



## Wichita Transit Network Redesign

# FINAL REPORT

MARCH 2025





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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Wichita Transit Network Redesign (TNR) is intended to guide future transit service enhancements to improve service quality, efficiency, and overall performance. As a vital component for the future of transit in Wichita, the Wichita TNR is structured to enhance the community's transit experience and serve as a strategic guide for Wichita Transit over the next ten years. The Wichita Transit Network Redesign Plan follows prior Wichita Transit planning efforts, including the [\*Wichita Transit Access Study\*](#) aimed at improving pedestrian access, safety and comfort; the [\*Wichita Area Transit Feasibility Study\*](#) evaluating regional transit demand; and the [\*Wichita Transit Sustainability Plan\*](#), which aimed to integrate enhancements in service alongside innovations in transit delivery to redefine available transit options. While the transit system has seen some adjustments in recent years to adapt to local changes, it has not been fully nor fundamentally redesigned to meet the city's evolving needs. With rising ridership and key projects on the horizon – like the new Delano Multimodal Center and the transition to low and zero-emission vehicles – the TNR is a fundamental step for creating a transit system that effectively serves Wichita's future mobility needs.

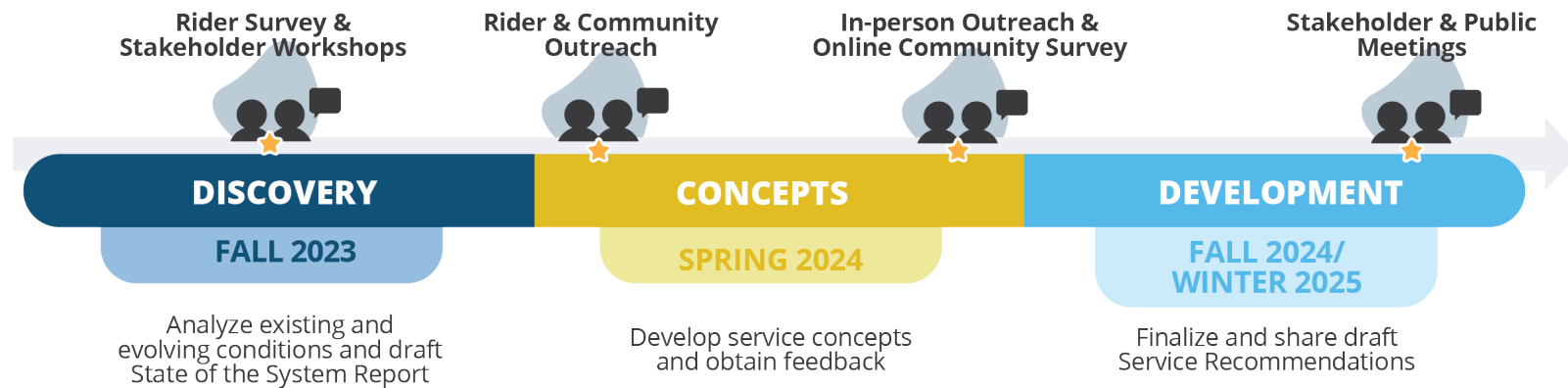
## Benefits of Transit in Wichita

Strong transit systems often boost regional economies and help create employment opportunities, while also providing safe, convenient, and reliable access to jobs for local residents. Additionally, transit systems provide social benefits, drawing in talent and enhancing a city's competitiveness. Public transit also plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable growth, positively impacting the environment by reducing transportation emissions. It enhances the attractiveness of cities for visitors and residents alike, contributing to active and healthy lifestyles.

Specifically, the Wichita TNR aims to improve quality of life in the region by increasing mobility across the city. The network proposed by this plan also aims to expand services in areas that may require significant improvements in job and residential accessibility, ultimately helping to build community and improve access to key destinations (e.g., healthcare, social services, economic opportunities).

## STUDY TIMELINE

The following section describes key phases of the Wichita TNR planning process over an 18-month period. A comprehensive evaluation of Wichita Transit's operations and service area demographics was conducted between October 2023 and February 2025. This evaluation was supplemented by public input throughout the process, which helped inform the recommendations presented in this document.



## Discovery

The **Discovery** phase of this project included a comprehensive analysis and understanding of Wichita Transit's current fixed-route network and complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service. This consisted of analyzing ridership trends, service availability by route, network connectivity, agency resources (e.g., service hours and peak vehicles), and supporting capital facilities. For each fixed route, detailed profiles were developed to analyze a wide range of characteristics including a description of the route alignment, ridership activity (informed by Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) data), route productivity, and on-time performance statistics. The examination of Wichita Transit's complementary ADA paratransit service included an examination of current policies and procedures, eligibility and certification processes, average wait and ride times, ridership activity, and key travel patterns (informed by Origin-Destination data).

A peer review was also conducted as part of this work to better understand Wichita Transit's performance relative to similar transit providers, identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, identify best practices, and assist in network redesign planning. Peer

agencies included Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority, Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority, Metro Transit Omaha, StarTran (Lincoln, NE), Metro Link (Tulsa, OK), and Rock Region Metropolitan Transit Authority (Little Rock, AR).

In addition to the comprehensive analysis of Wichita Transit's services, a market analysis was conducted to understand existing and future transit markets to help identify future network opportunities. As part of this task, the project team identified key destinations throughout the service area that are considered 'key trip generators' such as grocery stores, hospitals, and major employers. It also analyzed population and employment densities, developed a Transit Propensity Index (TPI) to understand transit demand relative to specific demographic groups, and examined regional and citywide travel flows using Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) Travel Demand Model data and cell-phone based travel data via Replica Platform.

To supplement the analysis conducted by the project team and agency, community outreach was conducted during this phase, including developing a unique project brand and website, hosting stakeholder focus groups and transit visioning workshops, and soliciting public input via on-board and online surveys.

## Concepts

The **Concepts** phase of this project included developing a range of short-, mid-, and long-term service concepts, along with capital and infrastructure requirements, and an accompanying service plan. Service planning and design principles were foundational to service concept development; they include route re-alignment, schedule coordination, service span and frequency revision, service pattern variations, and service expansion (i.e., new routes). Detailed service investments and financial assumptions were also included as part of this task using Via Remix Software.

As with the Discovery phase of the project, the project team continued to solicit public input regarding the draft route concepts during in-person pop-up events and stakeholder workshops.

## Development

The final phase of the project, the **Development** phase, included drafting a compilation of the analysis conducted throughout the project and presenting final service recommendations which are presented within this report. While this report summarizes recommendations developed in other tasks, there is a specific focus on fiscal implications of the proposed service recommendations that include developing funding strategies and summarizing available resources and funding expenditures. This particular focus serves as a roadmap for obtaining and maintaining a sustainable funding structure through operating and capital grant opportunities available at the local, state, and federal

level. Public outreach during this phase of the project included hosting a series of public meetings to present final service recommendations to key stakeholders, riders, and community members was used as a platform to advocate for funding support.

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This TNR report compiles analysis, findings, and recommendations informed by the [State of the System](#) report as well as insights from community surveys and engagement sessions that were conducted to inform service recommendations. The report is laid out in the following chapters:

- [Chapter 1: Introduction](#) outlines the project's background, highlights the benefits of transit, and details the timeline for the study.
- [Chapter 2: Existing Conditions](#) provides an overview of Wichita Transit's current services and local market analysis.
- [Chapter 3: Public Engagement](#) provides insight into rider demographics and public feedback, along with a summary of engagement strategies.
- [Chapter 4: Recommendations](#) contains recommended short-, mid-, and long-term service expansion options, as well as ridership projections and funding strategies to enhance Wichita Transit.

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the current state of the Wichita Transit system, including a review of the [State of the System](#) report that was completed in April 2024. The chapter includes a summary of current services, market analysis, and underlying transit demand.

### WICHITA TRANSIT SERVICE ANALYSIS

#### About Wichita Transit

Wichita Transit, established as a city department in 1962, provides city-wide fixed-route and complementary ADA paratransit services. It is dedicated to building and operating a sustainable public transit system that provides safe, reliable, customer-friendly, and efficient mobility for all people while supporting the growth, environmental, and economic development goals of the community.

Wichita Transit offers widespread coverage throughout the city, providing service to major corridors and key destinations, including multiple connections at the Downtown Transit Center (where most routes begin and end) and to WSU campuses. However, the service has opportunities for improvement with infrequent routes, early evening service cut-offs, and a lack of Sunday service. Additionally, the Transit Center-dependent design of the network often necessitates out-of-direction travel, leading to extended travel times for riders. To facilitate future transit connections, the City of Wichita is developing the design of the Delano Multimodal Center (located at South Sycamore Street in the Delano neighborhood).

Relative to its peers, Wichita Transit lags behind on several metrics: it maintains a relatively short span of service, does not offer service in the evenings or on Sundays, and serves fewer trips overall. Wichita Transit fares are among the highest when compared to peer agencies, although they remain competitive and not excessively priced. Notably, when compared to its peers in 2022, the agency spent the least per capita both in operating and in capital funding.

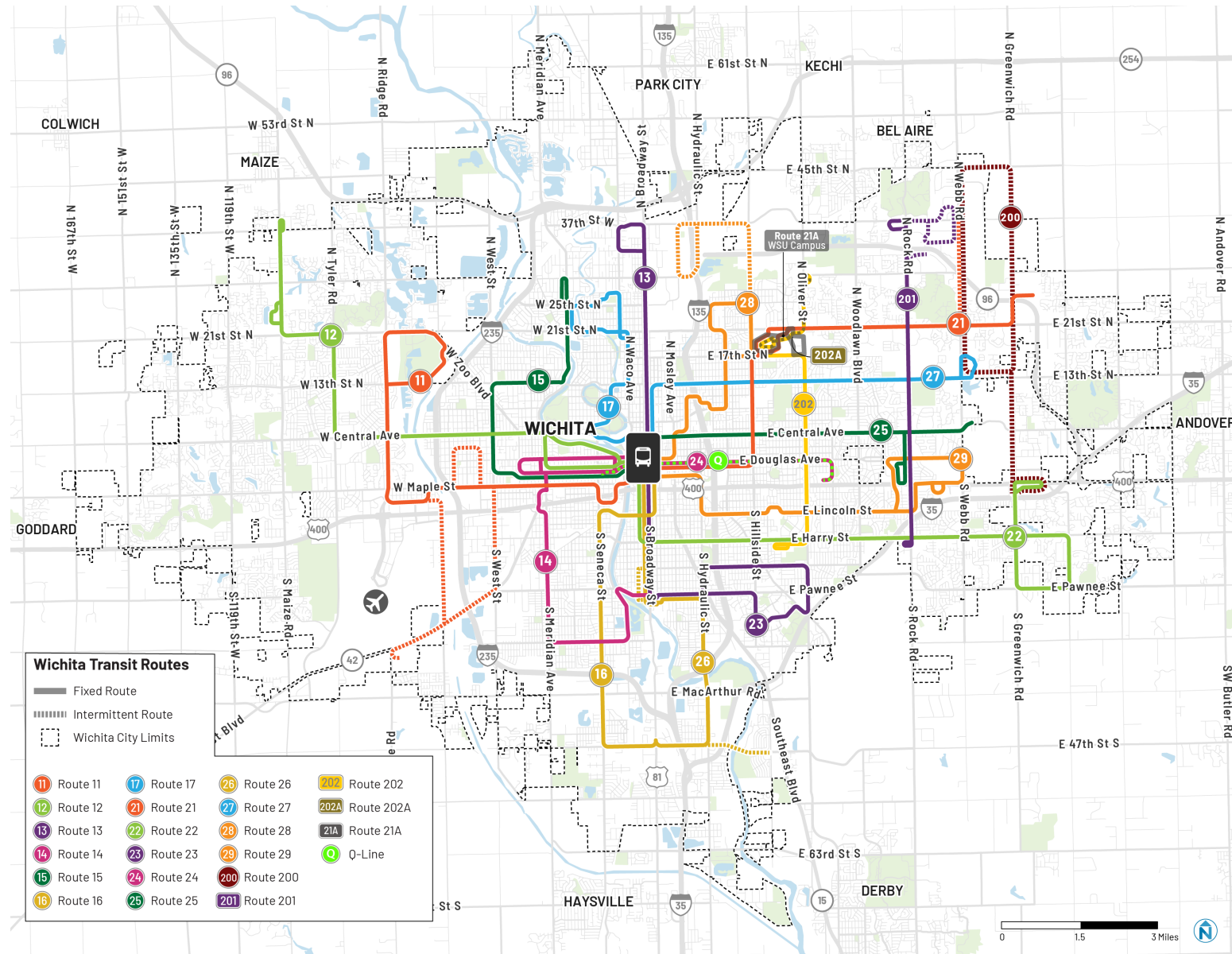
## Current Fixed-Route System

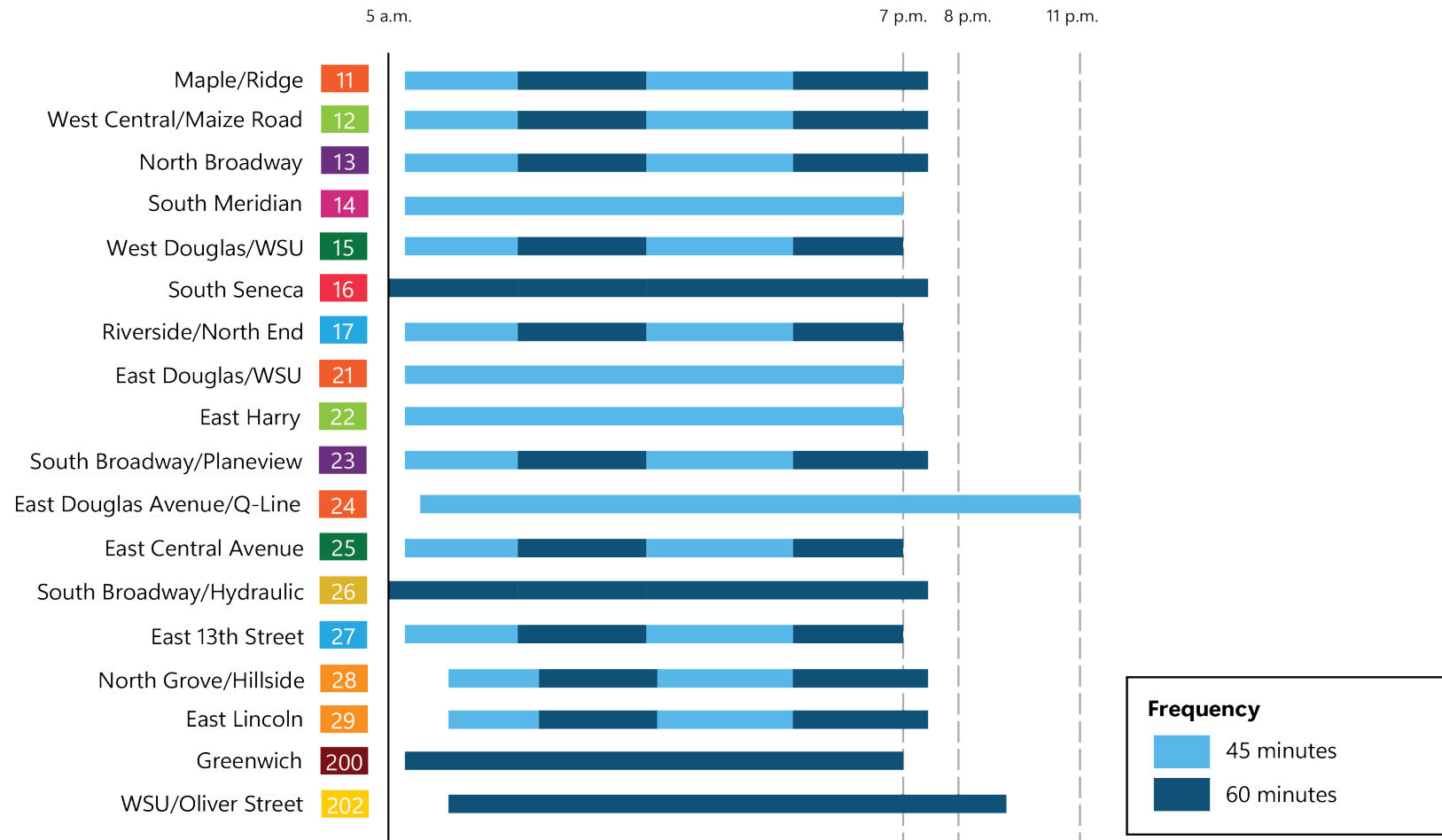
Wichita Transit operates twenty-one fixed routes, seventeen of which connect at the Downtown Transit Center, creating a mostly “hub-and-spoke” network model (Figure 1). Routes 201 and 202 are crosstown routes that intersect several routes but do not connect with other routes at the Downtown Transit Center. Route 202A is a WSU circulator that operates in and/or around the university’s main campus.

Wichita Transit operates several routes with deviations or extensions from the primary alignment on select trips, particularly around school start/end times and shift changes at major employment centers. While these route deviations and extensions increase access to transit for some, they also have varying negative impacts on other riders such as increased travel times and decreased service reliability.

## Service Availability

Wichita Transit offers service Monday through Saturday for most routes; service is not provided on Sundays. Headways range between 45 and 60 minutes, with most off-peak and Saturday headways at 60 minutes. Most routes are interlined with another route at the Downtown Transit Center. On weekdays, most Wichita Transit routes begin service between 5:00 and 6:00 AM and end service between 6:30 PM and 7:30PM. On Saturdays, most bus routes begin service between 6:00 and 7:00 AM and end service between 5:30 and 6:30 PM.

**Figure 1 Existing Wichita Transit Fixed-Route Network**

**Figure 2 Current Service Spans and Frequencies**



## ADA Paratransit Service

Wichita Transit provides complementary paratransit service to people with physical or cognitive disabilities that prevent them from using the fixed-route bus system. While paratransit services must be provided within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of each fixed route, Wichita Transit currently provides services citywide, beyond what is required by statute. Prospective paratransit riders must submit an eligibility application to Wichita Transit and recertify every three years.<sup>1</sup>

## Bus Stops and Amenities

There are 2,099 bus stops across the Wichita Transit system. Typically, for local routes without frequent service, stops are spaced every quarter mile (about a five-minute walk), but about half of the system's routes feature stop spacing greater than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile, potentially hindering access for some users. Many stops near major activity centers and downtown offer various amenities for waiting passengers, such as signs, route information, shelters, benches, bike parking, and sidewalk access. However, stop amenities outside these areas vary widely, often lacking basic features apart from a bus stop sign.

## Downtown Transit Center

Currently, most of Wichita Transit's routes start and end at the Downtown Transit Center, allowing for a centralized location for transfers between routes. For future transit connections, the City of Wichita is currently designing the Delano Multimodal Facility (also known as Delano HUB) to be located at South Sycamore Street & West Texas Avenue in the Delano neighborhood. In addition to having garage space for personal vehicles, this new multimodal center will provide some accommodation for local bus transfers and potential layover space for buses. Though it will not have the capacity to act as a new centralized transfer center for all routes, the Delano HUB could accommodate any future regional bus connections. The route network proposed by this plan takes the implementation of the Delano HUB into account, as routes will need to shift to the new HUB by 2026.

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<sup>1</sup> ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, [Federal Transit Administration](#)

# MARKET ANALYSIS

## About the City of Wichita

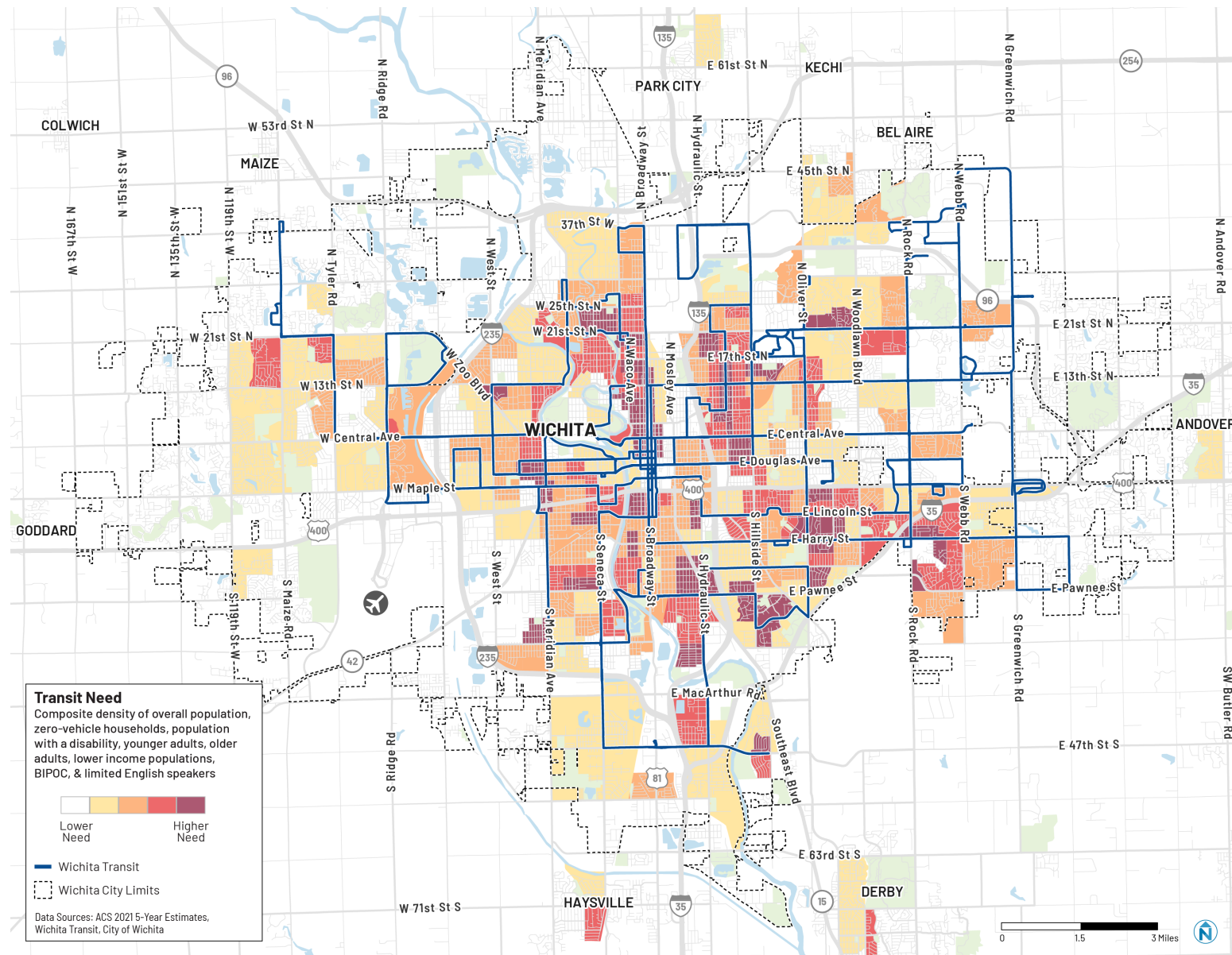
Wichita is the largest city in the state of Kansas, with around 390,000 inhabitants. Since the City assumed control of its transit system in 1962, Wichita has experienced consistent growth in both population and geographic size. The city's population is predominantly white, with significant Hispanic and Black communities. Communities of color, low-income groups, and various other demographics – including those without vehicles, individuals with disabilities, young people, seniors, and non-English speakers – tend to depend more on public transit to reach essential services. These communities frequently encounter challenges in finding dependable transportation, which can significantly affect their ability to secure jobs and access vital services like healthcare and grocery stores.

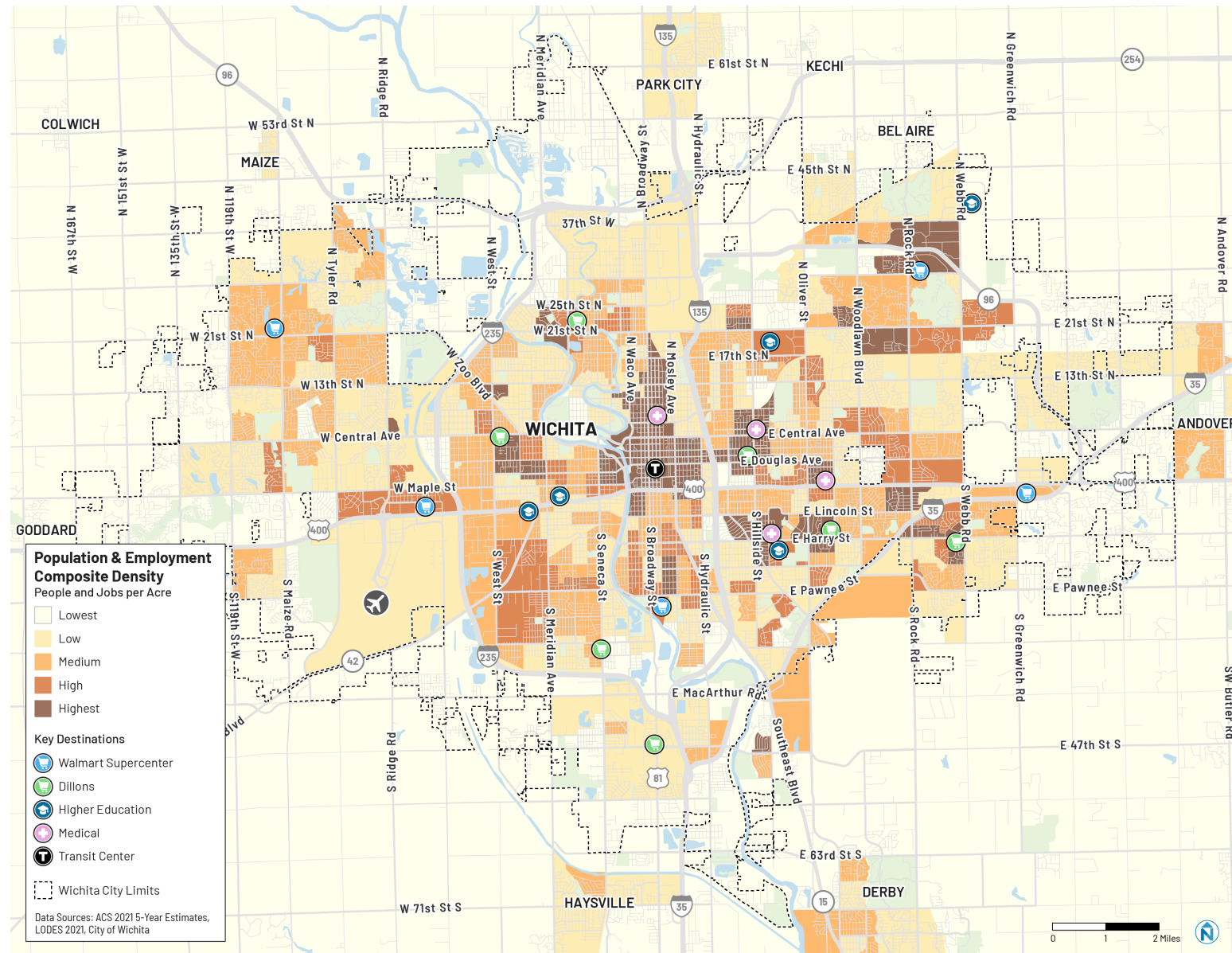
## Transit Needs and Demand

While it is essential for fixed-route transit systems to be inclusive and accessible to all, limitations in resources and infrastructure necessitate that transit providers prioritize the needs of those who rely on these services the most. Therefore, it is crucial that transit planning decisions ensure that service coverage and frequency effectively meet their needs. Figure 3 illustrates transit needs in Wichita and Figure 4 provides further insight into potential transit service demand by highlighting the areas of Wichita where people and jobs are concentrated. In both figures, the darker shades of red and brown indicate where transit is most likely supported in Wichita, including the central, eastern, and northeastern parts of the city.



### Figure 3 Wichita Transit Need Assessment



**Figure 4 Adjusted Population and Employment Densities**

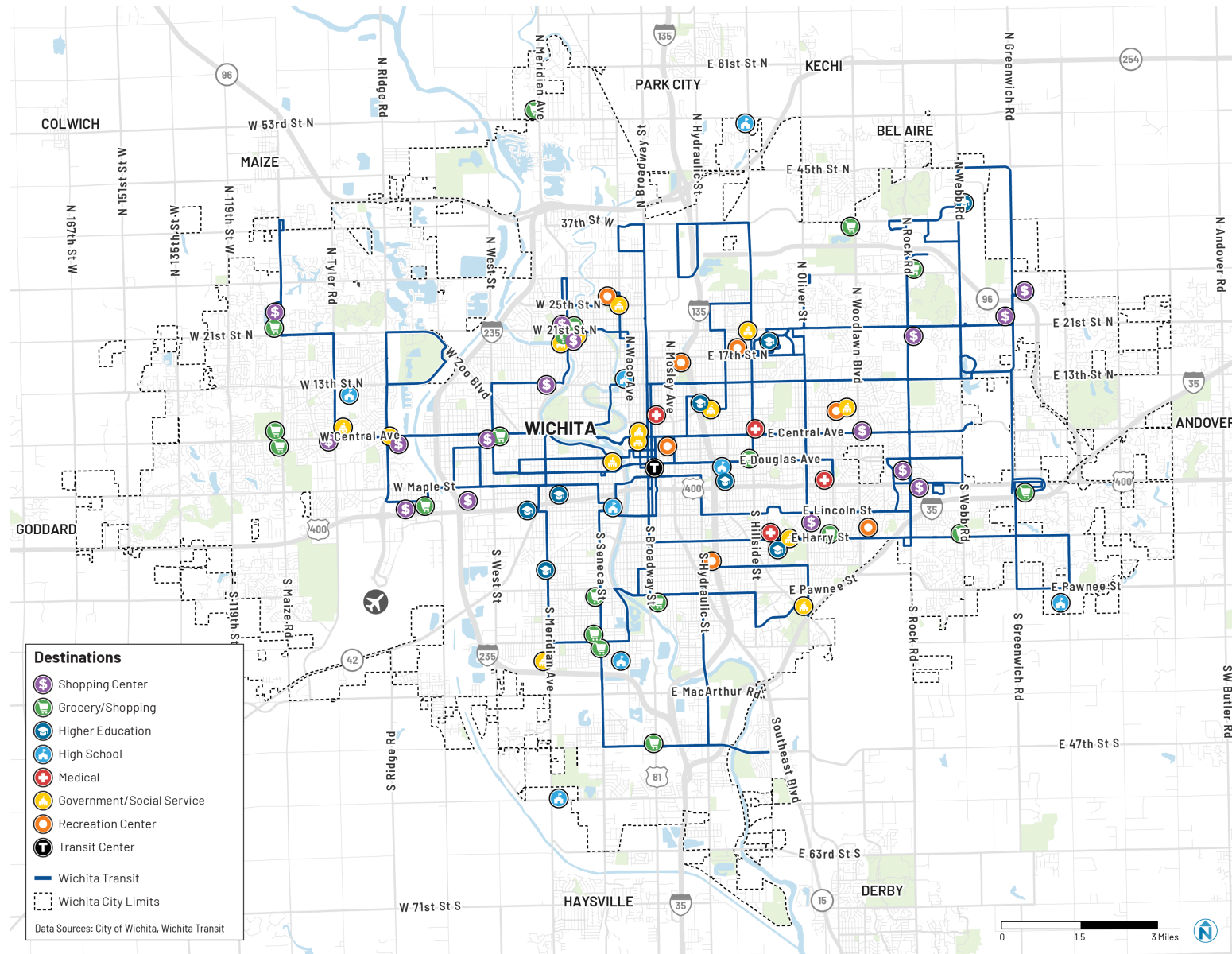
## Key Trip Generators

Targeting specific and well-defined markets is essential for transit systems. Wichita Transit aims to connect various destinations efficiently by following industry best practices in network design. Effective routes serve areas with high ridership potential and provide access to key destinations. Strong transit destinations, like Downtown or Wichita State University, typically maintain high activity levels throughout the day, often serving as connection points or hubs for various transit services (Figure 5).

**Figure 5 Key Trip Generators**

| Key Destinations                 | Importance   | Wichita Examples  |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Grocery Stores                   | Access to food; ideally one-seat ride                                | Dillons, Walmart Supercenter, Walmart Neighborhood Markets  |
| Shopping Centers                 | Employment centers with many low-wage jobs                           | Towne East Square, Bradley Fair, New Market Square  |
| Colleges and Universities        | Access to education, jobs, sporting events                           | WSU campuses, Wichita Technical Institute, Friends University                                     |
| Downtown Wichita                 | Jobs, limited and/or paid parking, entertainment, events.            | City Hall, INTRUST Bank Arena, Downtown Transit Center  |
| Medical Facilities               | Appointments, jobs   | VA Medical Center, Wesley Medical Center, Ascension Via Christi St Francis                        |
| Social Service Providers         | Government agencies and non-profit organizations                     | Department for Children and Families, Wichita Workforce Center, Sedgwick County Health Department |
| Recreation Centers and Libraries | Seniors, youth. Literacy development, internet access, meeting space | Linwood Recreation Center, Wichita City Arts, Advanced Learning Library                           |

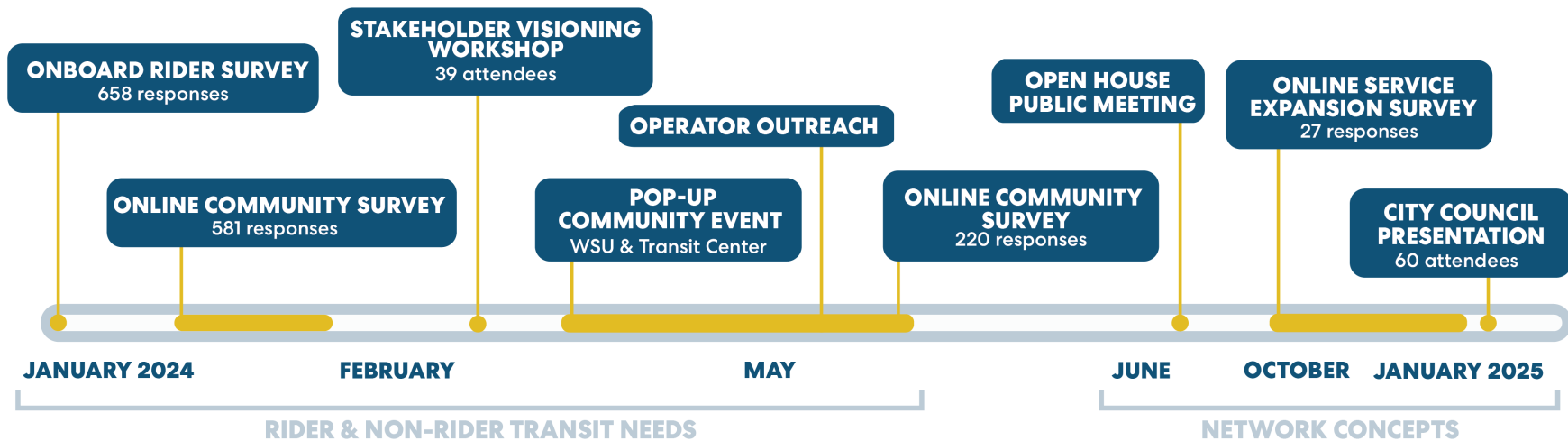


**Figure 6 Key Trip Generators**

### 3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Community participation was a critical component of the TNR. Robust outreach and engagement was conducted between January 2024 and January 2025 to ensure that community members, riders, and key stakeholders determine how the transit network will be redesigned to better serve the community. This section provides details of the public outreach that took place during the project, including the engagement strategies and a summary of the key findings and preferences from participants that were used to inform the proposed future service recommendations.

**Figure 7 Connecting Wichita Public Engagement Activities**



## ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In addition to the onboard surveys, transit worker interviews, and community surveys, a Vision Workshop, Open House Public Meeting, and Pop-Up Community events were held to inform and receive feedback. The following engagement strategies during the project included:

- **Inform** the community and stakeholders by providing balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities, and solutions.
- **Consult** the community and stakeholders by obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives, and decisions.
- **Involve** the community and stakeholders by working directly with them throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.
- **Demonstrate** that the feedback has influenced the decision-making and planning priorities.
- **Build** partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders, recognizing the effect this effort has on the community and that it complements other community initiatives.



## Key Messages

Consistent messaging was critical to providing an understanding of the project and to receiving input and feedback that helped develop the service recommendations presented in [Chapter 4](#). Transparency during the planning process was critical to encourage community participation and limit misinterpretation during each phase of the project. An additional aspect of messaging included providing context-specific messaging during in-person events that were tailored to audiences from different community groups, organizations, or neighborhoods. The following list includes key messages that were presented during all outreach events to help all participants and those engaged understand the project purpose and planning process.



- The entire community has an opportunity to be involved in the Transit Network Redesign.
- An effective Transit Network Redesign will need the participation of transit riders, other residents, community organizations, and community leaders.
- Public and stakeholder participation throughout the project will ensure that recommendations reflect the needs, priorities, and values of the community.

## Outreach Tools

Between Fall 2023 and Winter 2025, various methods were used to communicate with the community. The team used a variety of outreach tools to reach different audiences and to also engage the community in different ways, as some outreach tools are more accessible than others. The communication methods and outreach tools shown in Figure 8 were strategically selected to build community, promote inclusivity and collaboration, and encourage capacity building amongst stakeholders and community organizations in Wichita.

**Figure 8 Public Engagement Communication Methods**

| Meeting/Event           | Purpose   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Project Brand           | Attract attention and generate interest in the project  |
| Project Website         | Provide study overview, updates, links to surveys, event info, deliverables, etc.   |
| Project Fact Sheets     | Inform the community about the study and outreach opportunities   |
| Social Media Outreach   | Publicize outreach events and drive community to website for additional information   |
| Online Toolkit          | Provide consistent project information for community dissemination  |
| Onboard Rider Survey    | Solicit rider input   |
| Online Surveys          | Solicit rider and community input   |
| Stakeholder Workshops   | Solicit insight from stakeholder groups on transit needs of constituents  |
| Public Open Houses      | Inform community about the project, key findings, and receive input on priorities<br>Receive feedback on transit needs and service concepts |
| Community Pop-Up Events | Reach a wider segment of the community  |
| Email Notifications     | Summarize outreach activities and feedback  |

## Audience

The engagement tools used to reach the target audience included an onboard rider survey, online surveys, the project website, an online toolkit, a project fact sheet, social media outreach, email notifications, stakeholder discussions and public meetings and pop-ups.

Engagement and outreach strategies for the project were designed to gather input, build awareness, receive input and identify priorities.

Target audiences were divided into categories:

- Transit riders
- Transit workers and drivers
- Other residents and community members (non-riders)
- Stakeholders (public agencies, social services, non-profit organizations, community advocacy groups, economic development and business organizations, major employers, educational institutions, City departments)
- Wichita Transit staff, Wichita Transit Advisory Board, and the City of Wichita City Council

# FEEDBACK & SERVICE PREFERENCES

## Rider Characteristics

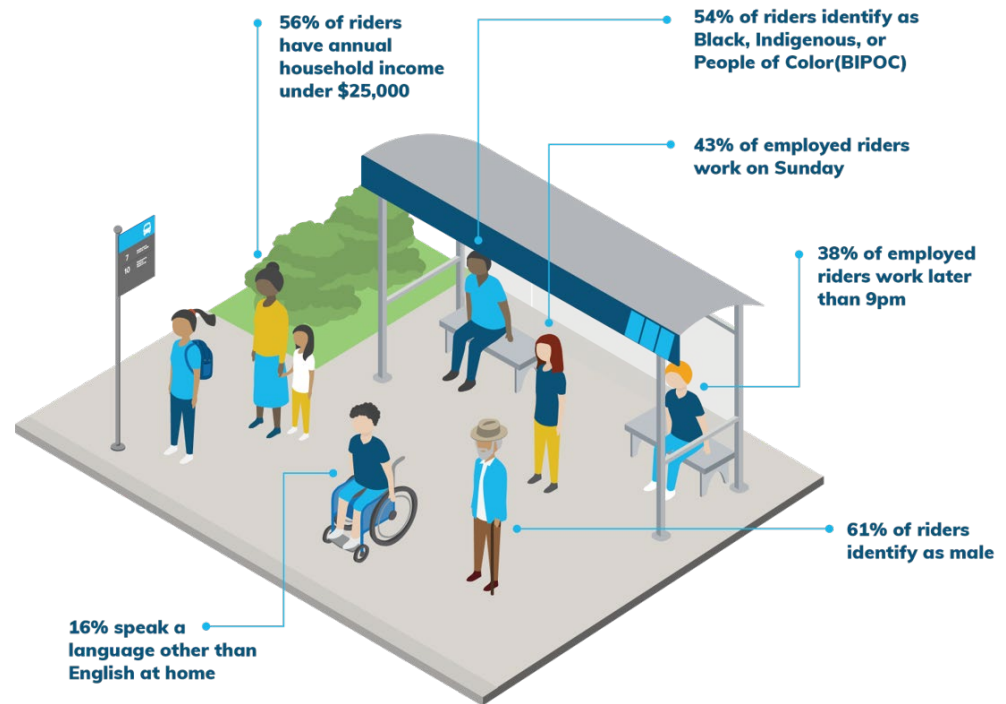
In January and February 2024, the Wichita Transit Rider Survey captured data from 658 transit users about their demographics, usage of the existing transit system, and satisfaction with services. In addition to online distribution, survey responses were also collected in person directly from riders using the system.

The survey revealed key insights into the patterns and behaviors of transit users. Notably, a considerable portion of the respondents were established users of the system, with nearly half having used it for two years or more, indicating a stable base of regular riders. Additionally, over half of respondents indicated using transit services five or more days a week, demonstrating that the service plays a critical role in the daily lives of its users.

Survey responses also underscored the importance of cross-town travel among riders, as a significant percentage reported making transfers during their trips, particularly at the Downtown Transit Center. Riders predominantly travel to and from work and home, although shopping, medical appointments, and education also comprise a significant portion of trip destinations. Although entertainment and recreation are mentioned as primary destinations with lower frequency, they still represent a portion of trip purposes, highlighting the diverse needs of riders.

Overall, the characteristics of surveyed riders reflect a population that is predominantly employed, diverse in age and ethnicity, with lower income levels than the average in Wichita, and reliant on public transportation due to limited vehicle ownership. These demographic insights highlight potential gaps in service that may need to be addressed, particularly for those who work irregular hours or belong to underserved communities, ensuring that transit resources align with the needs of the population they serve.

Figure 9 Rider Characteristics



## Rider Feedback

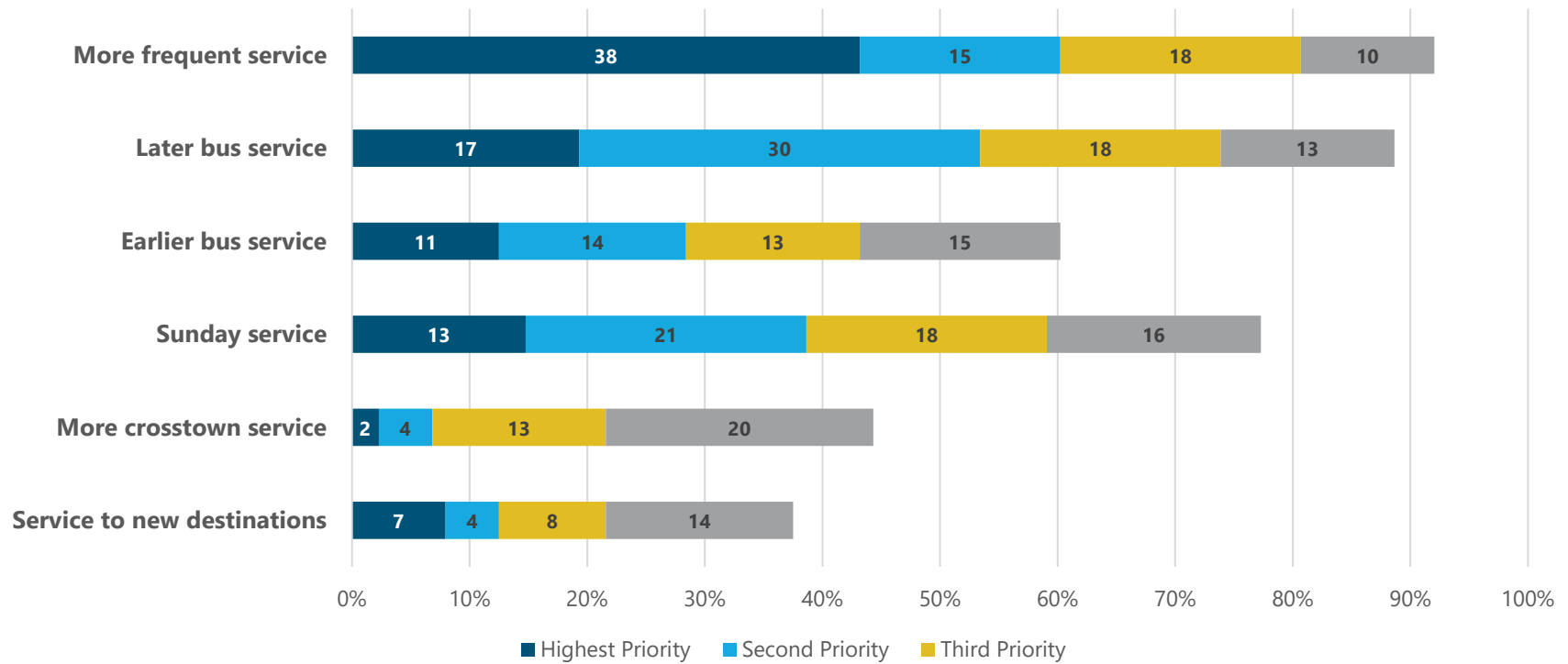
Rider feedback not only illustrated the strengths of the Wichita Transit system but also highlighted potential areas for enhancement to better serve the diverse commuting needs of its users. While not all desired improvements may be feasible in the near term given fiscal constraints, understanding rider preferences is vital for prioritization efforts and for future planning and budgeting.

Regarding satisfaction with current service, participants in the Wichita Transit Rider Survey expressed the highest levels of contentment with bus and driver safety, cleanliness, and fare affordability. Conversely, the areas where riders reported the least satisfaction included comfort at bus stops, as well as the hours of service, service frequency, and on-time performance. Prioritizing those aspects of transit service would offer the following benefits:

- Comfortable waiting environments, such as shelters with seating and lighting, can greatly reduce the stress and discomfort often associated with waiting for public transit.
- Extended service hours allow for greater accessibility, accommodating those who work non-standard hours or need to travel during off-peak times.
- Increased service frequencies and on-time performance minimizes waiting times and makes transit a more attractive option.

To obtain more detailed feedback, a Community Survey was distributed in May 2024, where potential improvements were presented to Wichita residents to determine their priorities for service expansions. Riders overwhelmingly prioritized more frequent service with over 50% of all riders ranking frequency as their highest or second-highest priority for future service. Earlier and later service also received strong support from current and potential riders. Others favored service expansions or extending existing bus routes to serve new areas and communities.

These preferred service expansion options were then analyzed for annual operating costs and capital costs to determine feasibility and cost effectiveness. Expanded service frequency is the most cost-intensive both operationally and in capital costs due to the need for new buses and operators to cover frequent runs. Earlier and later service do not require additional vehicles, but the increase labor costs and maintenance to existing vehicles will still require increased operational funding. Strategic route expansions require both operational and capital investment to cover new service areas, but these costs are lower overall than those associated with improving full system frequency.

**Figure 10 Riders' Preferred Service Expansion Options**

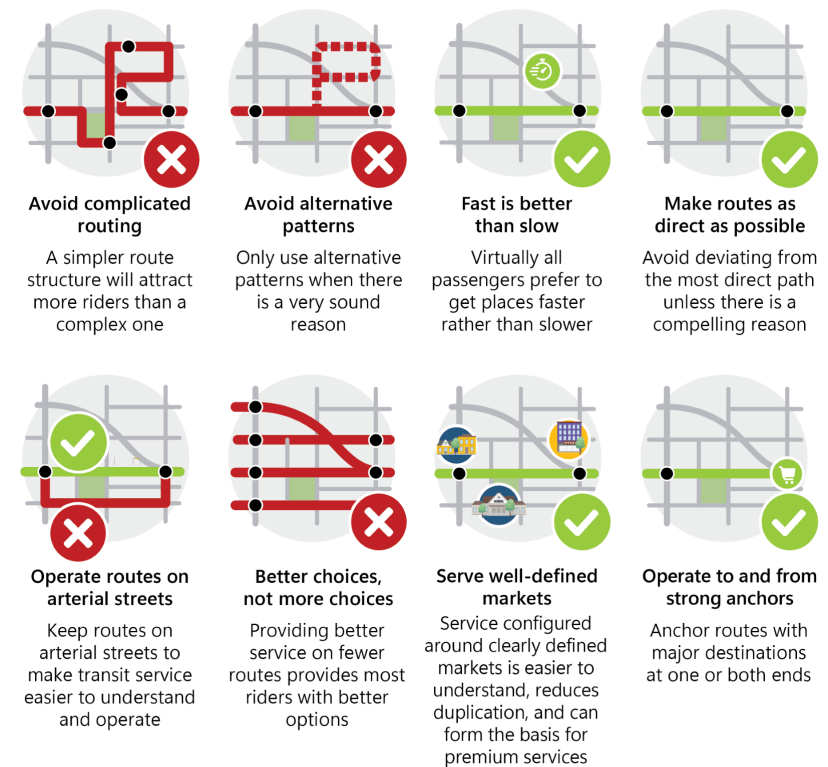
## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following several rounds of service and market analysis and public engagement, key recommendations were devised to improve transit service within Wichita. This chapter provides a detailed service plan for transit in the City of Wichita. The service recommendations outlined in this chapter reflect an approach to implementing a revised fixed-route network. As additional funding and dedicated resources become available, it is recommended that Wichita Transit implement the full revised network within 2-3 years of adopting this transit plan and consider implementing service options within 3-7 years.

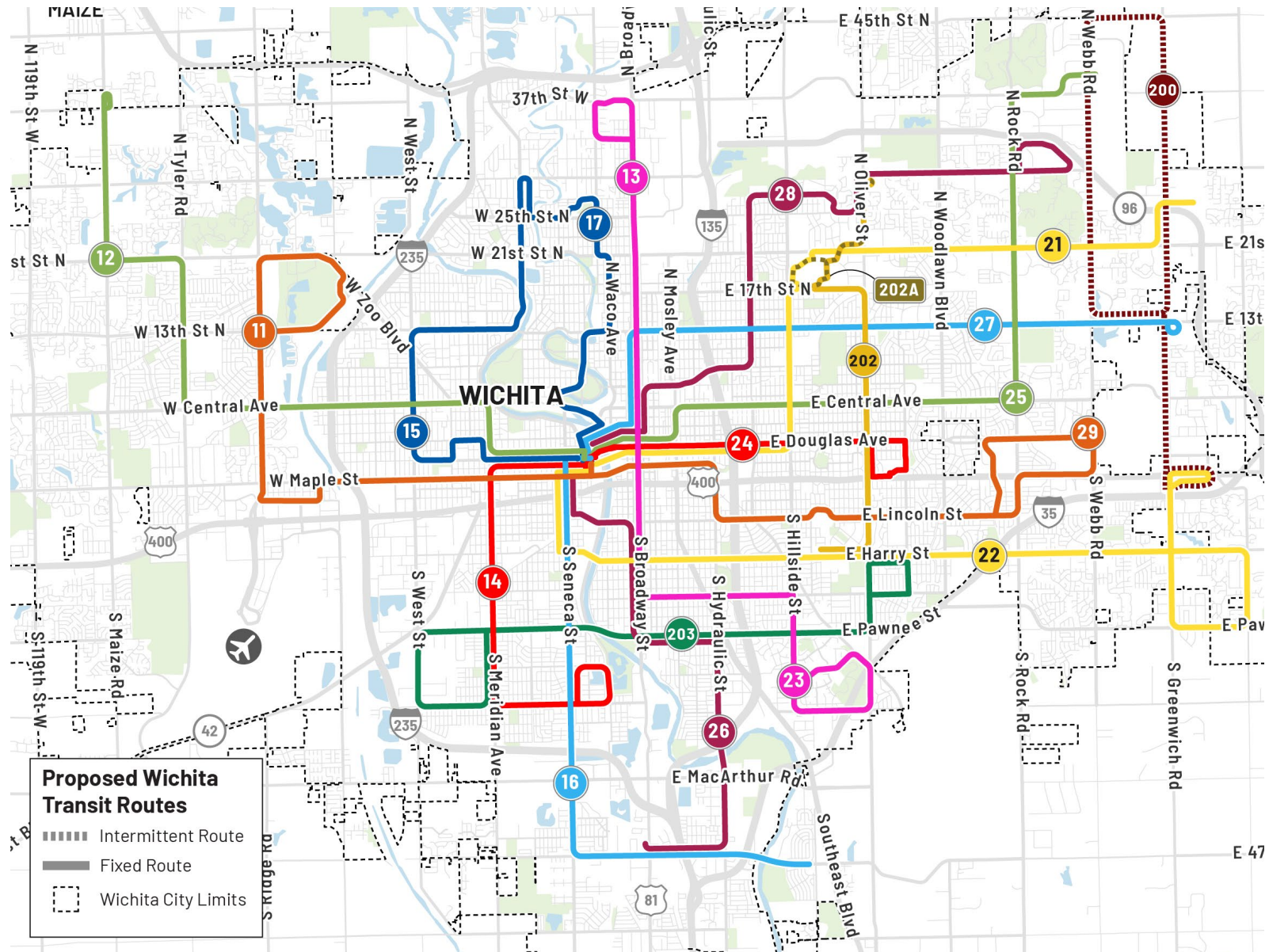
### Service Planning

Service design principles are general routing concepts that provide guidance to make service more productive, easier to understand, attractive, and efficient. In Wichita, it is vital to emphasize key anchor points and Figure 11 shows service design principles that were used to inform the proposed fixed-route concepts.

**Figure 11 Transit Service Design Principles**



**Figure 12 Proposed Transit Short- and Mid-Term Network**



## SHORT-TERM SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

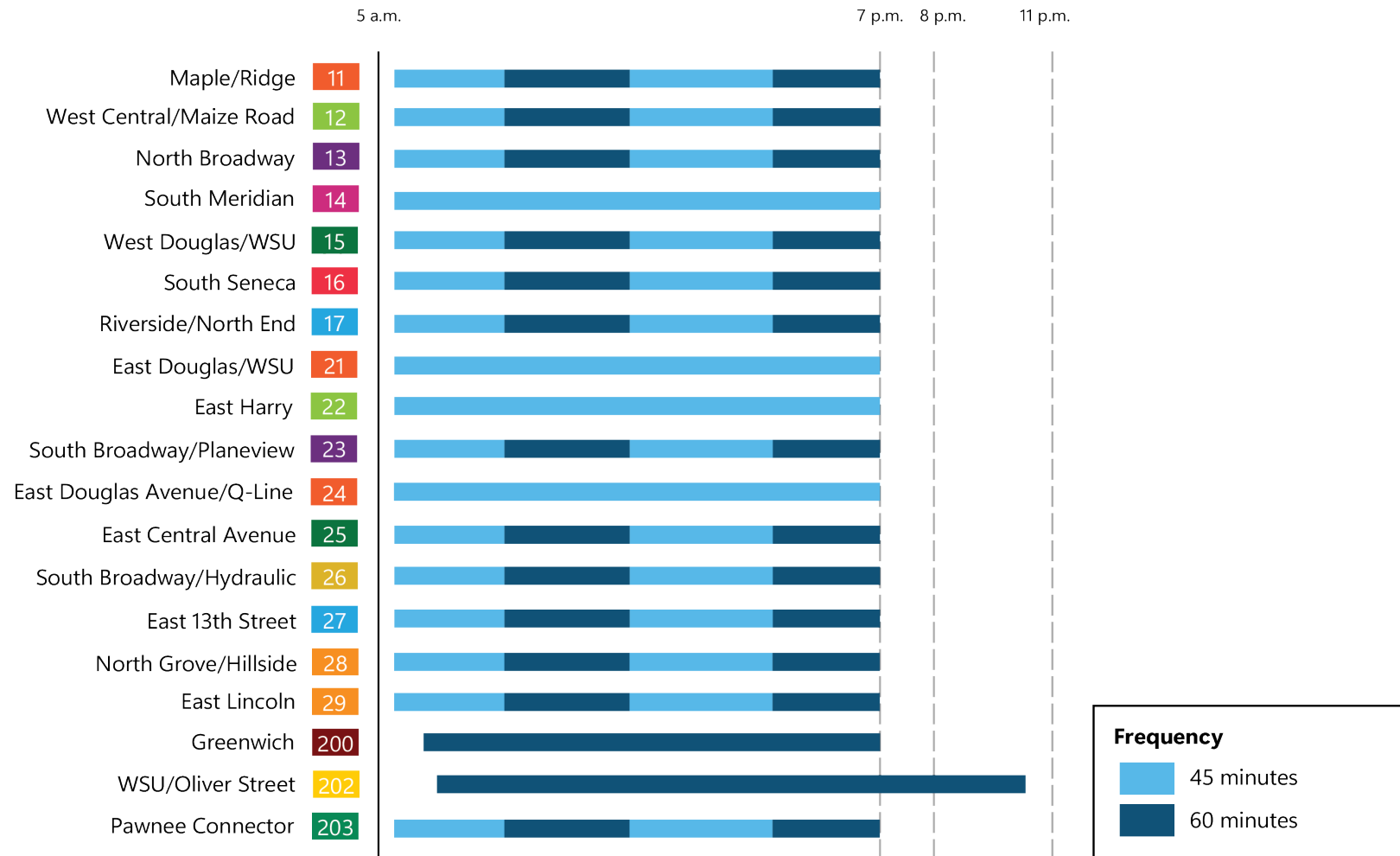
The proposed short-term recommendations aim to optimize service by streamlining routes, improving access to destinations, upgrading frequencies on select routes, and establishing a foundation for future growth. The following recommendations assume the same level of resources currently utilized by Wichita Transit. These cost-neutral recommendations could be implemented as early as 2025.

The service improvements at the core of the short-term recommendations focus on re-aligning five existing routes to improve ridership, productivity, and accessibility to current and planned community centers and essential services. These realignments focus on routes and route segments with low ridership or productivity to minimize impact on riders. The recommendations also include a new pilot route to connect West Street and Edgemoor Street via Pawnee Street. All six changes will be implemented prior to the opening of the Delano HUB in 2026, and the five realigned routes will serve both the existing Downtown Transit Center and the planned Delano HUB. The suggested short-term changes are illustrated and further described in Figure 13, Figure 14, and Figure 15.

### Operating Characteristics

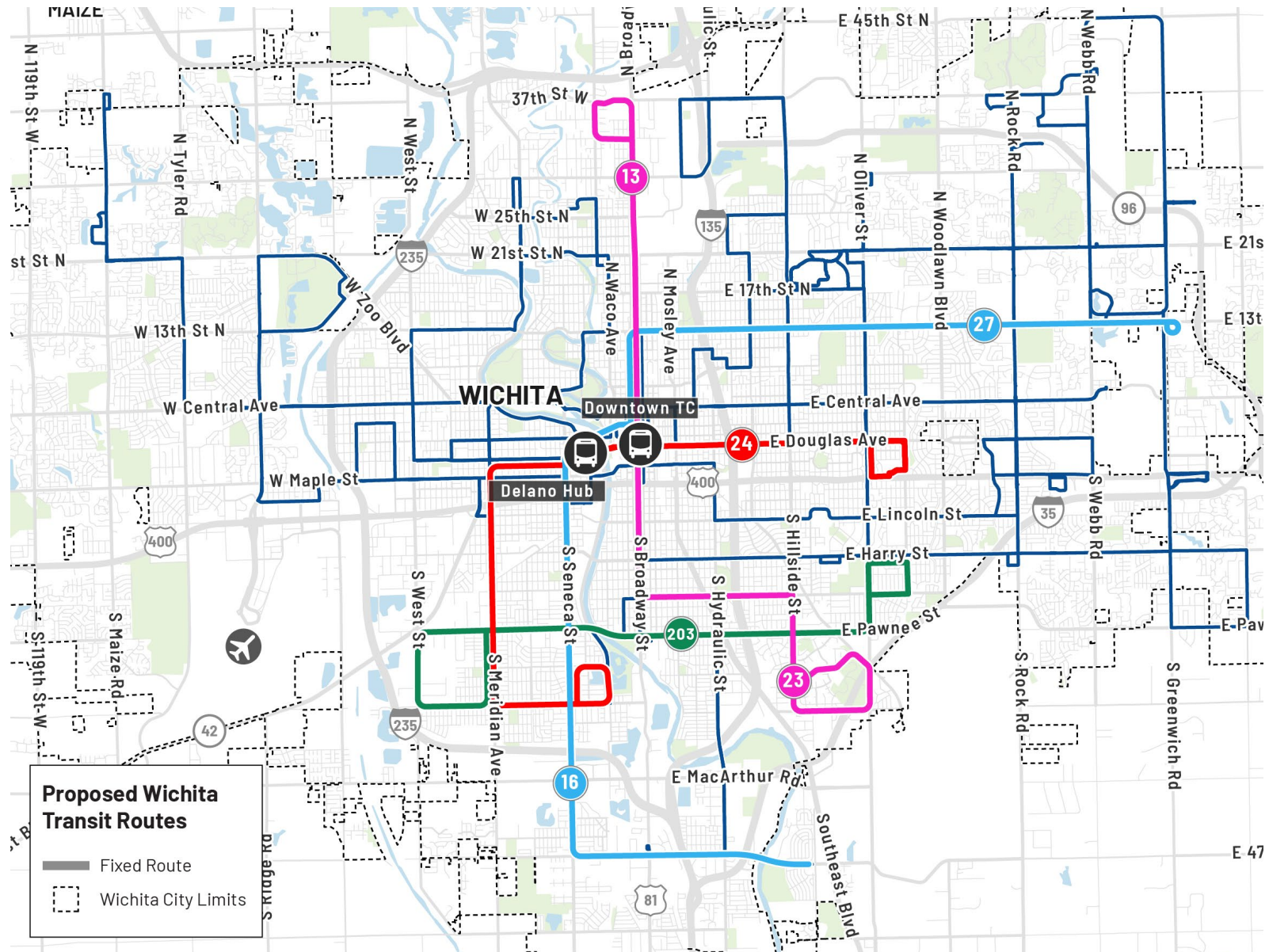
Short-term service changes emphasize more uniform service hours and patterns across routes. The current system has routes with varying operation hours, with routes beginning service anywhere from 5:00 AM to 6:30 AM and concluding service between 7:00 PM and 11:00 PM. This variability can make it more difficult for riders to understand the system. In the proposed short-term service model, most services start at 5:30 AM and conclude at 7:00 PM. Frequency along these routes follows peak schedules, with 45-minute headways during the periods of highest ridership (morning and afternoon/evening rush hours) and 60-minute headways during less congested daytime and nighttime hours. Routes 200 and 202 follow alternate service hours and frequencies to accommodate measured demand along the route. The pilot route (Route 203) adheres to the 5:30AM to 7:00 PM operating schedule, with varying peak and off-peak frequencies.



**Figure 13 Short-Term Proposed Service Spans and Frequencies**

**Figure 14 Short-term Service Recommendations**

| Proposal        | Route | Service Change  | Service Span     | Service Frequency  |
|-----------------|-------|---|------------------|--|
| Minor Change    | 13    | Service removed from the Downtown Transit Center via Douglas Avenue and William Street  | 5:30AM – 7:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 45 minutes (Peak)</li> <li>▪ 60 minutes (Off-peak)</li> </ul> |
| New Alignment   | 23    | Service discontinued along Pawnee Street (pilot Route 203 replaces service on Pawnee Street)<br>Service added along 31 <sup>st</sup> Street                             | 5:30AM – 7:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 45 minutes (Peak)</li> <li>▪ 60 minutes (Off-peak)</li> </ul> |
| Pilot New Route | 203   | Bi-directional between West Street and Edgemoor Street via Pawnee Street  | 5:30AM – 7:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 45 minutes (Peak)</li> <li>▪ 60 minutes (Off-peak)</li> </ul> |
| New Alignment   | 24    | Alignment discontinued north of Douglas Avenue on Museum Boulevard<br>Combined with existing Route 14 (alignment shortened and service removed from Pawnee Street)      | 5:30AM – 7:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 45 minutes (Peak)</li> <li>▪ 60 minutes (Off-peak)</li> </ul> |
| Minor Change    | 16    | Service discontinued along to the Transit Center via Lincoln and Emporia Street (proposed Route 26 replaces service on Lincoln Street)                                  | 5:30AM – 7:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 45 minutes (Peak)</li> <li>▪ 60 minutes (Off-peak)</li> </ul> |
| Minor Change    | 27    | Bidirectional service along Broadway (southbound service removed from Topeka Avenue)<br>Alignment extended to Greenwich Road via 13 <sup>th</sup> Street (Wichita East) | 5:30AM – 7:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 45 minutes (Peak)</li> <li>▪ 60 minutes (Off-peak)</li> </ul> |

**Figure 15 Short-term Service Recommendations**

## Piloting New Routes

Pilot routes are temporary routes introduced to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting demand, improving service quality, or assessing changes to existing services. These routes are typically tested over a specified period, allowing transit agencies to gather data and feedback before making decisions on permanent implementation or adjustments. In the short term, Pilot Route 203 will test bidirectional service between West Street and Edgemoor Street via Pawnee Street. This area of South Wichita showed moderately high population and employment density but had limited cross-town service in the current transit system.

During the pilot program and upon completion, pilot routes are evaluated for ridership, operational performance, customer experience, and costs. Metrics for evaluation include ridership, schedule adherence, percentage of positive feedback received, cost effectiveness (farebox recovery). If these metrics show strong operational performance and strong rider support, Wichita Transit will take the following steps to implement Route 203 into the fixed-route network permanently:

- **Month 1:** Route launch and initial monitoring.
- **Month 6:** Comprehensive evaluation of ridership, operational performance, and customer feedback.
- **Month 12:** In-depth review of service efficiency, financial performance, and rider trends to determine necessary adjustments.
- **Month 18:** Final assessment with data-driven recommendations for permanent implementation, modifications, or discontinuation.

## ADA Paratransit Service Considerations

The proposed short-term changes to the transit network would not alter existing ADA paratransit service in the City of Wichita. Paratransit will continue to operate within the Wichita city limits Monday through Friday from 5:30 AM until 7:30 PM and Saturday from 6:00 AM to 6:30 PM. Because the Wichita Transit paratransit service area already exceeds the federally mandated  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile buffer around fixed bus routes, small changes and realignments to the existing fixed-route system will not be reflected in the ADA paratransit service area.

## MID-TERM SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed Wichita Transit mid-term recommendations aim to integrate all existing and proposed routes with the new Delano HUB and invest in these routes to improve overall service spans and frequencies. To better accommodate the new Delano HUB, routes will be realigned to facilitate new connections between routes and different regions of the city in 2026 and 2027. Coupled with the new route alignments, this hub will foster better north-south access in Wichita. These mid-term changes would require increased funding, vehicles, and operators to deliver more efficient and consistent service.

In the mid-term, twelve of the remaining Wichita Transit routes will be modified when the Delano HUB begins operations. During this time, all routes that meet (or pulse) at the transit center will shift to serve the HUB to allow transfers between routes. Two routes will have major alignment changes. Five routes will have new alignments, such as simplified routes or bi-directional service. Route 203 will also be evaluated at this time to determine if the service will continue following the implementation of the HUB. At this time, all route frequencies will be modified to operate every 45 minutes during peak hours and every 60 minutes during off peak hours, excluding WSU routes Monday through Saturday. The suggested medium-term changes are illustrated and further described in Figure 16, Figure 17, and Figure 18.

### Operating Characteristics

There are few changes to operating hours or frequencies in the proposed medium-term system. Route 21 will follow peak and off-peak frequencies in this system as opposed to consistent 45-minute frequencies seen in the short-term system.

### ADA Paratransit Service Considerations

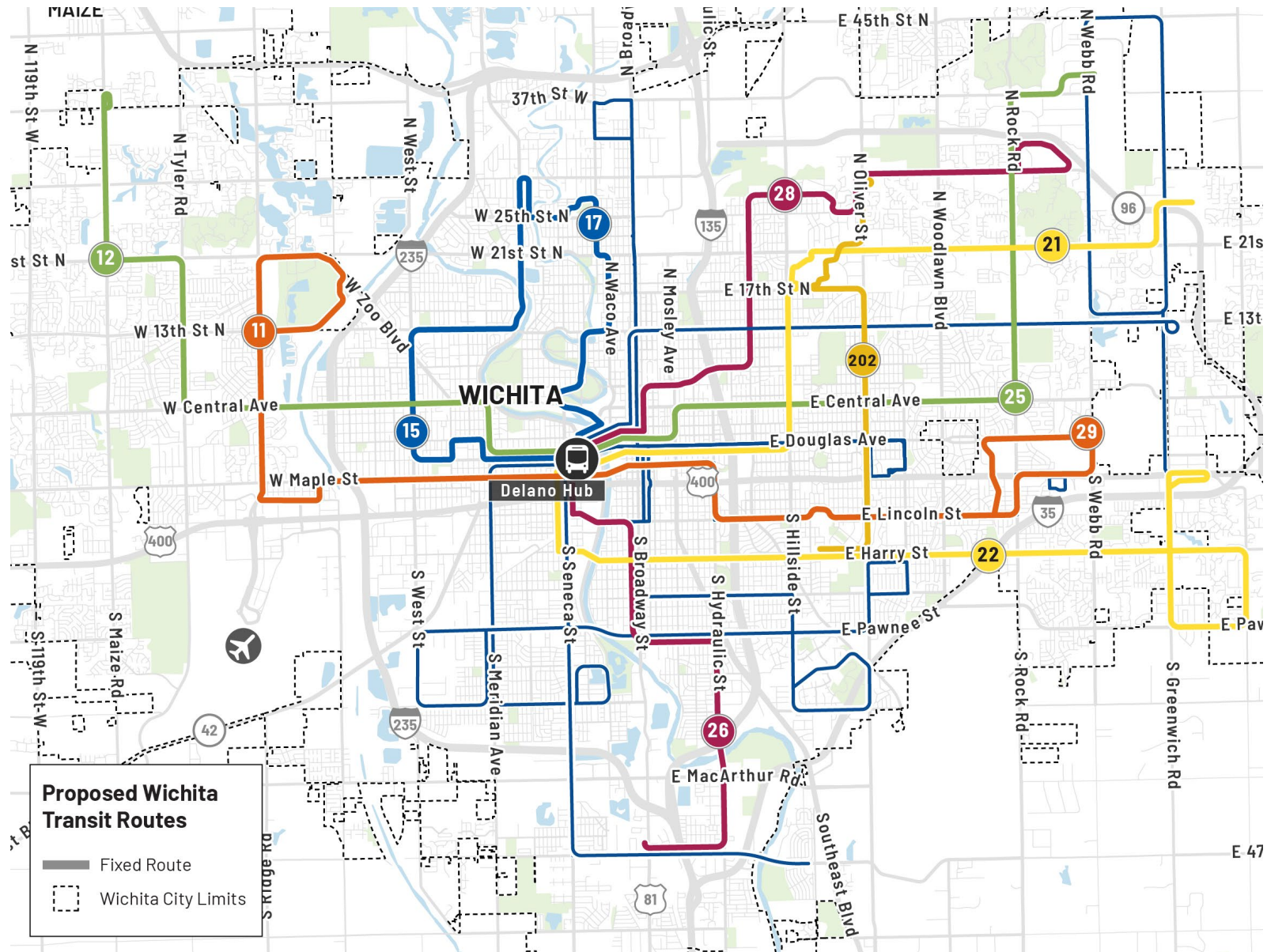
The proposed mid-term changes to the transit network would not alter existing ADA paratransit service in the City of Wichita. Paratransit will continue to operate within the Wichita city limits Monday through Friday from 5:30 AM until 7:30 PM and Saturday from 6:00 AM to 6:30 PM. Because the Wichita Transit paratransit service area already exceeds the federally mandated  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile buffer around fixed bus routes, changes and realignments to the existing fixed-route system will not be reflected in the ADA paratransit service area unless they extend beyond city limits.

**Figure 16 Mid-Term Proposed Service Spans and Frequencies**

**Figure 17 Mid-term Service Recommendations**

| Proposal                         | Route    | Service Change  | Service Span    | Service Frequency                          |
|----------------------------------|----------|---|-----------------|--|
| <b>New Delano HUB Operations</b> | Multiple | Routes 11, 12, 15, 17, 21, 22, 26, 25, 28, and 29 shift to service new Transit Center (Delano)  | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>Minor Change</b>              | 11       | Intermittent routing along south of Maple Street removed (on Dayton Street, West Street, and Hoover Road)   | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>New Alignment</b>             | 12       | Alignment discontinued along McLean Boulevard<br>Direct service at New Market Square discontinued (direct service on Maize Road)  | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>New Alignment</b>             | 15       | Service discontinued west of McLean Boulevard along 17 <sup>th</sup> Street & 21 <sup>st</sup> Street   | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>Minor Change</b>              | 17       | Route extended along 25 <sup>th</sup> Street (interlined with Route 15)<br>Service discontinued on 21 <sup>st</sup> Street between Amidon Street and Arkansas Avenue  | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>Minor Change</b>              | 21       | Service shifted from Broadway to Seneca Street (service on Broadway replaced with Route 23)   | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>New Alignment</b>             | 25       | Service discontinued to Rock Road & Kellogg Drive (Towne East Square) (Route 29 replaces service to Towne E Mall Drive)<br>Route extended north to WSU Campus of Applied Sciences via Rock Road & 37 <sup>th</sup> Street | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>Minor Change</b>              | 27       | Direct service to Waterfront Parkway discontinued (direct service on 13 <sup>th</sup> Street)   | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>New Alignment</b>             | 28       | Route extended to Walmart at Rock Road & 29 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>Service discontinued to Hydraulic Avenue via Hillside Street (bi-directional routing on Grove and 27 <sup>th</sup> Streets)                           | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |
| <b>Minor Change</b>              | 29       | Service discontinued south of Kellogg Drive at Cypress Drive & Eastern Street   | 5:30AM – 7:00PM | 45 minutes (Peak)<br>60 minutes (Off-peak) |



**Figure 18 Mid-term Service Recommendations**



## SERVICE EXPANSION OPTIONS

There are several avenues of service expansion to explore in Wichita. Major service improvements should be considered if additional resources become available and city and regional goals align with potential Wichita Transit initiatives. These improvements should only be pursued once redesigned routes are evaluated for route productivity and ridership to ensure resources are allocated to the routes or regions that can support expansion.

### Potential Service Expansions



#### **Expanded Frequency**

Expanded frequency provides more regular bus service with shorter wait times. By reducing wait times in between buses, Wichita Transit could improve convenience and flexibility for riders.



#### **Expanded System Times**

Expanded system times increase the service span to serve riders with unique travel patterns. For example, a service span that begins prior to 5:30 AM or ends after 7:00 PM could better serve shift workers who travel outside of traditional peak service hours, including those with night shift schedules.



#### **Weekend Service**

Wichita Transit currently operates service Monday through Saturday. By expanding service to Sunday, Wichita Transit could serve riders who currently have unmet transit needs on Sunday. Sunday service would also serve more trip purposes, such as recreational and religious activities.



#### **New Routes**

New routes can serve areas with unmet, developing, or changing transit needs. These routes can expand Wichita Transit's service area, provide stronger crosstown service, or offer express service to key destinations. New routes could serve more current transit riders or attract potential riders. It is best practice to pilot new routes to ensure that demand for these services merits the implementation of permanent routes.

**Microtransit/On-demand Transit**

Microtransit and on-demand transit offer direct service for riders, allowing them to schedule trips with exact origins and destinations. This can make service more convenient and comfortable for riders and eliminate transfers and wait times.

**Specific Shuttles (Employment/Airport)**

Special shuttles serve key locations directly, shortening commutes or trips to commonly accessed locations. Shuttle service allows riders to group trips based on similar travel patterns at a lower cost than commuting via private vehicle. Shuttle services can incentivize commuting via transit and attract new riders with their speed and efficiency.

**Service Beyond City Limits**






There may be opportunities to expand service beyond city limits in coordination with regional partners, counties, or state initiatives. Expanded service can take the form of regional fixed routes, express routes between Wichita and other regional or suburban hubs, shuttles to specific locations (such as major employers or airports outside the city), or on-demand service within the county.

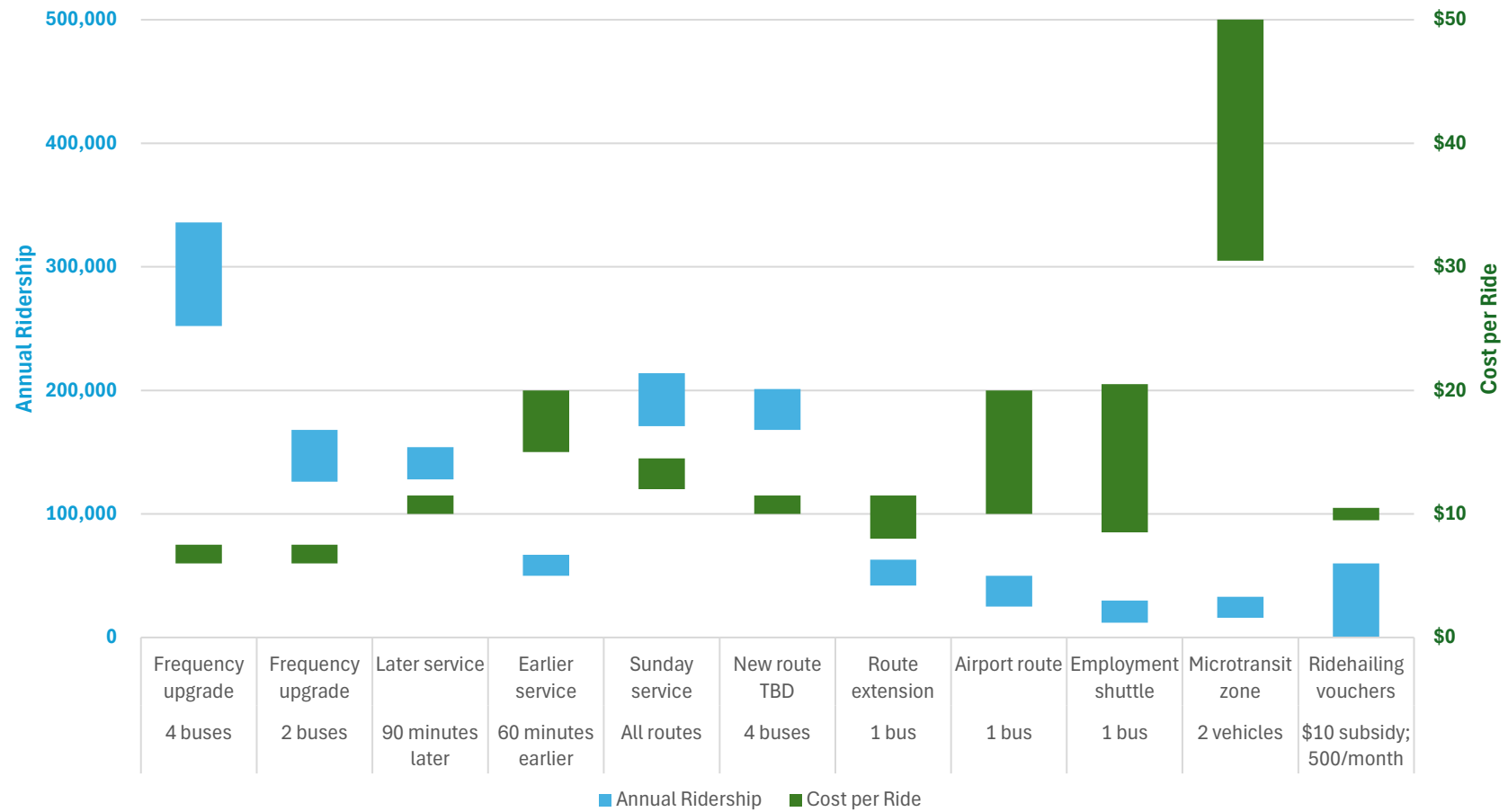
## Service Expansion Productivity

The proposed service options have varying operating and capital costs and attractiveness to existing and potential riders. Making routes more frequent, extending current routes, or adding new routes or shuttles require both additional operating costs to run additional vehicles and would likely require the acquisition of more vehicles by Wichita Transit. Earlier, later, and Sunday services only require additional operating costs since frequencies are assumed to remain constant for these improvements.

Some of the service expansion options have a higher total cost may also attract a proportionally higher number of riders than lower-cost expansion options. Comparing annual costs to anticipated ridership can develop an estimate of the productivity of the different service expansions. Estimated ridership can be achieved using the average productivity of Wichita Transit services today and industry standards for new services, though other factors such as fares, gas prices, and economic conditions when service is implemented can impact actual ridership. This analysis can also provide the potential cost per ride of implementing the expanded service. Descriptions and a comparison of the potential productivity and costs for each service expansion can be found in Figure 19.

**Figure 19 Service Expansion Options by Cost**

| Expansion Option  | Description  | Annual Operating Cost         | Capital Cost                        |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <br><b>30 Minute Service</b> | <p>Frequency improvements typically generate the highest ridership increases. In the proposed network, peak service frequencies are every 45 minutes or better. An additional bus is needed to increase the frequency from 45 to 30 minutes during peak hours. Since many of the routes are interlined (paired), it is recommended to increase the frequency of routes in groups of two.</p>   | \$1,000,000 for 2 routes      | \$1,600,000 for 2 buses             |
|   |  | \$2,000,000 for 4 routes      | \$3,200,000 for 4 buses             |
|   |  | \$3,000,000 for 6 routes      | \$4,800,000 for 6 buses             |
| <br><b>Later Service</b>     | <p>Providing later service does not require additional vehicles and is therefore cost-effective to implement. Fixed-route service currently ends at 7:00 PM or 7:30 PM on weekdays and 6:00 PM or 6:30 PM on Saturdays. Operating cost estimates assume additional round trips on all routes and include complementary paratransit service.</p>  | To 9:00 PM: \$1,650,000       | —                                   |
|   |  | To 10:30 PM: \$3,250,000      | —                                   |
|   |  | To 12:00 AM: \$4,800,000      | —                                   |
| <br><b>Sunday Service</b>    | <p>Adding Sunday service would increase access to work and shopping for existing and potential riders. The annual cost does not include supervisor and dispatcher staffing. Operating cost estimates include complementary paratransit service.</p>  | \$3,000,000                   | —                                   |
| <br><b>Earlier Service</b>  | <p>Providing earlier service does not require additional vehicles and is therefore cost-effective to implement. Fixed-route service currently begins at 5:00 AM or 5:30 AM on weekdays and 6:00 AM or 6:30 AM on Saturdays, which is sufficient for most riders. However, earlier service would benefit employees with early work shifts. Operating cost estimates assume additional inbound trips on select routes and include complementary paratransit service.</p> | \$600,000                     | —                                   |
| <br><b>Route Extension</b> | <p>Strategic route extensions would improve network connectivity and increase transit access. Potential extensions include Route 16 to WSU South, Route 29 to Social Security, and Route 201 to WSU Tech.</p>  | \$500,000 per route extension | \$800,000 for one bus per extension |

**Figure 20 Service Expansion Options Estimated Productivity**

# FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

## Funding Strategies

The medium-term and long-term recommendations provided in Chapter 4 will require an increase in budget and cannot be implemented with Wichita Transit's current budget and the current fleet. Any significant increase in revenue hours, capital investments, and operational expenses necessitates long-range planning to ensure fiscal sustainability. To realize those increased resources, it will be important to utilize all available funding streams. Local and state funding specifically can provide additional funding to implement the service expansions.

## Funding Sources

Funding for transit operations and supporting transportation capital programs use a combination of federal, state, and local funds. The following funding sources represent both potential new funding avenues for Wichita Transit and avenues currently used by Wichita Transit that could generate more funds in the future.

### Federal Funds

**Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307)** provide federal resources for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas. In 2024, Wichita Transit received approximately \$7.8 million in federal funding. Through Section 5307 funding, Wichita Transit is the direct recipient of these funds and must provide a match up to 80% for capital projects, and 50% for operating expenses. As an urbanized area with a population over 200,000, Wichita is eligible to receive these funds for public transportation capital projects, planning, and job access and reverse commute projects. Historically and currently, these funds are a primary source of revenue for Wichita Transit. To increase the amount of federal funding awarded, additional local funds ("local match") would need to be generated.

**Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)** grants offer opportunities to expand transit offerings for transit-reliant populations. Administered locally by the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO), 5310 offers funding to meet the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when existing services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate. In the case of an expanded fixed-route service area, this grant can help reduce paratransit costs. In 2024, Wichita Transit received approximately \$107,714 for administrative expenses, and \$68,170 for capital expenses.

**Capital Investment Grants (CIG)** is a discretionary program that supports major transit capital investments, including new and expanded rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects. Wichita can apply for funding to develop or expand fixed-route systems and system expansions, including BRT.

**Bus and Bus Facilities Program (Section 5339)** provides competitive grants for bus-related projects, including vehicle replacement, facility construction, and technological upgrades. Wichita Transit can apply for these funds to modernize its bus fleet and infrastructure and meet the vehicle capacity needs of the expanded medium- and long-term scenarios.

**Areas of Persistent Poverty Program** offers competitive funding for planning studies or financial plans aimed at improving transit services in economically distressed areas. Wichita can apply for these grants to assess and enhance transit options in underserved communities.

## State Funds

The Kansas State Highway Fund (KSHF) can be used by KDOT to fund major investments in the state. KDOT receives \$11 million annually from KSHF to administer the transit programs in their state. Out of these funds, transit funding is distributed amongst urban transit programs annually based on population, ridership, and miles.<sup>2</sup> In 2024, Wichita Transit received approximately \$1.4 million to administer and operate transit service. State funding is received annually and is subject to fluctuation based on the revenue generated through KSHF.

KSHF has multiple tools for collecting funds that generate revenue for transit programs, including:

- **State motor fuels tax.** Kansas has levied a tax of 24 cents per gallon on gasoline and 26 cents per gallon on diesel fuel since 2003. 66.37 percent of fuels tax revenues go directly to KSHF, with the remaining 33.63 percent to the Special City and County Highway Fund.
- **State sales tax.** The current general sales tax rate is 6.50%, with 0% state sales tax for food and ingredients as of January 1, 2025. 16.154 percent of state sales tax revenues head to KSHF. The City of Wichita does not levy a city tax, but does receive a portion of the sales tax received by Sedgwick County.
- **Registration fees.** Statutes also direct funding from vehicle registration and title fees, permits for oversized or overweight vehicles, and other registration-related fees to KSHF.

There are also dedicated project funds offered by the Kansas Department of Transportation for capital improvements. The **KDOT Cost Share Program** provides financial assistance to local entities for transportation projects that improve safety, support job retention and

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<sup>2</sup> KDOT Public Transit Funding, Kansas Legislature

growth, improve access or mobility, relieve congestion, and improve the state transportation system. This program is flexible and allows communities to apply for assistance with highway, local road, bridge, rail, airport, bicycle, pedestrian or public transit projects. These funds require at least a 15% local cash match and are used exclusively to match construction costs for projects, making this program ideal for capital investments. In 2024, the KDOT Cost Share program funded 21 projects for a total \$13.5 million investment.

## **Local Funds**

### **Tax Initiatives**

Wichita has no general citywide sales tax that is levied for the city or for public transportation services. In 2014, a Sales Tax Referendum failed. The referendum would have included a one-cent tax with 1/10 going to transportation. In lieu of general sales tax, the City of Wichita receives roughly 58% of 1985 Sedgwick County's one-cent sales tax, yielding approximately \$87 million in FY 2024. Other taxes account for 7% of the City of Wichita's total dollars, or around \$50 million. Fifty percent of sales tax revenue is apportioned to general funds to reduce the mill levy and the remaining 50% head to the Highway & Road fund. Wichita still has the ability to impose a transportation-specific sales tax up to 1% in addition to a maximum general sales tax of 2%. Based on \$8.5 billion taxable sales in the City of Wichita, a 0.1% sales tax would generate approximately \$8.5M per year and a 0.05% tax rate would generate approximately \$4.25M per year in revenue for transportation projects.

Peer agencies generate a considerable portion of their transit funding from levying local taxes (Figure 21). These taxes can take the form of sales taxes or property taxes for those living in the agency's service area. Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA), Toledo's transit provider, collected \$27 million in sales tax revenue in 2023, covering nearly 80% of TARTA's \$32,983,277 operating expenses for FY 2023. For agencies that utilize property taxes, such as Des Moines Area Rapid Transit Authority (DART) in Des Moines, 67% of FY 2025 revenue is expected to come from local property taxes, reducing reliance on fare collection and federal funding sources.

Sedgwick County's Transient Guest Tax also provides an opportunity for revenue generation. The current tax rate is 6% for lodging rentals under 28 days. Because good transit facilitates tourism, increased tax revenue can be applied to Wichita Transit, especially for routes that better serve downtown and tourist destinations.

**Figure 21 Peer Agency Operating Revenue Sources**

| Peer Transit Agency    | Geography       | Tax Initiative/Levy      | Tax Revenue   |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Sales Tax</b>       |                 |                          |   |
| TARTA (Toledo, OH)     | Lucas County    | 0.5% sales tax           | ~\$27 million, FY 2023  |
| StarTran (Lincoln, NE) | City of Lincoln | quarter-cent             | \$19.3 million, 2023-2024   |
| MetroLink (Tulsa, OK)  | City of Tulsa   | 0.95% sales tax          | \$295.8 million, between 2021-2030, reserved for streets and transportation |
| <b>Property Tax</b>    |                 |                          |   |
| DART (Des Moines, IA)  | IDOT            | 1-2% of tax payers' bill | ~\$29 million, FY 2025  |
| Metro (Omaha, NE)      | Douglas County  | one-cent                 | ~\$300 million, through FY 2024   |

## Local Partnerships

Local partnerships and coordination can provide additional funding for existing and expanded Wichita Transit service.

**Local employers** are one of the main forces increasing transit demand in Wichita and nationwide. Employees are looking for faster, easier commutes to job centers and employers benefit from a workforce that is more likely to arrive at work on time and efficiently. Transit agencies and major local employers can coordinate on programs such as transit commuter benefits, incentivizing public transit use and generating additional revenue for Wichita Transit.

**Wichita State University** currently provides students, faculty, and staff free transportation via Wichita Transit. Further partnership between the university and Wichita Transit in the form of contracted routes, advertising contracts, and parking and congestion fees to disincentivize private automobile use can generate further revenue and better serve Wichita Transit students.



## FARE ANALYSIS

In the future, Wichita Transit should examine options to modify its fare structure and introduce new fare medias. Findings from the peer review show that Wichita Transit's base fares are relatively high (\$1.75) as compared to peer agencies. While farebox revenue can help fund an agency's operating costs, fares that are too high may discourage ridership among transit-dependent populations. This section provides a summary of considerations regarding adjusting Wichita Transit's fare structure and policy in the future.

### Fares & Passes

There are five primary fare categories in Wichita Transit's fare structure: regular adult, half-fare adult, youth, child, and Paratransit. Older adults and people living with a disability are eligible for reduced fare. Students of Wichita Public Schools and surrounding private schools qualify for a slightly reduced fare.

**Figure 22** Wichita Transit Fare Structure<sup>3</sup>

| Service Type | Fare Product      | Adult   | Youth<br>6-18 years old | Half-Fare<br>65 and Older,<br>Medicare recipients,<br>Paratransit eligible | Children<br>5 years old and<br>younger |
|--------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Fixed-Route  | Single Ride       | \$1.75  | \$1.50                  | \$0.85   | Free                                   |
|              | Day Pass          | \$5.00  | \$5.00                  | \$2.50   | N/A                                    |
|              | Weekly Pass       | \$25.00 | N/A                     | N/A  | N/A                                    |
|              | Monthly Pass      | \$55.00 | \$20.00                 | N/A  | N/A                                    |
|              | Semester Pass*    | N/A     | \$40.00                 | N/A  | N/A                                    |
|              | School Year Pass* | N/A     | \$70.00                 | N/A  | N/A                                    |
| Paratransit  | Single Ride       | \$3.50  |                         |  | Free                                   |

\*Designated specifically for all Elementary/Middle/High school students in Wichita & surrounding areas)

<sup>3</sup> Current Fares and Passes, [Wichita Transit](#)

## Best Practices

Fares should be structured and designed to encourage ridership, promote equity, and enhance rider convenience.<sup>4</sup> While farebox revenue only makes up 14-16% of Wichita Transit’s total operating revenue, fare strategies should still be re-evaluated regularly to ensure revenue sustainability and fare affordability. The following best practices shown in Figure 23 represent a few ways that agencies across the county are reforming fare policy to ensure they remain progressive for revenue generation and prioritize the rider experience.

**Figure 23 Fare Policy Best Practices**

| Fare Policy Best Practices | Location                        | Description  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Fare Capping               | TriMet (Portland, OR)           | Requires additional fare technology including smart fare cards that track rider utilization. Fare capping creates a more affordable transit network by making sure riders pay no more than the cost of a daily, weekly, or monthly pass. Once a rider’s total spending reaches the amount for a pass, they receive that pass for the rest of the allotted period (e.g., day, week, month). |
| Simplified Fare Structure  | King County Metro (Seattle, WA) | A general, flat fare that is not based on distance, time of day, or geography.   |
| Discounted Fare Programs   | SFMTA (San Francisco, CA)       | A discounted “sliding scale” fare program for low-income riders. This program would allow discounted fares to be based on what the rider is able to pay.   |
| Student Fare Program       | WMATA (Washington, D.C.)        | Partnership between local public school system and Department of Transportation to establish transit subsidy program for students enrolled in elementary or secondary public, charter, private or parochial school to travel to school or school-related activities for free (ages 5 through 21).  |
| Mobile Fare Payment        | StarTran (Lincoln, NE)          | A convenient and cashless way for riders with smartphones to pay for transit fares and passes that doesn’t require them to travel to a transit center or retailer to buy a physical pass.  |

## Fare Policy Recommendations

Based on best practices and Wichita Transit’s current fare structure it is recommended that the agency simplify fares and passes and create a system that is more efficient and intuitive for riders. This would include simplifying discount programs, consolidating the number of pass programs, adjusting fares prices, and introducing additional fare payment technologies when feasible. The detailed recommendations include:

<sup>4</sup> A Fare Framework, [Transit Center](#)

- **Consolidate discount programs:** Include Youth fares (6-18 years old) as part of Half-Fare program – this would simplify fare payments for families riding the bus that may include individuals from different age groups and with different eligibility requirements.
- **Simplify multi-day pass programs:** Discontinue the use of Weekly Passes – it is more expensive for frequent riders to purchase a Weekly Pass every week than to purchase a monthly pass. It is recommended to increase the cost of the Monthly Pass to offset the costs of the Weekly Pass.
- **Make cash payments easier:** Structure fares and passes in \$0.25 increments to reduce the type of change needed to pay for fares using cash (i.e., dimes, nickels). It is recommended to reduce the discounted fare from \$0.85 to \$0.75. One strategy for offsetting impacts would be to raise base price to \$2.00 but keep or decrease costs for discounted fares and pass programs.
- **Expand Free Transfers:** Allow free transfers across all routes with each one-way fare purchase, valid for 90 minutes from the time of issue. This would enable riders to connect with routes that have lower frequencies. Currently, free transfers are only available for specific route pairs. Expanding free transfers to all routes would improve travel efficiency, encourage transfers outside of the Transit Center (HUB), and reduce costs for riders traveling longer distances on multiple routes.

# 5 IMPLEMENTATION

## NEXT STEPS

The implementation of the recommendations proposed in this study, along with the opening of the Delano HUB, would result in a transformation of Wichita Transit's fixed-route network. The new system would ultimately provide a more robust transit network with better connections to key activity centers and improved service reliability. This final report outlines proposed route concepts and a timeline. However, it recommends that Wichita Transit continue public outreach after the project's completion to keep the public informed about upcoming route changes. Additionally, the report suggests conducting an implementation study to detail the necessary steps for successfully implementing the proposed service plan recommendations. The following section outlines the tasks to consider for a future implementation study, which will support the agency's transition to the redesigned network while ensuring continued access to service and reliability.

## Capital Improvements

### Bus Stop Siting

Bus stops will need to be added, removed, and relocated for new and modified fixed routes. Wichita Transit will need to examine the location of existing bus stops to determine approximate bus stop locations for the proposed new bus network. The assessment should include field-validating stops, siting proposed bus stop locations, and siting transit amenities. Notices for new, relocated, and removed stops should be placed along existing bus routes, and should be available on Wichita Transit's website. These notices and stop changes should be included in ongoing public outreach.

## Bus Stop Accessibility

An assessment of the bus stop environment should include nearby traffic flow, stop visibility, adjacent land uses, pedestrian access, and ADA access. When complete, a list of new, relocated, and removed stops should be documented in a database that includes fields for route direction, amenities, stop ID, intersection, and geographic coordinates. All new transit stops should be accessible for all users, conforming to ADA requirements outlined in the 2023 Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines.<sup>5</sup> These standards specify a variety of requirements for platform surface, widths, and connectivity to surrounding sidewalk infrastructure and shelter facilities. Existing stops will be reviewed for accessibility as funding allows.

## Service Scheduling & Run Times

Upon final approval of the TNR, a series of service plan refinement activities should be conducted to validate the operational feasibility of the proposed service plan and prepare for detailed scheduling and run cutting. These activities include:

- **Route and Run Time Validation:** Validate the route running times developed as part of this study. Test runs on all proposed routes will need to be operated using a Wichita Transit bus to determine operational feasibility and running time duration. These run time tests should also account for the number of stops along the route and potential high ridership stop locations that or stops locations that may require additional dwell time (e.g., grocery stores, senior living centers).
- **Route Refinement:** Based on the findings of the run time validation process, routes may need to be adjusted to ensure proper run and cycle times. This step ensures service reliability and minor route modifications and should be communicated during public outreach. Proposed route modifications should also be reviewed and approved by Wichita Transit's advisory board and City Council. Finally, if substantial changes are necessary, a Title VI equity analysis may need to be prepared to ensure the modifications do not result in adverse impacts to low-income or minority populations.

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<sup>5</sup> Transit Stops and Transit Shelters, [PROWAG](#)

## Route Transfers

### Integrating Timed Transfers

A primary goal of this study was to improve crosstown connections and provide better service coverage. The project team designed routes to make travel more efficient and remove the need for riders on certain routes to transfer Downtown, increasing the need for improved transfers outside of Downtown. It is recommended that Wichita Transit explore integrating timed transfers when two or more routes are scheduled so that some or all buses operating on both routes meet at a designated transfer point. The buses wait at this point until all transfers among them are complete.<sup>6</sup>

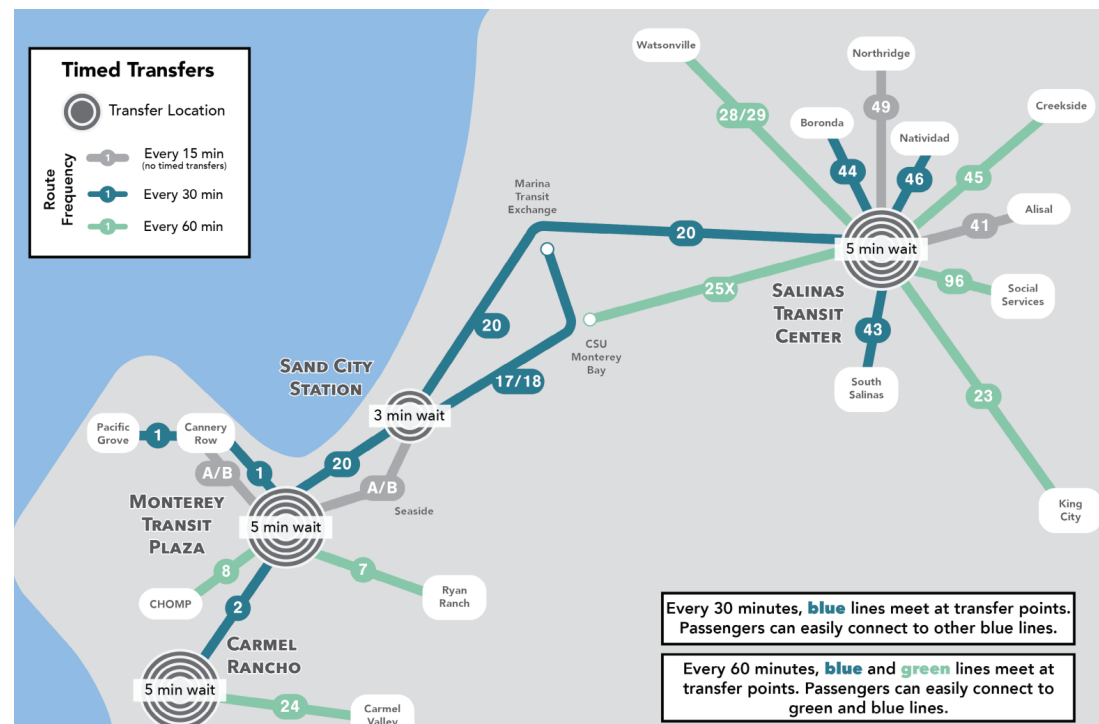
### Best Practices

According to an example from Monterey-Salinas Transit, timed transfers work best when:

- Routes can layover in areas outside of Downtown
- Transfers occur between low frequency and high frequency routes
- An agency's fare structure allows for free transfers across all routes<sup>7</sup>

Timed transfers can improve operating efficiency (i.e., minimizing transfer delays), local and neighborhood service, and route structure. Other timed transfer best practices include:

**Figure 24 Monterey-Salinas Transit Proposed Timed Transfers**



<sup>6</sup> Time Transfers, USDOT Volpe Center

<sup>7</sup> Route Recommendations, [Monterey-Salinas Transit](#)

- Stagger departure times at transit centers (i.e., :15 and :45)
- Monitor schedules of route runtimes periodically; adjust schedules as needed
- Implement timed transfers on route pairs with low frequencies and long waits between vehicles

When feasible in the mid- and long-term, it is recommended that the agency:

- Adjust fare policy so that transfers are either free or significantly discounted to encourage transfers across the system outside of Downtown
- Identify opportunities for route frequency upgrades
- Identify new layover locations for routes that do not interact with Delano HUB
- Integrate additional wayfinding for riders at transfer locations and on-street bays adjacent to Delano HUB

As part of this study five potential timed transfer points were identified for consideration, including:

- **Routes 14 and 13** at Broadway and Douglas Avenue
- **Routes 14 and 203** at Meridian Avenue and Pawnee Street
- **Routes 203 and 23** at Hillside Street and Pawnee Street
- **Routes 203 and 26** at Broadway and Pawnee Street
- **Route 22 and 202** at Harry Street and Oliver Street



