WESTCAT Evolution

APPENDICES

Final Plan

Adopted August 13th, 2026

APPENDICES

A. Microtransit Service Suitability Assessment Memorandum

B. Existing Conditions Report - Full

C. Public Engagement Results Summary - Full

APPENDIX A:

MICROTRANSIT SERVICE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT MEMORANDUM

To: WestCAT Board of Directors

From: Ronny Kraft Consulting

Date: October 15, 2025

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Microtransit Service Suitability Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memo is to evaluate whether flexible transit service, including microtransit, should be considered by WestCAT as a companion to, or replacement for, current fixed route services. The question is whether such a model could provide equal or better service effectiveness while maintaining a similar or lower operating cost.

The analysis draws on recent research, peer agency experience, and national best practices to identify the conditions under which microtransit has succeeded, the operational and financial challenges it typically presents, and the factors that make it less suitable for certain service environments.

This review finds that while microtransit can be effective in certain contexts, it would not represent an efficient or practical replacement for fixed-route service within WestCAT's operating environment.

ABOUT FLEXIBLE TRANSIT

Flexible transit is defined as any service in which the route or schedule varies based on who requests it. Common terms include *microtransit*, *demand-responsive transit*, and *on-demand transit*. These services may be scheduled in real time through software applications or through phone reservations. Agencies may operate it within geofenced zones, restrict service hours, and combine it with fixed-route transit. The defining characteristic is that they do not follow a fixed path or timetable, but instead respond dynamically to rider requests.

Flexible transit with pooled rides has long been in use in the United States and abroad. The "newness" of modern microtransit lies not in the concept itself, but in the recent availability of software and communications tools that allow riders to summon, track, and pay for rides in near real time, as well as provider-side technology for routing, tracking, and dispatch. These technological advances make it possible to offer almost on-demand booking, which in theory could make public transit more responsive to individual travel needs.

Flexible transit is inherently less efficient than fixed route transit for the following reasons. The first reason is simple geometry - flexible services must deviate to pick up and drop off passengers closer to their origins or destinations. This added deviation time reduces overall efficiency compared to a fixed route, which moves in a relatively straight line and serves clusters of passengers at designated stops. Because flexible service vehicles travel greater distances per passenger trip, they are also less useful to through-riders or those who depend on predictable travel times.

Second, very few flexible transit programs provide more than four passenger trips per vehicle service hour, even in well-designed zones. By comparison, WestCAT's local fixed routes average between 4.2 and 10.8 passengers per service hour on weekdays.

Finally, most of the cost of providing transit is the labor cost of the driver, not the vehicle itself. Operating a smaller van or shuttle does little to reduce total operating cost. Fuel and maintenance costs represent a small share of total expense, so even a smaller vehicle offers minimal financial savings when the labor cost remains constant.

In summary, while flexible transit has potential for niche applications, it cannot generally achieve the same efficiency or productivity as fixed route service under normal conditions.

CONDITIONS WHERE FLEXIBLE TRANSIT CAN SUCCEED

There are several conditions under which, when combined, flexible transit has been shown to perform successfully. The following represent key best practices and enabling conditions for effective implementation.

Compact, clearly bounded service zones with predictable demand

Flexible service works best in compact, well-defined zones with moderate, consistent trip demand. When service areas are small, the system can reduce empty travel, improve ride pooling, and maintain shorter wait times. Successful implementations often limit trip purposes—for example, serving as first/last-mile connections to regional rail. Confining both geography and purpose allows agencies to better manage performance and costs.

Adequate dispatch capacity, software, and operational oversight

A microtransit program depends on reliable trip-matching software, real-time routing, and oversight from trained dispatchers. For example, Tri Delta Transit replaced a low-ridership local route in Antioch with its *Tri MyRide* on-demand service, supported by dedicated dispatch staff and a technology vendor. Without this level of support, service performance can degrade quickly.

Equity and accessibility safeguards

Flexible transit must include multiple access methods to ensure equitable service. Riders should be able to reserve trips by phone as well as through a mobile app. Vehicles must be ADA-compliant, equipped to serve riders using mobility devices, and dispatch should provide multilingual support to meet the needs of diverse communities. These features are essential to maintaining accessibility across all user groups.

Clear operating constraints to control costs

Service parameters—such as hours of operation, fare and subsidy levels, zone boundaries, and pooling expectations—must be clearly defined before launch. Establishing these limits prevents cost escalation and ensures that vehicle hours are used efficiently.

Phased pilots and cautious scaling

Agencies that implement flexible transit most successfully begin with small, time-limited pilot programs. Many local agencies have tested single-zone pilots for one or two years before expanding. This approach allows for data collection, adjustment, and evaluation against measurable performance benchmarks before committing to adoption.

Marketing, rider education, and customer trust

A flexible service model requires clear communication with potential riders. Effective marketing explains how to book trips, expected wait times, fare policies, and how the new service integrates with existing routes. Outreach and education are critical in establishing rider confidence. If passengers are uncertain about how the service works, adoption rates remain low regardless of quality.

LOCAL PEER AGENCY PROGRAMS

Tri Delta Transit – Tri MyRide

Tri Delta Transit operates *Tri MyRide* within the cities of Antioch, Brentwood, and Pittsburg–Bay Point. The service offers on-demand, corner-to-corner rides for a flat $2 fare, using both a call center and a mobile app. Tri MyRide operates seven days a week, including holidays, and is structured as multiple small zones with designated transfer points between them. This configuration allows the agency to maintain cost control while improving first/last-mile access to BART and major shopping destinations.[1]

Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) – Go Tri-Valley

LAVTA's *Go Tri-Valley* program is a partnership with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber, Lyft, and Desoto Cab. The agency subsidizes 50 percent of the fare, up to $5 per trip, for rides taken within its service area. The program began as *Go Dublin* and replaced a low-ridership fixed route by providing subsidized point-to-point trips instead of running a full agency-operated microtransit service. This model reduces administrative complexity but limits the agency's direct control over service quality.[2]

City of Richmond – Richmond Moves

The City of Richmond launched *Richmond Moves* as a city-operated, on-demand shuttle connecting neighborhoods to BART, Amtrak, and ferry terminals. Richmond Moves is operated in partnership with Via—the same private provider that manages flexible transit services for SamTrans, Marin Transit, and several other Bay Area agencies. The service focuses on improving local access and equity within the city rather than replacing fixed routes. Ridership has been modest, and the program operates as a local mobility enhancement rather than a cost-saving measure.[3]

SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

This assessment operates under the assumption that WestCAT's primary goal for any potential microtransit service would be coverage-based, to provide access to transit for community benefit, rather than to maximize ridership. Within that framework, the effectiveness of a service is still measured by its capacity to move people and the total number of trips it can accommodate.

Replacement of underperforming fixed-route transit services in low-density or difficult-to-serve areas is one of the most common and potentially viable applications of microtransit. For WestCAT, this could include potential zones such as the Waterfront[4], Viewpointe neighborhood, or Wright Avenue, where WestCAT's fixed routes currently operate with very little ridership. Flexible transit, however, does not increase the overall capacity or number of trips provided compared to fixed-route service; rather, it redistributes service coverage to reach areas that are less efficiently served by buses. Within this context, microtransit could serve as a tool for maintaining community access in specific low-demand areas without expanding total system capacity. However, the following factors make clear that microtransit is not a suitable option for WestCAT at this time.

Overhead costs associated with microtransit are substantial. Software procurement and licensing represent a recurring cost category that does not exist under current fixed route operations.

Additional dispatch staffing would be required to monitor trips, manage bookings, and handle exceptions. Administrative oversight would increase to accommodate customer outreach, marketing, data reporting, customer support, and service troubleshooting. The need for an expanded fleet of smaller vehicles would introduce new capital and maintenance costs. Together, these factors would increase overall operating costs compared to existing fixed route service.

There is a demonstrated risk of losing existing riders if fixed-route service were replaced with an app-based, on-demand model. Passengers who are accustomed to predictable, scheduled service may be reluctant to adopt a system that introduces variable pickup times or requires additional transfers. This is supported by findings from the Onboard Survey, in which "an on-demand door-to-door service that you reserve with an app" received the lowest average importance rating among ten potential improvements, and only 2.2 percent of respondents selected it as their top priority. These results indicate that current riders place a higher value on frequency, reliability, and schedule predictability than on flexibility, suggesting limited interest in a new microtransit service.

A functioning microtransit service would require additional fleet to maintain coverage and reliability. Even at a basic level, a functioning on-demand service would require investment in additional vehicles to provide adequate coverage and maintain acceptable wait times. Operating microtransit with a single vehicle would limit the ability to control wait times and respond to service interruptions, as backup vehicles are essential for maintaining quality and reliability. Ensuring that level of service would necessitate purchasing additional fleet, thereby increasing rather than decreasing total system costs.

Peer agency programs do not offer directly transferable examples for WestCAT. Each operates within a different geographic, financial, or institutional context. Tri Delta's zones have higher population density, LAVTA relies on TNC partnerships rather than dedicated staff and vehicles, and Richmond's shuttle functions as a local circulator rather than a system replacement. These differences limit their applicability to WestCAT's conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the goal of the WestCAT Evolution project to develop cost-neutral service recommendations that effectively respond to community needs, introducing a new microtransit service does not represent a practical or cost-effective solution at this time. The combination of added administrative overhead, higher capital and operating costs, and likely lower passenger throughput makes the model an unsuitable fit for WestCAT's service area and operating scale. The potential for ridership loss further supports the recommendation that WestCAT should not pursue implementation of microtransit service at this time.

Endnotes

1 - Tri Delta Transit. *Tri MyRide Program Overview*. Accessed October 2025.

2 - Metropolitan Transportation Commission. *LAVTA Triennial Performance Audit (2024)*.

3 - City of Richmond. *Richmond Moves Program Description*. Accessed October 2025.

4 - An alternative approach for serving the Waterfront area would be to extend Route 15, an opportunity which will be presented separately.

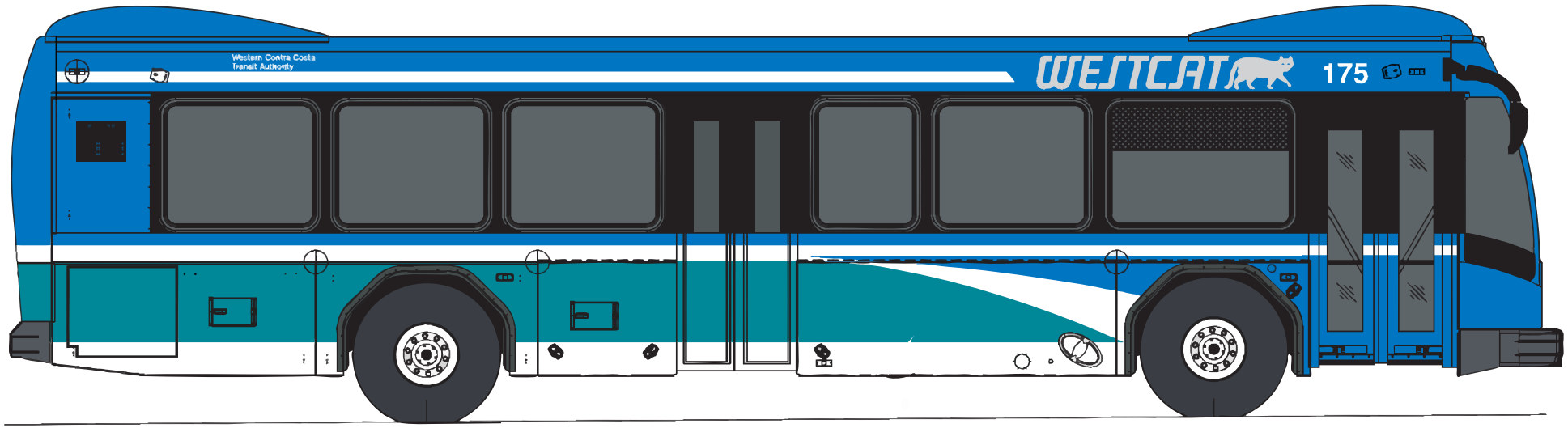
APPENDIX B:

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT - FULL

WestCAT Evolution

Existing Conditions Report

10.30.24



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INTRODUCTION

The existing conditions report provides a foundational overview of WestCAT's current transit operations, focusing on core metrics such as ridership trends and service frequency. It also examines the demographics, socioeconomics, and commuting travel patterns of the service area. This report sets the stage for the WestCAT Evolution Comprehensive Operational Analysis by assessing the levels of demand for transit, which will inform strategic planning for the future of WestCAT's transit services.

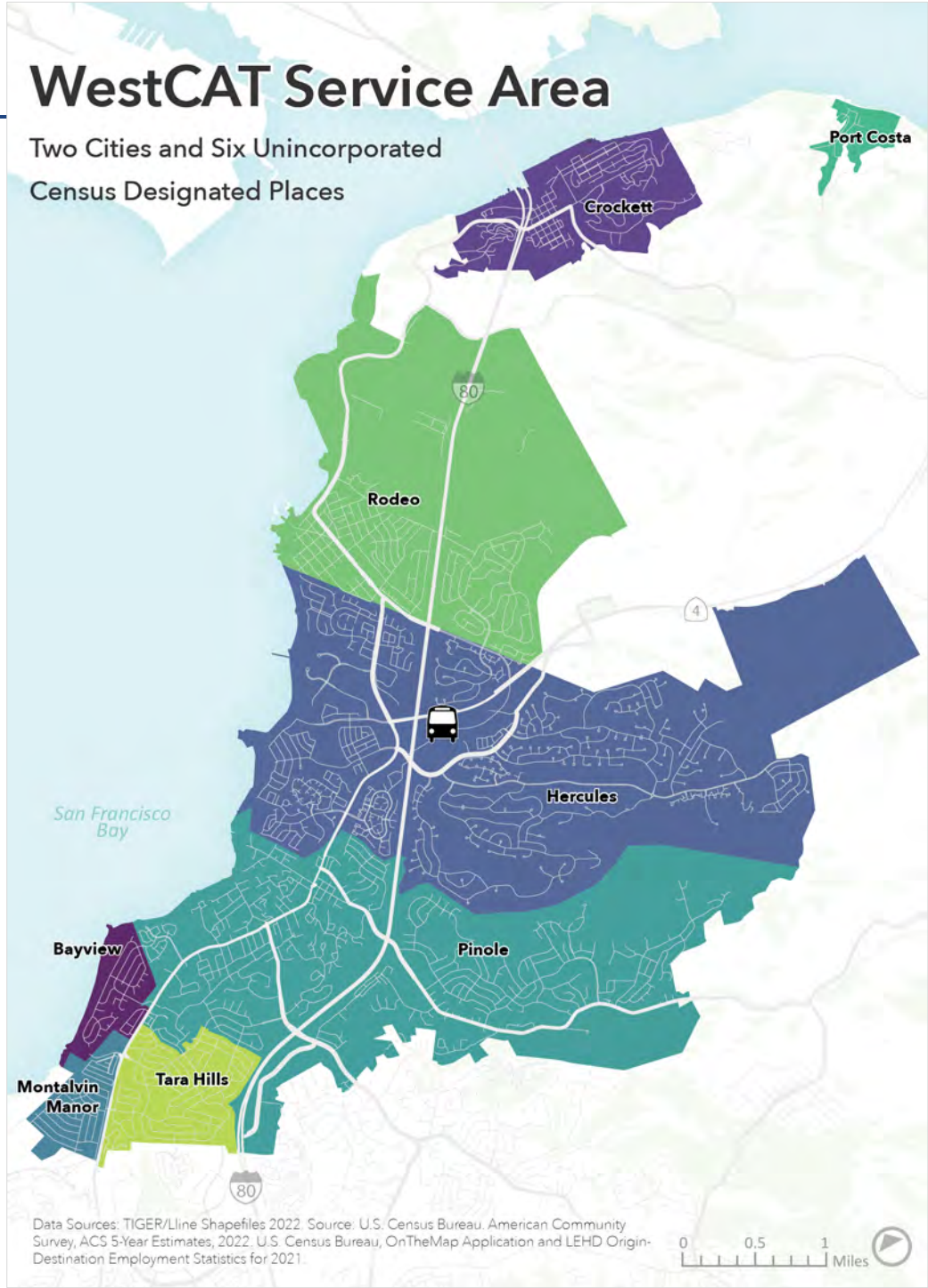
The first main chapter provides a basic understanding of the different WestCAT services, including the different types of fixed-route services, as well as the two Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services and the context of related transit systems. Each type of service is assessed through basic performance evaluation.

The second chapter examines the nature of the study area through demographic and socioeconomic data analysis. The focus of this chapter is to evaluate the service area in terms of the various factors that form the framework for local transit demand.

The third chapter examines commute behavior for both residents of the service area and people who travel to the service area for work.

The last chapter summarizes related planning efforts and projects that are relevant to this study, and in some cases should be included in future analysis and evaluation.

The next report will chronicle the public engagement process and findings, which is currently underway.



Map 1: WestCAT Service Area

Systemwide

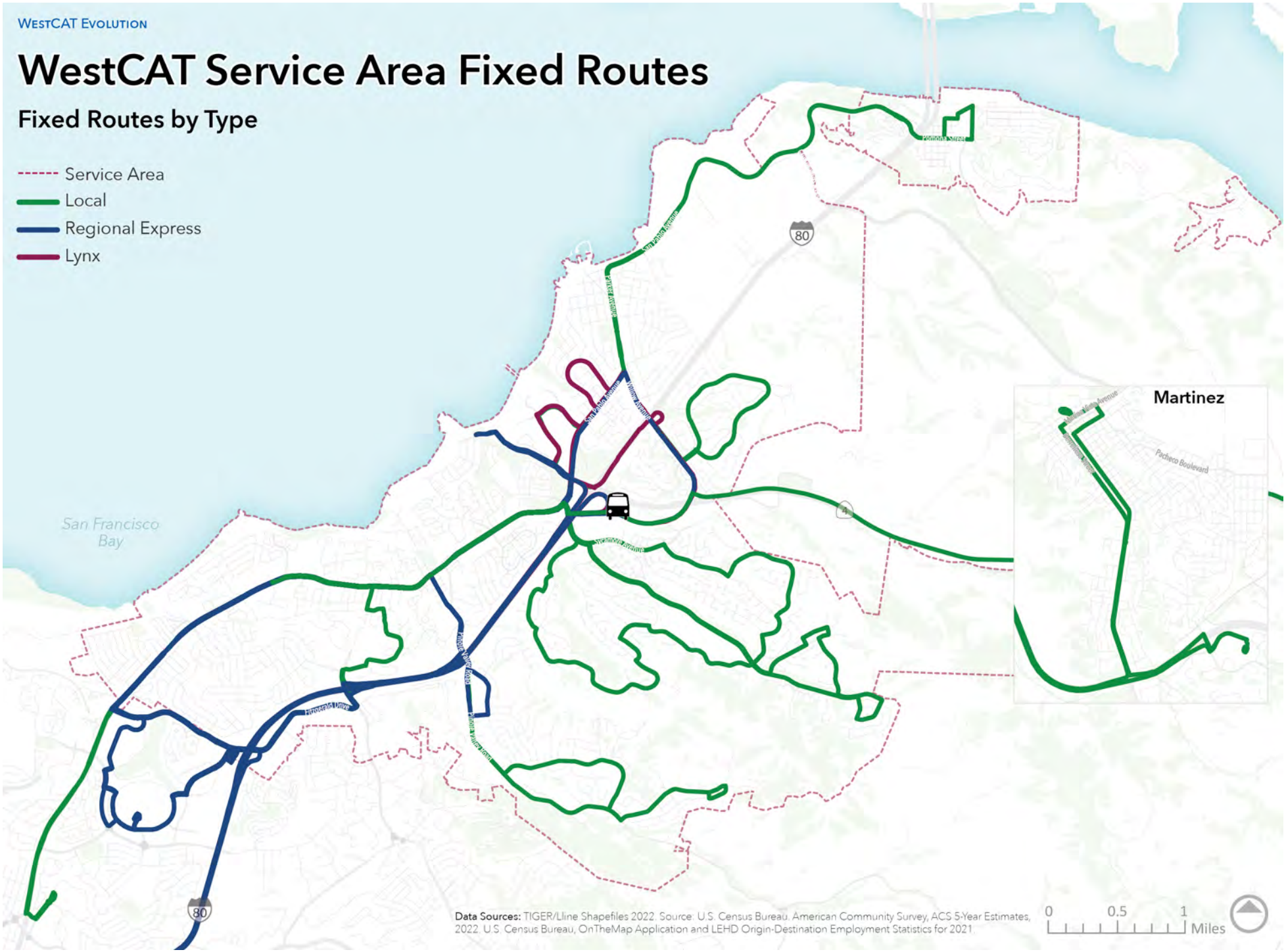
Organization

WestCAT public transit services are operated by the Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, herein "WestCAT." The agency was formed in 1977 under the provisions of the California Joint Exercise of Powers Act. The agency is responsible for the provision of public transit service within an approximately 18 square mile service area in Western Contra Costa County, which includes the incorporated cities of Pinole and Hercules, and the six unincorporated communities of Montalvin Manor, Bayview, Tara Hills, Rodeo, Crockett, and Port Costa. WestCAT is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors composed of two elected officials from each city's City Council and three members appointed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

System Description

WestCAT operates local and regional fixed route bus services, including regional express service to the closest Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station and a transbay commuter bus that travels to downtown San Francisco, branded as "Lynx." WestCAT has not made any major changes to its fixed routes in the last 20 years.

WestCAT also operates a Dial-a-Ride (DAR) program that provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service, which goes beyond ADA requirements in terms of both eligibility and service area.



Map 2: Fixed Routes by Type

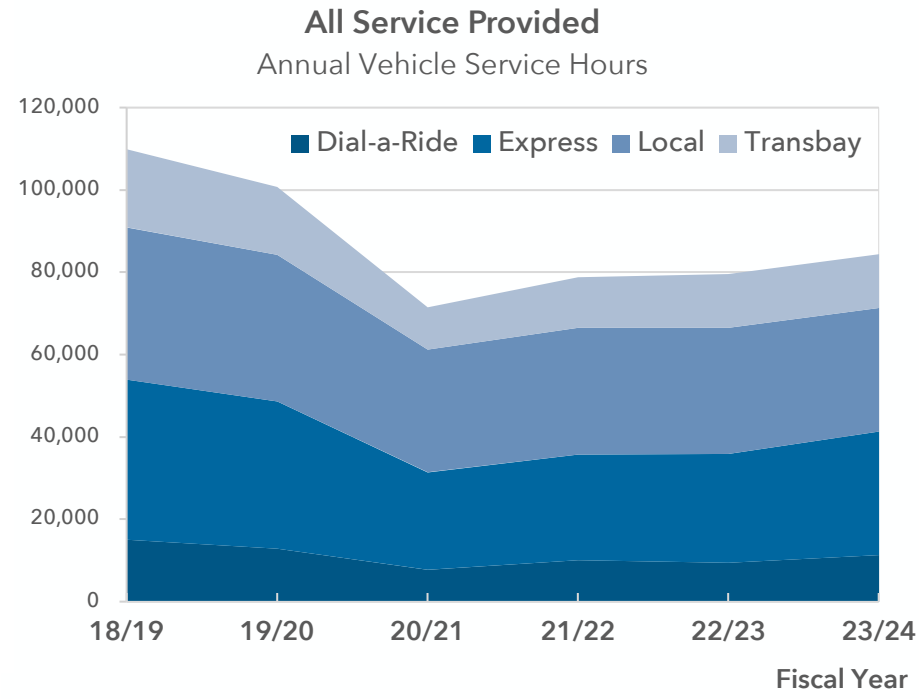
Systemwide Performance Over Time

For several years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, WestCAT operated a consistent amount of weekday service on eight local routes, four regional feeder bus routes, and one transbay route. On Saturdays the agency operated two local routes and on both weekend days operated one regional feeder bus route. Feeder routes and the transbay route operated at 15-minute headways during peak periods and around 30-minute headways in off-peak hours. Ridership on local and feeder bus routes was steady for several years and the transbay route started seeing an increase in ridership in the later years.

During the years of the pandemic, WestCAT, like all transit agencies, had to adapt quickly to the shelter in place order. Ridership fell by 71% and WestCAT had to cut its vehicle service hours by 35%. The average daily passenger count dropped from 953 to 271 and the average number of passengers per vehicle service hour dropped from 10.3 to 4.7.

In FY 21/22, passengers started to ride again, ridership rose to 45% of pre-pandemic levels, and total vehicle service hours were increased to about 78,000 per year. The following year ridership increased to 56.6% of pre-pandemic levels.

Since FY 22/23, ridership has grown slightly for the system as a whole, with small increases on the local routes, feeder bus routes, and Dial-a-Ride services, but ridership on the Lynx transbay route dropped slightly. These will be discussed further in the following sections.



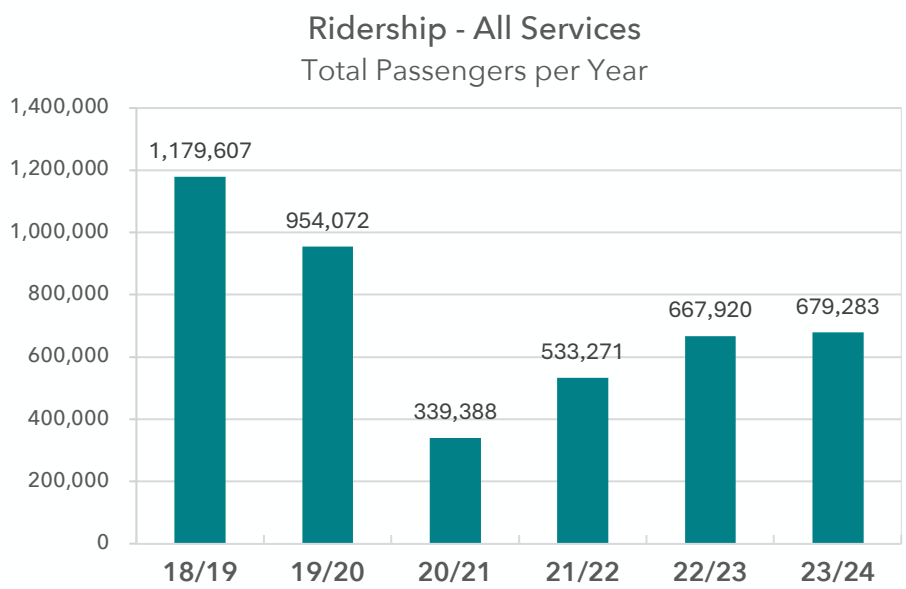


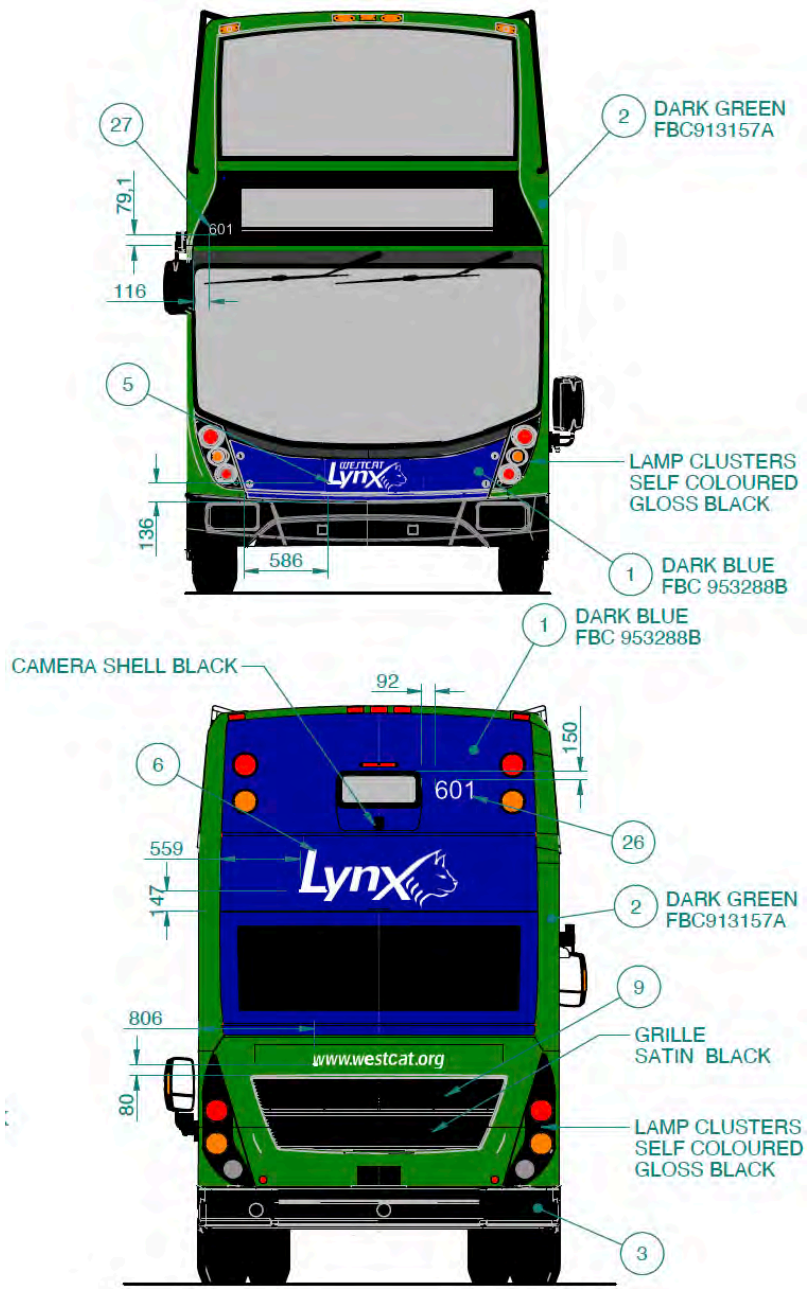
Figure 1: Historic Service Hours and Ridership

Fixed Routes

WestCAT operates three types of fixed routes, including:

- **Local Service:** Eight routes operate mainly within the service area and the local connect communities to key destinations and transit service hubs. Six of these operate only Monday through Friday, one route operates Monday through Saturday, and one runs only on Saturdays. Two of the local routes serve key destinations outside of the WestCAT service area.
- **Regional Express Service:** The three "J" routes (J, JX, & JPX) connect the service area with the closest BART station, which is the El Cerrito Del Norte station south of the WestCAT service area in El Cerrito. The JX and JPX are weekday express routes with few stops and shorter travel times. Route J has less direct routing, more stops within service area communities, and operates every day of the week.
- **Lynx Transbay Service:** Lynx service connects Hercules with the Salesforce Transit Center in downtown San Francisco, using double decker buses. The service operates Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Hercules Transit Center (HTC) is the main hub for WestCAT's fixed routes. Most routes start or end at the Transit Center, which makes it an ideal location for transfers between routes. There is a park and ride lot onsite, which is owned by BART. Parking costs $3 per day or $63 dollars for a monthly pass. There is also paid, secure bicycle parking managed Bike Link and a casual carpool pickup spot.



Among the fixed routes, in August 2024 the passenger boardings on the four Regional Express routes account for nearly half (47%) of all fixed route ridership (Figure 2). Additionally, the Regional Express routes also have the highest share of both service hours and service miles operated among the three types of fixed routes. The terms "service hours" and "service miles" indicate the time and distance traveled while the bus is picking up and dropping off passengers. The two measures are also known as "revenue hours" and "revenue miles."

Combined ridership on the fixed routes has been rising since the low of 2020 (Figure 3). The average number of passengers per revenue hours was also rising, however the average dropped somewhat between FY 22/23 and FY 23/24, from 9.3 to 9.0.

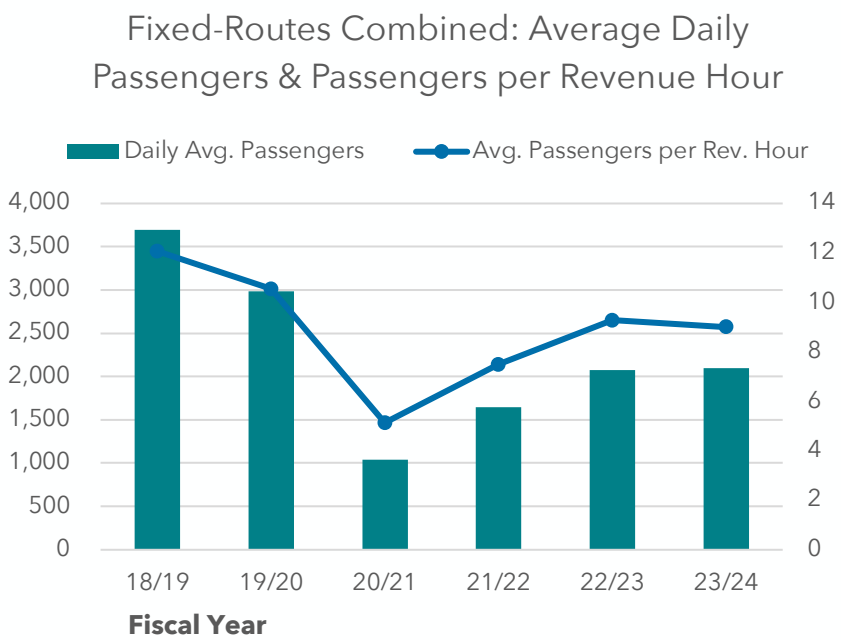


Figure 3: Fixed Route Passengers, Service Hours, and Service Miles over Time

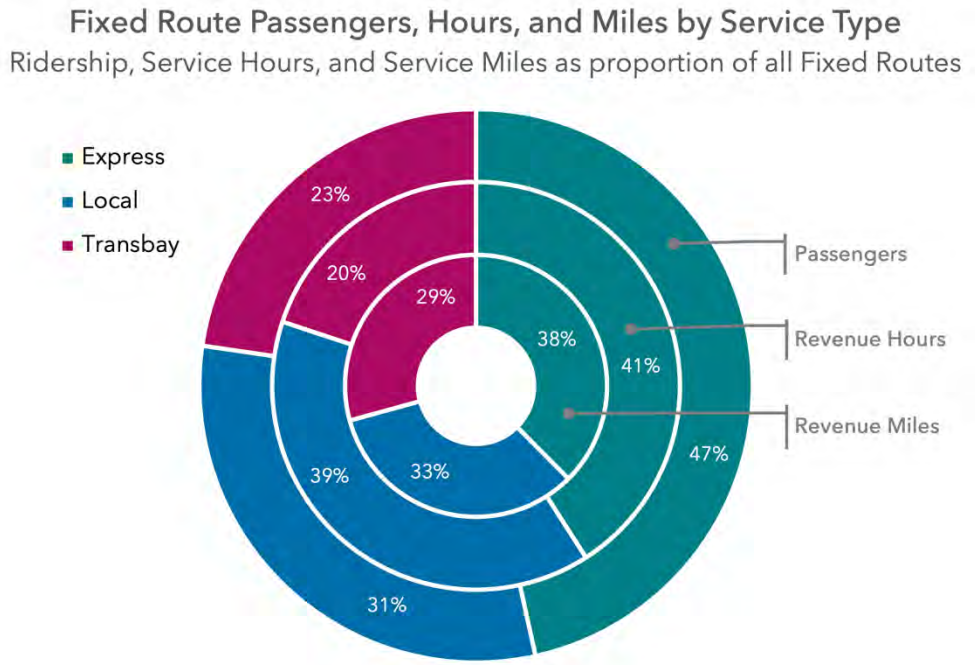
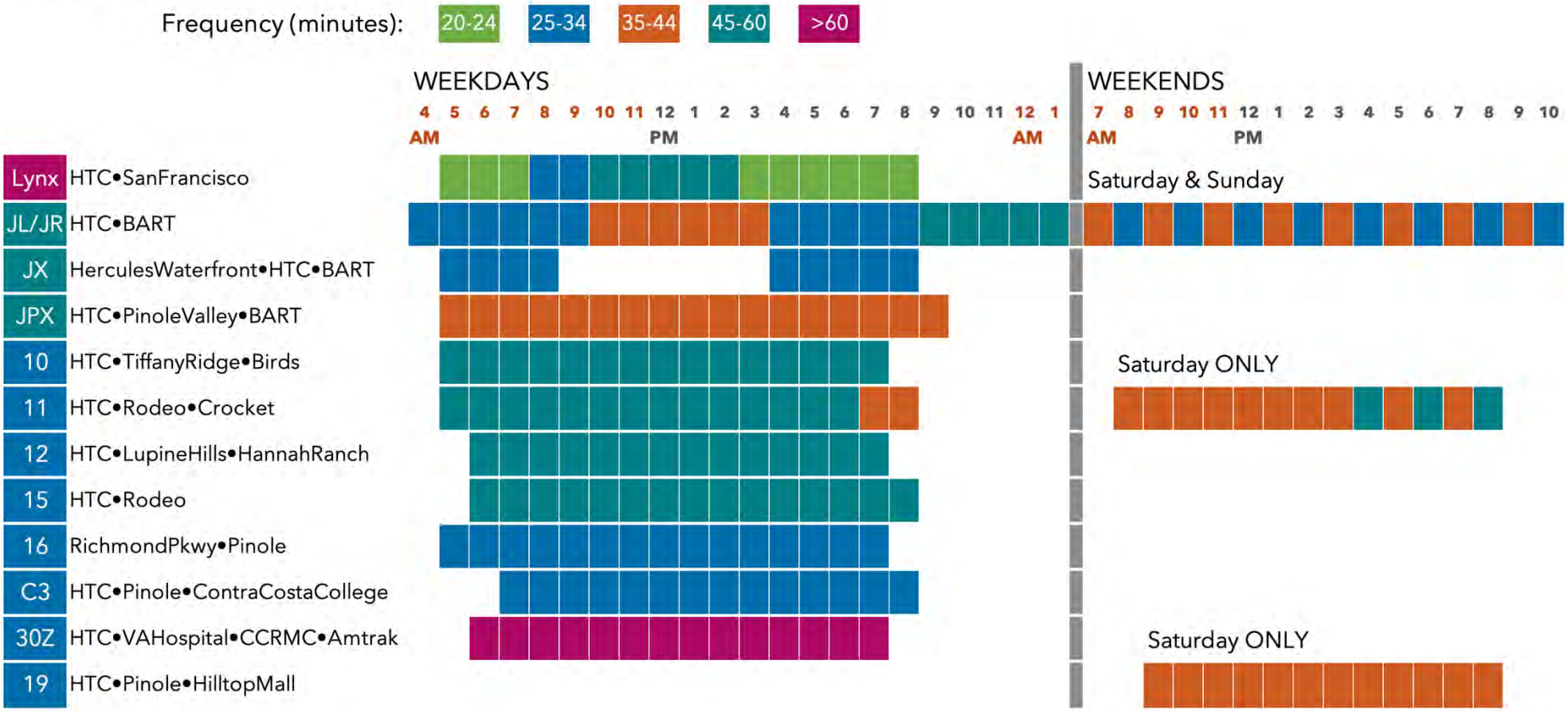


Figure 2: Fixed Route Passengers, Service Hours, and Service Miles, Aug. 2024

Fixed Route Spans and Frequencies of Service



"HTC" - Hercules Transit Center
"BART" - El Cerrito Del Norte BART Station
"CCRMC" - Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

Figure 4: Fixed Route Spans and Frequencies Infographic

Local Routes

Descriptions

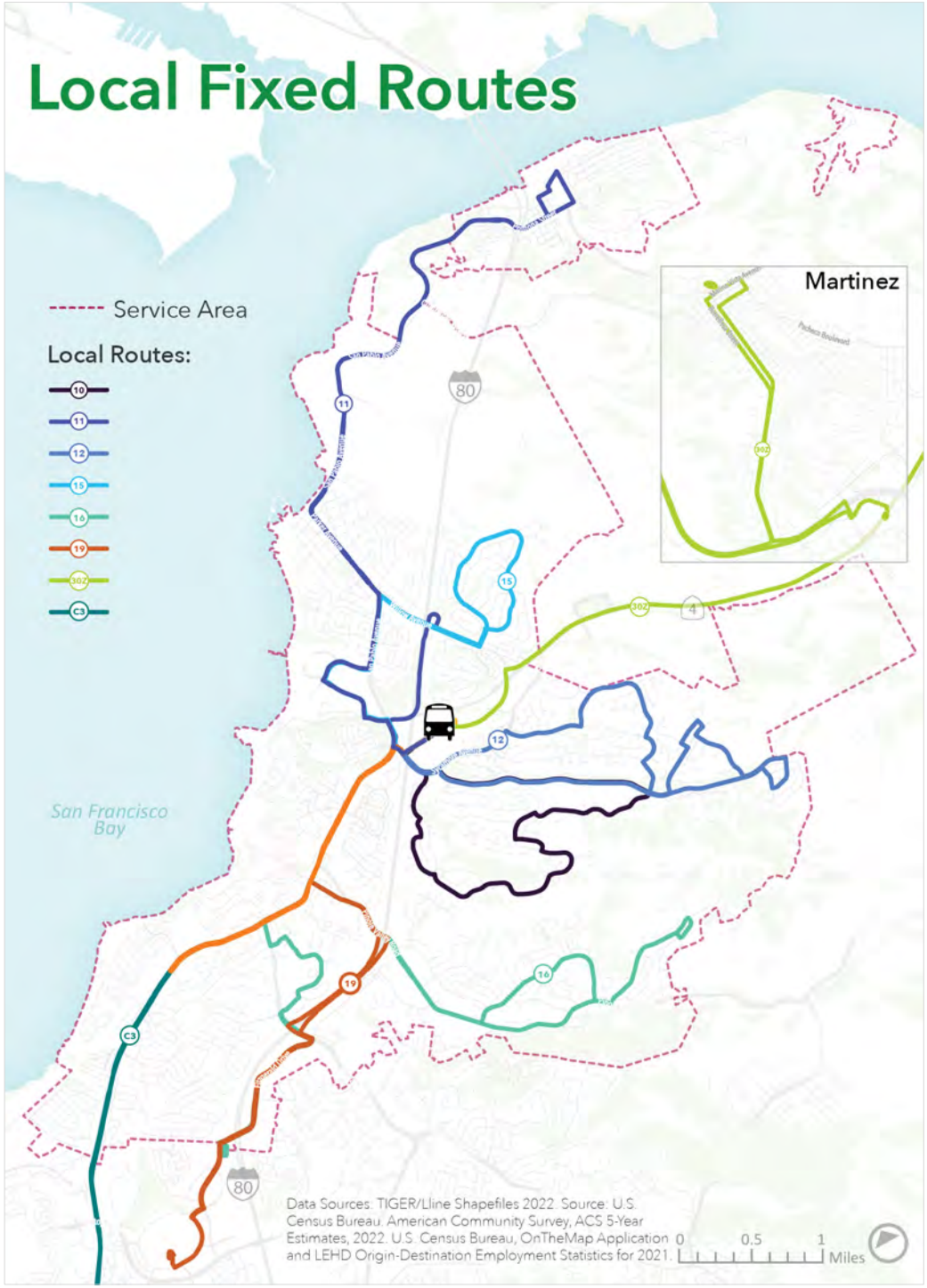
WestCAT's local route alignments were designed under a coverage model aimed at equitable geographic coverage of the entire service area and service to key local destinations. The current spans of service (hours that the bus operates per day) and frequencies of trips (how often the bus comes, a.k.a. headways) are shown in Figure 4 on the previous page. The headways on local routes stay mostly consistent throughout the day and do not fluctuate during peak and non-peak periods.

Route 10: HTC – Tiffany Ridge - Birds

Route 10 runs from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on weekdays about 60 minutes apart. The route travels a one-way circuitous route counterclockwise through southern Hercules south of I-80 winding along Turquoise Drive and Refugio Valley Road through the Tiffany Ridge, Marsten Ranch, and Birds neighborhoods. Route 10 includes two school "trippers" each day that deviate to serve the Hercules Middle and High School and are timed to the students' afternoon bell times.

Route 11: HTC – Rodeo – Crocket

Route 11 operates weekdays from 5:20 a.m. to 9:20 p.m. about every 60 minutes. The route travels from HTC northeast along Parker Avenue through Rodeo and then along San Pablo Avenue to end in a small loop in Crockett. Route 11 also operates on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 9:20 p.m. every 40 to 50 minutes. Late evenings and weekends, the route does not serve the Richmond Parkway Transit Center but does expand coverage into the Rodeo/Viewpointe area.



Map 3: WestCAT Local Routes

Route 12: HTC – Lupine Hills – Hannah Ranch

Route 12 runs from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays about every 60 minutes. The route travels southeast from HTC and runs counterclockwise along Refugio Valley Road, in the opposite direction of Route 10. It then winds around streets in the Hannah Ranch neighborhood before traveling northwest through Lupine Hills. Route 12 also includes two school trippers that serve the Hercules Middle and High School in the afternoon.

Route 15: HTC – Rodeo - Viewpointe

Route 15 operates on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 8:40 p.m. about every 60 minutes. The route follows San Pablo north before cutting southeast via Willow Avenue where it loops around in the area of Rodeo east of I-80 along Coral Drive and Viewpointe Boulevard.

Route 16: Richmond Pkwy Transit Center – Pinole

Route 16 runs from 5:15 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays about every 30 to 40 minutes. This is the only WestCAT route that does not stop at HTC, starting instead at the Richmond Parkway Transit Center southwest of Richmond Parkway and I-80 interchange. The route serves many schools and shopping centers traveling in both directions through the southern part of Pinole.

Route 19: HTC – Fitzgerald Drive – Hilltop Mall

Route 19 operates only on Saturdays from 9:20 a.m. to 9 p.m. about every 40 minutes. The route starts at HTC, travels south along San Pablo Avenue in Pinole, then briefly on I-80, and along Fitzgerald Avenue before reaching the end at Hilltop mall. The bus follows the exact same route back north, unlike most of the other local routes (except Route C3), which all include some sort of loop.

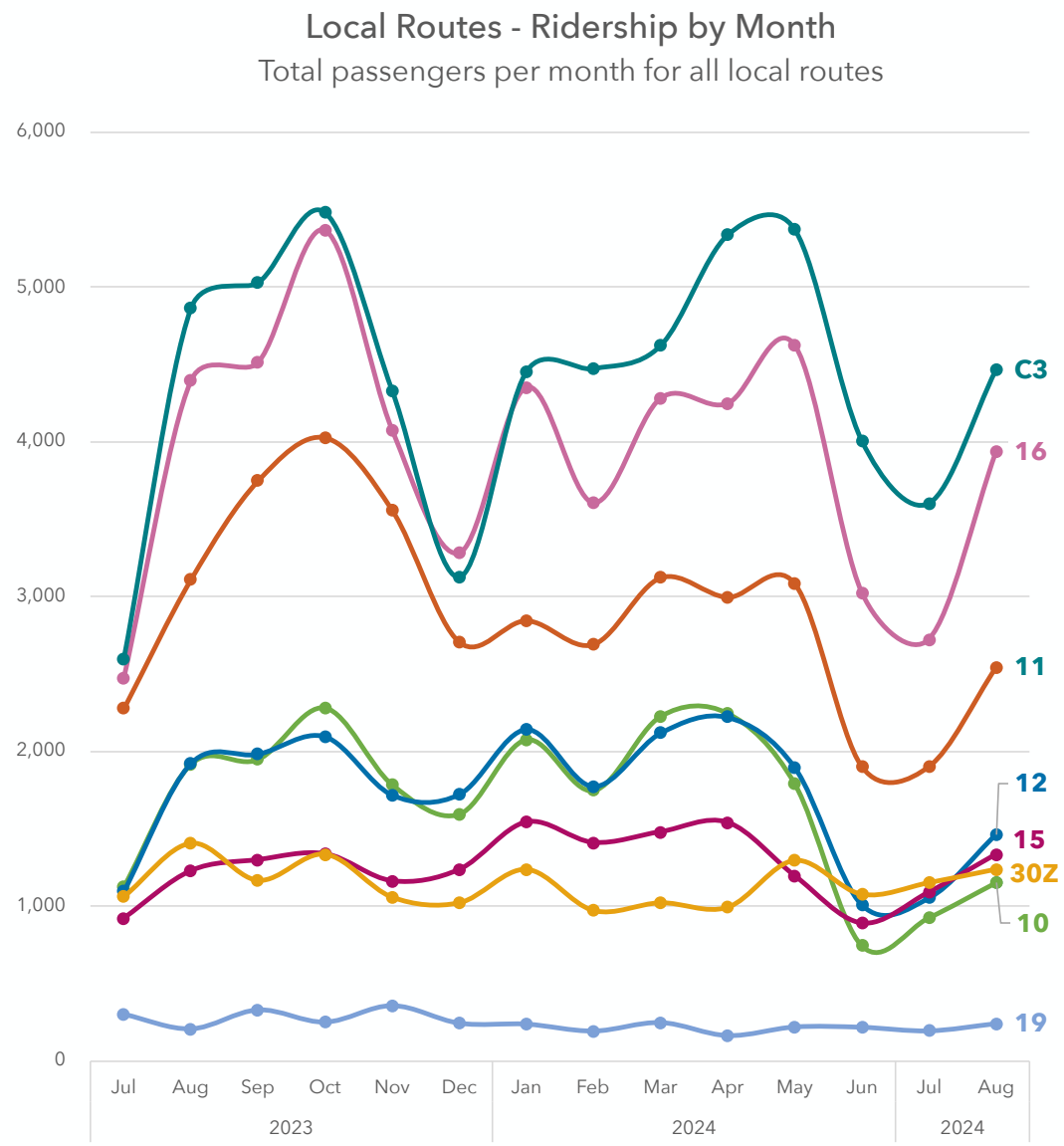


Figure 5: Ridership by Month for Local Routes, July 2023 to August 2024

Route 30Z: HTC – Martinez

Route 30Z runs about every 60 to 80 minutes from 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on weekdays. The route travels east from HTC, outside of the WestCAT service area, to Martinez where it serves the VA Hospital, The Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, and Amtrak's Capitol Corridor Martinez station.

Route C3: HTC – Pinole – Tara Hills – Contra Costa College

Route C3 operates from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. weekdays about every 30 minutes. It goes south from HTC south along San Pablo Avenue through Pinole and Tara Hills, ending just outside of the WestCAT service area at the Contra Costa College in San Pablo. Like Route 19, this route is also entirely bidirectional.

Performance

Figure 8 shows the total ridership per month for each of the local routes, from July 2023 to August 2024. All of the local routes are ridden most often in the Spring and Fall months, when school is in session.

Routes C3-Contra Costa College, 16-Richmond Parkway Transit Center to Pinole, and 11–Rodeo and Crocket consistently have the highest ridership among the local routes. Route 11 operates six days a week, whereas the other two operate only on weekdays. Route 19 technically has the lowest ridership, but only operates on Saturdays. Local routes with the lowest ridership include 12, 15, 30Z, and 10. Routes 12 and 15, both serve Refugio Valley Road in Hercules and consistently have very similar ridership counts.

A useful measure for comparing the productivity of routes is calculating the passengers per revenue (service) hour. Figure 6 shows the passengers per revenue hour for each of the local

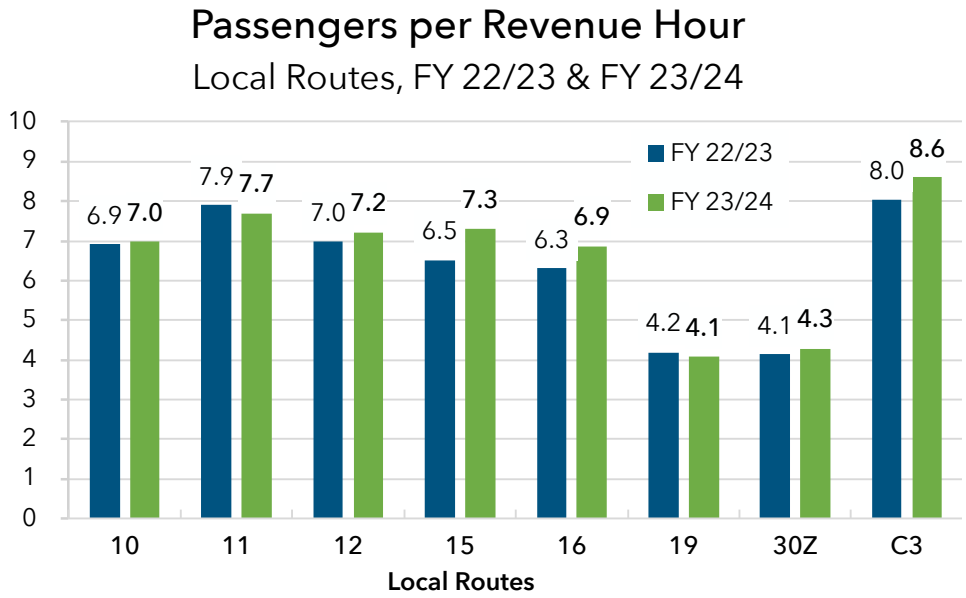


Figure 6: Passengers per Revenue Hour – Local Routes, FY 22/23 & FY 23/34

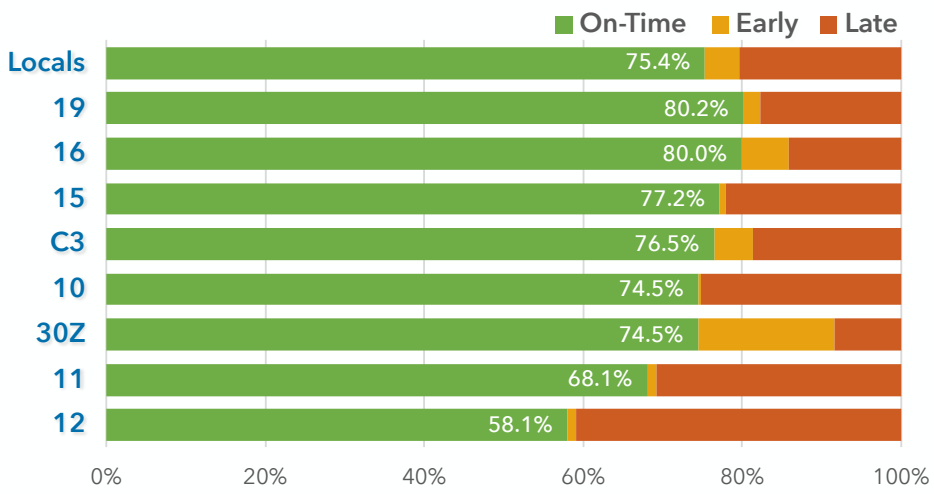


Figure 7: On-Time Performance – Local Routes, Sept. 2024

routes in FY 22/23 and FY 23/24. Most of the routes increased passengers per revenue hour between the two years, except for Routes 11 and 19, which decreased slightly.

Regional Express Routes

Descriptions

The three Regional Express Routes, or "J" routes, all connect the WestCAT service area to the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station, where passengers can transfer to several other local and regional transit systems. All of these routes benefit from use of the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on Interstate 80 to avoid traffic. In this section, any reference to "BART" indicates the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station.

Route J: Hercules – Pinole - Tara Hills – Richmond - BART

Route J operates from 4:30 a.m. to 12:35 a.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. The two components of Route J are Routes JL & JR. They follow mostly the same alignment connecting Hercules, Pinole, and several unincorporated areas of the County by traveling south along San Pablo Avenue, then Interstate 80 to the BART station. The difference between the two is that Route JL stops at the Hilltop Mall and Route JR stops at the neighboring Richmond Parkway Transit Center. The route deviates once in the morning and once in the afternoon to serve the Pinole Valley High School.

On weekdays during off-peak midday hours Route J comes every 40 minutes. The rest of the time on weekdays it operates on 30-minute headways. On Saturdays and Sundays, the J has 30 to 40 minute headways. Route J is the only route to operate on Sundays.

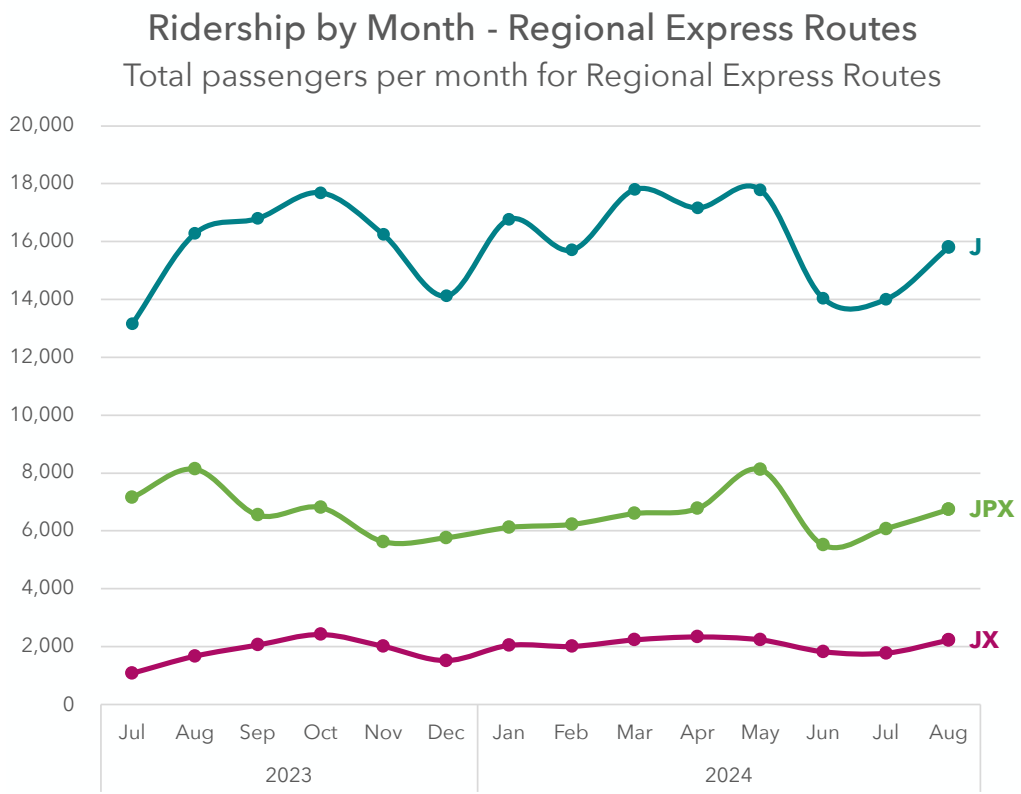


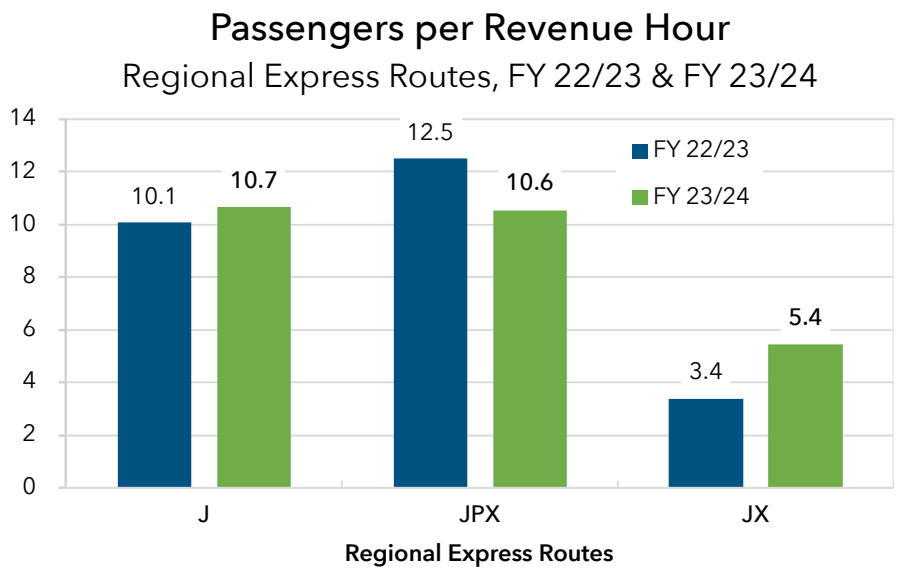
Figure 8: Ridership by Month - Regional Express Routes, July 2023 to July 2024

Route JPX: HTC – Pinole – Richmond – BART

Route JPX operates on weekdays from 5 a.m. to 9:20 p.m. every 30 to 40 minutes. The route begins at HTC traveling south on San Pablo Avenue, then cuts east on Pinole Valley Road to take I-80 south to BART. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. the route diverts from I-80 to serve shopping destinations along the Fitzgerald Drive.

Route JX: Waterfront - HTC – BART

Route JX is an express service with few stops and 30-minute headways. Route JX starts at Hercules Hub waterfront, then serves HTC before taking I-80 south all the way to BART without stopping. Passengers are able to take the JX from HTC to BART in 16 minutes. The route operates during peak morning and afternoon hours on weekdays, from 5:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. to 9 p.m.



FY 23/24 & FY 23/24

Performance

For the purposes of this study, Routes JR and JL are analyzed as one route (J) since they mostly serve the same stops. Total ridership on the three routes varies significantly (Figure 8), however they also have differing levels of service. RouteJ has the highest ridership in the system. It also has the second highest passengers per service hour in the system (10.7 in FY 23/24), behind Lynx. Route JPX is close behind at 10.6 passengers per hour, although the year prior the JPX had 12.5 passengers per hour.

Route JX has one of the lowest average passengers per hour of all fixed routes at 5.4 in FY 23/24, however this is a marked increase from the prior year.

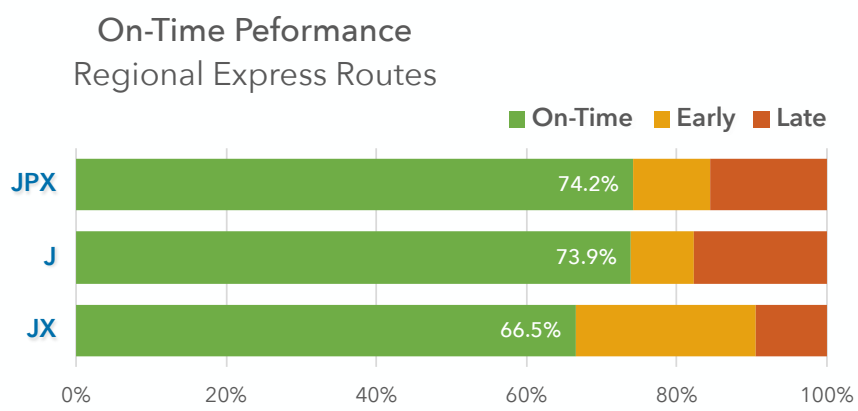
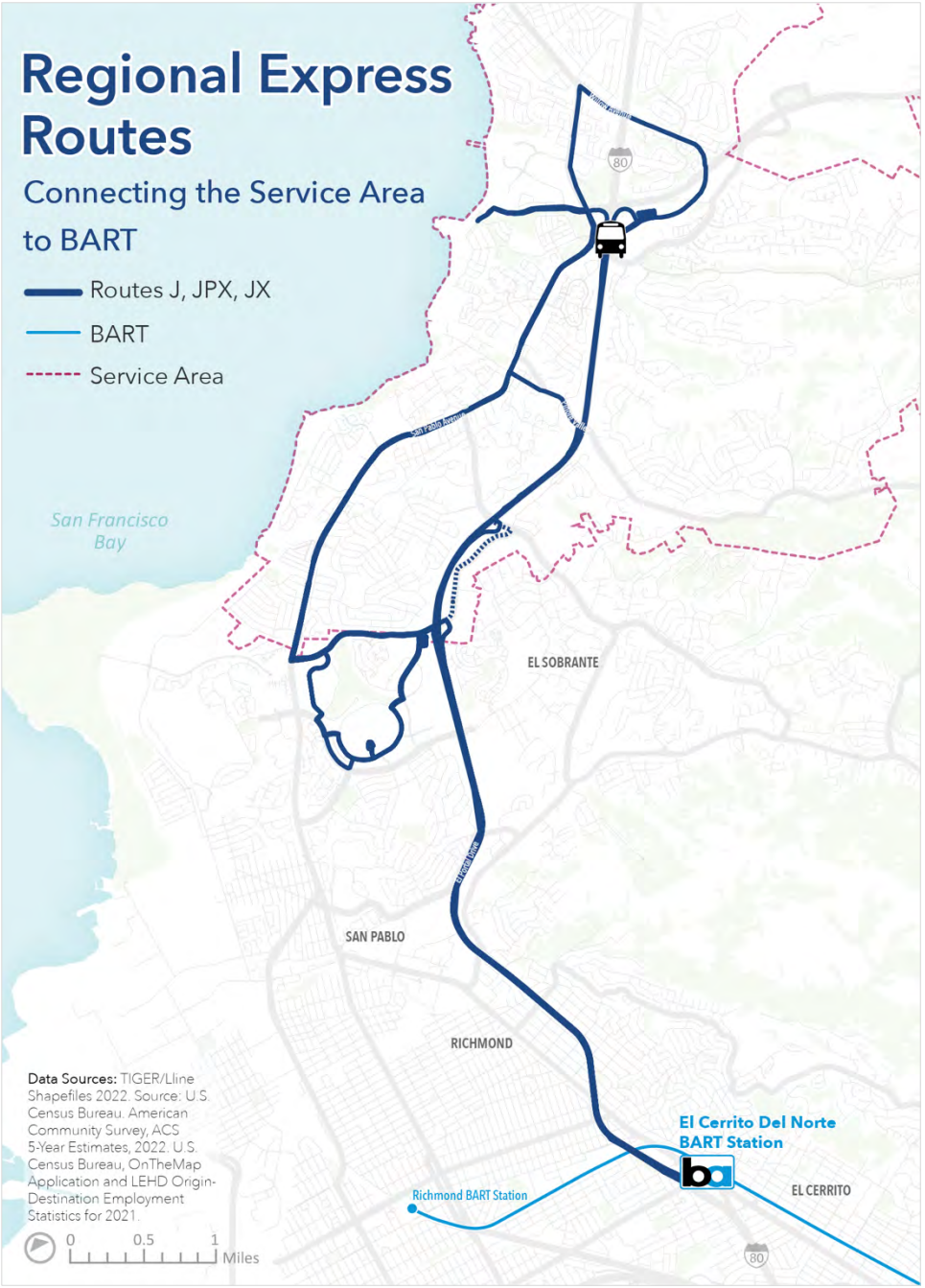
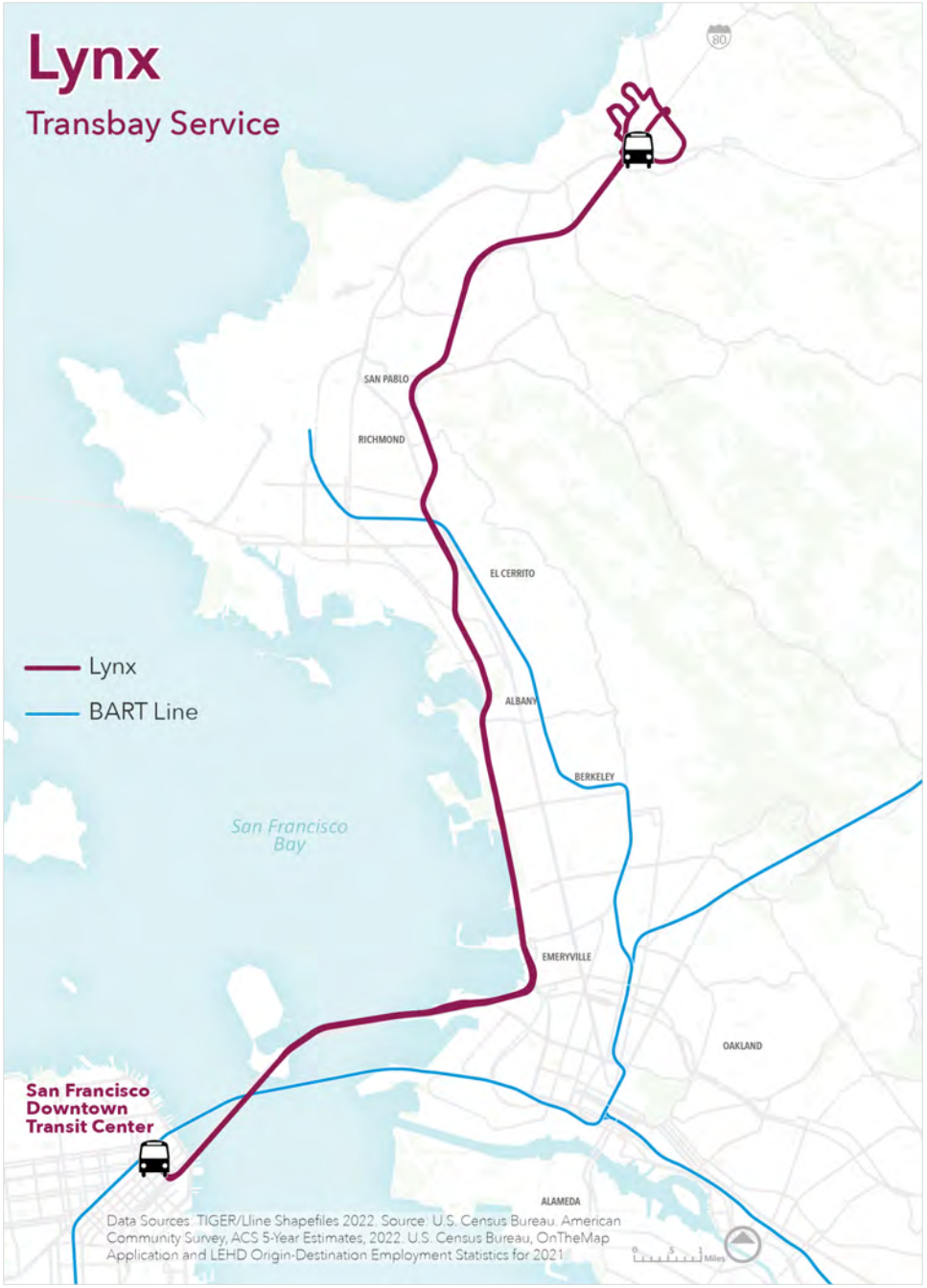


Figure 10: On-Time Performance - Regional Express Routes, Sept. 2024



Map 4: Regional Express Routes



Map 5: Lynx Transbay Service

Lynx Transbay Service

Description

WestCAT's Lynx route operates weekdays from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. Headways are 20 to 30 minutes during peak hours and 40 minutes midday. A one-way trip covers 23 miles and takes about 50 minutes depending on traffic and time of day. Three of the Lynx vehicles are double decker buses which can seat 88 passengers.

The transit vehicles are able to use the HOV and Bay Bridge priority lanes, making the trip faster than in a private vehicle. Lynx not only brings passengers living in the service area to and from San Francisco, it also brings workers north to employers in the service area, such as the Bio-Rad corporate headquarters in Hercules.

Performance

Lynx transbay service has the second highest ridership of the system, but both the total ridership and passengers per service hour are decreasing. Starting in September of 2023, the total ridership for most months is lower than that of the previous year. In addition, the passengers per hour on Lynx dropped from 12.4 to 11.4 between FY 22/23 and FY 23/24. Ridership on Lynx fluctuates from month to month, similar to other routes, but, due to the high ridership on Lynx, the impact of these changes is much more significant.

Lynx had the lowest proportion of being on time in September of 2024, which is likely due to the long length of each trip and the recent major increase in Bay Area traffic, according to an SF Chronicle analysis of Caltrans data. This data indicates a correlation between ridership and on-time performance.

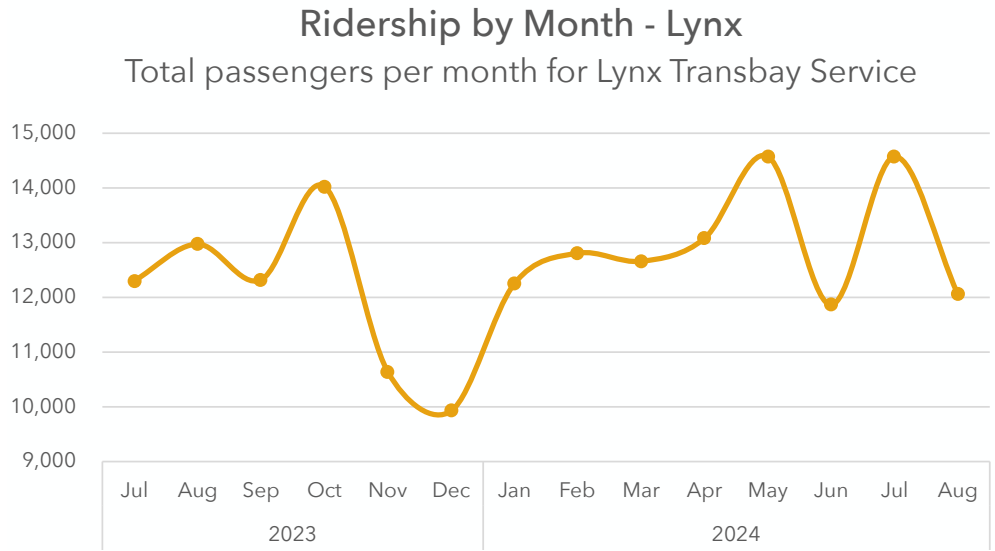


Figure 11: Ridership by Month - Lynx, July 2023 to August 2024

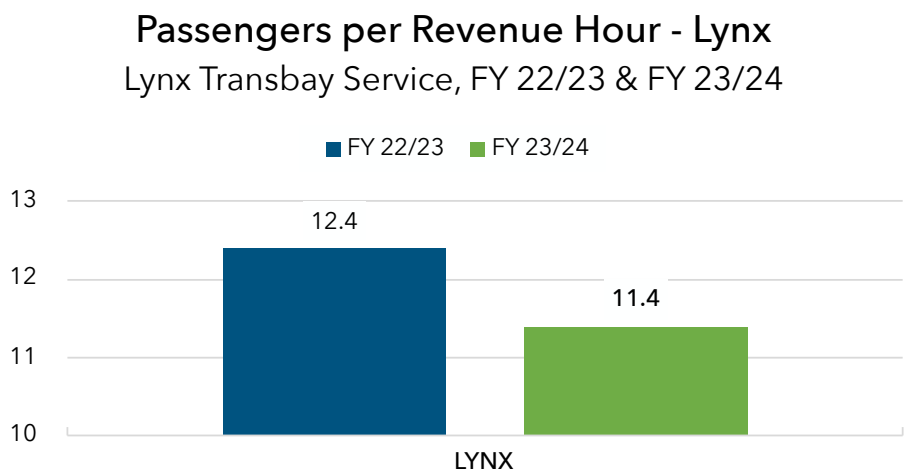


Figure 13: Passengers per Revenue Hour - Lynx

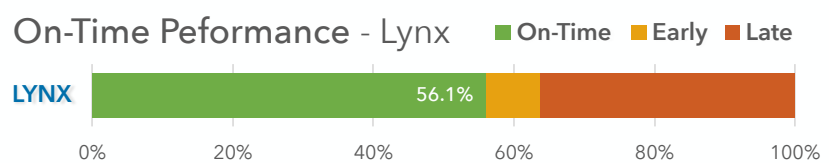


Figure 12: On-time Performance - Lynx, September 2024

ADA Paratransit & Senior Dial-a-Ride

WestCAT operates two shared-ride, demand-response, and curb-to-curb transit services that share the same vehicles and drivers: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit and Senior Dial-a-Ride. Information about the two programs and how they differ slightly are shown in Table 1. Travel training is available for both programs.

In conjunction, they are generally referred to as "Dial-a-Ride." For the purposes of this study, the acronym "DAR" will be used when referring to both services together and "Senior DAR" will be used for referring specifically to the Senior Dial-a-Ride program. ADA Paratransit will be referred to as "ADA."

ADA Paratransit

ADA paratransit is provided for persons with disabilities that make the use of regular fixed-route transit services more challenging. To qualify for using Paratransit, users must go through an application process and register for the service. Local rides are booked one to three days in advance by calling WestCAT on the phone. WestCAT allows a subscription service for passengers that need to make the same trip on a regular basis. Same day trips can be booked based on availability.

The service area for pickups and drop-offs includes the whole WestCAT service area. This goes beyond the requirements of the ADA law, which requires the paratransit service area to consist of a ¾ mile buffer on either side of the agency's fixed routes. Trips to the neighboring Richmond and San Pablo areas that are for medical appointments or other special needs can be booked from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Table 1: ADA Paratransit & Senior Dial-a-Ride Differences

	ADA Paratransit	Senior DAR
Eligibility	Have a disability that inhibits the use of fixed-route transit	Aged 65 or older
Booking	Priority 1-3 days advance Same day allowed, if available	Second to Paratransit 1 day in advance only Same day allowed, if available
Service Hours	M-F: 4:26 a.m. – 12:36 a.m. Sat & Sun: 7:08 a.m. – 10:03 p.m.	M-F: 6 a.m. – 8 p.m. Sat: 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. Not available Sunday
Transfers from other ADA systems	Free	$1.25
Transfers to Fixed Routes		Free to WestCAT, County Connection, and Tri-Delta
Coordinated Transfers on DAR	Yes	No
San Pablo/ Richmond	Yes, as available	No
LIFE program	Yes	Yes
One-Seat program	Yes	No

The one-way fare for trips within the WestCAT service area is $1.25, or $10 for a 10-ride sheet, and trips to Richmond and San Pablo cost $3 one-way, or $25 for a $10-ride sheet. It should be noted that these are much lower than most Bay Area transit agencies' paratransit fares. The ADA allows charging up to double the regular fixed-route one-way fare of $1.50.

Currently, there is a "One-Seat" pilot program for ADA paratransit passengers which allows trips to and from neighboring service areas without having to transfer to another Paratransit system. The participating agencies include WestCAT, County Connection and Tri-Delta in Contra Costa County, and the Livermore-Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA).

The Low Income Fare Equity (LIFE) pilot program is currently providing 10 one-way trip vouchers for free to low-income qualified paratransit riders in Contra Costa County. This program does not apply to trips under the One-Seat program. The pilot is set to run until funds are expended.

Senior Dial-a-Ride

The Senior Dial-a-Ride (Senior DAR) service provides shared ride, curb-to-curb rides for older adults aged 65 and older. The service area covers the whole of the WestCAT service area. Another way in which WestCAT provides service beyond the ADA requirements is that eligibility for Senior DAR is open to all older adults aged 65 and older living in the WestCAT service area. The fares are the same as ADA Paratransit and subscription service is also available.

Performance

In 2023 and 2024, combined ridership on both DAR programs is showing increased total riders per month, compared to the same months in the previous year. Total ridership increased between FY 22/23 and 23/24 to 20,272 total passengers per year.

In terms of productivity, passengers per service hour dropped from 2.0 to 1.8 (Figure 15). A target of two passengers per service hour is a common target for dial-a-ride programs, due to the nature of door-to-door trips. Passengers per mile has held steady at around 0.19 since FY 18/19.

Table 2 below shows the fare types for passenger trips in September 2024. Trips on ADA paratransit accounted for 92.7% of all trips and 7.3% were on Senior DAR. Among the ADA paratransit trips, 77.2% were the local fare type and 10.7% were the regional fare type. Local and regional paratransit trips can include free boarding for a personal care assistant, of which there were 55. On Sundays and times when WestCAT's DAR isn't operating, but fixed routes are, ADA passengers can take trips using East Bay Paratransit for both local and regional trips. Of these, there were 21 trips.

Table 2: Dial-a-Ride Passenger Fare Types

Passenger Type	One-Way Trips	Share
Senior DAR	118	7.3%
ADA Paratransit	1,495	92.7%
Local	1,246	77.2%
Regional	173	10.7%
Personal Care Assistant	55	3.4%
East Bay Paratransit	21	1.3%

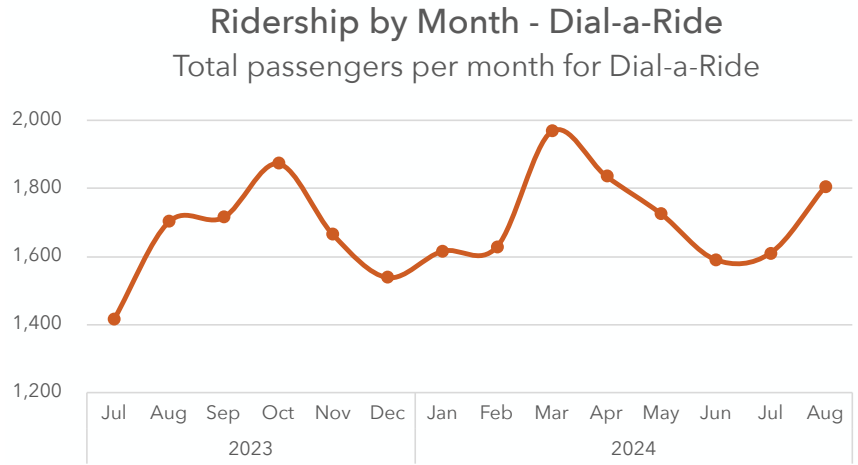


Figure 14: Ridership per Month - Dial-a-Ride, Jul. 2023 to Aug. 2024

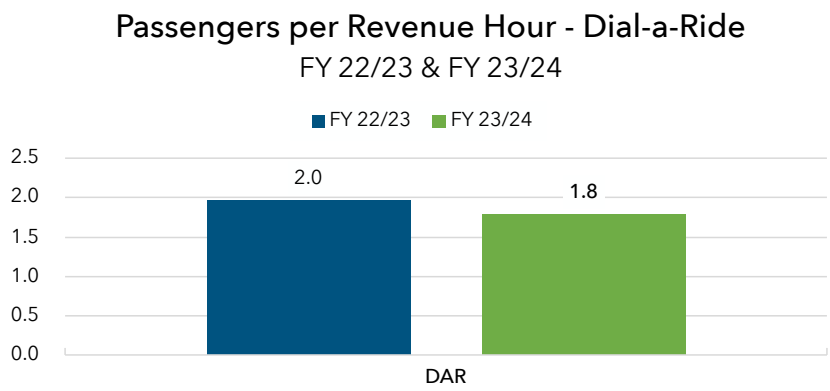
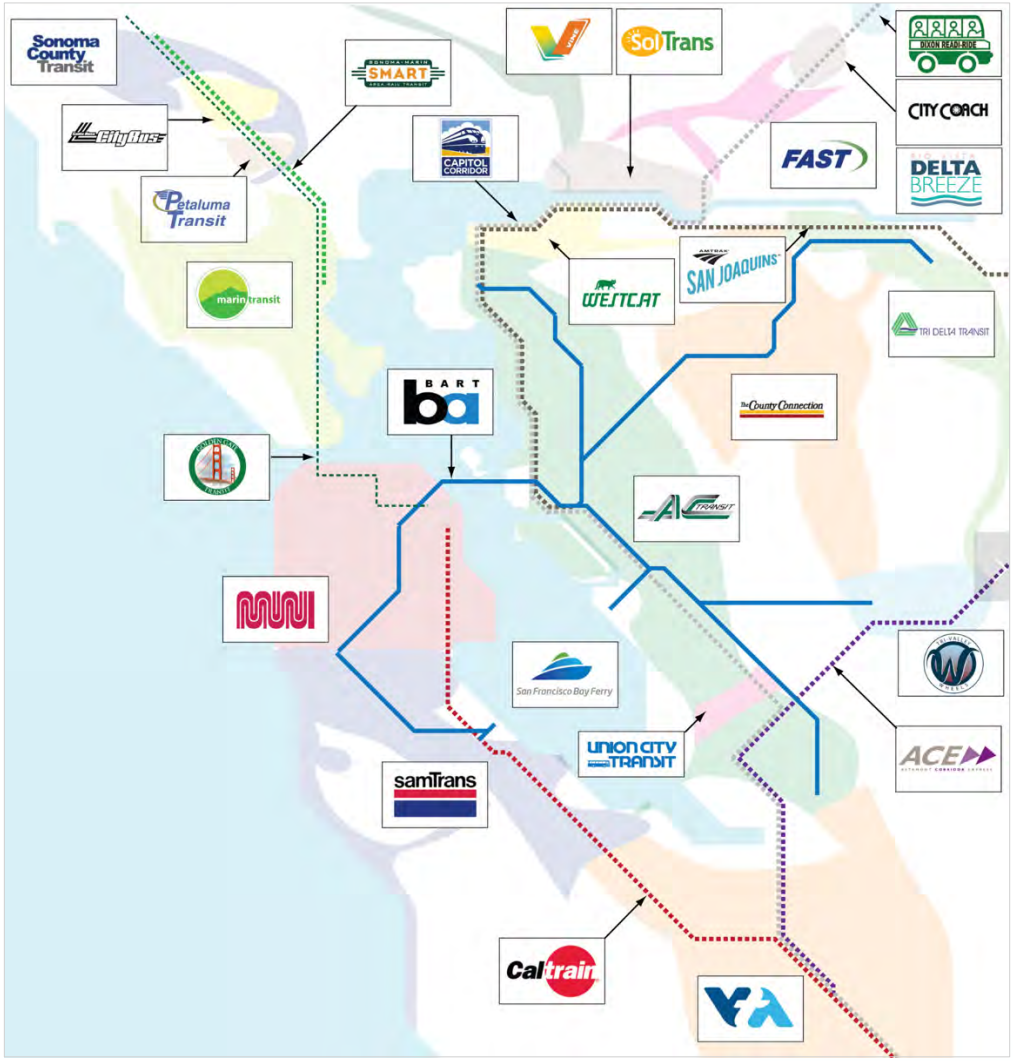


Figure 15: Passengers per Revenue Hour - Dial-a-Ride, FY 22/23 & FY 23/24

Neighboring & Regional Transit Services

WestCAT fixed routes connect with several neighboring public transit bus systems, including:

- **AC Transit** – WestCAT passengers can transfer to and from AC Transit Routes 76 and 376 at the Hilltop Mall stop in Richmond. At the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station and the Contra Costa College, passengers can transfer to several AC Transit routes. The AC Transit service area includes all of the East Bay from Richmond to Fremont.
- **Tri-Delta Transit** - In Martinez, Route 30Z shares two stops with Tri-Delta Transit, which serves the eastern part of the County containing Brentwood, Antioch, Pittsburgh, and Bay Point.
- **County Connection** – Route 30Z also has shared stops with County Connection in Martinez, which serve the portion of the County surrounding Concord, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek.
- **Golden Gate Transit** - At the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station, passengers can transfer to four Golden Gate Transit lines, which serve Marin and Sonoma Counties, and San Francisco.
- **SolTrans** – At the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station, passengers can board two SolTrans bus routes, which serve the Vallejo area.
- **Vine** – Passengers can also transfer to Vine Transit's Route 29 at the BART station, which serves American Canyon and Napa.



Map: Seamless Bay Area

Figure 16: Bay Area Transit Map

WestCAT routes also connect passengers with regional rail systems, including:

- **BART** – All three of WestCAT's Regional Express Routes bring passengers to and from the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station in El Cerrito.
- **Capitol Corridor** – In Martinez, passengers can transfer to Amtrak's Capitol Corridor rail line, which runs from San Jose to Auburn with many stops along the way, including Sacramento.
- **Amtrak** – The same Amtrak station in Martinez also serves three other Amtrak rail lines, which flow all over the United States.

The availability and quality of connections with other transit systems, along with opportunities for improvement, will be explore in a forthcoming phase of this study. These include potential connections with the Richmond Ferry and additional connection points, such as Diablo Valley College.

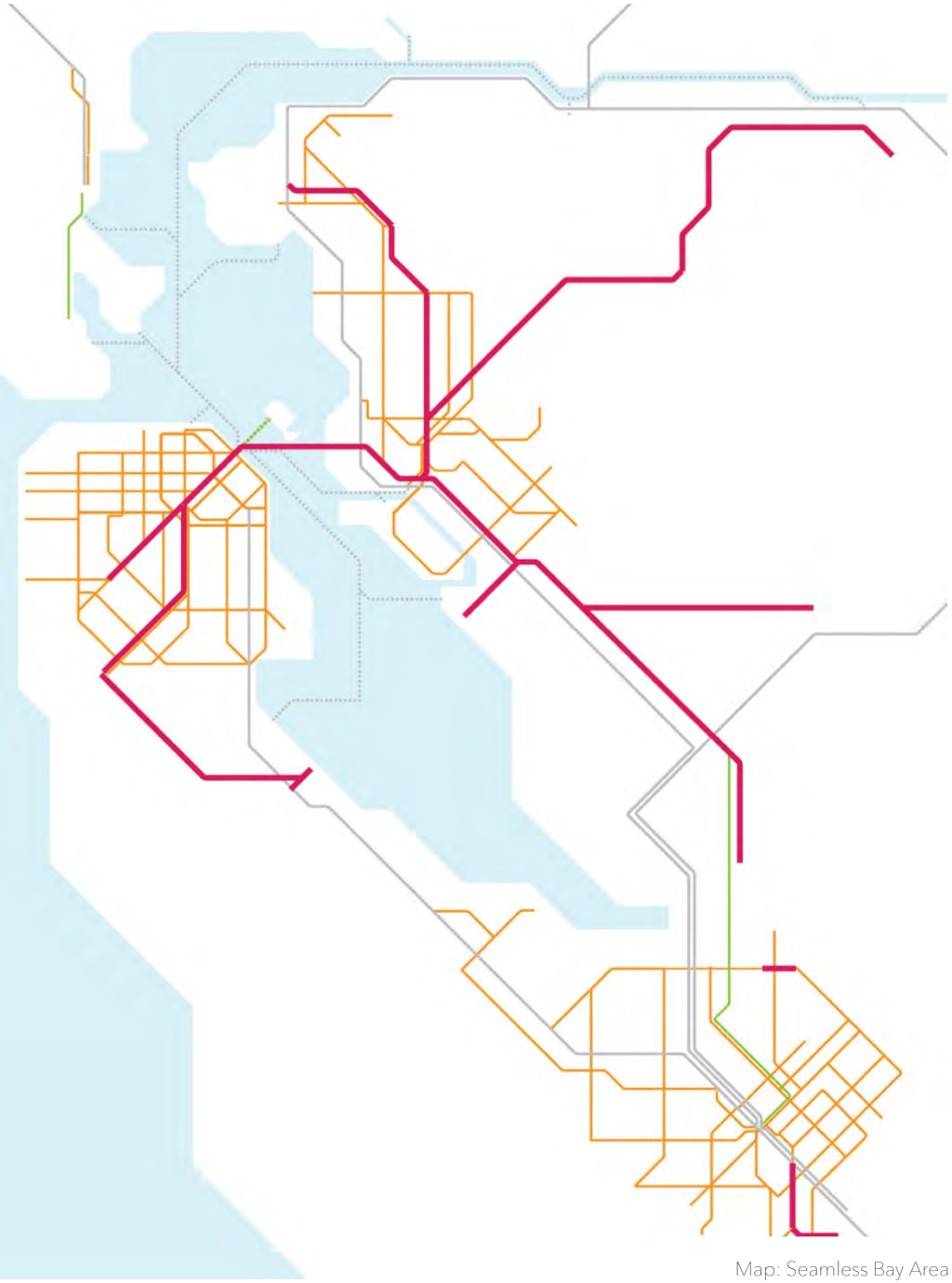


Figure 17: Bay Area Regional Transit Future Network Map

SERVICE AREA PROFILE & MARKET ASSESSMENT

This chapter presents basic demographic and socioeconomic information about residents of the WestCAT service area, through the lens of existing and potential demand for transit service. There are several common factors that influence the demand for transit, and all depend upon the local context. These include residential and employment densities, major activity generators, transportation infrastructure, and prevalence of various demographic sectors that are more likely to use transit. These key factors for determining the demand for transit are discussed in turn after the initial high-level profile of the service area in the next section.

Service Area Profile

WestCAT's service area is defined as the incorporated cities of Hercules and Pinole, along with the unincorporated "Census Designated Places" (CDP's) of Bayview, Crockett, Montalvin Manor, Port Costa, Rodeo, and Tara Hills.

The WestCAT service area is located in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area, along the Interstate 80 corridor north of Oakland and Berkeley. The area is primarily suburban residential with several medium and large shopping centers. The mediterranean climate is mild with warm, dry summers and moderately cold, wet winters.

Table 3 on the following page provides basic demographic and socioeconomic information about the WestCAT service area as a whole and its eight component communities. The same statistics are also provided for all of Contra Costa County and California for context.

Transit Service Area Highlights

Population:	68,072	**Population/Acre:**	6.0
Households:	23,905	**Households/Acre:**	2.1
Jobs:	11,869	**Jobs/Acre:**	1.0
Size:	17.8 miles^2	**Average household size:**	2.7 people

Ethnicity: **74%** Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

Education: **90%** high school graduate or higher
30% bachelor's degree or higher

Language: **41%** speak a language other than English at home
15% speak English less than "very well"

Poverty: **16%** living in poverty

Housing: **28%** renter occupied

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022.

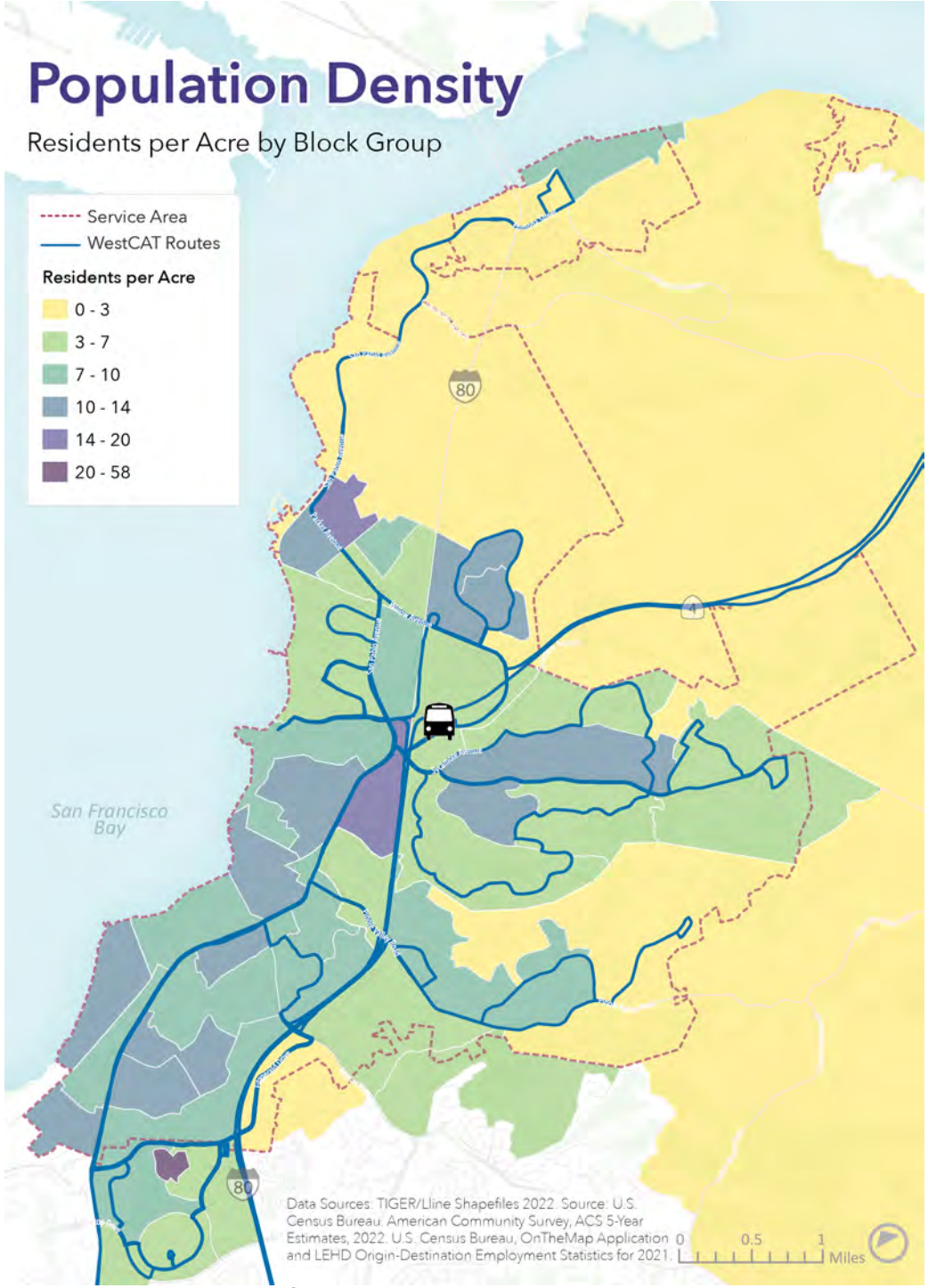
Table 3: Service Area Profiles

	Bayview	Crockett	Hercules	Montalvin Manor	Pinole	Port Costa	Rodeo	Tara Hills	Service Area Total	Contra Costa County	CA
Population	2,529	3,574	26,041	2,195	18,946	251	9,334	5,202	68,072	1,162,648	39,356,104
Occupied Households	807	1,674	8,990	649	6,784	171	3,058	1,772	23,905	408,537	13,315,822
Square miles[1]	0.30	1.06	6.41	0.32	5.11	0.16	3.74	0.67	17.8	717	155,859
Acres[1]	195	680	4,105	206	3,269	101	2,394	427	11,376	458,813	99,749,848
Under 5 years	1%	2%	4%	2%	5%	0%	6%	8%	5%	5%	6%
5 to 14 years	7%	6%	13%	16%	10%	0%	11%	12%	11%	13%	13%
15 to 17 years	1%	6%	3%	4%	3%	0%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%
18 to 24 years	16%	5%	8%	6%	6%	0%	9%	7%	8%	8%	10%
25 to 64 years	57%	62%	55%	51%	54%	36%	53%	55%	55%	50%	47%
65 years and older	17%	20%	18%	21%	22%	65%	17%	15%	19%	16%	15%
Median age	45	49	43	41	43	67	39	39	--	40	37
White alone	36%	63%	17%	14%	32%	88%	24%	24%	26%	41%	35%
Hispanic/Latino	51%	19%	16%	70%	26%	12%	27%	39%	25%	26%	40%
Asian	9%	6%	41%	9%	24%	0%	23%	23%	28%	18%	15%
Black/African American	4%	9%	19%	6%	12%	0%	14%	9%	14%	8%	5%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Some Other Race	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Two or More Races	0%	3%	5%	0%	6%	0%	10%	5%	6%	5%	4%
High school graduate or higher	90%	96%	92%	83%	89%	87%	85%	91%	90%	90%	84%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25%	40%	45%	27%	38%	15%	28%	30%	38%	45%	36%
Language other than English spoken at home[2]	56%	11%	46%	77%	35%	7%	33%	53%	41%	36%	44%
Speak English less than "very well"[2]	26%	3%	14%	44%	14%	7%	13%	20%	15%	13%	17%
Owner-occupied	74%	56%	80%	81%	72%	29%	58%	71%	72%	67%	56%
Renter-occupied	26%	44%	20%	19%	28%	71%	42%	29%	28%	33%	44%
Average household size	3.1	2.1	2.9	3.4	2.8	1.5	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.82	2.89
Median household income	$152,803	$94,167	$125,880	$77,083	$113,630	-	$91,875	$113,333	--	$120,020	$91,905
Poverty (<200% FPL)	6%	21%	14%	20%	15%	34%	21%	24%	16%	23%	35%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022.* | [1] Size of land area only. [2] Percentage of the population five years and older.

The eight individual communities that comprise WestCAT's service area vary significantly for some high-level demographic and socioeconomic factors (Table 3). More in depth analysis of various sectors of the residents and workers will be provided in the following sections. These are a few differences shown in Table 3 that are worth noting:

- Hercules and Pinole contain the largest resident populations by far and together account for 66% of the service area population.
- Montalvin Manor has the largest share of school-aged children (5 to 17 years old) at 20% of the community's total population. Second-to-lowest is Bayview with 8%.
- The proportions of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color range significantly from 86% to 12%. Hercules and Montalvin Manor have the lowest proportions of people who identify as White alone, with 17% and 14% respectively.
- Crocket has the lowest percentage (3%) of residents who don't speak English "very well" and Montalvin Manor has the highest (44%).
- Rodeo and Crockett have among the highest percentage of renter households at 42% and 44%, respectively, compared to an average of 28% for the whole service area.
- The small community of Port Costa is an outlier in many respects, including size (0.16 square miles), total resident population (251), age (zero residents under the age of 25 and 65% over the age of 65), ethnicity (88% white), language spoken at home (7% language other than English), and remote location.



Map 6: Service Area Population Density

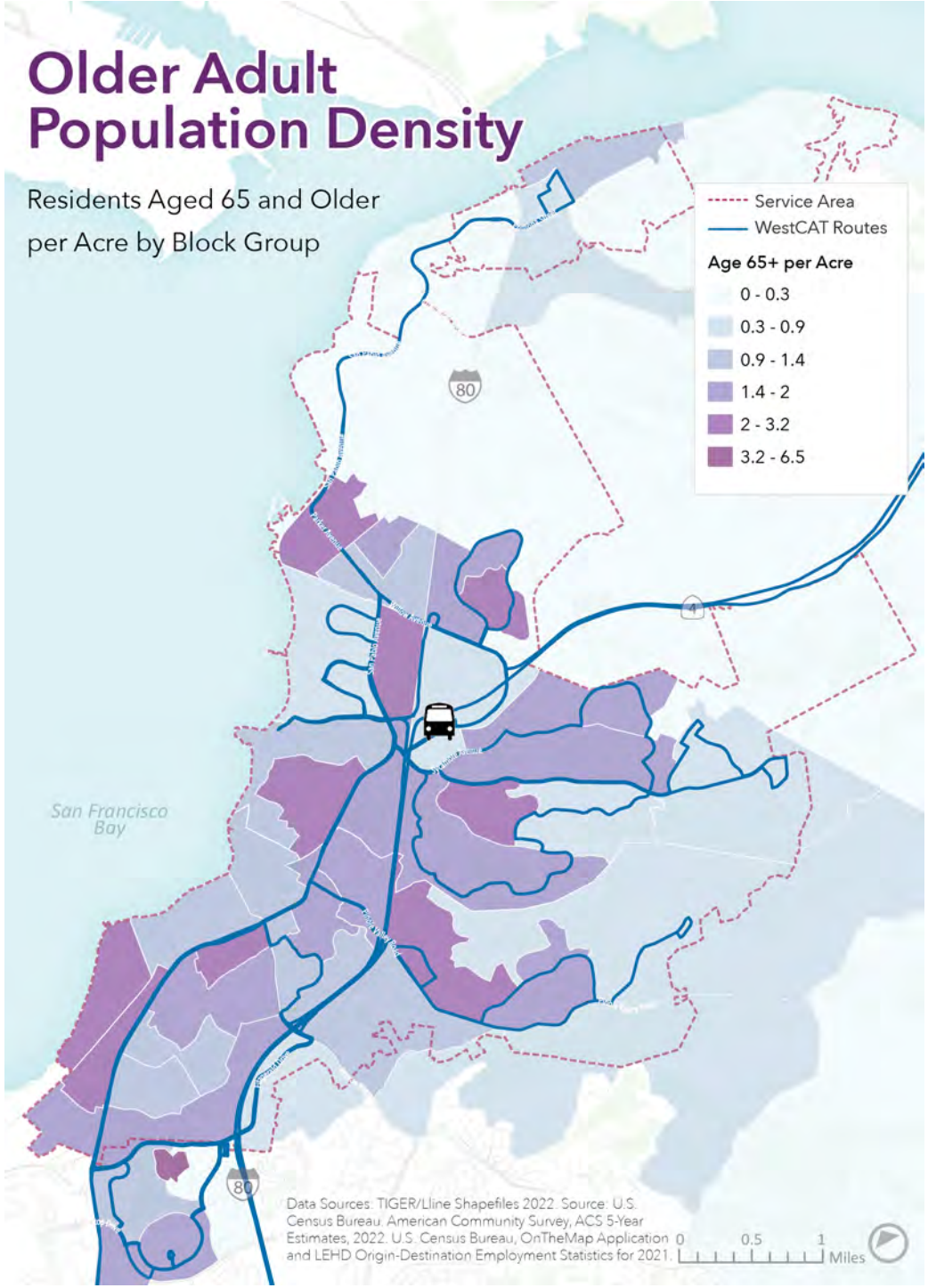
Market Sector Assessments

This section uses American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates from the U.S. Census, unless noted otherwise. The data for this analysis is at the "Census Designated Place (CDP)" level and the geographic data shown in the maps is at the Census "block group" level. Block group data is the smallest geography available for the service area. The block group boundaries do not align perfectly with the service area community boundaries, as shown in the maps. This should be taken into consideration when making assumptions about the counts or densities of market sector populations and jobs in this section.

Older Adults

Older adults who can no longer drive due to impairments related to aging often find it difficult to get around. Fixed-route transit is a viable option for older adults to go about independently. In recent years, the "senior tsunami," representing the aging of the baby boom generation, started taking effect. The service area communities, in particular, have a high proportion of adults over the age of 65 at 19% of the population. This is higher than the County, as a whole, and California, with proportions of 16% and 15%, respectively.

Map 7 shows the density of older adult residents per acre. There are concentrations throughout the service area, with the exception of Crockett and Port Costa. The highest concentration is in the Hilltop Bayview neighborhood where there are a lot of residents overall, due to the presence of multiple apartment complexes.

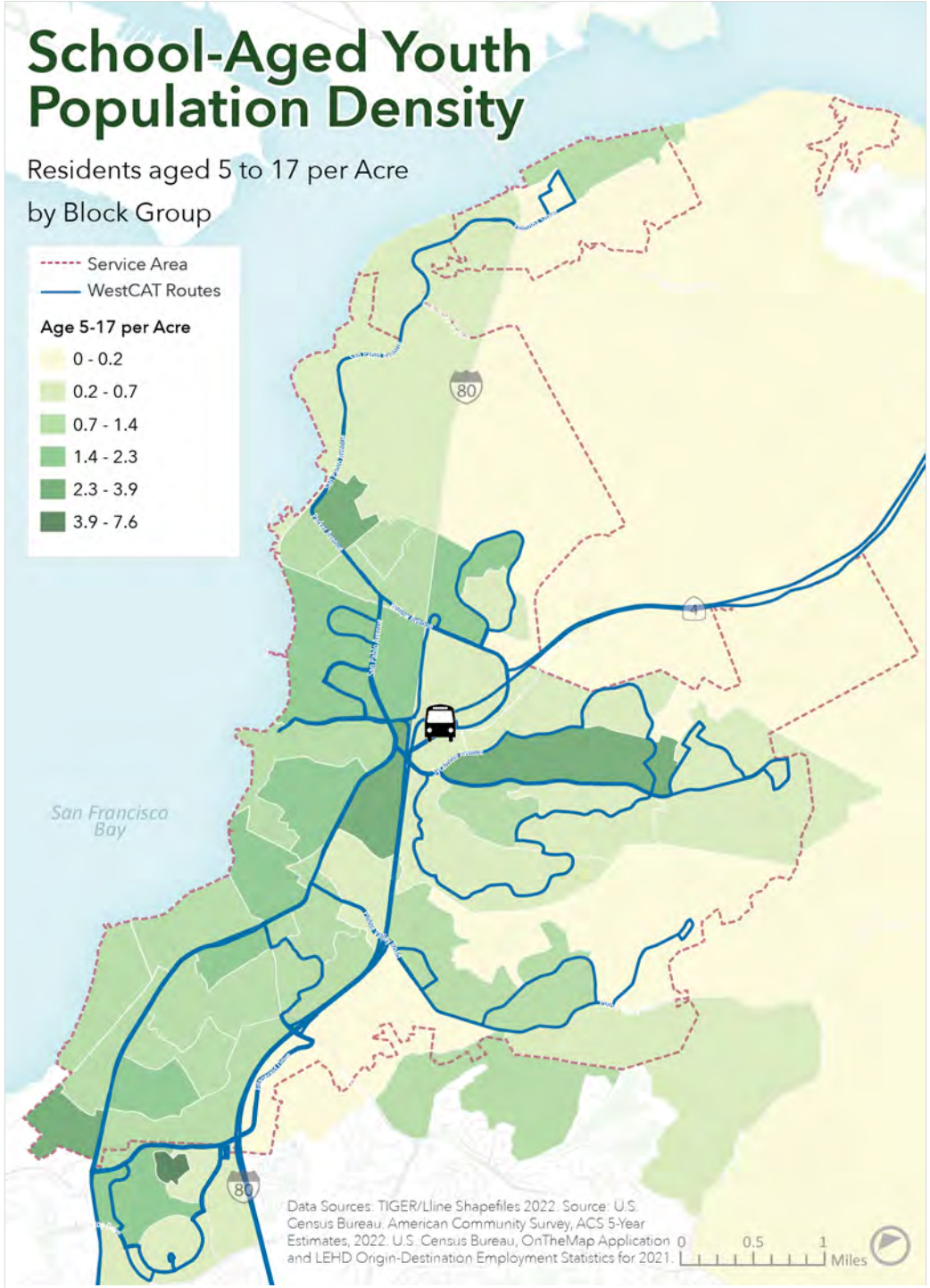


Map 7: Service Area Older Adult

School-Aged Youth

Public transit is a viable option for some school aged youth who live too far, or it's unsafe, to walk, bike, or roll to school. WestCAT currently makes special trips that deviate from the regular route to serve Hercules Middle and High Schools, as well as Pinole Valley High School. In addition, there is a program that provides free transit tickets for low-income students provided by Western Contra Costa Advisory Commission (WCCTAC).

There are several opportunities for serving school-aged youth on transit, such as alignment with schools and promotions, which will be explored further at a later phase of this study. One of the public engagement goals is to gather information from this demographic about their wants and needs relating to potential transit use.



Map 8: School-Aged Youth

People with Disabilities

There are approximately 8,130 people with one or more disabilities living within the service area, which is 12% of the total population, which is very slightly higher than the County overall (11.2%) and California (11%). Older adults are much more likely to have at least one disability and 30% of older adults in the service area self-reported a disability. Rodeo, Pinole, and Hercules have the highest amounts of older adults with disabilities (Figure 18).

For some people with disabilities who do not drive, fixed-route public transit is a viable option for some or all of their trips. For people that are unable to ride fixed-route transit due to disability, WestCAT provides on-demand paratransit service.

People Living in Poverty

The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) income thresholds vary by the number of people in the household. Due to the higher cost of living, planning and social services agencies in the Bay Area generally use household income under 200% of the FPL as the measure of living in poverty.

The communities of Hercules and Pinole do not have the highest poverty rates, but due to their larger populations the count of residents living in poverty are the highest (Figure 19, next page). An estimated 57% of renter households in the service area are "rent burdened," meaning that their rent equates to 30% or more of their income. Additionally, 28% are "severely rent burdened" and spend more than 50% of their income on rent.

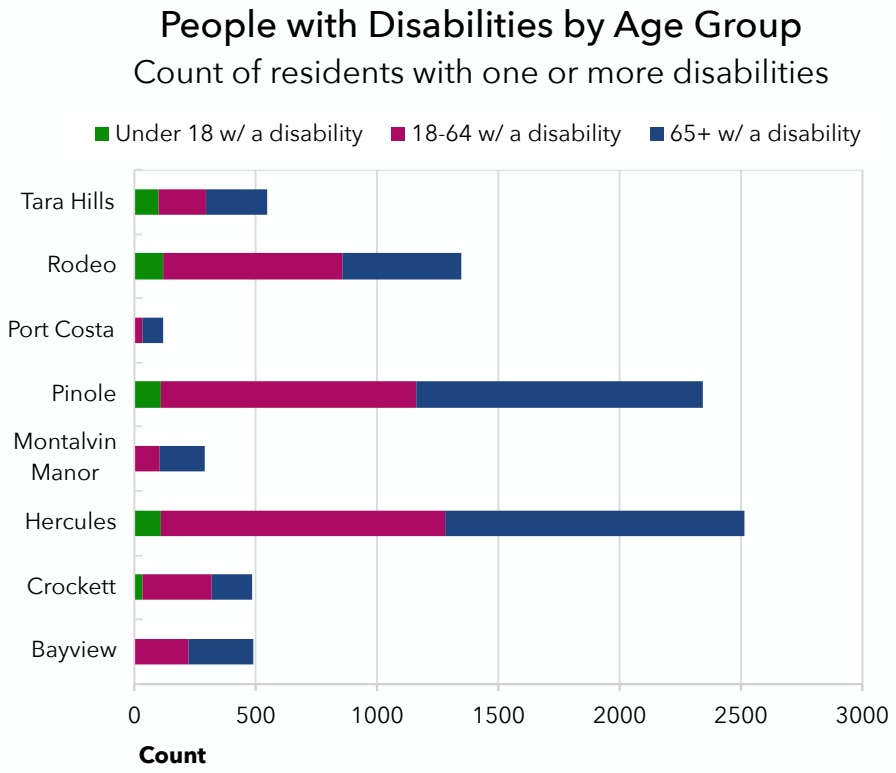


Figure 18: People with Disabilities by Age Group

The map to the right shows the density of residents living in poverty throughout the service area. The areas with higher than average concentrations of impoverished households include the Bayo Vista neighborhood in Rodeo, Western Pinole, Tara Hills, and the Hilltop Bayview neighborhood.

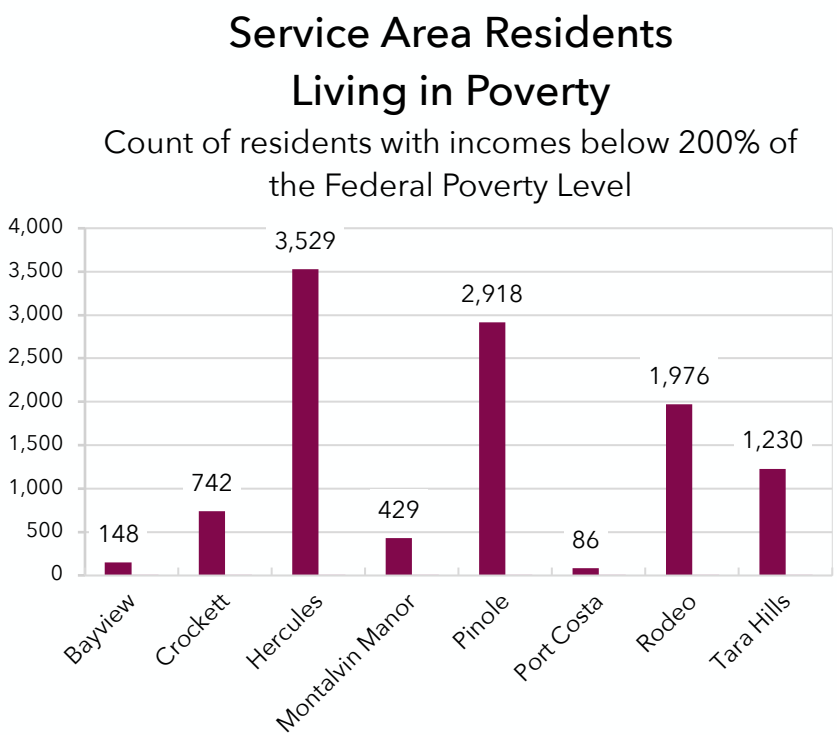
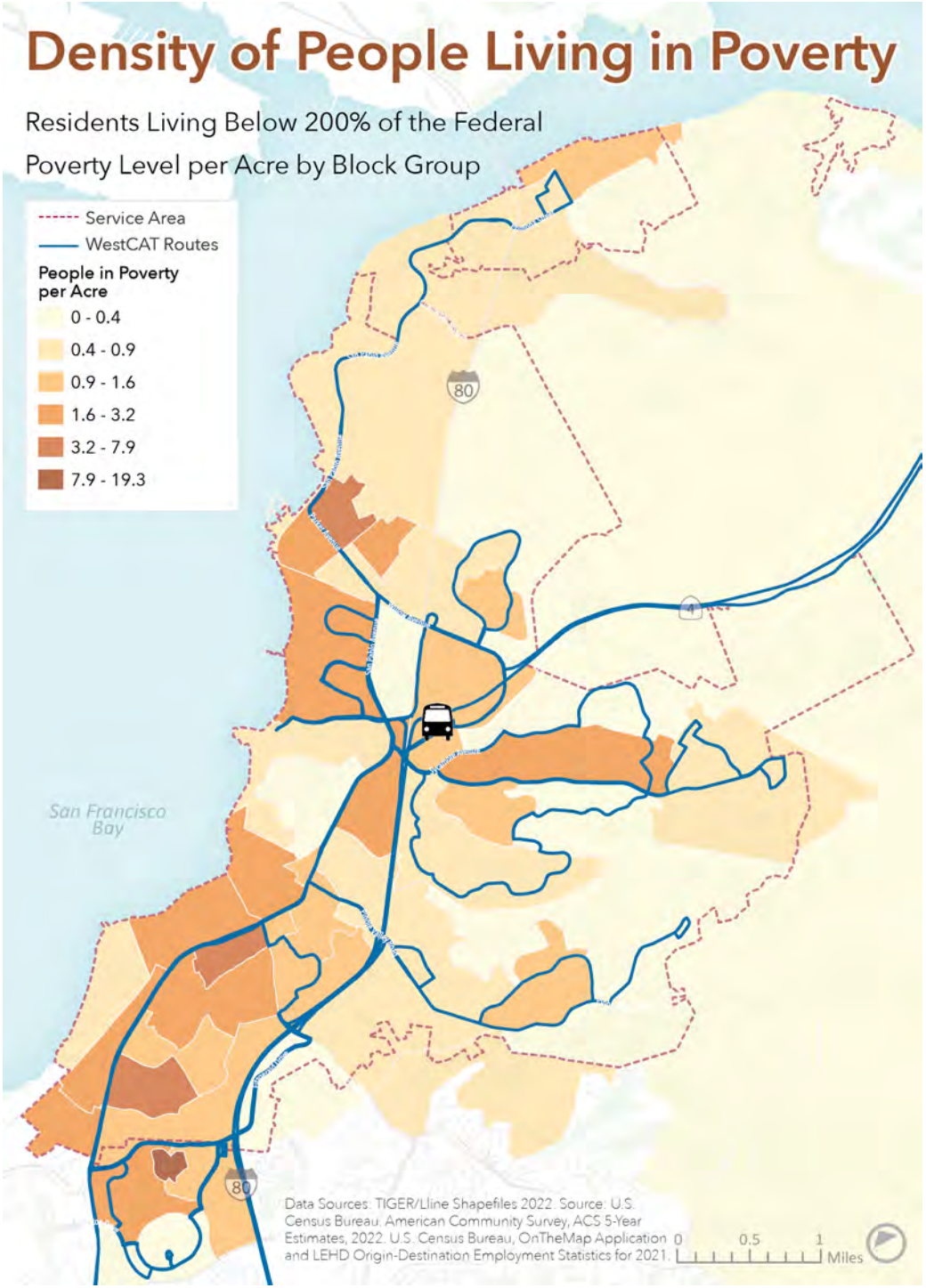


Figure 19: Service Area Residents Living in Poverty



Map 9: People Living in Poverty

Commute Mode

Figure 20 to the right shows the mode of travel that service area residents use to commute to work. It should be noted that this commute data, which is estimated based on years 2018 to 2022, may not be representative of the current circumstance. Commuting has changed significantly in the post-pandemic world and there is insufficient data at this time to fully understand how people are getting around at the local level.

At the County level, the proportion of people that commuted on public transit was nearly the same as the project area, at 7.6%, but had a higher proportion of people who worked from home, at 17%, for the same data estimate period (2018-2022). Data for larger geographies is available for single years and so we can look at statistics for the County to extrapolate for the service area. Figure 22 shows the change over time in the proportions of total County residents that either took public transit or worked from home. Prior to the pandemic, about 11% of County workers commuted via public transit and 7% worked from home. Unsurprisingly, during the pandemic the proportion of County residents that took public transit to work dropped significantly, and then rose to 6.4% in 2023, which is a little over half of what it was in 2019. The share of people who worked from home quadrupled to 28% and then dropped to 17.7% in 2023, which is still significantly higher than in 2019.

Oddly, among workers aged 16 years or older living in the service area, none of the 2.2%, or 748 workers who do not have access to a vehicle commuted to work using public transit. In addition, among the commuters who used transit, the largest

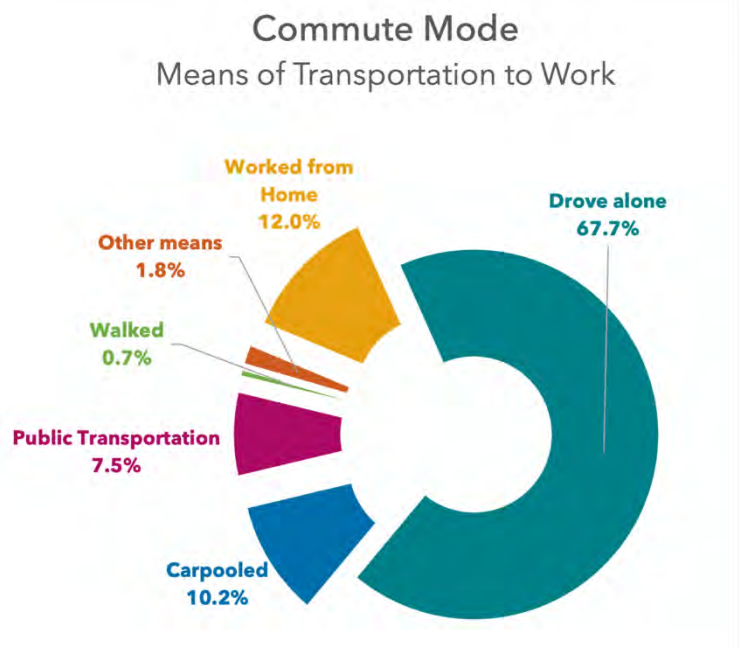


Figure 20: Residents' Commute Mode

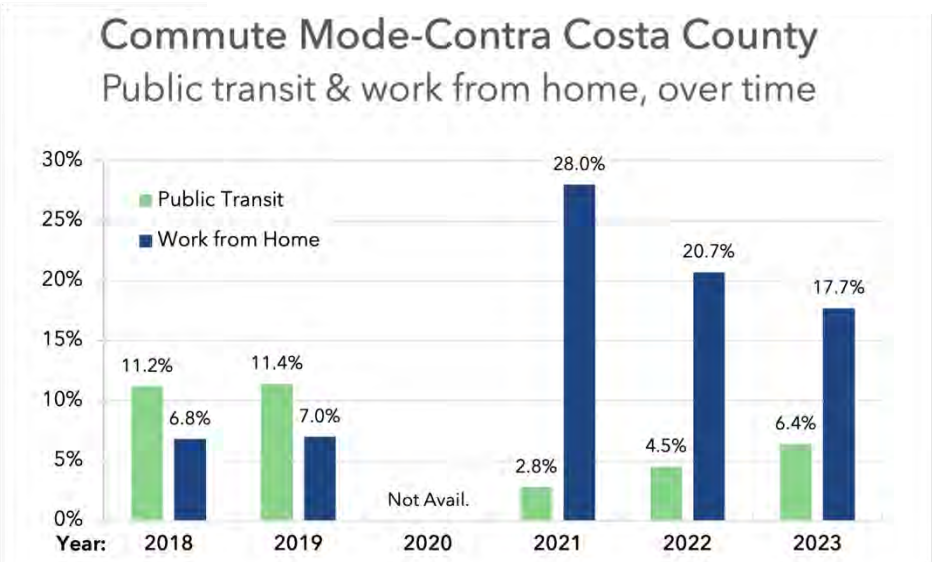


Figure 22: Commute Mode of Service Area Residents Over Time

share (42%) lived in households with three or more vehicles available.

Among households in the service area, 5.6% did not have a single vehicle available. An additional 4.5% of households had one or more workers than there were vehicles available.

Jobs & Workers in the Service Area

This and the following section use employment facts that were derived from the U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics for 2021.

There were approximately 11,869 full- and part-time employees that work within the service area in 2021. Workers with jobs in the service area are much more likely to identify as white alone (58%), compared to residents of the service area (26%). They were also much less likely to have completed high school or have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The most common industry sectors of jobs in the service area are shown in Table 4 to the right. The most common industry sectors for residents of the service area who work, either inside or outside of the service area, are shown in Table 5 to the right.

The majority of service area residents that work outside of the service area earned more than $3,333 per month, which equates to about $40,000 per year (Table 6). Only 11.3% were earning $1,250 per month or less, which was more than 100%, but well below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for a single person living alone in 2021.

Table 4: Jobs in the Service Area Top Industry Sectors

NAICS Industry Sector	Count	Share
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,144	18.1%
Retail Trade	1,903	16.0%
Manufacturing	1,805	15.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,571	13.2%
Educational Services	1,130	9.5%

Table 5: Service Area Residents' Jobs Top Industry Sectors

NAICS Industry Sector	Count	Share
Health Care and Social Assistance	6,360	20.4%
Retail Trade	2,985	9.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,824	9.1%
Educational Services	2,515	8.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	2,035	6.5%

Table 6: Earnings for Residents Working Outside the Service Area

Workers earning:	Count	Share
$1,250 per month or less	3,275	11.3%
Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	5,841	20.2%
Earning more than $3,333 per month	19,843	68.5%

Travel Patterns of Commuters

There are far more employees living in the service area (31,139), compared to jobs within the service area (11,869), with a net outflow of 19,270 employees. Only 7% of employees living in the service area also work within the service area. In addition, 82% of employees working in the service area live outside of the service area. This is a very important consideration for planning bus service because it points to the importance of regional connections for service area residents who commute. Even though this number is likely to be lower now that working remotely has become more common, it is still a significant indicator.

Table 7 shows that about 74% of these workers have a commute more than 10 miles and 25% have commutes longer than 25 miles. The most common home and work locations for service area residents and employees are shown in Figure 23.

93% of workers who live in the WestCAT service area have jobs that are *outside* the service area

Top Commute Cities

WORK Service Area Residents that Commute	HOME Employees that Work in the Service Area
San Francisco - 16%	Richmond - 8%
Oakland - 10%	Hercules - 7%
Richmond - 7%	Vallejo - 6%
Berkeley - 5%	Pinole - 5%

Figure 23: Top Commute Cities

Table 7: Distance to Jobs Outside the Service Area

Distance	Count	Share
Less than 10 miles	8,188	26.3%
10 to 24 miles	15,225	48.9%
25 to 50 miles	3,879	12.5%
Greater than 50 miles	3,847	12.4%

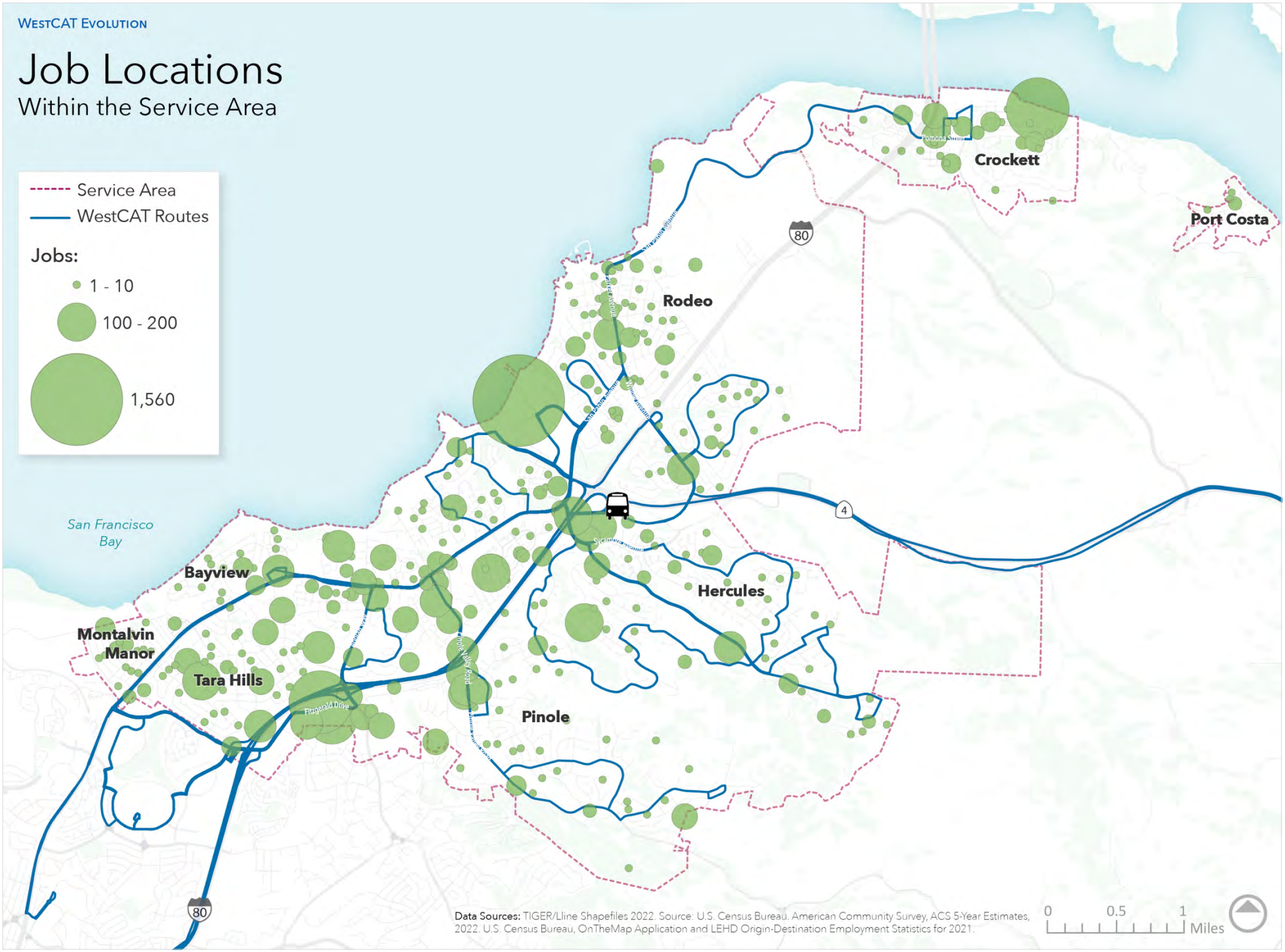
Employment Density

Residential and employment densities are key factors for assessing the demand for transit, with the objective of serving the most people overall. In addition, change in job location is one of the biggest factors for whether someone decided to use transit for commuting.

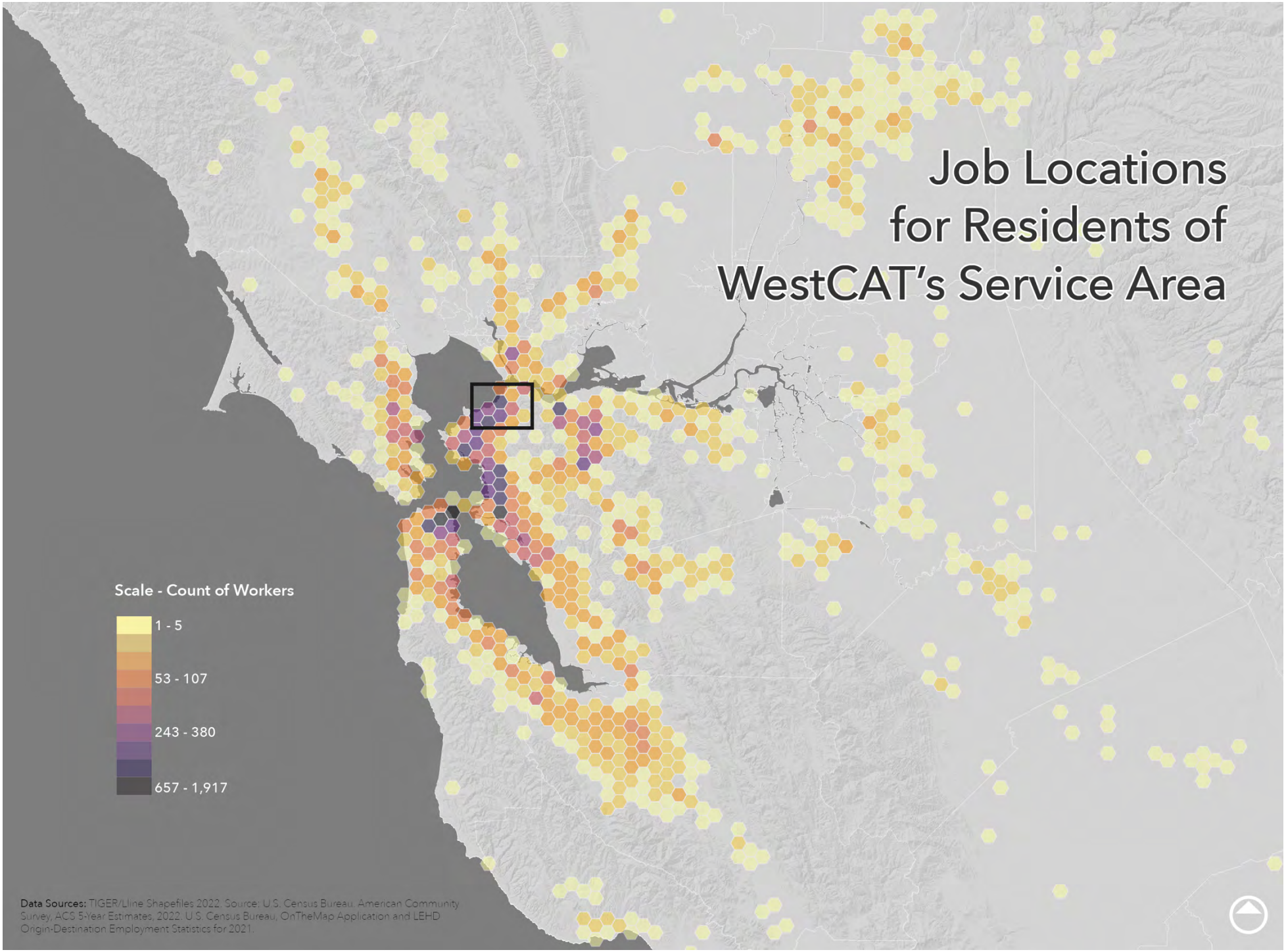
The maps on the following pages show where there are concentrations of jobs within the service area and where residents are commuting to. Jobs are spread to all reaches of the service area, and there are concentrations particularly along Interstate 80 and San Pablo Avenue (Map 10). The largest employer, Bio Rad maintains its corporate headquarters in Hercules at the Waterfront and employs about 1,560 people.

Map 11 shows where 31,139 service area residents are traveling to for work. They are commuting to all over the Bay Area and beyond, for notably long distances. There are significant amounts of people going to all nine bay area counties, as well as areas outside of the Bay Area, such as Santa Cruz, Modesto, and Sacramento.

Residents are commuting all over the Bay Area and beyond



Map 10: Job Locations within the Service Area



Map 11: Job Locations for Residents of the Service Area

RECENT & CONCURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS & PROJECTS

The first section in this chapter summarizes recent and concurrent planning efforts that are relevant and inform this study. The second section lists development and transportation projects that are either planned, under construction, or recently completed within the service area.

Plans & Studies

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority

Short Range Transit Plan

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, 2023-2028

The WestCAT Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) describes the current state of service as of 2022, including the effects of COVID-19 on services and ridership. The SRTP also discusses the future of WestCAT service under three different funding scenarios identified by MTC. The key takeaways that are relevant to WestCAT Evolution are:

- Service cuts during the pandemic prioritized maintaining service span and geographic coverage over frequency.
- Future service increases and/or reductions will be dependent upon revenue levels.
- Any new service changes will need to account for changing travel patterns, increased operations costs, and new developments within the service area.

Zero Emissions Bus Rollout Plan

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, 2023

WestCAT's Zero Emissions Bus Rollout Plan outlines the transition of the agency's bus fleet to 100% comprised of zero-emission vehicles by the year 2040. The current plan is to transition the existing fleet to Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Buses (FCEB's), which can accommodate the WestCAT's current route structure. In addition, WestCAT recently received a 20.6 million dollar Low No grant that will enable the purchase and installation of onsite fueling for the initial 15 vehicles. The Plan includes a fleet replacement schedule for purchase of only zero-emission transit vehicles one a one-to-one basis, starting in 2027.

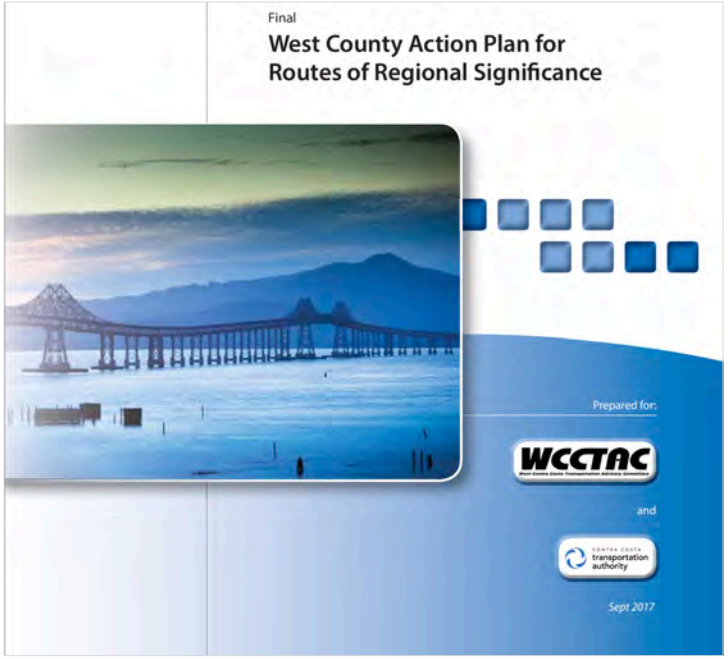
Western Contra Costa Transportation Commission

WCCTC WEST CONTRA COSTA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

West County Action Plan

West Contra Costa Transportation Commission, 2023

The 2023 West County Action Plan Update is the result of a regional, multijurisdictional planning process intended to reduce the impact of new development on freeways, arterials, transit and major trails update. The West County is one of five subregions of Contra Costa County and includes El Cerrito, San Pablo, Richmond, and unincorporated areas of the County, in addition to the WestCAT service area. The Action Plan is part of the 2023 update of the Countywide Transportation Plan and is tied to the County's local half-cent sales tax, Measure J.



The Action Plan used pre-pandemic data from 2019 to identify objectives and recommended actions for Routes of Regional Significance (RRS), which are important transportation facilities

that connect two or more subareas of Contra Costa County, have significant through traffic, and/or provides access to a regional highway or transit facility. Identified Routes of Regional Significance that overlap the WestCAT service area include the San Pablo Avenue/I-80 Corridor and State Route 4 Corridor.

West County High-Capacity Transit Study

West Contra Costa Transportation Commission, 2017

This 2017 study evaluated public transportation options and identified funding opportunities to expand high-capacity transit service for West County, which includes the incorporated cities, outside of the WestCAT transit area, of Richmond, San Pablo, and El Cerrito. In this study, "high capacity transit" is loosely characterized as high frequency/passenger capacity, fewer stops, and higher speed transit services.

Although the study relies on data which is no longer accurate due to its being collected prior to the pandemic, the study's final proposal identified five projects, which may be viable in the future. Those relevant to the WestCAT service area include:

- Increased Express Bus Service on I-80 from the Hercules Transit Center to San Francisco and expansion of service to Berkeley, Emeryville and Oakland
- Bus Rapid Transit service along San Pablo Ave
- Commuter rail including completion of the Regional Intermodal Transit Center in Hercules

West Contra Costa County Express Bus Implementation Plan

West Contra Costa Transportation Commission, 2020

This 2020 Plan built on the findings from the 2017 West County High Capacity Study and proposed express bus services

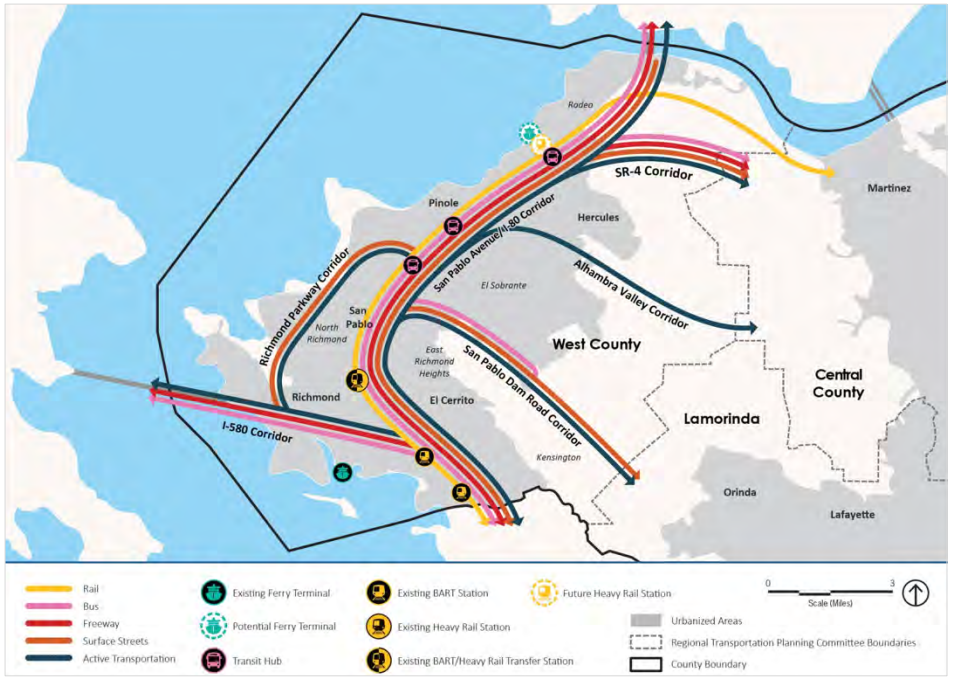
connecting western Contra Costa County with other key regions in the Bay Area. Although the study was based on pre-pandemic data and outreach efforts, the proposed route network structure, operations parameters, and implementation steps may be helpful. The Study's analysis of potential demand for express bus will be useful for determining if the current and near-future densities, travel patterns, and funding scenarios are sufficient for express bus service.

West County Needs Assessment Study of Measure J Programs for Seniors and People with Disabilities

West Contra Costa Transportation Commission, 2018

This 2018 needs assessment produced recommendations for services for older adults and people with disabilities in western Contra Costa County. Although the needs assessment was conducted pre-covid, some recommended strategies may still be relevant, including:

- Better coordination of non-ADA services
- Establish a comprehensive mobility management program
- Explore microtransit for same-day trips
- Support increase of available funding



Source: Placeworks, 2023

Figure 24: Routes of Regional Significance, West County

Contra Costa Transportation Authority

Integrated Transit Plan

Contra Costa Transportation Authority, in process

The Integrated Transit Plan began in 2023 and is currently in process. WestCAT Evolution project staff are actively coordinating with the Integrated Transit Plan team.

The following description of the Plan is taken verbatim from the project website (https://ccta.net/planning/integrated-transit-plan).

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is developing an Integrated Transit Plan (ITP) to improve transit services and coordination in Contra Costa County. CCTA is reviewing all existing services and will recommend new ways to improve transit for everyone, with special consideration for the different needs of riders across the county.

CCTA is working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the five Contra Costa bus operators (AC Transit, County Connection, Tri Delta Transit, WestCAT, and Wheels) to identify ways to optimize the transit network. The ITP will provide guidance for an improved transit network that better serves local and regional travelers.

The ITP will also include a list of improvements that will support enhanced services. The goal of these projects and improvements is to attract more riders and position the bus operators to meet future challenges.

Projects - Planned and Under Construction

This section describes large planned, under construction, and recently completed developments and transportation projects that may impact demand for and/or the accessibility of WestCAT's services. This is not an exhaustive list of all developments in the WestCAT service area.

Vista Woods

600 Roble Avenue, Pinole

- 179 units, under construction
- Affordable residential apartments for older adults

Valor Village

811 San Pablo Avenue, Pinole

- 33 units, under construction – nearing completion
- Affordable residential housing

Appian Village

2151 Appian Way, Pinole

- 154 units, under construction – nearing completion
- 31 affordable units
- Residential housing

Sycamore Crossing

Sycamore Ave & San Pablo Ave, Hercules

- Hotel, commercial, residential
- Under construction

Figure 25: Sycamore Crossing Site Plan

Hercules Hub

Hercules waterfront

The Hercules Hub is a transit-oriented development at the Hercules waterfront. It will eventually include 1,400 housing units and 340,000 square feet of retail/commercial/office/industrial space. The transportation options will include a new train stop along the Capitol Corridor Amtrak line and a new ferry terminal, along with direct access to bus, carpool, bicycle, and pedestrian options. The first three phases of many have been completed, including building the initial infrastructure, expanding the Bay Trail, extending local roadways and sidewalks, and adding new bicycle and pedestrian trails. Design for the utility relocation to make room for the Union Pacific railroad track realignment is currently under design.

Countywide Smart Signals

Countywide

This project will upgrade traffic signals at 300 intersections throughout the County, including San Pablo Avenue within the WestCAT service area. The project is being led by the Contra Costa Transit Authority in coordination with the Cities and the County staff. Among other features, the upgraded traffic signals will have the allow for Transit Signal Priority, which would have a positive impact on WestCAT's services that operate on those roads. The project is currently in the design and engineering phase, with construction scheduled to begin in 2025.

Figure 26: Hercules Hub Location Map

APPENDIX C:

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS SUMMARY - FULL

WestCAT Evolution

Public Engagement Results Summary

6.18.25

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INTRODUCTION

Public engagement is a key component of the WestCAT Evolution planning process. The goal is to ensure that passengers, stakeholders, and community members have an opportunity to provide input on transit needs, priorities, and potential improvements. Outreach efforts are designed to gather input from both riders and non-riders, including residents and employees, through a variety of strategies that engage diverse communities such as seniors, people with disabilities, students, and commuters.

This summary describes all of the public engagement activities shown on the right and the key findings.

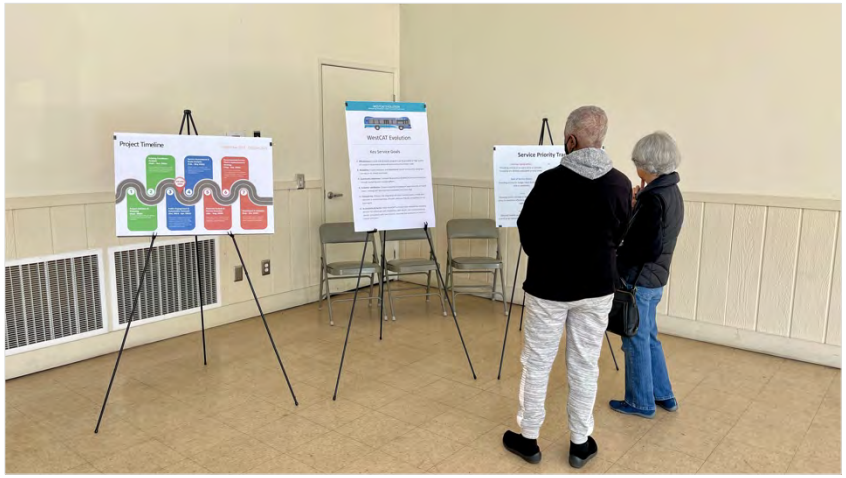

Figure 1: Image of Open House Attendees

Public Engagement Activities

- **Onboard Passenger Survey** – 640 responses; collected rider demographics and service feedback
- **Online Non-Rider Survey** – 179 responses; gathered input from residents and workers who don't regularly use WestCAT, 250 responses total
- **ADA & Senior DAR Phone Interviews** – 27 interviews; insights from Senior Dial-a-Ride and Paratransit riders
- **Open House Workshops** – 40+ attendees; 1-on-1 discussions, interactive boards, and comment cards
- **Stakeholder Interviews** – 6 interviewees; input from community-based partners
- **Special Events** – 75+ interactions; brief rider conversations at stakeholder organization events
- **Pinole Senior Center Discussion** – 8 participants; group feedback from older adults
- **Customer Requests** – 337 customer comments reviewed

OVERALL KEY FINDINGS

Many WestCAT riders choose transit even when other options are available. The majority of onboard survey respondents reported using WestCAT for work or school, highlighting the system's central role in weekday commuting. Notably, 54% of riders said they could have driven or gotten a ride instead of taking the bus, indicating that many are choosing WestCAT despite access to alternatives. Other survey responses—such as high rates of vehicle access and flexible travel behavior—also point toward a sizable segment of riders who value transit's affordability, convenience, or other benefits.

The most requested improvements are more frequent and more reliable service. Across all engagement activities, increased frequency—especially on key routes during peak hours and weekends—was the most common suggestion. Riders also expressed the need for improved reliability, particularly around schedule adherence and transfer connections.

Real-time arrival information is a high priority for many passengers. Many respondents indicated they would benefit from more accurate and accessible real-time information. Requests included mobile tracking apps, live signage at stops, and better communication during service disruptions.

Many non-riders are open to using WestCAT, but gaps in service or access remain a barrier. Non-rider survey respondents cited a range of issues that keep them from using the service, including limited weekend coverage, long wait times, or lack of direct connections to destinations. Several respondents indicated they would consider using transit more frequently if service was closer to home or better aligned with their schedules.

Lynx weekend service was one of the most common requests. Across surveys and public events, current and potential riders emphasized a desire for Lynx service on weekends, especially for reaching San Francisco. Many described the route as fast and convenient, and expressed interest in using it for leisure travel, family outings, or work on Saturdays and Sundays.

Later evening service is also in demand, especially for BART connections. Several respondents noted that current service hours are not late enough to support their evening commutes. Riders highlighted the need for buses to operate later, particularly for connecting to BART after 8:00 or 9:00 PM.

Long hold times when booking Dial-a-Ride trips were a common concern. ADA Paratransit and Senior DAR riders frequently reported waiting on hold for extended periods when calling to schedule rides. This was a consistent theme in interviews and was often described as stressful or frustrating, especially when return trip confirmations were unclear.

The WestCAT community values courteous drivers and clean buses. Riders consistently gave high marks to the professionalism and kindness of WestCAT operators. Cleanliness and onboard experience also received positive mentions in both surveys and interviews.

FIXED-ROUTE ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

An onboard survey is one of the most important aspects of public engagement in this planning process, because information is obtained directly from current users. The purpose of an onboard survey is to gain a thorough understanding of WestCAT's current passengers, including their travel needs, priorities for potential improvements, and key demographics.

642 WestCAT passengers submitted surveys

Methodology

The onboard survey aimed to gather input from current WestCAT riders about their travel habits, service preferences, and demographics. During early December 2024, paper questionnaires were handed out directly to passengers onboard WestCAT buses as well as at major transit hubs. A total of 642 completed surveys were collected, including 13 responses to the Spanish version. The survey contained 31 questions, several of which included multiple parts. To boost participation, respondents had the opportunity to enter a drawing to win a $500 gift card.

TELL US HOW TO SERVE YOU BETTER! COMPLETE THIS SURVEY AND HAVE THE CHANCE TO WIN $500!

WESTCAT

What is the date today? _____ 2024

1. For how long have you been riding WestCAT?
1 ☐ Less than a year 2 ☐ 1-2 years 3 ☐ 3-4 years 4 ☐ Longer than 5 years

2. On how many days in a typical week *(7 days)* do you ride transit?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I'm not a regular transit rider

3. Which WestCAT bus routes do you use regularly? *(choose up to 4)*
1 ☐ 10 2 ☐ 11 3 ☐ 12 4 ☐ 15 5 ☐ 16 6 ☐ 19
7 ☐ 30Z 8 ☐ C3 9 ☐ JX 10 ☐ JPX 11 ☐ JL/JR

4. For what purpose(s) do you usually ride WestCAT? *(mark all that apply)*
1 ☐ Work 2 ☐ Elementary 3 ☐ Middle, or High School
4 ☐ College or Vocational School 5 ☐ Shopping 6 ☐ Social Services
7 ☐ Doctor or Medical visit 8 ☐ Social or Recreation 9 ☐ Other _____

5. Do you usually transfer between WestCAT and other transit systems to get where you need to go? 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
If yes, which one(s)? *(mark all that apply)*
1 ☐ BART 2 ☐ County Connection 3 ☐ AC Transit 4 ☐ Muni
5 ☐ Amtrak 6 ☐ Tri-Delta 7 ☐ Other _____

6. How do you usually get to the first WestCAT bus stop?
1 ☐ Walk 2 ☐ Wheelchair/scooter 3 ☐ Bike 4 ☐ Drive a private vehicle
5 ☐ Get a ride 6 ☐ Transfer from another public transit system

7. Why do you ride WestCAT? *(mark up to three)*
1 ☐ It's cheaper than driving 2 ☐ It's more convenient than driving
3 ☐ I don't have access to a personal vehicle 4 ☐ I don't drive
5 ☐ It's my only form of transportation 6 ☐ It's better for the environment
7 ☐ It's safer than driving

8. Could you have driven or gotten a ride for the bus trip you are currently on? 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

9. How would you make this trip without WestCAT?
1 ☐ Walk/Wheelchair/Scooter 2 ☐ Bike 3 ☐ Carpool/Vanpool 4 ☐ Dial-a-Ride
5 ☐ Be driven by someone else 6 ☐ Uber/Lyft 7 ☐ Taxi 8 ☐ Drive alone
9 ☐ I would not make this trip 10 ☐ Other _____

10. A year from now, would you prefer to:
1 ☐ Keep using WestCAT as often as now 2 ☐ Get a car, but keep using WestCAT
3 ☐ Get a car and stop using WestCAT 4 ☐ Stop using WestCAT for another reason*

11. Which of the following describe your employment status? *(check all that apply)*
1 ☐ Employed full time 2 ☐ Employed part time 3 ☐ College Student
4 ☐ Middle/HS Student 5 ☐ Not currently employed 6 ☐ Retired

12. If you are employed, in a typical week, do you usually:
A. Work after 8 pm on any day? 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
C. Start before 7:00 am on any day? 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
B. Work Saturday and/or Sunday? 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

13. Are you a student? 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes, K-12 3 ☐ Yes, Contra Costa College 4 ☐ Yes, other College/University _____

14. How many people are in your household?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 or more

15. Do you have a valid driver's license? 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

16. How many people with valid driver's licenses are in your household, including yourself?
1 2 3 4 or more

17. How many personal vehicles are available for your household to use?
0 1 2 3 or more

18. What language do you usally speak at home?
1 ☐ English 2 ☐ Spanish 3 ☐ Mandarin 4 ☐ Cantonese
5 ☐ Tagalog 6 ☐ Vietnamese 7 ☐ Other _____

19. What year were you born? _____

20. Do you identify as...
1 ☐ Female 2 ☐ Male 3 ☐ Non-binary/non-conforming
5 ☐ Other 4 ☐ Prefer not to answer

21. Which do you consider yourself? *(mark all that apply)*
1 ☐ African/American 2 ☐ Asian 3 ☐ Hispanic 4 ☐ Native American
5 ☐ White 6 ☐ Other _____ 7 ☐ Prefer not to declare

22. What is your approximate household income?
1 ☐ Less than $30,000 2 ☐ $30,000 - $40,999 3 ☐ $41,000 - $51,999
4 ☐ $52,000 - $62,999 5 ☐ $63,000 - $73,999 6 ☐ $74,000 - $83,999
7 ☐ $84,000 - $105,000 8 ☐ More than $105,000 9 ☐ Don't know or prefer not to say

23. How often do you use social media?
1 ☐ Often 2 ☐ Occassionally 3 ☐ Rarely or Never

24. If you use social media, which of the following do you use regularly?
1 ☐ Facebook 2 ☐ Twitter/X 3 ☐ TikTok 4 ☐ LinkedIn
5 ☐ Instagram 6 ☐ YouTube 7 ☐ Other _____

25. What can WestCAT do to improve the quality of communication about its services?

TURN OVER
more questions on the back

Figure 2: Onboard Survey Questionnaire - Side 1

Systemwide Findings

This section summarizes systemwide survey results to provide an overview of who rides WestCAT, how and why they travel, how they access information, and how they rate the service. It also highlights rider priorities for improvements. Many of these findings will be explored in greater detail by individual route in the subsequent main task: Service Assessment & Opportunities.

Many of the questions in the survey allowed for multiple response selections to get at the full spectrum of riders and their travel, therefore the percentages often add up to more than 100%.

Who Rides WestCAT?

Employment & Student Status

Most passengers are employed either full (60.1%) or part time (17.4%). About 20% identified that they were a student, with 6.2% attending Contra Costa College, 7.8% attending "some other college," and about 6% in middle or high school. The combination of "Employed part time" and "College student" was the most common dual response (4.5%), indicating that some respondents have overlapping statuses.

Respondents who are employed were asked three questions about their work schedules, which yielded the following results:

- 42% work after 8pm
- 50% work before 7am
- 41% work weekends

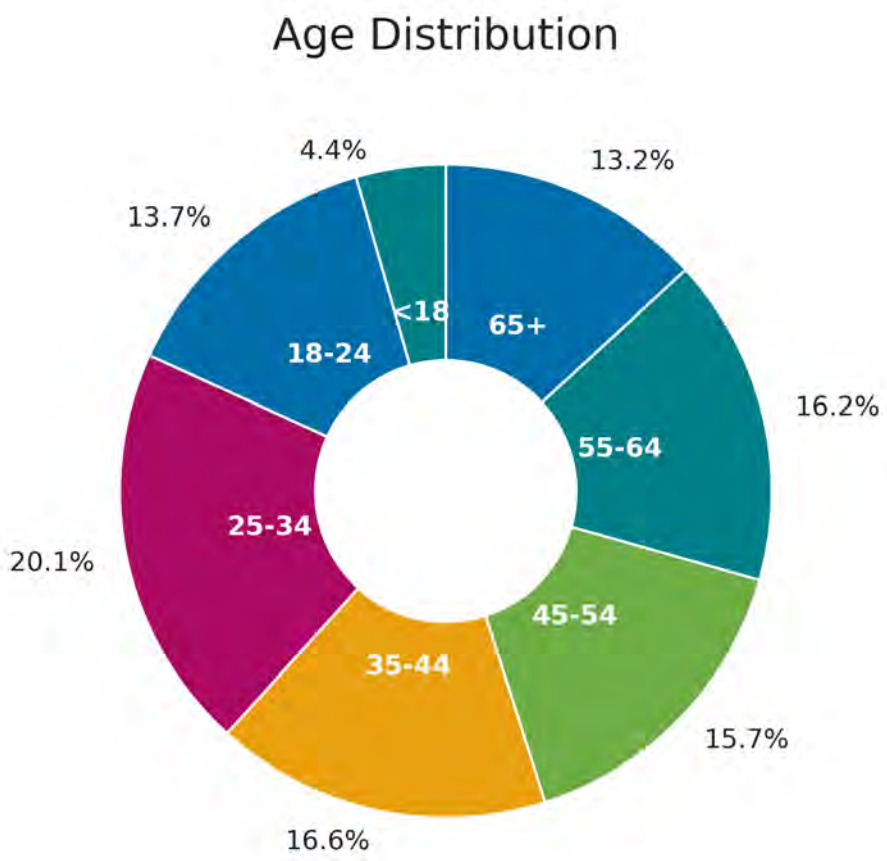

Figure 3: Onboard Survey - Age

Demographics & Socioeconomics

The distribution shows that the service is used across all age groups, with a slight peak in the young adult category (25-34). The relatively even distribution across other adult age groups suggests the service is valuable to people throughout their life.

Working-age adults (aged 18-64) represent 82.3% of respondents, but only 64% of the service area population. Older adults represent 13.2% of respondents, but account for 19% of the service area population. This suggests that older adults in area are likely using other services to get around, including WestCAT's Dial-a-Ride, or taking less trips.

There were slightly more female (52.5%) than male (43.1%) respondents, with 2.2% of respondents identifying as "non-binary" or "other."

Spanish is the most common (15.2%) non-English language spoken at home by passengers. A little under a third of respondents did not select English as one of the languages spoken at home. Of these respondents, 44.9% indicated that they spoke Spanish, followed by 11% that speak Tagalog.

Respondents were able to select more than one ethnicity that they identify with. About a quarter of respondents selected "Hispanic/Latino," which is very similar to the proportion of residents in WestCAT's service area that are Hispanic/Latino, according to the American Community Survey. About a third of survey respondents selected "Asian," which is a bit higher than the residential proportion of 28%. The proportion of African American survey respondents (24%) is higher than the proportion of service area residents (14%).

Most of the survey respondents chose not to disclose their household income range. Among those that did answer the

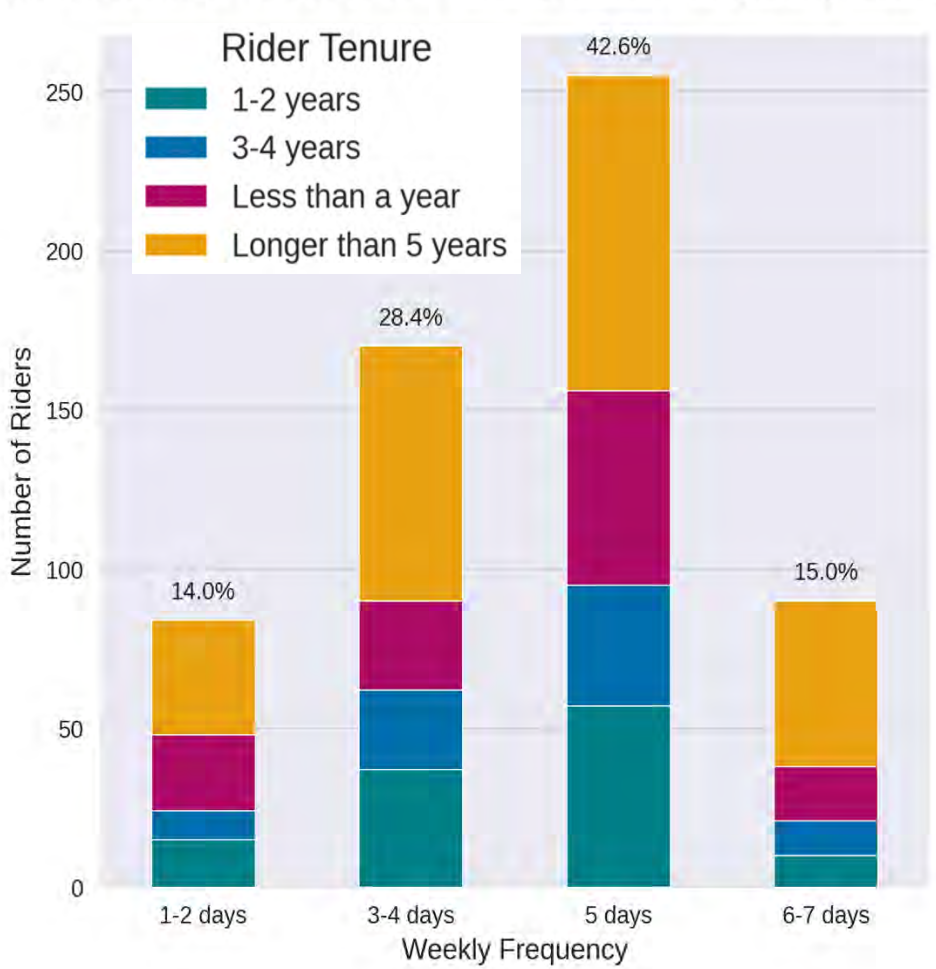

Figure 4: Onboard Survey - Tenure by Frequency

question, about 25% had a household income of less than $30k per year. Another 25% had household incomes of more than $105k per year.

Transit Usage

Tenure & Frequency of Use

Nearly half (44.8%) of surveyed passengers are long-term users of WestCAT with five or more years of riding (Figure 4 on the previous page). The most common riding pattern (42.5%) is 5 days per week, suggesting strong commute usage. For riders with longer than 5 years tenure (n=267), only 37.1% ride 5 days per week, yet represent a higher proportion of usage in the 6-7 days per week bracket (19.5%).

Regularly Used Routes

The survey included the question, "Which WestCAT bus routes do you use regularly?" Respondents were able to "select all that apply." The question was structured this way to encourage respondents to describe their whole experience riding WestCAT.

Figure 5 shows the proportion of respondents by route that they "use regularly." The J routes were the three most regularly used routes by the survey respondents, which makes sense given that several passengers presumably use the routes interchangeably. About a quarter of respondents indicated that they regularly rode Lynx.

Most of WestCAT's passengers selected more than one route they ride regularly. About 45% of respondents selected only one route that they ride regularly, 19% selected two, 15% selected three, 14% selected four, and 6% selected five or more.

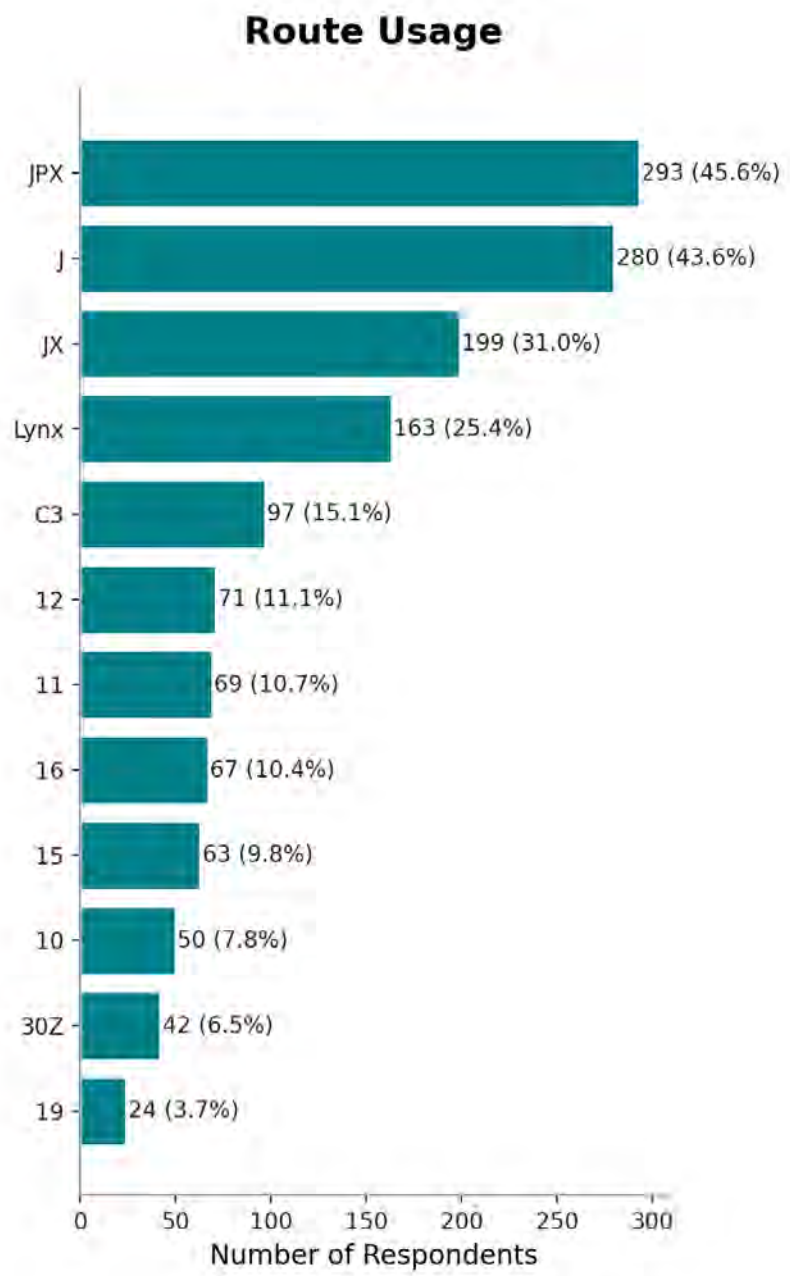

Figure 5: Onboard Survey - Routes Used Regularly

The proportions of total responses to this question (not total respondents) are fairly comparable to the actual ridership by route for October 2024 (Figure 6). The discrepancies among the J routes and Lynx are less important since the routes are already well represented.

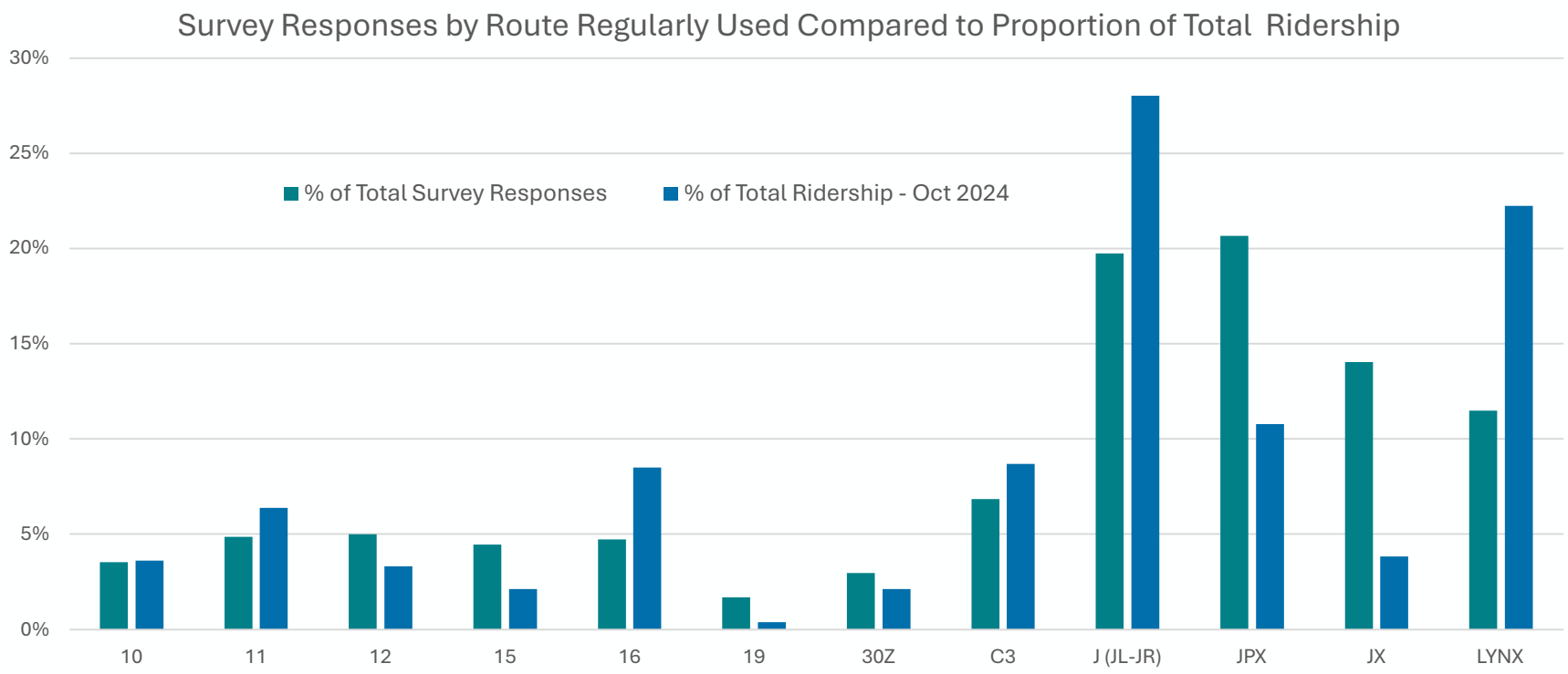

Figure 6: Survey Responses by Route Compared to Actual Ridership by Route

Trip Purpose

Passengers were asked, "For what purpose(s) do you usually ride WestCAT?" and instructed to mark all that apply. Overall, work is by far the most common trip purpose (76.5%), followed by Recreation at 17.0%.

About 70% of all survey respondents (450 out of 642) selected only one trip purpose from among the options. Among these:

- Work is by far the most common trip purpose (79.3%)
- School-related trips (Middle/High School and College/Vocational combined) account for about 11.4%
- All other purposes combined make up less than 10% of responses

For those respondents who selected two or three trip purposes (148 out of 642):

- Work remains the most common purpose (75% vs 79.3% for single-purpose)
- Recreation jumps significantly to second place (50% vs 2.7% for single-purpose)
- Medical appears much more frequently (38.5% vs 1.6% for single-purpose)
- College/Vocational also shows a notable increase (24.3% vs 5.6% for single-purpose)

Comparing trip purpose by the frequency per week of passenger use shows that:

- Work trips dominate across most frequency groups, especially among those who ride 3-5 days per week

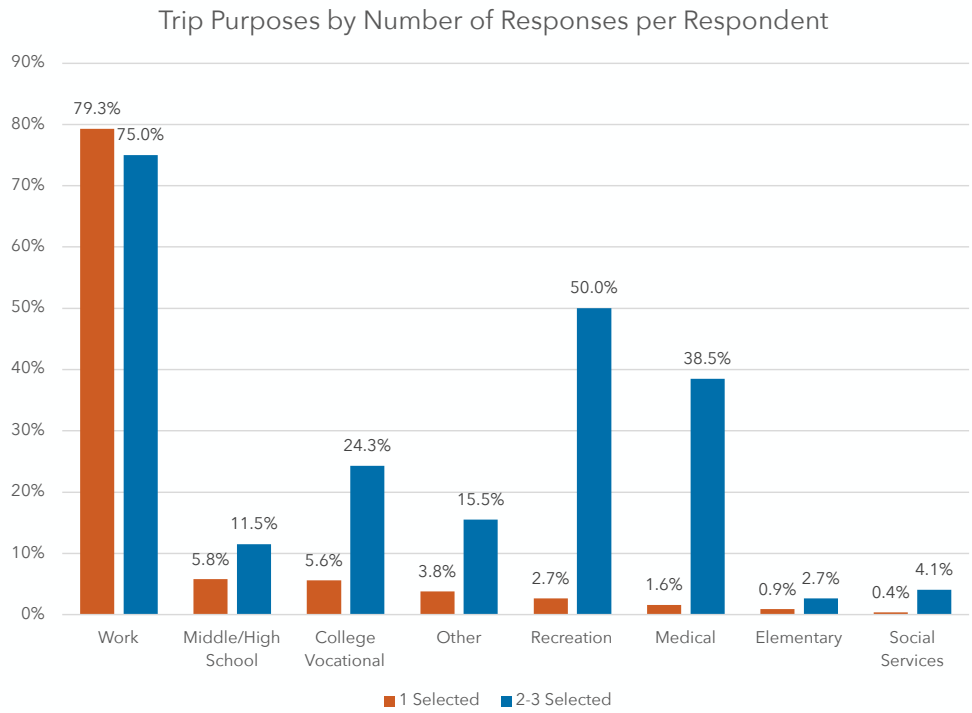

Figure 7: Onboard Survey - Trip Purposes by Responses per Respondent

- Recreation is the second most common purpose, with particularly strong representation among frequent riders
- Medical trips show up consistently across all frequency groups
- Social Services and Elementary school trips are less common but still present, particularly among higher frequency groups

72% of passengers usually transfer to/from another transit system

Transfers/Connections to Other Systems

The survey asked passengers about whether they usually transfer to other transit systems to get where they need to go and if yes, which ones. Only 27.7% of respondents indicated that they do not usually transfer to/from another transit system. Key findings related to transfer between systems include:

- BART Is the Most Common Transfer System Across All Routes
    - Every WestCAT route has riders who usually transfer to/from BART
    - Over half of respondents (56.5%) transfer to/from BART
    - JPX has the highest percentage of BART transfers with 35.8% of all respondents
    - Even the local routes show moderate transfers to BART
- AC Transit is the second most popular option at 26.0%.
    - JL/JR (19.0%) and JPX (15.0%) have the highest overlap with AC Transit, reinforcing their role in regional travel

	TRANSFER SYSTEM						
ROUTE	BART	AC Transit	Muni	Amtrak	County Connection	Other	Tri Delta
JPX	230	96	50	16	17	11	9
JL_JR	208	122	30	16	15	13	5
JX	161	61	41	16	11	10	3
C3	58	55	10	9	9	4	5
11	50	29	18	9	7	3	5
16	45	36	7	5	7	4	3
12	44	25	11	5	6	5	3
15	43	19	17	8	3	1	3
Lynx	29	6	41	4	1	10	0
10	36	18	9	5	5	5	2
30Z	30	26	4	5	10	1	3
19	16	15	4	3	4	1	2

10th Percentile | 50th Percentile | 90th Percentile

Figure 8: Onboard Survey - Transfer Systems by Route Counts

- Routes C3, 16, and 11 also show some integration with AC Transit (4.5%–8.6%), likely at transfer points in San Pablo or Richmond

- Muni was used by 15.4% of respondents overall, including 6.4% of respondents that ride Lynx, indicating that passengers continue their trips into San Francisco
- Amtrak attracted 4.7%, primarily with JPX, J, and JX, yet not Route 30Z, which connects to Amtrak in Martinez

Getting to WestCAT Stops (First/Last Mile)

Passengers were asked how they "usually get to the first WestCAT bus stop." Most WestCAT riders walk or use a wheelchair/scooter to get to their first WestCAT bus stop, particularly on local routes like 10, 11, and JL/JR. Driving in a private vehicle (21.5%) was the second most common mode. Routes JX, JPX, and Lynx have the most respondents that drive to their first WestCAT stop. There is a very low count (12) of passengers that bike to WestCAT.

Alternatives and Reasons for Riding WestCAT

The survey included a few questions aimed at understanding passengers' usage of WestCAT in the context of their travel alternatives. The first asked respondents if they could have driven or gotten a ride for the trip they were currently on when taking the survey. A bit over half (54%) of respondents said that they could have driven or gotten a ride for the trip they were currently on, indicating a high proportion of passengers that use WestCAT by choice.

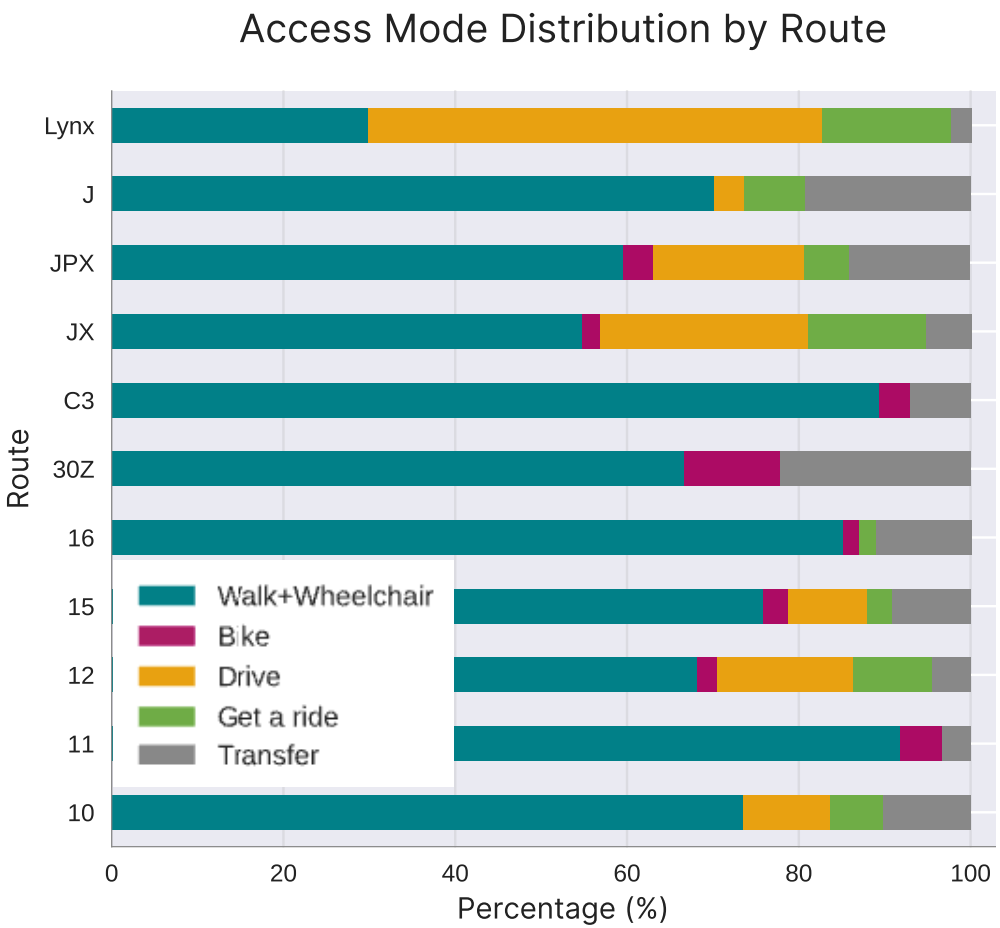

Figure 9: Onboard Survey – Mode of First/Last Mile by Route

54% of passengers could have driven or gotten a ride for the trip they were currently on

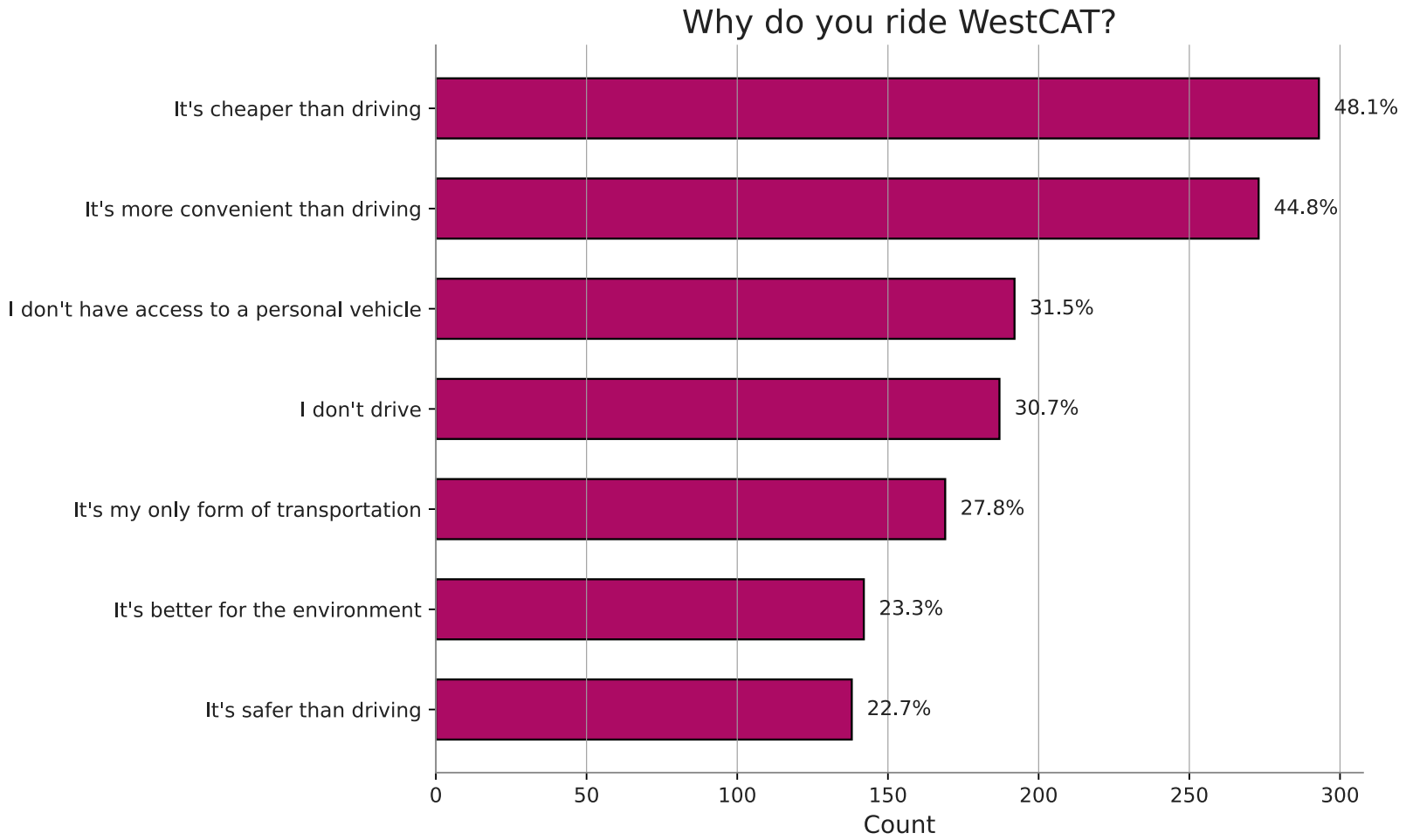

Figure 10: Onboard Survey - Reasons for Riding WestCAT

The most common reason for riding WestCAT is that it's cheaper than driving (48.1% of respondents), followed by being more convenient than driving (44.8%). The proportion of respondents who chose these two responses was higher among those same respondents that could have driven or gotten a ride for the trip they were on. Among those that could not have driven or gotten a ride, the reasons for riding WestCAT were spread fairly evenly for all the reasons, except

that it is safer than driving, which is the reason chose least overall.

Among respondents, 65% have a valid driver's license and 57% have both a license and access to a vehicle. In the reverse, 34% of passengers do not have a valid driver's license and 22% live in households where there are no licensed drivers at all. About 15% live in households where there are no vehicles available and an additional 8% live in households where there are less vehicles than there are licensed drivers.

When asked, "How would you make this trip without WestCAT?," one-third (32.5%) said that they would use Uber or Lyft (Figure 11). More than a quarter (27.5%) would drive alone and another (22.8%) would get a ride from someone else. Only 16% would not make the trip at all, suggesting WestCAT provides essential mobility.

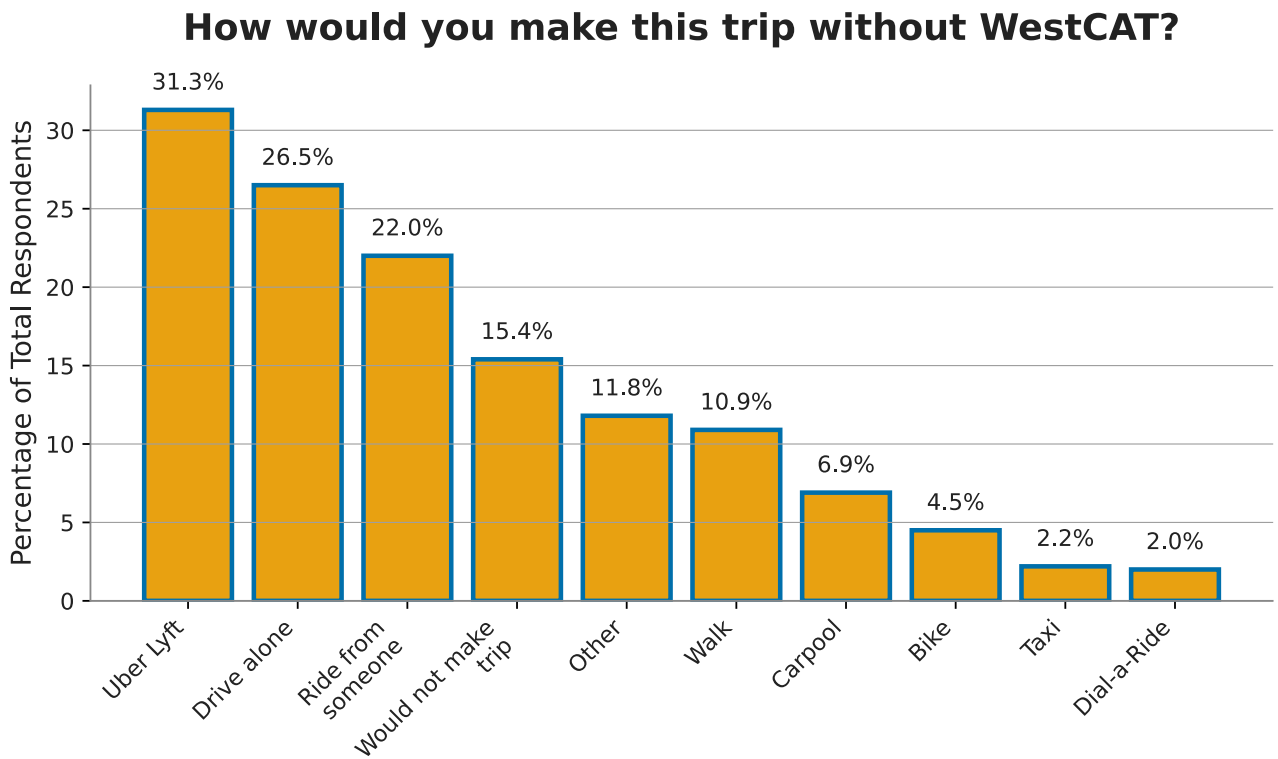

Figure 11: Onboard Survey - Trip Mode Alternatives

The survey asked passengers to consider their usage of WestCAT a year from now. The vast majority of respondents (74%) plan to continue using WestCAT, with an additional 21% indicating they would continue even if they get a car. Only about 12% of respondents indicated they would stop using the service (combining those who would stop after getting a car and those who would stop for other reasons).

Information & Communications

The survey included three questions aimed at determining the best methods for communication with current passengers. Here are the findings from the first two question, which asked about social media usage:

- Most passengers use social media. About half (49.4%) of passengers said that they use social media "often," and an additional third (32.8%) use it "occasionally."
- Instagram is the most used platform (58.3% of respondents)
- YouTube and Facebook follow as the next most popular platforms (45.6% and 42.2% respectively)
- TikTok is used by about a quarter of respondents (26.8%)
- Twitter X and LinkedIn have similar usage rates (11.5% and 10.9% respectively)

The first open-ended long response question in the survey asked, "What can WestCAT do to improve the quality of communication about its services?" The following is a distillation of the written answers, accompanied by sample quotes directly from the responses.

1. **Real-Time Updates & Alerts:** Riders want real-time bus tracking and text alerts with estimated arrival times, not just delay notifications. Many suggested real-time displays at major stops like Salesforce Transit Center and the BART station.

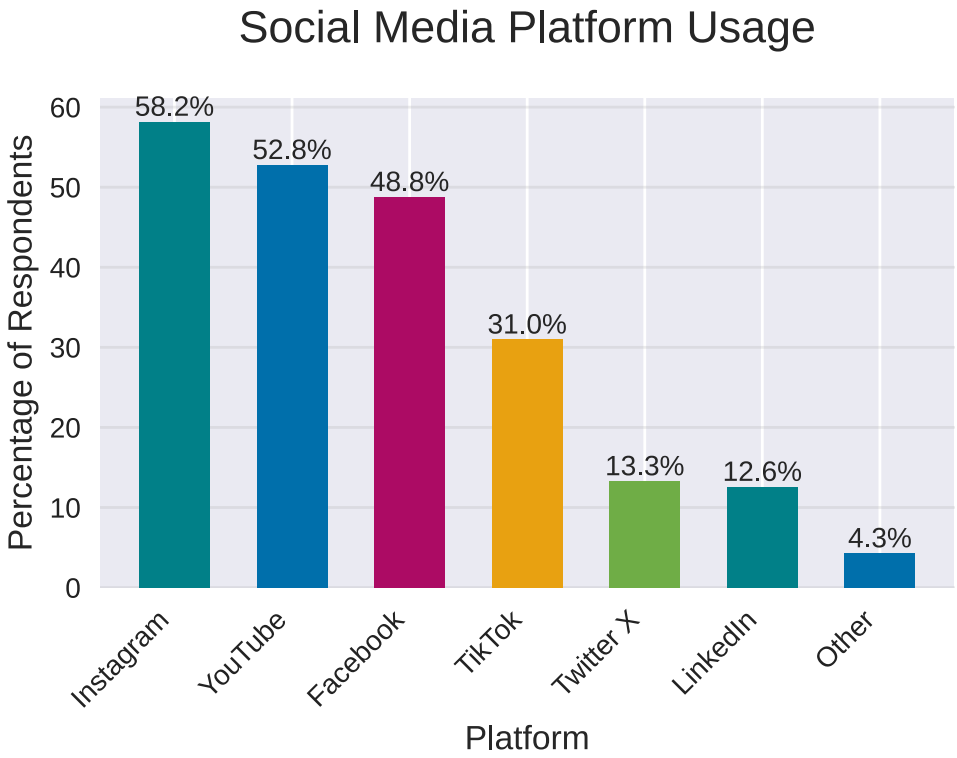

Figure 12: Onboard Survey - Social Media Platforms Used

2. **Mobile App & Digital Tools:** A WestCAT app with live tracking, schedules, and delay notifications was a frequent request. Many find existing tools unreliable or not well-promoted. Website updates should include real-time service alerts and integration with Google Maps for accurate ETAs.
3. **Social Media & Advertising:** More Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook updates on service changes would help riders stay informed. Several suggested daily service notices on social media and more transit awareness campaigns.
4. **On-Site Information & Signage:** Riders want printed schedules in buses, clearer signage at stops, and LED displays with live arrival times and service alerts.
5. **Customer Service & Rider Support:** Faster responses to phone inquiries and a customer service number posted at stops were frequently requested.

Overall, the most common request was for real-time tracking and alerts via text, app, or digital displays. Many riders already rely on digital tools but find them inconsistent or inaccurate. A mobile app and social media engagement would improve communication and accessibility. On-site signage and printed materials remain important, particularly for riders who may not use smartphones or social media. Customer service accessibility could be improved through better phone support.

"Send out alerts (texts) more frequently when there is an accident/heavy traffic."

"Real-time updates if there is a delay."

"Make use of social media platforms to stress the importance of transit."

Current Service Ratings

Figure 13 on the following page shows the proportions of ratings that passengers gave to 14 different service aspects, as well as their average rating. The seven-point scale ranges from 1-Extremely Poor to 7-Excellent. These are the relevant findings for planning service improvements:

Riders are especially satisfied with WestCAT drivers and overall service quality.

- Courtesy and helpfulness of drivers received the highest average score (6.4), with 60% of riders giving it a 7.
- Overall satisfaction averaged 5.9, with 65% rating WestCAT a 6 or 7.

Evening, weekend, and frequency-related service elements are rated lower.

- Availability of weekend service had the lowest average rating (4.8), with relatively few high scores and 16% saying it didn't apply.
- Evening service (how late buses run on weekdays) and frequency also had lower average scores (5.4 and 5.5).

Routing and bus stop placement are working well but should still be monitored as the system evolves.

- Directness of routes, distance to bus stops, and proximity to destinations all scored between 5.7 and 5.8 on average.
- These attributes received a large share of 6 and 7 ratings, reflecting general satisfaction.

Highest Customer Ratings:

#1 – "Courtesy and helpfulness of the bus drivers"

#2 - "How do you rate WestCAT OVERALL"

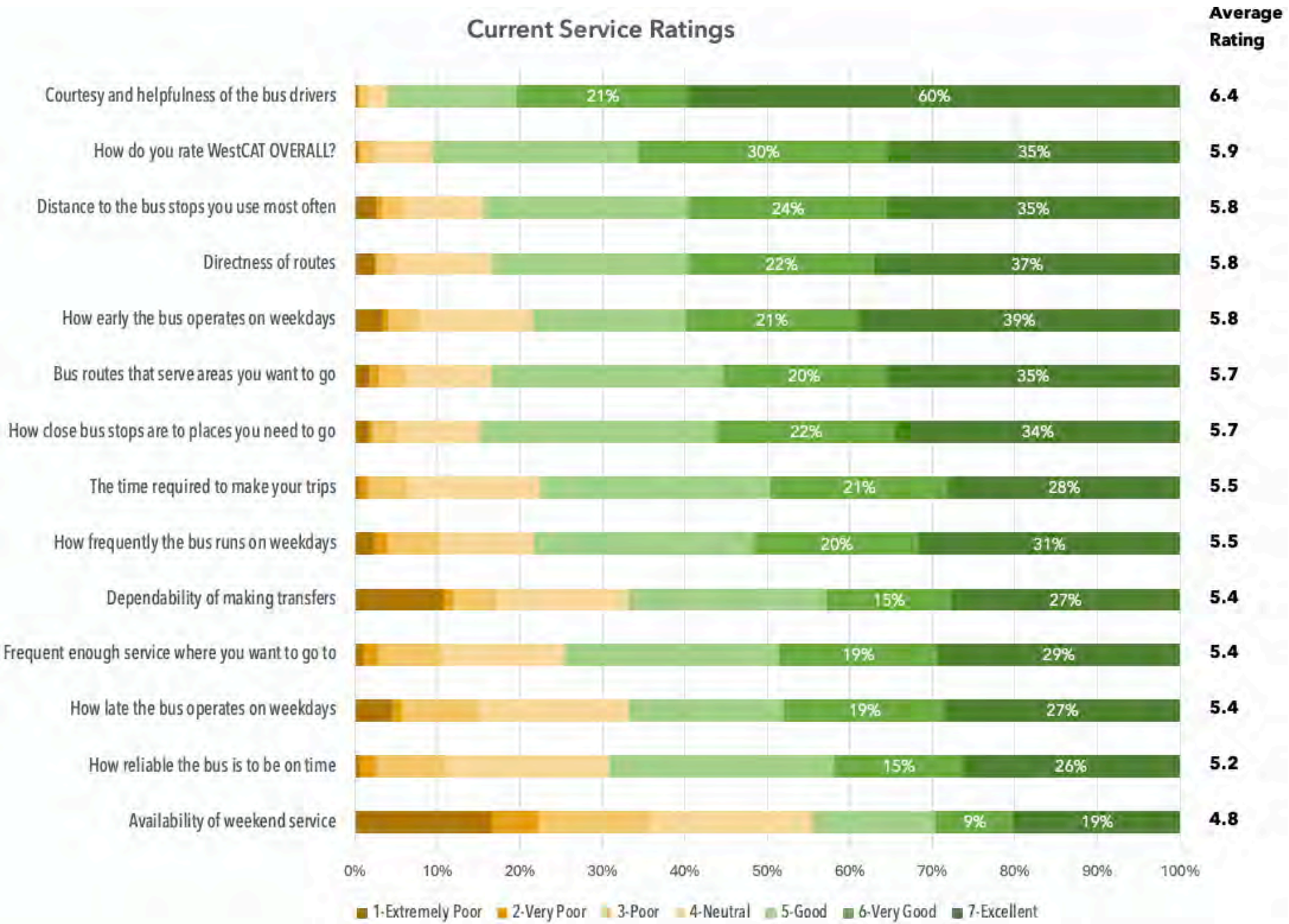

Figure 13: Onboard Survey - Current Service Ratings

Potential Improvements & Opportunities

Service Priorities & Tradeoffs

Passengers were asked to select on option from each of five pairs of service improvements that illustrate the various tradeoffs (Figure 15) that must be considered when planning transit service. The results of these questions will inform the development of improvements to the WestCAT system. The following are the high-level findings for the five tradeoff questions.

Frequency vs. Proximity to Stop

(68% prefer 15-minute frequency, 1/2 mile away)

Riders clearly favor more frequent service even if it requires a longer walk, suggesting that reliability and wait time are more important than walking distance for most users.

Frequency vs. Geographic Coverage

(61% prefer 15-minute service in current area)

A majority of respondents prefer more frequent service within the existing geographic coverage area rather than extending service to new neighborhoods with lower frequency.

Peak-Frequency vs. All-Day Frequency on J (JL/JR)

(64% prefer 20-minute all-day)

Most riders value consistent all-day service over more intensive peak-period frequency, possibly due to varied trip times or non-traditional schedules.

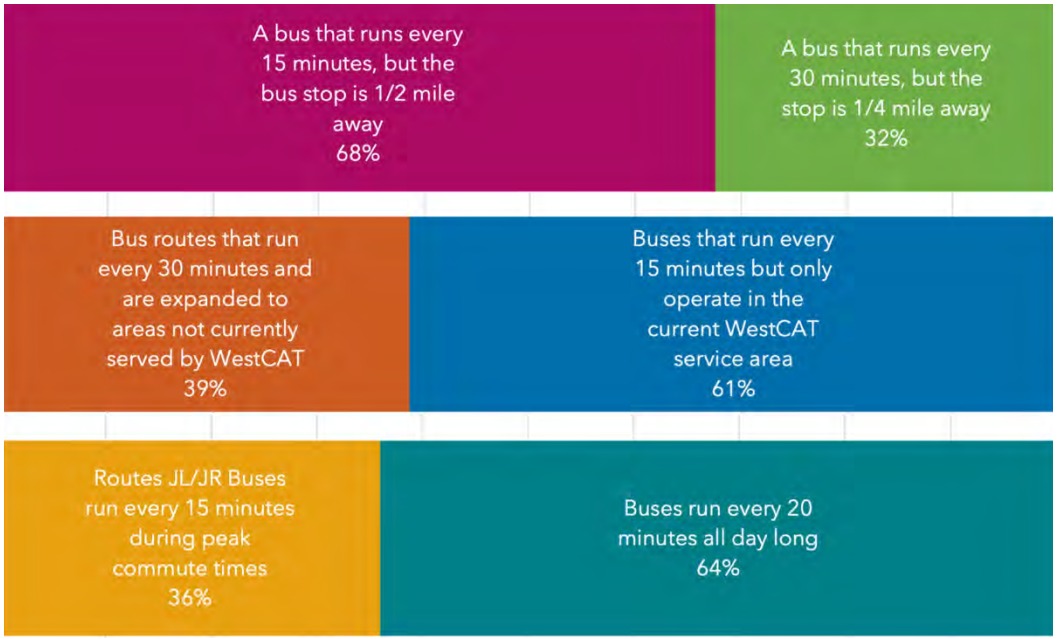

Figure 14: Onboard Survey - Service Priority Tradeoffs Results 1 to 3

Weekend BART Service: Frequency vs. Span

(55% prefer more frequent service during current hours)

Slightly more riders prefer increasing frequency to BART during the current weekend service hours over extending service later into the evening.

Regional vs. Local Destination Priorities

(68% prefer more regional service)

A strong majority of respondents prioritize service to major regional hubs like BART, San Francisco, and Oakland over enhanced local service.

Figure 15: Onboard Survey - Service Priority Tradeoffs Results 4 to 5

Potential Improvement Importance

This section of the survey asked respondents to give a rating of importance to 10 different potential improvements to WestCAT, with 1=not important to 7=very important (Figure 16). In addition, respondents were asked, "If WestCAT could make only one of the improvements above, which would be the most important to you personally?" (Figure 17). The findings to each of these questions are on the following pages.

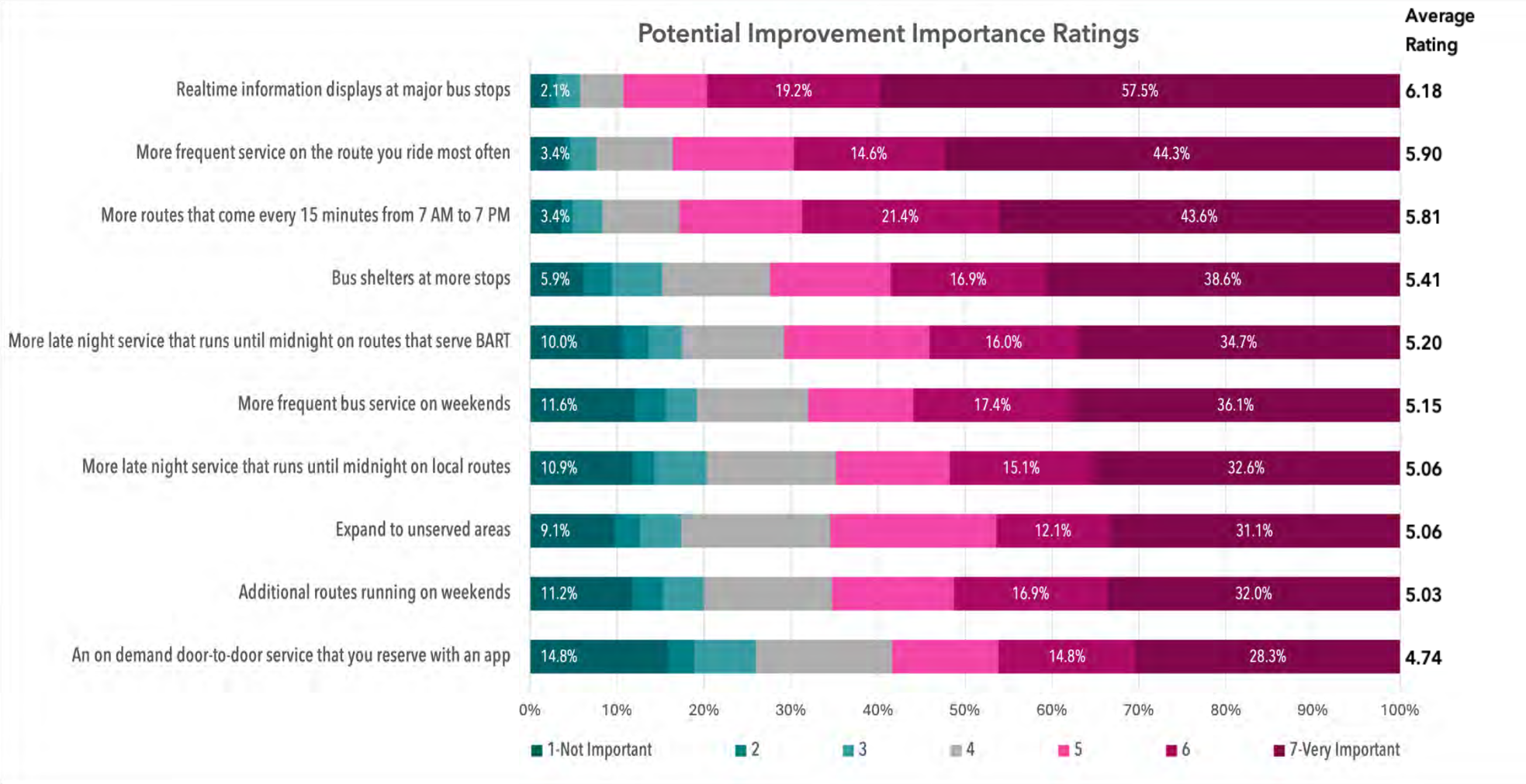

Figure 16: Onboard Survey - Potential Improvement Importance Ratings

Riders strongly support the addition of real-time information displays at major bus stops.

This improvement had the highest average rating overall (6.2 out of 7) and was selected as the most important of the potential improvements by the largest proportion of respondents (16.6%). The desire for real-time arrival information aligns with other feedback about improving reliability and confidence in trip planning.

Improving frequency on existing routes is more popular than adding new routes or new service models.

More frequent service on the rider's main route (5.90) and more routes with 15-minute frequency during the day (5.81) received the next-highest scores after real-time information. These were rated significantly higher than options like on-demand service or expansion to new areas. The number of responses to the "route they ride most often," are shown in Table 1.

The J (JL/JR) routes received the highest number of requests (186), making up nearly one-third of all comments. This reflects the high ridership and demand for frequency improvements on this important route. The JPX (71) and JX (52) also received a notable volume of requests, reinforcing the demand for more frequent express service connecting local areas to BART.

LYNX received 122 mentions, suggesting strong interest in enhanced service on the transbay route. There were fairly even low levels of interest for increased frequency on the local routes 10, 11, 12, 15, and C3. Only Route 19, which only runs on Saturdays, did not receive a mention for this question.

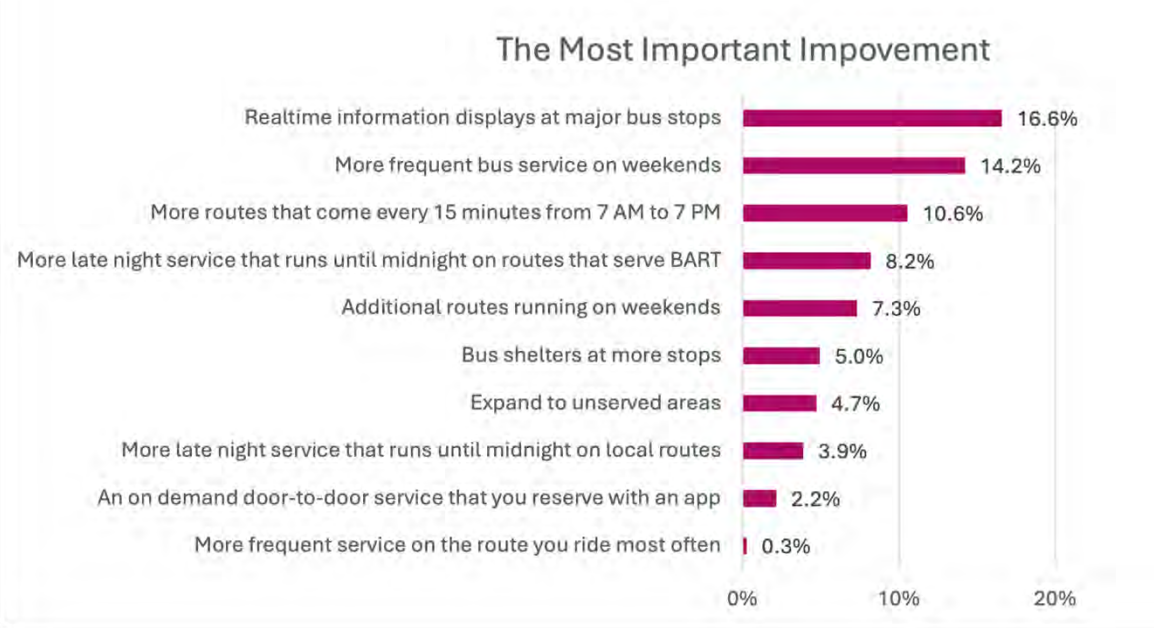

Figure 17: Onboard Survey - Most Important Improvement

Table 1: Onboard Survey - Routes Identified for the Potential Improvement, "More frequent service on the route your fried most"

Route	Count
J/JL/JR	186
LYNX	122
JPX	71
JX	52
12	23
C3	22
15	22
11	21
10	19
16	16
30Z	4

Weekend service improvements are especially important to a sizable segment of riders.

More frequent weekend service was selected as the most important by 14.2% of respondents—the second most common top priority—and received a solid average rating (5.1). Additional routes running on weekends was chosen by 7.3%, indicating latent demand in areas currently underserved on weekends.

Later service—especially to BART—matters to many riders.

More late night service to BART had a moderate average rating (5.2) and was selected as the top priority by 8.2% of respondents. However, later local service had lower average importance (5.1) and was selected by 3.9% as most important.

Open-Ended Questions about Improvements

The last two questions on the survey were open-ended, long answer format about potential improvements.

Where do you want/need the WestCAT buses to go the most?

Table 2 shows a summary table of counts by generalized destinations that were mentioned in response to this question. Below are the key findings from analysis of the full responses.

- High Demand for BART Connections - Many respondents named BART stations, particularly Del Norte, El Cerrito Plaza, and Richmond BART, for commuting. Some suggested more frequent service and better coordination with BART schedules.
- Strong Interest in San Francisco Service - Many riders depend on Lynx for travel to San Francisco and would like expanded weekend service. Several also requested better evening service for return trips.

Table 2: Onboard Survey - Summary of Most Important Destinations for WestCAT

Destination	Count
BART Stations	129
San Francisco	116
Hercules	57
Pinole	38
Richmond	34
Martinez	22
Contra Costa College	21
Berkeley	18
Oakland	11
Vallejo	10
Rodeo	8
El Cerrito	8
Walnut Creek	7
Concord	6
Crockett	5
El Sobrante	4
Tara Hills	2

- **Expanded Coverage in East Bay Cities -** Riders frequently mentioned Richmond, Berkeley, Oakland, Walnut Creek, Concord, and Martinez as important destinations. Some suggested new connections to Amtrak and ferry services.
- **More Service within the WestCAT Area** - Requests included better coverage in Hercules, Pinole, Rodeo, and Tara Hills. Some riders want additional stops, especially near residential areas and key shopping centers.
- **Increased Access to Shopping & Commercial Areas** - Many passengers requested routes to Hilltop Mall, Pinole Plaza, and large shopping centers like Target and Nordstrom Rack.
- **Greater Access to Colleges & Universities -** Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, and UC Berkeley were among the most requested educational destinations. Some students requested direct service or better transit connections.
- **Interest in New Transit Connections** - Some respondents suggested better links to Vallejo, Fairfield, and Sacramento, as well as improved connections to ferries and Amtrak.

"Lynx for weekends would be wonderful for events like Warriors/Giants."

"Buses should connect to other transit modes to provide options to riders"

What one change would you most like WestCAT to make?

Table 3 and Figure 18 shows a summary table of counts of categorized responses to this question. Below are the key findings from analysis of the full responses.

More Frequent Service: Riders want shorter wait times and more frequent buses, particularly on key routes like JL, JR, JPX, 302, 10, and 12. Many requested buses every 15 minutes during peak hours.

Extended Service Hours: Weekend service expansion was a top request, especially for Lynx and local routes. Many riders need later evening service for work commutes and social activities, with several asking for buses past midnight.

Real-Time Information & Apps: Strong demand for real-time tracking of buses via an app or digital displays at bus stops. Many riders want accurate ETAs, particularly in the Clipper app and other transit apps.

Reliability & On-Time Performance: Riders emphasized the need for on-time arrivals, particularly for connections to BART and other transit services.

Infrastructure & Comfort: Requests for bus shelters, benches, and better lighting at stops. Many suggested charging outlets and double-decker buses for comfort, especially on Lynx and long-distance routes.

Table 3: Onboard Survey – Categorized Responses to "What one change would you most like WestCAT to make?"

Category	Subcategory	Count
Reliability & On-Time Performance	Improve Punctuality	42
Extended Service Hours	Weekend Service	42
	Late-Night Service	15
Positive Feedback / No Change Requested	General Satisfaction	38
More Frequent Service	General Increase in Frequency	36
	Specific Routes Mentioned	25
Real-Time Information & Apps	Real-Time Information	27
Infrastructure & Comfort	Bus Interior & Ride Comfort	27
	Bus Stop Improvements	22
Service Coverage Expansion	New or Expanded Routes	18

Current WestCAT riders that took the companion survey (Non-rider Online Survey) were asked the same question – What one change would most like WestCAT to make? Many respondents emphasized the need for more frequent service, particularly for the Lynx and JR/JL routes, as well as better alignment with BART schedules. Several riders expressed a desire for expanded service hours—especially later evening and weekend trips—to support those with non-traditional work hours or attending events. A number of riders also called for real-time information via an app, bus stop displays, or improved communication about delays. Comfort and safety improvements were also noted, including cleaner buses, more seating shelters, and better climate control, particularly on longer Lynx trips. While many comments offered constructive criticism, a few respondents expressed strong appreciation for the existing service and operators.

What *one* change would you most like WestCAT to make? - Counts

Figure 18: Onboard Survey - One Change Category Counts

Methodology

The primary purpose of the online survey was to complement the onboard passenger survey by gathering input from non-riders of WestCAT who live and work in the service area.

The survey was available online from January to March 2025. A total of 230 responses were collected, including four in Spanish. The survey was set up so that the first questions determined whether the respondent was a regular WestCAT rider or not. If the respondents were regular riders, they were directed to an open ended question about needed improvements to WestCAT. If the respondents indicated that they were not regular riders, they were asked questions about barriers to using transit, awareness of WestCAT, and service improvement priorities.

The survey was advertised on the same direct mailing postcard to all residents and businesses in the service area as the Open Houses. The online survey QR code was also advertised through several mailing lists and fliers posted at public locations. The QR code took people to the project's webpage, where users could click on "Take the Survey" buttons in both English and Spanish.

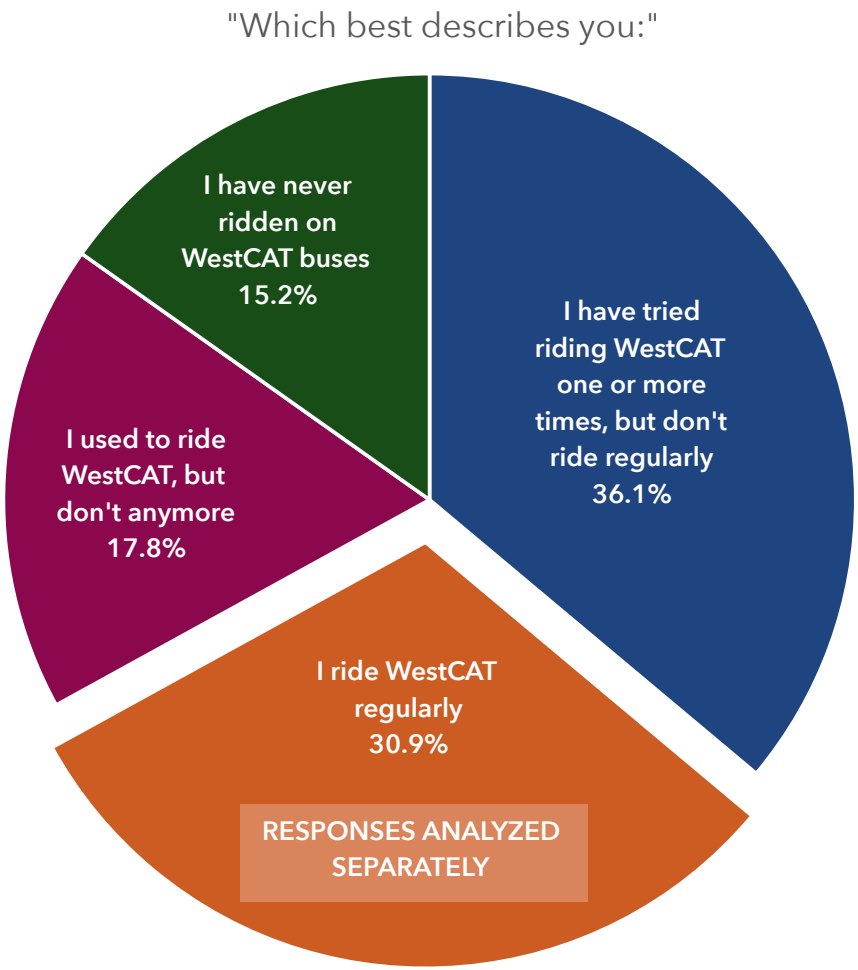

Figure 19: Non-Rider Survey - Use of WestCAT

Key Findings

Travel Behavior

The first question of the survey was aimed at determining the respondents' use of WestCAT. Most (69%) were not regular

WestCAT passengers, but 17.8% used to ride and 36.1% had tried riding once or twice (Figure 19).

A third (33%) of respondents drive alone to work and the question was not relevant for another 25%, due to not needing to travel for work (Figure 20). WestCAT commuters accounted for 25% of all respondents, with 6% for BART and 13% using other modes.

When asked about their primary mode for *non-work* trips, a much higher proportion (65%) of total respondents indicated that they primarily drive alone (Figure 21). Other vehicle based responses combined - getting a ride from family/friends (8%), Uber/Lyft (5%), and carpool (4%) - accounted for another 18% of respondents. There were very few respondents that walked (3%) or biked (1%).

The results of these two questions indicated that many respondents have access to personal vehicles but choose WestCAT or other transit for commuting.

Note: After the first three questions, those respondents that said that they ride WestCAT regularly were directed to an open ended question, "What is one thing WestCAT could do to improve your experience using transit?" These responses are folded in with the other open-ended responses from the Onboard Passenger Survey.

*The rest of the findings in this analysis describe only the respondents who indicated that they are currently **not** regular WestCAT riders.*

What is your primary mode of transportation for getting to/from work?

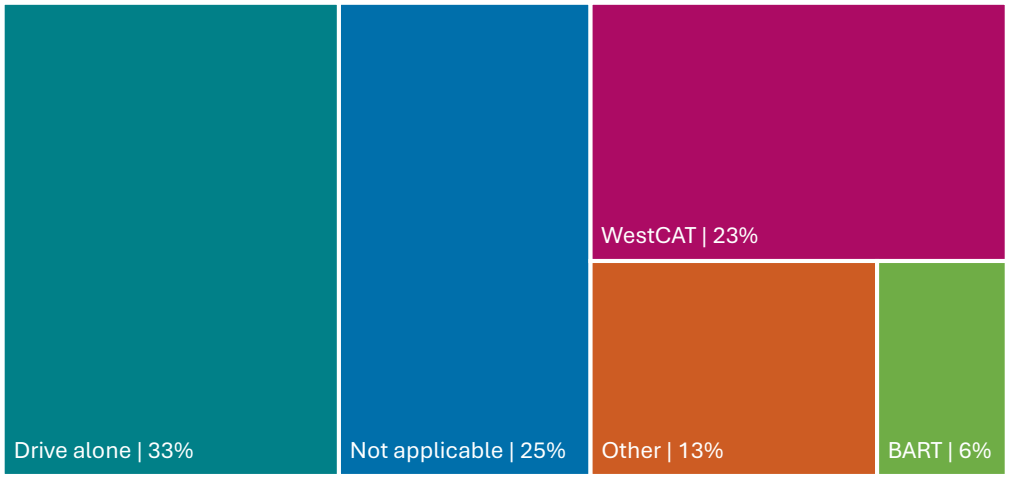

Figure 20: Non-Rider Survey - Primary Work Mode

What is your primary mode of transportation for all non-work trips?

Figure 21: Non-Rider Survey - Primary Non-Work Mode

Reasons for Not Using WestCAT

Table 4 shows the responses to a question asking respondents why they do not use WestCAT. The 99 responses to the open-ended "other" option were especially valuable:

- **Service Frequency and Reliability** (20+ responses) - Several respondents expressed a desire for more frequent and predictable service, particularly during key travel times. Some shared past experiences of long waits or uncertainty around scheduled departures.
- **Route Coverage and Access** (15+ responses) - Many participants noted that current routes do not always serve the destinations they need or stop close enough to their homes. They expressed appreciation for existing services and interest in expanded coverage.
- **Personal Vehicle Use / Convenience** (25+ responses) - A number of individuals mentioned relying on personal vehicles for the flexibility they offer, especially when combining errands or managing multiple destinations in one trip.
- **Retired or Work-from-Home Status** (20+ responses) Many respondents said they no longer have regular commute needs due to retirement or working from home. However, some mentioned they would consider using transit for occasional trips.

Table 4: Non-Rider Survey - Reasons for Not Riding WestCAT

Reason	% of Respondents
I have access to a car and would rather drive/get a ride	49%
It takes too long compared to driving/getting a ride	45%
There's a lack of bus routes near me	27%
The service hours don't meet my needs	25%
I'm unaware of the routes and/or schedules	14%
I have concerns about the safety and/or comfort of riding the bus	12%

"I've had to wait 30 minutes or more, which can make it hard to plan ahead."

"A stop closer to my neighborhood would make it much easier to use."

- **Lack of Awareness or Understanding** (5–10 responses) - Some respondents shared that they were not familiar with WestCAT services or were unsure how to access schedules and fare information.
- **Accessibility Concerns (5–10 responses)** - A few riders expressed uncertainty about how accessible the system is for people with mobility needs. These responses highlight an opportunity for increased outreach.
- **Desire for Weekend or Extended Hours** (5+ responses) - A number of respondents said they would be more likely to ride if service was available later in the evening or on weekends.
- **First/Last Mile Challenges** (5+ responses) - Respondents highlighted some challenges with getting to and from bus stops or syncing with BART schedules, suggesting opportunities to improve coordination or stop placement.

Familiarity & Impression

When asked, "How familiar are you with WestCAT transit services?" about half said they are "Very familiar" – they know where WestCAT goes and what it does, and another 45% said that they were somewhat familiar – they've heard of WestCAT but don't know much about it). Only a handful of respondents said they were not familiar with WestCAT at all, which makes sense given the contexts in which the survey was advertised.

Respondents were invited to select only one option in response to the question shown in Figure 22. The largest portion of respondents who were not regular riders of WestCAT felt that the biggest benefit of having public transit available is to provide transportation for those who can't drive (43%),

"I work from home and don't commute much anymore."

"I'm disabled & walking with cane. I don't know if I could get on & off easily & safely."

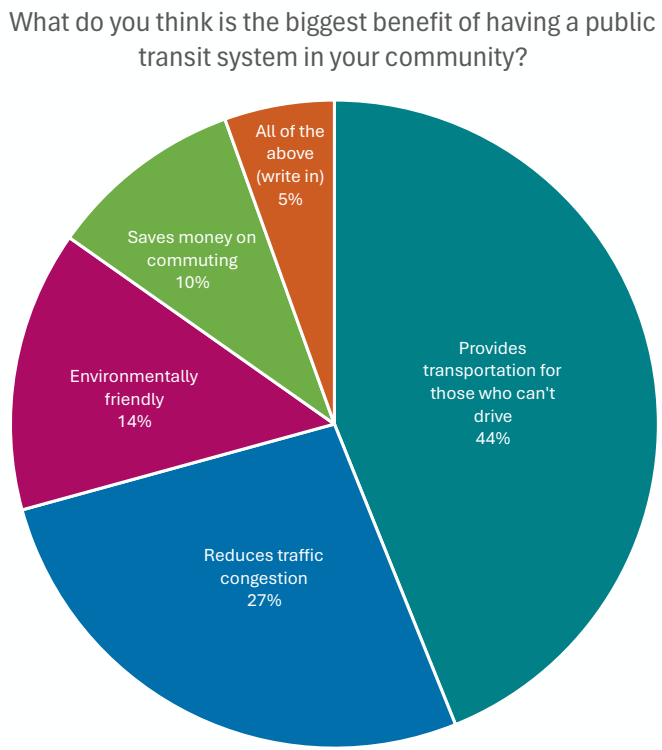

Figure 22: Non-Rider Survey - Biggest Benefit of Transit

followed by reducing traffic congestion (26%). This is an interesting finding when combined with the passenger survey, which revealed that the majority of passengers are using transit by choice. Nine respondents (5%) wrote in the "other" option some form of "all of the above."

Respondents were asked the open-ended question, "What is your overall impression of WestCAT transit services, and why do you feel that way?"

- **Positive Impressions** (15+ responses) - Many respondents shared highly favorable views of WestCAT, highlighting good experiences with service reliability, cleanliness, and the convenience of the Lynx route in particular. Several riders noted that WestCAT is one of the better systems they've used.
- **Mixed Impressions** (10–15 responses) - Some respondents expressed generally positive views but pointed out areas for improvement—most commonly around communication, frequency, or timeliness.
- **Limited Awareness or Experience** (5–10 responses) - A number of individuals stated they did not know enough about the service to form a clear opinion, or noted that they hadn't used it recently or at all.
- **Constructive Concerns** (5–10 responses) - A few respondents raised concerns related to outdated facilities, schedule inconsistencies, or long wait times. Even among critical responses, many included suggestions for improvement and expressed interest in future use.

"WestCAT is very good. Lynx is the best in the Bay Area."

"Clean, safe, efficient. A reliable means of transportation."

"It's great. Drivers are professional. Buses are clean and timely."

"Overall very satisfied with the service. It's been very dependable."

"Generally good but could be more frequent and reliable."

"I appreciate the service but sometimes buses are late or don't show."

"Useful, but there's room for improvement in scheduling and notifications."

Information & Communication

Survey takers were asked about their preferred methods for obtaining information about WestCAT, with multiple selections allowed. This question also included an open-ended "other" option, which many respondents used as an opportunity to expand on or reiterate on their selections. These are the findings:

- Most respondents expressed a strong preference for receiving transit information through digital platforms—especially WestCAT's website, real-time apps, and email. Convenience, accessibility, and clarity were common themes. (25+ responses)
- A significant number of participants still value physical information sources, particularly for planning trips ahead of time or while riding. (10–15 responses)
- Some respondents suggested using social platforms or integrating with local community centers and newsletters for broader reach. (5–10 responses)
- A few respondents indicated they would like to speak directly with someone or appreciated the option to call for help, especially older adults or infrequent riders. (5–10 responses)

Table 5: If you wanted information about WestCAT transit, what would be the best way for us to provide it?

Communication Channel	% of Respondents
Website with route and schedule details	90%
Real-time transit app	64%
Flyers or posters at key locations	21%
Email newsletters	18%
Social media updates	15%
Call the customer service telephone line	13%

Desired Improvements

Respondents were asked, "What improvements would make you consider using WestCAT transit?" and had the option to answer two open-ended questions pertaining to specific destinations and better connections. Multiple selections were allowed.

Table 6: What improvements would make you consider using WestCAT transit?

Potential Improvement	% of Respondents
More frequent service	63%
Real-time arrival information	56%
Faster travel times	42%
Routes closer to home or work	37%
Service to where I need to go (please specify below)	35%
Better connections to other transit systems (please specify below)	31%
Improved reliability of transfers	25%
Improved safety and cleanliness	17%

More Frequent Service (63%) – This was the most common improvement requested. Many respondents indicated that long gaps between buses or limited midday and evening schedules discouraged them from riding.

Real-Time Arrival Information (56%) – Over half of respondents wanted live tracking and real-time arrival updates. This was often mentioned alongside frustrations about past uncertainties or missed connections.

Faster Travel Times (42%) – Many people noted that WestCAT trips take significantly longer than driving, especially due to transfers or indirect routes.

Routes Closer to Home or Work (37%) – Respondents pointed out that existing bus stops are often too far from their homes or destinations—particularly in more residential areas or at the waterfront.

Service to Specific Destinations (35%) – Participants mentioned needing access to places like Kaiser, grocery stores, and regional destinations such as DVC, UC Berkeley, or San Francisco.

Better Connections to Other Transit (31%) – A significant number of respondents indicated that they would be more

likely to use WestCAT if it offered improved coordination or integration with other transit providers. Table 7 shows that several responses emphasized the need for better timing and connections to BART, particularly at El Cerrito del Norte and Richmond stations, to reduce long waits when transferring. Others highlighted the value of connections to regional systems such as SolTrans, Amtrak, and SMART, as well as direct access to major destinations like UC Berkeley and ferry terminals. Some respondents suggested improved links to AC Transit services, especially routes that serve areas of Oakland and San Pablo Avenue, to make regional travel more seamless. Together, these comments reflect a strong desire for WestCAT to function more effectively as part of an integrated regional transit network.

Improved Reliability of Transfers (25%) – Related to the above, many wanted better guarantees or coordination when switching between lines or systems.

Improved Safety and Cleanliness (17%) – Fewer respondents mentioned safety or cleanliness, but those who did emphasized lighting, bus stop conditions, and a sense of general upkeep.

Table 7: Top Desired Connections to Other Transit Systems

Connection System	Count	Example Comments
BART (general or unspecified station)	40+	"Direct to Bart and Rail stations"
Richmond BART/El Cerrito Del Norte	12	"Rodeo needs to more connected to Bart/SF" "Pinole to the closest east-bay BART stations"
Amtrak	9	"Connect to County Connection at DVC. Connect to Amtrak in Emeryville"
Ferry Connections (Richmond, Vallejo)	8	"Richmond Ferry connection" "Get to the ferry in Vallejo"
AC Transit	6	"AC Transit, BART/Amtrak, Golden Gate Transit"
Solano County / SolTrans	4	"Solano County connections" "SolTrans"
DVC / College Connections	3	"Connections to DVC/UCB would be nice"

Methodology

WestCAT maintains a system for receiving tracking telephone and online requests from passengers, which can include both negative and positive comments, as well as questions. All of the open ended submittals in text form were downloaded from the requests from January 1st, 2024 to February 28th, 2025. There were 337 relevant requests, which included a topic, date, and a description in long text format. The requests were analyzed to confirm or recategorize the content and to extract the specific routes, if mentioned.

Key Findings

Table 8 shows the most common main topics of the requests. Given the context of the WestCAT Evolution planning process, this analysis and key findings focus on the "Administrative" topics, which include customer comments that are relevant to developing future improvements.

Opportunities to Enhance Communication with Riders

A number of riders expressed challenges with getting timely updates – particularly during service disruptions, like canceled trips or schedule changes. Comments suggest that simple enhancements like posted signage or broader communication of changes (e.g., at Salesforce Transit Center or on the website) could help prevent confusion.

Strong Demand for Improved Real-Time Information

Riders are expecting tools that show accurate real-time bus arrivals, especially for infrequent and/or high-ridership services

Table 8: Customer Request Topic Counts

Topic	Count
Administration	**44**
Service Improvement Request	26
Real-Time Information & Apps	8
Information	3
Communication	7
Passenger Experience	**80**
Bus Operator Behavior	37
Commendation	15
Temperature	14
Bus Maintenance	7
Passenger Etiquette	4
Bus Stop Maintenance	3
Operations	**195**
Late Bus	61
Bus Never Showed	52
Bus Passed Customer	23
Early Bus	21
Reckless Driving/Speeding	18
Refusal to Stop/Board Passenger:	10
Bus Overloading	5
Improper Stop	5

like Lynx, JL/JR, and JPX. Several riders requested improvements to existing tools, such as the Transit App or WestCAT's website, and mentioned a desire for more consistent digital alerts or text notifications.

Paratransit Users Highlight the Importance of Booking Reliability

Multiple comments from Dial-a-Ride users (or caregivers) note difficulty reaching dispatch, long hold times, and the need for multiple callbacks to book a ride. Some comparisons were made to other paratransit booking systems, suggesting an opportunity to explore technology solutions that could improve efficiency and customer experience.

Signage, Schedules, and Stop Information Need Continued Attention

Riders identified occasional inconsistencies in route signs (e.g., JL vs. JR labeling), as well as stop-level confusion, such as unclear or missing map information. These issues create uncertainty for both new and long-time riders.

Support for Service Expansion – Especially on Lynx and School-Serving Routes

Multiple comments encouraged later evening and weekend service, especially for Lynx. Several community members tied this to safety, family access to cultural events, and shifting commute patterns. Similarly, requests related to school schedules (e.g., timing the 30Z or JPX to align better with high school or BART arrivals) highlight opportunities to fine-tune service windows for time-sensitive trips.

"More people are commuting now to SF and it would be extremely helpful… if there was an earlier Lynx route. Thank you in advance for your help and assistance."

"We are looking for a bus route for our new school site… Not sure if you can help with this, but can you link me to someone in charge?"

Methodology

Two public open houses were held to encourage a wide swath of community participation and gather feedback on transit services. The events featured interactive stations, allowing attendees to share their input through stickers, maps, and written feedback.

Both Open Houses were held in central locations accessible by transit and offered snacks and beverages. The Open House in Pinole took place on Wednesday evening from 6 to 8 PM on March 5, 2025, at the Pinole Library. The Open House in Hercules took place on Saturday midday from 11 AM to 1 PM on March 8, 2025, at the Ohlone Community Center. Both events attracted approximately 20-25 members of the public each.

Each event had drop-in participation where members of the community could come in to chat or participate for however long they wished. The primary method for advertising the events was a postcard that was mailed to all 27,000+ residents and businesses in the WestCAT service area. The postcard contained information in Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog about the availability of language services. The Open Houses were also advertised through social media, posted flyers at key locations, stakeholder distributions via email, and the WestCAT website.

Figure 23: Postcard Direct Mailer - Front & Back

Key Findings

The results from the Open Houses included responses to the service priority tradeoffs, which included diagrams, as well as open-ended comments made on sticky notes and maps of the service areas (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Given the relatively small number of responses (not everyone who attended provided written feedback), the findings from the service priority tradeoff questions (Figure 25) and open ended responses will be incorporated into the responses from the onboard survey.

One of the interactive posters, which was unique to the Open Houses, invited community members to rank their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd preferences for potential improvements, based on priority (Figure 26). The chart to the right (**Error! Reference source not found.**) shows the response counts weighted by the priority they were assigned by the Open House participants. 'More frequent service on the route you ride most often,' received by far the highest number of points and the most desired route for this increased service was Lynx. 'More frequent bus service on weekends' emerged as the second highest-priority improvement and 'Realtime information displays at major stops' was the third.

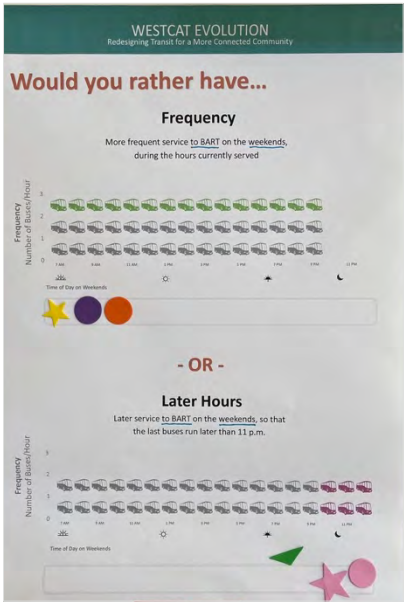

Figure 25: Open Houses - Service Priority Tradeoff Interactive Poster

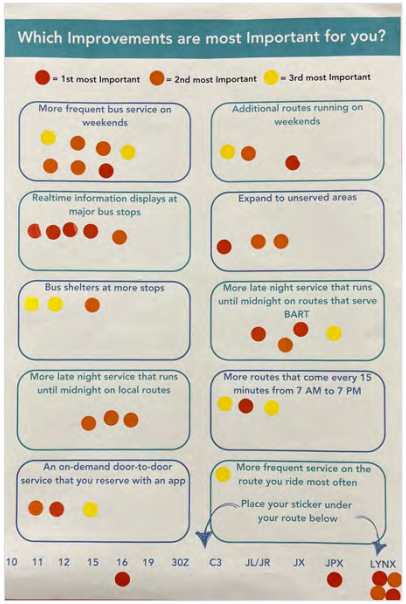

Figure 26: Open Houses - Potential Improvements Priorities Poster

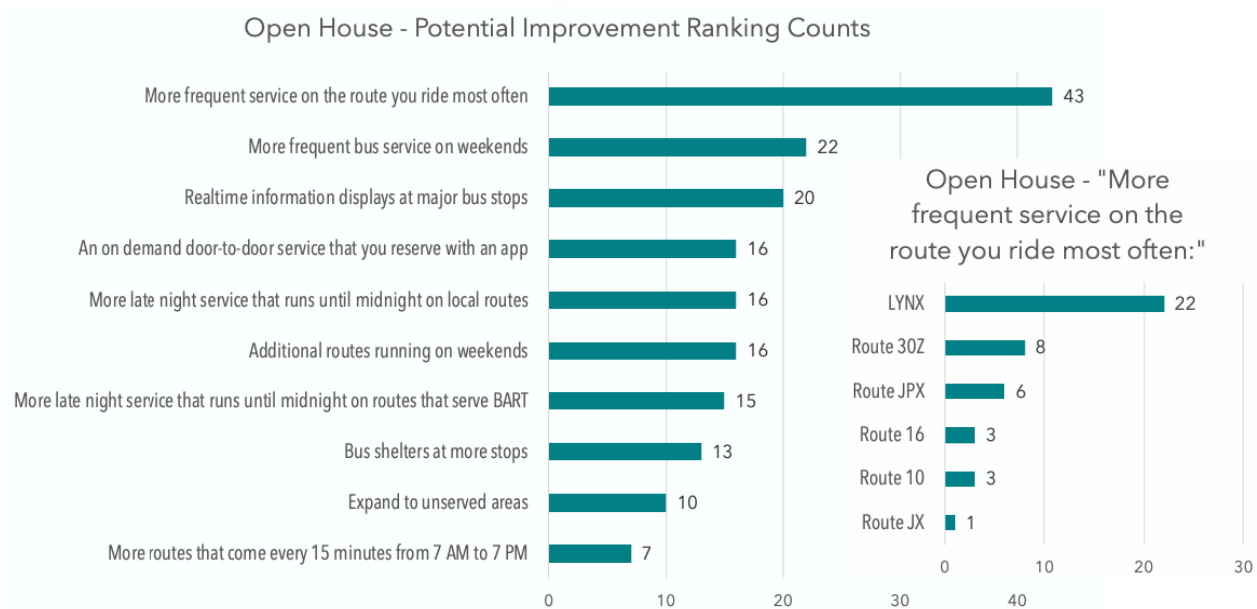

Figure 24: Open House - Potential Improvement Rankings

Methodology

WestCAT directly contacted stakeholder organizations, including senior centers and advocacy groups, to gather feedback from older adults, low-income residents, and other community members likely to be affected by transit service changes. The aim was to involve diverse and transit-dependent populations in the planning process through people and organizations with which they already have contact.

Through coordination with other local organizations, a contact list of stakeholders was compiled, and relevant stakeholder organizations were contacted via email and phone. Engagement activities with stakeholders included telephone interviews with key staff, participation in their events, and a presentation at a Senior Center. Feedback received was varied and will be folded into the overall outreach findings.

Project staff attended each of the following events to engage with transit stakeholders in the community.

- Hercules Senior Spring into Wellness Fair (3.19.25)
- Pinole Senior Center Presentation – engaged with older adults about their mobility needs (3.12.25)
- Salesforce Transit Fair (10.2.24) – Spoke with commuters and potential transit users about WestCAT services
- San Francisco Downtown Transit Center Outreach (9.24.24) – Provided WestCAT information and engaged with attendees

Figure 27: Image - Hercules Spring Into Wellness Fair

Methodology

To better understand the experiences and needs of ADA Paratransit and Senior Dial-a-Ride users (herein, in combination: "DAR"), structured telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of riders, that had taken at least one trip in December of 2024. The interviews took place from January to March 2025. A total of 27 interviews were completed with 16 ADA paratransit riders (or caretakers) and 10 Senior Dial-a-Ride passengers. The key findings also include input from two older adults that attended the Pinole Senior Center presentation/discussion for the project.

Most of the questions were open-ended and topics included service accessibility, reliability, and potential improvements.

Key Findings

Participants ranged in age and mobility levels, with most respondents using the service for medical appointments, grocery trips, and errands (Table 9).

One of the most commonly reported challenges was the process of booking rides by phone. While most participants were familiar with how to schedule trips, many expressed frustration with long hold times when calling to reserve a ride. Several described spending 20 minutes or more on hold, sometimes without a call-back option or confirmation that their request had been received. This led to uncertainty and, in some cases, the need to call repeatedly to secure a ride. Riders indicated that these delays were stressful, especially for those

Table 9: DAR Trip Purpose & Frequency

Frequency	Medical	Shopping	Work/ School	Social/ Recreation/ Religious
Less than once per month	6	2	0	1
1-2 days per week	3	6	2	3
1-3 times per month	5	4	1	2
3 or more days per week	3	0	0	3

with time-sensitive medical appointments. A few participants also noted that it was difficult to reach someone for follow-up questions or to confirm a ride's status, adding to the sense of unpredictability.

Several riders reported challenges specifically related to booking return trips after appointments. In some cases, they were unsure whether their return ride had been scheduled, or they felt anxious about whether the vehicle would arrive on time. This uncertainty made it difficult for riders to relax or feel confident about their travel plans—particularly important when returning from medical appointments or errands.

- One rider said they often "weren't sure if the return was confirmed" and would end up calling again to double-check.
- Another noted that it would be helpful to receive clearer communication or confirmation about both legs of the trip at the time of booking.

Although less frequent, a few riders mentioned they weren't always sure how the system worked—particularly newer users or those helping a family member book trips. They expressed interest in receiving clearer written or verbal explanations about policies, eligibility, and how to schedule rides most effectively.

Overall, participants expressed strong appreciation for the drivers. Many described the drivers as patient, respectful, and attentive to their needs, particularly when assisting with mobility devices or helping passengers enter and exit the vehicle safely. Several riders noted that drivers often went "above and beyond," helping make the experience feel safe and welcoming even when other aspects of the service were less consistent.

WestCAT Evolution Website

A dedicated project webpage was created to provide information, updates, and opportunities for feedback. Information about the Open Houses and the online survey for residents and workers in the service area were both detailed on the site. The page also displays the overall project purpose, service goals, and project roadmap. Project updates will continue to be posted throughout the process.

The page went live in early January and since then there have been 993 views by 627 unique users.

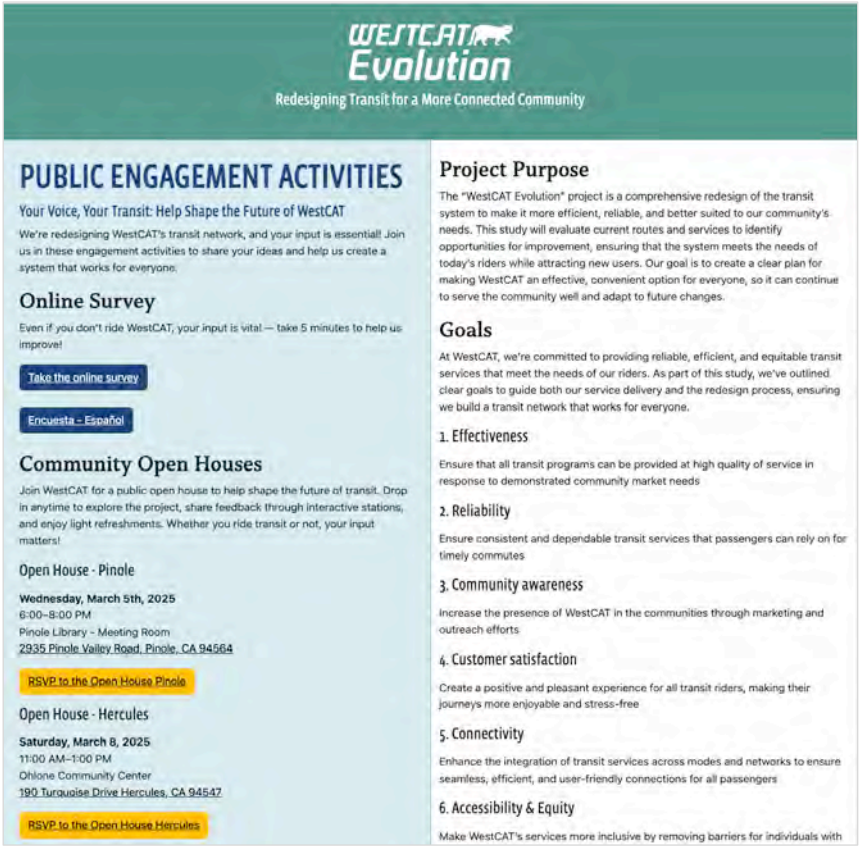

Figure 28: WestCAT Evolution Website Screenshot

Email Update List

A form is available at all events and on the website for people to sign up for an email list to receive updates about the project. The list has grown to about 75 people who will be informed about key project updates and milestones.

Telephone Hotline

A dedicated phone line was set up and is currently available, which allows community members to leave recorded feedback about the project. The phone number is advertised on the website. The voicemails are checked regularly and thus far, no one has used this feature to provide feedback. The outreach materials all contained a different phone number that would allow callers to reach a live person at WestCAT, so that they could receive immediate information about the public engagement activities.

Language Translation

Main outreach materials, including the flier for the Open Houses and online survey contained text in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog stating the availability of language services. The Onboard Survey for passengers was available in Spanish, as was the online Non-Rider Survey (Figure 29. In both surveys, about 2% of responses were in Spanish.

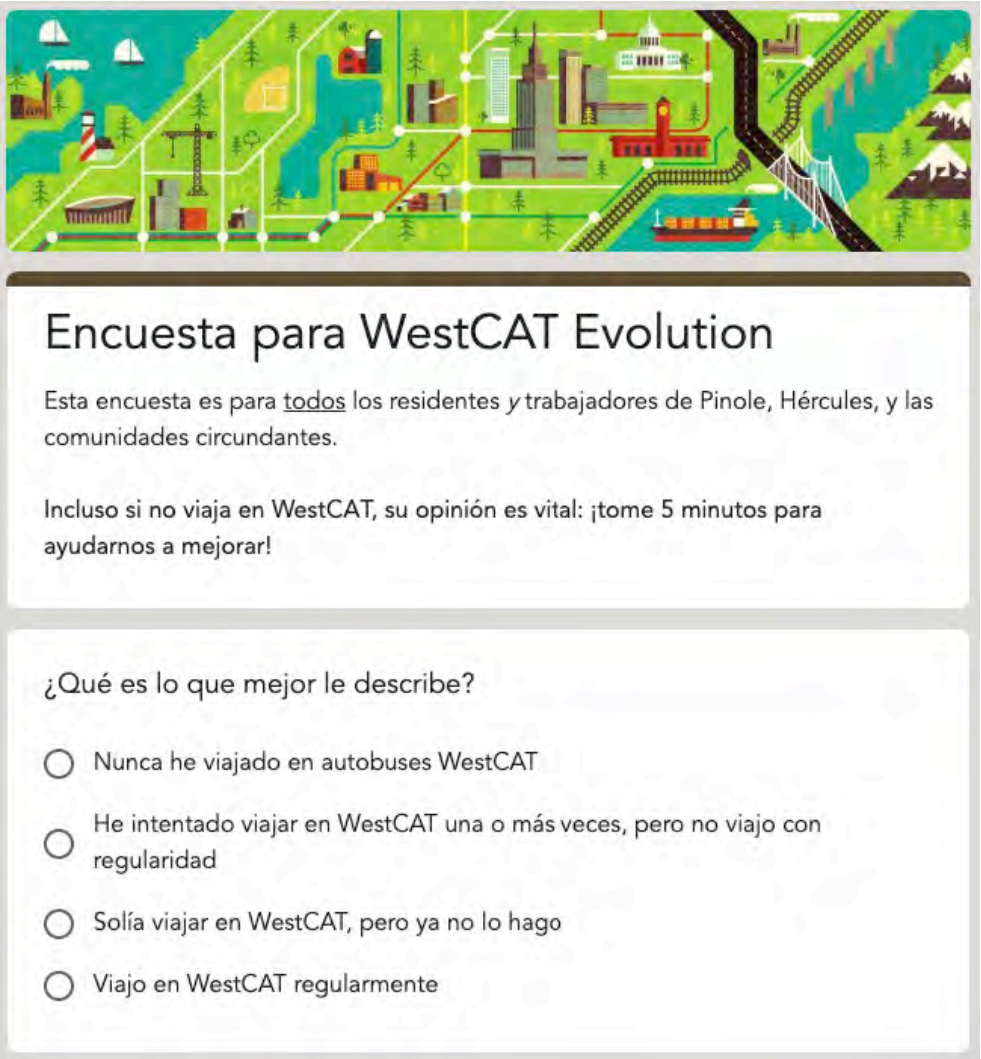

Figure 29: Spanish Non-Rider Online Survey Screenshot