

## CHAPTER 5 TRANSIT DEMAND

### 5.1 Introduction

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

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

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

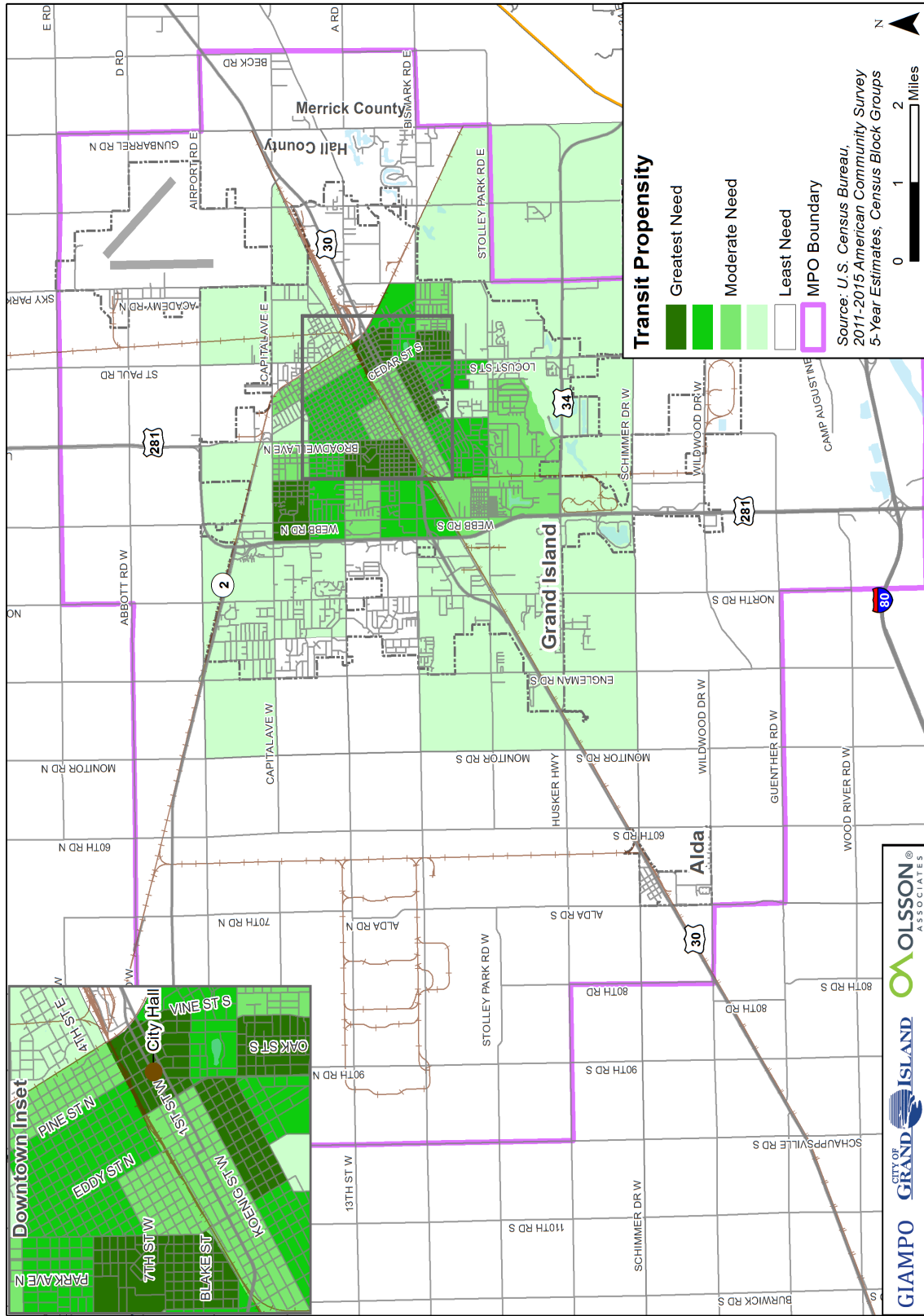
#### Transit Demand Methodologies:

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



*Hall County Public Transportation*

Figure 5.1: Grand Island Transit Propensity



## 5.2 Greatest Transit Needs Index Methodology

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

## 5.3 Commuter Transit Demand Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5.1: Grand Island Commuter Transit Demand

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

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

## 5.4 Peer Data Demand Methodology

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

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

Table 5.2: Peer City Data

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

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

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

Table 5.3: Ridership Projections Using Peer City Metrics

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

Source: Olsson Associates, 2017.

## 5.5 Mode of Transportation to Work Methodology

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

## 5.6 Transit Need Methodologies

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

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

### 5.6.1 Mobility Gap Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5.4: Mobility Gap Transit Need

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5.5: Mobility Gap of Peer Cities

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

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



## 5.7 Summary of Hall County Needs and Demand

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

Table 5.6: Methodology Summary

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

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## CHAPTER 6 PEER REVIEW

### 6.1 Introduction

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

### 6.2 Methodology and Selection Criteria

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

#### Peer Review Criteria:

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

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

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

Table 6.1: Peer City Overview

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

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

## 6.3 Peer Community Overview

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

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

Table 6.2: Characteristics of Selected Peer Cities

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

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

### 6.3.1 Ridership

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

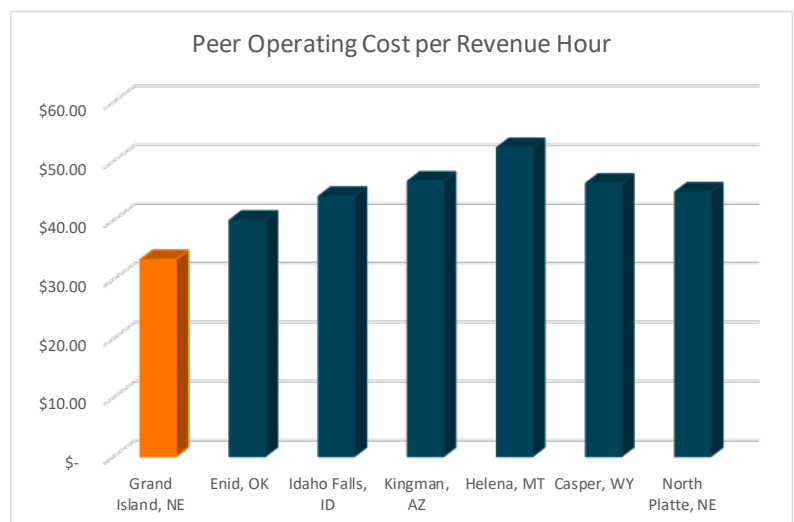
### 6.3.2 Operating Statistics

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

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

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

Figure 6.1: Peer Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



### 6.3.3 Mobility Gap

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

Table 6.3: Mobility Gap of Peer Cities

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

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

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

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

## 6.4 Peer Community Questionnaire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



North Platte Public Transportation Bus



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

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



*Enid Public Transportation Bus*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



*North Platte Public Transit*

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

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

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

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

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

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



*KART ADA Accessible Bus*

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

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

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

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

## 6.5 Peer Review Findings

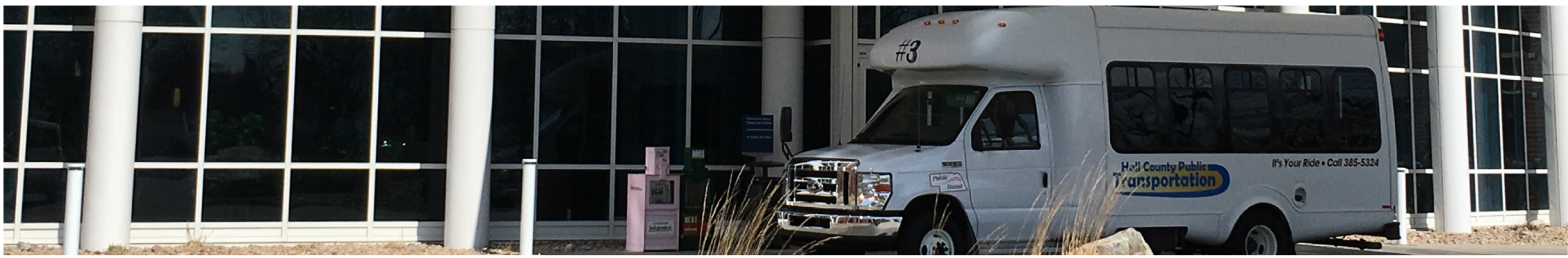
The peer review compares transit service in Grand Island, Nebraska with other communities around the country with similar characteristics. The information within the chapter assesses the different types of services offered, how services are administered, how services are paid for, and lessons learned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

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

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



CATC Public Transit



## CHAPTER 7 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - ROUND ONE

### 7.1 Introduction

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

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

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



*Focus Group Meeting*

### 7.2 Focus Group Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

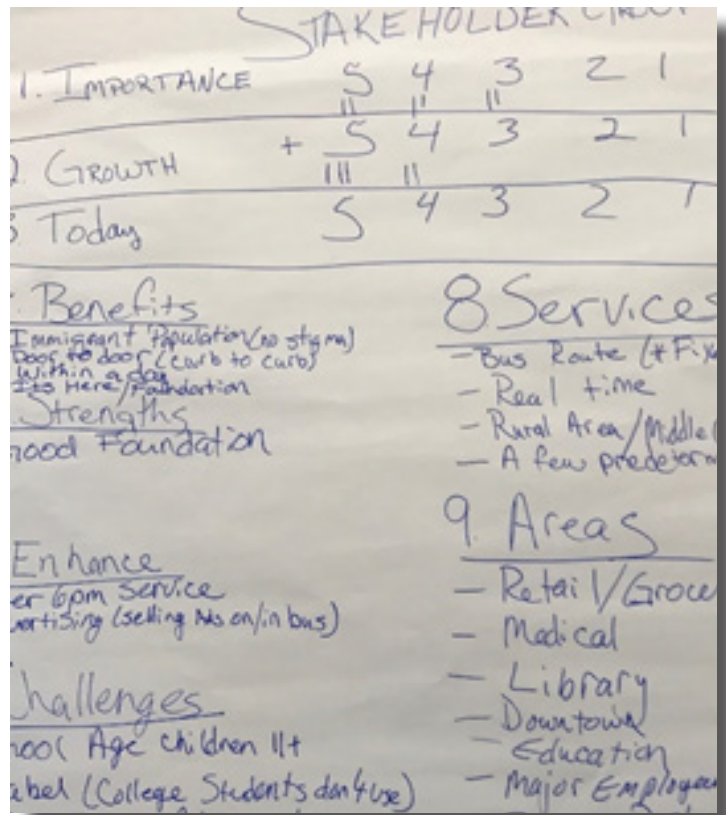
Table 7.1: Schedule of Focus Group Meetings

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

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

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

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



Comments Recorded During Focus Group Discussions

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- a. Great Drivers
- b. Helpful Drivers

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

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



*Focus Group Meeting*



*Focus Group Meeting*

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

### 7.3 Public Open Houses

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



*Open House at the Grand Generation Center*

## 7.4 Driver/Staff Meetings

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

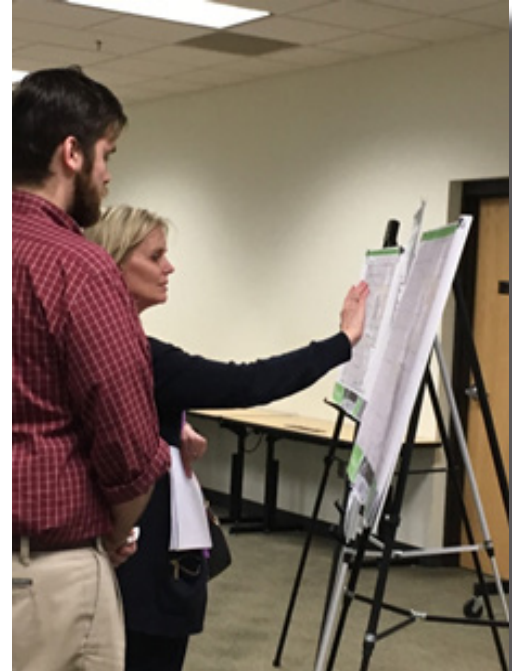
In addition, the local project team conducted a field visit, office visit, and ride along for Hall County Public Transportation on March 13, 2017. The site visits are a good opportunity to obtain first hand information on passenger requests, scheduling challenges, on time performance, and to identify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



*Open House at the Grand Island Library*

## 7.5 Major Employer Meetings

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



*Open House at the Grand Island Library*

## 7.6 Overall Summary of Community Engagement - Round One

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

### 7.6.1 Importance of Transit Today

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

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

### 7.6.2 Importance of Transit Tomorrow

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

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

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

Figure 7.1: Importance of Transit Today

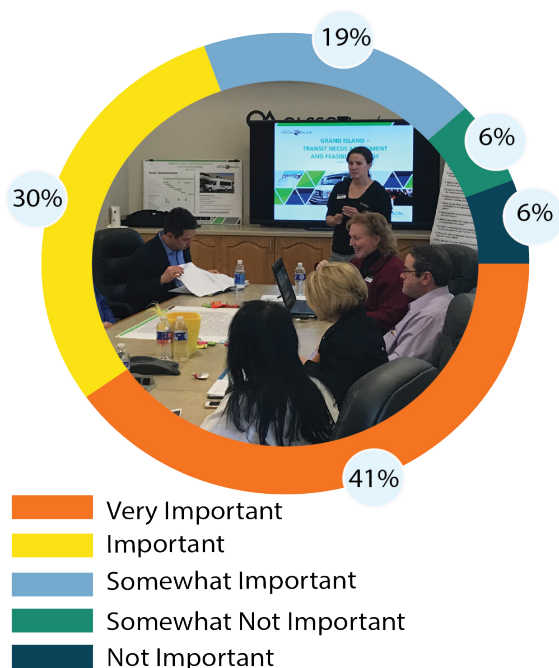
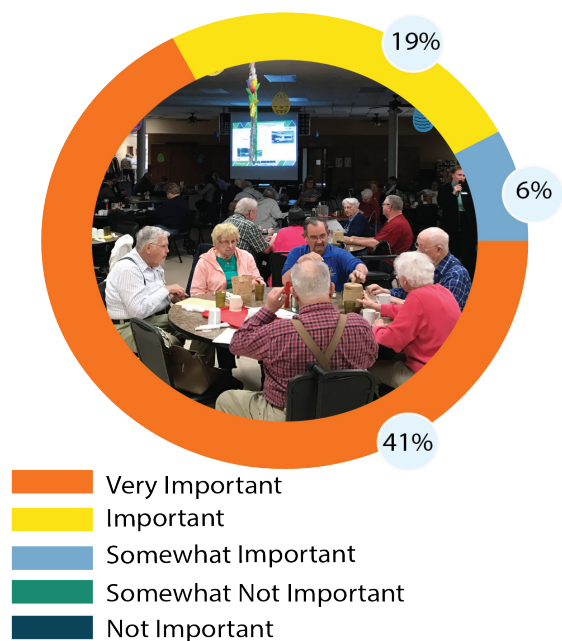


Figure 7.2: Importance of Transit Tomorrow



### 7.6.3 How Efficient Is Our Transit Service

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

### 7.6.4 Greatest Benefit of Transit

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

### 7.6.5 Enhancing Transit Service

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

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

### 7.6.6 Areas Transit Should Serve

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



Open House at the Grand Generation Center



Open House at the Grand Island Public Library

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## CHAPTER 8 COMMUNITY SURVEY & TRANSIT RIDER SURVEY

### 8.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

### 8.2 Survey Analysis Summary

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

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

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

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

### 8.3 Online Community Survey

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

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

Figure 8.1: How often do you ride public transit?

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

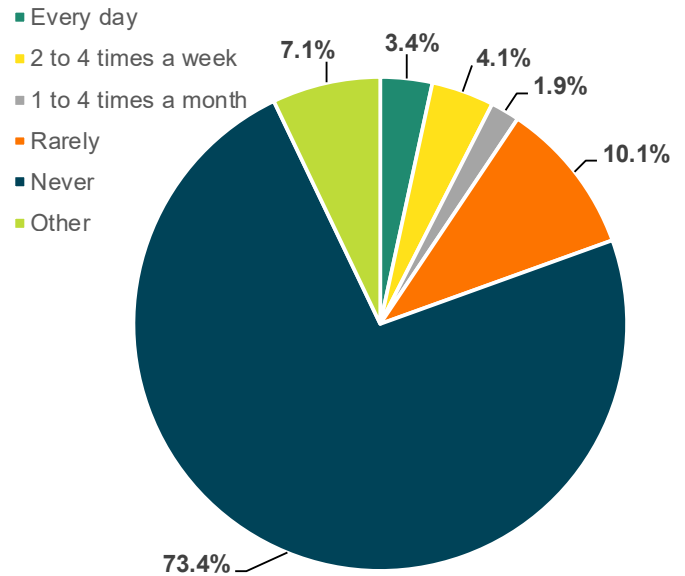
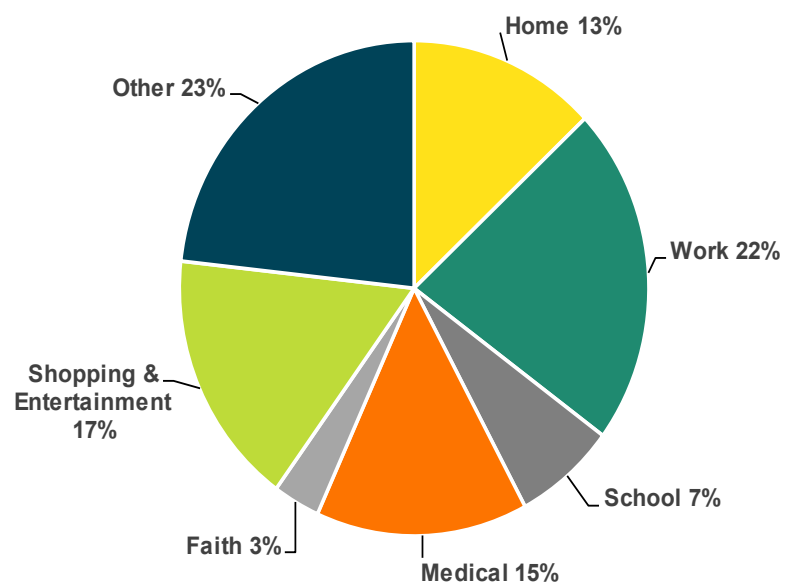


Figure 8.2: If you use public transportation, what is your primary purpose?

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





### 8.3.1 Socio-economic Characteristics

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

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

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

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

Figure 8.3: Characteristics - Age

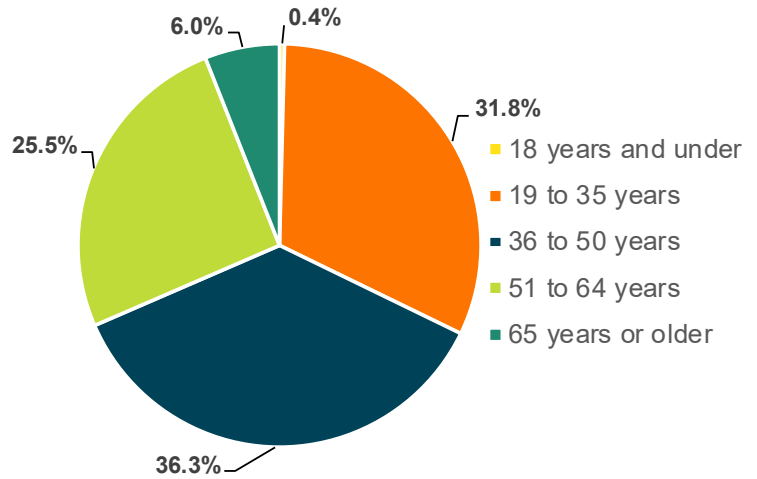


Figure 8.4: Characteristics - Employment

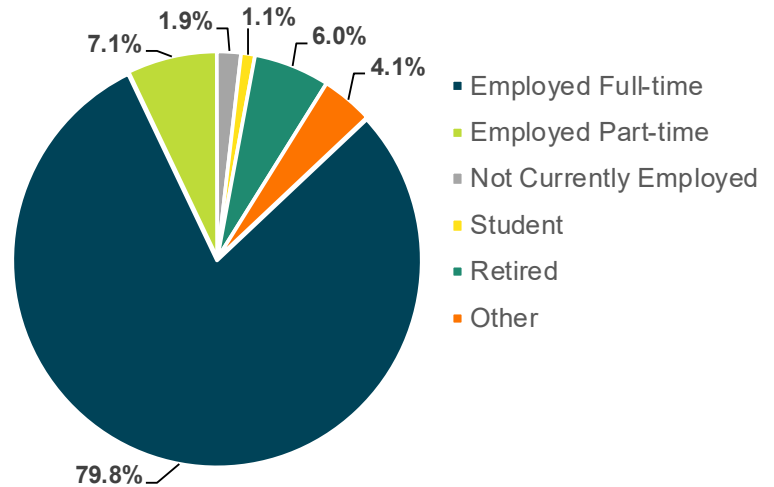
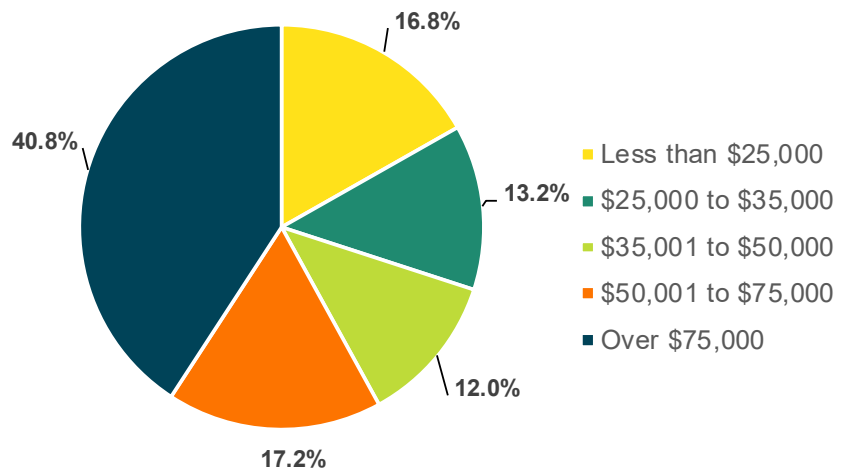


Figure 8.5: Characteristics - Household Income



### 8.3.2 Transit Service Perceptions

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

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

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

Figure 8.6: Value of Hall County Public Transportation

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

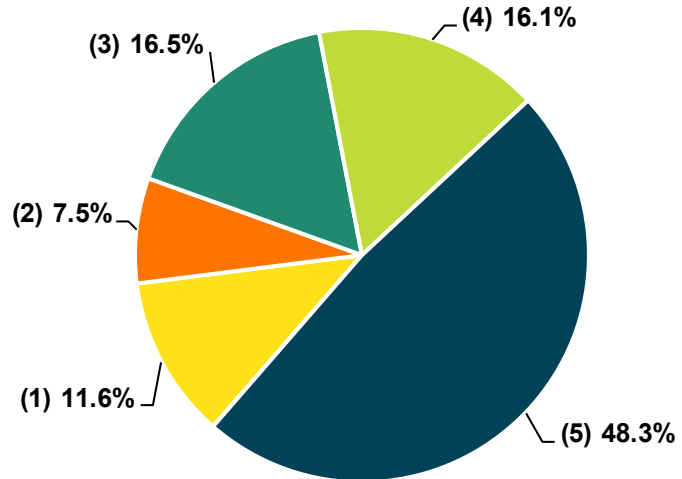
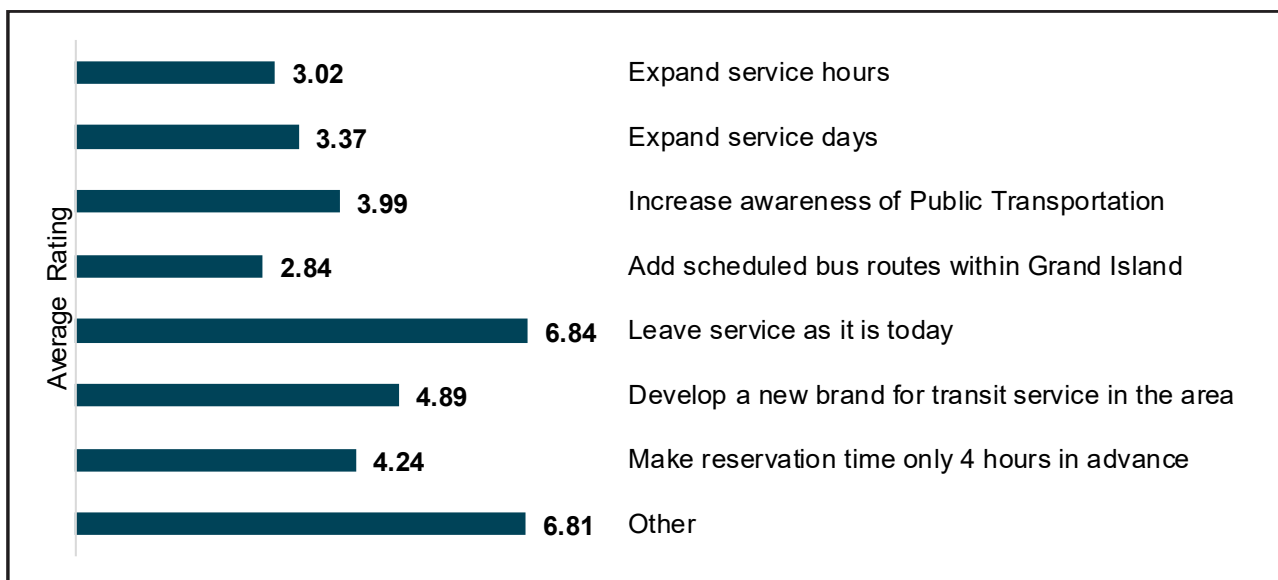


Figure 8.7: Priority of Hall County Public Transportation Improvements

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



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

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

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

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

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

Figure 8.8: Perception of Hall County Public Transportation

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



## 8.4 Transit Rider Survey

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

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

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

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

Figure 8.9: How Often Public Transit is Used

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

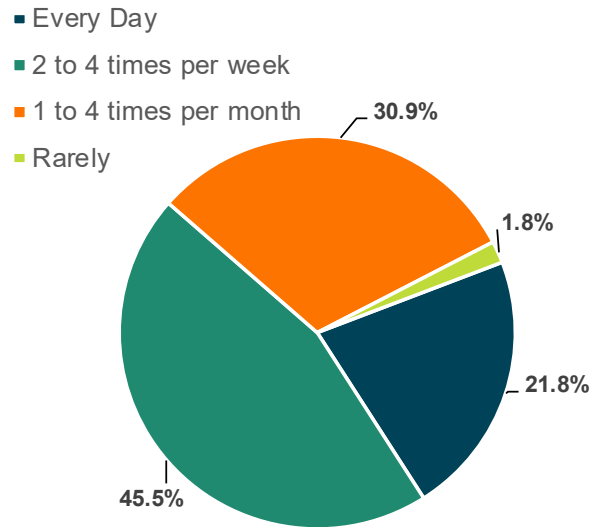
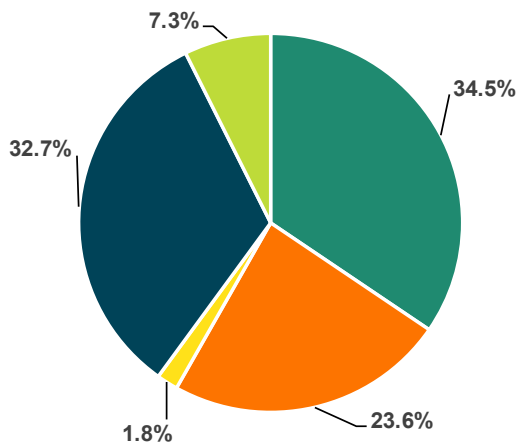


Figure 8.10: Other Transportation Options

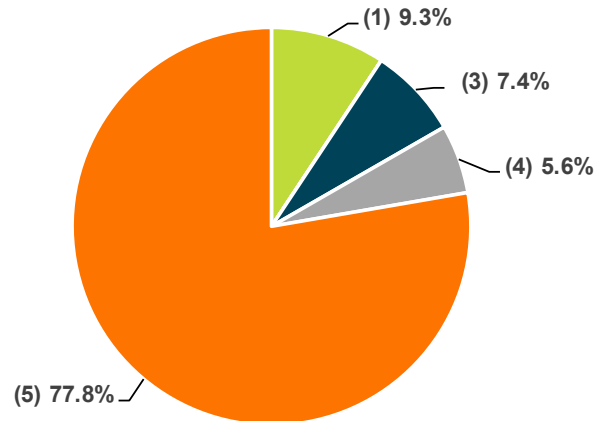
*If public transportation was not available, you would:*



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

Figure 8.11: Value of Hall County Transportation Today

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



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

Figure 8.12: Origin of Trip  
Where is your origin?

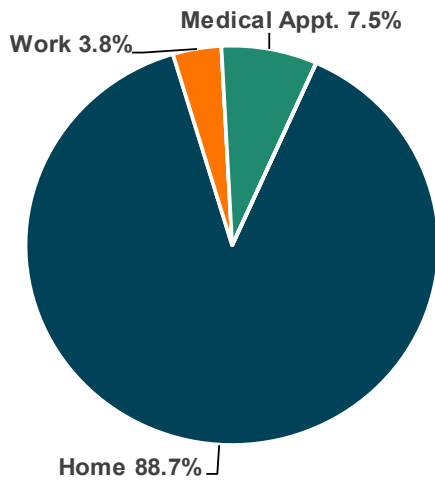


Figure 8.13: Destination of Trip  
Where is your destination?

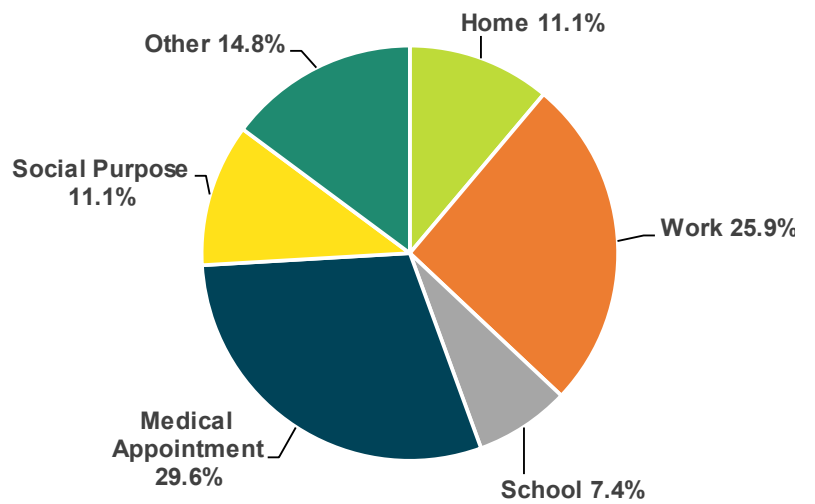


Figure 8.14: Availability of Vehicle  
Do you typically have a vehicle available for travel?

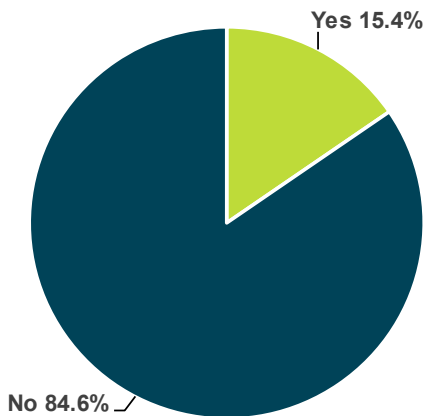
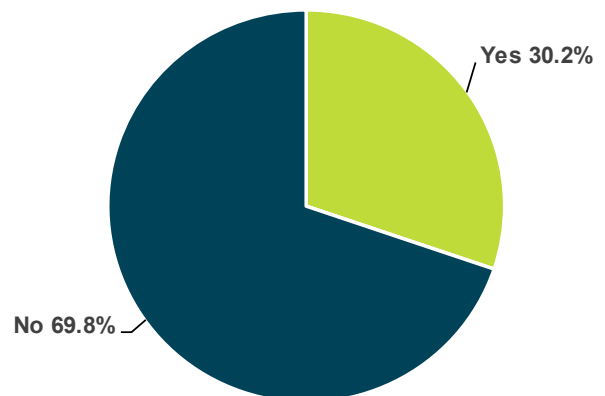


Figure 8.15: Possession of Driver's License  
Do you have a valid driver's license?



### 8.4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics

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

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

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

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

Figure 8.16: Characteristics - Household Income

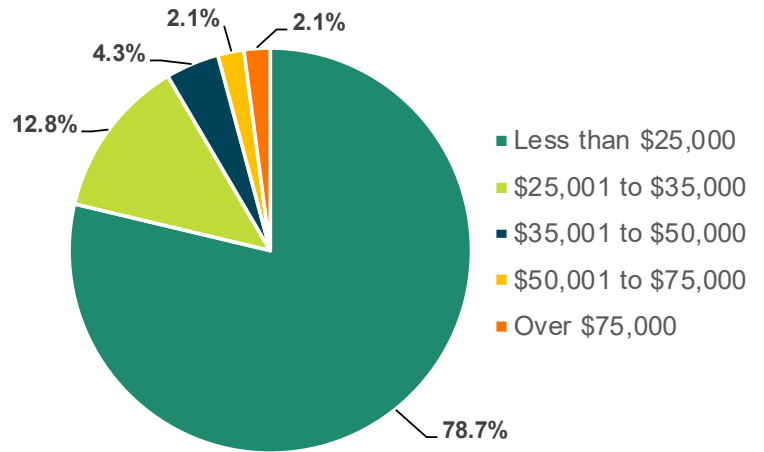


Figure 8.17: Characteristics - Age

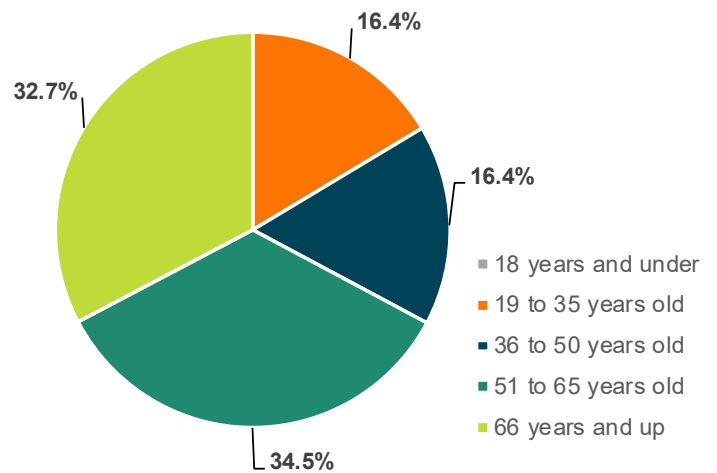


Figure 8.18: Characteristics - Employment Status

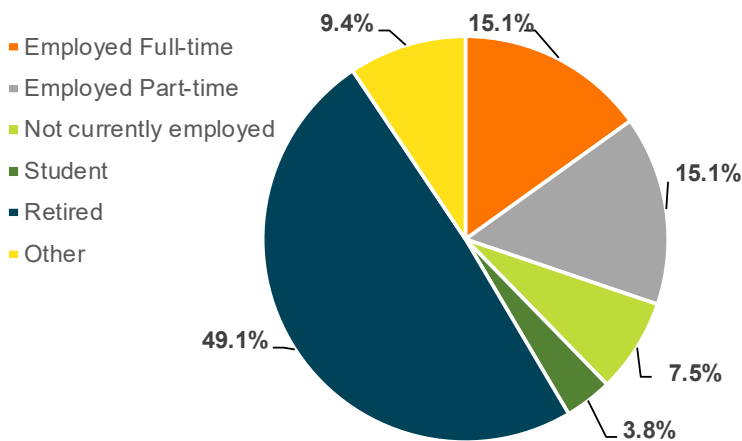
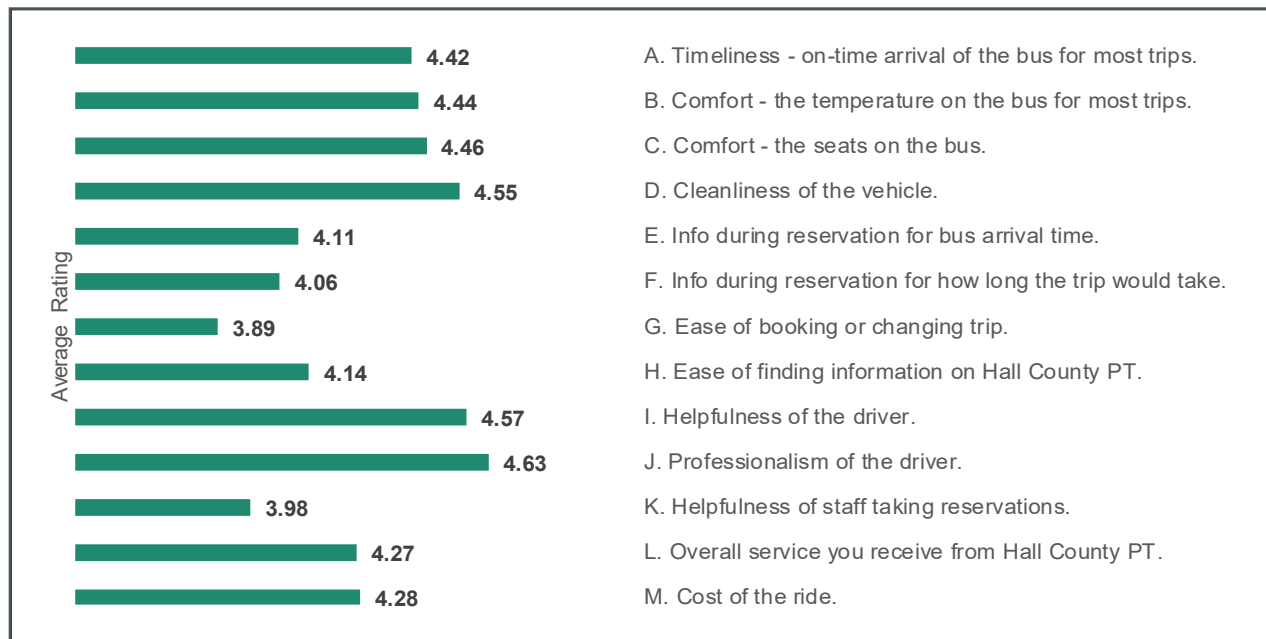


Figure 8.19 Aspects of Hall County Public Transportation

Please rate the following aspects of Hall County Public Transportation.



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

**Most Satisfied Aspects**

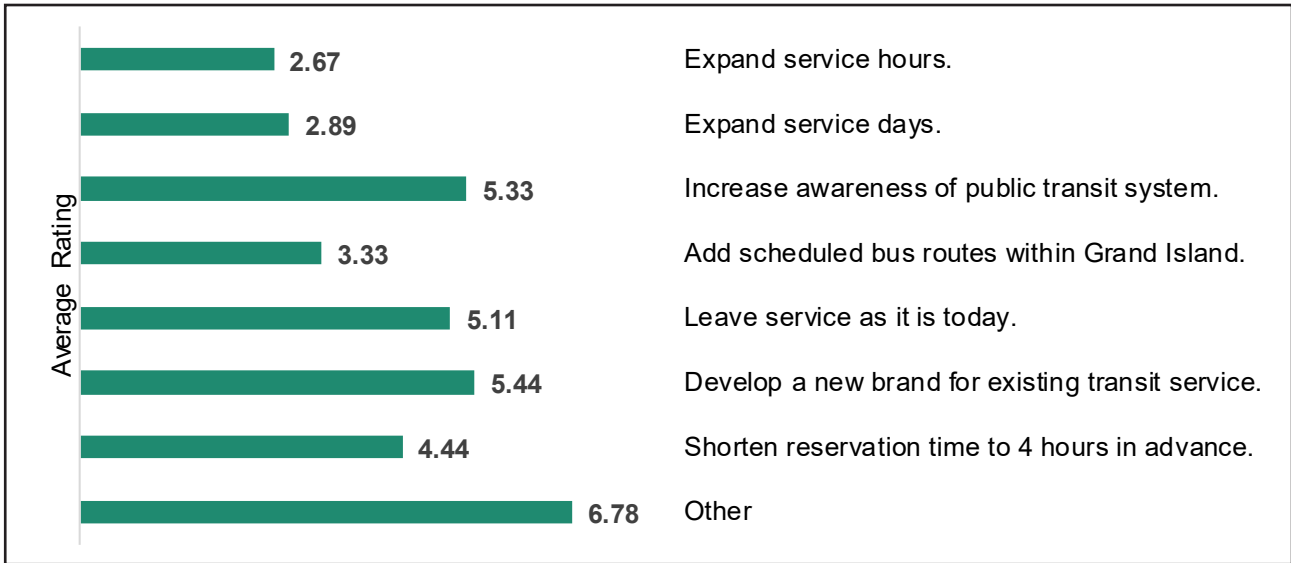
- Professionalism of the driver (4.63)
- Helpfulness of the driver (4.57)
- Cleanliness of the vehicle (4.55)
- Comfort - the seats of the bus (4.44)
- Comfort - the temperature of the bus (4.44)

**Least Satisfied Aspects**

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

Figure 8.20 Priority Improvements

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



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

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

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