



GVRTA Commuter Bus Service Strategic Operating and Capital Plan

Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority (GVRTA)

December 2024



Prepared By:

FEHR & PEERS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS THE PLAN?

The 2024 GVRTA Commuter Bus Service Strategic Operating and Capital Plan is a dynamic plan that looks at the commuter bus service for the next 5 years. The plan advances GVRTA's commuter bus service goal to "provide a long term and energy efficient public transit system between the north and south ends of the Highway 135 corridor".

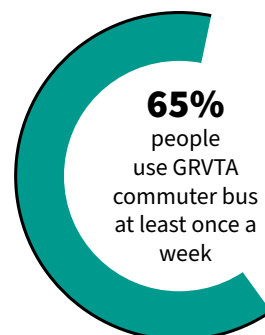
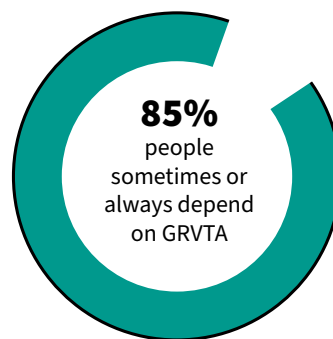
Since the plan was developed, the following items have occurred that may affect the prioritization and implementation of projects outlined in the plan:

- The Whetstone housing project has progressed.
- The Starview subdivision has headed towards sketch plan.
- The three roundabouts have been funded on Highway 135.
- GVRTA purchased the land for the enhanced bus stop and are moving towards a design.
- Mountain Express has begun their planning process.
- GVRTA has approved sharing in a local match for a second daily trip on the Denver/CB Bustang Outrider route.

WHY WAS THIS PLAN DEVELOPED?

GVRTA ridership has grown by **186%** from 2015 through 2023.

639 survey responses in addition to other outreach events and stakeholder interviews.



HOW IS GVRTA FUNDED?

- 1% sales tax within the GVRTA service area
- Federal and state funding typically cover:
 - 8% to 12% of operating expenses
 - 80% of capital expenses

GVRTA has been successful in pursuing and receiving federal and state funding. This funding is essential to operating and improving GVRTA's services. Any changes in federal and state funding can impact GVRTA's services and capital improvements.

PROJECTS

Projects were developed as a result of the planning process and community outreach. All projects meet the goal of GVRTA and help meet the needs of the growing community.





Top Priority – These projects advance the GVRTA goals and align with the needs of the community. They are considered a top priority for the GVRTA.

Secondary Priority – These projects provide secondary support to the top priority projects and existing GVRTA service, or they have a longer implementation timeline.



Service Expansion and Improvement Projects

Service expansion and improvement projects aim to improve the direct operations of the transit system.

	Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons	Winter and summer seasons add two evening runs. Continuous 15-minute frequencies during the peak three hours in the morning and evening in the winter.
	Enhance Marketing Efforts	Upgrade the website to be easier to navigate and the schedule easier to read, create an educational brochure to distribute to community leaders, partners, and organizations, and continue collaborative relationship with data vendors for an improved rider app experience.

Organizational and Internal Projects

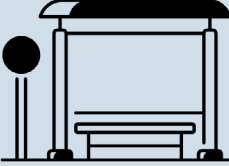


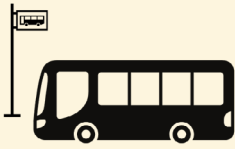
Organizational and internal projects are projects that will not directly impact riders but will improve the operations of GVRTA processes.

	Establish a Long-Term Vision	A long-term visioning plan involves various community stakeholders, looks toward the future, and recommends projects that may not be feasible within the near term but could be feasible in the future with the projected growth of both Gunnison Valley and GVRTA. This potentially includes reevaluating the vision, mission, and structure of the RTA to best serve the Gunnison Valley.
	Minor Routing Changes in Gunnison	Currently, the bus route through Gunnison includes a left turn from Teller Street to Georgia Avenue before turning right onto Colorado Street. This left turn can be difficult to make due to the narrow street configuration. GVRTA should consider making the left turn one block earlier at the wider Virginia Avenue.



Capital Projects

Capital projects include the physical infrastructure that would be needed to support the service expansion and improvement projects.

	Finish Upgrading Bus Stops	Three bus stops need to be upgraded with new shelters, lighting, and ADA access. The stops include the Gunnison Rec Center, 11th & Virginia, and Southbound Crested Butte 4-Way.
	Design and Construct and Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison	Design and construct a 1,200 square foot enhanced bus stop with GVRTA offices and a dispatch office on the recently bought lot near the existing Safeway stop. Key amenities the site will include are a passenger waiting area, restrooms, room for three buses to stop, a dispatch office, a GVRTA staff office, and staff/rider parking spaces.
	Provide more Park-and-Ride Locations	Providing more park-and-ride locations will help increase the accessibility of GVRTA services for those who do not live close to an existing bus stop. Per input from municipal partners, park-and-rides also have the benefit of being lower cost as a first/last mile solution than providing a local transit service (such as the originally proposed microtransit services).
	Install Bus stop Near Property Owners Association (POA) at Crested Butte South	An additional flag stop at Teocalli Road and Elcho Avenue, which is two blocks from the Crested Butte (CB) South business district, is planned to be installed in 2029. With projected development in CB South, it will be important to provide direct and convenient access to the regional transit provider.

Essential Projects

The essential projects listed below are needed for GVRTA to continue providing service.

- Replace the bus fleet per the bus fleet replacement plan.
- Identify requirements for future contracted operations.
- Incorporate the north valley bus storage facility into operations.
- Coordinate with other regional planning efforts.

Coordinated Projects

Coordinated projects are transportation-related projects that GVRTA would be a key partner but would not lead nor fund. These projects were identified by the community as important projects, but they do not fall within GVRTA's purview. These projects should be explored in depth in the long term vision for GVRTA and the surrounding communities.

- Coordinate with Mountain Express and Bustang.
- Establish a circulator route in Gunnison.
- Establish a circulator route in Crested Butte South.
- Establish micromobility services for first/last mile connections.
- Establish Brush Creek first/last mile connections.

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Prepared for:
Gunnison Valley
Regional
Transportation
Authority (GVRTA)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority (GVRTA) was formed in November 2002 by a vote of the residents of Gunnison, Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte and several unincorporated areas of Gunnison County. Among improving air transportation and providing senior and human services transportation in Gunnison County, a part of the RTA's current vision is providing long term and energy efficient public transit along the Highway 135 (CO-135) corridor.

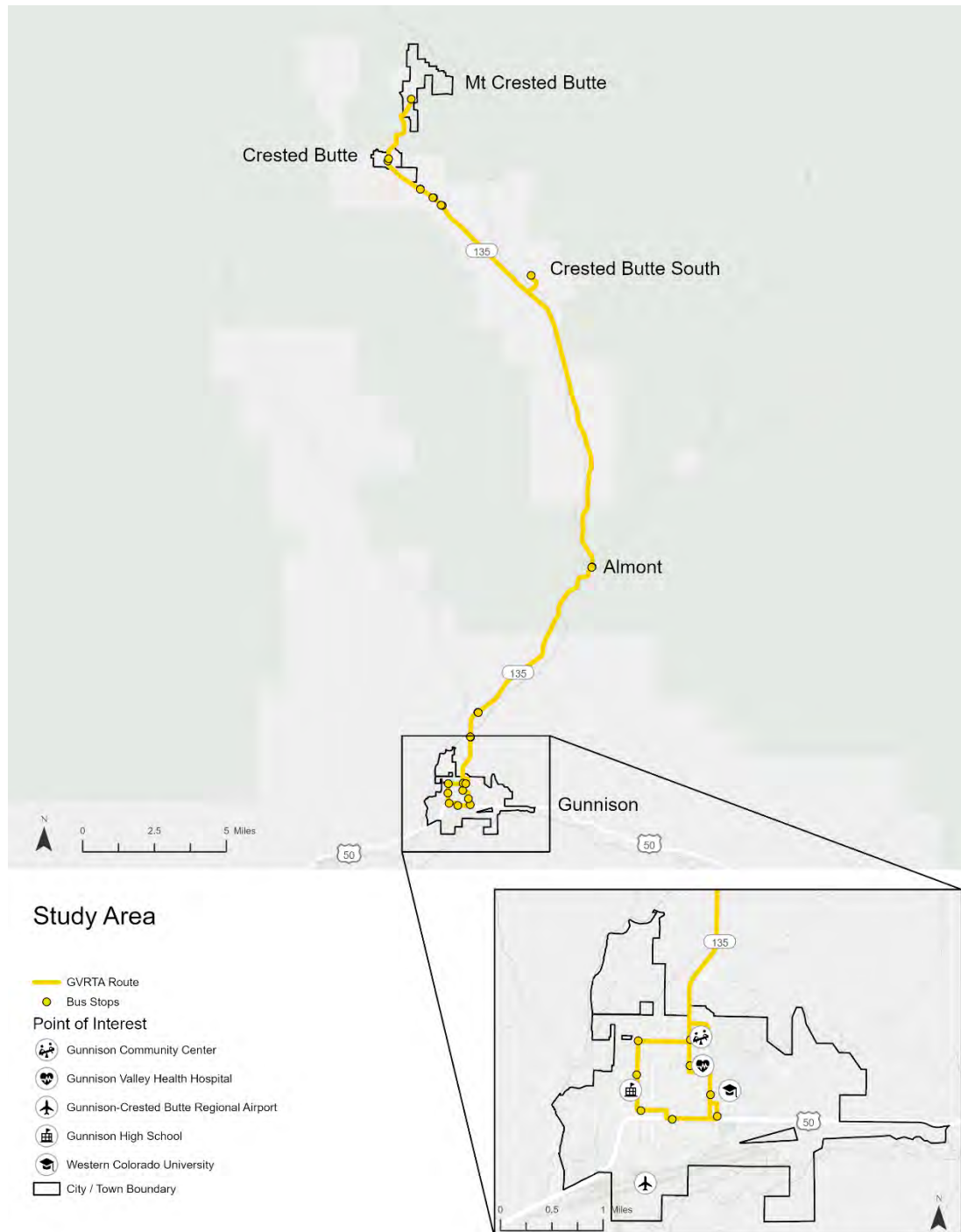
Plan Purpose

The last GVRTA Strategic Operating and Capital plan was completed in 2016, and many of the plan's recommendations have been implemented. The commuter service has grown significantly in terms of the number of service hours and passengers per year since the last plan. As a result, this update to the plan focuses on the commuter bus service by documenting changes since the last plan, seeking input from the public, and defining the improvements to GVRTA's services over the next five years.

Study Area

GVRTA operates in southwest Colorado in Gunnison County. The GVRTA boundary includes all of Gunnison County except for the towns of Marble, Somerset, Pitkin, and Ohio City. For this project, the study area includes Gunnison, Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte, and any area along Highway 135, which are the primary areas the commuter bus serves. **Figure 1** shows the GVRTA study area along with the existing commuter bus route, stops, and points of interest within Gunnison. There are 25 stops along the GVTRA route including nine stops in Gunnison, two stops in Crested Butte, one stop in Mt. Crested Butte, and 13 stops along the route between Gunnison and Crested Butte.

Figure 1: GVRTA Study Area



Chapter 2: Demographic Review

This chapter documents a comprehensive demographic review in the GVRTA study area (see **Figure 1** for the study area) to understand the current demographic and travel patterns of the GVRTA community and how they have changed since the 2016 Strategic Plan. In addition to analyzing the characteristics in the previous plan, Fehr & Peers also analyzed ridership data, transit access, previous planning efforts, and other existing transit services to better understand the community and GVRTA's performance. This information helps identify the travel markets and needs to be addressed by GVRTA's future efforts. These travel markets will then be used in Chapter 5 in evaluating how well the various proposed projects and recommendations are accommodated and served.

Demographics

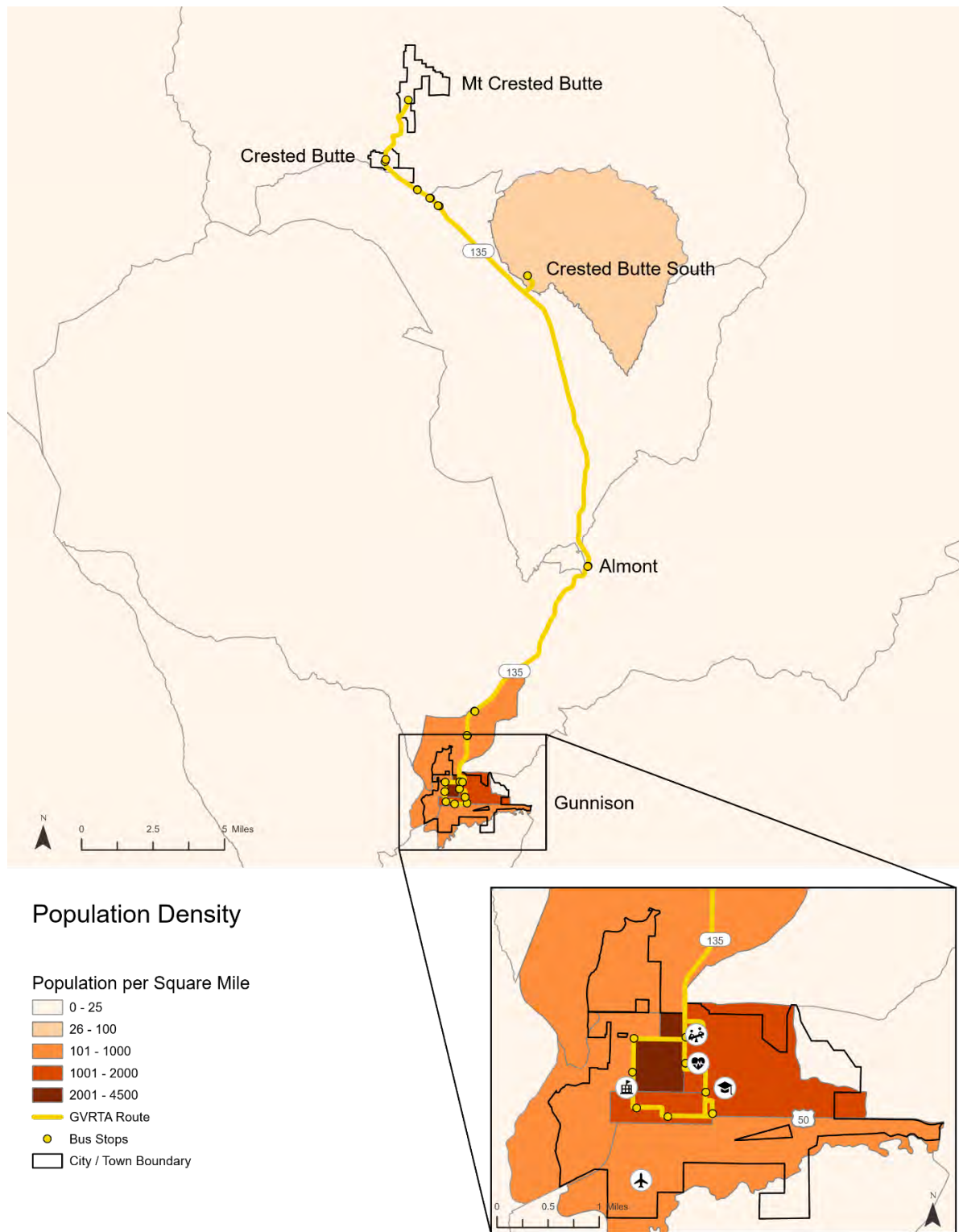
Demographic data was obtained from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year detailed table of the US Census Bureau from 2017-2021. All the data is at the census block group level, except for disability data, which is at the census tract level. Fehr & Peers analyzed and compared the following demographic data to the 2016 Strategic Plan:

- Population Density (**Figure 2**)
- Limited Vehicle Access (**Figure 3**)
- Youth Population (18 and Under) (**Figure 4**)
- Older Adult Population (65 and Over) (**Figure 5**)
- Population with a Disability (**Figure 6**)
- Population Below the Federal Poverty Line (**Figure 7**)
- Non-White Population (**Figure 8**)
- Limited English Proficiency (**Figure 9**)
- Limited Internet Access (**Figure 10**)

Population Density

Figure 2 shows the population density within the GVRTA study area, which measures the number of people for every square mile. The highest population density is found within central Gunnison, which is the same as in the 2016 study. Outside of Gunnison, there is a low population density, due to the more rural nature of Gunnison County. The census tract that contains Crested Butte South is an area that has grown since the 2016 study and now has a higher population density than the census tract that contains Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte. The denser areas are also typically where more destinations are located, and an effective transit system must be able to provide transportation effectively and efficiently to and from these dense areas.

Figure 2: Population Density

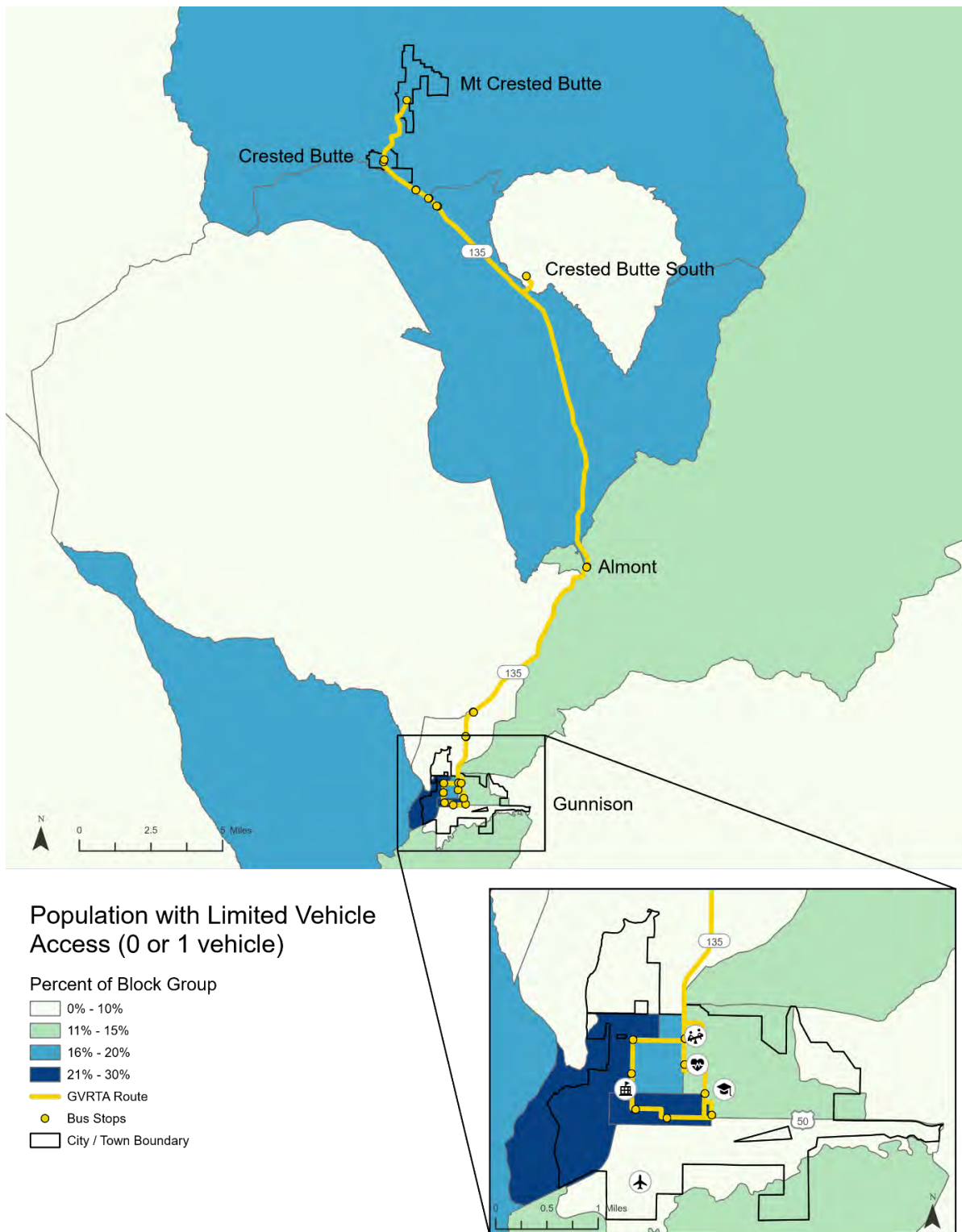


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Limited Vehicle Access

Households that have limited access to a vehicle are more likely to depend on transit. **Figure 3** shows the percentage of each block group's households that have limited access to a vehicle, which this study defines as households with zero or one vehicle. Although the last study only looked at areas with zero vehicles, larger households often face transportation challenges when they only have access to one vehicle. The highest percentage of households that have limited access to a vehicle are in central and southwest Gunnison, which are similar areas as in the 2016 study.

Figure 3: Limited Vehicle Access

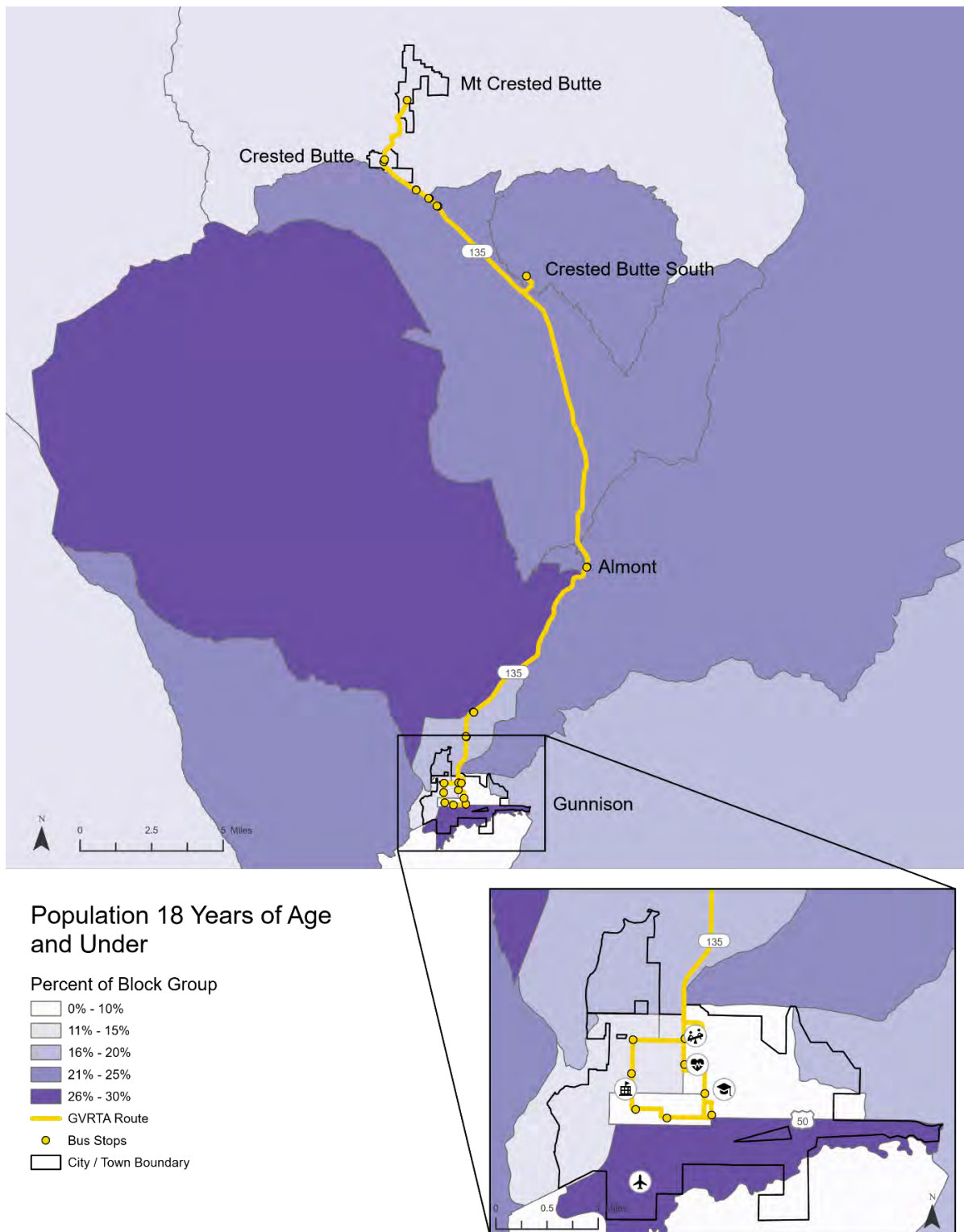


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Youth Population (18 and Under)

Figure 4 shows the percent of the block group population that is 18 years of age and under. The highest percentage of youth population can be found in southern Gunnison and a block group between Gunnison and Crested Butte. This has changed from the 2016 study where the highest youth population was in central and northern Gunnison. People 18 years of age and under are more likely to depend on transit for transportation due to either not yet having a driver's license or not having access to a personal vehicle.

Figure 4: Youth Population (18 and Under)

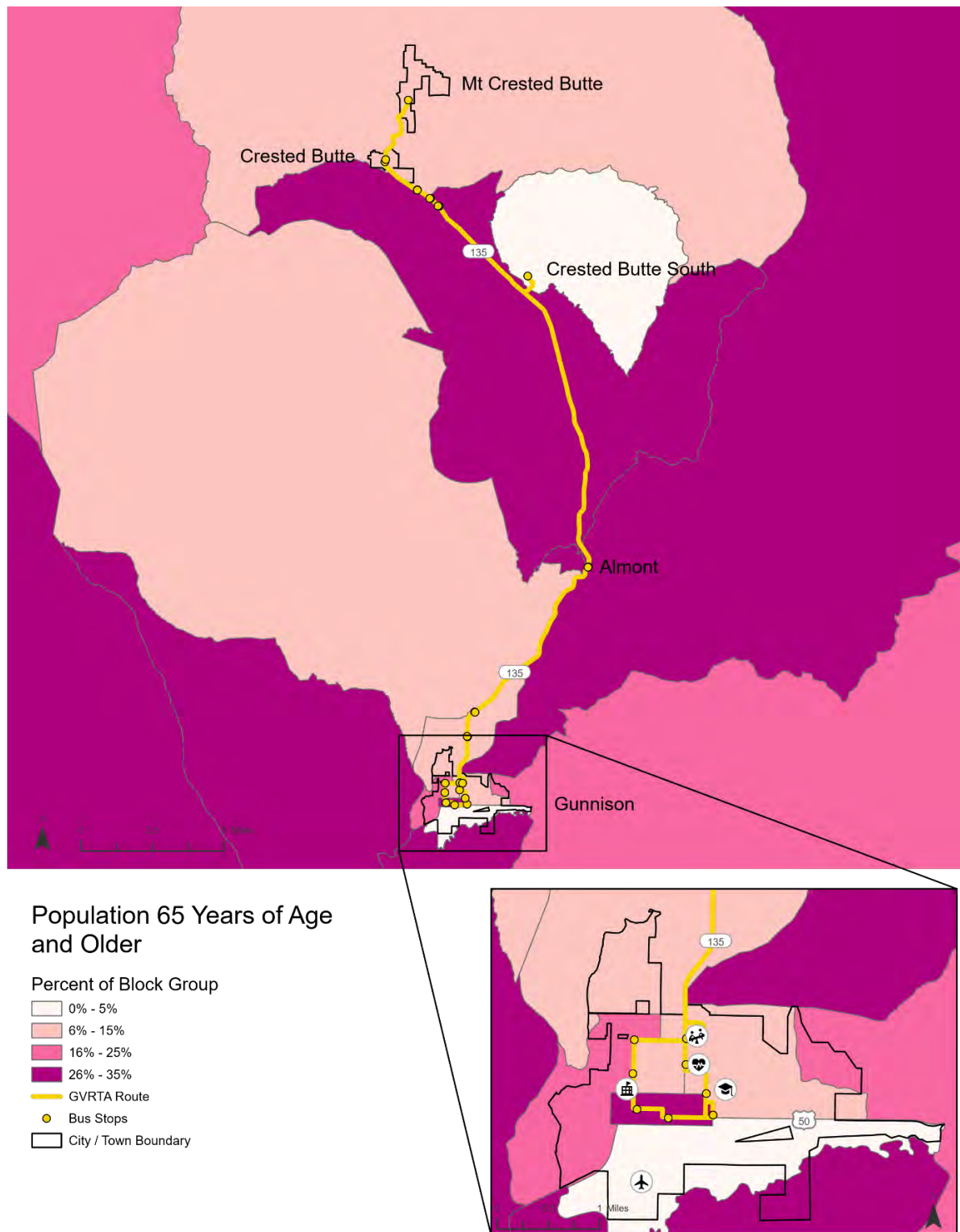


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Older Adult Population (65 and Older)

Figure 5 shows the percentage of the block group that is 65 years and older. The highest concentration of older adults can be found in central Gunnison and in unincorporated Gunnison County. This has changed from the 2016 study; in 2016, there was a higher population of older adults in Gunnison and now there is a higher concentration of older adults in unincorporated Gunnison County. Like youth populations, older adults are more likely to depend on transit to access destinations like community centers, grocery stores, and medical centers. This can be for several reasons, including mobility and health issues, inability to drive, or a desire to limit the risks associated with driving. GVRTA does have a Senior Bus Service that can be scheduled in advance.

Figure 5: Older Adult Population (65 and Older)

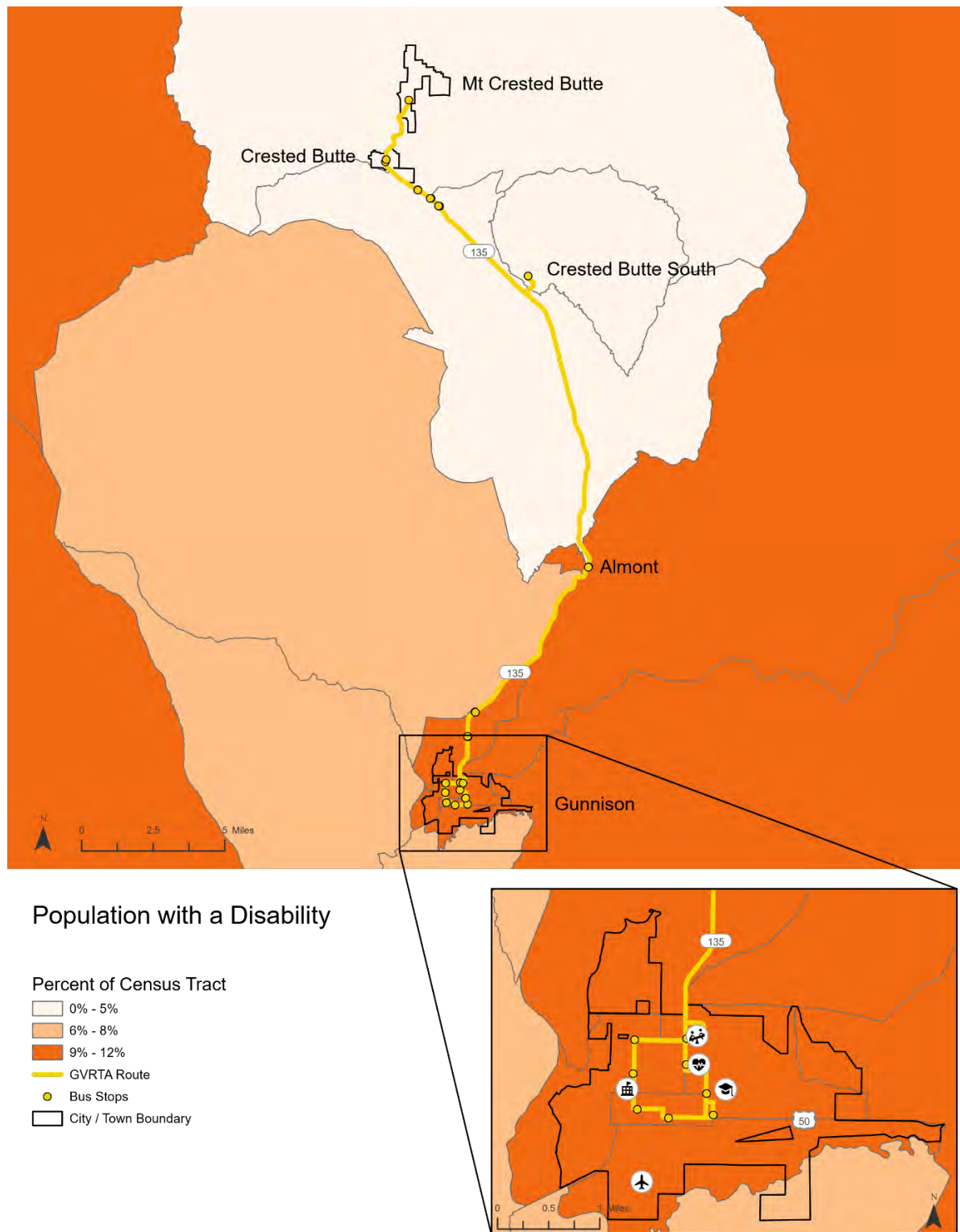


Source: U.S. Census ACS, 2017-2021

Population with a Disability

Figure 6 shows the percentage of the census tract that has a disability. The City of Gunnison and unincorporated Gunnison County have the highest concentrations of people with a disability, which is similar to the 2016 study. People with a disability may rely more on public transportation because the disability may prevent the person from being able to drive. The GVRTA buses can accommodate wheelchairs but because GVRTA is a commuter service, it is not required to provide ADA paratransit services, such as deviating from the route.

Figure 6: Population with a Disability

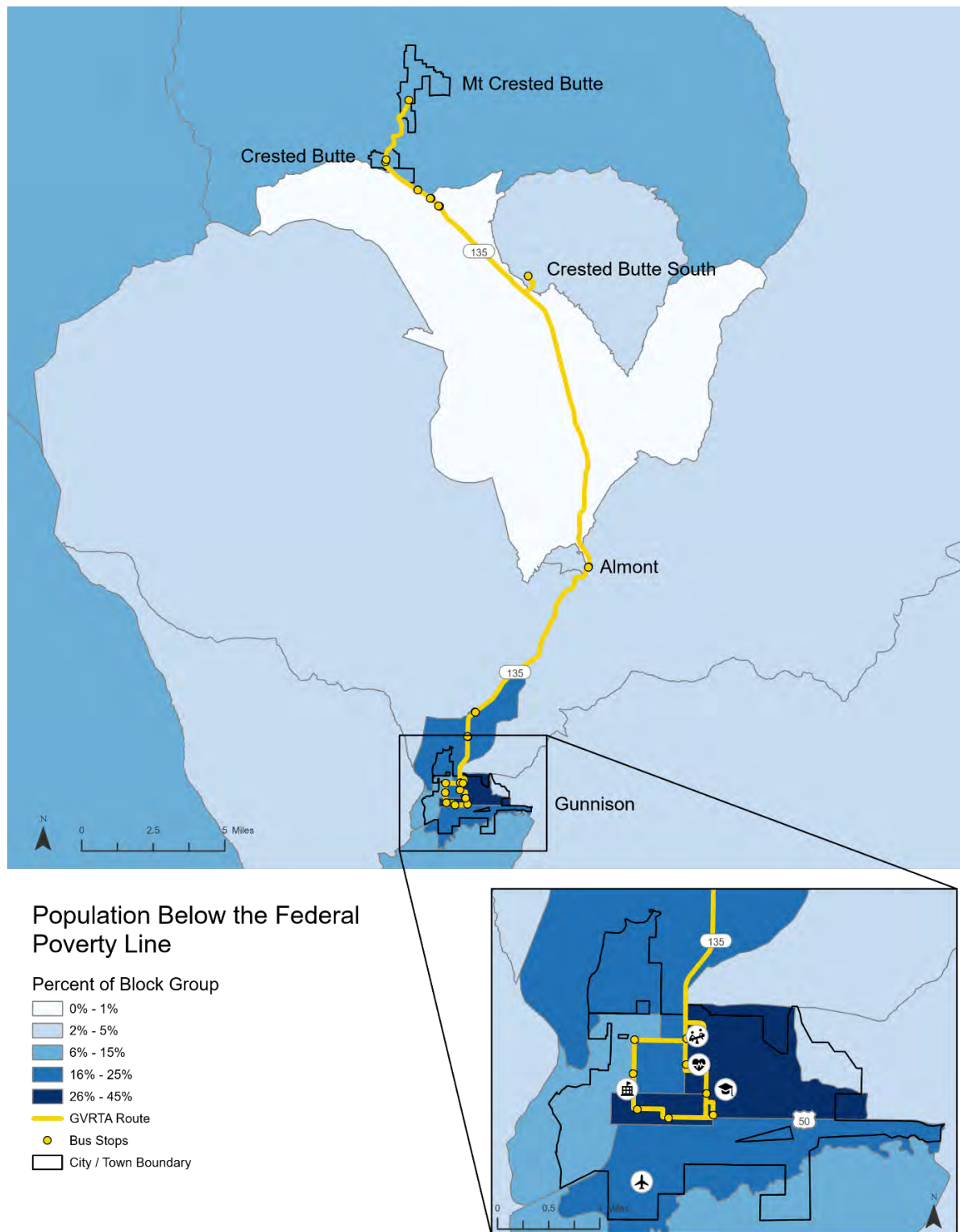


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Population Below the Federal Poverty Line

Figure 7 shows the percentage of the block group below the federal poverty line. The highest concentration of low-income population lives in central and northeastern Gunnison. The census block in northeast Gunnison has the highest percentage of the population below the federal poverty line with 43% of the population. In central Gunnison, 39% of the population is below the federal poverty line. Seven out of nine bus stops in Gunnison live in the census blocks with the highest percentage of low-income residents. The low-income population tends to depend on transit more than the population with more disposable income, and GVRTA's fare-free service provides a critical advantage for low-income populations.

Figure 7: Population Below the Federal Poverty Line

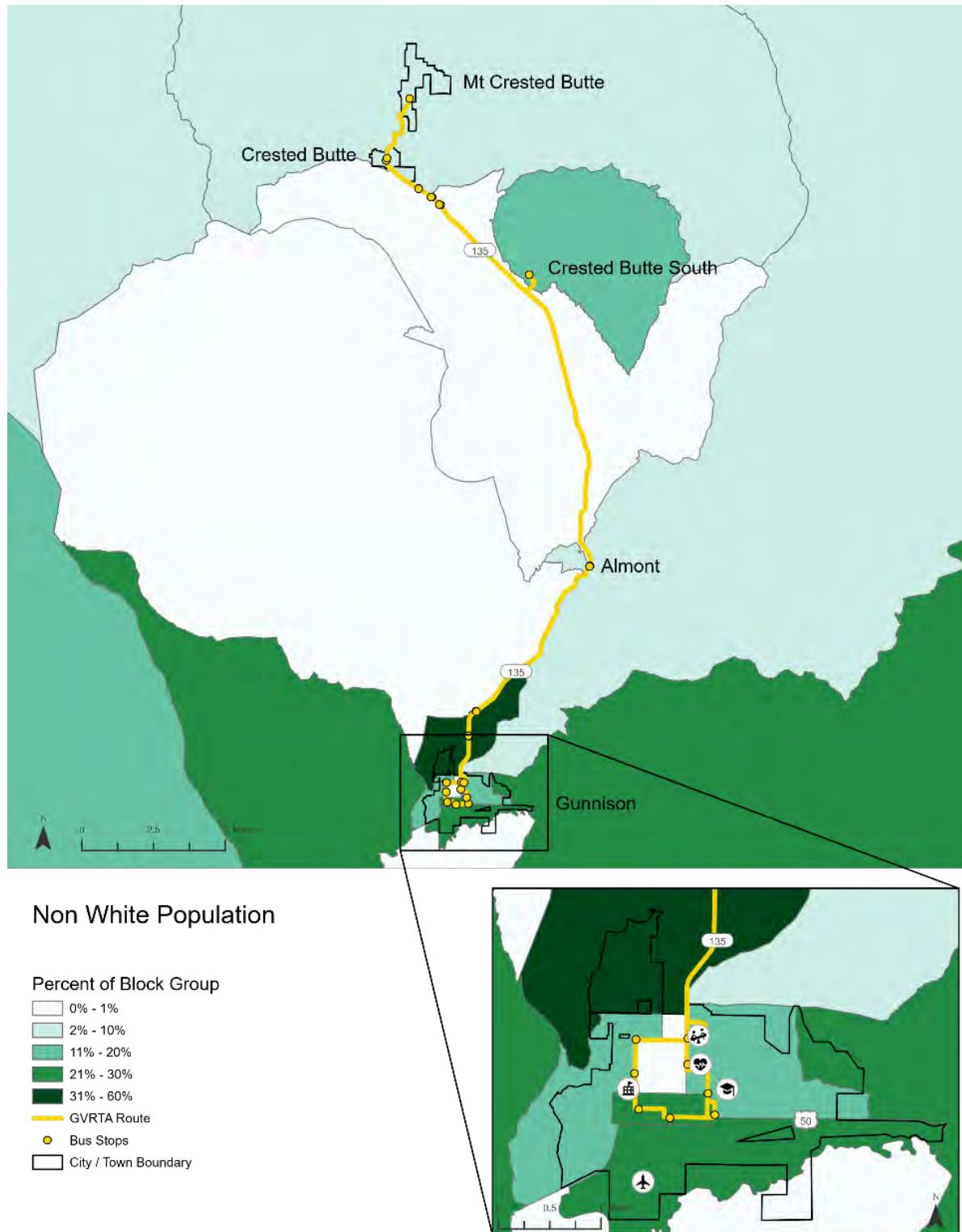


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Non-White Population

Figure 8 shows the percentage of the block group that identifies as non-white. The block group with the highest percentage of non-white residents is in northern Gunnison on either side of Highway 135. Although this factor does not directly affect the ability to access transit, this is a factor that is tracked for purposes of equity in transit access. This factor should be accounted for in ensuring that GVRTA is providing service to historically underserved communities.

Figure 8: Non-White Population

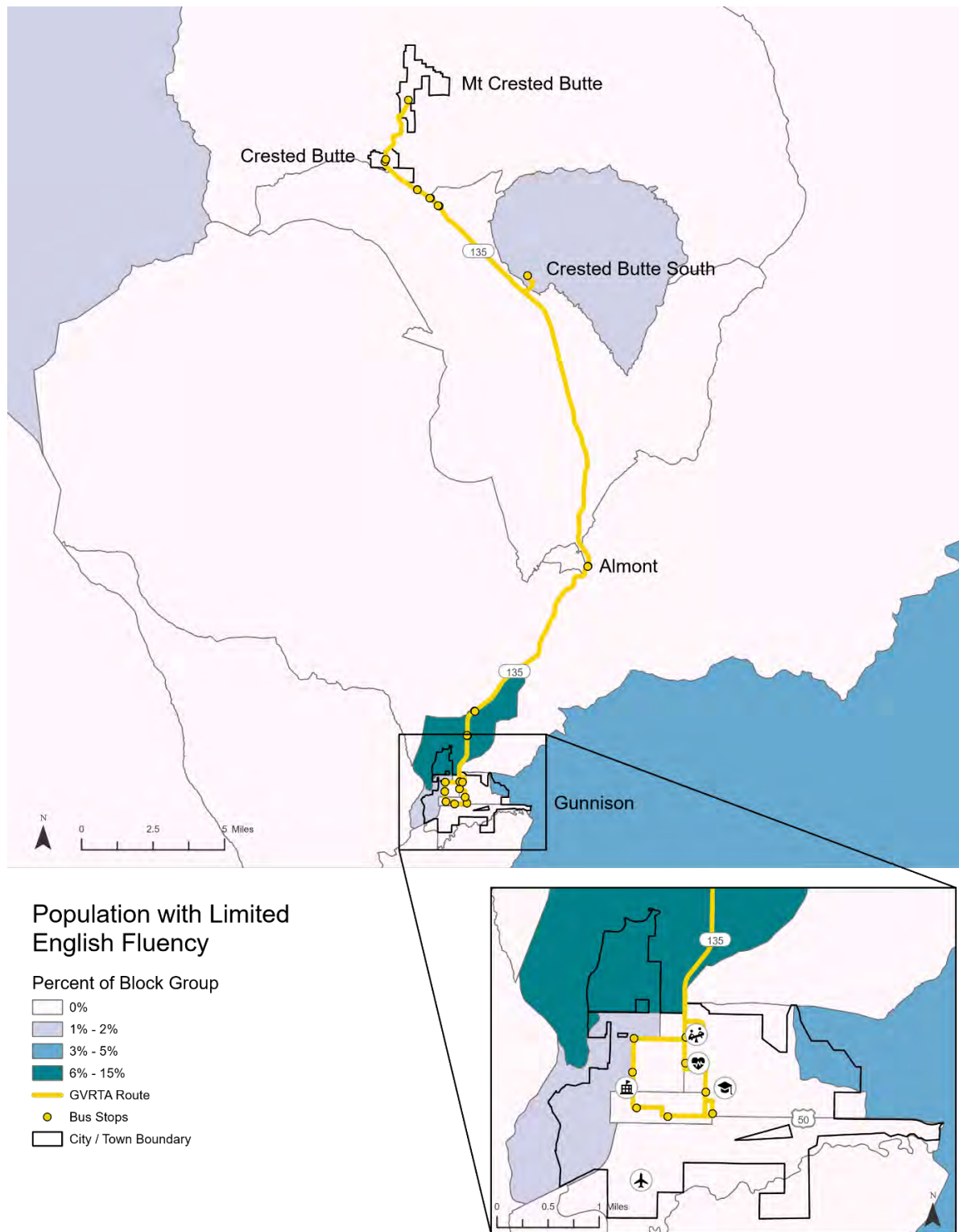


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Limited English Proficiency

Figure 9 shows the percentage of the block group that has limited English proficiency. The block group that has the most limited English proficiency is in northern Gunnison on either side of Highway 135, which is the same block group that has the highest percentage of non-white residents. Part of an effective transit system is meeting the needs of the population it serves, including language accessibility. This metric was not evaluated in the 2016 study.

Figure 9: Limited English Proficiency

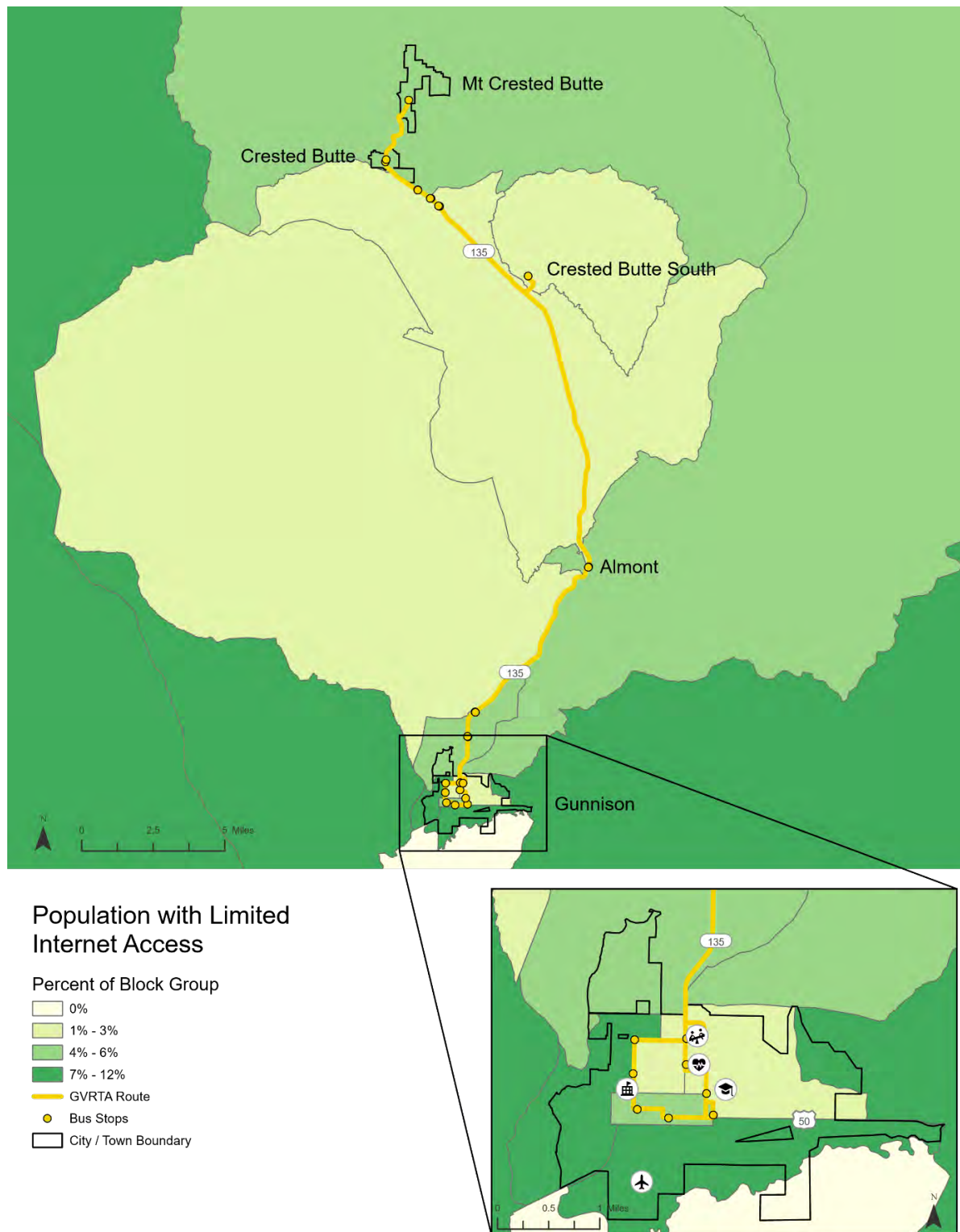


Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Limited Internet Access

Figure 10 shows the percentage of the block group that has limited access to internet. Although this factor does not directly affect transit usage, limited internet access can be correlated to lower income and other equity factors. This also means that communicating transit updates, changes, or other traveler information can be more difficult when it is only online. This metric was not evaluated in the 2016 study.

Figure 10: Limited Internet Access



Source: U.S. Census ACS, 2017-2021

Economic and Commuting Characteristics

Economic and commuting characteristics were evaluated using U.S. Census data and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data. These characteristics help understand what types of trips GVRTA may be able to support, based on the existing travel patterns.

Employment Sectors

Table 1 shows the job sectors in Gunnison County. The largest sector in Gunnison County is Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services with 21% of employment followed by Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance with 20% of the employment. Considering that many jobs within those top two categories (40% of the jobs in Gunnison County) are more likely to be in-person, transit can be more successful when it reliably provides access both for the employees and the patrons of the businesses.

Table 1: Job Sectors in Gunnison County

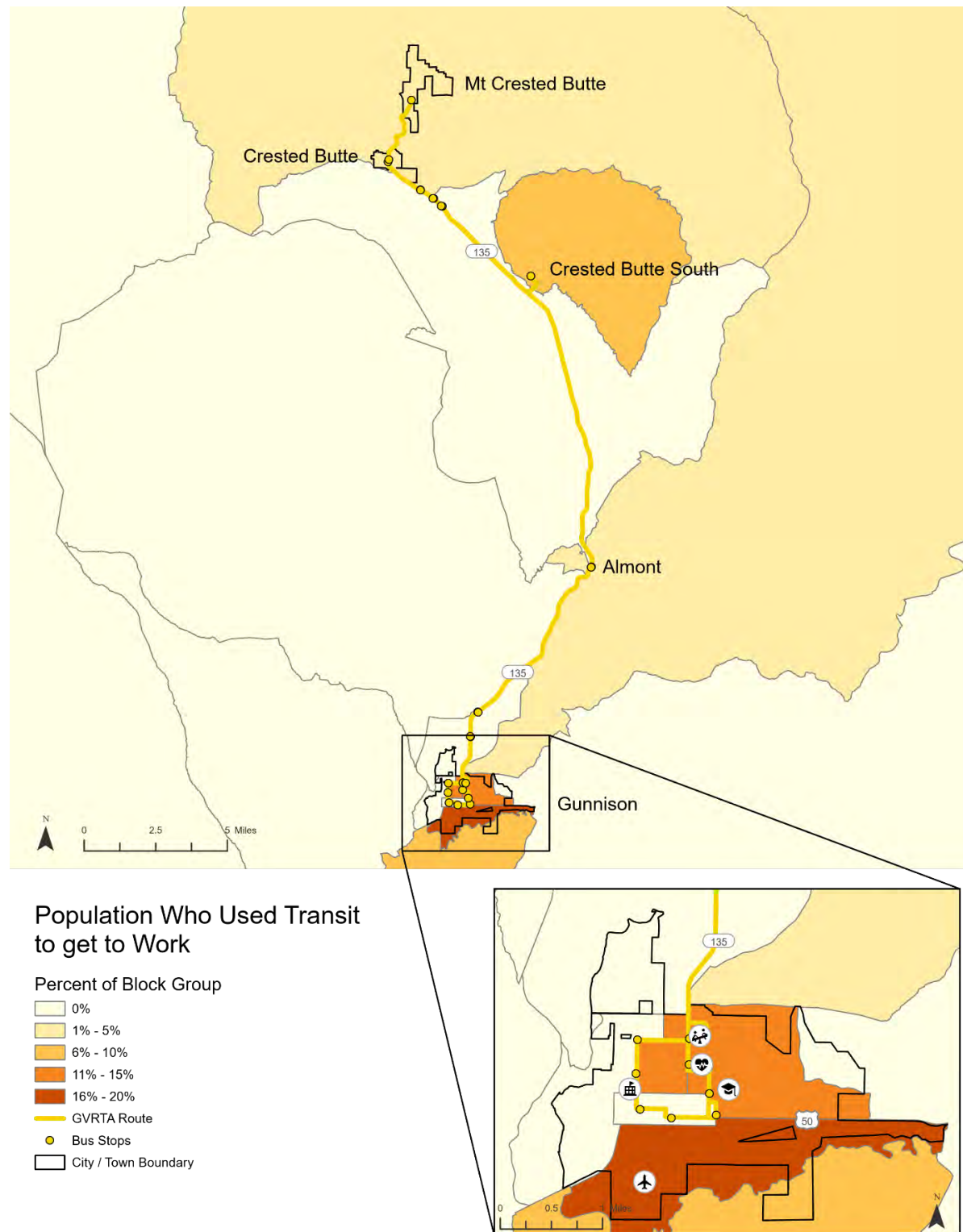
Job Sector	Employees	Percent
<i>Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services</i>	2,180	21%
<i>Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance</i>	2,047	20%
<i>Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services</i>	1,176	11%
<i>Retail Trade</i>	1,118	11%
<i>Construction</i>	1,057	10%
<i>Other Services, Except Public Administration</i>	561	5%
<i>Finance and Insurance, and Real estate and Rental and Leasing</i>	552	5%
<i>Public Administration</i>	515	5%
<i>Other</i>	1,208	12%
Total Jobs	10,414	100%

Source: U.S Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022. Table DP03.

Commuting Characteristics

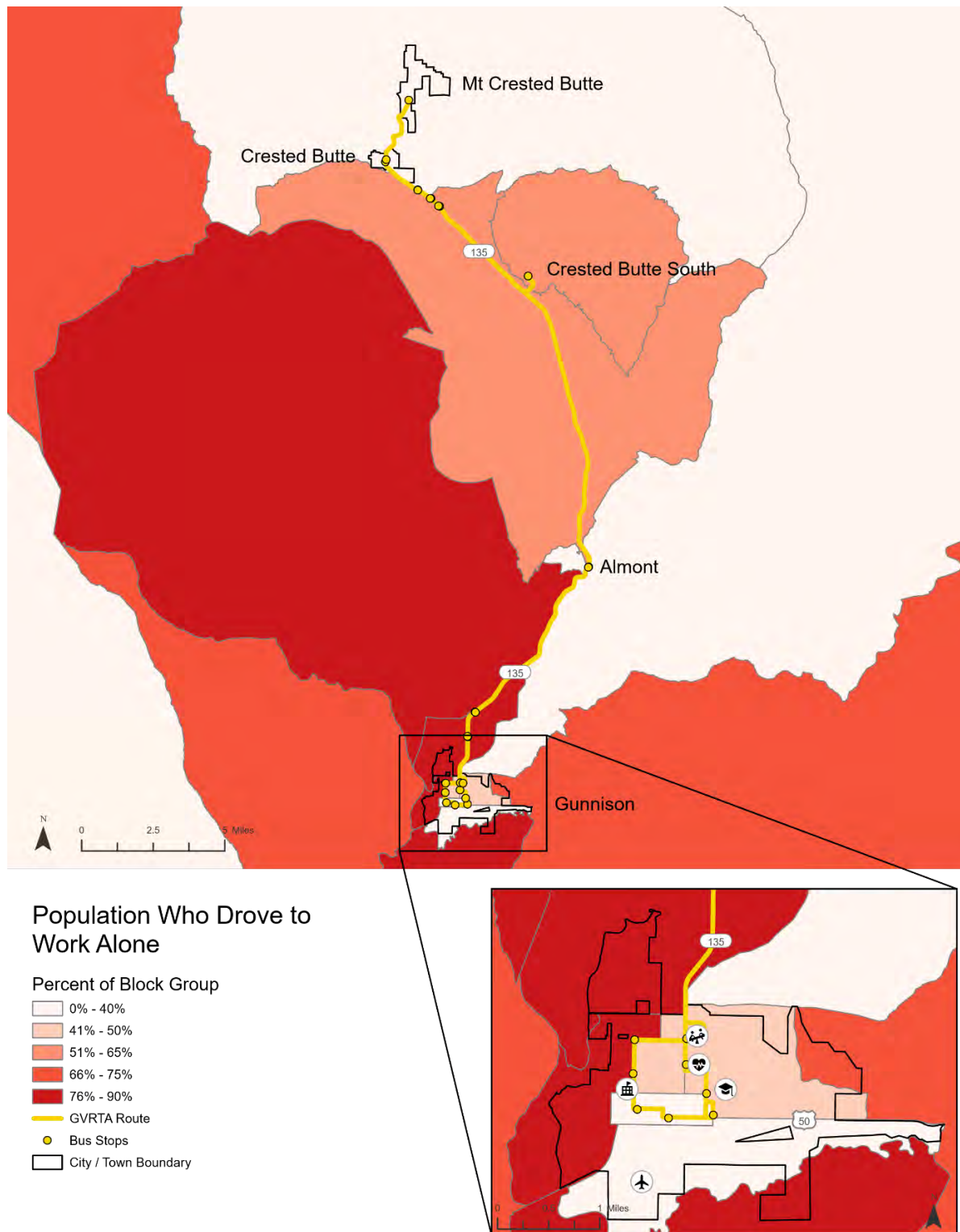
Commuting characteristics, such as the mode of travel to work, distance traveled to work, and home/work location are described in this section. **Figure 11** shows the population that uses transit to get to work. The City of Gunnison has the highest percentage of people that use transit to get to work in the study area, which is not surprising, knowing that GVRTA services are the predominant way people will use transit if they choose to use transit to get to work. **Figure 12** shows people who drove alone to get to work, and unincorporated Gunnison County has the highest percentage of people that drove to work alone. This inverse relationship between those who take transit compared to those who drive alone is partially a correlation to where transit services exist. In addition, this pattern shows that there may also be barriers that may prevent someone from taking transit. Although this is not shown in the demographic data, and is better informed by the public outreach, these barriers can include service frequency, bus stop location, availability of a parking location, first/last mile connections, and the need for personal vehicle use as part of the job (such as construction or maintenance).

Figure 11: Population Who Used Transit to Get to Work



Source: U.S Census ACS, 2017-2021

Figure 12: Population Who Drove to Work Alone



Source: U.S. Census ACS, 2017-2021

Distance Traveled to Work

The distance traveled to work analysis shows the distance between residence and employment locations for workers employed or living in the selected area. For this analysis, the City of Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte were used as areas for comparison. **Table 2** shows the results of the distance traveled to work analysis. In all the areas, the highest percentage of workers and people living in the area commute less than 10 miles. According to the census, the average time to travel to work is 17 minutes.

Table 2: Distance Traveled to Work

Distance Traveled	Gunnison		Crested Butte		Mt. Crested Butte	
	People living in area to work	People working in area to home	People living in area to work	People working in area to home	People living in area to work	People working in area to home
Less than 10 miles	45.7%	66.2%	52.1%	32.7%	52.1%	30.7%
10 – 24 miles	16.4%	6.6%	9.2%	28.6%	7.7%	23.2%
25 – 50 miles	2.4%	3.4%	2%	4.2%	3.2%	9.9%
50+ miles	35.5%	23.7%	36.7%	34.5%	37%	36.1%

Source: LEHD, 2021

Commute Patterns

The inflow/outflow analysis shows the number of workers flowing in to, out of, and within a selected area. For this analysis, the City of Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte were used as areas for comparison. **Table 3** shows the results of the inflow/outflow analysis. Gunnison has an almost equal split between workers that live and work in the area and workers that live outside of the area. In Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, most of the workers do not live there, which means that employee access to these towns is a transportation need, and something that can be fulfilled by GVRTA's services.

Table 3: Inflow/Outflow Analysis

Inflow/Outflow of Jobs	Gunnison		Crested Butte		Mt. Crested Butte	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Employed in Area	3,407	100%	1,542	100%	684	100%
Employed in Area but Live Outside	1,910	56.1%	1,380	89.5%	649	94.9%
Employed in Area and Live in Area	1,497	43.9%	162	10.5%	35	5.1%
Live in Area	3,551	100%	607	100%	311	100%
Live in Area but Employed Outside	2,054	57.8%	445	73.3%	276	88.7%
Live in Area and Employed in Area	1,497	42.2%	162	26.7%	35	11.3%

Source: LEHD, 2021

Work/Home Destination Analysis

The work/home destination analysis shows the home or work locations of workers employed or living in the selected area. **Table 4** displays the results of the analysis. In the City of Gunnison, 44% of the workers live in Gunnison and 54% of the workers live in a different location that is not Crested Butte or Mt. Crested Butte. In Crested Butte, 19% of the workers live in the City of Gunnison and 65% of the workers live in a different location that is not Crested Butte or Mt. Crested Butte. In Mt. Crested Butte, 20% of the workers live in the City of Gunnison and 64% live in a different location that is not Crested Butte or Mt. Crested Butte. These numbers show that a significant portion of the workers in Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte live in Gunnison, and again offer insight into the important role GVRTA can play in this commuting pattern.

Table 4: Work/Home Destination Analysis

	Gunnison		Crested Butte		Mt. Crested Butte	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Employment Location (where residents in the area work)						
Gunnison	1,497	42%	41	7%	27	9%
Crested Butte	290	8%	162	27%	90	29%
Mt. Crested Butte	134	4%	75	13%	35	11%
All Other Locations	1,630	46%	329	53%	159	51%
Residence Location (where workers in the area live)						
Gunnison	1,497	44%	290	19%	134	20%
Crested Butte	41	1%	162	10%	75	11%
Mt. Crested Butte	27	1%	90	6%	35	5%
All Other Locations	1,842	54%	1,000	65%	440	64%

Source: LEHD, 2021

Existing GVRTA Service

GVRTA provides a year-round free bus transporting residents, employees, and visitors between Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte. The RTA currently contracts with Alpine Express to operate both northbound (NB) and southbound (SB) directions from 5 AM to midnight.

GVRTA passenger trip numbers have grown by almost 300% in less than a decade. In 2016, the RTA provided 11 trips per day in the summer and 17 ran in the winter of 2016-2017, totaling 8,000 trips annually. In summer 2023, the RTA ran 28 trips every 30-50 minutes daily and 41 trips every 30-35 minutes daily in the winter with a total of 22,000 trips in 2023. The summer 2024 schedule increased the number of trips to 33 trips, and 41 trips is the current maximum number of trips with the existing fleet, except for possibly extending the service earlier or later into the day.

The NB direction serves 17 stops in a roughly one-hour trip between Gunnison Recreation Center and Mt. Crested Butte Transit Center. When the bus travels in the SB direction, it serves 10 stops in about 46 minutes between Mt. Crested Butte and Gunnison. Including bus driver layover time, the current total run time is two hours and five minutes. Within Gunnison, the bus acts as a circulator before traveling to Mt. Crested Butte. During the winter schedule, the first NB bus runs at 5:21 AM and arrives at 6:25 AM in Mt. Crested Butte, and the SB bus leaves at 6:40 AM and arrives at 7:26 AM in Gunnison. The last NB bus leaves at 10:11 PM arriving at 11:15 AM, then traveling south at 11:30 AM arriving in Gunnison at 12:16 AM. Both summer and winter schedules are described in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Existing Transit Service Span and Frequency

Route	Route Description	Service Hours		Service Frequency Peak (Off-Peak)	
		Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter
NB	Gunnison to Mt. Crested Butte	5:21 AM – 11:15 PM	5:21 AM – 11:17 PM	AM: 30-35 PM: 15-20 (30-50)	15-20 (30-35)
SB	Mt. Crested Butte to Gunnison	6:40 AM – 12:16 AM	6:40 AM – 12:16 AM	AM: 30-35 PM: 15-20 (30-50)	15-20 (30-35)

Source: GVRTA

System Coverage

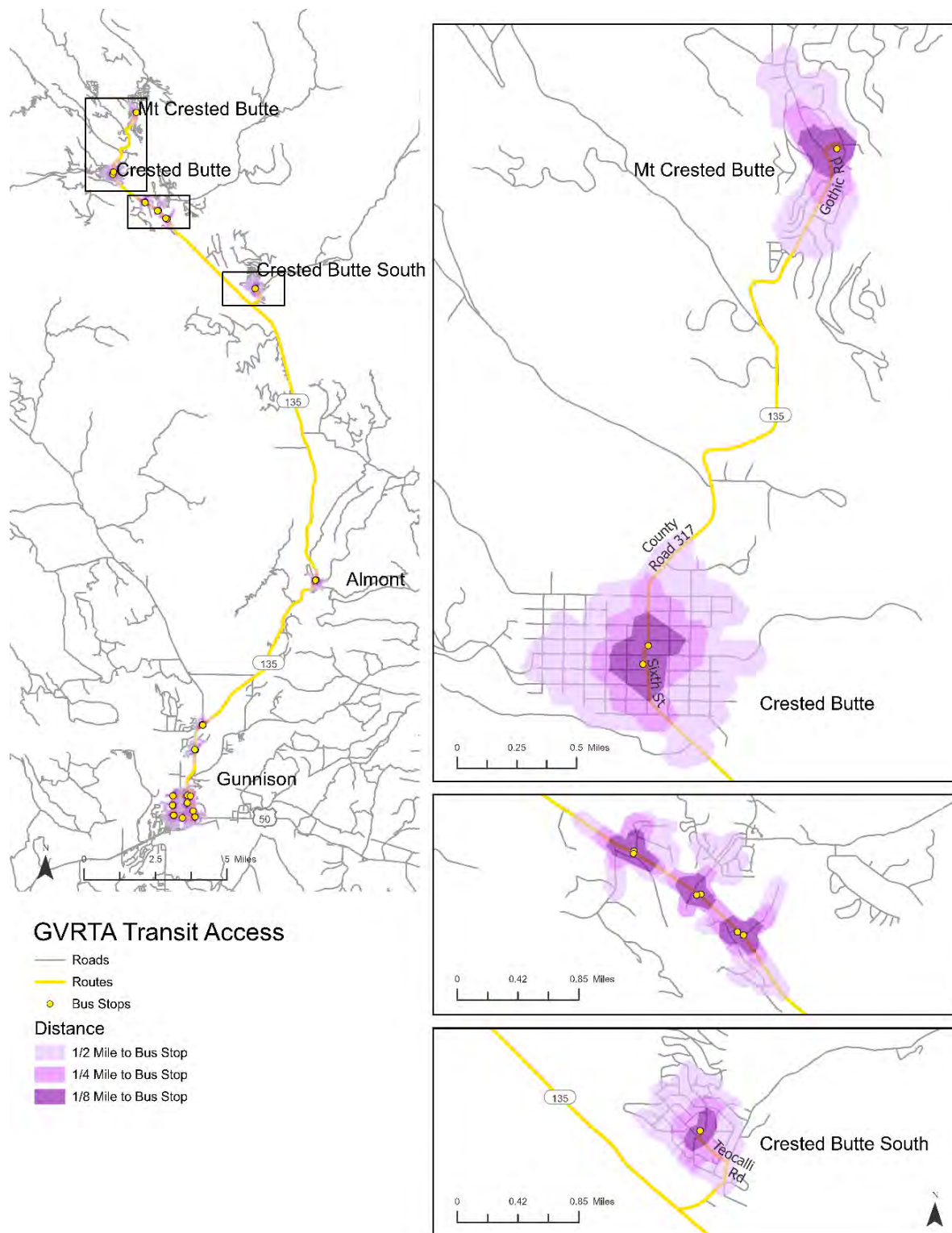
System coverage refers to the geography to which GVRTA provides services. Beyond knowing the routing of the bus, it is also critical to evaluate where geographic gaps may be present so that GVRTA can understand if any changes to its services need to be made.

Geographic Gaps

Figure 13 and **Figure 14** display the GVRTA communities within an eighth mile, a quarter mile, and a half-mile distance to the nearest GVRTA bus stop via the roadway network. These lengths are the typical distances people are willing to walk to access the bus, depending on weather, slope, available sidewalks, and other environmental and personal characteristics.

The maps show that the unincorporated communities with lower density (such as near the Riverbend, Brush Creek, Almont, and Ohio Creek stops) do not have a convenient walking distance to the GVRTA bus stops. Furthermore, there are many gaps within the municipalities of Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte that are beyond a quarter mile from the transit stops. The northern and southern sides of Mt. Crested Butte, most of the western side of Crested Butte, along with the south and central area of Gunnison are among the areas beyond a quarter mile from GVRTA bus stops. Although GVRTA's goals do not specifically aim to address intra-community connectivity, GVRTA can be a part of the conversation that ensures that people who use its commuter bus have easy access and first/last mile connections to the bus. Furthermore, overlaying these geographic gaps with some of the demographic data can be insightful in understanding whether GVRTA's current routing is providing service to those who really need it and use it.

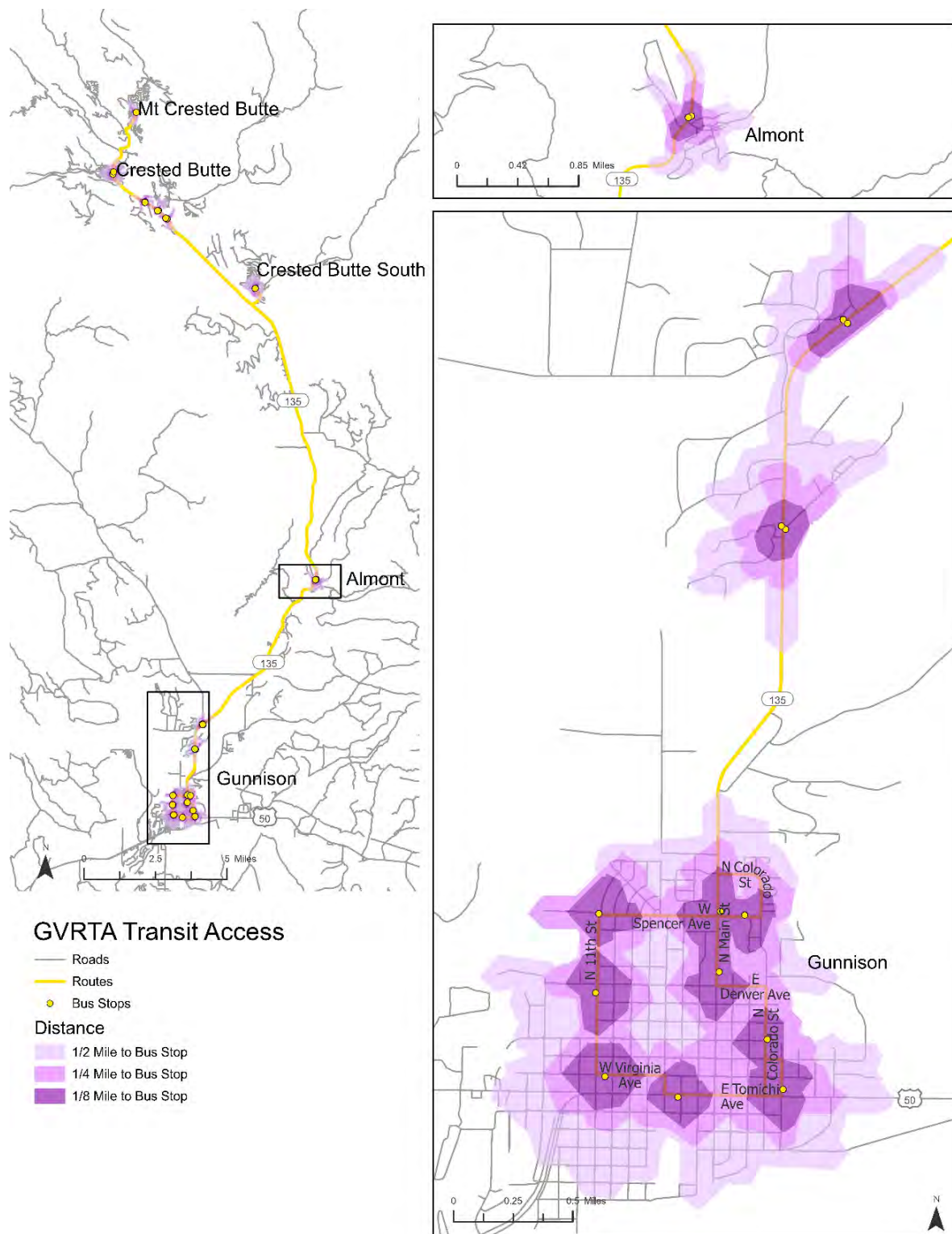
Figure 13. GVRTA Transit Access in Mt. Crested Butte, Crested Butte, CB South



Source: Fehr & Peers

Note: The map does not display transit access to the Mountain Express routes in Crested Butte.

Figure 14. GVRTA Transit Access in Almont and Gunnison



Source: Fehr & Peers

Ridership

The success of existing transit is often measured by ridership, and this section describes GVRTA's historical annual ridership, historical monthly ridership, and the 2023 ridership by stop.

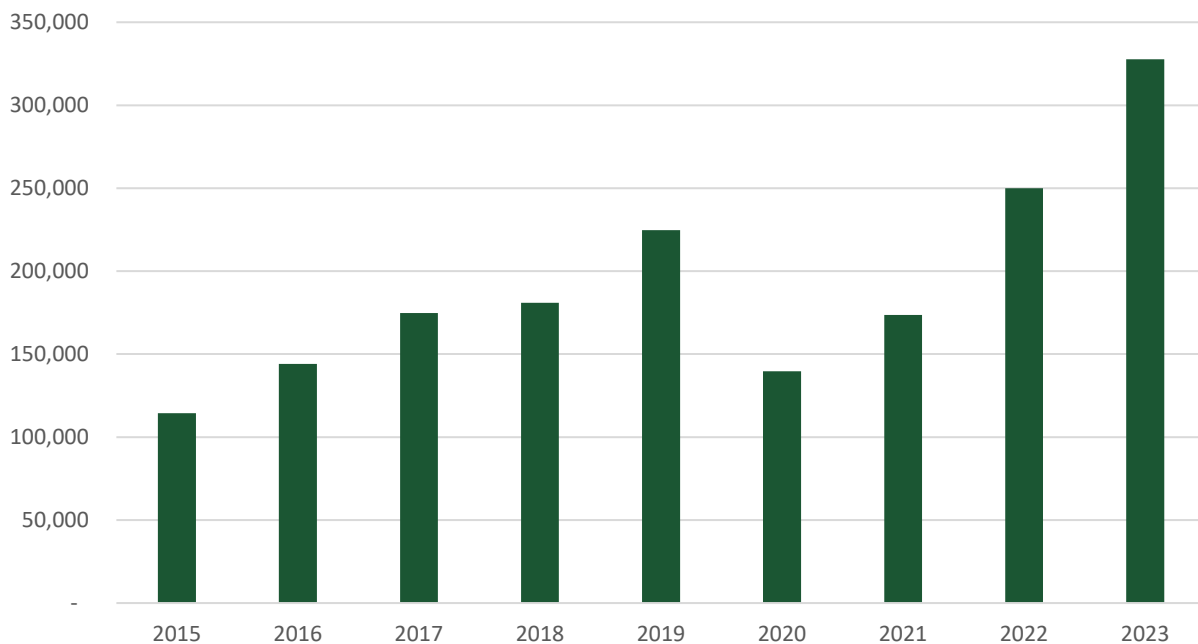
Annual Ridership

GVRTA ridership has grown by 186% since 2015. The number of passengers has multiplied by 2.9 times from 114,414 riders in 2015 to 327,692 riders in 2023 as shown in **Figure 15**.

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the ridership number decreased by 38% compared to 2019, but it rapidly increased afterward with a 20%-40% growth rate yearly.

With such immense growth, a key part of this strategic plan is determining the best plan of actions to accommodate this rapid growth and success over the next five years, including expanded hours of service and increased frequency during peak times. It also has implications for bus fleet through increased bus purchases and maintenance needs.

Figure 15. GVRTA Annual Ridership



Source: GVRTA

Monthly Ridership

Consistent with the annual ridership, monthly ridership has also grown since 2015 with a small drop during the pandemic.

Figure 16 displays distinct ridership trends between the winter and summer schedule periods, with winter ridership typically being double the summer ridership but larger growth year over year in the summers. Monthly ridership for the winter (December-March) has grown by 135% from 17,465 passengers in 2016 to 41,097 passengers in 2023, and summer (April-November) ridership has grown by 267% with 14,844 passengers more in 2023 than in 2015.

Figure 16. GVRTA Monthly Ridership



Source: GVRTA

Ridership by Stop

Figure 17 and **Figure 18** shows the ridership by stops calculated by the average daily boardings of each direction in 2023. The stops within municipal boundaries typically have higher daily ridership compared to stops in the unincorporated communities along the route.

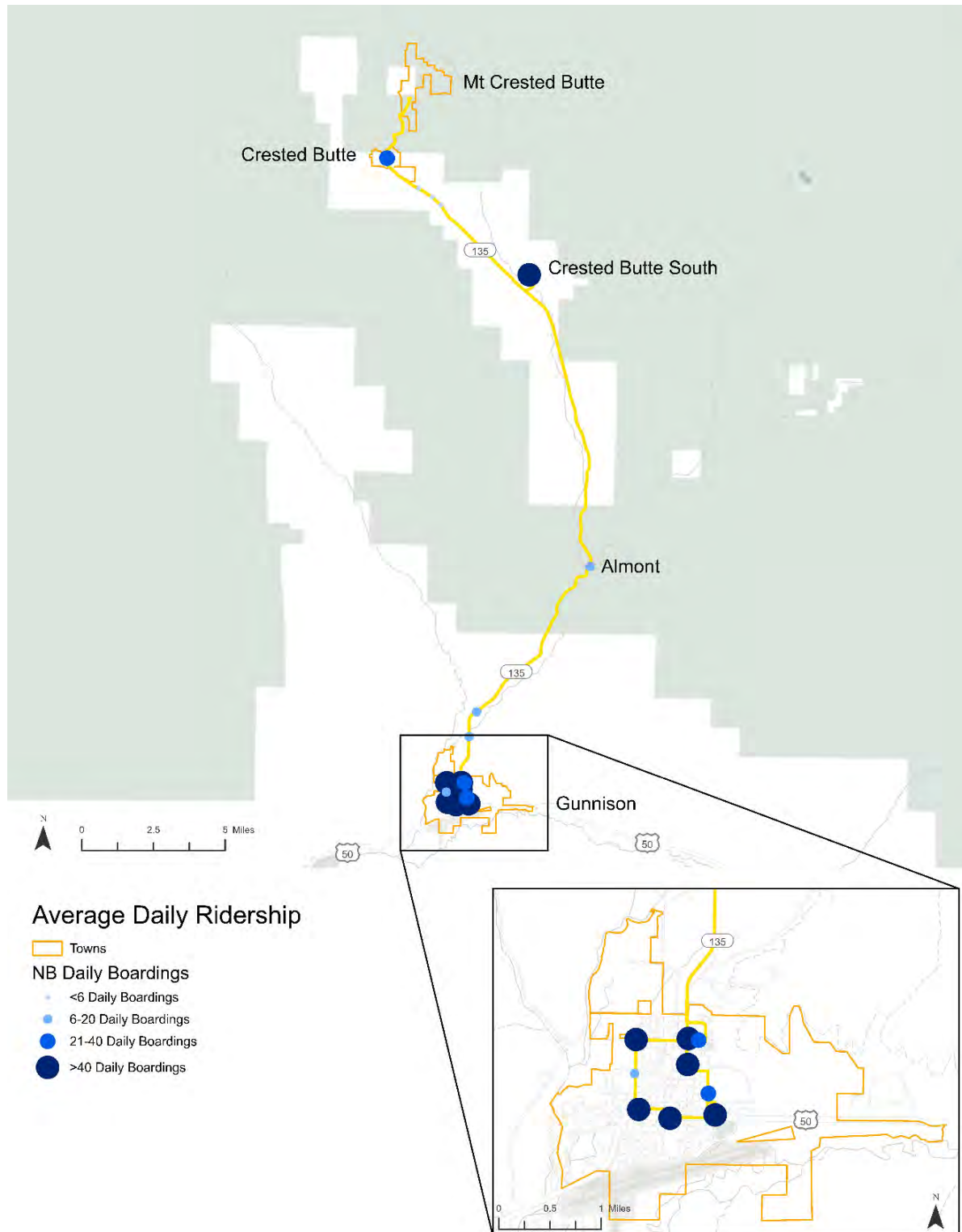
The SB ridership is more concentrated compared to NB stops ridership aligning with the number of stops available within each municipality, as detailed in **Table 6**. The Mt. Crested Butte Transit Center stop and the Crested Butte 4-Way stop are the only transit stops the RTA makes on the north end of the valley. Both stops have more than 160 average daily boardings. Meanwhile, six out of nine stops within Gunnison have more than 40 average daily boardings with the stop at Teller & US-50 having the highest average ridership of 60 people daily. This data likely indicates more transit usage for regional transit purposes between the three municipalities.

Table 6. Stops with the Highest Ridership

Transit Route	Transit Stop	Average Daily Boardings
SB	Mt. Crested Butte Transit Center	165
SB	Crested Butte 4-Way Stop	161
NB	Teller & US-50	60
NB	Spencer & Hwy 135	52
NB	11 th & Virginia	48
NB	Safeway (Pine & US-50)	48
NB	CB South	47

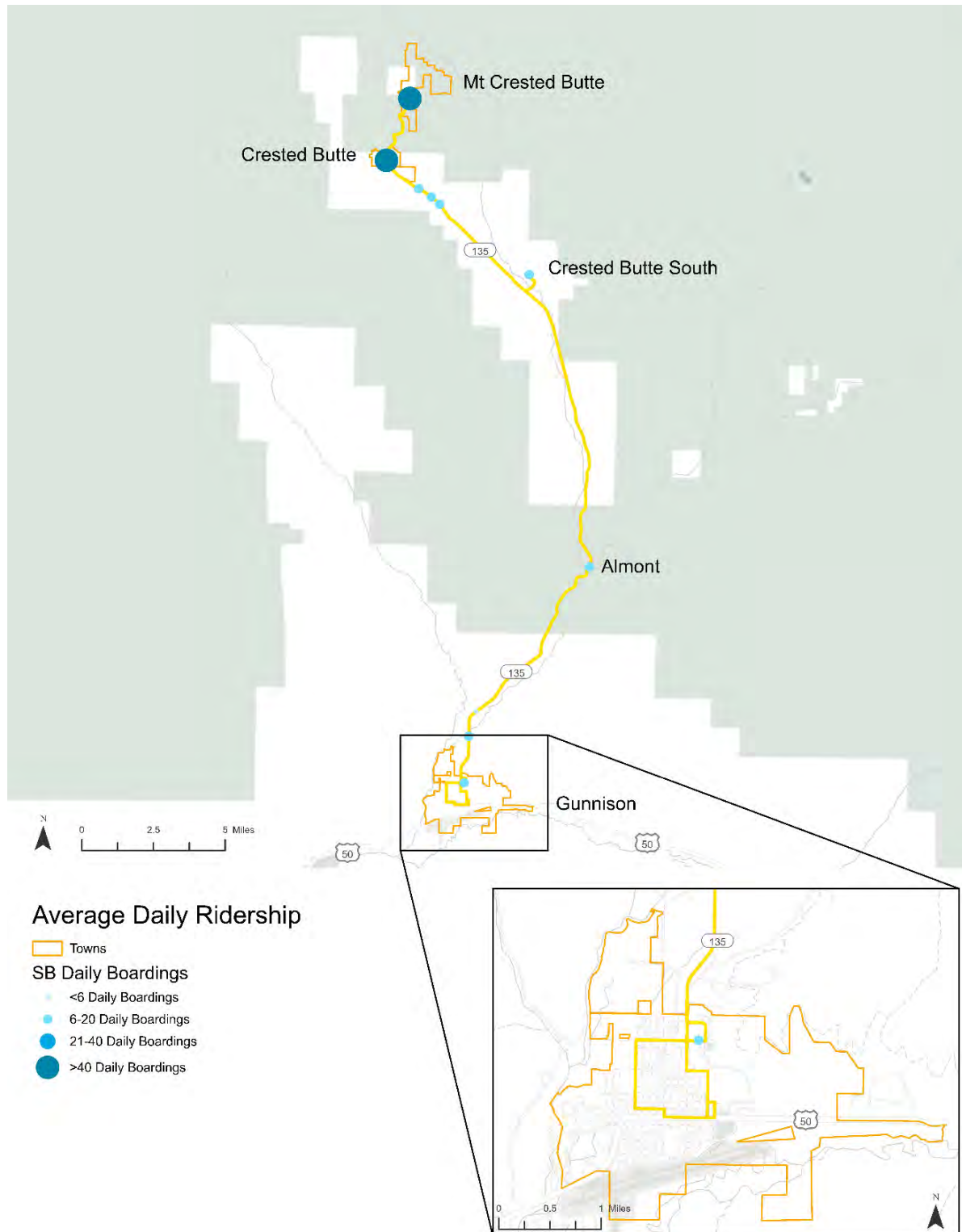
Source: GVRTA

Figure 17. NB Ridership by Stops



Source: GVRTA

Figure 18. SB Ridership by Stops



Source: GVRTA

System Performance

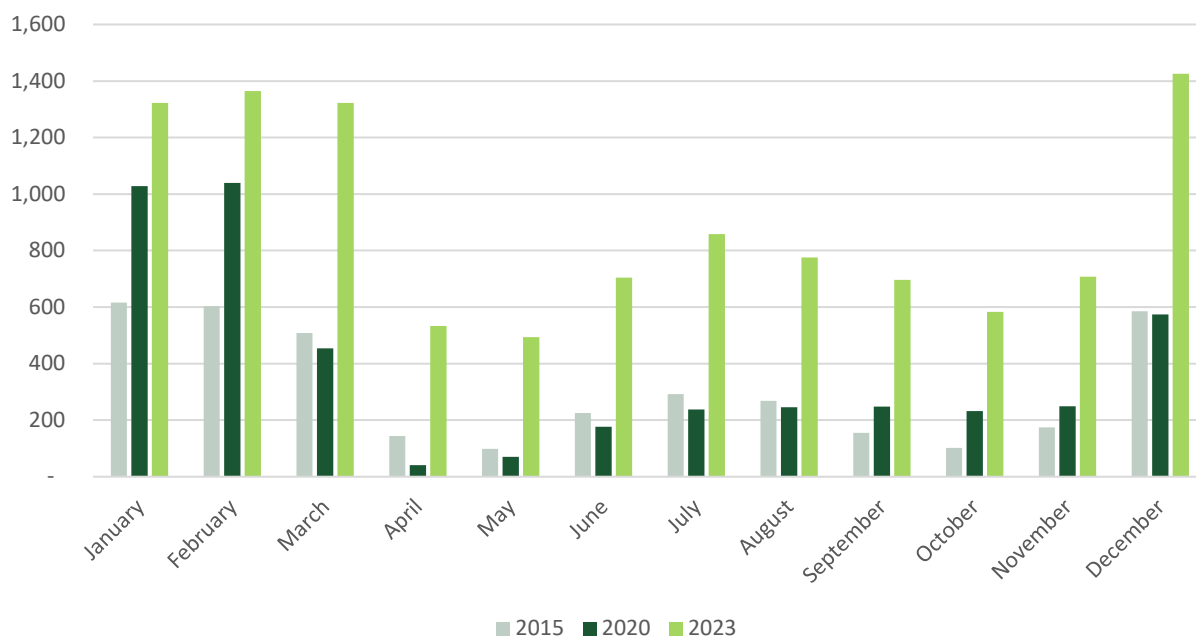
Although ridership is the key factor in evaluating success, the system's performance and productivity for accommodating that ridership is what drives strategic and capital decisions.

Passengers per Day

The average number of passengers per day served by GVRTA has more than doubled from 2016 to 2023. There were 400 average passengers per day in 2015 and 1,014 average passengers per day in 2023.

The month with the highest number of riders slightly switched in winter 2023 compared to winter 2015, and May remains the month with the lowest ridership. December 2023 recorded 44,198 riders in total, averaging 1,426 people per day compared to 616 daily riders in January 2015. Although May has the lowest ridership, the May 2023 average of 494 daily riders is four times the 98 riders in May 2015, showing the exponential growth of GVRTA's ridership.

Figure 19. GVRTA Passengers per Day



Source: GVRTA

Passenger per Vehicle Hour & Passenger per Vehicle Mile

As GVRTA has provided more frequent transit services in recent years for the growing demands, there are more trips made daily resulting in more vehicle hours and more vehicle miles. More trips led to more distributed passengers throughout the day, therefore fewer people were transported in a single vehicle hour/mile as detailed in **Table 7**. These metrics help evaluate the productivity of the transit system, and they help set performance metric goals for the future as the system continues to grow.

Table 7. Passenger per Vehicle Hour from 2015 to 2023

Year	Passengers	Vehicle Hours	Vehicle Miles	Passenger/ Vehicle Hour	Passenger/ Vehicle Mile
2015	114,414	5,657	187,817	20	0.6
2016	144,194	8,011	282,945	18	0.5
2017	174,839	8,963	323,025	20	0.5
2018	180,996	9,671	322,166	19	0.6
2019	224,718	12,833	427,192	18	0.5
2020	139,679	13,750	425,850	10	0.3
2021	173,550	18,109	538,164	10	0.3
2020	249,945	19,297	601,591	13	0.4
2023	327,692	25,887	754,438	13	0.4

Source: GVRTA

Funding Mechanisms

The primary funding mechanism for GVRTA is a 1% sales tax collected throughout the district. This sales tax is not collected on groceries or energy, which helps ease the local burden on fully funding the transit system. The total sales tax revenue has grown steadily over the last few years, from about 4.2 million dollars in 2020 to 6 million dollars in 2023. Approximately 15% of this revenue goes toward funding the RTA's air service and senior transportation activities, while the other 85% goes to the general and capital funds, much of which is used for the commuter bus.

GVRTA also applies for support from the state and federal government. As displayed in **Table 8**, this support varies year to year, and the federal funding made available during the COVID-19 pandemic was an operational relief during 2021 and 2022. Looking at the pre-pandemic 2019 and the "more normal" 2022, there is a typical split of 90% of operating costs are funded by the local source (sales tax) and 10% are funded by the federal and state funds. On the capital side, these shares differ more widely from year to year not only because of external factors (such as a global pandemic), but also because GVRTA does not always need as intense of capital investments each year (such as building a facility or buying new buses).

Table 8: Funding Sources by Year

Funding Source	2019	2020	2021	2022	Funding Source	2019	2020	2021	2022
Operating Expenses					Capital Expenses				
Federal and State Funds	11.4%	35.0%	46.4%	11.5%	Federal and State Funds	58.4%	26.9%	81.6%	86.5%
Local Funds	88.6%	65.0%	53.6%	88.5%	Local Funds	41.7%	73.1%	18.4%	13.5%

Source: National Transit Database, Federal Transit Administration

Knowing that many factors can impact available funding for GVRTA, creating a sustainable capital plan that can still accommodate and improve the commuter service will be a critical element to ensuring GVRTA's continued success over the next five years.

Other Transit Services

In addition to GVRTA's commuter bus service, there are other transit services that provide local and regional transportation services. These services are described in this section.

Bustang and Outrider (CDOT)

Bustang is a regional bus service provided by CDOT and operated by several contracted operators. The transit system provides statewide connections. The Outrider is the fleet of transit services provided throughout rural Colorado and runs daily between Denver and Crested Butte with a stop in Gunnison. The bus makes seven stops along the way. The trip from Denver to Crested Butte takes about five and a half hours. The fare depends on how long someone rides the bus, but to go the entire way from Denver to Crested Butte costs \$45. CDOT has been considering increasing the number of daily trips on this route from once daily to twice daily. Additionally, CDOT has been considering adding service between Gunnison and Montrose.

Mountain Express (Crested Butte and Mount Crested Butte)

Mountain Express provides free ground transportation services in the towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte. In the winter, there are four routes. The main route operates at 15-minute frequencies. Mountain Express also has an on-demand service that operates in the winter and summer.

Senior Transportation Service (GVRTA)

GVRTA partners with Gunnison Valley Health to provide Senior Transportation Service in Gunnison and within three service miles of the city limits to community members who are 55+ years of age or who are permanently disabled. Service is seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is free to use. Any ride should be scheduled at least two hours in advance.

Late Night Taxi

Alpine Express and Mountain Express partner together to provide a late-night shuttle service around downtown Crested Butte. The late-night shuttle runs seven days a week from 10:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. for a flat fee of \$10 per person. The late-night shuttle only operates in the towns of Mt. Crested Butte and Crested Butte.

Alpine Express (Private)

Alpine Express provides airport shuttle service from Gunnison to Crested Butte, wedding & event transportation, trailhead shuttle service, and private shuttle service. An advance reservation must be made

to use the service and rides can be shared or private. Private rides cost more money per passenger than shared rides.

Other Private Services

In addition to the transit services listed above, there are private shuttle services and hotel shuttles available in Gunnison and Crested Butte. There are three private shuttle services in Crested Butte that serve the Gunnison Valley. They are Dolly's Mountain Shuttle, Rocky Rides LTD, and Black Canyon Limo. All of the shuttle services provide door-to-door service, charge per person and have a minimum fee. Many of the hotels in Gunnison and Crested Butte have their own shuttle that can pick people up from the airport for transport to the hotel.

Plan Review

Previous plans were reviewed to ensure that the GVRTA Commuter Bus Service Strategic Operating and Capital plan builds upon the work that was already completed throughout the region. The plans in this section are organized by entity.

GVRTA Plans

GVRTA Strategic Transit Plan and Senior Mobility Plan (2016)

The result of the 2016 Strategic Plan consists of two service plan recommendations and seven other types of recommendations, as seen in **Table 9**. Service plan recommendations mostly focus on frequency improvements of regular bus routes and the span of service to seven days a week for senior service. The plan also explored other types of improvements by responding to community surveys and other feedback related to stop locations and airport service. The plan also suggested service consolidations with other agencies for more efficient and effective service coordination. As detailed in the table, many of the recommendations were completed due to the ability to financially justify the improvement, and the recommendations that were incomplete were mostly due to factors external to GVRTA.

Table 9. 2016 Recommended Service Plan

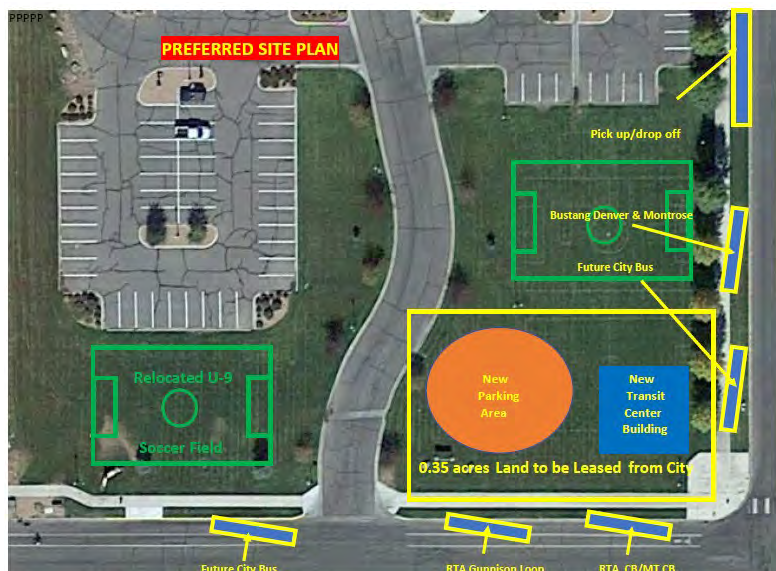
Recommendations	Details	Status (2023)
Service Plan Recommendations		
Modified Existing Service	Increase service frequency Slightly modify the route in Gunnison	Complete Complete
Senior Service	Improve operations to seven days a week	Complete
Other Recommendations		
Bus Stop Locations	Keep the Crested Butte stop location Relocate Safeway stop in Gunnison Keep the Crested Butte stop active	Complete Incomplete Complete

Bus Stop Improvements	Improve bus stops with better lighting, heat, and enclosure, and provide bus schedules at the flag stops at CO-135 flag stops	Mostly Complete
Bus Service to the Airport	No bus route expansion to the airport	Complete
Park-n-Rides Lots	Virginia Avenue and Spruce Street Ohio Creek Road Crested Butte South Brush Creek Road	Incomplete Complete Complete Incomplete
Passenger Surveys	Passenger Survey every two years	Incomplete
Consolidation of Senior Services	Combine the call center of Gunnison Senior Service and Crested Butte Senior Service	Incomplete
Consolidation of Fixed-Route Services	Consolidate GVRTA and Mountain Express	Incomplete

Gunnison Transit Center Plan (2023)

The Gunnison Transit Center Plan was adopted in February of 2023, but then declined in April 2023 due to written complaints about the site. The Gunnison Transit Center Plan (February 2023) defines what commuter bus service is, describes the desired elements of a transit center, establishes criteria for a transit center location, identifies possible locations for a Gunnison Transit Center, and selects a preferred location. This transit center would not only serve GVRTA's services, but also provide a mobility hub that could be used by other transit providers, provide restrooms and information kiosks, and be a location that promotes other mobility elements. Moreover, GVRTA already has a commitment from the state to help fund the development of the site. The location that was originally selected in February 2023 was on Spencer Avenue just south of the Gunnison Community Recreation Center. **Figure 20** shows the preferred site plan for the Gunnison Transit Center near the Gunnison Recreation Center.

Figure 20: Preferred Site Plan for Gunnison Transit Center



Since the decline of the plan in April 2023, GVRTA has been working to identify other potential locations that may work for the transit center. Additionally, GVRTA is focused on ensuring that the way in which the future site is communicated accurately depicts community sentiment. As part of this operating and capital plan, Fehr & Peers worked with GVRTA and the public to rename the facility to something that is more aligned with community expectations, identify a new location that met a set of criteria, and establish key amenities the site will have.

CDOT Plan

Gunnison Valley 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (2020)

The Gunnison Valley 2045 Regional Transportation Plan was adopted in October 2020. It is a long-range document that guides the development of a multimodal transportation system for the Gunnison Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR). The plan included responses to a survey that was conducted in 2019 that asked transit and human services agencies in the region to rank desired transit priorities. The top three priorities are to increase service frequency, increase the span of service, and increase service coverage. These priorities will be kept in mind when the project team is developing recommendations for the GVRTA Commuter Bus Service Strategic Operating and Capital Plan. The plan also identified priority projects. The priority projects that may relate to the current effort are listed on **Table 10**.

Table 10: Gunnison Valley 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Priority Projects

Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Estimated 10-Year Operating Cost	Project Benefits	Project Rank*	Project Status
Crested Butte Storage Facility	Initial phasing of new bus storage facility in Crested Butte for Bustang storage. Serves Crested Butte Mountain Express, Gunnison Valley RTA, and Bustang/Outrider Gunnison to Salida and Denver.	\$1,420,000	\$1,580,000	Asset Management	5	Complete
Gunnison Transit Center and Parking Facility	Design and construct a transit center and parking in Gunnison.	\$2,500,000	\$360,000	Public health, mobility, quality of life	15	In Progress
Gunnison Valley RTA Bus Maintenance and Storage Facility	Design and construct a new maintenance and storage facility.	\$4,000,000	\$600,000	Asset Management	20	Complete
Shared Crested Butte Storage Facility for Outrider and Gunnison Valley RTA	1-acre lot; 6 bays; 6,000 square feet facility for bus storage.	\$2,250,000	\$240,000	Asset Management	26	Complete

Gunnison Valley RTA Bus Stop Improvements	Upgrading of Current Bus Stops and Construct New Bus Stops.	\$1,500,000	\$120,000	Public health, mobility, quality of life	28	Complete
Gunnison Valley RTA – Expansion Buses	Expand existing fleet by 3 buses.	\$2,400,000	N/A	Public health, mobility, quality of life	Unranked	In Progress
Gunnison Valley RTA – Expanded Service Hours	Extend existing operating hours; \$850k/year.	N/A	\$8,500,000	Public health, mobility, quality of life	Unranked	In Progress

*CDOT established 35 ranked projects in the region. They are ranked by priority with a lower number representing higher priority.

Gunnison County Plans

One Valley Resiliency Roadmap (2023)

Gunnison County adopted the One Valley Resilience Roadmap (OVRR) in October 2023 after receiving the Resiliency Roadmap grant from Colorado's Department of Local Affairs to address regional challenges like housing affordability, transportation planning, climate action, and community cohesion. The initiative builds on the 2016 One Valley Prosperity Project and recent local plans.

Regional goal setting allows leaders in the Gunnison Valley to collaborate on land use, transportation, and infrastructure policies while respecting each community's unique needs. They developed four key goals:

- **Enable compact development in responsible areas:** Prioritize walkable, transit-served neighborhoods, rural character, and community values while guiding growth efficiently.
- **Focus on moving people:** Enhance multimodal transportation connections between neighborhoods and communities and limiting highway expansion.
- **Create great places for people:** Design new developments with parks and streets that promote social interactions and community livability.
- **Minimize environmental and agricultural impacts:** Ensure land use and infrastructure decisions protect natural areas and support ranching, a key part of the Valley's heritage and economy.

These goals align with the Valley's priorities of building community, promoting social equity, and advancing climate resilience. There are four strategies created to accomplish the goals.

1. Commit to OVRR Community Planning Principles.
2. Build Systems and Capacity to Enable More Informed Planning, Policy and Development Decisions.
3. Enhance Multijurisdictional Planning & Coordinate Investment in Infrastructure & Transit.

4. Align Plans, Policies, and Procedures with Shared Regional Goals and Planning Priorities.

As GVRTA continues to be the primary regional transit service in Gunnison County, strategic route and service planning along with bus stop improvements help accomplish many of the goals set in the roadmap.

Town of Crested Butte Plans

Crested Butte Community Compass (2022)

The Crested Butte Community Compass, adopted on November 7, 2022, is a five-year plan focused on sustainable growth, community well-being, and environmental stewardship. The plan was built around seven key goals:

1. **Collaborative Engagement**
2. **Sustainable Growth**
3. **Support for Residents**
4. **Preserving Character**
5. **De-emphasizing Cars**
6. **Environmental Protection**
7. **Climate Action**

Under the “de-emphasizing cars” goal, the plan plans to “promote walking, biking, and public transit to strengthen community connections and reduce environmental impact”. This goal includes the six strategies detailed below in **Table 11**, which have direct impacts to coordinating with GVRTA’s efforts in providing regional transit service.

Table 11. Goals and Strategies for “De-emphasizing Cars” per the Crested Butte Community Compass

Strategies	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Comprehensive mobility reexamination through a Transportation Master Plan (TMP).		TMP				
Evaluate the design and functionality of streets, parks, and public spaces.		Traffic Calming Policy		Elk Avenue Streetscape Plan	Implement Elk Avenue Streetscape Plan	
Employ creative solutions			Parking Program		Implement TMP projects	
Infrastructure and utility improvements.	Street Condition Master Plan.				Implement TMP projects	
Prioritize and support innovative transit solutions to improve connectivity between communities while ensuring Highway 135 functions well as a two-lane rural road	Participate in the Brush Creek Intersection Planning and Design, Mountain Express's five-year plan, and CB to CB South Trail		Support projects and transit investments for Mountain Express and RTA.			
Analyze and improve Sixth Street				Sixth Street Master Plan		

Crested Butte Transportation Mobility Plan (2024)

The Town of Crested Butte finalized its 2024 Transportation Mobility Plan (TMP) that de-emphasizes cars and focuses on walking, biking, rolling, and transit.

Challenge four of the plan discusses the limitations of local transit on service area and frequency leading to inconvenient travel experiences for people of all ages and mobility levels despite two transit systems, Mountain Express and GVRTA, operating in the area.

Mountain Express is an intergovernmental agreement between the Towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte to connect visitors and the community from the ski resort to the dining and entertainment options on Elk Avenue. The service focuses on circulating through Elk Avenue and Sixth Street on a seasonal schedule, with the most frequent headways occurring during the winter season.

Concerning GVRTA, the plan identified the first and last mile gap of most of the smaller communities around Crested Butte with lower density, spread out, and outlying recreational areas or the lower density employment centers in Riverland and Whetstone Industrial Park, as they are distant from a GVRTA bus stop.

Opportunities to lessen the gap identified in the plan include collaborating with the transit agency in the upcoming transit development plan to potentially increase the transit frequency, identify regional park-and-rides near Highway 135 adjacent to outlying communities to reduce the first and last mile gap, as well as improve the SB GVRTA stop in the Town.

Furthermore, the plan identifies three projects in its phasing plan that may be relevant to GVRTA:

- GVRTA Transit Development Plan, 2024 (this current effort)
- New SB Stops and Shelter, Pending TDP in 2026
- 4-Way Bike Storage & Shared Mobility Hub, Planning in 2025 and Construction in 2026

City of Gunnison Plan

City of Gunnison Comprehensive Plan (2020)

The Gunnison 2030 Comprehensive Plan was finalized in March 2020 and serves as the city's official policy document, guiding development over the next 10 years. It addresses key issues including sustainable land use, transportation, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, environmental features, economic development, and community identity.

The plan's vision for transportation is to prioritize safety, convenience, and efficiency, supported by a robust multimodal network. The plan includes expanding the existing grid, enhancing sidewalks, bikeways, and trails, and providing seamless connections to regional paths. There are three relevant transportation goals identified in the plan:

1. Improve Park-n-Ride Transit by 2020

- Create a masterplan to assess Park-n-Ride demand and implement recommendations.
- Explore development of a high-frequency south valley circulator bus and enhance regional transit in coordination with the Gunnison Valley Rural Transportation Authority.
- Establish Park-n-Ride transit connecting the City to the region.

2. Develop an Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System by 2030

- Regularly review roadways for maintenance and safety improvements.
- Collaborate with CDOT and the County on a Strategic Transportation Access Control Plan (TACP) to improve highway access.
- Ensure transportation corridors support the multi-modal system's safety and efficiency.
- Work with Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport to accommodate growing travel and freight demands.
- Initiate renewable energy projects, including solar charging and electric vehicles.

3. Develop Infrastructure for Non-Motorized Users by 2030

- Implement a multimodal streets policy to integrate with grant programs.
- Incorporate cycling and walking infrastructure in future road projects.
- Address sidewalk gaps and improve crossing safety at key intersections.
- Build shared-use trails to enhance non-motorized mobility and recreational opportunities.
- Ensure infrastructure supports seamless multi-modal access throughout the city by 2030.

As GVRTA continues to serve the City of Gunnison, collaboration on these goals, especially potential new park-and-rides and a south valley circulator bus, will be critical.

Town of Mt. Crested Butte Plan

Town of Mt. Crested Butte Master Plan (2023)

The Town of Mt. Crested Butte Master Plan was adopted in January 2023. It is an advisory guide designed to help Mt. Crested Butte achieve its long-term vision and goals for the next 10-15 years. Mt. Crested Butte set goals, detailed in **Table 12**, to enhance the multimodal transportation network, improve mobility within the town for all modes of travel, and coordinate with regional partners to provide an enhanced multimodal transportation network that is convenient, reliable, intuitive, and efficient. GVRTA is listed as a partner in most of the policies and recommendations.

Table 12: Summary of Mt. Crested Butte Transportation Policies and Recommendations

Policies	Recommendations	Potential Partners	Timeline
Provide high-quality multimodal transportation infrastructure and wayfinding to facilitate movement.	Improve the existing Transit Center to better accommodate current and future operations and improve safety for buses, bicycles, and pedestrians.	Mountain Express, Gunnison Valley RTA	Short term and Mid-term
	Collaborate with regional transportation providers to improve bus routes and service schedules to provide year-round, consistent access to nearby locations and reduce transfers and wait times.		Short term and Mid-term
Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and wayfinding to reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel.	Invest in improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety, adding sidewalks and trail connections throughout town.		Short term and Mid-term
	Ensure pedestrian access and enhance the aesthetic experience for pedestrians entering the commercial core by working with adjacent property owners to replace the existing pedestrian bridge and/or provide safe on-grade pedestrian crossing.		Mid-term
Promote parking alternatives that are a more efficient use of land and encourage a "park once" mentality.	Transition in-town parking lots to paid parking.	Mountain Express, Gunnison Valley RTA, Town of Crested Butte, Gunnison County	Short-term
	Working collaboratively with North Valley regional transportation partner agencies, develop an intercept lot / Park & Ride facility.		Long-term
	Partner with potential developers to build a parking structure within the Commercial Core that services the concentrated central location for essential community services and commercial uses.		Mid-term
	Develop parking regulations that reflect how a unit will be used.		Short-term
Identify and implement traffic calming and demand management strategies to improve vehicular circulation and reduce traffic congestion.	Consider aligning the Town Code with state-adopted municipal transportation requirements as appropriate.	Mountain Express, Gunnison Valley RTA	Short-term
	Implement the transportation demand management (TDM) strategies and recommendations outlined in the Mt. Crested Butte Transit Study and Gothic Road Capacity Analysis.		Short term and Mid-term

To enhance its service in Mt. Crested Butte, GVRTA should collaborate with the town to explore opportunities for improving transit facilities, routes, schedules, and park-and-ride options. This partnership will help ensure better service and meet future transit needs.

Demographic Review Key Takeaways

This demographic review, which also includes economic and commuting characteristics, an analysis of the existing GVRTA service, a description of current funding mechanisms, and a review of previous plans, can be best summarized by the following key takeaways.

- The results from the demographic review are similar to the results from the 2016 study. Changes include denser population in Crested Butte South, less 65+ population in the City of Gunnison (more in unincorporated Gunnison county), growth in the youth population in southern Gunnison and decline in northern Gunnison. These changes do not necessarily constitute a need to change the GVRTA route, but rather emphasize that populations that are more likely to be transit-dependent may be more impacted by any changes/improvements in the service.
- The largest employment sector is Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services, which continues to be the same as previously. Ensuring both employees and visitors of these sectors have access through transportation must be a consideration.
- The City of Gunnison has the highest percentage of the population that uses transit to get to work, likely because of its availability. Most people travel less than ten miles to get to work in Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte. However, most workers in Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte do not live in those locations, and efficient regional transit to these communities is a key focus.
- Operationally, GVRTA passenger trip numbers have almost tripled from 2015 through 2023. Winter ridership (December through March) has grown by 135% and summer ridership (April through November) has grown by 267%. At a stop level, most of the boardings are in the NB direction. As GVRTA continues to grow, it will need to focus on strategically accommodating this demand.
- The RTA is primarily funded by a local sales tax, but it also accesses state and federal funding opportunities, which vary year by year. GVRTA's financial sustainability will influence how successfully it can continue to provide the great service it offers today.
- Between the various previous and ongoing planning efforts, GVRTA is recognized as a successful and critical transportation provider. Although there are a variety of service and stop-level improvements that have been recommended, a key focus of local and regional plans include identifying capital improvements that can improve the regional transit experience and capacity.

Chapter 3: Community Outreach

Community outreach is a critical element of forming GVRTA's five-year plan. Involving the community at multiple points throughout the process allowed the project team to understand the current rider experience throughout different seasons and to gauge support for potential future endeavors.

Community outreach was conducted in March (winter) and July (summer) of 2024 with on-board, online and paper surveys. Four open houses were also held during the summer phase to inform the public about the project and gather feedback on potential projects that could be pursued by the RTA. Additionally, virtual and in-person stakeholder interviews and focus groups were conducted with eleven different organizations throughout the project.

Winter and Summer General Public Outreach

Fehr & Peers conducted two series of on-board, online and paper surveys between:

- February 28, 2024, and April 1, 2024; with a total of 456 responses
- June 24 and July 28, 2024; with a total of 183 responses.

Most participants took both surveys online. 46% of the winter and 57% of the summer respondents indicated they took the survey on the bus, most of which occurred while the Fehr & Peers team actively boarded the buses and encouraged people to take the survey.

On-Board Survey Respondents Experience

To understand ridership trends, onboard respondents were requested to provide their origins and destinations, mode of transportation to and from the bus stop, purpose of their trips, dependency on the bus, and frequency of riding the bus. The survey also asked the respondents about the most important reasons they ride the bus and rated their satisfaction with the RTA characteristics.

Origins and Destinations

Gunnison is the top origin in both seasons (**Figure 21** and **Figure 22**), while the top destination differs between winter (**Figure 23**) and summer (**Figure 24**). More than half of winter respondents start their trip from Gunnison and 40% of people end their trip in Mt. Crested Butte, while 46% of summer respondents end their trip in Crested Butte.

Figure 21. Where did you begin this trip? (Winter)

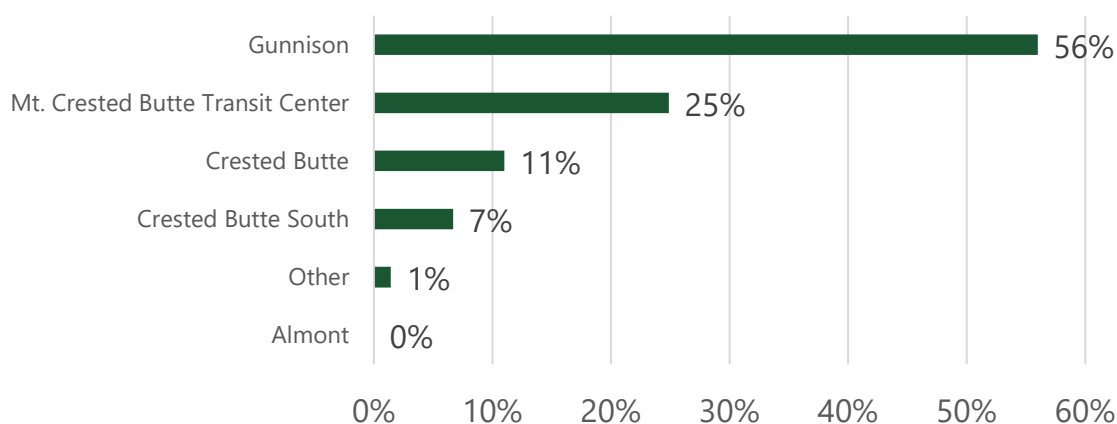


Figure 22. Where did you begin this trip? (Summer)

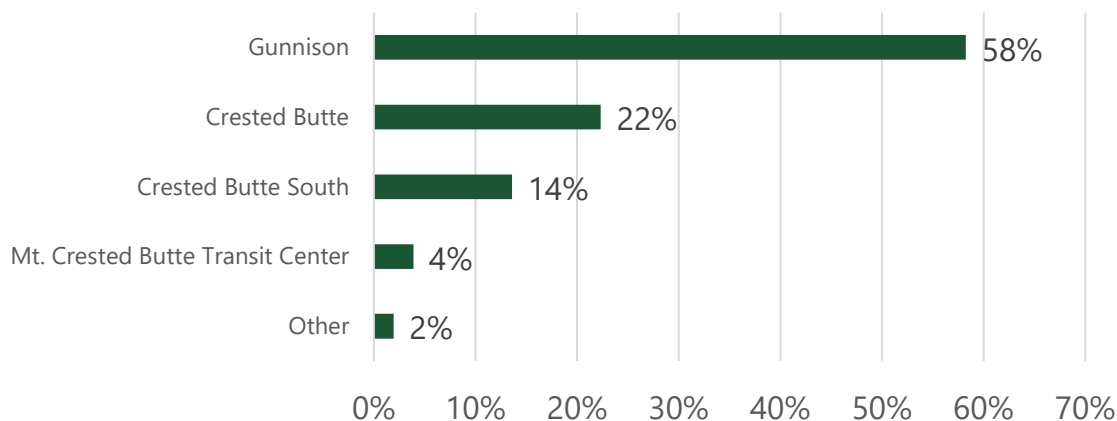


Figure 23. What is your destination today? (Winter)

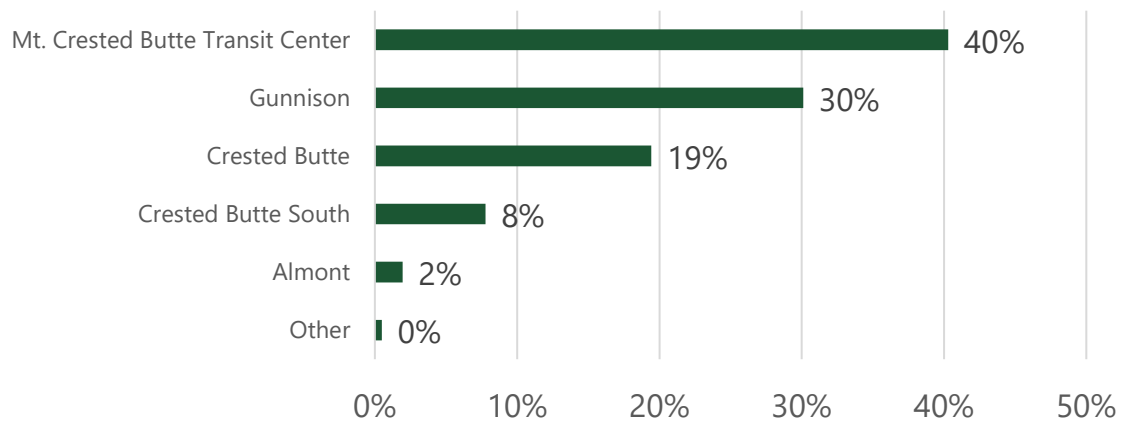
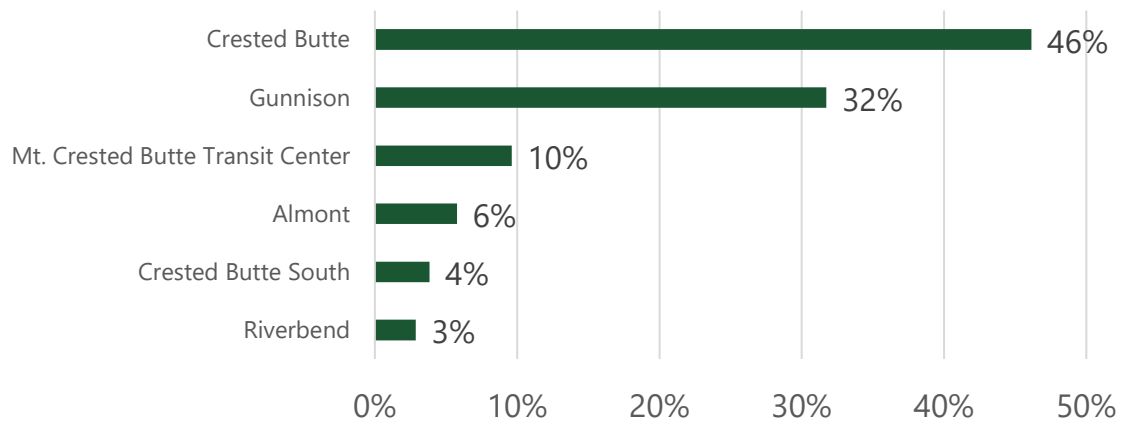


Figure 24. What is your destination today? (Summer)



Mode of Transportation to Bus Stops

Figure 25 and **Figure 26** detail the modes people used to get to the bus stop, and **Figure 27** and **Figure 28** display the modes people use to get from the bus stop. Walking is the primary mode (82% in the winter and 76% in the summer) people used for getting to and from the bus stop in both surveys. Driving alone (9%) is the next mode people used to get to/from the bus stop in the winter and shifted to biking (15%) in the summer as the weather is more suitable.

Figure 25. How did you get to the RTA bus stop? (Winter)

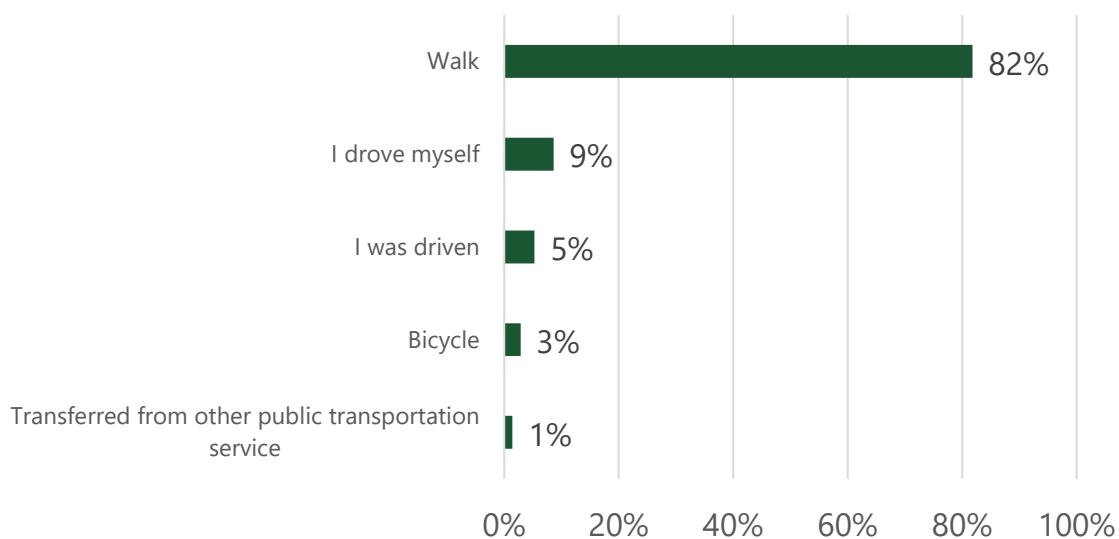


Figure 26. How did you get to the RTA bus stop? (Summer)

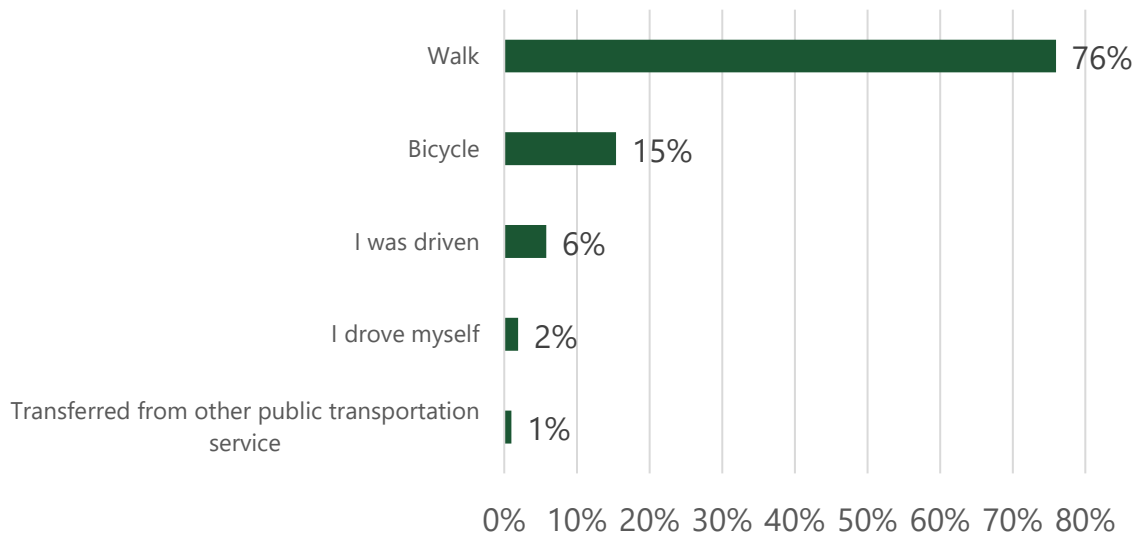


Figure 27. How will you get from the RTA bus stop to your destination? (Winter)

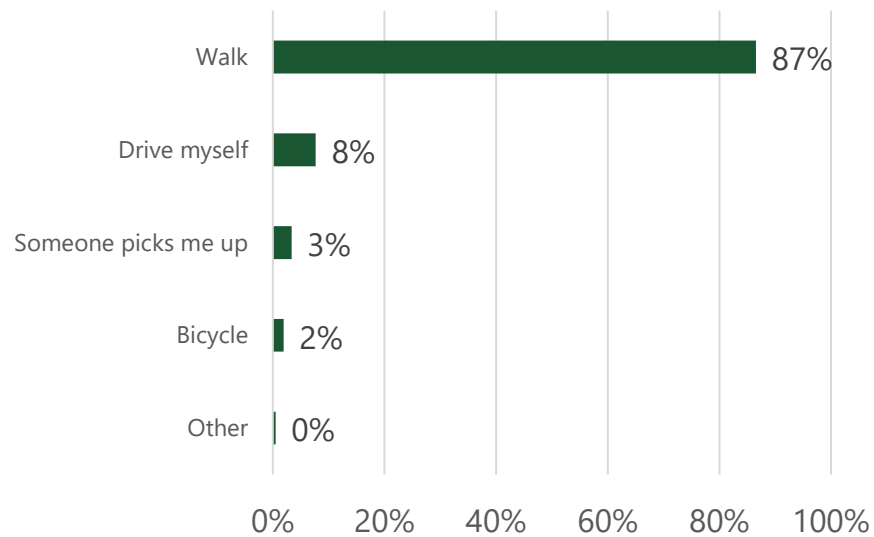
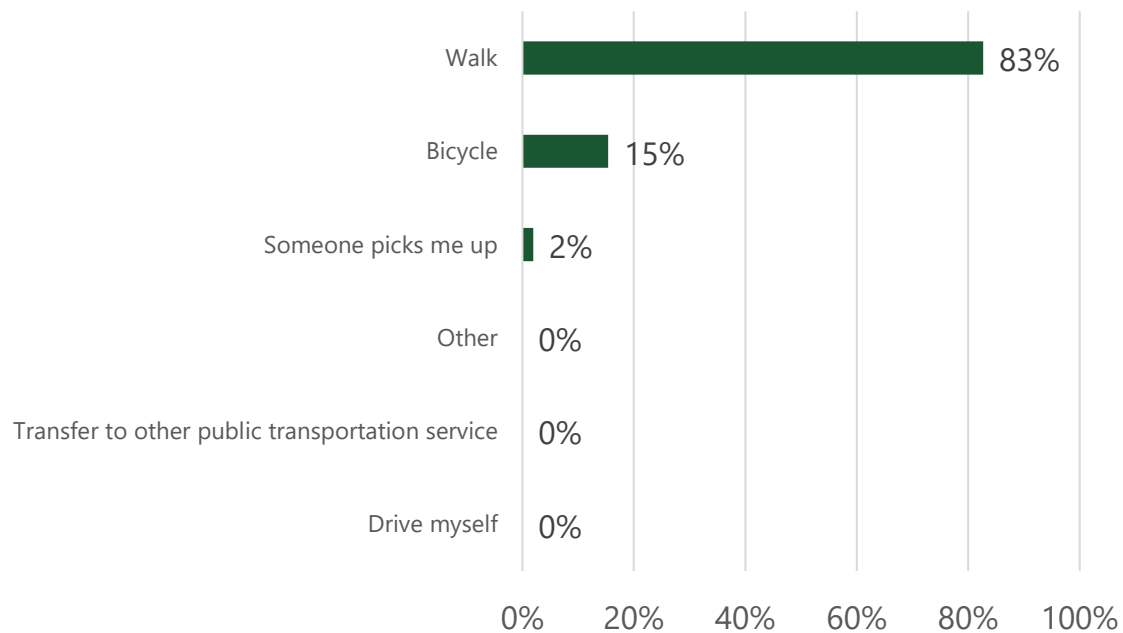


Figure 28. How will you get from the RTA bus stop to your destination? (Summer)



Trip Purpose

Travel to work is the top trip purpose in both surveys, with 54% in the winter and 65% in the summer. While recreational reasons (37%) come after travel to work in the winter, the number significantly decreased by 25% in the summer. Conversely, while only 4% take the bus for shopping/errands in the winter, the number increased to 17% in the summer as shown in **Figure 29** and **Figure 30**.

Figure 29. What is the purpose of this trip today? (Winter)

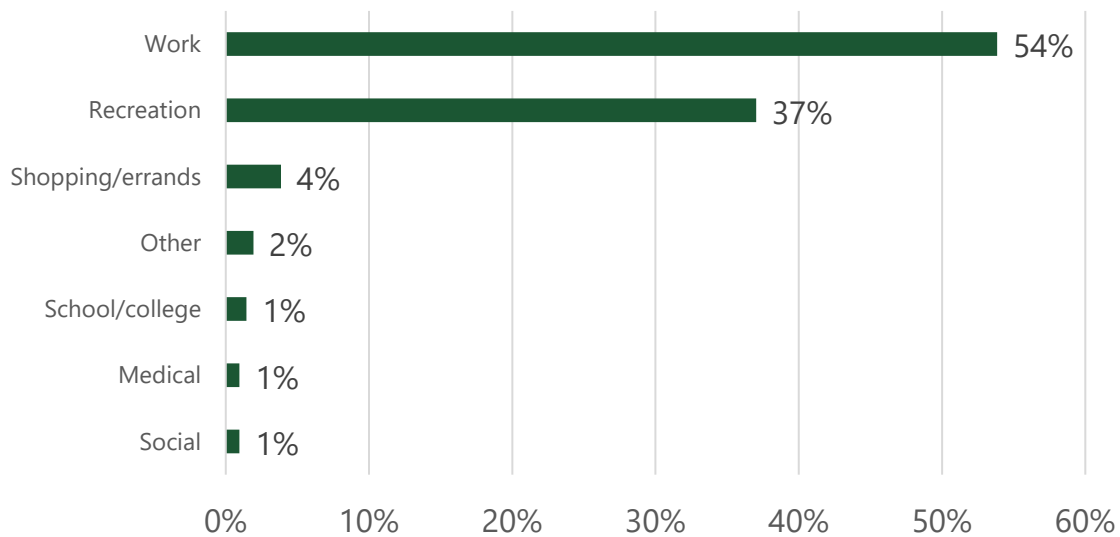
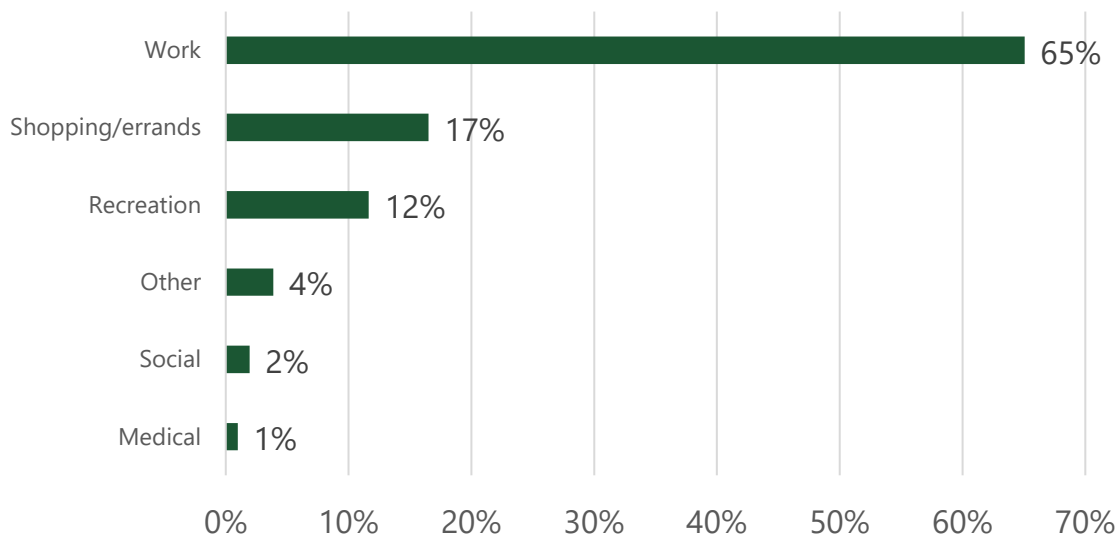


Figure 30. What is the purpose of this trip today? (Summer)



Dependency on the RTA Bus

When asked about their dependency on the RTA bus, at least 40% of respondents indicated that they depend on the bus for their transportation needs in both surveys (**Figure 31** and **Figure 32**), and another 40% mentioned that they sometimes depend on it. Approximately 15% of the winter riders and 12% of the summer riders said they do not depend on the bus.

Figure 31. Do you depend on the RTA bus for your transportation needs? (Winter)

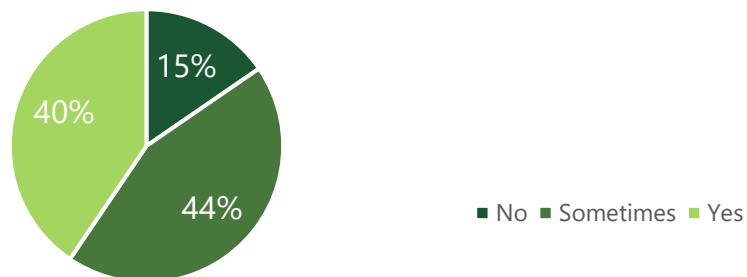
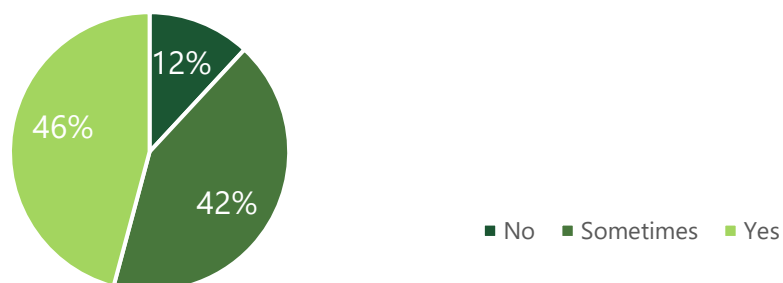


Figure 32. Do you depend on the RTA bus for your transportation needs? (Summer)



Frequency of Riding the RTA Bus

Figure 33 and **Figure 34** show that the frequency of riding is higher in the summer compared to the winter. 25% of riders in the winter and 29% in the summer mentioned they ride the bus at least once a week, and the number of people riding the bus daily increased from 12% in the winter to 21% in the summer. The number of respondents indicating less than once a month or never riding the bus decreased from 17% in the winter to 10% in the summer.

Figure 33. How often do you ride the RTA bus? (Winter)

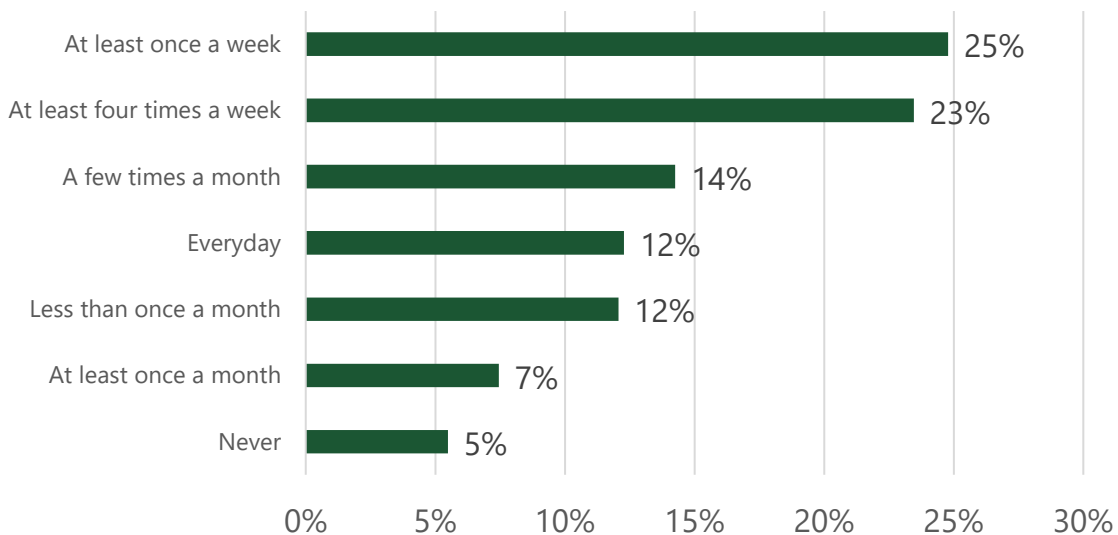
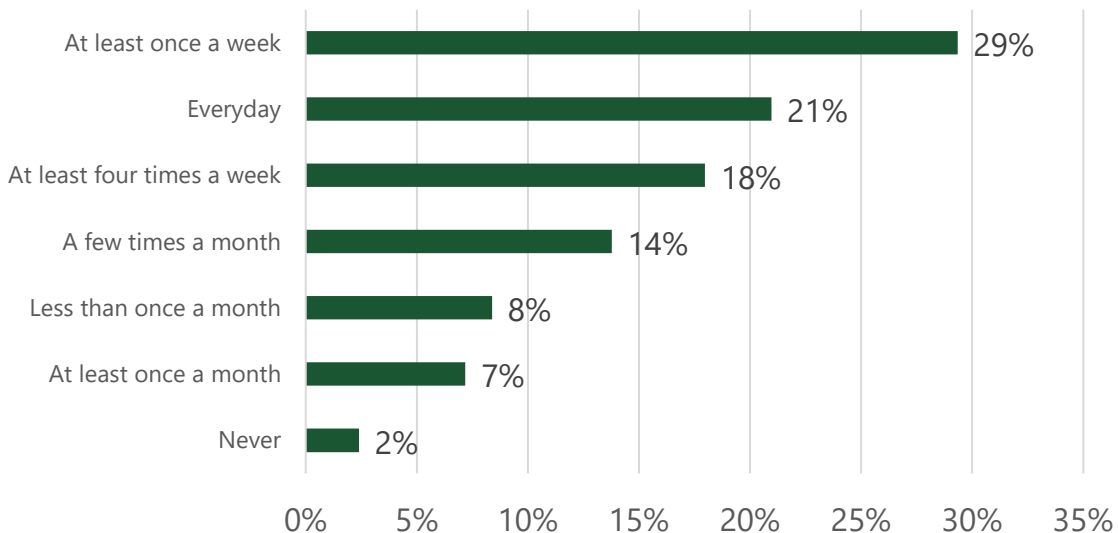


Figure 34. How often do you ride the RTA bus? (Summer)



Reasons to Ride the RTA Bus

In both surveys, the respondents expressed similar reasons for riding the bus as displayed in **Figure 35** and **Figure 36**. The top three most important reasons to ride the RTA bus according to respondents are that the bus is economical, convenient, and environmentally friendly. Car issues and other reasons remained the least two reasons respondents took the bus.

Figure 35. What are the most important reasons you currently ride the RTA bus? (Winter)

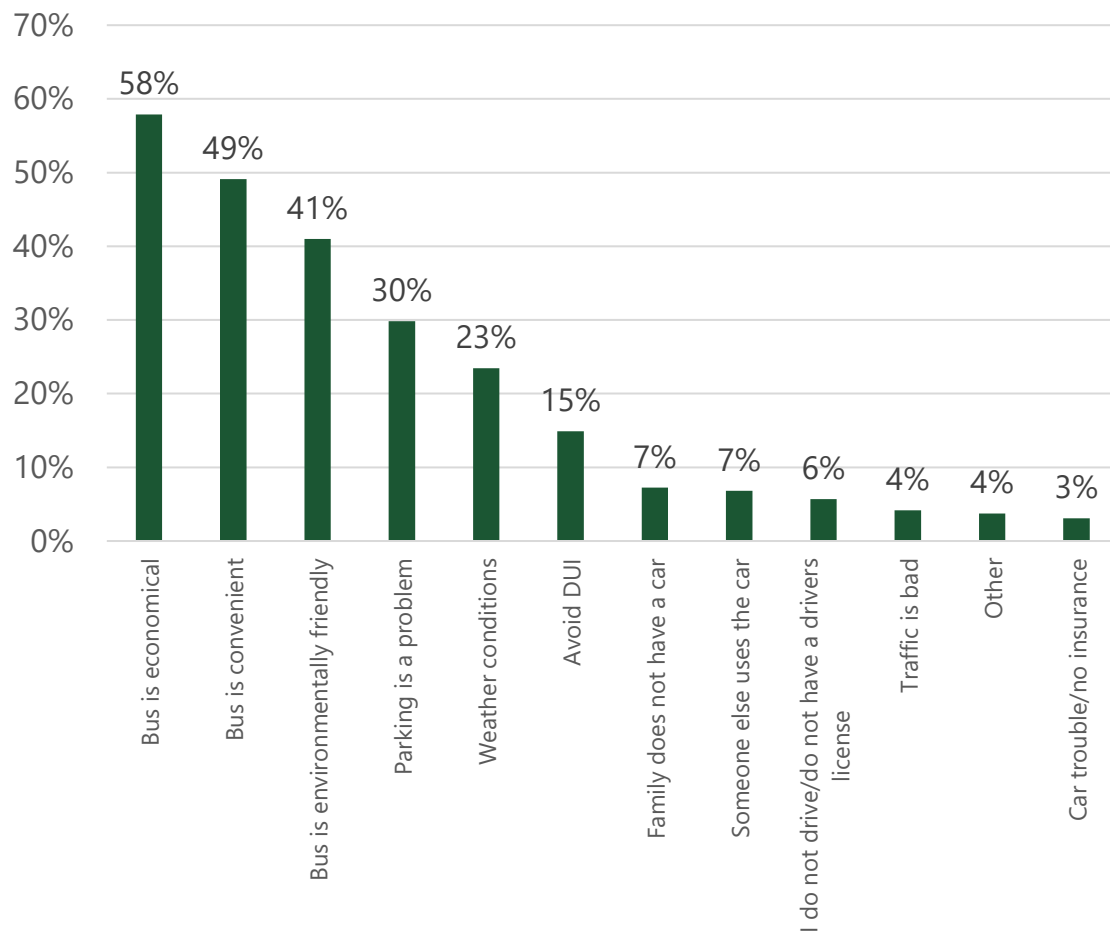
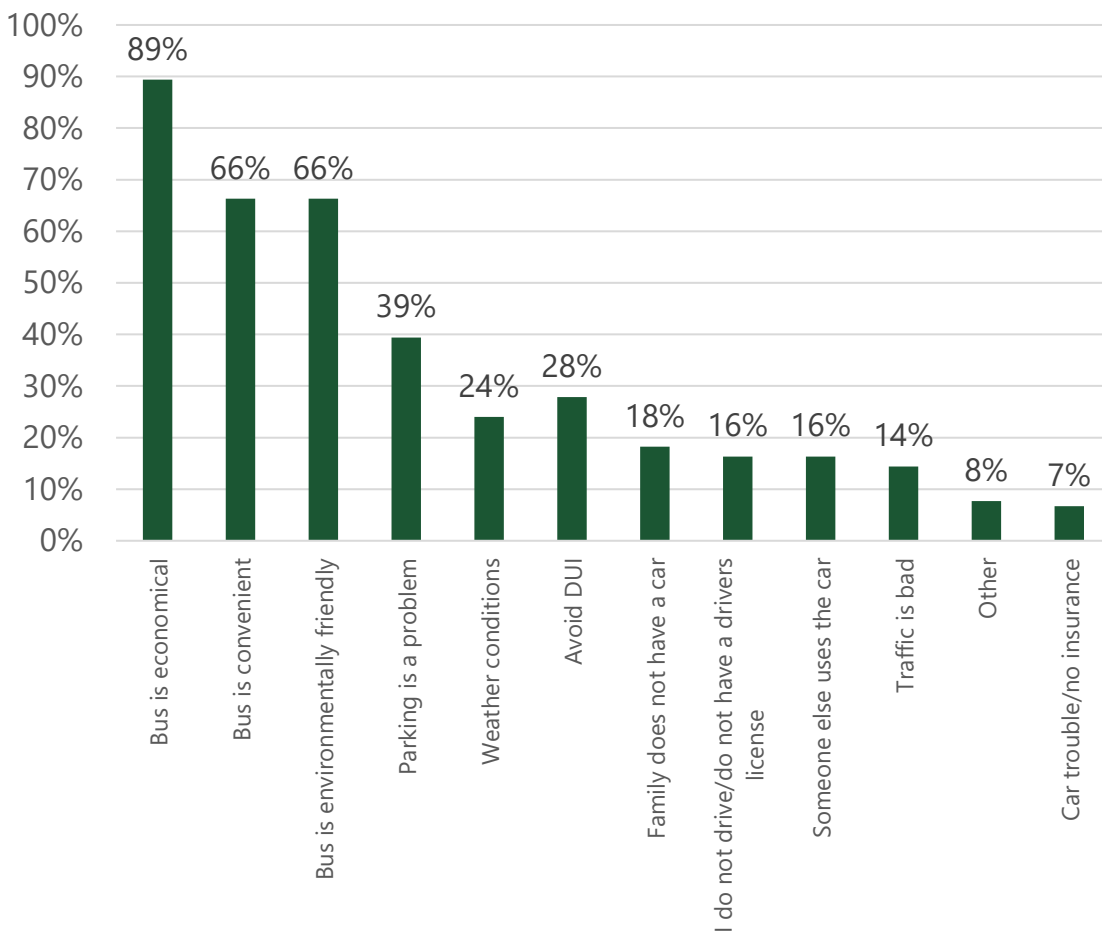


Figure 36. What are the most important reasons you currently ride the RTA bus? (Summer)



Satisfaction with RTA Service Characteristics

The respondents in both surveys indicated that they are mostly 'very satisfied' with buses being fare-free as shown in **Figure 37** and **Figure 38**. While in the winter respondents expressed the most dissatisfaction with park-and-rides, the summer survey indicated on-time performance as the most dissatisfied one. This shift is expected largely due to the US-50 middle bridge being closed due to safety issues, which impacted the ability to efficiently provide backup buses and drivers in cases where they were needed.

Figure 37. Riders' Satisfaction with RTA Service (Winter)

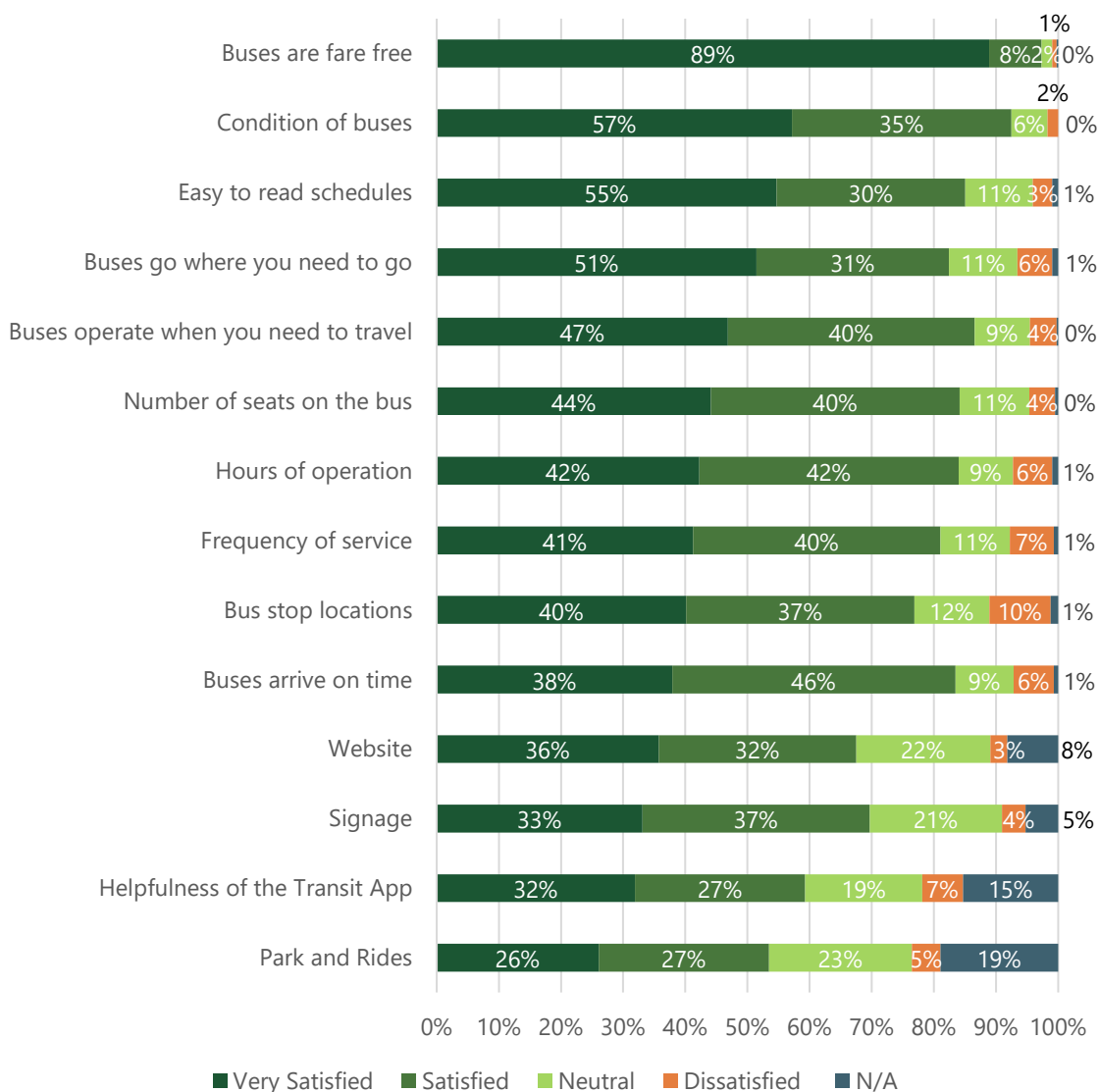
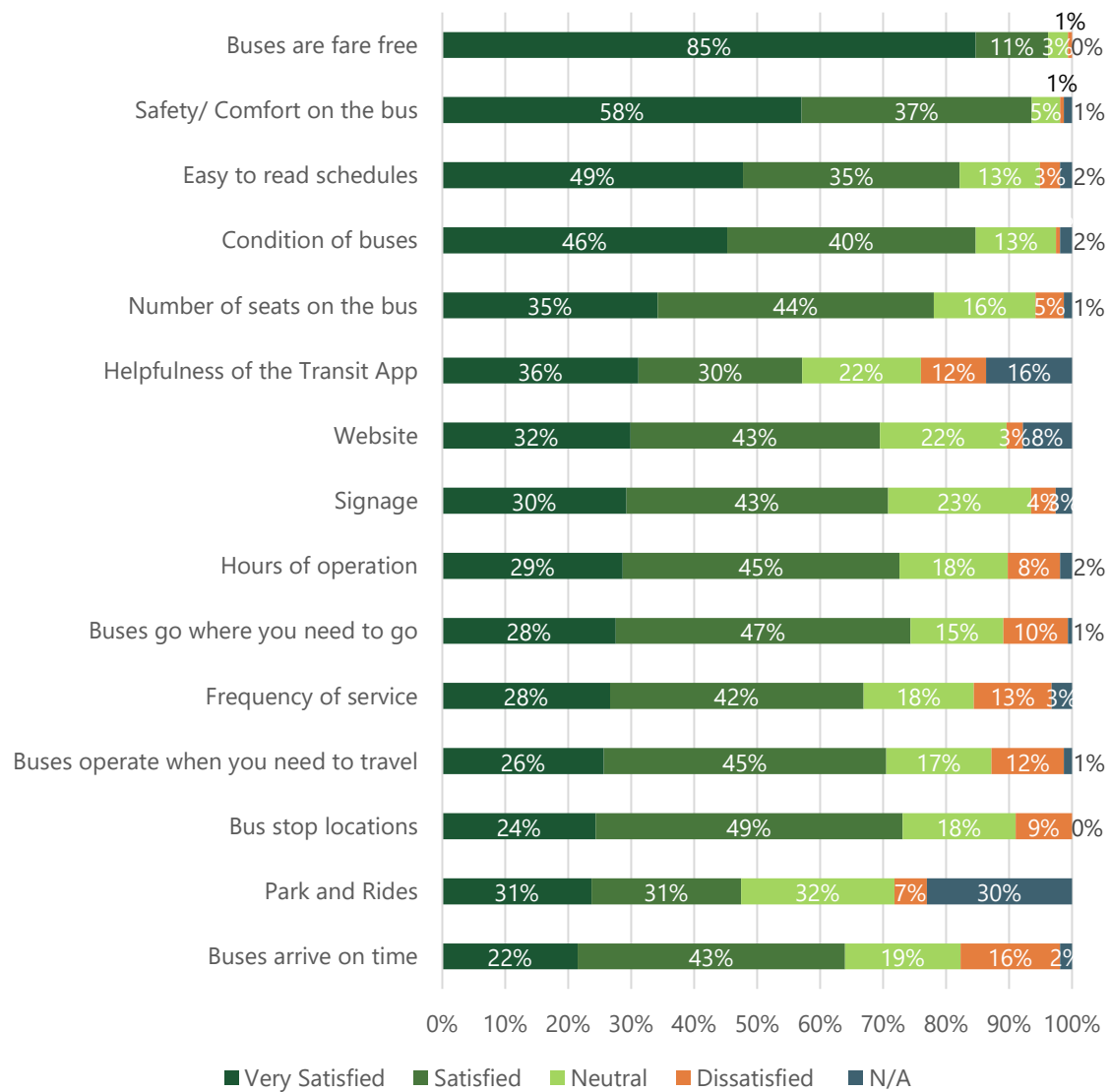


Figure 38. Riders' Satisfaction with RTA Service (Summer)



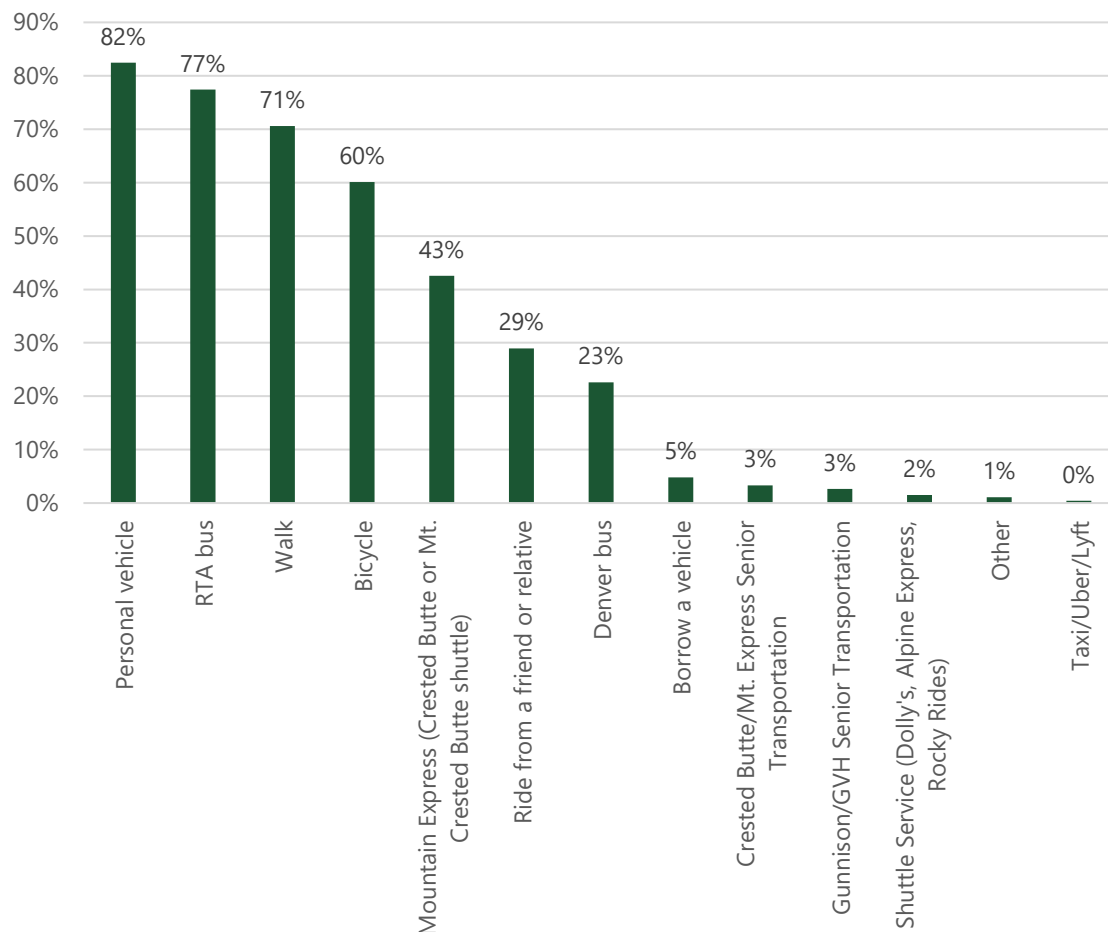
Travel Behavior of Survey Respondents

Understanding the travel behaviors in Gunnison Valley is critical in improving GVRTA service. The respondents were asked about modes of transportation used in their households, if it is possible to use transit for most of their trips during the day, and the reasons if they answered no. All respondents were also asked to identify barriers preventing them from riding the bus.

Transportation Modes Used by Survey Respondents

In the winter survey, respondents were asked about the modes of transportation their households use. Personal vehicles, RTA buses, walking, and biking are the most popular modes of transportation named in the survey as displayed in **Figure 39**. Other modes of transportation that are also often utilized by the participants include Mountain Express, a ride from their friend or relative, and the Denver bus (Bustang).

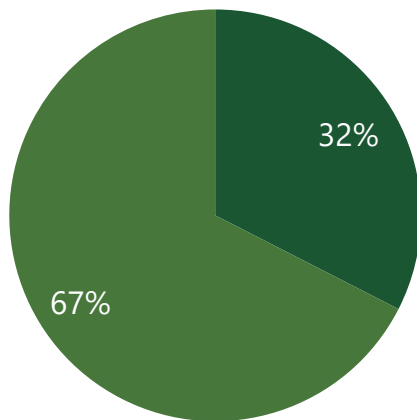
Figure 39. Which of the following types of transportation does your household use in Gunnison County? (Winter)



Ability to Make Most Trips Using the RTA Bus During the Day

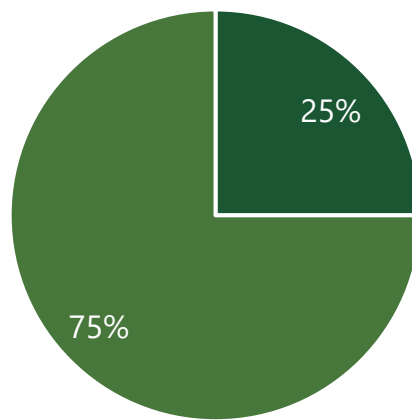
As seen in **Figure 40** and **Figure 41**, 67% of the winter and 75% of the summer respondents indicated they could use transit for the majority of their trips during the day. When the respondents who indicated they could not utilize transit, about 37% of winter respondents said that there is no route or stops available near their home or where they need to go, followed by 17% of respondents expressing the inefficiency of the RTA route for local trips within the City of Gunnison as shown in **Figure 42**. While the summer survey also indicated unavailable nearby bus stops as the top reason respondents could not use transit, the second top reason is that the type of activity they are doing is unsuitable to use transit as detailed in **Figure 43**.

Figure 40. Is it possible for you to use transit for the majority of your trips during the day? (Winter)



■ No ■ Yes

Figure 41. Is it possible for you to use transit for the majority of your trips during the day? (Summer)



■ No ■ Yes

Figure 42. If you answered “No” to the previous question, please answer why not (Winter)

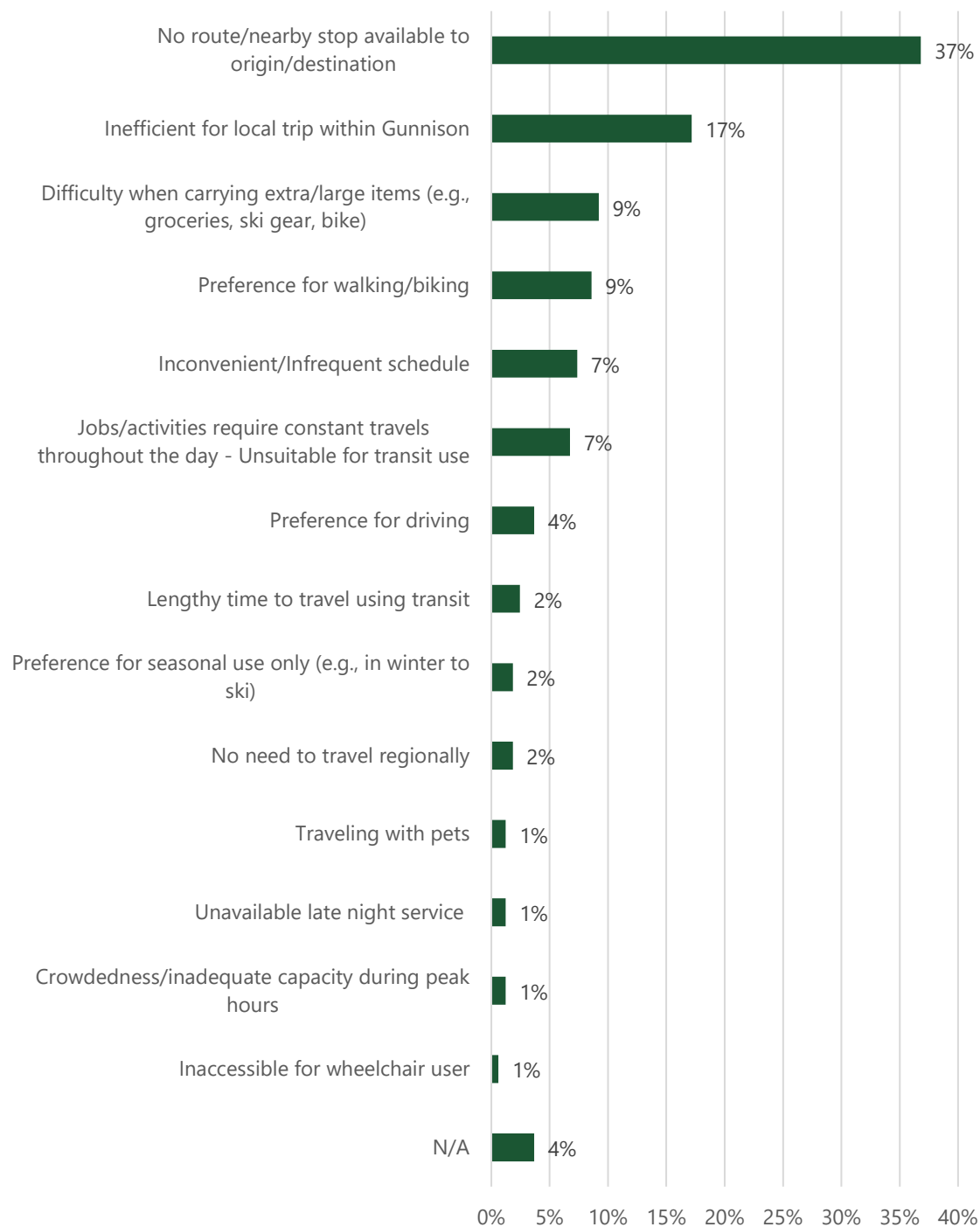
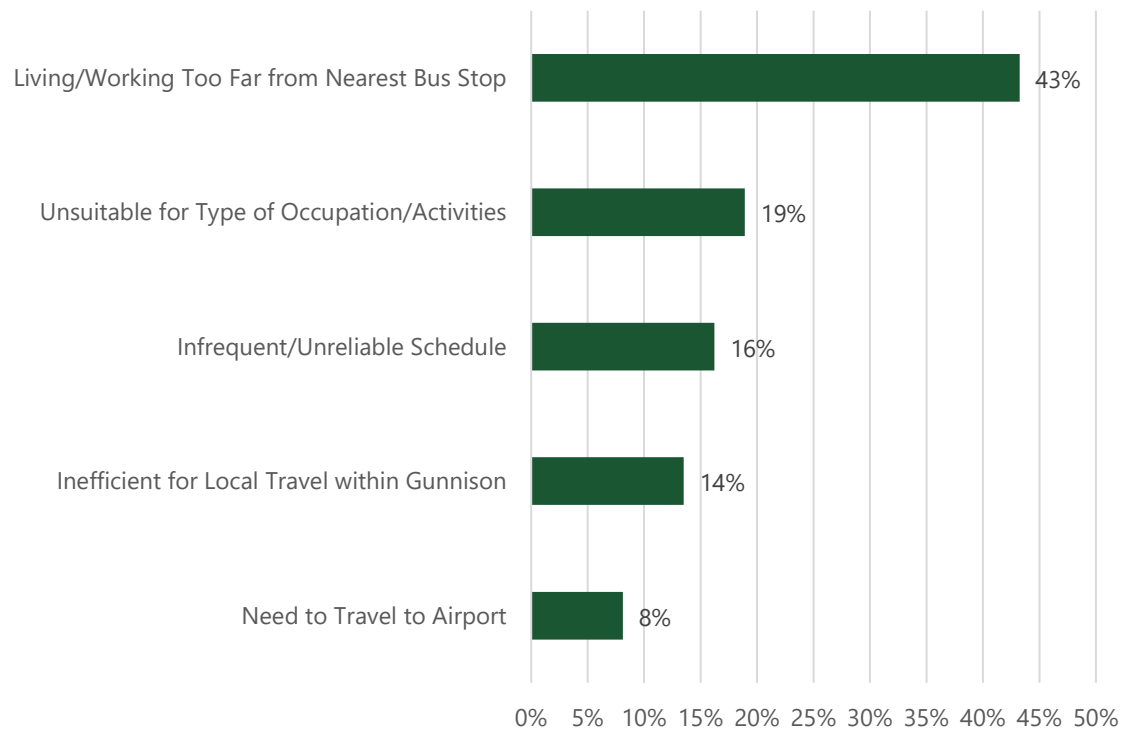


Figure 43. If you answered “No” to the previous question, please answer why not. (Summer)



Barriers to Ride RTA Bus More Often

When asked about the barriers that prevent them from riding the RTA bus more often or riding the bus at all, the top two reasons mentioned by respondents are the unavailability of routes to the desired destinations and the longer duration of riding the bus compared to driving (**Figure 44** and **Figure 45**).

Figure 44. What are the barriers that stop you from riding the RTA bus more or riding the RTA bus at all? (Winter)

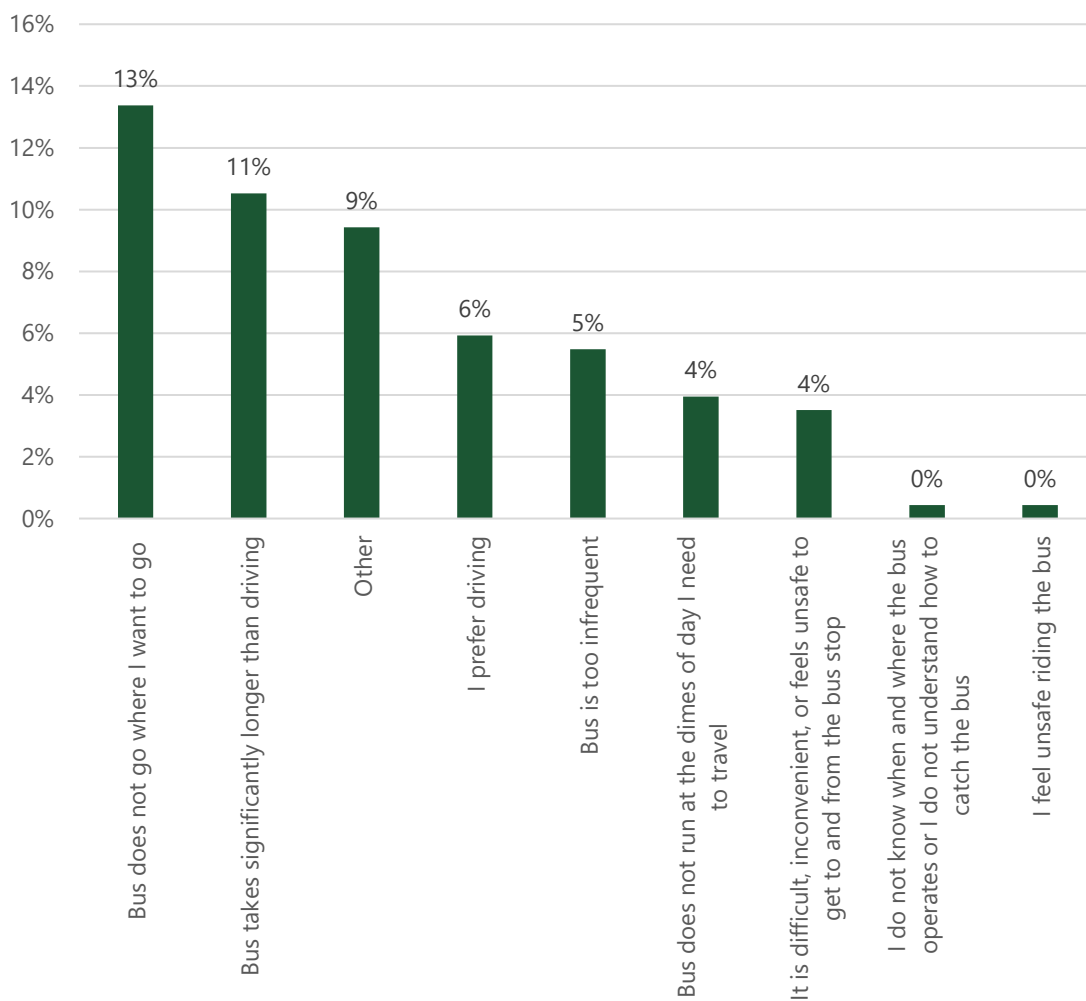
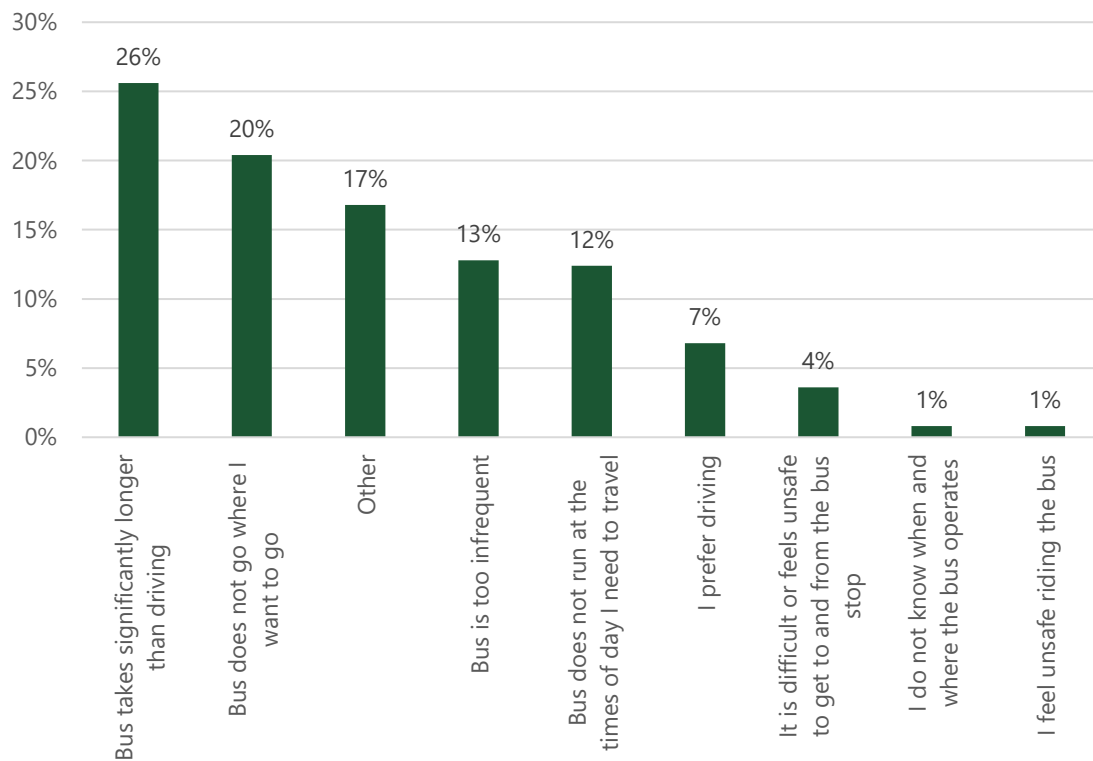
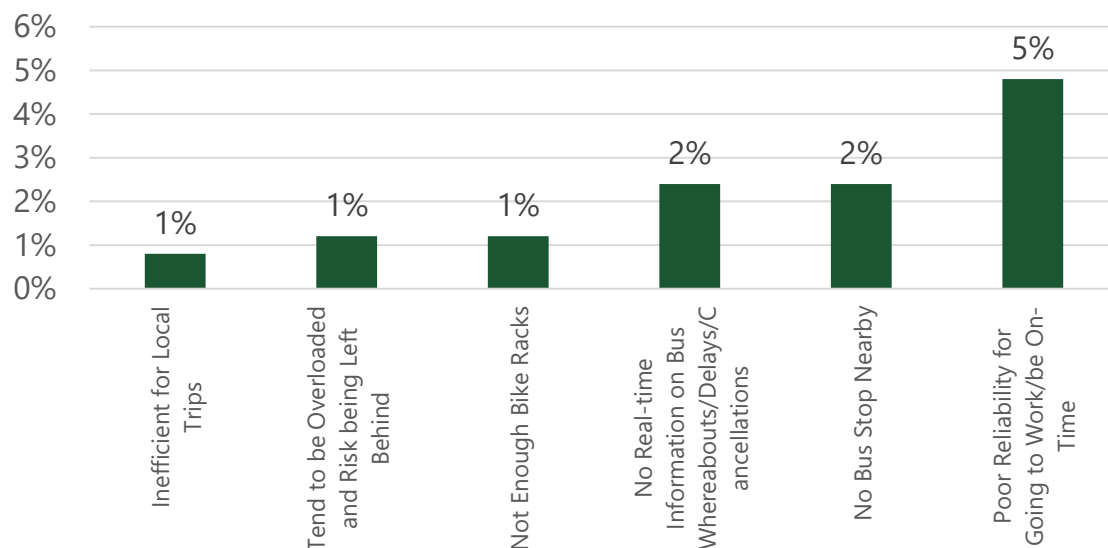


Figure 45. What are the barriers that stop you from riding the RTA bus more or riding the RTA bus at all? (Summer)



In both the winter and summer surveys, the third top barrier is “other” where respondents provided more comments. In the winter, respondents indicated they only travel within Gunnison therefore the bus is inefficient, while summer respondents also mentioned the poor reliability of the bus for getting to work on time (**Figure 46**).

Figure 46. ‘OTHER’ barriers that stop people from riding the RTA bus more or riding the RTA bus at all



Desired Service Characteristics

Survey respondents were asked to identify the level of importance of RTA service characteristics in the winter and then to choose the most important characteristic in the summer. Note: this change in the survey question was made to provide more ease for the survey taker in the summer.

Across both surveys, keeping the bus fare-free is the most desired characteristic (**Figure 47** and **Figure 48**). While approximately 50% expressed a desire for convenient schedules and to restore express service in the winter, only 4% and 7% selected these characteristics as the most important in the summer, respectively. Instead, the summer respondents indicated that less delays and later service are more important.

Figure 47. Winter Survey Respondents' Desired Service Characteristics

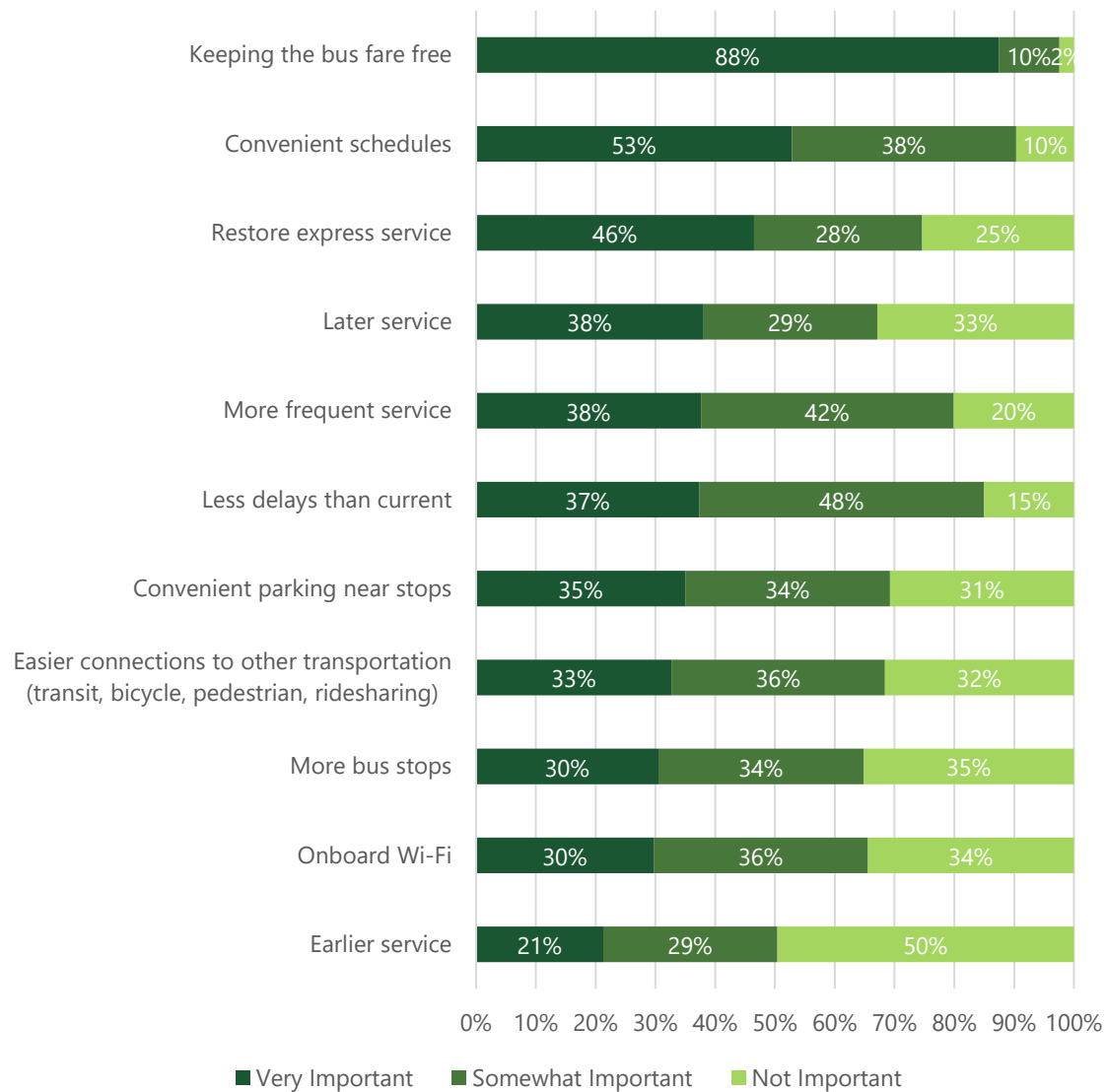
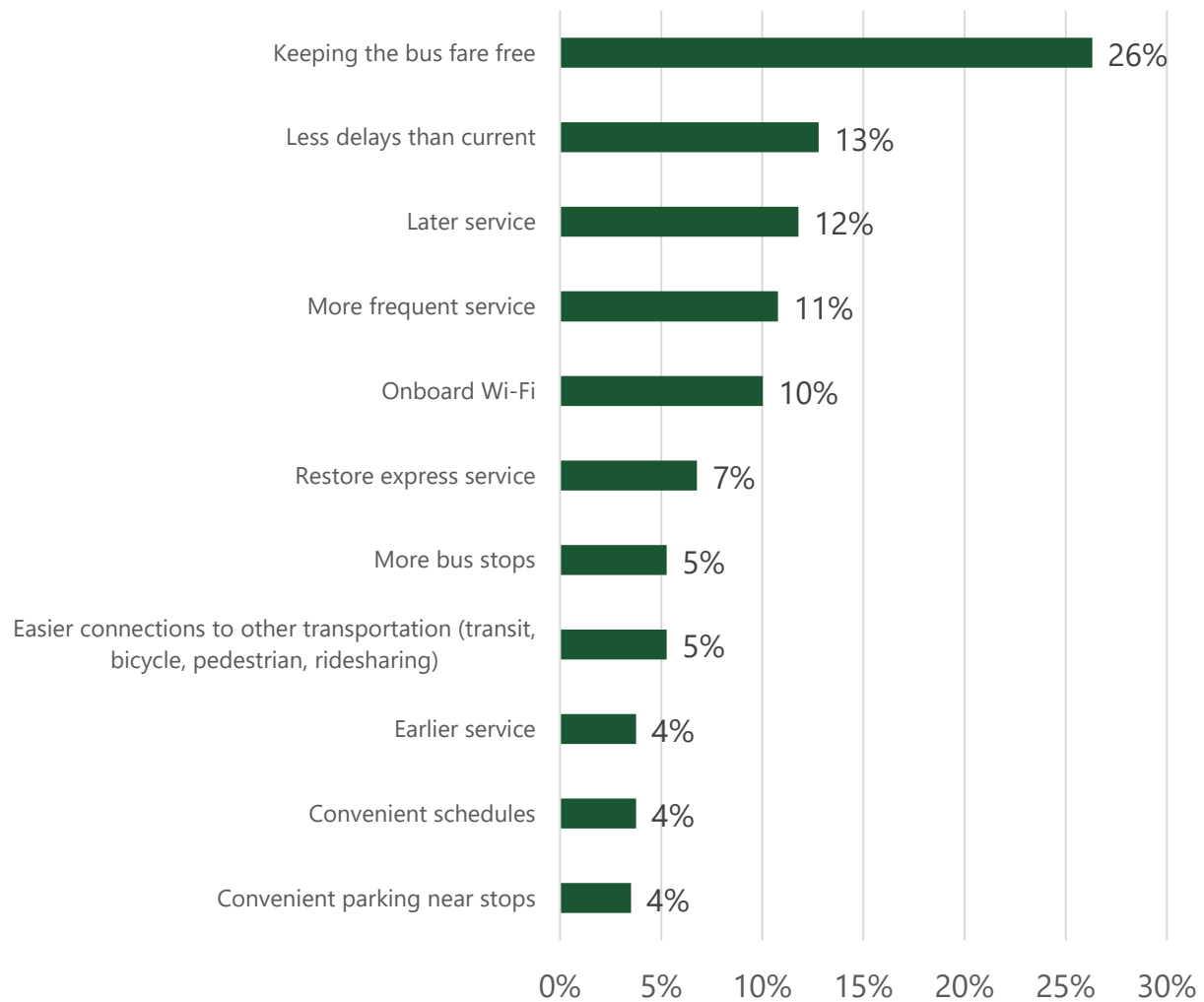


Figure 48. Summer Survey Respondents' Most Desired Service Characteristics



Desired RTA Bus Improvements

To understand the market interest, survey respondents were asked to name desired destinations, new routes, and new bus stops.

Desired Destinations

In both the winter and summer surveys, respondents named the airport as the top destination where they would like improved access. Ski resorts, workplaces, and shopping/restaurants also ranked among the top four desired destinations in both surveys as seen in **Figure 49** and **Figure 50**. In an open-ended question about additional bus stops, some respondents also expressed interest in a new bus stop at Tomichi Avenue and Main Street, as well as additional stops along Highway 135. Summer respondents added that they would like new stops near trailheads. Additionally, respondents in the winter survey were also asked about potential new routes. A circulator within the City of Gunnison is the most requested, followed by routes to other municipalities like Montrose and Monarch Mountain (**Figure 51**). This question was not asked in the summer survey.

Figure 49. What destinations would you like to have improved regional bus routes to? (Winter)

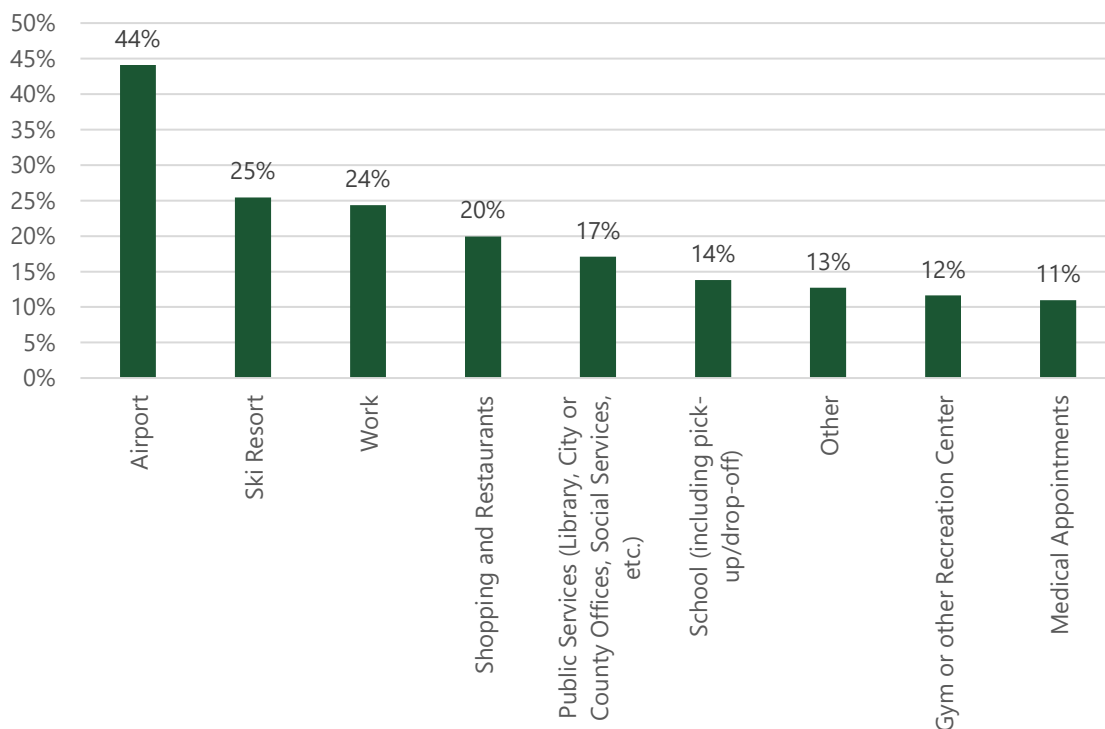


Figure 50. What destinations would you like to have improved regional bus routes to? (Summer)

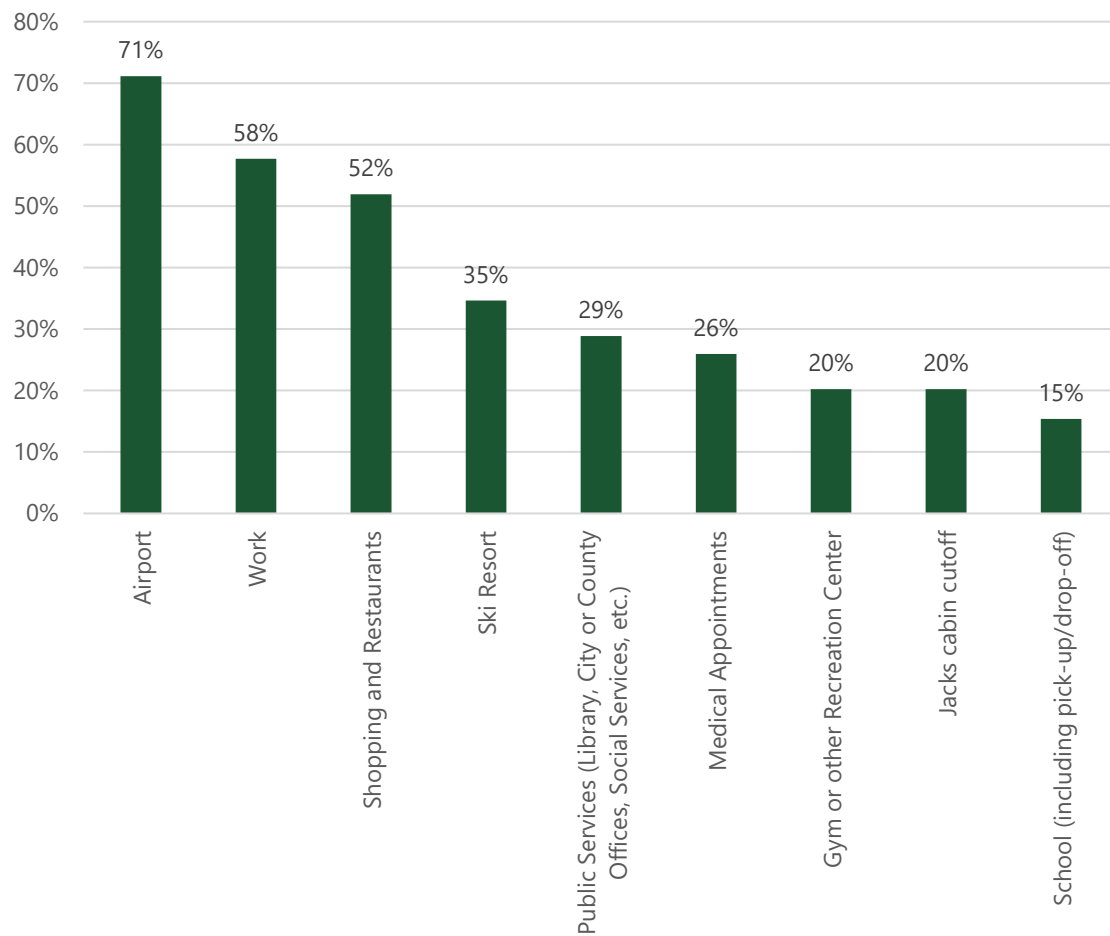
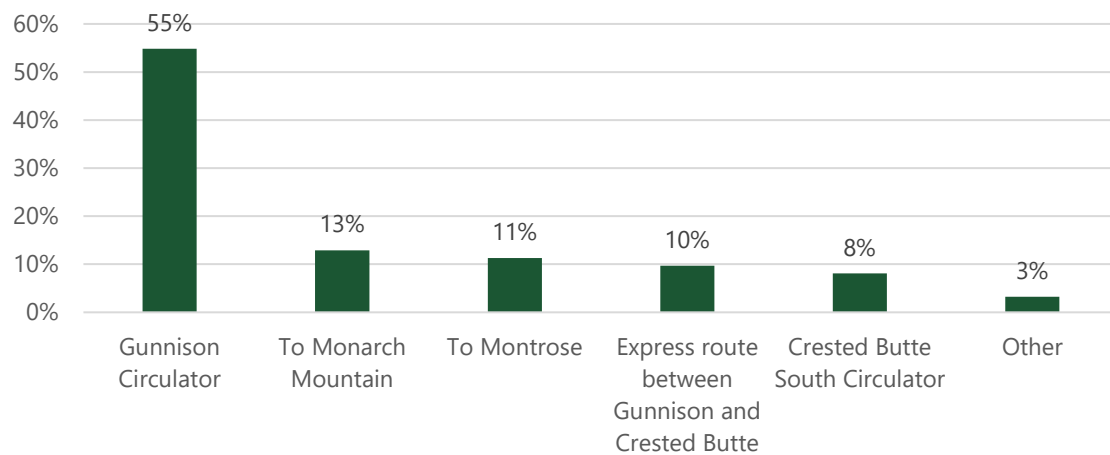


Figure 51. New Routes Requested (Winter)



Additional Comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were provided with an open-ended comment section. Many respondents used this section in both surveys to emphasize their desired improvements (e.g., new bus stops, routes, service performance). Summer respondents also expressed their desire to have real-time information about delays and cancellations. Additionally, 18% of the winter respondents used the section to show their appreciation for RTA services.

Figure 52. Winter Respondents' Open-ended Comments in Categories

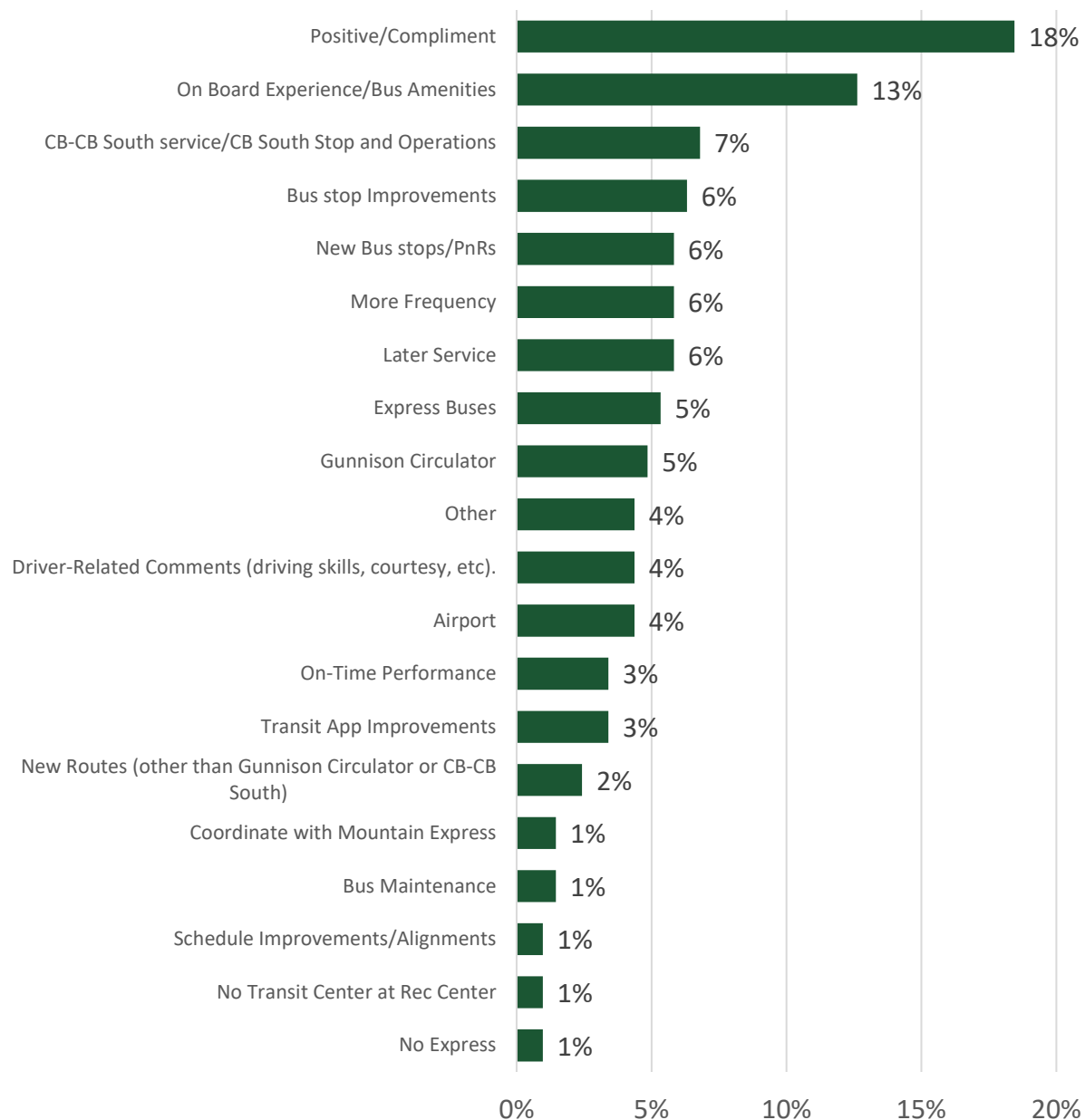
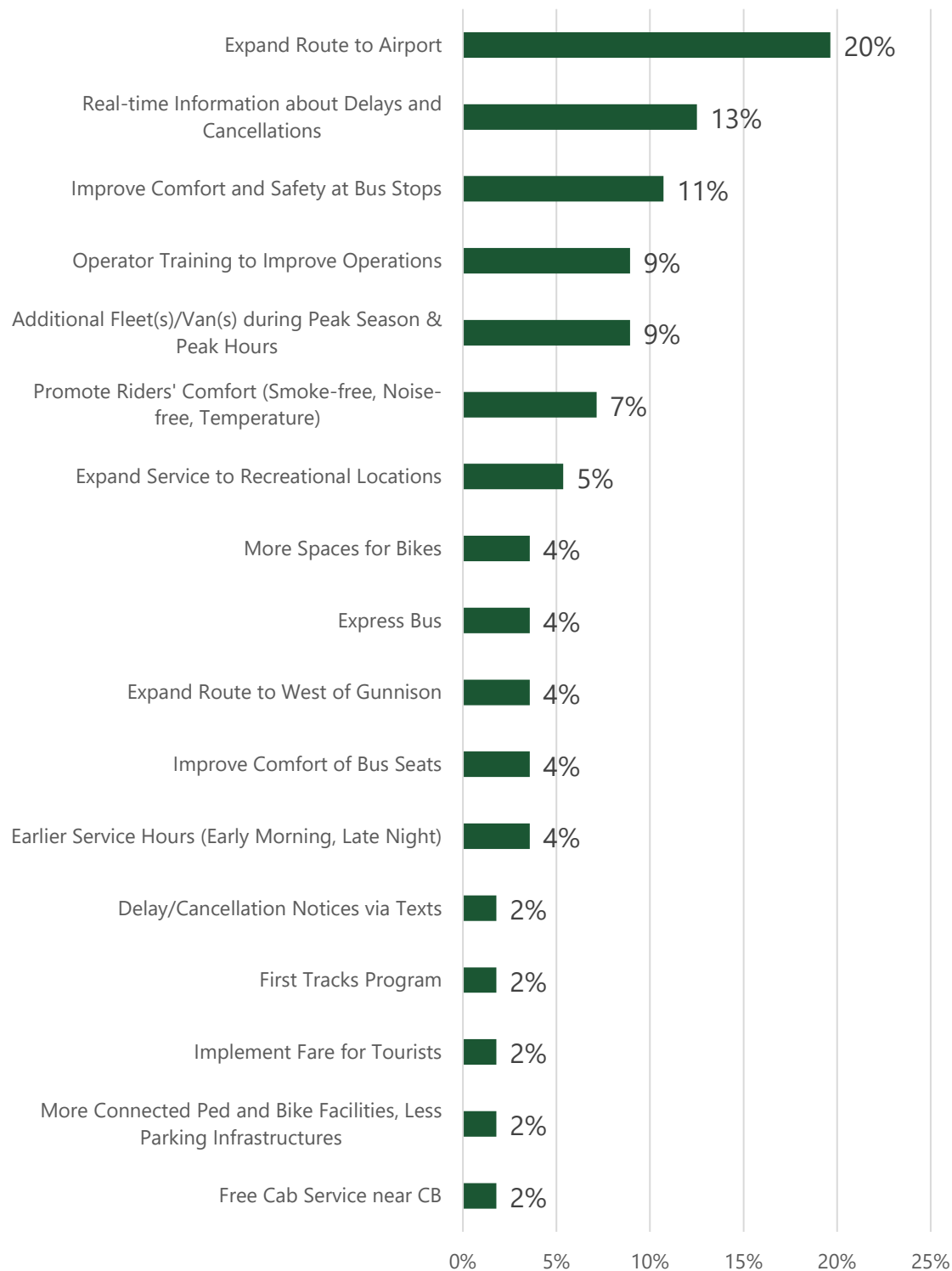


Figure 53. Summer Respondents' Open-ended Comments in Categories



Summer Survey – Draft Project Recommendations

Derived from the winter survey, service expansion and improvement projects, infrastructure (capital) projects, and other coordinated projects were identified. During the summer survey, respondents were asked to provide their input on these projects. These responses are documented in Chapter 4.

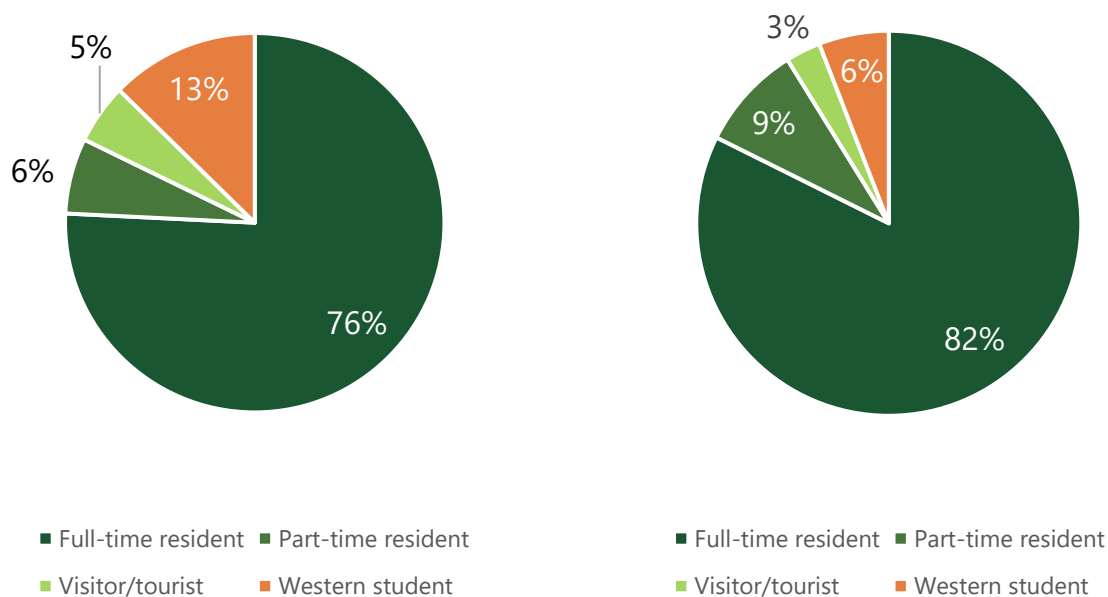
Demographics of Survey Respondents

To ensure the survey is representative of the community's demographic make-up, the respondents were asked to provide their residency status, where they live, ethnicity, age, household income, and vehicle ownership. In both surveys, the demographic trends were similar.

Residency Status of Survey Respondents

Figure 54 and **Figure 55** display the residency status of survey respondents. In both surveys, more than 70% of the respondents are full-time residents of the Gunnison Valley, less than 10% are part-time residents, and less than 5% are visitors. In the winter survey, 13% were taken by Western students, but the number decreased by 7% in the summer, likely due to fewer students being on campus at the time.

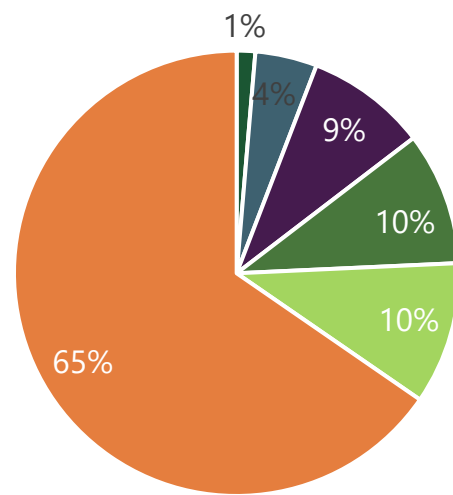
Figure 54. Which best describes you? (Winter) Figure 55. Which best describes you? (Summer)



Community Where the Respondents Live In

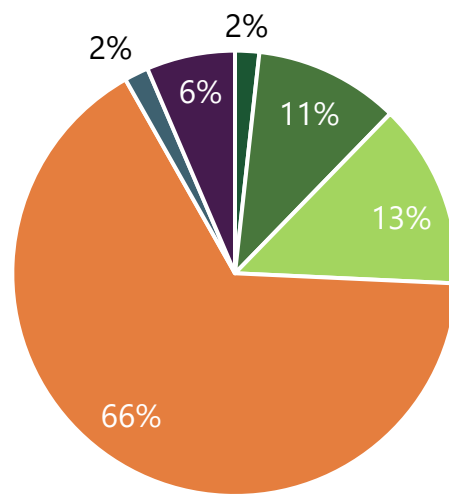
About two-thirds of the respondents in both surveys are Gunnison residents. 10% in the winter and 13% in the summer indicated they live in Crested Butte South, 10% in the winter and 11% in the summer indicated they live in Crested Butte, and less than 5% live in Mt. Crested Butte. The rest of the 10% in the winter and 8% in the summer are residents of other communities, including Almont, as shown in **Figure 56** and **Figure 57**. This aligns with the general population distribution throughout the county.

Figure 56. Where do you live? (Winter)



■ Almont ■ Mt. Crested Butte
 ■ Other ■ Crested Butte
 ■ Crested Butte South ■ Gunnison

Figure 57. Where do you live? (Summer)

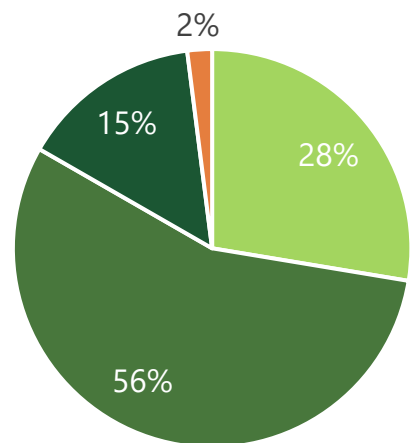


■ Almont ■ Crested Butte
 ■ Crested Butte South ■ Gunnison
 ■ Mt. Crested Butte ■ Other

Age

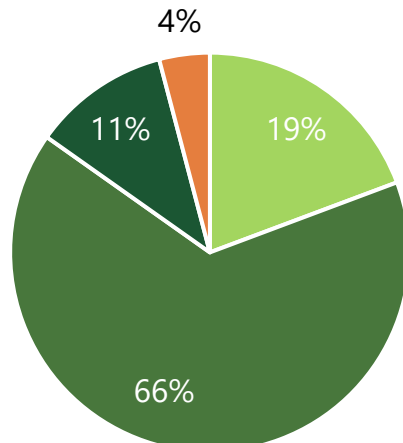
Figure 58 and **Figure 59** display the working age group (26-64 years old) as the largest respondents in both surveys, followed by the young adult group (19-25 years old). In the winter, the working group represents 56% of the respondents and by summer, they represent 10% of the respondents. The young adults represent 28% in the winter and 19% in the summer, likely due to fewer Western students being in the valley during the summer. The older adult (over 65) group ranges between 15% in the winter and 11% in the summer, and adolescents (under 18) remained below 5% in both surveys.

Figure 58. What is your age? (Winter)



■ 19-25 ■ 26-64 ■ 65+ ■ Under 18

Figure 59. What is your age? (Summer)

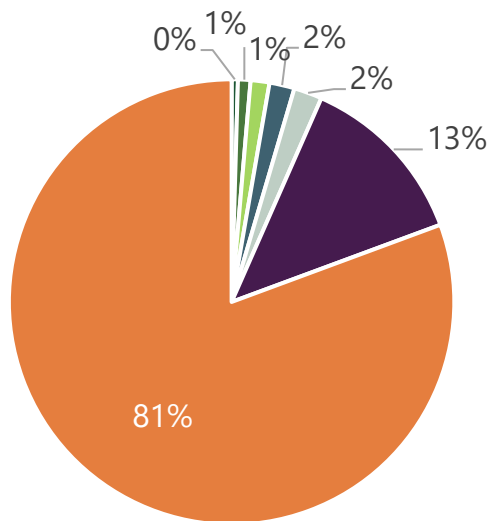


■ 19-25 ■ 26-64 ■ 65+ ■ Under 18

Ethnicity

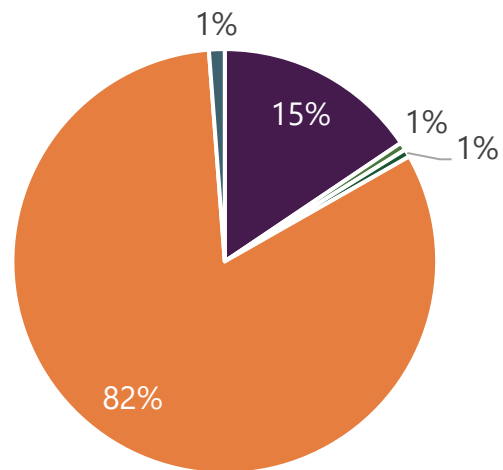
More than 80% of the respondents in both surveys are White/Caucasian. 13% in the winter and 15% in the summer are Hispanic/Latino and other ethnicities represent the remaining 6% in the winter and 3% in the summer as displayed in **Figure 60** and **Figure 61**. These statistics are representative of the proportion of people living throughout the county.

Figure 60. What is your ethnicity? (Winter)



- Pacific Islander
- Native American/Alaska Native
- Black/African American
- Other
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- White/Caucasian

Figure 61. What is your ethnicity? (Summer)

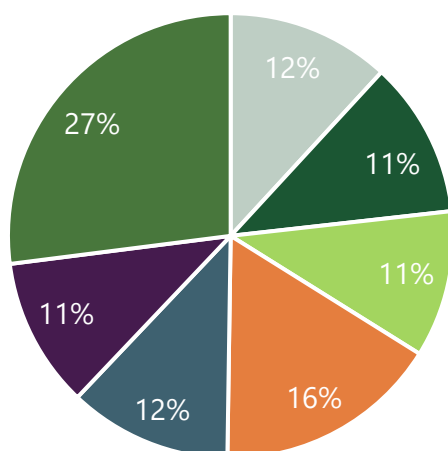


- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American/Alaska Native
- Pacific Islander
- White/Caucasian
- Other

Household Income

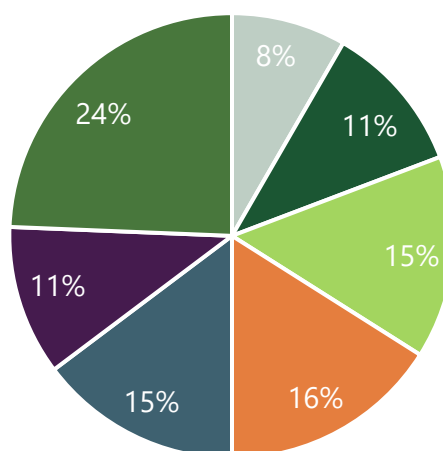
Figure 62 and **Figure 63** indicate that 38% of the winter survey respondents and 35% of the summer respondents earn more than the 2022 median household income (\$76,500) in Gunnison County; 27% of the winter respondents and 24% in the summer claimed that their households earn more than \$100,000 annually and about 11% earn more than \$80,000. 12% of the winter and 8% of the summer respondents indicated that they earn less than \$10,000 annually, which also corresponds with census data that 10.8% of the Gunnison County population live below the federal poverty line of a household with one person.

Figure 62. What is your total household income? (Winter)



- Under \$10,000 per year
- \$10,000 - \$19,999 per year
- \$20,000 - \$39,999 per year
- \$40,000 - \$59,999 per year
- \$60,000 - \$79,999 per year
- \$80,000 - \$99,999 per year
- \$100,000+ per year

Figure 63. What is your total household income? (Summer)



- Under \$10,000 per year
- \$10,000 - \$19,999 per year
- \$20,000 - \$39,999 per year
- \$40,000 - \$59,999 per year
- \$60,000 - \$79,999 per year
- \$80,000 - \$99,999 per year
- \$100,000+ per year

Vehicle Ownership

12% of winter respondents and 14% of summer respondents mentioned they have no vehicle in their household. More than 70% of the respondent households have at least one vehicle, and 17% in the winter and 13% in the summer have more than three vehicles in their households as shown in **Figure 64** and **Figure 65**.

Figure 64. How many vehicles does your household have? (Winter)

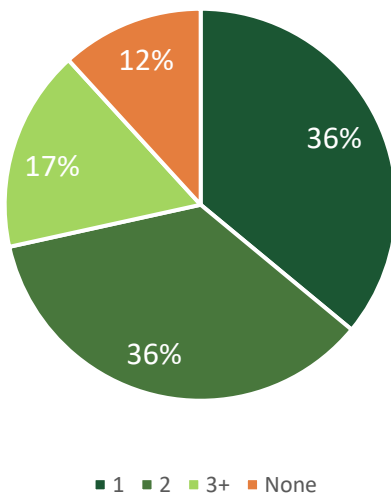
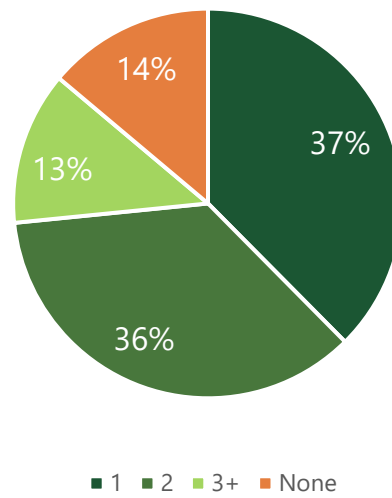


Figure 65. How many vehicles does your household have? (Summer)



Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

Stakeholder interviews and focus groups were held throughout the process to get more in-depth understanding of what key users, employers, employees, and officials thought of the RTA service and how it could be improved. The questions asked during the interviews and focus groups can be found in Appendix A. The organizations interviewed are listed below:

- Alpine Express
- Crested Butte/ Mt. Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce
- Gunnison Chamber of Commerce
- Gunnison Valley Health
- GVRTA Board Members
- GVRTA Bus Drivers
- Inmigrantes Unidos (Spanish Speaking Focus-Group)
- Municipal/County Staff from Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte
- Mountain Express
- Older Adult Residents
- Western Colorado University

Conversations with these groups brought insight into how different stakeholders use the RTA service, what they currently like about it, and what could be improved.

Key takeaways from the stakeholder outreach and focus groups are outlined below.

- GVRTA should be aware of new developments and expand its service to those sites if feasible.
- First/last mile improvements/connections (such as microtransit, improved bike facilities, park-and-rides, and car share) would help people get to/from the bus safer and improve the user experience.
- GVRTA should regularly collaborate between the communities and with Mountain Express.
- The services that the RTA offers should be expanded. Examples of community desires include late night service, an express route, and circulator routes.
- Educational efforts such as brochures and presentations should be expanded to encourage more people to ride the bus, such as the older adult population, students, the non-English speaking community, and visitors. These educational efforts can help explain the RTA services and general transit in the Gunnison Valley.
- Many stakeholders are dependent on the bus to get to/from work or school and really appreciate the free service.

Furthermore, once the initial project list was developed, municipal partners were given the opportunity to comment on the projects and express their thoughts on the prioritization of these projects.

Chapter 4: Project Development Process

In combination of the demographic review and the community outreach, the project team developed a set of travel markets (groups with common characteristics) to inform the list of potential projects. This chapter describes the identified travel markets and all projects that were initially considered.

Travel Markets

Travel markets are groups with common demographic characteristics who would use the transit service for a variety of trip purposes. They are important to identify to inform the initial project list. They are also an important qualitative metric to understand how successful a project may be over another as it relates to serving the travel markets. The following potential transit travel markets have been identified.

Commuters

With the focus of this update being on the commuter service provided between Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte, commuters are a key travel market. As the demographic review displays, there is a large regional movement of workers throughout the corridor and providing effective commuter transit service is at the core of GVRTA's mission. To be clear, however, there are also many residents throughout the study area who live and work within the same community, and GVRTA provides limited internal circulation throughout local communities being a regional transit service.

Youth/Students

Youth populations as well as students of all educational institutions throughout the county are key users of GVRTA. Throughout the county, approximately 35% of residents are under the age of 25 and approximately 27% of residents are between the ages of 10 and 25. These riders may not have a driver's license or access to a vehicle and may be a market for increased ridership. They typically have the largest demand for getting to and from school, higher education, jobs, and recreational activities.

Older Adults

Approximately 15% of Gunnison County's residents are 65 years and older. Like youth populations, older adults are more likely to depend on transit to access destinations like community centers, grocery stores, and medical centers. Between the senior bus service and the commuter service, older adults are a key

focus of the transit service GVRTA provides. Improvements to the service, along with other mobility partnerships, can help serve older adults for their trip purposes.

Recreation

Recreation is the largest employment sector in Gunnison County, employing 21% of the population. Recreation is also a large destination throughout the county year-round, specifically for outdoor activities like skiing, biking, hiking, and rafting. Furthermore, there are other destinations that serve recreational purposes like recreation centers, performing arts centers, and the airport. Although GVRTA does not always provide door-to-door connections for these trip purposes, many riders use the bus service for recreational trip purposes.

Short, Community-Based Trips

These are trips that riders may make for a variety of purposes, such as access to grocery stores, restaurants, medical facilities, and social services. GVRTA does not directly cater to these trips, but it is possible at both ends of the commuter route to make these trips in a limited fashion. As a result, some people (especially in Gunnison) make these short trips using GVRTA, especially if they are transit dependent. Although serving these trips does not directly align with GVRTA's mission, strong partnerships between regional and local mobility providers can enhance the rider experience.

People with Limited Access to Vehicles

Approximately 2% of residents have no vehicles available and approximately 17% have one vehicle available countywide, but these statistics (as the other demographic statistics) vary by community. Households or individuals that have limited access to a vehicle are more likely to depend on transit and rely on GVRTA and other service providers for their transportation needs.

People with Disabilities

Approximately 8% of residents live with a disability of some sort in Gunnison County. People living with a disability may be more likely to rely on other modes of transportation than driving. There are not necessarily unique destinations that people with disabilities may need to access, and GVRTA can deliver on providing access to regional destinations, while partnering with other mobility providers for local and door-to-door transportation services.

People with Limited English Proficiency

With approximately 1% of the Gunnison County population having limited English proficiency and 7% of people speaking a language other than English, it is important that GVRTA continues to provide multilingual support for its community through its services. This is especially true as many of the survey

respondents and community members that the project team interacted with during the outreach phases were Spanish speaking.

Preliminary Project List

With travel markets identified, the team developed projects that GVRTA could consider for improving existing service and infrastructure to accommodate the growing demand for its transportation services. The projects are split between projects GVRTA would be directly responsible for and projects that would require coordination with the surrounding municipalities.

These were presented to the public during the summer community outreach phase, and they were evaluated to determine which projects GVRTA will pursue in the next five years. The preliminary project descriptions below are those that were used during this outreach process. After the outreach process, projects were evaluated and refined for final project descriptions in the final operating plan, as described in Chapter 6.

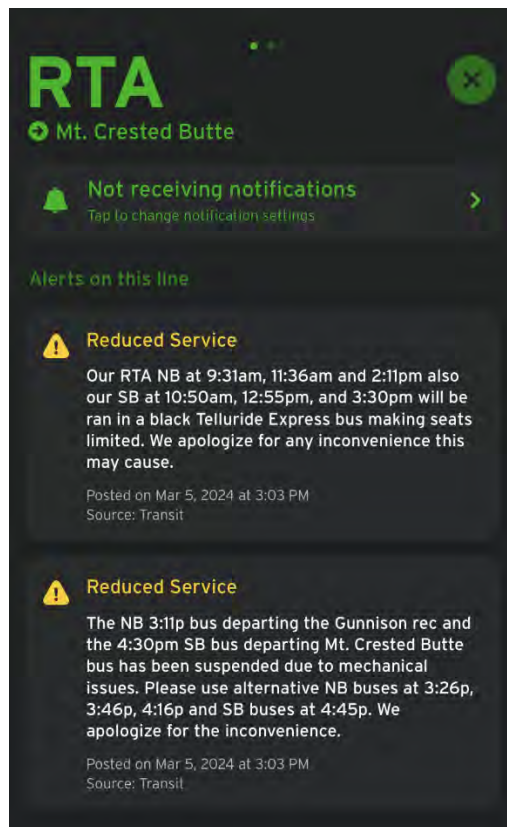
GVRTA Projects

The projects that GVRTA would take on directly as part of their mission can be sorted into three categories: service expansion and improvement projects, capital projects, and organizational projects.

Service Expansion and Improvement Projects

Service expansion and improvement projects aim to improve the direct operations of the transit system.

1. **Expand Service Hours in the Peak Seasons and Target Service Hours in the Off-Seasons.** Winter and summer seasons run on the same schedule with two added evening runs and more 15-minute frequencies during the peak hours. Spring and fall seasons run with fewer service hours and 30-minute frequencies.
2. **Establish a Gunnison Commuter Microtransit Zone.** On-demand transit service where riders can request to be picked up within a service zone during service hours. Rides must start or end at a GVRTA bus stop.
3. **Establish a Crested Butte South Commuter Microtransit Zone.** On-demand transit service where riders can request to be picked up within a service zone during service hours. Rides must start or end at the CB South bus stop.
4. **Enhance Marketing Efforts.**
 - a. Enhance the current Transit app to better address issues with real-time tracking, more timely notices of cancellations or delays, etc.



Example of GVRTA alert in Transit app. Source: Fehr & Peers.

- b. Enhance the current website to make the schedule easier to read and navigate, along with other website improvements to improve access to information.
- c. Create an educational brochure to distribute to community leaders, partners, and organizations. Brochure to include marketing of RTA services, FAQs about transportation in the Gunnison Valley, and contact information.

Capital Projects

Capital projects include the physical infrastructure that would be needed to support the service expansion and improvement projects.

1. **Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison.** An enhanced bus stop includes more passenger amenities and provides space for multiple transit operators to use the bus stop than a typical bus stop (think northbound Crested Butte 4-Way stop). This site would also house GVRTA administrative offices. Key amenities to this site would include a passenger waiting area, restrooms, room for multiple buses to stop, a dispatch office, a GVRTA staff office, and staff/rider parking spaces.

2. **Provide More Park-and-Ride Locations.** Parking lots near transit stops. Potential near-term locations include Brush Creek and CB South at Red Mountain Park. Also, plan for parking opportunities near future developments.



Existing parking at CB South bus stop. Source: Fehr & Peers.

3. **Finish Upgrading Bus Stops.** GVRTA has recently upgraded 19/25 bus stops with new shelters, lighting, and ADA access. The remaining stops to upgrade include: Gunnison Rec Center, Gunnison Community Schools, 11th & Virginia, Western, Denver & 135, Southbound Crested Butte 4-Way.



Existing Gunnison Rec Center bus stop. Source: Fehr & Peers.



Existing Southbound Crested Butte 4-Way bus stop. Source: Fehr & Peers.

4. **Install Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association at CB South.** Install an additional flag stop at Teocalli Road and Elcho Avenue (2 blocks from the CB South business district) to serve future CB South Development.

5. **Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan.** Adjustments to the existing fleet replacement plan to reflect the increase in service and replace the buses accordingly.

Organizational and Internal Projects

Organizational and internal projects are projects that will not directly impact riders but will improve the operations of GVRTA processes. Note: only the first two projects were displayed to the public during the summer phase of outreach.

1. **Identify Requirements for Future Contracted Operators.** GVRTA currently contracts its commuter bus service to Alpine Express, who is responsible for operating buses, hiring drivers, maintaining and cleaning the buses, and enforcing onboard policies. When the current contract expires, GVRTA should include requirements that best serve GVRTA and its riders.
2. **Establish a Long-Term Vision.** A long-term plan looks toward the future and recommends projects that may not be feasible within the near term but could be feasible in the future with the projected growth of both the Gunnison Valley and GVRTA. This potentially includes reevaluating the vision, mission, and structure of the RTA to best serve the Gunnison Valley.
3. **Consider Minor Routing Change.** GVRTA will consider whether making a left turn from Teller Street to Virginia Avenue is feasible for easing driver turning difficulty that is currently experienced by turning left onto Georgia Avenue.
4. **Incorporate the North Valley Bus Storage Facility into Operations.** With an expanded fleet, GVRTA will begin to store some vehicles at its recently constructed north valley bus storage facility. This will allow GVRTA to begin some bus runs at the north end of the route.
5. **Coordinate with Other Regional Planning Efforts.** As the region continues to grow and plan for the future of its transportation network, it is important that GVRTA continues to be an active participant in the planning processes throughout the county and various municipalities.

Other Coordinated Projects

Coordinated projects are transportation-related projects that GVRTA would be a key partner but would not lead nor fund. Since GVRTA would not lead nor fund these projects, they are not evaluated for prioritization in Chapter 5 nor included in the capital plan in Chapter 6.

1. **Advise the Establishment of a Gunnison Circulator.** A circulator service for local and first/last mile trips within Gunnison, potentially funded and operated by a partnership between the City of Gunnison, WCU, and/or a new funding source. The route could include a connection to the airport and other key locations within Gunnison.
 - a. **GVRTA's Role:** Serve as liaison and experienced transit provider. Be a key partner to ensure coordination between GVRTA services and Gunnison Circulator.

2. **Advise the Establishment of a Crested Butte South Circulator.** A circulator service for local and first/last mile trips within Crested Butte South, potentially funded and operated by the Towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte through Mountain Express along with the CB South POA and/or another funding source. The route should include a connection to Crested Butte.
 - a. GVRTA's Role: Serve as liaison and experienced transit provider. Be a key partner to ensure coordination between GVRTA services and Crested Butte South Circulator.
3. **Advise the Establishment of Micromobility Services (Shared Scooters/Bikes).** Scooter and bike share programs in Gunnison and in Crested Butte to improve first/last mile connections.
 - a. GVRTA's Role: Provide designated spaces for scooter/bike parking at bus stops.
4. **Advise the Establishment of Brush Creek First/Last Mile Opportunities.** Explore first/last mile opportunities for communities adjacent to Brush Creek Road as development occurs. This may include fixed-route, microtransit, or micromobility opportunities.
 - a. GVRTA's Role: Serve as liaison and experienced transit provider. Be a key partner to ensure coordination between GVRTA services and Brush Creek first/last mile opportunities.

Public Input on Preliminary Project List

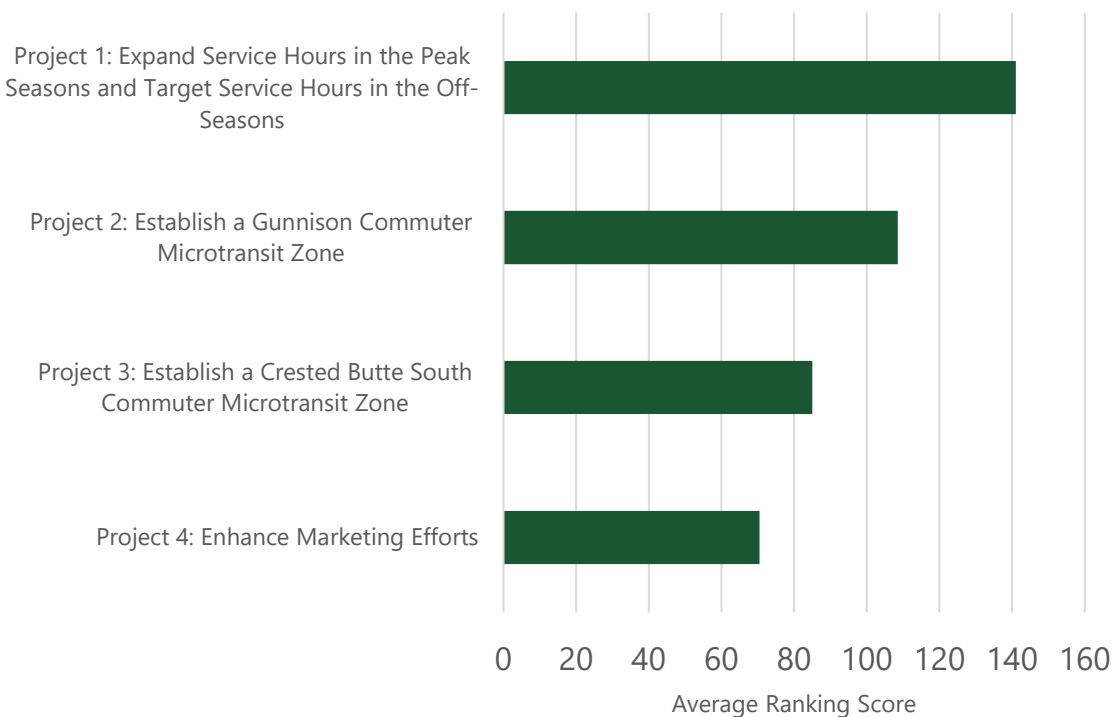
As described in Chapter 3, survey respondents and open house attendees during the summer outreach phase were asked to provide their input on the preliminary project list.

Summer Survey

Service Expansion and Improvement Projects

When asked to rank the most to the least important service expansion and improvement projects, most respondents chose project 1 which looks at adjusting service hours for more service during peak hours in peak seasons. Establishing commuter microtransit zones in Gunnison and Crested Butte South came in the second and third most important projects, and enhancing marketing efforts was identified as the least important as shown in **Figure 66**.

Figure 66. Please rank the following service expansion and improvement projects from 1-most important to you to 4-least important to you.¹

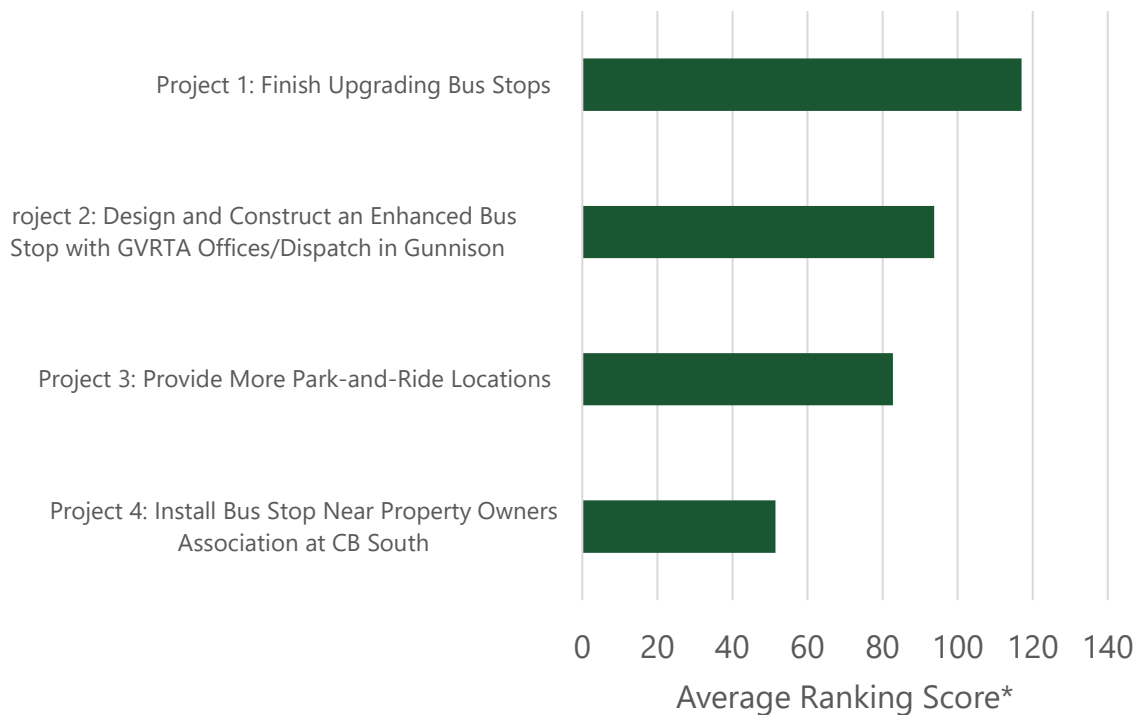


¹ The average ranking score is calculated based on which rank respondents gave each project. 1st rank of a project gives it the most points (4 points) and 4th rank gives it the least (1 point). All points are then calculated for an average ranking score.

Infrastructure (Capital) Projects

When asked to rank the most to the least important infrastructure projects, most respondents showed the most interest in finishing bus stop upgrades, followed by designing and constructing the enhanced bus stop. Providing more park-and-ride locations mostly ranked as the third most important and installing bus stops near the Property Owner Association (POA) at CB South was identified as the least important as shown in **Figure 67**.

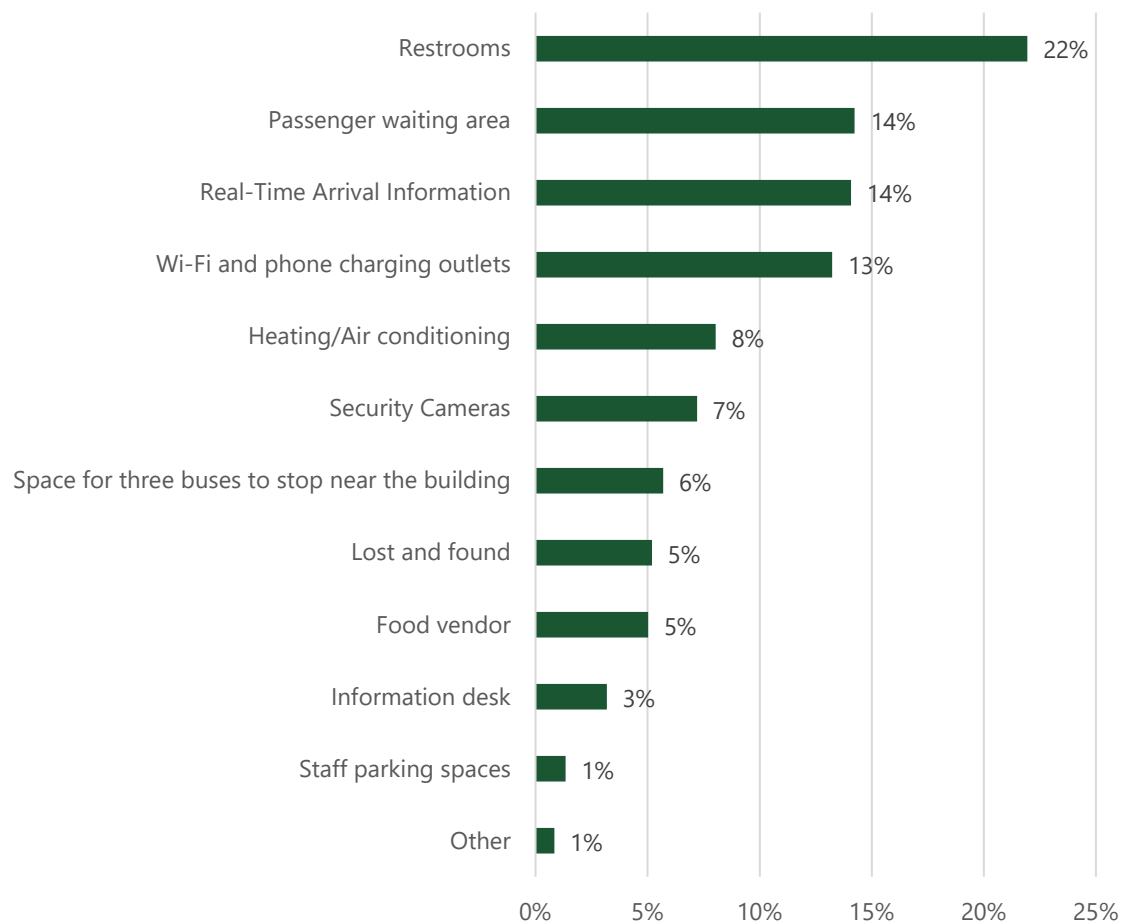
Figure 67. Please rank the following infrastructure projects from 1-most important to you to 4-least important to you.



Enhanced Bus Stop Criteria

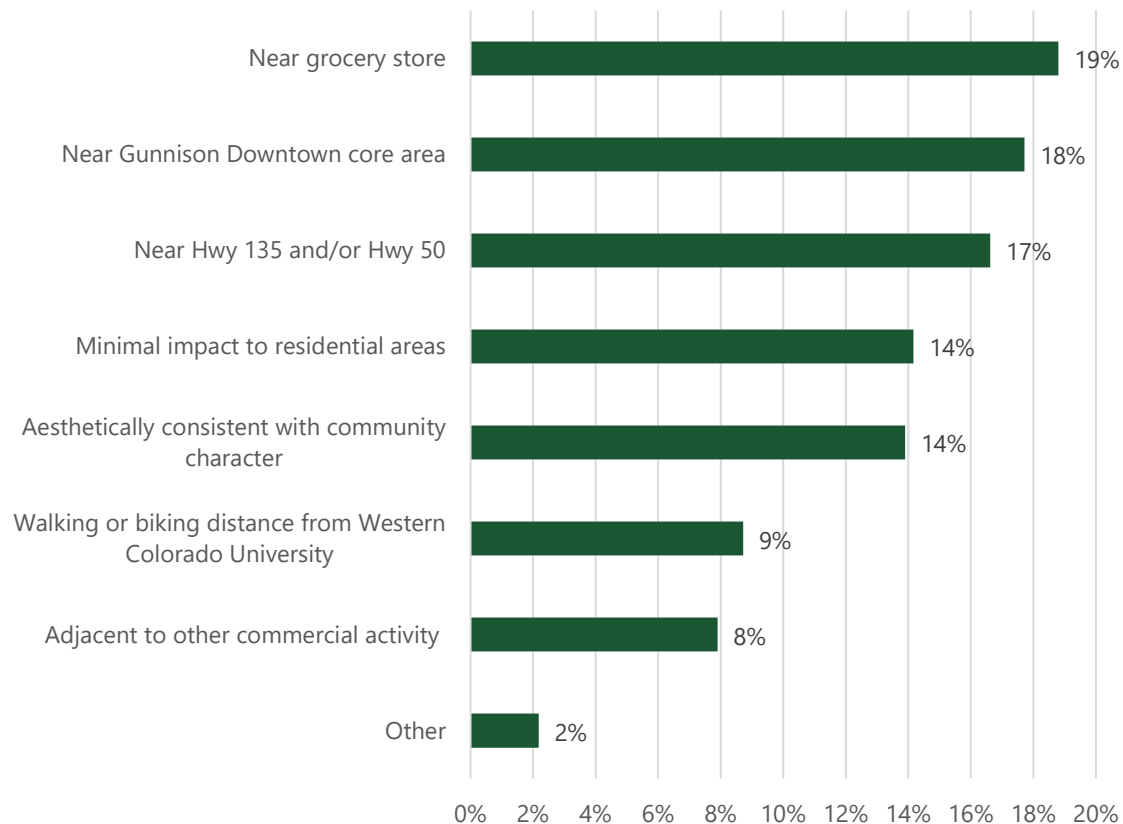
Figure 68 displays the desired amenities in the enhanced bus stop selected by the respondents. 22% of the respondents chose the restroom as the top amenity they would like to see, followed by the passenger waiting area (14%), and real-time arrival information (14%). 13% of the respondents were also interested in Wi-Fi and phone charging outlets.

Figure 68. Please select up to five amenities that you would like to see included at the Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch.



The respondents were also asked about the top location criteria, which are the factors that would be important in deciding the location for the enhanced bus stop. As shown in **Figure 69**, 19% of the respondents wished to have the enhanced bust stop near grocery stores, 18% responded Gunnison Downtown core area, and 17% wanted the facility to be built near the two main highways of the county.

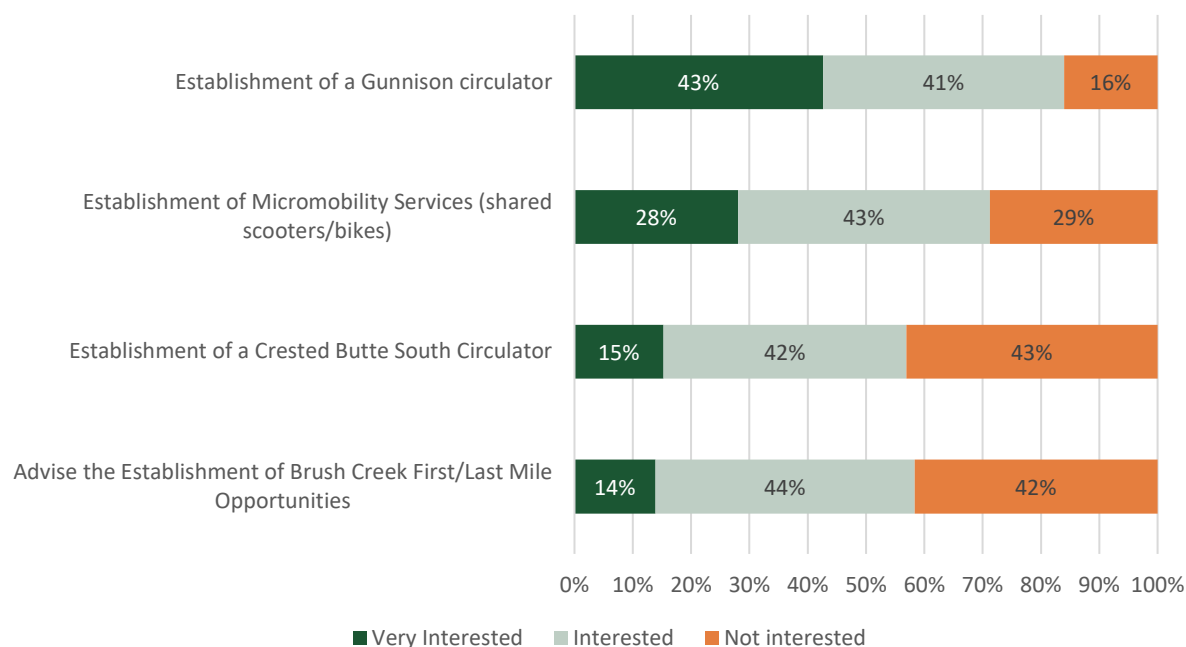
Figure 69. Please select the top three criteria that are most important to you for the location of the Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch.



Coordinated Projects

As seen in **Figure 70**, 43% of the respondents expressed the most interest in the establishment of a Gunnison circulator, followed by the establishment of micromobility services (28%). Furthermore, more than 40% of the respondents indicated that they were not interested in the establishment of a Crested Butte South circulator and Brush Creek First/Last Mile Opportunities.

Figure 70. Please identify your interest in the following coordinated projects.



In-Person Open Houses

In addition to the surveying efforts, GVRTA held four open house meetings in the last week of June 2024 to gather public input on the preliminary projects. Two meetings were held in Gunnison and two were held in Crested Butte on different days and at different times to offer flexible opportunities. Attendees provided input through stickers and comments on boards that described the various projects.



Open Houses in Crested Butte and Gunnison. Source: Fehr & Peers.

Chapter 5: Project Evaluation

Out of the initial project list, eleven projects were evaluated for the purpose of identifying the feasibility and the priority of projects. The projects that were not evaluated included some of the organizational/internal projects and the coordinated projects that will not have a significant financial impact on GVRTA or require GVRTA's leading role. **Table 13** lists the projects that were evaluated along with service assumptions of each project.

Table 13: Evaluation Projects

Project Name	Project Assumptions
Service Expansion and Capital Improvement Projects	
<i>Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons</i>	Two more evening runs year-round and eight more peak-hour runs to have a consistent 15-minute peak hour frequency during the winter. Calculations assume 130-minute round trips (compared to the current 125 minutes).
<i>Establish a Gunnison Commuter Microtransit Zone</i>	An on-demand transit service that operates year-round with 2-3 vehicles between 5am and 8pm everyday where riders can request to be picked up within a service zone in Gunnison.
<i>Establish a Crested Butte South Commuter Microtransit Zone</i>	An on-demand transit service that operates year-round with 2 vehicles between 6am and 8pm everyday where riders can request to be picked up within a service zone in CB South.
<i>Finish Upgrading Bus Stops</i>	Upgrade the remaining six bus stops at Gunnison Rec Center, Gunnison Community Schools, 11th & Virginia, Western, Denver & 135, and Southbound Crested Butte 4 Way.
<i>Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison</i>	A 1,200 square foot building on a lot near the current Safeway stop on Highway 50. The site was purchased by GVRTA in June 2024. The location should accommodate up to three GVRTA buses. Cost assumptions are based on the previously awarded CDOT grant.
<i>Provide More Park-and-Ride Locations</i>	Two park-and-rides at Brush Creek and CB South at Red Mountain Park.
<i>Install Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association (POA) in CB South</i>	Install flag stop at Teocalli Rd and Elcho Ave (2 blocks from the CB South business district).
Supporting Projects	
<i>Marketing Efforts</i>	Enhance the current Transit app, improve the website, and develop an educational brochure.
<i>Identify Requirements for Future Contracted Operators</i>	When the current contract expires, GVRTA should include requirements that best serve GVRTA and its riders.

Project Name	Project Assumptions
Establish a Long-Term Vision	A long-term plan looks toward the future and recommends projects that may not be feasible within the near term but could be feasible in the future with the projected growth of both the Gunnison Valley and GVRTA.
Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan	Adjustments to existing fleet replacement plan to reflect the increase in service and replace the buses accordingly.

Note: Routing changes were not evaluated as a project but are reflected in the final capital plan.

Unique evaluation criteria were developed for the projects. The chosen criteria reflect a combination of the key metrics gathered throughout the project without relying too heavily on one source.

Table 14 outlines the evaluation criteria, the metric it measured, and the technical details of the measurement. After establishing the evaluation criteria, it was made clear that some projects cannot be evaluated on all metrics due to being more supportive in nature. As a result, four projects were evaluated only on cost, ease of implementation, support of goals of GVRTA, and support of goals of previous plans.

Table 14: Project Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Metric	Metric Description / Calculation
Ridership Impact	Estimated increase in daily ridership or ability to increase ridership	Quantitative assessment of operational projects based on the estimated number of daily vehicle hours and expected number of passengers per vehicle hour based on existing service or peer communities. Qualitative assessment of capital projects on potential to increase ridership.
Cost	Additional Operational / Construction / Maintenance Cost Over 5 Years	Full build cost estimates based on peer communities and GVRTA cost per vehicle hour. All costs are displayed as a total for the next five years (some projects have already started in 2024, so the full cost may not be reflected in the capital plan)
Ease of Implementation	Qualitative ability to implement the project	Qualitative assessment of logistical needs for implementing each project, including need for vehicles, bus stops, drivers, coordination with partner agencies, timeframe, etc.
Supports Goals of GVRTA	Qualitative assessment of fit into existing GVRTA goals/mission	The goals of GVRTA are to provide a long term and energy efficient public transit system between the north and south ends of Highway 135 corridor and transport as many people as possible as safely as possible.

Evaluation Criteria	Metric	Metric Description / Calculation
Public Support of Project	Percent of survey respondents who voted for the project	Based on the summer public outreach. The percentage of respondents who voted for the project in the survey.
Destination Types	Number of destination types served	Number of common destination types (airport, work, ski resort, shopping/restaurants, school, public services, medical appointments, gym/recreation center), the project would directly and indirectly serve.
Transit Propensity Factors	Number of transit propensity factors that have a high classification census tract covered by the service area.	Using Fehr & Peers Demographic Mapping Tool (Census Data) to identify the number of propensity factors that have a high classification in a census tract within the service area. Included factors: population density, population under 18, population over 65, non-white population, population with limited vehicle access, population below the federal poverty line, limited English, limited internet, population with a disability, and population that commutes using transit.
Travel Markets Served	Number of travel markets the project would serve	Based on travel markets identified through demographic review, calculates the number of travel markets each project could potentially serve.
Supports Goals of Previous Plans	Number of reviewed plans the project supports	Number of previous plans (out of 6 non-GVRTA plans reviewed during the existing conditions) where the project would help accomplish/assist at least one action item/goal.

Project Evaluation Results

Each of the projects listed in **Table 13** were evaluated using the applicable evaluation criteria. **Table 15** shows the results of the service expansion and capital improvement project evaluation and **Table 16** shows the results of the supporting project evaluation. The cells in the project evaluation tables are highlighted based on feasibility. Dark green shows higher feasibility while light green indicates lower feasibility. Full calculations for each of the criteria can be found in Appendix B.

Table 15: Service Expansion and Capital Improvement Project Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Metric	Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons	Establish a Gunnison Commuter Microtransit Zone	Establish a Crested Butte South Commuter Microtransit Zone	Finish Upgrading Bus Stops	Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison	Provide More Park-and-Ride Locations	Install Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association (POA) at CB South.
Ridership Impact	Estimated increase in daily ridership or ability to increase ridership	124 - 219	113 - 188	28 - 84	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Cost	Additional Operational / Construction / Maintenance Cost Over 5 Years	\$2M - \$2.8M	\$5M - \$6.5M	\$4M - \$4.5M	\$150K - \$175K	\$1.8M - \$2M	\$500K - \$1M	\$150K - \$175K
Ease of Implementation	Qualitative Ability to Implement (based on timeframe, requirement for new stops, more drivers, enhanced marketing, ease of making changes/updates)	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low
Supports Goals of GVRTA	Qualitative assessment of fit into existing GVRTA goals/mission	High	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Public Support of Project	Percent of survey respondents who ranked the project in the top two (from the summer survey)	45%	28%	15%	43%	30%	19%	8%
Destination Types	Number of Destination Types Served	6	2.5	2.5	6	5	2.5	3.5
Transit Propensity Factors	Number of transit propensity factors that have a high classification census tract covered by the service area.	10	10	1	9	10	4	1
Travel Markets Served	Number of Travel Markets Served	5.5	7.5	7.5	8	8	4.5	5.5
Supports Goals of Previous Plans	Number of previous plans (out of 6) where the project would help accomplish/assist at least one action item/goal	5	2	2	4	2	3	0

Table 16: Supporting Project Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Metric	Marketing Efforts (Enhance Transit App, Upgrade Website, Develop Educational Brochure)	Identify Requirements for Future Contracted Operators	Establish a Long-Term Vision	Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan
Cost	Annual cost to operate/complete/maintain	\$25K - \$40K	\$10K - \$15K	\$25K - \$50K	\$8.8M - \$11M
Ease of Implementation	Qualitative Ability to Implement (based on timeframe, requirement for new stops, more drivers, enhanced marketing, ease of making changes/updating)	High	High	Medium	High
Supports Goals of GVRTA	Qualitative assessment of fit into existing GVRTA goals/mission	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Supports Goals of Previous Plans	Number of previous plans (out of 6) where the project would help accomplish/assist at least one action item/goal	2	0	6	0

After evaluating the projects, the projects could be ranked by more feasible to less feasible. The ranking order for operational and infrastructure projects are listed below with "1" being highest feasibility/desirability rating.

Service Expansion and Capital Improvement Projects

1. Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons
2. Finish Upgrading Bus Stops
3. Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison
4. Provide more Park-and-Ride Locations
5. Establish a Gunnison Commuter Microtransit Zone
6. Establish a Crested Butte South Commuter Microtransit Zone
7. Install a Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association (POA) at CB South

Supporting Projects

1. Marketing Efforts (Enhance Transit App, Upgrade Website, Develop Educational Brochure)
2. Establish a Long-Term Vision
3. Identify Requirements for Future Contracted Operators
4. Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan

Projects to be Pursued

After analyzing the project evaluation results all projects, except for the microtransit zones in Gunnison and Crested Butte South, were chosen by GVRTA and the project team to be pursued in the next five years. The microtransit zones were not chosen because they have a high cost associated with them, did not have as much support in the public input process, and do not directly meet other project and GVRTA goals. The projects that will be implemented in the next five years are described in detail in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Strategic Operating and Capital Plan

This chapter provides guidance on GVRTA's next five operating years (2025 through 2029) and can be leveraged for funding and other key decisions. It also provides detailed descriptions of all projects that will be pursued in the next five years; it should be noted that some projects that are described have no financial cost to GVRTA associated with them and therefore will not show up in the capital plan table but will be described. **Table 17** displays the capital plan for the next five years. It shows the cost for a project per year, the total cost for all projects each year, and the total cost per project over five years. These costs do not assume any contribution from state or federal grants. This means that the total cost for GVRTA will likely be lower, assuming the organization's continued success in grant awards. **Figure 71** also displays the implementation timeline for each of the project details.

Table 17: Capital Plan

Projects	2025		2026		2027		2028		2029		Total Cost Over 5 Years	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Service Expansion and Improvement Projects												
<i>Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons</i>	\$100,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$450,000	\$550,000	\$650,000	\$550,000	\$650,000	\$550,000	\$650,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,750,000
<i>Enhance Marketing Efforts: Upgrade Website</i>	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$8,000	\$12,000
<i>Enhance Marketing Efforts: Develop Educational Brochure</i>	\$-	\$-	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$5,000	\$10,000
Capital Projects												
<i>Finish Upgrading Bus Stops</i>	\$-	\$-	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$75,000	\$100,000
<i>Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison</i>	\$1,000,000	\$1,200,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$1,000,000	\$1,200,000
<i>Provide More Park-and-Ride Locations</i>	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$-	\$-	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
<i>Install Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association (POA) at CB South.</i>	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$125,000	\$175,000	\$125,000	\$175,000
<i>Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan</i>	\$2,400,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,000,000	\$8,800,000	\$11,000,000
Organizational and Internal Projects												
<i>Establish a Long-Term Vision</i>	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$-	\$-	\$25,000	\$50,000
<i>Minor Routing Changes in Gunnison</i>	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$5,000	\$10,000
<i>Total Cost for the Year</i>	\$3,513,000	\$4,572,000	\$2,030,000	\$2,560,000	\$2,150,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,675,000	\$3,700,000	\$2,275,000	\$2,825,000	\$12,643,000	\$16,307,000

Figure 71: Implementation Timeline

Project Type	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Service Expansion and Improvement Projects					
Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons	Add two evening runs				
		Add 15-minute peak-hour frequencies Winter 2026-2027			
			49 daily round trips in the winter, 36 daily round trips in the summer		
Enhance Marketing Efforts	Upgrade website				
	Develop educational brochure				
	Community Outreach: Educational Sessions				
	Continue Collaborative Relationship with Data Vendors for Improved Rider App Experience				
Capital Projects					
Finish Upgrading Bus Stops		Gunnison Rec Center and 11th & Virginia Bus Stop Upgrades			
			Collaborate with Crested Butte on SB CB 4-Way Stop		
Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison	Bus Stop Design and Construction				
Provide More Park-and-Ride Locations	Seek out north Gunnison park-and-ride opportunities				
				Brush Creek and CB South at Red Mountain Park	
Install Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association (POA) at CB South.					New flag stop in CB South
Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan	Fleet expansion: three new buses				
		Fleet replacement: two new buses			
			Fleet replacement: two new buses		
				Fleet expansion: two new buses	
					Fleet replacement: two new buses
Organizational and Internal projects					
Identify Requirements for Future Contracted Operators	New contract with operator				
Establish a Long-Term Vision				Long-term visioning plan	
Minor Routing Changes in Gunnison	Traffic study and routing change				
Incorporate the North Valley Bus Storage Facility into Operations		Use of facility and bus trips starting in Mt. CB			
Coordinate with Other Regional Planning Efforts	Continued Coordination				

GVRTA Projects

The projects that GVRTA would directly take on as part of their mission can be sorted into three categories: service expansion and improvement projects, capital projects, and organizational projects.

Service Expansion and Improvement Projects

Service expansion and improvement projects aim to improve the direct operations of the transit system.

Adjust Seasonal Schedules for Expanded Service Hours in the Peak Seasons

The top project for GVRTA, based on the project evaluation and alignment with GVRTA's mission, is to continue to enhance the service it currently provides between the two ends of the Gunnison Valley. Incorporating two additional runs into the evening to primarily serve the service workers is possible with the current fleet and could be implemented as soon as the next schedule change. It is recommended that this be done for both the summer and winter schedules, but GVRTA can decide whether one or both additional runs are added first. Key considerations for adding these additional evening trips, however, are the impacts on driver schedules and impacts on the rider experience. It is recommended that GVRTA cut these evening runs if it does not see the desired ridership within one year of implementing them.

Continuous 15-minute peak-hour frequencies can be added once the bus fleet is expanded to thirteen buses, expected by November 2026. This will add four roundtrips during both the morning and the evening peaks, providing three continuous hours of 15-minute frequencies during the winter season. At the time of this plan, the consistent 30-minute frequency during the summer season is considered to be enough. Furthermore, although the project team originally included a potential for reduced frequencies during the spring and fall, it was determined that the consistent 30-minute frequency appropriately accommodates the demand during the slower seasons too. It is estimated that by the time two additional evening runs and consistent 15-minute peak-hour frequencies are added into the winter season, it will cost GVRTA an additional \$550K to \$650K annually, beyond its current operating cost. Over the five-year plan, the total for these schedule adjustments are estimated to be between \$2.1M to \$2.75M. This cost also assumes that GVRTA will extend its roundtrip time to 130 minutes (instead of the current 125 minutes) to accommodate increased dwell time at stops for boardings and alightings, and to provide more consistent schedules. This time extension may also result in the need for an additional location for a second bus at the Mt. Crested Butte Transit Center bus stop due to more buses arriving to the bus stop before the previous bus has departed after its layover. GVRTA also plans to hire a bus operations manager who can work closely with dispatch to ensure clear coordination at the Mt. Crested Butte Transit Center bus stop.

Enhance Marketing Efforts

Upgrade Website

Enhance the current website to make the schedule easier to read and navigate along with other website improvements to improve access to information, such as an accessible widget to change the language. This is scheduled to be done in 2025 and is estimated to cost \$8K to \$12K to hire a website designer.

Create an Educational Brochure

Create a bilingual educational brochure to distribute to community leaders, partners, and organizations. The brochure should include marketing of RTA services, FAQs about transportation in the Gunnison Valley, and how to use the app. It is important that GVRTA staff use this educational brochure in conjunction with in-person educational sessions with various groups of the community. Some ideas include biannual presentations to the senior centers, semesterly presentations to incoming students to Western Colorado University, and bilingual presentations to the Inmigrantes Unidos community group. This brochure is estimated to cost \$5K to \$10K to develop, and it should be easily editable to provide flexibility in the information the brochure includes. The brochure should be developed ahead of the significant frequency increases slated for November 2026, but it can be developed earlier if desired.

Continue Collaborative Relationship with Data Vendors for Improved Rider App Experience

A key concern that the public expressed during the outreach process is the need for improvements to the Transit app. Specifically, there have been issues with the real-time tracking feature and with timely notices of cancellations or delays. GVRTA currently works with Swiftly to process automatic vehicle location (AVL) data. This data is often reliant on the cellphone towers for transmission, which means it is only as good as the reception, which can be spotty in certain segments of the GVRTA route. As technology improves, it is expected that the AVL data can also improve. After being processed by Swiftly, this data is then displayed through the Transit app. GVRTA will also push out notifications for delays, cancellations, or other relevant alerts directly through the Transit app. Typically many of the issues occur due to irregularities in the service not being coded correctly, such as when GVRTA is using a back-up vehicle provided by the contractor if no GVRTA fleet is available. As part of the bus operations manager's role, they can ensure that these details do not negatively affect the real-time information that riders receive.

GVRTA's relationship with these data vendors has been historically positive as they have provided the necessary services. To provide the best experience for riders, it is recommended that GVRTA continue to proactively reach out on a regular basis to both vendors to ensure that their data is being displayed accurately and promptly. It is not currently expected that these proactive meetings with the data vendors will cost additional money for GVRTA, unless there are features that become available that may require more money.

Capital Projects

Capital projects include the physical infrastructure that would be needed to support the service expansion and improvement projects.

Finish Upgrading Bus Stops

Throughout the process of this plan in 2024, three of the six remaining bus stops needing upgrades have been updated with new shelters, lighting, and ADA access. The remaining stops to upgrade include: Gunnison Rec Center, 11th & Virginia, Southbound Crested Butte 4-Way. It costs between \$25K to \$50K to upgrade a bus stop depending on the existing infrastructure. GVRTA is committed to upgrading the Gunnison Rec Center and the 11th & Virginia stops with \$100K in 2026, but upgrading the Southbound Crested Butte 4-Way stop will require coordination with the Town of Crested Butte, which may impact the cost and timeline for upgrading the stop.



Example of Upgraded Bus Stop: Library Bus Stop. Source: Fehr & Peers.

Design and Construct an Enhanced Bus Stop and GVRTA Offices/Dispatch in Gunnison

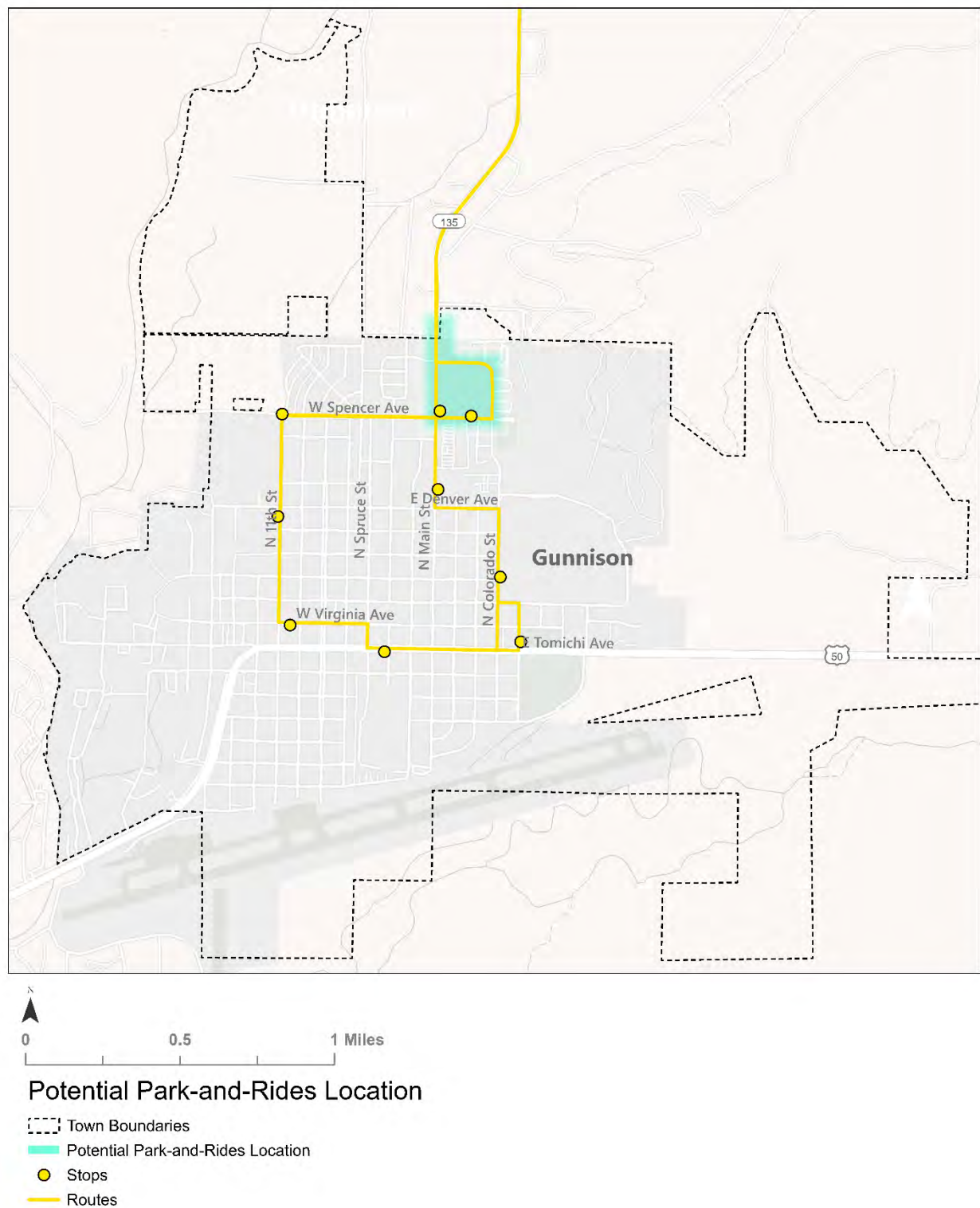
Design and construct a 1,200 square foot enhanced bus stop with GVRTA offices and a dispatch office on the recently bought lot near the existing Safeway stop. Key amenities the site will include are a passenger waiting area, restrooms, room for three buses to stop, a dispatch office, a GVRTA staff office, and staff/rider parking spaces. The enhanced bus stop will be similar to the Crested Butte 4-Way stop. The land where the enhanced bus stop will be located has already been purchased by GVRTA in 2024, and it aligns with the preferred location criteria for which the public provided input. Initial design work has also already begun. The design will be completed in 2025, and the construction of the enhanced bus stop is planned to start and finish in 2026 for an estimated cost of \$1M to \$1.2M. GVRTA has already been awarded a \$1M grant from CDOT to help cover a portion of these costs.

Provide More Park-and-Ride Locations

Providing more park-and-ride locations will help increase the accessibility of GVRTA services for those who do not live close to an existing bus stop. Per input from municipal partners, park-and-rides also have the benefit of being lower cost as a first/last mile solution than providing a local transit service (such as the originally proposed microtransit services). Near-term park-and-ride locations that are going to be pursued include Brush Creek and an expansion of the existing parking at the Crested Butte South stop at Red Mountain Park. These are estimated to cost GVRTA a combined total of \$500K to \$1M and will likely be pursued in 2028.

In addition to the two identified locations, park-and-rides should be considered in north Gunnison when opportunities become available, as illustrated in **Figure 72**. Although these opportunities may include purchasing land to provide park-and-ride opportunities, it is recommended that GVRTA prioritize seeking out shared-parking agreements as developments and land-ownership changes. This allows for the land to be used more productively, and the park-and-ride can serve as a destination for more than serving GVRTA riders.

Figure 72: Potential North Gunnison Park-and-Ride Locations



Source: Fehr & Peers

Install Bus Stop Near Property Owners Association at CB South

An additional flag stop at Teocalli Road and Elcho Avenue, which is two blocks from the Crested Butte (CB) South business district, is planned to be installed in 2029. With projected development in CB South, it will be important to provide direct and convenient access to the regional transit provider. The bus stop will be located on the east side of Teocalli Road, meaning people who board the bus here for destinations outside of CB South will need to ride the bus through the current CB South bus stop before heading out of CB South. The estimated cost for this new flag stop is \$125K to \$175K, which is higher than bus stop upgrades because new stops require additional infrastructure.

Replace Bus Fleet per Fleet Replacement Plan

GVRTA's buses are expected to last for 12 years or 500,000 miles per FTA and CDOT guidelines. With the current and expected vehicles miles, GVRTA reaches 500,000 miles in six years. To reduce the need for purchasing buses at twice the expected rate, GVRTA has been rebuilding the engines as necessary to reach about 750,000 miles on each bus before replacing them. This means that without increasing service, GVRTA needs to purchase 1.2 buses per year. The operating plan recommends increasing service levels over time and increasing the size of the fleet to 15 buses by 2029. **Table 18** summarizes plans for replacing and adding buses to the fleet. The full fleet replacement plan with expected mileage per vehicle per year and a chart of the GVRTA asset valuation over time can be found in Appendix C. Overall, fleet expansion from 10 buses to 13 is expected in 2025 (by the end of the year). Additionally, more fleet expansion to a total of 15 buses is expected in 2028. Six of the existing buses are also set to be retired due to mileage in 2026, 2027 and 2029 (two per year). With an estimated cost of \$800K to \$1M per bus, the purchase of eleven new buses is expected to be \$8.8M to \$11M. This is another expense that GVRTA has historically been successful in receiving state and federal assistance. For example, GVRTA has already been awarded federal funding for the purchase of four buses (two with a 15% local match and two with a 20% local match), meaning that 80% to 85% of the cost is being covered by federal funding. While the future of federal funding is unknown, GVRTA plans to apply for and receive grants to cover 80% of the cost of the two buses in each of 2027, 2028, and 2029.

Table 18: Fleet Replacement Plan Summary

Year	Starting Buses	New Buses	Retired Buses	Total Buses
2025	10	3	0	13
2026	13	2	2	13
2027	13	2	2	13
2028	13	2	0	15
2029	15	2	2	15

Organizational and Internal Projects

Organizational and internal projects are projects that will not directly impact riders but will improve the operations of GVRTA processes.

Identify Requirements for Future Contracted Operators

GVRTA currently contracts its commuter bus service to Alpine Express, who is responsible for operating buses, hiring drivers, maintaining and cleaning the buses, and enforcing onboard policies. When the current contract expires, GVRTA should include requirements that best serve GVRTA and its riders. It is recommended that GVRTA develop a set of performance metrics to assess the quality of service that the contractor is providing. These performance metrics would center on topics of customer satisfaction, service effectiveness and efficiency, safety, and maintaining a state of good repair. By evaluating the contractor's performance, GVRTA can better gauge the performance of the system, hold the contracted service operator accountable to the metrics, and communicate the performance with board members and the public. The new bus operations manager will be responsible for tracking and reporting these performance metrics. This process does not have a financial cost associated with it and will mostly be complete by the beginning of 2025.

Establish a Long-Term Vision

GVRTA routinely performs strategic five-year operating plans that set near-term, feasible goals. While this is important for the operations of GVRTA, it is important to expand the outlook to the next 10 to 20 years. A long-term visioning plan involves various community stakeholders and looks toward the future and recommends projects that may not be feasible within the near term but could be feasible in the future with the projected growth of both Gunnison Valley and GVRTA. This potentially includes reevaluating the vision, mission, and structure of the RTA to best serve the Gunnison Valley. Some key considerations for the long-term vision include:

- GVRTA's role in serving transit needs outside of the immediate Highway 135 corridor.
- GVRTA's role in local travel as Mountain Express continues to grow in serving the north end of the valley and the City of Gunnison potentially considers a local circulator.
- Increased coordination with Mountain Express and a future Gunnison Circulator, including exploring the benefits of combining the transit agencies together into one entity.
- Evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of turn-key operations (current structure) compared to agency operations.

This visioning process is slated to happen in 2028 with an estimated cost of \$25K to \$50K. It is intended that GVRTA complete this process after a full year of more peak-hour service and a full year of servicing the enhanced bus stop.

Minor Routing Changes in Gunnison

Currently, the bus route through Gunnison includes a left turn from Teller Street to Georgia Avenue before turning right onto Colorado Street. This left turn can be difficult to make due to the narrow street configuration. GVRTA should consider making the left turn one block earlier at the wider Virginia Avenue. There are multiple traffic implications that need to be further studied for feasibility of this routing change:

- Collecting 24-hour traffic counts and speed data to understand traffic flow through the Virginia Avenue and Colorado Street intersection, and the impacts of a four-way stop instead of the current two-way stop.
- Considering the traffic safety impacts:
 - Ensuring the sight distances are appropriate with no landscaping or foliage blocking the view for bus drivers or intersecting vehicles.
 - Evaluating the implications of having a bus stopping at a two-way stop intersection (Virginia Avenue and Colorado Street) compared to a four-way stop intersection. Note: the current routing through Georgia Avenue and Colorado Street ensures the bus stops at a four-way stop and has clear right-of-way.
 - The reduced reaction time for a vehicle turning off Tomichi Avenue (Highway 50) in the case a bus is turning onto Colorado Street. Currently the route turns onto Colorado Street two blocks north of Tomichi Avenue, but in the routing change, this would occur one block north of Tomichi Avenue.

Although the routing change will not have a financial impact on the operations, the capital plan sets aside \$5K to \$10K in 2025 in case a traffic study is needed in coordination with the City of Gunnison to make the routing change.

Incorporate the North Valley Bus Storage Facility into Operations

In 2024, GVRTA finished construction and payment for its north valley bus storage facility, located in an industrial area near the Riverland bus stop outside of Crested Butte. The facility can accommodate up to five buses, including washing and other maintenance activities. As the GVRTA fleet expands and the current location in Gunnison is not able to accommodate the entire fleet, GVRTA will need to store buses overnight at the north valley facility. This will also allow GVRTA to begin some bus runs at the north end of the route, meaning that these riders can be served earlier and at more flexible times than relying on buses to always come up from Gunnison. With the increased need for coordination between the south and north end of the valley, the bus operations manager will be a critical member in ensuring dispatch accurately and consistently assigns buses to/from the right facilities, especially in weather, traffic, mechanical and other abnormal events. At this time, incorporating the facility into the operations does

not have a financial cost associated with it, but it will have a larger impact on operational costs if the schedule is adjusted for more service beyond what this plan recommends.



Inside north valley bus storage facility. Source: Fehr & Peers.



Outside north valley bus storage facility. Source: Fehr & Peers.

Ensure Proper Building Maintenance of Capital Assets

In addition to the north valley bus storage facility, GVRTA has built multiple housing units to house contracted operations staff (namely bus drivers and mechanics). Most of these capital assets are new and do not currently require intense building maintenance. However, as time goes on, GVRTA will need to ensure budget is allocated to maintaining these buildings. This is not expected to be a significant cost before 2029, so it not included in the capital plan, but it will become a more significant endeavor after 2029.

Partner with CDOT's Bustang Outrider

CDOT provides critical regional connections throughout Colorado. Although there is a daily bus that travels between Denver and Crested Butte, demand has shown that a second daily bus may be necessary. Similarly, there is a demand for regional transportation between the Gunnison Valley and Montrose, which is in CDOT's long-term plan. GVRTA will continue to closely coordinate with CDOT in expanding regional services, which may also require some financial contributions. These financial contributions are not reflected in the capital or implementation plan, but must be kept in mind as CDOT enhances its statewide transit services.

Coordinate with Other Regional Planning Efforts

As the region continues to grow, there will be significant impacts to the transportation network and ensuring all residents, employees, and visitors are able to get around safely and conveniently. GVRTA's regional importance will continue to grow, so being an active participant in planning processes

throughout the county and various municipalities can encourage collaboration on future transportation opportunities. These planning processes can include, but are not limited to, the CO-135 Safety Action Plan; the Integrated Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Plan; small area plans; local access plans; and other transportation network and transit plans. Being involved in regional planning efforts does not have a financial cost associated with it, but potential action items that may come out of these processes may require GVRTA's financial contribution.

Other Coordinated Projects

Coordinated projects are transportation-related projects that GVRTA would be a key partner but would not lead nor fund.

Advise the Establishment of a Gunnison Circulator

Providing a local Gunnison circulator service for local and first/last mile trips within Gunnison does not currently fit within GVRTA's mission as a regional transit provider. However, this opportunity could potentially be funded and operated by a partnership between the City of Gunnison, WCU, and/or a new funding source. The route could include a connection to the airport and other key locations within Gunnison. Some ideas for what a circulator could potentially look like for the City of Gunnison were previously explored in the GVRTA Strategic Transit Plan. If this circulator service was to be developed, GVRTA's role would be to serve as a liaison and experienced transit provider. GVRTA would be a key partner to ensure coordination between GVRTA services and the Gunnison Circulator for a seamless rider experience.

Advise the Establishment of a Crested Butte South Circulator

Providing a local circulator service for local and first/last mile trips within Crested Butte South does not currently fit within GVRTA's mission as a regional transit provider. However, this opportunity could potentially be funded and operated by the Towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte through Mountain Express along with the CB South POA and/or another funding source. The route could include a connection to Crested Butte. If this circulator service was to be developed, GVRTA's role would be to serve as a liaison and experienced transit provider. GVRTA would be a key partner to ensure coordination between GVRTA services and Crested Butte South Circulator for a seamless rider experience.

Advise the Establishment of Micromobility Services (Shared Scooters/Bikes)

Micromobility services, such as scooter and bike share programs could improve first/last mile connections throughout Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte. However, these programs do not currently fit within GVRTA's mission as a regional transit provider. If these programs were to be established, GVRTA's role would be to provide designated spaces for scooter/bike parking at its bus stops.

Advise the Establishment of Brush Creek First/Last Mile Opportunities

Communities adjacent to Brush Creek Road are anticipated to develop over the next decade, including the Whetstone affordable housing development. Like other communities throughout the region, people will need access to the regional transportation network. GVRTA currently serves the community with bidirectional bus stops at Highway 135 and Brush Creek Road. A roundabout is also expected at this intersection. Local, first/last mile opportunities for these communities will need to be planned, which does not fit within the current GVRTA mission. These may include fixed-route, microtransit, or micromobility opportunities. If any of these services were to be developed, GVRTA's role would be to serve as a liaison and experienced transit provider. GVRTA would be a key partner to ensure coordination between GVRTA services and the Brush Creek first/last mile opportunities for a seamless rider experience.