

Fond du Lac Area Transit Transit Development Plan

2023-2027

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by:



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SRF No. 15116

Table of Contents

Introduction and Context.....	1
Existing Conditions.....	2
System Overview	2
System Performance.....	7
Community Demographics.....	13
Community Engagement.....	18
Rider Survey	18
Community Survey	25
Business Survey.....	30
Stakeholder Meetings.....	33
Additional Engagement Efforts	34
Recommendations.....	35
Scenario 1: Near-Term Route Changes	35
Summary of Proposed Route Changes	42
Scenario 2: Long-Term Recommendations.....	45
Conclusion	50
Appendices.....	51
Appendix A: Rider Survey	51
Appendix B: Community Survey.....	51
Appendix C: Stakeholder List.....	51
Appendix D: Stakeholder Presentations	51

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Introduction and Context

In 2022, Fond du Lac Area Transit embarked on its most recent Transit Development Plan, which will guide the agency's implementation of bus system improvements from 2023 to 2027. The 2023-2027 Transit Development Plan process included a detailed analysis of existing conditions, extensive stakeholder and community outreach efforts, and recommendations for near-term and long-term improvements. The TDP project team was led by staff from Fond du Lac Area Transit and completed by SRF Consulting Group. The East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) provided vital assistance with community and business outreach, with help from Envision Greater Fond du Lac.

This document summarizes the results of Fond du Lac Area Transit's 2023-2027 Transit Development Plan and replaces the previous Transit Development Plan document developed in 2016. Contents include proposed changes scheduled for January 2023 and further planning efforts to be completed over the next five years.

Existing Conditions

System Overview

The City of Fond du Lac provides public transit service as Fond du Lac Area Transit, serving approximately 200,000 passengers each year. Fond du Lac Area Transit operates eight fixed bus routes, including six regular routes, a specialized workforce route (Route 70), and a contracted school tripper route (Route 120) operated by Johnson School Bus. The agency also funds Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service throughout its service area via an intergovernmental agreement with Fond du Lac County, as well as other workforce-oriented and shared-ride taxi programs. The Fond du Lac Area Transit fleet includes seven modern fixed-route buses, five ADA paratransit vehicles, two support vehicles, and two older fixed-route buses used for Route 120.

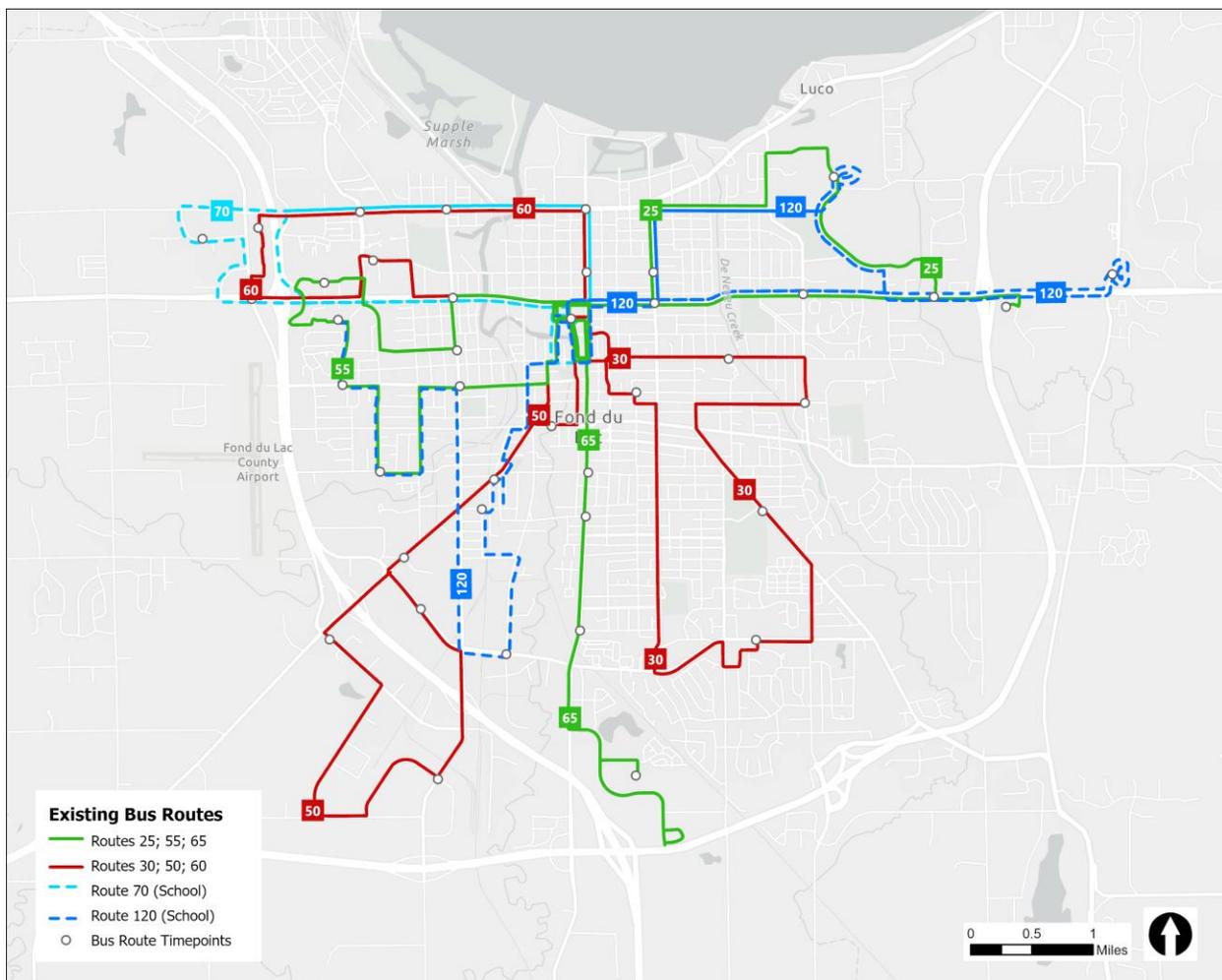
Fixed-Route Bus Service

Fond du Lac Area Transit’s fixed bus routes are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. All routes operate on weekdays only, including Route 120, which operates on school days only. Fixed route service extends from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Table 1. Existing Bus Routes – Frequency and Span

Route Type	Route	Span of Service	Frequency (Minutes)
Regular Local (Weekdays Only)	25: Johnson Street – N. Park Ave.	6:30 a.m. – 5:55 p.m.	30 (peak) / 60 (off-peak)
	30: Park – Fond du Lac Ave.	6:00 a.m. – 6:25 p.m.	30 (peak) / 60 (off-peak)
	50: Hickory St. – Rolling Meadows	6:00 a.m. – 6:25 p.m.	30 (peak) / 60 (off-peak)
	55: Forest Ave. – Mall/Plaza	6:30 a.m. – 5:55 p.m.	30 (peak) / 60 (off-peak)
	60: Johnson St. - Walmart	6:00 a.m. – 6:25 p.m.	30 (peak) / 60 (off-peak)
	65: Main Street	6:30 a.m. – 5:55 p.m.	30 (peak) / 60 (off-peak)
Brooke Industries (Weekdays Only)	70: Johnson – Scott – Main	8:00 – 8:25 a.m.; 3:10 – 3:25 p.m.	2 trips daily
School Route (School Days Only)	120: School Route	7:00 – 7:50 a.m.; 3:05 – 3:55 p.m.	2 trips daily

Source: Fond du Lac Area Transit.

Figure 1. Existing Bus Routes (2022)

Demand-Response Service

Fond du Lac Area Transit's complementary paratransit service, branded as Handi-Van, is provided for certified users with disabilities through a contract with Fond du Lac County. Handi-Van service is also available to customers over 65 years of age regardless of disability. Handi-Van, which is operated by Fond du Lac County, offers door-to-door service using lift-equipped vehicles and serves eligible customers within the City of Fond du Lac and the Village of North Fond du Lac. The one-way customer fare for this service is \$3.00, equal to twice the regular fixed route fare. As required by ADA, the paratransit service operates during fixed route service hours.

Handi-Van accepts advance reservations until 4:30 p.m. on the business day prior to the trip; same-day requests are accommodated as vehicle schedules and capacity permit. Standing appointments are available and must be renewed every two weeks.

In addition to required ADA paratransit, Fond du Lac Area Transit provides a shared ride taxi service for individuals who need to travel to or from locations that are more than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from a fixed route. This premium service is available within the City of Fond du Lac and Village of North

Fond du Lac at a higher fare: \$5.00 for adults (\$4.25 with a monthly pass), \$2.50 for seniors/disabled customers, and \$2.50 for children under 5 years.

Fares

Fond du Lac Area Transit's fare structure for fixed-route service is shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** A one-way fare is \$1.50 for adults, \$1.25 for students (ages 5 to 18), and \$0.75 for seniors or people with disabilities. The agency sells 10-packs of transit tokens at a slight discount and unlimited monthly passes. Children age 4 and under ride for free. Transfers are free for users of all fare types and are valid for one hour for any route other than the route of origin. All transfers must be made at Fond du Lac Area Transit's designated transfer point ("transfer zone"), which all fixed routes serve.

Fond du Lac Area Transit sells passes and tokens at three locations: a local bank, and Fond du Lac High School, and the City County Government Center.

Table 2. Fond du Lac Area Transit Fare Structure

	Cash	Tokens	Monthly Pass
Adult (19-64 years)	\$1.50	10 for \$13.00	\$38.00
Student (5-18 years)	\$1.25	10 for \$11.00	\$32.00
Student Summer (June-August)	--	--	\$35.00
Seniors (65 & over) / Disabled / Medicare Card Holders	\$0.75	--	--
All Day Pass	\$4.00	--	--
Transfers	FREE	--	--
Children (4 years & under)	FREE	--	--

Fleet

The Fond du Lac Area Transit fixed-route fleet (excluding trippers service) consists of seven heavy-duty diesel buses (Table 3). Currently, all buses operated by Fond du Lac Area Transit are 30' Gillig low-floor buses from model year 2011 or newer, with a useful life of 10 years.

As of January 5, 2022, the fixed-route bus fleet had an average age of 10.3 years and an average of 244,679 miles of service. Four of the buses (vehicle numbers 910-913) are beyond their useful life. Fond du Lac Area Transit currently has three buses on order, with an expected delivery date in January to early February of 2023. The agency plans to use these buses to replace buses 910, 911, and 913.

Between 2023 and 2025, Fond du Lac Area Transit expects to replace all current fixed-route buses with new diesel buses of equivalent size, configuration, and useful life. Future procurements beyond the timeframe of this Transit Development Plan are expected to include electric buses.

Table 3. Fixed-Route Bus Fleet

Vehicle Number	Year	Make/Model	Length	Useful Life	Mileage* (as of 5-Jan-22)	Age* (years)
910	2011	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	273,633	11
911	2011	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	244,288	11
912	2011	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	273,251	11
913	2011	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	253,099	11
914	2012	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	226,321	10
915	2013	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	220,631	9
916	2013	Gillig Low Floor G27E102N2	30'	10 years	221,532	9
FLEET AVERAGE					244,679	10.3

*Fleet roster reflects mileage as of January 5, 2022. Age calculated based on model year.

Figure 2. Fond du Lac Area Transit Fixed-Route Vehicle



The contractor-operated school tripper route (Route 120) uses dedicated vehicles that are owned by the City of Fond du Lac but are separately insured by and housed at the contractor, Johnson School Bus. These vehicles are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. School Tripper Bus Fleet

Vehicle Number	Year	Make/Model	Length	Useful Life	Mileage* (as of 4-Jan-21)	Age* (years)
909	2001	BlueBird CSRE 3204	32'	10 years	6,299	21

501	2005	Gillig Low Floor	40'	10 years	578,848	17
FLEET AVERAGE					292,574	19

*Fleet roster for contracted vehicles reflects mileage as of January 4, 2021. Age calculated based on model year.

Fond du Lac Area Transit also owns the fleet of vehicles used to operate its Handi-Van ADA paratransit service. These vehicles, which are operated and insured by Fond du Lac County, consist of truck-based, cutaway-style buses that have a useful life of 5 years. As of January 2022, the fleet includes five vehicles with an average age of 4.4 years and an average of 49,336 miles of service. Vehicles 950 and 951 (the oldest vehicles in the fleet) are scheduled to be replaced by vehicles 955 (delivery in 2022) and 956 (expected delivery in 2023).

Table 5. Handi-Van ADA Paratransit Fleet

Vehicle Number	Year	Make/Model	Useful Life	Mileage* (as of 5-Jan-22)	Age* (years)
950	2015	Ford/Starcraft Cutaway	5 years	90,061	7
951	2017	Ford/Starcraft Cutaway	5 years	71,322	5
952	2017	Ford/Starcraft Cutaway	5 years	53,522	5
953	2019	Ford/Starcraft Cutaway	5 years	23,373	3
954	2020	Ford/Starcraft Cutaway	5 years	8,404	2
FLEET AVERAGE				244,679	4.4

*Fleet roster reflects mileage as of January 5, 2022. Age calculated based on model year.

Facilities

Fond du Lac Area Transit's headquarters facility is shared with other units within the City of Fond du Lac Department of Public Works and is located at 530 Doty St. This building includes administrative offices, driver break areas, and dedicated storage bays for buses, as well as maintenance bays for Fond du Lac Area Transit and other city vehicles. The facility currently has sufficient space to store the agency's seven directly-operated buses and two support vehicles. It was financed using 15 percent FTA funding.

Figure 3. Fond du Lac Area Transit Bus Storage Area



In addition to its administrative and bus storage facility, Fond du Lac Area Transit maintains a downtown transfer zone at the intersection of Macy and Rees streets, just one block from Main Street in the center of Fond du Lac. This downtown transfer zone includes a partially enclosed shelter, as well as bike parking, benches, and on-street bus stops for each of the agency's fixed routes.

Figure 4. Fond du Lac Area Transit Downtown Transfer Zone



System Performance

Five-Year Performance Summary

In order to assess systemwide performance over time, the following section utilizes data from the National Transit Database (NTD) to report annual operating statistics and performance measures for Fond du Lac Area Transit's fixed-route bus system. These measures are reported for the most recent available five-year period (2016 to 2020). Data for year 2020 includes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and is reported separately from the average change from 2016 to 2019.

From 2016 to 2019, ridership on Fond du Lac Area Transit's fixed-route bus system increased by an average 0.2 percent per year, to a total of 164,585 in 2019. Operating expenses increased by an average of 7.7 percent per year to a total of \$1.24 million in 2020.

From 2019 to 2020, ridership decreased by approximately 46.4 percent, reflecting the significant impact of pandemic-related travel disruptions, including prioritizing transit for essential trips. This decline was consistent with state and national trends. Revenue hours and operating expenses also decreased in 2020, by 16.4 percent and 3.2 percent respectively.

Table 6. Fixed-Route Bus Operating Statistics, 2016-2020

Operating Statistic	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Annual Rate of Change (2016-2019)	Percent Change (2019-2020)
Revenue Hours	10,944	13,047	12,981	12,932	10,808	5.7%	-16.4%
Passenger Trips	163,384	157,952	167,116	164,585	88,231	0.2%	-46.4%
Operating Expenses	\$1.00m	\$1.15m	\$1.14m	\$1.24m	\$1.20m	7.4%	-3.2%
Passenger Revenue	\$126,759	\$128,047	\$131,452	\$125,751	\$72,679	-0.3%	-42.2%
Service Area Population	49,167	49,167	49,167	49,167	49,167	0.0%	0.0%

Source: National Transit Database, 2016-2020.

Table 7 shows performance measures for Fond du Lac Area Transit from 2016 to 2020. These measures are calculated based on the operating statistics reported in Table 6 and are consistent with performance measures reported in WisDOT's Five-Year Transit Management Performance Review process.

Table 7. Fixed-Route Bus Performance Measures, 2016-2020

Performance Measure	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Annual Rate of Change (2016-2019)	Percent Change (2019-2020)
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	\$6.15	\$7.27	\$6.82	\$7.52	\$13.57	6.9%	80.5%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	\$91.78	\$88.07	\$87.86	\$95.67	\$110.79	1.4%	15.8%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	14.9	12.1	12.9	12.7	8.2	-5.2%	-35.4%
Passenger Trips Per Capita	3.32	3.21	3.39	3.35	1.79	0.3%	-46.6%
Revenue Hours Per Capita	0.22	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.22	5.7%	-15.4%
Average Fare Per Passenger Trip	\$0.78	\$0.81	\$0.79	\$0.76	\$0.82	-0.9%	7.9%
Operating Ratio	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.10	0.06	-8.4%	-40.0%
Subsidy Per Passenger Trip	\$5.37	\$6.46	\$6.03	\$6.76	\$12.75	8.0%	88.6%

Source: National Transit Database, 2016-2020.

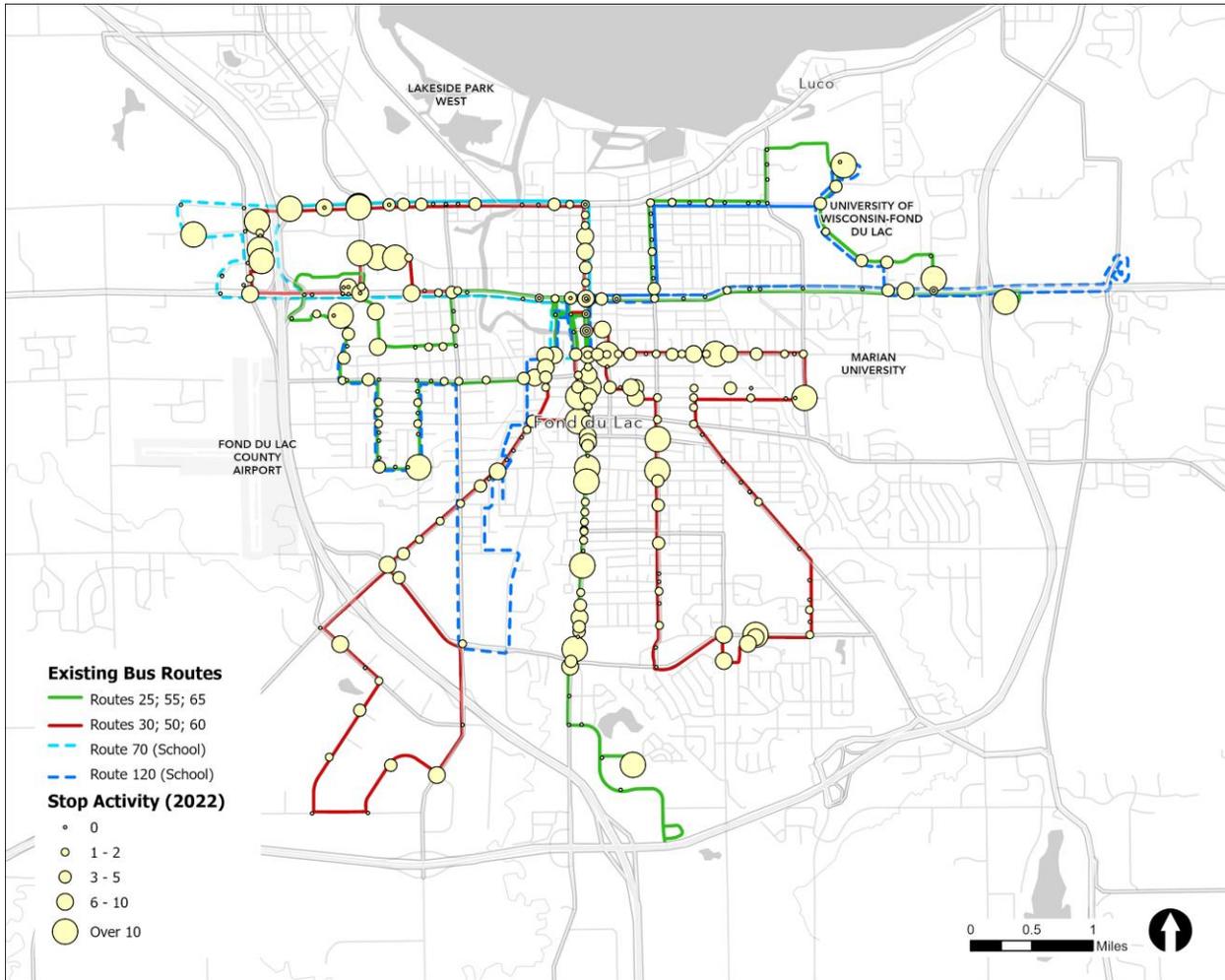
2022 System Performance

In order to inform the recommendations of this Transit Development Plan, Fond du Lac Area Transit conducted a ridership survey from May 23 to 27, 2022. Drivers were responsible for recording boarding and alighting counts for each route and stop; counts were compiled and tabulated to report weekday averages. The following section refers to data from the 2022 ridership survey and contains comparisons to the results of the previous ridership survey, conducted in 2018.

Systemwide Ridership Patterns

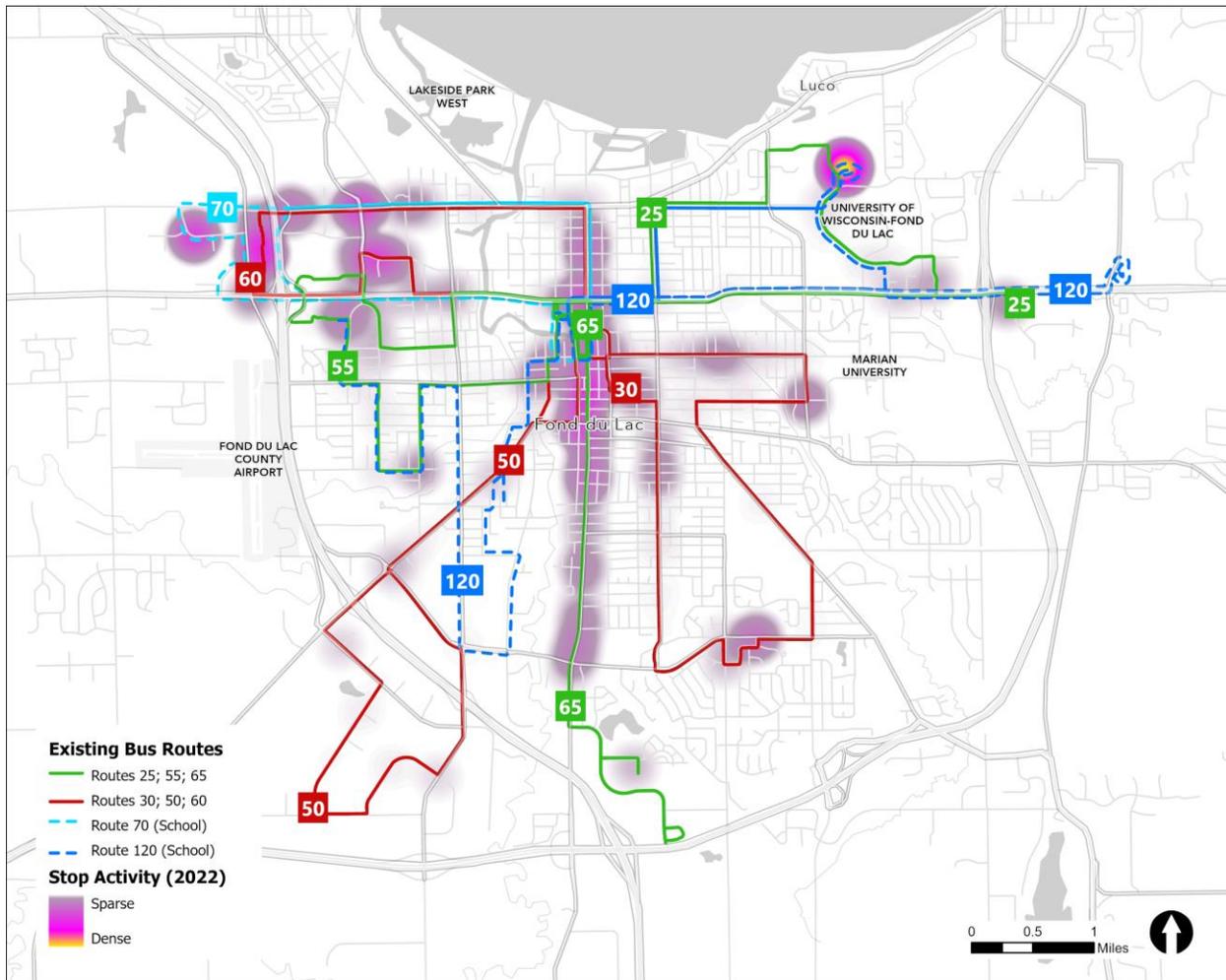
Figure 5 shows Fond du Lac Area Transit's 2022 systemwide ridership by stop. Average weekday ridership in May 2022 was 428 passengers per day. Major destinations include the downtown transfer zone, Fond du Lac High School, the Forest Mall area, Walmart, and the Main Street corridor.

Figure 5. Systemwide Ridership by Stop (May 2022)



Source: Fond du Lac Area Transit 2022 Boarding and Alighting Survey, May 23-27, 2022. Excludes Downtown Transfer Zone.

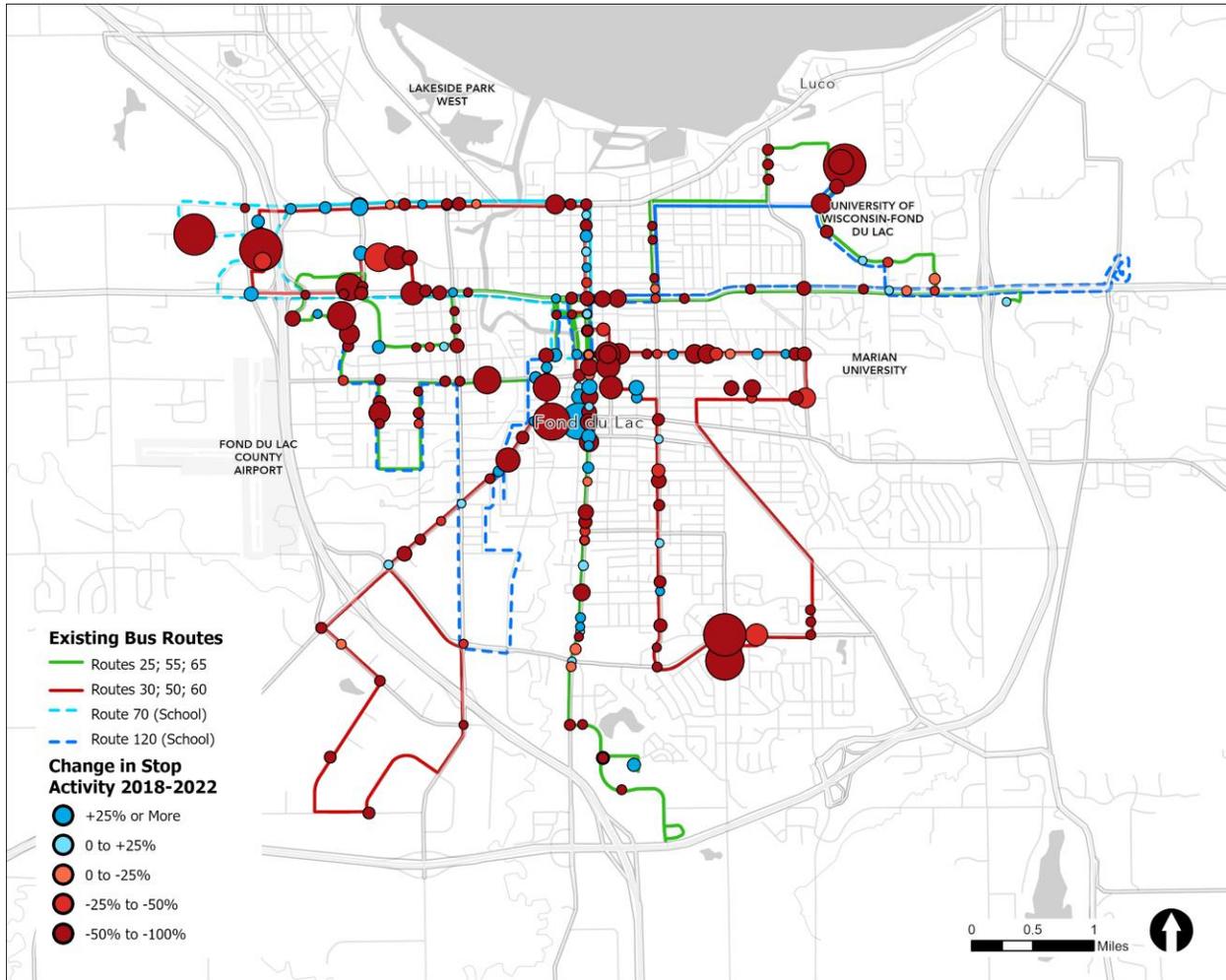
Figure 6. Systemwide Ridership Heatmap (May 2022)



Source: Fond du Lac Area Transit 2022 Boarding and Alighting Survey, May 23-27, 2022. Excludes Downtown Transfer Zone.

Figure 7 shows the change in ridership by stop from 2018 to 2022. Overall, systemwide ridership in May 2022 averaged 428 passengers per weekday, or 76 percent of 2018 ridership. Stop-level ridership shows declines at major destinations (especially schools and retail), but growth in the Main Street corridor in downtown Fond du Lac.

Figure 7. Ridership Change by Stop (2018-2022)

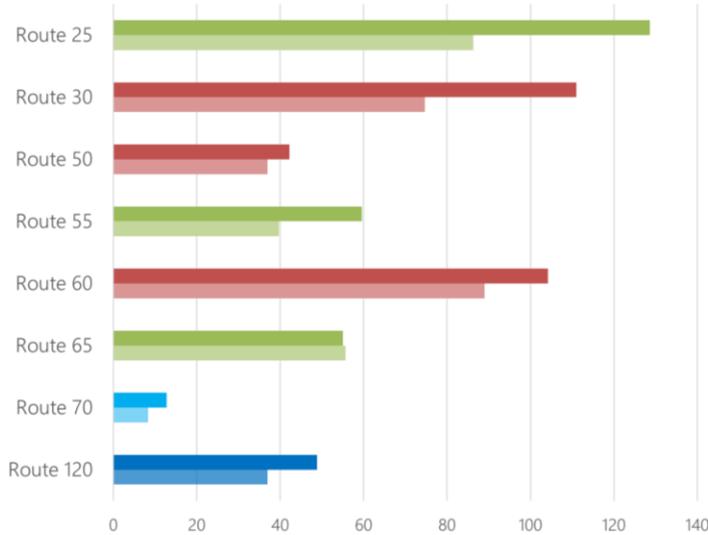


Source: Fond du Lac Area Transit 2022 Boarding and Alighting Survey, May 23-27, 2022. Excludes Downtown Transfer Zone.

Performance by Route

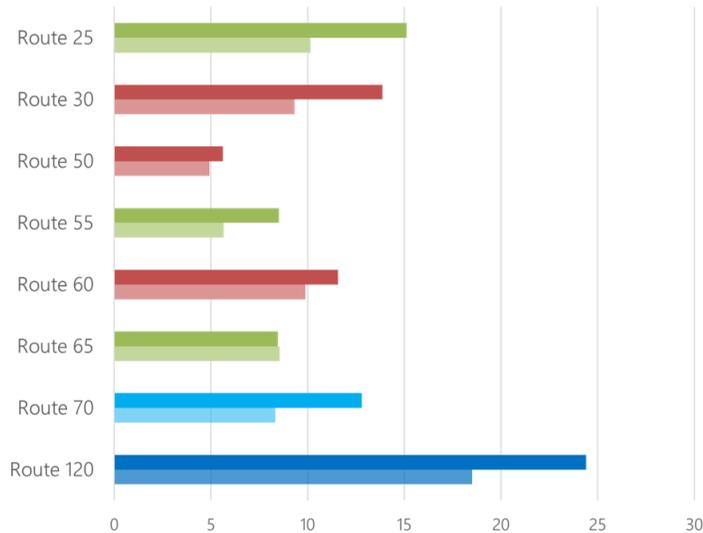
Figure 8 and Figure 9 show the average weekday ridership and productivity by route from 2018 to 2022. Across the Fond du Lac Area Transit system, average ridership decreased by 24 percent from 2018 to 2022. Among the six all-day fixed routes, Routes 25, 30, and 55 saw the greatest proportional declines (over 30 percent), while Route 65 gained riders (+1.2 percent). Route 70 (Brooke Industries) suffered the greatest proportional decline, at 37 percent.

Figure 8. Average Weekday Ridership by Route, 2018-2022



Source: Fond du Lac Area Transit 2018 and 2022 Ridership Surveys.

Figure 9. Passengers per Revenue Hour by Route, 2018-2022



Source: Fond du Lac Area Transit 2018 and 2022 Ridership Surveys.

Community Demographics

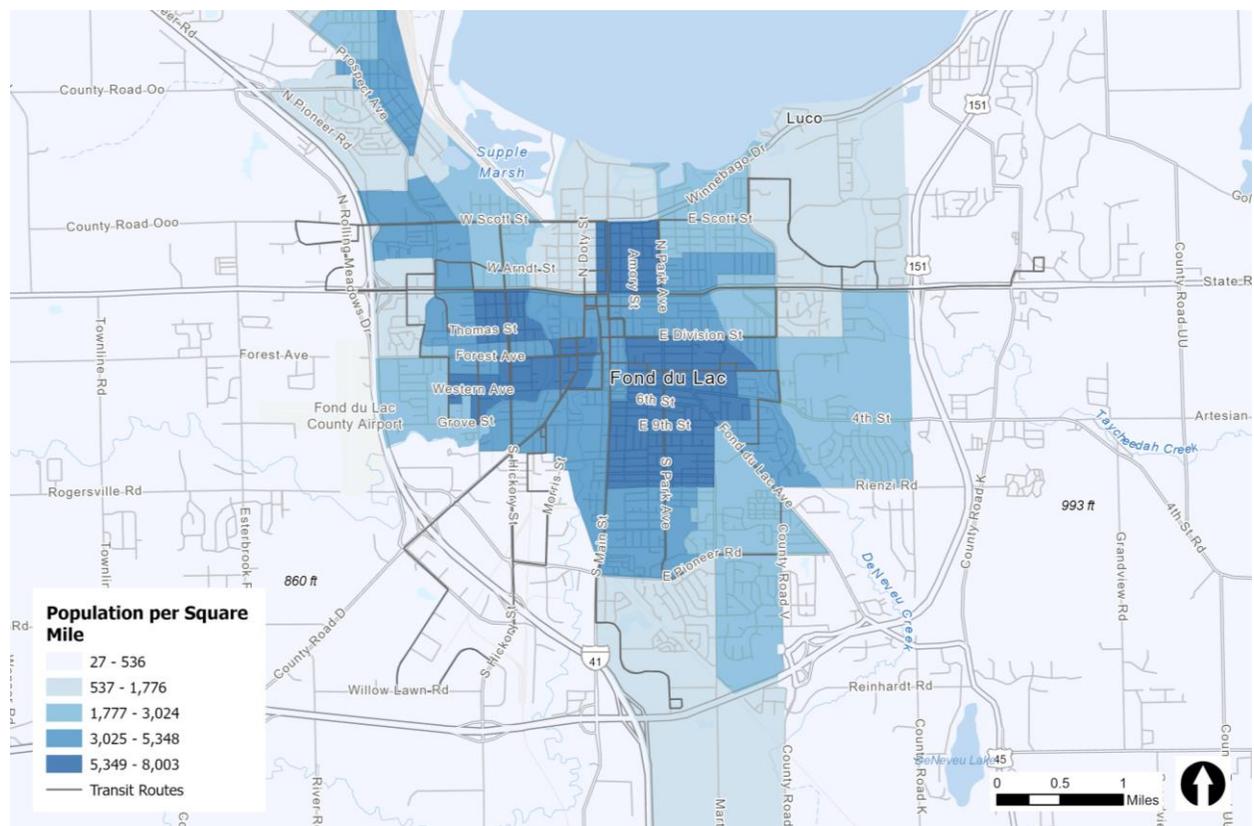
When developing transit routes and services, it is important to determine where the highest concentrations of potential transit customers are located to make sure transit-dependent populations are being served and to right-size service levels across the service area.

Key demographic factors that influence transit demand include population density, income and poverty status, vehicle ownership, and race and ethnicity. In general, transit ridership is higher where there is greater population density. People with lower incomes are more likely to ride public transit, as are those whose households do not have access to a vehicle. Additionally, it is critical to consider racial equity in the allocation of transit service; examining the presence of transit routes in and near communities of color can determine whether service is being equitably provided.

Population Density

Figure 10 shows population density across the Fond du Lac region. Within city limits, the population density is at or above 1,777 people per square mile, with the highest population density concentrated in the urban core. There are some block groups with lower densities in the southwest part of the city along County Road D and S Hickory St where fixed bus routes are present, as well as block groups in North Fond du Lac that are served only by shared-ride taxi service.

Figure 10. Fond du Lac Area - Population Density



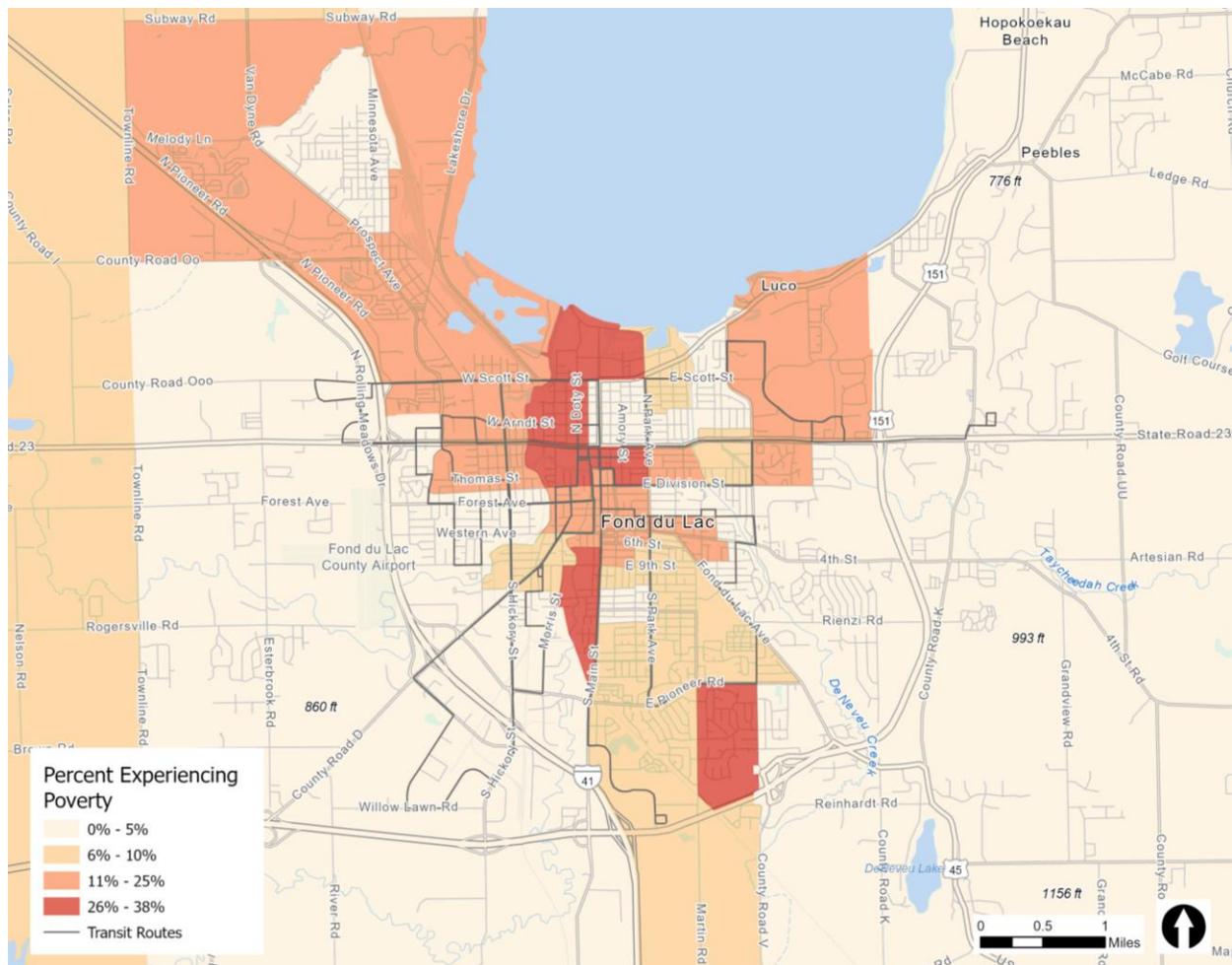
Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates by block group.

People Experiencing Poverty

Figure 11 shows the percent of the population in each block group experiencing poverty. For purposes of this analysis, individuals experiencing poverty are those residing in a household with an annual income below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For a family of four in 2022, the poverty guideline is \$27,750. Overall, about 11 percent of Fond du Lac's population are experiencing poverty. As the map indicates there are several census blocks with percentages higher than this. Block groups with the highest percentages of residents experiencing poverty (26 to 38 percent) tend to be within or near the city's urban core and well served by transit with one exception: a block group south of Pioneer Rd that has limited service.

There are several other block groups with 11 and 25 percent of their populations experiencing poverty, which is higher than the city's overall percentage. These block groups are mostly in the urban core and well served by transit; however, a couple of these block groups north of the urban core along Lake Winnebago where transit service is more limited.

Figure 11. Fond du Lac Area – People Experiencing Poverty

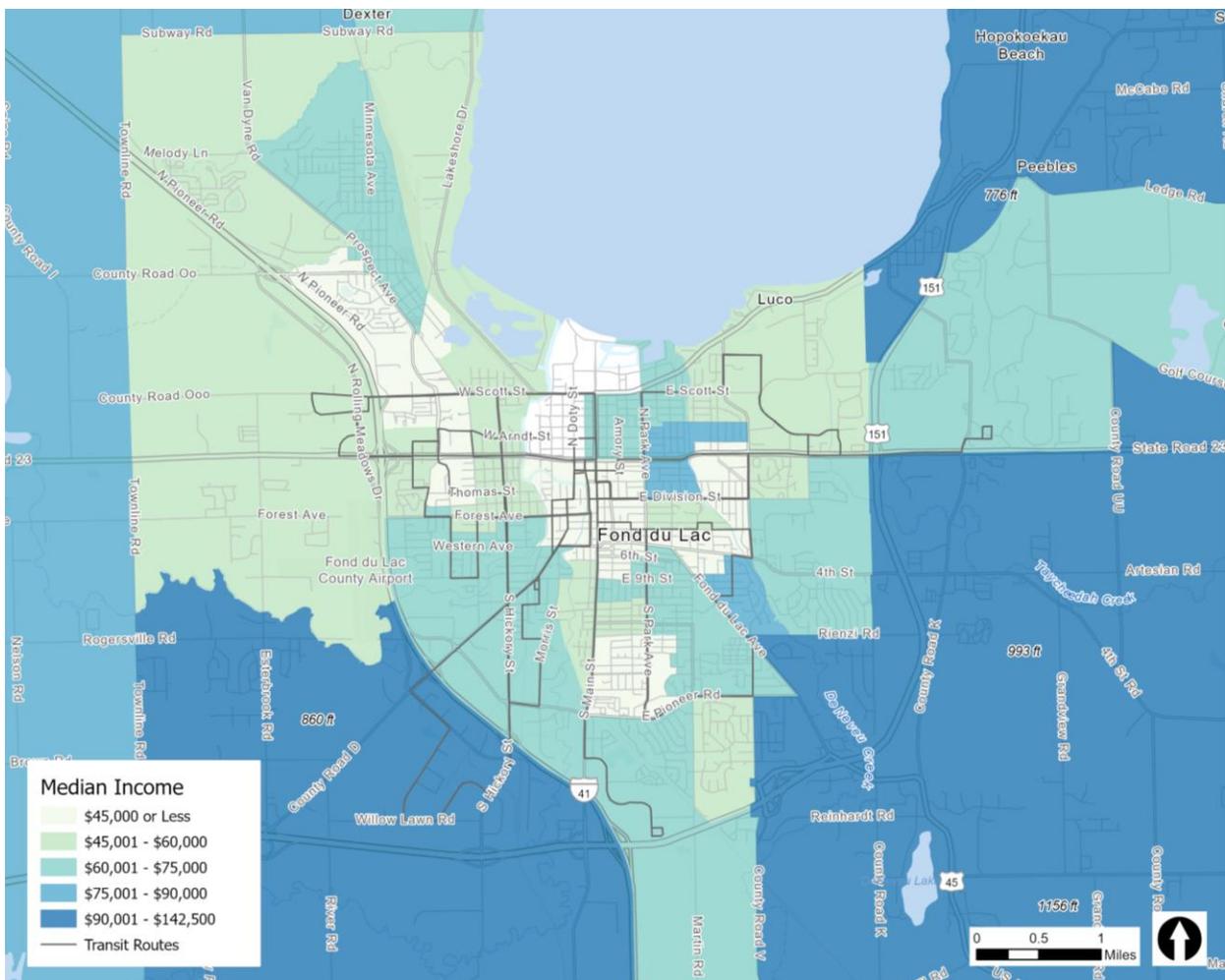


Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates by block group.

Income

The map in Figure 12, which shows the household median income by block group, is virtually an inverse of the map in Figure 11, which showed densities of populations experiencing poverty. The highest median incomes are primarily located south and east of Fond du Lac city boundaries. Within the city, the highest median incomes are in the outer parts of the city and in North Fond du Lac. Several census block groups within the urban core have median household incomes or \$45,000 or less, (the city's median household income is about \$54,000). These block groups are generally well served by fixed route transit.

Figure 12. Fond du Lac Area – Median Household Income

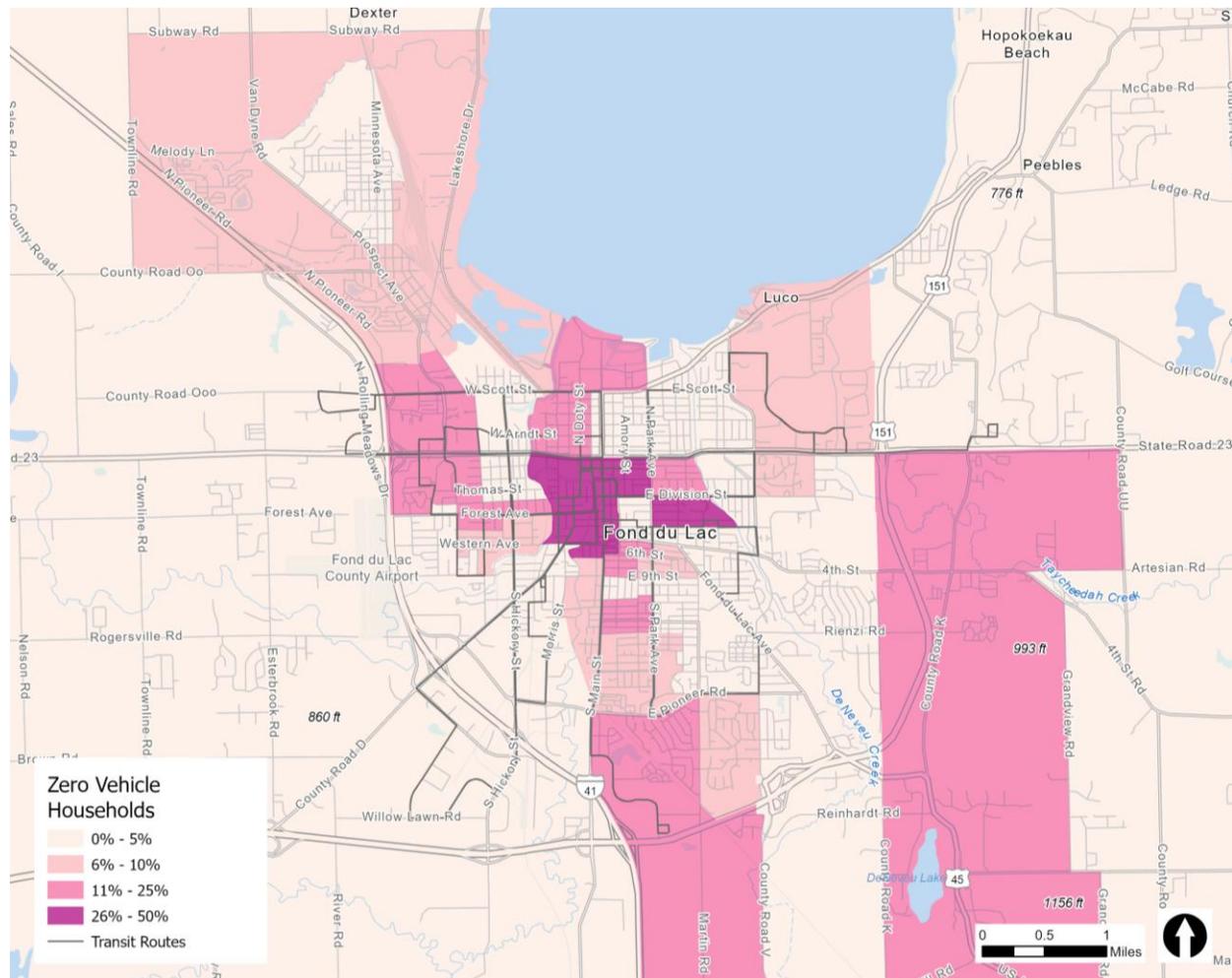


Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates by block group.

Auto Ownership

Figure 13 shows the percent of households in each block group that reported possessing no functioning vehicles in the 2016-2020 American Community Survey. In few block groups, more than 25 percent of households are zero-vehicle. Although these of these block groups are concentrated in the urban core and are well-served by transit, there are a few block groups where 11 to 25 percent of the population are zero-vehicle that have limited or poor access to fixed route transit service.

Figure 13. Fond du Lac Area – Zero Vehicle Households

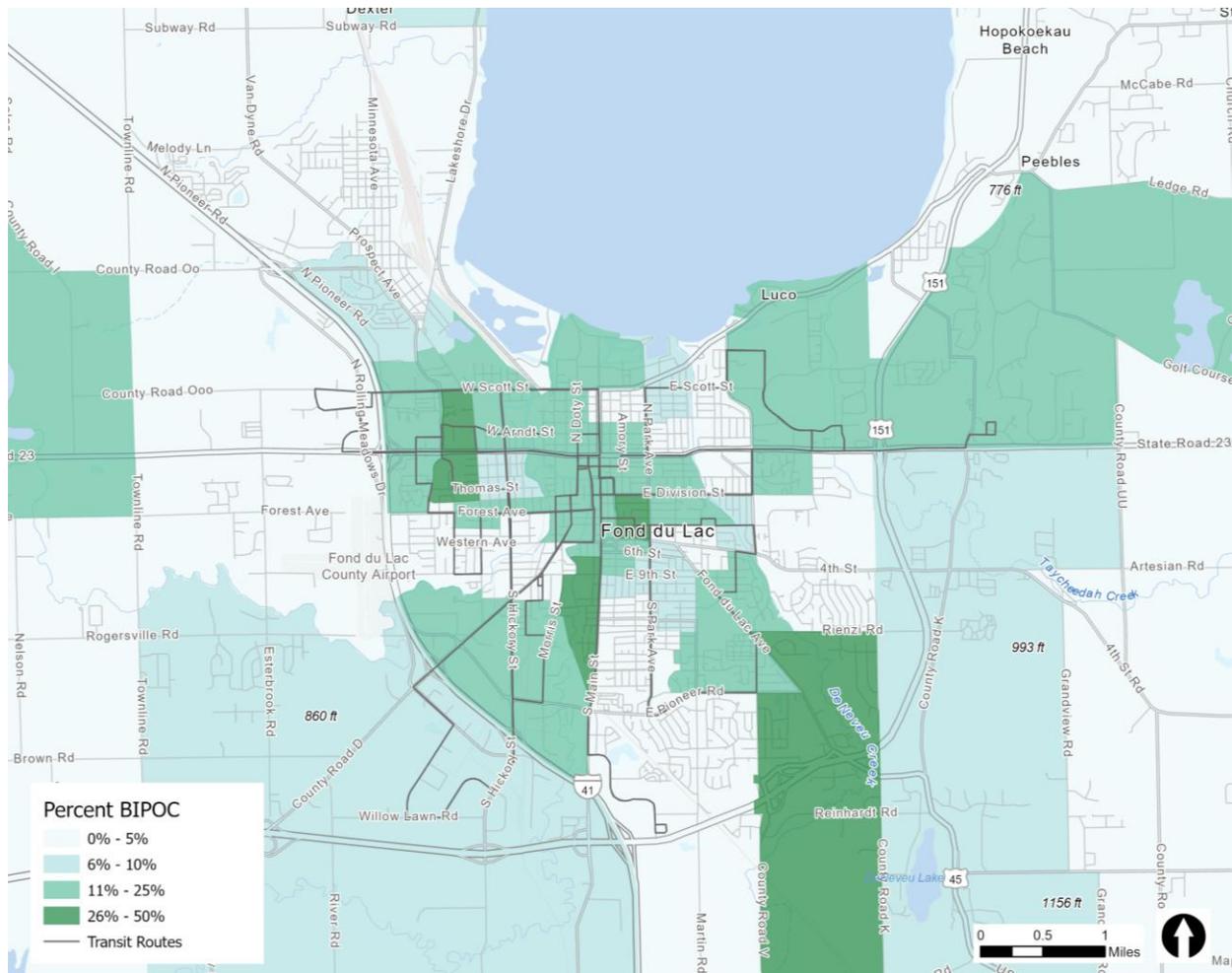


Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates by block group.

Race and Ethnicity

Figure 14 shows the percent of the population in each block group that identify as racial or ethnic minorities, defined here as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, BIPOC communities make up about 17 percent of Fond du Lac City's population overall. The map shows that there are a few higher concentrations of BIPOC populations in the city's urban core and southeast near the Highway 151 and Fond du Lac Ave interchange, where the BIPOC population makes up 26 - 50 percent of the population. Apart from the block groups with higher BIPOC populations, block groups with BIPOC populations that reflect the city overall (about 17 percent) are mostly located in the central, more populous parts of the city. Block Groups further away from the urban core, with lower population density had generally lower BIPOC population density.

Figure 14. Fond du Lac Area – BIPOC Communities



Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates by block group.

Community Engagement

Community engagement activities for this Transit Development Plan included extensive survey efforts (including rider, community, and business surveys), staff and driver workshops, pop-up events, and five in-person stakeholder meetings. These activities were intended to generate meaningful input that could inform the project team’s assessment of transit needs and gaps, as well as opportunities to improve the current system. Consultant staff were assisted in outreach by FDLAT and ECWRPC staff, as well as stakeholders from partner agencies and organizations.

Rider Survey

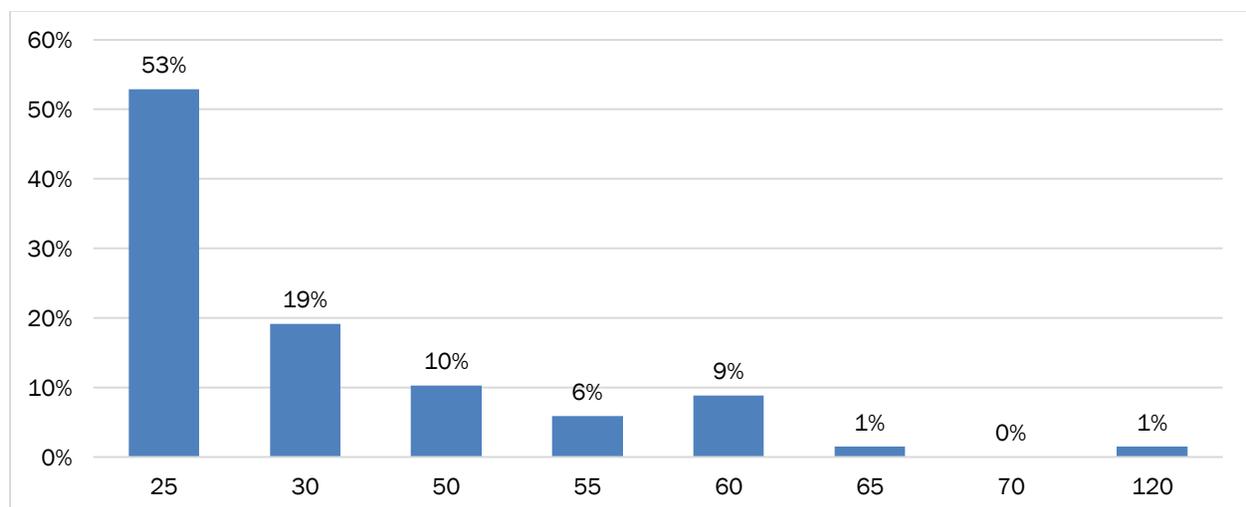
One of the main tools used to collect input was a survey for existing transit riders. This survey was available online from May through late August 2022. Paper surveys and QR code flyers were distributed by the project team and ECWRPC staff onboard buses and at the downtown transfer zone on May 18 and 19. Paper surveys and QR code flyers were made available onboard buses for the duration of the summer, and materials were also distributed to the Fond du Lac School District, Envision Greater Fond du Lac, SSM Health, and other organizations represented on the stakeholder committee. In total, the rider survey received 97 responses, representing nearly 23 percent of FDLAT’s 2022 daily ridership. The full rider survey instrument is included in Appendix A.

Transit Use and Access

The first section of the rider survey included questions related to transit use and access.

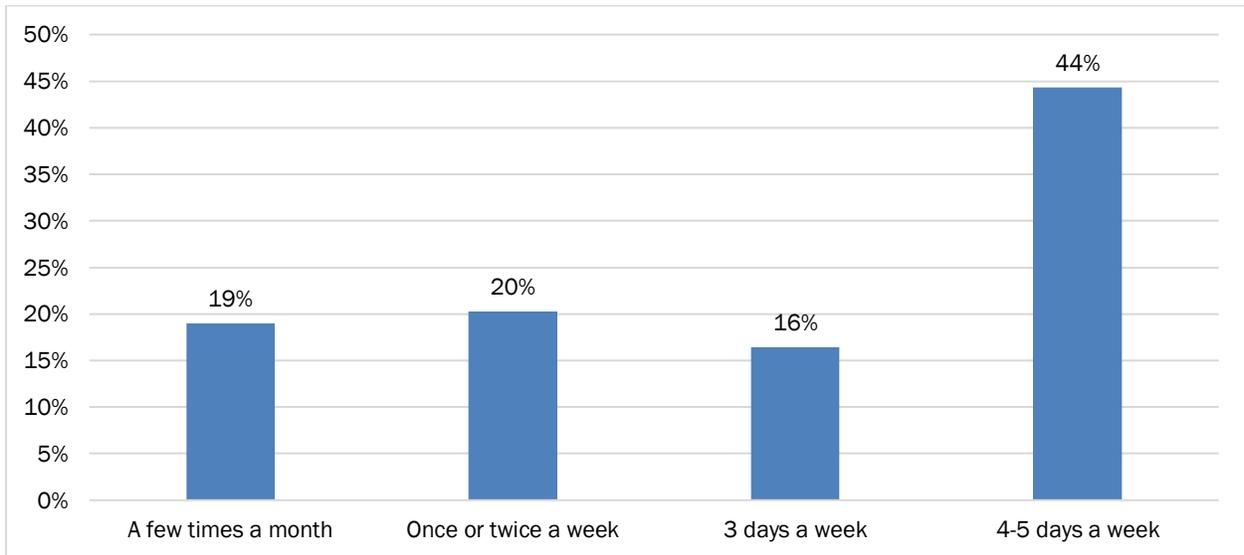
Routes 25 and 30 were most-well represented in responses: approximately half of respondents planned to take or were riding Route 25 at the time they took the survey and nearly 20 percent were riding Route 30. Remaining routes each represented 10 percent of responses or less (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Routes Ridden by Rider Survey Respondents



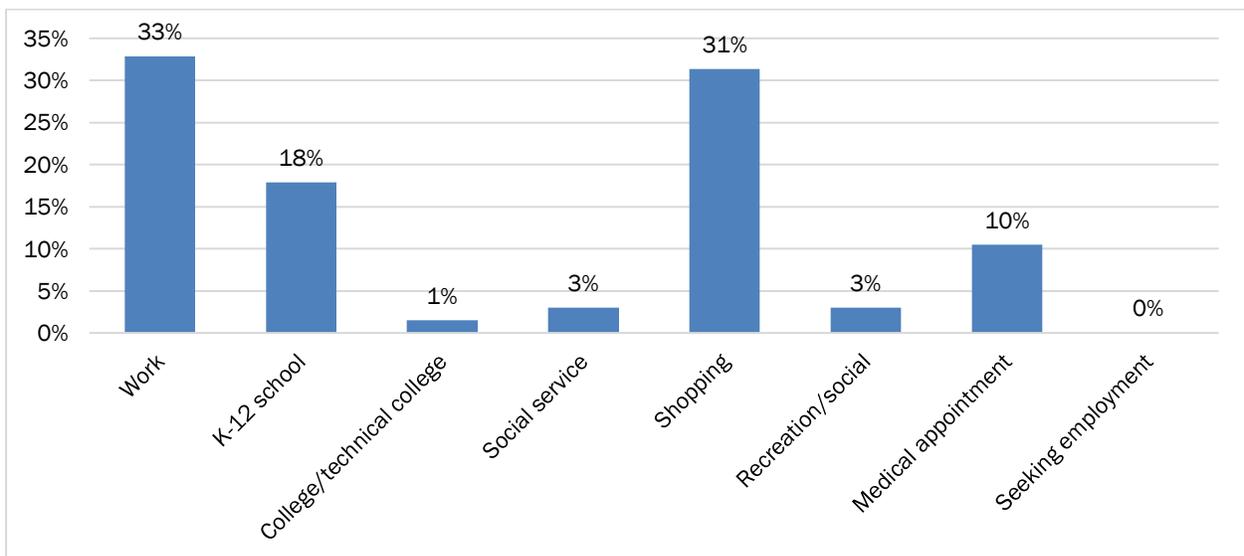
Nearly half of respondents ride FDLAT four to five times a week; the remainder are approximately evenly distributed between riding three times a week, one or two times a week, and only a few times a month (Figure 16). Three-quarters of respondents are using FDLAT as much as they did at the same time last year or more often; 15 percent indicated that they did not use FDLAT a year ago and less than 10 percent said they use FDLAT less often than they did a year ago.

Figure 16. Rider Survey Respondents' Frequency of Transit Use



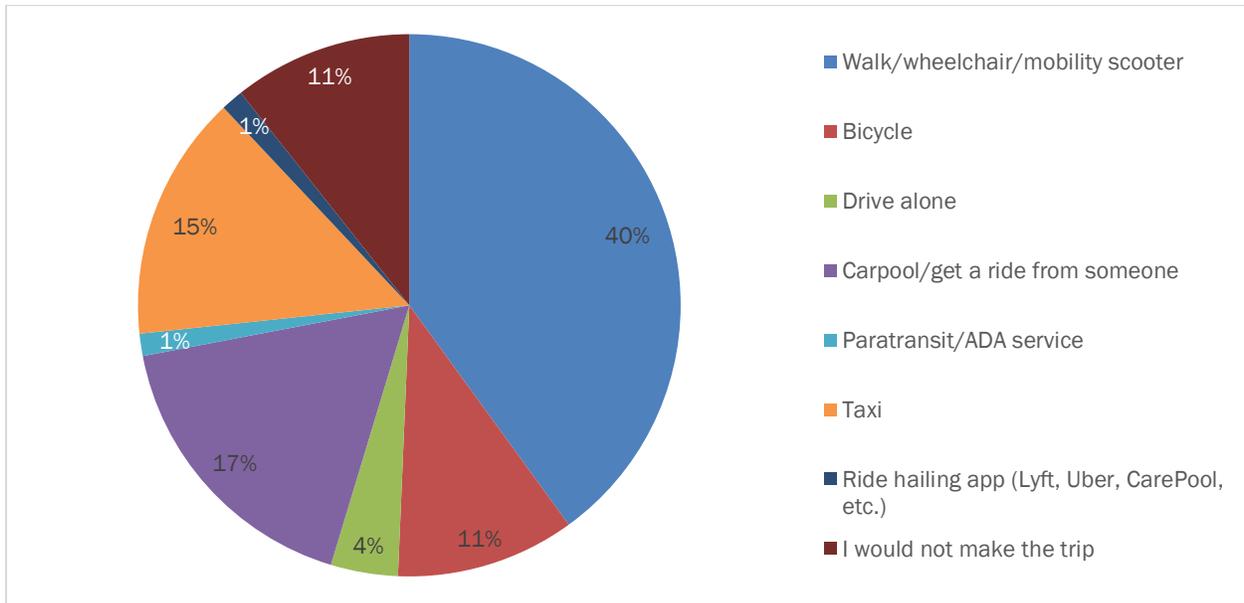
Approximately one-third of respondents were traveling to work when they took the survey and one-third were on their way to go shopping; other trip purposes, such as K-12 school, medical appointments, and recreational trips were less popular among respondents (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Rider Survey Respondents' Trip Purpose



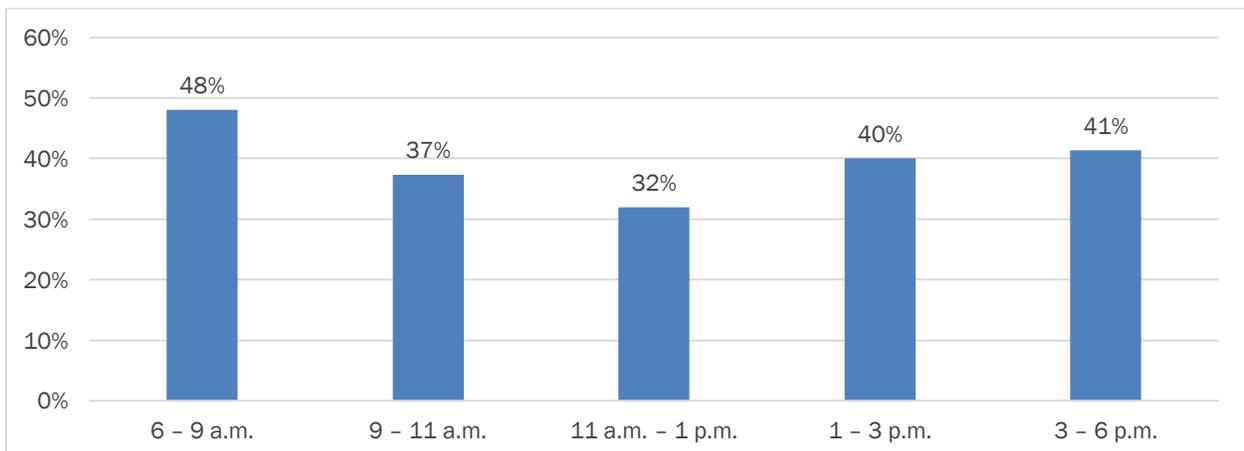
Respondents indicated a range of work and school locations including Festival Foods, Walmart, Fond du Lac High School (both students and employees), University of Wisconsin Oshkosh—Fond du Lac campus, and the Johnson Street Culver’s near the high school. Most respondents would find an alternative way to get around if transit were not an option: 40 percent said they would walk or use a wheelchair/mobility scooter, 17 percent said they would get a ride from someone, 15 percent indicated that they would get a taxi (Figure 18). Eleven percent of respondents indicated that they would not make the trip if transit were not an option.

Figure 18. Rider Survey Respondents' Alternatives to Transit



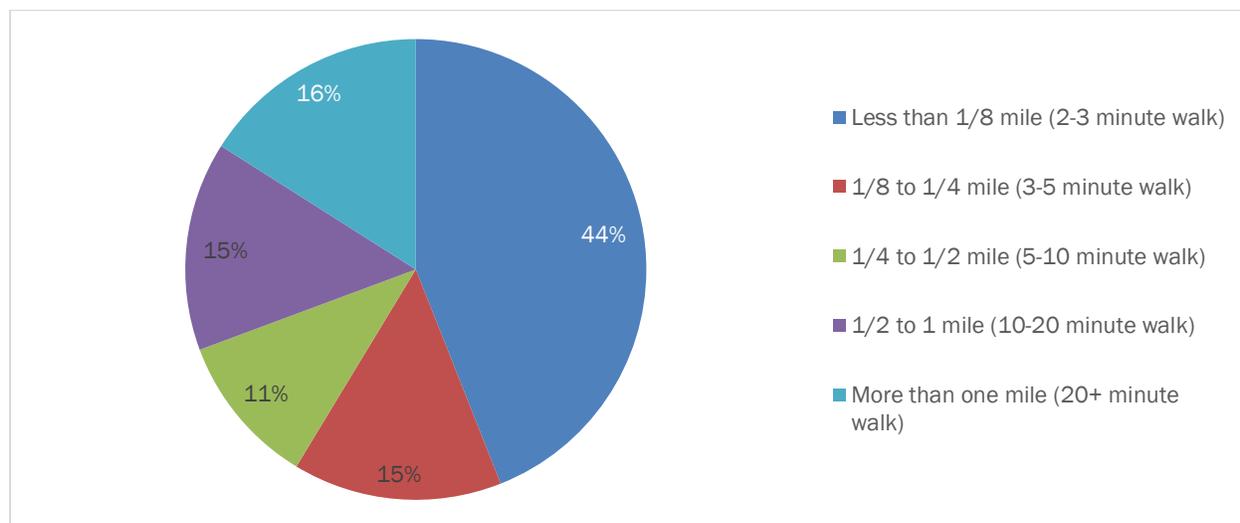
Transit use by survey respondents is well distributed throughout the day. Nearly half indicate that they use FDLAT in the morning peak from 6 to 9 a.m., two-fifths indicated that they ride from 1 to 3 p.m. or 3 to 6 p.m., and approximately one-third indicated that they ride either 9 to 11 a.m. or 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Time of Transit Use by Rider Survey Respondents



Almost half of riders live within one-eighth mile of where they board the bus; one-quarter live one-eighth to one-half mile away, 15 percent live one-half mile to one mile away, and 15 percent must walk one mile or more to get to their bus stop (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Distance for Riders to Access their Bus Pickup Location



Other topics related to transit use and access include vehicle ownership, fare payment types, and willingness to consider smartphone payment options. The survey found that the vast majority of respondents do not have a driver’s license and/or a reliable vehicle: just 10 percent indicated that they have both a license and a reliable vehicle, 70 percent have neither a license or a vehicle, and 17 percent have a license but no vehicle.

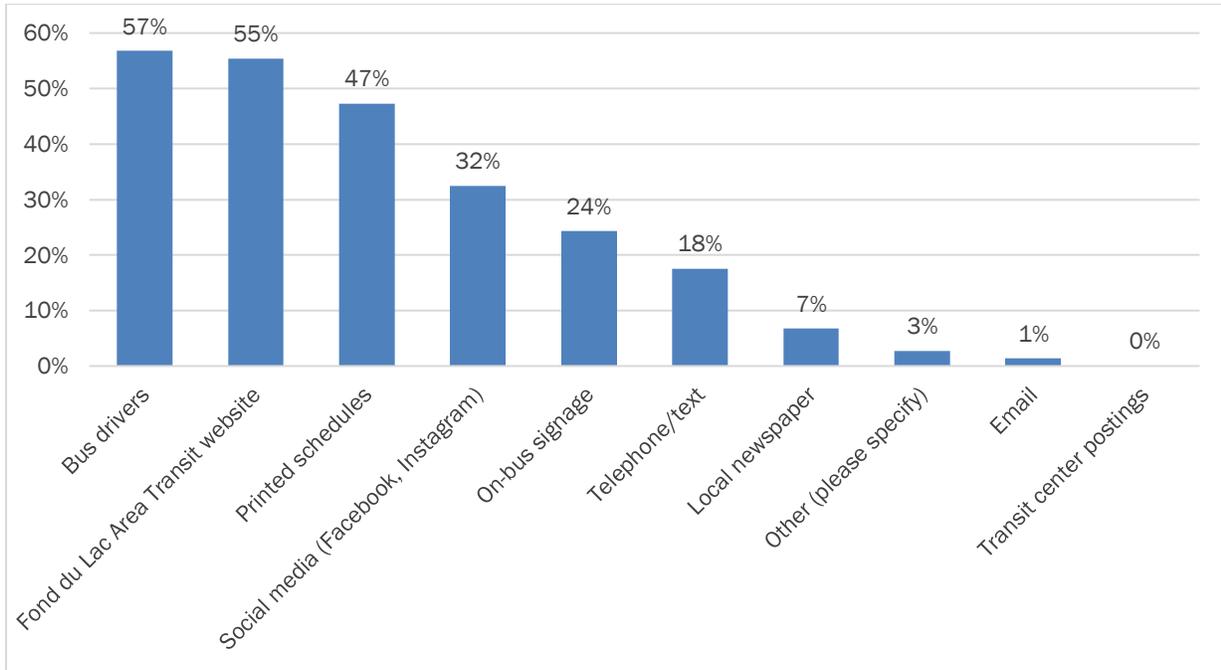
Nearly half of respondents (46 percent) typically use cash to pay for their bus fare and one-third (34 percent) typically use a monthly bus pass. Just 10 percent use tokens, seven percent use day passes, and two percent use the smartphone app. Approximately one-quarter (27 percent) of respondents use the senior/ADA discount when purchasing fare. More than half (56 percent) of respondents would prefer not to use an app to buy their fare, while 27 percent would be willing to do so if it were easy and 17 percent answered definitively that they would use an app to buy fare.

Transit Service Feedback

The next section of the rider survey relates to existing transit service and information, as well as opportunities for improvement.

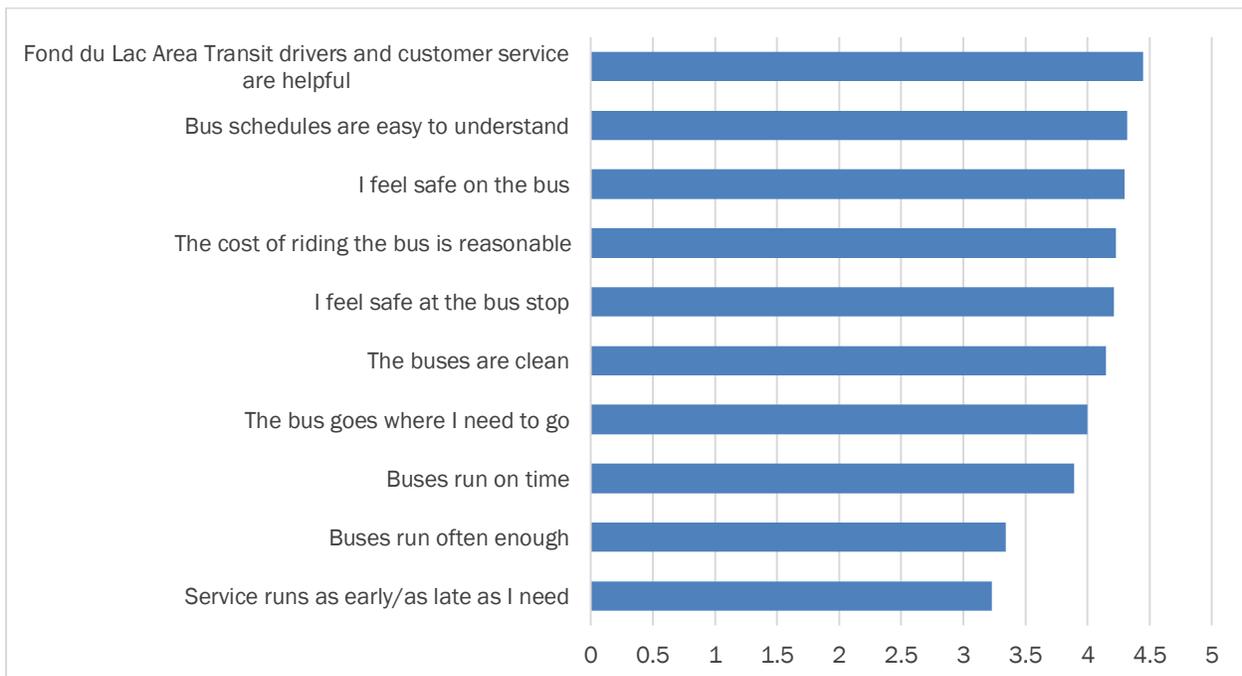
Most respondents said that they primarily get information about FDLAT from bus drivers, the FDLAT website, and printed schedules. Some respondents also get information from on-bus signage and phone/text services, and the two who selected “other” shared that they often get information from other people (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Primary Transit Information Sources for Rider Survey Respondents



Respondents provided positive feedback about FDLAT drivers and customer service, ease of understanding bus schedules, safety on the bus and at bus stops, fares, and cleanliness, while service frequency and hours of service received the lowest ratings (Figure 22).

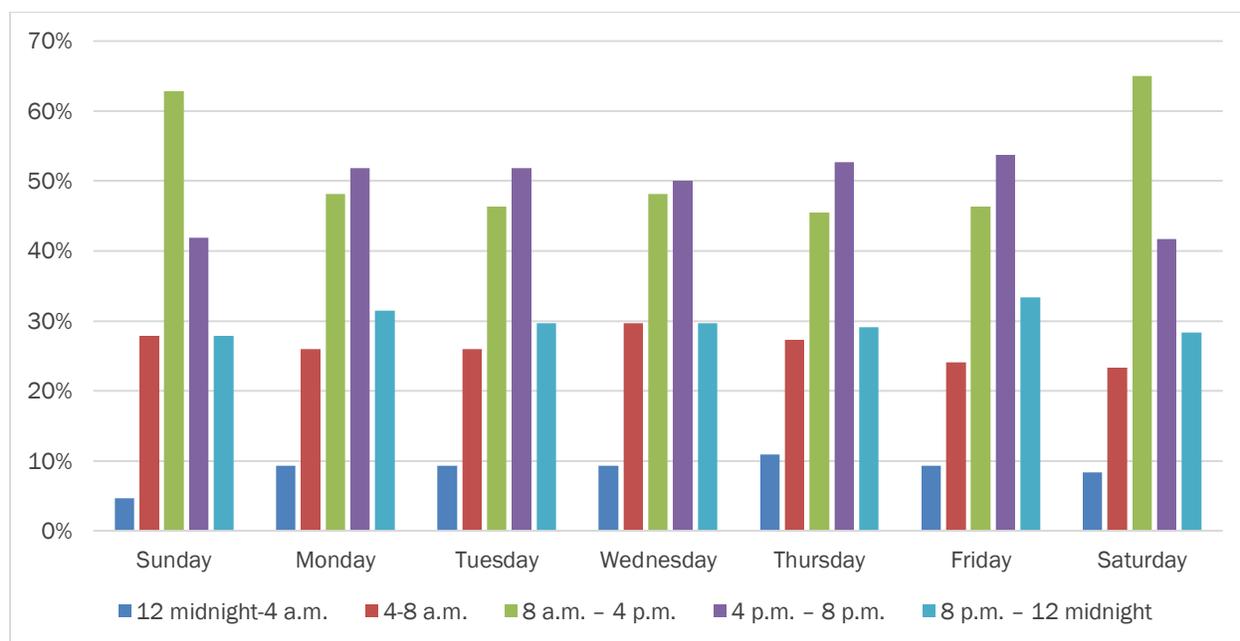
Figure 22. Rider Survey Respondents' Customer Satisfaction



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the statements listed above. All responses were assigned a value from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree" and the weighted averages are shown.

Rider survey respondents expressed the greatest interest in the addition of service during the day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) on weekends and the evening (4 p.m. to 8 p.m.), while there was limited interest in overnight service (Figure 23).

Figure 23. Rider Survey Respondents’ Priority Days and Times for Increased Transit Service



In addition to the topics above, respondents also provided open-ended feedback regarding existing FDLAT service or opportunities for improvement. These comments included the following input:

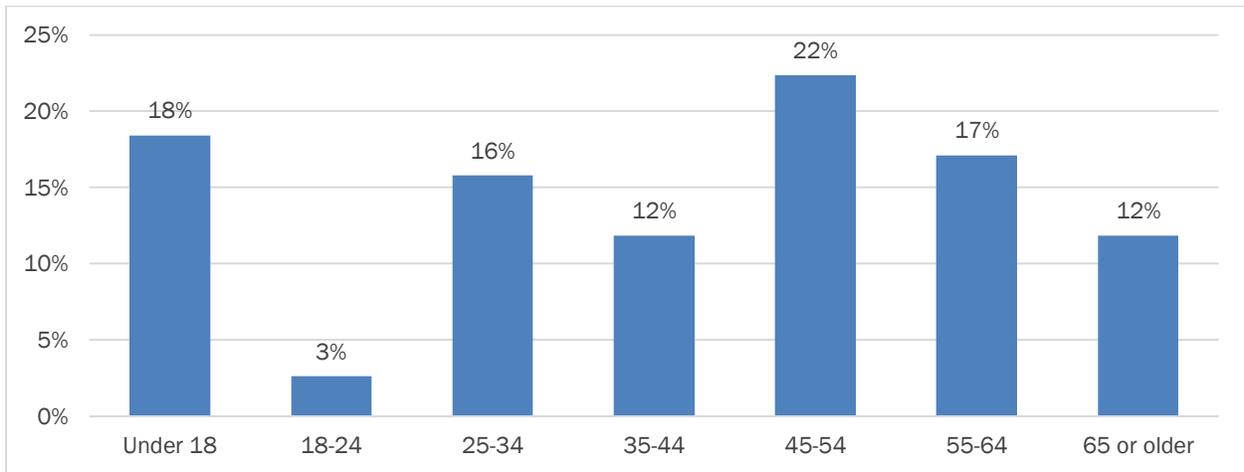
- Positive feedback about FDLAT bus operators and service generally.
- Interest in coordination with Go Transit in Oshkosh and Valley Transit in Appleton to provide connections between Fond du Lac and the two other cities.
- Interest in service earlier in the morning and later in the evening on weekdays and Saturdays.
- Suggestion to add automated audio messages with information about upcoming stops and transfer points.
- Suggestion to add service to Oshkosh.
- Interest in improving the transfer zone.

Respondent Demographics

The final section of the rider survey included optional demographic questions.

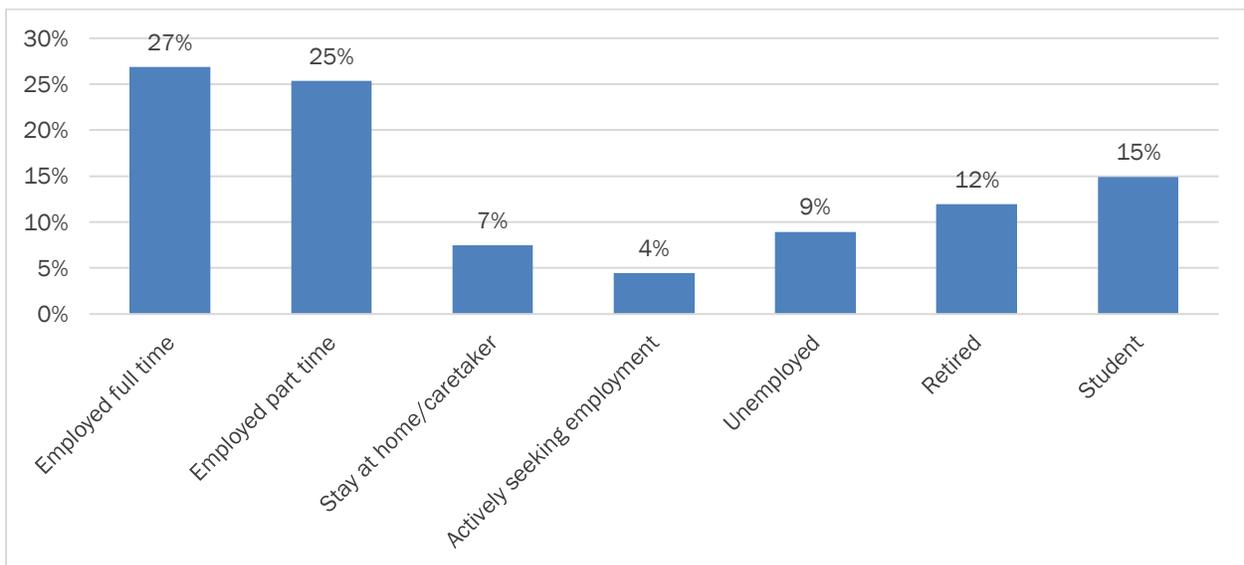
Respondents represented a wide range in age (Figure 24). The majority (96 percent) speak English as their primary language. Three-quarters identified themselves as white, 13 percent identify as Black or African American, and the remaining 12 percent identified as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or elected not to respond.

Figure 24. Age of Rider Survey Respondents



Approximately one-quarter of respondents are employed full time and one-quarter are employed part time. The remainder are students, retired, unemployed, caretakers, or unemployed and actively seeking a job (Figure 25).

Figure 25. Employment Status of Rider Survey Respondents



Community Survey

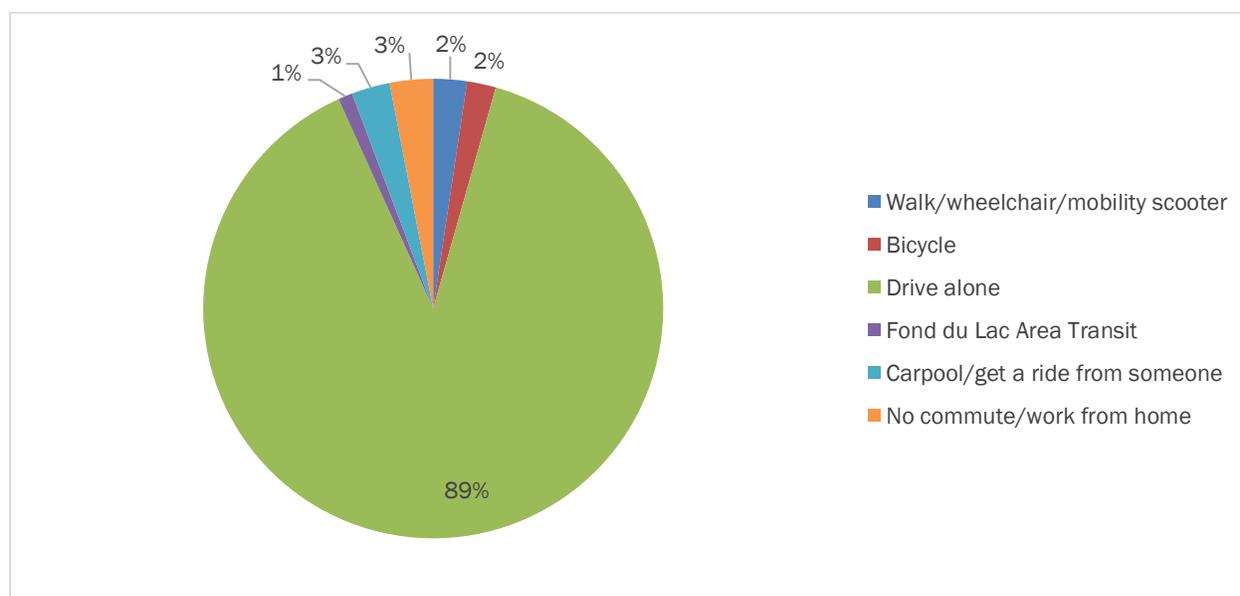
The project team also conducted a survey for non-transit riders in the Fond du Lac area during the same time period the rider survey was available. Community surveys were distributed to organizations represented in the stakeholder group, as well as at community events, including the Fond du Lac Farmer’s Market. In total, the community survey received 372 responses. The full community survey instrument is included in Appendix B.

Transportation Modes

The first section of the community survey assessed respondents’ use of various transportation modes, include driving, transit, walking and biking, and other options.

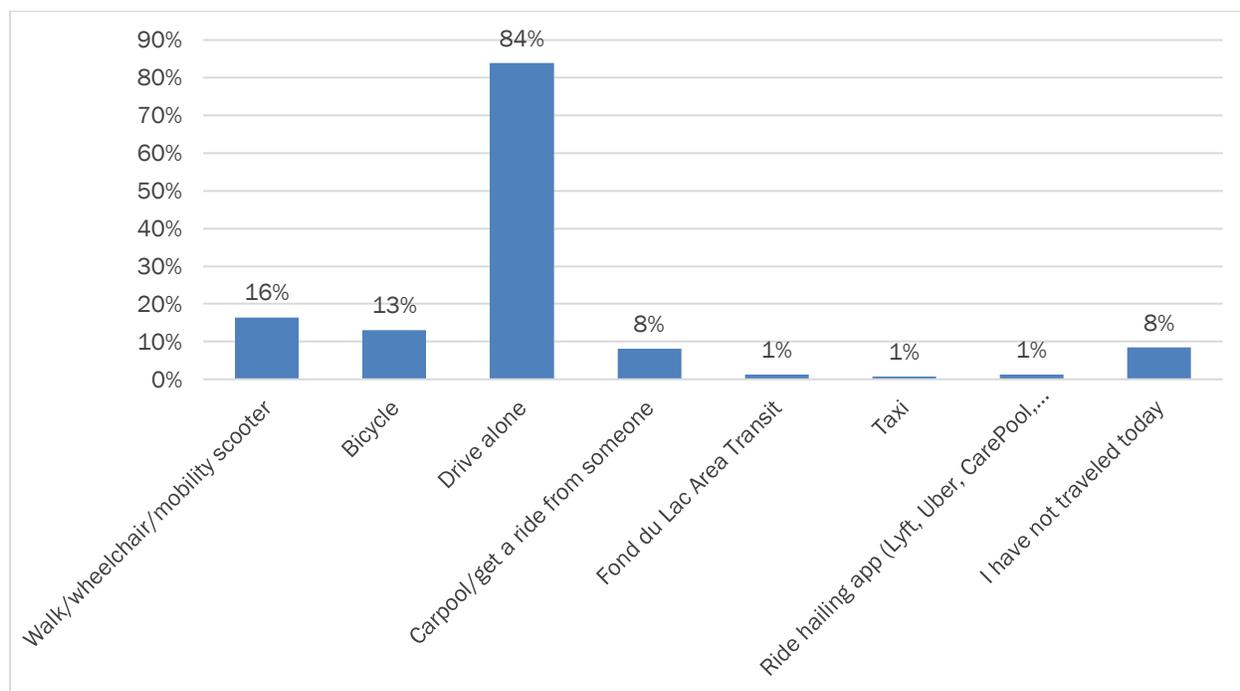
The primary mode of transportation for most respondents is driving alone (89 percent); the remaining 11 percent do not have a commute/work from home, carpool or get a ride from someone, walk or use a wheelchair/mobility scooter, bicycle, or use FDLAT (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Community Survey Respondents’ Primary Mode of Transportation



Similar trends were evident when respondents were asked which modes of transportation they planned to use on the day they took the survey. Driving alone was still the most common response with four-fifths of respondents (84 percent) indicating that they would drive alone today, but nearly one-fifth indicated that they would walk or use a wheelchair/mobility scooter to get around, and 13 percent said they would ride a bicycle (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Community Survey Respondents' Daily Transportation Choice



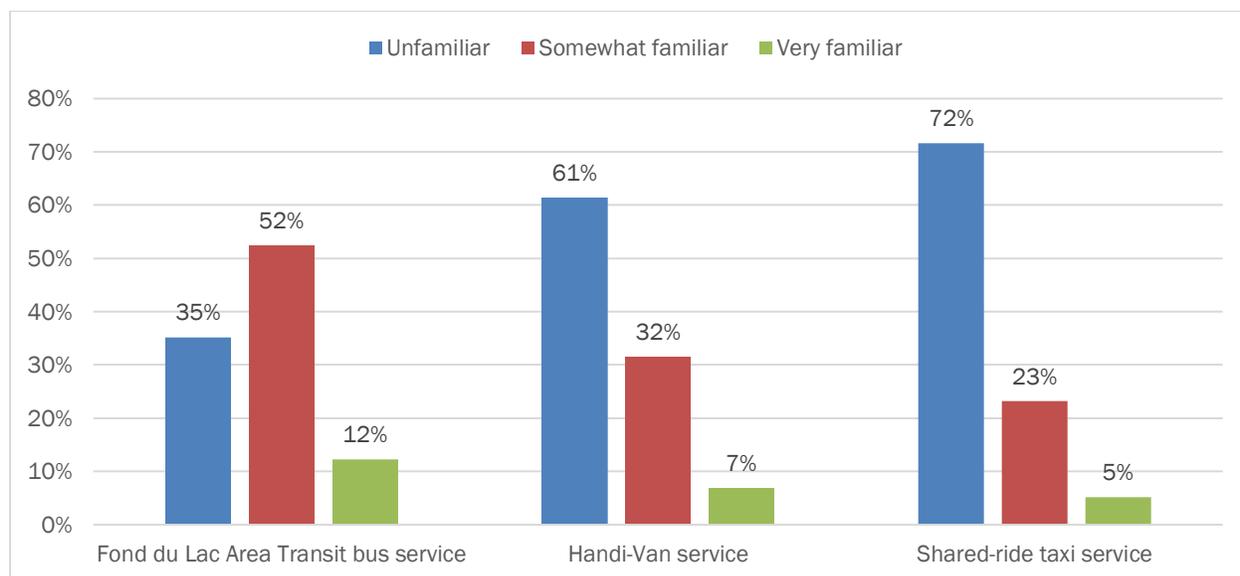
Almost all respondents (94 percent) said they have a driver’s license and access to a reliable vehicle; only eight people (2.7 percent) said they had neither a license nor a reliable vehicle, five people (1.7 percent) said they have reliable access to a vehicle but not a license, and four people (1.3 percent) said they have a license but no reliable access to a vehicle.

Transit Service Feedback

The next section of the community survey assessed respondents’ familiarity with and perspective on transit, including reasons why they may or may not use existing transit services.

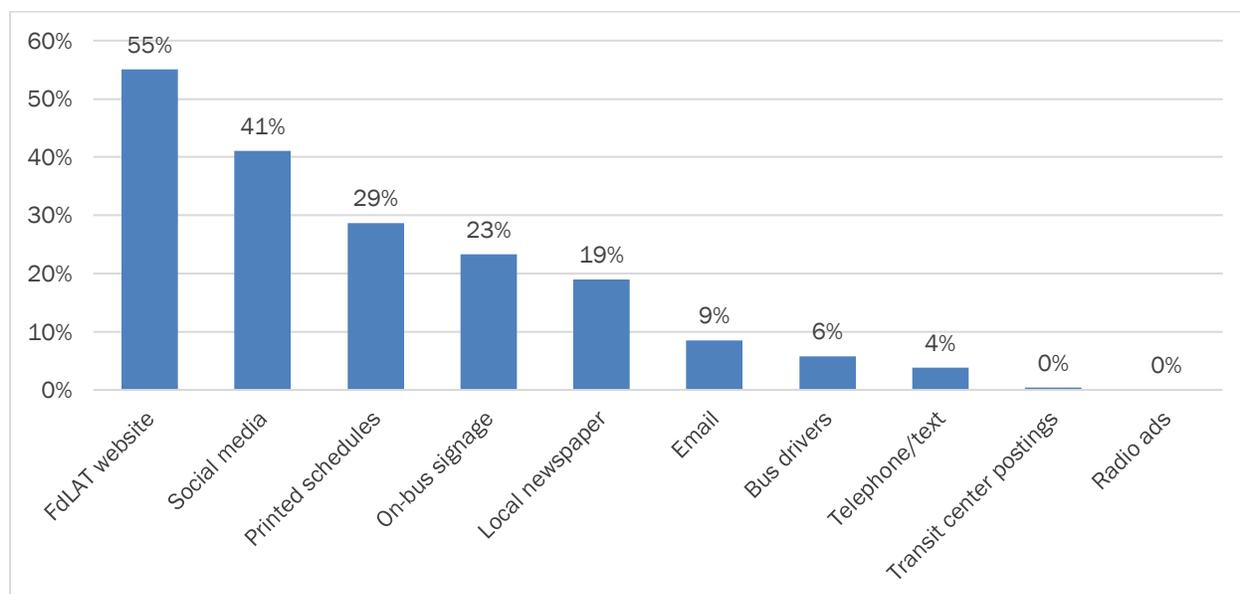
Awareness of FDLAT services was limited among community survey respondents: only 12 percent said they are very familiar with FDLAT bus service, half indicated that they are somewhat familiar with bus service, and the remaining one-third said they are unfamiliar with FDLAT bus service (Figure 28). Awareness of the Handi-Van and shared-ride taxi services was even lower, with 61 percent of respondents and 72 percent indicating they were unfamiliar with these services, respectively. Most respondents had not used FDLAT within the past two years; only 13 percent of respondents said that they had.

Figure 28. Community Survey Respondents' Familiarity with Fond du Lac Area Transit Services



Like rider survey respondents, community survey respondents primarily get information about FDLAT from the agency’s website and social media, as well as printed schedules and on-bus signage (Figure 29).

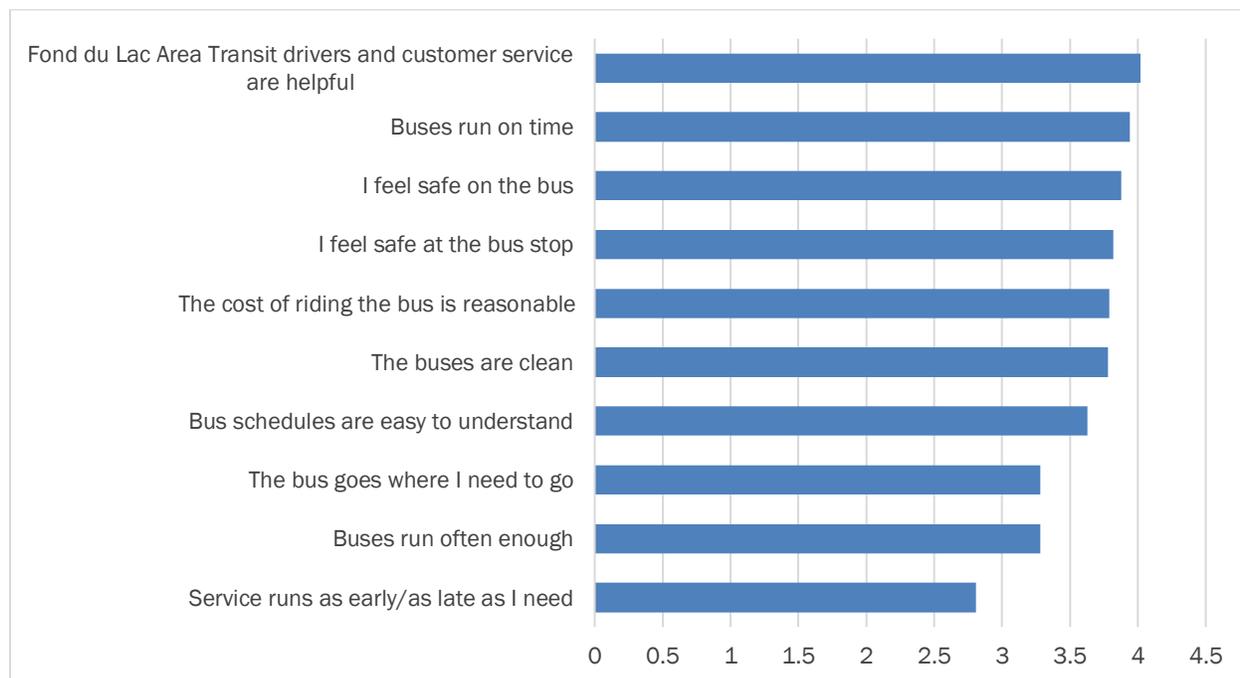
Figure 29. Community Survey Respondents' Primary FDLAT Information Source



Community survey respondents were generally more willing to use a smartphone app to buy fare than rider survey respondents. Two-fifths (41 percent) of respondents said they would use an app to buy fare and one-third (34 percent) said they might do so if it were easy; just one-quarter (25 percent) of respondents said they prefer not to use an app to buy fare.

Eighty of the community survey respondents completed the section that asked them to indicate whether they agree or disagree with a set of statements regarding FDLAT service. Feedback was generally positive regarding drivers and customer service, on-time performance, safety on the bus and at bus stops, fare cost, and cleanliness (Figure 30). Service area, frequency, and span received less positive ratings from survey respondents.

Figure 30. Community Survey Respondent Rating of Aspects of Fond du Lac Area Transit Service



Most respondents indicated that FDLAT could meet very few (36 percent) of their transportation needs or none (20 percent); nearly one-quarter said that FDLAT could meet about half of their needs and only 17 percent collectively said FDLAT could meet most (12 percent), almost all (5 percent) or all (4 percent) of their needs. The primary factor that influences respondents’ choice to ride the bus or not is whether it goes where they need to go (76 percent selected this option), followed by service hours (44 percent) and frequency (34 percent). Respondents indicated a wide range of workplaces including the Pioneer Road Pick n Save, Fond du Lac Public Library, Fond du Lac government buildings, Mahala’s Hope, and multiple downtown locations.

Respondents provided additional comments regarding the following:

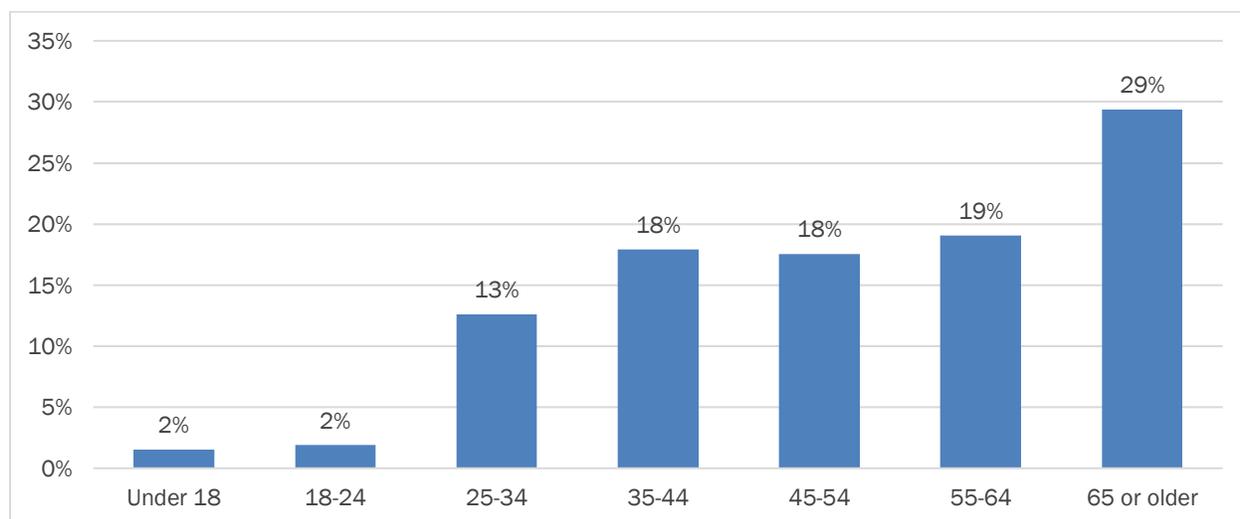
- Significant support for service earlier in the morning, later at night, and on the weekend.
- Appreciation for FDLAT’s efforts to gather input.
- Multiple suggestions to make FDLAT more welcoming and accessible with routes and schedules that are easier to understand, and a “how to ride the bus” day or video.
- Significant support for transit as a way to serve people with low incomes, students, and others that need transportation options besides driving their own vehicle.
- Suggestion to add stops near newer development, especially apartment complexes.

- Several suggestions to use smaller vehicles.
- Interest in extending Route 60 to serve Menard’s.
- Support for continued service to Brooke Industries.
- Many people take taxis to the library, but many patrons cannot come to the library when the buses are not running.
- Interest in additional park-and-ride service.
- Long travel times are a challenge.
- Interest in adding electric buses to the fleet.
- Some people expressed concern about the cost of running buses that appear largely empty.
- Interest in an app that shows bus routes and arrival times.

Respondent Demographics

The age distribution of community survey respondents skews much older than that of rider survey respondents; nearly one-third (29 percent) of respondents are age 65 or older and only three percent are age 24 or younger (Figure 31). All respondents indicated that English is their primary language, though several people said they would also like to see FDLAT use Spanish in its communications. Just over half of respondents (57 percent) are women and two-fifths (38 percent) are men; the remaining respondents identified themselves as non-binary or said they preferred not to say.

Figure 31. Age of Community Survey Respondents



The majority of respondents are white (91 percent), five percent declined to answer, and only five percent identified themselves as Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Native American. Most respondents are employed full time (57 percent) or half time (eight percent) or are retired (30 percent); 1.5 percent are students, two percent are unemployed or actively seeking employment, and one percent stay at home or are caretakers.

Business Survey

In addition to the rider and community surveys, the Transit Development Plan included a business survey conducted jointly by ECWRPC staff and Envision Greater Fond du Lac (Envision). This survey was distributed to members of Envision, which functions as the region’s unified chamber of commerce and economic development organization. Respondents included senior staff and human resources managers from major corporations and other employers in the Fond du Lac region, who answered questions related to the transportation needs of their employees.

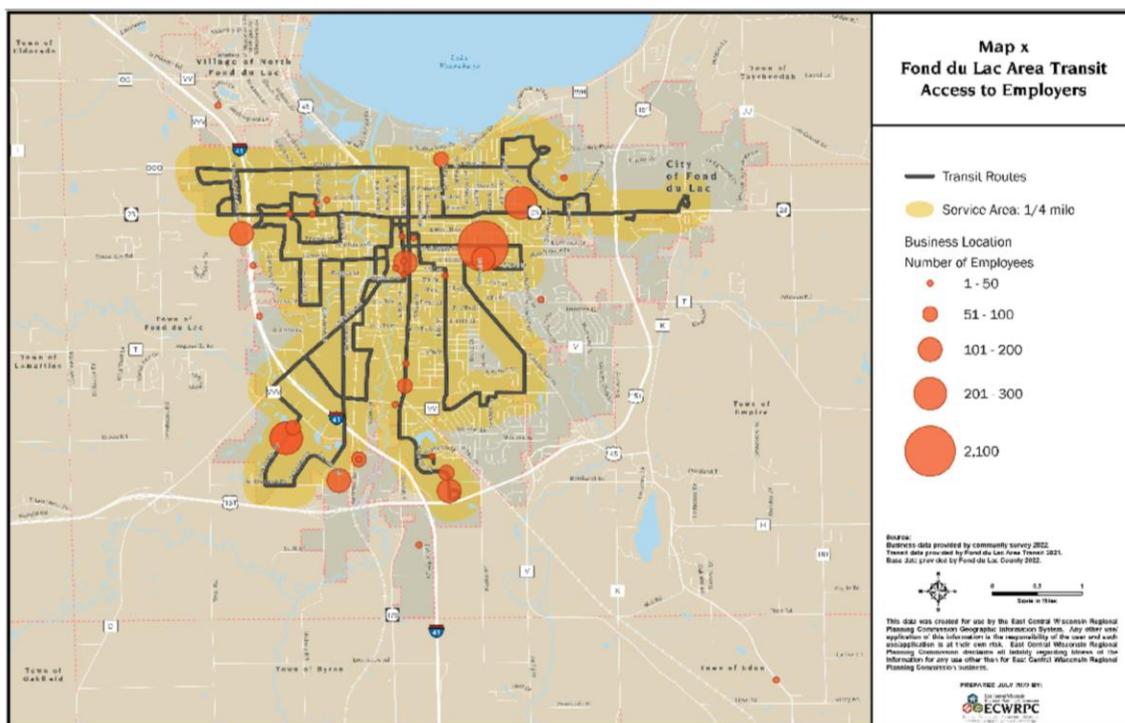
In total, ECWPC and Envision received responses from 37 employers representing over 5,000 employees. Key findings are described in the following sections.

Location and Staff Characteristics

30 responding businesses were located within the Fond du Lac MPO and FDLAT Transit Service Area, representing 4,000 total employees at these locations (Figure 32). In addition,

- 53% of employers have multiple locations;
- 43% have employees moving between work sites during workday;
- 50% have seasonal/intern staff, representing 70-100 employees;
 - Seasonal work is spread across the year, peaking in August;
- 47% report that transportation is an issue for employees; and
- 60% report they are aware of transportation needs for employees.

Figure 32. Employer Survey Respondents’ Location and Business Size



Source: ECWRPC.

Shift Times and Transit Service

In addition to questions on geographic location and staff transportation needs, businesses were asked to provide shift times of existing employees. This data enables analysis of how well existing transit trips are scheduled in relation to employees' potential commute times. Shift times are particularly relevant for industrial and warehouse facilities, which often work on 24-hour schedules with late-night or early-morning start and end times.

Table 8 shows the range of shift start and end times provided by employer survey respondents. Responses indicate a wide range of shift start and end times depending on employer scheduling practices. Table 9 shows the weekday start and end times for existing FDLAT fixed bus routes. While the span of service offered by FDLAT provides trip times suitable for a typical 8 AM to 5 PM office schedule, early morning, late evening, and overnight trips do not meet the needs of all employer shift times.

Table 8. Employer Survey Respondents' Shift Times

Employer Shift	Range of Times
1st Shift Starts	5 am to 10 am
1st Shift Ends	9:30 am to 6 pm
2nd Shift Starts	9 am to 6 pm
2nd Shift Ends	3 pm to 1 am
3rd and More Shift Starts	2 pm to 11:30 pm
3rd and More Shift Ends	10 pm to 7 am

Table 9. FDLAT Span of Service by Route

FdL Area Transit Route	Weekday Start Time	Weekday End Time
Route 30	6 am	6:25 pm
Route 50	6 am	6:25 pm
Route 60	6 am	6:25 pm
Route 25	6:30 am	5:55 pm
Route 55	6:30 am	5:55 pm
Route 65	6:30 am	5:55 pm
Route 70 Tripper	8 am & 3:10 pm	8:25 am & 3:25 pm
Route 120 School Tripper	7 am & 3:05 pm	7:50 am & 3:55 pm

Potential Transportation Solutions

In addition to the above questions, employers were asked to indicate whether they provide existing transportation or transit benefits (from a list of options), and whether they might be interested in learning more about these potential transportation solutions. Potential solutions offered included the following:

- Redesigning existing transit routes to better meet employer needs;
- Establishing dedicated employer shuttles to/from existing transit service;
- Offering rideshare or carpool perks to employees;
- Implementing a guaranteed ride home program;
- Offering flexible work hours;
- Providing a transportation allowance to employees;
- Allowing employees purchase transit passes with pre-tax dollars; and
- Enabling increased telecommuting.

The potential transportation solutions listed above include items that could be implemented by individual businesses or groups of businesses, FDLAT, or through collaboration between businesses and transit. A summary of responses to these potential options.

Table 10. Employer Survey – Potential Transportation Solutions

Program/Benefit	Percent of Employers Currently Offering or Interested in Learning About	Transit Solutions	Business Solutions	Collaboration between Business and Transit
Redesigned Routes	27%	X		
Commuter Shuttle	26%			X
Ride Share/ Car Pool Perks	23%		X	
Guaranteed Ride Home	30%	X		
Flexible Work Hours	80%		X	
Transportation Allowance	17%			X
Pre-Tax Transportation Benefit	20%		X	
Telecommute	36%		X	

Stakeholder Meetings

The 2023-2027 Transit Development Plan process was guided by a stakeholder group that included FDLAT and City of Fond du Lac staff, bus rider and driver representatives, and members of stakeholder agencies and organizations invested in transit. Members of the stakeholder group attended five in-person meetings as follows:

- **Stakeholder Meeting #1**
 Date and Time: Wednesday, May 18, 8:00-9:30 AM
 Location: Lakeside Park Pavilion, 71 Promen Dr.
 Topics: Project Introduction; Existing Conditions
 Attendees: 14
- **Stakeholder Meeting #2**
 Date and Time: Friday, June 17, 8:00-9:30 AM
 Location: Lakeside Park Pavilion, 71 Promen Dr.
 Topics: 2022 Ridership Count Results; Preliminary Rider Survey Results
 Attendees: 13
- **Stakeholder Meeting #3**
 Date and Time: Monday, August 1, 8:00-9:30 AM
 Location: Lakeside Park Pavilion, 71 Promen Dr.
 Topics: Rider/Community Survey Results; Business Survey Results; Scenario Discussion
 Attendees: 12
- **Stakeholder Meeting #4**
 Date and Time: Wednesday, August 24, 8:00-10:00 AM
 Location: Lakeside Park Pavilion, 71 Promen Dr.
 Topics: Draft Recommendations
 Attendees: 10
- **Stakeholder Meeting #5**
 Date and Time: Monday, September 19, 8:00-10:00 AM
 Location: Lakeside Park Pavilion, 71 Promen Dr.
 Topics: Final Recommendations
 Attendees: 10

The full list of stakeholder committee members is included in Appendix C. Presentations from each stakeholder meeting are included in Appendix D.

Additional Engagement Efforts

In addition to the surveys and stakeholder workshops described in the previous sections, the project team conducted further engagement efforts to reach additional users and develop more nuanced information on transit route usage. These activities included the following:

- **Driver Survey:** Prior to the start of the Transit Development Plan, FDLAT conducted a driver survey to assist in identifying issues with existing routes. This survey helped inform the discussion at subsequent driver meetings.
- **Driver Meeting #1**
 Date and Time: Wednesday, May 19, 11:45 AM-12:45 PM
 Location: Fond du Lac Area Transit/Public Works facility.
 Topics: On-Time Performance; Needs and Gaps; Ideas for Improvement
 Staff: FDLAT, ECWRPC, and Consultant Team
- **Driver Meeting #2**
 Date and Time: Wednesday, May 19, 1:15-2:15 PM
 Location: Fond du Lac Area Transit/Public Works facility.
 Topics: On-Time Performance; Needs and Gaps; Ideas for Improvement
 Staff: FDLAT, ECWRPC, and Consultant Team
- **On-Bus and Transit Center Engagement**
 Dates: Wednesday, May 19 – Thursday, May 20
 Location: All bus routes and downtown transfer zone
 Staff: ECWRPC and Consultant Team
- **Fond du Lac Downtown Farmers' Market**
 Date: Saturday, July 9
 Location: Downtown Fond du Lac (Main Street)
 Staff: FDLAT and ECWRPC

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the existing conditions analysis and stakeholder engagement efforts, the following two scenarios are recommended for implementation within the next five years:

- **Scenario 1:** Near-Term Route Changes
- **Scenario 2:** Long-Term Recommendations

Scenario 1: Near-Term Route Changes

Scenario 1 includes near-term route changes scheduled for implementation in January 2023. These include minor changes to improve on-time performance, better address current operating conditions, and allocate service toward the most productive parts of the system. Overall, these changes are revenue-neutral and can be implemented without any increase in local funding. **Error! Reference source not found.** lists the recommended changes by route, which are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Table 11. Proposed Changes by Route – Near-Term Scenario

Route Type	Route	Proposed Changes
Regular Local (Weekdays Only)	25: Johnson Street – N. Park Ave.	Add a second “extra” bus for the 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM trips to address capacity needs at school times starting September 19, 2022. Revise to not serve Aurora Health Center on the 3:30 PM trip due to schedule constraints.
	30: Park – Fond du Lac Ave.	Revise routing to eliminate jog near 2 nd and Ellis streets and better serve senior center.
	50: Hickory St. – Rolling Meadows	No changes.
	55: Forest Ave. – Mall/Plaza	Full route realignment. Change route direction from counterclockwise to clockwise; reroute to serve Pioneer Rd. Additional service at 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM peak hours.
	60: Johnson St. - Walmart	Remove 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM peak-hour trips starting September 19, 2022. Realign route to serve Meijer/Forest Mall site when construction allows.
	65: Main Street	No changes.
Brooke Industries (Weekdays Only)	70: Johnson – Scott – Main	Eliminate due to low ridership.
School Route (School Days Only)	120: School Route	Route 120 (School): No changes

Route 2

Route 25 serves Fond du Lac’s east side, including Fond du Lac High School, UW-Oshkosh Fond du Lac, and Aurora Health Center. A significant proportion of the route’s ridership consists of students traveling to and from Fond du Lac High School on the 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM trips. Due to heavy boarding activity, Fond du Lac Area Transit operates a second bus on these trips to ensure sufficient capacity.

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Fond du Lac Area Transit experienced significant growth in student ridership from students who were ineligible for school busing. As of September 2022, the two buses assigned to Route 25 at school times were carrying up to a combined 90 passengers, which is equal to the rated capacity of the two buses.

In order to avoid turning away customers, Fond du Lac Area Transit has made an emergency decision to reallocate an additional bus from Route 60 to Route 25 to provide a second “extra” bus on the 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM trips, starting on September 19, 2022. At the same time, the schedule of the 3:30 PM trip will be adjusted to not serve Aurora Health Center due to the need to accommodate additional boarding time at Fond du Lac High School. These changes were originally planned for January 2023 but have been accelerated due to current ridership demand.

The modifications to the Route 25 schedule are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Updated Route 25 Schedule (Effective September 2022)

Transfer Zone	Arndt & Park	FDL High School	Johnson & Country Lane	Aurora	National & Johnson	Transfer Zone
6:30 AM	6:33 AM	6:40 AM	6:45 AM	6:48 AM	6:52 AM	6:55 AM
7:00 AM	7:03 AM	7:10 AM	7:15 AM	7:18 AM	7:22 AM	7:25 AM
7:30 AM*	7:33 AM	7:40 AM	7:45 AM	7:48 AM	7:52 AM	7:55 AM
8:00 AM	8:03 AM	8:10 AM	8:15 AM	8:18 AM	8:22 AM	8:25 AM
8:30 AM	8:33 AM	8:40 AM	8:45 AM	8:48 AM	8:52 AM	8:55 AM
9:30 AM	9:33 AM	9:40 AM	9:45 AM	9:48 AM	9:52 AM	9:55 AM
10:30 AM	10:33 AM	10:40 AM	10:45 AM	10:48 AM	10:52 AM	10:55 AM
11:30 AM	11:33 AM	11:40 AM	11:45 AM	11:48 AM	11:52 AM	11:55 AM
12:30 PM	12:33 PM	12:40 PM	12:45 PM	12:48 PM	12:52 PM	12:55 PM
1:30 PM	1:33 PM	1:40 PM	1:45 PM	1:48 PM	1:52 PM	1:55 PM
2:30 PM	2:33 PM	2:40 PM	2:45 PM	2:48 PM	2:52 PM	2:55 PM
3:00 PM	3:03 PM	3:10 PM	3:15 PM	3:18 PM	3:22 PM	3:25 PM
3:30 PM*	3:33 PM	3:40 PM	3:45 PM	-----	3:52 PM	3:55 PM
4:00 PM	4:03 PM	4:10 PM	4:15 PM	4:18 PM	4:22 PM	4:25 PM
4:30 PM	4:33 PM	4:40 PM	4:45 PM	4:48 PM	4:52 PM	4:55 PM
5:00 PM	5:03 PM	5:10 PM	5:15 PM	5:18 PM	5:22 PM	5:25 PM

5:30 PM	5:33 PM	5:40 PM	5:45 PM	5:48 PM	5:52 PM	5:55 PM
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* Shaded rows denote trips at school times. Effective September 19, 2022, three total buses will run on each trip to ensure sufficient capacity for students and non-school passengers.

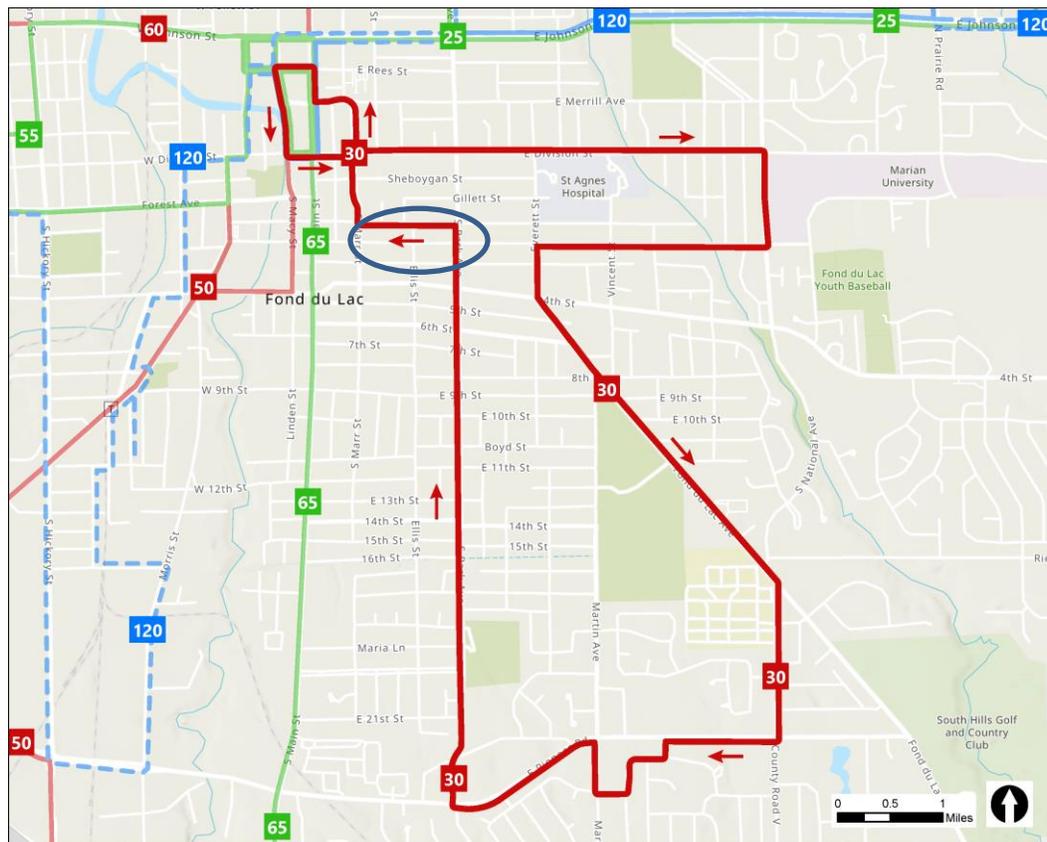
Route 30

Route 30 serves destinations on Fond du Lac’s southeast side, including St. Agnes Hospital, the Fond du Lac County Fairgrounds, and the Fond du Lac Senior Center.

During Fond du Lac Area Transit’s engagement with current staff, drivers suggested making a small revision to the Route 30 alignment near 2nd and Ellis streets, just east of downtown Fond du Lac. Currently, the route travels north on Park Avenue, west on 2nd Street, north on Ellis Street, and west again on 1st Street near the senior center. The recommended alignment would eliminate this zig-zag movement by continuing north on Park Avenue to 1st Street, then traveling west.

This change would reduce the number of signalized and unsignalized turns on the route. In addition, the revised Route 30 would enable buses to stop directly in front of the senior center, rather than forcing customers to walk a longer distance or cross the street. These benefits will be achieved with no impact to current schedules or travel times, and are expected to improve reliability.

Figure 33. Recommended Route 30 Alignment (January 2023)



Route 50

Route 50 serves Fond du Lac’s southwest side, including the Military Road corridor, the Radisson Hotel, and Mercury Marine. No changes are currently proposed.

Route 55

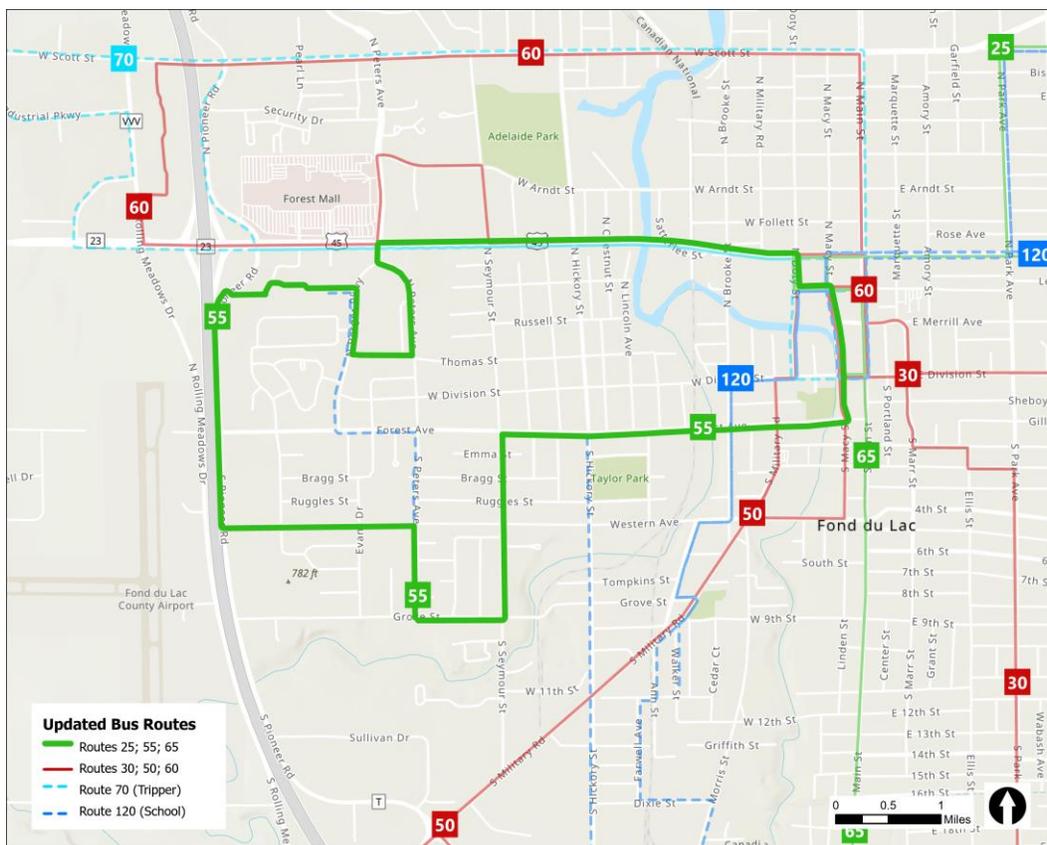
Route 55 serves Fond du Lac’s west side neighborhoods, including Johnson Street, Sabish Middle School, Forest Mall, Pick ‘n’ Save, and the Forest Avenue corridor.

Route 55 is recommended for significant changes starting in January 2023. These changes include the following:

- Changing the route direction to operate clockwise instead of counterclockwise;
- Extending the route westward to serve Pioneer Road between Western and Pick ‘n’ Save;
- Reducing the length of the alignment on Thomas Street;
- Removing the deviation to serve Forest Mall; and
- Providing eastbound service on Johnson between Seymour and downtown (enabling transfers to/from Route 60).

The recommended Route 55 alignment is shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**

Figure 34. Recommended Route 55 Alignment (January 2023)



Route 60

Route 60 serves Fond du Lac’s northwest side, including the Johnson Street commercial corridor, the Forest Mall site, Rolling Meadows Drive (Target/Walmart), Scott Street, and north Main Street.

The former Forest Mall site, located along Johnson Street between Peters Avenue and Pioneer Road, is currently under redevelopment. Formerly home to an indoor mall with department store anchors, the site is partially occupied by Kohl’s and T.J. Maxx stores. During the course of the Transit Development Plan process, the center of the former mall was demolished to make way for a proposed Meijer grocery store, which is expected to begin construction in 2023.

In August 2022, the Froedert and Medical College of Wisconsin regional health network announced plans to purchase the eastern side of the Forest Mall site for a future hospital development. No firm timing has been announced, but conceptual site plans have been released (Figure 35).

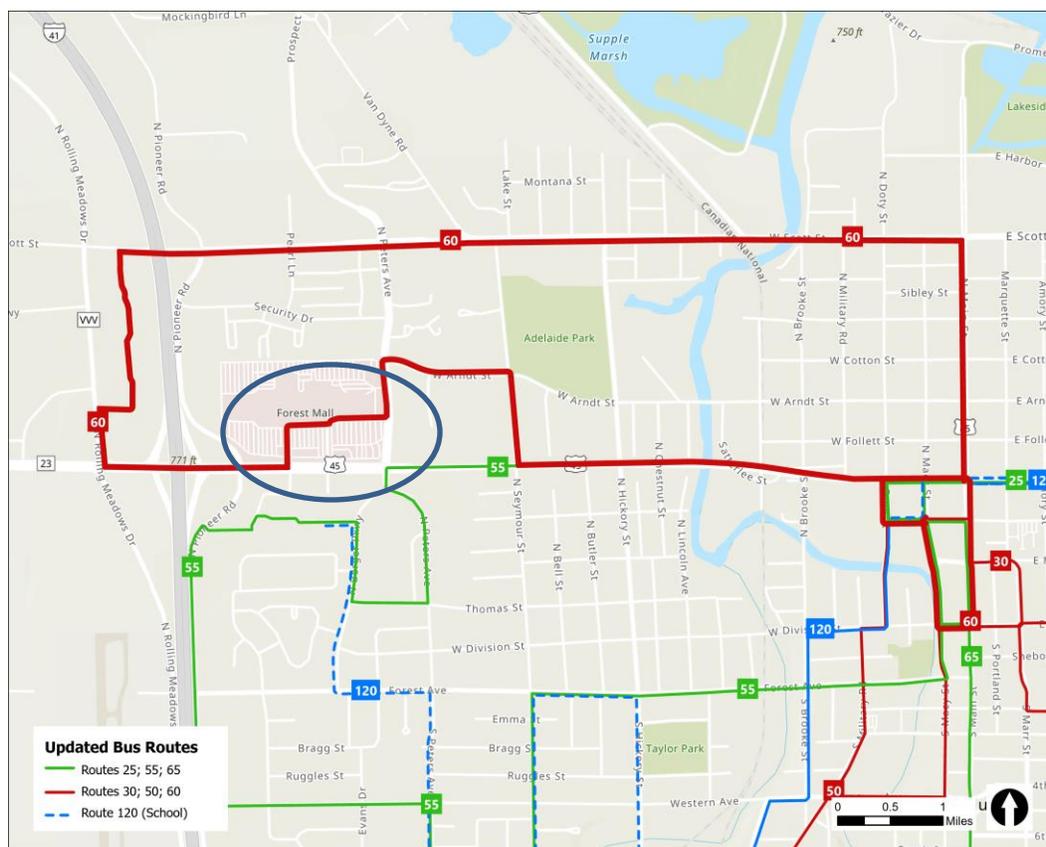
Figure 35. Conceptual Site Plans for Forest Mall Redevelopment



Source: KFIZ <https://www.kfiz.com/froedert-reportedly-buys-old-yonkers-building-plans-to-bring-new-hospital-to-fond-du-lac/>. Recommended bus routing shown in blue.

When construction is complete, it is recommended that FDLAT implement a revised alignment for Route 60 that directly serves the Forest Mall site (shown in blue in Figure 35; full route shown in Figure 36).

Figure 36. Recommended Route 60 Alignment (Upon Completion of Forest Mall Construction)



In addition to the changes outlined above, Route 60 will operate two fewer trips effective September 19, 2022. As outlined in the description of Route 25, the 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM trips on Route 60 will be discontinued and reallocated to Route 25 to provide additional capacity for school trips.

Route 70 (Tripper)

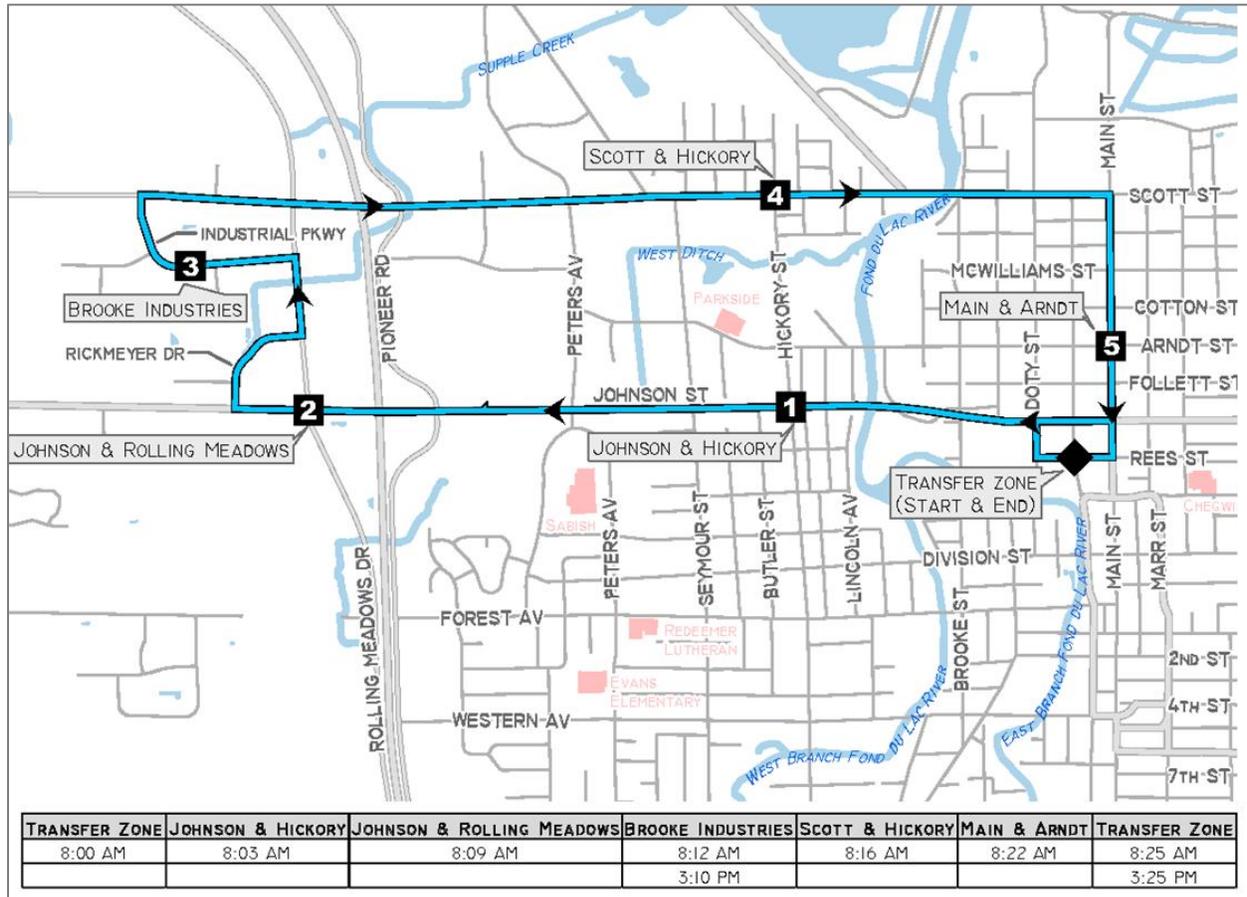
Route 70 is a tripper route that offers two trips per day (one AM and one PM trip) designed to serve shift times at Brooke Industries, Inc., a nonprofit rehabilitation and employment facility serving individuals with disabilities. The route overlaps with the majority of Route 60, serving the downtown transfer zone, Johnson Street, Rolling Meadows Drive, Scott Street, and north Main Street, with a small deviation to serve Brooke Industries. Between 2018 and 2022, Route 70 saw the steepest decline in ridership (34.9%) of all FDLAT routes. According to the 2022 ridership sample, Route 70 carries an average of only 4.2 riders per trip.

Due to the recent ridership declines, it is recommended that Route 70 be discontinued, effective in January 2023. FDLAT staff have notified Brooke Industries of this pending change, and other transportation options will remain available. The overwhelming majority of Brooke Industries employees are eligible to ride FDLAT’s Handi-Van ADA paratransit service, which will remain available since Brooke Industries is located within ¾ mile of Route 60. For employees who prefer to use fixed-route transit, Brooke Industries has indicated it will provide shuttle service to and from the

nearest Route 60 stop (likely Target or Walmart) on an as-needed basis, such as in the event of inclement weather.

The current Route 70 map and schedule are shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37. Route 70 Map and Schedule (Recommended for Discontinuation Effective January 2023)



Route 120 (School Tripper)

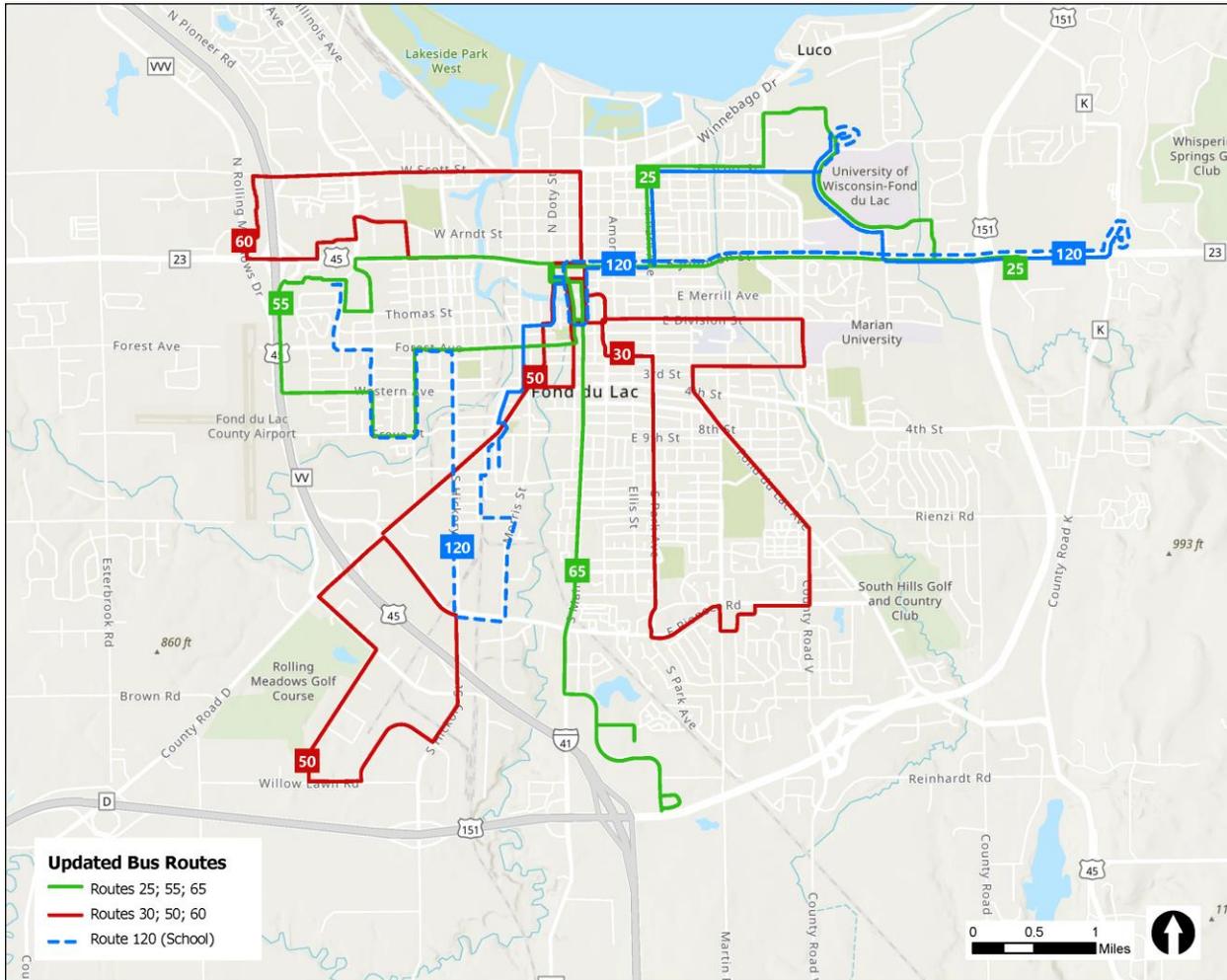
Route 120 is a school tripper service that operates two trips daily (one AM and one PM trip) serving Fond du Lac High School and various elementary and middle schools. This route is operated by Johnson School Bus under contract with FDLAT. No changes are currently proposed.

Summary of Proposed Route Changes

System Map

The proposed Scenario 1 network is shown in Figure 38.

Figure 38. Proposed Scenario 1 Bus Network (with Recommended Route Changes)



Resource Requirements

Proposed changes to Routes 25, 30, 55, and 60 are revenue-neutral and will not require any additional revenue hours, vehicles, or drivers. The discontinuation of Route 70 will result in a modest savings in overall operating costs which would be reallocated to cover the changes on Route 55.

Equity Analysis

In order to determine the likely impact of the proposed changes on low-income and minority populations, an equity analysis was conducted to compare the demographics of areas served by FDLAT’s current bus routes to the areas served by the revised system. Results of this analysis (conducted on areas within ½ mile of existing and proposed fixed routes) are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Equity Analysis Results (Existing and Proposed Service Networks, ½-mile buffer)

Service Area Statistics (1/2 Mile Buffer)	Existing System	Revised System	Change
Total Population	38,255	38,258	0.0%
Percent Minority	11.8%	11.8%	0.0%
Total Households	15,899	15895	0.0%
Percent Low-Income	11.0%	11.1%	+0.1%
Percent Zero-Vehicle Households	9.5%	9.6%	+0.1%

Based on the analysis conducted above, the revised system serves a slightly larger population and number of households, with the same proportion of minority individuals served. The revised system serves a slightly higher proportion of low-income and zero-vehicle households than the existing routes. Supporting maps for the equity analysis for the existing system and the recommended service network are shown in 0 and Figure 40, respectively.

Figure 39. Equity Analysis Map (Existing Service Network, ½-mile buffer)

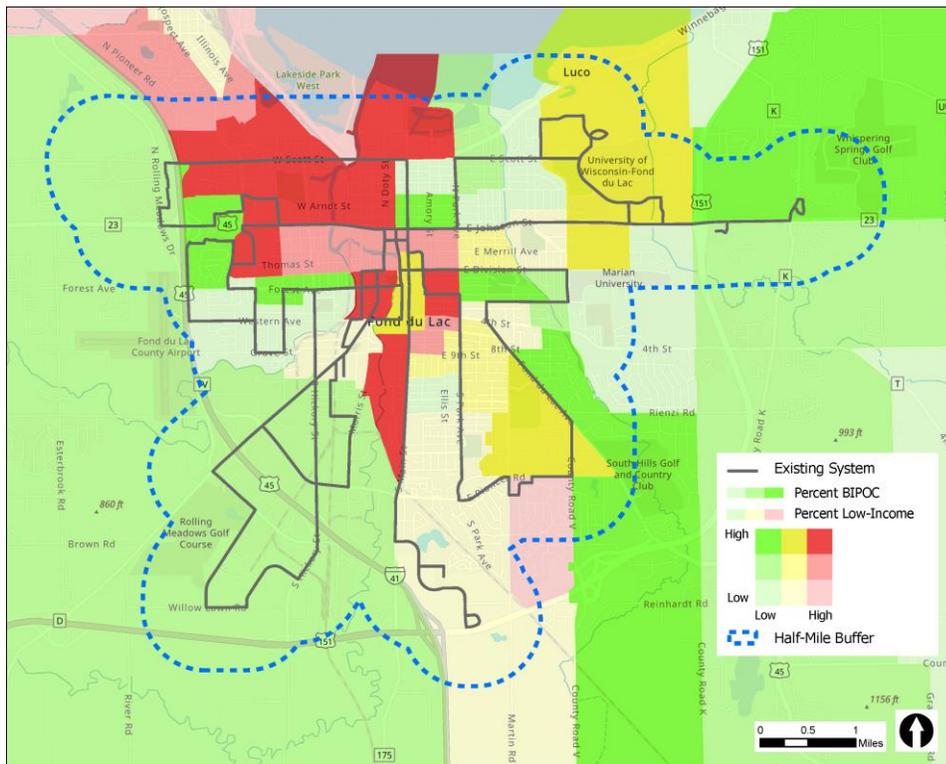
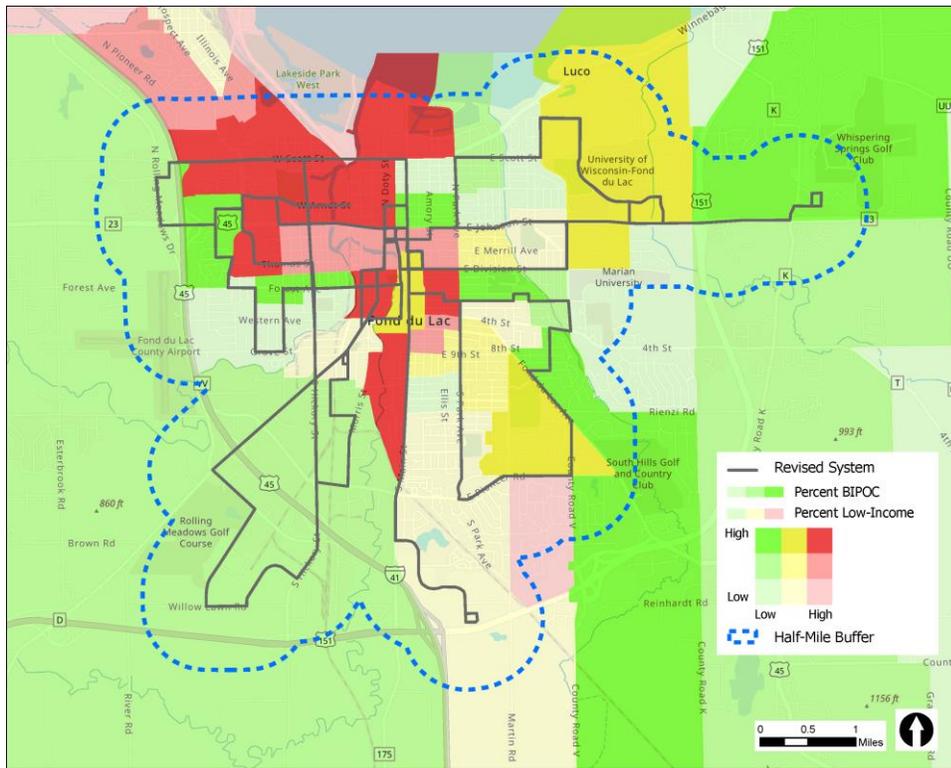


Figure 40. Equity Analysis Map (Recommended Service Network, 1/2-mile buffer)



Scenario 2: Long-Term Recommendations

Scenario 2 includes long-term recommendations for implementation between FY2024 and FY2027. Recommendations respond to the needs identified by customers, stakeholders, and the community that go beyond existing service offerings. They include exploration of new service types, technology, infrastructure, and organizational resources, and may be implemented in stages starting with planning studies as early as 2023.

Needs identified in the stakeholder engagement process include the following:

- Provision of transit service during evening and weekend hours.** This need is supported by comments expressed in the rider survey, community survey, and business survey, as well as comments offered directly by riders and drivers.
- Improved agency staffing and supervision.** Previous state and federal reviews have indicated that Fond du Lac Area Transit requires additional supervisory capacity and/or increased staff proximity to drivers and customers. Changes are needed to improve driver oversight and customer service. Similarly sized Wisconsin agencies, including Beloit Transit System, have faced similar staffing challenges and recommendations. It is recommended that agencies develop context-specific ways to meet supervision needs, such as establishing a “lead driver” position or adding office/clerical staff while seeking long-term funding for a dedicated supervisory role.
- Expanded or enhanced transit facilities.** The current downtown transfer zone is an open, on-street shelter; constructing an enclosed facility could improve the customer experience. The current operations base (the public works facility) is at capacity, so improvements may eventually be needed to facilitate transit expansion and/or vehicle electrification.

In order to address these needs, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit undertake multiple projects between 2023 and 2027, as shown in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Table 14. Recommended Projects – Long-Term Scenario

Transit Need	Recommendation	Description	Timeline
Evening and Weekend Service	Microtransit Pilot Project	Utilizing federal funds to study and implement a microtransit pilot project would help FDLAT test demand for evening and weekend service.	Planning Study: 2023 Implementation: 2024-2025
Increased Staffing and Supervision	Add 1 staff member to conduct daily clerical activities.	Adding an additional staff member would enable senior staff to conduct enhanced driver supervision and would allow for customer information to be provided during all hours of service.	Budget Request: 2023 Implementation: 2024
Expanded or Enhanced Transit Facilities	Transit Facility Study	Conducting a transit facility study would enable Fond du Lac Area Transit to plan for future resource requirements and desired features for a new downtown transit facility, which could enhance the customer experience, transit oversight, and service reliability.	Planning Study: 2023-2024 Implementation: 2025 or Later

Microtransit Pilot Project

In order to address the need for expanded hours of service on evenings and weekends, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit conduct a microtransit pilot project to investigate the feasibility of demand-response service to meet travel needs during hours when fixed-route buses are not available.

Recommended Approach

Microtransit, an emerging mode of transportation that allows customers to make on-demand reservations via a smartphone app or telephone call, can offer an attractive customer experience for transit trips in low-density areas or during off-peak service hours.

Many peer agencies across the country and within Wisconsin have studied or implemented elements of microtransit service, including Green Bay Metro and Valley Transit (Appleton). In order to have the best chance of success, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit first conduct a planning study to identify the appropriate service design, operator, and technology partner. The agency could then pursue a separate request for proposals (RFP) for operating and/or technology contract(s) to implement a one- to two-year pilot project.

During the pilot project, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit review and evaluate performance measures to determine whether service revisions are needed, as well as to inform policymaker decisions to fund continuation of the service beyond the pilot phase.

Scope of Planning Study

The microtransit planning study should include the following items in its scope:

- Developing the service design of the microtransit pilot, including days and hours of service, service area boundaries, and fares.
- Engaging with potential partner agencies, including local or regional entities already involved in providing demand-response transit service.
- Identifying the appropriate contracting model for the microtransit pilot, including whether the project should pursue a turnkey contract for both technology and

MICROTRANSIT PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: GREEN BAY METRO

In 2020, Green Bay Metro launched GBM On Demand, the agency's new, on-demand microtransit service. This service offers smartphone-enabled shared rides within four daytime zones and to designated transfer points, as well as throughout the Green Bay Metro service area during late-night hours.

Prior to launch, GBM On Demand was informed by a microtransit feasibility study, as well as extensive collaboration with the operator and paratransit provider, Via Transportation, Inc.

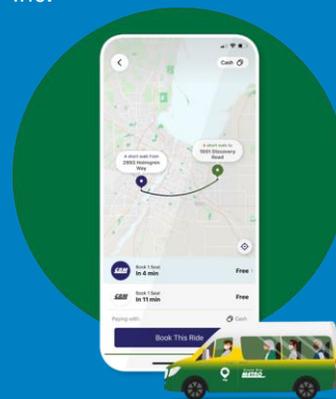


Image Credit: Via.

More information available at <https://greenbaywi.gov/GBM-On-Demand>.

- operations, separate technology and operations contracts, or operate the service in-house.
- Estimating resource requirements for a microtransit pilot project, including the number of vehicles, drivers, revenue hours, and annual operating costs.
- Developing performance measures that can be used to evaluate the success of the microtransit pilot project.

Potential Stakeholders/Partners

Potential stakeholders and partners for microtransit will include organizations already involved in providing demand-response transit service in the Fond du Lac region, as well as customers and employers who could benefit from expanded days and hours of service. Key partners that should be engaged include Fond du Lac County, which operates the Handi-Van ADA paratransit service, as well as Quality Cab, which operates the Fond du Lac Shared-Ride Taxi. Conversations with these organizations may yield insight into their capacity to assist with new demand-response service, as well as information on the most promising markets and areas of greatest need.

In addition, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit engage surrounding communities that may be interested in participating in a microtransit pilot project, such as the Village of North Fond du Lac (which participates in the current shared-ride taxi system) and/or the Town of Fond du Lac (which contains retail and employment destinations currently unserved by fixed-route transit). These communities could be incorporated as founding members and funding participants or could be considered for future expansion if desired.

Funding Sources

In order to complete the microtransit pilot project in the most cost-effective manner, it is recommended that both the initial planning study and subsequent pilot project be funded from existing federal stimulus funds available to Fond du Lac Area Transit. These funds may include funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of March 2020, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) of December 2020, or American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of March 2021.

Both planning and operations are eligible expenses for federal operating funds; utilizing these funds for a pilot project minimizes the City of Fond du Lac's fiscal exposure to service expansion during the pilot phase. If the pilot is deemed to be successful, the City of Fond du Lac would need to provide the local share of operating dollars for any new service operated on an ongoing basis. These local funds would be matched by state and federal dollars according to existing formulas.

Timeline

Based on the need to utilize time-limited federal stimulus funds, it is recommended that a microtransit pilot project be undertaken as soon as possible, with a planning study beginning in 2023. The subsequent pilot project should operate for at least one year and up to two years, depending on funding availability; it is estimated that this pilot phase would be conducted in 2024 and/or 2025.

Increased Staffing and Supervision

In order to improve Fond du Lac Area Transit’s ability to address customer needs, supervise existing operations, and plan for future expansion, it is recommended that the agency add one additional staff member, effective in fiscal year 2024.

Background

In 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) conducted its Five-Year Management Performance Review (MPR) of Fond du Lac Area Transit. The MPR process is required by state statute and is designed to monitor the provision of transit service by recipients of state operating assistance funds, with a focus on five primary functional areas: Transportation Operations, Vehicle and Facility Maintenance, Finance, Planning and Scheduling, and Marketing.

Fond du Lac Area Transit’s 2019 MPR identified the following deficiencies related to staffing:

Driver Supervision and Communications
<p>Fond du Lac Area Transit does not currently employ any full-time supervisors to monitor operations. While peer agencies typically employ multiple dedicated supervisory staff, Fond du Lac Area Transit relies on the transit manager and assistant transit manager to share day-to-day supervisory duties in addition to their administrative, financial, and planning tasks. Consequently, driver supervision generally is very limited.</p> <p>Administrative staff attempt to make in-person contact with all drivers daily (either at check-in or at some other point throughout the day), but typically this is not possible due to their other activities (daily runs to the bank, etc.).</p> <p>Unfortunately, current staffing levels do not allow for on-street supervision, which is a critical component of effective transit operations management. The administrative staffing deficit also means Fond du Lac Transit has no supervisor available to observe buses during high-ridership events, detours, and weather-related issues, even though this is considered a best practice. Moreover, this deficit leaves Fond du Lac transit struggling to adequately address other critical supervisory responsibilities such as responding to safety incidents, performing ride checks to track driver performance, and conducting training and as needed. Fond du Lac Transit’s lack of dedicated on-street supervisory personnel is an immediate challenge that the city must address as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Recommendation: Add dedicated staff personnel for on-street supervision and training. Priority: Very high.</p>

Recommended Approach

While the 2019 MPR identified the need for additional supervisory staff, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit address this need in a more cost-effective manner by adding one clerical staff member. By shifting some day-to-day tasks to this additional employee (such as answering customer inquiries via phone or assisting with data reporting), the transit manager and assistant transit manager could free up time to engage in additional supervisory activities.

Timeline

Based on the urgency of the staffing need, this change is recommended for fiscal year 2024.

Downtown Transit Facility Study

In addition to microtransit and staffing expansions, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit pursue a feasibility study to explore the creation of a permanent downtown transit facility.

Across Wisconsin, transit agencies are recognizing that the customer experience will be key to their ability to attract and retain ridership. Transit systems are investing in indoor waiting facilities, upgraded real-time information, and customer service stations to improve both transit operations and the customers' perception of transit. In many cases, agencies are also exploring opportunities to co-locate transit amenities with other types of development, such as government services, retail space, market-rate apartments, or affordable housing.

Recommended Approach

Due to the broad range of features that could be included in a downtown transit facility, it is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit first engage in a feasibility study to develop an understanding of space needs, resource requirements, and anticipated costs.

Scope of Planning Study

The scope of the transit facility study should include the following phases and tasks:

- **Phase 1: Project Programming.** Existing conditions and space needs analysis; site selection analysis; preliminary concepts; National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Class of Action.
- **Phase 2: Concept Design.** Final design; NEPA and Title VI evaluations; cost estimates.
- **Phase 3: Grant Application Documents.** Apply for FTA grant funding as appropriate.

Funding Sources

A downtown transit facility study could be completed with existing federal stimulus funds.

Timeline

It is recommended that Fond du Lac Area Transit begin the transit facility study in 2023.

TRANSIT FACILITY PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: EAU CLAIRE TRANSIT



Image Credit: Eau Claire Transit.
More information available on the [Eau Claire Transit website](#).

In fall 2021, Eau Claire Transit broke ground on a new downtown transit facility that will combine an indoor waiting area, drive-in bus bays, transit supervisor offices, and a private affordable housing development above.

This transit facility will replace the existing downtown transfer center, which was built as a temporary structure in 1984 and included few customer amenities.

By including both customer-facing and transit operations features, this facility will enhance Eau Claire Transit's ability to provide safe, reliable, and high-quality transit experience that makes bus service part of a vibrant downtown.

Conclusion

The 2023-2027 Transit Development Plan summarizes the current conditions of Fond du Lac Area Transit, including the existing bus services and unmet needs. Near-term recommendations include actionable route changes that Fond du Lac Area Transit plans to implement no later than January 2023; long-term recommendations will require further planning study but will allow the agency to leverage federal funding to provide substantial improvements for transit customers.

Critical expansion needs identified in this plan include the following:

- **Provision of transit service during evening and weekend hours.** This need is supported by comments expressed in the rider survey, community survey, and business survey, as well as stakeholder engagement.
- **Improved agency staffing and supervision.** Previous state and federal reviews have indicated that Fond du Lac Area Transit requires additional supervisory capacity and/or increased staff proximity to drivers and customers to improve driver oversight and customer service.
- **Expanded or enhanced transit facilities.** The current downtown transfer zone is an open, on-street shelter; constructing an enclosed facility could improve the customer experience. The current operations base (the public works facility) is at capacity, so improvements may eventually be needed to facilitate transit expansion and/or vehicle electrification.

By implementing the recommendations of this plan, Fond du Lac Area Transit will continue to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources invested in fixed-route transit. In the long term, planning for microtransit service expansion and facility improvements will position the agency to attract and retain riders in a changing transportation environment. Leveraging the stakeholder relationships developed as part of the 2023-2027 Transit Development Plan, Fond du Lac Area Transit will move forward in full partnership with riders and the community.

Appendices

Appendix A: Rider Survey

Rider survey instrument included as separate PDF attachment.

Appendix B: Community Survey

Rider survey instrument included as separate PDF attachment.

Appendix C: Stakeholder List

Stakeholder list included as separate PDF attachment.

Appendix D: Stakeholder Presentations

Stakeholder presentations (from Meetings #1 through 5) included as separate PDF attachments.