

# 2018 - 2021 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Final Report: May 17, 2018

CITY OF HINESVILLE

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF HINESVILLE, GEORGIA,  
ADOPTING LIBERTY TRANSIT'S  
TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

WHEREAS, Liberty Transit is required to evaluate their Transit Development Plan every five years as a prerequisite for the receipt of federal and state funding to provide transit agencies the opportunity to define public transportation needs, solicit input from stakeholders and the public, identify capital and operational deficiencies, and define courses of action to advance the mission and goals of the transit agency; and

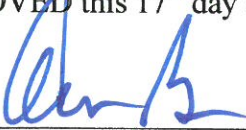
WHEREAS, the last plan was adopted in December 2012 and this five year update to the Transit Development Plan will guide the City's continuing commitment to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation service; and

WHEREAS, the Transit Development Plan was developed through a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process in coordination with state and local officials; and

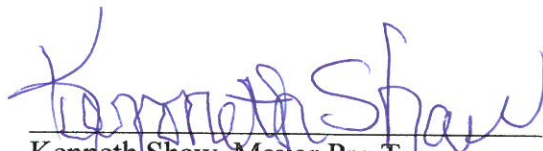
WHEREAS, the locally developed and adopted process for public participation has been followed in the development of the Transit Development Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council hereby adopts Liberty Transit's Transit Development Plan as the guide for transit planning activities going forward.


APPROVED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2018.



Allen Brown, Mayor



Kenneth Shaw, Mayor Pro Tem

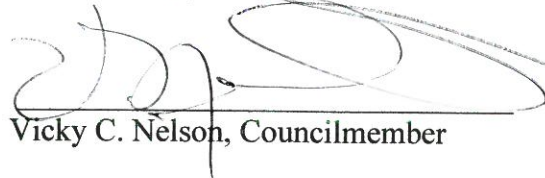


Diana F. Reid, Councilmember



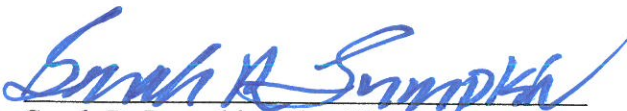
Keith Jenkins, Councilmember

Jason Floyd, Councilmember



Vicky C. Nelson, Councilmember

ATTEST:



Sarah R. Lumpkin, City Clerk

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OVERVIEW .....	1
CHAPTER 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS .....	6
2.1 Study Area Conditions .....	7
2.2 Transportation Service Providers .....	13
2.2.1 Rural Transit Service .....	14
2.2.2 Urban Fixed Route Service .....	15
2.2.3 Paratransit Service for Disabled .....	21
2.3 Local and Regional Plans .....	24
2.3.1 HAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) .....	24
2.3.2 Liberty Transit TDP / Strategic Plan .....	25
CHAPTER 3 OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS .....	28
3.1 Service Effectiveness .....	29
3.2 Sources of Funds .....	32
3.3 Ridership .....	34
3.4 Fare Structure .....	40
3.4.1 Peer System Fare Review .....	40
CHAPTER 4 DEMAND / NEEDS ASSESSMENT .....	45
4.1 Transit Propensity Analysis .....	46
4.2 Trip Destination Hot-Spots .....	51
CHAPTER 5 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT .....	55
5.1 Public and Stakeholder Involvement Program .....	56
5.1.1 Stakeholders Committee .....	56
5.1.2 Public Engagement .....	58

5.1.3	Liberty Transit Staff Interviews.....	70
5.1.4	Community Officials and Administrators Interviews .....	70
5.1.5	Fort Stewart Interview .....	71
5.2	Mission, Goals, and Objectives.....	73
<i>CHAPTER 6 RECOMMENDATIONS .....</i>		<i>78</i>
6.1	Service Scenarios .....	79
6.1.1	Scenario 1: Cost Neutral Improvements.....	80
6.1.2	Scenario 2: Moderate Service Improvements.....	80
6.1.3	Scenario 3: Premium Service .....	85
6.1.4	Preferred Alternative.....	85
6.2	Service Recommendations.....	86
6.3	Non-Service Recommendations.....	97
6.4	Implementation and Funding .....	100
<i>CHAPTER 7 APPENDICES .....</i>		<i>102</i>



CHAPTER 1

*INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OVERVIEW*

The metropolitan population within the City of Hinesville, the City of Flemington, the City of Walthourville, and Fort Stewart military installation is served by the Liberty Transit System which provides fixed route service, as well as paratransit service for ADA eligible riders. Liberty Transit has operated as a department of the City of Hinesville since October 2010 offering safe and reliable service five days per week.

At a countywide planning workshop in 2003, elected officials and community stakeholders reached consensus that a public fixed route transit system was needed in Liberty County. The Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission (LCPC) was tasked with administering a Transit Feasibility Study based on such factors as population density, median household income, median age, and surveys, to determine if a transit system could be supported. A feasibility study was conducted and results indicated that the prevalence of low income and younger individuals and families within the Hinesville/Flemington/Ft. Stewart community contributes to the need for additional transportation options for residents.

In January 2007 the City of Hinesville adopted the 2007 – 2012 Transit Development Plan (TDP) which provides capital and operational goals and financial plans for the

## **WHAT IS A TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN?**

Transit Development Plan (TDP) - a strategic planning document that defines the community's public transit needs. Its purpose is to solicit broad input, coordinate with other plans, explore community goals, define alternative courses of action and to develop systematic plans and monitoring programs. A TDP is a:

- Prerequisite for State & Federal funding, and
- Must be updated every 5 years

Liberty Transit System. While it was clearly demonstrated that a public transit system was warranted, a more detailed implementation study was performed in 2008 to refine the routes for implementation and provide recommendations for vehicle class and organizational structure. Based on the results of the planning analysis conducted, the City of Hinesville made the decision to initiate a public transit system. Delays in delivery of capital funding contracts for vehicle acquisition resulted in system start up delay. During this time, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus program was announced and resulted in capital support that allowed the Liberty Transit System to acquire all capital assets needed to begin operations in October 2010.

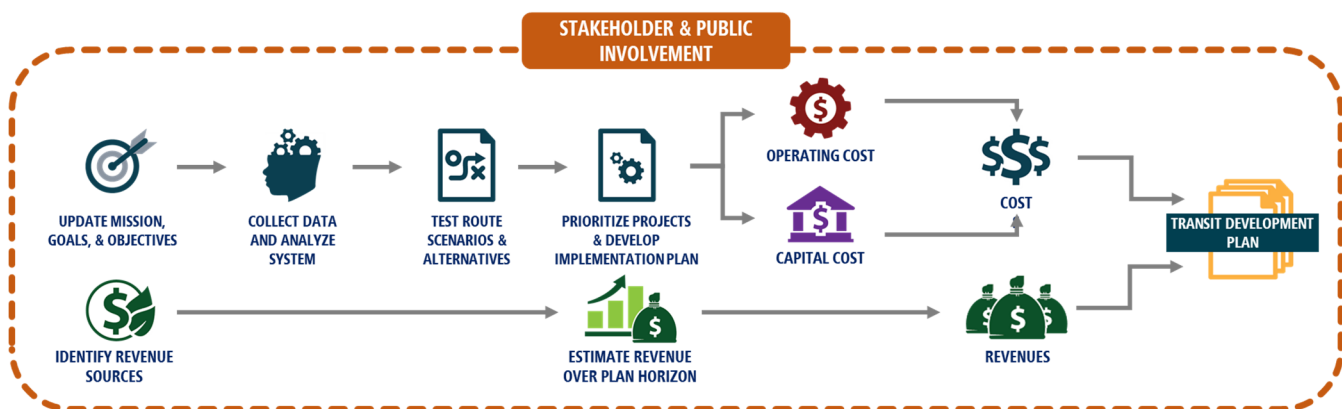
In 2012 the City of Hinesville partnered with the Hinesville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to begin an operational analysis of the first year of service, and update to the TDP, called the Liberty Transit Strategic Study. This combined planning effort was completed and adopted in December 2012.

Since the completion of the 2012 TDP, the Liberty Transit System has implemented a significant number of the study recommendations including revised routing alignments, expanded service area, and adjustments to service hours. These service modifications have resulted in greater system efficiency and accessibility for the community. The City's continuing commitment to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation service will create the foundation for this TDP update and will guide the planning process.

As Liberty Transit embarks on this process, it is a time to evaluate the agency's transit operations, as well as the environment in which it operates, while considering the future of the system. This vision and strategic direction of the TDP should be forward thinking while maintaining consistency with other local and regional planning efforts. The TDP update process provides transit agencies with the opportunity to define public

transportation needs, solicit input from stakeholders and the public, identify capital and operational deficiencies, and define courses of action to advance the mission and goals of the transit agency.

The following graphic demonstrates the TDP planning elements and how they work together in the development of the written report.





The Georgia Department of Transportation's Intermodal Division, along with the Federal Transit Administration, depends on local transit agencies to reevaluate their TDPs every five years as a prerequisite for the receipt of federal and state funding. The Liberty Transit TDP planning process and report document have been developed to meet all federal and state requirements, including updated requirements defined in the new federal legislation, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

---

The opinions, findings, and conclusions in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, the Federal Highway Administration, or the Federal Transit Administration.

The City of Hinesville and the Liberty Transit System are committed to the principle of affirmative action and prohibit discrimination against otherwise qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, physical or mental handicap, or disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program in its recruitment, employment, facility and program accessibility or services.

Prepared in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration.

CHAPTER 2

*EXISTING CONDITIONS*

In order to evaluate the current performance of the Liberty Transit system, a baseline for the system must be established. This chapter provides a description of the existing conditions for the Liberty Transit service area, as well as service profiles for current providers in the Region.

## **2.1 Study Area Conditions**

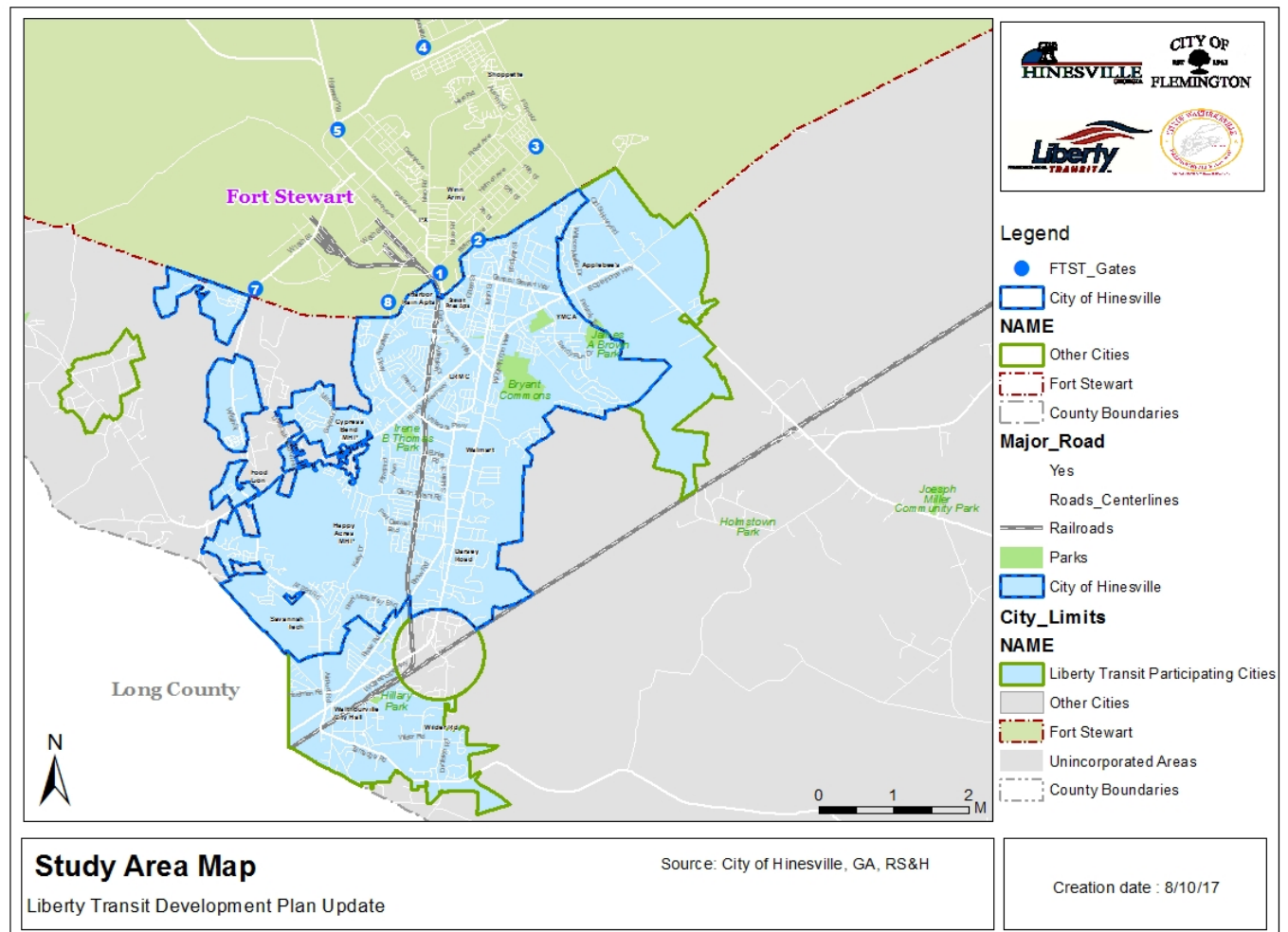
Liberty County, located on the Georgia coast, is one of seven counties created from the original colonial parishes. With a population of approximately 65,000 persons and land area of 542 square miles, the county includes seven municipalities.

For the purpose of this report, the study area includes only the urbanized portions of Liberty and Long Counties, which includes the following municipalities:

- City of Hinesville
- City of Flemington
- City of Walthourville
- Urbanized portions of Long County
- Urbanized portions of the Fort Stewart Military Base

The following map shows the urbanized area of Liberty and Long Counties that comprise the study area for the Liberty Transit TDP.

FIGURE 2.1: LIBERTY TRANSIT SERVICE AREA AND TDP STUDY AREA

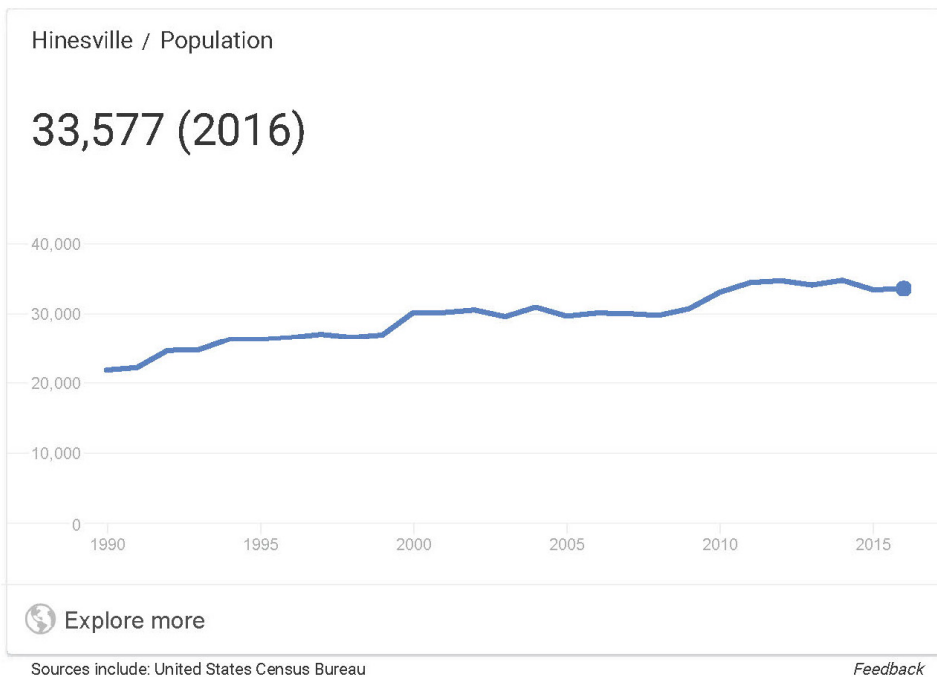


The City of Hinesville is located in the heart of the urbanized area, and includes approximately 52% of the county's overall population. According to estimates by the US Census Bureau, the 2016 City of Hinesville population was 33,577. Hinesville serves as a regional employment center to the surrounding counties of Long, McIntosh, and Bryan. As a result, the daytime population of Hinesville is considerably higher than the resident population.

The global economic downturn of 2008 had significant impacts on Liberty County, and as a result, the population of Hinesville remained static throughout the recovery period.



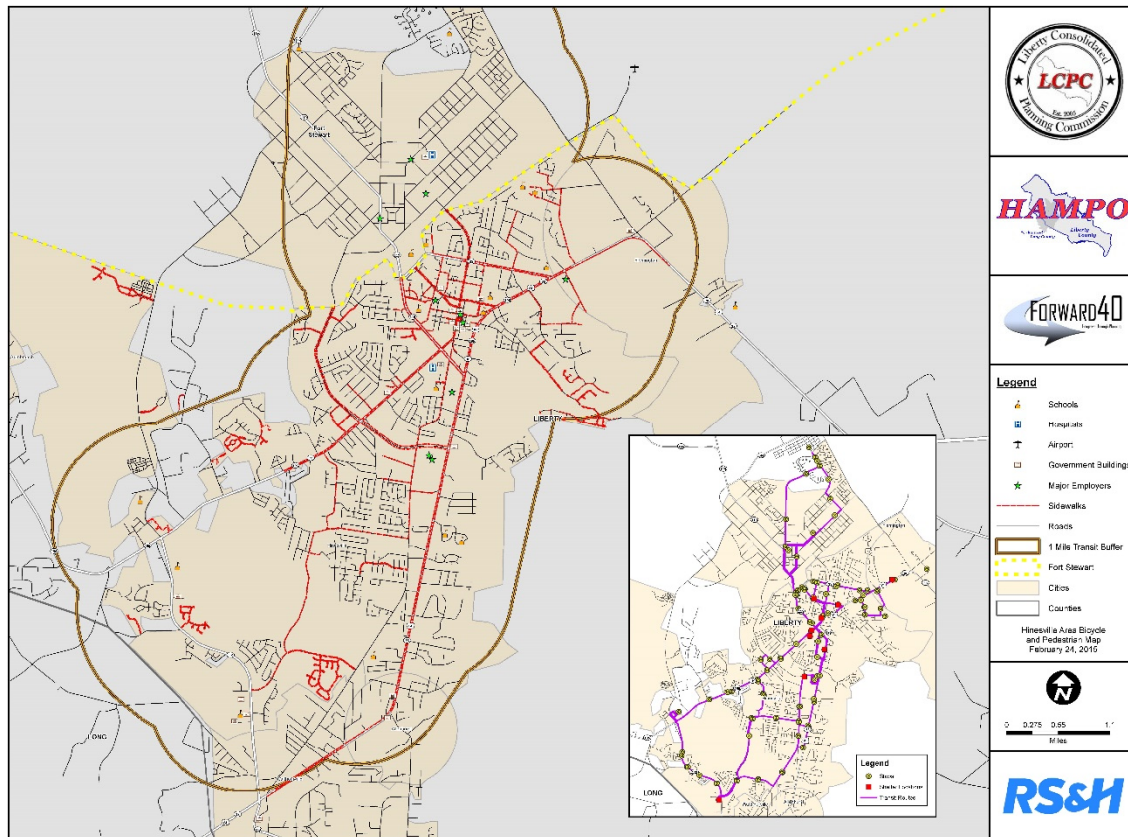
As the economy and global consumer confidence has improved, population and employment growth trends in Hinesville have resumed strength.



While the City of Hinesville was established in 1837, and incorporated in 1916, much of the residential and commercial growth of the City began in 1980 and continued through the 1990s. In keeping with the national focus promoting vehicular transportation investments, alternative transportation investments in Liberty County were not required for much of the new development that occurred during this growth period.

As a result, the multimodal network within the Liberty Transit service area is fragmented and serves as an impediment to accessibility for transit riders. The following map was developed by the Hinesville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization as an exhibit in their Non-Motorized Plan. The map provides a one mile service area buffer from Liberty Transit route alignments and highlights the sidewalk infrastructure found within the service area. The majority of sidewalks within the service area can be seen in the urban core of Hinesville, and along the southeastern side of US 84.

FIGURE 2.2: HAMPO NON-MOTORIZED PLAN, SIDEWALK GAP ANALYSIS

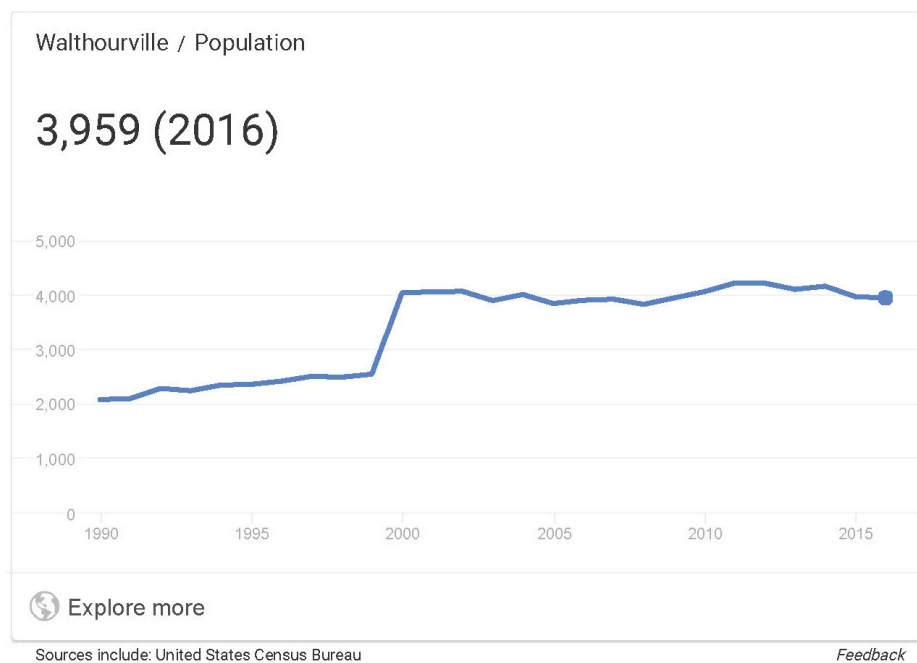


The Hinesville MPO actively supports the expansion of the bicycle and pedestrian network within the transit service area by facilitating the use of 5307 funds for infrastructure investments. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was released in February of 2018 for engineering and design services of projects funded through this program.

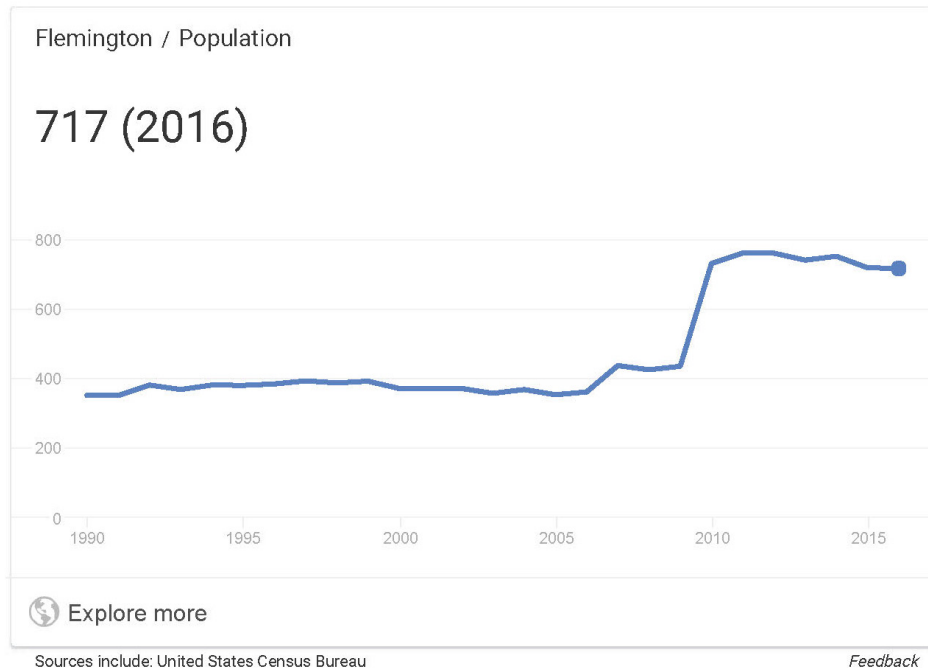
Recent major investments in the City of Hinesville, includes the grand opening of the Georgia Southern University's Hinesville Campus, the new Liberty County public library, Oglethorpe Square shopping plaza, Diversity Health's new clinical facility, and the Veteran's outpatient clinic. In addition to these major developments, the City has also

seen significant investment in both smaller scale commercial and residential development.

Two municipalities directly adjacent to the City of Hinesville, also located in the urbanized area, are Flemington and Walthourville. These municipalities have also experienced substantial per-capita growth over the last ten years, adding both households and jobs. Walthourville has an estimated population of 4,136 which has seen a slight .1% dip since the 2015 US Census estimates as demonstrated in the following graph.



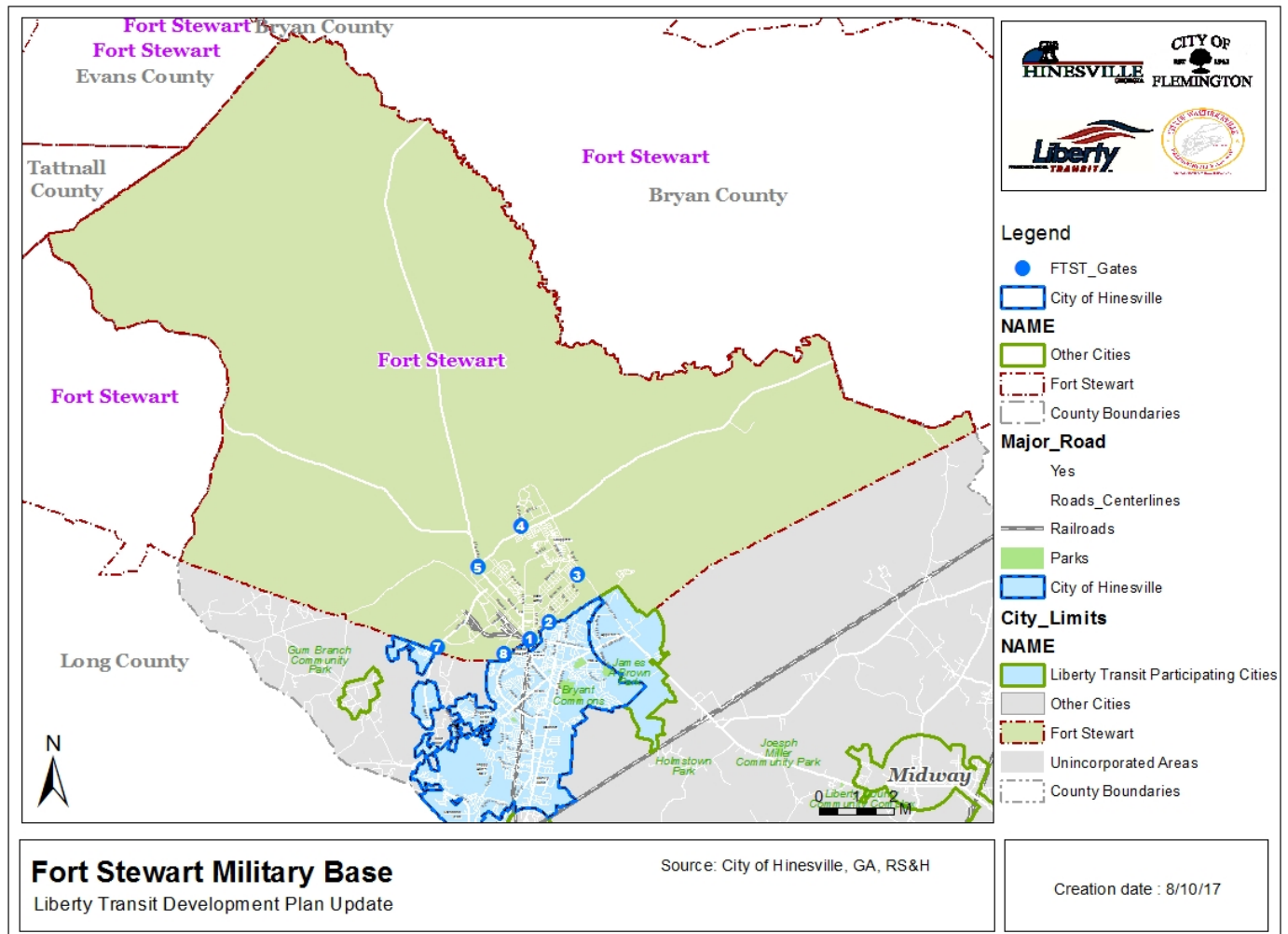
Employment in Walthourville has grown by nearly 2% over 2015 estimates, with approximately 1,500 jobs reported in 2016. While Hinesville is the primary employment center for the County, Walthourville has expanded job opportunities in recent years with the addition of two retail centers, fueling stations, and discount retail marts. Flemington has experienced comparable growth to surrounding cities, with an average annual growth rate of .3%. Recent population projections showed a slight decrease when compared to 2015 figures, with a US Census estimated 713 residents.



The Fort Stewart Military Base, home of the Third Infantry Division is a major landmark in Liberty County with concentrations of population and employment located in the cantonment area adjacent to the City of Hinesville’s municipal boundary. Fort Stewart, home to the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team, has a maximum troop strength of approximately 19,000, with approximately 3,400 civilian support jobs. Despite fluctuations in troop strength resulting from various deployment missions, Fort Stewart is the largest employer within the study area. The following map shows the Fort Stewart base, along with adjoining municipalities in Liberty and Long Counties.



FIGURE 2.3: FORT STEWART MILITARY BASE MAP



## 2.2 Transportation Service Providers

Liberty County is currently served by a variety of public and private transportation providers. The primary transportation service providers include:

- Regional demand response rural transit service – Coastal Regional Coaches
- Fixed route urban public transportation – Liberty Transit
- Intercity transit service – Greyhound

These primary service providers are supplemented by private transport companies that provide purchase of service and non-emergency human service trips. While there are a significant number of private car services operating in Liberty County, the following list captures a cross section of the most highly utilized services.

- Private car share services – Uber and Lyft
- Taxi Providers
- Medical and Non-Emergency Human Service Transport

### 2.2.1 Rural Transit Service

The Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) operates the rural transit system called Coastal Regional Coaches. The Coastal Regional Coaches offers service within the Georgia counties of Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Screven. Coastal Regional Coaches is a demand-response, advance -reservation service that operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. The fare per rider is \$3 per boarding (one-way) within the county of residence.



For travel outside the county of residence, the fare varies based on the number of counties traveled. By rule, the Coastal Regional Coaches cannot provide transportation from one urban area to another urban area. However, a potential traveler may find an address nearby that is considered rural and be picked up and returned to that location; for example, many people from Hinesville (urban) need transportation to Savannah (also urban). The Applebee's restaurant in Hinesville has an address that is designated rural, so if passengers can get to that location, they can be picked up and returned there.

Because the advanced reservation system cannot guarantee availability of trip times on a daily basis, the service is not recommended for daily trips such as home-based-work, and home-based-school trips.

The CRC rural transit system is funded through a combination of federal, state, and local funding. Annual federal grant funding sources used to offset the capital and operational deficits include the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program (Title 49 U.S.C section 5310), and the Rural Transit Assistance Program (Title 49 U.S.C section 5311). Additional discretionary grant sources are pursued on an annual basis including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) 5307 capital grant.

### *2.2.2 Urban Fixed Route Service*

Liberty Transit is a fixed-route transit system that began operations in October 2010. The service area for the system includes the municipalities of Hinesville, Flemington, Walthourville, and the Fort Stewart military base. Liberty Transit currently operates three fixed routes throughout the service day and runs from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The regular fare for one way service is \$1 with discounted rates available for senior citizens and Medicare card holders. Curb-to-Curb demand response service is available for eligible passengers at a rate of \$2.00 for a one way trip. The Liberty Transit system operates a fleet of three buses, each equipped with ADA compliant wheelchair lifts and tie downs, as well as bicycle racks for multimodal passengers.

The Liberty Transit System is governed by the City of Hinesville Council with oversight and recommendations provided by the Transit Steering Committee (TSC). The TSC is comprised of the chief elected officials from Hinesville, Flemington, Walthourville, the Liberty County Board of Commissioners, and a non-voting Fort Stewart representative.

The TSC is supported by the Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission/Hinesville Area MPO's Director and planning staff, as well as key City of Hinesville finance and grant administration staff.

The TSC meets monthly to discuss various aspects of the system such as operational performance, service complaints, capital improvement projects, and planning efforts. In the initial stages of transit service, there were several factors that limited the growth of the system, including a lack of funding and limited ridership. In response to these initial system challenges, an update to the Liberty Transit Development Plan (TDP) was conducted. This update was called the Liberty Transit Strategic Plan, and resulted in a revamped route structure and service plan.

The Strategic Plan was conducted during a time of extreme fiscal constraint for the City of Hinesville. The significant financial burden of ongoing operating expenses for the system was inconsistent with the City's focus to reduce overhead and program costs by 20% – 30%. The resulting service restructuring called for immediate service cuts, including the discontinuation of service that had little, or no ridership for the initial 18 months of service. Saturday service was discontinued, service frequencies were reduced system-wide, and non-productive route segments were eliminated.

Since the service reduction, Liberty Transit has worked to incrementally grow the system geographically to reach areas radiating out from the urban core. While the system has expanded in coverage area, the amount of service offered, in revenue service hours, has remained limited. Mid-day service gaps were created during the service reduction, which have not been closed, and have resulted in limited ridership on these routes. These operational statistics will be detailed in the service operational analysis of this report.



The following map shows the current Liberty Transit route alignments which includes Route 6 “Purple”, Route 7 “Green”, and Route 8 “Gold”. Service to the southwest portion of the system was extended after the completion of the 2012 TDP update. Prior to the rerouting, Liberty Transit terminated service at Veterans Parkway, with service to the Super Walmart. Service extensions now offer limited service shown in dashed lines, to Airport Road / SR 196, via EG Miles Parkway, US 84, and Shaw Road.

The Liberty Transit routes operate on variable service frequencies ranging from one hour, to one hour and 58 minutes. The following tables provide an overview of the service schedule offered for each route.

TABLE 2.1: LIBERTY TRANSIT ROUTES

	Start Time	Start Location	End Time	End Location	Variable Schedule
<b>Route 6</b>	6:09 AM	Liberty Regional Medical Center	7:56 PM	Happy Acres	Limited Service and Midday Gap
<b>Route 7</b>	5:50 AM	Happy Acres	7:07 PM	Happy Acres	Limited Service
<b>Route 8</b>	6:11 AM	Walmart	7:05 PM	Darsey Road	Limited Service

TABLE 2.2: LIBERTY TRANSIT TIMEPOINT SCHEDULES

Route 6 (Monday - Friday)

Northbound					Southbound				Northbound
LRMC	Library	PX	Shoppette	Winn Army	Stewart Pines Apts	Library	Cypress Bend MHP	Food Lion Plaza	Happy Acres MHP
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6:09a	6:15a	6:25a	6:34a	6:43a	6:51a	6:54a	--	--	7:14a
7:29a	7:35a	7:45a	--	7:49a	7:57a	8:00a	--	--	8:20a
8:35a	8:41a	8:51a	--	8:55a	9:03a	9:06a	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	2:35p	2:38p	2:52p	2:59p	3:16p
3:31p	3:37p	3:47p	3:56p	4:05p	4:13p	4:16p	4:30p	4:37p	4:54p
5:09p	5:15p	5:25p	5:34p	5:43p	5:51p	5:54p	6:08p	6:15p	6:32p
6:47p	6:53p	7:03p	--	7:07p	7:15p	7:18p	7:32p	7:39p	7:56p

Route 7 (Monday - Thursday)

Northbound				Southbound				
Happy Acres MHP	Walmart	PX	Winn Army	Harbor Rain Apts	Walmart	Happy Acres MHP	Savannah Tech	Food Lion Plaza
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5:50a	6:05a	6:25a	6:30a	6:38a	6:51a	7:12a	7:20a	7:32a
7:50a	8:05a	8:25a	8:30a	8:38a	8:51a	9:12a	--	--
9:12a	9:27a	9:47a	9:52a	10:00a	10:13a	10:34a	--	--
10:34a	10:49a	11:09a	11:14a	11:22a	11:35a	11:56a	--	--
11:56a	12:11p	12:31p	12:36p	12:44p	12:57p	1:18p	1:26p	1:38p
1:56p	2:11p	2:31p	2:36p	2:44p	2:57p	3:18p	--	--
3:18p	3:33p	3:53p	3:58p	4:06p	4:19p	4:40p	--	--
4:40p	4:55p	5:15p	5:20p	5:28p	5:41p	6:02p	--	--
6:02p	6:17p	--	--	6:29p	6:42p	7:03p	--	--

Route 7 (Friday)

Northbound				Southbound				
Happy Acres MHP	Walmart	PX	Winn Army	Harbor Rain Apts	Walmart	Happy Acres MHP	Savannah Tech	Food Lion Plaza
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5:50a	6:05a	6:25a	6:30a	6:38a	6:51a	7:12a	--	7:30a
7:48a	8:03a	8:23a	8:28a	8:36a	8:49a	9:10a	--	--
9:10a	9:25a	9:45a	9:50a	9:58a	10:11a	10:32a	--	--
10:32a	10:47a	11:07a	11:12a	11:20a	11:33a	11:54a	--	--
11:54a	12:09p	12:29p	12:34p	12:42p	12:55p	1:16p	--	1:34p
1:52p	2:07p	2:27p	2:32p	--	--	--	--	--
3:22p	3:37p	3:57p	4:02p	4:10p	4:23p	4:44p	--	--
4:44p	4:59p	5:19p	5:24p	5:32p	5:45p	6:06p	--	--
6:06p	6:21p	--	--	6:33p	6:46p	7:07p	--	--

Route 8 (Monday - Friday)

Northbound					Southbound				Northbound	
Walmart	LRMC	Library	YMCA	Applebees	LRMC	Walmart	Savannah Tech	Wilder Road	Walthourville City Hall	Darsey Road
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6:02a	6:11a	6:17a	--	--	6:27a	6:36a	--	--	--	6:43a
6:52a	7:01a	7:07a	--	--	7:18a	7:27a	7:50a	8:01a	8:09a	8:19a
8:28a	8:37a	8:43a	--	--	8:54a	9:03a	--	--	--	9:10a
9:19a	9:28a	9:34a	--	--	9:45a	9:54a	--	--	--	10:01a
10:10a	10:19a	10:25a	10:35a	10:40a	10:50a	10:59a	--	--	--	11:06a
11:15a	11:24a	11:30a	--	--	11:40a	11:49a	--	--	--	11:56a
12:05p	12:14p	12:20p	--	--	12:30p	12:39p	1:00p	1:10p	1:17p	1:25p
1:34p	1:43p	1:49p	1:59p	2:04p	2:14p	2:23p	--	--	--	2:30p
2:39p	2:48p	2:54p	--	--	3:04p	3:13p	--	--	--	--
3:13p	3:22p	3:28p	--	--	3:38p	3:47p	--	--	--	3:54p
4:03p	4:12p	4:18p	--	--	4:29p	4:38p	4:59p	5:09p	5:16p	5:24p
5:33p	5:42p	5:48p	--	--	5:59p	6:08p	--	--	--	6:15p
6:24p	6:33p	6:39p	--	--	6:49p	6:58p	--	--	--	7:05p

The system operates similarly to a spoke and hub style system, however service realignments to Route 6 eliminated the pulse at the Liberty Regional Medical Center. The system now has in-the-field transfers for each route, but no primary service center or hub where all three routes interline. The following figure shows the route alignments for the Liberty Transit System, as operated during the development of the TDP. Riders can also view service information regarding route alignments and schedules by using Google Maps Transit on personal computers and/or smart mobile devices.



A Liberty Transit ride guide is provided in Appendix A to this report.

### *2.2.3 Paratransit Service for Disabled*

Per regulations set forth in 49 CFR Part 37 "Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities (ADA), and 49 CFR Part 38 "Americans with Disabilities Act, Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles, public transit providers are required to offer complementary transportation services to persons with disabilities. Complementary paratransit is a comparable transportation service required by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transportation systems.

The Liberty Transit system was designed to offer point deviation service to eligible passengers within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius of the route. The fixed route bus served as the paratransit service provider and deviates from the fixed route alignment to pick up eligible passengers at scheduled times and locations. At the time of system design, Federal regulations interpreted point deviation service as synonymous with complementary paratransit service. In 2017, Liberty Transit was notified by oversight agencies that the point deviation system no longer met the intent of the Federal regulations and were advised that the service must transition to a demand response service model.

Liberty Transit partnered with the Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission to develop a Complementary Paratransit Plan, which was adopted in January 2018. The service model includes the following key service policies:

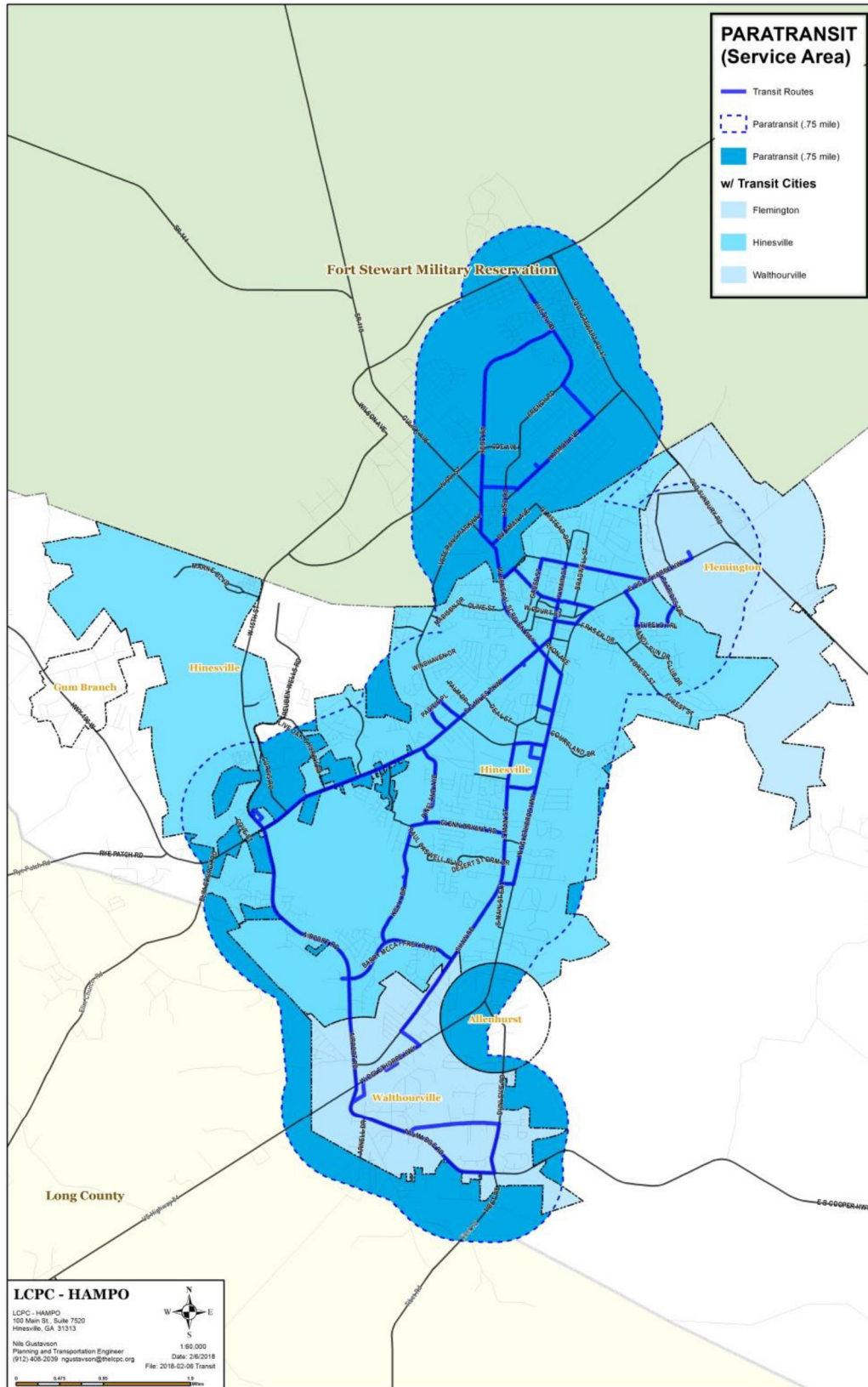
- Service is offered curb-to-curb with guidelines on assistance to those passengers who need assistance beyond the curb.
- Feeder service from curb to fixed route bus stop is considered a viable trip type if the destination is accessible from a standard bus stop.

- Time of Service will begin 30 minutes prior to the first fixed route transit stop of the day, and 30 minutes prior to the last fixed route stop of the day.
- Fare is two times standard fixed route fare.
- No premium service offered (same-day, will-call, trips beyond the defined service area and trips before or after the established service hours).
- Two ADA accessible vehicles dedicated to paratransit service are required, to guarantee service.

The service area was defined as the city limits of Walthourville, Flemington, and Hinesville; plus a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile buffer from routes in Allenhurst, Fort Stewart, Liberty County, and Long County. The following map shows the ADA Paratransit service map presented as an exhibit in the Complementary Paratransit Plan.



FIGURE 2.5: COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA MAP





The City of Hinesville anticipates implementation of the paratransit service in Fall 2018, following contract amendments, procurement of spare paratransit vehicle and scheduling software, and an independent evaluation of eligibility certifications.

## **2.3 Local and Regional Plans**

The local governments in Liberty County are committed to ongoing mobility improvements for the communities they serve. In keeping with this common goal, a number of transportation planning efforts have been conducted in recent years to identify a variety of community issues, and to define strategies and solutions to resolve these issues. The Liberty Transit TDP includes the review of these local planning documents to provide a foundation to the TDP. The evaluated plans include:

- HAMPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan - 2015
- Liberty Transit TDP / Strategic Plan – 2012

### *2.3.1 HAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*

Liberty Transit operates within the urbanized area of Liberty and Long Counties. An urbanized area is defined by the US Census Bureau as “areas that represent densely developed territory, and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses.”<sup>1</sup> To qualify as an urban area, the territory must have a dense core of census tracts/blocks that meet a minimum population density of 50,000 or more people. As a result of the 2000 Census, the Hinesville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (HAMPO) was established as a federally designated transportation planning agency to address transportation planning within the urbanized portions of Liberty and Long Counties.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/uafaq.html>

According to federal law, the transportation planning process must be carried out by MPOs for designated urbanized areas that exceed a population of 50,000, as well as the area expected to become urbanized within the next 20 years. As the designated MPO for Liberty County and Urbanized Long County, HAMPO is responsible for overseeing long range transportation planning within the MPO planning area.

HAMPO completed an update to the MTP in 2015, which included a cursory look at transit service and propensity for the study area. A key area of emphasis in the MTP was the need to improve pedestrian access to the fixed route transit system, especially in the older, disadvantaged portions of the City. The MTP also recognized consistent interest expressed by citizens regarding limited fixed-route service to Savannah with connecting service to Chatham Area Transit. Coastal Regional Coaches was recognized as an existing rural provider for those who wish to travel between Liberty County and Chatham County. However, limitations imposed by restrictions on stop locations when traveling between urban areas was cited as a major obstacle. The need for regular service between Savannah and Liberty County was recommended as a focus area for the TDP and the five-year work program. In addition to comments specifically addressing transit, public comment from the MTP also identified passenger rail transport as an area of interest for the community. Currently, the closest passenger rail stations are located in Chatham County / Savannah and Wayne County / Jesup. Chatham Area Transit offers transit service connections at the Amtrak train station, however no fixed route provide services to the Jesup station.

### *2.3.2 Liberty Transit TDP / Strategic Plan*

The Liberty Transit Strategic Plan was conducted in 2012 and was intended to make recommendations regarding the type of public transportation, service area, and system

management structure that will best meet the needs of the metropolitan Hinesville community. The goals of the study were to:

- Increase the cost effectiveness of providing public transportation,
- improve mobility for transit dependent populations, and
- support economic development and quality of life in the Hinesville community.

The study evaluated the need for public transportation, performance of the first eighteen months of the transit service, and alternative strategies to meet the community's transportation needs. A number of recommendations were crafted as part of the Strategic Plan, including route modifications, service hour adjustments, marketing strategies, and administrative changes. The following table provides an overview of the recommendations and their current status.

TABLE 2.3: 2012 STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

Recommendation	Status
<b>Reduce service in underperforming areas including family housing on Fort Stewart, Veterans Parkway, Patriots Trail (YMCA Loop)</b>	Completed
<b>Extend limited service to Savannah Technical College</b>	Completed
<b>Extend limited service to Walthourville</b>	Completed
<b>Remove service on Gulick Ave. on Fort Stewart</b>	Completed
<b>Provide peak service on Route 6 and supplement with demand response service between 06:00 – 20:00</b>	Incomplete. Route 6 reduced but no demand response supplement was implemented.

TABLE 2.3: CONTINUED

**Create Transit Coordinator position**

Completed. The City of Hinesville opted to expand the Transdev transit operations contract to include the Transit Coordinator responsibilities.

**Revise service contract to include more detailed reporting criteria, and update the City of Hinesville's contractor oversight monitoring protocol.**

Completed. The City of Hinesville completed a competitive RFP in 2015 and entered into a new agreement. However, a number of the issues identified in the 2012 plan are unresolved.

CHAPTER 3

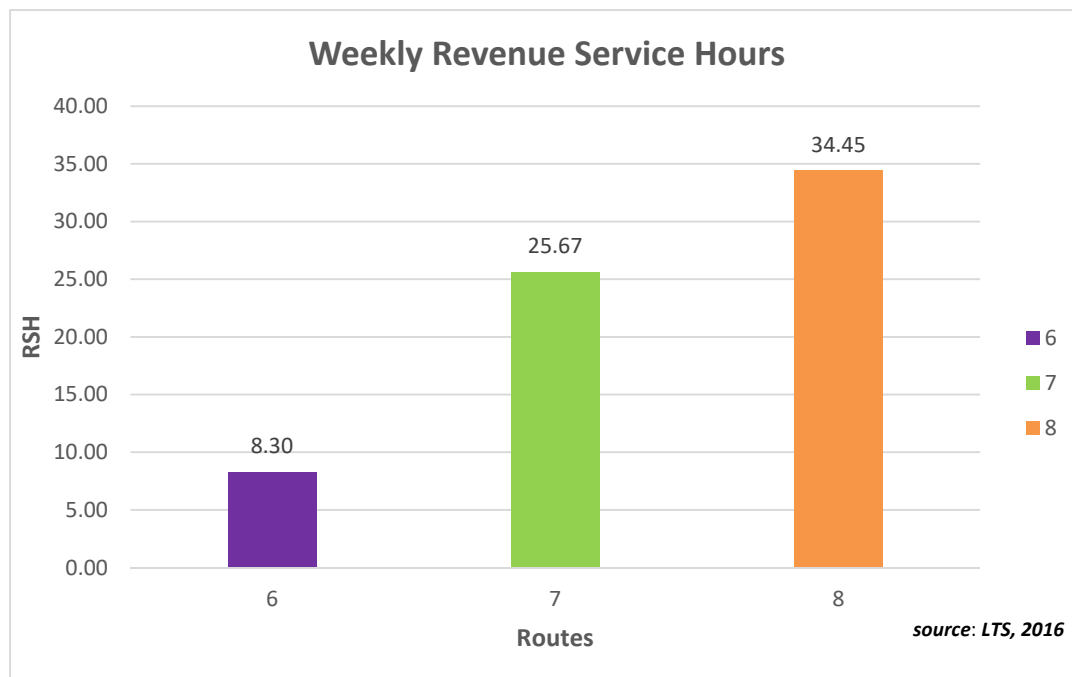
*OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS*

To effectively plan for future improvements to the Liberty Transit System, it is imperative that the current operational effectiveness of the system be thoroughly screened and analyzed. Assessment of specific areas of operational efficiency are limited for the Liberty Transit System due to relaxed reporting requirements to the National Transit Database (NTD). As a “limited reporter”, the typical areas of service effectiveness are not a required reporting factor, so the areas of analysis is constrained to the available data.

### 3.1 Service Effectiveness

The Liberty Transit System operates Monday – Friday with varying levels of service for each of its three routes. Route 8 offers the most significant opportunity for service at 34.45 service hours per week. In contrast, Route 6 only offers 8.3 hours of revenue service per week.

FIGURE 3.1: LIBERTY TRANSIT SERVICE HOURS



When gauging the efficiency of the system at the route level, it is imperative that the amount of service offered be a primary factor. For example, if ridership were compared

by route, Route 8 would have the highest performance. However, this route also has the most service available. To compare the ridership value, without also considering the level of service offered, provides a skewed perspective on performance. Other general indicators that must be considered are provided in the following table. These factors will be used in the service effectiveness analysis.

TABLE 3.1: LIBERTY TRANSIT NTD GENERAL SERVICE INDICATORS

General Indicator	2016
Service Area Population	31,932
Service Area (sq. miles)	20
Passenger Trips	16,255
Revenue Miles	104,932
Revenue Hours	8,253
Employees -FT	6
Vehicles Operated in Max. Service	3
Bus Average Fleet Age	8
Spare Ratio	60%

SOURCE: NTD 2016 REPORT

Using the General Service Indicators, a service effectiveness analysis was conducted to determine how well the current service is operating. The following table provides an overview of the various factors analyzed.



TABLE 3.2: SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness Indicator	NTD 2016
Operating Expenses per Unlinked Passenger Trip	38.34
Unlinked Trips per Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM)	0.2
Unlinked Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour (VRH)	2
Operating Expenses per VRM	5.94
Operating Expenses per VRH	75.51

As a point of comparison, data from peer transit agencies in the State of Georgia were gathered. While the size and function of Liberty Transit is fairly unique, the peer system analysis can provide a level of magnitude to the performance of the system.

TABLE 3.3: PEER SYSTEMS - SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness Indicator	Liberty Transit	Rome Transit	Athens Transit
Operating Expenses per Unlinked Passenger Trip	\$38.34	\$2.18	\$3.59
Unlinked Trips per Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM)	0.2	2.20	1.84
Unlinked Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour (VRH)	2	35.80	21.16
Operating Expenses per VRM	\$5.94	\$4.86	\$6.60
Operating Expenses per VRH	\$75.51	\$77.95	\$75.87
Maximum # Buses Operated at Peak Service	3	35	23

While Liberty Transit's expenses per Vehicle Revenue Mile and Vehicle Revenue Hour are comparable to the peer systems, the cost per passenger is significantly higher for Liberty Transit. The number of passengers served is the primary factor that impacts the overall efficiency for the service. With only two trips provided for every hour of service offered, the Liberty Transit system is extremely underutilized and falling significantly lower in comparison to the peer system's performance. The operating expenses per vehicle revenue hour and vehicle revenue mile are comparable to both Rome and Athens Transit, however both of these service providers operate a significantly higher number of vehicles at maximum service. This discrepancy in affordability of service will be a critical factor addressed in the recommendations section of this report.

Other factors that contribute to low ridership include extremely limited opportunities to access service in the Limited Service areas, confusion on how to schedule trips with route tables that are inconsistent, and insufficient population and employment densities necessary to support fixed route transit services.

### **3.2 Sources of Funds**

Liberty Transit operates on an annual budget of approximately \$1,040,000, including an operating budget of approximately \$630,000. Sources of funds used to support the service includes fare revenues, local funds derived from municipal general funds, and Federal Transit Administration 5307 formula funds. The State of Georgia does not provide operating funds for public transit agencies, but does offer 10% match on capital grant funding.

The City of Hinesville is the owner and operator of Liberty Transit and service is provided in the Cities of Flemington and Walthourville through Memorandum of Agreement. These municipal partners assist with the provision of cash matching funds for both

capital and operational expenditures for the system. The following table provides the respective local funding percentages paid by each of these municipalities.

TABLE 3.4: 2017 FUNDING BREAKDOWN

	<b>Operating Budget</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Federal Transit Administration</b>	\$264,048	48%	\$310,448	81%
<b>Georgia Department of Transportation</b>	-	-	\$34,494	10%
<b>City of Hinesville</b>	\$247,572	45%	\$35,935	9.38%
<b>City of Walthourville</b>	\$10,905	2%	35.80	.41%
<b>City of Flemington</b>	\$5,571	1%	\$4.86	.21%
<b>Passenger Fares/Other Revenues</b>	\$19,255	3%	-	-

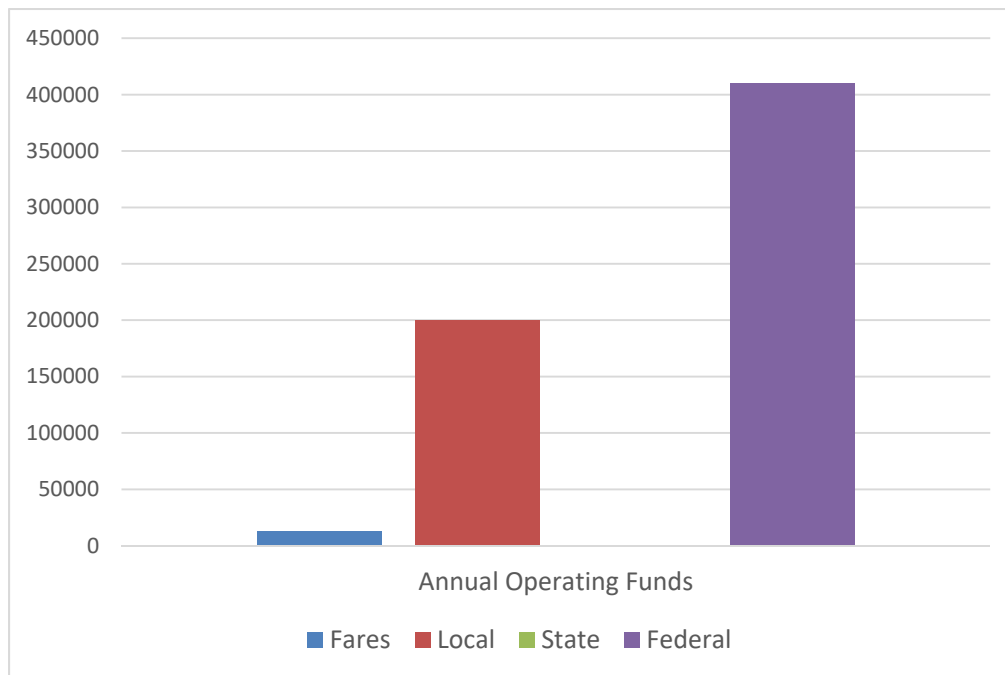
The Liberty Transit system utilizes the 49 U.S.C. 5307 Capital Cost of Contracting<sup>2</sup> as a method to reduce the local match funds paid for fleet maintenance conducted through contracted services. To avoid imposing burdensome accounting rules with regard to contracts for bus and paratransit-related services, FTA allows recipients to consider a percentage of contracted maintenance as capital costs. FTA guidance also provides detailed tables in “Exhibit III-1” describing the various eligibility criteria that determines the appropriate percentage of brokered services that can be considered capital expenses. Liberty Transit owns the full fleet of service vehicles, therefore the following eligibility criteria applies.

- Service Contract (contractor provides maintenance and transit service; recipient provides vehicles) 40 percent.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/urbanized-area-formula-grants-5307>

The result of this funding strategy is demonstrated in the following table. The operating expenditures for Liberty Transit are covered at a higher percentage by Federal and State sources, thereby reducing the local cost to operate the system.

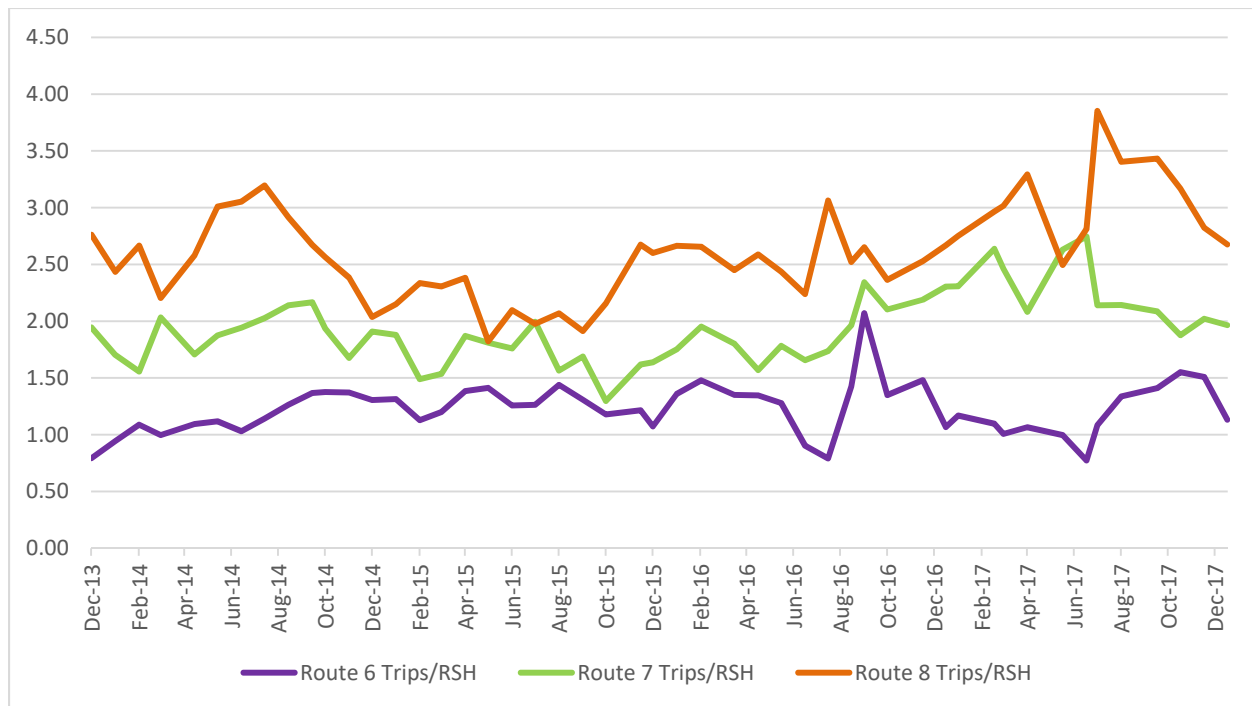
FIGURE 3.2: LIBERTY TRANSIT, SOURCES OF ANNUAL OPERATING FUNDS



### 3.3 Ridership

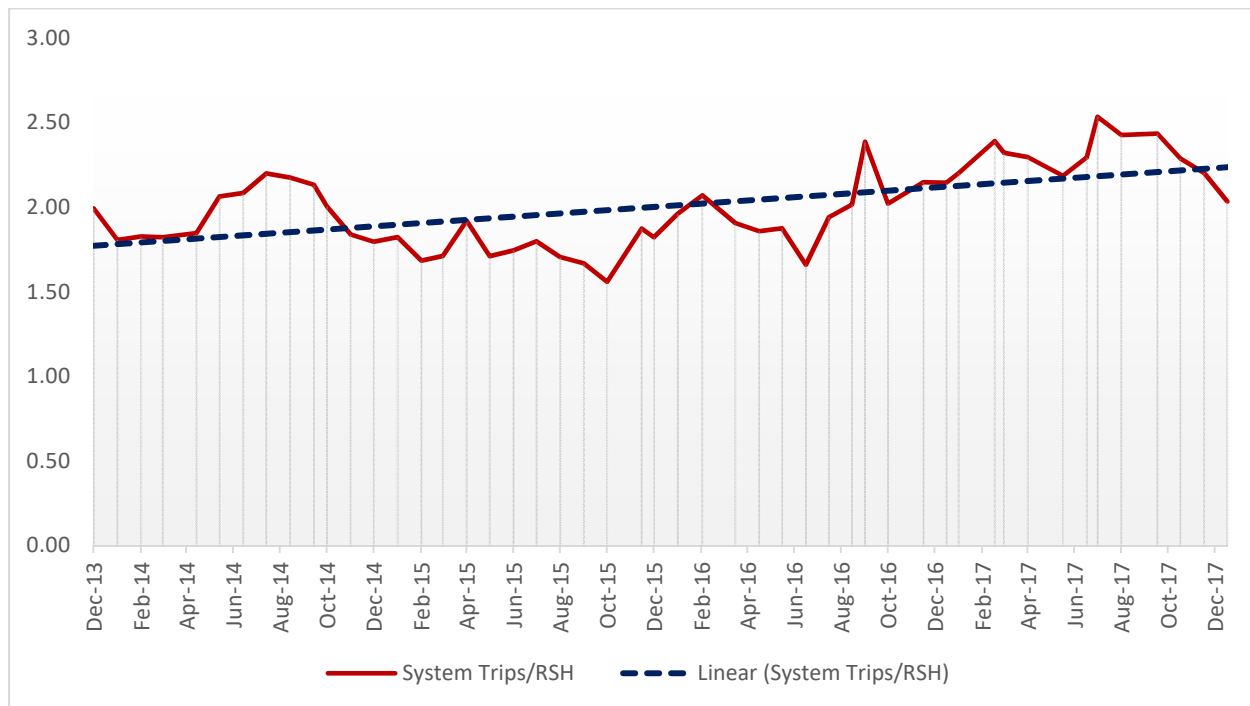
Liberty Transit provides approximately 2,000 unlinked passenger trips per month. The system tracks ridership using a Genfare GFI automated system, which includes a digital fare payment system that is coordinated with driver entries for cash paying riders. The following table provides a view of historical ridership trends, by month. The system has continued to see incremental growth in ridership, with fluctuations in performance caused by a variety of factors, including days of service in a month, holidays, school schedule, deployment activities at Fort Stewart, and weather events. Route 8 consistently outperforms both Routes 6 and 7, with the highest recorded ridership in August 2017.

FIGURE 3.3: HISTORICAL TRIPS PER REVENUE SERVICE HOUR, ROUTE LEVEL



While the ridership and revenue service hours for each of the Liberty Transit routes varies significantly, the aggregated system performance demonstrates incremental growth over the reporting timeline. The following graph shows the system level trips/revenue service hours and the corresponding trend-line.

FIGURE 3.4: HISTORICAL TRIPS PER REVENUE SERVICE HOUR, SYSTEM TRENDS



The system tracks ridership at the route level, but does not offer ridership information at the stop level for the system. This level of data is critical to the TDP process, as it facilitates the identification of underperforming segments of service at a more granular level. The TDP effort included a stop level ridership survey, to document boardings and alightings for an entire week of service in April 2016.

Liberty Transit partnered with the Armstrong Atlantic University, Liberty Campus for the count collection, offering students the opportunity to engage in the planning process and supporting the local continuing education program. The students were trained on the boarding and alighting count collection methodology and provided with an overview of the TDP planning process. The counts were conducted for the week of April 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, with a 100% sample achieved.

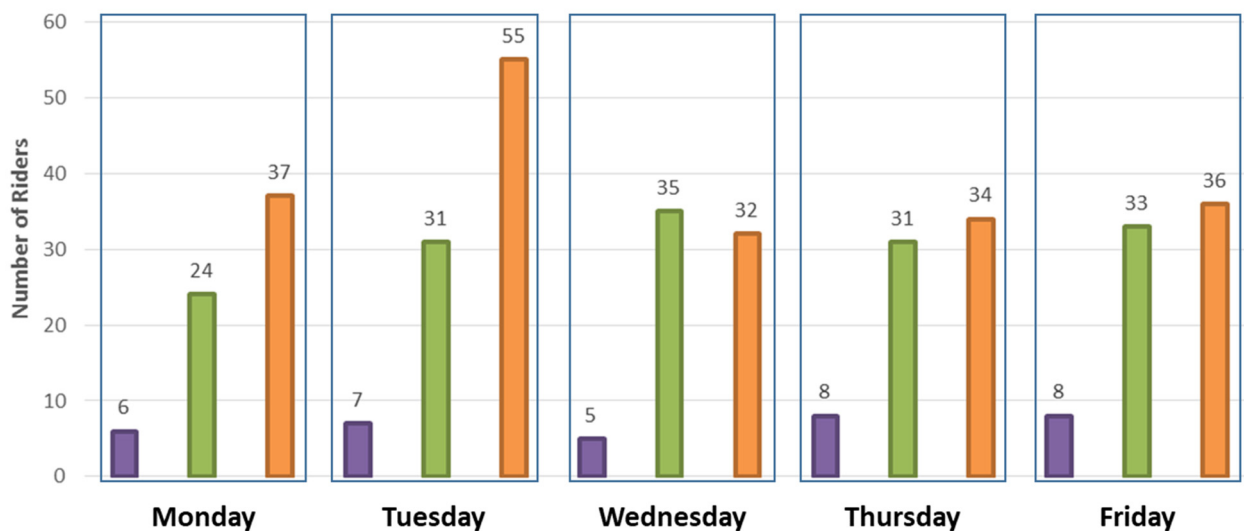
The survey data was compared to GFI farebox data and historical ridership data to ensure the validity of the sample.

TABLE 3.5: RIDERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS: TOTAL TRIPS BY ROUTE

Route	Trips
Route 6 - Purple	34
Route 7 - Green	154
Route 8 - Orange	194

The following graph shows a more detailed breakdown, by days of service. A total of 382 trips were counted, with Tuesday being the highest ridership day.

FIGURE 3.5: ROUTE LEVEL BOARDING SURVEY, DAILY RIDERSHIP



The results of the count survey were then loaded into Global Information Systems (GIS) and mapped. These maps were used to identify the most productive stops and route segments for the system, as well as those that are underperforming. The trips were separated by boarding (getting on the bus) and alighting (trips getting off the bus) to identify points of origin as well as destinations. The following maps show the results of the trip survey collection.



FIGURE 3.6: TRIP SURVEY RESULTS, BOARDING ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

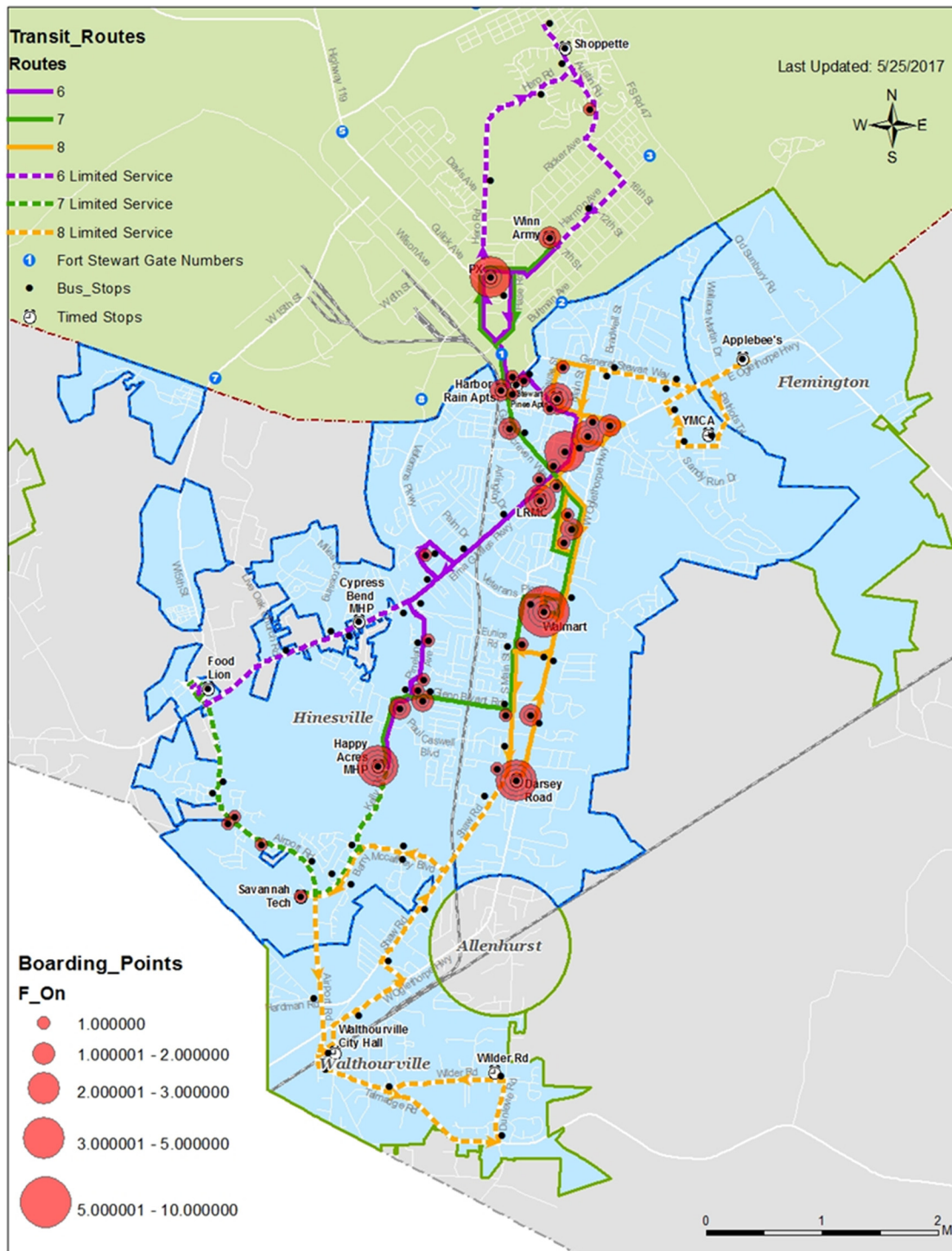
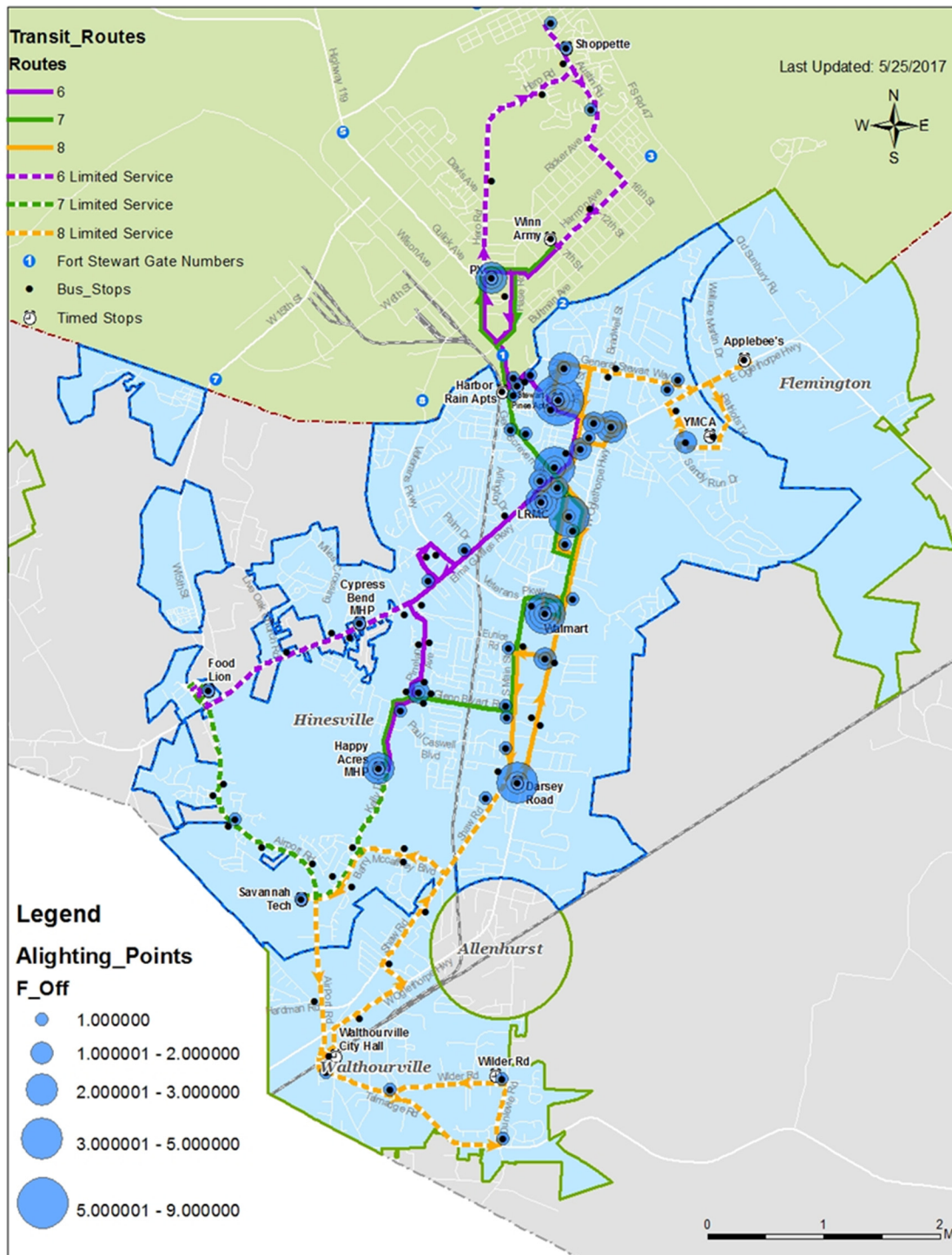


FIGURE 3.7: TRIP SURVEY RESULTS, ALIGHTING ACTIVITY LOCATIONS



Boarding and alighting activity is concentrated in the urban core of Hinesville, with very little activity in the limited service areas of the system. The two primary access points for the system that operate on a regular schedule are Darsey Road and the Happy Acres

Mobile Home Park. The activity levels at these two stops indicate that the limited service is not operating with sufficient frequency to facilitate trips, and passengers are accessing the system at the closest point that operates on a regular schedule. The ridership survey confirmed concerns that ridership is low and significant segments of service are underperforming.

### **3.4 Fare Structure**

In an effort to thoroughly analyze the current fare structure of Liberty Transit, a peer system fare structure review was conducted. This review provides an overview of fare structures and programs of comparable transit systems within the State of Georgia to help shape the fare evaluation process of Liberty Transit and serve as guidance in the decision making process regarding the fares for the various services offered by Liberty Transit. There are nine transit systems within the State of Georgia that were analyzed and summarized to highlight their current bus fares and services offered.

#### *3.4.1 Peer System Fare Review*

##### **Rome Transit-Fixed Route**

Rome Transit Department provides fixed route services that consist of main lines, trippers, and paratransit services within the city of Rome, Georgia. The system operates a total of 35 buses, at peak service, Monday through Friday from 5:40 am to 6:30 pm. Rome Transit's paratransit service operates up to a three quarter of a mile of the fixed route lines on a curb to curb service for the disabled and elderly. Before paratransit service can be granted, an application must be submitted and approved. Rome Transit charges \$1.25 for a regular full fare and \$0.60 for seniors and disabled riders. Transfers are free, and children under the age of five years riding with an adult are also free. Ride cards of fifty rides and ten rides for both regular and paratransit service are available.

Source: <http://www.romefloyd.com/departments/transit-department>.

### **Hall Area Transit-Scheduled Bus Service**

Hall Area Transit bus system serves the City of Gainesville and Hall County, Georgia, providing scheduled bus service throughout Gainesville and parts of the City of Oakwood, and unincorporated Hall County. Service is offered only on weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Hall Area Transit also offers complimentary ADA service "Mobility Plus" available to eligible riders within a three quarter mile radius of a Gainesville connection bus route that cannot safely navigate streets to access the service due to disability. The system charges children and adults ages seven to fifty-nine one dollar per ride; children ages three and under ride for free; senior citizens ages 60 and older, and disabled riders who have a valid reduced fare card pay \$0.50 per ride. The system offers daily unlimited passes and unlimited monthly passes to the general public and to reduced fare card passengers. Transfer tokens are also available for riders who use connecting bus rides to complete their trips.

Source: <http://www.gainesville.org/hall-area-transit>

### **Douglas County Georgia: Rideshare and Senior's Voucher program**

Douglas County, Georgia operates a commuter-oriented rideshare program that provides service to senior adults and disabled individuals, operates work-trip vanpools and carpool-matching assistance. Vanpools operates Monday through Friday, leaving central locations in Douglas County from 5:00am to 7:00 a.m. with return trips from 2:30 p.m. through 5:00 p.m. Vanpool services are offered at a monthly rate ranging from \$82 to \$195, depending on trip proximity. A transportation voucher program is also offered for senior adults (age 60 and over), and disabled individuals ages 19 to 59 in paying for what is referred to as "quality of life" trips.

Source: [http://www.celebratedouglascounty.com/cgi-bin/MySQLdb?VIEW=/departments/view\\_dept.txt&cdept=11&deptname=Rideshare](http://www.celebratedouglascounty.com/cgi-bin/MySQLdb?VIEW=/departments/view_dept.txt&cdept=11&deptname=Rideshare)

### **Cherokee County (CATS)-Fixed Route Service**

Cherokee Area Transit System provides fixed route service, county wide demand response, park and ride express service, and vanpool service to the residents of Cherokee County, Georgia. Fixed route service is offered Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Bus fare for a one way trip per person is \$1.25, and \$0.60 for seniors, Medicare and passengers with disabilities. Children under 42 inches tall ride for free. The demand response service is available from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm on weekdays only and reservations must be made in advance. Fare varies for demand response service based on proximity of trip.

Source: <http://www.cherokeega.com/Transportation/canton-fixed-route-service/>

### **Augusta Richmond Transit**

Augusta Public transit provides a comprehensive public transportation service throughout Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia. Services include fixed route, paratransit, and the Richmond Rural Transit service. Service operation takes place Monday through Friday, and on the first Saturday of each month from 8:00 am to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Fares for a regular trip per person is \$1.25 with available transfers for \$0.50, seniors (65 and older), students, and disabled individuals (with a Medicare card, APT, or APD ID) ride for \$0.60 with available transfers for \$0.25. Monthly and weekly passes are also provided for all riders.

Source: <http://www.augustaga.gov/247/Passes-Fares>.

### **Chatham Area Transit**

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) offers fixed route service including its paratransit service in Chatham County, Georgia. Fixed route fares and passes for the CAT cost \$1.50 per one-way local trip with free transfers valid for ninety minutes. Unlimited day passes cost \$3.00, weekly passes cost \$14.00, monthly passes cost \$50.00, and a ride-card with ten



rides is available for \$15.00. Reduced fares are available to youths, seniors, and disabled passenger who can provided the necessary identification cards. Paratransit service in Chatham County is designed specifically to transport individuals with disabilities. Service is provided door-to-door and varies based on the eligibility (all trips, some trips, transitional). In order to utilize this service upon approval, reservations must be made at least one day prior to, and up to seven days before the intended trip. Service operates seven days per week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Source: <http://www.catchacat.org/>

### **Athens Transit**

Athens Transit System (ATS) provides service to Athens-Clarke County, Georgia via a fixed route service with demand response service available to individuals with mobility impairment. Service hours for ATS are Monday through Sunday, from 6:00 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. Riders ages 18-64 ride ATS at a cost of \$1.75, senior citizens and persons with disability ride for \$1.00 during peak hours and \$0.85 during off peak hours. All children 17 and younger ride the bus for free in Athens-Clarke County. ATS makes passes available for their more frequent riders, allowing a total amount of 22 rides without a time limit and free transfers. Adults ages 18-64 pay \$31.00 for a smart pass, senior citizens and disabled riders pay \$18.00.

Source: <https://www.athensclarkecounty.com/199/Transit>

### **Henry County – Dial a Ride**

Henry County, Georgia provides a Dial-a-Ride transit service to the residents of Henry County. The system operates service using 18 cutaway buses which covers advanced reservation system on a first come first serve basis. The annual budget of \$1,345,759 supports, 26 drivers, schedulers, dispatchers, and office support staff. In 2011, 82,867 trips were provided. Two days per week trips are offered to the Regional Hospital area in adjacent Clayton County for \$5 each way. Seniors over 60 years of age pay \$2.00 per trip while the general public pays \$4.00.

Source: [http://www.henryherald.com/news/transit-system-rolling-along-in-henry-county/article\\_15f928fa-b123-5a25-a5cf-7bad1028c6ff.html](http://www.henryherald.com/news/transit-system-rolling-along-in-henry-county/article_15f928fa-b123-5a25-a5cf-7bad1028c6ff.html)

### **Albany Transit**

Albany Transit System provides fixed route service to Albany, Georgia through nine routes with a full base fare of \$1.50 per ride per adult. Seniors, disabled, and children ages 6 to 12 pay \$0.50 per ride and paratransit users pay \$2.50 per one way trip. Free transfers are available to all riders and children five years and younger ride for free. Albany Transit also offers unlimited weekly and monthly passes for frequent riders at a cost of \$12 and \$45.00 for adults respectively. Seniors and disabled can purchase monthly passes at a discounted fare of \$20, and students have the option of purchasing monthly passes for \$35.00.

Source: [http://www.albany.ga.us/filestorage/1798/2879/2941/TDP\\_Final.pdf](http://www.albany.ga.us/filestorage/1798/2879/2941/TDP_Final.pdf) and <http://www.albany.ga.us/>.

In summary, the systems analyzed during the peer screening provide a variety of services at varying fare structures and rates. Fixed route fares for these peer systems ranges from \$1.00 to \$1.75, with free transfers. Liberty Transit's standard fixed route fare of \$1.00 per trip, with no free transfers, is well aligned with peer systems throughout the state. In comparison to other systems, Liberty Transit offers fewer promotional fare programs, such as reduced fares for limited time-frames to garner interest or support user groups. A fare structure matrix can be seen in Appendix A of this report.



CHAPTER 4

*DEMAND / NEEDS ASSESSMENT*

Liberty Transit is committed to the advancement of its mission to enhance the quality of life for residents, soldiers and their families, and visitors by providing safe, environmentally-friendly and cost-effective transportation options. The Transit Needs and Demand chapter of this report evaluates areas within the urbanized area of Liberty and Long Counties that are most viable for public transit service.

#### **4.1 Transit Propensity Analysis**

Understanding the magnitude of riders attracted to and served by transit is vital to helping transit systems meet the mobility needs of the community in which it serves. Census data from the 2010 US Census was used to determine the relative propensity to use transit service by block group. The 2040 MTP propensity analysis used a technique based upon Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) "Report 28: Transit Markets of the Future" to weight demographic characteristics, as well as density, that influence transit use. This approach highlights the relative "need" for transit service within the service area.

One important aspect of transit demand is evaluating where, and if, population and employment densities are sufficient to support transit service. The Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual states, "The more people and the more jobs that are within easy access distance of transit service, the more potential customers there are to support high-quality service."

Transit-supportive population density thresholds of three units per gross acre are considered sufficient for hourly bus service; 4.67 units per gross acre to support buses every 30 minutes, and 10 units per gross acre to support buses every 10 minutes. From the employment perspective, four jobs per gross acre supports hourly bus service. Operating transit service balances tradeoffs between the provision and utilization of service, which depend in large part on density.

***IS FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT THE RIGHT MOBILITY TOOL?***

***POPULATION DENSITY OF 3 HOUSEHOLDS OR 4 JOBS PER ACRE IS CONSIDERED SUFFICIENT FOR HOURLY BUS SERVICE.***

To identify the areas exhibiting a propensity for transit, the demographic factors used in this analysis were identified. These factors consist of Households without Cars, Poverty, Minority, Female, Disability, Mobility Limitations, and Workers 65 and Older. Four of these demographic factors were available at the block group level. The most detailed level available for the other factors was the tract level.

FACTORS: BLOCK GROUP LEVEL

- Households without Cars: Census Table B25044 Tenure by Vehicles Available contains the total number of occupied housing units and households with no vehicle available (owner occupied and renter occupied)
- Poverty: Census Table B17017 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Household Type by Age of Householder contains the data of total households and income in the past 12 months below poverty level

- Minority: Census Table B03002 Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race contains the data of total population and population white alone, not Hispanic or Latino The percentage of population not “white alone, not Hispanic or Latino” was calculated.
- Female: Census Table B01001 Sex by Age contains the data of total population and female population

#### FACTORS: TRACT LEVEL

- Disability: Census Table C18120 Employment Status by Disability Status contains total population and population with a disability (by “employed in the labor force”, “unemployed in the labor force”, and “not in the labor force”)
- Mobility Limitation: Census Table B18105 Sex by Age by Ambulatory Difficulty contains total civilian noninstitutionalized population five years old and over and “with an ambulatory difficulty” by age cohort
- Workers 65 Years Old and Older: Census table B23004 Work Status in the Past 12 Months by Age by Employment Status for the Civilian Population 65 Years and Over contains “worked in the past 12 months, 65 to 74 years” and “worked in the past 12 months, 75 years and over” Because the universe for this table is civilian population 65 years and over, the number of other workers was borrowed from Census table C18129. The percentage of workers that are 65 years old or over was calculated.

#### DENSITY

- Distinct from the transit supportive densities above, the composite transit propensity utilizes a population density factor. Density was calculated from the Tiger/LINE block group shapefiles. The total area was calculated from the land area and water area attributes to derive percent land area. The area in square miles of each block group was calculated via Calculate Geometry, and the percent

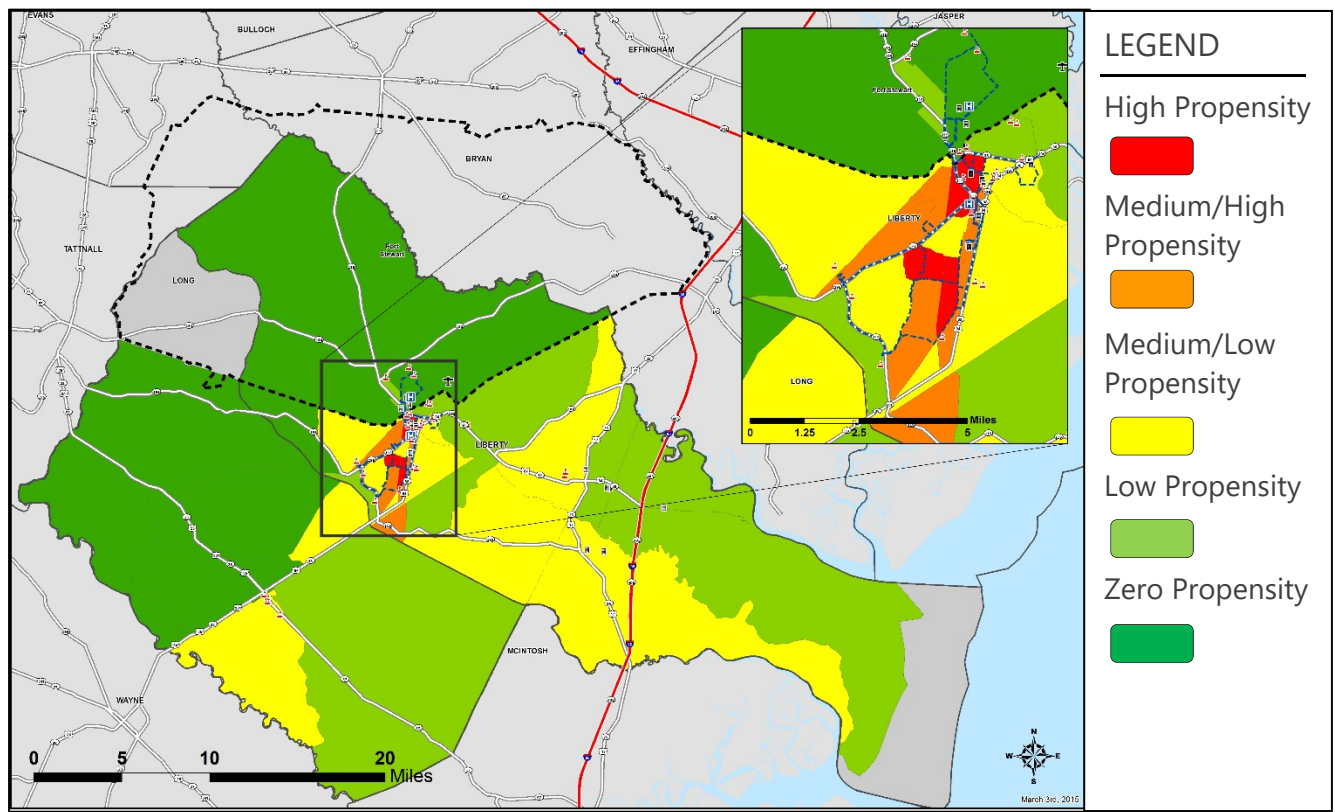
land area was applied to obtain square miles of land. Population was then divided by square miles of land to obtain the density value.

#### COMPOSITE PROPENSITY

Factors that were only available at the tract level were spatially joined from the tract to constituent block groups, resulting in all factors residing at the block group level. The percentage of households or population of each demographic factor (except for older workers) together with the population density in persons per square mile were each individually indexed to rate each block group's factor on a scale from one to 100. The factors were then weighted according to the accepted methodology.

Areas in the City of Hinesville, City of Flemington and Fort Stewart military installation with density sufficient to support hourly bus service are all served by the current bus system. One area that demonstrated higher concentrations of populations in need of transit service not currently served by Liberty Transit were within the City of Walthourville along US 84 and SR 119. The following map shows concentrations of population most likely to ride transit and with sufficient density to support fixed route hourly services highlighted in red.

FIGURE 4.1: TRANSIT PROPENSITY ANALYSIS RESULTS



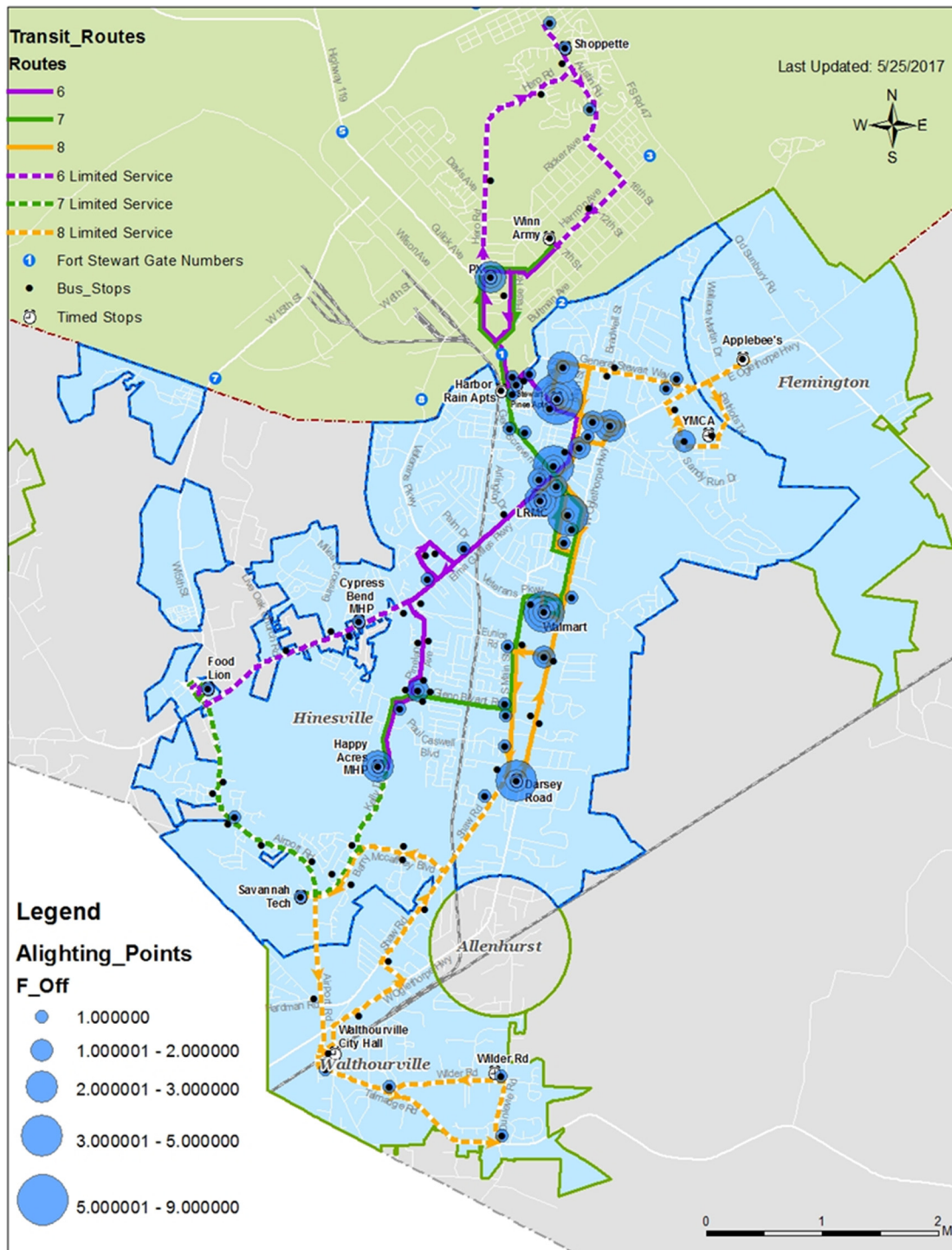
The propensity analysis further demonstrates that there is not sufficient population, employment, or other activity to support fixed route transit service to outlying areas in Liberty County, including areas adjacent to the interstate. Although major employers are located in these areas, previous efforts by the Coastal Regional Commission to form vanpools or provide carpool matching have been unsuccessful, suggesting that there is not a sufficient level of interest in alternative commuting options. The limited information available about employee residence locations also suggests that many employees commute from outside of Liberty County and would not support transit service from the urbanized areas in Hinesville to the workplaces located near the interstate or manufacturing- based employment centers in rural areas.

## 4.2 Trip Destination Hot-Spots

The transit propensity analysis helps providers identify concentrations of people most likely to ride public transportation, however the analysis does not factor in desired destinations. The trip destination hot-spots analysis was conducted using a variety of sources including the boarding and alighting data collected as a task of the TDP, as well as rider surveys, public input, and stakeholder interviews. The alighting map shown in the following figure provides clear indication of where current riders get off the bus, most frequently. The locations that have the highest concentrations of activity include:

- Super Walmart
- Liberty County Public Library
- Darsey Road
- Happy Acres Mobile Home Park
- Fort Stewart Post Exchange (PX)
- Veterans Clinic
- Liberty Regional Medical Center
- Kroger Shopping Plaza

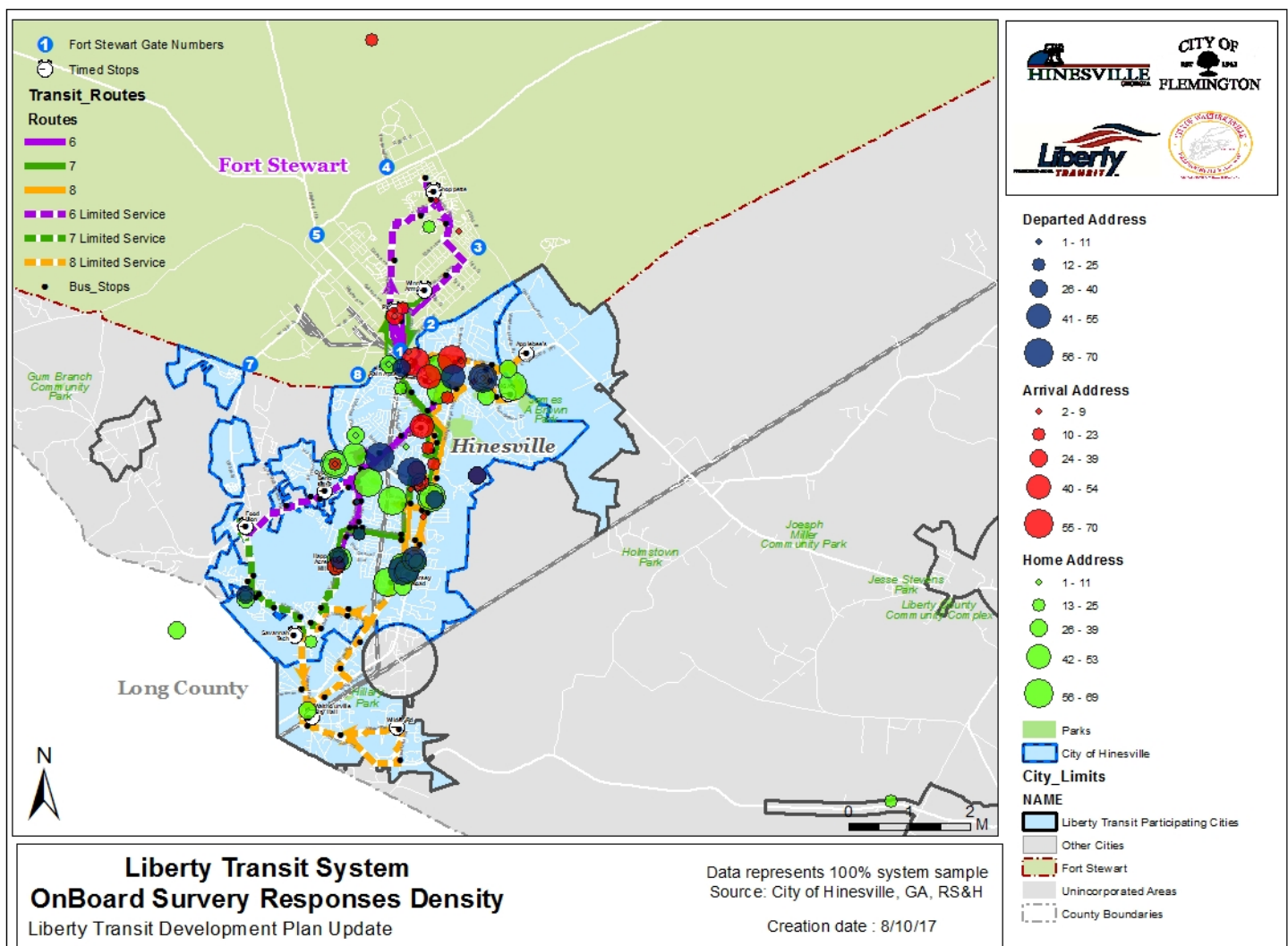
FIGURE 4.2: TRIP SURVEY RESULTS, ALIGHTING ACTIVITY LOCATIONS





In addition to the boarding and alighting sample, on-board surveys were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of rider's points of origin and ultimate destinations. The following map was created to demonstrate the travel sheds of survey respondents. Respondents home addresses are shown in green, while their point of access to the system are shown in blue, and their ultimate destination is shown in red. The travel behaviors demonstrated in this analysis shows that current riders are generally traveling within ½ mile of their homes to access the system, and arriving within ½ mile of their ultimate destination.

FIGURE 4.3: ONBOARD SURVEY ORIGIN/DESTINATION RESULTS



Public and stakeholder feedback provided additional desired destinations as potential targets for expanded service:

- Oglethorpe Square Shopping Plaza
- Walmart Neighborhood Market – Intersection of US 84 and General Stewart
- Walmart Neighborhood Market – Intersection of US 84 and Melanie Drive
- Diversity Health Future Facility / DFCS – Fraser Drive
- Liberty Regional Medical Center – Route 6
- Bryant Commons Park
- City of Savannah – Connections to CAT, Access to Medical, Services, & Shopping

Participants also provided insights highlighting areas that are currently served, but with limited service. These areas include:

- YMCA / Sandy Run Loop
- Cypress Bend Mobile Home Park
- Savannah Technical College
- Walthourville Service
- Food Lion on Airport Road

CHAPTER 5

*PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT*

## 5.1 Public and Stakeholder Involvement Program

A fundamental element of the Liberty Transit TDP is public and Stakeholder engagement. A dynamic outreach program was developed to ensure the public and key community stakeholders were engaged in the planning process, and were provided a variety of opportunities to give input. The following section details the public involvement process and results of these efforts.

### 5.1.1 Stakeholders Committee

In order to seek guidance and input from a diverse cross section of community leaders, a Stakeholders Committee was formed for the TDP development. The membership of the committee is provided in the following table.

TABLE 5.1: STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Committee Members	Representative
HAMPO Representative(s)	Jeff Ricketson
HAMPO Representative(s)	Cassidy Collins
Armstrong State University	Dorothy Kempson
Savannah Tech Liberty Campus	Lonnie Griffin
GDOT Intermodal Division	Jamie Cochran
GDOT Intermodal Division Staff	Mark Lambert
Federal Transit Administration	Valencia Williams
Hinesville Staff Representatives	Billy Edwards
HAMPO_County Staff Representative	Joey Brown
Flemington Municipal Representative	Paul Hawkins
Walthourville Municipal Representative	Daisy Pray
HAMPO_Hinesville Municipal Representative	Allen Brown

Ft. Stewart Command Representative	Robert Matthews
Liberty County BOC Representative	Donald Lovette
Fixed Route Transit Provider	Theodis Jackson
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocacy	Curtis Velasco
Downtown Development Authority	Michelle Ricketson
School Board of Education	Lily Baker
Liberty County Development Authority (LCDA)	Ron Tolley
Liberty County Recreation Department	Jimmy Martin
Coastal Regional Commission - Rural Provider	Don Masisak
Emergency Services	Mike Hodges
Emergency Services	Tracy Howard
Hinesville Homeless Prevention / Community Development	Kenny Howard
Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission	Jack Shuman
Liberty County CVB / Chamber of Commerce	Leah Poole
Urbanized: Major Employer 1: Liberty Regional Medical Center	Mike Hester
Urbanized: Major Employer 2: Walmart	Adam Gibson
DFAC Representative	Shawn Brown
Hinesville Housing Authority	Melanie Thompson
Coastal Georgia Community Action Authority	Vicky Nelson
LCPC / HAMPO Staff Planner	Nils Gustavson
Diversity Health Center	Stephanie Jones-Theaker

The committee met at key milestones in the planning process and assisted the planning team in the distribution of public engagement materials. Recommendations from the

Stakeholders Committee guided the public engagement process by expanding the public survey to include an employer's survey to gauge the economic impacts of transit service in the community. In addition, the Stakeholders Committee participated in a transit service field trip, where service areas were screened for route level adjustments, and appropriate service guidance in outlying areas. The following image depicts the on-board field trip where participants made written comments on service concepts and discussed options and ideas collaboratively.

*FIGURE 5.1: STAKEHOLDERS FIELD TRIP*



Meeting materials including agendas, attendance records, presentations, and meeting results can be seen in Appendix B of this report.

### *5.1.2 Public Engagement*

The public engagement element of the TDP included a dynamic set of tools designed to reach current riders, as well as members of the public that do not currently find Liberty Transit to be a viable transportation solution for their mobility needs. The public engagement program included a public survey, an on-board survey of current passengers, employer survey for work-force development, two rounds of public

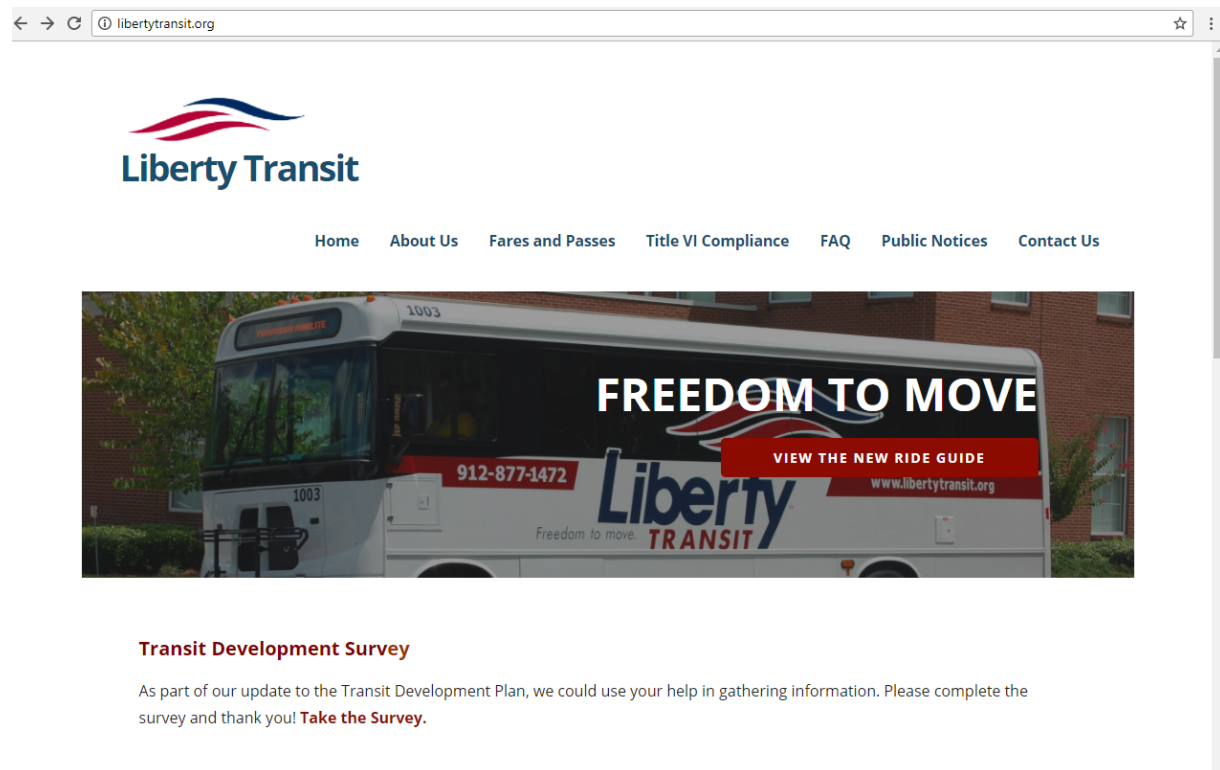
workshops, and published invitations to all transit steering committee meetings and Stakeholders Committee meetings where the TDP was discussed.

## **Public Survey Results**

The TDP public survey was developed in a branching format to differentiate between current riders and non-riders, offering a unique set of questions for each group. The survey asked respondents to rate the current service, provide insights regarding the type of trips they make using public transit, and how the system could be modified to better meet their transportation needs. The survey also included basic demographic questions to better understand the user groups responding to the survey, and to ensure the responses accurately reflect the demographics of the community served by Liberty Transit.

The survey was made available for a three month period and was distributed via email, and posted on the Liberty Transit webpage.

*FIGURE 5.2: ONLINE SURVEY ADVERTISEMENT*



A copy of the full Liberty Transit TDP survey can be viewed in Appendix B.

### **Onboard Survey**

An onboard survey was developed to be conducted concurrently with on-board ridership counts. The survey was administered for a full week from April 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 for all transit runs offered on each day. Seventy responses were gathered, representing 20% of the ridership for the sample period.

Respondents were asked to fill out a brief survey describing their point of origin and destination, how they accessed the system, the conditions of the path to the nearest bus stop, how often they use the service, and provided the opportunity for comments.

Questions regarding the survey respondent's demographic breakdown were used to develop a respondent profile summary. The respondent age range was very well distributed, with ages 56 – 65 most highly represented at 21%. The largest majority of respondents fall well below the Federal Poverty Level, with 52% of respondents having a household income of less than \$20,000 annually.



FIGURE 5.3: ONBOARD SURVEY, RESPONDENT AGE RANGE

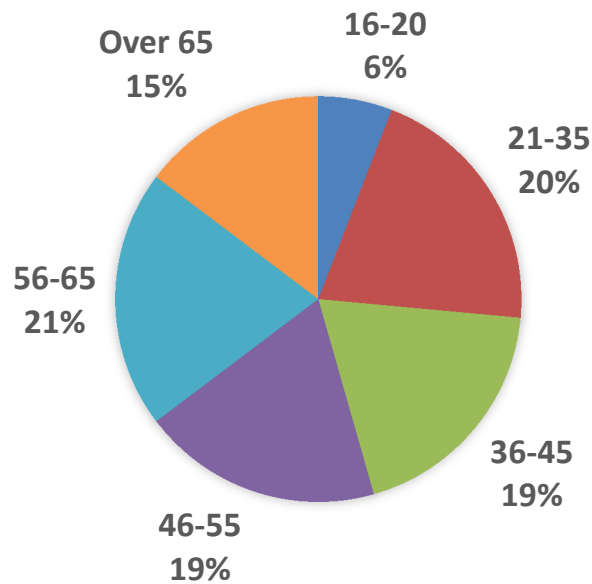
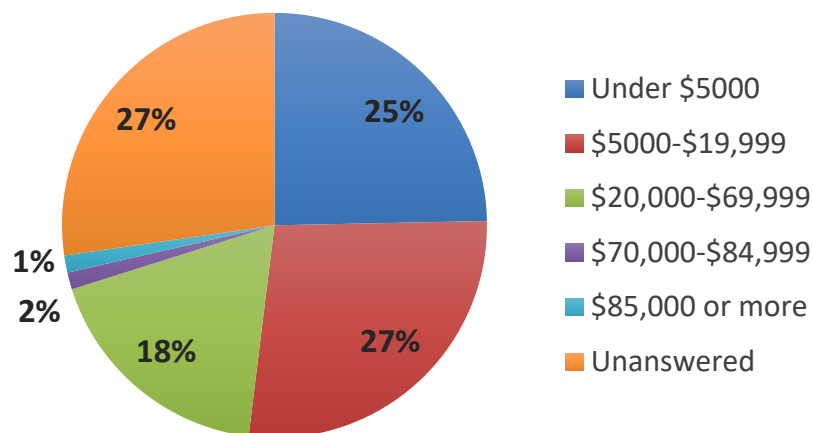


FIGURE 5.4: ONBOARD SURVEY, RESPONDENT HOUSEHOLD INCOME



The respondent's ethnicities were diverse, with the majority identifying as African American at 49%. The overwhelming majority of transit riders do not own a vehicle and are transit dependent riders.

FIGURE 5.5: ONBOARD SURVEY, RESPONDENT ETHNICITY

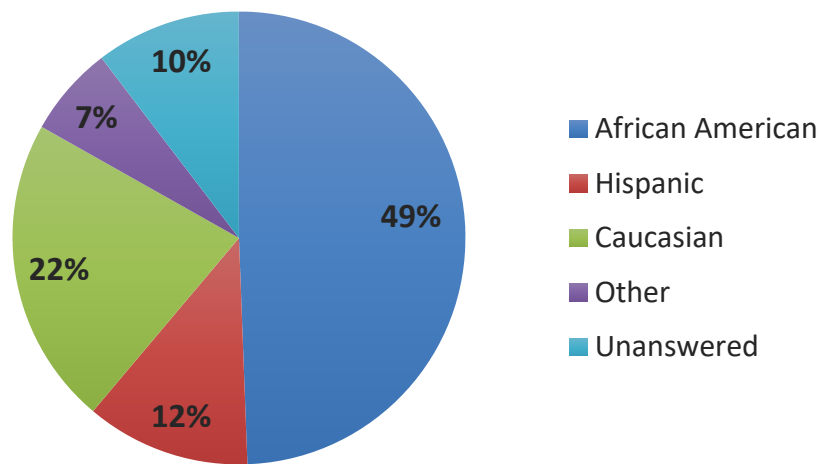
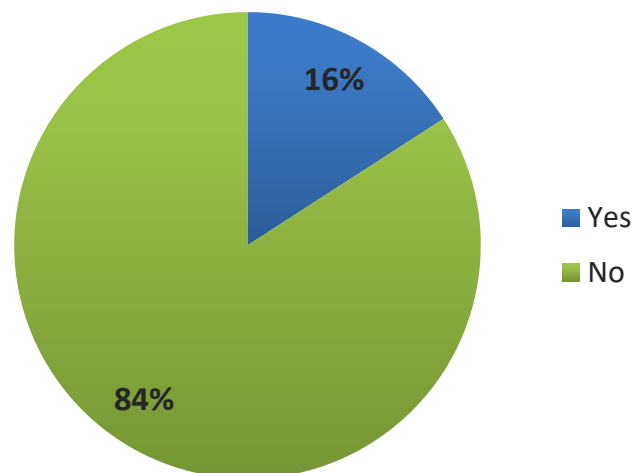


FIGURE 5.6: ONBOARD SURVEY, CAR OWNERSHIP



The start and end point to the respondent's trips were also very diverse, with the largest number of responses identifying home and work as the purpose of the trip. The most prominent response in the "other" category was for bus riders accessing medical treatment at the Veteran's Clinic on US 84 in Hinesville.

FIGURE 5.7: ONBOARD SURVEY, TRIP STARTING POINT

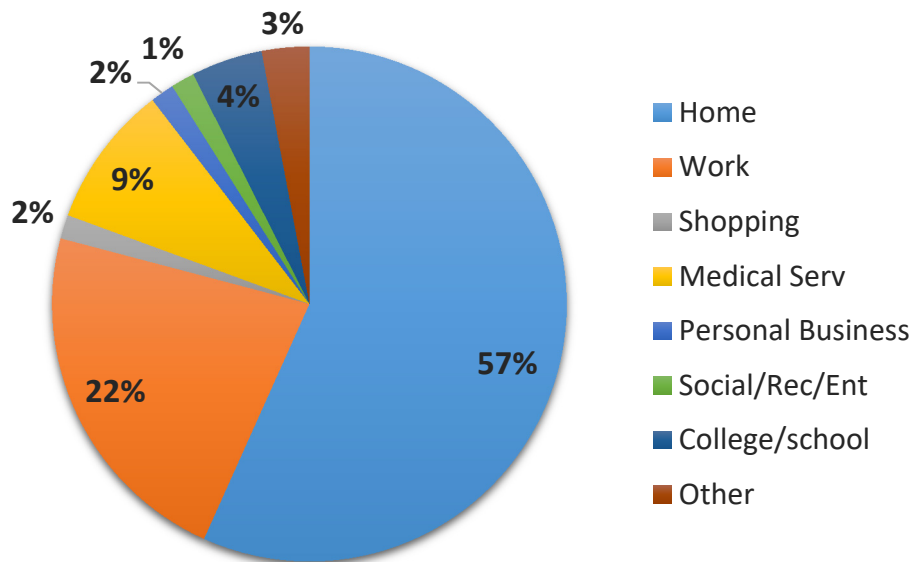
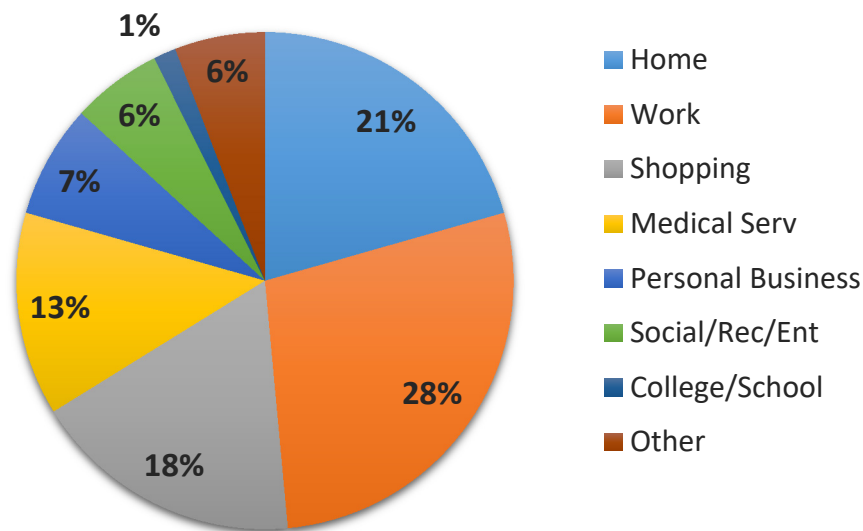
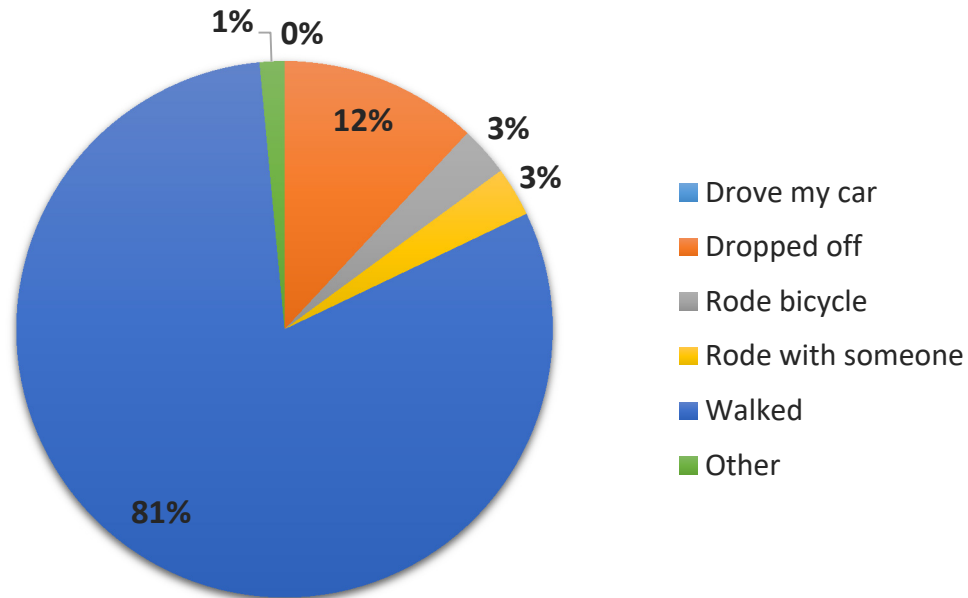


FIGURE 5.8: ONBOARD SURVEY, TRIP END POINT



The majority of respondents began their trip as pedestrians, walking between one and three blocks to access a transit stop. Forty percent of respondents had no access or limited access to sidewalks while walking to and from the bus stop.

FIGURE 5.9: ONBOARD SURVEY, HOW DID YOU GET TO THE BUS?



Hinesville residents comprised 89% of the respondents and 77% stated that they use Liberty Transit on a daily and weekly basis. In keeping with the findings of the transit propensity analysis, the majority of respondents are transit dependent and stated they would walk to their destination if Liberty Transit was not available. A significant percentage also identified taxi service as their alternative to transit service.

FIGURE 5.10: ONBOARD SURVEY, HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THE TRIP WITH NO BUS?

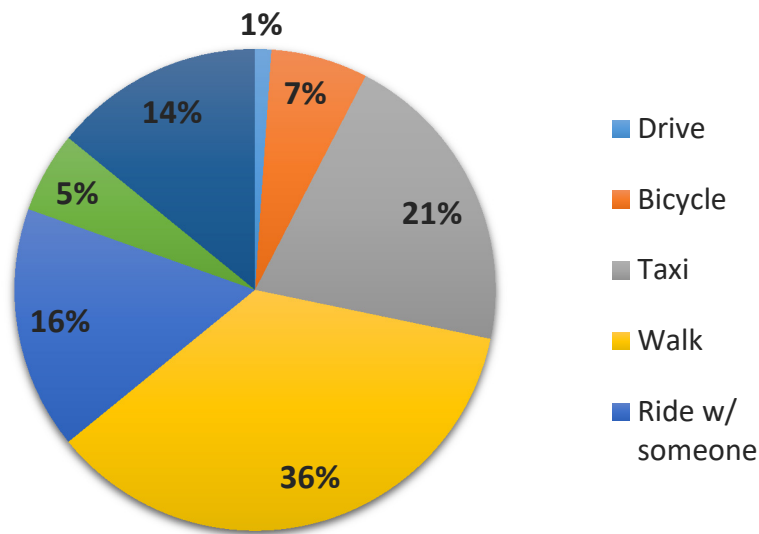
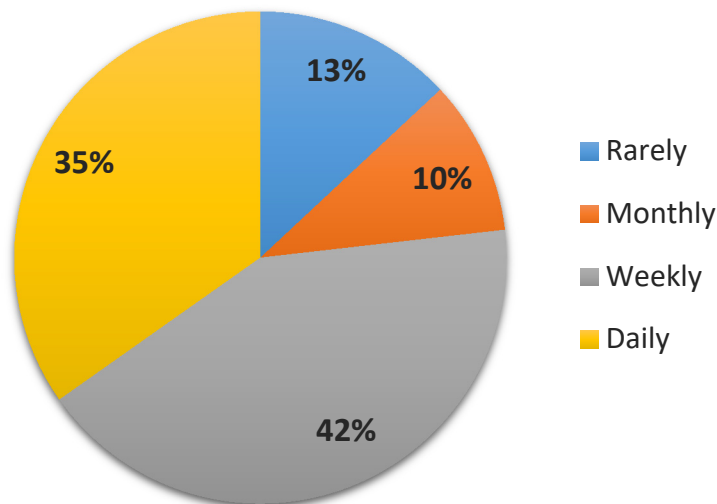
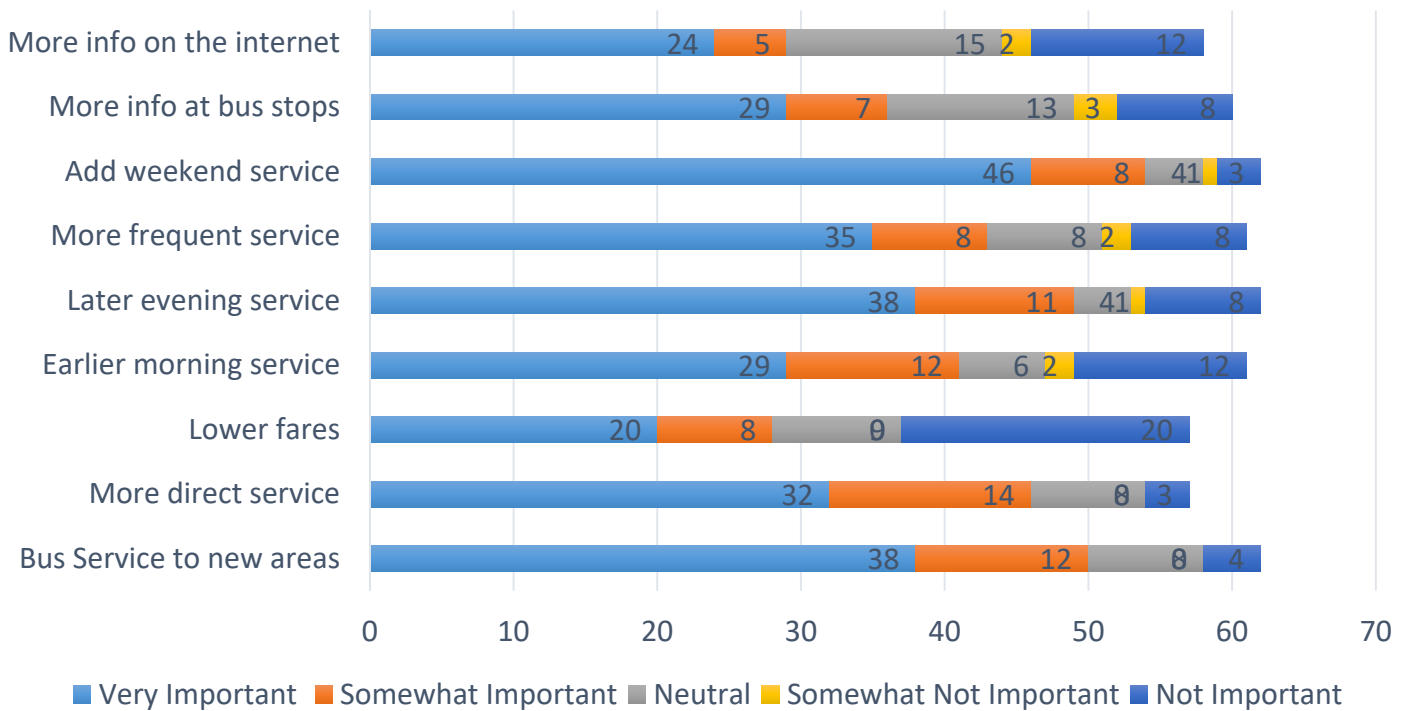


FIGURE 5.11: ONBOARD SURVEY, HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE LT?



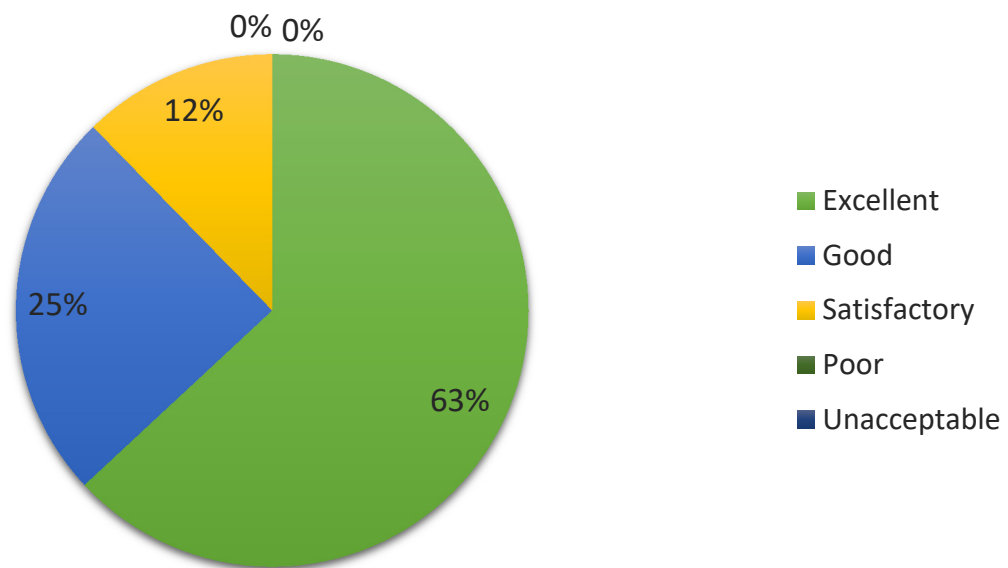
Respondents were asked to rate how important they felt various improvements were for the system. The results were primarily focused on the addition or improvement of bus service, with limited respondents selecting “lower fares”, “more information on the internet”, and “earlier morning service” as high priorities for the system. The following figure provides a detailed breakdown of the respondent’s responses.

FIGURE 5.12: ONBOARD SURVEY, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING IMPROVEMENTS?



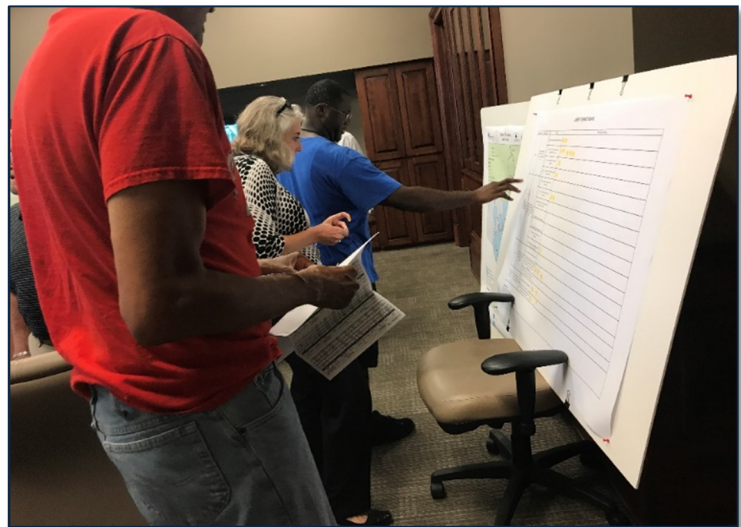
Lastly, respondents were asked how they would rate the Liberty Transit service. Of the responses received, 63% rated the system as excellent, and no responses rated the system as "Poor" or "Unacceptable".

FIGURE 5.13: ONBOARD SURVEY, SATISFACTORY RATING



### **Interactive Prioritization of Goals**

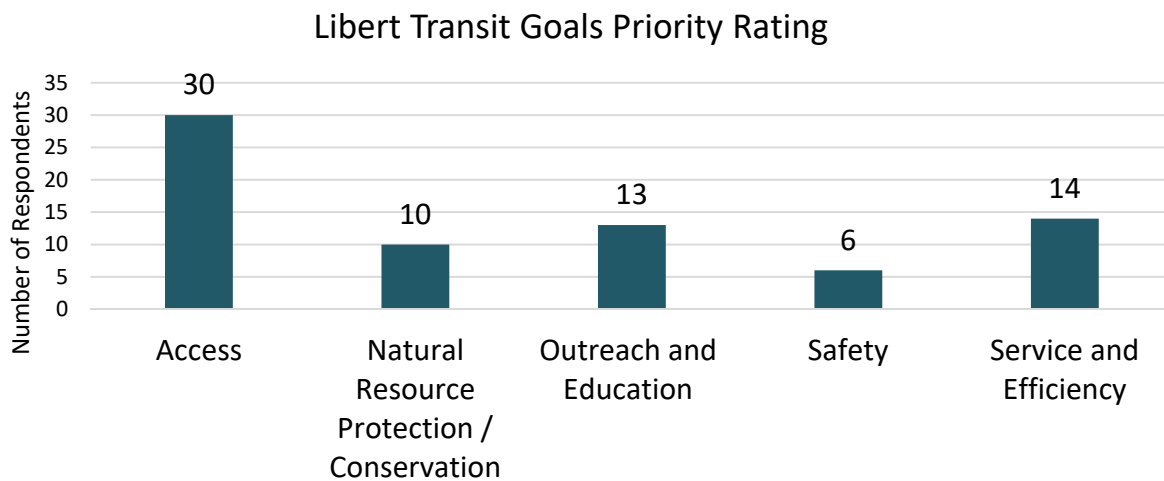
During the two rounds of public workshops, participants were invited to help set priorities and goals for the system. Each participant was provided with five sticker dots to represent their priorities and there were no restrictions on dot placement. The results of the exercise were summarized and used to guide the revised system goals.



Responses from the public meeting indicated that providing residents and visitors with access to a multimodal transportation system was of highest priority. Respondents

consider Liberty Transit to be a safe and secure system and as a result, voted that element as a low priority. The following graph shows the breakdown of priority ratings each of the focus areas received.

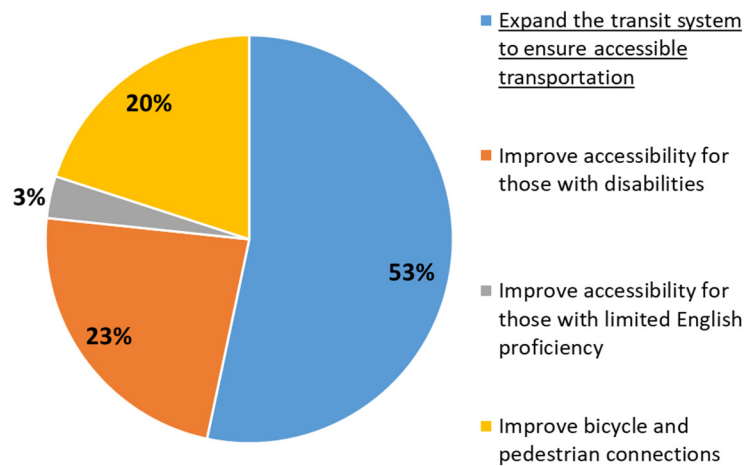
FIGURE 5.14: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PRIORITIES AND GOALS



When asked how best to improve access, respondents felt that the service should be expanded both geographically and with greater frequency. Only 3% of respondents felt that Liberty Transit should focus on expanding efforts to improve access for those with limited English proficiency.

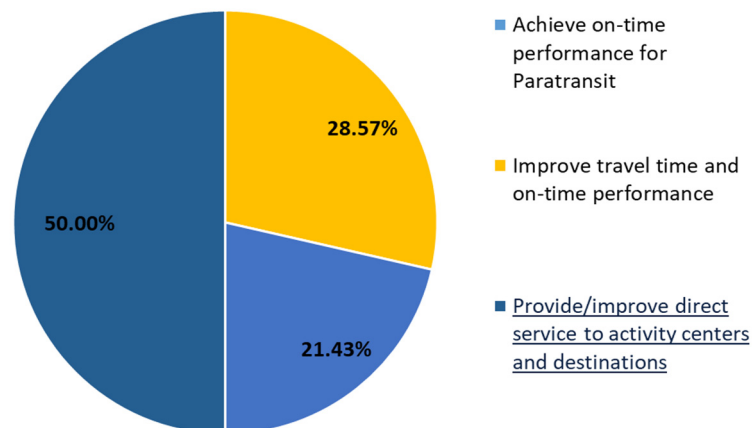


FIGURE 5.15: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, GOALS TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY



In the area of service efficiency, respondents felt that providing or improving direct service to activity centers and destinations was the highest priority for the system.

FIGURE 5.1: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, GOALS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY



While safety did not receive a high priority rating, the specific priorities within that category expressed by participants related to improving supporting infrastructure, including sidewalks, shelters, and road crossings.

### *5.1.3 Liberty Transit Staff Interviews*

Another key element of the outreach and information gathering effort was the Liberty Transit staff interviews. Administrators, supervisors, drivers, and support staff were all given the opportunity to share their perspectives regarding system strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Each staff member was provided with a list of questions that would be asked, and were also provided an opportunity to share other unique ideas and insights.

While the responses to interview questions varied by individual, the results were aggregated and integrated into the development of recommendations for the system. The summarized results of the interviews showed that the Liberty Transit drivers, supervisors, maintenance manager and General Manager take pride in the system and want to see positive changes. Route supervisors are knowledgeable about the system and appear to be communicating with their staff about issues and opportunities.

Consistent and overarching themes from all levels of employees include:

- Need for greater investments in marketing and advertisement
- Need for improved frequency system-wide
- Need for service gaps to be eliminated
- Need for infrastructure investments, specifically more stops, route identification signs, and shelters

A full copy of the aggregated interview responses can be found in Appendix B of the report.

### *5.1.4 Community Officials and Administrators Interviews*

Elected officials and Fort Stewart Command were offered the opportunity to share insights about the Liberty Transit system through individual interviews. Each participant

was provided with a list of questions, as well as the opportunity to share unique ideas, concerns, and priorities. All responses were aggregated, and the following provides a summary of the key issues expressed.

- Establish clear performance metrics for the system
- Improve ridership
- Improve coordination with internal departments, peers, and stakeholders
- Perform focused outreach and market to transit dependent
- Training for potential transit riders with focused efforts on Limited English Proficiency, Disabled, and Elderly populations
- Consider alternatives for the current fleet including bus size and fuel options
- Invest in the system at a reasonable level to improve the service
- Explore options for service between metropolitan areas (Savannah)

#### *5.1.5 Fort Stewart Interview*

As a key partner with Liberty Transit, Fort Stewart's guidance and feedback regarding goals, objectives, and service initiatives is a critical element in the development of future service scenarios. The Fort Stewart Garrison Commander requested a workshop, including participation from key command staff representing Base Security and Logistics.

The participants were offered an overview of the planning process, along with ridership and performance statistics specific to the installation. Existing ridership performance on the base is concentrated around the PX and Wynn Army Hospital. Ridership along the limited service corridor served by Route 6 is very low, with fewer than five trips recorded during the full 100% weeklong sample. Service provided to these residential areas is skeletal, with more than nine hours wait time between the morning and afternoon run.

The Fort Stewart staff provided insights regarding housing, shopping and service related activities on Fort Stewart, along with transportation needs. The following summarizes the areas of emphasis presented by command staff.

### **Installation Access and Security:**

The Trusted Traveler Program <sup>3</sup>was suspended approximately two years ago, therefore the current procedures for Liberty Transit vehicles entering the base are not in compliance with installation access protocol. In order to come into compliance, vehicle operators and passengers would need to present an approved form of identification to the guards on duty in order to be able to access the installation. More information regarding Fort Stewart Installation access can be viewed online at:

<http://www.stewart.army.mil/info/?id=463&p=1>

If passengers on-board a Liberty Transit bus do not have an approved form of identification, the preference would be to have them exit the vehicle and cross to the

---

<sup>3</sup> According to AR 190-13, the Army Physical Security Program, Common Access Card holders, military retirees and military family members have an inherent purpose and are authorized access to Army installations. The Trusted Traveler Program allows all DoD identification cardholders (DoD employees, active-duty military, family members ages 18 and older, and retired service members) to vouch for occupants in their immediate vehicle, provided the Trusted Traveler vehicle operator or passenger possesses a valid DoD ID card. If there is no DoD ID cardholder in the vehicle, then all occupants will be required to show appropriate identification and possibly have the vehicle searched to enter.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive #12 directs the Department of Defense to use the National Crime Information Center Interstate Identification Index (NCIC-III) to vet personnel entering the installation that do not possess a U.S. Government Common Access Card (CAC), Automated Installation Entry (AIE) card issued by Fort Stewart Department of Emergency Services and/or Uniformed Services Identification (ID) Card. The program was implemented on 1 January 2015 on Fort Stewart, with enforcement being increased in stages to minimize impact to the public.

adjacent side of the road in order to board the vehicle as it exits the installation on the return trip. Challenges discussed with this approach include a lack of sufficient bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure to facilitate a safe path of travel to the desired waiting location, as well as a lack of shelter facilities for passengers to wait comfortably. Additional discussion regarding the shelter placement included concern that identifying an appropriate shelter site would be challenging given the travel demand of vehicles leaving the base and proximity to traffic control devices.

### **Logistics:**

Fort Stewart's Directorate of Logistics presented scenarios that demonstrate a lack of interest in alternative modes of transportation on the installation. In addition, Fort Stewart currently provides three 15-passenger vans for transportation on the base, which are not well utilized. Most enlisted soldiers either have a personally owned mode of transportation (vehicle, motorcycle, etc.) or they prefer to walk given the limited transit service provided and accessibility of goods and services within walking distance. The largest majority of families on the installation have access to personally owned vehicles and would not be a target market for transit service.

Fort Stewart Command identified that the target market for service on the installation should be for veterans accessing the base for goods and services and civilian employees entering the base for employment purposes.

## **5.2 Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

The mission statement for Liberty Transit was developed prior to the inception of the system. The Transit Development Plan Stakeholders Committee, public engagement participants, and Officials reached consensus to maintain the Mission as stated below.

---

*"The mission of the Liberty Transit System is to enhance the quality of life for residents, visitors, soldiers and families by providing safe, environmentally friendly and cost effective transportation options."*

---

In addition to the Liberty Transit Mission statement, the City has an established vision that states:

*"While Liberty Transit began as a fixed route transit system, the long term goal is to become a countywide system and ultimately part of a regional solution to transportation needs."*

The City of Hinesville, with guidance from the Hinesville Area MPO, the Transit Steering Committee, and the public, have identified the following areas of focus for incorporation into the updated Liberty Transit Goals and Objectives.

- Continue to expand ridership through strategic system modifications and targeted outreach.
- Continue to explore opportunities to partner with municipalities in the HAMPO urbanized area to expand transit service where transit supportive densities have been identified.
- Maintain a state of good repair for the existing fixed-route transit fleet and analyze opportunities for procurement of vehicles right sized for Liberty Transit ridership.
- Continue to coordinate with local planning agencies to identify opportunities for service expansions/modifications to support new transit-oriented developments and employment destinations.
- Complete shelter installation efforts and procure additional shelters for prioritized stop locations within the service area.

- Identify opportunities for regional transit partnerships to provide connectivity of surrounding urban areas.
- Identify key non-motorized infrastructure improvement projects within the transit service area and implement utilizing 5307 transit capital funding.
- Identify strategies to reduce system operating costs, and improve service efficiencies.

The following table provides objectives for each of the stated goals and performance targets to track the performance of these objectives.

*TABLE 5.2: LIBERTY TRANSIT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, PERFORMANCE METRICS*

Goal	Objective	Performance Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand ridership through strategic system modifications and targeted outreach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use engagement and marketing strategies to build ridership within existing service area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase unlinked passenger trips by 10% over base year value.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore partnerships with municipalities in the HAMPO urbanized area to expand transit service where transit supportive densities have been identified.</li> <li>• Coordinate with local planning agencies to identify opportunities for service expansions to support new transit-oriented developments and employment destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use regularly updated development data and 2020 Census data to identify service expansion opportunities and evaluate for transit service potential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate minimum household and employment density thresholds for new service expansions in the urbanized area.</li> </ul>

TABLE 5.2: CONTINUED

Goal	Objective	Performance Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete shelter installation efforts and procure additional shelters for prioritized stop locations within the service area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve service satisfaction by providing comfortable and safe bus stop conditions for riders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install all remaining shelters housed in storage prior to FY 2020.</li> <li>Define remaining infrastructure needs and establish implementation timeline and funding strategies by FY 2020.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities for regional transit partnerships to provide connectivity of surrounding urban areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish regional transportation connections allowing expanded mobility options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define key targets for regional mobility and engage with surrounding providers by FY 2020.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key non-motorized infrastructure improvement projects within the transit service area and implement utilizing 5307 transit capital funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve first and last mile connectivity to transit services, by implementing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report demonstrating current status of defined projects, % complete, and anticipated completion date. Active projects should demonstrate progress towards completion.</li> </ul>



TABLE 5.2: CONTINUED

Goal	Objective	Performance Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify strategies to reduce system operating costs, and improve service efficiencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce operating costs through improved ridership performance, and contractual rates per service hour/mile.</li> <li>Identify operating vehicles appropriately sized for demand to reduce maintenance and insurance costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve Operating Cost / Unlinked Passenger Trip performance by 25% over base year value.</li> </ul>

These goals and objectives will serve as the foundation for recommendations presented in the final chapter of this report. All service and program changes should seek to support the mission and goals set forth by Liberty Transit, to ensure ongoing viability and success of the system.

CHAPTER 6

*RECOMMENDATIONS*

The analysis process found that the Liberty Transit system is operating at a higher cost per passenger than peer systems, ridership in the urban core is higher than remote and limited service areas, the full bus fleet is aging and oversized for current ridership in limited service areas, irregular schedules lead to confusion and access barriers for potential riders, safety performance is excellent, and ridership is limited but consistent. The Liberty Transit Development Plan is intended to consider these service issues, and to make recommendations regarding the type of public transportation, service area, and system management structure that will best meet the needs of the community. The following section provides recommendations separated by service related recommendations, such as service models and schedules, and system recommendations relating to organization and service support.

The following recommendations are based on public and stakeholder feedback, current service performance, and future goals and objectives.

## **6.1 Service Scenarios**

Three service scenarios were developed as options for consideration by the City of Hinesville Council. These scenarios have varying levels of investment and unique initiatives designed to meet the goals and objectives of the TDP. The scenarios can be summarized as:

1. Cost Neutral Improvements
2. Moderate Service Improvements
  - a. Fixed Route Solutions
  - b. Alternative Service Model Solutions
3. Premium Service Improvements

These scenarios are described in detail in the following section.

### *6.1.1 Scenario 1: Cost Neutral Improvements*

Scenario 1 was designed as a cost neutral approach, seeking to correct critical issues presently impacting the system. Recommendations included in this scenario are intended to be implementable within a short-term horizon and offer limited improvements for current and potential riders. Recommendations for Scenario 1 include:

- Restructuring the full system route schedules to use a regular time-point structure. For example, service begins outbound trip every hour, on the hour.
- Route 6: Discontinue service on Fort Stewart, supporting concerns of access and security protocol. This modification was recommended as a priority for Fort Stewart, and allows for reinvestment of service into the core service areas.
- Route 7: Reroute service to stop at the Liberty Regional Medical Center (LRMC). The system was designed to use the LRMC as a major transfer hub for all routes. Service modifications implemented in 2013 removed the Route 7 LRMC stop which complicates transfers and limits accessibility.
- Route 8: Relax schedule to achieve better on-time performance. Current schedules do not provide sufficient time to maintain scheduled time-points.
- Route 8: Extend service to Walmart Market located on US 84 and Melanie Drive. This new commercial establishment provides shopping, services, and job opportunities for the community.
- Route 8: Reroute service to access Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS) and Diversity Health's future location on Frasier Drive.
- Route 8: Reroute limited YMCA loop service to serve new Walmart Community Market located on US 84 at General Stewart.

### *6.1.2 Scenario 2: Moderate Service Improvements*

Scenario 2 was designed to include all elements recommended in Scenario 1, and offers mid-term service options that improve service conditions for current and potential

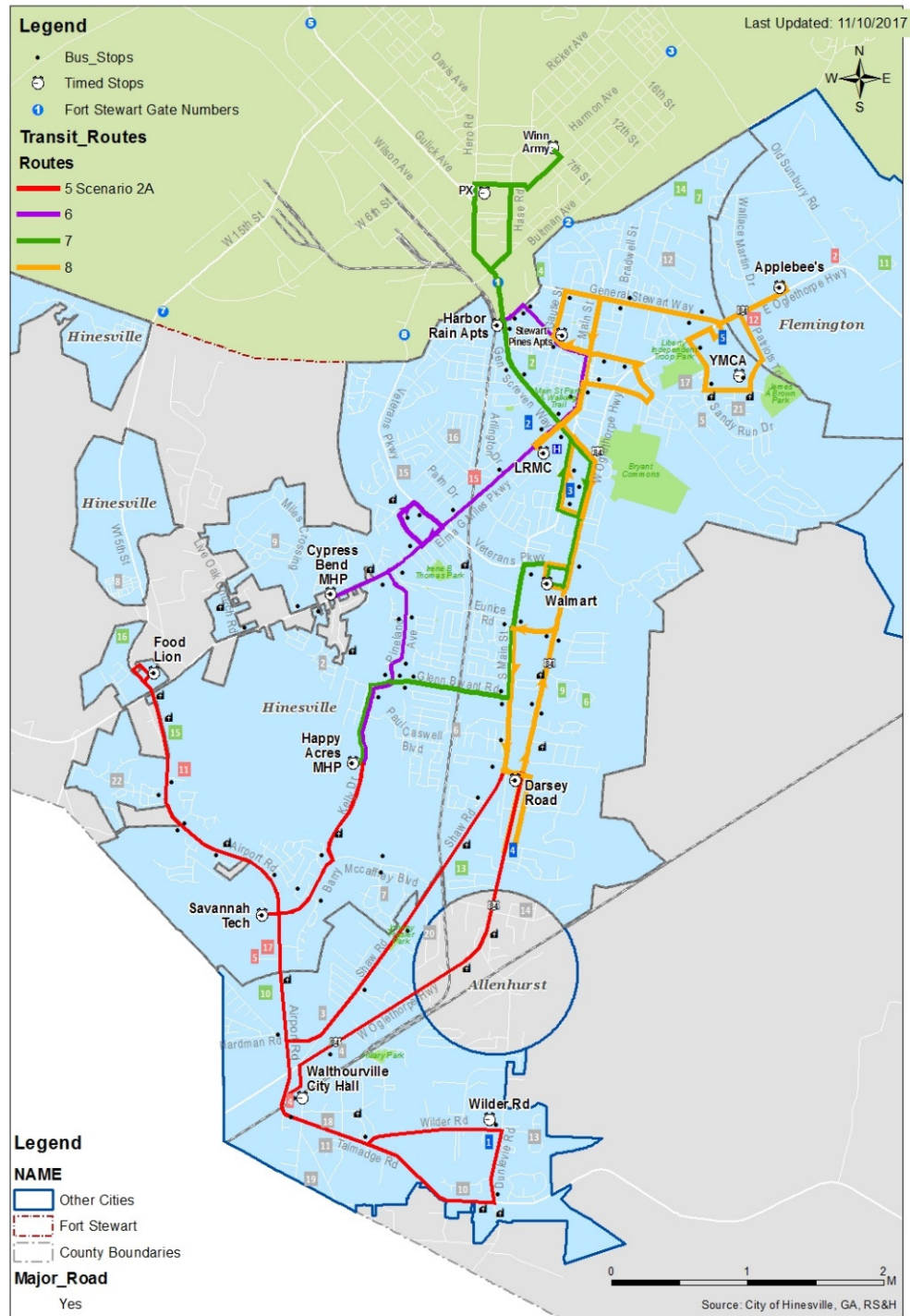
riders. This scenario recognizes that the system requires investments beyond the correction of critical issues and seeks to address the goals and objectives set forth by Liberty Transit. Scenario 2 was designed with two service models to provide additional implementation options for consideration. These variations are titled Scenario 2A and Scenario 2B.

Recommendations for Scenario 2A include:

- All elements from Scenario 1.
- Route 6: Close mid-day service gap, eliminating confusing and limited service.
- Route 8: Convert YMCA loop from limited service, to standard service. This service loop provides trips to low-income and minority communities, and connects directly to jobs, services, medical, and grocery destinations.
- Route 8: Add a bus to improve frequencies from two hours, to hourly service.
- New Route: Convert limited service areas in Walthourville and West-Hinesville to a new shuttle service. The new route would connect to the system at Happy Acres Mobile Home Park and Darcey Road, allowing service in the urban core to operate without deviating to serve the limited service areas. The new route would also provide more direct trips, with fewer transfers, for passengers boarding and alighting outside of the urban core.

The following figure demonstrates the service recommendations for Scenario 2A.

FIGURE 6.1: SCENARIO 2A SERVICE MAP



Recommendations for Scenario 2B include:

- All elements from Scenario 1.
- Route 6: Close mid-day service gap, eliminating confusing and limited service.
- Route 8: Convert YMCA loop from limited service, to standard service. This service loop provides trips to low-income and minority communities, and connects directly to jobs, services, medical, and grocery destinations.
- Route 8: Add a bus to improve frequencies from two hours, to hourly service.
- Serve current limited service areas in Walthourville and West-Hinesville with demand response service in lieu of fixed-route. Utilize the paratransit service structure to support hourly trip reservations for passengers within a defined service area. Trip destinations can be anywhere in the designated service demand response service area for a premium service rate. Trips connecting to fixed route service will connect at Darsey Road and Happy Acres Mobile Home Park stops for a reduced rate. This service structure is more conducive to densities found within these service areas, and provides better service to riders facing limited sidewalk infrastructure, low frequencies, and inconsistent service schedules. Additional service delivery options could include brokered services to private providers, such as Uber, Lyft, and Coastal Regional Coaches.
- Maintain Route 7 fixed route service on Fort Stewart until access agreement modifications are needed. At that time, convert route miles on Fort Stewart to non-ADA demand response service. This model allows for pre-screening and notification to riders that identification is required to access the base.

The following figure demonstrates the areas that would become eligible for non-ADA demand response services under Scenario 2B.







### *6.1.3 Scenario 3: Premium Service*

Scenario 3 was developed to address all needs identified during the public and stakeholder outreach effort. This scenario includes the service investments and modifications identified in Scenarios 1 and 2, adding frequency and expanding service operating hours to match trip needs.

Recommendations for Scenario 3 include:

- All elements from Scenarios 1 and 2.
- Add buses to improve system-wide frequencies to fixed route hourly service.
- Add limited Saturday service.
- Provide connection to Savannah and Chatham Area Transit services.

### *6.1.4 Preferred Alternative*

The Transit Steering Committee reviewed existing conditions, operational performance, stakeholder and public input, and draft Scenarios and reached consensus for a recommendation to Hinesville City Council. The recommendation included a hybrid of Scenarios 1 and 2, including two implementation strategies:

- Implement cost neutral adjustments from Scenario 1 as soon as possible.
- Apply for supplemental grant funding and prepare municipal budgets for incremental implementation of Scenario 2 improvements.

During a Council workshop hosted on February 8, 2018, Hinesville Council met collaboratively with funding partners to review the alternatives and identify the preferred alternative for the TDP. The Council supported the Transit Steering Committee recommendation and selected the hybrid Scenario 1 plus 2B as the preferred alternative.

## 6.2 Service Recommendations

The preferred alternative was used as the framework for the service recommendations of this plan, and the following recommendations provide the foundation for implementation.

### General Service Recommendations

All route schedules should be recreated to follow regular time points, with established route termini that more clearly delineates outbound and inbound trip segments. Irregular time point schedules create confusion for passengers when navigating trip scheduling and planning. In addition, more clearly defined in-bound and out-bound trip segments are a critical element of operational performance tracking and National Transit Database reporting criteria. Refining these areas of the system schedule will support performance based planning, and create a more intuitive system for passengers. The following Route 6 time point table provides an example of schedule irregularity.

Route 6 (Monday - Friday)									
Northbound					Southbound				Northbound
LRMC	Library	PX	Shoppette	Winn Army	Stewart Pines Apts	Library	Cypress Bend MHP	Food Lion Plaza	Happy Acres MHP
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6:09a	6:15a	6:25a	6:34a	6:43a	6:51a	6:54a	--	--	7:14a
7:29a	7:35a	7:45a	--	7:49a	7:57a	8:00a	--	--	8:20a
8:35a	8:41a	8:51a	--	8:55a	9:03a	9:06a	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	2:35p	2:38p	2:52p	2:59p	3:16p
3:31p	3:37p	3:47p	3:56p	4:05p	4:13p	4:16p	4:30p	4:37p	4:54p
5:09p	5:15p	5:25p	5:34p	5:43p	5:51p	5:54p	6:08p	6:15p	6:32p
6:47p	6:53p	7:03p	--	7:07p	7:15p	7:18p	7:32p	7:39p	7:56p

The first time point of the day is at the Liberty Regional Medical Center at 6:09 AM. The passenger ride-guide encourages riders to arrive at their stop 15 minutes prior to the scheduled stop. The effort needed to compute the passenger's arrival time is significantly greater, in comparison to a more regular schedule beginning every hour on-the-hour.

## **Route 6**

### **SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 1-2)**

The reconfigured version of this route will eliminate services on Fort Stewart, and reassign these revenue service miles to the core service area. Limited service along E.G Miles Parkway will be eliminated and rerouted to serve Food Lion via Happy Acres Mobile Home Park and Airport Road. This realignment offers more direct service to residences for riders leaving the grocery store and surrounding shopping center. Service to Cypress Bend Mobile Home Park will be maintained. Closure of the mid-day service gap is recommended to offer more consistent service throughout the day. No adjustments to service start and end times are recommended, in the short term.

### **MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 2-5)**

The current operations and management contract for Liberty Transit expires in 2018, with the option to renew for two additional years. When the City of Hinesville releases the new Request for Proposals (RFP), the respondents should be asked to provide cost estimates on two service scenarios:

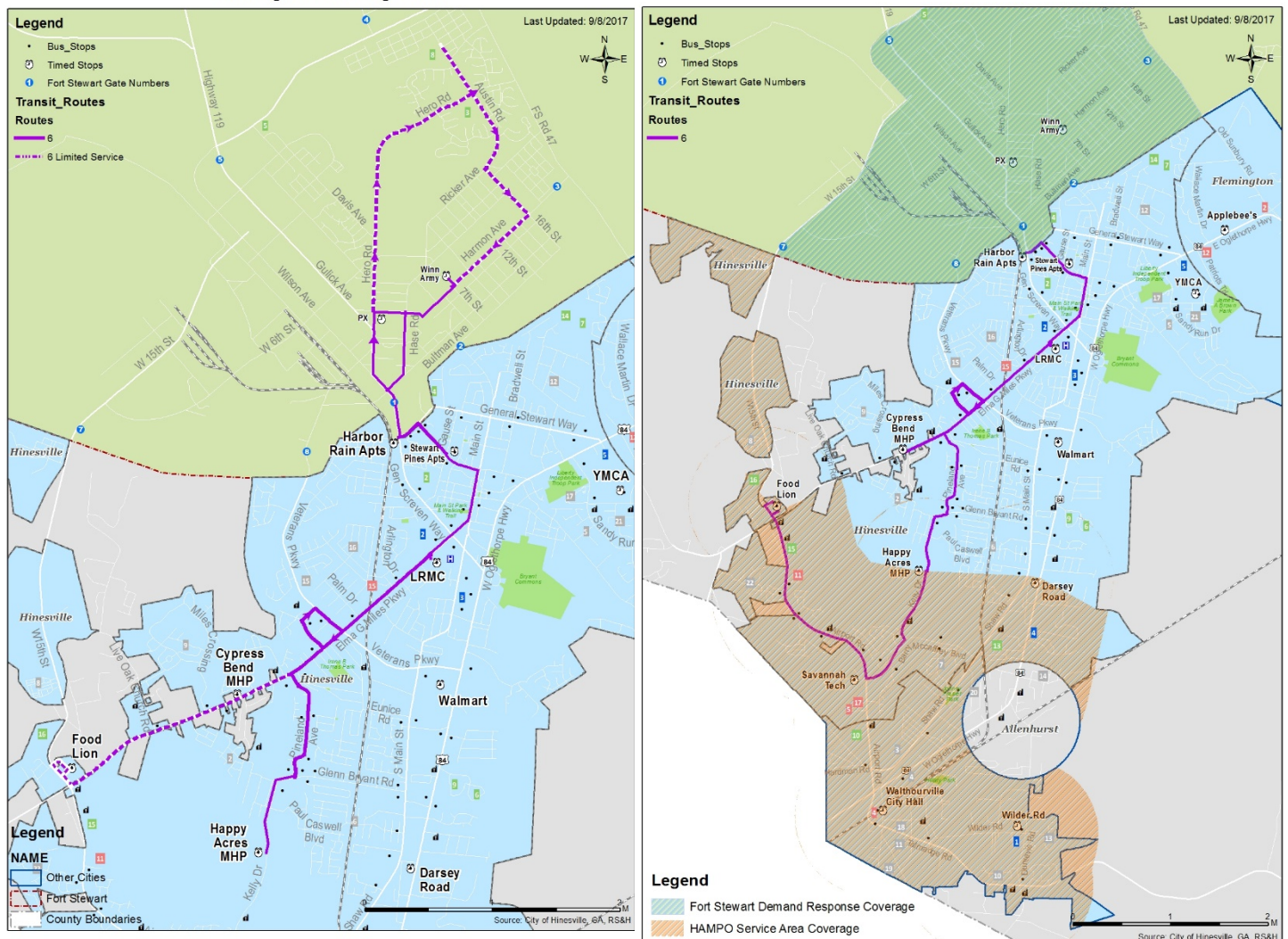
- Operations, maintenance, and management of the current system.
- Operations, maintenance, and management of fixed route and demand response service as demonstrated in scenario 2B.

The most cost effective and equitable service should be selected from these proposals and implementation of associated route modifications for Route 6 should be implemented as soon as practical. Because the rates associated with service modifications must be negotiated, future fiscal projections associated with this scenario are not provided. However, cost per revenue service hour for non-disabled demand response services should represent cost savings over fixed route service rates, to be deemed viable. In addition, concerted efforts should be made to negotiate a reduced cost per hour for fixed route service.

### **LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 5 – 10)**

Following the implementation of revised service scenario 2B, targets and metrics should be set to identify cost savings and achievement of established performance targets. Savings associated with improved performance and reduced operational costs should be considered for reinvestment in fixed route core service frequency enhancements.

FIGURE 6.3: ROUTE 6 CURRENT ROUTE / FULLY IMPLEMENTED SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS



## **Route 7**

### **SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 1-2)**

The service will be rerouted to stop at the Liberty Regional Medical Center to reinstate the major transfer hub and the only location where all three routes converge for transfers. Due to the elimination of Route 6 service on Fort Stewart, Route 7 should receive an increase of service frequency to the PX, Commissary, and Wynn Army Medical Center stops. This enhancement should be balanced by eliminating Route 7 trips to Food Lion on Airport Road, and utilizing Route 6 to provide consistent service to this location. Due to extremely limited trip activity at the Food Lion service location, in comparison to the trip activity on the base, this transfer of service supports established demand. No adjustments to service start and end times are recommended, in the short term, and service frequency is proposed to be maintained by service area modifications.

### **MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 2-5)**

As described in the Route 6 Mid-Term Improvements, when the City of Hinesville releases a new Request for Proposals (RFP), the respondents should be asked to provide cost estimates on two service scenarios:

- Operations, maintenance, and management of the current system.
- Operations, maintenance, and management of fixed route and demand response service as demonstrated in scenario 2B.

The most cost effective and equitable service should be selected from these proposals and implementation of associated route modifications should be implemented as soon as practical. Limited service areas located West of Happy Acres Mobile Home Park will no longer be operating, as per recommendations found in the Route 7 Short-Term Improvements. The non-disabled demand response service framework for Route 7 applies to route miles located on the Fort Stewart installation.

Due to stated concerns regarding access to the base, the demand response service model should be promoted as an alternative form of transportation, when and if base access agreements must be renegotiated. The demand response service model provides the opportunity to pre-screen trips during the scheduling process to ensure appropriate identification or access passes are obtained by the passenger. This advanced reservation service also provides maximum flexibility for riders seeking trips in low density areas of the base that do not warrant hourly fixed route service.

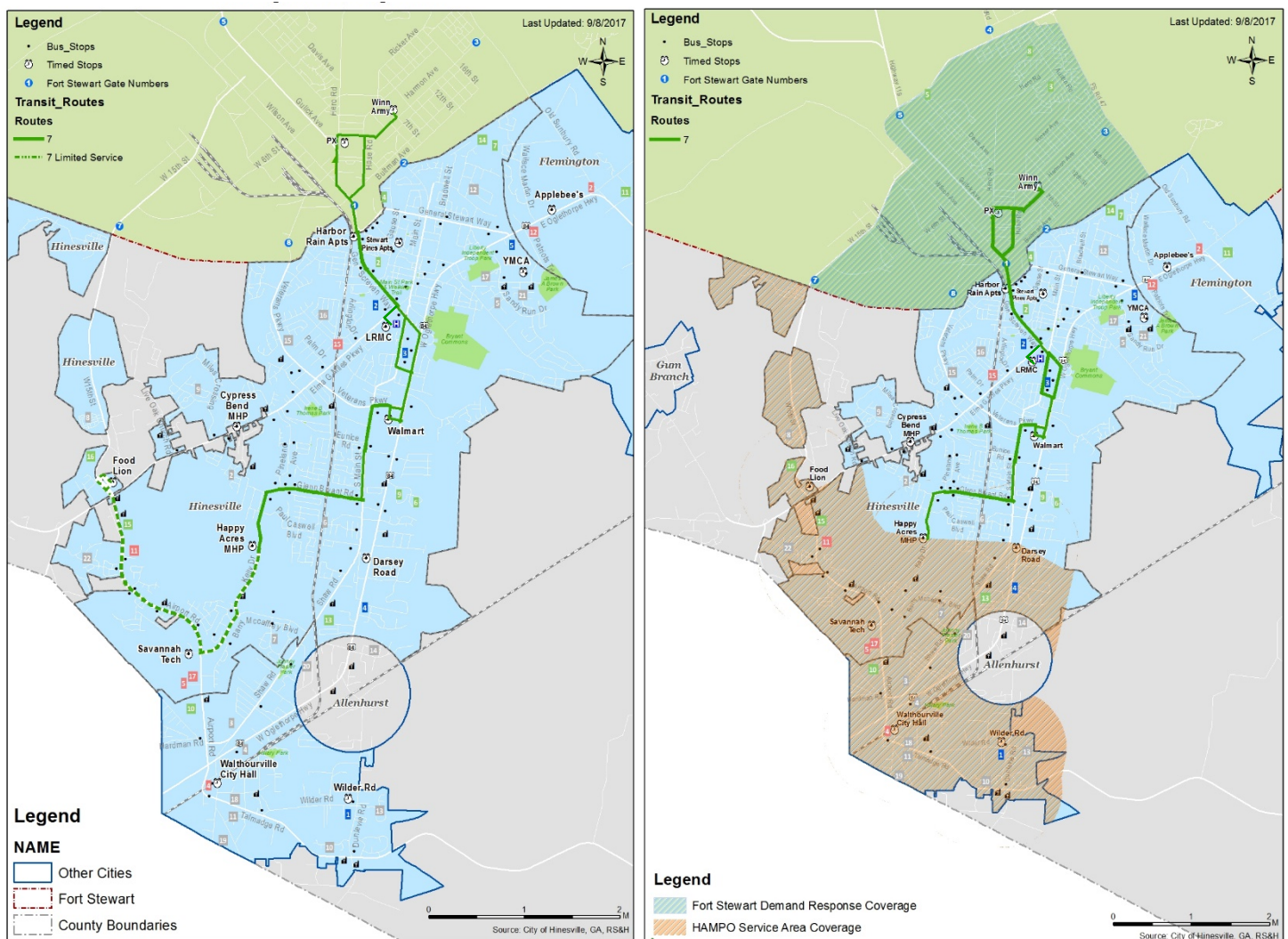
Because the rates associated with service modifications must be negotiated, future fiscal projections associated with this scenario are not provided. However, cost per revenue service hour for non-disabled demand response services should represent cost savings over fixed route service rates, to be deemed viable. In addition, concerted efforts should be made to negotiate a reduced cost per hour for fixed route service.

#### LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 5 – 10)

Following the implementation of revised service scenario 2B, targets and metrics should be set to identify cost savings and achievement of established performance targets. Savings associated with improved performance and reduced operational costs should be considered for reinvestment in fixed route core service frequency enhancements. If demand response service ridership becomes highly utilized, resulting in significant revenue service hour costs, further evaluation should be conducted to transition high performance areas to a more cost effective service model, such as brokered transportation services.



FIGURE 6.4: ROUTE 7 CURRENT ROUTE / FULLY IMPLEMENTED SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS



## Route 8

### SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 1-2)

New commercial developments in the urban core of Hinesville have been identified as key destinations for local trips, and targets for fixed route service extensions. Walmart Neighborhood Market "South" began operating in 2016, and is located on US 84 / Oglethorpe Highway @ Meloney Drive. This shopping center offers goods, services and job opportunities for the surrounding community and was identified through public and

stakeholder participation as a transportation need. In addition, a Walmart Neighborhood Market “North” also opened on US 84/Oglethorpe Highway @ General Stewart. This new shopping plaza is located in close proximity to low income, multifamily and subsidized housing developments, and offers opportunities for employment, shopping, and services to surrounding residents.

Route 8 should maintain the current routing from Patriots Trail, right onto Tupelo Trail, right turn onto Sandy Run Drive, right onto US 84/Oglethorpe Highway, and right into commercial access point south of traffic signalized intersection of General Stewart. The route circulation that occurs within the shopping plaza must be closely coordinated with the owner and manager of the property, with Memorandum of Agreements / Access Agreements established to ensure ongoing access for service.

Route 8 should also be rerouted to better serve the clients of the Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS) located at 112 W. Oglethorpe Highway. This facility is

accessed from Fraser Drive @ US 84/Oglethorpe Highway, and the current route configuration only offers service on the north side of this primary arterial highway. The traffic volumes and speeds, as well as the presence of significant freight truck traffic, creates a barrier for families seeking access to the DFCS facility. In addition, Diversity

#### *Diversity Health Clinic Ground Breaking*



Image Source: Coastalcourier.com

Health has begun site development and construction of their future mental health clinic on Fraser Drive, in close proximity to the DFCS campus. These two service centers are



key destinations for transit dependent community members that are traditionally underserved and most likely to need/utilize transit services. Proposed routing would bring service through the signalized intersection of MLK Jr. Blvd. to Fraser Drive, left turn onto Norman Street, left turn onto Layton Street, and across the signalized intersection at US 84/Oglethorpe Highway onto Memorial Drive. The routing would resume the current service alignment at this point.

Lastly, service to the new Oglethorpe Square Shopping Plaza should be negotiated with the property and lease holders to allow for more direct service for passengers. Currently service is offered in proximity to the shopping center via US 84/Oglethorpe Highway @ Ralph Quarterman Drive. More direct access to this new shopping, medical services, and jobs center was requested by current passengers, community stakeholders, and City Administrators.

#### MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 2-5)

As described in the Route 6 and 7 “Mid-Term Improvements”, when the City of Hinesville releases a new Request for Proposals (RFP), the respondents should be asked to provide cost estimates on two service scenarios:

- Operations, maintenance, and management of the current system.
- Operations, maintenance, and management of fixed route and demand response service as demonstrated in scenario 2B.

The most cost effective and equitable service should be selected from these proposals and implementation of associated modifications to Route 8 should be completed as soon as practical. Limited service areas located south and southwest of Darcey Road should be converted to the most cost effective service model determined during the proposal and contractor selection process. If non-disabled demand response is selected, Memorandums of Agreement between the City of Walthourville and the City of

Hinesville should be renegotiated to support the new service model. Demand response service to residents in the Walthourville and West-Hinesville should be offered with hourly/premium trip options for an increased fee, while standard fee based trips would be offered with a more significant wait time. The service and fares structure could be designed as follows:

- Complementary ADA Paratransit: 24 hour advanced notice required; fare is double the standard fixed route rate; and priority is given to these passengers during scheduling.
- Non-disabled Demand Response Standard Service Type A: 24 hour advanced reservations; connections to designated fixed route service stops, or any location within the designated demand response service area; rate is two times the standard fixed route fare; priority is given to ADA paratransit passengers.
- Non-disabled Demand Response Premium Service Type B: one to two hour advanced reservation; connecting to closest fixed route service stops (Darsey Road, Happy Acres Mobile Home Park); fare is three times the standard fixed route rate; priority is given to ADA passengers; transfer fees to fixed route apply.
- Non-disabled Demand Response Premium Service Type C: one to two hour advanced reservations; destination is anywhere within the designated demand response service area; priority is given to ADA passengers; premium fares apply.

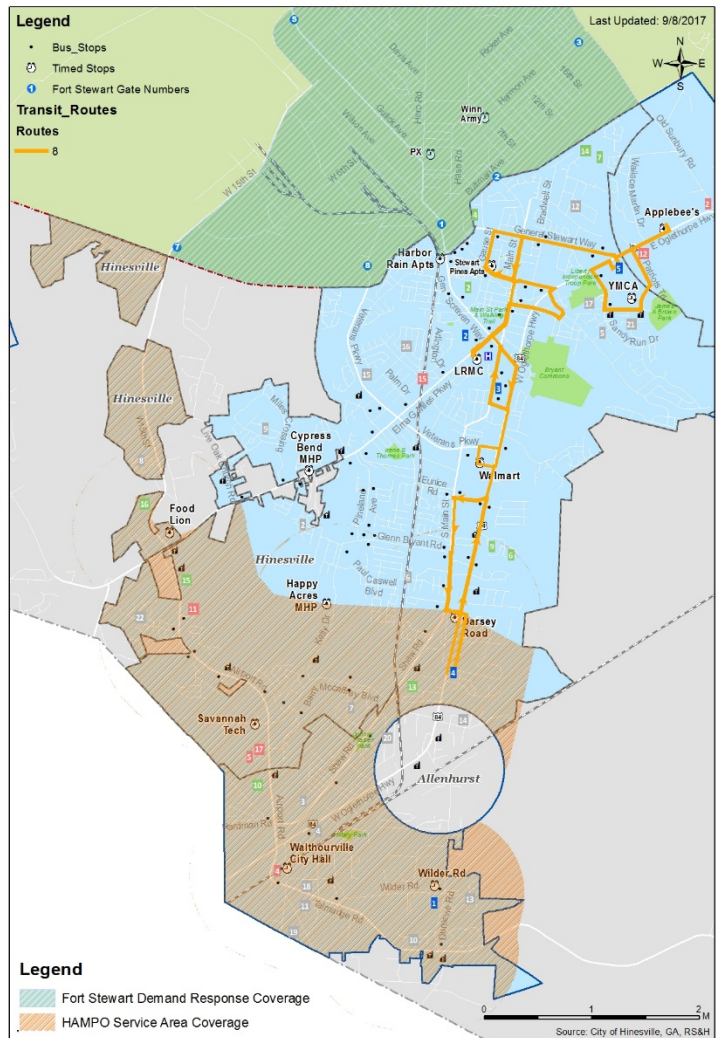
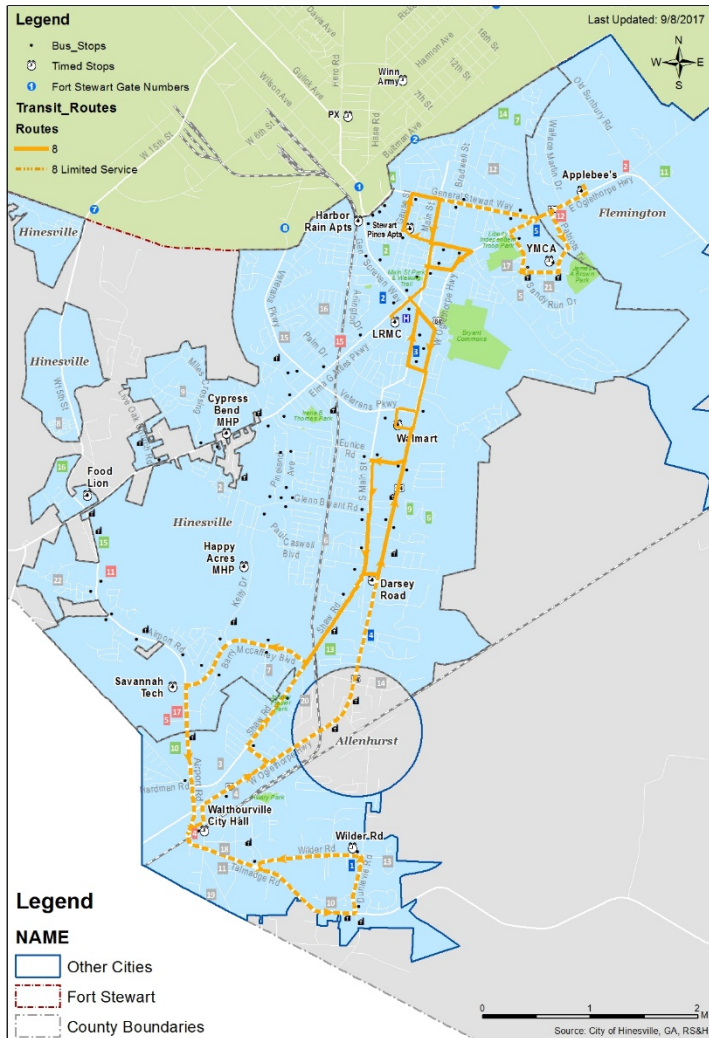
The non-disabled demand response service will build on the complementary paratransit service foundation. Dispatchers, vehicles, and drivers will be used for both paratransit services and demand response services, with priority given to disabled ADA passengers during trip scheduling. Because the rates associated with service modifications must be negotiated, future fiscal projections associated with this scenario are not provided. However, cost per revenue service hour for non-disabled demand response services should represent cost savings over fixed route service rates, to be deemed viable.

In addition, concerted efforts should be made to negotiate a reduced cost per hour for fixed route service. Current fixed route service rates exceed \$70/revenue service hour, and projected ADA paratransit service rates are approximately \$48/revenue service hour. If future negotiations sustain these rates, transition of underperforming and limited service areas would represent a 68% cost savings, and improved service for residents. In addition, by transitioning low density areas to demand response services, the fixed route services in the core of Hinesville and Flemington will not be required to perform limited service deviations, equating to improved frequencies and more direct service for riders on Route 8.

#### LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (YEARS 5 – 10)

Following the implementation of revised service scenario 2B, targets and metrics should be set to identify cost savings and achievement of established performance targets. Savings associated with improved performance and reduced operational costs should be considered for reinvestment in fixed route core service frequency enhancements. If demand response service ridership becomes highly utilized, resulting in significant revenue service hour costs, further evaluation should be conducted to transition high performance areas to a more cost effective service model, such as brokered transportation services.

FIGURE 6.5: ROUTE 8 CURRENT ROUTE / FULLY IMPLEMENTED SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS



## **6.3 Non-Service Recommendations**

The operational recommendations are key elements within the TDP, however, there are policy and system support recommendations that are incorporated to ensure a sustainable transit agency. These recommendations include those identified in the previous TDP that are still viable, as well as those identified through the current planning process.

### **Enhance Marketing and Outreach Activities and Investments**

- Offer ridership training for seniors in coordination with the Liberty Senior Center, and other local advocacy groups for seniors.
- Offer ridership training in coordination with the local homeless prevention departments and advocacy groups.
- Perform focused outreach and education for low income communities.
- Develop and offer promotional activities to expand interest in the Liberty Transit system.

### **Enhanced On-line Accessibility**

- The current Liberty Transit website relies on photographs and static images, posing challenges for ADA and non-English speaking customers. The website should be assessed and redesigned to eliminate barriers for disadvantaged users.
- Translations of key information should be offered for Limited English Proficient customers.
- The system website should be updated to feature information about other transit providers in the region including rural transit and intercity providers (CRC, Greyhound, etc.).

### **Community and Peer Agency Coordination**

- Conduct annual public workshops/listening sessions to provide citizens with the opportunity to share ideas and issues.

- Ensure Liberty Transit is an element of annual Countywide and City workshops.
- Conduct focused coordination with human service agencies and transit supportive agencies such as DFCS, mental health clinics, major employers, Homeless Prevention, Housing Authority, etc.
- Conduct more frequent direct coordination with Fort Stewart Command to ensure the mission of transit on the installation is still supported and functional.
- Conduct more frequent direct coordination with other service providers in the region, to identify challenges and opportunities for regional mobility.

### **Enhance Monitoring and Reporting Activities to Include Performance Targets**

As part of this performance-based approach, recipients of federal funds are required to link investment priorities from their Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to achieve performance targets. In order to support the transition to performance based planning, Liberty Transit should enhance current monthly and annual performance reporting to include the following elements.

- On-time performance
- Fuel efficiency
- State of good repair on rolling stock (number of repairs per vehicle and cost of maintenance)
- Ridership
- Contributing ridership factors (weather, special events, traffic issues, etc.)
- NTD standard performance reporting metrics

### **Improved Municipal Management Protocol**

- Develop standardized review process for contractor compliance to contractual obligations.
- Reinforce that Liberty Transit is a City Department and not a separate entity.

### **Rolling Stock and Capital Equipment**

- Thoroughly analyze the Liberty Transit rolling stock during the development of the Transit Asset Management, and consider right sizing the bus fleet when replacement occurs.
- Review spare bus ratio and consider surplus of additional vehicles.
- Study alternative fuel vehicle options for future fleet investments.
- Identify opportunities for additional shelters and budget for procurement, permitting, and installation.
- Purchase and install bus stop route identification flags that aid riders in identifying which buses service each stop. This form of stop identification provides the ability to easily update/modify the stops as service changes occur, and offers visual information for passengers with limited English proficiency and/or inability to read and interpret route maps.

### **Technology Investments**

- Review available technology to enhance LT's Intelligent Transit Services (ITS). Examples of technological investments could include Automated Passenger Counters (APCs), on-board Wi-Fi technology that allows dispatchers to monitor performance, real-time vehicle information at key service locations, etc.

### **Technical Support and Studies**

- Review and update local development ordinance and codes to include transit access as an element of the zoning and site plan review process.
- Alternative Fuel Vehicle Feasibility Analysis
- Conduct an analysis to determine if an intermodal station is desired/needed, and begin preliminary site identification and design, if warranted.



## 6.4 Implementation and Funding

Liberty Transit receives 49 USC 5307 Federal transit operating and capital funding annually. These funds are made available to transit providers in urbanized areas, and are dispersed by formula to providers throughout the country. The urbanized areas of Liberty and Long County have a projected value of \$1,064,016.00 formula 5307 funds for the fiscal year 2019. The City of Hinesville submits annual applications to the Georgia Department of Transportation demonstrating the needed operating and federal funds needed for the coming fiscal year. The following tables demonstrate the projected system funding needed to maintain current service levels through the year 2023.

**TABLE 6.1: ANTICIPATED TRANSIT FUNDING BY FISCAL YEAR AND SOURCE**

	Operating Projections for Liberty Transit					
	APPROVED TIP COST SCHEDULE				TDP PROJECTIONS	
	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
TOTAL COST	\$ 473,626	\$ 485,467	\$ 497,603	\$ 510,043	\$ 525,345	\$ 541,105
FEDERAL COST	\$ 236,813	\$ 242,733	\$ 248,802	\$ 255,022	\$ 262,672	\$ 270,553
STATE COST	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
LOCAL COST	\$ 236,813	\$ 242,733	\$ 248,802	\$ 255,022	\$ 262,672	\$ 270,553

Data Source: HAMPO FY 18-21 Transportation Improvement Program  
Federal funding source for each fiscal year is Title 49 USC 5307

	Capital Projections for Liberty Transit					
	APPROVED TIP COST SCHEDULE				TDP PROJECTIONS	
	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
TOTAL COST	\$ 607,439	\$ 622,625	\$ 638,190	\$ 654,145	\$ 673,769	\$ 693,983
FEDERAL COST	\$ 85,951	\$ 498,100	\$ 510,552	\$ 523,316	\$ 539,016	\$ 555,186
STATE COST	\$ 60,744	\$ 62,262	\$ 63,819	\$ 65,415	\$ 67,377	\$ 69,398
LOCAL COST	\$ 48,595	\$ 49,810	\$ 51,055	\$ 52,332	\$ 53,902	\$ 55,519



Due to the nature of Liberty Transit's purchase of services agreement with Transdev Public Transport Company, projections for future funding needs associated with the TDP recommendations cannot be provided. The current purchase of services contract includes provisions that if/when service adjustments exceeding 10% of the contract value are made, contract rate renegotiations will be initiated.

The recommendations of this report are intended to maximize federal funding, and improve ridership and service efficiencies. During the implementation phase, all service modifications must be carefully coordinated with the operating contractor to refine the associated costs, and identify corresponding impacts to service rates.

CHAPTER 7

*APPENDICES*

## **Appendix A**

Liberty Transit Ride Guide

Peer Systems: Fare Structure Matrix

## **Appendix B**

Public Meeting and 30 Day Comment Period Materials

Liberty Transit TDP Survey

Interview Response Summary



115 East ML King Jr. Dr.  
Hinesville, GA 31313

[www.libertytransit.com](http://www.libertytransit.com)

