

**Special Executive & Legislation Committee**  
**Wednesday, April 3, 2024**  
**5:00 PM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Joseph G Cannon Building**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Adoption/Amendments to the Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes – August 30, 2023
4. Audience Comments
5. Public Transit in Vermilion County Discussion-CRIS Rural Mass Transit District/City of Danville Mass Transit
6. Executive Sessions:
  - A **Pursuant to Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)** The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity.
  - B **Pursuant to Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (2)** Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.
  - C **Pursuant to Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (6)** The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body.
  - D **Pursuant to Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (11)** Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting
7. Items of Information
8. Adjournment

**Special Executive/Legislation Committee**  
**Wednesday, August 30, 2023**  
**Joseph G Cannon Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 5:00 PM**

## **MINUTES**

### **Agenda Item 1 - Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman Larry Baughn, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Upon the call of roll, the following members were present: Larry Baughn, Jr., Craig Golden, Steve Miller, Jerry Hawker and Mark Steinbaugh. Excused absent was Joe Eakle. Absent was Nancy O'Kane. 5 present, 2 absent. Also attending the meeting were: Marti Carroll - Veterans Assistance Commission, Bill Donahue – Audience Member, Kevin Green – County Board Member, Nancy Boose – HR Director and Cassy Carter – Financial Resources Director.

### **Agenda Item 2 - Adoption/Amendment to the Agenda**

Miller motion to amend the agenda by adding item 4A - Executive Session County Board Chairman's Office, seconded by Hawker. Motion passed by acclamation.

### **Agenda Item 3 - Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2023**

Steinbaugh moved, seconded by Miller to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed by acclamation.

### **Agenda Item 4 - Audience Comments**

None.

### **Agenda Item 4A – Executive Session County Board Chairman's Office:**

- A **Pursuant to Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)** The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity.

Miller motioned to go into Executive session, second by Hawker at 5:07PM. Upon the call of the roll the following members yes voted to wit: Baughn, Golden, Miller, Hawker and Steinbaugh. 5 yes, 2 absent. Motion passed.

Miller motioned to exit out of Executive session, second by Hawker at 5:35PM. Upon the call of the roll the following members voted yes to wit: Baughn, Golden, Miller, Hawker, and Steinbaugh. 5 yes, 2 absent.

### **Agenda Item 5 – Ordinance – RE: Amendment to the Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the North Fork District – Out of Category Transfer**

Chairman Baughn stated this was moving money from one line to another line to pay for water monitoring equipment.

Steinbaugh motion, Golden seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the following members voted yes, to-wit: Baughn, Golden, Miller, Hawker, and Steinbaugh. 5 yes, 2 absent. Motion passed.

### **Agenda Item 6 – Budget – North Fork Special Services**

Chairman Baughn stated there was no change from the current budget to the new FY2023-2024 budget. He did note that the county is a pass through for North Fork and they do have their own board.

Golden motion, Steinbaugh seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the following members voted yes, to-wit: Baughn, Golden, Miller, Hawker and Steinbaugh. 5 yes, 2 absent. Motion passed.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Budget – Veterans Assistance Commission**

Carroll noted there were several changes to her budget. She has planned to add two additional people to her staff. She explained their jobs are to assist the veterans with essential needs and to navigate benefits. This does include homeless vets, burial funds, and many other benefits. Carroll stated she needs to add a Service Officer so they can help the Veterans walk through and actually file the claims for

their benefits. Hawker stated he would like Carroll to attend a full County Board meeting to help educate the board of the services they offer.

Golden motion, Steinbaugh seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the following members voted yes, to-wit: Baughn, Golden, Miller, Hawker, and Steinbaugh. 5 yes, 2 absent. Motion passed.

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Budget – County Board**

Chairman Baughn stated there were not many changes from the current budget to the new FY2023-2024 budget. Hawker questioned if ARPA was included in this budget. Baughn explained ARPA is an unbudgeted fund.

Steinbaugh motion, Hawker seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the following members voted yes, to-wit: Baughn, Golden, Hawker and Steinbaugh. Miller voted no. 4 yes, 1 no, and 2 absent. Motion passed.

#### **Agenda Item 9 – Personnel Policy Discussion**

Miller explained he requested from the State's Attorney a Resolution to allow the Finance & Personnel committee to remain as one committee. Green & O'Kane have presented a Resolution asking for these to be split into two separate committees. Miller stated he would like both Resolutions on the County Board agenda as to give the full board a choice as to split into two committees or keep as one committee. Hawker stated he felt they should stay as one since a lot of the personnel issues are around salaries. In turn, these would end up going to finance anyway, and keeping as one would be less redundant.

#### **Agenda Item 10 – Executive Session**

Was moved to Agenda Item 4A.

#### **Agenda Item 11 - Items of Information**

Chairman Baughn stated Finance Committee would be held on 9/11, and County Board is scheduled for 9/12 but this may be pushed back one week.

#### **Agenda Item 12- Adjournment**

Chairman Baughn adjourned the meeting at 6:28 PM.

Minutes by: Cassy Carter, Financial Resources Director

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# DANVILLE URBANIZED AREA LOSS STUDY

EXISTING CONDITIONS MEMO



wsp



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1	Project Background .....	1
1.2	Purpose of the Memo .....	1
2	EXISTING CONDITIONS: DANVILLE MASS TRANSIT .....	2
2.1	Governance .....	2
2.2	Operating and Capital Budgets .....	2
2.2.1	Operating Sources and Uses .....	2
2.2.2	Capital Sources and Uses .....	4
2.3	Transit Service .....	5
2.3.1	Fixed Route Bus .....	5
2.3.2	On-Demand Service .....	7
2.3.3	Paratransit Service .....	8
2.3.4	Vehicle Revenue Miles and Hours .....	8
2.3.5	Ridership .....	9
2.4	Capital Assets .....	12
2.4.1	Fleet .....	12
2.4.2	Facilities .....	14
2.5	Technology .....	14
3	EXISTING CONDITIONS: CRIS RURAL MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT .....	15
3.1	Governance .....	15
3.2	Operating and Capital Budgets .....	15
3.2.1	Operating Budget Sources and Uses .....	15
3.2.2	Capital Budget Sources and Uses .....	17



<b>3.3</b>	<b>Transit Service</b> .....	<b>17</b>
3.3.1	Ridership.....	18
3.3.2	Revenue Miles and Hours.....	19
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Capital Assets</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.4.1	Fleet.....	21
3.4.2	Facilities.....	21
<b>4</b>	<b>PREVIOUS PLANNING STUDIES</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>MARKET ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Demographic Trends</b> .....	<b>22</b>
5.1.1	Population Density.....	22
5.1.2	Population Living Below the Poverty Line.....	22
5.1.3	Older Adults.....	22
5.1.4	Population with No Vehicle Access.....	23
5.1.5	Job Density.....	23
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Land Use Trends</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Travel Pattern Trends</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Challenges</b> .....	<b>26</b>
6.1.1	Funding.....	26
6.1.2	Transit Service.....	26
6.1.3	Governance.....	26
6.1.4	Land Use/Travel.....	26
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Opportunities</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>27</b>



*TABLES*

TABLE 1: DMT OPERATING BUDGET 2019-2023..... 3

TABLE 2: DMT FEDERAL GRANT BALANCE ..... 3

TABLE 3: DMT REBUILD ILLINOIS ROUND 1 CAPITAL  
GRANT AWARD ..... 4

TABLE 4: DMT PLANNED CAPITAL PROJECTS FY 2023-  
2025..... 5

TABLE 5: DMT FLEET ..... 13

TABLE 6: CRIS OPERATING BUDGET 2019-2023 ..... 15

TABLE 7: CRIS OPERATING AGREEMENT ENTITIES AND  
AMOUNTS - PROJECTED FY 2024 ..... 16

TABLE 8: CRIS REBUILD ILLINOIS CAPITAL GRANT  
AWARDS..... 17

TABLE 9: CRIS SERVICES ..... 17

*FIGURES*

FIGURE 1: DMT FIXED-ROUTES ..... 6

FIGURE 2: DMT SYSTEM MAP (2020) ..... 7

FIGURE 3: DMT VEHICLE REVENUE MILES, 2017-2021..... 9

FIGURE 4: DMT VEHICLE REVENUE HOURS, 2017-2021..... 9

FIGURE 5: DMT HISTORICAL RIDERSHIP, 2014-2021 ..... 10

FIGURE 6: DMT PERCENT OF TOTAL RIDERSHIP BY  
ROUTE, 2021..... 10

FIGURE 7: DMT DEMAND RESPONSE RIDERSHIP, 2014-  
2021..... 11

FIGURE 8: DMT ADA PARATRANSIT RIDERSHIP 2019-2021..... 11

FIGURE 9: 2021 DMT ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE BY  
AREA..... 12

FIGURE 10: DMT TRANSFER ZONE..... 14

FIGURE 11: DMT BUS STORAGE FACILITY ..... 14

FIGURE 12: TRIP PURPOSE..... 18

FIGURE 13: TOTAL TRIPS BY ORIGIN ..... 19

FIGURE 14: CRIS VEHICLE REVENUE MILES, 2017-2021..... 20



FIGURE 15: CRIS VEHICLE REVENUE HOURS, 2017-2021.....20

FIGURE 16: THE NEW CARLE AT THE RIVERFRONT  
MEDICAL CENTER IN DANVILLE  
(SOURCE: CARLE.ORG) .....23

FIGURE 17: DMT BOARDING AND ALIGHTING DATA (DMT  
TOP STOPS: A QUANTITATIVE DATA  
ANALYSIS, 2011).....25

FIGURE 18: POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT  
(AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2020 5-  
YEAR ESTIMATES).....2

FIGURE 19: PERCENT OF POPULATION LIVING BELOW  
THE POVERTY LINE BY CENSUS TRACT  
(AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2020 5-  
YEAR ESTIMATES).....3

FIGURE 20: PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OVER AGE  
65 BY CENSUS TRACT (AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY SURVEY 2020 5-YEAR..... 4

FIGURE 21: PERCENT OF POPULATION WITH NO  
VEHICLE (AMERICAN COMMUNITY  
SURVEY 2020 5-YEAR ESTIMATES) .....5

FIGURE 22: JOBS PER ACRE BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP  
(EPA SMART LOCATION DATABASE, 2021) ..... 6

*APPENDICES*

**A** MARKET ANALYSIS MAPS



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Danville Urbanized Area Designation Loss and Mitigation Strategies Study analyzes the impacts to public transit operations in Vermilion County, Illinois, following the loss of the urbanized area designation for the City of Danville and surrounding areas, the corresponding loss of Danville Mass Transit's (DMT) small urban transit status, and the new reality of serving Vermilion County with two transit agencies – DMT and the CRIS Rural Mass Transit District. The loss of approximately \$1.5 million in annual Section 5307 Urbanized Areas Formula funding, due to the change in urbanized area designation, requires investigating several options to restructure or provide additional local funding to transit services in Vermilion County. Federal Fiscal Year 2023 is the last year that Section 5307 funding is available for DMT.

The urbanized area designation change occurred due to population decline in the Danville urbanized area, which included the City of Danville and the City of Georgetown, the towns of Tilton, Belgium, and Westville, and the Village of Catlin. According to the 2020 Census, the Danville urbanized area population is 40,044, a decrease of 21.5% between 2010 and 2020.<sup>1</sup> The 2020 population fell below the 50,000-person threshold for an area to qualify for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) urban area formula funds, or Section 5307.

As part of the study, a summary of existing transit services and funding for DMT and CRIS Rural Mass Transit District was prepared. The Existing Conditions Memo outlines DMT's transit system and funding, followed by a summary of CRIS' service and funding, a review of previous planning studies and a market analysis, and conclusions.

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE MEMO

The Mitigation Strategies Memo follows the Existing Conditions Memo and presents future scenarios for transit operations and capital asset needs. Several points of coordination between DMT and CRIS are also discussed, including coordination on service delivery and proposed governance structures to meet IDOT's requirement of one federal and state funding recipient in the county. The primary objective of the strategies is to mitigate negative impacts on transit users – understanding that it is often the most vulnerable populations who rely on transit as a primary means of transportation.

The Mitigation Strategies Memo should be the guiding document in continuing discussions between DMT and CRIS as the new funding structure goes into effect in Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (October 1, 2023).

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/vermillioncountyillinois/PST045222>  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/29/2022-28286/2020-census-qualifying-urban-areas-and-final-criteria-clarifications>

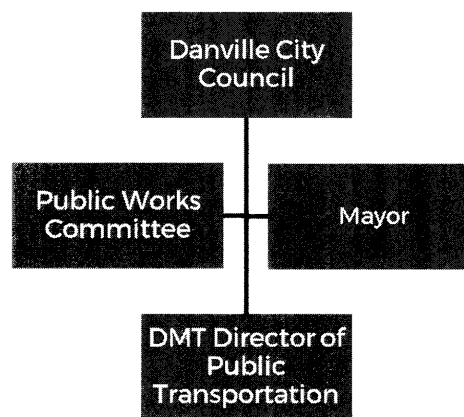
## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS: DANVILLE MASS TRANSIT

Danville Mass Transit (DMT) operates transit service in the Danville area in Vermilion County, Illinois. This includes service within Danville, Georgetown, Tilton, Westville, and Champaign. DMT provides fixed-route bus, evening on-demand, and complimentary ADA paratransit services. DMT contracts with the CRIS Rural Mass Transit District to operate the paratransit service.



### 2.1 GOVERNANCE

Danville Mass Transit (DMT) is a department of the City of Danville, Illinois. Daily operations are managed by the Director of Public Transportation and DMT management staff. The Mayor of Danville oversees DMT along with all other city departments. DMT is governed by the city's Public Works Committee and the Danville City Council. DMT also participates in transportation planning with the Danville Area Transportation Study (DATS), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Danville urbanized area. DATS is also housed within the City of Danville.



### 2.2 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

#### 2.2.1 OPERATING SOURCES AND USES

DMT's operating budget is funded through the following sources:

- Federal Section 5307 Urbanized Areas Formula Grant
- Other federal grants (CARES Act, ARPA)
- Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP)
- Farebox revenue
- Advertisement revenue
- City of Danville
- Payments for service from nearby towns

In fiscal year 2023, DMT has a total operating budget of \$3,615,956. DMT's federal funding comes from Federal Section 5307 Urbanized Areas Formula Grant. With the loss of the urbanized area designation, DMT will no longer receive Section 5307 funds.

DOAP funding comprises the largest amount of the total operating budget and Section 5307 funds are used as match to maximize the amount of DOAP that DMT can request. DOAP funding can be used to reimburse up to 65% of eligible operating expenses. DMT does not draw down their full DOAP appropriation amount, which was approximately \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2022.

Local operating revenue totals consist of contributions from the City of Danville. Other operating sources include farebox and advertisement revenue and payments from Tilton, Westville, and Georgetown for service in those areas. The budget has been consistently around \$3 million over the past five years. **Table 1** details DMT's operating budget since 2019.

Table 1: DMT Operating Budget 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Federal Operating Total</b>	\$791,362	\$1,105,712	\$1,024,456	\$1,078,228	\$838,076
<b>State Operating Total</b>	\$2,118,967	\$1,599,562	\$2,194,229	\$2,000,000	\$2,350,000
<b>Local Operating Total</b>	\$27,880	\$24,635	\$25,233	\$27,880	\$27,880
<b>Other Operating Total</b>	\$337,845	\$260,384	\$138,731	\$190,102	\$400,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,276,054</b>	<b>\$2,990,293</b>	<b>\$3,382,649</b>	<b>\$3,296,210</b>	<b>\$3,615,956</b>

### FEDERAL GRANT BALANCE

DMT has remaining balances on several federal grants, including Section 5307 apportionments from 2020-2023, CARES Act, and ARPA funds. The total amount on remaining balances, as shown in Table 2, is \$4,773,684. The CARES Act funding consists of both operating and capital assistance, while the other sources could be used for either. With this split, the total balance available for operating assistance is approximately \$3.9 million and the total available for only capital assistance is approximately \$866,000.

Table 2: DMT Federal Grant Balance

Grant	Year	Apportionment	Total Left to Draw
5307	FY 2020	\$1,050,927	\$315,426
5307	FY 2021	\$778,671	\$529,598
			\$249,073
5307	FY 2022	\$1,005,412	\$1,005,412
5307	FY 2023	\$1,573,657	\$1,573,657
CARES	FY 2020	\$2,968,440	\$589,908
ARPA	FY 2022	\$523,501	\$510,610
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$7,900,608</b>	<b>\$4,773,684</b>

### OPERATING AGREEMENTS

DMT contracts with CRIS Rural Mass Transit District to operate the required ADA-paratransit complementary service to DMT's fixed route bus service. The agreement also includes paratransit service in Catlin, although this is outside the fixed route service boundary. The contract amount is currently at \$135,000.

DMT also has intergovernmental agreements with the Village of Tilton, the City of Georgetown, and the Village of Westville for DMT to provide transit service in exchange for payments from the local governments. The payment structure is based on the ridership and revenue and varies by month based on the number of riders. This revenue is used for local match by DMT.

The agency does not currently have any service payment programs with employers in the community.

## 2.2.2 CAPITAL SOURCES AND USES

In recent years, DMT's use of capital funds included bus purchases, constructing the Transfer Zone (see Capital Assets-Facilities), installing bus camera systems, and bus and facility maintenance. DMT received state capital grant-awards through IDOT's Rebuild Illinois Round 1 program in 2020. Rebuild grants are 100% state-funded with no match requirement.

Table 2 lists the Rebuild Round 1 award amounts and their status. \$875,000 has not been expended and could be reallocated for other capital projects, such as new buses.

**Table 3: DMT Rebuild Illinois Round 1 Capital Grant Award**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Status</b>
Purchase four 35-foot low-floor replacement buses. The existing buses to be replaced have exceeded their useful life.	\$1,380,000	Complete
Replace underground diesel fuel and waste storage tanks at 101 N. Jackson St. The existing tanks were installed when the facility was built in the 1980s and are difficult to insure due to their old age.	\$225,000	Approved to move forward
Acquire land for administrative/maintenance upgrade and addition.	\$200,000	On hold
Procure architectural/engineering services for administrative/maintenance upgrade and addition.	\$450,000	On hold
<b>Total Awarded</b>	<b>\$2,255,000</b>	
<b>Total Award Funding Available</b>	<b>\$875,000</b>	

In addition, DMT has several capital projects planned for the next three fiscal years that may need to be reconsidered depending on the change in operations due to the loss of urbanized area funding. These planned capital projects are anticipated to be funded through Section 5307 capital, CARES Act, and ARPA apportionments. Out of the projects listed in Table 3, only the underground storage tank (UST) replacement, new shop truck, and leveling the back lot have started. Environmental work on the land acquisition for a new garage had begun but is on hold pending the outcome of this study, final operational need determinations, and funding availability.

Table 4: DMT Planned Capital Projects FY 2023-2025

Projects	Year Planned		
	2023	2024	2025
<b>Vehicles</b>			
Four 35' buses		\$2,000,000	
<b>Facilities</b>			
Land acquisition for facility upgrade	\$200,000		
A&E for garage improvements	\$450,000		
Office/garage construction		\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
<b>Other Capital</b>			
Upgrade mobile camera	\$65,000		
Shop furnace	\$20,000		
Radio system	\$20,000		
UST tank replacement*	\$225,000		
Shop truck*	\$90,000		
Level back lot*	\$300,000		
Upgrade lighting in back lot and garage	\$10,000		

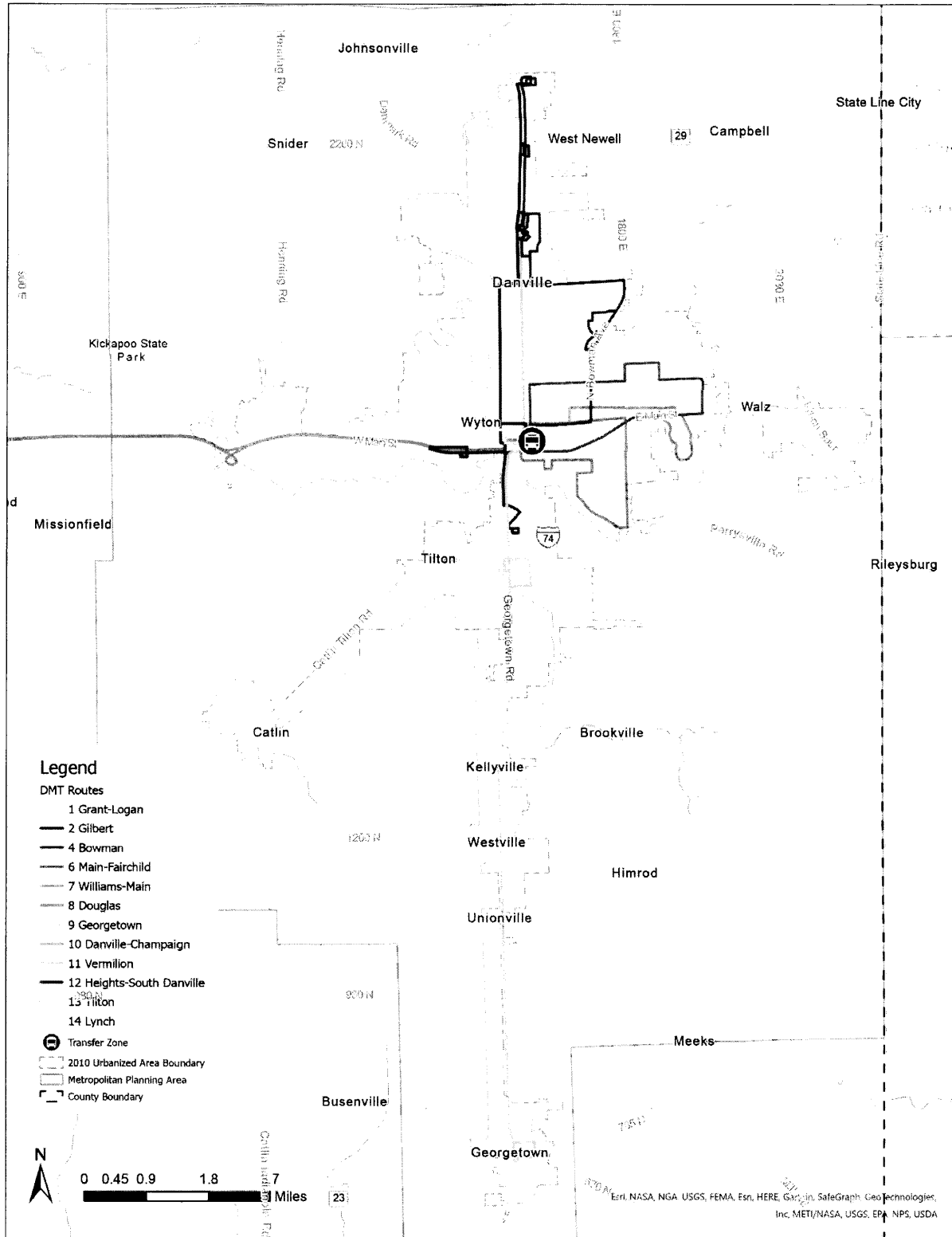
\*Project has begun as of time of study

## 2.3 TRANSIT SERVICE

### 2.3.1 FIXED ROUTE BUS

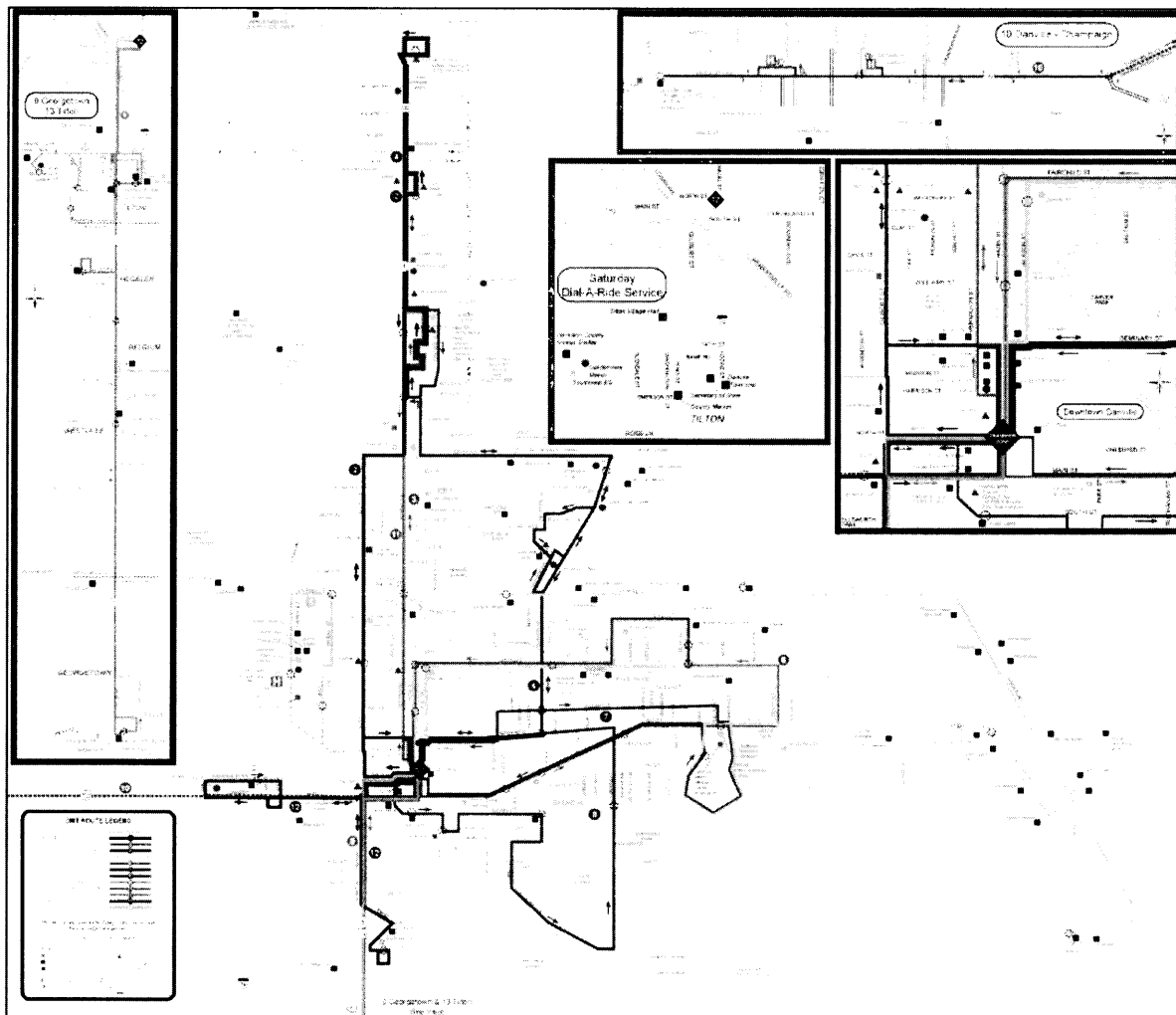
In 2022, DMT operates 12 fixed routes (see **Figure 1**). Most routes operate within the City of Danville, except Route 10 that provides intercity service between Danville and Champaign, Route 9 operating to Georgetown and Westville, and Route 13 operating to Tilton. As mentioned in the previous section, Tilton, Westville, and Georgetown have intergovernmental agreements with DMT to provided payments for this service.

Figure 1: DMT Fixed-Routes



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA

Figure 2: DMT System Map (2020)



As of December 2022, DMT was still operating at an 11% reduction in service compared to pre-pandemic levels. For example, Route 5 Fairchild shown the system map from 2020 (Figure 2) has been eliminated. At the initial start of the COVID-19 pandemic, DMT cut service by 70%. The current reduction in pre-pandemic service is primarily due to lack of bus drivers. DMT indicated that previously reduced routes would not likely be reinstated and different service models (e.g., on-demand) were being discussed to serve some areas.

All DMT routes operate to and from the transfer zone in downtown Danville on a pulse system at :15- and :45 after every hour (except Route 10 Danville/Champaign). The earliest bus begins operating at 5:45 a.m. (Route 2 Gilbert) and the latest bus ceases operating at 9:36 p.m. (Route 4 Bowman). The average span of operation is 12 hours.

### 2.3.2 ON-DEMAND SERVICE

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, evening on-demand service was available from 5:45 pm to 9:45 pm on weekdays and 8:45 am to 4:45 pm on Saturdays. The service covered three routes close to the city center – Route 1 Grant/Logan, Route 8 Douglas Park, and Route 12 Heights/South Danville – where there was demand but not enough to warrant full fixed route service during these hours. Saturday service only covered Route 12 and south of Interstate 74 to Tilton. Trips are made from bus stop to bus stop within the on-demand service area or bus stop to transfer center.

The on-demand service is operated by one driver and rides are scheduled manually. Rides are provided same day, as time and space allow.

Currently, evening on-demand service (i.e. "Dial-A-Ride") currently operates one weekday trip, mainly to accommodate students attending and after-school program. DMT has discussed adding Saturday and full weekday service back into the schedule, with the possibility of serving different areas than before.

In interviews with DMT staff, they indicated that on-demand service worked well in these areas that needed transit access but did not generate enough riders for fixed-route bus. If the on-demand service expanded, additional options to enable more service would likely be needed, such as purchasing scheduling software to take reservations and dispatch vehicles, contracting the service out to another provider, or co-mingling the service with paratransit trips.

### **2.3.3 PARATRANSIT SERVICE**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transit agencies operating fixed-route bus service to provide complimentary paratransit service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the fixed route bus for those who cannot use fixed-route bus due to a disability. DMT contracts with CRIS Rural Mass Transit District to provide its required ADA-paratransit service. This agreement also includes paratransit service in Catlin, which is in the former urbanized area but does not have a fixed-route bus line. DMT distributes the tickets to riders. CRIS provides the driver and vehicles for operating the service.

### **2.3.4 VEHICLE REVENUE MILES AND HOURS**

According to National Transit Database (NTD) reports, DMT's vehicle revenue miles (VRM) in 2021 were 642,998 and vehicle revenue hours (VRH) were 29,263. **Figures 3 and 4** show VRM and VRH operated by DMT in the last five years. VRM and VRH have held steady in this time, with slight decreases in 2020 that corresponded with service reductions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VRM and VRH are key inputs to evaluate transit service efficiency. In particular, operating expenses per VRH is a service efficiency metric that can help inform the long-term viability and stability of transit service by measuring the efficiency of transporting riders while factoring in the speed of the bus service.<sup>2</sup> To evaluate the cost of the operating a bus for one hour, DMT's operating expenses per revenue hour were calculated DMT's cost of operating a bus for one hour is \$121.22 based on their total operating expenses and vehicle revenue hours for fiscal year 2021.<sup>3</sup> The 2021 national average cost per hour was \$160.33.<sup>4</sup>

---

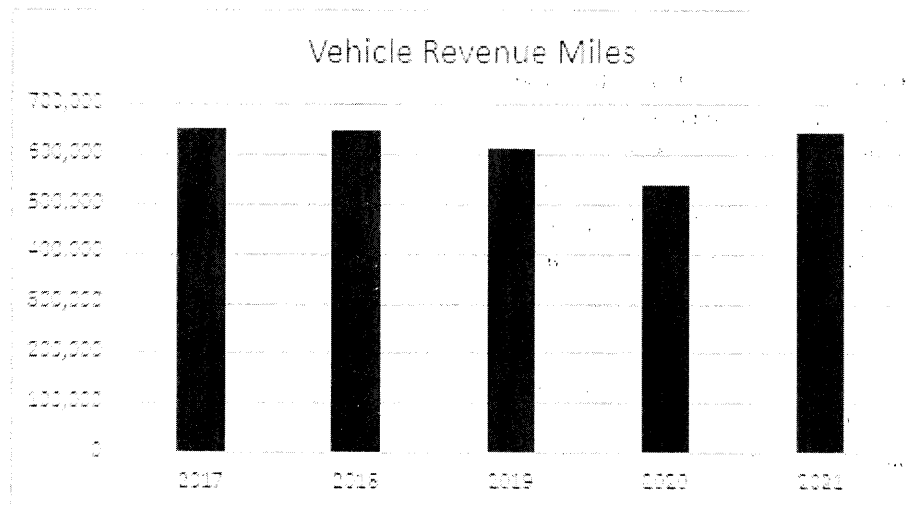
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fdot.gov/docs/default-source/transit/pages/BestPracticesinEvaluatingTransitPerformanceFinalReport.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> NTD 2021

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-10/2021%20National%20Transit%20Summaries%20and%20Trends\\_1-0.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-10/2021%20National%20Transit%20Summaries%20and%20Trends_1-0.pdf)

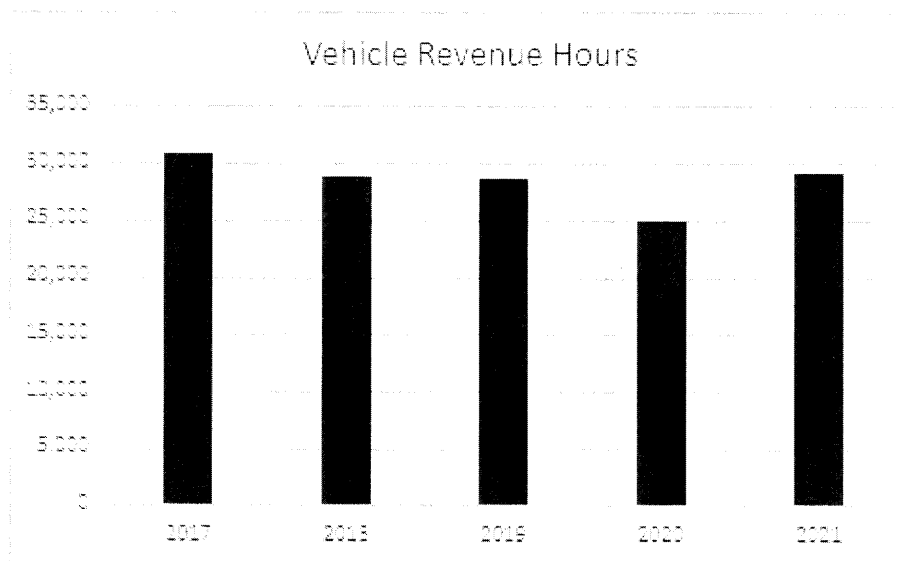


Figure 3: DMT Vehicle Revenue Miles, 2017-2021



Source: National Transit Database

Figure 4: DMT Vehicle Revenue Hours, 2017-2021



Source: National Transit Database

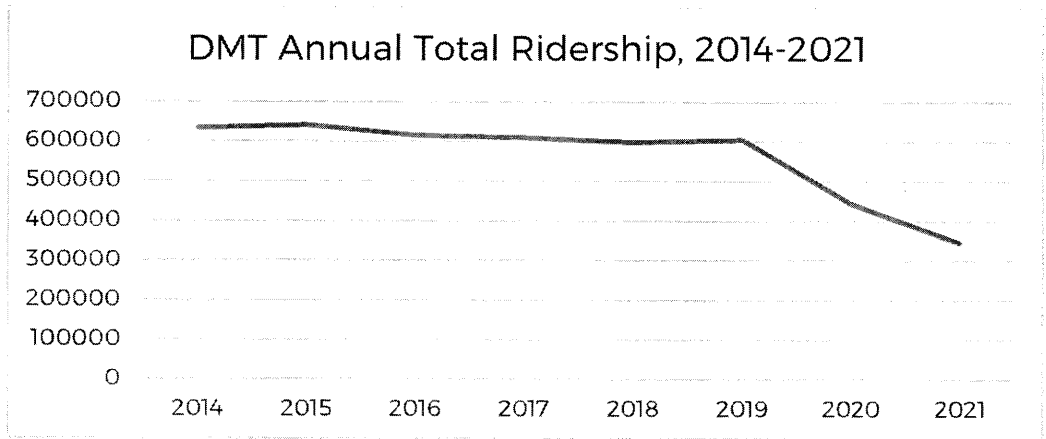
### 2.3.5 RIDERSHIP

#### FIXED-ROUTE

Ridership on DMT’s fixed-route bus service has seen significant decline in the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, DMT provided 344,911 unlinked passenger trips on 14 routes. Although many transit agencies experienced ridership decline in the late 2010s, DMT’s ridership held steady from 2014-2019 with only a 5% decrease over those years. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a drop in riders with DMT. Ridership decreased by 26% between 2019 and 2020 alone and continued to decline in 2021. **Figure 5** shows the annual ridership totals for 2014-2021. The top performing routes are Route 4 Bowman, Route 2 Gilbert/Danville Crosstown, and Route 6 Main/Fairchild. Collectively these three routes account for 54% of the total ridership. Together these routes serve important commercial,

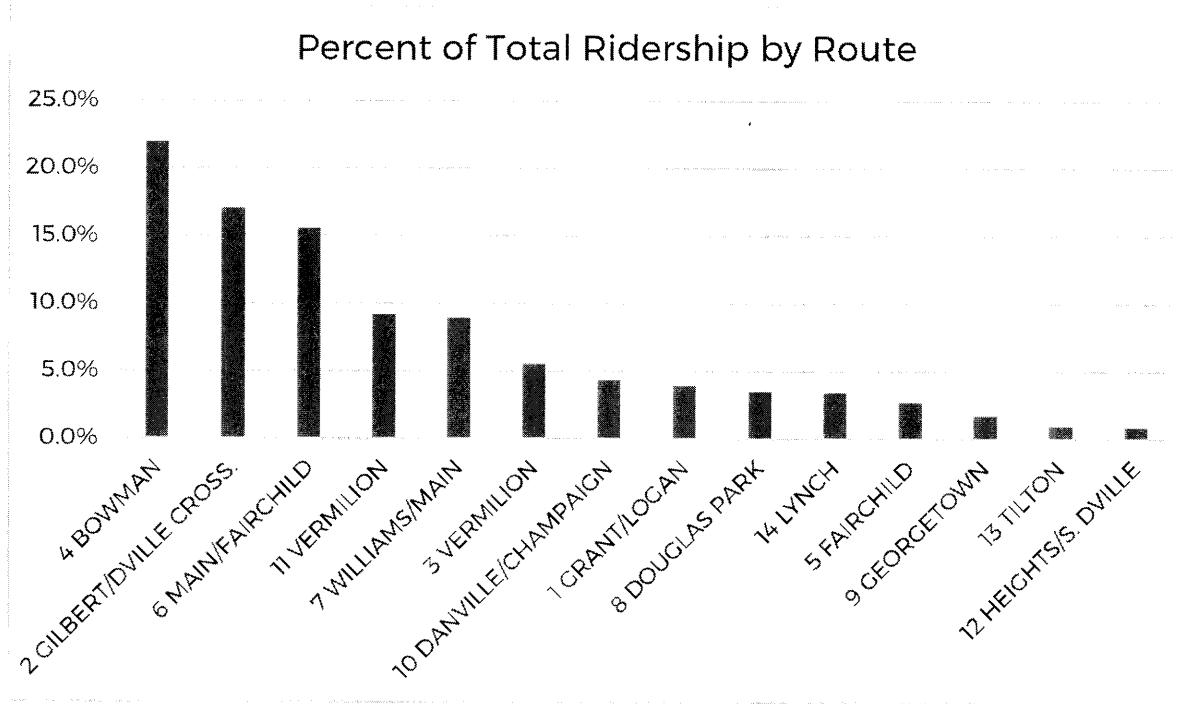
medical, and residential areas. Routes 4 and 2 connect downtown to big box retail and commercial areas north of the city. Route 2 also serves the CARLE Medical Center and other medical offices. Route 6 connects residential areas east of downtown, including affordable housing, to the transfer center.

Figure 5: DMT Historical Ridership, 2014-2021



Source: Danville Mass Transit

Figure 6: DMT Percent of Total Ridership by Route, 2021

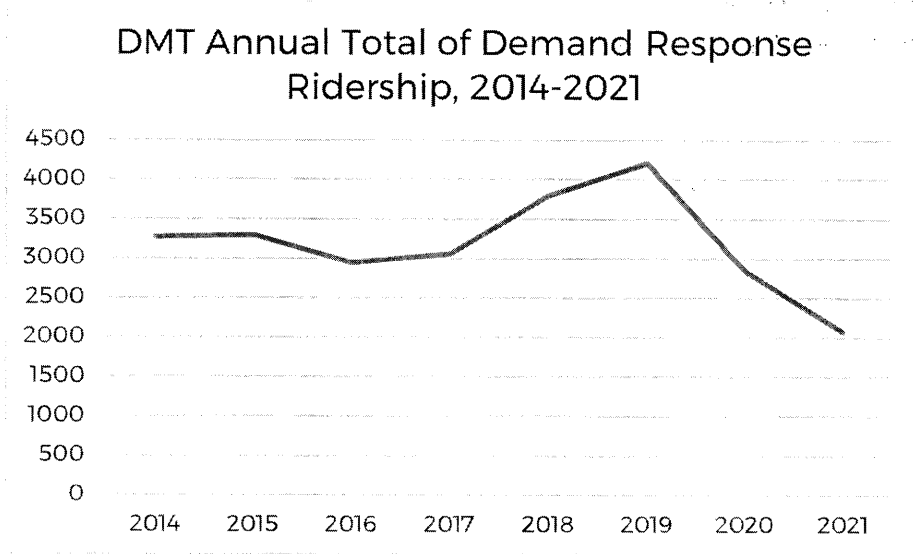


Source: Danville Mass Transit

**DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE**

DMT’s demand response service, also called “Dial-A-Ride”, provided 2,076 rides in 2021. This decrease reflects the cut in service in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to 2020, the demand response service provided a peak of 4,209 rides in 2019.

Figure 7: DMT Demand Response Ridership, 2014-2021

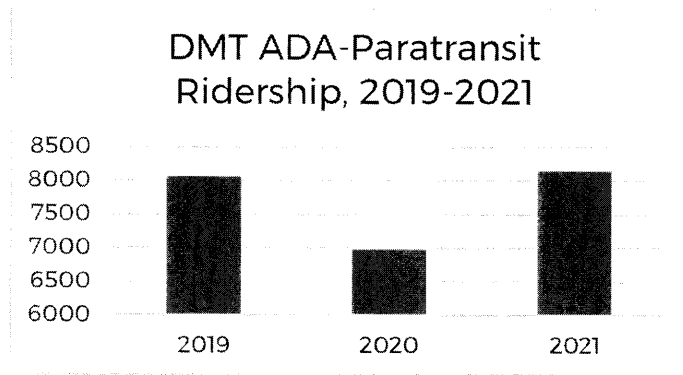


Source: Danville Mass Transit

### ADA PARATRANSIT

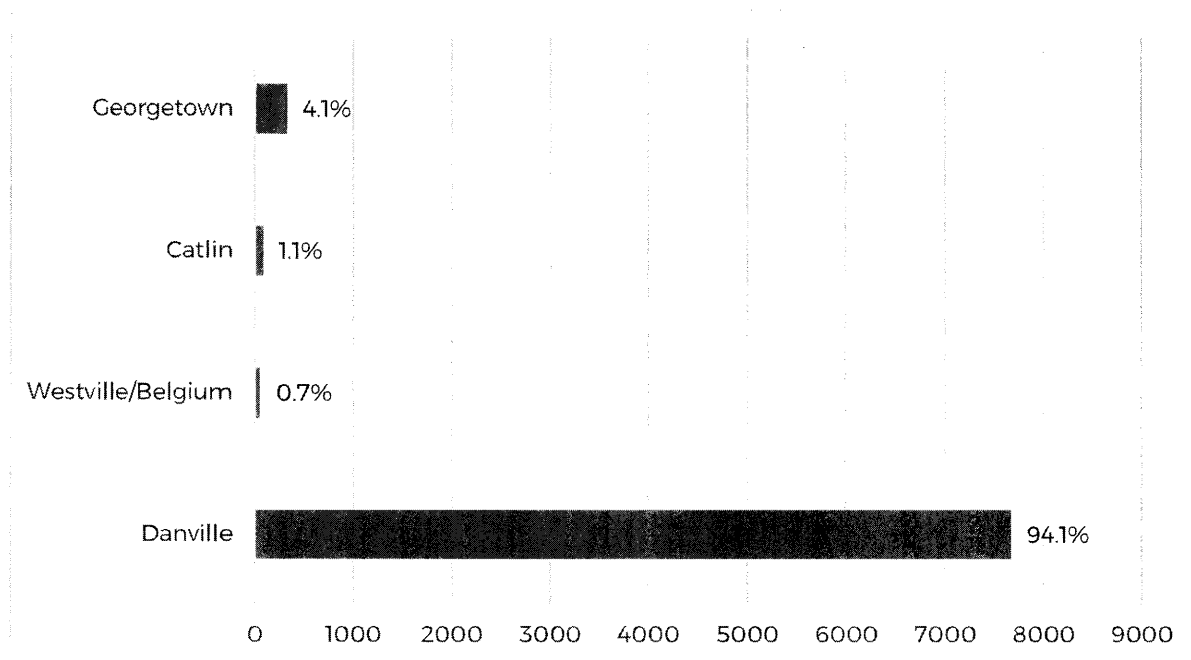
Paratransit ridership in 2021 was 8,154 trips, the majority of which were taken in Danville. Only 6% of paratransit trips originated in Westville/Belgium, Catlin, or Georgetown. Ridership decreased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but surpassed 2019 totals in 2021. Figures 8 and 9 show the recent ridership trends and the breakdown of ridership by area.

Figure 8: DMT ADA Paratransit Ridership 2019-2021



Source: Danville Mass Transit

Figure 9: 2021 DMT ADA Paratransit Service by Area



Source: Danville Mass Transit

## 2.4 CAPITAL ASSETS

### 2.4.1 FLEET

DMT has a fleet of 18 vehicles, comprised of 13 Gillig low floor buses and five Ford cutaway buses. **Table 4** details the fleet. The standard Useful Life Benchmark (ULB) for buses, as published by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is 14 years.<sup>5</sup> The average age of the DMT bus fleet is 6 years, in part due to DMT's investment in four new buses purchased in 2022 and two new buses purchased in 2019. However, DMT's seven other buses are older and at or past the ULB. DMT's five cutaway buses are used to operate the demand response service. The average age of these vehicles is 7 years, which is below the standard ULB of 10 years. The oldest cutaway bus is nine years old. DMT conducts their maintenance on vehicles in-house.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2021-11/TAM-ULB-CheatSheet.pdf>

Table 5: DMT Fleet

<b>BUS #</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MAKE</b>	<b>MODEL</b>	<b>SEATS</b>	<b>VEHICLE TYPE</b>	<b>MILEAGE</b>
819	2008	Gillig	Low Floor	28	Local	510,631
821	2008	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	524,366
1126	2011	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	443,933
1127	2011	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	438,425
1128	2011	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	455,250
1631	2016	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	306,729
1632	2016	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	274,435
1329	2013	Ford	Eldorado	26	Commuter / Low volume local	247,640
1633	2016	Ford	Aeroelite	26	Commuter / Low volume local	203,598
1634	2016	Ford	Aeroelite	26	Commuter / Low volume local	298,887
1635	2016	Ford	Aeroelite	26	Commuter / Low volume local	189,557
1636	2016	Ford	Aeroelite	26	Commuter / Low volume local	238,221
1937	2019	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	157,614
1938	2019	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	142,895
2239	2022	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	9,581
2240	2022	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	11,143
2241	2022	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	11,714
2242	2022	Gillig	Low Floor	32	Local	10,532

Source: Danville Mass Transit

## 2.4.2 FACILITIES

### TRANSFER ZONE

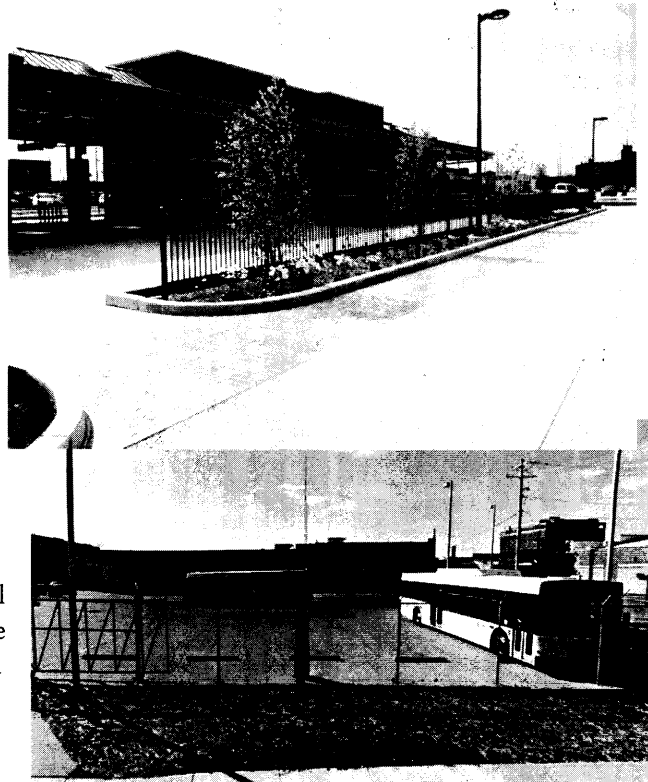
DMT constructed a new Transfer Zone in 2017 to provide a safe, comfortable passenger experience when transferring buses. The Transfer Zone is located at E North St and N Hazel St in downtown Danville, one block from the main DMT facility. The facility offers indoor seating, restrooms, and vending. All routes operate to and from the Transfer Zone.

### ADMINISTRATIVE, MAINTENANCE, AND BUS STORAGE FACILITY

The main DMT facility is located at 101 N Jackson Street in downtown Danville and houses the agency's administrative, dispatch, maintenance, and storage functions. The facility was built in the 1980s and includes offices and staff break areas, two and a half bus parking and maintenance bays, a wash bay, and outdoor bus parking.

In 2020, DMT contracted with the Farnsworth Group to conduct a feasibility study to build a new facility, with the goal of expanding indoor bus parking bays, upgrading maintenance facilities, and redesigning the office space for better space and function. The study surveyed the existing site and other nearby sites and proposed design options. The project was intended to be partially funded with Rebuild Illinois Round 1 funds, but this award funding is on hold.

Figure 10: DMT Transfer Zone



## 2.5 TECHNOLOGY

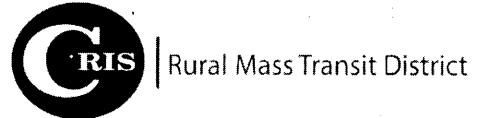
DMT buses are equipped with Odyssey fareboxes and ETA Transit CAD/AVL systems, which include passenger announcements and interior digital stop information. The AVL system is integrated with the bus head signs and coordinates the head signs and stop announcements. Buses are also equipped with video cameras.

Drivers use two-way radios to communicate with the dispatch center for all routes in the Danville area. Drivers operating the Danville/Champaign service (Route 10), use cellphones and Bluetooth devices for communications with dispatch.

# 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS: CRIS RURAL MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

## 3.1 GOVERNANCE

The CRIS Rural Mass Transit District (CRIS) is governed by a board of directors, who are appointed by the Vermilion County Board.<sup>6</sup> The CRIS Board is comprised of a president, treasurer, three members at large, and the CRIS C.E.O. The CRIS C.E.O. oversees daily operations.



## 3.2 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

### 3.2.1 OPERATING BUDGET SOURCES AND USES

CRIS' operating budget is funded through the following sources:

- Federal Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas
- Other federal and state grants (CARES, ARPA)
- Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP)
- Fare revenue
- Operating agreements with local human services agencies

In 2023, CRIS has a total operating budget of \$1,374,467. DOAP funding is the largest percentage of the operating budget and Section 5311 funding is used as local match, in addition to revenue from local operating agreements and fares. The CRIS budget has been consistently around \$1.3 million over the past five years. **Table 5** details CRIS' operating budget since 2019.

Section 5311 funding will become the primary federal funding source for transit in Vermilion County, with the loss of urbanized area funding in Danville. Section 5311 funding for Vermilion County will increase with the addition of the former urbanized area into the calculation for the county.

**Table 6: CRIS Operating Budget 2019-2023**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Federal Operating Total</b>	\$143,028	\$143,028	\$485,366	\$143,028	\$143,028
<b>State Operating Total</b>	\$892,550	\$822,468	\$693,008	\$892,550	\$892,550
<b>Local Operating Total</b>	\$331,233	\$294,802	\$230,130	\$331,233	\$331,233
<b>Other Operating Total</b>	\$7,656	\$5,037	\$0	\$7,656	\$7,656
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$1,374,467	\$1,265,335	\$1,408,504	\$1,374,467	\$1,374,467

<sup>6</sup> CRIS Mass Transit District and CRIS Healthy Aging are separate entities.

## OPERATING AGREEMENTS

CRIS has 12 contracts that support its transit service and go toward local match for DOAP and 5311 funding. Seven contracts are to provide service to local human services agencies. As mentioned in the DMT section, DMT contracts with CRIS to provide the required complimentary ADA-paratransit service to DMT's fixed-route bus system. CRIS also received grants through the Illinois Department of Aging (IDoA), the Department of Health and Family Services, and Vermilion County. **Table 6** details these contracts and the amounts.

**Table 7: CRIS Operating Agreement Entities and Amounts – Projected FY 2024**

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Accolade (Logan Ave)	\$25,000
Colonial Manor	\$15,000
Crosspoint	\$30,000
Danville Mass Transit	\$140,000
ADA-Paratransit <sup>7</sup>	
ESS-IDoA Funds	\$5,000
Gardenview	\$2,000
Medicaid	\$40,000
MTM	\$25,000
Survivor Resource	\$1,000
HFS Senior	\$13,875
Transportation	
Vermilion County Grant	\$3,750
Worksource	\$70,000

---

<sup>7</sup> The contract to operate complimentary ADA paratransit service for DMT may change depending on the outcome of the study and who is the direct recipient of 5311 funding for the county.



TOTAL

\$370,625

### 3.2.2 CAPITAL BUDGET SOURCES AND USES

CRIS received state capital grant awards through IDOT's Rebuild Illinois Round 1 and Round 2 program. Rebuild grants are 100% state-funded with no match requirement. Both awards are on hold pending the outcome of this study, determination of operational need and funding availability.

**Table 7** lists the awards and their status.

Table 8: CRIS Rebuild Illinois Capital Grant Awards

Project	Award	Status
Dispatch Software/ADP Hardware	\$22,300	No progress
Bus Garage Facility with Admin Wing and Wash Bay*	\$3,066,088	On hold

\*Original request was for \$11,031,792 for the full scope of the project, but the award was reduced to \$3,066,088 due to lack of funds

## 3.3 TRANSIT SERVICE

CRIS operates several different transit services in Vermilion County, outlined in **Table 8**. CRIS uses Ecolane scheduling software purchased in 2013.

Table 9: CRIS Services

Service	Service Area	Fare	Notes
General public transportation	Outside the urbanized area to/from the urbanized area	\$4	Reservations 48 hours in advance
Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation	Vermilion County and to Champaign-Urbana	Covered by Medicaid	First Transit administers the Medicaid transportation application process
Senior transportation	Danville urbanized area	Free. Suggested donation of \$1	Older adults over 60; limited rides available and limited to one round trip per rider per week

**ADA-Paratransit service for Danville Mass Transit**

¾ mile of DMT fixed-route buses and Catlin

\$12 for 6 ride ticket

DMT manages applications to qualify for paratransit service

**3.3.1 RIDERSHIP**

According to the Existing Conditions prepared for the CRIS Rural MTD Administrative and Operations Facility Feasibility Study, CRIS ridership was steady during 2015 to 2018, serving around 61,000 trips annually. Since 2019, ridership has decreased from 55,671 rides to 37,226 in 2021 – a 33% decrease.

CRIS ridership surveys and trip data reveal most customers are using CRIS for transportation to work, medical appointments, and general personal needs. 100% of rider survey responses answered that they had used CRIS rides for medical trips. Almost half of the survey responses also indicated rides are being taken to social activities. **Figure 12** shows the percentage of trips being taken for specified purposes.

CRIS operates throughout Vermilion County, but rides from Hoopeston accounted for almost half of all rides provided, followed by Sidell and Rossville (see **Figure 13**). Almost 95% of riders travel to Danville.

**Figure 12: Trip Purpose**

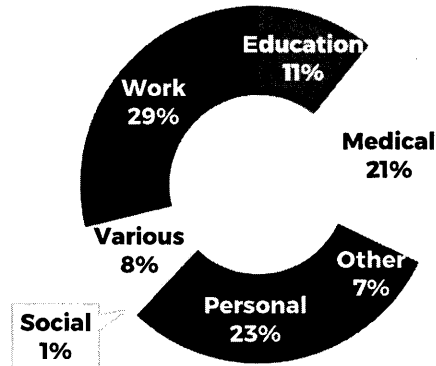
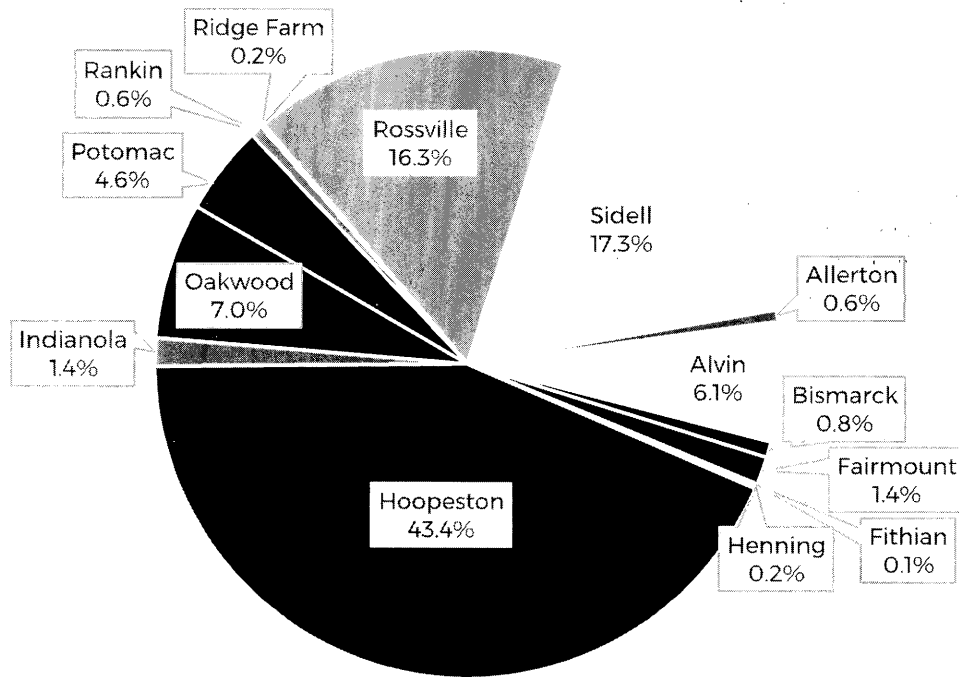


Figure 13: Total Trips by Origin



Source: CRIS RMTD

### 3.3.2 REVENUE MILES AND HOURS

According to CRIS's NTD report for fiscal year 2021, the agency's VRM were 312,752 and the VRH were 15,980. VRM have increased by 15% since 2017, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Service efficiency, measured as operating expenses per revenue hour, are \$88.14. This is lower than the national cost per hour for demand response service, which is \$101.30.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-10/2021%20National%20Transit%20Summaries%20and%20Trends\\_1-0.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-10/2021%20National%20Transit%20Summaries%20and%20Trends_1-0.pdf)

Figure 14: CRIS Vehicle Revenue Miles, 2017-2021

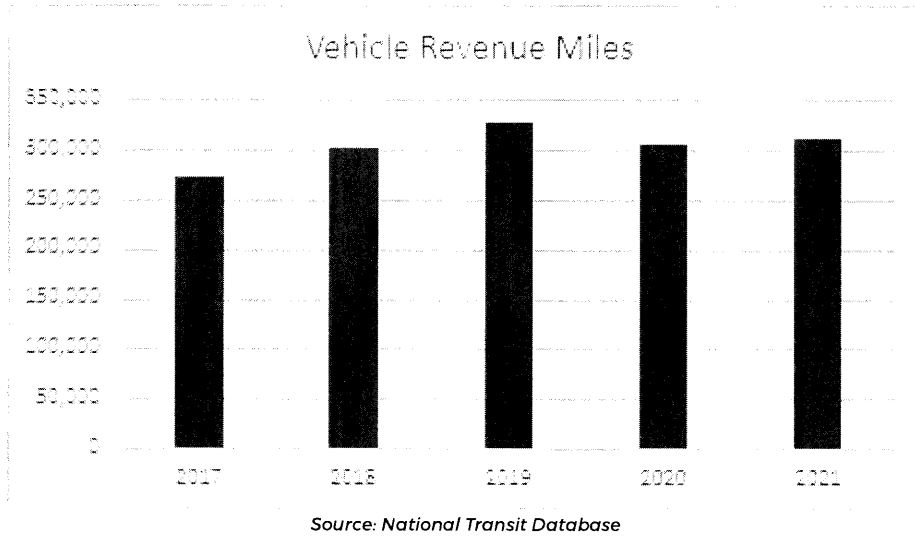
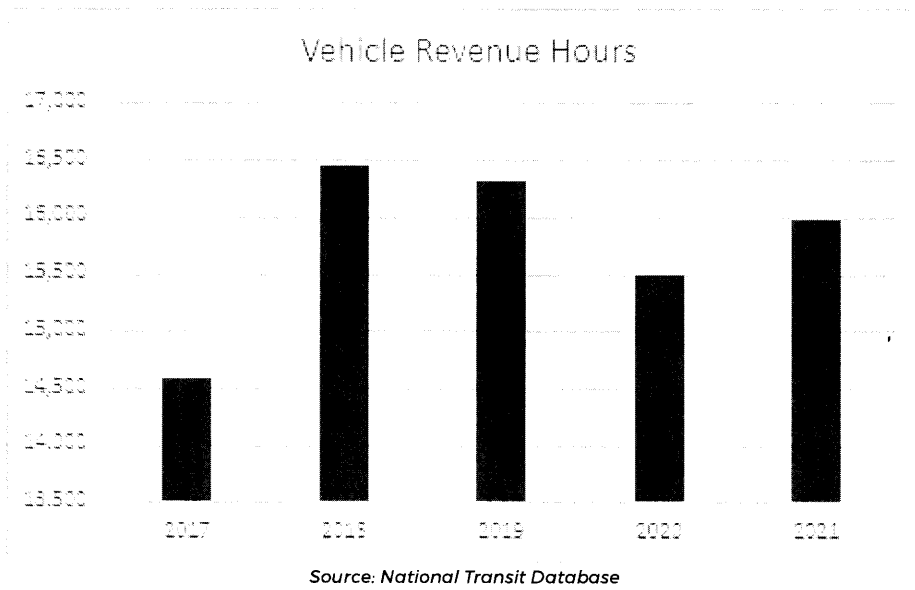


Figure 15: CRIS Vehicle Revenue Hours, 2017-2021



## 3.4 CAPITAL ASSETS

### 3.4.1 FLEET

CRIS has 31 revenue vehicles, which include a mix of cutaway buses seating 14 people and 5-6 seat minivans. As listed in CRIS' FY 22 NTD reporting, 25 vehicles are active and six are out of service. The oldest active vehicle was manufactured in 2010 and the newest active vehicle was manufactured in 2019.

CRIS' vehicles are purchased through state funds. The funding loss is not expected to have a large impact on the fleet replacement needs for CRIS for this reason. CRIS will continue working with the state to acquire new buses as needs and funding warrants.

CRIS contracts with Champaign-Urbana MTD to complete their vehicle maintenance.

### 3.4.2 FACILITIES

The current CRIS facility is located at 615 E Voorhees Street, Danville, Illinois. CRIS leases the facility for approximately \$80,000 a year. The bus storage area is approximately 12,500 square feet and the office space is approximately 5,000 square feet. An additional garage is attached to the office space that houses some vans.

In 2021, CRIS contracted with TranSystems to conduct a feasibility study for a new administrative and operations facility. The study investigated several sites around Vermilion County and proposed conceptual layouts. Sites in Batestown and Oakwood ranked the highest based on proximity to key destinations, like Hoopston and I-74, as well as desirable site characteristics. Only two sites, one in Danville and one in Tilton, were identified to move forward with after inquiring with property owners to see if they were willing to sell. The project and associated Rebuild Illinois funding are on hold pending the outcome of this study.

## 4 PREVIOUS PLANNING STUDIES

The following previous plans and studies for Danville and Vermilion County were reviewed:

- City of Danville Comprehensive Plan (2006)
- DATS Long Range Transportation Plan "Connections to 2045" (2020)
- DATS Transportation Improvement Program Fiscal Years 2021-2024
- DATS Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) (2013)
- DATS Greenways and Trails Plan (2018)
- DMT Top Stops: A Quantitative Data Analysis (2011)

A common theme among the plans and studies reviewed was the focus on enhancing connections between residents and employment to give people more transportation options and support economic development and growth. Multimodal connectivity goals included objectives to increase frequency on transit routes and serve earlier and later service times on fixed route buses. The need for Complete Street-type infrastructure was also identified, with the desire to create safe, walkable neighborhoods.

# 5 MARKET ANALYSIS

## 5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The following demographic and economic measures were chosen to highlight areas of transit need in Vermilion County. More densely populated areas are easier to serve with transit because there are generally more riders in a smaller area and routes can efficiently move people with shorter trips. The density of jobs also highlights where transit can serve the most workers.

The percent of people living below the poverty line, people without access to a vehicle, and the percent of people who are older adults over 65 are also important measures, as these populations are more likely to use or be completely dependent on transit for daily living.

The following demographic data was obtained from the [American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates](#), unless otherwise noted. **Appendix A** includes the mapped demographic and economic data.

### 5.1.1 POPULATION DENSITY

According to the 2020 Census, the population in Vermilion County is 74,188 people and the Danville urbanized area population is 40,044.<sup>9</sup> Vermilion County's population decreased by 9.1% from 2010 to 2020 and the Danville urbanized area population decreased by 21.5% between 2010 and 2020. The City of Danville's population decreased from 33,027 people in 2010 to 29,204 people in 2020, an 11.6% decrease. This shows that most of the decrease in population in the urbanized area occurred outside the Danville city boundary.

Population density describes how many people, on average, live in a square mile. The highest concentrations of population density are within the former urbanized area around Danville, including Tilton and Westville south of Danville and the area east of Danville to the Indiana state line. The area between Voorhees Street, Grant Street, the river, and Griffin Street in Danville has the highest population density, ranging from 1,800 to 3,171 people per square mile. The City of Hoopeston on the northern boundary of Vermilion County has the highest population density outside of the urbanized area.

### 5.1.2 POPULATION LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

Approximately 18% of Vermilion County residents live below the poverty line. In Danville, the census tracts with the highest percentages of people living in poverty are:

- Census Tract 1: 52%
- Census Tract 3: 42%
- Census Tract 4: 51%

Hoopeston also has a significant population below poverty at 27%.

### 5.1.3 OLDER ADULTS

Older adults make up 20% of the Vermilion County population, which is higher than the rate in the state of Illinois, which is 17%. The population of older adults is not only concentrated in Danville as is seen with the other demographic

---

<sup>9</sup><https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/vermilioncountyillinois/PST045222>

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/29/2022-28286/2020-census-qualifying-urban-areas-and-final-criteria-clarifications>

categories. A high percentage of the older adult population also resides in the county, where there is less access to transportation, medical, and shopping.

In Danville, census tracts with higher population of older adults are also where several assisted living facilities are located. Six assisted living facilities are located on N Bowman Avenue and Liberty Lane in the northern part of Danville. Another three are in the downtown area.

#### 5.1.4 POPULATION WITH NO VEHICLE ACCESS

Two census tracts in Danville have the highest percentage of people with no vehicle access in their households. 19% and 25% of people living in Census tracts 1 and 4, respectively, do not own a vehicle. Census tract 1 covers the downtown area where the transfer center currently provides access to all DMT routes. However, census tract 4 lies to the east of the downtown area where a transit ride would likely require a transfer to travel from the residential housing areas to shopping, medical, and employment destinations.

#### 5.1.5 JOB DENSITY

Job density is generally concentrated in Danville and the immediate surrounding area. The areas with the highest number of jobs per acre in Danville are in downtown east of N Gilbert Street, the medical complex area west of Grant Street, and the industrial area on E Voorhees Street. High density of jobs is also present at the I-74 interchange with US 150 in Tilton. Catlin and Hoopeston also have areas of significant job density.

The census tracts with the highest density of jobs are also near census tracts with a large percentage of the population living below the poverty line. East-west connectivity between downtown and the eastern part of Danville is important to maintain convenient transit service between low-income population and jobs.

## 5.2 LAND USE TRENDS

Like many other small cities in the U.S., Danville had a dense urban core of residential and commercial land uses from which the city has expanded with new development. However, many transit riders still live in these inner core areas and must travel to retail and jobs in the outer ring of development. Much of the commercial options for grocery stores, clothing, and restaurants are in the northern part of the city on N Vermilion Street. A dense area of fast-food restaurants and a grocer are also located south of downtown on S Gilbert Street.

Several new developments in Danville are anticipated to need transit service in the future. The industrial area around Lynch Road, east of Danville, continues to grow. The area is a gateway to jobs in the community. Route 14 currently operates in this area, and while the ridership numbers are not large, the number of riders has increased since 2020, the only route to do so. Route 14 is a loop route, operating from downtown on Fairchild Street to the Danville Area Community College and VA Medical Center, then east on US 136 to Lynch Road. The route operates along E Voorhees Street inbound to downtown. Passengers must transfer to the route at the downtown Transfer Center if traveling from another part of the city. The need for transit is expected to continue rising in the Lynch Road area as new sites open.

Figure 16: The New CARLE at the Riverfront Medical Center in Danville (Source: carle.org)



The Danville VA Clinic and Danville Area Community College, located on E Main Street, are already key destinations for riders. The planned addition of veterans housing near the clinic will likely increase the number of riders in this area. Similarly, the CARLE at the Riverfront medical center expansion, a \$70 million investment, opened in February 2023 near N Gilbert Street and N Logan Avenue.

### 5.3 TRAVEL PATTERN TRENDS

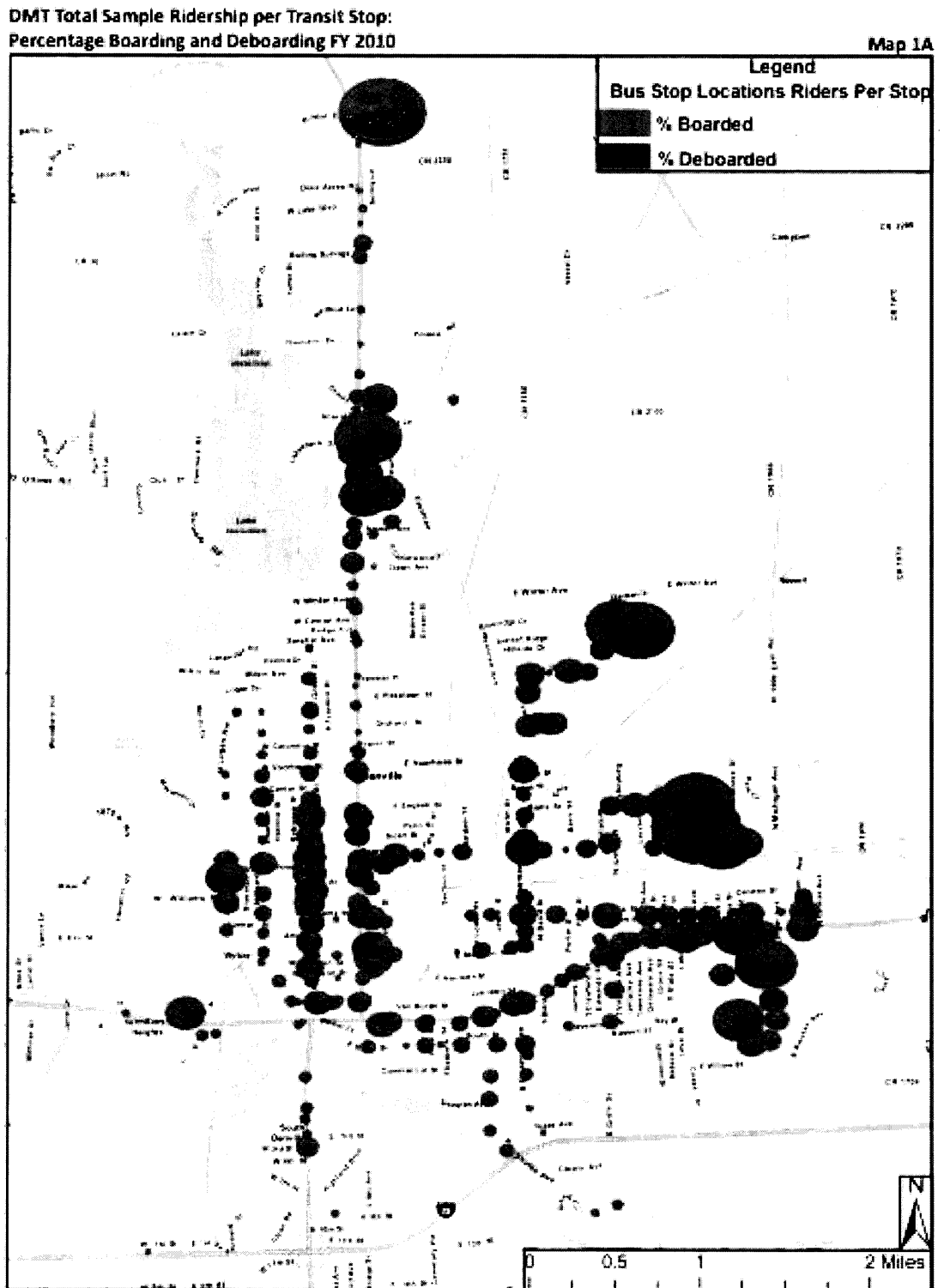
From interviews with the two agencies, most riders take transit to access medical, shopping, school, and employment. Recent boarding and alighting data is not available for DMT routes, but a 2011 report analyzing the top stops in the system revealed similar travel patterns to the current observations stakeholders observed. **Figure 22** shows the top stop locations that the report identified. Key community destinations include:

- Danville VA Clinic
- CARLE at the Riverfront
- Danville Area Community College
- Big box retail on N Vermilion Street
- Employers on E Voorhees St

The residential area along E Fairchild Street, which includes affordable housing developments, is home to many riders who board at these stops. A significant number of trips also originate in the Vermilion Heights and downtown. Additionally, the roadway network in and around Danville has interconnectivity issues, primarily due to over 155 at-grade rail crossings in the area and limited street connectivity across tracks. According to the Danville Comprehensive Plan, and substantiated through discussions with Danville and DMT staff, railroad tracks limit east-west connectivity for transit, particularly north of E Fairchild Street. For example, Route 4 – Bowman provides critical transit connections in the N Bowman Avenue and E Winter Avenue area that is isolated by two rail lines. The DATS LRTP 2045 also mentions the at-grade rail crossings on the Voorhees Street corridor that cause unplanned delays for motorists and transit. The Voorhees Street corridor is home to many jobs and is a main economic area in the city, which is important for transit to serve.



Figure 17: DMT Boarding and Alighting Data (DMT Top Stops: A Quantitative Data Analysis, 2011)



# 6 CONCLUSIONS

DMT and CRIS demonstrate that the populations they serve have a need for public transportation service. Likewise, both agencies demonstrate a desire and propensity to serve the community which can be an asset as we look at aligning mitigation strategies with the current and future transit needs in the community. As the existing conditions of the agencies and community were reviewed, challenges and opportunities for transit in Vermilion County were identified. Mitigating the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities will ensure that public transportation continues in Vermilion County.

## 6.1 CHALLENGES

### 6.1.1 FUNDING

- Federal fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023) will be the last year of Section 5307 funding for the Danville urbanized area. This equates to a loss of approximately \$1.5 million in federal and state funding annually for the county and will impact the operations and capital budgets of both agencies.
- Section 5311 funding will be recalculated with the addition of the former urbanized area to the rural transit service area. The amount will result in an increase from the current amount for rural transit currently only provided by CRIS, but it will not replace the amount of funding lost from Section 5307 urbanized area funds.
- Federal and state funding from IDOT must go to one recipient in Vermilion County.
- Both agencies have capital grants on hold for building new or renovating administrative and operations facilities. With the likely impact to service, both facilities are not needed for future service in Vermilion County. This funding could become critical for serving immediate capital needs, including bus replacements.

### 6.1.2 TRANSIT SERVICE

- Fixed route service will continue to be a preferred delivery model for the city center of Danville. However, with the reduction in funding, the current service model is not sustainable. Service reduction scenarios will need to be considered that provide transit to the most vulnerable population and connect people to goods, services, and jobs.
- Potential reductions in fixed route service would result in a reduction in the required ADA complementary paratransit service.
- Demand response service works well in the low utilization areas in which it currently operates. However, if demand response service expands to cover other areas, scheduling software or contracting the service to another provider may need to be explored to ensure this service is organized and able to serve the demand efficiently.
- Potential reductions in fixed route service could require selling current vehicles and refunding a portion of the funding to the FTA.

### 6.1.3 GOVERNANCE

- One fiduciary agent for the future federal and state funding allocations will be required by IDOT. The coordination between DMT and CRIS will need to function differently in the future.

### 6.1.4 LAND USE/TRAVEL

- The predominant travel pattern from residential areas in the inner core of the city to employment and shopping on the outer edge of the city will need to continue being served with transit. The residential areas with a high number of boardings are also in equity areas where people rely on transit to get around.
- The roadway and railroad network in Danville limits connectivity, particularly on the east side of the city.

## 6.2 OPPORTUNITIES

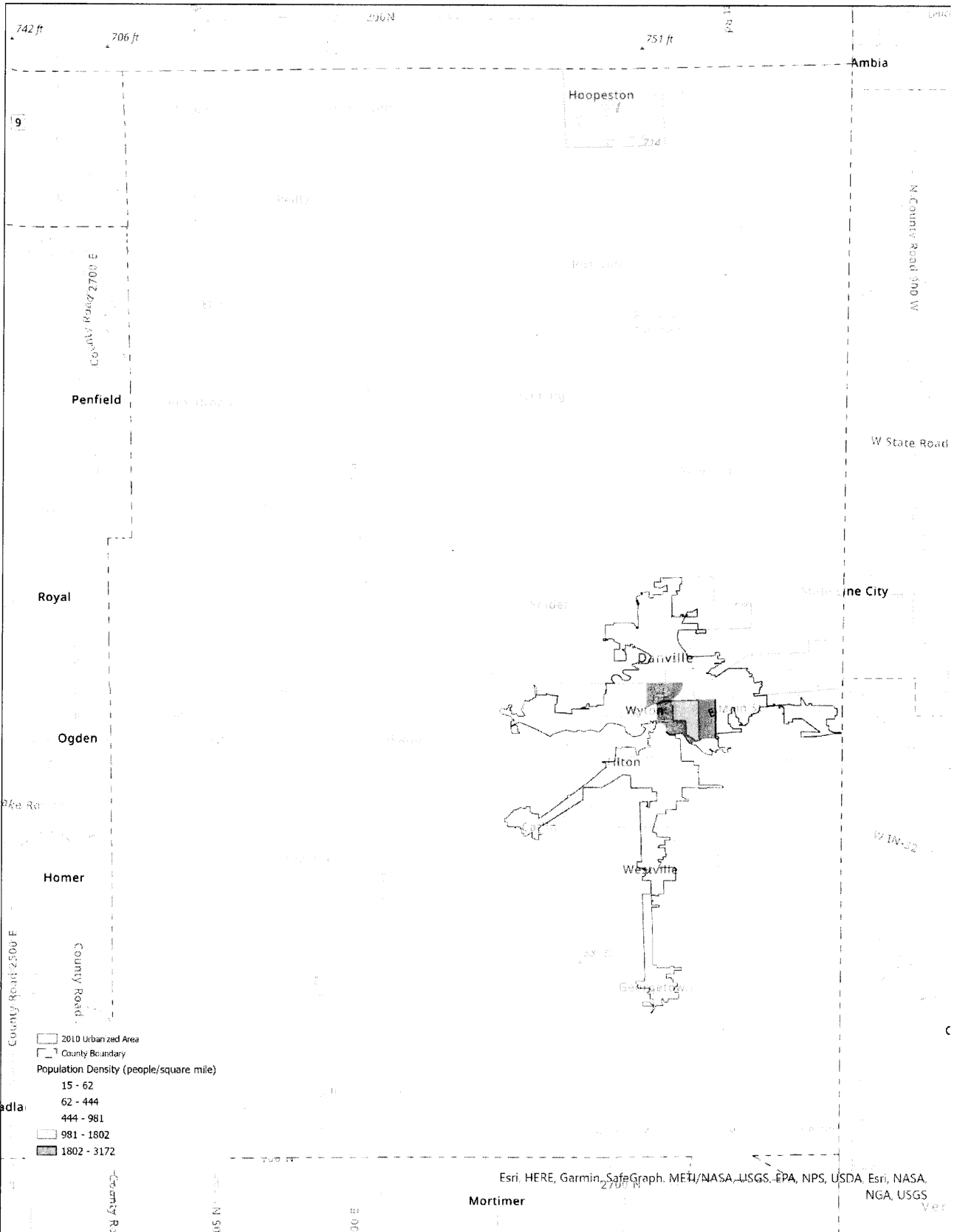
- Similar capital needs identified by both agencies could be combined. For instance, both agencies have recently explored building new facilities for administrative offices and bus storage/maintenance. This could be an opportunity to coordinate future facility investments.
- DMT's remaining balance on federal grants could be used to extend the current service for a few years.
- Access to jobs in the Lynch Road area is an opportunity to improve transit service that best serves the workers. With the limited road network connectivity to the main part of the city, there's an opportunity to try another form of transit service, such as demand response or microtransit.
- With no urbanized area boundary to consider, service in Tilton, Westville, and Georgetown could be served under a different model, such as rural service through CRIS.
- DMT's parallel and loop routes could be redesigned to maximize efficiency.

## 6.3 NEXT STEPS

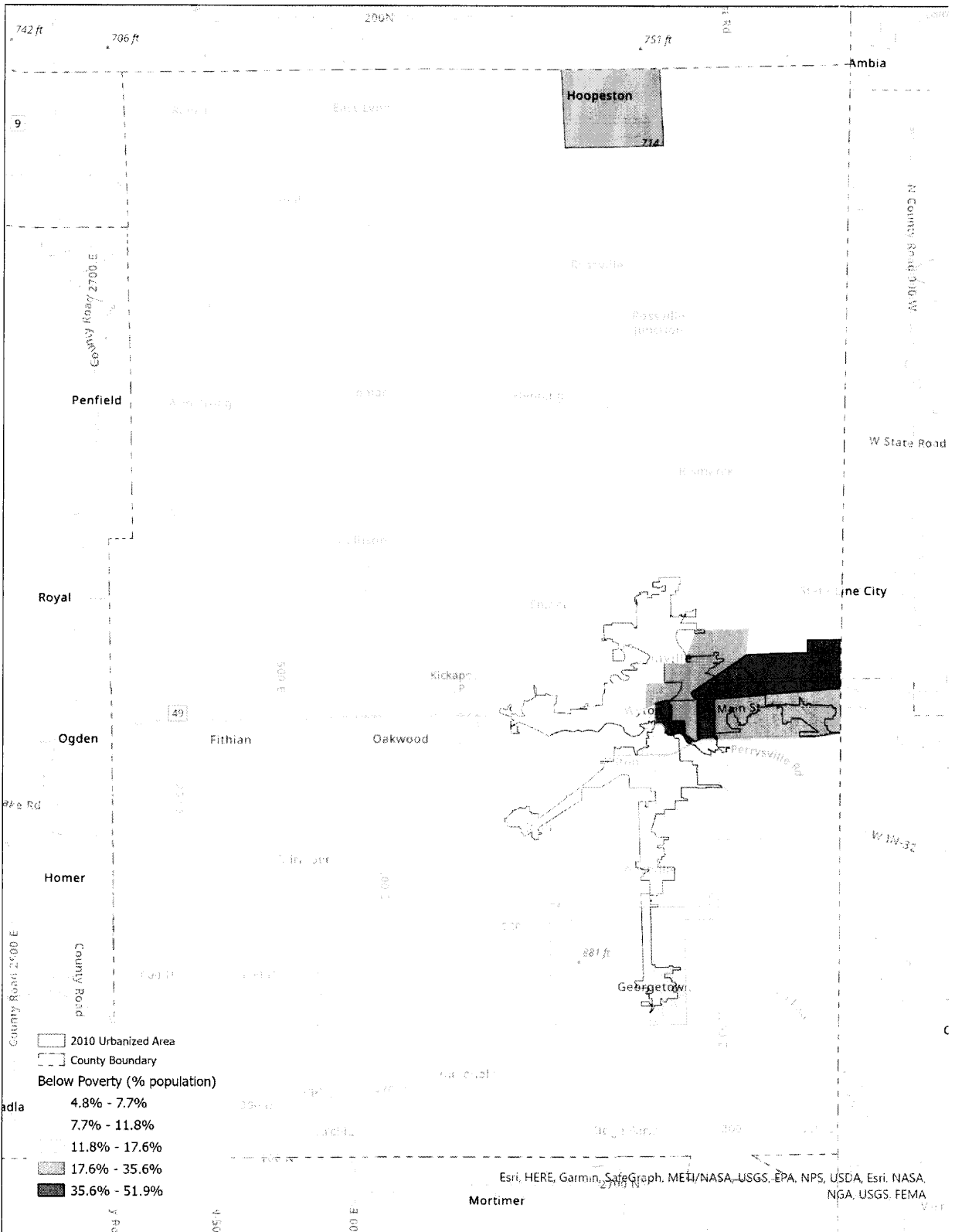
- The consultant team will develop mitigation strategies for transit in Vermilion County. These strategies will provide sustainable service options for DMT and CRIS to continue public transit and mobility services in the Danville area.
- The consultant team will develop anticipated operating budgets for the agencies as the funding changes take effect, considering how existing grant balances could be used for operational and capital expenses over the next several years.
- The consultant team will develop a Community Outreach Plan to help educate the public and stakeholders on the changes to transit service.

# **A** MARKET ANALYSIS MAPS

**Figure 18: Population Density by Census Tract (American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates)**



**Figure 19: Percent of Population Living Below the Poverty Line by Census Tract (American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates)**



Community Engagement  
Urbanized Area

Illinois Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
100 North Dearborn Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62762  
Phone: 217/243-3000  
Fax: 217/243-3001  
www.idot.gov

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# DANVILLE URBANIZED AREA LOSS STUDY

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT PLAN



# PRODUCTION TEAM

## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Deputy Director - Transit Shoun Reese

Bureau Chief – Transit Capital Karen Rogulja

Bureau Chief – Transit Operations David Schafer

## WSP

Project Manager Ben Stupka

Lead Planner Bill Micheel

Transportation Planner Elizabeth Farc

Transportation Planner Kevin McNally

Associate Consultant,  
Environmental Planner Grace Zheng

Communications and Public Involvement Steff Hedenkamp





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1	Project Background.....	1
1.2	Purpose of the Community Outreach & Engagement Plan.....	1
1.3	Project Location & Demographics .....	2
1.4	Project Name .....	2
1.5	Community Outreach Objectives .....	2
2	INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS.....	3
2.1	Key Messages .....	3
2.2	Primary Roles and Responsibilities .....	4
2.3	Project Identity.....	4
2.4	Project Website.....	5
2.5	Social Media .....	5
2.6	Contact Database Development & Maintenance.....	6
2.7	Public Comment Channels.....	6
2.8	Correspondence Tracking & Response Protocol.....	6
2.9	Media Relations.....	7
3	STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION & ENGAGEMENT.....	8
3.1	Key Audiences.....	8
4	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....	10
4.1	Community Profile.....	10
4.2	Community Outreach Work Streams.....	10



**TABLES**

TABLE 1: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES .....	3
TABLE 2: PROJECT KEY AUDIENCES AND LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION .....	8
TABLE 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DELIVERABLES, TIMING, AND ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	11

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Community Outreach Plan provides a blueprint for community engagement to help educate riders and the public in Vermilion County on the loss of urbanized area formula funds for Danville Mass Transit (DMT) and the resulting changes to existing transit service within the City of Danville and Vermilion County. Specifically, this plan provides details related to the desired outcomes and goals of the outreach efforts, key audiences including stakeholders and members of the public, primary messages, outreach strategies, and the tactics needed to implement those strategies.

## 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Danville Urbanized Area Loss Study analyzed the impacts to public transit operations in Vermilion County, Illinois, following the loss of the urbanized area designation for the City of Danville and surrounding area, the corresponding loss of Danville Mass Transit's (DMT) small urban transit status, and the new reality of serving Vermilion County with two transit agencies – DMT and the CRIS Rural Mass Transit District (CRIS). The loss of approximately \$1.5 million in annual Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula funding, due to the change in urbanized area designation, required investigating several options to restructure transit service or identify additional local funding to support the existing level of transit service in Vermilion County. Federal Fiscal Year 2023 is the last year that Section 5307 funding is available for DMT.

As part of the study, an Existing Conditions Memo summarizing existing transit services and funding for DMT and CRIS was prepared. The Mitigation Strategies Memo followed the Existing Conditions Memo and presented future scenarios for transit operations and capital asset needs. Several points of coordination between DMT and CRIS are also discussed, including coordination on service delivery and proposed governance structures to meet IDOT's requirement of a single federal and state funding recipient in the county. This single recipient will administer federal and state funds for all transit agencies in the County. The Mitigation Strategies Memo should be the guiding document in continuing discussions between DMT and CRIS as the new funding structure goes into effect in Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (October 1, 2023); State Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025).

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of the Community Outreach and Engagement Plan (COEP) is to guide communication and engagement with riders and members of the public in a coordinated fashion and represent the interests and unique needs of the partners in this change: the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), CRIS, DMT, the City of Danville, Vermilion County, and the communities affected by the proposed transit changes. The COEP defines the strategies, tools, tactics, and timing for conducting outreach and education with project partners, stakeholders, community leadership, and the broader public.

The COEP documents all communications activities and public information anticipated throughout the lifecycle of this effort, including support for the community leadership engagement process, the transit service options development process, and ongoing outreach activities. Messaging is flexible and is likely to morph as decisions are made. The COEP is intended to contribute to a culture of accountability and transparency with key stakeholders and the public by providing a structure for communication with external organizations and the community. The COEP is comprised of the following three main sections:

1. **Information and Communications:** Outlines internal and external-facing strategies, protocols and deliverables for informative materials, resources, communications, and distribution.
2. **Stakeholder Coordination and Engagement:** Provides an overview of identified stakeholders and organizations that will be engaged, the level of engagement appropriate for each stakeholder group and processes for stakeholder coordination.
3. **Community Engagement:** Identifies objectives, approaches, and timing of outreach activities.

*NOTE: What is presented in this Plan may be amended depending on how the changes to transit service and transit agency governance structure in Vermilion County progress, as well as how other engagement opportunities and challenges that may emerge. The contents are not meant to be rigid or prescriptive but rather to serve as the primary reference to shape outreach, promotion, communication, and engagement efforts made through the duration of the preliminary design phase of the project.*

### 1.3 PROJECT LOCATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

The project area is the City of Danville and Vermilion County in Illinois. All transit services in Vermilion County will be affected.

The urbanized area designation change occurred due to population decline in the Danville urbanized area, which included the City of Danville and the City of Georgetown, the towns of Tilton, Belgium, and Westville, and the Village of Catlin. According to the 2020 Census, the Danville urbanized area population is 40,044, a decrease of 21.5% between 2010 and 2020. <sup>1</sup> The 2020 population fell below the 50,000-person threshold for an area to qualify for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) urban area formula funds, or Section 5307.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, the City of Danville has a population of 28,787 in 18 square miles. Vermilion county has a population of 73,095 and is approximately 900 square miles.

### 1.4 PROJECT NAME

The transit changes will likely not have a single project identity; however, each agency is encouraged to name their effort. Having a project identity helps communicate clearly with the public and provides cohesive messaging and materials. If a transit study is conducted for the area, the planned changes can assume the identity of the study (e.g. Vermilion County Transit Study). Other examples of project names could be "DMT Path Forward" and "CRIS Rural Service Evaluation".

### 1.5 COMMUNITY OUTREACH OBJECTIVES

Community outreach for this project is guided by objectives that inform the approach of various project information and communications deliverables, as well as our stakeholder management and community engagement opportunities. Community Outreach Objectives are shown below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Public Involvement Objectives**

**Public Involvement Objectives**

- **Create a project identity for changes to be used throughout the outreach process, establishing a cohesive look and feel for the communications and public-facing project assets and materials.**
- **Communicate early and transparently with community leadership, local businesses, neighborhood leadership, and community members throughout the area to build trust and establish two-way dialogue.**
- **Provide consistent and clear communications for project budget, impacts, and timeline.**
- **Integrate stakeholder feedback into project information and communications deliverables, as well as community engagement and education.**
- **Establish an authentic open-door policy with the community to understand their priorities.**
- **Provide supplemental outreach activities as needed.**

## 2 INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

The successful implementation of a Community Outreach and Engagement Plan is dependent on building awareness and encouraging participation in the public process. Outreach leads for DMT and CRIS should develop and refine community outreach strategies and coordinate regularly between the two agencies and other partners. Each agency will be responsible for distributing meeting invitations, coordinating meeting locations, and preparing meeting minutes for their own outreach efforts.

The following sections provide high-level information regarding the internal and external strategies, protocols and collateral for informative materials, resources, communications, and distribution approaches.

### 2.1 KEY MESSAGES

Key messages help guide project communications and should use a consistent voice and tone. The following statements use simple and concise language to communicate the **WHY, WHAT, AND WHEN** of the changes. The first statement is the driver.

- IDOT, CRIS, DMT, the City of Danville, and the Vermilion County government are collaborating to develop and implement strategies for a sustainable path forward to continue public transit and mobility services in the Danville area and greater Vermilion County.
- Despite the necessary changes to adapt to the new budget reality, we will still have a functional system that serves the needs of riders and the community.
- Community outreach will be oriented around key milestones of the implementation of service changes.
- The community is encouraged to check out the agency outreach webpages where they can sign-up for updates and alerts, register for upcoming events, and leave comments. The public can also engage on existing CRIS, DMT, City, and County social media channels.
- It is essential that all aspects of the changes, from budget to impacts and timeline, are consistently communicated with transparency.

- We have an open-door policy so that we can stay informed of community priorities during the planning phase and future phases of the project.

## 2.2 PRIMARY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Community Outreach Leads** – DMT, CRIS, and Vermilion County should designate one staff member as the Community Outreach Lead for the duration of the change. Responsibilities include oversight of communication strategies and messaging, as well as development of written content for communications collateral. This includes, but is not limited to, webpage content, social media posts, and public meeting materials. Will serve as facilitators for stakeholder group meetings and public meetings. Also responsible for stakeholder coordination and tracking ongoing communications and feedback in a comment tracking spreadsheet, supporting the project partners with any media relations, as well as assisting with letters and outreach to current riders. Project documentation, management, and coordination are also priorities.
- **Agency Leads**– The Directors of DMT, CRIS, and Vermilion County Transportation Committee Chair should be involved as agency leads. Their responsibilities will include reviewing content developed by Community Outreach Leads to confirm clarity and accuracy of technical and infographic content, providing oversight of coordination efforts between the two transit agencies. The agency leads should also be facilitators at stakeholder and public events. Ensure quality standards are met prior to distribution.

## 2.3 PROJECT IDENTITY

Identity is an important element for building familiarity with the changes and increasing overall awareness. Branding and messaging are encouraged throughout the entire outreach process to provide a consistent graphic identity on all publicly distributed materials including webpages, social media channels, print and meeting materials, and other communications collateral. In addition, branding and messaging are for use in focus group meetings and public meetings, as well as internal documents and presentations. As mentioned in 1.4 PROJECT NAME, the identity of the changes could be tied to a transit planning study or similar effort. This would assist with marketing the changes. Otherwise, the agencies are encouraged to create their own project names and identities for the changes. The project identity elements should include the following:

- Project Logo (fonts, colors, and icon library)
- Quick Reference Brand Guidelines
- Factsheet + FAQ design (English, Spanish)
- Postcard template (English, Spanish)
- Project location map (English, Spanish)
- PowerPoint template
- Word masthead template (announcements)
- Infographics
- Public meeting board template + boards + roll plot exhibits

## 2.4 PROJECT WEBSITE

Each agency is encouraged to create or point to a specific outreach webpage or website via their individual websites to serve as the central portal for all service change information from launch through completion. The website should host a comment form to collect public input. The comment database, which can be called the Comments Tracker, should retain comments throughout the project. A document library to retain project documentation related to project information and analysis should be established. Later in the anticipated implementation phase, transit service changes can be posted to the outreach websites. Events and key milestones can be shared, and informational materials can be posted. The outreach websites will leverage and supplement the project's social media efforts.

- **Welcome and Key Messaging:** Visitors are welcomed with spotlight information at the top of the website, along with a navigation bar. The home page should also feature a map of service adjustments and key messages explaining where the changes are and why they are needed, as well as a notation of the project's current phase.
- **Contact Information:** Website should offer a "Who's Listening" section that identifies agency staff and relevant partners. This can help to personalize the outreach effort and give a face to an otherwise anonymous project team. A dedicated email address (e.g. [outreach@...com](mailto:outreach@...com)) is suggested.
- **Timeline:** The timeline illustrates the phases and milestones, and where we are now.
- **Upcoming Events:** This shows any upcoming events, such as public meetings or town halls. Visitors can learn more and register.
- **Links to Important Documents:** Links to reference documents are provided for public review. Examples of important links include recordings of public meeting presentations, maps, videos, downloadable meeting slide decks, FAQ flyer, and other information. If additional transit planning studies are conducted, they could also be linked on the website.
- **Sign-Up and Registration Features:** Critical to the website is the ability for visitors to sign up for project updates. Sign-ups will be asked for their name, telephone number, mailing address, and email address. The website allows for the easy export of Sign-Up data in Excel or .csv format. The website should enable email e-blasts, which are an effective way to direct and sustain community interest and solicit input during the project engagement phases.
- **Comment Form:** Comment forms allow key stakeholders and the community to share feedback, and forms are tailored to the specific phase or aspect of the project currently at the forefront. Comment forms are designed to be brief and only require five or so minutes to complete them to encourage participation. Comments are coded and incorporated into the comment database.

## 2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be leveraged for organic posts to draw attention to project milestones, events, and opportunities for engagement. The agencies and partners should use their existing social media accounts in coordination with each other. Coordination between the agencies could include a social media editorial calendar framework, to ensure the effective implementation of a social media strategy including goals, measurements, key messages, and protocols for distribution and draft posts.

## 2.6 CONTACT DATABASE DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

Maintaining engagement with new and previously involved audiences is critical to an iterative engagement process. The transit agencies likely have their own databases of interested parties with whom they regularly engage. These databases are a starting point for outreach. The databases are likely to include riders, residents, community organizations, human service agencies, and City and County staff and officials. The database could identify names, telephone numbers, addresses, conversation dates, and other pertinent information.

The contact database can be further developed through the Sign-Up feature on the outreach websites, collecting email addresses from interested parties. Outreach leads are responsible for maintaining the record of public contacts.

## 2.7 PUBLIC COMMENT CHANNELS

The community outreach leads should keep a record of comments and inquiries regarding the proposed changes. Responding in a timely manner to inquiries from the public is critical. Community members will be able to contact the agencies using the specific dedicated e-mail address. To increase accessibility, a mailing address can also be used. The following provides additional detail about how correspondence can be managed through each method.

- **E-Mail:** E-mail inquiries should be acknowledged upon receipt by the outreach leads, who can request input from the agency manager and partners to assist with responses as appropriate. Responses should be provided within two days. The outreach leads should retain copies of e-mails and responses to share with leadership upon request and for record keeping. Comments should be added to a comment tracking spreadsheet. Email addresses within the database can be used to distribute e-blasts to promote attendance at upcoming events, such as public meetings.
- **Phone:** Phone calls and messages received by the outreach leads should be returned within two business days after they are received. Input from project partners should be requested to assist with responses if necessary. The outreach leads should retain a log of calls and responses to share with project partners upon request and for record keeping. Comments should be added to a comment tracking spreadsheet.
- **Mail:** The agency addresses should be used as the mailing address for the outreach. The outreach leads should have primary responsibility for responding to correspondence, with project partners' assistance if necessary. Correspondence should be answered within two business days of receipt. The outreach leads should retain copies of all received mail and responses for record keeping. Comments should be added to a comment tracking spreadsheet. In addition, the U.S. Postal Service is a source for addresses for mailed postcards, which can be selected by routes included within project area zip codes.

## 2.8 CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING & RESPONSE PROTOCOL

It cannot be overstated, properly managing correspondence between key audiences, including stakeholders and members of the public, and the project team is critical to maintaining transparency and building trust. This section outlines a system for exactly how correspondence should be tracked and a response protocol to guide the timely reply to stakeholder or public submissions.



### 2.8.1 CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING

The outreach leads should record all comments received through the various channels available for stakeholders and the public to provide questions, comments, compliments, and complaints. The methods of input track include, but are not limited to, those listed below:

- Comment form on websites
- Email
- Phone
- Meetings

All submissions should be entered into a comment tracking spreadsheet to document date and time of receipt, submission method, commentor details, contact information, submission type (e.g., question, complaint), sentiment, submission content, response date, and response content.

### 2.8.2 RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Timely response is important to maintaining trust and building faith in the public engagement process. Correspondence should be governed by protocol detailed in this section. All time frames are from the date of original submission.

**Timing of initial response:** Two Business Days

Submissions requiring a response should be acknowledged within two business days. Acknowledgement confirms the receipt of a submission indicating when a resolution can be expected (see below for suggested resolution timeframe). In some cases, a resolution may be included in the initial response. This includes simple inquiries, basic project information, and where additional review is not needed or the leadership sign-off is not critical. These submissions should be tracked as outlined in section 2.8.1.

**Timing of resolution:** Five Business Days

Submissions requiring input from agency leadership or partners should be submitted to the appropriate people for review. Input from the agency leadership/partners should be received within five business days. Response should be issued to the individual who provided the submission within five business days.

## 2.9 MEDIA RELATIONS

Local and regional news media outlets can play a valuable partnership role in communicating about the transit changes and raising awareness. The outreach leads should be the main contact for local news media outlets and request support as needed from IDOT / CRIS / DMT / City / County Public Information Officers. The outreach leads should also provide close consultation with IDOT / CRIS / DMT / City / County to support the development of media advisories and news releases. The initial media notification is best to occur prior to the first service adjustments in 2024.

# 3 STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION & ENGAGEMENT

## 3.1 KEY AUDIENCES

The table below provides a high-level analysis of the key audiences who are likely to have an interest in the transit changes. The table identifies the key audience or key audience grouping, and includes stakeholders and members of the broader community, their anticipated level of participation, and their anticipated level of interest in the project. Key Audiences are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Project Key Audiences and Levels of Participation**

<b>Key Audience</b>	<b>Level of Participation</b>
<b>Danville Mass Transit (DMT)</b>	As the majority of transit changes will occur in DMT’s system, DMT is empowered to make decisions regarding the progression of changes and the necessary level of outreach. DMT plays the role of primary outreach coordinator and active listener to identified stakeholders and community interests and priorities in Danville. Furthermore, DMT will be a highly involved partner in outreach regarding changes throughout Vermilion County. DMT’s participation and cooperation with all partners is needed. DMT is financially invested in the transit changes.
<b>CRIS Rural Mass Transit District (CRIS)</b>	CRIS is empowered to make decisions regarding the progression of changes and the necessary level of outreach to their riders. CRIS plays the role of primary outreach coordinator and active listener to identified stakeholders and community interests and priorities, specifically in rural Vermilion County. As the designated funding recipient for Vermilion County, CRIS will be a highly involved partner. CRIS’ participation and cooperation with all partners is needed. CRIS is financially invested in the transit changes.
<b>City of Danville (City)</b>	As DMT is a city department, the City is empowered to participate in the discussion and implementation of transit changes in Danville. The City’s plays a role in connecting appropriate stakeholders in the community to the outreach efforts and coordinating between DMT and Vermilion County. The City can also be an active listener to identified stakeholders and community interests and priorities. The City will be a moderately involved partner. The DMT outreach leads will communicate with the City and ensure comments received from the City are addressed. The City is investing financially in the DMT transit system.

<b>Vermilion County (County)</b>	<p>The County is empowered to participate in the discussion and implementation of transit changes. The County plays a role in connecting appropriate stakeholders in the community to the outreach efforts and coordinating between CRIS, DMT, the City, and IDOT. The County can also be an active listener to identified stakeholders and community interests and priorities.</p> <p>The County will be a moderately involved partner. The CRIS outreach leads will communicate with the County and ensure comments received from the County are addressed. The County is investing financially in the CRIS transit system.</p>
<b>Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)</b>	<p>As the entity responsible for reviewing and approving work completed as a part of the Danville Urbanized Area Loss Study, IDOT will be moderately involved as a partner. The agencies will be responsible for ensuring comments received from IDOT are addressed before changes proceed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of Planning and Programming (OP&amp;P)</li> <li>• Office of Intermodal Project Implementation Transit Division</li> </ul>
<b>Riders</b>	<p>Current transit riders are a major audience for outreach about the changes expected from the funding loss. Riders will have valuable input to the discussion regarding key destinations, routing, and scheduling. Riders should be engaged regularly throughout the lifecycle of the changes, and their concerns should be addressed through the iterative engagement process. Engagement to riders should also be more targeted in both the channels of communication and messaging.</p>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<p>Stakeholders represent major government or other public agencies, community services, and non-profits that may have an interest in proposed transit changes. In many cases, stakeholders may have valuable input to the transit discussion (e.g., human service needs, workforce and housing development). Stakeholders should be engaged regularly throughout the lifecycle of the changes, and their concerns should be addressed through the iterative engagement process.</p>
<b>Industry / Local Businesses</b>	<p>Local businesses are vital to the economy of the City of Danville, Vermilion County and the State of Illinois. Local businesses should be invited to attend public engagement activities such as one-on-one small group meetings and public meetings. Local businesses should be engaged, but it should be noted that consensus and buy-in are not required to advance projects and changes.</p>
<b>Neighborhood Leadership</b>	<p>Neighborhood leadership may include community organizations, homeowners' associations, and other identified groups. Neighborhood leadership should be informed of engagement opportunities and invited to participate in public meetings. Where appropriate, neighborhood leadership may be invited to participate in the one-on-one small group meetings. Residents should be engaged, but it should be noted that consensus and buy-in are not required to advance projects and changes.</p>
<b>Broader Community</b>	<p>The broader community represents the citizens in Danville and Vermilion County. The public's perspective on transit service in the area is important to connect transit service to economic development, quality of life, and sense of community. Messaging may be more general in nature and gather input on how transit fits into the vision for the community. The broader community should be engaged, but it should be noted that consensus and buy-in are not required to advance projects and changes.</p>

Key Audience members may include City of Danville Mayor, Aldermen, and Departments (e.g., Public Works, Parks & Recreation), Vermilion County Board and Departments including Emergency Management, any Railroads, Utilities, area School Districts, Chamber of Commerce, Area Hospitals and Medical Facilities, and the Danville Area Community College.

## **4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **4.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE**

The demographic and economic analysis in the Existing Conditions Memo should be used as a **community profile** to guide engagement, particularly with historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities who might be more transit-dependent and therefore might experience the effects of service changes more acutely.

### **4.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORK STREAMS**

Community engagement efforts include strategies, tools, tactics, and timing related to soliciting input from identified stakeholders and the community. The following sections detail the community outreach efforts to be conducted.

#### **4.2.1 FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS**

The outreach leads and agency leadership should meet with individuals and groups who are significantly affected by the changes. These meetings should be conducted prior to any public meeting. These focus group meetings could be conducted as steering committee or community advisory committee groups for a transit planning study. It is suggested that at least three focus group meetings take place – one as the service change planning kicks off, one after significant public feedback is received, and one before changes are implemented.

#### **4.2.2 PUBLIC MEETING**

The outreach leads should schedule, arrange, and facilitate at least one public meeting presenting proposed service changes and collecting feedback. It is strongly suggested the two agencies work together to conduct one public meeting, but the agencies could also conduct separate meetings. The public meeting should be advertised via email blast, social media, and local media (e.g. newspaper, radio) beginning at least ten (10) days prior to the event. Mailed notices to the key audiences in the database may also be sent.

During the public meeting, outreach leads, agency leadership, and partners should be available to answer questions and receive comments. The outreach leads should provide and maintain a sign-in list and comment forms and prepare a written summation of the oral and written comments received. The outreach leads should provide any necessary follow-up.

#### **4.2.3 DELIVERABLES & TIMEFRAME**

Community engagement deliverables are shown below in Table 3, which includes general community engagement, as well as specific engagement in association with public meetings.

**Table 3: Community Engagement Deliverables, Timing, and Roles and Responsibilities**

**Community Engagement**

**Deliverable**

**Timing**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Project Website Launch**

The project website will act as the central destination for information and updates, timelines, information about upcoming events, and general news. The website address should be on all print and digital promotional materials to drive traffic to the project website and allow for simplified messaging on collateral. The website objective is to serve as a one-stop-shop for interested stakeholders and community members to return on a semi-frequent basis to stay up to date with the changes. Website should ideally provide a comment form to support two-way communication project stakeholders, and the community, as well as Sign-Ups for project alerts.

More information on the website can be found in [Section 2.4](#).

Quarter 1  
CY2024 for  
website launch.  
  
Ongoing  
updates made  
across the  
project

**Outreach Leads**

- Draft initial webpage copy
- Prepare graphic content for initial webpage
- Provide updates for webpage

**Agency Leads**

- Review / approve content
- Post final content

**Comment Database**

The outreach leads should create and maintain a comment database (Comments Tracker) to aggregate comments and feedback received through the project website, emails to the dedicated address, and phone calls received by the agencies. The comment database should retain and categorize all comments received throughout the project, including those at focus group meetings and public meetings.

Quarter 1 of CY  
2024 for  
creation of the  
comment  
database  
  
Ongoing  
additions to  
database made  
across the  
project

**Outreach Leads**

- Prepare comment database
- Update comment database monthly

**Agency Leads**

- Provide any received comments to outreach leads and partners

**Focus Group Meetings**

The community engagement team should meet with individuals who are significantly affected by the project. These meetings should be conducted prior to any public meeting(s).

These meetings should focus on the launch of the changes, providing information, and soliciting initial input. The outreach leads should prepare an agenda and presentation to guide the meeting through a facilitated discussion. Discussion should focus on background and

Quarter 2 of  
CY2024

**Outreach Leads**

- Identify individuals/groups and contact them for the optimal date and time, and schedule the meetings
- Book meeting facility near transit area
- Prepare meeting agenda, presentation, and discussion questions / activities
- Attend / lead meetings
- Prepare meeting summaries

## Community Engagement

### Deliverable

context, identification of preliminary challenges within the service area, and perceived opportunities for improvement. Input from the meetings should be used by the agencies and partners. The outreach leads should prepare meeting summaries following each meeting with participants.

### Public Meeting

The outreach leads should schedule, arrange, and facilitate at least one public meeting presenting proposed service changes and collecting feedback. It is strongly suggested the two agencies work together to conduct one public meeting, but the agencies could also conduct separate meetings. The public meeting should be advertised via email blast, social media, and local media (e.g. newspaper, radio) beginning ten (10) days prior to the event. Mailed notices to the key audiences in the database may also be sent. During the public meeting, outreach leads, agency leadership, and partners should be available to answer questions and receive comments. The outreach leads should provide and maintain a sign-in list and comment forms and prepare a written summation of the oral and written comments received. The outreach leads should provide any necessary follow-up:

The event could be hosted as an in-person event at a neutral site and should be structured as a two-hour, drop-in session. Attendees should be able to participate in a presentation near the top of the meeting, followed by the opportunity to view information in detail on printed display boards with staff on hand to answer questions.

Participants should be able to provide feedback using written comment forms, by providing feedback directly to staff members or by providing comments following the presentation. An online version of the presentation and comment form should also be made available to reach those who attend and have ideas after the event

### Timing

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

2023-2024

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Agency Leads

- Support the identification and coordination of invitees
- Review and approve materials
- Attend meetings

#### Outreach Leads

- Schedule the meeting
- Book facility
- Prepare Meeting Plan/ Briefing Guide, Room Layout, Presentation, and Talking Points with discussion and Q&As
- Prepare event and public notification plan
- Prepare notification materials (e.g., printed postcard, printed factsheet + FAQs translated into Spanish, Title IV brochures, webpage updates, social media announcement, newspaper ad, public notice, and assist with project partner news release(s))
- Coordinate mail material
- Prepare comment form (physical and online) and provide recording device to capture oral comments if needed.
- Prepare display boards and event signage
- Attend / Lead meeting
- Log comments and prepare comment summary
- Prepare summary report

Community Eng  
Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

Community Eng

Meeting

Pre-Decisional

## **Community Engagement**

### **Deliverable**

and those who were unable to attend the event in person. The outreach leads should prepare a post-event summary report incorporating a summary of all comments received at the event and through the online form.

### **Timing**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Agency Leads and Partner Communications Teams**

- Review and approve content and mail material
- Post webpage updates
- Share social media posts
- Distribute news release