February 10, 2026

2025 Morro Bay Short Range Transit Plan

The City of Morro Bay &
San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority

Draft Plan

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

2025 Morro Bay
Short Range Transit Plan

Draft Plan

Prepared for

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&

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Public transportation plays a crucial role in Morro Bay, offering essential mobility for residents to access important medical, recreational, social, educational, and economic services and opportunities. Public transit improves quality of life for residents through supporting access to educational programs, medical providers, employers, and social service initiatives throughout the region. Additionally, public transit contributes to the local tourism industry by enabling visitors to easily reach various businesses and attractions.

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. was retained by the City of Morro Bay and the San Luis Obispo Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to conduct a Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) to assess public transit and related transportation issues in the City of Morro Bay and provide a "road map" for improvements to the public transit program over the upcoming five years. The intent of this study is to evaluate the specific needs for transit services, as well as to develop plans for improvements and service revisions to Morro Bay Transit (MBT). This will be accomplished through the review of existing transit conditions and evaluation of operations, as well as through public outreach via onboard surveys, an online community survey, and community-based focus group meetings.

This SRTP evaluated a wide range of alternatives, taking special consideration of MBT's recent administrative and operational transition to RTA. Additionally, an important element of this study will be to identify stable funding sources for operations and capital improvements of transit services. The ultimate goal of the study is to provide a comprehensive strategy of short-range service, capital, and institutional improvements, with a supporting financial and implementation plan.

Chapter 2 reviews existing demographic conditions and transportation services operating within Morro Bay. It provides an overview of historic, current, and projected demographic data. Chapter 3 summarizes the operating history of Morro Bay Transit (MBT) and provides a brief overview of connecting services to other areas within San Luis Obispo County. Chapter 4 concludes with current performance metrics and a cost analysis. Chapter 5 provides a summary of outreach results. Chapters 6 and 7 offer an alternatives analysis followed by the recommended Plan elements.

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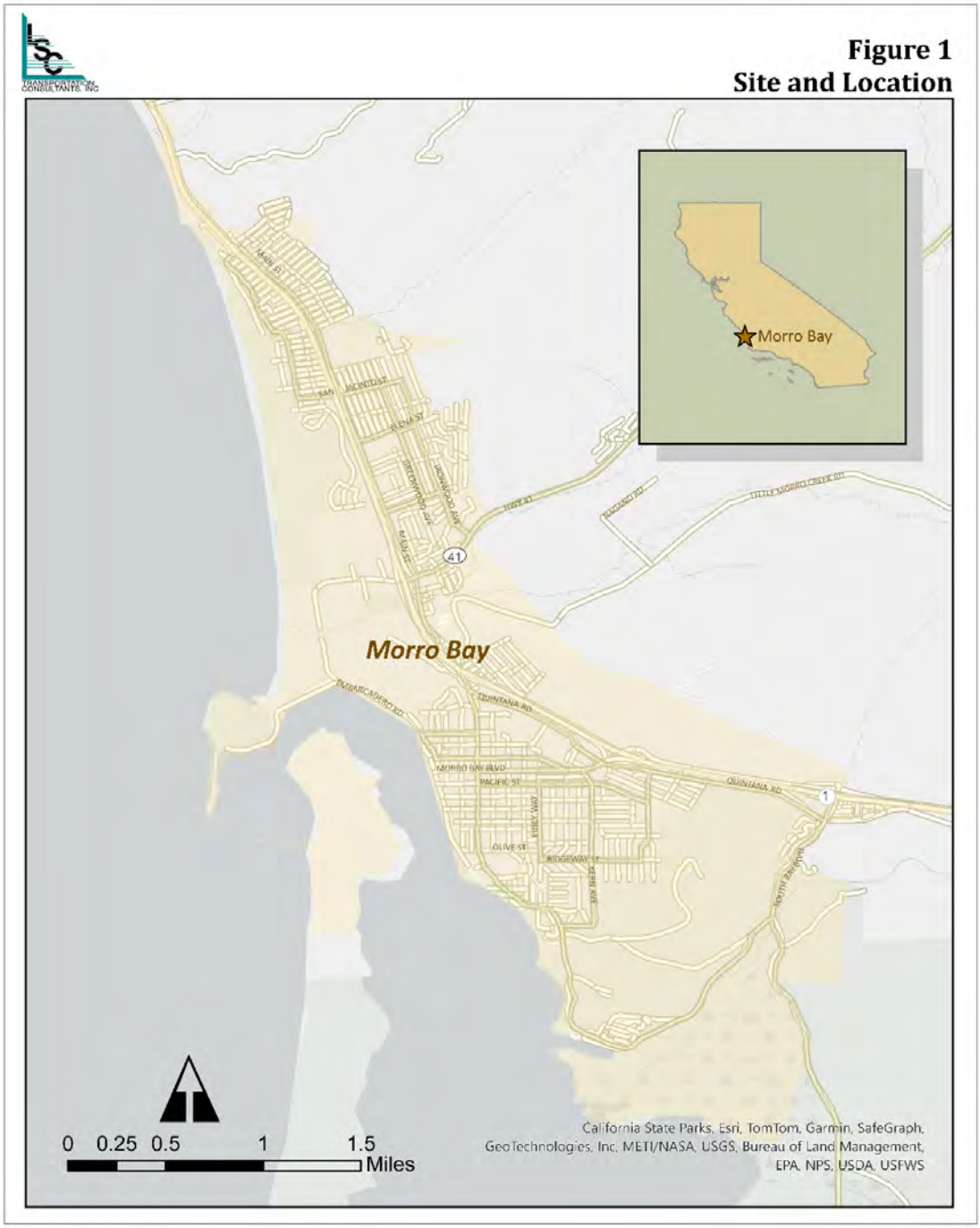
STUDY AREA

The City of Morro Bay (Morro Bay) is an incorporated city of San Luis Obispo County located within California's central coastal region. Morro Bay is neighbored by the coastal unincorporated communities of Cayucos to the north and Los Osos to the south. Morro Bay is about 14 miles west of the City of San Luis Obispo (Figure 1).



The area is known for its geographically unique landscapes, California State Parks, and oceanic wildlife. For these reasons, the region typically attracts nearly 800,000 tourists annually[1]. Morro Bay is primarily served by State Route (SR) 1 (running north and south) and SR 41 (terminating at SR 1 and traversing to the northeast).

POPULATION

Historic and Current Population

The most recent estimate of Morro Bay's population is from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, which regularly updates population numbers for cities and counties. In 2023, the City of Morro Bay's population was 10,717. Table 1 presents the historic population in Morro Bay, as well as annual population growth. For growth comparison, data is shown for San Luis Obispo County and the State of California as well. As shown, annual growth rates have been between 0.2 percent and 0.4 percent for Morro Bay. This is compared to recent negative annual growth for the County and the State.

Table 1: Historic and Current Population

	2010		2015		2020		2023	
	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth
Morro Bay	10,255	--	10,471	0.4%	10,592	0.2%	10,717	0.4%
Balance of the County	255,322	--	266,046	0.8%	271,925	0.4%	270,769	-0.1%
San Luis Obispo County (Total)	*265,577*	--	*276,517*	*0.8%*	*282,517*	*0.4%*	*281,486*	*-0.1%*
State of California	36,637,290	--	38,421,464	1.0%	39,346,023	0.5%	39,242,785	-0.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population Projections by Age

Table 2 shows the projected population for Morro Bay derived from the California Department of Finance (CA DOF). As shown, the total City population is projected to increase to 11,083 by 2040 (an increase of 4.6 percent over 2020). Highlights of projected changes expected between 2020 and 2040 include:

- Morro Bay's population will increase by 4.6 percent in 2040.
- The number of children under the age of 19 will decrease slightly (-2 percent for children 4 years old and under and -7 percent for ages 5 to 19).
- The number of college-aged adults (18 to 24) is expected to decrease by 11 percent.
- The number of traditional working-age adults (25 to 64) is expected to decrease by 4 percent.
- The young retiree population is expected to decrease (-21 percent).
- The number of mature retirees (75-84) is expected to increase by 43 percent.

[1] *Morro Bay Destination Tourism Strategy, SMG Consulting, 2019*

- The older senior population (85 and older) will experience significant growth, with an expected increase of 133 percent. This age group will be the most likely to become transit-dependent over the next 20 years.

Overall, the population forecast for Morro Bay reveals how the population will age in the coming years. The significant increase in those 85 and older is likely to result in increased demand for public transit.

Table 2: Morro Bay Population Projections by Age Category

Year	Total (All Ages)	Preschool (0-4 years)	School Age to Young Adult (5-19 years)	College Age (20-24 years)	Working Age (25-64 years)	Young Retirees (65-74 years)	Mature Retirees (75-84 years)	Older Seniors (85 or older)
2010	10,255	338	923	615	5,271	1,404	1,046	676
2020	10,592	365	1,070	851	5,115	1,787	1,104	300
2030	10,664	355	996	836	4,874	1,707	1,897	379
2040	11,083	357	997	754	4,923	1,418	1,577	698
2010 to 2020 Change								
Number	337	27	147	236	-156	383	58	-376
Percent	3.3%	8.0%	15.9%	38.4%	-3.0%	27.3%	5.5%	-55.6%
2020 to 2030 Change								
Number	72	-10	-74	-15	-241	-80	793	79
Percent	0.7%	-2.7%	-6.9%	-1.7%	-4.7%	-4.5%	71.8%	26.4%
2030 to 2040 Change								
Number	419	2	1	-82	49	-289	-320	318
Percent	3.9%	0.5%	0.1%	-9.8%	1.0%	-16.9%	-16.9%	83.9%

Sources: State of California, Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000–2010. Sacramento, California, September 2012;
California Department of Finance. Report P-2B: Population Projections by Individual Year of Age, 2020-2060, California Counties and Total Population Only By Age and Race/Hispanics, and Gender: 2000-2010;
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2010 and 2020.
Note: 2030 and 2040 projections were available for San Luis Obispo County, but not for the City of Morro Bay, so to calculate the projected population changes, the county change percentage was applied to the city population numbers.

Transit-Dependent Population

Table 3 presents key demographic data for Morro Bay at the US Census block group level. Some block groups are outside of Morro Bay's city boundaries, so the block group totals shown in Table 3 are slightly higher than the actual city population (also shown). A review of block group data indicates the following:

- The most populous block group is Census Tract 105.05, Block Group 1 in North Morro Bay. This is depicted in Table 3 and Figure 2.
- Youth (persons aged 10 to 17) total 1,804, or 13 percent of the total population (compared with 18 percent in San Luis Obispo County and 22 percent statewide). Census Tract 105.06, Block Group 1 (where 15 percent of the youth population lives) and Census Tract 105.05, Block Group 2 (where 14 percent of the youth population lives) have the highest portion of the youth population.

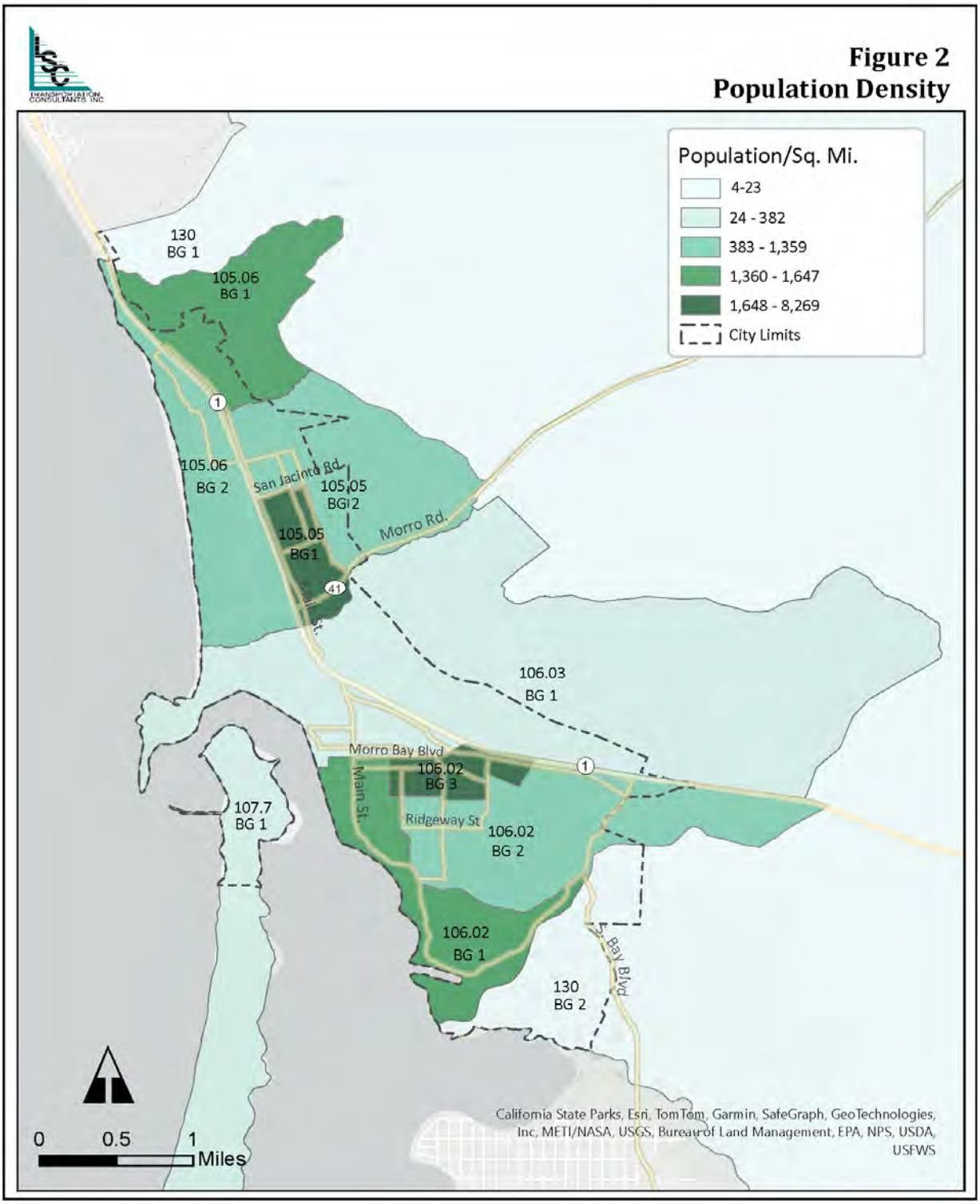
Table 3: City of Morro Bay Demographic Characteristics

Census Tract	Block Group	Area Description	Square Miles	Total Persons	Youth (Under 18 Years)		Seniors (65+)		Persons with a Disability		Persons Below Poverty Level		Total Households	Zero-Vehicle Households	
					#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	%
105.05*	1	NE Morro Bay, E of SR 1, Between Elena St and SR 41	0.2	2,019	43	2%	**579**	**13%**	**346**	**34%**	**135**	**17%**	798	**21**	**15%**
105.05*	2	NE Morro Bay, E of SR 1, Between SR 41 and Island St	1.0	1,309	**251**	**14%**	483	11%	47	5%	67	9%	657	18	12%
105.06	1	NE Morro Bay, East of SR 1	0.7	1,224	**267**	**15%**	362	8%	32	3%	68	9%	630	4	2%
105.06	2	NW Morro Bay, Coast to W of SR 1	0.7	1,005	163	9%	196	4%	20	2%	54	7%	439	2	2%
106.02*	1	S. Morro Bay on Coast, Morro Bay Blvd to State Park Rd	0.7	1,084	**189**	**10%**	351	8%	17	2%	54	7%	536	16	11%
106.02*	2	S Morro Bay, Between SR 1 and Piney Way	1.1	1,420	84	5%	**629**	**14%**	124	12%	52	7%	684	20	14%
106.02*	3	S. Morro Bay, Between Morro Bay Blvd and Pecho St	0.2	1,494	**187**	**10%**	367	8%	**214**	**21%**	**144**	**18%**	731	**21**	**15%**
106.03*	1	Central Morro Bay, Between SR 41 and Morro Bay Blvd	4.1	1,469	128	7%	412	9%	102	10%	83	11%	626	**41**	**28%**
107.07*	1	N. of Morro Dunes Natural Reserve	1.97	753	196	11%	248	5%	62	6%	18	2%	269	2	2%
130*	1	N Morro Bay, East of SR 1	73.8	1,673	226	13%	**566**	**13%**	15	1%	74	9%	623	0	0%
130*	2	N Morro Bay, East of SR 1	179.7	795	70	4%	334	7%	34	3%	38	5%	348	0	0%
Total				**14,245**	**1,804**	**13%**	**4,527**	**32%**	**1,013**	**7%**	**787**	**6%**	**6,341**	**145**	**2%**
City of Morro Bay (Census Designated Place)				**10,717**	**1,248**	**12%**	**3,309**	**31%**	**884**	**8%**	**618**	**6%**	4,989	**143**	**3%**
San Luis Obispo County				**281,486**	**49,564**	**18%**	**60,708**	**22%**	**14,851**	**5%**	**22,073**	**8%**	108,897	**4,366**	**4%**
State of California				**39,242,785**	**8,729,012**	**22%**	**5,994,486**	**15%**	**2,006,651**	**5%**	**2,495,904**	**6%**	13,434,847	**939,021**	**7%**

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2023 5-Year Estimates.

X% *= (bolded) tracts with the highest percentage of population type.*

Figure 2
Population Density



- Seniors age 65 and older total 4,527 or 32 percent of the total City population. This is significantly higher than the County (22 percent) or statewide (15 percent). Census Tract 106.02, Block Group 2 near the east side of Morro Bay State Park, has a particularly high concentration of the senior population (14 percent), as well as Census Tract 105.05, Block Group 1 at 13 percent, and Census Tract 130, Block Group 1 at 13 percent.
- Persons with a disability totaled 1,013, or 7 percent, of the population. This is slightly higher than San Luis Obispo County (where 5 percent of the total population has a disability) and the State of California (also 5 percent). Census Tract 105.05, Block Group 1 has the highest portion of the population of persons with a disability (34 percent), followed by Census Tract 106.02, Block Group 3 (21 percent).
- Persons living below the federal poverty level totaled 787, accounting for 6 percent of the Morro Bay population. This is less than San Luis Obispo County (8 percent) and about equal to the State of California. Census Tract 105.05, Block Group 1 (17 percent) and Census Tract 106.02, Block Group 3 (18 percent) have the highest concentration of persons living below the federal poverty level in Morro Bay.
- One of the stronger indicators of transit dependence is households without vehicles available. In Morro Bay, 145 households (2 percent) have no access to a vehicle, a lower rate compared to both San Luis Obispo County (4 percent) and the State of California (7 percent). This is depicted in Table 3. The greatest concentration is found in Census Tract 106.03, Block Group 1, which accounts for 28 percent of all zero-vehicle households in Morro Bay.

Transit Needs Index

It is helpful to consider all five of the potentially transit-dependent groups simultaneously to paint a better picture of what areas of Morro Bay have the greatest relative transit needs. To better compare the transit needs of different block groups in the City, LSC developed a Transit Needs Index (TNI) (Table 4) for Morro Bay using the demographic data presented in Table 3.

The first step in developing the TNI is to calculate the density of each specific transit-dependent group within each block group (for example, there are 961 youth per square mile in Census Tract 106.02, Block Group 3). Then, the ranges of densities for each subpopulation were divided into quintiles. Population densities in the highest quintile were assigned a score of 5 to represent the high density and resulting high transit need, while the lowest population densities were assigned a score of 1 to represent the lower need for transit.

The scores for each subgroup were then summed to yield an overall transit needs index rank for each block group (Table 4 and Figure 3). Ultimately, the TNI measures the relative need for transit services from the population living in the block groups, with possible values ranging from a low of 5 to a high of 25. A score of 25 indicates the greatest relative need for transit services, considering all five transit-dependent subgroups. As shown in Figure 3, Census Tract 106.02, Block Group 3 (TNI score of 23), and Census Tract 105.05, Block Group 1 (TNI score of 19) have the highest overall transit need.

Table 4: City of Morro Bay Transit Needs Index

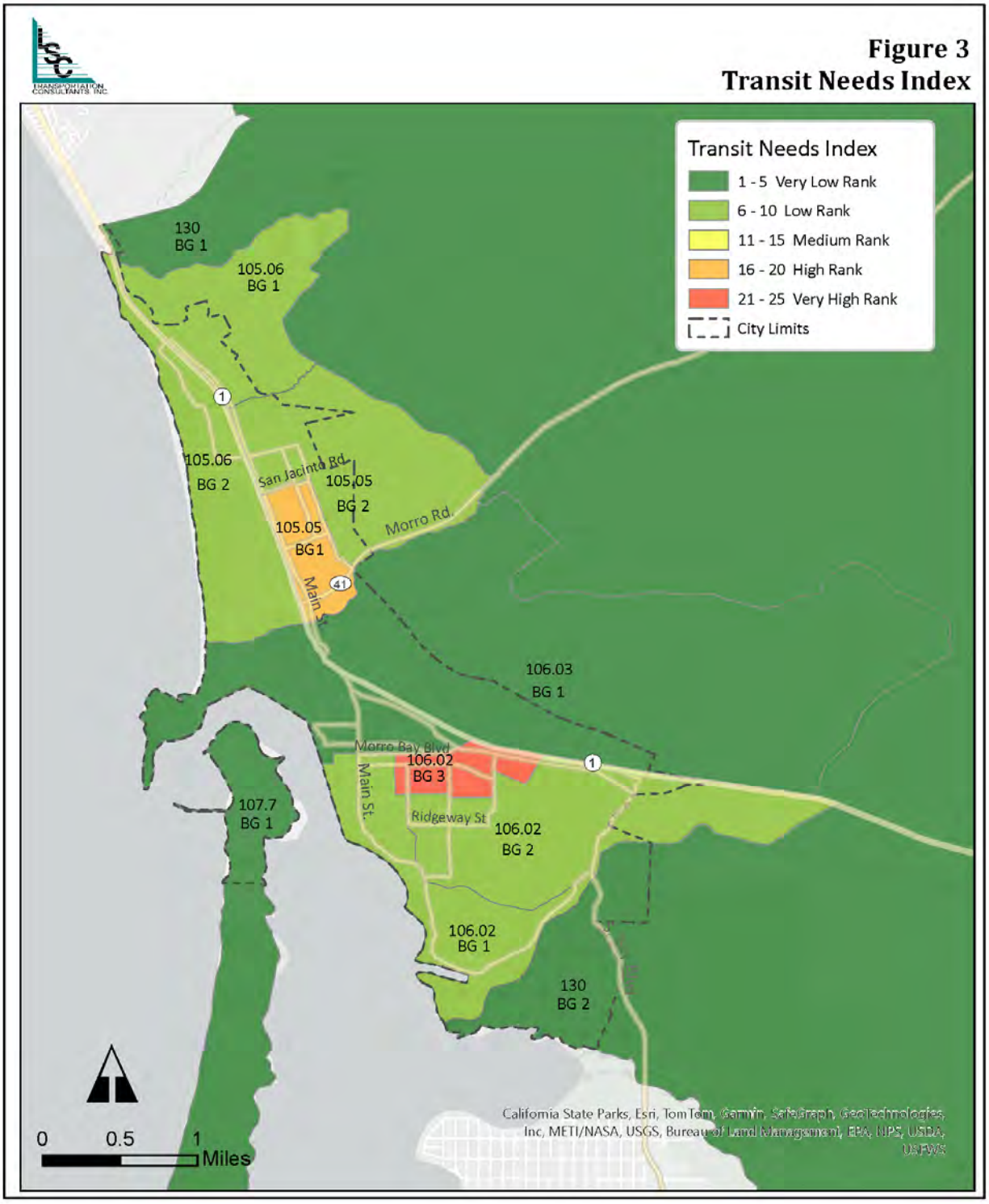
Legend	
1	Very Low Rank
2	Low Rank
3	Medium Rank
4	High Rank
5	Very High Rank

Census Tract	Block Group	Area Description	Total sq mil	Rank					
				Youth (Under 18 Years)	Senior Adults (65+)	Persons with a Disability	Persons Below Poverty Level	Zero-Vehicle Households	Overall Transit Needs Index Rank (All Categories Summed)
105.05*	1	NE Morro Bay, E of SR 1, Between Elena St and SR 41	0.2	1	5	5	4	4	19
105.05*	2	NE Morro Bay, E of SR 1, Between SR 41 and Island St	1.0	2	2	1	1	1	7
105.06	1	NE Morro Bay, East of SR 1	0.7	2	2	1	1	1	7
105.06	2	NW Morro Bay, Coast to W of SR 1	0.7	2	1	1	1	1	6
106.02*	1	S. Morro Bay on Coast, Morro Bay Blvd to State Park Rd	0.7	2	2	1	1	1	7
106.02*	2	S Morro Bay, Between SR 1 and Piney Way	1.1	1	2	1	1	1	6
106.02*	3	S. Morro Bay, Between Morro Bay Blvd and Pecho St	0.2	5	4	4	5	5	23
106.03*	1	Central Morro Bay, Between SR 41 and Morro Bay Blvd	4.1	1	1	1	1	1	5
107.07*	1	N. of Morro Dunes Natural Reserve	2.0	1	1	1	1	1	5
130*	1	N Morro Bay, East of SR 1	73.8	1	1	1	1	1	5
130*	2	N Morro Bay, East of SR 1	179.7	1	1	1	1	1	5

**= Census Tract is partially outside of the City of Morro Bay*

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Figure 3
Transit Needs Index



EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Some of the most regular transit riders are those who rely on the bus for commuting to and from work. This section reviews the Morro Bay economic characteristics influencing transit demand for the purpose of commuting.

Employment and Unemployment Statistics

Table 5 shows the current and historical labor force, including the unemployment rate. Like many areas, Morro Bay experienced a higher unemployment rate during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (14.5 percent) and 2021 (10.1 percent), higher than the overall state average of 10.1 percent in 2020 and 7.3 percent in 2021, compared to 2019 a statewide unemployment rate of 4.1 percent in 2022, with a statewide unemployment rate of 4.3 percent. Monthly unemployment rates during 2024 ranged from 8.2 percent in January to 5.7 percent in May. Employment data is a key indicator for transit planning, as it helps identify commuting patterns, peak travel times, and the potential demand for transit services. Understanding labor force trends also supports decisions about service frequency, route design, and connectivity to major employment centers. In addition, unemployed individuals are more likely to experience difficulty affording the operating costs of a personal vehicle and may rely on public transit as a more affordable means of transportation.

Table 5: Morro Bay Current and Annual Employment

Month (2024)	Labor Force	Total Employed	Total Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
January	5,200	4,700	400	8.2%
February	5,200	4,800	400	8.3%
March	5,200	4,800	400	7.6%
April	5,100	4,800	400	6.9%
May	5,100	4,800	300	5.7%
June	5,200	4,800	400	7.6%
July	5,200	4,800	400	8.1%
August	5,200	4,700	400	8.5%
September	5,100	4,700	400	7.7%
October	5,100	4,800	400	7.7%
November	5,100	4,800	400	7.5%
December	5,100	4,700	400	7.2%

Year	Labor Force	Total Employed	Total Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2023	5,200	4,800	300	6.7%
2022	5,100	4,800	300	6.0%
2021	5,200	4,700	500	10.1%
2020	5,300	4,500	800	14.5%
2019	5,300	5,000	300	5.6%

Source: California Employment Development Department, Unemployment Rates

Travel Behavior and Patterns

Major employers can be significant transit trip generators due to the many employees who need to get to and from work. Morro Bay is a tourist destination, and the economy is heavily reliant on tourism. As such, many of Morro Bay's residents commute to another area for work, and many Morro Bay workers commute from another area where they live. Table 6 shows where employees who work in Morro Bay live and where residents of Morro Bay commute for work.

As shown in Table 6, 19.9 percent of jobs employing Morro Bay residents were located within Morro Bay. A fifth of jobs require Morro Bay residents to commute to the City of San Luis Obispo (20.7 percent or 953 people). Nearly three-quarters (69.2 percent) of all jobs held by Morro Bay residents are in San Luis Obispo County. Of those with jobs in Morro Bay, 25.4 percent live in Morro Bay, and 76.1 percent live in San Luis Obispo County.

Table 6: Morro Bay Local and Regional Commute Patterns
2021

Where Morro Bay Residents Work and Commute to

Counties	# of Jobs	% of Total	Cities/Towns	# of Jobs	% of Total
San Luis Obispo County	**3,182**	**69.2%**	**San Luis Obispo**	**953**	**20.7%**
Los Angeles County	312	6.8%	**Morro Bay**	**916**	**19.9%**
Santa Barbara County	268	5.8%	**Atascadero**	**193**	**4.2%**
Kern County	104	2.3%	Los Angeles	151	3.3%
Orange County	100	2.2%	**Los Osos**	**144**	**3.1%**
Fresno County	80	1.7%	Santa Maria	102	2.2%
Monterey County	63	1.4%	**Paso Robles**	**96**	**2.1%**
Santa Clara County	60	1.3%	**Avila Beach**	**95**	**2.1%**
Ventura County	51	1.1%	**Cambria**	**95**	**2.1%**
San Diego County	41	0.9%	**Cayucos**	**83**	**1.8%**
All Other Locations	338	7%	All Other Locations	1,771	38.5%
Total Number of Jobs	**4,599**		**Total Number of Jobs**	**4,599**	

Where Employees In Morro Bay Commute From

Counties	# of Jobs	% of Total	Cities/Towns	# of Jobs	% of Total
San Luis Obispo County	**2,749**	**76.1%**	**Morro Bay**	**916**	**25.4%**
Santa Barbara County	220	6.1%	**Los Osos**	**509**	**14.1%**
Los Angeles County	109	3.0%	**San Luis Obispo**	**303**	**8.4%**
Fresno County	43	1.2%	**Atascadero**	**249**	**6.9%**
Monterey County	39	1.1%	**Paso Robles**	**123**	**3.4%**
Tuolumne County	39	1.1%	**Cayucos**	**96**	**2.7%**
Kern County	36	1.0%	Santa Maria	92	2.5%
Orange County	27	0.7%	**Arroyo Grande**	**55**	**1.5%**
Ventura County	26	0.7%	Los Angeles	43	1.2%
Contra Costa County, CA	23	0.6%	**Templeton**	**43**	**1.2%**
All Other Locations	300	8.3%	All Other Locations	1,182	32.7%
Total Number of Jobs	**3,611**		**Total Number of Jobs**	**3,611**	

Source: US Census Bureau LEHD Database, 2022
Note: **Bold text** indicates locations within San Luis Obispo County.

This dataset does not indicate whether a job is held by a remote worker. Despite the data not clarifying who works in-person or remotely, most of this information can be logically assumed. For instance, most Morro Bay residents holding jobs that are technically located in Los Angeles County are likely working remotely. Even with these caveats, the Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data still provides useful information about popular commute patterns that could potentially be served by transit.

Private vehicles are the primary form of commute transportation for Morro Bay residents, as 81 percent of Morro Bay workers either drive alone or carpool to get to their place of work. In comparison, less than 1 percent (0.3 percent) use public transit to complete their commute[2].

ACTIVITY CENTERS

Activity centers in Morro Bay, which are likely to generate trips (and potentially transit ridership), are shown in Figure 4. As shown, many of these activity centers are clustered in the downtown area (close to the transfer center), and all are served by existing MBT services.

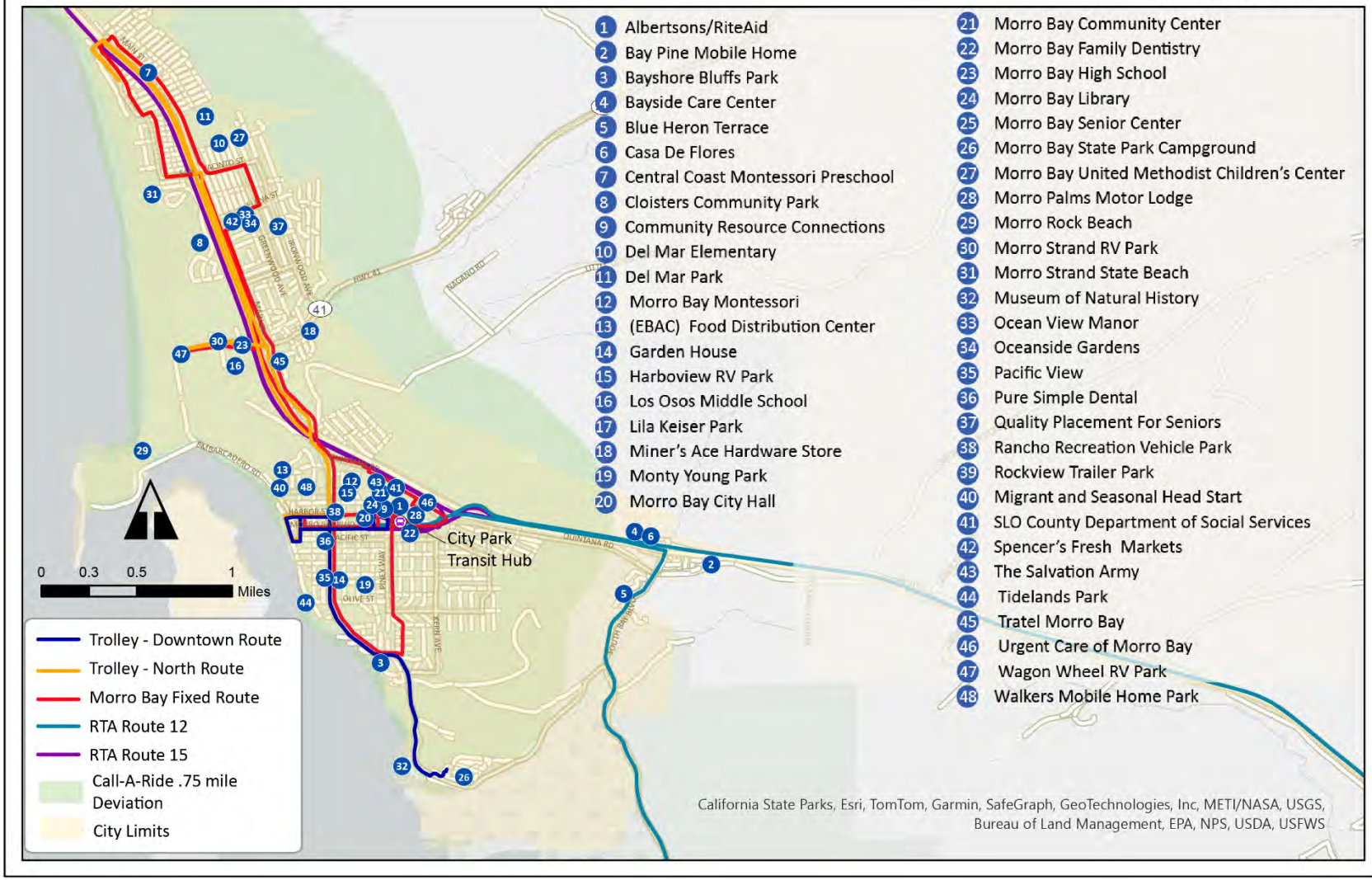
In addition to local activity centers, regional activity centers are also potentially important transit generators. In terms of transit, these activity centers would be accessible through transfers to RTA Routes 12 and 15 at the City Park transit hub.

RECENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

A summary of recent transportation plans relevant to either MBT or RTA, including both countywide studies as well as agency-specific reports, is available in Appendix B.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Sex of Workers by Means of Transportation to Work [B08006 for 2023].

Figure 4
Morro Bay Activity Centers



Chapter 3

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT TRANSIT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Several public, private, and non-profit agencies provide transit and transportation services in Morro Bay. While all these organizations move people around, each program differs in the type of service, availability, and passenger eligibility. This chapter primarily discusses the services of the one public transit provider, MBT, with other services summarized at the end of this chapter.

HISTORY, GOVERNANCE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

MBT began operating as a local transit service in 1977. Transportation services were first offered by the City of Morro Bay as a demand-response service. In the summer of 1994, the City introduced a seasonal Trolley service. In 2010, the City of Morro Bay completely restructured MBT services, replacing a 30-year-old general public demand-response service with the currently-operated deviated fixed-route service. This change was a result of reductions in the Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding during the recession. On June 1, 2025, MBT operations were fully assumed by RTA through a contract between the City of Morro Bay and RTA.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

MBT historically has been governed by the Morro Bay City Council as the ultimate policy and decision-making body. Operating responsibilities were split between City staff and a third-party transit contractor. MBT was managed by the Public Works Department of the City of Morro Bay, primarily through the Management Analyst and Public Works Director roles.

In the fall of 2024, the Morro Bay City Council authorized staff to take steps to consolidate MBT into RTA, whereby RTA would take over the administration, maintenance, and operation of MBT services. In February 2025, the Morro Bay City Council and RTA Board executed an agreement that transferred MBT administration, operations, and maintenance to RTA. RTA began operating MBT in June 2025, and MBT's capital assets were transferred to RTA. The Morro Bay City Council still retains control of service levels, fares, and budget for local transit services.

The RTA is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), established in 1989 to manage San Luis Obispo County's regional fixed-routes and paratransit services. Prior to 2009, RTA services were provided through contract by private operators. However, since 2009, the RTA has operated all of its services directly.

The RTA Board of Directors consists of representatives from all of the cities in which the RTA operates (Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo) and five San Luis Obispo County Supervisors. The RTA Board meets every other month and oversees operational and policy issues.

The Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC) meets quarterly to provide advice to the RTA Board on pertinent issues. The RTAC is comprised of representatives appointed from the County of San Luis Obispo; the Cities of San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Morro Bay, and Paso Robles; the South County Transit Committee; Cal Poly; Cuesta College; and SLOCOG. The RTA Board also appoints two at-large representatives, one of fixed-route users and one of paratransit users.

Staffing

The City of Morro Bay's Transit Division is overseen by Public Works Department staff. The Department is responsible for the review and approval of annual budgets prepared by the RTA, service planning, and review of operating data collected by the RTA. The RTA provides all operating and vehicle maintenance staff, bus operator training, dispatching, marketing, capital procurement, and grants management.

MBT SERVICES SUMMARY

MBT consists of a single, deviated fixed-route available to the general public on weekdays and the Morro Bay Trolley, which operates on Saturdays and Sundays from early June through early October each year. Until June 2025, MBT operations were contracted to a third-party transit operator. Now, MBT is directly managed and operated by the RTA.

MBT Fixed-Route

MBT fixed-route service consists of a single, deviated fixed-route (Table 7). The route operates Monday through Friday from 6:25 AM to 6:45 PM. The deviation feature is referred to as "Call-A-Ride". To request a deviation of up to 0.75 miles from the designated route, passengers must call dispatch in advance to schedule their pick-up and drop-off location. The Call-A-Ride component of MBT is available to the general public.

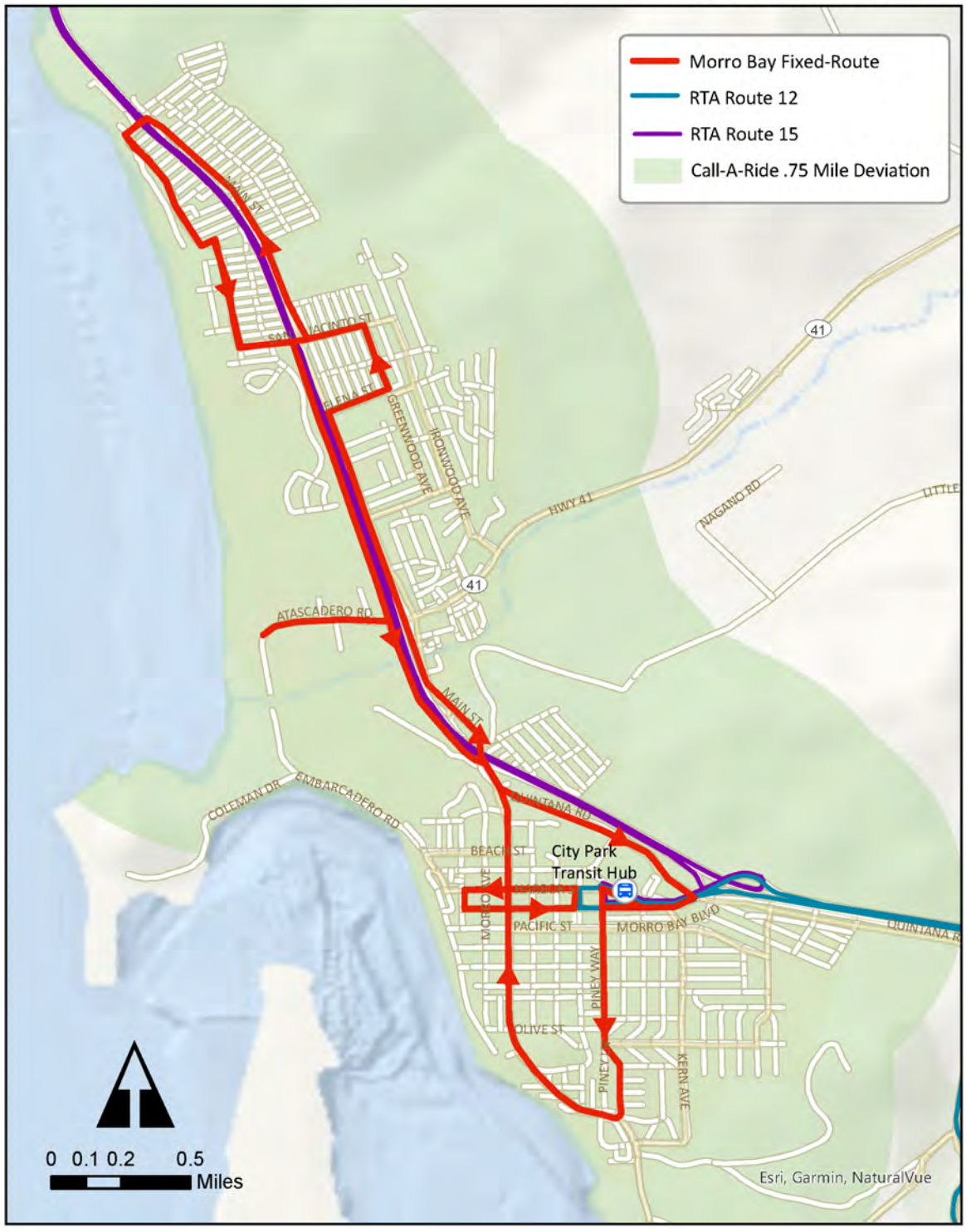
Table 7: Summary of Morro Bay Transit Services and Frequency

	Service Days[1]	Service Hours[2]		Start & End Location	Service Frequency (Minutes)
		Start	End		
Fixed Route[3]					
Fixed Route	Monday-Friday	6:25 AM	6:45 PM	Morro Bay Community Center	Every 60 Minutes
Call-A-Ride[4]	Monday-Friday	6:25 AM	6:45 PM	Curb-to-Curb Service	N/A
Trolley[5]					
North Route	Saturday and Sunday	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	Main St @Elena St to Main St @ Errol St	Every 15 minutes
Downtown Route	Saturday and Sunday	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	Morro Bay State Park Campground to Morro Bay Blvd @ Monterey Ave	Every 15 minutes

Note 1: No service on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day.
Note 2: Schedule times accurate as of February 2025.
Note 3: Trolley operates seasonally from early June to early October.
Note 4: Call-A-Ride is a curb-to-curb service that will deviate up to 3/4 mile off the route to pick up or drop off passengers before resuming the regular fixed route. Passengers must call and make an appointment the day before to use this service.
Note 5: Connection to RTA is possible at Morro Bay City Park to connect to RTA Routes 12 and 15.
Source: https://www.slorta.org/schedules-fares/morro-bay-transit/

The route taken by the MBT fixed-route is shown in Figure 5. It runs as a loop on 60-minute headways, with stops at major local activity centers and tourist attractions. Passengers who need to travel beyond Morro Bay can transfer to RTA Routes 12 and 15 at the City Park.

Figure 5
Morro Bay Transit Routes



MORRO BAY TROLLEY

MBT operates the Morro Bay Trolley service from early June through the first weekend of October. This service is available on Saturday and Sunday from 10 AM to 5 PM (Table 7). MBT operates two trolley routes, as shown in Figures 6 and 7 and described below.

North Route

This route operates on approximately 15-minute headways and travels north of Morro Bay to the Morro Strand State Beach Campground, south through downtown along Main Street, west on Harbor Street, south on Market Street, west on Pacific Street, north on Embarcadero Road, east on Harbor Street, returning to Main, and north again to the Morro Strand State Beach Campground.

Downtown Route

This route is operated approximately every 15 minutes. Starting at Shasta and Kennedy Way, the bus heads south on Piney Way, west on Morro Bay Boulevard, south on Main Street to Morro Bay State Park, returning north on Main, west on Harbor, south on Market, west on Pacific Street, north on Embarcadero Road, east on Harbor Street, south on Morro Avenue, east on Morro Bay Boulevard and north on Shasta to Kennedy Way.

MBT FARE STRUCTURE

MBT Fares

MBT offers several options for fares (Table 8). General public one-way fares are $1.50 for the fixed-route and $2.50 for Call-A-Ride service. Discounted fares are $0.75 and are available for seniors (aged 65 to 84) and passengers with a disability. Children 5 years of age and under are free with a paying adult. Seniors older than 85 years of age qualify for a Gold Pass, which allows them to ride for free.

MBT also offers day pass and punch pass products. The day pass costs $4.00 for regular fare and $2.00 for discounted fare. There is also an 11-Ride Punch Pass, which is good for 11 rides on the fixed-route bus and costs $15 for regular fare and $7.50 for the discounted fare. There is also an 11-Ride Punch Pass specifically for the Call-A-Ride service, which is $25. Regional passes are also accepted on MBT (see RTA Fare Passes below).

The fare on the Morro Bay Trolley is $1.00, and up to two children under age 5 ride free with a fare-paying rider.

The RTA currently uses a zone-based fare for its intercity fixed-routes, ranging from $1.75 to $3.25. At its May 7, 2025, meeting, the RTA Board of Directors authorized a flat $2.00 regular / $1.00 discount fare per boarding, which will be implemented alongside a countywide contactless fare-capping system in Fall 2025. That contactless system will also be available for riders on the MBT services.

Key Transfer Locations

- Passengers have timed transfers between MBT fixed-route services and RTA Routes 12 and 15 at the Morro Bay City Park transit hub. Riders can also transfer between the two Trolley routes at Dorn's Breaker Café on Market Street, although the transfers are not timed.

Figure 6
Morro Bay Transit Trolley - North Route

Figure 7
Morro Bay Transit Trolley - Downtown Route

Table 8: Transit Fares

Morro Bay Transit Fares Cash Fares	One-way Fare Price	Day Pass	Punch Pass - 11 Rides
Fixed Route	$1.50	$4.00	$15.00
Discount Fixed Route[1]	$0.75	$2.00	$7.50
Call-A-Ride	$2.50	N/A	$25.00
Gold Pass (Ages 85 and over)	Free	--	--
Children Ages 5 and Under	Free	--	--
Trolley	$1.00	--	--

RTA Fares Cash Fares	Intercity Routes (Routes 9 - 15)[5]	Local Routes (Paso Robles Routes A/B, Routes 21 - 28)[5]
Regular	$1.75 - $3.25	$1.50
Seniors (65 - 79 years old)	$0.85 - $1.60	$0.75
Seniors (80+ years old)	Free with VIP Card [2]	Free with VIP Card 1
ADA Cardholders	Free with ADA Card	Free with ADA Card
Disabled	$0.85 - $1.60	$0.75
Medicare Cardholders	$0.85 - $1.60	$0.75
Students (K - 12)	$0.85 - $1.60	$1.50
Children (44" and under)	Free with adult rider	Free with adult rider
Pass Products		
Regional Day Pass [3]	$5.50	$5.50
Day Pass	--	$1.50 - $3.00
20-Ride Pass	--	$24.00
Stored Value Pass	$15.00	$15.00
31-Day Pass - Regular	$47.00	$37.00
31-Day Pass - Discounted [4]	$23.50	$18.50
Regional 31-Day Pass [3]	$68.00	$68.00
Regional 31-Day Pass - Discounted [2,4]	$34.00	$34.00

Note 1: MBT offers discounted fare and punch passes to seniors (ages 65 to 84) and disabled individuals. Children under 5 years of age ride free with paying adult.

Note 2: Seniors ages 80 and older must fill out a Basic Eligibility Form and be verified by the RTA to receive a VIP Card.

Note 3: Regional Day Pass allows unlimited rides on all SLO RTA, SLO Transit, and Morro Bay Transit routes for the date indicated. The Regional 31-Day Pass allows unlimited rides on the same services for 31 consecutive days.

Note 4: Discounted SLO RTA passes available for senior adults ages 65 to 79, disabled passengers, and students in grades K-12 on the RTA intercity and local Paso Robles Routes.

Note 5: RTA's Board of Directors has authorized a flat rate fare of $2.00 regular fare and $1.00 discount fare. This change will be implemented in the Fall of 2025, alongside a countywide contactless fare-capping system. This will be implemented on MBT services as well.

Source: MBT and SLO RTA

OTHER PROVIDERS

Regional Transit Authority

The RTA operates fifteen fixed-routes: five long-distance routes, two local Paso Robles routes, four local south county routes, the MBT, and three seasonal trolleys. Generally, RTA service hours are 6:00 AM to 9:45 PM on weekdays, 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM on Saturdays, and 7:30 AM to 7:15 PM on Sundays. In addition, riders who are ADA eligible qualify for San Luis Obispo County's Runabout paratransit service, that is operated by the RTA.

RTA Route 12 – San Luis Obispo – Morro Bay

RTA Route 12 operates between San Luis Obispo and Los Osos via Morro Bay, as shown in Figure 5. Service is available Monday through Friday on an hourly frequency. RTA Route 12 also operates five round-trips each Saturday and three round-trips each Sunday. Key destinations served by RTA Route 12 include the Government Center, the Cal Poly Library, Cuesta College, and Morro Bay City Park.

RTA Route 15 – Morro Bay – San Simeon

RTA Route 15 provides deviated fixed-route service along the north coast of San Luis Obispo County, providing connectivity between Morro Bay, Cayucos, Cambria, and San Simeon (Figure 5). RTA Route 15 completes five roundtrips Monday through Saturday and three roundtrips per Sunday. Notable RTA Route 15 stops include Morro Bay City Park, Morro Bay High School, the Cayucos Pier, the Cambria Pines Lodge, and the Cambria Library. On weekends, RTA Route 15 also serves the Hearst Castle Visitor Center.

Runabout

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires public transit operators to provide complementary paratransit service for people with disabilities who are unable to access local fixed-route services. The Runabout has been the sole complementary paratransit service for San Luis Obispo County since 2001. Administered and operated by the RTA, the Runabout serves areas within 0.75 miles of every fixed-route service in the county.

Passengers make Runabout reservations in advance by calling RTA's demand response scheduling line. Runabout provides origin-destination service; however, riders can request door-to-door service if they have a disability that makes origin-destination service infeasible. Every Runabout vehicle is equipped with a wheelchair lift. Runabout service is limited to only those passengers who are verified by the RTA as meeting ADA eligibility criteria.

RTA Fare Passes

Table 8 shows the fare structure for the RTA services systemwide. For frequent riders, RTA offers daily, weekly, and 31-Day passes. Physical passes are available for purchase at the RTA office and numerous other government offices in the area, including at the Morro Bay Public Works office. Passes can also be purchased online and obtained in a physical format via USPS or electronically through Token Transit. MBT accepts validated Regional Day and Regional 31-Day Pass products. Those who have met the ADA certification process and are eligible, Runabout passengers ride for free on MBT and all other fixed-routes in the county with their Runabout card. Runabout fare on RTA services is twice the applicable fixed-route fare, with a cap of $11.00 (which is twice the Regional Day Pass price). Reservations must be made the previous day and up to two weeks in advance.

A helpful fare option for passengers occasionally traveling long distances across jurisdictional boundaries is the Regional Day Pass. This includes unlimited rides on all RTA, South County Routes 21, 24, 27, and 28, SLO Transit local fixed-routes, Paso Robles Routes A & B, and MBT for the price of $5.50.

The following multi-day discount pass options are available for riders who use RTA services on a more frequent basis:

- RTA 31-Day Pass (only good on RTA-operated fixed-routes)
- RTA 7-Day Pass (only good on RTA-operated fixed-routes)

- Regional 31-Day Pass (South County, RTA, Paso Robles, MBT, and SLO Transit)

Stored value cards are also available for purchase at outlets and online for RTA.

RIDERSHIP TRENDS

Annual Ridership

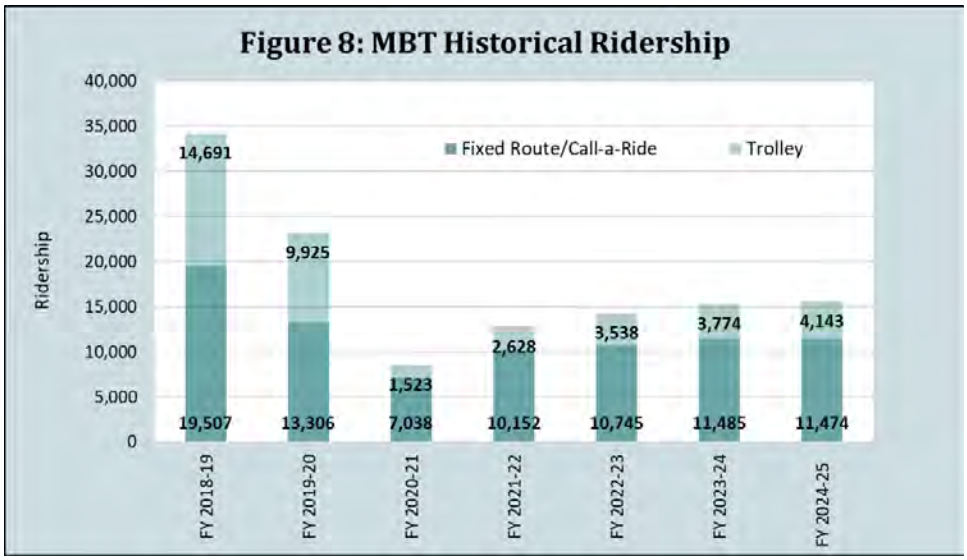
Table 9 shows ridership trends by service for the past seven fiscal years for the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride and Morro Bay Trolley. As shown in Table 9 and Figure 8, systemwide ridership varied from a high of 34,198 passenger-trips in FY 2018-19 to a low of 8,561 in FY 2020-21, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While ridership has been growing consistently over the last several fiscal years, it is still significantly less than pre-pandemic levels.

Morro Bay Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride ridership had the highest ridership in FY 2018-19 at 19,507 passengers, with ridership plummeting to a low of 7,038 in FY 2020-21 during the height of COVID-19, partially due in part to Saturday service ceasing in July 2020. As of FY 2024-25, the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride served 11,474 passenger trips, resulting in an increase of 13 percent since FY 2020-21.

Morro Bay Trolley ridership also saw the highest ridership in FY 2018-19 at 14,691. In 2020-21, ridership plummeted by 74 percent to only 1,523 during the height of COVID-19. As the campgrounds in the north and south of Morro Bay were closed until August 2020, this significantly impacted ridership that year. In addition, due to the uncertainty of how much tourism the City would experience during COVID, the number of routes was reduced from three to one, focusing on bringing riders from the campgrounds to the Downtown, Embarcadero waterfront area, and beach. Since then, passenger trips have rebounded to 4,143 trips as of FY 2024-25, resulting in a 58 percent increase since the pandemic.

Table 9: Morro Bay Transit and RTA Routes Passenger Trips by Year

Routes serving Morro Bay	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change FY 2018-19 to FY 2024-25	% Change FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25
Morro Bay Transit									
Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride	19,507	13,306	7,038	10,152	10,745	11,485	11,474	-41%	13%
Trolley	14,691	9,925	1,523	2,628	3,538	3,774	4,143	-72%	58%
MBT Systemwide Total	**34,198**	**23,231**	**8,561**	**12,780**	**14,283**	**15,259**	**15,617**	**-54%**	**22%**
RTA Routes									
RTA Route 12	175,135	127,300	68,928	91,920	106,963	117,627	120,386	**-31%**	**31%**
RTA Route 15	24,795	19,066	12,509	11,612	10,420	12,001	12,116	**-51%**	**4%**



Ridership by Month

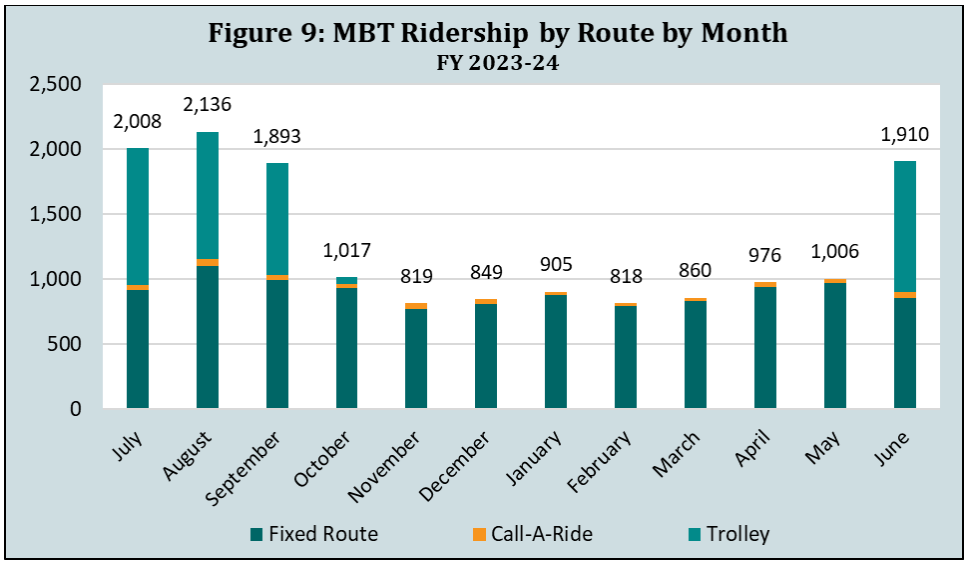
Table 10 and Figure 9 show monthly ridership for MBT in FY 2023-24. As shown, total ridership for MBT was highest in the summer months, when the Trolley operates. August had the most passenger-trips (2,136), and February had the lowest (818 passenger-trips).

For both Fixed-Route and Call-A-Ride services, ridership was fairly consistent, with Fixed-Route having an overall monthly average of 901 passenger trips per month and Call-A-Ride having an overall monthly average of 35 passenger trips. Call-A-Ride (fixed-route deviations) represented approximately 4 percent of fixed-route ridership. The month with the greatest ridership was August for both Fixed-Route and Call-A-Ride (1,105 trips and 50 trips, respectively).

The months with the lowest number of passenger trips by service type was November (773 trips) for the Fixed-Route and February for Call-A-Ride (25 trips). The Trolley only operated from June to early October. The highest month of ridership for the Trolley in FY 2023-24 was July (1,048 passenger-trips), and the lowest ridership occurred in October (55 passenger-trips).

Table 10: Morro Bay Transit Passenger Trips by Route by Month
FY 2023-24

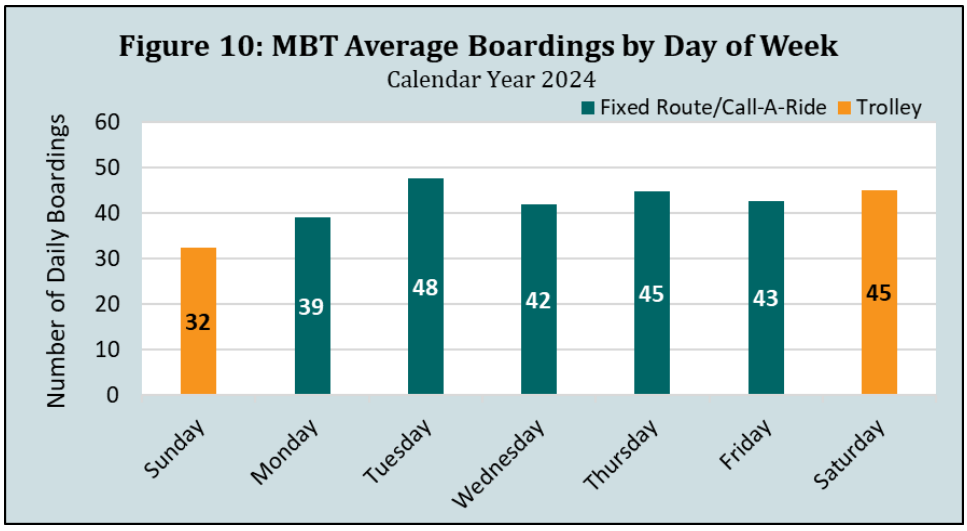
		Fixed Route		Call-A-Ride		Trolley		Total	
Month	Year	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
July	2023	921	8.5%	39	9.2%	1,048	26.5%	2,008	13.2%
August	2023	1,105	10.2%	50	11.8%	981	24.8%	2,136	14.1%
September	2023	996	9.2%	34	8.0%	863	21.8%	1,893	12.5%
October	2023	931	8.6%	31	7.3%	55	1.4%	1,017	6.7%
November	2023	773	7.1%	46	10.8%	-	-	819	5.4%
December	2023	814	7.5%	35	8.3%	-	-	849	5.6%
January	2024	878	8.1%	27	6.4%	-	-	905	6.0%
February	2024	793	7.3%	25	5.9%	-	-	818	5.4%
March	2024	833	7.7%	27	6.4%	-	-	860	5.7%
April	2024	944	8.7%	32	7.5%	-	-	976	6.4%
May	2024	972	9.0%	34	8.0%	-	-	1,006	6.6%
June	2024	857	7.9%	44	10.4%	1009	25.5%	1,910	12.6%
Total		**10,817**		**424**		**3,956**		**15,197**	
Average Monthly		**901**		**35**		**791**		**1,266**	



Ridership by Day of Week

Figure 10 shows average boardings by day of week for 2024.

- The Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride services only operate Mondays through Fridays and saw the highest average ridership on Tuesdays (48 average daily boardings) and Thursdays (45 average daily boardings). The lowest average daily ridership occurred on Mondays (39).
- The Trolley service only runs on weekends between June and the first weekend in October. As shown, Saturdays saw a higher average ridership (45 daily boardings) than Sundays (32 daily boardings).



Ridership per Hour

Average ridership by hour for all weekdays in 2024 is depicted in Figure 11. Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride ridership is generally higher in the morning, with a drop between 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM. There is a morning peak between 9:00 and 10:00 AM and another from 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM, both with an

average hourly ridership of 4.8, and an afternoon peak between 2:00 PM and 3:00 PM, with an average of 6.4 passengers per hour. The lightest ridership occurs in the first and last hour of the day (6:25 AM – 7:00 AM, with 2.2 boardings and 6:00 PM – 6:45 PM, with 1.6 boardings), followed by 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM with 2.4 boardings.

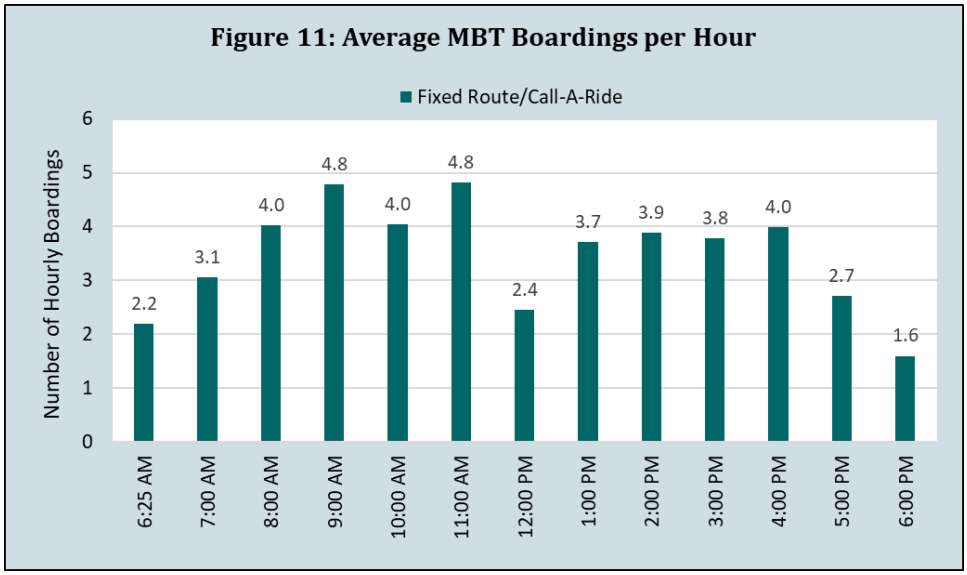
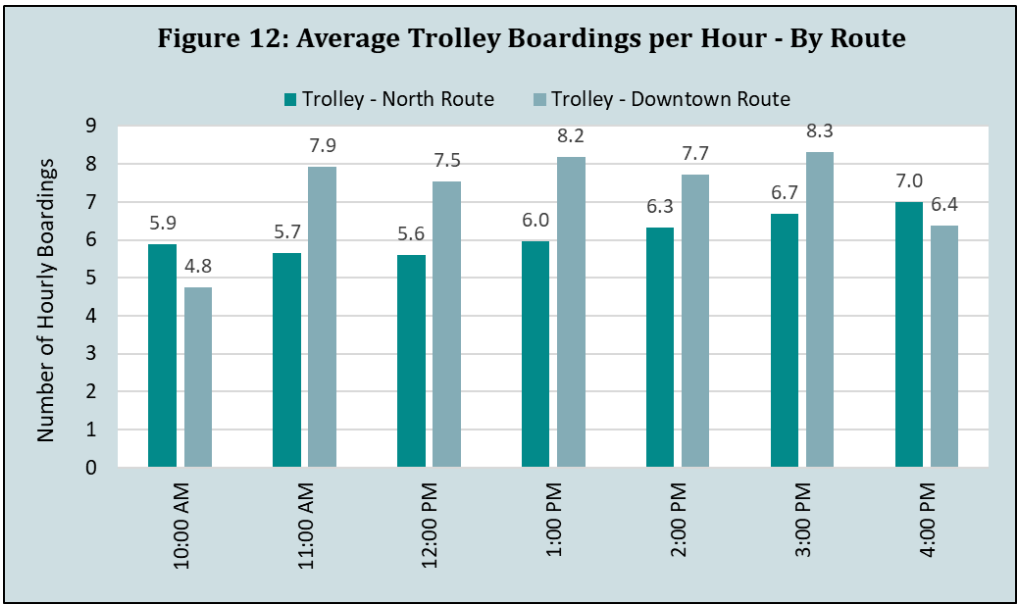


Figure 12 shows average Trolley ridership by hour over the course of the 2024 summer season and the split of hourly ridership between the Downtown Route and the North Route. Average ridership by hour is relatively strong over the course of the operating day. Ridership is highest from 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM, with an average of 8.3 boardings on the Downtown Route and 6.7 boardings on the North Route. Ridership at the beginning of operating hours from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM is the lowest overall on average (5.35 average riders). The two trolley routes are split fairly equally, with 49 percent of total daily riders riding the North Route and 51 percent of riders riding the Downtown Route. Hourly ridership on the Downtown Route is fairly steady during the day (7.9 average riders from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM) with the exception of the first and last hour of the day, where ridership is significantly lower (4.8 average riders from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM and 6.4 average riders from 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM). On the North Route, ridership in the afternoon, from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM, is significantly higher, with the hour from 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM having an hourly average of 7 riders.



Ridership by Fare Type

Table 11 shows annual ridership by fare type for Fixed-Route and Call-A-Ride services. From July 2023 through June 2024, the largest proportion of riders paid a Discount cash fare (5,264 riders or 47 percent), while Regular cash fares were rarely paid, with only 6 recorded. Although shown in Table 3, 32 percent of Morro Bay residents are aged 65 or older or have a disability, it is possible that not all discounted boardings represent riders who are eligible for the discounted fare. The RTA 31-Day Regional Pass was the second most common fare type used, with 4,293 rides or 38 percent of all rides. The RTA 1-Day Regional Pass represents 92 boardings. Gold and Child fare types amounted to 686 and 81 fares, respectively, with a noticeable increase in Gold riders during June 2024. Additional ridership included 129 Youth Ride Free (a free summer program for K-12 school kids), 15 53 Aide rides, and 243 Runabout users.

Use of RTA 31-Day Regional Passes and Discount cash fares remained consistently high throughout the year, with minimal use of regular cash fare options. Call-A-Ride service usage varied slightly month-to-month but remained fairly steady between 25 to 50 riders. Overall, the data reflects consistent community reliance on discount programs and 31-Day Regional Passes, with only modest fluctuations in total monthly ridership.

Table 11: Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Riders by Fare (FY 2023-24)

	CASH RIDER			DAY PASS RIDER		PUNCH PASS RIDER				REGIONAL PASSES		OTHER RIDER						
	Regular	Discount	Call-A-Ride	Regular Day Pass	Discount Day Pass	Regular	Discount	Call-A-Ride	Gold	RTA 1 DAY	RTA 31 DAY	Child	Youth[1]	Free	ADA	Aide	Runabout	TOTAL RIDERS
7/1/2023	0	511	39	0	0	0	0	0	39	3	283	2	64	0	0	0	19	**960**
8/1/2023	0	621	50	0	0	0	0	0	41	7	361	2	30	0	0	0	43	**1,155**
9/1/2023	0	606	34	0	0	0	0	0	37	8	308	0	0	0	0	1	36	**1,030**
10/1/2023	0	455	31	0	0	0	0	0	51	13	386	0	0	0	0	0	26	**962**
11/1/2023	0	372	46	0	0	0	0	0	32	11	336	6	0	0	0	0	16	**819**
12/1/2023	1	417	35	0	0	0	0	0	40	3	322	3	0	0	0	0	28	**849**
1/1/2024	0	373	27	0	0	0	0	0	51	6	390	35	0	0	0	5	18	**905**
2/1/2024	0	340	25	0	0	0	0	0	62	7	359	17	0	0	0	0	8	**818**
3/1/2024	3	383	27	0	0	0	0	0	69	9	360	0	0	0	0	9	0	**860**
4/1/2024	0	442	32	0	0	0	0	0	75	2	410	5	0	0	0	0	10	**976**
5/1/2024	0	432	34	0	0	0	0	0	79	12	429	5	0	0	0	0	15	**1,006**
6/1/2024	2	312	25	0	0	2	5	19	110	11	349	6	35	0	0	0	24	**900**
Subtotal	*6*	*5,264*	*405*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*5*	*19*	*686*	*92*	*4,293*	*81*	*129*	*0*	*0*	*15*	*243*	***11,240***

Note 1: The column for Youth shows ridership from the Youth Ride Free summer program.

Source: MBT Monthly Transit Data FY 2023-24

Table 12 shows annual Trolley ridership by fare type for FY 2023-24. Between July 2023 and October 2023, and in June 2024, the $1 cash fare was the most widely recorded, accounting for 3,274 rides. Additionally, there were 497 rides recorded for children aged 5 and under, who ride for free when accompanied by a paying adult. There were no recorded rides under Free Event, $3 All Day Pass, or Lifts. Additionally, 3 tokens[3] were received in June.

Table 12: Trolley Riders by Fare (FY 2023-24)

	$1	Child	Free Event	$3 All Day Pass	Free Hotel Guests	Tokens Received	Tokens Sold	Lifts	Total
7/1/2023	943	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1,048**
8/1/2023	846	135	0	0	0	0	0	0	**981**
9/1/2023	770	93	0	0	0	0	0	0	**863**
10/1/2023	46	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	**55**
6/1/2024	669	155	0	0	0	3	0	0	**827**
Subtotal	*3,274*	*497*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*	*0*	*0*	***3,774***

Note: Trolley service operates seasonally from June to October. In FY 2023-24, the service only operated one day in the month of October.
Source: MBT Monthly Transit Data FY 2023-24

VEHICLE SERVICE MILES AND HOURS

Similar to ridership trends, MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service levels have fluctuated in recent years due to pandemic-related disruptions and driver shortages. The system experienced its lowest service levels in FY 2022–23, with 2,858 vehicle service hours (VSH) and 27,150 vehicle service miles (VSM) (Figure 13) due to a driver shortage from mid-December 2023 through February 2024. While service hours have since rebounded to 3,092 VSH in FY 2023–24, nearly returning to pre-pandemic levels, it is unlikely that MBT will return to pre-pandemic highs, as Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride no longer offers Saturday services. VSM also increased to 31,004 in FY 2023–24, up from the previous year but still slightly below the FY 2020–21 baseline, due to increases in Call-A-Ride trips in FY 2022-23. Between FY 2020–21 and FY 2023–24, Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride VSH increased marginally by 1 percent, while VSM declined overall by 6 percent.

[3] Going forward, no new Tokens will be issued since that fare program is being phased out.

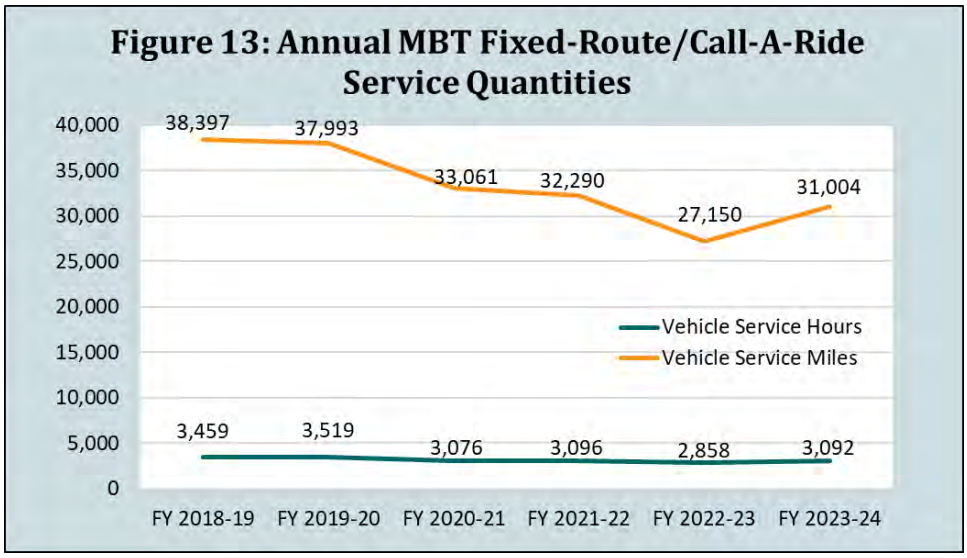
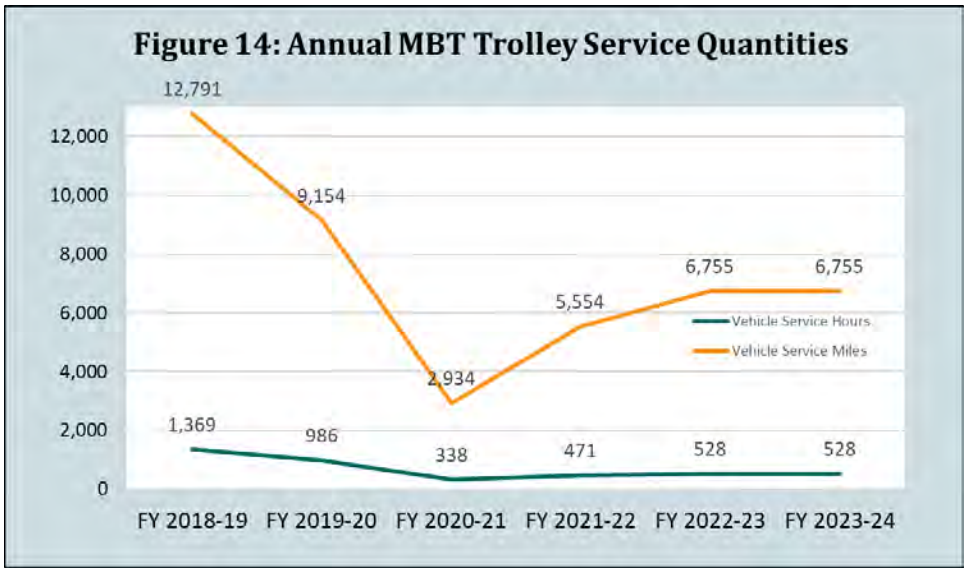


Figure 14 shows Trolley service levels. Similar to broader system trends, trolley service levels have fluctuated in recent years due to pandemic-related impacts and operational constraints. The system recorded its lowest service levels in FY 2020-21, with just 338 vehicle service hours (VSH) and 2,934 vehicle service miles (VSM). Service levels increased significantly over the next two years, reaching 528 VSH and 6,755 VSM in FY 2022-23—a level that was maintained in FY 2023-24. This represents an overall increase of 56 percent in VSH and 130 percent in VSM between FY 2020-21 and FY 2023-24.



When broken down by mode, fixed-route service consistently accounts for the majority of operational output, with 2,976 VSH and 29,841 VSM in FY 2023-24. The trolley—a seasonal offering—has seen steadily increasing service levels with each passing year from the first year of COVID, growing from 2,934 VSM in FY 2020-21 to 6,755 VSM in FY 2023-24. Overall, MBT's service recovery since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic has been strong, though continued monitoring will be needed to assess future year-over-year trends.

MBT FACILITIES AND CAPITAL EQUIPMENT

Operations Facility

Prior to the consolidation with the RTA, the MBT vehicles were housed at the City's Maintenance Yard, where they were maintained by a City mechanic. The City used the State's Voyager fuel card system to fuel vehicles at local gas stations. Up until June 1, 2025, the MV administrative staff were housed at 1001 Kennedy Way in Morro Bay in an office space at the Community Center. Moving forward, under RTA, MBT vehicles will be stored and maintained at the RTA facility located in San Luis Obispo.

The new RTA Bus Maintenance Facility is located at 253 Elks Lane in San Luis Obispo, and is the central location for RTA's administrative, operations, dispatch, and maintenance functions. The facility's on-site parking accommodates approximately seventy public transit vehicles and eighty employee and visitor vehicles. The Bus Maintenance Facility has both conventional fueling capacity as well as four fast-charge direct-current (DC) bus recharging stations. The RTA intends to install additional bus charging stations as the agency procures more battery-electric buses (BEBs).

Fleet Inventory

There are seven vehicles in the MBT active fleet, as shown in Table 13. All vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and can accommodate two wheelchair passengers to conform with ADA requirements. The three buses used on the Deviated Fixed-Route are equipped with two-position bicycle racks, and the trolley vehicles do not have bicycle racks. After consolidation into the RTA, one of the buses and two of the trolleys were transferred to the RTA, with the trolleys having two-position bicycle racks installed. The two other buses have reached the end of their useful life prior to this SRTP planning period and will be surplused and sold. The other two trolleys were not transferred to the RTA and will be surplused and sold. The RTA ordered one more cutaway bus in March 2025 to replace B2.

Table 13: Morro Bay Transit Vehicle Fleet

Agency ID	Make	Model	Year	Mileage	Capacity	Est. Vehicle Replacement Date[2]
B1	El Dorado	Cutaway	2016	137,660	14 & 2 Wheelchair	2025
B2	El Dorado	Cutaway	2019	94,619	14 & 2 Wheelchair	2025
B3*	Starcraft Allstar 22	Cutaway	2024	9,953	14 & 2 Wheelchair	2034
T4	Ford F-53	Trolley	2009	67,344	30 & 2 Wheelchair	2025
T5	Ford F-53	Trolley	2010	50,928	30 & 2 Wheelchair	2025
T6*	Ford F-53	Trolley	2019	19,566	22 & 2 Wheelchair	2032
T7*	Ford F-53	Trolley	2022	6,185	30 & 2 Wheelchair	2035

Source: Morro Bay Transit
Note 1: Information accurate as of April 10, 2025.
Note 2: Estimated retirement dates based off of vehicle model's Federal Transit Administration's Useful Life Benchmark. Assumes a 10-year or 150,000 mile useful life based on FTA useful life recommendations for cutaway vehicles and a 13-year or 150,000 mile useful life for trolley vehicles. Refurbishment of vehicles will increase their useful life.
* Vehicles that will be transferred to RTA when they take over administration, maintenance, and operations of Morro Bay Transit on 6/1/2025.

PASSENGER AMENITIES

As MBT is a fairly small system, there are minimal passenger amenities. Existing major stops, including the Transit Hub, benches, shelters, and bus stop signage, are discussed in this section.

Bus Stops, Benches, and Shelters

The following is a brief overview of the bus stops evaluated in the previous SRTP.

- MBT Transit Hub is located at the City Park and is a transfer point for RTA Routes 12 and 15, and the MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service. In 2023, the site was updated, including upgraded shelters, ADA-compliant bench seating, ADA upgrades to sidewalks and curbs, fencing, decorative safety lighting, a bike rack, painted waste bins, and a route map. The two new bus shelters and benches are designed to meet ADA accessibility standards. In the consolidation contract between RTA and the City of Morro Bay, the City is responsible for emptying trash cans and maintaining the decorative lighting in the passenger transfer area, and RTA is responsible for maintenance of the transit shelter and its benches.
- During the 2019 SRTP, the Albertson's stop, which includes two benches, a shelter, and a bus stop sign, was found to be problematic due to access challenges. While the 2019 SRTP recommended exploring the possibility of moving the bus stop to Quintana Rd, this was found to be infeasible due to traffic safety concerns, cost, and property ownership. The estimated construction cost in 2025 would be increased from the 2019 estimate of $50,000 due to inflation.
- At Dorn's Breaker Café, there are benches, trash receptacles, a bike rack, and a signpost with transit information. The signpost includes a sign for the trolley and one for MBT. Below the bus stop signs are display panels with map routes.

There are a few other bus stop benches in north Morro Bay along Main Street, which were installed by the RTA for the previous route alignment along Main Street, as RTA Route 15 was heading north out of town. These are located at the following locations:

- Main at Bonita (serving MB Transit and North Route Trolley stops)
- Main at Elena (serving North Route Trolley stop)
- Main at Jamaica (serving North Route Trolley and Fixed-Route stops)

Bus Stop Signs

The MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride and Trolley brochures identify designated bus stops, many of which do not have a time point. Each designated Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride stop has a bus stop sign and information kiosk with transit service information, which includes a phone number. After consolidation into the RTA, each of these stops, as well as the trolley stops, had a small sign installed providing a four-digit number to identify the stop. When a rider texts the number to the Transit Tracker phone number listed on the sign, the system will send back a text message with an estimated arrival time for that stop.

In the 2019 SRTP, the capital plan recommended $10,930 for bus stop improvements, including converting high-frequency flag stops to regular stops by adding a bus stop sign. Previously, flag stops were allowed for dropping off passengers, but that service was stopped in 2020 due to safety concerns.

The following specific stop improvements were identified in the SRTP, but due to the onset of COVID-19, with resources redirected to respond to the pandemic and staffing changes in the Engineering Division, these have not been fully evaluated for their feasibility.

- **Main at Errol:** This stop is near a restaurant and the Silver City West mobile home park. The restaurant is currently closed due to flood damage in January 2023. The sidewalk is not ADA-compliant and also has a power pole, fire hydrant, and mailbox, creating obstacles in the sidewalk for pedestrians and bus passengers. Further evaluation for accessibility is needed.
- **Main at Tahiti:** Last stop before crossing HWY 101. Listed on the schedule but lacks signage. Signage was recommended and was added at this stop.
- **Main at South (Garden House):** A sign would improve service visibility in the area. Further evaluation is needed to determine the optimal sign location.
- **Main at Marina/Pacific:** Prior to COVID-19, there was a trolley stop at Main Street and Pacific Avenue. During the pandemic, trolley routes were modified, and this stop was removed. There has never been a fixed-route stop at either of these locations. With flag stops eliminated, further evaluation is needed to determine the most suitable location for new signage along this block. This is a long stretch without a fixed-route stop until reaching Downtown.
- **Morro Bay Blvd near Bay Theater:** Add signage to clarify that Morro Bay Blvd is part of the Trolley route.
- **Elena Street Apartments (456 Elena):** Active stop with unclear location. Signage would help riders and drivers. Further evaluation is needed to see if there is a good location for signage.
- **San Jacinto at Birch/Cedar (mid-block):** A mid-block stop would serve a mixed-use area; low traffic makes it feasible. Further evaluation is needed to see if there is a good location for signage.

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MBT FINANCIAL REVIEW

The long-term sustainability of transit services hinges on a careful balance between operating revenues and expenditures. Striking this balance is essential not only for maintaining current service levels but also for enabling thoughtful growth and responsiveness to community needs. In Chapter 6, the use of RTA's cost model and FY 2025-26 budgeted revenue and expenses will be used to assess MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride and Trolley route performance and recommend alternative services.

However, this Chapter aims to examine MBT's actual expenditures for FY 2023-24 as the foundation for understanding the system's historical financial landscape. The budget figures are then used to build a detailed cost model for that fiscal year, allowing for an analysis of historical transit performance. This aids in identifying where services were operating efficiently and where adjustments may be needed to enhance overall system sustainability.

MBT Operating Expenses and Revenues

The MBT actual expenses for FY 2023-24 are shown in Table 14, broken out between the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service and the trolley. As shown, the greatest single cost in FY 2023-24 was MBT's agreement with MV Transportation for contracted transportation services ($208,845, or 52 percent of their systemwide expense budget).

Table 14: Morro Bay Transit Operating Expenses

MBT Expenses	FY 2023-24 Actuals
Fixed Route Transit	
Fuel Oil & Lubricants	$28,052
Machinery/Equip/Supplies	$4,141
Legal Services - General	$0
Contractural Services (MV)	$208,845
Vehicle Inspections	$100
Telephone	$442
Vehicle Insurance	$1,641
Membership	$1,109
Cap Asset Depreciation	$14,203.46
Interfund Transfers	$76,441
Fixed Route Total	**$334,975**
Trolley	
Fuel Oil & Lubricants	$3,294
Rolling Stock Supplies	$0
Machinery/Equip/Supplies	$856
Contractional Services	$33,370
Vehicle Inspections	$0
Cap Asset Depreciation	$23,581
Trolley Total	**$61,101**
Total Combined Expenses	**$396,076**

Source: City of Morro Bay Budget Performance Reports, FY 2023-24 and Midyear FY 24-25

MBT transit revenues for FY 2023-24 are shown in Table 15, including operating and non-operating revenues for Fiscal Years 2023-24. As shown, a majority (96.5 percent) of their operating revenue comes from Local Transportation Funds (LTF).

Table 15: Morro Bay Transit Revenues

MBT Revenues	FY 2023-24 Actuals
Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	
LTF Transit	$345,850
DAR STA	$69,971
LTF Misc. Tran Allocation	-$151,908
Van Farebox Receipts	$11,482
Programmed Use of Fund Balance	-$119,438
Interfund Transfer	$119,438
Fixed Route Total	**$275,394**
Trolley	
LTF Transit	$42,745
Van Farebox Receipts	$3,980
Other Rev/Current Services	$0
Rental Income	$599
Programmed Use of Fund Balance	$35,573
Trolley Total	**$82,897**
Total Combined Revenues	**$358,291**

Source: City of Morro Bay Budget Performance Reports, FY 2023-24 and Midyear FY 24-25

MBT COST MODEL

The FY 2023-24 actual expenditures and service quantities form the basis for a better understanding of the systemwide performance for that year of operations. As detailed in Table 16, each expense is assigned to one of three cost allocation factors—revenue vehicle hours, revenue vehicle miles, or fixed costs—based on what most directly drives that expense. For instance, fuel costs are tied to the number of vehicle miles operated, while costs such as marketing, utilities, and management are considered fixed, as they do not fluctuate significantly with service levels. Contractor costs are allocated according to the terms outlined in the contract fee schedule.

By summing costs under each allocation factor and dividing by the relevant annual service quantities, the cost model for FY 2023-24 is calculated as follows:

Operating Cost = $66.91 × **Revenue Vehicle Hours** + $0.98 × **Revenue Vehicle Miles** + $78,948 (Fixed Costs).

The first two components of this formula represent marginal costs, which vary based on the operation of specific routes or services. It's important to note that this model does not include capital costs, such as vehicle replacement.

Table 16: Morro Bay Transit - FY 2023-24 Cost Model

Expense Category	Variable Hour	Variable Mile	Fixed
Fixed Route Transit			
Fuel Oil & Lubricants		$28,052	
Machinery/Equip/Supplies		$4,141	
Legal Services - General			
Contractural Services (MV)	$208,845		
Vehicle Inspections			$100
Telephone			$442
Vehicle Insurance		$1,641	
Membership			$1,109
Cap Asset Depreciation			
Interfund Transfers			*$76,441*
Fixed Route Total	***$208,845***	***$33,834***	***$78,092***
Trolley			
Fuel Oil & Lubricants		$3,294	
Machinery/Equip/Supplies			$856
Contractional Services	$33,370		
Vehicle Inspections			
Trolley Total	***$33,370***	***$3,294***	***$856***
Total Combined Expenses	**$242,215**	**$37,128**	**$78,948**

FY 23/24 Total	Vehicle Service Hours	Vehicle Service Miles	
Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	3,092	31,004	--
Trolley	528	6,755	--
Total Combined Service Hours/Miles	3,620	37,759	--

Cost Per Unit by Variable	Vehicle Service Hours	Vehicle Service Miles	Fixed Costs
Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	$67.54	$1.09	$78,092
Trolley	$63.17	$0.49	$856
Total Annual Service	**$66.91**	**$0.98**	**$78,948**

Source: City of Morro Bay Budget Performance Reports, FY 2023-24.
Note 1: Total costs are based on actual values for FY 2023-24.
Note 2: Annual service quantities based on FY 2023-24.
Note 3: Expense does not include Capital Asset Depreciation.

MBT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The FY 2023-24 cost model was applied to operations data from that same fiscal year to calculate standard performance metrics such as passenger-trips per hour and subsidy per passenger-trip. This analysis helps for comparison in the analysis of future MBT service alternatives. The service parameters and performance analysis are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17: Morro Bay Transit - FY 2023-24 Service Parameters and Performance

Routes	Service Parameters: Passenger-Trips	Service Hours	Service Miles	Fully Allocated Operating Cost	Marginal Operating Cost [1]	Fare Revenue
Fixed Routes/Call-A-Ride	11,485	3,092	31,004	$320,771	$242,679	$11,482
Trolley	3,774	528	6,755	$37,520	$36,664	$3,980
Morro Bay Transit Total	**15,259**	**3,620**	**37,759**	**$358,291**	**$279,343**	**$15,462**

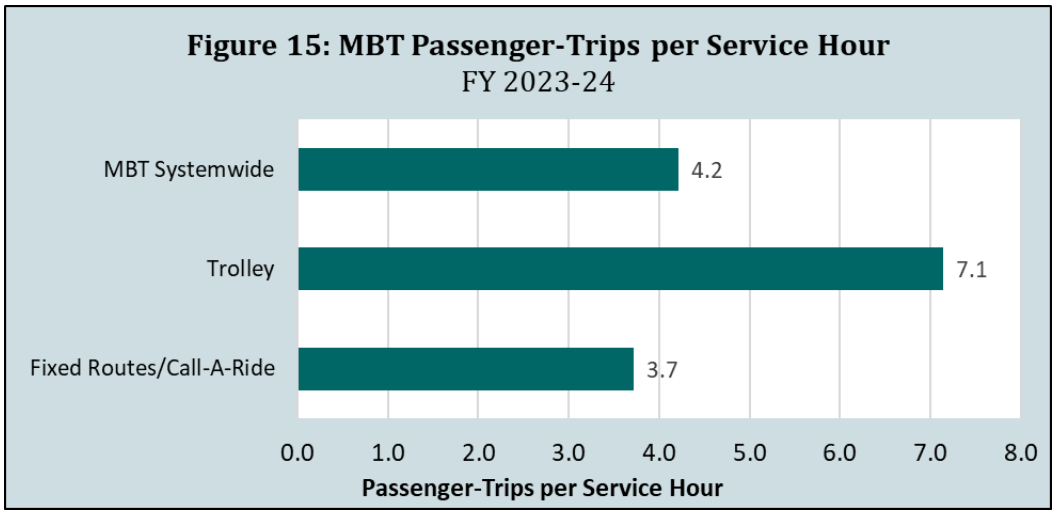
	Passengers per... Hour	Mile	Total Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip	Total Operating Subsidy per Passenger-Trip	Total Operating Cost per Service Hour	Farebox Ratio [2]
Fixed Routes/Call-A-Ride	3.7	0.37	$27.93	$26.93	$103.74	3.6%
Trolley	7.1	0.56	$9.94	$8.89	$71.03	10.6%
Morro Bay Transit Total	**4.2**	**0.40**	**$23.48**	**$22.47**	**$98.97**	**4.3%**

Sources: MBT, LSC
Note 1: Marginal operating costs do not include fixed costs.
Note 2: Farebox calculations do not represent official calculations for TDA eligibility.

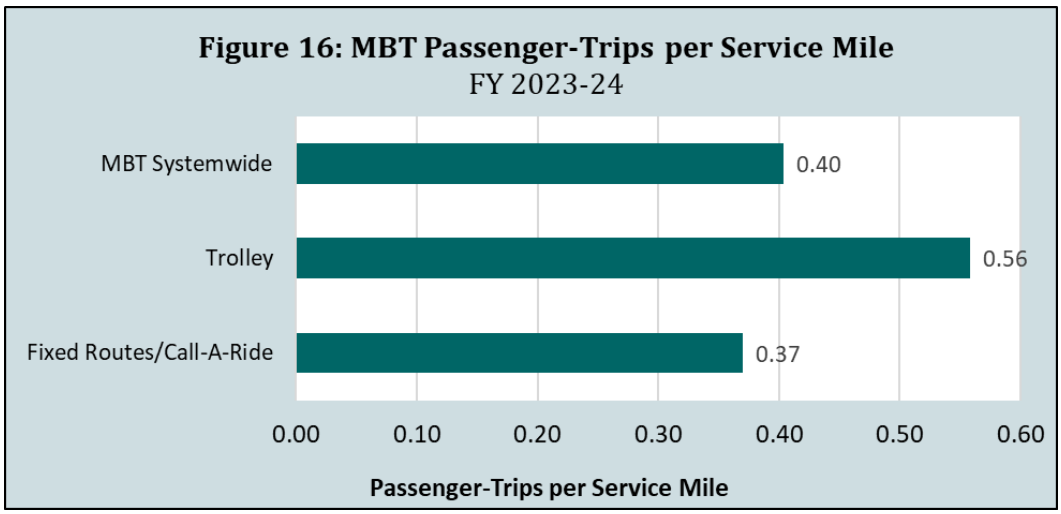
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Performance Indicators

Based on FY 2023-24 service quantities and the cost model, a number of performance indicators were evaluated for the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service, as shown in Table 17 and presented below in Figures 15 through 20.

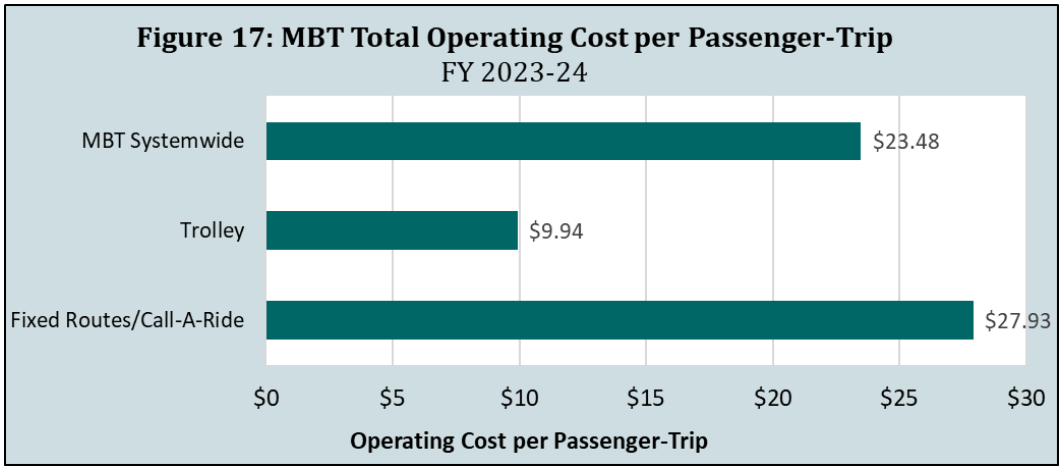
- **Passenger Trips per Service Hour –** This metric is a key indicator of transit productivity. In FY 2023-24, systemwide passenger-trips per service hour averaged 4.2. The combined Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride services averaged 3.7 passenger-trips per service hour (Figure 15). While relatively low for a fixed-route service, this figure is typical for systems serving smaller, transit-dependent populations and is considered strong for fixed-route deviation service like Call-A-Ride. The Trolley service, which operates seasonally from June through early October on weekends only, achieved a notably higher productivity of 7.1 passenger-trips per hour, underscoring its popularity during peak visitor months.



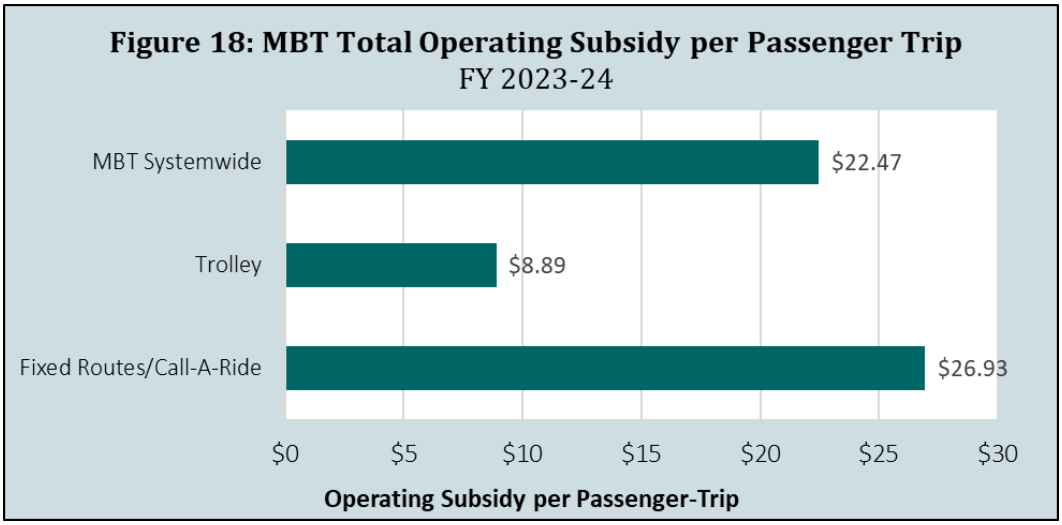
- **Passenger-Trips per Service Mile –** Systemwide averaged 0.40 passenger-trips per mile. The Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride services provided 0.37 passenger-trips per mile, reflective of the longer, low-density trips common in Morro Bay (Figure 16). In contrast, the Trolley, operating on a more compact and high-traffic route, carried 0.56 passengers per mile, demonstrating strong efficiency during its limited operational window.



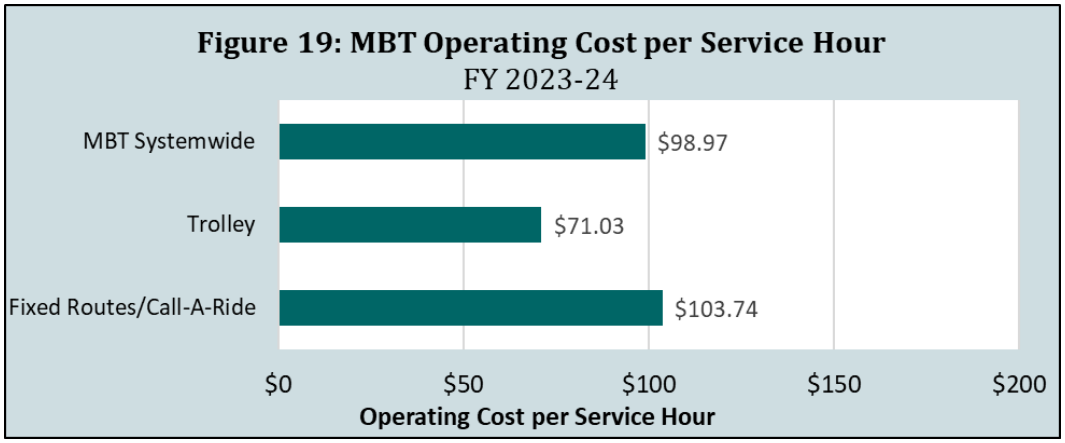
- **Total Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip –** The cost to serve each rider systemwide was $23.48. The cost to serve each rider on the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride system (inclusive of fixed costs) was $27.93, which is significantly lower than that seen for other small transit agencies (Figure 17). The Trolley, benefiting from higher ridership volumes over fewer service hours, achieved a significantly lower cost per trip of $9.94.



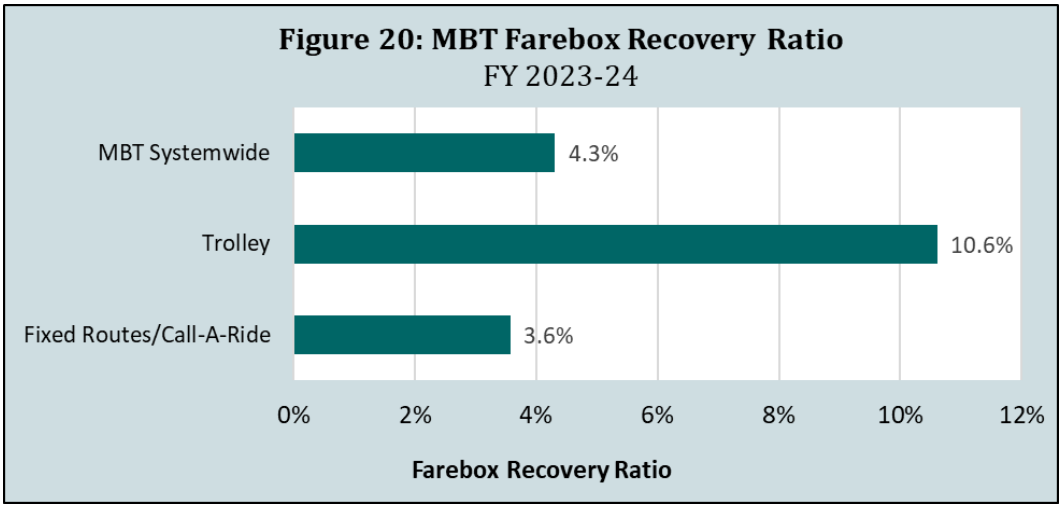
- **Total Operating Subsidy per Passenger-Trip –** Public subsidy remains a critical funding source for transit (Figure 18). Systemwide, the total operating subsidy per passenger-trip was $22.47. For the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride, the total operating subsidy was $26.93 per passenger-trip, reflecting the essential public service role of this program. In comparison, the Trolley required an $8.89 subsidy per trip.



- **Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour –** Systemwide, the fully allocated operating cost averaged $98.97 per service hour. The Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride's cost was comparable at $103.74, while the Trolley's more focused and seasonal service brought costs down to $71.03 per hour (Figure 19).



- **Farebox Recovery Ratio –** This metric represents the proportion of the system's operating cost that is covered by fare revenue and has historically been a key determinant of how well a transit system is performing. It is important to note that the farebox ratio calculated herein does not represent the official calculation for TDA eligibility requirements. Systemwide, the farebox recovery ratio is 4.3 percent. The Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride services achieved a 3.6 percent recovery ratio. The Trolley, with its concentrated seasonal service and stronger ridership, achieved a much higher 10.6 percent farebox recovery, highlighting its relative cost-effectiveness during the summer and early fall (Figure 20).



MBT ROUTE PERFORMANCE

An evaluation of MBT's route performance in FY 2023-24 reveals a notable distinction between high- and low-performing services. Among all services, the Trolley stood out as the most efficient and productive. Operating only seasonally from June through early October on weekends (10 AM to 5 PM), the Trolley carried 7.1 passenger-trips per vehicle service hour—almost double the systemwide average. It also provided the lowest total operating cost per passenger-trip at $9.94 and a farebox recovery ratio of 10.6 percent, reflecting its success in attracting riders and generating revenue relative to its limited operational scope. These strong performance metrics suggest that the Trolley plays an important role in serving both tourists and locals during peak visitor months, especially along the popular waterfront corridor.

In contrast, the regular Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride services, while essential for meeting the mobility needs of transit-dependent populations, displayed slightly lower performance than the Trolley service, but still faired quite well in comparison to similar-sized transit systems. The Fixed-Route averaged 3.7 passengers per service hour and 0.37 passengers per mile. Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride had a higher total operating cost per passenger-trip when compared to the Trolley service at $29.93. These figures highlight the challenges of providing regular public transit in lower-density areas, where service coverage and span of service often take precedence over ridership volume or financial efficiency. Nevertheless, these services remain critical in providing equitable access to transportation for Morro Bay residents, particularly seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income riders.

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Chapter 5
PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

INTRODUCTION

Community outreach is essential in planning effective and equitable transportation systems. With this in mind, LSC conducted both onboard passenger surveys and an online community survey to help capture real-time feedback from riders during their journeys while also engaging broader community voices through an online survey (surveymonkey.com). The following is a summary of the feedback and input received during the public outreach process.

ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

In partnership with the City of Morro Bay and the RTA, LSC conducted an onboard passenger survey to get feedback from those who ride the MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service, the North Trolley, and the Downtown Trolley. The surveys asked respondents about their ridership habits (how often they ride/where they ride from and to), their opinions on transit, and basic demographic information, including occupation and age. The surveys were available in both English and Spanish, and the effort was administered on paper on the bus. The onboard surveys were distributed by a trained surveyor from July 17th – July 18th, 2025, on MBT's Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service and from July 19th – July 20th, 2025, on MBT's Trolley Routes. All surveys were collected and returned to LSC to analyze and summarize the data.

A full analysis of the survey results is available in Appendix C. Below is a summary of these results.

MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Summary (20 Responses)

Demographics

- Nearly half (45 percent) of the respondents were seniors (ages 61–90); about one-third (35 percent) were under 25.
- Those who reported speaking more than one language accounted for 20 percent of respondents, while 80 percent of respondents reported speaking only one language.

Trip Pattern

- The bus stop with the most reported boardings was MBT Center/City Park on Harbor Street, and the bus stop reported as the most common destination was Kennedy Way Community/Senior Center.
- Trips clustered midday (10 AM – 2 PM), with fewer early morning or evening riders.
- The top trip purposes reported by respondents were leisure/social (30 percent) and shopping (25 percent). Work trips (15 percent) and medical/dental (10 percent) were also noted.
- A total of 25 passengers boarded the bus and were counted by the surveyor. None of the respondents used the Call-A-Ride deviation service.
- Riders lacking access to a personal vehicle accounted for 85 percent of respondents.
- Riders were mostly split across Regular Fare, Free Fare, and bus pass (type not specified), each accounting for 24 percent of respondents.

- The majority of respondents walked to (55 percent) and from (53 percent) bus stops; 20 percent connected via RTA Route 12.
- Respondents reported the frequency of use as being 30 percent riding 1 to 2 days per week, 30 percent riding from 3 to 4 days per week, and 25 percent riding 5 or more days per week. Those who reported using the service 1 day or less accounted for 15 percent of respondents.

Respondent Feedback and Opinions

- The top transit information sources reported by respondents were social media and the website (39 percent each).
- On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent), Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride ratings found high marks for Overall Service (4.7 weighted average), Safety/Security (4.65 weighted average), Driver Courtesy (4.6 weighted average), and On-Time Performance (4.6 weighted average). Lower scores were given for Information Availability (3.95 weighted average) and Bus Stop Amenities (3.95 weighted average).
- The strongest requests for service improvements included weekend service (47 percent on Saturday, 35 percent on Sunday). Other priorities included reversing the route direction to have a northbound and southbound run, instead of one continuous loop (29 percent), evening service (24 percent), and more frequent buses (12 percent).
- Most common open-ended comments and feedback were positive feedback about bus drivers (23 percent). Some (15 percent) said no improvements were needed. Others requested improved RTA transfers (15 percent), expanded Call-A-Ride hours/service area (15 percent), weekend Fixed-Route and weekday trolley service (8 percent each, respectively). Smaller shares highlighted the need for better bus stop information, signage, and bike racks.

Downtown and North Trolley Survey Summary (40 Responses)

Demographics

- Those respondents who were visitors from outside San Luis Obispo County accounted for 73 percent, and 18 percent of respondents lived in Morro Bay (15 percent full-time, 3 percent part-time).
- The respondents' age groups were diverse, with 35 percent of respondents reporting being between the ages of 26–40, 25 percent of respondents between the ages of 41–60, and 20 percent of respondents being under age 18.

Trip Pattern

- Trip Patterns:
  - The most common origins reported by respondents were Morro Strand State Beach, Main at Elena/Spencer's Market, and Morro Bay State Park. The most common destinations reported by respondents were Downtown/Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard and Morro Bay State Park.
- Respondents reported that 94 percent of trips were round-trip.
- Respondents primarily walked to (87 percent) and from trolley stops (76 percent).

- Trips were mostly for recreation, with 45 percent of respondents reporting social/recreational purposes as the reason for their trip, 38 percent sightseeing, and 28 percent reporting dining.
- Respondents reported their boardings occurred primarily during midday, especially between 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM.
- First-time riders accounted for 56 percent of respondents, and one-third (33 percent) of respondents reported riding once or less per year.

Respondent Feedback and Opinions

- Respondents reported receiving information about transit services primarily from social media (58 percent) and the website (45 percent).
- Respondents reported learning about the Trolley services from seeing the trolley stop signs or seeing the trolley (38 percent), word-of-mouth (30 percent), and flyers (24 percent).
- Open-ended feedback/comment service improvements included later weekend hours (50 percent for Sundays and 42 percent for Saturdays), expanded routes (25 percent), and stronger regional transit connections (13 percent), also suggested.
- Trolley Service Ratings on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent) found high marks for the trolley service, including Cleanliness (5.0), On-Time Performance (4.95), Overall Service (4.95), Driver Courtesy (4.93), Value of Fare (4.90). All categories rated above 4.7, indicating consistently excellent rider satisfaction.
- Most trolley survey respondents were highly satisfied with the service, with 60 percent stating that no improvements were needed. Among those suggesting changes, the most common requests included weekday service and amenity improvements (15 percent each, respectively). Smaller shares called for earlier morning service, safety improvements, bus stop enhancements, or better transfer connections to RTA (5 percent each, respectively).

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY (113 RESPONSES)

The Online Community Survey collected 113 responses from residents of Morro Bay and the broader San Luis Obispo County region. Not all respondents answered each question. Outreach was conducted online and in the community to reach both riders and non-riders.

Demographics

- Respondents were mostly older adults, with the majority between ages 59 and 77 (60 percent of respondents).
- One-third (33 percent) of adults reported an income between $0-$79,999, and one-third (33 percent) of respondents reported having an income above $80,000 (one-third preferred not to respond).
- Nearly all reported having access to at least one personal vehicle (95 percent of respondents).

Transit Use

- Transit use was evenly split, with half (50 percent) of the respondents reporting using public transit and half (50 percent) reporting that they do not use public transit.

- Those who do use transit reported the trip purposes most often for recreation or social activities (73 percent), personal business (47 percent), shopping (37 percent), and medical appointments (31 percent).
- The most commonly used services included RTA Routes 9, 10, 12, and 15 (59 percent), along with MBT's Fixed-Route (43 percent) and trolley services (39 percent).
- Most riders reported using transit only occasionally (55 percent), 20 percent reporting never riding MBT. Those who ride more frequently account for 26 percent of riders.
- Transit riders reported riding transit routes fairly consistently, with Monday-Thursday accounting for 46-49 percent and Friday accounting for 62 percent of ridership. Ridership on the weekends is lower (44 percent of riders rode on Saturday and 36 percent on Sunday).
- Half of the respondents who reported not using public transit most frequently cited reliance on their own transportation (66 percent), service not going where they need to travel (34 percent), and travel times being too long (32 percent) as reasons for not using transit.

Opinion on Transit Services

- Asked to rate a series of service improvements that would encourage them to ride MBT services on a scale of 1 (Definitely Would Not) to 4 (Definitely Would), respondents identified several key improvements that would make them more likely to use transit. Top priorities included expanding service to additional destinations (3.2 weighted average), creating stronger connections with regional transit providers (3.04 weighted average), and adding more frequent weekend service (2.93 weighted average). Other areas of interest were later weekend hours (2.91 weighted average), better information about services (2.91 weighted average), and bus stops located closer to home (2.96 weighted average).
- Nearly half (49 percent) of respondents also expressed interest in trying microtransit, though many wanted more information before deciding (39 percent). Those who were not interested in micro transit (12 percent) cited needing more information on microtransit (36 percent), concerns with safety (18 percent), having their own transportation (18 percent), and that microtransit scheduling was not convenient (18 percent).
- Open-ended feedback highlighted recurring themes: expanding the service area to San Luis Obispo, Cayucos, and Los Osos (20 percent); offering earlier and later service hours for workers, students, and airport travelers (14 percent); and improving transit information, including better signage and accessibility for riders with disabilities (14 percent). Additional notable suggestions included restoring Dial-A-Ride service (10 percent) and making transfers to RTA Routes 12 and 15 easier (10 percent).

Chapter 6
SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

A successful transit system can influence economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life. This chapter delves into a comprehensive analysis of potential changes to MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service, as well as the North and Downtown Trolley services. This chapter reviews potential changes to both MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride and the Trolley.

For each alternative, the impacts on ridership and operating costs are estimated. Ridership and cost estimates assume implementation in FY 2026-27 and are based on the following parameters:

- The RTA proposed FY 2026-27 operating budget was used to estimate the operating costs of MBT, assuming no change to service levels ("status quo" scenario). The per-hour and per-mile costs were then used to estimate the cost impacts of the various alternatives, per the following equation:
    - **Change in MBT's Marginal Operating Cost** = $104.99 X Change in Vehicle Service Hours + $3.60 X Change in Vehicle Service Miles.
- For the alternatives evaluations that follow, operating cost estimates represent "marginal" costs. In other words, fixed costs are excluded from the analysis unless identified specifically. The reason for looking at marginal costs of potential changes or improvements is that fixed costs (such as administrative staff salaries, utilities, and supplies) will not change if service levels are increased or decreased. However, fuel/maintenance costs (cost per mile) and bus operator salary costs (costs per hour) will increase incrementally as vehicle hours and miles are increased. Fixed costs and capital costs will be included in the discussion when the Draft Financial Plan is prepared.
- Further, "marginal operating subsidy" represents marginal operating cost minus fare revenue, or the amount of revenue needed to subsidize the service.
- Status quo FY 2026-27 ridership estimates assume a slight (1 percent) increase in ridership per year from FY 2024-25 levels. This is consistent with post-pandemic trends of similar-sized transit systems. Ridership estimates for service alternatives are based on ridership data from peer systems and standard transit demand elasticity factors, depending on the alternative. Elasticity is an economic term that measures the change in the behavior of one variable in response to the change in a related variable. For example, if service levels are doubled, historical data has shown that ridership will not double but rather increase by around 47 percent. Elasticity factors vary for different variables such as headways, total travel time, or transfer time. Variation has also been found in urban areas vs. suburban areas or during peak or non-peak periods. *The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 95 Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes Chapter 9 – Transit Scheduling and Frequency* is a good resource for transit elasticity factors.
- Service was assumed to include 250 weekdays, 51 Saturdays, and 51 Sundays, unless otherwise noted. Operating days for the Trolley were assumed to be 36 days.

- Data shows that the average fare of the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride was $0.48 in 2024, before the consolidation of MBT into RTA. The current post-consolidation average fare is $1.00. However, with the implementation of the new discount fare verification program, the assumed average cash fares received per boarding for Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride are assumed to be $1.00. The Trolley average fare per passenger is assumed to be $0.83, based on a sample of ridership from FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25.

Average daily boarding and alighting data from a two-week sample in July was used to develop and analyze some of the options below. This data is presented graphically in Appendix D.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Alternatives

Table 18 presents cost and ridership impacts for a variety of service alternatives for MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride. Each alternative is described below.

Provide Weekend Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Services

The top service request for the on-board surveys was weekend (Saturday and Sunday) Fixed-Route/Call-a-Ride service. While the Downtown and North Trolleys operate on weekends during the summer months (June through October), there is no weekend Fixed-Route service, nor is there any weekend service during the non-summer months. Two weekend Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service options were analyzed: non-summer and year-round.

Non-Summer Season Weekend Service 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Under this option, the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service would operate between the hours of 10 AM and 5 PM on both Saturday and Sunday for the weekends that the Trolley does not operate (October to June). This equates to 68 additional days of service for an estimated net increase in annual operating costs of $68,170. Weekend service would be similar to weekday service and arrive/depart the Morro Bay Park Transit Center at the top of the hour to allow for timed connections with Routes 12 and 15.

Ridership for Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service during the non-summer season was estimated by applying the average proportion of Saturday and Sunday daily ridership to weekday ridership for Routes 12 and 15 to Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride. This results in an increase in 3,100 trips annually and an additional annual operating subsidy of $65,070.

Year-round Weekend Service 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

As the Trolley routes cater more to visitors, it is worthwhile considering operating Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service (serves more residents) seven days a week. Under this option, Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service would operate from 10 AM to 5 PM, year-round, for an additional annual operating cost of $104,250. Adding 104 days of service would garner an additional 4,700 one-way passenger-trips and result in a marginal operating subsidy of $99,550. Although the Trolleys stops at the Community Senior Center (during the summer months), which is within one-quarter mile of the transfer point currently, connections to RTA Routes 12 and 15 would further be improved under this scenario as there would be scheduled direct connections at the MBT Center.

Provide Weekday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service to 7:45 PM

Another common request among on-board and community survey respondents was later evening service. Currently, the last run on MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride departs the MBT Center at 6:00 PM,

ending at the Morro Bay High School at 6:45 PM. Although average daily ridership during this last hour of service is low (1.6 boardings), another connection with RTA Route 12 coming from San Luis Obispo could be made.

As shown in Table 18, this option would cost around $35,800 to operate and carry around 300 additional one-way passenger-trips. Ridership was estimated based on the ratio of 7:00 PM hour ridership to average daily ridership for peer operators.

Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Two Loop Route - Improve Connections with Routes 12 and 15

Timely inter-regional bus transfers contribute to a more equitable transportation system by providing accessible and convenient options for all, particularly for those who rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation. RTA Route 12 connects Morro Bay with Los Osos, the City of San Luis Obispo, and Cuesta College. Timed transfers between MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride and RTA Route 12 heading towards Los Osos and coming from SLO are possible at the top of the hour at the Morro Bay Park. However, connecting MBT passengers must wait 39 minutes at Morro Bay Park to transfer to a southbound RTA Route 12 bus to SLO. According to on-board passenger surveys, roughly 20 percent of survey respondents transferred to/ from RTA Route 12. This is an increase from 6 percent during the last SRTP update. No respondents stated that they transferred to/from RTA Route 15. Additionally, the Blue Heron Mobile Home Park and Bay Pines Travel Trailer Park are served by RTA Route 12 but not by MBT. Therefore, residents/visitors to these areas would also benefit from improved connectivity with RTA Route 12.

The previous SRTP recommended dividing the MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride into two loops (Figure 1). Each loop would begin and end at Morro Bay Park, where the bus operator would take a break. The North Loop would depart Morro Bay City Park at the top of the hour as usual, travel west along Morro Bay Road, north on Main Street, following the existing route alignment to serve the northern portion of Morro Bay, including the spur along Atascadero Road to Morro Dunes State Park (Figure 21). As the bus approaches the downtown area, it would turn left on Quintana and right on Morro Bay Blvd to return to the Morro Bay City Park 38 minutes after the hour, in time for passengers to transfer to RTA Route 12 toward SLO. The bus would then operate in the South Loop. In order to maintain good on-time performance for the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride, the South Loop would be shortened from the existing configuration. After leaving the City Park, the bus would travel west along Morro Bay Blvd and south along Piney Way only as far as South Street, where it would turn north on Main Street to serve Harbor Street and Morro Bay Blvd before stopping at the Community Center and ending at City Park. According to recent Call-A-Ride ridership logs, 60 State Park Road is a popular destination. This stop would still be within ¾ mile of the South Loop.

The Two Loop Route will take 1 hour to operate with one bus, but with a small reduction in vehicle miles (as a result of the route no longer travelling as far south as Piney and Main Street) and no increase in vehicle hours, this alternative will save around $7,000 in annual operating costs. Transfers between MBT and RTA Route 12 will be improved, and passengers will have a shorter travel time from the northern portion of Morro Bay to Blue Heron Mobile Home Park, Bay Pines Travel Trailer Park, Cuesta College, and the City of SLO. It is estimated that improved transfers will increase ridership by around 3 trips per day or 700 per year.

Table 18: Morro Bay Transit and Trolley Alternatives Analysis

FY 2026-27

	Run Parameters		Daily Service				Annual					
	Hours	Miles	Runs	Hours	Miles	Days per Year	Hours	Miles	Annual Marginal Cost	Annual Ridership	Fare Revenues	Marginal Operating Subsidy
Status Quo												
Morro Bay Transit Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride	1	10.6	12	12.25	127.2	250	3,063	31,800	$436,181	11,700		
Downtown Trolley	0.25	4.8	14	7	67.2	36	235	3,007	$35,502	1,920		
North Trolley	0.25	6.9	14	7	96.6	36	225	2,883	$34,029	1,840		
Total		**22.3**					**3,523**	**37,690**	**$505,711**	**15,460**	**$14,700**	
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride												
Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service												
Non-Summer Season (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM)	1	10.6	7	7	74.2	68	476	5,046	$68,170	3,100	$3,100	$65,070
Year Round (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM)	1	10.6	7	7	74.2	104	728	7,717	$104,250	4,700	$4,700	$99,550
Later Weekday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service (Add one run to 7:45 PM)	1	10.6	1	1	10.6	250	250	2,650	$35,800	300	$300	$35,500
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride: Two Loop												
North Loop	0.67	7.98	12	8.250	95.76	250	2,063	23,940	$302,850			
South Loop	0.34	1.96	12	4.000	23.52	250	1,000	5,880	$126,190			
Subtotal	*1.00*	*9.94*					*3,063*	*29,820*	*$429,040*			
Net Impact							***0***	***-1,980***	***-$7,141***	***700***	***$700***	***-$6,441***
Trolley												
Add Friday Evening and Extend Service Saturday Evening until 9 PM (4 Hours)												
Downtown Trolley				4	51.2	36	144	1,844	$21,770			
North Trolley				4	51.2	36	144	1,844	$21,770			
Net Impact							**288**	**3,688**	**$43,540**	**1,090**	**$905**	**$42,635**
Microtransit Friday and Saturday Evening Service (5 PM to 9 PM)												
Two vehicles at peak times				6	72	36	216	2,592	$32,020			
Technology Cost									$40,000			
Net Impact									**$72,020**	**860**	**$860**	**$71,160**
Replace Trolley with Microtransit (Friday - 5 PM to 9 PM, Saturday - 11 AM to 9 PM, Sunday - 11 AM to 5 PM)												
Three vehicles at peak times							1,044	12,528	$154,780	5,220		
Technology Cost									$40,000			
Eliminate Fixed-Route Trolley Service									-$69,530	-3,760		
Net Impact									**$125,250**	**1,460**	**$4,380**	**$120,870**
Downtown Trolley - Add Transit Center Stop												
Extend route to add Transit Center	0	0.17	14	0	2.38	36	0	86	$310	**0**	**$0**	**$310**

Figure 21
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Two Loop Service Alternative

Add Bus in Opposite Direction

Roughly 25 percent of on-board survey respondents indicated that they would like to "add a second bus running in the opposite direction". One-way directional loops can create indirect trips and longer travel times in one trip direction. On the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride, the most common origin/destination trip pattern observed as part of the on-board survey was between Main/Jamaica and the Community/Senior Center, with the next most common origin/destination pair between Spencer's Market and the Community/Senior Center. Travelling from Main/Jamaica to the Community Center takes 25 minutes (with a short walk or deviation from City Park), and the return trip takes 35 minutes.

A potential extension of the Two Loop scenario would be to add a second bus travelling in the opposite direction; however, this would double the marginal operating costs or add around $436,000 per year. Given that bi-directional service would only save around 10 minutes of travel time in one direction for the most common trip patterns, this option is not recommended as the increase in ridership would not be warranted with the additional cost.

Additional Stop at Community & Senior Center Fixed-Route

As referenced above and shown in Appendix C, the most common origin-destination patterns of on-board survey respondents were:

- Main St/Jamaica - Community Center
- Spencer's Market - Community Center
- City Park - Main St/Bonita

According to the Fixed-Route schedule, the Community & Senior Center is only served once on the route, about 20 minutes after the departure from City Park Transit Center. The Community & Senior Center is roughly one-quarter mile from the City Park Transit Center. If passengers ride the bus the entire route from Main Street and Jamaica to the Community Center, it would take roughly 45 minutes. However, if they alight the bus at the City Park Transit Center and walk to the Community Center, the total travel time would be around 25 minutes. Although the walk between the City Park and the Community Center would not be difficult for able-bodied passengers, seniors and disabled passengers could benefit by including a "request stop" at the Community Center just prior to ending the route at the Morro Bay City Park Transit Center. Passengers could request the drop off directly with the bus operator as they are boarding without the need to call dispatch in advance or be charged the Call-A-Ride fare. Similarly, it is less than a quarter mile walk from the Dollar Tree stop to the Community Center. This distance could be made even shorter with a request drop near the intersection with Kennedy Way and the shopping center access road between Dollar Tree and Albertsons.

Microtransit Year-Round (Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Replacement)

The existing MBT deviated Fixed-Route system allows for a set schedule on which riders can depend, with the flexibility of pickups/drop-offs outside the set route. The majority of Morro Bay can be served this way during the week, with the exception of Morro Bay Park Campground (which is served seasonally by the Trolley on weekends). The geographic layout of Morro Bay (long and skinny with north and south clusters of development) makes it relatively efficient to serve with a deviated Fixed-Route type of service. However, as the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service carries only 3.7 trips per vehicle service hour (well within the productivity range of microtransit for one vehicle), it is worth considering replacing the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride with microtransit.

There are two primary disadvantages to this scenario: Cost and dependability. Even with only one microtransit vehicle in operation, technology costs for the on-demand app would add at least $30,000 to annual operating costs. On-board survey origin/destination patterns show distinct trip patterns between the Spencer's Market area and the Community Center/City Park. This lends better to a Fixed-Route type of service. Lastly, many regular riders may find it inconvenient to request a ride for each trip. (According to on-board surveys, 85 percent of respondents use Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride at least once a week, while 25 percent use it five days a week). One potential advantage of microtransit is that destinations outside the ¾ mile Call-A-Ride service area, such as the Blue Heron Mobile Home Park, could be included in the microtransit service area. Given all these factors, replacing Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride with microtransit is not recommended at this time, but could be considered in the future.

Downtown and North Trolleys Alternatives

According to on-board surveys, 83 percent of Trolley survey respondents were visitors from outside SLO County. Boarding and alighting data for a two-week sample show that the Morro Strand State Park Campground is the most popular stop (35 average daily boardings), followed by the Giant Chessboard (23 average daily boardings). The majority of Trolley survey respondents stated that they were quite happy with the service, and many were riding for their first time. The following alternatives were analyzed for the Trolley Routes based on ridership patterns and survey suggestions.

Downtown Trolley Serves City Park Transit Center

One minor adjustment that could improve connectivity on the weekends would be for the Downtown Trolley to serve the Morro Bay City Park Transit Center. The small detour would add roughly ¼ mile per round-trip or around $500 annually. As the Trolley does not have fixed timepoints, this small detour would not impact on-time performance. Serving the City Park would allow visitors to transfer more directly to RTA Routes 12 and 15.

Add Friday Evening Trolley Service and Extend Saturday Evening Trolley Service Until 9 PM

One common suggestion among Trolley survey respondents was later service on both Saturday and Sunday. Prior to COVID, the Trolley service operated until 7:00 PM on Friday and Saturday evenings. During the Summer of 2025, the Trolley service was operated until 5:00 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. Service until 7 PM does not easily allow visitors to use the Trolley to go out to dinner downtown. Therefore, this alternative considers extending Trolley Service until 9 PM on Saturday evenings and adding evening service until 9 PM on Fridays, in an attempt to capture more weekend visitors.

The additional 4 hours of daily service for both Trolley Routes would add around $43,540 in annual operating costs. Ridership was estimated based on historical Morro Bay Trolley ridership from 5 PM to 7 PM and evening ridership for the Town Trolley in Mammoth Lakes and the Avila Beach Trolley, adjusted to reflect that Morro Bay charges a fare where the other Trolley services do not. The alternative is projected to carry an additional 1,900 passenger-trips per year, or on average 52 per service day.

Adding Friday Evening and Saturday Evening Microtransit Service

Many resort communities have found microtransit to be a popular option during times when demand for Fixed-Route service is lower, such as evening hours or weekends. Similar to Uber or Lyft, microtransit allows passengers to use their mobile phone or telephone to request a ride "on-demand", at any pick-up location within a defined service area and time. Nearly 50 percent of community survey respondents

indicated that they would be interested in microtransit, and another 39 percent would like more information regarding microtransit. The benefit of microtransit is that it can serve more people directly by not having fixed stops. Microtransit is most useful for regions where there are few distinct origin-destination patterns. Additionally, microtransit can often appeal to visitors who do not usually ride public transit. One potential application of microtransit in Morro Bay is for Friday evening, as well as Saturday evening service, after the Trolley has stopped running. As the Trolley does not provide deviations, it would be possible to serve more residents/visitors directly with microtransit.

In order to provide service with no more than a 30-minute wait, it is recommended that at least three microtransit vehicles be used for service between 5 PM and 8 PM, and two for the last hour of the evening. The most productive microtransit services observed in tourist areas carry anywhere from 5 - 7 trips per vehicle hour for a fare-free service. Considering that a fare would be changed in Morro Bay, it is reasonable to assume the low end of the productivity range of 5 passenger-trips per hour. In this scenario, an evening microtransit service in Morro Bay would carry around 1,980 trips annually.

As the RTA fleet includes smaller vans, which are used for paratransit service, it would be possible for RTA to operate the microtransit; however, the microtransit software would need to be procured. This technology is estimated to cost around $30,000 - $40,000 annually (not including start-up costs). In total, evening microtransit service in Morro Bay on Friday and Saturday evenings would cost around $98,710 annually. One disadvantage of this alternative is that it would require Morro Bay visitors to learn two different types of public transit service: Fixed-Route Trolley service in the daytime and microtransit in the evening. This would likely limit ridership growth to the low end of productivity levels served in other tourist areas.

Assuming the same fare of $1 per ride for general public passengers, this equates to an operating subsidy of $93,370. If RTA considers microtransit in other portions of the county, the additional cost of purchasing on-demand app technology for Morro Bay microtransit vehicles could make this option more cost-effective.

Replace Daytime and Evening Trolley Service with Microtransit

Another application of microtransit in Morro Bay would be to replace daytime Trolley service with microtransit, as well as add the evening microtransit service discussed above. The benefits of this alternative would be that both daytime and evening weekend service would serve all of Morro Bay more directly, and visitors would only need to learn one type of service during their stay. As part of this alternative, three vans would be used to operate service from 11 AM to 8 PM, and 2 vans from 8 PM to 9 PM. This would cost on the order of $120,250 in marginal operating costs over status quo Trolley service. Although high productivity rates on a microtransit service of 7 trips per vehicle hour have been observed in some resort destinations (Lake Tahoe) at peak times of day, most microtransit services do not carry more than 5 trips per vehicle hour. Currently, the Fixed-Route trolley is carrying 7.1 trips per vehicle service hour. It is reasonable to assume that a daytime and evening microtransit service in Morro Bay on weekends has the potential to carry up to 6 passenger-trips per vehicle hour, which equates annual ridership of 6,200 trips per year. This results in a net increase in ridership of 2,500 over the status quo (due to the addition of evening service). However, it may take several years of operation before this level of ridership is achieved. It is reasonable to charge a higher fare for a demand response service. Assuming a $3 average fare, the operating subsidy would be $117,750.

Move Trolley Layovers to Transit Center

Currently, the Downtown Trolley takes a layover time at the Community Center, as there is a restroom available for the operator. Passengers can request to be dropped off at the City Park if they need to transfer to Routes 12 and 15; however, this is not a listed stop. One operational adjustment that could be made to improve regional connections with Routes 12 and 15 would be to add the City Park Transit Center to the Downtown Trolley Route. As the Transit Center is improved, an operator's restroom will be available. Adding the Transit Center to the Downtown Trolley route will only add 0.17 miles per loop, or the equivalent of $310 in vehicle mileage-related costs.

ALTERNATIVES PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

To evaluate the relative performance of the RTA service alternatives, each alternative's impacts on ridership, marginal operating cost, passengers carried per vehicle service hour, and marginal operating cost per passenger trip were compared. Analysis findings are summarized in Table 19 and Figures 22 through 24. Alternatives with performance that improve the status quo are highlighted in green.

- **Ridership** – The alternative with the greatest positive ridership impact is Year-round Weekend Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service (4,700 trips), followed by the Non-Summer Season Weekend Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride (3,100 trips). Later weekday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service will only add a small amount of ridership (300 trips).
- **Passenger-trips per Vehicle Hour** – In terms of productivity, adding Trolley Friday Evening Service and extending Saturday Evening until 9 PM is the most productive (6.6 trips per vehicle hour), although this is not higher than the status quo productivity of the Trolley. Productivity impacts for both weekend service options for Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride exceed status quo levels (6.5 trips per vehicle hour).
- **Marginal Operating Cost per Trip** – Implementing the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride – Two Loop option would save $10.20 per passenger-trip gained, making it the most cost-effective alternative. The weekend Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride alternative also improves status quo performance.

SERVICE ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY

The following alternatives are worth consideration for the Draft Plan:

- Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Two Loop - This option would lower operating costs by a small amount while increasing ridership. The primary benefit of this alternative is that the wait time to transfer to/from RTA Route 12 would be reduced. Roughly 20 percent of survey respondents transfer to RTA Route 12.
- Adding Trolley Friday evening service and extending existing Saturday Evening Service Until 9 PM – It is worth considering reimplementing Trolley evening service and extending it until 9 PM. This allows visitors and residents to go out to dinner or simply stay in town longer than 4:30 PM. This option performs better than the microtransit evening service.
- Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service – Although these options would increase operating costs by $68,000 to $104,000 annually, these alternatives would have the greatest impact on ridership. Weekend service was a common request for both on-board and community surveys.

Although the microtransit options could provide greater flexibility, they are not as cost-effective as the Fixed-Route and Trolley alternatives.

Table 19: Morro Bay Transit Service Alternatives Performance Analysis

	Net Impact				
	Annual Ridership	Annual Vehicle Service Hours	Annual Marginal Operating Cost [1]	Passenger-Trips per Vehicle Service Hour	Marginal Op. Cost per Passenger-Trip
Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service - Non-Summer Season 10 AM - 5 PM	3,100	476	$67,010	6.5	$21.62
Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service - Year-round 10 AM - 5 PM	4,700	728	$102,490	6.5	$21.81
Later Weekday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service (Add one run to 7:45 PM)	300	250	$35,190	1.2	$117.30
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride: Two Loop	700	0	-$7,142	--	-$10.20
Add Trolley Evening Friday and Extend Saturday Service until 9 PM	1,090	288	$42,840	3.8	$39.30
Microtransit Friday and Saturday Evening Service (5 PM to 9 PM)	860	216	$71,500	4.0	$83.14
Replace Trolley with Microtransit and Add Evening Service	1,460	1,044	$123,827	1.4	$84.81
Status Quo[(2)]					
			Fixed-Route/CAR	3.8	$36.64
			Trolley	8.2	$18.19

Note 1: Does not include fixed costs.
Note 2: Represents FY 26-27 status quo using the RTA cost model.
Alternatives shaded in green perform better than status quo.

Figure 22: Morro Bay Service Alternatives - Impact on Ridership

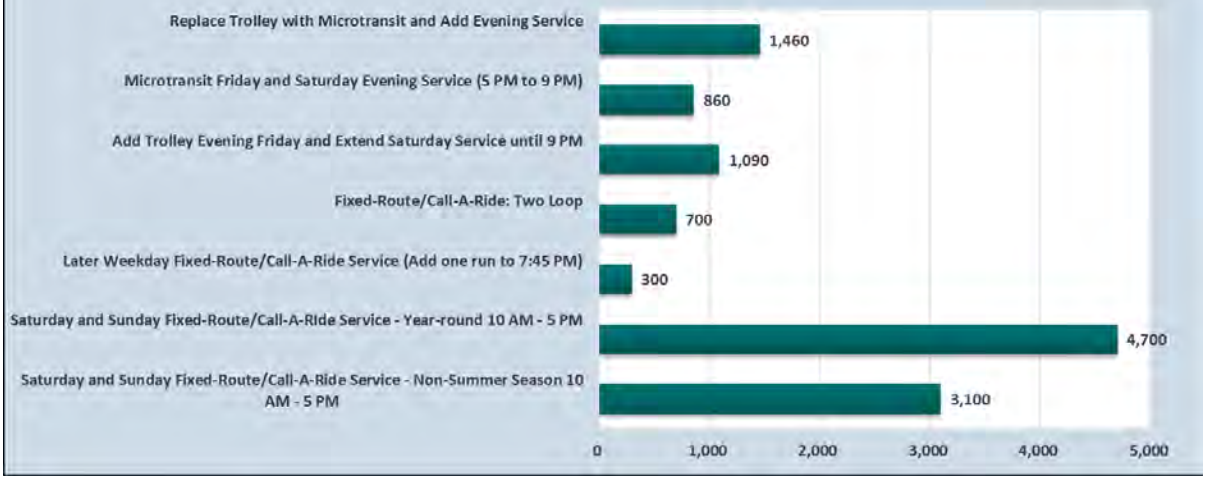


Figure 23: Morro Bay Service Alternatives - Impact on Passenger-trips per Vehicle Hour

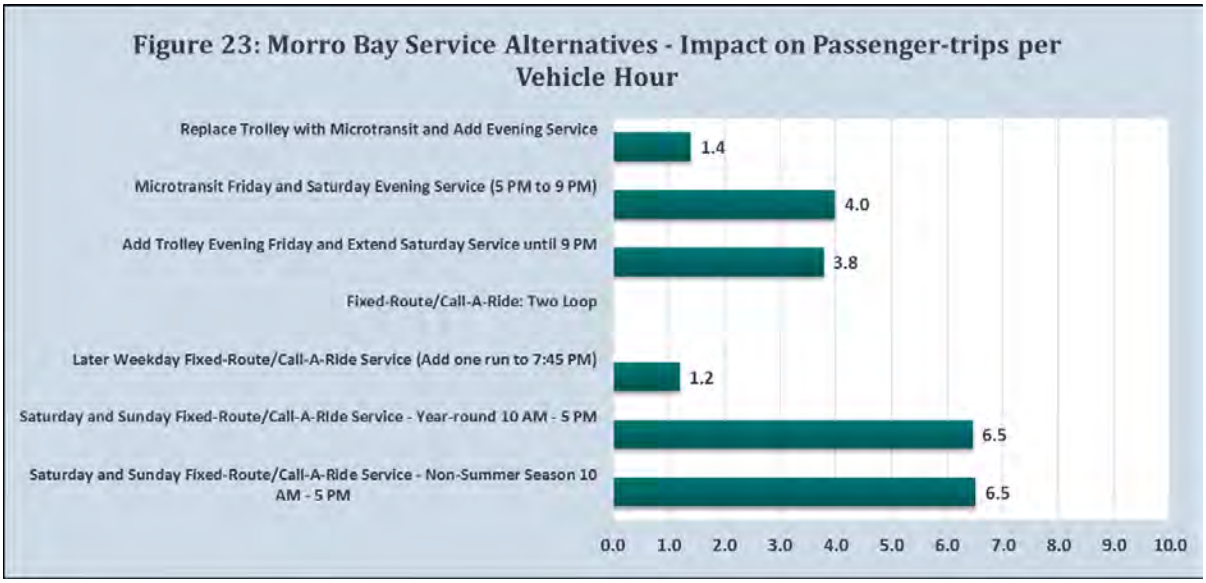
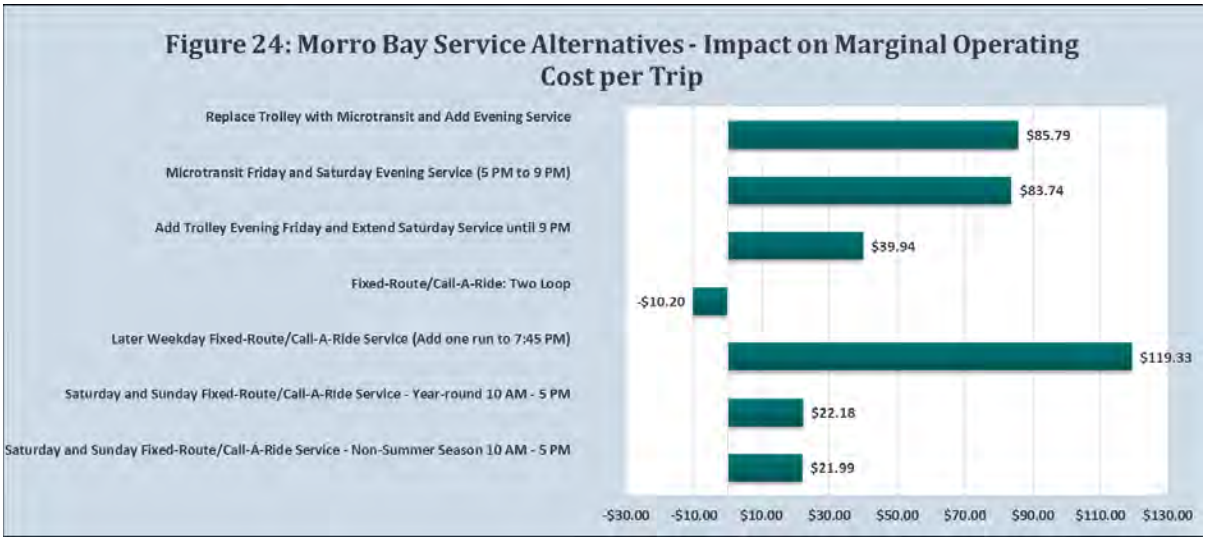


Figure 24: Morro Bay Service Alternatives - Impact on Marginal Operating Cost per Trip



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Morro Bay Waterfront Master Plan is a long-range planning document designed to guide the future development of Morro Bay's waterfront. As an update to the original 1996 plan, the future Master Plan aims to reimagine current land use, circulation, infrastructure, and design across waterfront areas, including the Embarcadero, Coleman Park, and former industrial sites like the old power plant and wastewater treatment facility. Proposed improvements include ADA-compliant pathways, upgraded restrooms, and better sidewalk connectivity at Coleman Park, along with a potential drivable bridge over Morro Creek to enhance access, though traffic concerns remain. Parking strategies such as paid parking at Morro Rock and time-limit enforcement along the Embarcadero are also under consideration.

The area will remain zoned for "Visitor Serving Commercial" and "Parks and Recreation," which could potentially increase employment and tourism opportunities in the future; however, this would likely occur outside of this current SRTP planning period. While major development north of the power plant will be limited due to vulnerability to coastal hazards and flooding, family-friendly tourism and recreation activities, such as parks, playgrounds, and RV camping, are all being considered. As the estimated completion date for the Waterfront Master Plan is November 30th, 2026, development as a result of its completion will be considered in future transit planning efforts for the area. After the Waterfront Master Plan is adopted by the City Council, it will also need to go before the Coastal Commission.

FARE ALTERNATIVES

Transit fare alternatives, such as discounted passes, free transfers, or fare capping, help make services more accessible for riders with different travel needs. Having a reliable fare collection system is equally important as it ensures revenue is accurately collected, reduces barriers for passengers, and supports smooth operations.

Implement Cal-ITP Open-Loop Contactless Fare-Payment System

Open-loop contactless fare payment allows passengers to board a bus simply using their mobile phone or credit card, and eliminates the need to search for exact change. The California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) and the California Department of General Services have collaborated to simplify the process for transit providers to implement a contactless fare-payment system. Cal-ITP has also negotiated lower-cost credit card processing fees than would be possible for individual agencies.

In 2024, SLOCOG led an effort to establish and fund an open-loop contactless fare payment system on all countywide fixed-routes using SB125 funds. This project will fund the upfront costs – including the purchase and installation of contactless payment hardware and related software – as well as fees for the first five years of operation. RTA plans to implement the contactless fare payment system on Morro Bay fixed route buses; however, there will still be the option of paying a cash fare.

Discount Fare Verification Program

When RTA passengers purchase a multi-ride pass on Token Transit or at pass outlets throughout the County, the passenger has the option to choose which fare category they fall under, general public or discount. Similarly, bus operators are instructed to avoid fare-related conflicts and generally to accept the word of cash-paying riders. RTA staff have observed general public passengers paying the discounted cash fare when there is no obvious reason the person qualifies for the discounted fare. As such, there is likely some abuse of the fare system. For MBT specifically, data for FY 2023-24 shows that

less than 1 percent of passengers paid the full cash fare. On-board survey results indicate that 55 percent of respondents were under the age of 60.

In an effort to reduce fare evasion, the RTA is separately implementing a program to distribute a discount fare verification card in conjunction with the launch of the Cal-ITP system and the re-establishment of in-person ADA eligibility verification. Passengers can sign up in person at a pre-arranged location (possibly revolving around the county at existing pass outlets) or through an online portal, which will reduce the potential burden for qualifying passengers who may face mobility challenges.

Token Transit and the Cal-ITP system allow agencies to restrict the ability of users to purchase discounted fares by providing a "good list" of passengers who qualify for discounted fares, and persons buying a discounted pass at a pass outlet would be required to show their eligibility card during purchase. Qualified applicants could submit their documentation via an online portal or in person at an office to be added to the "good list".

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Chapter 7
CAPITAL ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Capital investments include funding allocated for physical components of the transit system, such as vehicles, facilities, and passenger amenities. Capital investments are necessary to provide safe, dependable, and comfortable services, yet they also require substantial planning and funding on the part of the transit agency. While there is always a degree of uncertainty when planning capital improvements, as there may be unanticipated needs or product prices may change, it is still helpful to identify known capital needs to assist transit staff with securing funding. This chapter presents capital projects for MBT over the next five years.

TRANSIT VEHICLES

Vehicle Replacement Needs

Transit vehicles must be regularly replaced to maintain a safe and reliable fleet. As the vehicle procurement process can take multiple years, transit agencies must identify their vehicle needs well in advance. Additionally, the State of California's (CA) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation will begin impacting transit vehicle procurement in 2026, at which point 25 percent of small transit agency fleet bus purchases will be required to be ZEBs. By 2029, this purchasing requirement will increase to 100 percent. By 2040, all vehicles in the fleet will need to be ZEBs. To meet these standards, transit agencies can purchase either battery-electric buses (BEBs) or fuel-cell hydrogen electric buses (FCEBs). It should be noted that vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of less than 14,000 pounds are not subject to the ICT rule. A sample of boarding and alighting data shows that peak passenger load on MBT is around 10 passengers. Therefore, it may be possible to use small diesel vans to operate Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride while not violating the ICT rule.

ZEB Considerations

Currently, ZEBs are more expensive than gas or diesel vehicles, meaning MBT/RTA will need to secure additional funding to meet local match requirements for capital grants. While ZEBs are more expensive at this point, the ZEB market is constantly changing as new models are released and older models are improved, making it hard to predict future pricing. The MBT vehicle replacement schedule presented below is subject to change as new ZEB technologies become available and costs stabilize.

Vehicle Replacement Schedule

MBT's active fleet was acquired by RTA when they began operating the service in June 2025. A new medium-duty Allstar 14.2 passenger cutaway was delivered in 2025, which will replace the older El Dorado cutaway. As such, RTA will not need to replace vehicles used for the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride during this five-year planning period. The two Trolleys used for primary service are not due for replacement until 2032 and 2035. The next round of vehicle replacement will need to be ZEV, unless ICT regulations change.

TRANSIT FACILITIES

Transit facilities refer to the sites and infrastructure that directly support administrative, operations, and maintenance functions. This section discusses capital improvements to MBT facilities.

MBT Transit Center

MBT Transit Center is located at the City Park on Harbor Street and is a transfer point for RTA Routes 12 and 15, and the MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service. In 2023, the site was updated, including upgraded shelters, ADA-compliant bench seating, ADA upgrades to sidewalks and curbs, fencing, decorative safety lighting, a bike rack, painted waste bins, and a route map. The two new bus shelters and benches are designed to meet ADA accessibility standards. As part of RTA's electrification program, opportunity chargers will be installed at the transfer point at Morro Bay City Park. This could be used for MBT as well as Routes 12 and 15. To be consistent with other transfer points in the RTA system and to provide convenience to passengers, an LED "Next Bus" sign should be installed at the Transit Center.

Bus Stop Improvements

For most passengers, bus stop amenities are important to comfort and perception of public transit. A few survey respondents indicated a desire for more visible bus stop signs which provide information such as a schedule. RTA employs the Transit Tracker app, which provides passengers with real-time location of buses. RTA recently installed bus schedules and Transit Tracker signs at all MBT bus stops. However, the existing bus stop signs show the old MBT phone number (which is forwarded to RTA). In order to provide the most accurate information, these bus stop signs should be replaced with RTA bus stop signs over the long term.

Chapter 8
MORRO BAY TRANSIT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following plan presents service enhancements and a financial plan to enhance public transit services in Morro Bay, within the constraints of realistic funding projections. This chapter presents the individual plan elements in brief, based on the substantial discussions presented in previous chapters; the reader is encouraged to refer to previous chapters for additional background on the plan elements.

The service plan elements recommended in this short-range transit plan will increase ridership by 3,200 or 23 percent over the base case scenario. The implementation of all plan elements will increase MBT's annual operating budget by 11 percent or $68,800 by the end of the planning period.

PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

- Forecasts of annual operating and administrative costs are presented in Table 20. "Base case" or "status quo" operating and administrative cost forecasts were estimated based on the MBT 2026-27 Proposed Budget. An annual inflation escalator of three percent was then applied to FY 2026-27 costs to project operating costs for each year of the planning period.
- Ridership and associated fare revenue for each SRTP element were estimated as shown in Tables 21 and 22. The "base case" reflects FY 2024-25 projected service levels. Ridership is assumed to increase by 1 percent annually throughout the planning period.

SERVICE PLAN

Operating costs, ridership, and fare revenue estimates for service plan elements for MBT are shown in Tables 20, 21, and 22 and described below. The reader is encouraged to review Chapter 4 for more detailed information on how each plan element was developed. Figure 25 presents the two plan elements graphically.

Table 20: Morro Bay Transit Short Range Transit Development Plan Operating Costs

Plan Element	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
Base Case Operating Cost [(1)]					
Marginal Systemwide Operating Costs	$456,650	$470,300	$484,500	$499,000	$514,000
Fixed Costs	$90,450	$93,200	$96,000	$98,800	$101,800
Total	$547,100	$563,500	$580,500	$597,800	$615,800
Recommended Service Plan					
Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service - Non-Summer Season 10 AM - 5 PM	$67,000	$69,000	$71,100	$73,200	$75,400
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride: Two Loop	-$7,100	-$7,300	-$7,500	-$7,800	-$8,000
Total Marginal Service Plan Costs	$59,900	$61,700	$63,600	$65,400	$67,400

Note 1: FY 2025-26 RTA Budget - Proposed FY 26-27"

Table 21: Morro Bay Transit SRTP Estimated Annual Ridership

Plan Element	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
Base Case [1]					
Fixed-Route/ Call-A-Ride	11,700	11,800	11,900	12,100	12,200
Trolley	4,200	4,200	4,300	4,300	4,400
Total	**15,900**	**16,000**	**16,200**	**16,400**	**16,600**
Service Plan Elements [2]					
Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service - Non-Summer Season 10 AM - 5 PM	3,100	3,100	3,200	3,200	3,200
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride: Two Loop	700	710	710	720	730
Total	**3,800**	**3,810**	**3,910**	**3,920**	**3,930**

Note 1: Passenger fares escalated at projected ridership increase of 2% annually through FY 2027-28 to account for small population increase and rebound from the pandemic. Passenger fares and ridership escalated by 1% annually for the remainder of the planning period.

Note 2: Assumes service changes begin in July 2026.

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Table 22: Morro Bay Transit SRTP Estimated Annual Farebox Revenues

Plan Element	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
Base Case [1]					
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride	$11,800	$11,900	$12,100	$12,000	$12,000
Trolley	$4,000	$4,000	$4,100	$4,100	$4,200
Total	**$15,800**	**$15,900**	**$16,200**	**$16,100**	**$16,200**
Service Plan Elements [2]					
Saturday and Sunday Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service - Non-Summer Season 10 AM - 5 PM	$3,100	$3,100	$3,200	$3,200	$3,200
Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride: Two Loop	$700	$710	$710	$720	$730
Total	**$3,800**	**$3,810**	**$3,910**	**$3,920**	**$3,930**

Note 1: Passenger fares escalated at projected ridership increase of 2% annually through FY 2027-28 to account for small population increase and rebound from the pandemic. Passenger fares and ridership escalated by 1% annually for the remainder of the planning period.

Note 2: Assumes service changes begin in July 2026.

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Figure 25
Morro Bay Transit Plan

Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Two Loop Route - Improve Connections with RTA Routes 12 and 15

According to on-board passenger surveys of MBT Fixed-Route, roughly 20 percent of survey respondents transferred to/ from RTA Route 12, which travels between San Luis Obispo and Los Osos via Morro Bay. RTA Route 12 also serves the Blue Heron Mobile Home Park and Bay Pines Travel Trailer Park. As recommended in the previous SRTP, realigning the Morro Bay Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride to have two loops beginning and ending at the Morro Bay City Park Transit Center will allow for shorter transfer times between MBT and RTA Route 12 in both directions.

The Two Loop Route will continue to use one bus operating on hourly headways (Figure 25). This will result in a small reduction in vehicle miles (as the south loop must be shortened to maintain on-time performance) and no increase in vehicle hours. The Two-Loop Route will save around $7,000 in annual operating costs. It is estimated that improved transfers will increase ridership by around 3 passenger-trips per day, or 700 additional passenger-trips per year. It is recommended that this plan element be implemented in FY 2026-27.

Provide Weekend Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Service: Non-Summer Season (10:00 AM to 5:00 PM)

The on-board surveys indicated the most popular service request from current passengers is weekend (Saturday and Sunday) Fixed-Route/Call-a-Ride service. While the Downtown and North Trolleys operate on weekends during the summer months (June through October), there is no weekend Fixed-Route service on weekends, nor is there any weekend service during the non-summer months. The alternatives analysis demonstrated that weekend fixed-route service exceeded performance indicators and will improve the productivity and cost efficiency of MBT. As such, it is recommended that the City Council consider operating Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service during the non-summer months as a two-year pilot program.

Under this plan element, the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service would operate between the hours of 10 AM and 5 PM on both Saturday and Sunday for the weekends that the Trolley does not operate (October to June). This equates to 68 additional days of service for an estimated net increase in annual operating costs of $68,100. Weekend service would be similar to weekday service and allow for timed connections with Routes 12 and 15. It is estimated that weekend Fixed-Route service would increase ridership by roughly 3,100 trips annually, once the service meets its full ridership potential.

As a pilot service, a performance monitoring program should be developed. Typically, it can take 2 to 3 years for a new transit service to reach its full ridership potential. Therefore, if weekend service does not reach at least 50 percent of the projected ridership increase within the first year of service, the City Council should reconsider the pilot program. If, after 2 years, weekend service does not come within 90 percent of the ridership projections in Table 21, the City Council should again reconsider the cost effectiveness of weekend service.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Trolley Evening Service

In recent years, visitor-oriented evening Trolley service to transport visitors from their lodging to restaurants in town has been successful in other areas. The Avila Beach Trolley is a good example. The

option of Friday and Saturday evening Trolley service during the summer months was explored in the Alternatives Chapter. Per the analysis, evening Trolley service is anticipated to increase ridership by 1,090 passenger-trips annually and cost around $43,540 in operating costs. Although this does not meet performance standards, the service could become cost-effective if Morro Bay business owners were willing to contribute to the service.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Transit services require ongoing capital investment in facilities and vehicles. Capital investments in both vehicles and passenger facilities can attract additional riders while improving the quality of service and safety of existing riders. Of note, California's Innovative Clean Transit regulation will go into effect during the plan period, requiring the RTA to transition to zero-emission buses (ZEBs).

Fleet Replacement

Transit vehicles must be regularly replaced to maintain a safe and reliable fleet. As of June 2025, MBT's active fleet was acquired by RTA. A new medium-duty Allstar 14.2 passenger cutaway was delivered in 2025, which will replace the older El Dorado cutaway. As such, RTA will not need to replace vehicles used for the Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride during this five-year planning period. The two Trolleys used for primary service are not due for replacement until 2032 and 2035. The next round of vehicle replacement will need to be ZEV, unless ICT regulations change.

Morro Bay Transit Center

The Morro Bay Transit Center is located at the City Park on Harbor Street and is a transfer point for RTA Routes 12 and 15, and the MBT Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride service. As part of RTA's electrification program, opportunity chargers will be installed at the transfer point at Morro Bay City Park. This could be used for MBT as well as Routes 12 and 15. To be consistent with other transfer points in the RTA system and to provide convenience to passengers, an LED "Next Bus" sign should be installed at the Transit Center. Capital revenue to fund these improvements was set aside in FY 2025-26 and therefore not reflected in this document's financial plan.

Cal-ITP Open-Loop Contactless Fare-Capping System

During this planning period, SB 125 funds allocated through SLOCOG will be used to implement contactless fare-payment technology as an option for payment on MBT vehicles. While new contactless fare payment technology will be implemented, paying for fares in cash will still be an option for passengers.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Table 23 presents the five-year financial plan for MBT. Operating costs were increased at a rate of 3 percent annually to reflect inflation. As discussed in previous chapters, MBT's primary revenue source is state TDA funds (LTF and STA). In order to fund this short-range transit plan, FTA 5311 funds, now allocated to RTA, could be requested by the City of Morro Bay for rural transit services. As FTA funds can now be used as a local match to meet farebox ratio requirements, this would ensure that MBT meets farebox ratio requirements.

Additionally, the financial plan assumes that the amount of LTF funds used for transit purposes would increase over the five-year planning period. Historically, the City has directed all LTF funds to transit

purposes with occasional allocations to streets and roads. Any future LTF funds not used for transit purposes could be used for street and road purposes. Under this plan, weekend service and realignment to a Two-Loop service are funded for the next five years. As no major capital purchases are required until 2032, sufficient capital revenue will be available for the plan period for the replacement of maintenance equipment and bus stop improvements, as needed.

Table 23: Morro Bay Transit Short Range Transit Development Plan Financial Plan

	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
Operating Revenues					
TDA LTF Allocation [1]	$285,820	$499,660	$517,060	$535,150	$553,840
Passenger Fares Base Case[2]	$15,800	$15,900	$16,200	$16,100	$16,200
State Transit Assistance (STA) Including SB 1[3]	$68,730	$68,730	$68,730	$68,730	$68,730
Federal Transit ADM (FTA) (Section 5311) - Operating [4]	$36,000	$37,100	$38,200	$39,300	$40,500
Subtotal	*$406,350*	*$621,390*	*$640,190*	*$659,280*	*$679,270*
Fund Balance	$196,850	$0	$0	$0	$0
Total Operating Revenue	**$603,200**	**$621,390**	**$640,190**	**$659,280**	**$679,270**
Status Quo Operating Expenditures	$547,100	$563,500	$580,500	$597,800	$615,800
SRTP Plan Elements Operating Costs	$59,900	$61,700	$63,600	$65,400	$67,400
SRTP Plan Element Fare Revenue	$3,800	$3,810	$3,910	$3,920	$3,930
Balance	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*
Capital Revenues					
State Transit Assistance (STA) Including SB 1[3]	$4,050	$4,050	$4,050	$4,050	$4,050
FTA 5307 (Capital)[3] Support Vehicle and Maintenance Equip.	$2,750	$2,800	$2,900	$3,000	$3,100
State of Good Repair[2]	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Capital Fund Balance	$3,830	$3,900	$4,100	$4,200	$4,300
Total Capital Recurring Revenue	**$10,630**	**$10,750**	**$11,050**	**$11,250**	**$11,450**
Capital Expenses					
Vehicle Maintenance Equipment and Bus Stop Improvements	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000
Total Capital Expenses	**$3,000**	**$3,000**	**$3,000**	**$3,000**	**$3,000**
Balance	$7,630	$7,750	$8,050	$8,250	$8,450

Note 1: TDA LTF revenue based on budgeted need for FY26-27 . LTF revenue available for transit operations varies each year and is dependent on the level of funding from other sources.

Note 2: Passenger fares escalated at projected ridership increase of 2% annually through FY 2027-28 to account for small population increase and rebound from the pandemic. Passenger fares and ridership escalated by 1% annually for the remainder of the planning period.

Note 3: STA revenue growth based on SLOCOG projections of flat growth.

Note 4: Based on amount need to obtain a 10% farebox ratio with FTA funds as local support.

Appendix A
DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS

DETAILED DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS

A large proportion of transit riders belong to what is known as the transit-dependent population. The following demographic maps provide additional context about where transit-dependent persons live in Morro Bay, building on the discussion presented in Chapter Two of this Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP). The subpopulations reviewed in this Appendix include:

- **Figure A-1,** Youths under 18 years of age – most children are unable to drive or do not have a parent/guardian to give them a ride, yet still have commitments outside of the home. Those who can drive may not have a car available.
- **Figure A-2,** Senior population ages 65 and older – senior adults need to travel to attend medical appointments, go grocery shopping, or do other errands, but many are either not comfortable driving or not able to drive anymore.
- **Figure A-3,** Individuals with a disability – disabled persons may be unable to drive due to medical concerns.
- **Figure A-4,** The population living below the poverty level – there are many financial barriers preventing people from owning a private vehicle. The low-income population is defined by factors such as household income and the number of dependent children.
- **Figure A-5,** Households without a vehicle available – public transit may be the best alternative for traveling longer distances for those who live in homes without vehicles.

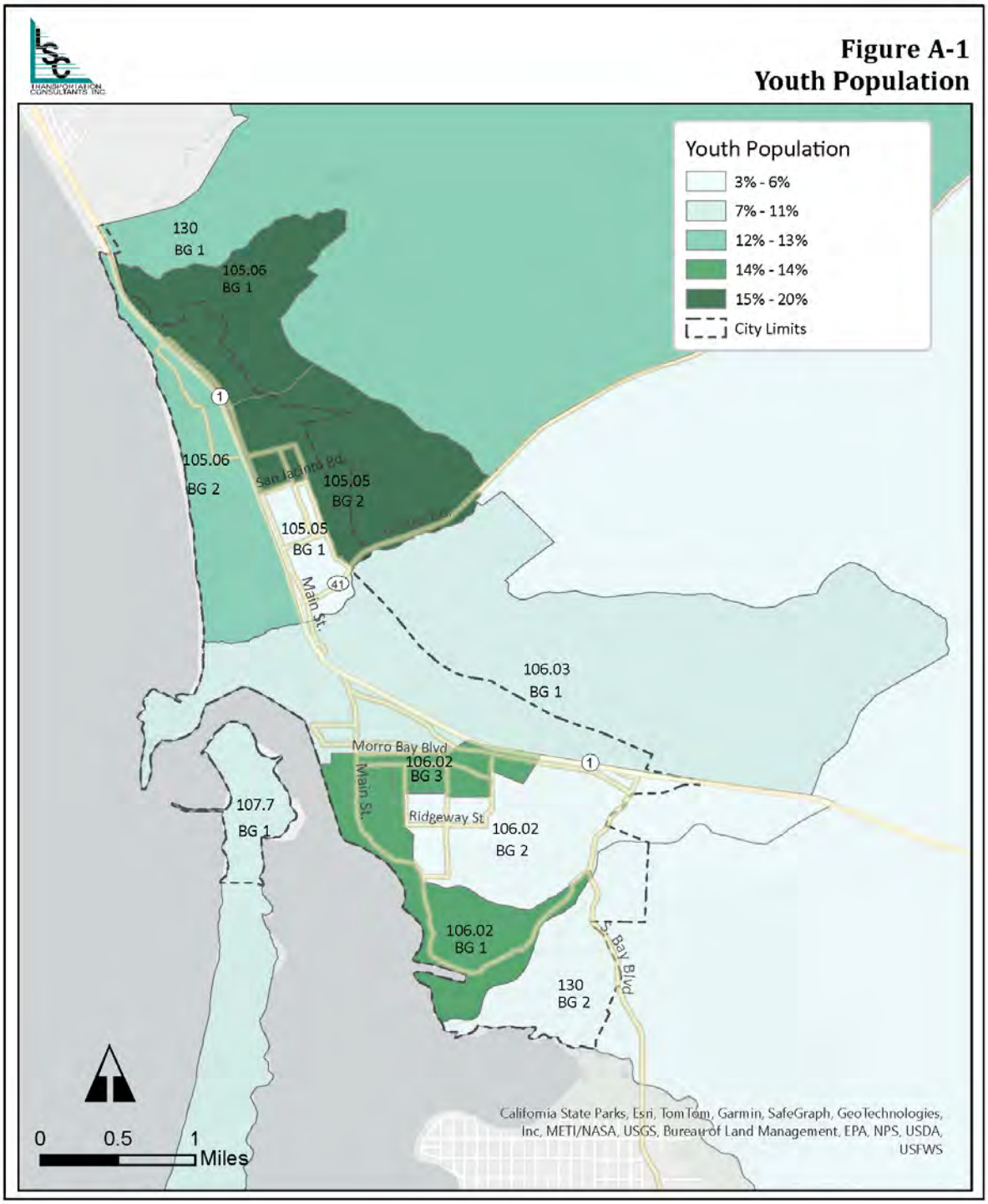


Figure A-1
Youth Population
Youth Population
3% - 6%
7% - 11%
12% - 13%
14% - 14%
15% - 20%
City Limits
130
BG 1
105.06
BG 1
105.06
BG 2
105.05
BG 2
105.05
BG 1
106.03
BG 1
106.02
BG 3
106.02
BG 2
106.02
BG 1
107.7
BG 1
130
BG 2
Main St.
Morro Bay Blvd
Ridgeway St
S. Bay Blvd
0
0.5
1
Miles
California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

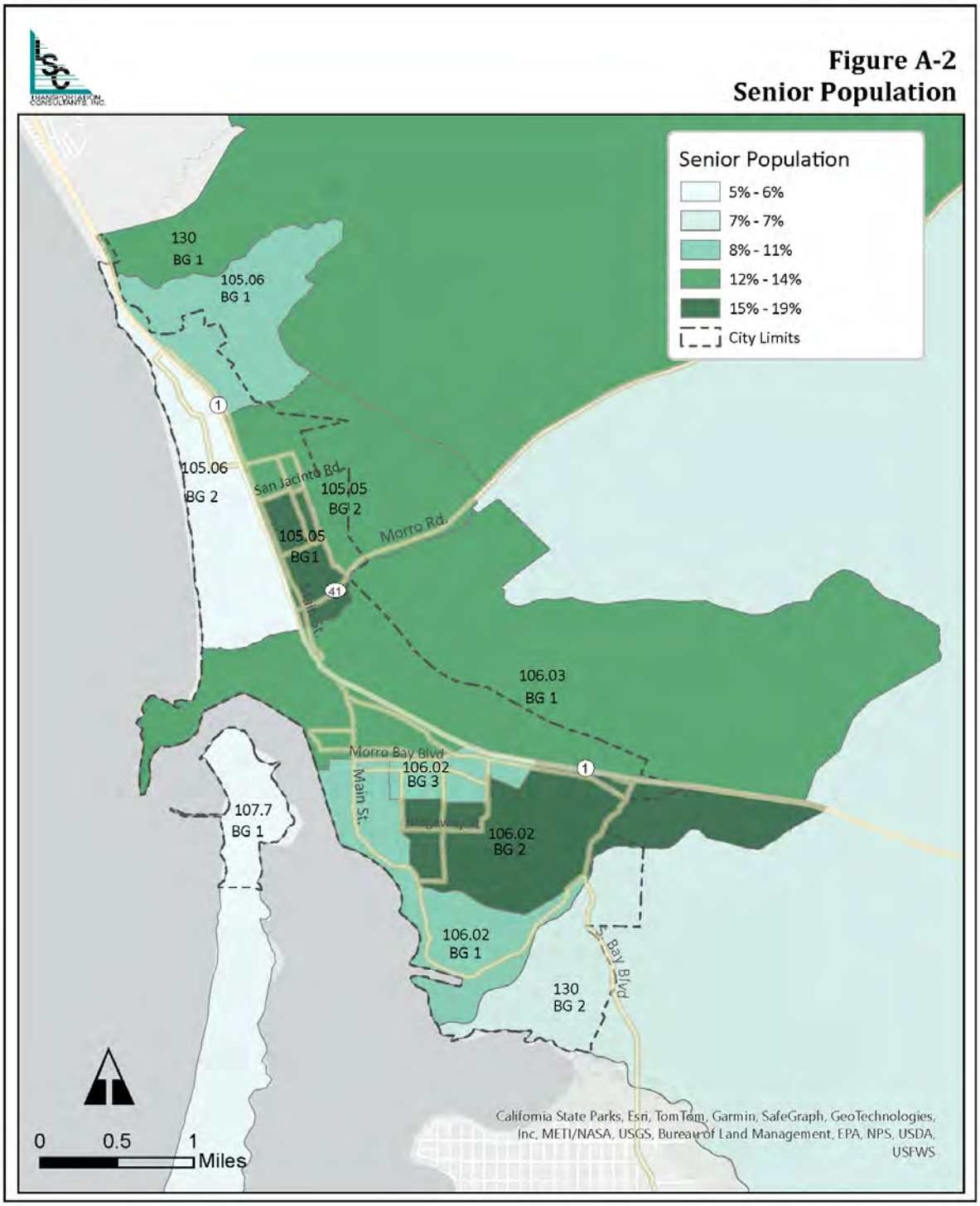


Figure A-2
Senior Population
Senior Population
5% - 6%
7% - 7%
8% - 11%
12% - 14%
15% - 19%
City Limits
130
BG 1
105.06
BG 1
105.06
BG 2
San Jacinto Rd.
105.05
BG 2
105.05
BG1
Morro Rd.
106.03
BG 1
Morro Bay Blvd
106.02
BG 3
Main St.
107.7
BG 1
106.02
BG 2
106.02
BG 1
Bay Blvd
130
BG 2
0
0.5
1
Miles
California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

Figure A-3
Population with a Disability

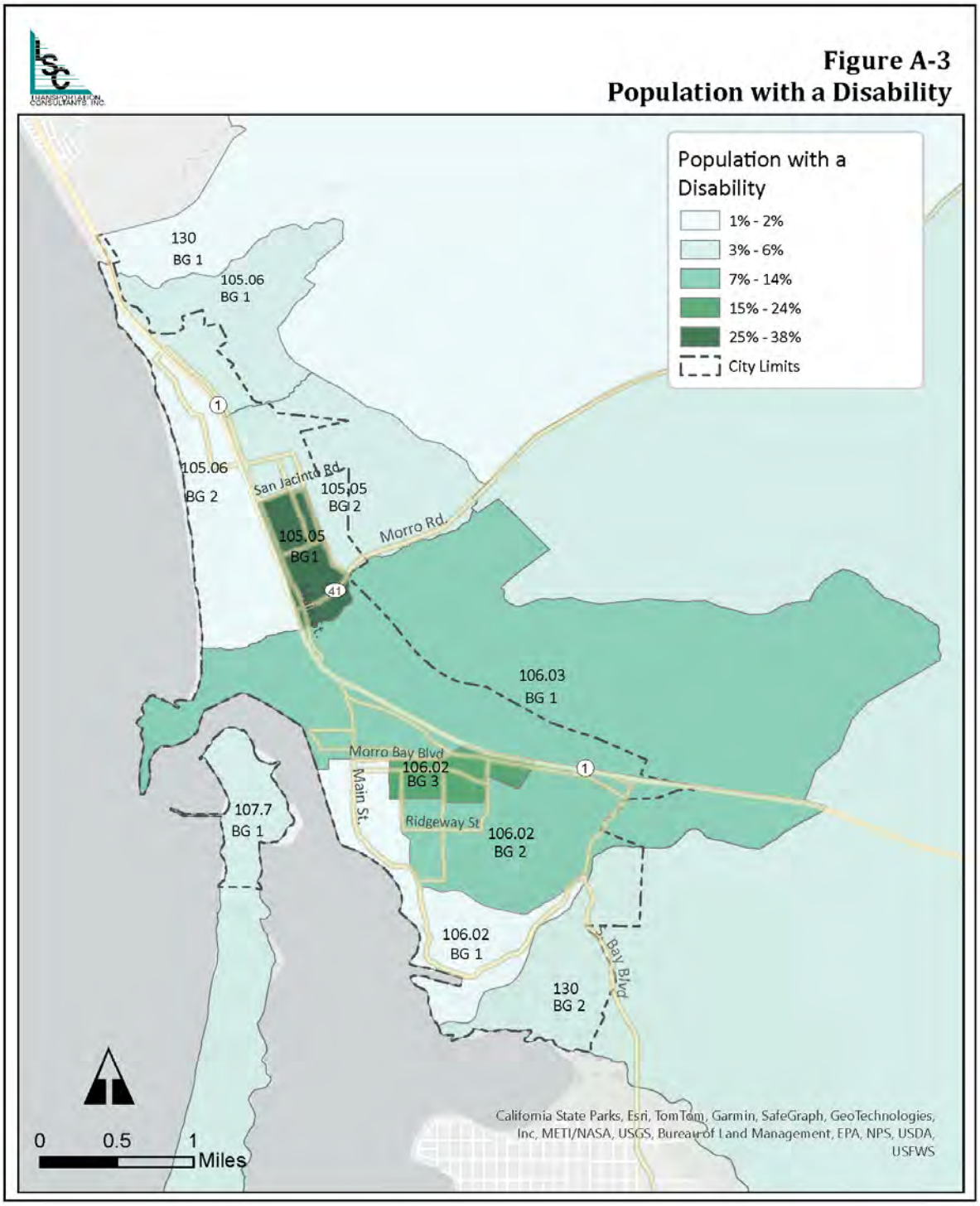


Figure A-4
Population with Low Income

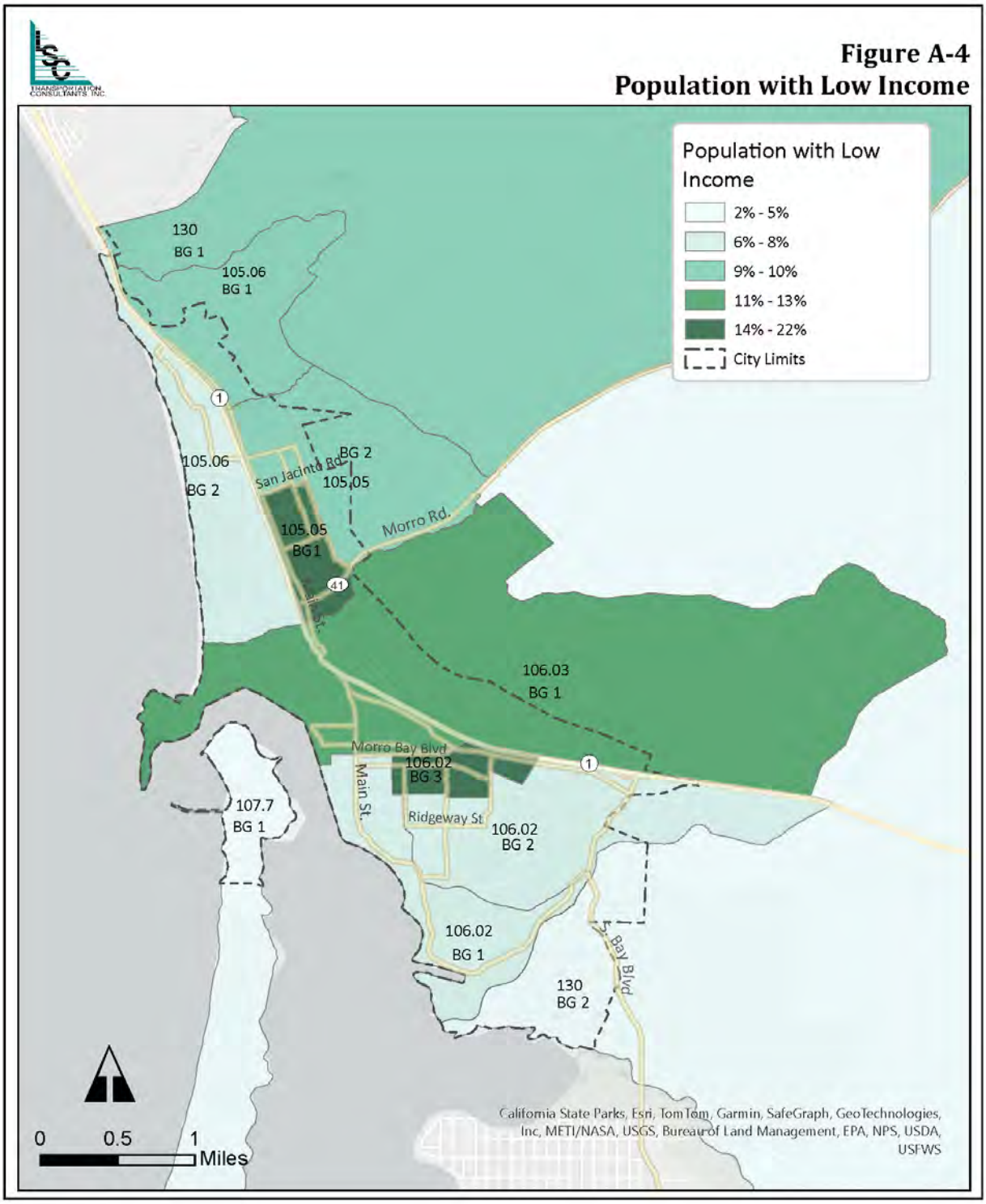
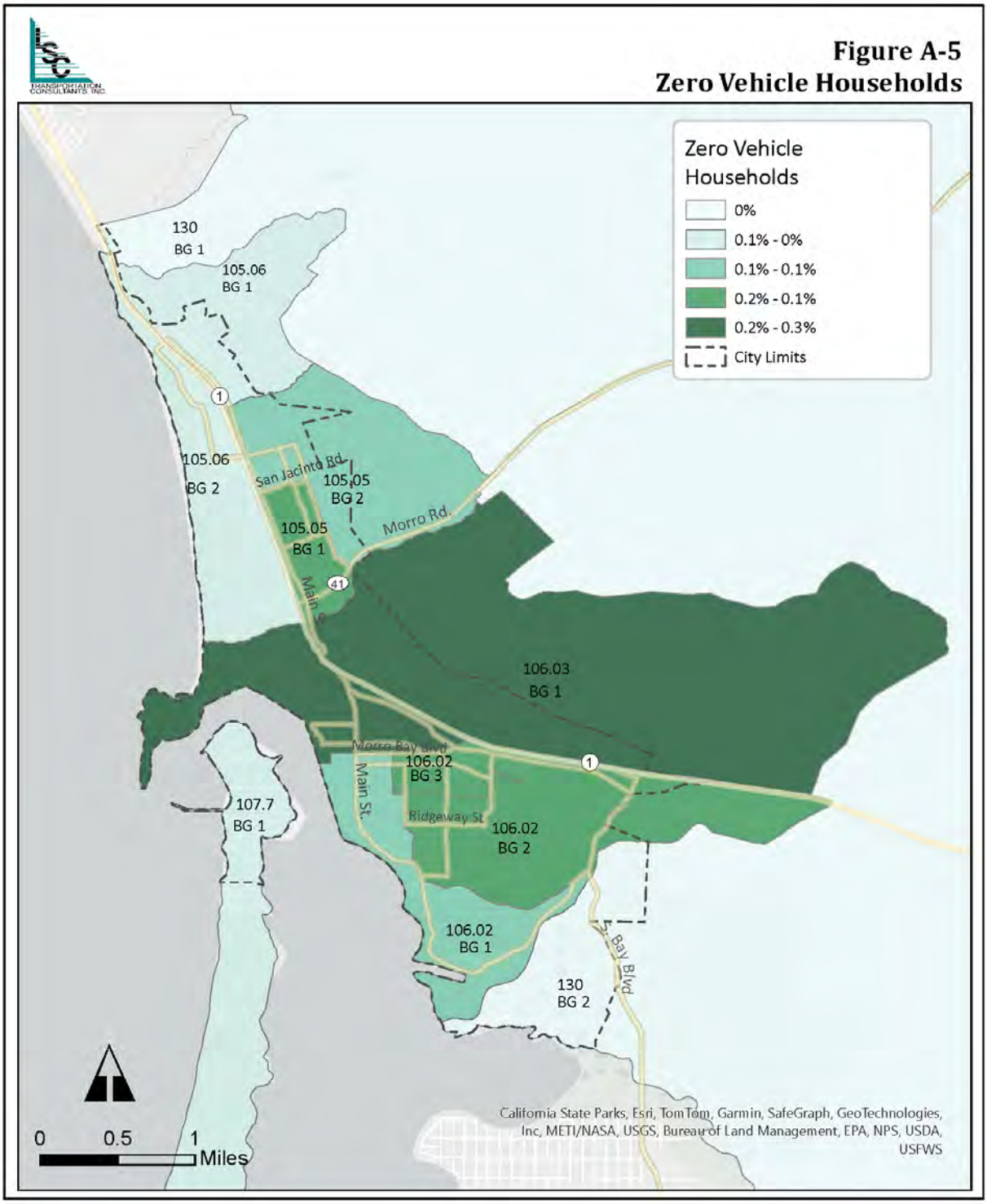


Figure A-5
Zero Vehicle Households



Appendix B

RECENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

This appendix summarizes recent transportation plans relevant to either Morro Bay Transit (MBT) or San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLO RTA), including both countywide studies as well as agency-specific reports. The recommendations presented in the agencies' respective Short Range Transit Plans (SRTPs) will support and eventually further the objectives of the studies discussed.

CITY OF MORRO BAY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Morro Bay Transit Hub (2019)

This study was commissioned by Morro Bay Transit to assess inadequacies at Morro Bay City Park's Transit Hub. The study assessed the advantages and disadvantages of three sites, including the City Park, and two new sites that could serve as a Transit Hub. No one site was recommended by the study, as all were found to be viable to serve as the location of the Transit Hub. The study recommended the following for the Transit Hub:

- **Curb Space:** 173 linear feet to accommodate four buses, including bike racks and circulation space.
- **Wheelchair Loading/Unloading:** Minimum 8' x 5' areas for wheelchair lifts, with an 8' wide sidewalk along bus bays.
- **Passenger Waiting Area:** 375 square feet of covered space for 30 passengers, with seating for 15.
- **Ticket Vending Machine Space:** Allocate space for a machine.
- **Outdoor Bench Seating:** Seating for at least 15 persons.
- **Bike Racks:** Capacity for four bikes, no bike lockers needed, possible bike tool station.
- **Employee Break Area:** 160 square feet, including an ADA-standard restroom and seating area.
- **Power and Internet:** 110V power and internet for real-time displays.
- **Electric Bus Charging:** Conduit and pedestal for future Battery Electric Bus (BEB) charging.
- **Public Art Space:** 100 sq. ft. for a potential sculpture.
- **Storage Closet:** 6' x 10' closet for maintenance supplies and tools.

Morro Bay Short Range Transit Plan (2019)

A Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) serves as a strategic guide for public transportation services over a 5- to 10-year period. It evaluates current transit operations, identifies service gaps and rider needs, and outlines improvements to routes, schedules, and infrastructure to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and ridership. MBT updated its SRTP in 2019 and adopted in February 2020, just one month before the Covid-19 Pandemic. As such, many of the following recommendations were not implemented due to a temporary shutdown of services. Highlights of the service, capital, and financial plan include:

- **Service Plan:**
    - Revise the Fixed Route to a two-loop service (40-minute and 20-minute loops), enhancing connections. Serve the Natural History Museum "on-demand" to

accommodate campers and improve bus turnaround, with trial implementation to ensure schedule sustainability.
    - Extend weekday and Saturday Fixed Route/CAR service by one hour (weekdays to 7:45 PM, Saturdays to 5:25 PM) based on passenger requests.
    - Operate the Trolley one hour earlier on Saturdays (starting at 10 AM) to align with early-opening businesses in the waterfront and downtown areas.

- **Capital Plan:**
    - Vehicles: Replace one fixed route CAR vehicle and two trolleys, costing $546,450.
    - Automatic Vehicle Location: Add to future bus purchases at $18,180.
    - Two-Way Radios: Install radios on vehicles for better communication with RTA drivers, costing $6,000.
    - Bus Stop Improvements: Allocate $10,930 for upgrading high-use flag stops to regular stops.
    - Transit Hub: Evaluate and reconstruct the Transit Hub at Morro Bay City Park, estimated at $553,200, with grant funding to be sought.

- **Financial Plan:**
    - Operating Costs: Increase by $11,230 to $12,390 per year (3.5 percent), rising from $323,990 in 2019-20 to $357,620 in 2023-24 with inflation.
    - Vehicle Purchases: Estimated total cost of $546,450 over five years.
    - Additional Capital: $35,110 for other capital needs.
    - Transit Hub: Estimated cost of $553,200 for reconstruction.

- **Management Plan and Marketing Strategies:**
    - Adopt Updated Goals & Performance Measures: Align goals, objectives, and standards with current operations while encouraging service improvements.
    - Improve Customer Service: Enhance communication with RTA via two-way radios and extend customer service hours, potentially using RTA for after-hours calls.
    - Eliminate Flag Stops: Convert frequently used flag stops to regular stops for better visibility, safety, and reduced driver-passenger conflicts.
    - Establish Consistent Trolley Schedules: Create reliable trolley schedules, balancing tourist flexibility with consistent service.
    - Offer Local MBT Monthly Pass: Introduce a $47 monthly pass ($23.50 for discounts), projected to generate $3,700 in additional fare revenue annually.

Morro Bay Transit Triennial Performance Audit (FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24)

In accordance with the California Public Utilities Code, all recipients of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding are required to undergo an independent performance audit every three years. The most recent Triennial Performance Audits (TPA) for Morro Bay Transit were completed in 2024 and covered the fiscal years 2021-22 through 2023-24. The Morro Bay Transit TPA resulted in one recommendation

to ensure that a formal set of post-consolidation performance standard metrics for Morro Bay transit services are developed as part of the expanded Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) update.

Plan Morro Bay - Circulation Element (2021)

The Circulation Element guides how people and goods move throughout Morro Bay, supporting the city's vitality, sustainability, and economy by promoting safe, efficient, and accessible travel for all users, whether by vehicle, walking, biking, or transit. Required by California Government Code Section 65302(b) and aligned with the Coastal Act, it outlines a regionally connected, multimodal transportation network that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled while ensuring coastal access. The element includes an overview of the existing transportation system, parking in the coastal zone, infrastructure diagrams, and addresses key transportation issues along with goals and policies to improve mobility for residents and visitors alike.

Goal LU-1: The community form of Morro Bay reflects its vision and values, promoting a strong economy and high quality of life.

- **POLICY LU-1.5:** Senior Living. Encourage the development of housing designed for universal access and senior housing that is accessible to public transit, health and community facilities, and services.
    - **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION LU-5:** Continue to implement the North Main Street Specific Plan through the actions in this plan and the actions in the specific plan.

Goal LU-8: Morro Bay's downtown and waterfront areas are active and welcoming locations for shopping, recreation, public access, visitor-serving needs, and coastal services.

- **POLICY LU-8-5:** Wayfinding. Design and install comprehensive wayfinding signage along the Embarcadero that addresses all modes of travel, including transit, trucks, bicycles, and cars. Excessive signs and other visually intrusive landscape features shall be avoided.
- **POLICY LU-8-16:** Multimodal Access. Emphasize access for public transit and active transportation downtown and along the waterfront.
    - **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION CD-2:** Develop citywide design guidelines with a focus on certain character areas. The guidelines for each character area should be sensitive to the design objectives and unique characteristics of each area. Those character areas include Downtown, the Embarcadero, North Morro Bay, Cloisters, North Embarcadero, and Highway 1 Commercial. Considerations for the guidelines will include allowing sufficient flexibility, use types generally allowed, building size and massing, and allowing for eclectic design features. Design standards should address senior housing that is accessible to public transit, health, and community facilities and services.

Goal ED-1: A strong, resilient local economy.

- **POLICY ED-1.10:** Prioritize Access. Situate new non-residential development in easily accessible areas. Ensure that buildings can be reached by walking, biking, and public transit.

- **POLICY CIR-1.5:** Regional Transit. Coordinate with the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority to ensure local transit connects smoothly with regional transit and possible future route and schedule expansions.
- **POLICY CIR-1.6:** Local Transit Improvement. Continue to improve the local Morro Bay Transit Deviated Fixed Route and Call-A-Ride services and ensure connections to regional transit and active transportation facilities.
    - **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION CIR-3:** Prioritize projects in the CIP that improve local and regional connectivity and mobility by increasing access and connecting to existing systems, including transit, sidewalks, bike lanes, and roadways.
    - **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION CIR-4:** Update the City's development impact fee program to provide funding for future circulation improvements, including pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit facilities and amenities. Also, consider other local financing options such as an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD).
    - **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION CIR-6:** Designate a representative to attend locally relevant meetings held by San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority, Caltrans, and other regional agencies to represent the interests of Morro Bay.

Goal CIR-2: Morro Bay is a pleasant and safe place to walk and bike.

- **POLICY CIR-2.1: OAL CIR-2:** Morro Bay is a pleasant and safe place to walk and bike. Compact Development. Support mixed-use, compact-style, and other land use development patterns within existing developed areas so as to facilitate easy active transportation and transit use. (See also Policies LU-3.1, LU-3.3, LU-3.4, and LU-3.7.)
- **POLICY CIR-2.6:** Destination Facilities: Require and place access areas and facilities for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit travel in front of major destinations, such as shopping centers, parks, and schools. Facilities may include any or a combination of the following: designated passenger drop-off and pickup zones, benches, lighting, secure bike parking, shelters, and street trees. (See also Policies LU-2.3 and PS-2.1.)
    - **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION CIR-13:** Design and install comprehensive wayfinding signage in key locations of the city that address all modes of travel, including transit, trucks, bicycles, and cars. Excessive signs and other visually intrusive landscape features shall be avoided.

GOAL CIR-4: Morro Bay has convenient parking that enables access to the downtown and waterfront areas and the coast while enhancing the city's character.

- **POLICY CIR-4.1:** Adequate Parking Required. Eliminate minimum parking requirements when and where appropriate to promote walkable neighborhoods and transit, and bicycle use, and establish maximum parking standards. In all cases, a finding shall be made that the proposed development can be served by adequate parking either on-site, off-site in a private parking lot, or off-site in a public parking lot provided the applicant has paid for that number of parking spaces via an in-lieu fee to the City (see also Policy CIR-4.3): In all cases, parking shall be

provided in a manner that does not adversely impact the public's ability to park, unless a determination is made that existing parking in the area is sufficient

- **POLICY CIR-4.7:** Alternative Options. Require or establish EV charging stations, bike sharing, and park and ride locations throughout Morro Bay and in particular, close to transit and amenities.

GOAL C-3: Air quality in Morro Bay continues to improve through local actions and interagency cooperation.

- **POLICY C-3.7:** Park and Ride. Support the future development of park and ride lots in Morro Bay. Site lots near commuter transit service and provide bicycle storage lockers at the lots to ensure they are designed to facilitate use by transit and active transportation users.

GOAL EJ-3: Residents and visitors in Morro Bay are healthy and have access to essential services.

- **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION EJ-4:** Work with medical providers, transit agencies, private transit providers, and community representatives to develop an access plan that can provide service to major medical facilities in the region. Include recommendations for locating future medical facilities close to public transit.

GOAL EJ-4: Morro Bay recognizes and is prepared for increased health risks due to current and anticipated future climate change effects.

Plan Morro Bay - Housing Element (2014-2019)

The Housing Element, one of eight State-mandated components of Morro Bay's General Plan, outlines the City's strategy for meeting housing needs from 2020 to 2028 as part of its broader 2040 vision. It supports the community's goal to preserve Morro Bay's unique coastal, small-town character while promoting environmental resilience and a healthy lifestyle. This element addresses the urgent need for affordable housing, guided by state law, and aims to improve access for low- and moderate-income households. Analyzing demographic and employment trends, it provides a long-range plan to balance housing availability with economic growth and social cohesion.

Program H-1.4

In order to create a vibrant, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly small urban atmosphere in the downtown area and ensure optimal access to services and public transportation, the City will encourage the development of new high-density housing in and adjacent to the downtown commercial district. To facilitate this goal, the City will inventory vacant and underutilized lots in and adjacent to the downtown business district, identify sites or areas where re-zoning to high-density residential or mixed-use categories might be desirable, and modify the City's zoning map as appropriate.

COUNTYWIDE

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), as the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the San Luis Obispo region, has developed numerous studies to improve the region's multimodal transportation network. Recent countywide transportation studies are summarized in this section, with an emphasis on understanding the plan components most relevant to public transit.

2023-2045 Regional Transportation Plan (2023)

SLOCOG is responsible for updating the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) every four years. The RTP is a long-range transportation planning document that serves as a blueprint for the regional transportation system and prioritizes investments to state highways, local roads, public transit, tribal transportation, and aviation services within the study area based on community values. The most recent update to San Luis Obispo County's RTP was completed in 2023.

The 2023 RTP outlines $930 million worth of expenditure to maintain and expand the County's public transportation programs. Transit capital projects recommended in the 2023 RTP include replacing the various transit programs' vehicles once the vehicles hit their respective Federal Transit Administration (FTA) useful life benchmarks (ULBs), constructing a new maintenance facility for SLO Transit, improving the RTA bus stops, and procuring electric-vehicle chargers for SLO Transit.

From the Visions, Goals, and Policies:

- **Active Transportation**
    - 10.6 Leverage regional investments in highway, street, & road projects to advance pedestrian and bicycle enhancements along routes of national, statewide or regional significance to support tourism and mobility, including but not limited to, the Anza Trail Corridor, Edna Valley Trail, California Coastal Trail, Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector, Chorro Valley Trail, Arroyo Grande Creek, Pacific Coast Railroad Trail and the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail. (Ongoing)
    - Harbors 12.38 Leverage regional investments in highway, street, & road projects to advance pedestrian and bicycle enhancements along routes of national, statewide or regional significance to support tourism and mobility, including but not limited to, the Anza Trail Corridor, Edna Valley Trail, California Coastal Trail, Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector, Chorro Valley Trail, Arroyo Grande Creek, Pacific Coast Railroad Trail and the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail. (Ongoing)
    - 12.41 Support efforts to secure funding for breakwater, pier, and other infrastructure and access improvement, maintenance, and rehabilitation in both Port San Luis and Morro Bay. (Ongoing)
- **Sustainability Communities Strategy**
    - 13.2 Support housing development, including mixed-use and infill development, near employment centers along transit corridors. (Ongoing)
    - 13.5 Support expanded housing options for people of all ages and incomes to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation. (Ongoing)
    - 13.7 Encourage healthy, livable human-scale development by coordinating with local jurisdictions on the incorporation of healthy community design best practices into land use and circulation decisions. (Ongoing)
    - 13.9 Engage with community members representing the region's disadvantaged communities to better understand long-term housing and transportation concerns and needs. (Near)

- 13.12 Support local jurisdictions' policies that encourage efficient land use decisions regarding parking. This includes reducing the amount of surface-level parking, investigating best practices for the implementation of in-lieu parking fee programs, and supporting cost-effective investments in structured parking. (Ongoing)
- 13.15 Provide funding for access improvements for projects that support land uses that improve the region's jobs-housing balance and align with the transportation efficiency analysis. (Near)
- 13.23 Use regional modeling tools to quantify the return on investment for intensification along existing commercial corridors and emerging transit corridors. (Near)

- **Chapter 11 Public Transit Scheduled Projects**
  - Local bus fleet replacement: MB Transit, Replace minibuses every 5 years (6 buses) Morro Bay Transit Morro Bay $1,075,000 S/M/L $1,209,05313.
  - Local trolley fleet replacement: MB Transit Replace 1 trolley every 10 years (2 trolleys) Morro Bay Transit Morro Bay $440,000 M/L $610,72.

San Luis Obispo County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan (2022)

The *San Luis Obispo County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan* (Coordinated Plan) was last updated by SLOCOG in 2022. The Coordinated Plan recommends strategies that will improve coordination between transportation providers, with the ultimate goal of encouraging the better use of resources and meeting the unmet transit needs of local residents. The strategies included in the 2022 Coordinated Plan most relevant to the RTA and SLO Transit are listed below.

- Strategy 1 – Spread awareness of SLOCOG Regional Rideshare Programs, like SLO 5-1-1 and "Know How to Go", through a major advertising effort.
- Strategy 2 – Add new customer-facing technology for scheduling trips and fare payment.
- Strategy 3 – Add new technological capacity for improving scheduling and dispatching, tracking vehicles, and responding to unforeseen changes in service needs.
- Strategy 4 – Develop local tools for driver recruitment and retention.
- Strategy 5 – Develop a One-Call/One-Click Center.
- Strategy 6 – Conduct a one-year pilot project that decreases the age for Senior Go! From 65 to 60 and increases the allowable number of trips per month.
- Strategy 10 – Coordinate with Santa Barbara County to increase services to Santa Maria.

2021 Active Transportation Plan (2021)

SLOCOG most recently updated the region's *Active Transportation Plan* (ATP) in 2021. The ATP identifies strategies and projects to increase rates of walking and bicycling throughout San Luis Obispo County. While the ATP primarily focuses on walking and bicycling, one of the overarching goals of the ATP is to

improve transit and rail connectivity by facilitating safe first/last mile connections for pedestrians. Projects recommended in the 2021 ATP relevant to transit include improving pedestrian amenities and sidewalks within 0.25 miles of bus stops, procuring bike racks for transit vehicles, and implementing commuter transportation demand-management programs.

SLO Regional Zero-Emission Bus Implementation Plan (2020)

SLOCOG developed the SLO Regional Zero-Emission Bus Implementation Plan (SLO Regional ZEB Plan) to help San Luis Obispo County transit programs, as well as transit programs in nearby Santa Barbara and Monterey Counties, transition to zero-emission fleets as required by the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation. Morro Bay Transit runs three trolley routes seasonally, and one deviated, fixed route. There are five vehicles in the MBT fleet; two cutaway buses are used year-round for their Fixed/Call-a-Ride Route, and three trolleys are in use approximately nineteen weeks out of each year (Memorial Day weekend to the first Sunday in October). MBT will eventually combine two of the trolley routes to purchase, but will potentially transition back to three electric trolleys in the future.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan (2019)

The *Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan* (RHNAP) is a component of the Housing Element of the *San Luis Obispo County General Plan*. The RHNAP details the need for housing by income group within each jurisdiction in the study area for the upcoming planning period. The most recent San Luis Obispo County RHNAP applies to Atascadero, Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo and covers the time period from December 2020 to December 2028. The RHNAP recommends that new housing projects be developed in close proximity to transit services.

Active Transportation Partnership Program Safe-Routes-to-School Plan (2016)

The Active Transportation Partnership Program (ATPP) is a series of work programs initiated by SLOCOG to guide near-term active transportation investments in San Luis Obispo County. The *ATPP Safe Routes to School Plan* outlines a strategic plan for improving the bicycle and pedestrian networks near schools, as well as strategies for how regional stakeholders can better collaborate to develop successful California Active Transportation Program grant applications. Strategies presented in the *ATPP Safe Routes to School Plan* related to transit include increasing the percentage of new and existing roadways with pedestrian and bicycle facilities, emphasizing travel routes along roadways with transit stops, improving pedestrian conditions within 0.25 miles of bus stops, and installing bike wayfinding signs at key bus stops.

SLOCOG Unmet Transit Needs Reports (FY 2023-24)

SLOCOG, as the designated RTPA for San Luis Obispo County, is required by the California Transportation Development Act (TDA) to hold an annual hearing to identify unmet transit needs in the region. TDA funding must be spent on any unmet transit needs deemed through the unmet transit needs process to be reasonable to meet before the RTPA can allocate funds to other transportation projects. For SLOCOG, requests for additional services must meet *all four* criteria listed below to be considered an unmet transit need:

A. "The request fills a gap in public-transit service or is identified as a deficiency in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Clean Air Plan (CAP), Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan, or the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP);

B. Sufficient broad-based community support is demonstrated by persons who will likely use the service on a routine basis (at least 15 requests for general public service and 10 requests for individuals with disabilities);

C. The request is current rather than an anticipated need;

D. The request is for service expansion, such as increased hours, increased frequency, new routes, significant modifications to existing routes, and not operational in nature, such as minor route changes or bus-stop changes, etc. If the request is for minor service changes, the request will be forwarded to the transit operator for follow-up."

Unmet transit needs must then meet four additional criteria in order to be considered by SLOCOG to be reasonable to meet:

A. **"Farebox recovery:** The request is projected to generate the required farebox ratio (10 percent rural, 20 percent urban, and 15 percent RTA by the third year, demonstrating continuous progress after the first and second year).

B. **Served entity:** Service will not involve funding from a non-served entity.

C. **Service is comparable with other similar transit services** (such as local fixed route, regional fixed route, local general-public dial-a-ride, specialized dial-a-ride, circulator, trolley, etc.) or will be similar, based on the projected number of passengers per hour the proposed service would carry.

D. **The request is fundable with existing TDA funds** without reducing other existing transit services. The new, expanded, or revised service, if implemented, will not cause the responsible operator to incur expenditures in excess of available TDA funds (if 100 percent of the TDA funds are being used for transit, no mandate can be imposed on the operator.)."

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24, SLOCOG received the following requests specific to Morro Bay.

- A request was received to increase frequency on RTA Routes 9, 12, and 15. This was found not to be an unmet need that is reasonable to meet.
- Reinstate RTA's Morro Bay High School Tripper. If not, then RTA Route 15 must increase in Frequency to every hour. RTA staff is evaluating bus run cuts planned for Fall 2023 that could include the restoration of the MBHS Tripper service. However, at this time, the RTA does not have the Bus Operator resources to re-implement the Tripper – although we are working to increase our Bus Operator roster to help restore services cut during the pandemic.
- Implemented: Earlier RTA Route 12 from Los Osos to Cal Poly. Beginning March 19, 2023, the first RTA Route 12 bus departing Los Osos/Morro Bay will be moved back 23 minutes so that it arrives at Cal Poly in time for classes that begin at 7:10 AM (arrives at 6:55 AM instead of 7:18 AM). As such, this request is no longer an unmet need that is reasonable to meet.

- In FY 2022-23, SLOCOG received twelve transit-related requests for RTA. None of the requests were found to be unmet transit needs per the definitions adopted by SLOCOG. Requests received included providing earlier service on RTA Route 10 and the Paso Robles Route A, increasing service frequency on RTA Route 12, and creating a new transit route in San Luis Obispo from the Arbors/Righetti area to South Higuera/Prado. There were no requests for Morro Bay Transit.
- In FY 2021-22, SLOCOG received eleven transit-related requests for RTA; five requests were for additional service frequency, three were for new routes, one was for bus stop improvements (since implemented), one was to move a bus stop location, and one was for increased consideration of COVID-19. None of the requests were found to be unmet transit needs per SLOCOG criteria. There were no requests for Morro Bay Transit.

SLO RTA PLANS AND AUDITS

The following section discusses plans focused specifically on SLO RTA services, including the services operated by the SLO RTA through contract which now includes MBT after the recent transition of administration, maintenance, and operations to RTA in June 2025.

SLO RTA Zero-Emissions Bus Rollout Plan (2023)

The RTA adopted its *Zero-Emissions Bus* (*ZEB) Rollout Plan* in 2023. The *ZEB Rollout Plan* is based on the work of prior studies, including the *RTA Electrification-Readiness Plan* (2019), and fulfills the requirements of the ICT regulation. Of the RTA's 79-vehicle fleet, 50 vehicles have a gross weight greater than 14,000 pounds and therefore must be replaced with ZEBs under the ICT regulation. The *ZEB Rollout Plan* presents purchase timelines for the RTA for both heavy-duty and smaller vehicles through 2040, with the ultimate goal being able to convert all vehicles to ZEBs while also avoiding the early retirement of conventionally fueled vehicles. As presented in the study, the RTA will continue to purchase both conventional and battery-electric buses (BEBs) until 2029, at which point all new vehicles will be BEBs.

It should be noted, however, that the ZEB Rollout Plan includes an appendix that discusses possible tipping points that would prompt the RTA to consider procuring hydrogen fuel-cell electric buses (FCEBs) in addition to BEBs.

The new vehicle procurement policy presented in the *RTA ZEB Rollout Plan* has already been put into practice by the RTA; the RTA is expected to receive two BEBs in late 2023. Before deploying BEBs in mass, the RTA will need to install additional/improved charging infrastructure at the RTA Bus Maintenance Facility at 253 Elks Lane in San Luis Obispo, as well as at the RTA's park-out facilities in Paso Robles and Arroyo Grande.

While Morro Bay Transit developed its own ZEV Rollout Plan, RTA has since taken over administration, maintenance, and operations of MBT in June 2025. As a result, the RTA ZEB Rollout Plan will include Morro Bay Transit.

RTA Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan (2022)

Per FTA regulations, every transit agency must develop a Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan if the agency owns, operates, or manages capital assets to provide public transit service and receives federal funding under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 as either a recipient or subrecipient. The RTA adopted its most recent TAM Plan in 2022.

The TAM Plan states the RTA's goal to replace heavy-duty buses, cutaways, and minivans in the revenue fleet at a rate that will ensure no more than 40 percent of the vehicles in the fleet are beyond the FTA-defined ULBs for vehicle age or mileage. The vehicle replacement schedule presented in the 2024 update to the RTA SRTP will reflect this standard. The TAM Plan also states that the RTA will not allow more than 40 percent of its facilities to be assessed as a 1 or 2 using the five-point condition assessment scale utilized by the FTA and National Transit Database. Currently, the condition of the RTA Bus Maintenance Facility, located at 253 Elks Lane in San Luis Obispo, is a 5, or "Excellent."

RTA Triennial Performance Audit (FY 2017 – FY 2019, FY 2020 – FY 2022)

All transit programs that receive TDA funding are required to undergo a Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) to determine compliance with TDA requirements. The two most recent TPAs conducted for the RTA covered FYs 2016-17 through 2018-19 and FYs 2019-20 through 2021-22.

For the FY 2016-17 through FY 2018-19 audit, the auditor found that the RTA complied with all ten applicable TDA requirements. The auditor also found that the RTA had successfully implemented two out of the four prior audit recommendations. The recommendations made in the audit included two carried over from the previous audit, and were as follows:

1. Align organizational structure to meet the RTA's changing priorities.
2. Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Runabout paratransit operations, including scheduling efficiencies and route optimization.
3. Enhance the Runabout customer experience through improved marketing and the deployment of a one-click/one-call technology.
4. Consider supplemental services and next-generation mobility for the Runabout.

RTA performance during the most recent TPA period (FY 2019-20 – FY 2021-22) was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The auditor once again found that the RTA complied with the ten applicable TDA requirements. The RTA had also implemented one of the four recommendations made in the previous audit. The TPA made two new recommendations for the RTA:

1. Evaluate the RTA's preventable collision rates to achieve its internal standards – the RTA outlined in its most recent Strategic Business Plan that the agency intends to have a rate of preventable vehicle collision that does not exceed 1 per 100,000 miles. The RTA did not meet this internal standard during the audit period.

2. Ensure the RTA SRTP update addresses Runabout service efficiencies and business practices, including implementing a digital application system for passenger eligibility and determining the optimal amount of service consumed by subscription trip bookings.

RTA Strategic Business Plan (2018)

The RTA recently updated its *Strategic Business Plan* in 2018. The *Strategic Business Plan* covers a three-year planning horizon (2018-2020) and presents focused goals, objectives, and performance standards to guide operations. The three overarching agency goals adopted in the plan were as follows:

1. Increase ridership – Increase ridership by attracting discretionary ridership with service improvements to both regional and subregional transit services.
2. Key performance indicators – Expand the development and use of the RTA's key performance indicators to enhance system performance and employee performance and to improve service quality.
3. Innovation – Explore innovative opportunities to improve services for customers and potential customers.

The standards of excellence outlined in the 2018 *Strategic Business Plan* will be reviewed and modified as a component of the current update to the RTA SRTP.

RTA Short-Range Transit Plan (2024)

The 2024 update to the RTA SRTP builds on prior plans but incorporates significant changes driven by the COVID-19 pandemic's lasting effects on ridership, funding, and workforce availability. Unlike the 2016 plan, this update does not propose major service expansions due to limited operating revenue. Instead, it focuses on modest, financially constrained service improvements, including:

- Reinstating select school trippers.
- Restoring some pre-pandemic express trips.
- Streamlining Route 10 in Santa Maria to reflect funding shifts.
- Adding targeted weekend service where warranted.

The capital plan prioritizes vehicle replacement and transitioning to zero-emission buses. It is also planning for a new Downtown San Luis Obispo Transit Center and a potential South County transfer point. Additionally, the plan outlines fare modernization, including adopting a contactless fare-capping system and evaluating time-based flat fares, while exploring strategies to verify discount fare eligibility and reduce fare evasion.

A Marketing Plan was also included in the RTA SRTP. It included broad marketing strategies to accomplish the following goals:

- Increase awareness about the system.
- Continue to shape a positive perception of public transportation.
- Attract new riders.

The Marketing Plan included specific recommendations for each area-specific transportation provider including Morro Bay. The Plan identified target audiences such as tourists, day-trippers, service industry workers, college students, and active older adults. It recommended specific marketing tactics to increase target-specific knowledge through the creation of tourist programs including a “Morro Bay Explorer Pass” and partnership opportunities with local hotels. Overall the Plan recommended that they take on a “car-free vacation” approach to creating brand content moving forward. These ideas are explored in more detail in Appendix A of the 2024 RTA SRTP.

Appendix C

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Community outreach is essential in planning effective and equitable transportation systems. With this in mind, LSC conducted both onboard passenger surveys and an online community survey to help capture real-time feedback from riders during their journeys while also engaging broader community voices through surveymonkey.com. The following is a summary of the feedback and input received during the public outreach process.

ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY SUMMARY

Working closely with the City of Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA), LSC developed a survey campaign to get feedback from passengers of Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride and Trolley services.

The surveys asked respondents about their ridership habits (how often they ride/where they ride to and from), their opinions on the transit system overall, and basic demographic information, including occupation and age. The onboard surveys were available in both English and Spanish and were distributed by a trained surveyor along Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service from July 17th to July 18th, 2025, and along Morro Bay Transit's Trolley service from July 19th to July 20th, 2025.

Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Summary

The Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride survey had 20 responses (20 in English and 0 in Spanish). The summary below captures the main insights gathered through the survey and provides a high-level look at respondent feedback.

- **Origin and Destination Pairs**: The most commonly reported origin and destination pairs reported by respondents on Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service were Main St. at Jamaica St going to Kennedy Way - Community/Senior Center (3 trips with this origin/destination pair), Main St. - Spencer's Market going to Kennedy Way Community/Senior Center (2 trips with this origin/destination pair), and Morro Bay Transit Hub – City Park at Harbor St. (2 trips with this origin/destination pair), and Morro Bay Transit Hub – City Park going to Main St at Bonita St (Table C-1).
    - **Most common origin:** Morro Bay Transit Hub – City Park on Harbor St. had the highest number of outgoing trips (7 total boardings), followed by Main St. at Jamaica St. (3 total boardings), and Kennedy Way – Community/Senior Center (2 total boardings).
    - **Most common destination**: Kennedy Way – Community/Senior Center (7 total alightings) and Main Street at Bonita St, Market St at Morro Bay Blvd – Dorn's Breaker Café, and Main St – Spencer's Market each received 2 total alightings.
- **Boarding Time:** Boarding times for the Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service were spread throughout the day, with the busiest periods between 10:00–10:59 AM and 1:00–1:59 PM (20 percent of respondents). Additional peaks occurred between 2:00–2:59 PM and 3:00–3:59 PM (15 percent of respondents each). Only a few passengers boarded earlier in the morning (15 percent combined from 6:00 AM – 9:59 AM) or after 5:00 PM (10 percent from 5:00 PM-6:59 PM) (Table C-2).

Table C-1: Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Origin/ Destinations

		Destination											
		Berwick Drive	Kennedy Way - Community/ Senior Center	Highway 1 at San Jacinto St	Main St at Bonita St	Main St at Errol St	Main St at Sequoia St	Main St- Spencers Market	Main St at Tahiti St	Market St at Morro Bay Blvd - Dorn's Breaker Café	Morro Bay Transit Hub - City Park on Harbor St	Quintana Road - Albertson's	Origin Total
Origin	Morro Bay Transit Hub - City Park on Harbor St	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	**7**
	Kennedy Way - Community/ Senior Center	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Main St at Jamaica St	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
	Main St at Sequoia St	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
	Main Street at Bonita Street	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	Main St - Spencers Market	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Market St at Morro Bay Blvd - Dorn's Breaker Café	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Morro Bay High School	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Quintana Road- Albertson's	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	**2**
	Destination Total	**1**	**7**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**20**

Table C-2: Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Results

Boarding Time	#	%
6:00 AM - 6:59 AM	0	0%
7:00 AM - 7:59 AM	1	5%
8:00 AM - 8:59 AM	1	5%
9:00 AM - 9:59 AM	1	5%
10:00 AM-10:59PM	4	20%
11:00 AM - 11:59 AM	0	0%
12:00 PM - 12:59 PM	0	0%
1:00 PM - 1:59 PM	4	20%
2:00 PM - 2:59PM	3	15%
3:00 PM - 3:59PM	3	15%
4:00 PM - 4:59 PM	1	5%
5:00 PM - 5:59 PM	2	10%
6:00 PM - 6:59 PM	0	0%
Total Responses	**20**	

Call-A-Ride Trip?	#	%
Yes, I used the Call-A-Ride Route Deviation Service for this trip.	0	0%
No, I did NOT use the Call-A-Ride Route Deviation Service for this trip.	19	100%
Total Responses	**19**	

Round Trip on Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride?	#	%
Yes, I'm traveling round-trip	8	47%
No, I'm going one-way.	9	53%
Total Responses	17	

Getting to the Bus Stop	#	%
Bicycled	2	10%
Got a ride	3	15%
Drove Alone	0	0%
Walked	11	55%
Transferred from RTA Rt 12	4	20%
Transferred from RTA Rt 15	0	0%
Total Responses	**20**	

Mode of Transportation to Complete the Trip	#	%
Bicycle	2	11%
Get a ride	2	11%
Drive Alone	0	0%
Walk	10	53%
Transfer to RTA Rt 12	4	21%
Transfer to RTA Rt 15	0	0%
Wheelchair	1	5%
Total Responses	**19**	

Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Trip Purpose	#	%
Work	3	15%
Returning Home	2	10%
Social Services	1	5%
Leisure/Social	6	30%
Shopping	5	25%
Medical/Dental	2	10%
University/College	0	0%
High School	0	0%
Elementary/Middle School	1	5%
Personal Business	1	5%
Total Responses	**20**	

Alternative Vehicle Availability	#	%
Yes, I had access to a vehicle I could have used to make this trip instead.	3	15%
No, I did NOT have access to a vehicle to make this trip.	17	85%
Total Responses	**20**	

Fare Paid for Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Trip	#	%
Regular Fare - $1.50	4	24%
Reduced Fare - $0.75	1	6%
Free Fare	4	24%
Student - Free Fare	1	6%
Monthly Pass	4	24%
Day Pass	2	12%
MBT Punch Pass	1	6%
Total Responses	**17**	

Suggested Improvements to Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Service	#	%
Saturday Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	8	47%
Sunday Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	6	35%
Earlier morning service	0	0%
Later evening service	4	24%
More frequent service	2	12%
Bus running the opposite direction	5	29%
Weekend Service	1	6%
Improved bus stops	0	0%
Total Responses	**17**	

Frequency of Using Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	#	%
1 or less	3	15%
1-2 days	6	30%
3-4 days	6	30%
5+ days	5	25%
Total Responses	**20**	

- **Trip Purpose:** The most common trip reason reported by passengers riding Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride was Leisure/Social (30 percent of respondents), followed by Shopping (25 percent of respondents). Those respondents who were commuting to work trips accounted for 15 percent, and Medical/Dental appointments (10 percent) were also common. Very few riders indicated trips for school or personal business (Table C-2).
- **Call-A-Ride Usage:** None of the respondents reported using the Call-A-Ride route deviation service for their trip (Table C-2).
- **Vehicle Access:** Only 15 percent of respondents had access to a personal vehicle they could have used instead; 85 percent did not, highlighting the importance of the service for those without alternative transportation (Table C-2).
- **Fare Payment:** Fare payment reported by respondents was primarily split among Regular Fare ($1.50), Free Fare, and Monthly Pass—each accounting for 24 percent of riders. A small number paid Reduced Fare ($0.75) (6 percent), the MBT Punch Pass (6 percent), Summer Youth Ride Free Fare (6 percent), or used Day Passes (12 percent) (Table C-2).
- **Round Trip Use:** Respondents were evenly split, with 53 percent making one-way trips and 47 percent traveling round-trip (Table C-2).
- **Getting to the Bus Stop:** A majority of respondents (55 percent) walked to their boarding location. Those respondents, 20 percent transferred from RTA Route 12, while smaller shares biked (10 percent) or got a ride (15 percent) (Table C-2).
- **Mode of Travel to Complete Trip:** Just over half of riders (53 percent) also walked to their final destination. 21 percent transferred to RTA Route 12, while others biked, got a ride, or used a wheelchair (Table C-2).
- **Frequency of Use:** Respondents reported riding frequency for Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride was varied, with 30 percent using the service 1–2 days per week, 30 percent riding 3–4 days per week, 25 percent using the service more than five days per week, and 15 percent were infrequent or first-time riders (Table C-2).
- **Suggested Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Improvements:** Survey respondents identified weekend service expansion as the most desired improvement. Nearly half (47 percent) of respondents expressed interest in adding Saturday service, while 35 percent requested Sunday service. Other suggestions included adding a bus running in the opposite direction (29 percent of respondents) and extending service into the evening hours (24 percent of respondents). A smaller number of respondents asked for more frequent service (12 percent) (Table C-2).
- **Transit Information Sources:** Respondents most commonly reported receiving information about Morro Bay Transit's transit services through social media (39 percent) and on the website (39 percent), followed by email newsletters (17 percent) and printed mailers (17 percent). Only one person cited community events (6 percent), and two mentioned newspapers (11 percent) (Table C-3).
- **Language Spoken by Respondents:** In terms of language, 20 percent of respondents indicated they speak more than one language, while the remaining 80 percent reported speaking only one language (Table C-3).

Table C-3: Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Results

Receiving Information about Transit Services		
	#	%
Email Newsletter	3	17%
Printed Mailer or Letter	3	17%
Community Events	1	6%
Social Media	7	39%
Newspaper	2	11%
City Website	7	39%
Total Responses	**18**	

Bilingual or Multilingual?		
	#	%
Yes, I speak more than one language.	4	20%
No, I only speak one language.	16	80%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Total Responses	**20**	

Age		
	#	%
17 or younger	5	25%
18-25	2	10%
26-40	4	20%
41-60	0	0%
61-75	6	30%
76-90	3	15%
91+	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Total Responses	**20**	

- **Age:** Those respondents who reported being older, from ages 61-75 (30 percent) or 76-90 (15 percent), accounted for 45 percent of total responses. Those who reported being younger, including those who were 17 or younger (25 percent) or 18-25 years old (10 percent) accounted for 35 percent of respondents. Adults aged 26-40 accounted for 20 percent of respondents (Table C-3).
- **Respondent Rating of Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Services:** Respondents rated Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride services across most categories. On a 1 to 5 scale (with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent"), the highest weighted marks were given for Overall Service (4.70), Safety/Security (4.65), Driver Courtesy (4.60), On-Time Performance (4.60), Travel Time (4.56), and Vehicle Cleanliness (4.55). Ratings for Ease of Transfers/Connections (4.37) and Service Frequency (4.35) also indicate a strong level of satisfaction. Areas with lower scores included Availability of Information (3.95) and Bus Stop Amenities (3.95), suggesting opportunities for improvement in rider communication and physical infrastructure (Table C-4).

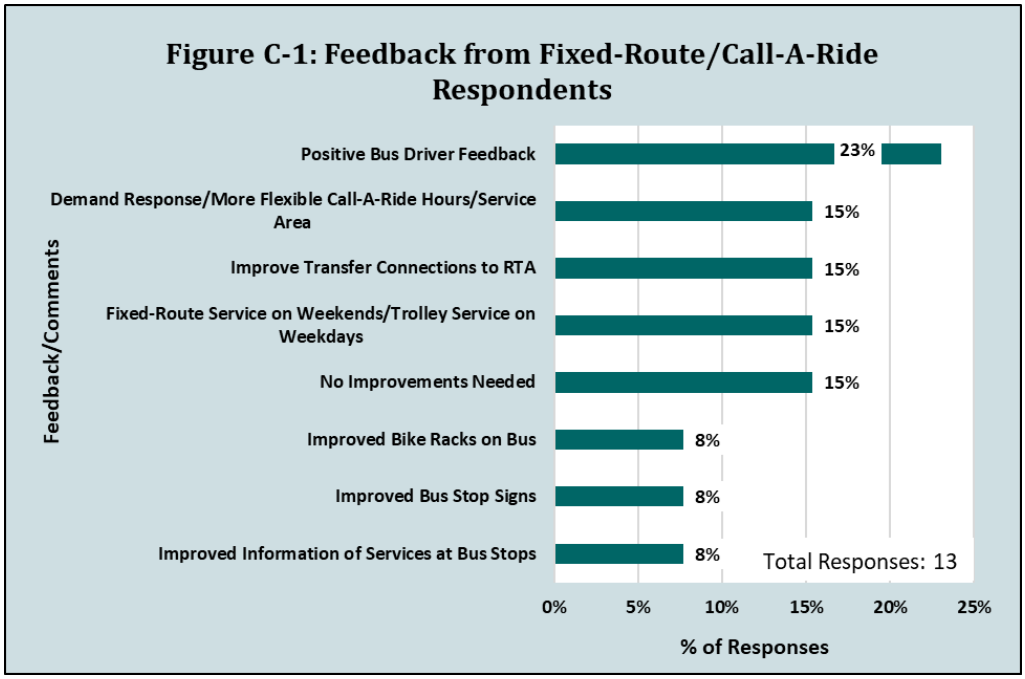
Table C-4: Respondent Rating of Fixed-Route/Call-A-Ride Services

	Safety/ Security	Driver Courtesy	On-Time Performance	Vehicle Cleanliness	Value of Fare	Availability of Information	Span of Service
Weighted Average	4.65	4.60	4.60	4.55	4.55	3.95	4.15

	Service Frequency	Travel Time	Bus Stop Amenities	Bus Stop locations	Ease of Transfers/ Connections	Overall Service	Total Responses
Weighted Average	4.35	4.56	3.95	4.10	4.37	4.70	**20**

Note: Respondents were asked to rate each Trolley Service category on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). A weighted average of all responses is shown above.

- **Open-ended Feedback/Comments:** Fixed Route and Call-A-Ride respondents, the most common feedback was positive comments about bus drivers (23 percent). Several respondents (15 percent each) noted that no improvements were needed, but others highlighted requests for weekend fixed-route or weekday trolley service, better transfer connections to RTA, and more flexible Call-A-Ride service in terms of hours or service area. Smaller shares of feedback (8 percent each) called for improvements to bus stop information, signage, and bike racks on buses (Figure C-1).



Downtown and North Trolley Survey Summary

The Downtown and North Trolley survey had a total of 40 responses (40 in English and 0 in Spanish). The summary below captures the main insights gathered through the survey and provides a high-level look at respondent feedback.

- **Origin and Destination Pairs**: The most commonly reported origin and destination pairs reported by respondents (Table C-5).
    - **Most common origin:** Morro Strand State Beach (9 trips), followed by Main at Elena / Spencer's Market (6 trips) and Morro Bay State Park (4 trips).
    - **Most common destination**: Downtown and Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard tied with 10 trips each, followed by Morro Bay State Park (5 trips).
- **Residence of Respondents:** Respondents represented a mix of Morro Bay residents and visitors, with nearly three-quarters (73 percent) visiting from outside San Luis Obispo County (Table C-6). Those who live in Morro Bay accounted for 18 percent of respondents, with 15 percent living in Morro Bay full-time and three percent living in Morro Bay part-time.
- **Age:** Riders represented a wide range of age groups. The largest share (35 percent) was between ages 26 and 40, followed by 25 percent ages 41–60, and 20 percent ages 17 or younger (Table C-6).
- **Trolley Use:** The majority of trips (94 percent) were round-trip (Table C-6).
- **Mode of Travel Before/After Trip:** Most riders (87 percent) got to the trolley stop to board the trolley by walking, and over three-quarters (76 percent) continued their trips on foot, once they got off the trolley (Table C-6).

Table C-5: Trolley Survey Origin/Destinations

Origin	Downtown	Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard	Main at Elena / Spencer's Market	Market at Morro Bay Blvd (Dorn's Breaker Café)	Morro Bay Library	Morro Bay State Park	Morro Strand State Beach	Wharf	Origin Total
	Destination								
Downtown	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	**3**
Main at Elena / Spencer's Market	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	**6**
Market at Morro Bay Blvd (Dorn's Breaker Café)	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	**4**
Morro Bay	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Morro Bay State Park	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	**4**
Morro Bay State Park Campground	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Morro Bay Transit	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Morro Strand State Beach	4	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	**9**
Destination Total	**10**	**10**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**34**

Table C-6: Trolley Survey Results

Boarding Time	#	%
10:00 AM - 10:59 AM	0	0%
11:00 AM - 11:59 AM	0	0%
12:00 PM - 12:59 PM	8	20%
1:00 PM - 1:59 PM	21	53%
2:00 PM - 2:59 PM	2	5%
3:00 PM - 3:59 PM	6	15%
4:00 PM - 4:59 PM	3	8%
Total Responses	**40**	

Round Trip?	#	%
Yes, I'm traveling round-trip	30	94%
No, I'm going one-way.	2	6%
Total Responses	**32**	

Trolley Trip Purpose	#	%
Work	1	3%
Shopping	11	28%
Social/Recreation	18	45%
Restaurant/Bar	11	28%
Sightseeing	15	38%
Personal Business	2	5%
Total Responses	**40**	

Resident of Morro Bay	#	%
Yes, Full-Time Resident	6	15%
Yes, Part-Time Resident	1	3%
No, Visitor from within SLO County	4	10%
No, Visitor from outside SLO County	29	73%
Total Responses	**40**	

Receiving Information about Transit Services	#	%
Email Newsletter	4	11%
Printed Mailer or Letter	5	13%
Community Events	4	11%
Social Media	22	58%
Newspaper	4	11%
Website	17	45%
Total Responses	**38**	

Suggested Improvements to Trolley Service	#	%
Earlier Saturday Service	5	21%
Earlier Sunday Service	6	25%
Later Sunday Service	12	50%
Later Saturday Service	10	42%
Weekday Trolley Service	1	4%
More routes/extended service area	6	25%
Improved trolley stops	2	8%
Connections to RTA	3	13%
More Frequent Services	0	0%
Total Responses	**24**	

Getting to the Trolley	#	%
Bicycled	1	3%
Drove Alone	3	8%
Walked	34	87%
Transferred from MBT	1	3%
Transferred from RTA Rt 12	0	0%
Transferred from RTA Rt 15	0	0%
Total Responses	**39**	

Mode of Transportation to Complete the Trip	#	%
Bicycle	1	3%
Drive Alone	5	13%
Walk	29	76%
Get a ride	3	8%
Transfer to RTA Rt 12	0	0%
Transfer to RTA Rt 15	0	0%
Total Responses	**38**	

Frequency of Using Trolley	#	%
First time	22	56%
1 or less	13	33%
1-2 days	2	5%
3-4 days	1	3%
5+ days	1	3%
Total Responses	**39**	

Respondent Age	#	%
17 or younger	8	20%
18-25	4	10%
26-40	14	35%
41-60	10	25%
61-75	3	8%
76-90	1	3%
91+	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Total Responses	**40**	

How Respondent Learned about Trolley	#	%
Friend/Family Member	11	30%
Saw Trolley or Trolley Stop	14	38%
Flyer	9	24%
Ridden Trolley Before	3	8%
Total Responses	**37**	

- **Trip Purpose:** The most common trip purposes included social or recreational activities (45 percent), sightseeing (38 percent), and dining at restaurants or bars (28 percent) (Table C-6).
- **Travel Time and Frequency:** The highest boarding period was between 1:00 and 1:59 PM (53 percent), followed by 12:00–12:59 PM (20 percent) and 3:00–3:59 PM (15 percent) (Table C-6).
- **Frequency of Trolley Ridership:** Over half of riders (56 percent) were first-time trolley users, while a third reported using the trolley once or less per year (Table C-6).
- **Transit Information Sources:** Social media (58 percent) and the website (45 percent) were the most common ways respondents received information about transit services (Table C-6).
- **How Riders Learned About Trolley Services:** Respondents learned about the trolley through either seeing a trolley stop sign or the trolley (38 percent), through word-of-mouth from friends or family (30 percent), or by reading a flyer (24 percent) (Table C-6).
- **Trolley Suggested Improvements:** Respondents suggested extended weekend service hours, with 50 percent of suggesting later service on Sundays and 42 percent of Saturdays. Additional service improvement suggestions included weekday trolley service (4 percent), expanded routes (25 percent), and improved connections to regional transit (Table C-6).
- **Respondent Rating of Trolley Services:** Respondents rated the trolley service very positively across all categories. On a 1 to 5 scale (with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent"), the highest ratings were for Vehicle Cleanliness (5.00), On-Time Performance (4.95), and Overall Service (4.95). Driver Courtesy (4.93) and Value of Fare (4.90) also received high marks. The lowest ratings were for Availability of Information (4.70) and Span of Service (4.75). Across all service quality and bus stop-related categories, scores remained consistently above 4.70, indicating a high level of rider satisfaction (Table C-7).

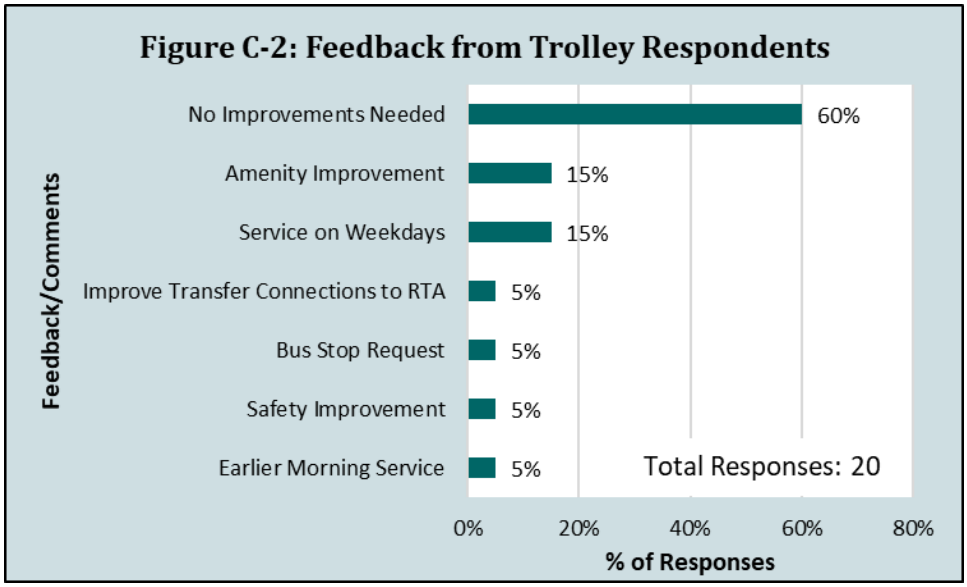
Table C-7: Respondent Rating of Trolley Services

	Safety/ Security	Driver Courtesy	On-Time Performance	Vehicle Cleanliness	Value of Fare	Availability of Information	Span of Service
Weighted Average	4.85	4.93	4.95	5	4.9	4.7	4.75

	Service Frequency	Travel Time	Bus Stop Amenities	Bus Stop locations	Ease of Transfers/ Connections	Overall Service	Total Responses
Weighted Average	4.72	4.88	4.72	4.74	4.84	4.95	**40**

Note: Respondents were asked to rate each Trolley Service category on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). A weighted average of all responses is shown above.

- **Trolley Public Feedback (Open-Ended):** Most trolley survey respondents were highly satisfied with the service, with 60 percent stating that no improvements were needed. Among those suggesting changes, the most common requests included weekday service (15 percent) and amenity improvements (15 percent). Smaller shares (5 percent each) called for earlier morning service, safety improvements, bus stop enhancements, or better transfer connections to RTA.(Figure C-2).



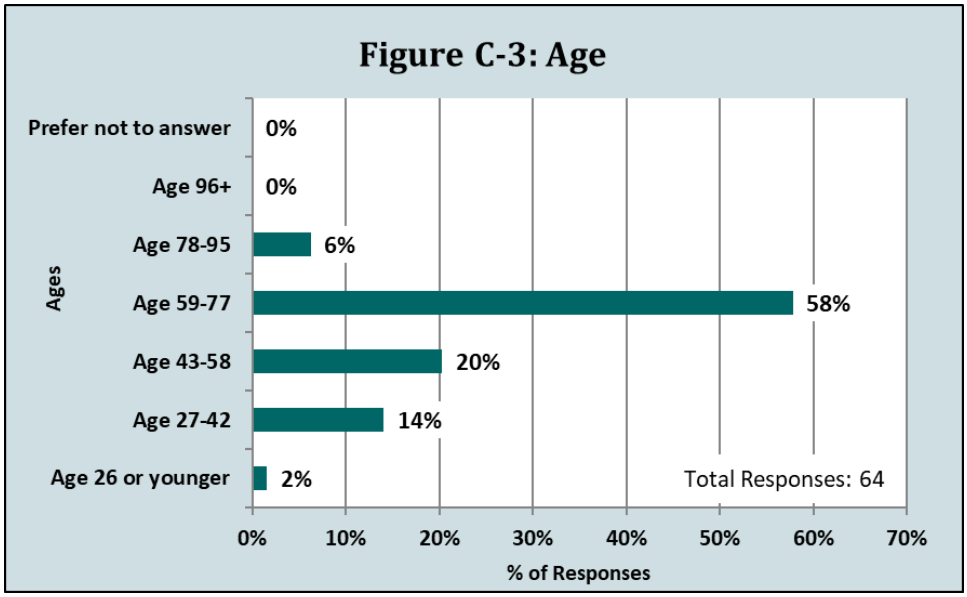
ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The online community survey conducted for the 2025 Morro Bay Transit Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) was conducted over several weeks in July and early August 2025. The survey instrument was a 15-question survey made available online in English and Spanish. To inform the public of the survey effort, flyers were posted on buses and near some bus stops, posts advertising the survey were made on Facebook, Nextdoor, and on media websites, including Morro Bay Life. In addition, the survey was included in the City Manager's monthly update on the City's website and emailed to the City Manager Update subscriber list. The online community survey was also posted to the Hot Topics section of the City website and a banner was added to the RTA and Morro Bay Transit websites. The survey was targeted at all residents of the City of Morro Bay and the wider San Luis Obispo County region, including those who do not use public transit on a regular basis. The survey received a total of 113 responses.

Demographics

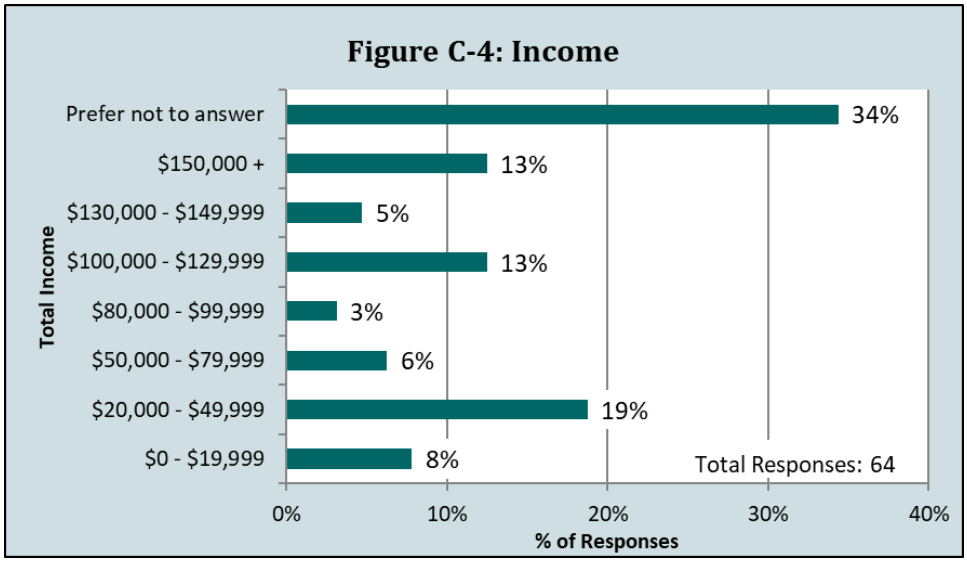
Age

Participants were asked to provide their age (Figure C-3). The survey received only 2 percent of responses from individuals 26 years old or younger and only 6 percent from respondents who were ages 78-95. The majority of respondents reported being between the ages of 59 and 77 (58 percent). Those who were between ages 27-42 accounted for 14 percent of respondents, and those who reported being between 43-58 years old accounted for 20 percent of respondents.



Income

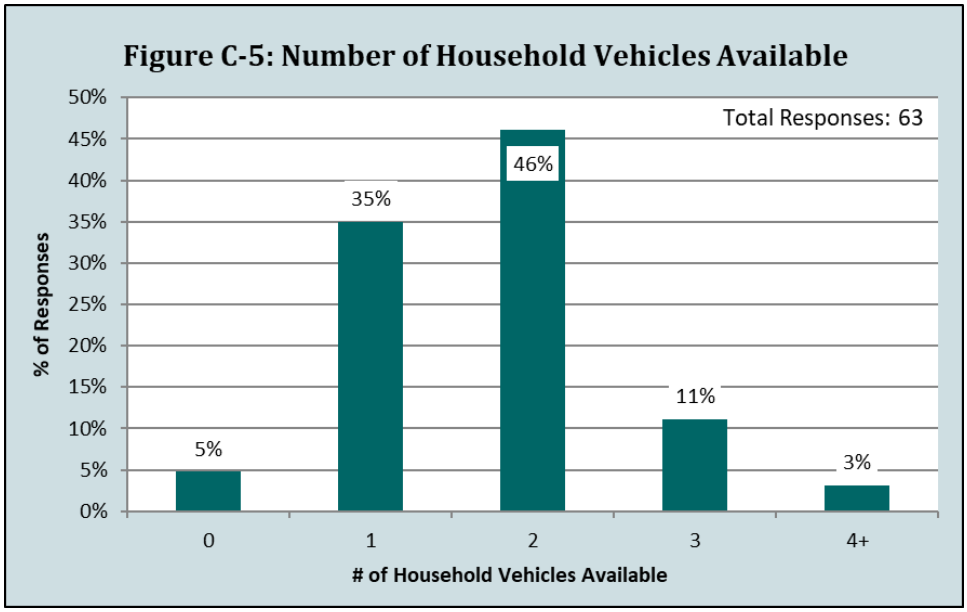
Participants were asked about their income (Figure C-4). Over one-third (34 percent) preferred not to share their income. Among those who did, the largest group (19 percent) reported earning between $20,000 and $49,999, while 13 percent each reported incomes of $100,000–$129,999 and $150,000 or more. Smaller percentages reported earnings in other ranges.



Household Vehicle Access

Participants were asked how many working vehicles their household had access to, as a lack of vehicle access is a significant factor contributing to transit dependence (Figure C-5).

Only 5 percent of responses reported no household access to vehicles. The majority of participants reported having access to at least one or more vehicles in their households (95 percent combined).



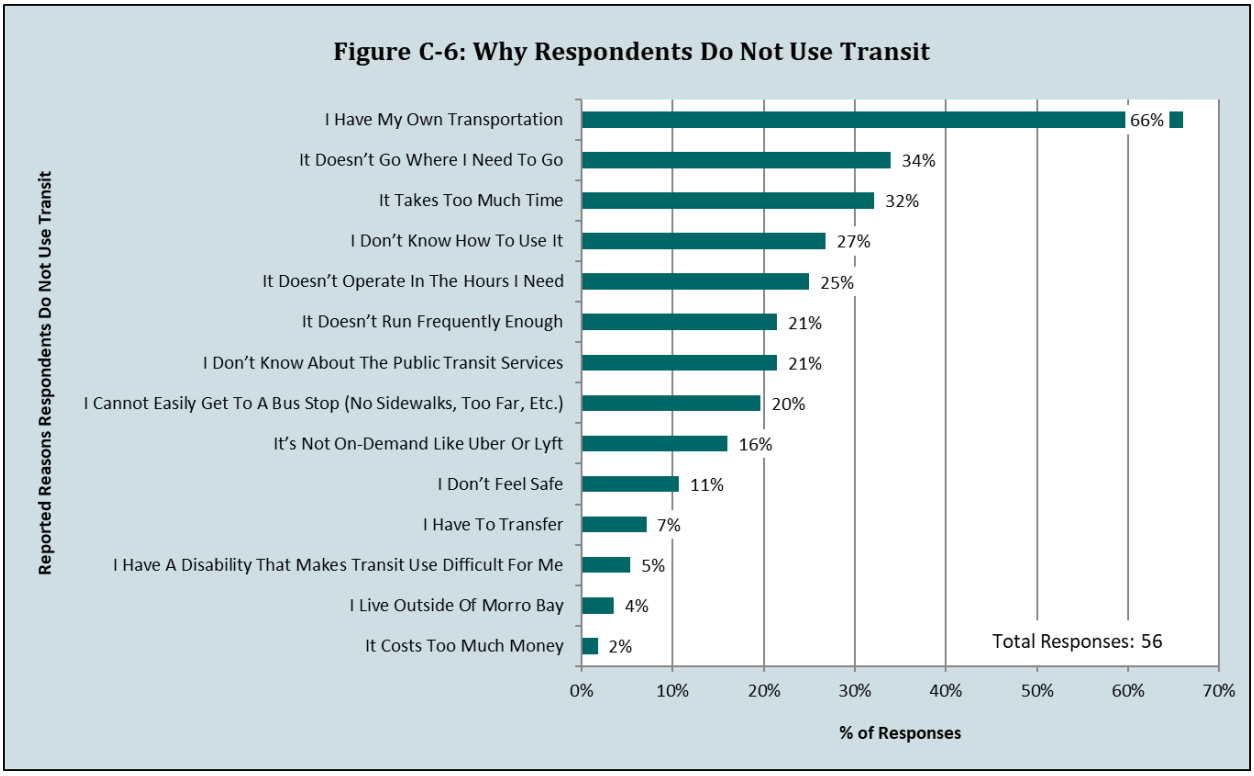
Transit Use

Transit Use

Participants were asked if they use public transit or specialized transportation services, such as paratransit, to meet some or all of their travel needs. A total of 112 responses were received, with half (50 percent) of participants reporting using public transit, while the other half (50 percent) of participants indicated that they did not use these services.

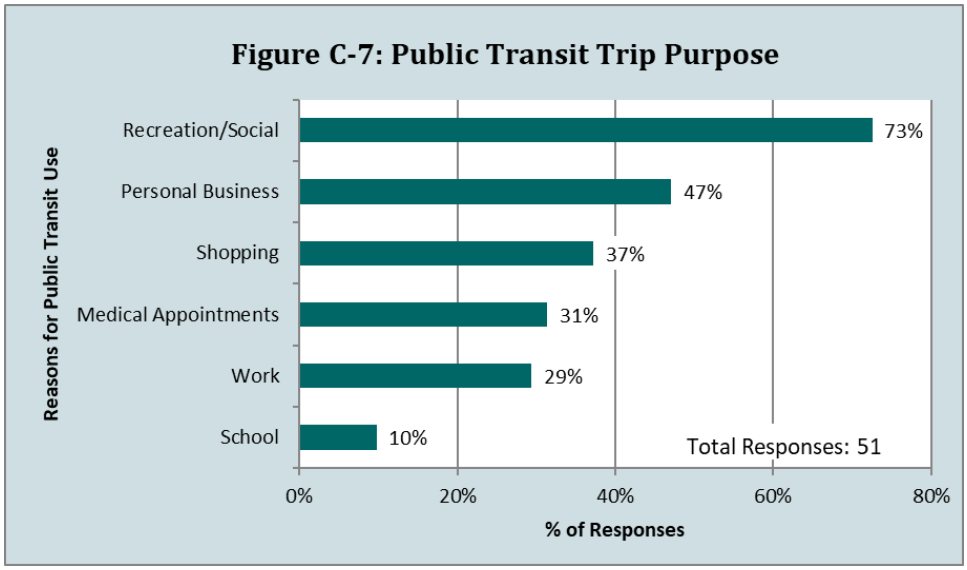
Respondent Reasons Not to Use Public Transit

Participants who answered No to using public transit were asked why they did not use public transit (Figure C-6). The top reasons people reported for not using public transit were that they have their own transportation (66 percent), transit does not go where they need to go (34 percent), and it takes too much time (32 percent). Additional common barriers included not knowing how to use the system (27 percent) and limited hours (25 percent), frequency of service (21 percent), or not knowing about public transit services (21 percent).



Respondent Reasons For Public Transit Use

Participants who answered Yes to using public transit were asked about their trip purposes using public transit (Figure C-7). The most common reasons were recreation or social activities (73 percent), personal business (47 percent), and shopping (37 percent). Other reasons included medical appointments (31 percent), work (29 percent), and school (10 percent).



Use of Regional Transit Provider Services

Participants who indicated that they use transit services were asked to identify which services they use and were allowed to select any or all of the services they used. There was also an option for participants to select if they had not heard of any of these providers (Figure C-8).

Among those who responded, the most frequently used service was RTA Routes 9, 10, 12, and 15, selected by 59 percent. Other top services included Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route (43 percent), Morro Bay Transit Trolley (39 percent), and Amtrak (27 percent). SLO Transit was used by 25 percent, while SeniorGo! was selected by 20 percent.

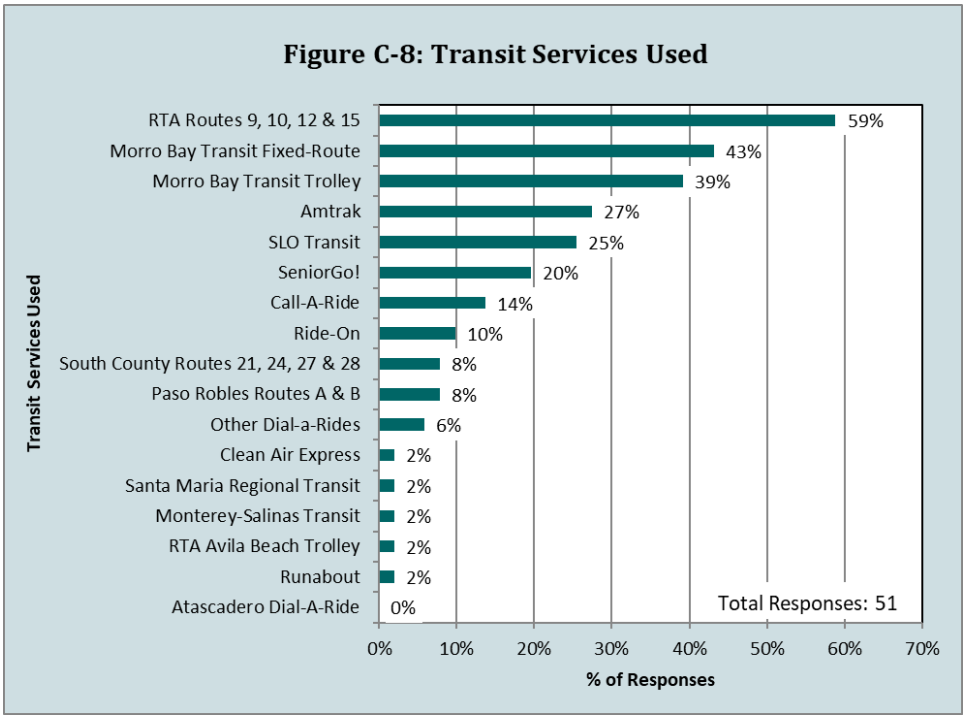
Frequency of Transit Use

Participants who indicated that they use transit services were asked about how frequently they used public transit services (Figure C-9). Most respondents indicated that they ride Morro Bay Transit services occasionally (55 percent). Smaller shares reported riding 2–5 times per month (16 percent), 2–5 times per week (6 percent), or daily (4 percent). Those participants who reported that they never use these services accounted for 20 percent.

Transit Use by Day of the Week

Participants who indicated that they use transit services were asked about which days of the week they rode either Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service (which operates Monday-Friday) or Trolley services (which operate Saturday-Sunday) (Figure C-10). The most reported day is Friday (62 percent), followed by Monday and Thursday (49 percent each). Slightly fewer reported riding on Tuesday and Wednesday (46 percent each), Saturday (44 percent), and Sunday (36 percent).

Figure C-8: Transit Services Used



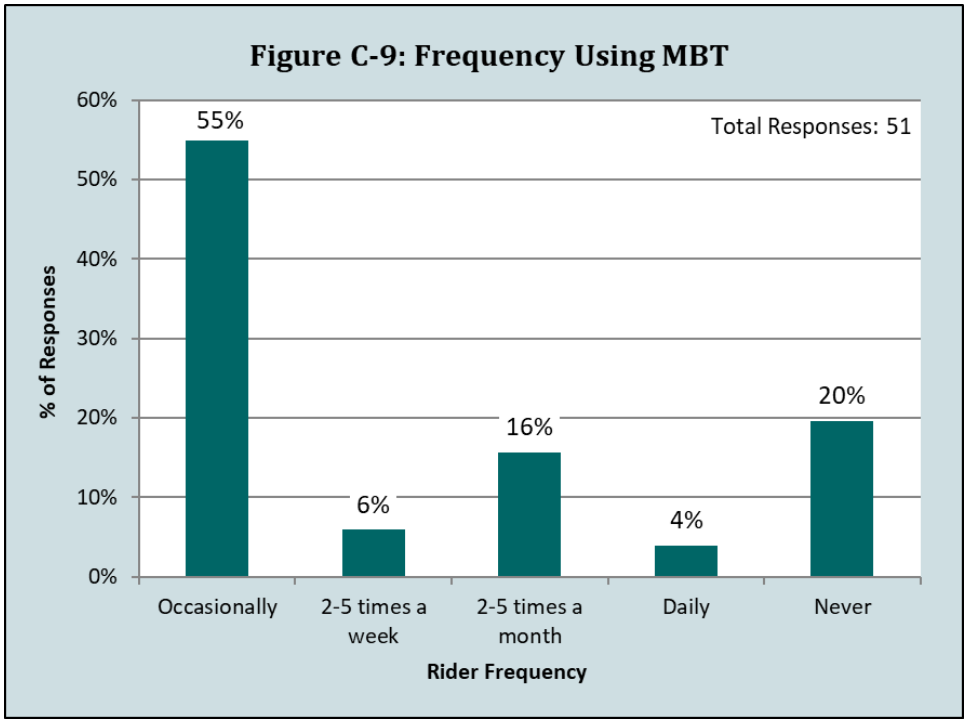


Figure C-9: Frequency Using MBT
Total Responses: 51
% of Responses
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
55%
6%
16%
4%
20%
Occasionally
2-5 times a week
2-5 times a month
Daily
Never
Rider Frequency

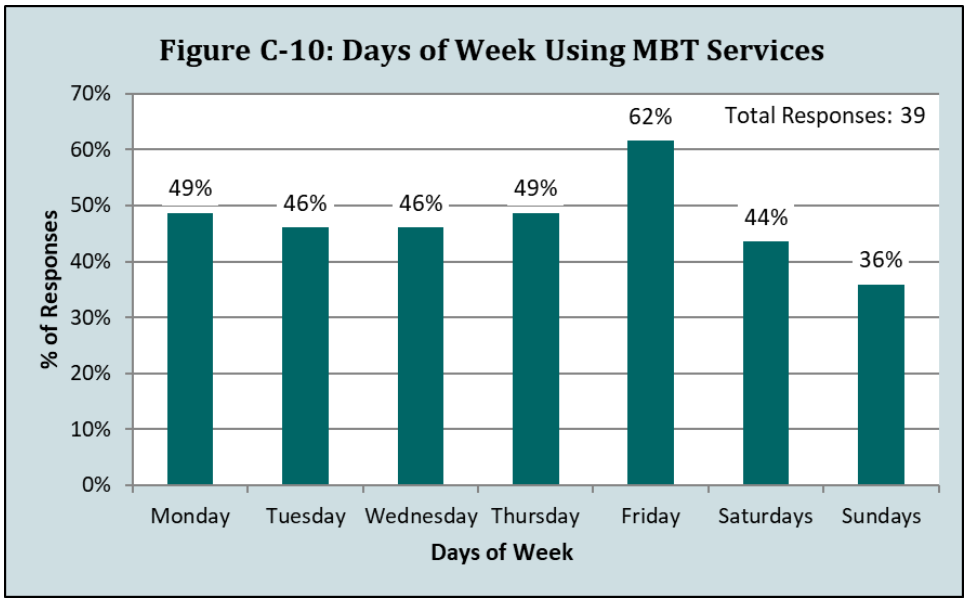


Figure C-10: Days of Week Using MBT Services
Total Responses: 39
% of Responses
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
49%
46%
46%
49%
62%
44%
36%
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturdays
Sundays
Days of Week

Opinion on Transit Services

Improvements to Encourage Morro Bay Transit Use

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to use Morro Bay public transit more often if certain improvements were made, using a scale of 1 (definitely would not) to 4 (definitely would) (Figure C-11). The improvements that received the strongest positive responses included service to additional destinations (46 percent "definitely would"), better connections to other transit services (42 percent "definitely would"), and more frequent weekend service (27 percent "definitely would"), with many respondents also selecting "would."

Other improvements that received notable support were bus stops closer to home (31 percent "definitely would"), better information (29 percent "definitely would"), later weekend service (31 percent "definitely would"), and more frequent weekday service (25 percent "definitely would"). Improvements such as earlier weekday service (17 percent "definitely would") and earlier weekend service (20 percent "definitely would") had lower support, with more respondents indicating "would not" or "definitely would not."

Table 1 summarizes the weighted averages of this question, showing that the improvements that generated the highest likelihood of increased use included service to additional destinations (weighted average 3.2), better connections to other transit services (3.04), and more frequent weekend service (2.93).

Other improvements, such as bus stops closer to home (2.96), better information (2.91), and later weekend service (2.91), also scored relatively high. Changes to earlier weekday service (2.58) and earlier weekend service (2.64) had the lowest weighted averages, indicating these were less likely to influence increased transit use compared to other improvements.

Figure C-11: Improvements That Would Encourage MBT Service Use

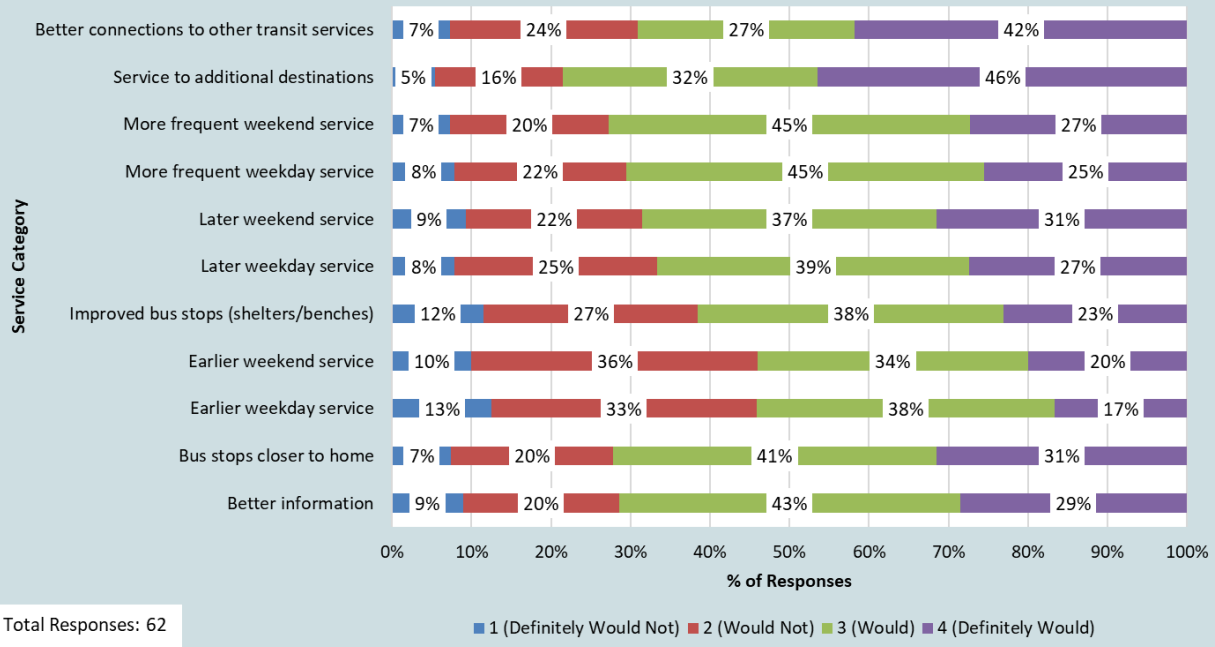


Table C-8: Improvements that would Encourage More MBT Service Use - Weighted Average

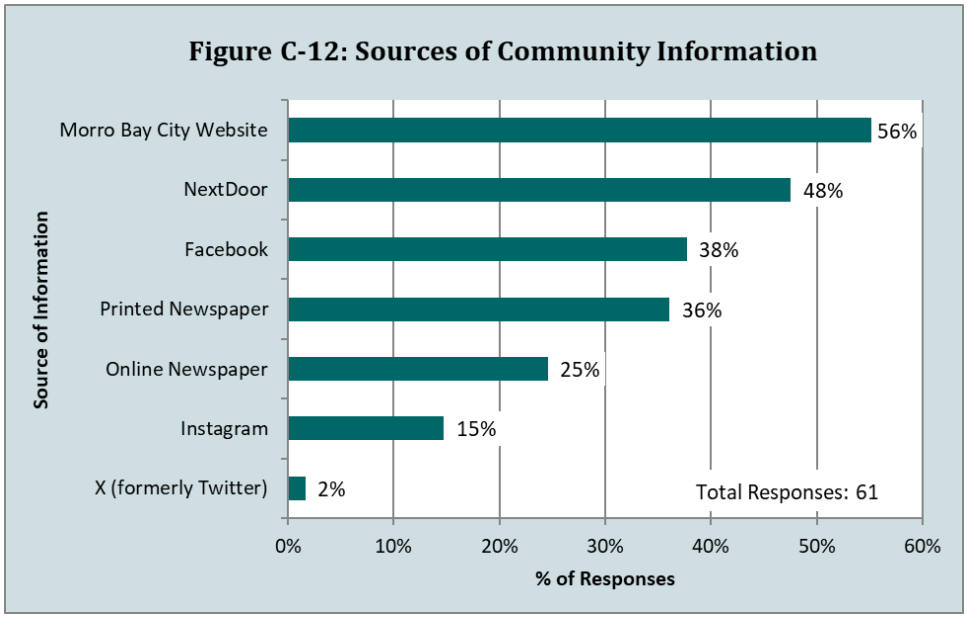
	Better information	Bus stops closer to home	Earlier weekday service	Earlier weekend service	Improved bus stops (shelters/ benches)	Later weekday service
Weighted Average	2.91	2.96	2.58	2.64	2.73	2.86

	Later weekend service	More frequent weekday service	More frequent weekend service	Service to additional destinations	Better connections to other transit services	Total Responses
Weighted Average	2.91	2.88	2.93	3.2	3.04	62

Note: Weighted average calculated on a scale from a scale of 1 (Definitely Would Not) - 4 (Definitely Would).

Sources of Community Information

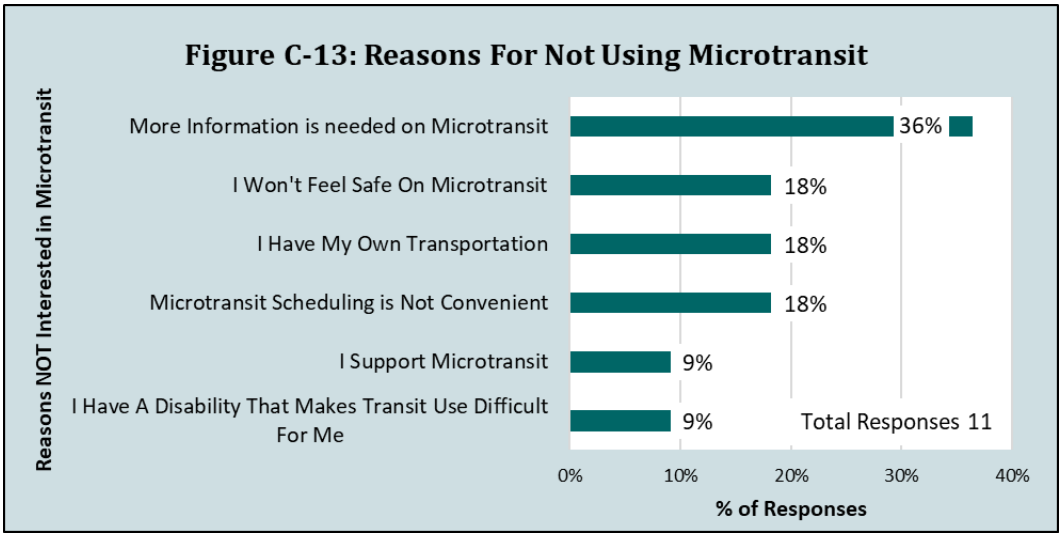
Participants were asked where they get information about their local community (Figure C-12). The most common sources of local community information were the Morro Bay City website (56 percent) and NextDoor (48 percent). Social media platforms like Facebook (38 percent) and Instagram (15 percent) were also used, while online newspapers (25 percent) and printed newspapers (36 percent) reached smaller shares. Very few respondents (2 percent) reported using X (formerly Twitter).



Interest in Microtransit

Respondents were asked about their interest in using Microtransit. Of the 65 respondents, 49 percent indicated they would be interested, 12 percent were not interested, and 38 percent needed more information before deciding.

Those who answered No, they were NOT interested in microtransit were asked why they were not interested in microtransit (Figure C-13). Among respondents who were not interested in Microtransit, 36 percent indicated they needed more information, while 18 percent cited inconvenient scheduling, having their own transportation, or safety concerns. Smaller shares noted a disability that makes transit use difficult (9 percent) or expressed general support for Microtransit despite not being interested (9 percent).

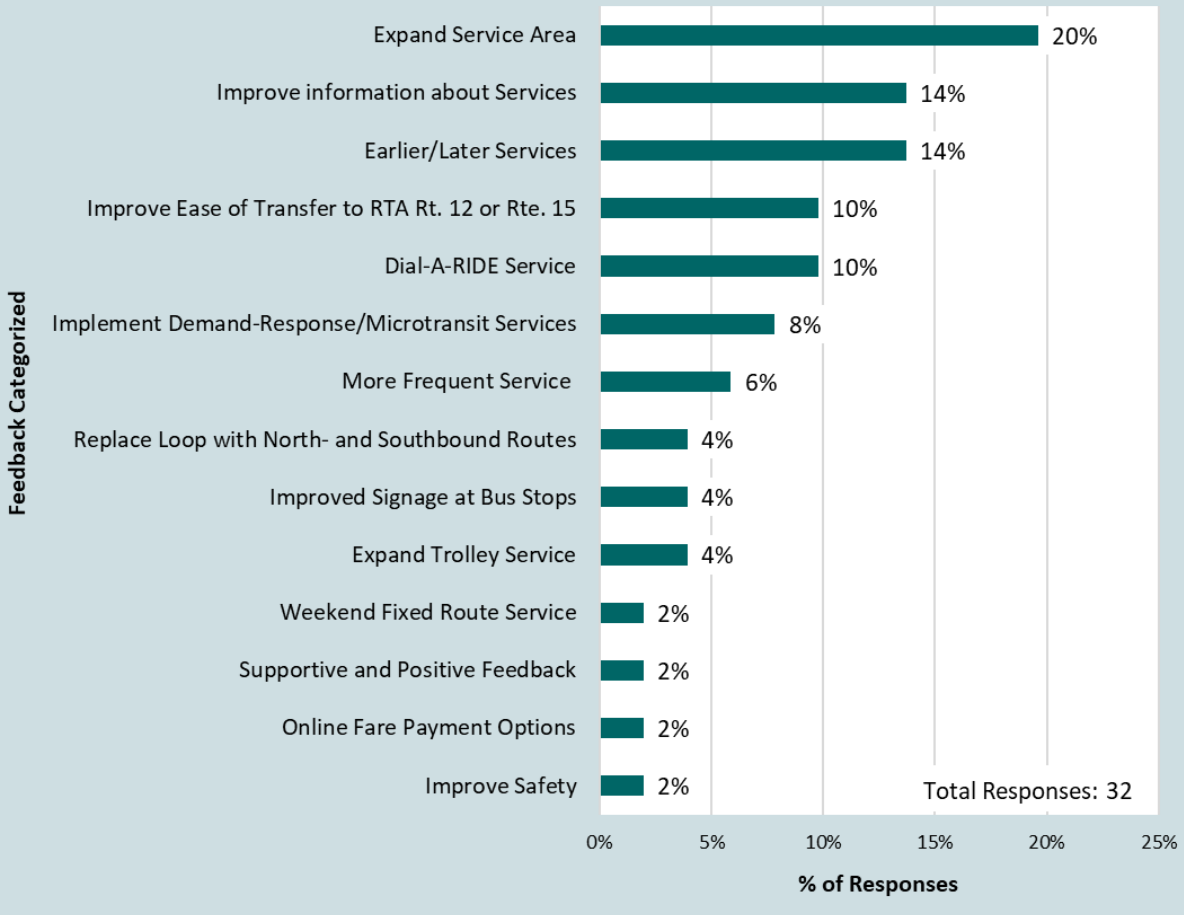


Open-Ended Comments and Feedback

Survey Participants were given the ability to leave open-ended comments and feedback about Morro Bay Transit. For ease of analysis, these were categorized based on content (Figure C-14). The survey results include:

- Respondents who request expanding the service area (20 percent), particularly for those who are trying to go to San Luis Obispo, Cayucos, and Los Osos.
- Respondents requesting earlier and later service hours (14 percent), including for those traveling to the airport and for students who may wish to use the bus service to get to school, but have a zero period or wish to attend after-school extracurricular activities.
- Requests for improving information about available services (14 percent), including adding route schedules to bus stops and making information available for passengers with disabilities that would make Fixed Bus/Trolley use more difficult.
- Other frequently mentioned needs include restarting the MBT Dial-A-RIDE service and making transfers to RTA Routes 12 and 15 easier (10 percent each).

Figure C-14: Open-Ended Feedback Summary



Appendix D

BOARDING AND ALIGHTING MAPS

Figure D-1
Morro Bay Transit Fixed-Route Avg. Daily Boardings/Alightings

Figure D-2
Downtown Route Trolley Avg. Daily Boardings/Alightings

Figure D-3
North Route Trolley Avg. Daily Boardings/Alightings