



Existing Conditions

SNAPSHOT REPORT

LONG-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

December 2021



Existing Conditions: Key Findings



Recent land use planning processes and forecasted population and employment growth point to opportunities to coordinate Cherriots transit services with development across the region to ensure people have a range of affordable mobility choices.



The Core Network and Cherriots frequent bus service provide a forward-looking strategy to help guide future development and growth across the region that can grow with a diverse range of services. This strategy can expand with a diverse range of services.



Cherriots offers a range of mobility services, not just local buses. By delivering on-demand services, and promoting options like vanpools, carpools, and safe walking routes, Cherriots has opportunities to bring innovative services to the region.



Cherriots plays an important role in affordable and safe transportation for riders, who today represent above average numbers of people in low-income households, and as well as people who identify as Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native American, or as belonging to more than one racial group.

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Introduction

The Cherriots Snapshot Report describes the transit and transportation options services provided by the Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD), also known as Cherriots. This report provides an overview of transit ridership and rider markets, transportation options and work commute programs, Cherriots vehicle fleet, and funding sources and uses. The information is a starting point for the Cherriots Long-Range Transit Plan (LRTP), which will create a shared understanding about where we are today and what opportunities and challenges we will consider over the next 20 years.

The LRTP will identify and communicate Cherriots 20-year strategies to maintain and grow a regional public transportation system that enhances our communities. The plan will clearly describe the agency's role in the region and set priorities for future service. Cherriots Vision, Mission, Values, and Brand Promise will guide the plan.

Vision: Making a positive difference by enhancing community livability through innovative and sustainable regional transportation options.

Mission: Connecting people with places through safe, friendly, and reliable public transportation services.

Values: Safety, service excellence, communication, innovation, and accountability.

Brand Promise: Cherriots delivers a world class customer experience.



Cherriots response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic affected transit use and operations across the United States, and Cherriots was no exception. Ridership on Cherriots buses fell by more than 90% during the spring of 2020. Cherriots took steps to protect the safety of transit operators and passengers who continued riding during the pandemic. Cherriots required passengers and operators to wear masks, encouraged physical distancing on board vehicles and inside transit centers, installed plexiglass barriers on buses to protect operators, and disinfected buses throughout the day and night. From March 2020 to July 2021, Cherriots suspended fare collection and encouraged riders to board through the rear door on buses.

Overview

Cherriots is the name used for all transit and paratransit service that SAMTD operates in Polk and Marion Counties, Oregon. Cherriots operates a public transit system providing local bus and paratransit service 7 days per week in the Salem-Keizer metro area. Cherriots also offers bus service connecting Salem and Keizer to other communities in Marion, Polk, Linn, and Clackamas Counties. Cherriots LIFT provides origin-to-destination paratransit service for people who cannot ride Cherriots Local due to their functional abilities. Cherriots also provides support for commuters in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties through the Cherriots Transportation Options program.

Cherriots relies on 303 employees to provide service across the region:

Drivers	133
Operations(Direct)	25
Operations(Contracted)	58
Maintenance(vehicles and facilities)	45
Finance	17
Communications and Transportation Options	16
Human Resources and Management	9

Notes: Operations includes dispatch, supervisors, planning, security, and emergency management. Finance includes procurement, contracts, accounting, grants administration, fare collection, technology and program management. Communications and TO includes customer service, marketing, and transportation options.



Transit service

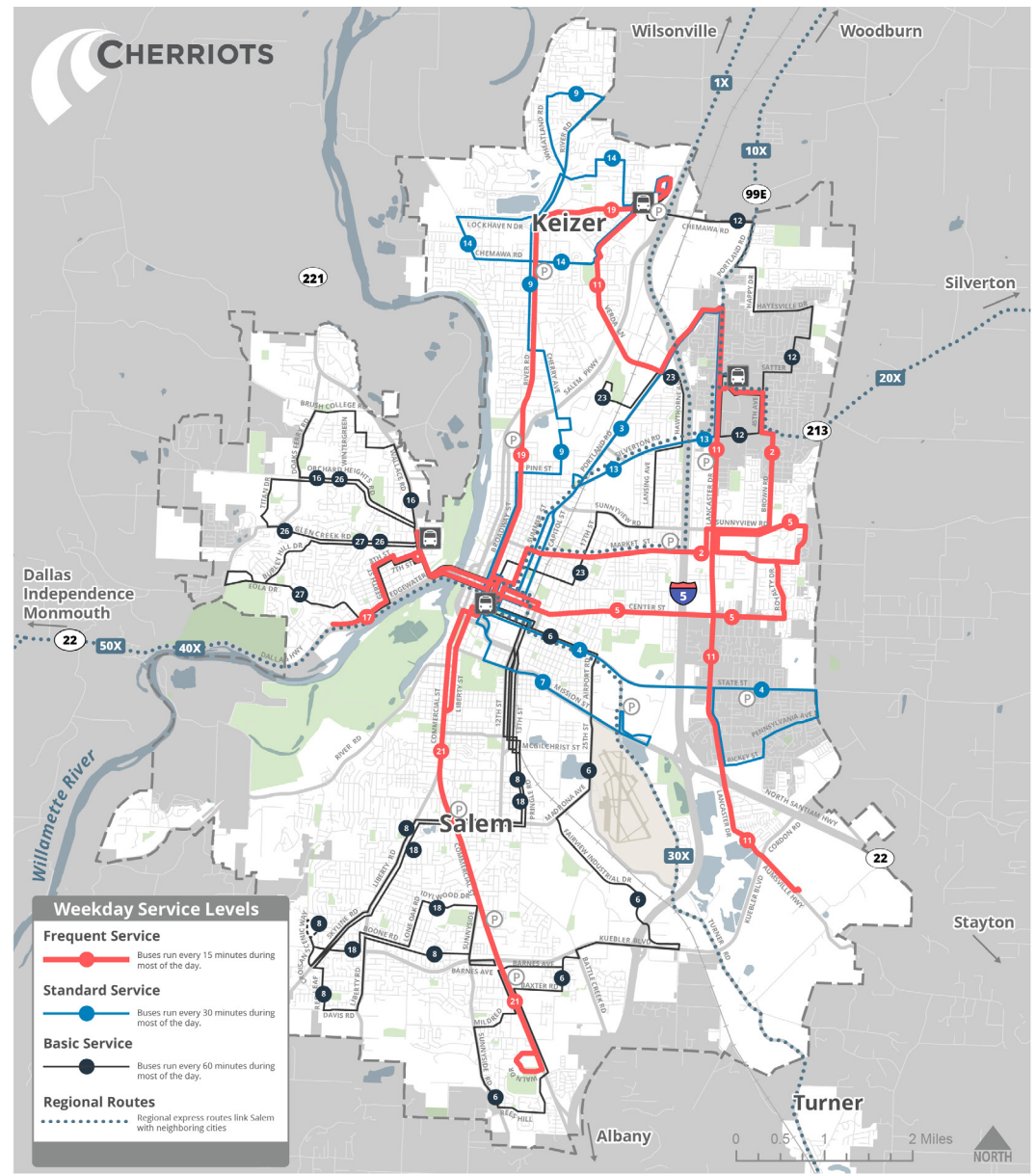
Cherriots Local and most Cherriots Express buses provide fixed-route service, which are buses operating on a predetermined schedule and route. Twenty local bus routes serve the Salem-Keizer region, and six express routes and one deviated fixed route provide regional service.

Bus service

Cherriots Local

Local buses operate from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weekdays, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sundays and most holidays. All Cherriots Local buses have wheelchair lifts and are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and accommodate up to two bicycles at a time on front-loading racks. Cherriots Local routes serve the Salem-Keizer metropolitan area with three levels of service (Figure 1).

The Core Network is several transit corridors where Cherriots is committed by policy to focus on frequent and reliable transit today and into the future. The Core Network lets riders, business owners, and developers know where they will find transit today and in the future. The Core Network allows for some flexibility connecting certain segments and in serving the downtown core. Any changes require formal Board of Directors action and a public hearing process.



Legend

Weekday Service Routes
Long Range Transit Plan

Jacobs

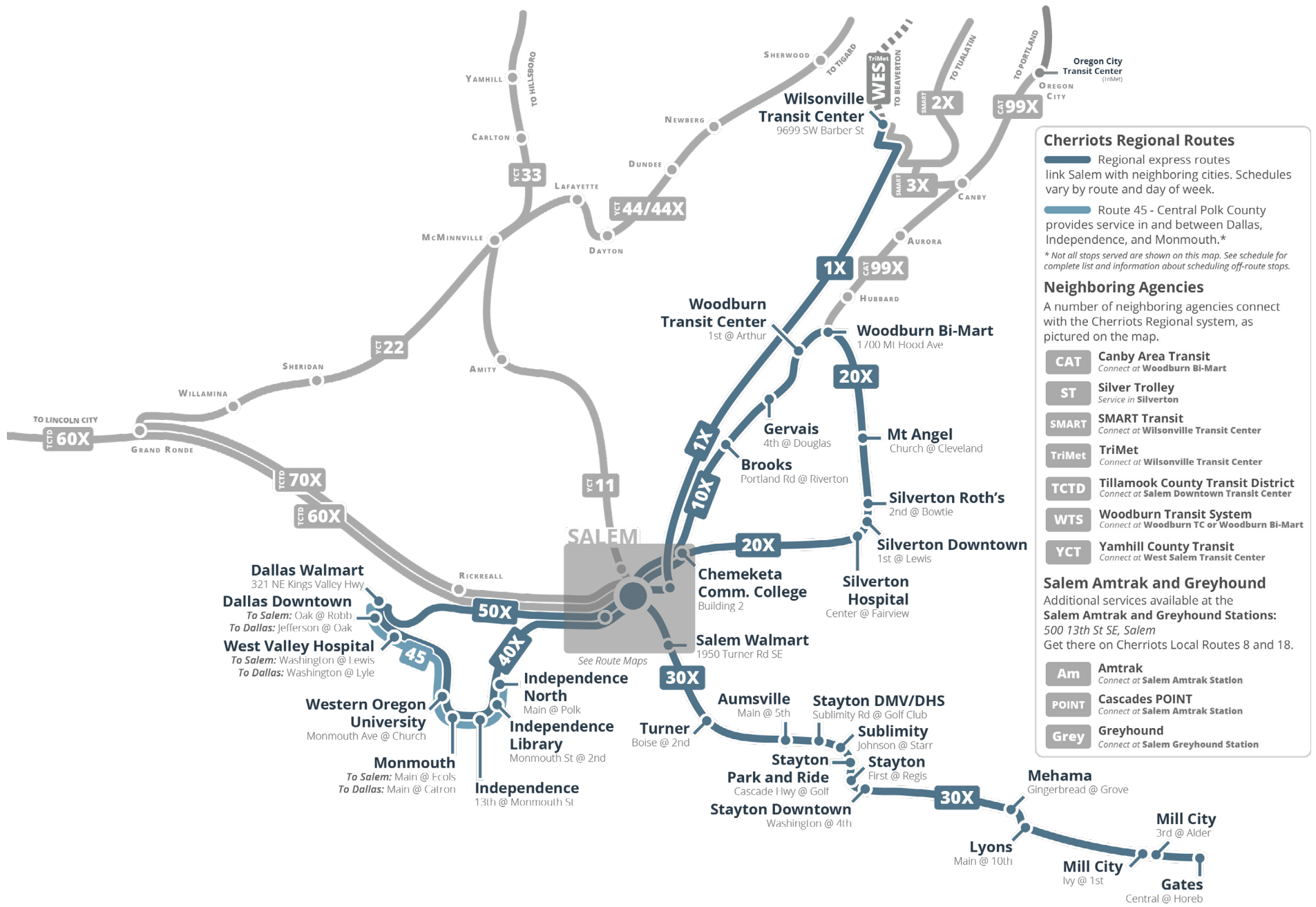


Figure 2. Cherriots Regional Service Map
Source: Cherriots

Frequent service (15 minute)

Frequent service routes provide direct connections to downtown Salem every 15 minutes. Route 11 runs north to south through eastern Salem and Keizer.

Standard service (30 minute)

Standard service routes provide direct connections to downtown Salem, apart from Route 14. Route 14 runs as a loop through northern Keizer.

Basic service (60 minute)

Basic service routes provide both direct connections to downtown Salem and local neighborhood connections.

Cherriots Regional

Most regional buses operate Monday through Saturday and connect 17 communities outside of the Salem-Keizer region to downtown Salem (Figure 2).

Express service

Express routes run every 30 minutes to 2 hours throughout the day on weekdays. Express routes typically run once during the morning peak hour and once during the afternoon peak hour on Saturdays. Express routes provide connections to regional communities such as Silverton and Wilsonville, while other agencies connect Salem to places like McMinnville and Grand Ronde. Express routes provide service to a limited number of stops in each community they serve and are compliant with federal guidelines.

Deviated fixed route service

Route 45 provides service between Dallas, Monmouth, and Independence. Route 45 runs every 2 hours between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Stops on Route 45 are spaced about 1/4 mile apart, providing more access for seniors and people with disabilities.



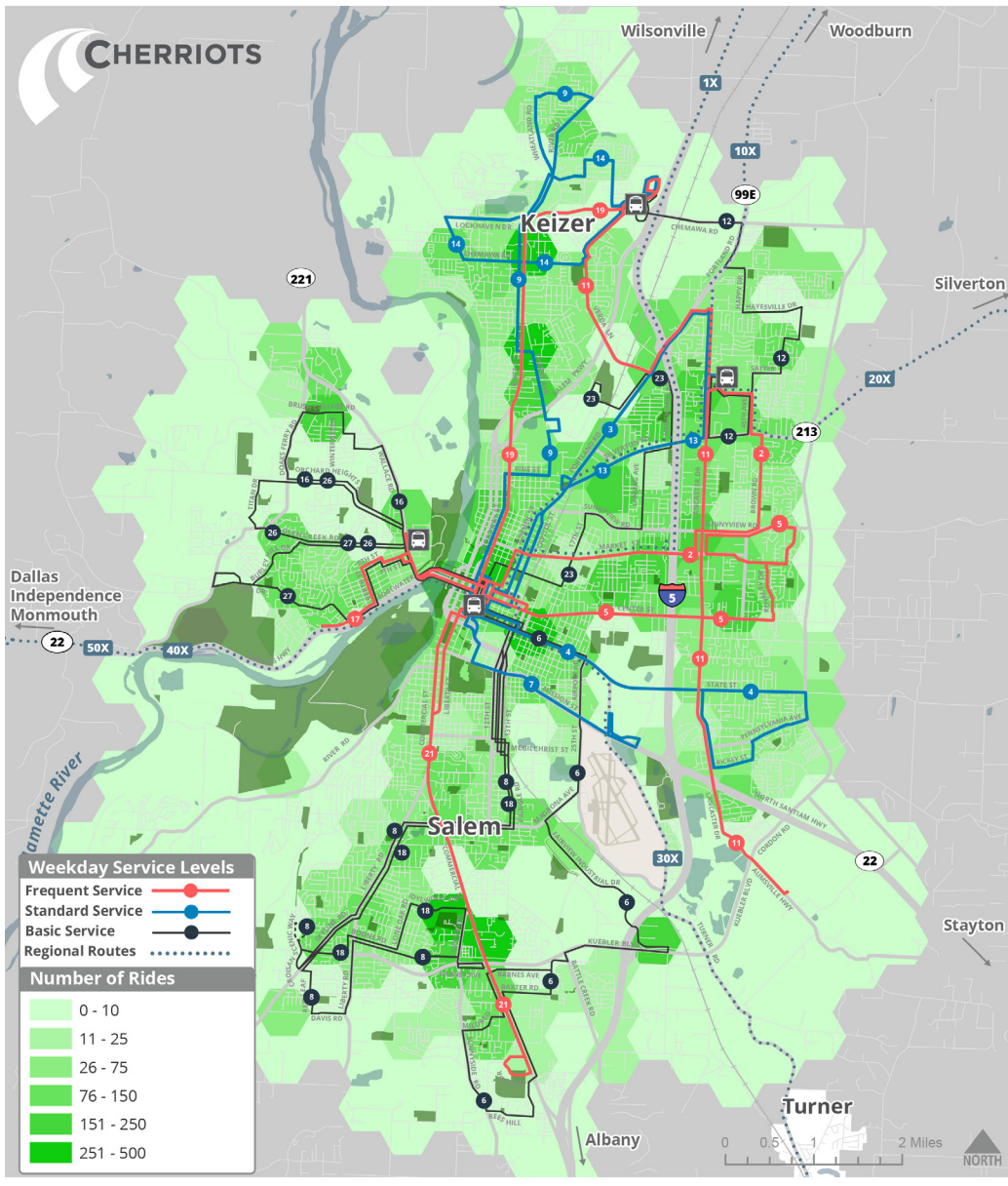


Figure 3. Cherrriots LIFT Trips to and from Salem Hospital in Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary
Source: LIFT program usage data, Cherrriots, 2021

Park and Ride

There are 16 Park and Ride locations connecting to Cherrriots Local and Regional routes, with 10 located within the Salem-Keizer area. Park and Ride locations provide daytime parking for personal vehicles, carpools, and bicycles.

On-demand service

Cherrriots provides on-demand transit services within the Salem-Keizer area for qualifying individuals.

Cherrriots LIFT

Cherrriots LIFT provides transportation service to individuals who cannot access Cherrriots Local due to their functional ability. Users must apply to be eligible for this service and reserve their trip at least the day before their ride. LIFT operates on both weekdays and weekends. A sample of LIFT trips to and from Salem Hospital (Figure 3) shows LIFT users spread throughout the service area, with a few hot spots corresponding to care and rehabilitation centers.

Cherrriots Shop and Ride

Cherrriots Shop and Ride is an on-demand service available for individuals over the age of 60 or with a disability. There are two services provided under the Shop and Ride brand - Shopper Shuttle and Dial-a-Ride. For the Shopper Shuttle service, rides must end at designated store locations, which are specific to the region where users live within the

Salem-Keizer area. The Cherriots Shopper Shuttle service was suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Dial-a-Ride service is a curb-to-curb service taking riders anywhere within the Salem-Keizer area, operating Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Rides must be reserved the day before the trip.

Travel Training

The Travel Training program provides educational resources for independent transit travel. The program is focused on seniors and individuals with disabilities but is available to all members of the public.

Ridership

The Cherriots transit system averages 13,000 rides per day, with most ridership within the Salem-Keizer area. Overall ridership on Cherriots buses increased slightly between 2015 and 2020 before falling by nearly 90% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership has since partially recovered.

Fixed-route ridership trends

Fixed-route ridership is primarily composed of Cherriots Local services (97%). Ridership has partially recovered over the past year,

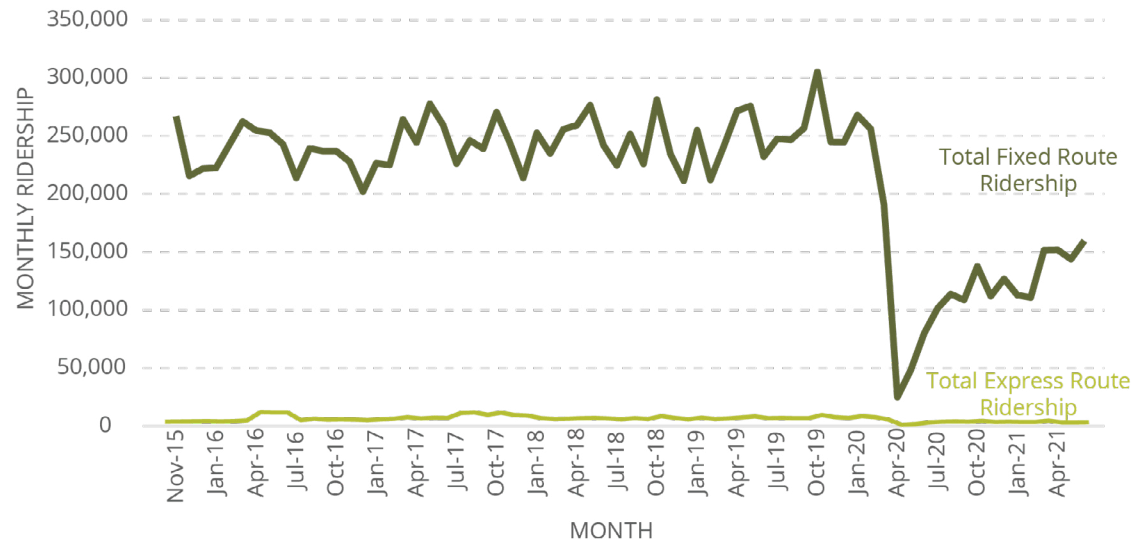


Chart 1. Cherriots Fixed-Route Ridership
Source: Cherriots

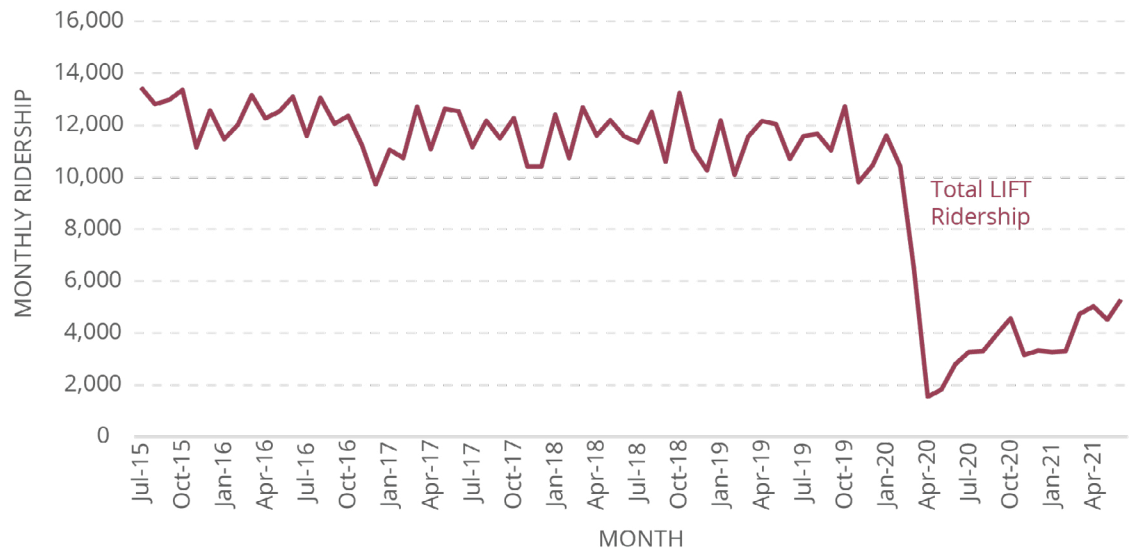


Chart 2. Cherriots LIFT and Demand Response Ridership
Source: Cherriots

with 2021 ridership levels reaching two thirds of 2019 levels for Cherriots Local service, and half of 2019 levels for Cherriots Express service. From July 2016 to January 2020, total fixed route ridership grew 20%.

On-demand ridership trends

On-demand ridership (Cherriots LIFT and Shop and Ride) remained relatively steady between 2015 and 2019. After declining sharply in March of 2020, ridership in June 2021 had recovered to approximately two thirds the ridership in June 2019.

Rider survey: how and why people ride Cherriots

Cherriots periodically conducts surveys of its riders to better understand their needs and reasons for riding. The information in the following sections is drawn from the most recent rider survey, which was conducted on board Cherriots Local buses in 2016. New survey results will be available in early 2022.

How people pay for their rides

Most people use 1-day or 30-day passes, including 70% of riders who pay full fares (\$1.60) and over 80% of riders who are eligible for youth (\$0.50) or reduced (\$0.80) fares.* Approximately one third of riders who pay the full fare pay in cash. Passes can be purchased with cash, check, or credit card at the Cherriots Customer Service Center in downtown Salem, Chemetka Community College, Wilsonville City Hall, and local grocery stores. Cherriots Customer Service also sells passes by phone.

*Cherriots implemented a \$0.50 youth fare in 2019, after this survey.

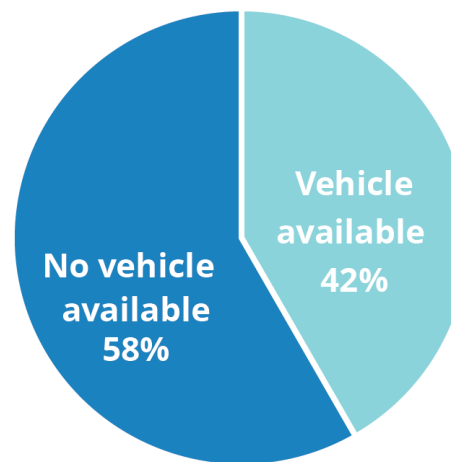


Chart 3. Personal Vehicles Available
Source: Cherriots 2016 Rider Survey, American Community Survey 2019

Cherriots riders vs. Marion and Polk County residents

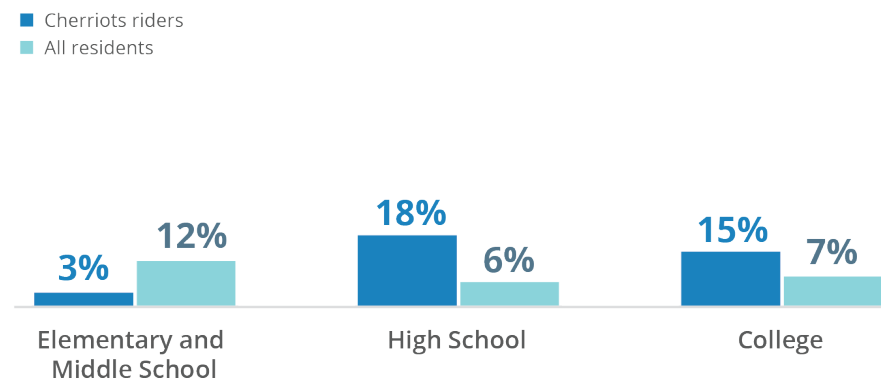
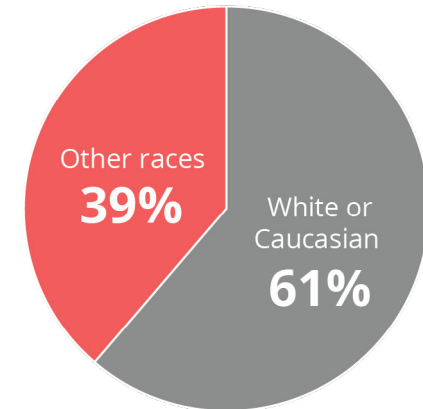


Chart 4. Percent of Students Taking Transit
Source: Cherriots 2016 Rider Survey, American Community Survey 2019

Why people ride

The 2016 survey provides some clues for why people choose to ride Cherriots Local buses. More than half of all riders surveyed (58%) said that they did not have a vehicle available to make their transit trip, either as a driver or a passenger, as shown in Chart 3. Cherriots Local bus passengers are more likely than the average resident to be in school: 18% of riders are in high school and 15% are in college, but only 13% of all Marion and Polk County residents are students. These responses indicate that many riders rely on transit because they lack access to a private vehicle or may not yet have learned to drive.

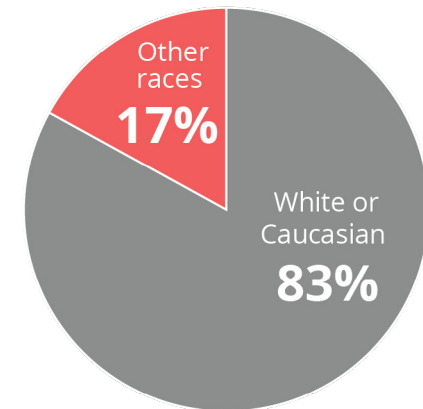


Cherriots riders

Transit access and equity

Rider demographics

As shown in Charts 5 and 6, Cherriots riders are less likely to be white compared to the average resident of Marion and Polk Counties. Almost 40% of rider survey respondents who stated their racial background identified as Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, and/or belonging to two or more racial groups (Chart 5). In contrast, these demographics make up only 17% of all residents (Chart 6).



Marion and Polk County residents

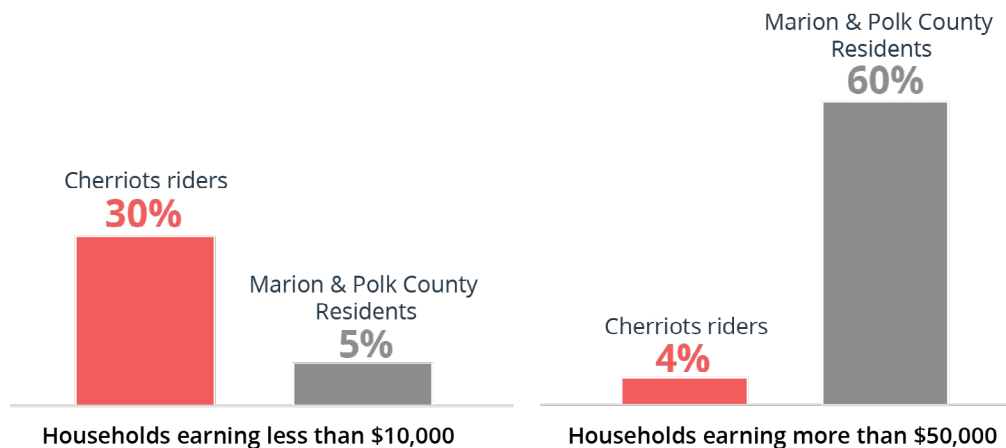


Chart 5. Percent Ridership by Annual Household Income
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Chart 6. Percent All Residents in Service Area
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Cherriots riders vs. Marion and Polk County residents

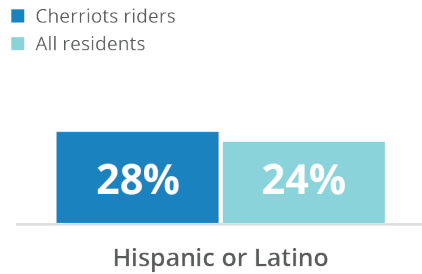


Chart 7. Percent Ridership by Ethnic Origin
Source: Cherriots 2016 Rider Survey, American Community Survey 2019

Cherriots riders vs. Marion and Polk County residents

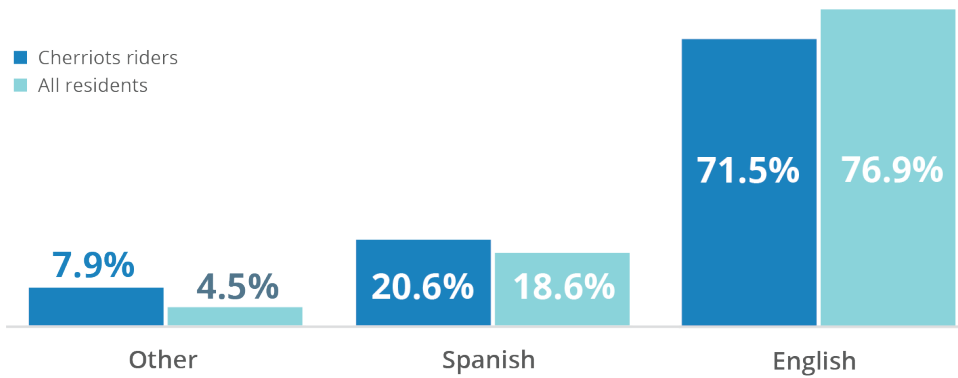


Chart 8. Percent Languages Spoken at Home
Source: Cherriots 2016 Rider Survey, American Community Survey 2019



As shown in Chart 7, riders are somewhat more likely to be Hispanic or Latino, and regardless of race, 28% of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino, compared to the 24% of all residents in the county identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

As shown in Chart 8, riders are more likely to speak a language other than English at home: about 29% of riders speak another language at home, versus 23% regionwide. Spanish is the most common non-English language spoken at home.

Cherriots is currently working with an outside consultant to review its approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Low-income households

Responses to the 2016 rider survey and data from the U.S. Census show that Cherriots Local bus riders have much lower household incomes than the average resident of Marion and Polk Counties. Bus riders are 5 times more likely than residents to live in households earning less than \$10,000 per year. By contrast, residents of Polk and Marion Counties are 15 times more likely than bus riders to live in households earning more than \$50,000 per year. This wide gap in household incomes indicates that many people riding Cherriots may rely on transit because they cannot afford other ways to travel.

The Salem-Keizer area's low-income residents, who are more likely to rely on transit, are most concentrated in areas served by Cherriots. Low-income households in South Salem, South Gateway, West Salem, and neighborhoods east of I-5 in North Salem may rely more on driving because these areas have relatively limited bus service.

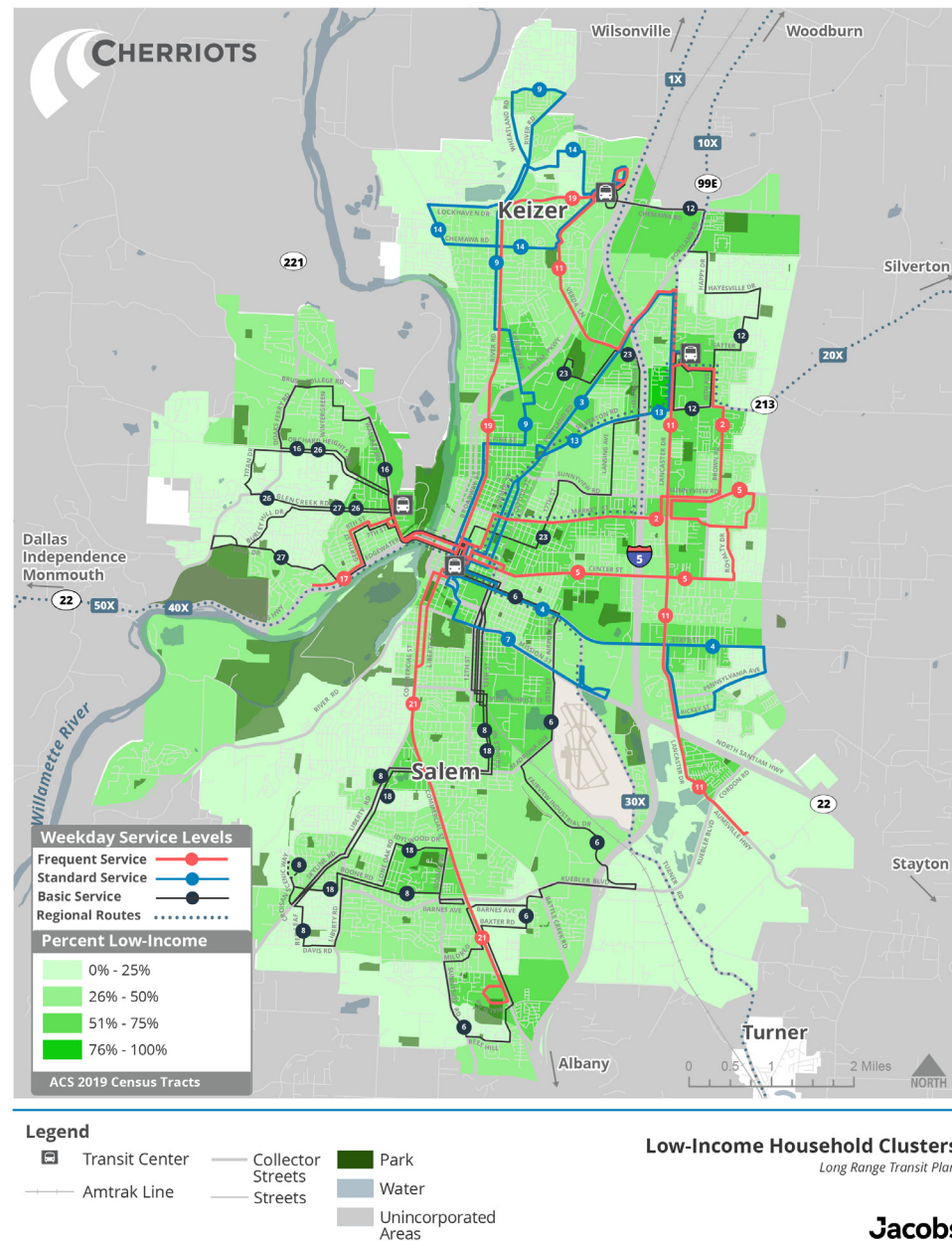
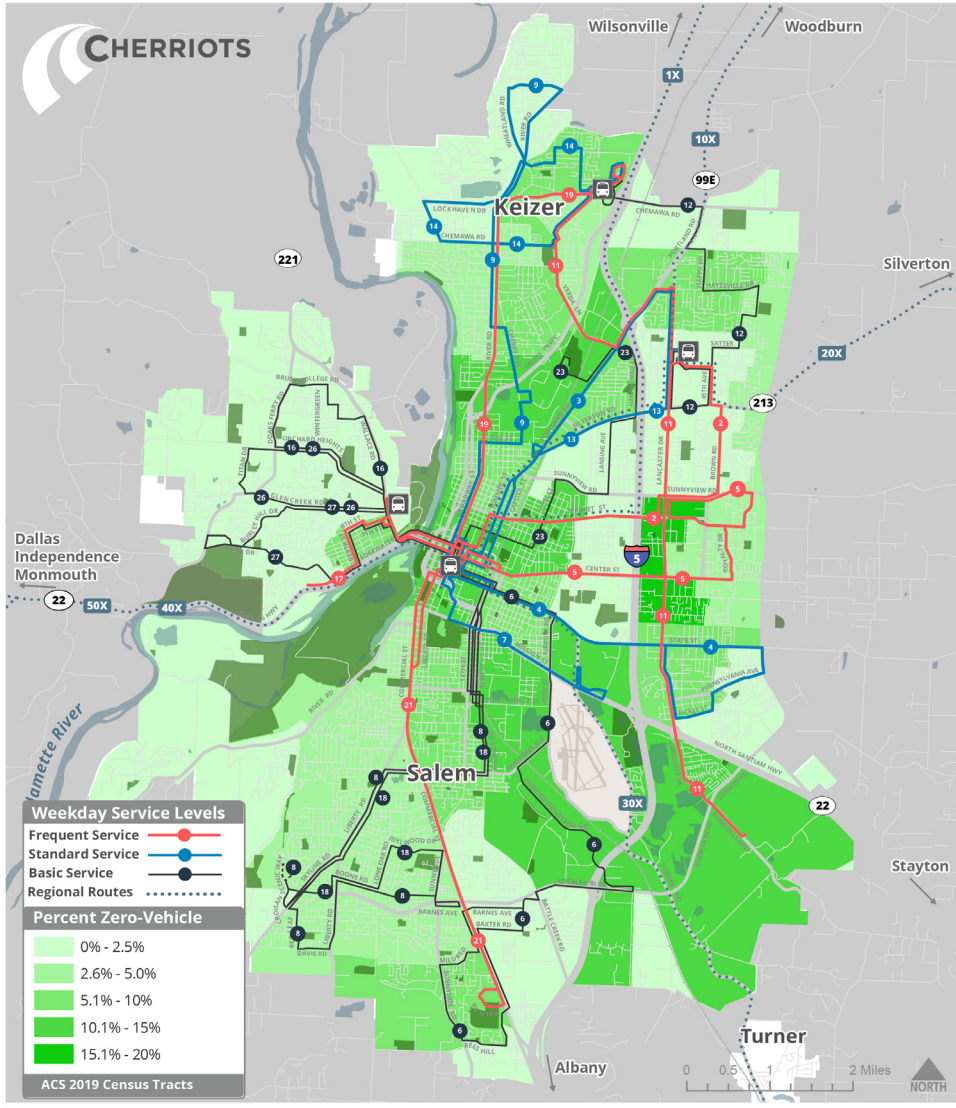


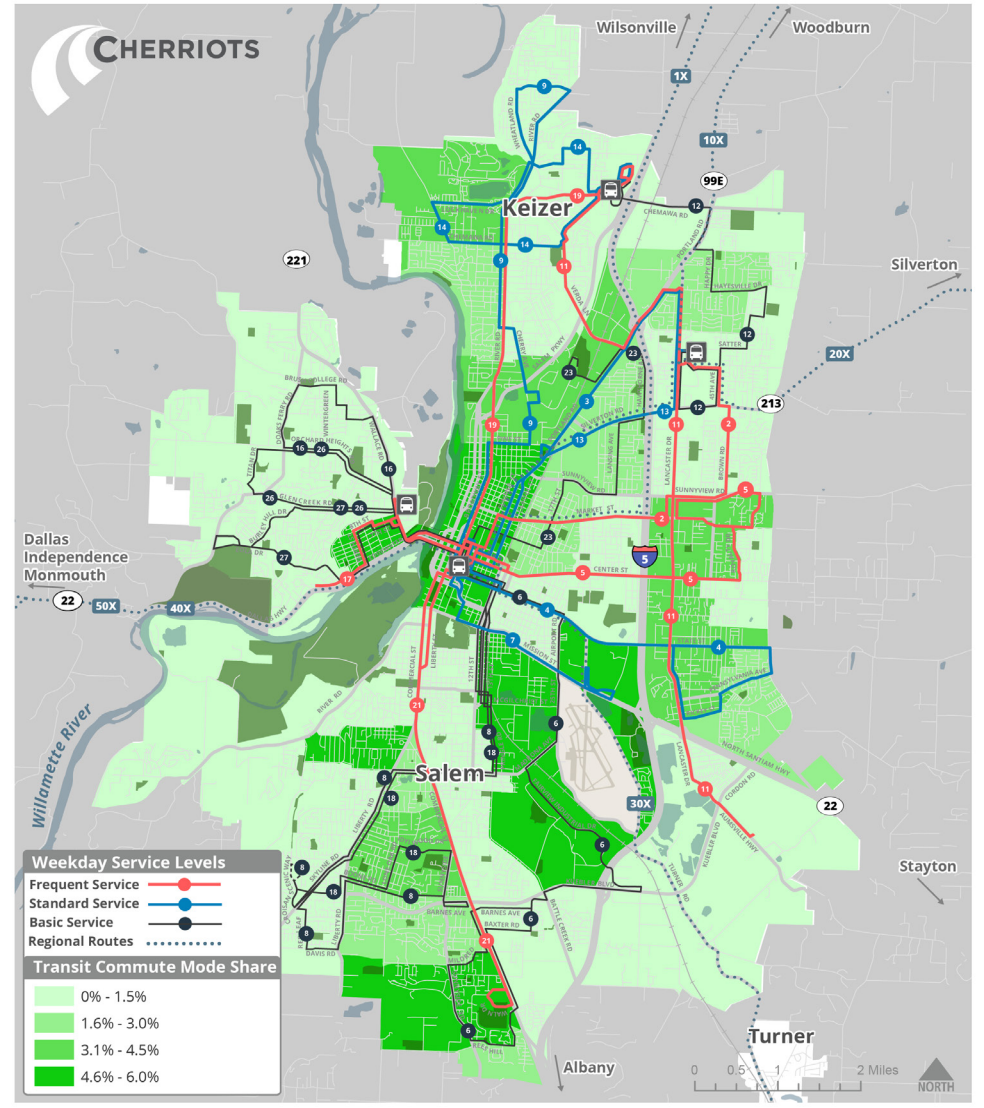
Figure 4. Low-Income Household Clusters in Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary
Source: American Community Survey 2019



Zero-Vehicle Household Clusters
Long Range Transit Plan

Jacobs

Figure 5. Zero-Vehicle Household Clusters in Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary
Source: American Community Survey 2019



Transit Commute Rate
Long Range Transit Plan

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Figure 6. Transit Commute Mode Share in Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary
Source: American Community Survey 2019

West Salem Connector Pilot

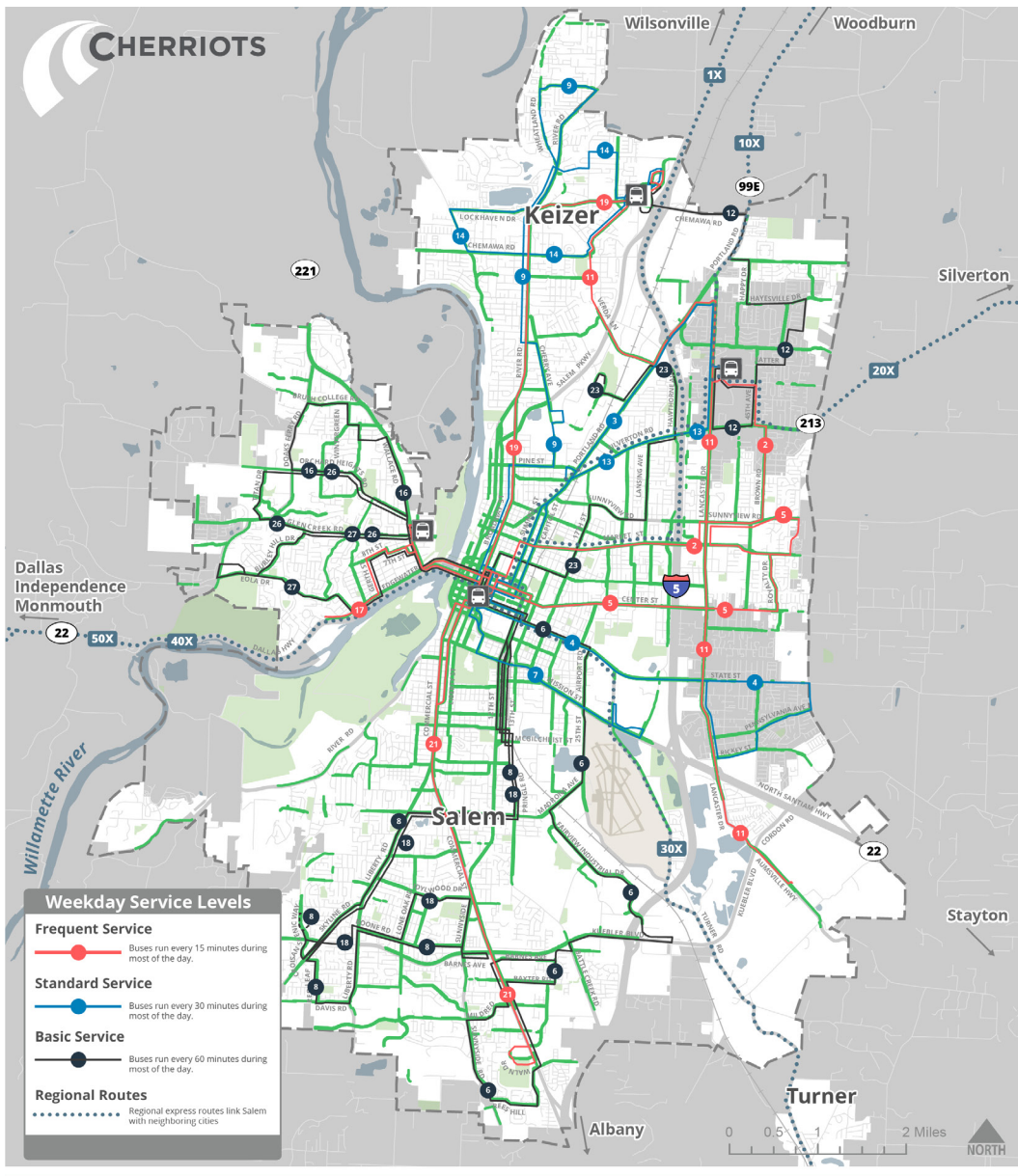
From mid-2015 to mid-2017, Cherriots piloted an on-demand transit service in West Salem. The primarily residential neighborhood has low development densities, hills, and limited sidewalks. This environment makes transit difficult for riders to access and more challenging for Cherriots buses and operators to navigate.

The West Salem Connector replaced two infrequent bus routes that used full-sized buses with a single 14-passenger bus, providing shared, on-demand transit service between defined pickup and drop-off points. The service operated every 60 minutes from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays. Riders requested pickups online or by telephone and there was a 5-minute layover each hour at the West Salem Transit Center to allow for walk-on trips. For the first 6 months of its operation, the service was fare-free, after which riders paid the regular Cherriots Local fare.

The West Salem Connector successfully expanded transit access within West Salem but was not cost-competitive with fixed-route buses. Seventy-four percent of riders transferred between the Connector and regular Cherriots buses. The pilot encountered challenges with its booking and routing software, which were addressed midway through the pilot with an operator interface update that improved on-time performance.

Cherriots conducted extensive outreach and promotions for the service and provided explanatory signs, which spread awareness about the service among potential riders. Cherriots has since replaced the Connector with an expanded fixed-route bus service within West Salem, with four routes connecting residents to the West Salem Transit Center (Routes 16, 17, 26, and 27) and downtown (Routes 16 and 17).





Transit commuting and zero-vehicle households

Households without access to a vehicle and commuters with a higher use of transit are clustered along Cherrriots Local routes. In some neighborhoods up to 20% of households lack access to a vehicle, while the highest rates of transit commuting reach just 6%.

Some commuters may rely on friends or neighbors for rides to work, while households without access to a vehicle may be less likely to have members who work outside the home. There are clusters of households without vehicles in less-dense neighborhoods, such as at the south end of Salem, in the Southeast Mill Creek neighborhood, and near the Salem Municipal Airport. Cherrriots has been looking at ways to meet transportation needs with flexible and cost-effective services.

Getting to transit

Most people who use transit get to bus stops and transit centers by walking or bicycling. Cities and counties can support transit use by providing complete sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and bike-friendly streets between neighborhoods and transit.

Walking to transit

Figure 7 shows where sidewalks are present in Salem and Keizer; Figure 8 shows where sidewalks are missing on major streets (collectors

Figure 7. Sidewalk Network Map

Source: Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study November 2020 sidewalk inventory, compiled from multiple sources.

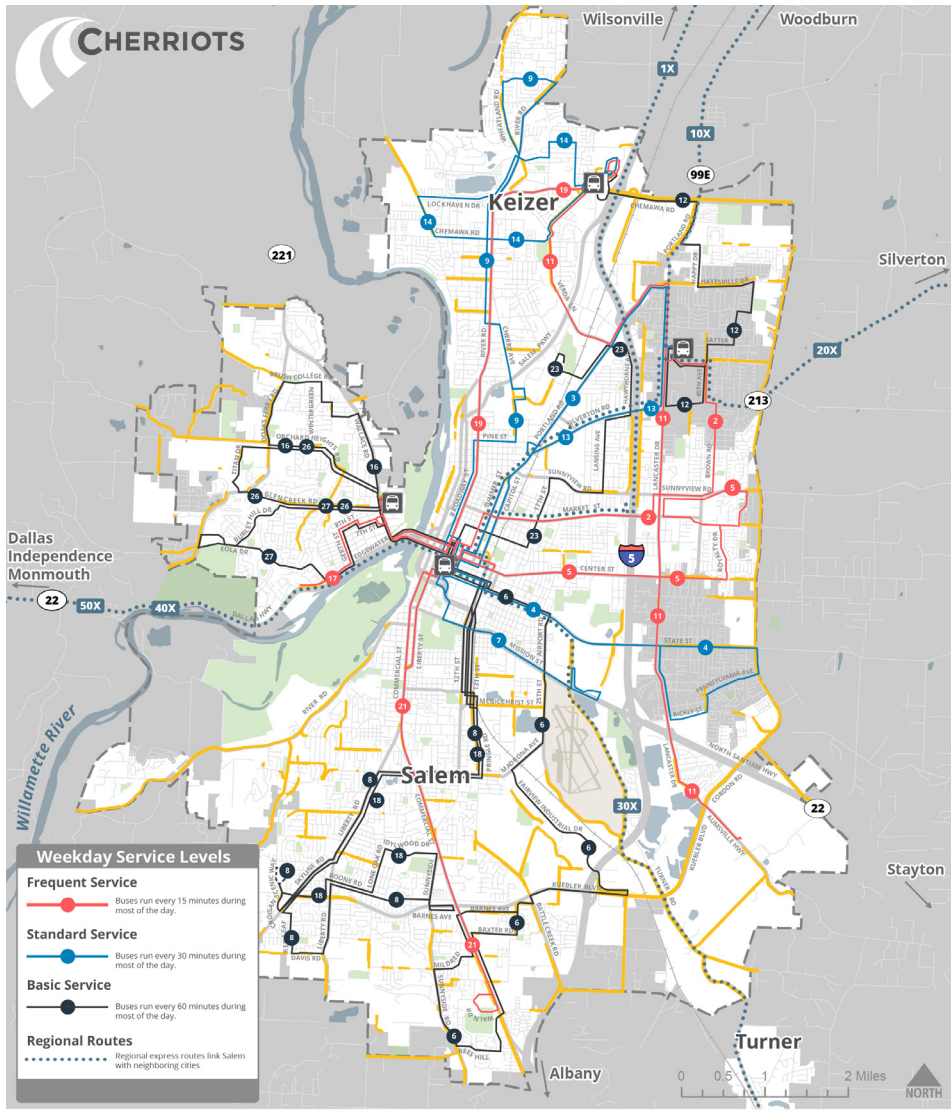


Figure 8. Sidewalk Gaps on Major Streets Served by Transit (Collectors and Arterials)
 Source: Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study November 2020 sidewalk inventory, compiled from multiple sources.

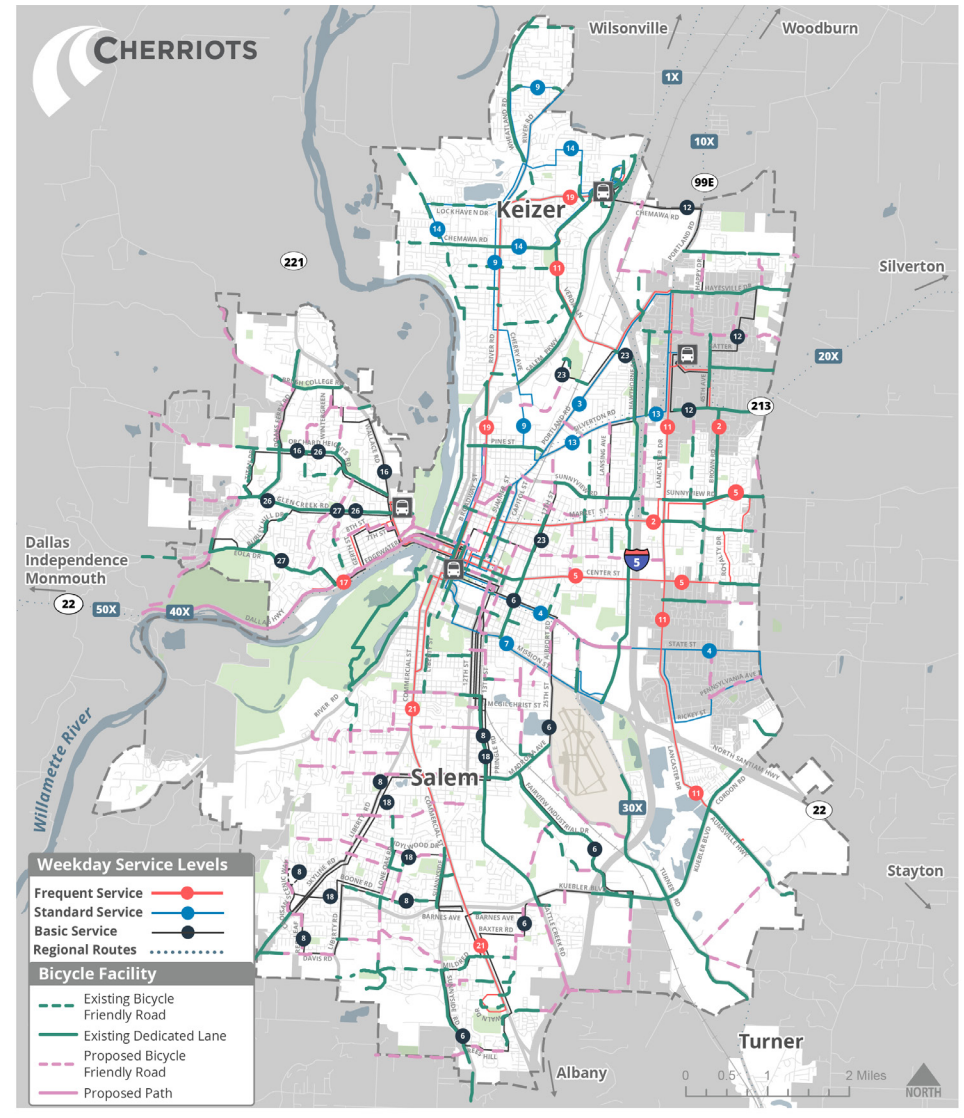


Figure 9. Bicycle Network Map
 Source: Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study, provided by Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments staff. Includes existing and planned facilities documented in the City of Keizer Transportation System Plan (2009) and the City of Salem Transportation System Plan (2020).



CHERRIOTS

1961

BATTERY DISCONNECT

and arterials) served by transit and near transit stops. Notable sidewalk gaps are present in the South Salem, South Gateway, and West Salem neighborhoods, along SE Lancaster Drive, and in parts of the North Lancaster, Hayesville, and Chemawa neighborhoods.

Biking to transit

As shown on Figure 9, Salem and Keizer generally provide dedicated bike lanes immediately around Cherriots transit centers. Bicycle routes are designated on streets where lower levels of slow-moving traffic can make bicycling more attractive. In their Transportation System Plans, which guide city investments in transportation, Salem and Keizer have proposed expanding networks of bike lanes and bicycle-friendly streets. These expanded networks could fill gaps in the South Salem, South Central, Northeast, and Hayesville neighborhoods, which would improve access from these neighborhoods to transit centers and bus routes.

Current and future travel needs

Transit typically works best in dense neighborhoods where riders can easily walk to transit stops and connect to different bus routes. As of fall 2021, the City of Salem is in the process of developing Our Salem, an update to the city’s comprehensive plan that will guide where and how new jobs and housing will be built over the next 20 years. The future need for transit in Salem-Keizer will be determined in part by how the two cities grow—whether new housing and jobs are centrally located and walkable—as well as by new technologies (like self-driving cars) and new expectations about work and housing (like increased telecommuting).

Current commute patterns

Within Cherriots service area, Salem is a major employment hub. As of 2019, twice as many people (about 65,000) commuted from outside Salem to work in Salem than commuted from Salem to other



Chart 9. Commute In and Out of Salem-Keizer Region
Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2019

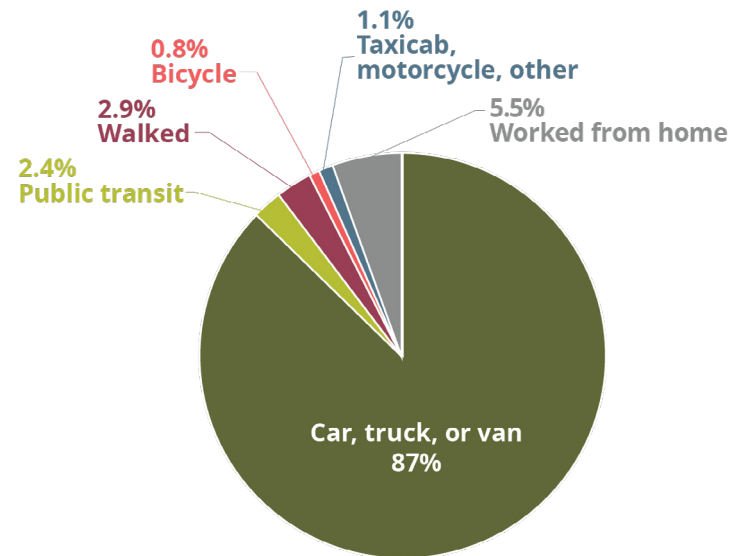


Chart 10. 2019 Salem and Keizer Commute Mode Share
Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year, 2019



cities (about 33,000). Most people (about 108,000) who worked in Polk and Marion Counties lived there as well; about equal numbers of people commuted into the two counties (about 60,000) as commuted out of them (about 62,000).

In Salem and Keizer, as in most cities, driving accounted for the vast majority of work trips in 2019. Working from home (telecommuting) accounted for about 5%, while public transit and walking accounted for 2.4% and 2.9% of all commute trips, respectively (Chart 10).

Projected population growth

Portland State University's Population Research Center forecasts that population will grow by 22% from 2020 to 2040 in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties. Polk County is expected to grow faster than Marion and Yamhill Counties, growing by over 40% over the next 20 years. Currently, Salem makes up about half the population of Marion and Polk Counties; this is expected to hold steady over the next 20 years.

Projected population 2020-2050

Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties

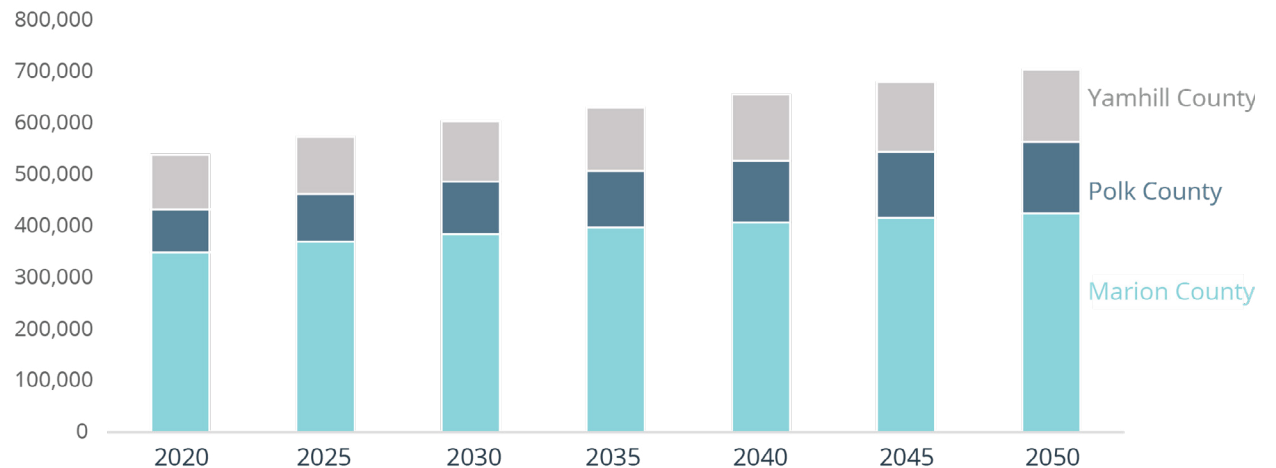


Chart 11 Projected Population Growth, 2020-2050
Source: Population Research Center, Portland State University

Vehicles, infrastructure, and technology

Cherriots fleet

During morning and afternoon peak service, Cherriots operates 64 buses across the Cherriots Local system, 2 Shop and Ride vehicles, and 38 LIFT paratransit vehicles. Cherriots offers four different services using different vehicle and fuel types, depending on route and ridership needs. Fuel type varies depending on the vehicle's type and age, as some newer buses are using lower emissions technology instead of diesel. Cherriots has committed to replacing diesel-fueled vehicles with alternative-fuel vehicles.

The charts on this page show the existing fleet. The Transit Asset Management Plan has more information about the vehicle types, uses, and near term replacement plans. Buses must typically be purchased 1 to 2 years in advance. Chart 12 shows the current fleet plan by service type, and Chart 13 shows vehicles by fuel type. In 2021 there are 71 large buses (35-40 feet) serving primarily the Local and Regional routes, 42 "cutaway" buses (25-35 feet) serving primarily LIFT and regional routes, 10 vans, and 19 other non-revenue vehicles (trucks and cars).

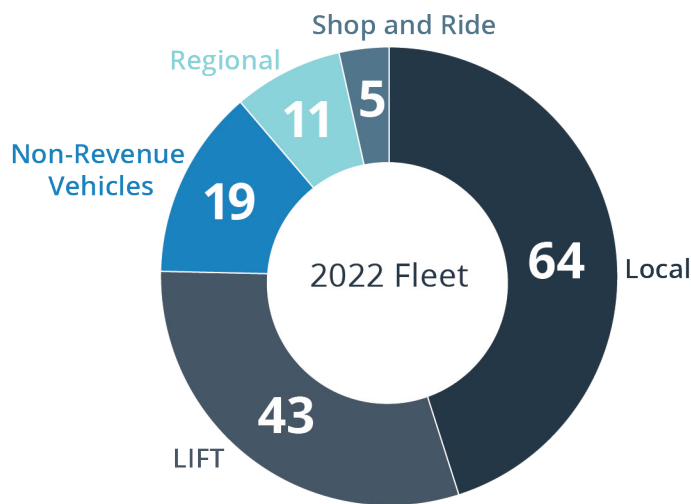


Chart 12. Fleet County by Service Type
Source: Cherriots

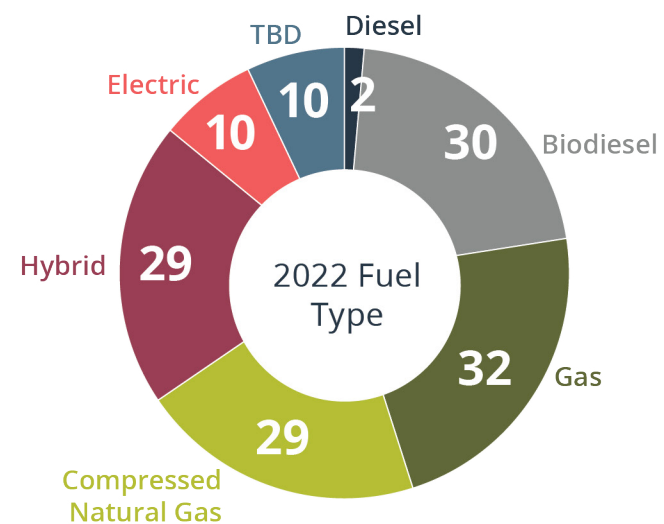


Chart 13. 2021 Vehicles by Fuel Type Breakdown
Source: Cherriots



Bus stops

There are 769 bus stops across the Cherriotics service area. While every stop has a bus pole and sign, amenities such as seating, waste receptacles, and shelters are not provided at every bus stop location. How and where these are installed is based on ridership and available resources. Chart 14 provides a breakdown of stops with various amenities and the percentage of stops with these amenities. Among Local bus stops, 18% have benches and 16% have shelters. At Regional stops, 35% have benches and 28% have shelters. Local and Regional bus stops have waste cans at about 30 percent of stops. A small number of local routes use Simme-Seats for seating in constrained spaces.

**Simme-Seats typically have two small seats attached to the bus stop sign pole and allow short-term seating without additional infrastructure.*






	 STOPS	 BENCH	 SHELTER	 SIMME SEAT	 WASTE RECEPTACLE
Local	697	124	115	9	196
	share	18%	16%	1%	28%
Regional	72	25	20	0	21
	share	35%	28%	0%	29%
Total	769	149	135	9	217

Chart 14. 2021 Bus Stop Breakdown
Source: Cherriotics

Facilities

Four buildings house Cherriots operations, maintenance, and customer service functions, providing offices, garages, storage, and public waiting areas. The four buildings are on Cherriots property including the Del Webb Operations Building, Del Webb Maintenance Building, Keizer Transit Center, and Downtown Transit Center. The West Salem Transit Center and Chemeketa Community College Transit Center offer key service facilities. Chart 15 provides a brief description of each facility.

Cherriots is currently conducting a study to determine the need for a future South Salem Transit Center, with Phase 1 being completed in December 2021.






FACILITY	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	EMPLOYEES
 Del Webb Operations Headquarters and Maintenance Building	Cherriots headquarters and maintenance facility Bus repairs, equipment, and bus storage Cherriots call center	43,180 square feet	69
 Downtown Courthouse Square Transit Center	Transit center with 22 bus bays Retail and restaurant space Primary layover location for riders and employees Public security Customer service lobby Public restrooms	22,519 square feet	53
 Keizer Transit Center	Transit center with 8 bus bays Layover location for riders and employees Public restrooms Security Park and Ride lot	2,332 square feet	2
 West Salem Transit Center	Transit center with 5 bus bays	N/A	N/A
 Chemeketa Community College	Transit center with 5 bus bays	N/A	N/A

Chart 15. Cherriots Facilities
Source: Cherriots

Finance and funding

Cherriots funding resources include a mix of funds from local, state, and federal programs. Cherriots often acquires the funds through scheduled and competitive grants, for which Cherriots is held accountable through regular reporting and close accounting. The funds pay for employees, services, and maintaining equipment and facilities.

Operating expenses

Operating costs fund Cherriots transit service. Operating costs include wages and benefits for operators and operations supervisors, vehicle and facilities maintenance staff and supervisors, and all administrative staff. Fuel, vehicle parts, and other miscellaneous expenses required to operate service are also part of the operating costs. Operating expenses for non-local services decreased from 2018 to 2019 due to Cherriots removing nonemergency medical transportation regional service.

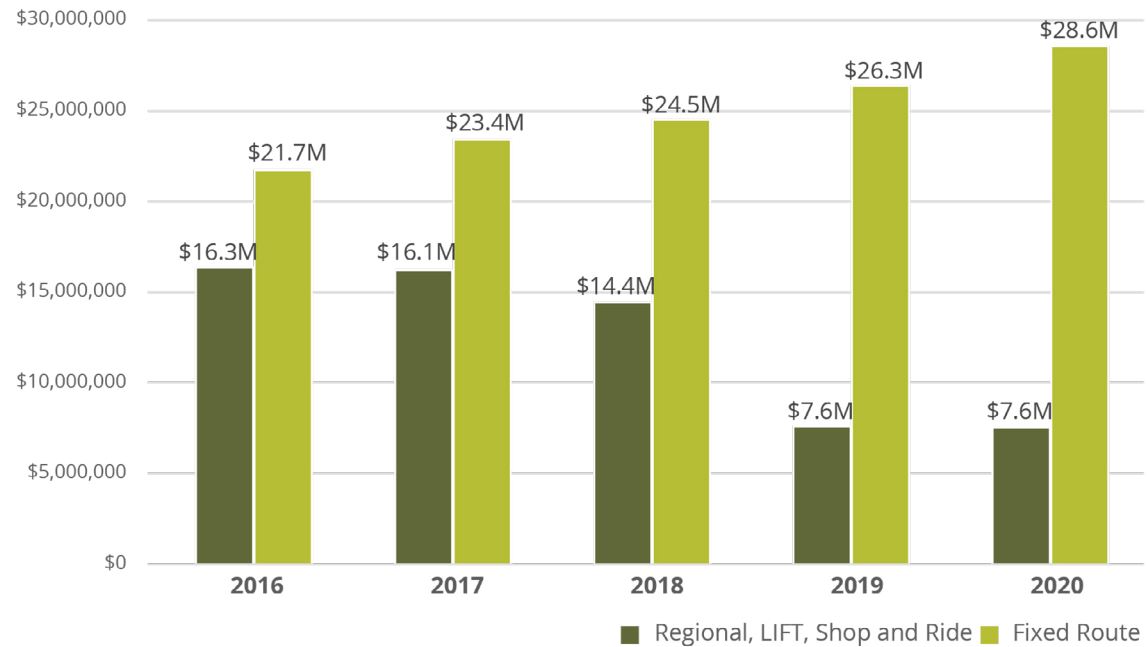


Chart 16. Average Operating Expenses by Service Category. Source: Cherriots

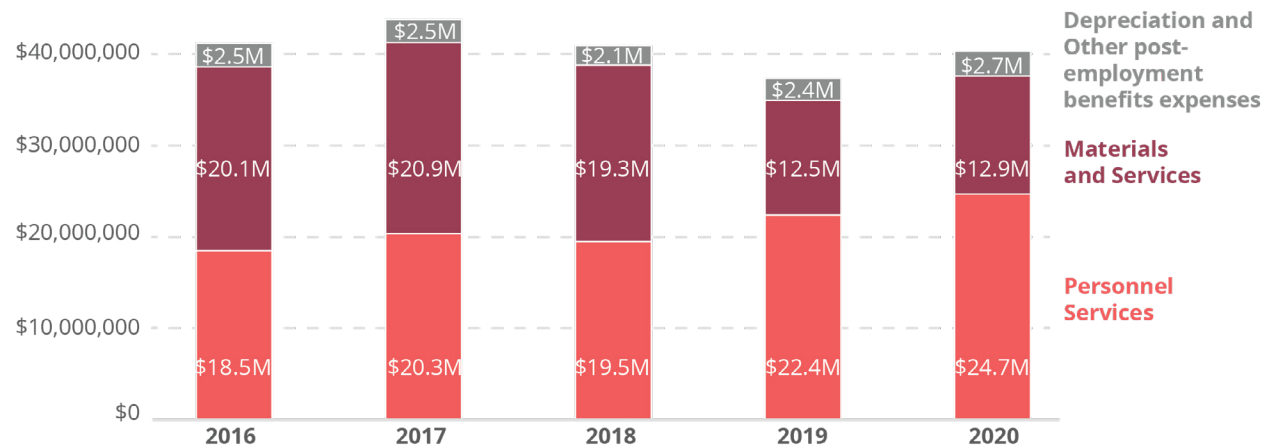


Chart 17. Average Operating Expenses by Classification. Source: Cherriots

Operating expenses by service category

Service categories are the types of transit service, split between the Local service and Cherrlots Regional, LIFT, and Shop and Ride. Chart 16 shows the fixed-route operating costs and “other” services (Regional bus, LIFT, and vanpool). Fixed-route transit service requires the most money to operate because it is the most common and most used transit service that Cherrlots provides. Fixed-route expenses have increased with service improvements, which has increased revenue. Other services have decreasing costs through shifts in service mix.

Operating expenses by classification

Expenses are classified by what is purchased, including staff wages (personnel services), facilities, maintenance, materials and services, employee benefits, and miscellaneous expenses. Recently personnel, materials, and services costs rose slightly, even as ridership decreased, to accommodate public health and safety investments during the pandemic (Chart 17).

Capital expenses

Capital expenses support nonoperational elements of the agency, such as vehicles, buildings, and landscaping. Chart 18 shows that the average expenses incurred between 2016 and 2020 were almost entirely for vehicles (rolling stock).

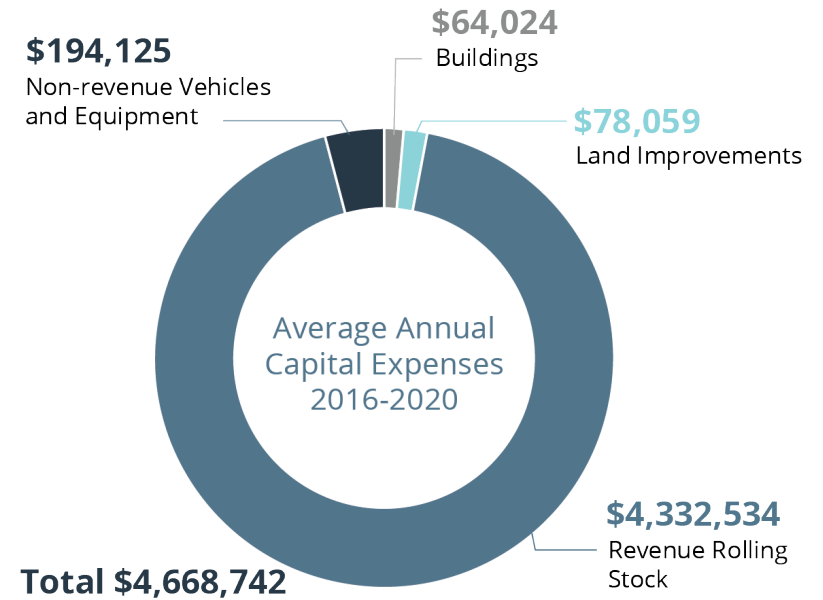


Chart 18. Average Capital Expenses, 2016-2020
Source: Cherrlots Staff & 2016 Financial Audit Report

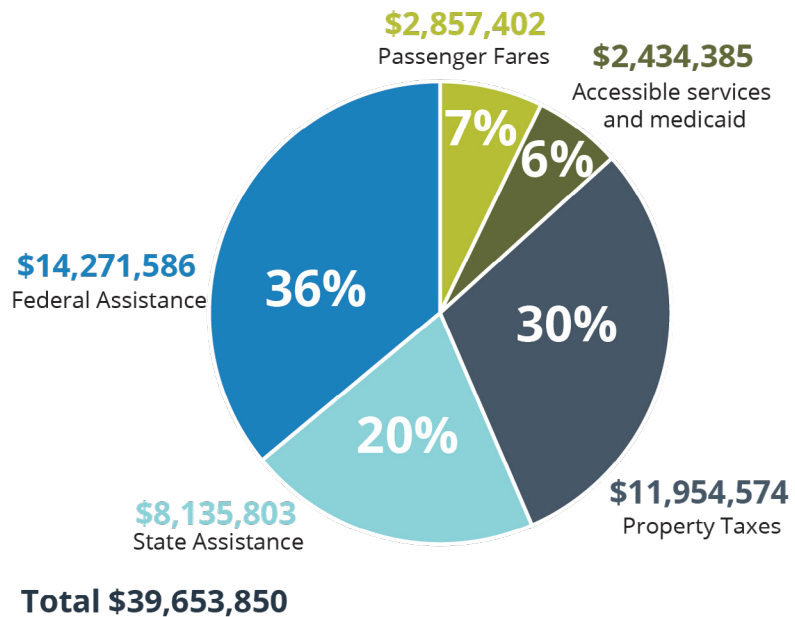


Chart 19. Average Operating Revenue and Share by Source
Source: Cherriots



Chart 20. Average Capital Contributions, 2016-2019
Source: Cherriots

Funding

Cherriots federal, state, and local funds come from various funding categories, including operating revenues, nonoperating revenues (grants), and capital contributions. Among the three categories, nonoperating revenues provide the most revenue for Cherriots.

Operating revenues

Operating revenues are income sources that Cherriots receives when people ride transit, such as passenger fare payments. On average, 36% of Cherriots operating revenues come from federal assistance programs, 30% come from property taxes, and 20% come from state assistance programs. Passenger fares provide 7% of Cherriots operating revenues, and LIFT provides another 6%.

Capital contributions

A third funding category is capital contributions. This includes federal and state grants that may be offered through competitive programs, or “formula” programs that are not competitive and provide regular funding sources. Together, these grants contribute \$3.7 million on average per year for vehicles, equipment, and facilities.

Transportation options

Cherriots provides information and resources to support the use of transit, vanpooling, carpooling, biking, and walking throughout Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties. The TO program currently has two full-time staff who manage activities and outreach to employers and community members; in past years it has had as many as three and a half full-time employees. Grants from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), which distributes federal and state funds to regional transportation options programs across Oregon, typically fund the Cherriots TO program.

Transportation options services

The TO program supports several services:

- Managing and recruiting for the **Cherriots Group Pass Program**, which allows organizations to purchase Cherriots bus passes for all their employees, residents, or students at steeply discounted rates; as of fall 2021, the program had two employers enrolled, compared to five before the pandemic.
- Supporting **vanpool** formation and operations, managing Cherriots contract for up to 29 vans through its vendor, and distributing vanpool subsidies that the Federal Transit Administration provides, which cover up to 50% of the lease cost of each van.
- **Providing outreach and training** to employers and Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs) about commute options and TO programs. An ETC is an employee of a company or organization who promotes Transportation Options at the worksite and encourages other employees to use transportation options.
- Promoting the **Get There Challenge**, an annual statewide contest that encourages commuters to travel by telecommuting, transit, carpool, vanpool, biking, or walking, along with regional commute challenges.
- Funding **Emergency Ride Home**, which reimburses commuters for taxi or ride hailing if they used transit, vanpool, or carpool or biked or walked to work and need to get home quickly when transit is not available.
- Providing community **education on transportation** options alongside other members of the Cherriots Communication Department, including staffing community outreach events and helping to develop safety campaigns.
- **Working with related programs** and organizations, including Safe Routes to School programs and the Strategic Economic Development Corporation (the mid-Willamette Valley's economic development corporation).
- **Partnering** with other transportation providers to coordinate vanpool service in the mid-Willamette Valley.

COVID-19 and transportation options

In March 2020, the State of Oregon and other large employers in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties closed their offices, dramatically decreasing commute travel and the need for transportation options. In response, TO staff shifted their focus to supporting telecommuting and community needs. There were key changes due to the pandemic:

- Suspending the **Group Pass Program**, which was a component of Cherriots pausing fare collection on buses between March 2020 and July 2021.
- Navigating the decline in demand for **vanpools**. Prior to the pandemic, the TO program was subsidizing 29 vanpools and providing staff support to another 16. Many of these vanpools were organized for state agencies, who let their contracts lapse in 2020 as most of their staff were working from home.
- Developing a **Telecommuting Toolkit**, which was distributed to ETCs and organizations in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties in November 2020.
- Transitioning support for **ETC** from quarterly group meetings to a monthly email newsletter and frequent one-on-one conversations.
- Reorienting promotional activities for the **annual Get There Challenge** to encouraging telecommuting, biking, and walking. As shown in Chart 20, trips logged by telecommuters increased during the fall 2020 Get There Challenge, in contrast to the steep drop in carpool trips seen in March 2020.

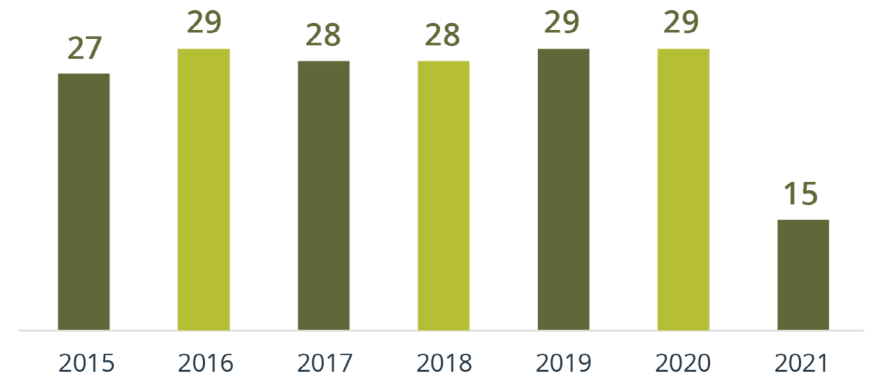


Chart 21. Total Vanpools 2015-2021
Source: Cherriots

Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties

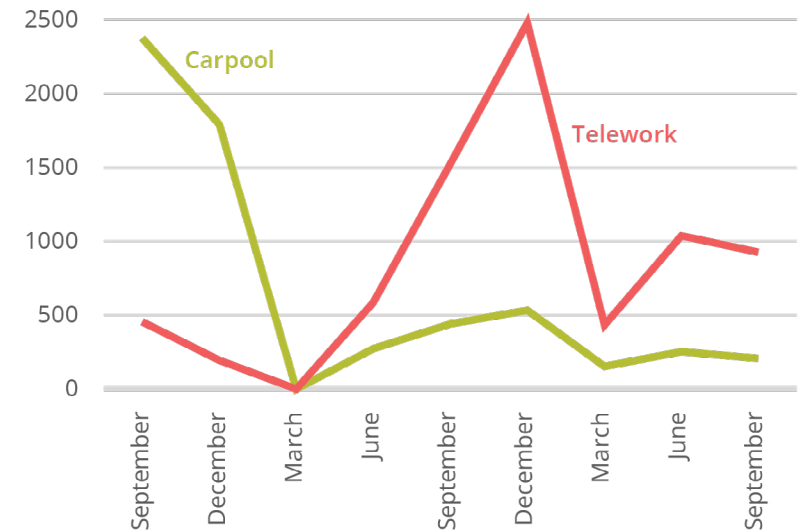


Chart 22. Trips Logged on Get There Oregon
Source: Cherriots

Future transportation opportunities

Cherriots program staff expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to affect how people get to work and the need for transportation options. Staff identified opportunities for transit and the TO program.

Opportunities

- Continued teleworking may reduce the demand for carpooling, vanpooling, and transit use among office workers, and increase the desire for other shared mobility services.
- Staffing shortages may motivate employers in frontline industries to provide commute benefits to their workers; manufacturing and agriculture employers in Yamhill County have recently shown interest in forming vanpools to improve hiring and retention
- Growing use and ease of using shared bike and scooters for local mobility and connections.
- Support cities and counties in expanding transportation options that support requirements for employers from the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities Rulemaking process.
- Expand the Group Pass Program to partners in housing developments, colleges, and universities to increase the use of transit and shared mobility options, such as ride sharing, taxis, e-scooters, and bikeshare.
- Expand activities to promote bicycle riding and provide training.
- Expand the TO program to address noncommute trips.
- Leverage alignment with local Climate Action Plans and business and community sustainability priorities to increase shared mobility options in the region.
- Explore opportunities to partner with new multifamily housing developments close to the Salem Downtown Transit Center.

Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking

The State of Oregon is in the process of updating its Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), which guides how cities and counties plan and construct transportation systems. As of fall 2021, the draft TPR amendments focus on investing in transit, walking, and bicycling to balance Oregon's history of investing in auto travel. Draft amendments would require cities and counties to assess and invest in facilities that support public transit use. Cities and counties would also be required to include a transportation options element in their transportation plans. This planning element would need to provide projects and programs to provide equitable resources to populations with limited access to transportation resources. It would also require plans to identify strategies for large employers to reduce drive alone commute trips. This requirement would align with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's ongoing effort to strengthen and expand Oregon's existing Employee Commute Options Rule (ECO Rule).





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Portland, Oregon 2021
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For more information visit our project website:
www.cherriots.org/projects/LRTP