

The background image shows the rear of a white bus on a city street. The bus has several logos and text on its back: a 'STOP' sign, the number '1832', the 'columbus indiana' logo, and a 'Community of the Year' award. The bus is parked on a street with trees and buildings in the background. The text 'Chapter Eight: Transit Projects' is overlaid in a large, blue, sans-serif font on the right side of the image.

Chapter Eight: Transit Projects

**EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES AND
PARTNERS**

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

TYPICAL FUNDING SOURCES

POSSIBLE PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES



EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES AND PARTNERS

Public transportation is crucial to providing personal mobility and an inexpensive option for traveling for residents in the CAMPO MPA. Buses accommodate more people than personal vehicles and can potentially help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thereby positively impacting the amount of funds required for maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure. Public transportation also provides opportunities for residents without access to a personal vehicle or with other mobility limitations.

ColumBUS Transit provides transit services throughout much of the City of Columbus. The system includes both fixed-route and demand response services. The service provides mobility to residents who cannot drive or choose not to drive, including 3.5% of the MPA's residents who do not own a personal vehicle. The transit provider recently completed a [ColumBUS Route Study](#).

As of April 2026, ColumBUS operates four fixed-route bus loops and one point deviation loop that serves Walesboro and Taylorsville as shown in [Figure 38](#). Each of these routes has 14 trips per day on weekdays, and nine trips per day on weekends. These lines have one-hour headways, and all depart from the Mill Race Transit Center at the same time to allow for timed connections between routes. The blue route switches between two slightly deviated routes every other hour. The red loop alternates between providing service to Walesboro and Taylorsville on one-hour point deviation at different times of day.

In addition to the fixed-route bus loops, ColumBUS operates demand-response paratransit service which is branded as “Call-a-Bus.” This service is provided at no cost to people who, because of disability, are unable to use the ColumBUS fixed-route buses. As of April 2026, both the fixed-route and paratransit services are provided Monday – Friday, 6:00am – 8:00pm and Saturday, 8:00am – 5:00pm. ColumBUS has identified as part of its long range planning a desire to expand its “Call-a-Bus” service to offer point-to-point rides more broadly for the public. This service will accommodate the needs of individuals whose trip locations fall outside of the fixed route service area, or who need a point-to-point ride for logistical or other reasons. The service will initially be piloted in a limited service area and may eventually be expanded after a successful pilot period.

Through the transit agency’s “Rack & Roll” program, bicycle racks have been added to all of the buses on the fixed-route lines to address the first-mile/last-mile issue encountered by transit riders. All buses in the fleet are wheelchair accessible. As of 2026, ColumBUS transit’s fleet inventory consists of eight 29-foot buses for fixed route operations, nine vans for demand response operations, and one pickup truck and van for maintenance and supervisory operations; the average age of the fleet is 7.5 years.

All ColumBUS services are currently fare free. Ridership declined significantly in 2020 because of the pandemic but has steadily increased each year since and has now returned to pre-pandemic levels. [Table 24](#) shows total ColumBUS system annual ridership from 2019 through 2025. [Figure 39](#) shows a heatmap of ColumBUS use at bus stops throughout the City of Columbus as of April 2026.

Table 24: ColumBUS Transit Annual Ridership (Source: National Transit Database)

YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
ANNUAL RIDERSHIP	228,818	127,986	160,789	168,618	217,636	226,319	242,358

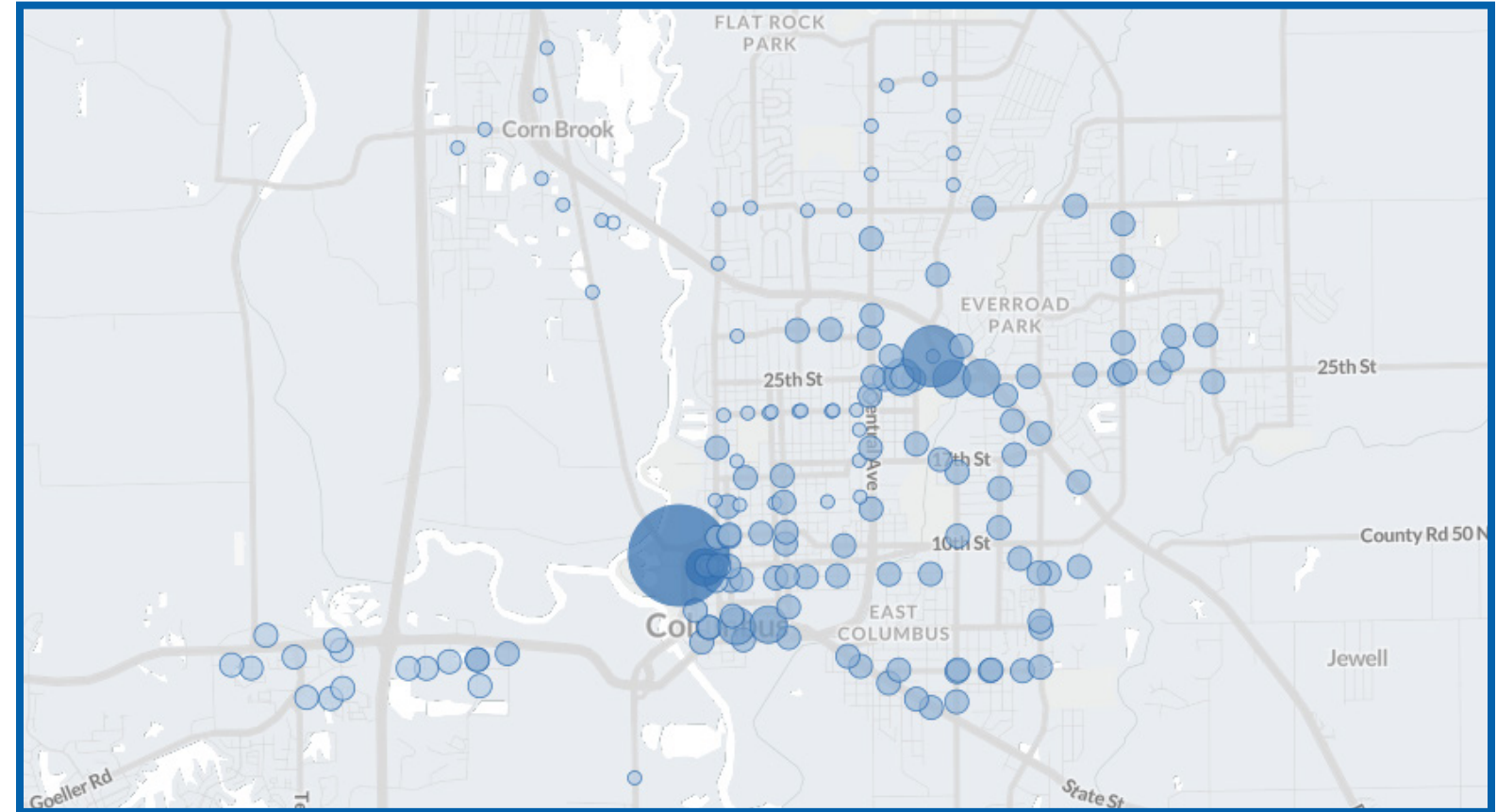
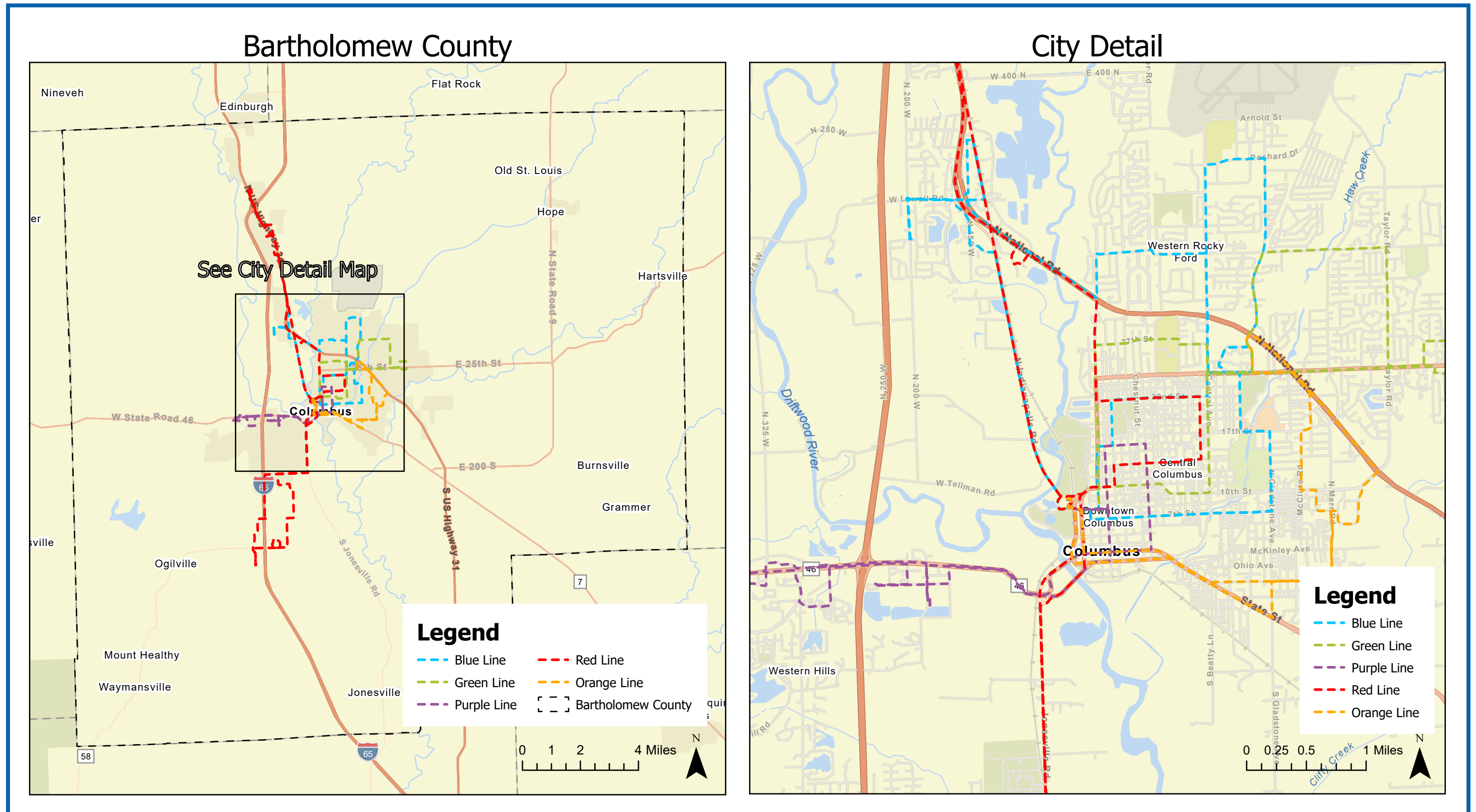


Figure 39: Columbus Rider Heat Map from April 2026





FIGURE 38: COLUMBUS FIXED TRANSIT ROUTES, AS OF APRIL 2026



PROJECT TYPES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Identified transit projects in this MTP are all illustrative, and as a result the projects identified in the MTP are not prioritized. Local agencies responsible for each of the identified transit projects will implement them as funding and concurrent projects allow. In general, the following transit project types will be used by CAMPO’s partner agencies to identify transit projects throughout the MPA:

- ◆ Community Consistency
- ◆ Workforce and Depot
- ◆ Fleet
- ◆ Community Amenities
- ◆ Service Coverage

In addition to ColumBUS, several other community partners provide transit-supportive services within the CAMPO MPA. These partners are shown in [Table 25](#).

Table 25: Other Local Human Service Transportation Providers
(Source: 2022 CAMPO Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan Update)

	DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, INC.	JUST FRIENDS	MILL RACE CENTER	BARTHOLOMEW CO. VETERANS SERVICES
LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION	2920 Tenth St., Columbus, IN 47202 (800) 745-7686 https://www.dsiservices.org	900 Lindsey St., Columbus, IN 47201 (812) 372-6415 https://www.justfriendscolumbus.com	900 Lindsey St., Columbus, IN 47201 (812) 376-9241 https://www.millracecenter.org	440 Third St., Ste. C, Columbus, IN 47201 (812) 379-1540 https://www.bartholomew.in.gov/veteran-services.html
SERVICE AREA	50 counties in central and southern Indiana	Columbus	Bartholomew County	Bartholomew County/VA Facilities
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	Agency Clients	Older adults; Medical and senior center trips	Older adults; Medical and senior center trips	Veterans traveling to VA medical appointments
DAYS/HOURS OF SERVICE	Monday - Sunday, 6:00 AM - 11:00 PM	Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Not Reported	Monday - Friday
FUNDING SOURCES	Medicaid; FTA Section 5310	Medicaid; Older Americans Act Title III-B; Veterans Administration; FTA Section 5310	Medicaid; Older Americans Act Title III-B; Veterans Administration; FTA Section 5310	Bartholomew County
FLEET BY LOCATION AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY	Not Reported	Columbus-3 (WC accessible)	Columbus-3 (WC accessible)	Columbus-1
SERVICE TYPE(S)	Demand Response	Demand Response	Demand Response	Demand Response

TYPICAL FUNDING SOURCES

URBAN AREA FORMULA PROGRAM (SECTION 5307)

Section 5307 is the primary federal funding source to support public transportation. Urban Formula Program funds may be used to support public transportation capital projects, operating assistance, workforce development, and for transit-related planning. For areas of 50,000 to 199,999 in population, the formula is based on population, low-income population, and population density. Consistent with the Memorandum of Agreement between CAMPO, ColumBUS Transit, and INDOT, ColumBUS Transit is designated the recipient of Section 5307 funding in the Urban Area. The federal share of projects funded by Section 5307 may not exceed 80% for planning and capital expenses and 50% for operating assistance.

ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (SECTION 5310)

This program addresses the special transit needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meet their needs. The federal share of projects funded by Section 5310 may not exceed 80% for planning and capital expenses and 50% for operating assistance. Section 5310 funds can be spent on “traditional” projects, such as buses and vans, wheelchair lifts, ramps and securement devices, and transit-related information technology systems. Funds can also be spent on “non-traditional” projects such as:

- ◆ Travel training
- ◆ Volunteer driver programs
- ◆ Building an accessible path to a bus stop, including curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features
- ◆ Improving signage or wayfinding technology

BUS AND BUS FACILITIES PROGRAM (SECTION 5339(A))

Section 5339(a) provides funding to states and transit agencies through a statutory formula to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. In addition to the formula allocation, the program includes two competitive components: the Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Program and the Low or No Emissions Bus Vehicle Program. The Federal share of project costs is 80 percent.

TRANSIT-ADJACENT FUNDING FLEXIBILITY

FHWA funds in several funding programs can be flexed to projects that enhance transit or access to transit. Any pedestrian improvement within half a mile of a transit station or stop and any bicycle improvement within three miles of a transit station or stop improves access to transit and is therefore eligible. Pedestrian or bicycle improvements beyond these distances may also be eligible if a project sponsor can demonstrate the improvement is within the distance that people will travel by foot or bicycle to a transit stop or station. Such projects may include small-scale improvements like ADA-compliant curb cuts, or mobility hubs for bicycle sharing; or larger-scale infrastructure projects such as pedestrian and bicycle overpasses and off-road trails.

LOCAL OPERATING FUNDS

Local operating funds, from sources including local taxes and transit farebox revenues, are another typical source of transit funding.



POSSIBLE PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES

Transit projects identified in this MTP were provided by ColumBUS and CAMPO staff and are intended to capture all local providers and possible county coordination. [Table 26](#) lists some of the illustrative transit projects across different project types. This list is not exhaustive, and CAMPO and its partner agencies may seek to advance other transit projects as implementation opportunities arise and community needs and development patterns change.

Table 26: Illustrative Transit Projects

TOPIC	COMMUNITY CONSISTENCY	WORKFORCE AND DEPOT		FLEET		COMMUNITY AMENITIES		SERVICE COVERAGE	
GOALS AND PRIORITIES	Maintain consistency with other community documents as they are updated	Continued workforce development	Continued depot maintenance and improvement	Continued fleet maintenance and management	Update fleet technology	Provide benches and shelters through the network, prioritizing those as higher-user locations first	Improve connectivity between bicycle-pedestrian facilities	Increase loop frequency	Increase service to a greater percentage of the MPA
EXAMPLES	◆ CAMPO Coordinated Public Transit Humans Services Transportation Plan ◆ ColumBUS Transit Route Study ◆ ColumBUS Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan ◆ Columbus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan ◆ BCSC Safe Routes to School Plan	◆ Gilig School ◆ Professional certifications through Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and American Public Transportation Association (APTA) ◆ Safety and security training via Transportation Security Administration (TSA)/ Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	◆ Increase office space ◆ Security system improvements ◆ Generator Maintenance	◆ Vehicle preventative maintenance ◆ Purchase new vehicles according to the TAM Plan	◆ Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) ◆ Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) ◆ Automatic Passenger County (APC) ◆ Public Information Systems (wayfinding)	◆ Shelters in the top 1/3 of stops would be approximately 50 shelters	◆ Bus stop improvements prioritized near high-user bicycle-pedestrian facilities ◆ Install wayfinding ◆ Install sidewalks to improve connectivity for transit users (Flex Funding may be used within 3 miles of transit network)	◆ Improve loop route frequency from existing hourly schedule, with a goal of 15-minute loop route frequency ◆ New ColumBUS transfer station	◆ Implement county-wide rural transit ◆ Increase access to individuals with disabilities ◆ Increase access to senior citizens ◆ Increase access for community workforce ◆ Automobile competitive ◆ Woodside/ Walesboro ColumBUS Route ◆ Indiana Outlets ColumBUS Route