

Galesburg Public Transportation Vision Plan

Executive Summary

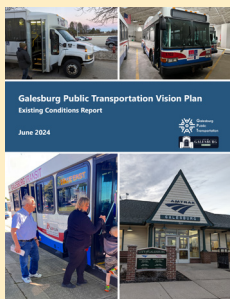


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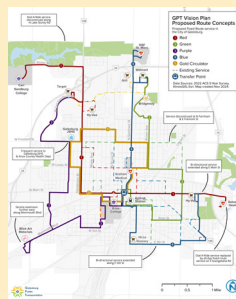
All transit providers must periodically review the transit services they provide and make service adjustments that reflect current passenger needs, recent demographic shifts, and changes in how people travel.

The **Galesburg Public Transportation Vision Plan** provides a vision for future service changes to Galesburg Public Transportation (GPT) services that reflects community needs, values, and priorities. This Vision Plan emphasizes the need for reimagined fixed routes and expanded transit options that serve the City of Galesburg and Knox County. Importantly, it is also an opportunity to evaluate transit service in Galesburg following the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on how people use, value, and prioritize transit services.

The Galesburg Public Transportation Vision Plan was conducted over a 12-month period between December 2023 and December 2024. This plan includes results from the following three phases:



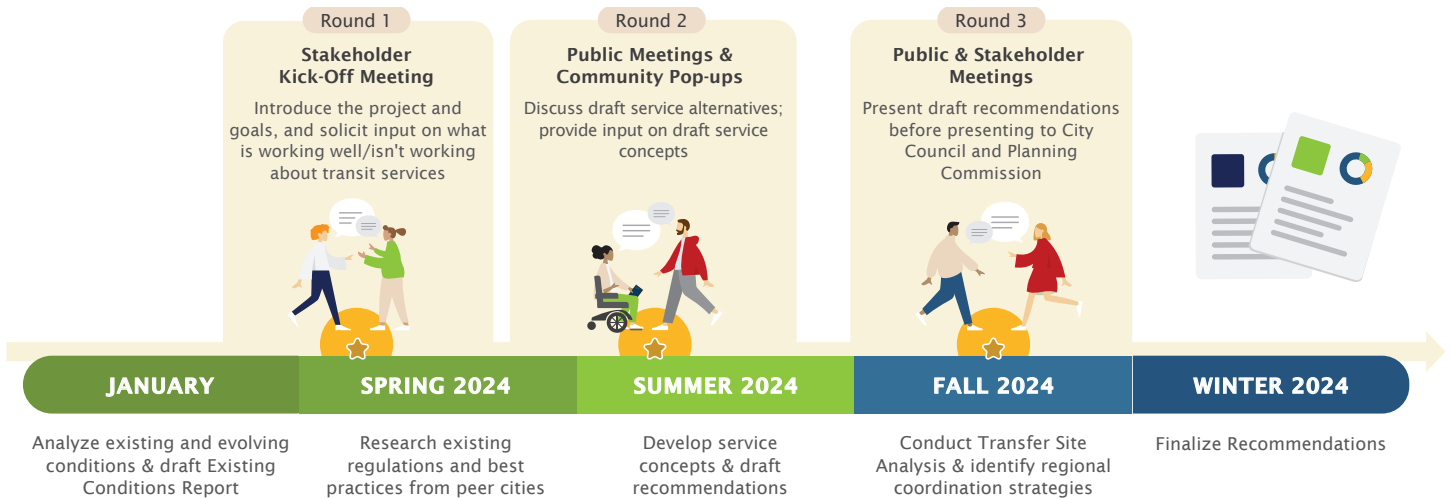
Phase I: Existing Conditions Report provides a detailed evaluation of existing GPT transit services in Galesburg as well as the market conditions in which transit operates, both in Galesburg and Knox County. This report was the foundation for developing transit alternatives.



Phase II: Transit Alternatives offer residents and key stakeholders the opportunity to weigh in on different service types and explore the opportunities of each. This iterative phase led to final service recommendations.



Phase III: GPT Vision Plan Final Report presents the short, mid, and long-term service recommendations for GPT. A financial plan is also presented that considers different scenarios for implementing the recommendations.



About Galesburg Public Transportation

CITY OF GALESBURG CHARACTERISTICS

Galesburg is located in the western part of Illinois in Knox County, approximately 45 miles northwest of Peoria and 40 miles south of the Quad Cities. Galesburg has an area of 18 square miles with approximately 30,000 residents. In addition to being the county seat of Knox County, Galesburg is home to several medical centers, fulfillment and distribution facilities, Knox College, and Carl Sandburg College. The GPT service area currently covers the City of Galesburg and areas directly outside of the city (¾-mile outside of the city limits).



FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

GPT currently operates four fixed transit routes that provide hourly service on weekdays and Saturdays between 7AM and 6PM. Dial-A-Ride service (deviated fixed-route) is provided along fixed routes but similar to ADA trips, Dial-A-Ride must be scheduled in advance over the phone with GPT (shown in Figure 1).



PARATRANSIT SERVICE

GPT is required to provide complementary ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) paratransit service within a ¾-mile buffer of fixed routes and ¾-mile beyond Galesburg city limits, for eligible riders. Paratransit service is available Monday through Saturday from 7AM to 6PM.

Key Findings

Throughout the development of this Vision Plan, several key themes were identified that are reflected in the Proposed Service Plan:

- **Support for transit and its many benefits.** Many riders and stakeholders noted the value of transit in Galesburg, including the mobility transit brings to older adults and persons with disabilities. Transit is necessary to many Galesburg residents' lifestyles and livelihoods, especially for those accessing medical appointments, work, and errands.
- **Simplify existing routes.** While stakeholders noted the value of fixed-route service, they also noted the inefficiency and inconvenience of current routes. More direct, less circuitous routes are important to riders and can improve productivity and ridership.
- **Expand service to Knox County.** Knox County has underlying transit demand outside of Galesburg, with many residents voicing interest in county-wide service options. Demand-response service offers flexibility, coverage, and convenience for riders that may live beyond the city limits.

Preferred Service Plan

Based on the community outreach, evaluation of existing services, and market analysis conducted in Phases I and II, the long-term vision for transit service in Galesburg and Knox County is summarized below.



Focus on bi-directional service. Several of the existing GPT routes offer one-way service in large, looped routes to expand geographic coverage. But one-way routes also make round-trip travel for most trips longer than necessary. The preferred service plan focuses service where demand is highest and creates direct, bi-directional routes that serve the same corridor in both direction, which is easier for passengers to understand.



Streamline service and reduce duplication. Several existing routes, such as the 2 Green Central route and 3 Red West route, attempt to serve both the east and west sides of the city, and other locations are served by multiple routes regardless of demand. By implementing more specialized routes and a circulator to connect specific areas, the proposed service is less duplicative.



Provide new demand response service throughout Knox County. There is significant transit demand in regions beyond the City of Galesburg within Knox County. Demand-response service throughout Knox County would allow riders to travel between smaller towns and cities in the county and connect to fixed-route service in Galesburg itself. This has huge implications for accessibility in the county.



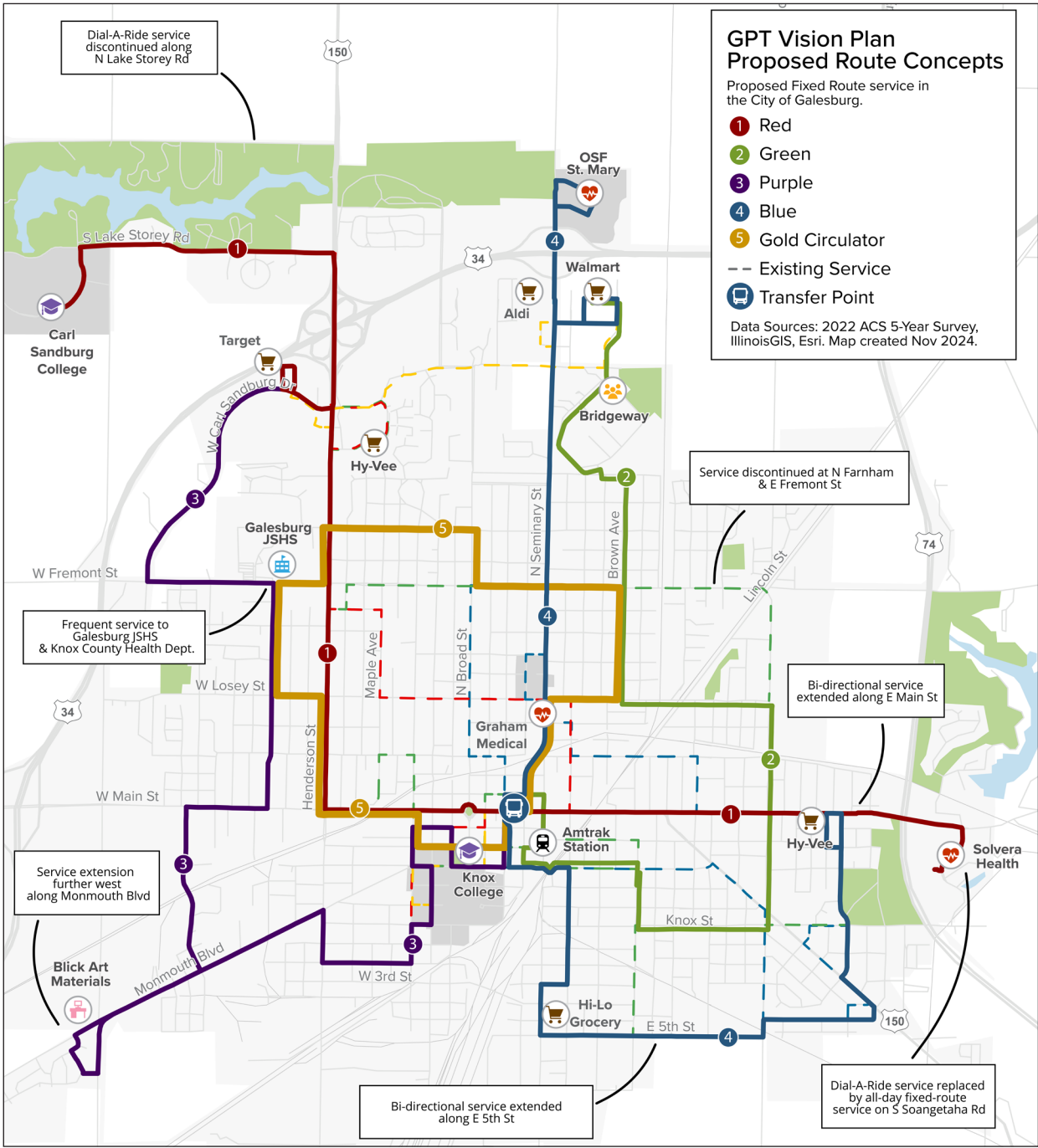
Improve bus stop infrastructure and visibility. Fixed-route service currently relies on riders flagging the bus, with few bus stop signs or shelters. Implementing fixed stops will improve visibility for both riders and bus operators, making the system more accessible and navigable, even for those who are unfamiliar with GPT.



Serve new destinations. Fixed-route service will serve major employers and allow Galesburg residents to commute to work efficiently without a car. These connections improve job accessibility for all residents, not just drivers.

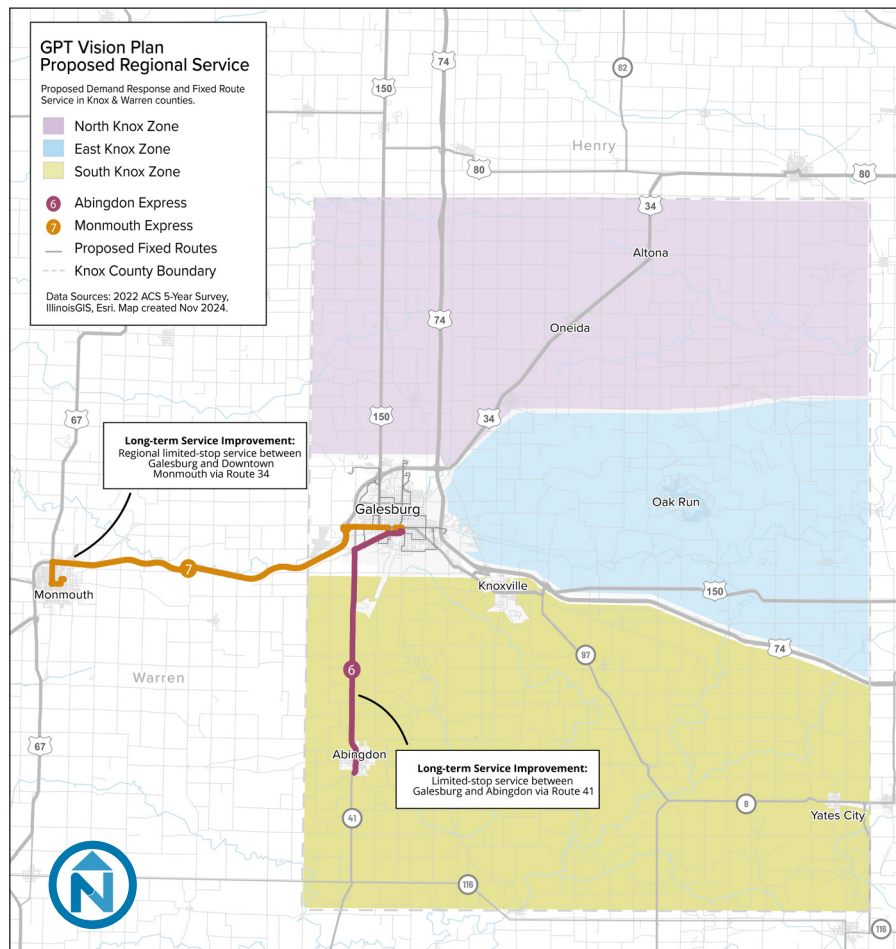


Establish a new transfer center. The current transfer center is often affected by street closures and offers fewer connection opportunities to the Galesburg Amtrak Station. By moving the transfer center closer to the Amtrak Station and other regional bus services, GPT can improve regional connections and potentially take advantage of additional state and regional funding opportunities.



BENEFITS:

- Provides flexibility for riders traveling to and from less dense areas
- Simplifies service
- Reduces duplication in the northern and western parts of the city
- Improves access to industrial areas, medical facilities, and grocery stores
- Offers direct service between key locations
- Delivers faster service along commercial corridors without deviations



BENEFITS:

- Improves county-wide access to jobs, medical services, and other key destinations
- Provides new service to residents of Knox County not previously served by GPT or other providers (especially low-income residents/ residents with no or limited vehicle access)
- Demand Response service informs future regional and county-wide transportation efforts through recording travel flows and transit demand
- Regional routes offer direct service between Galesburg and cities not currently served by transit
- Improves access to schools, hospitals, retail centers, and other institutions relied on by Knox and Warren County residents.
- Provides connections to areas beyond Knox County and Galesburg via Galesburg Amtrak Station

***Long-term service recommendations represent system changes that require further investment, ridership and transit demand data, and county and community support to implement. Given continued interest, these services could be explored in a 5–7-year time frame.*

Implementing the Service Plan

Fixed-route bus changes and the addition of a fifth route will require the fewest vehicles and operators and least buy-in (24% increase in existing operating costs), allowing these changes to be operated in the near future. The introduction of countywide service—and especially regional or intercounty service—will require additional county, state, and federal funding to launch and operate sustainably. These changes will also require time-intensive planning and coordination between counties and transit providers and strong community support. Other interventions such as a new transit center, require large capital investment and potential zoning changes, making them feasible only over a longer time horizon. An approximate timeline for implementation is included below.

Recommendations

