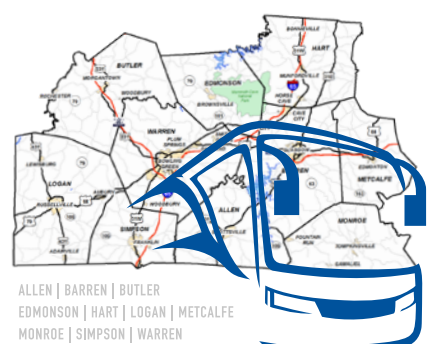




Prepared by
Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

BRADD REGIONAL TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY SUMMARY PLAN

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2023



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Talking Transit

From **March 10 to April 7, 2023**, a public survey was conducted to collect input on the needs, perceptions, and the future of transit from residents throughout the BRADD region. **289** individuals representing **all ten BRADD counties** participated in the survey which was offered in English and Spanish language versions and accessed through on-line and hard copies. Interviews were also conducted with **twelve stakeholders** in the region who included transit providers, local officials, and representatives serving clients who might be transit dependent.

As we talked about transit with the BRADD community, this is what we heard:

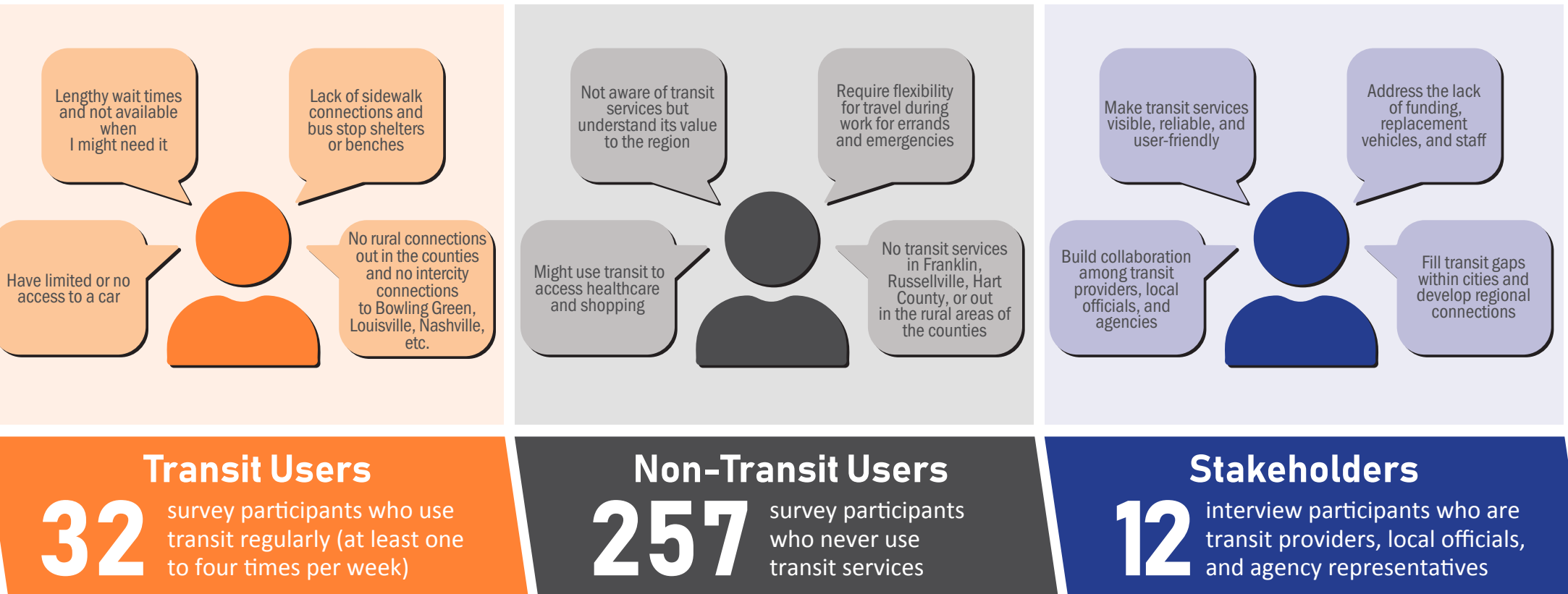
BRADD Regional Transit Vision

Provide a sustainable, accessible transit system that delivers consistent, timely, and reliable connections based upon the current and projected needs across the communities in the BRADD region.

BRADD Regional Transit Goals

The goals which support this vision are:

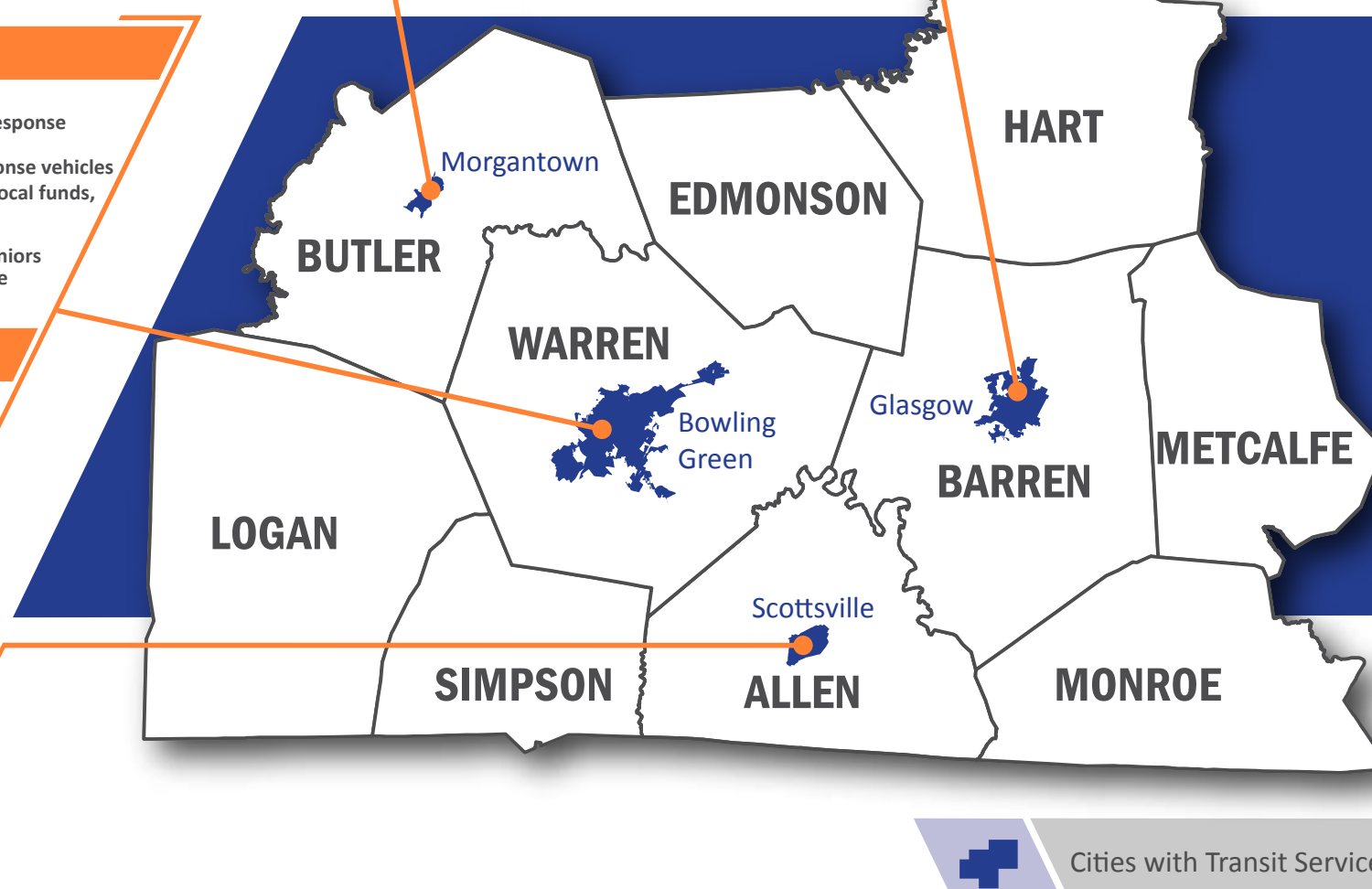
1. **Promote and expand community awareness** of the available transit options for connecting users and potential users to their needs within the context of their life journeys.
2. **Encourage regional collaboration and cooperation** among transit providers, local officials and groups or agencies representing transit consumers.
3. **Expand transit services** to address existing gaps within and among the BRADD communities.
4. **Provide connectivity to service centers** such as specialized healthcare, state and federal government offices, and other passenger transportation modes located in Bowling Green, Glasgow, Nashville, and Louisville.
5. **Address the need for flexible and timely connections** to employment centers.



TRANSIT AGENCY PROFILES: Existing Service

GObg
Start of Service / 2003 Type of Service / Fixed route & demand-response Service Area / Bowling Green city limits Fleet Size / 10 buses & 6 demand-response vehicles Funding / Federal grants, state funds, local funds, fare revenue Passengers/Year / 55,500 Fare / Free Service Hours / Adults: \$2, Children 7-11: \$1, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities: Free Mon.-Fri. 6:30 am to 5:49 pm
Topper Transit (WKU)
Start of Service / 2006 Type of Service / Fixed route & demand-response Service Area / WKU Campus & Saturday shuttle off-campus Fleet Size / 10 buses Funding / Private organization Passengers/Year / 385,600 Fare / Free Service Hours / Evening: Mon.-Fri. 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Sun. 4:30 pm to 9:00 pm Paratransit: Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am to 4:30 pm
Scottsville City Transit
Start of Service / 2019 Type of Service / Deviated Fixed-Route Service Area / Scottsville City Limits Fleet Size / 112-seat bus Funding / Federal grants & local funds Passengers/Year / 2,000 Fare / Free Service Hours / Mon.-Fri. 7:00 am to 6:00 pm No transit service from 11:30 am to Noon

MOGO Shuttle
Start of Service / 2019 Type of Service / Demand-response Service Area / Morgantown City Limits Fleet Size / 1 paratransit bus Funding / Local funds Passengers/Year / 1,500 Fare / Free Service Hours / Mon.-Fri. 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Sat. 8:00 am to Noon
Glasgow Transit System
Start of Service / Before 2001 Type of Service / Deviated fixed-route Service Area / Glasgow city limits Fleet Size / 2 buses Funding / Federal grants, local funds Passengers/Year / 6,500 Fare / Free Service Hours / Mon.-Fri. 6:45 am to 6:30 pm



Cities with Transit Service

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND SERVICE GAPS

Access and Connectivity

Insufficient Bike/Ped Infrastructure
The region must work to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can adequately support transit service. Survey respondents noted that the lack of infrastructure is a barrier to using transit and that some boarding areas are not accessible or hazardous.

Disconnected Low-Density Rural Areas
The region must work to provide service to rural residents in low-density areas, which are usually underserved by transit services and are home to lower-income and older residents who cannot always afford to drive or are physically unable to drive.

Limited Public Transit Service Hours of Operation
Survey respondents would like to see service expanded to include earlier and later hours as well as the addition of weekend services, with a special emphasis on servicing 3rd shift workers and expanding the service hours of paratransit.

Lack of Interconnectivity Among Existing Systems
The current public transit systems in the BRADD region are disconnected, with little service coverage throughout the entire region, and do not service many common points of interest, basic services, or connect to cities outside the region like Louisville and Nashville.

Limited Public Transit Resources

Limited Funding Opportunities for Transit Implementation and Expansion
Day-to-day operations for public transportation require a commensurate investment in funding to buy vehicles, pay drivers and staff, and complete routine maintenance on vehicles and property. As a result, transit agencies need to carefully balance how much service they provide and in what areas with their limited budgets. A lack of funding can prevent an agency from expanding their service area or increasing frequency on existing routes.

Lack of Operational Assets and ADA Components Assets
There are currently not enough employees to effectively operate the transit systems. There is also a need for more public transit vehicles and for the current fleets of transit agencies to have the ability to accommodate ADA passengers.

Lack of Community Awareness of Public Transit

Untapped Communities for Potential Ridership
There are untapped population groups, such as college students, low-English proficiency individuals, and plain sect communities, that could take advantage of public transit but may not be aware of the services offered or the locations serviced.

Lack of Public Transit Service Education
There is a lack of community awareness among the public, local officials, and even among public transit providers regarding the available transportation options in the region. There is also a perception of public transit being "for someone else," coupled with a reluctance to use public transit.

Improve Advertisement of Transit Services

Increasing the attractiveness and awareness of transit services requires developing a marketing strategy for existing transit providers and human services organizations. These strategies can educate both current and potential transit users about existing services and how they benefit their communities. Additional collaboration with refugee resettlement agencies and religious minority organizations could aid in developing transit service literature, advertisements, and wayfinding signage that are easily comprehensible for minority groups.

Create Incentives to Using Public Transit
Familiarizing and incentivizing the public to ride public transit should be a priority. This goal can be attained by implementing a region-wide policy that allows free rides after a set number of trips. Local and regional employment centers could create employer-sponsored transit passes, which would encourage private and public sector collaboration while increasing ridership.

Establish Regional Microtransit
Fulfilling the needs of all regional residents' calls for non-fixed route transit services to connect low-density rural areas to county seats, employment centers, and essential services. BRADD should cooperate with and support organizations like Community Action of Southern Kentucky (CASOKY) to identify sources of funding and establish regional microtransit service.

Create Regional Transit Hubs and Coordinate Across Transit Agencies
Establishing a regional intercity service to connect urban hubs like Bowling Green, Glasgow, Scottsville, and Morgantown is a top priority for residents and stakeholders in the BRADD region. Steering committees should be formed to identify and refine routes and coordinate cross-agency cooperation. Additional long-term goals include creating a pilot project for monthly trips to Nashville and Louisville destinations to determine possible demand.

Support Regional Passenger Rail Connections

There is significant interest in reestablishing passenger rail service in the region. As of 2023, the Tennessee Department of Transportation is conducting a statewide study to assess the potential of creating new passenger rail connections between Louisville and Nashville. BRADD could work with rail officials in Tennessee and Kentucky to support such a route making stops in the study area.

Expand Sources of Revenue
Expanding or improving service is challenging without reliable and sustainable revenue sources. Because of this, developing a plan for creating revenue by selling advertisements on transit vehicles, shelters, websites, and more is a necessity. Transit agencies like MOGO Shuttle can also work with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to utilize available matching federal grants for services that already have significant local funding.

Consider Transit Costs an Investment
An American Public Transportation Association study reveals that every \$1 invested in transit generates a \$4 return on investment. The values of homes located near transit are 24% higher than homes located in other areas. The average cost of a medium-duty small transit vehicle is \$125,000, while standard-sized diesel buses cost approximately \$500,000. Since the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) covers the majority (~80%) of capital costs required to establish transportation service including vehicles, equipment, and facilities, this translates to a local cost-share of the small bus would be \$25,000 each, or \$100,000 for each standard-sized bus. Despite the noteworthy initial costs, transit should be viewed as a long-term investment that benefits the public good.

ACTION ITEMS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Short-Term (1 - 2 Years) 2024-2025

- Improve Awareness**
- Create a communications plan to develop an informative campaign. **\$**
 - Develop a Regional Transit Advisory Working Group to meet quarterly and to report the BRADD Regional Transportation Committee. **\$**
 - Work to make transit service information more user-friendly by creating an on-line clearinghouse (website or StoryMap) of regional transit options. **\$**
 - Utilize multiple outreach and advertisement options, using traditional and social media and hardcopy materials. **\$**
 - Involve more county and city officials in the transit planning process, especially in the expansion of services to fill existing gaps. **\$**
- Adjust Schedules**
- Connect and start discussions with healthcare providers and employment centers, involving them in the development of more aligned transit connections. **\$**
 - Work with employment centers to determine the need and interest among their employees for transportation, destinations, and alignment with work shifts. **\$**
 - Find partners to provide vehicles for shuttle services such as 15-passenger vans. **\$**
 - Engage county industrial development agencies in transit planning process. **\$**
- Establish Microtransit**
- Investigate possible funding strategies to create and operate micro-transit connections to Nashville, Louisville, and other regional hubs. **\$**
 - Develop pilot project for monthly trips to Nashville and Louisville destinations to determine possible demand. **\$**
 - Explore ride sharing opportunities within each county. **\$**

Mid-Term (3 - 5 Years) 2026-2029

- Reconfigure Routes**
- Collaborate with internal and external transit systems to create a network of connected stops that allow passengers to transfer between systems. **\$\$\$**
- Collaborate across Communities**
- Engage county and city governments to provide their ideas for transit services and input on how they can financially support and promote transit. **\$**
 - Investigate potential lessons learned for regional cooperation; such as Foothills Community Action Partnership, Fulton County Transit Authority, and Rural Transit Enterprises Coordinated, Inc. (RTEC). **\$**
 - Explore creating a funding match program from county and city funds and encourage local match generation. **\$**
- Collaborate across Transit Providers**
- Work to unify software and databases to enable coordinated transit bus dispatching. **\$**
 - Establish GPS tracking for existing transit systems to better inform riders and help manage daily service. **\$\$\$**
 - Coordinate vehicle and equipment purchases to reduce capital costs among individual transit services. **\$\$**

Long-Term (Beyond 5 Years) 2030+

- Collaborate across Communities**
- Create a resolution for local governments to adopt, expressing interest in creating a Regional Transit Authority. **\$**
 - Create a BRADD regional transit authority which would have a third-party management entity. **\$\$\$\$**
- Expand Regional and National Connectivity**
- Create a transit hub network, especially for counties that are not served by transit, that would connect into Bowling Green. **\$\$\$**
 - Recruit a sustainable national bus carrier system to provide stops within the BRADD region. **\$\$**
- Support Passenger Rail**
- Support the development of a link to a national passenger rail network such as AMTRAK. **\$\$**
 - Coordinate with TDOT and KYTC about passenger rail between Nashville and Louisville, helping to identify local funding sources and advocating for stations in the BRADD area. **\$**

