



VALLEY TRANSIT

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026 - DRAFT

Prepared by:



**East Central
Wisconsin**
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION



Valley Transit
CONNECTING THE FOX CITIES



Table of Contents

- Section 1: Introduction 5
 - Planning Process and Report Contents 6
- Section 2: Key Findings..... 7
 - Existing Conditions 8
 - Major Destinations 10
 - Current Challenges 12
 - Stakeholder Engagement..... 14
 - Summary of Priorities 16
- Section 3: Recommendations..... 17
 - Scenario Approach 18
 - Scenario 1 – Near-Term 19
 - Scenario 2 – Medium-Term 24
 - Scenario 3 – Long-Term..... 31
- Implementation Plan 35



List of Figures

- Figure 1. Planning Process and Technical Reports 6
- Figure 2. Key Statistics – Existing Conditions 8
- Figure 3. Valley Transit Weekday Ridership by Stop – 2025 9
- Figure 4. Key Statistics – Major Destinations 10
- Figure 5. Minimum Travel Time to Grocery Stores – Existing Transit Network..... 11
- Figure 6. Example Infrastructure Improvements – Grand Chute Walmart..... 12
- Figure 7. Stakeholder Engagement Events and Materials..... 14
- Figure 8. Proposed Route 2 19
- Figure 9. Proposed Route 15..... 20
- Figure 10. Proposed Route 20 21
- Figure 11. Proposed Route 30 22
- Figure 12. Proposed Route 4..... 24
- Figure 13. Proposed Route 5..... 25
- Figure 14. Proposed Route 41 26
- Figure 15. Proposed Frequency Improvements 28
- Figure 16. Current VT Connector and VT II Service Areas..... 31
- Figure 17. A New Avenue Project Corridor..... 32
- Figure 18. Example Boulevard with Urban Mobility Enhancements..... 32
- Figure 19. Appleton Airport and Greenville Service Expansion Considerations..... 33

List of Tables

- Table 1. Summary of Key Findings - Existing Conditions..... 8
- Table 2. Summary of Key Findings – Major Destinations..... 10
- Table 3. Summary of Key Findings – Community Considerations..... 12
- Table 4. Summary of Key Findings – Administrative and Policy Considerations 13
- Table 5. Zero-Emission Vehicle Technology Comparison 13
- Table 7. Summary of Key Findings - Stakeholder Engagement 15
- Table 8. Near-Term Recommendations 23
- Table 9. Proposed Frequency Improvements..... 27
- Table 10. Proposed Span of Service Improvements 29
- Table 11. Medium-Term Recommendations..... 30
- Table 12. Long-Term Recommendations 34
- Table 13. Implementation Timeline and Resource Needs..... 35



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Valley Transit's 2026 Transit Development Plan outlines the new vision for transit in the Fox Cities through 2030. This document summarizes the results of the planning process and recommendations for future improvements.

INTRODUCTION

The 2026 Transit Development Plan (TDP) outlines Valley Transit’s planned service improvements for the next five years (2026-2030). Developed in partnership with the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC), the TDP documents the current state of the Valley Transit bus system, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and makes recommendations for improving transit service for riders.

The development of Valley Transit’s 2026 TDP took place between April 2025 and March 2026. Initial phases of the project evaluated existing service performance, travel patterns, and current challenges facing Valley Transit. The project team used findings from these analyses to develop strategies to improve the system, including the following:

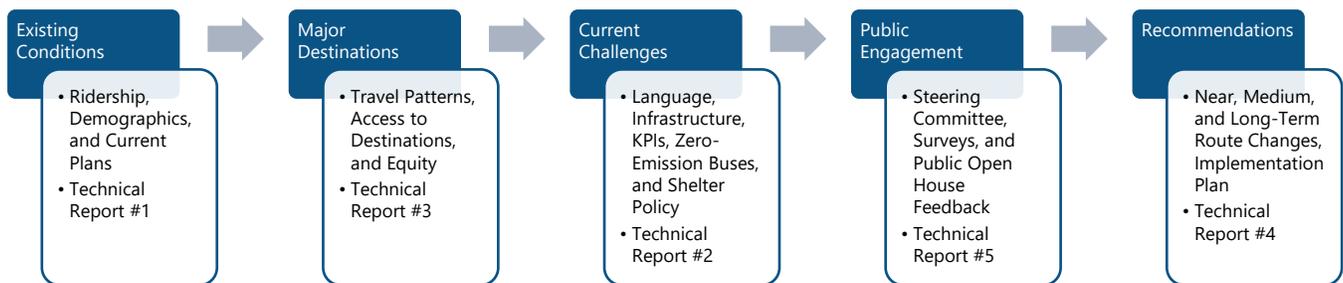
- Improving frequency and reliability on high-ridership routes
- Restoring service levels reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Improving access to essential destinations such as grocery stores and employment centers
- Balancing geographic coverage with travel speed and operational efficiency
- Accounting for workforce availability as a key constraint affecting the scope and timing of future improvements

Building on these strategies, the TDP organizes recommendations into near-, medium-, and long-term scenarios based on resource requirements.

Planning Process and Report Contents

Work included five key topic areas: Existing Conditions, Major Destinations, Current Challenges, Public Engagement, and Recommendations. Each major topic area is addressed in a separate technical report, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Planning Process and Technical Reports



This TDP document summarizes the contents of the prior technical reports in a Key Findings section, followed by a detailed review of the final recommendations and implementation plan.

These elements provide a structured and realistic framework for guiding Valley Transit’s service decisions over time, ensuring that future investments are grounded in documented needs, operational feasibility, and community priorities.



SECTION 2: KEY FINDINGS

The following section summarizes key findings from each element of the TDP process: Existing Conditions, Major Destinations, Current Challenges, and Stakeholder Engagement. Taken together, these findings informed the development of recommendations.

Existing Conditions

The TDP process began with a detailed examination of the existing performance of the Valley Transit system, as well as the people, jobs, and communities that are served. Consideration was also given to ongoing and previous planning efforts by ECWRPC, Valley Transit, and partner communities. Findings from these topics are documented in *Technical Report #1: Current System Assessment*.

Figure 2 shows key statistics from the existing conditions analysis. Valley Transit’s current system serves over 2,000 weekday riders and operates 18 bus routes across 9 participating communities, including Appleton, Buchanan, Grand Chute, Fox Crossing, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Little Chute, Menasha, and Neenah.

Figure 2. Key Statistics – Existing Conditions

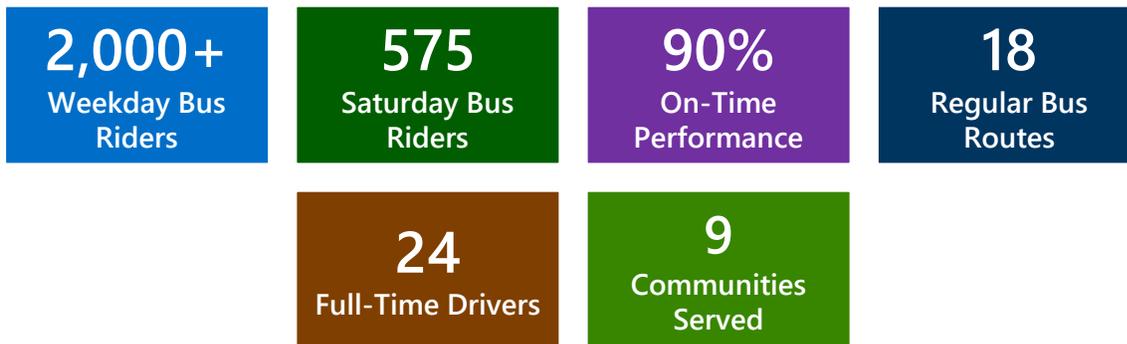


Table 1 summarizes findings from Technical Report #1 across each topic area. These findings informed development of subsequent analysis, as well as the recommendations featured later in the TDP.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings - Existing Conditions

Topic Area	Key Findings
System Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 95% of Valley Transit ridership occurs on weekdays, but demand is growing outside traditional commute hours. High-ridership routes include Routes 12, 15, 20, and 30, while Routes 2, 9, 31, and 32 see lower utilization. Key transfer locations include downtown Appleton, Fox River Mall, and downtown Neenah.
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most high-need populations (low-income, non-white, and zero-car) are served by the existing transit network. Gaps in service include areas that have seen recent development (including along I-41 and in Grand Chute) as well as non-participating communities (Greenville, Combined Locks).
Municipal, County, and Regional Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local plans call for promoting denser development near transit. Transportation improvements focus on complete streets and active transportation (biking, walking, and transit). Regional plans support funding accessibility upgrades, vehicle replacement, technology, and major facility projects for Valley Transit.

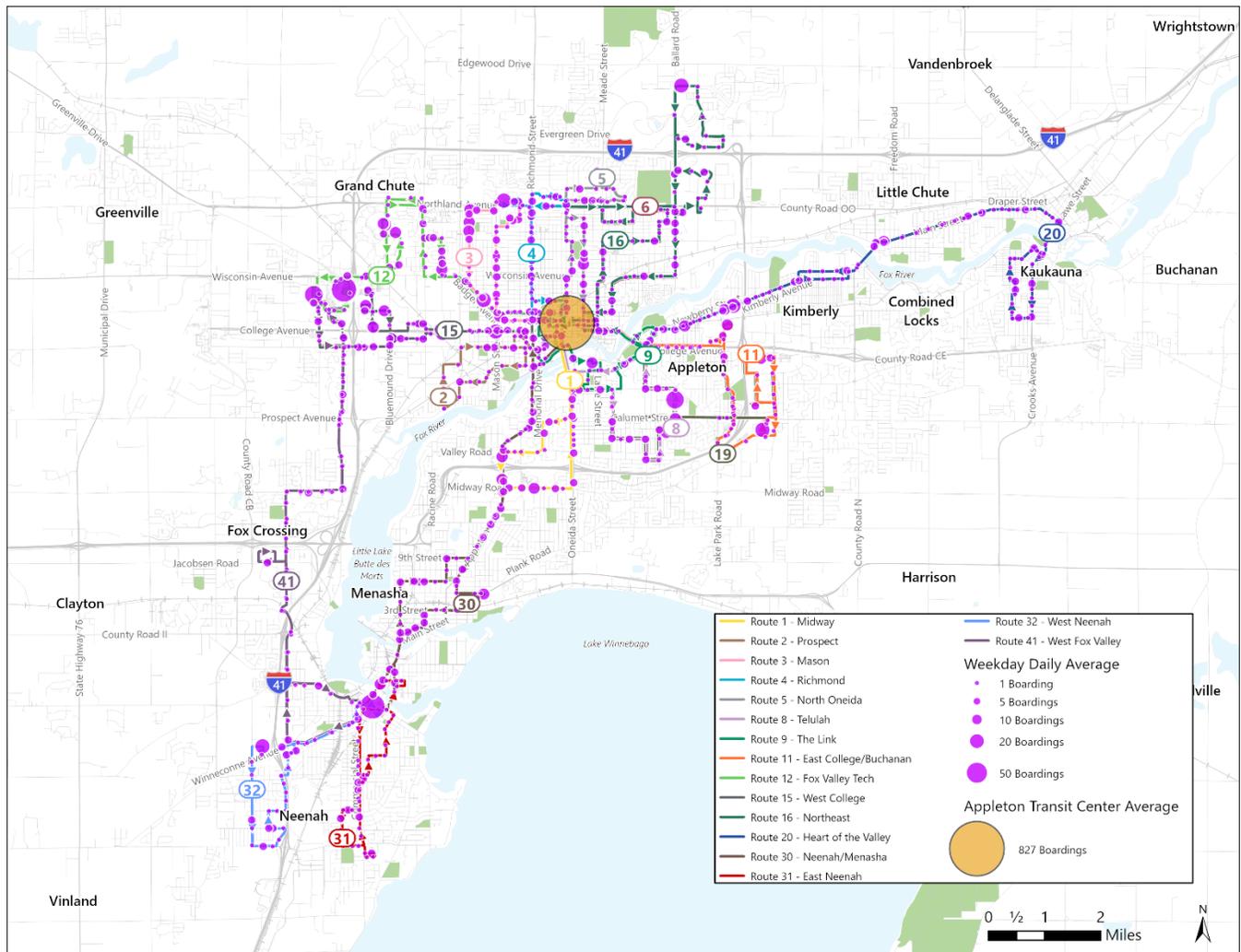
Topic Area	Key Findings
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Previous Valley Transit Plans

- Workforce shortages limit Valley Transit’s ability to expand bus service.
- Future recommendations must account for workforce constraints.
- Potential improvement strategies include technology upgrades, alternative service models, marketing, and improved engagement.

Figure 3 shows Valley Transit’s current route network, along with weekday ridership by stop. Most ridership occurs around downtown Appleton, with additional clusters near Fox River Mall and downtown Neenah.

Figure 3. Valley Transit Weekday Ridership by Stop – 2025



Major Destinations

Building on the existing conditions documented in Technical Report #1, the project team developed an assessment of major destinations, travel patterns, and equity and accessibility analysis. Findings from this analysis are documented in *Technical Report #3: Major Destinations and Trip Generators*.

Figure 4 shows key statistics from the major destinations analysis. The average Fox Cities resident can reach over 6,700 jobs via transit, and transit access is even better for low-income residents, people of color, and zero-car households.

Figure 4. Key Statistics – Major Destinations



Table 2 summarizes findings from Technical Report #3 across each topic area. Analysis of major destinations was based on local data provided by ECWRPC, as well as commute patterns from regional and national sources. The equity and accessibility analysis explored how current Fox Cities residents can reach community resources using Valley Transit’s current route network.

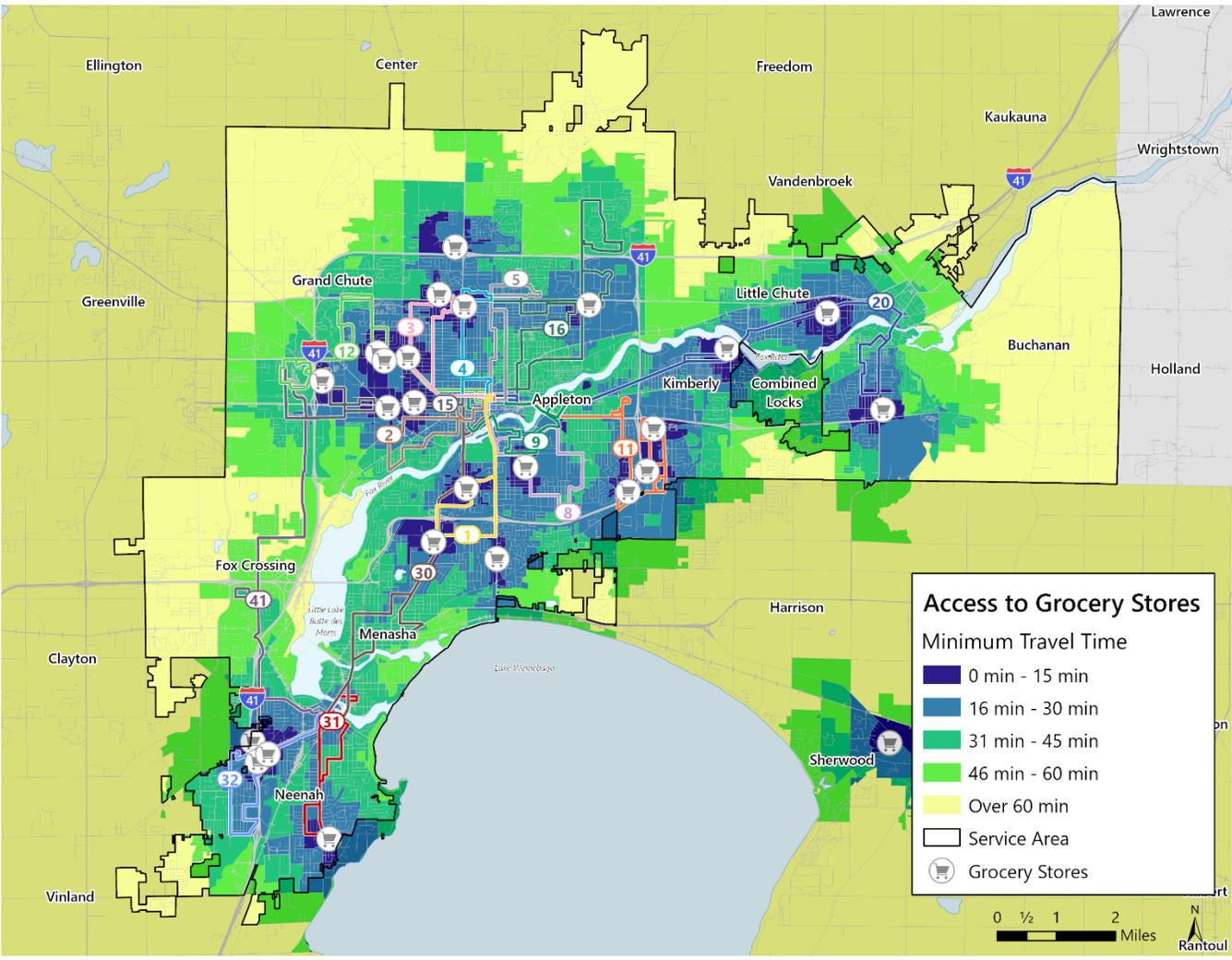
Table 2. Summary of Key Findings – Major Destinations

Topic	Key Findings
Major Trip Generators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The highest concentrations of employment and community facilities are within the City of Appleton. Most retail and healthcare destinations are spread evenly across the region, creating travel demand throughout the Fox Cities. Grocery access is uneven, with some stores unserved; no grocery store is present in downtown Appleton. Outlying destinations in Town of Grand Chute, Village of Kimberly, and Village of Fox Crossing are more difficult to serve with fixed-route transit.
Commuting Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Appleton attracts commuters from across the Fox Cities, but fewer people are commuting since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reverse commuting and regional travel have increased, with more workers traveling from one city to another for work.
Travel Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most trips in the region are short in distance and duration. Overall travel flows are oriented toward Appleton, with major corridors connecting Appleton, Neenah, and Grand Chute. Non-work trips (such as shopping, healthcare, and school) account for a large share of regional travel, indicating a need for all-purpose transit.

Topic	Key Findings
Equity and Accessibility Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fixed-route network provides meaningful and generally equitable access to essential destinations, especially for zero-car households. • Increasing frequency would improve accessibility across all trip types. • Route alignment changes should consider walking time to minimize overall travel time for riders.

Figure 5 shows the minimum travel time to grocery stores using Valley Transit’s current route network. Additional analyses explored access to jobs, parks, hospitals, and educational facilities.

Figure 5. Minimum Travel Time to Grocery Stores – Existing Transit Network



Current Challenges

To supplement analysis of existing conditions and major destinations, Valley Transit requested an assessment of various current challenges facing the agency, including community considerations and administrative and policy considerations. Findings related to each topic are addressed in *Technical Report #2: Review of Current Challenges*.

Community considerations explored include infrastructure and land use, as well as language assistance. These topics rely on Valley Transit’s coordination with local and municipal partners, who share responsibility for implementing solutions that can benefit riders. These topics are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Key Findings – Community Considerations

Topic	Key Findings
Infrastructure and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit service and daily operations are closely influenced by local land use decisions, roadway design, and pedestrian infrastructure. • New developments may anticipate transit service, but site design does not always accommodate bus operations or accessible passenger facilities. • Pedestrian infrastructure is often a limiting factor when evaluating bus stop locations or route adjustments (see Figure 6). • Effective coordination depends on early communication and clearly defined processes for incorporating transit considerations into development and roadway planning.
Language Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley Transit provides website translation, printed Spanish materials, multilingual travel training, and Language Line support. • Riders frequently require assistance navigating broader community systems such as housing, healthcare, and social services. • Language access is a community-wide challenge that requires partnership. • Automated translation tools are not always effective for less common languages or dialects, underscoring the importance of direct person-to-person communication.

Figure 6. Example Infrastructure Improvements – Grand Chute



Before Improvements: No Shelter or Sidewalk



After: Shelter and ADA-Compliant Sidewalk

Administrative and policy considerations explored include bus shelter placement, automated passenger counters, zero-emission vehicles, and key performance indicators. Valley Transit’s work on these topics will enhance its ability to meet riders’ needs, improve data management and reporting, and pursue sustainability goals consistent with local and regional plans. These topics are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Key Findings – Administrative and Policy Considerations

Topic	Key Findings
Bus Shelter Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that Valley Transit set a minimum ridership threshold for shelter installation, such as 10 boardings per day, and prioritize upgrading current shelter locations where ridership warrants. Shelter installation decisions must balance ridership with ADA accessibility, right-of-way constraints, and coordination with municipal partners.
Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APC data used for National Transit Database reporting must be statistically validated through FTA certification procedures. Valley Transit is in the process of pursuing APC certification.
Zero-Emission Vehicle Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery-electric and fuel cell-electric vehicles present different operational tradeoffs related to range, refueling time, and infrastructure requirements. Both technologies require substantial capital investment and facility planning prior to implementation. Valley Transit should continue to assess available technologies as it works toward a zero-emission fleet transition.
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valley Transit’s current KPIs align with peer agencies’ reporting standards. KPIs and performance thresholds should be consistent over multiple years to allow for analysis of trend performance.

Table 5 compares the zero-emission vehicle technologies Valley Transit is considering for implementation.

Table 5. Zero-Emission Vehicle Technology Comparison

Category	Battery-Electric Vehicles (BEVs)	Fuel Cell-Electric Vehicles (FCEVs)
Energy Source	Stored electricity in onboard batteries	Hydrogen gas converted to electricity via fuel cells
Vehicle Range	~150–200 miles (new models up to 300 miles)	~275–350 miles
Refueling / Recharging Time	Hours (unless using fast or mid-route charging)	~10 minutes (similar to diesel)
Infrastructure Needs	Charging stations, grid upgrades, possible solar canopies	Hydrogen production, storage, and fueling stations
Cold Weather Performance	Reduced efficiency; higher energy consumption	Minimal performance loss

Table 6. Summary of Key Findings - Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Group	Key Findings
<p>Internal Engagement: Staff Workshop, Survey & Ongoing Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley Transit staff identified specific locations where service changes may improve reliability or access to employment. • Travel trainers highlighted usability challenges such as long service headways, difficulty navigating the system, and barriers faced by new riders. • Operators noted specific operational reliability issues including tight schedules, missed transfers, and the need for additional running time. • Strengths of the system include maintaining strong customer service and driver support, in addition to a strong travel trainer program, each of which are important parts of the rider’s experience.
<p>Steering Committee: Four (4) In-Person Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee members helped identify key service priorities, including improvements to service frequency, extending service hours, and expanding service to new destinations. • Members discussed challenges affecting transit service including land use and infrastructure coordination and language assistance needs, identifying partnership opportunities with Valley Transit. • The Committee provided feedback on draft service concepts to aid in refining route recommendations. • Members also discussed implementation considerations including workforce constraints and long-term planning issues.
<p>Public Engagement: Project Website, Surveys, and Public Open House</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early public comments identified priorities such as improving service frequency, expanding the span of service, and providing transit access to new destinations in the Fox Cities. • The public identified specific destinations where improved transit access is desired, such as employment centers, grocery stores, and emerging development areas. • Riders generally support the proposed service changes intended to improve frequency on high-ridership routes and improve systemwide reliability.

Summary of Priorities

Taken together, each analysis area yielded several high-level themes illustrating the top priorities for improvement in Valley Transit's current system. These needs uncovered throughout the planning process present a clear picture of areas to be addressed by the project's recommendations.



Access to Major Destinations

Maintaining and improving access to locations such as jobs, grocery stores, and medical facilities was reported in public and stakeholder engagement as a top priority for the TDP and echoed by Valley Transit staff. *Technical Report #3: Major Destinations and Trip Generators* supported this finding by highlighting disparities between private automobile and public transit access, while also noting multiple grocery stores just outside the reach of the current network. Project recommendations will modify routes to serve as many major destinations as possible while being mindful of resource constraints.



Reliability

Valley Transit operators and travel trainers reported challenges related to on-time performance on certain routes, caused in part by route length relative to scheduled runtime. This creates documented challenges with making transfers. Data from *Technical Report #1: Current System Assessment* showed challenges in this area on Routes 12, 15, 20, 30, and 41. Valley Transit staff echoed these concerns and intends project recommendations to aid in addressing this challenge.



Frequency

Both the 2019 Valley Transit TDP and the 2022-2023 Post-Pandemic Study identified weekday frequency improvements on the system's highest-ridership routes (Routes 12, 15, 20, and 30) as a priority. Additionally, the 2023-2024 customer survey further reinforced frequency as the most requested service improvement, and both public and Steering Committee engagement during this project have consistently requested improvements to bus frequency. Investing in frequency will be a core component of this project's recommendations pending future workforce availability and funding partner approval.



Span of Service

Restoring the span of service was identified as a top priority in the 2023-2024 customer survey. In mid-2024, Valley Transit reduced weekday and Saturday service hours due to workforce challenges. Restoring service hours is a top priority of Valley Transit staff and the project Steering Committee, representing a key step toward returning the system to pre-pandemic service levels and improving overall usability. Project recommendations will include phasing strategies to address this system need.



Service Area Expansion

Valley Transit periodically receives requests for transit service from communities outside its current fixed-route service area. Community members have also reported this need during project engagement efforts. Expanding to new areas will require new municipal funding agreements and coordination on infrastructure projects not overseen by Valley Transit. While beyond the five-year horizon of this plan, project recommendations will address the potential for these future service concepts and identify topics for future planning.



SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

This section documents the key recommendations of the 2026 Valley Transit TDP. Recommendations are organized into three scenarios based on resource requirements and the expected timeline for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The early phases of the TDP included analyses of existing service and ridership data, demographic characteristics, major destinations, regional travel patterns, and accessibility. Building on the conclusions gathered in these efforts, as well as opportunities and concerns identified by Valley Transit staff, operators, customers, and municipal funding partners, the project team explored service modifications that meet the goals and needs of the community today and into the future.

In the development of route concepts, all transit agencies must balance competing priorities within resource constraints. As part of the TDP, Valley Transit considered multiple measures of transit effectiveness, working to balance priorities such as access to destinations, geographic coverage, potential ridership, travel speed, and service reliability.

As discussed in previous technical memos, Valley Transit's most significant resource constraint since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic has been a driver shortage. While Valley Transit has worked to address driver recruitment and retention by improving driver pay, offering additional training, and modifying work schedules, the driver shortage continues to limit Valley Transit's restoration of service cut in 2020 and 2024.

To account for this constraint, Valley Transit considers *current service* as the baseline for future planning in this TDP. Current service is delivered by 24 drivers, as opposed to the pre-pandemic staffing level of 36 drivers. Fixed-route service recommendations accordingly prioritize investments that Valley Transit can implement as new drivers are hired, with a goal of reaching pre-pandemic staffing levels.

Scenario Approach

To organize project recommendations based on both the required level of investment and planned implementation timelines, the project team has developed three scenarios, intended to be implemented sequentially:

- **Near-term recommendations** focus on low-cost route modifications that address immediate operational challenges, safety concerns, and planned roadway changes. These changes are designed to be feasible within one to two years.
- **Medium-term recommendations** include more robust route changes, as well as improvements to frequency and service hours. These changes will depend on Valley Transit's continued workforce recovery and funding partner approval, with the goal of implementation within three to five years.
- **Long-term recommendations** identify potential service expansions and corridor-based improvements that would require additional planning, new partnerships, and service area expansion. These concepts are presented to inform future discussions even though implementation may extend beyond the five-year horizon of this TDP.

Together, these recommendations provide a flexible roadmap for advancing Valley Transit's service over time while remaining responsive to operational constraints and community priorities. All timelines and resource estimates are subject to change based on workforce availability, funding decisions, and evolving community priorities.

Scenario 1 – Near-Term

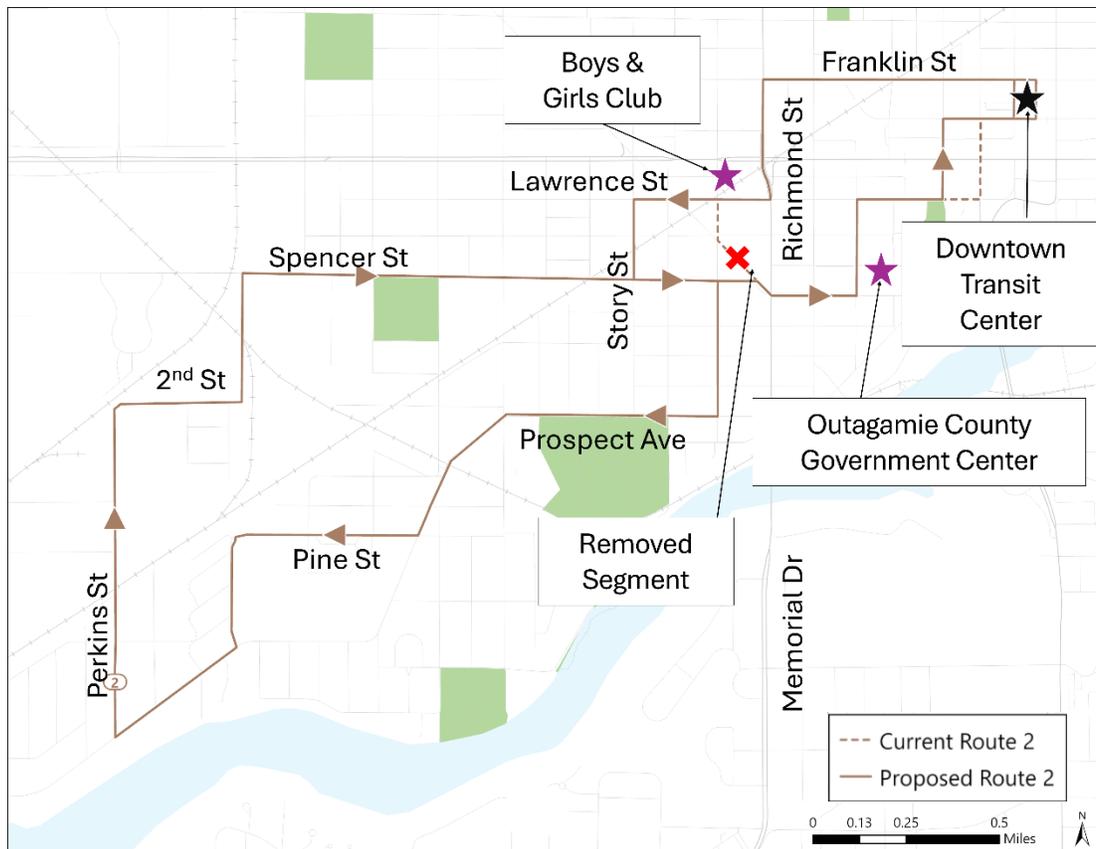
Near-term recommendations are intended for implementation within 1 year and consist of low-cost or resource-neutral changes that can be implemented with minimal additional personnel or vehicles. These recommendations focus on addressing known operational challenges, improving safety and reliability, and maintaining or improving access to key destinations.

Route 2

The City of Appleton has scheduled a reconstruction of Badger Avenue for 2026-2027. The proposed street design requires removal of the current Route 2 stop at the intersection of Badger Avenue, Locust Street, and 8th Street, necessitating a route change between Lawrence Street and Spencer Street. This site is identified in Figure 8. In addition to accommodating this reconstruction, this route modification presents an opportunity to simplify the existing alignment while preserving access to key destinations.

The proposed rerouting removes Route 2 from Badger Avenue through this segment and instead utilizes Franklin Street, Richmond Street, Lawrence Street, and Story Street on the outbound trip departing from the Transit Center, while maintaining the existing routing on the inbound trip. This change preserves access to two major destinations currently served by the route, the Boys & Girls Club and the Outagamie County Government Center (also served every 30 minutes by Route 9). The revised alignment shown in Figure 8 avoids conflict with the future Badger Avenue roadway design, simplifies the route's design, and results in a net reduction in route length of approximately 0.4 miles per route run.

Figure 8. Proposed Route 2



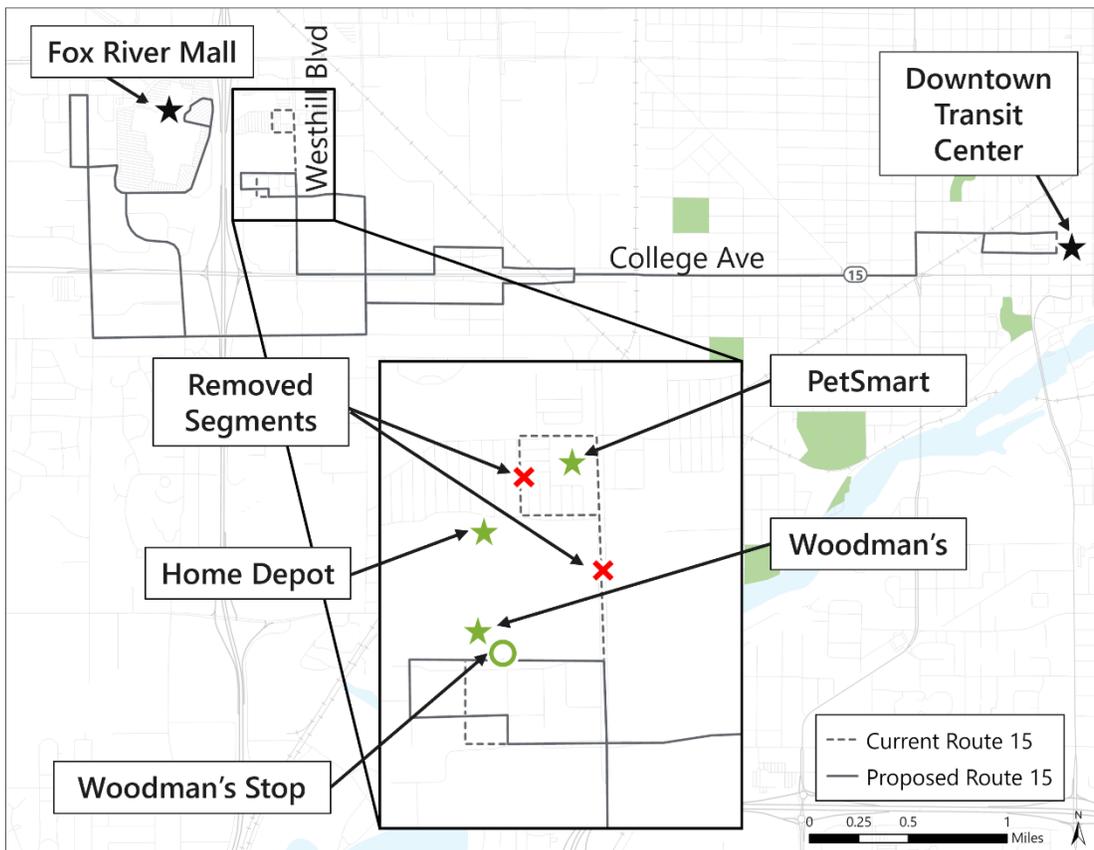
Route 15

Service on North Westhill Boulevard has presented ongoing safety and reliability concerns, particularly related to bus movements through the Woodman's parking lot. Route 15 currently experiences delays and conflicts in this area due to high vehicle and pedestrian volumes, multiple access points, and the location of its current turning movements at busy areas in the parking lot. At the same time, maintaining access to Woodman's remains a priority given that it is a major grocery destination.

In addition, Route 15 has the highest ridership in Valley Transit's fixed route system and is currently at the limit of what it can accomplish in its scheduled 55-minute round-trip runtime. The route experiences persistent speed and reliability challenges, as it serves multiple busy locations throughout its run and is tasked with making several complex movements.

To address these challenges, the recommended route modifications shown in Figure 9 preserve the existing Woodman's stop location while adjusting how the bus circulates within the parking lot to minimize conflict points and simplify vehicle movements. Rather than exiting through the parking lot's busiest interior aisle, the bus would use the most direct low-conflict path available by continuing past the current stop location to the western edge of the parking lot, reducing interactions with vehicles and pedestrians on its way to exit onto Westhill Boulevard. In conjunction with this change, direct service to PetSmart and Home Depot would be removed, as these stops generate very low ridership and require additional deviation and turning movements that negatively impact overall travel time and reliability for the route.

Figure 9. Proposed Route 15



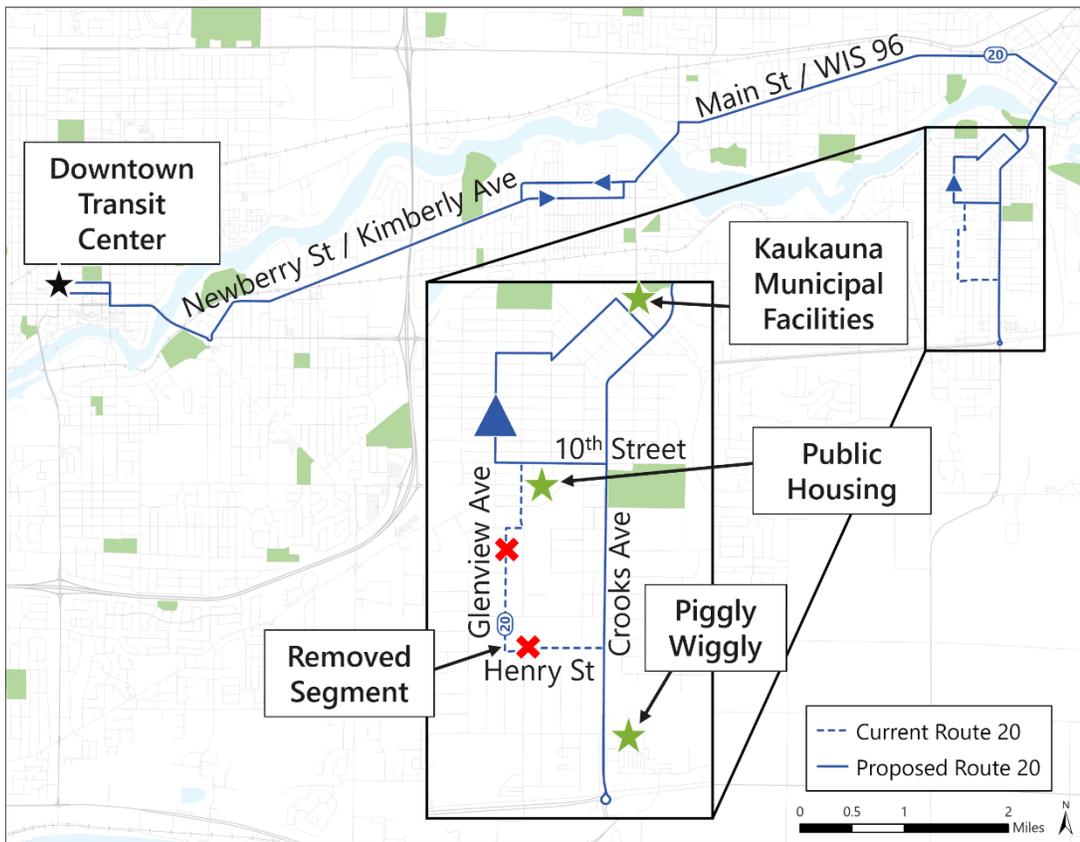
Route 20

The City of Kaukauna has requested Valley Transit service to the Piggly Wiggly location just north of the intersection of Crooks Street and East College Avenue. The specific site is labeled in Figure 10. Because Route 20 currently makes a relatively large loop just north of this location, extending service to the grocery store presents challenges due to the route's length and scheduling constraints. Any addition of new service on the route requires careful consideration of tradeoffs between coverage and on-time performance.

The recommended change, shown in detail in Figure 10, extends Route 20 to serve Piggly Wiggly by continuing southbound on Crooks Avenue, using the roundabout at East College Avenue to turn around on Crooks Avenue, and serve a new stop on the east side of Crooks Street at Ann Street, just outside of Piggly Wiggly. This approach maintains service to downtown Kaukauna, including municipal facilities, apartment buildings, and nearby public housing, preserving access to important destinations for existing riders. However, to offset the added length and time necessary to travel further south on Crooks Street, streamlining must also occur by trimming the length of the loop the route currently serves.

This recommended route configuration results in a net increase in route length of approximately 0.8 miles per run. As such, Valley Transit will test running times to confirm the feasibility of this change and ensure that on-time performance can be maintained.

Figure 10. Proposed Route 20

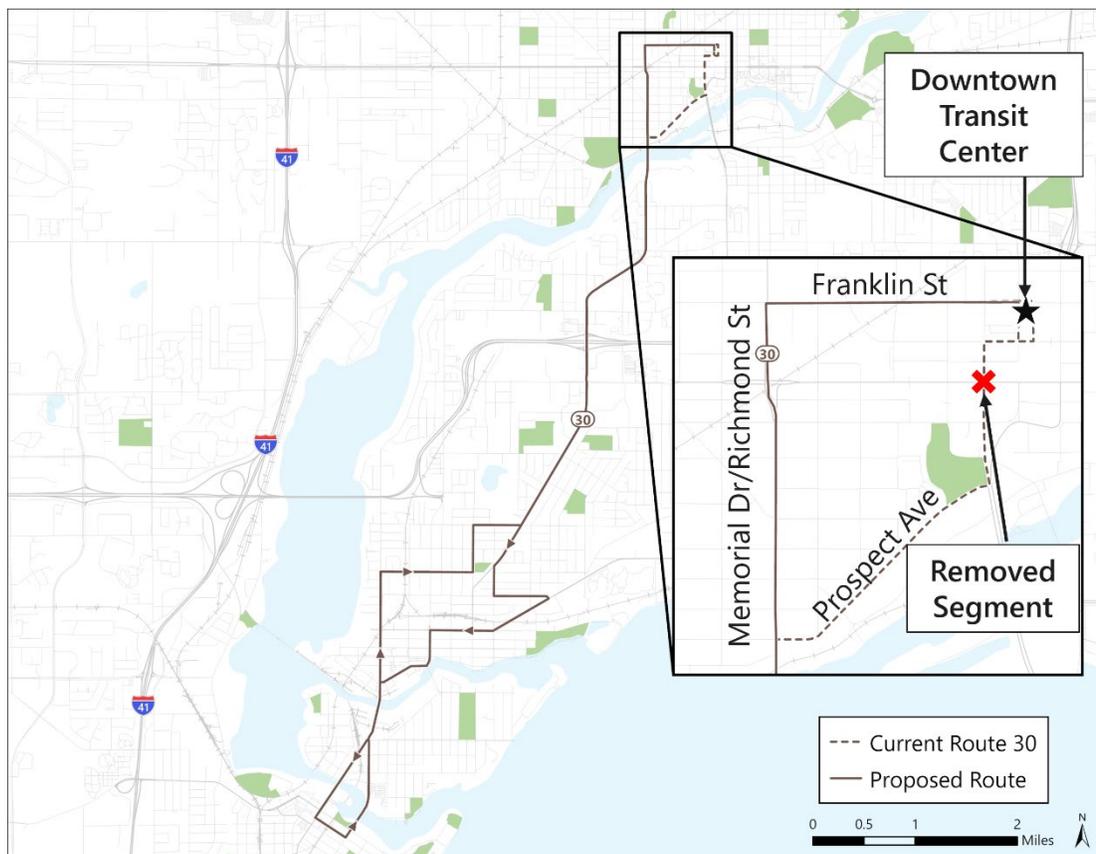


Route 30

Valley Transit has received a request to remove service from Prospect Avenue just south of downtown Appleton. In its current configuration, Route 30 offers one-way service on this segment, which has relatively low ridership. Current routing contributes to reliability issues due to travel on neighborhood streets rather than higher-speed arterials. The proposed route modification provides an opportunity to improve reliability and simplify route operations by focusing service where ridership demand exists.

The recommended change, shown in Figure 11, reroutes outbound service from the Transit Center onto Franklin Street, Richmond Street, and Memorial Drive, creating bidirectional service on this segment. Service on Appleton Street and Prospect Avenue would be removed, consistent with the request and current low ridership. Establishing bidirectional service also improves customer understanding of the route, reduces operational complexity, and supports improved on-time performance despite a modest net increase in route length. Valley Transit would confirm running times prior to implementation.

Figure 11. Proposed Route 30



Summary of Near-Term Recommendations

Collectively, the near-term route modifications for Routes 2, 15, 20, and 30 are intended to address specific operational and safety challenges, respond to planned roadway construction and community requests, and improve reliability without requiring any additional vehicles or operators. These changes prioritize access to key destinations while streamlining route alignments where feasible. All near-term recommendations are designed to be resource-neutral as shown in Table 7, and are suitable for implementation as early as 2026, subject to running time confirmation where noted.

Table 7. Near-Term Recommendations

Recommendation	Description	Needs Addressed
Route 2	Remove route from Badger Avenue to avoid conflict with upcoming street redesign.	 Access to Major Destinations
Route 15	Modify route design through Woodman’s parking lot to minimize vehicle and pedestrian conflict points; discontinue service at PetSmart and Home Depot.	 Access to Major Destinations  Reliability
Route 20	Extend route further south on Crooks Avenue to serve Piggly Wiggly; remove portion of northbound loop in Kaukauna to preserve schedule and runtime viability.	 Access to Major Destinations
Route 30	Move outbound service from Appleton Street and Prospect Avenue to Franklin Street, Richmond Street, and Memorial Drive.	 Reliability

Scenario 2 – Medium-Term

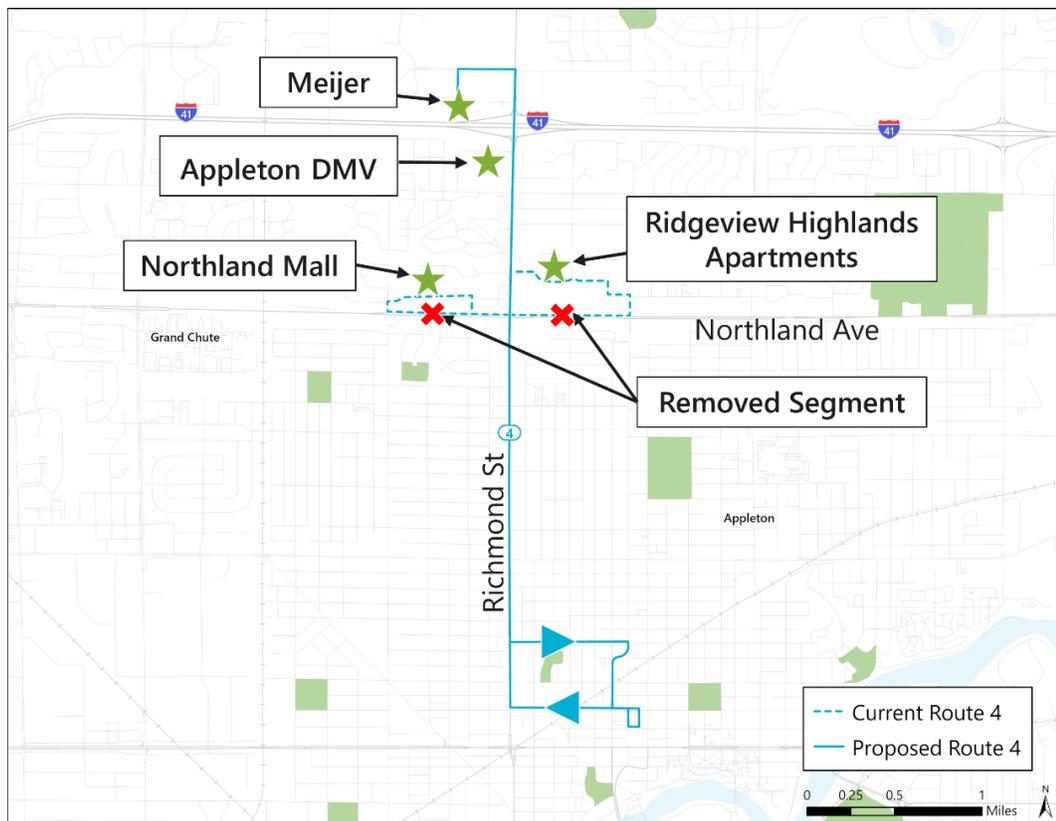
Medium-term recommendations are planned for implementation within five years and include low-to-moderate cost service investments that build on near-term improvements. These recommendations focus on improving access to key destinations, streamlining routes to improve reliability, restoring service levels reduced during the pandemic, and responding to customer priorities identified through prior studies and surveys. Implementation of these recommendations is dependent on workforce recovery, funding partner coordination, and the availability of additional operating resources.

Route 4

Previous planning efforts, including Valley Transit's 2019 TDP, recommended extending Route 4 to serve destinations further north on Richmond Street, including the Appleton DMV and Meijer. Route 4 currently includes loops near Richmond Street and Northland Avenue that limit its ability to serve new destinations further north.

The proposed modification, shown in Figure 12, extends Route 4 north along Richmond Street to serve the Appleton DMV and Meijer while removing two loops on Northland Avenue. While this change reduces Route 4's coverage near Northland Mall and Ridgeview Highlands Apartments, nearby service on Route 3 to the west coupled with the proposed realignment of Route 5 to the east (discussed later in the Medium-Term Scenario) are expected to mitigate the impact of these changes. The revised Route 4 alignment improves access to regional destinations and simplifies the route structure without increasing overall route length. **However, it is contingent on the proposed Route 5 modifications and consultation with funding partners.**

Figure 12. Proposed Route 4

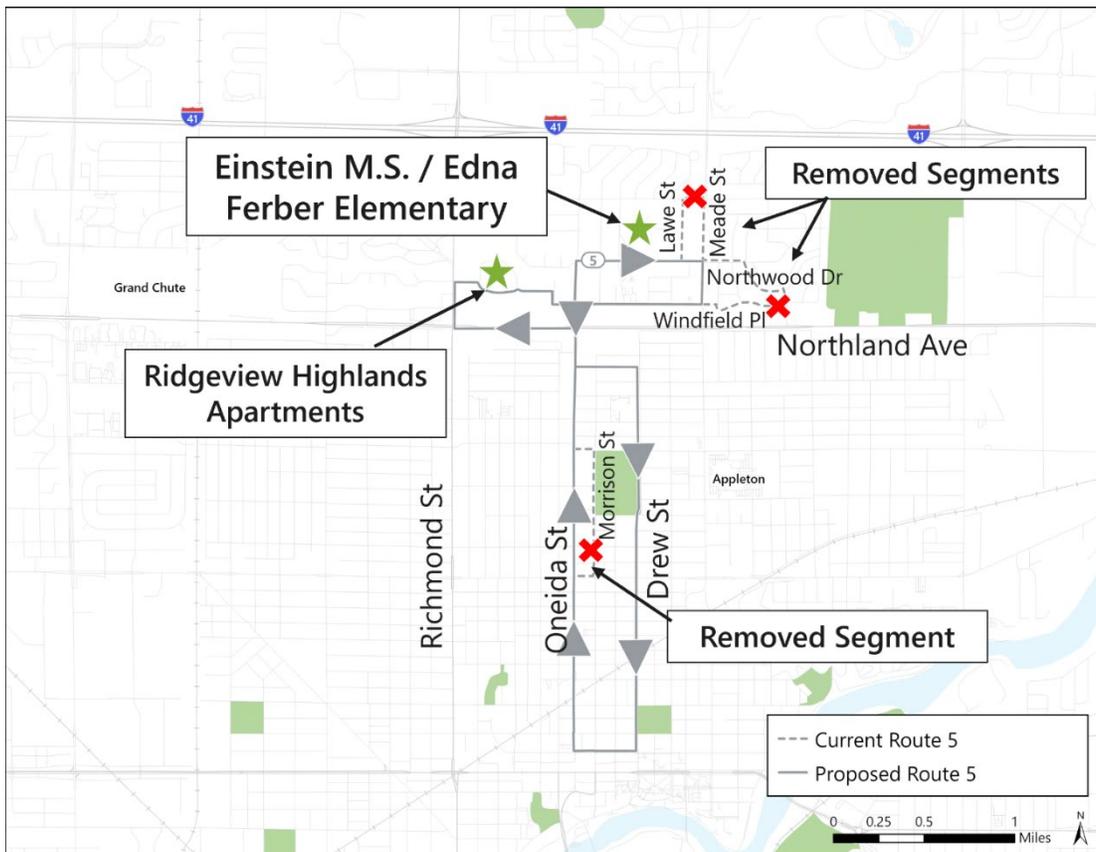


Route 5

Route 5 currently includes two loops on its northeastern end that serve low-ridership stops and add travel time and complexity to the route. These characteristics create opportunities for streamlining, particularly in conjunction with the proposed Route 4 realignment.

The recommended modification, shown in Figure 13, restructures Route 5 to assume service offered on the current Route 4 to the Ridgeview Highlands Apartments area, preserving access for residents affected by the northward Route 4 extension. The route change would necessarily eliminate low-ridership segments on Lawe Street, Meade Street, Northwood Drive, and Windfield Drive to maintain reliability and schedule feasibility. Service to Einstein Middle School and Edna Ferber Elementary School would be maintained. Additionally, the route would be straightened on Oneida Street northbound rather than using Morrison Street. The proposed changes simplify the route, reduce unnecessary deviation, and improve reliability while maintaining coverage to key residential and school destinations.

Figure 13. Proposed Route 5

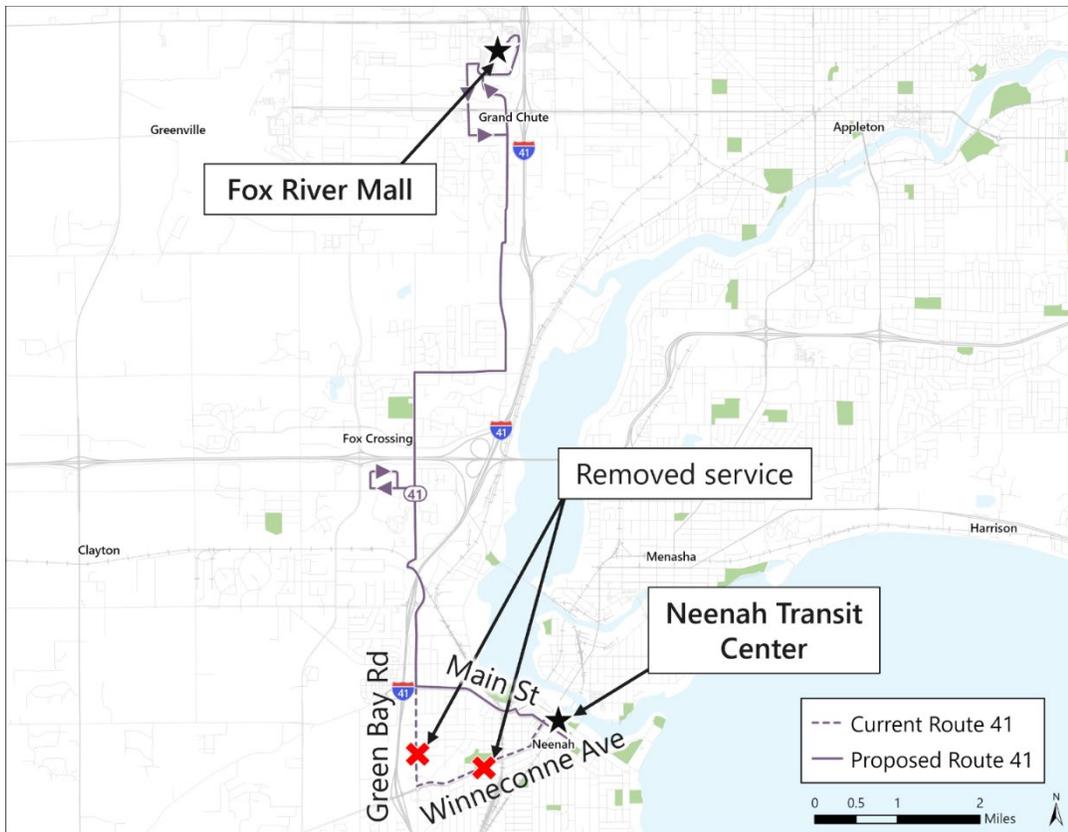


Route 41

Route 41 currently experiences reliability challenges related to multiple freight rail crossings. In addition, the route includes one-way segments in Neenah on Winneconne Avenue and Green Bay Road that contribute to slightly longer northbound travel times compared to southbound travel times. Portions of the route duplicate service provided by Route 32 along Winneconne Avenue, creating opportunities for restructuring without significant coverage loss.

The proposed modification, shown in Figure 14, removes one-way service on Winneconne Avenue and Green Bay Road and instead establishes bidirectional service on Main Street in Neenah. This change shortens the route, simplifies service patterns, and improves reliability on the northbound trip, resulting in potential improvements to transfers at Fox River Mall. Winneconne Avenue would continue to be served by Route 32, maintaining access along this corridor.

Figure 14. Proposed Route 41



Frequency

Both the 2019 TDP and the 2022-2023 Post-Pandemic Study identified weekday frequency improvements on the highest-ridership routes (Routes 12, 15, 20, and 30) as a priority. These four routes have remained Valley Transit’s highest-ridership routes over the past several years while also supporting regional travel needs and facilitating transfers throughout the system. Additionally, the 2023-2024 customer survey further reinforced frequency as the most requested service improvement.

It is recommended that Valley Transit improve weekday frequency on Routes 12, 15, 20, and 30 to operate every 30 minutes between approximately 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM on weekdays, as shown in Table 8 and Figure 15. The order of implementation would be based on factors such as ridership, productivity, and geographic coverage. Based on current data, Route 15 would be prioritized first, followed by Routes 30, 20, and 12.

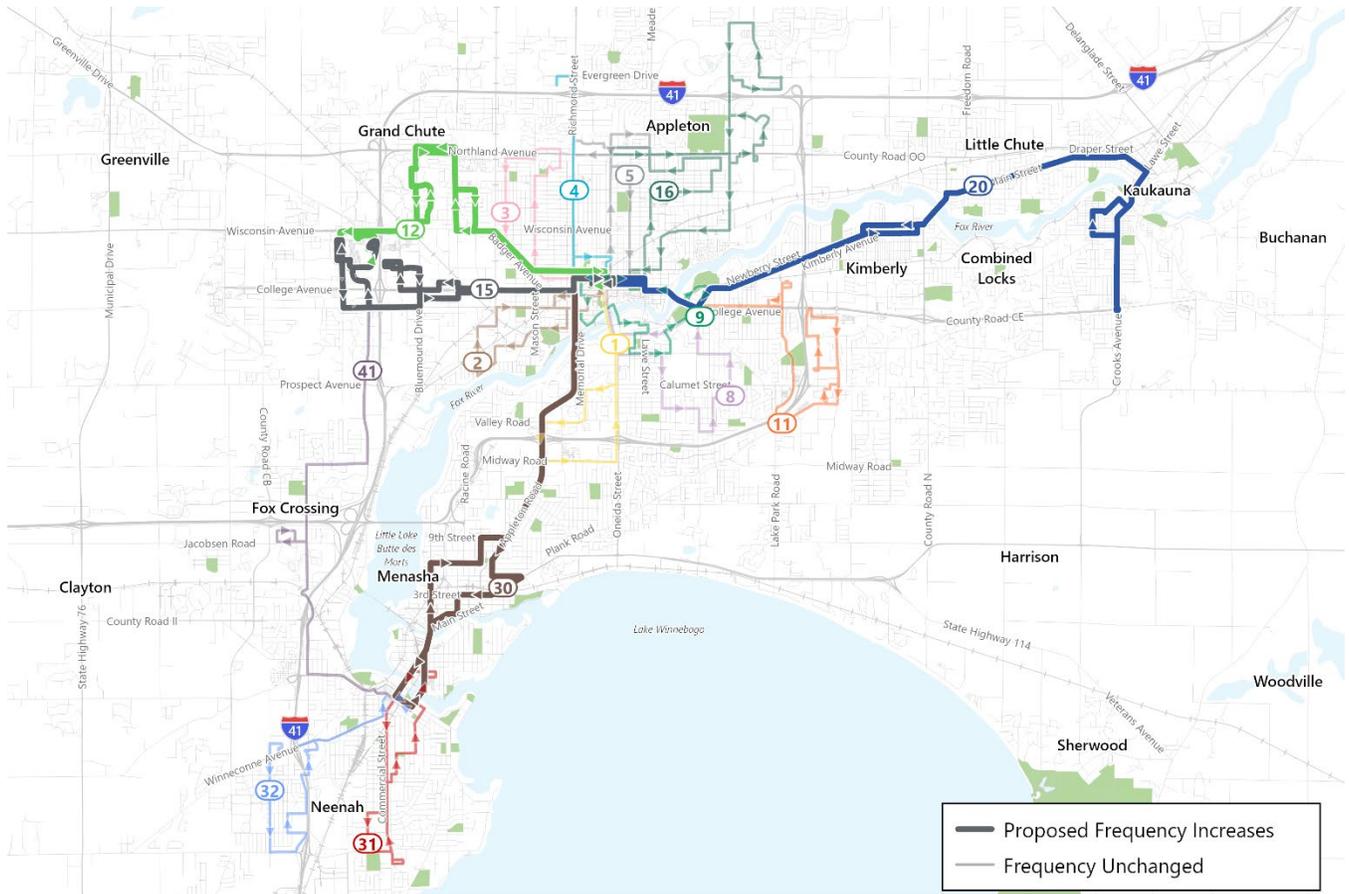
Over the past several years, Valley Transit has improved its ridership data collection practices, increasing the accuracy of data inputs relevant to planning decisions, including prioritizing specific route-level improvements. As such, the order of frequency improvement implementation across these routes is subject to change pending evaluation of updated ridership data in future years.

All improvements that include additional revenue hours and cost are subject to approval by the Fox Cities Transit Commission and municipal funding partners.

Table 8. Proposed Frequency Improvements

Route	Current Frequency	Proposed Frequency	Estimated Resource Needs
Route 12	60 minutes (12 trips daily) (15 trips daily after span improvements)	30 minutes Between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM (+10 trips)	+3,060 revenue hours annually
Route 15	60 minutes (12 trips daily) (16 trips daily after span improvements)	30 minutes Between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM (+10 trips)	+3,060 revenue hours annually
Route 20	60 minutes (13 trips daily) (17 trips daily after span improvements)	30 minutes Between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM (+10 trips)	+3,060 revenue hours annually
Route 30	60 minutes (13 trips daily) (17 trips daily after span improvements)	30 minutes Between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM (+10 trips)	+3,060 revenue hours annually

Figure 15. Proposed Frequency Improvements



Span of Service

Extending Valley Transit’s service hours was identified as a top priority in the 2023–2024 customer survey, as well as the previous TDP. Unfortunately, in mid-2024, Valley Transit needed to reduce weekday and Saturday service hours due to workforce challenges. Restoring service hours is a key step toward returning the system to pre-pandemic service levels and improving overall usability.

The project team recommends that Valley Transit restore Saturday afternoon service prior to expanding weekday frequency or coverage. Saturday service restoration requires moderate additional resources and may be implemented sooner than other system improvements depending on staffing levels. Restoration of weekday evening service would follow as additional drivers become available. Estimated resource requirements for each of these improvements are shown in Table 9.

As with frequency improvements, improvement to service hours involve additional cost and are subject to approval by the Fox Cities Transit Commission and municipal funding partners. Valley Transit may pursue interim service improvements as resources allow.

Table 9. Proposed Span of Service Improvements

Day	Current Service	Proposed Service	Estimated Resource Needs
Saturday	~5 hours per day (8:15/8:45 AM to 1:15/1:45 PM)	~9.5 hours per day (8:15/8:45 AM to 5:45/6:15 PM)	+52 revenue hours per Saturday +2,700 revenue hours annually
Weekday	~12 hours per day (6:15/6:45 AM to 5:45/6:15 PM)	~16 hours per day (6:15/6:45 AM to 9:45/10:15 PM)	+28.5 revenue hours per weekday +7,260 revenue hours annually

Summary of Medium-Term Recommendations

Medium-term recommendations include coordinated route realignments, frequency improvements on the system’s highest-ridership routes, and restoration of service hours reduced during the pandemic. These recommendations are intended to improve access to major destinations, simplify service patterns, and respond to customer priorities, and are summarized in Table 10.

More information on improvement and phasing prioritization is available in the Implementation Plan section of this document.

Table 10. Medium-Term Recommendations

Recommendation	Description	Needs Addressed	
Route 4	Extend route north on Richmond Street to Meijer, removing Northland Avenue loops to maintain schedule adherence.	 	Access to Major Destinations Reliability
Route 5	Restructure route to add loop serving Ridgeview Highlands Apartments (currently served by Route 4), removing low-ridership loops at northeastern edge of route, while straightening route on Oneida Street.	 	Access to Major Destinations Reliability
Route 41	Remove one-way service on Winneconne Avenue and Green Bay Road in Neenah, instead implementing bidirectional service on Main Street.		Reliability
Frequency	Introduce 30-minute service on Routes 12, 15, 20, and 30 between approximately 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM when resources permit.		Frequency
Span of Service	Extend Saturday span of service by 4.5 hours in the afternoon and extend weekday span of service by 4 hours in the evening.		Span of Service

Scenario 3 – Long-Term

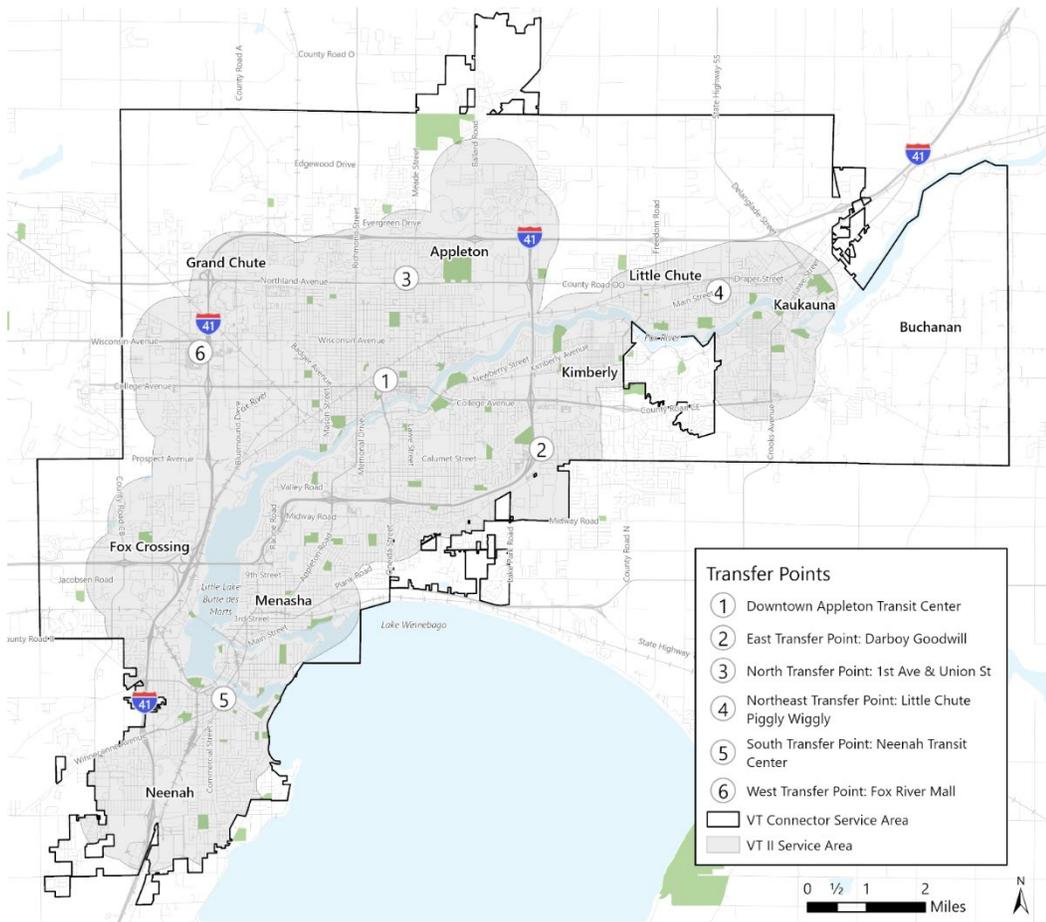
Long-term recommendations include service concepts that require service area expansion, new partnerships, or the completion of other infrastructure projects that are not overseen by Valley Transit. These opportunities are intended for implementation beyond the five-year horizon of this TDP and would require additional planning, coordination, and resource commitments prior to implementation. As such, they are presented as potential future concepts rather than programmed improvements.

VT Connector Expansion

Valley Transit periodically receives requests for transit service from communities outside its current fixed-route service area. In many cases, extending fixed-route service to these areas is not feasible due to lower densities, limited ridership potential, and the high cost of traditional bus service on a per-ride basis.

Expanding VT Connector beyond its current service area, shown in Figure 16, provides a flexible option for responding to these requests while managing cost and resource constraints. Microtransit service could allow interested communities to join the Valley Transit service area and help build ridership demand over time, potentially supporting future fixed-route service where conditions warrant. The project team recommends that Valley Transit consider expansion opportunities into those communities that express interest, subject to partnership and funding commitments, as well as further evaluation of operational feasibility.

Figure 16. Current VT Connector and VT II Service Areas

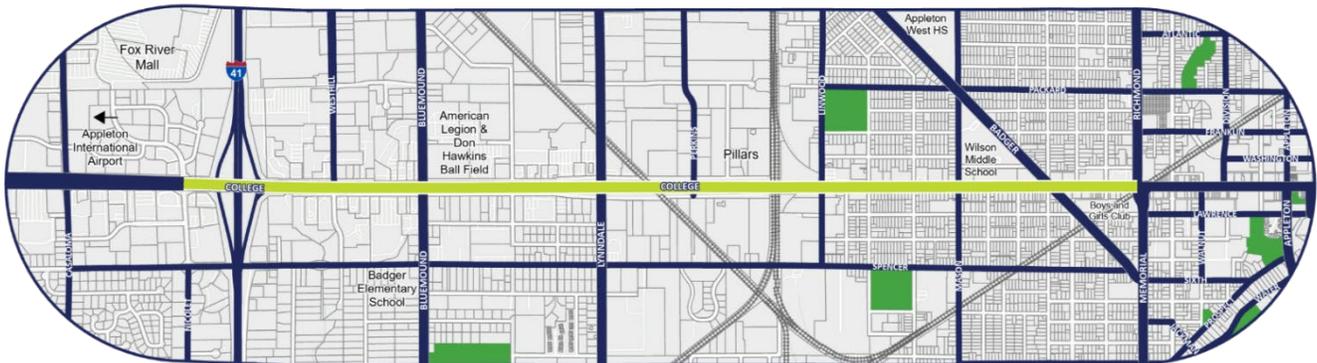


College Avenue Corridor

Regional partners are exploring potential changes to College Avenue between Richmond Street and Mall Drive. An Outagamie County-led vision for the corridor, known as [A New Avenue](#), emphasizes improved bicycle, pedestrian, and transit accommodations. The specific segment of the College Avenue corridor highlighted as part of this project is shown in Figure 17. Existing roadway conditions along College Avenue present challenges for transit access, including limited pedestrian connectivity, difficult crossings, and constrained bus stop environments.

If the improvements envisioned in the project are implemented, enhanced infrastructure and more transit-supportive land use (examples shown in Figure 18) could allow for future streamlining of Route 15. These improvements would support faster and more reliable transit service while improving access for riders. As such, it is recommended that Valley Transit coordinate with Outagamie County, WisDOT, and municipal partners to incorporate transit-supportive design elements into potential future College Avenue improvements and evaluate opportunities to improve Route 15 service as corridor conditions evolve.

Figure 17. A New Avenue Project Corridor



Source: A NEW Avenue

Figure 18. Example Boulevard with Urban Mobility Enhancements



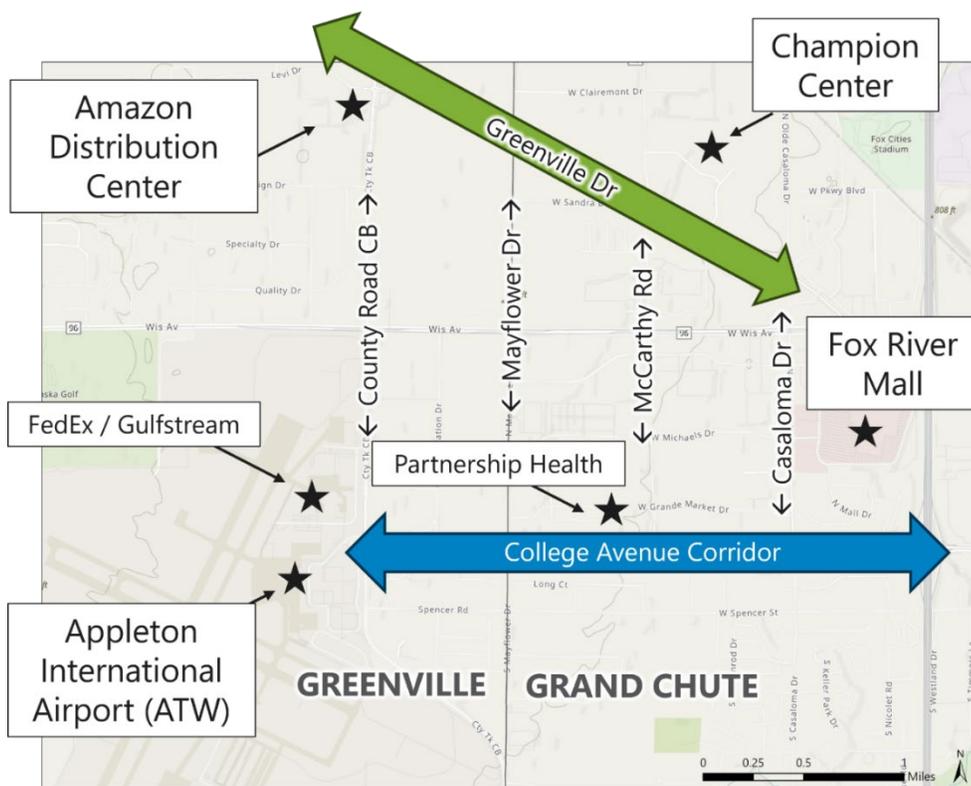
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

Appleton Airport and Greenville Service Expansion

Valley Transit has received requests from community members for service to new destinations in the Town of Grand Chute and the Village of Greenville, including Appleton International Airport, the Amazon Distribution Center, the Champion Center, and Partnership Health, among others (shown in Figure 19). While these destinations represent significant employment and travel generators, they are located outside Valley Transit’s current fixed-route service area. Notably, the Village of Greenville is not a current Valley Transit funding partner, and Wisconsin state law prevents transit agencies from providing service in communities that do not provide funding support.

Providing service to these areas would require expanding Valley Transit’s service area, as well as additional vehicles and drivers. In addition, roadway and pedestrian infrastructure improvements on corridors such as College Avenue and Greenville Drive would be necessary to support safe and reliable transit service. To address these needs, it is recommended that Valley Transit work with the Village of Greenville and Outagamie County to explore potential transit service to the airport and nearby destinations, including evaluation of service models, infrastructure needs, and partnership requirements.

Figure 19. Appleton Airport and Greenville Service Expansion Considerations



Summary of Long-Term Recommendations

Long-term recommendations identify potential service expansions and corridor improvements that would require additional resources, new partnerships, and/or future infrastructure investments. These concepts are intended to inform future planning and coordination efforts and are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. Long-Term Recommendations

Recommendation	Description	Needs Addressed
VT Connector Expansion	Consider and discuss expansion opportunities into communities that express interest, subject to partnership and funding commitments, while also evaluating operational feasibility.	 Access to Major Destinations  Service Area Expansion
College Avenue Corridor	Coordinate with “A New Avenue” project partners to incorporate transit-supportive elements into a potential future College Avenue redesign, both to enable improvements to Route 15 and create the possibility of westward expansion.	 Access to Major Destinations  Reliability  Service Area Expansion
Appleton Airport and Greenville Service Expansion	Work with the Town of Grand Chute and Outagamie County to explore potential transit service to the airport and nearby destinations, including evaluation of service models, infrastructure needs, and partnership requirements.	 Access to Major Destinations  Service Area Expansion

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan outlines sequencing and prioritization for the recommended service changes based on anticipated timelines and resource requirements. While the recommendations presented in this TDP are organized into time-bound scenarios, actual implementation will depend on Valley Transit’s ability to recruit and retain operators, secure funding partner approval where required, and confirm operational feasibility through schedule and running time analyses.

As discussed throughout this plan, Valley Transit continues to face workforce constraints that limit the pace at which service improvements can be introduced. Current service levels are delivered with approximately 24 drivers, compared to a pre-pandemic staffing level of 36 drivers. As a result, service improvements are expected to be implemented incrementally as staffing levels recover, with priority given to changes that provide the greatest benefit relative to their resource requirements.

Implementation sequencing reflects both resource availability and operational readiness. While near-term route changes are expected to advance first due to their resource-neutral nature, Valley Transit may pursue select medium-term improvements out of sequence as staffing levels and funding partner approvals allow. Specifically, restoration of service hours or frequency may occur incrementally on individual routes rather than as systemwide changes.

The implementation timeline presented in Table 12 reflects a planning-level estimate of sequencing and resource needs based on current conditions and assumptions. All timelines and resource estimates are subject to change based on workforce availability, funding decisions, future trends in ridership data, and evolving community priorities.

Table 12. Implementation Timeline and Resource Needs

Scenario / Concept	Routes Affected	Timeline	Estimated Resource Needs
Near-Term Route Changes	Routes 2, 15, 20, 30	1-2 Years	N/A (No Change)
Medium-Term Route Changes	Routes 4, 5, 41	3-5 Years	N/A (No Change)
Saturday Afternoon Service Restoration	All	3-5 Years	+2,700 annual revenue hours
Frequency Improvements	Routes 12, 15, 20, 30	3-5 Years	+3,060 annual revenue hours per route
Weekday Evening Service Restoration	All	3-5 Years	+7,260 annual revenue hours
Long-Term Service Expansion	New Routes / Connector Service	Depends on Partners (Ongoing Discussion)	To Be Determined
Total Estimated Resource Needs			+22,200 annual revenue hours

REFERENCES

This Transit Development Plan Final Report summarizes the outcomes of a year-long planning process by ECWRPC, Valley Transit, and local partners. Additional detail is available in the following technical reports, which may be obtained separately via the ECWRPC website (<https://www.ecwrpc.org/>) or Valley Transit website (<https://myvalleytransit.com/>).

- **Technical Report #1: Current System Assessment**
- **Technical Report #2: Review of Current Challenges**
- **Technical Report #3: Major Destinations and Trip Generators**
- **Technical Report #4: Future Service Framework**
- **Technical Report #5: Engagement Summary**

Similarly, materials from Valley Transit's Steering Committee meetings, public open house, and presentation to the Fox Cities Transit Commission are available upon request and can be obtained by contacting Valley Transit's administrative office.