



OPEN MEETING

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION
MOBILITY AND VEHICLES COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, October 2, 2019 – 2:30 p.m.
Laguna Woods Village Community Center Board Room
24351 El Toro Road**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Acknowledgment of Media
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Approval of Meeting Report for August 7, 2019
5. Chair's Remarks
6. Member Comments (Items Not on the Agenda)
7. Response to Member Comments

Reports:

8. Transportation & Maintenance Manager's Report
 - Ridership Data
 - New Bus Update
 - Phone Call Data

Items for Discussion and Consideration

9. Transportation Study Final Report – Fehr & Peers

Items for Future Agendas:

10. Bus Policy Updates – Use by Non-Profit Agencies
11. ADA Policy Review

Concluding Business:

12. Committee Member Comments
13. Special Meeting Date – Tuesday October 29, 2019
14. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 4, 2019
15. Adjournment

Ray Gros, Chair
Chris Laugenour, Staff Officer: 949-597-4638

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**REPORT OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION
MOBILITY AND VEHICLES COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, August 7, 2019 – 1:30 p.m.
Laguna Woods Village Community Center Board Room
24351 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92637

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray Gros-Chair, Don Tibbets, Jim Matson, Jon Pearlstone, John Frankel, Elsie Addington, Andre Torng

ADVISORS: Vashti Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Dalis

OTHERS PRESENT: Cash Achrekar, Diane Phelps, Juanita Skillman, Annette Sabol Soule, Bert Moldow, Lynn Jarrett

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Laugenour, Francisco Perez, Tiffany Rivas, Elizabeth Cortez

1. Call to Order

Chair Gros called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. Acknowledgment of Media

No press was present.

3. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. Approval of Meeting Report for June 5, 2019

The Regular Meeting Report of June 5, 2019 was approved by consensus.

5. Chair's Remarks

Chair Gros notified the audience that he has been working with Mr. Laugenour on the next steps of the Transportation Evaluation. He mentioned there will be information regarding the phone system in the manager's report.

6. Member Comments (Items Not on the Agenda)

Suellen Zima (823-D): Spoke about PAR and brought a copy of a suggested bus schedule for the Committee to review.

Annie Funk (663-B): Spoke about PAR and her dependency on the service due to having a visual impairment. She shared her recent experience with having difficulty in reaching the PAR scheduling office. She requested prioritization for visually impaired drivers.

David Kay (5360): Spoke about the Fixed Routes and PAR. Suggested to the Committee, a seven-day Fixed Route schedule and suggested PAR have a separate phone line.

Sylvia Heyman (46-D): Spoke about PAR and her difficulty with getting an appointment. She suggested bringing back the Lyft Bus program.

Eve Friedman (4003-1G): Spoke about LW Transportation bus drivers and suggested drivers have more educational training on residents with disabilities. Also spoke about PAR, and suggested there be more drivers.

Larry Irion (682-O): Spoke about PAR and his difficulty with reaching the scheduling office. He suggested this be addressed as soon as possible.

7. Response to Member Comments

Chair Gros reminded members that the Committee cannot make definitive changes but can only make recommendations to GRF board. He stated the Committee will make the appropriate recommendations that will help the residents.

Director Tornig: Expressed appreciation for those who organized the attendance of residents with visual loss.

Director Addington: sympathized with member's comments. She expressed her frustration in waiting for solutions to the transportation system.

Director Tibbets: sympathized with members who had negative experience with transportation service. Spoke about PAR and suggested we need to look more into this service.

Mr. Laugenour addressed members by stating the complexity of the Transportation system is one of the challenges faced when trying to make the system more effective for everyone. Mr. Laugenour stated he will not provide recommendations until he feels comfortable with its success. He stated that when he is ready, a special M&V Committee meeting will be held to review and make final preparations of the recommendations. After the recommendations have been finalized and reviewed by the Committee they will be presented to the GRF board at the appropriate time. In addition, Mr. Laugenour addressed member's comments by apologizing to those

members who have had negative experiences with Transportation services. He stated that is not acceptable and will be addressed. He stated that it is highly important that residents be treated with the utmost respect. Chris Laugenour, publicly thanked Ms. Jeanne Bray who organized the attendance of residents with visual impairment. He shared with the Committee that Ms. Bray provided training at the last Driver meeting on techniques helpful for working with those who are visually impaired.

Reports:

8. Transportation & Maintenance Manager's Reports

Mr. Laugenour gave an overview of the report including ridership data, transit study update, new bus update and phone call data. There was discussion among the Committee members and residents on ideas to improve the overall reservation process including better tracking, incorporating volunteers, and software improvements.

9. Agreement with Age Well for Fuel Purchase

Mr. Laugenour presented to the Committee a fuel purchase program with Age Well. Director Tibbets recommended and Director Addington seconded resulting in all in favor.

Items for Future Agendas:

10. ADA Policy Review

11. Bus Policy Updates – Use by Non-Profit Agencies

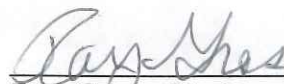
Concluding Business:

12. Committee Member Comments

13. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday October 2, 2019 - 1:30 PM

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ray Gros", written over a horizontal line.

Ray Gros, Chair
GRF Mobility & Vehicles Committee

STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 2, 2019
FOR: Mobility and Vehicles Committee
SUBJECT: Transportation and Maintenance Services Manager's Report

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file report.

BACKGROUND

At each meeting of the Mobility and Vehicles Committee, the Transportation and Maintenance Services Manager provides information related to the Village transportation program and the operational costs of the Village vehicle maintenance program. The reports are varied each meeting and are submitted to the Committee to provide a broad spectrum of information on a variety of topics.

DISCUSSION

Ridership trends for Plan-A-Ride and Easy Rider for the period of January through August 2019.

Total number of individual riders: (monthly average)
Fixed Route – 484
Plan-A-Ride - 318

When residents and their guests ride the Village buses or utilize the Plan-A-Ride program, their trips are tracked. Each time a rider enters a bus, the RFID chip on their Resident Identification Card records a 'trip'. Drivers record guests manually. Trips provided through the Plan-A-Ride program are tracked by the 'Ride Now' scheduling software.

For the first half of 2019, Plan-A-Ride provided an average monthly total of 2,088 completed rides, with the highest daily utilization occurring on Saturday and Sunday each week. There continues to be a high percentage (29%) of cancellations in the Plan-A-Ride system and staff is evaluating options to help reduce this amount. The detail on Plan-A-Ride participation is shown on Attachment #1.

The Easy Rider fixed route program provided a monthly average of 7,767 trips per month in 2019, and showed a reduction in the month of August. This fixed route system operates Monday through Friday and ridership is fairly consistent each day with Fridays being the busiest. See Attachment #2. This does not include those residents that participated in the Destination Shopping, monthly excursions or the weekly docent tours.

The Destination Shopping ridership continues to grow as the program gains popularity. Ridership in August peaked to a total of 152 participants, and the program continues to fill up quickly and there is routinely a waiting list each week.

Transit Study Update

Fehr & Peers has finalized their Transit study and will provide the Committee their recommendations to improve the overall bus system. Upon final review of their recommendations, Staff is planning on holding a special M&V Committee meeting on October 29th to bring for final recommendations for bus system improvements to the Committee.

Vehicle Purchases/Repairs

GRF recently received two new 18 passenger buses that were approved in the 2019 Capital budget. One has been put into service already and the second is being up-fitted with cameras and other safety related equipment. Two more buses are on order and will be delivered in the next 3-4 months.

Grant Update

GRF currently owns and operates 16 buses. Fourteen of those were purchased utilizing Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) 5310 Grant Funds. The grants paid approximately 88% of the total purchase price. Two buses purchased within the past year were funded entirely from GRF Reserve Funds, with two grant-funded buses traded-in as part of the purchase. There are no restrictions on the use of the two new buses. The 5310 Grant program requires that grant-funded buses be operated for seven years or 200,000 miles before the title is transferred to the grant recipient and use restrictions expire.

Currently three buses that are still part of the grant requirements and staff is mandated to report the daily ridership and hours of operation of these buses in the grant program semi-annually to meet the contractual requirements set by the FTA. No fees may be charged to patrons that ride a bus that was purchased with grant funds until after the restrictions expire.

Phone Data Update

For the first eight months of 2019, staff has collected data on phone calls made to the Transportation Department

Total Calls Received:

1st Quarter – 15,550 (5,183 per month)
2nd Quarter – 15,284 (5,094 per month)
3rd Quarter – avg of 5,040 for July/August

Average Time in Queue

1st Quarter – 1.:54 minutes
2nd Quarter – 2:09 minutes
3rd Quarter – 2:24 minutes

Maximum Time in Queue

1st Quarter – 9:01 minutes
2nd Quarter – 8:03 minutes
3rd Quarter – 8:04 minutes

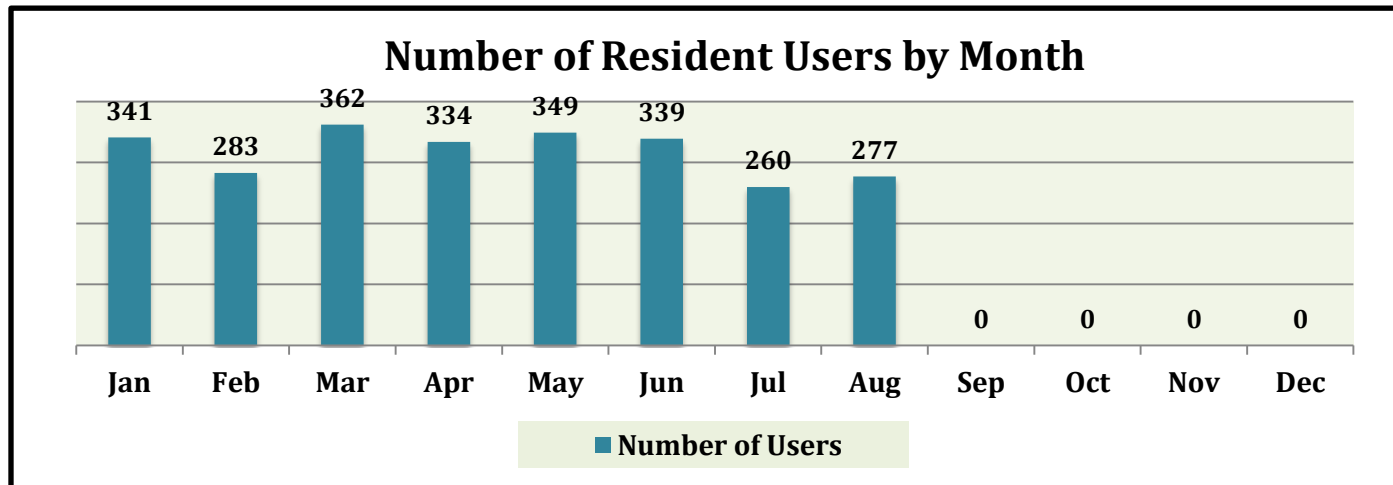
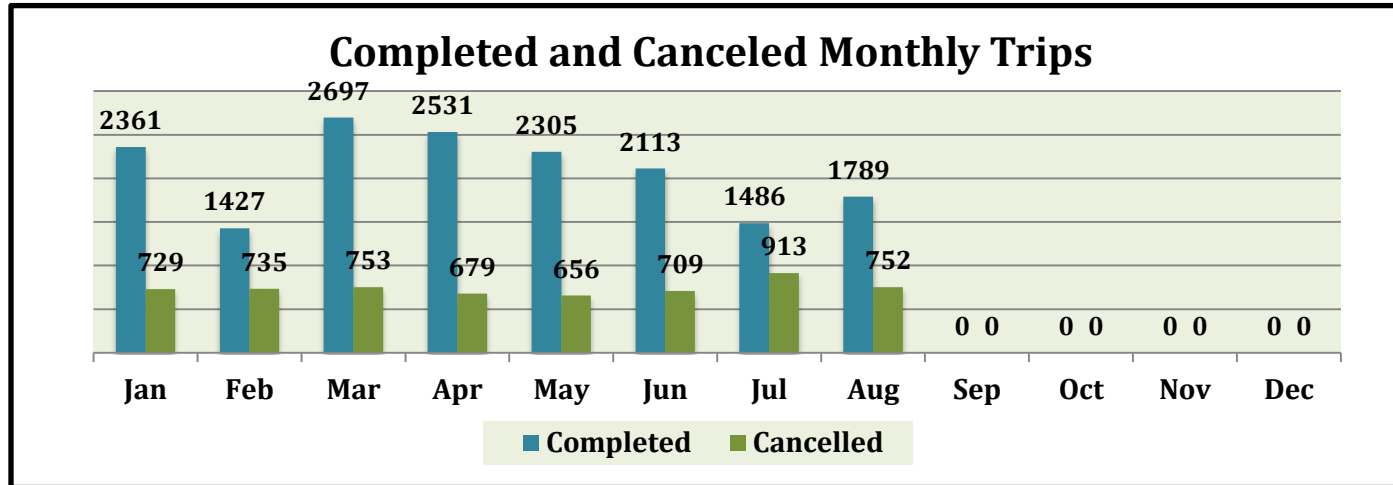
Prepared By: Chris Laugenour, Sr. Transportation & Maintenance Manager

ATTACHMENT(S):

ATT-1: Plan-A-Ride Year to Date Ridership
ATT-2: Easy Rider Year to Date Ridership

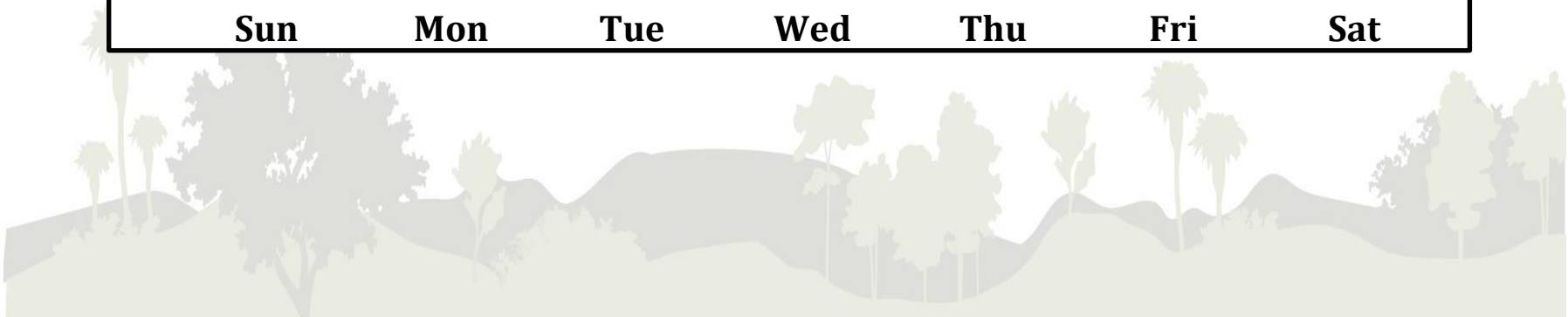
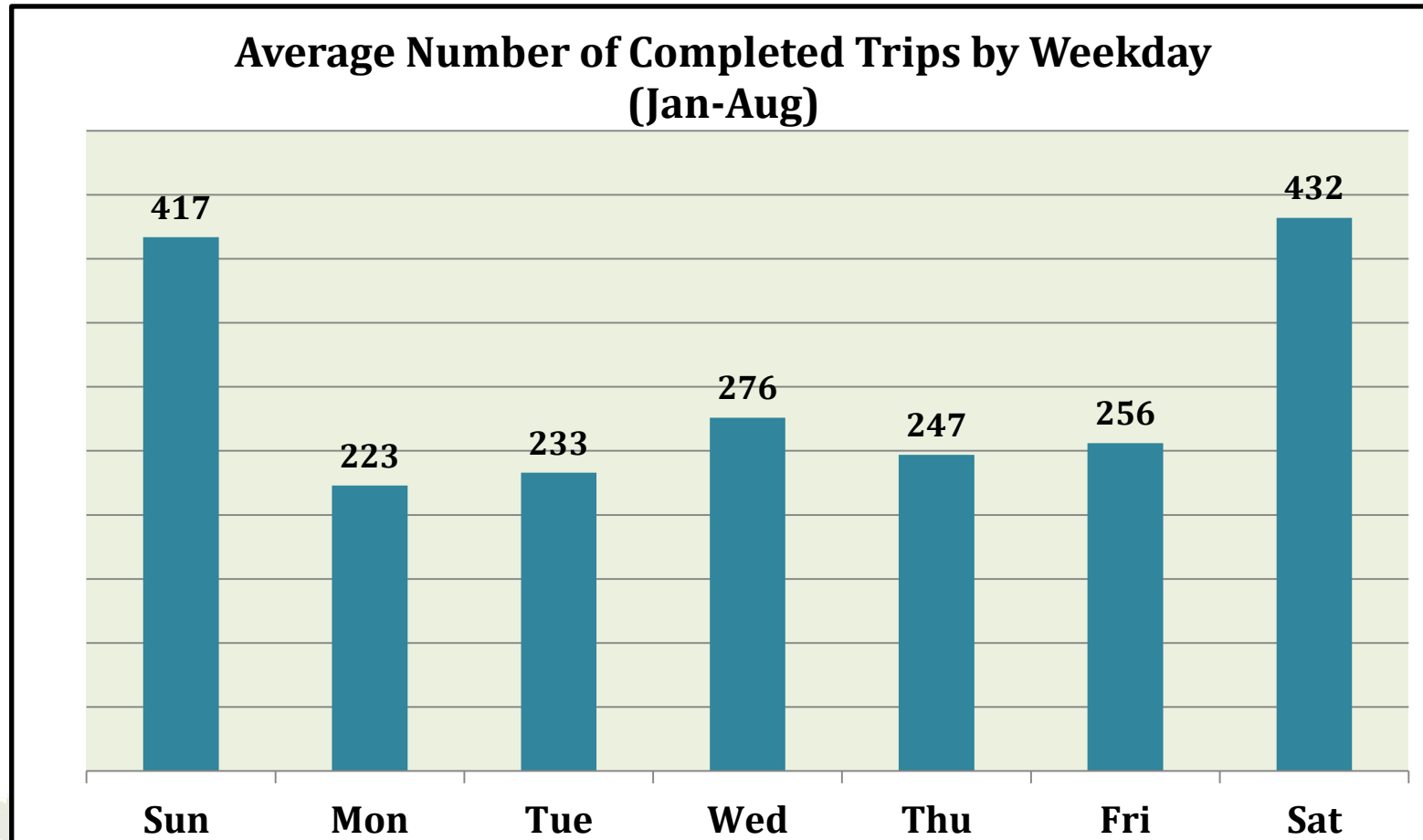
2019 Plan-A-Ride Ridership

ATT-1



2019 Plan-A-Ride Ridership

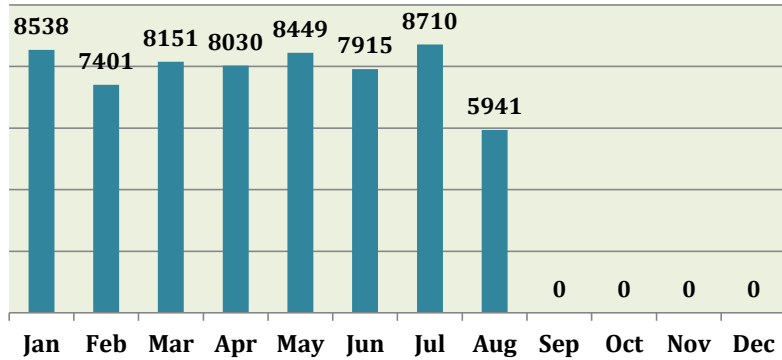
ATT-1



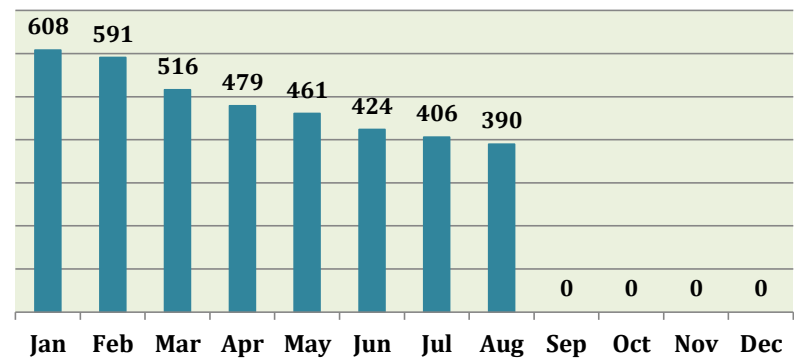
2019 Fixed-Route Ridership

ATT-2

Trips per Month



Number of Users per Month



Fixed-Route Trips by Week Day

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Jan | 1457 | 1646 | 1961 | 1661 | 1813 | 8538 |
| Feb | 1181 | 1590 | 1475 | 1312 | 1843 | 7401 |
| Mar | 1690 | 1586 | 1240 | 1406 | 2229 | 8151 |
| Apr | 1599 | 1543 | 1228 | 1278 | 1384 | 7032 |
| May | 1119 | 1586 | 1948 | 1730 | 2066 | 8449 |
| Jun | 1571 | 1474 | 1585 | 1585 | 1700 | 7915 |
| Jul | 2083 | 1924 | 1940 | 1125 | 1638 | 8710 |
| Aug | 1098 | 1109 | 1051 | 1391 | 1292 | 5941 |



Short Range Transit Plan

Prepared for:
Laguna Woods Village

September 2019

OC19-0619

FEHR  PEERS

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1. Introduction

Laguna Woods Village is an active living community for people aged 55 and older located in southern Orange County, California. Under Village Management Services (VMS), the community provides residents a transportation program that includes local fixed-route shuttles and a reservation-based door-to-door shuttle service. The transportation program has been in place for many years and has been through several iterations, most recently with an overhaul of both the routes and reservation-based service in 2016. The transportation service fills a critical need for many residents who either cannot or do not wish to drive themselves, allowing convenient travel to grocery stores and doctor's appointments, and socializing in the community.

The current system is unpopular with many residents. Some long-time bus riders find the current routes to be too time-consuming and indirect for many trips, while the reservation-based service is unable to meet demand at peak times. Current and past riders have provided extensive comments detailing frustration with the service, particularly compared with service designs provided in the past. There are current riders who find that the existing system meets their needs, particularly those who primarily use the reservation-based services. However, the overwhelming sentiment expressed at the beginning of the SRTP study is that the current service design is not effectively using the resources available to get people to and from their homes in a reasonable time.

The majority of residents who are not regular riders do not use the bus primarily because they drive, but also believe the bus system is too inefficient and difficult to use.

Regardless of sentiment about the current route system, survey data suggests a majority of residents believe they will try using the Village bus service within a few years, particularly if they become uncomfortable driving themselves. People are interested in a more frequent bus system with shorter travel times and community presentations to teach people how to use the service effectively.

The Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) reviews the current service design and community perceptions on transit service along with service data (from VMS and collected in the field) in order to make near-term recommendations.



2. The Existing Transportation Program

Village Management Services (VMS) administers the current transportation program at the direction of the Laguna Woods Village Board and the community's 'Mobility and Vehicles' committee. The community transportation program is comprised of three elements: a fixed-route service, a reservation-based demand-response service, and weekly special trips. This SRTP reviews the first two exclusively, as these are the regular, core services available daily.

2.1 The “Easy Rider” Fixed-Route Service

VMS operates eight fixed-route shuttles through the residential community to nearby commercial, medical and civic destinations, such as the Stater Bros. grocery store, churches, restaurants, Saddleback Medical Center, and more. These routes are collectively called the “Easy Rider” service. Easy Rider service operates once an hour between 9:00AM and 5:00PM on weekdays. No Easy Rider service is provided on weekends. Easy Rider service is offered free-of-charge to residents, and is not open to the general public. The buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts or ramps.

Each bus route begins at Clubhouse 1 at the top of each hour, circulates through a neighborhood area, then a non-residential area such as shopping plazas and medical centers, then returns to Clubhouse 1 at about 50 minutes past the hour. The routes are grouped by neighborhoods in four quadrants, with two routes per quadrant. Each route picks up residents on specific streets in its quadrant and then leaves the neighborhood to serve non-residential destinations (meaning all commercial, medical, and civic stops outside of Laguna Woods Village neighborhoods), roughly divided up between those east of Clubhouse 1 and those to the west. The closest bus to a given resident's home may be either an “East” or “West” bus, and passengers can transfer to the other route at a designated point before the buses exit the neighborhood. This allows any resident to get on any bus that comes by their home, and drivers facilitate passengers getting onto the bus that serves their intended destination.

From any non-residential stop, for example at Trader Joe's, the buses can be identified by the neighborhood group they serve (routes 1-4). In most cases, someone waiting to return home must get on the bus and ride to Clubhouse 1 and wait until the next departure at the top of the hour before going home.

Figure 1 shows the Easy Rider map, illustrating the four neighborhood quadrants and the East and West commercial areas by the pink and blue lines, respectively. The map makes no graphical distinction between the two routes serving each of the four neighborhood areas.



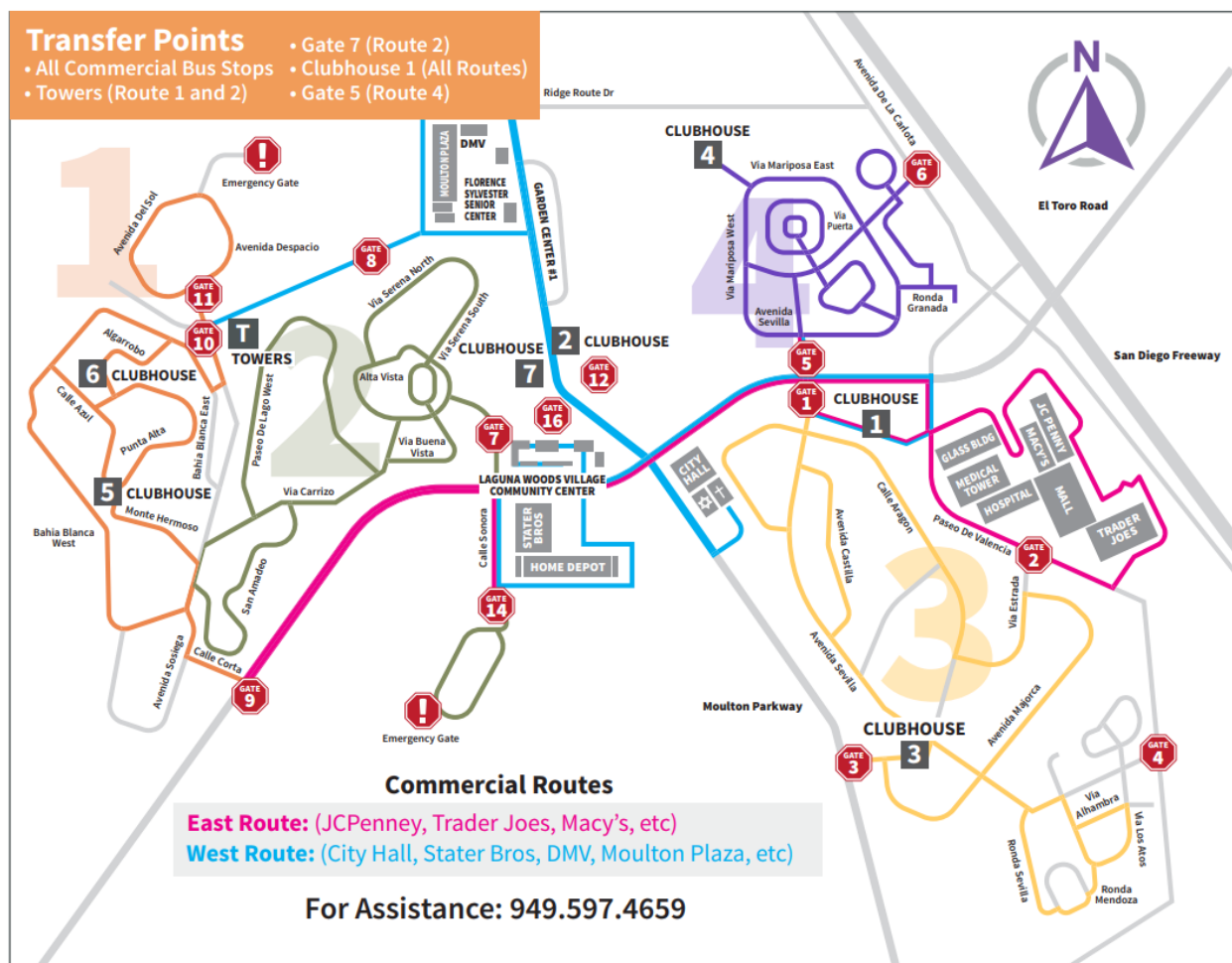


Figure 1 Easy Rider neighborhood and commercial routes

Although described as fixed routes, the operation allows considerable flexibility with numerous request-stops both inside the neighborhoods and for non-residential/commercial stops. Routes are also modified incrementally to respond to changing rider demands and other factors such as the demolition and redevelopment of the mall property.

2.2 The “Plan A Ride” Door-to-Door Service

Plan-A-Ride (PAR) is the community’s reservation-based door-to-door service, also known as a “demand response” service. This service has no set route, unlike the Easy Rider, and the buses pick up individuals directly at home and bring them directly to their destination with no required connection to Easy Rider. Residents can call in advance to make a reservation for rides. The service area is effectively the same as the Easy Rider area. PAR operates from 8AM through 10:30PM, seven days a week. PAR is the only VMS-operated transportation service available in Laguna Woods Village on the weekends.



PAR service is available to all residents free-of-charge, just like Easy Rider routes. The service has no requirements for trip purpose or mobility requirements, and reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the schedule is full. PAR service availability is effectively only limited by availability of vehicles and drivers within the schedule.

2.3 Operations and Performance

Easy Rider and PAR share a vehicle fleet of small “cutaway” style buses (a bus body built onto a small truck chassis) equipped with wheelchair lifts or ramps, and wheelchair securement areas. About 13 vehicles are in service at peak during the weekdays (between 9:00AM and 5:00PM) including both the Easy Rider and PAR services. On the weekends, about 8 vehicles at peak period operate the PAR service. The service is staffed by both full-time and part-time operators hired directly by VMS.

2.3.1 Ridership Change

VMS collects ridership data on Easy Rider buses through a ‘tap-to-board’ card system. Each resident taps their personal RFID-chip card when they board a route. The RFID system allows VMS to collect total boarding data by vehicle and day, and analyze trip frequency by user ID. However, the system does not have a GPS connection to associate boarding data with vehicle location. This would be particularly useful for analyzing which areas of the community are generating riders for better route and schedule planning.

VMS provided monthly ridership totals for calendar year 2013 through 2018. The usefulness of this data for the SRTP is somewhat limited because the system was redesigned in 2016. The previous and current bus systems relied on transfers between routes, but in different ways that make a direct comparison less meaningful. However, as Figure 2 demonstrates, overall ridership averaged about 10,000 trips per month through 2017 and 2018, compared with around 15,000 between 2013 and 2016. Ridership fluctuates on all transportation systems, and other factors not studied in the SRTP could influence these data. Bus ridership has generally declined nationwide in recent years.

It is particularly difficult to compare the operation and ridership of PAR, as opposed to the demand-response service prior to late 2016. The previous service was available on a more limited basis and restricted mainly to people whose disability precluded using the fixed routes.



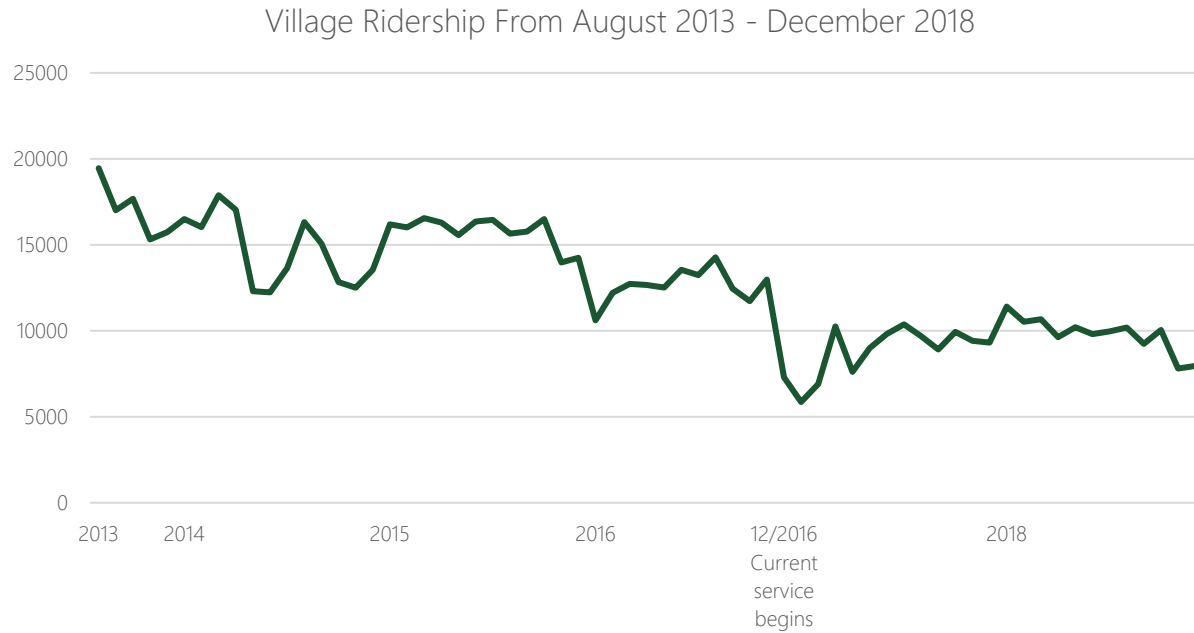


Figure 2 Ridership trends since late 2013

Although the data show a clear decline in ridership in recent years compared with the ridership of the previous system, it remains essential to understand the perspective of the current and former users to assess what has caused the decline and how to address it. The next chapter of the SRTP reviews the input gathered from hundreds of residents through the SRTP outreach process.



3. Community Perspectives



Community engagement was one of the first stages of the study of Laguna Woods Village bus transportation, to understand the strengths and opportunities of the program. The engagement piece included in-person sessions with residents and the bus operators, and a paper and online survey of both riders and non-riders.

The study for the SRTTP kicked off in March, 2019 with two community engagement workshops, one hosted at Clubhouse 1 and the other at the Towers. Approximately 110 people attended the Clubhouse 1 event and 50 people participated at the Towers, providing input on major destinations and means of mobility, comments and critique on the current transportation service, and narrative of their personal experiences.

Bus operators participated in a focus group to share their perspective on the current and historical service, and what issues the drivers believe are critical for providing better service. Seventeen drivers attended, including the service supervisor. The driver narrative was especially helpful in understanding the trade-offs between earlier service designs and the current design, and identifying key opportunities and hurdles for any future routes.

Fehr & Peers staff also conducted field visits to ride the Easy Rider routes, observe operations and passenger trips, and further talk with the drivers. On-board observations occurred during the busy mid-morning to early afternoon, in order to directly experience what current riders encounter when running errands or making other trips, and understand what it takes to successfully navigate and transfer between routes.



3.1 The Passenger Perspective

Many riders are thankful that there is a transportation program, citing the bus service as a key contributor to choosing to live in Laguna Woods Village. Riders are overwhelmingly positive about the bus operators (drivers). Passengers commented, "Bus drivers are wonderful, many thanks!" and "The drivers are so good and helpful." Passengers highly value the direct assistance that friendly drivers provide.

*"The bus system is essential –
and a good selling point to
new residents."*

Despite these positive sentiments, many current and former riders have expressed dissatisfaction with the current 'Easy Rider' and 'Plan-a-Ride' service design. This section focuses on these main issues identified by participants in the outreach process:

1. The current fixed-route service design is ineffective, motivating some riders to shift trips to PAR
2. The PAR service cannot match rides, carrying typically one passenger per vehicle, and is therefore not making up for the perceived shortcomings of the Easy Rider
3. Providing only PAR on the weekends further limits the usefulness of the bus service because it is not a substitute for fixed-route capacity

3.1.1 Inefficient Fixed-Routes

Participants at the community engagement sessions provided extensive comment about how the current eight-bus Easy Rider system takes too long to reach most destinations. "It takes an hour to get anywhere! I can walk more quickly," wrote one participant. Another specified, "When you want to go to e.g. Trader Joe's, you have to spend one hour to get back, while before you can have another bus to take you back." Fehr & Peers staff spoke personally with many participants at both engagement sessions who echoed these sentiments.

About 150 riders responded to a survey distributed on-board the buses in the Spring of 2019, in addition to the comments provided in writing at the initial outreach meetings in March. Almost half of the respondents say they currently use the service four or more days a week. However, when asked if their Easy Rider riding habits have changed, respondents who currently ride 'Occasionally but not regularly' were more likely to be using the service less than they used to. This suggests that some riders have indeed responded to the current service design by switching to other options, similar to the narrative heard during the personal engagement.

Figure 3 below shows the survey results regarding how often respondents use the bus and how those respondents have changed their habit based on whether they currently ride frequently (up to 3 days a week), or only occasionally.



How often do you currently use the Easy Rider fixed-route bus?

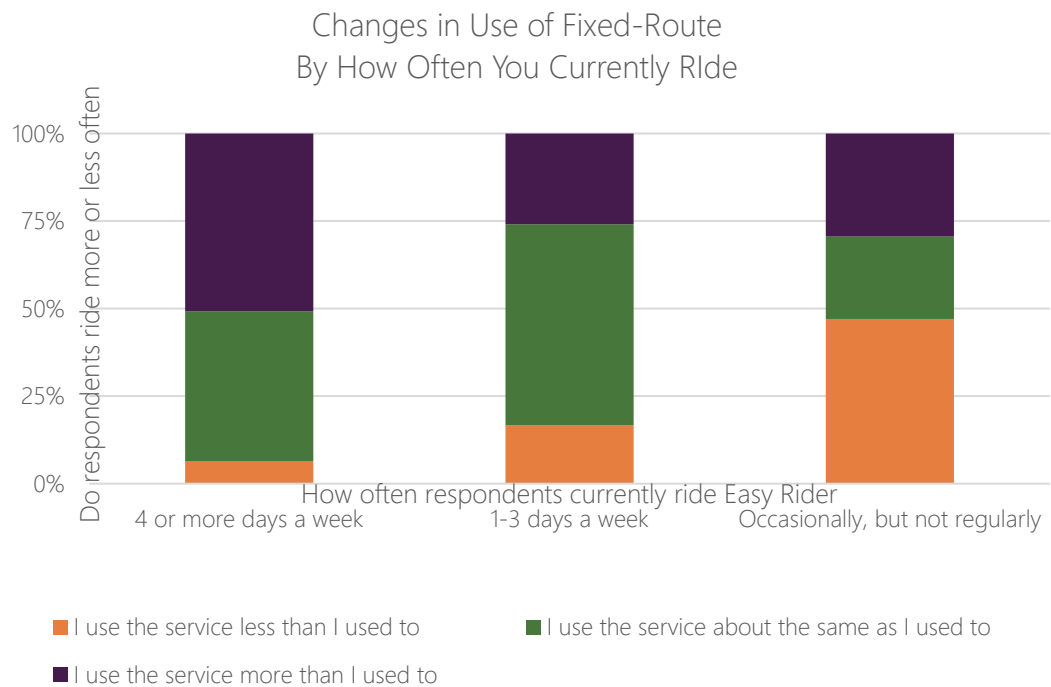
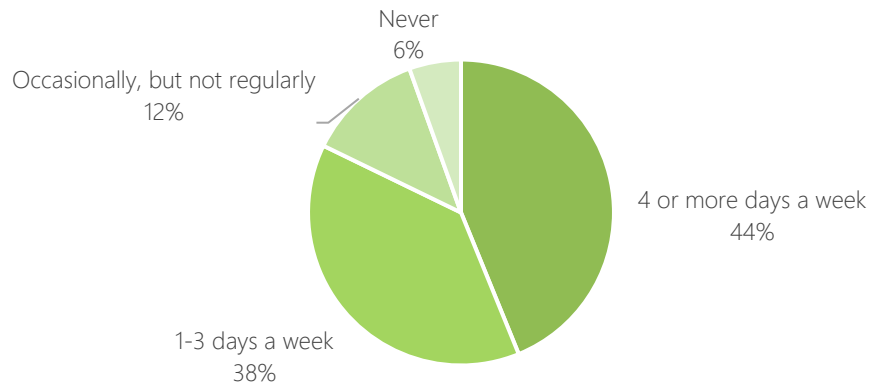


Figure 3 Riding Habits of 2019 Survey Respondents



3.1.2 The Shift to Plan-A-Ride

Residents frequently raised the issue of the service redesign in late 2016 that reduced the number of fixed routes in the Village and shifted more service to PAR¹. Previously, the PAR equivalent was only available outside of the fixed-route service hours (essentially early morning and at night, seven days per week). During the day, when more fixed routes were operating, reservation-based demand-response service was only available for people whose disability prevented them from using the regular fixed-route. In the 2016 service change, fixed-route service was redesigned to the current eight routes and the new 'Plan-a-Ride' service was (eventually) expanded to operate at all times and available to all passengers, regardless of their mobility.

The main rider complaint stemming from this change can be summarized in two parts. First, the design of the fixed-routes has increased the trip time for many rides in comparison with the previous service. There are many examples of how this change affects riders, but simply, the hourly service requires almost all riders to transfer buses at Clubhouse 1, causing trips that take over an hour door-to-door in at least one direction. Previous system designs avoided this problem both with more routes, staggered scheduling (rather than exclusively a hub-and-spoke design at Clubhouse 1), and designs to transfer passengers between routes at multiple points throughout the community.

The second aspect of this complaint is that the demand for PAR has quickly outpaced the supply since making the PAR service open to all residents regardless of personal mobility need or trip purpose. A door-to-door service, from the individual's perspective, is a more direct and faster trip than riding a fixed-route bus, making it a popular alternative. However, the PAR schedule fills up quickly with reservations. Riders have reported being unable to schedule trips as many as five days in advance.

The PAR schedule is limited both by the supply of buses and by the ability to pair up similar reservations onto one trip, a process called 'ride matching.' Many residents (both riders and non-riders) perceive that the PAR service is inefficient because full-size buses are being used to serve only one passenger trip at a time. Based on discussions with VMS staff, the current software used to schedule and dispatch PAR service is limited in its ride-matching ability, meaning that much of the time it is true that PAR buses are serving only one trip. At best, each bus might be able to serve about three riders per hour on average. The majority of survey respondents stated that they have difficulty scheduling PAR trips for the time they request at least some of the time, and about 20% believe this is often or most of the time.

Figure 4 below shows survey responses to the question, "If you have had trouble booking a Plan-A-Ride trip, what were the reasons?" Respondents were able to select more than one response. Another notable issue raised here and in the in-person sessions is that the phone line for PAR is frequently busy and messages left sometimes go unanswered, adding to the frustration for riders.

¹ The 'Easy Rider' and 'Plan-A-Ride' branding were also a new component of the late-2016 service redesign, but regardless of name, there has historically been a transportation program with the two main components: fixed-routes and reservation-based demand-response.



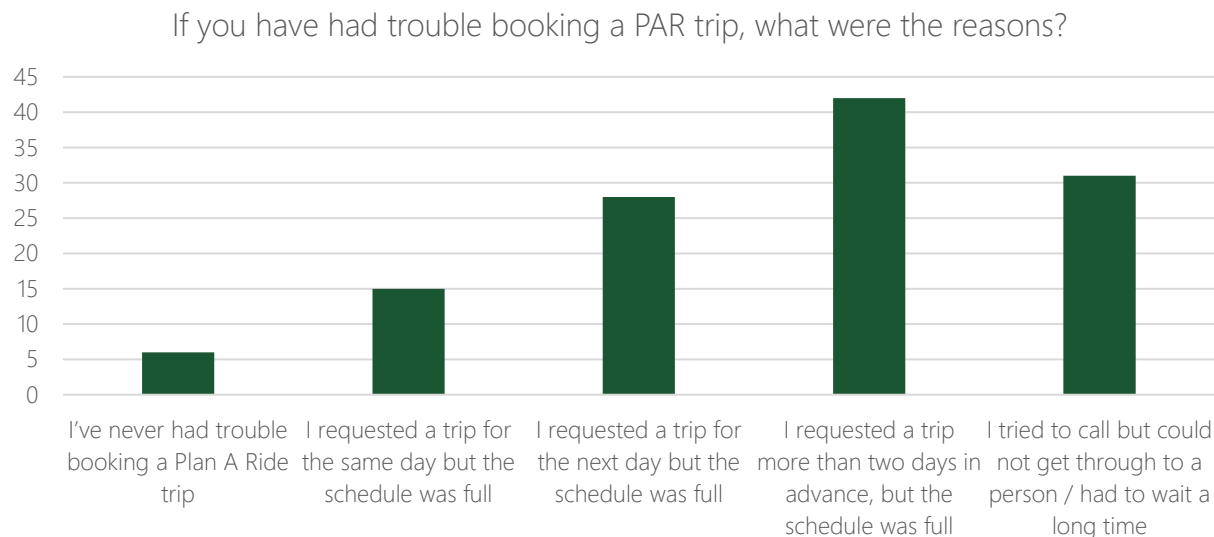


Figure 4 Trouble booking Plan-A-Ride trips

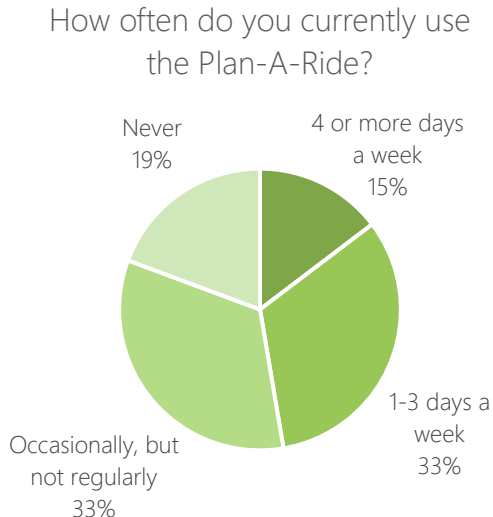


Figure 5 Frequency of PAR use

Figure 5 shows the overall responses to the question, “How often do you currently use the Plan-A-Ride reservation-based service?” Based on the survey data, people are using PAR less regularly than the fixed-routes, with only 15% of respondents using it four or more days a week compared with 44% for Easy Rider.

Many community engagement participants believe that a main factor in the over-demand of PAR is that the changes in Easy Rider routes has forced riders to try shifting fixed-route trips to PAR. While this is very likely a factor, the survey responses also suggest that simply more people are coming into the transportation program using PAR rather than the fixed routes. Comparing responses for how habits have changed, only about 7% stated that they use PAR more than they used to. Just under 30% of respondents said their use of both services has stayed about the same, and 20% said their use of both services has increased. The latter most likely represents new riders.



Table 1, below, shows the comparison of changes in habits for the Easy Rider and PAR. Whether the cause of PAR being over-burdened is primarily existing or new riders, the fact remains that a smaller proportion of riders use PAR on a regular basis, but they perceive the service as incapable of meeting their transportation needs.

Table 1 Change in transportation habits between Easy Rider and Plan-A-Ride

| Use of Easy Rider | Change in use of Plan-A-Ride | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------|
| | | I have never used the Plan A Ride service | I use the service less than I used to | I use the service about the same as I used to | I use the service more than I used to | Total |
| | I use the service about the same as I used to | 6% | 7% | 29% | 4% | 46% |
| | I use the service less than I used to | 4% | 4% | 2% | 4% | 15% |
| | I use the service more than I used to | 8% | 4% | 7% | 20% | 39% |
| | Total | 18% | 16% | 38% | 28% | 100% |

3.1.3 Weekend Service

The increased demand for PAR compared with the supply of service is a main issue for the SRTP to address. A closely related issue is the lack of fixed-route service on the weekends. Since late 2016, only PAR is available on Saturdays and Sundays. Due to the same scheduling and capacity limitations noted previously, this severely limits travel on the weekends to only what the PAR schedule can accommodate, which is significantly fewer passenger trips per hour than a fixed route bus system could handle. As shown above, residents have had difficulty scheduling trips sometimes as many as five days in advance, and many commented that this problem is the worst on the weekend when there is no alternative.



3.1.4 Bus Riders and the General Community

For context, the survey asked respondents about their age and mobility needs. Figure 6 shows the age range of respondents, with most aged 75 and up.

The survey also asked if respondents use a cane or walker most of the time, and/or a wheelchair or scooter most of the time. About 35% of respondents use a cane or a walker most of the time. Only about 5% of survey respondents stated they use a wheelchair or scooter most of the time.

During the on-board observations, the bus drivers deployed the ramp basically for every stop when boarding and alighting passengers. This practice is helpful for people with canes and walkers (and basically required for people using wheelchairs or scooters), but could be less helpful for people who are not using mobility devices because there are no handrails as people walk down the ramp. A few people noted on the rider survey that this was a concern.

A separate survey sought the perceptions of the Village residents who don't typically use either the Easy Rider or PAR buses, and gathered just over 100 responses. The primary focus of this survey was to determine why people might not be using the bus system, for the SRTP to recommend possible actions responding to those factors.

Figure 7 shows the age range of non-rider respondents, which trended slightly younger than the bus rider-specific survey (note that the survey response is a very small sample of the overall population). Over three-quarters of respondents stated that they are able to walk without assistance, and only about 18% use a cane or walker, compared with 35% of bus rider survey respondents.

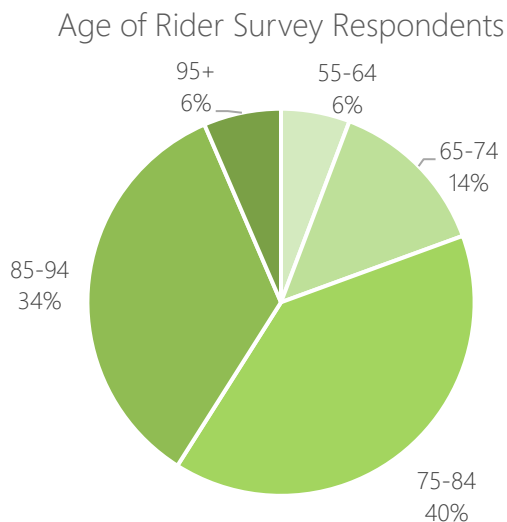


Figure 6 Age of Bus Riders

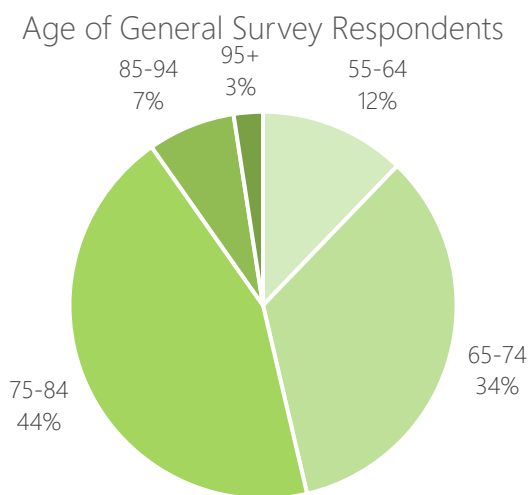


Figure 7 Age of General Transportation Survey Respondents



3.2 General Community Survey

Although intended to capture primarily residents who are not currently using the bus, the general community transportation survey was designed to allow for response from people who use both the bus and other means to get around. About 35% of the general respondents use the Easy Rider bus, but more than half of those respondents still drive themselves at least some of the time. Figure 8 shows the responses to the question, “What ways do you use to get around currently?” Respondents were allowed to choose multiple options.

Regardless, the vast majority, about 70%, of respondents still drive themselves at least some of the time. The survey asked respondents to identify any reasons why they don’t use the bus routes regularly, and Figure 9 shows there are many reasons. The primary justification for most respondents was that they still drive themselves. For about 12%, the main reason for not using the bus was because the trip takes too long, but almost 30% of all respondents cited this as at least one of the factors². Although asked as separate questions, the reasons for not using PAR were generally similar.

The ease of understanding the bus system is another disincentive that appears in the survey results. Only a few respondents identified ‘I don’t know how to get where I want to go using the bus’ as their primary reason for not riding, but it was a factor for 22% of people overall. In a separate question, only 20% of respondents stated they were ‘very familiar with how to use the service and get where I’m going.’ About 33% responded that they ‘know the service exists, but not how to use it,’ and another 5% ‘have never heard about the Easy Rider bus.’ A similar question regarding PAR found that 55% of respondents were aware of, but did not know how to use PAR, and 7% stated they had not heard of the service.

More than two-thirds of respondents responded ‘yes’ to the question, “If you don’t use the Village bus system regularly, do you expect to try using the bus in the future?” Only about 9% of respondents stated they do not plan to use the bus in the future. Many people added in the open comment field sentiments such as, “I expect my ability to drive will become more restricted within the next few years,” or, “The bus is one of the reasons I moved here. There will come a time when I’ll need and use it.”

Finally, the survey asked respondents to choose from suggested ideas that might motivate them to use the bus system. These ideas included VMS holding periodic training presentations at clubhouses or one-on-one, shorter travel times, more frequent service, or service to other destinations. Survey respondents generally selected all of the options, although “if the service was more frequent” stood out with 55% of respondents selecting that option.

² Note, most respondents answered the question ‘If you do not use the bus routes regularly, which of the following reasons describe why? Check all that apply.’ A follow-up question was intended to determine what was their main reason from that same list, and only about half of the respondents completed that question.



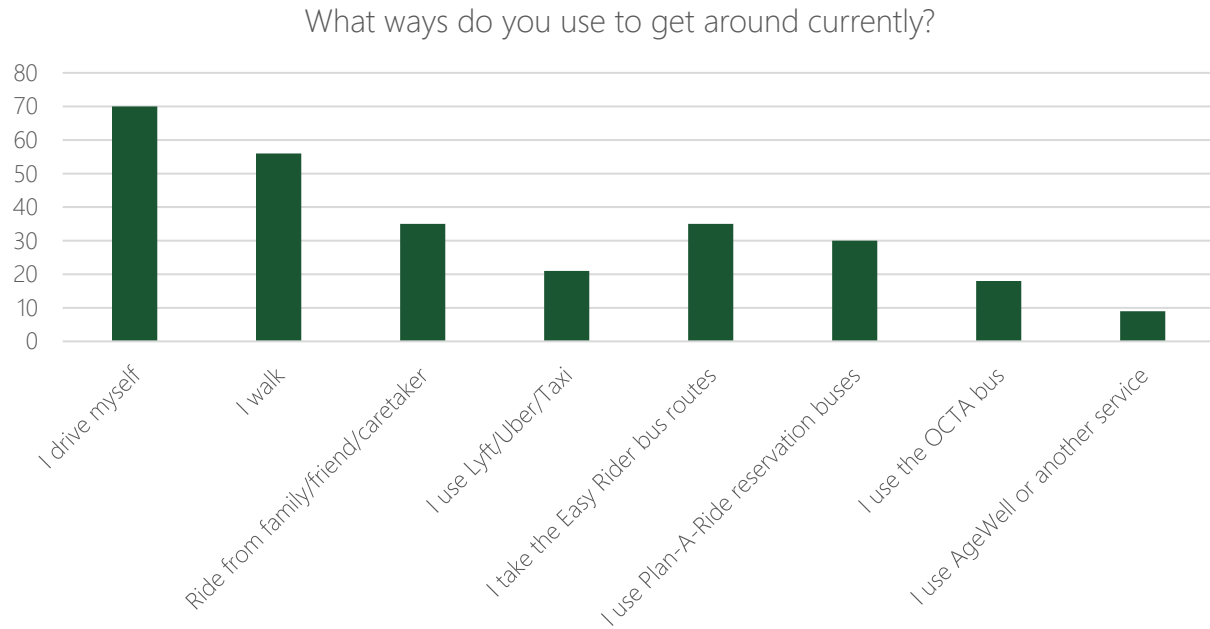


Figure 8 Travel modes of the General Transportation Survey respondents

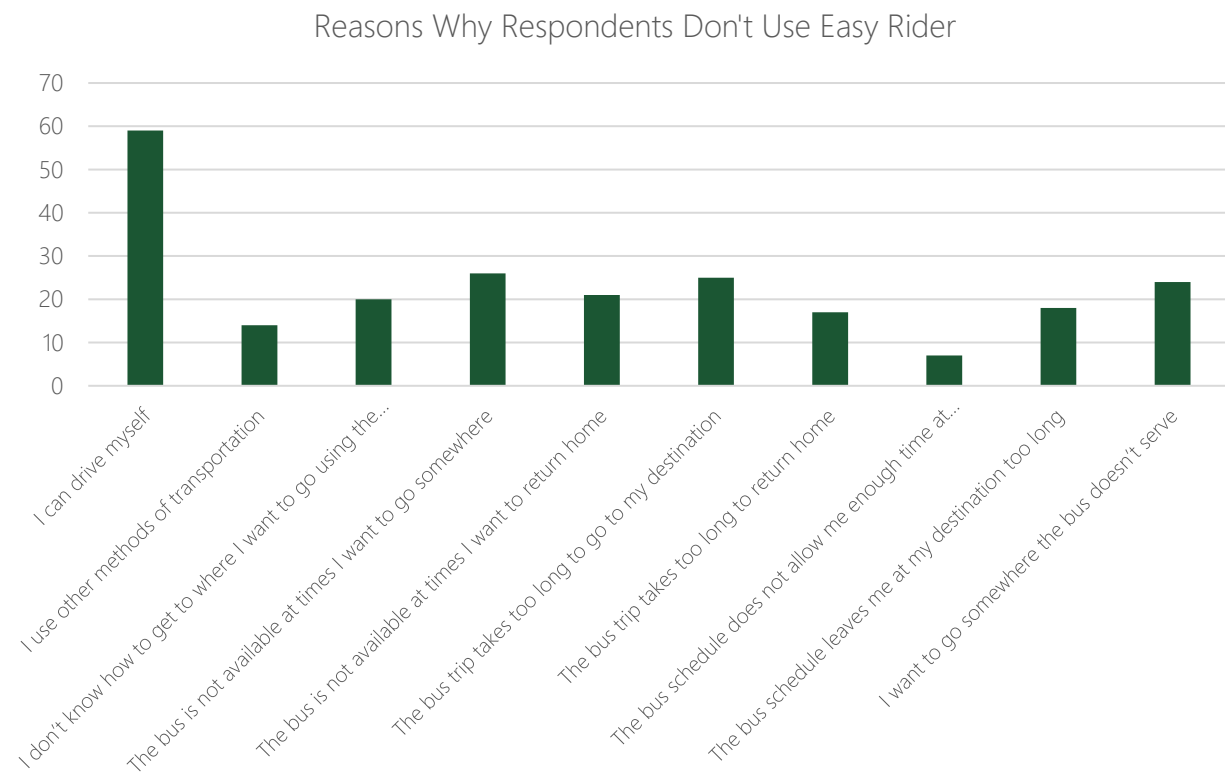


Figure 9 Reasons General Survey Respondents Don't Use Easy Rider



3.3 Other Community Input

The initial community engagement sessions solicited a wide range of comments from participants not already covered in this chapter. A table summarizing the comments received is provided in Appendix A.

3.3.1 Major Destinations

The community participants were asked to place sticker dots on boards to help visually represent major destinations, whether the participant was a bus rider or not. Figure 10 and Figure 11 below show the results of that exercise. The major destinations that stand out include grocery stores and the stores in their associated plazas: Stater Bros., Aldi, and Trader Joe's. Major community destinations include Clubhouses 1, 4, and 5, and the Community Center.



Figure 10 Major community destinations, west area; dots are sized by their relative popularity with the largest dots representing the most popular destinations





Figure 11 Major community destinations, east area (overlaps with previous figure)

3.3.2 Modes of Travel

The engagement session also included a sticker dot exercise to gauge how much residents use various means of travel, which informed the later General Transportation Survey design. The photos below in Figure 12 and Figure 13 show the results from the Clubhouse 1 session and the Towers session, respectively. The colors of the stickers have no particular meaning.

Participants at the Clubhouse 1 session were likely to take the bus and walk or use mobility assistance. A smaller proportion drove themselves, and a few use app-based services like Lyft or Uber. Bus users were again in the majority at the Towers session, or would get rides from someone else. Very few of the Towers participants use app-based ride services.



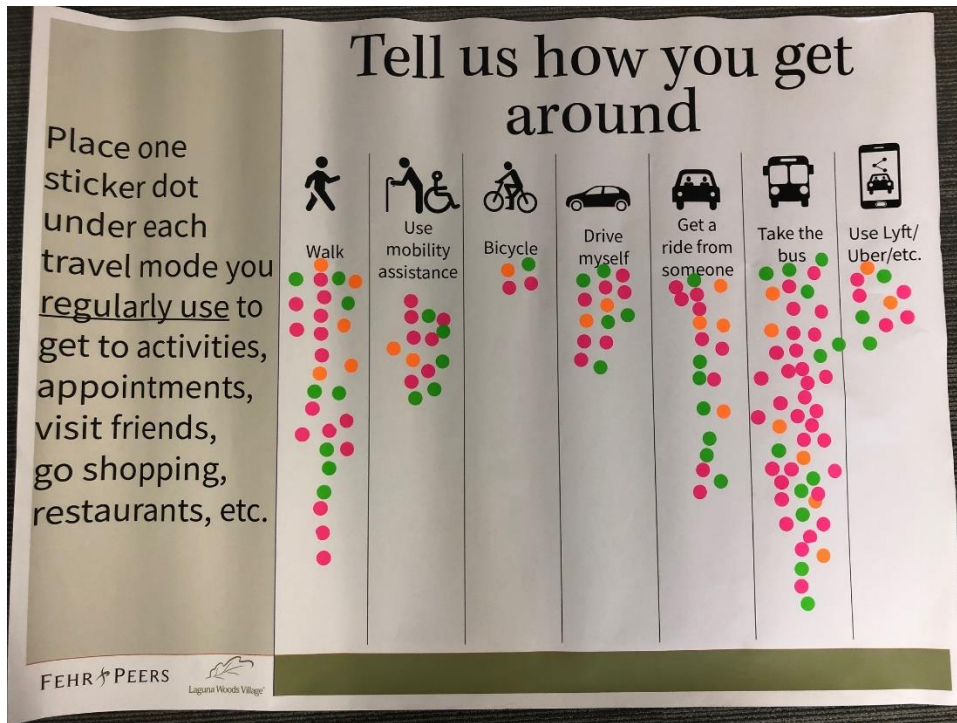


Figure 12 Travel modes of Clubhouse 1 engagement participants

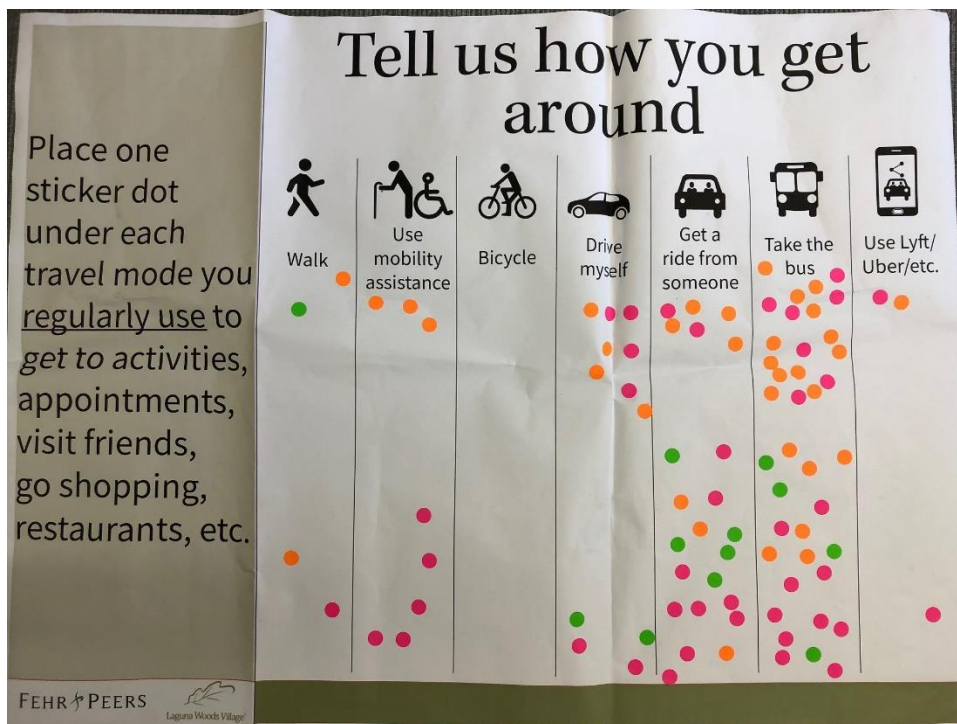


Figure 13 Travel modes of the Towers engagement participants



3.4 Bus Operator Input

About 17 transportation program staff, mostly drivers, attended a focus group during the study to provide comments that helped to frame the community surveys and ultimately inform the SRTP recommendations. The experience of the drivers, specific to Laguna Woods Village, ranged from under a year to about 15 years.

The focus group was valuable in framing the service changes in recent years from the driver's perspective and setting context for much of the community's sentiment. The operators underscored the concern about the limited effectiveness of PAR because ride matching is difficult or impossible to accomplish using the current software. Drivers alluded to the idea that as demand for PAR has increased, the schedule has become too tight and a single issue such as waiting for a passenger who has forgotten their appointment can throw off the entire day.

The drivers suggested that some savvy riders in the community are able to use both the fixed route system and PAR to get to appointments more efficiently – something that might explain some of the increasing use of both services reported in the rider surveys.

Operators agreed with the community sentiment that PAR does not effectively serve the transportation need on the weekends, particularly on Saturday. However, the experienced drivers had a more nuanced story. On Sundays in particular, drivers have found that there are many passengers wishing to attend faith services at locations all around Laguna Woods starting at various times, which is difficult to serve effectively with either the fixed-route or demand-response service. Furthermore, drivers believe that in the past, demand on the weekends, especially Sundays, drops off much earlier than on weekdays.

3.5 Community Route Proposal

We reviewed a proposal for redesigned fixed-routes using eight buses. Some members of the community including a former Laguna Woods Village driver drafted the proposed routes. The proposal attempts to replicate the multi-point transfer system of earlier fixed-route designs, rather than the hub-and-spoke Easy Rider service.

Ultimately, we do not recommend moving forward with the community route proposal. While it addresses some of the resident's concerns discussed throughout this chapter, the route proposal alone does not address the main desires of the community, which are increased frequency of fixed-route service and improved operation and efficiency of the PAR service. We developed a series of recommendations that attempt to address both the fixed route and PAR service designs.



4. Service Recommendations

Summarized below are the most critical issues to address:

- Long-time riders are unhappy with the Easy Rider fixed-route design, which is both limited in frequency and flexibility
 - Although the service design appears simple, it requires many trips within the community to pass through commercial areas before connecting at a central point, taking longer than desired
 - The current service can only operate at most once per hour with eight buses
- Following a service redesign in 2016, the demand response service (PAR) was opened up for all residents to be eligible for service all of the time
 - This effect is apparent as PAR cannot accommodate peak demand based on passenger and staff input
- The PAR scheduling system and procedure restricts the capacity because similar trip requests (in time and place) are not paired together to fill seats
 - The residents, both riders and non-riders alike, view this to be a major inefficiency of the service
 - Exacerbating the appearance of PAR inefficiency is the use of full-size buses to carry typically only one rider per trip
- PAR is the exclusive weekend service provided, and riders experience great difficulty in scheduling trips
 - VMS data shows that at least eight buses are operating PAR on the weekends, the same number of buses used in the current fixed-route design, but serving a fraction as many riders per trip at the same cost per hour

These issues, passenger and driver input, and VMS data informed the following recommendations. The recommendations separately address the different components of the transportation program, but are intended to be implemented altogether over time, beginning with the changes to the fixed routes. In brief, we recommend a redesign of the Easy Rider routes using nine buses, restoration of the fixed route service on at least Saturdays, a reassessment of the PAR service policies and procedures to ensure the schedule can accommodate riders who need the service the most, and other changes to improve the overall transportation program.



4.1 Redesign the Fixed-Route System

The proposed design uses a new eight-route system with six residential routes (using one bus each), one route serving medical offices (using one bus), and one route serving exclusively commercial/shopping destinations (using two buses). Figure 14 on the following page shows the proposed route network in its entirety.

The six residential routes are divided up among the neighborhoods, each serving a small area of the community and circulating to Clubhouse 1 every 30 minutes to facilitate transfers to other neighborhoods or other routes. This should significantly improve the ability to get to popular clubhouses like Clubhouse 4 and Clubhouse 5 from anywhere in the community, with service twice an hour. The proposed neighborhood routes generally cover the same areas as the current service, although some on-request residences may need to be limited in order to accommodate the higher frequency of service.

A seventh route provides some additional residential coverage along Calle Aragon and Avenida Sevilla, but the primary focus of this, the “Wellness Route” is service every 30 minutes to medical plazas and the hospital along Paseo De Valencia and Calle De La Louisa. This will be the only route serving any of these stops. The route will make connections at Clubhouse 1 every half-hour with all residential routes and the Commercial Routes, described below.

Finally, two buses will operate the “Commercial Route”, the sole purpose of which is to circulate through the five main shopping plazas currently served: Moulton Plaza (Big Lots!), the Stater Bros. plaza, the Willowtree Plaza (Aldi), Valencia Center (Mother’s Market) and Oakbrook Village (Trader Joe’s). The commercial route passes through Clubhouse 1 each time in each direction, between the Willowtree Plaza and Valencia Center. Because two buses will operate this route from opposite directions, service is every half hour from any stop. The Commercial Route buses would have a timed transfer every hour and half-hour at Clubhouse 1 with all residential routes and the Wellness route, as described above.

One of the six residential routes will also provide one-way service to Stater Bros. when heading towards Clubhouse 1 every 30 minutes. This route will serve the area near Gate 7 and the Towers, providing a direct connection to the nearest grocery store, one of the most popular destinations identified. Riders waiting at Stater Bros. could pick up the same route to return home and ride through Clubhouse 1, or could pick up the Commercial Route that also stops at Stater Bros. every 30 minutes to travel to another destination.

This network is expected to significantly enhance residents experience in traveling from home to other community destinations and back by effectively doubling the frequency of service while adding only one bus to the regular schedule. Streamlining some routes closer to Clubhouse 1 and rerouting others that were further away, with service directly to Clubhouse 1 allows 30-minute circulation times. This network also uses a similar “easy to approach” design – all clubhouses are served only on the residential routes, the Commercial route only serves commercial destinations, and the Wellness Route is the only one serving medical offices and the hospital.



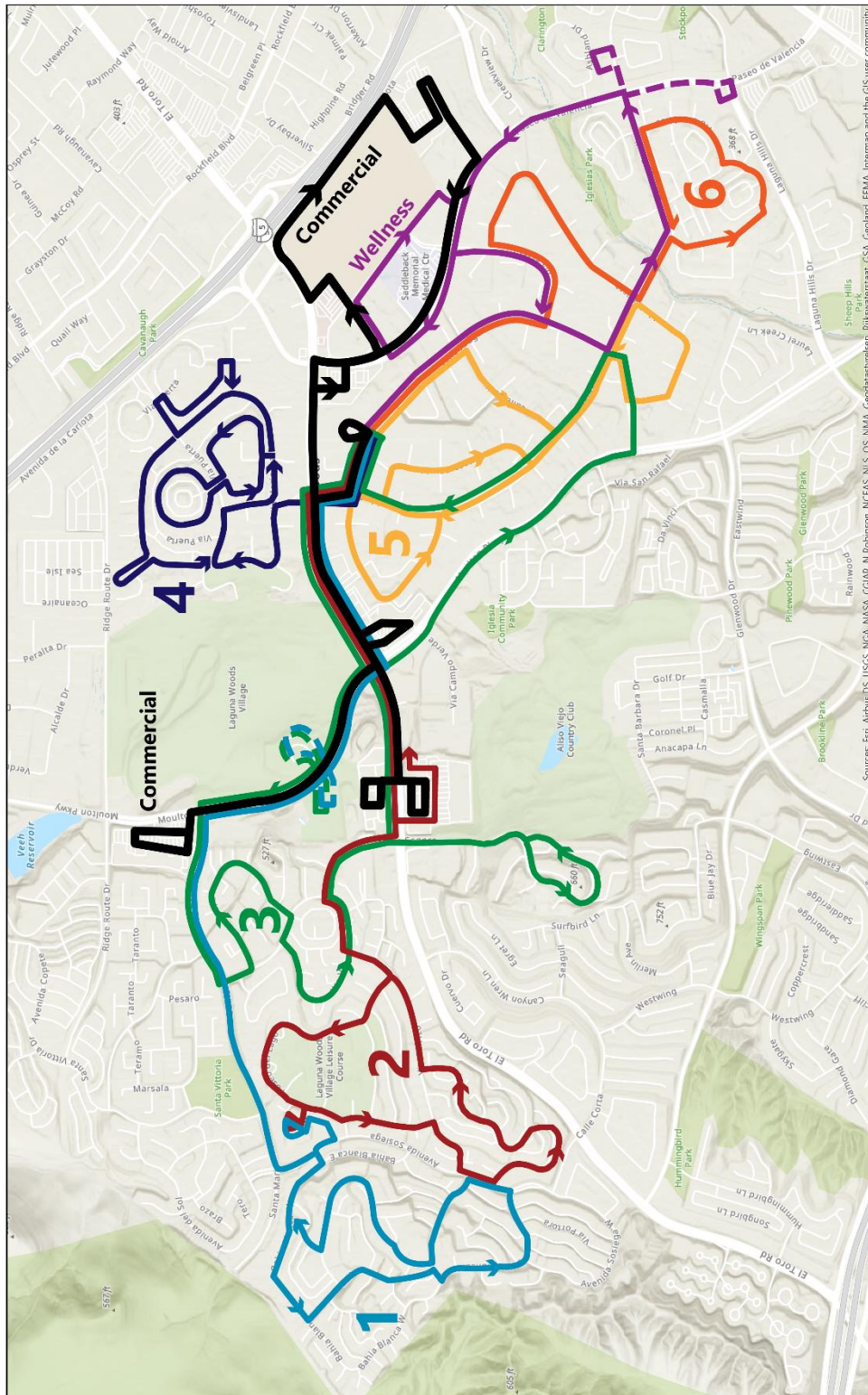


Figure 14 Proposed Fixed Routes



4.2 Operate Fixed Routes on Saturdays

As described earlier in the SRTP, the demand for service on weekends, especially Saturdays, is greater than PAR can accommodate. We recommend operating the same route structure as proposed above on the weekends, at least beginning with Saturday service. Based on anecdotal data and input from residents, operators and staff, PAR may be able to adequately serve Sunday demand if scheduling opportunities for ride matching are improved as described below.

4.3 Revise Plan-A-Ride Policy and Scheduling

Policy changes can allow VMS to manage the demand and ensure that capacity is available to serve customers who need the service the most. VMS should prioritize PAR trips for customers with disabilities that preclude them from using the fixed route service for some or all of their trip, and serve other residents' requests only as the schedule allows. This is similar to the service design that was in place prior to 2016, so while a significant change, it is a proven approach familiar to many residents. Some residents may perceive the change to a more restrictive use policy negatively, but the data from customers and VMS staff clearly show that many existing customers are unable to use the service as much as desired. Although changes to PAR policy could be phased-in alone, they are best implemented following the adoption of the new fixed-route services described above, including some time for the community to learn and adapt to the new service.

Scheduling and ride-matching is the second and equally-important component of improving PAR service quality and efficiency. While VMS should consider another scheduling software that might suit their needs, the fact is that no product on the market will fully automate ride matching. Staff will always need to use the software as a tool to accomplish the goal of effectively negotiating trip times and matching rides.

The following steps will further enhance PAR:

- Enhance the scheduler role in booking trips and reduce reliance on the current software program.
- Do not confirm trip requests right away.
- Take all of the information for the appointment and make the schedule later in the day (beginning at 4PM, for example).
- Use other resources to identify trip pairs, and then the software to book the slate including combined trips.
- Call residents back to confirm at the end of the day.

Many advance-reservation systems operate according to this process, where trips are not confirmed until the end of the day, and can be shifted within a pre-defined span of time (often +/- 15 minutes for pick-up time) until the day prior to the trip.



Schedulers should be able to quickly search for the exact location of manor numbers, community amenities, commercial destinations, and doctor's offices. VMS or the scheduling software developer should ensure that the Village manors and other details are digitized in GIS so that origins and destinations can be identified quickly. For example, if a limitation of the current software is identifying that two manors are close to each other (via driving), it may require some development of improved GIS data for the Village so the software has better parameters to search from, or that the scheduler can make the determination themselves quickly.

VMS should set and communicate clear policies for negotiating pick-up and drop-off times, in conjunction with changes in the scheduling approach outlined in DR1. For example, the scheduler could request a rider to be ready for pick-up 15 minutes earlier than their original request in order to accommodate another nearby rider, ensuring that time allows to drop off each rider at their destination on time or up to 15 minutes early. With a policy for negotiating trips and a scheduling process that allows gathering of requests before confirming rides, vehicle and schedule capacity will be better utilized.

We suggest developing a policy for no-shows. VMS staff identified late cancellations and no-shows as a major challenge affecting capacity. No-shows can be a difficult subject to address because the reasons are most often legitimate and the rider may be unable to or have difficulty anticipating them early enough to warn the dispatcher. However, there are strategies for addressing repeated no-shows that can include setting up particular reminders or check-in calls with some riders, or coordinating a bus buddy, friend, or caretaker to help reduce the likelihood of a no-show. For new customers, an in-person orientation may help ensure that both the rider and the scheduler have a shared understanding of the pick-up and drop-off locations anticipated. A more hardline measure would be to temporarily or permanently suspend trips for people who very frequently no-show for reasons that are within their control.

The Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund publishes a guide to ADA Paratransit³ that has some helpful guidance on the subject of no-shows. Although the Village is not providing service under the FTA regulations for 'complementary paratransit', this guide is very applicable to the matter of understanding what is a pattern of no-shows and how to separate reasons that are outside of the rider's control.

³ DREDF Topic Guides on ADA Transportation, Topic Guide 7 <https://dredf.org/ADAtg/noshow.shtml#beyond>



4.3.1 Other Recommendations: Phone Responsiveness

A major complaint regarding the PAR service is the ability to reach staff over the phone. VMS should implement policies to monitor messages and call-backs with residents, although potentially some of the phone 'jam' will be alleviated through the other measures described above. If necessary, VMS should consider adjustments to the phone system itself that would either ring additional staff in order to at least allow customers to reach a live person, or a phone system that automatically rings back customers who are in the queue without requiring them to remain on hold.

4.3.2 Vehicle Fleet

Many residents and even operators have questioned the choice to use the same full-size bus fleet for PAR. VMS staff have already addressed this issue with plans to procure smaller, minivan-style accessible vehicles. These vehicles cost significantly less than even the small buses and are still able to transport a few passengers at a time, even with one person using a wheelchair.

4.3.3 Partnership with AgeWell Services

During the development of the SRTP, Fehr & Peers assisted VMS in a discussion with AgeWell Senior Services, a non-emergency medical transportation provider operating in Orange County. AgeWell provides transportation for eligible clients to health and wellness appointments similarly to the Village's PAR, and some Village residents are also clients of AgeWell.

AgeWell previously approached VMS and expressed interest in developing an agreement for local bus storage and potentially fuel purchase from VMS. They are also willing to explore operating some of Laguna Woods Village services. VMS and AgeWell are continuing to discuss potential partnerships for providing expanded transportation options to the residents of the Village. The form of such a partnership is yet to be determined. AgeWell may have significantly better ride matching and dispatch capability compared with VMS. AgeWell may also be able to provide operational support for PAR to improve quality of service to the community.

VMS will continue to explore potential partnership opportunities in the context of the community transportation needs outlined in this report. Opportunities to consider include expanding AgeWell's offerings specifically within Laguna Woods Village to supplement PAR, transitioning scheduling and dispatch of PAR to AgeWell, and contracting with AgeWell to operate some or all PAR services on behalf of VMS. We recommend VMS continue discussions with AgeWell to determine what benefits could be gained in terms of reliable demand-response service delivery.



4.4 Service Change Implementation, Evaluation and Monitoring

VMS should closely monitor the implementation of the recommendations to address technical issues and rider concerns that will inevitably arise over time. During the initial rollout of new services, Village staff throughout the community should be prepared with working knowledge of the new routes and the proposed changes to PAR policy. VMS transportation staff could expand their ability to reach riders by hosting training sessions with riders who have participated in the SRTP outreach, leveraging their interest in improving the service by asking them to champion the changes and spread the word. At a minimum, staff should follow-up directly with residents who frequently use the service, especially those who may need additional assistance.

In order to properly measure the effectiveness of the recommendations and continue to properly adjust and maintain services, VMS needs better data systems and management. The current RFID system used to track boardings has limited use for monitoring frequency of use by rider ID, but cannot associate that data with a location or even directly with the route in operation. VMS should consider a similar system with GPS functionality to monitor how boardings and alightings change in both time and place. A GPS-based system would also help VMS monitor and address on-time performance. The proposed routes will require some adaptation time during which buses may regularly run late, but better data systems can help identify specifically where time is lost and address those issues if they persist or as new ones arise.

VMS should closely monitor boarding and alighting data over the course of implementation by comparing not only total boardings from before and after, but also comparing weekdays and weekends, and comparing changes in fixed-route boardings to demand-response (PAR) boardings. Given the changes in service design to effectively double the frequency of fixed-routes, the expectation after the initial shakeout period is that ridership will increase overall compared with the 2017 and 2018 average. Although the transportation program is a highly-valued amenity for the community, the majority of residents will continue to drive themselves or use other means to get around. The program should be considered a great success if average boardings reach similar levels to the 2013-2015 era, based on the data available. The new proposed routes do not provide exactly the same level of service as was provided at that time.

Another measure of value will be to regularly survey rider and community perspectives on the transportation program, specifically for the fixed-route services. VMS should conduct rider perception surveys just prior to the implementation of the new service, within a few months afterwards, and again about a year afterwards. Use the same survey design each time, gathering time-series data to properly evaluate how perceptions of riders are changing.



Appendix A

Summary of Community Input

Table A1 : Bus Routes & Stops

*Tell us what works and what needs improvement about the **bus routes and stops**.*

| Question | Comment Character | First Session | Towers Session | Aggregate | Takeaways |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| <i>What's good?</i> | Driver quality | 4 | 2 | 6 | |
| | Having the service | 4 | 4 | 8 | Several respondents were grateful to have bus service, revealing a likely dependence for some riders on LWV buses for their method of travel. |
| | Frequency | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| | Service area | 0 | 4 | 4 | |
| | Subtotal | 7 | 5 | 12 | |
| <i>What would you improve?</i> | Transfers | 2 | 8 | 10 | Respondents in the Towers often found the Clubhouse 1 transfer inconvenient and time-inefficient. |
| | Destinations | 10 | 11 | 21 | Respondents specifically requested fixed routes that service grocery stores, the DMV, the senior center, the community center, the Willow Tree Center, Walmart, the 99-Cent Store, Moulton Pkwy, and Irvine. |
| | Waiting | 3 | 1 | 4 | |
| | Communications | 3 | 0 | 3 | |
| | Efficiency | 5 | 8 | 13 | Respondents sought improved efficiency in both bus routing and service, generally. Many respondents perceived the emptiness, or very low ridership, of buses as a sign of inefficiency within the system; others requested that specific parts of routes or specific stops be cut because of the time added to routes. |
| | Scheduling | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Ease | 0 | 7 | 7 | Respondents in the Towers asked for more directness in fixed-route buses serving them. Six respondents specifically asked for a Towers-Only bus. Others requested that some stops be formalized, rather than request-only. |
| | Subtotal | 17 | 33 | 50 | |
| | Total Comments | 24 | 38 | 62 | |

Table A2: Plan-A-Ride Service

*Tell us what works and what needs improvement about the **Plan-A-Ride service**.*

| Question | Comment Character | First Session | Towers Session | Aggregate | Takeaways |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| <i>What's good?</i> | Popular service | 4 | 0 | 4 | |
| | Drivers | 2 | 7 | 9 | |
| | Scheduling | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| | Reliability | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| | Having the service | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| | Subtotal | 7 | 6 | 13 | |
| <i>What would you improve?</i> | Disabilities | 5 | 1 | 6 | Respondents commented on the difficulty of entering vans, particularly the steepness of the ramp to enter the vehicle. Notably, a respondent requested that individuals qualify for PAR use because the respondent observed and felt that residents with the greatest mobility needs were not always accommodated on PAR, due to its popularity. |
| | Scheduling/ reliability | 8 | 18 | 26 | Respondents repeatedly requested regular fixed-route service on Saturday and Sunday, particularly to malls and commercial areas, to supplement existing service. Respondents expressed frustration with being late to their medical appointments because their ride was late or because their van's route was inefficient. There appears to lack transportation service to clubhouses for special events at the Towers. |
| | Communications | 8 | 13 | 21 | Respondents had encountered unresponsive operators, often resulting in confusion or severe delay in pick-up/drop-off locations and times. Thus, respondents typically saw improved communication both internally and with customers as a necessary change. Also, one respondent specifically requested available schedules onboard. |
| | Requesting service | 7 | 11 | 18 | Respondents expressed frustration with the time it took to request and receive service. Many experienced requesting a ride and being refused service, particularly for rare trip options. Respondents wanted some sense of spontaneity or flexibility in their travel, which was not possible for those who had to call several days ahead for a ride. Notably, requesting PAR days in advance of a trip was not conducive to respondents' fluctuating health. |
| | Availability | 4 | 0 | 4 | |
| | Crowding | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Routing | 9 | 0 | 9 | Respondents often requested routing to maximize time and ridership efficiency, largely through improved technologies for the driver. Sometimes, this was connected to riders' perceived lack of internal communication. |
| | Destinations | 0 | 12 | 12 | To complement PAR, respondents sometimes wanted fixed service to specific destinations, including: grocery stores, doctors' offices and hospitals, the 99-cent store, the mall/movie theater, and religious organizations. |
| | Frequency | 0 | 2 | 2 | |

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--|
| | Reliability | 0 | 3 | 3 | Occasionally, respondents had experienced a PAR never picking them up, despite requesting the ride. |
| | Transfers | 0 | 5 | 5 | |
| | Efficiency | 5 | 9 | 14 | Several respondents wondered why buses often carried just one passenger, even if they were going to the same destination, like a clubhouse at night. One respondent suggested smaller van sizes to better fit the very small ridership onboard. |
| | Comfort | 0 | 1 | 1 | One respondent shared that seats are uncomfortable. |
| | Subtotal | 36 | 68 | 104 | There was debate in respondents' comments around the value of PAR. Some felt that they were not getting the proper value from the service they had already paid for by choosing to live there, while others said they would pay a fare for improved service. |
| | Total Comments | 43 | 74 | 117 | |

Table A3: Wish List

Tell us one thing you **wish was different** about the Laguna Woods Village transportation program.

| Question | Comment Character | First Session | Towers Session | Total | Takeaways |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|------------|--|
| I wish our local transportation system... | Disabilities | 4 | 6 | 10 | Respondents had experienced difficulties in accessing vehicles, particularly at night. These difficulties were amplified for riders with disabilities and mobility challenges, as they were sometimes dependent on LWV bus services. |
| | Requesting service | 3 | 2 | 5 | Some respondents expressed frustration with PAR technology and attributed it to communication breaks between drivers and personnel and poor trip routing. |
| | Destinations | 7 | 10 | 17 | Requested destinations predominantly included Laguna Beach, the OC airport, malls, and special entertainment/events in the area. Respondents also expressed difficulty in getting to medical appointments. Respondents in the Towers requested very few new destinations and asked instead for more directness in reaching their destinations. |
| | Availability | 6 | 1 | 7 | Because respondents had to request PAR rides several days in advance, they perceived a need for more available vans for residents' travel needs. Respondents also expressed a desire for more availability on special trips. |
| | Scheduling | 6 | 22 | 28 | Respondents consistently requested regular weekend service and staggered bus pick-up times at stops. Occasionally, respondents wanted only service reduced during the week to three or four days of fixed-route options. |
| | Waiting | 1 | 9 | 10 | Some respondents specifically asked for improved lighting, shade, or benches at certain stops. |
| | Communications | 5 | 4 | 9 | Respondents typically saw improved communication both internally and with customers as a necessary change. Some respondents asked for different communication channels for their different needs. Others had had negative customer service experiences, like never having their call returned. |
| | Routing | 4 | 26 | 30 | There was some discrepancy among respondents in routing preferences; some wished for more clubhouse stops (particularly to CH 4), while others wanted the bus to skip clubhouse stops to provide more direct service to their destination. |
| | Experience/comfort | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| | Frequency | 0 | 5 | 5 | Several respondents asked that buses come more frequently to alleviate wait times and shorten the time of their trips. |
| | Reliability | 0 | 5 | 5 | |
| | Speed | 0 | 6 | 6 | |
| | Ease | 0 | 2 | 2 | |
| | Total Comments | 31 | 70 | 101 | Respondents would occasionally convey their preferences by comparing the current system to the "old" system (from various years). This suggests that residents were not sufficiently notified of changes or did not feel included when the service changes were made. |

Table A4: Bus Riding Experience

*Tell us what works and what needs improvement about **riding the bus**.*

| Question | Comment Character | First Session | Towers Session | Total | Takeaways |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| <i>What's good?</i> | Drivers | 15 | 13 | 28 | Many respondents had extremely positive views of their bus drivers, praising their helpfulness, attitude, and service. |
| | Grateful for service | 3 | 6 | 9 | Some respondents were glad to have the bus service, as it gave them "freedom" of mobility. One respondent said they moved to LWV primarily for its mobility services. |
| | Efficiency | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Comfort/ safety | 0 | 4 | 4 | |
| | Subtotal | 19 | 14 | 33 | |
| <i>What would you improve?</i> | Communications | 11 | 0 | 11 | Communication was closely related to customer service experiences. Without sufficient communication (usually through the phone), the bus service appeared confusing. Respondents' comments indicated that communication was a significant contributor to their perceived quality of the service and experience on the bus. |
| | Efficiency | 8 | 0 | 8 | Comments related to efficiency were two-fold: bus routes took too long and buses were often near-empty. |
| | Reliability | 5 | 1 | 6 | Respondents reported frustration with late bus arrivals; lacking communication appeared to exacerbate frustration. |
| | Scheduling | 5 | 0 | 5 | Respondents repeatedly requested regular fixed-route service on Saturday and Sunday, particularly to malls and commercial areas, to supplement existing service. Respondents also asked for staggered bus arrivals at stops to make connections between buses. |
| | Routing | 4 | 0 | 4 | |
| | Drivers | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| | Disabilities | 1 | 5 | 6 | Some respondents with disabilities experienced difficulty or discomfort in riding the bus, particularly in boarding, while other respondents with disabilities expressed only gratitude for the service. One respondent specifically asked for more information in Braille. |
| | Requesting service | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| | Comfort | 0 | 5 | 5 | |
| | Cell phones (on bus) | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| | Subtotal | 25 | 13 | 38 | |
| | Total Comments | 44 | 27 | 71 | |

Table A5: Bus Schedules & Travel Time

Tell us what works and what needs improvement about the bus schedules and travel times.

| Question | Comment Character | First Session | Towers Session | Total | Takeaways |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| <i>What's good?</i> | Scheduling | 3 | 2 | 5 | |
| | Drivers | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| | Disabilities | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Routing | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| | Efficiency | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| | Subtotal | 5 | 3 | 8 | |
| <i>What would you improve?</i> | Scheduling | 12 | 18 | 30 | Respondents consistently requested weekend service and staggered bus arrival times at stops. Respondents in the Towers asked that bus schedules align with event times in clubhouses. |
| | Efficiency | 8 | 8 | 16 | Respondents frequently commented on how long it took them to reach their destination on the bus, revealing an inefficiency of fixed buses' routing. Respondents in the Towers often had reasonable travel times to their destinations, but the time doubled for their return trip. |
| | Vehicle design | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Reliability | 1 | 4 | 5 | |
| | Communications | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| | Routing | 7 | 4 | 11 | Many respondents perceived an aimlessness to their travel on fixed-route buses, they felt too much time was spent "just riding around" and lacked a direct route to their destinations. Some specifically cited that the bus spent too much time driving through the neighborhood. |
| | Waiting | 4 | 6 | 10 | Due to buses arriving and departing from stops at the same time, respondents were frustrated in having to wait for an hour when they missed their bus or wanted to catch a different bus. |
| | Frequency | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| | Transfers | 0 | 4 | 4 | |
| | Subtotal | 23 | 35 | 58 | Some respondents reported trip-chaining and were dissatisfied with the amount of time that it took to run more than one errand. |
| | Total Comments | 28 | 38 | 66 | |

Table A6: Non-bus Users

Tell us the main reason why you prefer not to use the Easy Rider or the Plan-A-Ride bus services.

| Question | Comment Character | First Session | Towers Session | Total | Takeaways |
|---|------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| <i>"I don't use the bus because..."</i> | Efficiency | 3 | 2 | 5 | Comments related to efficiency usually had to do with the time spent on buses, as respondents perceived that bus routes took too long. |
| | Disabilities | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| | Communications | 5 | 6 | 11 | A common frustration from respondents had to do with calling to request service or request information, contributing to an overall sense that the bus was too confusing or complicated to use. Others had questions applicable to riding transit in general, like how to make transfers. |
| | Drivers | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Reliability | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| | Routing/ destinations | 4 | 2 | 6 | For some respondents, the bus did not go where they wanted it to go, like their church; for others, they were frustrated at the amount of time that routes took for simple trips, like grocery shopping. |
| | Availability | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Other mobility options | 1 | 11 | 12 | Many respondents in Towers were still driving; one other respondent said they still walked everywhere that they needed to go. Some respondents explained that their mobility/ability needs were changing and were unsure about how they would use or like the bus. |
| | Scheduling | 0 | 6 | 6 | Respondents said they would use a weekend bus. |
| | Waiting | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Total Comments | 15 | 25 | 40 | Some respondents had negative experience(s) as previous riders; others did not know about or understand the bus services, or had other ways of getting around. |