



SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN 2027-2031

Executive Summary
and Recommendations

July 2026



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Project Background

In November 2024, voters in Central Ohio passed COTA's levy to pass LinkUs initiative, increasing the local sales tax by 0.5 percent to fund a long-term expansion of the region's transportation system.

The LinkUS program is expected to increase COTA transit service by approximately 45% between 2025 and 2050 by introducing bus rapid transit (BRT), improving multimodal access, and expanding service coverage. The 2027–2031 Short-Range Transit Plan (S RTP) represents the first major implementation phase of this long-term program.

COTA's 2027–2031 S RTP is a five-year, implementation-focused roadmap that prioritizes service investments based on rider demand, operational feasibility, and financial resources. The plan identifies which improvements will be advanced in the near term (2027–2028) and establishes a prioritized program of future investments to be implemented as resources allow.

The 2027-2031 S RTP outlines a set of coordinated service changes, including network redesign, frequency improvements, and new service types, along with the associated financial, operator, and capital requirements. These recommendations are designed to prepare the system for the introduction of BRT corridors on West Broad Street and East Main Street while reallocating resources to better align with current and projected rider demand.

Overview of the Process

COTA's 2027-2031 S RTP was developed through a multi-step process that focused on delivering promises made as part of the LinkUs vision, addressing gaps in the current network, and soliciting feedback from riders and other key stakeholders on proposed new service investments. The end result is a complete transit network that COTA will implement over the next five years.



Figure 1 Project Timeline

The recommended network will be implemented through a phased approach that reflects financial capacity, workforce availability, and dependencies on capital projects such as BRT. Early phases (2026–2028) include defined service changes, while later phases prioritize additional improvements based on performance and available resources. Phasing is designed to maximize near-term benefits while minimizing service disruptions and maintaining continuity for existing riders.

Short-Range Transit Plan Report & Companion Website

This report summarizes the key findings of the Short-Range Transit Plan. The SRTP project website was developed in tandem with the report and was a useful tool for sharing data and recommendations with the public and collecting feedback. The final version of the project website was published with the report and includes detailed interactive maps and charts of the data, analysis, and network recommendations included in the Existing Conditions, Engagement, and Recommended Transit Network sections of the report. To visit the SRTP project website, visit COTA.com/SRTP.

SRTP Project Website

COTA.com/SRTP



The Planning Process Continues

The Short-Range Transit Plan serves as COTA's roadmap for advancing service improvements over the next five years, guiding decisions from Board adoption through phased implementation and ongoing refinement. Following adoption, the plan will be implemented through upcoming service change cycles beginning in 2027, prioritizing high-impact improvements and advancing the highest-ranked service packages first.

Implementation is designed to be iterative and responsive. COTA will continuously monitor system performance, ridership trends, and operational outcomes to ensure the plan is delivering intended benefits. Based on this evaluation, adjustments will be made over time, with a formal plan update anticipated in 2028.

Public engagement will remain a central component throughout implementation. COTA will continue to host regular public meetings for each service change, conduct targeted outreach to riders, and coordinate closely with local jurisdictions, employers, and key stakeholders. For significant service changes, additional steps such as focused outreach, expanded public

Recommendations

Recommendation Themes

In the development of COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP, several themes guided the recommended path forward.

DELIVER ON PROMISES OF LINKUS

Prepare for Bus Rapid Transit

BRT is a cornerstone of the LinkUs vision and will begin operating during the 2027-2031 SRTP implementation period. This plan accounts for the transition of COTA Line 2 (East Main BRT) and Line 10 (West Broad BRT) into BRT and includes support services such as Line 80 on West Broad St. and operational adjustments that will break Line 2 and Line 10 in downtown Columbus.

Expand COTA's Frequent Service Network

Frequent service is the core of building transit networks that people can rely upon easily without needing to consult schedules and timetables. COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP identifies opportunities to improve the quality of service on high-performing lines to help meet passenger demand.

Late Night Service

To improve access for people working non-traditional hours, COTA will expand its network to introduce 24-hour service on key lines to connect workers to jobs during non-peak times. Overnight service on select lines will operate hourly from midnight to 5:00 AM daily.

Improve Weekend and Off-Peak Service

Weekend and off-peak service will improve travel access across the course of a week, creating midday, night, and weekend service that better matches service frequencies during peak times. This service will expand access for workers and ensure transit is accessible for riders when needed, not just during morning and afternoon commute times.

Expand COTA//Plus to New Communities

COTA//Plus is a service mode (microtransit) that can be used to extend transit's footprint in areas where fixed-route service may be infeasible. COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP identifies opportunities to augment COTA's fixed route services by offering COTA//Plus in lower-density environments to connect passengers into COTA's network.

FOCUS ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Break Long Routes into Shorter Routes to Improve Operational Reliability

COTA operates several routes that have travel times in excess of 2 hours and travel more than 40 miles per trip. Because of these long travel times and distances, these routes often struggle

with operational performance, including on-time performance. Dividing lines into two shorter lines creates improved operational reliability while also allowing each line to be evaluated separately, allowing for unique differences between these routes to be considered independently.

UPDATE NETWORK TO MEET DEMAND

Monitor and Consider Discontinuing Underperforming Services

As Columbus and the surrounding communities continue to grow, COTA must update its services to best reflect where demand is greatest. Several recommendations of this plan focus on ensuring COTA's operational resources are used to be most effective for Central Ohio residents. This results in some areas reducing service due to low demand while other areas may require adding additional service because there is unmet demand. As a best practice to remain responsive to taxpayer funds and provide the most effective service possible, underperforming services were evaluated, and several routes are proposed for discontinuation through this plan.

Recommended Network

The recommended network for the 2027-2031 SRTP focuses on accomplishing several goals for COTA:

- Implement the West Broad BRT corridor
- Implement the East Main BRT corridor
- Expand COTA's network to improve service access across the course of a week, including improved late night and weekend services
- Realign of underperforming lines
- Introduction of new COTA/Plus services

Service Type
Bus Rapid Transit Span: All day, all week Frequency: 15 minutes or less
Standard Span: All day, all week Frequency: 16-60 minutes
Frequent Span: All day, all week Frequency: 15 minutes or less
Rush Hour Span: 6:30-9AM and 3-6PM, Monday through Friday

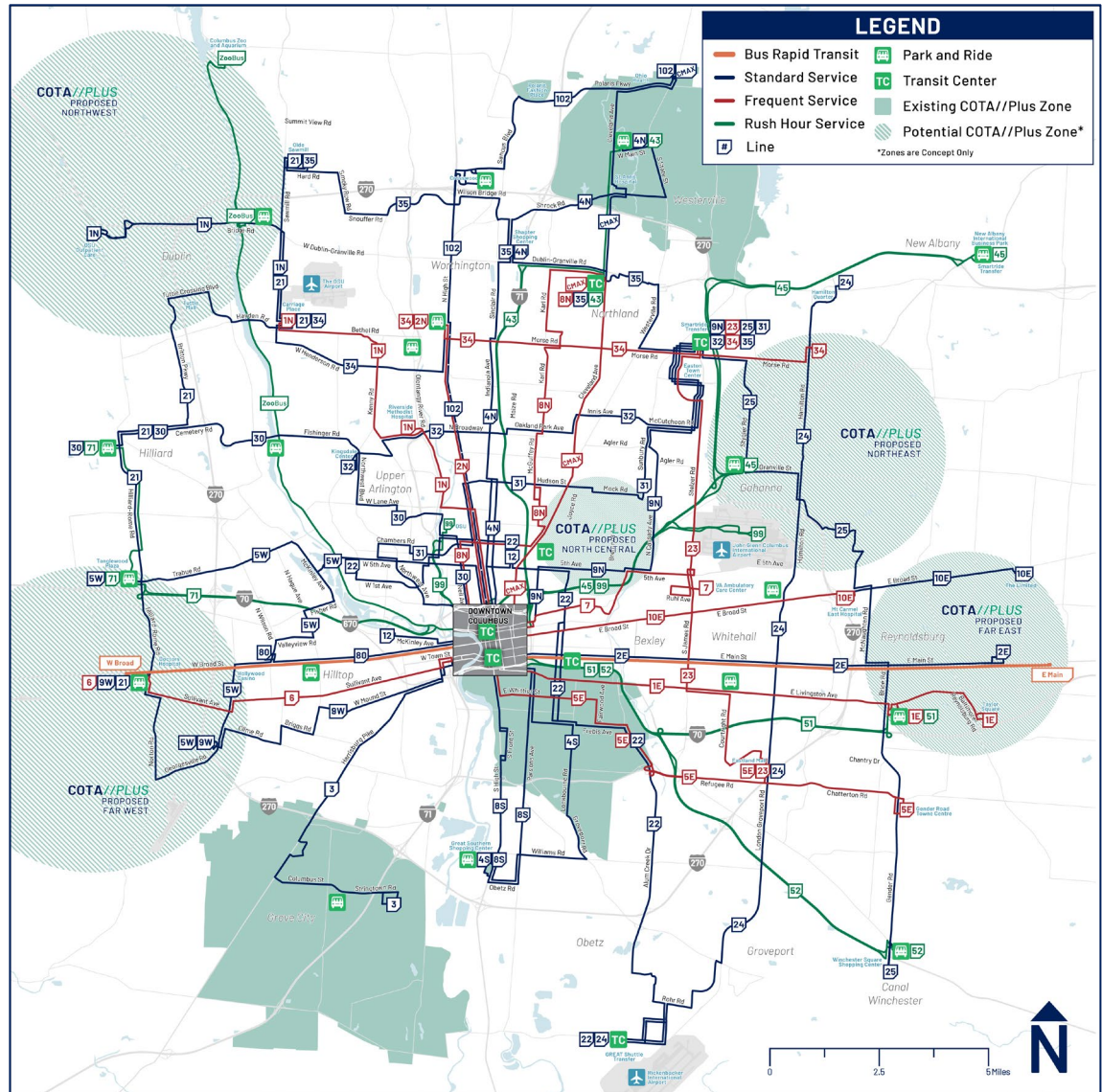


Figure 2 Recommended System Map – Interactive map available at www.cota.com/srtp

NETWORK SUMMARY

The SRTP includes a comprehensive set of service changes spanning new services, frequency improvements, route realignments, and service discontinuations. These changes collectively reshape the network to better align with demand and improve system performance.

The COTA Short-Range Transit Plan 2027-2031 includes the following recommendations:

Recommendation Type	Recommendation	Impacted COTA Service	Notes and Considerations
Implement New Service	Implement BRT service along West Broad St	Line 10, West Broad BRT, Line 80	Route 80 alignment will be reassessed after the West Broad BRT alignment is finalized.
Implement New Service	Implement BRT service along East Main Street	Line 2, East Main BRT	
Increase Frequency/Span	Introduce overnight hourly service	Line 1, 2, 10, 22, W Broad BRT, E Main BRT	
Increase Frequency/Span	Expand COTA's Frequent Service Network	Line 5E, 6	Line 5 Refugee leg only
Increase Frequency/Span	Improve weekend frequency from 30-minutes to 15-minutes	Line 1, 2N, 10E	
Increase Frequency/Span	Improve weekend frequency from 30-minutes to 20-minutes	Line 5E, 6, 7, 8, 23, 34	
Increase Frequency/Span	Improve weekend frequency from 60-minutes to 30-minutes	Line 3, 4, 9, 24, 30	
Increase Frequency/Span	Improve weekday frequency from 60-minutes to 30-minutes	Line 9, 25, 32, 35	

Recommendation Type	Recommendation	Impacted COTA Service	Notes and Considerations
Alignment Change	Break long routes in downtown Columbus to improve operational reliability and allow for independent scheduling.	Line 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10	Lines 2 and 10 must change as part of BRT service implementation. All other lines can be implemented individually over time.
Alignment Change	Extend service to Taylor Square in Reynoldsburg	Line 1E	
Alignment Change	Extend service to OSU Outpatient in Dublin	Line 1N	Replace Line 33 service to Dublin
Alignment Change	Discontinue Line 3 north of downtown Columbus	Line 3	Service replaced by new service on Line 30 from Hilliard to Downtown Columbus
Alignment Change	Extend service to Westerville along Busch Boulevard, Schrock Road, State Street, and Main Street	Line 4N	
Alignment Change	Realign service along Koebel Road, Fairwood Ave, Watkins Road, and Alum Creek Drive to Williams Road, Parsons Avenue, and Obetz Road to Great Southern	Line 4S	
Alignment Change	Realign service along Wilson Road and Broad Street to McKinley Avenue, Risher Road, Hague Avenue, Valleyview Drive, Wilson Road, Broad Street, and Georgesville Road to Walmart	Line 5W	
Alignment Change	Realign service along Georgesville Road, and Broad Street to Sullivant Avenue and Westwoods Boulevard to Westwoods Park and Ride	Line 6	

Recommendation Type	Recommendation	Impacted COTA Service	Notes and Considerations
Alignment Change	Discontinue Line 7 service to Easton Transit Center and CMH Airport, and terminate at VA Clinic	Line 7	Service replaced by new service on Line 9N on Cassady Avenue and 99 to CMH Airport
Alignment Change	Realign service along Dublin-Granville Road to Northland Transit Center	Line 8	
Alignment Change	Realign service from Brentnell Avenue, Perdue Avenue, Agler Road, and Sunbury Road to Cassady Avenue, Sunbury Road, McCutcheon Road, and Stelzer Road.	Line 9N	Service replaced by new COTA//PLUS service in the North Central area
Alignment Change	Realign service from Town Street and Central Avenue to Souder Avenue, Davis Avenue, and Mound Street. Realign from Norton Road and Broad Street to Sullivant Avenue and Westwoods Boulevard.	Line 9W	
Discontinue service	Discontinue service	Line 11	Service replaced by new COTA//PLUS service in the North Central area
Alignment Change	Realign service near Easton Town Center to Stelzer Road, Easton Way, Morse Crossing, Morse Road, and Stelzer Road to Easton Transit Center	Line 9, 31, and 32	
Alignment Change	Extend service from Carriage Place to Sawmill via Sawmill Road. Discontinue service past Westwoods Park and Ride	Line 21	Replace Line 33 service to Sawmill
Alignment Change	Realign service to the new Mobility Center at Rickenbacker via Shook Road in both directions	Line 22 & 24	
Alignment Change	Extend service to 1 st Avenue via 5 th Avenue	Line 22	

Recommendation Type	Recommendation	Impacted COTA Service	Notes and Considerations
Alignment Change	Realign service along Easton Way and Stelzer Road to Morse Crossing, Morse Road, and Stelzer Road	Line 23	
Alignment Change	Realign service along Morse Road and Stelzer Road to Hamilton Road to OSU Outpatient Center	Line 24	
Alignment Change	Discontinue service on Chantry Drive, Park Drive, Alshire Road, and Scarborough Boulevard	Line 25	
Implement New Service	Implement new service from Hilliard Park and Ride to Downtown Columbus via Kingsdale Center and OSU	Line 30	Replace Line 32 service to Hilliard
Alignment Change	Realign and extend service from along Kinnear Road, North Star Road, King Avenue, Grandview Avenue, 1 st Avenue, and Northwest Boulevard to Chambers Road, North Star Avenue, 5 th Avenue, Northwest Boulevard, and Vine Street to Downtown Columbus.	Line 31	Alternative service for discontinued Line 3 NW.
Alignment Change	Discontinue service west of Kingsdale Center	Line 32	Replaced by Line 30 from Hilliard to Kingsdale Center
Discontinue service	Discontinue service	Line 33	Service replaced by new service on Lines 1 to Dublin, 21 to Sawmill, and 34 on Henderson Road
Alignment Change	Extend service to Carriage Place via North High Street, Henderson Road, and Sawmill Road. Streamline service to remain on Morse Road west of Easton Transit Center	Line 34	Replaces Line 33 to Carriage Place on Henderson Road
Alignment Change	Discontinue service east of Easton Transit Center. Extend service to Sawmill via Busch Boulevard,	Line 35	Service from Easton Transit Center to New Albany replaced by SmartRide

Recommendation Type	Recommendation	Impacted COTA Service	Notes and Considerations
	Schrock Road, Huntley Road, Wilson Bridge Road, Snouffer Road, Smoky Row Road, and Hard Road		
Discontinue service	Discontinue service	Line 41, 42, 44, 46, 61, 72, 73, 74, and 75	Line 45 is replaced by Line 46. Line 73 is replaced by Zoo Bus
Alignment Change	Streamline to operate via Cleveland Avenue	Line 43	
Alignment Change	Serve both New Albany and Gahanna Park and Ride	Line 45	Replace Line 46 service to Gahanna Park and Ride
Implement New Service	Implement service that operates between OSU, Downtown, and CMH Airport	Line 99	Replaces Line 7 service to CMH Airport
Alignment Change	Extend to Meijer on North State Street	CMAX	
Increase Frequency/Span	Operate year-round	Zoo Bus	Replace Line 73 entirely
Implement New Service	Implement COTA//PLUS Service	North Central, Northwest, Northeast, Far East, Far West	Each zone will be evaluated and implemented independently

Figure 3 Recommendations

Impacts and Benefits

The recommended network for the 2027-2031 SRTP proposes a 27-30% service increase over the next five years. Service improvements include:

- **Refocusing the transit network** into high-demand, transit-dependent, or underserved communities.
- **Expanding the frequent service network** by upgrading high-performing routes or extending existing frequent routes into new areas.
- **Improving frequency throughout the week** with a focus on improved weekend frequency.
- **Expanding hours of operation** including introducing a 24-hour network on core routes.
- Providing direct access between John Glenn International Airport, Downtown Columbus, and OSU.
- Introducing two new COTA//Plus microtransit zones to create more first- and last-mile connections to the fixed-route network.

The recommended network is based on where residents live, work, and move today and responds to the changing travel needs of Central Ohio's growing population. The recommended network serves 56% of the population and 67% of the jobs in COTA's service area. Service improvements are focused in areas with transit-critical populations, including areas with high densities of zero-car households, low-income residents, and people of color. Benefits of the service investments made as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP are focused on transit-critical populations. Investments in the 24-hour network will benefit 42% low-income residents and 50% people of color (40% and 48% respectively for the weekend improvements network), compared to 37% and 46% respectively across the service area. By focusing on transit investments in communities where ridership is concentrated, COTA can effectively improve transit access for people who are most likely to use the service.

FREQUENCY IMPROVEMENTS

The recommended network improves weekend frequency on 14 lines so service is consistent and useful throughout the week. It also upgrades five hourly lines to 30-minute frequency on weekdays such that all frequent and standard service runs every 30-minute or better on weekdays. Frequency improvements are summarized below.

Frequency Improvements	Lines Impacted*
Improve weekend frequency from every 30-min to 15-min	Lines 1, 2N, 10E
Improve weekend frequency from every 30-min to 20-min	Lines 5E, 6, 7, 8N, 23, 34
Improve weekend frequency from every 60-min to 30-min	Lines 3, 4, 9, 24, 30
Improve weekday frequency from every 60-min to 30-min	Lines 9, 21, 25, 32, 35
Improve weekend frequency from every 40-min to 30-min	Lines 8S

Figure 4 Summary of Frequency Improvements

*Split route is specified if only one segment will receive frequency improvements.

NUMBER OF TRIPS

- The recommended network will increase service every day of the week by 35%, especially on weekends. While traditional 9-5 commuters have made a more permanent shift to hybrid or remote work post-pandemic, many people who rely on transit are more likely to work weekends and to take transit for various purposes like shopping and socializing. The recommended network would make it easier to travel at all hours of day and all days of the week, as well as overnight for the first time.
- **Weekday Trips:** The number of weekday trips increases by 27%. Service increases at all hours of the day, but most notably after 9 PM and overnight. While transit service has historically been more frequent during morning and afternoon weekday peak periods, the recommended network builds on the existing network by providing nearly as much service in the midday and late evening through 11 PM as the peaks.
- **Weekend Trips:** Recommended Saturday and Sunday service increases the amount of service compared to the current network by 64% and 74% respectively, a much larger increase compared to the weekday. The amount of recommended weekend service is higher than the amount of current weekday service and similar to weekday service levels (89% and 80% of weekday service on Saturdays and Sundays respectively). In other words, riders will be able to use transit almost as easily on weekends as on weekdays. The 24-hour network also operates on weekends.

FREQUENT TRANSIT ACCESS

The recommended network increases the number of residents within walking distance (of ½ mile from a bus stop) frequent service by 39% and all-day service (frequent and standard) by 8%. Frequent service is much more useful to riders because they can travel more spontaneously and is appropriate for denser areas that are more conducive to more frequent transit. By investing more in the all-day network, per one thousand residents the number of weekday trips increases from 1.8 to 2.4.

The recommended network increases the number of jobs along frequent transit by 10% and all-day service by 4%. Because jobs cluster more than residents, a larger portion of jobs are already served today by frequent transit, but a higher number of residents can reach these jobs with frequent transit. Per one thousand jobs, the number of trips increases from 1.9 to 2.5 by investing more resources into the all-day network.

The main tradeoff of the recommended network is reducing the number of residents and jobs with access to Rush Hour service. Rush Hour service ridership has permanently reduced by over 80% since the pandemic and is much more expensive to operate per passenger than local service. Rush hour service by nature offers far fewer trips as it only operates during peak periods.

Phasing Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Year 0 – 2026

While the SRTP covers 2027–2031, several priority improvements will be advanced in 2026 to accelerate benefits and prepare for subsequent phases. These changes with **estimated** vehicle and operator requirements include:

Recommendation	Estimated Marginal Revenue Vehicle Hours (annual)	Estimated Marginal Peak Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Marginal Operator Requirements
Extend Line 1 to the Ohio State University Outpatient Medical Center in Dublin Break Line 1 (Line 1N and Line 1E) into two shorter routes, split in downtown Columbus Improve night and weekend service on Line 1N to 15-minute frequency. ¹ Introduce Line 30 Shorten Line 32	+70,400	+8	+44
Introduce one COTA/Plus Zone	+15,000	+4	+10

Figure 5 Phased Recommendations - 2026

¹ To be implemented at later date

Year 1 – 2027

Recommendation	Estimated Marginal Revenue Vehicle Hours (annual)	Estimated Marginal Peak Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Marginal Operator Requirements
Extend Line 21 to Sawmill Extend Line 34 to Carriage Place Discontinue Line 33	+150	0	+1
Combine Line 42 and Line 43 into new Line 43	+1,500	0	+2
Extend CMAx to N State Street in Westerville (Meijer)	+850	0	+1

Figure 6 Phased Recommendations - 2027

Year 2 – 2028

Recommendation	Estimated Marginal Revenue Vehicle Hours (annual)	Estimated Marginal Peak Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Marginal Operator Requirements
Shorten Line 7 to end at VA Hospital Improve Line 7 frequency to 20 minutes on weekends Reroute Line 9 to utilize Cassady Avenue Break Line 9 (Line 9N and Line 9W) into two shorter routes, break in downtown Columbus Improve Line 9 frequency to 30 minutes all days of week Introduce Line 99	+24,800	+3	+16
Transition Line 11 and introduce North Central COTA/Plus Zone		+1-2	+4-5
Extend Line 22 to Grandview Heights Adjust Line 31 routing in Grandview Heights Improve Line 31 frequency to 30 minutes on weekends Discontinue northern segment of Line 3 Improve Line 3 frequency to 30 minutes on weekends	-2,400	-2	0
Discontinue Line 75	-500	-1	0

Figure 7 Phased Recommendations - 2028

Years 3-5 – 2029-2031

Priority	Recommendation	Estimated Marginal Revenue Vehicle Hours (annual)	Estimated Marginal Peak Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Marginal Operator Requirements
High	Improve frequency on Line 1E to 15 minutes at all periods	+20,600	+1	+13
High	Extend Line 5W and Line 6 to Westwoods Park and Ride. Line 6 frequency improvement to 20 minutes on weekends.	+20,350	+3	+13
High	Improve frequency on Line 5E to 15 minutes on weekdays, and 20 minutes on weekends	+26,800	+4	+17
High	Improve frequency on Line 8N and Line 8S	+18,400	0	+12
High	Improve frequency on Line 9W to 30 minutes	+9,700	+1	+6
High	Implement late night service on Line 1 , Line 2 , Line 10 , Line 22 , and CMAx	+15,800	+0	+10
Medium	Discontinue Line 41	-500	-1	0
Medium	Discontinue Line 44	-500	-1	0
Medium	Implement combined Line 45 and Line 46	+1,000	-1	0
Medium	Discontinue Line 61	-1,000	-1	0
Medium	Discontinue Line 72	-1,000	-2	0
Medium	Implement combined Line 73 and ZooBus	+550	-3	0
Medium	Discontinue Line 74	-500	-1	0

Priority	Recommendation	Estimated Marginal Revenue Vehicle Hours (annual)	Estimated Marginal Peak Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Marginal Operator Requirements
Low	Break Line 4 into Line 4N and 4S , extend Line 4N to Westerville via Schrock Road. Increase weekend frequency on 4S & 4N to every 30 minutes.	+19,750	0	+13
Low	Streamline Line 23 via Stelzer Road, Morse Crossing and Morse Road. Increase Line 23 weekend frequency to every 20-minutes.	+3,900	0	+3
Low	Extend Line 24 to OSU Outpatient Center in Hamilton Quarter. Increase Line 24 weekend frequency to every 30-minutes.	+6,600	0	+5
Low	Streamline to remove JC Penny Catalog Outlet Store loop just south of I-70. Schedule to provide 2-way service south of US-33, and seek improved end-of-line location. Increase Line 25 weekday frequency to every 30 minutes.	+11,100	+2	+7
Low	Extend Line 35 to Sawmill via Wilson Bridge Road. Shorten eastern portion of Line 35 to end at Easton Transit Center. Increase Line 35 weekend frequency to every 30-minutes.	+9,600	+2	+6
Low	Implement an additional COTA/Plus Zone	+15,100	+4	+10
Low	Implement an additional COTA/Plus Zone	+15,100	+4	+10
Low	Implement an additional COTA/Plus Zone	+15,100	+4	+10
Low	Implement late night service on Lines 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 23, 30, and 34	+23,850	+0	+15

Figure 8 Phased Recommendations - 2029-2031

POLICY AND PHASING CONSIDERATIONS

Rush Hour Lines

Rush Hour lines are the lowest-performing services COTA currently provides, and ridership has not shifted significantly since 2020. However, recent fluctuations in gas prices have sparked new interest in Rush Hour services, and COTA has been experiencing ridership gains over the past several months. While COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP recommends consolidating and discontinuing many Rush Hour lines, COTA should continue to monitor ridership and performance to determine if discontinuation is necessary. Maintaining Rush Hour lines will increase COTA's revenue hours, vehicle requirements, and operator requirements.

Line 99 Extension to Easton

COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP recommends launching Line 99 to provide direct, frequent access to John Glenn International Airport as an alternative to current Line 7. To improve regional connectivity, COTA may consider extending Line 99 to Easton Town Center as well. This extension will require one additional vehicle throughout the day but would improve regional access to the airport and create limited stop service connecting the airport directly to major COTA nodes where passengers can easily reach the rest of the COTA network.

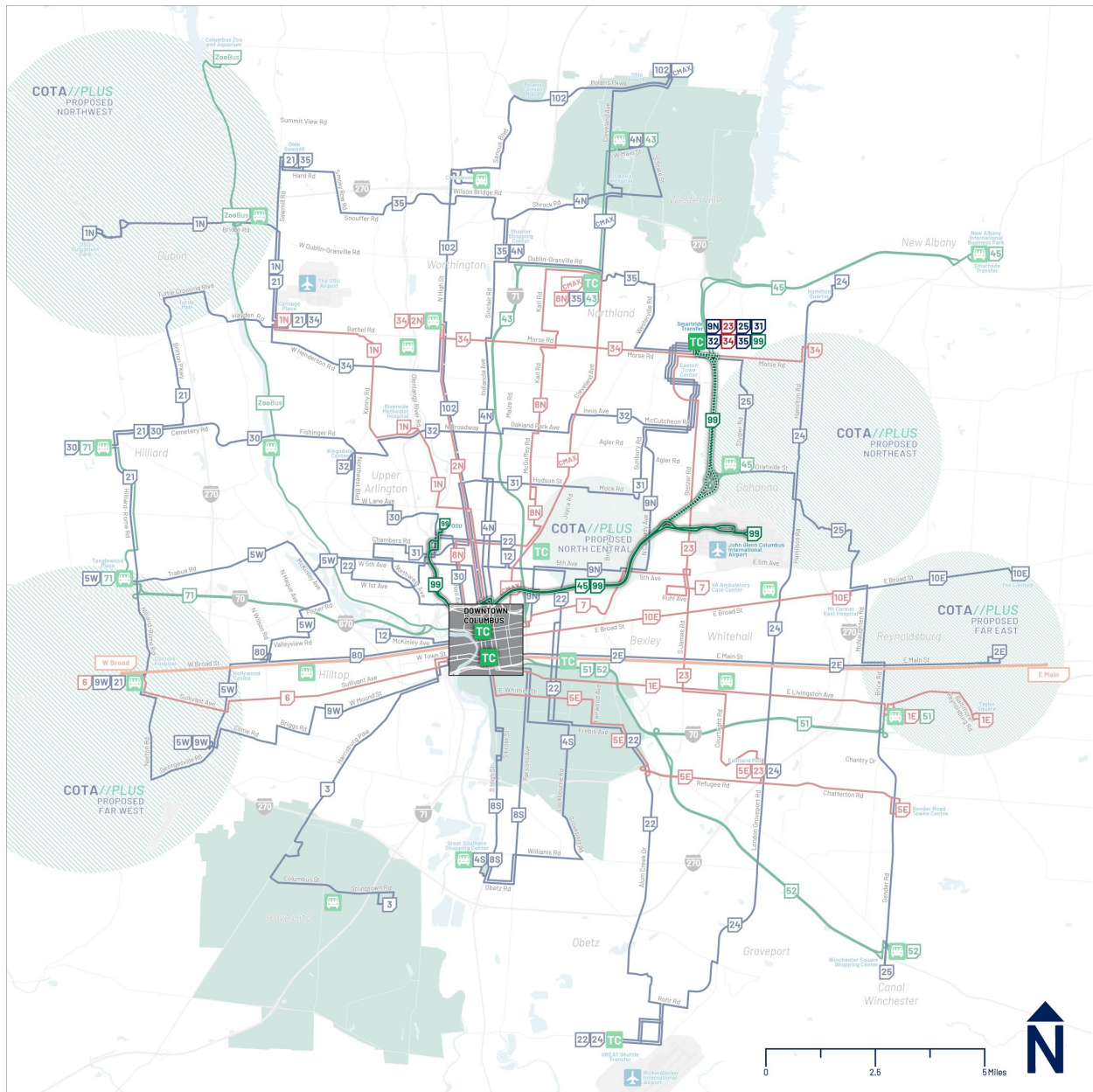


Figure 9 Proposed Line 99 Extension to Easton Town Center

Redundancy on Line 2 and Line 102

While COTA's 2027-2031 S RTP recommends maintaining Line 2 and Line 102 along High Street, these two separate services provide duplicative coverage to the same corridor and should be considered for consolidation long-term to create operational efficiencies. Today, Line 102 provides limited stop service along High Street with Line 2 providing local stop service. Line 102 passengers benefit from faster travel times by bypassing local stops, while Line 2 operates with 15-minute frequency throughout much of the week. By providing these two levels of service, COTA incurs higher operating costs with mixed benefits across the corridor.

Beyond the 2031 project horizon, COTA should examine travel times along High Street to identify opportunities to improve travel times for all passengers and ultimately discontinue Line 102 with improved Line 2 operations.

BRT Implementation

COTA's BRT program is a series of capital-intensive transit investments that will significantly impact COTA's current network and phasing for key recommendations of this plan. As West Broad and East Main BRT projects advance toward implementation in the coming years, COTA must begin planning adjustments to other services to align with these new routes.

COTA//Plus Operational Model

COTA//Plus services are currently designed to provide on-demand trips across the entirety of each COTA//Plus zone, regardless of the presence of COTA fixed route services. When COTA//Plus and fixed route services operate in the same area, this operational model creates operational redundancy, with fixed route services often providing similar trips to COTA//Plus trips. While COTA//Plus has a lower operating cost overall, the cost per passenger is significantly higher than fixed-route service. Passengers utilizing COTA//Plus service when fixed route is available both increases COTA's cost to provide a trip and makes the available fixed route service less productive.

To address this, for each COTA//Plus zone, COTA should consider operational models that allow greater control of operating costs, including restricting zone size, increasing advertised wait time, or limiting trip purposes or destinations. For example, updating the current Southside COTA//Plus zone to limit usage to first/last-mile connections will ensure COTA is maximizing its resources and not providing duplicative services in a community with extensive access to both the fixed route and microtransit networks. By adjusting these parameters, COTA can exert greater control over its operational costs and deliver COTA//Plus more efficiently.

Late Night Service

Late night service has two major considerations for implementation and phasing. First, COTA will need to implement several late night routes at the same time to create a network of available services for passengers. Implementing only one or two routes will limit impact across the network, with only riders using those specific routes realizing any benefit. By creating a network of four to five routes, passengers will have greater access across the region and will be able to transfer across services to make regional connections during off-peak hours.

Second, late night service introduces a new service period that requires COTA to consider impacts to its operations. This new service period occurs when most vehicles are currently being maintained, and no operators are working. Late night service will impact COTA's vehicle maintenance program, and will require COTA to expand its workforce schedules across the night, including operators, safety and security personnel, and street supervision.

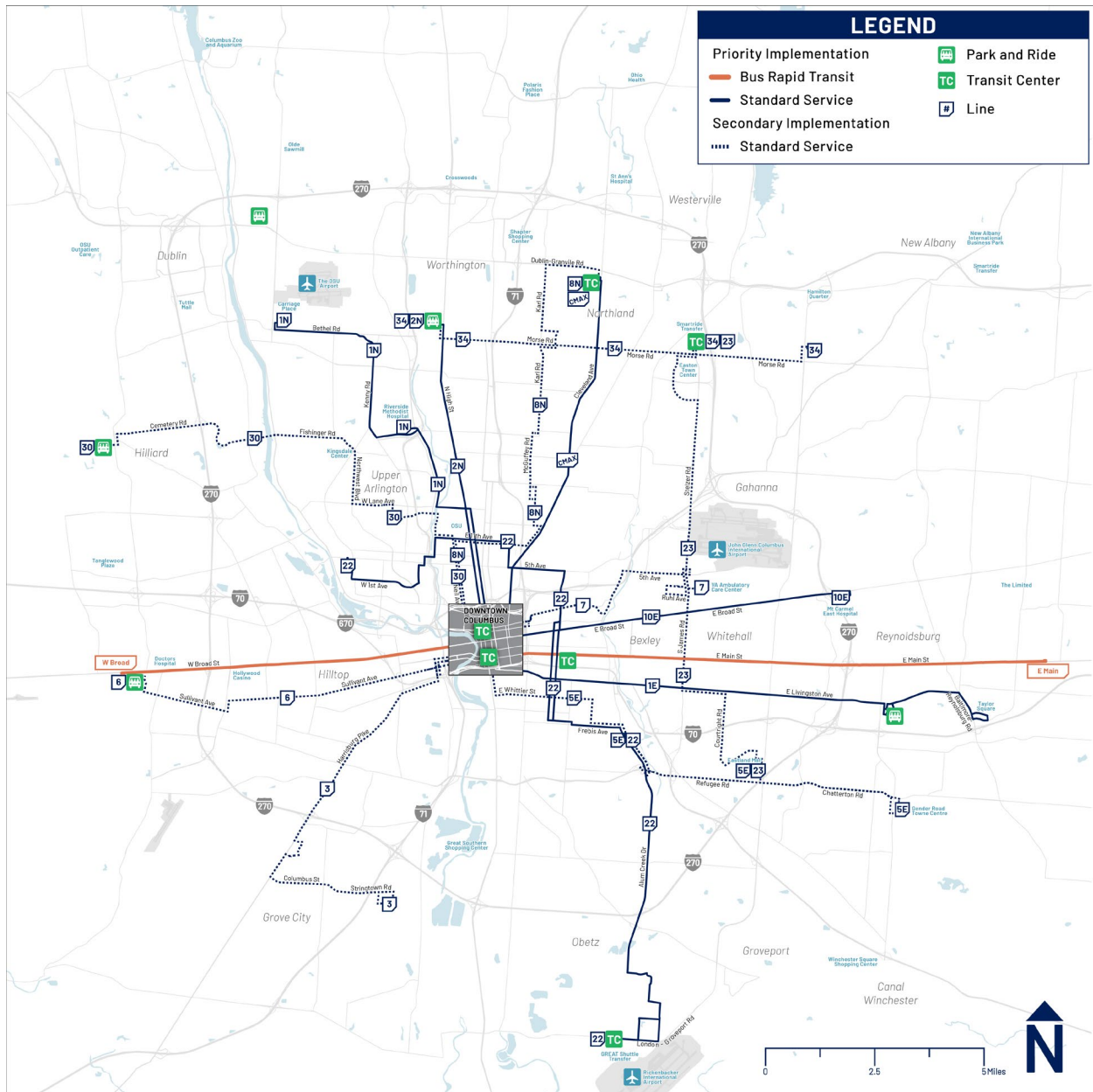


Figure 10 Proposed Late Night Network

Capital Plan

With the implementation of COTA's SRTP 2027-2031, COTA will need to invest capital funds to support the increased service. Capital considerations are listed below.

BUS STOPS

Today, COTA's service area includes 2,990 bus stops. The 2027-2031 SRTP recommends that COTA discontinue service to approximately 427 stops due to realignment of service. Based on new services proposed and COTA's Transit Stop Design Guide, COTA will require 142 additional stops. As a result, COTA SRTP 2027-2031 results in a net decrease of 285 bus stops, resulting in a total of 2,705 bus stops across the recommended network.

PASSENGER FACILITIES

As COTA changes operations in downtown Columbus while implementing the BRT program and dividing longer routes, COTA will need to consider passenger transfer needs, as well as an increased operational footprint. Today, both the Spring Street Terminal and COTA Terminal (High Street & Rich Street) can have capacity for additional passengers and vehicles, but may require capital investments to serve increased usage of these facilities.

With expanded service, passenger activity is anticipated to increase at additional locations such as Carriage Place in northwest Columbus and Eastland Transit Center in the southeast. COTA should consider evaluating capacity and passenger amenities at these locations to determine if additional capital investments are needed to support passenger and operator needs.

PARK AND RIDE LOCATIONS

Reducing Rush Hour lines and implementing BRT services will impact COTA's Park and Ride locations. Westwoods Park and Ride will be upgraded as part of the West Broad BRT project. Several service investments recommended by this plan, including **Line 6**, **Line 9**, and **Line 21**, also depend on Park and Ride upgrades. COTA's new Dublin Park and Ride location in Dublin's mixed-use development will also service updated **ZooBus** more regularly.

Should the recommendations to decrease Rush Hour lines proceed, COTA should consider closing the St Andrew Park and Ride.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONS TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

COTA maintains a report called the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that outlines COTA's long-term financial plans and projects. Inclusion on this list is the first step in advancing a project toward potential funding. Based on the recommendations within the Short-Range Transit Plan, COTA should consider adding the following projects to the next update of the CIP.

- Dublin Park & Ride Relocation Project – costs associated with a joint development project to relocate Dublin Park & Ride
- Northwest Area Enhancements (Sawmill & Bethel area): locate and construct new facility with space for off-street vehicle layovers and passenger waiting areas, operator restrooms, and other improvements

- Westwoods Park & Ride Upgrades – at COTA’s existing park & ride, construct new facility with space for off-street vehicle layovers and passenger waiting areas, operator restrooms, and other improvements
- Spring Street Terminal enhancements – upgrade facility and surrounding area to serve more all-day buses in anticipation of more COTA lines ending in downtown Columbus
- COTA Transit Terminal enhancements – upgrade facility and surrounding area to serve more all-day buses in anticipation of more COTA lines ending in downtown Columbus
- Eastland Transit Center – locate and construct new facility with space for off-street vehicle layovers and passenger waiting areas, operator restrooms, and other improvements

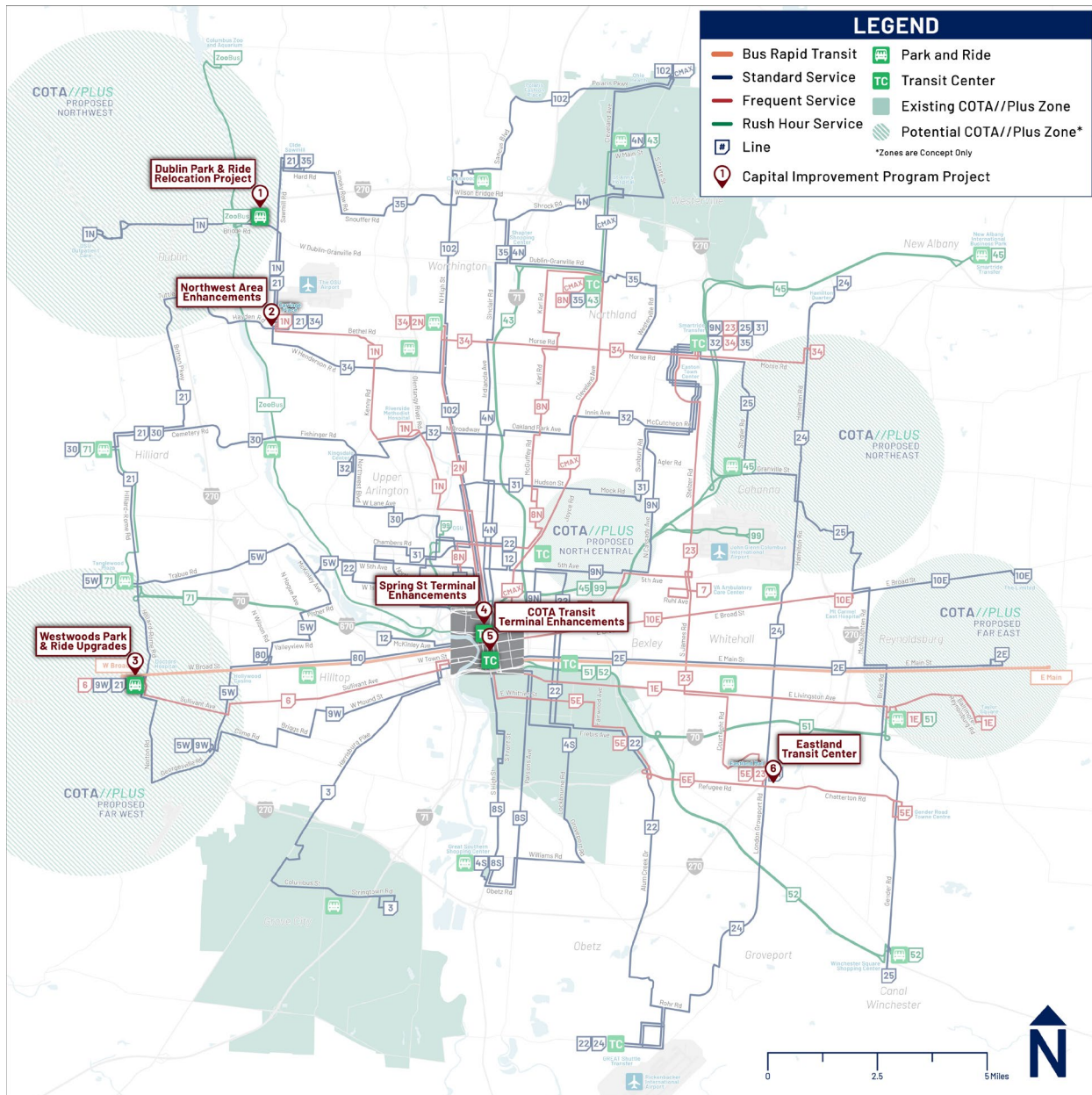


Figure 11 Proposed Additions to the Capital Improvement Program

Financial Plan

Expansion of transit service identified as part of LinkUs program is captured within COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP. The 2027-2031 SRTP accounts for a 30% increase over 2026 service levels, which equates to approximately an additional 215,000 annual vehicle revenue hours (VRH) each year. Using COTA's 2026 hourly service cost, when fully implemented, the 2027-2031 SRTP will increase COTA's operating budget by \$42.1M annually and will require 200 additional operators.

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Annual Increase in VRH	+50,000	+50,000	+50,000	+50,000	+15,000
Cumulative Increase in VRH	+50,000	+100,000	+150,000	+200,000	+215,000
Cumulative Operational Budget Impacts	\$9.7M	\$19.6M	\$29.3M	\$39.2M	\$42.1M

Figure 12 Anticipated Annual Increase in Operation Budget

While this plan considers service implementation in steady investments through 2030 with a smaller service implementation in 2031, recommendations are intended to be flexible to provide COTA the ability to adjust due to unforeseen financial impacts.

Successful implementation of the SRTP will require careful coordination across service planning, workforce development, capital investment, and customer communication. Key considerations include workforce availability, financial variability, and project dependencies such as BRT delivery timelines. COTA will monitor performance and adjust implementation as needed to ensure the plan remains responsive and financially sustainable.

Existing Conditions

Summary of Findings – Market Analysis

Evaluating population, employment, and combined/composite density is a critical step in gauging transit demand for a given area. Areas with higher density generally indicate greater demand for transit. Dense areas are also likely to experience vehicle congestion and limited parking, conditions that would benefit from increased access to transit. In addition, looking at travel overall is helpful for better understanding the main trip patterns across all modes of travel and for evaluating whether transit service is providing the desired connections.

The following is a summary of the Market Analysis. To view a detailed interactive display of the Market Analysis, visit COTA's project website at COTA.com/SRTP.

POPULATION

Population density in COTA's service area was assessed in terms of people per acre, with population densities of 2-10 people per acre considered the minimum needed to support public transit service.

Most of the area COTA serves has transit-supportive population density in the low to very low categories. However, there are several distinct clusters and corridors throughout the county with higher population density (more than 30 people per acre), including:

- The Ohio State University and surrounding neighborhoods
- Downtown Columbus and nearby east/west neighborhoods
- German Village, Hilltop, and North Linden
- Northland area, Westerville

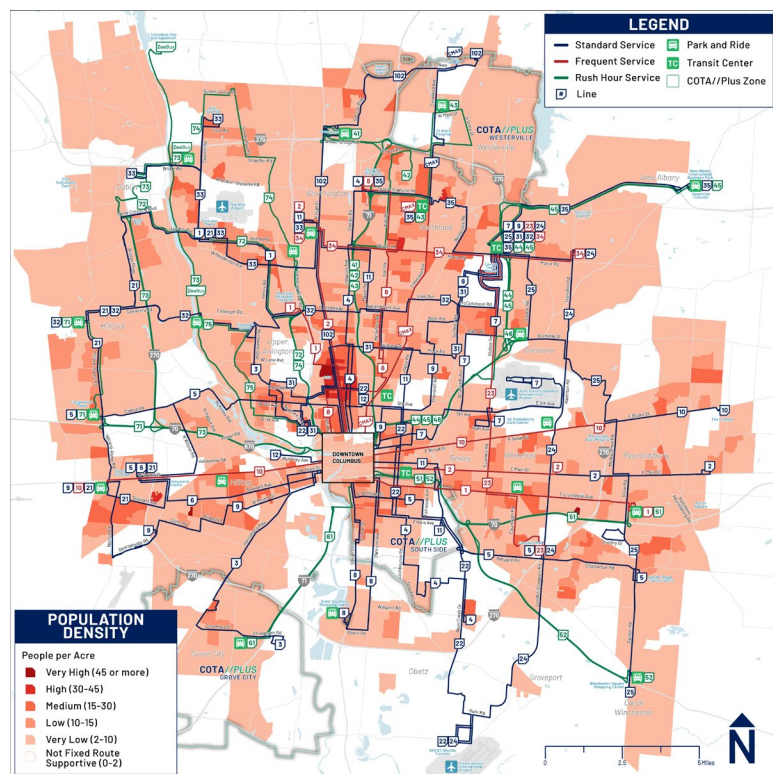


Figure 13 Population Density of COTA Service Area

EMPLOYMENT

Employment density was assessed in terms of jobs per acre, with at least 2 or more jobs per acre considered the minimum to support public transit service.

Areas with high employment density tend to be located near large urban centers, main corridors, large office parks, or key employers. Most jobs are concentrated around the urban core of Downtown Columbus. However, there are also several distinct employment clusters throughout the region, including:

- Easton Town Center
- Polaris Town Center
- OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital and surrounding medical district
- Dublin Office Park
- OhioHealth Doctors Hospital

COMPOSITE DEMAND

To better assess potential transit demand, the study team combined measures of population (2023), employment (2022), and adjusted demographic factors, including zero-car household rates, low-income households, and minority status, and also used the findings of COTA's 2023 on-board survey to produce the Composite Demand index. The Composite Demand index identifies areas with the highest potential demand for transit service and can serve as a guide for identifying

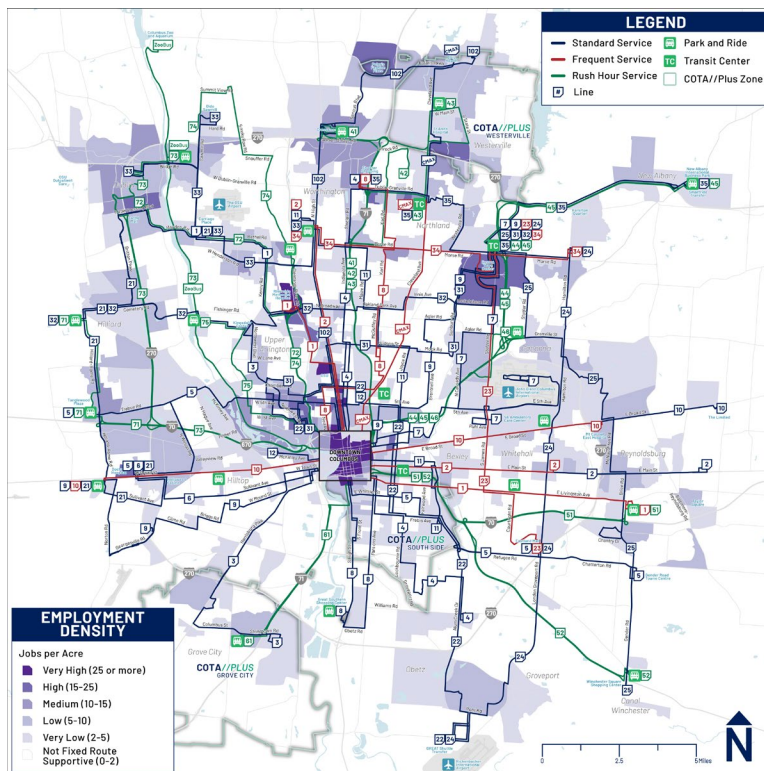


Figure 14 Employment Density of COTA Service Area

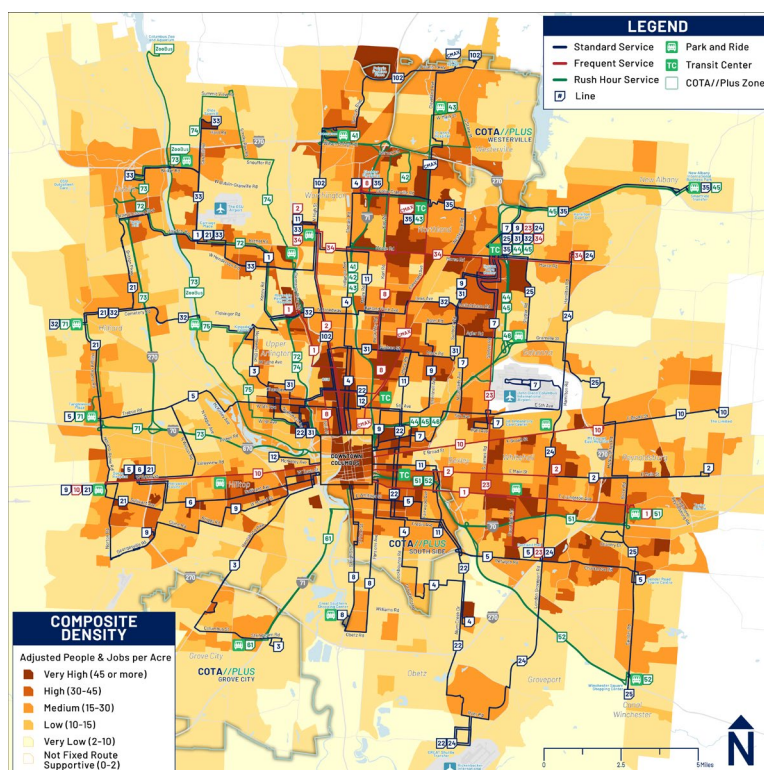


Figure 15 Composite Transit Demand of COTA Service Area

priority areas for future transit investments.

The following areas have been identified as areas with the potential for strong transit demand, based on residential and employment densities and demographic analysis:

- **Downtown Columbus & The Ohio State University**
- **Northland**
- **OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital**
- **Whitehall**
- **Central Hilltop**
- **Polaris**

TRAVEL FLOWS

Location based service data from Fall 2024 suggests that travel demand patterns are relatively consistent across the different time periods, with most trips concentrated in areas with higher population and employment density. Downtown Columbus and The Ohio State University and surrounding neighborhoods see high concentrations of trip origins and destinations throughout the different time periods.

The data also indicates strongest demand during the Saturday midday period followed by the weekday midday period, with the weekday AM period seeing the lowest total number of trips starting and ending in the study area. This emphasizes the importance of providing transit service outside of traditional “peak commute” hours to best serve potential riders.

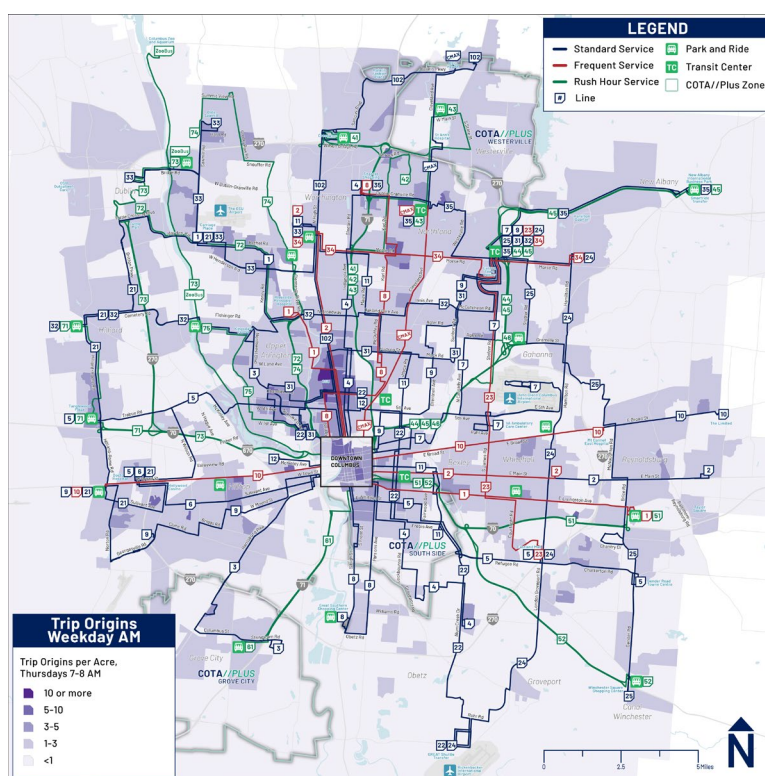


Figure 16 Weekday AM Trip Origins

Summary of Findings – Service Analysis

Evaluating ridership performance, on-time performance, and route alignments and connections can reveal opportunities for service improvements. The following is a summary of key takeaways from the Service Analysis.

To view a detailed interactive display of the Service Analysis, visit COTA's project website at COTA.com/SRTP.

SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS: COMPOSITE DEMAND VS TRANSIT SUPPLY

Currently, the COTA fixed-route network and its distribution of frequency appropriately meet high demand areas.

- Frequent Lines 1, 2, 10, and CMAX provide high quality transit service along the high demand corridors N High Street, Livingston Avenue, Main Street, Cleveland Avenue, and Broad Street.
- The high demand Easton area is served by high-quality transit.
- Frequent Line 1 serves high density areas out to Carriage Place, but analysis suggests service demand extends further out in Dublin.
- There is unmet demand for transit along Busch Boulevard, Shrock Road, and near Northland Transit Center in north Columbus.

FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

- **Duplicative Alignments** - In Franklinton, Lines 6, 9, and 10 all serve the area, but ridership patterns show passengers choose to walk to Broad Street to access Line 10. The Lines serve three parallel corridors (Broad Street, Town Street, and Sullivant Avenue) within less than a quarter mile of each other.
- **Ridership Recovery from COVID** - Across most Standard and Frequent Lines, annual ridership has slowly recovered since the pandemic began. On average, annual ridership on these Lines in 2024 is about 68% of annual ridership in 2019. Standard Lines 6, 7, and 32 have current day ridership under 50% of pre-pandemic ridership. Standard Lines 21, 22, 24, and 33 have recovered at least 85% of their pre-pandemic ridership. Among Frequent Lines, Line 10 has the slowest recovery (55% of pre-pandemic levels), and Line 34 has the best recovery (73% of pre-pandemic levels). Rush Hour lines have only recovered about 14% of their pre-pandemic ridership while operating about 25% of the number of pre-pandemic trips.
- **Short Lines** - Lines 6, 12, 33 have high ridership efficiency (passengers per vehicle revenue hour, passengers per vehicle revenue mile, and operating cost per passenger), but low total ridership. Lines 6 and 12 also have the highest on-time performance in the system.
- **On-Time Performance (May to September 2025)** - On Weekdays, Standard and Frequent Lines both have an on-time performance of about 74%. CMAX has an on-time

performance of 69%, falling below average. Rush Hour Lines have an average on-time performance of 69%.

- **Circuitous Alignments** - Most Frequent and Standard Lines with high ridership offer direct, streamlined service on one or two corridors. However, Lines 4, 11, 21, 22, and 31 have circuitous alignments designed to serve key destinations but can be detrimental to productivity and cause confusion for riders.
- **Branching Patterns** - Most Lines have a single pattern or two patterns (e.g. Line 1, 2, 8, and 10) where one pattern terminates as short turn along the alignment. However, Lines 5, 7, and 33 have branching patterns provide more coverage in less-dense areas, and with lower frequency.
- **John Glenn Columbus International Airport (CMH)** has low frequency and ridership on Line 7. Airport employees may benefit from late night / early morning service.
- **Rickenbacker International Airport (LCK)** area has high ridership via Lines 22 and 24 but lacks connections to downtown.
- **Crosstown Service** - Crosstown Lines have the lowest ridership productivity within their Line categories. This includes Frequent Lines 23 and 34, and Standard Lines 11, 21, 25, and 32. These Lines connect various high-ridership Park and Rides and shopping centers but have low frequency, limiting ridership potential.

ON-DEMAND SERVICE

- **The South Side zone** has the highest ridership but is duplicative with fixed-route transit. Except for a few high schools, ridership in the zone and in fixed-route generally exists at the same nodes.
- **The Westerville zone** has the lowest ridership, and a significant number of drop-offs are concentrated along State Street, which may indicate an opportunity for future fixed route service.
- **The Grove City zone** has the second-most ridership among the three zones, and its destinations primarily consist of schools and shopping centers. While Line 3 serves most of the shopping centers, it does not provide local circulation.

Appendix 1: Service Standards and Design

Overview

COTA's *Service Guidelines and Design Standards* document provides guidance on the design, implementation and evaluation of their services. It aims to codify good planning and operational practices and to provide an objective basis for evaluating existing services and planning new services. In practice, this document serves several purposes:

- To support the regular evaluation of existing services by setting minimum guidelines for several metrics of transit service, such as span and frequency of service and passengers served per revenue hour;
- To inform the planning and design of new services and recommendations for changes to existing services that would maximize service productivity;
- To serve as a compass for both staff and decision-makers who often may be caught up in reactive responses to external factors; and
- To inform decision-makers, who may not have a background in the transit industry, about good transit practices.

COTA's Transit System Redesign (TSR) bus network was developed in 2017 through public inputs and based on the concept of allocating resources between two service goals: efficient, high-ridership service and lower ridership coverage service that serves essential locations such as employment centers. These service design and monitoring standards were first developed to support the underlying principles of the TSR network and have been refined and updated through each subsequent 5-year Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP).

As part of the 2027-2031 SRTP, COTA's *Service Guidelines and Design Standards* were updated significantly to streamline the document and to reflect the latest industry best practices, changes to service categories, and recent service findings and performance. The goal was to create a document that is more usable internally to implement clear and consistent design and evaluation practices as well as more accessible externally for decision-makers and the community to understand the processes by which COTA strives to meet varied and evolving customer needs.

The service and design standards in this document should generally not be understood as strict rules, but as guidelines. They are intended to provide flexibility to respond to diverse community expectations and customer needs, within reason. Finally, this document acknowledges that the ability to adhere to these guidelines is contingent upon the availability of resources. COTA should aim to meet these guidelines as closely as possible using available resources and prioritize investments as necessary.

Transit Service Policies

The purpose of transit service design guidelines is to provide service that best matches the market (i.e. needs of potential transit riders). This section outlines the policies by which COTA determines where to provide transit and what type of service to provide – this includes how to determine transit demand, options for allocating service by area, and the categorization of service types. It also details the key principles that guide the design of COTA’s service.

Service Purpose and Allocation

Service coverage standards guide the development of new services and modification of existing services. **COTA’s standard for service coverage is that 50% of total population and 60% of total jobs in COTA’s taxing service area will be within ¼-mile of fixed-route service or within a COTA/Plus zone.** As part of the 2027-2031 SRTP update, a new coverage standard of serving 50% of low-income populations (defined as population below 150% of the poverty line) in COTA’s taxing service area was introduced. The job standard is higher than the population standard because job density tends to be more concentrated than population density. As of 2025, COTA’s network provided access to 777k people and 576k jobs, which accounted for 55% and 67% respectively of the 1.401 million people and 866k jobs within the taxing service area at the time, thereby exceeding the coverage standards. The 2025 network also exceeded the low-income coverage standard, providing access to 264k low-income people, accounting for 65% of the 409k low-income people within the service area.

Transit services should be updated periodically as development patterns change throughout the region to ensure that service provided best matches the underlying transit demand. The production of the SRTP creates a regular interval to assess services against demand. Transit demand can be measured using population and employment density, as well as land use and development factors. Figure 17 provides guidelines on appropriate types of transit service

Figure 17 Land Use and Transit Service Levels

LAND USE			TRANSIT	
Land Use Type	Residents per Acre	Jobs per Acre	Appropriate Types of Transit	Frequency of Service
 Downtowns & High Density Corridors	>45	>25	High Capacity Transit, Rapid Bus, Local Bus	10 mins or better
 Urban Mixed-Use	30-45	15-25	High Capacity Transit, Rapid Bus, Local Bus	10-15 minutes
 Neighborhood & Suburban Mixed-Use	15-30	10-15	Local Bus	15-30 minutes
 Mixed Neighborhoods	10-15	5-10	Local Bus, Micro-transit	30-60 minutes
 Low Density	2-10	2-5	Micro-transit, Rideshare, Volunteer Driver Pgm	60 mins or less or On Demand
 Rural	<2	<2	Rideshare, Volunteer Driver Pgm	On Demand

based on demographic and land use characteristics of an area. The market analysis conducted as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP used adjusted population and employment data to assess the need for different levels of transit service across COTA's service areas. These land use types are compared to level of service in Chapter 4 of this document.

COTA broadly aligns its services with identified land use patterns, and utilizes the appropriate mode based upon the surrounding community characteristics.

Service Categories

COTA classifies its routes largely based on frequency and span of service. The Frequent, Standard, and Rush Hour route categories have been employed since the 2017 Transit System Redesign (TSR) and are familiar to riders. COTA/Plus microtransit services were introduced in 2019 and have been added to the service categories as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP. The specific routes and services included in each category at the time of the 2027-2031 SRTP are presented in Appendix A. An explanation of each category is below.

- **BRT Routes:** Operate every 15 or better minutes most of the day, seven days a week. Serve all stations along alignment, connecting areas of regional importance. Operates primarily in dedicated right-of-way and includes a variety of transit priority measures, including transit signal prioritization and increased stop spacing, to reduce travel times.
- **Frequent Routes:** Operate every 15 minutes or better most of the day, seven days a week, connecting downtown Columbus to surrounding communities or connecting communities to each other.
- **Standard Routes (30-Minute):** Operate every 30 minutes most of the day, seven days a week. Serve all stops along alignment, connecting downtown Columbus to surrounding communities or connecting communities to each other.
- **Standard Routes (60-Minute):** Operate every 60 minutes most of the day, seven days a week. Serve all stops along alignment, connecting downtown Columbus to surrounding communities or connecting communities to each other.
- **Rush Hour Routes:** Operate during select times, usually during the AM and PM peak travel periods during weekdays only. Serve limited stops with closed-door service (no stopping) between two areas, primarily between suburban areas and downtown Columbus. Express service that travels to Downtown in the AM and from Downtown in the PM is considered "commute service", while service that operates in the opposite direction is "reverse commute".
- **Special Services:** Operate during select times, usually with limited frequency, and not centered around AM and PM peak travel periods. Serve limited stops with closed-door service to connect regional geographic destinations. Service characteristics are tailored to the specific purpose of travel.
- **COTA/Plus Microtransit Services:** Operate within specified geographic zones and provides first/last mile connections to fixed-route service. Can also address connectivity

gaps in the network where fixed route services are infeasible. On-demand services that are typically corner-to-corner or based around designated “nodes”.

Aside from the route categories above, Frequent and Standard routes are also further divided into sub-categories based upon route functions. This is a change that was introduced as part of the 2027-2031 S RTP to reflect the important role of crosstown routes, despite their lower productivity on average, particularly on weekdays.

- **Radial Routes:** connect outer regions of the Columbus area into downtown Columbus.
- **Crosstown Routes:** connect outer regions of the Columbus area without providing direct service into downtown Columbus.

A discussion of determining which category a service falls into is found below and is summarized in Figure 18.

COTA designs service so that at least 70% of annual operating hours are spent on BRT, Frequent, and Standard (30-Minute) Routes. These routes, due to the dense operating environment, tend to be routes that provide the greatest benefit for most riders, and allotting a minimum threshold of 70% of agency resources for these services will ensure access for the majority of COTA riders. 20% of COTA’s resources are prioritized for Standard (60-Minute) Routes, and Rush Hour Routes. These services, operated in lower-density environments, tend to have lower ridership and are less vital for the majority of passengers. However, these services are often lifeline services for passengers who use them, and these services often provide access in locations with limited options. The remaining 10% of COTA’s resources are allocated to COTA//Plus as these services often tend to operate in lower-density environments with far fewer riders. In addition, COTA//Plus costs increase as ridership grows, and providing an operational cap will ensure COTA works to constrain cost on this premium service.

Figure 18 Purpose by Service Type

SERVICE TYPE	ALL-DAY FREQUENCY	APPROXIMATE SHARE OF AGENCY RESOURCES
BRT	<= 15 min	70%
Frequent	<= 15 min	
Standard (30-minute)	30 min	
Standard (60-minute)	60 min	20%
Rush Hour (Express)	Minimum of 2 Peak Trips Only	
COTA//Plus Microtransit	N/A (On Demand)	10%

Service Level Standards and Guidelines

Service level standards set **required minimum service levels** for each service category. They facilitate a consistent and coordinated network by setting uniform expectations for how much transit service to provide. In practice, these standards serve as guidelines, i.e. recommendations rather than requirements, for the level of service that should be provided for each service category. They can be used to help guide and prioritize investment in services.

Moreover, service level standards work in harmony with performance evaluation measures (Chapter 5) to create a framework for providing productive and efficient transit service. This framework can help COTA justify adjustments to existing services. For example, investments in span and frequency may be prioritized on routes with higher productivity (boardings per hour) or high passenger loads; conversely, service levels may be reduced on routes that do not meet service productivity standards.

This section sets standards for two metrics:

1. **Span of Service:** Sets service start and end times.
2. **Service Frequency:** Recommends how often transit service is operated.

All existing COTA services were evaluated against the updated service level standards and guidelines as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP. Results are summarized in Appendix B.

Span of Service

The span of service is the length of time that transit operates. Standards that set service start and end times ensure that transit is available when customers need it and that the network can offer connections and transfers between routes. COTA's guidelines for span of service are summarized in Figure 19.

Figure 19 Span Guidelines by Service Category

	BRT	Frequent Local & Crosstown	Standard Local & Crosstown (30-minute)	Standard (60-minute)	Rush Hour (Express)	Microtransit
Weekdays	5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	6:00-8:30 AM, 4:00-6:00 PM	5:00 AM to 9:00 PM
Saturday	5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	6:00 AM to 12:00 AM	6:00 AM to 12:00 AM	6:00 AM to 12:00 AM	N/A	Optional; 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM
Sunday	5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	6:00 AM to 10:00 PM	6:00 AM to 10:00 PM	6:00 AM to 10:00 PM	N/A	Optional; 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM

These hours are targeted minimums by service category. An additional requirement is that the last trip of crosstown routes in each direction is later than the last local trip that connects with it in order to facilitate late night transfers. Due to differences in demand and funding limitations, some variation in the start/end times among routes are expected. Some routes may operate shorter hours if demand is very low or if resources are limited; conversely, some routes may operate longer hours if there is an identified need outside the minimum service hours. Only weekday service is required on microtransit – however, when weekend service is provided, it should ideally match the standards presented. For Special Services, span should be defined based on the specific market being served.

COTA has goals for span of service beyond the minimum standards including:

- Implement the 24-hour network
- Expanding microtransit service to complement fixed-route service and, where appropriate and feasible, operate during similar service spans.

Frequency of Service

The frequency of service refers to the amount of time between buses, or how often a bus serves a particular transit stop. Service frequency has a major influence on ridership, as more frequent service is generally more attractive and convenient to riders. However, frequency is also a major driver of operating costs. Transit providers often need to be strategic about where and when to invest in frequent service such that it will serve a higher ridership.

Service frequencies can vary by service category as well as time of day. The 2027-2031 SRTP introduced service periods to reflect changes in demand by day of week and time of day and to better coordinate service across the system.

Like the span standards, these frequencies are the targeted minimum by service category and time period. Some variation is expected by route based on demand and resource availability. The microtransit standards refer to the average wait time for people accessing the service. COTA's standards for frequency of service by time period are summarized in Figure 20.

Figure 20 Frequency Standards by Service Category and Time Period

	Time Period	BRT	Frequent Local & Crosstown	Standard (30-minute)	Standard Crosstown (30-minute)	Standard (60-minute)	Rush Hour (Express)	Micro-transit *
Weekdays								
<i>Early AM</i>	5 AM – 6 AM	15	15	30	30	60	-	30
<i>AM Peak</i>	6 AM – 9 AM	10	15	30	30	60	2 trips	30
<i>Midday</i>	9 AM – 3 PM	10	15	30	30	60	-	30
<i>PM Peak</i>	3 PM – 6 PM	10	15	30	30	60	2 trips	30
<i>Evening</i>	6 PM – 9 PM	15	15	30	30	60	-	30
<i>Night</i>	9 PM – 12 AM	20	30	60	60	60	-	-
<i>Late Night**</i>	12 AM – 5 AM	60	60	60	60	60	-	-
Saturday								
<i>Morning</i>	5 AM (BRT)/6 AM – 9 AM	15	20	30	60	60	-	30 [‡]
<i>Daytime</i>	9 AM – 6 PM	10	20	30	60	60	-	30 [‡]
<i>Evening</i>	6 PM – 9 PM	15	20	30	60	60	-	30 [‡]

<i>Night</i>	9 PM – 12 AM	20	30	60	60	60	-	-
<i>Late Night**</i>	11 PM – 6 AM	60	60	60	60	60	-	-
Sunday								
<i>All Day</i>	5 AM (BRT)/6 AM – 6 PM	15	20	30	60	60	-	30 [‡]
<i>Evening</i>	6 PM – 9 PM	20	20	30	60	60	-	30 [‡]
<i>Night</i>	9 PM – 12 AM	20	20	30	60	60	-	-
<i>Late Night**</i>	12 AM – 5 AM (BRT)/6 AM	60	60	60	60	60	-	-

*Microtransit standards refer to average wait times by time period.

**Late Night service is currently not required based on span standards. When it is provided, however, it should run at the frequencies presented.

[‡]Microtransit is optional on weekends. When it is provided the standard refers to average wait times by time period.

Performance Evaluation Measures and Service Monitoring

Route-level performance measures are designed to ensure the productivity of individual bus routes matches the level of investment in that route. Setting performance measures provides a benchmark for evaluating individual services and determining if changes are warranted, as well as guiding investment in individual bus routes to help match transit service and demand. For example, additional investment may be warranted in a route that exceeds their performance measures. In another case, service may be reduced or changed for a service that does not meet their performance measures.

Performance measures capture the critical aspects of service: productivity, efficiency, and reliability and are set individually for each of the service types as their underlying markets and purposes can be different. These performance measures can be easily reproduced and communicated.

All existing COTA services were evaluated against the updated performance evaluation measures as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP. Results are summarized in Appendix B.

Service Productivity

The productivity of a bus route is primarily measured in two ways:

- **Boardings per revenue hour:** The number of boardings divided by the total number of hours the vehicles on a route are in revenue service.
- **Boardings per revenue trip:** the number of boardings divided by the number of trips a route makes during the day.

COTA uses the boardings per revenue hour measure to set standards for service productivity. The standards vary by service category and by day of week. Frequent and Standard routes that serve as crosstown connections rather than radial connections to downtown Columbus will also be evaluated using a separate standard – this is a change that was introduced as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP to reflect the important role of crosstown routes, despite their lower productivity on average.

The productivity standards seen in Figure 21 should be considered as minimum goals. COTA should review lines for potential changes if productivity falls below the minimum standard for its category and time period. Special attention should be paid to reviewing lines that perform 33% above or below their standard.

Figure 21 Productivity Standards by Service Category

	Frequent	Standard (30-minute)	Standard (60-minute)	Rush Hour (Express)	Microtransit
Radial					
Weekdays	25/hour	16/hour	12/hour	5/trip	2/hour
Saturday	20/hour	12/hour	8/hour	-	-
Sunday	18/hour	10/hour	6/hour	-	-
Crosstown					
Weekdays	22/hour	14/hour	10/hour	-	-
Saturday	20/hour	12/hour	8/hour	-	-
Sunday	18/hour	10/hour	6/hour	-	-

Vehicle Loads

Vehicle loads refer to the number of riders on the bus relative to the seating capacity of the vehicle. The standard is meant to capture the time or portion of the route when the greatest number of riders are simultaneously on the vehicle. The intent of load standards is to align passenger comfort and safety with service design. These standards define maximum passenger loads at different times of day to ensure acceptable levels of rider comfort and safety, while providing COTA good operating efficiencies.

COTA's standards for frequency of service are summarized in Figure 22. Unlike other measures, vehicle load standards are maximum values expressed as a percentage. For example, a standard of 100% means every passenger should have a seat; a standard of 120% means most passengers should have a seat, but some standing passengers are okay.

To evaluate a fixed-route's vehicle load, the load of a bus is calculated using the average ridership and number of seats per bus over a 60-minute period, at the point when and where ridership is highest and in the direction of travel with more activity. COTA compiles this information through automatic passenger counters. Passenger loading on individual trips may exceed the standard. However, if a route consistently exceeds standards over a sustained 60-minute period, schedule adjustments should be made to better serve times and directions of highest demand, or additional capacity (more or larger buses) should be added to the route.

The vehicle load standard should be reviewed on a trip by trip basis. Vehicle load standards are maximums. If a trip or group of trips is above the vehicle load standard for its category, COTA should consider changes such as adding trips to the line.

Figure 22 Vehicle Load Standards by Service Category and Time Period

	Frequent	Standard (30-minute)	Standard (60-minute)	Rush Hour (Express)	Microtransit
Peak	120%	120%	120%	100%	100%
Off-Peak, Saturdays and Sundays	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Service Quality and Reliability

COTA evaluates its service quality and reliability primarily using two measures:

- **On-time performance:** The proportion of trip timepoints that arrive on time.
- **Missed trips:** The number of scheduled trips that are not provided.

COTA currently aims for 81% of their services to be considered on time. On-time is defined by a bus arriving at its scheduled timepoint within a range of one minute early to five minutes late of the scheduled arrival time. Microtransit services are considered on-time if a vehicle arrives within 3 minutes of the scheduled pick-up time, with an average 30-minute wait time from the request time.

COTA, like all transit agencies, misses scheduled trips due to a shortage of drivers, mechanical problems, or traffic congestion. The percentage of trips operated is defined as the ratio of trips actually operated divided by the scheduled number of trips. The annual objective shall be to operate a minimum of 99% of scheduled trips.

The On-Time performance standard is a minimum standard. If a line performs below the 75% on-time performance standard, COTA should adjust scheduled travel times and/or investigate routing or corridor improvements which might improve on-time performance. Additional data analysis may be required.

The Missed Trips standard is a minimum standard. If COTA fails to operate a minimum of 99% of trips, staff should consider service reductions to more realistically match vehicle and employee resources. COTA leadership should be notified as cross-agency collaboration may be needed to return reliability to the 99% minimum goal.

Design Standards for Implementing New Service and Modifying Existing Service

Design standards guide COTA when implementing new services or modifying current service in response to public requests and changes in land-use, employment, and operations. The goal of this chapter is to provide a systematic process to answer the simple question, “Should this proposed change in service be implemented?”

The results are recommendations to aid decision makers in determining if a proposal should be implemented. Two primary steps are taken when considering proposed changes to fixed-route bus service. While COTA may consider other factors and take additional steps, these two form the foundation of examining proposed changes.

- **Designing service:** This includes a proposed alignment, frequency, span of service, and cost.
- **Analyzing Title VI and Environmental Justice impacts:** Ensure the change in service does not discriminate against special populations.

Service Design Principles

COTA provides two basic modes of service: fixed route bus and microtransit (COTA//Plus). When considering changes to existing services or creating a new service, the following design principles apply to the design of these services.

ALL SERVICES

COTA’s delivery of transit services adheres to the following principles across all modes.

Services should connect transit-supportive land uses.

Generally, higher densities of residents and jobs are more supportive of transit service. Planners should also consider major destinations like universities and large shopping centers. When possible, remember to consider planned developments in this analysis.

Service planning should prioritize equity.

Populations of vulnerable demographics like zero car households and low income households should be prioritized for transit service, and are more likely to ride transit service. Sensitive land uses like social services, senior living centers, and essential services like grocery stores should be considered in route planning. At a minimum, COTA must follow Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and ensure changes do not disproportionately cause negative impacts on low income or minority areas).

Service should serve many types of trips.

Public transit tends to generate higher ridership when it serves many types of trip purposes and destinations. Lines with overly specific purposes may fail to generate ridership. For example,

designing a line to the airport specifically for trips made by convention visitors may generate fewer riders than a line designed for trips made by convention visitors *and* airport workers.

Plan service with pedestrians first.

When possible, COTA should align routes to make stops in areas with sidewalks, crossings, and other pedestrian amenities. Walksheds should also be considered. Areas with more connected street patterns have larger walksheds than areas with disconnected streets and cul-de-sacs. Unfortunately, many areas of our community lack sidewalks or a connected street grid. If a transit service operates in an area that lacks pedestrian amenities, COTA should work with local governments and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) committee to prioritize future capital investment in pedestrian amenities.

Routes are driven by bus operators.

Where possible, layover locations should be safe, well-lit, and have access to restrooms for bus operators. Routes should consider where operator shift changes will occur. Route design should consider impacts on layover time, cycle time, deadhead, and possible need for split shifts.

FIXED ROUTE BUS

COTA provides fixed route bus service, which is defined by primarily 40' buses operating at scheduled intervals along pre-defined routes. When designing fixed route services, COTA adheres to the following principles.

Routes Should Operate Along a Direct Path.

Routes should be designed to operate as directly as possible to keep travel time lower while maintaining access to key destinations. The fewer turns a route makes, the easier it is for riders to understand. Conversely, circuitous paths are disorienting and difficult to remember, which can impact the reliability of the route. Direct routes also maximize average speed for the bus and minimize travel time for passengers while maintaining access to service. Major Transit Routes Should Operate Along Arterials.

Potential transit users have at least a basic knowledge of the region's arterial road system and use that knowledge as points of reference. The operation of bus service along arterials therefore makes transit service easier to figure out and to use. It also makes service faster.

Routes Should Operate to and from Strong Anchors.

The ideal start and end of a route should be at a transit center or activity center. When not feasible, COTA starts and ends routes at terminals with layover for buses or a key destination that can provide strong ridership to "anchor" the route, such as grocery stores. When this kind of location does not exist, the end of line should be selected based on safety and security, restroom availability for operators and the potential impacts on adjacent land uses.

Route Deviations Should be Minimized.

As described above, service should be as direct as possible. Consistent with this idea, the use of route deviations—traveling off the most direct route—should be minimized.

There are instances when deviating service from the most direct route is appropriate, such as avoiding a bottleneck or providing service to major shopping centers, employment sites, medical centers, schools, etc. In these cases, the benefits of deviating service from the main route must be weighed against the inconvenience caused to passengers already on board. Route deviations should be implemented only if:

- Overall route productivity (in terms of the number of people served per revenue vehicle hour) would be equal to or better than without the deviation.
- The amount of time saved for people using the deviation would be equal to or greater than the additional time for other passengers. Deviations in the middle of the route are likely more disruptive to more passengers than those at the end of the route.
- The deviation would not interfere with the provision of regular service frequencies and/or the provision of coordinated service with other routes operating in the same corridor.
- Pedestrian access to a large trip generator is unsafe due to a lack of infrastructure, or inaccessible due to a disconnected street pattern.

In most cases, where route deviations are provided, they should operate for the entire service period. Exceptions are during times when the sites that the route deviations serve have no activity—for example, route deviations to shopping centers do not need to serve those locations early in the morning before employees start commuting to work.

Routes Should Follow the Same Path in Both Directions.

Routes should operate along the same alignment in both directions to make it easy for riders to know how to return to their trip origin location. For example, if a route follows Broad Street into downtown Columbus, it should use Broad Street on its outbound trip. Exceptions can be made in cases where such operation is not possible due to one-way streets or turn restrictions. In those cases, routes should be designed so that the opposite direction alignments run parallel as closely as possible.

Routes Should have Consistent & Predictable Schedules.

People can easily remember repeating patterns. For this reason, to the greatest extent possible, COTA schedules services to operate at regular headways – for example, every 15, 30, or 60 minutes. Limited exceptions can be made for more frequent services (ex. every 7-8 minutes) or in cases where demand spikes during a short period to eliminate or reduce crowding on individual trips.

COTA also strives to make services more predictable and reliable for riders through evaluating on-time performance and adjusting schedules as needed. Stop spacing can also affect bus speeds and reliability – COTA's stop spacing guidelines are presented in Chapter 6 of this document.

Minimize branching and short turns.

For efficiency reasons, agencies may opt to use short turn or branching patterns to operate high frequency service along busy parts of a transit line and reduced trip frequency along portions of the line that travel through areas with less ridership demand. Short turns are midpoints along a transit line where some trips end and turn back. Branching patterns consist of midpoints along a transit line where transit trips diverge to take separate branching routes. Both approaches create a higher frequency trunk route with lower frequency service after the branch or short turn.

Branches and short turns add complexity to transit lines which may confuse riders. For this reason, the use of these techniques should be minimized. As a general rule, COTA avoids adding more than one short turn or one set of branching patterns per line.

Frequency and Coverage are a trade-off.

Coverage and frequency are a trade-off. The same length of route will cost more to operate at higher frequency. A long route may be desirable because it covers more parts of the community. A frequent route may be desirable because it provides more trip time options. In an environment of fixed resources, planners may opt to design a longer route at lower frequency, or a shorter route at high frequency, but not both at once without increasing operating cost.

COTA//PLUS MICROTRANSIT

Microtransit differs from fixed route services by utilizing smaller vehicles to provide on-demand curb-to-curb trips for passengers within defined zones across COTA's service area. As a rule, microtransit service does not scale like fixed route services, meaning it is vital to follow clear principles to avoid unproductive, expensive service. When designing new COTA//Plus zones, COTA follows the following design principles.

Zones should minimize travel time.

Larger microtransit zones require greater resources to operate due to longer trip lengths. By designing zones to limit travel time, zones will require fewer resources and be able to provide more trips to more passengers.

Zones should incentivize shared trips between passengers.

Due to the individualized nature of microtransit service, most trips are provided to single passengers, which ultimately contributes to microtransit's increased operational costs. Zone design that focuses on providing trips to multiple passengers simultaneously will be more operationally sustainable in the long-term.

Zones should have a clearly-identified purpose.

Microtransit is a malleable tool that can address a variety of mobility issues, including improving first-/last-mile connectivity, enhancing access for seniors, and providing connectivity across geographic barriers that may limit fixed route services. However, microtransit service carries a disproportionately higher cost per passenger than fixed route services that only increases as ridership grows. Identifying the purpose of a microtransit service, and selecting corresponding

key performance indicators related to that purpose is integral in ensuring microtransit operational costs do not exceed resources.

Zones should augment the fixed route network, not replace it.

Microtransit service can provide connections in areas where fixed route service may not be feasible like low density areas or areas where the pedestrian infrastructure is lacking, but conversely, where feasible, fixed route services tend to more effectively serve communities than microtransit. Because microtransit services provide a more individualized experience, passengers will often select microtransit over fixed route when both are made available. However, microtransit service cost increases for each new passenger while fixed route does not. Therefore, to maximize efficiency and operational resources, microtransit zones should be designed to complement and augment fixed route services, not compete with them. When feasible, micro transit zones should enable transfers to fixed routes in order to access the broader service area.

Service Change Process Overview

COTA implements three service changes each year on the first Mondays of January, May, and September. Service changes may include modifications to frequency, schedule times, trip times, routing, and stop locations. For each service change, two rounds of public meetings are held: public comment meetings to present proposed changes and receive public feedback, and informational meetings to share the final changes. Service changes are vital to improving transit service for customers.

1. Gather Inputs (ongoing)

- a. Review data such as ridership, transit line performance, and travel patterns.
- b. Continuously collect external stakeholder and public feedback, including records of comments and questions submitted to the Customer Care Center.
- c. Continuously collect internal feedback from frontline employees like bus operators.
- d. Assess local and regional plans and development activities.
- e. Incorporate Short Range Transit Plan recommendations.
- f. Ensure adherence to Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements.
- g. Confirm labor and resource availability.

2. Plan and Design Changes

- a. Develop proposed service design changes.
- b. Prioritize service based on need and feasibility.
- c. Estimate required resources (operators, vehicles, service hours).
- d. Coordinate with internal and external partners.

- e. Conduct Title VI Equity Analysis for proposed changes.

3. Public Meetings and Communication

- a. COTA hosts a minimum of 2 public comment meetings where feedback on proposed changes is solicited. These meetings are typically held during the first two weeks of the current service change.
- b. Proposals are adjusted based on public feedback, and final changes are selected by the end of the first month of the current service change to align with operator sign-up.
- c. COTA holds 2 public information meetings where we present final changes that will take place in the next service change.
- d. COTA Marketing communicates changes to riders and the public. Communication methods may include updates on COTA.com, social media, print or audio announcements on buses, and bulletins placed at impacted bus stops

4. Implement Changes

- a. The Planning Department recommends a final list of proposed service changes 2-4 weeks following the first set of public comment meetings. This gives COTA staff time to implement the changes leading up to the new trimester. Key internal implementation steps include:
 - The Scheduling Department creates operator work schedules.
 - Operator work schedule sign-up takes place in the 2nd month of the current trimester.
 - i. If needed, bus stops or other improvements are made leading up to the service change.
 - ii. Internal communication of service changes to COTA staff.
 - iii. External communication and marketing of service changes to riders and the public.
 - iv. Changes are implemented on the first Monday of January, May, and September each year.

5. Continuous Monitoring – return to step 1

- a. Monitor service performance continuously.
- b. Collect inputs and feedback for the next service change cycle.

Analyzing Title VI and Environmental Justice Impacts

Once it is determined that there are available resources to implement the proposed service, a Title VI and Environmental Justice impact analysis must occur. As a federally funded and regulated transit provider through the FTA, COTA has a responsibility to adhere to the objectives of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Part of this adherence is analyzing how proposed changes affect minority and low-income communities. This analysis compares effected populations to that of COTA's entire service area. More details can be found below.

If a proposed change is found to not be in compliance with Title VI policy, COTA may decide to modify or not implement the proposed change.

TITLE VI

The objectives of the FTA Title VI program are as follows:

- To ensure FTA-assisted benefits and related services are equitably distributed without regard to race, color or national origin;
- To ensure that both the level and quality of transit services provide equal access and mobility for any person without regard to race, color or national origin;
- To prevent the denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations;
- To ensure that access to the planning and decision-making process is open and provided without regard to race, color or national origin;
- To ensure that decisions on the location of transit facilities and services are made without regard to race, color or national origin; and
- To ensure meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

These objectives are the basis for the implementation of the FTA Title VI program. To comply with these objectives, COTA has adopted the suggested methodology and framework set forth in the Title VI reporting guidelines (FTA Circular 4702.1B) for compliance assessment.

By using this methodology, COTA will monitor and compare performance of all its routes based on level of service and quality of service criteria. To facilitate this evaluation, COTA will continue to collect data relating to its service standards, such as load factor, vehicle assignment, frequency, and on-time performance. These analyses will be conducted on a route-by-route basis each service change period, thus enabling a system-wide evaluation. Where a variance exists, these findings will be used to modify service delivery in order to comply with the Title VI program's stated objectives.

In 2025, COTA submitted a new Title VI triennial report to FTA, which documented the results of this methodology and showed COTA's compliance with the Title VI regulations during years 2022-2025.

Sub Appendix A: Existing Services by Category

This appendix includes a list of all existing COTA services by category (as of June 2026) and the share of revenue vehicle hours by service type.

Figure 23 COTA Services by Service Category

ROUTE NUMBER	ROUTE SHORT NAME	SERVICE CATEGORY
1	Kenny / Livingston	Frequent
2	E Main / N High	Frequent
5	W 5th Ave / Refugee	Frequent
6	Sullivant	Frequent
7	Mt Vernon	Frequent
8	Karl / S High / Parsons	Frequent
10	E Broad / W Broad	Frequent
23	James-Stelzer	Frequent
34	Morse	Frequent
101	CMAx	Frequent
3	Northwest / Harrisburg	Standard (30-minute)
4	Indianola / Lockbourne	Standard (30-minute)
12	McKinley / Fields	Standard (30-minute)
22	OSU-Rickenbacker	Standard (30-minute)
24	Hamilton Rd	Standard (30-minute)
31	Hudson	Standard (30-minute)
33	Henderson	Standard (30-minute)
102	Polaris Pkwy / N High	Standard (30-minute)
9	W Mound / Brentnell	Standard (60-minute)

11	Bryden / Maize	Standard (60-minute)
21	Hilliard Rome	Standard (60-minute)
25	Brice	Standard (60-minute)
32	N Broadway	Standard (60-minute)
35	Dublin-Granville	Standard (60-minute)
41	Crosswoods-Polaris	Rush Hour (Express)
42	Sharon Woods	Rush Hour (Express)
43	Westerville	Rush Hour (Express)
44	Easton	Rush Hour (Express)
45	New Albany	Rush Hour (Express)
46	Gahanna	Rush Hour (Express)
51	Reynoldsburg	Rush Hour (Express)
52	Canal Winchester	Rush Hour (Express)
61	Grove City	Rush Hour (Express)
71	Hilliard	Rush Hour (Express)
72	Tuttle	Rush Hour (Express)
73	Dublin	Rush Hour (Express)
74	Smoky Row	Rush Hour (Express)
75	Arlington / 1st Ave	Rush Hour (Express)
-	Grove City Zone	COTA//Plus Microtransit
-	South Side Zone	COTA//Plus Microtransit
-	Westerville Zone	COTA//Plus Microtransit
141	Columbus Zoo	Special Services
201	Smartridge New Albany – Red*	Other

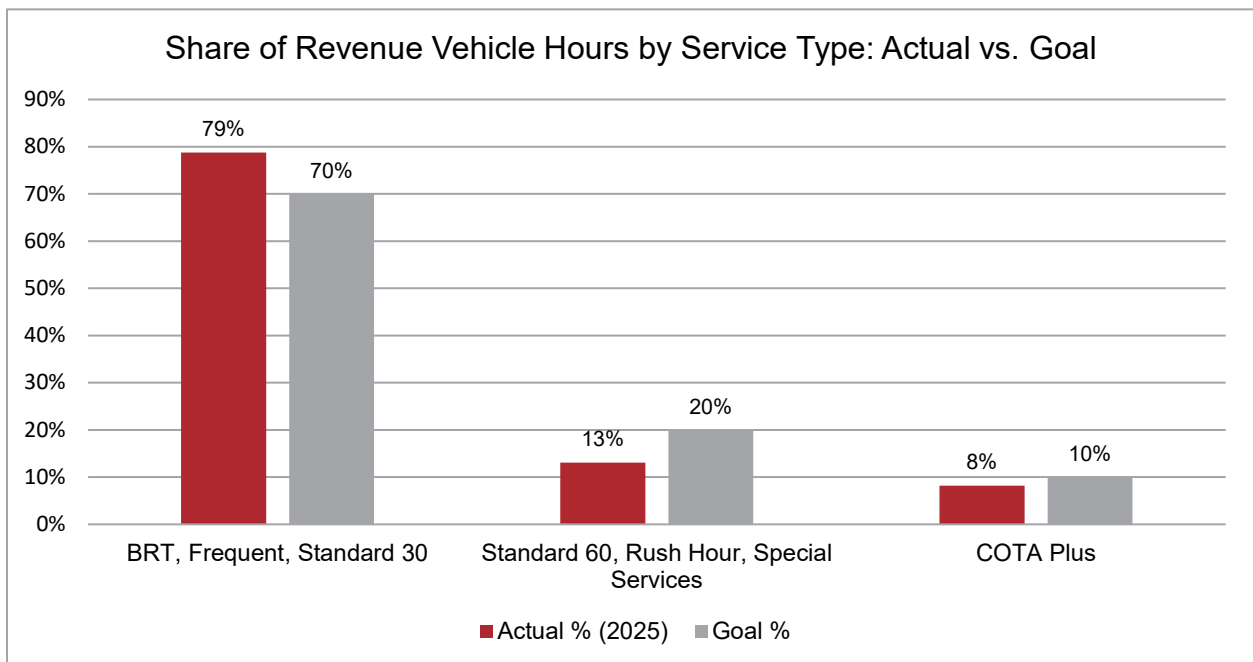
202	Smartride New Albany – Blue*	Other
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*Smartride New Albany services are not operated by COTA.

As of 2025, COTA's allocation of resources by service type aligns well with the goal allocation split. Resources are focused on more frequent routes, with 79% of service hours allocated to Frequent and Standard (30-minute) services, higher than the 70% goal share.

Figure 24 Share of Revenue Vehicle Hours by Service Type

SERVICE TYPE	TOTAL REVENUE VEHICLE HOURS	ACTUAL SHARE OF SERVICE	GOAL SHARE OF SERVICE
BRT, Frequent, Standard 30	928,300	79%	70%
Standard 60, Rush Hour, Special Services	154,300	13%	20%
COTA//Plus Microtransit	96,400	8%	10%



Sub Appendix B: Evaluation of Existing Services

This appendix summarizes the evaluation of COTA's services based on the *Service Guidelines and Design Standards* updated as part of the 2027-2031 SRTP. Service levels and boardings

per revenue hour data is from September 2024. On-time performance data is from May to September 2025. BRT is not evaluated because it is not yet in service.

Frequent Routes

SERVICE LEVELS

Span: Figure 25 indicates whether each frequent route meets span standards by day type.

Figure 25 Frequent Route Span Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Span	Saturday Span	Sunday Span
Standard	5:30 AM – 11:30 PM	6:30 AM – 10:30 PM	6:30 AM – 9:30 PM
1	Y	Y	Y
2	N (last trip at 11:15 PM)	Y	Y
8	N (last trip at 11:15 PM)	Y	N (last trip at 9:00 PM)
10	N' (last trip at 11:15 PM)	Y	Y
23	N (first trip at 5:45 AM)	Y	Y
34	Y	Y	Y
101	Y	Y	Y

Frequency: Frequency standards vary by time period. Figure 26 presents the frequency of each frequent route by time period, as well as whether it meets the standard.

Figure 26 Frequent Route Frequency Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Wkdy Early AM	Wkdy AM Peak	Wkdy Midday	Wkdy PM Peak	Wkdy Evening	Wkdy Late Night	Sat All Day	Sun All Day
Standard	15	15	15	15	30	60	20	30
1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (20)	Y
2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (20+)	Y
8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (20+)	Y
10	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (20+)	Y
23	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (30)	Y
34	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (30)	Y
101	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y

PERFORMANCE

Boardings Per Revenue Hour: Figure 27 indicates whether each frequent route meets the boardings per revenue hour productivity standard. The standard differs for radial vs. crosstown routes.

Figure 27 Frequent Route Productivity Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Sunday Standard?
Radial						
Standard	25	-	20	-	18	-
1	25.5	Y	22.9	Y	19.4	Y
2	28.1	Y	26.9	Y	22.7	Y
8	16.0	N	14.2	N	13.3	N
10	24.8	N	21.9	Y	18.4	Y
CMAX	30.7	Y	15.3	N	13.8	N
Crosstown						
Standard	22	-	20	-	18	-
23	18.9	N	23.6	Y	18.1	Y
34	15.2	N	25.4	Y	18.2	Y

On-Time Performance: Figure 28 indicates whether each frequent route meets the on-time performance service quality standard of 75%. To be considered on-time, buses must arrive between 1 minute early and 5 minutes compared to the scheduled time.

Figure 28 Frequent Route On-Time Performance Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday OTP	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday OTP	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday OTP	Meets Sunday Standard?
Standard	75%	-	75%	-	75%	-
1	74%	N	70%	N	84%	Y
2	73%	N	66%	N	81%	Y
8	75%	Y	68%	N	85%	Y
10	79%	Y	73%	N	77%	Y
23	68%	N	76%	Y	85%	Y
34	76%	Y	79%	Y	80%	Y
101	69%	N	73%	N	78%	Y

Standard (30-Minute) Routes

SERVICE LEVELS

Span: Figure 29 indicates whether each standard 30-minute route meets span standards by day type.

Figure 29 Standard (30-Minute) Route Span Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Span	Saturday Span	Sunday Span
Standard	5:30 AM – 11:30 PM	6:30 AM – 10:30 PM	6:30 AM – 9:30 PM
3	Y	Y	Y
4	Y	Y	N (last trip at 9:15 PM)
5	N (last trip at 11:00 PM)	Y	Y
6	N (first trip at 5:45 AM)	Y	Y
7	Y	Y	Y
12	N (7:00 AM – 9:30 PM)	N (7:00 AM – 9:30 PM)	N (7:00 AM – 9:30 PM)
22	Y	Y	Y
24	Y	Y	Y
31	Y	Y	Y
33	Y	Y	Y
102	Y	Y	Y

Frequency: Frequency standards vary by time period. Figure 30 presents the frequency of each standard (30-minute) route by time period, as well as whether it meets the standard.

Figure 30 Standard (30-Minute) Route Frequency Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Wkdy Early AM	Wkdy AM Peak	Wkdy Midday	Wkdy PM Peak	Wkdy Evening	Wkdy Late Night	Sat All Day	Sun All Day
Standard	30	30	30	30	60	-	30	60
3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (60)	Y
4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (60)	Y
5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
6	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
12	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
22	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
24	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (60)	Y
31	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (60)	Y
33	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
102	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N (60)	Y

PERFORMANCE

Boardings Per Revenue Hour: Figure 31 indicates whether each standard (30-minute) route meets the boardings per revenue hour productivity standard. The standard differs for radial vs. crosstown routes.

Figure 31 Standard (30-Minute) Route Productivity Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Sunday Standard?
Radial						
Standard	16	-	12	-	10	-
3	11.8	N	14.2	Y	11.3	Y
4	13.0	N	11.3	N	9.3	N
5	18.5	Y	13.1	Y	11.6	Y
6	22.3	Y	16.5	Y	14.8	Y
7	11.3	N	11.0	N	9.1	N
12	17.0	Y	9.5	N	9.3	N
102	13.8	N	15.2	Y	12.5	Y
Crosstown						
Standard	14	-	12	-	10	-
22	14.2	Y	9.9	N	8.2	N
24	10.6	N	11.2	N	8.9	N
31	12.7	N	13.4	Y	11.0	Y
33	13.4	N	10.0	N	8.6	N

On-Time Performance: Figure 32 indicates whether each standard (30-minute) route meets the on-time performance service quality standard of 75%. To be considered on-time, buses must arrive between 1 minute early and 5 minutes compared to the scheduled time.

Figure 32 Standard (30-Minute) Route On-Time Performance Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday OTP	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday OTP	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday OTP	Meets Sunday Standard?
Standard	75%	-	75%	-	75%	-
3	72%	N	52%	N	74%	N
4	80%	Y	82%	Y	84%	Y
5	66%	N	64%	N	79%	Y
6	83%	Y	79%	Y	83%	Y
7	76%	Y	77%	Y	79%	Y
12	83%	Y	79%	Y	78%	Y
22	65%	N	74%	N	73%	N
24	73%	N	79%	Y	81%	Y
31	74%	N	70%	N	77%	Y
33	70%	N	71%	N	82%	Y
102	75%	Y	65%	N	80%	Y

Standard (60-Minute) Routes

SERVICE LEVELS

Span: Figure 33 indicates whether each standard (60-minute) route meets span standards by day type.

Figure 33 Standard (60-Minute) Route Span Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Span	Saturday Span	Sunday Span
Standard	5:30 AM – 11:30 PM	6:30 AM – 10:30 PM	6:30 AM – 9:30 PM
9	N (last trip at 11:00 PM)	Y	Y
11	N (last trip at 11:00 PM)	Y	N (last trip at 9:00 PM)
21	Y	Y	N (last trip at 9:00 PM)
25	Y	Y	Y
32	Y	Y	N (last trip at 9:15 PM)
35	N (last trip at 10:00 PM)	N (last trip at 10:00 PM)	Y

Frequency: Frequency standards vary by time period. Figure 34 presents the frequency of each standard (60-minute) route by time period, as well as whether it meets the standard.

Figure 34 Standard (60-Minute Frequency) Route Frequency Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Wkdy Early AM	Wkdy AM Peak	Wkdy Midday	Wkdy PM Peak	Wkdy Evening	Wkdy Late Night	Sat All Day	Sun All Day
Standard	60	60	60	60	60	-	60	60
9	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
11	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
21	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
25	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
32	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
35	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y

PERFORMANCE

Boardings Per Revenue Hour: Figure 35 indicates whether each standard (60-minute) route meets the boardings per revenue hour productivity standard. The standard differs for radial vs. crosstown routes.

Figure 35 Standard (60-Minute) Route Productivity Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Sunday Standard?
Radial						
Standard	12	-	8	-	6	-
9	14.0	Y	9.8	Y	8.2	Y
11	9.7	N	6.4	N	5.5	N
Crosstown						
Standard	10	-	8	-	6	-
21	10.0	Y	8.2	Y	7.0	Y
25	11.5	Y	9.2	Y	7.1	Y
32	10.0	Y	8.2	Y	6.6	Y
35	9.9	N	8.1	Y	7.1	Y

On-Time Performance: Figure 36 indicates whether each standard (60-minute) route meets the on-time performance service quality standard of 75%. To be considered on-time, buses must arrive between 1 minute early and 5 minutes compared to the scheduled time.

Figure 36 Standard (60-Minute) Route On-Time Performance Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday OTP	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday OTP	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday OTP	Meets Sunday Standard?
Standard	75%	-	75%	-	75%	-
9	80%	Y	79%	Y	82%	Y
11	77%	Y	80%	Y	85%	Y
21	80%	Y	80%	Y	84%	Y
25	64%	N	78%	Y	81%	Y
32	78%	Y	84%	Y	87%	Y
35	79%	Y	83%	Y	83%	Y

Rush Hour (Express) Routes

SERVICE LEVELS

Rush hour routes are held to a standard of two trips per peak period. While the span standards are 6:00 – 8:30 AM during the AM peak and 4:00 – 6:30 PM during the PM peak, trip times may vary by route. Therefore, this section uses just the number of trips by peak period to evaluate rush hour routes.

Number of Trips: Rush hour routes are held to a service level standard of two trips per peak period. Figure 37 presents whether each rush hour route meets the standard.

Figure 37 Rush Hour Route Peak Hour Trips Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Wkdy AM Peak	Wkdy PM Peak
Standard	2 trips/peak	2 trips/peak
41	N (1)	N (1)
42	N (1)	N (1)
43	Y	Y
44	N (1)	N (1)
45	Y	Y
46	N (1)	N (1)
51	Y	Y
52	Y	Y
61	Y	Y
71	Y	Y
72	Y	Y
73	Y	Y
74	N (1)	N (1)
75	N (1)	N (1)

PERFORMANCE

Boardings Per Trip: Figure 38 indicates whether each rush hour route meets the boardings per trip productivity standard of 5 passengers per trip.

Figure 38 Rush Hour Route Productivity Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Peak Hour Boardings Per Trip	Meets Productivity Standard?
Standard	5 boardings/trip	-
41	3.5	N
42	8.5	Y
43	5.0	Y
44	7.4	Y
45	2.6	N
46	3.7	N
51	5.4	Y
52	6.1	Y
61	2.6	N
71	6.9	Y
72	8.2	Y
73	5.3	Y
74	4.7	N
75	5.1	Y

On-Time Performance: Figure 39 indicates whether each rush hour route meets the on-time performance service quality standard of 75%. To be considered on-time, buses must arrive between 1 minute early and 5 minutes compared to the scheduled time, and up to 5 minutes early for stops served after the express portion of the route.

Figure 39 Rush Hour Route On-Time Performance Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday OTP	Meets Weekday Standard?
Standard	75%	-
41	69%	N
42	64%	N
43	67%	N
44	84%	Y
45	71%	N
46	60%	N
51	68%	N
52	76%	Y
61	54%	N
71	61%	N
72	76%	Y
73	71%	N
74	70%	N
75	81%	Y

COTA//Plus Microtransit Services

SERVICE LEVELS

Span: Figure 40 indicates whether each COTA//Plus zone meets span standards by day type.

Figure 40 COTA//Plus Zone Span Standards

ZONE	Weekday Span	Saturday Span	Sunday Span
Standard	5:30 AM – 8:00 PM	Optional; 5:30 AM – 8:00 PM	Optional; 5:30 AM – 8:00 PM
Grove City Zone	Y	-	-
South Side Zone	Y	Y	Y
Westerville Zone	Y	-	-

Wait Time: The standard for average wait time is 30 minutes. Figure 41 presents whether each COTA//Plus zone meets the standard, as well as the actual average wait time. Generally, average wait time across time day types is much lower than the standard, usually not exceeding 10 minutes.

Figure 41 COTA//Plus Zone Wait Time Standards

ZONE	Weekday Span	Saturday Span	Sunday Span
Standard	30 minutes	Optional; 30 minutes	Optional; 30 minutes
Grove City Zone	Y (10.4)	-	-
South Side Zone	Y (8.7)	Y (7.2)	Y (7.2)
Westerville Zone	Y (9.0)	-	-

PERFORMANCE

Boardings Per Revenue Hour: Figure 42 indicates whether each COTA//Plus zone meets the boardings per revenue hour productivity standard.

Figure 42 COTA//Plus Zone Productivity Standards

ROUTE NUMBER	Weekday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday Boardings Per RVH	Meets Sunday Standard?
Standard	2	-	2 if provided	-	2 if provided	-
Grove City Zone	2.1	Y	-	-	-	-
South Side Zone	2.8	Y	2.2	Y	2.5	Y
Westerville Zone	1.4	N	-	-	-	-

On-Time Performance: Figure 43 indicates whether each COTA//Plus zone meets the on-time performance service quality standard of 75%.

Figure 43 COTA//Plus Zone On-Time Performance Standards

ZONE	Weekday OTP	Meets Weekday Standard?	Saturday OTP	Meets Saturday Standard?	Sunday OTP	Meets Sunday Standard?
Standard	75%	-	Optional; 75%	-	Optional; 75%	-
Grove City Zone	83%	Y	-	-	-	-
South Side Zone	84%	Y	84%	Y	82%	Y
Westerville Zone	85%	Y	-	-	-	-

Appendix 2: Engagement Summary

Overview

Goal

The goal of the stakeholder and community engagement was to proactively inform and engage stakeholders, operators, riders and the public regarding COTA's 2027–2031 Short Range Transit Plan (S RTP) and proposed transit service concepts.

Objectives

The objectives of the plan were to:

- Inform audiences about the purpose, process and timeline of the 2027–2031 S RTP.
- Solicit input on proposed transit service concepts and potential service adjustments throughout Central Ohio.
- Provide multiple opportunities for operators, residents and riders to participate in the engagement process.

Strategy and Approach

STRP engagement followed a multi-tiered approach, including:

- Meeting with COTA's member jurisdictions to review discussions held during the development of the LinkUS program and possible service adjustments between 2026 and 2031.
- Briefing and seeking input from COTA leadership and advisory committees to explain the process, share data regarding evolving market demands and ridership patterns, and to seek input on draft service plans.
- Tabling with COTA bus operators and seeking additional input through an online survey.
- Convening six public meetings across Central Ohio, including five in-person meetings and one virtual meeting. Meetings were geographically distributed throughout the region to improve accessibility and provide multiple opportunities for participation.
- A printed and online survey.
- Follow-up briefings and meetings with various jurisdictions.

Bus Operator Input

COTA sought operator feedback via an online and printed survey between April 28 and May 13. The project team also conducted tabling exercises in the bus operator break rooms at the McKinley and Fields facilities. The survey received 15 responses with feedback related to

proposed route adjustments, service frequency, bus rapid transit (BRT) improvements, operating hours and regional connectivity.

Survey and in-person responses reflected support for expanded service coverage, additional routes, proposed BRT corridors, 24-hour service concepts, and improved airport connectivity. Some responses identified concerns regarding proposed route restructuring and changes to existing services.

Operators also identified operational concerns regarding several proposed route extensions and service changes. The most frequently referenced concerns included:

- Longer route lengths and increased travel times
- Schedule reliability challenges associated with extended routes
- Limited layover and restroom break opportunities
- Lack of operator facilities along proposed extended corridors
- Concerns regarding reductions to existing frequent service corridors

Feedback included concerns regarding the proposed Line 1 and Line 2 extensions, with comments noting that additional travel time and limited recovery time could negatively affect service reliability and operator working conditions. Operators also expressed disappointment regarding the proposed elimination of Line 33, while acknowledging existing ridership challenges along portions of the corridor.

Operators expressed strong support for the proposed Line 99 airport connection but recommended expanding service beyond peak periods to improve usability and ridership potential.

Based on this feedback, some route proposals were adjusted to allow more layover and restroom break options and more specific recommendations were made regarding passenger and operator facilities.



Figure 44 COTA operator providing feedback to service proposals

In-Person Public Meetings and Online Engagement

Figure 45 summarizes the public meeting times, locations and attendance between April 27 and May 1, 2026.

Figure 45 SRTP Public Meetings and Attendance

Date	Quadrant	Location	Attendees
Monday, April 27	West	Mid-Ohio Farm on the Hilltop, 140 N. Wheatland Ave., Columbus, OH 43223	8
Tuesday, April 28	Northwest	Bob Crane Community Center Events Room, 3200 Tremont Rd., Upper Arlington, OH 43221	13
Wednesday, April 29	Downtown	COTA Board Room, 33 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43215	23
Wednesday, April 29	Northeast	Huntington Empowerment Center, 780 Mt. Vernon Ave., Columbus, OH 43203	3
Thursday, April 30	South	Columbus Library, Driving Park Branch, 1422 E. Livingston Ave., Columbus, OH 43205	14
Friday, May 1	Virtual	Microsoft Teams	66
TOTAL		6 Meetings	127

Meeting and Survey Notification

The public meetings and survey were promoted through a variety of channels designed to inform riders, stakeholders and the public about opportunities to participate in the engagement process. All materials directed recipients to more detailed information online.

Meeting and survey information was shared through COTA's social media platforms and e-newsletter. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and Central Ohio jurisdictions in COTA's service area also shared the notifications through their social media and e-newsletter platforms.

Door hangers were distributed on COTA bus service lines to encourage riders to attend the public meetings and complete the online survey. Several attendees noted that the door hangers on the buses got their attention and prompted their participation.

Samples of meeting notification materials are included in the appendices.

Meeting Format and Content

The public meetings were organized in a presentation/open house format. The presentation and exhibits outlined proposed transit service concepts, route adjustments and service changes associated with COTA's 2027-2031 SRTP. Attendees were able to review presentation materials, ask questions and discuss proposed changes with project team members and facilitators.

Facilitators responded to questions and comments immediately following the presentation, then directed participants to the exhibits. Participants were encouraged to share comments and input using sticky notes placed throughout the meeting space and on exhibit boards. An online survey was available for those who could not attend the meetings.

Breakout stations were organized by geographic service areas and included displays focused on proposed transit service reallocations, route adjustments and future transit concepts throughout Central Ohio. A feedback station was also provided for attendees to submit additional comments and questions.

Surveys were provided to attendees to gather additional public input. Participants also shared comments and feedback through written responses, sticky notes and discussions with facilitators.

Presentation Content

The public workshop presentation content included:

- Introductions and project team overview
- Overview of the 2027–2031 Short Range Transit Plan
 - Process overview and project schedule
 - Existing conditions and market analysis
 - Transit service analysis and service gaps
 - Major findings identified through existing conditions analysis
 - Proposed transit service recommendations and alignment changes
 - Frequency, operating hour and service improvement recommendations
 - Potential COTA/Plus service zones and future transit concepts
 - Key benefits associated with the proposed network
 - Public engagement opportunities and next steps
 - Instructions for providing public feedback and comments

Related Public Interactions

In addition to the SRTP public meetings, feedback was received via:

- COTA Service Change public meetings and rider outreach activities conducted throughout spring 2026
- Worthington City Council discussion regarding the SRTP on May 11, 2026

- COTA's Customer Care Center and rider call center interactions
- Attendance and outreach at community events throughout Central Ohio, including engagement activities in Grandview Heights and surrounding communities

Online Survey

The public survey gathered 272 responses regarding the proposed 2027–2031 SRTP service concepts. Respondents were largely current riders: 84% reported riding COTA at least occasionally, including 33% who ride three to five times per week and 19% who ride every day. Respondents skewed younger, with 49% between the ages of 18 and 34.

Half of respondents (50%) said the proposed changes would improve their typical travel, while 40% said they would not and 10% were unsure. Regarding potential negative effects, 51% reported that at least one proposed change would negatively impact their travel. Asked how the changes would affect their ridership, 39% expected to ride more often, 36% expected to ride less often and 25% expected no change.

When asked to rank service improvements, respondents prioritized more frequent weekday trips and extending service to new areas above all else. These two options together accounted for the large majority of first-choice rankings (80 and 84 respondents, respectively), followed by more frequent weekend service, later evening service and earlier morning service. The lines respondents reported using most frequently were Line 2 (E. Main/N. High), Line 102 (Polaris Pkwy./N. High), Line 1 (Kenny/Livingston) and Line 8 (Karl/S. High/Parsons).

Common Themes from All Engagement Efforts

Support and enthusiasm. Open-ended feedback showed strong, repeated support for several concepts:

- The proposed Line 99 airport connection drew the most enthusiasm by a wide margin, frequently cited by OSU students and downtown residents as a long-needed link to John Glenn Columbus International Airport.
- Bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors, particularly the Northwest and West Broad lines, were viewed as a meaningful step toward faster, more reliable service.
- 24-hour service on core lines was repeatedly welcomed, especially by riders with overnight or non-traditional work schedules.
- Increased frequency, improved weekend service and route extensions to areas such as Westerville, Madison County and the Far West side also drew support.

Concerns and opposition. The most frequently raised concerns centered on specific route changes:

- The proposed elimination of Line 102 generated the most opposition, with riders citing its faster, limited-stop service between Worthington, Polaris and downtown and expressing

concern that the replacement Line 2N would add travel time, require transfers or create confusion from two routes sharing one name.

- Eliminating the Line 41 express from the Crosswoods Park & Ride drew strong objections from commuters in the US-23 North corridor, including Delaware and Lewis Center residents, several of whom described it as their only practical option.
- Splitting Line 8 and reducing frequency on Neil Avenue raised concerns about lost single-seat rides and reduced access between OSU, the Arena District and downtown.
- Additional concerns included new transfer requirements from route splits (Lines 5, 10 and 33), the loss of Line 72, reduced coverage in the US-23 North corridor and pedestrian and sidewalk gaps near affected stops.

All Feedback by Line (Survey, Operators, Meetings, Call Center)

Line 1 / 1N

Survey

- Strong support for the northern extension up Sawmill Road to Dublin and the resulting one-seat ride downtown, which several respondents said would substantially increase their use of COTA.
- Support for splitting Line 1 and adding frequency to improve reliability and speed.
- Some respondents noted that Line 1N and Line 21 would not adequately replace the discontinued Line 72.

Public Meetings

- Strong support for the Taylor Square extension (“that’s huge”).
- Concern about transfer timing and amenities at Riverside Hospital, especially westbound transfers to Line 32.
- Concern about the planned detour to E. Main during construction.

Call Center

- Riders expressed interest in expanded service coverage and improved direct downtown connections.

Operators

- Concerns were raised regarding the proposed Line 1 extension into Dublin, with comments noting that the route could become too long and create operational and schedule reliability challenges.
- Operators also noted concerns regarding limited layover time and insufficient operator facilities along the proposed extended route.

Line 2 / 2N

7 comments

Survey

- Support for all-day and proposed 24-hour service, increased frequency and the extension into Worthington.
- Widespread concern that replacing the Line 102 with the 2N would lengthen trips between Worthington, Polaris and downtown due to additional stops.
- Confusion about two routes sharing the “2N” name and uncertainty about whether the 2N would continue into downtown or terminate at the Westview turnaround.

Public Meetings

- Riders requested additional frequency farther north on 2N.
- Feedback noted appreciation for proposed 102 → 2N connections.
- Concerns that eliminating Line 11 could create more dependence on Line 2 for grocery and essential trips, particularly for older riders.
- Riders noted that Line 102 is significantly faster than Line 2 and requested that peak-hour trips remain.

Call Center

- Riders requested increased frequency and improved reliability on Line 2, including 15-minute service throughout the week.
- Riders expressed concern regarding replacing the 102 with the 2N and requested frequent or express service connections between Worthington, Crosswoods, OSU and Downtown Columbus.

Operators

- Operators expressed concern regarding extending Line 2 farther north without additional layover time or operator facilities.
- Comments noted that extended travel times could negatively affect schedule reliability and operator break opportunities.
- Some operators requested additional frequent service and improved corridor support for the extended route.

Line 3

Survey

- Support for more frequent Line 3 service.

- Concern that shortening Line 3 would eliminate direct connections between Grandview, East Franklinton and downtown destinations such as German Village and the Arena District.

Public Meetings

- Riders encouraged stronger marketing of Lines 30 and 31 to OSU students and downtown workers.
- Concerns about long transfer waits between Lines 31 and 3 in Upper Arlington.

Call Center

- Riders requested improved transfer coordination and reliability.

Operators

- Operators supported increased service frequency on Line 3 and noted support for simplifying portions of the route structure.

Line 4 / 4N

5 participants supported this change

Survey

- Support for the extension to Westerville, the connection to the Great Southern shopping center and improved weekend frequency.
- Concern that the route would no longer serve the west side of Capitol Square, adding walking time for some commuters.

Public Meetings

- Positive feedback supporting the proposed extension to Westerville.
- Requests to maintain service continuity to Alum Creek.

Call Center

- Riders requested that Line 4 continue serving the Southfield/Marion-Franklin area near Koebel Road and Fairwood Avenue.
- Feedback supported extending Line 4 to the Great Southern Shopping Center while maintaining existing neighborhood service coverage.

Operators

- Operators expressed concern that the extended Line 4 route could result in excessively long trip durations.
- Additional comments supported increased service frequency along the corridor.

Line 5 / 5E

Survey

- Support for increased frequency and BRT investment on the corridor.
- Concern that ending the 5E downtown would eliminate the one-seat ride along High Street connecting neighborhoods north and south of downtown.
- Requests to extend 15-minute frequency to the entire route, including the 5W (west side), rather than only the 5E.

Public Meetings

- Riders expressed concern about losing direct north-south downtown connections without transfers.
- Comments noted long walking distances if transfers are required.

Line 8 / 8N / 8S (and new Line 30)

16 participants opposed these changes

Survey

- Strong, repeated concern about reducing Neil Avenue service from frequent (15-minute) to standard (30-minute) frequency under the new Line 30, cited by Victorian Village residents, OSU students and downtown commuters.
- Concern that splitting Line 8 into two non-connecting segments would eliminate single-seat rides between OSU, the Arena District and downtown.
- Several respondents referenced the route's high ridership and said the change could prompt them to buy a car or stop riding.

Public Meetings

- Strong concern about reduced frequency on Neil Avenue and impacts to OSU/hospital access, especially in winter.
- Requests to shift portions of Line 8 to High Street due to new development activity.
- Concerns that breaking up Line 8 would force additional transfers north of downtown.

Line 9

Survey

- Concern that rerouting Line 9 alongside the Line 11 elimination would create a service gap in the northeast, with opposition to replacing fixed-route service with microtransit.

Public Meetings

- Riders questioned whether Line 9 service from Easton would improve if Line 44 is reduced or removed.

Line 10

3 participants opposed this change

Survey

- Concern that splitting the line downtown would force transfers for east-west trips and that the West Broad BRT would not fully replace local Line 10 service.

Line 11

7 participants opposed eliminating this line

Survey

- Strong opposition to eliminating the route, frequently citing older riders in the Franklin Park, Olde Towne East and Linden areas who rely on it for access to downtown, the library, medical care and groceries.
- Concern that elimination would remove non-transfer access to High Street and add substantial walking distance to reach the nearest line.

Public Meetings

- Multiple comments opposed eliminating Line 11.
- Riders specifically noted the importance of access to:
 - The library
 - Ohio State School for the Blind
 - Grocery stores and essential services
- Some feedback suggested pedestrian improvements would be needed if the route is removed.

Line 21

Public Meetings

- Requests to extend Line 21 farther north to replace lost coverage from discontinued Route 73.
- Interest in expanding service near Tuttle Crossing and Smoky Row.

Line 24

Survey

- Interest in extending the route toward Line 45 and connecting it to a potential new COTA/Plus zone.

Public Meetings

- Positive feedback on the route overall.
- Requests for 24-hour service.

Call Center

- Riders requested more frequent service on Line 24, including 30-minute service intervals.

Line 31

Survey

- Support for improved weekend frequency on Line 31.

Public Meetings

- Riders encouraged stronger marketing of Lines 31 to OSU students and downtown workers.
- Concerns about long transfer waits between Lines 30 and 32 in Upper Arlington.

Call Center

- Riders requested improved transfer coordination and reliability.

Operators

- Operators supported increased service frequency on Line 3 and noted support for simplifying portions of the route structure.

Line 33 / 34

4 comments supported this change

Survey

- Support for merging the routes and for frequent service on Line 34 along Sawmill Road.
- Concern that eliminating Line 33 would reduce east-west and Sawmill-area coverage before the Northwest BRT opens, with requests to extend Line 34 up Sawmill in the interim.

Operators

- Operators expressed disappointment regarding the proposed elimination of Line 33 but acknowledged existing ridership challenges along portions of the corridor.

Line 35

Survey

- Support for the extension through Worthington toward Sawmill and Easton.
- Comments that the proposed extension is too short and infrequent to deliver a meaningful east-west connection.

Public Meetings

- Riders proposed routing adjustments near Smoky Row, Summit View and Sawmill.
- Requests for additional shelters/stops near OSU areas with high student demand.
- Suggestions to expand Line 35 to help replace lost Route 73 coverage.

Call Center

- Riders expressed interest in improved east-west connectivity and expanded service coverage associated with Line 35.

Line 41

8 participants opposed this line change

Survey

- Strong opposition to eliminating the rush-hour express from the Crosswoods Park & Ride, described as the only practical option for many commuters from Lewis Center, Powell, Delaware and the broader US-23 North corridor.
- Several respondents who are disabled or unable to drive said elimination would directly affect their ability to reach work downtown.
- Repeated concern that the proposal overlooks the fast-growing US-23 North corridor.

Line 42

Survey

- Concern about discontinuation, with riders citing reliable commutes from the Karl Road area to Broad and High.

Call Center

- Riders expressed concern regarding potential discontinuation of service and the impact on reliable commute access.

Line 45

Survey

- Interest in connecting the route to an extended Line 24.

- Concern from Easton-area riders about losing express access downtown.

Public Meetings

- Riders emphasized maintaining on-time arrivals downtown, especially around the 7:30 a.m. arrival window.

Line 61

6 participants opposed these changes

Survey

- Strong, repeated opposition to discontinuing the Grove City-to-downtown route, cited as vital for employment access, with several respondents noting ridership has grown recently.
- Concern that the Line 3 alternative would roughly double commute times.

Line 72

4 participants opposed to this line change

Survey

- Opposition to discontinuation, with respondents stating the proposed Line 1N and Line 21 alternatives would lengthen commutes.
- One respondent attributed low ridership to limited trip times and a circuitous downtown routing rather than lack of demand.

Line 73 / 74

6 participants

Survey

- Uncertainty about whether the year-round Zoo Bus or Line 1N would adequately replace discontinued service.

Public Meetings

- Concerns about discontinuing service.
- Requests for sidewalk and pedestrian improvements to address resulting mobility gaps.

Line 75

Survey

- Opposition to discontinuation from daily commuters who described the route as full each day and the closest service to their homes.

Line 99

22 participants strong support for this line change

Survey

- The most enthusiastically supported concept in the survey. Respondents, especially OSU students, repeatedly described the OSU/downtown-to-airport connection as a long-needed link and a more affordable alternative to rideshare and parking.
- Requests to add a Convention Center stop and to run earlier-morning and later-evening trips.
- Some concern that hourly frequency would be too infrequent to draw riders away from rideshare.

Public Meetings

- Requests for a stop at the Westin Downtown.
- General rider support and positive feedback were noted.

Operators

- Operators expressed support for the proposed airport connection but suggested that service should operate throughout the day rather than only during peak periods.

Line 102

27 participants had negative sentiment toward these line changes.

Survey

- The most opposed change in the survey. Riders valued the route's faster, limited-stop express service between Worthington, Polaris and downtown and said the 2N replacement would add travel time.
- Several respondents described dependence on the route for work, school and family members with disabilities, including riders in Worthington.
- Requests to preserve peak-hour express trips or maintain 15-minute rush-hour frequency.

Public Meetings

- Strong concerns about replacing the 102 with Line 2 service due to increased travel time.
- Riders stated the current 102 is 15–20 minutes faster.
- Requests to preserve peak-hour express trips.

Call Center

- Strong opposition to eliminating Line 102 was repeatedly expressed through customer comments and rider communications.
- Riders described Line 102 as essential for commuting between Worthington, Polaris, Crosswoods, OSU and Downtown Columbus.
- Several riders requested preservation of the route's faster limited-stop service and increased frequency.
- Riders expressed concern that replacement service through Line 2 would increase travel times and reduce reliability.

Meeting Feedback

The feedback provided during the public meetings reflected a broad range of transit priorities, service concerns and mobility needs throughout Central Ohio. Attendees shared comments regarding proposed route adjustments, service frequency, operating hours, accessibility, safety, reliability and future transit investments. Feedback was gathered through discussions with facilitators, written comments, surveys and sticky note exercises.

Attendee Feedback

Common themes identified throughout the public meetings included:

- Support for increased frequency, expanded operating hours and 24-hour service on key corridors
- Requests for additional shelters, sidewalks and pedestrian accessibility improvements near transit stops
- Interest in maintaining direct connections to Downtown Columbus and reducing required transfers
- Concerns regarding route splits and rider confusion associated with proposed service changes
- Interest in improving reliability, bus priority and transfer coordination throughout the system
- Requests for improved transit access to employment centers, food access and community destinations
- Interest in expanding north-south and crosstown connections throughout the region
- Support for additional outreach and continued public engagement opportunities
- Requests for improved accessibility accommodations and communication tools for riders with disabilities

Additional feedback included

- Support for maintaining or increasing service on Lines 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 24, 32, 34 and 35
- Interest in expanded frequent service and improved weekend frequency
- Requests for improved transit access to Polaris, Worthington, Grandview Heights, Dublin, Westerville and the Airport

- Concerns regarding sidewalk gaps, stop safety and walkability near transit corridors
- Requests for additional wayfinding, real-time information and clearer route branding for split services
- Interest in improving service coordination with future development and transit-oriented development opportunities
- Requests for improved transfer timing and reduced wait times between connecting routes

Summary

The project team is using the information and comments gathered through the public meetings and engagement activities described above, as well as feedback from riders, stakeholders and the public, to guide the development of the 2027–2031 Short Range Transit Plan and future transit service recommendations.