



### Introduction

For some residents in Sumter, taking transit is a necessity rather than a choice. Residents without access to private automobiles depend on transit for access to jobs, medical care, services, and many other aspects of daily life. As the region grows and development patterns shift, convenient and reliable transit service becomes more important, and in some ways, more difficult. This Transit Element identifies local issues related to transit as well as strategies aimed to enhance access and mobility for all residents of the region, particularly the one-third who cannot drive—children and the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those who cannot afford a car.

One of the goals of the *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan* is to provide viable transportation alternatives to decrease dependence on the automobile, in turn decreasing the demand on the existing transportation system. One way to encourage transit use is to develop around each stop a safe, comfortable customer delivery system complete with attractive and convenient amenities. And because most regular transit users walk or bike to and from the stop, a network of sidewalks, safe street crossings, and lighting should complement the amenities provided at the stop.

The efficiency of transit also depends on an interconnected system of roads and highways suitable for bus traffic and bicycle and pedestrian features that provide access to transit stops. Transit cannot be considered in isolation, and the strategies presented in this chapter support improvements to the larger transportation system.

### Transit and Urban Form

Based on community discussions, many people agree that they would use transit if service was fast, frequent, dependable, and easy to use. While such criteria requires a complete system of roads, sidewalks, and bikeways, transit also must provide connections to the places people need to go at a time when they need to get there. As a result, transit must be introduced or expanded within a framework of transit-supportive urban form. Two development types that maximize potential transit ridership include transit-oriented development and transit-ready development.

Transit-oriented developments (TODs) provide a mixture of residential and commercial uses focused around a transit station or bus stop. The transit stop is surrounded by relatively high density development that spreads out as you move away from the center. The scale of a TOD generally is limited to ¼- to ½-mile in diameter to establish the walkability of the neighborhood. The design of such places maximizes access to transit and support walking and biking between destinations.

In locations that lack existing transit facilities or demand to support a TOD, regulations and guidelines that support transit-ready development should be enforced. Transit-ready development describes the coordinated design of new neighborhoods and activity centers that supports future transit expansion. Like TODs, transit-ready developments include a mixture of land uses, pedestrian-friendly design, appropriate locations and/or routes for transit, an interconnected network of internal streets, and appropriate densities supportive of future transit use.

While transit-oriented and transit-ready developments represent ideal urban form for transit destinations, many existing single-use locations in Sumter are viable long-term facilities. The mall, grocery stores, and business parks are just a few examples of vital destinations for many Sumter residents, and while their urban design may not be ideal for transit, they are locations where access to public transportation continues to be an important priority.

The population in the region is projected to grow substantially to 131,041 in 2040, from 107,456 (2010). As population increases, the demand for public transportation will also increase. This chapter reviews the current transportation services and recommends improvements of such to meet the projected increasing demand.

### History of Transit in Sumter

The transportation options available to Sumter residents are constantly evolving. The National Interstate and Highway Defense Act of 1956 brought increased access to the area, and as a result, the region is now encircled by three Interstate Highways: I-95, I-20, and I-26. In 1973, the state legislature passed a series of laws (South Carolina Code of Laws Section 58-225-30) in response to a need for public transportation throughout South Carolina. The effects of

those laws in Sumter became evident in 1978, when the Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA) was created following the closure of the Sumter Bus Company. The new transportation authority served seven counties of the Santee Lynches region including Sumter, Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Calhoun, Lower Richland (Eastover/Hopkins), and Orangeburg.

Since then, SWRTA has expanded the type and geographic reach of its services. Today, the footprint of SWRTA covers more than 5,000 square miles in seven counties with a variety of services such as paratransit, commuter, and fixed-route services. As a result, SWRTA is the second largest small urban and rural public transportation system in South Carolina.

### Existing Transit Services

Public transportation services are provided by the Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority. SWRTA provides fixed-route service in the City of Sumter and commuter and paratransit (dial-a-ride) services in the surrounding region. In addition to SWRTA, several private transportation and taxicab companies provide local transportation services, and Southeastern Stages (Greyhound) provides intercity bus service. In addition to these existing services, several groups actively advocate for the mobility needs of the general public throughout the region. The Regional Transit Council, which formed in 2004, includes members from public and private transportation providers, human service agencies, faith-based and community organizations, and advocates. The Council seeks to enhance the freedom of mobility by promoting transit services, assisting with transit planning, and pursuing funds for improved services.

### Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority

The Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA) offers fixed route and ADA service in the City of Sumter.

**Fixed Route Service**

In May 2012, SWRTA launched new fixed bus route schedules with one hour and two hour headways on its bus routes of the following except Route 8 (Vocational Rehab on North Main):

- Route 1 (West Liberty) – 1-hour headway
- Route 5 (South Main) – 1-hour headway
- Route 9 (Broad Street) – 1-hour headway
- Route 4 (North Main) – 2-hour headway
- Route 6 (East Liberty) – 2-hour headway
- Route 7 (Shaw Shuttle) – 2-hour headway

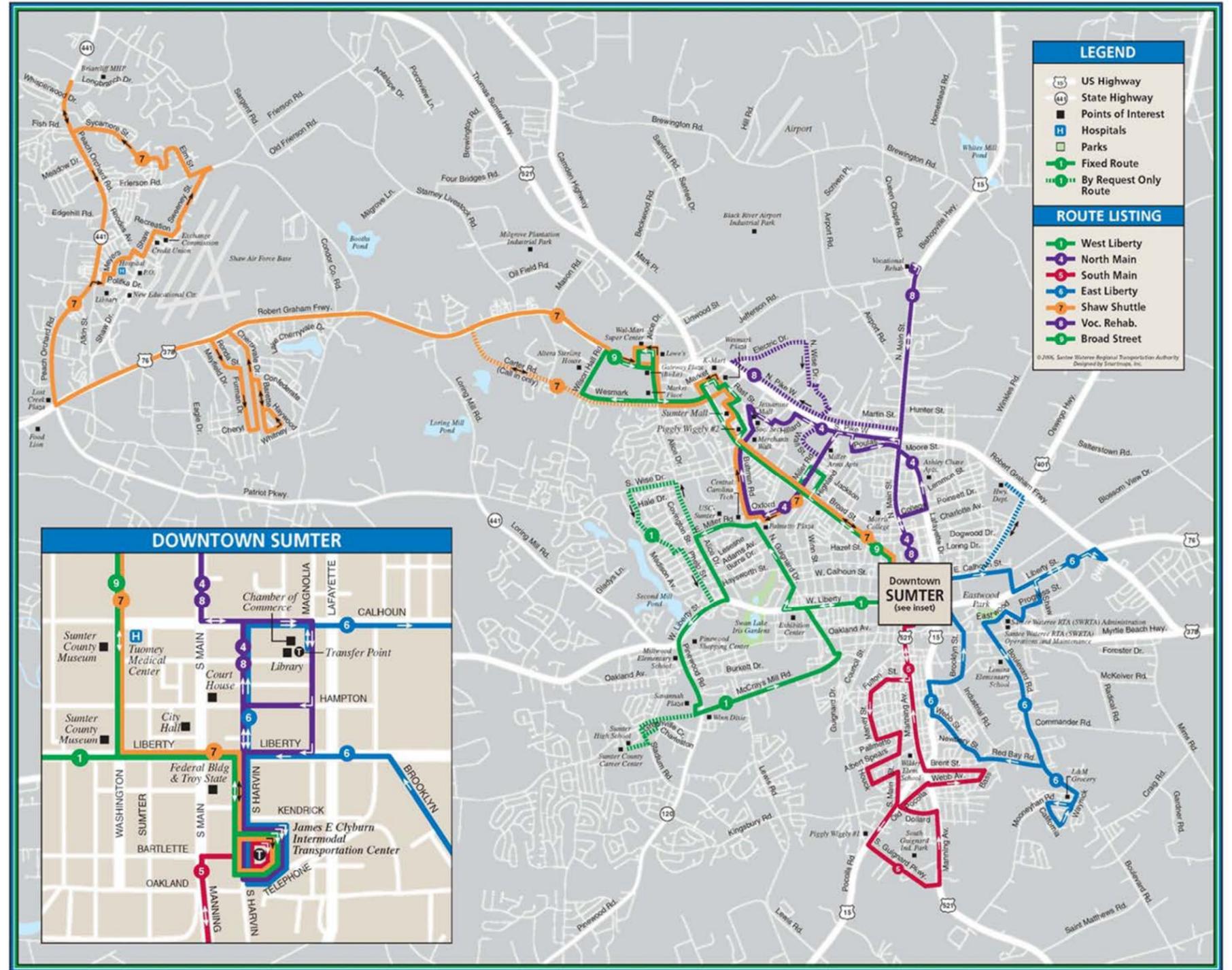
The seven fixed route services in the City of Sumter consist of a “hub and spoke” layout with seven routes (or spokes) originating from a hub located at the transfer point on North Magnolia Street between Calhoun Street and Hampton Avenue. The hub and spoke layout of the SWRTA fixed-route system emphasizes trips originating from or destined to the downtown area. Table 7.1 below lists each route with operating hours and frequency. The routes are shown in Figure 7.1.

Table 7.1 - Fixed Route Operations in Sumter

Route	Name	Operating Hours		Total Operation Hours
		Earliest	Latest	
1	West Liberty	7:30am	5:40pm	2.5 hrs
4	North Main	7:10am	5:10pm	3.6 hrs
5	South Main	7:00am	5:10pm	2.5 hrs
6	East Liberty	7:10am	5:10pm	3.9 hrs
7	Shaw Shuttle	6:10am	3:10pm	3.0 hrs
8	Vocational Rehab	8:10am	3:30pm	1.2 hrs
9	Broad Street	7:10am	5:10pm	8.6 hrs

Source: Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority

Figure 7.1 – Existing SWRTA Routes



### Paratransit (Dial-A-Ride) Service

For residents who meet certain requirements, paratransit service operates in the urban and rural areas of the county. The demand response, or dial-a-ride, service is provided on a contracted rate basis for Medicaid, Department of Social Services, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Investment program under the Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments, and others. The service also provides county residents the opportunity to ride any county route on a space available basis as a cash client. ADA passengers living within 3/4-mile of fixed bus routes can use the service for \$2.00 each way. Non-fixed bus route passenger within a 10-mile radius may ride for \$3.00; \$6.00 from 11-20 miles; \$9.00 from 21 to 30 miles. Most paratransit vans are ADA accessible.

### Carpool and Vanpool Services

Commuters to Myrtle Beach and from Eastover to Columbia (Lower Richland) can take advantage of the authority's commuter service. SWRTA also organizes several vanpool services to link residents of Sumter with employment centers in Columbia and Camden.

Often carpool and vanpool involvement fails to reach its potential because potential participants are unable to find persons with similar commuting needs. A recent addition to [www.SWRTA.com](http://www.SWRTA.com) helps overcome this barrier by providing a web-based interface designed to match commuters with similar travel patterns.

### Other Public Transportation Providers

General discussions of public transportation traditionally center on the services similar to those provided by SWRTA, namely fixed-route and paratransit. These transit services are important components of the larger public transportation network that also includes taxis and intercity bus travel.

### Taxis

Several taxicab companies operate within the city limits of Sumter, including City Service Cab Company, Liberty Street Taxi, Northside Cab Service, Southside Cab Service, and Yellow Cab Company. These companies provide service based on drop-off, per-mile, and waiting time rates. The number of taxicabs in Sumter has no direct

correlation to the level of anticipated ridership for transit. However, the presence of the companies does indicate a need within the Sumter population for a means of travel other than privately owned automobiles.

### Greyhound Service

From its terminal at 129 S. Harvin Street in Sumter, Greyhound provides service to and from thousands of locations throughout North America, including 20 cities in South Carolina. Fares vary based on the trip's distance and departure date. Table 7.2 shows sample fares for Saturday travel to cities across the United States.

In addition to the reduced price of advanced purchases, Greyhound offers a variety of discounts for military personnel and companion travel. Schedules for Greyhound service vary by day and time. Station and ticketing hours are Monday to Saturday 10:30 AM to 4 PM and 7 PM to 9 PM. More information is available at [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com).

Table 7.2 – Sample Greyhound Fares

City	Distance from Sumter	Regular Fare	7-Day Advance Purchase Fare
Greenville, SC	153 miles	\$41	\$38
Washington DC	442 miles	\$95	\$49
Orlando	422 miles	\$127	\$92
New York City	671 miles	\$175	\$75
Memphis	648 miles	\$162	\$144
Chicago	849 miles	\$173	\$153
Dallas	1,041 miles	\$198	\$173
Los Angeles	2,430 miles	\$256	\$213
Portland	2,839 miles	\$275	\$233

### Regional Public Transportation

In addition to the services offered by public transportation providers in Sumter, many residents choose to drive to larger cities nearby to take advantage of their public transportation options. In particular, Sumter citizens travel to Columbia for air service and Camden for Amtrak service.

### Public Involvement

The public expressed their thoughts regarding transit within the Sumter region via a series of public input opportunities including a public questionnaire, public workshop, and during a stakeholder interview with transit administrators.

### Public Questionnaire

The public questionnaire was distributed as part of the *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan*. When asked to rate bus service in the region, a majority of the respondents expressed no opinion. Of those respondents with opinions, the majority believed the services offered have worsened or stayed the same over the last two years. Only 10% of the respondents believed services have improved over the same period (Figure 7.2).

Respondents to the questionnaire did not indicate a high level of transit ridership. However, questionnaire results did specify what activities would increase transit ridership. More than ten percent indicated they would be very likely to use transit if it provided more bus routes. This information is consistent with comments received during other outreach activities. In total, the public comments confirm a low opinion held by the general public when considering public transit. Other ways to improve ridership include better route information, more transit routes with more frequent service, and clean buses and facilities. Vanpools were not identified as a way to increase transit use (90% noted that such improvements would not likely increase their use of transit). Additionally, most respondents indicated their commutes as being only 1-5 miles (40%) or 5-10 miles (31%).

Another question on the survey asked respondents to divide \$100 among several transportation priorities. When dividing limited funds among transportation initiatives such as traffic calming, roadway improvements, access management, and sidewalks, an average of only \$7.00 was dedicated to public transportation. This amount was the lowest all categories listed (Figure 7.3).

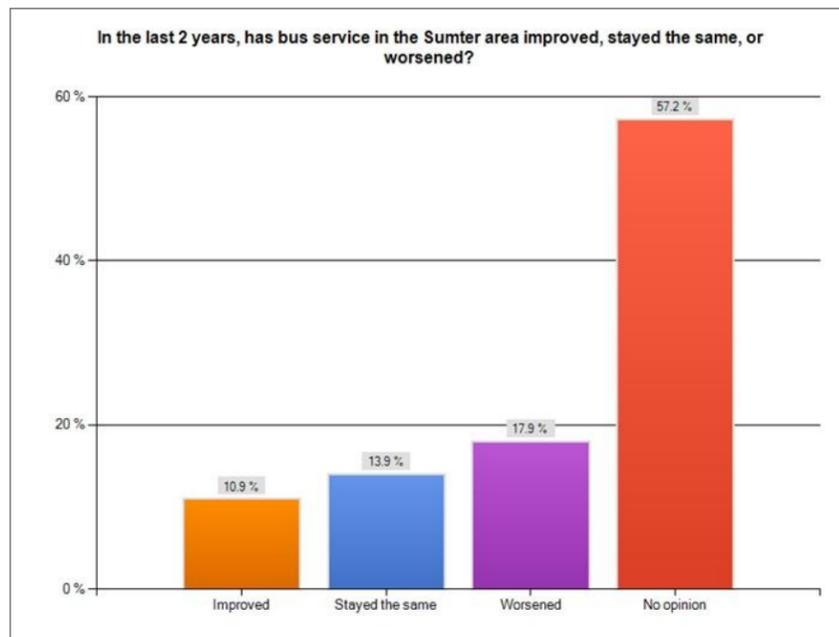


Figure 7.2 – Bus Service (LRTP Update Survey, 2012)

### On-Board Survey

In the summer of 2010, Santee Lynches Council of Governments (SLCOG) assisted the Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Agency (SWRTA) to conduct a passenger survey on the grading of SWRTA services in Sumter. (See Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority Public Transportation Study, September 2010 prepared by SLCOG) The survey forms were distributed to passengers on buses and were collected before passengers got off. A total of 207 individuals responded to the survey. The survey questionnaire was composed of nine questions and printed in both English and Spanish. The number 1 question on the survey was “What grade would you give the Public Transportation services in

Sumter?” A letter grade A to F was given for passengers to rate the RTA services. “A” is the best service and “F” is the failing performance. However, passengers were given the option to describe why a certain grade was given. Figure 7.4 reflects the survey results.

Following are the survey respondents/passengers reasons for giving a specific grade for SWRTA services:

- Grade A—Friendly drivers, safe, and very reliable, longer hours needed on Friday and need Saturday services
- Grade B—Times are always switching, need more friendly drivers, need weekend services and longer weekday services.
- Grade C—Cannot find the bus stops—they need to be marked, bus needs to be on time, buses should operate consistently.
- Grade D—Only been riding for two days and do not know where the bus stops are, and do not know when to catch the bus.
- Grade F—Failure in bus services performance

As Figure 7.4 reflects, less than half of the survey respondents were totally satisfied with bus service performance. Respondents expected RTA to provide longer service hours on Friday and Saturday service.

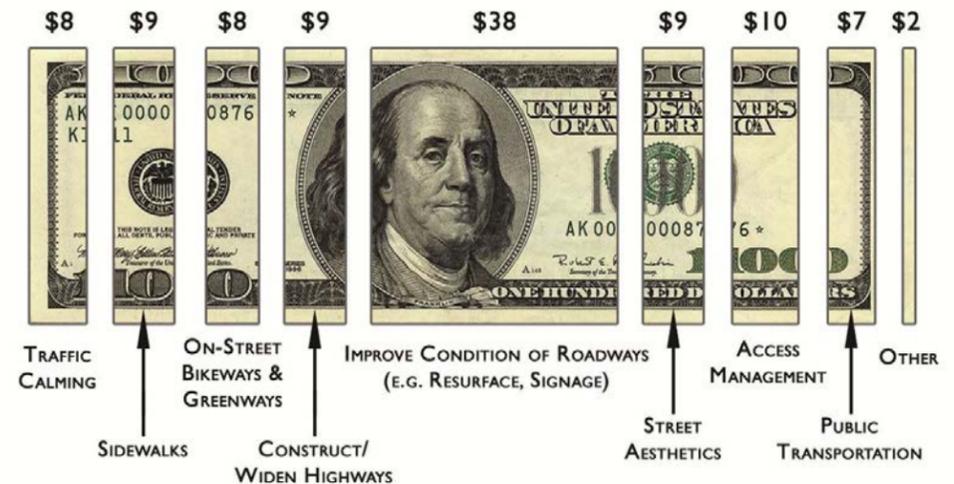


Figure 7.3 – How would you spend \$100 to improve transportation?

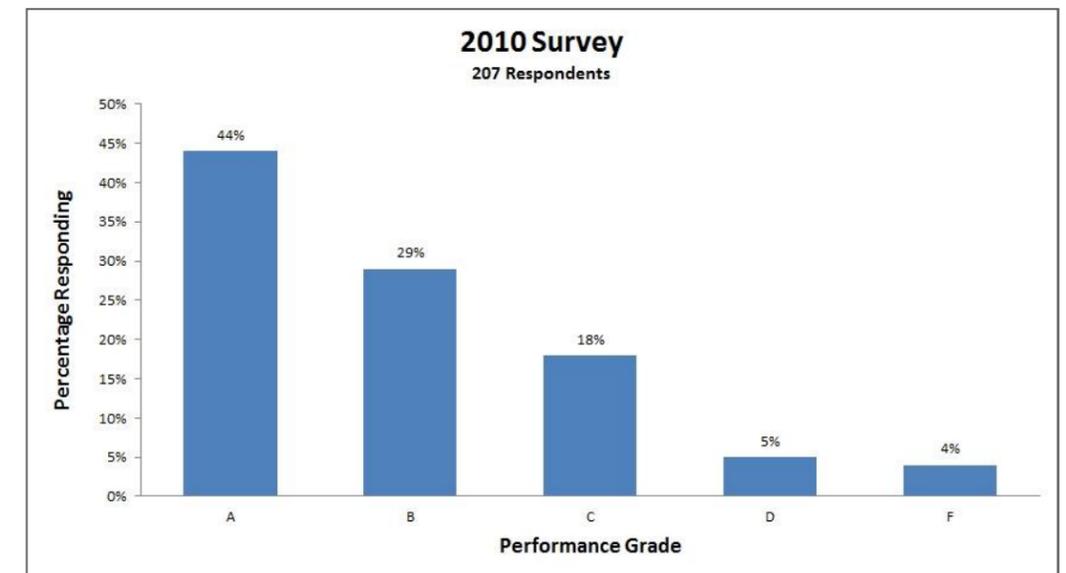


Figure 7.4 - What grade would you give the Public Transportation services in Sumter?



## Financial Challenges SWRTA Faces

(This section is an insert of the 2012 report: [Executive Summary of Restructuring SWRTA Fixed Bus Routes Study in the City of Sumter, SC](#). The data referred to in this section may or may not necessarily reflect any data after March 2012)

### Background

The Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority, commonly referred to as SWRTA, provides transit services in the Santee-Lynches region. The Santee-Lynches region covers the four counties of Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter. Additionally, SWRTA provides transit services for Lower Richland County, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties. It operates approximately 107 vehicles to provide public transit and contract services to these areas.

In the urbanized area of Sumter, SWRTA operates 18 vehicles to provide public transit fixed bus routes, commuter services, complimentary ADA paratransit services, “call in”— demand response services, and transit services for special events such as the Iris Festival and Shaw Fest. Approximately 114,000 annual passenger trips were provided in FY2010-FY2011. Additionally, approximately 40,000 annual passenger trips were provided under various human transportation service contracts and a brokerage contract to provide non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) for the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Currently, seven (7) fixed bus routes runs within the City of Sumter and two (2) fixed bus routes run between Sumter and Myrtle Beach and between Sumter and Columbia, which serve commuters. The one-way fare for all fixed bus routes within the City is \$1 for each passenger, except the Shaw Air Force Base route which charges \$1.50 per passenger. Senior citizens (65 or above), handicapped, or Medicare cardholders pay half fare and children under six ride for free. Transfers between routes are free. The Myrtle Beach commuter service charges \$3.50 per person one-way and the Eastover-Columbia service charges \$2.50. However, starting in late 2010, free-fare Fridays were implemented for all City fixed bus routes so that passengers could ride for free within the City limits on Fridays.

In the early spring of 2011, SWRTA received a financial warning from the Santee Lynches Regional Development Corporation, subsidiary of SLCOG, after the Corporation analyzed SWRTA’s income and expenditure data.

### Restructuring Fixed Bus Routes Study

In February 2012, the SWRTA requested the Planning Department of Sumter to assist in restructuring the City of Sumter fixed bus routes as a possible way to reduce operating costs. The staff, in cooperation with the staff of SLCOG, has conducted a preliminary study on all seven fixed bus routes. The findings and recommendations of this study are described below.

#### Study Methodology

The findings and recommendations of restructuring fixed bus routes are based upon extensive research of published data and field observations. After careful data analysis and discussions with the staff of SLCOG, the study’s focus centered on how to increase ridership on the fixed bus route services within the City of Sumter.

#### Published Data Collection Approach

The Staff collected and analyzed various variables of transit data from the following sources:

- Transit Data Report by SCDOT Fiscal Year 2010-2011
- Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority Public Transportation Study, Sept 2010, by SLCOG
- SWRTA Business and Route Analysis by Profit Centers (Proforma: “As Is” Case) 12/31/2011 ( cover 6-month period) data submitted by SWRTA (calculations by SLCOG)
- SWRTA Small Urban Fixed Route Trips (2001-2011 Fiscal Years and Includes Trips Through 1/31/12) submitted by SWRTA

#### Field Survey Approach

The Staff observed and identified the locations of the following potential passenger trip generators along all seven fixed city bus routes:

- Public Housing residential area
- Apartment complex
- Public schools
- Super markets
- Commercial strips (banks, restaurants, retail stores)
- Hospitals and clinics
- Low income and high density residential area
- Major employment /industry
- Social Facility such as Iris Garden, Opera House, Hope Centers etc.

#### Objective of the Study

The objectives of restructuring the City fixed bus routes Study are to:

- Increase ridership
- Reduce costs
- Discover underserved areas
- Improve visibility and awareness of transit services
- Enhance connectivity of bus services

One of the approaches to increase the ridership in the City is to serve the areas where there are high probabilities of using transit services. For example, car ownership is relatively low in low income and public housing residential areas. School buses do not pick up students within one mile radius of where schools are located. Blue collar workers need transportation for commuting to work places. Physical able retirees need to do grocery shopping in the nearby super market.

## Findings

### Overall Transit System

In accordance with the SCDOT Transit Data Report, the Staff has compared the transit data of FY 2009- FY 2010 with the one in FY 2010- FY 2011 and found the FY 10- FY11 has decreased in revenue by \$121,661 and loss in the fare box recovery ratio by 7.2%. (See Table 7.3 below) However, the ridership (the number of passenger trips) has increased substantially by 16,076 for the free fare Friday implementation in late 2010.

Table 7.3 – 2009 to 2011 Transit Comparison				
Urban Service Area Only*				
	FY 2009-FY 2010	FY 2010-FY 2011		Difference
Fleet size	18	18		0
Annual Pass. Trips	137,650	153,726		16,076
Annual Revenue Miles	371,652	366,435		-5,217
Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours	23,579	23,086		-493
Annual Operating Revenue	978,084	856,423		-121,661
Annual Operating Expenses	1,133,224	1,144,162		10,938
Cost per pass. Trip	8.23	7.44		-0.79
Cost per vehicle Revenue Mile	3.05	3.12		0.07
Fare box Recovery Ratio	29.60%	22.40%	decreased by	7.2%

\*Urban Service Area is not clearly defined by SWRTA; but the seven fixed routes are in Urban service area.

During the field survey, the Staff found the following:

- 12 bus stop posts without bus schedules posted
- 7 bus shelters along all seven bus routes in the City
- The bus routes serve abandoned industrial areas
- Some social facilities such as parks, the Sumter Aquatic Center, and schools are not along the bus routes
- Some of the public housing residential areas are not along the bus routes
- Route 7 (Shaw shuttle) runs along Broad Street instead of the commercial/residential area on Carter Road.
- Lack of connectivity of bus services in shopping mall.
- No connectivity of bus service to Industrial Park where the major employers are located on Route 15 South.
- No school day fixed bus services to Sumter High School and Lakewood High School.
- Route 1 “on call” service runs through neighborhoods with higher than average income and vehicle ownership
- Route 1 runs along McCrays Mill Road with minimal residential ridership.
- No bus stop service available to Swan Lake.
- No bus route runs along the North Pike frontage road to Dillon Park where significant residential neighborhoods are in vicinity.
- No bus services to the Crosswell low income residential neighborhood
- Limited bus service area covers the vast number and area of trailers/mobile homes in Cherryvale area.

### Individual Bus Route

Based on the redirected source of data from SLCOG, the staff has evaluated, as shown in the following table, the profitability of each route based upon cost and revenue per passenger.

Table 7.4 – Bus Route Profit Analysis			
Route	Cost (\$)/ Passenger	Revenue (\$)/ Passenger	Difference
9	5.89	3.50	(2.39)
8	12.91	12.49	(0.42)
7	8.79	7.63	(1.16)
6	6.41	4.23	(2.18)
5	6.15	3.86	(2.29)
4	6.17	3.91	(2.26)
1	6.16	3.86	(2.30)
Columbia	25.35	11.02	(14.33)
Myrtle Beach	17.06	15.56	(1.50)

**Recommendations**

Based upon the above findings, the Staff recommends the following:

**Overall Transit System**

- Active promotions of existing bus route services by mass media advertisements, place bus schedules in public places such as shopping mall, schools, and grocery stores.
- Improve the “on call”-demand response service by restructuring system requiring 24 hour advance call in and provide pick up services along major roadway intersections.
- Assign one vehicle (mini- van or 15 passenger bus) for “call in” – demand response services for reducing costs of operations.
- Designate a “at pulse” transfer point at the Wesmark Plaza by the Staples and Big Lots stores for Bus Route 7, and 9 and 4 for free transfer.
- Install more bus stop sign poles with bus schedules posted.
- Eliminate Bus Route 8 service which only carried 140 passengers in 6 months period, also the highest cost per passenger (\$12.91). Instead, assign another 15 passenger bus or mini-van to “on call” demand response system to transport customers to and from the Vocational Rehabilitation Center on North Main.

**Individual Routes**

An enlarged size individual bus route map is attached to this report. Each bus route map has a current bus route and a proposed new bus route for comparison of the changes. Also, a comparison of current and proposed revenue miles is shown below:

Table 7.5 – Bus Route Revenue Mileage		
Route #	Current Revenue Miles	Proposed Revenue Miles
1	8.15	12.94
1 by Request	3.85	-
4	10.71	33.16 *
4 by Request	0.48	0.48
5	9.47	9.26
5 Peak Hour	-	7.68
6	12.14	12.23
6 by Request	1.14	-
7	38.27	38.6
7 by Request	2.21	-
8	8.12	-
9	12.67	13.12
Total	107.21	127.47

\* Route 4 has two buses running simultaneously in opposite directions.

The total cost for all bus routes revenue miles is \$466.69 for one loop. The individual route proposed cost is shown in the table below:

Table 7.6 – Proposed Route Revenue Mile Cost (Terminal to Terminal)			
Route #	Proposed Revenue Miles	Cost per Revenue Mile *	Proposed Revenue Miles Cost
1	12.94	4.03	\$ 52.15
4 **	33.16	3.99	\$ 132.31
5	9.26	4.03	\$ 37.32
5 Peak	7.68	4.03	\$ 30.95
6	12.23	3.83	\$ 46.84
7	38.27	2.91	\$ 111.37
9	13.12	4.25	\$ 55.76
Total Routes Cost			\$ 466.69

\*\* Two Buses Running Simultaneously in Opposite Directions

The following section describes the proposed changes for the various fixed-routes in Sumter.

## Route 1 - West Liberty/ Guignard ( Figure 7.5)

- The “on-call” demand response service from Wise Drive, via Henderson Street and Phelps Street, to W. Liberty Street is eliminated.
- The “on-call” service route to Sumter High School will be changed to regular bus service route.
- Designate a bus stop in the shopping center at the Bi-Lo Supermarket.
- Eliminate the loop portion on McCrays Mill Road to Birnie Hope Center. Designate Pinewood Road as a return route and designate bus stops at Swan Lake and Civic Center. Right turn on Liberty Street eastbound to stop at low income apartment units right across from the Birnie Hope Center and northbound on Guignard Drive back to Liberty Street toward the Terminal.

## Route 4 - North Main/Sumter Mall & Wesmark Plaza (Figure 7.6)

- Two buses running simultaneously on opposite directions. Both buses leave the bus terminal simultaneously, with one bus going towards N. Main Street and the other going to N. Lafayette Drive to Loring and Croswell areas. Bus A goes toward Sumter Mall/Wesmark Plaza via Miller Road and Pullman Drive and stops at the Staples/Big Lots transfer point. Bus A waits for Bus B which heads towards the transfer points via N. Lafayette Drive and North Pike Frontage Road, through Dillon Park, Wise Drive and loops into a retirement apartment complex and stops at the transfer point.
- The connectivity point for bus A and bus B meet at the Staples/Big Lots (Wesmark Mall) transfer point.
- The transfer point is where Route 4, 7 and 9 meet.
- The Wall Street area “on call” services remains.

## Route 5 - South Main/Pilgrim’s Pride (Figure 7.7)

- Route 5 will extend services to Pilgrim’s Pride industrial park during the morning and evening peak hours only. During off peak hours, bus will loop at S. Guignard Parkway and Pocalla Road for the returning trip.
- Bus will stop at Bates Middle School and the Southside Park (public housing).

## Route 6 - East Liberty/ Aquatic Center (Figure 7.8)

- Route 6 bus will provide service along S. Main St. to Fulton Park low income area.
- Route 6 “on call” service extends to DMV of SCDOT along Oswego Road.
- Bus stop pole must be erected at the Aquatic Center.

## Route 7 - Shaw Shuttle (Figure 7.9)

- Bus will meet at the Transfer Point in the Wesmark Plaza for connectivity for Bus Route 9 and Route 4.
- Bus service area will expand at Cherryvale (See Figure 7.9).
- City bound bus route 7 will turn at Wilson Hall Road, down on Wesmark , up on Alice Drive, and stop at Walmart before going to the Transfer point in Wesmark Plaza.
- Bus will go from Staples/Big Lots to Sumter Mall and then return to the bus terminal.

## Route 8 - North Main/Vocational Rehab

- Eliminate Route 8 and have one bus designated for “on call” services.
- The “on call” service requires at least minimum of 24 hours advance reservations. Designate pick up locations on major roadway intersections. This “on call” service MUST NOT provide door to door services. The door to door services may be provided through the FTA human services coordination program

## Route 9 - Broad Street (Figure 7.10)

- The diversion on Highland Avenue and Miller Road will be eliminated.
- Bus stop pole will be erected in front of the library.
- Bus will stop at K mart and the retirement apartment units behind such
- Bus will meet Route 4 and Route 7 buses at the Transfer point.
- Bus shelters are recommended on Broad Street in front of Aldi and Piggly Wiggly.

## Conclusions

By restructuring the current bus routes, the proposed total revenue miles will be increased to 127.47 miles from 107.21. Ridership is most likely to increase for a significant percentage of the expanded service areas where passenger trip generators of grocery stores, schools, social facilities, and low percentage of vehicle ownerships residential areas. In addition, by improving the connectivity of bus services, passengers are more willing to use public transit for their choice of shopping malls, restaurants, clinics, and even employment places.

Figure 7.5

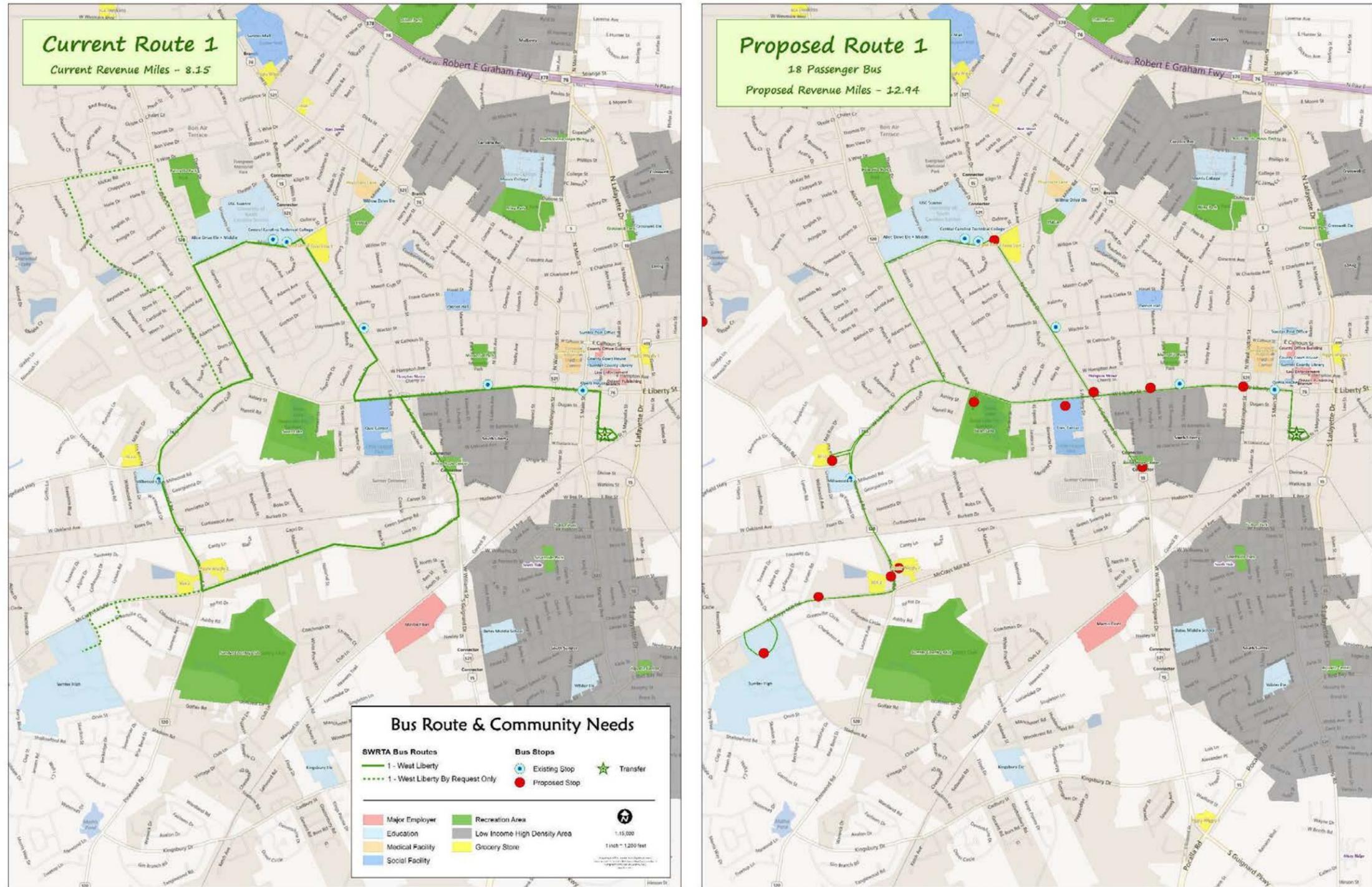


Figure 7.6

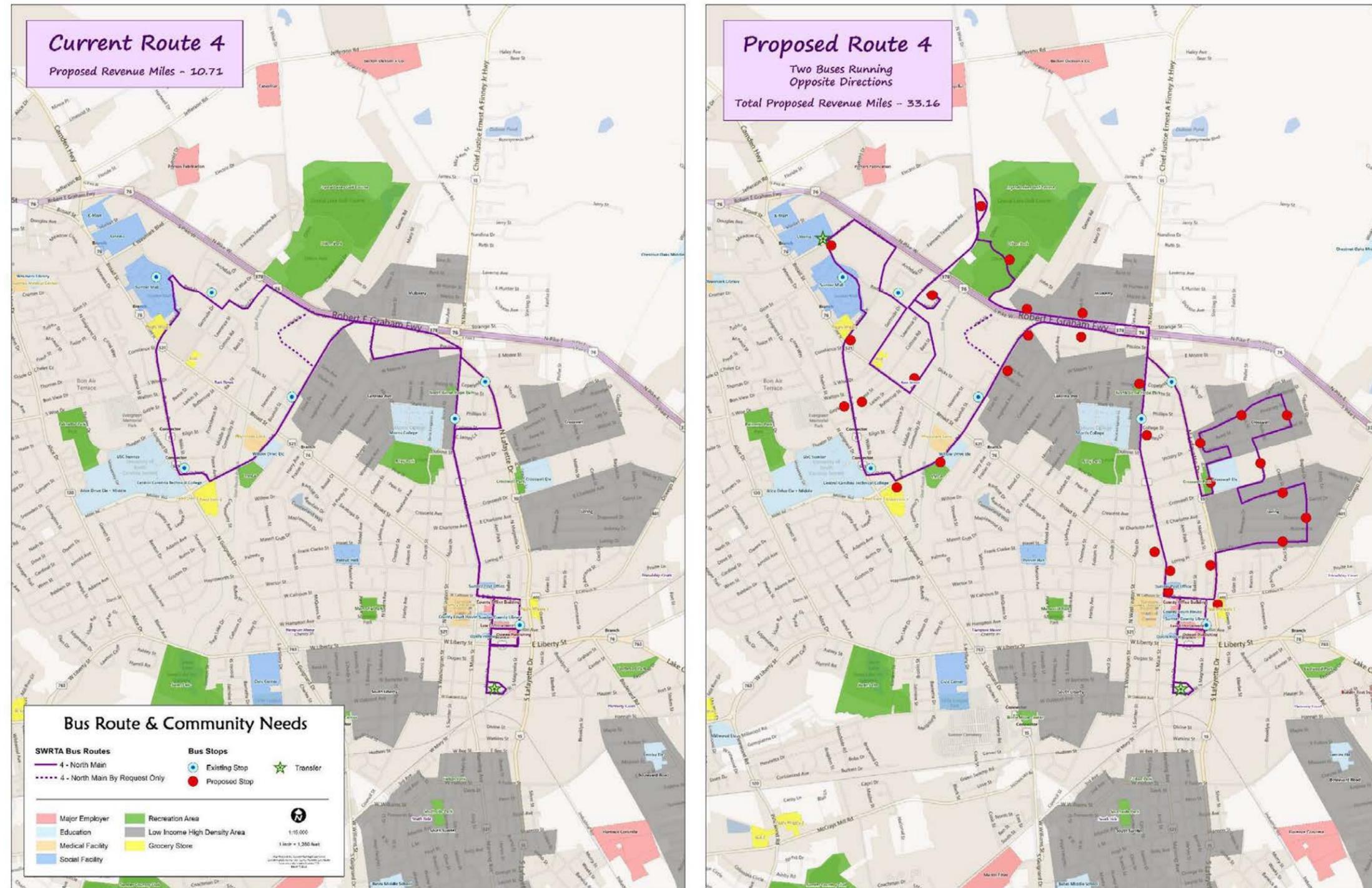


Figure 7.7

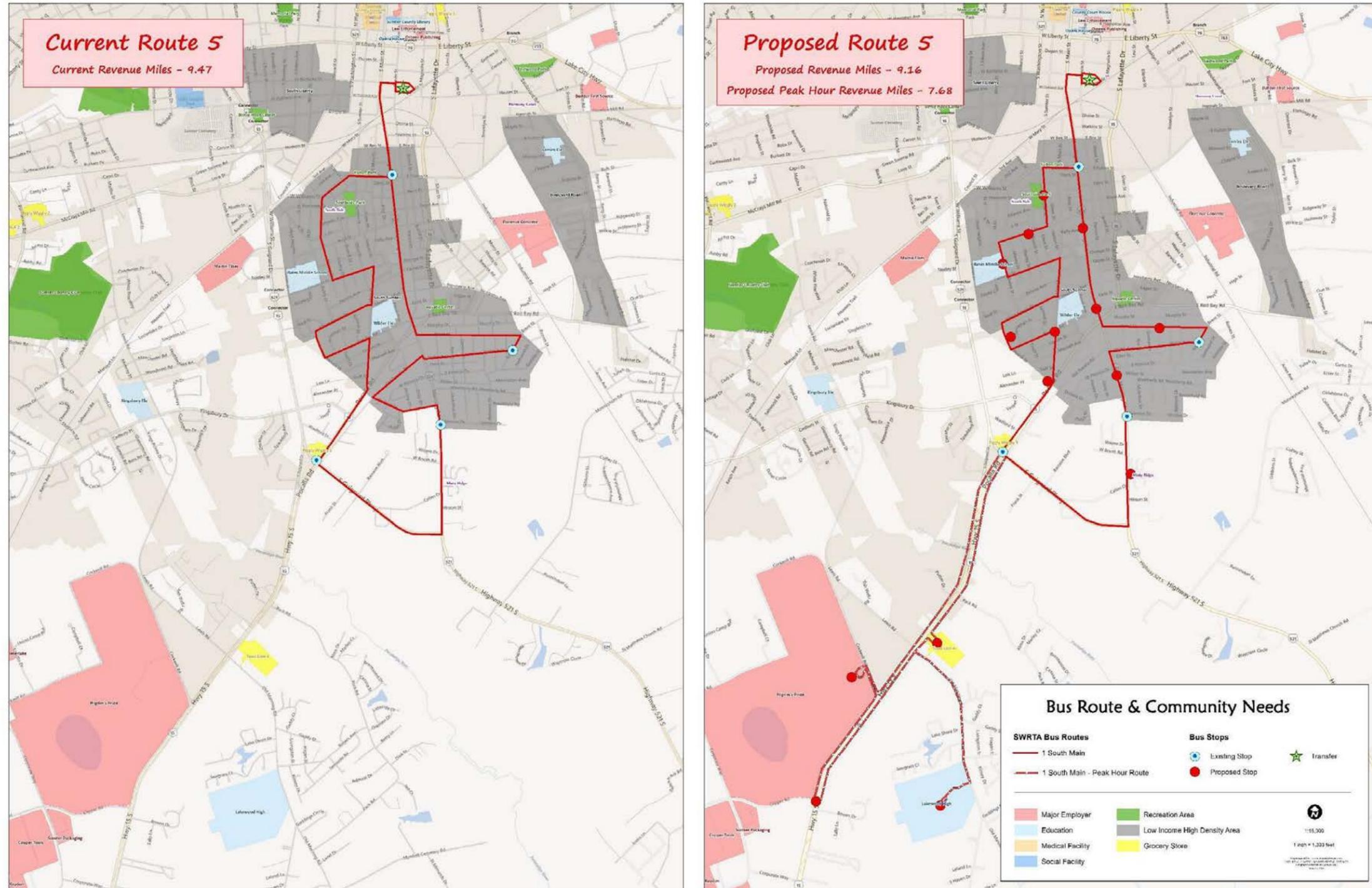


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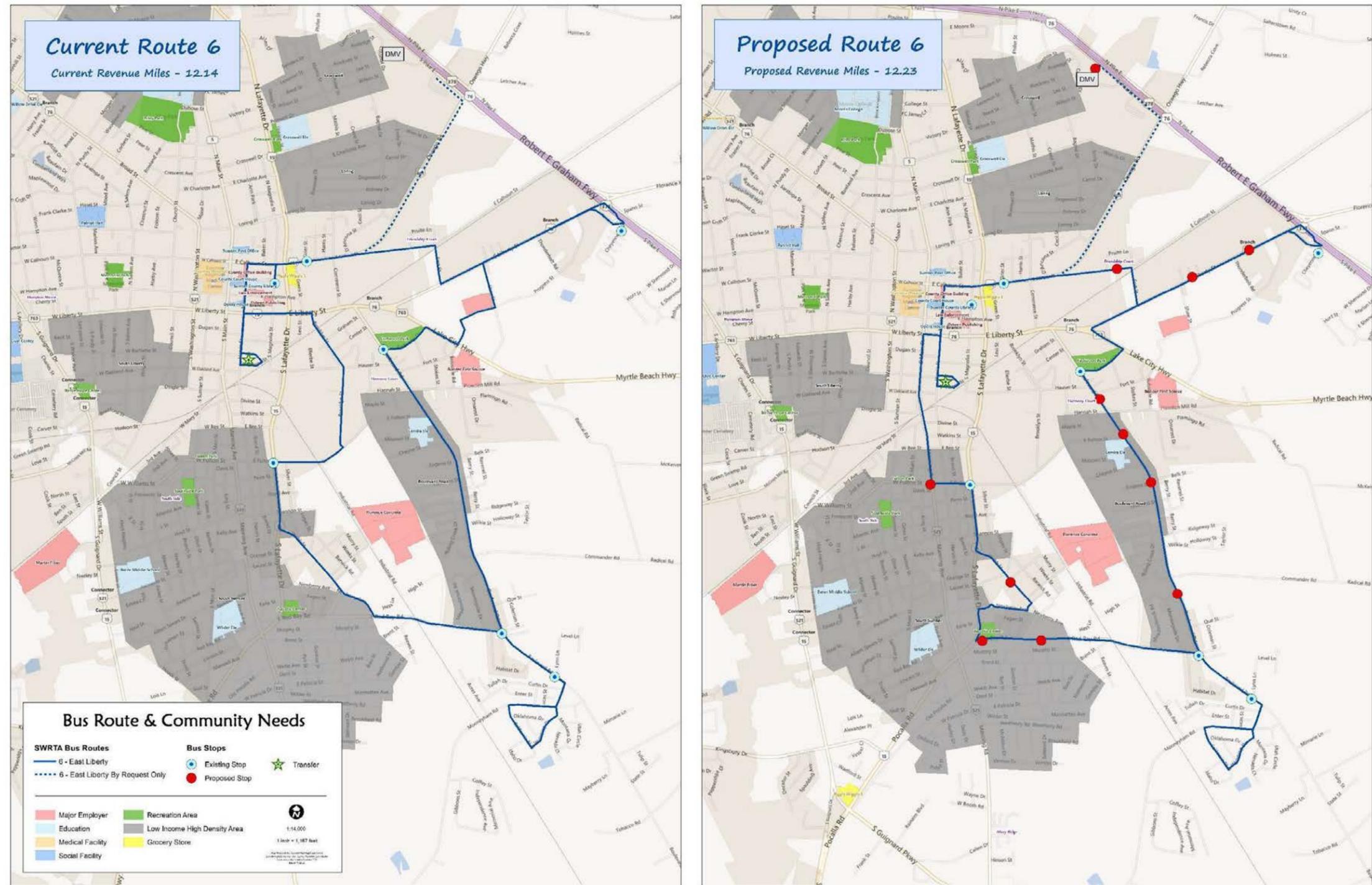
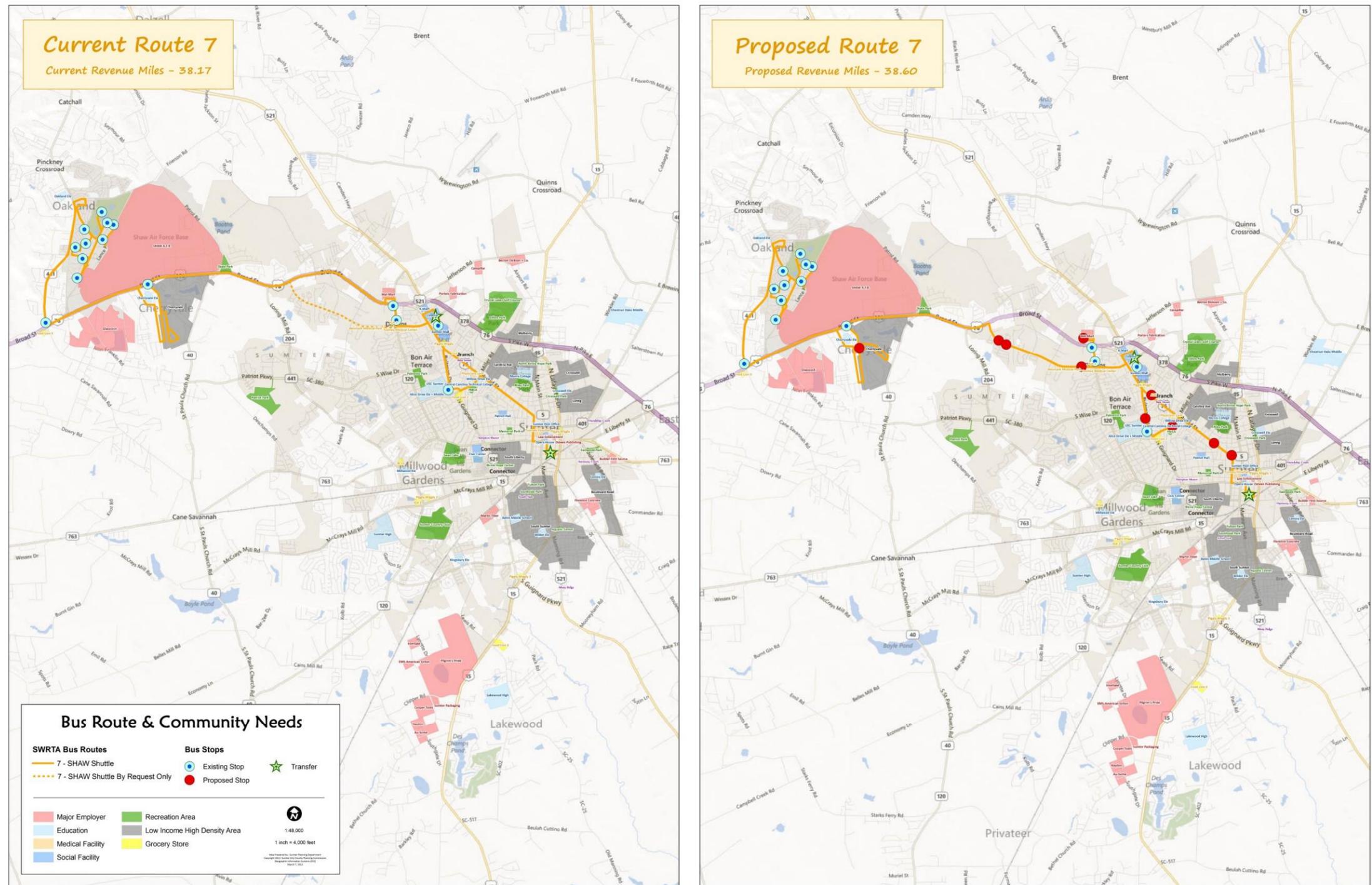
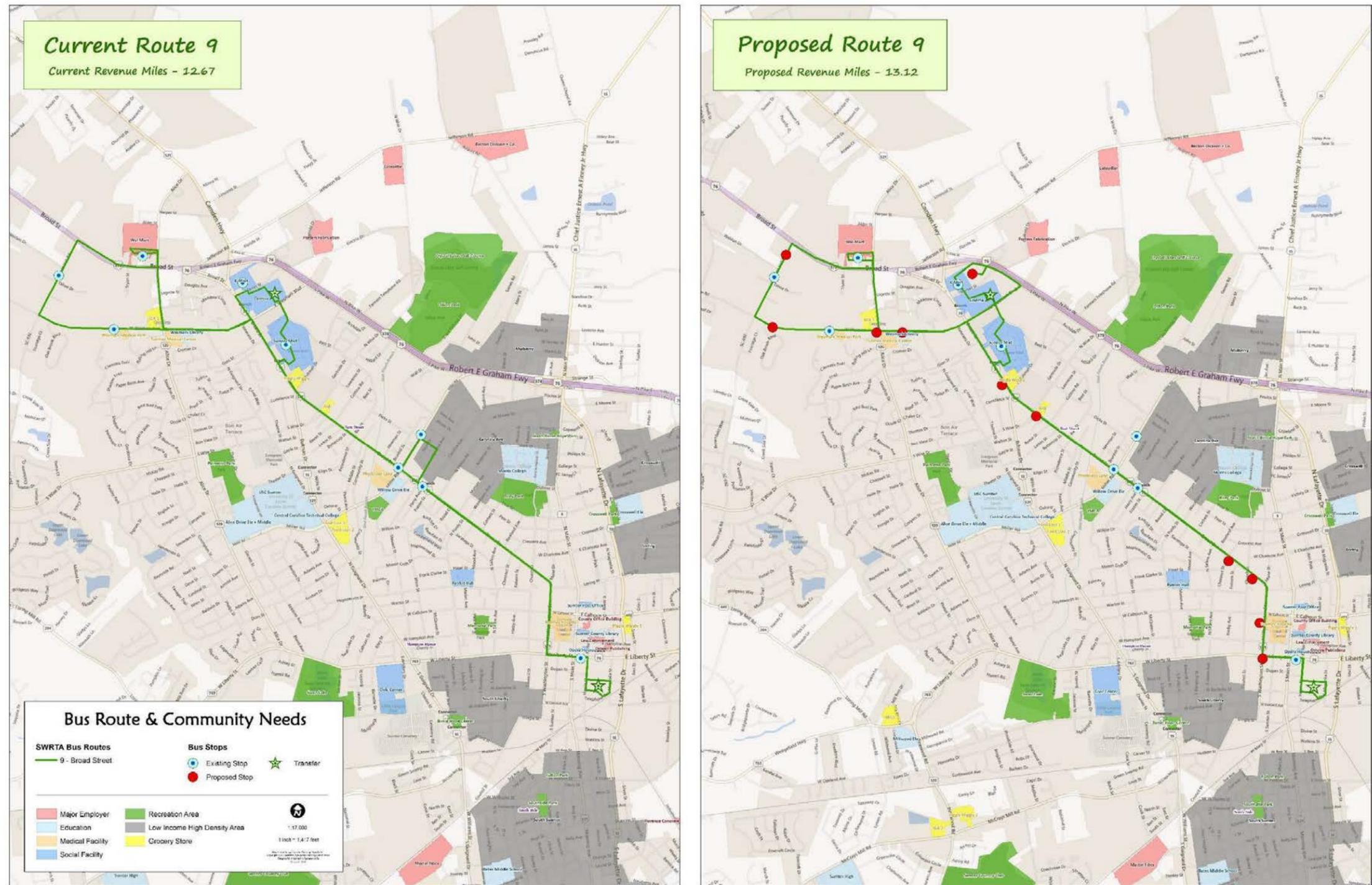


Figure 7.9



Figure



## System Recommendations

Transit riders typically fall into one of two categories – captive or choice. Choice transit riders choose to leave their vehicle at home to save time and money or for other reasons. Captive transit riders use transit because they have no other choice. This may be because they lack access to a personal vehicle or because they have a physical impediment. Captive riders also include those too young to drive, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those without the financial means to own and operate a personal vehicle.

Figures 7.11 and 7.12 show the existing SWRTA fixed-routes in relation to Sumter’s population density and percentage of persons without access to a personal vehicle. Figure 7.11 indicates the more dense areas of the city are served by transit with the exception of southwestern portions of the city between McCrays Mill and Pinewood Roads. Information in Figure 7.12 is based on census block groups, the smallest census geography for which the information is available. While the image indicates households near downtown without access to automobiles are served by bus routes, pockets of households in the county that need transit are forced to rely on paratransit if they qualify or seek alternative options such as taxis.

The recommendations that follow recognize the need to enhance existing service in order to meet the needs of both choice and captive transit users. An underlying goal is to encourage further dialogue regarding the benefits of transit for choice riders and the critical role transit plays in the life of captive users. The recommended improvements were established through analysis and public outreach efforts and balanced with the needs identified for other elements presented in the *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan*. The recommended improvements are grouped by general findings. Many of the recommendations will address more than one finding.

*Finding: Public perception of transit limits its effectiveness.* The general perception of transit in the Sumter area is that transit serves only those people without access to or the ability to use personal automobiles. In order to establish transit as a viable mode for choice riders and to encourage those in need of the mobility offered by transit to use the service, public perceptions must be identified and addressed.

Recommendations:

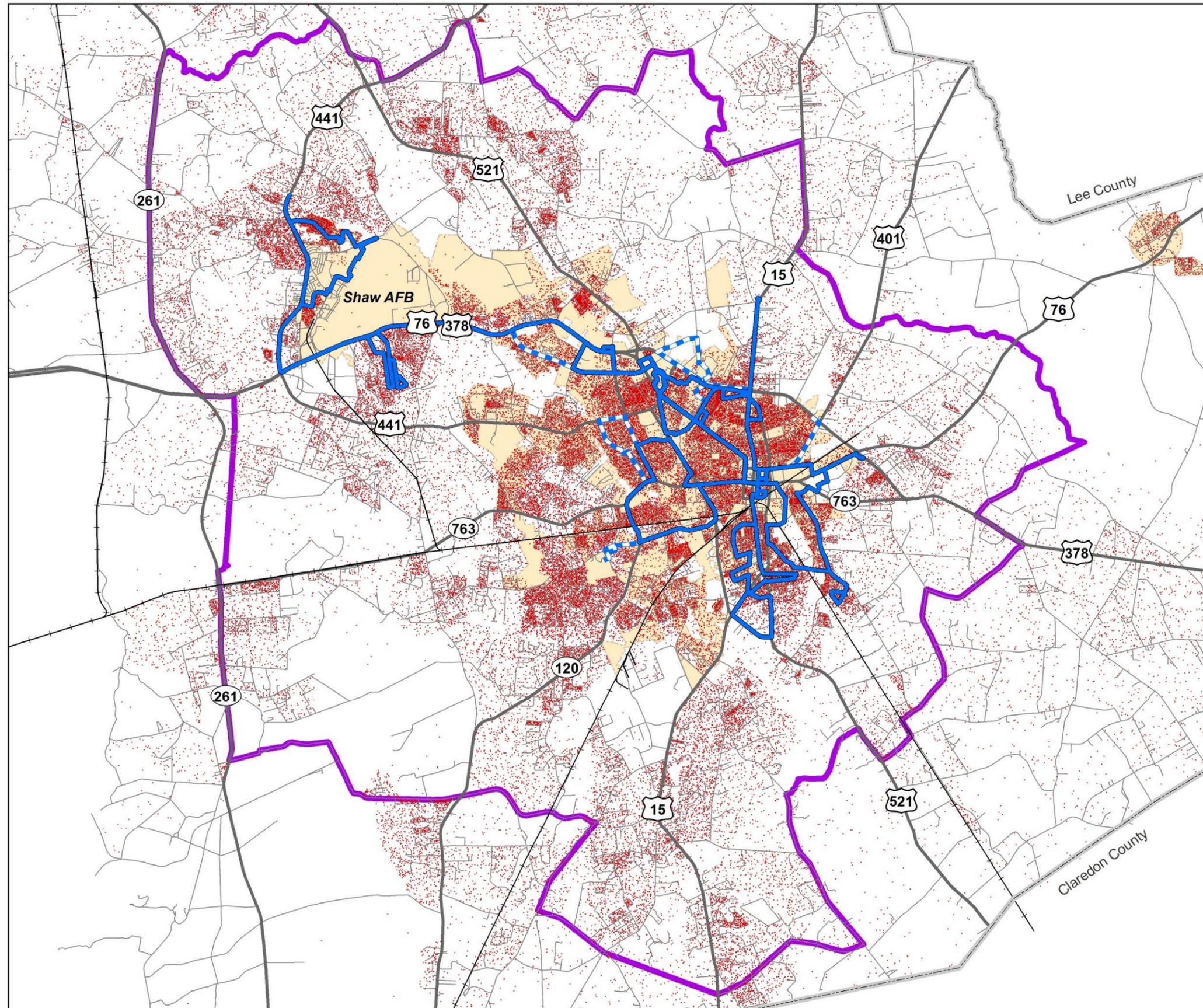
- **Conduct a ridership survey.** A focused ridership survey with proper distribution will go a long way in determining overall levels of customer satisfaction and help identify issues of importance for transit users. The results of the survey should help reaffirm the transit initiatives launched as part of the *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan* while also serving as a prelude to a new transit master plan.
- **Develop a transit master plan.** A transit master plan should be developed to explore multiple alternatives and detailed solutions for the near- and long-term transit needs of the Sumter community. The master plan should include a detailed review of existing conditions (ridership trends, travel times, customer preferences, etc.), recommended bus routes and service improvements, recommended delivery system upgrades (bus stops, sidewalks, etc.), implementation strategies, and funding resources. A detailed plan coordinated with the recommendations presented throughout the *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan* can help inform the land development review process in addition to transportation project prioritization.
- **Introduce a coordinated marketing plan.** The indication in the survey that the public does not want to spend more money on transit shows the benefits of this mode of travel is not reaching the general public. A marketing effort through print and broadcast media outlets should be coordinated with improved signage and informational handouts (route maps, fare books, etc.). SCDOT is exploring how to approach some of these issues on a statewide basis, which should provide opportunities for local agencies to collaborate.

*Finding: Transit does not fulfill the existing needs of some captive users.* As shown in Figures 7.11 and 7.12, SWRTA’s routes provide critical access to persons that require transit to access jobs and services. Additional routes or changes to existing routes can fill holes in the region’s transit service without incurring unnecessary costs. In addition, the frequency and operating hours of some routes need to be altered to meet the needs of existing and potential customers.

Recommendations:

- **Extend duration of routes.** Extending the duration of routes, particularly during the evening for Route 7 Shaw Shuttle, will accommodate evening commutes for the region’s largest employment generator.
- **Utilize the master planning process to assess current service and explore changes in route frequency and duration.** The transit master plan should be targeted to the needs of captive users while accommodating potential increases in choice riders. Public outreach efforts for the LRTP identified a need to re-evaluate the location, frequency, and headway times between transit stops, a process that should be a key component of the transit master planning process. Discussions with the community and analysis of existing conditions show the overall route system accommodates many of the more dense areas in Sumter. However, changes to some routes or the addition of new routes is needed to serve the growing population in the southwest planning area along Loring Mill Road, McCrays Mill Road, Wedgefield Highway, and Pinewood Road.
- **Improve the quality of taxicab services.** The presence of taxi companies is indicative of the need to give residents and visitors a means of travel other than privately owned automobiles. However, compared to other South Carolina metropolitan areas the taxi companies in Sumter provide a lower quality of service, which adversely could impact customer service as well as the image Sumter is trying to create for the area. City and County officials should investigate how other metropolitan areas have been able to improve the quality of their taxicab services without causing undue financial hardships on this industry.

## Population Density and Transit Routes



### Legend

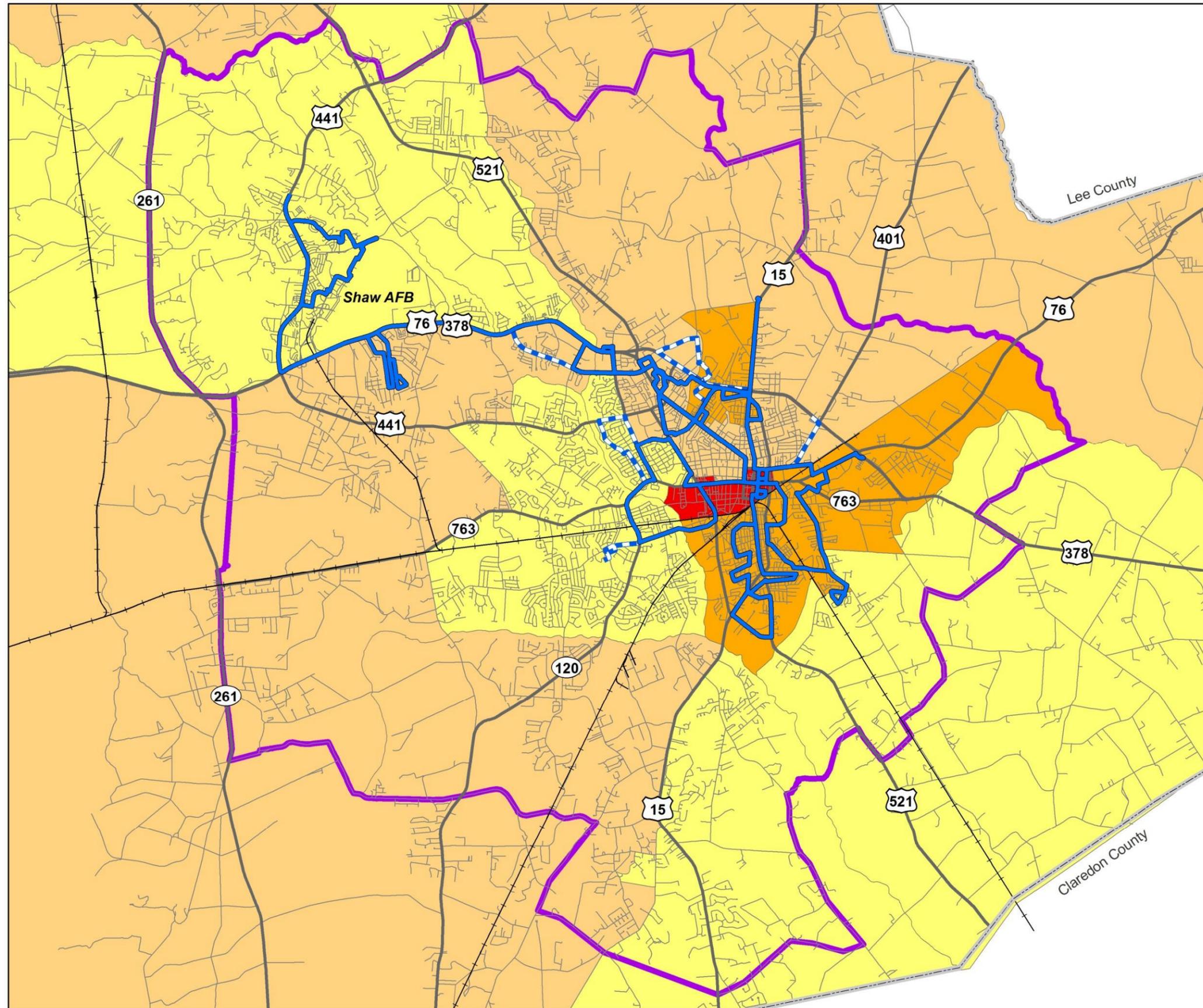
- 1 Dot = 1 Person
- Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010
- Bus Route
- Call In Bus Route
- SUATS 2010 Study Area Boundary
- County
- City Limits
- Road
- Railroad

September 22, 2012

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



## Vehicle Available and Transit Routes



### Legend

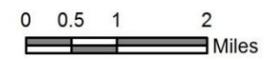
#### Percent of Households with no Access to a Vehicle

- Less than 5%
- 5 to 15%
- 15 to 30%
- More than 30%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010

- Bus Route
- Call In Bus Route
- SUATS 2010 Study Area Boundary
- County
- Road
- Railroad

September 22, 2012



**Finding:** Hub and spoke design may become ineffective as the region grows. The hub and spoke layout of the SWRTA fixed-route system supports the downtown area by emphasizing trips originating from or destined to the downtown area. The long headways created by these one-way routes may become outdated as the region's activity centers become more diverse.

Recommendations:

- **Identify satellite transfer stations for future expansion.** As the system grows to accommodate new demand, locations near emerging activity centers where multiple routes converge should be designated as satellite transfer stations. The exact location of these facilities should be determined through additional study and in coordination with property owners, SWRTA, and local officials. Amenities at these stops should be enhanced to include shelters, informational boards, benches, route information, and bus pull-outs.

**Finding:** Transit must be flexible to growth within the region. Growth in Sumter will increase the burden on the area's transportation system and will bring to the region more persons dependent upon public transportation for their daily traveling needs. Both situations require a flexible system designed to grow with the region and meet changing travel patterns and trends.

Recommendations:

- **Promote coordination and collaborative partnerships between the urban and rural transportation programs of SWRTA as well as with other public transit and human service agencies.** Fixed-route and paratransit services provide complementary services that reach out to those with easy access to a bus stop as well as rural residents who depend on public transportation to access services and employment. The existing partnership between these two segments of SWRTA should continue to be evaluated to ensure no gaps in coverage exist. As part of the Regional Transit Council at the Santee-Lynches Council of Governments (COG), SWRTA is working with other regional partners to provide comprehensive transit service. Current efforts include coordinating Section 5310 (elderly and persons with disabilities) programs and Medicaid services with

the Lower Savannah COG as well as working to develop a SmartRide program in the Orangeburg area. SWRTA also works closely with the Central Midlands COG and coordinates with CMRTA in Columbia for its SmartRide and Eastover Services. These partnerships should be enhanced where appropriate.

- **Utilize technology to ensure reliability of the transit system.** Because the extent of SWRTA's coverage area – 5,000 sq. mi. – is so large, emerging technology designed to coordinate scheduling, determine efficient routes, and provide real-time information to customers should be implemented. SWRTA currently utilizes a Route Match Scheduling and Dispatch Program for its paratransit (dial-a-ride) service. In 2004, SWRTA became the first transit system in the state to operate the Palmetto 800 system, a radio communication-based public safety network. Such progressive use of technology should be encouraged. The ability to provide real time information to customers should be explored as funding permits.
- **Future routes should be responsive to future land use patterns.** SWRTA should work alongside the City and County planning departments to ensure transit service is considered in future development projects. In locations with larger scale development and redevelopment impacts, the review process should ensure transit-ready development features such as a mixture of land uses at appropriate densities, interconnected streets, and pedestrian-friendly design.
- **Civic land uses should be within walking distance of public transit.** Civic land uses such as libraries, parks, city/county administration, and social services should be located within walking distance of public transit service. Existing transit routes and amenities should be evaluated to ensure equal accessibility to those choosing to ride transit. In addition, when evaluating locations for future public facilities the ability to provide access via transit should be a priority.
- **Maximize the use of the James E. Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center.** Named for Sumter native and U.S Representative James E. Clyburn, the redeveloped historic warehouse at Harvin and Telephone Streets opened in Spring 2008 as a hub for local and regional bus service as well as intercity and interstate bus service provided by Southeastern

Stages (Greyhound). The Center also houses offices for SWRTA and rents office space to other companies. The strategic location of this project can serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of the southern edge of the central business district. Its location adjacent to the city's CSX rail yard also can help support the potential long-term implementation of Amtrak service or commuter rail from Greenville through Charleston by way of Sumter.

**Finding:** Services for commuters must be a priority for the regional transportation system. Many residents of the Sumter region depend on jobs in other locations – whether service jobs in Myrtle Beach or government jobs in Columbia. Services designed to encourage alternatives to single-occupant private vehicles can help alleviate traffic congestion at the regional level.

Recommendations:

- **Expand carpool matching service.** The current carpool matching service offered through AlterNetRides on the SWRTA homepage provides a forum to match potential carpoolers. This service should be promoted through the coordinated marketing plan as a way to save commuters time and money. In particular, vanpooling for Shaw AFB personnel should be promoted.
- **Expand SmartRide service in the Sumter market.** SmartRide is marketed as a safe, comfortable, and convenient commuter service between Camden, Lugoff, and Columbia. The current vanpool from Sumter to Columbia operates as a SmartRider Service and has carried more than 17 people for more than three years. To provide opportunities for more riders, vehicle capacity should be added as funding permits. In addition, vanpools can provide an opportunity for focused commuter purposes.

*Finding:* Focus is needed on increasing passenger amenities such as sidewalks, shelters, and benches. A successful and thriving transit system depends on a system of safe and convenient sidewalks and bikeways to delivery users to transit stops. The stops themselves should provide a safe and comfortable environment while users wait for the bus to arrive.

Recommendations:

- **Coordinate upgrades to transit stops with improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle network.** The *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan* recommends strategic sidewalks and bikeways designed to connect activity centers and neighborhoods. Improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle network, especially those constructed as part of new road construction and/or widening, should be coordinated with existing and future transit needs.
- **Enhance bus stops.** Current bus stops are little more than a sign on the side of the road. To encourage new riders and better accommodate existing users, bus stops should be enhanced to include benches and shelters. Initial locations for transit stop improvements should be identified during the master planning process. Where possible, partnerships between SWRTA and land owners should be established to provide funding for shelter construction with the understanding the land owner can advertise his or her property on the shelter. In locations where sheltered bus stops are not possible or necessary, bus stop signs should be updated to include route information.
- **Right sized fleet.** The size of buses used to carry passengers should reflect the usual average number of passengers of the route.

## Conclusion

Many of the recommendations for transit in Sumter involve promoting transit as a safe, convenient, and dependable form of transportation. An improved image and appearance can be achieved using short-term, low-cost measures. Long-term solutions target improvements for captive and choice riders to ensure transit exists as a sustainable transportation alternative. For overall success to be achieved, Sumter must make a commitment to provide and support

alternative modes of travel. Efforts independent of SCDOT and SWRTA must be initiated to promote mobility choices throughout the City and County.

Strategies for transit extend beyond the realm of what typically is considered transit planning. Many of the strategies presented throughout the *SUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan* can help make transit a viable alternative for residents and visitors. Improving roadways and creating a more connected roadway network can allow transit vehicles to service people more efficiently. Constructing a consistent bicycle and pedestrian network can help residents move between bus stops and their final destination. Coordinating the land use and transportation decision-making process ensure new development – whether roads, homes, offices, or shops – support existing and future transit service.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, transit enhances the access and mobility for those who have no other transportation options. The transit-dependent population will continue to grow as the Baby Boomer generation ages. At the same time, the City continues to reach out to the senior population and market the area as an attractive place for retirees. Improvements to transit service will help make the area a more attractive location for retirees.

Perhaps the two most critical elements for transit to flourish in the region is progressive planning and dedicated funding. A more detailed transit master plan can explore the underlying issues presented in this chapter and help develop comprehensive strategies to ensure the fulfillment of long-term needs of choice and captive riders. Likewise, local and regional planning efforts should continue to leverage on-going statewide transit planning efforts. As for funding, SWRTA notes the region often does not pursue federal grants due to a lack of local and state match funds. Dedicated funding for transit must be emphasized.