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# Technical Advisory Committee

Monday, October 30, 2017

Regular Session

## Item H6

**Approval Recommendation of Final Draft Summary Final Report for  
Regional Transit Study**

Staff Contact: Allan Zafft, MPO Program Manager

**ISSUE**

VOTE: Draft Summary Final Report for the Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study

**BACKGROUND**

Grand Island and Hall County have had public transportation services available to residents since the mid-1970s. These services were funded in part by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) rural transportation programs and Hall County.

After the 2010 Census designation of Grand Island to an urban area, the Grand Island Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GIAMPO) was established in 2013 to serve as the formal transportation planning body for the greater Grand Island metropolitan region. The move from rural to urban designation affected the funding mechanisms for public transportation in Grand Island. As an urban area, the FTA appropriates funding to urban communities, such as Grand Island, by formula allocations across the United States each fiscal year. The formula is based on population and population density. One designated recipient within the urban area is appointed by the Governor, and for Grand Island, it is the City of Grand Island.

Beginning on July 1, 2016, the City of Grand Island became the primary funding partner from a local perspective, with a small portion of the local match (5%) from Hall County. The allocation for Hall County is based upon existing services located primarily within the urban area of Grand Island and some service requests outside the City that include rural trips.

In April 2016, the City of Grand Island City Council approved an interlocal agreement where the City provides public transit services within Hall County. The City of Grand Island has an existing contract with Senior Citizens Industries, Inc. d/b/a Hall County Public Transportation for an initial 12-month term, with options for a maximum of two years renewal. The City began managing the transit service in July 2016.

GIAMPO in coordination with the City of Grand Island initiated the Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study in March 2017. Olsson Associates was retained by the City to lead the study efforts. The primary purpose of this study is to provide baseline information to the City of Grand Island, as the City's first year managing the transit service, and to give the City a plan for transit service based upon, but not limited to, community input and vision for the future.

Olsson Associates has completed a Draft Summary Final Report for the study. This report provides the following information:

- Development of project goals and vision for transit service in Grand Island and Hall County
- Market analysis for the study area
- Evaluation of existing transit services
- Analysis of the existing transit needs, gaps, and potential future demand for transit service
- Review of peer communities
- Evaluation of contract models for transit agencies and a discussion on future governance options
- Public and stakeholder involvement during the study
- Development of future transit alternatives
- A five year plan and budget and an implementation plan for the City of Grand Island

The GIAMPO Public Participation Plan specifies there will be a 15-day public comment period before adoption of a GIAMPO report/document by the Policy Board. Staff will recommend TAC release the DRAFT Summary Final Report for public review and comment.

## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS/DISCUSSION

### Transit Agency – Peer Review

The study included a Transit Agency Peer Review, which provides a useful tool in terms of lessons learned at other agencies and in assessing where Hall County Public Transportation is today, compared to peer communities, using transit industry typical statistics for reasonable costs, ridership, and service levels. The peer agencies included: Enid, OK; Idaho Falls, ID; Kingman, AZ; Helena, MT; Casper, WY; and North Platte, NE.

		2014 Population	Post-Secondary School Enrollment	Demand Response Trips	Fixed Route Trips	Total Trips	Transit Trips per Capita	Operating Budget	Operating Budget per Capita	Revenue Hours (Revenue Miles)	Cost per Revenue Hour
	Grand Island, NE	51,236	2,163	35,085	N/A	35,085	0.7	\$490,000	\$10.10	14,705 (170,497)	\$33.32
1	Enid, OK	51,386	1,902	40,800	N/A	40,800	0.8	\$735,446	\$14.89	18,400 (N/A)	\$39.07
2	Idaho Falls, ID	58,691	862	N/A	79,914	79,914	1.4	\$1,229,217	\$20.94	27,924 (350,476)	\$44.02
3	Kingman, AZ	28,912	1,707	N/A	116,352	116,352	4.0	\$771,819	\$26.70	16,564 (170,567)	\$46.60
4	Helena, MT	29,943	2,400	N/A	173,775	173,775	5.8	\$1,317,688	\$46.76	25,209 (488,299)	\$52.27
5	Casper, WY	60,086	4,648	54,213	125,460	179,673	3.0	\$1,730,107	\$31.28	37,410 (448,385)	\$46.25
6	North Platte, NE	24,592	3,250	76,289	N/A	76,289	3.1	\$634,603	\$26.09	14,183 (163,656)	\$44.74
	Average	42,268	2,462	57,101	123,875	111,134	3.0	\$1,069,813	\$27.78	23,282 (324,277)	\$45.64

As shown above, the operating cost per vehicle for the peer agencies range from approximately \$40 to 52 per revenue vehicle hour. The operating cost per vehicle revenue

hour performance measure accounts for every hour a transit vehicle is in service. This measure includes driver salary, fuel, and wear and tear on the vehicles. Hall County Public Transportation is lower than all the peer agencies at \$33.32 per revenue vehicle hour and has a low cost to operate the system.

Contracting Models

The study evaluated different contract models for the City of Grand Island to consider for its operation management in the future.

1. Traditional Transit Management Model – The contractor senior management typically manages the public transit budget and all aspects of the agency’s performance. They also typically report to the public sector board or local overseeing governmental agency. The financial risk of the operation resides with the public transit agency.
2. Operating Service Model – The transit agency contracts with the private sector to operate and manage its service operations, while maintaining the transit agency fleet. The transit agency continues to manage the other key functions of the service.
3. Turn-key Operating Service Contract Model – This is a partnership with a contractor and the public transit agency, who delegates the management and operation of an entire transit system to the contractor, who is held contractually accountable for all aspects and functions of the transit agency.
4. Purchase of Service Contract Model – This is a partnership with the public transit agency and the private provider, who specifically only provides service, direct operations management, and may or may not provide maintenance of the vehicles, depending upon the needs of the agency. This service model typically has payment per trip, which is different from the other models described above.

Using the existing contract with SCI, local estimates for the City of Grand Island for contracting transit services are shown in the table below. This table also includes estimates for in-house models.

Operation Models	City Cost	Contractor Cost	Total Transit Costs
Today*	\$93,000	\$490,000	\$583,000
Traditional	\$93,000	\$698,200	\$791,200
Operating Service	\$93,000	\$668,790	\$761,790
Turn-key	\$93,000	\$943,200	\$1,036,200
Purchase of Service	\$93,000	\$632,215	\$725,215
In-House (incl full-time & part-time drivers)	\$854,725	\$0	\$854,725
In-House (incl part-time drivers)	\$781,200	\$0	\$781,200

\* Existing contract with SCI with contract amount of \$638,000

There is not a wrong contracting model. Each community must choose a model that works best for their environment and political culture, keeping in mind, whichever model is chosen will have the best management and use of taxpayer dollars.

Based upon the estimates from the operations table and the longevity of successful contracting for transit services in the Grand Island area, it is recommended the City continue to use contracting in the short term. Should the service parameters and/or type of service change to a flexible or fixed route service, the City should revisit the In-house Contracting opportunities to determine if a different method of contracting may be more appropriate for management, operations, and oversight. In addition, as transit demand increases, the City should research the number of administrative staff for oversight of services and determine appropriate leveling of staffing.

#### Future Governance Options

The City of Grand Island is the new manager of public transportation within the urbanized area of Grand Island. Prior to 2016, Hall County was the manager of public transit services. In the future, it is recommended to begin discussions of a formal governance structure, which incorporates representatives from each of the governmental entities in the region. This governance should be considered for several reasons:

- *To establish fair and acceptable cost-sharing arrangements among all entities*
- *To fund the service through administration of a dedicated funding source*
- *To ensure that any service changes contemplated in the future are in the best interests of the region and are fair and acceptable to each entity involved*
- *To establish a long-term commitment for the provision of transit service among all entities*

The creation of a multiple entity Regional Authority changes the existing structure and presents an opportunity for a sizable expansion of the service area, if adjacent entities join the Authority. The formation of an Authority allows the regional governance of planning, funding, and operations all under one entity, making it more efficient to provide transit service beyond the city limits of Grand Island.

The existing state law does not permit the City of Grand Island, nor Hall County to form an authority at this time. In 1972, the Nebraska State Legislature passed Legislative Bill 1275 “enabling” the creation of the Transit Authority, City of Omaha, a governmental subdivision of the State of Nebraska, pursuant to statute 14-1803, and the only such transit authority in the state. No other Authority is allowed outside the City of Omaha without the change of this legislative bill. This study recommends the City continue discussions with Hall County and surrounding counties and cities to determine interest in changing existing state law for authorization in the development of an Authority.

#### Future Alternatives Development

The study developed future transit alternatives that shaped by the vision and goals articulated early in the process, historical ridership and boarding / de-boarding data, transit need, gaps, evaluation of transit delivery in peer cities, input from the community, key stakeholders, rider and community surveys, and consideration of potential services within the community.

Four primary alternatives were developed for the Grand Island and Hall County Region.

1. Status Quo – This is the existing service, which is 24-hour reservation, demand-response.
2. Same-day Demand Response – Resident calls for a reservation, and the bus will pick-up this person at curbside within three hours.
3. Flexible Route Service – Two routes operating in Grand Island, with the option of calling into the office for a route deviation if the rider is unable to walk to the bus stop. When trip deviation requests are made, the bus deviates off the route to pick-up or drop-off passenger, then travels back to the scheduled bus route. Trip deviations must be requested a day in advance. The two routes would operate every 60 minutes.
4. Fixed Route Service – Three scheduled routes throughout Grand Island, operating every 60 minutes. All passengers get on the bus and off at scheduled bus stops along each route. Eligible passengers who are unable to walk to the bus stop due to a physical or medical disability, have complementary curb-side paratransit service available to them, if the resident lives  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of the designated fixed bus route.

Five additional services were also examined for their potential application for area residents and employees.

5. Regional Airport Service – This service provides regularly scheduled, reservations-required, ground passenger transit service to Central Nebraska Regional Airport from North Platte, Lexington, Kearney, and Grand Island, with one daily round trip seven days a week.
6. Commuter Express Routes – Two routes operating on Highway 30 between Grand Island and Kearny and Highway 34 between Grand Island and Hastings. Both commuter bus routes would operate two round trips each weekday, one trip in the morning peak hour and a second trip during the afternoon peak hour. (Note – After the third round of focus group meetings, Commuter Express Routes changed to Intercity Bus Service. This service would operate three trips, Monday through Friday – one morning trip, one mid-day trip, and late afternoon trip with connections to intermodal points.)
7. Rideshare Program – This program is for residents to register and form carpool, vanpool, school pool options within the community. The Rideshare software program matches persons traveling to/from similar locations within the community. This program is based on an online software program that matches two or more persons traveling together in a vehicle.
8. Vanpool Program – An option for a group of residents traveling to/from similar locations to travel together using a van through Enterprise. This program is a partnership between the Nebraska Department of Transportation and Enterprise.
9. Autonomous Vehicle Technology – Autonomous vehicles rely on “smart infrastructure” that facilitates automatic communication between cars, roadways, bridges, and traffic signals. This advancing technology provides an opportunity for all local government

entities and the private sector to continue forward-thinking and incorporate infrastructure to accommodate the upcoming technological changes.

The four primary alternatives are exclusive alternatives, meaning only one of these alternatives would be implemented. Each of the additional services could theoretically operate alongside any of the other additional services, or with one of the primary alternatives. Autonomous Vehicle Technology, when sufficiently developed, could also be incorporated into any of the alternatives.

The estimated costs for each transit alternative is summarized in the below table.

Future Transit Alternatives	Annual Operating Cost	Total Capital Vehicles	Total Capital Other	Total Costs - Year 1
Status Quo	\$490,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Same-day Demand Response	\$738,098	\$700,000	\$60,000	\$1,498,098
Flexible Route Service	\$682,549	\$490,000	\$601,500	\$1,774,049
Fixed Route Service	\$910,066	\$630,000	\$868,250	\$2,408,316
Regional Airport Service	\$67,737	\$70,000	\$10,000	\$147,737
Commuter Express Routes	\$53,997	\$140,000	\$10,000	\$203,997
Ridershare Program	\$12,500	\$0	\$60,000	\$72,500
Vanpool Program	Data Varies Depending Upon Trip Distances and # of Participants			
Autonomous Vehicle Technology	Data Varies Depending Upon Trip Distances and # of Participants			

#### Five Year Plan

The study has recommended the Fiscally Constrained Plan as the five year plan for the City of Grand Island and Hall County. The Fiscally Constrained Plan is based upon technical data analysis, the public engagement process for this study, and the realistic financial projections for the City for the next five years. Due to the limited resources of the City's general fund, there is very little flexibility with the budget for the City, which is reflected in the Fiscally Constrained Plan.

The Fiscally Constrained Plan includes the following elements:

- Status Quo – Demand Response Service
  - Demand Response
  - 24-hour Reservation
  - Curb-to-curb service
  - Monday – Friday
  - 6:00 am – 5:00 pm
  - 7 to 8 peak vehicles
  - \$490,000
  - \$2.00 base fare

- 12 vehicles
- NEW – Transit Service
  - Vanpool Service
  - Rideshare Program
- NEW Changes
  - Branding for the transit service; new look, new image, new name.
  - Increase in transit marketing from dedicated City staff oversight.
  - Increased oversight of transit contract with dedicated City staff oversight.
  - Planning for Intercity Bus Service to/from Kearney and Hastings.

The study has proposed an Illustrative Plan for the City of Grand and Hall County. This plan builds on the Fiscally Constrained Plan and transitions the transit service for the Grand Island urbanized area from Status Quo – Demand Response Service to Flexible Route Service. Due to the current budget constraints for the City, this option is not feasible for at least three years. Should additional funding become available in the near-term, the City’s Transit Program Manager would begin initial planning efforts to implement the Flexible Route concept.

The Illustrative Plan includes the following elements:

- Flexible Route Service
  - 2 Routes
  - Monday – Friday
  - 6:00 am - 6:30 pm
  - 6 peak vehicles in urban area
  - 60-minute headways
  - \$683,000 annual operating
  - 19,125 annual revenue hours
- Intercity Bus Service
  - Monday – Friday
  - Three trips per day
  - Wifi -equipped vehicles
  - 2 routes
    - Hastings from/to Grand Island
    - Kearney from/to Grand Island

The implementation of the Intercity Bus Service is dependent on identifying the local match for vehicle procurement and other capital projects associated with the service.

#### Implementation Plan

The study has included an implementation plan with steps for the next two years to continue the momentum for public transportation in Grand Island. These steps will be carried out by the City’s Transit Program Manager.



The implementation plan for actions over the next two year is shown in the following table:

		2018	2019
<b>Initial Implementation Steps</b>			
1	Research Rideshare software program options and develop RFP for purchasing the Rideshare software for implementation.		
2	Implement Rideshare software and coordinate with software developer staff to design software infrastructure relative to local and regional needs.		
3	Coordinate with Enterprise Vanpool program representative and establishments such as JBS and Veterans Home.		
4	Finalize contract with vendor and rollout of Enterprise Vanpool program.		
5	Develop general marketing plan for community outreach and awareness for transit services.		
6	Continue coordination with NDOT on the Intercity Bus Service Plan.		
7	Coordinate with NDOT to develop RFP for Intercity Bus Service Operations Plan and Park and Ride Study.		
8	Coordinate with local agencies and establishments to fund the local match for the vehicles and other capital improvements for Intercity Bus Service.		
9	Develop Bid for service contract of transit operations.		
10	Develop RFP for transit facility preliminary planning.		

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS**

The urbanized area projects in the Fiscally Constrained Plan is funded by FTA Section 5307 funds, FTA Section 5339 funds, Section 5311(f), state match, and local match. The Financial Capacity and Recommended Transportation Plan sections of the Long Range Transportation Plan will be amended to incorporate the operating and capital expenses and the funding of the urbanized area projects in the Fiscally Constrained Plan.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Draft Summary Final Report and release this document for public review and comment.

**STAFF CONTACTS**

Allan Zafft



# Future Governance Options

The City of Grand Island is the new manager of public transportation within the urbanized area of Grand Island. Prior to 2016, Hall County was the manager of public transit services. In the future, it is recommended to begin discussions of a formal governance structure, which incorporates representatives from each of the governmental entities in the region. This governance should be considered for several reasons:

- To establish fair and acceptable cost-sharing arrangements among all entities
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# Implementation Plan

	2018	2019
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8	Coordinate with local agencies and establishments to fund the local match for the vehicles and other capital improvements for Intercity Bus Service.	
9	Develop Bid for service contract of transit operations.	
10	Develop RFP for transit facility preliminary planning.	

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## Getting to the Route of It

THE ROLE OF GOVERNANCE IN REGIONAL TRANSIT



The implementation plan includes specific projects identified within the study to continue the momentum of enhancing public transit in the Grand Island region. In the next two years, transit projects are planned, which will set the stage for the next phases of enhanced public transit service in the community.



## Executive Summary

October 16, 2017

### Study Background

Grand Island and Hall County have had public transportation services available to residents since the mid-1970s. After the 2010 Census designation of Grand Island to an urban area, the City of Grand Island became the primary provider for public transportation within the urbanized area, with Hall County responsible for the rural areas within the County. The City began managing transit service in July 2016. The City currently contracts with Senior Citizens Industries, Inc. (SCI) d/b/a Hall County Public Transportation to operate transit services within the urbanized area. SCI also provides transit service in the rural area with funding from Hall County.

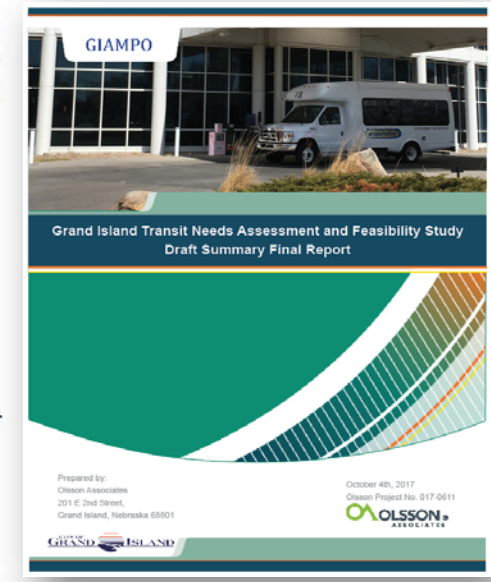
The primary purpose of this study is to provide baseline information to the City of Grand Island, as the City's first year managing the transit service, and to give the City a plan for transit service based upon, but not limited to, community input and vision for the future.

The study identifies future transit opportunities, challenges, and overall transit demand for public transportation in Grand Island and Hall County.



# Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study

## Final Report



The project included a multi-level data collection effort, evaluation of current conditions and operational structures, a review of peer communities, and the development of future transit alternatives. Based on technical analysis, public and stakeholder involvement, enhanced transit improvements are recommended. The study approach concluded with a 5-Year Fiscally Constrained Plan and a 5-Year Illustrative Plan for the urbanized area. An Implementation Plan with steps for the next two years is also included in the study.

## Transit Vision

*Efficient Mobility for All Residents in the Grand Island Region*



In March 2017, the Grand Island Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GIAMPO) retained Olsson Associates, and worked closely with stakeholders from around the community to develop future transit alternatives and develop this plan.

The Summary Final Report includes a review of existing transit operations in the study area, identifies the areas in Grand Island with the greatest transit need, presents future transit options, and provides a realistic plan moving forward for the City of Grand Island. The study provides a roadmap for the City to follow to meet the future vision of transit for the Grand Island community.

## Fiscally Constrained Plan

The Fiscally Constrained Plan is based upon technical data analysis, the public engagement process for this study, and the realistic financial projections for the City for the next five years. Due to the limited resources of the City's general fund, there is very little flexibility with the budget for the City, which is reflected in the Fiscally Constrained Plan with the recommendation for remaining Status Quo, 24-hour demand response service, which is what is provided today.

Even though limited funding is projected to continue for the next five years, there are planning projects to begin immediately that require little or no funding increases over the existing budget, as shown on the right.

New transit services in the next five years include coordination with the Nebraska Department of Transportation for Vanpool Services, which focus on major activity centers in the region and connecting riders to similar destinations. In addition, the City is implementing a free Rideshare Program available for all residents in the community. The Rideshare Program is based on an online software program that matches two or more persons traveling together in a vehicle.



Vanpool Coordination



Transit Branding

## Illustrative Plan

The Illustrative Plan for the City of Grand Island and Hall County includes the Flexible Route Service concept. Due to the current budget constraints for the City, **this option is not feasible for at least three years**. Should additional funding become available in the near-term, the Transit Program Manager would begin initial planning efforts to implement the Flexible Route concept.

### ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

- **Flexible Route Service**
- 2 Routes
- Monday – Friday
- 6:00 am – 6:30 pm
- 6 peak vehicles in urban area
- 60-minute headways
- \$683,000 annual operating/  
\$961,000 start-up costs
- 19,125 annual revenue hours
- **Intercity Bus Service**
- Monday - Friday
- Three trips per day
- Wifi-equipped vehicles
- 2 routes -
  - Hastings from/to Grand Island
  - Kearney from/to Grand Island

### FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PLAN

#### Status Quo – Demand Response Service

- Demand Response
- 24-hour Reservation
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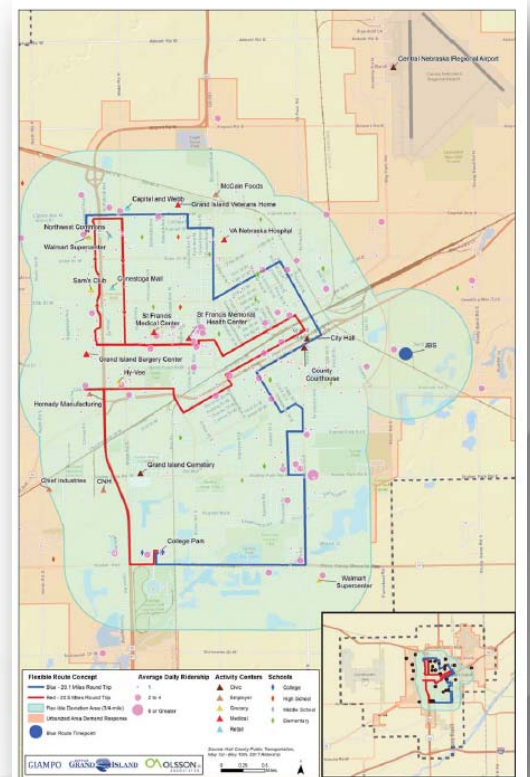
#### NEW – Transit Service

- Vanpool Service
- Rideshare Program

#### NEW Changes

- Branding for the transit service; new look, new image, new name.
- Increase in transit marketing from dedicated City staff oversight.
- Increased oversight of transit contract with dedicated City staff oversight.
- Planning for Intercity Bus Service to/from Kearney and Hastings.

### FLEXIBLE ROUTE SERVICE



Multiple opportunities were provided for public engagement and activity participation throughout the study process.

## Public Engagement



Many opportunities for public engagement were available throughout the study, including:

- Public Open Houses
- Focus Group meetings
- Major employer meetings
- Online community survey
- Social media outreach
- Transit rider survey
- Local Project Team meetings
- Transit provider interviews



## Future Alternatives Development

Future transit alternatives were developed and shaped by the vision and goals articulated early in the process, historical ridership and boarding / de-boarding data, transit need, gaps, evaluation of transit delivery in peer cities, input from the community, key stakeholders, rider and community surveys, and consideration of potential services within the community.

Four primary alternatives were developed for the Grand Island and Hall County Region.

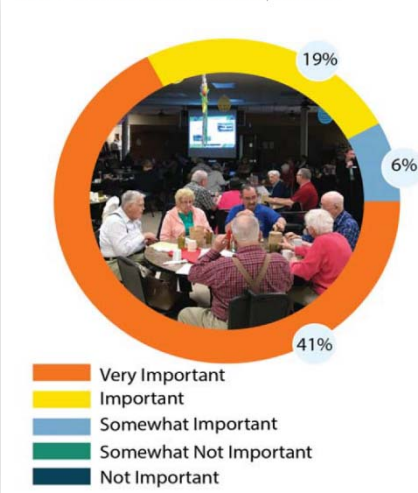
1. Status Quo
2. Same-day Demand Response
3. Flexible Route Service
4. Fixed Route Service

Five additional services were also examined for their potential application for area residents and employees.

5. Regional Airport Service
6. Commuter Express Routes
7. Rideshare Program
8. Vanpool Program
9. Autonomous Vehicle Technology

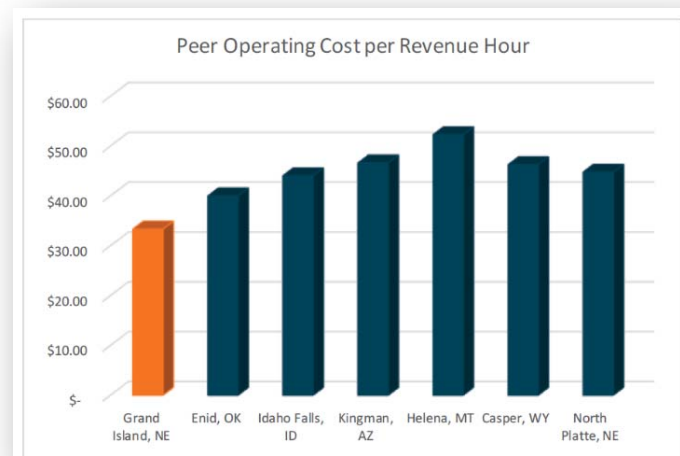
During Round Two Focus Groups, a representative from the NDOT suggested revisiting the Commuter Express Route as an Intercity Bus Route and provide transit service outside typical commute hours. The study team updated the service option to two Intercity Bus Routes, to/from Grand Island, Kearney, and Hastings.

Figure 7.2: Importance of Transit Tomorrow



## Transit Agency - Peer Review

The study included a Transit Agency Peer Review, which provides a useful tool in terms of lessons learned at other agencies and in assessing where Hall County Public Transportation is today, compared to peer communities, using transit industry typical statistics for reasonable costs, ridership, and service levels. The peer agencies included: Enid, OK; Idaho Falls, ID; Kingman, AZ; Helena, MT; Casper, WY; and North Platte, NE.



GIAMPO



# Grand Island Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study DRAFT Summary Final Report

Prepared by:  
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October 20, 2017  
Olsson Project No. 017-0611



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# REGIONAL TRANSIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT & FEASIBILITY STUDY DRAFT SUMMARY FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:

**City of Grand Island and**

**Grand Island Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GIAMPO)**

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*Olsson Report No. 017-0611*

OCTOBER 20, 2017

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Grand Island and Hall County have had public transportation services available to residents since the mid-1970s. These services were funded in part by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) rural transportation programs and Hall County.

After the 2010 Census designation of Grand Island to an urban area, the Grand Island Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GIAMPO) was established in 2013 to serve as the formal transportation planning body for the greater Grand Island metropolitan region. The move from rural to urban designation affected the funding mechanisms for public transportation in Grand Island. As an urban area, the FTA appropriates funding to urban communities, such as Grand Island, by formula allocations across the United States each fiscal year. The formula is based on population and population density. One designated recipient within the urban area is appointed by the Governor, and for Grand Island, it is the City of Grand Island.

Prior to fiscal year (FY) 2014, Hall County has been the sole local governmental funding agency for Hall County Public Transportation. After July 1, 2016, the City of Grand Island is now the primary funding partner from a local perspective, with a small portion of the local match (5%) from Hall County. The allocation for Hall County is based upon existing services located primarily within the urban area of Grand Island and some service requests outside the City that include rural trips.

In April 2016, the City of Grand Island City Council approved an interlocal agreement where the City provides public transit services within Hall County<sup>1</sup>. The City of Grand Island has an existing contract with Senior Citizens Industries, Inc. for an initial 12-month term, with options for a maximum of two years renewal<sup>2</sup>. This contract is funded by FTA 5307 (Urban) and 5311 (Rural) funds and local matching funding sources from the City of Grand Island and Hall County.



Hall County Public Transportation

<sup>1</sup> [https://agendamanagement.blob.core.windows.net/agenda-1000-public/meeting/132492/20160412-100\\_13.pdf](https://agendamanagement.blob.core.windows.net/agenda-1000-public/meeting/132492/20160412-100_13.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://agendamanagement.blob.core.windows.net/agenda-1000-public/meeting/132496/20160614-100\\_15.pdf](https://agendamanagement.blob.core.windows.net/agenda-1000-public/meeting/132496/20160614-100_15.pdf)

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study is to provide baseline information to the City of Grand Island, as the City's first year managing the transit service was July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017, and to give the City a plan for transit service based upon, but not limited to, community input and vision for the future. The study identifies future transit opportunities, challenges, and overall transit demand for public transportation in Grand Island and Hall County. This Final Report includes the transit needs and future transit options that most effectively satisfy the community's vision for the Grand Island region.

This feasibility study assesses the need for future transit services in Grand Island and Hall County. Stakeholders and policymakers reviewed quantifiable data regarding transit demand and other types of transit services besides what is offered today. Short-term alternatives for future public transit in Grand Island and Hall County are developed to meet the needs of the community. A Fiscally Constrained Plan and an Illustrative Plan were developed with an implementation plan to move forward. The funding plan is realistic for municipal and county governments.

## 1.3 Report Contents

Three Technical Memorandums were prepared for this study and are summarized within this Final Report. The Final Report includes the following sections:

**Chapter 1** provides a description of this report. In this chapter a reader will find an introduction to the study, the purpose of the study and brief descriptions of the contents found within.

**Chapter 2** includes the development of project goals and vision for transit service in Grand Island and Hall County. The goals and vision provide guidance to the project team, the City of Grand Island, GIAMPO, and local stakeholders as alternatives were developed.

**Chapter 3** contains a market analysis for the study area. This section provides a review of demographic information to assist in determining focus areas that may contain unserved or underserved populations, as well as identify various market segments such as elderly, people with disabilities, low-income populations, minority areas, and zero vehicle households. Chapter 3 also examines regional commute patterns to assist decision-makers in understanding how residents get to and from work.

**Chapter 4** examines the existing transit service in the study area. This chapter presents the current service, performance, and ridership that exists in the study area.



*Hall County Public Transportation service daily to St. Francis Hospital*

**Chapter 5** identifies the existing transit needs, gaps, and potential future demand for transit service in the study area. Utilizing research developed by the Transit Cooperative Research Board and other industry methodologies, the transit needs and demand are identified.

**Chapter 6** summarizes the first round of public input from public open houses and stakeholder involvement events.

**Chapter 7** discusses Grand Island and similar peer communities. Specific criteria to select the peer communities included similarities to the study area, transit operating characteristics, and transit organizational structure.

**Chapter 8** analyzes both the online survey distributed to the Grand Island area community, and the transit rider survey distributed on the Hall County Public Transportation buses. The surveys were intended to not only assess the existing transit services according to riders and non-riders, but also gather customer satisfaction of transit within the community.

**Chapter 9** summarizes the second round of focus groups meetings that were held in Grand Island on August 2-3, 2017. This chapter presents a brief review of the Round Two public engagement conducted thus far for the Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study.

**Chapter 10** identifies four primary alternatives (Status Quo, Same-day Demand Response, Flexible Route Service, and Fixed Route Service) that are exclusive alternatives, meaning only one of these alternatives would be implemented. Each of the additional services (Regional Airport Service, Commuter Express Routes, Rideshare Programs, and Vanpool Programs) could theoretically operate alongside any of the other additional services, or with one of the primary alternatives.

**Chapter 11** explains the differences in contract models for transit agencies. This analysis will be a critical resource when it is determined which contract model is chosen going forward.

**Chapter 12** outlines the Fiscally Constrained Plan for the contracted service provider for the next five years. The Plan identifies realistic expenses and reflects revenues for transit projects and services.

**Chapter 13** presents information building from the projects identified in Chapter 12 and moves to an enhanced level of public transportation for the community, or the Illustrative Plan.

**Chapter 14** provides a brief discussion of the implementation plan for actions over the next two years.



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## CHAPTER 2

## VISION AND GOALS

To develop goals and objectives for this feasibility study, it is necessary to evaluate the needs of the community, support the plans and policies of local governmental agencies, and identify areas where operating efficiencies and enhancements can be achieved. This chapter includes the vision and goals for the study.

### 2.1 Data Collection and Evaluation

In this report, a significant amount of data collection was conducted to understand the environment in which transit operates in Grand Island and Hall County and to evaluate and identify the strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of the community.

A thorough analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic data was conducted for purposes of identifying markets with high propensity for transit utilization, and potential new markets for Grand Island and Hall County. A comprehensive evaluation of how Grand Island compares to its industry peers in terms of operating and financial performance to highlight strengths and weaknesses was conducted. Finally, a variety of market research activities and public engagement were undertaken including:

- An online community survey for all residents
- An onboard customer survey for transit riders
- Community focus groups

These activities were designed to gain an understanding of the community's perceptions of Hall County Public Transportation, the services it provides, the services most desired by users and non-users of the system, and the community's vision for the future of transit.

### 2.2 Consistency With Other Plans and Programs

During the development of the vision and goals, the adopted GIAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan and City of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan were reviewed for consistency. The goals and objectives developed for this study address, for example, the need to pursue the development of transit friendly land use, policies, regulations, and land development criteria.



*Hall County Public Transportation serving Golden Age Village*

## 2.3 Proposed Vision, Goals, and Objectives

As part of the first round of public engagement, study goals were discussed. The following goals and objectives help define the outcomes of this study.

### **Hall County Public Transportation Vision:**

#### Efficient Mobility for All Residents in the Grand Island Region

### Goals and Objectives

The scope of this project calls for a development of a five-year plan to efficiently operate transit service inside the Grand Island Metropolitan Planning Area, while understanding the constrained budgets of local partners.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Goal: Efficiently provide mobility options to area residents.**

- Objective: Improve mobility by increasing knowledge of available services to area residents and access to public transit.
- Objective: Provide affordable, efficient public transportation options for those with limited access to transportation.
- Objective: Explore options for governing structures to assist in supporting future public transportation services.

#### **Goal: Enhance economic activity by improving access to employment for area residents.**

- Objective: Support economic development, vitality, and competitiveness by efficiently enhancing access to existing employment centers.
- Objective: Improve access to jobs for underemployed or low-income area residents.
- Objective: Examine opportunities to provide public transportation to second- and third-shift employees at area employment centers.

#### **Goal: Coordinate with local organizations for public transportation options, while being good stewards of the public dollar.**

- Objective: Identify partnership opportunities with local businesses, community organizations, and area partners.
- Objective: Develop financially achievable transit alternatives to provide service to area residents who need it the most.
- Objective: Examine non-traditional solutions to provide after-hours transportation options for low-income employees at area employment centers.

#### <sup>1</sup> Local Study References

- Grand Island Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GIAMPO), 2040 Performance Based Long Range Transportation Plan - Adopted April of 2016
- <http://www.grand-island.com/home/showdocument?id=15898>
- Grow Grand Island, Implementation Plan, January 2015  
<http://files7.design-editor.com/91/9120474/UploadedFiles/663C7F99-1CF5-D924-BCF7-235F8DF48067.pdf>
- Grand Vision, Vision Plan, November 2014  
<http://files7.design-editor.com/91/9120474/UploadedFiles/7E17FD7B-FB1C-370F-B31B-DC9ABA04D225.pdf>



# CHAPTER 3

# MARKET ANALYSIS

## 3.1 Introduction

The population and employment characteristics of Grand Island and the GIAMPO area are described within this chapter. The data assisted in determining what type of transit service best fits for the community. By analyzing the demographics, population and employment concentrations and general commuting patterns of the study area, transportation investments may be targeted to areas with a high transit need. This chapter organizes and reviews available data and reports pertaining to the feasibility of public transit service, in concert with current and planned transportation and land use conditions affecting transit service. **While this chapter is a summary of the market analysis phase of the study, the complete analysis is available in Technical Memorandum 1.**

## 3.2 Study Area

The study area location focuses on the City of Grand Island, Hall County, and part of Merrick County. The major communities in Hall County, starting with the highest populated, include Grand Island, Wood River, Doniphan, Cairo, and Alda. **Table 3.1** displays the study area’s 2011-2015 population totals, as estimated by the U.S. Census’ American Community Survey by county and city.

## 3.3 Land Use Overview

Existing and future land use for the City of Grand Island was provided by GIAMPO, as shown in **Figure 3.1** and **Figure 3.2**. Much of the development is anticipated to occur westward, as well as areas in the southwest and the southeast of the City. Industrial expansion occurs west of the airport, and south of Highway 281, towards Interstate 80. A majority of the commercial development will continue along the existing Highway 281 corridor, but also along South Locust Street, nearby interstate interchanges, and at the intersection of Highway 2 and Highway 281.

Table 3.1: Current Area Population Totals

Jurisdictions	Populations
Nebraska	1,869,365
Hall County	60,792
Merrick County	7,776
Grand Island	50,582
Alda	607
Cairo	888
Doniphan	1,020
Wood River	1,393

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Figure 3.1: Existing Land Use

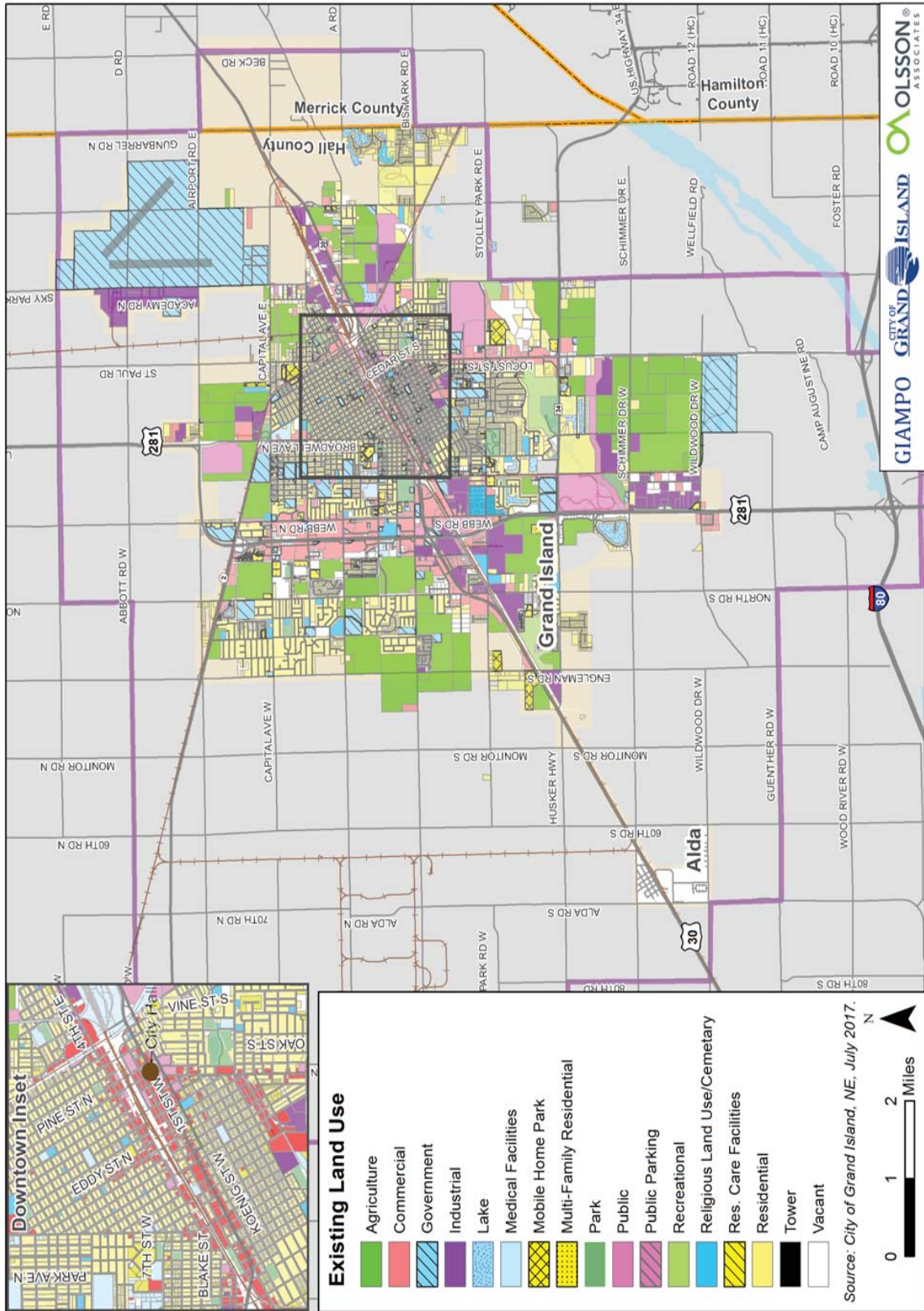
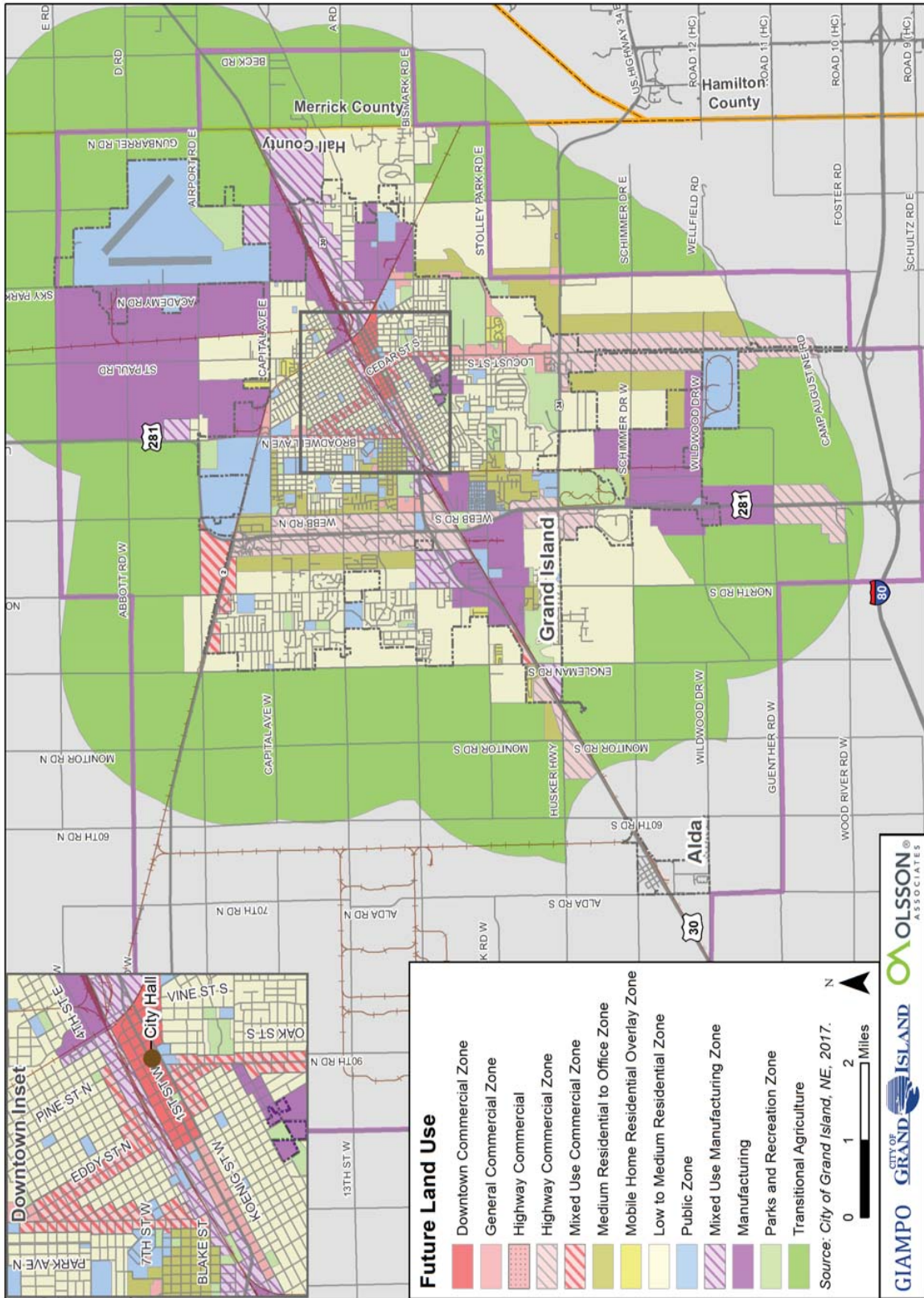


Figure 3.2: Future Land Use



### 3.4 Population

Population projections for Grand Island and Hall County were developed for the GIAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). After applying the compound annual growth rate of 1.1 percent through the 2040 horizon year, the LRTP found the total number of households rose by 33 percent, or 6,186 households since the 2014 base estimate of 18,801 households <sup>1</sup>. **Table 3.2** displays the projections for households and population, by County and City. **Figure 3.3** identifies the current household density, while **Figure 3.4** depicts where the new households are projected by the year 2040. The majority of the development will take place in the northwest, southwest, and southeast of the City.

Table 3.2: Future Populations and Households Summary

	2010	2020	2030	2040
<b>Grand Island</b>				
Population	48,520	54,129	60,387	67,368
Households	18,326	20,076	22,397	24,987
<b>Hall County</b>				
Population	58,607	65,832	72,941	81,374
Households	22,196	23,702	26,442	29,499

Source: GIAMPO LRTP, 2016.

<sup>1</sup> Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation, Grand Island Community Housing Study, 2014.

Figure 3.3: Existing Household Density

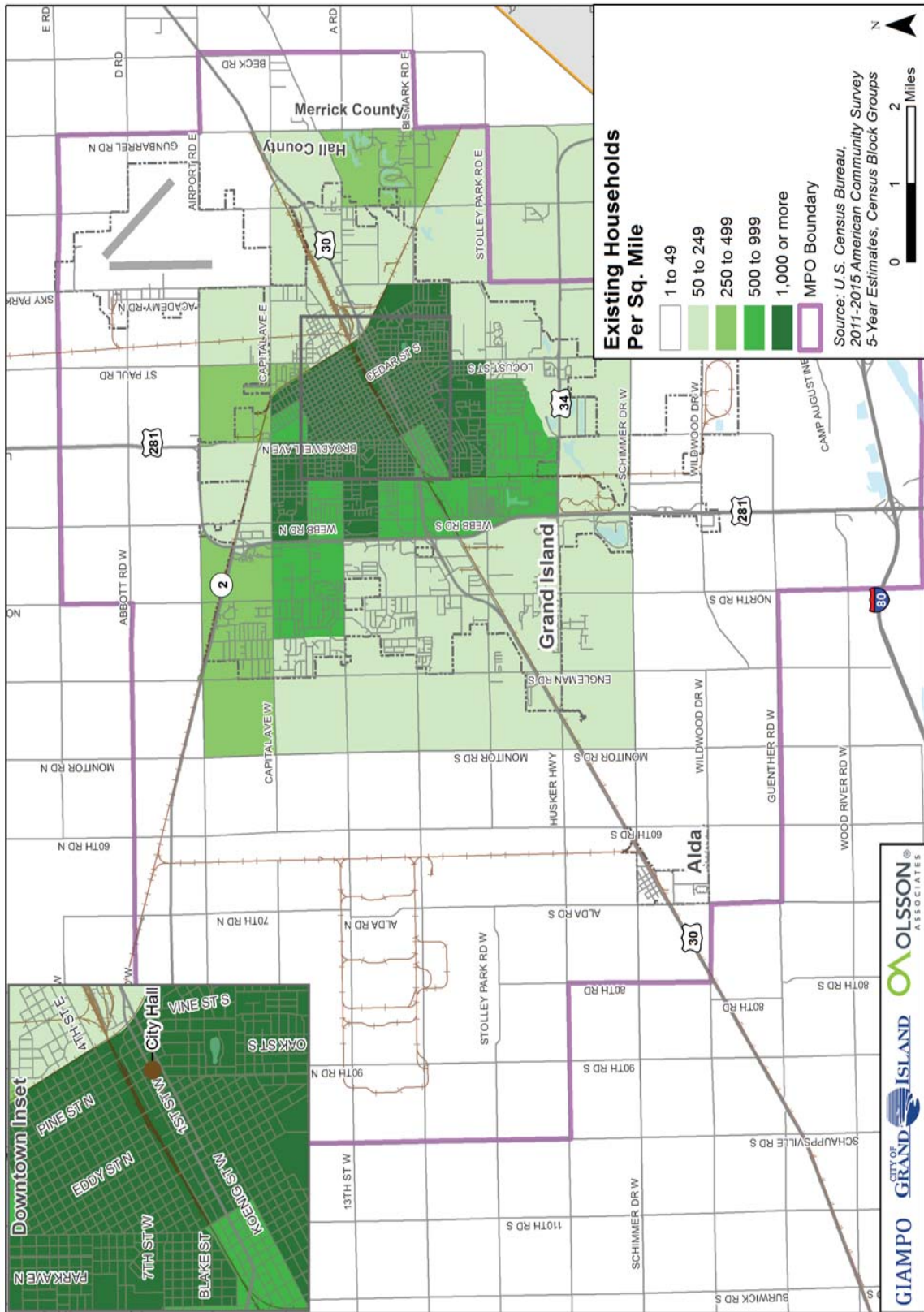
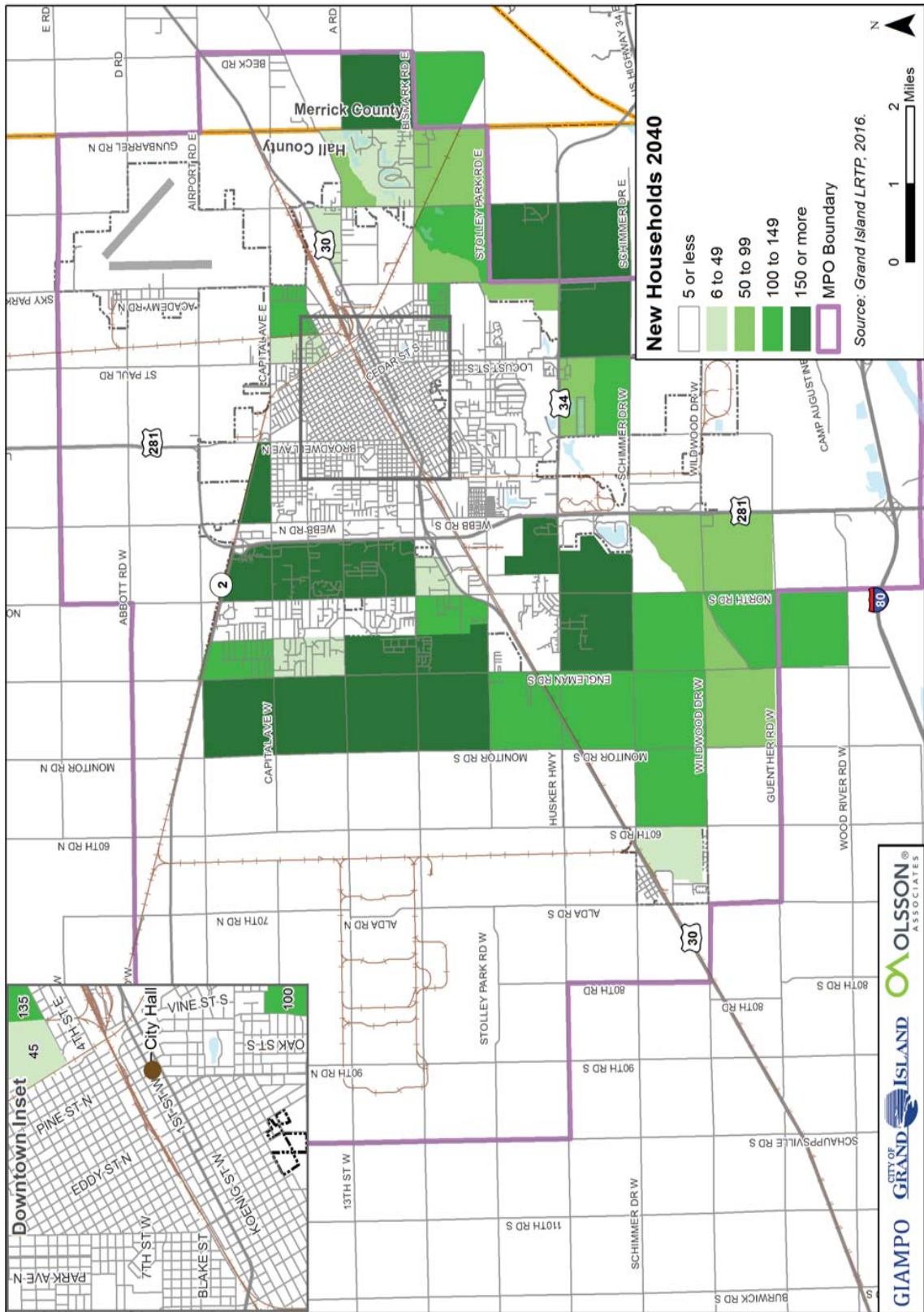




Figure 3.4: New Households 2040



## 3.5 Transit Propensity

The demographic characteristics described in this chapter provide a composite snapshot of Grand Island area residents. The transit dependent market segments are most likely to use public transit more often than other persons in the region. These datasets are used to calculate the transit propensity and identify areas with the greatest need for transit within the community.

### 3.5.1 Methodology

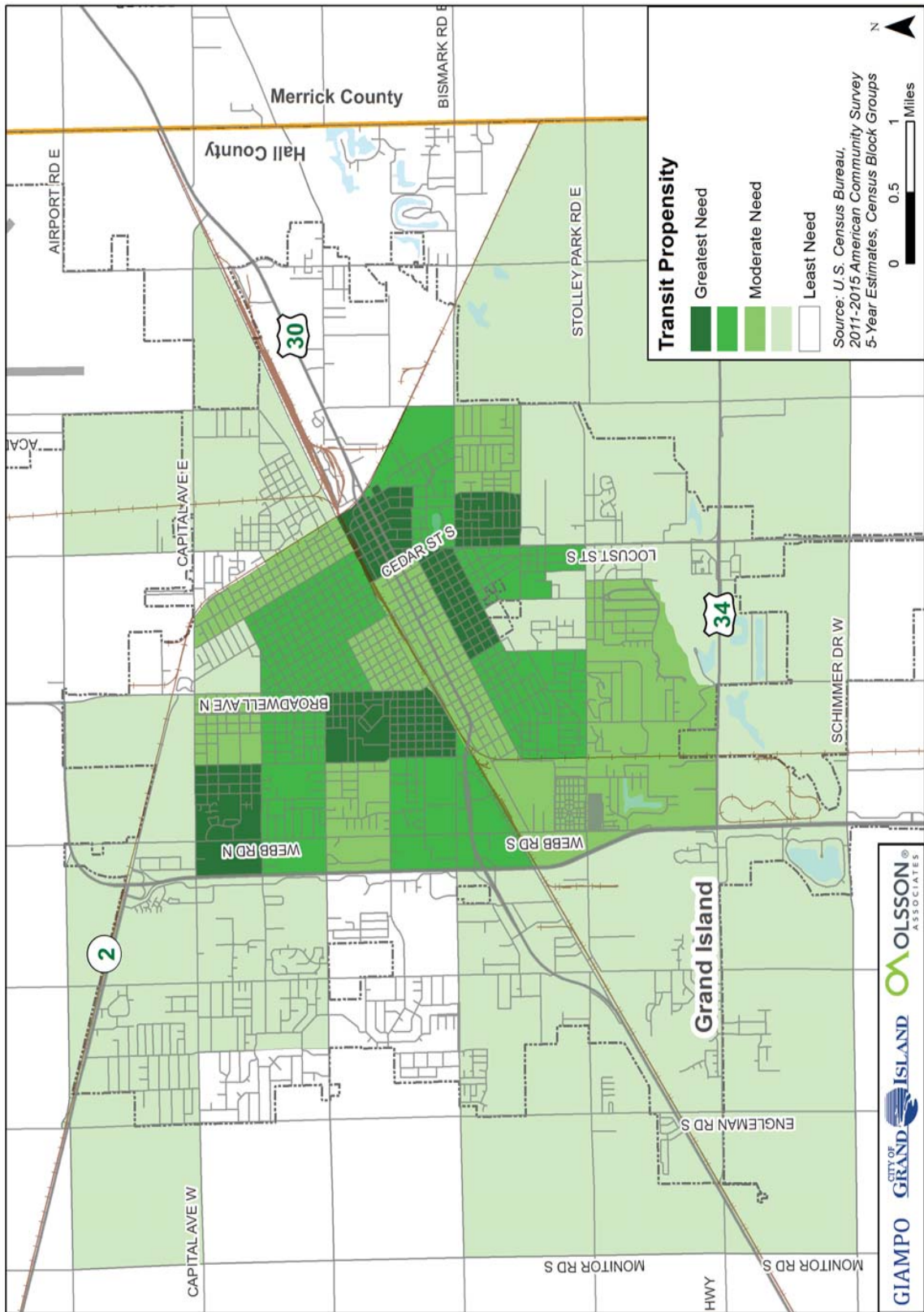
The Transit Propensity Analysis provides a general understanding of areas in the community with the greatest transit need. Each of the categories listed below was used to develop the transit propensity.

- Elderly Population - Number of persons aged 65 years old and over
- Disability Population - Number of persons living with a hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living disability
- Low-Income Households - Number of households with an income in the past 12 months below the poverty level
- Zero Vehicle Households - Number of households without owning an automobile

The composite transit propensity map is shown in **Figure 3.5**. Densities for the analysis are at the block group level. The areas with the greatest need within the Grand Island region are found in and around downtown Grand Island. As transit alternatives are developed, the transit propensity data will be used in the analysis to ensure that areas with a high transit need are adequately served by public transportation.

The next sections examine the existing employment in the study area, as well as how work and non-work trip flows explain the transportation needs of those who live and/or work in Grand Island region.

Figure 3.5: Transit Propensity Map



## 3.6 Employment

### 3.6.1 Existing and Future Employment

The majority of jobs in the Grand Island region are concentrated at the retail-heavy businesses along the Highway 281 corridor, the retail and public employees located in the downtown area, and industrial concentrations at the intersection of Highway 30 and Highway 281, as well as east of the City. **Figure 3.6** presents the 2014 employment concentrations for the Grand Island region.

Employment projections for Grand Island and Hall County were developed for the GIAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan. Future employment forecasts in that plan were based on region-specific employment projection growth rates, provided by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for 2010 to 2020. Hall County is one of 22 counties located in the Central Economic Region of Nebraska, therefore the Central Region’s growth rates were applied to Hall County’s future employment forecasts.

After applying the annual projected regional growth rate of each industry to the Hall County existing employment base provided by the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, a total of 8,087 new jobs are estimated by the year 2040, a 21 percent increase from 2013

Allocation of these employment sectors were based on discussions with City of Grand Island and GIAMPO staff, the 2004 Grand Island Comprehensive Transportation Plan, as well as further analysis of available land, permitted densities, future land uses, and neighboring developments. The sector of employment and the location of the employment center has a significant impact on the needs of the region’s transportation network.

### 3.6.2 Major Employers

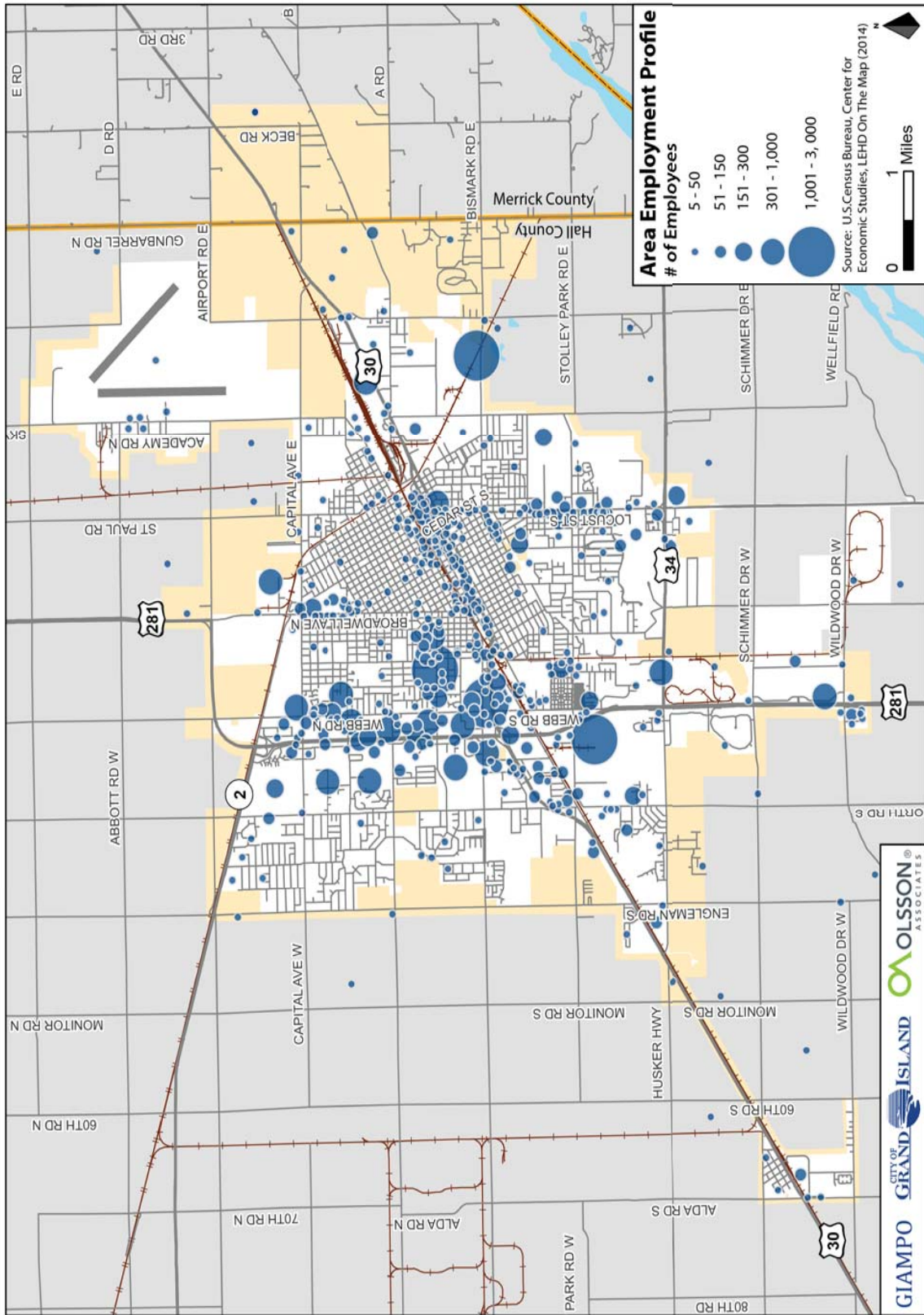
The major employers in the Grand Island region are listed in **Table 3.3**. Larger concentrations of employment provide additional opportunities for commuter-related public transportation. For the Grand Island area, the top five employers include JBS, CHI Health St. Francis, Grand Island Public Schools, Hornady Manufacturing, and CNH Industrial America. When reviewing the map of major employers, it is important to consider some of these larger employers are not all in one location. Of the top 10 employers, five are concentrated in a single location and five are dispersed in other locations around the City.

Table 3.3: Grand Island Major Employers

Employer	# of Employees
JBS	3,200
CHI Health St. Francis	1,300
Grand Island Public Schools	1,250
Hornady Manufacturing	751
CNH Industrial America	722
Walmart	662
Chief Industries	650
McCain Foods	550
City of Grand Island	535
Principal Financial	445
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,065</b>

Source: Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation (2017).

Figure 3.6: Existing Grand Island Employment Profile



### 3.7 Commuter Travel Patterns

Commuter travel patterns indicate the connection between where people live and where they work. **Figure 3.7** illustrates the work trip travel movements for communities in the Grand Island region. These data were extracted from the 2014 U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program. The LEHD program produces public-use information combining federal, state, and Census Bureau data on employers and employees under the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Partnership. The LEHD data describes geographic patterns of employees by their employment locations and residential locations, as well as the connections between the two locations. The information shows the number of workers living in each community and the location of their employment. **Table 3.4** shows a list of the major commuter connections from and to Grand Island.

Since the GIAMPO LRTP was completed, employment totals are now available for as recent as 2014. According to the LEHD program, the City of Grand Island has approximately 25,000 working age individuals living within the City and approximately 32,000 individuals employed in Grand Island. This accounts for a net job inflow of 7,000. Of the 32,000 employed in Grand Island, 16,400 (66 percent), both work and live within the City. The remaining 15,600 employees live outside Grand Island and commute into the City for work.

Table 3.4: Intercity Commuter Connections

Direction	Commuters
Hastings to Grand Island	1,099
Grand Island to Lincoln	872
Grand Island to Hastings	790
Kearney to Grand Island	790
Grand Island to Kearney	731
Lincoln to Grand Island	686
Omaha to Grand Island	625
Grand Island to Omaha	622
Aurora to Grand Island	411
Central City to Grand Island	299
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,925</b>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD On The Map (2014)*

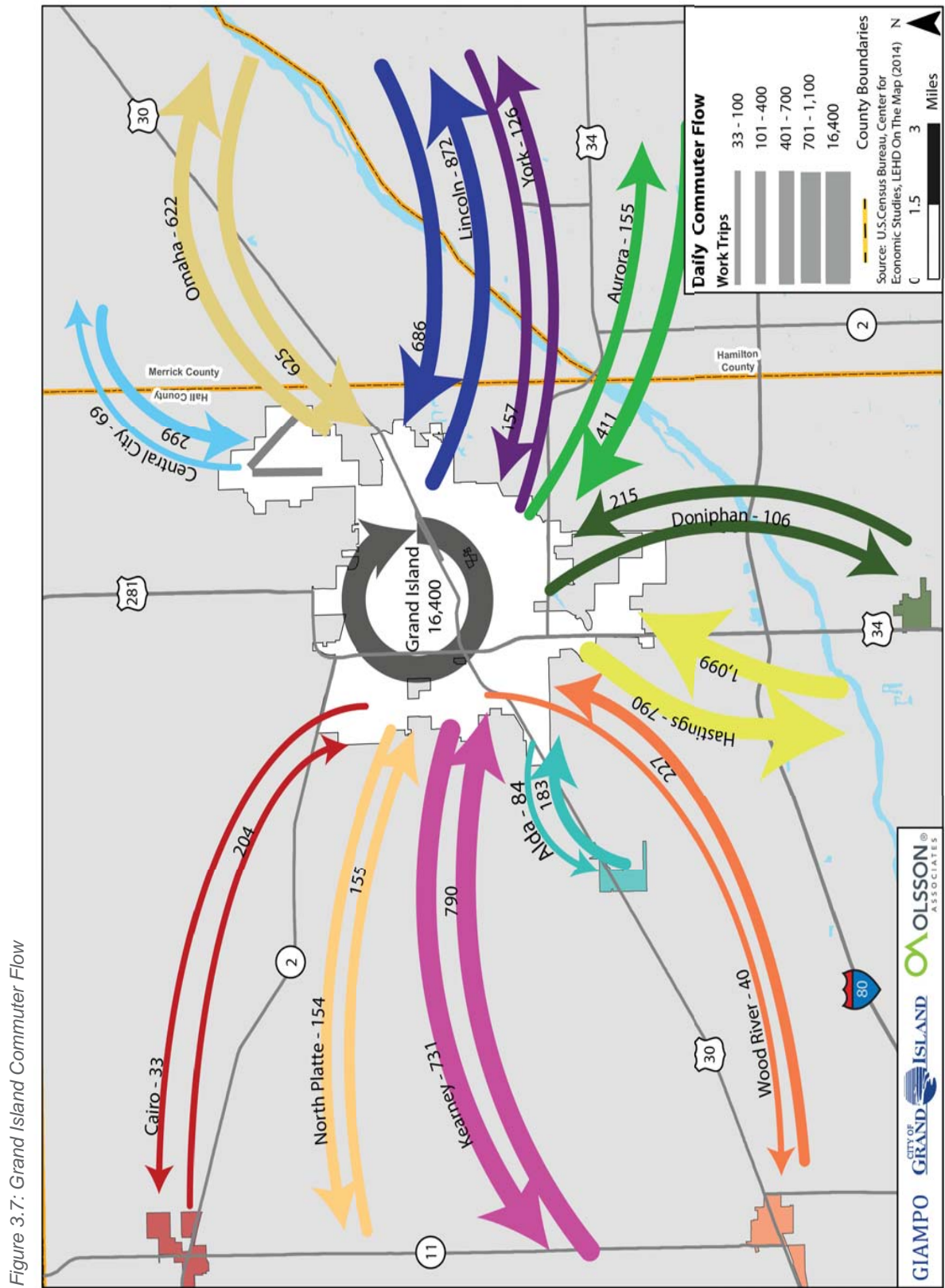


Figure 3.7: Grand Island Commuter Flow



## CHAPTER 4 EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 provides an overview and analysis of existing operations and financial information for Hall County Public Transportation. In addition, information on current ridership and system performance are included in the summary data. Other transportation providers serving Hall County and Grand Island are also summarized within the chapter.

### 4.2 Hall County Public Transportation

Grand Island and Hall County have had public transportation services available to residents since the mid-1970s. The current services, after July 1, 2016, are funded in part by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) urban transportation programs, 5311 rural funds, the City of Grand Island, and Hall County.

Prior to fiscal year (FY) 2014, Hall County was the sole local governmental funding agency for Hall County Public Transportation. After July 1, 2016, the City of Grand Island is now the primary funding partner, with a small portion of the local match (5 percent) from Hall County. The allocation for Hall County was based upon existing services located primarily within the urban area of Grand Island and some service requests outside the City (rural trips funded by the 5311 funding program).

In April 2016, the Grand Island City Council approved an interlocal agreement where the City provides public transit services through contract services with Senior Citizens Industries, Inc. (SCI) for an initial 12-month term, with two one-year renewable options. This contract is funded from FTA 5307 (urban) and 5311 (rural) funds and local matching funding sources via the City of Grand Island and Hall County.

Today, Hall County Public Transportation provides demand response, curb-to-curb service for Hall County residents. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance, Monday through Friday between 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Transit service is available from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm. The base fare is \$2.00 per one-way trip. Tickets are also available for purchase for 1 trip, 10 trips, or 20 trips. Hall County Public Transportation typically has seven or eight peak vehicles providing service from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm, each weekday. The agency provides transportation to all residents age 18 and older. Those under 18 years must have an adult companion.



*Hall County Public Transportation Rider*



From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, the agency provided approximately 35,000 annual one-way trips. Ridership is anticipated to increase slightly in FY 2016-2017 due to the discontinuation of the taxi voucher program in late 2016.

### 4.2.1 Fleet and Facilities

The Hall County Public Transportation office, operated by Senior Citizens Industries (SCI), is located at 304 E. 3rd Street, the Grand Generation Center, in downtown Grand Island. The buses are parked overnight across 3rd Street, in an uncovered lot. All SCI administration and operation are housed at this facility. The City of Grand Island hired a Transit Program Manager in May 2017, and one of the position’s primary duties is to oversee the contracted service provider. Administratively, the Transit Program Manager reports directly to the Public Works Director.

Hall County Public Transportation operates curb-to-curb, demand response service for the residents within Hall County, using a fleet of 12 vehicles, as shown in **Table 4.1**. The fleet includes minivans and small body-on-chassis gasoline-fueled buses. Seating capacity ranges from two seats in the minivans to 14 seats on the body-on-chassis buses. All vehicles are accessible with a wheelchair lift or ramp, with the exception of the 2012 12-passenger van. The lifts and ramps allow for level boarding at sidewalk or curb level. This feature reduces and/or eliminate gaps between the boarding location and the bus, as well as allow passengers with mobility devices to safely and independently board the bus. The existing fleet does not have vehicle bike racks.

Table 4.1: Hall County Public Transportation Fleet Information

SCI Fleet - August 2016						
		Type of Vehicle	Age of Vehicle (Yrs)	Vehicle Capacity	Wheelchair Lifts	Wheelchair Ramps
1	2014	Dodge Grand Caravan	3	2	No	Yes
2	2014	Dodge Grand Caravan	3	2	No	Yes
3	2013	Ford Small Bus	4	14	Yes	No
4	2008	Chevy Small Bus	9	14	Yes	No
5	2009	Chevy Small Bus	8	14	Yes	No
6	2014	Ford Small Bus	3	14	Yes	No
7	2015	Senator II Small Bus	2	14	Yes	No
8	2015	Senator II Small Bus	2	14	Yes	No
9	2010	Ford Small Bus	7	14	Yes	No
10	2010	Ford Small Bus	7	14	Yes	No
11	2010	Ford Small Bus	7	14	Yes	No
12	2012	Chevy Van	5	12	No	Yes

Source: SCI, Spring 2017.

### 4.2.2 Ridership

Annual passenger trip data for Hall County Public Transportation was 35,085 in FY 2015-2016. This ridership is slightly lower than the previous year of 36,394. Average ridership for the Hall County Public Transportation is slightly higher on Tuesday and Thursday, and slightly lower on Mondays. Annual weekday ridership by percent is listed below.

- Monday – 17 percent total ridership (5,896 total annual one-way trips)
- Tuesday – 22 percent total ridership (7,574 total annual one-way trips)
- Wednesday – 20 percent total ridership (7,067 total annual one-way trips)
- Thursday – 22 percent total ridership (7,807 total annual one-way trips)
- Friday – 19 percent total ridership (6,741 total annual one-way trips)

### 4.2.3 Financial Review

An essential element of operating and sustaining transit service is a review of the financial characteristics of the system. Annual operating costs for Hall County Public Transportation, FY 2015-2016, were approximately \$490,000 based upon current service levels. Annual revenue hours were approximately 14,705, which equates to approximately \$34 operating cost per revenue hour. These costs are in the normal range for demand response transit agencies across the nation and within the state of Nebraska. The agency provides approximately 2.4 passengers per revenue hour, which is also within the normal range for demand response transit agencies across the nation.

The revenue required to operate Hall County Public Transportation comes from a variety of sources consisting of the City’s general fund, county local funding, Federal 5307 and 5311 grants and fare revenues. Using the \$490,000 budget for FY 2015-2016, **Table 4.2** provides the estimated breakout of funding sources.

Hall County Public Transportation



Table 4.2: Hall County Public Transportation Budget

Operating Budget/Revenues FY 2015 - 2016		
Amount	Source	Percent of Total
\$249,900	FTA	51%
\$65,467	Fares	13%
\$174,633	Local	36%
\$490,000	Total	100%

The largest revenue source is the FTA, representing 51 percent of total operating revenue. Fares contribute to approximately 13 percent of the budget, and local funding from the City and County is approximately 36 percent of the total budget. For the local funding in the last fiscal year (2016-2017), the City contributes approximately \$161,000 and the County contributed approximately \$5,700 annually.

The City is eligible to apply annually for 50 percent reimbursement from the Nebraska Public Transportation Assistance Program towards the local match for the 5307 program relating to Grand Island's transit operations. The Nebraska Public Transportation Assistance Program was created by the Nebraska Public Transportation Act in 1975, and it is administered by the Nebraska Department of Transportation.<sup>1</sup> The funding is available for rural areas, small urban areas (Bellevue, Grand Island, Papillion-La Vista, and South Sioux City) and large urban areas (Omaha and Lincoln). Funding is awarded in the following order -- rural areas, small urban areas, then large urban areas. In FY 2016-2017, the City received approximately \$80,000 reimbursement, which is approximately half of the local operating assistance in the urban area. This funding sources is not guaranteed; however, the City will likely apply for reimbursement each year.

Total operating expenses for FY 2015-2016 were just under \$500,000. Salary and wages account for approximately 58 percent of the total budget, which is common among most transit agencies. Fuel is the second highest cost (10 percent of total budget) for Hall County Public Transportation at approximately \$4,000 per month on average. Vehicle insurance is approximately nine percent of the budget, followed closely by routine preventative maintenance for vehicles at approximately \$3,100 per month or eight percent total budget. These four categories of expenses make up approximately 85 percent of total expenses for the transit agency. **Appendix A** presents budget detail assumptions.

#### 4.2.4 System Performance

The operating effectiveness and financial efficiency of a transit agency are central factors contributing to the success of a transit system. Operating effectiveness is the ability of a transit system to generate and sustain ridership, while financial efficiency is a transit system's ability to provide transit service at the lowest feasible cost.

**Table 4.3** presents the system-wide performance characteristics for Hall County Public Transportation.

This summary table includes data for operating effectiveness as measured by the number of passenger trips per vehicle revenue hours and vehicle revenue miles. Financial efficiency is measured by the operating cost per passenger trip and operating cost per vehicle revenue hour.

<sup>1</sup> Nebraska Statutes, Chapter 13, Section 13-1201 to 13-1214. [http://www.sos.ne.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Roads\\_Dept\\_of/Title-415/Chapter-2.pdf](http://www.sos.ne.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Roads_Dept_of/Title-415/Chapter-2.pdf)

Table 4.3: Hall County Public Transportation System Wide Performance

System Performance	
Operating Cost	\$490,000
Passenger Trips	35,085
Vehicle Revenue Hours	14,705
Vehicle Revenue Miles	170,497
Operating Effectiveness	
Passenger Trips/Revenue Hr	2.4
Passenger Trips/Revenue Mile	0.21
Financial Efficiency	
Operating Cost per Passenger Trip	\$13.99
Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	\$33.32
Operating Cost per Revenue Mile	\$2.87

Source: Olsson Associates, 2017.



Hall County Public Transportation Bus

## 4.3 Other Transportation Providers

### 4.3.1 Burlington Trailways

Burlington Trailways provides intercity service seven days a week from Grand Island. The bus station is co-located with Arrow Stage Lines in Grand Island. Eastbound and westbound routes travel to out-of-state destinations. The buses are at the station in Grand Island at 12:50 am, 3:05 am, and 5:30 pm. Wifi is available on all buses for travelers. Feedback from local station staff estimate approximately 50 boardings and deboardings occur in Grand Island each month. Popular destinations include Lincoln, Omaha, Des Moines, and Indianapolis. Agency staff report 18 buses are on the road during peak travel periods.

The company has 39 vehicles in its fleet.

Passengers on Burlington Trailways include many students, elderly, and people on fixed incomes.

### 4.3.2 Central City Mini Bus - Merrick County

The Mini Bus operates demand response, curb-to-curb service Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. Reservations are required 24-hour in advance. To travel to/from Grand Island, it is \$10 round trip. The agency travels to Grand Island the first Monday of every month. The primary purpose of most passengers traveling from Central City to Grand Island are for medical appointments.



Burlington Trailways Bus

### 4.3.3 Navigator Airport Express

The Navigator Airport Express is based out of Kearney and provides service into Grand Island Monday through Saturday. The agency focuses on airport service to multiple cities, including York, Lincoln, Omaha, and Kearney. Reservations are required to schedule a trip. The average fare from Grand Island to Omaha is \$62 per one-way trip.



Navigator Airport Express

### 4.3.4 Ponca Express

The Ponca Express transit agency is based out of Norfolk and transports passengers to/from Grand Island. Many passengers use Ponca Express to travel to the airport and to the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The agency makes the trip approximately every two weeks. The cost for the one-way trip is \$5.00 per person. The agency has 14 vehicles in its fleet, with approximately 12 vehicles operating during peak hours. Five of the 12 vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Trip requests to/from Grand Island and Hastings have increased, in addition to requests for Lincoln and Omaha.



Ponca Express

### 4.3.5 Ryde Transit

Ryde Transit is based out of Kearney and travels to/from Grand Island on a weekly basis. The agency estimates approximately 10,000 annual trips to Grand Island. The majority of trips are for medical appointments and the Veterans Administration facility in Grand Island. The one-way fare to Grand Island is \$8.00 per person. The agency has 48 total vehicles in its fleet, with approximately 38 vehicles in operation during peak hours.



Ryde Transit

### 4.3.6 Private Transit Providers

Other transportation providers within Hall County and Grand Island are private companies, taxis, and Uber. In addition to these services is the company Liberty, which is a new startup company, based out of Lincoln, known as the rural 'Uber' service. The agency is currently looking for drivers in the Grand Island area to provide service to the community. The agency, similar to Uber and the taxi service, will provide rides 24 hours a day, seven days per week. The Liberty service has independent contract drivers who make their own schedules and get paid per mile. Drivers must be 21, have a smart phone with a data plan, and pass a brief background check. Liberty will be providing trips for central Nebraska, Kearney, Grand Island, Hastings, and the surrounding areas.



*Uber Comes to Grand Island*

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## CHAPTER 5 TRANSIT DEMAND

### 5.1 Introduction

A key step in developing and evaluating transit feasibility in a community is a careful analysis of the mobility needs of various segments of the population and potential transit riders. Several factors affect demand, not all of which can be forecasted. Demand estimation is an important task in developing any transportation plan, and several methods of estimation have been presented within this chapter.

The demand methodologies use census data, including demographic and socioeconomic data, presented in Chapter 3 and existing ridership and statistics from current services. Transit demand is used in Chapter 10 to identify and evaluate various transit service options. In addition to transit demand in the Grand Island region, Chapter 5 provides an overview of the transit needs within the region.

Each methodology helps show the patterns that are likely to arise regarding transit needs within the area. Estimating demand for services is not an exact science and therefore must be carefully evaluated. The best approach for forecasting demand and estimating need is to use multiple methodologies and then evaluate the results in the context of the specific conditions for Grand Island and Hall County. The multiple methods are detailed below.

#### Transit Demand Methodologies:

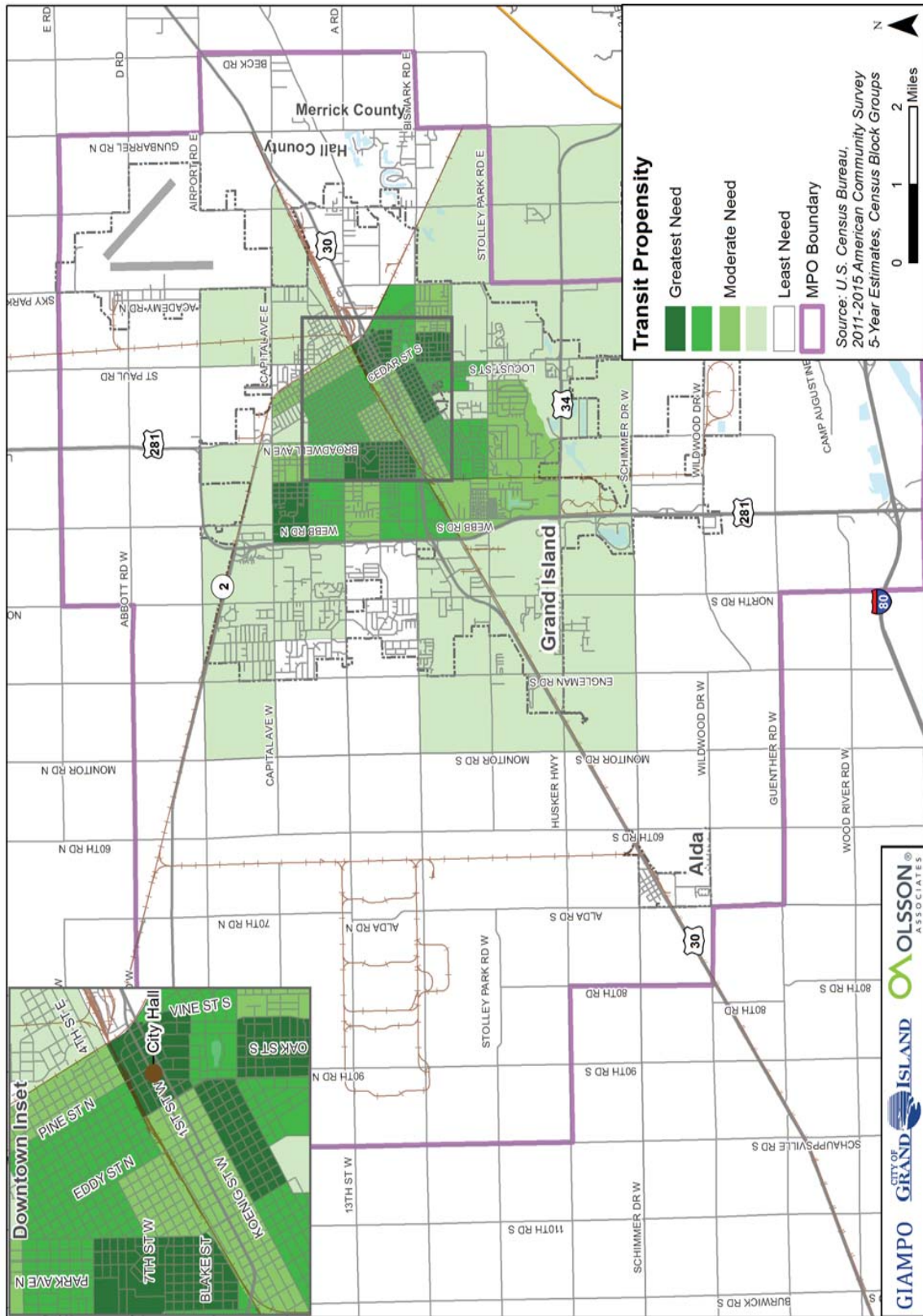
- Greatest Transit Needs Index
- Commuter Transit Demand
- Peer Data Demand
- Mode of Transportation to Work
- Mobility Gap



*Hall County Public Transportation*



Figure 5.1: Grand Island Transit Propensity



## 5.2 Greatest Transit Needs Index Methodology

Chapter 3 of this Final Report provided a detailed analysis of the areas in Grand Island with the greatest transit need. The Greatest Transit Need Index Methodology is based upon Census data from four categories (elderly, disabled, low-income, and zero vehicle households). **Figure 5.1** illustrates the greatest needs in Grand Island are in the downtown area. By identifying the areas with a high need for public transportation, the local project team determined a pattern for the areas with the highest propensity to use transit service. These data were used in the analysis to ensure that areas with a high transit need were considered in future transit service options.

## 5.3 Commuter Transit Demand Methodology

The Commuter Transit Demand Methodology estimates the demand for commuters, typically traveling Monday through Friday from one community to another. For the Grand Island area, this is typically from a rural county to a regional center in another county. The *Transportation Research Board* developed this methodology to estimate commuter demand, with specific focus on rural and suburban areas.

The basis of this methodology is a function of the number of existing commuters from surrounding areas coming into the urban center, and the distance of that commute. For example, a large number of commuters coming from a short distance, would exhibit a higher transit demand than the same number of commuters from a longer distance. The formula to estimate the demand is below.

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Proportion using Transit for Commuter Trips from Rural County to Urban Place} = \\ &0.024 + (0.0000056 \times \text{Workers Commuting from Rural County to Urban Place}) - \\ &\quad (0.00029 \times \text{Distance in Miles from Rural County to Urban Place}) + \\ &\quad 0.015 \text{ ( if the Urban Place is a state capital ) }^1 \end{aligned}$$

**Table 5.1** lists the top 25 locations whose residents commute to work in Grand Island. The cities where people live in, but work in Grand Island, was used as a proxy for rural counties. The table also shows commute distance from the community to Grand Island, and how many of those commuters expected to take transit, if a transit option did exist.

The results indicate a small number of commuters from outlying rural areas taking transit to work in Grand Island. It is important to clarify this methodology DOES NOT take into account commuter trips originating within Grand Island. The methodology also DOES NOT include trips taken for medical or social service purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> TCRP report 161, *Method for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation*, Transportation Research board, Washington, D.C, 2013.

Table 5.1: Grand Island Commuter Transit Demand

	Residents That Work in Grand Island	City Distance to Grand Island (Miles)	Commuter Transit Demand (Daily Trips)
<b>Grand Island, NE</b>	<b>16,372</b>		
Hastings city, NE	1,191	26	0.02
Kearney city, NE	765	43	0.02
Lincoln city, NE	645	96	0.00
Omaha city, NE	596	145	0.00
St. Paul city, NE	434	23	0.02
Aurora city, NE	407	22	0.02
Central City city, NE	309	22	0.02
Wood River city, NE	304	16	0.02
Doniphan village, NE	250	12	0.02
Cairo village, NE	237	16	0.02
Alda village, NE	204	8	0.02
York city, NE	165	49	0.01
North Platte city, NE	149	146	0.00
Beatrice city, NE	106	131	0.00
Palmer village, NE	102	24	0.02
Norfolk city, NE	89	30	0.02
Bellevue city, NE	86	107	0.00
Holdrege city, NE	85	146	0.00
Loup City city, NE	81	77	0.00
Columbus city, NE	79	51	0.01
Chapman City, NE	78	64	0.01
Lexington city, NE	69	12	0.02
Giltner village, NE	69	20	0.02
<b>All Other Locations:</b>	<b>9,262</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Daily Ridership:</b>			<b>0.29</b>
<b>Annual Commuter Ridership:</b>			<b>73</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD On The Map (2014)

## 5.4 Peer Data Demand Methodology

The Peer Data Demand Methodology calculates transit usage for other similar peer areas and forecasts ridership with a similar level of transit service. Applying the transit ridership per capita for the existing ridership level (Hall County today = 0.7) - in other words, forecasting that future transit service would remain status quo as a proportion of total trips – just as it is today – expected ridership would be approximately 55,723 in the horizon year 2040. This calculation uses the population projections, discussed in Chapter 3, for 2040 with 81,374 persons in the county multiplied by the existing transit trip per capita (0.7).

Peer city ridership data and trips per capita are shown in **Table 5.2**. Hall County Public Transportation has the lowest transit trips per capita of any of their peers, although Enid, OK has similar levels for trips per capita with 0.8. Four peer cities have fixed route service, which tend to exhibit more trips per capita than cities with only demand response service. This is typically due to ridership growth, in which cities often find it more cost-effective to implement a fixed route system to serve the majority of their riders, rather than expanding their demand response fleet. Understanding this for similar sized transit agencies and communities, it is useful to examine potential demand from the perspective of demand response-only systems, and from the perspective of systems that have both demand response and fixed route systems.

Table 5.2: Peer City Data

	Population	Demand Response Trips	Fixed Route Trips	Total Trips	All Transit Trips per Capita
Grand Island, NE	51,236	35,085	n/a	35,085	0.7
Enid, OK	51,386	40,800	n/a	40,800	0.8
Idaho Falls, ID	58,691	n/a	79,914	79,914	1.4
Kingman, AZ	28,912	n/a	116,352	116,352	4.0
Helena, MT	29,943	n/a	173,775	173,775	5.8
Casper, WY	60,086	54,213	125,460	179,673	3.0
North Platte, NE	24,592	76,289	n/a	76,289	3.1
Average All Peers	42,268	57,101	123,875	111,134	3.0
Average Trips per Capita of cities with Demand Response ONLY:					1.4

Source: Federal Transit Administration, The National Transit Database, 2014

The total transit ridership per capita of the peer group is 3.0 (fixed route plus demand response). For Grand Island, this would result in projected demand of approximately 154,000 annual one-way trips, if the community had fixed route and demand response service. Grand Island projects the 2040 population to be 81,374 persons in the community. If the agency increased transit ridership to the peer agencies with only demand response service at 1.4 trips per capita, ridership would be approximately 111,548 trips annually, as shown in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Ridership Projections Using Peer City Metrics

Projection Metric	Population	Ridership Projections	
		All Peer Agencies - Trips Per Capita	Peer Cities with ONLY Demand Response Service - Trips per Capita
Projection Metric		3.0	1.4
Grand Island 2016	51,236	154,356	70,234
Grand Island 2040	81,374	245,152	111,548

Source: Olsson Associates, 2017.

## 5.5 Mode of Transportation to Work Methodology

This methodology uses existing US Census data mode of transportation to work by bus. However, for Hall County, potentially due to the existing limited services, the census reported less than one percent (approximately 150 people) of total employees used transit for commuting to/from work. Existing demand for this data resulted in approximately 75,000 annual one-way trips, assuming each person travels round trip, works five days per week, for 50 weeks of the year.

## 5.6 Transit Need Methodologies

In the previous sections, several transit demand methodologies identified transit demand for the Grand Island region. In addition to these data, feedback from the community, the transit agency, and the local project team include transit needs, such as expansion of daily hours of service, broadening coordination activities, and finding better ways of addressing commuter needs.

Gauging the need for transit is different from estimating demand for transit services (number of potential passengers). Demand within a community will always exist whether or not public transit is available. The Mobility Gap Methodology is used to find the total demand for zero vehicle households by a variety of modes, including transit.

### 5.6.1 Mobility Gap Methodology

The Mobility Gap method measures the difference in the household trip rate between households with vehicles available and households without vehicles available. Because households with vehicles travel more than households without vehicles, the difference in trip rates is the mobility gap. This method shows total demand for zero vehicle household trips by a variety of modes including transit.

This method uses data that is easily obtainable, yet is stratified to address different groups of users: the elderly, the young, and those with and without vehicles. The data can be analyzed at the county or City level and based upon the stratified user-groups; the method produces results applicable to the City and at a realistic level of detail.

The primary strength of this method is that it is based upon data that is easily available: household data and trip rate data for households with and without vehicles, obtained from the US Census. Rural and urban trip rate data were derived from the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) for Nebraska.

The mobility gap methodology is the total number of trips not taken because members of zero vehicle households do not have readily available access to a car. The mobility gap for the nation as a whole and the nine Census regions has been developed from data in the 2009 National Household Travel Survey. A mobility gap estimate based on household vehicle availability, with the gap measured in trips per day, is computed as:

$$\text{Need (trips)} = \text{Number of Households having No Car} \times \text{Mobility Gap}$$

The mobility gap computation uses households with no vehicle available multiplied by the gap number for Nebraska (sited in the TCRP 161 report) to estimate the daily mobility gap. The estimate produced by the mobility gap methodology is measured in one-way trips per day.<sup>2</sup>

To produce an estimate for annual need, it is recommended that the daily Mobility Gap figure be multiplied by 300 days. This figure reflects that trip need is likely reduced on the weekends, but annual need is not just associated with weekdays. This results in an annual need of 863,100 trips for Hall County, as shown in **Table 5.4** <sup>3</sup>.

Table 5.4: Mobility Gap Transit Need

Transit Need Mobility Gap Methodology					
0 - Vehicle HHs Hall County		Mobility Gap Factor for NE		Daily Transit Need	Annual Transit Need
1,370	x	2.1	=	2,877	863,100

The estimates of need made using the mobility gap method are typically far greater than the number of trips actually observed on transit systems and are likely greater than the demand that would be generated for any practical level of service. Therefore, the annual need of 863,100 trips for Hall County should be seen as an upper bound of the need and not reflective of the actual demand for a particular level of service. Today, approximately 35,000 annual trips are provided by Hall County Public Transportation. Approximately four percent of the total need from the Mobility Gap Methodology is being met. Much of the remaining trip-based mobility gap is likely filled by friends and relatives driving residents of non-car-owning households.

The mobility gap is a measure of trips not taken because residents in a community do not have access to a vehicle in their household (zero vehicle households). In Chapter 6 of this report is a discussion of the six peer communities. The mobility gap for each of these communities was calculated for Grand Island to gauge other communities for transit need using the Mobility Gap Methodology. One benefit of the peer review is to gauge the percentage of needs met for Grand Island and Hall County and for the peer communities. The City of Grand Island met approximately four percent of the total transit needs, using the mobility gap methodology. Grand Island's

<sup>2</sup> The demand analysis is based on methodologies developed for the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the American Academy of Scientists.

<sup>3</sup> TCRP 161 - <http://www.trb.org/TCRP/Blurbs/168758.aspx>

The peer communities have a range of transit needs met, from 7 percent in Enid to 56 percent of the transit needs met in Casper, WY. The average of the peer needs met is 26 percent, with an average mobility gap trip rate factor of 1.1. The trip rates are readily available data derived from the National Household Travel Survey. The mobility gap results for all the selected peer cities are shown in **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5: Mobility Gap of Peer Cities

	Hall County Public Transportation	Enid, OK (Garfield Co)	Idaho Falls, ID (Bonneville Co)	Kingman, AZ (Mohave Co)	Helena, MT (Lewis and Clark Co)	Casper, WY (Natrona Co)	North Platte, NE (Lincoln Co)	Peer Average
Total Households	22,433	23,937	36,686	80,832	26,753	32,131	15,010	26,767
Zero Vehicle Households	1,370	996	1,757	4,389	1,438	1,340	957	1,463
Mobility Gap Factor <sup>1</sup>	2.1	2.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	2.1	1.1
Daily Transit Need	2,877	1,992	1,405	3,511	1,150	1,072	2,009	2,002
Annual Transit Need	863,100	597,600	421,680	1,053,360	345,120	321,600	602,910	449,280
Annual Ridership	35,085	40,800	79,914	116,352	173,775	179,673	76,289	100,270
Percent of Transit Need Met	4%	7%	19%	11%	50%	56%	13%	26%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration National Transit Database 2014-2015*

## 5.7 Summary of Hall County Needs and Demand

A summary of the results of the methodologies are presented in **Table 5.6**. These estimates are not cumulative. Different approaches focus on different markets. Other methodologies exist; however substantial data collection is needed (and outside the scope of this project) to feed into the models for appropriate projections. While the demand forecasts have highly variable results, they are useful in identifying a range of demand for Hall County. The results were useful as the local project team developed different types of services for the future in Grand Island and Hall County.

Table 5.6: Methodology Summary

Methodology Summary		
Demand	Today Annual Trips	Future
Commuter Transit Demand	73	100
Peer Data Demand (range)		
Status Quo Service Level	35,085	55,723
Enhanced Service Level- 1*	70,234	111,548
Enhanced Service Level- 2**	154,356	245,152
Mode of Transportation to Work	75,000	100,000
Need		
Mobility Gap	863,100	945,000
Existing Transit Trips	35,085	55,723
Needs Being Met	4%***	6%****
<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- * Enhanced Service Level- 1 = Peer Methodology using the average 1.4 trips per capita (Demand Response only peer agencies)</li> <li>- ** Enhanced Service Level- 2 = Peer Methodology using the average 3.0 trips per capita (All peer agencies)</li> <li>- *** The four percent is based on annual need of 863,100 trips for Hall County that should be seen as an upper bound of the need and not reflective of the actual demand for a particular level of service.</li> <li>- **** The six percent is based on future need of 945,000 trips for Hall County that should be seen as an upper bound of the need and not reflective of the actual demand for a particular level of service.</li> </ul>		



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## CHAPTER 6 PEER REVIEW

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 provides a host of information regarding peer communities for the Grand Island Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study. An overview of the peer selection process is described and transit agency data analyzed. Peer communities were identified in coordination with the local project team based upon similar community size and similar transit agency service characteristics. **While this chapter is a summary of the peer review phase of the study, the complete analysis can be found in Technical Memorandum 1.**

### 6.2 Methodology and Selection Criteria

To identify and select peer communities, the local project team began with 18 peer cities with similar characteristics to the City of Grand Island. In the past, the City of Grand Island has used many of the cities listed in **Table 6.1** for other peer comparisons. Several of the peer communities listed in the table have robust transit systems, which may not be a good representation as a peer for the transit peer review. Before selecting the six peer communities, shaded in **Table 6.1**, the local project team reviewed several criteria for selection of the final peer communities, as shown in the bulleted list.

#### Peer Review Criteria:

- total population
- post-secondary school enrollment
- total transit trips
- types of transit service
- transit operating budget
- transit annual revenue hours
- transit annual revenue vehicle miles
- revenue miles

The following six peer communities, shaded in **Table 7.1**, were selected for the final peer review:

- Enid, Oklahoma
- Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Kingman, Arizona
- Casper, Wyoming
- North Platte, Nebraska
- Helena, Montana

Table 6.1: Peer City Overview

	City	2014 Population	Total Transit Trips	Transit Operating Budget
	<b>Grand Island, NE</b>	<b>51,236</b>	<b>35,085</b>	<b>\$490,000</b>
1	Jefferson City, MO	43,132	328,114	\$2,236,590
2	Enid, OK	51,386	40,800	\$735,446
3	Sioux City, IA	82,517	1,113,770	\$4,204,131
4	Rapid City, SD	73,569	366,884	\$2,098,250
5	St. Joseph, MO	76,967	423,645	\$5,060,920
6	Grand Junction, CO	60,358	3,978,503	\$3,461,784
7	Victoria, TX	66,094	360,767	\$4,768,385
8	Sheridan, WY	17,873	37,104	\$565,140
9	Idaho Falls, ID	58,691	79,914	\$1,229,217
10	Kingman, AZ	28,912	116,352	\$771,819
11	Cape Girardeau, MO	39,628	148,858	\$2,072,278
12	Helena, MT	29,943	173,775	\$1,317,688
13	Casper, WY	60,086	179,673	\$1,730,107
14	Kearney, NE	32,469	122,509	\$1,432,958
15	Lincoln, NE	272,996	2,495,735	\$11,383,799
16	Omaha, NE	446,599	4,163,850	\$26,974,181
17	North Platte, NE	24,592	76,289	\$634,603
18	Scottsbluff, NE	15,062	39,393	\$340,735
	<b>Average</b>	<b>82,271</b>	<b>791,441</b>	<b>\$3,945,446</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration National Transit Database 2014-2015

### 6.3 Peer Community Overview

The following peer community overview provides a snapshot of information for each city and an overview of the transit system and its characteristics, although it should be noted that no two cities are the same. Data were obtained through the National Transit Database (NTD) and discussions with each peer transit agency to assist in recognizing both quantitative and qualitative characteristics of these communities.

**Table 6.2** is the summary table for Grand Island and the six peer communities. For most agencies, fiscal year 2015 and 2016 were available for the peer review. An average of the six peer communities is shown in the table below and also available for comparison.

Table 6.2: Characteristics of Selected Peer Cities

		2014 Population	Post-Secondary School Enrollment	Demand Response Trips	Fixed Route Trips	Total Trips	Transit Trips per Capita	Operating Budget	Operating Budget per Capita	Revenue Hours (Revenue Miles)	Cost per Revenue Hour
	Grand Island, NE	51,236	2,163	35,085	N/A	35,085	0.7	\$490,000	\$10.10	14,705 (170,497)	\$33.32
1	Enid, OK	51,386	1,902	40,800	N/A	40,800	0.8	\$735,446	\$14.89	18,400 (N/A)	\$39.07
2	Idaho Falls, ID	58,691	862	N/A	79,914	79,914	1.4	\$1,229,217	\$20.94	27,924 (350,476)	\$44.02
3	Kingman, AZ	28,912	1,707	N/A	116,352	116,352	4.0	\$771,819	\$26.70	16,564 (170,567)	\$46.60
4	Helena, MT	29,943	2,400	N/A	173,775	173,775	5.8	\$1,317,688	\$46.76	25,209 (488,299)	\$52.27
5	Casper, WY	60,086	4,648	54,213	125,460	179,673	3.0	\$1,730,107	\$31.28	37,410 (448,385)	\$46.25
6	North Platte, NE	24,592	3,250	76,289	N/A	76,289	3.1	\$634,603	\$26.09	14,183 (163,656)	\$44.74
	Average	42,268	2,462	57,101	123,875	111,134	3.0	\$1,069,813	\$27.78	23,282 (324,277)	\$45.64

The data shown in the above table include several performance statistics used to assess where Hall County Public Transportation is today, compared to the peer communities. The peer analysis is a useful tool in terms of lessons learned at other agencies, determining reasonable cost standards, and projecting ridership.

### 6.3.1 Ridership

Ridership for Hall County Public Transportation is approximately 35,000 annual one-way trips, which is lower than the average for the six peer agencies at 111,134 annual trips. Enid, OK is the closest peer agency for ridership with approximately 41,000 annual trips. The population for the peer community varies from approximately 25,000 in North Platte to over 60,000 in Casper, WY. Reviewing ridership per capita is a good peer measure of comparison. Grand Island has a 0.7 ridership per capita. The average of the peer communities is 3.0, with the highest in Helena, MT and the lowest in Enid, OK.

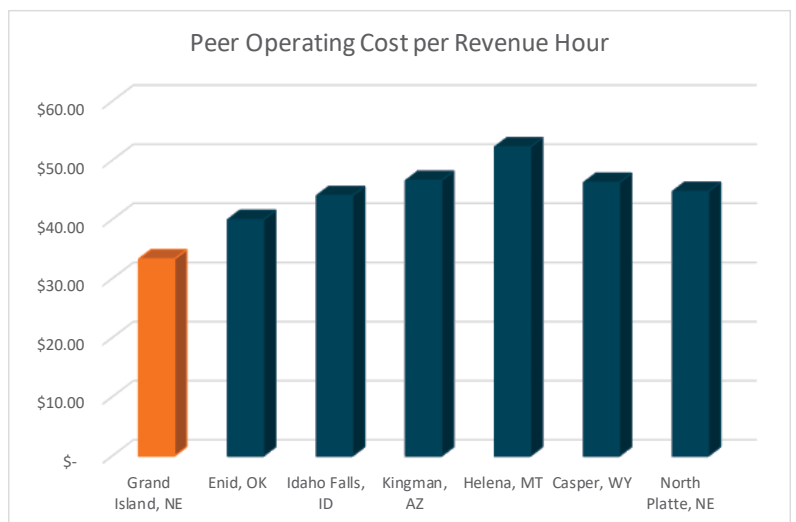
### 6.3.2 Operating Statistics

The operating budget for the six peer communities is higher than Hall County Public Transportation. The largest system among the peer systems is in Casper, WY with the highest annual budget at approximately \$1.7M and highest ridership at approximately 180,000 annual one-way trips. North Platte Public Transportation is the smallest peer agency with \$635,000 annual budget. However, North Platte has higher ridership than the City of Grand Island and Enid with approximately 76,000 annual one-way trips. The smallest peer agency for ridership is Enid, OK with approximately 41,000 annual trips, which is close to Hall County Public Transportation ridership. The annual budget for Enid, OK is \$735,000.

The operating cost per vehicle revenue hour performance measure accounts for every hour a transit vehicle is in service. This measure includes driver salary, fuel, and wear and tear on the vehicles. The peer agencies included in this review range from approximately \$40 to \$52 per revenue vehicle hour. While there are many possible reasons for significant variations (wages, fuel cost, vehicle maintenance costs, etc.). It is important to note that Hall County Public Transportation is lower than all the peer agencies at \$33.32 per revenue vehicle hour and has a low cost to operate the system. **Figure 6.1** illustrates the range of values.

The passenger trips per revenue vehicle hour is another measure included in the peer analysis to understand how many trips per hour each system carries, even though they are very different systems. The Kingman, AZ and the Helena, MT transit agencies have the highest passengers per revenue hour at approximately 7.0 passengers per hour. All peer agencies, except Enid, OK, carry more trips per hour than Hall County Public Transportation. The peer average is 4.9 passengers per hour. Enid, OK carries 2.2 passengers per hour and Hall County Public Transportation has 2.4 passengers per hour.

Figure 6.1: Peer Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



### 6.3.3 Mobility Gap

The mobility gap is a measure of trips not taken because people in a community do not have access to a vehicle in their household (zero vehicle households). Chapter 5 presented several transit demand methodologies and the transit needs measured by the mobility gap. One benefit of the peer review is to gauge the percentage of needs met for Grand Island and Hall County and for the peer communities. The City of Grand Island and Hall County met approximately four percent of the total transit needs, using the mobility gap methodology. The four percent is based on annual need of 863,100 trips for Hall County that should be seen as an upper bound of the need and not reflective of the actual demand for a particular level of service. **Table 6.3** shows the percentage of needs met for each of the peer communities.

Table 6.3: Mobility Gap of Peer Cities

	Hall County Public Transportation	Enid, OK (Garfield Co)	Idaho Falls, ID (Bonneville Co)	Kingman, AZ (Mohave Co)	Helena, MT (Lewis and Clark Co)	Casper, WY (Natrona Co)	North Platte, NE (Lincoln Co)	Peer Average
Total Households	22,433	23,937	36,686	80,832	26,753	32,131	15,010	26,767
Zero Vehicle Households	1,370	996	1,757	4,389	1,438	1,340	957	1,463
Mobility Gap Factor <sup>1</sup>	2.1	2.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	2.1	1.1
Daily Transit Need	2,877	1,992	1,405	3,511	1,150	1,072	2,009	2,002
Annual Transit Need	863,100	597,600	421,680	1,053,360	345,120	321,600	602,910	449,280
Annual Ridership	35,085	40,800	79,914	116,352	173,775	179,673	76,289	100,270
Percent of Transit Need Met	4%	7%	19%	11%	50%	56%	13%	26%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration National Transit Database 2014-2015*

The peer communities have a range of transit needs met, from 7 percent in Enid to 56 percent of the transit needs met in Casper, WY. The average of the peer needs met is 26 percent, with an average mobility gap trip rate factor of 1.1. The trip rates are readily available data derived from the National Household Travel Survey.

<sup>1</sup> TCRP 161 - <http://www.trb.org/TCRP/Blurbs/168758.aspx>

## 6.4 Peer Community Questionnaire

Each transit agency was contacted by phone and by email to complete the brief peer review questions. Of the six peer communities, four provided thorough responses. All responses received are summarized in the following sections by question:

### Q1. How is your organization governed? (city, county, authority, etc.)

- Enid, Oklahoma is governed by the Enid Public Transportation Authority.
- Kingman's transit system is governed by the City.
- The City of Helena governs the Capital Transit.
- The City of Casper contracts services to CATC (Casper Area Transit Coalition), a 501 (c) 3 organization.
- The North Platte Transit system is a department within the City.

### Q2. Do you contract service or provide service directly?

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority provides service directly.
- Kingman Area Regional Transit provides service directly.
- Capital Transit (Helena) provides service directly.
- CATC is the contractor for service through the City of Casper.
- North Platte provides service directly.

### Q3. What is the breakdown of your staff?

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority employs 19 workers. Fourteen of these are drivers, with five full time positions, one part-time office assistant, one part-time dispatcher, one full-time dispatcher, one part-time marketing manager, and one general manager.
- Kingman Area Regional Transit employs 14 people. The agency has nine full-time and three part-time transit operators, one administrative assistant, and one superintendent.
- Capital Transit has 18 employees. The agency has one supervisor, one administrative assistant, one transit operations coordinator, one dispatcher, and 16 drivers.
- CATC employs a total of 34 employees. There are four administrative employees, three dispatchers, 16 full-time drivers, and 11 part-time drivers.



North Platte Public Transportation Bus

**Q4. What types of service do you provide?**

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority provides demand response service with a 24-hour call ahead requirement. If available, a rider can request same day service for a higher fare.
- Kingman Area Regional Transit operates four deviated fixed routes. While this service has a “fixed” route with scheduled stops, the bus can deviate from the route to pick up passengers within a ¾-mile buffer of the route.
- Capital Transit operates fixed route service, ADA paratransit service, and demand response service.
- CATC operates fixed route service and demand response service.
- North Platte Public Transit operates door-to-door demand response service, with same day pick available, if the schedule allows and at a higher fee.



Enid Public Transportation Bus

**Q5. What hours/days do you operate?**

- EPTA hours of operation are 6:00 am – 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
- Kingman operates two routes from 6:00 am – 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday while two other routes operate from 6:00 am – 8:00 pm, Monday through Friday. All four routes operate from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday.
- Capital Transit’s fixed route buses operate hourly on weekdays from 7:00 am – 6:15 pm.
- CATC provides service from 6:30 am – 6:30 pm Monday through Friday and 7:30 am to 3:30 pm on Saturdays.
- North Platte Public Transit operates 5:30 am – 8:00 pm on weekdays.

**Q6. How many peak vehicles do you operate on an average weekday?**

- Enid typically has six peak vehicles on the road between 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. The other times of the day, the agency has four peak vehicles available for service.
- The Kingman Area Regional Transit system operates four vehicles during peak times.
- Capital Transit operates six fixed route buses and three ADA paratransit buses in Helena during peak hours.
- During peak hours for CATC, six fixed route vehicles and seven for demand response service are in operation.

**Q7. For funding purposes, where does your local match originate from?**

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority receives funding for their local match from the City of Enid, State of Oklahoma and fares.
- The KART local match is from the City of Kingman’s General Fund.
- Capital Transit receives local funding from the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, and the City of East Helena to match federal and state dollars.
- The cities of Casper, Mills, Evansville, and Bar Nunn contribute locally to match federal and state funding programs.
- Match funding is provided by the City of North Platte. The transit system also uses fares and contract services for the local match.



**Q8. What are your agency’s annual ridership, annual revenue hours, annual revenue miles, and annual operating budget?**

- Refer to **Table 7.1** on page 43 for ridership, revenue hours, revenue miles and operating budget information.

**Q9. Do you coordinate with local, regional, or state education facilities?**

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority does not currently coordinate with any educational facilities.
- Kingman Area Regional Transit provides bus passes to local alternative high school programs for the students.
- Capital Transit does not coordinate with any educational facilities.
- CATC does not currently coordinate with any educational facilities.
- North Platte Public Transit does not currently coordinate with local education facilities.

**Q10. Do you coordinate with any major employers in the area?**

- Enid Public Transportation Authority does not currently coordinate with any major employers. However, the agency is in preliminary discussions with local companies that have expressed interest in public transportation.
- KART does not coordinate with any major employers in the area.
- The Capital Transit system coordinates with the local government to provide trips from certain bus stops to the capital building.
- CATC does not coordinate with any major employers in their area.

**Q11. Do you have a local transit committee that meets regularly to discuss transit services in the area?**

- There is a Transit Advisory Council in Enid, Oklahoma that meets once a year to discuss the transit needs of the City. This advisory council is made up of four members.
- The City of Kingman has a five-member Transit Advisory Commission that meets quarterly. It used to be a seven-member commission, but was reduced to five members due to a lack of interested applicants and inability to have a quorum.
- The Capital Transit Advisory Council meets in Helena to discuss transit needs for their community. The Council has a senior leadership of four members and is committed to guiding Capital Transit.
- No local transit committee exists that meets regularly in Casper, Wyoming.
- North Platte does not have a local transit committee that meets regularly.

**Q12. Do you require a 24-hour advance reservation?**

- All peer agencies require a 24-hour advance reservation. Many of the agencies expressed their ridership is growing, which increases the importance of making a reservation. Several of the agencies, such as Enid Public Transportation Authority and North Platte Public Transportation, offer same day service at a higher fee, if there is availability.



*North Platte Public Transit*

**Q13. Do you provide trips real-time, if space allows?**

- Enid Public Transportation Authority, Kingman Area Regional Transit, Capital Transit, and North Platte Public Transit provide real-time trips, if space available. CATC does not offer same day trips at this time.

**Q14. How do you schedule demand response return trips?**

- Return trips in Enid, Oklahoma depend on the situation. If a rider is at an appointment with a specific time frame, then when the rider originally calls dispatch to schedule the trip, a return is also scheduled. If a passenger is unsure of how long the appointment will be, such as a grocery store trip, the passenger schedules the return trip when they are done by calling the office.
- KART's curb-to-curb return trips are required to be booked in advance. If the passenger is not waiting outside when the driver arrives for the return trip, then the driver will return the following hour.
- Capital Transit uses the RouteMatch software for all scheduled rides; thus, return trips are scheduled at the time the initial trip is scheduled.
- CATC typically books the return trip at the same time as the initial call. Once in a while, passengers can book the return when finished with the appointment.
- North Platte Public Transit books same day and at the time of the reservation. Passengers will pay more for the same day bookings.

**Q15. What is your fare structure?**

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority has a base fare of \$2 per one-way trip made 24-hrs in advance. Same day service is a base fare of \$5 per one-way trip.
- KART charges \$1.50 per one-way trip as the base fare for the fixed route service. The curb-to-curb service is a base fare of \$6 per one-way trip. Riders who are ADA eligible have a base fare of \$3. Children under age 10 ride for free. KART also offers Coupon Books, daily passes, and monthly passes.
- Capital Transit has a base fare of \$0.85 per one-way trip for the demand response and fixed route services. ADA eligible residents have a based fare of \$0.50 per one-way trip.
- The CATC base fare for the general public is \$1 per one-way trip. The student base fare is \$0.75 per one-way trip, and ADA-eligible seniors, disabled, and Medicare riders have a base fare of \$0.50 per one-way trip.
- North Platte Public Transit has a base fare of \$1.50, if the trip is booked 24-hr in advance. Same day service has a base fare of \$3 per one-way trip.



*KART ADA Accessible Bus*

**Q16. What is your age limit for riding the bus by yourself?**

- The Enid Public Transportation Authority allows passengers age 12 and older to ride the bus alone.
- KART requires children be at least 10 years old to ride the bus without an adult.
- Capital Transit allows children age six and older to ride without an adult.
- CATC requires bus passenger be over age 10 to ride the fixed route bus alone and over 12 years old to ride the demand response bus alone.
- North Platte Public Transit requires a child be at least six years old to ride the bus alone.

**Q17. Do you have bike racks on your buses?**

- Enid Public Transportation Authority has existing buses with bike racks.
- All KART buses accommodate up to two bicycles on each vehicle.
- Most Capital Transit buses have bike racks.
- All CATC buses operating the fixed route have bike racks. Only one demand response bus has bike racks.
- North Platte Public Transit does not have bike racks available.

## 6.5 Peer Review Findings

The peer review compares transit service in Grand Island, Nebraska with other communities around the country with similar characteristics. The information within the chapter assesses the different types of services offered, how services are administered, how services are paid for, and lessons learned at different peer agencies.

Grand Island is similar to the peer communities; however, Grand Island does not have a robust transit service, which is seen in other peer communities, particularly those areas with different types of services and modes. Several of the peer communities also have a significantly higher level of ridership. With the exception of Enid, Oklahoma and North Platte Public Transit, the other peer communities offer some form of fixed route or deviated fixed route service. Kingman Area Regional Transit and Casper Area Transportation Coalition provide a deviated fixed route and have a cost per revenue hour that is in the average of our peer communities.

It is also important to acknowledge that while Grand Island has the fewest total trips of all the peer communities, the existing operating budget is also smallest among the peer communities. Grand Island's total population and student population are comparable to the peer communities providing more modes and services.



CATC Public Transit



## CHAPTER 7 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - ROUND ONE

### 7.1 Introduction

A key part of any planning study is the public outreach within the community. This chapter presents a brief review of the public engagement conducted for Round One of the Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study. During the study time-frame, several methods for involving the local community were completed, including a community survey, public open houses, focus group meetings, and pop-up meetings. These opportunities openly welcome citizens to comment on transit services in Grand Island and Hall County. Driver meetings were held to receive input from transit operators, dispatch, and supervisors. Other opportunities for feedback to the local project team included on-site field work on the buses and around the community, which allow the project team to interact with riders, staff, local stakeholders, and the general public.

Community input helped in identifying the current and future local transit needs of community residents and Hall County Public Transportation. These needs were shaped into the vision for public transit, which led to goals and objectives. Providing a space that allows stakeholders and members of the public to provide input throughout the study process allows the community of Grand Island to have their voices heard and that specific alternatives, opportunities, and issues are examined.

Olsson Associates worked with the local project team for guidance and direction throughout the project. An initial “Kick-off Meeting” was held in March 6, 2017 with City and GIAMPO staff. The importance of working with the local team and the community is pivotal to community outreach and success of the study. Local stakeholders were also an active outlet for community education and helping residents understand the true costs and benefits of transit.



Focus Group Meeting

### 7.2 Focus Group Meetings

A series of focus group interviews were conducted during the week of April 3, 2017, at the Grand Island Public Library, 211 N Washington Street, and at the Olsson Associates downtown office, 201 East 2nd Street. Stakeholders included:

- Transportation providers
- Governmental partners
- Nonprofit organizations
- Elected officials
- Faith-based organizations
- Human service agencies
- Major employers
- Educational institutions
- Elderly services
- Bicycle/Pedestrian partners
- Grow Grand Island partners
- Ethnic Heritage partners

The purpose of the initial round of focus group meetings was to gather information to help shape the vision for transit service in Hall County and Grand Island, discuss the need for enhanced transit services in the region and what future services are realistic, and determine the level of support for public transportation. The input collected during the first round of engagement fed directly into the development of alternatives for the region.

The focus group meeting format involved facilitated discussion with each of the target groups, which lasted approximately 45 minutes. The meetings began with a brief informal presentation followed by discussion of prepared questions.

The schedule of focus group meetings for the week is shown in **Table 7.1**.

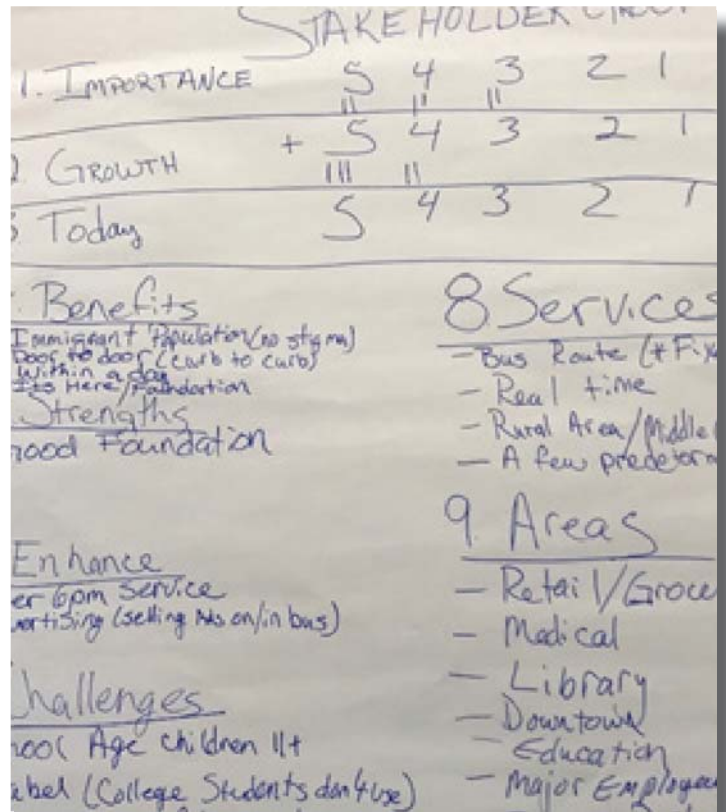
Table 7.1: Schedule of Focus Group Meetings

Schedule of Meetings - April 2017			
Date	Time	Activity	Location
Tues., April 4, 2017	9:00am - 9:30am	Set up	Library
	9:30am - 10:15am	Major businesses/organizations - 1	Library
	10:30am - 11:15am	Major businesses/organizations – 2	Library
	11:30am - 12:15pm	Major businesses/organizations – 3	Library
	12:30pm - 1:30pm	Governmental agencies – 1	Library
	1:45pm - 2:30pm	Lunch	-/-
	3:00pm - 3:45pm	Transportation providers	Olsson
	4:00pm - 5:00pm	Educational institutions	Olsson
Wed., April 5, 2017	9:00am - 9:30am	Set up	Library
	9:30am - 10:15am	Governmental agencies – 2	Library
	10:30am - 11:00am	Set up public open house	Grand Generation Center
	11:00am - 1:00pm	Public open house - 1	Grand Generation Center
	1:00pm - 1:30pm	Take down	Grand Generation Center
	1:45pm - 2:30pm	Lunch	-/-
	2:30pm - 4:00pm	Faith-based community	Olsson
	4:15pm - 5:00pm	Set up public open house	Library
	5:00pm - 8:00pm	Public open house – 2	Library
	8:00pm - 8:30pm	Take down	Library
Thurs., April 6, 2017	8:30am - 9:00am	Set up	Olsson
	9:00am - 9:45am	Elderly services	Olsson
	10:00am - 10:45am	Bike/pedestrian	Olsson
	11:00am - 11:45am	Grow Grand Island – 1	Olsson
	12:00pm - 12:45pm	Grow Grand Island – 2	Olsson
	1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch	-/-
	2:30pm - 3:15pm	Human services agencies	Olsson
	3:30pm - 4:15pm	Ethnic heritage	Olsson
Fri., April 7, 2017	8:00am - 8:30am	Set up	Olsson
	8:30am - 9:15am	Elected officials – 1	Olsson
	9:30am - 10:15am	Elected officials – 2	Olsson
	10:30am - 11:15am	Elected officials – 3	Olsson

Prepared questions, listed below, were asked to each focus group and comments recorded. The responses received throughout the public engagement process helped the local project team develop alternatives for public transportation in Grand Island and Hall County.

**7.2.1 Focus Group Questions: Rank first 3 questions (Scale of 1-5, 5=greatest)**

1. How would you rate the importance of transit for Grand Island and Hall County today?
2. How would you rate the importance of transit as Grand Island and Hall County continue to grow?
3. How effective do you feel Hall County Public Transportation is now?
4. What is the greatest benefit of having Hall County Public Transit in our community?
5. If you are familiar with the service, what are strengths of the transit service?
6. What could Hall County Public Transportation do to enhance existing services?
7. What do you think are the most important transit challenges to be addressed in the short-term of 1-3 years?
8. What specific transit services should be considered for the near future?
9. What areas within the region are likely to need public transportation the most?
10. If you or someone you know used public transit where would you need it to go? To/ From where?
11. What are some of the best ways to include our citizens into this study effort?
12. How did you first hear about the transit study?



Comments Recorded During Focus Group Discussions

**7.2.2 Summary of Focus Group Meetings - Round 1 Engagement**

Throughout the week during the multiple meetings, over 150 people were contacted through the focus group meetings or public meetings, or via phone and email conversations. In addition to this direct contact at the scheduled 19 meetings, the local newspaper and TV stations provided coverage for the public transportation study. This broad base of listeners and viewers provided an opportunity for residents to learn about the study and to get involved. The following text provides a summary of overall comments from the first round of public engagement.

**1. Question 1 (How would you rate the importance of transit for Grand Island and Hall County today?)**

- a. Wide range of answers. General Consensus = Transit is fairly important (3-4) today and will become even more important as Grand Island continues to grow.

**2. Question 2 (How would you rate the importance of transit as Grand Island and Hall County continue to grow?)**

- a. Transit will become more important as the community continues to grow (4-5).

**3. Question 3 (How effective do you feel Hall County Public Transportation is now?)**

- a. Many believe the transit system could be more effective. These answers ranged between 1 and 3.

**4. Question 4 (What is the greatest benefit of having Hall County Public Transportation in our community?)**

- a. Provides an option for people who do not have a vehicle available
- b. Helps employees get to work
- c. Good for disadvantaged populations

**5. Question 5 (If you are familiar with the service, what are strengths of the transit service?)**

- a. Great Drivers
- b. Helpful Drivers

**6. Question 6/7/8 (What could Hall County Public Transportation do to enhance existing services? What do you think are the most important challenges to address in the short term? What specific transit services should be considered for the near future?)**

- a. Marketing and Education
- b. Expand the hours
- c. Lower the age restriction
- d. Scheduled service or bus routes



*Focus Group Meeting*



*Focus Group Meeting*



7. **Question 9 (What areas within the region are likely to need public transportation the most?)**
  - a. Medical offices
  - b. Major employers (JBS, Hornady, etc.)
  - c. Retail areas
  - d. Schools
  - e. Grocery
  - f. Elderly residential areas
8. **Question 10 (If you, or someone you know, used public transit, where would you need to go?)**
  - a. Walmart
  - b. Grocery
  - c. Entertainment
9. **Question 11 (What are some of the best ways to include our citizens into this study?)**
  - a. Direct contact with the riders
  - b. Direct contact with low income citizens
  - c. Go to different clubs, groups, or associations
10. **Question 12 (How did you first hear about the transit study?)**
  - a. Email
  - b. MPO
  - c. Other meetings

### 7.3 Public Open Houses

The first public open houses for the transit study were held on Wednesday, April 5, 2017. The first meeting was at the Grand Generation Center, 304 East 3rd Street, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. The second open house was held at the Grand Island Public Library, 211 N Washington Street, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The open houses offered members of the community an opportunity to provide public input regarding public transportation issues, ask questions about the transit study, and also learn about the Hall County Public Transportation existing services. A second public open house meeting will be held in November 2017 to present the Draft Summary Final Report for Hall County Public Transportation.



*Open House at the Grand Generation Center*

## 7.4 Driver/Staff Meetings

A meeting with the existing Hall County Public Transportation drivers was conducted on April 25, 2017 to discuss existing transit service and what enhancements their riders request. Driver meetings provide a unique opportunity to meet with staff that drive this system every day and have insights into key performance issues and opportunities. The meeting was held at the Grand Generation Center during the mid-day shift change.

In addition, the local project team conducted a field visit, office visit, and ride along for Hall County Public Transportation on March 13, 2017. The site visits are a good opportunity to obtain first hand information on passenger requests, scheduling challenges, on time performance, and to identify transit needs and opportunities. The input received during these field visits assisted the quantitative analysis of the system and demographics of the community.



*Open House at the Grand Island Library*

## 7.5 Major Employer Meetings

The local project team identified several major employers who were not able to participate in the focus group meetings. Follow-up calls and site visits were conducted to JBS, Hornady, and Central Community College on April 25, 2017. The major employers were interested in future partnerships that may increase transit options for employees in the region. Each of the major employers agreed to distribute the community transit survey to their employees and student populations. In addition, the major employers participated in the focus group questions.



*Open House at the Grand Island Library*

## 7.6 Overall Summary of Community Engagement - Round One

A high level summary of the input received from the first round of public involvement activities is discussed below.

### 7.6.1 Importance of Transit Today

The public was asked to rate the importance of a transit system in Grand Island. **Figure 7.1** shows approximately 70 percent of the respondents rated transit as “Important to Very Important,” while 12 percent said transit is “Not Important to Somewhat Not Important.”

Participants discussed that while it may not be important for many Grand Island residents, the transit system is important for those that need it. Several respondents made up of professionals in the social services field and users of the service expressed strongly that without Hall County Public Transportation, there would be no way for many of their clients and residents to take trips to work, school, or other necessities. This idea was echoed through many other participants.

### 7.6.2 Importance of Transit Tomorrow

The public was asked to rank the importance of transit for the future of their community. Over half of the residents engaged in the Round 1 public engagement believed that transit is “Important or Very Important.” Refer to **Figure 7.2**.

Residents supported an efficient transit system in the future. Many participants understood and voiced that as Grand Island continues to grow, the amount of “blue collar” jobs will also increase, which likely indicates employees will need transit options to/from work.

Major employers of Grand Island believed that without a transit system in place, Grand Island will not be able to grow efficiently and continue to provide transportation options to those who needed them.

Figure 7.1: Importance of Transit Today

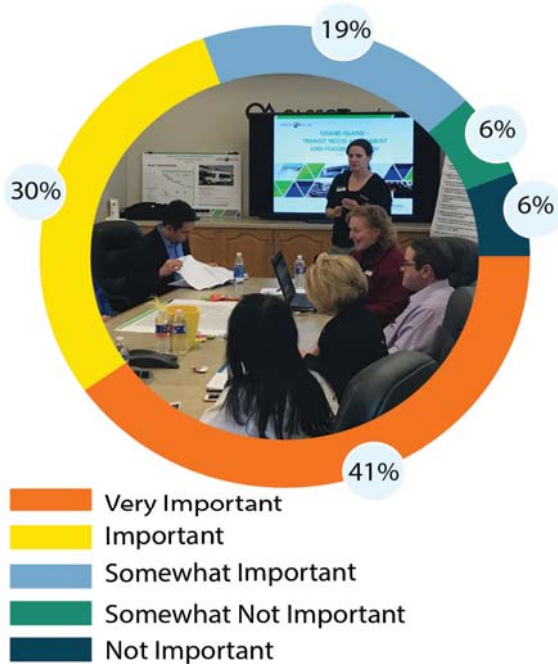
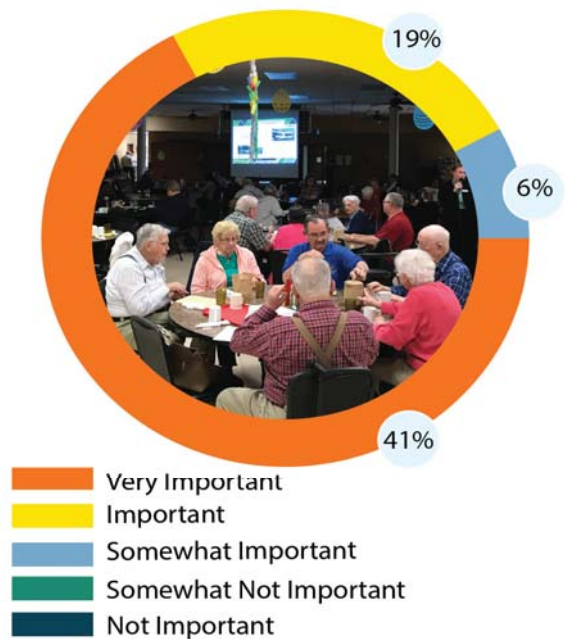


Figure 7.2: Importance of Transit Tomorrow



### 7.6.3 How Efficient Is Our Transit Service

A mixed response was received from participants for rating how efficient is transit in Grand Island today. Several participants believe the current transit system is somewhat effective. However, only effective for serving transit dependent populations in Grand Island. Over 50 percent of participants stated the transit system was “Somewhat Not Effective” due to restricted hours of operations, age limits, and limited marketing.

### 7.6.4 Greatest Benefit of Transit

Participants were asked to provide the greatest benefit of Hall County Public Transit in Grand Island today. The primary response was the agency provides transportation options to those residents who need the service and do not have other mobility options. Other popular answers were good service for the elderly, employment, and medical trips. Others stated some service is better than no service.

### 7.6.5 Enhancing Transit Service

How can we enhance service today was the primary question that generated the most discussion among meeting participants. The most widely agreed upon responses were:

- Increase marketing efforts
- Increase the service’s hours of operation
- Decrease the age restriction
- Partner with local businesses
- Decrease time needed to call ahead for a reservation
- Add scheduled service, bus stops

### 7.6.6 Areas Transit Should Serve

Participants were asked to identify places in the community that transit should serve. Popular answers varied from “Major Employers” to specific answers such as Central Community College and Walmart. General consensus included transit needed to focus on serving Medical Centers, Employment Centers, and Educational Centers. Beyond these areas, many people identified Walmart and the Grand Island Public Library as important locations that need service.



Open House at the Grand Generation Center



Open House at the Grand Island Public Library

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## CHAPTER 8 COMMUNITY SURVEY & TRANSIT RIDER SURVEY

### 8.1 Introduction

As part of this transit study, the project team had a goal of maximizing public interest and input for the study. The community's feedback and diverse viewpoints enrich the evaluation and purpose of the study and provide open and meaningful input. The local project team conducted a community survey using Survey Monkey, an online survey software tool. A survey questionnaire was distributed through a variety of networks in an effort to collect feedback and input from across the county. The survey launched on May 30, 2017 and closed on June 13, 2017.

The survey was available in English or Spanish with separate online active links to the appropriate language. There was also the option of having the survey available in hard-copy. The local project team and focus group attendees were viable partners in the distribution of surveys to particular markets that may or may not have access to the survey.

- The questionnaire was designed with a mindset of short and simple, so that the audience would not lose interest in completing the survey. The majority of questions were designed for ease of use, which allowed the survey respondent to check off a box or click on a box,
- Notification of the survey was available from multiple sources, including Twitter, Facebook, email blast, newspaper article, radio spots, and TV.

At the conclusion of the community survey, the results provided a snapshot of opinions for transportation in Hall County.

To compliment the online community survey, the local project team also developed the transit rider survey for Hall County Public Transportation. The rider survey is administered by the Hall County Public Transportation drivers, who are available for assistance to the rider if needed. The survey was conducted over two weeks. **This chapter summarizes only a sample of the questions asked in each survey. Refer to Technical Memorandum 2 for the complete summary.**

### 8.2 Survey Analysis Summary

Chapter 8 analyzes both the online survey distributed to the Grand Island area community, and the transit rider survey distributed on the Hall County Public Transportation buses. The surveys were intended to not only assess the existing transit services according to riders and non-riders, but also gather customer satisfaction of transit within the community. In total, 267 respondents participated in the community survey, and 56 riders completed surveys in June 2017. English and Spanish versions were available for the community survey and an English version was available for the ridership survey. **Appendix B** includes the Transit Rider Survey and **Appendix C** includes the Online Community Survey.

Essential information was gathered in each of the surveys regarding ridership patterns, demographic characteristics, and how respondents felt about the existing and future transit services. While the two surveys were administered separately, a total of 13 of the 20 questions were included in both surveys. The majority of online community survey respondents had:

- higher employment rate (80 percent working full-time compared to only 15 percent of bus riders)
- higher income level (17 percent making less than \$25,000 annually compared to 79 percent of riders)
- owned more vehicles (90 percent having access to a vehicle compared to 15 percent of riders)
- used public transportation much less (nearly 75 percent of community respondents had never taken the bus)

A high rate of respondents from each survey believed public transportation was very valuable to the community today (48 percent of community respondents compared to 78 percent of riders), and agreed with the priorities for public transportation in the future (ranking the same top three improvements, such as adding scheduled bus routes, expanding service days and hours).

### 8.3 Online Community Survey

The community survey asks respondents how often they use public transportation in Grand Island. Approximately 75 percent of the respondents never use transit, as shown in **Figure 8.1**.

For those respondents using public transportation, the survey asked what the primary purpose of those trips were. This specific question asks respondents to mark all that apply, so percentages are based on the total number of individual responses, and not the number of people responding. While 'home', 'shopping and entertainment', and 'medical' trip purposes vary slightly, both 'other' and 'work' trips make up nearly half of all responses, as shown in **Figure 8.2**. Other locations included destinations such as the senior center, searching for employment, therapy, banking, family, social opportunities, and volunteering.

Figure 8.1: How often do you ride public transit?

How often do you ride public transit services in Grand Island?

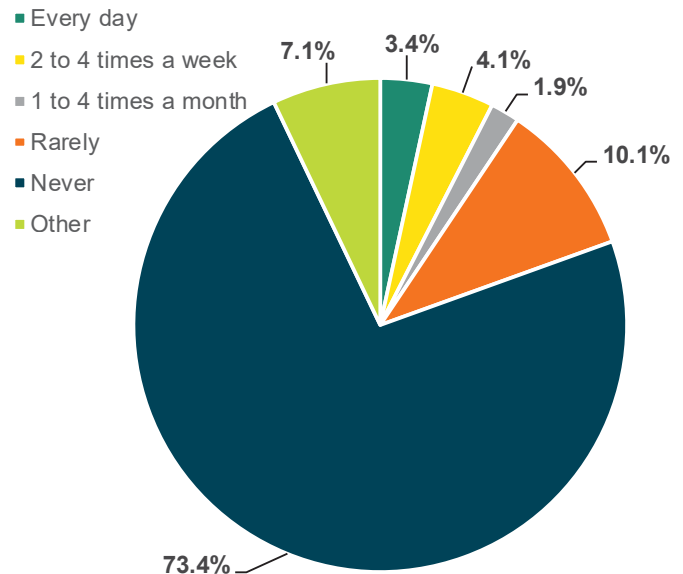
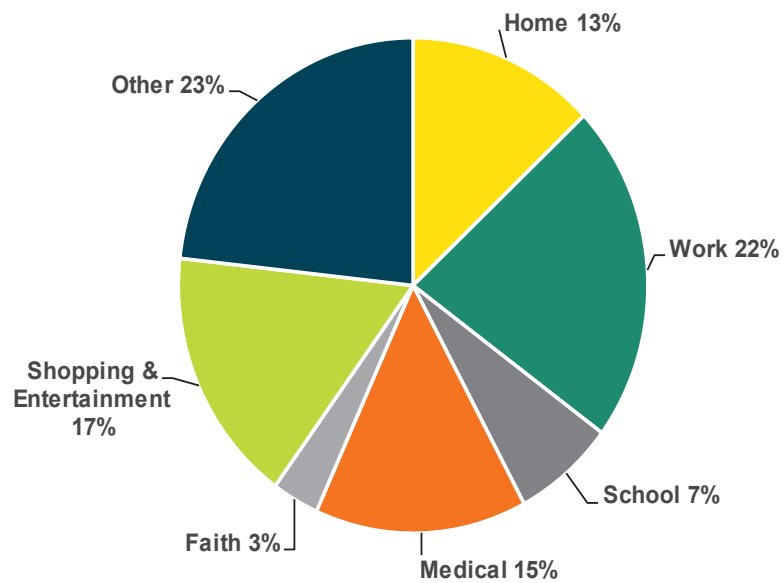


Figure 8.2: If you use public transportation, what is your primary purpose?

If you use public transportation, what is your primary purpose?



### 8.3.1 Socio-economic Characteristics

In the community survey, several questions asked respondents' background, including gender, age, employment status, and annual household income.

**Figure 8.3** shows most frequent age range was 36 to 50 years, while few respondents were under the age of 18 or over 65 years.

**Figure 8.4** illustrates nearly 80 percent of respondents were employed full-time, with the next largest group (7 percent) were employed part-time.

The largest single group in regards to annual household income included those making over \$75,000. The remaining 60 percent was split between the four lower income brackets, with those earning between \$50,001 and \$75,000 making up the next largest group, as shown in **Figure 8.5**

Figure 8.3: Characteristics - Age

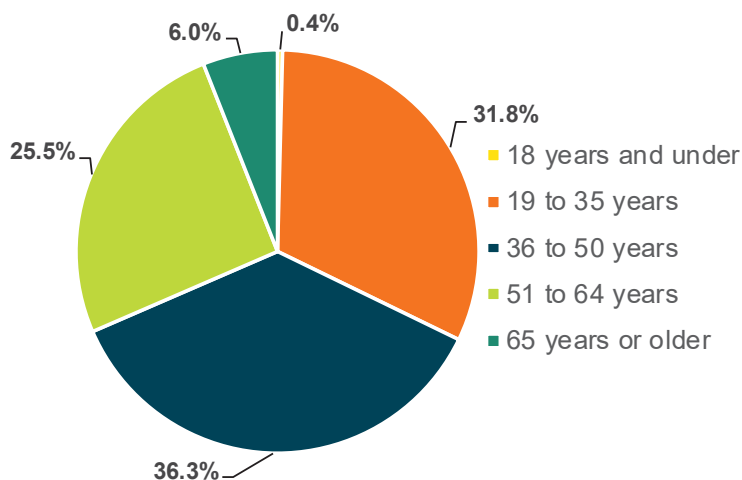


Figure 8.4: Characteristics - Employment

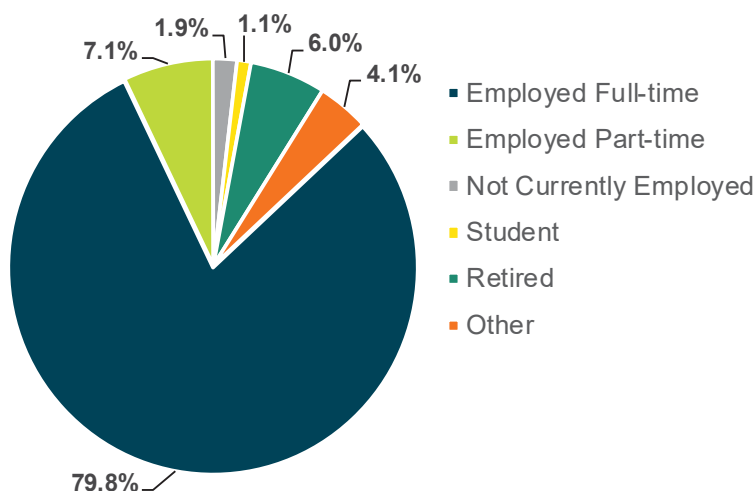
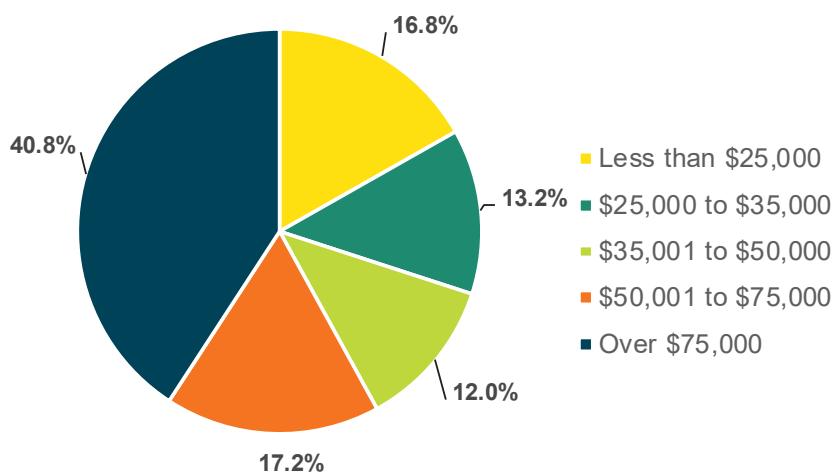


Figure 8.5: Characteristics - Household Income





### 8.3.2 Transit Service Perceptions

When respondents were asked how valuable Hall County Public Transportation is for the community today, approximately 65 percent agreed the service is a valuable resource.

**Figure 8.6** shows the responses. Approximately 36 percent of the remaining respondents ranked transit's value with a one, two, or three.

**Figure 8.7** shows the prioritized improvements suggested from survey respondents. The most important improvements included adding scheduled bus routes within Grand Island, expanding service hours, and expanding service days.

Figure 8.6: Value of Hall County Public Transportation

On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 = Not Valuable, 5 = Very Valuable), how valuable do you think Hall County Public Transportation is for our community today?

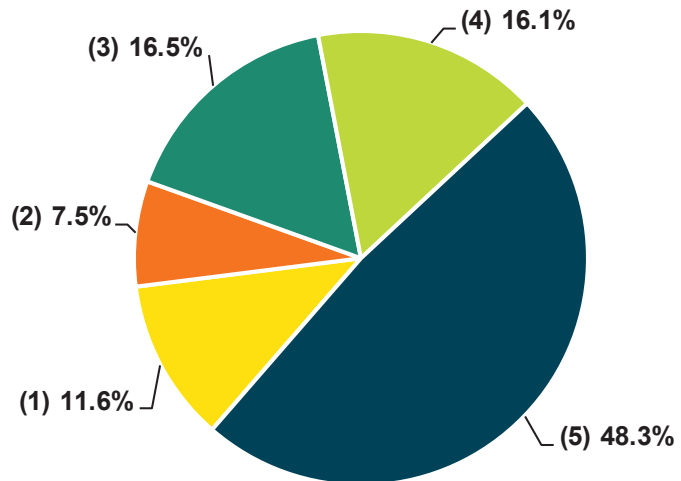


Figure 8.7: Priority of Hall County Public Transportation Improvements

How would you prioritize improvements to Hall County Public Transportation in the short range, 1-3 years? (1= most important, and 8= least important)

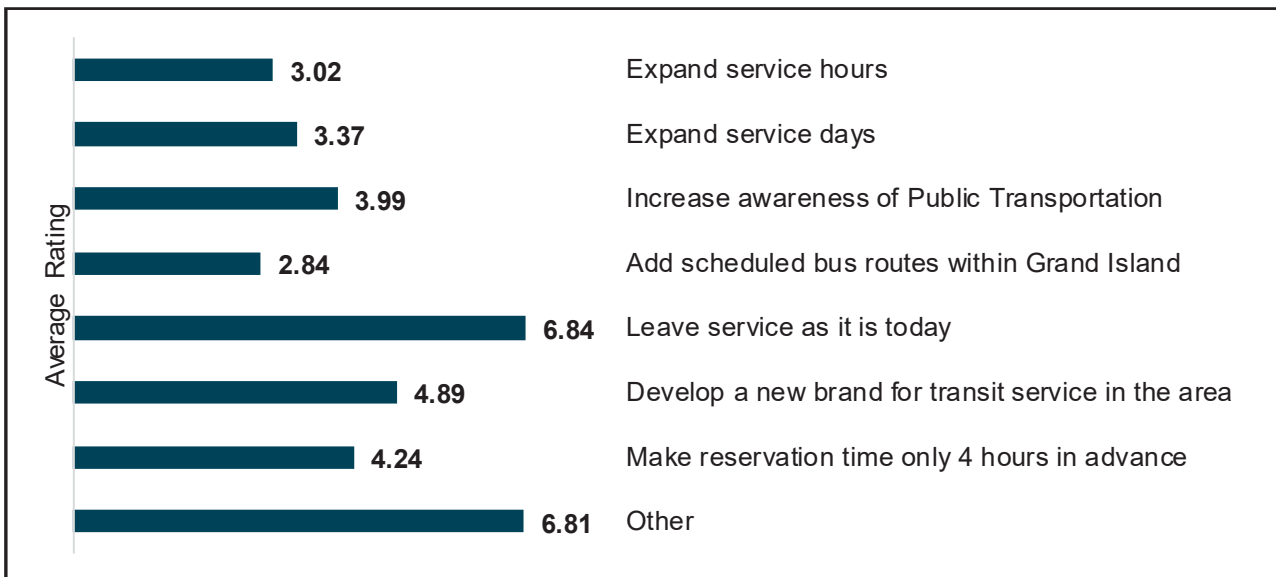


Figure 8.7 also shows increasing awareness as the fourth priority for transit. Over 100 comments were submitted, suggesting social media and the internet as the preferred media (34 percent). Approximately 15 percent prefer television, radio, newspaper or fliers for advertisements. To increase the level of service, respondents suggested removing the 24-hour reservation requirement and implementing a fixed route system.

The survey asked respondents what the greatest benefit Hall County Public Transportation offers to the community. Of the 140 answers received, 18 percent of respondents considered those residents who do not have access to a vehicle receive the greatest benefit from the service. The elderly population was the second highest response benefiting from services, with the disabled, low-income and students falling close behind. Respondents also considered the specific trip type as a benefit to the community. While medical trips received the most attention, other beneficial trip purposes included commuting to work and shopping.

The survey also asked residents to describe how they believe the community perceives Hall County Public Transportation. Of the 205 total responses, the majority of comments received followed themes involving a lack of awareness of the available service, or that existing service is for the elderly, disabled or low-income. Perceptions also indicated that existing services should be increased. Refer to the word cloud in Figure 8.8 for a visual representation of the comments received. The larger the words appear, the more times they were used to describe the community’s perception.

The survey form also allowed residents to leave additional comments regarding Hall County Public Transportation. Most comments were generally positive reaffirming the importance of public transportation in the community. Other responses discussed personal stories about their own situation or someone else they know who depended on the transit services to meet their daily needs. Other comments included the following opportunities to improve the existing services:

- Convert demand-response service to fixed route
- Remove the 24-hour reservation requirement
- Expand service hours and days
- Change the age restrictions
- Additional bicycle/pedestrian options
- Additional promotion for the service
- Additional bilingual services

Figure 8.8: Perception of Hall County Public Transportation

What is the perception in the community of Hall County Public Transportation?



## 8.4 Transit Rider Survey

A transit rider survey was completed in June 2017. The drivers for Hall County Public Transportation handed out surveys to riders who completed while on the bus. Fifty six completed surveys were returned.

Approximately 22 percent of the respondents use transit every day, with 46 percent using the bus 2 to 4 times per week, as shown in **Figure 8.9**.

The survey asked transit riders how they would travel if public transportation were not available. Just over one-third said they would not make the trip, as shown in **Figure 8.10**. The second highest response was "Take an alternative mode of transportation."

Transit riders were asked how valuable public transportation is within the community. Over 84 percent stated Valuable or Very Valuable, as shown in **Figure 8.11**. Just under 10 percent stated transit as Not Valuable.

Figure 8.9: How Often Public Transit is Used

*How often do you ride public transit services in Grand Island?*

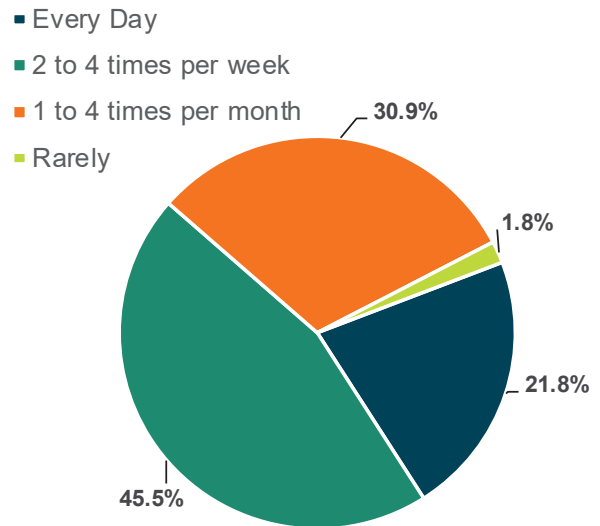
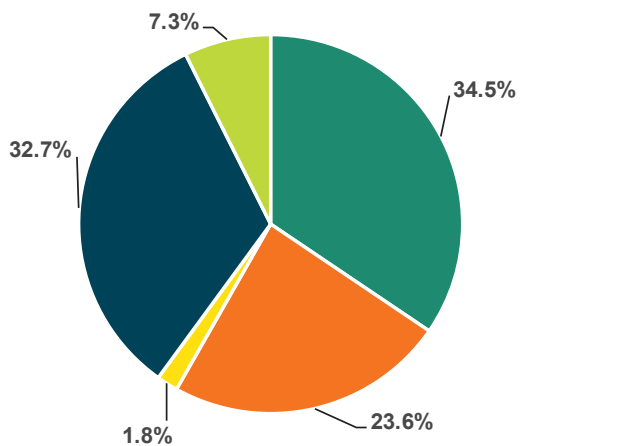


Figure 8.10: Other Transportation Options

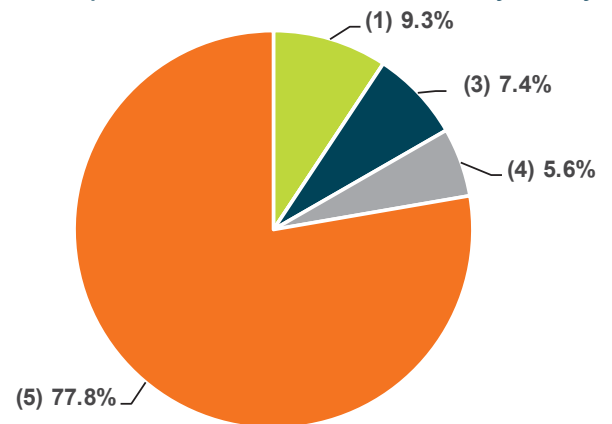
*If public transportation was not available, you would:*



- Not make this trip.
- Take an alternative mode of transportation.
- Call friend or family.
- Look for alternative destination or place to go.
- Other

Figure 8.11: Value of Hall County Transportation Today

*On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not valuable, 5 = Very Valuable), how valuable do you think Hall County Public Transportation is for our community today?*



Riders reported their origin and destination on the rider survey. Nearly 89 percent were originating from home, as shown in **Figure 8.12**. The most common destinations were medical appointments, work and other. **Figure 8.13** also shows school, social trips, and home for common destinations. **Figure 8.14** shows 85 percent of transit riders do not have a vehicle available for travel. Approximately 30 percent have a valid driver's license, as shown in **Figure 8.15**.

Figure 8.12: Origin of Trip  
Where is your origin?

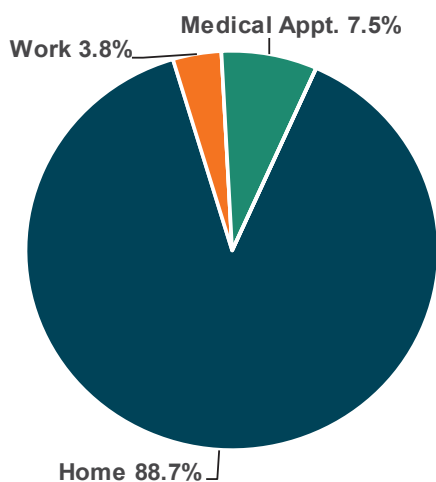


Figure 8.13: Destination of Trip  
Where is your destination?

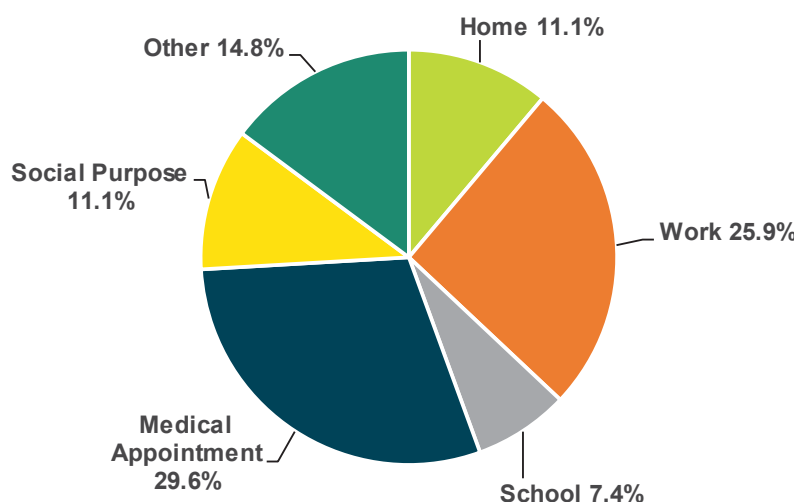


Figure 8.14: Availability of Vehicle  
Do you typically have a vehicle available for travel?

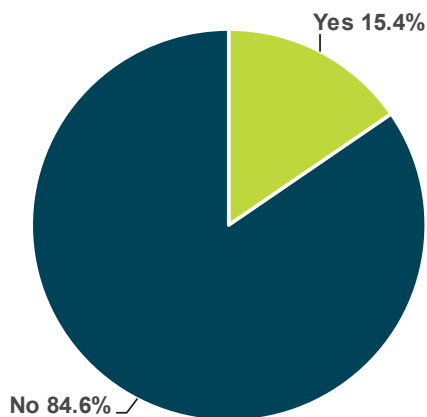
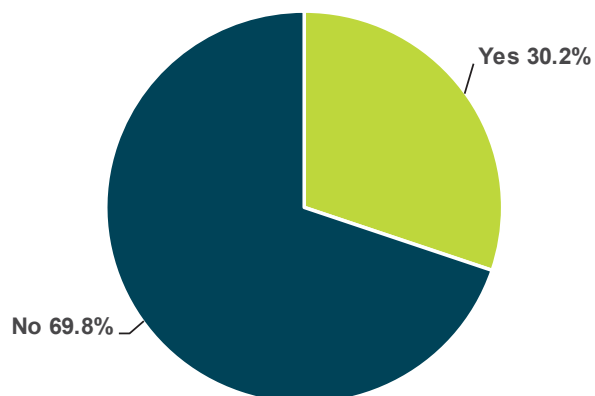


Figure 8.15: Possession of Driver's License  
Do you have a valid driver's license?



### 8.4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics

Information collected from transit riders taking the on-board survey included characteristics such as gender, age, employment status, annual household income, and ethnicity. A selection of the characteristics are detailed below.

Nearly 79 percent of transit riders said their annual household income is less than \$25,000, as shown in **Figure 8.16**. The Department of Health and Human Services' poverty distinction is approximately \$25,000 for a family of four.

The age of respondents for the rider survey, shown in **Figure 8.17**, reports 67 percent above age 50. Sixteen percent of the transit survey respondents were between age 19 to 35 and another 16 percent age 36 to 50 years.

**Figure 8.18** shows approximately half of the respondents were retired. Transit riders who selected the 'other' option specified their employment status as disabled.

Figure 8.16: Characteristics - Household Income

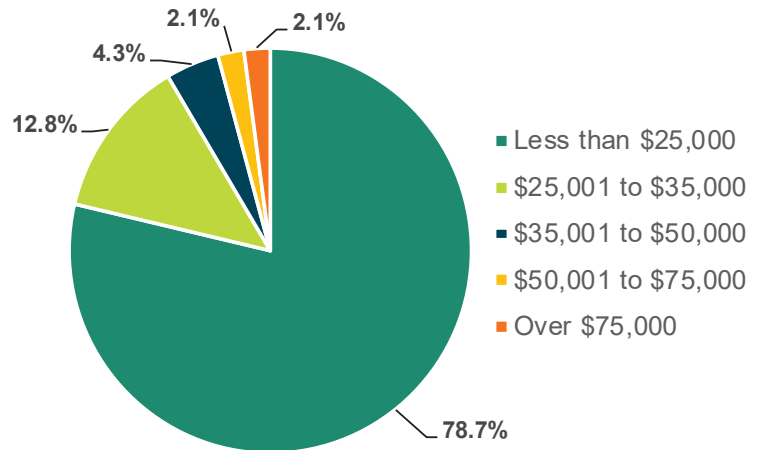


Figure 8.17: Characteristics - Age

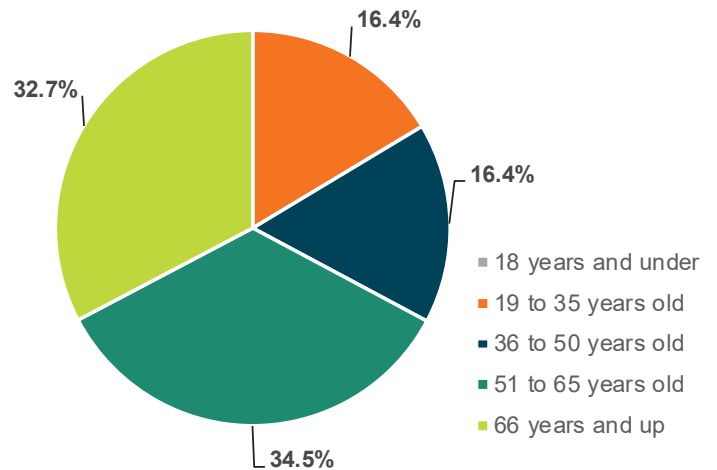


Figure 8.18: Characteristics - Employment Status

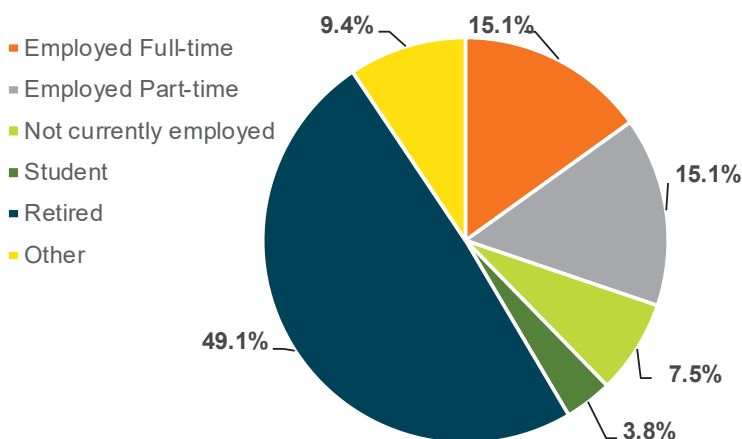
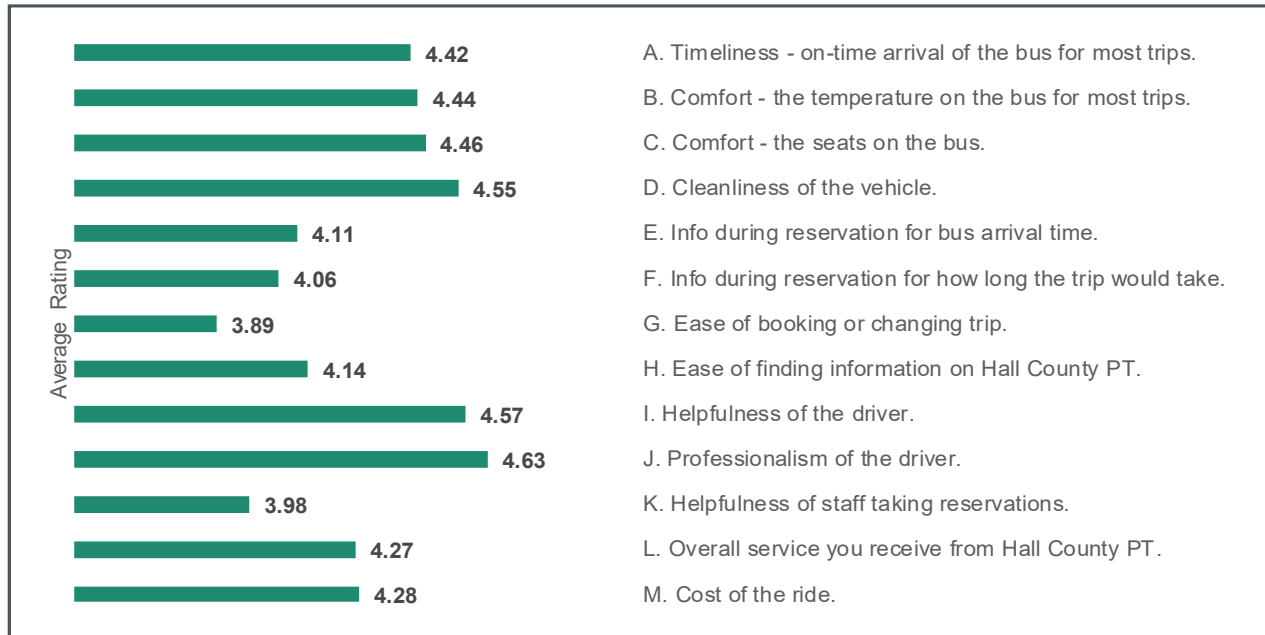


Figure 8.19 Aspects of Hall County Public Transportation

Please rate the following aspects of Hall County Public Transportation.



Transit riders ranked aspects of Hall County Public Transportation, as shown in **Figure 8.19**. Possible answers ranged from very satisfied to neutral to very dissatisfied. The higher values signify a higher rate of satisfaction, and the lower values correspond to a lower rate of satisfaction. The most satisfied and least satisfied aspects are listed below.

**Most Satisfied Aspects**

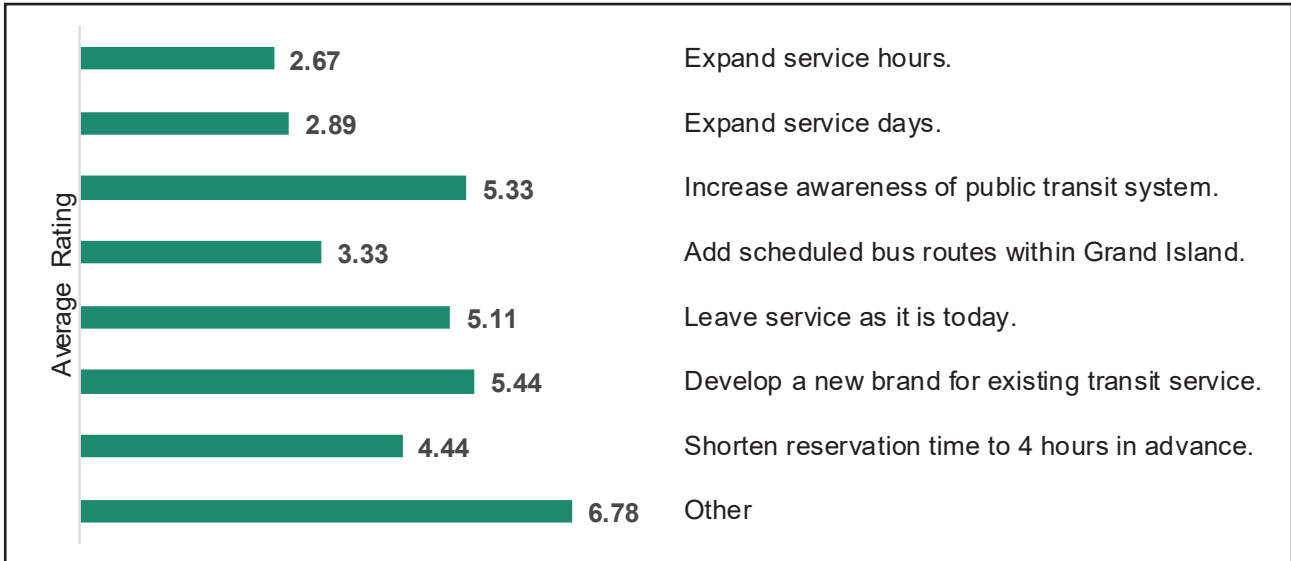
- Professionalism of the driver (4.63)
- Helpfulness of the driver (4.57)
- Cleanliness of the vehicle (4.55)
- Comfort - the seats of the bus (4.44)
- Comfort - the temperature of the bus (4.44)

**Least Satisfied Aspects**

- Ease of booking or changing a trip (3.89)
- Info during reservation for how long the trip would take (4.06)
- Info during reservation for bus arrival time (4.11)
- Ease of finding information on Hall County Public Transportation (4.14)
- Overall service you receive from Hall County Public Transportation (4.27)

Figure 8.20 Priority Improvements

How would you prioritize improvements to Hall County Public Transportation in the short range (1 - 3 years)?



Satisfaction ratings help prioritize opportunities for Hall County Public Transportation to improve the rider experience. The transit rider survey gathered input on ways to improve transit service in the short term. Riders were asked to prioritize these short range improvements to Hall County Public Transportation by ranking from most important to least important (1 = most, 8 = least). **Figure 8.20** shows the results; however, it should be noted 9 of the 56 respondents (16%) answered this question. The most important priority was expanding service hours, followed closely by expanding service days and scheduled service. These three improvements were also prioritized in the top three for the online community survey respondents as well. The lower priority choices were:

- Develop a new brand for existing service
- Increase awareness of public transit system
- Leave service as it is today

Transit riders could make additional comments regarding Hall County Public Transportation at the end of the survey. While most of the comments were generally positive statements reaffirming the importance of public transportation in the community, other responses offered suggestions to increase service on the weekends, and add more vehicles when demand is at its highest.



## CHAPTER 9 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - ROUND TWO

### 9.1 Introduction

The second round of focus groups meetings was held in Grand Island on August 2-3, 2017. This chapter presents a brief review of the Round Two public engagement conducted thus far for the Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study. These opportunities are critical to the process and study and allow the project team to openly engage the community. Understanding the voice of the community ensures the final product reflects and encapsulates the goals and visions set out at the beginning.

The Round Two focus group meetings were made up of citizens from many different stakeholder groups, unlike the first round of focus group meetings where stakeholder groups met independently of each other. Community participation, surveys, and discussion were facilitated at the Olsson Associates Grand Island Office. A meeting was also held with the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Community participation provides Hall County Public Transportation, the City of Grand Island, and GIAMPO the opportunity to hear the community's opinions of the several different transit alternatives. With the vision and goals in mind, stakeholders were asked to participate in discussion and take a survey to rate different alternatives. **This chapter is a summary of the Public Engagement - Round Two phase of the study, the complete analysis can be found in Technical Memorandum 2.**



Round Two Focus Group Meeting

### 9.2 Focus Group Meetings

A series of focus group interviews were conducted on August 2-3, 2017, at the Olsson Associates office in Grand Island, 201 E 2nd St. Stakeholders included:

- Transportation providers
- Government partners
- Nonprofit organizations
- Elected officials
- Faith-based organizations
- Human service agencies
- Major Employers
- Educational services
- Elderly services
- Bicycle/Pedestrian partners
- Grow Grand Island partners
- Ethnic Heritage partners



The purpose of the Round Two focus group meetings was to present the different alternatives and for stakeholders to provide feedback. The feedback collected during the Round Two engagement fed directly into the final recommendations for the study.

The focus group meeting format involved facilitated discussion, community participation, and the completion of a survey in which the stakeholder was asked to rate each transit alternative based on certain criteria. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes. The meetings began with a brief informal presentation followed by discussion and the survey. The schedule of focus group meetings is shown in **Table 9.1**.

Table 9.1: Focus Group Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Activity	Location
<b>Wed., August 2, 2017</b>	8:00am - 8:30am	Set up	OA Office
	8:30am - 9:15am	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	9:30am - 10:15am	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	10:30am - 11:15am	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	11:30am - 12:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	12:30pm - 1:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	1:30pm - 2:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	2:30pm - 3:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	3:30pm - 4:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	4:30pm - 5:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	5:30pm - 6:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	6:30pm - 7:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
<b>Thurs., August 3, 2017</b>	7:30pm - 8:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	8:00am - 8:30am	Set up	OA Office
	8:30am - 9:15am	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	9:30am - 10:15am	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	10:30am - 11:15am	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	11:30am - 12:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	12:30pm - 1:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	1:30pm - 2:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	2:30pm - 3:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	3:30pm - 4:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	4:30pm - 5:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
	5:30pm - 6:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office
6:30pm - 7:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office	
7:30pm - 8:15pm	Focus Group Meeting	OA Office	

Prepared surveys were distributed to each focus group member and then comments recorded. The responses received throughout the public engagement process help the local project team identify what aspects of the designed alternatives were attractive and unattractive for the community of Grand Island and Hall County. Below is a copy of the survey and additional comment card provided to each focus group participant.

Focus Group Survey

## Comment Sheet – Grand Island Transit Study

1. How effective does this transit option meet the goals/objectives? (3 = Very; 2 = Somewhat; 1 = Not)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	3	2	1
Goal 1: Efficiently provide mobility options to area residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goal 2: Enhance economic activity by improving access to employment for area residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goal 3: Coordinate with local organizations for public transportation options, while being good stewards of the public dollar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Knowing the ridership projections for this transit service, how effective do you think this option is for our region for the investment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How effective is this transit option by gauging the number of activity centers served?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How effective is this transit option serving the Greatest Transit Need areas in the region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. How effective is this transit option providing access to job sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Knowing the cost estimates for this transit option, how likely is this transit option to be implemented in the next 5 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. When is a realistic time frame for this transit option?			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 Yrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 Yrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 Yrs	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure

Focus Group Additional Comment Sheet

## Comment Sheet – Grand Island Transit Study

1. In the short-term, pick 2 of the 5 additional services that may be realistic for implementation?

2. Which would you select as the TOP additional service to focus on first?

3. Would you seriously consider using rideshare or vanpool services for your commuting?

- Yes       No       Not Sure

4. What would you suggest as a starter route for the Commuter Service?

Why?

5. Do you think Grand Island would be a good pilot community to test autonomous vehicle technology?     Yes       No

Why or Why Not?

6. Does this transit option meet the goals/objectives?

- |                               |                              |                             |                                   |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Commuter Service              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure |
| Regional Airport Service      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure |
| Rideshare Program             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure |
| Vanpool Program               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure |
| Autonomous Vehicle Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure |

Participants completed surveys and comment cards



## 9.3 Summary of Focus Group Meetings

Focus group attendees provided detailed and conclusive responses regarding the multiple transit options. The following text and figures provide a summary of the overall comments from the second round of public engagement. Each participant completed a survey for three of the four main alternatives (Fixed Route, Same Day Demand Response, and Flexible Routes), as well as the five additional services (Regional Airport Service, Commuter Service, Rideshare, Vanpool, and Autonomous Vehicle Technology).

The following discussion provides overall feedback from the focus group attendees, which was approximately 280 total comments from attendees. The summary is a result of aggregating all comment cards received. Attendees were asked to score by how effective the question may be. The comment card is shown on page 65 and 66 of this report.

*Question 1: How effectively does this transit option meet the goals/objectives?*

**Goal 1: Efficiently provide mobility options to area residents.**

Summary: Thirty-five percent of respondents believed Fixed Route Service and Flexible Route Service very effectively met Goal 1, while 30 percent believed Same Day Demand Response met Goal 1.

*Question 1: How effectively does this transit option meet the goals/objectives?*

**Goal 2: Enhance economic activity by improving access to employment for area residents.**

Summary: Goal 2 focuses on access to employment. Focus group members scored the Flexible Route highest for being most effective meeting the goal. The Same Day Service scored second highest. It should be noted the members of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) during the July 20, 2017 meeting, scored Same Day Demand Response Service as very effectively meeting Goal 2.

*Question 1: How effectively does this transit option meet the goals/objectives?*

**Goal 3: Coordinate with local organizations for public transportation options, while being good stewards of the public dollar.**

Summary: Goal 3 focuses on working with the community to give the best possible service in the most realistic and responsible fashion. Respondents ranked the Fixed Route Service option for being the most effective meeting Goal 3, with Flexible Route Service closely following. The Same Day Service option scored highest for somewhat meeting Goal 3. There were very few responses stating the services do not effectively meet Goal 3 criteria.



Focus Group Meetings

*Question 2: Knowing the ridership projections for this transit service, how effective do you think this option is for our region for the investment?*

Summary: Forty-five percent of respondents scored the Flexible Route Service as the most effective transit alternative. Through discussion, many focus group participants viewed the investment in Flexible Route Service as an appropriate stepping stone to one day having Fixed Route Service. No participants believed that Flexible Route Service was Not Effective for the investment. Twenty-five percent of participants believed Same Day Demand Response as the most effective alternative for the investment.

**Question 3: How effective is this transit option by gauging the number of activity centers served?**

Summary: Participants viewed maps with relevant activity centers in Grand Island and were asked to rate how effective the transit alternatives were in serving these areas. Thirty-eight percent of respondents scored Fixed Route Service “Most Effective”, while 35 percent believed Flexible Route Service was “Most Effective”. During focus group discussion, it was strongly stated JBS needed to be included in the Flexible Route service area and have options of scheduled service during major shift changes.

**Question 4: How effective is this transit option by serving the Greatest Transit Need areas in the region?**

Summary: Approximately 75 percent of focus groups respondents scored Flexible Route Service and Fixed Route Service as most effective. The TAC scored Same Day Demand Response service as the most effective. Attendees suggested more transit needs in the future for areas of Grand Island west of Highway 281.

**Question 5: How effective is this transit option providing access to job sites?**

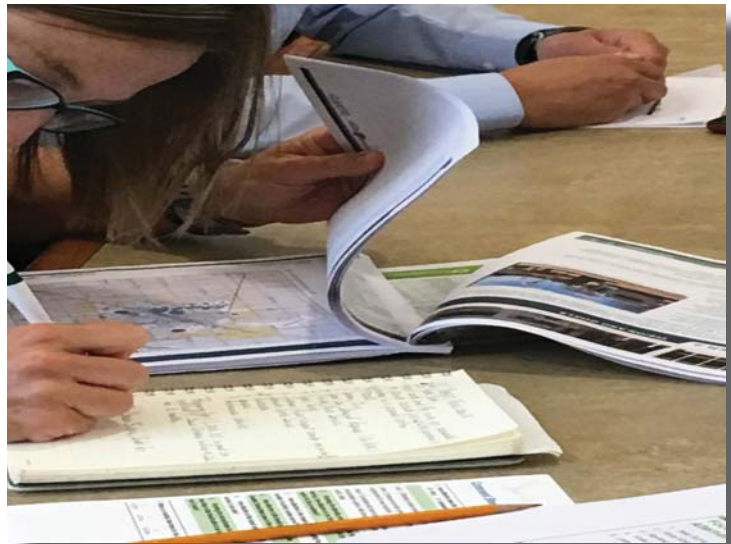
Summary: Forty-one percent of participants believed Fixed Route was most effective, while Flexible Route Service was the next highest with 32 percent. Nine percent of respondents believed Same Day Demand Response would not be effective. Many people expressed they would have ranked Flexible Route Service higher if it provided direct access to JBS.

**Question 6: Knowing the cost estimates for this transit option, how likely is this transit option to be implemented in the next 5 years?**

Summary: Most respondents agreed Same Day Demand Response and Flexible Route Service could be implemented in the next five years. The lower cost of Same Day Demand Response and Flexible Routes made implementation more realistic in the next five years. Forty percent believed the cost and planning of a Fixed Route system would make implementation not likely in the next five years.

**Question 7: When is a realistic time frame for this transit option?**

Summary: A general consensus from focus group attendees was Same Day Demand Response would be the quickest to implement within 1 - 3 years. Participants believed there were less barriers to implementation, as it is the most similar to the transit service provided in Grand Island today. Sixty percent believed Flexible Route Service in Grand Island could be implemented in 4 - 5 years. Finally, 43 percent believed Fixed Route Service could be implemented in Grand Island in 5 - 10 years.



Round 2 Focus Group Meeting

## 9.4 Additional Alternatives Comment Form Summary

Participants completed comment sheets for the five additional transit services. Participants were asked to pick two of the five services that may be realistic for implementation. The two most popular choices were the Rideshare Program (54%) and the Commuter Express Routes (45%). **Figure 9.1** shows respondents priority for the additional services.

Focus group participants were asked if they would seriously consider using Rideshare or Vanpool services for commuting. Less than five percent responded they would consider it. Even though members of the focus group were not interested in rideshare themselves, they understood the importance of having these services available.

Focus Group participants were also asked to weigh in on discussions of Autonomous Vehicle Technology. **Figure 9.2** shows the results when people were asked if they would consider Grand Island a good pilot community to test autonomous vehicle technology.

Finally participants were asked to answer if the five additional transit services met the goals and objectives of the study. The Rideshare service had the highest response with 61 percent believing the service does meet the goals of the study. The Regional Airport Service scored lowest, with 52 percent saying this service did not meet the study's goals and objectives. **Figure 9.3** shows the results on the following page.

Figure 9.1: Top Service Priority

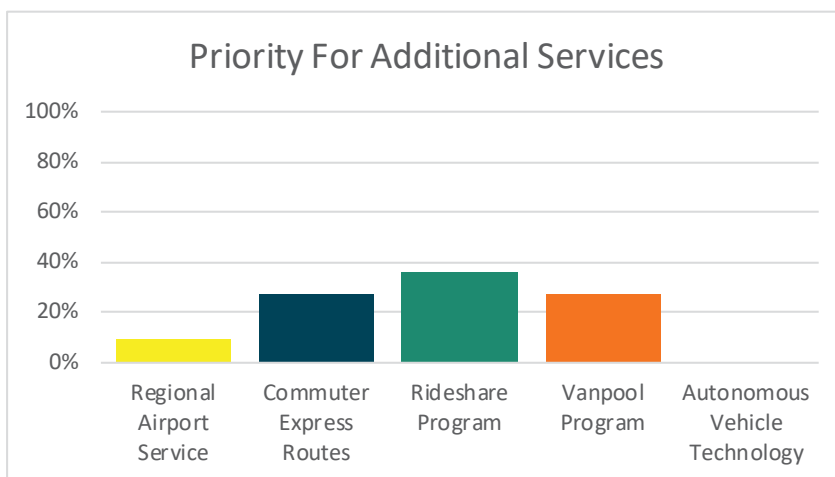


Figure 9.2 Autonomous Vehicle Technology

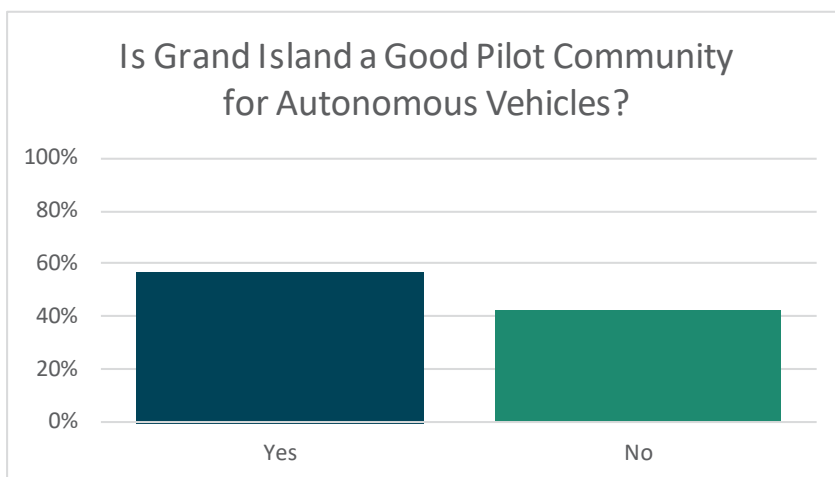
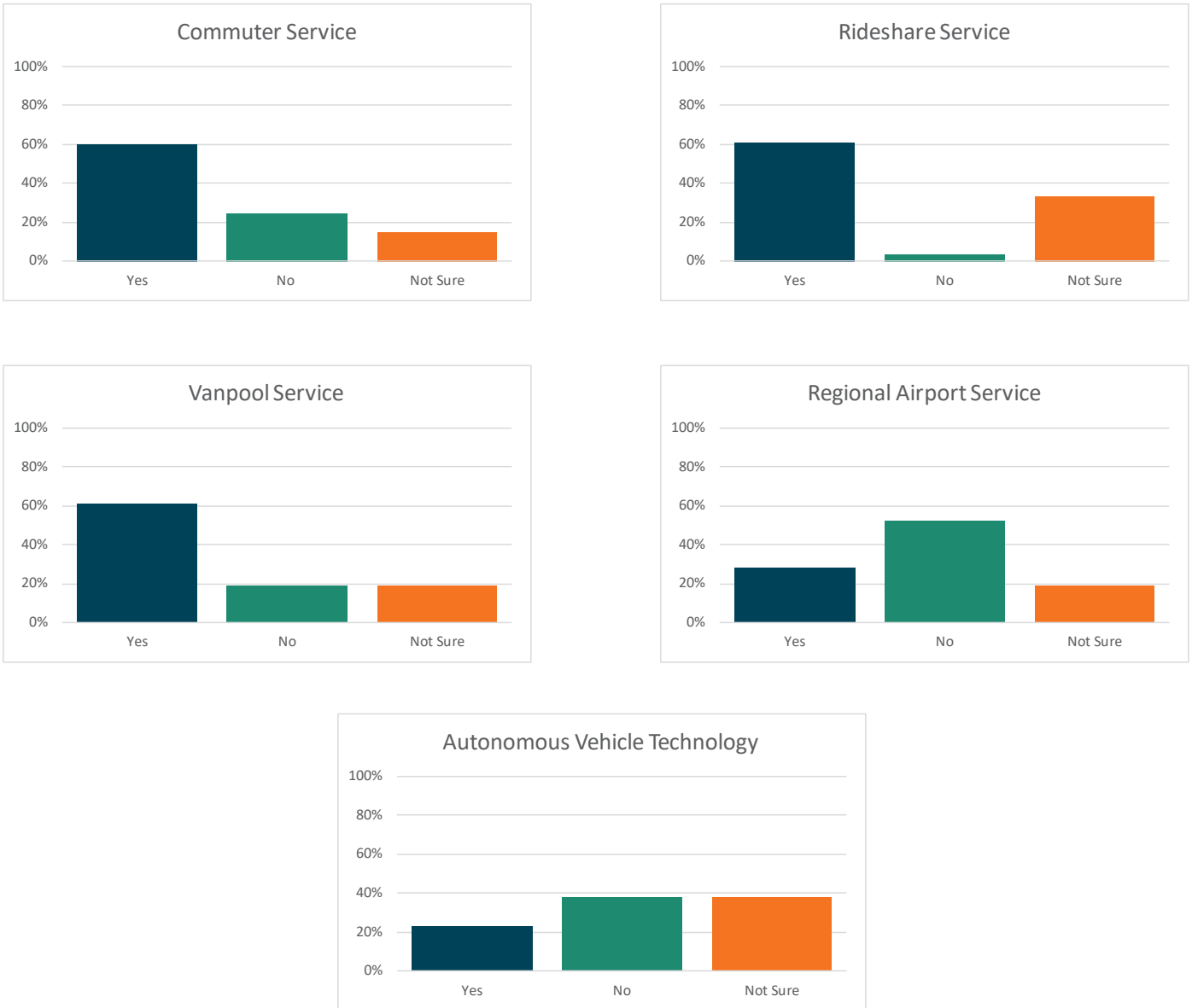


Figure 9.3: Do the Additional Transit Services Meet the Goals/Objectives?



## 9.5 Transit Bus Rider Survey - Future Alternatives

The second round of public engagement also included a transit rider survey distributed on Hall County Public Transportation requesting opinions on potential future transit alternatives. The Transit Rider Survey is shown in **Appendix D**, with results from the 65 completed surveys summarized in the following section. The survey was distributed by drivers from August 23, 2017 - September 4, 2017.

The first two questions of the survey asked about scheduled bus service and curbside pickup, shown in **Figures 9.4** and **9.5**. Question 1 asked riders which service would be best for the community. Question 2 asked if there was a difference between what riders believed was best for the community and what their personal preference was. For both questions, curbside pickup was preferred over scheduled bus service by at least a three to one ratio.

Other commuting transit alternatives considered by riders included vanpool and rideshare programs. The results, shown in **Figure 9.6** on the following page, reveal approximately 70 percent said a vanpool or rideshare would not be a viable commute option or were unsure at this time. For existing transit riders, a vanpool or rideshare would be a viable alternative for approximately 30 percent of the respondents.

Question 4 asked transit riders to choose between either new service to Kearney/Hastings or enhanced bus service within Grand Island, and over 80 percent of respondents preferred enhanced bus service within the City of Grand Island, as shown in **Figure 9.7**. Riders were asked in Question 5 how often they need to go to the airport. Approximately 90 percent of respondents, summarized in **Figure 9.8**, on the following page, said they travel to the airport no more than once a year.

Question 6 of the survey asked riders to review two potential bus routes operating every 60 minutes. The routes were shown on the back of the survey. Approximately one-third of the respondents stated the two routes would be a good alternative for them. Respondents were also asked "Why or Why Not?" the two bus routes would be a good travel alternative. Comments included the routes would get people to important places they needed to go. Some transit riders said the routes were too far from their home or their destination. These findings are included in **Figure 9.9**.

Figure 9.4: Question No. 1

*In the next five years in Grand Island, what service do you think is best for the community?*

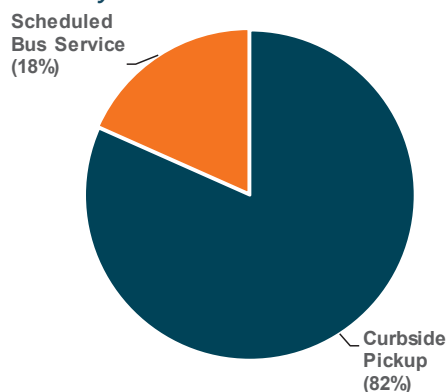


Figure 9.5: Question No. 2

*What would you prefer?*

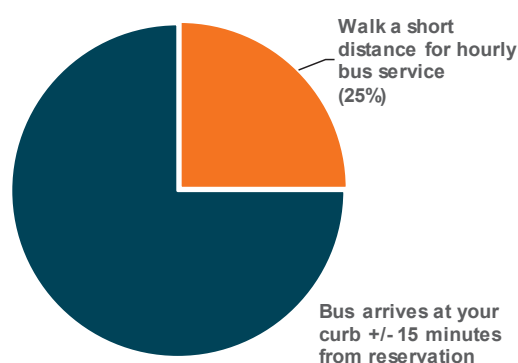




Figure 9.6: Question No. 3

Would a vanpool or rideshare program be a viable future option for your typical commute?

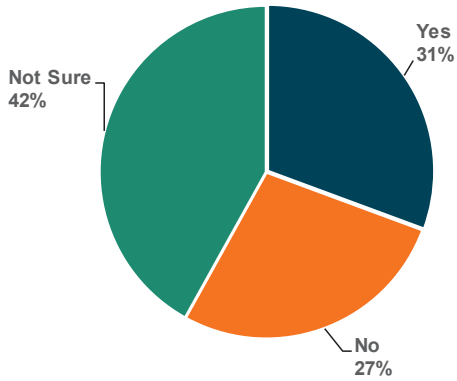


Figure 9.8: Question No. 5

How often do you need to go to an airport?

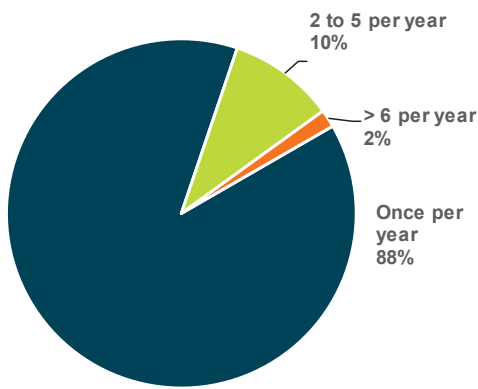


Figure 9.7: Question No. 4

What would you prefer?

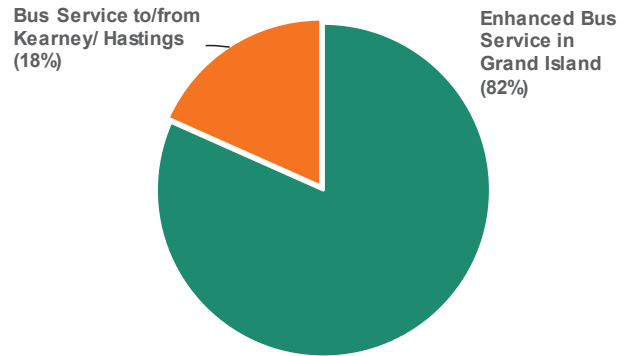
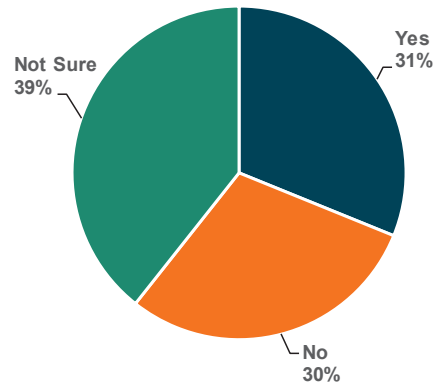


Figure 9.9: Question No. 6

Below are two bus routes in Grand Island that would operate every 60 minutes. Would these bus routes be a good alternative for you?





## CHAPTER 10 TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

### 10.1 Introduction

The future transit alternatives were developed and shaped by multiple factors. The factors included the vision and goals articulated early in the process, historical ridership and boarding / de-boarding data, transit need, gaps, evaluation of transit delivery in peer cities, input from the community, key stakeholders, rider and community surveys, and consideration of potential services within the community. **This chapter is a summary of the transit alternatives phase of the study. The complete analysis can be found in Technical Memorandum 2.**

### 10.2 Alternatives

Four primary alternatives were developed for the Grand Island and Hall County Region.

1. Status Quo
2. Same-day Demand Response
3. Flexible Route Service
4. Fixed Route Service

Five additional services were also examined for their potential application to service Grand Island area residents and employees.

5. Regional Airport Service
6. Commuter Express Routes
7. Rideshare Program
8. Vanpool Program
9. Autonomous Vehicle Technology



*Hall County Public Transportation*

The four primary alternatives (Status Quo, Same-day Demand Response, Flexible Route Service, and Fixed Route Service) are exclusive alternatives, meaning only one of these alternatives would be implemented. Each of the additional services (Regional Airport Service, Commuter Express Routes, Rideshare programs, and Vanpool programs) could theoretically operate alongside any of the other additional services, or with one of the primary alternatives. Autonomous Vehicle Technology, when sufficiently developed, could also be incorporated into any of the alternatives.

To determine how each alternative met the goals of the study and the goals of the GIAMPO area, the alternatives were analyzed with a variety of criteria, including:

- Market segment comparison of service
- Projected ridership
- Operating and capital cost estimates
- Access to activity centers
- Access to job sites
- Likelihood of implementation
- Stakeholder reception

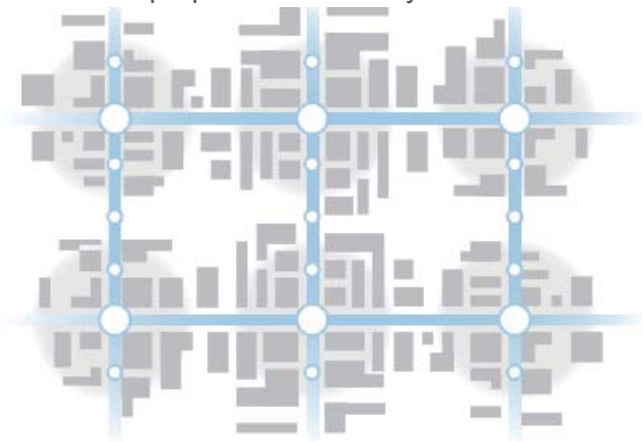
### 10.2.1 Status Quo

The minimum level of service for transit evaluation is to review the option, Status Quo, which involves no change in Hall County Public Transportation services. This option may be appropriate when the existing needs are met or if budget constraints are in effect during specific time periods. One of the primary factors impacting Grand Island over the next 10 to 20 year planning period is population projections for the region, which will result in an increase in the demand for transit service. Overall ridership has been constant and slowly increasing over the last few years.

The existing service is 24-hour reservation, demand-response service. The annual cost is approximately \$490,000. The annual revenue hours are 14,705 and 170,500 annual revenue miles. The annual ridership is approximately 35,000, with a cost per passenger trip of \$13.97.

Based on the information presented in Technical Memorandum 1 of baseline conditions and goals for the study, the Status Quo alternative is not a long-term sustainable transit alternative that will meet the needs, goals, and objectives of the community or the stakeholders. The purpose of this analysis is to determine if there is a more effective way to have the transit system function in order to meet the needs of the community and to analyze the system impacts of developing new and additional transit services to meet the needs of the community's residents.

The advantage of maintaining the existing transit service and transportation provider is there is little or minimal additional cost for the City of Grand Island. The major disadvantage of maintaining the Status Quo is the City will only meet a few of the community's stated needs or improve the identified system issues.



Grid System

### 10.2.2 Same Day Demand Response

Today, residents must make reservations 24-hours in advance. Transit Alternative 2 allows residents to have same day demand response service (ability to have a bus at pickup within a three-hour notice or shorter). The Same Day Service provides higher level of service to passengers by allowing them more flexibility in scheduling trips, and the freedom of not having to schedule service a day in advance.

Hall County Public Transportation currently uses Route Match, the trip scheduling software, to assist in scheduling and dispatching service. For Same Day Service, the software will require an upgrade to accommodate last minute scheduling. Same Day Service requires three additional vehicles to be in service, beyond the current service. The Same Day Service option picks up passengers at the curb and takes them directly to the curb of their destination, anywhere within the urbanized area. Service hours would be extended to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday. In addition, general public demand response would be available for all persons outside the urbanized area of Grand Island, with required 24-hour reservations.



Same Day Service in North Platte

### 10.2.3 Flexible Route Service

The Flexible Route Service alternative features two routes operating in Grand Island, with the option of calling into the office for a route deviation if the rider is unable to walk to the bus stop. When trip deviation requests are made, the bus deviates off the route to pickup or drop-off passenger, then travels back to the scheduled bus route. Trip deviations must be requested a day in advance. The two routes would operate every 60 minutes.

Passengers board a bus at a designated bus stop along the route, or for an additional fee, make an advanced reservation to either be dropped off or picked up at any location within ¼-mile of the regular route. In addition, high demand locations, such as JBS, could be scheduled as regularly scheduled service at various times throughout the day, even if these locations are not on the fixed alignment. The Flexible Routes primarily serve portions of the following corridors in Grand Island:

- US 281 / Dier's Avenue
- Old Potash Highway
- Downtown along portions of 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> streets
- 13<sup>th</sup> Street
- Oak Street
- Faidley Avenue
- Webb Road
- Lincoln Avenue
- Broadwell Avenue
- Capital Avenue
- Locust Street

Service hours would be until 6:30 pm. The Flexible Route service is similar to a traditional fixed route service, with branded vehicles, brochures with route maps and service schedules, and bus stops with signs, and shelters at high ridership locations. In addition to the Flexible Route Service, general public demand response would be available for all persons outside the deviation area, which is within the urbanized area of Grand Island.

Outside the urbanized area, general public demand response would be available for all persons, with required 24-hour reservations.

**Figure 10.1** presents the proposed routes for the Flexible Route Service alternative.

### 10.2.4 Fixed Route Service

The Fixed Route Service alternative has three scheduled routes throughout Grand Island, operating every 60 minutes. All passengers get on the bus and off at scheduled bus stops along each route. Eligible passengers who are unable to walk to the bus stop due to a physical or medical disability, have complementary curb-side paratransit service available to them, if the resident lives  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of the designated fixed bus route. **Figure 10.2** shows the proposed routes for the Fixed Route Service alternative.

Fixed Route Service hours operate until 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The Fixed Route Service will have branded vehicles, brochures with route maps and service schedules, designated bus stops, and shelters at high ridership locations.

The routes serve portions of the following corridors in Grand Island:

- US 281 / Dier's Avenue
- Old Potash Highway
- Downtown along portions of 1st, 3rd, and 4th streets
- 13th Street
- Oak Street
- Sycamore Street
- Faidley Avenue
- Webb Road
- Lincoln Avenue
- Broadwell Avenue
- Capital Avenue
- Locust Street
- Husker Highway

In addition, general public demand response would be available for all persons outside the urbanized area of Grand Island.



*Bus Stop in Tulsa, Oklahoma*



*Kingman (Arizona) Area Regional Transit Bus*

Figure 10.1: Flex Route Service Alternative

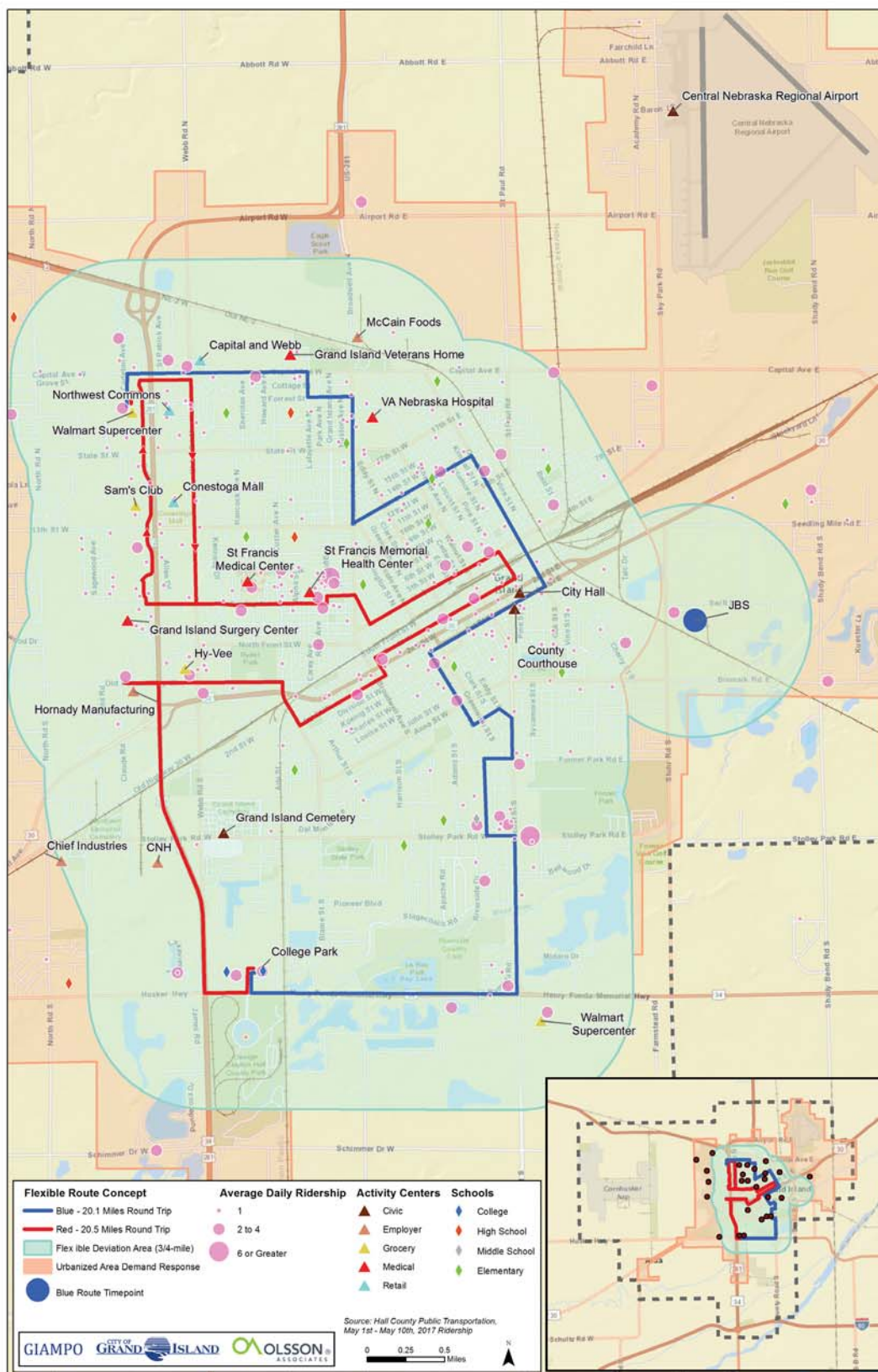
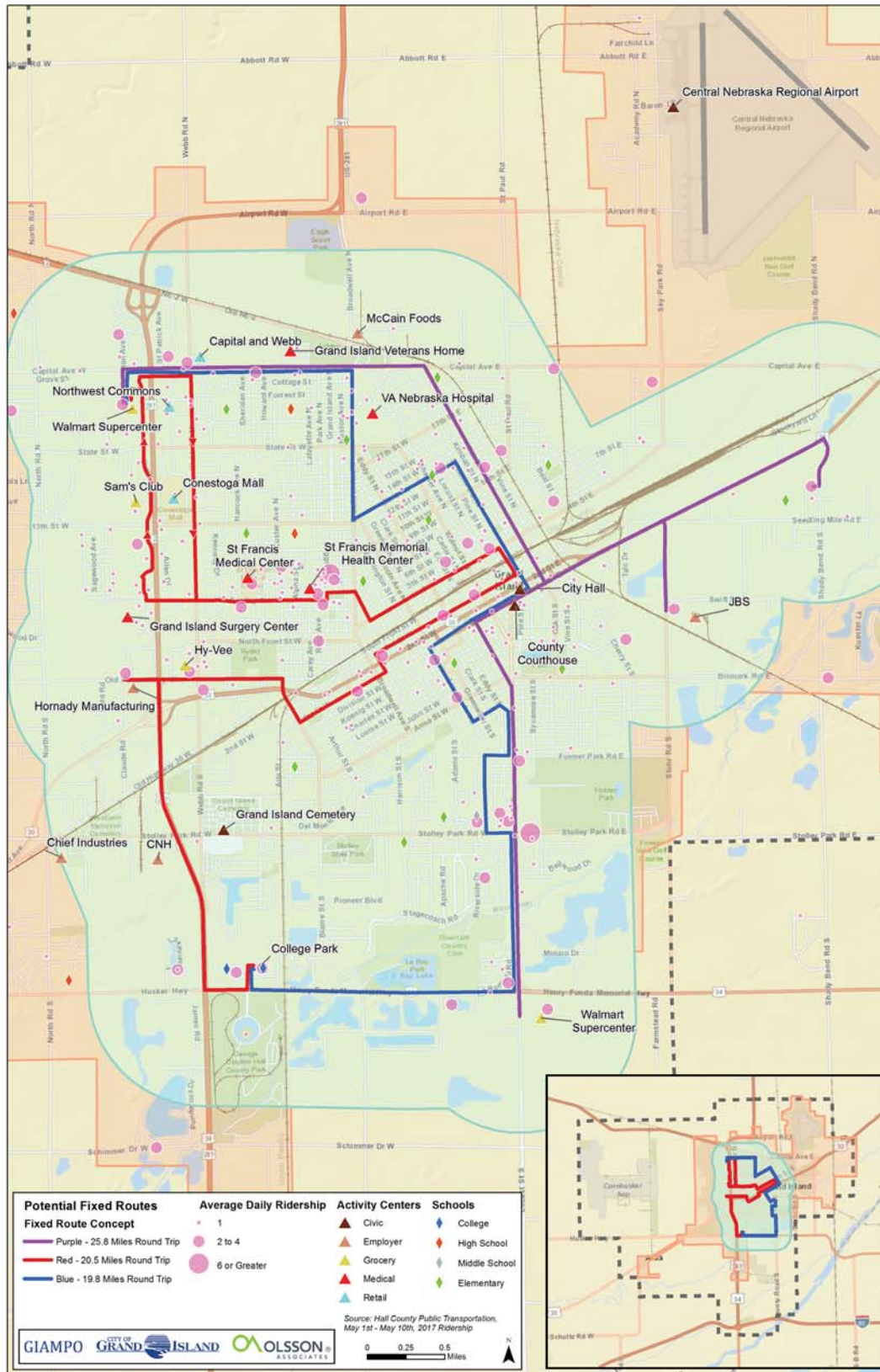


Figure 10.2: Fixed Route Service Alternative



## 10.2.5 Additional Services

The previous alternatives discussed primary modes of public transit within the Grand Island area. The community must decide the best mode of service for the growing Grand Island region.

The transit alternatives discussed in the following sections are additional services that may be introduced with any of the primary modes of service for Grand Island. These alternatives focus on different market segments of the community where transit may be a viable and suitable mode of transportation.



*Central Nebraska Regional Airport*

### *10.2.5.1 Regional Airport Service*

The Regional Airport Service option focuses on regional service to/from the Grand Island airport. Today, ground transportation companies provide service from Grand Island to airports in Lincoln or Omaha; however, no regularly scheduled transit service takes passengers to the Grand Island airport. This alternative provides regularly scheduled, reservations-required, ground passenger transit service to Central Nebraska Regional Airport from North Platte, Lexington, Kearney, and Grand Island, with one daily round trip seven days a week. Passengers have connections with daily flights to Dallas, and twice weekly flights to Las Vegas and Phoenix.

### *10.2.5.2 Commuter Express Service*

The Commuter Express Service alternative focuses on commuter traffic, Monday through Friday, travelling in and out of Grand Island. A combined 2,300 persons commute daily to the Grand Island area from Hastings, Kearney, Wood River, and Alda. Two commuter routes will operate each weekday:

- Route 1 - Grand Island/Kearney (Highway 30 Route)
- Route 2 - Grand Island/Hastings (Highway 34 Route)

The Commuter Express Service to/from Kearney would travel Highway 30 and provide transit service for commuters from Kearney, Grand Island, and other communities along the corridor. The Commuter Express Service to/from Hastings would travel Highway 34. Both commuter bus routes would operate two round trips each weekday, one trip in the morning peak hour and a second trip during the afternoon peak hour.



### 10.2.5.3 Vanpool

The Vanpool service alternative provides residents an option of travel besides the single occupant vehicles. In 2017, the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) entered into partnership with Enterprise Rideshare, a national firm specializing in the rideshare across the county. A vanpool program provides an opportunity for a group of residents traveling to/from similar locations to travel together and save money, along with reduced congestion, and being environmental conscious with vehicle emissions. It is common for the vanpool group to work at the same company or live in the same neighborhood and travel to/from work.

In Nebraska, the Enterprise partnership begins with a group of seven or more participants, including the driver, to register for the program. The monthly and annual costs are calculated based upon the trip distance and number of participants. Each vanpool decides the logistics of their vehicle, such as rotating drivers or one driver assignment. Vehicles range from seven passenger minivans to 15-passenger vans. NDOT provides a \$400 subsidy per month to vanpools with at least seven participants. Based upon community feedback and documented travel patterns, two potential locations for the Grand Island area include a JBS vanpool and a vanpool to/from Kearney.

### 10.2.5.4 Rideshare Service

The Rideshare service alternative provides a voluntary program for residents to register and form carpool, vanpool, school pool options within the community. The Rideshare software program matches persons traveling to/from similar locations within the community. The Rideshare software program, typically purchased by the City or the Metropolitan Planning Organization, requests travel data and matches participants based on their preferences, home/work locations, and work times. After the initial purchase and maintenance fees of the software, the primary expense is continued marketing of the program. Carpool matches are free for participants.

[EnterpriseRideshare.com](http://EnterpriseRideshare.com)

**GoNEWhere**  
VAN POOLS

\*All drivers must meet minimum qualification criteria.



*GoNE Where Rideshare Program*

10.2.5.5 Autonomous Vehicle Technology

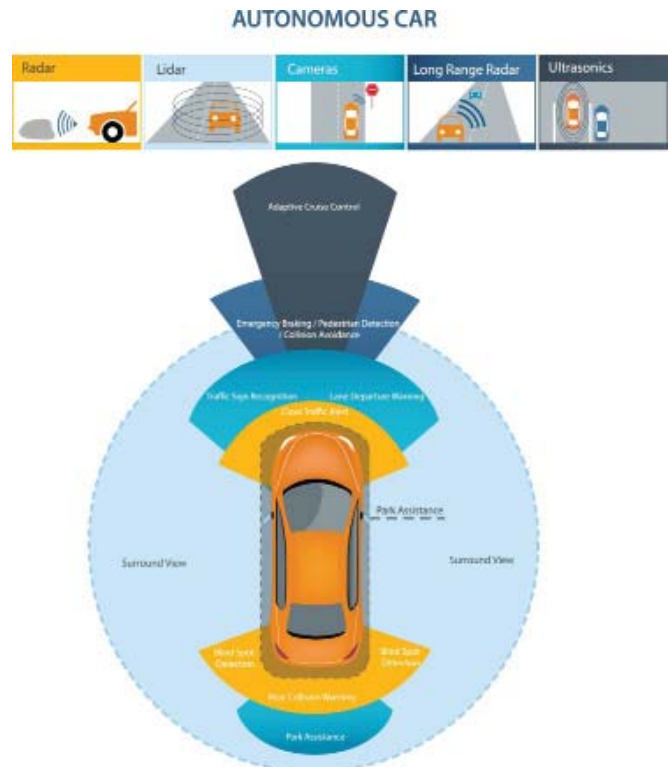
Autonomous Vehicle Technology is rapidly developing across the world and within the United States, and several major automakers are expecting to have fully autonomous vehicles for individual consumers by 2020 or 2025. Autonomous transit vehicles are currently being manufactured and rolled out as pilots or limited transit service in parts of the US and Europe. The City of Grand Island Public Works Department was approached by a community in Florida to discuss the applicability of autonomous vehicles in Grand Island. As the community continues to grow, this advancing technology provides an opportunity for all local government entities and the private sector to continue forward-thinking and incorporate infrastructure to accommodate the upcoming technological changes.

Public transportation is one piece of the puzzle for infrastructure, and would welcome opportunities to test future vehicle or software technologies. Upcoming research projects and demonstrations provide options for Grand Island to showcase its grid community, its geographical features, and forward-thinking for future developments.

Communities, such as Grand Island, are eligible to apply for grants to increase connectivity within a community with compact trip patterns. Autonomous vehicles rely on “smart infrastructure” that facilitates automatic communication between cars, roadways, bridges, and traffic signals. Legislative framework is being developed, at both the federal and state level, to define legal and liability issues surrounding autonomous vehicles. At this time, it is not legal for an autonomous vehicle to operate on the roadway in the State of Nebraska. Other states, such as Nevada and Michigan, passed state laws to support the growing industry.

10.3 Transit Alternatives Summary

Table 10.1 summarizes the estimated costs for each transit alternative.



Autonomous Vehicle Technology

Table 10.1 Transit Alternative Summary

	Status Quo		Same Day Demand Response		Flexible Route		Fixed Route		Regional Airport Service		Commuter Express Service		Rideshare		Vanpool		Autonomous Vehicle Technology	
	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - Sun	M - F	M - F	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun
Service Days	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - Sun	M - F	M - F	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun	M - Sun
Hours	6a - 5p	6a - 6:30p	6a - 6:30p	6a - 6:30p	6a - 6:30p	6a - 6:30p	6a - 6:30p	6a - 6:30p	Reservation Only	2 trips per weekday	2 trips per weekday	Selected by Participant	Participant Choice	Participant Choice	Participant Choice	Participant Choice	Participant Choice	Participant Choice
Peak Vehicles	7	10	10	6	6	8	8	1	1	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2	2	2
Ann Revenue Hrs	14,377	21,089	21,089	19,125	19,125	25,500	25,500	1,898	1,898	1,513	1,513	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ridership	35,000	84,354	84,354	102,000	102,000	90,844	90,844	690	690	4,104	4,104	53,920	53,920	53,920	53,920	53,920	53,920	53,920
Cost per Trip	\$14.10	\$8.75	\$8.75	\$6.69	\$6.69	\$10.02	\$10.02	\$98.16	\$98.16	\$13.16	\$13.16	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23
<b>Annual Operating Cost</b>	<b>\$490,000</b>	<b>\$738,098</b>	<b>\$738,098</b>	<b>\$682,549</b>	<b>\$682,549</b>	<b>\$910,066</b>	<b>\$910,066</b>	<b>\$67,737</b>	<b>\$67,737</b>	<b>\$53,997</b>	<b>\$53,997</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>
Fed Share	\$296,623	\$376,430	\$376,430	\$348,100	\$348,100	\$464,133	\$464,133	\$34,546	\$34,546	\$27,539	\$27,539	\$6,375	\$6,375	\$6,375	\$6,375	\$6,375	\$6,375	\$6,375
State Share	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Local Share	\$193,377	\$361,668	\$361,668	\$334,449	\$334,449	\$445,932	\$445,932	\$33,191	\$33,191	\$26,459	\$26,459	\$6,125	\$6,125	\$6,125	\$6,125	\$6,125	\$6,125	\$6,125
<b>Total Capital Vehicles</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$490,000</b>	<b>\$490,000</b>	<b>\$630,000</b>	<b>\$630,000</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>
Fed Share	N/A	\$560,000	\$560,000	\$392,000	\$392,000	\$504,000	\$504,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$115,000	\$115,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
State Share	N/A	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Local Share	N/A	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$126,000	\$126,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$28,000	\$28,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
<b>Total Capital Other</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$601,500</b>	<b>\$601,500</b>	<b>\$868,250</b>	<b>\$868,250</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
Fed Share	N/A	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$481,200	\$481,200	\$694,600	\$694,600	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000
State Share	N/A	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Local Share	N/A	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$120,300	\$120,300	\$173,650	\$173,650	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
<b>Total Costs - Year 1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$1,498,098</b>	<b>\$1,498,098</b>	<b>\$1,774,049</b>	<b>\$1,774,049</b>	<b>\$2,408,316</b>	<b>\$2,408,316</b>	<b>\$147,737</b>	<b>\$147,737</b>	<b>\$203,997</b>	<b>\$203,997</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>
Fed Share	N/A	\$984,430	\$984,430	\$1,221,300	\$1,221,300	\$1,662,733	\$1,662,733	\$98,546	\$98,546	\$147,539	\$147,539	\$54,375	\$54,375	\$54,375	\$54,375	\$54,375	\$54,375	\$54,375
State Share	N/A	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Local Share	N/A	\$513,668	\$513,668	\$552,749	\$552,749	\$745,582	\$745,582	\$49,191	\$49,191	\$56,459	\$56,459	\$18,125	\$18,125	\$18,125	\$18,125	\$18,125	\$18,125	\$18,125

Additional Cost Data Needed for Local Impact

Data Varies Depending Upon Trip Distances and # of Participants

**Notes:**  
Same Day Demand Response, Flexible Route, and Fixed Route does not include costs for the transit services for the non-urbanized area of Hall County.



## CHAPTER 11 OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

### 11.1 Introduction

The subject of operations management has been a long-debated question of whether it is more cost effective to operate public transportation services in-house or to contract services. Hall County Public Transportation, under the auspices of the City of Grand Island Public Works Department, currently contracts services with Senior Citizens Industries, Inc. (SCI) for all services. The contract for this service has been in place with Hall County for several decades.

**This chapter is a summary of the operations management phase of the study. The complete analysis can be found in Tech Memo 2.**

### 11.2 Background

Many factors play into the discussion of outsourcing services, including cost, politics, staffing capabilities, risks, expertise, etc. In 1966, the Office of Management released the Budget Circular A-76<sup>1</sup>, providing the definition of commercial activity. Throughout the last 50+ years, the Circular has been updated many times with the different administrations, but the fundamental principle remains unchanged – government does not compete with private enterprise. The message from the Circular states that government shall not perform or provide a commercial product or service if that same product/service can be procured more economically from a commercial source.

As mentioned previously, the concept of outsourcing has been in place in Hall County for many years. It is unknown why Hall County, many years ago, began outsourcing public transit services; however, it is likely many factors were in play, such as adding full-time employees, existing staffing capacity, little experience in public transportation services, liability and risk, cost effectiveness, and/or quality of service. In Spring 2016, as the City of Grand Island, began planning for the administration of the public transportation services, it was decided to continue contracting for services to ensure a smooth transition of services for residents in the community. This chapter provides information for the City to use as decisions are made regarding future management of the service, either through outsourcing or as an operation in-house.

#### BUDGET CIRCULAR A-76

##### DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY:

*A COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IS A RECURRING SERVICE THAT COULD BE PERFORMED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND IS RESOURCED, PERFORMED, AND CONTROLLED BY THE AGENCY THROUGH PERFORMANCE BY GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL, A CONTRACT, OR A FEE-FOR-SERVICE AGREEMENT. A COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IS NOT SO INTIMATELY RELATED TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST AS TO MANDATE PERFORMANCE BY GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES MAY BE FOUND WITHIN, OR THROUGHOUT, ORGANIZATIONS THAT PERFORM INHERENTLY GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES OR CLASSIFIED WORK.*

*Explanation of Commercial Activity*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/circulars/A76/a076.pdf>

### 11.3 Hire Employees vs. Contract Out

Many factors are considered before deciding whether to contract or operate transit service in-house. The decision should be based on whether the service is performed more efficiently in-house, in which true costs would be weighed against the cost of hiring a contractor.

Procurement regulations and existing contract arrangements may be significant impediments to the consideration of a third-party contractor. It is critical that legal limitations and requirements be considered when evaluating or implementing contract services. Additionally, the political viability of any large-scale contract of services should also be considered. Contracts often have strong opposition from employee unions. These political factors should always be planned for and considered prior to contract consideration, with particular attention paid to union concerns.

Some transit agencies find it more cost effective to reorganize and improve internal operations than turn services over to a third-party contractor. When estimating in-house costs, all true costs should be included to accurately compare contractor costs. In addition, when calculating costs and benefits of in-house versus contract service, the costs for additional contract administration must be considered due to the significant amount of monitoring and management of the contractor.

Based upon research data and firm experience from other transit agencies, a list of common factors influencing why transit agencies make contract decisions are shown in **Tables 11.1** and **11.2**. The variation in responses shows the advantages and disadvantages for each option.

Table 11.1: In-House Operations

In-House Operations	
Advantage	Disadvantage
Avoid waisted contract administration time	Regulations for funding expenditures through Federal funding programs
Service quality	Limited availability to expand services/staff
Control of operations	High maintenance costs
Low employee turnover	Limited staff training for specialty services
Vehicles well-maintained	Political influences
Potential for lower fuel expenses	

Direct operation refers to transit services that are provided “in-house” by public transit agencies that assume total responsibility for the administration and operation of services. Many public transit operators believe they can ensure more efficient service delivery by providing the service themselves. Through in-house operations they are able to ensure vehicle reliability and more efficient service delivery. Direct operation affords more control over service quality and makes it easier to integrate and coordinate different service types. The advantages of publicly operated in-house transit usually include lower insurance rates, less expensive fuel costs due to bulk purchases, and internal control over quality and demand.

The disadvantages of in-house operations center around the high costs of transit labor and benefits, and inflexible work rules. Research suggests that public sector transit wages and benefits are typically higher than those of the private sector (i.e. market). Section 13(c) of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. 5333) requires the position of existing transit workers not be diminished through projects initiated with federal DOT funds. Because local transit labor unions are concerned that contracting out transit services paid for with federal funds will lower the number of transit workers, they often seek to keep transit service delivery in-house, which potentially makes contracting for services difficult.

Table 11.2: Contract Services

Contract Services	
Advantage	Disadvantage
Take advantage of open competitive market	Possible interruption/distraction with change of contracts
Cost savings/efficiency	Loss of direct control over services
Risk of service provision	Political ramifications
Flexible full-time/part-time driver positions	Diverting resources outside the agency
Pilot or new service flexibility	Misjudgment of true costs
Avoid administrative costs	High overhead/admin costs
Limited transit agency staff experience	High employee turnover
Political ramifications	Availability of providers
Relationships w/ suppliers for reduced costs	Oversight required from entity
Service quality	
Safety performance	
Operating costs lower	
Efficient maintenance management	
Expertise	

As shown in **Table 11.2**, common advantages of contracting may include the avoidance of administrative costs for a public agency, which results in less full-time public employees. The provider typically absorbs the administrative costs into the contract bid. Another advantage of contracting service allows the transit agency to not have extensive public transit operational experience. The agency relies on the contractor for this expertise. Additionally, contracting may have positive political ramifications due to coordination between public and private sector industries. The service quality under a contractor may be an advantage to the transit agency when the contractor is able to have incentives in the contract to provide efficient service and good customer service through identified performance measures.

Disadvantages are also discussed in **Table 11.2**, in which some advantages may also be a disadvantage at some public transit agencies. For example, political ramifications, as mentioned in the table, are an advantage at some public transit agencies. However, at other transit agencies with active unions and influence in the community, there may be negative political ramifications for using outside contractors for service. By hiring a contractor, some transit agencies may have pressure to keep the transit resources (funding) within the public transit agency and not hire outside workers.

It is common across the country with private contractors that operator salaries are lower under a contractor, likely due to less benefits than a public agency. The lower wage with the contractor is typically from not having governmental pensions and/benefits and a lower hourly wage to employees. However, as mentioned earlier, this factor is also an advantage due to the overall cost saving in providing transit service. In addition, some contractors provide a low bid for services, and misjudge the true costs or have a skeleton staff to operate services. This misjudgement of costs has an indirect effect on transit services typically seen in the quality of service provided. Another disadvantage concerns the high administrative costs or fixed fees included in contractor’s bid. The administrative costs should be at an appropriate level for the services provided - not overstaffed.

Recent research from the previous studies states the percentage of transit agencies in the United States using private contractors for service:

- 10 percent – regular transit bus service
- 65 percent – demand responses paratransit service
- 25 percent – school bus service.

Transit agencies enter into service contracts with private for-profit and non-profit organizations, ranging from local taxi companies to national transportation companies, for the provision of transit services. The contracts are awarded to the organization who best meets selection criteria through the competitive bid process. Contracts are awarded for a designated time period of up to five years, including renewal options. Mandatory levels of accident and liability insurance are specified. Vehicles may be privately owned, operated, and maintained, or provided by the transit agency. Contracts delineate performance standards, quality indicators, and general conditions.

Most contracts include financial penalties for unsatisfactory service and some include financial incentives for superior service delivery. Sometimes contracts include special “start-up” provisions to allow new contractors to make the transition to acceptable performance levels. Mandatory reporting and other compliance requirements, as well as monitoring strategies, are detailed.

Considered to be more economical than publicly run transit services, studies suggest an average savings of 30 percent cost savings with privately provided transit services<sup>1</sup>. The lower unit service cost is usually attributed to the lower labor costs of the private transportation industry and cost benefits accrue from economies of scale. Experienced private providers are often credited with having the capability to start up services quickly, as well as the resources to expand system capacity on relatively short notice. National transportation companies can draw additional vehicles from other localities, and private companies usually have the flexibility to buy or lease additional vehicles in less time than public operators.

## 11.4 Contracting Models

Transit agencies vary in what they choose to contract for services, depending upon circumstances and needs. Some agencies contract all transit bus service, others do the opposite with some services contracted out, with the remaining services handled by the transit agency.

The focus of the following discussion are common contracting types most applicable to Grand Island.

### 1. Traditional Transit Management Model

The Traditional Transit Management Model has the contractor senior management typically managing the public transit budget and all aspects of the agency’s performance. They also typically report to the public sector board or local overseeing governmental agency. The financial risk of the operation resides with the public transit agency.

### 2. Operating Service Model

The Operating Service Contract Model is another common type of contracting used today. In this model, the transit agency contracts with the private sector to operate and manage its service operations, while maintaining the transit agency fleet. The transit agency continues to manage the other key functions of the service.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.554.1097&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

The contractor is typically responsible to manage all aspects of service delivery, which includes hiring, managing, training, performing all vehicle and facilities maintenance, managing vehicle parts inventory, etc. The transit agency generally maintains control of service design, scheduling, passenger information, websites, social media, ticketing, procurement, grants administration, finance, IT, legal, etc.

The contractor maintains all vehicles, facilities, and other assets, with contractual commitment of performance, defined risks assumed by the contractor, and a guaranteed cost structure. The contractor also assumes operating risk and cost associated with accidents, which is included in the bid for services.

### 3. Turn-key Operating Service Contract Model

The Turn-key Operating Service Contract Model is a partnership with a contractor and the public transit agency, who delegates the management and operation of an entire transit system to the contractor, who is held contractually accountable for all aspects and functions of the transit agency. These functions include overseeing and executing operations, vehicle maintenance, procurement, marketing, passenger information and communication, planning, scheduling, ticketing, finance, grants management, technology, human resources, and all other normal agency functions.

The public transit agency is responsible for setting transit policies, including budgets, fare structure, policy decisions, short-range and long-range planning objectives, service standards, and grant purchases. The public transit agency oversees contract compliance with agreed-upon performance metrics, which are typically reported monthly to appropriate oversight Boards. The contractor is responsible for implementing agency policies in an efficient and effective manner. They are responsible for outcomes and have the authority to use the best methods to achieve the outcomes. The risk is on the contractor, with penalties for service failures and incentives for goals met.

### 4. Purchase of Service Contract Model

The Purchase of Service Contract Model is a partnership with the public transit agency and the private provider, who specifically only provides service, direct operations management, and may or may not provide maintenance of the vehicles, depending upon the needs of the agency. This service model typically has payment per trip, which is different from the other models described above. The public transit agency is responsible for service design, scheduling, passenger information, websites, social media, ticketing, procurement, grants administration, finance, IT, legal, etc.

A summary of the four contract models most applicable for Grand Island, shown in **Table 11.3**, lists different functions of the transit system and how they are affected depending upon the desired model.

The contracting model discussion provides an overview of many types of transit agency organizational management. There is no 'One Size Fits All' approach for each transit system due to the different dynamics, political environment, and history that forms the foundation in each community.



Table 11.3: Contract Variations in Job Functions

Contract Variations in Job Functions				
Areas of Responsibility	1. Traditional Management Contract	2. Operating Service Contract	3. Turn-key Operating Service Contract	4. Purchase of Service
Method of Payment	Fixed Fee, plus costs	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate	Per Trip
A. Private firm provides Operations Department	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B. Private firm provides Maintenance Department	Yes	Yes/No	Yes	Yes
C. Private firm handles all Human Resources issues	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D. Transit agency provides facilities and equipment	Yes	Yes	No	No
E. Transit agency provides all vehicles	Yes	Yes	No	No
F. Private firm provides administration department – Grants	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	No
G. Private firm handles procurement, prepares specifications and bids	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	No
H. Private firm handles planning & scheduling	Yes	Yes/No	Yes	Yes/No
I. Private firm handles marketing	Yes	Yes/No	Yes	No
J. Private firm handles Board relations	Yes	Yes/No	Yes/No	No

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FINAL\\_FTA\\_circular9030.1E.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FINAL_FTA_circular9030.1E.pdf)

### 11.4.1 Local Contracting Model Estimates

Using the existing contract with SCI, local estimates for the City of Grand Island for contracting transit services are shown in **Table 11.4** for the different contracting models. The table shows assumptions for one year of service, assuming the parameters stay the same. The estimates would need to be updated if additional revenue service hours are identified.

#### 11.4.1.1 Traditional Management Contract

Information in **Table 11.4** describes the scenario if the City moved to a Traditional Management Contract, assuming service parameters are the same as today's operation.

It is assumed the annual cost for operations would increase due to designated management staff to oversee the services of the contract. The proposed management structure is a Transit Manager, Assistant Manager, and an Administrative Assistant. These costs are included in the Additional Costs line item.

#### 11.4.1.2 Operating Service Contract

**Table 11.4** also shows the estimated costs if the City moved to an Operating Service Contract. This contract method has the same City staffing requirements as is used today. However, the private contractor would provide dispatch and scheduling functions and direct management of the operations.

Table 11.4: Traditional and Operating Service Cost Comparison

	Today	1. Traditional	2. Operating Service
		Fixed Fee, plus costs	Hourly Rate
Existing Contract	\$638,000		
Ridership	35,085	35,085	35,085
Annual Rev Hrs	14,705	14,705	14,705
Annual Rev Miles	170,497	170,497	170,497
Actual Budget	\$490,000	\$588,200	\$558,790
Cost per Rev Hr	\$33.32	\$40.00	\$38.00
Pass per Rev Hr	2.4	2.4	2.4
Operating Cost per Trip	\$16.62	\$22.55	\$21.71
Vehicle Fleet	12	12	12
Additional Contractor Costs		\$110,000	\$110,000
City Cost	\$93,000	\$93,000	\$93,000
Contractor Cost	\$490,000	\$698,200	\$668,790
<b>Total Transit Costs</b>	<b>\$583,000</b>	<b>\$791,200</b>	<b>\$761,790</b>
City Position(s)	1.City Transit Program Manager	1.City Transit Program Manager	1. City Transit Program Manager
Non-City or Contract-Related Position(s)	-/-	1. Non-City Transit Manger; 2. Non-City Asst. Mgr.; 3. Non-City Admin. Asst.	1. Non-City Transit Manger; 2. Non-City Asst. Mgr.; 3. Non-City Admin. Asst.
Facility Lease (10-12k sq.ft.)	-/-	-/-	-/-
Vehicle Expenses	-/-	-/-	-/-

11.4.1.3 Turn-key Service Contract

The Turn-key Operating Service Contract Model, shown in **Table 11.5**, has the highest cost associated for transit program. However, it is the model with the least involvement from the City’s perspective.

This model would assume the private contractor would bring 12 service vehicles into service for the City, in which the depreciation of the vehicles and the maintenance of the vehicles during the time of service would be included in the cost of the contract.

The Turn-key Model assumes a Contract Transit Manager, Assistant Manager, Administrative Assistant, and Grant Administrator for the service. In addition, a facility would be leased for the contractor to operate services and house the transit vehicles.

11.4.1.4 Purchase of Service

**Table 11.5** includes information for the Purchase of Service Model. This model type, as the name suggests, is the City purchasing transit services for the transit system. This model assumes the City will have the same administration today with one Transit Program Manager. The private contractor will manage operations, drivers, hiring, scheduling, and dispatching.

Table 11.5: Turn-key and Purchase of Service Cost Comparison

	Today	3. Turn-key	4. Purchase of Service
		Hourly Rate	Per Trip
Existing Contract	\$638,000		
Ridership	35,085	35,085	35,085
Annual Rev Hrs	14,705	14,705	14,705
Annual Rev Miles	170,497	170,497	170,497
Actual Budget	\$490,000	\$588,200	\$632,315
Cost per Rev Hr	\$33.32	\$40.00	\$43.00
Pass per Rev Hr	2.4	2.4	2.4
Operating Cost per Trip	\$16.62	\$29.53	\$20.67
Vehicle Fleet	12	12	12
Additional Contractor Costs		\$355,000	\$0
City Cost	\$93,000	\$93,000	\$93,000
Contractor Cost	\$490,000	\$943,200	\$632,215
<b>Total Transit Costs</b>	<b>\$583,000</b>	<b>\$1,036,200</b>	<b>\$725,315</b>
City Position(s)	1. City Transit Program Manager	1. City Transit Program Manager	1. City Transit Program Manager
Non-City or Contract-Related Position(s)	-/-	1. Non-City Transit Manger; 2. Non-City Asst. Mgr.; 3. Non-City Admin. Asst.; 4. Non-City Grants	-/-
Facility Lease (10-12k sq.ft.)	-/-	\$25,000	-/-
Vehicle Expenses	-/-	\$120,000	-/-

11.4.1.5 In-House Service Model

**Table 11.6** includes information comparing services today and what it may be if the transit agency changes models to an In-house Service Model. The In-house Model gives the Transit Manager full control over all aspects of the transit operations, including:

- *Scheduling and personnel* – the scheduling and personnel responsibilities would be positions created in-house with daily functions for the transit operations.
- *Managing bus drivers* – The City would have direct control over bus operators and in establishing policies for the drivers. Any operational issues related to drivers could be handled directly with staff. The operating budget includes an Operations Manager for the day-to-day functions of service. In addition, scheduling and dispatching is included in the operations budget, shown in line 5 of **Table 11.6**, under ‘Actual Budget.’
- *Training standards* – City staff would have the responsibility and opportunity to train drivers and staff. Strong training programs often have less risk associated with In-house Service Models. The City also has the opportunity to re-train, evaluate, and have on-going training with the In-house model.
- *Customer Service* – The City would have direct control over customer service calls, questions, complaints, commendations, etc. Staff can be contacted directly for information about a situation and/or solution.

Table 11.6: In-House Service Part-time and Full-time Cost Comparison

	Today	5. In-House Admin/Ops/ Full-time & Part-time Drivers	6. In-House Admin/Ops/ Part-time Drivers
Existing Contract	\$638,000		
Ridership	35,085	35,085	35,085
Annual Rev Hrs	14,705	14,705	14,705
Annual Rev Miles	170,497	170,497	170,497
Actual Budget	\$490,000	\$661,725	\$588,200
Cost per Rev Hr	\$33.32	\$45.00	\$40.00
Pass per Rev Hr	2.4	2.4	2.4
Operating Cost per Trip	\$16.62	\$24.36	\$22.27
Vehicle Fleet	12	12	12
Additional Contractor Costs		\$0	\$0
City Cost	\$93,000	\$193,000	\$193,000
Contractor Cost	\$490,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Transit Costs</b>	<b>\$583,000</b>	<b>\$854,725</b>	<b>\$781,200</b>
Non-City or Contract-Related Position(s)	1. City Transit Program Manager	In-house wages higher due to competitive pay in other urban areas; 1. City Transit Director; 2. City Grants Admin; 3. City Planner/Marketing	In-house wages higher due to competitive pay in other urban areas; 1. City Transit Director; 2. City Grants Admin; 3. City Planner/Marketing
Non-City Position(s)	-/-	-/-	-/-
Facility Lease (10-12k sq.ft.)	-/-	\$25,000	\$25,000
Vehicle Expenses	-/-	-/-	-/-

The In-house Model assumes the City would have a City Transit Director, as well as driver, dispatch, scheduling, and administrative positions to operate the day-to-day services. **Table 11.6** presents two options for the In-house Model:

1. Option 1 assumes the majority of drivers would be full-time staff, with some part-time drivers.
2. Option 2 assumes part-time drivers for service operations.

### 11.4.2 Contracting Model Summary

The contracting models described in this chapter reflect numerous methods of how to provide transit services. There is not a wrong contracting model. Each community must choose a model that works best for their environment and political culture, keeping in mind, whichever model is chosen will have the best management and use of taxpayer dollars.

The previously described contracting models are based on services within the metropolitan planning organization urbanized boundary. SCI, the current provider, currently provides the urban services for the City with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5307 funds, and the rural services, funded by Hall County and FTA 5311 funds. The FTA strongly encourages continued coordination among all transit agencies, as long as the specific service parameters for urban and rural services are defined, monitored, and reported separately to meet the requirements of the different federal funding sources. This is true for the revenue sources, as well as expenditure items. In the past, SCI did not have to monitor and track urban trip data verses rural trip data. However, after July 1, 2016, the City is mandated by the FTA to report the urban ONLY service data, expenses, revenues, and urban system characteristics. SCI has adjusted over the past year by breaking out the specific urban data to comply with the regulations, with guidance from the City.

Based upon the detailed cost estimates from the previous section and the longevity of successful contracting for transit services in the Grand Island area, it is recommended the City continue to use contracting in the short term. Should the service parameters and/or type of service change to a flexible or fixed route service, the City should revisit the In-house Contracting opportunities to determine if a different method of contracting may be more appropriate for management, operations, and oversight. In addition, as transit demand increases, the City should research the number of administrative staff for oversight of services and determine appropriate leveling of staffing.

In many rural and small urban areas, such as the Grand Island region, limited resources are often one challenge in providing more transportation choices for residents. An increasing number of residents in the region commute to urban-area jobs from rural or suburban communities, which by nature forces transit agencies, such as the City, to look beyond the urbanized boundary and look at the best method for providing efficient public transportation and maximizing federal and state resources. Knowing the continued growth projections for Hall County and the City, it will benefit the City to continue working towards the goal of coordination with Hall County. As the City moves into the next contracting cycle, the City's Transit Program Manager and Hall County officials should begin conversations regarding the specific services and requirements for the urban and for the rural areas. There is an opportunity with the next contracting cycle to include specific parameters expected from the City for urban services. In addition, the transit contractor will also need to provide monthly rural statistics to Nebraska Department of Transportation for the County.

The following governance discussion provides mechanisms for increasing coordination in the future, with the ultimate goal of equitable funding among local agencies to fund the public transit services.

## 11.5 Future Governance Structure

Chapter 10 introduced several transit options for the City of Grand Island and Hall County. Some of the services are solely within the City of Grand Island; however, several of the transit options are multi-jurisdictional and do not stop at the city limits. As transit services expand over the next decade, the City of Grand Island should begin to discuss a formal governance structure, which incorporates representatives from each of the governmental entities in the region. This future structure is considered for several reasons:

- To establish fair and acceptable cost-sharing arrangements among all entities
- To establish service levels and approve budgets that are financially feasible for all parties
- To fund the service through administration of a dedicated funding source
- To plan for and approve large capital expenditures and disposal of assets
- To ensure that any service changes contemplated in the future are in the best interests of the region and are fair and acceptable to each entity involved
- To establish a long-term commitment for the provision of transit service among all entities, and to establish a framework for the withdrawal of any party that is fair to the rest
- To coordinate efforts between various types of transit services being offered or considered (e.g. express routes, flexible routes) and allocate budgets accordingly

### 11.5.1 Governance Today

The primary public transportation provider in Grand Island is Hall County Public Transportation, currently under the auspices of the City of Grand Island, Public Works Department. The Department has been responsible for the administration and operation of transit service within the urbanized area, since July 1, 2016. The City of Grand Island has an existing contract with Senior Citizens Industries, Inc. for an initial 12-month term, with options for a maximum of two years renewal. This contract is funded by FTA 5307 (Urban) and 5311(Rural) funds and local matching funding sources from the City of Grand Island and Hall County.

### 11.5.2 Governance in the Future

The most impactful change in the management and governance of transit service operations in the Grand Island region, including Hall County and Merrick County, would come from the formation of a multiple entity Regional Authority with direct taxation powers. The creation of the multiple entity Regional Authority would change the existing governance structure, which currently is with the City of Grand Island.

Through a new multi-jurisdictional Regional Authority, the current employees would likely become employees of the new organization. Creation of a new Authority presents an opportunity for a sizable expansion of the service area for transit services in the region, if adjacent entities in the urbanized area join the Authority and support transit services through a community taxation. A financial capacity assessment would need to be conducted to establish the level of transit service that could be supported given the revenue generated by a levy from all participating communities in the Authority boundary.

One viable solution for the long-term is to establish a multi-jurisdictional Regional Authority for Grand Island and Hall County. For the topic of governance structure, it would benefit the City of Grand Island to coordinate with Hall County and the surrounding counties to ensure a Regional Authority is truly regional in

nature to accommodate all transit needs and services in the region.

The formation of an Authority allows the regional governance of planning, funding, and operations all under one entity, making it more efficient to provide transit service beyond the city limits of Grand Island. In the short-term, a specific study focusing on the governance of the region and an implementation strategy to get it passed should be completed.

The existing state law does not permit the City of Grand Island, nor Hall County to form an authority at this time. In 1972, the Nebraska State Legislature passed Legislative Bill 1275 “enabling” the creation of the Transit Authority, City of Omaha, a governmental subdivision of the State of Nebraska, pursuant to statute 14-1803, and the only such transit authority in the state.

No other Authority is allowed outside the City of Omaha without the change of this legislative bill. The Omaha Authority consists of a five-member Board appointed by the mayor. Under the provisions of the enabling status, the Authority shall have and retain full and exclusive jurisdiction and control over all public passenger transportation systems in the City of Omaha, excluding taxicabs and railroad systems. Funds obtained from Omaha’s tax levy cannot be used to offset transit service operating expenses incurred outside of Omaha city limits.

Today, transit service outside of the Omaha city limits is provided by contractual agreement between Metro and the respective political jurisdictions and agencies, wherein they agree to reimburse Metro for all operating expenses not recovered through farebox receipts, and federal and state subsidies. The level of service, miles, and hours of operation, are dictated by individual contracts.

A few changes have been made over the years to the legislative bill, such as the name from Metro Area Transit (MAT) to Metro; however, the statutory structure for mass transit authorities in Nebraska remain mostly the same. In 2013, the following changes/discussions were proposed to the Legislature addressing challenges to the existing Bill.

- The current legislation allows only a city of ‘metropolitan class’ to become an Authority. One example is that Omaha is a metropolitan class; however, Lincoln is designated a ‘primary class’ and not eligible under the existing language. Neither is Grand Island, the third largest community in the state.
- The Nebraska Budget Act has specific restrictions. New language would be needed to ensure inclusion of any new such entity created, including the distribution, collection, and responsibility of any tax receipts.
- Other changes would be taken at the federal and state level to facilitate the transfer of transit assets from a municipality to facilitate a regional transit authority, such as through intergovernmental agreements.
- In 2003, the Transit Authority Law was significantly amended by LB720, which modified the Transit Authority Law by permitting extension of its jurisdictional boundaries in order to allow establishment of a regional transit authority in other municipalities, villages, or counties if they wish to join. However, the statutory revisions enacted under LB720 do not truly enable the establishment of any true regional authority.

The Nebraska Transit Authority Law was amended in 2003 and now authorizes the creation of a regional transit authority covering the following: City of Omaha; Douglas; Washington; Dodge and Sarpy Counties; and Pottawattamie County in Iowa.

Today, funding is available through bonds, federal funds, fees for use (fares), sales taxes and/or property taxes from participating jurisdictions. The Authority can also access sales tax funds through interlocal agreements with participating municipalities. The Local Option Revenue Act allows municipalities to impose a sales tax, which must be approved by the voters. Voter approved tax rates over 1.5 percent must also be approved by 70 percent of the City Council.

The 2003 amendment for multi-jurisdictional Authorities was a first step for coordination of regional services. However, other future potential changes to the legislation include:

- Direct taxing authority. State legislation, recognizing the Regional Transit Authority as a separate political subdivision, could provide the authority with its own dedicated tax levy authority and its own tax cap to be determined.
- A “multimodal” entity could be created to take responsibility for road, bridge, trail and public transit improvements with the authority to raise revenue through a dedicated sales tax and/or property tax.

### 11.5.3 Governance Summary

The most impactful change in the management and governance of transit service operations in the Grand Island region would come from the formation of a multiple entity Regional Authority with direct taxation powers. The creation of the multiple entity Regional Authority would change the existing governance structure, which currently is a division under the Public Works Department.

Through a new multi-jurisdictional Regional Authority, the current employees would likely become employees of the new organization. Creation of a new Authority presents an opportunity for a sizable expansion of the service area for transit services in the region, if adjacent entities in the region join the Authority and support transit services through a community taxation. A financial capacity assessment would need to be conducted to establish the level of transit service that could be supported given the revenue generated by a levy from all participating communities in the Authority boundary.

A multi-jurisdictional Regional Authority for the Grand Island region would need strong partnership. It would benefit the City of Grand Island to continue coordination with Hall County and the surrounding counties and cities to ensure a Regional Authority is truly regional in nature to accommodate all transit needs and services of region. The formation of this Authority allows the regional governance of planning, funding, and operations all under one entity making it more efficient to provide transit service beyond the city limits of Grand Island.



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## CHAPTER 12 FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PLAN

### 12.1 Introduction

Chapter 12 presents the Fiscally Constrained Plan for the contracted service provider for the next five years. This plan is based upon technical data analysis, the public engagement process for this study, and the realistic financial projections for the City for the next five years. The Fiscally Constrained Plan identifies realistic expenses and reflects revenues for transit projects and services. These items are identified and are reasonably expected to be available to implement/continue the projects or services over the next five years.

### 12.2 Data Analysis Summary

The data analysis and technical evaluation suggests there is continued transit potential in the study area. Sufficient transit demand is present in the highest transit need areas of Grand Island. However, in some areas of the region at this time, demand is not high enough to warrant a high level of transit service. Less costly and more flexible transit options in the future are a more viable and realistic option. Over time, as Hall County continues to grow, the communities will need to consider how to enhance existing public transportation services appropriately so they meet demand, can operate reliably and effectively, and can make transit service an attractive option for residents and employees, whether they are traveling to work, medical appointments, or the supermarket.

The challenge of implementing new or expanded transportation services and programs in the near-term stems from constrained funding, limited service times of existing services, and the limited experience with transit as a viable mode of transportation versus the single occupant vehicle. Communities with higher levels of existing public transportation often choose to continue enhanced transit services as a priority, as they consider options for future successful services.

### 12.3 Public Engagement Summary

Throughout the transit study planning time frame, many opportunities were available for public input regarding future transit services in the region, including stakeholder meetings, public open houses, online community survey, transit rider survey, website information, social media outreach, and the local project team meetings. Public sentiment, supported by technical analysis, formed the basis of the Fiscally Constrained Plan and the Illustrative Plan. Overall feedback from the public engagement process included support for increased transit services.



Public Engagement Round 2

Feedback from Round One and Round Two public engagement included increasing marketing efforts, changing the age restriction, increasing hours of operation, partnering with local businesses, decreased call-ahead time for a reservation and scheduled service.

The Fixed Route Service option, primarily due to the increased cost of operations, was the least supported mode for future service. The Flexible Route Service had the highest support from overall public feedback, with the Same-Day Demand Response scoring second highest. During the Focus Group meetings in September of 2017, all the potential plans such as the Fiscally Constrained Plan, Illustrative Plan, and Implementation Plan were shared with participants.

## 12.4 Budget Review Summary

The final step prior to preparing the Fiscally Constrained Plan included discussions with city staff from the Finance Department and Public Works Department. The Finance Department reviewed the future transit alternatives, with particular interest on the increase in local match needed for the increase in services. Due to the limited resources of the City’s general fund, there is very little flexibility with the budget for the City, which is reflected in the Fiscally Constrained Plan.

## 12.5 Fiscally Constrained Plan Elements

Figure 12.1 Fiscally Constrained Plan

### 12.5.1 Transit Service

This section describes the fiscally constrained fundamental details of the transit service for the next five years.

#### 12.5.1.1 Status Quo - Demand Response

The contracted service provider will continue to operate Status Quo demand response service for the next five years. As discussed in the previous section, the limited resources of the City’s general fund weigh heavily into the decision for the next five years. As additional funding becomes available, the City will begin the process to implement the Flexible Route Service Option, which is reflected in the Illustrative Plan.

**FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PLAN**

**Status Quo – Demand Response Service**

- Demand Response
- 24-hour Reservation
- Curb-to-curb service
- Monday – Friday
- 6:00 am – 5:00 pm
- 7 to 8 peak vehicles
- \$490,000
- \$2.00 base fare
- 12 vehicles

**NEW – Transit Service**

- Vanpool Service
- Rideshare Program

**NEW Changes**

- Branding for the transit service; new look, new image, new name.
- Increase in transit marketing from dedicated City staff oversight.
- Increased oversight of transit contract with dedicated City staff oversight.
- Planning for Intercity Bus Service to/ from Kearney and Hastings.

### 12.5.1.2 Intercity Bus Service

Knowing the limited budget over the next several years for the City, one future transit alternative included revisiting the Commuter Express Service to consider expanding the range of services beyond the morning and evening commuter trip. During the second round of Focus Group discussions, a representative from the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) suggested revisiting the Commuter Express Service. Potential funding for Intercity Bus Service is available to transit services between communities that focus on all trips throughout the day, not just commuter trips. Knowing the limited budget over the next several years for the City, the Commuter Express Service was expanded beyond the morning and evening trips and renamed Intercity Bus Service, which includes two routes:

- To/from Grand Island and Kearney
- To/from Grand Island and Hastings

Both routes would operate three trips, Monday through Friday – one morning trip, one mid-day trip, and one late afternoon trip. The total annual operating cost for the two Intercity Bus routes is \$126,500. One bus will be operated on each route, with one backup vehicle for a total of three vehicles for the Intercity Service. The vehicles will be similar size to the body-on-chassis buses used today, and will be equipped with Wifi.

The Intercity Bus Service transit routes are eligible for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5311(f) funding. This grant program currently funds 100 percent of many costs for the service, including detailed planning for the service. The funding breakout for the FTA 5311(f) is:

- Operations (50% - Federal and 50% - State)
- Capital - Signage and Shelters (80% - Federal and 20% - Local)
- Vehicles (80% - Federal, 10% - State, 10% - Local)
- Planning (80% - Federal and 20% - State)

Each of the routes to/from Kearney and Hastings will serve intermodal connections, including the bus stations and the airports, which is a requirement to be eligible for the funding. Additional coordination and outreach with the major employers in Hastings, Kearney and Grand Island, the University of Nebraska Kearney, and the communities are the next steps for this service to move forward.

In addition to serving the intermodal connecting points, the Intercity Bus Service will identify major transfer areas and/or park and ride lots for bus riders using the service. The City will coordinate with the NDOT over the next several months for planning of the Intercity Bus Service, acquisition of vehicles, and the operational plan. Year 1 includes the Intercity Bus Operating and Marketing plan, in addition to completing a Park and Ride locational study. These necessary planning functions have a 100 percent funding reimbursement from the FTA and the NDOT.

The operating costs to start up the service are shown in Year 2 of the Illustrative Plan due to the local match for vehicle procurement and other capital projects associated with the service. The vehicle and other capital projects are shown in Year 1 of the Illustrative Plan.

### 12.5.1.3 Vanpool Coordination

The recent contract between NDOT and Enterprise Rideshare provides an opportunity for the City to continue discussions with the Enterprise representative and increase outreach to the major employers in the Grand Island region. The interest from our major employer stakeholders was outstanding for the study and provides a segway to continue the momentum for increased transit services through vanpool services.

The City, in coordination with the Enterprise representative, should begin with setting up meetings in Year 1 with representatives from establishments such as JBS and Veterans Home. These two major employers have a significant employment base to test the vanpool program in the region. A continued coordination for Year 2 should concurrently follow to engage with other major employers in the area to determine interest in the vanpool program.



Vanpool Coordination

### 12.5.1.4 Rideshare Program

The Rideshare Program service alternative provides a voluntary program for residents to register and form carpool, vanpool, or school pool options within the community. The Rideshare software program matches persons traveling to/from similar locations and time frames within the community. The Rideshare software program would be purchased by the City of Grand Island in Year 2. Management of the program would be through the City Transit Division. The branding initiatives for transit should coordinate efforts to also include rideshare services.

## 12.5.2 Management and Planning

Even though limited funding is projected to continue for the next five years, there are several policy and planning projects to begin immediately that require little or no funding increases over the existing budget. These include:



Hall County Public Transportation



Hall County Public Transportation

12.5.2.1 New Branding for Transit Service in the City of Grand Island and Hall County

The new branding for transit services in the City of Grand Island and Hall County includes many components to showcase the transit services available to all residents. One of the most heard comments throughout the public engagement process included residents not knowing about the service. This new branding provides an opportunity to reach the existing riders, in addition to new markets in the community that have never used the service. Promotional activities may include:

- Creating a new brand that represents the Grand Island region and may be used for existing demand response service, but also complement intercity bus service options and other future transit service option.
- Developing printed and online materials for the new brand to use at outreach events.
- The branding—including logos, layout, and language—be easily identifiable and flexible enough to adapt to different types/modes of service. The new brand may incorporate elements of existing brand or may be a new look.

The branding should be easily understood and replicable. The name, logo, and image should be easily convertible to all types of transit materials, including print newspaper, online media, and radio advertisements; website content; community outreach materials; and employer outreach materials. The transit brand may have a website address specific to the brand created to promote transit services, but the address would redirect to the existing website.



Transit Branding

12.5.2.2 Increased Marketing

The City's Transit Program Manager has the opportunity to promote transit services internally throughout City and County Departments, but also to the community. The new position has a multitude of different opportunities for increased marketing from presentations to community organizations to updates for City Council. In addition, a general marketing plan should be developed for the upcoming Fiscal Year to have intentional outreach in the community.

In addition to general marketing, targeted marketing efforts designed to reach key groups should be pursued on an as-needed basis. For example, targeted marketing materials may focus on employers in specific destination areas or by industry, socioeconomic or demographic groups (such as JBS or Hornady workers or churches), and residents in specific locations.

Advertisements in newspapers, via online media, and on the radio would be used to promote transit services. Newspaper and radio advertising would be conducted on a quarterly basis. The relatively low cost of online advertising makes advertising online throughout the year feasible. Online media is generally purchased on a monthly basis and would be utilized throughout the year. The types of media outlets selected are those that are local to Grand Island and Hall County, with the exception of the radio outlets, which are regional.

The new transit brand and the increased marketing raises awareness and promotes the transit services in the area, providing residents with the information needed to use these services. The marketing would:

- Promote the new transit brand and services.
- Develop standardized printed marketing materials for the City to use across the region in outreach activities.
- Place advertisements across a variety of media, including newspapers, online news sources, and radio.

Ongoing advertising to support the general promotion of public transit would be conducted on a quarterly or other periodic basis throughout the year, and continue on an annual basis thereafter. Additional “surge” times for service promotions—e.g., Try Transit Week —may occur as needed.



Transit Rider Brochures

12.5.2.3 Increased Oversight of Transit Contract

The creation of the City's Transit Program Manager position allows a dedicated staff position to oversee and perform a variety of planning and administrative activities as to provide transit service and meet complex FTA requirements. The Transit Program Manager monitors the contract and works with the service provider to verify proper levels of safety and service quality are maintained, contract employee training is sufficient, and appropriate business practices are followed.

The Transit Program Manager oversees contractor performance through various activities, including inspecting contractor facilities or vehicles, and reviewing performance data related to customer complaints, on-time performance, accidents, and maintenance, which is compiled in a monthly report. In the future, the contractor should provide monthly performance metrics for the Transit Program Manager, in addition to the typical monthly invoice.

### 12.5.3 Capital Projects

The following section describes the elements of the Fiscally Constrained Plan pertaining to capital projects, which includes facility improvements, vehicle procurement, and a study to identify potential transfer locations and park and ride locations.

#### 12.5.3.1 Transit Facility

Currently, Hall County Public Transportation operates from the Grand Generation Center, with the buses parked in an adjacent surface lot. The existing parking arrangement is not ideal for the City long term due to security of vehicles, in addition to the wear on the vehicles from exposure to the weather elements. The agency should consider a transit facility to provide a secure, covered location for the transit vehicles. Senior Citizens Industries (SCI), the current service contractor, operates the transit service from the Grand Generation Center building, and also manages the Grand Generation Center activities and lunches. The City should begin conversations with the FTA to discuss size, location, operational functions, and funding programs for a future facility.

In the short term to have increased security for the transit vehicles, the City could use the mandatory FTA one percent safety and security allocation to install security cameras at the existing vehicle parking lot. Another option includes hiring security staff to assist in overnight protection of the vehicles. In Grand Island, SCI has not experienced any criminal activity to date.



Park and Ride Lot

#### 12.5.3.2 Park and Ride Lots

The implementation of Intercity Bus and Rideshare Services often initiates the need for Park and Ride lots for residents to park and make connections to the transit service. It is recommended the City initiate, in coordination with the Intercity Bus Service Operations Plan, a location study for potential Park and Ride connections. It is common to have both formal and informal designated Park and Ride lots, depending upon the location in and around the community.

Park and Ride facilities have many benefits, including:

- Serves as the origin points for many intercity bus routes.
- Serves as connecting points for many carpools/vanpools.
- Often provides connections for pedestrian/bicycle facilities.



The Park and Ride location study will take into consideration ideal connections for residents, in addition to reviewing potential sites, which will likely need further environmental review for development. The City will coordinate with the NDOT and the FTA on the next steps for designated locations, federal funding assistance, design elements, and site access. At a minimum, the following elements will be considered for the lots.

- Multimodal access from street network, including pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Real-time parking/transit information.
- Dedicated space for transit operations, bus bays, and station/stop facilities.
- Accommodation for private shuttle operators.
- Waiting areas/shelters for transit and carpool/vanpool.
- Adequate landscaping and lighting in parking area.
- Americans with Disabilities Act access for residents.
- Covered bicycle racks or bicycle stations.
- Trash receptacles throughout the facility.
- Storm water treatment/management facilities.

#### 12.5.3.3 Vehicle Procurement

The vehicles currently operated by Hall County Public Transportation are owned by Hall County and the NDOT. When the City began management of the services in 2016, the vehicles were not transferred from the County to the City. The Transit Program Manager should continue to work with NDOT and the County for transfer of ownership.

As the management of the transit service, it is recommended all future vehicles used in the urbanized area be owned by the City to ensure proper maintenance of vehicles and oversight. **Table 12.1** shows a summary of the Fiscally Constrained budget, including operating and capital expenses. The projected revenues are also shown in **Table 12.2**.

#### 12.5.4 Transit Outside Urbanized Area

The above transit service alternatives and capital projects for the Fiscally Constrained Plan are under the auspices of the City of Grand Island. Approximately five percent of the existing ridership for Hall County Public Transportation operates within Hall County, but outside the urbanized area. The focus of this study is for the City of Grand Island; therefore, we will use existing parameters of the transit service for inclusion into the report.

The rural transit service has approximately 720 annual revenue hours annually, with an annual budget of \$24,500. The FTA 5311 program provides 50 percent reimbursement for these services, with the state reimbursing 25 percent, and the remaining local match of 25 percent (\$6,125) from Hall County general fund. These assumptions will continue for the Fiscally Constrained Plan.

Table 12.1: Fiscally Constrained Budget - Expenses

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Notes	
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Admin/Operating</b>						<b>Funding % Breakouts</b>	
1	Admin Management	\$92,400	\$95,172	\$98,027	\$100,968	\$103,997	80 Fed/20 Local*
2	Service Contract - Existing Urban	\$500,000	\$515,000	\$530,450	\$546,364	\$562,754	50 Fed/50 Local*
3	Intercity Bus Service	\$100,000					80 Fed/20 State
4	Vanpool Service Marketing		\$10,000	\$11,935	\$12,293	\$12,662	50 Fed/50 Local*
5	Rideshare Ann. fees/marketing		\$12,500	\$12,875	\$13,261	\$13,659	50 Fed/50 Local*
6	Service Contract - Rural	\$24,500	\$25,235	\$25,992	\$26,772	\$27,575	50 Fed/25 State/25 Local
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$716,900</b>	<b>\$657,907</b>	<b>\$679,279</b>	<b>\$699,658</b>	<b>\$720,647</b>	
<b>Capital</b>							
1	Transit Vehicles (2 @ \$65K Each)	\$130,000		\$130,000		\$130,000	80 Fed/20 Local
2	Prev. Maintenance	\$72,500	\$74,675	\$76,915	\$79,223	\$81,599	80 Fed/20 Local*
3	Vehicle Equipment	\$11,250	\$11,588	\$11,935	\$12,293	\$12,662	80 Fed/20 Local*
4	Transit Branding	\$12,000	\$12,360	\$12,731			80 Fed/20 Local*
5	Rideshare Software		\$60,000				80 Fed/20 Local*
6	Transit Facility - Prel. Planning		\$100,000		\$100,000		80 Fed/20 Local
7	Park and Ride Study	\$50,000					80 Fed/20 State
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$275,750</b>	<b>\$258,623</b>	<b>\$231,581</b>	<b>\$191,516</b>	<b>\$224,261</b>	
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$992,650</b>	<b>\$916,530</b>	<b>\$910,861</b>	<b>\$891,174</b>	<b>\$944,909</b>	
* City may receive 50 percent reimbursement towards its local match from the Nebraska Public Transportation Assistance Program through NDOT.							
3. Intercity Bus Service Planning and Marketing in Year 1; Operations/Vehicles - Illustrative Plan							
7. Park and Ride Study complete w/ Intercity Bus Service Planning							

Table 12.2: Fiscally Constrained Budget - Revenues

	Year	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Revenues</b>						
<b>Admin/Operating</b>						
	Local - City	\$268,480	\$282,784	\$291,268	\$300,006	\$309,006
	Local - County	\$6,125	\$6,309	\$6,498	\$6,693	\$6,894
	Local - Other (Vanpool Service)		\$5,000	\$5,968	\$6,147	\$6,331
	State	\$26,125	\$6,309	\$6,498	\$6,693	\$6,894
	Federal 5307	\$323,920	\$344,888	\$356,052	\$366,733	\$377,735
	Federal 5311	\$12,250	\$12,618	\$12,996	\$13,386	\$13,787
	Federal 5311(f)	\$80,000	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$716,900</b>	<b>\$657,907</b>	<b>\$679,279</b>	<b>\$699,658</b>	<b>\$720,647</b>
<b>Capital</b>						
	Local - City	\$45,150	\$51,725	\$46,316	\$38,303	\$44,852
	State	\$10,000	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-
	Federal 5307	\$76,600	\$206,898	\$81,265	\$153,213	\$75,409
	Federal 5311(f)	\$40,000	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-
	Federal 5339	\$104,000	-/-	\$104,000	-/-	\$104,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$275,750</b>	<b>\$258,623</b>	<b>\$231,581</b>	<b>\$191,516</b>	<b>\$224,261</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>\$992,650</b>	<b>\$916,530</b>	<b>\$910,861</b>	<b>\$891,174</b>	<b>\$944,909</b>



# CHAPTER 13 ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

## 13.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the Fiscally Constrained Plan for the contracted service provider. Information within this chapter builds from the projects identified in Chapter 12 and moves to an enhanced level of public transportation for the community.

Figure 13.1 Illustrative Plan

## 13.2 Illustrative Plan

The Illustrative Plan for the City of Grand Island and the Hall County includes the Flexible Route Service concept. Due to the current budget constraints for the City, this option is not feasible for at least three years. Should additional funding become available in the near-term, the Transit Program Manager would begin initial planning efforts to implement the Flexible Route concept.

### 13.2.1 Flexible Route Service

The Flexible Route Service alternative features two routes operating in Grand Island, with the option of riders calling into the office for a route deviation if the rider is unable to walk to the bus stop. When trip deviation requests are made, the bus deviates off the route to pickup or drop-off passenger, then travels back to the scheduled bus route. The two routes would operate every 60 minutes.

Passengers board a bus at a designated bus stop along the route, or for an additional fee, make an advanced reservation to either be dropped off or picked up at any location within 3/4-mile of the regular route. The Flexible Routes primarily serve portions of the following

**ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN**

- **Flexible Route Service**
- 2 Routes
- Monday – Friday
- 6:00 am - 6:30 pm
- 6 peak vehicles in urban area
- 60-minute headways
- \$683,000 annual operating
- \$961,000 start up cost
- 19,125 annual revenue hours
  
- **Intercity Bus Service**
- Monday - Friday
- Three trips per day
- Wifi-equipped vehicles
- 2 routes -
  - Hastings from/to Grand Island
  - Kearney from/to Grand Island

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US 281 / Dier's Avenue</li> <li>• Old Potash Highway</li> <li>• Downtown along portions of 1st, 3rd, and 4th streets</li> <li>• 13th Street</li> <li>• Oak Street</li> <li>• Faidley Avenue</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webb Road</li> <li>• Lincoln Avenue</li> <li>• Broadwell Avenue</li> <li>• Capital Avenue</li> <li>• Locust Street</li> <li>• Husker Highway</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Service hours would be from 6:00 am to 6:30 pm. The Flexible Route Service is similar to a traditional fixed route service, with branded vehicles, brochures with route maps and service schedules, bus stops with signs, and shelters at high ridership locations. In addition to the Flexible Route Service, general public demand response would be available for all persons outside the deviation area, which is within the urbanized area of Grand Island. **Figure 13.2** shows the Flexible Route Service.

The Flexible Route Service planning would begin in Year 4, along with the procurement of three vehicles for the service. In Year 4, the preliminary steps for the Flexible Route Service include:

- Operations Plan
- Capital Plan
- Marketing Plan
- Bus Stop Assessment
- Bus Stop Installation

These planning steps are included in the Illustrative Plan budget, displayed in **Table 13.1** and **Table 13.2** on the following pages. Capital Costs line 9 display costs for the Flexible Route Operations Plan in Year 4 and would include developing plans for operating, capital and marketing. Line 12 under the Capital Costs is Flexible Route Implementation in Year 5, and includes the Bus Stop Assessment and implementation. The Flexible Route infrastructure in Capital Costs Line 11 includes the construction of accessible stops for approximately 170 stops for the two routes. Seven vehicles will be used to operate the service. Grand Island will procure four of those vehicles in Year 1 and 3, followed by the other three vehicles in Year 4. The summary table of the Illustrative Plan projected expenses and revenues are shown for the next five years.

### 13.2.2 Intercity Bus Service

Intercity Bus Service, which includes two routes:

- To/from Grand Island and Kearney
- To/from Grand Island and Hastings

Both routes would operate three trips, Monday through Friday – one morning trip, one mid-day trip, and one late afternoon trip. The total annual operating cost for the two Intercity Bus routes is \$126,500. One bus will be operated on each route, with one backup vehicle for a total of three vehicles for the Intercity Service. The vehicles will be similar size to the body-on-chassis buses used today, and will be equipped with Wi-Fi.

The Intercity Bus Service transit routes are eligible for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5311(f) funding. This grant program currently funds 100 percent of many costs for the service, including detailed planning for the service.

Each of the routes to/from Kearney and Hastings will serve intermodal connections, including the bus stations and the airports, which is a requirement to be eligible for the funding. Additional coordination and outreach with the major employers in Hastings, Kearney and Grand Island are the next steps for this service to move forward.

The operating costs to start up the service are shown in Year 2 of the Illustrative Plan due to the local match for vehicle procurement and other capital projects associated with the service. The vehicle and other capital projects are shown in Year 1 of the Illustrative Plan.

Figure 13.2: Flexible Route Service

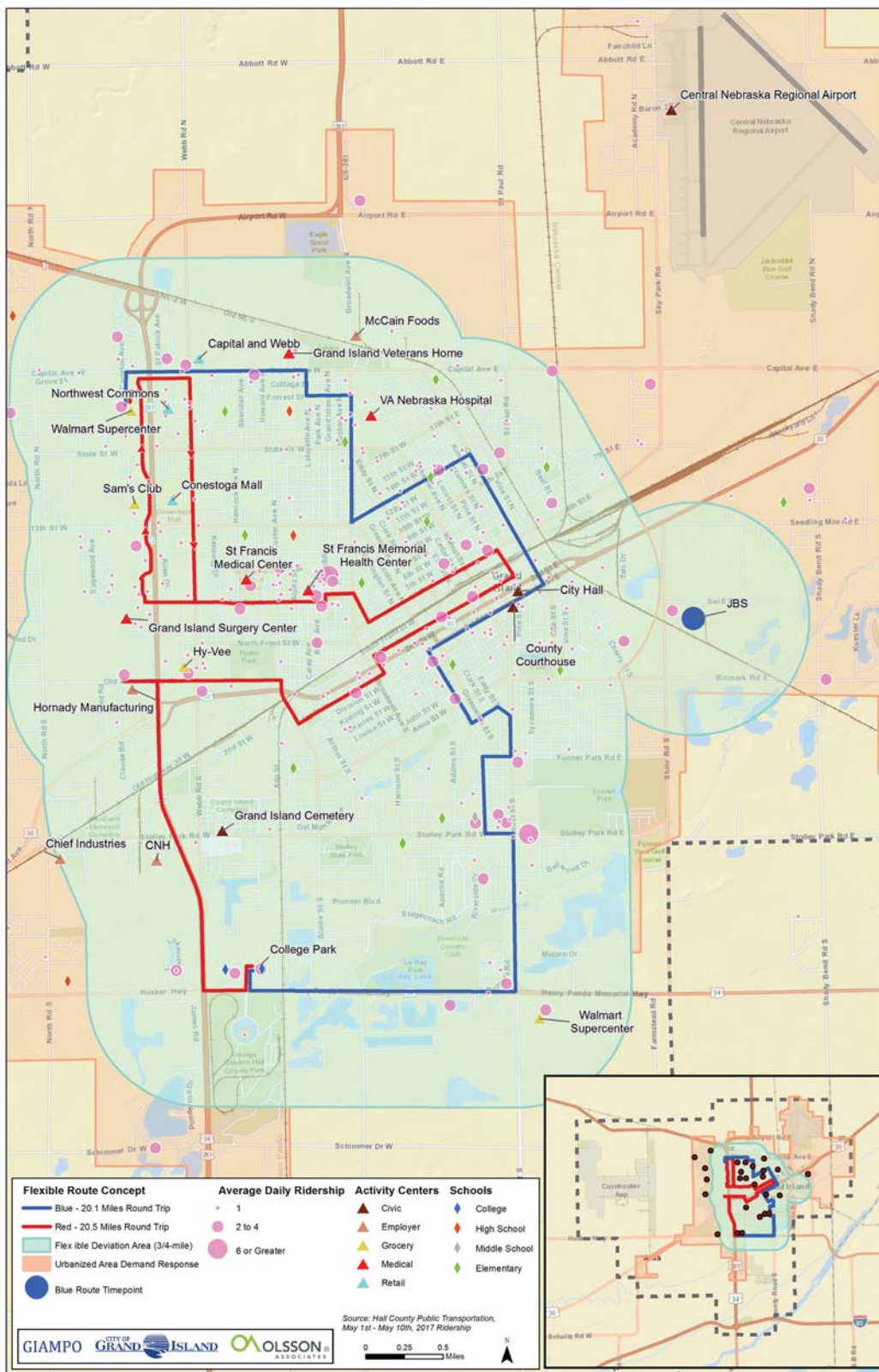


Table 13.1: Illustrative Plan Budget - Expenses

	Year	1	2	3	4	5	Notes
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Admin/Operating</b>							<b>Funding % Breakouts</b>
1	Admin Management	\$92,400	\$95,172	\$98,027	\$100,968	\$103,997	80 Fed/20 Local*
2	Service Contract - Existing	\$500,000	\$515,000	\$530,450	\$546,364	-/-	50 Fed/50 Local*
3	Intercity Bus/Planning Operations	\$100,000	\$126,500	\$130,295	\$134,204	\$138,230	80 Fed/20 State; Operations - 50 Fed/50 State
4	Vanpool Service Marketing	-/-	\$10,000	\$10,300	\$10,609	\$10,927	50 Fed/50 Local*
5	Rideshare Ann fees/ Marketing	-/-	\$12,500	\$12,875	\$13,261	\$13,659	50 Fed/50 Local *
6	Flexible Route Operations	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	\$682,549	50 Fed/50 Local*
7	Service Contract - Rural	\$24,500	\$25,235	\$25,992	\$26,772	\$27,575	50 Fed/25 State/25 Local
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$716,900</b>	<b>\$784,407</b>	<b>\$807,939</b>	<b>\$832,177</b>	<b>\$976,937</b>	
<b>Capital</b>							
1	City Transit Vehicles (2@ \$65k each)	\$130,000	-/-	\$130,000	-/-	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local
2	Prev. Maintenance	\$72,500	\$74,675	\$76,915	\$79,223	\$81,599	80 Fed/20 Local*
3	Vehicle Equipment	\$11,250	\$11,588	\$11,935	\$12,293	\$12,662	80 Fed/20 Local*
4	Transit Branding	\$12,000	\$12,360	\$12,731	-/-	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local*
5	Intercity Bus Service - Vehicles (3 @ \$70k)/ Marketing	\$210,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	80 Fed/10 State/10 Local
6	Rideshare Software	-/-	\$60,000	-/-	-/-	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local*
7	Transit Facility - Prel. Planning	-/-	\$100,000	-/-	\$100,000	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local
8	Park and Ride Study	\$50,000	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	80 Fed/20 State
9	Flexible Route Operations Plan	-/-	-/-	-/-	\$150,000	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local
10	Flexible Route Vehicles(3 @ \$70k)	-/-	-/-	-/-	\$210,000	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local
11	Flexible Route Infrastructure	-/-	-/-	-/-	\$601,500	-/-	80 Fed/20 Local
12	Flexible Route Implementation	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	\$100,000	80 Fed/20 Local
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$485,750</b>	<b>\$268,623</b>	<b>\$241,581</b>	<b>\$1,163,016</b>	<b>\$204,261</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$1,202,650</b>	<b>\$1,053,030</b>	<b>\$1,049,520</b>	<b>\$1,995,193</b>	<b>\$1,181,199</b>	
* City may receive 50 percent reimbursement towards its local match from the Nebraska Public Transportation Assistance Program through NDOT.							

Table 13.2: Illustrative Plan Budget - Revenues

Year		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Revenues</b>						
<b>Admin/Operating</b>						
Local		\$268,480	\$282,784	\$291,268	\$300,006	\$368,903
Local - County		\$6,125	\$6,309	\$6,498	\$6,693	\$6,894
Local - Other (Vanpool Service)		-/-	\$5,000	\$5,150	\$5,305	\$5,464
State		\$26,125	\$69,559	\$71,646	\$73,795	\$76,009
Federal 5307		\$323,920	\$344,888	\$355,234	\$365,891	\$436,765
Federal 5311		\$12,250	\$12,618	\$12,996	\$13,386	\$13,787
Federal 5311(f)		\$80,000	\$63,250	\$65,148	\$67,102	\$69,115
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$716,900</b>	<b>\$784,407</b>	<b>\$807,939</b>	<b>\$832,177</b>	<b>\$976,937</b>
<b>Capital</b>						
Local - City		\$45,150	\$51,725	\$46,316	\$230,603	\$38,352
Local - Intercity Bus Service Partner Communities		\$42,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
State		\$10,000	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-
Federal 5307		\$76,600	\$126,898	\$81,265	\$674,413	\$155,409
Federal 5311(f)		\$208,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Federal 5339		\$104,000	\$80,000	\$104,000	\$248,000	-/-
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$485,750</b>	<b>\$268,623</b>	<b>\$241,581</b>	<b>\$1,163,016</b>	<b>\$204,261</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>\$1,202,650</b>	<b>\$1,053,030</b>	<b>\$1,049,520</b>	<b>\$1,995,193</b>	<b>\$1,181,199</b>



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## CHAPTER 14 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 14.1 Implementation Plan

The following steps and tasks are key to the continued momentum for public transportation in Grand Island and Hall County. Of particular importance within this report is the baseline transit agency information available to the City, as they continue to be the new management of the services since 2016. The Transit Program Manager must continue to monitor service performance and conduct bi-annual checks for the implementation of projects within this report. The City, with input from the service provider, should develop performance metrics on system performance. The service provider should regularly report these metrics to the Transit Program Manager.

The Transit Program Manager and the service provider will be responsible for action items for implementation in order to ensure transit services in Hall County and Grand Island are maintained at a high level and operating with maximum cost effectiveness. **Table 14.1** provides the implementation plan for actions over the next two years.

Table 14.1: Implementation Steps

		2018	2019
<b>Initial Implementation Steps</b>			
1	Research Rideshare software program options and develop RFP for purchasing the Rideshare software for implementation.		
2	Implement Rideshare software and coordinate with software developer staff to design software infrastructure relative to local and regional needs.		
3	Coordinate with Enterprise Vanpool program representative and establishments such as JBS and Veterans Home.		
4	Finalize contract with vendor and rollout of Enterprise Vanpool program.		
5	Develop general marketing plan for community outreach and awareness for transit services.		
6	Continue coordination with NDOT on the Intercity Bus Service Plan.		
7	Coordinate with NDOT to develop RFP for Intercity Bus Service Operations Plan and Park and Ride Study.		
8	Coordinate with local agencies and establishments to fund the local match for the vehicles and other capital improvements for Intercity Bus Service.		
9	Develop Bid for service contract of transit operations.		
10	Develop RFP for transit facility preliminary planning.		

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# APPENDIX A SENIOR CITIZEN INDUSTRIES ANNUAL EXPENSES

SCI Transportation Average Expenses Per Month - 2015

Expenses	Average Monthly Amount	Percent of Budget
Internet	\$20	0%
Tablet plan	\$235	1%
Telephone	\$23	0%
Two-way radio	\$57	0%
Utilities	\$263	1%
Fuel	\$3,930	10%
Admin Support	\$721	2%
Gross Pay	\$22,965	58%
Taxes	\$1,851	5%
Auto Insurance	\$3,692	9%
Printing/Supplies	\$145	0%
Vision Insurance	\$146	0%
Renewals	\$111	0%
Unemployment taxes	\$97	0%
Snow removal	\$13	0%
Audit	\$300	1%
Bank charges	\$10	0%
Travel	\$10	0%
Insurance Deductible	\$250	1%
Training	\$137	0%
Insurance prop/liability	\$1,099	3%
Prev. Main	\$-	0%
Main - oil	\$24	0%
Main - routine	\$3,146	8%
Main - supplies	\$35	0%
Main - non-routine	\$171	0%
	\$-	0%
Capital Support Equip	\$-	0%
Remote phones	\$233	1%
	\$-	
	\$39,683	

SCI Annual Expenses

Expense	Amount
Payroll: Gross Pay	\$188,734.53
Cab Tickets	\$62,585.50
Insurance: Automobile	\$47,153.82
Fuel	\$44,016.36
Payroll: Payroll Gross	\$40,909.78
Maintenance-routine	\$28,682.33
Payroll: Taxes	\$18,727.10
Insurance-property/liability	\$8,789.50
Payroll: Admin Support	\$8,526.00
Printing/Supplies	\$7,494.71
Bills: Tablet-data plan	\$5,744.04
Workman's Comp Insurance	\$5,713.50
Misc	\$4,803.65
NATP - Reimburs. expenses	\$2,715.95
Maintenance-oil	\$2,133.57
Bills: Utilities	\$2,100.00
Advertising	\$2,095.31
Maintenance - Building	\$1,490.00
Unemployment Tax	\$1,384.02
Audit	\$1,225.00
Training	\$920.32
Bills: Telephone-2-way Radios	\$632.39
Vision Insurance	\$632.20
Bus Registrations	\$396.00
Bus Wash	\$321.00
Install radio new bus	\$287.77
Maintenance - non-routine	\$266.33
Bills: Telephone	\$218.10
Bills: Internet	\$217.51
Dishonesty Bond	\$200.20
Membership dues	\$175.00
Bills: Data Plan	\$125.00
Personnel	\$115.51
Office Supplies	\$111.09
Maintenance-wash	\$58.85
Bus: Maintenance	\$37.73
Maintenance-supplies	\$30.71
Reimbursed Title XX	\$10.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$489,780.38</b>

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# APPENDIX B TRANSIT RIDER SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Transit Rider Survey Instrument



# Hall County Public Transportation Transit Rider Survey, June 2017

The City of Grand Island and GIAMPO launched the **Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study** in March 2017. The Purpose of the Study is to review existing transit services in Grand Island and Hall County, analyze transit demand, develop short-term public transportation options, and prepare a 3-5 year plan and budget. Hall County Public Transportation has provided curb-to-curb demand response transit to the community for over 30 years.

The transit survey will help the project team assess existing transit services and customer satisfaction of transit riders within the community. Thank you for your participation.

**1. Please rate the following:**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
A. Timeliness - ontime arrival of the bus for most trips.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Comfort - the temperature on the bus for most trips.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Comfort - the seats on the bus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Cleanliness of the vehicle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Information during reservation for when the bus would arrive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Information during reservation for how long the trip would take.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Ease of booking or changing trip.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Ease of finding information on Hall County Public Transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Helpfulness of the driver.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Professionalism of the driver.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Helpfulness of staff taking reservations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Overall service you receive from Hall County Public Transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Cost of the ride.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Transit Rider Survey Instrument

**7. On a scale of 1 to 5 how valuable do you think Hall County Public Transportation is for our community today? (1=Not Valuable, 5=Very Valuable)**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**8. What is the perception in the community of Hall County Public Transportation?**

**9. Which one of the following best describes you:**

- Employed Full-time  Student  
 Employed Part-time  Retired  
 Not currently employed  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Gender**

- Male  Female

**11. Age**

- 18 years and under  19 yrs - 35 yrs  
 36 yrs - 50 yrs  51 yrs - 65 yrs  
 66 yrs or older

**12. What is your annual household income?**

- Less than \$25,000  \$25,001 - \$35,000  
 \$35,001 - \$50,000  \$50,001 - \$75,000  
 Over \$75,000

**13. Ethnicity**

- African-American/Black  Asian  
 Caucasian/White  Hispanic/Latino  
 Native-American/Indian  Pacific Island/Hawaiian  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**14. What disability or special need do you require assistance with?**

- I do not have special needs/ I do not require accommodations.  
 Blindness/Visual Impairment  Deaf/Hard of Hearing  
 Mobility Disability  Psychiatric Disability  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Was walking, cycling, or public transit an important consideration in your choice of where to live or work?**

- Walking:  Yes  No  
 Bicycling:  Yes  No  
 Public Transit:  Yes  No

**16. Do you typically have a vehicle available for travel?**

- Yes  No

**17. Do you have a valid driver's license?**

- Yes  No

**18. What is the Date and Time of your ride today?**

**18. How often do you ride public transit services in Grand Island?**

- Every Day  1 - 4 times a month  
 2 - 4 times a week  Rarely

**19. Additional Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**Thank you!**  
**GIAMPO**



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# APPENDIX C ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Online Community Survey Instrument



### Grand Island Community Survey

#### Regional Transit Needs Study

Please take our short survey today and make your voice heard! Your input will help ensure Hall County Public Transportation continues to meet the needs of the community!

**Thank you for your participation!**

#### 1. How often do you ride public transit services in Grand Island?

- Every day
- 2 to 4 times a week
- 1 to 4 times a month
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (please specify)

#### 2. If you use public transportation, what is your primary purpose? (Mark all that apply)

- Home

- Work
- School
- Medical
- Faith
- Shopping/Entertainment
- Other (please specify)

**3. If you are not a bus rider, why do you NOT use Hall County Public Transportation for your transportation needs? (Mark all that apply)**

- Does not go to where I need to go (Today – transit travels anywhere in Hall County)
- I have my own vehicle for transportation
- Cannot plan my trips 24 hours in advance (Today – 24 hour reservation required)
- Takes too long
- Don't know how to use the services
- Too expensive (Today – fare is \$2 per one-way trip)
- Other (please specify)

**4. How would you prioritize improvements to Hall County Public Transportation in the short range (1-3 years)? (1 = most important and 8 = least important)**

<input type="text"/>	Expand service hours. (Today service is 6a-5p, M-F)
<input type="text"/>	Expand service days.
<input type="text"/>	Increase awareness of Hall County Public Transportation. How?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Add scheduled bus routes within Grand Island.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leave service as it is today.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a new brand for transit service in the Grand Island area.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make reservation time only 4 hours in advance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**5. Please include additional description to the improvement priorities from Question #4.**

How would you increase awareness of Hall County Public Transportation?

What "other" improvements would you prioritize?

**6. On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 = Not Valuable, 5 = Very Valuable), how valuable do you think Hall County Public Transportation is for our community today?**

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. What is the perception in the community of Hall County Public Transportation?**

**8. For a typical walk, what distance is comfortable for you?**

- 5 min - Up to a 1/4 mile
- 10 min - Up to a 1/2 mile

- 20 min - Up to 1 mile
- 30 min - Up to 1.5 miles
- 40 min - Up to 2 miles
- More than 2 miles
- Unable to walk
- Other (please specify)

**9. What keeps you from walking more often for short trips? (Select top 3 reasons)**

- Nearby vehicle traffic is too fast and congested
- Prefer to drive and/or used to driving out of habit
- My health
- My destination is too far away
- Sidewalks/paths/crossings are missing or are in poor condition
- Weather Conditions
- Darkness, concerned about personal security or safety
- Need to transport other people and things
- Other (please specify)

**10. If bike racks were available on Hall County Transit buses, would that be an incentive for you to ride transit more often?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



**11. What specific areas of Grand Island would you like to see transit service and bicycle/pedestrian connections?**

**12. Was walking, bicycling, or public transit service an important consideration in your choice of where to live or work? (Check all that apply)**

- Walking
- Bicycling
- Transit Services
- None of the above were considered
- Other (please specify)

**13. What is your age?**

- 18 years and under
- 19 to 35 years
- 36 to 50 years
- 51 to 64 years
- 65 years or older

**14. Do you typically have a vehicle available for travel?**

- Yes
- No

**15. Do you have a valid driver's license?**

- Yes
- No

**16. Gender**

- Male
- Female

**17. Please select the best option that describes you.**

- Employed Full-time
- Employed Part-time
- Not Currently Employed
- Student
- Retired
- Other (please specify)

**18. What is your annual household income?**

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$35,000
- \$35,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$75,000
- Over \$75,000

**19. What is the greatest benefit of Hall County Public Transportation in our community today?**

**20. Additional Comments Here:**

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# APPENDIX D

# TRANSIT RIDER SURVEY - FUTURE TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

## Transit Rider Survey – Transit Alternatives

1. In the next 5 years in Grand Island, what service do you think is best for the community? (Rank #1 - best, #2 – second best)

\*Curb side pickup service on the same day     1 = Best             2 = 2<sup>nd</sup> Best

\*Scheduled bus service available every hour with bus stops     1 = Best             2 = 2<sup>nd</sup> Best

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2. Would you prefer?

- To walk a short distance to a bus stop with service every hour OR
- Have the bus pick you up at the curb, but may be 15 minutes early or late?

---

3. Would a vanpool or rideshare program be a viable future option for your typical transit trip?

- Yes             No             Not Sure

---

4. What would you prefer to have:

- Enhanced bus service in Grand Island OR
- Have bus service to/from Kearney/Hastings?

Why?

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5. How often do you need to go to an airport?

- Once a year or less     2–5 times per year     More than 6 times per year
- 



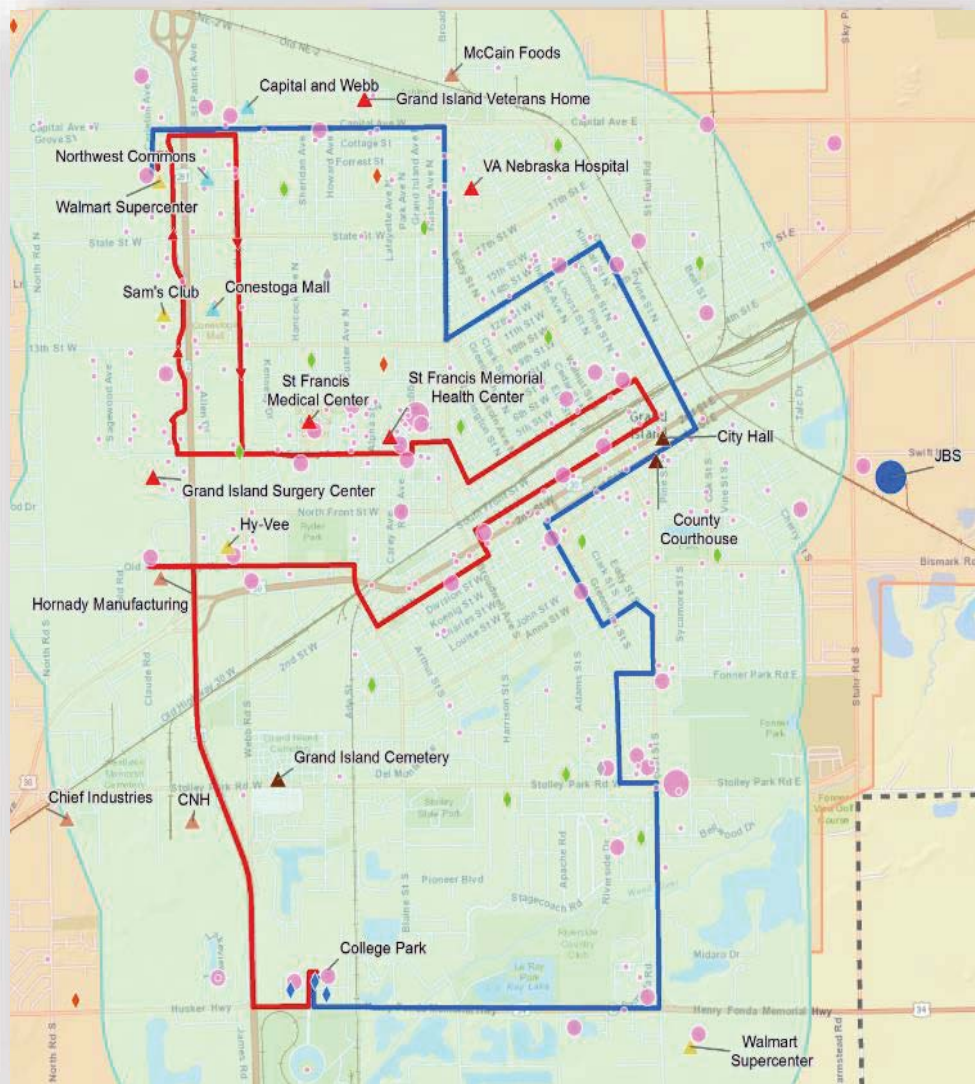
*Continued Other Side*

*August 2017*

Below are 2 bus routes in Grand Island that would operate every 60 minutes. Would these bus routes be a good alternative for you?

- Yes       No       Not Sure

Why or Why Not?



Thank YOU!!