RICHMOND REGION MICRO-TRANSIT STUDY
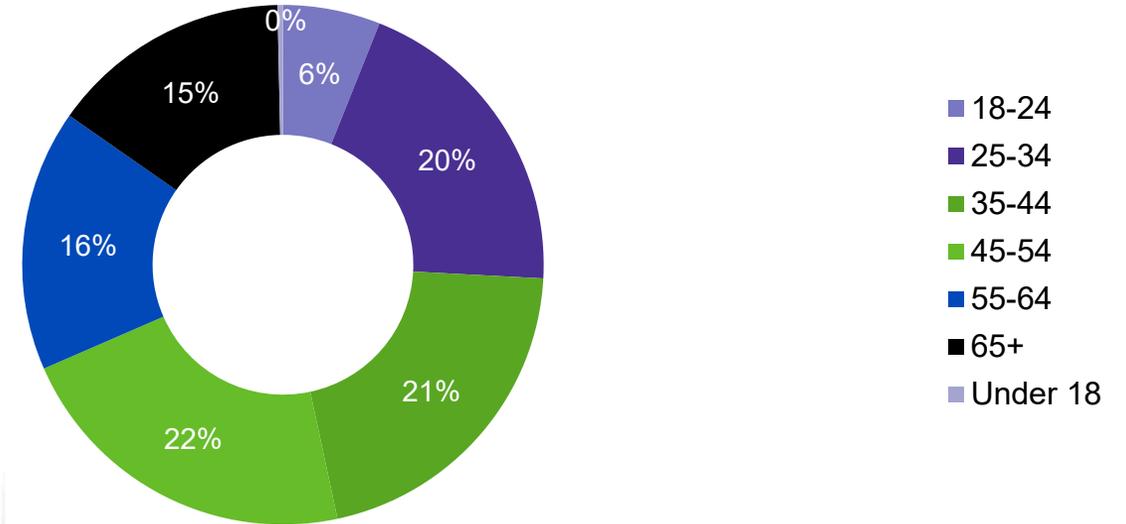
January 2022

PROGRESS TO DATE

- Conducted public survey to gather input related to micro-transit service

- Conducted interviews with six agencies operating microtransit around the U.S.

- Met with four local operators to understand potential opportunities and challenges

- Completed existing conditions, market, and micro-transit suitability analyses

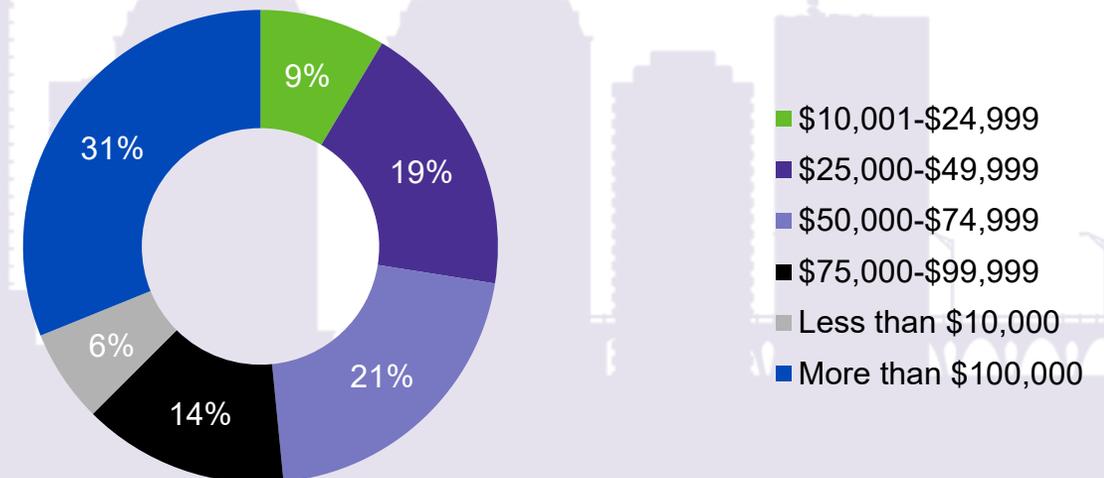- Identified potential micro-transit areas for further consideration

PUBLIC SURVEY

- November 4 through Dec 15
- 936 participants

What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Under 18

0%
6%
20%
21%
22%
16%
15%

What is your annual household income (in 2020)?

- $10,001-$24,999
- $25,000-$49,999
- $50,000-$74,999
- $75,000-$99,999
- Less than $10,000
- More than $100,000

9%
19%
21%
14%
6%
31%

SURVEY KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Approximately 45% of respondents typically **drive alone** as one of their main modes of travel, and over 60% of respondents **rarely or never use GRTC's services**.

- There is interest among respondents in alternative transportation options.

  - Over a third indicated they would use it **at least once a week**.

  - 80% of respondents were willing to pay up to **$6 per trip** and **wait up to 20 minutes** for a ride.

  - A majority of respondents are comfortable with **app-based booking**.

- **Reliability and cost** were the most important factors to consider for using a new service.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PEER AGENCY INTERVIEWS

- Micro-transit's convenience is **popular among many riders** and micro-transit **can increase fixed-route ridership** if designed correctly to do so.

- There is value in **piloting service** to "test the waters."

- It is recommended to **establish service standards** and a **clear performance monitoring and evaluation process.**

- **Zone size is very important**; too-large zones leads to high demand and high wait times.

- **Education and marketing is very important** to a service's success.

- Agencies **cannot assume most riders will use the app, although education and incentives can help**.

Peer agency regions: Albany, NY; Austin, TX; Dayton, OH; Georgetown, DE; Muskegon, MI; York, PA

GRTC
TRANSIT SYSTEM

INTENDED BENEFITS FOR EACH MICRO-TRANSIT USE CASE

	Underperforming Fixed-Route Replacement	First/Last Mile Connections	New Service Area
Improved customer experience	✓	✓	✓
Increase ridership on or connection to higher capacity network	✓	✓	✓ (where relevant)
Increase productivity and/or cost savings	✓	✓	
Increased coverage	✓	✓	✓
Enhanced safety	✓ (esp. late night)	✓	✓

✓ – Primary intended benefit; ✓ – Secondary benefit (or potential benefit)

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM OPERATOR MEETINGS

- **Most demand response providers in the region only serve specific populations** (usually seniors and people with disabilities).

- There is widespread **interest in seeing more transit options available** to residents in the region in general and there seems to be **minimal concern about overlapping service areas**.

- **Significant fare differences exist** (some trips are free or $2, others charge $6).

- **Most of the region's operators continue to explore technology platforms** for demand response and/or on-demand transit, whether via procurement or in-house development. This may represent an opportunity to coordinate or share software.

- More **rural areas may be more difficult to serve with truly on-demand service**.

GRTC TRANSIT SYSTEM

MICRO-TRANSIT RECOMMENDATIONS
THREE STEP PROCESS

Step 1: Zone Identification
- Analyze origins, destinations, and density
- Identify areas with Micro-transit Suitability
- Gather input to inform adjustments to identified zones

Step 2: Zone Evaluation for Prioritization
- The prioritization considers:
  - Intersection density
  - Activity generators
  - Land use
  - Equity
  - Transit Hubs

Step 3: Service Design
- Categorize zones for service type/use case
- Refine zone boundaries
- Define operational characteristics

Guiding Questions:

WHERE WOULD MICRO-TRANSIT SERVICE WORK?

WHICH OF THESE ARE THE STRONGEST CONTENDERS FOR A MICRO-TRANSIT PROGRAM?

WHAT TYPE OF SERVICE WILL WORK BEST IN THESE AREAS?

GRTC TRANSIT SYSTEM

NEXT STEPS

- Present these *preliminary* findings to regional partners and gather input on local conditions and priorities not captured in our data-driven analysis.
  - Meetings with representatives from: Ashland, Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powatan Counties, City of Richmond, and Bay Transit
  - Present findings to GRTC Board and CVTA TAC and gather their input
- Additional meetings with localities

Goal: One or more micro-transit pilots launched in FY 2023, *contingent* upon adequate staffing and other resources.