

BATA Next Wave

Transit Master Plan

Executive Summary | October 2022



About The Project

BATA Next Wave is a Transit Master Plan (TMP) that will guide the agency's priorities for the next five to ten years. The goal of this plan was to identify how best to use the agency's resources to maximize the benefits that transit can bring to our community.

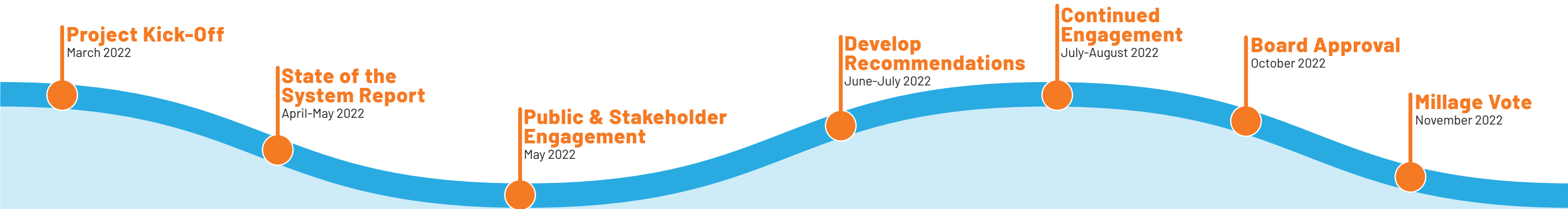
The plan evaluated our region's transit demand and growth opportunities to make recommendations based on BATA's guiding principles, stakeholder and community input, and data analyses.

BATA is prepared to take on future challenges and improve transportation options, helping our community's residents become better connected to jobs, services, and educational opportunities.

BATA strives to meet the changing needs of transit riders in our community. Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties are growing, the region has cemented itself as a premier tourism destination in northern Michigan, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic have led to shifts in how people travel. Now is a key time for BATA to evaluate goals and plans to develop a plan for the future.

In the last five years, BATA has increased ridership, launched a high-frequent fare-free Bayline service, upgraded tourism-based services, developed a mobile-ticketing program, improved rural door-to-door service, created the Link On-Demand service, and is close to starting construction on a new transit facility. BATA Next Wave builds on these successes to develop guiding principles and implementable goals for the agency for the next 5 to 10 years.

Project Timeline



Market Analysis

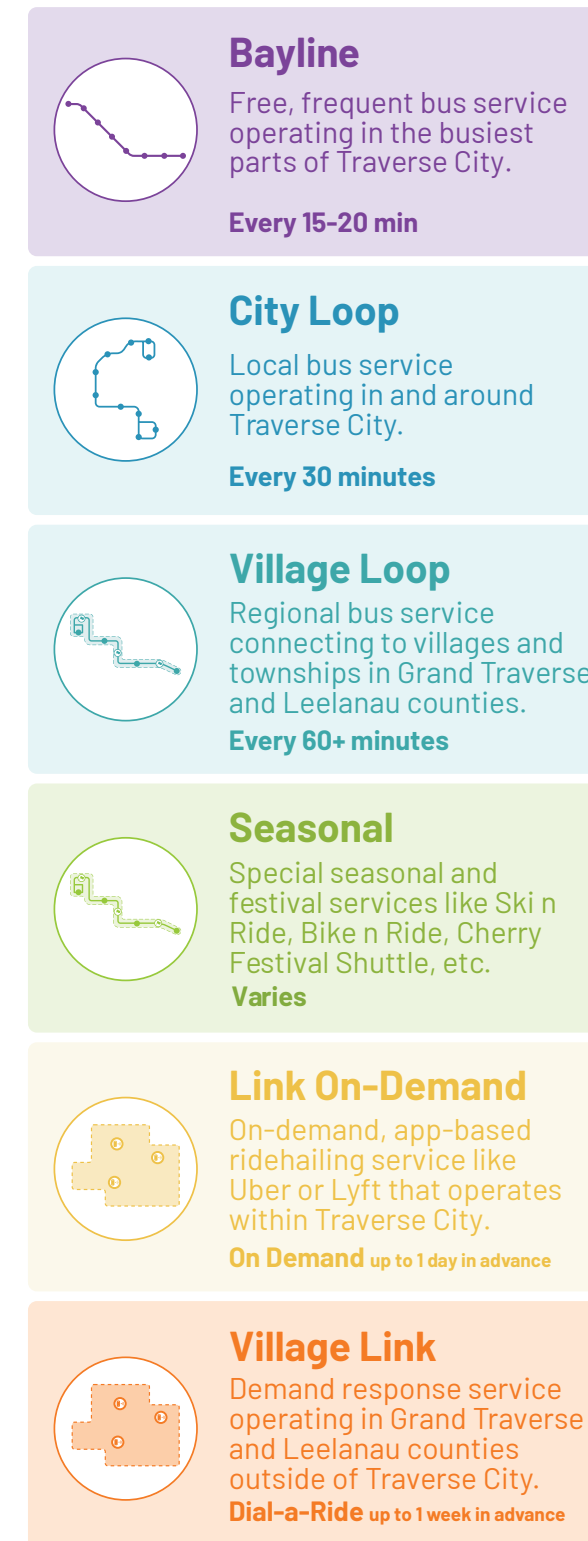
Understanding the underlying patterns of transit demand in BATA's service area was an important part of developing the plan. The market analysis used demographic, environmental, and economic data to provide an overview of where current and potential transit riders live, work, and travel. Findings highlight where transit service will be most effective and will help BATA invest in high-quality services that will continue to be successful and beneficial to the community.

Transit Demand is strongly driven by...



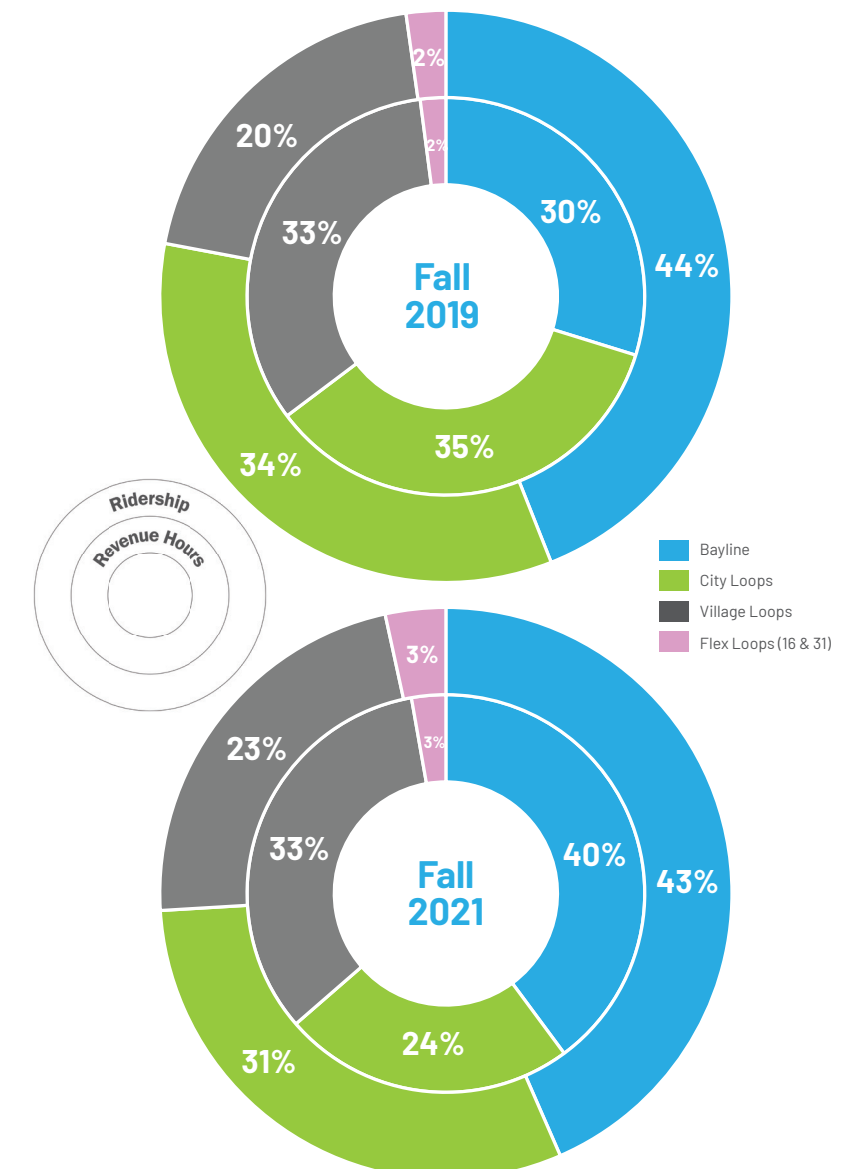
Transit Assessment

The Next Wave planning process included an inventory and detailed analysis of BATA's six different service types and a variety of performance metrics. Each of the services described below is tailored to the needs of different areas of the community. Close attention was paid to the changes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the ability for BATA to provide service.



Ridership vs Revenue Hours

Comparing ridership to revenue hours shows how productive a service is compared to the resources spent on providing it. In both 2019 and 2021, Village Loops had disproportionately lower ridership compared to hours, while City Loops and the Bayline carried more riders compared to hours.



Engagement Efforts

Public Input

To guide the BATA Next Wave, we completed an initial round of public engagement. We asked the community to take a survey about their preferences and experience with transit in the region. Over 250 people completed the survey both online and in person at multiple public outreach popups at the Hall Street Transit Center, a senior center, and local farmer’s markets. The survey was also advertised on the agency’s website, on social media, and in the Ticker.

A second round of public engagement was conducted to obtain feedback on the drafted recommendations. A project website detailing the analysis and draft recommendations was created for the public to learn about the plan and provide input.

Stakeholder Meetings

BATA also held two virtual stakeholder engagement meetings to ensure the plan would support and build off of other local initiatives. Stakeholders who participated in these meetings represented a variety of organizations including City of Traverse City Planning Department, Networks Northwest, Groundworks, Traverse Area District Library, and Benzie Bus.

Some of what we heard...

“I’d love to use the bus more, but I don’t know how to put together routes to places I might want to go on one trip away from home.”

“BATA is my only form of transportation and I rely on it for work, shopping and socializing with peers.”

“I really enjoy the Bayline but was disappointed when it stopped running on weekends. I understand why but it was super helpful to have those days.”

By the numbers

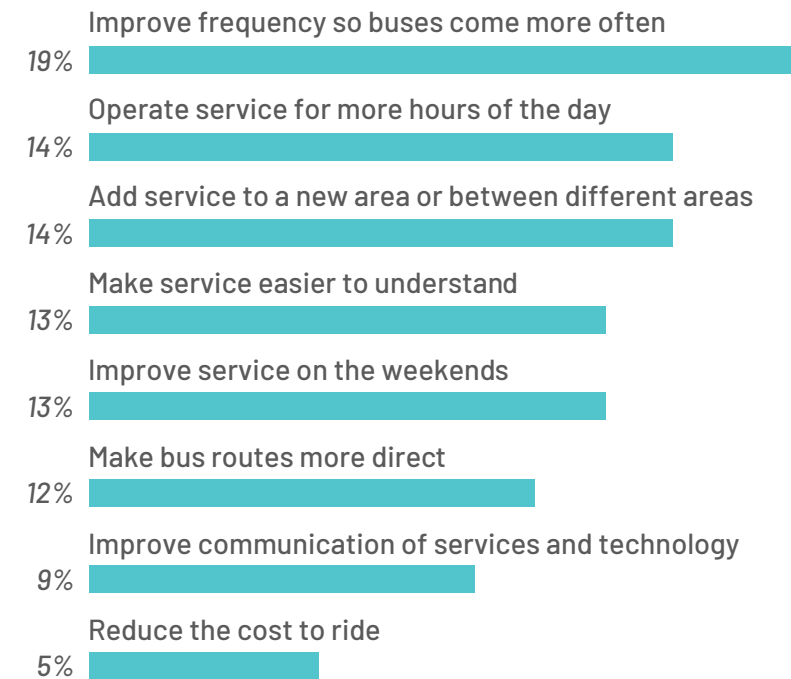
8
pop-up events

1,544
website views

303
survey responses

2
meetings with stakeholders

Prioritizing BATA Service Improvements



Buses running more often on main streets, with a longer walk to bus stops
60% preferred

- OR -



Buses running on more streets, but less often and with a shorter walk to bus stops
40% preferred



What does the plan accomplish?



Developing Recommendations

Using the results from the data analysis and public involvement efforts, BATA Next Wave identified three focus areas to guide the recommendations in the plan. These goals define some of the strategies BATA uses to make transit more accessible, convenient, and useful to more of the community.

Service Levels

Improve transit service in a productive and cost-efficient way.
Strengthen connections to key destinations.
Coordinate fixed route services with demand response and microtransit services.



Reliability

Provide sufficient recovery for fixed routes to remain on-schedule.
Establish sufficient service spans and frequencies.
Create a service schedule with no more than 3 changes per year.



Clarity

Consolidate services categories and coordinate associated fares.
Create simple route and schedule pamphlets to support rider trip planning.



5-Year Recommendations

Frequency Improvements

- Restore Bayline to 15-minute frequencies and extend to Grand Traverse Mall area
- Restore Routes 1 and 2 to 30-minute frequencies on weekdays
- Restore all Village Loop (not including Routes 16 and 31) routes to regular 60-minute frequencies

Weekend Service Increases

- Provide Saturday service on all City Loop routes
- Provide Sunday service on Bayline, Routes 1 and 2

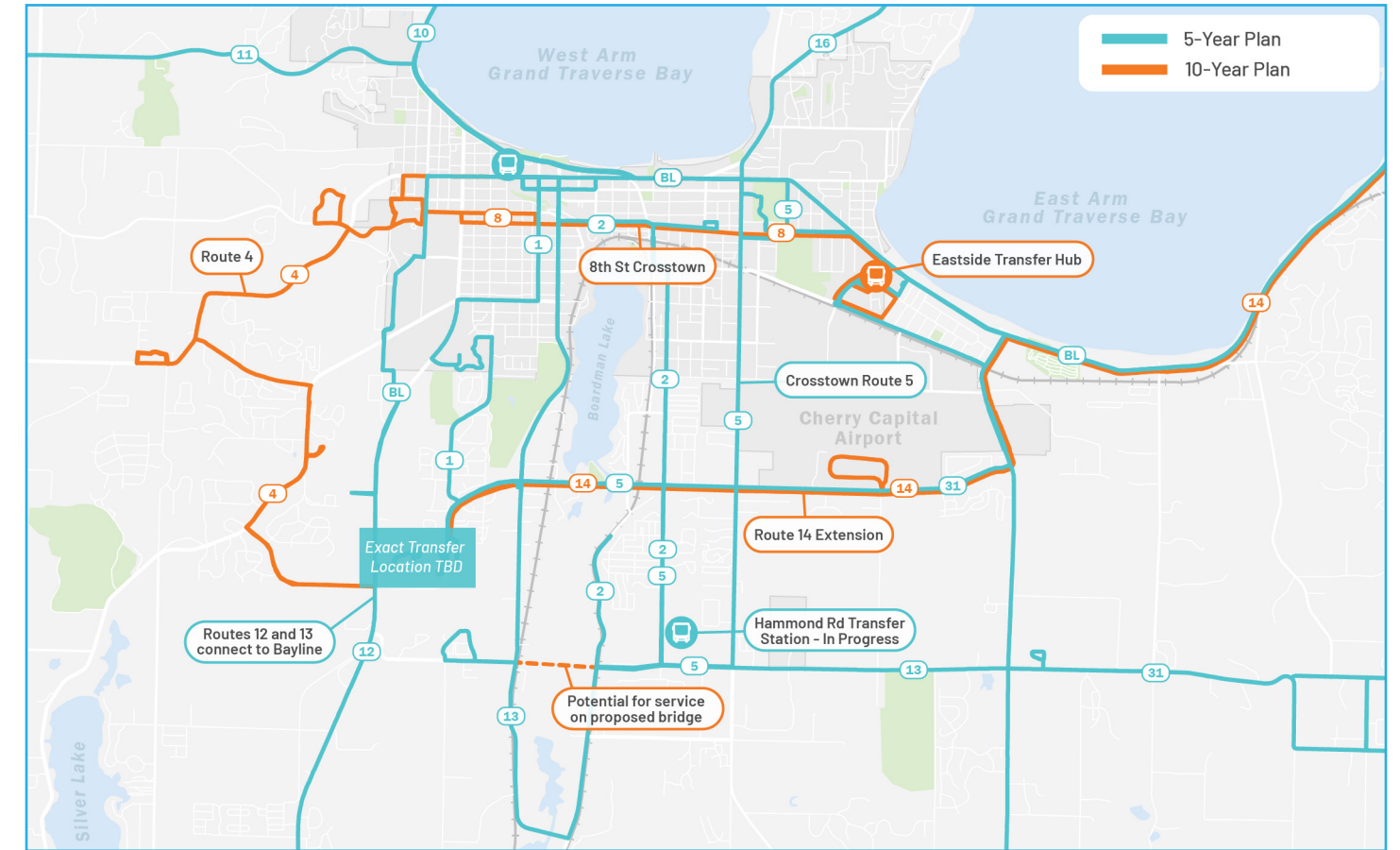
New Route

- Implement new crosstown service (Route 5) at 30-minute service

Village Loop Changes

- Shorten outer ends-of-lines on most Village Loop routes, and enhance Village Link On-Demand service with designated connection points to Village Loop routes
- Start and end Routes 12 and 13 at Grand Traverse Mall area where they will connect to frequent City Loop service
- Start and end Route 14 near Munson Medical Center where it will connect to Bayline

Traverse City



10-Year Recommendations

Frequency and Span Improvements

- Increase Route 2 to 15-minute frequencies on weekdays
- Increase Routes 1 and 2 to 30-minute frequencies on Saturdays
- Expand Route 16 to all-day service
- Provide Saturday service on all Village Loop routes

New and Extended Routes

- Westside service (Route 4)
- Eighth Street crosstown service
- Extend Route 14 to Grand Traverse Mall area via Airport Road

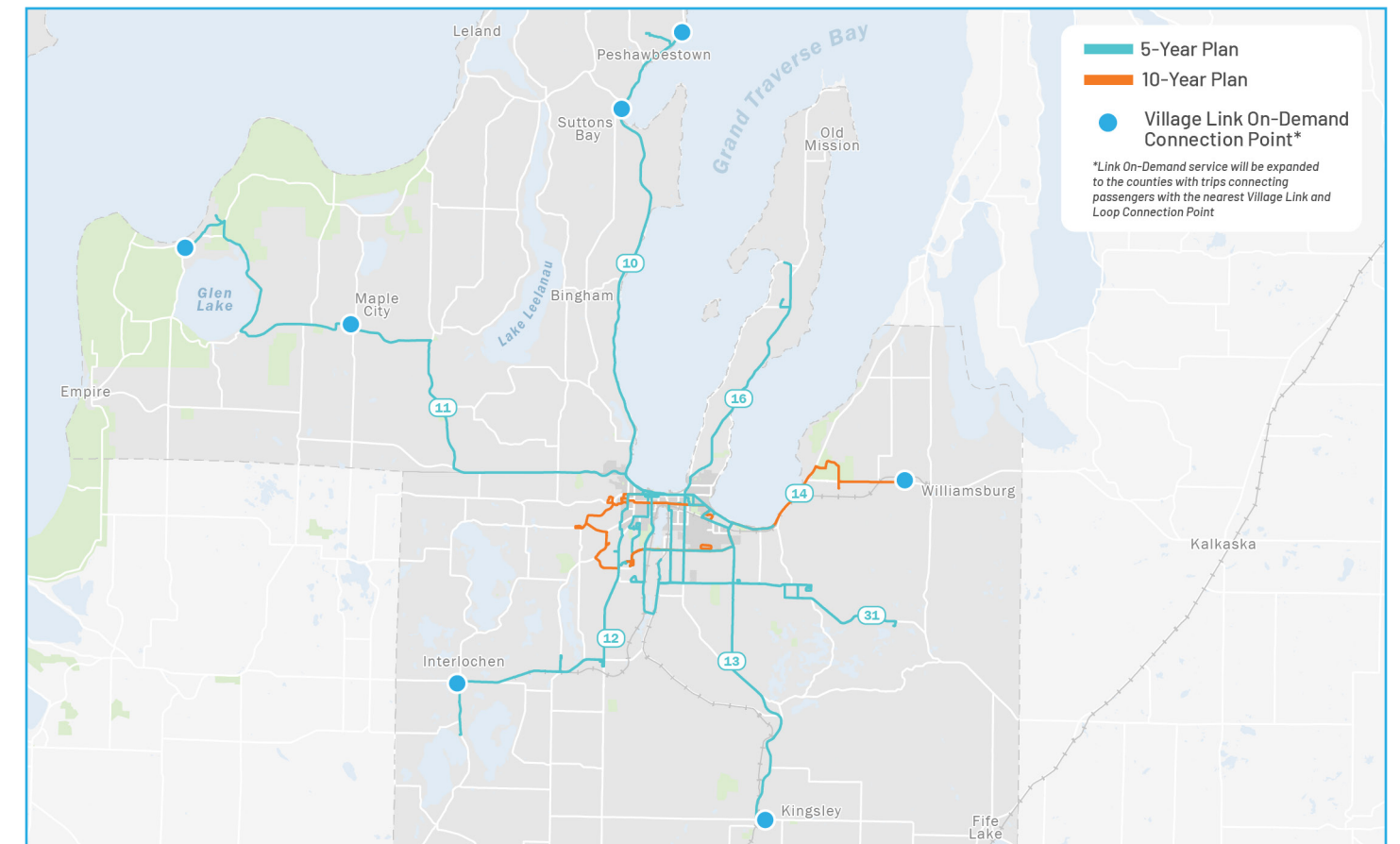
Potential New Transit Hub

- Eastside near Tom's

Other Potential Considerations

- Hartman-Hammond Bridge
- Intercity train service to Traverse City

Grand Traverse & Leelanau Counties





BATA | (231) 941-2324 | 115 Hall St Traverse City, MI 49684