GALESBURG PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

GPT Vision Plan Final Report

NOVEMBER 2024

NELSON NYGAARD

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1 INTRODUCTION

GPT VISION PLAN

The Galesburg Public Transportation (GPT) Vision Plan aims to analyze existing transit services provided by the City of Galesburg to strengthen the current transit network and effectively expand service beyond the City of Galesburg into Knox County. The audit and analysis of GPT's existing services consisted of a multi-step planning effort comprised of existing conditions analysis, public engagement, transit alternatives, and implementation planning. Throughout this project, the project team used a variety of data sources and methods to create a new vision for transit including:

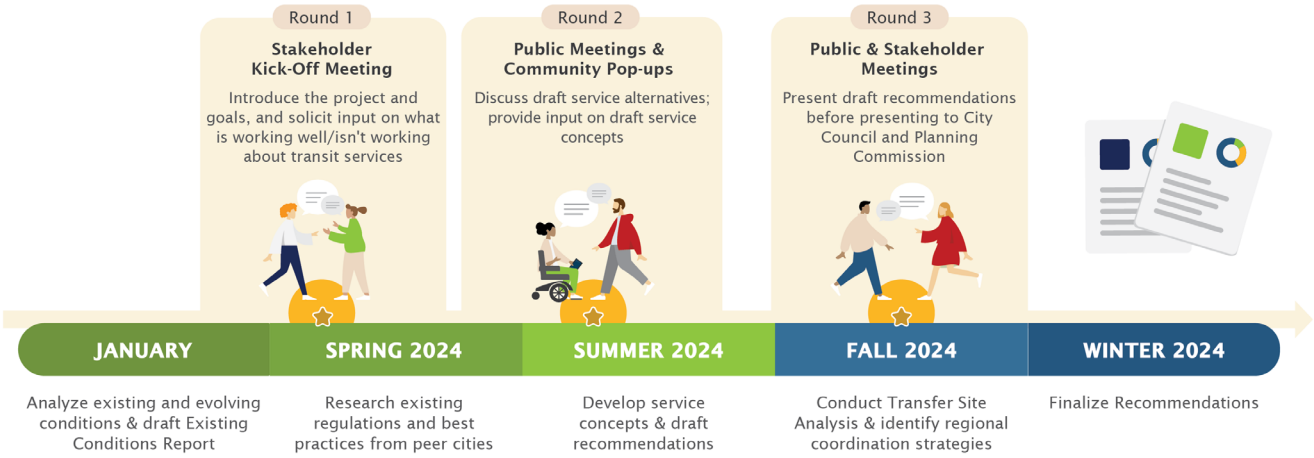
- **Geospatial data analysis** of transit demand, transit propensity, travel flows, population and employment density, activity centers, and demographic trends
- **Quantitative and qualitative analysis** of existing transit services including ridership, efficiency, cost efficiency, network design, and service policies
- **Peer review** of cities, counties, and transit systems similar to Galesburg, Knox County, and/or Galesburg Public Transportation
- **Rider and community surveys**, the first to understand existing transit needs and the second to gain feedback on proposed service alternatives
- **Public meetings and pop-up events** to gather feedback on current and proposed transit systems
- **Route planning and design** programs to modify existing routes and analyze future operations and projected performance.

IDENTIFY ways that GPT can strengthen their current transit system in the short-term by assessing GPT's existing routes

RECOMMEND ways to improve route efficiency and effectiveness

IDENTIFY how GPT can provide service to areas beyond the City of Galesburg into Knox County.

PROJECT TIMELINE



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 Galesburg Public Transportation (GPT) service area covers the City of Galesburg and areas directly outside of the city (¾-mile outside of the city limits).

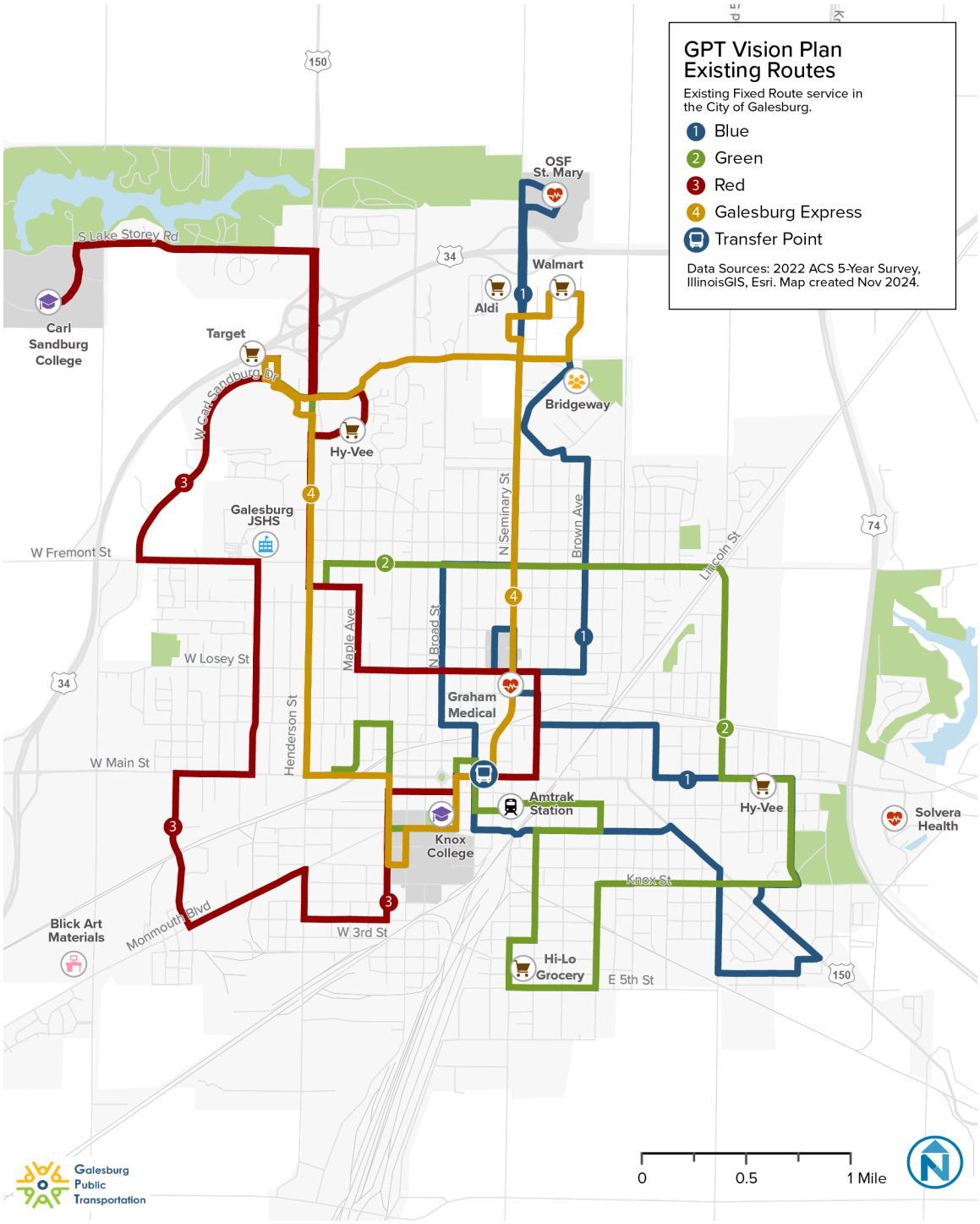
Fixed-Route Service

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.

Figure 1 Existing GPT Fixed-Route Service



Report Outline

This Vision Plan compiles analysis, findings, and recommendations informed by the GPT Service & Market Analysis as well as insights from community surveys and engagement sessions that were conducted to inform service recommendations. The report is laid out in the following chapters:

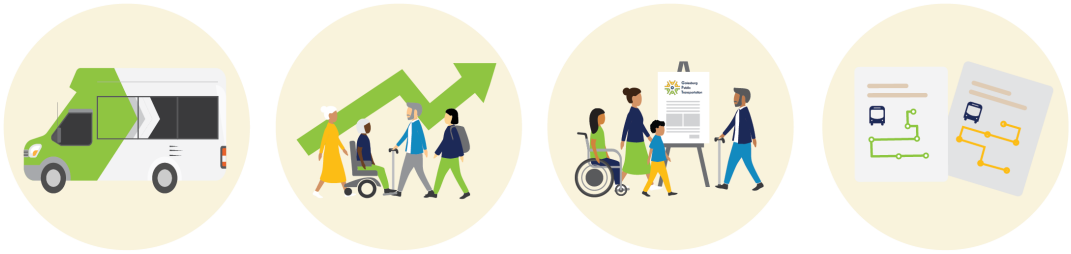
Chapter 1: Introduction. Provides an overview of the audit and analysis planning process and a brief description of existing GPT service.

Chapter 2: Service Recommendations. Introduces proposed route concepts and operational statistics.

Chapter 3: Vision Plan. Provides a detailed service and capital implementation plan for the proposed transit network.

Chapter 4: Transit System Access. Suggests additional recommendations for further improving GPT's transportation network and pedestrian infrastructure in the City of Galesburg.

KEY GOALS OF THIS REPORT:



PRESENT

detailed short- and long-term service recommendations

IDENTIFY

opportunities for future development & service expansion

INFORM

stakeholders & riders of public engagement that was conducted during the project

SERVE AS A FOUNDATION

for the development of initial service concepts, operations, and implementation

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Engagement Summary

Public engagement was a core strategy used as part of the GPT Vision Plan. Community and stakeholder engagement occurred in January, August, and December 2024. In addition to broader community engagement, a project-specific technical advisory committee (TAC) was established to inform key Galesburg stakeholders of the study's progress and to solicit input. The TAC included representatives from Knox County, the City of Galesburg, major employers, and community groups.

Public Engagement Tools

This Vision Plan was developed using four primary public engagement tools: public meetings, pop-ups, informal meetings (small groups), and online surveys. The first round of engagement was centered around the Rider and Community Survey. The purpose of this initial survey was to determine where residents and riders are traveling to/from, understand why riders currently use or don't use GPT service, and determine the types of service improvements that are most desired by riders and community members. Between March and May 2024, 243 GPT riders and Knox County community members completed this survey. This survey was primarily distributed online using a QR code, with some paper surveys available onboard GPT vehicles and at GPT's administrative office.

The second round of engagement occurred in August 2024. An online survey was launched prior to in-person events and remained open after the public meetings until September 5, 2024. The purpose of this second route of engagement was to present three different service alternatives for future improvements to GPT service throughout Knox County and receive feedback from the public to understand their preferences pertaining to GPT's potential service and operating plans. The third route of engagement occurred in December 2024, and

was intended for presenting final recommendations to community members and public stakeholders. Key findings from the first and second engagement periods included the following:

- Most GPT riders use fixed-route services or paratransit weekly but not daily, with locations like shopping and errand hubs and medical centers the most popular among riders.
- Both riders and community members alike favor many of the same service improvements. Of the improvements provided, both groups found increased service frequency and later evening services to be the most attractive and necessary. Riders were more interested in Sunday service than non-riders, however, and voiced that preference in open-ended question responses as well.
- Many GPT riders do not have reliable access to vehicles, necessitating their ridership, but community members largely had their own vehicles and preferred these vehicles to public transit.
- Several GPT riders would support more direct routes that allow them to access key locations without riding the entire, hour-long route. Routes that prioritize key locations rather than a wide service area are preferred.
- GPT riders and Knox County residents are concerned by the limited transportation options throughout Knox County for non-drivers, especially older adults, low-income residents, and students.
- Current riders and community members expressed interest in on-demand service and fixed-route service throughout Galesburg, Knox County, and the region, especially older adults who want to access medical appointments, errands and grocery shopping, and social events without driving.
- Galesburg and Knox County residents voiced a desire for improved connectivity to jobs centers and industrial locations (e.g., Blick) given the costs and inconvenience of commuting via car.
- Students and staff would appreciate more regular and extensive service to Knox College and Carl Sandburg College from other key locations in Galesburg and Knox County.
- Riders and community members are concerned about service reliability and GPT's ability to support changes to service given limited funding. A few community members are interested in supporting GPT through countywide effort and conversations with state and county legislators.

2 SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following chapter consists of service recommendations that were informed by an iterative process of scenario building, public engagement, and operational statistics analyses. It is important to note that these recommendations reflect a 24% increase in GPT's existing operating budget and cannot be implemented on GPT's current budget and fleet. All scenarios, including the proposed demand response and regional service will require an increase of capital and operational funds from Knox County and the state (Illinois Department of Transportation), as well as intensive planning and continuous public engagement efforts to be feasible. These scenarios were provided to the public for their consideration with the intention of shaping discourse and gathering public opinion rather than with the promise of timely implementation.

In addition to the findings from community engagement, the analysis of GPT's current transit network highlighted several key opportunities for growth.

1. **Switching from looped routes to direct, bi-directional routes.** Existing fixed-route transit is circuitous and less efficient. By offering service in loops, GPT prioritizes service area coverage (even in low-ridership and low-density areas) over quality and efficiency of service. By making routes more direct and bi-directional, GPT can offer more timely and convenient service to key locations while still serving riders that depend on public transportation.
2. **Extending on-demand service into Knox County.** There are several areas within Knox County with medium to high underlying transit demand outside of the city of Galesburg, including Abingdon, Knoxville, Altona, and Wataga. By providing on-demand service in these areas, GPT can increase ridership and improve accessibility to key locations in the city and county, including jobs centers, clinics, hospitals and healthcare providers, schools, and commercial areas.
3. **Considering a new transfer center.** The current transfer center in Downtown Galesburg has many great features but does not allow for convenient transfers for many riders. Relocating the current transfer center can provide riders with a comfortable waiting area, provide GPT operators with designated break facilities, and enhance regional connectivity with connections to Amtrak rail lines and regional bus services (e.g., Trailways).

UNDERLYING TRANSIT DEMAND

Transit ridership is the result of underlying demand for transit and the attractiveness of the service.

Population and job densities help indicate where it makes sense to provide transit service, and the level of service that may be appropriate. For example, a community with 15 households per acre is likely able to support 30-minute service.

Population Density

Greater population density is a good indicator of transit demand because transit relies on people being close to the service that is being provided. Higher population densities increase the feasibility of providing transit service that matches the demand for service.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Some populations may be more likely to use transit or use transit for different purposes because of socioeconomic characteristics. Generally, groups with lower incomes and no access to a vehicle tend to use transit more than other groups.

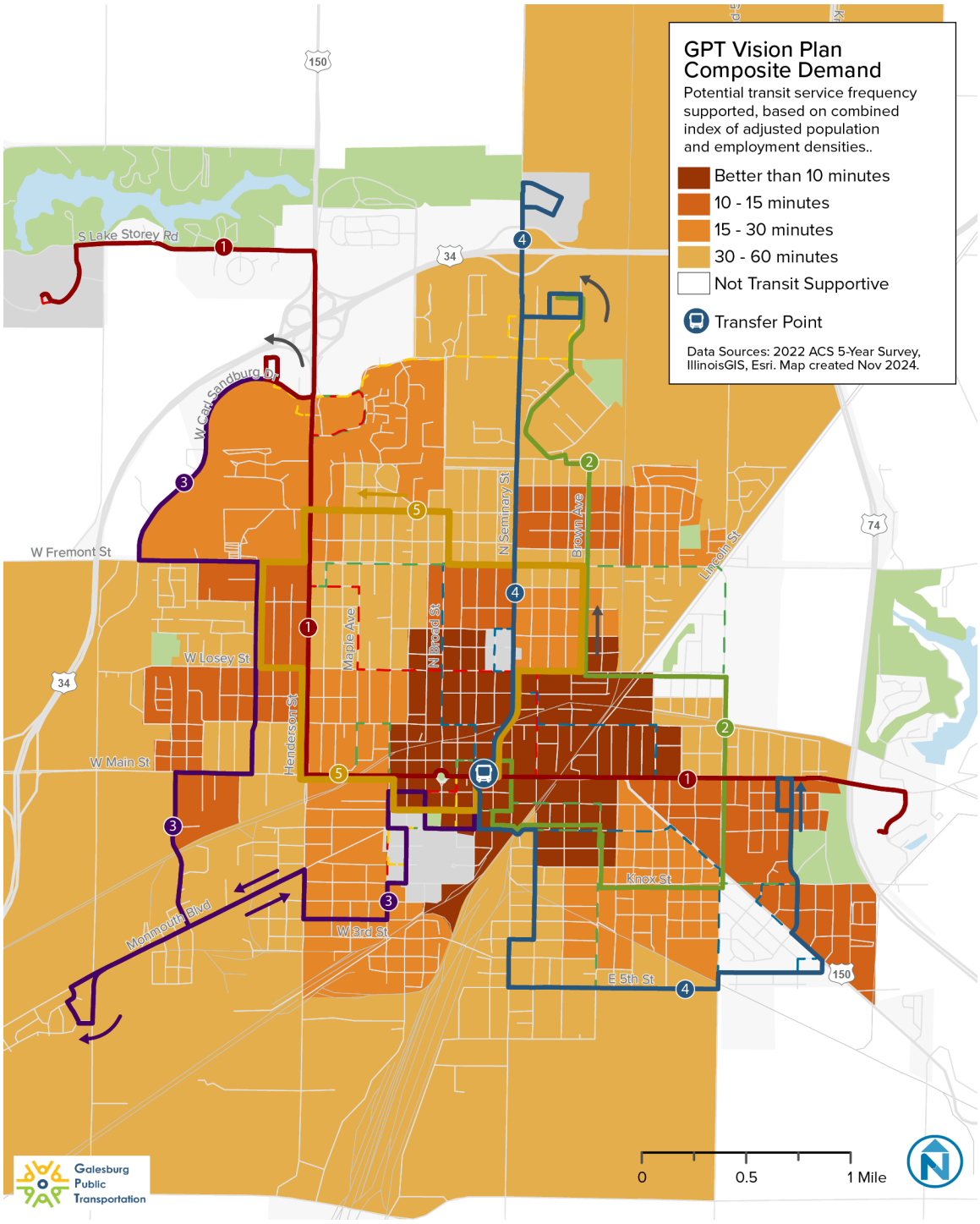
Job Types and Employment Density

Jobs are a strong indicator of demand for transit because travel to and from work is usually the most frequent type of transit trip. Jobs involving customers, clients, patients, and students (CCPS) produce additional demand for transit because each job represents the people that visit the jobsite for any services provided. While there are high proportions of traditional office jobs in Galesburg and across the region, there are also a higher proportion of CCPS jobs such as shops, restaurants, and medical facilities due to the higher concentrations of people in this area that need access to these destinations.

Most of Galesburg has population and job densities that can potentially support frequent transit service with buses that come every 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays.

Figure 2 shows the potential underlying demand for transit throughout the service area and areas where transit service is most supported. Generally, where there are higher concentrations of people, jobs and key trip generators such as grocery stores, medical facilities, and schools, the area can support higher levels of transit service (i.e., increased number of trips, higher frequencies).

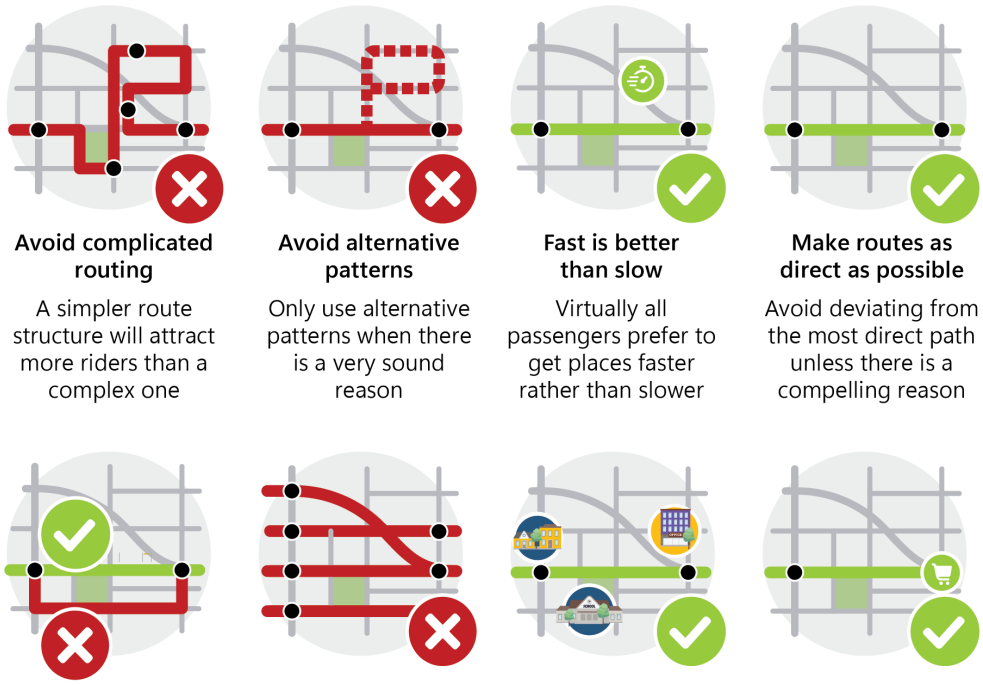
Figure 2 City of Galesburg Composite Demand



SERVICE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Service design principles are general routing concepts that provide guidance to make service more productive, easier to understand, attractive, and efficient. Figure 3 shows service design principles that were used to inform the proposed fixed-route concepts.

Figure 3 Route Planning and Service Design Principles



Avoid complicated routing

A simpler route structure will attract more riders than a complex one

Avoid alternative patterns

Only use alternative patterns when there is a very sound reason

Fast is better than slow

Virtually all passengers prefer to get places faster rather than slower

Make routes as direct as possible

Avoid deviating from the most direct path unless there is a compelling reason

Operate routes on arterial streets

Keep routes on arterial streets to make transit service easier to understand and operate

Better choices, not more choices

Providing better service on fewer routes provides most riders with better options

Serve well-defined markets

Service configured around clearly defined markets is easier to understand, reduces duplication, and can form the basis for premium services

Operate to and from strong anchors

Anchor routes with major destinations at one or both ends

IMMEDIATE SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following service recommendations were designed to be implemented within the next one to two years after the Vision Plan is adopted. The proposed changes build on existing routes, GPT practices, existing conditions (service and market analysis), and public feedback to improve and transform fixed-route service. Importantly, the system remains recognizable and navigable to current riders while still offering material improvements. These

recommendations require capital funding and will increase overall operating expenses, but both costs are reasonable with additional financial support from the City of Galesburg and Knox County. In short, the following recommendations are ambitious but feasible in the near term with adequate support from stakeholders.

Proposed Fixed-Route Network

The following proposed fixed-route recommendation includes five routes total (shown in Figure 4). Like the existing service, four of the five proposed routes (Red, Green, Purple, and Blue) would continue providing service every 60 minutes. The fifth route is a half-hour circulator designed to connect longer routes and improve cross-town connectivity (similar to the existing Galesburg Express). This network design offers direct service to high-ridership destinations, such as Wal-Mart, Target, OSF St. Mary Medical Center, Carl Sandburg College, Mary Allen West Towers, Blick, Knox College, and Downtown Galesburg while improving overall system efficiency.

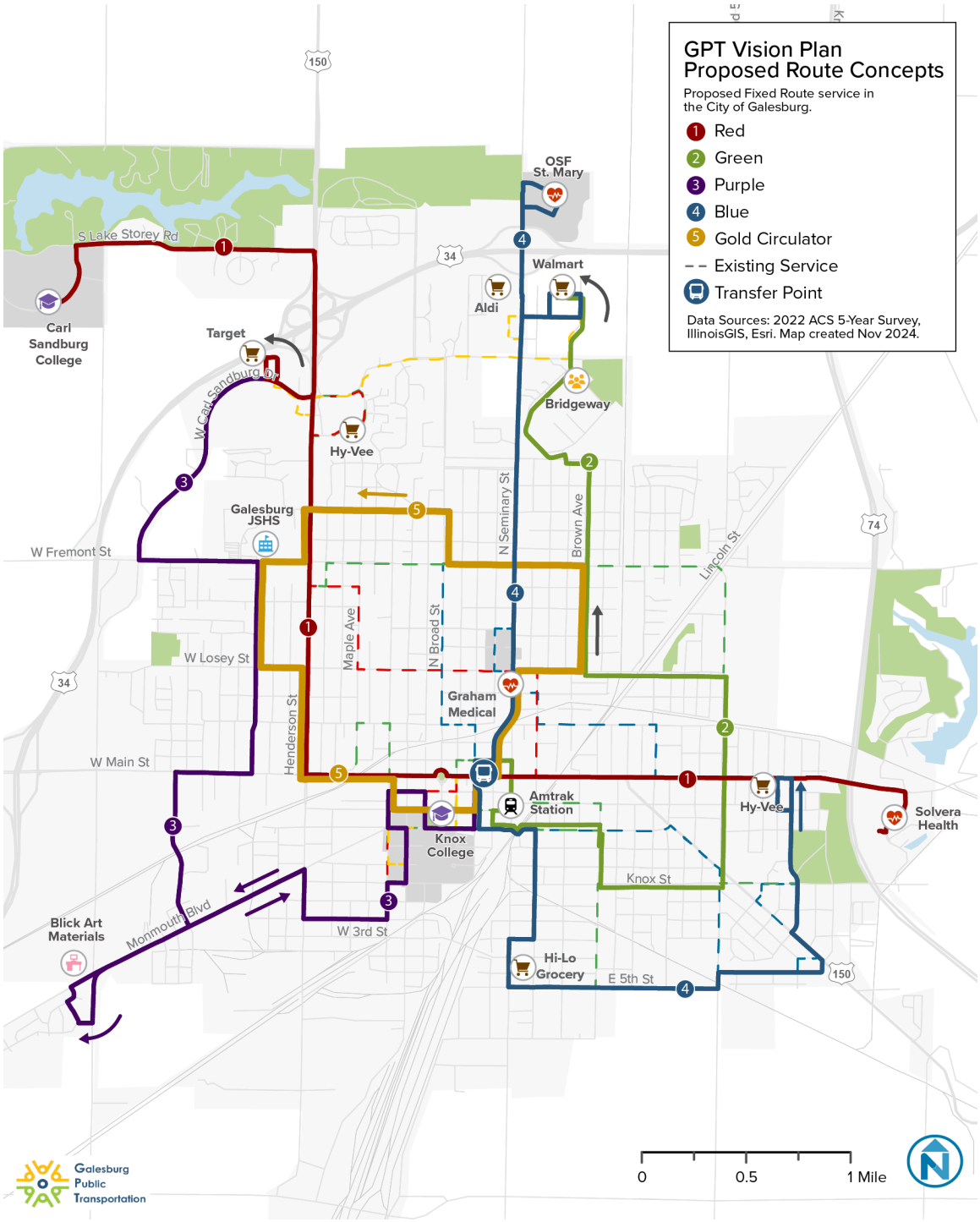
These five routes converge at the current Downtown transfer point, but they are staggered to ensure riders have enough time to transfer comfortably. All one-hour routes are bi-directional as opposed to looped – leading to improved efficiency and limiting the delays that often arise from frequent turns and travel on narrower roads. Each route also operates in a distinct part of the city, limiting service redundancies. The Gold Circulator retains riders' favorite qualities of the existing Gold Express route—namely, its shorter runtime and central location—but offers more transfer opportunities in a more manageable service alignment. The proposed circulator loop complements bi-directional service. Buses will continue to operate at similar hours and frequencies, from around 7AM to 6PM (Blue, Green, Red, and Purple) with the addition of the 30-minute circulator, also operating between 7AM and 6PM.

The addition of physical stop locations and a fixed schedule on all routes is recommended to increase service visibility throughout the city and provide a convenient experience for new and existing riders. The following proposed transit network would continue to provide ADA complementary paratransit service to eligible riders, further increasing accessibility and usability in the City of Galesburg.

Key benefits of the proposed fixed-route network include:

- ✓ Simplified service that is more legible to all riders
- ✓ Reduced duplication and redundancy in the northern and western parts of the city
- ✓ Improved access to industrial areas, medical facilities, and grocery stores
- ✓ Express service with multiple transfer opportunities
- ✓ Reduced travel on quiet, residential, or narrow streets

Figure 4 GPT Proposed Fixed-Route Concepts



Operational Statistics

The new bi-directional routes, improve the reliability and efficiency of routes, focus on new priority markets (such as Blick Art Materials), increase total ridership, and decrease the percentage of non-revenue vehicle hours. Successful changes to efficiency, accessibility, and convenience will also endear more Galesburg to the service, increasing the number of riders in addition to the number of trips.

As reflected in Figure 5, the addition of the proposed fifth route (Gold Circulator) increases total revenue hours and miles. The addition of a fifth route would be needed to complement the adjustment to the current four route alignments that make up GPT's network. This additional route results in an estimated 24% increase in GPT's total operating cost annually. GPT would require increased state, county, and local funding to implement and operate these changes, especially given the additional cost of acquiring and maintaining a fifth peak vehicle when GPT is currently experiencing challenges with operator and vehicle availability.

Changes to fixed-route service will also contribute to minor ADA-mandated complementary paratransit zone shifts. Paratransit is required to operate within a 3/4-mile buffer of all fixed routes. Although the proposed routes do not expand or contract the existing service area greatly, there will be minor changes to buffer boundaries that might make more residents eligible for paratransit to and from their homes.

Figure 5 Proposed Weekday Fixed-Route Operational Statistics

	Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours*	Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles**	Peak Buses	Annual Operating Cost	% Change (Operating Cost)
Existing Fixed-Routes	13,806	205,313	4	$1,307,152	-
Proposed Fixed-Routes	**17,160**	**507,112**	**5**	**$1,624,709**	**24%**

*Vehicle Revenue Hours are the hours that vehicles travel while in service (including layover and recovery)

**Vehicle Revenue Miles are the miles that vehicles are in service (including layover and recovery)

Additional Opportunities

With proposed connections to the Galesburg Amtrak Station and the current Downtown transfer point, the proposed routes would support future connections to countywide or regional services. As GPT attempts to expand service throughout Knox County, a simpler and more navigable fixed-route transit system allows riders transferring from other services to use fixed-route services comfortably.

Proposed Route Change Sheets

Route 1 Red

The proposed 1 Red route operates between Carl Sandburg College and Soangetaha Road and Solvera Health, primarily along N Henderson Street and Main Street. This route would serve several key destinations along Main Street and Downtown, including Hy-Vee and the Downtown Transfer Point, and uses North Henderson Street to access key shopping destinations like Hy-Vee and Target before terminating at Carl Sandburg College. This direct route would avoid duplicating service in Western Galesburg (an area also served by the proposed 3 Purple route) and limits delays by Galesburg Junior Senior High School.

The existing Red route currently serves Graham Medical, Knox College, and Moon Towers directly, but this service has been replaced by the 3 Purple and 4 Gold Circulator routes, with transfers between the Red route and other routes also made more feasible outside of the Downtown Transfer point. The Red route also does not currently serve Carl Sandburg College. By offering direct transit between Carl Sandburg's main campus and Downtown Annex, the proposed Red route aims to better serve the student population.

Markets Served

As proposed, the 1 Red route would serve key destinations such as:

- **Educational facilities**: Carl Sandburg College, Carl Sandburg College Annex
- **Retail/Grocery:** Target, Main Street, Hy-Vee Main Street, Hy-Vee Home Boulevard
- **Residential areas**: Mary Allen West Towers, Bridlecreek Apartments, Galesburg Towers, Sandburg Village
- **Medical facilities**: Solvera Health, Beacon of Hope Hospice of Illinois
- **Community facilities**: Galesburg Public Library, Fish of Galesburg, Knox County Farm Bureau, Downtown Galesburg YMCA.
- **Other employers**: Prairie Inn Conference Center, Holiday Inn

Service Characteristics

The 1 Red route would retain the current operational schedule: Monday through Friday from 7AM to 6PM. Buses would run every 60 minutes. Riders would be able to transfer to all other bus routes at Prairie and Main Street, the Downtown Transfer Point, to the 4 Gold Circulator at Main and Henderson Street and at West Fremont and Henderson Street, to the 2 Green route at Main and North Farnham Street. Although the 1 Red route does not directly provide service to the Galesburg Amtrak Station, the station is 0.2 miles on foot from the proposed route.

Figure 6 Route 1 Red Weekday Service Characteristics

	Span	Frequency	Trips	Service Span
Current Route	11 hours	60 minutes	11 total	7AM-6PM
Proposed Route	**11 hours**	**60 minutes**	**11 total**	**7AM-6PM**

Figure 7 Proposed Route 1 Red Concept

Route 2 Green

The proposed 2 Green route would operate between Main/Prairie Street and Walmart, primarily along East Knox Street, North Farnham Street, East Losey Street, and Florence Avenue. This route would serve several key destinations in eastern Galesburg including Walmart, among the City's highest ridership stops. This direct route would avoid duplicating service in central and western Galesburg (an area also served by the proposed 1 Red route) and would no longer provide crosstown service. The existing Red route currently serves both eastern and western Galesburg.

The existing routes focused on expanding service area but sacrificed efficiency and convenience for riders and faced disruptions and delays in residential areas. The proposed routes would eliminate service to Target and Hy-Vee via Home Boulevard directly, but this service has been replaced by the proposed 1 Red route, with transfers between the Green route and other routes. The proposed Green route would expand existing service by adding access to destinations such as Walmart, Aldi, and Bridgeway.

Markets Served

As proposed, the 2 Green route would serve key destinations such as:

- **Retail/Grocery:** Walmart
- **Residential areas**: Seminary Estates
- **Community facilities**: Bridgeway, Thrive Community Services, Amtrak Station, Galesburg Rescue Mission

Service Characteristics

The 2 Green route would retain the current operational schedule: Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 6 PM. Buses would run every 60 minutes. Riders would be able to transfer to all other bus routes at Prairie and Main Street, the Downtown Transfer Point, to the 5 Blue at South Prairie and East South Street, to the 1 Red route at Main and North Farnham Street, to the Gold Circulator at East Losey and North Florence Street, and to the 5 Blue route at Walmart.

Figure 8 Route 2 Green Weekday Service Characteristics

	Span	Frequency	Trips	Service Span
Current Route	11 hours	60 minutes	11 total	7AM-6PM
Proposed Route	**11 hours**	**60 minutes**	**11 total**	**7AM-6PM**

Figure 9 Proposed Route 2 Green Concept

Route 3 Purple

The proposed 3 Purple route would operate between Main/Prairie Street and Target, primarily along 3rd Street, Monmouth Boulevard, North Hawkinson Street, West Fermont Street, and West Carl Sandburg Drive. This route would serve several key destinations in western Galesburg including Target, among the City's highest ridership stops, and Blick Art Materials, a major employer. This direct route would avoid duplicating service in western Galesburg (an area also served by the proposed 1 Red route) but also provides connections to the Red route.

The Purple route does not have an exact equivalent in existing service, but it would serve many of the highest ridership stops served by the existing 3 Red West Route, including Knox College and Target. Importantly, the Purple route would stop at Blick Art Materials warehouse on Monmouth Boulevard. Blick is a major employer for Galesburg and Knox County residents, and several Blick employees voiced interest in a transit option for their commute to avoid the congestion and costs of daily commutes in personal vehicles.

Markets Served

As proposed, the 3 Purple route would serve key destinations such as:

- **Retail/Grocery:** Target, Aldi
- **Educational:** Knox College, Galesburg Junior Senior High School
- **Residential areas**: Mary Allen West Towers, Knox College dormitories, Galesburg Towers
- **Community facilities**: Amtrak Station, Galesburg City Hall, Galesburg Public Transportation Office
- **Major employers**: Blick Art Materials

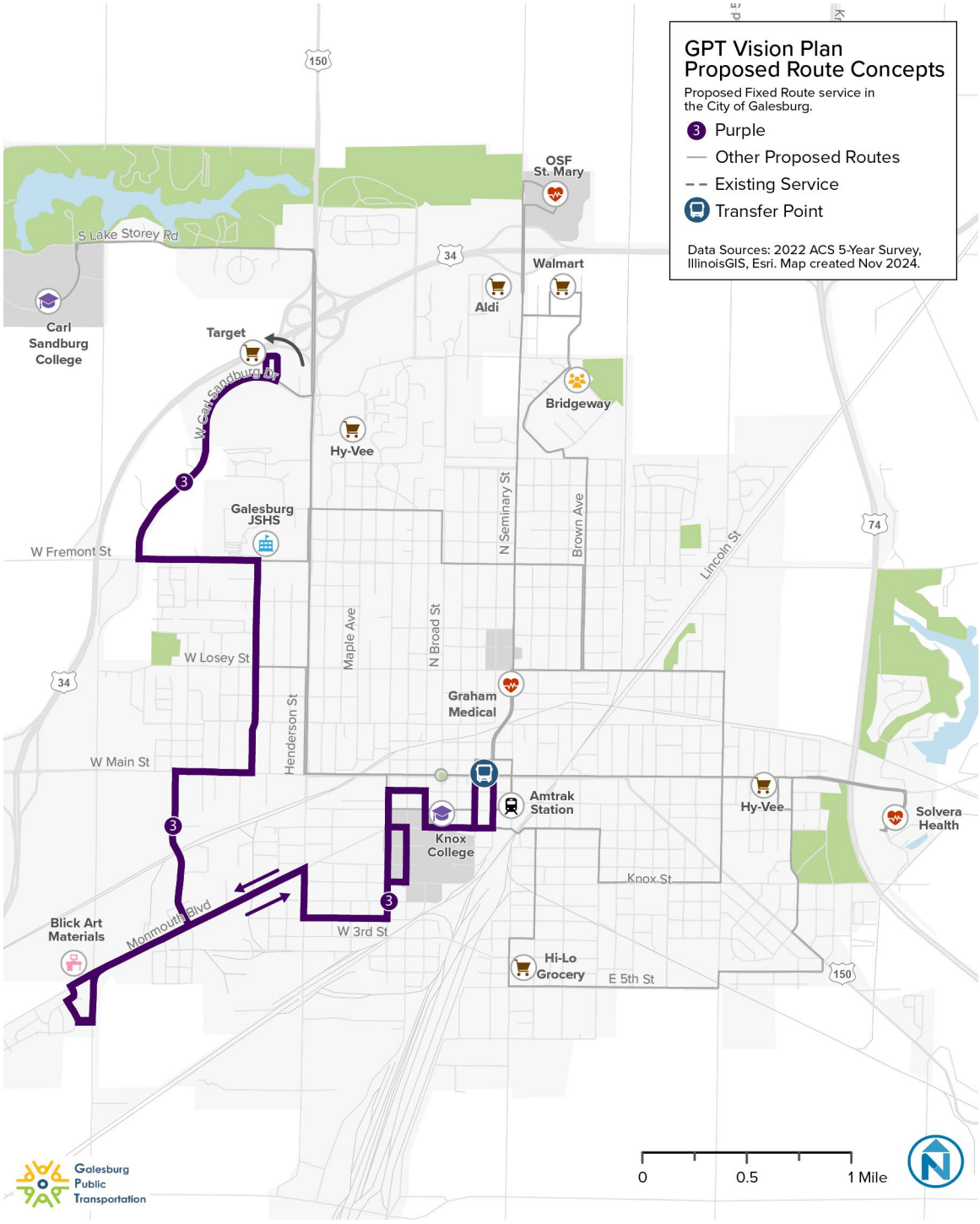
Service Characteristics

The 3 Purple route would retain the current operational schedule: Monday through Friday from 7AM to 6PM. Buses would run every 60 minutes. Riders would be able to transfer to all other bus routes at Prairie and Main Street, the Downtown Transfer Point, to the Gold at West Losey Street and North Hawkinson Street, and to the Red at Target.

Figure 10 Route 3 Purple Weekday Service Characteristics

	Span	Frequency	Trips	Service Span
Current Route	-	-	-	-
Proposed Route	**11 hours**	**60 minutes**	**11 total**	**7AM-6PM**

Figure 11 Proposed Route 3 Purple Concept



Route 4 Blue

The proposed Route 4 Blue route would operate between Hy-Vee (Main Street) and OSF St. Mary with service to Walmart along South Michigan Avenue, East 5th Street, and North Seminary Street. This route would serve several key destinations in eastern Galesburg including Walmart and Aldi, among the City's highest ridership stops, and medical facilities OSF St. Mary and Graham Medical, major employment centers and key destinations. This direct route would avoid duplicating service in eastern Galesburg (an area also served by the proposed 2 Green route) and provides a clear North-South route with access to medium-density residential areas in South Galesburg and medical campuses in North Galesburg.

The existing 1 Blue East route provides more circuitous service around Seminary Street with service on Broad Street and North Florence Avenue, overlapping with other routes including the existing Green and Red routes. Although this proposed route would shrink the East-West service area, these areas are covered by other routes and offset by a greater North-South service area expansion. This route would also link several key grocery shopping centers, allowing riders to hit multiple stores on the same route.

Markets Served

As proposed, the 4 Blue route would serve key destinations such as:

- **Retail/Grocery:** Walmart, Aldi, Menards, Downtown Galesburg, Hy-Vee (Main Street), Hi-Lo Grocery
- **Residential:** Seminary Estates
- **Educational:** Knox College
- **Medical:** Graham Medical, OSF St. Mary
- **Community destinations:** Amtrak Station

Service Characteristics

The 4 Blue Route would retain the current operational schedule: Monday through Friday from 7AM to 6PM. Buses would run every 60 minutes. Riders would be able to transfer to all other bus routes at Prairie and Main Street, the Downtown Transfer Point; to the Green route at Walmart and Amtrak Station; to the Gold Circulator at several stops along North Seminary Street; and to the Red Route at Hy-Vee (Main Street).

Figure 12 Route 4 Blue Weekday Service Characteristics

	Span	Frequency	Trips	Service Span
Current Route	11 hours	60 minutes	11 total	7AM-6PM
Proposed Route	**11 hours**	**60 minutes**	**11 total**	**7AM-6PM**

Figure 13 Proposed Route 4 Blue Concept

Route 5 Gold Circulator

The proposed Route 5 Gold Circulator would operate a compact loop along Tompkins Street, North Henderson Street, North Hawkinson St, West Dayton Street, East Fremont Street, North Florence Avenue, and North Seminary Street. The primary purpose of this circulator is to connect all proposed fixed routes and provide express service that allows for more frequent transfers and fast service to specific locations. This route would serve important destinations—Graham Medical, Downtown Transfer Point, Knox College, Mary Allen West Towers, and Galesburg Junior/Senior High School—but it is most notable for its ability to quickly connect riders to other routes.

Like the current Gold Express route, this additional route would operate frequently, with 30-minute headways. By keeping the circulator compact and offering transfer opportunities to every other route, the proposed Gold Circulator aims to improve reliability and efficiency, fostering a smooth rider experience.

Markets Served

As proposed, the 5 Gold Circulator route would serve key destinations such as:

- **Retail/Grocery:** Downtown Galesburg
- **Educational:** Knox College, Galesburg Junior Senior High School
- **Residential areas**: Mary Allen West Towers, Knox College dormitories, Whiting Hall Apartments

Service Characteristics

The 5 Gold Circulator would retain the current operational schedule: Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 6 PM. Buses would run every 30 minutes. Riders would be able to transfer to all other bus routes at Prairie and Main Street, the Downtown Transfer Point; to the Red route at West Main Street and North Henderson Street and at West Dayton Street and North Henderson Street; to the Green route at East Losey Street and North Florence Avenue and at East Fremon Street and North Florence Avenue; to the Purple Route at West Losey Street and North Hawkinson Street and at West Fremont Street and North Hawkinson Street; and to the Blue Route at several locations along North Seminary Street.

Figure 14 Route 5 Gold Circulator Weekday Service Characteristics

	Span	Frequency	Trips	Service Span
Current Route	11 hours	30 minutes	22 total	7AM-6PM
Proposed Route	**11 hours**	**30 minutes**	**22 total**	**7AM-6PM**

Figure 15 Proposed Route 5 Gold Circulator Concept

SHORT-TERM SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations could feasibly be implemented within a three-year horizon. While all improvements and expansions to GPT service require larger funding pools and state, county, and local buy-in, the proposed short-term recommendation is more doable due to its flexibility and potential to complement existing GPT services. This recommendation also provides clear benefits for the county and its many communities while addressing existing needs voiced by county residents.

Countywide Demand-Response

Countywide demand response service would operate in three demand response zones outside the City of Galesburg in Knox County (Figure 12). Demand-response service is designed to accommodate varying transit needs throughout the county. Because service is dependent on scheduled trips, this system is dynamic and responsive to changing needs and circumstances throughout the county. A zone-based approach improves scheduling and service efficiency by grouping trips in similar geographic areas. Vehicles would be allocated to each zone based on observed demand, limiting fuel consumption and non-revenue trips and hours. These zones would also help dictate fares: travel within a zone would be cheaper than travel across zones.

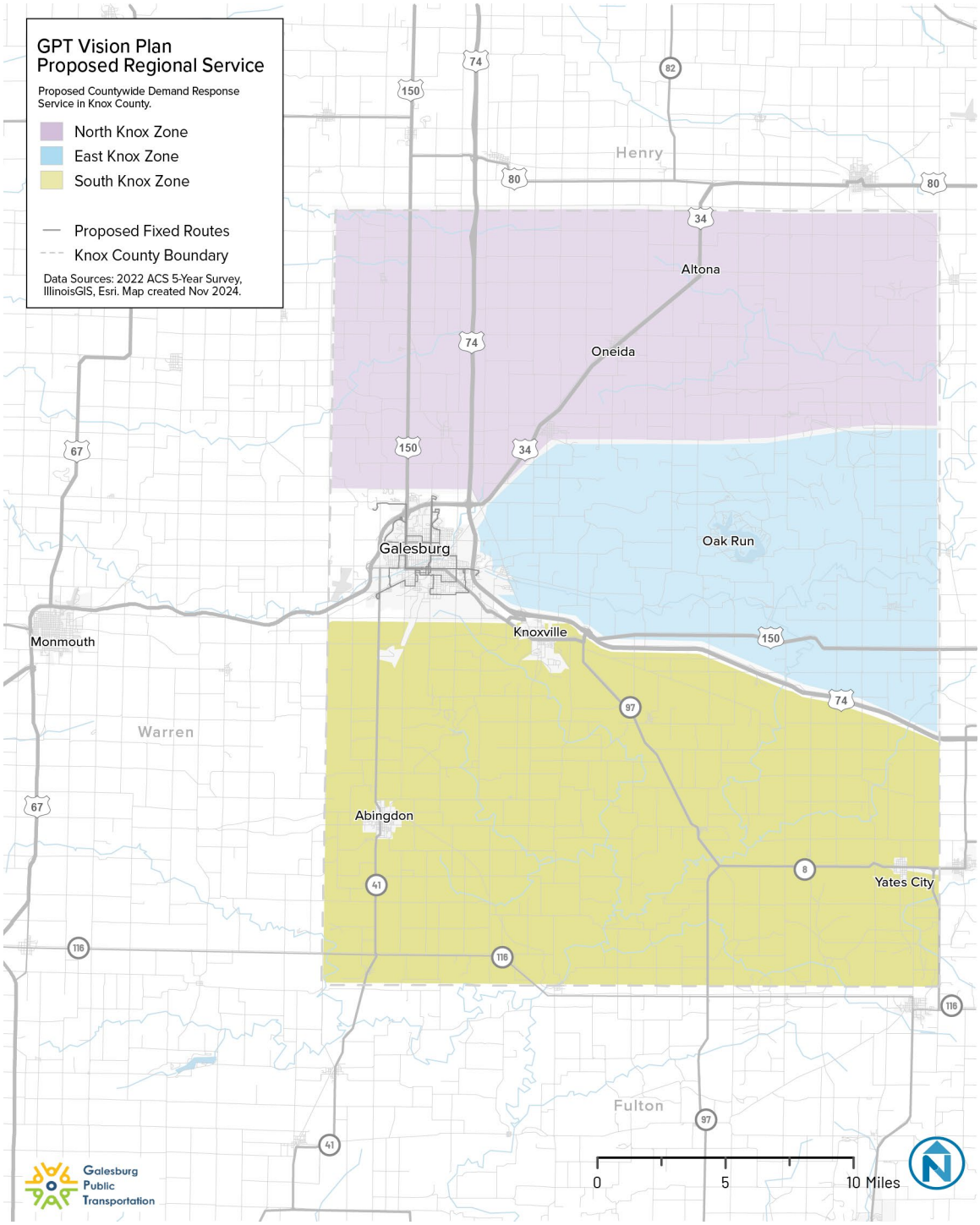
Countywide demand response would not operate within the City of Galesburg or the existing GPT service area, but Knox County residents would be able to transfer between fixed-route or paratransit services in the city and countywide service in the county at a set transfer point. This transfer integrates countywide service with fixed-route service and enhances connectivity, especially for commuters to Galesburg and those who rely on the city for healthcare, groceries, and shopping.

Most counties in Illinois already operate some form of countywide transportation. This means that there is both a state funding mechanism for such services and many examples of successful countywide services in Illinois. While GPT and Knox County develop a countywide demand response service, they can consult the example of several other systems, such as Peoria's County Link or Henry County Public Transportation.

Key benefits of proposed countywide demand response service include:

- ✓ Improves countywide 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 despite underlying transit propensity (especially low-income residents, residents with no or limited vehicle access)
- ✓ Informs future regional and countywide transportation efforts through recording travel flows and transit demand

Figure 12 Proposed Countywide Demand Response



Demand Response Zone Characteristics

The proposed demand response zones each cover distinct areas of the county. The South Knox zone serves the largest geography and population, with residents clustered in Abingdon, Yates City, Delong, and Knoxville. The East Knox zone is geographically and demographically smaller and will allow for convenient transfers between the North and South zones. North Knox County has a small resident population, but a comparatively high number of jobs served. Cumulatively, demand response zones would serve 18,000 people and 2,700 jobs across 686 square miles. Figure 13 provides a summary of each proposed demand response zone and service area characteristics.

Figure 13 Proposed Demand Response Zone Characteristics

Zone Name	Service Area (square miles)	Population Served	Jobs Served
South Knox County	304.2	8,500	800
East Knox County	154.1	4,200	500
North Knox County	228.1	5,300	1,400
Countywide Demand Response Totals	**686.4**	**18,000**	**2,700**

Source: Remix Transit Planning – 2022 Census ACS 5-year Estimates

Operational Statistics

Each zone has roughly similar estimated average trip distances and productivity. Due to its size and current population, South Knox County is estimated to have the longest average trips but also the most productive vehicles. Due to its low population, East Knox County will have fewer trips per hour. These estimates provided by Remix Transit Planning Software assume vehicle allocation: three vehicles in South Knox County and two each in East and North Knox County (Figure 14). South Knox County will therefore have higher vehicle hours per week, higher annual hours, and higher operating costs.

Figure 14 Proposed Demand Response Operational Statistics

Zone Name	Average Trip Distance (miles)	Rides per Vehicle Hour	Average Wait Times (minutes)	Peak Vehicles	Vehicle Hours per Week	Annual Hours
South Knox County	14.1	0.9	30	3	204	9,360
East Knox County	13.8	0.6	30	2	144	6,240
North Knox County	13.2	0.8	30	2	144	6,240
Countywide Demand Response Totals	**41.1**	**2.3**	**30**	**7**	**492**	**21,840**

Source: Remix Transit Planning - 2022 Census ACS 5-year Estimates

Additional Opportunities

Countywide service is vital to Knox County; by connecting individuals outside of Galesburg to the city, this service can improve access to key services countywide and limit the financial burden of car ownership and maintenance on Knox County residents. Countywide transit can also provide data on transit demand throughout the county, allowing GPT and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to consider further transit interventions, such as fixed-route transit outside the county or regional connections to other residential, employment, educational, or commercial hubs. Although countywide demand response service requires increased funding, if operated successfully with clear demand, demand response service can attract further investment and improved service throughout the county and region.

LONG-TERM SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term service recommendations represent system changes that require further investment, ridership and transit demand data, and county and community support to implement. These changes may benefit Knox County transit riders, but they are not feasible to implement without further analysis. Given continued interest, these services could be explored in a five to seven-year timeframe.

Regional Connections

The following proposed regional connections offer fixed-route express service between the City of Galesburg and other nearby cities with a high number of regional trips, namely Abingdon and Monmouth with limited stops in between. This direct, bi-directional service would be provided on two routes with an emphasis on serving commuters during peak travel times (6-9AM, 4-6PM)[1]. Regional routes terminate in Galesburg and GPT at the Galesburg Amtrak Station, connecting riders to both fixed-route buses and regional and state transportation like Amtrak, Greyhound, and Trailways. This service would be implemented only if demand response trip data indicated unmet demand and a strong need for further transportation options.

Proposed Route Concepts

Abingdon Express: Express route along State Route 41 between the Galesburg Amtrak Station and Hi-Lo Grocery in Abingdon. Service operates every 60 minutes between 7AM and 6PM, Monday-Friday.

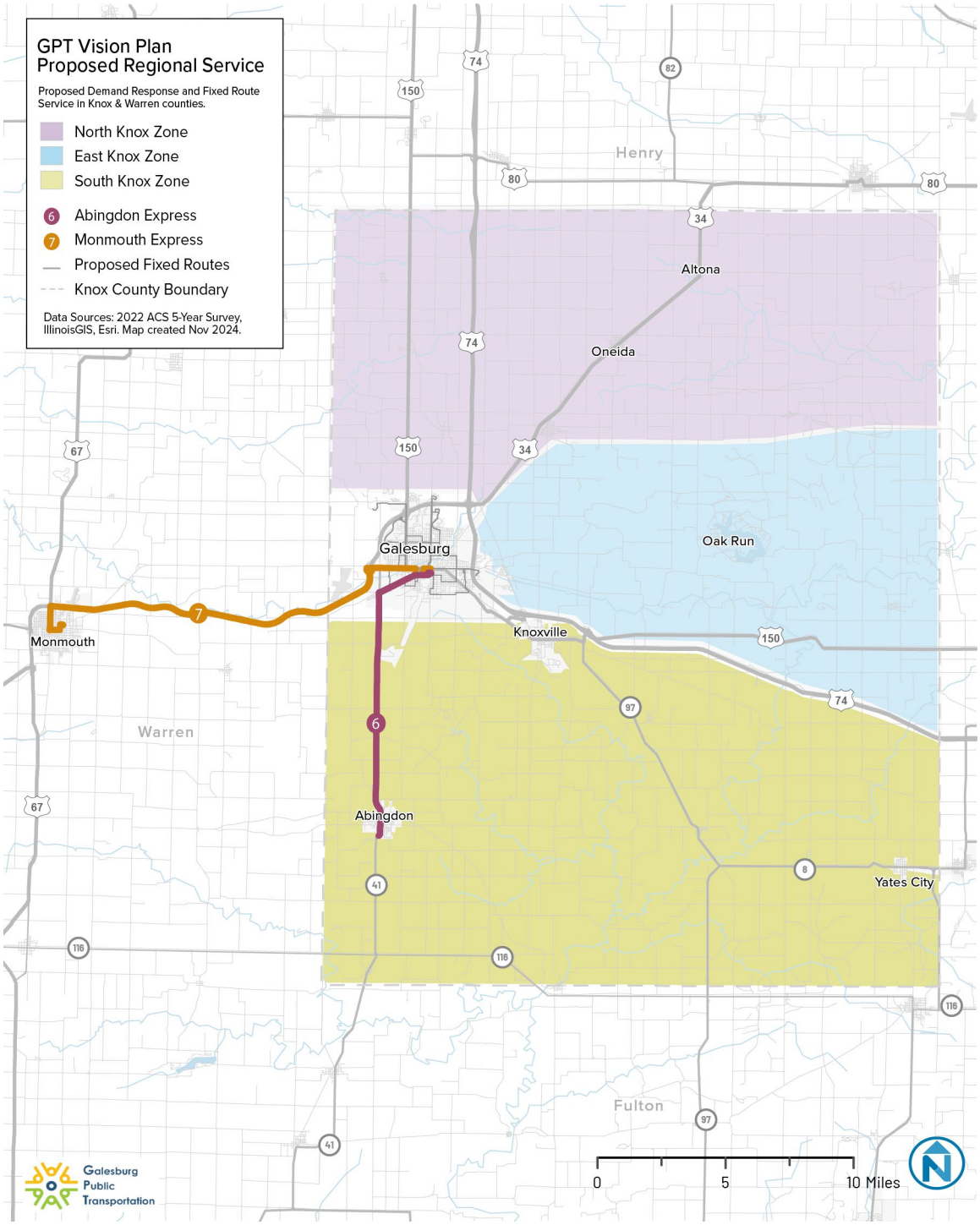
Monmouth Express: Express route along the Chicago-Kansas City Expressway between the Galesburg Amtrak Station and Monmouth College. Service operates every 90 minutes between 7AM and 6PM, Monday-Friday.

[1] Further analysis would need to be conducted to understand the level of service provided along regional routes and service hours (peak travel times). Future demand response data and ongoing public engagement should be used to inform long-term recommendations.

Key Benefits of the regional routes include:

- ✓ Offers 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

Figure 15 Proposed Knox County Regional Connections



Operational Statistics

The Abingdon and Monmouth fixed routes have longer run times and further route distances than routes operating within the City of Galesburg. To accommodate this, the proposed route frequencies are longer to ensure timely, reliable service. The arterial roads and highways these routes travel along also allow for increased travel speeds.

Figure 16 Proposed Regional Route Service Characteristics

Route Name	Minimum Route Frequency	RT Distance (miles)	Average Speed (miles per hour)	Running Time (minutes)
6R Abingdon	60 minutes	23.7	29.9	48
7R Monmouth	90 minutes	36.8	29.2	76

Assuming the Abingdon and Monmouth routes operate at peak travel times (two to three trips in the morning and evening), these services would operate for six hours each per day, five days a week. These peak-oriented services help reduce overall operating costs, and would only provide service when there is high travel demand on weekdays.

Figure 17 Proposed Regional Route Operational Statistics

Route Name	Daily Vehicle Revenue Hours	Daily Vehicle Revenue Miles	Annual Revenue Hours	Annual Revenue Miles
6R Abingdon	6	142.3	1,560	44,423
7R Monmouth	6	147.3	1,560	45,964
Total	**12**	**289.6**	**3,120**	**90,387**

Additional Opportunities

Ridership data from both the countywide demand response service and regional routes could support the development of additional regional routes. With indicative demand, the proposed regional routes could allow GPT and Knox County to explore other higher-demand areas such as Knoxville, Oneida, Altona, or Wataga. There is also potential to coordinate with Peoria County to develop an intercounty bus to connect Knox County residents to medical, shopping, and recreational facilities in Peoria.

Warren County Coordination

In November, the project team moderated a discussion between Galesburg Public Transportation and Warren County Public Transportation staff. The purpose of this meeting with Warren County was to assess opportunities for coordinated transit operations between Knox and Warren Counties, explore potential service between Galesburg and Monmouth, identify service gaps, barriers, and develop solutions, and lay the foundation for future planning and coordination. The meeting between Warren County Transportation and GPT highlighted the significant demand for improved and coordinated public transportation services between Warren and Knox Counties, the operational successes and limitations of Warren County, and opportunities for strategic partnerships with GPT and funding solutions.

Ongoing Challenges

The meeting focused on assessing Warren County's current transit operations, which include countywide transportation in addition to four daily door-to-door trips to Galesburg. Similar to GPT, Warren County faces service limitations due to funding and operator availability. Other Challenges discussed included limited resources for extended service hours, a shortage of backup operators, service efficiency (due to long distance trips), high project costs reliant on match contracts, and significant service gaps, particularly between Henderson and Knox Counties.

Potential Strategies & Opportunities

In addition to identifying specific challenges regarding service delivery, the two providers specified several opportunities and coordination strategies. These opportunities included expanding student transportation, optimizing morning and afternoon trip loops to reduce vehicle strain, boosting Monmouth College ridership, coordinating more effectively with Galesburg, and seeking new funding sources like HUD match and the Hunger Collaborative. Strategies for public outreach and ongoing community engagement were also proposed to increase ridership and reduce stigmas associated with bus use.

It is recommended that the two providers maintain and strategically enhance services to increase mobility options when financially feasible, expand mobility management coordination functions under a Coordinated Transportation Services Plan, and create a regional, sustainable funding platform for public and human transportation services.

3 VISION PLAN

This chapter provides a detailed service plan for transit in the City of Galesburg and Knox County. The projects listed reflect an approach to implementing fixed-route service and county-wide demand response service in Knox County. A project may include one or more separate tasks. The projects are organized in a manner that would support operating an entirely new service model in the county and the extended timeline and incremental implementation of projects reflect existing capacity and other operational constraints. As additional funding and dedicated resources become available, it is recommended that GPT implement demand response and regional service within 5-7 years of adopting this Vision Plan.

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS

A comprehensive update of the GPT network is recommended to respond to ridership trends and reallocate resources accordingly. Updating the bus network also provides an opportunity to simplify service, improve connectivity, and establish a foundation for sustainable growth.

Based on the feedback and input received during leadership meetings, TAC meetings, and in-person outreach events, it is recommended that GPT move forward with modifying their current fixed-route transit network. As described in Chapter 2, it is recommended that GPT begin necessary capital improvement projects, conducting public outreach to inform the public of upcoming service changes, procuring an additional fixed-route vehicle, and site future fixed-route bus stops.

Modify Fixed-Route Network

The improvements shown in Figure 18 are recommended to be implemented over the first year of the plan, beginning in Fall 2025. These improvements are focused on adjusting current routes in the City of Galesburg and improving stop infrastructure.

Figure 18 Immediate Service Improvements

Implementation Year(s)	Project Name	Project/Task Description
FY26-27	Modify and Expand the GPT bus network	▪ Initiate service changes – begin operating all five proposed fixed routes in Galesburg and monitor service effectiveness. ▪ Prior to service changes, current riders should be given information regarding ADA Complementary Paratransit eligibility and route schedules. All bus stops should be marked or have signs at this time (Capital Project).
FY26-27	Conduct Public Engagement	Establish an engagement plan with community members, riders, and community stakeholders. Public engagement should focus on the implementation of fixed routes and informing community members of service changes.
FY26-28	Conduct Bus Stop Site Selection	Determine optimal stop locations along GPT routes that improve bus travel times, reliability, efficiency, safety, and accessibility, while maintaining and/or enhancing rider access to destinations and amenities. Multiple factors must be used to determine the appropriate siting of a bus stop including demographics and land use, existing service and rider amenities, pedestrian environment, and safety.

Bus Stop Infrastructure

Bus stops are the basic type of transit facility that serve as the front door of the transit system. The presence of bus stops lets people know where buses run, and their appearance and condition often define people's impressions of transit. A critical immediate improvement is to sign and/or mark all GPT bus stops and identify capital funds for future improvements immediately after the Vision Plan is adopted.

There are three bus stop types recommended for access to future fixed-route service including a basic stop, standard stop, and an enhanced stop. Based on the five proposed routes, the GPT service area should consist of approximately **271 basic stops**, **15 standard stops** and **5 enhanced bus stops**. This estimate uses a ¼-mile distance between bus stops (4-5 stops per mile) to ensure faster travel times for passengers and comfortable walking distances to access transit service from key destinations and neighborhoods.

An extensive site selection process will need to be completed to determine exact stop locations – the stops proposed in this document are subject to change and are contingent on available right-of-way (ROW). It is common for bus stops to be placed on both private and/or

municipal property with maintenance and liability still considered as an agency responsibility. Before placing a bus stop, GPT and the ROW owners (i.e., IDOT, City of Galesburg) should agree on maintenance and upkeep responsibilities. Additionally, it is the responsibility of all parties to ensure sidewalks are well-maintained and meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Bus Stop Typology

Bus stops must comply with the ADA accessibility requirements[2]. Bus stop guidance from ADA ensures that all public bus stops, and transit facilities are accessible to everyone, specifically riders and pedestrians with disabilities or those with additional mobility needs. ADA standards set by the FTA require a bus stop front door boarding area, (also referred to as a landing area) and an accessible route (5' clear path of travel) between the landing area, sidewalk, and bus stop amenities.[3] Additional accessibility improvements that are not required by ADA but can improve passenger experience may include stop audio announcements, at-or near-level boarding platforms, curbside detectable warnings, and braille signage. The following bus stop types for GPT's proposed fixed-route system are provided below. The number of stops per type is a suggestion; depending on capital funds and future investments additional amenities can be distributed throughout the network to increase rider comfort, safety, and service attractiveness.

- A **basic bus stop** will include a bus stop sign/post and landing area (5'x8'), this stop type requires the lowest level of investment while ensuring that the stop can be identified and is ADA compliant. Over 90% of all GPT stops should considered standard bus stops when the proposed service is implemented. In the future, additional stop elements can be added, such as shelters, maps, seating, etc., to make high ridership stops into standard or enhanced bus stops.
- A **standard bus stop** will include a bus stop sign/post, landing area (5'x8'), trash can, and a bench with additional concrete pad (5'x6'). A small number of stops will be enhanced and will provide more comfort for passengers waiting to transfer or that may serve populations with additional mobility needs (e.g., housing for older adults, grocery stores, medical facilities). In the future, additional stop elements can be added, such as shelters, maps, etc., to make high ridership stops into enhanced bus stops.
- An **enhanced bus stop** will include a bus stop sign/post, shelter pad and landing area (14'x8'), trash can, system maps/rider information, and a shelter. A small number of stops will be enhanced and will provide more comfort for passengers waiting to transfer and located where higher passenger volumes are expected (e.g., Downtown

[2] ADA Regulations, FTA

[3] Toolkit for the Assessment of Bus Stop Accessibility, NADTC

Transfer Point, Galesburg Amtrak station, grocery stores, hospitals). Additional stop elements can be added, such as bike racks, lighting, or real-time arrival information.

Vehicles

An additional bus is needed to operate the proposed fifth fixed route. It is recommended that GPT procure at least one additional vehicle for operations and another vehicle to be used as a spare. GPT's vehicle procurement process is dependent on IDOT's Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program (CVP). This program provides assistance to transportation providers in Illinois to obtain vehicles and equipment to operate service. Eligible providers can participate in this program but must submit an application for a grant, as a limited number of grants are awarded each year.[4] Until a grant is awarded, and it becomes feasible for GPT to procure additional vehicles, it is recommended that the agency use paratransit vehicles to operate fixed-route service.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires transit agencies to have some number of spare vehicles in the event of breakdowns, for maintenance needs, or for temporary surge in operations. FTA requires a spare ratio of at least 20% for fixed-route service providers.

SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

Expanding GPT's network into Knox County is recommended to respond to mobility needs and access challenges across rural areas of the county. Expanding service outside of the City of Galesburg will allow residents that don't live in the city to access more opportunities and resources available in areas with higher densities (e.g., shopping centers, medical facilities).

Countywide Demand Response Service

Based on the feedback and input received during leadership meetings, TAC meetings, in-person outreach events, and discussions with GPT leadership, it is recommended that GPT move forward with expanding transportation services. As described in Chapter 2, it is recommended that GPT begin conducting public outreach to inform the public of upcoming service changes and procuring additional demand response vehicles.

The improvements shown in Figure 19 are recommended to be implemented within three to five years following the adoption of this Vision Plan. These improvements are focused on expanding the GPT's transportation services.

[4] Consolidated Vehicle Procurement, Illinois Department of Transportation

Figure 19 Short-term Service Improvements

Implementation Year(s)	Project Name	Project/Task Description
FY27-31	Expand the GPT bus network into Knox County	Begin operating county-wide demand response service within the three proposed demand response zones. Service should be provided during the same service days and times as fixed-route service (7AM-6PM).
FY28-31	Improve service frequencies and service spans	Adjust service to match demand for trips that are likely to occur outside of traditional commute hours especially for 2nd and 3rd shift workers. Increased frequencies (better than 60 minutes) will improve rider experience, convenience, and service quality.
FY29-31	Develop GPT Service Standards	Establish performance standards with target values for all service types including fixed-route, countywide demand response, and complementary paratransit service. provide a framework for how the agency designs and monitors transit services, as well as the process for making changes in the future.
FY28-29	Optimize scheduling and booking software	Evaluate software solutions to implement service changes more easily and efficiently schedule fixed-route buses and drivers. Scheduling software should be equipped to manage same-day trip bookings for county-wide demand response and complementary ADA paratransit service.
FY29-31	Develop a Bus Stop Improvement program	Develop a step-by-step process involved in creating an ideal bus stop (e.g., accessible, comfortable, visible). Provide directions on safe and accessible bus stop design and criteria for evaluation that can be used in conjunction with planning/engineering, appropriate laws, ordinances, and regulations.
FY30	Develop Marketing and Branding guidelines	Create a consistent and recognizable identity that enhances public perception and usability of transit services. Ensure this includes all visual elements such as logos, color schemes, signage, and promotional materials.

Bus Stop Improvement Program

Bus stops throughout the City of Galesburg are not uniformly visible, accessible, or comfortable. To encourage ridership and improve comfortability and convenience for those who currently ride, GPT can renovate bus stops to include ADA-accessible shelters, signage that alerts passersby to the existence of a bus stop, maps and wayfinding materials that allow riders and non-riders to understand the transit network and schedule, and amenities such as benches, shelters, trash cans, and bike racks to improve overall rider comfort and experience. Below is the recommended process.

- **Step 1:** Establish a bus stop classification system. Create a system of three to four bus stop types based on daily boarding volumes and the number of trips where people might experience long wait times. Each bus stop class should specify the ideal dimensions of the stop and the amenities that are required, vital, and optional.

- **Step 2:** Conduct a comprehensive inventory of bus stops. Evaluate ADA compliance of the landing pad, the presence of a connecting sidewalk and amenities, and several other factors to assess the accessibility of bus stops.
- **Step 3:** Optimize bus stop spacing. The distance between bus stops impacts travel times and the rider experience. Stops spaced farther apart mean faster bus speeds but also reduce rider access. Stops spaced closer together increase rider access, but also mean slower and less consistent travel times. Most riders want transit service that balances access and speed. Optimizing stop spacing involves calculating distances between consecutive bus stops and determining which stops should be eliminated, consolidated, relocated, or added.
- **Step 4:** Adjust the placement of individual bus stops. Bus stop placement involves balancing access, safety, operational efficiency, and adjacent land use. Therefore, each bus stop should be evaluated individually to determine its exact location.
- **Step 5:** Classify stops and identify the gaps. Assign the appropriate classification of each bus stop and identify which stops require an upgrade.
- **Step 6:** Develop a prioritization plan for upgrading stops. Develop a bus stop improvement priority scoring system based on agency goals and community values. The scoring should consist of several factors, including but not limited to ridership, equity, typical wait times, adjacent land use, pedestrian safety, and other factors.
- **Step 7:** Develop an implementation plan to allocate resources to stops. Depending on when funding is available to dedicate towards bus stop upgrades, funds can be distributed starting with stops deemed as the highest priority. More stops can be upgraded to meet the new standards as funding becomes available.

LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

The improvements shown in Figure are recommended for implementation within seven to eight years of adopted this Vision Plan. These improvements primarily include opportunities for regional service expansion and adjustments for future core services. Beyond the following mid-term improvements, GPT should continue monitoring the effectiveness of the newly implemented fixed routes (Purple route) and demand response service.

Regional Connections

The improvements shown in Figure 20 are recommended for implementation within five to seven years following the adoption of the Vision Plan. These improvements focus on expanding GPT's transportation services.

Figure 20 Long-term Service Improvements

Implementation Year(s)	Project Name	Project/Task Description
FY29-32	Expand the GPT bus network into Warren County	Begin operating limited/peak-based service to Abingdon and Monmouth (Warren County) if demand from demand response service warrants scheduled service. Service should be provided only on weekdays (Monday through Friday) during the same times as core GPT fixed-route service (7AM-6PM) at lower frequencies.
FY30-34	Establish new Downtown Transfer Center	A new transfer center/facility should be integrated into Downtown Galesburg to elevate the surrounding community, enhance rider comfort, and improve connections to other intercity modes (e.g., regional rail, intercity bus service).
FY30-31	Develop Coordinated Service Plan with Warren County	Establish performance standards with target values for all service types including fixed-route, countywide demand response, and complementary paratransit service. provide a framework for how the agency designs and monitors transit services, as well as the process for making changes in the future.

**Further study needed to determine site location and total cost for regional hub.

Transfer Site

Transfer Centers are transit stops that experience very high ridership and a high number of transfers. They usually serve the system's most frequent bus routes. Since these stops have the highest level of ridership and service, they should provide a wide range of information and passenger amenities. It is recommended that GPT work with municipal partners to purchase land, design, and construct a new Downtown transfer center. Depending on the availability of city- or county-owned land, number of bus bays, and available passenger and GPT employee amenities available, the Downtown transfer center could require at least $2.1M[5] to $3.9M[6] to fully fund.

A transfer site analysis was conducted as part of this study to analyze whether downtown Galesburg's current transfer point for transit at Prairie and Main Streets is still viable or whether it should be moved and/or upgraded with a commuter transfer facility. The assessment consisted of analyzing the current Downtown Transfer Point and identifying potential locations for a future transfer site that would allow for multi-modal connections and provide a designated space for all routes to converge. This assessment included an internal workshop that allowed GPT staff and Galesburg planners to prioritize several transfer

[5] Redmond Transit Hub in Oregon cost $1.6M in 2017, adjusted for 2024 dollars, with 7 bays, Cascades East Transit

[6] City of Loveland (7 routes, population 77,200) received $3.9M to construct a transit center, FTA

site characteristics and potential locations for a future transfer center including factors such as amenities, safety, convenience, and capacity.

The project team assessed three potential future transfer site locations that are situated in downtown Galesburg. This chapter provides best practices for transfer center siting and a detailed summary of each site that was assessed as part of this task is provided in Appendix A.

Need for a Transfer Center

A transfer center is a key component of an efficient and comfortable multi-route system. In Galesburg, the current transfer point has a few shortcomings. Although there are passenger amenities at each individual stop, the existing facilities do not support easy or comfortable transfers between routes given the tight transfer schedule. Buses are also frequently routed away from the transfer center due to street closures, impacting service.

A well-defined and convenient transfer location can encourage existing riders to transfer between routes, attract new riders, improve the efficiency and comfort of trips, offer connections to other travel modes, and offer operators a convenient rest location. These benefits improve overall system performance and accessibility.

Transfer Center Design & Placement

Successful Transit Design Placement

The location of a transfer center has an impact on both transit operations and ridership. An inconveniently placed transfer center can lower ridership while at the same time increasing costs. There are several elements to consider when placing a new transfer center, including:

Transfer centers should be near activity centers.

Successful transfer centers combine the function of allowing passengers to transfer between buses with the walk access from surrounding land uses. Ridership is increased because more passengers have a direct, no transfer ride to their chosen destination. For this reason, transfer centers should be located near activity centers, while placing transfer centers next to freeways, across railroad tracks, or any other pedestrian barrier should be discouraged. A safe, inviting pedestrian network is essential surrounding the Transfer center.

An important side-benefit of placing transfer centers closer to activity centers is additional security. An isolated area is less safe than an area that has more activity and thus more eyes on the street.

Transfer centers should be visible.

Many Galesburg residents rely on personal vehicles and are not aware of when or where GPT service operates. A transfer center is also a marketing tool that allows non-users to understand where service is available should they ever want or need it. A visible transfer center will ultimately result in more people knowing about GPT and choosing service over other modes.

Transfer centers should support surrounding land uses.

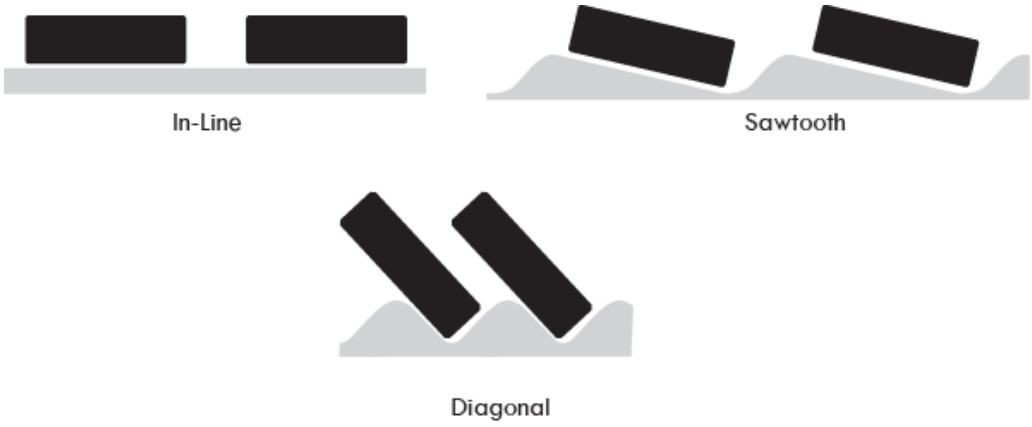
There is a symbiotic relationship between transfer centers and medium to high-density areas in cities. Transfer centers thrive in areas with high-density employment or mixed-use developments. While these land uses support transfer centers, transfer centers also bolster existing land uses by attracting foot traffic, improving visibility of specific areas and businesses and encouraging a higher transit mode share in dense areas. A transfer center can be used to leverage federal or state dollars for supporting improvements, including parking and transit-oriented development. In the case of Galesburg, siting a transfer center near the Galesburg Amtrak station and other regional transportation services (Greyhound and Trailways) would also allow GPT to support alternative transportation modes and bolster a regional transit network. This could have larger funding implications for GPT as well.

Design Elements of Successful Transfer Center Design

Transfer centers can vary widely depending on the size of the transit system and intended function of the facility. The following is a list of elements typically found at medium-sized transfer centers and some general guidelines for how those elements could be designed:

- **Bus bays.** To ensure adequate space for all vehicles to "pulse" at the transfer center, which allows timed connections between all routes, a transfer center should be designed to accommodate multiple transit vehicles at one time. Bus bays can be designed in a number of different configurations but are typically designed as in-line, sawtooth, or diagonal bays, as shown in Figure 21. Note that diagonal bus bays require vehicles to back up while in-line and sawtooth bays do not. Ideally, a GPT transfer center would include one to two more bays in any new facility to accommodate growth. In addition, all bays should be sized to accommodate 40-foot Gillig buses, even if cutaways are more common or usable at present.

Figure 21 Transit Bus Bay Configurations



NOTE: For illustrative purposes only; not to scale.

- **Queuing and layover.** Regardless of the design of the bays, it is most important that the site have sufficient space for buses. Otherwise, buses will end up waiting on side streets, either to enter the site to drop-off passengers or to take advantage of recovery time. This can lead to missed transfers for passengers and extra trips if buses drop off passengers, layover elsewhere, and then return to the transfer center to pick up passengers for the next run.
- **Transit vehicle driveway.** Off-street transit facilities must also include enough right-of-way to allow transit vehicles to circulate within the site, which increases the footprint of the facility. In some cases, the right-of-way required for transit circulation at an off-street Transfer center can equal or exceed the space needed for other uses.
- **Passenger waiting area.** The transfer center should have adequate space for passengers to wait for their bus or get information about Shuttle. The amount of adequate space can vary, but in Galesburg, a transfer center would ideally be able to accommodate 20-30 riders in order to ensure space for all transfers across four or five routes and paratransit and county-wide on-demand trips that may connect to other routes in Galesburg. The windows and doors to the boarding/alighting area should be designed to allow passengers to easily see approaching vehicles, and to ensure "eyes on the street." This could also be accomplished through real-time passenger information displays.
- **Signage and passenger information.** This includes maps, schedules, and any other information that helps passengers better navigate and understand the system. Take-away items such as maps and brochures would ideally be located in an enclosed area, but maps and schedules should also be posted outside in the passenger boarding areas for easy reference.
- **Bicycle parking.** Providing secure bicycle parking facilities in a transportation center is a necessity. There are many types of parking that can be used based on the space

available, including lockers, racks, or a cage. If space permits, a full bike station with repair and tire-filling facilities may be desirable. Providing these facilities will help people make more seamless connections between modes.

- **Accessibility for all people.** Aside from meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, the Transfer center must be designed according to the principles of universal design and must provide exterior facilities as well as interior facilities. Ensuring that sidewalks around and leading to the Transfer center are of sufficient width to accommodate pedestrians is critical. There must be multiple points of access to the center, with high quality facilities. Safe, direct, and appealing walking routes to the station and through the station must be designed, with access directly onto the street.
- **Programming.** Transportation centers should avoid excessive amounts of unprogrammed space by including vendors and a mix of all-day uses. The center should be designed to avoid creating dead spaces that might foster illicit activities.
- **Optional elements.** There are a number of other elements that can be incorporated into the design of a Transfer center. None of the elements listed below are critical to the success of the facility, but they do help improve the experience of using transit for all passengers.
    - Restrooms: Restrooms improve comfort for riders - designated restrooms allow operators to take breaks in their own facilities, eliminating the need to partner with private businesses for facilities or to head back to the bus depot.
    - Public meeting spaces: Public meeting spaces attract further activity to transfer centers, fostering vibrancy and improving safety in the area.
    - Retail and/or joint development (such as office or residential): Other development incentivizes use of the transfer center and ensures regular flows of pedestrians around the center.
    - Transit administrative offices: Administrative offices allow staff to quickly respond to questions or issues that emerge at the transfer center and also to engage naturally with riders and operators.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvements are fundamental and require higher levels of planning and investment, but there are also several priority service and operational changes that can improve the rider experience with less intensive planning.

Service Expansion

Several riders and community members voiced support for Sunday service and longer service spans to accommodate workers who do not follow the traditional 9AM to 5PM workday and peak transit schedules. Expanding service spans (operating earlier or later) and providing service on Sundays would provide residents with increased access to opportunities and resources that they may need to reach during non-traditional commute hours.

Multimodal Connectivity

To facilitate connections across different modes of travel, GPT can consider multimodal amenities to make access to transit direct, convenient, and safe for all modes. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements can make traveling to transit stops easier and provide convenient access to surrounding neighborhoods, major employers, and essential resources. Improvements for safe and effective multimodal connectivity include:

- New or improved crosswalks to address gaps in the existing pedestrian network.
- Traffic calming infrastructure like curb extensions and street trees.
- Bike parking and bike lockers at transfer centers.
- Bike racks placed near the front of platforms for people transferring buses with their bikes at transit hubs.
- Wayfinding signage to key destinations. Providing multimodal connections encourages transit as an attractive transportation option that improves safety and air quality for people working and living nearby.

Performance Monitoring

GPT could improve analytical efficiency by implementing more technology that allows for easy analysis of service trends. Automated passenger counters track ridership more accurately and facilitate scheduling, route planning, and annual ridership counts. This data can inform funding decisions at the state and federal level. Ride check and scheduling software (trip matching), especially for paratransit services and on-demand transportation, can enhance efficiency and allow GPT to track important metrics such as on-time performance. Both can result in notable improvements for operators and riders alike.

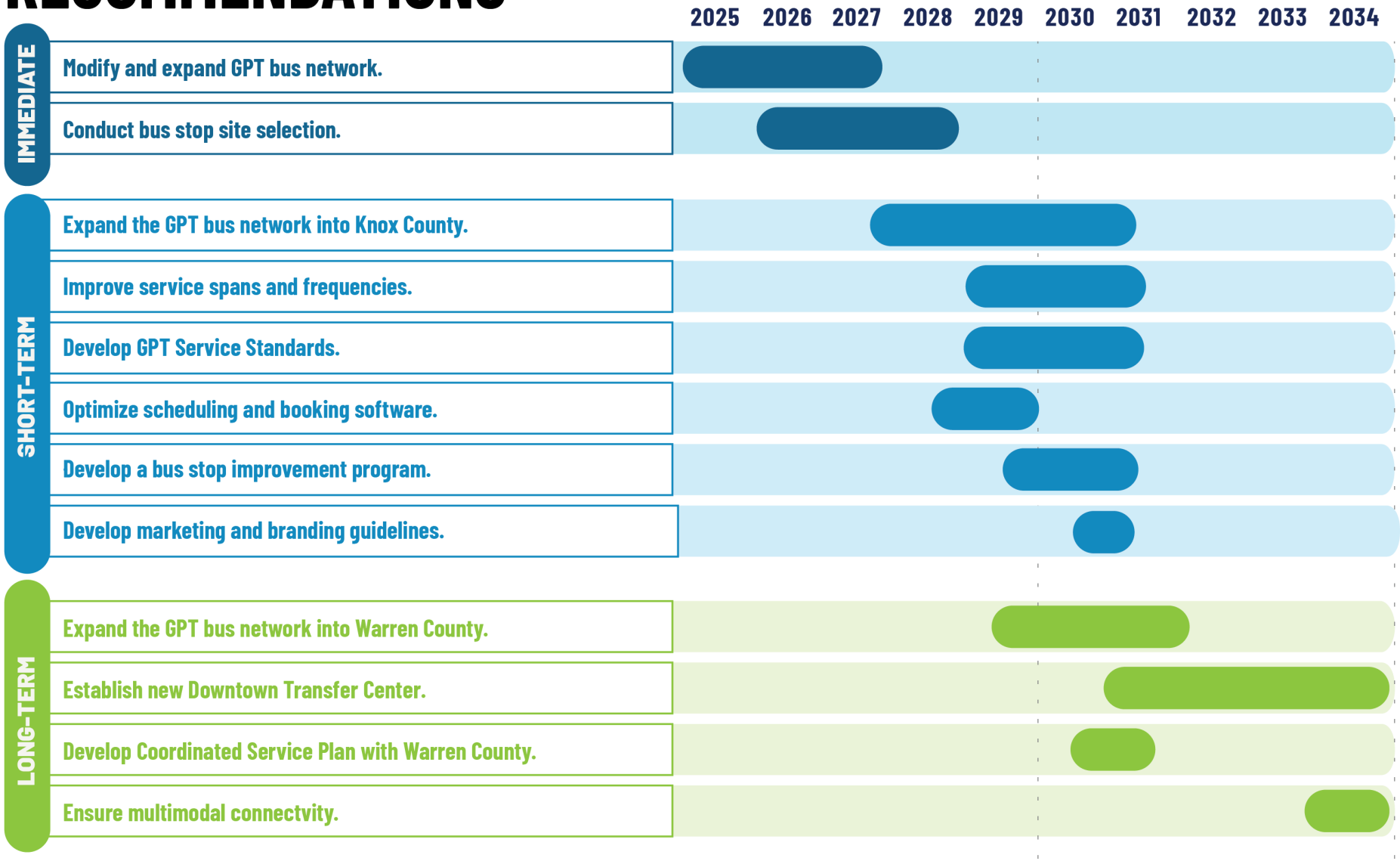
PHASING PLAN

The Galesburg Public Transportation Vision Plan outlines service and capital recommendations that support a future where public transportation is a more viable and

attractive transportation option for residents, workers, and visitors. While the recommendations are not fiscally constrained, the following phasing plan is designed to:

- Optimize the use of existing and future GPT resources.
- Prioritize projects that respond to the greatest needs of transit riders.
- Promote ongoing community and stakeholder engagement.
- Promote coordination with partner jurisdictions and agencies.
- Build upon preceding service and capital investments.
- Provide flexibility for changes in transit demand and community priorities

RECOMMENDATIONS



FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS & STRATEGIES

The recommendations provided in Chapter 2 reflect a 24% increase in GPT's existing operating budget and cannot be implemented on GPT's current budget with the current fleet. For GPT to realize those increased resources, it will be important to tap all available funding streams. Local and state funding specifically can provide ample funding to make implementation of these scenarios possible.

Local Funding

To effectively increase transit funding in Galesburg, the city and county can consider several strategies:

- **City of Galesburg**: Galesburg can provide local funds through intergovernmental agreements to support GPT. The City of Galesburg currently transfers funds from the General Fund to supplement transit funding.
- **Knox County**: Transit agencies and counties often use sales taxes to create dedicated, reliable revenue streams for transit. Knox County currently levies a 1.0% sales tax to fund education and a 0.50% sales tax to fund public safety. In addition to sales taxes, property tax proceeds can also be used to fund transit development projects.

State Funding

Illinois offers several state funding sources for transit, which can be leveraged to support and enhance public transportation systems:

- **General Sales Taxes**: A significant portion of state funding for Galesburg Transit can come from general sales taxes. These taxes are collected on the sale of goods and services and allocated to transit projects within the city.
- **Trust Fund Revenues**: Revenues from state trust funds, such as the Illinois Transportation Trust Fund, can be used to support Galesburg Transit operations and infrastructure improvements.
- **Bond Proceeds**: The state issues bonds to raise capital for large-scale transit projects. The proceeds from these bonds can be used to finance the construction and maintenance of Galesburg Transit facilities.

- **State Grants**: Illinois provides various grants specifically for public transportation. Galesburg Transit can apply for these grants to cover operational costs, capital projects, and other transit-related expenses.
- **Local Match**: Increasing the match rate for operating support and extending the state match to any new local revenues can provide additional funding for Galesburg Transit.
- **Motor Fuel Taxes**: Revenues from motor fuel taxes are also allocated to transit funding. These taxes, collected on the sale of gasoline and diesel fuel, can be used to support Galesburg Transit infrastructure.
- **Public Utility Taxes**: Taxes collected from public utilities, such as electricity and natural gas, contribute to the funding of Galesburg Transit systems.

4 TRANSIT SYSTEM ACCESS

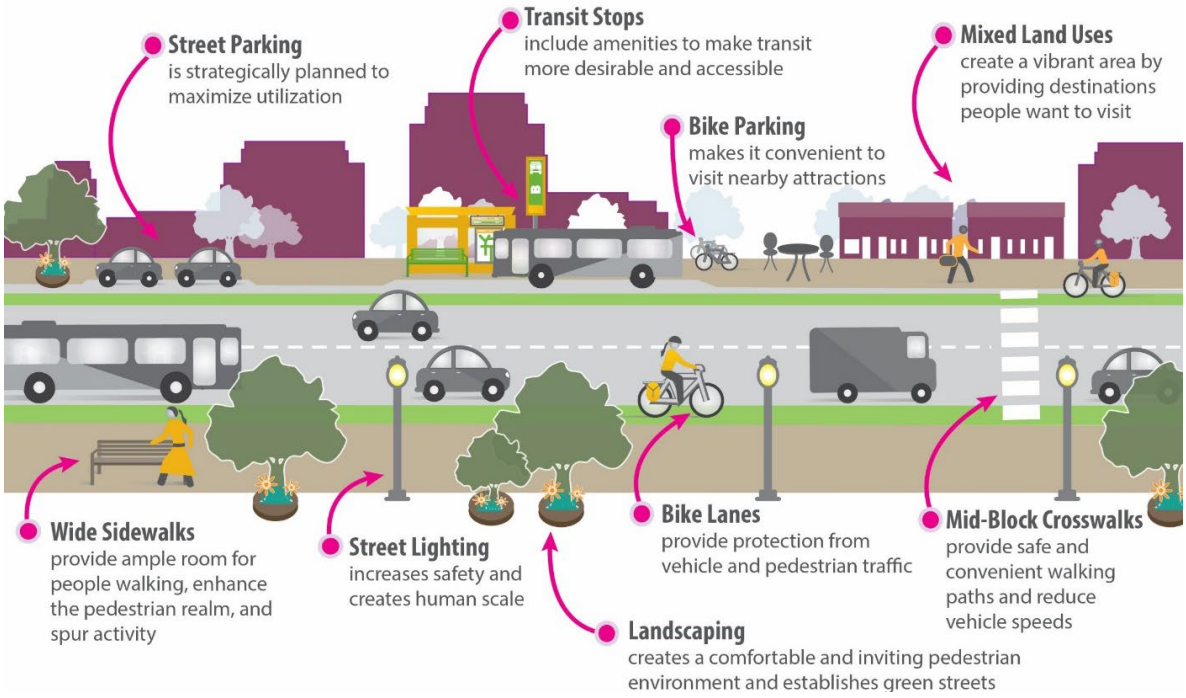
This chapter describes actions and concepts for GPT, municipal partners, and community leaders to enhance access to transit services and improve existing pedestrian infrastructure. System access is critical for service effectiveness and community benefit. Figure 32 shows different elements that can improve the many ways transit riders get to/from a transit stop and their trip origin and destination.

Safe and accessible pedestrian facilities allow people to access transit stops and key destinations—every transit rider is a pedestrian at some point in their trip. The pedestrian network includes sidewalks that are sufficiently wide and well-lit, with curb ramps that provide a transition between sidewalks and the street; well-marked, convenient, and adequately spaced street crossings; and wayfinding that helps direct passengers to transit and destinations. Street trees, landscaping, and a mix of uses create comfortable, attractive streets where people want to walk.

Inclusive Design refers to designing streets and transit facilities for use by all people regardless of ability. This means ensuring that sidewalks are not impeded by bus stops, utility poles, or other elements; reducing driveway cross-slopes; providing tactile treatments on curb ramps, stop platforms, and other conflict points; and providing information in audio, visual, and tactile formats, considering cultural and language differences as well as people with restricted mobility, visual, and/or audible ability (e.g., signage, audible stop announcements, real-time information, etc.).

Safe and convenient bicycle access routes to transit stops and both short-term and secure, long-term **bicycle parking** expand the distance people can travel to access transit.

Figure 22 Best Practices for Transit-Supportive Street Design



Source: Nelson\Nygaard

Customer Information, Marketing, and Branding

Transit information and legibility will make the current and future GPT transit service more intuitive and user friendly for current and potential GPT riders. The following sections briefly describe opportunities and strategies for navigating the future bus network and making transit more accessible and identifiable.

System Branding

GPT fixed-route bus stop signs, vehicles, and route maps should have a consistent look and feel. The GPT logo and branding should be incorporated to make the service more identifiable and bring more awareness. It is recommended that GPT apply its current branding scheme to existing and new vehicles and develop new marketing materials for the launch of fixed-route service. This should also include a refresh of the current GPT website that will make the service more attractive and information regarding the new service more accessible.

System & Route Maps

The proposed fixed-route service will require updated public timetables and route maps that can be used to navigate the transit system. The appearance of the timetables and route maps should accurately reflect route schedules, be consistent with GPT agency branding, and should include descriptions of each route, points of interest served, and intersecting route. Timetables should include all scheduled trips on each day of service, description of fares, and GPT contact information. It is recommended that system maps be posted at bus stops where transfers are most likely to occur and where passenger volumes are expected to be higher.

Education and Travel Training

Outreach and education programs improve service awareness and promote understanding of how to use transit services offered by GPT. Public outreach such as in-person tabling, block parties, and/or community meetings can be held to help community members and potential riders receive information regarding service changes and how to use the proposed fixed-route service.

5 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TRANSFER SITE ASSESSMENT

Existing Conditions

Downtown Transfer Point

The current transfer point is located at the intersection of Main Street and Prairie Street in downtown Galesburg. Galesburg Public Transportation has invested in infrastructure to make transfers at Main/Prairie Street more comfortable. The Red-Gold stop consists of one bus bay, a bus shelter with interior bench, a bus route signpost, a 3-loop bike rack, an exterior bench, a sidewalk planter, and a trash receptacle. These facilities are attractive and well-maintained, comfortably accommodating basic rider needs. The Green route stop, located off Main Street on North Prairie Street, is less conspicuous with a bus shelter with an interior bench and bus route signpost. The Blue route stop on South Prairie Street also offers a bus shelter with interior bench and a bus route signpost. These amenities improve transit visibility, accessibility, and rider satisfaction. This transfer infrastructure is notably geared toward riders and not operators, with no visible operator facilities.

Dwell Time and Transfer Ability

The current bus schedule aims to give riders the option of transferring Downtown. The Blue East bus departs E Main Street/Prairie Street every hour on the hour between 7AM and 6 PM. The Green Central bus follows this same schedule. The Red West bus arrives at the Main Street transfer point on the hour every hour starting at 8AM and concluding at 6PM. The Gold Express route arrives at the Main Street transfer point every half hour starting at 7:45AM and ending at 5:45PM. Because three routes converge on the transfer location at once, there is potential for transferring, but any delays or changes to individual routes could prevent riders from transferring easily or comfortably. Transfers are considered most convenient and feasible with a comfortable buffer between bus departures (between 5 and 15 minutes). With three buses scheduled to arrive on the hour every hour and dwell for under 10 minutes, transfers between routes are difficult.

Additionally, because the transfer point is composed of three separate—albeit close—stops, transfers are more difficult for those with mobility challenges or other limitations (such as bikes, strollers, grocery bags) that prevent quick alighting and street crossing.

Strengths

The land use patterns on Main and Prairie Street support the current transfer center. The Downtown Transfer Point is centrally located in Downtown Galesburg, providing easy access to the city's commercial and cultural hub and many key destinations (YMCA, Galesburg Public Library, etc.). Higher commercial and residential density in this area makes the transfer location easy to access for many riders. Downtown Galesburg is also the most walkable area in the city. Passing foot traffic makes this transfer center more accessible and visible to riders and non-riders alike.

Challenges

Despite the supportive land uses, The Main/Prairie Street transfer location poses further challenges:

- Because Main Street is used for parades, festivals, and other events in warmer months, bus routes are regularly rerouted, confusing riders and slowing down service.
- The configuration of stops, notably the different stops for Blue, Green, Red, and Gold routes, may also discourage riders from taking trips that require a downtown transfer or confuse infrequent riders who do not know which bus stops at which shelter.
- For operators, this transfer hub does not offer essential amenities like restrooms or a separate rest area.
- The Downtown Transfer Point is within the 10-minute walkshed from the Galesburg Amtrak Station, but proximity to Amtrak and other regional transportation could be improved.
- Current shelters at the Downtown Transfer Point are not ADA-accessible, limiting usability of the waiting area for riders with mobility considerations.

Transfer Site Assessment

As part of the Vision Plan, the project team along with GPT staff and the City of Galesburg planners conducted a Transfer Site Feasibility Assessment. The parameters and conditions below reflect the priorities of GPT staff and indicate the characteristics that are most supportive of GPT's system-wide goals.

Transfer Site Parameters & Conditions

High Priority

Galesburg Public Transportation and the City of Galesburg aims to prioritize Amtrak and regional connectivity and passenger convenience in a new transfer center. Proximity to the Amtrak station and regional bus providers (Trailways, Greyhound) encourages riders of both services to use GPT for their transportation needs within the city. Prioritizing passenger amenities like seating, trash cans, and information improves the transfer experience, as does limiting inconvenience from street closures and other common sources of delay on Main Street.

Medium Priority

A city-owned parcel or a new, undeveloped site would expedite the development process for a transfer site, but the city will consider sites that do not meet these criteria if they satisfy high-priority concerns. It is also important that a transfer center is within safe walking distance from key destinations beyond regional transportation providers. Further amenities, such as operator facilities, on-site public parking, cyclist infrastructure, and passenger amenities like water fountains, improve the transfer experience and should be included whenever possible, but should not determine the placement or existence of a new transfer location.

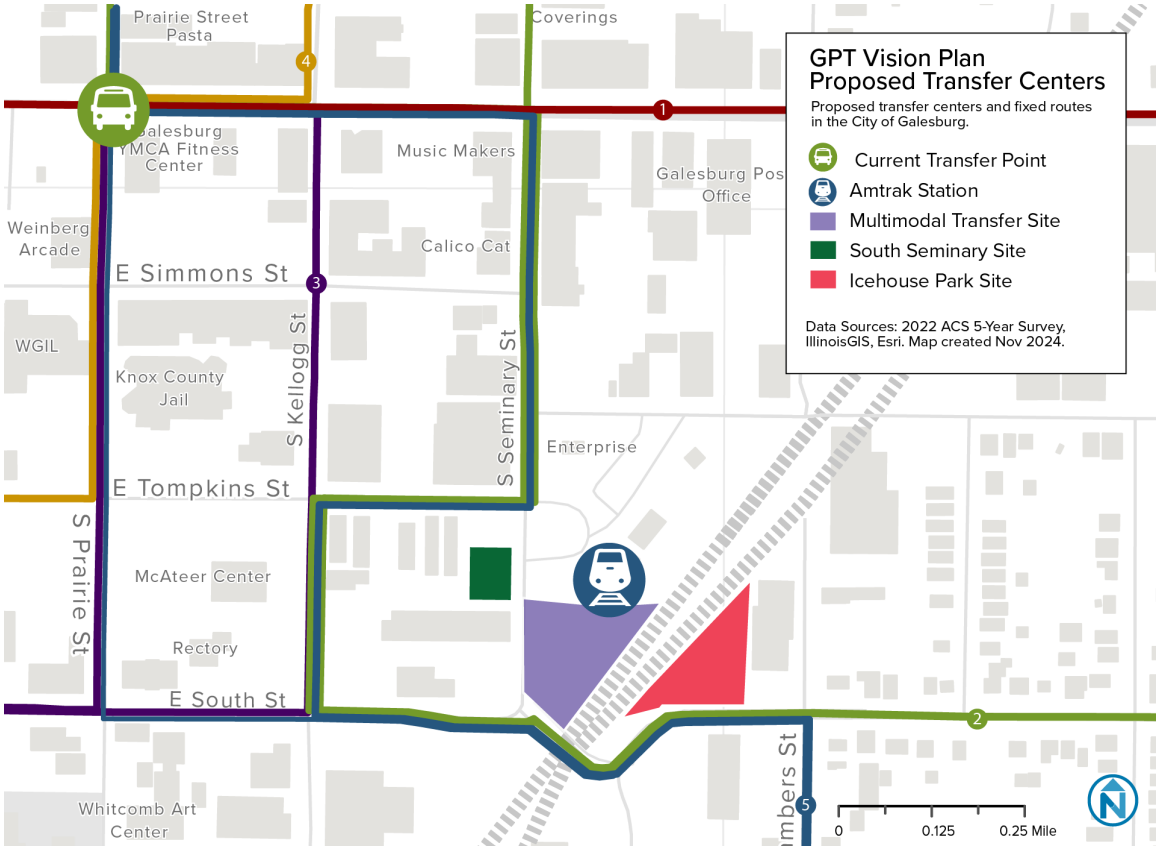
Low Priority

Galesburg Public Transportation does not currently have the ridership that necessitates a staffed transfer location. An indoor waiting area is also not feasible given the available parcels in transit-conducive locations within Galesburg.

Potential Transfer Site Locations

The three potential transfer sites under consideration are all within the vicinity of the Galesburg Amtrak Station. These sites are all south of the current transfer site on Main and Prairie and were selected for their proximity to Downtown Galesburg and the Amtrak Station and distance from Main Street, where road closures are more common.

Figure 23 Potential Transfer Centers and Proposed Route Alignments



Potential Galesburg Multimodal Transfer Site

Site Overview

As proposed in 2010, a multimodal transit facility at 225 South Seminary Street (Amtrak Station) would provide a transfer area adjacent to the Amtrak station and future Railroad Hall of Fame Museum. This facility includes covered waiting areas and an indoor facility with seating, information/maps, and public restrooms. This transfer area could accommodate up to six buses and additional on-site parking for staff.

A transfer center located at the Amtrak Station would allow GPT to align bus schedules with Amtrak, Trailways, and Greyhound departures and arrivals. A longer pulse time of at least 10 minutes would provide ample time to transfer both between GPT buses and between Amtrak trains and GPT buses.

Figure 24 Multimodal Transportation Potential Location, Satellite View

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

Proximity to Amtrak would transform a local transportation transfer center into a regional transportation hub. The existing Amtrak station attracts Galesburg and Knox County residents and offers several amenities that facilitate travel to and from Galesburg: a station building with indoor waiting room and information desk, a parking lot for Amtrak customers, and proximity to Enterprise Car Rental. Burlington Trailways and Greyhound Buses also stop at the Amtrak Station. With the addition of transit—especially several routes pulsing at one central transfer site—Amtrak station would become even more accessible for those without personal vehicles.

The multimodal transfer site is also located close to Main Street in downtown Galesburg. Downtown Galesburg receives the amount of foot and vehicle traffic needed for transit to be visible to different groups of potential riders. The number of key destinations in this area (jobs, shopping, recreational areas) also correlates to higher transit ridership and, likely, better use of a transfer center.

Potential Economic Development

Collocating a transfer center and regional train station offers ridership and revenue growth potential for each service. Potential future developments near the Amtrak Station, such as the National Railroad Hall of Fame, could introduce new riders to GPT. Furthermore, the Illinois Department of Transportation emphasizes enhanced regional connectivity. This transfer site might be more attractive for state grants.

Assessment Criteria

Figure 25 Multimodal Transportation Facility Transfer Center Assessment Summary

This site meets all the high-priority conditions for a transfer site, as identified both by transfer center best practices and the GPT and City of Galesburg characteristics prioritization list. This site benefits from its proximity to Amtrak, Greyhound, and Trailways and its Downtown location off Main Street. Additionally, because this site has access to Amtrak rider amenities

such as parking and the existing station house, the site maximizes rider comfort and amenities even prior to the construction of a transfer center.

Potential South Street Transfer Site

Site Overview

236-238 and 240 South Seminary Street are city-owned parking lot and storage buildings directly facing Amtrak Station across Seminary Street. These sites have existing structures, but given the location and current use of these buildings, it is possible to redevelop this area while minimizing disturbance to residents and visitors.

This site has capacity for four bus bays and on-site circulation in addition to limited waiting space and other passenger facilities and amenities. To best utilize its proximity to Amtrak Station, GPT could align bus schedules with Amtrak, Trailways, and Greyhound departures and arrivals. A longer pulse time of at least 10 minutes would provide ample time to transfer between GPT buses and Amtrak trains.

Figure 26 236-238, 240 South Seminary Street Satellite View

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

As with the previous location, proximity to Amtrak would transform a local transportation transfer center into a regional transportation hub. Although this site is across the street from

as opposed to directly next to Amtrak Station, this location still boasts prime access to the train station and would allow for easy and efficient transfers.

This South Street site is also located close to Main Street in downtown Galesburg. Downtown Galesburg receives the amount of foot and vehicle traffic needed for transit to be visible to different groups of potential riders. The number of key destinations in this area (jobs, shopping, recreational areas) also correlates to higher transit ridership and, likely, better use of a transfer center.

Potential Economic Development

By converting this site into a center for transit transfers, the City of Galesburg would activate a previously under-utilized space for public use. This can increase pedestrian traffic in this area and encourage Galesburg residents to frequent nearby businesses. Increased visibility might attract further businesses to the area and stimulate economic growth.

Assessment Criteria

Figure 27 South Seminary Street Transfer Center Assessment Summary

This site satisfies five of the six high-priority conditions for a transfer site. This site benefits from its proximity to Amtrak, Greyhound, and Trailways and its Downtown location off Main Street. Because this site would entail land use conversion, however, there are no existing transfer center amenities to utilize. It would also be more difficult to develop the site given its smaller lot size, meaning fewer rider and operator amenities compared to a large site.

Potential Icehouse Park Transfer Site

Site Overview

Icehouse Park is a small (~0.75 acre) park on South Chambers and East South Street. Owned by the city, the park directly abuts the railroad tracks. There are few existing features on this parcel. To become a transfer center, this park would require paving and redevelopment.

There is also limited street capacity in this area of East South Street, potentially necessitating further development.

This site has capacity for three to four bus bays and on-site circulation in addition to limited waiting space and other passenger facilities and amenities. To best utilize its proximity to Amtrak Station, GPT could align bus schedules with Amtrak, Trailways, and Greyhound departures and arrivals. A longer pulse time of at least 10 minutes would provide ample time to transfer between GPT buses and Amtrak trains.

Figure 28 Icehouse Park Satellite View

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

As with the previous locations, proximity to Amtrak would transform a local transportation transfer center into a regional transportation hub. This site is close to Amtrak Station but does not have a clear pedestrian pathway between the park and the train station. This limits access to Amtrak Station.

Icehouse Park is further from downtown Galesburg than advisable. Main Street is approximately 10 minutes away on foot, limiting accessibility especially for older adults and riders with mobility limitations. Jobs and housing density are both lower in this region of the city, indicating lower pedestrian and vehicle traffic and less visibility for the transfer center. Most importantly, however, converting a park into a transfer center would require rezoning. The optics of developing a public green space for an unrelated use are suboptimal, and the redevelopment could attract public discontent and foster dislike of the transfer center.

Potential Economic Development

The current Icehouse Park has few amenities and is not widely used by Galesburg residents. Redevelopment would attract new visitors to the area and increase pedestrian traffic. Increased visibility might encourage riders to patronize the few nearby businesses and attract new businesses to the area, ultimately stimulating economic growth.

Assessment Criteria

Figure 29 Icehouse Park Transfer Center Assessment Summary

Icehouse Park is not an ideal transfer location. Its surrounding unsupportive land uses and lack of amenities do not satisfy two high-priority considerations. Although the park is located next to the Amtrak train tracks, the street network and existing pedestrian infrastructure poses accessibility challenges to Amtrak and regional bus service. The site is located away from Main Street, limiting disruptions to bus service in the event of street closures. The site also has possibilities for economic development. Overall, however, the park lacks too many of the key characteristics needed for a successful transfer center.