Charlotte, Salisbury, and regional employment centers
- Microtransit and on-demand services are seen as a viable solution for low-density areas and off-peak hours.
- Targeted marketing and education including passenger testimonials, social media engagement, and increasing bus stop visibility
- Infrastructure enhancements including more shelters, sidewalks, park-and-ride options, and accessible bus stops

Long-Term Vision

- Population growth, new employers, and rising costs are expected to increase transit needs.
- Service improvements desired in the long term include:
 - Express and rapid transit routes
 - Increased frequency and reliability
 - Circulators in downtown and tourist areas
 - Integration with broader development and workforce strategies



2.4 Local Community Involvement

Local community involvement was a key component of the study, ensuring that the perspectives and needs of residents of various backgrounds were meaningfully incorporated into the study and the proposed needs for the community. Engagement activities included a series of community workshops and additional outreach efforts designed to gather input from a broad cross-section of the public. These efforts provided valuable insights into local mobility challenges, priorities, and opportunities for improving transit access and service delivery. Feedback collected through these activities helped guide the development of recommendations that reflect community values and support long-term transit goals for Cabarrus County and the residents throughout the county.

To maximize opportunities for participation, venues were selected to ensure geographic coverage and, whenever possible, piggyback with other major community events, like the Concord International Festival, art fair, etc. to gain the most from a large turnout. We also held events at popular destinations that bring in a lot of foot traffic like the Midland Library and Cannon Ballers game. The workshops were scheduled at different times during the day and evening to accommodate various work and personal schedules.

2.4.1 Community Workshops

Community workshops were held to gather input from residents, business owners, and community members about the future of transit needs in Cabarrus County. The project team conducted various forms of community workshops throughout May through October 2025, the project team hosted 18 in-person events across the county, including locations in Concord, Kannapolis, Mt. Pleasant, Midland, and Harrisburg.

The initial workshops (held in the spring) provided an opportunity for participants to learn about the project, share their experiences with local transit, and offer feedback on potential improvements. The input collected helped the project team gain a deeper understanding of community priorities, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing transit services in Cabarrus County to better serve the needs of current transit users and prospective future transit users. Following the review of the initial public engagement data and the development of concepts for transit improvements, the second round of workshops (held in the Fall) allowed for the public to provide their feedback on their level of agreement with the proposed transit improvements.

Table 2-3 below highlights the community engagement events with the respective date, time, and function of the event.

FIGURE 2-4: COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT



FIGURE 2-5: COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT



TABLE 2-5: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP EVENTS

Date	Time	Event
May 8, 2025	6:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Thursdays on Main Pop-Up Event
June 3, 2025	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Salvation Army Pop-Up
June 3, 2025	3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Cabarrus County Library and Active Living Center in Mount Pleasant
June 4, 2025	11:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Cabarrus Community Job Fair & Resource Event
June 4, 2025	7:00 PM	Cannon Ballers Home Game Pop-Up
June 5, 2025	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Stakeholder Discussion (Latino Community Needs-from Camino Survey)
June 5, 2025	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Midland Library
June 10, 2025	10:00 AM	Cabarrus Collab-Cohort meeting presentation
June 23, 2025	6:00 PM	Logan Neighborhood presentation, followed up with QR Code Flyer
September 4, 2025	5:30 PM	Centerview Community Center
September 12, 2025	11:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Medicaid Health Fair
September 12, 2025	3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Video Testimonials
September 19, 2025	9:00 – 12:00 PM	Rider Transit
September 19, 2025	3:30 PM	Cabarrus County Library and Active Living Center in Mount Pleasant
September 20, 2025	10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Multicultural Festival
September 23, 2025	9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Rider Transit – Video Testimonials
September 27, 2025	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Camino sponsored Employment and Entrepreneur Fair

FIGURE 2-6: COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS



2.4.2 Community Outreach Event Summaries

Thursdays on Main

- May 8, 2025, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM (rain limited the event)
- Veteran's Park, 119 N. Main Street, Kannapolis

A popular community event, the free outdoor concert series in downtown Kannapolis takes place on the second Thursday of each month from May through September, featuring live music, food, and local vendors. Attendees typically bring blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy the evening atmosphere.

Approximately 300 people attended the event. The project team hosted an outreach table and engaged with roughly 40 attendees, distributing Rider Transit-branded giveaways and handing out 25 push cards with a QR code linking to the survey. Although the festivities concluded early at 7 p.m. due to inclement weather, the event provided a valuable opportunity for community interaction and visibility for the project.

Survey Outreach

- June 3, 2025, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- The Salvation Army, 45 Ashlyn Dr. SE, Concord, NC

Many residents living at the Salvation Army Center of Hope rely on public transit, making it an ideal location to gather meaningful input on potential service improvements. With permission from the Director, the project team visited the site to conduct interviews and surveys with 13 residents. The feedback received offered valuable insights into current transit use and opportunities for enhancement.

Cabarrus County Library and Active Learning Center

- June 3, 2025, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- 1111 Washington St Mount Pleasant, N

The outreach team had time after the Salvation Army effort, so we set up a table inside the library to talk with visitors about transit and ask them to respond to the survey. This impromptu event engaged 12 people.

Cabarrus Community Career Fair & Resource Event

- June 4, 2025, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- Carolina Mall, 1480 Concord

The Cabarrus County NCWorks Center, Carolina, and the Salvation Army co-sponsored this event, which brought together community resources, local support organizations, and more than 40 employers. The project team engaged with approximately 70 attendees, distributing Rider Transit-branded giveaways, push cards, and paper surveys. The event was well attended and provided an excellent opportunity to connect directly with job seekers and transit users. Many participants expressed the need for expanded service hours, both earlier and later, to better align with varying work shifts. Limited bus service often restricts employment opportunities for transit-dependent individuals seeking flexible or nontraditional work schedules.

Cannon Ballers Home Game

- June 4, 2025, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
- 1 Cannon Baller Way, Kannapolis, NC

The Kannapolis Cannon Ballers, a Minor League Baseball team in the Carolina League and the Single-A affiliate of the Chicago White Sox, play their home games at Atrium Health Ballpark in downtown Kannapolis. The project team set up an outreach table in a high-traffic area of the ballpark's main corridor. Alongside two interns, the team distributed push cards featuring the survey QR code to approximately 60 attendees and engaged in conversations with an additional 100 people. Regardless of how many people completed the survey, a lot of visibility was created for Rider Transit and transit in general.

Midland Library

- June 5, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- 4297 NC-24 27 C, Midland, NC

We set up a table inside the Midland Library to speak with visitors about transit and ask them to respond to the survey. This coordinated event engaged 18 people.

Cabarrus Collab-Cohort Meeting

- June 10, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
- 35 Cabarrus Avenue West, Concord, NC

One project team member and a Rider Transit staff representative presented the LRPTP to this group during their regularly scheduled meeting at Concord City Hall. The group included a diverse mix of representatives from government agencies, health organizations, NCWorks, non-profits, and community groups. The presentation provided an excellent opportunity to inform approximately 40 attendees about the transit planning process and to encourage them to complete the survey and share it with their networks, clients, and colleagues.

Logan Neighborhood

- Logan Multi-Purpose Center
- June 23, 2025, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- 184 Booker Dr SW, Concord, NC

One team member and one Rider Transit staff member presented the LRPTP to this neighborhood group at the Logan Multi-Purpose Center at their regularly scheduled meeting. There were 25 members in attendance.

Cabarrus Health Fair

- Sponsored by Cabarrus Social Services
- September 12, 2025, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- Bethel Baptist Church Ministries, 2474 Dale Earnhardt Blvd, Kannapolis, NC 28083

The Health Fair, held in Kannapolis and sponsored by Cabarrus Social Services, focused on infants and toddlers. Vendors provided free giveaways, ranging from blankets, diapers, crafts, and formula. During the event, which was held from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM, we engaged with about 55 people, including the organizations/ vendors at the event. Many of these organizations serve populations that rely heavily on public transit, providing a strong opportunity for the project team to discuss the proposed bus system improvements. Push cards featuring the survey QR code were distributed to attendees and organization representatives. Overall feedback was very positive, with several participants expressing interest in the timeline and implementation process. The team explained that financial and implementation plans will be finalized later this year, after which elected officials will consider the proposed transit system changes.

Rider Transit Center

- Hosted by Rider Transit
- September 19, 2025, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Rider Transit Center, Concord, NC

The tabling event at the Rider Transit Center allowed staff to connect directly with passengers as they exited their buses. The project team spoke with 22 individuals and distributed 17 push cards. Engagement included a mix of transit users and Rider Transit employees, many of whom expressed interest in and support for the proposed service improvements. Feedback included a suggestion from one Rider Transit employee to develop a large central hub instead of multiple smaller ones. One member of the public shared concerns about recent changes to Orange Line stops, noting inconvenience, while another suggested the need for larger bus stops. Overall, the feedback was constructive and provided valuable insight into the daily experience of current transit users.

Mount Pleasant Library

- Hosted at Mount Pleasant Library
- September 19, 2025, 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM
- Mount Pleasant, NC

At the outreach event held at the Mount Pleasant Library, the project team engaged with local residents in a smaller community setting. Two attendees were interviewed, and two push cards were distributed. Since Mount Pleasant lies outside the current and proposed fixed-route service area, participants expressed strong interest in the plan's microtransit component. One attendee noted that a future microtransit service could help reduce the cost of ridesharing to the airport, highlighting the potential value of on-demand mobility options in rural and lower-density areas.

Harrisburg Multicultural Festival

- Hosted by the Town of Harrisburg
- September 20, 2025, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Harrisburg Park, Harrisburg, NC

At the Harrisburg Multicultural Festival, a vibrant, family-oriented event celebrating global cultures, the project team met with approximately 131 attendees and distributed nearly 130 push cards. The public responded positively to the proposed transit improvements, particularly the new routes planned for Harrisburg. Some attendees voiced safety concerns and emphasized the importance of integrating transit with active transportation infrastructure, such as bike connections to bus stations. Others were interested in potential service connections to Downtown Charlotte and raised questions about cost and affordability. Overall, feedback was highly engaged and underscored community enthusiasm for expanded and connected mobility options.

Employment and Entrepreneurship Fair

- Sponsored by Camino.org
- September 27, 2025, 9:00 AM -1:00 PM
- Camino Health Center, 790 Main Street, Concord, NC

The project team hosted an outreach table at this event, which primarily attracted members of the Hispanic community. A Spanish-speaking team member was able to explain the survey and gather feedback on the proposed Rider Transit service changes. A large display map showing the proposed bus route enhancements and microtransit service areas was well received by attendees. The team also connected with several community organizations including the Health Clinic, Dress for Success, and Camino.org, to help promote the survey and expand outreach efforts. While on site, the team focused on the Town and Country neighborhood, where a Camino representative agreed to share the survey with residents. This engagement was initiated at the request of the Assistant City Manager. Notably, a transit stop is located across the street from the new Camino Health Clinic, and clinic staff expressed enthusiasm about helping spread awareness of the stop, the Long-Range Transit Plan, and ways for patients to get involved. In total, approximately 30 people were engaged during this event.

Concord International Festival

- Oct 11, 2025 (rain date)
- 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Downtown Concord, NC

The project team’s table and tent were positioned in a high-traffic area of the festival along the main vendor row, allowing for strong engagement throughout the day. By 4:00 PM the team had interacted with approximately 250 attendees and distributed all “squishy bus” giveaways. Given the international focus of the event, the team’s Spanish-speaking representative was able to engage with visitors from Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, as well as local Hispanic residents. Push cards with the survey QR code were distributed while staff discussed the proposed Rider Transit service improvements. Many attendees expressed interest in the LRPTP, particularly in the new routes, expanded microtransit zones, and extended operating hours. Regardless of the number of surveys completed, the event generated substantial visibility for Rider Transit and raised awareness of upcoming changes. The team also shared the outreach table with the Director of the Cabarrus-Rowan MPO, who distributed materials related to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, an effort that identifies regional transportation goals and priority projects through 2055.

In addition to community workshops and events, additional outreach took place in August 2025 to eleven homeowners’ associations (HOAs) and local churches to broaden participation and ensure diverse community representation. Table 2-4 below provides an overview of additional community outreach efforts.

TABLE 2-6: ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS CONTACT LIST

Organization	Contact	Action
Carver Community	Sherry Gordon; Pam Smith	Emailed flyer with survey link
Little Texas Community	Sophia Wilkerson	No reply
Centerview Community Watch	Sheila Pinkston	Community meeting (Rider Transit attended), also sent QR Code Flyer
Franklin Heights		No reply
Rose Hill Baptist Church	Pastor Jones	Left push card and emailed flyer
Cabarrus County NAACP	Theron Smoutherson	Stakeholder interview
El Puente/Sandra Torres	Sandra Torres	Stakeholder interview
St Josephs Catholic Church	Christine DePascale; Amy Ditter	Shared English and Spanish survey
Tiffany Dr. Mobile Park Neighborhood	Lennin Caro; Cheryl Moynihan of Camino.org	Connected with this group at Camino's Employment Fair
Bethel Baptist	Pastor Johnson; Ashley Hazell; Gerald Lundy	Left push cards and emailed flyer
Community Improvement Commission	N/A	Meeting took place on 8/19/25 at 6 PM

2.5 Transit Patron Survey

A transit patron survey was published from May 2025 through July 2025, with members of the project team conducting an intercept survey on the following dates May 13th-18th. Transit patron survey efforts are a critical step in the planning process as it is used to obtain information with statistical significance related to the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction of current riders. The survey was developed to obtain key data by means of online completion or in-person completion via the rider intercept efforts.

The intercept process was performed at the Rider Transit Center. The survey covered a sample of Rider Transit bus riders for key times of day for a representative weekday of service. The survey utilized a questionnaire consisting of 25 questions addressing topics of behavior, origin/ destination, demographics, and suggested improvements. The intention of the survey was to highlight areas of improvement and identify transit modifications and recommendations. The Transit Rider Transit Survey received a total of 565 responses, including 34 online submissions and 531 completed on paper in-person at the intercept survey effort. The following includes notable questions from the intercept survey. A full list of all results from the survey are included in Appendix B.

Figure 2-7 highlights the primary reasons why transit patrons choose to ride the bus. As shown, 46 percent of respondents indicated that Rider Transit is their only mode of transportation available. An additional 12 percent cited convenience compared to other travel options, while 11 percent reported using transit because they do not possess a valid driver's license.

FIGURE 2-7: TRANSIT RIDER TRANSIT SURVEY - MOST IMPORTANT REASON TO RIDE BUS

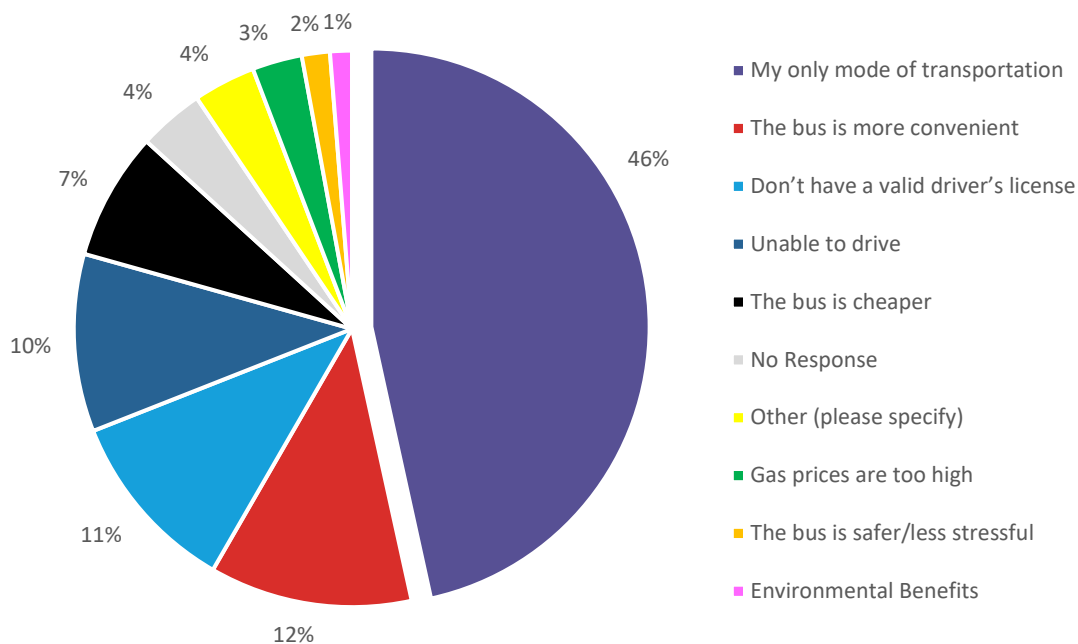


Figure 2-8 highlights the service improvements that respondents indicated would make Rider Transit more convenient and appealing to use. The two most commonly identified improvements were the addition of more shelters and benches at bus stops, and the extension of service hours to include earlier mornings and later evenings. Respondents also noted that increased service frequency on existing routes and the introduction of additional routes or new services would further enhance Rider Transit's services.

FIGURE 2-8: TRANSIT RIDER TRANSIT SURVEY - WHICH IMPROVEMENTS WOULD MAKE RIDER TRANSIT BETTER FOR YOU TO USE?

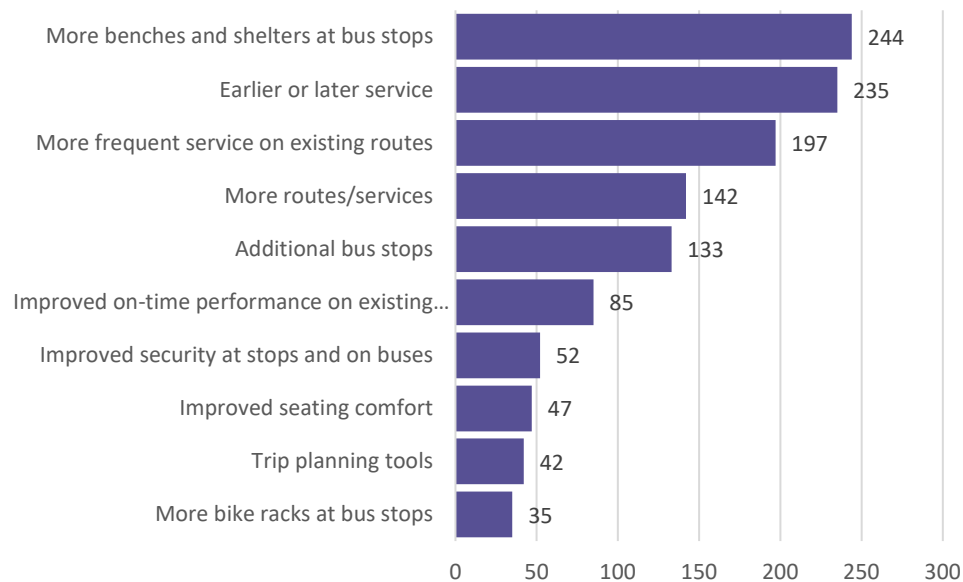
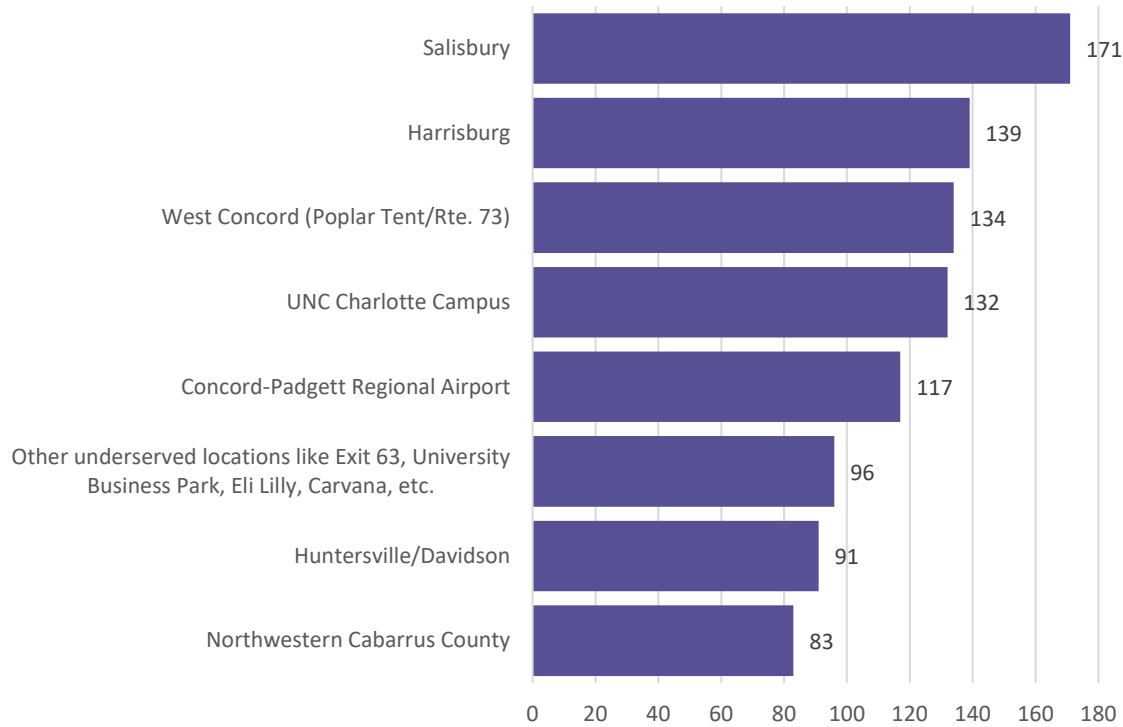


Figure 2-9 highlights the destinations that current transit riders would like to see Rider Transit provide access to. As shown, Salisbury was the most requested destination, followed by Harrisburg, West Concord, and the UNC Charlotte Campus. Other notable locations include the Concord-Padgett airport and Huntersville to name a few.

FIGURE 2-9: TRANSIT RIDER TRANSIT SURVEY - WHICH NEW DESTINATIONS SHOULD RIDER TRANSIT SERVE?



2.6 Demand Response/Paratransit Survey

A Rider Transit and CCTS Paratransit Survey was conducted alongside other surveys during the study. The paratransit online survey received a total of 41 Paratransit and CCTS Surveys/Interviews, including 16 CCTS, 23 Rider Transit and two unknowns. The Rider Transit and CCTS Paratransit Survey was designed to gather input from current riders regarding their travel behavior, service satisfaction, and overall reliance on transit. The survey aimed to assess how passengers use the service, the purpose and frequency of their trips, and how critical transit is to their daily mobility. In addition, respondents were asked to identify preferred service improvements, potential new destinations, and demographic information to help the project team better understand rider characteristics and travel needs of current paratransit riders. A full list of all results from the survey are included in Appendix B.

Figure 2-10 highlights how respondents would make their trip if the demand response services were not available. As shown, nearly 50 percent of respondents indicated they would be unable to make their trip without transit service, demonstrating Rider Transit's and CCTS's critical role in supporting essential demand response services. About 30 percent stated they would ride with someone, while others noted they would rely on walking, using a wheelchair, or using ride-hailing services such as Uber or Lyft.

FIGURE 2-10: PARATRANSIT SURVEY - HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THIS TRIP IF THE BUS WAS NOT AVAILABLE?

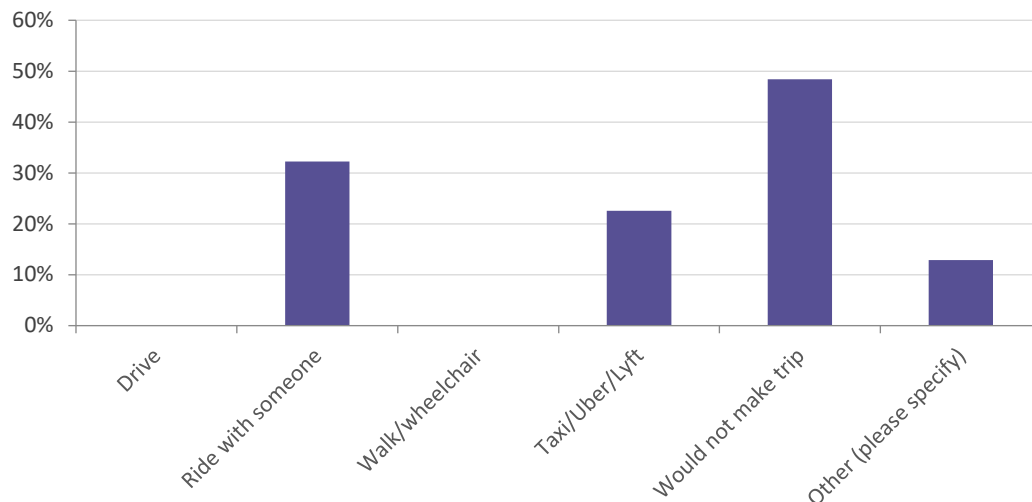


Figure 2-11 highlights the most important reasons why respondents choose to ride CCTS or Rider Transit. As indicated, 50 percent of respondents cited high gas prices as their main reason for using transit, followed by 17 percent who identified it as their only mode of transportation. Less notable responses include 8 percent stating they use transit because it is more convenient, 6 percent do not have a valid driver's license, or because it is cheaper or less stressful. Approximately 9 percent selected other reasons.

FIGURE 2-11: PARATRANSIT SURVEY - WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON YOU RIDE CCTS OR RIDER TRANSIT

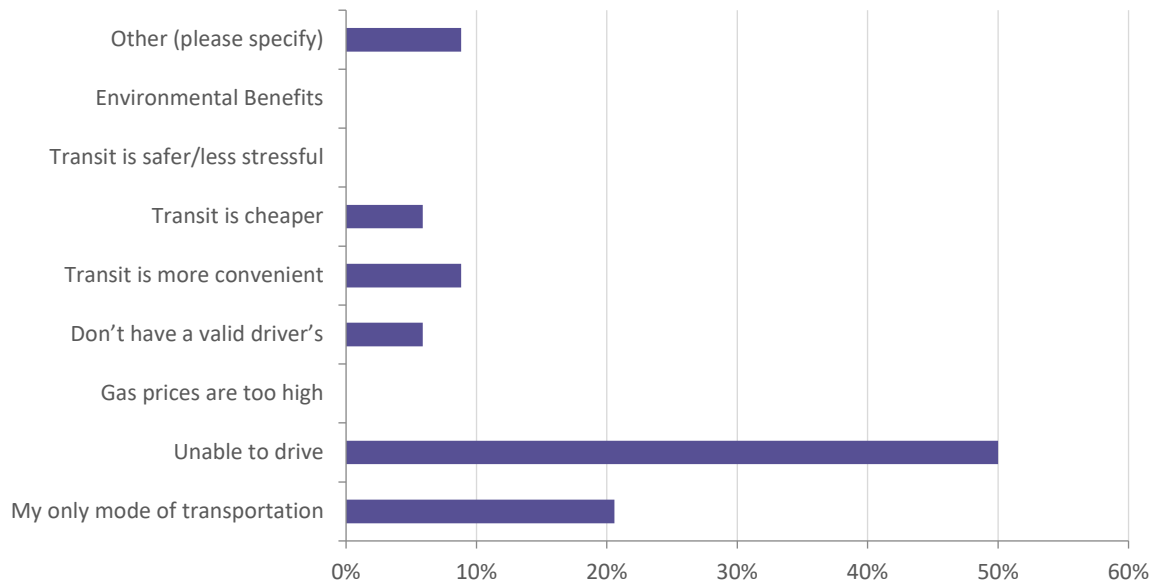
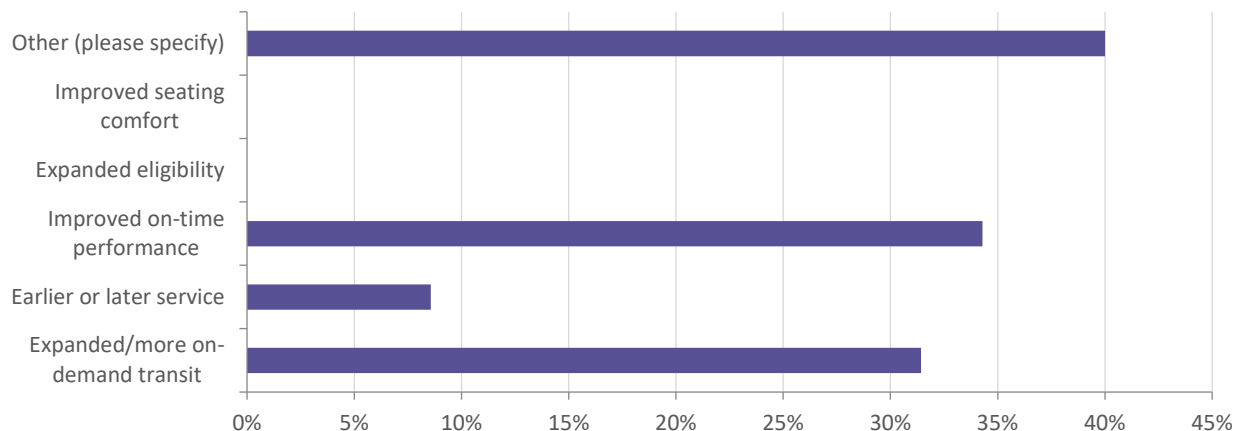


Figure 2-12 highlights which service improvements respondents believe would make CCTS or Rider Transit better suited to their travel needs. The most frequently mentioned improvements included enhanced on-time performance at nearly 35 percent, expanded or more frequent service (30%), and other user-suggested enhancements (40%). Other user suggestions included things such as the need for more drivers, improved scheduling and communication, better driver training, and expanded weekend service hours. Additional feedback pointed to interest in earlier or later service hours and expanded eligibility, particularly for riders dependent on paratransit or specialized services.

FIGURE 2-12: PARATRANSIT SURVEY - WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS WOULD MAKE CCTS/RIDER TRANSIT BETTER FOR YOU TO USE



2.7 Public Online Survey

A general public survey was conducted both online and in person at community outreach events from May 8 through July 16. The general public online survey received a total of 229 responses, including 220 online submissions and nine completed on paper. The survey was designed to gather input from residents regarding their awareness, perceptions, and potential use of transit services in Cabarrus County. Its primary goal was to assess the public's familiarity with existing services, their willingness to utilize transit, and the factors that influence their current and future travel choices.

In addition to these general topics, the survey sought to identify community knowledge of available transit options, barriers to use, and potential system improvements that could make public transportation a more functional and attractive option for non-riders. The following section summarizes key findings from the general public survey, with the complete set of survey responses provided in Appendix B.

Figure 2-13 below highlights the general public's perception on awareness of transit/public transportation in Cabarrus County. As shown, the general public highlighted an overall low awareness with nearly 45 percent of respondents selecting the low option, followed by 30 percent stating a moderate awareness of transit services.

FIGURE 2-13: GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY - HOW MUCH AWARENESS IS THERE IN CABARRUS COUNTY ABOUT TRANSIT/PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

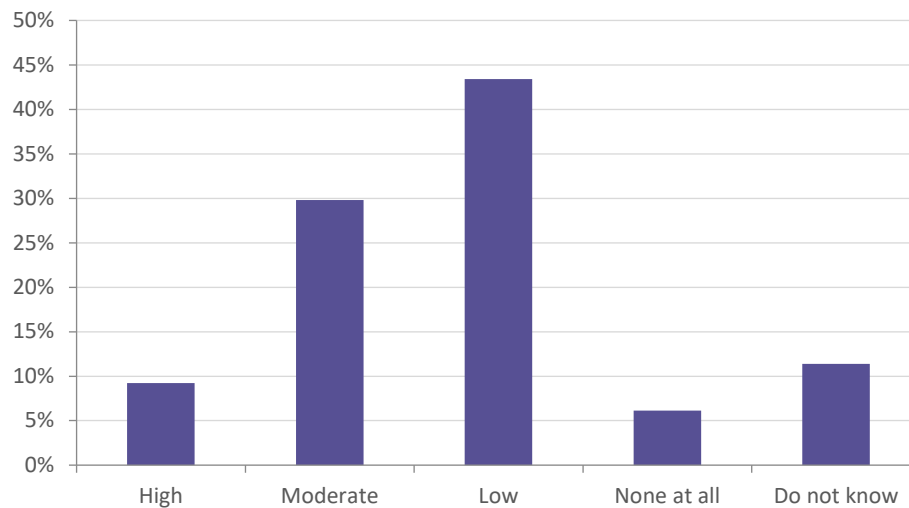


Figure 2-14 below highlights the general public's overall perception of transit services in Cabarrus County, from a necessity perspective. An overall positive perception of need is highlighted with over 50 percent of respondents stating the transit services must be provided, followed by nearly 30 percent of respondents stating that the service might be useful. Less than 10 percent of respondents stated that it does not matter to them, were not sure of its usefulness, or stated it was not needed.

FIGURE 2-14: GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY - WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TRANSIT SERVICES IN CABARRUS COUNTY?

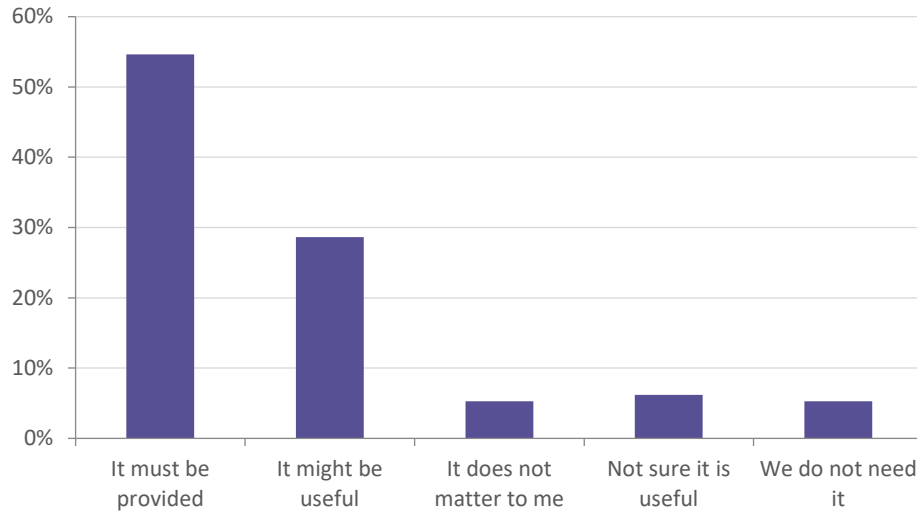
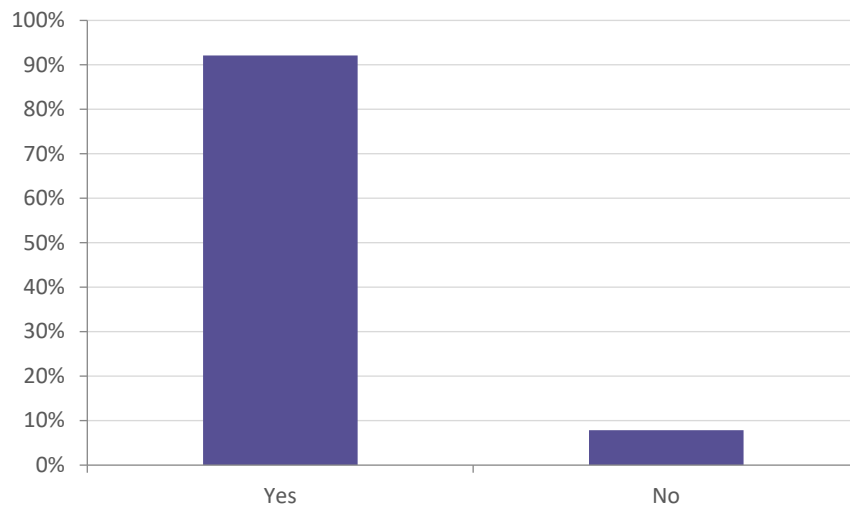


Figure 2-15 below highlights the general public's perception of need for additional or improved transit services. Over 90 percent of respondents indicated that there is a need for additional and/or improved transit services in Cabarrus County, with less than 10% of respondents stating that there is no need for additional or improved transit services.

FIGURE 2-15: GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY - DO YOU THINK THERE IS A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL/IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICES IN CABARRUS COUNTY?



2.8 Transit Improvements Survey

In addition to the other surveys outlined in this section, the project team conducted a Transit Improvements Survey, which received a total of 84 online responses. The survey was designed to gauge public agreement with the proposed service improvements developed by the project team based on prior outreach and data analysis. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each proposed improvement using a scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” A full summary of the survey results will be included in Appendix B; the following section provides an overview of some of the key findings from the survey.

Figure 2-16 illustrates survey responses reflecting participants’ level of agreement with potential fixed-route transit improvements, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Respondents showed the highest level of support for establishing a new Salisbury route, emphasizing strong community interest in restoring regional connectivity and reinstating a previously operated service. Other proposed improvements such as new routes along NC-49 between Harrisburg and the JW Clay light rail station, NC-73/Davidson Highway to Huntersville, and Afton Ridge to Downtown Concord received moderate support. Additional enhancements, including improved alignments on existing routes, implementation of a US-29 Fast and Frequent Transit service, and new routes along Kannapolis/Liles Parkway, also demonstrated similar levels of agreement.

FIGURE 2-16: TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS SURVEY - FIXED ROUTE NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

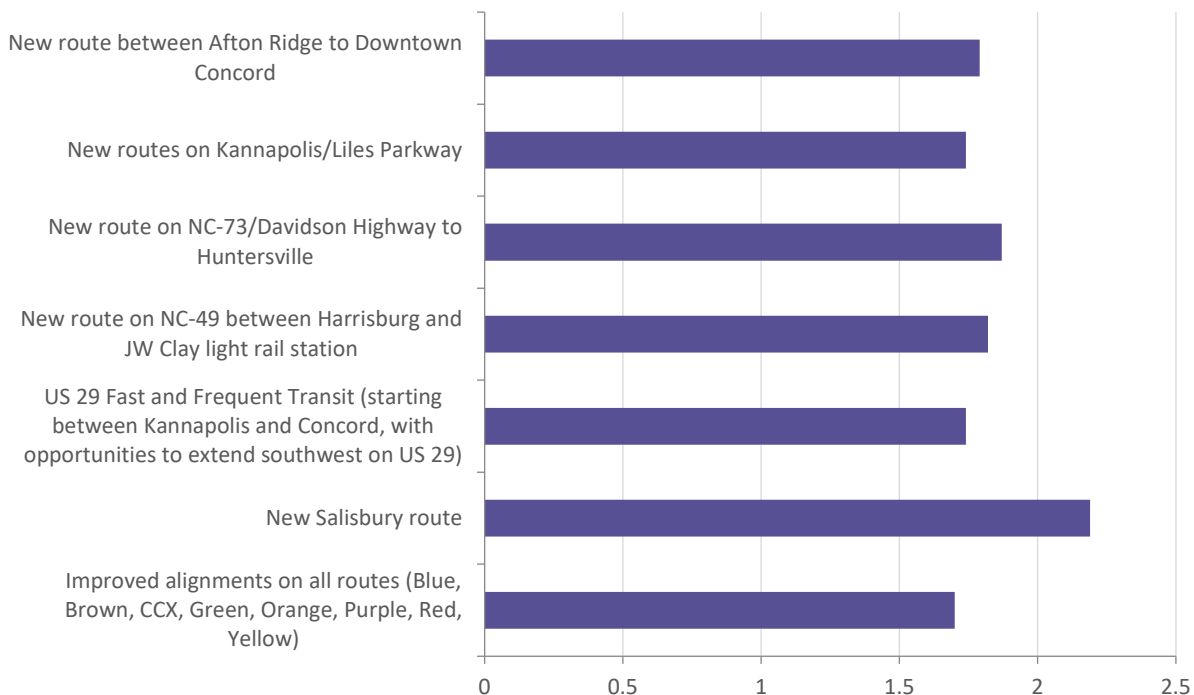


Figure 2-17 presents survey results illustrating respondents' level of agreement with proposed operational improvements, rated on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Overall, participants expressed the strongest support for establishing a direct bus connection to UNC Charlotte, which received the highest weighted average. Extending fixed-route service hours from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 PM (with microtransit service operating until 12:30 AM) and improving route frequency to 15–30 minutes followed closely in preference. The introduction of a clockface schedule, standardizing bus departures at consistent intervals, received slightly lower but still positive support. These results suggest that respondents place the greatest value on improving connectivity to major destinations and enhancing the reliability, frequency, and span of Rider Transit's services.

FIGURE 2-17: TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT SURVEY - OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

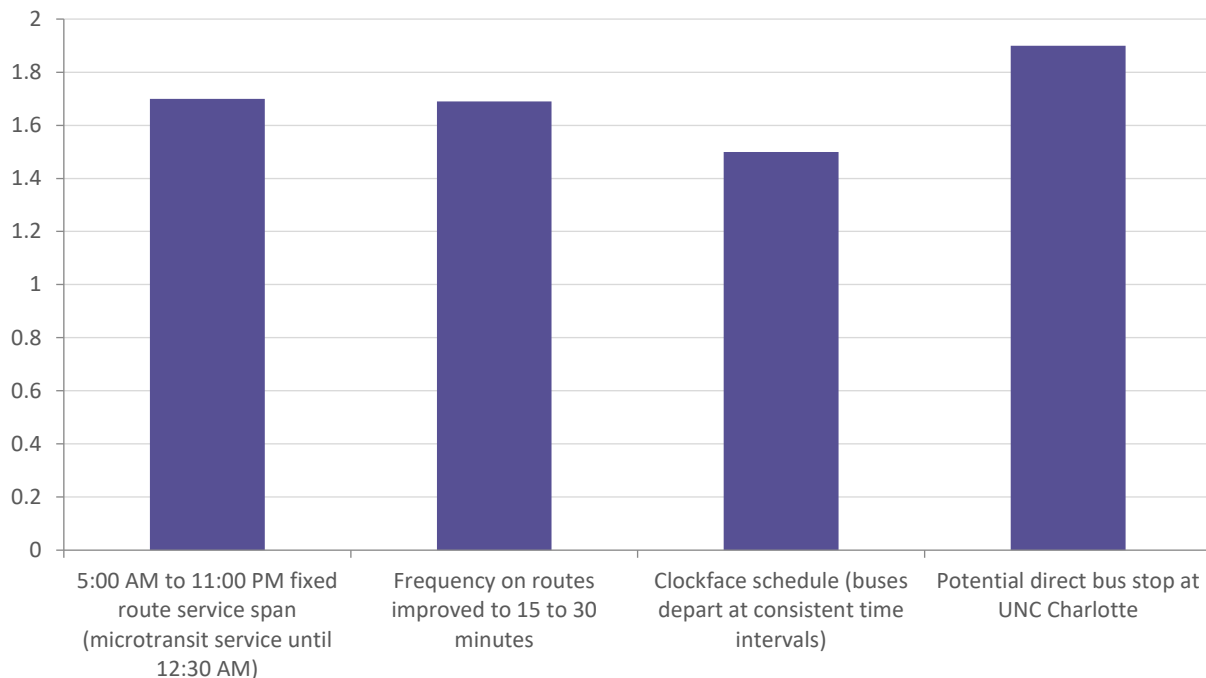
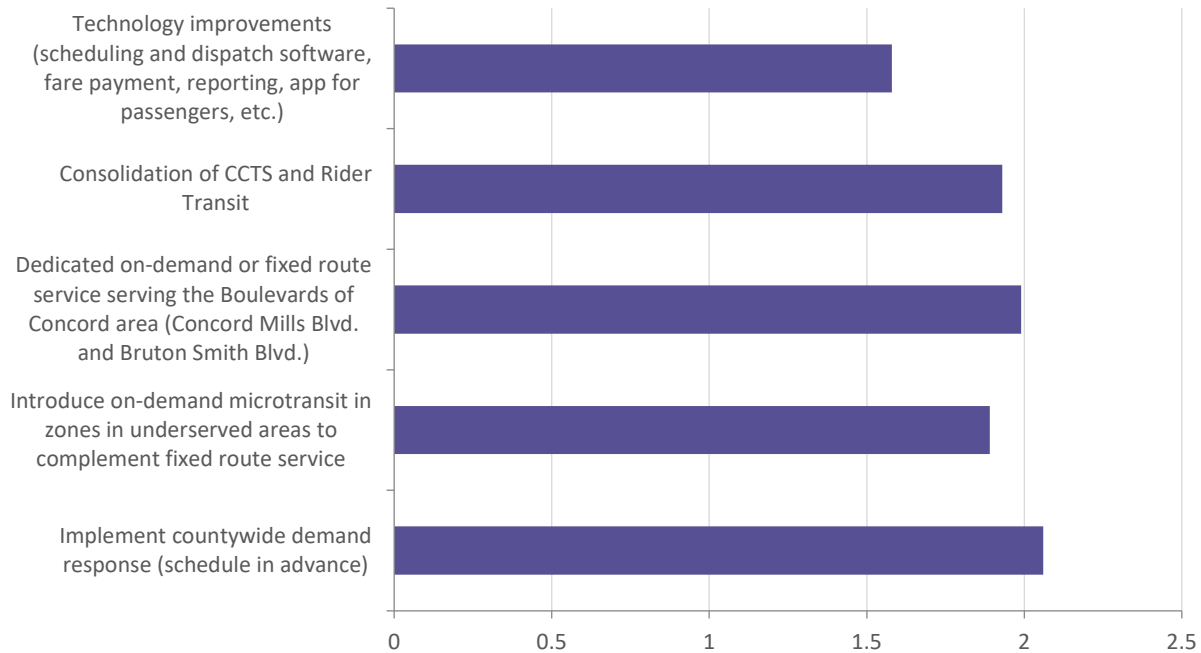


Figure 2-18 summarizes survey responses from participants who rated their level of agreement with proposed service and technology improvements, using a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Respondents expressed the highest level of support for implementing a countywide demand response system that allows trips to be scheduled in advance, which received the top weighted average score. This was followed closely by support for establishing dedicated on-demand or fixed-route service in the Concord area and introducing microtransit zones in underserved parts of the county. The proposed consolidation of CCTS and Rider Transit also received similar levels of support, indicating moderate interest in unified operations. Technology-focused improvements such as upgraded scheduling and dispatch systems, enhanced fare payment options, and new passenger-facing applications, which earned slightly lower but still positive ratings. Overall, respondents demonstrated consistently strong interest in improvements related to on-demand and technology-enhanced mobility options.

FIGURE 2-18: TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT SURVEY ON-DEMAND IMPROVEMENTS



2.9 Transit Operator Survey

Transit operators are immersed in the provision of an agency's transit services every day. This makes them valuable resources for vetting rider input and for providing important insights into route-level and system network issues related to operations, safety, scheduling, etc. To understand their input, an operator survey was developed and distributed both to Rider Transit and CCTS to collect static responses from the operators.

2.9.1 Rider Transit Operator Survey

Fifteen Rider Transit operators completed the operator survey. The majority have worked for the agency for less than six years, while several have ten to twenty years of service experience, providing a diverse perspective on system operations. Feedback from operators emphasized the need for operational and infrastructure improvements to enhance both service delivery and working conditions. Key recommendations included hiring additional drivers, expanding bus stop shelters, improving passenger amenities such as lighting and safe pedestrian access, and providing increased operator support through longer layovers, additional staffing for callouts, and adequate break times. Several operators also recommended implementing hourly scheduling to create a more consistent and manageable system for both operators and passengers, aligning with goals identified by the project team and agency staff. Additionally, operators highlighted specific routes such as the Red, CCX, and Yellow routes as needing modifications to improve reliability and efficiency. Suggested adjustments included revising timepoints, relocating or removing select stops, and extending layover times to better account for variable traffic conditions during peak travel periods.

2.9.2 CCTS Operator Survey

Eighteen CCTS operators completed the survey. Most have worked for the agency for fewer than three years, with some having four to six years of experience. Operators highlighted CCTS's effectiveness in transporting clients and maintaining vehicles as strengths but identified areas needing improvement such as internal communication, dispatch and route assignments, travel times, on-time performance, scheduling, and vehicle maintenance.

They reported frequent passenger concerns about wait times, on-time performance, scheduling, and rider comfort, noting that service limitations prevent trips for shopping, non-medical purposes, afternoon appointments, and weekend travel. Operators also indicated challenges serving areas outside Concord and Kannapolis, including Midland, Mount Pleasant, and Charlotte, and noted passenger suggestions to improve vehicle suspension and air conditioning.

2.10 Discussion Groups

The project team hosted six discussion groups totaling 36 participants. Three of the discussion groups were in-person at Rider Transit, and three were virtual. Three of the discussion groups included representatives from the following agencies: Centralina Regional Planning, Salisbury Transit, Charlotte Area Transit System, Cabarrus Health Alliance and El Puente Hispano, Cabarrus County Department of Health & Human Services, Camino, Concord United Committee, Cabarrus County Chamber, Huntington, Shipley, Queen City Engineering, Cabarrus County Schools, Harrisburg, Victory Family Counseling, and Cooperative Christian Ministries. The other three discussion groups were made up of transit riders. As added incentive for the transit rider discussion groups, the project team hosted lunch and raffled off a 55" television. Figure 2-19 and Figure 2-20 provide an overview of the key themes identified in the discussion groups.



FIGURE 2-19: DISCUSSION GROUP KEY TAKEAWAYS – CURRENT STATE OF TRANSIT

General Perceptions and Usage of Transit	Barriers to Transit Access
• Most do not transit due to car ownership or inconvenient service but have worked with clients who rely heavily on transit • Awareness campaigns are ineffective and there is a lack of awareness of transit service offered • When transit is unavailable or insufficient, people resort to expensive options like Uber • Some feel unsafe using transit or waiting at stops • The general public considers public transit to only be for people without any other mode of transportation	• Poor frequency and lack of coverage in rural and suburban areas are a major deterrent to the services • Lack of sidewalk connectivity and bus stop accessibility makes transit hard to reach • Existing service spans don't align with retail or healthcare shift work

FIGURE 2-20: DISCUSSION GROUPS KEY TAKEAWAYS - FUTURE OF TRANSIT

Ideas for Improvement	Long-Term Vision
• Service should be improved by ○ Increasing frequency and expanding service span ○ Improving route alignments ○ Adding more regional connections • Education campaigns and real-time tracking would improve the public's understanding on how to use transit. • There should be more partnerships/collaborations with employers, churches and other organizations provide affordable rideshare-like programs. • Transit infrastructure should be improved by adding more sidewalks, shelters, seating, and ADA-complaint bus stops	• Participants see public transit becoming more essential due to county growth and economic development. • Some expect public-private partnerships and alternative mobility models (like microtransit and autonomous shuttles) to play a larger role over the next decade.

2.11 Social Media, Online Project Materials, and Video Testimonials

This section highlights the project’s digital engagement strategy and outreach efforts through social media, online materials, and video testimonials. These tools were developed to expand public awareness, increase accessibility to project information, and encourage participation beyond in-person events and surveys previously outlined in this section. Social media posts and online content provided regular project updates, links to surveys, and opportunities for the community to share feedback. Video testimonials captured authentic perspectives from Rider Transit patrons. Collectively, these online tools ensured a broad and inclusive approach to public engagement, reaching audiences who may not have participated or been aware of the project via traditional means.

2.11.1 Social Media

The project team developed social media graphics and content for Rider Transit to share on its Facebook page. The information was also shared in local Cabarrus County Facebook groups and on LinkedIn. In addition, several paid Facebook posts were created to increase visibility, reach a broader audience, and ensure key project updates and engagement opportunities were seen by community members. As of September 20, 2025, 32,139 total social media interactions, including views, reach, impressions, clicks, reactions, and comments.

FIGURE 2-21: EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS



2.11.2 Virtual Room (Online Project Materials)

A virtual room is an online website that simulates a meeting room that displays project data and relevant information about the project in ways that are accessible and interesting for the public and stakeholders. Visitors who entered the room saw a 360-degree room filled with project materials such as PowerPoint presentations, maps, information boards, technical reports, and an online survey. The room was organized to have areas that show the public outreach done for this study, the existing transit and socioeconomic conditions, and the recommended transit improvements. Figure 2-22 and Figure 2-23 present the left and right sides of the virtual room, respectively.

FIGURE 2-22: LEFT SIDE OF CONNECTING CABARRUS VIRTUAL ROOM



FIGURE 2-23: RIGHT SIDE OF CONNECTING CABARRUS VIRTUAL ROOM



Since the debut of the virtual room on April 13, 2025, 165 unique users visited the virtual room 314 separate times through March 16, 2026. On average, each visit to the virtual room lasted 1 minute and 46 seconds, indicating that each visitor likely spent an adequate amount of time interacting with all the elements within the virtual room.

2.11.3 Video Testimonials

Video testimonials were recorded in person with transit riders. These final videos were shared on social media. In total, 19 testimonials were captured on camera to highlight real world perspective from existing Rider Transit patrons in the community.

Video Testimonials

- September 12, 2025, at The Salvation Army, 45 Ashlyn Dr. SE, Concord, NC
- September 23, 2025, at Rider Transit Center, 45 Transit Ct. NW, Concord, NC

Below is a list of talking prompts used during the testimonials, prompting riders to share on camera their thoughts and experiences related to transit:

- Do you need the bus to get to work?
- How does it affect your daily life?
- Would you be able to work or get around if there were no buses?
- What would you like to say to those who fund the bus system?

The videos were edited and combined into a total of four different short clips to share at Council and Commissioner meetings, as well as other presentations. The purpose of doing this is to personalize how critical transit is to many people in the community, and without transit, per many testimonials, their ability to get around would be extremely difficult, limiting access to work, shopping and medical appointments.



3 EXISTING CONDITIONS, SERVICES, PLANS & BEST PRACTICES

Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS) and Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider Transit) are jointly working to update the Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transit Plan (LRPTP), an effort that involves robust planning and community engagement in order to develop 5, 10, and 20-year visions that will employ potential funding opportunities and set the stage for future transit growth in the rapidly growing region. Effective transportation planning necessitates a thorough understanding of existing conditions, available services, and potential future opportunities. This assessment of existing conditions and services focuses on examining the demographic, socioeconomic, and operating contexts of CCTS' and Rider Transit's service area, the current performance of its services, and the planning and policy framework within which it functions.

3.1 Existing Operating Environment Analysis

With support from CCTS and Rider Transit staff, as well as numerous other resources, data were compiled to document and assess the pertinent conditions within the service area. This analysis is useful in assessing the environment in which services currently operate and documenting base-level data that is beneficial for completing subsequent tasks. This section includes tables, maps, and graphics that describe and illustrate the operating environment within and around the CCTS and Rider Transit service areas.

3.1.1 Study Area Overview

Cabarrus County, located immediately northeast of Mecklenburg County, covers 361.2 square miles of land area and houses 240,016 residents as of 2023. Rowan County, Stanly County, Union County, and Iredell County also border it. The county seat and largest city is Concord, which shares its southwest boundary with Charlotte in Mecklenburg County. Its second-largest city is Kannapolis. Cabarrus County's other municipalities include Harrisburg, Locust, Midland, and Mount Pleasant. Cabarrus County is best known for its parks and trails, local stores, restaurants, and as the home to the Charlotte Motor Speedway and Concord Mills shopping mall. Tourism, manufacturing, and the Concord-Padgett Regional Airport bolster the county's economy.

3.1.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Conditions

Cabarrus County has experienced consistent population growth over the few decades. Alongside population increases, the city's demographic composition is evolving. Current demographic trends are expected to shape future transportation needs. These changes underscore the importance of aligning transit service planning with the communities shifting characteristics to ensure equitable, efficient, and accessible mobility for all residents. Demographic and socioeconomic profiles are provided in this section using 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) data from the US Census Bureau, as well as state and local sources.

Population

Per the most recent (2023) ACS 5-year Estimates, Cabarrus County's population is 240,016, as shown in Table 3-1, along with its municipal populations. The county's population has increased by 6 percent

since 2020 and by 35 percent since 2010. According to the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management's population projections, Cabarrus County will continue to grow steadily, increasing its current population 15 percent by the year 2030 and reaching a population of 419,252 in 2060, depicted in Figure 3-1.

Cabarrus County's population is concentrated mainly in Concord and Kannapolis, especially along the Interstate 85 and US 29 corridors, as shown in Map 3-1. The eastern half of the county is mainly rural.

An increasing population will drive higher demand for public transportation as traffic congestion increases, and more people require access to jobs, education, and essential services.

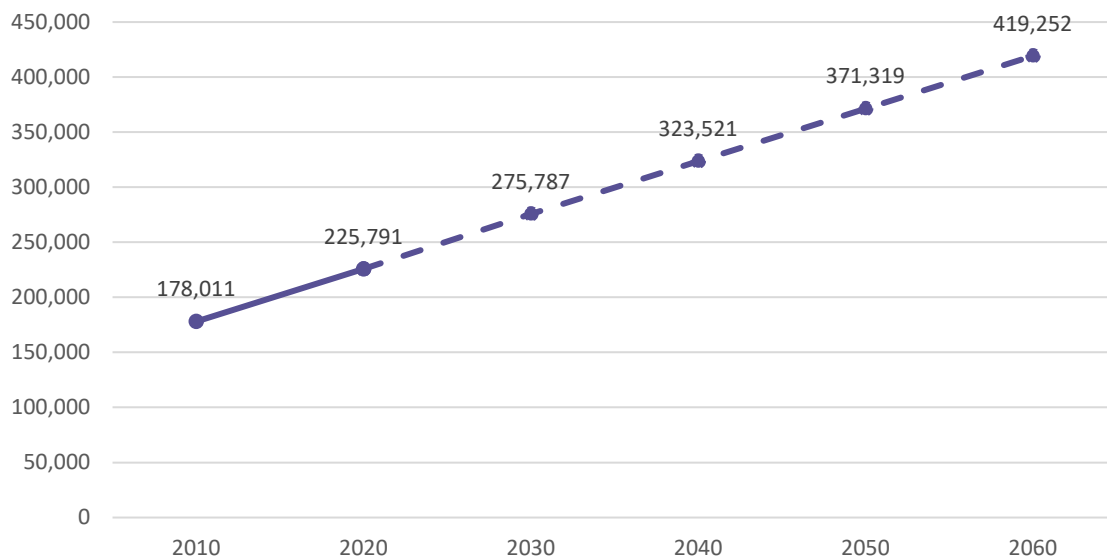
TABLE 3-1: POPULATION IN CABARRUS COUNTY BY JURISDICTION (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)

Jurisdiction	Population
Cabarrus County	240,016
Concord	110,119
Kannapolis*	59,321
Harrisburg	19,883
Locust**	5,854
Midland	4,758
Mount Pleasant	1,866

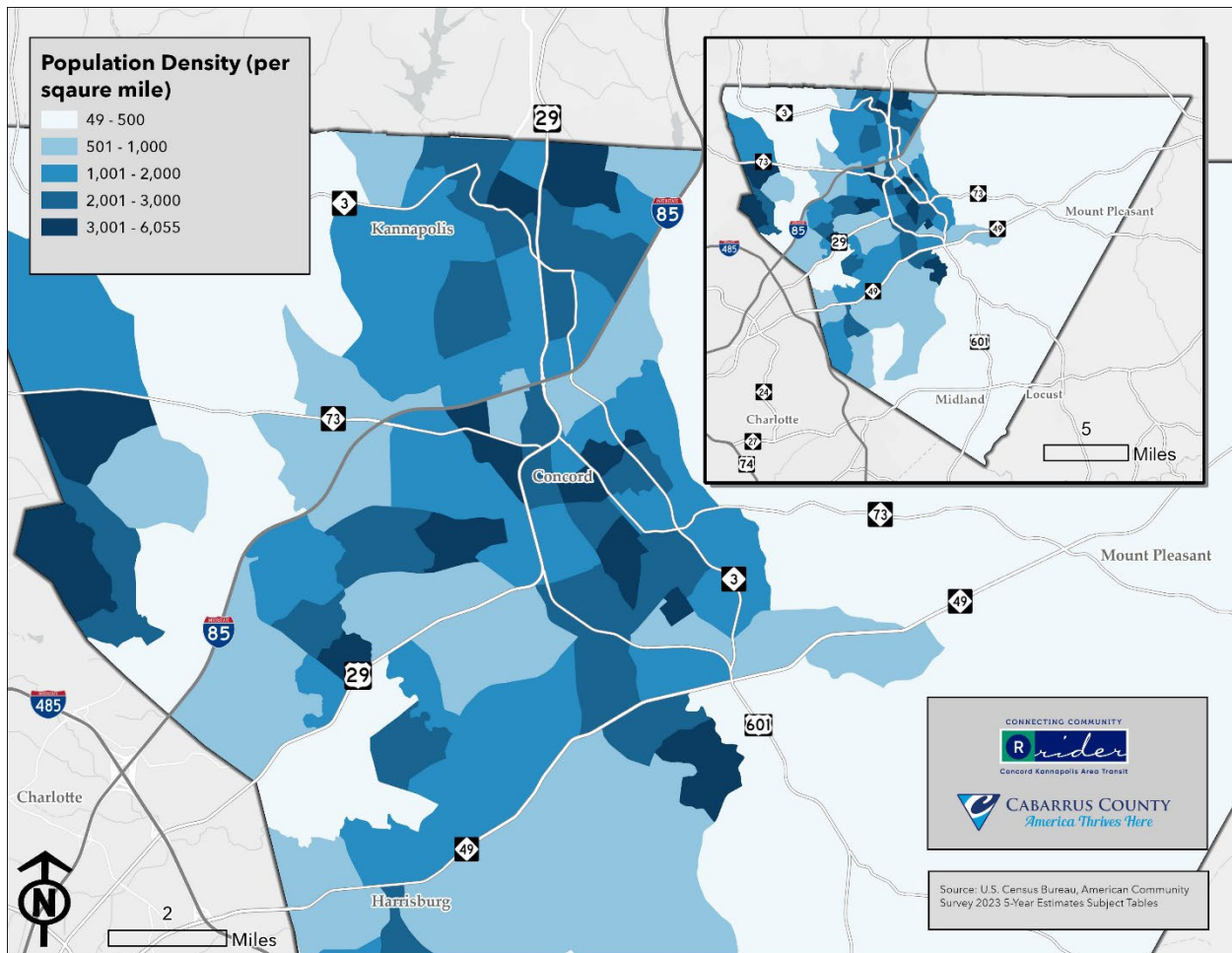
* Kannapolis is located in both Cabarrus and Rowan Counties

** Locust is located in both Cabarrus and Stanly Counties

FIGURE 3-1: CABARRUS COUNTY POPULATION COUNTS AND PROJECTIONS (US CENSUS BUREAU, NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF STATE BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT)



MAP 3-1: CABARRUS COUNTY POPULATION DENSITY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



Income and Poverty

Cabarrus County's 2023 median household income was \$86,084, greater than that for its largest cities and North Carolina's state median household income. Figure 3-2 documents household income within Cabarrus County while Figure 3-3 compares Cabarrus County's median household income with nearby jurisdictions. The income bracket that constitutes the largest percentage of Cabarrus County's population is \$100,000 to \$149,999, followed by \$50,000 to \$74,999, and \$200,000 or more. Over 40 percent of Cabarrus County households have an annual income of at least \$100,000. About 12 percent of households generate an income of less than \$25,000 per year. Figure 3-2 visualizes these data by block group.

FIGURE 3-2: CABARRUS COUNTY HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)

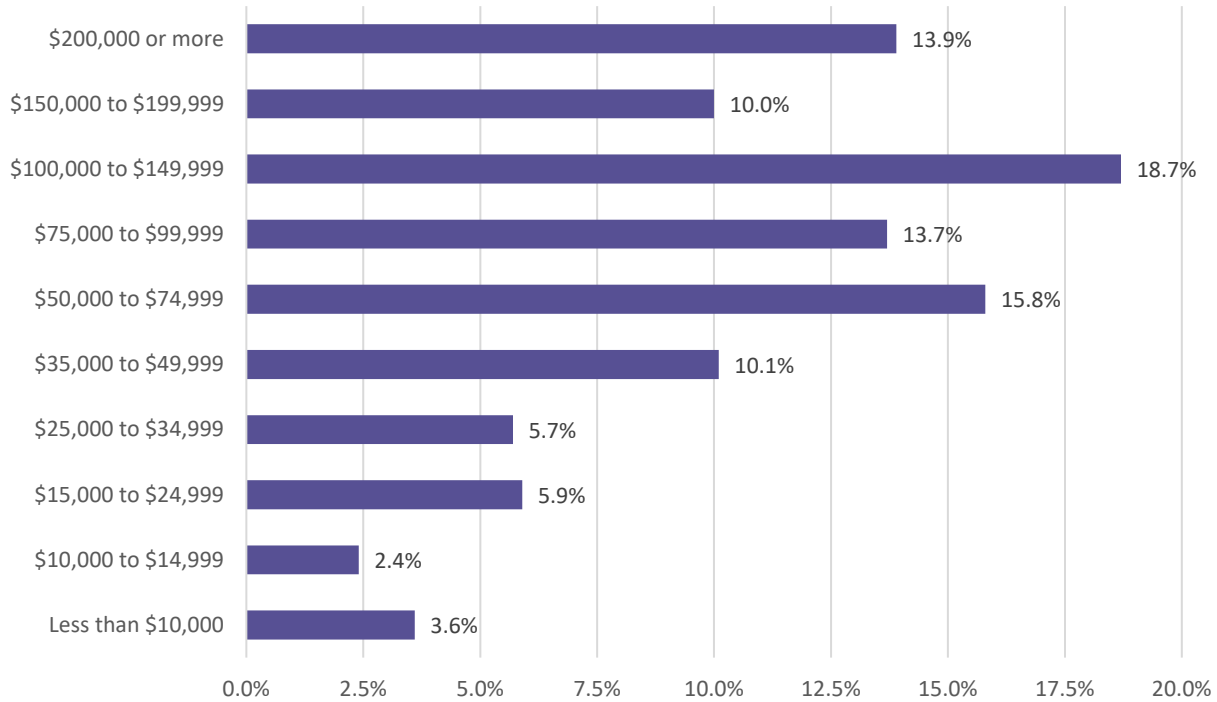
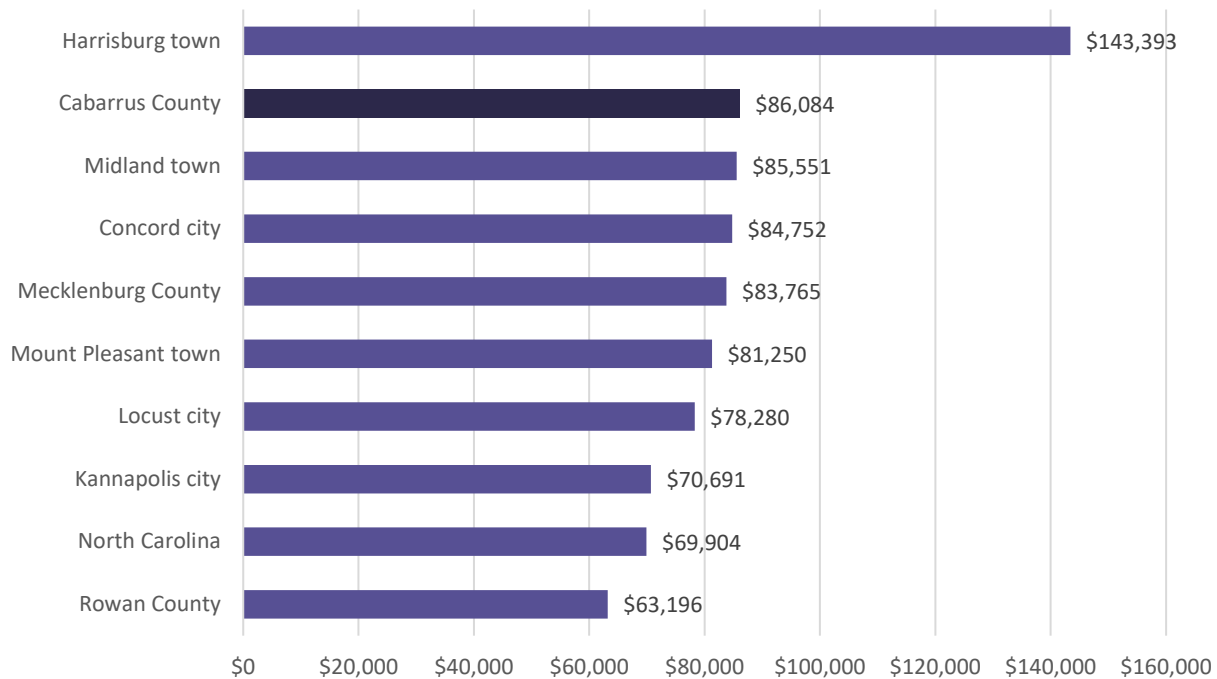
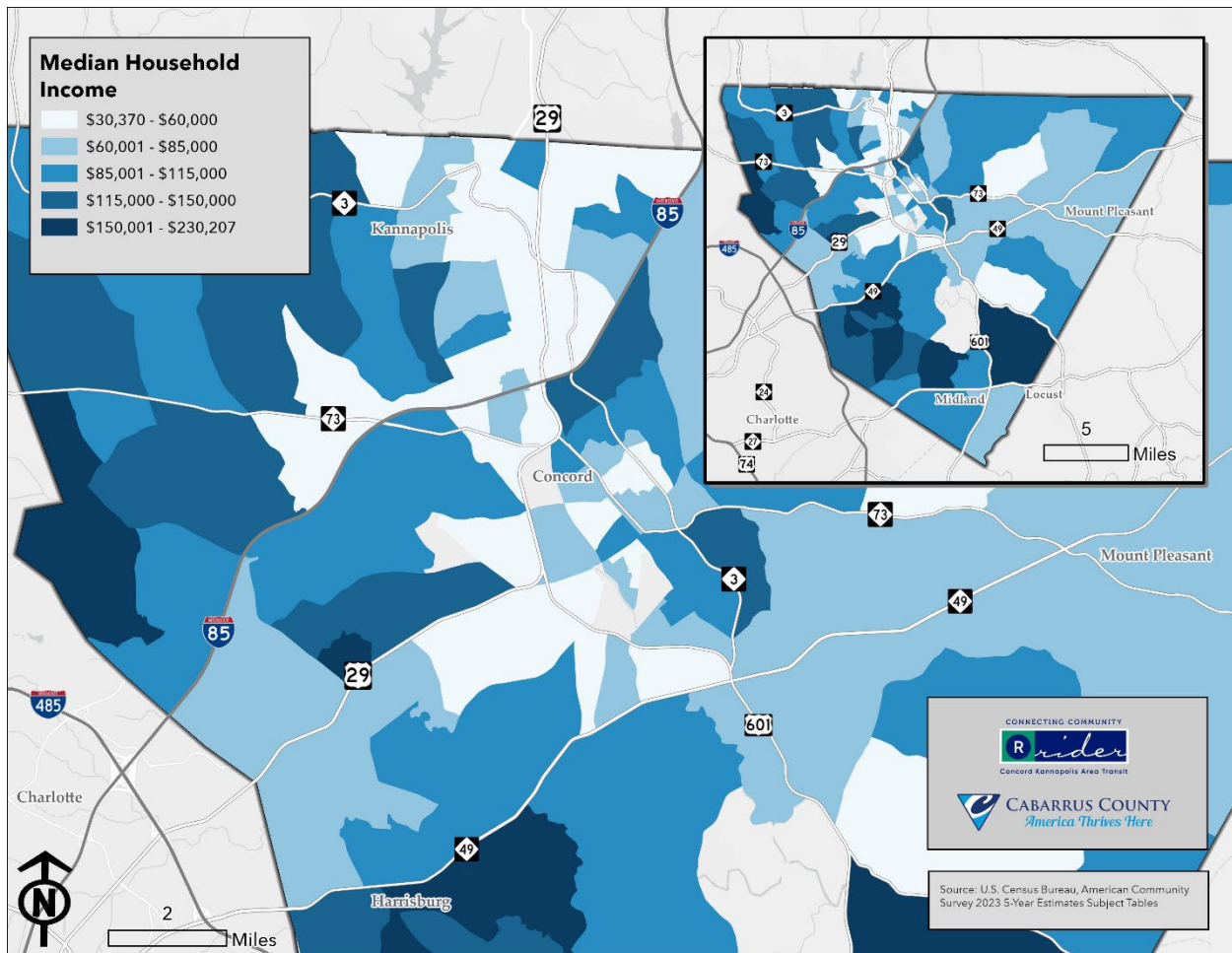


FIGURE 3-3: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY JURISDICTION (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



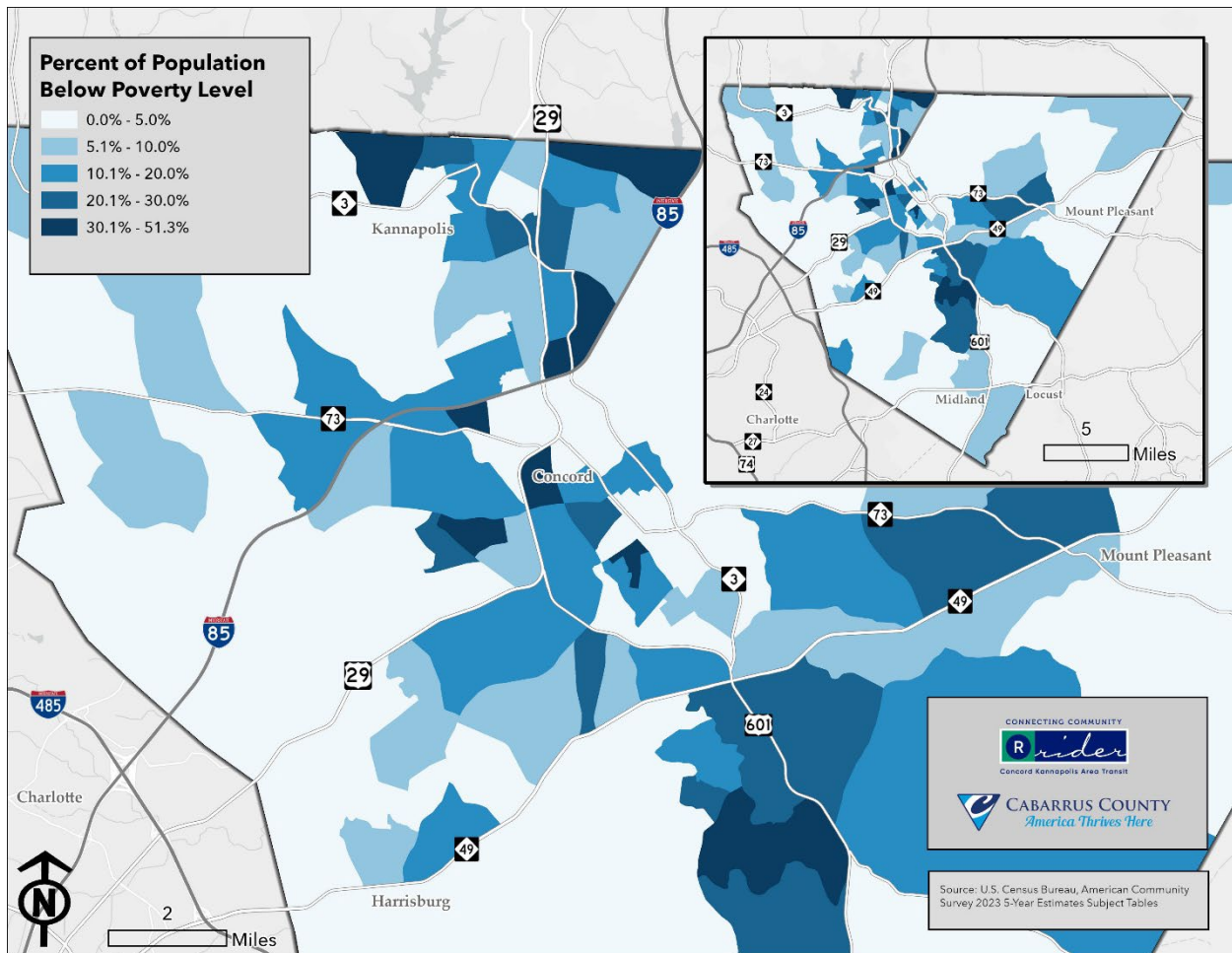
MAP 3-2: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



Associated with income, the poverty level is defined by the US Census Bureau as a household's pre-tax income threshold, determined by the current cost of living, the number of residents in a household, and the age of its residents. A household is considered to be "in poverty" or "living below the poverty level" if its annual household income is less than its Census-defined income threshold. Depending on the number and age of a household's residents, the 2023 poverty income thresholds range from \$15,480 to \$67,810.

Based on these criteria, Map 3-3 depicts the percentage of Cabarrus County's population living below the poverty level by block group. Poverty occurs at higher rates in the central portion of the county, especially along the US 601 and US 29 corridors in Concord and Kannapolis.

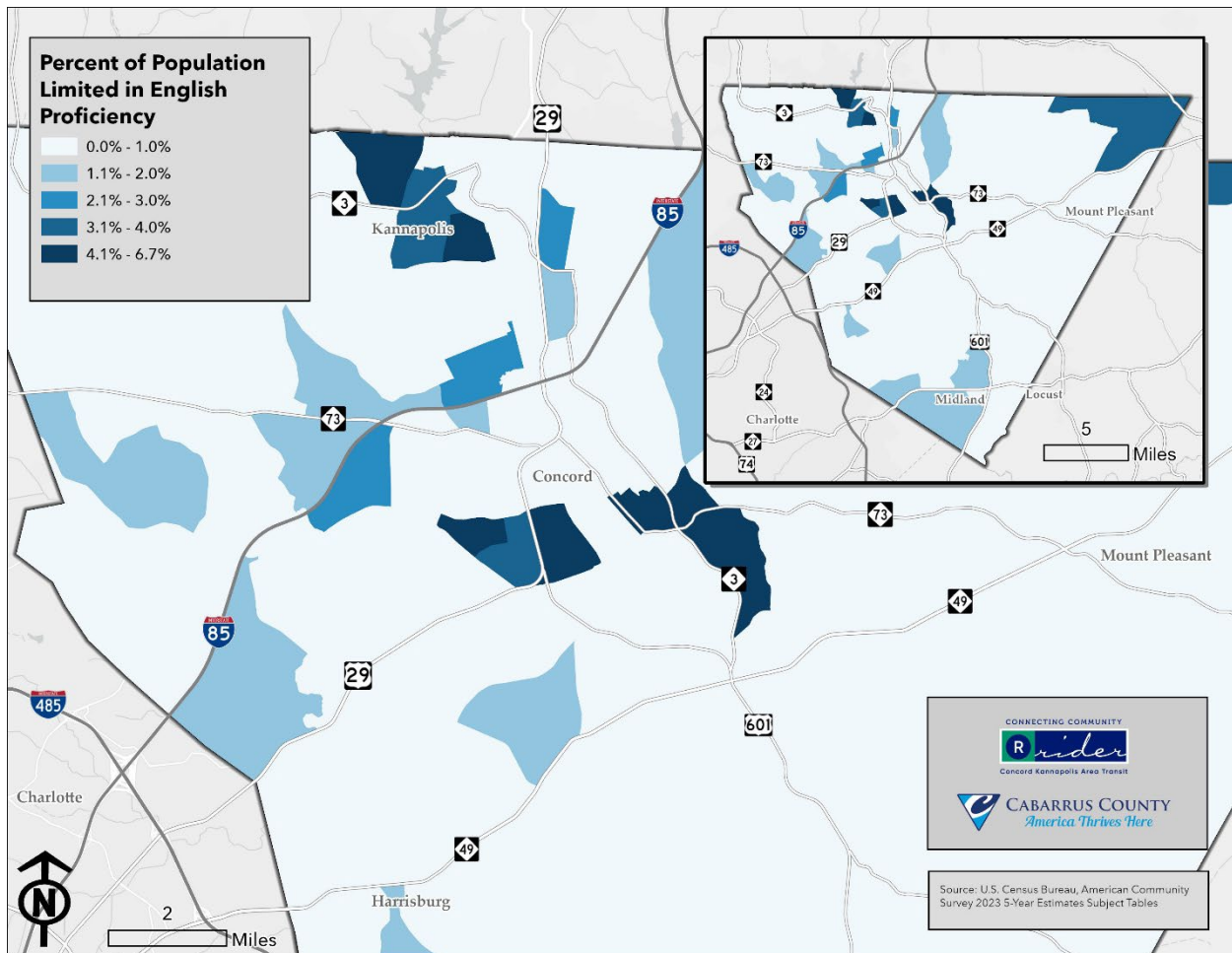
MAP 3-3: CABARRUS COUNTY POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



Languages

According to the US Census Bureau, LEP individuals are persons aged 5 or older who self-identify as speaking English less than "very well." Map 3-4 portrays foreign-language-speaking households that are not proficient in speaking English, by block group. The LEP household population comprises just a sliver of the county's total population, as most block groups are characterized by 100 percent English proficiency. Certain block groups in Concord, Kannapolis, Harrisburg, and near Gold Hill have an elevated percentage of LEP households.

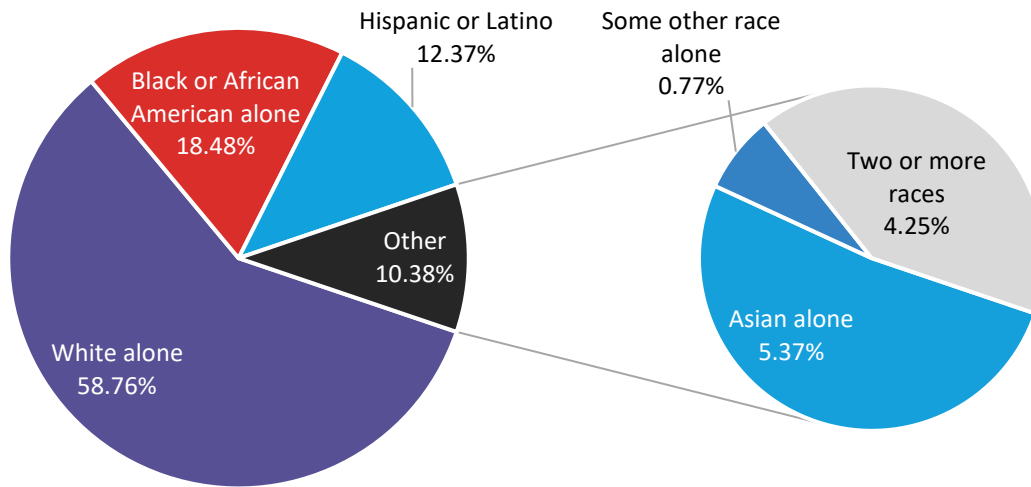
MAP 3-4: POPULATION WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



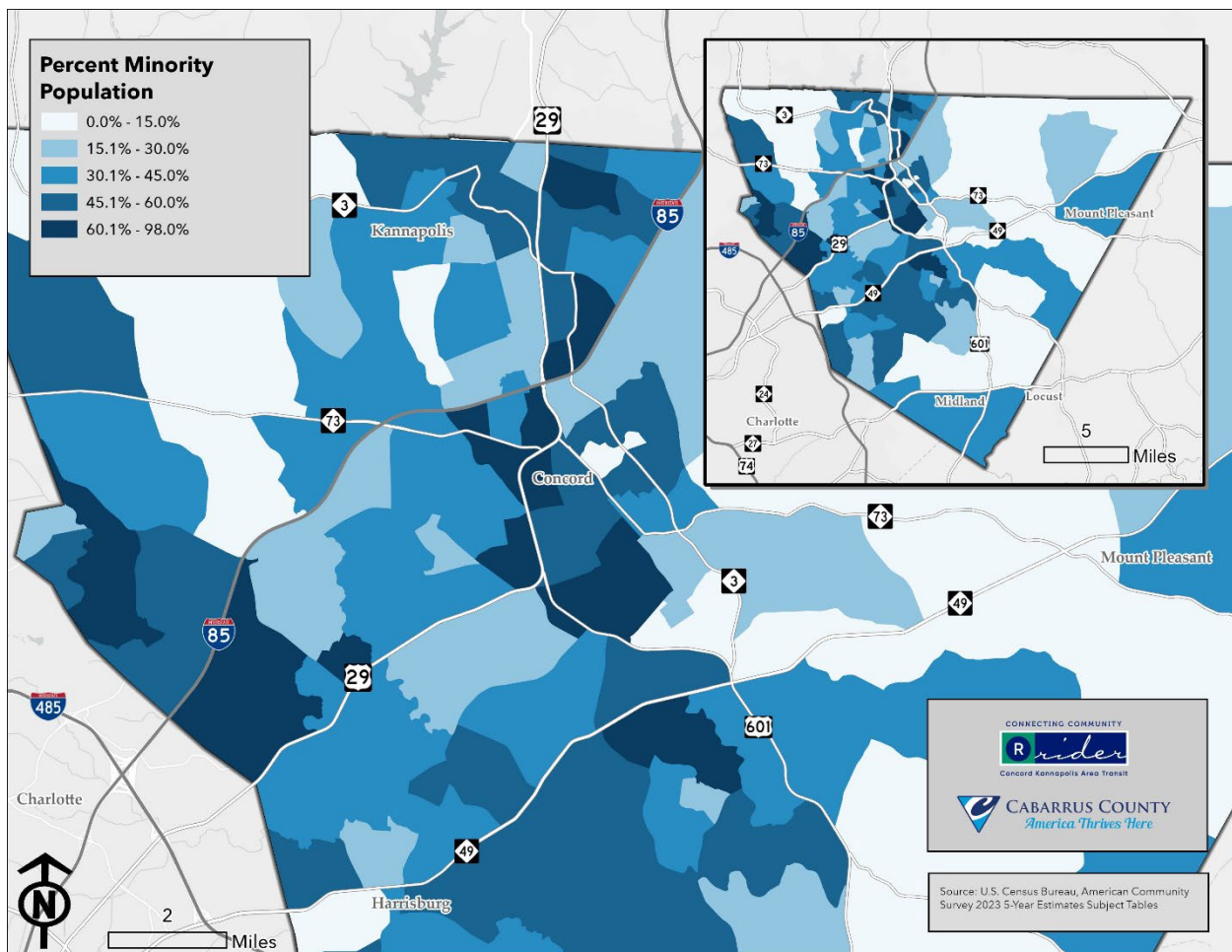
Minority Population

Figure 3-4 displays the proportion of each race and ethnicity in Cabarrus County. Map 3-5 depicts the spatial distribution of minority (non-White) and ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino) by block group in Cabarrus County. Overall, minority groups are more prevalent in the block groups adjacent to Mecklenburg County as well as several areas within the cities of Concord and Kannapolis.

FIGURE 3-4: CABARRUS COUNTY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



MAP 3-5: MINORITY POPULATION IN CABARRUS COUNTY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)





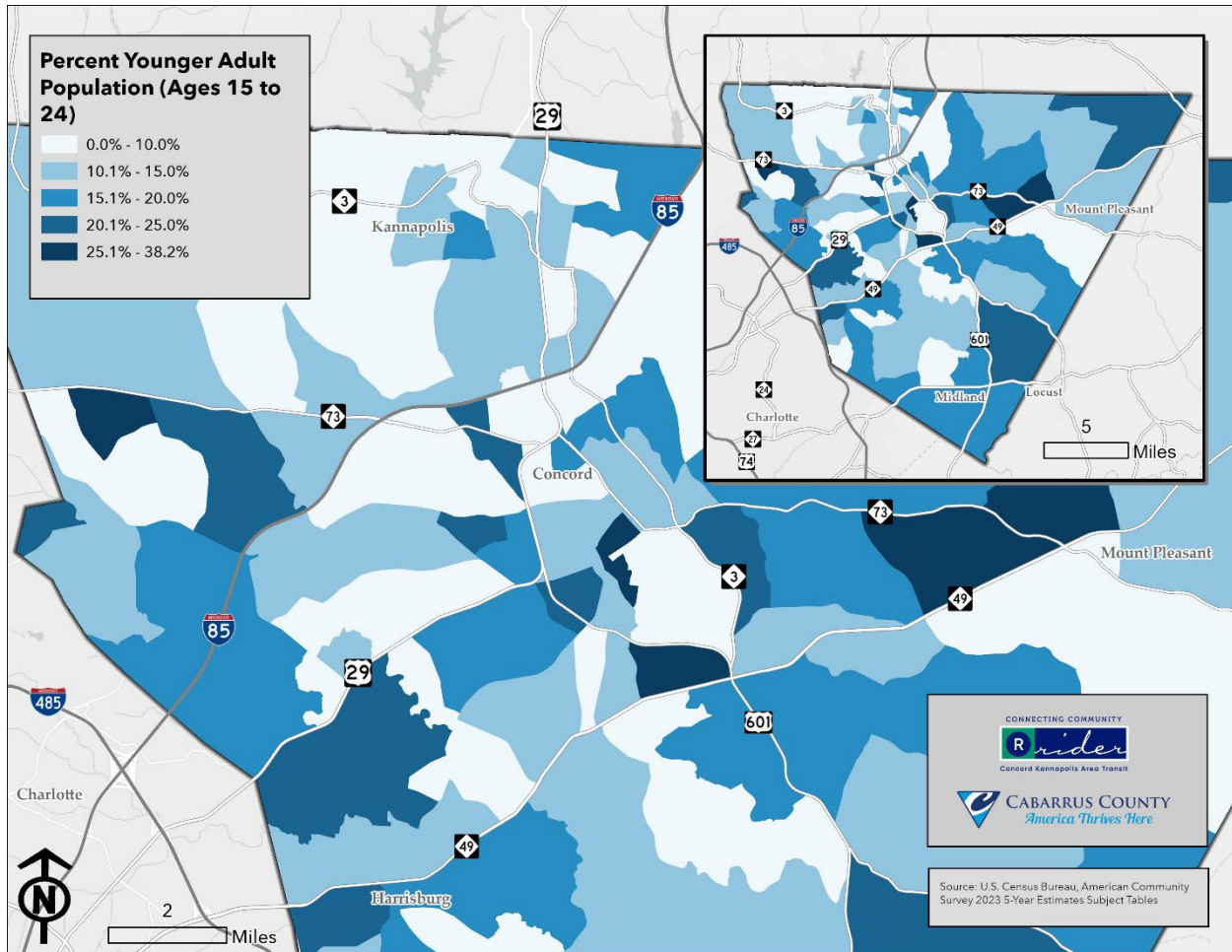
Age

Overall, Cabarrus County's age distribution is relatively uniform across all age brackets. However, diving into the data at a finer level and comparing different areas within Cabarrus County reveals varying proportions of the age cohorts that are most likely to ride transit: younger adults (ages 15 to 24) and older adults (ages 65 and older). While factors such as lower car ownership, urban living, and cost savings make it more likely for younger adults to ride public transportation, older adults also display a higher level of public transportation usage due to their reduced driving abilities, fixed incomes, and eligibility for paratransit services. Providing more fixed route opportunities for these age cohorts will likely increase ridership while reducing paratransit operations costs.

Map 3-6 and Map 3-7 illustrate the proportion of the population of each of the younger adult and older adult age cohorts, respectively, relative to the entire block group population. Across Cabarrus County, there is no general pattern of the distribution of the populations within these age cohorts.

Figure 3-5, a population pyramid, portrays the age distribution of Cabarrus County residents, divided into age brackets. The pyramid depicts a relatively uniform age distribution in the county, although the youth population slightly outnumbers the other age cohorts. Again, the youth and younger adult population is more likely to use transit as some are unable to drive due to age, preference, or their financial situation.

MAP 3-6: YOUNGER ADULT POPULATION IN CABARRUS COUNTY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



MAP 3-7: OLDER ADULT POPULATION IN CABARRUS COUNTY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)

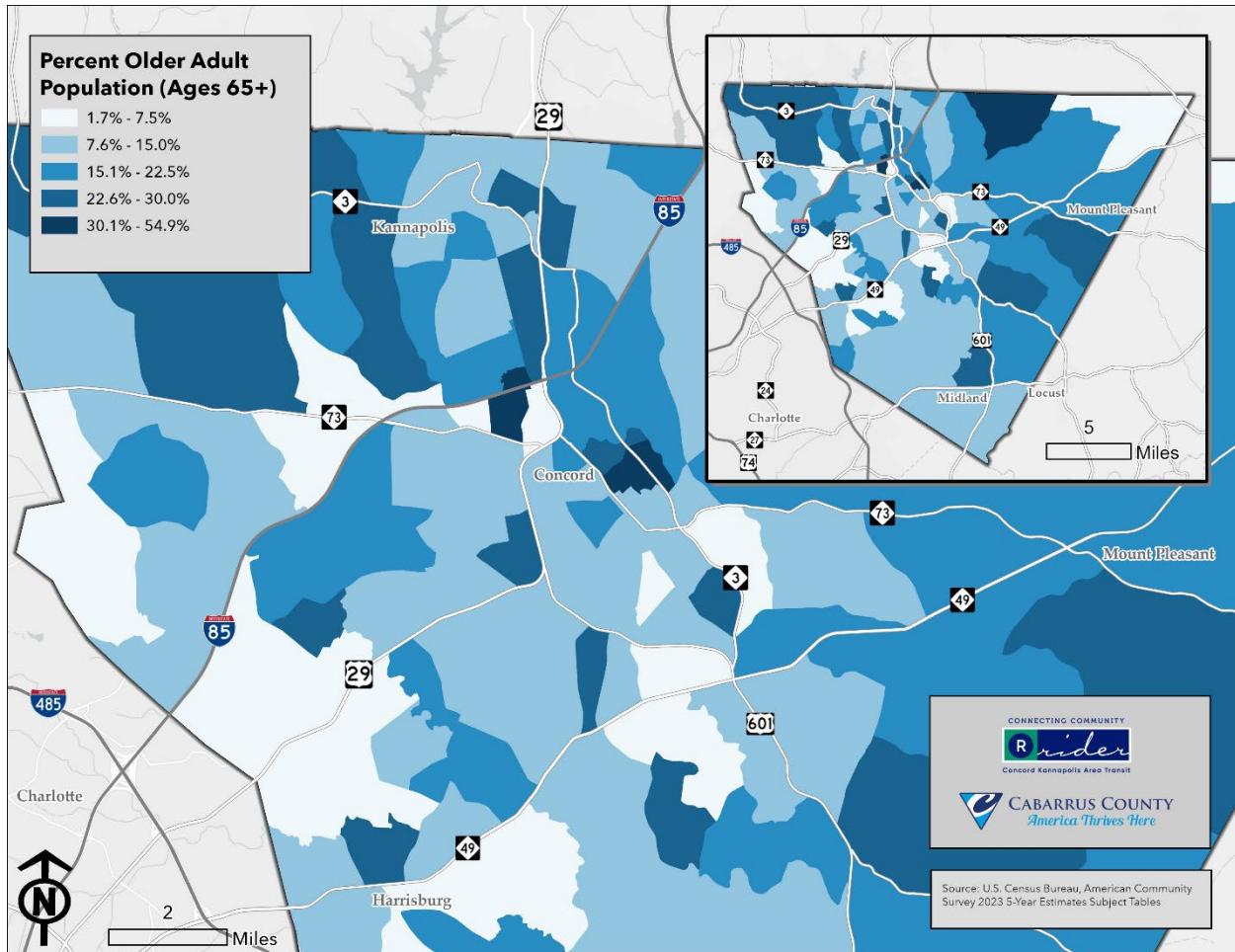
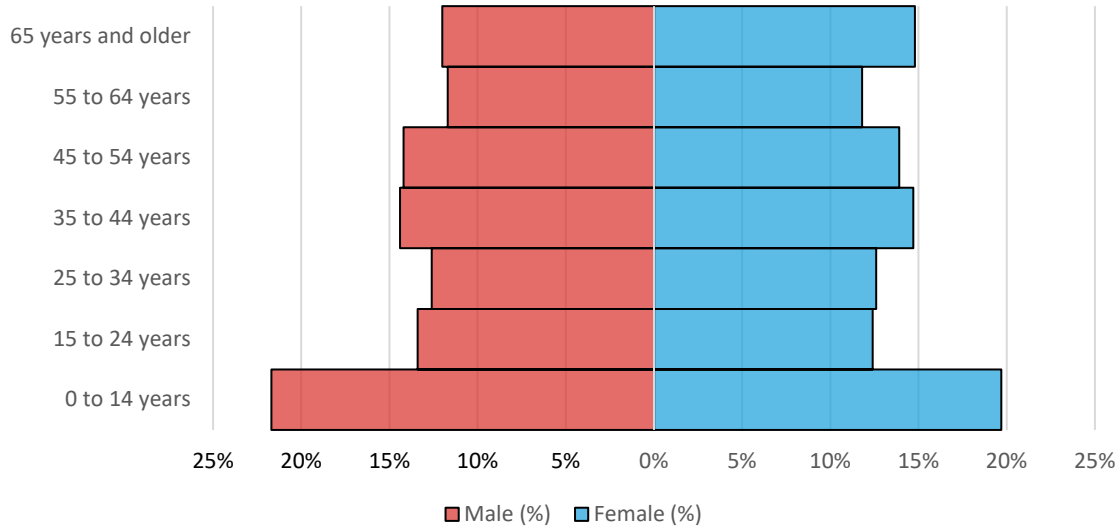


FIGURE 3-5: CABARRUS COUNTY AGE DISTRIBUTION (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)

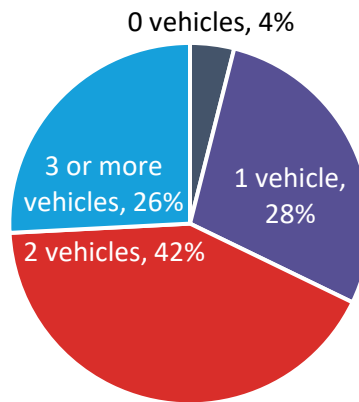


Vehicle Ownership

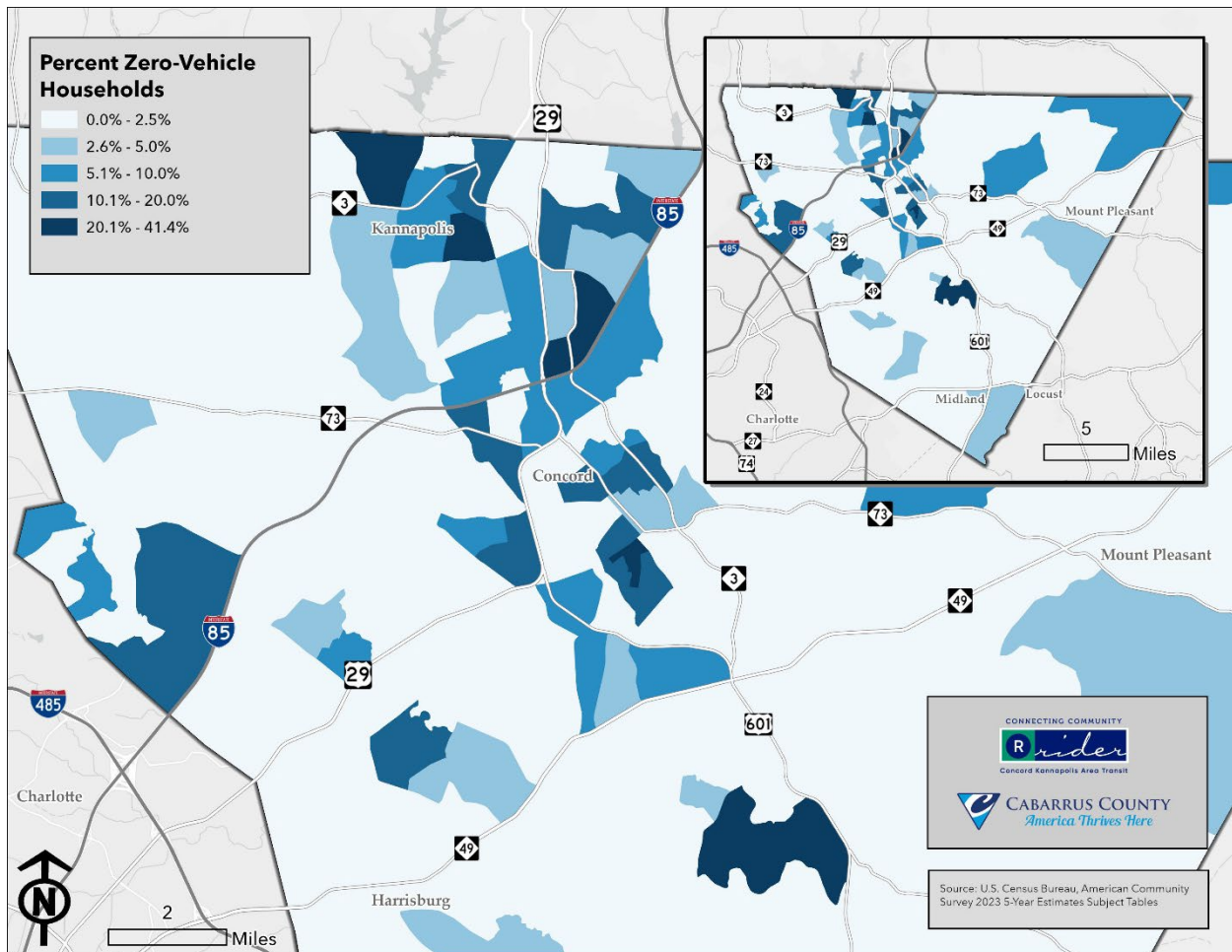
Over 96 percent of households in Cabarrus County have access to at least one vehicle, a rate slightly higher than the national average of 92 percent. Two or more vehicles are accessible to over two-thirds of Cabarrus County households. Figure 3-6 and Map 3-8 depict the percentage of households without access to a personal vehicle. Although most Cabarrus County households have access to a personal vehicle, the highest prevalence of zero-vehicle households occurs in the cities of Concord and Kannapolis. These areas will likely rely more heavily on public transportation to access jobs, education, healthcare, and daily necessities, making reliable and frequent transit service essential for their populations' mobility and quality of life.



FIGURE 3-6: NUMBER OF VEHICLES AVAILABLE BY HOUSEHOLD IN CABARRUS COUNTY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



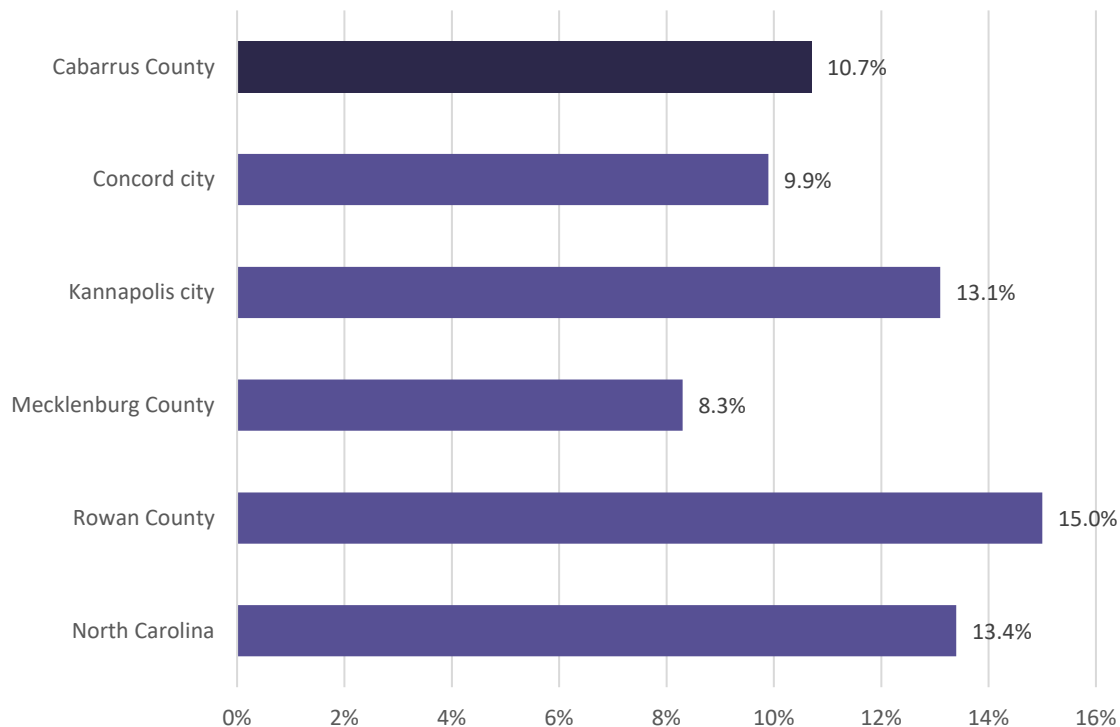
MAP 3-8: ZERO-VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS IN CABARRUS COUNTY (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



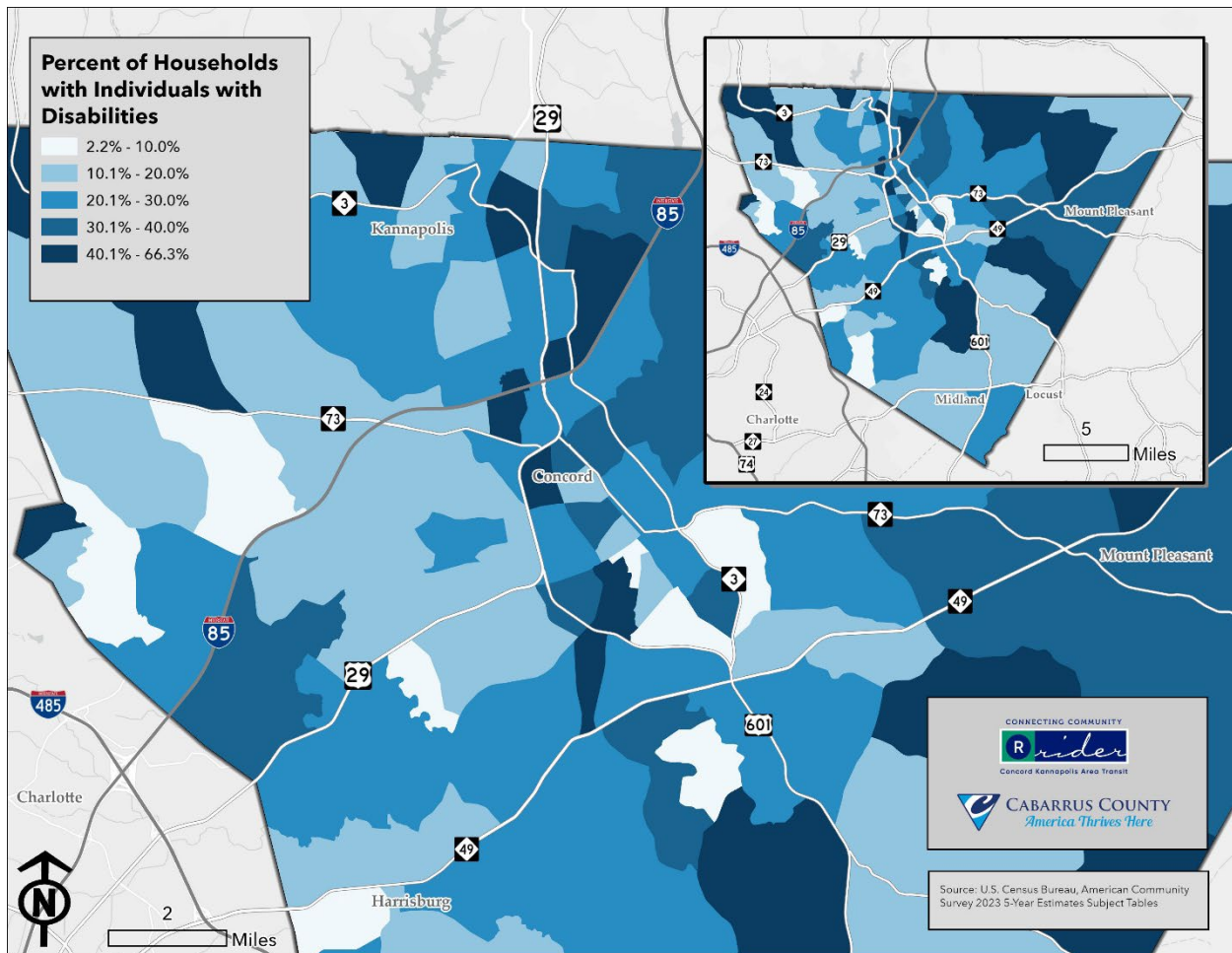
Population with Disabilities

Figure 3-7 exhibits the percentage of individuals with disabilities by municipality and Map 3-9 portrays this data by block group. Throughout the county, nearly one in three households have a member with a disability. The map does not indicate a clear pattern, so this may suggest that any spatial correlation of household disability status might be exhibited at a finer level, such as within a single neighborhood, since a single block group in Cabarrus County can have anywhere between 0 percent and 67 percent of households that house an individual with a disability. Individuals with disabilities are more likely to depend on public transportation due to various barriers that limit their access to private vehicles, such as physical impairments, financial constraints, or an inability to drive. An accessible fixed route and paratransit system plays a critical role in ensuring mobility and independence for people with disabilities.

FIGURE 3-7: PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



MAP 3-9: HOUSEHOLDS WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2023)



3.1.3 Land Use and Major Trip Generators

To better assess the impact of local land use conditions and policies on public transportation needs, it is important to identify the areas that may benefit the most from the provision of public transportation services. Concord and Kannapolis, the principal cities served by Rider Transit, comprise the areas in Cabarrus County best suited for transit. Currently, the Interstate 85, US 29, US 601, and State Highway 3 corridors sit in the heart of the county's activity.

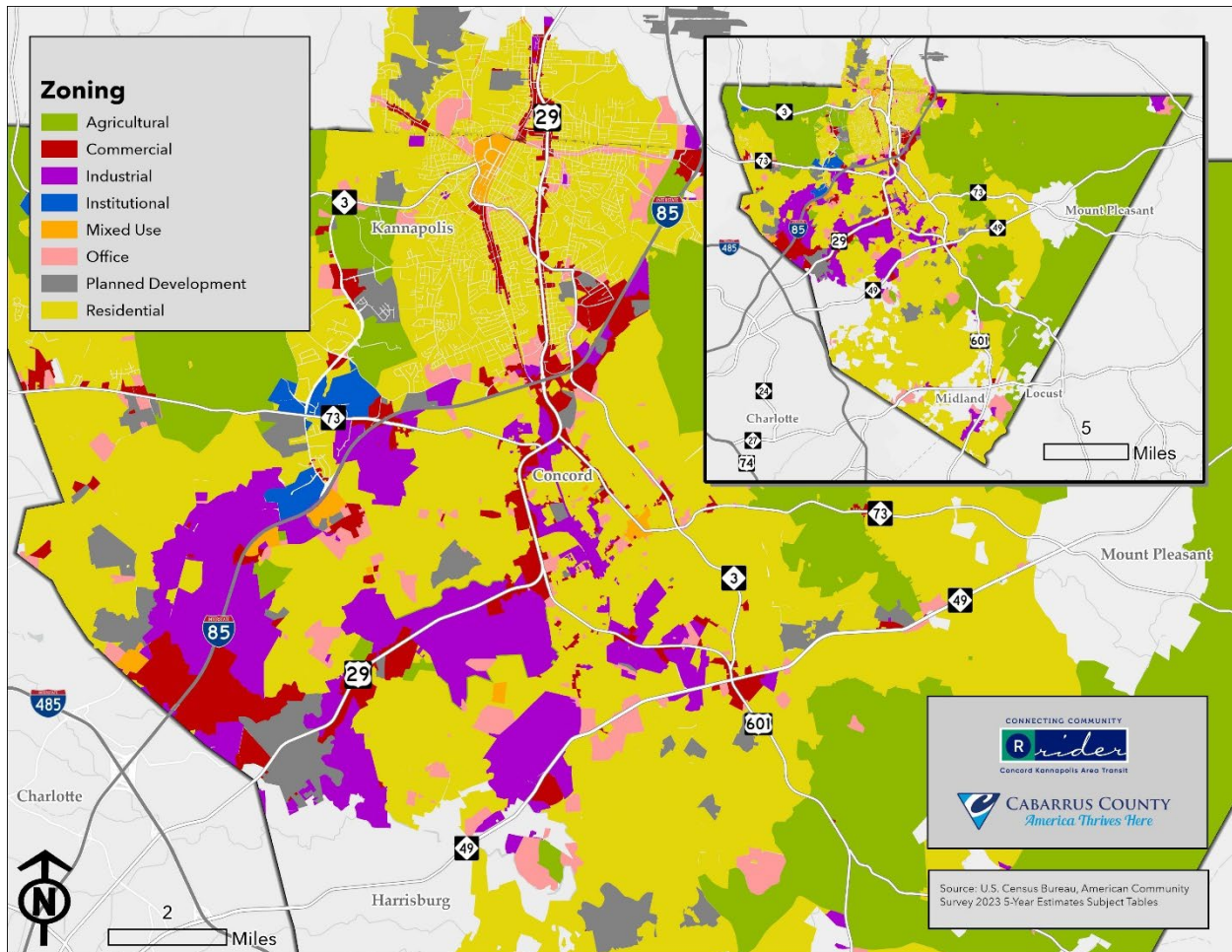
High concentrations of people drive public transportation usage, as densely populated areas can more easily justify higher transit frequencies or shorter wait times. Urban environments also tend to be more walkable, making it easy for people to access transit. Additionally, public transportation tends to become more efficient in dense environments, where there are more riders per mile of service, resulting in a lower cost per passenger.

Land Use

General zoning within Concord, Kannapolis, and unincorporated Cabarrus County is illustrated in Map 3-10. The county's most traveled corridors, Interstate 85 and US 29, are lined with the bulk of the

county's commercial and industrial land. The eastern third of the county is agricultural, as is much of the northwest portion. Most of the rest of Cabarrus County is residential, barring some land that is planned for development and Downtown Kannapolis' mixed-use development. Large areas of residential, commercial, office, institutional, and mixed-use development have high transit potential as those land uses generate the most trips.

MAP 3-10: ZONING IN CONCORD, KANNAPOLIS, AND UNINCORPORATED CABARRUS COUNTY



Employment

Employment density and major industries are other key factors to consider when analyzing a transit market, as commuting is a major generator of trips. Areas of high employment density often include activity centers that cluster multiple employers like retail centers, medical offices, and/or educational centers that attract transit trips.

According to Cabarrus County's 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, the county's total labor force amounted to 115,179 employees, equivalent to about half of the county's population. The occupational groups with the highest levels of employment in Cabarrus County (including Retail Trade, Health Care, and Accommodation and Food Services) are illustrated in Figure 3-8 and listed in Table 3-2.

Table 3-3 includes a list of the top 10 institutions that employ 14 percent of Cabarrus County's workforce. Atrium Health is the largest employer in Cabarrus County, employing about 4,500 workers.

Company Name	Employees	Percent of Total Employment	Rank (2024)	Rank (2015)
Atrium Health Cabarrus	4,500	3.91%	1	1
Cabarrus County Schools	4,300	3.73%	2	2
Cabarrus County	1,280	1.11%	3	4
City of Concord	1,100	0.95%	4	5
Amazon.com Inc	1,000	0.87%	5	-
Walmart SuperCenter	965	0.84%	6	-
Shoe Show Inc	800	0.69%	7	7
Hendrick Motorsports	600	0.52%	8	-
Eli Lilly & Co	600	0.52%	9	-
Westrock Coffee Co LLC	600	0.52%	10	-

Map 3-11 illustrates employment densities in the greater Cabarrus County area. Similar to population density, the highest densities of workers are located in the heavily populated areas of Concord, Kannapolis, and Charlotte. The rest of the western half of Cabarrus County exhibits a more moderate employment density while the eastern half of the county exhibits a low employment density.

FIGURE 3-8: TOP 10 INDUSTRIES IN CABARRUS COUNTY (NC DEPT. OF COMMERCE, 2023)

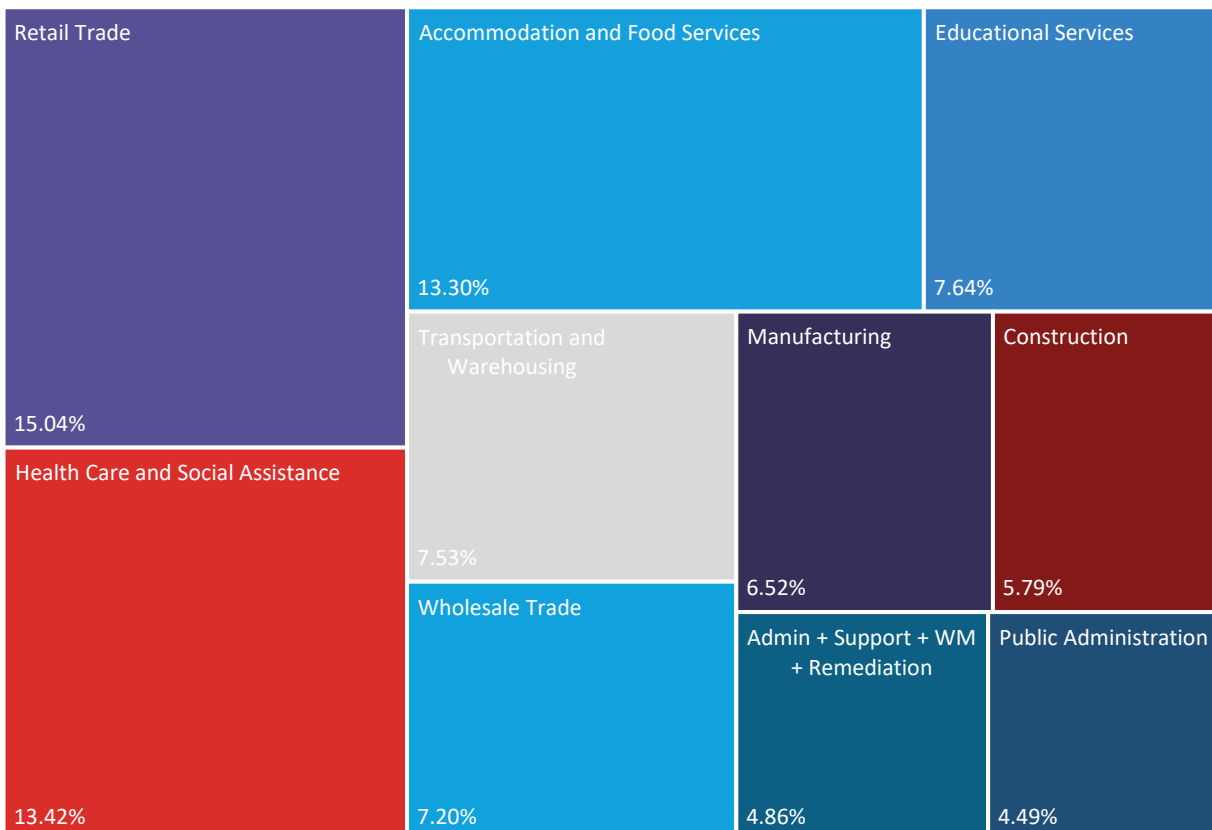


TABLE 3-2: TOP 10 INDUSTRIES IN CABARRUS COUNTY (NC DEPT. OF COMMERCE, 2023)

Industry	Employees	Number of Establishments	Rank
Retail Trade	12,606	739	1
Accommodation and Food Services	11,244	542	2
Health Care and Social Assistance	11,149	471	3
Transportation and Warehousing	6,400	142	4
Educational Services	6,309	236	5
Wholesale Trade	6,033	347	6
Manufacturing	5,468	192	7
Construction	4,853	754	8
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,071	455	9
Public Administration	3,763	25	10

TABLE 3-3: TOP 10 EMPLOYERS IN CABARRUS COUNTY (CABARRUS COUNTY, 2024)

Company Name	Employees	Percent of Total Employment	Rank (2024)	Rank (2015)
Atrium Health Cabarrus	4,500	3.91%	1	1
Cabarrus County Schools	4,300	3.73%	2	2
Cabarrus County	1,280	1.11%	3	4
City of Concord	1,100	0.95%	4	5
Amazon.com Inc	1,000	0.87%	5	-
Walmart SuperCenter	965	0.84%	6	-
Shoe Show Inc	800	0.69%	7	7
Hendrick Motorsports	600	0.52%	8	-
Eli Lilly & Co	600	0.52%	9	-
Westrock Coffee Co LLC	600	0.52%	10	-



MAP 3-11: JOB DENSITY IN AND AROUND CABARRUS COUNTY (U.S. CENSUS, 2022)

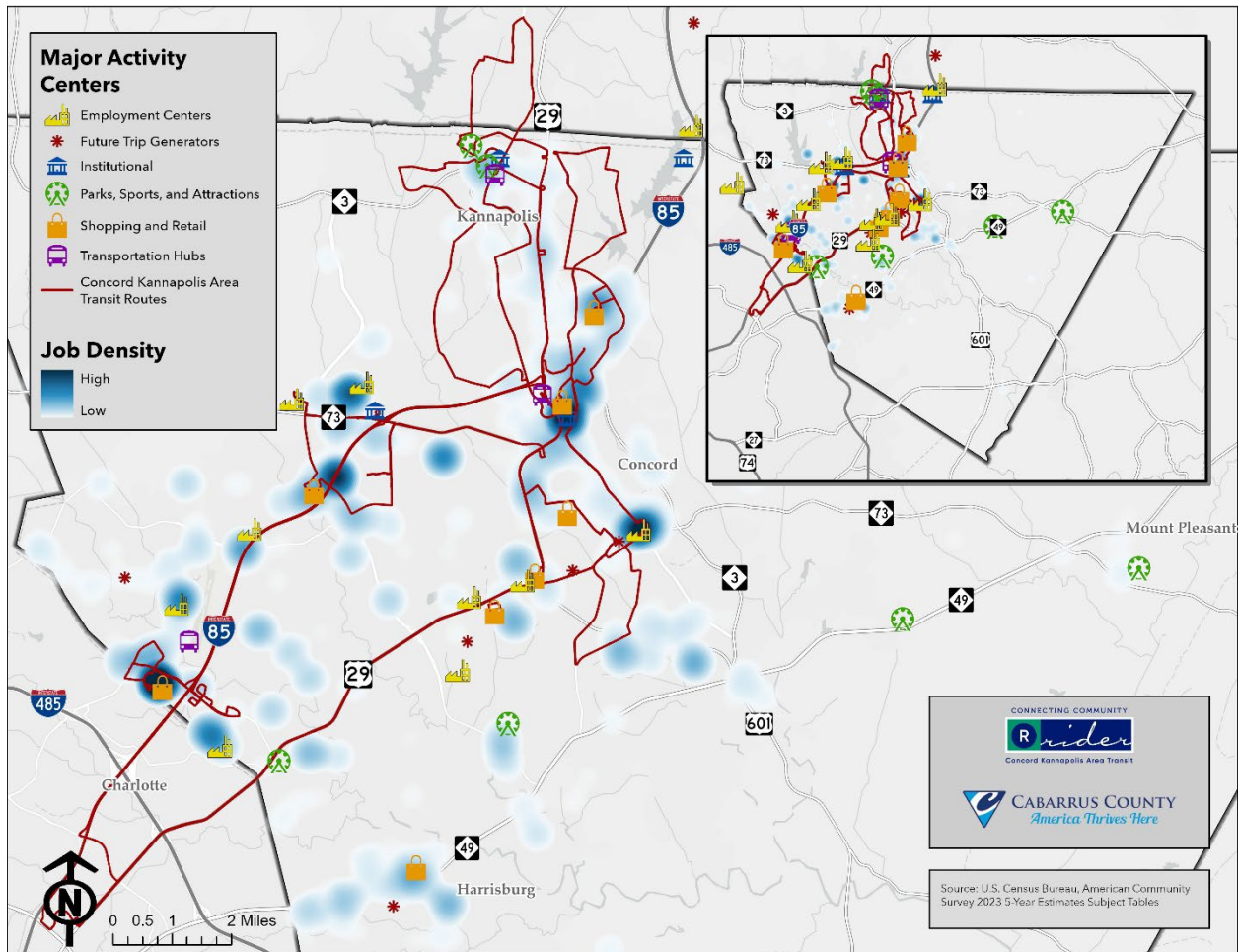


Figure 3-9 depicts Cabarrus County commuter inflow (where Cabarrus County workers reside), while Figure 3-10 depicts Cabarrus County commuter outflow (where Cabarrus County residents work). These maps highlight a strong commuting relationship between Cabarrus and Mecklenburg counties, as well as less strong commuting relationships between Cabarrus and its other adjacent counties. Table 3-4 lists these data quantitatively and calculates the net commuter flow between Cabarrus and each other county. Overall, Cabarrus County exports more commuters than it imports by a margin of 61 percent, due in large part to the high number of jobs available in Mecklenburg County. However, Cabarrus County imports more workers from all other adjacent counties than it exports.

TABLE 3-4: CABARRUS COUNTY COMMUTER INFLOW AND OUTFLOW (U.S. CENSUS, 2022)

Location	Cabarrus Commuter Inflow	Cabarrus Commuter Outflow	Net Workers Commuting to Cabarrus County
Cabarrus County	27,853	27,853	N/A
Mecklenburg County	19,495	47,650	-28,155
Rowan County	7,622	4,787	2,835
Iredell County	3,292	3,079	213
Union County	3,120	2,544	576
Stanly County	2,654	1,480	1,174
Gaston County	2,392	1,225	1,167
Wake County	1,754	3,665	-1,911
Guilford County	1,430	2,445	-1,015
Forsyth County	1,000	1,754	-754

FIGURE 3-9: CABARRUS COUNTY COMMUTER INFLOW (U.S. CENSUS, 2022)

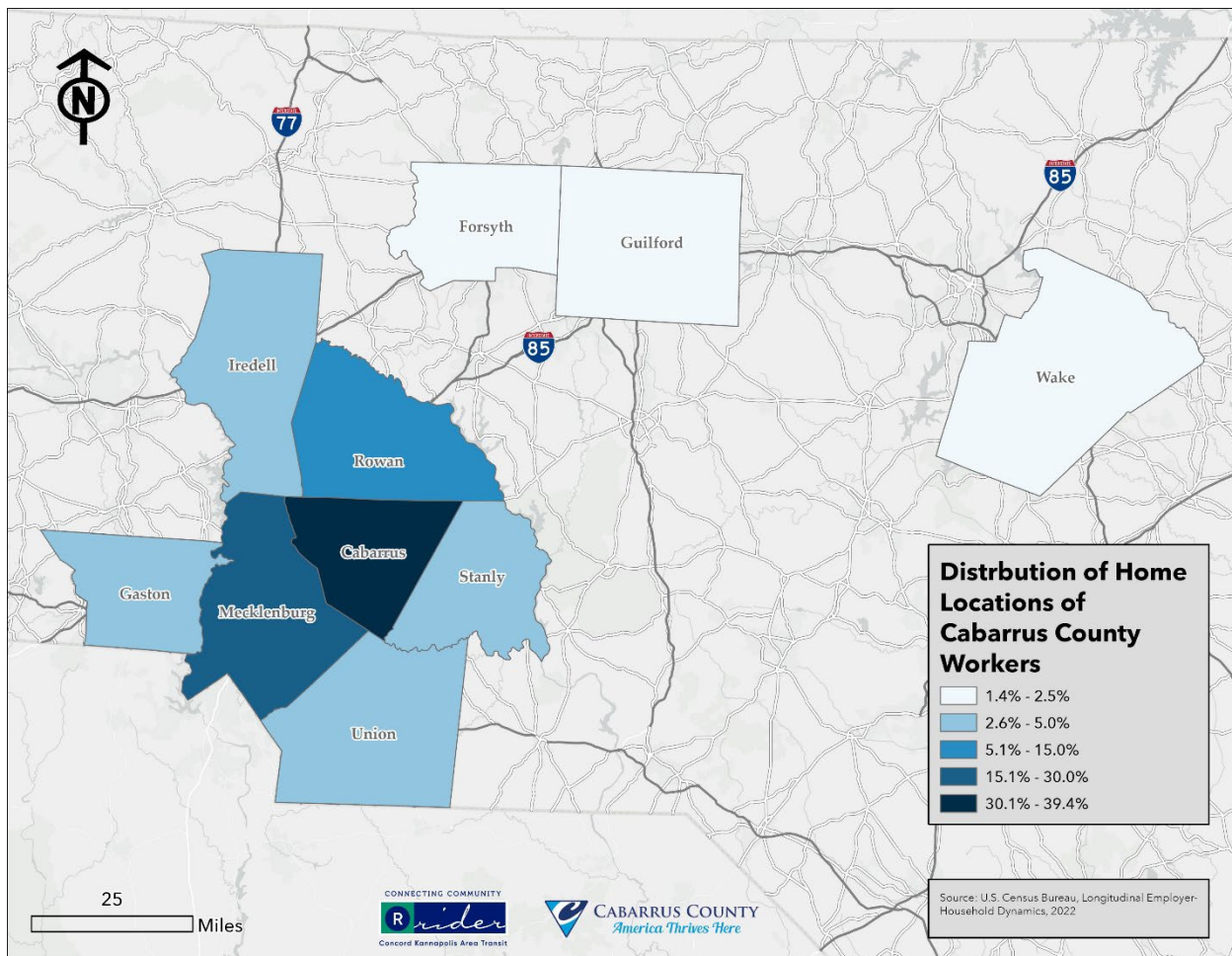
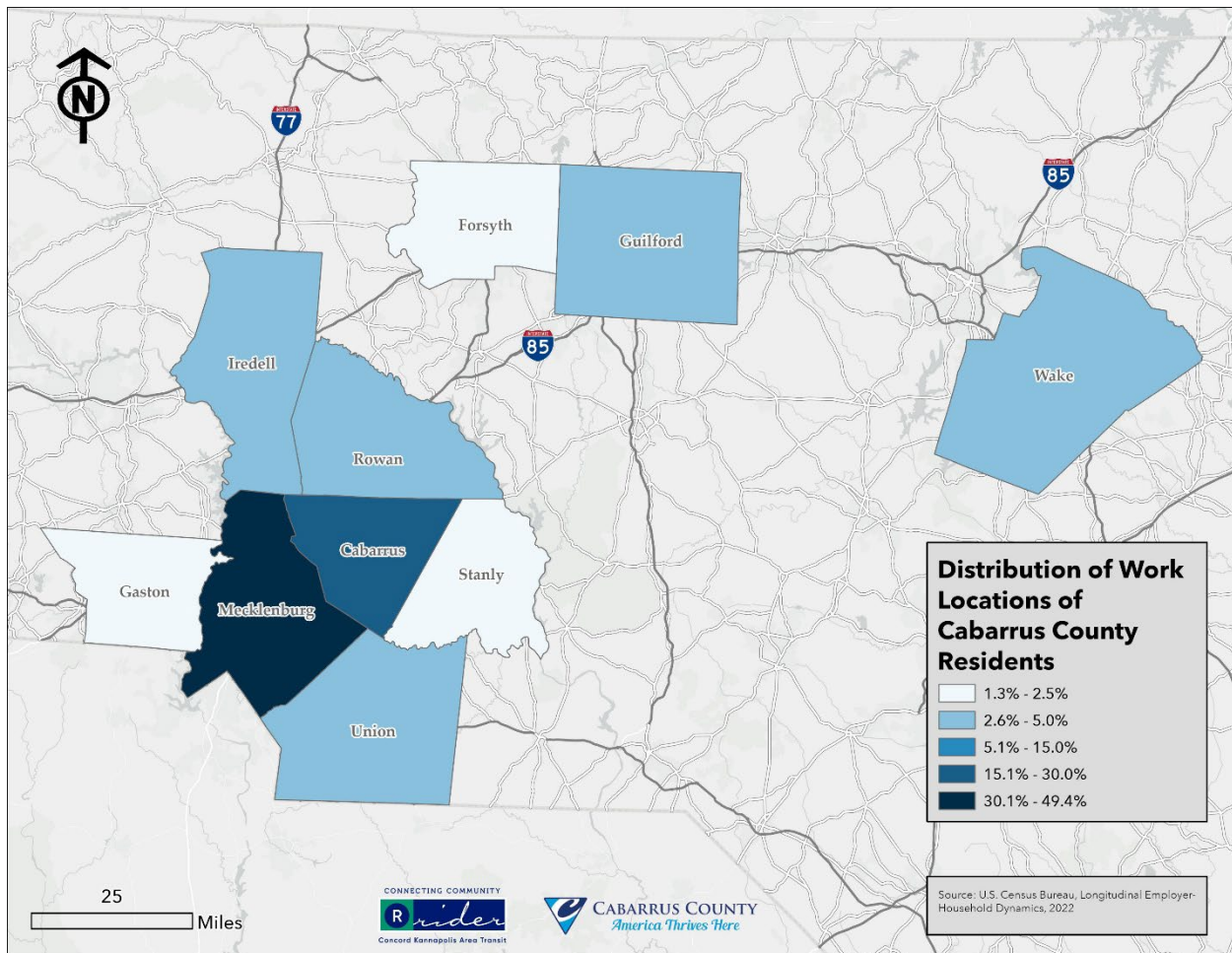


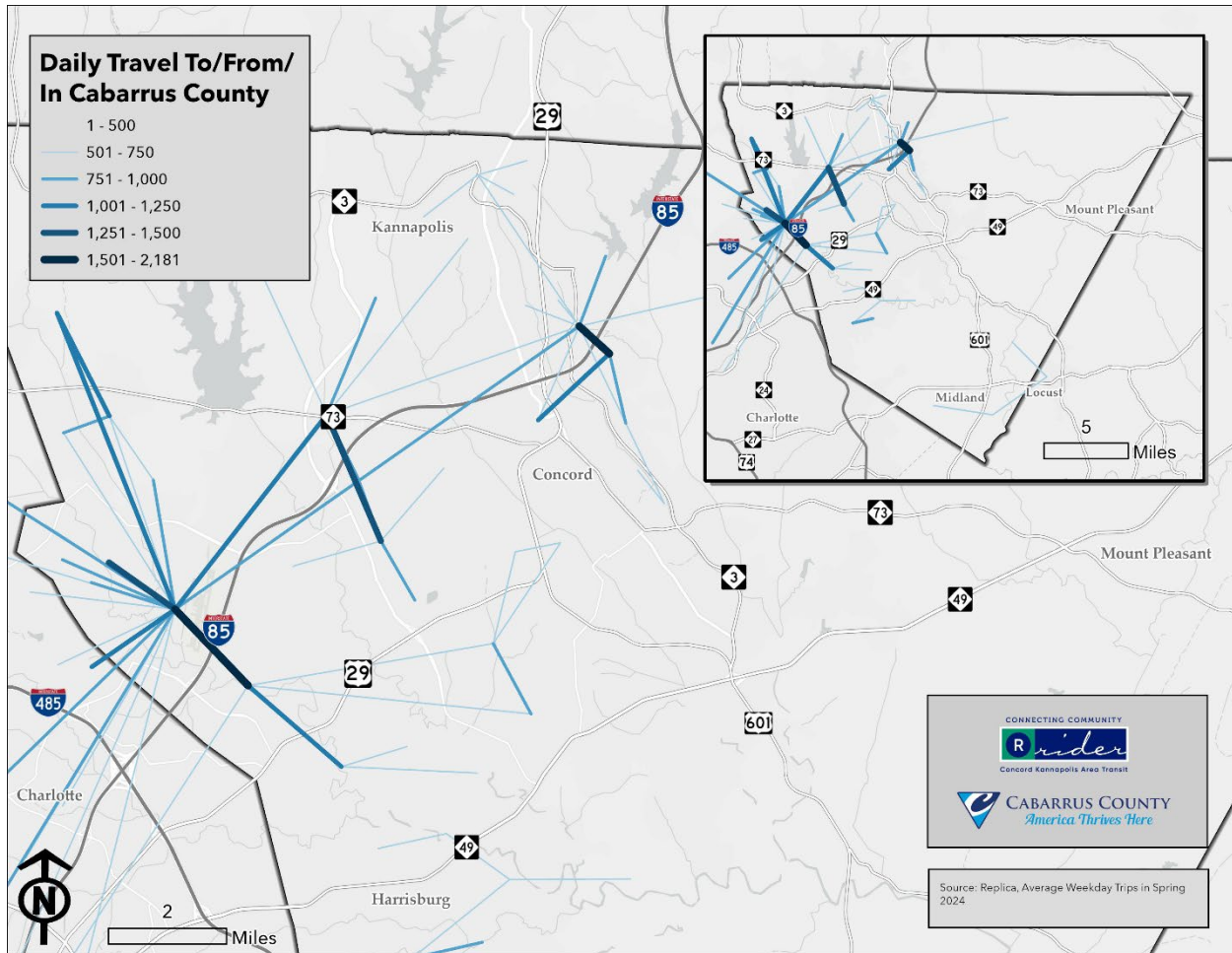
FIGURE 3-10: CABARRUS COUNTY COMMUTER OUTFLOW (U.S. CENSUS, 2022)



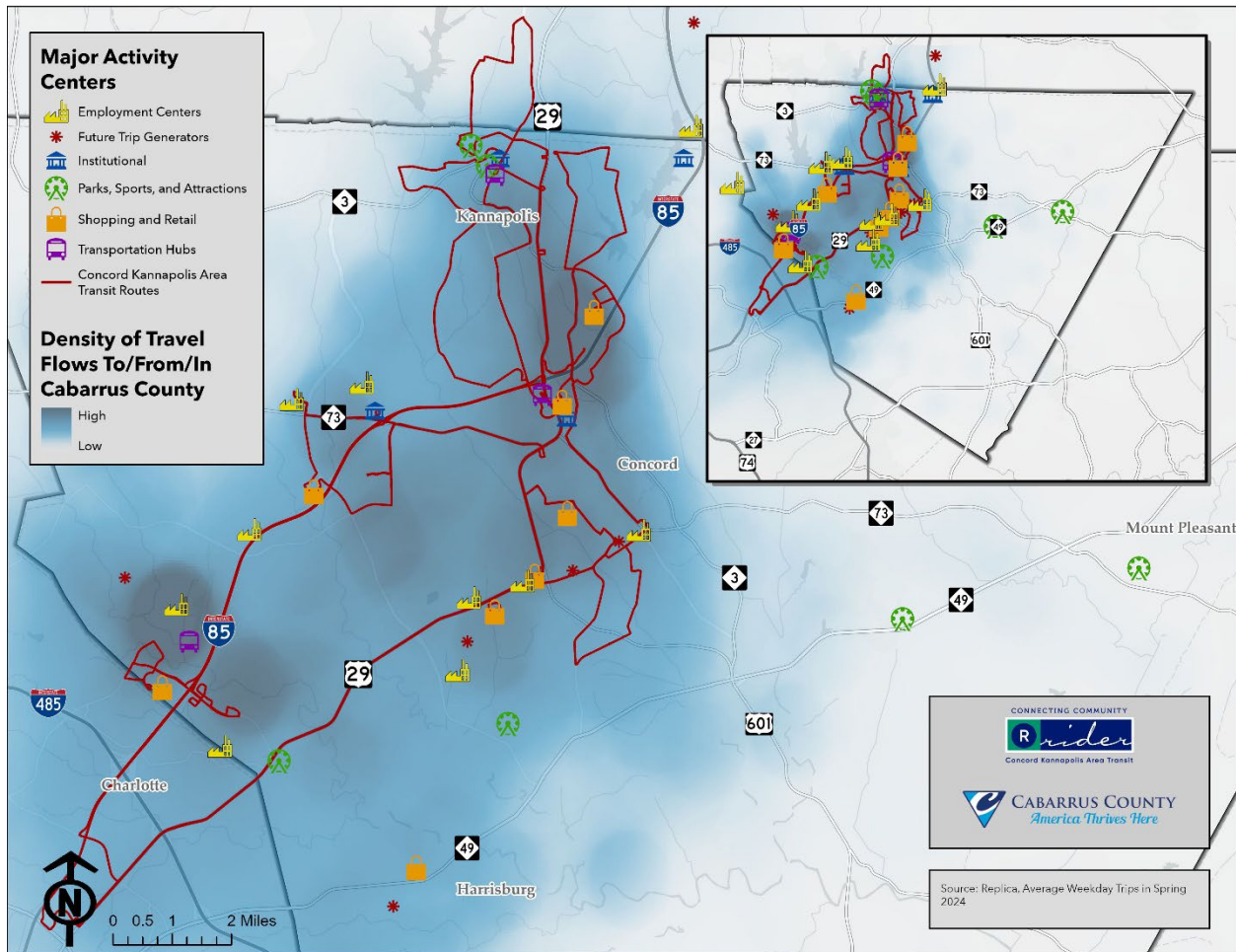
3.1.4 Travel Flow Analysis

Understanding travel flows and patterns is critical for the optimal provision of transit service. Of particular importance are commuting flows within the cities of Concord and Kannapolis, within Cabarrus County, and between Cabarrus and surrounding counties. Map 3-12 illustrates the typical person-trip travel flows to, from, or within Cabarrus County, respectively. Lines on the map represent all trips between a pair of Census block groups. These data are sourced from Replica, a mobility and economic activities data management tool. Replica estimates travel trends based on various data sources, including road traffic, mobile device location data, and financial transactions. These data are compiled and estimated to determine changes in mode and purpose, as well as socioeconomic and travel characteristics. Map 3-13 shows the density of travel flows seen in Map 3-12, which depicts the number of daily person trips between block groups, grouped at the block groups' centroids.

MAP 3-12: DAILY TRAVEL TO, FROM, AND WITHIN CABARRUS COUNTY (REPLICA, 2024)



MAP 3-13: DENSITY OF DAILY TRAVEL TO, FROM, AND WITHIN CABARRUS COUNTY (REPLICA, 2024)



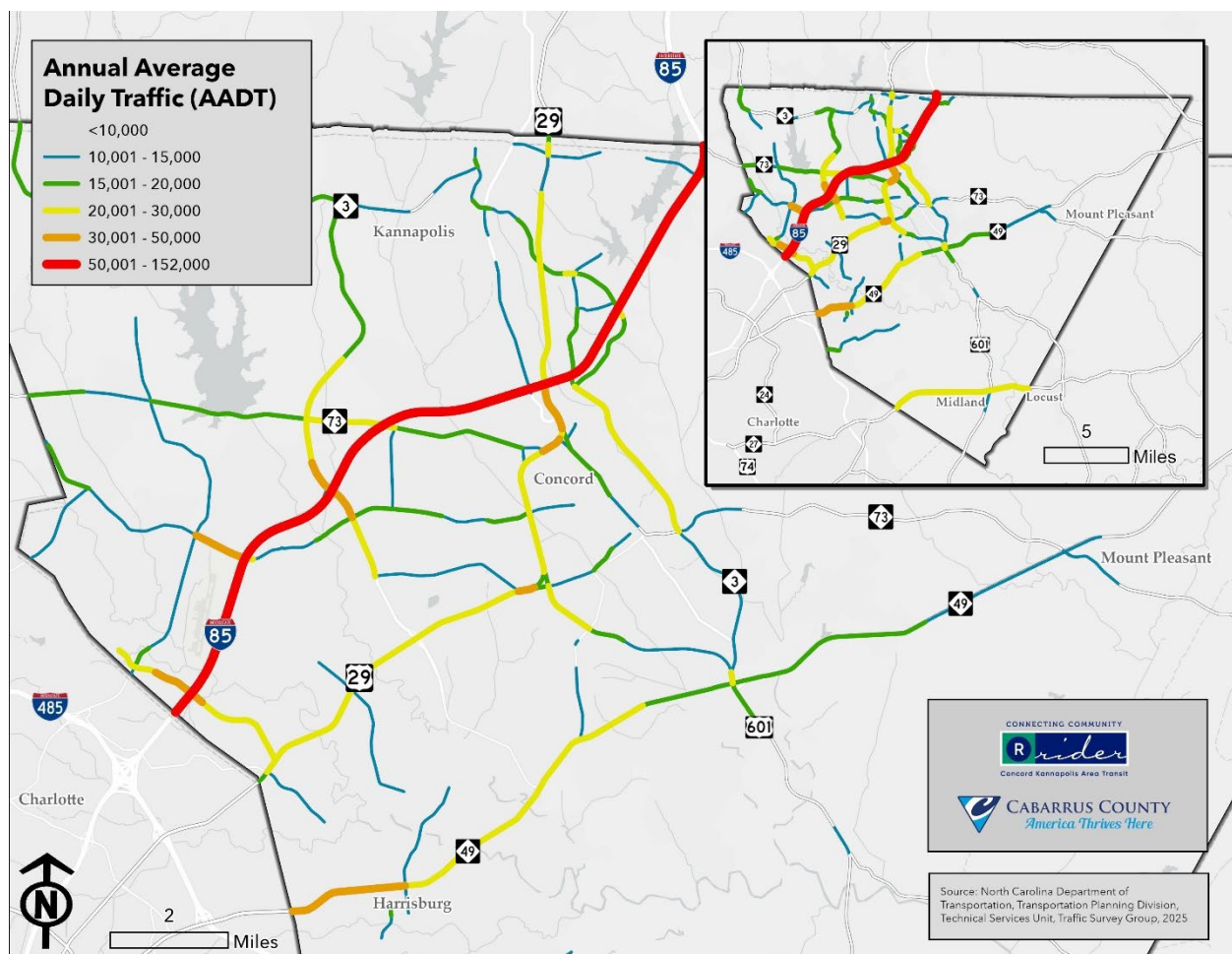
Replica's estimates of travel flow highlight Concord Mills' status as the flagship trip generator in Cabarrus County, attracting significant levels of travel from the immediate vicinity and substantial travel from Concord, Kannapolis, Harrisburg, unincorporated areas of Cabarrus County, and northeastern Mecklenburg County. In Concord and Kannapolis, the highest levels of travel occur in and around newly incorporated areas and Interstate 85, rather than in the city centers. These estimates reflect development patterns occurring in the previously undeveloped area between Charlotte and the cities of western Cabarrus County, as well as the tendency to locate major trip generators adjacent to major highways.

3.1.5 Traffic Conditions

Traffic conditions in a transit service's operating environment are an additional indicator of the feasibility of the provision of those services. Traffic volume and level of service data curated by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) can help determine the suitability of a given roadway to accommodate transit service throughout the day.

Map 3-14 presents traffic volumes on major roads in Cabarrus County as Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). Traffic volume can potentially indicate areas of high transportation activity and demand. The area's most significant traffic volumes are typically experienced on state-owned major arterial roads. By far, the busiest road is Interstate 85. Its southernmost segment in Cabarrus County carries an average of 152,000 vehicles per day. Other road segments that currently carry a sizable number of vehicles include Concord Parkway between Interstate 85 and Davidson Highway, Liles and Kannapolis Parkways near the Interstate 85 interchange, Poplar Tent Road between Interstate 85 and Derita Road, and Concord Mills and Bruton Smith Boulevards between Thunder Road and Weddington Road.

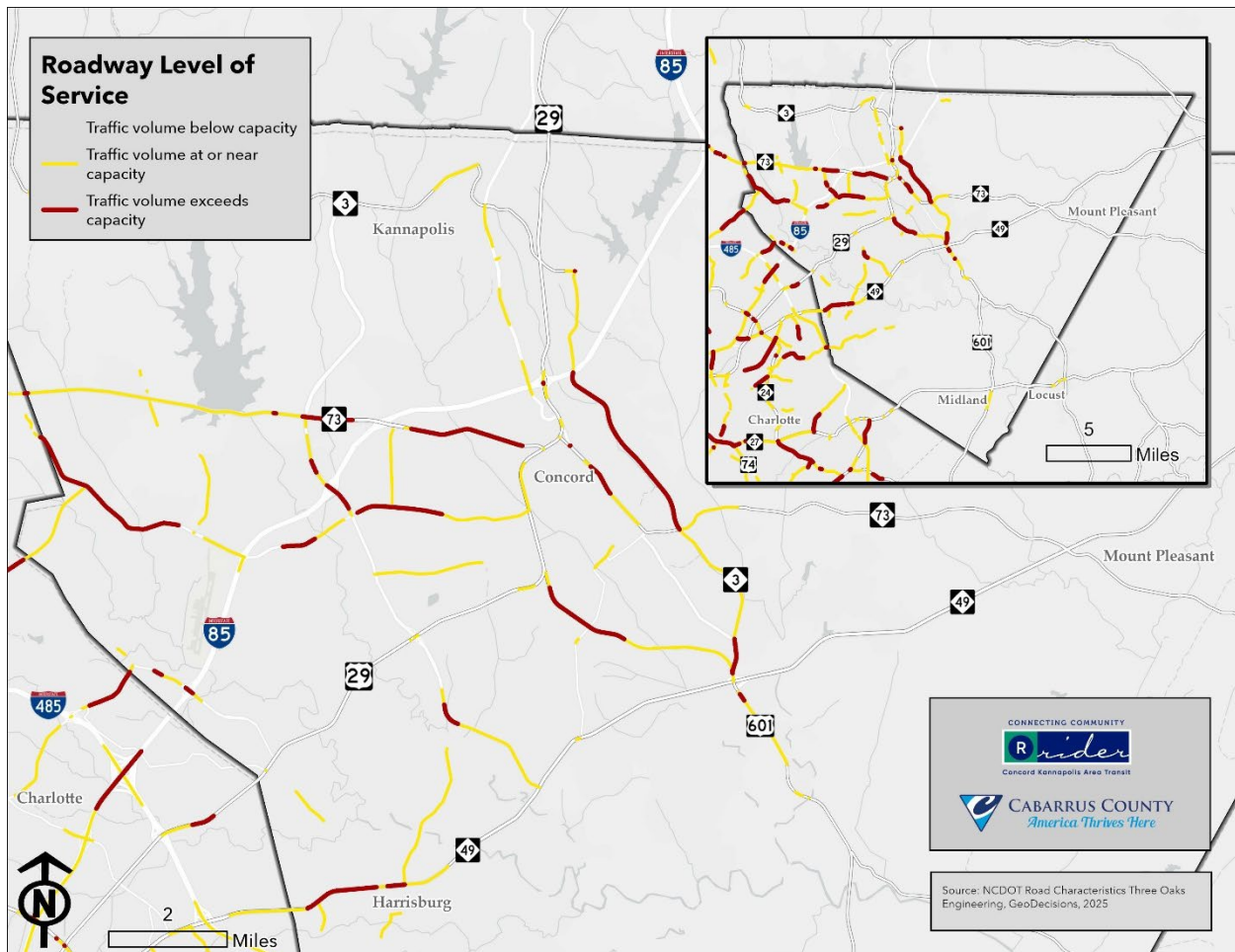
MAP 3-14: ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)



In addition to overall traffic volume, roadway level of service is another important traffic characteristic to consider. Operating transit service in rights-of-way shared with other vehicular traffic can be inefficient if traffic congestion extends transit runtimes and reduces on-time performance. Level of service measures a given road segment's traffic volume relative to its capacity. Some roads in Cabarrus County will experience or already experience traffic volumes that exceed capacity. At peak times, this results in traffic congestion and increased travel times. Depicted in Map 3-15, notable level of service

failures currently occur on Branchview Drive between Interstate 85 and Corban Avenue, State Highway 49 west of Roberta Road, Coleman Boulevard between Cabarrus Avenue and Zion Church Road, Liles and Kannapolis Parkways near the Interstate 85 interchange, and multiple segments of Poplar Tent Road and Davidson Highway. Rider Transit's Yellow route currently operates along Davidson Highway.

MAP 3-15: ROADWAY LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)



Around Concord, NC-3 and US 601 have traffic levels pushing the boundary of capacity for their roadways. These boulevards are listed as “in need of improvement” by the Cabarrus-Rowan MPO’s 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update in 2021. Additionally, future areas of interest located in downtown Concord, such as the Rebuilders Campus and Barber-Scotia College, will further impact the levels of service these corridors can provide. In the MPO’s 2055 MTP draft, it highlights several new road and existing road widening projects over the next 30 years. Several projects will alleviate traffic congestion in Concord, particularly Poplar Tent Road. However, some identified road widening projects may not be completed within this plan’s 20-year horizon.



This roadway serves as an important connection to the airport, several commercial and retail shopping centers, educational facilities, and as the access for the upcoming Jim Ramseur Park. This roadway experiences a wide range of traffic volumes throughout different corridors and has reached or exceeded its roadway capacity in several segments. Cabarrus-Rowan MPO's 2055 MTP draft programs road widening projects for Poplar Tent Road, including bike lanes and sidewalks, to promote a more multimodal community and help address the transportation needs and constraints of residents.

Table 3-5 lists all Cabarrus County road improvements slated for inclusion in the 2055 MTP. Upon completion of these improvements, these facilities may be better suited to accommodate transit service if traffic congestion is reduced and multimodal transportation is accommodated.

TABLE 3-5: CABARRUS-ROWAN MPO 2055 MTP DRAFT ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Year	Type	Facility	From	To	Lanes	Description
2025	Widening	NC-3	Kannapolis Pkwy	Loop Road	2 to 4	Improve access to downtown Kannapolis
	New	Rodgers Lake Road				Railroad grade separation
		NC-3 at US 29/601				Intersection improvement
		Harris Road at Poplar Tent Road				Intersection improvement
2035	Widening	Odell School Road	Concord Mills	I-485	2 to 6	Median divided
		Poplar Tent Road	Derita Road	George Liles Pkwy	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
	New	US 29	Rock Hill Church Road	Union Cemetery Road		Realign Union Cemetery to int of US 29/Rock Hill Church Road
		22 nd Street	Airport Road	US 29	2 lanes	Railroad grade separation
2045	Widening	NC-3	Dale Earnhardt Road	NC-73	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
		NC-3	NC-73	US 601	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
		NC-73	US 29	I-85	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
		NC-73	I-85	Poplar Tent Road	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
		Poplar Tent Road	George Liles Parkway	US 29	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
		Poplar Tent Road	NC-73	Derita Road	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
2050	Widening	US 601	NC-3	Flowes Store Road	2 to 4	Median divided w/ sidewalks and bike lanes
		George Liles Pkwy	NC-49	Roberta Road	2 to 4	Widen with part on new location

3.2 Latent Demand Analysis

In the transit planning process, it is important to ensure that the resulting future vision for transit accommodates areas within the operating environment that are not served (or are underserved) yet have latent ridership demand for transit services. This section presents a latent demand analysis, which was undertaken to address the possibility of unserved or underserved demand. The latent demand analysis utilizes multiple innovative and transit-specific planning and market analysis tools to identify transit-supportive populations and travel markets. These tools include the Transit Orientation Index (TOI), the Density Threshold Assessment (DTA), and an activity center analysis.

3.2.1 Traditional Transit Market Analysis

A traditional transit market refers to population cohorts that historically have demonstrated a higher demand for public transit to fulfill their mobility needs. Traditional transit users typically include older adults, youth and young adults, and individuals who live in low-income households or households with no vehicles.

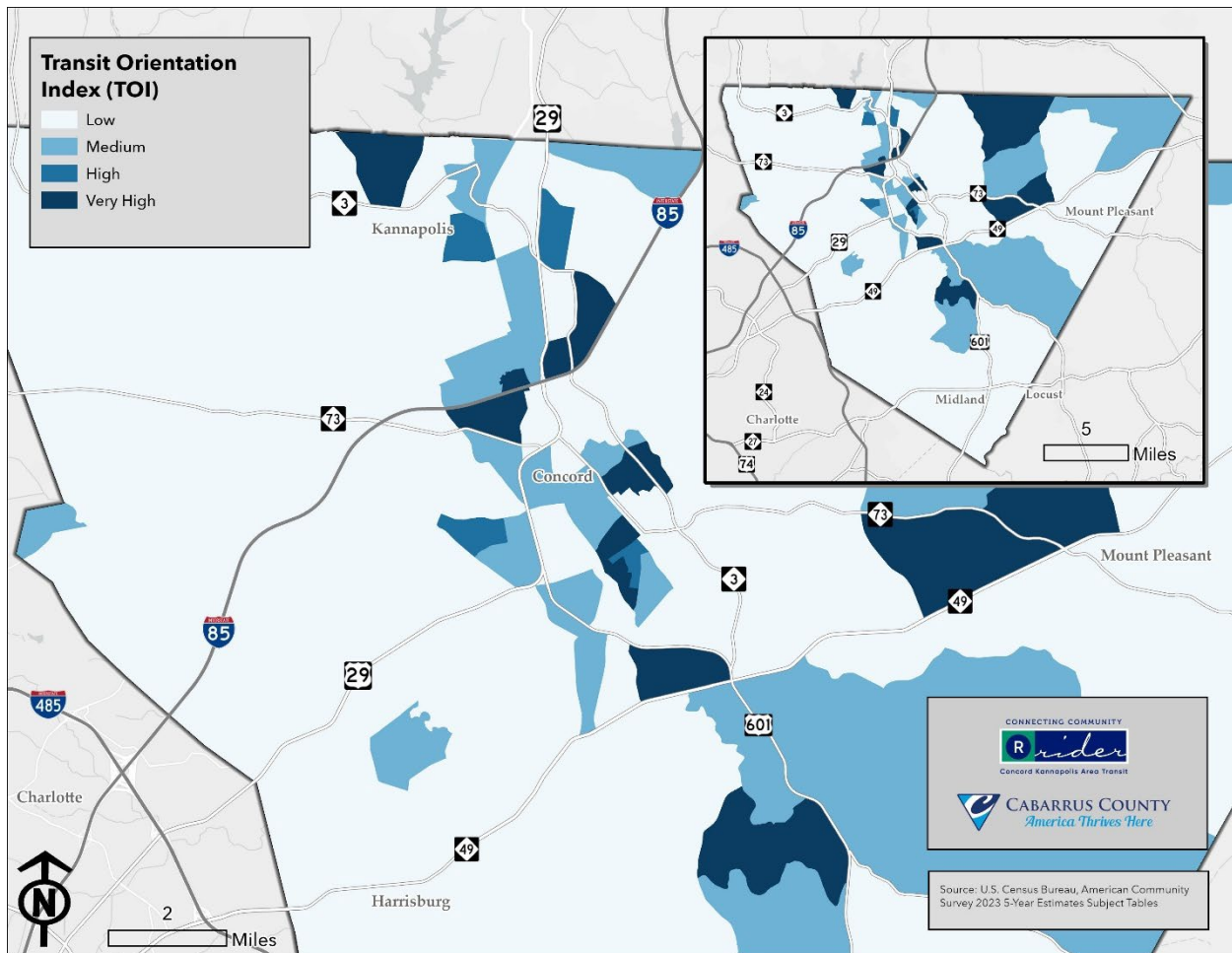
A TOI assessment helps identify areas where a traditional transit market exists. To create the TOI for this analysis, demographic data from the 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates were compiled at the census block group level and categorized according to each block group's relative ability to support transit based on the prevalence of these demographic characteristics. Four socioeconomic and demographic characteristics traditionally associated with the inclination to use transit were used to develop the TOI, including:

- Proportion of population ages 15-24 (young adults)
- Proportion of population age 65 and over (older adults)
- Proportion of population below poverty level (low income)
- Proportion of households with no vehicles (zero-vehicle households)

The TOI categorizes transit propensity by block group as "low," "medium," "high," or "very high." Map 3-16 presents the TOI map for Cabarrus County.



MAP 3-16: TRANSIT ORIENTATION INDEX



In Cabarrus County, areas most likely to benefit from transit services are mostly located in Concord and Kannapolis, as well as an additional block group near Midland. Block groups of medium to high transit propensity are also chiefly located in Concord and Kannapolis, although some are found near Harrisburg and Mount Pleasant.

3.2.2 Discretionary Transit Market Analysis

The discretionary market refers to the potential riders living in higher-density areas served by transit who may choose to use it despite having other mobility options. To spatially represent and analyze the discretionary market, a DTA was conducted for Cabarrus County to identify areas that have transit-supportive residential and employment density levels.

Employment and housing data were retrieved from the US Census Bureau estimates and are mapped to show dwelling units per acre and jobs per acre at the block group level. Three density thresholds were established to determine whether an area has sufficient density to support a level of fixed-route transit operations. These thresholds are detailed in Figure 3-11. The analysis assesses an area's ability to

support a “minimum,” “high,” or “very high” transit service level investment. The results of the Density Threshold Assessment in Cabarrus County are mapped in Map 3-17.

As Cabarrus County is largely suburban and rural in character, very few areas have the job density or housing density alone to support transit service. This suggests that the discretionary market in Cabarrus County is weaker compared to the traditional transit market. However, there are few areas with moderate job density alone to support transit service, including downtown Concord and areas along the Interstate 85 corridor in Concord and Kannapolis.

MAP 3-17: DENSITY THRESHOLD ASSESSMENT

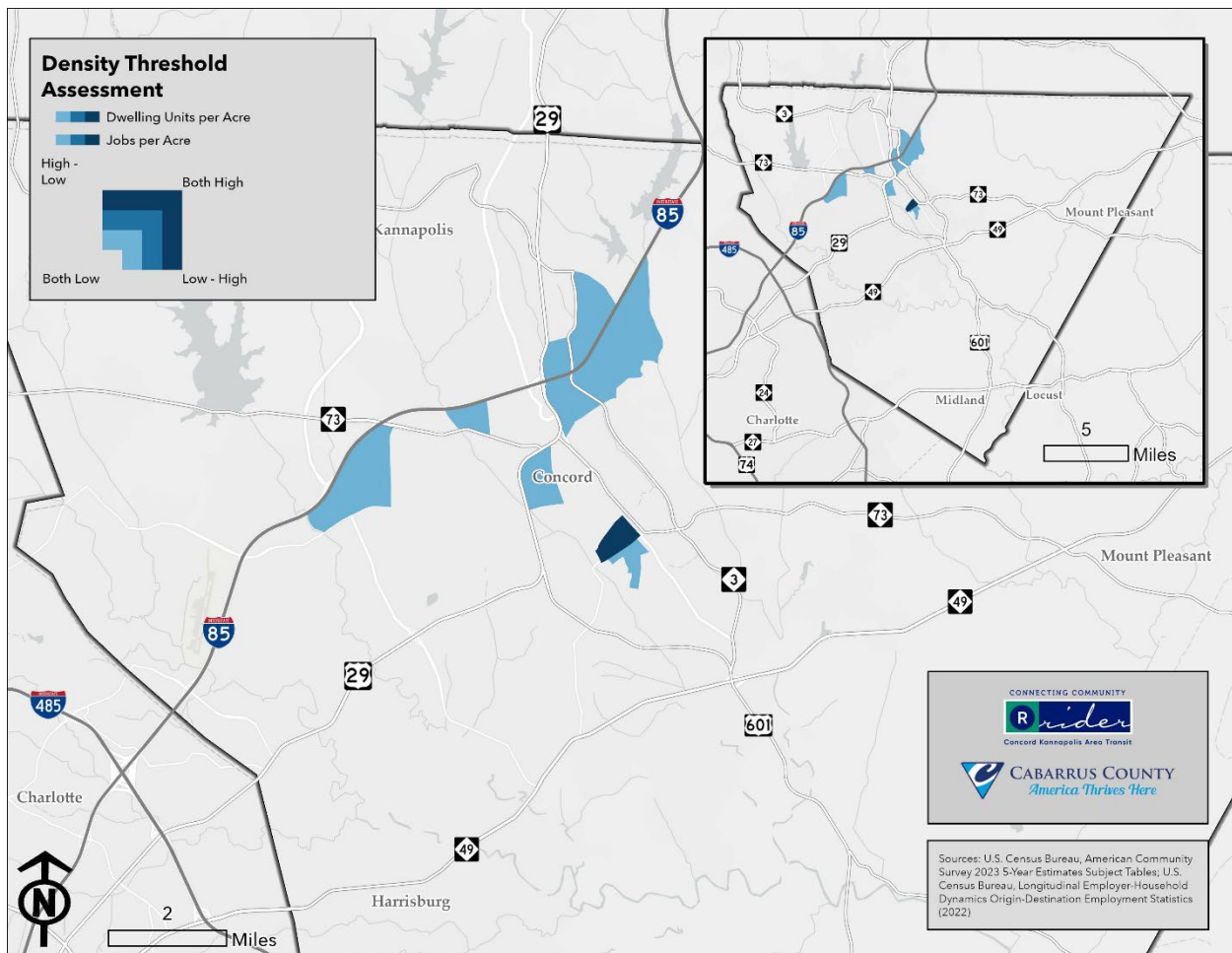
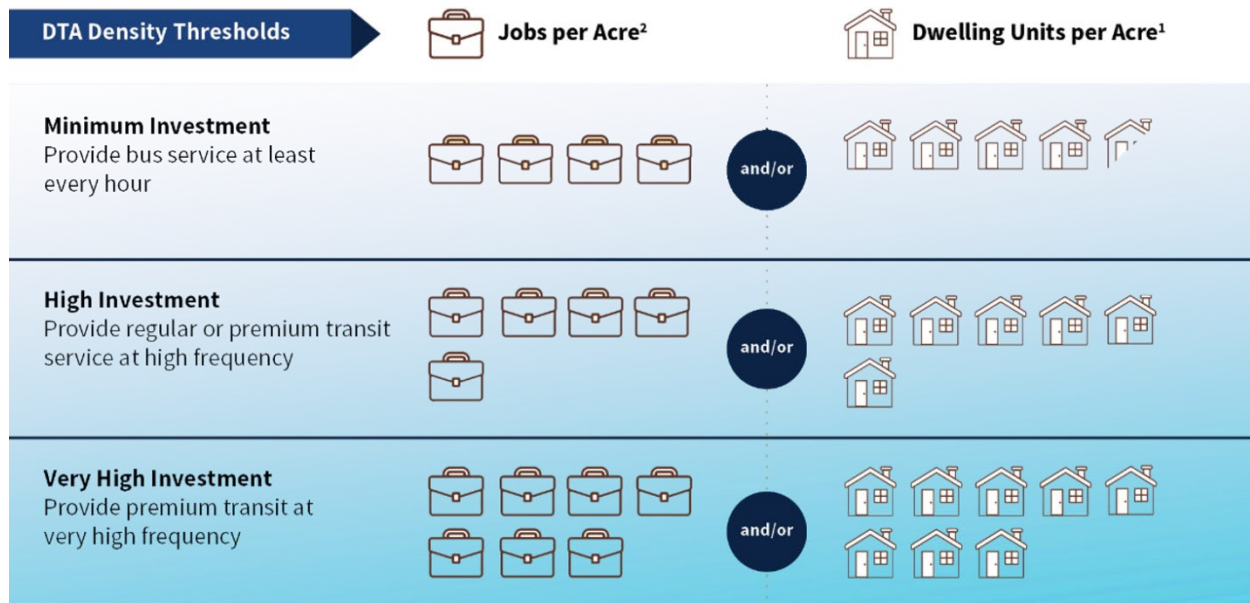


FIGURE 3-11: DTA DENSITY THRESHOLDS



3.2.3 Activity Center Analysis

Activity centers are critical for transit, as they effectively drive one end of most travel flows, including transit trips. An activity center analysis identifies these major trip generators throughout Cabarrus County to determine whether transit is serving key locations for users. Activity centers reviewed include major employment locations and other locations identified as transit generators, such as higher education institutions, health and medical facilities, government services, major shopping destinations, and other attractions and points of interest. The identified major activity centers are depicted in Table 3-10 and Map 3-18 along with future trip generators:

- **Kannapolis Crossing** – Part of the Kannapolis Downtown Revitalization Project, this area recently annexed by the City of Kannapolis in Rowan County off I-85 will feature residential, commercial, industrial, and entertainment uses. As of May 2025, the distribution center has been built but is not currently active. Potential transit services in this area will be somewhat detached from other major activity hub routes.
- **Jim Ramseur Park** – Located in southwestern Cabarrus County off Cox Mill Road, this park will feature several amenities such as pickleball and basketball courts, greenways, a splash pad, playgrounds, an amphitheater, and dog parks. This site is in proximity to Cox Mill Elementary and Cox Mill High School. With only a two-lane road serving several attractions, there is potential for significant peak hour congestion that may cause transit service delays or scheduling unpredictability. Construction began in late Spring 2025 and is scheduled for completion by Summer 2027.
- **Harrisburg Amtrak Station** – This new Amtrak station will be located just off NC-49 in Harrisburg along the NCR and will serve as an additional station for the Carolinian and Piedmont Amtrak lines. This station will help improve the transportation accessibility for Harrisburg residents and

Harrisburg town center, as well as alleviate the increasing railway demand for the growing university areas in Charlotte.

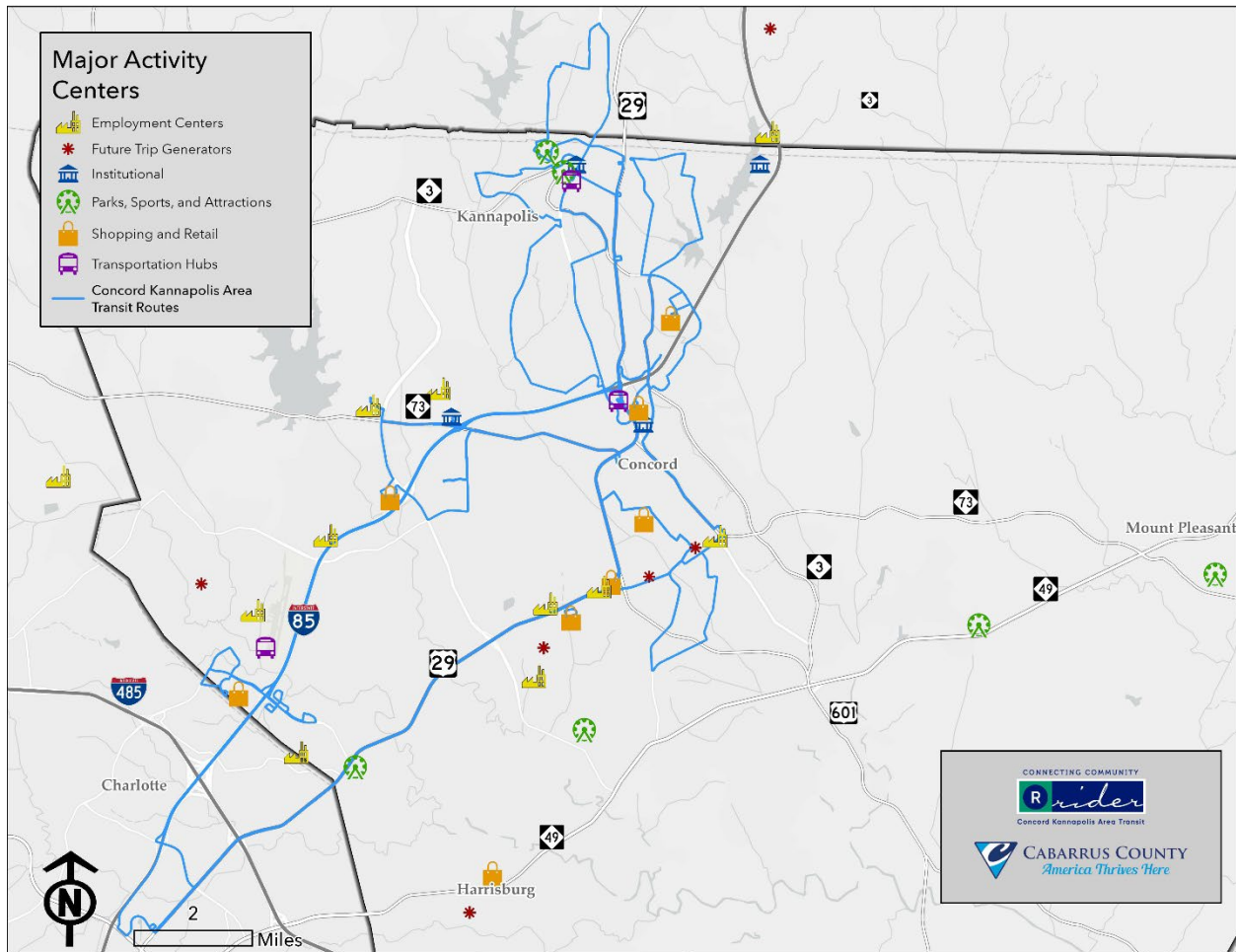
- **Rebuilders Campus at Brown Mill Commons** – This revitalization project is on Cabarrus Avenue and White Street NW within West Concord. It includes construction of a housing campus that will serve 50 households with disabilities or experiencing homelessness, including up to 220 adults and children. Under a 5-year development plan, construction is expected to be completed by Year 3 (2026) and resident enrollment to start by Year 4 (2027). Near multiple existing trip generators, the Rebuilders Campus has access to multiple transit routes, shopping centers, and employment hubs.
- **Barber-Scotia College** – This private Historically Black College (HBCU) in Concord lost its accreditation in 2004 but has been working toward regaining it in recent years. Located in proximity to the denser downtown Concord, students and faculty of the college can easily walk or bike to nearby amenities; however, there are also several areas to park personal vehicles and two transit routes nearby, as well. The college hopes to reinstate its accreditation by 2026.



TABLE 3-6: MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS IN CABARRUS COUNTY

Employment Centers	• Shoe Show Inc • Carvana Concord • Downtown Concord • Davidson Hwy near Kannapolis Pkwy	• Eli Lilly Concord • Westrock Coffee • S&D Coffee • Poplar Tent Rd near I-85 • Derita Road	• Metrolina Greenhouses • Lakeshore Corporate Park • Hendrick Motorsports
Shopping and Retail	• Concord Mills • Harrisburg Town Center • Concord Commons	• Carolina Mall • Afton Ridge Shopping Center • Village Shopping Center	• Gibson Mill Market • Northlite Shopping Center
Parks, Sports, and Attractions	• Charlotte Motor Speedway • Frank Liske Park • Village Park	• Cabarrus Arena & Events Center • Virginia Foil Park	• Great Wolf Lodge Water Park • Atrium Health Ballpark
Transportation Hubs	• Concord-Padgett Regional Airport	• Kannapolis Amtrak Station	• Rider Transit Center
Institutional	• Atrium Health Cabarrus • RCCC South Campus	• Atrium Health Kannapolis • Atrium Health Harrisburg	• North Carolina Research Campus
Future Trip Generators	• Kannapolis Crossing (Overlook 85) • Rebuilders Campus at Brown Mill Commons	• Harrisburg Amtrak Station • Jim Ramseur Park	• Barber-Scotia College • Red Bull Concord

MAP 3-18: MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS IN CABARRUS COUNTY



3.3 Introduction to Existing Services

A detailed assessment of existing transit services is crucial to ensuring they effectively meet the needs of the community. This evaluation focuses on key operational aspects, including service span, frequency, runtimes, governance, and funding. By analyzing these factors, we can determine how well transit services align with demand, identify areas for improvement, and enhance overall efficiency. Understanding governance structures and funding sources is equally important, as they shape the sustainability and expansion of transit operations. This review will provide valuable insights to support data-driven decisions that improve service reliability, accessibility, and long-term viability.

3.3.1 Background and Existing Services

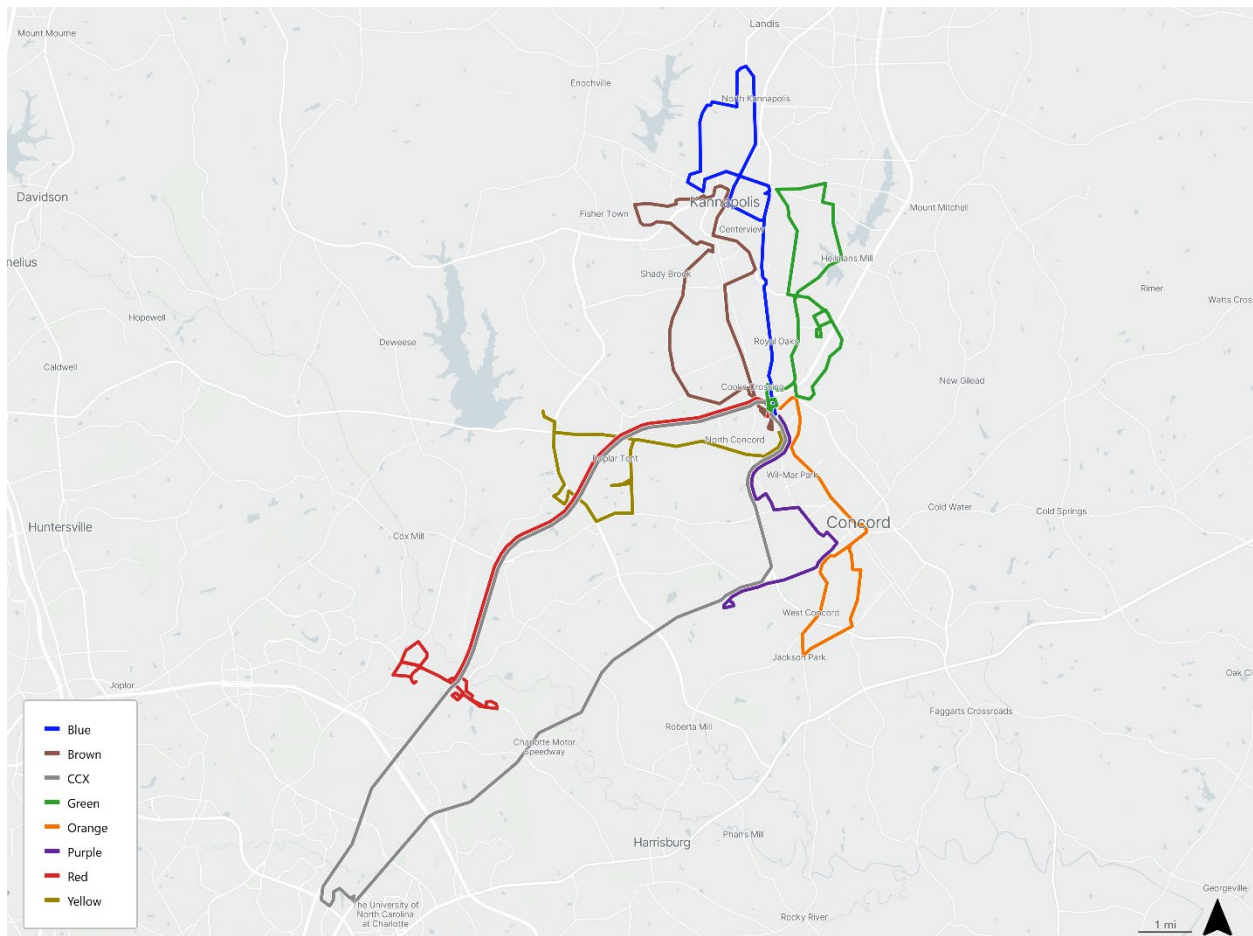
Two primary public transit service providers serve Cabarrus County. Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider Transit) provides fixed route and paratransit services primarily in the cities of Concord and Kannapolis, while Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS) provides demand response service to eligible populations across the entire county.



3.3.2 Concord Kannapolis Area Transit

A joint venture between the cities of Concord and Kannapolis, Rider Transit operates as a department of the City of Concord. Rider Transit operates fixed route service in Concord and Kannapolis, including express service that connects to Charlotte's transit services. The Rider Transit routes are depicted in Map 3-19. Rider Transit also provides the federally mandated demand response paratransit service within ¾ mile of its fixed routes, excluding the Concord Charlotte Express (CCX). Paratransit service is available for individuals eligible under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

MAP 3-19: RIDER TRANSIT SYSTEM MAP



Rider Transit operates eight fixed routes, seven of which serve Concord and/or Kannapolis, and an express route connecting Concord to Charlotte's LYNX light rail. These routes run every 60 minutes, seven days per week. Headways lengthen to 75 minutes in the early afternoon. Weekday service runs from 5:30 AM to 8:25 PM, while weekend service starts later in the morning, operating between 8:30 AM and 8:25 PM. Additional route characteristics are included in Table 3-7.

TABLE 3-7: RIDER TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

Service Characteristics	Weekdays	Weekends
Service Span	5:30 AM - 8:25 PM	8:30 AM - 8:25 PM
Frequency (minutes)	60 to 75	60 to 75
Route runtimes (minutes)	48 to 67	48 to 67
Peak Vehicles	8	8

The Rider Transit fare structure is outlined in Table 3-8. A standard one-way, fixed route trip fare costs \$1.25. Reduced fares are available for persons with disabilities, senior citizens 65 and older, Medicare cardholders, and military veterans. In addition to the standard one-way fare, Rider Transit offers day, week, month, and 10-trip passes. ADA paratransit fares are \$2.00 per one-way trip.

TABLE 3-8: RIDER TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE FARE STRUCTURE

Fare Category	Standard Fare	Reduced Fare
Single Trip	\$1.25	\$0.60
Transfer Pass	\$0.00	\$0.00
1-Day Pass	\$4.00	\$2.00
10-Trip Pass	\$10.00	\$5.00
7-Day Pass	\$12.00	\$6.00
31-Day Pass	\$40.00	\$20.00

3.3.3 Cabarrus County Transportation Services

A department of Cabarrus County, CCTS provides fare-free transportation throughout Cabarrus County for those who are eligible to ride through one of the following programs: Work First Family Assistance program, Medicaid, Adult and Family Services, Adult and Aging Services, and the Rural General Purpose program. Rider Transits who are eligible to use CCTS ride fare free, except Rural General Purpose riders, who can purchase a ticket book.

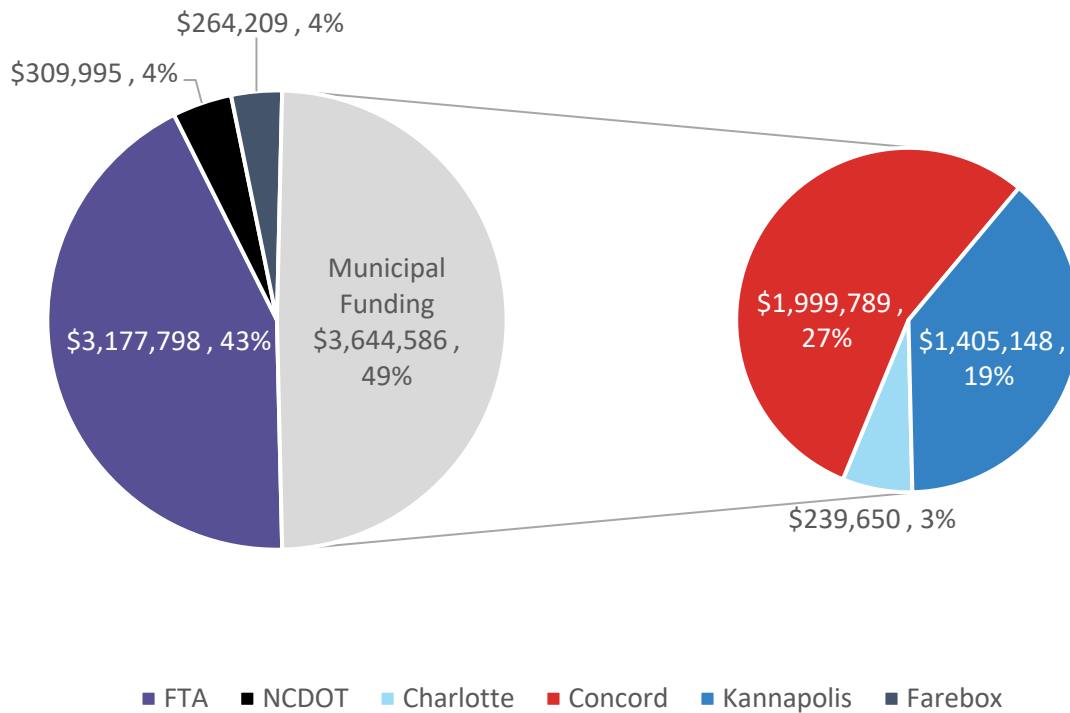
3.3.4 Governance & Funding

CCTS generates revenue from several sources of funds. The largest source is Medicaid, which provides CCTS with \$1 million to fund transportation services for those enrolled in Medicaid. The next largest source of funds is awarded by the Federal Transit Administration's 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Areas. Other significant funding sources include the Home and Community Care Block Grant, grants from the Rural Operating Assistance Program, and funding from the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Operating expenses comprise nearly three quarters of CCTS' total expenses. Most of this spending covers employee wages and benefits. The local match for 5311 capital funds constitutes most of the remaining quarter of spending. Other smaller expenses include minor technological equipment and the local match for Medicaid funding.

Rider Transit generates four main types of revenue: federal funding, state funding, local funding, and farebox. As of FY 25-26, local support and matching from Concord, Kannapolis, and Charlotte comprise nearly half of all generated revenue. Federal funding is awarded in the form of grants that partially cover capital and operations expenses. These grants come from programs like the State Maintenance Assistance Program, Section 5307, and Section 5339 for buses and bus facilities. These all add up to a total revenue of \$7,396,588 for FY 25-26 and is broken down in Figure 3-12.

FIGURE 3-12: RIDER TRANSIT'S FUNDING SOURCES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026



Rider Transit expends funds mostly on operations, including employee wages and benefits, maintenance, and supplies. Capital expenses comprise about a third of total expenses, which fund the purchase of vehicles, construction of facilities, and other infrastructure. Marketing and planning account for a small portion of all spending.

3.3.5 Other Transit Providers

In addition to Rider Transit's CCX route, which travels to Charlotte, Cabarrus County is regionally connected via other transit providers:

- Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) connects to Rider Transit's Red route at Concord Mills and Rider Transit's CCX route at the JW Clay Station.
- Amtrak connects the Cabarrus County region with multiple destinations in North Carolina and along the East Coast. There are four northbound and four southbound trains that stop at the Kannapolis Train Station daily. The train routes serving the station include the Piedmont service between Charlotte and Raleigh as well as the Carolinian, which operates between Charlotte and New York. Rider Transit and CCTS provide transit service from the station.



- Rider Transit partners with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Rail Division to offer a transit pass to provide first-last mile connectivity from the Kannapolis Train Station. The pass allows train passengers to connect to the Rider Transit bus service free of charge from the train station.
- The City of Kannapolis operates the West Avenue Express Shuttle, a free seasonal service that connects destinations in downtown Kannapolis on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings.
- There are several private taxi companies in Cabarrus County, including Ace Taxi, Concord Taxi, Knox Taxi Service, On Time Taxi, and Yellow Cab.
- Rideshare companies Lyft and Uber operate throughout Cabarrus County and the surrounding region.

3.4 Evaluation of Existing Services

The existing transit services were evaluated to help identify where fixed routes, demand response, and paratransit services are robust relative to mobility needs and where service is not. This evaluation analyzes historical and current data from Rider Transit and CCTS across all service types.

3.4.1 Fixed-Route Ridership by Service Type

Fixed-route ridership remained strong from 2017 to 2019, peaking at 423,363 passenger trips in 2019. The onset of the pandemic in 2020 led to a steep decline in usage, with ridership dropping to 279,229 trips. Since that low point, services have experienced a steady rebound, reaching 394,313 trips in 2024, which represents about 93% of pre-pandemic levels. This gradual recovery suggests that fixed route transit is regaining its role as a dependable and utilized mobility option in the region.

Paratransit service, in contrast, has shown generally grown over the same period. Fixed-route ridership increased from 10,187 trips in 2017 to 19,907 trips in 2023, with a slight dip to 18,247 trips in 2024. This near doubling of paratransit demand over seven years reflects both changing mobility needs and an increasing reliance on specialized services for individuals who may not have access to fixed route options.

FIGURE 3-13: RIDER TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE RIDERSHIP (2017-2024)

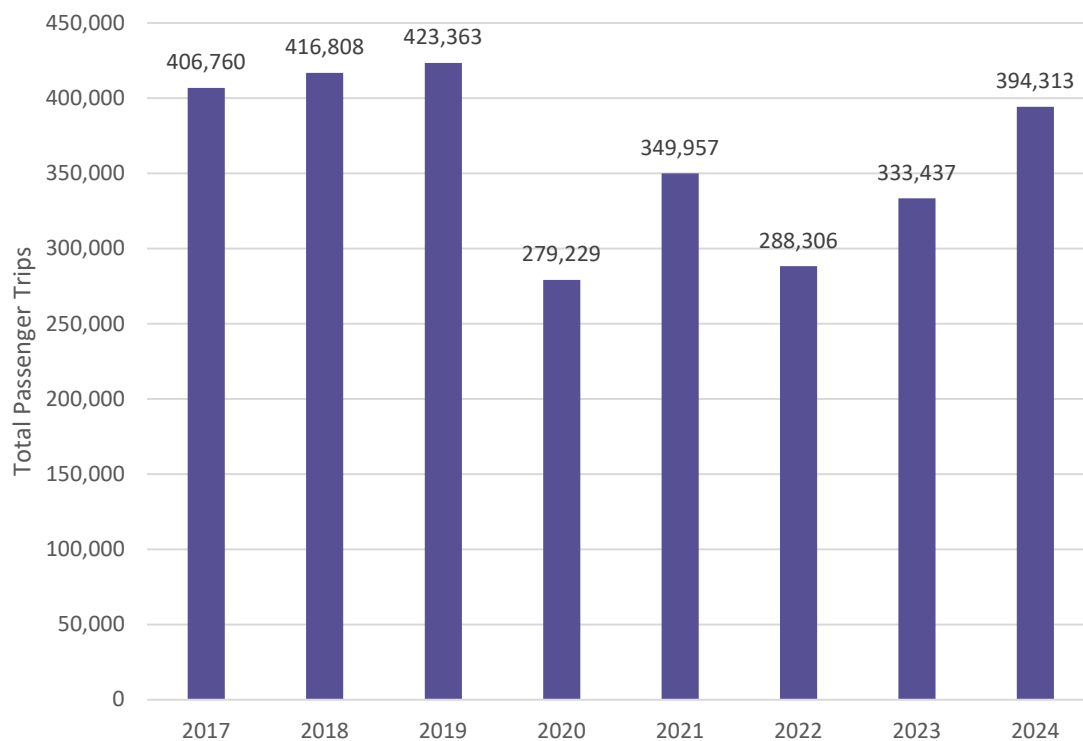
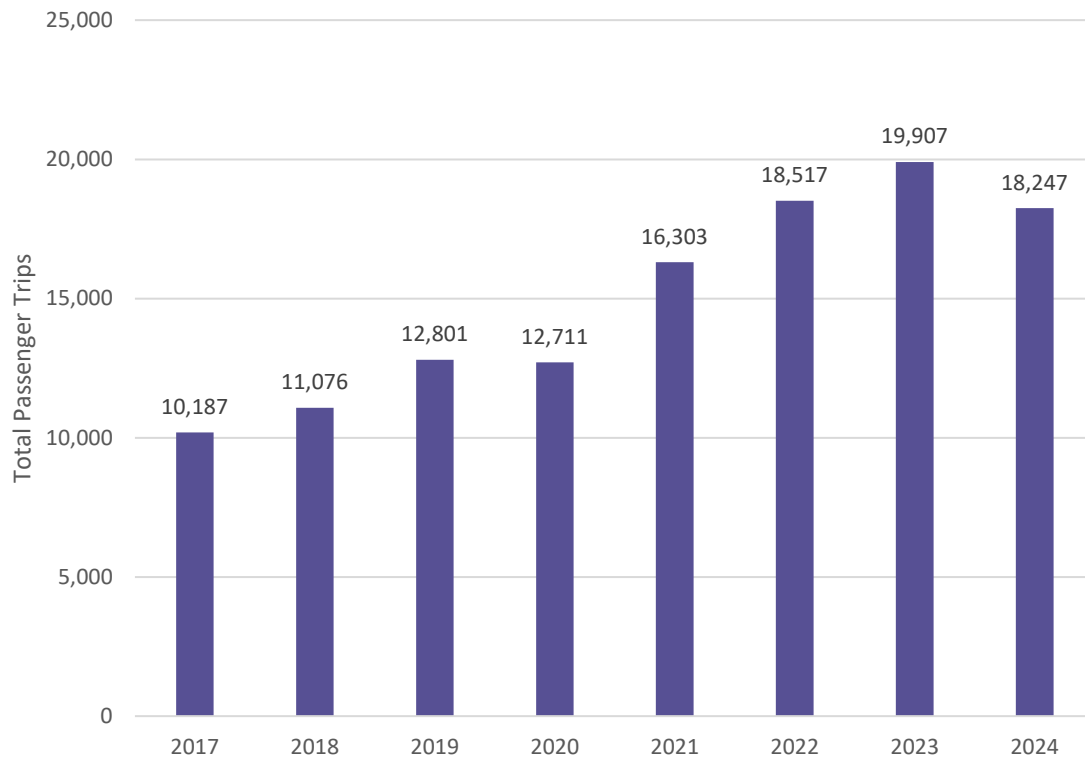
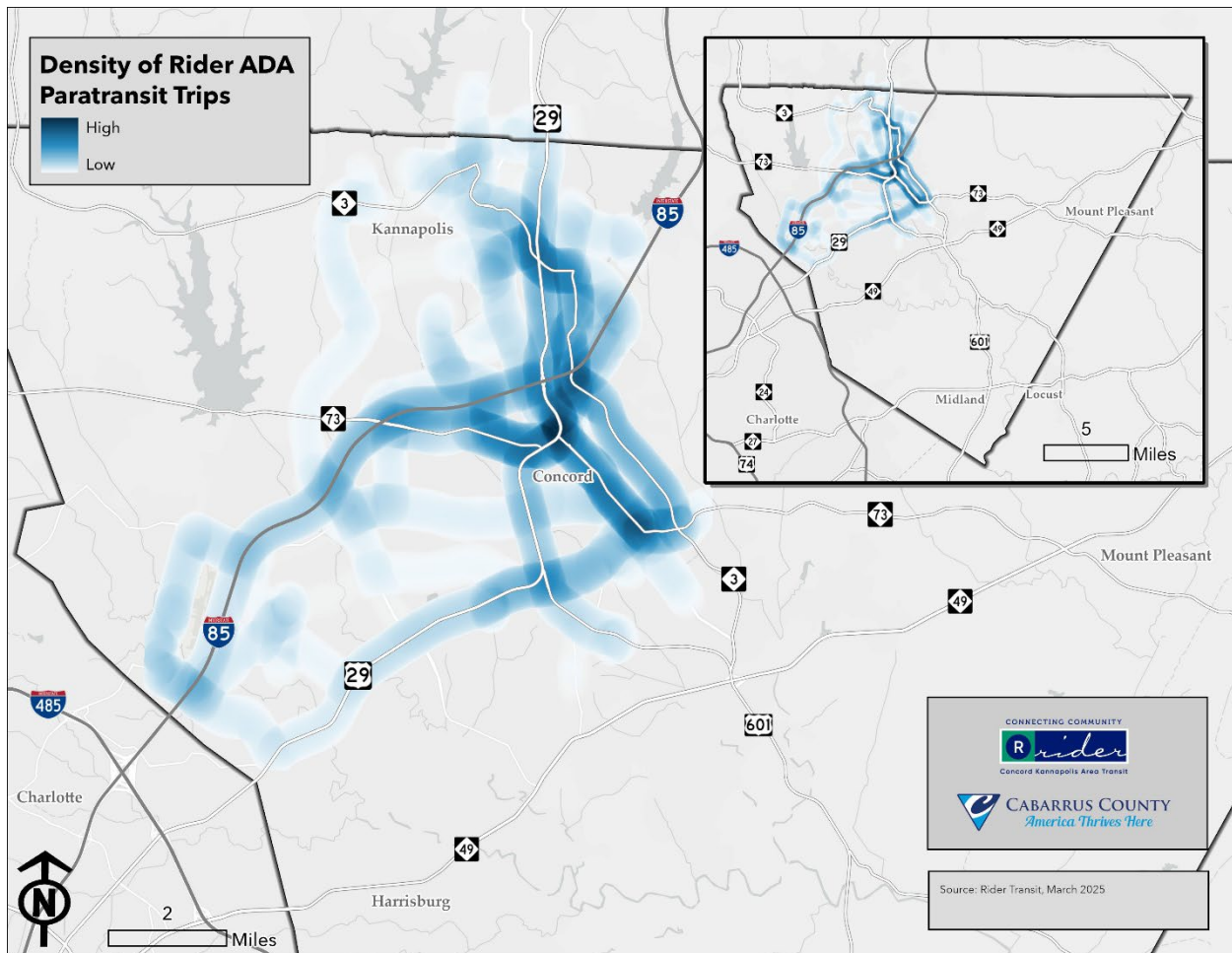


FIGURE 3-14: RIDER TRANSIT PARATRANSIT RIDERSHIP (2017-2024)



Map 3-20 dives deeper into understanding ADA paratransit ridership, looking at the origins and destinations of all trips taken in March 2025. The map portrays the density of paratransit trips taken that month, revealing where most of those trips occur. Most paratransit trips travel along major corridors including Interstate 85, US 29, and Branchview Drive. The darkest blue areas on the map, near Rider Transit Center and near Downtown Concord, see the highest paratransit activity in the country.

MAP 3-20: DENSITY OF RIDER TRANSIT ADA PARATRANSIT TRIPS (MARCH 2025)



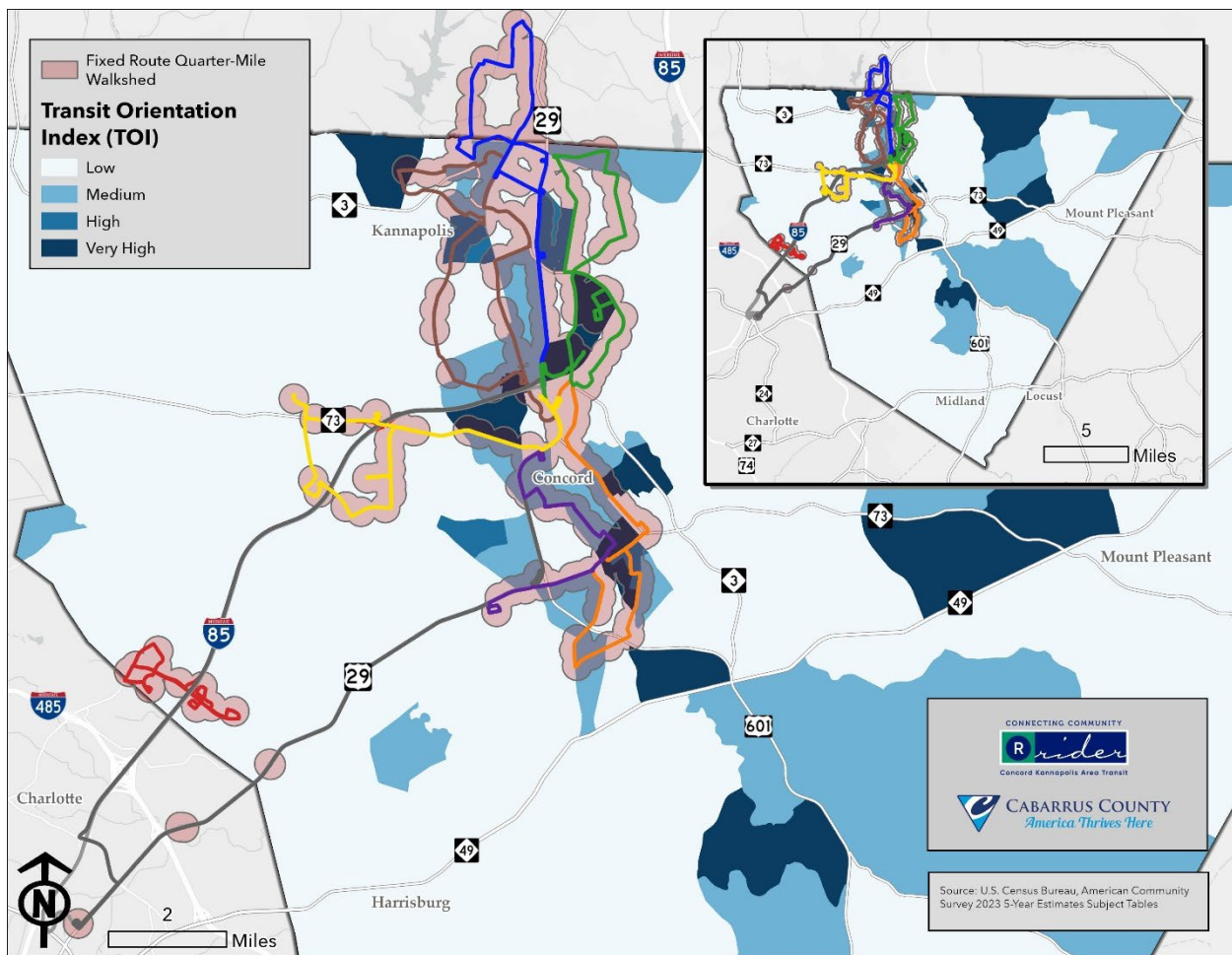
3.4.2 Transit Gap Analysis

The gap analysis is an evaluation process that compares existing service coverage to areas of potential need using the TOI analysis results for Cabarrus County. This approach assesses the performance of public transit in meeting the needs of the populations within a service area that are most inclined to use transit.

The analysis aims to identify geographical gaps in the public transit service coverage where travel needs are high, but services are non-existent or insufficient. This is a twofold process that uses socioeconomic data and geographic analysis. The first step determines where pockets of high demand for transit exist within the service area, considering TOI factors that include young adult populations, older adult populations, households in poverty, and zero-vehicle households. The second step uses geographic analyses to determine the extent of each route's service reach by using buffer tools. Ultimately, the two outputs are overlaid with one another to identify general gaps in transit in Cabarrus County, and more specifically, high priority TOI areas that are served, unserved, or underserved. Note that areas beyond the buffered area along the route are considered to be unserved for the purpose of the gap analysis.

As shown in Map 3-21, there are several small pockets in and around Concord and Kannapolis where no fixed route service exists yet there are populations who might need transit. These gaps on the map are symbolized as polygons with different shades of blue, which represent the intersection of medium/high/very high TOI scores and areas outside the bus stop quarter mile range. These areas are mostly located in Central Kannapolis and near Concord Parkway. Since these areas are not located in the urban core of Cabarrus County, their lower densities and less-commercial land uses explain why they are currently not served by fixed route transit.

MAP 3-21: RIDER TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE GAP ANALYSIS



3.4.3 Route and Stop-level Ridership

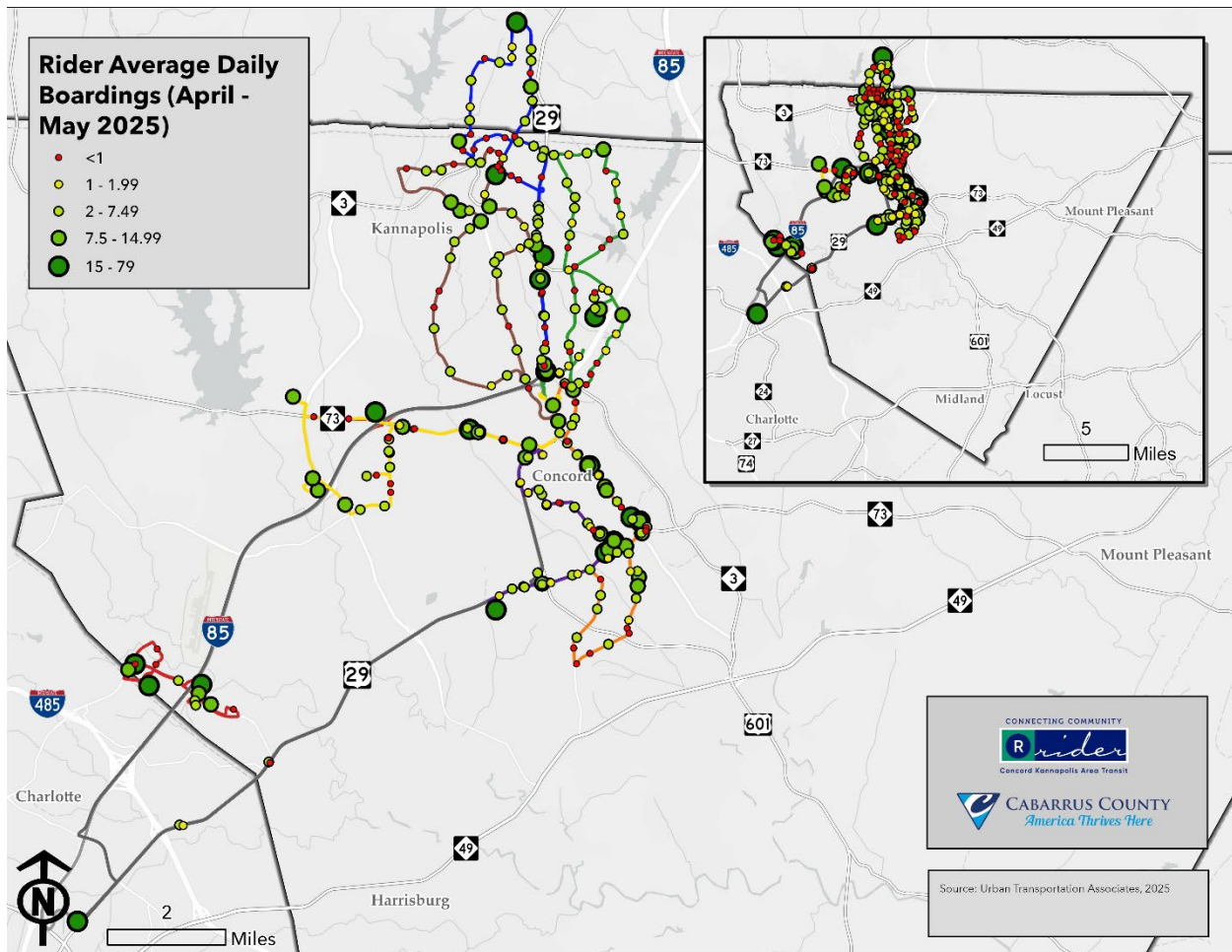
Examining fixed route usage at a finer detail stop-level ridership reveals which locations are traveled to and from via transit more than others, as seen in Map 3-22. This data may suggest the location of inefficient bus stops and route segments that could be eliminated, refigured, or served by a mode other than fixed route.

The Rider Transit fixed route system has about half a dozen bus stops that experience a significantly higher ridership than the rest. These stops are typically situated at Cabarrus County's major activity centers. These very high ridership stops are located at:

- Rider Transit Center
- JW Clay Station (CATS bus and light rail)
- Concord Mills
- Walmart – Concord Commons
- Walmart – Kannapolis Supercenter
- Cabarrus County Human Services Center

Other bus stops with moderate ridership levels are located near the urban centers of Concord and Kannapolis, in addition to a bus stop at the Amazon Fulfillment Center near Kannapolis Parkway.

MAP 3-22: RIDER TRANSIT AVERAGE DAILY BOARDINGS IN APRIL AND MAY 2025



In contrast to heavily frequented bus stops, Map 3-22 also shows the bus stops that saw on average less than one (red) and one to two (yellow) average daily boardings in April and May 2025. Approximately 40 percent of bus stops in Rider Transit's fixed route system averaged fewer than two daily boardings during this period. Although each route serves low-boarding stops, the largest number of low-boarding stops can be found in Kannapolis along the Brown, Green, and Blue routes. These stops with fewer than two average daily boardings and their respective surrounding areas are candidates for elimination or for different transit services.



3.5 Local Plans & Policies Review

Recent local plans and studies that may have a direct bearing on the considerations for County (and regional) public transportation services were collected and reviewed. Key goals of this process are to enhance the project database with additional information that will benefit subsequent analyses and to compile any existing county and/or community goals, objectives, and/or policies relating to transit needs and services in the community. This improves the understating of the policy context in which CCTS and Rider Transit operate, as well as identifies any prior needs or recommendations related to transit. The plans, their summaries, and key takeaways are documented in Table 3-9.

TABLE 3-9: PLAN REVIEW

Plan	Summary	Key Takeaways
2050 Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2022)	The 2050 Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) establishes a set of regional transportation goals and objectives, and recommends strategies and projects that will maintain, manage, and develop Cabarrus and Rowan counties' transportation system through 2050. It uses data and public feedback to develop a long-range multimodal transportation network plan for implementation through 2050.	The plan's chief public transportation goal calls for efforts to improve mobility for urban area residents: - Increasing awareness of existing public transit services and exploring new transit opportunities - Supporting expansion plans for existing transit agencies - Supporting stakeholders in projects that would implement or improve public transit service in urban areas Additionally, the MTP assumes the implementation and schedule of the services outlined in the Cabarrus County Long Range Transportation Master Plan.
Cabarrus-Rowan Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2021)	More actionable than its MTP counterpart, the Cabarrus-Rowan Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) sets a course for how the Cabarrus-Rowan transportation network will need to be improved to support the region's growth over the long term.	The CTP inventoried the existing fixed route transit system and identified additional corridors recommended to be served by fixed route transit in the future.
Cabarrus County Transportation Title VI Program Plan (2022)	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. A Title VI Program Plan documents a federally funded transit agency's compliance with nondiscrimination.	The CCTS Title VI Program Plan outlines the agency's standard operating procedures for providing inclusive and nondiscriminatory transportation services in compliance with federal requirements.
Concord Kannapolis Area Transit Title VI	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and	The Rider Transit Title VI Program Plan documents Rider Transit's efforts to operate a nondiscriminatory and inclusive transit system, in compliance with Title VI. Rider Transit has conducted

Program Plan (2022)	activities receiving federal financial assistance. A Title VI Program Plan documents a federally funded transit agency's compliance with nondiscrimination.	research and developed materials and procedures to understand which groups use or would like to use its services (like those with Limited English Proficiency), and how to provide equitable and quality service to all groups.
Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transportation Master Plan (2020)	The overall goal of the Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transportation Master Plan (LRPTMP) is to identify current and future needs and opportunities to expand public transit within Cabarrus County and for regional connections. Existing conditions and services, coupled with future growth, are inventoried and then synthesized to create actionable items to improve transit service across short, medium, and long-term horizons.	The LRPTMP functions as a 20-year planning document for public transit service in Cabarrus County. This document also examined the feasibility of consolidating CCTS and Rider Transit into one system. The plan culminates in a wide range of capital and service recommendations to be implemented over the next 20 years: • Capital Recommendations ○ New and Replacement Vehicles ○ Bus Stop Amenities ○ Technology, Software, and Data ○ 3 New Transit Hubs ○ New Administration and Maintenance Facility ○ Additional Studies (High-Capacity Transit, Park and Ride, Site Feasibility, etc.) ○ Park and Ride Lot Construction • Service Recommendations ○ Consolidate CCTS and Rider Transit ○ Extend hours of service ○ Increase route frequency (30-minute, then 15-minute headways) ○ Implement countywide demand response service ○ Add 13 fixed routes
Cabarrus County Transportation Service & Concord Kannapolis Area Transit Consolidation Study (2024)	The purpose of the report was to provide an implementation plan for the two transit agencies operating in Cabarrus County to consolidate. CCTS provides demand response service while Rider Transit provides fixed route and complementary paratransit services.	The analysis included three potential options for consolidation: county-based, city-based, and authority-based. Ultimately, decision makers requested implementation plan information on two options: city-based and authority-based. The implementation plans provide an overview of the steps for the two agencies to consolidate into a city department or to create a separate authority that consolidates both transit agencies. The authority implementation plan would require legislative and voter approval to create and fund the new authority.

3.6 Peer Case Studies

Despite population growth in Cabarrus County and the larger Charlotte Metropolitan Area, Rider Transit's fixed route ridership declined between 2015 and 2023 but is currently recovering. The 2020 Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transportation Master Plan addressed this issue head-on, focusing on the power of robust public transit to mitigate the mobility challenges associated with growth, such as increased traffic congestion, and offers a viable alternative to the inconveniences and expenses of car ownership, traffic, and parking. However, developing a robust public transit system faces significant challenges, particularly as operational costs rise.

This peer review helps to contextualize the challenges and opportunities for building robust transit systems in areas experiencing rapid population growth. With an eye on financial constraints and the need for flexibility that they engender, this peer review aims to address how growing transit systems adapt their budgets, operations, and ridership to deal with that growth.

This peer review targets three key factors in evaluating how similar transit systems are evolving in comparison to Rider Transit:

- How ridership on similar transportation systems changes as populations grow.
- How similar transit systems structure their budgets and finances for optimal service.
- How similar transit systems change their operations to provide better service.

3.6.1 Peer Determination Methods

This long-range transit plan incorporates both Rider Transit and CCTS. For this peer review, the project team focused on Rider Transit's fixed route service, as it makes up the bulk of Rider Transit's operational budget and there is likely to be higher variation in fixed route transit systems between different authorities.

Peer selection was facilitated by use of the Urban Integrated National Transit Database (NTD) through the Florida Transit Information System (FTIS), using data up to 2023. FTIS pulls NTD data to create peer lists for transit systems, basing peer similarities on 14 features including total vehicle miles operated, total operating budget, service area type, and population growth rate, among other factors. These features can be evaluated individually or as a composite of all 14 features.

Peer selection for Rider Transit emphasized finding systems which are similar in population size and experiencing population growth similar to Cabarrus County. To do this, the project team generated a list of transit systems similar to Rider Transit, looking primarily at population growth rates between 1.0% to 3.0% per year, total vehicle miles operated, total operating budget, and urban area population. Next, to refine the list, we considered other criteria, such as service area type, region, and proximity to a major city. Furthermore, variation in trends among the peers was sought. Table 3-10 lists the characteristics considered for peer selection.

TABLE 3-10: CHARACTERISTICS CONSIDERED FOR PEER SELECTION

Primary Characteristics	Secondary Characteristics
Population growth rate (1.0% - 3.0% per year) since 2020 for the urban area	Service area type (non-urbanized, multiple urban, urban, etc.)
Total vehicle miles	Percent poverty
Total operating budget	Population density of the urban area
Urban area population	Local to the Southeast region
	Proximity to a major city
	Ridership trends and operating cost trends
	Number of routes
	Number of vehicles
	Service to key locations with different demand profiles

The final list of peers is presented in Table 3-11.

TABLE 3-11: PEER SUMMARY

Agency Name	Location	Proximity to a Major City	Service Area Size (square miles)	Service Area Population	Number of Fixed Routes
Rider Transit	Cabarrus, NC	30 minutes from Charlotte, NC	78	136,700	8
ART	Asheville, NC	No	45	93,350	18
CityLink	Abilene, TX	No	110	125,182	7
SPARTA	Spartanburg, SC	40 minutes from Greenville, SC	40	37,013	8
LakeXpress	Lake County, FL	50 minutes from Orlando, FL	71	97,497	9
YCAT	Yuma County, AZ	50 minutes from San Luis, Mexico	78	195,751	9

3.6.2 Overview of Peers

All peer systems, including Rider Transit, have faced a gradual and consistent decline in ridership between the mid-2010s and 2023, even as their populations have grown. The COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020 caused a substantial drop in ridership across all systems, followed by a modest recovery in 2022 and 2023. However, looking at the overall trends from mid-2010s to 2023, the overall trend has been a steady, long-term decline in ridership.

Operating costs have also increased across all these systems, highlighting a common challenge of managing expenses amid declining ridership. However, one system, ART in Asheville, stands out with a significantly higher operating budget and ridership compared to other peers, averaging four to six times more ridership than its peers in 2023.

Funding for transit systems is primarily sourced by local and federal governments. However, the composition of these funds can vary significantly. ART again stands out by receiving almost 80% of its funding from local governments, which is higher than that of most of its peers. Substantial local investment in expanding fixed routes and decreasing headways on key routes can aid in increasing ridership.

Key practices observed across the peer transit systems highlight a range of strategies aimed at improving service quality, accessibility, and ridership. ART is focused on exploring fare-free systems to encourage greater ridership while also prioritizing frequent service in high-density areas and maintaining high levels of local investment. CityLink is advancing multimodal improvements and fostering partnerships with local businesses to enhance last-mile connectivity and accessibility, alongside efforts to increase ADA compliance. SPARTA is examining the feasibility of implementing microtransit service to better serve its less-dense areas. LakeXpress is working to improve frequency on high-performing routes and improve farebox recovery ratios to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Meanwhile, YCAT is expanding its deviated fixed route service and simplifying customer information to improve clarity and ease of use for riders. Applying some of these practices to Rider Transit could create a fixed-route bus system that is better able to serve Cabarrus communities.

3.6.3 Peer City Comparisons

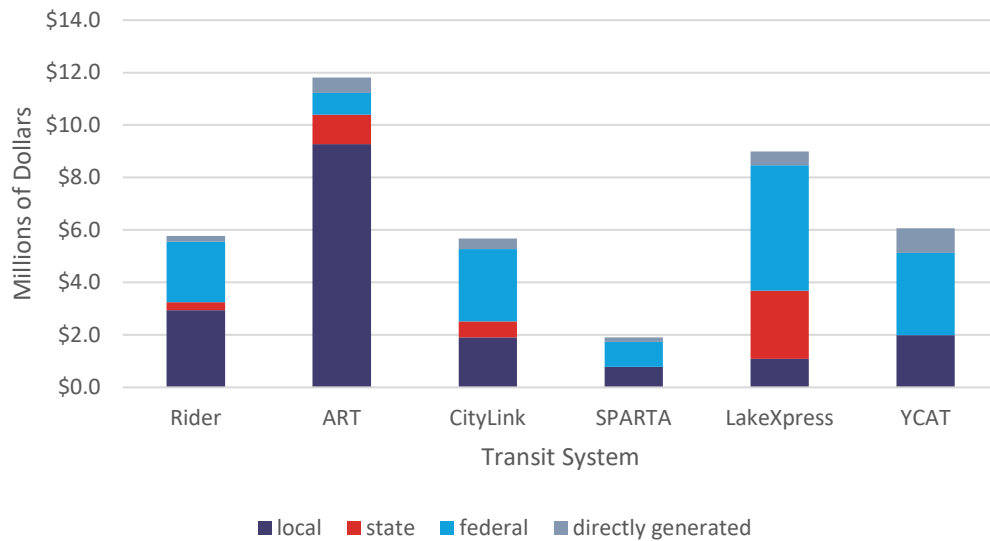
This section presents an overview comparison of budgets, ridership volumes, populations, visions, and key practices of the peers. More in-depth comparisons between each peer and Rider Transit are presented in sections 3.6.4 through 3.6.9.

Budgets

A transit system's operating budget is crucial to understanding how that system functions. Most of these systems, including Rider Transit, receive substantial portions of their operating revenue from local and federal governments (Figure 3-15). One exception here is ART, which gets almost 80% of its funding from local governments. ART also has a higher operating budget overall than the rest of its peers.

Another exception to this pattern is LakeXpress, which gets around 29% of its operating budget from the state of Florida, but only 12% from local governments. SPARTA, meanwhile, has less than half the operating budget of any other peer: under \$2 million in 2023.

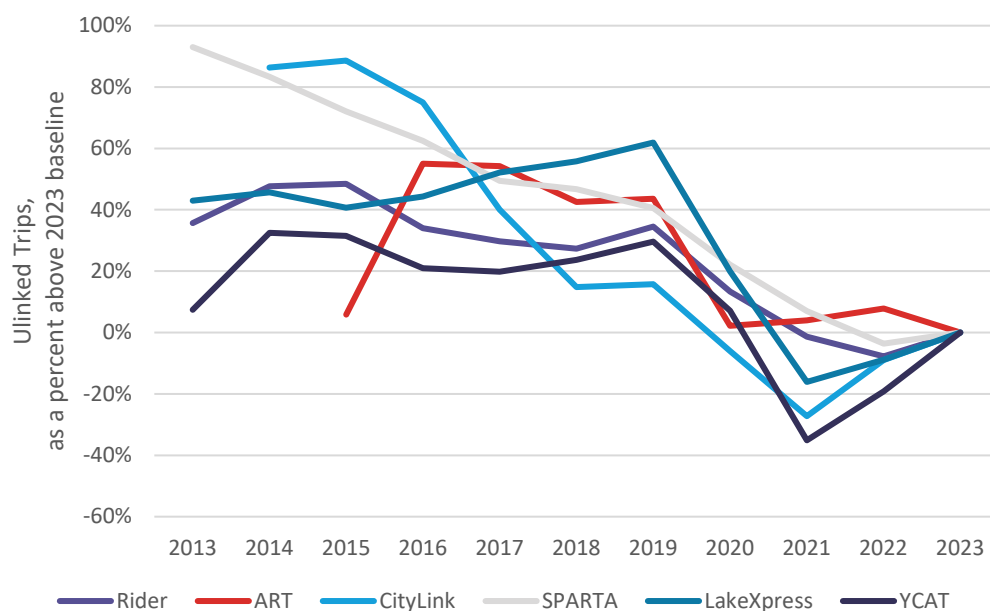
FIGURE 3-15: 2023 OPERATING BUDGETS BY SOURCE (NTD, 2023)



Ridership

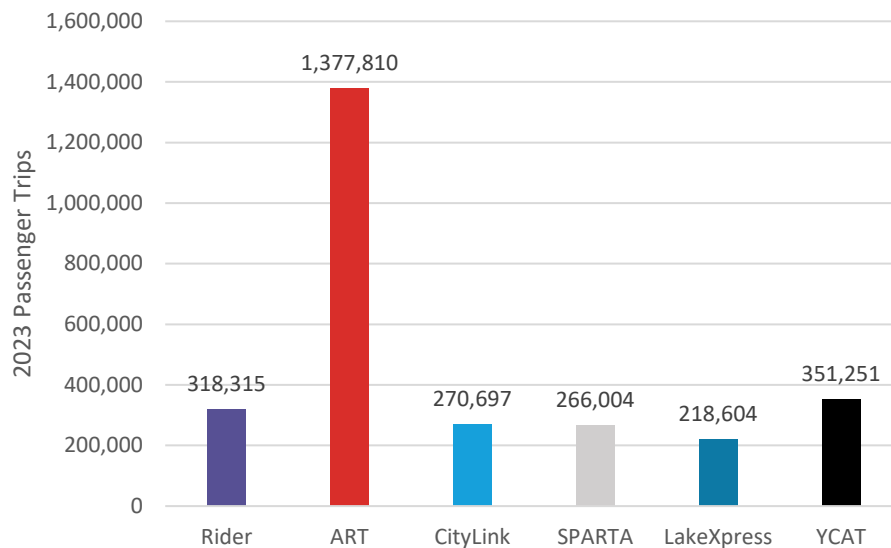
For all peers, ridership declined overall between 2016 and 2023. Several (YCAT, CityLink, LakeXpress) have seen a resurgence since a low in 2021, but that uptick does not make up for the long-term declines (Figure 3-16). While this trend is discouraging for public transportation overall, Rider Transit's experience of declining ridership is the norm for most transit agencies during the same time frame and reflects nationwide challenges.

FIGURE 3-16: ANNUAL RIDERSHIP PER YEAR AS A PERCENT ABOVE THE SYSTEM'S 2023 PASSENGER TRIPS (NTD, 2023)



Although every peer has seen a trend of declining ridership, they all have different total ridership per year. In 2023, Rider Transit saw 318,315 passenger trips, however, ART, again an outlier, saw 1,377,810. Other systems saw less, such as LakeXpress, at just 218,604 (Figure 3-17).

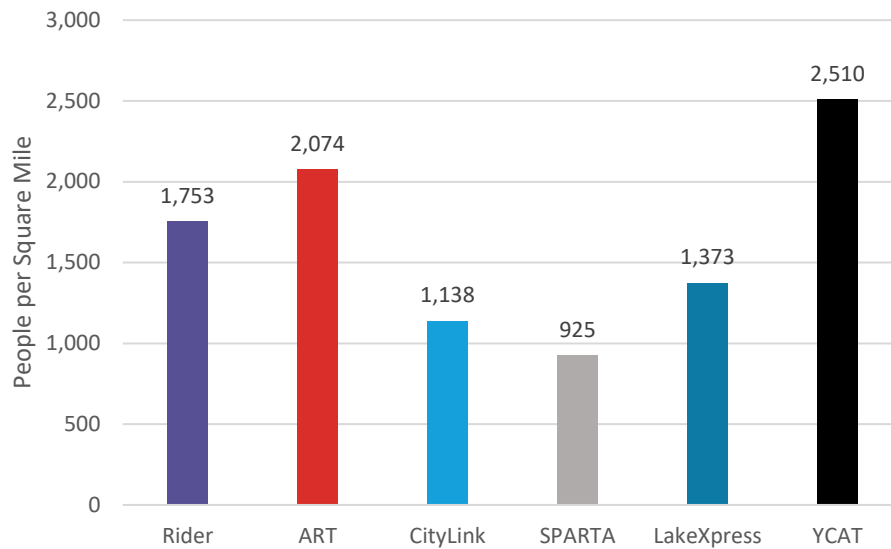
FIGURE 3-17: ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD, 2023)



Population versus Ridership

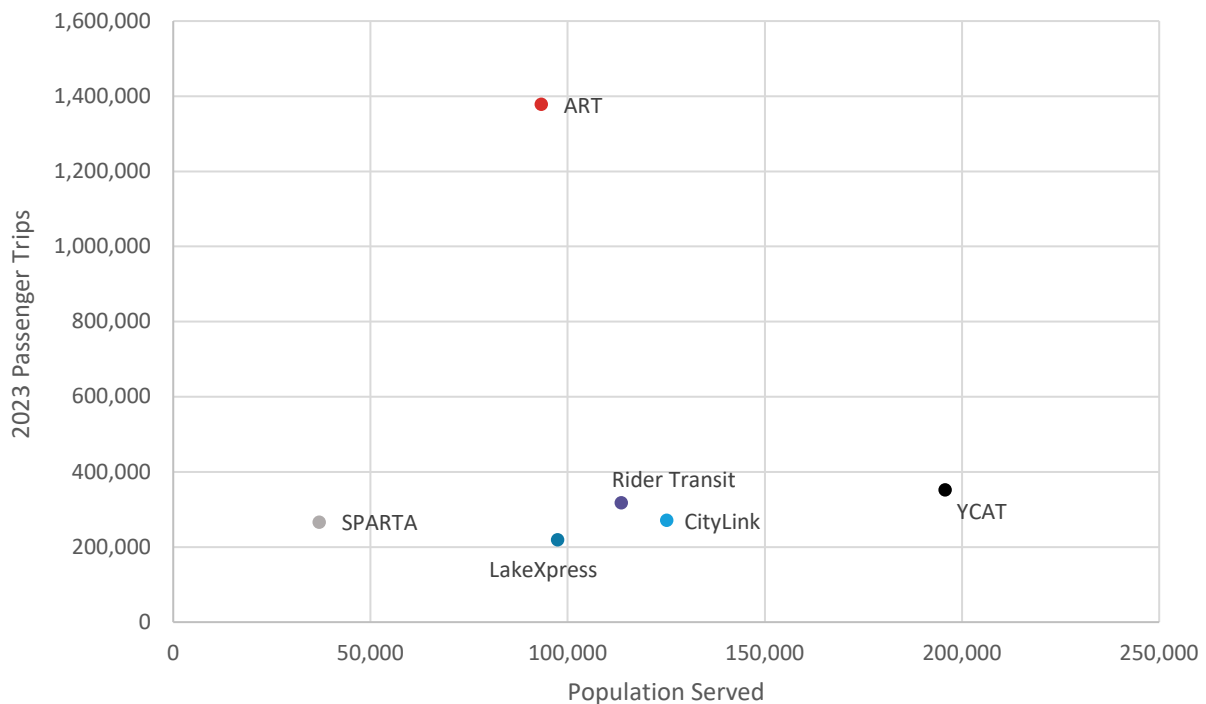
The population density of a service area is an important indicator of how efficient fixed route transit can be; a higher density means it is likely that more people can access a fixed route. Rider Transit's service area in Concord and Kannapolis is in the middle of population densities in its service area for its peers, at around 1,750 people per square mile. ART and YCAT have higher population densities in their service areas, and CityLink, SPARTA, and LakeXpress have lower population densities (Figure 3-18).

FIGURE 3-18: SERVICE AREA POPULATION DENSITY (NTD, 2023)



Most of the peers had between 250,000 and 350,000 passenger trips in 2023. A more populous service area like that of YCAT had slightly higher trips, around 351,000, whereas a smaller system had slightly lower trips, around 266,000. The notable exception here is ART, which had 1.4 million passenger trips in 2023, almost four times that of YCAT (Figure 3-19).

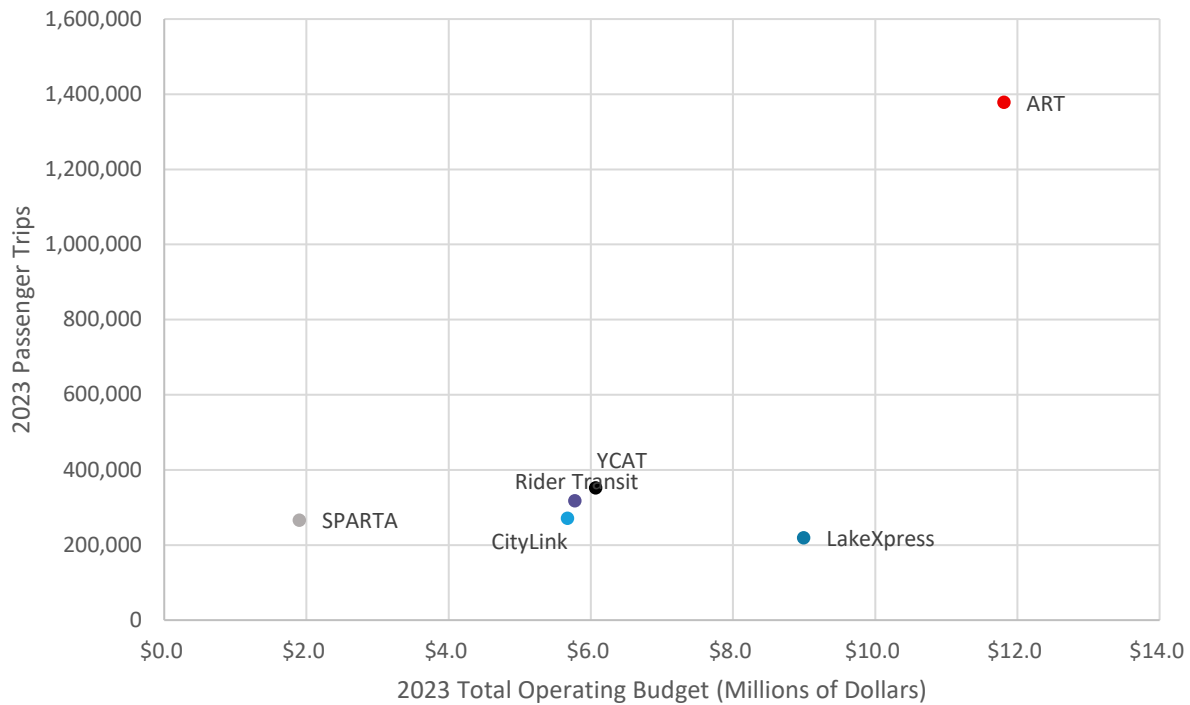
FIGURE 3-19: SERVICE AREA POPULATION VERSUS ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD, 2023)



Budgets versus Ridership

There is little relationship between operating budget and annual passenger trips for the peer systems. The notable exception to this is, again, ART, which has an almost double the operating budget as most peers (around \$11.8 million, much of that made up of local funds) and four to six times the annual ridership (Figure 3-20).

FIGURE 3-20: ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET VERSUS ANNUAL RIDERSHIP



3.6.4 Rider Transit – Concord/Kannapolis, NC

Rider Transit serves the fast-growing cities of Concord and Kannapolis, North Carolina. Rider Transit is run as a department of the City of Concord, and major decisions are made by the Concord Kannapolis Transit Commission, which features representatives from both Concord and Kannapolis.

Concord and Kannapolis are located approximately 25 miles from Charlotte, North Carolina, a major and fast-growing city. As the metropolitan area grows, Concord and Kannapolis are experiencing increased pressure on their transportation systems as increasing numbers of cars fill roadways. A growing Charlotte also means increased need for intercity connectivity; Rider Transit currently offers one express bus line from Downtown Concord to connect with the Charlotte Area Transit System.

Across its 78 square mile service area, Rider Transit serves a population of 136,700 individuals, according to NTD. Its service area population density is 1,753 people per square mile.

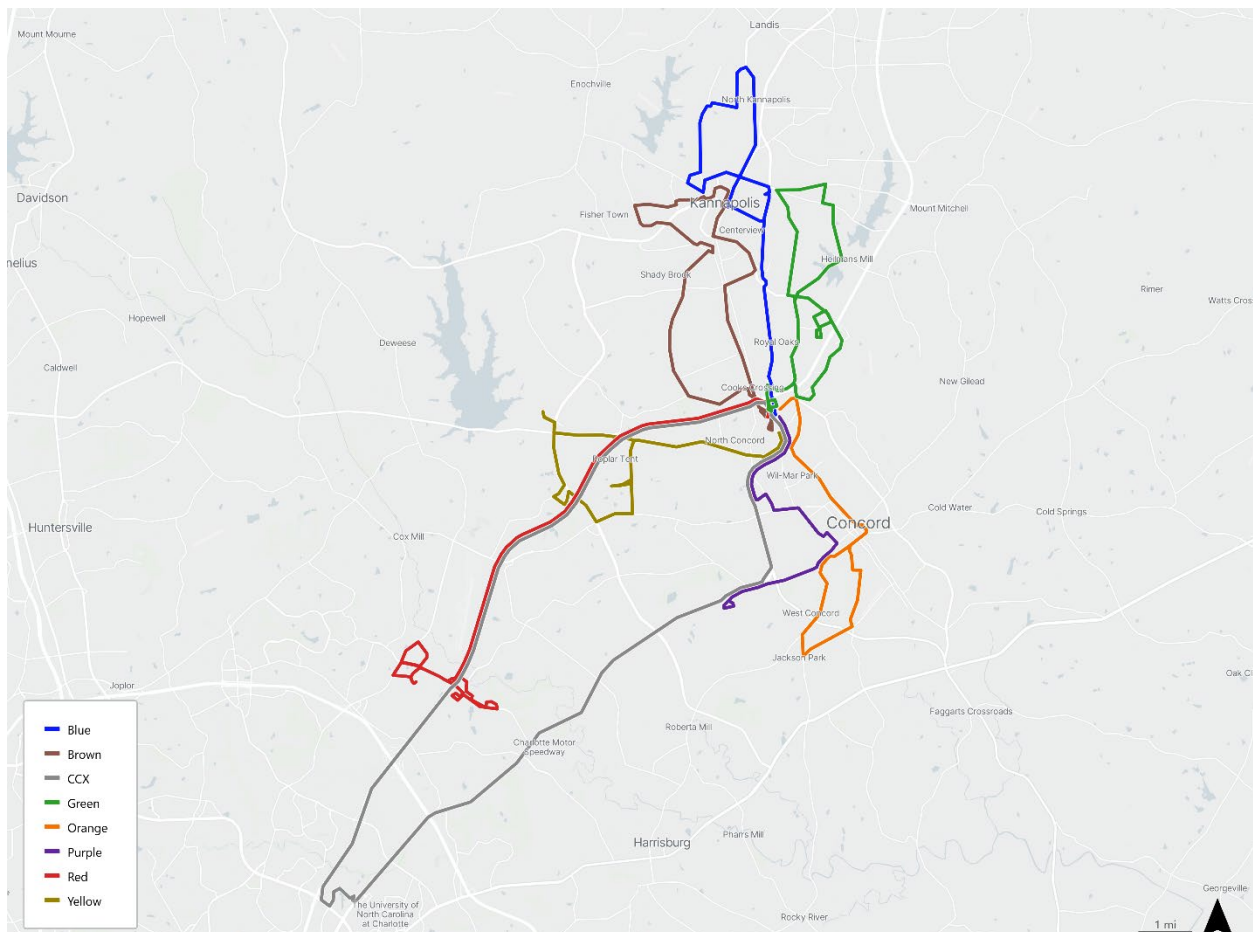
2023 Summary	
Service Area	78 square miles
Service Area Population	113,639
Revenue Miles	714,636
Peak Vehicles	8
Headways	60 minutes in the morning and evening; 75 minutes in the afternoon

Fare Collection

As of 2023, fares funded 3.8% (\$219,583) of Rider Transit's operating budget and 0% (\$0) of its capital budget. Costs per ride are \$1.25 or \$4.00 for a one-day pass. Reduced fares are available for eligible individuals.

Service Area Map

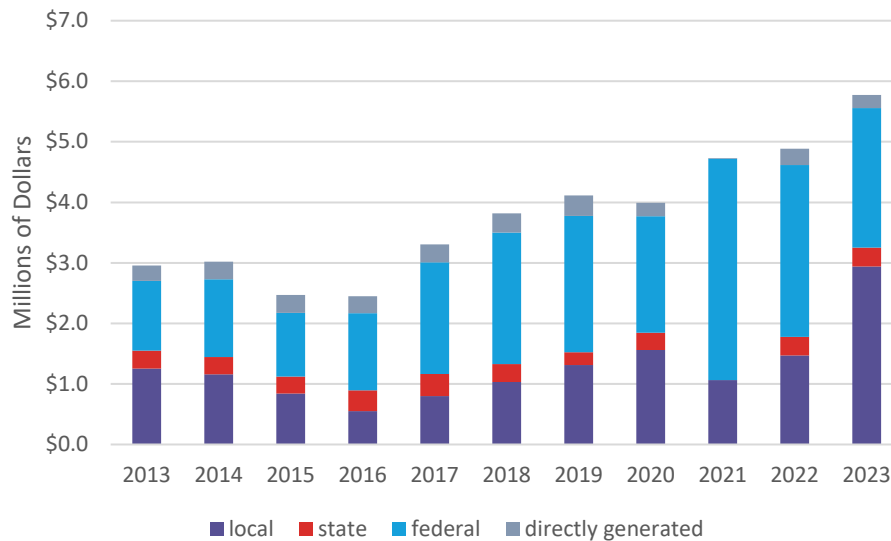
MAP 3-23: RIDER TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



Performance Over Time

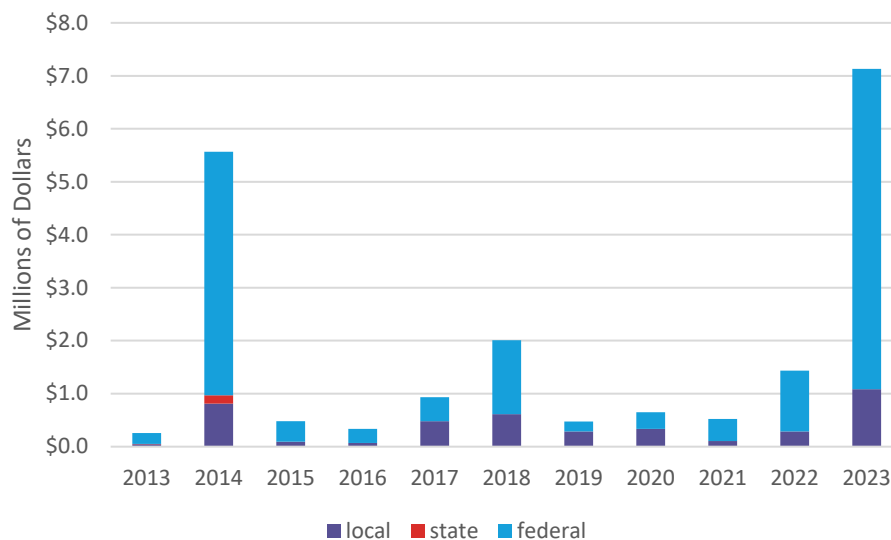
Rider Transit's operating expenses have risen steadily since 2016. Federal and local governments cover the bulk of these expenses, but the exact composition of these funding sources varies over time. In 2023, there has been a notable increase in local funding (Figure 3-21).

FIGURE 3-21: RIDER TRANSIT ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET (NTD)



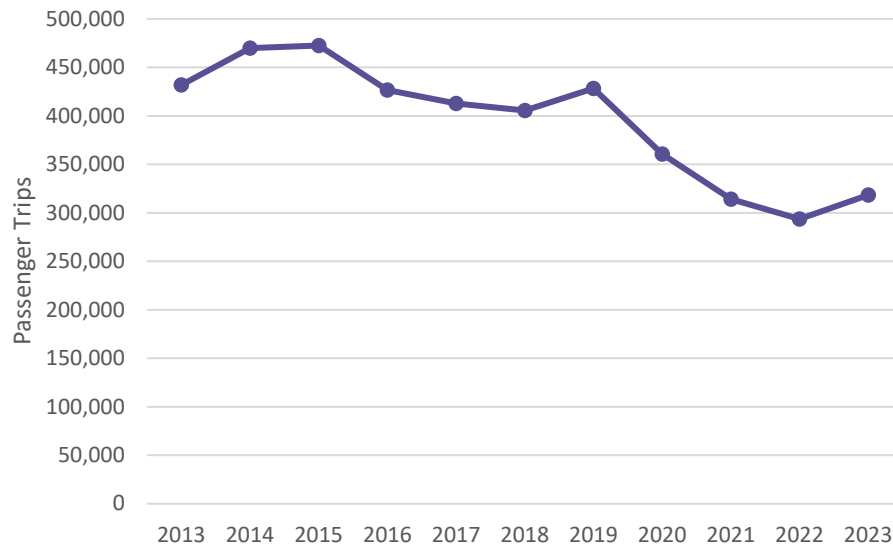
Capital expenses are highly variable, and large surges in funding have historically come from the federal government, in 2014 and 2023 (Figure 3-22).

FIGURE 3-22: RIDER TRANSIT ANNUAL CAPITAL BUDGET (NTD)



Ridership fell steadily between 2015 and 2023, both overall and on a per-mile basis. Although Rider Transit recovered slightly in 2023, this has not offset the overall downward trend (Figure 3-23).

FIGURE 3-23: RIDER TRANSIT ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD)



Visions and Practices

As the Charlotte metropolitan area expands, Concord and Kannapolis also experience growth, which increases the demands on the region's transportation systems. Cabarrus County's 2020 Long-Range Plan articulated public transportation as a key resource in mitigating stress on the transportation system. Getting more people out of their cars and onto a bus or other public transit would mean fewer cars on the road, less need for parking, and better access to goods and services for all community members. The system's use is limited, however, by short service hours, 60-minute headways, and a limited number of routes.

The 2020 Long Range Plan, which laid out a 20-year vision for Rider Transit, makes recommendations related to service enhancements, transit hubs, and funding strategies. For services, the plan recommended first extending fixed route services into the morning and evening, and then on Saturdays and Sundays, and then reducing headways to as low as 15 minutes. It also recommends establishing two new transit hubs where routes can connect, pulse, and better reach areas that are distant from the current Rider Transit Center.

These improvements, however, come at high costs, and current funding sources are insufficient to meet the proposed enhancements. The plan recommends applying to several competitive programs, including Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program – Federal Section 5310, Urban Advanced Technology Grant Program, NCDOT IMD Mobility Management Program, and the NCDOT Urban State Match Program. It also recommends a county vehicle registration fee for transit (which would need to be approved by the county commission) and general obligation bonds (which would need

to be approved by the relevant local authority), as well as a sales tax, which the county could enact after approval from both the North Carolina General Assembly and a voter referendum.

Key Takeaways

The rapidly growing cities of Concord and Kannapolis in North Carolina are experiencing stress on their transportation systems due to a growing population. The rapid growth of nearby Charlotte, one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S., increases pressure on the Rider Transit system in Concord and Kannapolis, highlighting the critical need for effective public transportation for commuters between these areas. However, Rider Transit faces challenges with declining ridership amidst rising operational costs.

Rider Transit in Concord and Kannapolis faces challenges, including rising costs and limited-service hours and routes. These challenges are compounded by national-level trends in declining public transit ridership. The 2020 Long Range Plan proposed solutions such as extended service hours, reduced headways, and new transit hubs to address these issues. However, funding remains a significant barrier, with current budgets insufficient to implement these enhancements. To secure the necessary finances, additional grants and revenue sources should be pursued.

3.6.5 Asheville Rides Transit – Asheville, NC

Asheville is located in the center of Buncombe County in mountainous western North Carolina. The mountainous topography has significantly influenced transportation and development patterns in the area. Waterways, railroads, and interstates play a crucial role in and around the city, impacting the fixed route transit system. Downtown Asheville offers a dense, walkable urban environment that supports fixed transit lines, while areas outside downtown transition into more suburban and rural styles.

The population of Buncombe County is projected to increase from 276,000 to 318,000 by 2035, putting strain on the transportation system. Major activity centers and trip generators include large employers such as Buncombe County Public Schools, Mission Health Hospital, and the City of Asheville. The transit system serves primarily the City of Asheville, with some service extending to Black Mountain.

Importantly, in September of 2024, Buncombe County was devastated by Hurricane Helene, which resulted in hundreds of casualties and destroyed billions of dollars in property. As communities continue to recover, the ART system may face novel demands as it responds to the needs of the people it serves.

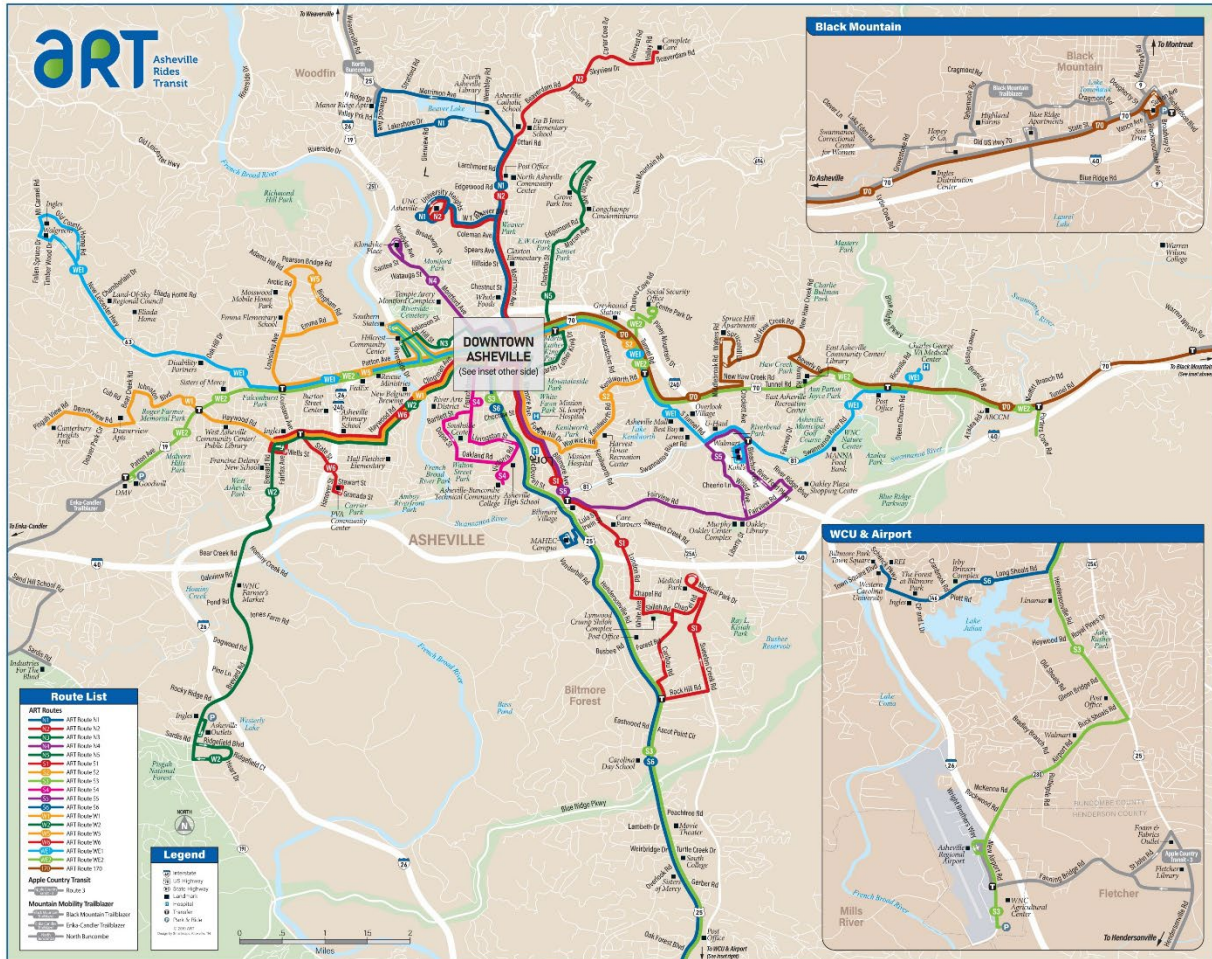
2023 Summary	
Service Area	45 square miles
Service Area Population	93,350
Revenue Miles	1,317,518
Peak Vehicles	19
Headways	Several 60-minute headways; 20, 30, and 90-minute headways as well.

Fare Collection

As of 2023, fares funded 5.0% (\$591,426) of ART's operating budget and 0% (\$0) of its capital budget. Costs per ride are \$1.00 or \$20.00 for a monthly pass. Reduced fares are available for eligible individuals.

Service Area Map

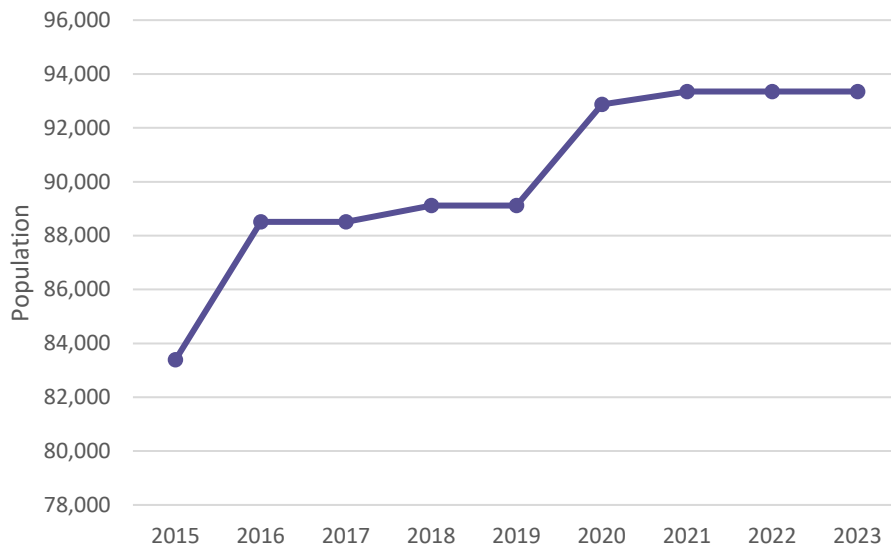
MAP 3-24: ART FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



Performance Over Time

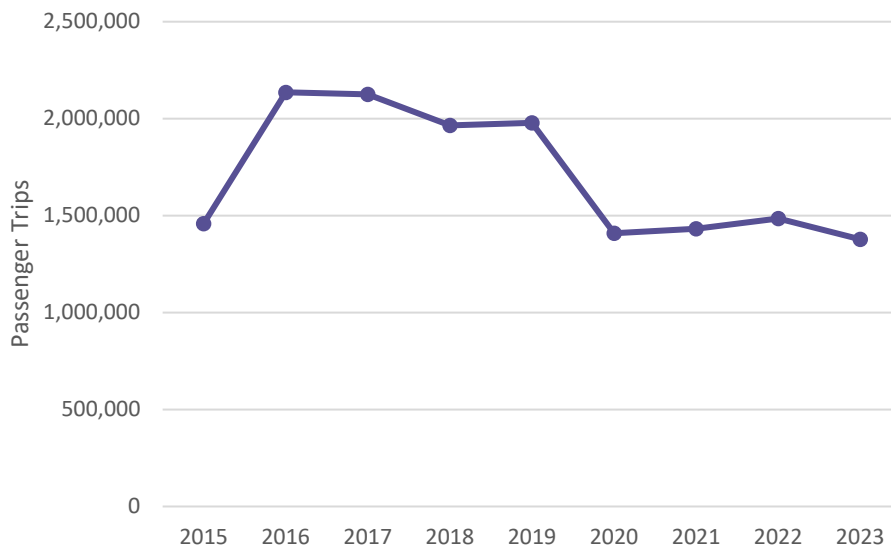
Since 2015, ART has maintained a 45 square mile service area using between 17 and 19 buses and has served a slightly growing service area population (Figure 3-24).

FIGURE 3-24: ART SERVICE AREA POPULATION (NTD)



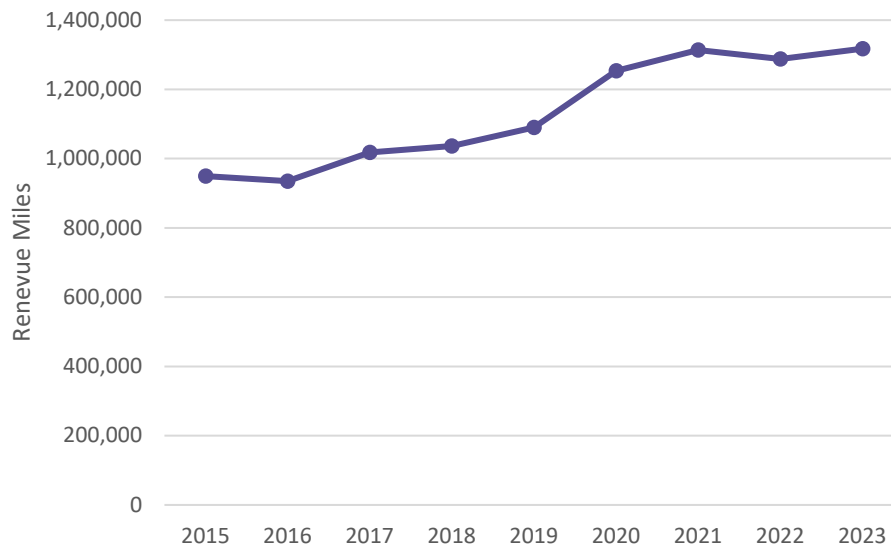
However, this increase in service area population has not been accompanied by an increase in ridership. On the contrary, passenger trips dipped in 2020 and had not recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 (Figure 3-25).

FIGURE 3-25: ART ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD)



Meanwhile, total system mileage has risen steadily, up 365,968 revenue miles (39%) to a high of 1,317,518 since 2015 (Figure 3-26).

FIGURE 3-26: ART ANNUAL SYSTEM MILEAGE (NTD)



Visions and Practices

The City of Asheville Transit Master Plan (TMP) serves as a guiding document for the city's transit system, providing specific routing recommendations to enhance service in the short term and outlining a long-term vision for future expansion and improvements. The TMP acknowledges the projected population growth in Buncombe County, which is expected to reach 318,000 by 2035. This growth is anticipated to increase the demand for transit services, necessitating enhancements to the existing system.

The TMP highlights the need for transit services to complement development along transit corridors and offer competitive travel times with other modes of transportation. The plan aims to improve existing transit services with high-quality and frequent service that serve walkable areas and higher concentrations of employees and residents.

The TMP identifies several limitations of the current transit system, including short service hours, long headways, and limited fixed routes. It proposes making trips faster to increase service frequency with a system of premium bus transit centers serving major transfer points downtown. Additionally, it proposes phasing out the confusing fare-free zone in downtown and replacing it with free shuttles designed to circulate people around the dense urban core.

Alternatively, the TMP also considers transitioning the entire system to be fare-free, which could increase ridership. This transition would eliminate the costs associated with fare collection and potentially attract additional ridership. However, it would require replacing the average annual fare revenue, usually several hundred thousand dollars, and could lead to overwhelming system use, especially during peak hours.

For several more rural fixed bus lines, ART has proposed collaborating with its neighbor, Mountain Mobility, to share operations and maintenance facilities and keep costs down.

Key Takeaways

Although ART and Rider Transit serve different urban environments and face unique challenges, both face declines in ridership as populations grow. ART operates in Asheville, a city located in the center of Buncombe County, North Carolina, where mountainous geography and a dense urban core shape their transportation system. In contrast, Rider Transit caters to the fast-growing cities of Concord and Kannapolis near Charlotte, with a focus on intercity connectivity and mitigating transportation system stress.

To accommodate population growth and rebuild ridership following the pandemic, ART focuses on enhancing its existing transit services by implementing high-quality, frequent service along transit corridors, and potentially transitioning to a fare-free system to reduce confusion and financial barriers. ART also receives heavy local investment, which could help account for its high performance.

3.6.6 CityLink – Abilene, TX

CityLink, the fixed route bus system for Abilene, operates within a small urban transit system context, primarily serving the City of Abilene, Texas. The transit system caters to a mixture of urban densities but concentrates services within the city limits where population density is higher compared to surrounding rural areas. Abilene is not directly adjacent to any major metropolitan areas, but it is part of the West Central Texas Region and interacts with rural transit services provided by agencies like City And Rural Rides (CARR) and Double Mountain Coach.

Abilene itself has seen modest population growth of just under 1% annually.

2023 Summary	
Service Area	110 square miles
Service Area Population	125,182
Revenue Miles	342,309
Peak Vehicles	10
Headways	60 minutes

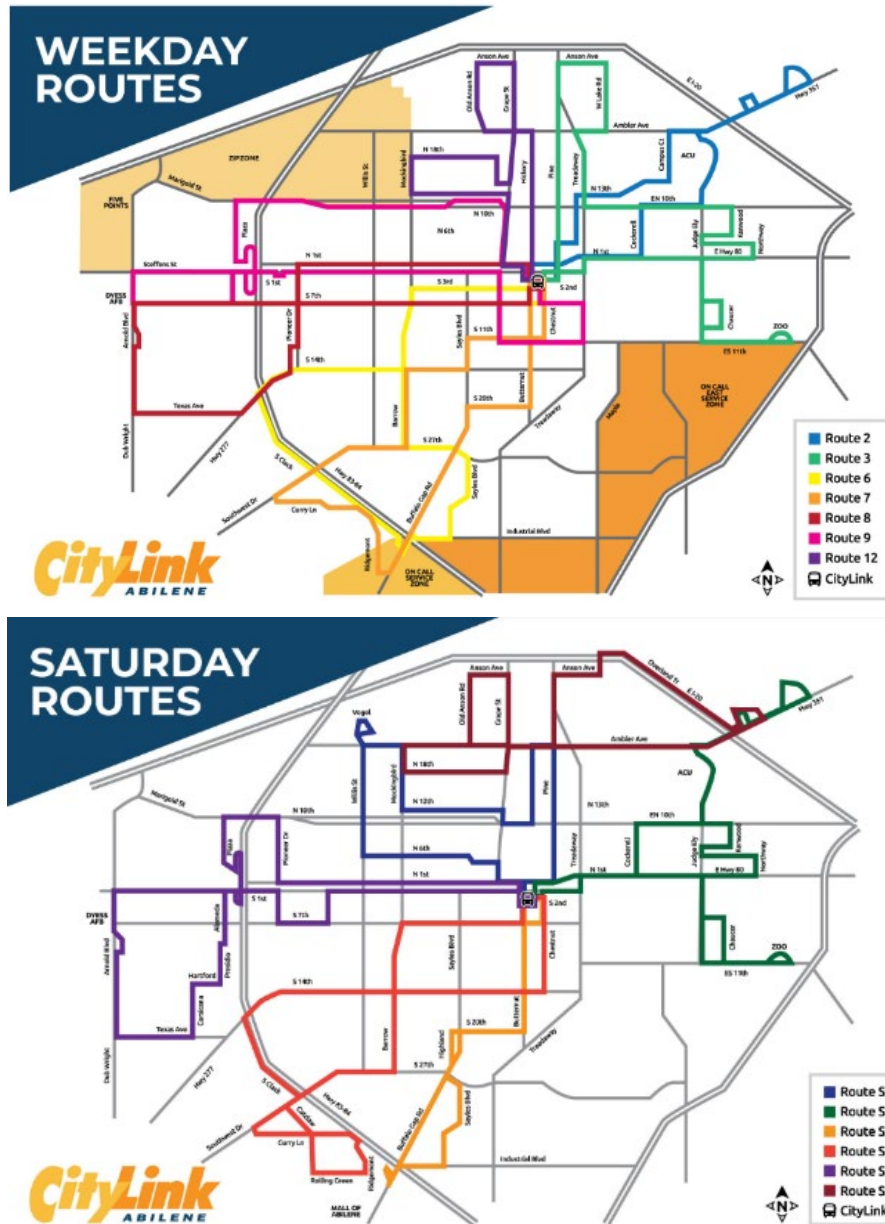
Fare Collection

As of 2023, fares funded 7.0% (\$395,252) of CityLink's operating budget and 0% (\$0) of its capital budget.

CityLink's fare collection practices include a standard adult fare of \$1.50 per trip, with reduced fares for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities. Transfers are free, and the system offers various services, including fixed route, ADA paratransit, and evening demand response services.

Service Area Map

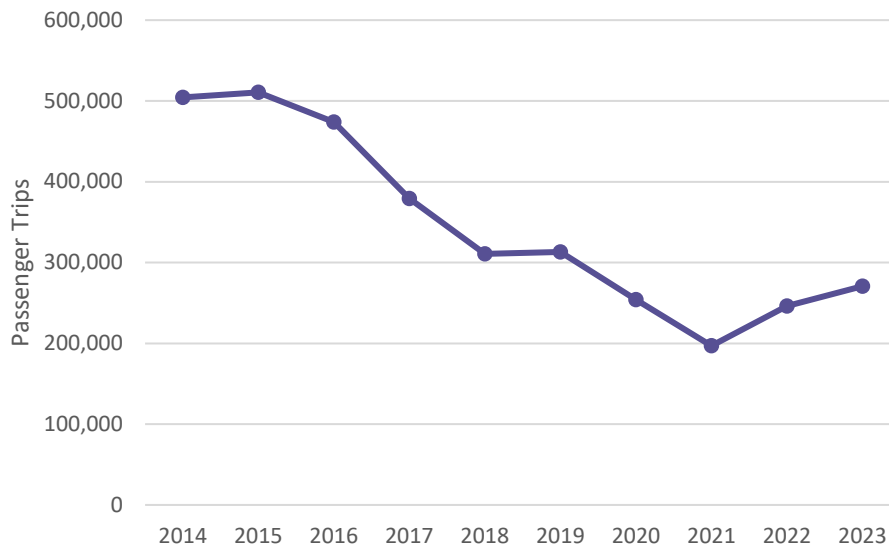
MAP 3-25: CITYLINK FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



Performance Over Time

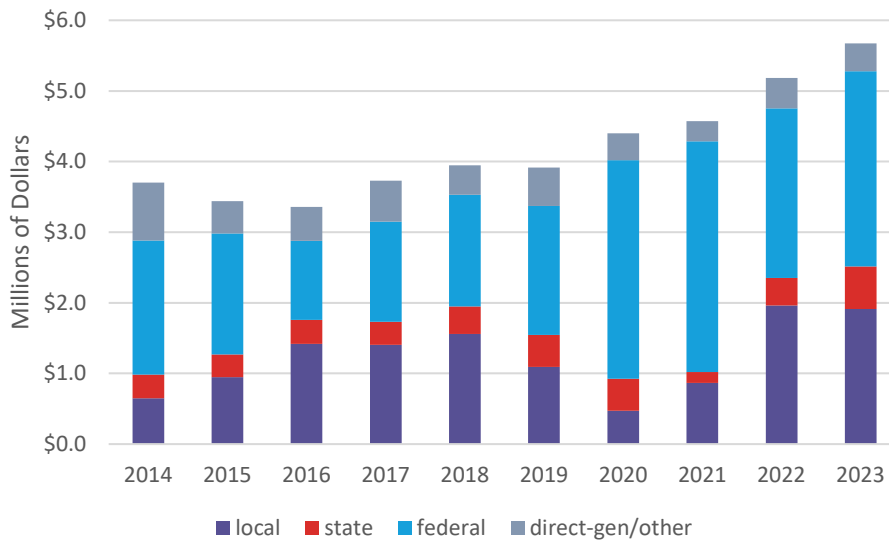
Despite modest population growth in Abilene, CityLink ridership declined between 2015 and 2023 (Figure 3-27).

FIGURE 3-27: CITYLINK ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD)



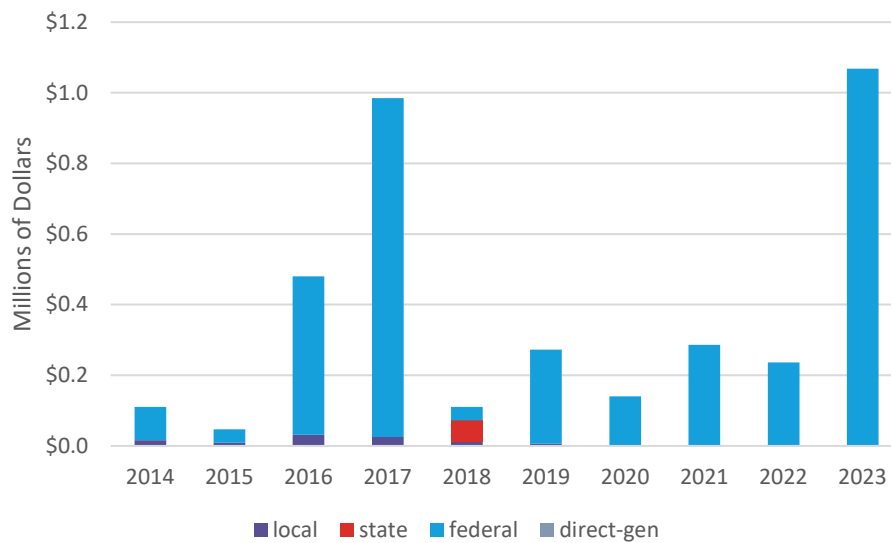
Operating expenses, on the other hand, have grown, with most of these funds coming from local and federal sources (Figure 3-28).

FIGURE 3-28: CITYLINK ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET (NTD)



Capital expenses have been variable, with funding likely coming from federal grants, especially in 2017 and 2023 (Figure 3-29).

FIGURE 3-29: CITYLINK ANNUAL CAPITAL BUDGET (NTD)



Visions and Practices

The Abilene Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) envisions a future where transportation in the region is safe, dependable, and supports economic development and sustainability. It emphasizes optimizing system performance, preserving assets, and leveraging new investments to attract additional federal and state funding. The plan advocates a multimodal approach, incorporating roadways, transit, airports, trains, bicycles, and pedestrian modes to enhance the mobility network, address deficiencies, and improve resiliency. Environmental protection and justice are prioritized to ensure transportation improvements are sensitive to both natural and human environments.

The Abilene MTP outlines concrete steps to adjust services, expand access, and change funding strategies. To enhance service efficiency, the plan focuses on reducing congestion and improving travel time reliability through measures like enhanced intersection level of service and corridor signalization. It emphasizes integrating multimodal improvements in all projects, promoting increased use of transit services, and prioritizing the development of sidewalk and bicycle facilities near transit stops.

To expand access, the MTP includes programs aimed at increasing transit system accessibility, particularly for mobility-impaired citizens.

Key Takeaways

CityLink in Abilene and Rider Transit in Concord and Kannapolis serve different urban contexts and face distinct challenges. CityLink operates in a small urban transit system in Abilene, Texas, catering to a mixture of urban densities. In contrast, Rider Transit serves the fast-growing cities of Concord and Kannapolis, North Carolina, with a service area of 78 square miles and a population of 113,639. Despite population growth, both systems have seen a steady decline in annual trips. Both systems have faced rising operating expenses.

CityLink emphasizes optimizing system performance and expanding access through multimodal improvements, including enhanced intersection level-of-service and corridor signalization. It also focuses on developing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and partnering with local businesses to stimulate job creation. Integrating bike and pedestrian infrastructure, such as dedicated bike lanes and accessible sidewalks, with fixed route bus service can significantly enhance connectivity to transit systems by making it easier for people to reach bus stops safely and conveniently. For example, installing bike racks at bus stations and ensuring sidewalks are well-lit and maintained can encourage individuals to use public transportation more frequently. This connectivity is particularly important for persons with disabilities, as accessible routes can provide critical links between their homes and public transportation, facilitating greater independence and mobility, and speeding up the bus service itself.

3.6.7 Spartanburg Area Regional Transit Agency (SPARTA) – Spartanburg, SC

The Spartanburg Area Regional Transit Agency (SPARTA) serves the relatively dense urban core, and some suburbs, of rapidly growing Spartanburg, SC (population 39,040). In 2024, Spartanburg was the 10th fastest growing metro area in the country. The city sits about 30 miles northeast of Greenville, SC (population 74,000) along interstate 85.

2023 Summary	
Service Area	40 square miles
Service Area Population	37,013
Revenue Miles	275,602
Peak Vehicles	8
Headways	60 minutes

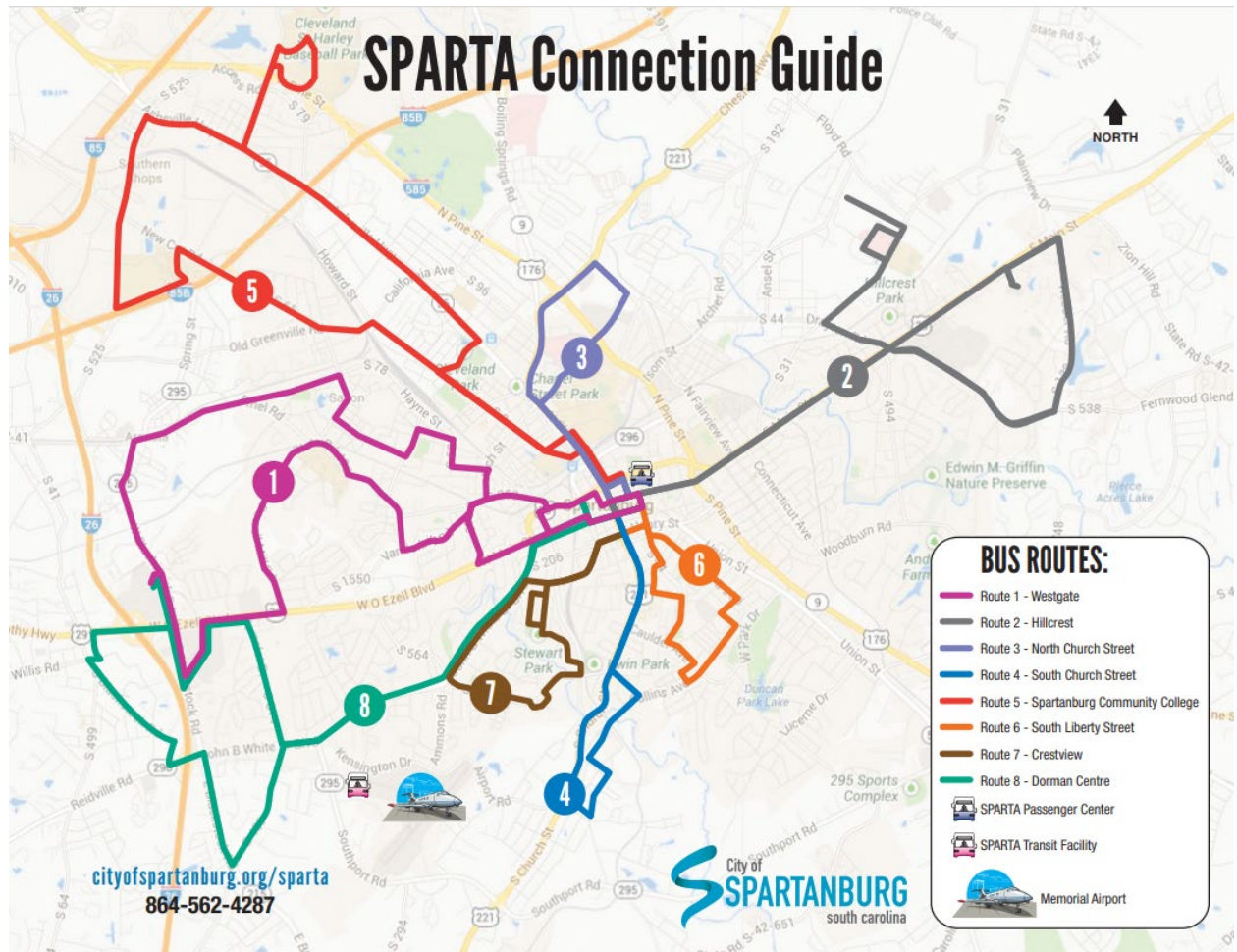
Fare Collection

As of 2023, fares funded 8.6% (\$163,306) of SPARTA's operating budget and 0% (\$0) of its capital budget.

One-way tickets cost \$1.25, or \$0.75 for elderly, disabled, or student riders. Day passes are available for \$2.50, or \$1.25 for elderly, disabled, or student riders.

Service Area Map

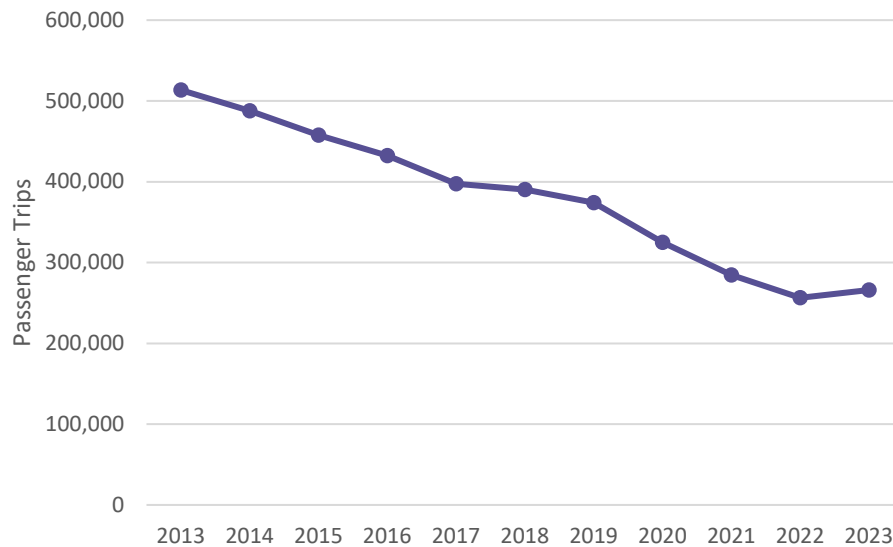
MAP 3-26: SPARTA FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



Performance Over Time

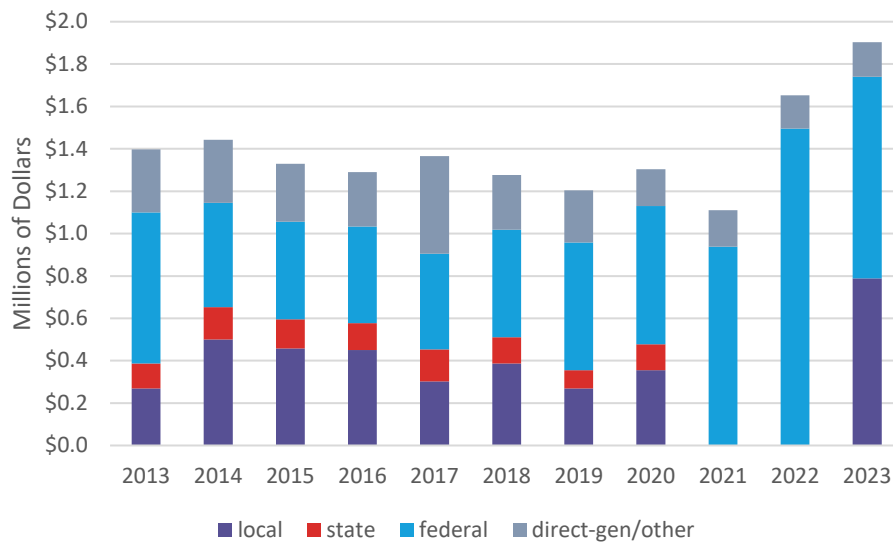
Despite population growth in Spartanburg, annual ridership has declined steadily over the last ten years (Figure 3-30).

FIGURE 3-30: SPARTA ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD)



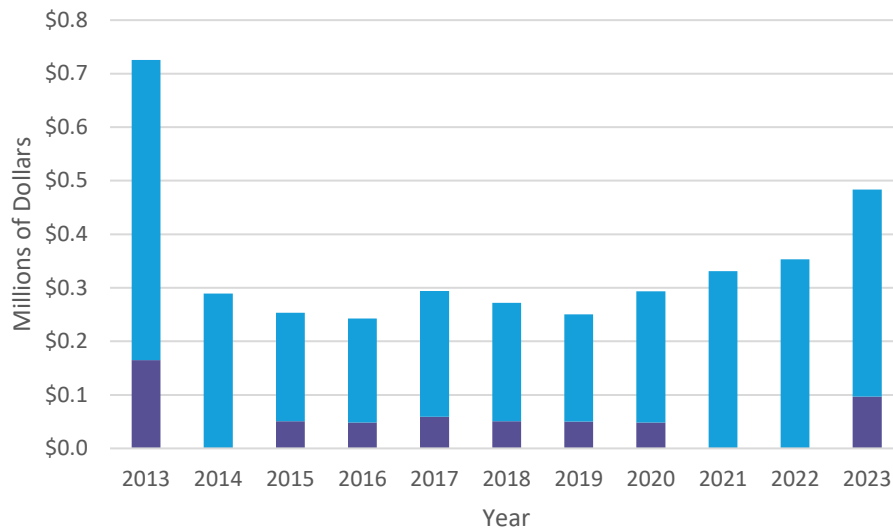
Operating expenses, which had declined, rose in 2022 and 2023, with most of the funding coming from the federal government. Local contribution to SPARTA's operating expenses also rose substantially in 2023 (Figure 3-31).

FIGURE 3-31: SPARTA ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET (NTD)



Capital expenses have also been growing in recent years, with most funding coming from the federal government (Figure 3-32).

FIGURE 3-32: SPARTA ANNUAL CAPITAL BUDGET (NTD)



Visions and Practices

The SPATS Long Range Transportation Plan 2040 envisions the future of transit in Spartanburg by focusing on enhancing mobility, accessibility, and connectivity within the region. The plan recommends improving existing transit services and exploring new routes to better serve the community's needs, which includes optimizing current transit operations and considering the introduction of new services where demand is identified. It emphasizes the importance of expanding access to transit services, particularly for underserved areas, and suggests developing infrastructure that supports active transportation modes, such as walking and cycling, to complement transit services. Additionally, the plan discusses various funding strategies to support the implementation of transit improvements, including exploring federal, state, and local funding opportunities. Overall, the plan aims to create a more integrated and efficient transportation system that can accommodate future growth and enhance the quality of life for residents in the Spartanburg region.

Key Takeaways

Despite population growth, both Rider Transit and SPARTA have seen steadily declining ridership over the last years, even as operating costs have increased. SPARTA has worked against this trend by planning to expand service hours and routes and improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure for first- and last-mile connectivity.

The SPATS Long-Range Transportation Plan 2040 focuses primarily on car and bike/pedestrian improvements. In early 2025, Spartanburg launched a microtransit pilot program with four dedicated vehicles (Go Upstate), though the results of that have been unclear.

3.6.8 LakeXpress – Lake County, FL

Lake County, Florida, is characterized by a mix of urban and rural areas, with a generally low population and dwelling unit densities. The municipalities of Eustis, Clermont, and Fruitland Park have the highest

population densities, and these areas are expected to experience increases in density from 2025 to 2035. Lake County is located approximately 40 miles northwest of Orlando and aims to expand business and industry opportunities through strategic planning. The county has been growing at a rate of over 2% per year, with a total increase of 78.2% between 2000 and 2021.

LakeXpress is the public transportation service operating within Lake County, providing fixed route services across eight bus routes. These routes primarily operate within Lake County, with service times varying by route but generally available Monday through Friday.

Lake County's urban context is shaped by its location within the Orlando metropolitan area. Orlando is a major U.S. city whose population and economic growth has stimulated tourism and economic activity in Lake County. The county is divided into regions that focus on various aspects, including ecotourism, small-town offerings, and outdoor fitness. The county's strategic corridors and urbanized areas are crucial for planning transit services, such as LakeXpress, which aims to provide efficient transportation options amid increasing urbanization.

2023 Summary	
Service Area	45 square miles
Service Area Population	93,350
Revenue Miles	1,317,518
Peak Vehicles	19
Headways	Several 60-minute headways; 20, 30, and 90-minute headways as well

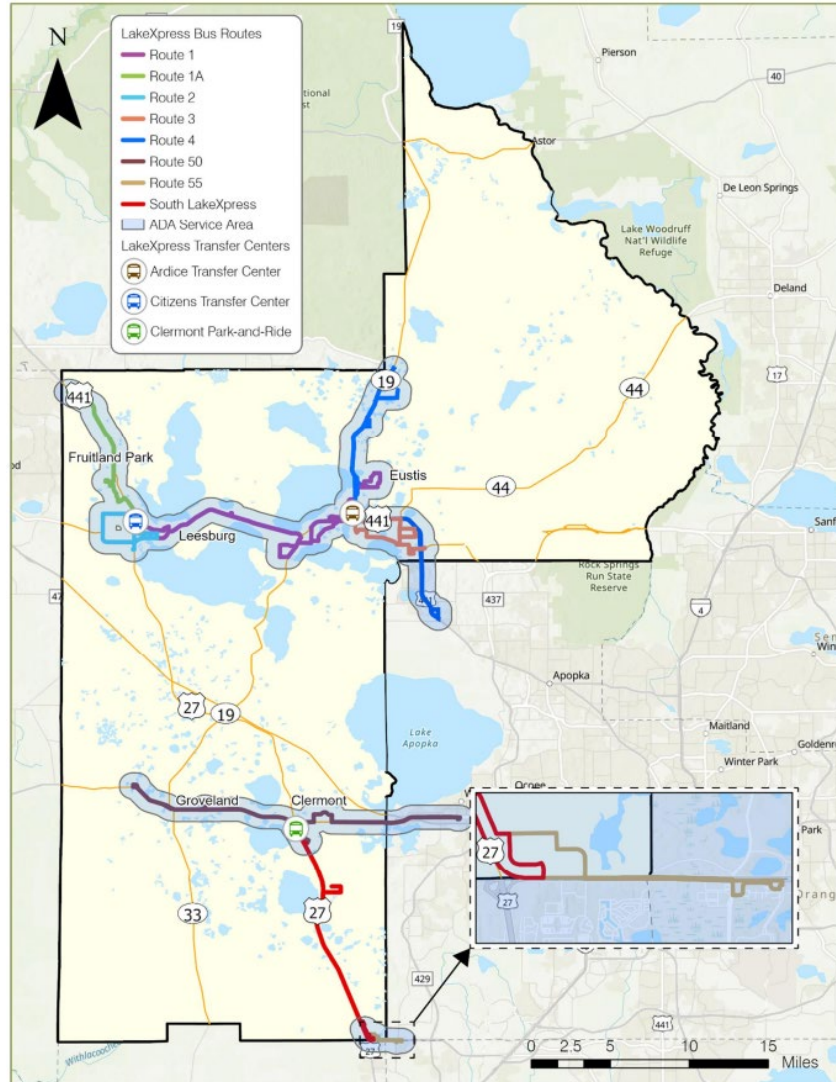
Fare Collection

As of 2023, fares funded 6% (\$521,569) of LakeXpress' operating budget and 0% of its capital budget.

One-way fares cost \$1.00, and day passes \$3.00, or, for qualifying individuals, \$0.50 and \$1.50, respectively.

Service Area Map

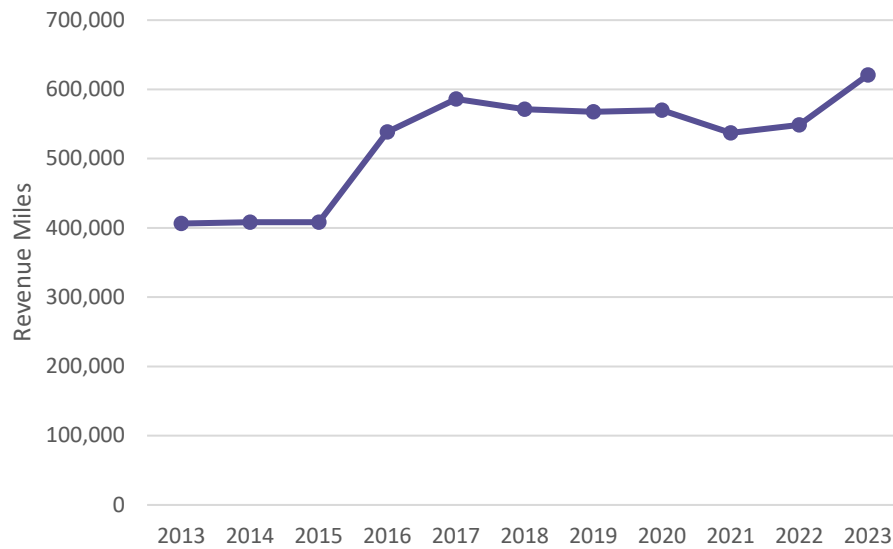
MAP 3-27: LAKE XPRESS FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



Performance Over Time

Between 2015 and 2023, annual revenue miles increased for LakeXpress (Figure 3-33).

FIGURE 3-33: LAKEXPRESS ANNUAL REVENUE MILES (NTD)



However, passenger trips, both total (Figure 3-34) and per revenue mile (Figure 3-35) have also declined.

FIGURE 3-34: LAKEXPRESS ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD)

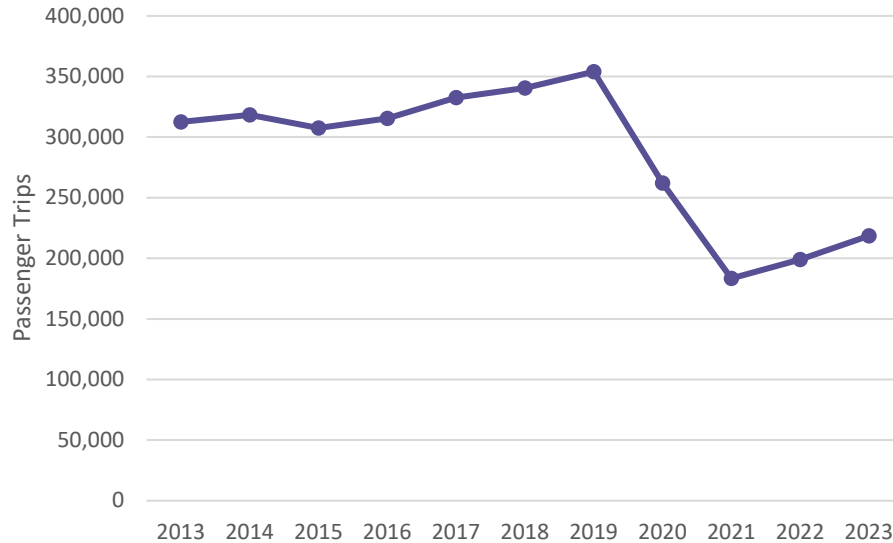
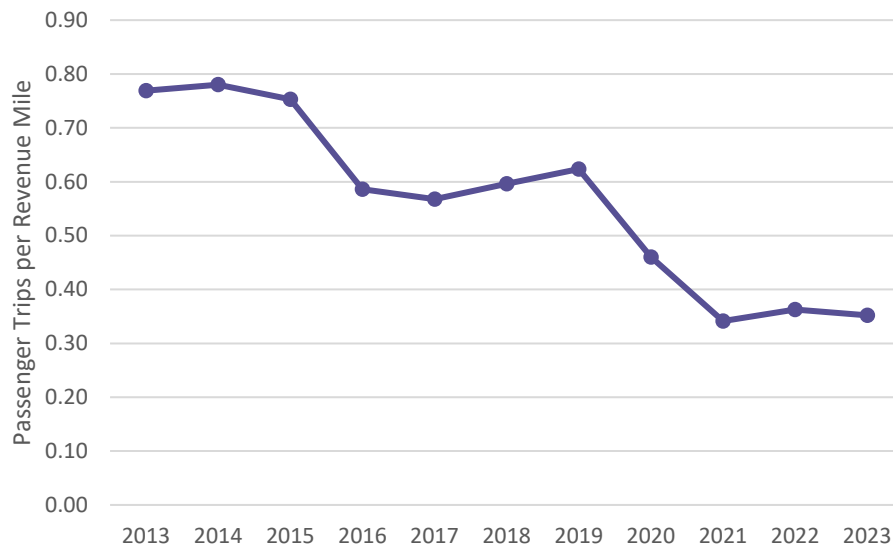
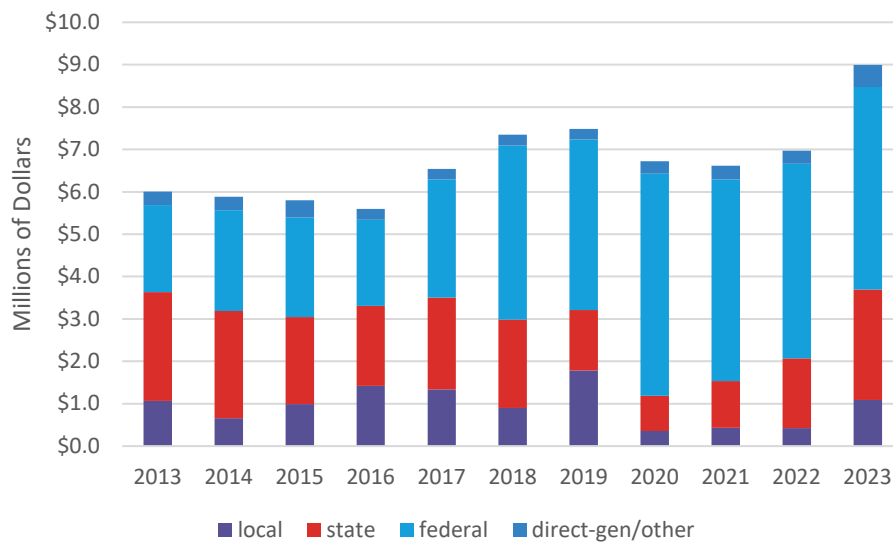


FIGURE 3-35: LAKEXPRESS ANNUAL PASSENGER TRIPS PER REVENUE MILE (NTD)



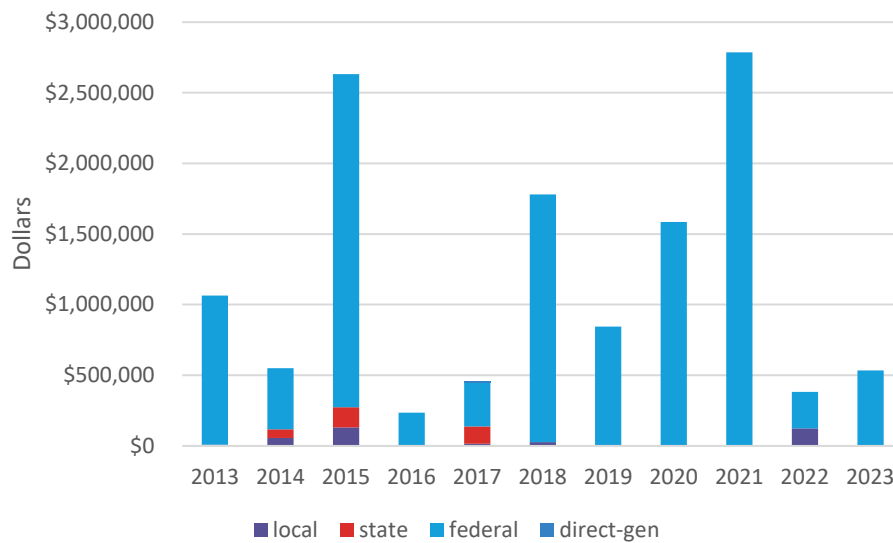
Operating expenses have also increased, especially in 2023, and the majority of the budget is federal funds (Figure 3-36).

FIGURE 3-36: LAKEXPRESS ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET (NTD)



Capital expenses have been covered almost entirely by federal funds and are highly variable (Figure 3-37).

FIGURE 3-37: LAKEXPRESS CAPITAL BUDGET (NTD)



Visions and Practices

The 2024 Lake County Transit Development Plan emphasizes enhanced connectivity throughout Lake County via public transportation. The plan reconfigures routes, increases the frequency of service, extends the hours of operation into the evening, and adds weekend services. These changes aim to make public transit more convenient and accessible for residents and improve connectivity across the county.

To expand access, the county is introducing new bus routes and services that connect different parts of the county and extend into neighboring areas. This includes express services that provide faster travel between key locations. Additionally, the county is proposing flexible transit options that can better serve areas with lower demand or specific needs, such as shuttle services in certain zones.

Improving connectivity is a key focus, with efforts to enhance both local and regional transportation links. This involves creating better connections within the county and to adjacent counties, ensuring that residents can travel more easily across the region.

This plan also proposes improving farebox recovery ratios through actions like tracking performance, increasing frequency of high-performing buses, a mobile ticketing system, and pre-paid systems for major employers.

Key Takeaways

Both LakeXpress and Rider Transit are grappling with rising operational costs, even as ridership declines. Both are also located close to major, fast-growing cities; Lake County is only about 40 miles from downtown Orlando, FL, which is growing at around 2% annually. Moreover, both are seeing rapid population growth of their own, around 2% per year.

To adapt to growth, LakeXpress is implementing a series of operational enhancements, including reconfigured routes, increased bus frequency, and extended service hours into evenings and weekends

to improve the transit experience and draw more riders. The introduction of express services for rapid travel between key locations, along with flexible transit options like shuttle services, aims to accommodate diverse rider needs and elevate accessibility in less populated zones. Financially, LakeXpress is boosting farebox recovery through strategies like monitoring performance metrics, expanding high-performing routes, deploying mobile and prepaid ticketing systems, and creating partnerships with major employers. Regional connectivity improvements are also prioritized to fortify both local and regional transportation networks, enhancing mobility within the commuter-centric landscape of Lake County and its pivotal role as a link to the greater Orlando metropolitan area.

3.6.9 Yuma County Area Transit (YCAT) – Yuma County, AZ

YCAT serves Yuma County, AZ, and the City of Yuma, which is located about 20 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border and San Luis Río Colorado in Sonora, Mexico, a city of about 176,685. Yuma County has experienced varied population growth rates across its communities. From 2010 to 2022, Yuma County's population grew by 7%. The City of Yuma, the largest population center in the county, grew at the same rate as the county. San Luis and Somerton saw significant growth rates of 41% and 3%, respectively, while Wellton experienced a decline. The Cocopah Indian Tribe Reservation's population increased annually by 8.2% between 2010 and 2020.

YCAT serves both the urban area of the City of Yuma, as well as more rural parts of the county extending east, west, and south towards the border. Yuma's 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan emphasizes that day-tripping from San Luis to the City of Yuma is a common occurrence, especially to Walmart. This practice has become more pronounced as the population of San Luis has grown.

2023 Summary	
Service Area	78 square miles
Service Area Population	195,751
Revenue Miles	745,665
Peak Vehicles	14
Headways	Mostly 60-minute headways; one 30-minute headway

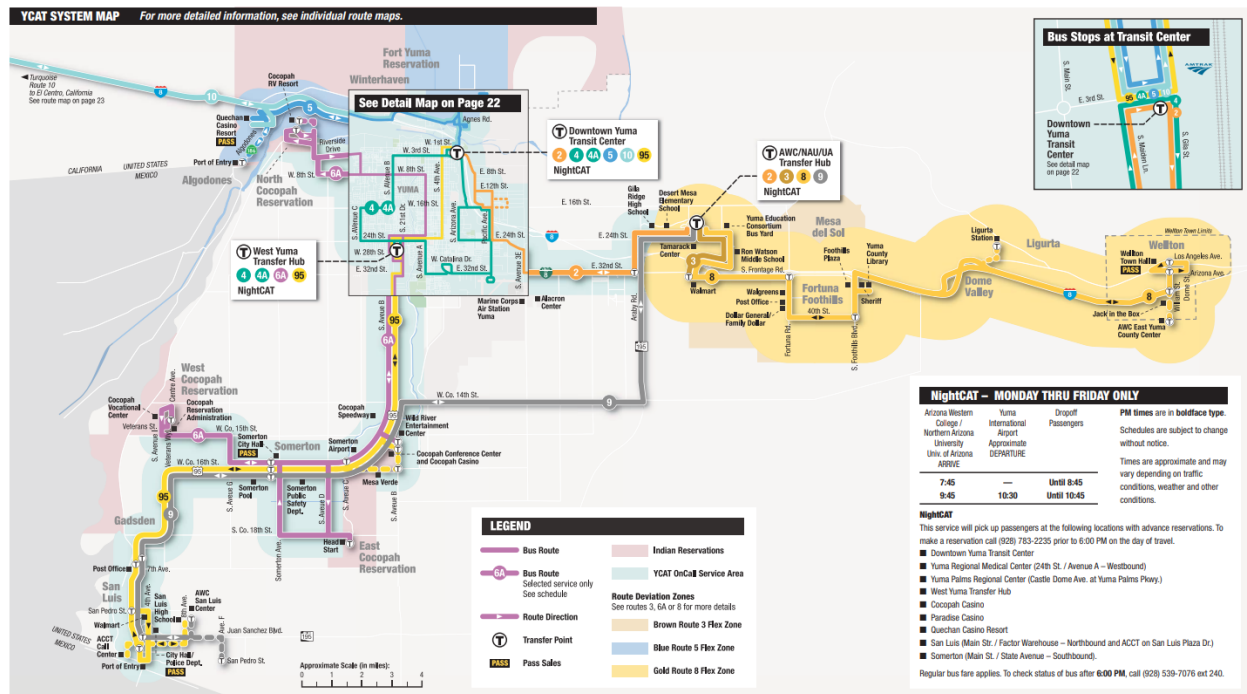
Fare Collection

In 2023, fares made up about 16% of the YCAT operations budget and 0% of the capital budget.

One-way passes are \$2.00, or \$1.00 for qualifying individuals, and day passes are \$5.00 and \$2.50, respectively.

Service Area Map

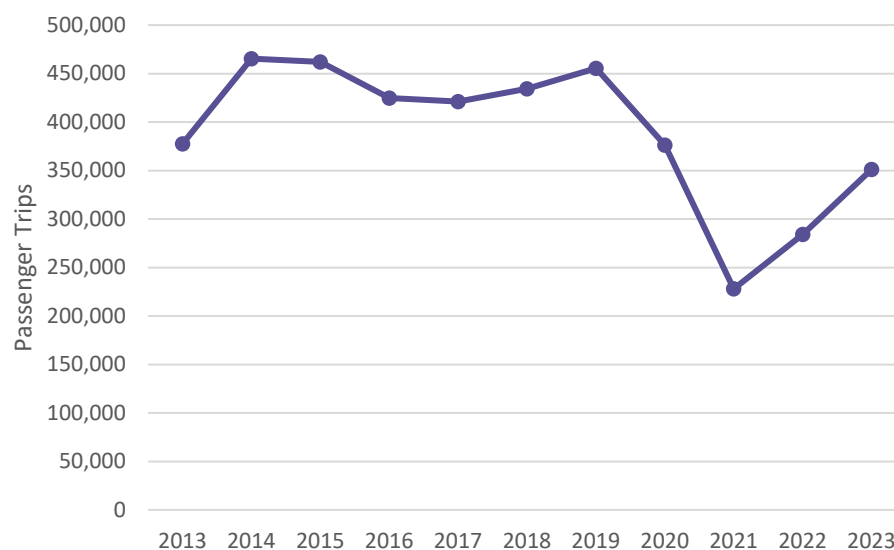
MAP 3-28: YCAT FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



Performance Over Time

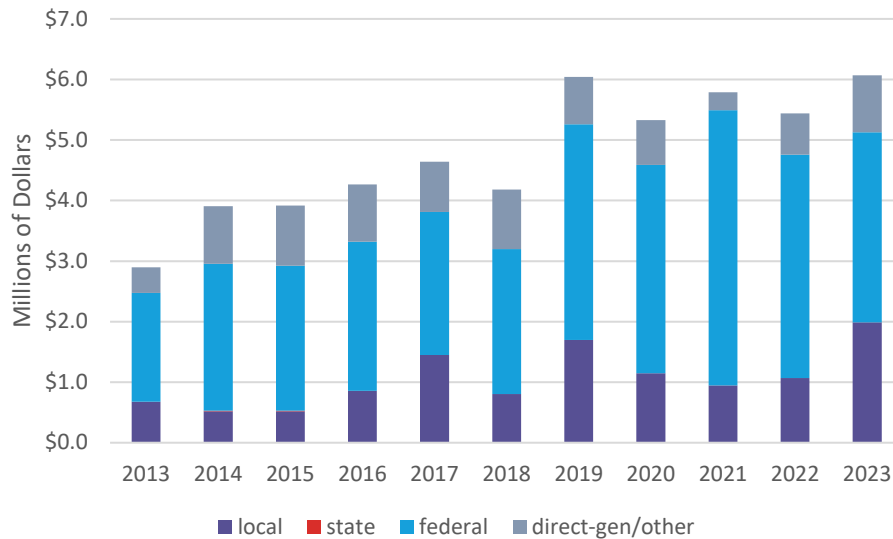
2020 and 2021 saw declines in YCAT's annual passenger trips. However, since then, YCAT has since seen increases in ridership, potentially in part due to increased transit from San Luis (Figure 3-38).

FIGURE 3-38: YCAT ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (NTD)



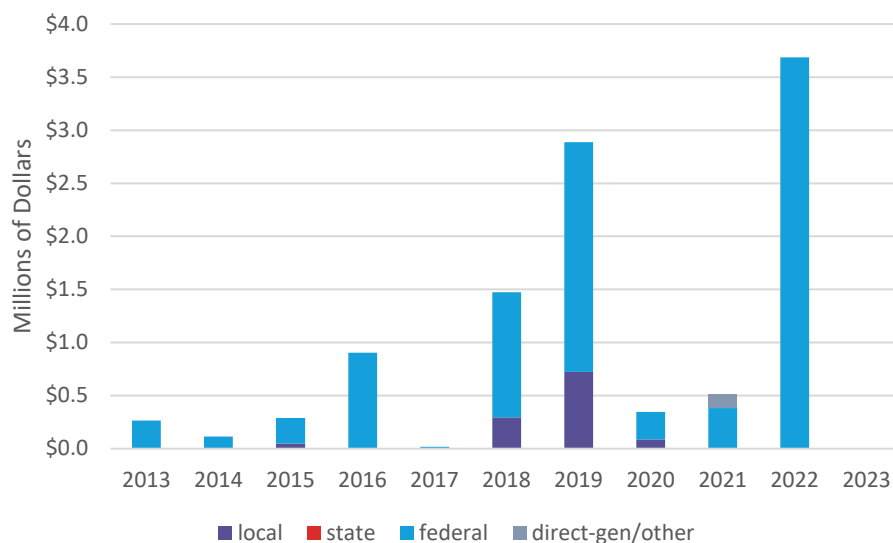
Operating expenses have stayed relatively stable since 2019. The majority of these funds have come from the federal government (Figure 3-39).

FIGURE 3-39: YCAT ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET (NTD)



The capital budget has been largely funded by the federal government, although 2021 saw an influx of other funds (Figure 3-40).

FIGURE 3-40: YCAT ANNUAL CAPITAL BUDGET (NTD)



Visions and Practices

The 2025 Yuma Metropolitan Area Regional Coordination Plan mentions that as San Luis rapidly grows, demand for transit services has increased. Coordination challenges arise from the need to efficiently use

limited transportation resources to address mobility barriers. Addressing these challenges involves modifications to services and increased connectivity, while working in a limited budget.

To adjust services, YCAT plans to modify and expand deviated fixed routes, restore late afternoon coverage on selected routes, prevent overcrowding, especially on buses to key locations like schools, and simplify customer information. It also seeks to improve connectivity, especially to the Fort Yuma-Quechan Reservation, improving headways to 30 minutes and restructuring certain routes in central Yuma.

Key Takeaways

Rider Transit and YCAT both cover 78 square miles, but YCAT is denser with a service area population of 195,751 to Rider Transit's 136,700. YCAT also generates more of its operating funds directly through fares (16% of total operating budget) than Rider Transit (3.8%). YCAT has also seen a more robust post-pandemic recovery in ridership than Rider Transit, perhaps due to use from its rapidly growing neighbor, San Luis in Sonora, Mexico.

YCAT is undertaking several strategic actions in response to growth pressures. It plans to modify and expand its routes, improve connectivity, restore coverage on selected routes, and prevent overcrowding, particularly on routes leading to key locations such as schools and the Fort Yuma-Quechan Reservation. Despite the growth in San Luis, YCAT has not initiated new specific actions related to this development but continues to address existing mobility barriers with limited resources.

3.6.10 Peer Comparison Takeaways

This peer review provides valuable insights into how Rider Transit can enhance its fixed route transit offerings. An analysis of key metrics such as budget, ridership, and system mileage indicates that Rider Transit's operations and financial health are similar to those of comparable systems. Notably, high-performing systems like ART in Asheville, which boast increased ridership levels, also tend to have substantial operating budgets that are predominantly supported by local funding. This suggests that prioritizing public transit in local budgets can significantly bolster the system effectiveness.

This peer review also identifies best practices from peer systems that could benefit Rider Transit. Noteworthy strategies include investing in reducing headways, implementing fare-free transit options, enhancing multimodal infrastructure to improve first- and last-mile connectivity, and fostering local partnerships. Moreover, exploring alternative funding avenues, such as seeking competitive grants and imposing local fees, is crucial to sustain these enhancements. By integrating these practices and tailoring them to Rider Transit's specific context, Rider Transit can enhance its service quality and address the challenges posed by urban development.

4 TRANSIT NEEDS, ALTERNATIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS

To develop logical recommendations for new transit service and/or service enhancements, the interaction of service area, service demand, and service supply in the greater Cabarrus County area must be understood to identify any existing geographic or temporal gaps between needs and services. Needs and gaps are identified using public input and the prior analyses of existing conditions, services, and latent demand. Appropriate transit alternatives are then developed to help address the identified needs and gaps. These alternatives are then phased into recommendations based on the appropriate timeframe of implementation.

4.1 Transit Needs Identification

The work of previous tasks, particularly the results of the engagement activities, was critical in the assessment of potential future transit service and capital/infrastructure improvement needs. This information is used in conjunction with local conditions data to evaluate the need for new, improved, modified, and/or expanded transit service, as well as other related enhancements that may be necessary to bolster mobility in the county.

To make informed decisions on service alternatives that meet the identified needs and are relevant to those living in the region, while also accounting for technology and innovation expected to occur over the life of the plan, an evaluation of current services, demographic characteristics of the population, and other existing operating environment conditions were explored. Additionally, several public engagement activities were conducted to allow residents and staff for the transit agencies involved to provide feedback on the current system, providing key insights that were used to further highlight the needs of the population.

4.1.1 Evaluation of Current Population and Services

As presented previously in the Existing Conditions, Services, Plans and Best Practices section of this plan, a significant level of analysis was completed on the Rider Transit and CCTS systems and their service areas. Such analysis is critical in a transit plan as it provides both context and structure for the development of potential recommendations for the service area. Using these various data and analyses, the project team evaluated the local service area, existing service demand, and service supply to identify any existing geographical or temporal gaps between identified needs and existing services so that these could be accounted for in the planning process.

Following are the key items (presented in more detail in those prior sections) that were assessed to identify transit needs within Cabarrus County. Each is summarized briefly in this section to further highlight the various pertinent issues and needs and how they were considered in the development of the recommended improvements to be included in the long-range transit plan.

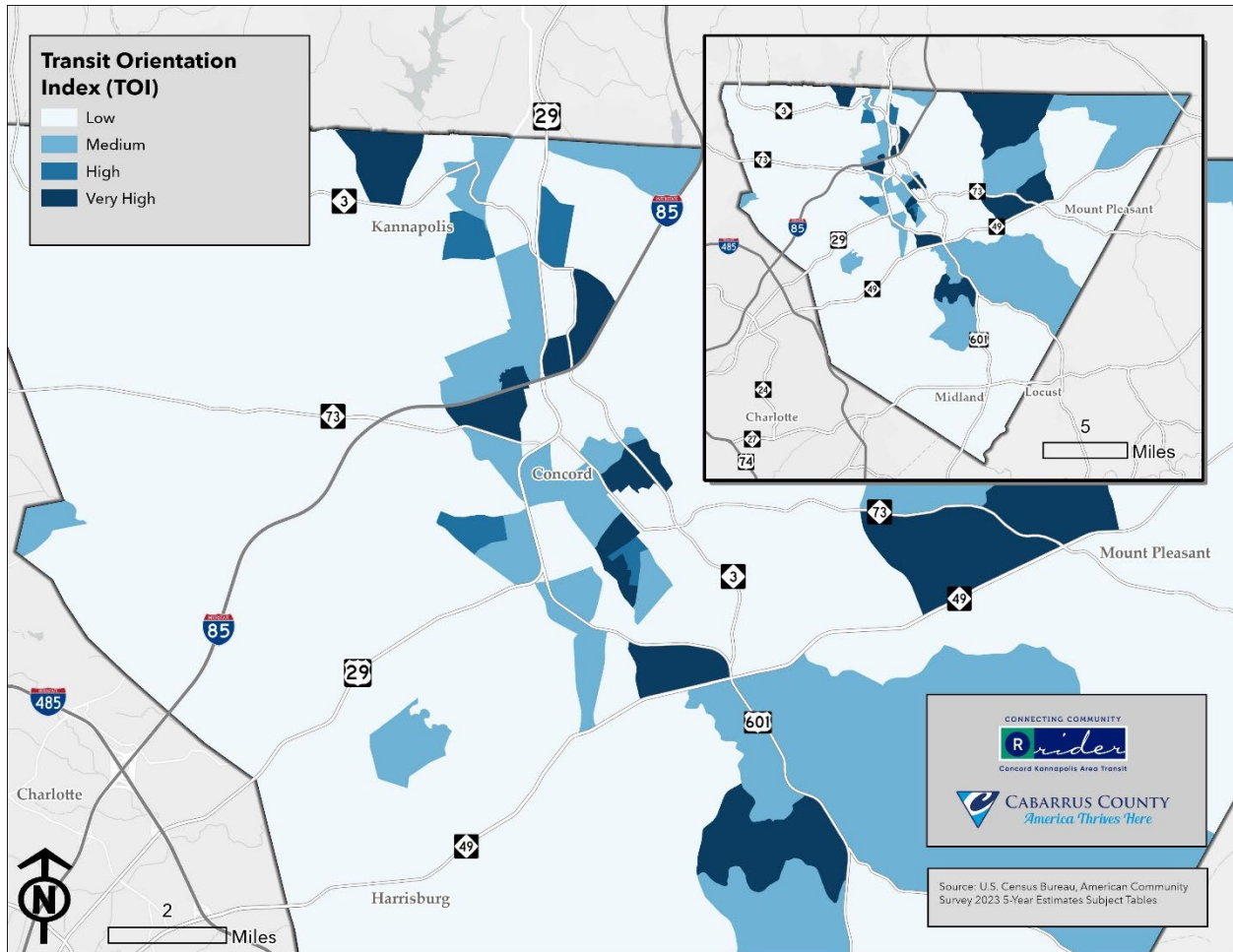
- **Transportation Disadvantaged Populations:** A substantial proportion of the traditional rider market is comprised of individuals who can be considered part of the transportation disadvantaged population. This refers to those population segments that historically have had a higher propensity to use transit and often are dependent on public transit for their

transportation needs. A Transit Orientation Index (TOI) analysis (Map 4-1) reveals the location of these population segments.

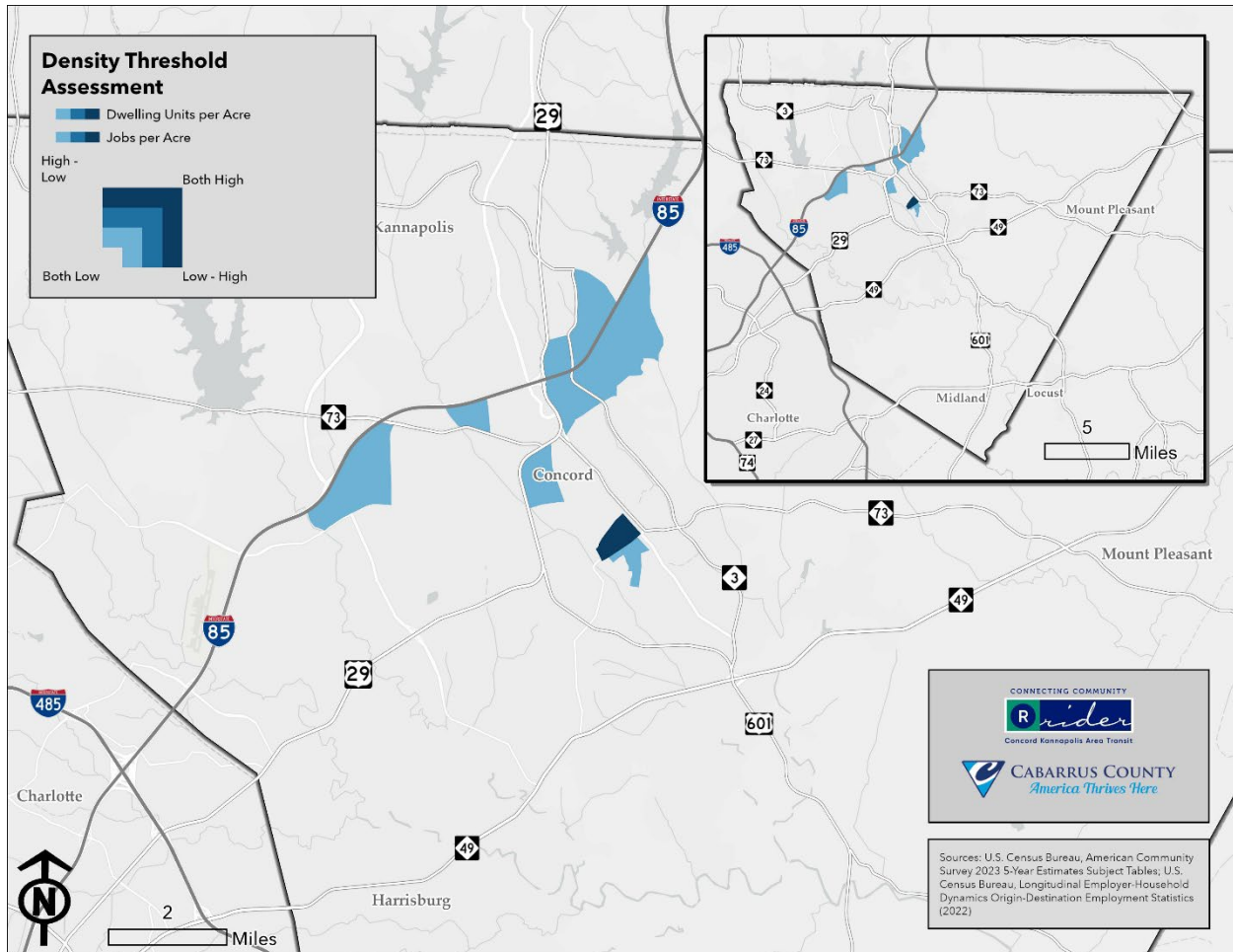
- **Discretionary Markets:** The Density Threshold Assessment (DTA) describes potential riders living in higher-density areas who may choose to use transit but are not dependent on it as they have other mobility alternatives at their disposal. Identifying areas reflecting these markets helps identify where latent ridership potential may be located, and these are highlighted in Map 4-2.
- **Demonstrated Travel Demand:** Analysis of the travel flow estimates harnessed from Replica (shown in Map 4-3) enable the identification of existing travel flows across all modes, which help highlight where travel demand occurs in the region and where the density of those trips suggest potential accommodation by transit.
- **Major Activity Centers and Employment:** Such analysis can be used to locate where higher concentrations of travel activity and employment clusters occur, as well as where opportunities for more robust, commuter-oriented transit may be most needed. The results of this assessment are depicted in Map 4-4.
- **Ridership Data:** This information is used to understand the relationship between existing transit supply and demand, identifying where the highest boardings and alightings occur in the service area, which are depicted and evident in Map 4-5.



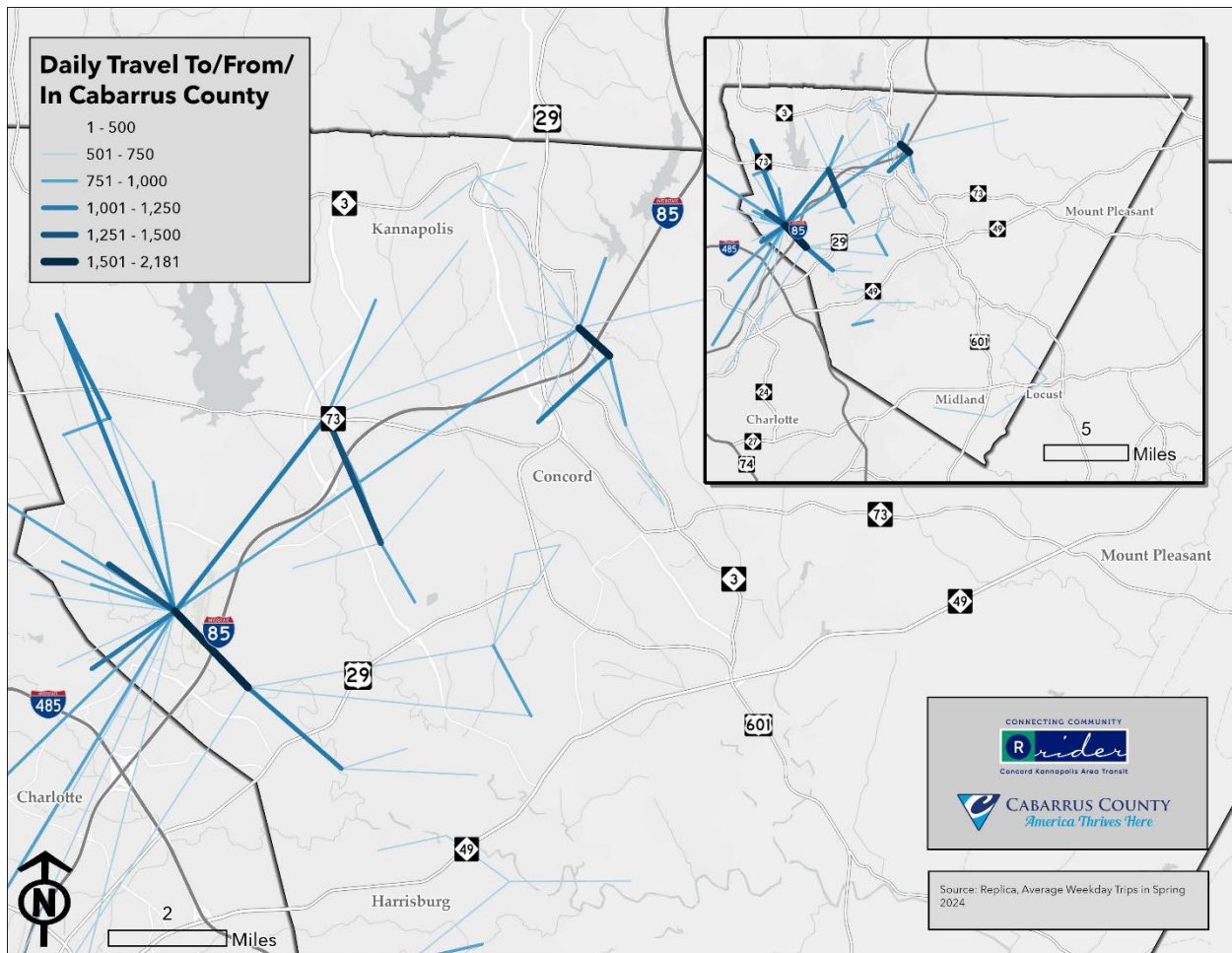
MAP 4-1: TRANSIT ORIENTATION INDEX (TOI)



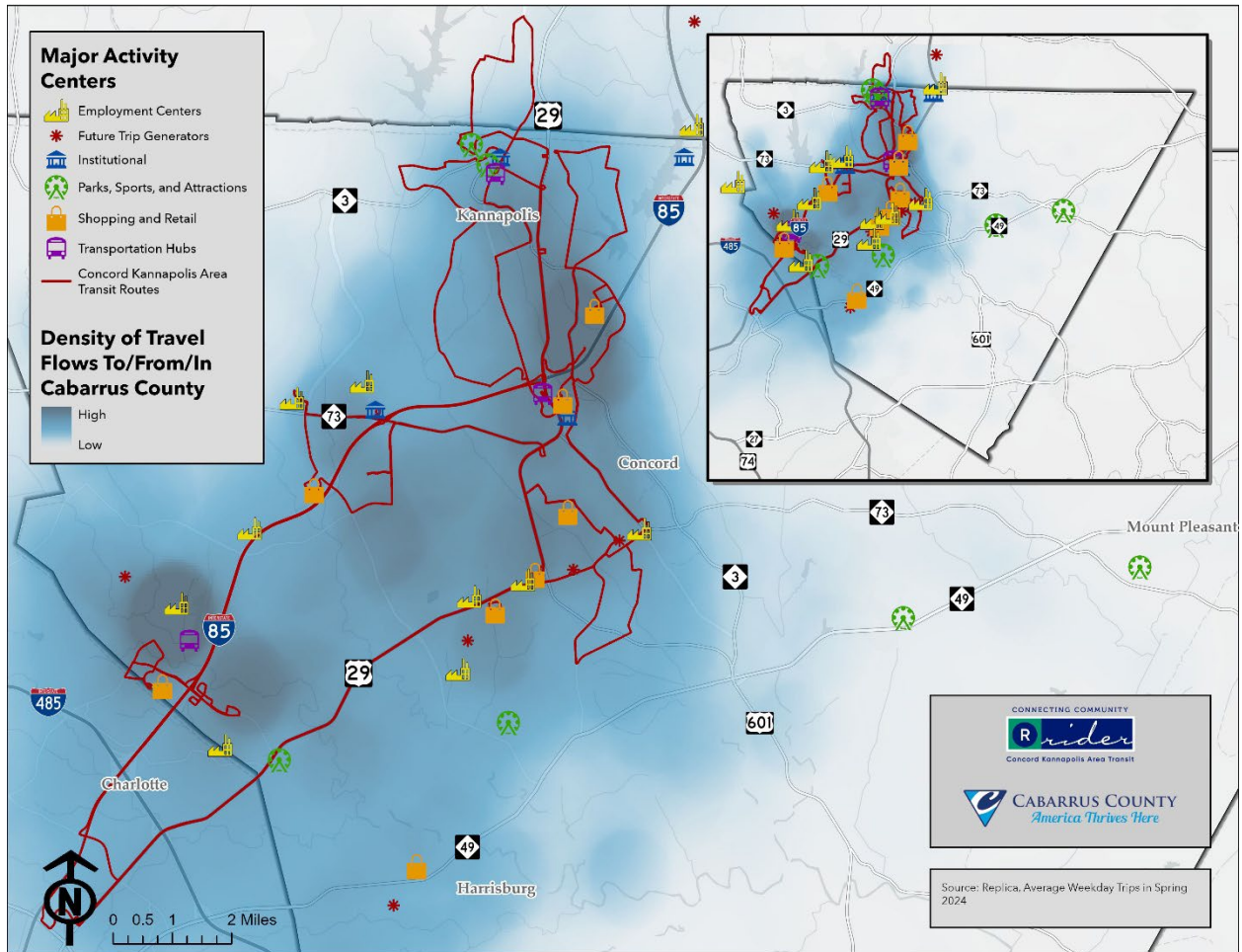
MAP 4-2: DENSITY THRESHOLD ASSESSMENT



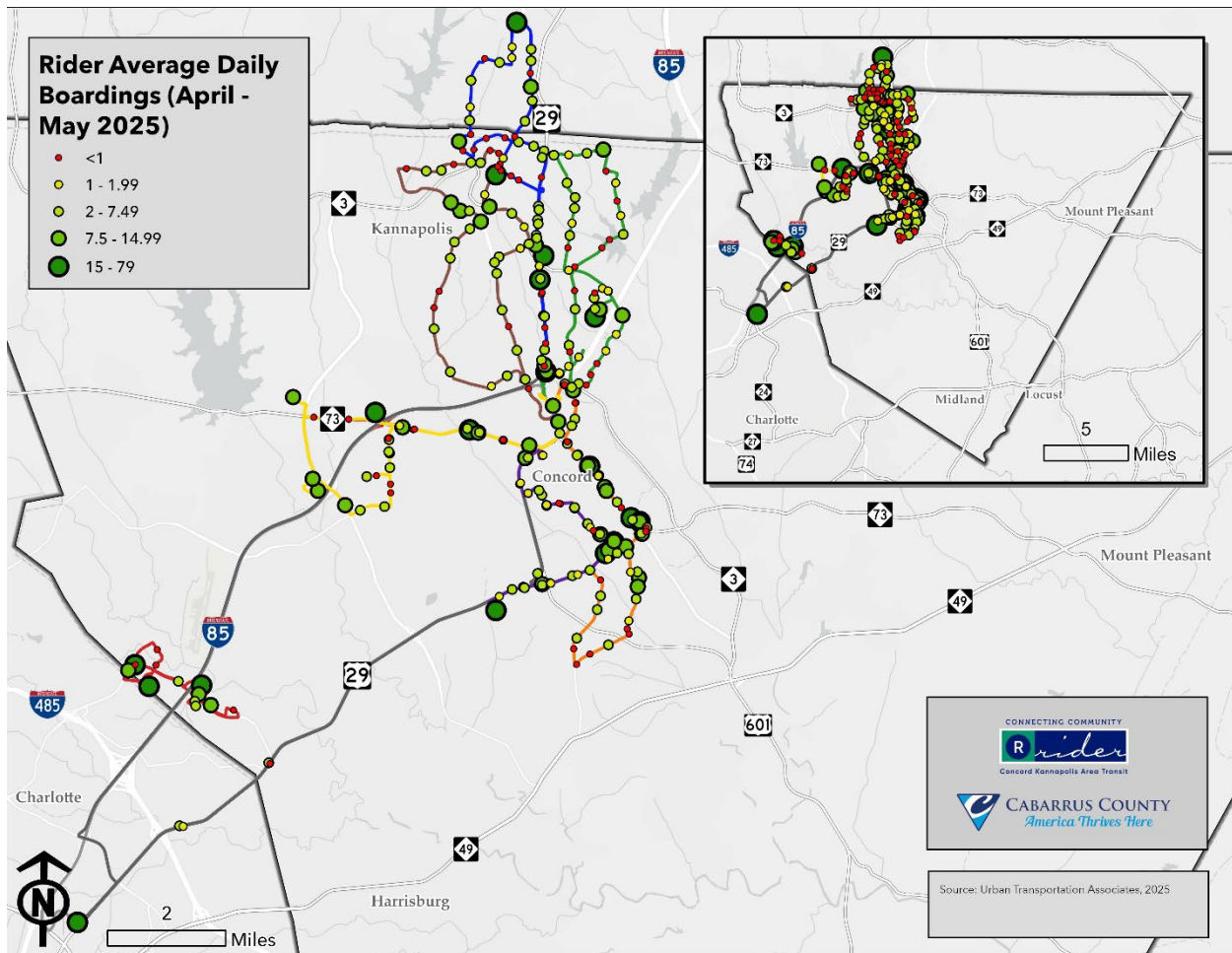
MAP 4-3: DAILY TRAVEL TO, FROM, AND WITHIN CABARRUS COUNTY



MAP 4-4: MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS AND DENSITY OF DAILY TRAVEL, TO, FROM, AND WITHIN CABARRUS COUNTY



MAP 4-5: RIDER TRANSIT AVERAGE DAILY BOARDINGS IN APRIL AND MAY 2025



4.1.2 Evaluation of Public Input

As presented previously in the Public Engagement section of this plan, a significant amount of public input was gathered and analyzed. Input from riders and members of the community is crucial in the transit planning process as it can help identify and prioritize potential improvements that would have the greatest impact on the riding experience for current patrons, as well as encourage non-users to try transit. The project team evaluated the public input to identify any potential issues or desired enhancements for the current transit services and/or infrastructure that, if addressed, could help better meet the current and future mobility needs of the community so that these could be accounted for in the planning process.

Following are the key items (presented in more detail in those prior sections) that were assessed to identify transit needs within Cabarrus County. Each is summarized briefly in this section to further highlight the various pertinent issues and needs and how they were considered in the development of the recommended improvements for the long-range transit plan.

- **Desired Transit Service Improvements:** Survey responses (Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2) were analyzed to determine the service improvements most desired by current and potential transit users, functioning as a key contributor to the development of recommendations for this plan.
- **Desired Transit Infrastructure:** As with service improvements, survey responses (Figure 4-2) were analyzed to determine the infrastructure and technology improvements most desired by current and potential transit users, highlighting the capital needs that could complement potential service improvements.
- **Desired New Transit Destinations:** Through the Rider Transit bus survey, transit riders indicated new destinations they would like to see served by transit (Figure 4-1). This information serves as the initial foundation for developing recommendations related to the geographic coverage of transit services.

FIGURE 4-1: TRANSIT RIDER TRANSIT SURVEY DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS AND NEW DESTINATIONS

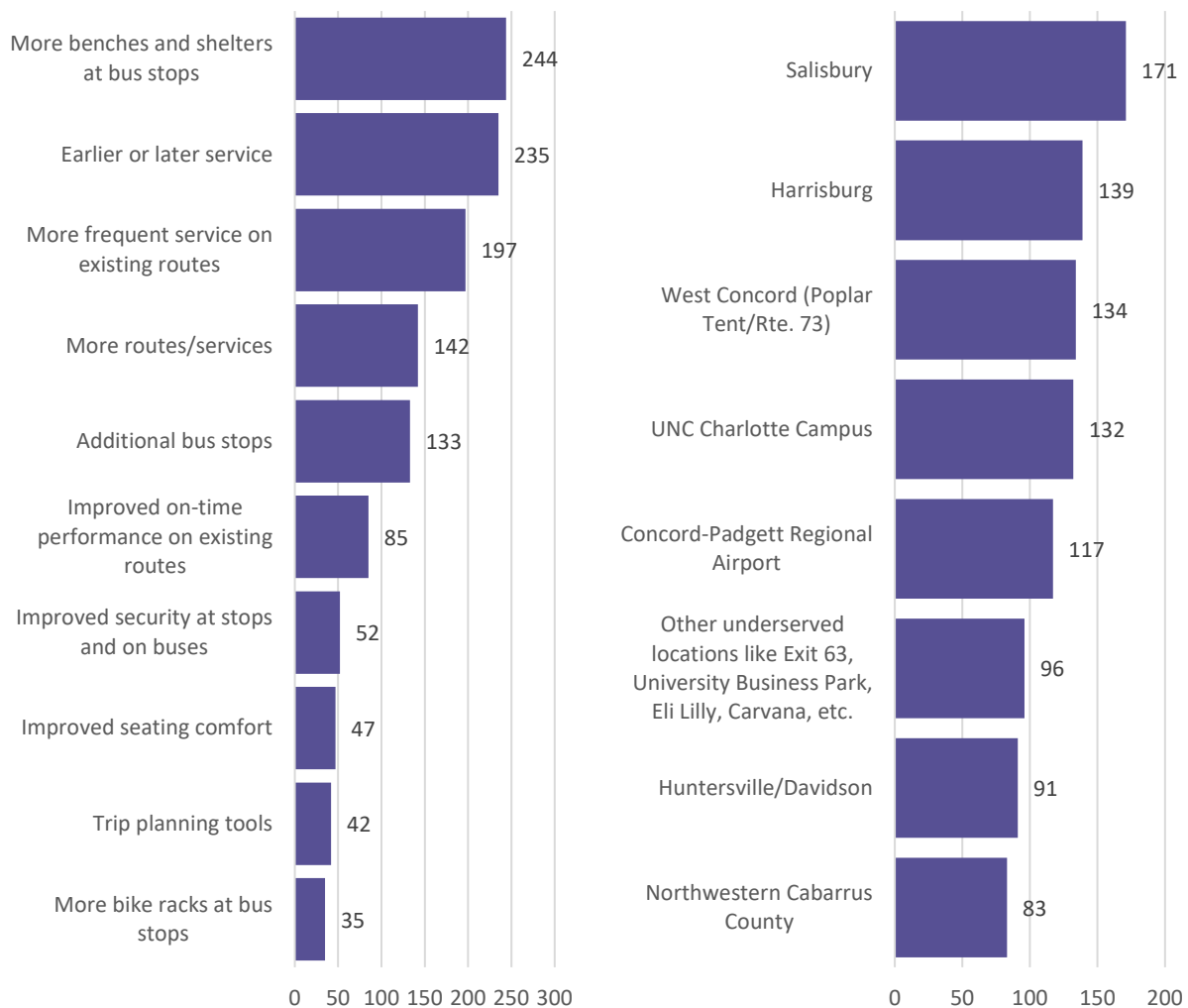
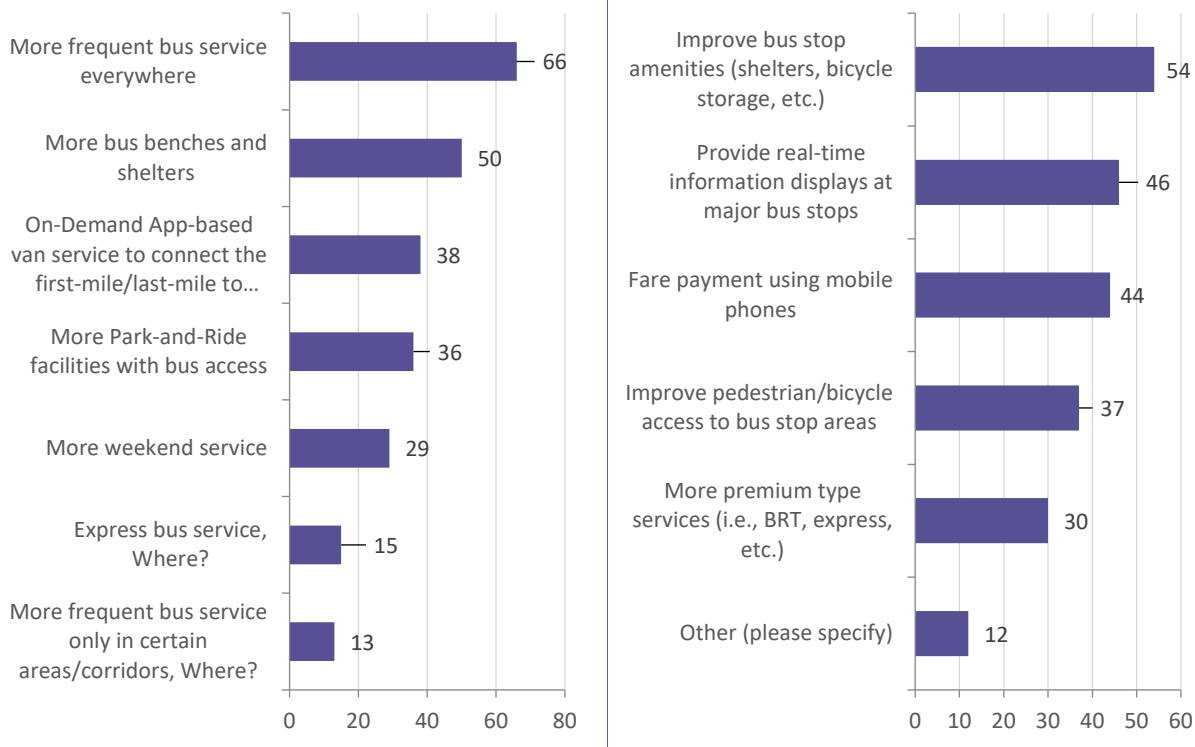


FIGURE 4-2: DESIRED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



4.1.3 Types of Service Improvements

There are four main types of service improvements that will be discussed within the short, medium, and long-term service alternatives. These include fixed-route network changes, Mobility On-Demand (MOD) services, systemwide operational improvements, and capital improvements. Describing these alternatives under these service improvement categories will help orient the intended direction of future services and help create a guide for implementing services throughout the term of this plan.

Fixed-Route Network Changes

Changes for fixed routes include alternative alignments for service, each considering the other changes occurring within the network. These changes include revising existing fixed routes to help maximize ridership without increasing costs in the short term, shortening routes to allow for all-day 60-minute service intervals in the medium term, and streamlining services to provide high-frequency transit to key corridors as microtransit is implemented for local, more individual trips in the long-term.

Mobility On-Demand (MOD) Services

The local transit agencies will also expand the types of services provided in the county by developing local MOD zones, which may be used in medium-to-low density areas to provide individualized curb-to-curb services. MOD zones will aim to provide connectivity between all areas within their geographies, allowing either for the completion of local trips or connections to the high-frequency fixed route network to accommodate more regional trips.



Systemwide Operational Improvements

Such improvements would involve changes to the way in which the current system operates to accommodate the other proposed systemwide enhancements that are expected to occur. These will focus on producing a greater level of efficiency and the ability to adapt to changes occurring within the region. These projects could include reconsidering the placement of bus stops, expanding hours of service in the evenings and on weekends, and/or increasing service frequencies.

Capital Improvements

A major component of the capital improvements would involve supporting the consolidation of the County's existing transit services, including the siting, design and construction of a joint Operations and Maintenance facility that could accommodate both agencies' current and future fleets and staffing needs. They also could help lay the groundwork for improving infrastructure at existing bus stops and implementing mobility hubs, allowing for a greater level of priority for transit to operate within Cabarrus County's current built infrastructure.

4.2 Short-Term Improvement Alternatives (Years 0-5)

The short-term improvement alternatives, as outlined in this section, are intended to be implemented within the first five years of this plan. Changes expected to occur within the first five years of implementation include the pilot of a microtransit zone, four existing fixed-route alignment changes, the implementation of one new fixed route, an extension of service hours, improvements to bus stops and signage, and development of a new Operations and Maintenance facility. The improvement alternatives highlighted for the short term guide the unified agency's eventual transition to a system where local microtransit zone services are supported by high-frequency fixed routes operating along key roadway corridors. To reach this goal, these short-term alternatives may be considered at varying levels during this period of the plan.

4.2.1 Fixed Route Network Changes

The first service alternatives to be recommended work toward modifying the existing fixed-route network to streamline services while continuing to serve current riders. These changes help simplify routes while keeping their current expenses unchanged. Many of these changes involve reducing the distances of one-way portions of routes and consolidating areas of low stop-level ridership activity to be reoriented with the microtransit services that will be implemented in conjunction with these changes. By Year 4 of this plan, the following changes will occur to selected existing fixed routes as shown:

- **Blue route:** Route realignment, streamlining services (Year 4)
- **Green route:** Route realignment, streamlining services (Year 4)
- **Orange route:** Route realignment, streamlining services (Year 4)
- **Red route:** Route realignment, streamlining services (Year 4)

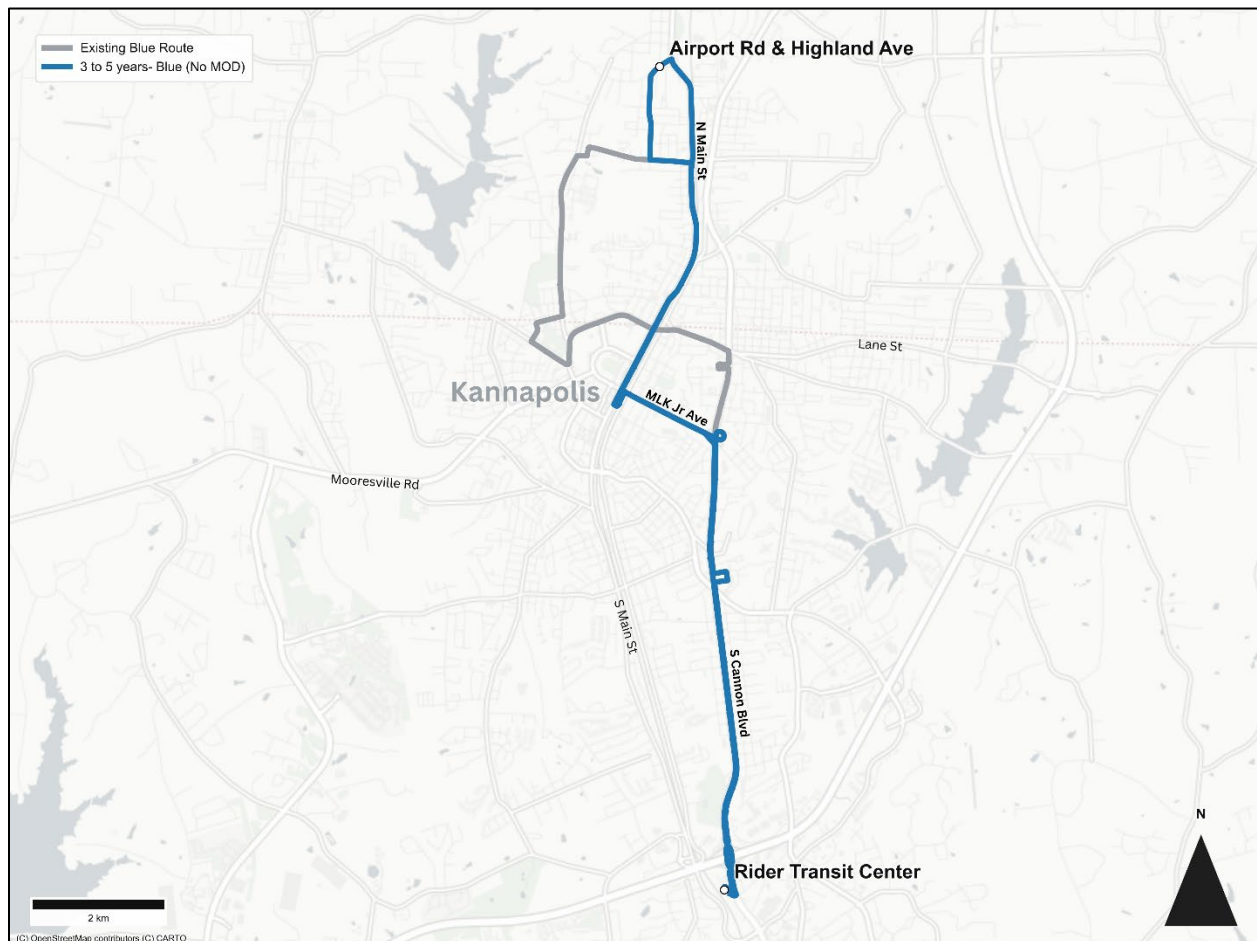
Additionally, by Year 5, a new fixed route may be implemented. The reintegration of service to Salisbury would further enhance mobility within Cabarrus County and may provide an increased level of regional trips following the consolidation of the transit agencies and the implementation of microtransit services.



Blue Route

Alterations for the Blue route in the short term involve re-routing the line to accommodate consistent point-to-point ridership. This route will be diverted from West A Street, Loop Road North, and portions of North Cannon Boulevard to provide a more streamlined ride between stops heading toward Central Kannapolis and the Kannapolis Train Station from its northern terminus. The intention of these changes is to shift service to the largest corridors serving Central Kannapolis while maintaining the route's current level of service.

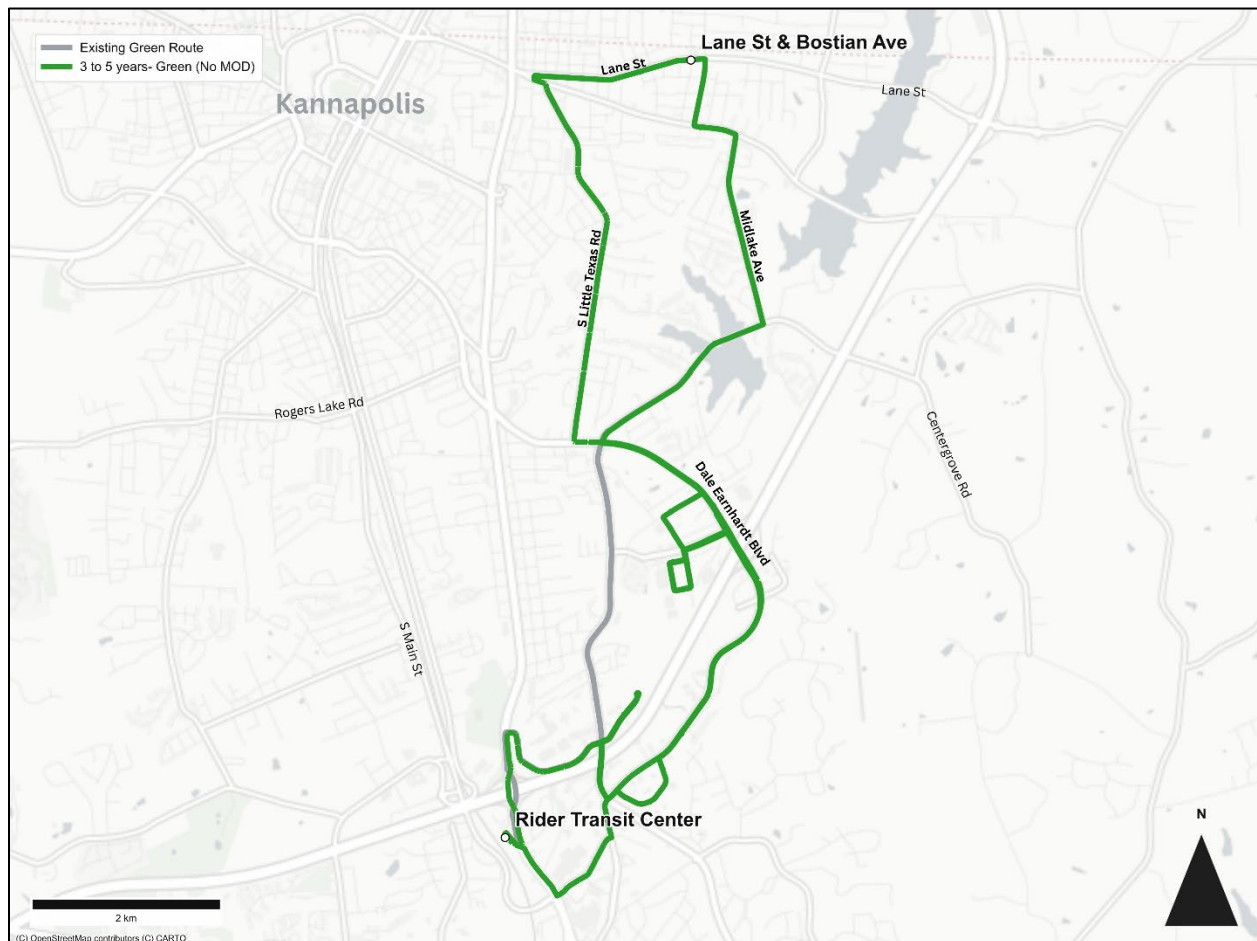
MAP 4-6: SHORT-TERM CHANGES TO BLUE ROUTE



Green Route

Alterations for the Green route in the short term involve re-routing the line to accommodate riders transferring between Downtown Kannapolis and the Rider Transit Center. This route will be diverted from Concord Lake Road and instead take Copperfield Boulevard NE from Dale Earnhardt Boulevard to provide consistency between northbound and southbound trips, helping serve the commercial corridor for trips heading in both directions while continuing to serve the local residential neighborhoods in the northern loop.

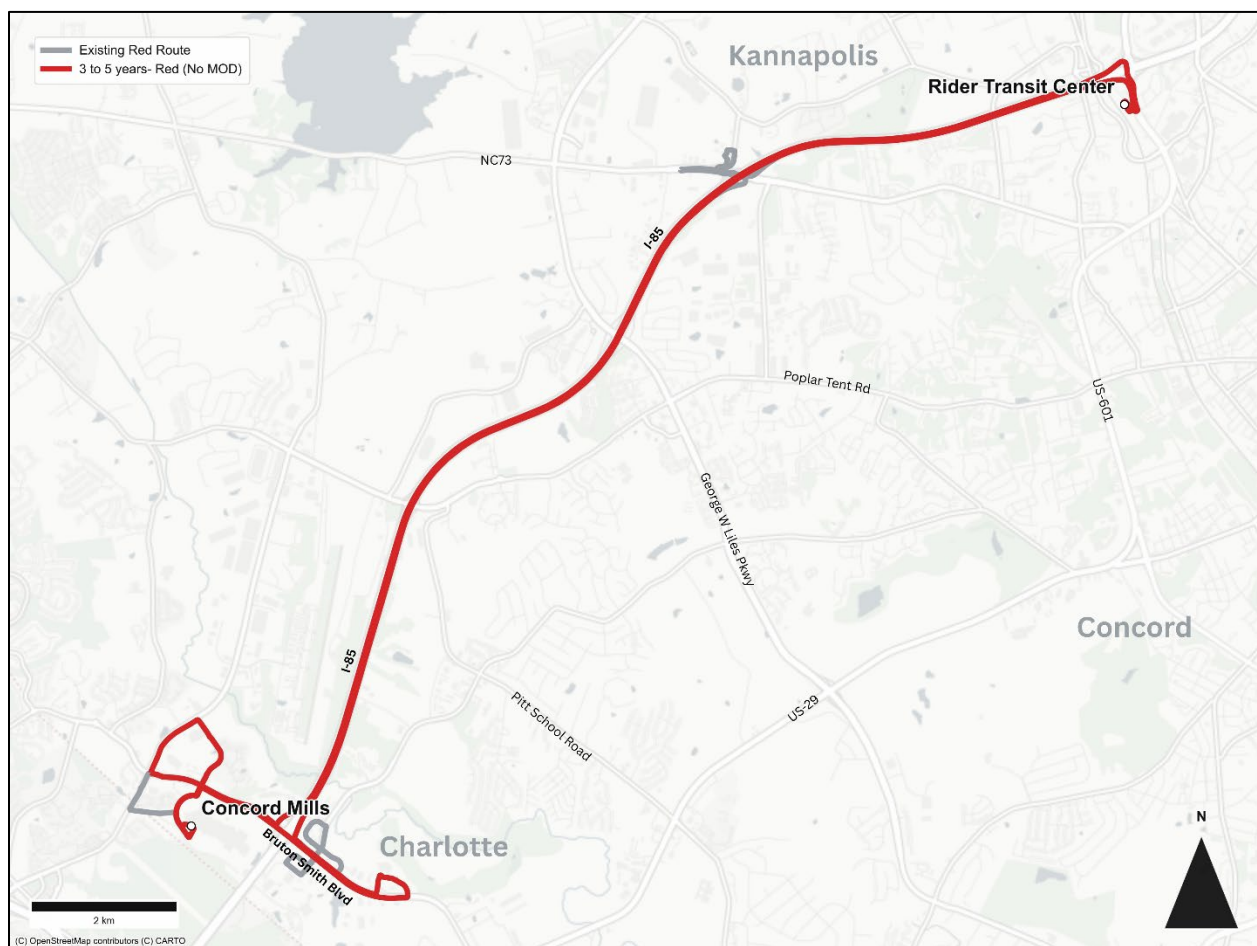
MAP 4-7: SHORT-TERM CHANGES TO GREEN ROUTE



Red Route

Alterations for the Red route in the short term involve re-routing the line to provide greater efficiencies at commercial destinations along Bruton Smith Boulevard and Concord Mills Boulevard. This route will be diverted from Carolina Lily Lane and will then serve the mall via the entrance to Concord Mills Boulevard, helping designate the commercial corridor as a priority destination for trips heading in both directions along each line. Realigning the Red route will allow for improved on-time performance and reliability. The Boulevards of Concord microtransit pilot can accommodate transportation to or from destinations in the area that are no longer served directly due to the updated Red route alignment.

MAP 4-8: SHORT-TERM CHANGES TO RED ROUTE



Salisbury Fixed-Route Connection

A new route that would fit the needs of overall community mobility and connectivity in the short term is a connection between Cabarrus County and Salisbury. The reintroduction of a Salisbury fixed route would facilitate regional travel between Cabarrus and Rowan counties. After an initial pilot as a standalone route, the route can be considered for consolidation with one of the existing routes connecting the Rider Transit Center and the Kannapolis Train Station, if it is operationally effective. The initially proposed Salisbury route begins at its southern terminus at the Rider Transit Center, following US-29A through Kannapolis, then merging onto US-29 through Landis and China Grove, then taking I-85 to Salisbury, serving Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and its downtown core, and ending at the Salisbury VA Medical Center. Initially, this route would only run during peak hours on weekdays as it would be geared toward fulfilling medical and work-related trips.

MAP 4-9: NEW SALISBURY FIXED ROUTE



4.2.2 Mobility-On-Demand (MOD) Services

In conjunction with the changes to the fixed-route system, the development of microtransit zones will establish expanded coverage as part of regular transit service provided in Cabarrus County. These zones are meant to provide mobility for those needing transport within their boundaries, providing households with equitable access to local needs and amenities as well as transportation to or from fixed-route transit stops for trips outside of the local area. The suggested short-term microtransit service concept to be implemented by Year 3 is listed below:

- **Boulevards of Concord:** Local microtransit zone for commercial and industrial corridors.

During this period, the zone will operate as a pilot service, as operations and training on the new service will occur prior to permanent implementation. Additionally, the zone may be altered to accommodate improved wait times or by adding or reducing the service area of the microtransit zone.

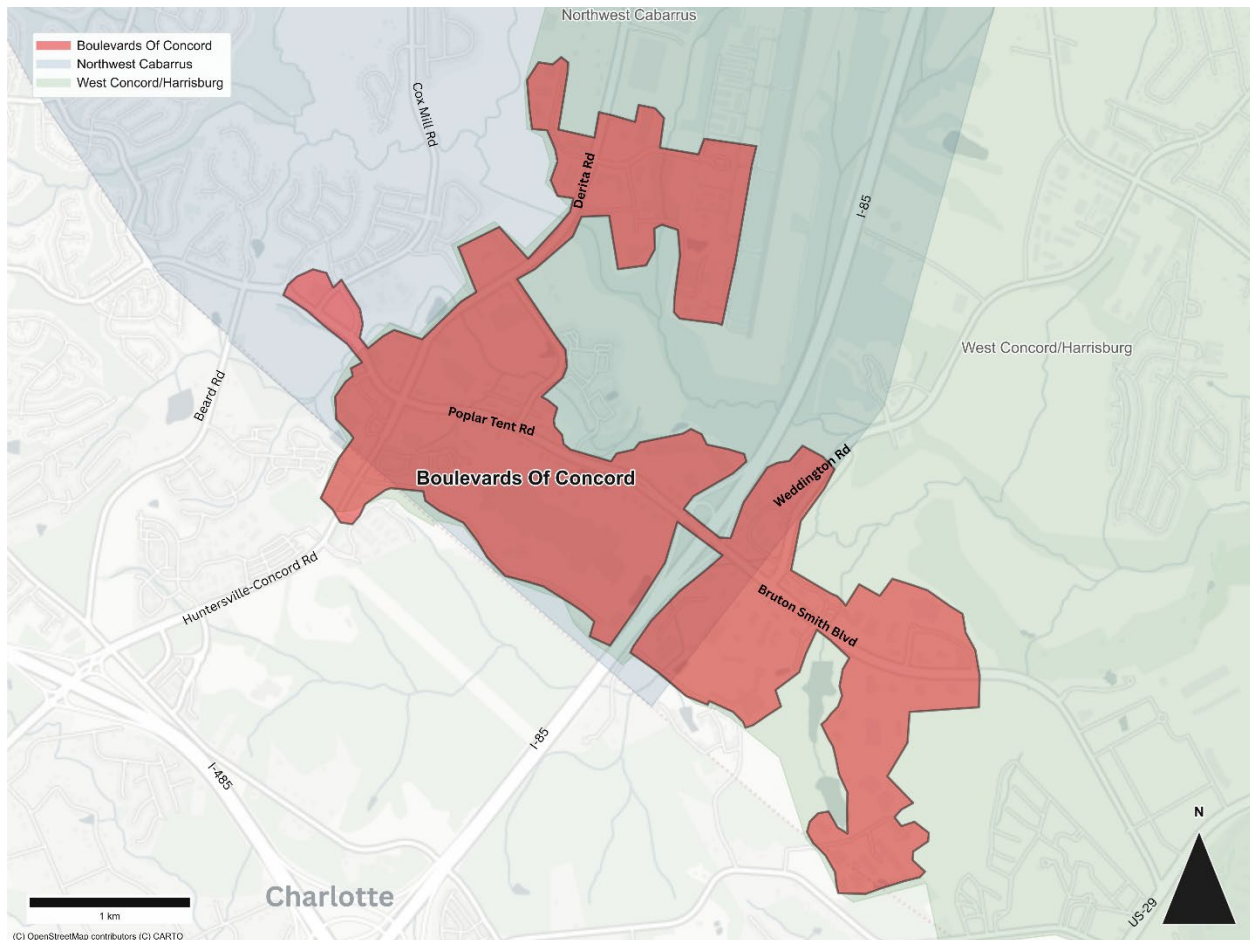
Boulevards of Concord Microtransit Zone

The area south of the Concord-Padgett Regional Airport, encompassing corridors that include Aviation Boulevard NW, Derita Road (south of the airport), Concord Mills Boulevard, and Bruton Smith Boulevard, may be established as a microtransit zone, where those needing to make local trips across this commercial area may be able to do so without needing to utilize any fixed-route services. This area was chosen as a microtransit hub due to its status as a major employment hub, its ability to generate numerous local trips, and to enable residents and riders to link trips at different locations in one general area. Additionally, the limited road network and sprawling nature of the area is not conducive to operating effective fixed-route services.



The area receiving coverage from this zone includes Concord Mills shopping mall, the Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau (and nearby hotels), the auto mall on Bruton Smith Boulevard, other commercial and big-box retailers (such as Walmart, BJ's, At Home), and the industrial park surrounding and including Concord-Padgett Regional Airport.

MAP 4-10: BOULEVARDS OF CONCORD MICROTRANSIT ZONE



Microtransit Technology Improvements

If the County intends to deploy microtransit, a comprehensive Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) mobility solution to support the planning, operation, and optimization of the service is recommended. The platform should be cloud-based and include interfaces for users (via mobile app, web portal, and call center) and agency staff (for administration and dispatch), along with supporting hardware, onboard vehicle equipment, and operational software.

All ride requests should be required to go through the SaaS system to support key functions such as trip scheduling, vehicle assignment, shared ride optimization, and service monitoring. Spontaneous boardings (i.e., flag-down or walk-ons) should not be allowed. Trip requests can be made through the transit call center, mobile application, or web portal.

Key Functional Requirements

The following section outlines recommended key functional requirements for a SaaS platform, which showcase ideal functional requirements to foster an effective and efficient microtransit service within Cabarrus County.

- **User Management:** Rider Transits can pre-register with the system, providing contact information and preferred destinations.
- **Fare Integration:** Users can create payment accounts and utilize mobile-based fare payment methods that align with current fare policies.
- **Trip Planning & Requests:** The platform must allow riders to plan and request trips in real time or up to seven days in advance, including fixed-route or microtransit options, and show travel time, transfer, and fare details.
- **Boarding Verification:** Each rider will be issued a unique trip code that operators confirm using an onboard tablet, ensuring the correct trip matching.
- **Vehicle Assignment & Operator Tools:** The system will automatically assign and sequence trips using dynamic algorithms. Operators will receive real-time instructions and routing through their in-vehicle tablets and communicate with dispatch.
- **Payment Collection:** Rider Transits will pay via mobile payment and on-board readers that support cashless fare collection.
- **Real-Time Operations & Data Collection:** The platform must capture detailed service data—including trip requests, boardings, cancellations, revenue hours/miles—for use in NTD, FTA, and state-level reporting. RideCo currently provides these features to Rider.
- **Administrative Control & Service Optimization:** Agency staff must be able to adjust key parameters (e.g., scheduling, zone boundaries, non-service areas) and monitor service quality metrics like waiting times, productivity, and on-time performance.
- **Multi-Modal Integration:** The system should support connections to fixed-route services and future regional mobility hubs, enabling seamless transfers and varied service models such as first-/last-mile and population-targeted services.
- **Mobility Optimization Algorithms:** The SaaS must determine whether a trip can be served more efficiently by fixed route or microtransit, using comparative travel time thresholds (determined by the agency) to assign the best mode.
- **Predictive Analytics & Service Planning:** The platform must use historical and real-time data to forecast demand, optimize vehicle deployment, and match service supply with observed travel patterns throughout the day.

The ideal SaaS platform should provide reliable, optimized shared ride services and meet the functional and performance requirements detailed above. The platform also should enable scalable, flexible microtransit service tailored to the county's evolving mobility needs.

4.2.3 Systemwide Operations Improvements

Another short-term alternative focuses on revising operational characteristics within Rider Transit, which may enhance overall rider experience and improve the public perception of the service. In the near term, the primary change is to extend evening service hours to 10:30 PM.

Evening Service Improvement

By the fourth year of this planning horizon, fixed route service may extend its hours of service until 10:30 PM. This would result in all fixed routes providing two additional trips per day, increasing the overall operating cost of routes by roughly 14-15% based on the increase in vehicle revenue hours required for this extended service. Increasing the service window for many routes makes sense given the needs expressed by current patrons and the inherent benefit this would generate to attract new riders. By the end of the short term, Blue, Brown, Green, Orange, Purple, Red, Yellow, and CCX routes would all provide evening service until 10:30 PM. However, note that additional service window alternatives will be explored in the medium- and long-term windows of the plan to understand the additional cost of further increasing service hours with the addition of new types of service.

4.2.4 Capital Improvements & Consolidation

A few capital improvements were also assessed for the short term, which aim to provide amenities that improve the overall rider experience when using transit. At the agency level, a new joint Operations and Maintenance facility for a unified transit agency in Cabarrus County is crucial for the ongoing success of their respective operations. In addition, a bus stop and signage improvement program, aimed primarily at providing wayfinding for the new services, will also improve the rider's ability to utilize the system effectively.

However, before any of the short-term service alternatives may be implemented, it first would be prudent for the County to establish a single unified transit agency that will be responsible for plan implementation and the various new, modified, and expanded services it offers over the long term. This process is recommended to occur over the first two years of the plan.

Consolidation

The implementation of many of the transit improvements highlighted throughout this chapter will be dependent on the consolidation of Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS) and Rider Transit into a single, unified system.

CCTS currently serves as the primary provider of demand response service within the county, while Rider Transit operates the fixed-route network serving the cities of Concord and Kannapolis and provides ADA paratransit service within three-quarters of a mile of those fixed routes. Since the proposed transit improvements include enhancements to both microtransit and fixed-route services, effective coordination between the two will be essential to maximize mobility and minimize service gaps. Currently, the two systems operate separately, so, to plan, schedule and manage services efficiently, the consolidation of these services is crucial in order to execute the improvements in this plan in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Bringing both under a single organizational structure, first under the City of Concord and then eventually as a transit authority (as originally proposed in the previous consolidation study), would improve coordination, simplify administration, supply an appropriate level of staff and create a unified transit network that will better connect and serve all areas of the county.

This unified transit agency would be better equipped to coordinate all the proposed system changes in the plan since it would be able to implement them within the operational context of all transit services

already existing in the county. As the addition of microtransit services occurs, the unified agency will also be able to manage existing fixed-route services to re-orient their purpose to serve trips spanning the most highly trafficked corridors in Cabarrus County. This singular agency would also be able to inventory and take account of all transit infrastructure throughout the county, ensuring a consistent quality standard for services for riders utilizing the newly expanded array of services.

Finally, consolidation would also support key infrastructure investments needed for future growth within the agency. These include designing and constructing a new Operations and Maintenance facility to support an expanded fleet and upgrading passenger amenities across the network, such as shelters, benches, signage, and accessibility improvements. Together, these actions would create a stronger and more coordinated transit system capable of meeting the growing mobility needs of Cabarrus County residents over the next two decades and beyond.

Additionally, both agencies are understaffed generally and would benefit from the addition of more staff. Consolidation alone will not solve the understaffing concern such that this issue must be addressed in addition to consolidation.

The Cabarrus County Transportation Service and Concord Kannapolis Area Transit Consolidation Plan, completed in 2024, details the steps required in order to achieve the proposed consolidation.

Joint Operations & Maintenance Facility

A new joint Operations and Maintenance facility will serve as the central hub for the unified CCTS and Rider Transit operations, maintenance, and administrative staff. It will house all daily transit operations under one roof. This facility will be designed to accommodate an expanded fleet of approximately 100 revenue vehicles, 50 non-revenue vehicles, and 150 parking spots for staff and visitors, which accommodates growth from existing service to the twentieth year of the planning horizon.

Key components of the facility include a maintenance office, maintenance bays for both cutaways and buses, a wash bay, and an inspection bay for each vehicle type. Other features include a maintenance shop, fueling station, storage areas, training space, and an administrative office equipped with restrooms and support spaces. This centralized hub will streamline operations, improve efficiency, and provide the infrastructure needed to support a unified and expanding transit system.

Table 4-1, Table 4-2, and Table 4-3 detail the space requirements for the new facility. The design of the facility is programmed to take place in Year 4 of this plan, following the consolidation of Rider Transit and CCTS into a single entity. The construction of the facility would occur the following year. It is estimated that it will require approximately \$26 million in investment (in 2030 dollars) to cover land acquisition, design, and construction.

TABLE 4-1: JOINT OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE FACILITY TOTAL BUILDING AREAS

Building Areas	Area (Square Feet)
Total Administrative Area for the Facility	11,700
Total Operations Areas for the Facility	8,400
Total Vehicle Maintenance Areas for the Facility	26,100
Total Parts Storage Areas for the Facility	6,800
Total Service Areas	7,000
Total All Building Areas	60,000

TABLE 4-2: JOINT OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE FACILITY TOTAL EXTERIOR AREAS

Exterior Areas	Area (Square Feet)
Total Exterior Bus Parking	99,120
Total Vehicle Parking Areas for the Facility	68,400
Total Exterior Storage Areas for the Facility	2,700
Total Exterior Storm Water Management Areas for the Facility	22,500
Total All Exterior Areas	192,720

TABLE 4-3: JOINT OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE FACILITY TOTAL SITE AREA

Total Site Area	Area (Square Feet)
Total Building Area	60,000
Total Exterior Area	192,720
Other Site Circulation, Setbacks, and Landscaping	252,720
Total All Exterior Areas	192,720 (11.6 acres)

Bus Stop & Signage Improvement Program

The final short-term service alternative involves developing an ADA Transition Plan for the current fixed-route bus stop inventory. Transit riders and stakeholders have strongly voiced their desire for bus stops to be safe, accessible, and effective. An ADA Transition Plan is vital in ensuring transit in Cabarrus County remains inclusive, diverse, and safe. The transition plan will consist of an inventory of Rider Transit's bus stops that evaluates non-ADA-compliance of stops, inaccessible amenities, lack of amenities, general safety concerns, and operationally inefficient locations.

Taking place during the first year of this plan, the ADA Transition Plan will recommend, develop, and lead into a phased and fiscally-defined two-year implementation program to address the recommendations identified as part of the ADA Transition Plan. The bus stop improvements are anticipated to be undertaken and completed by Year 3 of this plan, coinciding with the full consolidation of the two transit agencies.

4.2.5 Education Campaign

In order to support the introduction of microtransit in Cabarrus County in the Boulevards of Concord area, an education and outreach campaign should be undertaken to engage, inform, and prepare riders

for using that microtransit service as well as future microtransit zones. Education methods for this service change can include but are not limited to social media, community workshops, and in-person engagement at key transit stops. The content of the education campaign should also reflect the complementary fixed-route service changes, as well.

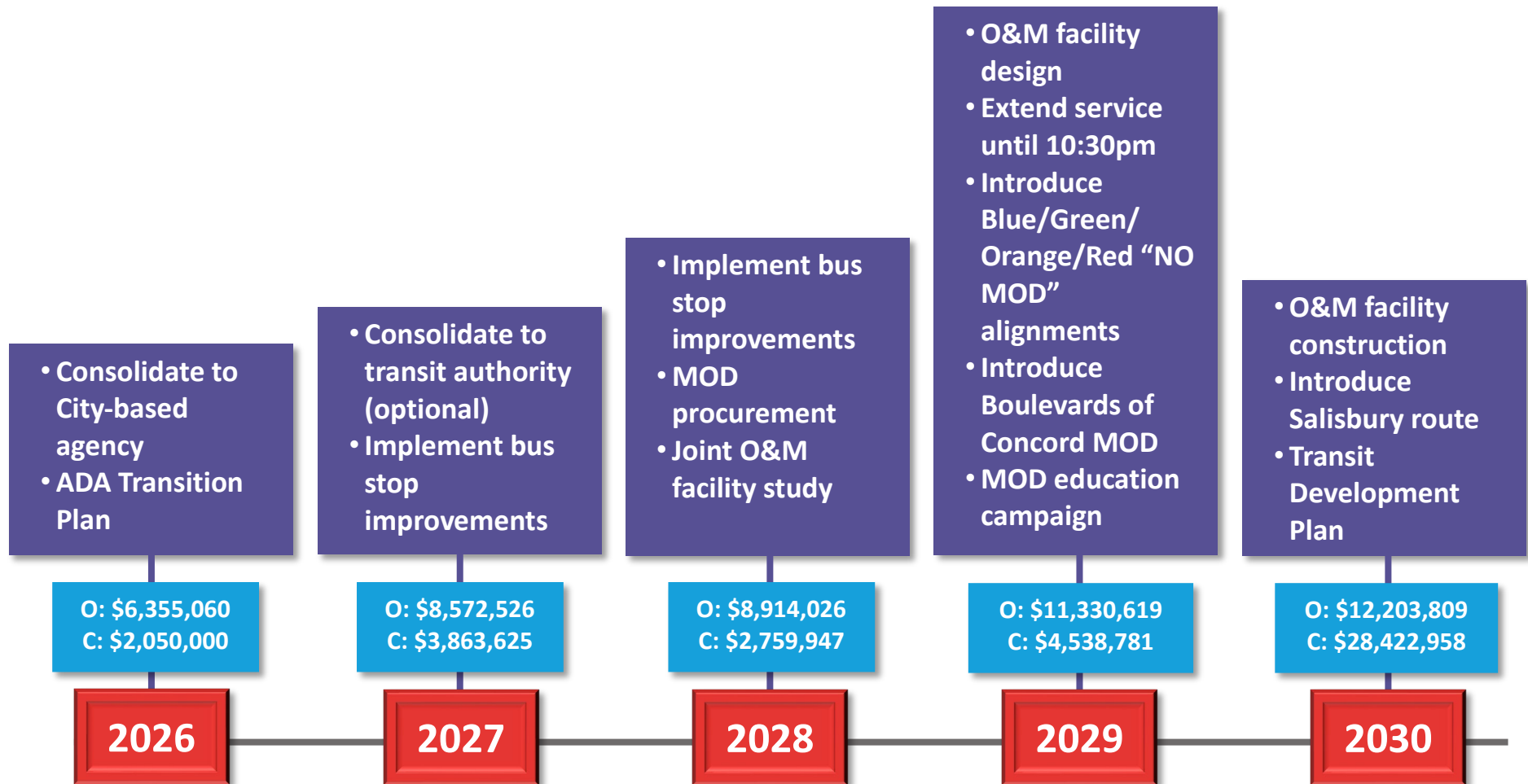
4.2.6 Financial Summary

Figure 4-3 presents the total annual expense for each year in the short term of this needs plan and highlights all the proposed short-term alternatives discussed previously. Each operational improvement alternative was assessed by using its expected number of revenue hours to assume future costs of operations. This assessment assumes that current transit operations will continue to have the same level of efficiency, using Rider Transit's projected 2027 average fixed-route cost, \$107.20 per revenue hour, Rider Transit's projected 2027 average paratransit cost, \$123.31 per revenue hour and an industry typical microtransit operating cost of \$75 per revenue hour. Additionally, other expected costs were assumed for projects regarding consolidation, new vehicle acquisitions, and future infrastructure. New buses for fixed routes are assumed to cost \$1 million each, while other MOD and demand response vehicles, which may be smaller cutaways or larger vans, are assumed to cost \$125,000 each. Finally, all costs are inflated annually, assuming an annual inflation rate of 3.03% considering the average annual inflation rate of the past 10 years. Cost assumptions are listed in Table 4-4.

TABLE 4-4: COST ASSUMPTIONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Assumption	Amount
Fixed-route vehicle purchase	\$1,000,000
Demand response vehicle purchase	\$125,000
Hourly fixed-route operating expense	\$109.61
Hourly paratransit/demand response operating expense	\$130.04
Hourly microtransit operating expense	\$75.00
Annual rate of inflation	3%
Bus stop improvements (total)	\$4,500,000
Site studies (each)	\$250,000
Transit hub design (each)	\$500,000
Transit hub construction (each)	\$2,000,000
New joint O&M facility	\$25,000,000
Transit development plan (total)	\$175,000
ADA transition plan	\$175,000
Education campaign	\$150,000
Microtransit procurement and deployment (each)	\$100,000

FIGURE 4-3: SUMMARY OF SHORT-TERM TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES AND IMPROVEMENTS



4.3 Medium-Term Improvement Alternatives (Years 6-10)

Years 6 through 10 of this plan will include several additional medium-term service improvement alternatives regarding fixed-route services, microtransit services, service operations, and capital improvements. The service changes during this period generally continue the transition toward a system in which microtransit services are utilized for local trips, with high frequency corridors being supplemented with higher frequency fixed routes to improve the timing of regional trips. On the operations and capital improvements side, alternatives continue to address facility needs as well as improve the overall span of services.

4.3.1 Fixed Route Network Changes

The service alternatives to be recommended in the medium-term work toward ensuring that the existing fixed-route network is equipped to complete trips in coordinated fashion with the MOD zones established in the short and medium terms. These changes continue to simplify routes along major corridors, thereby improving efficiency and allowing for shorter waiting times. These changes aim to create a system in which local trips may be completed by utilizing MOD or local fixed routes, while shifting many service transfers to switch between fixed routes and MOD services to complete the first-/last-mile portions of trips. These changes will occur to existing fixed routes as shown:

- **Blue route:** Route realignment, coinciding with MOD services (Year 6)
- **Brown route:** Route realignment, coinciding with MOD services (Year 6)
- **Green route:** Route realignment, coinciding with MOD services (Year 6)
- **Yellow route:** Route realignment, coinciding with MOD services (Year 7)
- **Orange route:** Route realignment, coinciding with MOD services (Year 8)
- **Red & CCX routes:** Route consolidation, coinciding with MOD services (Year 6)

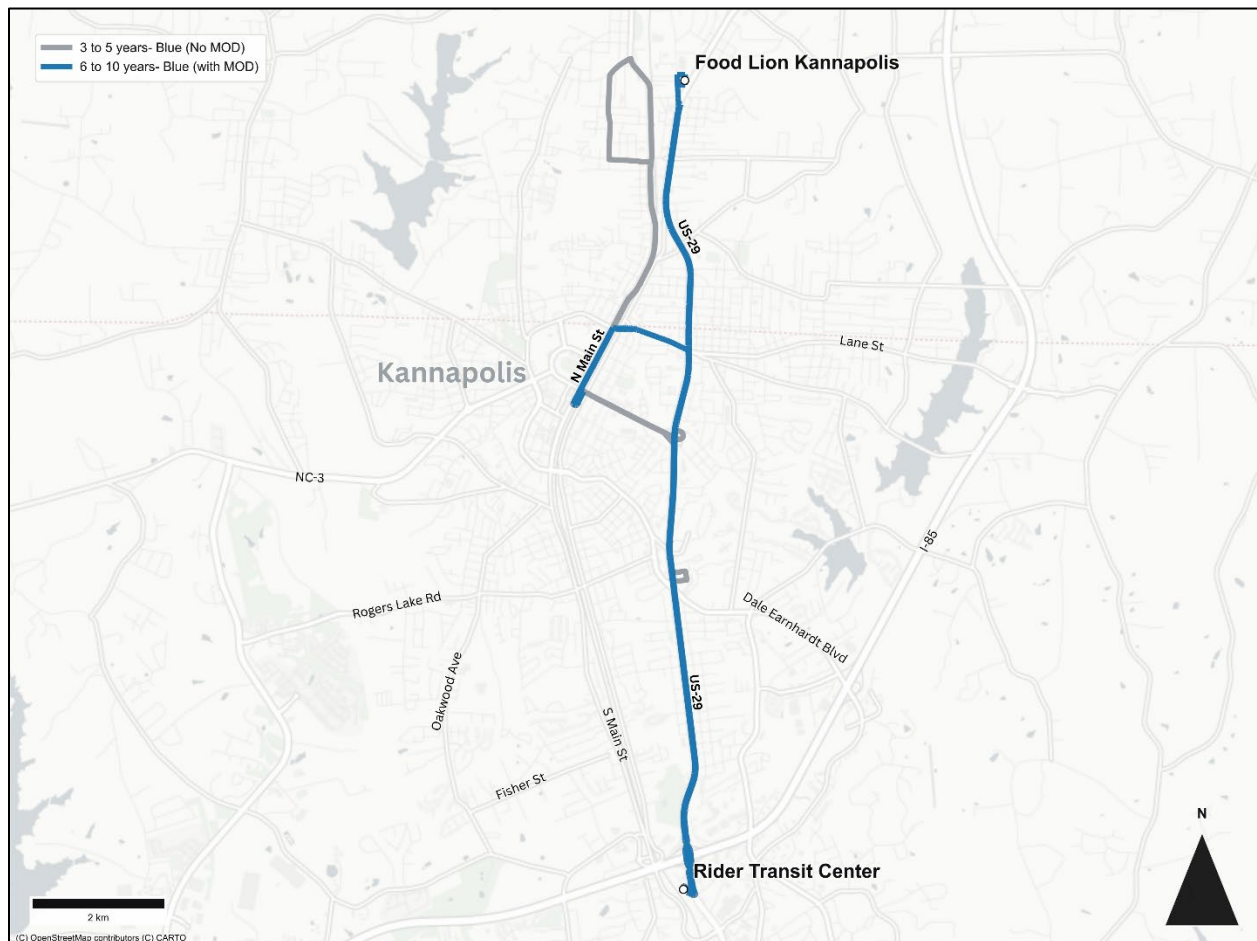
Additionally, during the medium-term period of implementation, two new additional services may be implemented. The addition of a limited-stop service along US-29, connecting Concord and Kannapolis, would greatly enhance mobility between key locations in the two cities. Finally, revising the Boulevards of Concord microtransit zone into a fixed-route circulator may be a viable transition during this period to accommodate what would be expected to be increased ridership in the newly designated transit area.



Blue Route

The medium-term service alternative for the Blue route provides services from the Rider Transit Center at the southern terminus, following US-29 to Jackson Park Road, diverting to serve downtown and the Kannapolis Train Station, then turning back around to North Main Street and Jackson Park Road back to US-29, which it would follow to the Kannapolis Food Lion, its northern terminus. Overall, this new routing aims to serve Downtown Kannapolis and US-29 in a direct capacity as MOD becomes activated in the region in the medium term.

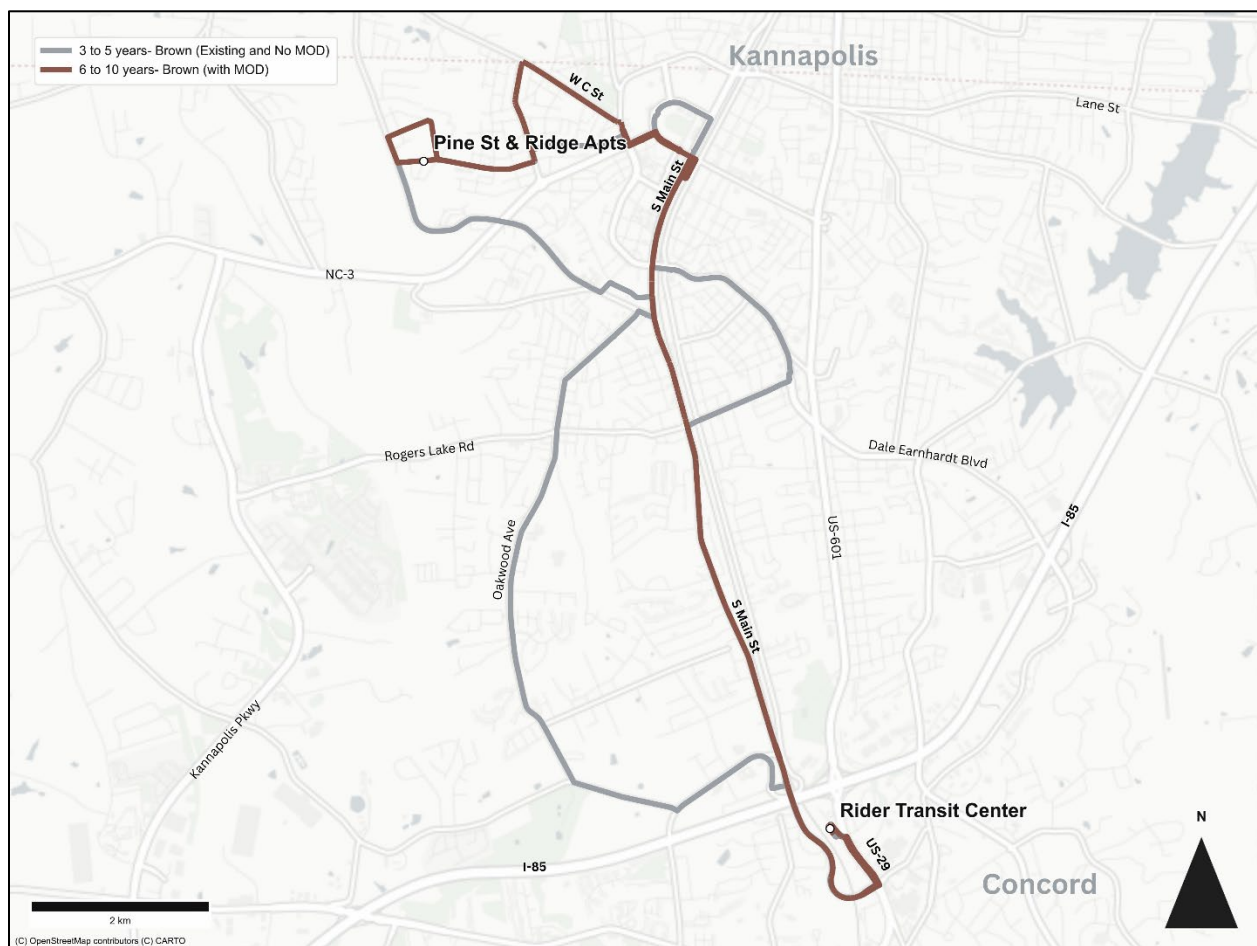
MAP 4-11: MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES TO BLUE ROUTE



Brown Route

Medium-term alterations for the Brown route provide direct service to Kannapolis along South Main Street, connecting the Rider Transit Center and the Kannapolis Train Station. This new route eliminates a portion of the current loop that follows Rainbow Drive, Richard Avenue, Oakwood Avenue, Orphanage Road, and Winecoff School Road. The route is condensed to a point-to-point line, serving the neighborhoods directly west of Downtown Kannapolis by connecting them to the Kannapolis Train Station, South Main Street, and Rider Transit Center. This change allows the route to directly serve fewer local roads at the northern end and instead focus the majority of service on a main corridor with multiple major transit connections.

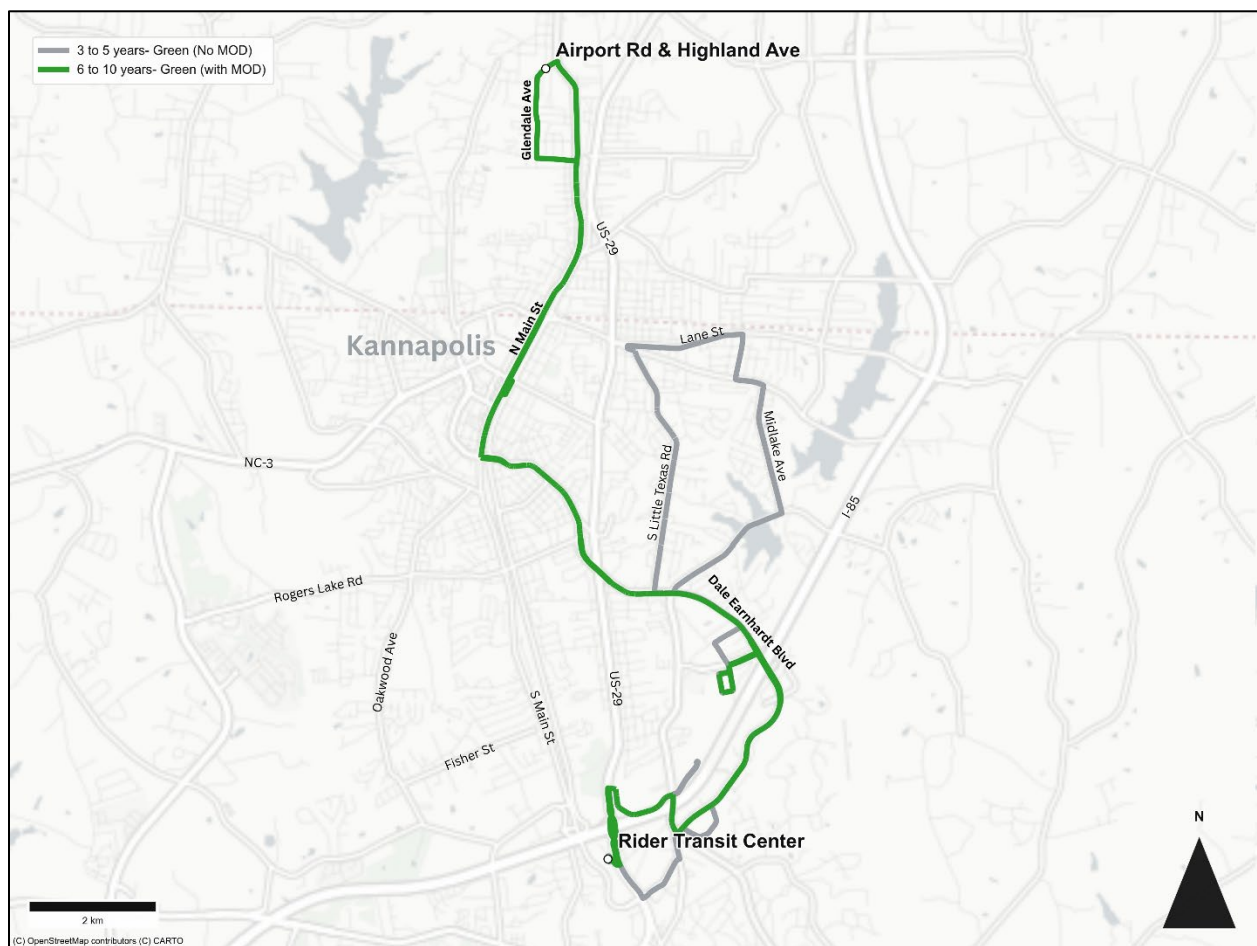
MAP 4-12: MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES TO BROWN ROUTE



Green Route

The Green route may be changed in the medium term to coincide with the Kannapolis MOD zone. Prior to MOD becoming implemented in Kannapolis, the route served the purpose of providing connections between many lower density residential parcels to the commercial areas surrounding Dale Earnhardt Boulevard and the Rider Transit Center. However, the implementation of MOD will now aim to serve many of these residential trips. The new Green route would eliminate its loop and re-orient service to Copperfield Boulevard NE and Dale Earnhardt Boulevard, leading to Downtown Kannapolis, then continuing north, serving North Main Street through North Kannapolis and terminating in the Rose Hill neighborhood near the Landis city limit.

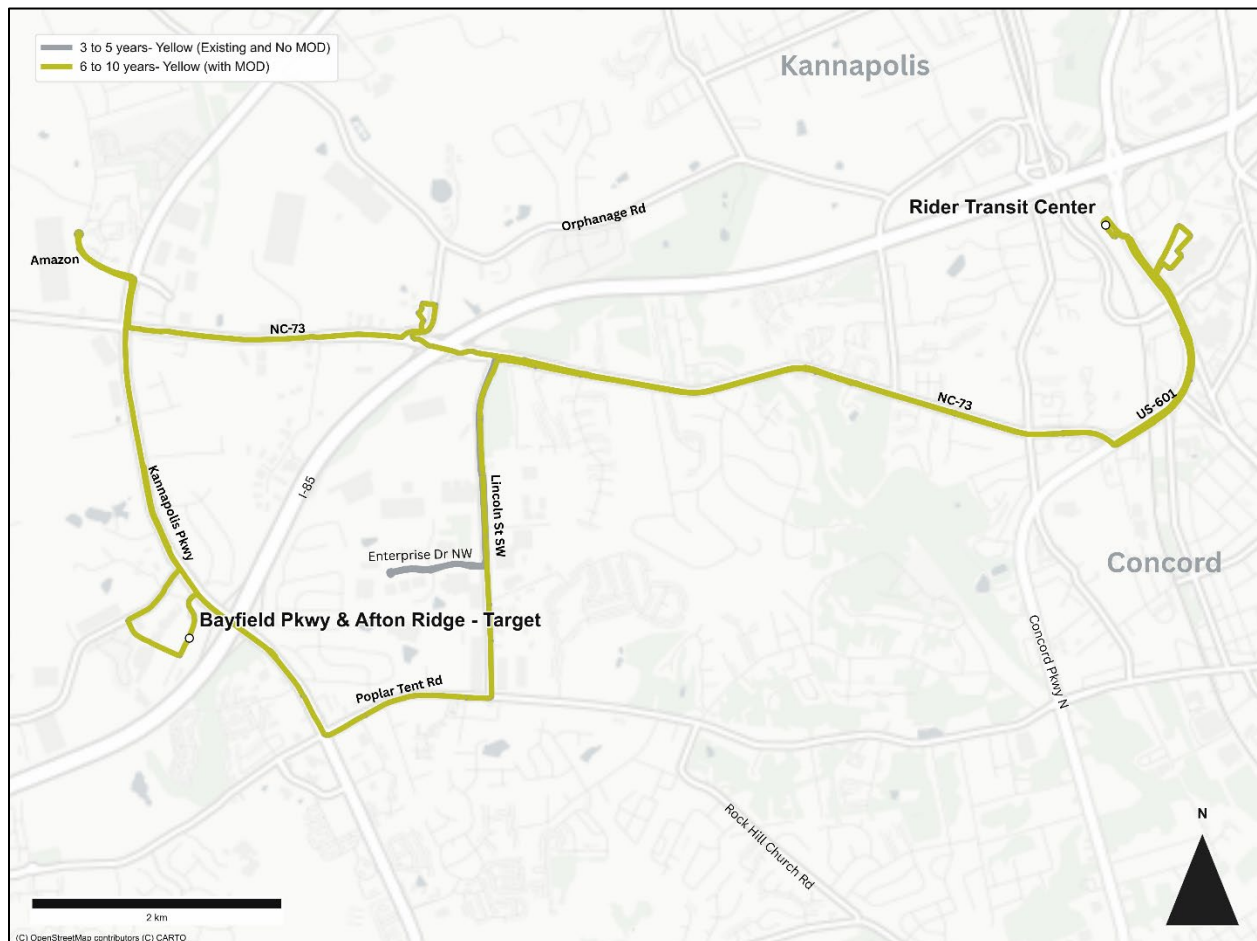
MAP 4-13: MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES TO GREEN ROUTE



Yellow Route

Alterations for the Yellow route in the medium term enable the ability for Rider Transit to provide frequent service along Davidson Highway and connect the Rider Transit Center to other destinations to its west, including Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Amazon, and Afton Ridge Shopping Center. The new route eliminates a portion of the current loop following Enterprise Drive NW by bypassing this portion of the route on its way to its western terminus, saving up to 11 minutes of run-time during peak hours.

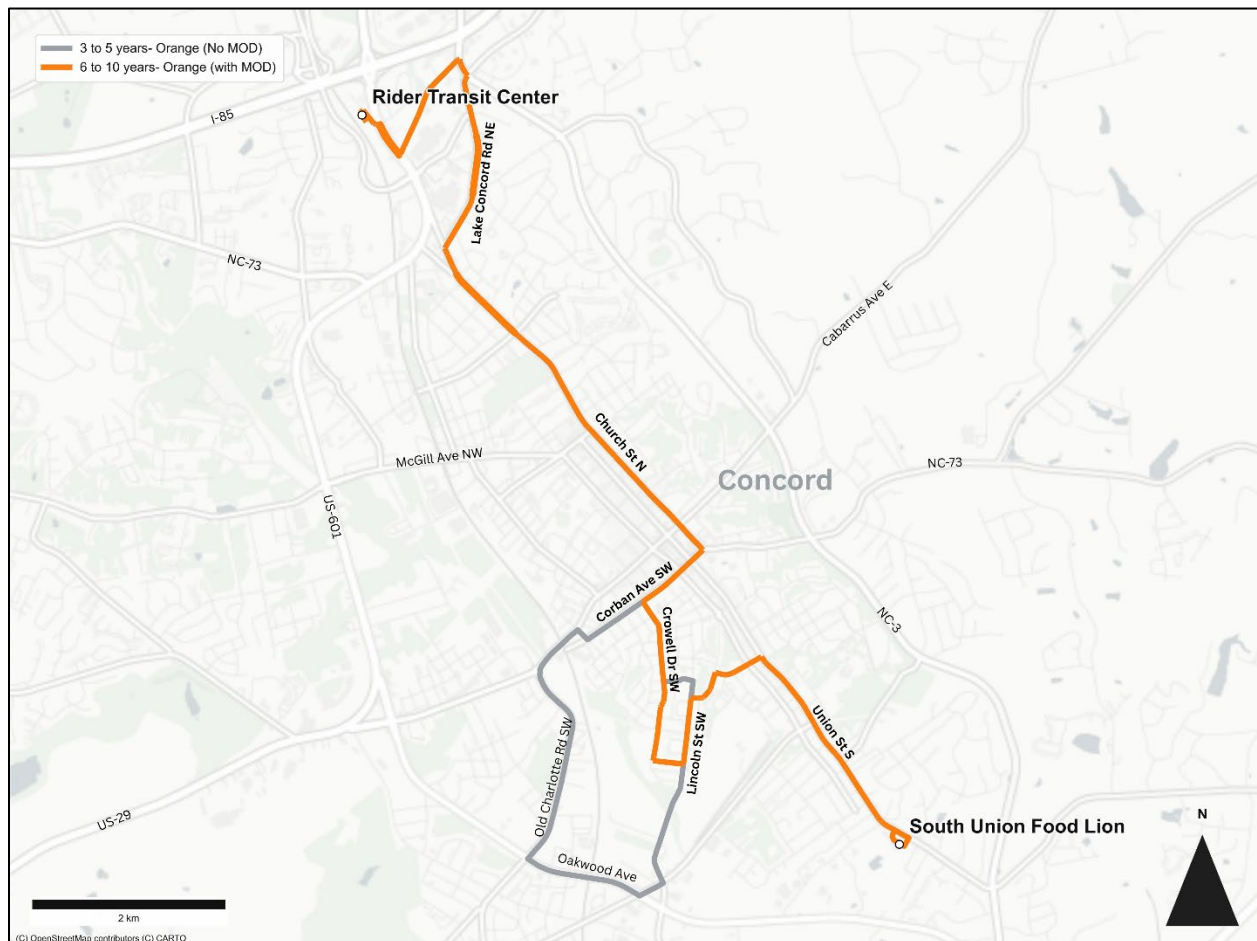
MAP 4-14: MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES TO YELLOW ROUTE



Orange Route

The revisions to the Orange route in the medium term include eliminating the loop around the southern terminus of the route and, instead, serving the Logan Community as a diversion from the main corridor of the route, Union Street. The new routing follows Church Street SE from the Rider Transit Center to Downtown Concord. After turning onto Corban Avenue SW and serving Barbara-Scotia College, the route then takes Georgia Street SW, Lincoln Street SW, Broad Drive SW, and Tribune Avenue SW, to get back to Union Street South, which it follows until its southern terminus at the Food Lion.

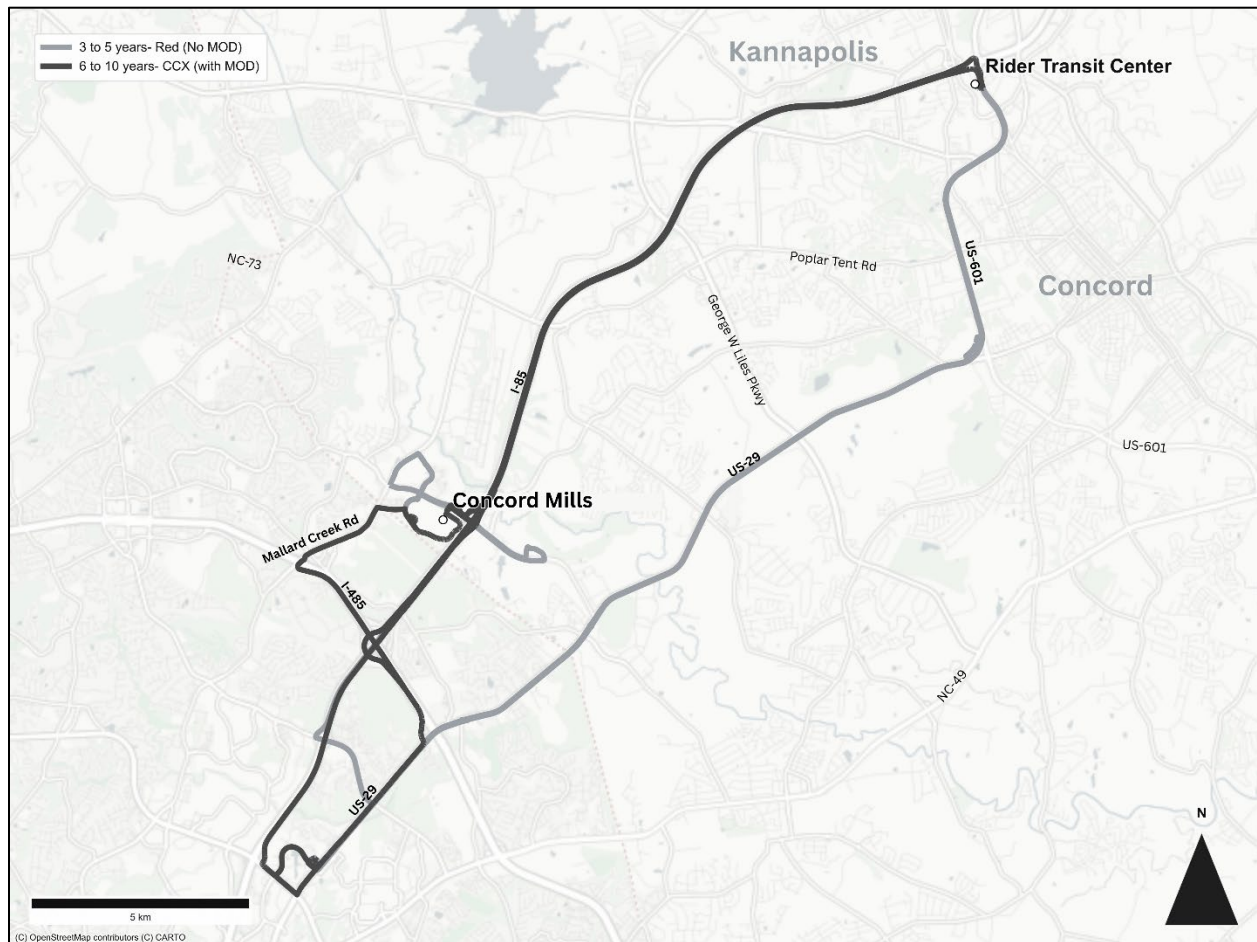
MAP 4-15: MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES IN ORANGE ROUTE



Red & CCX Routes

In the medium term, the Red and CCX routes may be condensed into a singular CCX route. These two routes currently serve a similar purpose, connecting Concord Mills and Charlotte's LYNX light rail to the rest of the Cabarrus County network via Rider Transit Center. Condensing these routes into one service would reduce costs and allow the Boulevards of Concord microtransit zone to fill in service gaps around that area until demand allows for a Boulevards of Concord circulator. The only three stops for this route would be Rider Transit Center, Concord Mills, and JW Clay Station. Concord Mills would be served only by southbound buses in the morning and served only by northbound buses in the afternoon and evening. Passengers traveling to or from Concord Mills in off-peak directions will have a less direct and longer trip to or from JW Clay Station or Rider Transit Center.

MAP 4-16: MEDIUM-TERM CCX ROUTE

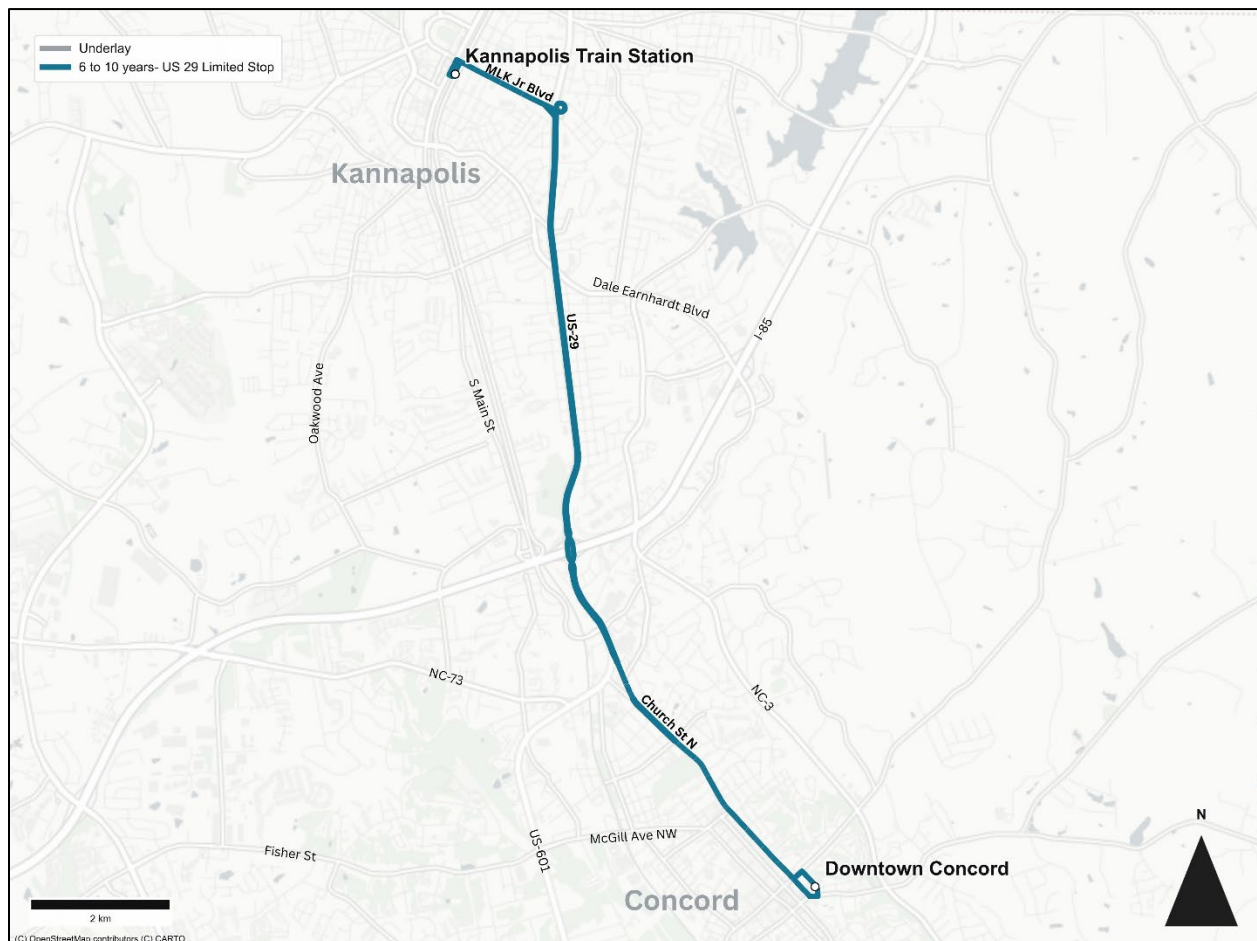


US 29 Limited Stop Transit Service

New services between Concord and Kannapolis were assessed for implementation in the medium-term as the two communities have the greatest existing linkage in their respective residents' transit needs. A frequent limited-stop service between the Kannapolis Train Station and Concord starting in Year 9 would serve residents commuting between the two cities and those needing to connect with other transit services with limited disruptions during travel at a 15-minute frequency.

From the Kannapolis Train Station at the northern terminus of this route, the limited stop service would take Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, US-29, and Church Street North to Downtown Concord, its southern terminus. While travelling along this corridor, stops will only be made at key locations. These could include existing stops such as Rt 29 and McLain Road, Carolina Memorial Park, Atrium Medical Center, Lock Mill Plaza, and Cabarrus Avenue and Church Street.

MAP 4-17: LIMITED STOP SERVICE ON US 29

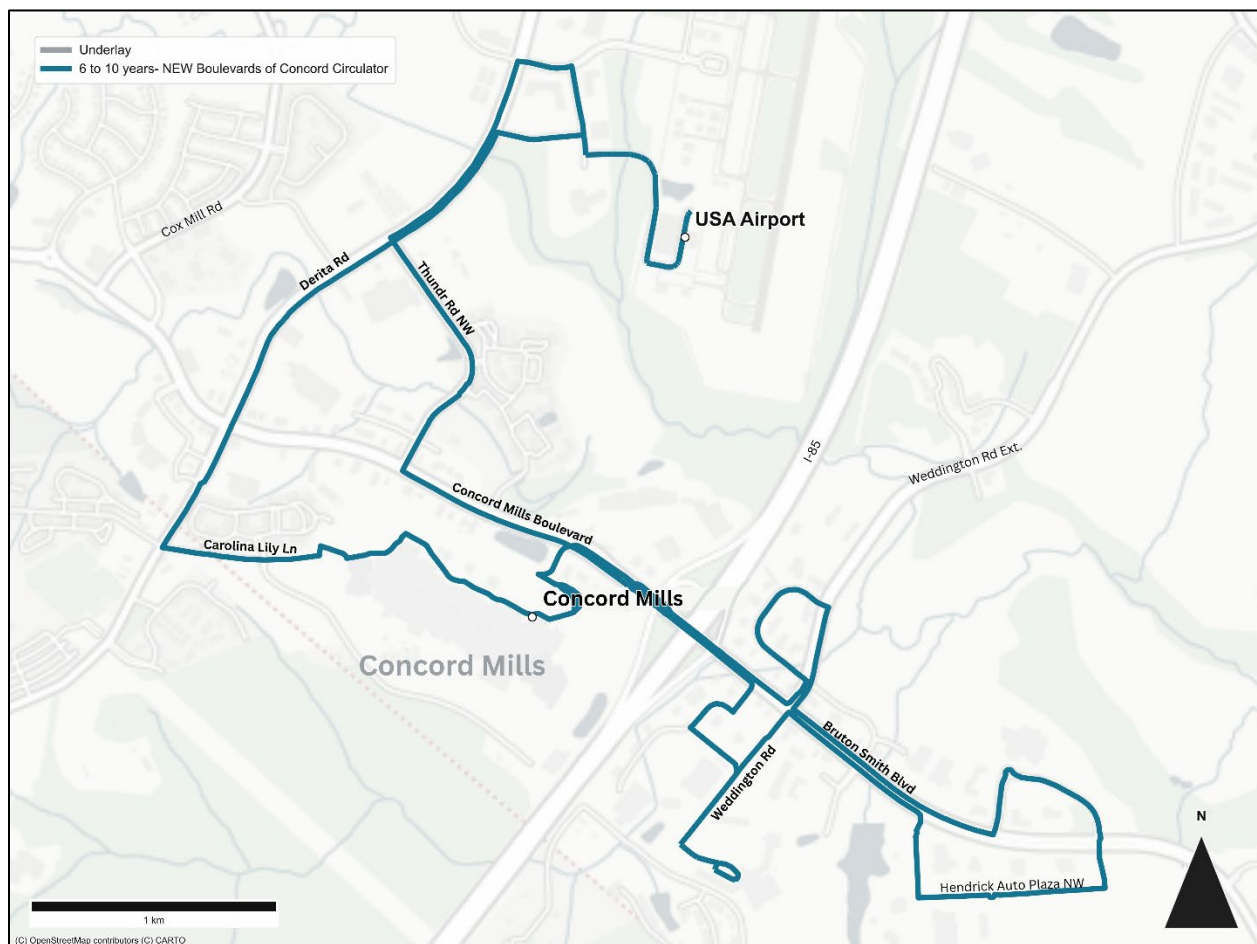


Boulevards of Concord Circulator

The final fixed-route service alternative in the medium term involves assessing the Boulevard of Concord's microtransit zone, which was implemented in the near term of this plan. Shifting service for this zone to a fixed-route circulator in Year 7 alongside the implementation of the West Concord and Harrisburg MOD zone would allow for increased demand in the area to be better accommodated.

The core of this route would serve the Concord Mills Boulevard and Bruton Smith Boulevard corridor. It would serve that corridor between Derita Road, which it also would serve up until it reaches Aviation Way, then turning to serve Concord-Padgett Regional Airport. This route would serve many commercial outlets such as Walmart, Lowe's, and BJ's, but also serve hotels and entertainment as well as Strayer University. The route also would cover car dealerships and service centers, connecting patrons and employees of that auto hub to daytime amenities. At Concord Mills, circulator riders can transfer to the CCX to travel to Charlotte via LYNX light rail or to Concord and Kannapolis via the Rider Transit Center.

MAP 4-18: BOULEVARDS OF CONCORD CIRCULATOR



4.3.2 Mobility-On-Demand (MOD) Services

In conjunction with the changes to the fixed-route system, the development of four additional microtransit zones will greatly expand transit coverage in Cabarrus County. The implementation of new zones would enable riders within the developed areas in Cabarrus County to have greater access to local uses, while continuing to offer regional fixed-route services with minimal revisions. The suggested short-term microtransit service concepts are listed below:

- **Kannapolis:** microtransit zone (Year 6)
- **West Concord/Harrisburg:** microtransit zone (Year 7)
- **South Concord:** microtransit zone (Year 8)
- **Northwest Cabarrus County:** microtransit zone (Year 9)
- **Countywide Service:** on-demand, advance-reservation service for rural residents (Year 10)

During this period, these zones will also go through a pilot service as the short-term zones did, to allow for operations and training on the new services prior to their full implementation. The microtransit service can commence with a target 30-minute wait time but can be adjusted based on demand and available resources.

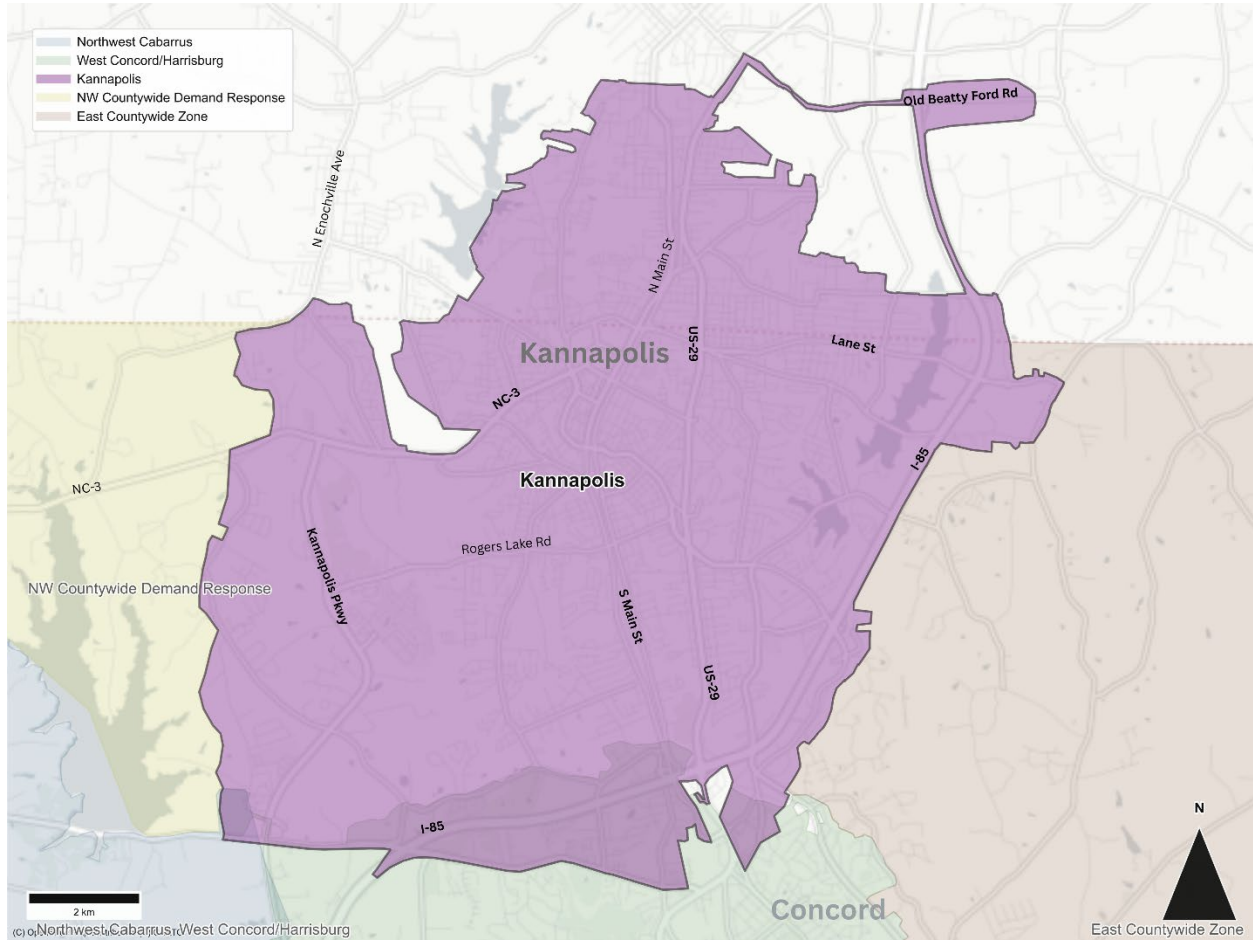
Kannapolis Microtransit Zone

The first microtransit zone for implementation in the medium-term encompasses Kannapolis and its vicinity. Kannapolis, being the second largest city in Cabarrus County, is home to a relatively high number of medium to low density developments, resulting in a land use pattern that is favorable for microtransit services. Establishing Kannapolis as a microtransit hub would enable residents to make local trips by utilizing the service, while the city's three fixed routes would continue to serve high-demand trip areas and connect to microtransit to facilitate intercity trips.

The Kannapolis microtransit zone would include nearly all of Kannapolis's residential population, encompassing the area between I-85, Kannapolis Lake, and the Kannapolis Parkway corridor and its surroundings. The area also extends out to several locations beyond this boundary including the Rider Transit Center, Atrium Health Cabarrus, and Old Beatty Ford Road.



MAP 4-19: KANNAPOLIS MICROTRANSIT ZONE

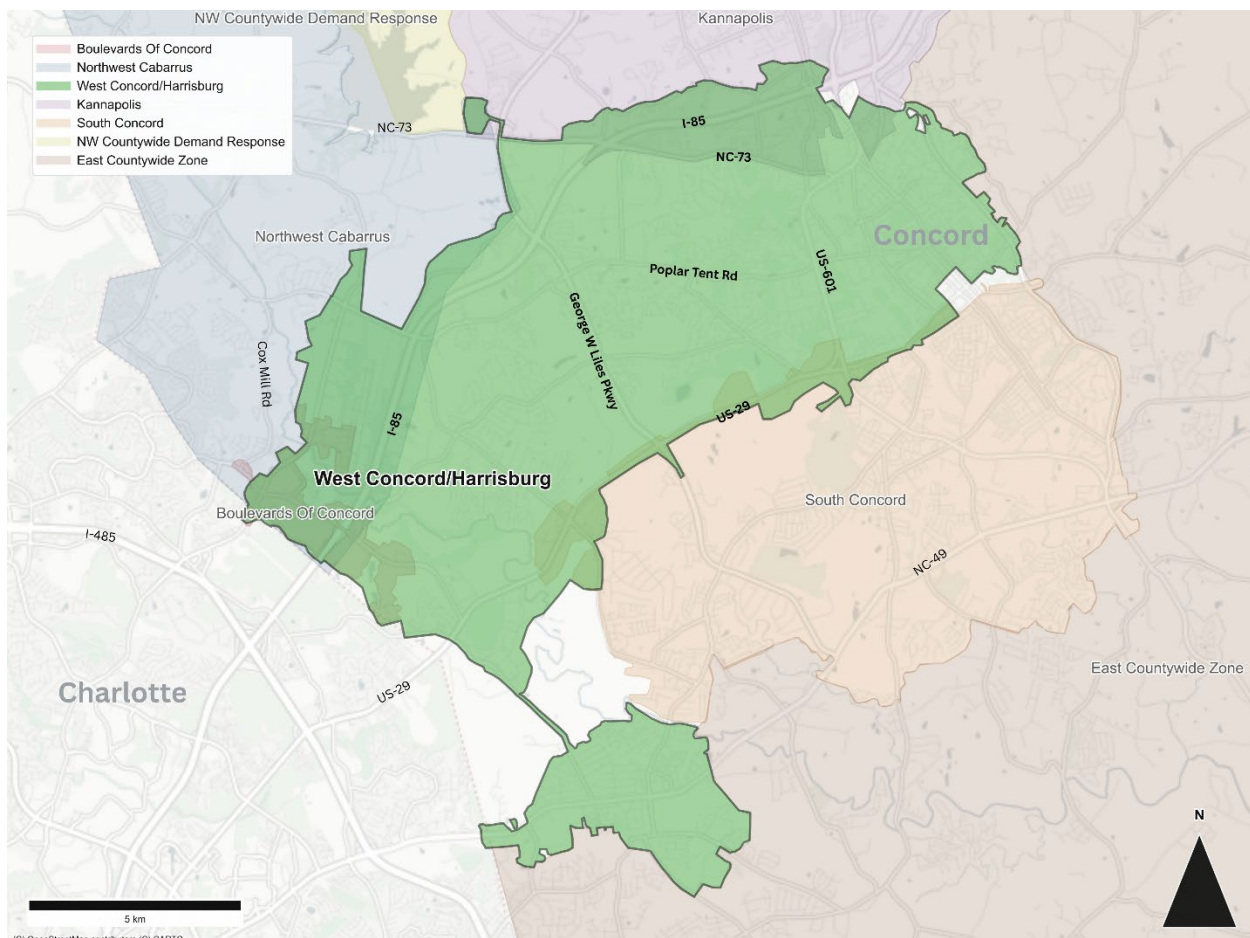


West Concord/Harrisburg Microtransit Zone

The next microtransit zone for implementation in the medium term encompasses Western Concord and Harrisburg and their vicinity. Western Concord is predominantly home to residential and commercial zoning at medium to low density levels, resulting in a land use pattern that is favorable for microtransit services. Local trips for residents traveling to jobs or amenities may be supplemented by this microtransit zone, while fixed-route services may be used to connect the area to the rest of the county and region.

The Western Concord and Harrisburg microtransit zone would include nearly all the residential population in the area, as well as their identified local commercial and transportation hubs. The area falls within the boundaries loosely defined by covering all of Concord west of Branchview Drive NE and north of Cabarrus Avenue and US-29 toward Charlotte. It extends west to the Concord-Padgett Regional Airport and its surrounding businesses, while extending to the county line at the far southwest of the zone. The area also extends to cover the extent of Harrisburg, as well. The zone would enhance connectivity to places like Downtown Concord, Atrium Health Cabarrus, the Charlotte Motor Speedway, Concord-Padgett Regional Airport and Concord Mills, among others in between.

MAP 4-20: WEST CONCORD/HARRISBURG MICROTRANSIT ZONE

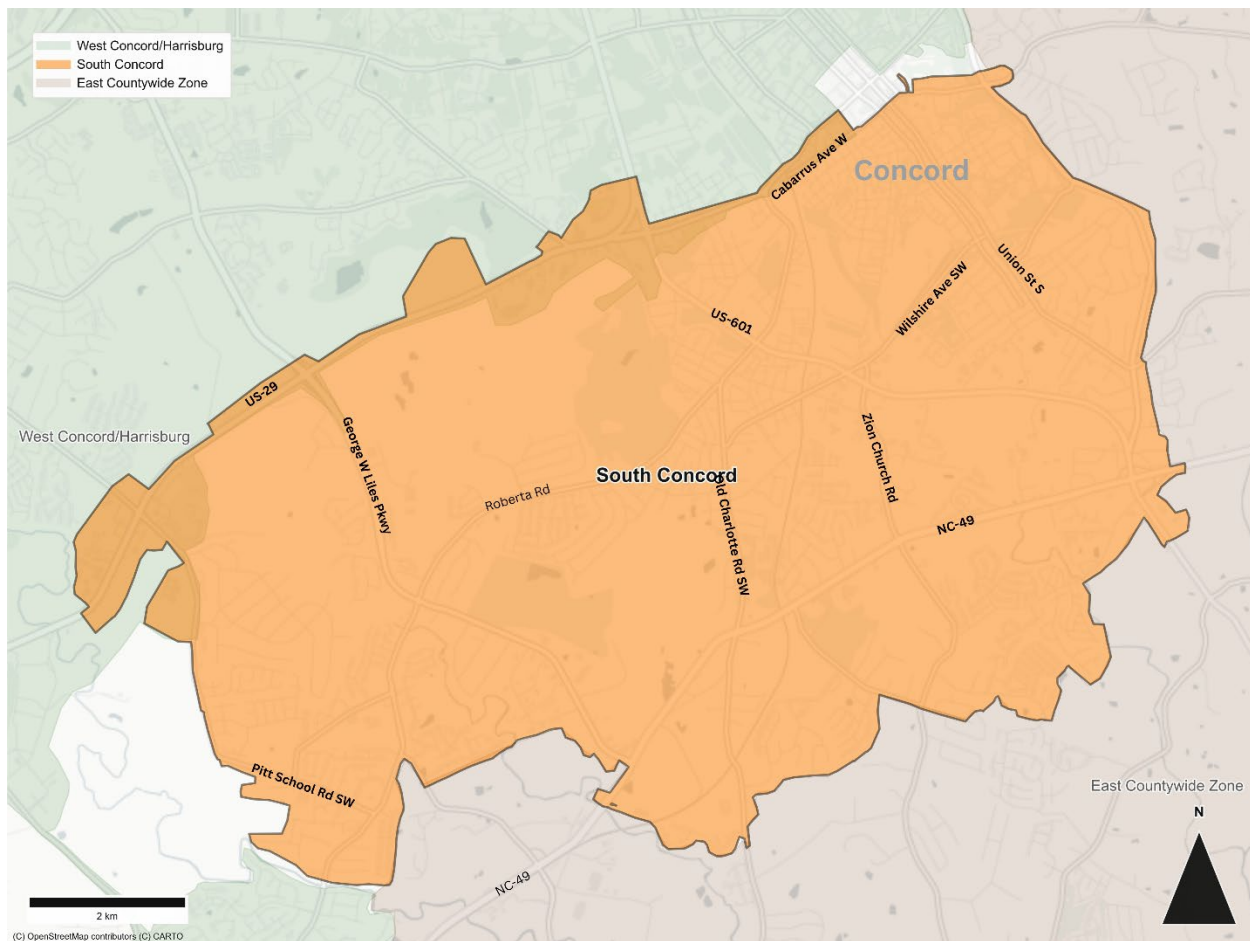


South Concord Microtransit Zone

The third medium term microtransit zone to be implemented is located around South Concord, encompassing most of the city south of Concord Parkway. It extends to cover the developed area surrounding the edge of Concord to the east and south, while using the boundaries of the West Concord/Harrisburg zone to the north.

This area would extend to cover the medium to low density development patterns that exist in this area, extending coverage toward Downtown Concord and the commercial centers along Concord Parkway from the residential neighborhoods in south and east Concord.

MAP 4-21: SOUTH CONCORD MICROTRANSIT ZONE

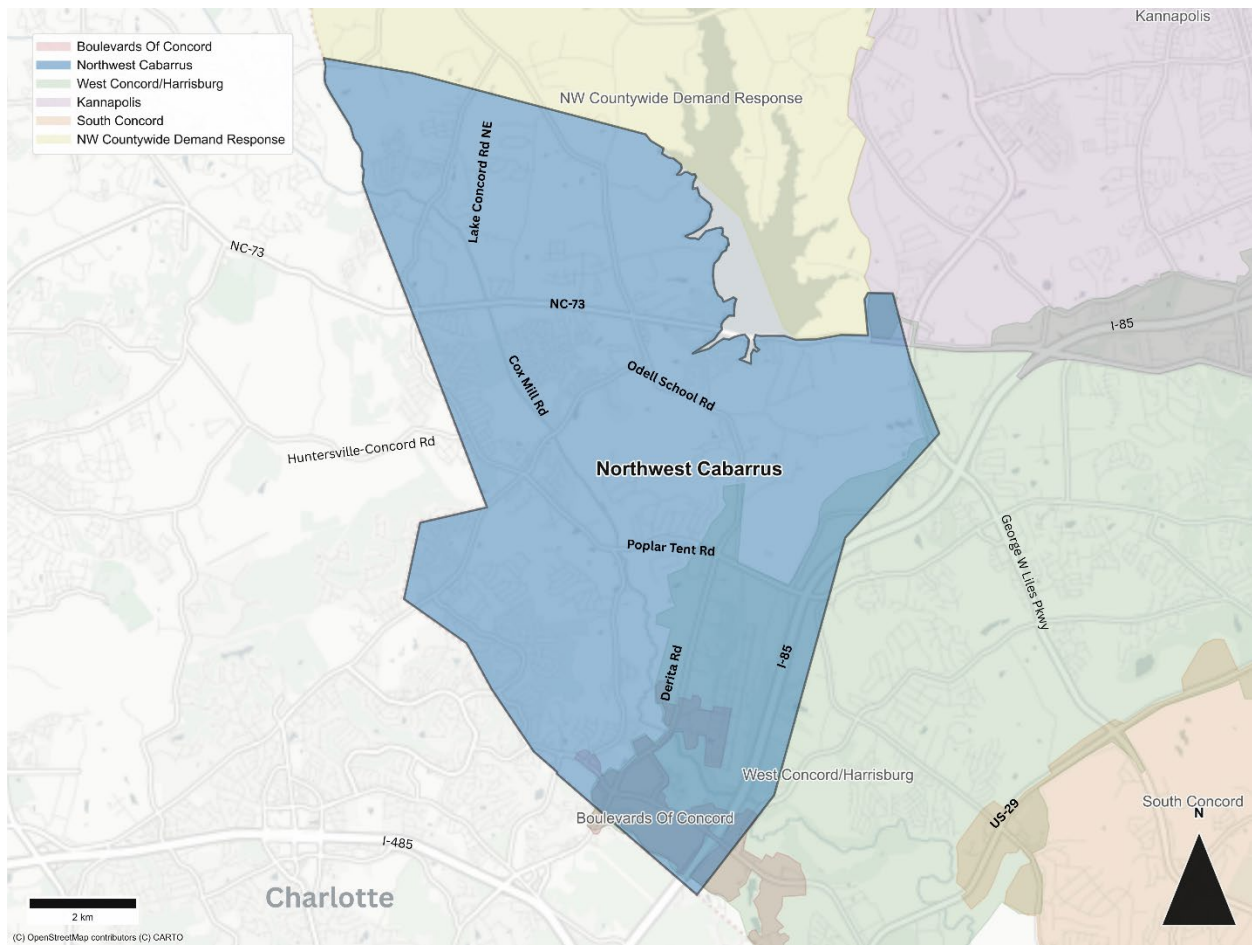


Northwest Cabarrus Microtransit Zone

The final medium-term microtransit zone to be implemented is located around Northwest Cabarrus County, providing support for suburban developments in and around Deweese, Moss Creek, Cox Mill, the Concord-Padgett Regional Airport, and Concord Mills.

This area follows the county boundary along the western side, but covers that area, Davidson Highway, Odell School Road, Poplar Tent Road, and all suburban developments west of I-85, Kannapolis Parkway, and Don T. Howell Reservoir.

MAP 4-22: NORTHWEST CABARRUS MICROTRANSIT ZONE



Countywide Service

A major benefit of the unified transit agency is that it may be able to support countywide demand response services for the general public in the form of a reservation-based system. By enabling rural residents the option to call and schedule a ride ahead of time to connect them to other services or amenities, Cabarrus County would be enabling and encouraging its population to participate in the county's local economy and support rural employees with better transportation options.

Technology Improvements

Before the expiration of a contract, the unified transit agency should continue to procure its SaaS solution as described in the short-term recommendations. The agency should also continue to monitor and update Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and act upon the KPI measurements to improve transit operations and customer satisfaction.

4.3.3 Systemwide Operations Improvements

The medium-term operational improvement alternatives include extending the hours of service until 12:30 AM and implementing all-day service on the Salisbury route. These improvements continue to shift riders toward utilizing all types of transit services for their mobility needs.

UNC Charlotte Bus Stop

In addition to the bus stop at the JW Clay CATS Station on the CCX route, the unified transit agency should also consider extending this service to a stop somewhere on UNC Charlotte's campus. This would provide greater efficiency for university students and faculty utilizing the service to travel as a viable commute option.

4.3.4 Capital Improvements

By Year 6, the construction of the new joint Operations and Maintenance facility should be complete, and the facility should be fully operational. In the medium term, the unified transit agency should begin strategizing its future capital improvements, namely the development of future transit hubs. By Year 10, a site study and initial concept for the first transit hub, in Downtown Concord, should be underway.

A key recommendation of this plan is to establish three new transit hubs that would serve as transfer points between fixed routes and microtransit zones. Currently, Rider Transit operates all fixed routes out of the Rider Transit Center where buses depart every 60 to 75 minutes, depending on the time of day. Operating a transit system out of a single hub hampers a system from growing as it can sometimes limit the number of buses/routes used in peak service and the geographic extent of the routes.

In order to overcome this potential barrier to transit network growth, this plan recommends establishing transit hubs in Downtown Concord, at or near the Kannapolis Train Station, and at or near Harrisburg Town Center. Fixed routes would operate at these transit hubs similarly to how the current fixed route system operates out of the Rider Transit Center. The addition of these new transit hubs would allow for cross-town expansion into other areas of the county and permit passengers to make connections at transit hubs located closer to their origins and destinations instead of having to travel to the Rider Transit Center. This plan assumes that each transit hub is developed through an initial study

that determines feasibility, site of the hub, and preliminary design concepts. These studies would be followed by the design and construction of each hub.

4.3.5 Education Campaign

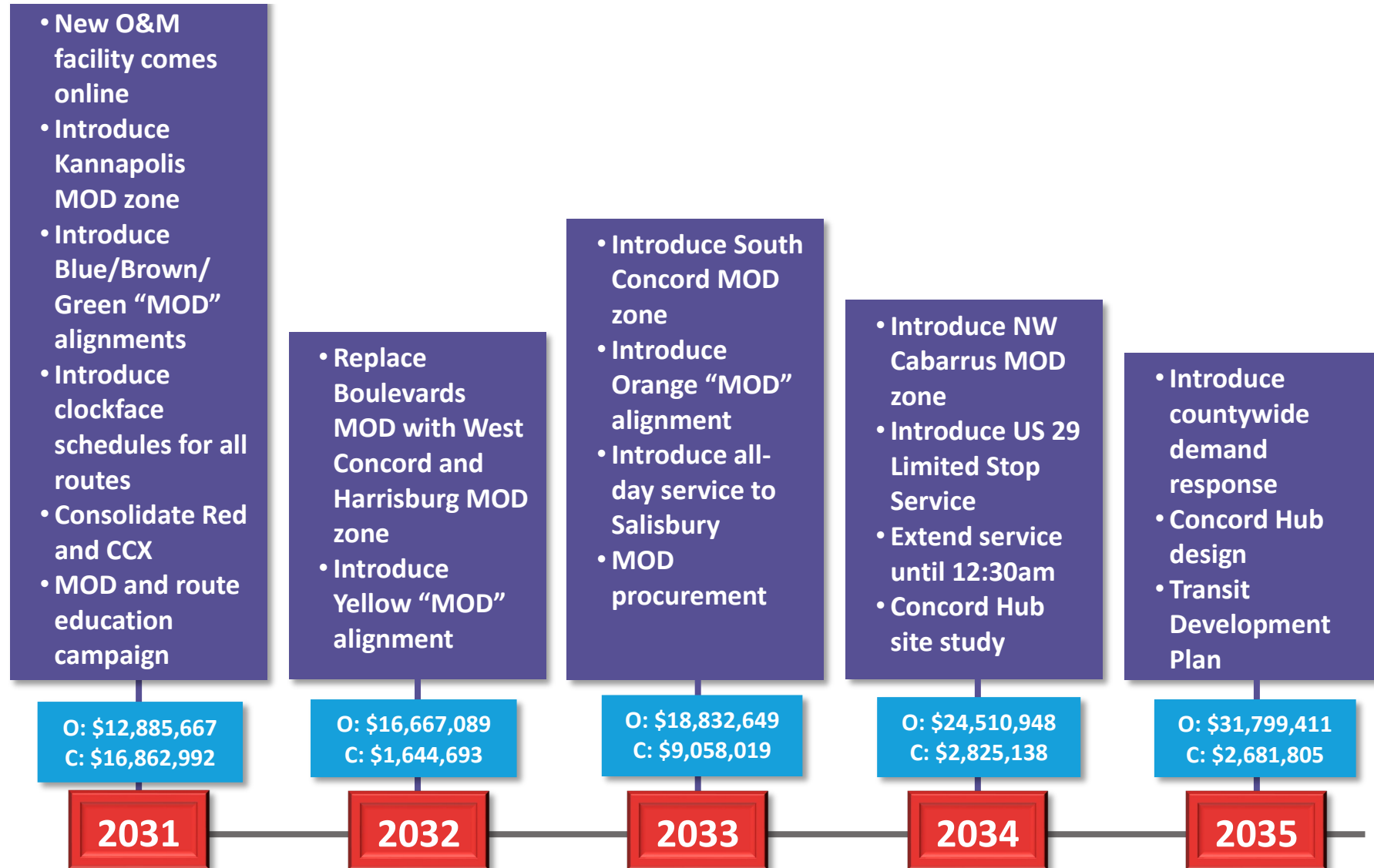
In order to support the considerable number of fixed route and microtransit improvements programmed for Year 6 of the plan, another education and outreach campaign should be undertaken to engage, inform, and prepare riders for using those new or improved services. Education methods for this campaign can be similar to those used in the short term.

4.3.6 Financial Summary

Figure 4-4 presents the total annual expenses during Years 6 through 10 of this plan, associated with the mid-term improvement alternatives identified for implementation. These improvements build upon the short-term initiatives and continue advancing the unified agency's transition toward an integrated system where local microtransit services support high-frequency fixed-route corridors. The proposed enhancements include additional fixed-route and microtransit service modifications, operational adjustments to improve service reliability and coverage and continued investment in capital improvements such as stop-level infrastructure, facility upgrades, and expanded service spans. Collectively, these actions are intended to strengthen system connectivity, improve regional travel times, and ensure the network evolves to meet growing mobility demands across the service area.



FIGURE 4-4: SUMMARY OF MEDIUM-TERM TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES AND IMPROVEMENTS



4.4 Long-Term Improvement Alternatives (Years 11-20)

Long-term improvements for Years 11 through 20 of this plan focus on advancing long-term transit recommendations that position the unified system for sustained growth and regional connectivity. These improvements are more visionary and high-capacity in nature, intended to establish the foundation for a robust multimodal network capable of supporting future population and employment expansion. Long-term strategies may include the introduction of premium transit services such as bus rapid transit (BRT) or express commuter routes, dedicated transit infrastructure investments, and enhanced regional connections to neighboring systems. While these concepts are cost agnostic in this section, they represent a forward-looking framework for achieving a fully integrated, high-performing transit network that meets the long-range mobility goals of the community.

4.4.1 Fixed-Route Network Changes

The service alternatives to be recommended in the long-term work toward ensuring a comprehensive countywide mobility network and convenient connectivity across fixed route and MOD services. While many existing routes are unaltered, other long-term options for new fixed-route service were explored. These visionary route concepts, while they may not be implementable today, are potential paths for generating high levels of connectivity and expanding ridership and transit services. These service alternatives for potential new fixed routes are as follows:

- **US 29 Limited Stop Transit Service:** Expansion of route to Charlotte (Year 11)
- **Concord Connector:** Route from Concord to Afton Ridge (Year 13)
- **Downtown Concord:** Route from Concord to Harrisburg (Year 13)
- **Kannapolis/Liles/Roberta:** Long-distance connection from Kannapolis to Harrisburg (Year 16)
- **Charlotte Express:** Express route from Kannapolis to Charlotte (Year 16)
- **Harrisburg-JW Clay:** Route from Harrisburg to UNC-Charlotte (Year 19)
- **Rider Transit-Huntersville:** Route from Rider Transit Center to Huntersville (Year 20)

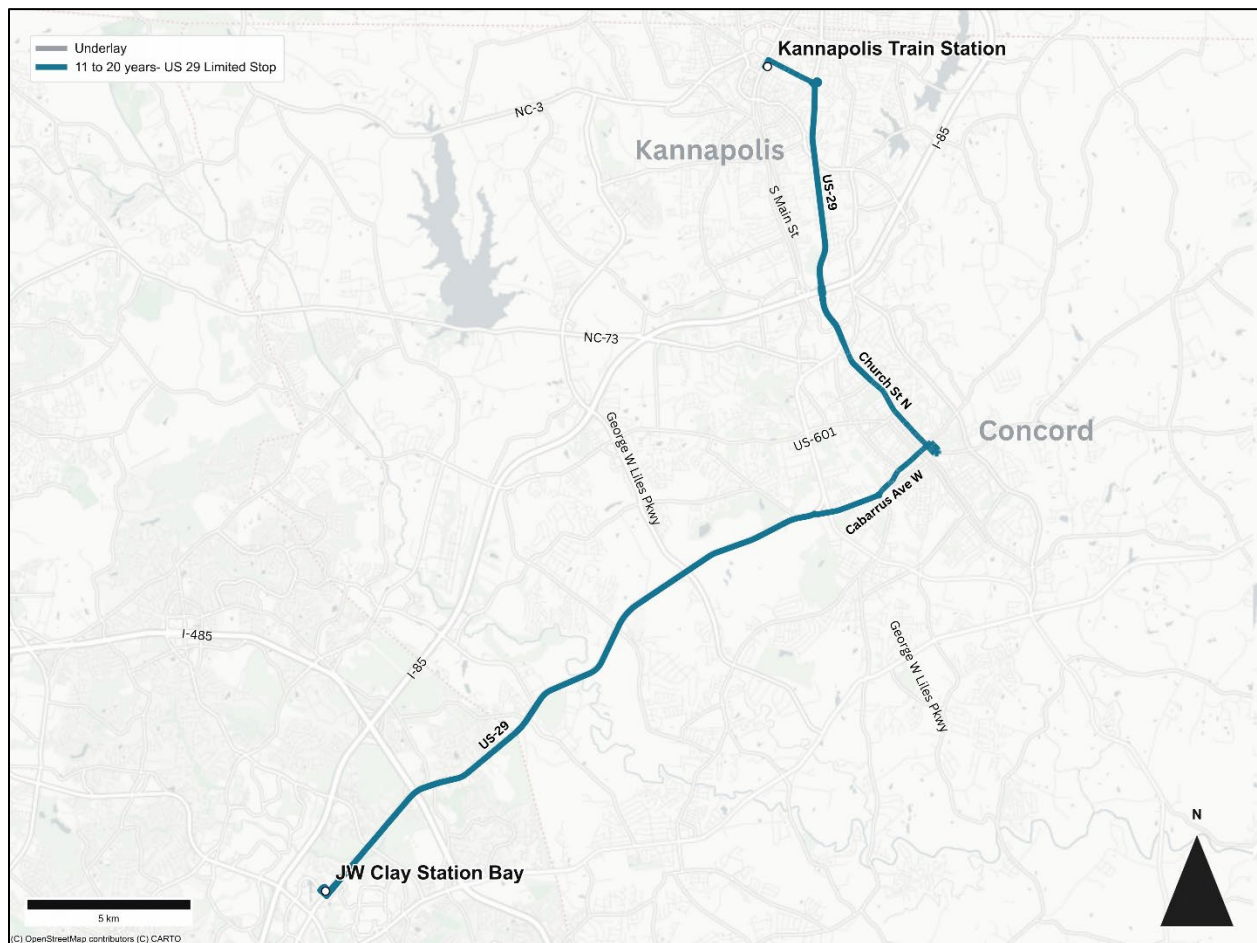
While these routes may not be major points of emphasis in the present day, they are included in this plan to account for increased demand for these services over time.



US 29 Limited Stop Transit Service

Expanding upon the medium-term iteration of this route, limited stop transit service on US 29 extends south to the JW Clay light rail station Charlotte. This route extension enhances the fast and frequent connectivity throughout Cabarrus County and into Charlotte. Additional new destinations that could be connected by this frequent limited stop service include Concord Commons, Eli Lilly, Pitts School Road, and the Charlotte Motor Speedway.

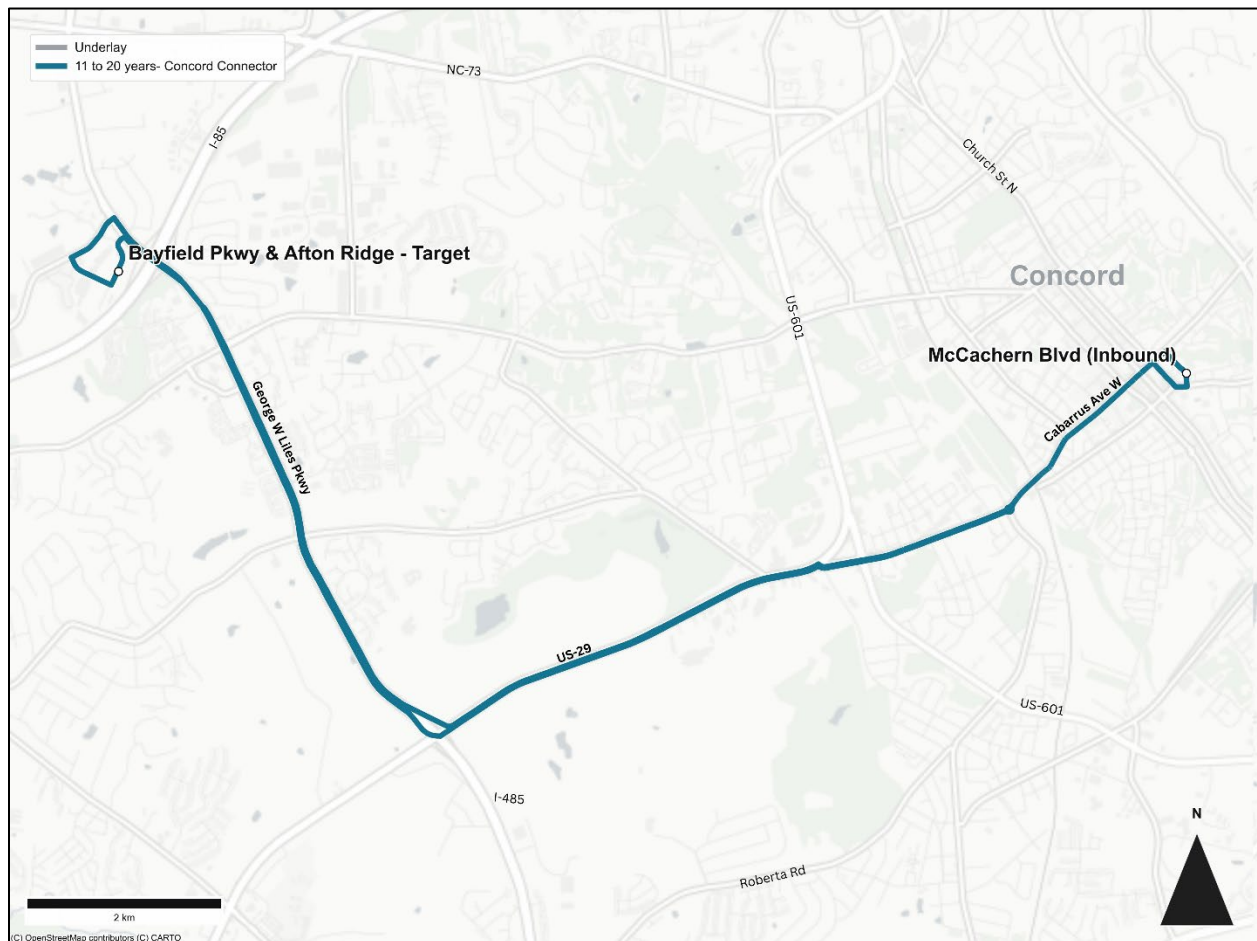
MAP 4-23: LONG-TERM LIMITED STOP TRANSIT SERVICE ON US 29



Concord Connector

A new route, mostly within Concord, the Concord Connector provides a one-seat ride between Downtown Concord and Afton Ridge in Kannapolis. As a local route, it also captures latent transit demand on the currently unserved corridor of George W. Liles Parkway, consisting of residential development flanking the entire corridor and commercial development at intersections with Poplar Tent Road and Weddington Road. From its termini, riders can transfer from this route to a multitude of other fixed routes connecting all of Concord and Kannapolis.

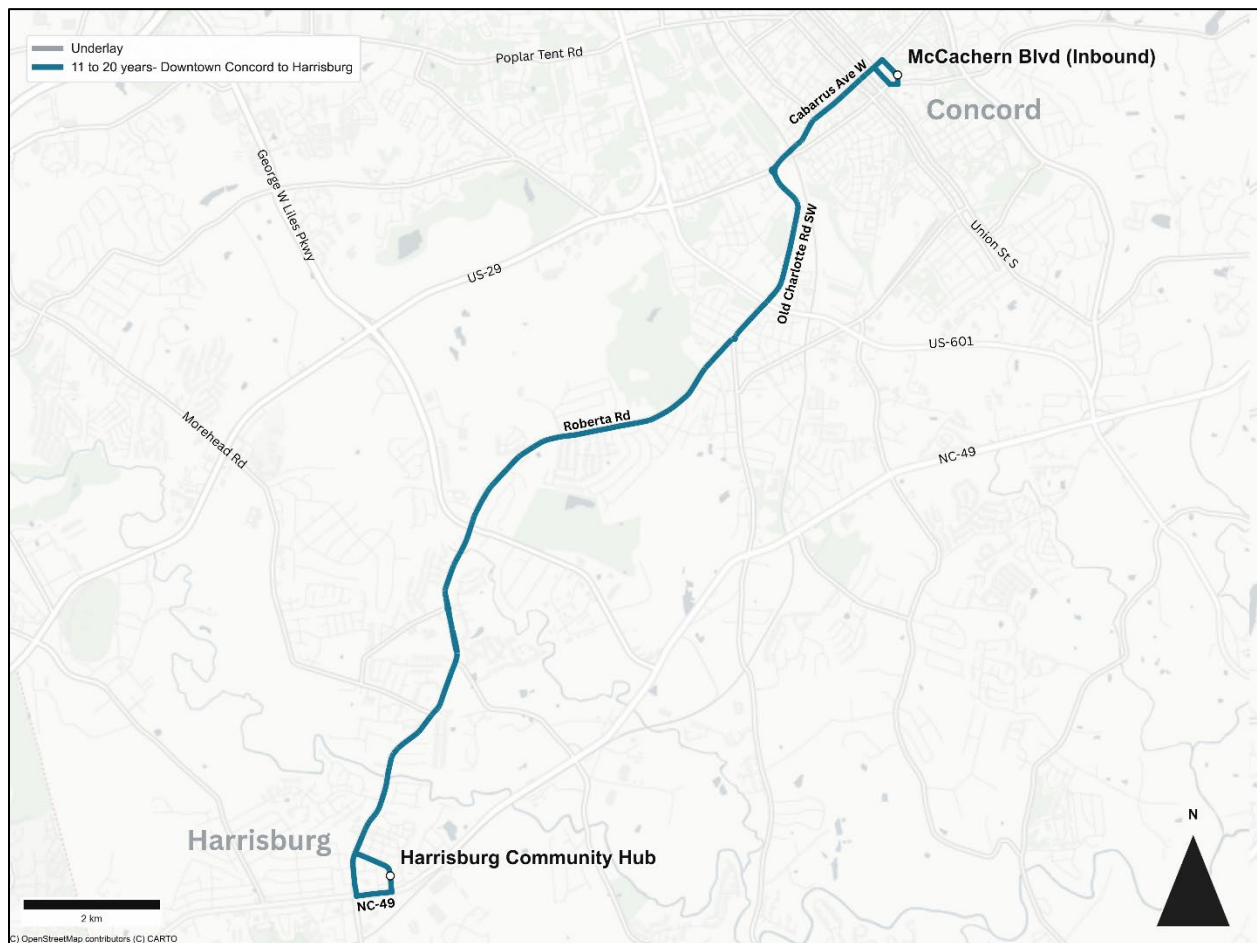
MAP 4-24: CONCORD CONNECTOR ROUTE



Downtown Concord to Harrisburg

Introducing fixed route service to Harrisburg and southern and western Concord after building demand through microtransit service in the medium term, this new route connects Downtown Concord to Harrisburg Town Center via Cabarrus Avenue, Old Charlotte Road, and Roberta Road, which provide access to many of the residential neighborhoods in the area and other points of interest such as the Hartsell Recreation Center and Roberta Road Middle School.

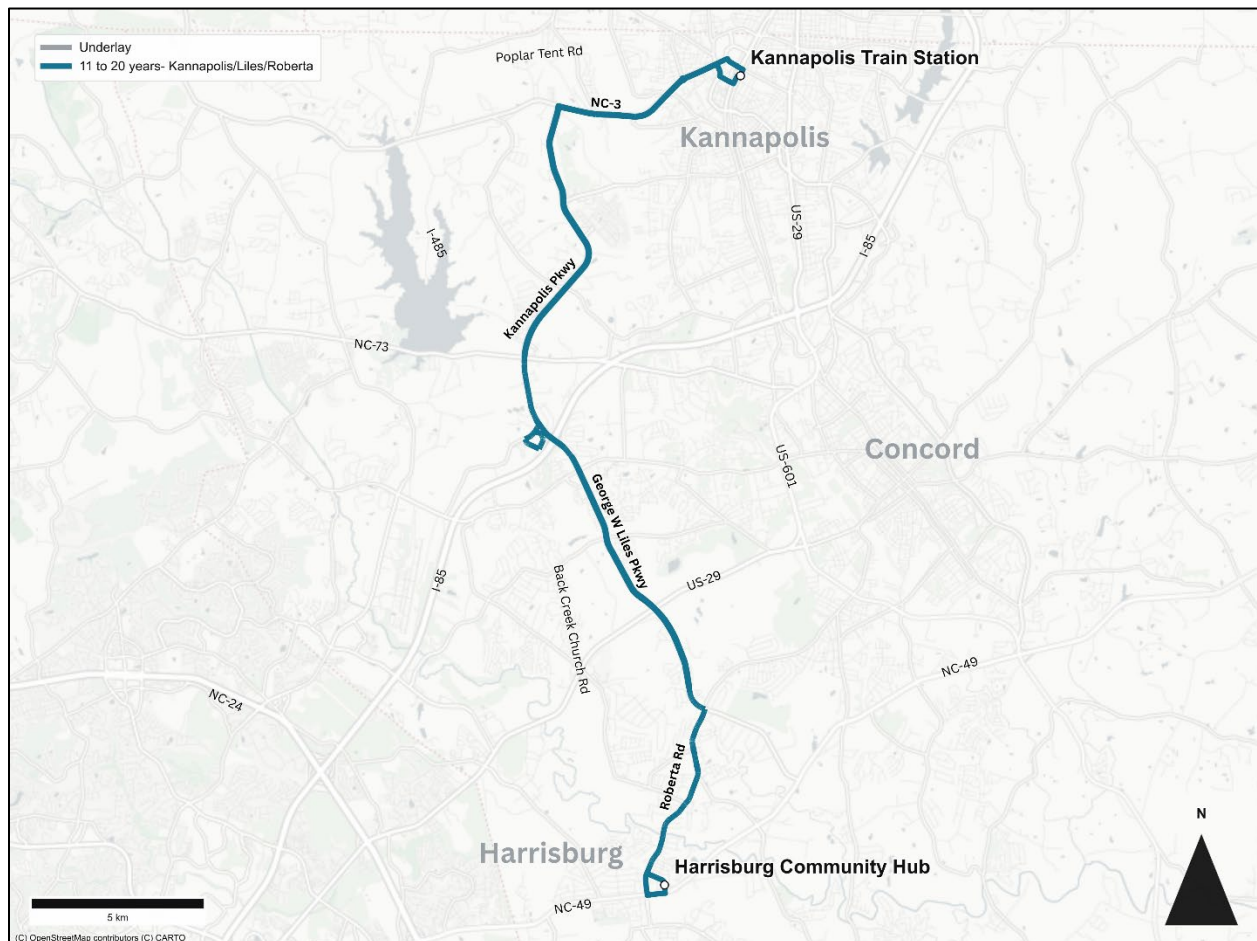
MAP 4-25: DOWNTOWN CONCORD TO HARRISBURG ROUTE



Kannapolis/Liles/Roberta

A new north-south route in the central portion of the county, this route provides a one-seat ride between the previously disconnected Kannapolis and Harrisburg. The northern leg of this route connects the Kannapolis Train Station to the Afton Ridge Shopping Center via Mooresville Road and Kannapolis Parkway, traveling through areas of rapid residential growth and some commercial and industrial land uses, as well. South of Afton Ridge, this route runs on George W. Liles Parkway and Roberta Road enroute to Harrisburg, providing service to residential and retail land uses along those corridors.

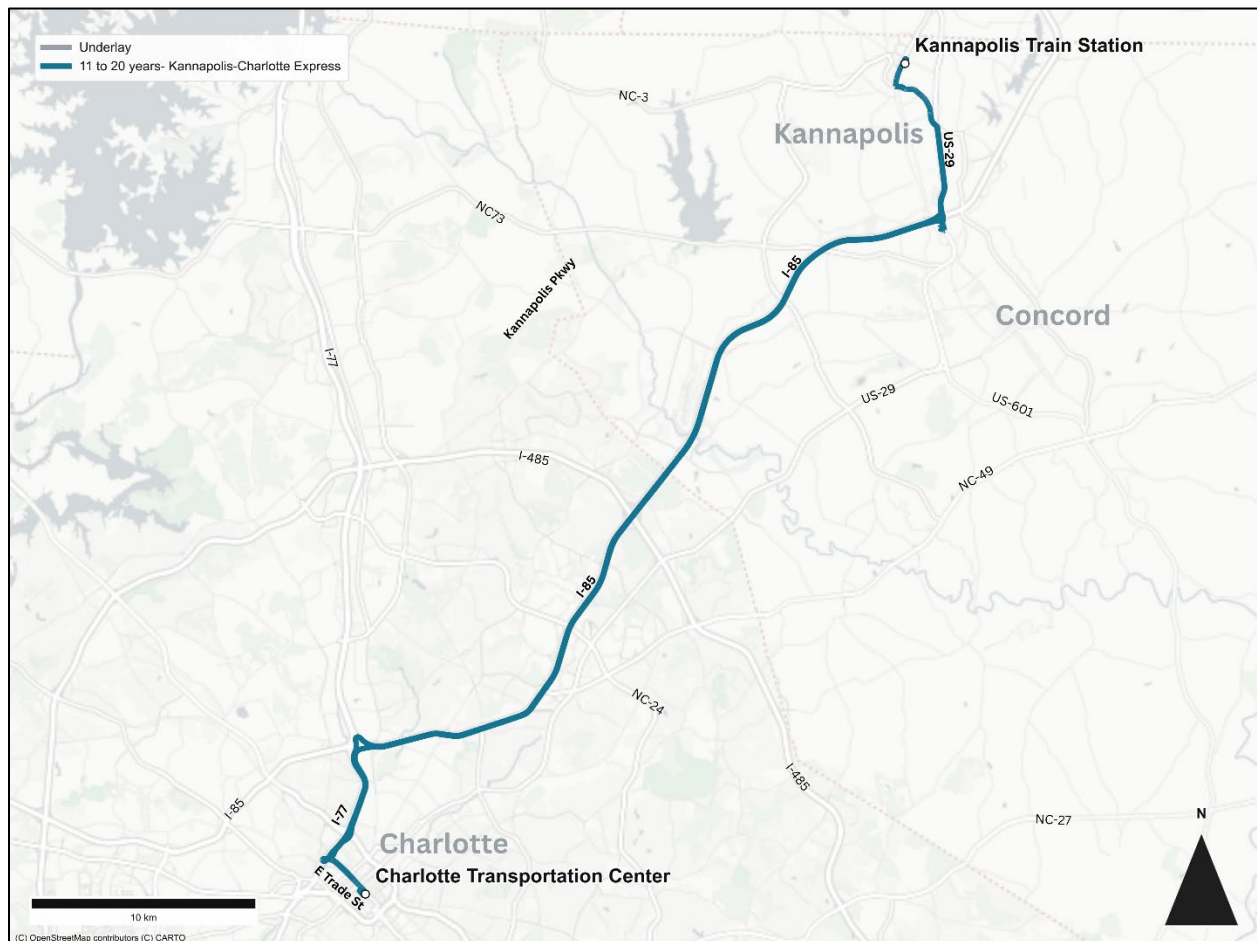
MAP 4-26: KANNAPOLIS/LILES/ROBERTA ROUTE



Kannapolis-Charlotte Express

Bolstering regional connectivity in quick and direct fashion, the Kannapolis-Charlotte Express provides express bus service between Kannapolis and Uptown Charlotte, with an intermediate stop at the Rider Transit Transfer Center in Concord. Providing a new one-seat ride between Cabarrus County and Uptown Charlotte, this route makes it extremely efficient to travel between the urban cores of Kannapolis and Charlotte but facilitates local connections, as well, by providing easy transfers to many other bus routes at each of the three stops along the route.

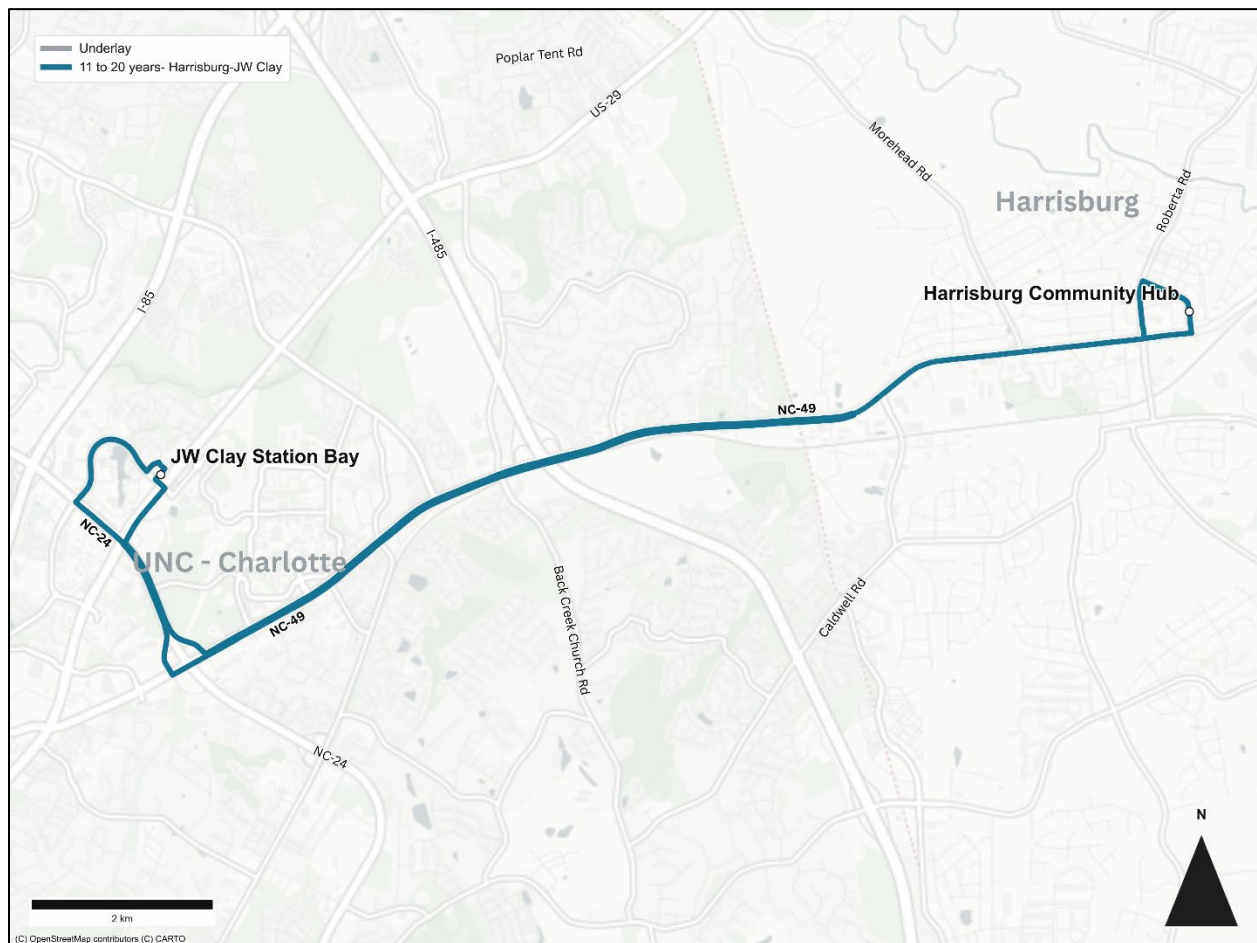
MAP 4-27: KANNAPOLIS-CHARLOTTE EXPRESS ROUTE



Harrisburg-JW Clay

A second fixed route for Harrisburg, the Harrisburg-JW Clay route adds a previously unserved connection between Harrisburg and Charlotte, running a short distance between the Harrisburg Town Center to the JW Clay light rail station in Charlotte via NC-49. In addition to connecting Harrisburg and Cabarrus County to all of Charlotte via light rail, this route also features interim stops near key destinations, including UNC Charlotte and swaths of multifamily housing and retail outlets along NC-49.

MAP 4-28: HARRISBURG-JW CLAY ROUTE



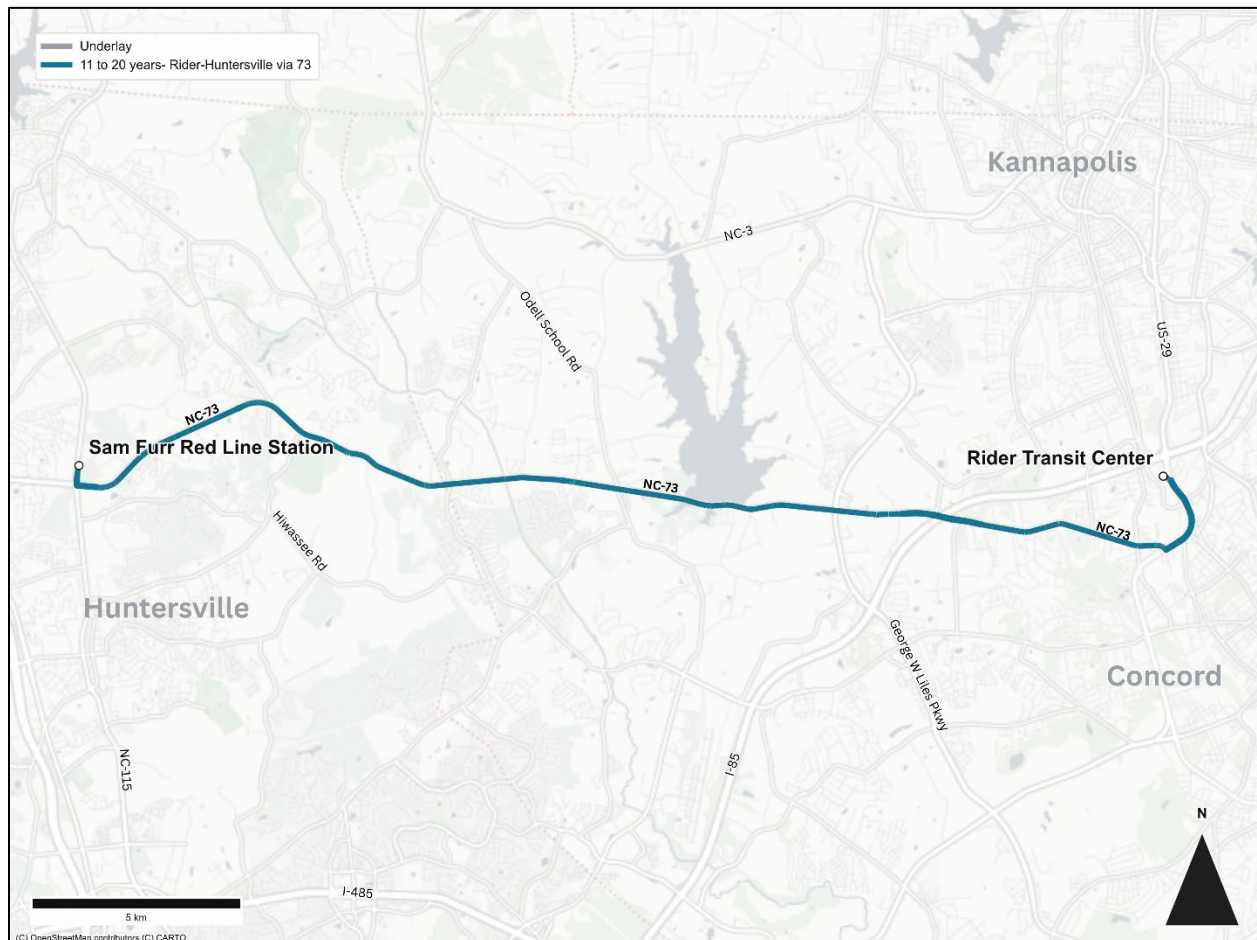
Rider-Huntersville via 73

A new east-west route in Cabarrus County, the Rider-Huntersville route provides a new regional connection between Cabarrus County and northern Mecklenburg County. This link is facilitated via NC-73 connecting Rider Transit Center to the future Sam Furr Station for CATS' Red Line commuter rail. Presently, the terminus in Huntersville connects with CATS Micro, a microtransit service covering much of northern Mecklenburg County.

As a local route connecting the two counties, the Rider Transit-Huntersville route serves the NC-73 corridor, which travels through areas of rapid development, thereby providing fixed-route transit access to new residential communities, retail outlets, and other locations such as Robert C. Bradford Regional Park.

If conserving resources is desired, this route could be consolidated with the Yellow route as a single route serving all destinations currently served by both routes. However, this would increase overall runtime.

MAP 4-29: RIDER-HUNTERSVILLE VIA 73 ROUTE



4.4.2 Microtransit Service Improvements

To accommodate increasing demand and to improve level and quality of service, the primary improvement in microtransit service for the long term should be to target a 15-minute wait time for microtransit trips. With the four zones established in the medium term, it is projected that reducing average wait times from 30 minutes to 15 minutes will require an extra four revenue vehicles during peak service. This service improvement would increase the reliability and effectiveness of microtransit to the level that would be expected for it to be a beneficial component of a robust transit network.

4.4.3 Fixed Route Operations Improvements

The key fixed-route operation improvement to be implemented within the long term is a minimum of 30-minute frequency on all routes. Certain routes or corridors that exhibit a high demand should be considered for service that is even more frequent, with buses arriving every 15 to 20 minutes. Furthermore, weekend service schedules should be expanded to match weekday service schedules, offering transit service at consistent times seven days a week.

Introduction of 30-Minute Service

To support the goal of adequately serving high-traffic corridors with fixed-route services, an increase in service frequency would enable riders to utilize transit as a viable alternative to personal vehicles along more corridors. Implementing 30-minute service frequencies across the board is a significant jump in service operating costs, where there would essentially be double the vehicle revenue hours during the daily service window, resulting in a need for greater ridership. Routes can be individually and gradually transitioned to 30-minute headways based on demand and available resources, if desired.

Weekend Service Improvement

This alternative proposes to improve morning service hours for weekend trips. This would start weekend services at 5:30 AM, as opposed to the current 8:30 AM start time. This adjustment will allow for greater flexibility for morning trips, especially for those commuting or heading to early medical appointments. This service improvement would add roughly 14-15% to the current cost of providing fixed-route services.

4.4.4 Capital Improvements

The long-term phase will see the continuation of the development of the three additional hubs in Cabarrus County. By Year 12, the Downtown Concord Hub should be ready for revenue for service. The Kannapolis Hub should be completed by Year 15, and the Harrisburg Hub should be completed by Year 18.

4.4.5 Education Campaign

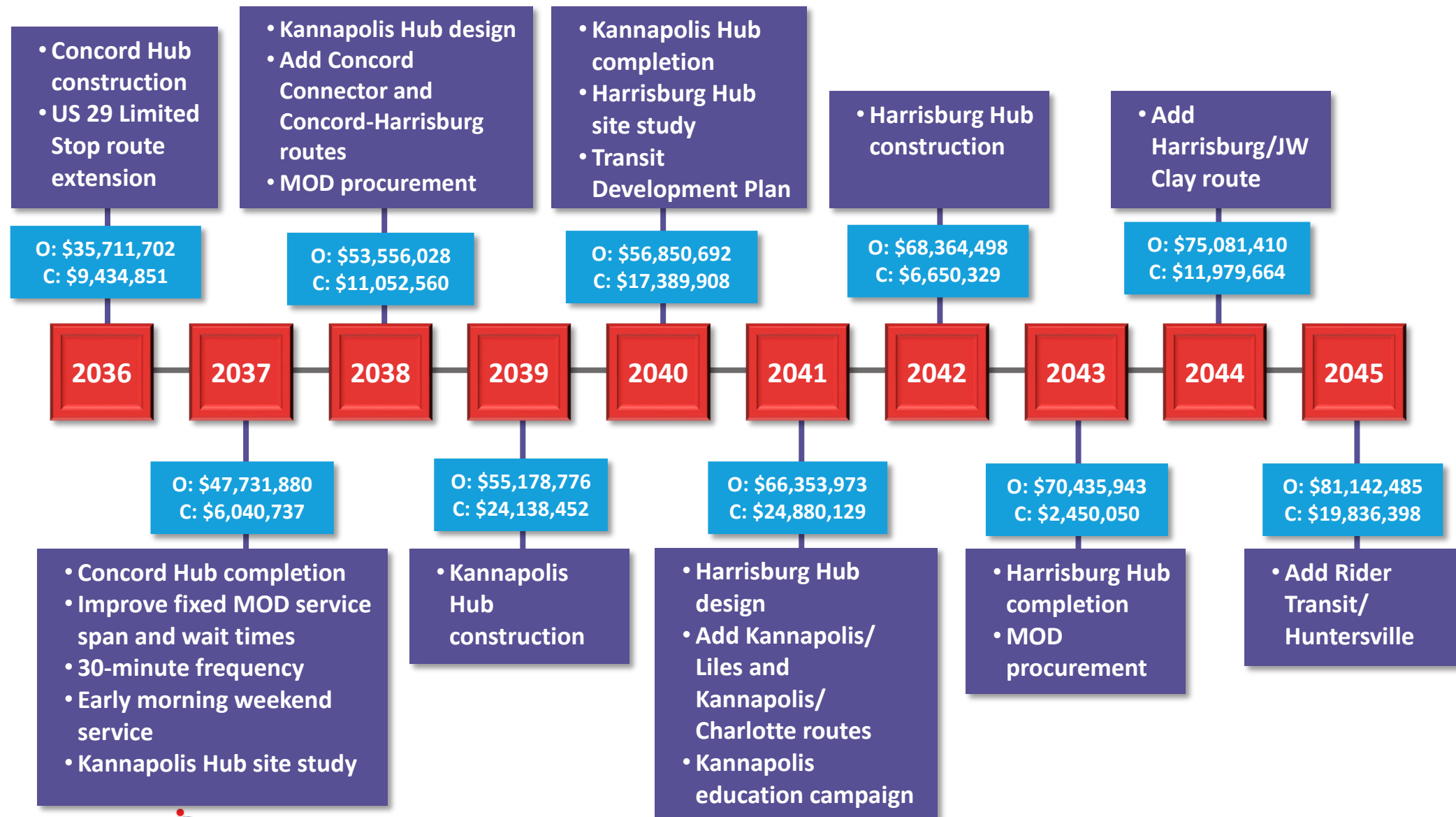
In order to support the introduction of the Kannapolis/Charlotte Express and the associated Kannapolis Hub opening, an education and outreach campaign should be undertaken to engage, inform, and prepare riders for using the new route and hub. Education methods for this campaign can be similar to those used in the short and medium terms.

4.4.6 Financial Summary

Figure 4-5 presents the total annual expenses during Years 11 through 20 of this plan, associated with the long-term improvement alternatives identified for implementation. These improvements build upon the medium-term initiatives and continue to implement additional and more frequent services. The proposed enhancements include new fixed-route service in previously unserved areas, enhanced fixed-route frequency and microtransit wait times and continued investment in three transit hubs in Cabarrus County. Collectively, these actions are intended to strengthen system connectivity, improve regional travel times, and ensure that the network continues to evolve appropriately to meet growing mobility demands across the service area.



FIGURE 4-5: SUMMARY OF LONG-TERM TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES AND IMPROVEMENTS



5 FUNDING, POLICY, AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

It is possible that some of the needs identified previously in the Transit Needs, Alternatives and Recommendations section may require recommended solutions that are not service and/or capital infrastructure related. Instead, it may be necessary to involve changes in agency coordination/governance, changes in local government transportation/land use policies, and/or pursuit of new funding sources, among other possible improvements. Hence, the purpose of this section is to address within this plan's recommendations in special topic areas that go beyond the types of transit improvements that are anticipated to result from the recommendations.

This section presents strategies for strengthening regional connectivity, ensuring sustainable funding, and advancing policies that support high-quality public transportation in Cabarrus County. It outlines existing and proposed regional express services designed to link Cabarrus County with neighboring communities and major employment, education, and service centers, while emphasizing coordination with regional transit providers and planning agencies. The section also summarizes Rider Transit's current funding framework and explores potential federal, state, and local funding sources needed to maintain and expand service over time. Finally, it highlights the role of transit-supportive land use and multimodal policies in improving access to transit, closing first- and last-mile gaps, and aligning transportation investments with regional growth and development objectives.

5.1 Coordination of Regional Services

Cabarrus County sits within a thriving metropolitan area, and connections to nearby towns and cities are crucial for expanding opportunities and providing access to services. Proposed express bus connections include Huntersville, Salisbury, Harrisburg, University City, and Uptown Charlotte. Figure 5-1 (below) illustrates proposed future regional services that will provide this connectivity.

Rider Transit currently runs only one regional service, a route that goes beyond Cabarrus County and into another transit agency's jurisdiction: the Concord Charlotte Express (CCX) route into the City of Charlotte, which connects with the Blue Line and CATS bus routes at the JW Clay station. Rider Transit currently coordinates with CATS to ensure that buses schedules are synchronized for transfers and CATS provides funding for the portion of the route in Charlotte.

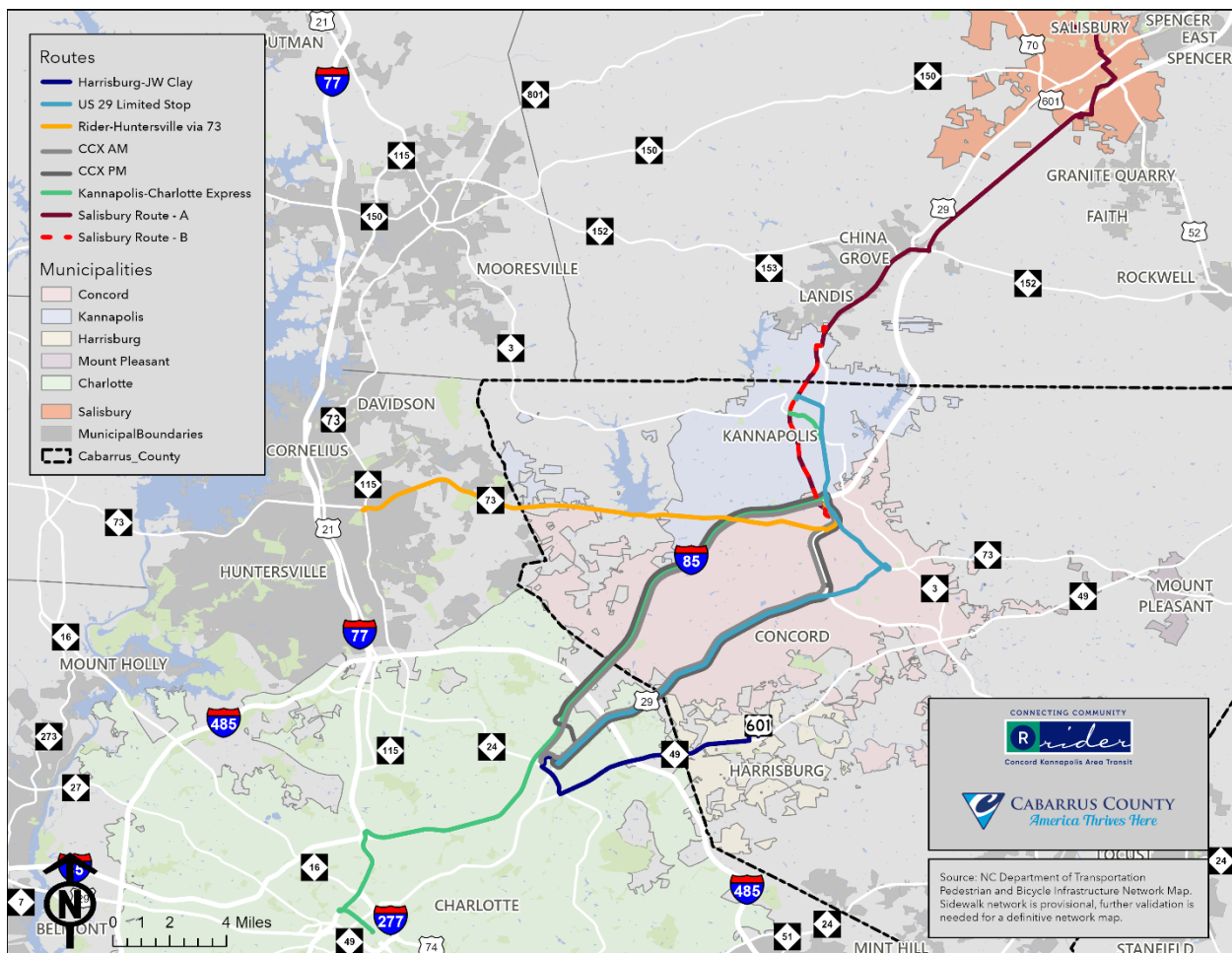
As part of current and future route enhancements and recommendations, the identified express transit routes must accomplish three things: they must fulfill a specific transit need, they must be operationally and financially viable, and they must serve a community for whom transit is important. Each existing and proposed regional service notes:

- The mission of the service
- Key operational and financial information
- The communities that are likely to rely on it
- Potential integration with existing routes, e.g., when two proposed routes are likely to overlap, when applicable

- Coordination with other transit providers and planning agencies.

For the current and future route enhancements and recommendations, the project team analyzed demographic data for communities likely to rely on a proposed regional service. American Community Survey data by block group within a quarter mile of route stops was reviewed. Key demographic factors linked to transit dependence — including minorities, low-income populations, youth (under 18), seniors (over 65), and households with limited or no vehicle access — were analyzed and compared to the average for Rowan, Cabarrus, and Mecklenburg counties (the three-county average). All the routes except for Rider Transit to Huntersville via NC 73 showed a higher-than-average percentage of low-income residents and households with few or no vehicles, suggesting that many communities near these stops are likely reliant on bus transit. The Rider Transit to Huntersville via NC 73 route has an above-average proportion of residents under the age of 18, a group also likely to be reliant on public transportation.

FIGURE 5-1: POTENTIAL REGIONAL SERVICES TO AND FROM CABARRUS COUNTY



5.1.1 Current Regional Routes

Rider Transit's only current regional route is the CCX route into the City of Charlotte. It does not currently serve any other region. It is important to note that with the passage of the PAVE Act in 2025, CATS, which is a department of the City of Charlotte, will be replaced by a stand-alone authority. This may affect future coordination efforts.

Concord Charlotte Express

Implementation Timeline: Existing

Mission: A transit connection between Cabarrus County and Uptown Charlotte is crucial for Rider Transit to serve, given Uptown Charlotte's role as the center of the metropolitan region. Rider Transit will continue to operate the CCX connection to JW Clay Station, where connections can be made via the Blue Line light rail to UNC Charlotte and Uptown.

Operations and Finances: See Table 5-1.

TABLE 5-1: CCX OPERATIONS AND FINANCES

Operations and Finances			
Cost per Year	\$562,000	Schedule	M-F 5:30-8:30 Weekend 8:30-8:30
Runtime	50 minutes	Vehicles	1
Headway	60-75 minutes	Round Trip Miles	29.4

Communities: Like most of the proposed regional routes, the CCX has a service area with a higher low-income population and higher rates of low/no-vehicle households than the three-county average. This route also has more minorities in its service area than average. Many of these people are concentrated around downtown Concord and just northeast of UNC Charlotte.

TABLE 5-2: CCX DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	CCX	Three-county Average
Minority	58%	51%
Low-Income	20%	18%
Youth	22%	23%
Seniors	11%	13%
No and Low Vehicle Households	54%	47%

Integration with other services: As microtransit is developed and other routes (e.g., US 29 Limited Stops) are built, the CCX has the potential to be streamlined for more efficient service, using measures such as running out and back on I-85, rather than making a loop on US 29.

Coordination: CCX requires coordination with CATS to ensure efficient connections and cost-sharing. Coordination with the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) may also be important to ensure long-term alignment between transportation services and development.

5.1.2 Proposed Regional Express Route Planning

Rider Transit will seek to expand express services along key corridors like US 29/Concord Parkway and NC 73, and connect directly to important locations like Uptown Charlotte, Harrisburg, Huntersville, and Salisbury. Offering high quality, express transit service along these key corridors will facilitate residential development, especially as all types of workers will be able to easily access these locations, as well as providing access to key services.

Salisbury Route

Implementation Timeline: Mid-Term (three to five years)

Mission: During public engagement, the most requested destination for additional Rider Transit service was Salisbury, with 30 percent of respondents asking for service there. Until 2021, Rowan Transit System provided a bus service which ran between the Salisbury and Kannapolis Amtrak stations, providing access for those commuting to work or traveling to medical appointments. However, the loss of a key grant funding source forced Rowan Transit System to cut the service. This route would reinstate service from the Rider Transit Center, through Kannapolis and Salisbury, to the VA Medical Center.

Operations and Finances: See Table 5-3.

TABLE 5-3: SALISBURY OPERATIONS AND FINANCES

Operations and Finances			
Cost per Year	\$1,273,000	Schedule	Mon-Sun 5:30-12:30
Runtime	107 – 132 minutes	Vehicles	2
Headway	60 minutes	Round Trip Miles	48.9

Communities: The Salisbury route would have a service area with a higher low-income population and higher prevalence low/no-vehicle households than the three-county average. This route also would have a higher percentage of older adults over the age of 65 than the three-county average. Many of these older adults are concentrated in Salisbury. They are an important demographic for transit as they are more likely than other age groups to lack access to or be able to drive a car.

TABLE 5-4: SALISBURY DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	Salisbury	Three-county Average
Minority	46%	51%
Low-Income	27%	18%
Youth	25%	23%
Seniors	16%	13%
No and Low Vehicle Households	52%	47%

Integration with Other Services: A connection would be made to Amtrak and Salisbury Transit local fixed routes and microtransit at the Salisbury Depot.

Coordination: The Salisbury route would require coordination between the City of Salisbury, Rowan Transit System, and Rider Transit to ensure efficient connections and cost-sharing. Coordination with the

Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO) may also be important to ensure long-term alignment between transportation services and development.

US 29 Limited Stop

Implementation Timeline: Long-Term (11 to 20 years)

Mission: This route would connect residents of the US 29/Concord Parkway corridor to the University City area (the area around UNC Charlotte), as well as Uptown Charlotte via the Blue Line. The CONNECT Beyond study identifies US 29/Concord Parkway between University City and Concord as a corridor that could benefit from intentional, transit-supportive development. Building a fast, frequent, and reliable limited stop fixed route bus line along this corridor has the potential to support development of vibrant communities with a variety of transit options.

Operations and Finances: See Table 5-5.

TABLE 5-5: US 29 LIMITED STOP OPERATIONS AND FINANCES

Operations and Finances			
Cost per Year	\$4,592,000	Schedule	Mon-Sun 5:30-12:30
Runtime	97 minutes	Vehicles	7
Headway	15 minutes	Round Trip Miles	40.2

Communities: The US 29 Limited Stop would have a service area with higher low-income population and higher prevalence of low/no-vehicle households than the three-county average. This route would also have a higher proportion of minority population in its service area, many of whom are concentrated around the Rider Transit center and just northeast of UNC Charlotte.

TABLE 5-6: US 29 LIMITED STOP DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	US 29 Limited Stop	Three-county Average
Minority	53%	51%
Low-Income	23%	18%
Youth	22%	23%
Seniors	14%	13%
No and Low Vehicle Households	56%	47%

Integration with Other Services: This route would improve the service that the CCX currently provides along US 29, allowing CCX to focus its service on I-85.

Coordination: Like the CCX, the US 29 Limited Stop route would require coordination with CATS to ensure efficient connections and cost-sharing. Coordination with the CRTPO may also be important to ensure long-term alignment between transportation services and development.

Rider Transit-Huntersville via NC-73

Implementation Timeline: Long-Term (11 to 20 years)

Mission: This route would connect residents in Concord and along the NC-73 corridor to northern Mecklenburg County via Huntersville. Communities in northern Mecklenburg County were highly requested locations for service during public engagement, with 16 percent of those surveyed requesting

a connection. Additionally, the NC-73 corridor has been studied several times as a key corridor for the region, most recently in CONNECT Beyond (2021) and before that in the NC-73 Corridor Study (2004).

Operations and Finances: See Table 5-7.

TABLE 5-7: RIDER TRANSIT-HUNTERSVILLE VIA NC-73 OPERATIONS AND FINANCES

Operations and Finances			
Cost per Year	\$2,016,000	Schedule	Mon-Sun 5:30-12:30
Runtime	84 minutes	Vehicles	3
Headway	30 minutes	Round Trip Miles	30.8

Communities: The Rider Transit-Huntersville route along NC-73 would serve a population with a higher proportion of young people (under 18) than the three-county average.

TABLE 5-8: RIDER TRANSIT-HUNTERSVILLE VIA NC-73 DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	Rider Transit-Huntersville via NC-73	Three-county Average
Minority	39%	51%
Low-Income	14%	18%
Youth	28%	23%
Seniors	13%	13%
No and Low Vehicle Households	37%	47%

Integration with existing services: Once in Huntersville, riders could connect to the planned Red-Line commuter rail stop or connect via CATS microtransit to other parts of Huntersville and northern Mecklenburg County, like downtown or shopping centers.

Coordination: The Rider Transit-Huntersville via NC-73 route would require coordination with CATS to ensure efficient connections and cost-sharing. Coordination with the CRTPO may also be important to ensure long-term alignment between transportation services and development.

Kannapolis-Charlotte Express

Implementation Timeline: Long-Term (11 to 20 years)

Mission: Connecting Kannapolis, Concord, and Uptown Charlotte is crucial for those looking to commute back and forth between Cabarrus County and Charlotte. An express bus that starts in Kannapolis, passes through the Rider Transit Center in Concord, and travels along Interstate 85 to Uptown Charlotte could provide a vital commuter connection.

Operations and Finances: See Table 5-9.

TABLE 5-9: KANNAPOLIS-CHARLOTTE EXPRESS OPERATIONS AND FINANCES

Operations and Finances			
Cost per Year	\$1,680,000	Schedule	Mon-Sun 5:30-12:30
Runtime	70 minutes	Vehicles	3
Headway	30 minutes	Round Trip Miles	58.2

Communities: The Kannapolis-Charlotte Express would have a service area with higher low-income population and higher rates of low/no-vehicle households than the three-county average. This route

would have particularly high low and no-vehicle households. These households are concentrated in the three highly urbanized areas where the route stops: downtown Kannapolis, Concord, and Uptown Charlotte.

TABLE 5-10: KANNAPOLIS-CHARLOTTE EXPRESS DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	Kannapolis-Charlotte Express	Three-county Average
Minority	48%	51%
Low-Income	20%	18%
Youth	14%	23%
Seniors	10%	13%
No and Low Vehicle Households	76%	47%

Integration with other services: Other fixed routes and microtransit services can feed into this route, allowing Cabarrus residents to make the long journey to Charlotte with limited time-consuming connections. This route would likely supplant the portion of the CCX route along I-85 by providing a more direct route into the core of Uptown Charlotte and offering connections to many CATS routes.

Coordination: The Kannapolis-Charlotte Express route requires coordination with CATS to ensure efficient connections and cost-sharing. Coordination with the CRTPO may also be important to ensure long-term alignment between transportation services and development.

Harrisburg-JW Clay

Implementation Timeline: Long-Term (11 to 20 years)

Mission: This service would connect Harrisburg to the JW Clay station, and the rest of Cabarrus and Mecklenburg counties via connections on Rider Transit and CATS routes. It represents an opportunity to expand transit access to Harrisburg, a community that currently has none.

Operations and Finances: See Table 5-11.

TABLE 5-11: HARRISBURG-JW CLAY OPERATIONS

Operations and Finances			
Cost per Year	\$1,184,000	Schedule	Mon-Sun 5:30-12:30
Runtime	48 minutes	Vehicles	2
Headway	30 minutes	Round Trip Miles	16.0

Communities: The Harrisburg-JW Clay Route would have a service area with a higher low-income population and higher rates of low/no-vehicle households than the three-county average. This route would also have a high proportion of minorities in its service area, at 62 percent as compared to the three-county average of 51 percent. These minorities are concentrated in the University City area, near UNC Charlotte.

TABLE 5-12: HARRISBURG-JW CLAY DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	Harrisburg-JW Clay	Three-county Average
Minority	62%	51%
Low-Income	23%	18%
Youth	12%	23%
Seniors	5%	13%
No and Low Vehicle Households	66%	47%

Integration with other services: The JW Clay Blue Line Station provides connections to existing and proposed Rider Transit routes (e.g., the CCX and US 29 Limited Stop) and many CATS routes (e.g., Blue Line).

Coordination: The Harrisburg-JW Clay route would require coordination with CATS to ensure efficient connections and cost-sharing. Coordination with the CRTPO may also be important to ensure long-term alignment between transportation services and development.

Table 5-13 summarizes the regional routes proposed in this plan. It also notes which agencies the routes will need to coordinate with and key demographics who may be in particular need of public transit that are above the three-county average within a ¼ mile of each route's stops.

TABLE 5-13: PROPOSED REGIONAL ROUTES

Route	Description	Coordinating Agencies	Transit-Disposed Demographics
Current Regional Services			
CCX	Rider Transit Center to JW Clay Station. Connection with CATS fixed routes and Blue Line	CATS ¹ , CRTPO ²	Minority, Low-income, Low and No Vehicle households
Proposed Regional Services			
Salisbury	Rider Transit Center to Salisbury VA Medical Center. Connection with Salisbury Transit	Salisbury Transit, CRMPO ³	Low-income, Low and No Vehicle households, and Seniors
US 29 Limited Stop	Downtown Kannapolis, through downtown Concord, to JW Clay station. Headways are just 15 minutes. Connection to CATS fixed routes and Blue Line.	CATS ¹ , CRTPO ⁺	Minority, Low-income, Low and No Vehicle households

¹ Charlotte Area Transit System, this name may change as the agency is replaced by a regional authority in 2026.

² Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the MPO for the Charlotte region.

³ Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization, the MPO for the Cabarrus and Rowan region.

Route	Description	Coordinating Agencies	Transit-Disposed Demographics
Rider Transit-Huntersville via NC-73	Rider Transit Center to Future Red Line Station. Connection to Future Red Line and CATS Microtransit.	CATS*, CRTPO [†]	Youth
Kannapolis-Charlotte Express	Downtown Kannapolis, through Rider Transit Center, to Charlotte Transportation Center via I-85. Connection to CATS fixed routes and Blue Line.	CATS*, CRTPO [†]	Low-income, Low and No Vehicle households
Harrisburg-JW Clay	Downtown Harrisburg to JW Clay Station Connection to CATS fixed routes and Blue Line.	CATS*, CRTPO [†] , Harrisburg	Minority, Low-income, Low and No Vehicle households



5.2 Funding Sources

Sustaining and expanding Rider Transit’s operations requires a diverse and dependable funding base that supports ongoing service and future growth. This section outlines current and potential funding sources that enable Rider Transit to maintain and enhance transit services across Cabarrus County, emphasizing the combined support from federal, state, and local partners. Reliable sources such as Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5307 funds and contributions from the City of Concord and City of Kannapolis general funds will continue to be essential to Rider Transit’s financial stability. Meanwhile, new opportunities—including competitive federal grants and locally generated revenues, such as taxes or fees—may prove critical to developing expanded and innovative transit offerings. The following subsections first examine Rider Transit’s current funding structure, then explore potential future funding sources available at the federal, state, and local levels.

5.2.1 Current Funding

70 percent of Rider Transit’s funding for the 2026 Fiscal Year comes from Federal FTA 5307 urban formula funds, the City of Concord general fund, and the City of Kannapolis general fund (see Figure 5-2). The rest comes from other federal funding (such as FTA 5303), the North Carolina State Maintenance Assistance Program (SMAP), and other local funding sources (such as taxes, general funds, and CATS). Table 5-14 below provides a current snapshot of Rider Transit existing funding categories, which can be leveraged as Rider Transit continues to grow and expand services.

FIGURE 5-2: RIDER TRANSIT CURRENT FUNDING

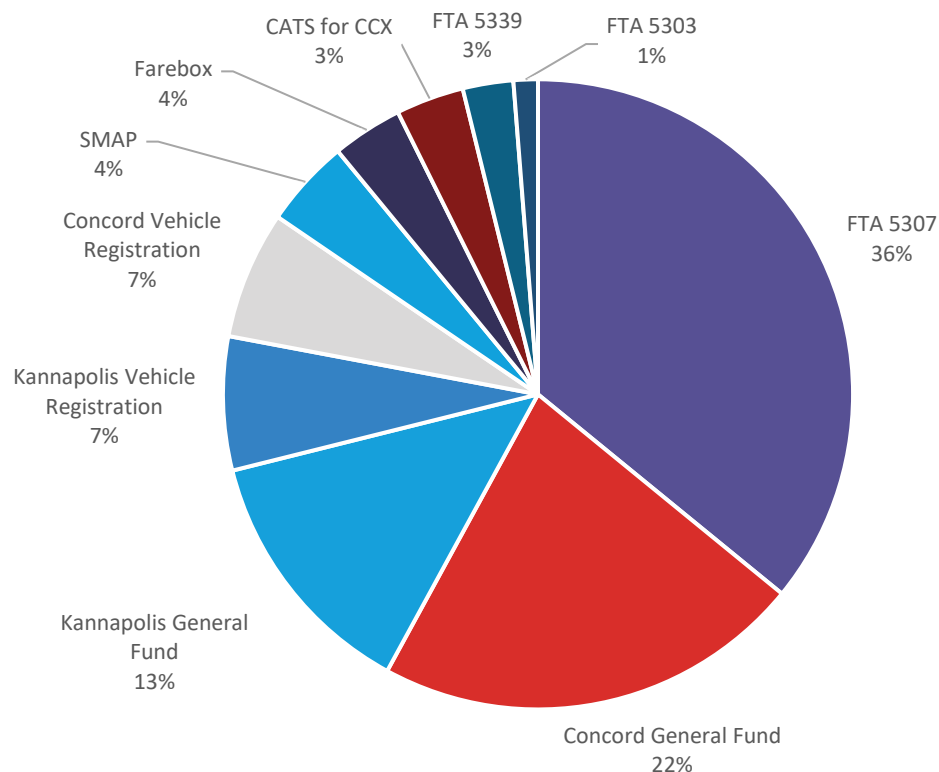


TABLE 5-14: RIDER CURRENT FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Mechanism	Description	Uses	Revenues (FY2026 – Budget)
Federal			
FTA 5307 Urban Formula Funds	Main source of funding for most urban transit. Different matching requirements apply for different purposes.	Capital, Contracting, Operations	\$2,463,524
FTA 5303	Support federally mandated planning, e.g., long-range plans and transportation improvement plans.	Planning	\$85,714
FTA 5310	Support for projects and programs designed to benefit seniors and individuals with disabilities. Accessing these funds is more likely if Rider Transit and CCTS consolidate.	Capital, operations, and some mobility management activities	The City of Concord is the designated recipient.
FTA 5339(a)	Formula grant for transit capital improvements.	Capital	
State			
State Maintenance Assistance Program (SMAP)	The SMAP provides a state funding mechanism for North Carolina transit systems, with allocation formula based on local match and performance; SMAP can assist with non-federal share of net operating costs.	All	\$299,280
State Match (5303)	Up to ten percent state match for federally funded projects is awarded based on operating performance factors, vehicle fleet, past state matching funds, and availability.	Matching Federal Funding	\$10,714
Local			
Fare Box	Revenue from fares.	All	\$248,638
Concord – Vehicle Registration Tax	\$5 vehicle registration fee	All	\$450,000
Kannapolis – Registration Tax	\$5 vehicle registration fee	All	\$470,517
Concord – General Fund	Transfers from the City of Concord General Fund	All	\$1,512,415
Kannapolis – General Fund	Transfers from the City of Kannapolis General Fund	All	\$903,146
CATS for CCX Route	Route CCX connects to the CATS Blue Line at JW Clay Station in Mecklenburg County.	All	\$239,650

5.2.2 Potential Funding

Federal Funding

Many of the improvements that Rider Transit seeks to make to the transit system in Cabarrus County will require additional funding. Some of the funding sources are outlined in Table 5-15 through Table 5-17 in the following sections.



It should be noted that some of the indicated funding sources may have been used before by Rider Transit, like federal FTA 5339(b) funds. Some, however, may be new to Rider Transit, including a county sales tax or a Municipal Service District (MSD). Implementing additional funding sources could be key to expanding transit service coverage and frequency in areas with high potential demand.

Some potential federal funding sources face cuts in the coming years, such as the Carbon Reduction Act and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program. Table 5-15 summarizes these funding sources.

TABLE 5-15: POTENTIAL FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Mechanism	Description	Approval Process	Uses
FTA 5309	Discretionary grant for major transit capital improvements.	Competitive, multi-stage, rating-based process with the FTA	Major capital improvements such as fixed-guideway and Bus Rapid Transit.
FTA 5339(b)	Discretionary grant for transit capital improvements under two categories: Low or No Emission Grant Program and the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program.	Competitive application process, directly with the FTA through grants.gov	Grants for Bus and Bus Facilities: bus replacement, modernization, and facilities. Low-No Program: purchase or lease of zero- or low-emission buses; and acquisition, constructing, and lease of supporting facilities (e.g., charging and maintenance).
Enhancing Mobility Innovation	An FTA program designed to foster innovative transit projects or demand response options like microtransit.	Directly with the FTA through grants.gov	Innovative projects, including innovations in delivery models, financing, partnerships, and technology.
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Directly Attributable (STBG-DA)	Flexible funding for transportation capital improvements [formerly Surface Transportation Program (STP)]	Through Cabarrus-Rowan MPO; requires a lengthy “flexing” process from FHWA to FTA 5307 funding category if funding awarded	Capital improvements, such as bus rapid transit corridors or dedicated bus lanes; transit vehicles; EV charging infrastructure.
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Program	Flexible funding for transportation capital improvements.	Directly with the FTA through grants.gov	Capital improvements and planning, such as transit facilities and multimodal hubs, bus rapid transit, and resilience and evacuation routes.
Carbon Reduction Act*	Designed to reduce CO ₂ emissions from on-road sources.	Through Cabarrus-Rowan MPO	Investments in low-CO ₂ technology, including hybrid or electric buses.
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program*	Funding for areas in nonattainment or maintenance for ozone, carbon monoxide, and/or particulate matter.	Through Cabarrus-Rowan MPO; requires a lengthy “flexing” process from FHWA to FTA 5307 funding category if funding awarded	Any investments in transit projects designed to reduce ozone, carbon monoxide, and/or particulate matter.

*May face funding cuts.

State-Coordinated Federal Funding

Currently, there is limited potential for state-level funding, and much state-level funding is federal funding and funneled through NCDOT in the form of grants.

TABLE 5-16: STATE AND STATE-COORDINATED FEDERAL FUNDING

Funding Mechanism	Description	Approval Process	Uses
Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)	Provides state funding to support transportation services in rural areas.	Application through the NCDOT Unified Grant Application Process.	Focused on helping individuals with limited mobility or access to transportation for employment, medical appointments, and other essential needs.
Consolidated Capital – Coordination Projects (ConCPT-CO)	Provides state funds for bus services coordinated across multiple transit systems.	Application through the NCDOT Unified Grant Application Process.	Three or more systems participate in a regularly scheduled, fixed route type program advertised and operating five days per week.
Consolidated Capital – Consolidation Projects (ConCPT-CN)	Provides state funds for system consolidation.	Application through the NCDOT Unified Grant Application Process.	State funds for two or more systems consolidating into one system.
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	Funding available to public entities for administration and implementation	Application through the NCDOT Unified Grant Application Process.	For programs that reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips (e.g., carpooling, vanpools, employer programs).
FTA 5311(f)	Combination of federal Section 5311(f), state and local funds available specifically for supporting intercity bus service to provide assistance in operating intercity routes.	Application through the NCDOT Unified Grant Application Process.	Transportation services are defined as fixed routes regularly scheduled services that provide intercity transportation within the state and connections to the national intercity bus system through interline agreements or through-service arrangements.

One example of effective state-level coordination of federal funding is the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division’s Mobility for Everyone Everywhere in North Carolina (MEE NC) program, which leverages a grant from the USDOT to launch three-year microtransit pilot programs in eleven North Carolina Counties. The grant covers the cost of launching and running the service and provides support during the process. While this grant is not currently taking applicants, Rider Transit should apply to any similar NCDOT programs to help launch its microtransit and other services.

Local Funding

Potential local funding can come from a variety of sources, such as taxes and debt financing. One potential strategy would be to institute a one percent (1 percent) county sales tax, which would fund several sectors, including things like education and public works, in addition to transit. This tax would require approval from the North Carolina State legislature. Simpler funding sources could be revenues from parking or advertisements on buses.

TABLE 5-17: LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Mechanism	Description	Approval Process	Uses
Local Taxes			
General Property Tax	A general tax on the value of properties, at the municipal or county level, a portion of which could be earmarked for public transit.	Approval by County Commissioners or a local City Council; appropriation for transit subject to local approval	All
¼ percent County Sales Tax (Articles 43)	A county-based tax on sales earmarked for public transit. NC Chapter 105, Articles 43 allows for ¼ percent increase.	Approval by referendum and enacted by county commission	All
1 percent County Sales tax	A county-based tax on sales, combined to fund transit, education, and other priorities. Requires approval by the NC State Legislature.	Approval by State Legislature, referendum, and county commission	All
Municipal Service Districts (MSD)	A special area with an additional property tax to fund local projects and services. Downtown Concord is an MSD.	City council	All
Additional Vehicle Registration Fees	Additional charge or greater portion of the existing \$5 vehicle registration fee. A county can levy up to a \$7 fee, and a public transportation authority up to \$10.	County or public transportation authority	All
Rental Car Tax	A tax on rental cars, earmarked for public transit. This tax can be up to 1.5% for a county under article 156 and up to 5% for an authority under Article 50.	County or public transportation authority	All
Other Local			
Parking Revenue	Parking revenues from on-street and parking decks could be transferred to public transit. Parking rates could be raised.	City	All
Transit Fares	Fares are currently \$1.25. Raising this may bring in additional funds, but care should be taken not to price riders out of transit.	Transit Commission and Concord City Council	All
Bus Advertising	Advertisements on the inside or outside of buses.	Rider Transit staff	All
Debt Finance			
General Obligation Bonds	Long-term bonds to be repaid by proceeds from general property taxes.	Referendum	Capital
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Uses projected increases in tax revenue to service debt that allows for redevelopment. TIF (or Synthetic TIP) mechanism can be used for an area like a downtown or an innovation district, where significant redevelopment is expected.	City	Capital

5.3 Transit-Supportive Policies

Supporting the continued growth of public transit in Cabarrus County requires coordinated local policies that encourage multimodal access, transit-supportive development, and regional collaboration. This section highlights existing policies in Concord, Kannapolis, Harrisburg, and across the region that promote walkable, connected communities, and strengthen Rider Transit’s ability to serve residents effectively. Building on these frameworks, Rider Transit and its partners can advance plans, policies, and practices that better integrate land use and transportation planning, enhance last-mile connectivity, and foster regional coordination. The following subsections first summarize current transit-supportive policies before outlining proposed strategies to strengthen Rider Transit’s role in shaping a multimodal, transit-friendly future for Cabarrus County and the region.

5.3.1 Current Transit-Supportive Policies

Concord, Kannapolis, and Harrisburg have each adopted plans that prioritize multimodal connectivity. Key areas and corridors are called out in these plans for transit supportive development, including the NC-73/Davidson Highway corridor and Downtown Harrisburg. CONNECT Beyond also provides recommendations for future planning efforts, notably the need for transit agencies to be involved in land use and development planning. These plans are summarized in Table 5-18.



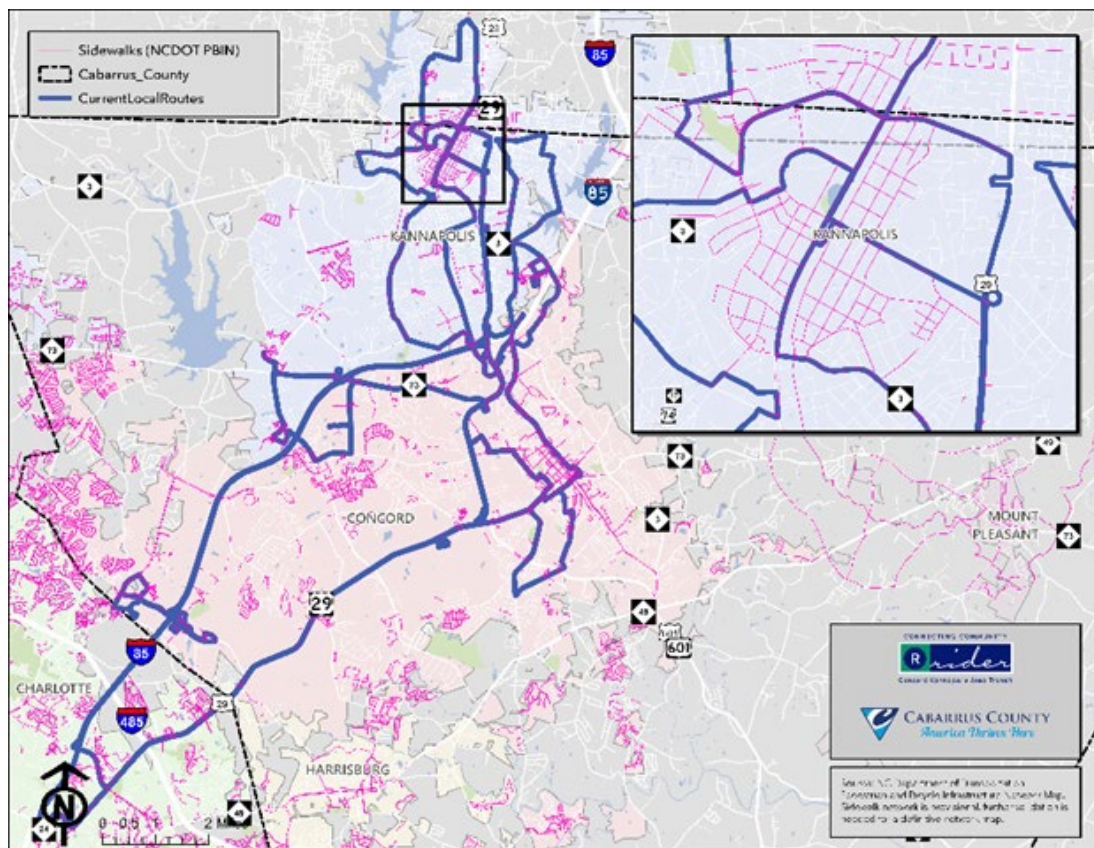
TABLE 5-18: TRANSIT SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

Plan	Policy/Recommendation Language	Implications
Concord Land Use Plan (2018)	<i>Objective 2.1:</i> Ensure that new development is designed to provide users with mobility choices, including driving, walking, bicycling, and riding transit.	• Complete streets • Transit, bike and pedestrian supportive environment
	<i>Objective 10.2:</i> Support the expansion of the Rider Transit System to provide efficient transit service to those who live, work, and visit Concord.	• Transit-supportive development and bike and pedestrian infrastructure around transit facilities
	<i>Objective 10.4:</i> Provide a transportation system that efficiently and safely serves the current and future needs of Concord citizens.	• Support transit-supportive and bike and pedestrian friendly development along the NC-73 corridor • Support bike and pedestrians on most road typologies • Explore ways to connect light rail transit expansion to Concord
Kannapolis Comprehensive Plan (2018)	<i>Outcome 3.2:</i> Residents and Visitors Have Many Options for Getting Around Kannapolis	• Support Rider Transit to connect residents with jobs and activity centers • Invest in bus stops, sidewalks, and pedestrian/bike facilities • Create a Comprehensive Transportation Plan and Complete Streets policy
	<i>Outcome 4.3:</i> Support Development of New Complete Neighborhoods	• Promote transit-supportive development • Promote a network of walkable streets in developing neighborhoods
Harrisburg Area Land Use Plan (2019)	<i>LU-2:</i> Link Land Use with Transportation Improvements, including connections with public transit	• Build around major transit corridors • Explore connections with Rider Transit, CATS, a village circulator, or link to Blue Line LYNX to leverage concentrated Town Center development • Consider the potential for a high-speed rail corridor while building
CONNECT Beyond (2021)	Involve Transit Agencies in Land Use & Development Planning Processes	• Rider Transit involvement in Cabarrus, Concord, Kannapolis, and other municipalities' land use and development planning
	Integrate the CONNECT Beyond Mobility Hub Locations into Local, County, and Regional Transit Plans	• Integrate mobility hubs into all local development plans
	Enhance Regional Coordination and Representation	• Continue to build relationships with neighboring transit agencies and authorities, especially as CATS becomes an authority

5.3.2 Proposed Transit Supportive Policies

While current plans prioritize the development of vibrant, transit and bike/pedestrian friendly urban spaces, there remain crucial gaps in planning for a truly multi-modal Cabarrus County. Importantly, Cabarrus County lacks a rigorous, systematic study of bike and pedestrian connectivity. Walking is the primary mode by which people access bus transportation, so a missing sidewalk or unsafe street crossing can mean a missed bus. While there is no comprehensive map of bike and pedestrian infrastructure in Cabarrus County, data from the NCDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Network (PBIN) can be used to approximate infrastructure gaps. Figure 5-3 depicts bus routes and sidewalks in the Rider Transit service area. While some areas, such as the downtowns of Kannapolis and Concord have excellent pedestrian connectivity, others do not have any sidewalks or crosswalks. The inconsistent network can result in transit riders struggling to make safe last-mile connections. For example, Downtown Kannapolis has an excellent sidewalk network immediately around Main Street, but it does not extend as far as North Cannon Boulevard nearby.

FIGURE 5-3: MAP OF RIDER TRANSIT BUS ROUTES AND SIDEWALKS



Three recommendations, provided below, can help to close these multimodal infrastructure gaps, and build robust public transit in Concord and across the region.

1. Create a Comprehensive Multimodal Transit Plan for Cabarrus County

A multimodal transit plan for Cabarrus County could help to bridge the first and last miles of transit trips, ensuring that the transit system Cabarrus is building can be accessed safely and conveniently. Key to this plan will be aligning areas of mobility with areas robust transit service and aligning both of those to areas of high growth. The plan should include:

- A. A comprehensive map of bike and pedestrian infrastructure in Cabarrus County.
- B. An analysis of future growth patterns in Cabarrus County in order to integrate multimodal infrastructure into high-growth areas' development.
- C. An analysis of Unified Development Ordinances (UDOs) and Traffic Impact Analyses (TIAs) for municipalities in Cabarrus County and recommendations to improve their requirements for multimodal infrastructure.
- D. Road Safety Audits (RSAs) along transit corridors and other key corridors to review and update multimodal improvements.
- E. Assemble a team of community stakeholders to guide the planning process, including transit riders, small business owners, and social service providers.

2. Advocate for Improved Transit-supportive Development at the County and Municipal Levels

Transit-supportive development is about developing with an aim to facilitate accessible, efficient, safe, and comfortable transit access for growing communities. People need to feel empowered by their urban spaces to access the high-quality transit that Rider Transit seeks to expand. Maintaining an influence on local planning processes is essential for Rider Transit to guide development to better support and guide development. Maintaining and expanding this influence could include:

- A. Remain involved in the process of developing and enacting municipal plans.
- B. Take part in development review and rezoning processes to incorporate transit supportive policies in development practice. This will include develop staff analyses for key developments and rezonings and attending planning board meetings.
- C. Continue to develop relationships with town planning boards.
- D. Hiring an additional staff person to go to facilitate these actions.

Key to effective advocacy for transit-supportive development is remaining involved in the development of municipal plans, from small area plans to long range plans. As communities in Cabarrus County create these plans, Rider Transit should be at the table to ensure that transit is properly understood and integrated into the planning process. As part of these processes Rider Transit should advocate for:

- E. Re-evaluations of Unified Development Ordinances (UDOs) and Traffic Impact Analyses (TIAs) to ensure they support multimodal infrastructure.
- F. Encourage mixed-use zoning where appropriate to reduce the need for short car trips.
- G. Plan corridor-based communities with high relative densities can be effectively served by public transit.
- H. In those places where high-density neighborhoods are not feasible, advocate for the highest possible density and high-quality multimodal infrastructure.
- I. Increase street connectivity ratios for areas near urban centers from 1.4 to 1.6.

- J. Adopt a complete streets policy if none exists.
- K. Lower or remove of parking minimums to support economically vibrant urban spaces and encourage the use of public transit.
- L. Integrate mobility hubs into plans to facilitate seamless transfers between routes and services.

3. Continue to Maintain and/or Foster Relationships with Other Jurisdictions

As Rider Transit plans to expand service to regions it has not previously operated within and substantial changes are occurring in regions where they currently operate changing from an agency to an authority, robust relationships with those who run these towns and agencies can facilitate the expansion of high-quality services.

- A. *City of Salisbury*, a strong relationship with the City of Salisbury can help build support for the renewing of the service connection between Cabarrus County and Salisbury, including potential for cost-sharing agreements.
- B. *Town of Harrisburg*, the Town of Harrisburg currently does not maintain any public transportation routes. This presents a barrier for the many service workers who need to commute into the town to run Harrisburg's many stores and restaurants. Robust relationships with the town of Harrisburg would help to clarify the importance of public transportation for the town.
- C. *CATS*, with the recent passage of the PAVE act in Mecklenburg County, CATS, which is a department of the City of Charlotte, will be replaced by a regional authority. This transition could result in substantial changes to coordination procedures. For example, Rider Transit currently has ex officio representation on the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). But the MTC is expected to be dissolved in this transition, and Rider Transit will not have representation on the new authority's board. Maintaining relationships with the new authority could be crucial to expanding connections to the Blue Line and into central Charlotte.
- D. *Local MPOs*, to improve collaboration and strategic alignment in regional transportation planning, Rider Transit must continue to actively participate in ongoing discussions and initiatives with the Cabarrus Rowan Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO). This involves attending planning meetings, helping prioritize projects, and staying updated on regional transportation trends. Additionally, maintaining strong relationships with the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) is vital, especially considering the passage of the PAVE Act referendum and the various transit investments tied to its funding. By doing so, Rider Transit can ensure that its current interests, future plans, and needs are effectively represented in broader regional planning efforts, fostering a more unified approach to transportation strategy and infrastructure development throughout the region.

6 5/10/20-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This implementation plan translates the Transit Needs Identification findings into a phased, 20-year roadmap for transit investment and service improvements in Cabarrus County. The plan outlines a comprehensive and operationally feasible program for advancing mobility through staged enhancements over the short-term (0–5 years), mid-term (6–10 years), and long-term (11–20 years), assuming a one-cent sales tax (or comparable funding level).

To guide decision-making, this section presents a tiered set of implementation scenarios. The first scenario, the Full Aspirational Implementation Plan, represents the complete vision for transit in Cabarrus County, incorporating all identified service, capital, and operational improvements needed to meet current and future mobility needs. This scenario is intentionally ambitious and serves as a benchmark for what could be achieved with sustained funding and long-term investment.

Recognizing the importance of aligning recommendations with fiscal realities, two additional scenarios are also presented. The Moderate Growth Implementation Plan reflects a more measured approach that phases selected key service expansion and capital investments over time, while the Cost Feasible Implementation Plan focuses on maintaining core services and advancing only the most essential improvements within constrained funding levels.

Together, these three scenarios provide a range of options that allow Cabarrus County to evaluate trade-offs between investment levels, service outcomes, and long-term system performance, supporting informed decision-making based on available resources and community priorities.

6.1 Implementation Plans by Cost

Section 6.1 below details the timeline of improvements recommended within each tiered scenario. Figure 6-1, Figure 6-2, and Figure 6-3 graphically summarize the timeline of improvements recommended within each tiered scenario.

6.1.1 Full Aspirational Implementation Plan

The Full Aspirational Implementation Plan represents the “complete” aspirational vision for transit in Cabarrus County, incorporating all identified service, infrastructure, and operational improvements needed to create a high-performing, fully integrated transit system. This scenario reflects an ambitious, long-term investment strategy designed to significantly enhance mobility, expand access, and strengthen regional connectivity.

This plan is structured to build progressively over time, beginning with foundational governance and capital investments, followed by strategic service expansion, and ultimately culminating in a robust regional network supported by multiple transit hubs and high-frequency service. It assumes a proactive approach to funding, partnerships, and implementation, enabling the agency to deliver the full range of recommended improvements.

Overall, the Full Aspirational Implementation Plan positions Cabarrus County to transition from its existing system into a comprehensive, modern transit network that supports economic growth,

improves quality of life, and provides reliable, accessible transportation options for residents and visitors alike.

5 Years (Short-term)

The short-term implementation period (0–5 years) focuses on establishing a strong institutional foundation, advancing early service improvements, and initiating key capital investments to support future system growth.

In Year 1, efforts will center on governance restructuring, including the initial steps toward consolidating CCTS and Rider into a unified, city-based transit agency. Concurrently, the agency will initiate an ADA Transition Plan to assess bus stop accessibility and identify priority improvements.

By Year 2, the consolidation process will be completed, forming a regional transit authority. Implementation of bus stop accessibility upgrades will begin and continue into Year 3 based on the ADA Transition Plan. During this period, planning for a new operations and maintenance facility will also commence, beginning with a site feasibility study in Year 3.

Service enhancements will begin to take shape in Year 3 with the procurement of microtransit services, supported by a public outreach and education campaign to communicate the role of microtransit within the broader transit network. In Year 4, microtransit service will be launched, starting with the Boulevards of Concord zone. Additional operational improvements will also be introduced, including extended evening service hours and route refinements to improve efficiency and reliability.

Capital investments will accelerate in Year 4 with the design of the new operations and maintenance facility, followed by construction in Year 5. Service expansion will continue in Year 5 with the introduction of a new route connecting to Salisbury, further enhancing regional connectivity. By the end of the short-term period, the agency will have established a unified governance structure, implemented microtransit service, improved accessibility, enhanced fixed-route operations, and advanced a major capital project that will position the system for long-term success.

10 Years (Medium-term)

The mid-term implementation period (6–10 years) focuses on advancing network restructuring, expanding service coverage and span, and initiating major transit infrastructure that supports a more connected and efficient system.

In Year 6, the new operations and maintenance facility will become operational, providing the capacity needed to support continued service growth. During this year, the agency will introduce the Kannapolis microtransit zone, along with complementary route realignments. Systemwide clockface scheduling will also be implemented to improve service consistency and ease of use.

Network restructuring will continue in Year 7 with the transition of the Boulevards of Concord microtransit zone to a fixed-route circulator service. At the same time, the West Concord/Harrisburg microtransit zone will be introduced, along with complementary adjustments to the Yellow route to enhance connectivity and efficiency.

In Year 8, the system will expand further with the introduction of the South Concord microtransit zone. Additional route refinements, including updates to the Purple and Orange routes, will be implemented to better align with travel demand. To support this expansion, additional microtransit vehicles will be procured.

Service span and speed improvements will be prioritized in Year 9, including extending service hours to 12:30 AM and introducing limited-stop service along the US-29 corridor to improve travel times along this key regional route.

Planning for major transit infrastructure will also advance during this period. In Year 9, the agency will initiate a site study for a future Concord transit hub, followed by development of a Transit Development Plan in Year 10 to guide long-term system growth.

By Year 10, the agency will begin designing the Concord transit hub and implement countywide demand response service, expanding mobility options and ensuring access to transit for all Cabarrus County residents. By the end of the mid-term period, the system will have significantly expanded service coverage, improved service reliability and span, and advanced critical infrastructure investments to support the next phase of transit development.

20 Years (Long-term)

The long-term implementation period (11–20 years) focuses on delivering major capital investments, increasing service frequency, and expanding regional connectivity to establish a fully integrated transit network across Cabarrus County and beyond. In Year 11, the agency will extend the US-29 limited-stop service into Charlotte, strengthening regional connections, while also initiating construction of the Concord transit hub.

By Year 12, the Concord Hub will open, creating a key secondary transfer point within the network and improving system connectivity. During this same year, the agency will enhance service levels by implementing 30-minute frequencies on fixed routes and introducing earlier weekend morning service, significantly improving convenience and usability for riders.

Planning and development of additional transit hubs will occur in parallel to support continued growth. A Kannapolis Hub site study will be conducted in Year 12, followed by design in Year 13, construction in Year 14, and completion in Year 15.

Service expansion will continue throughout this period with the introduction of new regional routes, including the Concord Connector and Concord–Harrisburg routes, further strengthening intra-county and regional mobility.

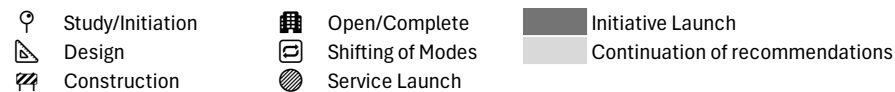
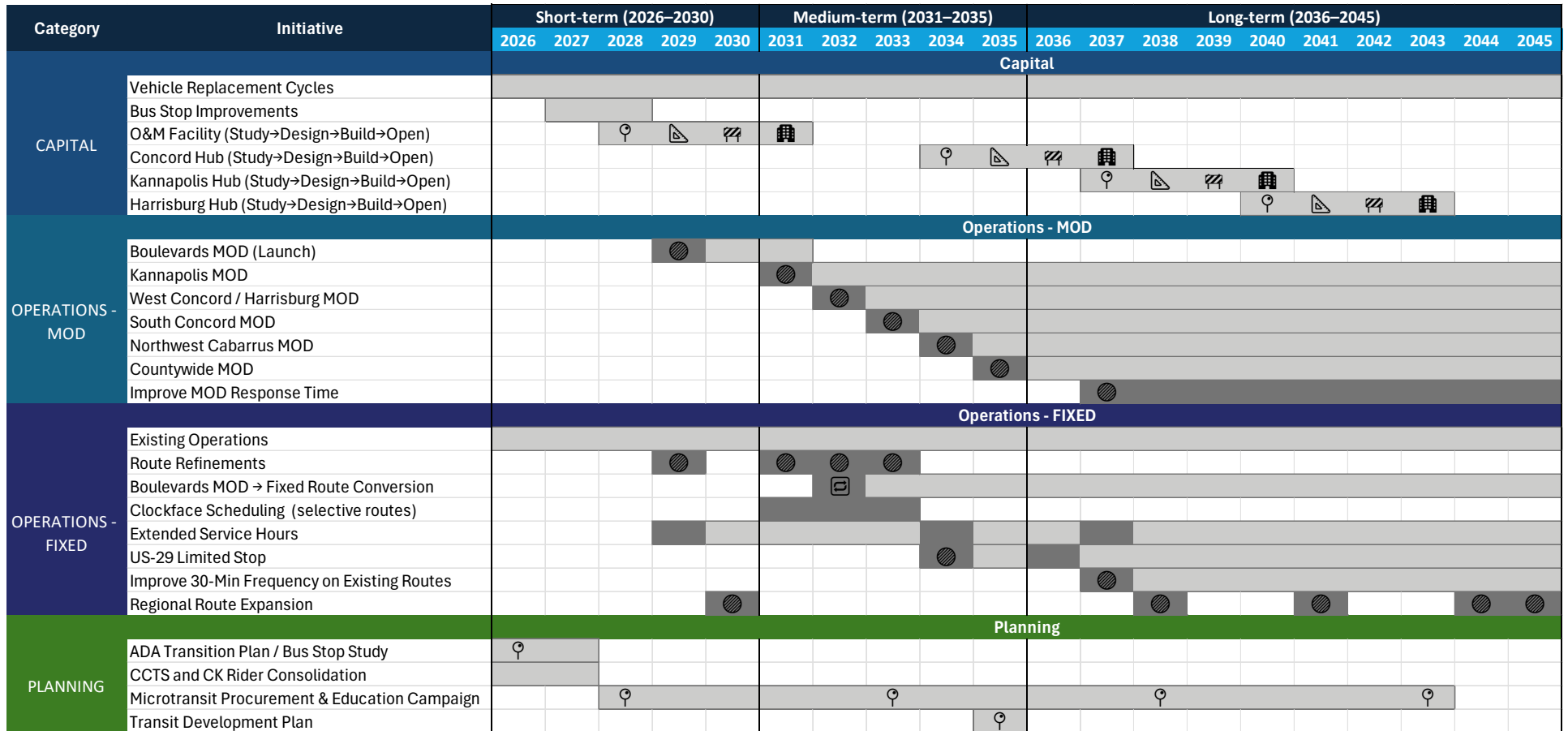
In Year 16, the agency will introduce additional regional services, including the Kannapolis–Liles–Roberta route and the Kannapolis–Charlotte Express, supported by a targeted public education campaign to promote new service options.

Development of a third major transit hub in Harrisburg will begin with a site study in Year 15, followed by design in Year 16, construction in Year 17, and completion in Year 18, creating another key node in the regional network.

In the final years of the plan, the agency will complete its regional network buildout with the introduction of the Harrisburg–JW Clay route in Year 19 and the Rider–Huntersville route in Year 20, further enhancing connectivity to the greater Charlotte region. By the end of the long-term period, the transit system will function as a fully integrated, high-capacity regional network supported by multiple transit hubs, expanded regional routes, frequent fixed-route service, and complementary microtransit options.



FIGURE 6-1: SUMMARY OF FULL ASPIRATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



6.1.2 Moderate Growth Implementation Plan

The Moderate Growth Implementation Plan represents a balanced and fiscally responsible approach to advancing transit in Cabarrus County. This scenario maintains the core vision of improving mobility, accessibility, and regional connectivity, while pacing investments and service expansion more gradually to align with funding availability and implementation capacity.

While the moderate growth plan follows a similar overall framework as the Full Aspirational Implementation Plan, particularly in the early years where foundational governance, planning, and capital investments are critical, it prioritizes a more measured rollout of service enhancements. This includes a slower expansion of microtransit, more targeted fixed-route improvements, and a reduced set of new services and frequency upgrades in the later years.

Overall, this approach ensures that the most essential improvements are delivered while maintaining flexibility, managing costs, and allowing the system to grow in a sustainable and scalable manner over time.

5 Years (Short-term)

The first five years will focus on restructuring governance, foundational planning, early service improvements, and preparation for major capital investments. These early actions will mirror those in the full-implementation scenario because both approaches require the same foundational investments.

10 Years (Medium-term)

Like the full aspirational scenario, the second five-year period of the moderate growth plan will focus on network restructuring, service expansion, and preparation for the system's first major transit hub.

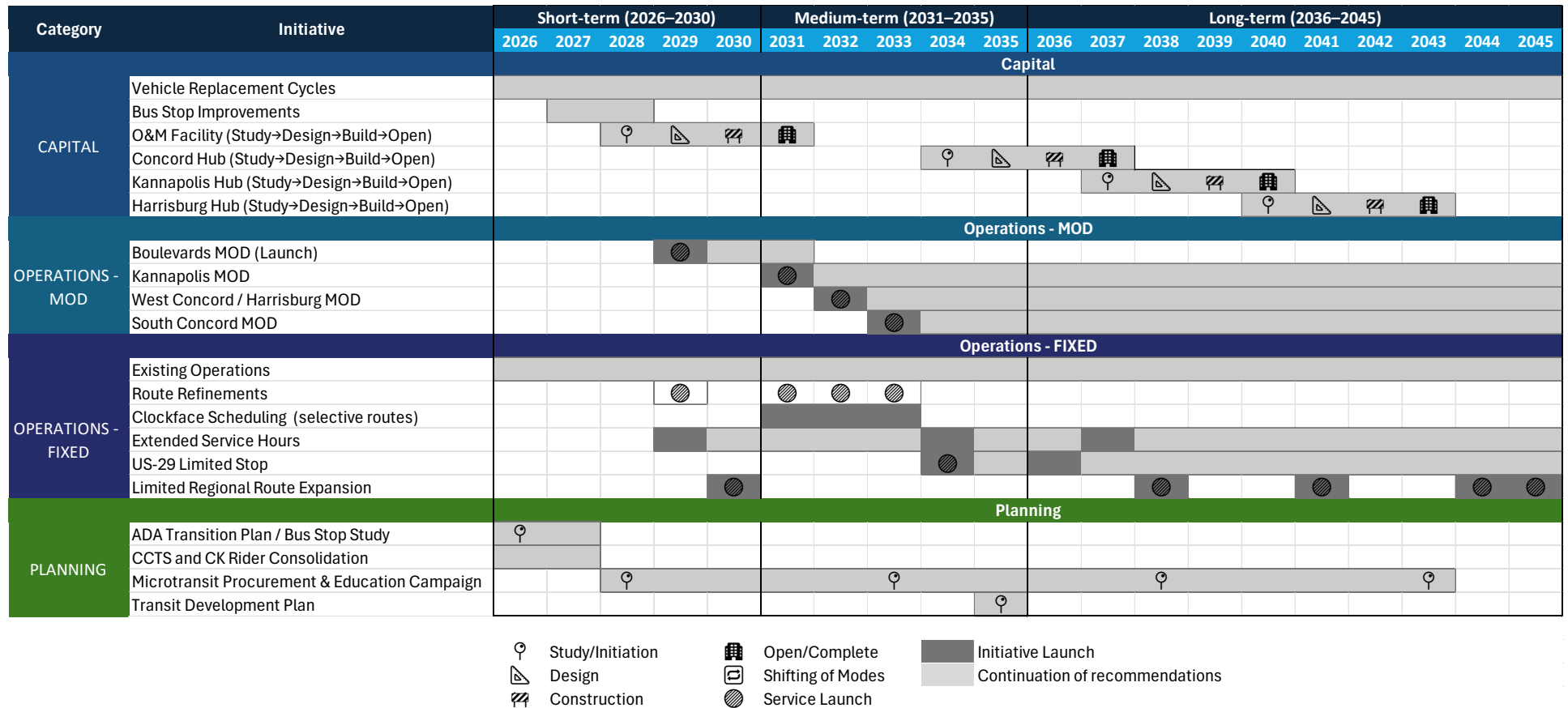
While many milestones occur at similar times in the full aspirational scenario, the moderate growth timeline will expand microtransit more gradually and will omit several of the broader service expansions included in the full-implementation scenario including the Boulevards of Concord circulator, Northwest Cabarrus microtransit zone, and all-day service to Salisbury.

20 Years (Long-term)

Similar to the full aspirational scenario, the final ten years of the moderate growth plan will focus on major capital investments, service frequency improvements, and expanded regional connectivity. However, the moderate-growth scenario features more limited frequency improvements and fixed-route network expansion.

The Moderate Growth Implementation Plan does not include the Concord Connector, Kannapolis/Liles/Roberta, or Harrisburg/JW Clay routes. Furthermore, the only routes operating at a 30-minute frequency by the end of the long-term are the CCX, Purple, Yellow, Kannapolis-Charlotte Express, Harrisburg-JW Clay, and the US-29 limited-stop service (instead of operating at a 15-minute frequency).

FIGURE 6-2: SUMMARY OF MODERATE GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



6.1.3 Cost Feasible Implementation Plan

The Cost Feasible Implementation Plan reflects a conservative, resource-constrained approach to advancing transit in Cabarrus County. This scenario focuses on maintaining and strengthening the system's core foundation while aligning investments strictly with anticipated funding levels.

Rather than emphasizing service expansion, the cost feasible plan prioritizes essential institutional and capital improvements needed to sustain reliable operations. Early efforts center on governance consolidation, accessibility enhancements, and development of critical infrastructure, such as a new operations and maintenance facility. Service changes are limited to adjustments that improve efficiency within the existing network, rather than expanding coverage or frequency.

In the out years, the plan emphasizes system preservation and incremental operational improvements, ensuring that the transit system remains functional and responsive without overextending financial resources. Overall, this approach provides a realistic path forward that maintains stability while preserving the ability to scale up investments as additional funding becomes available.

5 Years (Short-term)

The first five years will focus on restructuring governance, foundational planning, and preparation for a new operations and maintenance center. These early actions will mirror those in the full aspirational scenario except for services improvements, which are not included in the cost feasible scenario.

The core improvements that remain in the Cost Feasible Implementation Plan are the consolidation of CCTS and Rider, the development of an ADA Transition Plan and implementation of bus stop improvements, realignment of existing routes, and the construction of a new joint operations and maintenance facility.

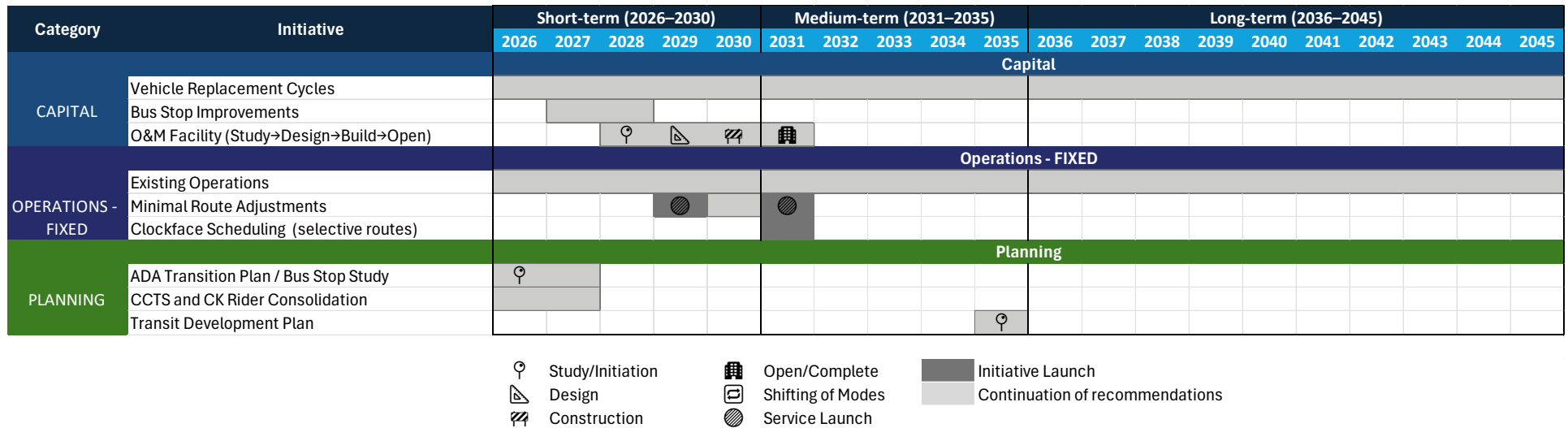
10 Years (Medium-term)

The next five years of the Cost Feasible Implementation Plan see only a handful of improvements including the opening of the new joint operations and maintenance facility, the adjustment of route schedules and alignments to maintain a clockface schedule throughout the day, and the preparation of a Transit Develop Plan to guide the future of the transit agency.

20 Years (Long-term)

No improvements are programmed in the long term for the Cost Feasible Implementation Plan. During this period, the agency will focus primarily on maintaining its existing services.

FIGURE 6-3: SUMMARY OF COST FEASIBLE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



6.2 Tiered Financial Plans

To support the tiered implementation plans, a corresponding financial plan was developed for each 20-year planning horizon. These financial plans are intended to evaluate the fiscal feasibility of each scenario and provide a clear understanding of the resources required to sustain and expand transit service in Cabarrus County over time.

Each financial plan begins by establishing a baseline of existing conditions, including the annual operating and capital costs associated with maintaining the current Rider and CCTS systems, informed by recent budget experience and anticipated ongoing revenue streams. Building on this foundation, the plans incorporate the projected costs of implementing the phased service and capital improvements identified in each implementation scenario, using standardized unit cost assumptions.

Consistent with the tiered approach, three financial scenarios were developed to align with the Full Aspirational, Moderate Growth, and Cost Feasible Implementation Plans. All costs and revenues are presented in year-of-expenditure dollars, based on the inflation assumptions outlined in the Transit Needs Identification section.

In addition to identifying funding needs, the financial plans provide a framework for understanding the County's fiscal capacity to support varying levels of investment. They establish an initial revenue baseline and illustrate how available funding may be allocated to maintain existing services while advancing new improvements. Together, these financial scenarios support informed decision-making by clearly outlining the trade-offs between investment levels, service expansion, and long-term system sustainability.

Figure 6-4 and Figure 6-5 compare the annual total costs by implementation plan and cumulative annual total costs by implementation plan, respectively. Table 6-4 at the end of this section details annual costs for each of the tiered financial plans. Furthermore, Table 6-5 through Table 6-16 detail the itemized costs for each tiered financial plan.

FIGURE 6-4: TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS BY PLAN

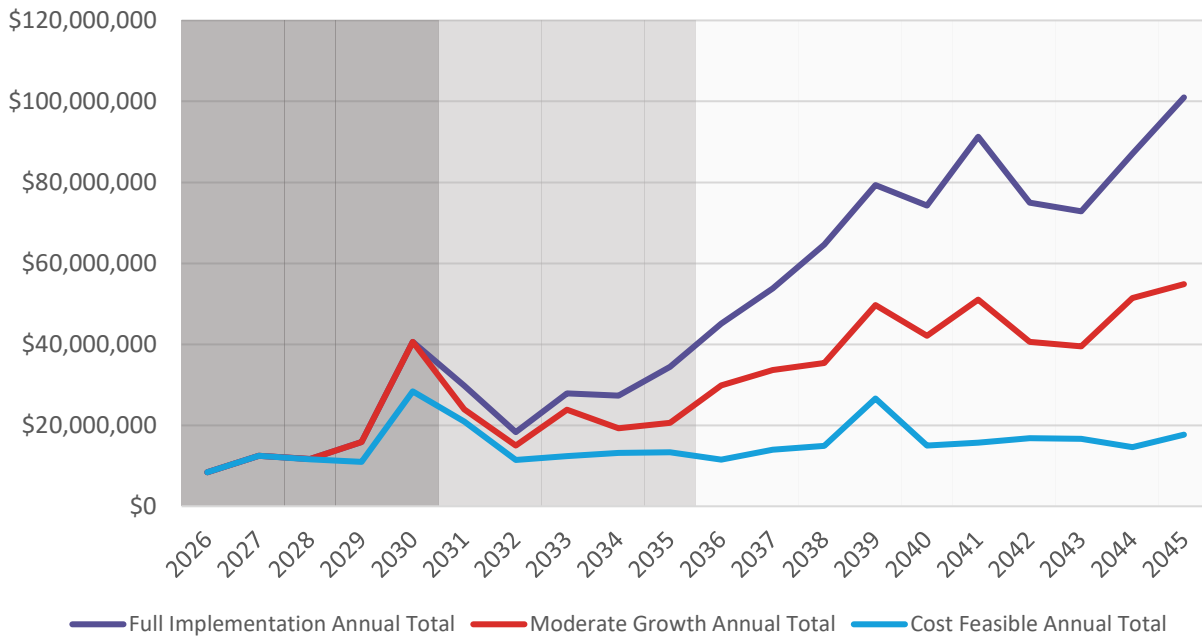
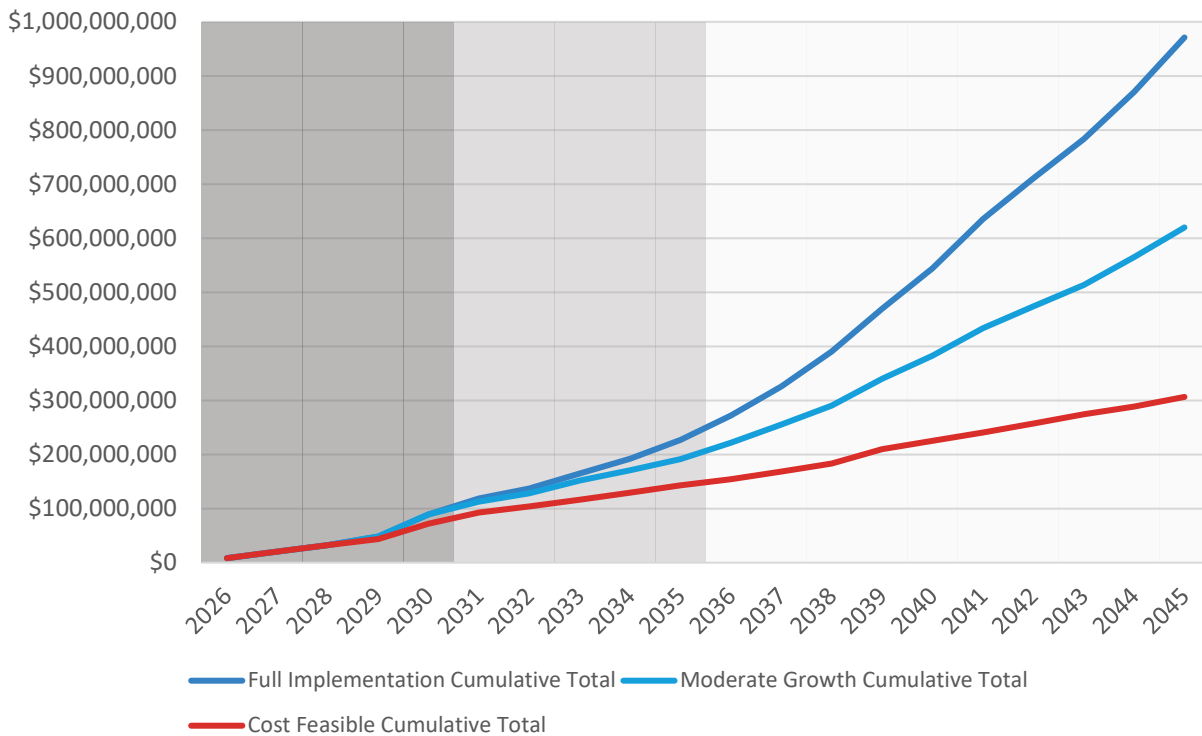


FIGURE 6-5: CUMULATIVE ANNUAL COSTS BY PLAN



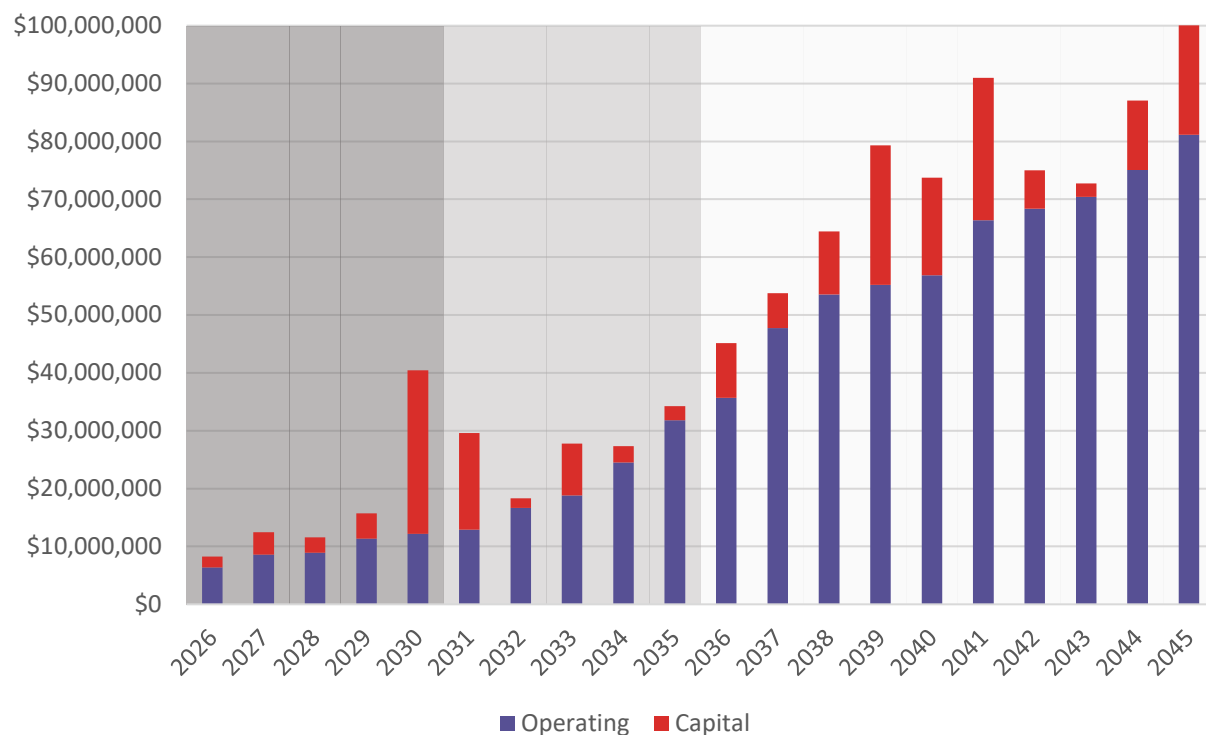
6.2.1 Full Aspirational Financial Plan

The full 20-year implementation of the phased recommendations is estimated to require approximately \$971 million, including \$89 million over the first five years and \$227 million over the first ten years. The majority of costs are associated with ongoing transit operations, with a larger share occurring in the second ten years due to the more robust level of service planned in the long term.

TABLE 6-1: FULL ASPIRATIONAL FINANCIAL PLAN

	Operating	Capital	Planning and Other	Total
5-Year	\$47,376,000	\$40,993,000	\$642,000	\$89,011,000
10-Year	\$152,072,000	\$73,539,000	\$1,169,000	\$226,780,000
20-Year	\$762,479,000	\$206,317,000	\$2,244,000	\$971,040,000

FIGURE 6-6: FULL ASPIRATIONAL ANNUAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENSES



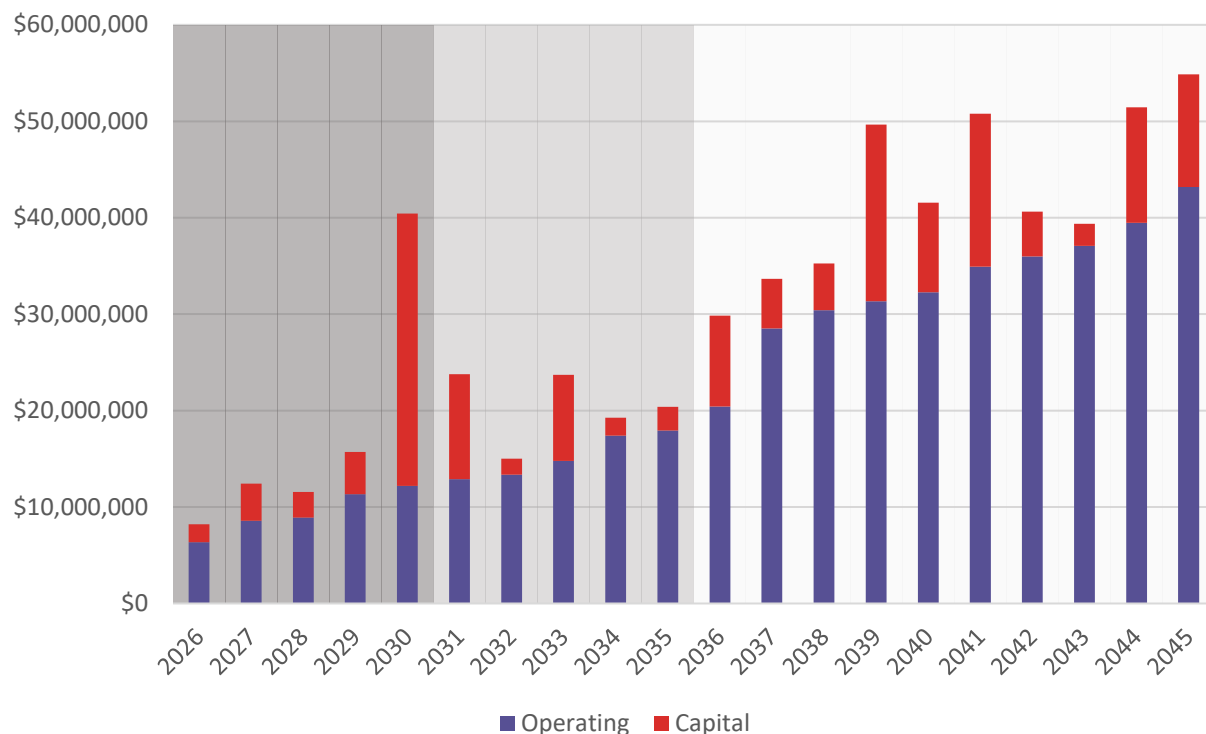
6.2.2 Moderate Growth Financial Plan

Consistent with the Moderate Growth Implementation Plan's balanced and fiscally responsible approach, this scenario phases in improvements more gradually while still advancing key operations and capital investments. Approximately \$620 million is required to fund the full 20-year program. The first five years require the same level of investment as the full implementation plan to support foundational improvements, while costs grow more modestly in the mid-term, with \$192 million needed over the first ten years. Over the full 20-year period, this plan represents a reduction of approximately \$351 million compared to the full implementation plan, totaling about 64% of the overall cost.

TABLE 6-2: MODERATE GROWTH FINANCIAL PLAN

	Operating	Capital	Planning and Other	Total
5-Year	\$47,376,000	\$40,993,000	\$642,000	\$89,011,000
10-Year	\$123,755,000	\$66,782,000	\$1,169,000	\$191,706,000
20-Year	\$457,333,000	\$160,240,000	\$2,244,000	\$619,817,000

FIGURE 6-7: MODERATE GROWTH ANNUAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENSES



6.2.3 Cost Feasible Financial Plan

Consistent with the Cost Feasible Implementation Plan's focus on maintaining core services and prioritizing essential investments, this scenario requires relatively minimal additional funding over the 20-year period. The first five years are estimated at \$72 million, increasing to \$143 million over the first ten years, with a total 20-year cost of approximately \$306 million. This represents just 32% of the full implementation plan, or roughly \$665 million less, reflecting a conservative approach centered on system preservation and operational efficiency.

TABLE 6-3: COST FEASIBLE FINANCIAL PLAN

	Operating	Capital	Planning and Other	Total
5-Year	\$42,794,000	\$28,598,000	\$372,000	\$71,765,000
10-Year	\$95,436,000	\$47,015,000	\$601,000	\$143,052,000
20-Year	\$227,502,000	\$77,810,000	\$1,133,000	\$306,444,000

FIGURE 6-8: COST FEASIBLE ANNUAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENSES

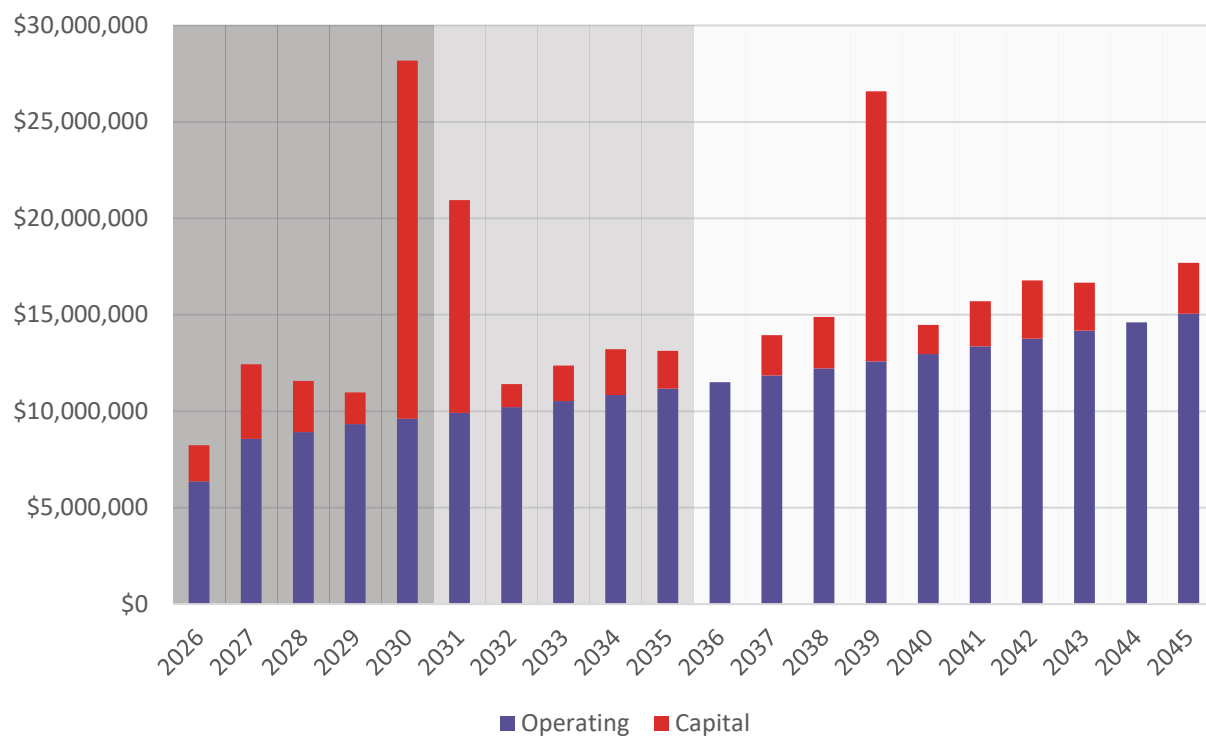


TABLE 6-4: DETAILED FINANCIAL PLAN

Full Implementation	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Operating	\$6,355,060	\$8,572,526	\$8,914,026	\$11,330,619	\$12,203,809	\$12,885,667	\$16,667,089	\$18,832,649	\$24,510,948	\$31,799,411
Capital	\$1,875,000	\$3,863,625	\$2,653,795	\$4,374,728	\$28,225,764	\$16,688,848	\$1,644,693	\$8,934,781	\$2,825,138	\$2,452,870
Planning and Other Expenses	\$175,000	\$0	\$106,152	\$164,052	\$197,194	\$174,144	\$0	\$123,238	\$0	\$228,935
Annual Total	\$8,405,060	\$12,436,151	\$11,673,973	\$15,869,399	\$40,626,767	\$29,748,660	\$18,311,782	\$27,890,668	\$27,336,086	\$34,481,215
Cumulative Total	\$8,405,060	\$20,841,210	\$32,515,183	\$48,384,582	\$89,011,349	\$118,760,009	\$137,071,791	\$164,962,459	\$192,298,545	\$226,779,760
Full Implementation	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045
Operating	\$35,711,702	\$47,731,880	\$53,556,028	\$55,178,776	\$56,850,692	\$66,353,973	\$68,364,498	\$70,435,943	\$75,081,410	\$81,142,485
Capital	\$9,434,851	\$6,040,737	\$10,909,485	\$24,138,452	\$16,858,339	\$24,645,410	\$6,650,329	\$2,283,945	\$11,979,664	\$19,836,398
Planning and Other Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$143,075	\$0	\$531,569	\$234,718	\$0	\$166,105	\$0	\$0
Annual Total	\$45,146,553	\$53,772,618	\$64,608,588	\$79,317,227	\$74,240,600	\$91,234,102	\$75,014,828	\$72,885,993	\$87,061,074	\$100,978,883
Cumulative Total	\$271,926,313	\$325,698,931	\$390,307,519	\$469,624,746	\$543,865,346	\$635,099,448	\$710,114,276	\$783,000,268	\$870,061,342	\$971,040,226

Moderate Growth	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Operating	\$6,355,060	\$8,572,526	\$8,914,026	\$11,330,619	\$12,203,809	\$12,885,667	\$13,370,669	\$14,787,830	\$17,403,799	\$17,931,134
Capital	\$1,875,000	\$3,863,625	\$2,653,795	\$4,374,728	\$28,225,764	\$10,884,031	\$1,644,693	\$8,934,781	\$1,872,844	\$2,452,870
Planning and Other Expenses	\$175,000	\$0	\$106,152	\$164,052	\$197,194	\$174,144	\$0	\$123,238	\$0	\$228,935
Annual Total	\$8,405,060	\$12,436,151	\$11,673,973	\$15,869,399	\$40,626,767	\$23,943,843	\$15,015,363	\$23,845,849	\$19,276,643	\$20,612,939
Cumulative Total	\$8,405,060	\$20,841,210	\$32,515,183	\$48,384,582	\$89,011,349	\$112,955,192	\$127,970,555	\$151,816,404	\$171,093,047	\$191,705,986
Moderate Growth	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045
Operating	\$20,425,814	\$28,504,812	\$30,411,395	\$31,332,861	\$32,282,246	\$34,927,723	\$35,986,033	\$37,076,410	\$39,455,454	\$43,175,026
Capital	\$9,434,851	\$5,172,815	\$4,828,788	\$18,332,720	\$9,264,492	\$15,843,478	\$4,635,078	\$2,283,945	\$11,979,664	\$11,681,435
Planning and Other Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$143,075	\$0	\$531,569	\$234,718	\$0	\$166,105	\$0	\$0
Annual Total	\$29,860,665	\$33,677,627	\$35,383,259	\$49,665,581	\$42,078,308	\$51,005,919	\$40,621,111	\$39,526,459	\$51,435,118	\$54,856,461
Cumulative Total	\$221,566,651	\$255,244,278	\$290,627,537	\$340,293,118	\$382,371,426	\$433,377,345	\$473,998,456	\$513,524,915	\$564,960,033	\$619,816,494

Cost Feasible	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Operating	\$6,355,060	\$8,572,526	\$8,914,026	\$9,334,990	\$9,617,840	\$9,909,261	\$10,209,512	\$10,518,860	\$10,837,581	\$11,165,960
Capital	\$1,875,000	\$3,863,625	\$2,653,795	\$1,640,523	\$18,565,109	\$11,029,152	\$1,196,141	\$1,848,575	\$2,380,734	\$1,962,296
Planning and Other Expenses	\$175,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$197,194	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$228,935
Annual Total	\$8,405,060	\$12,436,151	\$11,567,821	\$10,975,513	\$28,380,143	\$20,938,413	\$11,405,652	\$12,367,435	\$13,218,315	\$13,357,191
Cumulative Total	\$8,405,060	\$20,841,210	\$32,409,031	\$43,384,545	\$71,764,688	\$92,703,101	\$104,108,753	\$116,476,188	\$129,694,503	\$143,051,694
Cost Feasible	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045
Operating	\$11,504,289	\$11,852,869	\$12,212,010	\$12,582,034	\$12,963,270	\$13,356,057	\$13,760,746	\$14,177,696	\$14,607,280	\$15,049,881
Capital	\$0	\$2,083,013	\$2,682,660	\$14,003,987	\$1,518,769	\$2,347,182	\$3,022,877	\$2,491,576	\$0	\$2,644,853
Planning and Other Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$531,569	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Annual Total	\$11,504,289	\$13,935,881	\$14,894,671	\$26,586,022	\$15,013,609	\$15,703,239	\$16,783,623	\$16,669,272	\$14,607,280	\$17,694,734
Cumulative Total	\$154,555,983	\$168,491,864	\$183,386,535	\$209,972,556	\$224,986,165	\$240,689,404	\$257,473,027	\$274,142,299	\$288,749,579	\$306,444,313

TABLE 6-5: ITEMIZED FULL ASPIRATIONAL FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 1 THROUGH 5 (2026-2030)

Full Aspirational		2026		2027		2028		2029		2030	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 8 routes	\$3,360,076	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,466,383	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,645,266	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,868,565	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,016,083
								FR service until 10:30pm	\$697,763	FR service until 10:30pm	\$718,905
										Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$529,873
	MOD							Boulevards of Concord MOD	\$1,297,865	Boulevards of Concord MOD	\$1,337,190
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$2,054,356	Existing Demand Response	\$2,816,536	Existing Demand Response	\$2,928,080	Existing Demand Response	\$3,063,666	Existing Demand Response	\$3,156,495
ADA Paratransit		\$940,627	ADA Paratransit	\$1,289,607	ADA Paratransit	\$1,340,679	ADA Paratransit	\$1,402,760	ADA Paratransit	\$1,445,263	
Vehicle Purchases		Vehicle purchases	\$1,875,000	Vehicle purchases	\$1,545,450			Vehicle purchases	\$4,374,728	Vehicle purchases	\$2,112,789
Non-vehicle Capital Expense				Bus stop improvements	\$2,318,175	Bus stop improvements	\$2,388,416	New facility design	\$0	New facility construction	\$26,112,975
Planning and other Expenses	Consolidate to city-based agency	\$0	Consolidate to transit authority	\$0	Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$106,152	Microtransit education campaign	\$164,052	Transit Development Plan	\$197,194	
	ADA Transition Plan	\$175,000									
Total Operating Expense		\$6,355,060		\$8,572,526		\$8,914,026		\$11,330,619		\$12,203,809	
Total Capital Expense		\$1,875,000		\$3,863,625		\$2,653,795		\$4,374,728		\$28,225,764	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$175,000		\$0		\$106,152		\$164,052		\$197,194	
Total Annual Expense		\$8,405,060		\$12,436,151		\$11,673,973		\$15,869,399		\$40,626,767	

TABLE 6-6: ITEMIZED FULL ASPIRATIONAL FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 6 THROUGH 10 (2031-2035)

Full Aspirational		2031		2032		2033		2034		2035	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,522,061	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,659,080	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,800,250	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,945,697	2025 existing 7 routes	\$5,095,552
		FR service until 10:30pm	\$648,102	FR service until 10:30pm	\$667,740	FR service until 10:30pm	\$687,972	FR service until 12:30am	\$1,417,636	FR service until 12:30am	\$1,460,590
		Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$545,928	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$562,469	Salisbury route (all day weekdays)	\$1,228,030	Salisbury route (all day weekdays)	\$1,265,240	Salisbury route (all day weekdays)	\$1,303,577
				Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$3,296,419	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$3,396,301	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$3,499,209	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$3,605,235
						US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 1)	\$3,489,083	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 1)	\$3,594,802		
		MOD	Boulevards of Concord MOD	\$1,377,707	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,155,212	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,220,515	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,287,797	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)
	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)		\$2,091,830	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,481,211	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,556,391	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,633,850	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,713,656
						South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,628,067	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,677,397	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,728,222
						Northwest Cabarrus MOD (30-min)	\$1,220,799	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (30-min)	\$1,257,789		
						Existing Demand Response	\$2,538,015	Existing Demand Response	\$1,951,403	Existing Demand Response	\$1,587,990
	ADA Paratransit		\$1,162,024	ADA Paratransit	\$893,555	ADA Paratransit	\$727,132	ADA Paratransit	\$651,454	ADA Paratransit	\$671,193
	Vehicle Purchases	Vehicle purchases	\$16,688,848	Vehicle purchases	\$1,644,693	Vehicle purchases	\$8,934,781	Vehicle purchases	\$2,698,165	Vehicle purchases	\$1,798,771
Non-vehicle Capital Expense	New facility comes online	\$0					Concord Hub site study	\$126,972	Concord Hub design	\$654,099	
Planning and other Expenses	Microtransit and route consolidation education campaign	\$174,144			Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$123,238			Transit Development Plan	\$228,935	
Total Operating Expense		\$12,885,667		\$16,667,089		\$18,832,649		\$24,510,948		\$31,799,411	
Total Capital Expense		\$16,688,848		\$1,644,693		\$8,934,781		\$2,825,138		\$2,452,870	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$174,144		\$0		\$123,238		\$0		\$228,935	
Total Annual Expense		\$29,748,660		\$18,311,782		\$27,890,668		\$27,336,086		\$34,481,215	

TABLE 6-7: ITEMIZED FULL ASPIRATIONAL FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 11 THROUGH 15 (2036-2040)

Full Aspirational		2036		2037		2038		2039		2040	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 7 routes	\$5,249,947	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$10,818,041	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$11,145,828	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$11,483,546	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$11,831,498
		FR service until 12:30am	\$1,504,846	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$3,801,770	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$3,916,964	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,035,648	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,157,928
		Salisbury route (all day weekdays)	\$1,343,075	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$1,980,690	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,040,705	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,102,539	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,166,246
		Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$3,714,473	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$3,827,022	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,149,301	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,275,025	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,404,558
		US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$6,652,493	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$6,854,064	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$7,061,742	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$7,275,713	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$7,496,167
	MOD					Concord Connector and Concord to Harrisburg routes	\$4,171,551	Concord Connector and Concord to Harrisburg routes	\$4,297,949	Concord Connector and Concord to Harrisburg routes	\$4,428,177
		Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,428,538	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,295,863	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,395,728	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,498,618	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,604,626
		West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,795,880	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$3,942,420	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,061,875	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,184,950	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,311,754
		South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,780,588	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,097,367	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,160,918	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,226,393	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,293,853
		Northwest Cabarrus MOD (30-min)	\$1,295,900	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$1,897,618	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$1,955,116	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,014,356	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,075,391
	Demand Response	Countywide Demand Response	\$8,254,432	Countywide Demand Response	\$8,504,541	Countywide Demand Response	\$8,762,229	Countywide Demand Response	\$9,027,724	Countywide Demand Response	\$9,301,264
		ADA Paratransit	\$691,530	ADA Paratransit	\$712,483	ADA Paratransit	\$734,072	ADA Paratransit	\$756,314	ADA Paratransit	\$779,230
	Vehicle Purchases	Vehicle purchases	\$6,739,179	Vehicle purchases	\$5,901,870	Vehicle purchases	\$10,194,109	Vehicle purchases	\$21,190,244	Vehicle purchases	\$16,706,462
	Non-vehicle Capital Expense	Concord Hub construction	\$2,695,672	Concord Hub completion	\$0	Kannapolis Hub design	\$715,376	Kannapolis Hub construction	\$2,948,208	Kannapolis Hub completion	\$0
				Kannapolis Hub site study	\$138,868					Harrisburg Hub site study	\$151,877
	Planning and other Expenses					Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$143,075			Transit Development Plan	\$531,569
Total Operating Expense			\$35,711,702		\$47,731,880		\$53,556,028		\$55,178,776		\$56,850,692
Total Capital Expense			\$9,434,851		\$6,040,737		\$10,909,485		\$24,138,452		\$16,858,339
Total Planning and other Expenses			\$0		\$0		\$143,075		\$0		\$531,569
Total Annual Expense			\$45,146,553		\$53,772,618		\$64,608,588		\$79,317,227		\$74,240,600

TABLE 6-8: ITEMIZED FULL ASPIRATIONAL FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 16 THROUGH 20 (2041-2045)

Full Aspirational		2041		2042		2043		2044		2045	
	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$12,189,992	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$12,559,349	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$12,939,897	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$13,331,976	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$13,735,935
		Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,283,913	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,413,716	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,547,452	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,685,239	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,827,202
		Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,231,883	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,299,509	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,369,184	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,440,970	Salisbury (all day, daily)	\$2,514,932
		Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,538,016	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,675,518	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,817,187	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$4,963,147	Boulevards of Concord circulator	\$5,113,531
		US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$7,723,301	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$7,957,317	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$8,198,424	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$8,446,836	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2)	\$8,702,775
		Concord Connector and Concord to Harrisburg routes	\$4,562,351	All previous new routes	\$12,717,050	All previous new routes	\$13,102,376	All previous new routes	\$13,499,378	All previous new routes	\$16,495,759
	Kannapolis/Liles and Kannapolis/Charlotte routes	\$7,780,705	Harrisburg/JW Clay route					\$2,511,258	Rider-Huntersville route	\$3,786,108	
	MOD	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,713,846	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,826,376	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$3,942,315	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$4,061,767	Kannapolis MOD (15-min)	\$4,184,839
		West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,442,400	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,577,005	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,715,688	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$4,858,573	West Concord MOD (15-min)	\$5,005,788
		South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,363,357	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,434,967	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,508,746	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,584,761	South Concord MOD (15-min)	\$2,663,079
		Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,138,275	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,203,065	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,269,818	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,338,593	Northwest Cabarrus MOD (15-min)	\$2,409,453
	Demand Response	Countywide Demand Response	\$9,583,092	Countywide Demand Response	\$9,873,460	Countywide Demand Response	\$10,172,626	Countywide Demand Response	\$10,480,857	Countywide Demand Response	\$10,798,426
		ADA Paratransit	\$802,841	ADA Paratransit	\$827,167	ADA Paratransit	\$852,230	ADA Paratransit	\$878,053	ADA Paratransit	\$904,658
Vehicle Purchases	Vehicle purchases	\$23,863,016	Vehicle purchases	\$3,425,927	Vehicle purchases	\$2,283,945	Vehicle purchases	\$11,979,664	Vehicle purchases	\$19,836,398	
Non-vehicle Capital Expense	Harrisburg Hub design	\$782,394	Harrisburg Hub construction	\$3,224,402	Harrisburg Hub completion	\$0					
Planning and other Expenses	New route/hub education campaign	\$234,718			Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$166,105					
Total Operating Expense		\$66,353,973		\$68,364,498		\$70,435,943		\$75,081,410		\$81,142,485	
Total Capital Expense		\$24,645,410		\$6,650,329		\$2,283,945		\$11,979,664		\$19,836,398	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$234,718		\$0		\$166,105		\$0		\$0	
Total Annual Expense		\$91,234,102		\$75,014,828		\$72,885,993		\$87,061,074		\$100,978,883	

TABLE 6-9: ITEMIZED MODERATE GROWTH FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 1 THROUGH 5 (2026-2030)

Moderate Growth		2026		2027		2028		2029		2030	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 8 routes	\$3,360,076	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,466,383	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,645,266	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,868,565	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,016,083
								FR service until 10:30pm	\$697,763	FR service until 10:30pm	\$718,905
										Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$529,873
	MOD							Boulevards of Concord MOD	\$1,297,865	Boulevards of Concord MOD	\$1,337,190
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$2,054,356	Existing Demand Response	\$2,816,536	Existing Demand Response	\$2,928,080	Existing Demand Response	\$3,063,666	Existing Demand Response	\$3,156,495
ADA Paratransit		\$940,627	ADA Paratransit	\$1,289,607	ADA Paratransit	\$1,340,679	ADA Paratransit	\$1,402,760	ADA Paratransit	\$1,445,263	
Vehicle Purchases		Vehicle purchases	\$1,875,000	Vehicle purchases	\$1,545,450			Vehicle purchases	\$4,374,728	Vehicle purchases	\$2,112,789
Non-vehicle Capital Expense				Bus stop improvements	\$2,318,175	Bus stop improvements	\$2,388,416	New facility design	\$0	New facility construction	\$26,112,975
						New facility site study	\$265,380				
Planning and other Expenses		Consolidate to city-based agency	\$0	Consolidate to transit authority	\$0	Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$106,152	Microtransit education campaign	\$164,052	Transit Development Plan	\$197,194
		ADA Transition Plan	\$175,000								
Total Operating Expense		\$6,355,060		\$8,572,526		\$8,914,026		\$11,330,619		\$12,203,809	
Total Capital Expense		\$1,875,000		\$3,863,625		\$2,653,795		\$4,374,728		\$28,225,764	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$175,000		\$0		\$106,152		\$164,052		\$197,194	
Total Annual Expense		\$8,405,060		\$12,436,151		\$11,673,973		\$15,869,399		\$40,626,767	

TABLE 6-10: ITEMIZED MODERATE GROWTH FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 6 THROUGH 10 (2031-2035)

Moderate Growth		2031		2032		2033		2034		2035	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,522,061	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,659,080	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,800,250	2025 existing 7 routes	\$4,945,697	2025 existing 7 routes	\$5,095,552
		FR service until 10:30pm	\$648,102	FR service until 10:30pm	\$667,740	FR service until 10:30pm	\$687,972	FR service until 12:30am	\$1,417,636	FR service until 12:30am	\$1,460,590
		Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$545,928	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$562,469	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$579,512	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$597,071	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$615,163
								US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 1, 30-min frequency)	\$1,770,109	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 1, 30-min frequency)	\$1,823,743
	MOD	Boulevards of Concord MOD	\$1,377,707	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,155,212	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,220,515	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,287,797	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,357,117
		Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,091,830	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,481,211	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,556,391	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,633,850	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,713,656
						South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,628,067	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,677,397	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,728,222
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$2,538,015	Existing Demand Response	\$1,951,403	Existing Demand Response	\$1,587,990	Existing Demand Response	\$1,422,787	Existing Demand Response	\$1,465,897
		ADA Paratransit	\$1,162,024	ADA Paratransit	\$893,555	ADA Paratransit	\$727,132	ADA Paratransit	\$651,454	ADA Paratransit	\$671,193
	Vehicle Purchases	Vehicle purchases	\$10,884,031	Vehicle purchases	\$1,644,693	Vehicle purchases	\$8,934,781	Vehicle purchases	\$1,745,872	Vehicle purchases	\$1,798,771
Non-vehicle Capital Expense	New facility comes online	\$0					Concord Hub site study	\$126,972	Concord Hub design	\$654,099	
Planning and other Expenses	Microtransit and route consolidation education campaign	\$174,144			Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$123,238			Transit Development Plan	\$228,935	
Total Operating Expense		\$12,885,667		\$13,370,669		\$14,787,830		\$17,403,799		\$17,931,134	
Total Capital Expense		\$10,884,031		\$1,644,693		\$8,934,781		\$1,872,844		\$2,452,870	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$174,144		\$0		\$123,238		\$0		\$228,935	
Total Annual Expense		\$23,943,843		\$15,015,363		\$23,845,849		\$19,276,643		\$20,612,939	

TABLE 6-11: ITEMIZED MODERATE GROWTH FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 11 THROUGH 15 (2036-2040)

Moderate Growth		2036		2037		2038		2039		2040	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 7 routes	\$5,249,947	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$10,818,041	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$11,145,828	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$11,483,546	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$11,831,498
		FR service until 12:30am	\$1,504,846	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$3,601,517	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$3,710,643	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$3,823,076	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$3,938,915
		Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$633,802	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$672,792	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$693,178	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$714,181	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$735,821
		US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$3,830,370	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$3,946,430	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,066,007	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,189,207	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,446,919
						Downtown Concord to Harrisburg route	\$1,042,887	Downtown Concord to Harrisburg route	\$1,074,487	Downtown Concord to Harrisburg route	\$1,107,044
	MOD	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,428,538	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,502,122	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,577,937	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,656,048	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,736,526
		West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,795,880	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,880,595	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,967,877	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,057,803	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,150,455
		South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,780,588	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,834,539	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,890,126	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$1,947,397	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,006,403
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$1,510,314	Existing Demand Response	\$1,556,077	Existing Demand Response	\$1,603,226	Existing Demand Response	\$1,651,804	Existing Demand Response	\$1,701,853
		ADA Paratransit	\$691,530	ADA Paratransit	\$712,483	ADA Paratransit	\$734,072	ADA Paratransit	\$756,314	ADA Paratransit	\$779,230
Vehicle Purchases	Vehicle purchases	\$6,739,179	Vehicle purchases	\$5,033,948	Vehicle purchases	\$4,113,412	Vehicle purchases	\$15,384,512	Vehicle purchases	\$9,112,616	
Non-vehicle Capital Expense	Concord Hub construction		\$2,695,672	Concord Hub completion	\$0	Kannapolis Hub design	\$715,376	Kannapolis Hub construction	\$2,948,208	Kannapolis Hub completion	\$0
				Kannapolis Hub site study	\$138,868					Harrisburg Hub site study	\$151,877
Planning and other Expenses						Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$143,075			Transit Development Plan	\$531,569
Total Operating Expense		\$20,425,814		\$28,504,812		\$30,411,395		\$31,332,861		\$32,282,246	
Total Capital Expense		\$9,434,851		\$5,172,815		\$4,828,788		\$18,332,720		\$9,264,492	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$0		\$0		\$143,075		\$0		\$531,569	
Total Annual Expense		\$29,860,665		\$33,677,627		\$35,383,259		\$49,665,581		\$42,078,308	

TABLE 6-12: ITEMIZED FULL ASPIRATIONAL FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 16 THROUGH 20 (2041-2045)

Moderate Growth		2041		2042		2043		2044		2045	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$12,189,992	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$12,559,349	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$12,939,897	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$13,331,976	2025 existing 7 routes, every 30 min	\$13,735,935
		Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,058,264	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,181,230	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,307,921	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,438,451	Daily FR service 5:30am to 12:30am	\$4,572,936
		Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$735,821	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$758,116	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$781,087	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$804,754	Salisbury route (peak hour)	\$829,138
		US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,446,919	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,581,661	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,720,485	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$4,863,516	US 29 Limited Stop (Phase 2, 30-min frequency)	\$5,010,880
		Downtown Concord to Harrisburg route	\$1,140,588	All previous new routes	\$2,892,992	All previous new routes	\$2,980,649	All previous new routes	\$3,070,963	All previous new routes	\$4,457,688
		Kannapolis/Charlotte route (every 60 min)	\$1,667,324					Harrisburg/JW Clay route (every 60 min)	\$1,255,629	Rider-Huntersville route (every 60 min)	\$2,524,072
	MOD	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,819,443	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,904,872	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$2,992,890	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$3,083,575	Kannapolis MOD (30-min)	\$3,177,007
		West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,245,914	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,344,265	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,445,596	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,549,998	West Concord MOD (30-min)	\$3,657,563
		South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,067,197	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,129,833	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,194,367	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,260,856	South Concord MOD (30-min)	\$2,329,360
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$1,753,419	Existing Demand Response	\$1,806,548	Existing Demand Response	\$1,861,286	Existing Demand Response	\$1,917,683	Existing Demand Response	\$1,975,789
ADA Paratransit		\$802,841	ADA Paratransit	\$827,167	ADA Paratransit	\$852,230	ADA Paratransit	\$878,053	ADA Paratransit	\$904,658	
Vehicle Purchases	Vehicle purchases	\$15,061,084	Vehicle purchases	\$1,410,676	Vehicle purchases	\$2,283,945	Vehicle purchases	\$11,979,664	Vehicle purchases	\$11,681,435	
Non-vehicle Capital Expense	Harrisburg Hub design	\$782,394	Harrisburg Hub construction	\$3,224,402	Harrisburg Hub completion	\$0					
Planning and other Expenses	New route/hub education campaign	\$234,718			Microtransit procurement and deployment	\$166,105					
Total Operating Expense		\$34,927,723		\$35,986,033		\$37,076,410		\$39,455,454		\$43,175,026	
Total Capital Expense		\$15,843,478		\$4,635,078		\$2,283,945		\$11,979,664		\$11,681,435	
Total Planning and other Expenses		\$234,718		\$0		\$166,105		\$0		\$0	
Total Annual Expense		\$51,005,919		\$40,621,111		\$39,526,459		\$51,435,118		\$54,856,461	

TABLE 6-13: ITEMIZED COST FEASIBLE FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 1 THROUGH 5 (2026-2030)

Cost Feasible		2026		2027		2028		2029		2030	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 8 routes	\$3,360,076	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,466,383	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,645,266	2025 existing 8 routes	\$4,868,565	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,016,083
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$2,054,356	Existing Demand Response	\$2,816,536	Existing Demand Response	\$2,928,080	Existing Demand Response	\$3,063,666	Existing Demand Response	\$3,156,495
		ADA Paratransit	\$940,627	ADA Paratransit	\$1,289,607	ADA Paratransit	\$1,340,679	ADA Paratransit	\$1,402,760	ADA Paratransit	\$1,445,263
Vehicle Purchases		Vehicle purchases	\$1,875,000	Vehicle purchases	\$1,545,450			Vehicle purchases	\$1,640,523	Vehicle purchases	\$2,112,789
Non-vehicle Capital Expense				Bus stop improvements	\$2,318,175	Bus stop improvements	\$2,388,416	New facility design	\$0	New facility construction	\$16,452,321
						New facility site study	\$265,380				
Planning and other Expenses		Consolidate to city-based agency	\$0	Consolidate to transit authority	\$0						
		ADA Transition Plan	\$175,000								
Total Operating Expense			\$6,355,060		\$8,572,526		\$8,914,026		\$9,334,990		\$9,617,840
Total Capital Expense			\$1,875,000		\$3,863,625		\$2,653,795		\$1,640,523		\$18,565,109
Total Planning and other Expenses			\$175,000		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$197,194
Total Annual Expense			\$8,405,060		\$12,436,151		\$11,567,821		\$10,975,513		\$28,380,143

TABLE 6-14: ITEMIZED COST FEASIBLE FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 6 THROUGH 10 (2031-2035)

Cost Feasible		2031		2032		2033		2034		2035	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,168,069	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,324,662	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,485,999	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,652,225	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,823,487
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$3,252,136	Existing Demand Response	\$3,350,676	Existing Demand Response	\$3,452,202	Existing Demand Response	\$3,556,803	Existing Demand Response	\$3,664,574
		ADA Paratransit	\$1,489,055	ADA Paratransit	\$1,534,173	ADA Paratransit	\$1,580,659	ADA Paratransit	\$1,628,553	ADA Paratransit	\$1,677,898
Vehicle Purchases		Vehicle purchases	\$11,029,152	Vehicle purchases	\$1,196,141	Vehicle purchases	\$1,848,575	Vehicle purchases	\$2,380,734	Vehicle purchases	\$1,962,296
Non-vehicle Capital Expense		New facility comes online	\$0								
Planning and other Expenses										Transit Development Plan	\$228,935
Total Operating Expense			\$12,885,667		\$13,370,669		\$14,787,830		\$17,403,799		\$17,931,134
Total Capital Expense			\$10,884,031		\$1,644,693		\$8,934,781		\$1,872,844		\$2,452,870
Total Planning and other Expenses			\$174,144		\$0		\$123,238		\$0		\$228,935
Total Annual Expense			\$23,943,843		\$15,015,363		\$23,845,849		\$19,276,643		\$20,612,939

TABLE 6-15: ITEMIZED COST FEASIBLE FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 11 THROUGH 15 (2036-2040)

Cost Feasible		2036		2037		2038		2039		2040	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 8 routes	\$5,999,940	2025 existing 8 routes	\$6,181,738	2025 existing 8 routes	\$6,369,044	2025 existing 8 routes	\$6,562,026	2025 existing 8 routes	\$6,760,856
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$3,775,611	Existing Demand Response	\$3,890,012	Existing Demand Response	\$4,007,879	Existing Demand Response	\$4,129,318	Existing Demand Response	\$4,254,437
		ADA Paratransit	\$1,728,738	ADA Paratransit	\$1,781,119	ADA Paratransit	\$1,835,087	ADA Paratransit	\$1,890,690	ADA Paratransit	\$1,947,978
Vehicle Purchases		Vehicle purchases	\$0	Vehicle purchases	\$2,083,013	Vehicle purchases	\$2,682,660	Vehicle purchases	\$14,003,987	Vehicle purchases	\$1,518,769
Planning and other Expenses										Transit Development Plan	\$531,569
Total Operating Expense			\$11,504,289		\$11,852,869		\$12,212,010		\$12,582,034		\$12,963,270
Total Capital Expense			\$0		\$2,083,013		\$2,682,660		\$14,003,987		\$1,518,769
Total Planning and other Expenses			\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$531,569
Total Annual Expense			\$11,504,289		\$13,935,881		\$14,894,671		\$26,586,022		\$15,013,609

TABLE 6-16: ITEMIZED COST FEASIBLE FINANCIAL PLAN YEARS 16 THROUGH 20 (2041-2045)

Cost Feasible		2041		2042		2043		2044		2045	
		Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Operating Expense	Fixed Route	2025 existing 8 routes	\$6,965,710	2025 existing 8 routes	\$7,176,771	2025 existing 8 routes	\$7,394,227	2025 existing 8 routes	\$7,618,272	2025 existing 8 routes	\$7,849,106
	Demand Response	Existing Demand Response	\$4,383,346	Existing Demand Response	\$4,516,161	Existing Demand Response	\$4,653,001	Existing Demand Response	\$4,793,987	Existing Demand Response	\$4,939,245
		ADA Paratransit	\$2,007,001	ADA Paratransit	\$2,067,813	ADA Paratransit	\$2,130,468	ADA Paratransit	\$2,195,021	ADA Paratransit	\$2,261,531
Vehicle Purchases		Vehicle purchases	\$2,347,182	Vehicle purchases	\$3,022,877	Vehicle purchases	\$2,491,576	Vehicle purchases	\$0	Vehicle purchases	\$2,644,853
Total Operating Expense			\$13,356,057		\$13,760,746		\$14,177,696		\$14,607,280		\$15,049,881
Total Capital Expense			\$2,347,182		\$3,022,877		\$2,491,576		\$0		\$2,644,853
Total Planning and other Expenses			\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0
Total Annual Expense			\$15,703,239		\$16,783,623		\$16,669,272		\$14,607,280		\$17,694,734