

# ABQ RIDE FORWARD NETWORK PLAN: Phase 1 Engagement Summary



February 2023

## Background

### Purpose of Phase I Outreach

The ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan is a comprehensive effort to review existing transit services across the City of Albuquerque and to consider ways to enhance the bus network and service options. Engagement efforts for the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan are taking place across three phases:

- **Phase I** of community and stakeholder engagement focuses on education and information gathering about community needs and preferences. The results of this phase will inform the Network Plan vision, goals, and objectives. The initial phase of community engagement was conducted from early September to early November 2022.
- **Phase II** will ask for feedback on two contrasting network concepts.
- **Phase III** will focus on a single proposed network that could be implemented and potential next steps for implementation.

This document outlines the approach and results of the stakeholder and community engagement activities for Phase I of outreach for the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan. General objectives for the first phase of outreach for the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan were to:

- Share information about the study
- Gain an understanding among community members of transit-related priorities and trade-offs
- Outline the general types of service design options that ABQ RIDE could provide
- Inform the public on what is and is not possible through the provision of public transit services, given budget constraints

The following audiences and population groups were targeted during Phase I of community engagement:

- Current transit riders
- University of New Mexico (UNM) and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) students and staff
- Business community and major employers
- Community groups and social service providers
- Public sector advisory groups that focus on transit and active transportation

### Overview of Activities

**Project Webpage:** The Project Team created and managed a webpage specifically for the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan ([www.abqrideforward.com](http://www.abqrideforward.com)). Information contained on the website included links to key documents such as the Existing Conditions Report, results of an on-board survey (conducted in early 2022), network maps, general project background, and a frequently asked questions page. The website also contained information on public participation opportunities, links to the community survey and the registration form for the focus group events, and a link where participants could submit comments and questions.



#### Online Community Meetings

There were two community meetings held in October. If you weren't able to attend, here is a link to a recording to watch the meeting and learn more about the project.

#### Study Purpose

**Community Survey:** The Project Team created a community survey that could be completed through the project website. Hardcopies of the survey were distributed at in-person events and made available at informational booths. Both the online version and the hardcopy versions were translated into Spanish. The community survey for Phase I was intended to gather input on how participants think ABQ RIDE should make certain choices in the network redesign process. An additional survey will be administered in Phase II.

Outreach Stats	Number
Surveys Completed	1,682
Intercept Survey Events	9
Stakeholder Workshop	1
Community Meetings	2
Presentations	8
Pop-up Events	10
Focus Groups	6
Social Campaigns	4
Informational Board Displays	3

To ensure a high level of participation among current transit users and individuals who may not have been aware of the social media campaigns and online outreach efforts, the Project Team administered the community survey and distributed information about the Network Plan through a series of **in-person intercept events**. Intercept survey events were conducted at high-ridership locations and at major transit stations.

**Stakeholder Workshop:** Phase I included a workshop with a **Public/Stakeholder Advisory Group** featuring an introduction to the project and a network design game that allowed participants to create a hypothetical transit network in an illustrative city.

**Virtual Community Meetings:** The Project Team hosted two community meetings in Phase I that were open to the general public. Each meeting featured a short presentation, interactive questions, and opportunities for questions and answers. One of the virtual community meetings was recorded and posted on the project website.

**Public and Stakeholder Presentations:** Members of the Project Team presented at various community organizations and public sector advisory committees focused on active transportation and public transit. The Project Team also gave presentations to various formal community organizations and business groups. Presentations were given upon request. The presentations provided an overview of the objectives of the network redesign process, reviewed existing ABQ RIDE services at different times of the day and days of the week, explained the ridership and coverage network design concepts, and encouraged attendees to help advertise the community survey and to sign up to participate in a focus group.

Community Organizations	Public Sector Advisory Committees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban to Wild Coalition</li> <li>Albuquerque Bus Riders Union</li> <li>Urban Land Institute – NM Chapter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit Advisory Board</li> <li>MRCOG Active Transportation Committee</li> <li>Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee</li> </ul>

**Pop-up Events:** The Project Team set up an informational “pop-up” table at various community events to meet people where they are and engage with members of the public who may be less familiar with the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan or ABQ RIDE services. Team members shared project information, encouraged people to complete the survey, and answered general project questions. ABQ RIDE also partnered with Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Planning Department to get out surveys, flyers, and brochures at other events.

**Focus Groups:** The Project Team facilitated a series of six focus groups intended to generate in-depth discussion and feedback from participants, including key demographic groups and populations that are particularly likely to utilize public transit. Options for virtual and in-person events were provided, and each focus group was approximately one hour in duration.

**Newsletters and Social Media Outreach:** In addition to the ABQ RIDE social media feeds, the Project Team coordinated with partner agencies (e.g., Mid-Region Council of Governments) and other City of Albuquerque departments to help disseminate information about the community survey and in-person events using their social media feeds and newsletters.

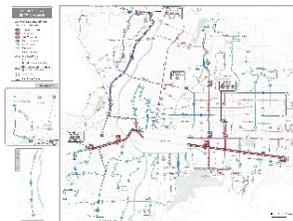
**Informational Boards:** Informational boards were displayed at various libraries and community centers to help raise awareness about the project, explain the choices that will go into the network redesign process, and encourage individuals to visit the project website and participate in the survey and other outreach activities.

Provide your input on where and when ABQ RIDE should run its bus routes and services.

### Plan Purpose

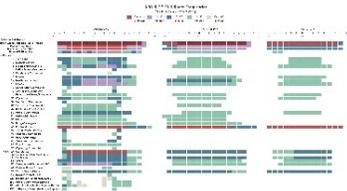
The ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan is a review of the purpose and performance of Albuquerque's bus network and an update of the City's plans for future investments in the network.

The plan will help identify goals and purposes of the City's investment in public transit and will inform future decisions about where bus routes go, at what times they run, and how frequently.



The map depicts the bus network as of 2019 and reflects the full set of services that ABQ RIDE can provide under current funding levels. Some services have been reduced or suspended following the COVID-19 pandemic due to a driver shortage.

WHEN transit service operates is nearly as important as WHERE. The Route Frequencies graphic depicts how often buses travel along different routes by time of day and day of the week. Service levels are generally highest in the morning and evening peak periods, while service for some routes is minimal on weekends.



### Plan Timeline



Go to [www.abqrideforward.com](http://www.abqrideforward.com) to learn more:

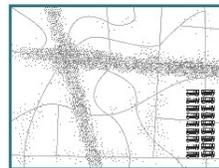
- Study information
- Initial reports
- Opportunities to participate

Email [info@abqrideforward.com](mailto:info@abqrideforward.com) for more information / para más información.

### Understanding Transit Choices

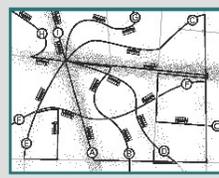
A key question is how to balance running routes that are ridden by the greatest number of people (ridership) vs running routes that cover the greatest geographic area (coverage).

The images below depict two imaginary bus networks that show the extremes of this choice. The dots in these images are residents and jobs. Should buses be concentrated into frequent routes, where the most people are? Or is it better to spread buses across the whole city, but the buses don't come often and few people ride?



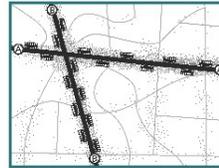
**Imagine Transit Town**

Imagine you had 18 buses to serve this fictional town. The dots scattered around the map are people and jobs. The 18 buses are the resources the town has to run transit. Before you can plan transit route, you must first decide: What is the purpose of your transit system?



**Maximum Coverage**

The 18 buses are spread around so that there is a route on every street. Everyone lives near a stop, but every route is infrequent, so waits for service are long. However, only a few people can bear to wait so long, so ridership is low.



**Maximum Ridership**

All 18 buses are focused on the busiest areas. Waits for service are short but walks to service are longer for people in less populated areas. Frequency and ridership are high, but some places have no services. A ridership-based system can help reduce emissions and vehicle miles traveled.

Go to [www.abqrideforward.com](http://www.abqrideforward.com) to learn more:

- Study information
- Initial reports
- Opportunities to participate

Email [info@abqrideforward.com](mailto:info@abqrideforward.com) for more information / para más información.

## Stakeholder Advisory Group

### Role of Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Stakeholder Advisory Group is comprised of community members, representatives of social service agencies, transportation advocates and public agency staff. They are expected to play an active role advising on the project by participating at key points in each of the three phases and spreading information about the project to their respective communities. Objectives for the Stakeholder Workshops include:

- **Meeting I:** Provide training and an opportunity for general input and educate participants on the existing ABQ Ride network and future choices.
- **Meeting II:** Understand the two network concepts that illustrate different ways the bus network could be redesigned.
- **Meeting III:** Review and comment on the proposed Draft New Network.

### Summary of Meeting I

The first meeting, held early in Phase I, was a three-hour interactive workshop. Half of this workshop was spent on a training game, which was meant to help the Stakeholder Advisory Group members understand the types of choices that come up in network design and to develop opinions that represent their respective values and needs. In the training game, the stakeholders were divided into smaller groups and invited to design a bus network for a fictional, simple city.

Many of the choices they had to make in playing the game were similar to the choices that have to be made about the future Albuquerque bus network, including:

- whether to spread limited service out across the whole city or concentrate it into more frequent routes;
- where to put the most frequent routes;
- how to connect routes to one another; and
- which types of places were most important to serve.

After working in small groups, the stakeholders posted their networks on the wall to share with others. The meeting facilitator gathered a subset of the networks that were most different from one another and described some of the important contrasts that were visible in the variety of networks the Group had produced.

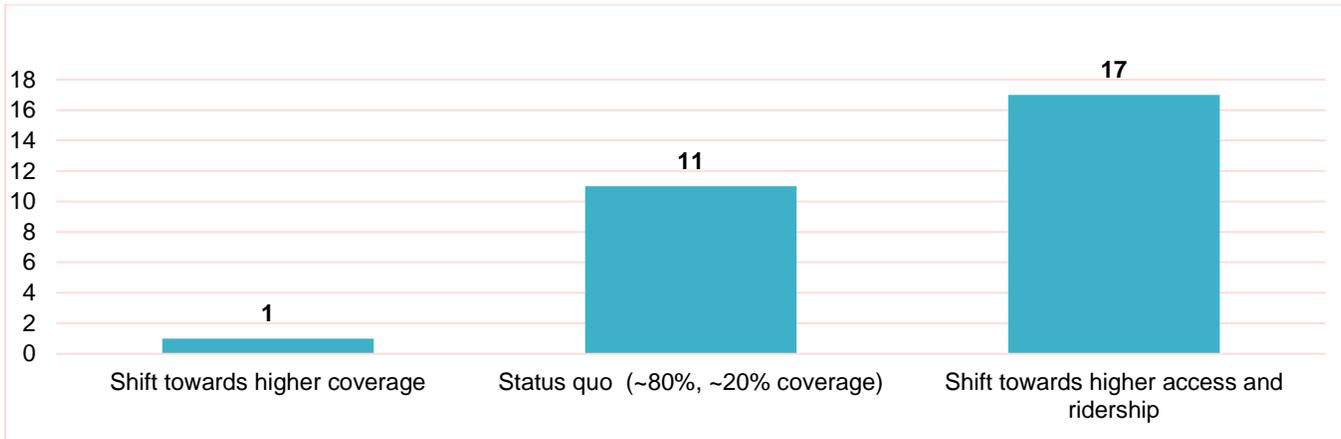


After this training exercise and discussion, the facilitator gave a presentation summarizing the content of the Transit Existing Conditions Report. The Report included “Key Questions” about the future bus network, which will be answered in part through this planning process and especially during Phase I using the many tools and venues described in this summary. The Stakeholder Advisory Group were asked to weigh in on these questions, the same questions that were asked to hundreds of members of the public and current bus riders. The stakeholder responses, gathered during this workshop using real-time polls, are below.

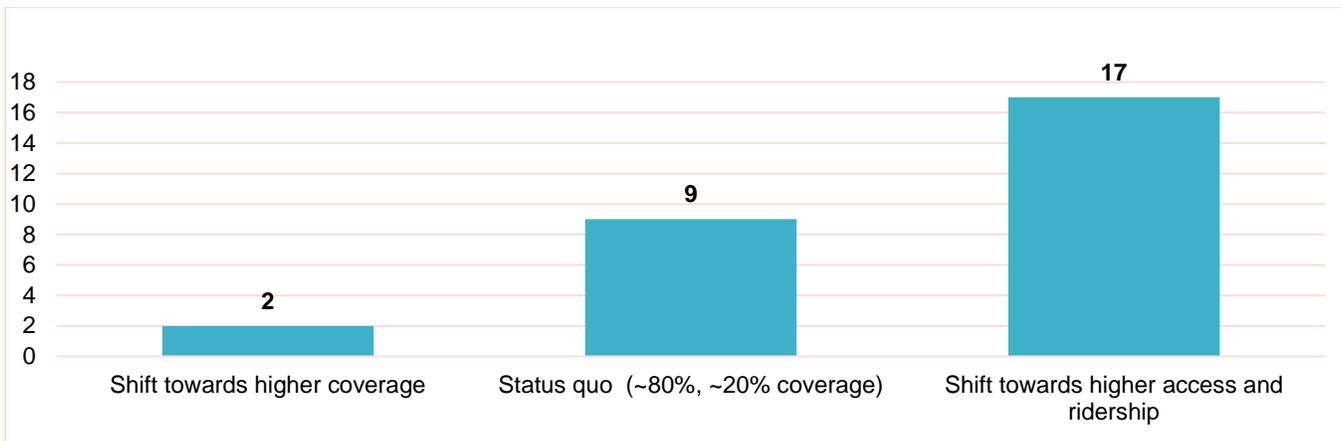
Meeting I of the Stakeholder Advisory Group closed with a discussion of the poll results and a briefing about what the attendees could expect in Phase II when they would be invited to return and review two contrasting network concepts for the City of Albuquerque.

## Stakeholder Advisory Group Interactive Polling Questions

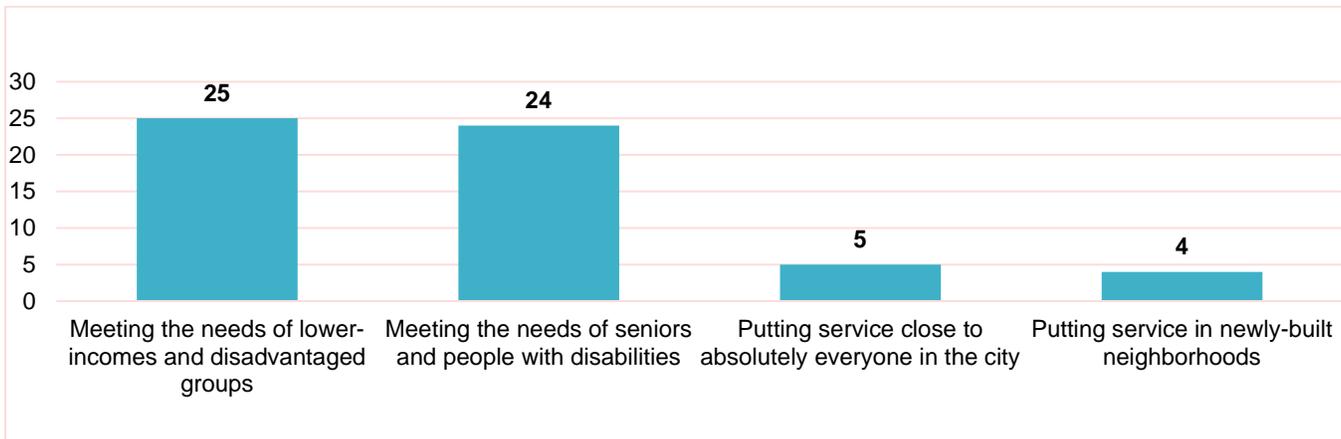
**How would you want the City of Albuquerque to balance ridership and coverage goals, within the existing supply of bus service?**



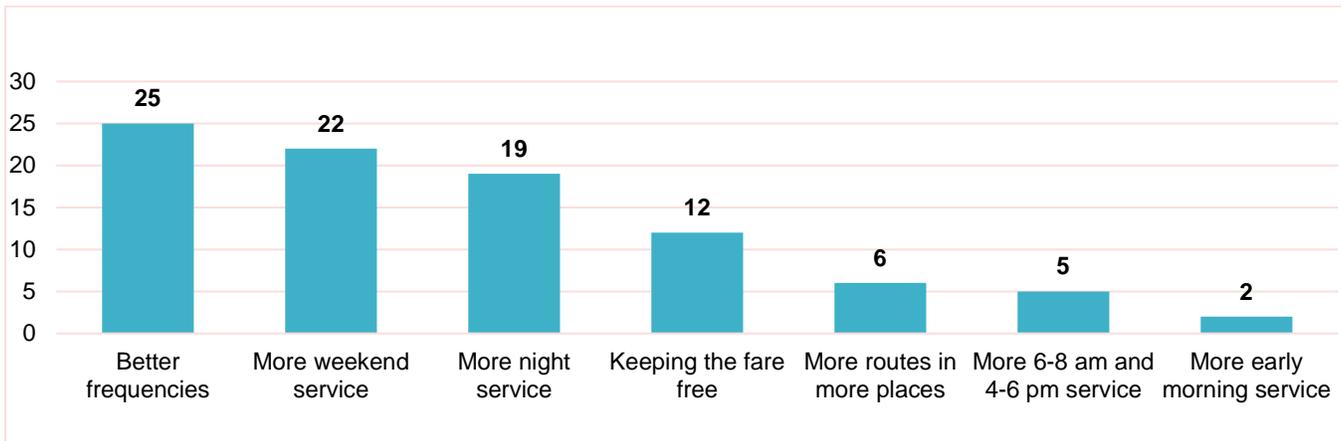
**How would you want the City of Albuquerque to balance ridership and coverage with any future additional bus service?**



**What are the most important reasons for providing coverage in a low-ridership area? (Select two responses.)**



**What would your top 3 service priorities be for any additional funding in the future?**



### Participation Opportunities for Non-English Speakers

Various opportunities and accommodations were provided for non-English speakers to participate in the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan development process. The community survey was translated into Spanish, as were other key materials on the project website, including registration details for the focus groups. The Google translate feature was provided on the project website for the languages for which there are the greatest number of residents in the City of Albuquerque. Staff members at intercept survey and pop-up events were also fluent Spanish speakers who could administer the survey and answer questions in Spanish. Simultaneous interpretation services were made available at two of the focus group sessions.

## Community Survey

### Survey Background and Methodology

The community survey for Phase I of the ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan was intended to gather input on general transit-related priorities and how participants think ABQ RIDE should make certain choices and investments in the network redesign process. Other questions were intended to document demographic characteristics and the frequency with which respondents use public transit, so the Project Team could analyze how general service preferences differ depending on demographic and rider characteristics.

The survey was posted on the project website from early September to early November 2022. In addition to online participation, surveys were collected by members of the Project Team at in-person pop-up events and at transit stops and station areas around the city. Surveys were available in Spanish, and most in-person survey events included a Spanish-speaking project team member who could answer questions about the project and survey and conduct the survey when needed.

Overall, 1,682 individuals completed all or parts of the survey, including 601 in-person participants. In-person survey respondents were disproportionately comprised of regular transit users (i.e. individuals who ride public transit at least once per week) and closely resembled the overall ridership demographics, as determined by the biannual ridership survey. In person respondents were also more likely to be members of households whose incomes were below the median income level.

## In-Person Survey Collection

### Intercept Surveys

A total of nine intercept surveys were conducted in high ridership locations and areas with populations that are more likely to use public transit, as identified in the Existing Conditions Report. To attract a wide range of transit users, surveys were collected at varying hours on weekdays and weekends. The following table lists survey dates, times, and locations. At each intercept survey and pop-up table event, there was at least one ABQ RIDE staff member present along with one consultant staff member.

Date	Location	Day of Week	Time	Surveys Collected
9/14/2022	Central & Unser TC	Wednesday	2 PM - 6 PM	50
9/16/2022	San Mateo ART Station and on board the San Mateo Bus	Friday	8 AM - 12 PM	54
9/17/2022	Alvarado Transportation Center	Saturday	11 AM - 3 PM	41
9/19/2022	Uptown Transit Center	Monday	2 PM - 6 PM	77
9/23/2022	Central & Unser TC	Friday	6 AM - 10 AM	27
9/28/2022	UNM ART Station	Wednesday	12 PM - 4 PM	55
10/3/2022	Alvarado Transportation Center	Monday	2 PM - 6 PM	32
10/6/2022	Alvarado Transportation Center	Thursday	7 AM - 11 AM	57
10/12/2022	San Mateo / UNM	Tuesday	9 AM - 1 PM	68

### Pop-up Tables and Community Events

In addition to intercept surveys conducted at transit stops, the Project Team participated in pop-up tables at community events to engage with members of the public who may not otherwise participate in the network design process.

Date	Location	Day of Week	Time	Surveys Collected
9/16/2022	State Fair	Friday	10 AM - 2 PM	41
10/6/2022	Bernalillo County Office	Thursday	10 AM - 1 PM	6
10/7/2022	First Friday Arts Crawl	Friday	5 PM - 9 PM	55
10/15/2022	Int'l Market - Small Biz resource fair	Saturday	9 AM - 12 PM	25
10/16/2022	CiQlovia	Sunday	9 AM - 12 PM	13

## Survey Results

Tables below contain key results from community survey. Depending on the question, results are split out by household income, whether the survey was completed in-person or online, and whether the respondents are regular or infrequent transit users.

**Note:** Not all respondents completed the survey, and the number of responses varies by question.

### Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

The tables below document the participants in the Phase I survey by race/ethnicity, gender, household income, language spoken at home, and whether the survey was completed online or in person.

Race/Ethnicity	Total Respondents	Share	In-person	Share	Online	Share
Black / African American	101	6%	63	11%	38	3%
Asian or Asian American	41	2%	12	2%	29	3%
White	803	49%	186	33%	617	57%
Hispanic	448	27%	196	35%	252	23%
American Indian	124	8%	68	12%	56	5%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	17	1%	11	2%	6	1%
Other	17	1%	11	2%	6	1%
Prefer not to answer	100	6%	17	3%	83	8%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>1651</b>		<b>564</b>		<b>1087</b>	

Gender	Total Respondents	Share	In-person	Share	Online	Share
Female	652	44%	189	37%	463	48%
Male	708	48%	298	58%	410	43%
Non-binary/third gender	27	2%	3	1%	24	2%
Self-identify	12	1%	6	1%	6	1%
Transgender	16	1%	6	1%	10	1%
Prefer not to answer	64	4%	13	3%	51	5%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>1479</b>		<b>515</b>		<b>964</b>	

Household Income	Total Respondents	Share	In-person	Share	Online	Share
<\$10,000	148	14%	119	33%	29	4%
\$10,000-14,999	86	8%	50	14%	36	5%
\$15,000-24,999	93	9%	32	9%	61	9%
\$25,000-34,999	105	10%	35	10%	70	10%
\$35,000-49,999	116	11%	33	9%	83	12%
\$50,000-74,999	186	18%	57	16%	129	19%
\$75,000-99,999	84	8%	0	0%	84	12%
\$100,000 or more	218	21%	36	10%	182	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1036</b>		<b>362</b>		<b>674</b>	

Language Spoke at Home	Total Respondents	Share	In-person	Share	Online	Share
English	1403	97%	456	93%	947	99%
Spanish	237	16%	116	24%	121	13%
Diné	29	2%	23	5%	6	1%
Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese)	7	0%	3	1%	4	0%
Vietnamese	6	0%	3	1%	3	0%
Other	51	4%	24	5%	27	3%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>1447</b>		<b>491</b>		<b>956</b>	

Note: Respondents could indicate more than one language spoken at home.

## Survey Responses

Survey questions and responses are grouped by theme, with summary analysis contained in each section. Responses for individual questions are split out by means of data collection (in-person versus online), frequency of transit usage, and household income.

### *Transit Usage Patterns and Impacts of Pandemic – Notes and Observations*

The questions and responses below shed light on transit usage patterns among respondents and how travel behavior was impacted by the pandemic. Responses to subsequent questions are evaluated in part based on the frequency of transit usage.

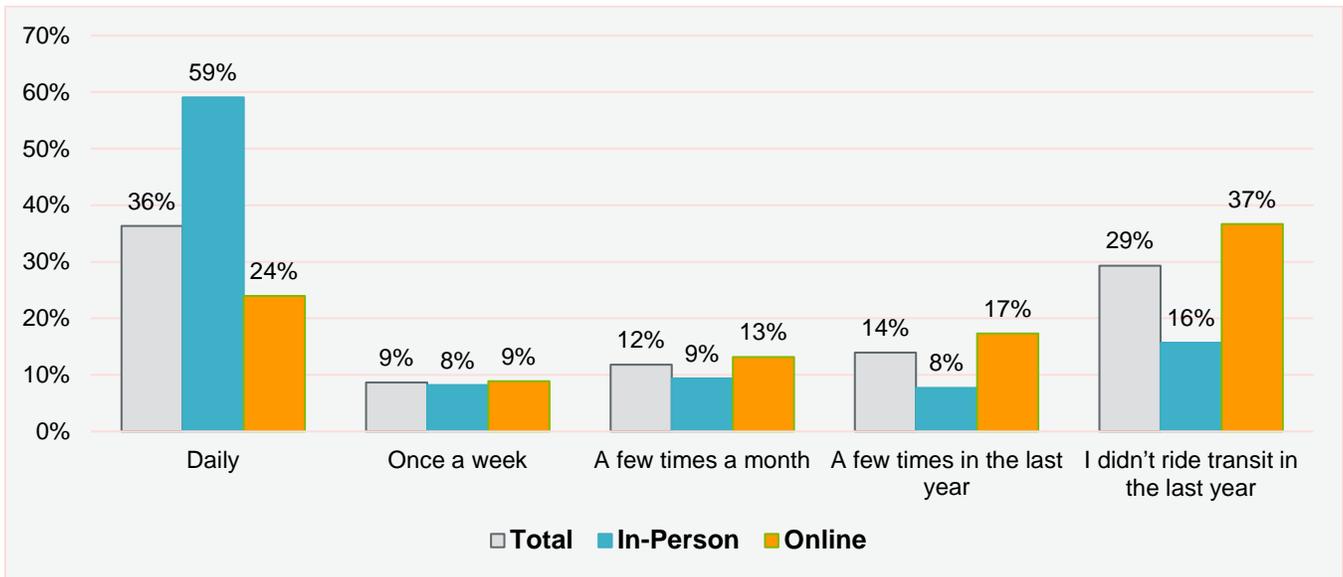
**Transit Usage Patterns:** Overall, about 45% of all respondents utilize transit regularly (i.e., daily or at least once a week), while about 67% of in-person respondents ride transit regularly. In-person respondents were far more likely to ride on a daily basis than online participants in the survey. In-person respondents who indicated they did not ride in the last year were disproportionately surveyed at pop-up events rather than intercept surveys.

Most respondents who ride transit regularly utilize both ART routes and ABQ RIDE local routes. Online respondents were less likely to have ridden ABQ RIDE transit routes regularly but were significantly more likely to have ridden the Rail Runner over the last year than in-person respondents (30% compared to 21%).

COVID-19 had an uneven impact on transit usage patterns among those surveyed, with about one quarter of all respondents indicating they ride less than before the pandemic started and one quarter indicating they ride more. About half of all respondents indicated they travel the same amount on public transit as before the pandemic.

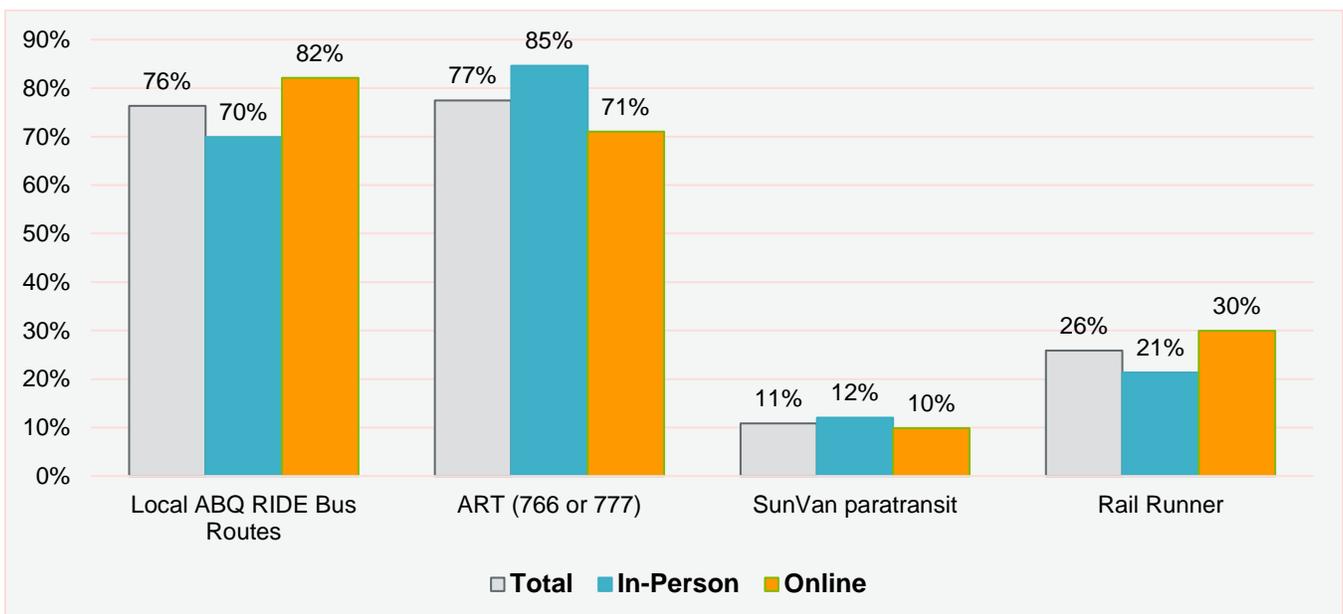
**Impacts of Pandemic on Travel Behavior:** One out of two respondents who indicated they ride public transit less frequently than before the pandemic selected personal safety concerns as a reason. Other frequent responses include concerns for personal health (37%), service being unavailable at desired times (35%), and changes in travel behavior. Frequent write-in responses that were provided as to why respondents ride transit less than before the pandemic include issues related to bus cleanliness, individuals who retired or now work remotely, formerly regular transit users who bought a car, and trip reductions related to service cuts.

**Transit Usage Patterns: How often have you ridden transit in the Albuquerque area in the last year?**



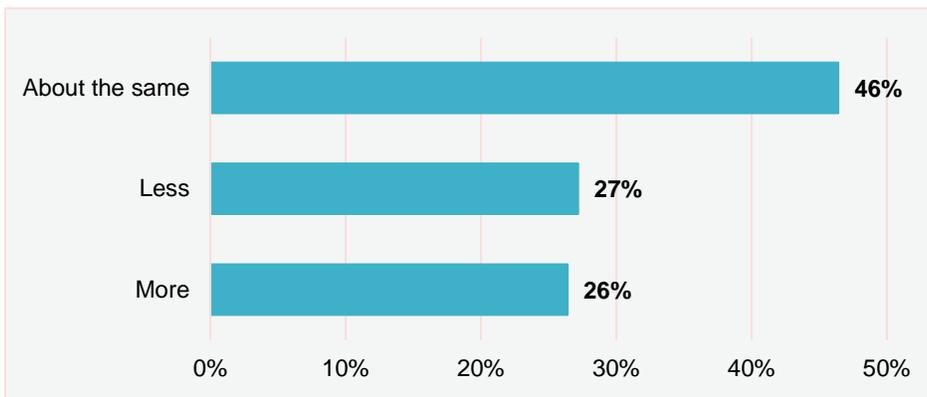
How often have you ridden transit in the Albuquerque area in the last year?	Total	In-Person	Online
Daily	605	346	259
Once a week	144	48	96
A few times a month	197	55	142
A few times in the last year	232	45	187
I didn't ride transit in the last year	488	92	396
<b>Total</b>	<b>1666</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>1080</b>

**Transit Usage Patterns: Which transit services have you ridden in the last year? Pick all that apply. (Among people that ride daily, weekly, or monthly)**



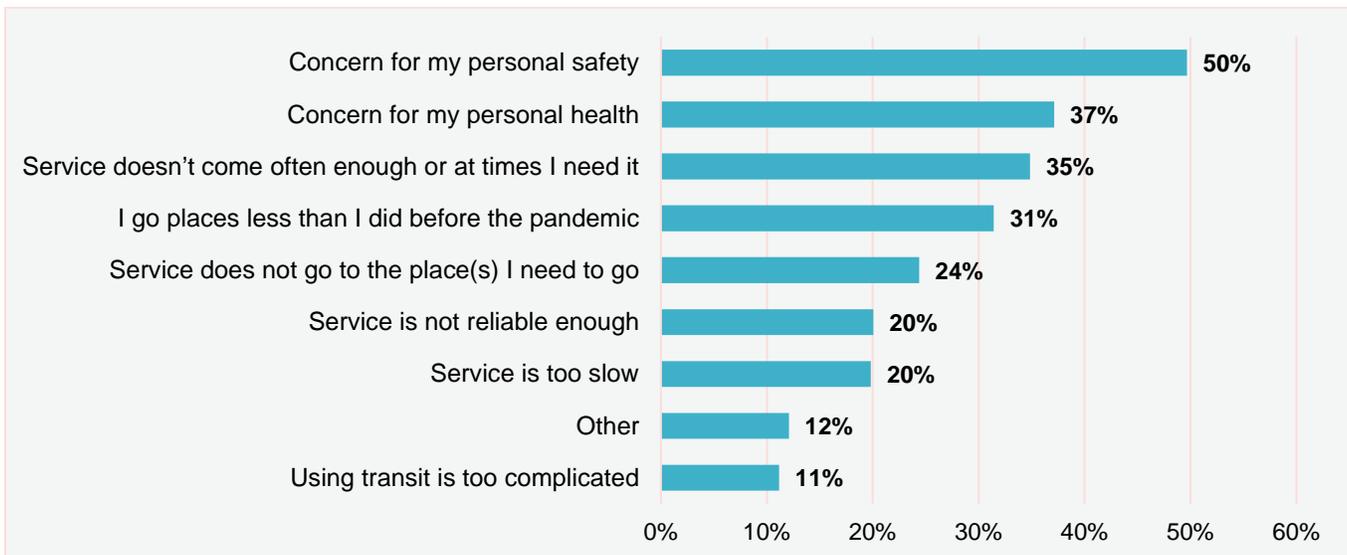
Transit Service Type	Total	In-Person	Online
Local ABQ RIDE Bus Routes (e.g., 11, 140/141, 155)	722	314	408
ART Routes	733	380	353
Sun Van paratransit	103	54	49
Rail Runner	245	96	149
Other	7	3	4
<b>Total that provided a response</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>497</b>

**Impacts of Pandemic on Travel Behavior: Are you riding transit about the same amount, more, or less than you did before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic?**



N=1633 respondents

**Impacts of Pandemic on Travel Behavior: Why have you been riding transit less since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic? Please pick all that apply.**



N=439 respondents

## *General Service Preference Questions – Notes and Observations*

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Participants were asked several questions related to general service preferences, including preferred **route types** and **service design** types.

### Preferred Route Type Response Options:

- Routes that are close by, but you have to wait a long time for the bus
- Routes that are a farther walk away, but the buses are always coming soon

### Service Design Preferences Response Options:

- Spread service out to cover all areas, so that everyone in the city is close to minimal service
- Focus service into frequent routes, in the places where large numbers of people will use the service

**Route Type Preferences:** Survey respondents were more likely to express a preference for frequent routes requiring a longer walk than for less frequent service nearby. Fully half (50%) of all respondents said they preferred “routes that are a farther walk away, but the buses are always coming soon,” while less than a quarter (21%) of all respondents said they preferred “routes that are close by, but you have to wait a long time for the bus”. (The remaining respondents said they were not sure which type of service they preferred.) Although both in-person and online survey respondents tended to prefer frequent routes requiring a longer walk over infrequent routes nearby, these preferences were more pronounced among people completing the survey online.

Respondents consistently preferred routes that are far away but more frequent regardless of transit usage rates and household income. Non-transit user respondents preferred far away but frequent routes over close by but infrequent routes by a rate of three to one (46% compared to 15%), though non-transit users indicated much higher rates of uncertainty than regular transit users (39% indicated they were not sure). Respondents of all income categories preferred routes that are far away but more frequent, though the degree to which far away but frequent routes were preferred increases as household income rises.

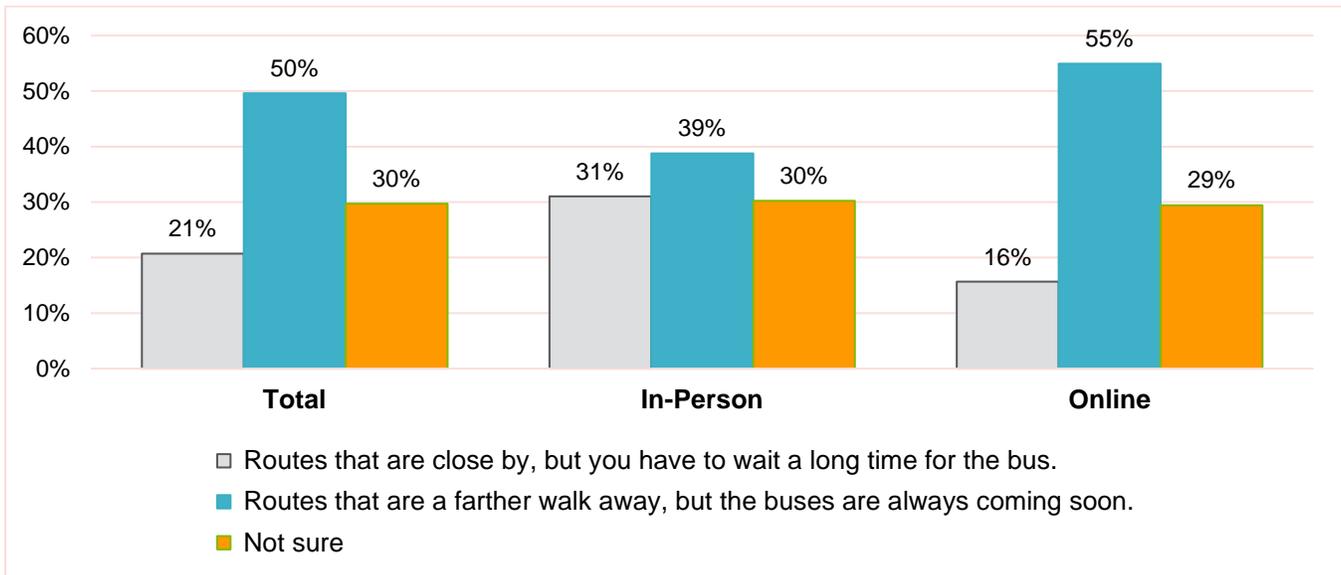
**Service Design Preferences (Ridership versus Coverage):** Even though respondents showed a preference for routes that were farther away but that come frequently many respondents preferred spreading service across the city instead of concentrating it in frequent routes. Overall, a plurality of respondents indicated a preference for spreading service out to cover all areas (46%) compared to focusing service into frequent routes (39%). Regular transit riders were more likely to prefer that service be spread across the city (51%) compared to focusing service onto high-ridership routes (33%), with responses among occasional transit riders nearly evenly split among the service design concepts.

Respondents with higher incomes were more likely to prefer focusing service into frequent routes. Among respondents with household incomes over \$100,000, more than half (54%) indicated a preference for concentrating service along higher ridership and higher frequency routes.

**Reasons for Providing Coverage Service:** Respondents were also asked to identify reasons why it might be appropriate to provide service in locations where there might not be high numbers of riders. Participants consistently identified meeting the needs of low-income and disadvantaged groups as the most important reason for providing transit locations where it is not used by many people. Meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities and putting service close to everyone in the city were other frequently cited reasons for providing transit in lower ridership areas.

Regular riders were much more likely than occasional riders and non-transit users to name putting service close to everyone in the city as an important reason for providing transit in places where it isn't used by many people. By contrast, occasional and non-transit users placed more emphasis on meeting the needs of low-income individuals and seniors and people with disabilities than putting service close to everyone in the city. Putting service in newly-built neighborhoods was the least cited reason for providing transit service in low ridership areas.

**Route Type Preferences: What kind of transit routes do you think are better?**

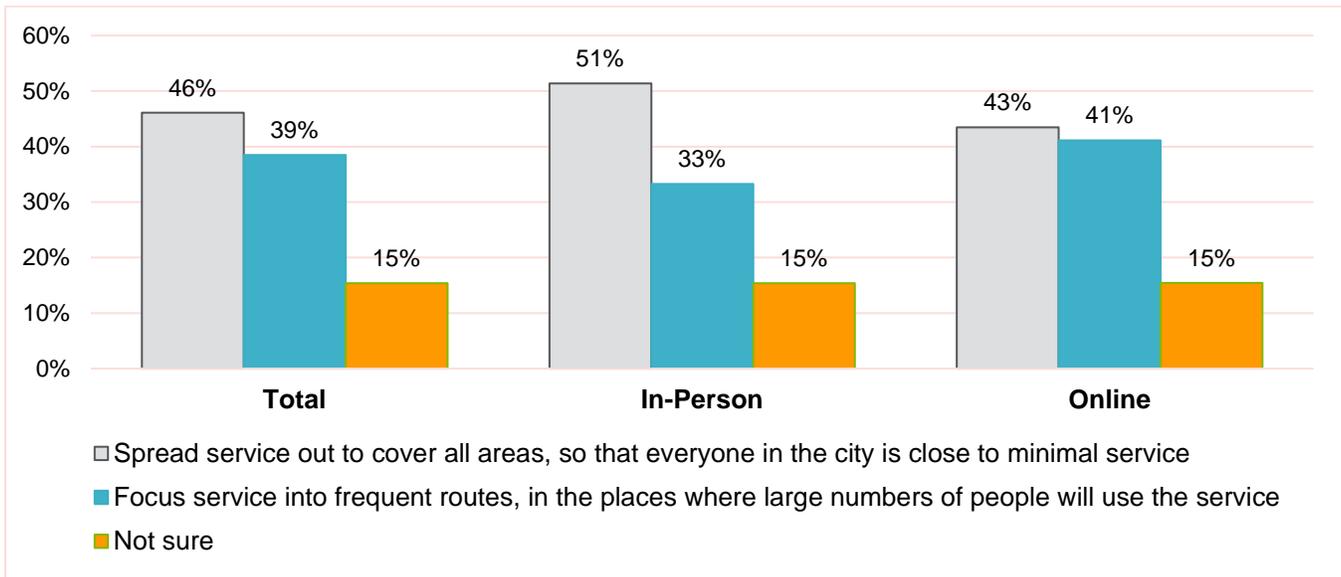


Route Type	Total	In-Person	Online
Routes that are close by, but you have to wait a long time for the bus	21%	31%	16%
Routes that are a farther walk away, but the buses are always coming soon	50%	39%	55%
Not sure	30%	30%	29%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1029</b>

Route Type	Regular Riders	Occasional Riders	Non-Transit Users
Routes that are close by, but you have to wait a long time for the bus	28%	15%	15%
Routes that are a farther walk away, but the buses are always coming soon	47%	60%	46%
Not sure	26%	26%	39%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>447</b>

Route Type	<\$25,000	\$25,000 - 49,999	\$50,000 - 74,999	\$75,000 - 99,999	>\$100,000	No Answer
Routes that are close by, but you have to wait a long time for the bus	30%	21%	18%	18%	11%	20%
Routes that are a farther walk away, but the buses are always coming soon	44%	50%	58%	52%	67%	42%
Not sure	26%	28%	24%	30%	21%	38%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>522</b>

**Service Design Preferences: In general, which of these do you think ABQ RIDE should do?**



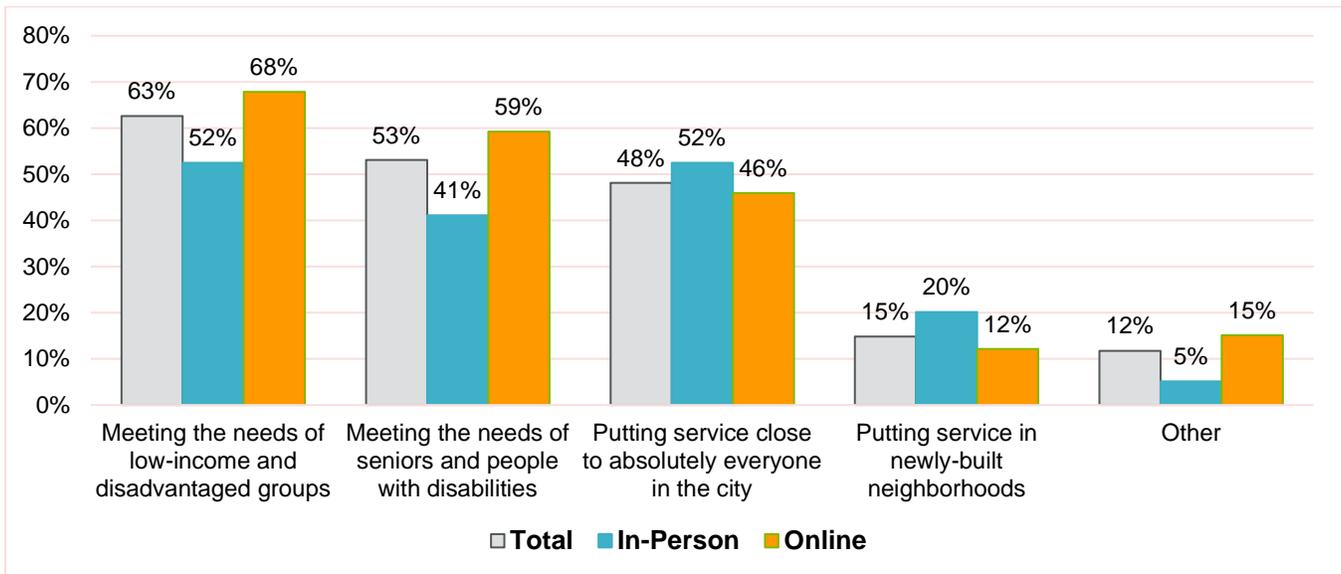
N=1532 respondents

Service Design Priority	Total	In-Person	Online
Spread service out to cover all areas, so that everyone in the city is close to minimal service	46%	51%	43%
Focus service into frequent routes, in the places where large numbers of people will use the service	39%	33%	41%
Not sure	15%	15%	15%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1024</b>

Service Design Priority	Regular Riders	Occasional Riders	Non-Transit Users
Spread service out to cover all areas, so that everyone in the city is close to minimal service	50%	42%	44%
Focus service into frequent routes, in the places where large numbers of people will use the service	38%	43%	36%
Not sure	12%	15%	20%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>445</b>

Service Design Priority	<\$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,999	>\$100,000	No Answer
Spread service out to cover all areas	55%	52%	40%	43%	34%	46%
Focus service into frequent routes	32%	38%	48%	45%	54%	32%
Not sure	13%	10%	13%	12%	12%	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>521</b>

**Reasons for Providing Coverage Service: Sometimes transit service is provided in places where it isn't used by very many people. What do you think are the most important reasons for providing transit, in these situations? Pick two.**



Reason for Providing Coverage Service	Total	In-Person	Online
Meeting the needs of low-income and disadvantaged groups	63%	52%	68%
Meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities	53%	41%	59%
Putting service close to absolutely everyone in the city	48%	52%	46%
Putting service in newly-built neighborhoods	15%	20%	12%
Other	12%	5%	15%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>1509</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>998</b>

Reason for Providing Coverage Service	Regular Riders	Occasional Riders	Non-Transit Users
Meeting the needs of low-income and disadvantaged groups	<b>57%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>66%</b>
Meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities	46%	<b>55%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Putting service close to absolutely everyone in the city	<b>54%</b>	46%	42%
Putting service in newly-built neighborhoods	18%	12%	14%
Other	11%	12%	12%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>431</b>

Reason for Providing Coverage Service	<\$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,999	>\$100,000	No Answer
Meeting the needs of lower-income people and disadvantaged groups	59%	62%	67%	68%	79%	55%
Meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities	47%	47%	52%	61%	59%	56%
Putting service close to absolutely everyone in the city	53%	54%	47%	44%	37%	49%
Putting service in newly-built neighborhoods	17%	17%	14%	13%	12%	15%
Other	8%	12%	10%	14%	12%	14%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>489</b>

### *Transit Priority Questions – Notes and Observations*

The final category of questions is related to the general priorities for providing transit service and the specific investments that ABQ RIDE should make in the City of Albuquerque bus network. Potential **transit service priorities** include maximizing ridership, reducing congestion and benefiting different populations or user groups (e.g., seniors or low-income households). Potential transit investments include more frequent service, keeping the fare free, more routes in more places, more weekend service, and more service at different times of day (e.g., late night, peak periods, or early mornings).

**General Transit Priorities:** Transit priorities varied based on frequency of transit use and household income, though few priorities were identified at significantly higher rates than others. The most commonly selected transit priorities were benefiting people with lower incomes (47%) and maximizing ridership (42%).

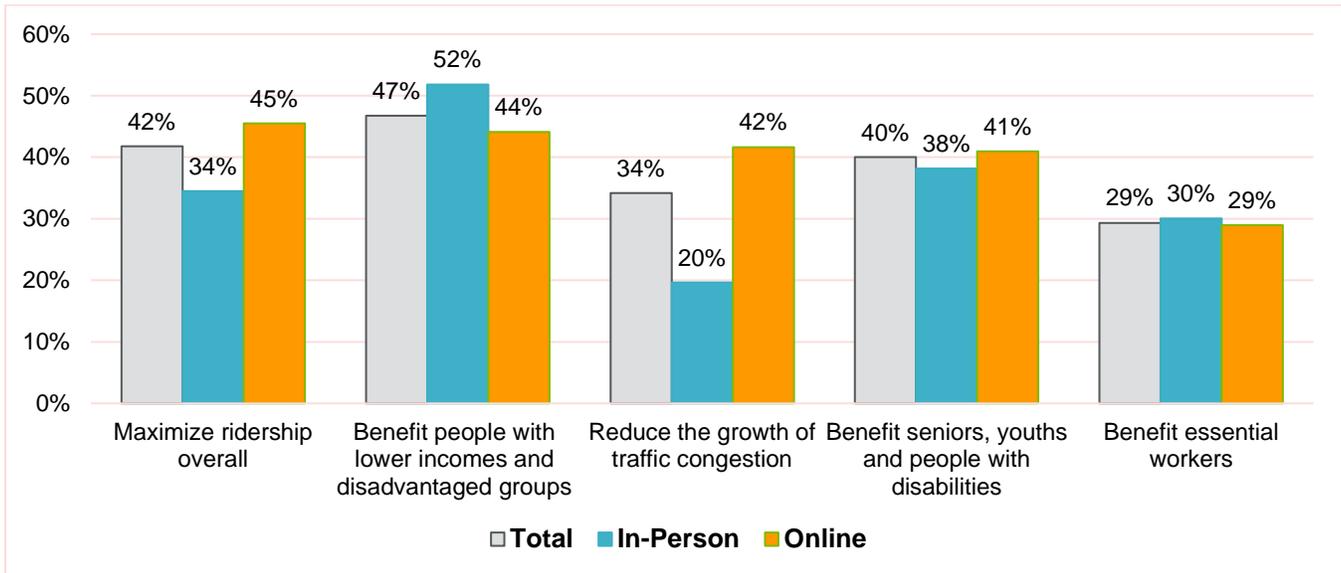
All categories of transit users (frequent, occasional, and non-users) selected benefiting people with lower incomes most frequently, though no priority was selected by more than half of respondents. Regular transit users were least likely to select reducing the growth of traffic congestion as a transit priority. Responses from non-transit users were split across nearly all transit priority categories.

Respondents from lower income households were somewhat more likely to select benefiting certain population groups (lower income households and seniors, youths, and people with disabilities) as a high transit priority. Respondents with higher household incomes were far more likely to select maximizing ridership and reducing the growth of traffic congestion as high priorities for public transit than respondents from lower-income households.

**Specific Transit Investments:** Overall, the highest priority investments among respondents were better frequencies (53%), keeping the fare free (50%), and more routes in more places (40%). The most frequently selected priorities were generally consistent among respondents with different transit usage patterns, though the order of priority varied. Among regular riders, the most frequently selected investment was “keeping the fare free” (55% of respondents), with “better frequencies” and “more weekend service” the next most frequently selected investment priorities (about 49% and 38% respectively). Both occasional and non-transit riders selected “better frequencies” most often among potential transit investments (57% and 54% respectively). The second most commonly selected priority among occasional transit riders was “keeping the fare free” (52%), while non-transit users selected “more routes in more places” (48%).

Respondents with the lowest household incomes were most likely to identify weekend and more night service among their priorities. Higher income respondents identified better frequencies as a priority at markedly higher rates than respondents from other income categories. More early morning service was consistently the least identified investment priority.

**General Transit Priorities: What do you think the highest priorities for transit in Albuquerque should be? Pick two.**

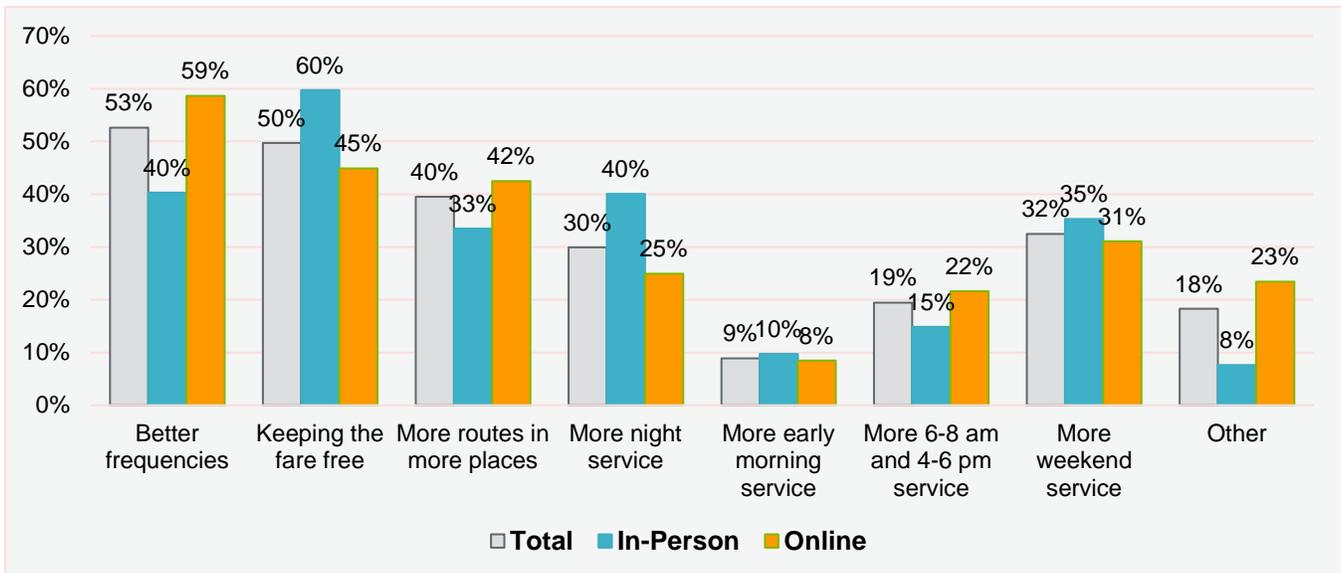


General Transit Priority	Total	In-Person	Online
Maximize ridership overall	<b>42%</b>	34%	<b>45%</b>
Benefit people with lower incomes and disadvantaged groups	<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Reduce the growth of traffic congestion	34%	20%	42%
Benefit seniors, youths and people with disabilities	40%	<b>38%</b>	41%
Benefit essential workers	29%	30%	29%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>1011</b>

General Transit Priority	Regular Riders	Occasional Riders	Non-Transit Users
Maximize ridership overall	<b>40%</b>	<b>44%</b>	42%
Benefit people with lower incomes and disadvantaged groups	<b>47%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Reduce the growth of traffic congestion	26%	39%	42%
Benefit seniors, youths and people with disabilities	<b>40%</b>	37%	42%
Benefit essential workers	33%	26%	26%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>441</b>

General Transit Priority	<\$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,999	>\$100,000	No Answer
Maximize ridership overall	32%	41%	41%	55%	48%	43%
Benefit people with lower incomes and disadvantaged groups	55%	49%	49%	38%	51%	39%
Reduce the growth of traffic congestion	24%	29%	39%	52%	46%	32%
Benefit seniors, youths and people with disabilities	46%	36%	35%	29%	31%	45%
Benefit essential workers	30%	38%	27%	26%	22%	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>517</b>

**Specific Investments: Which of these specific investments do you wish could be made for ABQ RIDE services? Pick up to three.**



N=1478 respondents

Investment Type	Total	In-Person	Online
Better frequencies	53%	40%	59%
Keeping the fare free	50%	60%	45%
More routes in more places	40%	33%	42%
More night service	30%	40%	25%
More early morning service	9%	10%	8%
More 6-8 am and 4-6 pm service	19%	15%	22%
More weekend service	32%	35%	31%
Other	18%	8%	23%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>994</b>

Investment Type	Regular Riders	Occasional Riders	Non-Transit Users
Better frequencies	<b>49%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>
Keeping the fare free	<b>55%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>40%</b>
More routes in more places	33%	<b>42%</b>	<b>48%</b>
More night service	36%	30%	20%
More early morning service	11%	6%	8%
More 6-8 am and 4-6 pm service	18%	14%	27%
More weekend service	<b>38%</b>	29%	28%
Other	17%	17%	21%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>427</b>

Investment Type	<\$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,999	>\$100,000	No Answer
Better frequencies	<b>45%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Keeping the fare free	<b>60%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>54%</b>	39%	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>
More routes in more places	35%	<b>41%</b>	<b>44%</b>	39%	<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>
More night service	<b>43%</b>	31%	27%	<b>43%</b>	26%	22%
More early morning service	9%	11%	8%	6%	6%	10%
More 6-8 am and 4-6 pm service	10%	25%	22%	18%	24%	20%
More weekend service	42%	31%	28%	32%	28%	31%
Other	14%	18%	19%	17%	16%	22%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>469</b>

## Focus Groups

### Methodology

The Project Team facilitated a series of six focus groups to generate in-depth feedback from participants on transit service priorities, including key demographic groups and populations that are particularly likely to utilize public transit. Focus group meetings featured a combination of interactive polling and general discussion questions facilitated by members of the Project Team.

Focus group meetings were one hour in length and were offered either in an in-person/virtual hybrid format, with an option to attend at the Alvarado Transportation Center, or entirely virtually. Spanish interpretation was made available at two of the focus group meetings.

A total of six focus group meetings took place during the first phase of outreach. The focus group meetings were facilitated by members of the Project Team, who presented an overview of the study and led interactive elements, including polling and general discussion. The table below includes the dates, locations, and number of focus group participants for each meeting.

**Table 1: Focus Group Dates and Attendance**

Event	Meeting Date	Location	Participants
1	Friday, October 14, 2022 – 2:00pm	Virtual	5
2	Monday, October 17, 2022 – 5:30pm	Virtual	6
3	Friday, October 21, 2022 – 12:00pm	Alvarado Transit Center + virtual	4
4	Monday, October 24, 2022 – 12:00pm	Virtual	6
5	Monday, October 24, 2022 – 5:30pm	Alvarado Transit Center + virtual	10
6	Friday, October 28, 2022 – 2:00pm	Virtual	7
<b>Total Number of Focus Group Participants</b>			<b>38</b>

Focus group participants registered to participate via the project website. Participants were recruited via direct recruiting efforts at community and stakeholder meetings, announcements made on social media, advertising flyers, and through follow-up emails to individuals who participated in the community survey. If someone expressed interest in a focus group, they were asked to fill out a survey asking about their language preference, availability for certain planned focus group dates and times, and their transit usage patterns and employment status. Based on their availability, survey respondents were assigned to a focus group. Attempts were made to make each focus group diverse based on responses to the question above.

### Key Takeaways and Discussion

#### *General Priorities and Desired Route Types*

The vast majority of participants indicated a preference for routes that are farther away but come more frequently. When asked how far they would be willing to walk to access frequent service, more than half (53%) of focus group participants indicated they would be willing to walk more than 10 minutes. By contrast, only about 1 in 5 participants (21%) were willing to walk more than 10 minutes to a route that comes infrequently (every 45-60 minutes). When asked more specific questions about how far they were willing to walk to access transit stops near their residence, many participants indicated shorter distances in practice than in theory.

Among focus group participants, the principal roles of transit are to provide access to destinations for low-income residents (68%) and connections to major job centers and services (63%). When asked to identify the top investment priorities for ABQ RIDE, better frequencies (73%) and more routes in more places (59%) were both

selected by a majority of participants. Keeping the fares free (43%) was selected somewhat less frequently by focus group participants than survey respondents.

Common reasons for preferring routes that are farther away but come more frequently included less of a need to refer to a schedule when trip planning and greater control over one's schedule since there is less of a consequence in travel time if one misses a bus. Participants highlighted that predictability and reliability are critical when you need to arrive at a destination a specific time, and that limited service exposes riders to more risk since a disruption or reduced service will have greater impacts.

### *Ridership and Coverage Models*

**Coverage:** Common arguments in favor of a **coverage model** include the suburban design form across the City of Albuquerque and the general lack of walkable areas where access to transit is safe and convenient. Some participants who live in more rural areas acknowledged that they may not be able to expect the same level of service as in denser neighborhoods, but that having access to transit allows them to participate in city life.

Other commonly identified reasons for supporting coverage-based routes include limiting the distances that people need to walk, which is critical for individuals with limited mobility and families with small children. Many participants indicated that there are limits to how far people are willing to walk and that after a certain time and distance it does not make sense to take transit. Other arguments in support of a coverage model, even where densities are low, include providing service in areas with low vehicle ownership rates and where topography creates challenges to walking long distances.

**Ridership:** Multiple participants commented that it makes sense to provide the best service where people are going anyways; for example, it is logical that Central Ave should have the most service since there are so many destinations along it. In addition, there are parts of Albuquerque that are very car dependent where it may not be reasonable to expect people to take transit. Participants who supported the approach that high-ridership routes should be the core of the system generally acknowledged that the system would still need supplemental routes. Other participants expressed hope there would be a positive feedback loop in which high levels of ridership both attracts residents to transit rich areas of the city and encourages additional investment in transit.

**Hybrid Approach:** Many participants expressed interest in some form of hybrid model in which a share of resources is allocated to high-ridership routes with remaining resources distributed across the system to provide some level of transit access across the city.

### Defining Coverage and Ridership

A **coverage** approach spreads out services so that there would be a bus stop near everyone. Spreading it out sounds great, but it also means spreading it thin. The resources would be divided among so many routes that it wouldn't be possible to offer much service on any of them. As a result, all routes would be infrequent, even those on the main roads.

A **ridership** approach involves focusing service on the streets where there are large numbers of people, where walking to transit stops is easy, and where the straight routes feel direct and fast to customers. Because service is concentrated into fewer routes, frequency is high and a bus is always coming soon.

### Additional Comments and Discussion

**Greater Span and Weekend Service:** Numerous participants stressed that many current and potential riders work jobs with non-traditional hours and would be more likely to choose to depend on transit if service on weekends and later at night were more comprehensive. To better service these transit users, the same service levels should be provided regardless of the day of the week.

**Other Service Types:** A common suggestion among focus group participants was for a form of shuttle service or neighborhood circulator that serves a lower density area. Many participants recognized that some areas are more difficult to serve via transit than others, but there may be residents in these areas who lack mobility or individuals who would prefer to drive less and utilize transit. Suggestions for shuttle services were often linked to the perception that such service would be less expensive to operate.

**Role of Transit in Reducing Congestion:** Several participants related the perception that transit can play a role in addressing regional congestion, particularly for individuals crossing the Rio Grande.

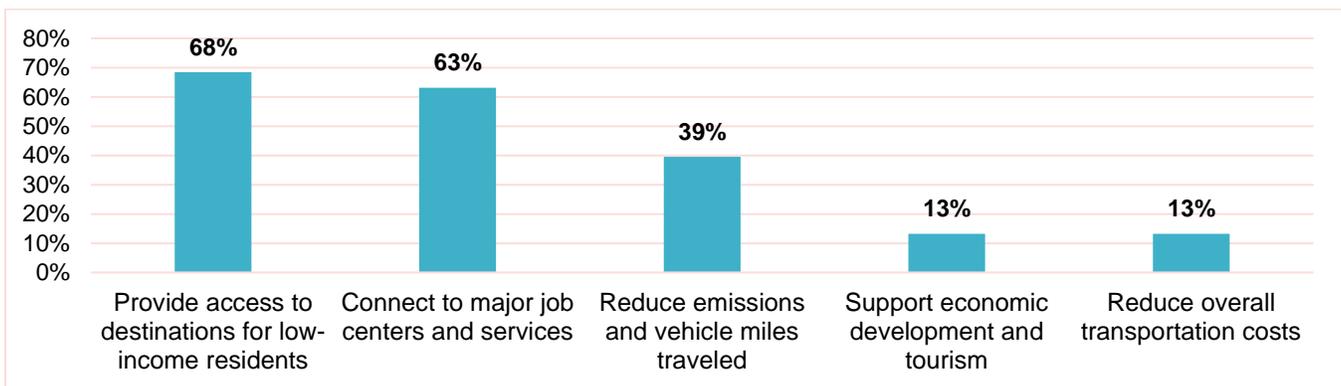
**Safety/Security:** Numerous participants made a connection between service design patterns and safety, as more frequent buses reduce the amount of time one is exposed while waiting at a bus stop. In addition to concerns about unhoused populations at stops and on buses, participants indicated that waiting conditions also matter, and various participants indicated they would be willing to wait longer where there is a shelter.

**Budget and Financial Constraints:** The tradeoffs associated with a fixed budget was a common area of discussion, with many participants expressing an opinion that existing service levels are insufficient. Various participants asked if additional resources could be allocated to transit to support both ridership and coverage-based goals.

### Focus Group Polling Questions

Participants were asked for their thoughts on ABQ RIDE priorities, preferred types of routes, and distances they would be willing to walk. The responses below were obtained through Mentimeter polling and were consolidated to show overall preferences among all focus group participants.

**1. What is the main role and purpose of a city transit system? Select up to 2.**



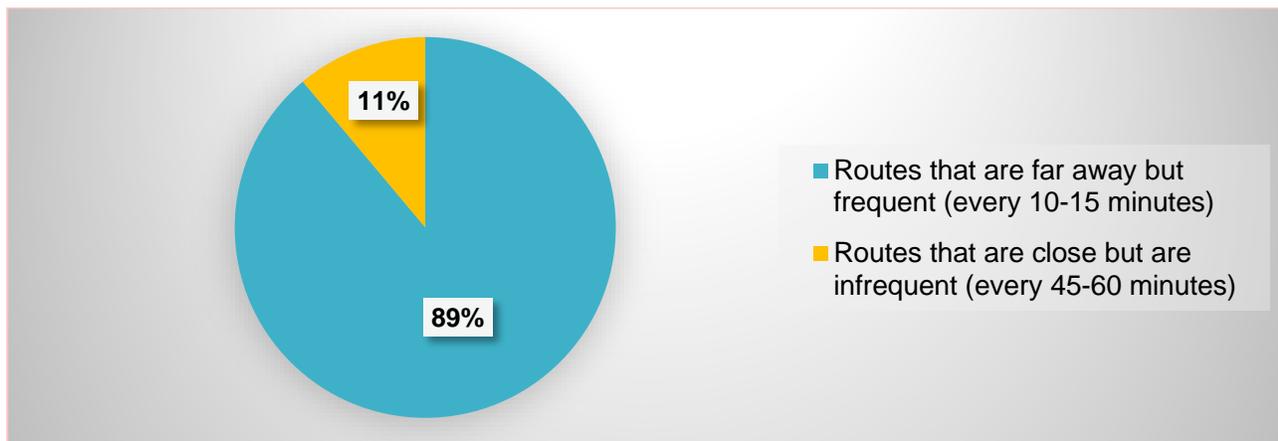
N=38 respondents

**2. What are the top priorities for ABQ RIDE and the City of Albuquerque to invest in? Select up to 3 responses.**



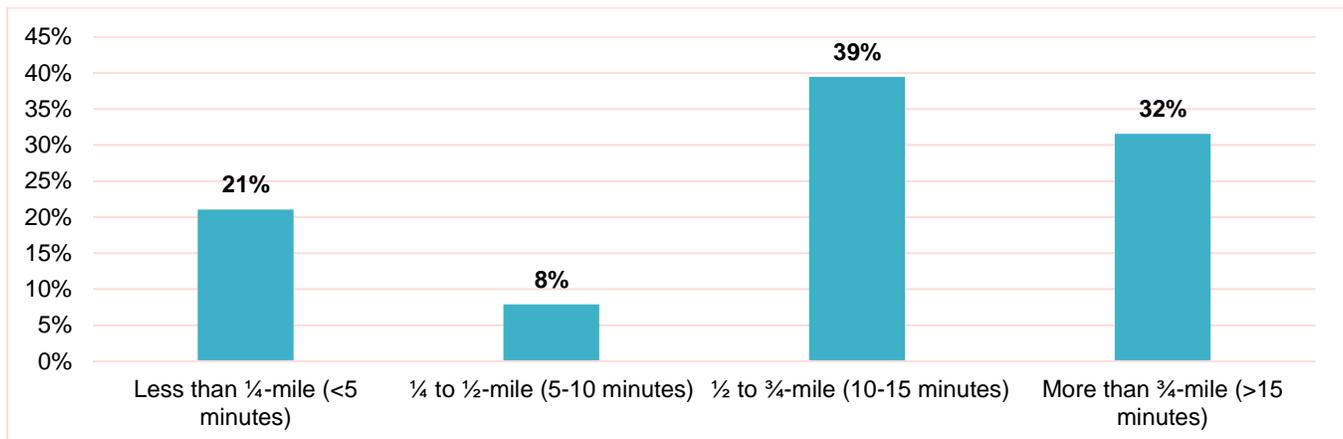
N=37 respondents

**3. What types of routes do you personally prefer?**



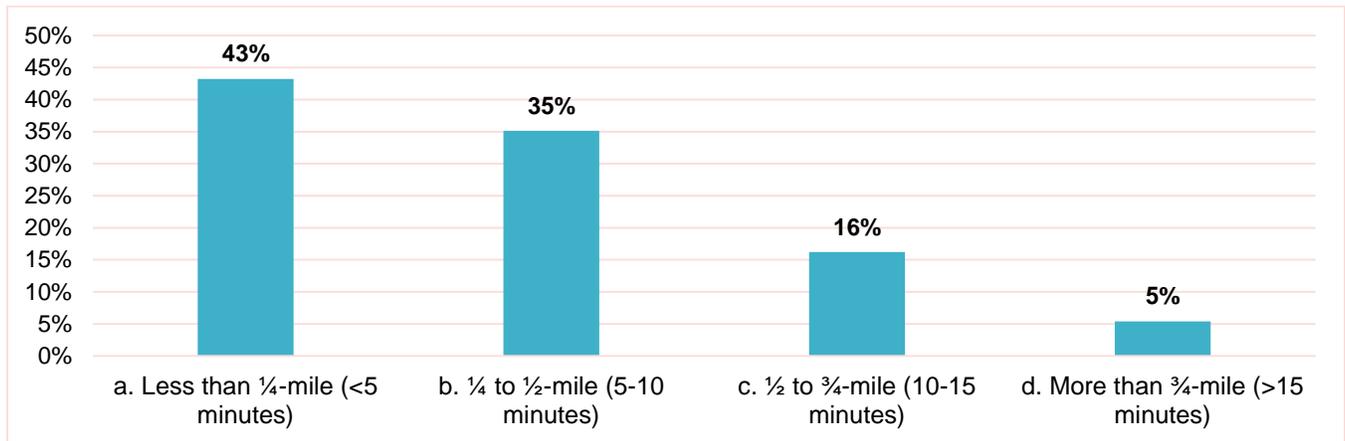
N=36 respondents

**4. How far would you be willing to walk to take a bus that comes every 10-15 minutes?**



N=38 respondents

**5. How far would you be willing to walk to take a bus that comes every 45-60 minutes?**



N=37 respondents

## Appendix: Individual Focus Group Summaries

### Focus Group #1: 10/14/22

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- General transit priorities
  - Participants selected better frequencies/more routes as their top priority.
  - One participant uses night and weekend service but must drive unless the destination is on Central. Lack of night service prevents him from grocery shopping on weekends and reduces social activities.
- Preferred types of routes
  - All participants preferred routes that come more frequently with longer walks to bus stops.
  - More frequent service allows riders to be more in control of their schedule.
  - Several participants commented that more frequent service leads to better reliability; if a bus doesn't come, they can wait for the next one.
  - One participant commented that reliability is more important than frequency.
  - One participant asked for a bus route on Tramway Blvd.
- Walking distance to bus stops
  - One participant said they are not willing to walk far to a bus that comes every hour, especially if there is a more frequent alternative closer.
  - A participant representing transit-dependent people who use food bank services said she would be willing to walk farther because if she has to wait for the bus anyways, she might as well walk to the stop.
  - Safety was brought up as a concern—one participant stated they are not willing to wait as long at bus stops with drugs/panhandling problems.
  - One participant is willing to wait longer if there is a bus shelter, especially in windy conditions.
- Discussion on the coverage model
  - One person stated that coverage should be provided in areas where vehicle ownership is low and that people should have access to essential services like hospitals, grocery stores, etc. Another participant suggested that Sun Vans could provide coverage in areas without fixed route service.
  - One person commented that it is difficult for people to walk to bus stops in areas with hills.
- Discussion on the ridership model
  - One participant commented that it makes sense to provide the best service where people are going anyways. Participant would rather walk further and not have to wait, especially with safety concerns.
  - One person commented that the problem with coverage-based model is that it doesn't run at hours where people need it—a lot of people need night and weekend services. This person commented that the ridership model is also equity-focused because it provides a service that people can actually use.
  - One participant commented that there are specific places where low-income people live and need more service and said that job centers also need better service. They commented that there is a happy medium between the two options.
  - One person commented that cutting rush hour service could be one way to create more room in the budget.
  - One person stated that if the coverage model is used, it should be spread to places where there are destinations and people who would use the bus.
  - One participant asked a question about how ART fits into this study and why it doesn't go faster than Route 66 buses.
    - ABQ RIDE response: ART does not cost more to operate than other routes. ABQ RIDE would like to spend more money to maintain the stations but are short staffed. ART carries about 1/3 of the total system's ridership. Signal timing adjustments might be able to make it faster than the 66.
- Other comments:
  - One person asked if the study is looking at transit options if the budget is expanded.

- ABQ RIDE response: Ultimately, City Council and Mayor will decide what to implement, and expanding budget a little could be part of that. But constraining the budget for the study is useful to make sure it gets implemented.
- One participant thinks that reliability is the main priority and has talked to people who have gotten fired or missed exams due to unreliable bus service.
- Safety concerns: one person said they wouldn't let their children on the bus because of harassment and that many colleagues have stopped using the bus because of safety.
- One commenter stated that BRT was a better choice over light rail and asked how we can get non-transit riders to ride on local buses that connect to ART.
  - ABQ RIDE response: In general, riders are making fewer transfers, possibly because of low reliability.
- One participant who is a TAB member commented that the project team should ask for more participation from the TAB.

## Focus Group #2: 10/17/22

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- Discussion on frequency and walking distance
  - One person commented that if they know the bus is going to be a while, they would rather stay at home and wait that while than be outside and trying to find it, rather than spend lots of energy getting there and waiting.
  - One person commented that their complaint is buses don't go to places they need to go. They had to turn job at Sandia Labs and Sandia Casino because they couldn't get there. The participant indicated that even if a bus only comes once an hour to get to those places, they would walk longer and wait to get there.
  - One person commented that they live in downtown and do not want to walk far or stand out on the street for more than a few minutes because of safety concerns, especially when it's dark out.
  - One person commented that nothing really goes on base but the 157, so you can't really get to any employment place there. They said that those places are hiring, and they are paying good money, too.
  - One person commented that they've been walking about 20 minutes to catch bus, and they have to walk off base to catch the bus. They said 20 minutes is longer than they want to walk, especially in the heat. They commented that they don't want to be waiting for a bus that doesn't come and said there have been buses that don't show up, and that adds to the frustration. They understand there are driver shortages.
- Discussion on the coverage model
  - One person commented that they have mobility issues. They have a car but prefer to take bus. Mobility issues prevent them from walking more than a mile to get to a bus.
  - Multiple participants commented that it's important to provide some coverage to more people because it makes transit convenient and opens doors for people.
- Discussion on the ridership model
  - One person commented that high-ridership routes should be the core of the system, but the system would still need supplemental routes. That person commented that the system should have plenty of service on Central and areas with the most riders.
  - One person commented that the ridership model offers more "bang for your buck."
  - One participant commented that it's annoying to wait 30-40 minutes for a bus on most routes. Although we have a bus system that works, people are still limited by the routes we have.
  - One person commented that the frequency of the Coors bus is too low.
- Comments in support of a mix of approaches
  - One participant argued in support of a ridership model with augmented coverage. This person suggested that a high-ridership route could be augmented with smaller vans. Further, they

- commented that ABQ RIDE could use a Hub-and-spoke model where more nimble vehicles bring people to high-ridership routes
- o Another participant agreed that a big bus is not needed for all routes, commenting that hourly buses at less accessible places would provide a middle ground between ridership and coverage. The participant stated that they didn't want reduced service on Central, just more coverage for the rest of the city.
  - How important is it to provide service for long hours, even if it means less frequent service/coverage?
    - o One participant commented that routes that end early in the day are not useful for people.
    - o One participant commented that most buses would be better if they went an hour later.
    - o Expanded service by time of day (span):
      - One participant thought a schedule that end at midnight would work for most people. Another participant thought they should run until at least 1 AM.
      - One participant thought it is very important to expand service hours because people need the bus more when it is late, especially on Central.
        - One person commented that a bus that runs until 2 AM would reduce DUIs.
        - One person commented that most people don't work standard 9-5 jobs anymore.
    - o One participant commented that it's worth having more coverage on the weekends, saying that some days the frequency is so bad that it's not even worth taking the bus.
    - o Another person commented that there needs to be longer service hours on Sundays.
    - o One participant had to quit job in the film industry because couldn't drive or get to shoots.
    - o One participant commented that it's awful being stranded on the weekend, and that just because it's Sunday doesn't mean everybody's life stops.
    - o One person commented that some people need to buy groceries on Sundays.
  - Should we provide service to parts of the city where few people will use it?
    - o One person stated that the size of van can be matched to number of people using it and suggested the following. Van would go to nearest high frequency route rather than the destination. Then high-frequency routes can have fewer stops as well.
  - Should ABQ RIDE invest in additional security, even if it means removing buses from the system?
    - o One person commented that it doesn't seem like the security we have now are preventing or dealing with drugs and altercations.
    - o One participant said they normally don't even notice security on the bus.
    - o One participant commented that it doesn't seem worth investing in something that might not have an impact.
  - Other comments
    - o One participant thought the Rail Runner train is great, but getting from the train to their destination is tough even at 9 AM.
    - o Another participant loves Route 16, but it doesn't have many people on it and it's difficult to make connections from it.
    - o One person noted that getting to areas on Kirtland Airforce Base can be tricky and that Uber/Lyft can't go on base, either.

### Focus Group #3: 10/21/22

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- ABQ RIDE Priorities
  - o Participants selected better frequencies and more routes in more places as their top priorities. The next highest priorities were more night service and keeping the fare free.
  - o One participant noted that it would be good to have service to destinations like getting to a trail in foothills so that transit-dependent people can enjoy open spaces.
- Discussion on the coverage and ridership models

- One participant commented that it is possible for ABQ RIDE to not have to choose exclusively high coverage or high ridership; instead, ABQ RIDE could choose to strategically switch approaches during the day.
- One person commented that if they are going to have to wait for the bus for a long time, they don't want to walk very far. They would rather use the time waiting to walk.
- One person commented that having high density developments and infill was a critical strategy in having a good transit system, as it creates corridors where high ridership becomes more likely.
- Discussion on service span
  - One person commented that it is critical that buses run later into the evening, but that no one is really asking for more early morning buses.
  - One person suggested that ABQ RIDE not work off of a dichotomy between workdays and weekends; instead run the same routes/schedules every day of the week.
  - Many people who use the bus are not working a traditional Monday to Friday business hour office job. Many are working service jobs and need the bus when they got off from working at food service places, etc., later in the evening and on weekends.
  - One participant noted that she has had to quit jobs because she is transit dependent and could not get home after work. This has also discouraged her from applying for further jobs, where she would be required to work shifts that run later than the bus.
- Other comments:
  - One person commented that she uses a service dog but that the bus driver has refused to allow her on the bus with the dog, so she is unable to get where she needs to go that day.
  - One person commented that bus drivers are often rude to people.
  - One person commented that bus drivers seem to enforce rules randomly rather than consistently, like sometimes allowing non-service dogs on buses or ignoring people doing drugs on bus.
  - One person commented that there needs to be a crosswalk at Washington and Montgomery so people can safely access the nearby.
  - One participant noted Park and Ride for Balloon Fiesta was not possible for bus-dependent persons because the hours you need to arrive at parking lot were not hours regular bus service runs.
  - One person suggested publishing information about ABQ RIDE activities/initiatives like this at the bulletin board at the income support office.

## Focus Group #4: 10/24/22

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- ABQ RIDE Priorities
  - Participants selected more routes in more places (6 votes) and better frequencies (4 votes) as their top priorities. The next highest priorities were keeping the fare free, followed by equal votes for more weekend service and more night service.
  - One participant noted that it would be good to have service to destinations like getting to a trail in foothills so that transit-dependent people can enjoy open spaces.
- Preferred types of routes
  - On the question of preferred routes, one person commented, "Depends. I'm the one of six who selected close but infrequent. I use my bus on bike a lot. If I can get my e-bike on bus (right now, that's only ART) than I'm okay with longer distance. But if I can't get my bike on bus, then I prefer a much shorter distance."
  - One participant noted If you take public transportation, you know there's going to be some walking. I'd rather walk a few more blocks and have a reliable system like ART.

- Walking distance to bus stops
  - Participants were equally split on how far they would be willing to walk for a frequent bus, with 2 votes each for less than 5 minutes, 10-15 minutes, and more than 15 minutes.
  - For an infrequent bus, people were willing to walk less. No one was willing to walk more than 10 minutes for an infrequent bus.
  - One participant noted they don't mind walking if they know a bus is coming soon. They generally use the bus to get to a place at a certain time and don't want to add 45 minutes to a commute. "I don't mind walking. I'd rather use my wait time to walk."
  - One participant commented that she has a medical problem with her foot so is limited in how far she can walk, and that's part of reason she depends upon a bicycle. It's not a choice, really, since she can't walk that far. For her, it all come back to whether I can use a bike and bring it on bus.
  - One participant noted that schedules are hard to interpret right now, so she would rather show up at a bus stop and know that a bus will come soon rather than scrutinize a schedule and be wrong. This participant noted she tried to take mother-in-law, a non-native English speaker, to mall using bus once, but it required interpreting the bus schedule and a couple transfers and mother-in-law gave up. She doesn't have a car so ideal transit user. If she could just stand at bus stop and know it will arrive and not worry about interpreting a schedule, that would be best.
  - The Eubank route changes on weekends, which is very confusing.
    - ABQ RIDE reply: Yes, and Eubank only runs once a day, so a route where it's important to be able to interpret schedule or going to be waiting a long time.
  - One person commented that there are times when bus drivers get there early, times driver gets there late. This person used to ride the bus to school, used to have to get up early and get there before scheduled time, otherwise he would have to wait 45 minutes for the next bus, and would miss classes.
- Discussion on the coverage and ridership models
  - Multiple respondents indicated that a hybrid model should be pursued. One participant commented that the issue they see with high ridership with all 18 buses on two corridors is this: how do people get to the corridor? It might be a very long walk to get to high access route. They have to take a different form of transportation to get to high access route. They suggest having a combination of routes that are less frequent to get to high access route.
  - One person stated that they have walked up to 1.5 miles to get to route. They grew up in Chicago taking transit and don't mind walking if the weather is nice. But they don't want to have to walk 2 or 2.5 miles; by that time, they could just walk to destination. If it takes them 30-45 minutes to walk to bus stop, they could just probably have walked all the way to destination.
  - One person commented that if we move buses to infrequent route, we lose density. She said she would love to use the bus to get to work and daycare. But it's took infrequent and unreliable. So, she has a car and adopted life around its use.
    - This person reiterated example of her mother-in law example mentioned earlier; because bus is infrequent, and mother-in-law can't read schedule, not native English speaker, doesn't use bus.
    - ABQ RIDE: trip chaining is especially problematic if infrequent service.
  - One person commented that they have had some success commuting from Tramway/Paseo using combination of bus and bike.
  - One person commented that they're guessing ridership/coverage is like chicken and egg situation – "if they build it, they will come." But if there is no service and people move there, they're not expecting service. Like at top in G, I would not use two buses to service G and top of scale. I wonder if H is useful as well. Like C line below G would be their best bet. All the C line is light as well.

- One person commented that they live in middle of city and believe you should work near where you live to take advantage of city transit opportunities. However, you shouldn't cut off parts of city.
- One person said that not everyone has great choices about where they live and where they work. Many people who choose to live in areas where it's possible to use bus frequently or outside bus zones do have cars and may be able to use park and ride. However, the bus service must be safe and reliable. A culture shift is required because Albuquerque is a high vehicle use place.
- Based on discussion about using vehicle ownership rates as a factor in network design, one person expressed caution. He commented that he lives near UNM, and the driveways are packed with cars. He would gladly use his car less if he could use transit.
- Another participant agreed, commenting that we don't live in NYC. She said that in outlying areas, we could focus on a hub, like Park and Ride at Balloon Fiesta. Then someone like her who hates driving could drive or bike a couple miles to a hub and then use the bus.
- Other comments
  - One person commented that based on their own experience, the bus takes a long time to go to different places. At the same time if bus system were frequent and ran on schedule, or if we could see it on a screen with arrival time with GPS, you would know how long you would have to wait or if you would have to call for a ride to not be late. This person commented that he used to have to go to meetings and it would take an hour to get around city. He commented that ART has faster routes, and if we could improve function of alerting people/counting down when bus is coming (real-time user tracking), that would be better. He commented that we need to make it better for other areas of city as well.
  - Discussion on Transit app: Some participants find it confusing, and not all riders have smart phones,
    - ABQ RIDE: The app doesn't change underlying service and doesn't make bus come faster, but it gives you some additional info about how long you must wait.
    - A participant indicated that recent upgrades to the app made a big difference.

## Focus Group #5: 10/24/22

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- ABQ RIDE Priorities (integrates verbal and chat comments)
  - One participant noted that he grew up using all different transit and doesn't think any one thing should be prioritized.
  - Participants selected better frequency as a top priority (9 votes), followed by more weekend service (6 votes). The least votes went to early morning service or keeping the fare free.
- Preferred types of routes
  - All participants preferred faraway but frequent routes. None preferred close but infrequent routes
  - One participant noted that the Coors bus runs every 45 minutes and if she misses it, she is sitting in sun and snow, waiting a long time, upset, and calls 311 to complain. She noted it wouldn't be so bad if bus came every 10-15 minutes.
  - One person said he takes the San Mateo to Constitution commuter bus and has to walk 20 minutes down to Constitution. Service along Constitution is very inconvenient.
  - Another participant asked about integrating bicycle us on buses. He has tried to bring his bike on-board on time, but couldn't figure out the bike rack in front of bus, which causes a delay for others. It's easier to just get on the bus without a bicycle.
  - A participant lives on the north side of Lomas and will ride bike down to ART to go Downtown. Lomas has good service because 5 and 11 cover Lomas/Carlisle to downtown. If we go with fewer routes all over town, will be faced with that problem when traveling to other destinations.

- Walking distance to bus stops
  - Almost all (8 of 9) participants would be willing to walk between 5-15 minutes for a bus that comes frequently. Only one person was willing to walk more than 10 minutes for a bus that comes infrequently.
  - One person noted that they prefer close by if low frequency because if they only have to walk 5 minutes to stop, but miss the bus, they can walk home to wait for the next bus.
  - One person commented that she is close to the route 16 and tries to catch it out, to save energy. But she is less likely to catch it home, and instead has to catch another route and walk 25 minutes home. She will show up half hour early to get route 16 bus because if she walks too much one day, she can't walk the next day.
  - One person noted that they are looking for convenience relative to driving.
  - One person noted that if the bus comes every 10-15 minutes, but if they can get where they need to go on bike in 25 minutes, they will just bike, rather than wait for a bus.
- Discussion on the coverage and ridership models
  - One person commented that It's not really so much what they want to do or not want to do, it's that the theater, museum, etc. don't wait for bus. She said that the higher chance she has of getting to that thing that doesn't wait for bus, she is all onboard. Also, there is the factor of laziness in not having to memorize bus schedule; if she can just get to the corner and has just missed a bus, she will know it's coming in 15 minutes if it's high frequency.
  - One participant commented that they are always in favor of frequency and high ridership, saying that it is better to give great service to 50% of community than bad service to everyone. This participant said that over time, people who value transit will move to where service is, so you create a network effect where service improves because more people ride it. The more people you have riding the bus, the safer it is. The participant said he has never seen a good case for high coverage low frequency other than political reasons.
  - One participant said that the middle is best. They asked if anyone has heard the phrase "frequency is freedom" and agreed with the person who said the theater doesn't wait for you, it starts at specific time. Being able to know and plan your day is an advantage to high frequency.
  - One participant commented that ABQ has sprawl, it's continuing, and there are lots of people who want it to sprawl. This person said that we are not leaving these people behind, they just keep building further and further out.
  - One participant has always lived rural and doesn't think believe these areas deserve no service: "We're farmers, we have to live at our farms." She said that having no service means they have no ability to participate in city life. If you move to a rural area, you recognize you won't have all the same transit options, but you shouldn't be excluded completely.
  - One person commented that he thinks we need to look at commuter routes (e.g., Comanche and Candelaria) and noted that those routes do not operate the time of day or when kids getting out of school. As a result, many kids who don't have cars at all are unable to get home. Instead of just doing the same thing over and over, we should think outside of box and consider what we can do with commuter routes, such as operating. He commented that maybe we can try it during weekday, mid-day, a noon one, or a weekend one in the middle of day.
  - One person commented that they would like to make a case for coverage - we need five BRT routes running east-west and 5 BRT routes running north-south.
  - One participant says his wife rides the commuter bus, that there's only one going westbound in morning, eastbound in evening. He commented that with a tight budget, we should funnel money to times people ride like middle of day, like 1 or 2 pm, to do errands during the day. He notes that this does end up sacrificing coverage. He says if we increase ridership through higher frequency, eventually funding will increase.

- Other comments
  - One participant would be a daily user but lives in the County, and service in South Valley is not good, so walks a lot and spends a lot of money on Uber.
  - One person commented they lived downtown when there was the D-ride, and when it went away, access to transit become less frequent and less convenient.
  - One person commented that they love public transit, have made major life decisions based on it, and are nerdy about transit. Based on the studies that have read studies, perception of convenience is more important than actual convenience.
  - One person commented that we don't live in a world with unlimited resources and unlimited transit money, so we must figure out how to best distribute limited resources. People will move to areas where there's transit. The city also needs to provide excellent class 1 bike facilities.
  - One person commented that there needs to be balance of services and that transit is human right. They can't drive because of medical reasons and live in a house they can afford to because family owns it; otherwise, they wouldn't be able to afford to live on Central Ave. They said we can't expect people with to move to high frequency transit areas and that people with disabilities exist and want to participate in society.
  - One person commented that the state has abysmal DWI rates and that it's ridiculous people can get to bars on bus but can't get home on bus at night. As a result, people have to get in a car with a friend and hope they're sober enough. They commented that they've lived in cities where people partied hard but took the metro home and got home safe. The city and state need to be investing in transit as a DWI issue.
  - One person said they were concerned about sidewalks disappearing.
  - One person commented that some of the stops are in unsafe locations, and they will avoid those locations as a result.
    - ABQ RIDE responded that like driver shortage, the clean-up crew and security are also understaffed. Council is trying to come up with legislation to improve this situation.
  - One person asked where riders can voice concerns not related to or covered by this plan, such as security.
    - ABQ RIDE – One idea is to spend less money on drivers and routes and more on security. For now, 311, contact councilors and mayor; they decide how much money ABQ RIDE gets.
  - One person commented that the redesign study should focus not just on people already using bus, also for people who would use bus if it was better.

One person commented that the Transit Advisory Board is very good at receiving public comments and noted that they recently passed a resolution about directing the City Council to create a committee that will study public safety issues on the bus.

## Focus Group #6: 10/28/22

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- Preferred types of routes
  - One participant would rather plan their schedule around infrequent routes rather than use park and rides.
  - One participant prefers frequent routes because it's easier ride without planning ahead.
  - One participant prefers closer stops when traveling with kids, but otherwise prefers more frequent routes. Temperature affects whether waiting for the bus is enjoyable.
- Walking distance to bus stops

- One participant stated that they choose whichever route is faster. They said it's usually faster to walk farther to a more frequent bus, especially if traveling spontaneously. Greater frequency provides more flexibility.
- One person noted that it's easier to miss the bus if it comes infrequently, especially if it's a long walk to the bus stop.
- One person noted that Infrequent routes make it hard to make meetings that are scheduled on the hour.
- One person noted that further walking distances to bus stops increases the chance that you will miss the bus, and with infrequent buses you will have a long wait.
- One participant noted that they are more willing to walk farther downhill than uphill.
- Discussion about service on west side of river
  - One participant commented that the focus group questions seem more applicable to the east side of the river than the west side. There is little service on the west side and most routes are probably over a mile to walk to. River crossings create a pinch point for congestion, which can encourage people to use transit. The study should consider what role transit plays in reducing traffic congestion over the river. Another participant expressed support for more west side service, even though they don't live there.
- Discussion on the ridership model
  - One participant stated that the study should look at ways to increase ridership by considering density, income, car ownership, and other demographic factors when planning routes.
  - One person commented that the network plane should complement the City of Albuquerque's centers and corridors designations and zoning designations.
  - One person commented that the network plan should balance between ridership and coverage.
  - One participant commented that we should lean into the ridership model, because more people can use it. However, there should still be infrequent service in more places. The way that development occurs affects how transit is used, as cities with higher residential density have more successful transit systems. It's hard to provide service to such a rapidly expanding city. Better transit will incentivize transit-oriented development along those high frequency corridors. The westside doesn't have the density for really good transit.
- Discussion on the coverage model
  - One person commented that the coverage model provides the option of using transit, which is especially important for people who need to use transit. This commenter lives on the west side and would like to have the option of riding transit to reduce traffic. However, transit options are much more limited on the west side, so they normally drive or bike instead.
  - One person commented that transfer wait times are a big factor to consider when planning a coverage model.
  - One participant noted that since ABQ RIDE currently has a ridership model, we could try the coverage model to see if it improves the system.
- Discussion on scheduling and frequencies
  - One person commented that bus service is most important for people who need to go to work at non-traditional times. Afternoon/evening service seems to be the most important.
  - One person recommended that ABQ RIDE not over-plan the system so that the system is sparsely staffed, stating that it's better to have to wait slightly longer for each bus than have reliability issues. Participants related different experiences about the impacts of unpredictable service and service reductions.
  - One participant commented that they won't use the bus on the weekends because there is not enough frequency, and if they missed the bus there is no way to get home.

- One person said that many traditional rush hour commuters have given up riding transit because of the substandard bus system. They said that people working hybrid schedules makes transit planning more difficult.
- Other comments
  - One participant commented that the bus network needs to be accessible for riders with disabilities. They said it's necessary to find the happy medium between coverage/ridership.
  - One person stated that reducing deadheading would make system more productive for “reverse commuters.” One participant asked if it would be possible to create a system where they could reserve a deadhead ride.
  - One person stated that giving people the option to provide input before routes get cut could help ABQ RIDE make better decisions about when people need the service. Several people commented that their routes were cut with about 2 weeks of notice.
    - ABQ RIDE response: Current service cuts are due to the driver shortage. Otherwise, it's rare that service gets cut.