

Riverview Transit Service Review

Presentation to Council

January 13, 2025

Background

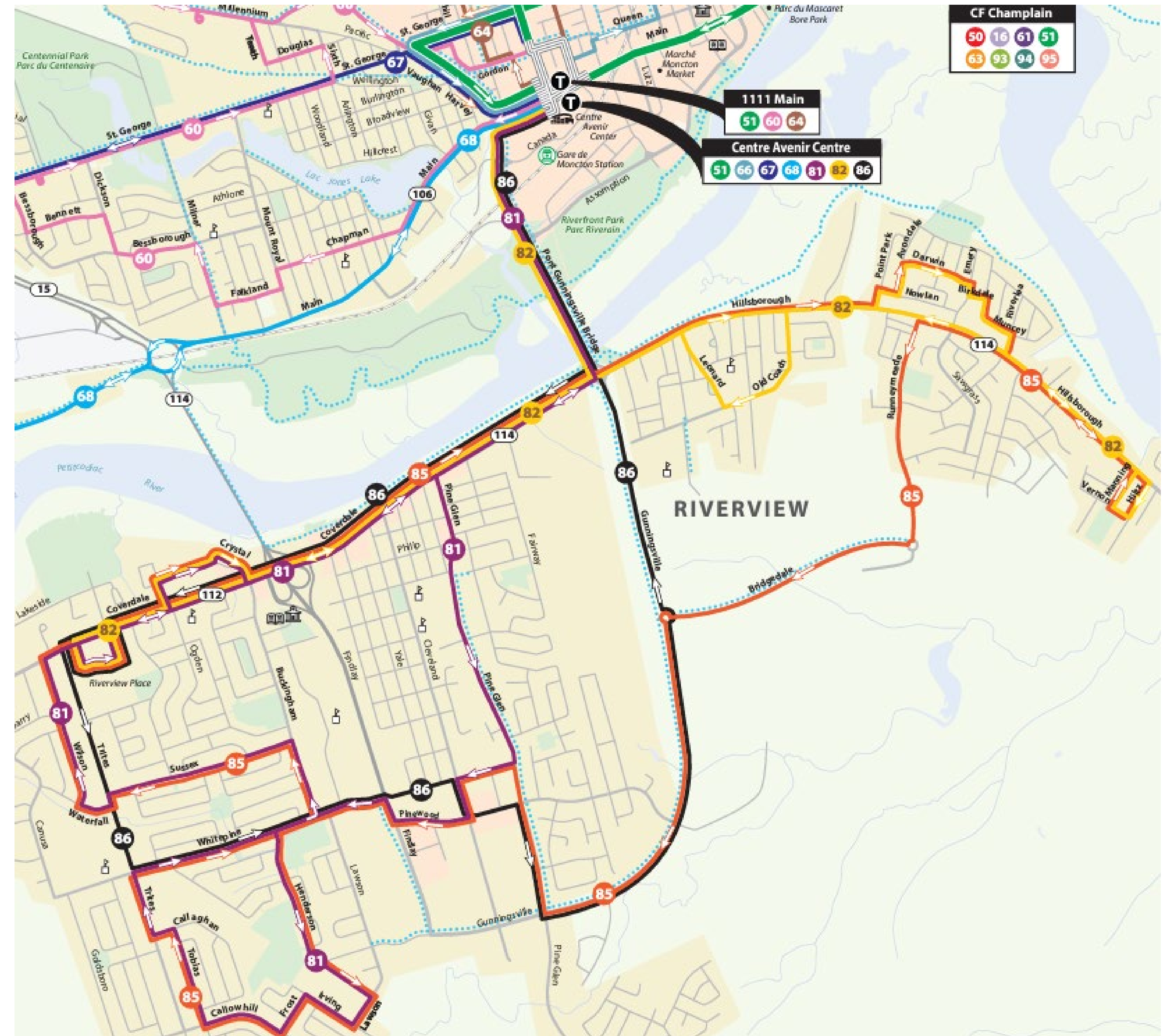
- Transit ridership in Riverview has recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic and has been growing sharply throughout 2023 and 2024
- Ridership and demand levels are now approximately three times higher than during COVID and higher than they were prior to the pandemic
- This pattern mirrors the recent rapid growth of the tri-community, which has corresponded with a large ridership increase across Codiac Transpo
- The Town commissioned this study to:
 - Better understand transit demand and travel patterns
 - Evaluate how the whole transit network is functioning, rather than looking at routes or stops in isolation
 - Recommend a transit service network to support Riverview's growth
- Council has already ordered one new bus to provide for a spare in the fleet, which is expected to arrive in 2025

Purpose

- The objective of this study was to review the operation and service delivery of public transit in Riverview. The study consisted of several components:
 - Evaluating **existing routes** to identify potential strengths and weaknesses
 - Examining **travel demand patterns** by transit and other travel modes in Riverview and the tri-community
 - Propose **service changes** to improve the effectiveness of Riverview's transit system
 - Recommend **infrastructure improvements** to prioritize pedestrians and improve rider experience
 - Develop a **financial and implementation plan** to guide the Town's enactment of the proposed transit improvements

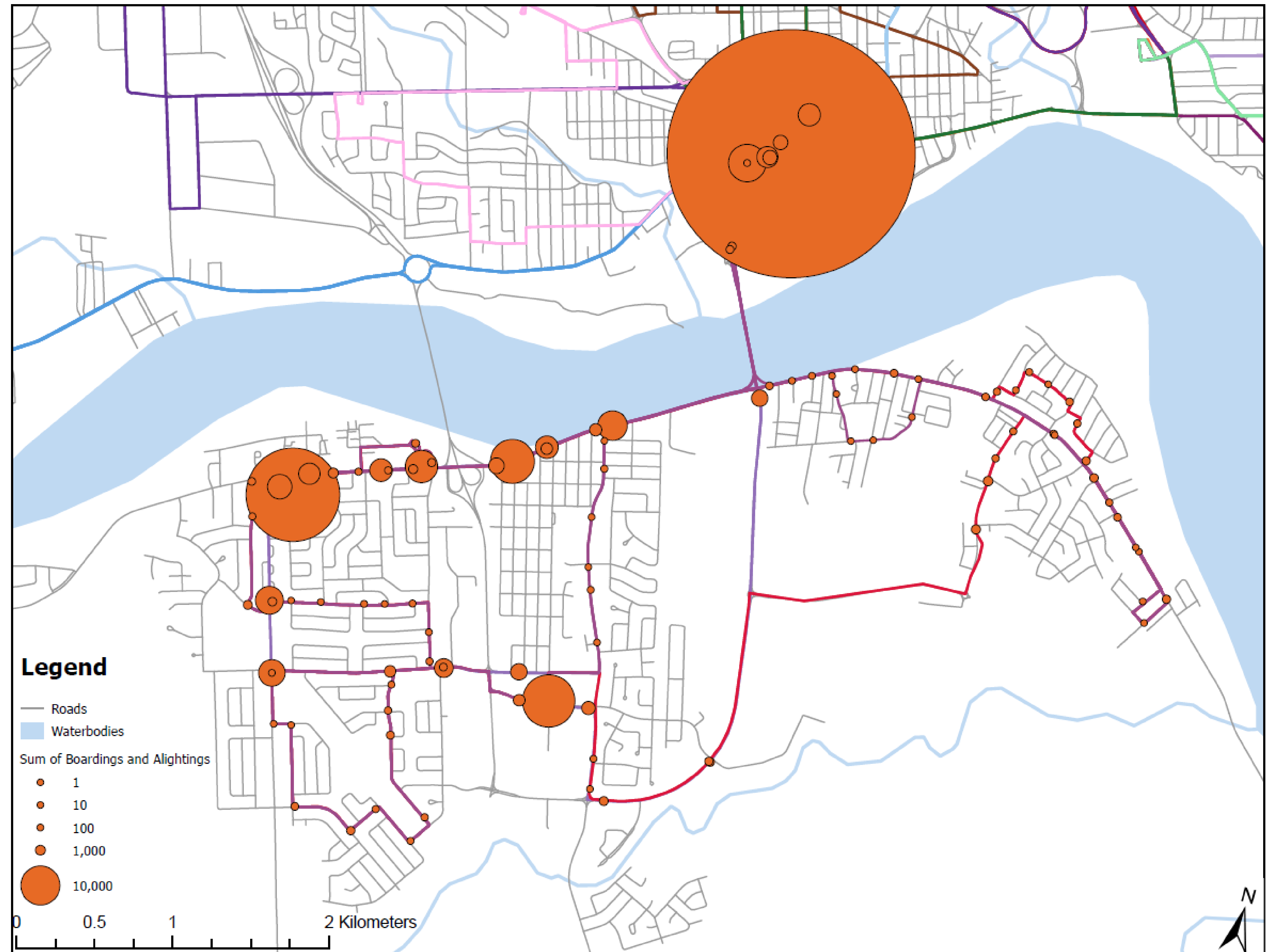
Existing Transit Service

- Two weekday routes: 85 Riverview Connector and 86 Pinewood
 - 85 Riverview Connector operates every hour and is the least productive route
 - 86 Pinewood operates every 35-40 minutes and is the busiest + most productive route
- Two weekend routes: 81 Riverview and 82 Riverview Place
 - 81 Riverview operates every hour and circles around west Riverview connecting to downtown
 - 82 Riverview Place operates just three trips per week
- 86, 81, and 82 all connect downtown while 85 does not



Ridership Around Riverview

- Travel patterns are clearly oriented towards Downtown Moncton, the busiest stop and most critical destination to serve
- Transit travel within Riverview is limited
- Major stops in Riverview include Riverview Place and Findlay Park
- Ridership observed along Coverdale Rd and Trites Rd
- All the most well-used stops in Riverview are located on Route 86



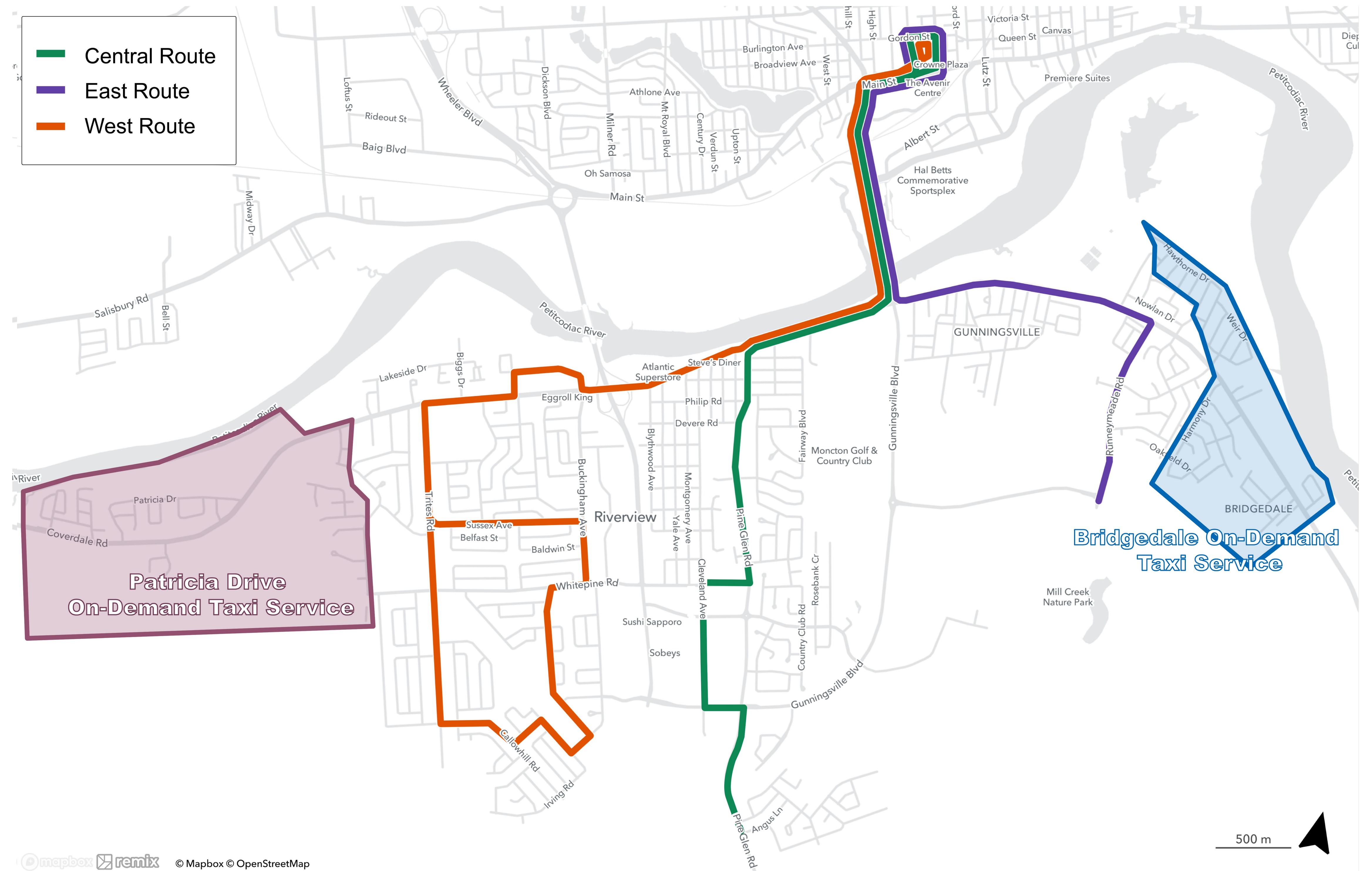
System & Peer Review Takeaways

The project team reviewed the operation of transit in Riverview and evaluated it in comparison to similar transit systems around the country based on population and size of the service area. Takeaways include:

- Ridership in Riverview is growing quickly, averaging 9,800 passenger trips per month in 2024 compared to 7,600 in 2023 and just 3,000 during the COVID-19 pandemic
- With only two buses, Riverview is very limited by the size of its fleet in the amount of service it can operate at any time
- Other peer systems own between four (Caledon, Fort St. John) and eight (Moose Jaw) buses
- Riverview has below-average levels of investment in terms of annual service hours
- Due to lower investment and service levels, Riverview also has below-average transit ridership despite its proximity to a major city
- Transit service in Riverview is efficient with the limited available bus fleet
- The bottom line is that if it is to invest in improved transit service, **Riverview must purchase more buses**

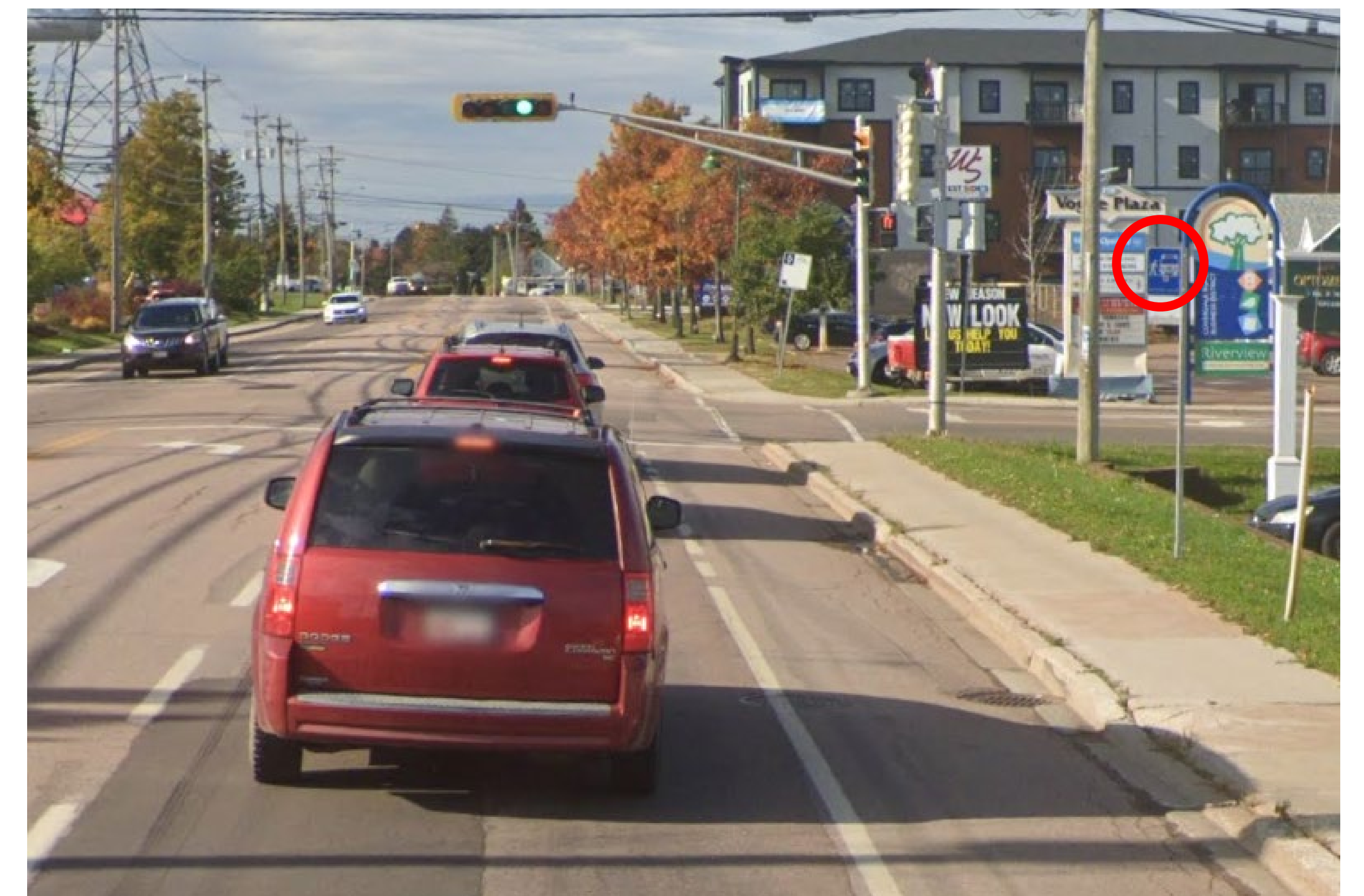
Recommended Service Network (2026)

- Three routes connecting Riverview to downtown Moncton
- Service focused on main corridors and growing communities
- Fast, direct travel with minimal backtracking
- All three routes operating 7 days a week (5am-11pm weekdays, 6am-9pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun)
- Taxi-to-transit service provided in low-ridership areas (Patricia, Bridgedale)
- Two to four buses operating at once



Right-of-way Allocation Review

- The Town requested a review of the existing conditions of public streets in Riverview
- Most existing bus stops in Riverview do not have **passenger waiting amenities** like:
 - Shelters
 - Benches
 - Garbage cans
- Many streets in Riverview have narrow sidewalks, limited sidewalks, or no sidewalks at all
- Passengers may need to wait for and board the bus on residential driveways or lawns
- Some bus stops in Riverview do not have **clear signage** indicating the presence of a stop



Right-of-way Allocation Review

- The plan provides different streetscape recommendations for **arterial, collector, and local streets**
- Streetscape renovations in Riverview will benefit transit users, as well as all other pedestrians and active mode users



Implementation

- The Town should hire a **Transportation Coordinator** to oversee transit and other transportation tasks:
 - Budgeted at 0.5 FTE for transit and 0.5 FTE for other transportation work
- **Two new buses** should be purchased at an estimated cost of \$1.8M, for a total fleet size of five buses
 - Allows up to four buses to be operated at once, during busier hours
- Weekend service to be aligned with weekday service in 2025, with new network starting in 2026
- Revised service network represents an approximate **doubling of existing service hours**
- Annual capital budget for concrete stop pad construction and shelter installation, estimated at ~\$350,000 for the next five years

Financial Plan: Projected Operating Costs

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Municipal Population	21,750	21,900	22,100	22,300	22,500
Service Hours	10,000	13,500	17,000	17,000	17,000
Ridership Estimate	107,300	129,800	150,000	152,700	155,500
Peak Fleet / Spare Fleet	2/1	4/1	4/1	4/1	4/1
Operating Revenues					
Farebox	\$187,000	\$227,000	\$262,000	\$267,000	\$272,000
U-Pass	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$187,000	\$227,000	\$262,000	\$267,000	\$272,000
Operating Costs					
Administration (0.5 FTE)	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Transportation Operations	\$1,091,000	\$1,473,000	\$1,854,000	\$1,854,000	\$1,854,000
Taxi Subsidy Program	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$1,151,000	\$1,533,000	\$1,914,000	\$1,914,000	\$1,914,000
Operating Metrics					
Net Operating Spend	\$964,000	\$1,306,000	\$1,652,000	\$1,647,000	\$1,642,000
Cost Recovery Ratio	16%	15%	14%	14%	14%

Future Considerations – Fare-Free Transit

- Council directed the Town to investigate the impacts of removing transit fares
- A review of other jurisdictions that have piloted fare-free transit found ridership does increase, but at the cost of less funding for the system
- Based on ridership projections for the full year of 2024, the opportunity cost of making fares free would be approximately **\$220,000** for the year, or **2,000 annual service hours**
 - This is the cost of operating one bus on the road for 8 hours, every weekday of the year
 - Within the recommended network, this is the difference between a bus every 30 minutes and a bus every 40 minutes, or a bus every 40 minutes and a bus every 60 minutes
- Fare-free transit is not recommended at this time due to the associated impacts on the Town's ability to fund transit operations
- If the Town elects to make transit fare-free in the future, it is recommended that funding sources be identified to ensure this doesn't result in service being cut

Recommendations

1. Hire a **Transportation Coordinator** in 2025
2. Purchase **two buses** in 2025
3. Begin constructing concrete bus pads and installing shelters in 2025
4. Institute **weekend service** on Routes 85 & 86 when a new bus is delivered in mid-2025
5. Install **new bus stop posts** in early 2026 to prepare for the roll-out of the new service network
6. Adopt the **new service network** when two new buses arrive in mid-2026
7. Introduce the **taxi-to-transit program** in the Bridgedale/Point Park and Patricia Drive communities
 - This program can be pilot-tested in the Patricia area before the arrival of new buses
8. Monitor ridership and growth trends to increase investment levels where appropriate once the new network is operating
9. Maintain open communications with Moncton and Dieppe regarding cross-regional services

Questions
