

Appendix C: Baseline Assessment Report

November 2020

"I WOULD RIDE THE BUS IF..."

THERE WAS LESS TIME BETWEEN BUSES

THERE WAS MORE WEEKEND SERVICE

IT RAN LATER

IF SERVICE WAS FASTER

OTHER? TELL US:

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NYGAARD

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1 Introduction

Giving everyone in the community an opportunity to participate was a top priority throughout the MTD Next Transit Service Analysis. MTD and its consultants provided community members with as many ways as possible to express their ideas and provide feedback online or in person. They encouraged community members to communicate in whatever way they found was most convenient and comfortable.

The following provides a summary of the public engagement strategies that were used during MTD Next and highlights the major findings that emerged from comments and conversations with riders, stakeholders, and the greater Champaign-Urbana community.

Public engagement efforts included the following:

- **Public Involvement Plan:** MTD and its consultants developed a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) at the project's outset. This plan detailed the public engagement efforts to be made in association with the Transit System Analysis, along with plans and timelines for each public engagement activity. It also identified roles and responsibilities for MTD and its consultants.
- **Project Brand:** A unique project name and branding were used to create a clear and recognizable identity for the project and generate interest from a wide range of community members.
- **Project Website:** A project website was launched to provide project background, share news and upcoming events, provide links to surveys and other ways to share feedback, and post project deliverables as they were completed.
- **On-Board Survey:** A passenger survey was conducted on board all MTD bus routes. A total of 2,134 passengers responded, sharing information about their trip and their general use of transit services, their priorities for improving service, and their satisfaction with the system's services and features.
- **Open House Workshop:** The stand-alone event gathered riders and MTD Board members to discuss existing conditions, brainstorm service ideas, and gather feedback through mapping and voting activities.
- **Pop-Up Events:** On-site engagements occurred at two existing events in the community. Several activities and voting exercises gathered quantitative feedback, while conversations with community members gathered qualitative feedback.
- **Design Your Own Transit System Survey:** An online, interactive exercise that invited participants to prioritize transit improvements within a fixed budget. A total of 302 people participated in the survey.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** The project team conducted interviews with key MTD stakeholders to gain their insights into and experience with MTD's system. The consultants spoke with seven stakeholders representing the Cities of Champaign and Urbana as well as other community representatives.
- **Smithville Planning Game:** The consultants led a hands-on planning workshop that included the study's Transit Advisory Committee members. The workshop familiarized

them with transit planning principles and common service tradeoffs. A guided exercise in which participants designed a transit system for Champaign-Urbana allowed the members to put what they learned into action.

- **City Council Presentation:** The project team formally presented on MTD Next's progress to the Champaign City Council and introduced them to transit planning principles and tradeoffs. The Council voted unanimously to continue the study.

2 On-Board Passenger Survey

The consultants conducted a passenger survey on board all MTD bus routes. Passengers shared information about their trip and their general use of transit services, their priorities for improving service, and their satisfaction with the system's service and features. The survey was administered September 30 to October 3, 2019 on all MTD fixed routes, with paper surveys available in both English and Spanish. A total of 2,134 surveys were collected. Most responses were received on the Silver, Gold, and Teal routes while the fewest responses were received on the Ruby and Lime routes.

Rider Characteristics

- **Gender:** 54.4% of respondents were female and 44.8% were male.
- **Age:** The largest share of respondents (56.9%) were between the ages of 18-24, which implies that students heavily use MTD service. Nearly 15% were between the ages of 30 and 44, followed by 12.6% between ages 25-29. Only 4% of the respondents were above the age of 60.
- **Employment Status:** About half of the transit riders are students. A fifth of the transit riders are employed full-time, while another fifth is employed part-time.
- **Income:** A quarter of the MTD transit riders reported living in households with incomes less than \$10,000. Since most of the transit riders are students, this may also mean personal income rather than total household income. Total household income of a third of the transit riders is at or above the median household income of Champaign (\$68,872) and Urbana (55,079).
- **Race/Ethnicity:** White or Caucasian riders constitute the largest portion (31.3%) of survey respondents, closely followed by Asian (27.1%) and African American/Black riders (25.5%). This contrasts with the share of Champaign and Urbana's combined population, which is 64% White or Caucasian, 17% African Americans/Black, and 15% Asian.

Transit Use

- **Frequency of Transit Use:** Most respondents are regular transit riders, with about 76% reporting that they ride the bus at least five days a week. Only 2% of respondents reported using bus services just once a week.
- **Trip Purposes:** 60% of respondents reported taking the bus to go to their college or university. Another 27% of them took the bus to their place of employment. They also used transit for shopping, medical appointments, and recreation.
- **Transit Use Over Time:** Most respondents have been using MTD for four years or less, which may indicate that a large share of riders are university students. Approximately 28% of respondents are new to the system and have been riding it for less than six months. Another 27% of riders have been riding MTD for one to two years, and another 20% of riders have been riding MTD for three to four years.

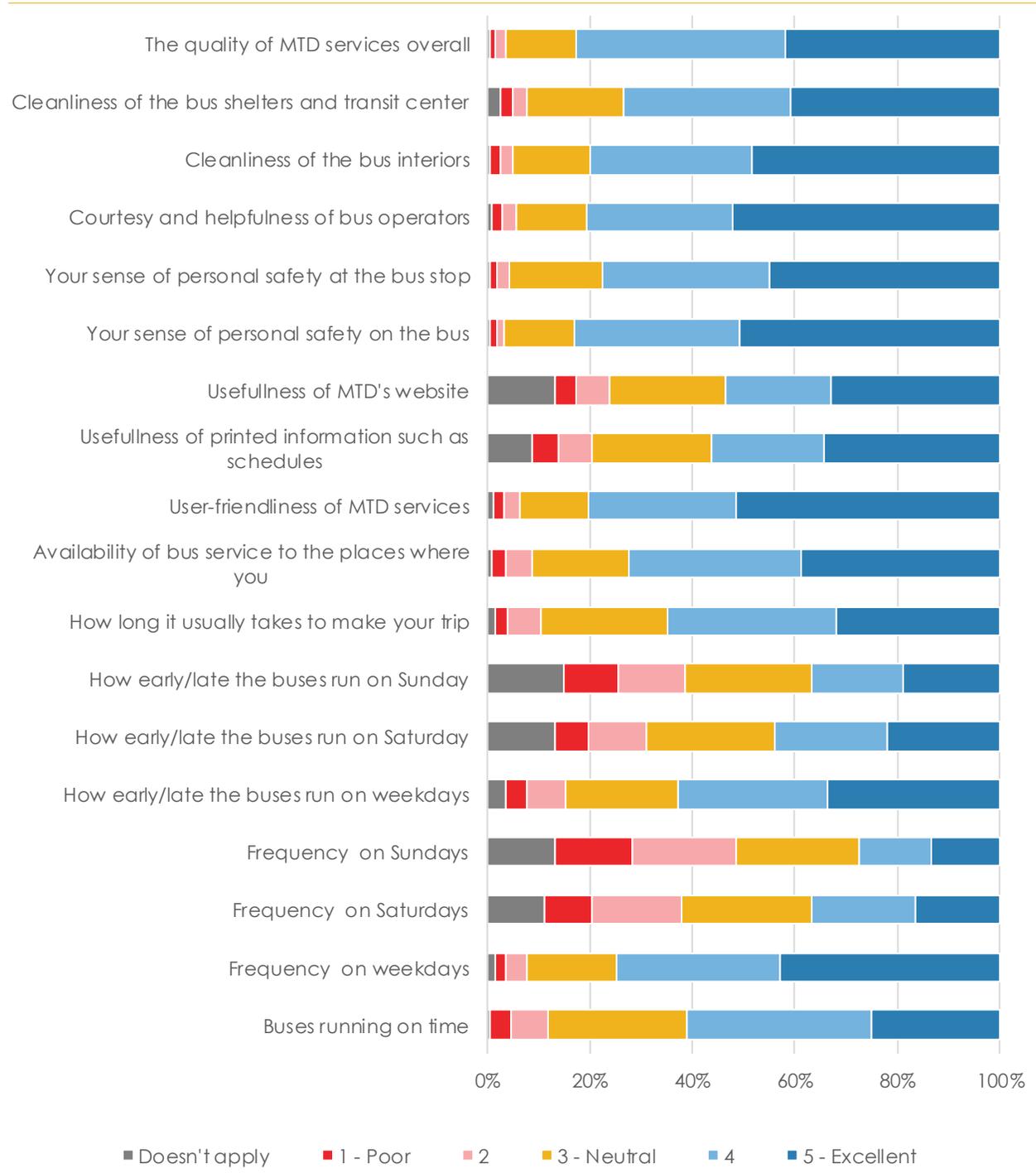
Approximately 41% of riders reported that they use MTD with the same frequency as a year ago, while approximately one quarter use MTD more often than they had. Approximately 23% did not ride the system one year ago, and just 10% reported riding it less often than a year ago.

- **Transit Access:** 90% of respondents walked to a nearby bus stop to ride MTD. The remaining respondents either biked, used VeoRide, drove, or were dropped off at a bus stop.
- **Transfers:** Most respondents (61%) did not have to transfer between buses to reach their destination. Approximately one fifth of respondents made one transfer to complete their trip, while another 13% made two transfers to reach their destination.
- **Fare Payment:** Two-thirds of riders (67%) reported using an i-card to pay their fare, indicating the extent to which UI students, faculty, and staff comprise MTD ridership. About 11% of all riders use cash to ride the system, while almost another tenth uses an annual pass.
- **Mobile Transit Apps:** Nearly all respondents (95%) reported that they use a cell phone, and 92% of them have access to the internet. In addition, 76% of survey respondents have a mobile phone app that they use for local bus service.

Rideshare and Bikeshare: Half of respondents reported having used Uber, Lyft, or a similar ridehailing service at least once in the past 30 days. However, only 17% of respondents reported using the VeoRide bike sharing service during that same time. Forty-eight percent of respondents answered that these services were not used in combination with a bus trip, while only 7% used it in combination with MTD service. The consultants also asked respondents whether they used these services to replace a bus trip, and 23% answered that they had.

MTD Service Features and Improvements

Overall, MTD riders are fairly satisfied with local bus service. Respondents gave high ratings to personal safety on MTD buses, courtesy and helpfulness of operators, and MTD's overall service quality. In terms of service characteristics, they also gave high ratings for weekday frequency. The lowest ratings were given to service frequency on both Saturdays and Sundays, and to early and late span of service on Sundays.



Out of the 18 service feature options, respondents were asked to identify the top three features that they believe are most important to improve. In general, the most important opportunities for improvement are on-time performance, service frequency (particularly on weekends), and the availability of bus service to where people want to go.

- The largest share of survey respondents by far identified **buses running on time** as their top service improvement opportunity. Service frequencies on Saturdays and Sundays were the next highest opportunities, but with less than a third as many votes as on-time performance, indicating that reliability is a significant issue for MTD riders.
- The largest share of respondents identified **the availability of service to where they want to go**, as their second-highest area of improvement, followed by on-time performance and both frequency and hours of service on Sundays.
- Many respondents identified **service frequency** as their third-most important opportunity for improvement, with Sunday, weekday, and Saturday frequency ranking in the top four.

3 Open House Workshop

The project team held an open house workshop to engage the public. The open house format allowed the public to interact, engage, and provide feedback. It consisted of a brief introduction to the MTD Next project along with information gathered as part of the Service Analysis and Market Analysis. From there, the consultants took the opportunity to solicit input on transportation needs and discuss the existing operating environment with participants.

The open house was held at the Illinois Terminal on November 13, 2019. Members of the MTD Board as well as the public attended. There were several stations set up with different engagement activities. Comment cards were also available for participants to give feedback.

Activity Stations

- Existing System and Transit Planning Principles
 - Description of MTD Next project, reasons for undertaking, links to more information
 - Transit Supportive factors within a community
 - Building a transit network and simplified transit tradeoffs
- Dot Voting Exercise
 - “What are your transit priorities?” board
- MTD Next Brainstorm
 - “What would make MTD better?” Writing prompt
- Mapping Activity
 - “Where do you live, where do you travel most often, where would you like to travel?” pin drop activity

"What Are Your Transit Priorities?" Dot Voting Exercise Results

Coverage

Provide frequent service but only serve high ridership areas



Provide low frequency service in all areas

Service Distribution

Provide service in only areas with the most need



Provide service in areas proportional to funding regardless of need

Frequency and Span

Provide low frequency service for more hours of the day



Provide frequent service for fewer hours of the day

Directness

Provide faster service on major roads, requiring longer walks



Provide slower service on neighborhood roads, requiring shorter walks

Stop Spacing

Space stops two blocks apart to speed up service



Space stops every block to reduce walk time, but slow down service

Transfers

Provide a high frequency network that requires transfers



Provide low frequency service that focuses on "one-seat" rides

Days of Service

Provide more weekday service and keep weekends as is



Provide more weekend service and keep weekdays as is

Service Type

Focus service on the entire community



Focus service on the University of Illinois

MTD Next Brainstorm Ideas

- Sunday evening service to Round Barn Road
- More frequent service AND longer service hours
- Dedicated bus lane on Green Street
- Weekend service on routes that currently only have weekday service
- Evening service on Lavender Route and service to Carle on Curtis
- Publicly subsidized rideshare for edges of community (e.g. West Champaign, South Urbana)

Mapping Activity

Participants placed green pins where they lived including:

- South Champaign
- North Champaign
- Midtown Champaign
- Downtown Urbana
- West Champaign
- Round Barn Road area

Then, they placed red pins where they travelled most often including:

- Downtown Urbana
- South Urbana
- Campus Town
- University of Illinois
- Midtown
- Downtown Champaign
- Parkland College

Finally, some participants placed additional yellow pins where they would like to travel using the bus, but are not currently able to:

- Carle Fields
- South U of I campus
- Central Champaign
- North Champaign



MTD System Map with Pins and Notes from Participants
Source: Nelson\Nygaard

4 Pop-Up Events

The project team participated in two “pop-up” events to share information about the project and gather input. Outreach activities included voting exercises, open-ended questions where participants could share their ideas, and general comment cards. Project staff spoke one-on-one with people attending the events, interacting with many who might not otherwise attend a public meeting or other formal project event. Activities with hand-outs and prizes were conducted to create fun, meaningful, and relevant experiences to get people thinking about transit service and provide meaningful feedback.

The consultants conducted pop-ups at two events:

- **Urbana Sweetcorn Festival:** Friday, August 23rd and Saturday, August 24th, 2019. This music and arts festival in Downtown Urbana drew attendees from across the Champaign-Urbana area.
- **Quad Day:** Sunday, August 25th, 2019. Given the high number of college students who use MTD, it was important to gather information at the event for University students who are looking for student organizations and extracurricular activities. It proved to be an invaluable opportunity to engage with this population and educate newly arrived students about MTD services and invite their feedback from the start.

Nelson Nygard and MUSE spoke to hundreds of residents, students, and visitors over three days at the Sweetcorn Festival and Quad Day. Among them, the following themes emerged.

MTD Rider Voting Exercise Outcome

I Ride MTD To...	# of Dots/Comments
Get Around	46
Get to Class	43
Save Money	25
Be Green	17
Avoid Traffic	15
Get to Work	14
Other	7



MTD Next Pop-up at University of Illinois Quad Day
Source: MUSE

MTD Non-Rider Voting Exercise Outcome

I would ride the bus if...	# of Dots/Comments
There Was More Weekend Service	54
There Was Less Time Between Buses	39
It Ran Later	33
Service Was Faster	18
Other	18

Summary of Comments

Specific route comments:

- Extend Yellow Route with two stops: one at the airport and one at the golf course entrance
- Service to the Savoy Walmart
- Service to Arbor Meadows
- The Blue Route is sporadic
- The Bronze Route is rarely on time
- Route 22 is very indirect
- Straighten out 7 Gray Route
- Too many variants of some routes – hard to keep track

Expanded service:

- While the campus is well served, Route 10W ends before some classes end at 8pm
- Expand weekend service
- More frequency on Navy Route
- Infrequency makes MTD hard to use for day trips. Easy to get into town, but harder to get home
- More buses on Routes 1, 22, and 100
- Night service to industrial parks
- One airport employee walks 40 minutes when his car is in the shop and would rather not drive
- New Years' Eve service
- More buses to the Crystal Lake Pool

Safety: Some shift workers do not feel safe waiting for the bus very early in the morning. Buses do not serve their area early enough for them to get to work or school on time.

Amenities:

- Larger/more visible bus stop signs
- Posting maps of routes at stops
- Timetables posted at all stops

- Bilingual/multilingual signage
- More benches (e.g., Sangamon & Mattis)
- More and larger shelters at high ridership stops (example: Round Barn, many seniors waiting)
- More USB plugs
- Sidewalks at every stop (e.g., missing crosswalk to the Bradley Apartment Complex stop)
 - Some stops are in yards

App reliability: Most common feedback was that Google Maps and all mobile apps are frequently incorrect on iOS and Android

- Ghost buses, real-time scheduling errors, buses do not arrive as scheduled
- Bus stop data in Google Maps is not current
- No standalone app for Android

Education: Requests for in-person training about how to use the bus to get around:

- Special education teacher and her students
- Carle resident who would like to take MTD but has no idea which lines serve her home
- U of I faculty member for herself and her students

Other:

- The schedule book is confusing and is not detailed enough
- Make large-font schedules available
- Provide a day pass option
- A private school student would like to have MTD pass on their student ID
- Some respondents would like to see a return of punch cards
- Have the Hopper routes say Hopper on headsigns
- Reroutes are confusing and need better signage

Compliments:

- Many remarked that the bus drivers are courteous and answer questions
- One respondent moved from Evanston and thinks MTD provides better service than the Chicago Transit Authority. Another respondent prefers MTD over suburban Portland transit service.
- Partnership with the Parks works well
- Bus bike racks are great. Between biking and the bus, many feel that they do not need a car.
- For some, the bus is preferred even if they have a car. Many said the hassles of parking, shoveling snow, gas, etc. outweigh the benefits.



MTD Next Pop-up at Urbana Sweetcorn Festival
Source: Nelson\Nygaard

5 Design Your Own Transit System

The Design Your Own Transit System survey is an interactive web exercise that provides insight into respondents' priorities for public transportation service and investments. Respondents were provided with a hypothetical budget (\$100) to spend on a menu of various public transportation service elements, with a specific cost assigned to each element. These elements fell under one of seven categories:

- How should we change the existing route network?
- Where should transit service take people?
- Where should transit service pick people up?
- How often should service operate?
- When should service operate?
- Infrastructure improvements
- Other improvements

Each element also helped to achieve certain benefits to differing degrees: Ridership, Geographic Coverage, Passenger Experience, and Speed and Reliability. By asking respondents to choose their investments with a constrained budget, the results provided insights into respondents' values and equipped decision makers with a better understanding of community priorities around public transportation. There was also a follow-up survey with questions about demographic characteristics and respondents' likelihood to use a potential public transportation service in Harrisburg.

The online survey was open August through November 2019. It was promoted on the City's website as well as at community outreach events in town. A total of 302 respondents completed the Design Your Own Transit System survey; of those respondents, 243 completed the follow-up survey.

About the respondents:

- Most respondents identified as White/Caucasian (71%).
- Approximately 13% identified as Asian, 5% identified as Black/African American and, 6% identified as Hispanic/Latino. Another 4% identified as other races or ethnicities.
- The respondents were 56% female and 44% male.
- Most respondents were from mid to high income households: 27% of respondents reported an annual household income of more than \$100,000, while 9% reported having an annual household income of \$75,000 to \$100,000 and another 16% having an annual household income of \$50,000 to \$75,000.
- Most respondents were under the age of 34. Over 39% of respondents were between the ages of 14 and 24, while 27% were between the ages of 25 and 34. Only 3% of respondents were over the age of 65.

Respondents were asked how often they would potentially use local public transportation service in Champaign-Urbana if it met their needs. One third of respondents (34%) reported that they would use the service seven days a week, while another third (33%) reported they would use it five days a week.

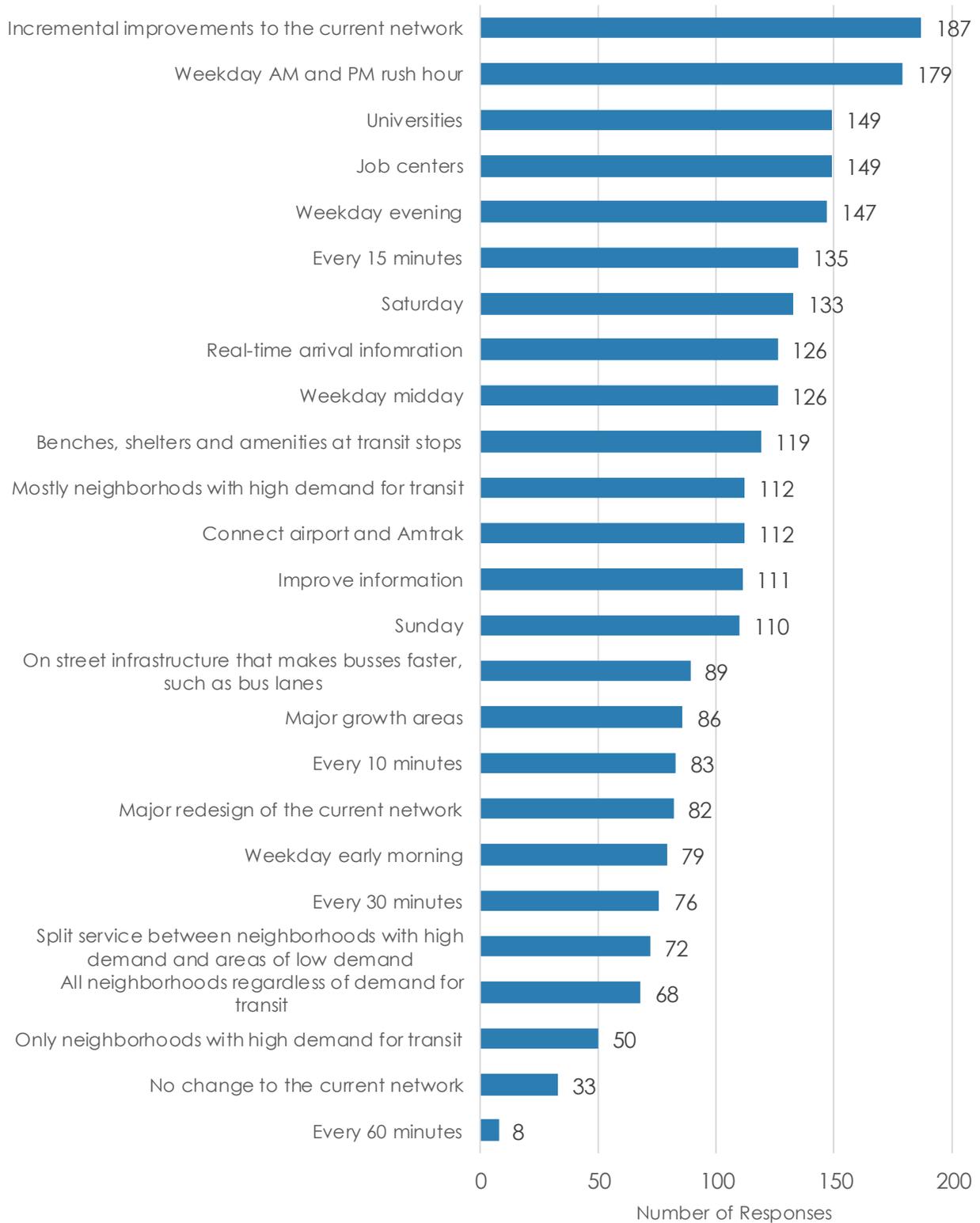
Respondents were asked to identify their top priorities among several characteristics of public transportation service. Looking at all service characteristics across the seven categories, the top three priorities were:

- Incremental improvements to the current route network
- Weekday service during rush hour
- Service to the University of Illinois campus

Priorities for each service category were as follows:

- **How should we change the existing route network?** Most respondents prioritized incremental improvements to the current network (187). Almost a third of the respondents (82) opted for a major redesign of the current network, while the rest (33) wanted no changes to the current network.
- **Where should transit service take people?** Operating a service to Job Centers (149) and Universities (149) was more important to respondents than operating a service to the Airport and Amtrak (112) or to Major Growth Areas (86).
- **Where should transit service pick people up?** Respondents prioritized most service in neighborhoods with high demand (112). Significant responses were also received for providing split service between neighborhoods with high demand and areas of low demand (72), and for providing service to all neighborhoods regardless of transit demand (68).
- **How often should service operate?** Respondents prioritized having bus service every 15 minutes (135) over service every 10 minutes (83), every 30 minutes (76), and every 60 minutes (8).
- **When should service operate?** Respondents prioritized operating a service during Weekday – Rush Hour (179) but also showed significant support for weekday evening service (147) and weekday midday service (126). More respondents are open to having service on Saturday (133) than on Sunday (110).
- **Infrastructure improvements:** More respondents wanted improvements to benches, shelters and amenities at transit stops (119) over improvements to on-street infrastructure that would makes buses faster (89).
- Respondents also prioritized access to real-time arrival information (126) over improvements to other information (111).

Design Your Own Transit System Online Survey – Transit Priorities



6 Stakeholder Interviews

The consultants conducted interviews with key MTD stakeholders to gain their insights into and experience with MTD’s system. They provided stakeholders with a set of questions in advance of their interview to serve as a starting point for encouraging a broader conversation about public transit in Champaign-Urbana and about what stakeholders see as key challenges and opportunities. MTD identified the stakeholders while the consultants conducted interviews with as many of them as possible based on their availability. Stakeholders who were interviewed included:

- Tina Ansong, City of Champaign
- Cynthia Hoyle, Transportation Consultant
- Ben LeRoy, City of Champaign
- Rita Morocoima-Black, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
- Daniel Olson, Champaign Park District
- Morgan White, University of Illinois Facilities and Services
- Lily Wilcock, City of Urbana

Top Takeaways

1. Bus commutes and transfers can be unpleasant and frustrating.
2. Some would-be passengers choose cars over the bus due to the lack of predictability, efficiency, and frequency of bus service.
3. Lack of familiarity and lack of accessible information (signage, electronic, etc.) is a barrier to ridership.
4. Many riders and would-be riders were complimentary of MTD overall. MTD is doing many things right and some tweaks and “quality of life” improvements would go a long way.

Key Issues

1. **Route/System Design**
 - Circuitous routes cannot compete with the convenience of driving or biking, especially when one can drive most anywhere in town in 10 minutes.
 - Circuitous route design and a lack of infrastructure leaves riders in the elements for long times.
 - Even if people can get to work or school in the morning, there might be no evening bus to get them home.
 - Route variances are difficult to commit to memory; routes are not intuitive.
 - Re-route information due to events and construction is not timely or accessible.
 - Most trips require transferring via downtown, making commutes much longer than walking, biking, or driving if the origin and destination is outside of downtown.
 - Route spokes lack a wheel/circulator to make the system complete.

2. Campus Concerns

- High turnover of the population in a college town means there is a constant need to educate newcomers.
- There is a perceived difference between quality of service and amenities within campus versus the rest of the system.
- There is a perception that university faculty and administrators lack awareness about transit benefits.
- Historically, there has been an uneven approach to reducing driving to and on campus while prioritizing bus transportation.

3. Urban Design

- The cities and county's land-use decisions have hampered the bus system's efficacy.
- Recent growth, including hospitals and park facilities, is occurring on the urban fringe and there is a perception that bus service has not kept up with such growth.
- Outside of Campus, there is a deficit in both service and infrastructure such as shelters, benches, lighting, and real-time information boards.
- There is a perception that not enough affordable and family housing exists in the few transit-rich areas.
- Drivers sometimes drop people off in peoples' yards or driveways where bus stops are not accessible.
- Workplaces providing free parking disincentivize bus as a commuting option.
- Similarly, the Champaign Park District does not charge program and event attendees for parking.

4. Bus Service:

- A lack of evening and Sunday service impacts third shift workers, many of whom are low-income.
- There is a desire for more shelters, benches, and information boards to areas outside of Campus – especially at key transfer points.
- Cultural barriers and fear (based in lack of accurate information) may dissuade immigrants from using the bus.
- Improved bus service to access daily needs (grocery stores, etc.) could help with other goals such as decreasing “food deserts.”
- There is a sense that MTD employees drive and cannot relate to riders.
- Some residents perceive bus commuting as a behavior reserved only for the poor. I.e., “What does taking transit say about me? Who will see me on the bus?”

Key Strengths

- Passes for school-age students give parents peace of mind that their child doesn't have to drive at 16. Also, encouraging high school students to ride the bus makes them less likely to drive later.
- There is an opportunity for increased financial participation from the Champaign Park District for additional services.
- Lowering the annual bus pass cost was favorably received.

- Hybrid buses are great for campus routes and are much quieter.
- Investment in designated bus stops, bus stop facilities, and the accommodation of bikes were all received favorably.
- MTD is a safety net that takes care of the community and is a good system overall.

Recommendations

In addition to issues raised, interviewees also suggested specific improvements they would like to see:

- Use either colors or numbers for routes but not both. Perhaps MTD could use color to denote frequency.
- Improve the route book information to make it less confusing.
- Map existing shelters against race and income levels to ensure equitable facilities.
- Balance efforts to attract “choice riders” with system improvements for all.
- Shorten travel times between key destinations.
- Provide bus service to hospitals’ satellite campuses.
- Run cross-town routes on east-west streets.
- Make the following bus stop improvements:
 - Install more bike racks at stops to encourage multi-modal transportation.
 - Install more shelters, but especially at transfer points and where MTD projects ridership will grow.
 - Add more lighting to make early and late commuters feel safer.
 - Make bus stop signs bigger with improved signage for texting service.
- Incorporate bus information into LED displays in hospitals, businesses, etc.
- Improve cleanliness of the seats.
- Expand the student bus pass program to after school hours.

7 Smithville Planning Game

Nelson\Nygaard led a hands-on planning workshop for MTD Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) members. This workshop familiarized them with transit planning principles and common service tradeoffs and provided them with a guided exercise in which they designed a community transit system that let them put what they learned into action.

Participating Transit Advisory Committee members included:

- Kara Dudek, Urbana Parks District
- Ben LeRoy, City of Champaign
- Rita Morocoima-Black, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
- Lily Wilcock, City of Urbana

The exercise was centered on Smithville, an imaginary city with key similarities to Champaign-Urbana including a medium-density urban core, a large university campus, existing rail service, a large barrier in the form of a river, and clusters of transit-dependent residents. Through this exercise, the participants were able to visualize the impacts of different service investments by placing physical lines and boundaries on a paper map. Each team was given a set of several long, medium, and short flexible sticks that each represented a segment of low-frequency, medium-frequency, or high-frequency bus service, respectively. The participants were able to swap out one size stick for another which allowed them to lean into the transit tradeoffs introduced in the beginning.

At the exercise's conclusion, the consultants facilitated a discussion of the similarities and differences of each group's developed transit system. The discussions focused on how the abstract city related to Champaign-Urbana's real-world conditions and how it informs a vision for guiding transit service improvements in the twin cities.

Game Outcome

- Five Technical Advisory Committee members were present for the game and were formed into two teams.
- Each team produced a distinct solution to transportation within Smithville.
- Team A created an organic, multi-hub radial network with medium-frequency service throughout most of the community.
- Team B created a geometric grid network, with a high-frequency core of service linking several medium-frequency routes.
- Each team used their long, low-frequency segments to connect to clusters of riders at the community's far edges.



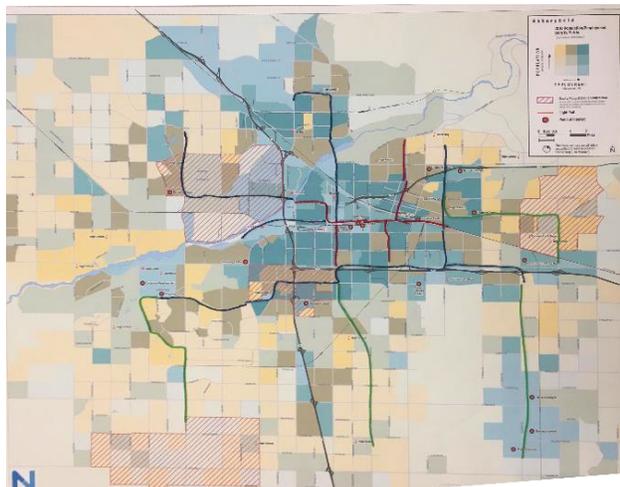
Rita Morocoima-Black (Champaign County RPC)
Explains Game Outcome
Source: Nelson\Nygaard

Final Team Maps from Smithville Game

Smithville Team A Outcome



Smithville Team B Outcome



8 City Council Presentation

On November 12, 2019, representatives from the consultant team, MTD, and the Champaign Planning Department presented to the Champaign City Council on the progress of the MTD Next Transit Service Analysis. The presentation included an overview of the service analysis process, a review of existing conditions in Champaign-Urbana, and an introduction to transit planning principles such as transit supportive factors within a community and tradeoffs in service design.

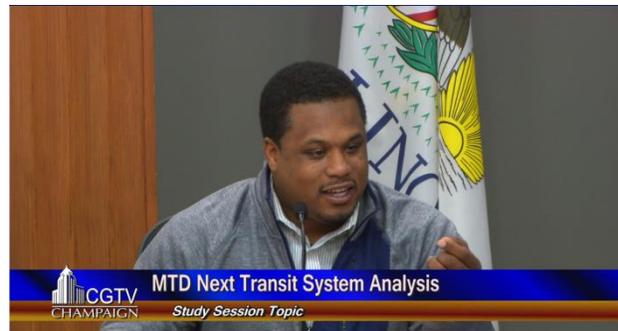
The presentation updated the Champaign City Council on the study's current findings and helped them better understand the environment in which MTD operates and how municipal decision-making (particularly around land use and infrastructure) can support or hinder transit.

Response

The Champaign City Council was receptive to the presentation and provided meaningful acknowledgement of the municipal role in transit planning.

Councilors asked about the outreach efforts undertaken as part of MTD Next. One councilor wondered what the impact of MTD's transition from flag to designated stops has been, among other questions.

Overall, the Council found that the study was an important undertaking that can improve the lives of Champaign residents, including young people and the international community.



Councilor Will Kyles reacts to MTD Next presentation
Source: City of Champaign, IL

Comments and Ideas from Council

- Engage Providence and Thornberry residents and businesses in southwest Champaign
- Involve Champaign Housing Authority
- Provide express service between Illini Union and the Illinois Terminal
- Upgrade infrastructure and amenities at Round Barn Road, if it will be a long-term transfer point
- Increase connections to big box retail and add crosstown routes
- Make MTD service time competitive with ridesharing services
- Late night routes and SafeRide are confusing for some
- Use trip planner app to collect feedback from riders
- Use social media outreach, such as Snapchat and Instagram
- Need a simple and easy way for riders to understand routes and schedule trips

- Comparison to transit in Phoenix where buses and light rail have distinct large hubs and small stops
- Increase North Champaign access to food
- City should add crosswalks to Windsor Avenue

The Council unanimously voted to continue supporting the MTD Next Transit Service Analysis with staff time.

A recording of the presentation is available at

<https://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4806?channel=1>