

# 2025 Morro Bay Short Range Transit Plan

*Technical Memorandum 2:  
Alternatives*



San Luis Obispo  
Regional Transit Authority



LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.



# **2025 Morro Bay Short Range Transit Plan**

## *Technical Memorandum 2: Alternatives*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Public transportation plays a crucial role in Morro Bay, offering essential mobility for residents to access important medical, recreational, social, educational, and economic services and opportunities. Public transit improves quality of life for residents through supporting access to educational programs, medical providers, employers, and social service initiatives throughout the region. Additionally, public transit contributes to the local tourism industry by enabling visitors to easily reach various businesses and attractions.

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. was retained by the City of Morro Bay to conduct a Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) to assess public transit and related transportation issues in the City of Morro Bay and provide a “road map” for improvements to the public transit program over the upcoming five years. The intent of this study is to evaluate the specific needs for transit services, as well as to develop plans for improvements and service revisions. To date, the Study Team has conducted a review of existing transit conditions and evaluation of operations, as well as public outreach via onboard surveys, and an online community survey. As part of this technical memorandum, public outreach efforts are summarized and a wide range of service, capital and financial alternatives intended to improve mobility and cost effectiveness are evaluated.

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## PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

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### INTRODUCTION

Community outreach is essential in planning of effective and equitable transportation systems. With this in mind, LSC conducted both onboard passenger surveys and an online community survey to help capture real-time feedback from riders during their journeys while also engaging broader community voices through surveymonkey.com. The following is a summary of the feedback and input received during the public outreach process.

### ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

In partnership with the City of Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA), LSC conducted an onboard passenger survey to get feedback from those who ride the Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service, the North Trolley and the Downtown Trolley. The surveys asked respondents about their ridership habits (how often they ride/where they ride from and to), their opinions on transit, and basic demographic information, including occupation and age. The surveys were available in both English and Spanish and was administered on paper on the bus. The onboard surveys were distributed by a trained surveyor from July 17th-July 18th, 2025, on Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service and from July 19th – July 20th, 2025, on Morro Bay Transit's Trolley Routes. All surveys were collected and returned to LSC to analyze and summarize the data.

A full analysis of the survey results is available in Appendix A. Below is a summary of these results.

### Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Summary (20 Responses)

#### *Demographics*

- Nearly half (45 percent) of the respondents were seniors (ages 61–90); about one-third (35 percent) were under 25.
- Those who reported speaking more than one language accounted for 20 percent of respondents, while 80 percent of respondents reported speaking only one language.

#### *Trip Pattern:*

- The bus stop with the most reported boardings was Morro Bay Transit Hub/City Park on Harbor Street, and the bus stop reported as the most common destination was Kennedy Way Community/Senior Center.
- Trips clustered midday (10 AM–2 PM), with fewer early morning or evening riders.
- The top trip purposes reported by respondents were leisure/social (30 percent) and shopping (25 percent). Work trips (15 percent) and medical/dental (10 percent) were also noted.
- None of the respondents used the Call-A-Ride deviation service.
- Riders lacking access to a personal vehicle accounted for 85 percent of respondents.

- Riders were mostly split across Regular Fare, Free Fare, and Monthly Pass, each accounting for 24 percent of respondents.
- The majority of respondents walked to (55 percent)/from (53 percent) bus stops; 20 percent connected via RTA Route 12.
- Respondents reported the frequency of use as being 30 percent riding 1 to 2 days per week, 30 percent riding from 3 to 4 days per week, and 25 percent riding 5 or more days per week.

### ***Respondent Feedback and Opinions:***

- The top transit information sources reported by respondents were social media and the website (39 percent each).
- Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Service Ratings on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent) found high marks for Overall Service (4.7 weighted average), Safety/Security (4.65 weighted average), Driver Courtesy (4.6 weighted average), On-Time Performance (4.6 weighted average). Lower scores for Information Availability (3.95 weighted average) and Bus Stop Amenities (3.95 weighted average).
- Strongest requests for service improvements included weekend service (47 percent on Saturday, 35 percent on Sunday). Other priorities include evening service (24 percent), more frequent buses (12 percent), and reversing the route direction to have a northbound and southbound run, instead of one continuous loop (29 percent).
- Most common open-ended comments and feedback was positive feedback about bus drivers (23 percent). Some (15 percent) said no improvements were needed. Others requested weekend fixed-route or weekday trolley service (8 percent each), improved RTA transfers (15 percent), and expanded Call-A-Ride hours/service area (15 percent). Smaller shares highlighted needs for better bus stop information, signage, and bike racks.

### **Downtown and North Trolley Survey Summary (40 Responses)**

#### ***Demographics***

- Those respondents who were visitors from outside San Luis Obispo County accounted for 73 percent and 18 percent of respondents lived in Morro Bay (15 percent full-time, 3 percent part-time).
- The respondents' age groups were diverse with 35 percent of respondents reporting being between the ages of 26–40, 25 percent of respondents between the ages 41–60, and 20 percent of respondents being under age 18.

#### ***Trip Pattern***

- Trip Patterns:
  - The most common origins reported by respondents were Morro Strand State Beach, Main at Elena/Spencer's Market, and Morro Bay State Park. And the most common destinations reported by respondents were Downtown/Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard and Morro Bay State Park.

- Respondents reported that 94 percent of trips were round-trip.
- Respondents primarily walked to (87 percent) and from trolley stops (76 percent).
- Trips were mostly for recreation, with 45 percent of respondents reporting social/recreational purposes as the reason of their trip, 38 percent sightseeing, and 28 percent reporting dining.
- Respondents reported their boardings occurred primarily during the midday, especially between 12:00–2:00 PM.
- First-time riders accounted for 56 percent of respondents, and one-third (33 percent) of respondents reported riding once or less per year.

### ***Respondent Feedback and Opinions***

- Respondents reported receiving information about transit services primarily from social media (58 percent) and the website (45 percent).
- Respondents reported learning about the Trolley services from seeing the trolley stop signs or seeing the trolley (38 percent), word-of-mouth (30 percent), and flyers (24 percent).
- Open-ended feedback/comment service improvements included later weekend hours (50 percent for Sundays and 42 percent for Saturdays), expanded routes (25 percent) and stronger regional transit connections (13 percent) also suggested.
- Trolley Service Ratings on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent) found high marks for the trolley service, including Cleanliness (5.0), On-Time Performance (4.95), Overall Service (4.95), Driver Courtesy (4.93), Value of Fare (4.90). All categories rated above 4.7, indicating consistently excellent rider satisfaction.
- Most trolley survey respondents were highly satisfied with the service, with 60 percent stating that no improvements were needed. Among those suggesting changes, the most common requests included weekday service (15 percent) and amenity improvements (15 percent). Smaller shares (5 percent each) called for earlier morning service, safety improvements, bus stop enhancements, or better transfer connections to RTA.

### **ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY (113 RESPONSES)**

The Online Community Survey collected 113 responses from residents of Morro Bay and the broader San Luis Obispo County region. Not all respondents answered each question. Outreach was conducted online and, in the community, to reach both riders and non-riders.

#### **Demographics**

- Respondents were mostly older adults, with the majority between ages 59 and 77 (60 percent of respondents).
- One-third (33 percent) of adults reported an income between \$0-\$79,999, and one-third (33 percent) of respondents of adults reported having an income above \$80,000 (one-third preferred not to respond).
- Nearly all reported having access to at least one personal vehicle (95 percent of respondents).

## Transit Use

- Transit use was evenly split, with half (50 percent) of the respondents reporting using public transit and half (50 percent) reporting that they do not use public transit.
- Those who do use transit reported the trip purposes most often for recreation or social activities (73 percent), personal business (47 percent), shopping (37 percent), and medical appointments (31 percent).
- The most commonly used services included RTA Routes 9, 10, 12, and 15 (59 percent), along with Morro Bay Transit's fixed route (43 percent) and trolley services (39 percent).
- Most riders reported using transit only occasionally (55 percent), 20 percent reporting never riding MBT. Those who ride more frequently account for 26 percent of riders.
- Transit riders reported riding transit routes fairly consistently, with Monday-Thursday accounting for 46-49 percent and Friday accounting for 62 percent of ridership. Ridership on the weekends is lower, (44 percent of riders rode on Saturday and 36 percent on Sunday).
- The half of the respondents who reported not using public transit most frequently cited reliance on their own transportation (66 percent), service not going where they need to travel (34 percent), and travel times being too long (32 percent) as reasons for not using transit.

## Opinion on Transit Services

- Asked to rate a series of service improvements that would encourage them to ride MBT services on a scale of 1 (Definitely Would Not) to 4 (Definitely Would), respondents identified several key improvements that would make them more likely to use transit. Top priorities included expanding service to additional destinations (3.2 weighted average), creating stronger connections with regional transit providers (3.04 weighted average), and adding more frequent weekend service (2.93 weighted average). Other areas of interest were later weekend hours (2.91 weighted average), better information about services (2.91 weighted average), and bus stops located closer to home (2.96 weighted average).
- Nearly half (49 percent) of respondents also expressed interest in trying microtransit, though many wanted more information before deciding (39 percent). Those who were not interested in micro transit (12 percent) cited needing more information on microtransit (36 percent), concerns with safety (18 percent), having their own transportation (18 percent), and that microtransit scheduling was not convenient (18 percent).
- Open-ended feedback highlighted recurring themes: expanding the service area to San Luis Obispo, Cayucos, and Los Osos (20 percent); offering earlier and later service hours for workers, students, and airport travelers (14 percent); and improving transit information, including better signage and accessibility for riders with disabilities (14 percent). Additional notable suggestions included restoring Dial-A-Ride service (10 percent) and making transfers to RTA Routes 12 and 15 easier (10 percent).

## INTRODUCTION

A successful transit system can influence economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life. This chapter delves into a comprehensive analysis of potential changes to Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride service as well as the North and Downtown Trolley services. This chapter reviews potential changes to both Morro Bay Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride and the Trolley.

For each alternative, the impacts on ridership and operating costs are estimated. Ridership and cost estimates assume implementation in FY 2026-27 and are based on the following parameters:

- The RTA proposed FY 2026-27 operating budget was used to estimate the operating costs of Morro Bay Transit assuming no change to service levels (“status quo” scenario) in FY 2026-27. The per-hour and per-mile costs were then used to estimate the cost impacts of the various alternatives, per the following equation:
  - Change in Morro Bay Transit’s Marginal Operating Cost = \$104.99 X Change in Vehicle Service Hours + \$3.60 X Change in Vehicle Service Miles.
- For the alternatives evaluations that follow, operating cost estimates represent “marginal” costs. In other words, fixed costs are excluded from the analysis unless identified specifically. The reason for looking at marginal costs of potential changes or improvements is that fixed costs (such as administrative staff salaries, utilities, and supplies) will not change if service levels are increased or decreased. However, fuel/maintenance costs (cost per mile) and driver salary costs (costs per hour) will increase incrementally as vehicle hours and miles are increased. Fixed costs and capital costs will be included in the discussion when the Draft Financial Plan is prepared.
- Status quo 26-27 ridership estimates assume a slight (1 percent) increase in ridership per year from FY 2024-25 levels. This is consistent with post-pandemic trends. Ridership estimates for service alternatives are based on ridership data from peer systems, and standard transit demand elasticity factors, depending on the alternative. Elasticity is an economic term that measures the change in behavior of one variable in response to the change in a related variable. For example, if service levels are doubled, historical data has shown that ridership will not double but rather increase by around 47 percent. Elasticity factors vary for different variables such as headways, total travel time or transfer time. Variation has also been found in urban areas vs. suburban areas or during peak or non-peak periods. *The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 95 Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes Chapter 9 – Transit Scheduling and Frequency* is a good resource for transit elasticity factors.
- Service was assumed to include 250 weekdays, 51 Saturdays, and 51 Sundays, unless otherwise noted. Operating days for the trolley were assumed to be 36 days.
- Data shows that the average fare of the Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride was \$0.48 in 2024. However, with the implementation of the new discount fare verification program, the assumed average cash fares received per boarding for Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride are assumed to be \$1.00. The

Trolley average fare per passenger is assumed to be \$0.83, based on a sample of ridership from FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25.

Average daily boarding and alighting data from a two-week sample in July was used to develop and analyze some of the options below. This data is presented graphically in Appendix B.

## **ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

### **Fixed Route and Call-a-Ride Alternatives**

Table 1 presents cost and ridership impacts for a variety of service alternatives for MBT Fixed Route/CAR. Each alternative is described below.

#### ***Provide Weekend Fixed Route/CAR Services***

While the Downtown and North Trolley's operate on weekends during the summer months (June through October), many online community survey comments indicated that the Trolley service area is limited, as it is primarily intended to transport visitors staying in campgrounds to Downtown. The top service request for the on-board surveys was Saturday and Sunday Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride service. Two weekend Fixed Route/CAR service options were analyzed: Non-summer and year-round.

#### ***Non-summer Season 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM***

Under this option, Fixed Route/CAR Service would operate between the hours of 10 AM and 5 PM on both Saturday and Sunday for the weekends that the Trolley does not operate (October to June). This equates to 68 additional days of service for an estimated net increase in annual operating costs of \$68,170. Weekend service would be similar to weekday service and arrive/depart the Morro Bay Park Transit Center at the top of the hour to allow for timed connections with Routes 12 and 15. Although the Trolleys stops at the Community Senior Center, which is within one-quarter mile of the transfer point currently, connections to Route 12 and 15 would be improved under this scenario as there would be scheduled direct connections at the Morro Bay Transit Center.

Ridership for Saturday and Sunday Fixed Route/CAR service during the non-summer season was estimated by applying the average proportion of Saturday and Sunday daily ridership to weekday ridership for Routes 12 and 15. This results in an increase in 3,100 trips annually and an additional annual operating subsidy of \$65,070.

#### ***Year-round Weekend Service 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM***

As the Trolley routes cater more to visitors, it is worthwhile considering operating Fixed Route/CAR service (serves more residents) seven days a week. Under this option, Fixed Route/CAR service would operate from 10 AM to 5 PM, year-round for an additional annual operating cost of \$104,250. Adding the additional 104 days of service would garner an additional 4,700 one-way passenger-trips and result in a marginal operating subsidy of \$99,550.

#### ***Provide Weekday Fixed Route/CAR Service to 7:45 PM***

Another common request among on-board and community survey respondents was later evening service. Currently the last run on MBT Fixed Route/Call-a-Ride departs the Morro Bay Transit Center at 6:00 PM ending at the Morro Bay High School at 6:45 PM. Although average daily ridership during this

last hour of service is low (1.6 boardings), another connection with Route 12 coming from San Luis Obispo could be made.

As shown in Table 1, this option would cost around \$35,800 to operator and carry around 300 additional one-way passenger-trips. Ridership was estimated based on the ratio of 7:00 PM hour ridership to average daily ridership for peer operators.

### ***Two Loop Route - Improve Connections with Route 12 and 15***

Timely inter-regional bus transfers contribute to a more equitable transportation system by providing accessible and convenient options for all, particularly for those who rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation. RTA Route 12 connects Morro Bay with Los Osos, the City of San Luis Obispo and Cuesta College. Timed transfers between MBT Fixed Route/CAR and Route 12 heading towards Los Osos and coming from SLO are possible at the top of the hour at the Morro Bay Park. However, connecting MBT passengers must wait 39 minutes at Morro Bay Park to transfer to a southbound Route 12 bus to SLO. According to on-board passengers surveys, roughly 20 percent of survey respondents transferred to/ from Route 12. This is an increase from 6 percent during the last SRTP update. No respondents stated that they transferred to/from Route 15. Additionally, the Blue Heron Mobile Home Park and Bay Pines Travel Trailer Park are served by Route 12 but not MBT. Therefore residents/visitors to these areas would also benefit from improved connectivity with Route 12.

The previous SRTP recommended dividing the MBT Fixed Route/CAR into two loops (Figure 1). Each loop would begin and end at Morro Bay Park, where the driver would take a break. The North Loop would depart Morro Bay City Park at the top of the hour as usual, travel west along Morro Bay Road, north on Main Street following the existing route alignment to serve the northern portion of Morro Bay including the spur along Atascadero Road to Morro Dunes State Park. As the bus approaches the downtown area, it would turn left on Quintana and right on Morro Bay Blvd to return to the Morro Bay City Park at :38 minutes after the hour, in time for passengers to transfer to Route 12 toward SLO. The bus would then operate the South Loop. In order to maintain good on-time performance for the Fixed Route/CAR, the South Loop would be shortened from the existing configuration. After leaving the City Park, the bus would travel west along Morro Bay Blvd and south along Piney Way only as far as South Street where it would turn north on Main Street to serve Harbor Street and Morro Bay Blvd before stopping at the Community Center and ending at City Park. According to recent CAR ridership logs, 60 State Park Road is a popular destination. This stop would still be within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the South Loop.

The Two Loop Route will take 1 hour to operate with one bus but with a small reduction in vehicle miles (as a result of the route no longer travelling as far south as Piney and Main Street) this alternative will save around \$7,000 in annual operating costs. Transfers between MBT and Route 12 will be improved, and passengers will have a shorter travel time from the northern portion of Morro Bay to Heron Mobile Home Park, Bay Pines Travel Trailer Park, Cuesta College and the City of SLO. It is estimated that improved transfers will increase ridership by around 3 trips per day or 700 per year.

**Table 1: Morro Bay Transit Alternatives Analysis**

FY 2026-27

	Run Parameters		Daily Service			Days per Year	Annual		Annual Marginal Cost	Annual Ridership	Fare Revenues	Marginal Operating Subsidy
	Hours	Miles	Runs	Hours	Miles		Hours	Miles				
<b>Status Quo</b>												
Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route/CAR	1	10.6	12	12.25	127.2	250	3,063	31,800	\$436,181	11,700		
Downtown Trolley	0.25	4.8	28	7	134.4	36	235	3,007	\$35,502	1,920		
North Trolley	0.25	6.9	28	7	193.2	36	225	2,883	\$34,029	1,840		
<b>Total</b>		<b>22.3</b>					<b>3,523</b>	<b>37,690</b>	<b>\$505,711</b>	<b>15,460</b>	<b>\$14,700</b>	
<b>Fixed Route/CAR</b>												
<b>Saturday and Sunday Fixed Route/CAR Service</b>												
Non-Summer season (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM)	1	10.6	7	7	74.2	68	476	5,046	\$68,170	3,100	\$3,100	\$65,070
Year Round (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM)	1	10.6	7	7	74.2	104	728	7,717	\$104,250	4,700	\$4,700	\$99,550
<b>Later Weekday Fixed Route/CAR Service (Add one run to 7:45 PM)</b>												
	1	10.6	1	1	10.6	250	250	2,650	\$35,800	300	\$300	\$35,500
<b>Fixed Route - 2 Loop</b>												
North Loop	0.67	7.98	12	8.250	95.76	250	2,063	23,940	\$302,850			
South Loop	0.34	1.96	12	4.000	23.52	250	1,000	5,880	\$126,190			
Subtotal	1.00	9.94					3,063	29,820	\$429,040			
<b>Net Impact</b>							<b>0</b>	<b>-1,980</b>	<b>-\$7,141</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>-\$6,441</b>
<b>Trolley</b>												
<b>Extend Service Saturday Evening until 9 PM (4 Hours)</b>												
Downtown Trolley				4	51.2	36	144	1,844	\$21,770			
North Trolley				4	51.2	36	144	1,844	\$21,770			
<b>Net Impact</b>							<b>288</b>	<b>3,688</b>	<b>\$43,540</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>\$2,083</b>	<b>\$41,457</b>
<b>Microtransit Friday and Saturday Evening Service (5 PM to 9 PM)</b>												
Three vehicles at peak times				11	132	36	396	4,752	\$58,710			
Technology Cost									\$40,000			
<b>Net Impact</b>									<b>\$98,710</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>\$7,530</b>	<b>\$91,180</b>
<b>Replace Trolley with Microtransit (Friday - 5 PM to 9 PM, Saturday - 11 AM to 9 PM, Sunday - 11 AM to 5 PM)</b>												
Three vehicles at peak times							1,044	12,528	\$154,780	6,260		
Technology Cost									\$40,000			
Eliminate Fixed Route Trolley Service									-\$69,530	-3,760		
<b>Net Impact</b>									<b>\$125,250</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$117,750</b>

**Figure 1**  
**Two Loop Alternative**



### ***Add Bus in Opposite Direction***

Roughly 25 percent of on-board survey respondents indicated that they would like “add a second bus running in the opposite direction”. One-way directional loops can create indirect trips and longer travel times in one trip direction. On the Fixed-Route /CAR, the most common origin/destination trip pattern observed as part of the on-board survey was between Main/Jamaica/Spencer’s and the Community/Senior Center. Travelling from Main/Jamaica to the Community Center takes 25 minutes (with a short walk or deviation from City Park) and the return trip takes 35 minutes.

A potential extension of the Two Loop scenario would be to add a second bus travelling in the opposite direction; however, this would double the marginal operating costs or add around \$436,000 per year. Given that bi-directional service would only save around 10 minutes of travel time in one direction for the most common trip patterns, this option is not recommended as the increase in ridership would not be warranted with the additional cost.

### ***Additional Stop at Community & Senior Center Fixed Route***

As referenced above and shown in Appendix B, the most common origin destination patterns of on-board survey respondents were:

- Main St/Jamaica – Community Center
- Spencer’s Market - Community Center
- City Park – Main St/Bonita

According to the fixed route schedule, the Community & Senior Center is only served once on the route about 20 minutes after the departure from City Park Transit Hub. The Community & Senior Center is roughly one-quarter mile from the City Park Transit Hub. If passengers ride the bus the entire route from Main Street and Jamaica to the Community Center, it would take roughly 45 minutes. However, if they alight the bus at the City Park Transit Hub and walk to the Community Center, total travel time would be around 25 minutes. Although the walk between the City Park and the Community Center would not be difficult for able-bodied passengers, seniors and disabled passengers could benefit by including a “request stop” at the Community Center just prior to ending the route at the Morro Bay City Park Transfer Point. Passengers could make a request stop directly with the driver as they are boarding without the need to call dispatch in advance. Similarly, it is less than a quarter mile walk from the Dollar Tree stop to the Community Center. This distance could be made even shorter with a request stop near the intersection with Kennedy Way and the Dollar Tree access road before turning on to Quintana.

### **Downtown and North Trolleys**

According to on-board surveys, 83 percent of Trolley survey respondents were visitors from outside SLO County. Boarding and alighting data for a two-week sample shows that the Morro Strand State Park Campground is the most popular stop (35 average daily boardings), followed by the Giant Chessboard (23 average daily boardings). The majority of Trolley survey respondents stated that they were quite happy with the service, and many were riding for their first time. The following alternatives were analyzed for the Trolley Routes based on ridership patterns and survey suggestions.

### ***Later Saturday Trolley Service Until 9 PM***

One common suggestion among Trolley survey respondents was later service on both Saturday and Sunday. Prior to COVID, Trolley service operated until 7:00 PM on Friday and Saturday evenings. Service until 7 PM does not easily allow visitors to use the Trolley to go out to dinner downtown. Therefore, this alternative considers extending Trolley Service until 9 PM on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The additional 4 hours of service for both Trolley Routes would add around \$43,540 in annual operating costs. Ridership was estimated based on historical Morro Bay Trolley ridership from 5 PM to 7 PM and evening ridership for the Town Trolley in Mammoth Lakes and the Avilla Beach Trolley. The alternative is projected to carry an additional 2,510 passenger-trips per year or on average 69 per service day.

### ***Friday and Saturday Evening Microtransit Service***

Many resort communities have found microtransit to be a popular option during times when demand for fixed route service is lower, such as evening hours or weekends. Similar to Uber or Lyft, microtransit allows passengers to use their mobile phone or telephone to request a ride “on-demand”, at any pick-up location within a defined service area and time. Approximately 50 percent of community survey respondents indicated that they would be interested in microtransit and another 39 percent would like more information regarding microtransit. The benefit of microtransit is that it can serve more people directly by not having fixed stops. Microtransit is most useful for regions where there are few distinct origin destination patterns. Additionally, microtransit can often appeal to visitors who do not usually ride public transit. One potential application of microtransit in Morro Bay is for Friday and Saturday evening service, after the Trolley has stopped running. As the Trolley does not provide deviations, it would be possible to serve more residents/visitors directly with microtransit.

As noted in the above alternative, ridership demand for evening trolley service is projected at around 69 trips per day. Ridership by hour patterns for the peer Trolley services suggest that this equates to up to 20 trips per hour between 5 PM to 8 PM with fewer in the last hour of service. The most productive microtransit services observed in tourist areas carry anywhere from 5 – 7 trips per vehicle hour. In order to provide service with no more than a 30 minute wait, it is recommended that at least three microtransit vehicles be used for service between 5 PM and 8 PM and 2 for the last hour of the evening. If the service proves popular a fourth vehicle may be required. As the RTA fleet includes smaller vans which are used for paratransit service, it would be possible for RTA to operate the microtransit; however, the microtransit software would need to be procured. This technology is estimated to cost around \$30,000 - \$40,000 annually (not including start-up costs). In total, evening microtransit service in Morro Bay on Friday and Saturday evenings would cost around \$98,710 annually. Because Trolley service does not allow for deviation requests and microtransit provides direct service to more residents and visitors, projected ridership for microtransit evening service has the potential to be higher than Evening Fixed Route Trolley service discussed above. However, one disadvantage of this alternative is that it would require Morro Bay visitors to learn two different types of public transit service: Fixed-route Trolley in the daytime and Microtransit in the evening. This would likely limit ridership.

It is common for demand response services to have a higher fare than traditional fixed route services. Therefore, it would be reasonable to charge \$3 per ride for evening microtransit service. This equates to

an operating subsidy of \$91,180. If RTA considers microtransit in other portions of the county, the additional cost of purchasing on-demand app technology for Morro Bay microtransit vehicles could make this option more cost effective.

### ***Replace Daytime and Evening Trolley Service with Microtransit***

Another application of microtransit in Morro Bay would be to replace daytime Trolley service with microtransit as well as add the evening microtransit service discussed above. The benefits of this alternative would be that both daytime and evening weekend service would serve all of Morro Bay more directly and visitors would only need to learn one type of service during their stay. As part of this alternative, three vans would be used to operate service from 11 AM to 8 PM and 2 vans from 8 PM to 9 PM. This would cost on the order of \$120,250 in marginal operating costs over status quo Trolley service. Although high productivity rates on a microtransit service of 7 trips per vehicle hour have been observed in some resort destinations (Lake Tahoe) at peak times of day, most microtransit services do not carry more than 5 trips per vehicle hour. Currently the fixed route trolley is carrying 7.1 trips per vehicle service hour. It is reasonable to assume that a daytime and evening microtransit service in Morro Bay on weekends has the potential to carry up to 6 passenger-trips per vehicle hour, which equates annual ridership of 6,200 trips per year. This results in a net increase in ridership of 2,500 over status quo (due to the addition of evening service). However, it may take several years of operation before this level of ridership is achieved. If a \$3 per trip fare is changed, the net impact on annual operating subsidy would be \$112,630.

### ***Microtransit Year-Round (Fixed Route CAR Replacement)***

The existing MBT deviated fixed route system allows for a set schedule on which riders can depend with the flexibility of pickups/drop-offs outside the set route. The majority of Morro Bay can be served this way during the week, with the exception of Morro Bay State Park Campground (which is served by the Trolley on weekends). The geographic layout of Morro Bay (long and skinny with north and south clusters of development) makes it relatively efficient to serve with a deviated fixed route type of service. However, as the Fixed Route/CAR service carries only 3.7 trips per vehicle service hour (well within the productivity range of microtransit for one vehicle), it is worth considering replacing the Fixed Route/CAR with microtransit.

There are two primary disadvantages to this scenario: Cost and dependability. Even with only one microtransit vehicle in operation, technology costs for the on-demand app would add at least \$30,000 to annual operating costs. On-board survey origin/destination patterns show distinct trip patterns between the Spencer's Market area and the Community Center/City Park. This lends better to a fixed route type of service. Lastly, many regular riders may find it inconvenient to request a ride for each trip. (According to on-board surveys 85 percent of respondents use Fixed Route/CAR at least once a week, while 25 percent use it five days a week). One potential advantage of microtransit is that destinations outside the ¼ mile CAR service area, such as the Blue Heron Mobile Home Park could be included in the microtransit service area. Given all these factors, replacing Fixed Route/CAR with microtransit is not recommended at this time but could be considered in the future.

## ALTERNATIVES PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

To evaluate the relative performance of the RTA service alternatives, each alternative's impacts on ridership, marginal operating cost, passengers carried per vehicle service hour, and marginal operating cost per passenger trip were compared. Analysis findings are summarized in Table 2 and Figures 2 through 4. Alternatives with performance that improve status quo are highlighted in green.

- **Ridership** – The alternative with the greatest positive ridership impact is Year-round Weekend Fixed Route/CAR Service (4,700 trips), followed by the Non-Summer Season Weekend Fixed Route/CAR (3,100 trips). Later weekday Fixed Route/CAR service will only add a small amount of ridership (300 trips).
- **Passenger-trips per Vehicle Hour** – In terms of productivity, adding Trolley Evening Service on Friday and Saturday Evening Until 9 PM is the most productive (8.7 trips per vehicle hour) which is higher than status quo productivity levels. Productivity impacts for both weekend service options for Fixed Route/CAR exceed status quo levels (6.5 trips per vehicle hour).
- **Marginal Operating Cost per Trip** – Implementing the Fixed Route/CAR – Two Loop option would save \$10.20 per passenger-trip gained, making it the most cost-effective alternative. The weekend Fixed Route/CAR alternatives and the Trolley Evening Service until 9 PM on Friday and Saturday evening also improve status quo performance.

## SERVICE ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY

The following alternatives are worth consideration for the Draft Plan:

- **Fixed Route/CAR Two Loop** - This option would lower operating costs by a small amount while increasing ridership. The primary benefit of this alternative is that wait time to transfer to/from Route 12 would be reduced. Roughly 20 percent of survey respondents transfer to Route 12.
- **Trolley Friday and Saturday Evening Service Until 9 PM** – It is worth considering reimplementing Trolley evening service and extending until 9 PM. This allows visitors and residents to go out to dinner or simply stay in town longer than 4:30 PM. This option performs better than the microtransit evening service.
- **Saturday and Sunday Fixed Route/CAR Service** – Although these options would increase operating costs by \$68,000 to \$104,000 annually, these alternatives would have the greatest impact on ridership. Weekend service was a common request for both on-board and community surveys.

Although the microtransit options could provide greater flexibility, they are not as cost-effective as the fixed route and Trolley alternatives.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Morro Bay Waterfront Master Plan is a long-range planning document designed to guide the future development of Morro Bay's waterfront. As an update to the original 1996 plan, the future Master Plan aims to reimagine current land use, circulation, infrastructure, and design across waterfront areas, including the Embarcadero, Coleman Park, and former industrial sites like the old power plant and wastewater treatment facility. Proposed improvements include ADA-compliant pathways, upgraded

restrooms, and better sidewalk connectivity at Coleman Park, along with a potential drivable bridge over Morro Creek to enhance access, though traffic concerns remain. Parking strategies such as paid parking at Morro Rock and time-limit enforcement along the Embarcadero are also under consideration.

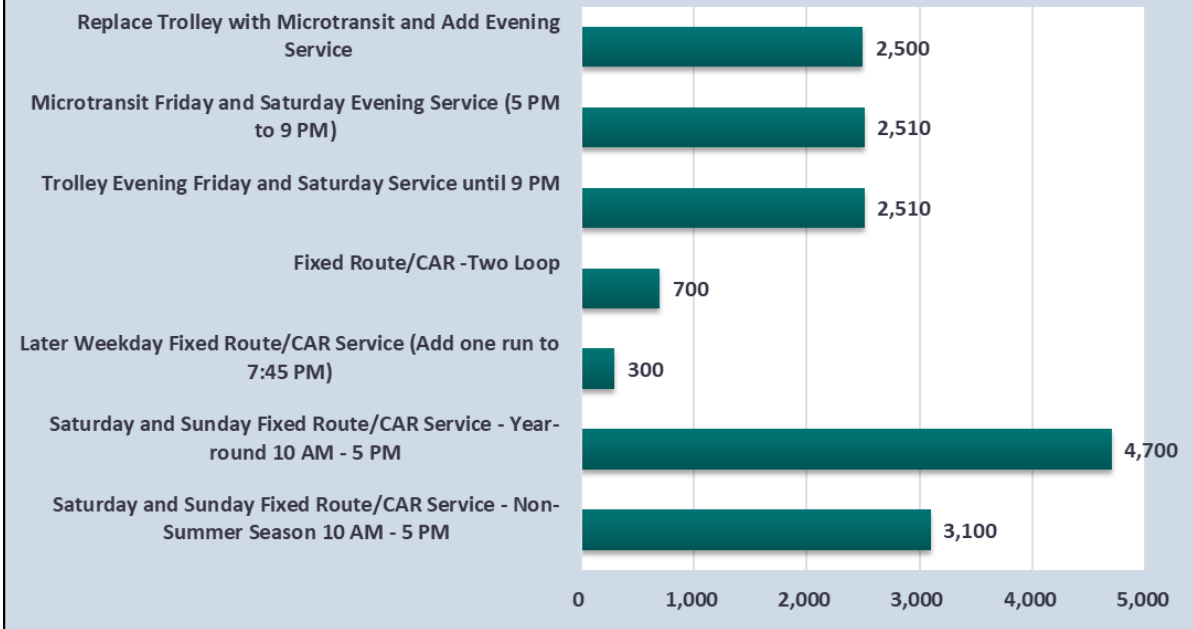
The area will remain zoned for “Visitor Serving Commercial” and “Parks and Recreation” which could potentially increase employment and tourism opportunities in the future; however, this would likely occur outside of this current SRTP planning period. While major development north of the power plant will be limited due to vulnerability to coastal hazards and flooding, family-friendly tourism and recreation activities such as parks, playgrounds, and RV camping are all being considered. As the estimated completion date for the Waterfront Master Plan is November 30th, 2026, development as a result of its completion will be considered in future transit planning efforts for the area.

**Table 2: Morro Bay Transit - Service Alternatives Performance Analysis**

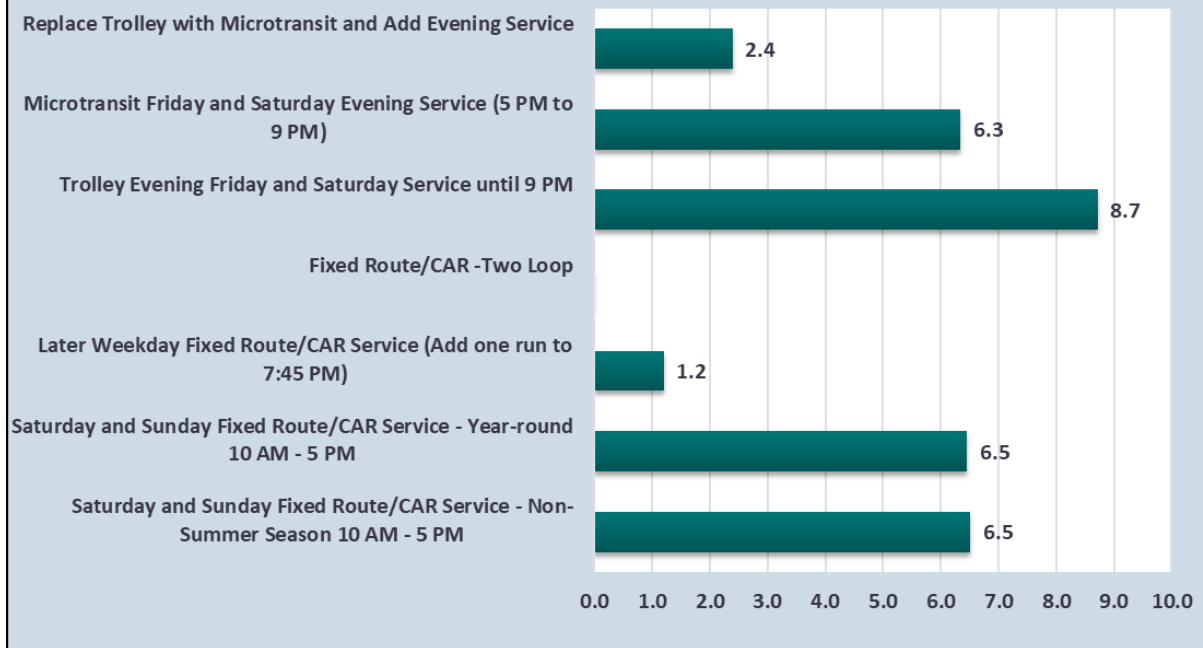
	Net Impact				
	Annual Ridership	Annual Vehicle Service Hours	Annual Marginal Operating Cost <sup>1</sup>	Passenger-Trips per Vehicle Service Hour	Marginal Op. Cost per Passenger-Trip
Saturday and Sunday Fixed Route/CAR Service - Non-Summer Season 10 AM - 5 PM	3,100	476	\$68,170	6.5	\$21.99
Saturday and Sunday Fixed Route/CAR Service - Year-round 10 AM - 5 PM	4,700	728	\$104,250	6.5	\$22.18
Later Weekday Fixed Route/CAR Service (Add one run to 7:45 PM)	300	250	\$35,800	1.2	\$119.33
Fixed Route/CAR - Two Loop	700	0	-\$7,141	--	-\$10.20
Trolley Evening Friday and Saturday Service until 9 PM	2,510	288	\$43,540	8.7	\$17.35
Microtransit Friday and Saturday Evening Service (5 PM to 9 PM)	2,510	396	\$98,710	6.3	\$39.33
Replace Trolley with Microtransit and Add Evening Service	2,500	1,044	\$125,250	2.4	\$50.10
Status Quo <sup>(2)</sup>					
			Fixed Route/CAR	3.8	\$37.28
			Trolley	8.2	\$18.49

Note 1: Does not include fixed costs  
 Note 2: Represents FY 26-27 status quo using the RTA cost model.  
 Alternatives shaded in green meet standards

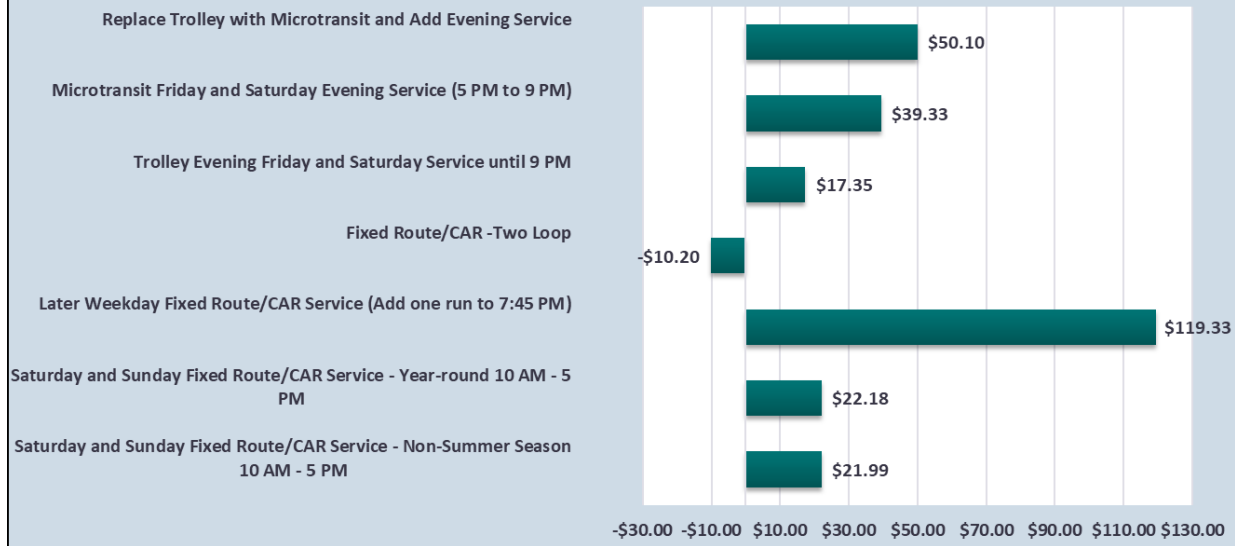
**Figure 2: Morro Bay Service Alternatives - Impact on Ridership**



**Figure 3: Morro Bay Service Alternatives - Impact on Passenger-trips per Vehicle Hour**



**Figure 4: Morro Bay Service Alternatives - Impact on Marginal Operating Cost per Trip**



## FARE ALTERNATIVES

### Discount Fare Verification Program

When RTA passengers purchase a multi-ride pass on Token Transit or at pass outlets throughout the County, the passenger has the option to choose which fare category they fall under, general public or discount. Similarly, bus operators are instructed to avoid fare-related conflicts and generally to accept the word of cash-paying riders. RTA staff have observed general public passengers paying the discounted cash fare when there is no obvious reason the person qualifies for the discounted fare. As such there is likely some abuse of the fare system. For Morro Bay Transit specifically, data for FY 2023-24 shows that less than 1 percent of passengers paid the full cash fare. On-board survey results indicate that roughly half of respondents were under the age of 60.

In an effort to reduce fare evasion, the RTA will implement a program to distribute a discount fare verification card in conjunction with the launch of the Cal-ITP system and the re-establishment of in-person ADA eligibility verification. Passengers can sign up in person at a pre-arranged location (possibly revolving around the county at existing pass outlets) or through an online portal, which will reduce the potential burden for qualifying passengers who may face mobility challenges.

Token Transit and the Cal-ITP system allow agencies to restrict the ability of users to purchase discounted fares by providing a “good list” of passengers who qualify for discounted fares, and persons buying a discounted pass at a pass outlet would be required to show their eligibility card during purchase. Qualified applicants could submit their documentation via an online portal or in person at an office to be added to the “good list”.

## Implement Cal-ITP Open-Loop Contactless Fare-Capping System

The California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP), and the California Department of General Services have collaborated to simplify the process for transit providers to implement a contactless fare-capping system. Cal-ITP has also negotiated lower-cost credit card processing fees than would be possible by individual agencies.

Some transit agencies that have implemented the Cal-ITP program have set a goal of a fully cashless fare system, including Monterey-Salinas Transit (2027). RTA staff have expressed a desire to follow M-ST's example since this would reduce the staff time needed for the fare counting process as well as the increasing cost of maintenance for the complicated and occasionally unreliable Genfare fareboxes.

In 2024, SLOCOG led an effort to establish and fund the Cal-ITP system on all countywide fixed-routes using SB125 funds. This project will fund the upfront costs – including the purchase and installation of contactless payment hardware and related software – as well as fees for the first five years of operation.

In order to offer a fare payment option for unbanked or underbanked passengers, in the short-term the RTA will promote *BankOn* certified financial institutions in SLO County so that riders can obtain a contactless EMV chipped bank card through a low-fee and easy-entry bank account. *BankOn* is an initiative by the Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Fund that works to ensure everyone has access to safe and affordable banking accounts using national account standards for low-fee banking accounts. When banks and credit unions offer accounts that meet these standards, they can receive *BankOn* certification. There are over 350 certified accounts available with 46,000 branches nationwide. Longer term, the RTA will investigate partnerships with a third party to offer a prepaid card that can be reloaded at RTA pass outlets and possibly other organizations. The target to launch a prepaid card is FY26-27.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Capital investments include funding allocated for physical components of the transit system, such as vehicles, facilities, and passenger amenities. Capital investments are necessary to provide safe, dependable, and comfortable services, yet they also require substantial planning and funding on the part of the transit agency. While there is always a degree of uncertainty when planning capital improvements, as there may be unanticipated needs or product prices may change, it is still helpful to identify known capital needs to assist transit staff with securing funding. This chapter presents capital projects for Morro Bay Transit over the next five years.

## **TRANSIT VEHICLES**

### **Vehicle Replacement Needs**

Transit vehicles must be regularly replaced to maintain a safe and reliable fleet. As the vehicle procurement process can take multiple years, transit agencies must identify their vehicle needs well in advance. Additionally, the State of California's (CA) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation will begin impacting transit vehicle procurement in 2026, at which point 25 percent of small transit agency fleet bus purchases will be required to be ZEBs. By 2029, this purchasing requirement will increase to 100 percent. By 2040, all vehicles in the fleet will need to be ZEBs. To meet these standards, transit agencies can purchase either battery-electric buses (BEBs) or fuel-cell hydrogen electric buses (FCEBs).

### ***ZEB Considerations***

Currently, ZEBs are more expensive than gas or diesel vehicles, meaning Morro Bay Transit/RTA will need to secure additional funding to meet local match requirements for capital grants. While ZEBs are more expensive at this point, the ZEB market is constantly changing as new models are released and older models are improved, making it hard to predict future pricing. The Morro Bay Transit vehicle replacement schedule presented below is subject to change as new ZEB technologies become available and costs stabilize.

### ***Vehicle Replacement Schedule***

Morro Bay Transit's active fleet was acquired by RTA when they began operating the service. A new medium-duty Allstar 14.2 passenger cutaway was delivered in 2025, which will replace the older El Dorado cutaway. As such, RTA will not need to replace vehicles used for the Fixed Route/CAR during this five-year planning period. The two Trolleys used for primary service are not due for replacement until 2032 and 2035. The next round of vehicle replacement will need to be ZEV, unless state regulations change.

## **TRANSIT FACILITIES**

Transit facilities refer to the sites and infrastructure that directly support administrative, operations, and maintenance functions. This section discusses capital improvements to Morro Bay Transit facilities.

### **MBT Transit Hub**

MBT Transit Hub is located at the City Park on Harbor Street and is a transfer point for RTA Routes 12 and 15, and the MBT Fixed Route/Call a Ride service. In 2023, the site was updated, including upgraded shelters, ADA-compliant bench seating, ADA upgrades to sidewalks and curbs, fencing, decorative safety lighting, a bike rack, painted waste bins, and a route map. The two new bus shelters and benches are designed to meet ADA accessibility standards. As part of RTA's electrification program, opportunity chargers will be installed at the transfer point at Morro Bay City Park. This could be used for Morro Bay Transit as well as Routes 12 and 15.

### **Bus Stop Improvements**

For most passengers, bus stop amenities are important to comfort and perception of public transit. A few survey respondents indicated a desire for more visible bus stop signs which provide information such as a schedule. RTA recently installed bus schedule information at all MBT bus stops. However, the existing bus stop signs show the old Morro Bay Transit phone number. In order to provide the most accurate information, these bus stop signs should be replaced with RTA bus stop signs. Additionally, RTA employs the Transit Tracker app, which provides passengers with real-time location of buses.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Community outreach is essential in planning effective and equitable transportation systems. With this in mind, LSC conducted both onboard passenger surveys and an online community survey to help capture real-time feedback from riders during their journeys while also engaging broader community voices through surveymonkey.com. The following is a summary of the feedback and input received during the public outreach process.

## **ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY SUMMARY**

Working closely with the City of Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA), LSC developed a survey campaign to get feedback from passengers of Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride and Trolley services.

The surveys asked respondents about their ridership habits (how often they ride/where they ride to and from), their opinions on the transit system overall, and basic demographic information, including occupation and age. The onboard surveys were available in both English and Spanish and were distributed by a trained surveyor along Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service from July 17<sup>th</sup> to July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and along Morro Bay Transit's Trolley service from July 19<sup>th</sup> to July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Summary**

The Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride survey had 20 responses (20 in English and 0 in Spanish). The summary below captures the main insights gathered through the survey and provides a high-level look at respondent feedback.

- **Origin and Destination Pairs:** The most commonly reported origin and destination pairs reported by respondents on Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service were Main St. at Jamaica St going to Kennedy Way - Community/Senior Center (3 trips with this origin/destination pair), Main St. - Spencer's Market going to Kennedy Way Community/Senior Center (2 trips with this origin/destination pair), and Morro Bay Transit Hub – City Park at Harbor St. (2 trips with this origin/destination pair) (Table A-1).
  - **Most common origin:** Morro Bay Transit Hub – City Park on Harbor St. had the highest number of outgoing trips (7 total boardings), followed by Main St. at Jamaica St. (3 total boardings), and Kennedy Way – Community/Senior Center (2 total boardings).
  - **Most common destination:** Kennedy Way – Community/Senior Center (7 total alightings) and Main Street at Bonita St, Market St at Morro Bay Blvd – Dorn's Breaker Café, and Main St – Spencer's Market each received 2 total alightings.
- **Boarding Time:** Boarding times for the Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service were spread throughout the day, with the busiest periods between 10:00–10:59 AM and 1:00–1:59 PM (20 percent of respondents). Additional peaks occurred between 2:00–2:59 PM and 3:00–3:59 PM (15 percent of respondents each). Only a few passengers boarded earlier in the morning (15 percent combined from 6:00 AM – 9:59 AM) or after 5:00 PM (10 percent from 5:00 PM–6:59 PM) (Table A-2).

**Table A-1: Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Origin/ Destinations**

		Destination											Origin Total
		Berwick Drive	Kennedy Way - Community/ Senior Center	Highway 1 at San Jacinto St	Main St at Bonita St	Main St at Errol St	Main St at Sequoia St	Main St - Spencers Market	Main St at Tahiti St	Market St at Morro Bay Blvd - Dorn's Breaker Café	Morro Bay Transit Hub - City Park on Harbor St	Quintana Road - Albertson's	
Origin	Morro Bay Transit Hub - City Park on Harbor St	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	7
	Kennedy Way - Community/ Senior Center	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Main St at Jamaica St	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Main St at Sequoia St	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Main Street at Bonita Street	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Main St - Spencers Market	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Market St at Morro Bay Blvd - Dorn's Breaker Café	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Morro Bay High School	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Quintana Road - Albertson's	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
	<b>Destination Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>

**Table A-2: Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Results**

Boarding Time		
	#	%
6:00 AM - 6:59 AM	0	0%
7:00 AM - 7:59 AM	1	5%
8:00 AM - 8:59 AM	1	5%
9:00 AM - 9:59 AM	1	5%
10:00 AM - 10:59 PM	4	20%
11:00 AM - 11:59 AM	0	0%
12:00 PM - 12:59 PM	0	0%
1:00 PM - 1:59 PM	4	20%
2:00 PM - 2:59 PM	3	15%
3:00 PM - 3:59 PM	3	15%
4:00 PM - 4:59 PM	1	5%
5:00 PM - 5:59 PM	2	10%
6:00 PM - 6:59 PM	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

Call-A-Ride Trip?		
	#	%
Yes, I used the Call-A-Ride Route Deviation Service for this trip.	0	0%
No, I did NOT use the Call-A-Ride Route Deviation Service for this trip.	19	100%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>19</b>	

Round Trip on Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride?		
	#	%
Yes, I'm traveling round-trip	8	47%
No, I'm going one-way.	9	53%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>17</b>	

Getting to the Bus Stop		
	#	%
Bicycled	2	10%
Got a ride	3	15%
Drove Alone	0	0%
Walked	11	55%
Transferred from RTA Rt 12	4	20%
Transferred from RTA Rt 15	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

Mode of Transportation to Complete the Trip		
	#	%
Bicycle	2	11%
Get a ride	2	11%
Drive Alone	0	0%
Walk	10	53%
Transfer to RTA Rt 12	4	21%
Transfer to RTA Rt 15	0	0%
Wheelchair	1	5%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>19</b>	

Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Trip Purpose		
	#	%
Work	3	15%
Returning Home	2	10%
Social Services	1	5%
Leisure/Social	6	30%
Shopping	5	25%
Medical/Dental	2	10%
University/College	0	0%
High School	0	0%
Elementary/Middle School	1	5%
Personal Business	1	5%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

Alternative Vehicle Availability		
	#	%
Yes, I had access to a vehicle I could have used to make this trip instead.	3	15%
No, I did NOT have access to a vehicle to make this trip.	17	85%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

Fare Paid for Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Trip		
	#	%
Regular Fare - \$1.50	4	24%
Reduced Fare - \$0.75	1	6%
Free Fare	4	24%
Student - Free Fare	1	6%
Monthly Pass	4	24%
Day Pass	2	12%
MBT Punch Pass	1	6%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>17</b>	

Suggested Improvements to Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Service		
	#	%
Saturday Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	8	47%
Sunday Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride	6	35%
Earlier morning service	0	0%
Later evening service	4	24%
More frequent service	2	12%
Bus running the opposite direction	5	29%
Weekend Service	1	6%
Improved bus stops	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>17</b>	

Frequency of Using Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride		
	#	%
1 or less	3	15%
1-2 days	6	30%
3-4 days	6	30%
5+ days	5	25%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

- **Trip Purpose:** The most common trip reason reported by passengers riding Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride was Leisure/Social (30 percent of respondents), followed by Shopping (25 percent of respondents). Those respondents who were commuting to work trips accounted for 15 percent, and Medical/Dental appointments (10 percent) were also common. Very few riders indicated trips for school or personal business (Table A-2).
- **Call-A-Ride Usage:** None of the respondents reported using the Call-A-Ride route deviation service for their trip (Table A-2).
- **Vehicle Access:** Only 15 percent of respondents had access to a personal vehicle they could have used instead; 85 percent did not, highlighting the importance of the service for those without alternative transportation (Table A-2).
- **Fare Payment:** Fare payment reported by respondents was primarily split among Regular Fare (\$1.50), Free Fare, and Monthly Pass—each accounting for 24 percent of riders. A small number paid Reduced Fare (\$0.75) (6 percent), the MBT Punch Pass (6 percent), Student Free Fare (6 percent), or used Day Passes (12 percent) (Table A-2).
- **Round Trip Use:** Respondents were evenly split, with 53 percent making one-way trips and 47 percent traveling round-trip (Table A-2).
- **Getting to the Bus Stop:** A majority of respondents (55 percent) walked to their boarding location. Those respondents, 20 percent transferred from RTA Route 12, while smaller shares biked (10 percent) or got a ride (15 percent) (Table A-2).
- **Mode of Travel to Complete Trip:** Just over half of riders (53 percent) also walked to their final destination. 21 percent transferred to RTA Route 12, while others biked, got a ride, or used a wheelchair (Table A-2).
- **Frequency of Use:** Respondents reported riding frequency for Morro Bay Transit's Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride was varied, with 30 percent using the service 1–2 days per week, 30 percent riding 3–4 days per week, 25 percent using the service more than five days per week, and 15 percent were infrequent or first-time riders (Table A-2).
- **Suggested Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Improvements:** Survey respondents identified weekend service expansion as the most desired improvement. Nearly half (47 percent) of respondents expressed interest in adding Saturday service, while 35 percent requested Sunday service. Other suggestions included adding a bus running in the opposite direction (29 percent of respondents) and extending service into the evening hours (24 percent of respondents). A smaller number of respondents asked for more frequent service (12 percent) (Table A-2).
- **Transit Information Sources:** Respondents most commonly reported receiving information about Morro Bay Transit's transit services through social media (39 percent) and on the website (39 percent), followed by email newsletters (17 percent) and printed mailers (17 percent). Only one person cited community events (6 percent), and two mentioned newspapers (11 percent) (Table A-3).
- **Language Spoken by Respondents:** In terms of language, 20 percent of respondents indicated they speak more than one language, while the remaining 80 percent reported speaking only one language (Table A-3).

**Table A-3: Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Survey Results 2/2**

Receiving Information about Transit Services		
	#	%
Email Newsletter	3	17%
Printed Mailer or Letter	3	17%
Community Events	1	6%
Social Media	7	39%
Newspaper	2	11%
City Website	7	39%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>18</b>	

Age		
	#	%
17 or younger	5	25%
18-25	2	10%
26-40	4	20%
41-60	0	0%
61-75	6	30%
76-90	3	15%
91+	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

Bilingual or Multilingual?		
	#	%
Yes, I speak more than one language.	4	20%
No, I only speak one language.	16	80%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

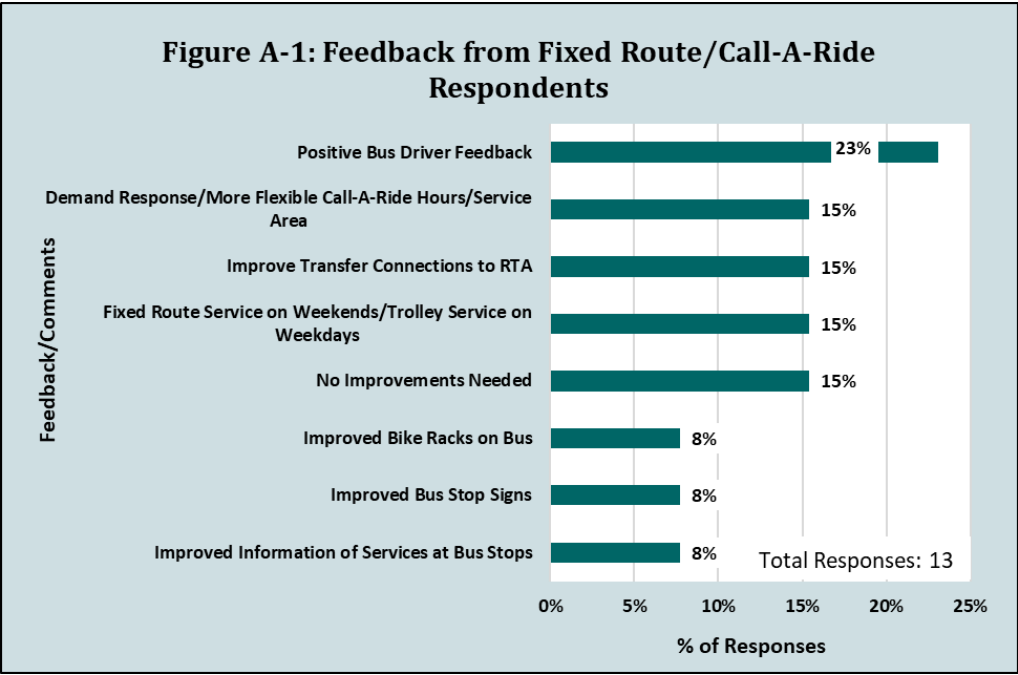
- **Age:** Those respondents who reported being older, from ages 61-75 (30 percent) or 76-90 (15 percent), accounted for 45 percent of total responses. Those who reported being younger, including those who were 17 or younger (25 percent) or 18-25 years old (10 percent) accounted for 35 percent of respondents. Adults aged 26-40 accounted for 20 percent of respondents (Table A-3).
- **Respondent Rating of Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Services:** Respondents rated Morro Bay Transit’s Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride services across most categories. On a 1 to 5 scale (with 1 being “Poor” and 5 being “Excellent”), the highest weighted marks were given for Overall Service (4.70), Travel Time (4.56), and Ease of Transfers/Connections (4.37). Ratings for Service Frequency (4.35) and Safety/Security (4.65) also indicate a strong level of satisfaction. Other categories, such as Driver Courtesy (4.60), On-Time Performance (4.60), and Vehicle Cleanliness (4.55), were well-rated, reflecting generally positive experiences with day-to-day service quality. Areas with lower scores included Availability of Information (3.95) and Bus Stop Amenities (3.95), suggesting opportunities for improvement in rider communication and physical infrastructure (Table A-4).

**Table A-4: Respondent Rating of Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride Services**

	<b>Safety/ Security</b>	<b>Driver Courtesy</b>	<b>On-Time Performance</b>	<b>Vehicle Cleanliness</b>	<b>Value of Fare</b>	<b>Availability of Information</b>	<b>Span of Service</b>
<b>Weighted Average</b>	4.65	4.60	4.60	4.55	4.55	3.95	4.15
	<b>Service Frequency</b>	<b>Travel Time</b>	<b>Bus Stop Amenities</b>	<b>Bus Stop locations</b>	<b>Ease of Transfers/ Connections</b>	<b>Overall Service</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
<b>Weighted Average</b>	4.35	4.56	3.95	4.10	4.37	4.70	20

*Note: Respondents were asked to rate each Trolley Service category on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). A weighted average of all responses is shown above.*

- **Open-ended Feedback/Comments:** Fixed Route and Call-A-Ride respondents, the most common feedback was positive comments about bus drivers (23 percent). Several respondents (15 percent each) noted that no improvements were needed, but others highlighted requests for weekend fixed-route or weekday trolley service, better transfer connections to RTA, and more flexible Call-A-Ride service in terms of hours or service area. Smaller shares of feedback (8 percent each) called for improvements to bus stop information, signage, and bike racks on buses (Figure A-1).



**Downtown and North Trolley Survey Summary**

The Downtown and North Trolley survey had a total of 40 responses (40 in English and 0 in Spanish). The summary below captures the main insights gathered through the survey and provides a high-level look at respondent feedback.

- **Origin and Destination Pairs:** The most commonly reported origin and destination pairs reported by respondents (Table A-5).
  - **Most common origin:** Morro Strand State Beach (9 trips), followed by Main at Elena / Spencer's Market (6 trips) and Morro Bay State Park (4 trips).
  - **Most common destination:** Downtown and Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard tied with 10 trips each, followed by Morro Bay State Park (5 trips).
- **Residence of Respondents:** Respondents represented a mix of Morro Bay residents and visitors, with nearly three-quarters (73 percent) visiting from outside San Luis Obispo County (Table A-6). Those who live in Morro Bay accounted for 18 percent of respondents, with 15 percent living in Morro Bay full-time and three percent living in Morro Bay part-time.
- **Age:** Riders represented a wide range of age groups. The largest share (35 percent) was between ages 26 and 40, followed by 25 percent ages 41–60, and 20 percent ages 17 or younger (Table A-6).
- **Trolley Use:** The majority of trips (94 percent) were round-trip (Table A-6).
- **Mode of Travel Before/After Trip:** Most riders (87 percent) got to the trolley stop to board the trolley by walking, and over three-quarters (76 percent) continued their trips on foot, once they got off the trolley (Table A-6).

**Table A-5: Trolley Survey Origin/ Destinations**

		Destination							Origin Total	
		Downtown	Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard	Main at Elena / Spencer's Market	Market at Morro Bay Blvd (Dorn's Breaker Café)	Morro Bay Library	Morro Bay State Park	Morro Strand State Beach		Wharf
Origin	Downtown	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Embarcadero at Giant Chessboard	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
	Main at Elena / Spencer's Market	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	6
	Market at Morro Bay Blvd (Dorn's Breaker Café)	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
	Morro Bay	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Morro Bay State Park	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
	Morro Bay State Park Campground	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Morro Bay Transit	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Morro Strand State Beach	4	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	9
	Destination Total	10	10	2	2	3	5	1	1	34

**Table A-6: Trolley Survey Results**

Boarding Time		
	#	%
10:00 AM - 10:59 AM	0	0%
11:00 AM - 11:59 AM	0	0%
12:00 PM - 12:59 PM	8	20%
1:00 PM - 1:59 PM	21	53%
2:00 PM - 2:59 PM	2	5%
3:00 PM - 3:59 PM	6	15%
4:00 PM - 4:59 PM	3	8%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>40</b>	

Round Trip?		
	#	%
Yes, I'm traveling round-trip	30	94%
No, I'm going one-way.	2	6%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>32</b>	

Trolley Trip Purpose		
	#	%
Work	1	3%
Shopping	11	28%
Social/Recreation	18	45%
Restaurant/Bar	11	28%
Sightseeing	15	38%
Personal Business	2	5%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>40</b>	

Resident of Morro Bay		
	#	%
Yes, Full-Time Resident	6	15%
Yes, Part-Time Resident	1	3%
No, Visitor from within SLO County	4	10%
No, Visitor from outside SLO County	29	73%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>40</b>	

Receiving Information about Transit Services		
	#	%
Email Newsletter	4	11%
Printed Mailer or Letter	5	13%
Community Events	4	11%
Social Media	22	58%
Newspaper	4	11%
Website	17	45%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>38</b>	

Suggested Improvements to Trolley Service		
	#	%
Earlier Saturday Service	5	21%
Earlier Sunday Service	6	25%
Later Sunday Service	12	50%
Later Saturday Service	10	42%
Weekday Trolley Service	1	4%
More routes/extended service area	6	25%
Improved trolley stops	2	8%
Connections to RTA	3	13%
More Frequent Services	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>24</b>	

Getting to the Trolley		
	#	%
Bicycled	1	3%
Drove Alone	3	8%
Walked	34	87%
Transferred from MBT	1	3%
Transferred from RTA Rt 12	0	0%
Transferred from RTA Rt 15	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>39</b>	

Mode of Transportation to Complete the Trip		
	#	%
Bicycle	1	3%
Drive Alone	5	13%
Walk	29	76%
Get a ride	3	8%
Transfer to RTA Rt 12	0	0%
Transfer to RTA Rt 15	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>38</b>	

Frequency of Using Trolley		
	#	%
First time	22	56%
1 or less	13	33%
1-2 days	2	5%
3-4 days	1	3%
5+ days	1	3%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>39</b>	

Respondent Age		
	#	%
17 or younger	8	20%
18-25	4	10%
26-40	14	35%
41-60	10	25%
61-75	3	8%
76-90	1	3%
91+	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>40</b>	

How Respondent Learned about Trolley		
	#	%
Friend/Family Member	11	30%
Saw Trolley or Trolley Stop	14	38%
Flyer	9	24%
Ridden Trolley Before	3	8%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>37</b>	

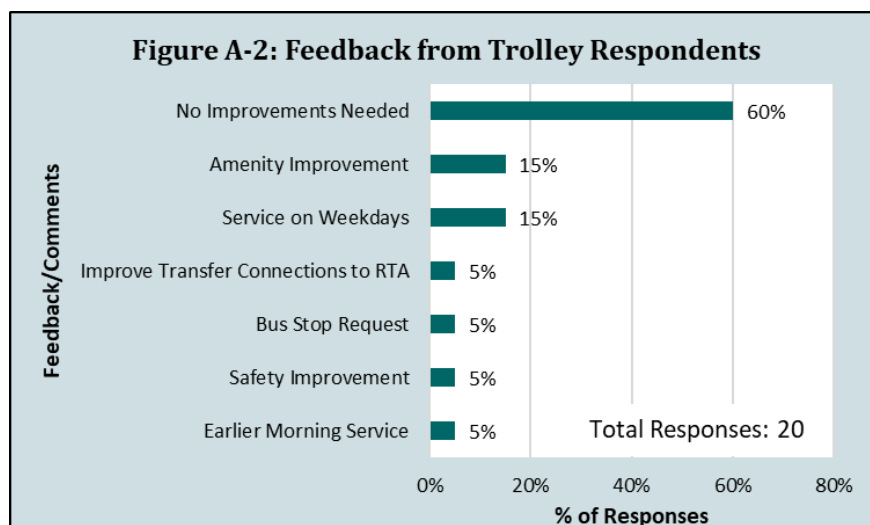
- **Trip Purpose:** The most common trip purposes included social or recreational activities (45 percent), sightseeing (38 percent), and dining at restaurants or bars (28 percent) (Table A-6).
- **Travel Time and Frequency:** The highest boarding period was between 1:00 and 1:59 PM (53 percent), followed by 12:00–12:59 PM (20 percent) and 3:00–3:59 PM (15 percent) (Table A-6).
- **Frequency of Trolley Ridership:** Over half of riders (56 percent) were first-time trolley users, while a third reported using the trolley once or less per year (Table A-6).
- **Transit Information Sources:** Social media (58 percent) and the website (45 percent) were the most common ways respondents received information about transit services (Table A-6).
- **How Riders Learned About Trolley Services:** Respondents learned about the trolley through either seeing a trolley stop sign or the trolley (38 percent), through word-of-mouth from friends or family (30 percent), or by reading a flyer (24 percent) (Table A-6).
- **Trolley Suggested Improvements:** Respondents suggested extended weekend service hours, with 50 percent of suggesting later service on Sundays and 42 percent of Saturdays (42 percent). Additional service improvement suggestions included weekday trolley service (4 percent), expanded routes (25 percent), and improved connections to regional transit (Table A-6).
- **Respondent Rating of Trolley Services:** Respondents rated the trolley service very positively across all categories. On a 1 to 5 scale (with 1 being “Poor” and 5 being “Excellent”), the highest ratings were for Vehicle Cleanliness (5.00), On-Time Performance (4.95), and Overall Service (4.95). Driver Courtesy (4.93) and Value of Fare (4.90) also received high marks. The lowest ratings were for Availability of Information (4.70) and Span of Service (4.75). Across all service quality and bus stop-related categories, scores remained consistently above 4.70, indicating a high level of rider satisfaction (Table A-7).

**Table A-7: Respondent Rating of Trolley Services**

	Safety/ Security	Driver Courtesy	On-Time Performance	Vehicle Cleanliness	Value of Fare	Availability of Information	Span of Service
Weighted Average	4.85	4.93	4.95	5	4.9	4.7	4.75
	Service Frequency	Travel Time	Bus Stop Amenities	Bus Stop Locations	Ease of Transfers/ Connections	Overall Service	Total Responses
Weighted Average	4.72	4.88	4.72	4.74	4.84	4.95	40

*Note: Respondents were asked to rate each Trolley Service category on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). A weighted average of all responses is shown above.*

- **Trolley Public Feedback (Open-Ended):** Most trolley survey respondents were highly satisfied with the service, with 60 percent stating that no improvements were needed. Among those suggesting changes, the most common requests included weekday service (15 percent) and amenity improvements (15 percent). Smaller shares (5 percent each) called for earlier morning service, safety improvements, bus stop enhancements, or better transfer connections to RTA.(Figure A-2).



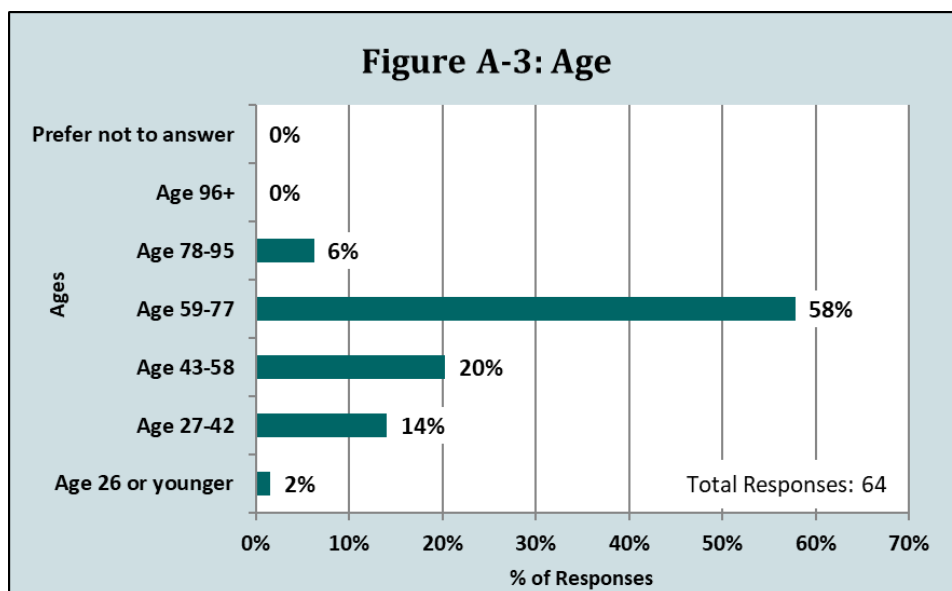
## ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The online community survey conducted for the 2025 Morro Bay Transit Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) was conducted over several weeks in July and early August 2025. The survey instrument was a 15-question survey made available online in English and Spanish. To inform the public of the survey effort, flyers were posted on buses and near some bus stops, posts advertising the survey were made on Facebook, Nextdoor, and on media websites, including Morro Bay Life. In addition, a banner was added to the RTA and Morro Bay Transit websites. The survey was targeted at all residents of the City of Morro Bay and the wider San Luis Obispo County region, including those who do not use public transit on a regular basis. The survey received a total of 113 responses.

### Demographics

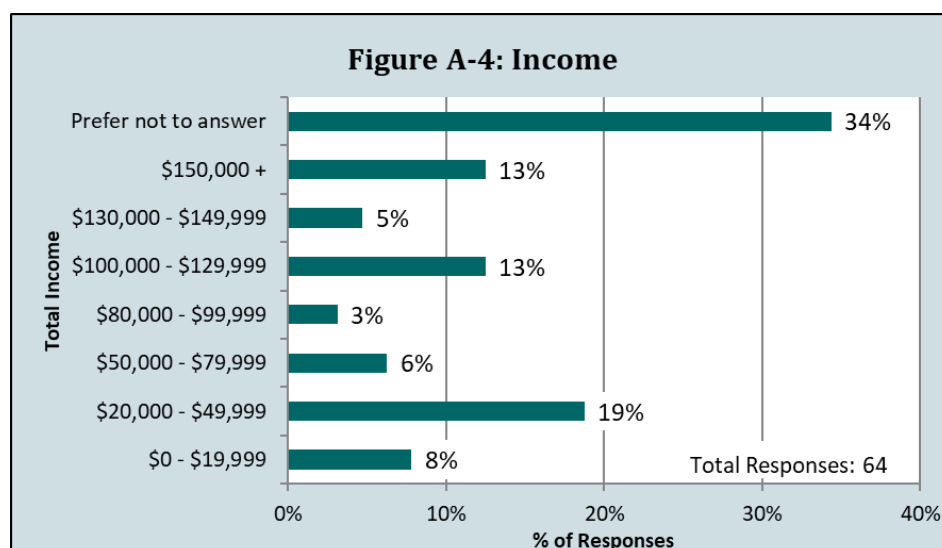
#### *Age*

Participants were asked to provide their age (Figure A-3). The survey received only 2 percent of responses from individuals 26 years old or younger and only 6 percent from respondents who were ages 78-95. The majority of respondents reported being between the ages of 59 and 77 (58 percent). Those who were between ages 27-42 accounted for 14 percent of respondents, and those who reported being between 43-58 years old accounted for 20 percent of respondents.



### *Income*

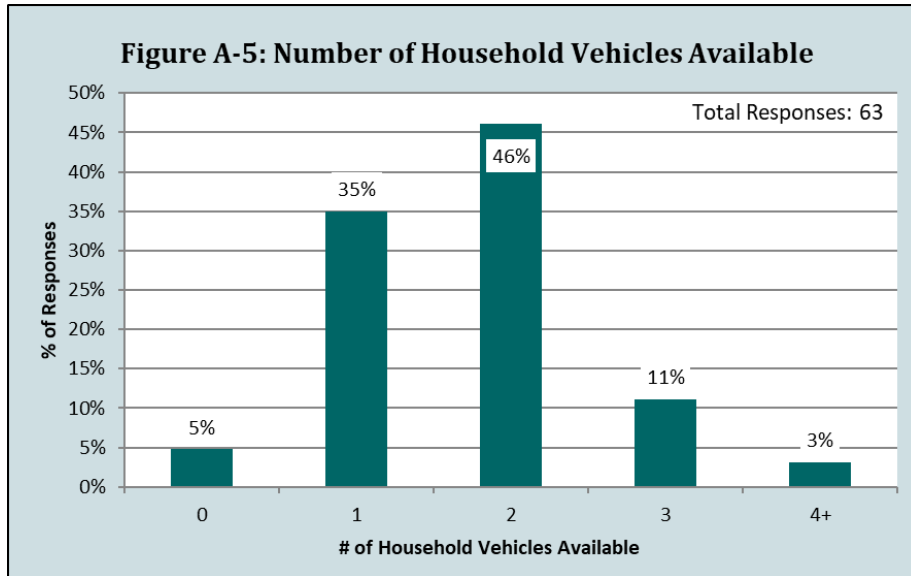
Participants were asked about their income (Figure A-4). Over one-third (34 percent) preferred not to share their income. Among those who did, the largest group (19 percent) reported earning between \$20,000 and \$49,999, while 13 percent each reported incomes of \$100,000–\$129,999 and \$150,000 or more. Smaller percentages reported earnings in other ranges.



### *Household Vehicle Access*

Participants were asked how many working vehicles their household had access to, as a lack of vehicle access is a significant factor contributing to transit dependence (Figure A-5).

Only 5 percent of responses reported no household access to vehicles. The majority of participants reported having access to at least one or more vehicles in their households (95 percent combined).



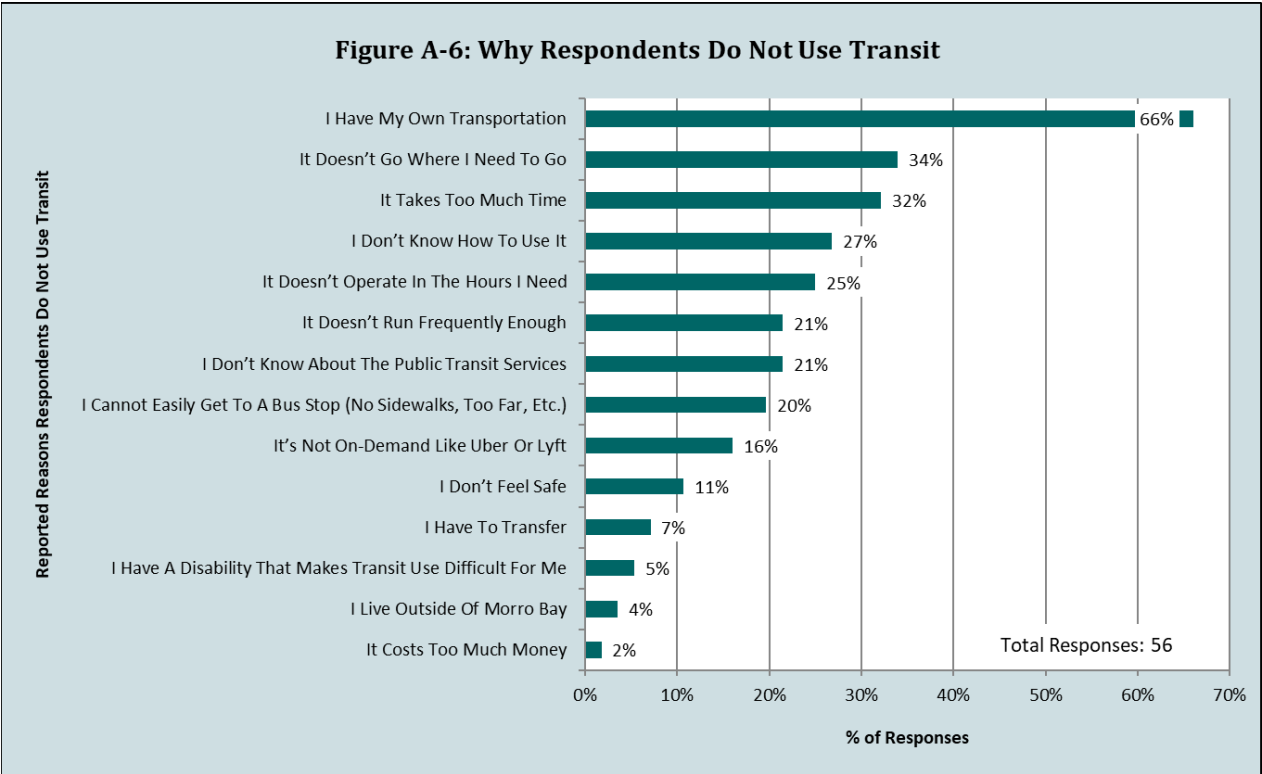
## **Transit Use**

### ***Transit Use***

Participants were asked if they use public transit or specialized transportation services, such as paratransit, to meet some or all of their travel needs. A total of 112 responses were received, with half (50 percent) of participants reporting using public transit, while the other half (50 percent) of participants indicated that they did not use these services.

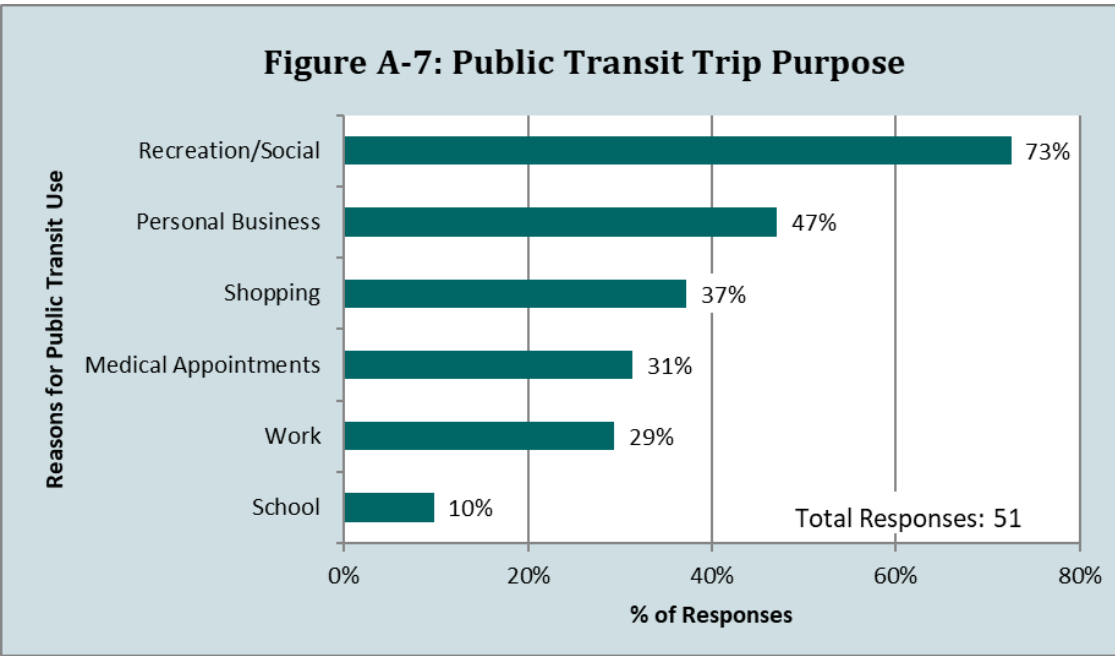
### ***Respondent Reasons Not to Use Public Transit***

Participants who answered No to using public transit were asked why they did not use public transit (Figure A-6). The top reasons people reported for not using public transit were that they have their own transportation (66 percent), transit does not go where they need to go (34 percent), and it takes too much time (32 percent). Additional common barriers included not knowing how to use the system (27 percent) and limited hours (25 percent), frequency of service (21 percent), or not knowing about public transit services (21 percent).



**Respondent Reasons For Public Transit Use**

Participants who answered Yes to using public transit were asked about their trip purposes using public transit (Figure A-7). The most common reasons were recreation or social activities (73 percent), personal business (47 percent), and shopping (37 percent). Other reasons included medical appointments (31 percent), work (29 percent), and school (10 percent).



### Use of Regional Transit Provider Services

Participants who indicated that they use transit services were asked to identify which services they use and were allowed to select any or all of the services they used. There was also an option for participants to select if they had not heard of any of these providers (Figure A-8).

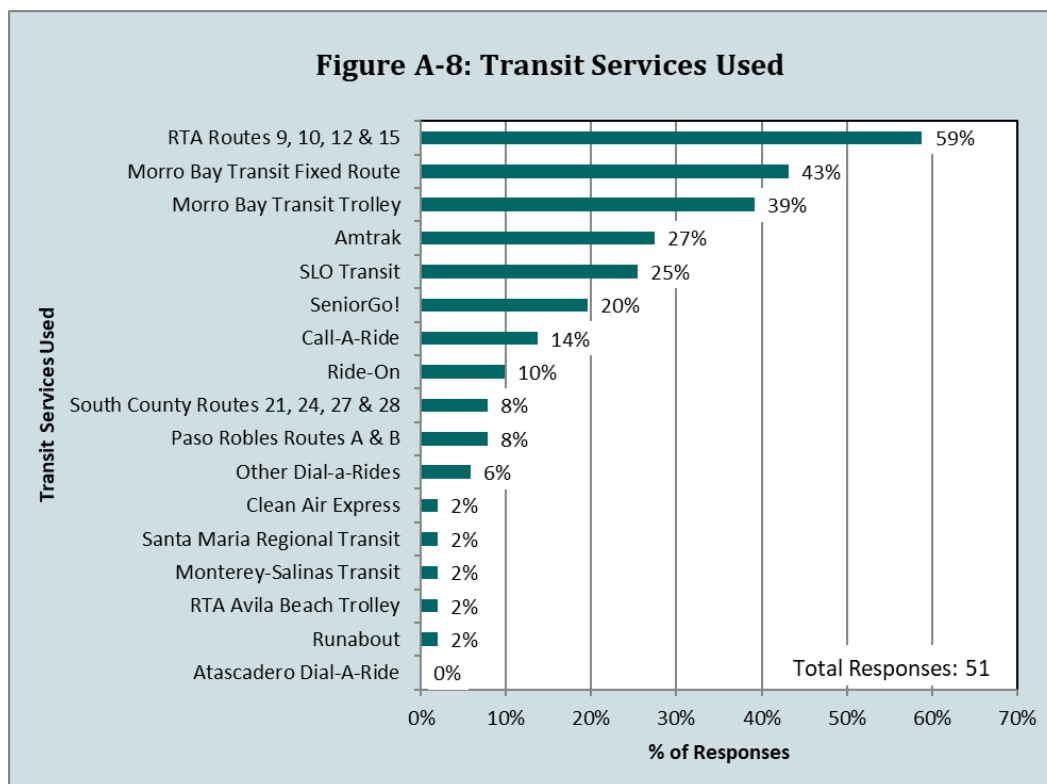
Among those who responded, the most frequently used service was RTA Routes 9, 10, 12, and 15, selected by 59 percent. Other top services included Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route (43 percent), Morro Bay Transit Trolley (39 percent), Amtrak (27 percent). SLO Transit was used by 25 percent, while SeniorGo! was selected by 20 percent.

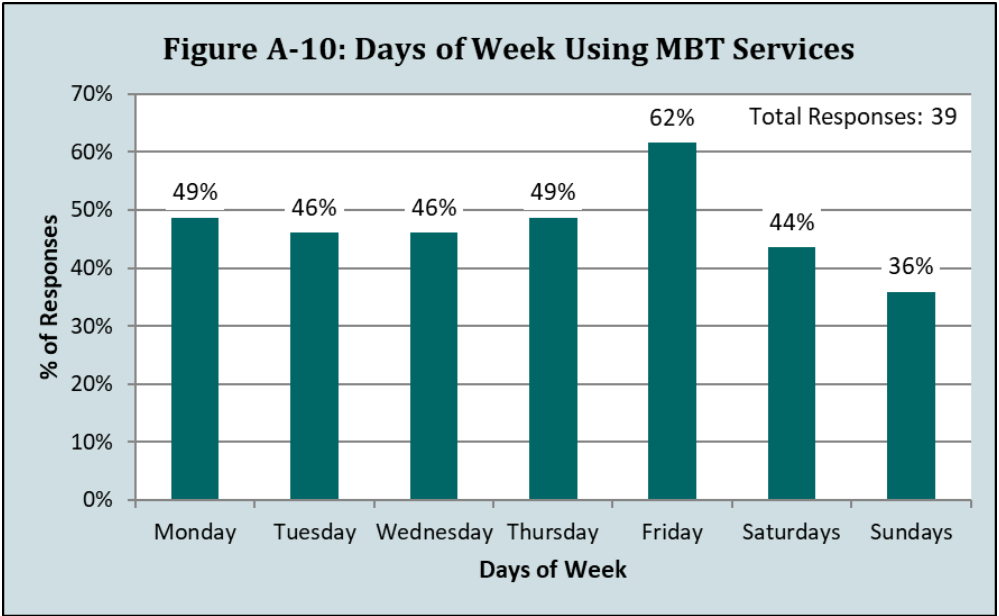
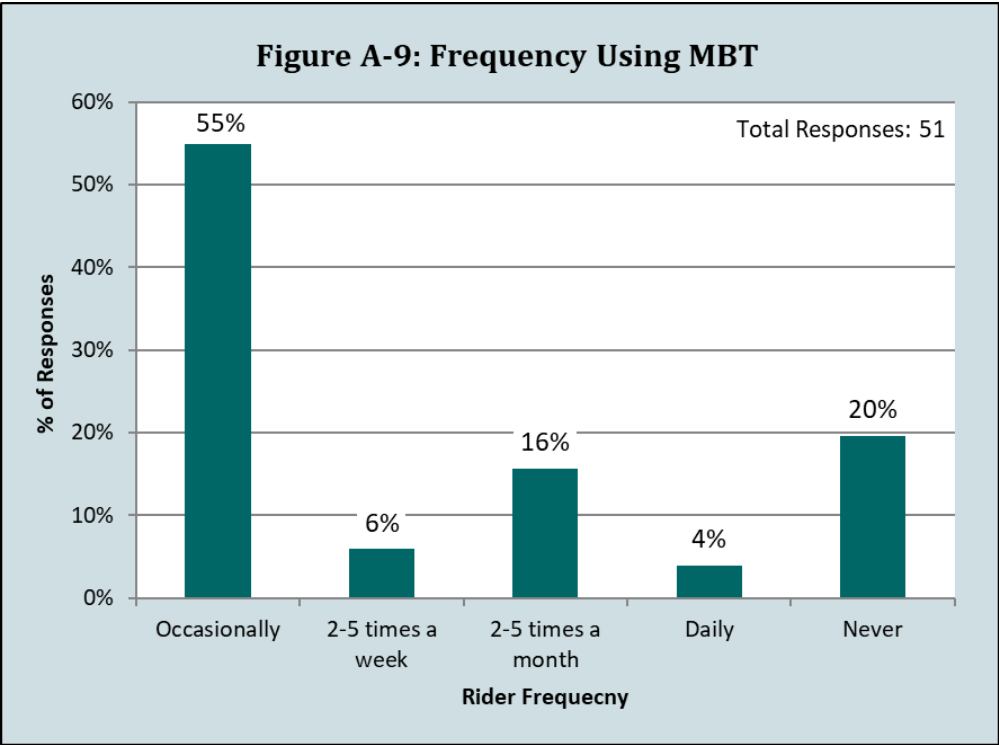
### Frequency of Transit Use

Participants who indicated that they use transit services were asked about how frequently they used public transit services (Figure A-9). Most respondents indicated that they ride Morro Bay Transit services occasionally (55 percent). Smaller shares reported riding 2–5 times per month (16 percent), 2–5 times per week (6 percent), or daily (4 percent). Those participants who reported that they never use these services accounted for 20 percent.

### Transit Use by Day of the Week

Participants who indicated that they use transit services were asked about which days of the week they rode either Morro Bay Transit’s Fixed Route/Call-A-Ride service (which operates Monday-Friday) or Trolley services (which operate Saturday-Sunday) (Figure A-10). The most reported day is Friday (62 percent), followed by Monday and Thursday (49 percent each). Slightly fewer reported riding on Tuesday and Wednesday (46 percent each), Saturday (44 percent), and Sunday (36 percent).





## Opinion on Transit Services

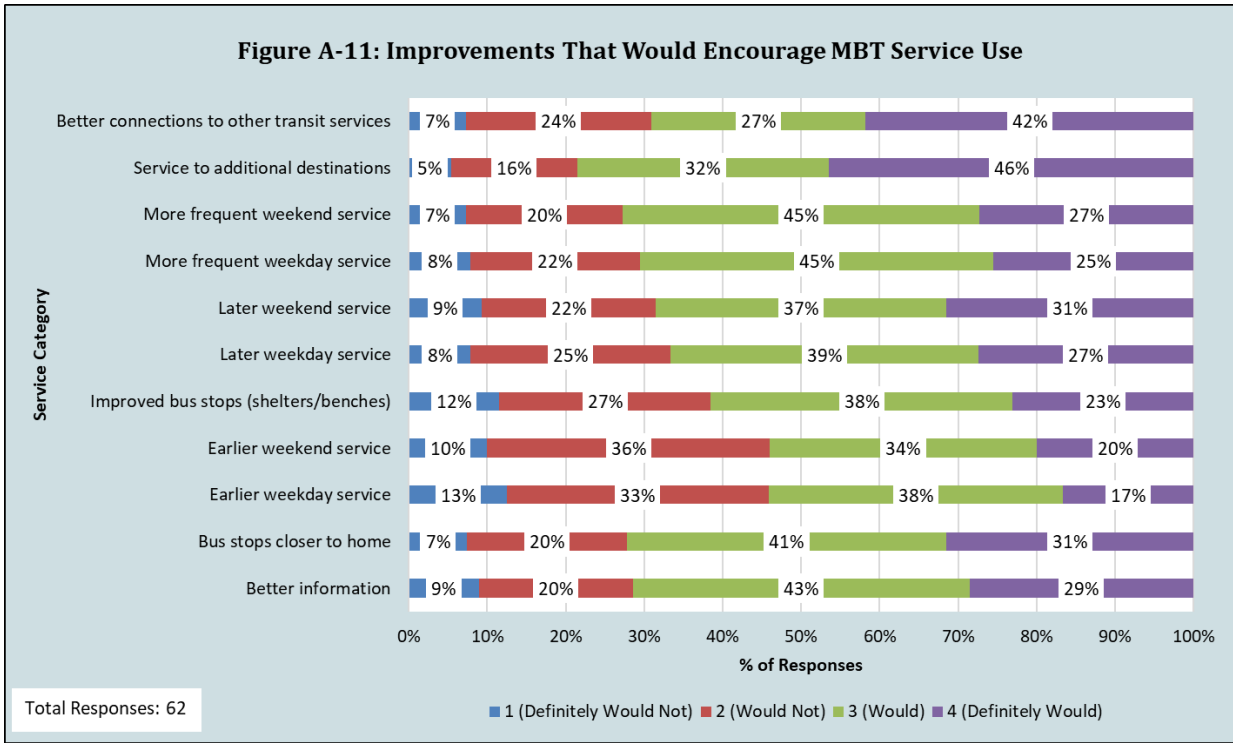
### *Improvements to Encourage Morro Bay Transit Use*

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to use Morro Bay public transit more often if certain improvements were made, using a scale of 1 (definitely would not) to 4 (definitely would) (Figure A-11). The improvements that received the strongest positive responses included service to additional destinations (46 percent “definitely would”), better connections to other transit services (42 percent “definitely would”), and more frequent weekend service (27 percent “definitely would”), with many respondents also selecting “would.”

Other improvements that received notable support were bus stops closer to home (31 percent “definitely would”), better information (29 percent “definitely would”), later weekend service (31 percent “definitely would”), and more frequent weekday service (25 percent “definitely would”). Improvements such as earlier weekday service (17 percent “definitely would”) and earlier weekend service (20 percent “definitely would”) had lower support, with more respondents indicating “would not” or “definitely would not.”

Table 1 summarizes the weighted averages of this question, showing that the improvements that generated the highest likelihood of increased use included service to additional destinations (weighted average 3.2), better connections to other transit services (3.04), and more frequent weekend service (2.93).

Other improvements, such as bus stops closer to home (2.96), better information (2.91), and later weekend service (2.91), also scored relatively high. Changes to earlier weekday service (2.58) and earlier weekend service (2.64) had the lowest weighted averages, indicating these were less likely to influence increased transit use compared to other improvements.



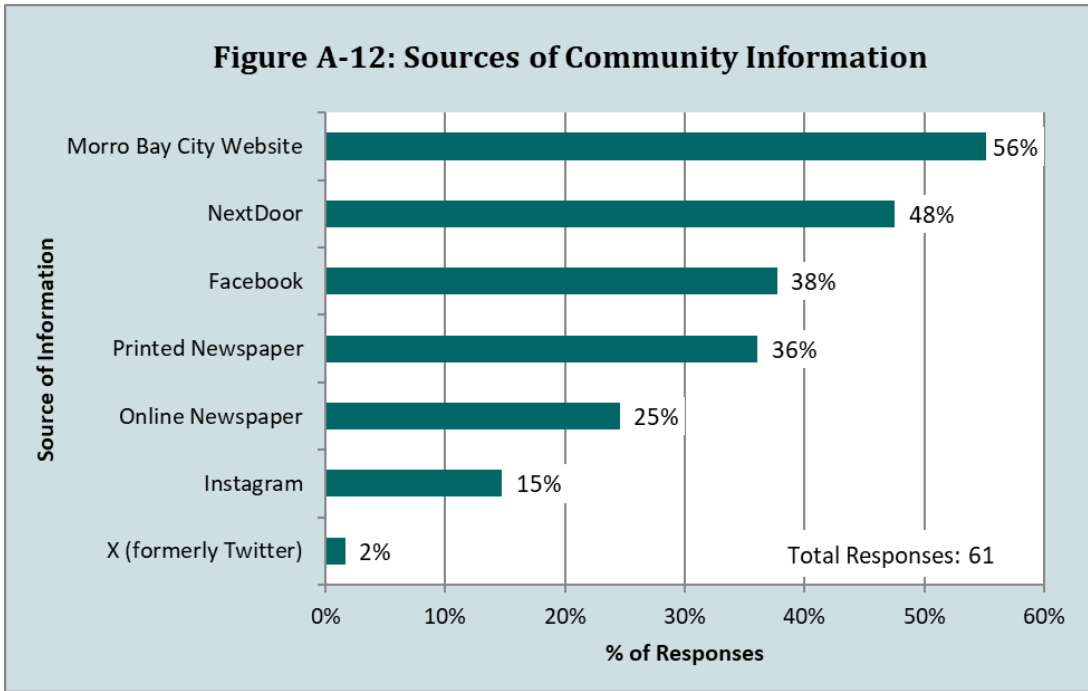
**Table A-8: Improvements that would Encourage More MBT Service Use - Weighted Average**

	Better information	Bus stops closer to home	Earlier weekday service	Earlier weekend service	Improved bus stops (shelters/benches)	Later weekday service
Weighted Average	2.91	2.96	2.58	2.64	2.73	2.86
	Later weekend service	More frequent weekday service	More frequent weekend service	Service to additional destinations	Better connections to other transit services	Total Responses
Weighted Average	2.91	2.88	2.93	3.2	3.04	62

Note: Weighted average calculated on a scale from a scale of 1 (Definitely Would Not) - 4 (Definitely Would).

**Sources of Community Information**

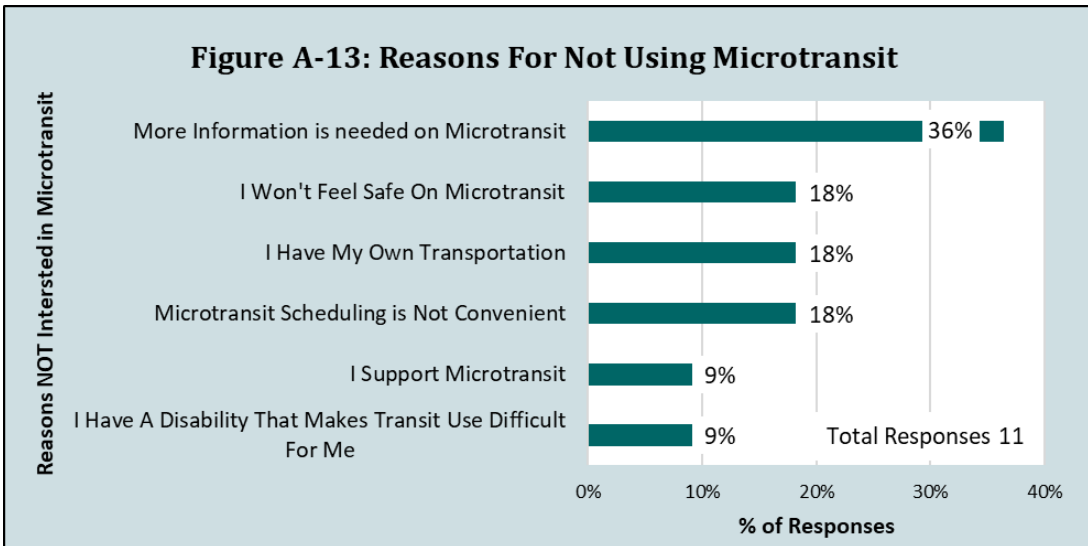
Participants were asked where they get information about their local community (Figure A-12). The most common sources of local community information were the Morro Bay City website (56 percent) and NextDoor (48 percent). Social media platforms like Facebook (38 percent) and Instagram (15 percent) were also used, while online newspapers (25 percent) and printed newspapers (36 percent) reached smaller shares. Very few respondents (2 percent) reported using X (formerly Twitter).



**Interest in Microtransit**

Respondents were asked about their interest in using Microtransit. Of the 65 respondents, 49 percent indicated they would be interested, 12 percent were not interested, and 38 percent needed more information before deciding.

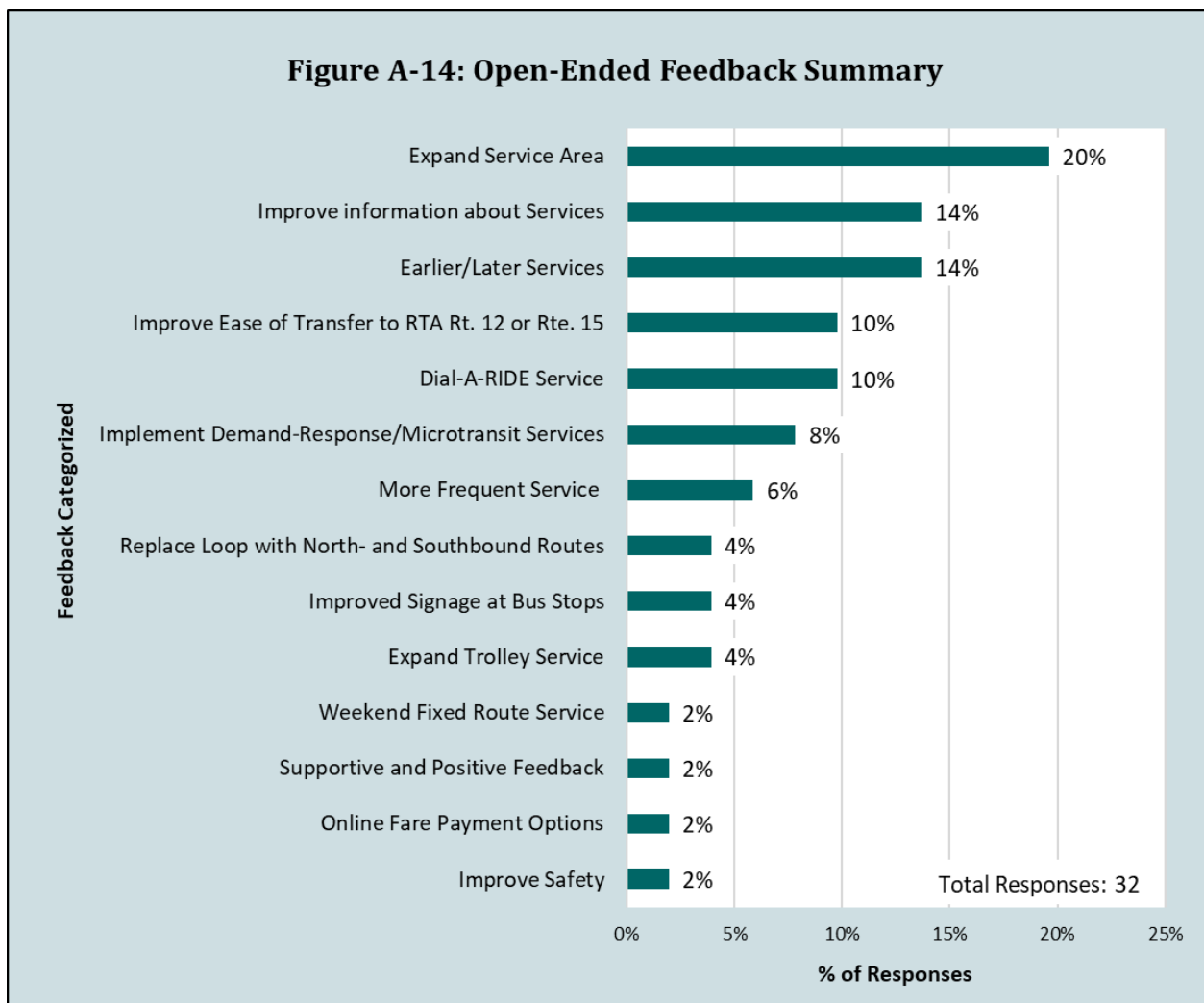
Those who answered No, they were NOT interested in microtransit were asked why they were not interested in microtransit (Figure A-13). Among respondents who were not interested in Microtransit, 36 percent indicated they needed more information, while 18 percent cited inconvenient scheduling, having their own transportation, or safety concerns. Smaller shares noted a disability that makes transit use difficult (9 percent) or expressed general support for Microtransit despite not being interested (9 percent).



## Open-Ended Comments and Feedback

Survey Participants were given the ability to leave open-ended comments and feedback about Morro Bay Transit. For ease of analysis, these were categorized based on content (Figure A-14). The survey results include:

- Respondents who request expanding the service area (20 percent), particularly for those who are trying to go to San Luis Obispo, Cayucos, and Los Osos.
- Respondents requesting earlier and later service hours (14 percent), including for those traveling to the airport and for students who may wish to use the bus service to get to school, but have a zero period or wish to attend after-school extracurricular activities.
- Requests for improving information about available services (14 percent), including adding route schedules to bus stops and making information available for passengers with disabilities that would make Fixed Bus/Trolley use more difficult.
- Other frequently mentioned needs include restarting the MBT Dial-A-RIDE service and making transfers to RTA Routes 12 and 15 easier (10 percent each).



*Appendix B*  
**BOARDING AND ALIGHTING MAPS**

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**Figure B-1  
Morro Bay Transit Fixed Route**



**Figure B-2  
Downtown Route Trolley**



**Figure B-3  
North Route Trolley**

