



manchester transit

MTA SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

FY 2023-2027



January 2023

SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN FOR MANCHESTER, NH

FY 2023 – FY 2027



manchester transit

Prepared for the Manchester Transit Authority

By the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

January 2023

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Background	1
Goals and Objectives of the SRTP	1
PART 1: MTA TODAY	3
Organization	3
Fixed Route Services	5
Fares	9
Demand-Response Paratransit	10
Facilities and Equipment	13
Ridership	14
Revenues & Expenditures.....	17
Evaluation of Existing Service.....	18
Schedule Adherence.....	19
Mapping Manchester’s Demographics.....	20
PART 2: MTA IN THE FUTURE	39
Accomplishments since 2017.....	39
Monitoring System Performance	40
Vehicle Replacement	40
Community Support Activities	40
System Amenities	41

Maps

MTA Route Network.....	8
Map 1: Effective Coverage of MTA Routes.....	21
Map 2: StepSaver Service Area	22
Map 3: CART Service Area	23
Map 4: Job Density.....	25
Map 5: Population Density.....	26
Map 6: Population & Job Density.....	27
Map 7: Households without a Vehicle	28
Map 8: Working Households with Fewer Vehicles than Workers	29
Map 9: Median Household Income.....	30
Map 10: Living below the Poverty Threshold.....	31
Map 11: Limited English Proficiency.....	32
Map 12: Racial or Ethnic Minorities.....	33
Map 13: Living with a Disability	34
Map 14: Population 65 Years or Older.....	35
Map 15: Population Under 16 Years of Age	36

INTRODUCTION

Background

The FY 2023 – FY 2027 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) provides a five-year program for the continuing development of the Manchester Transit Authority's (MTA's) fixed route bus and ADA complementary paratransit services. The document has been designed to provide MTA and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) with the necessary information to review all aspects of operation. The SNHPC Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) includes funding for updates to the SRTP and the work is completed according to a September 26, 1995 agreement between SNHPC and MTA to maintain and update the SRTP. The SRTP includes a description and evaluation of existing transit service and formulates recommendations. The recommendations included in the SRTP will be reassessed during each subsequent version of the Plan.

The MTA, in its present form, was established by the City of Manchester on May 1, 1973, for the purpose of providing mass transit service to the community. A five-member Commission appointed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen governs the Authority. The SNHPC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area. Transit planning in the MPO area is the responsibility of the SNHPC as MTA operating and capital funding is administered through the SNHPC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). In addition, the SNHPC provides planning services to the MTA and conducts short and long-range transit planning activities as included in the UPWP.

Goals and Objectives of the SRTP

It is generally agreed upon that the development and maintenance of a comprehensive public transit system is desirable to provide an attractive and viable transportation alternative to the single-occupant automobile. MTA and SNHPC are committed to continuing development of public transit in this area to improve mobility, provide access to employment, medical care, and other services as well as to improve the environment and promote livable and sustainable communities. In this regard, the following overall goal of the SRTP is

“[T]o assist in the development and provision of an efficient, reliable and cost-effective public transit service that encourages increased use by representing a viable alternative to single-occupant automobile travel.”

The following objectives for the SRTP have been identified as necessary to attain this goal:

1. Collect and analyze data on transit system performance and urban development patterns to assess adequacy and efficiency of service and to identify opportunities for new or changed service design.



2. Encourage increased ridership and cost-effective service by considering and analyzing input from current riders.
3. Evaluate MTA fare structure to encourage ridership while maintaining a minimum 10% farebox recovery rate.
4. Identify alternative sources of revenue to diversify MTA's local match stream.
5. Develop specific strategies to encourage use amongst choice riders.

The SRTP is divided into two parts, which are summarized below:

MTA Today:

- Organization
- Fixed Route Services
- Fares
- Demand-Response Paratransit
- Ridership
- Revenues & Expenditures
- Evaluation of Existing Service
- Mapping Manchester's Demographics

MTA In the Future:

Measurable Recommendations

- A – Accomplishments since 2017
- B – Monitoring System Performance
- C – Vehicle Replacement
- D – Community Support Activities
- E – System Amenities



PART 1: MTA TODAY

This section provides a comprehensive discussion of MTA transit services currently offered in the SNHPC region and beyond. The discussion includes administration, fixed route, and paratransit service features such as routes, fares, MTA facilities and capital, ridership data and revenues and expenditures.

ORGANIZATION

The Manchester Transit Authority was established by the City of Manchester on May 1, 1973, as a public non-profit agency designed to provide mass transit service for the community. Although the MTA also provides pupil transportation for the Manchester School District, public transit and school transportation funding, operations, and vehicles are administered as separate entities. MTA is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. A Chair and Vice-Chair are elected from the membership. An Executive Director is responsible for the financial and operational oversight of both Transit and School services.

The MTA consists of three main departments:

Operations

- Daily operations, including driver assignments, vehicle schedules, and dispatching
- Assistant Executive Director responsible for daily oversight

Maintenance

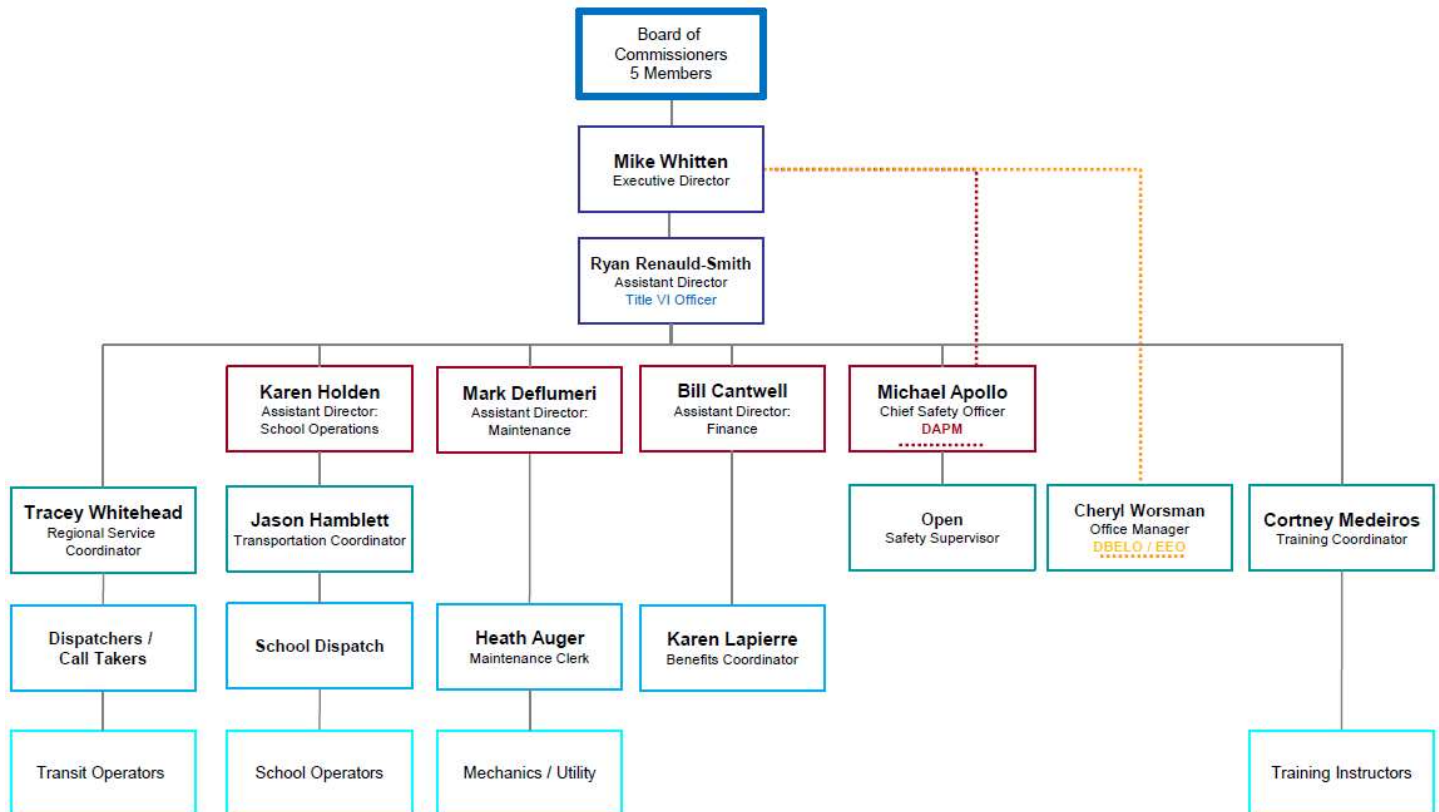
- Plans and implements comprehensive programs for vehicle, equipment, and facility maintenance
- Maintenance Foreman responsible for oversight of maintenance functions

Administrative

- Plans, directs, and performs the fiscal and administrative duties/activities of the agency
- Assistant Director of Finance responsible for daily oversight

The current employee roster includes 31 full-time drivers, 38 part-time school bus drivers, 9 maintenance workers, 3 dispatchers, 3.5 clerical personnel, 1 safety supervisor, 1 maintenance foreman, 1 CFO, and 3 Managers. The MTA's organizational structure is outlined in Exhibit 1.

Manchester Transit Authority



Accurate as of Dec. 2022

FIXED ROUTE SERVICES

The existing MTA fixed route system consists of 15 routes providing scheduled service Monday through Friday to Manchester and limited portions of surrounding communities. Saturday service is provided on 11 of these routes, and no Sunday service is provided. Hours of operation on weekdays are between 5:25 a.m. and 9:50 p.m., while on Saturdays they are reduced slightly to between 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Comprehensive service is provided to the central business district, and routes

extend outwards to serve other areas of the city. The fixed route system is confined to the boundaries of the City of Manchester, except for limited service to the following surrounding towns:

Bedford

The Bedford Grove Plaza / Second St (Route 7) route extends less than a mile into the adjacent town of Bedford to serve commercial activities.

Goffstown

The Bremer St./Mast Rd. (Route 6) route extends 1.25 miles into Goffstown and serves St. Anselm College and a shopping center.

Londonderry

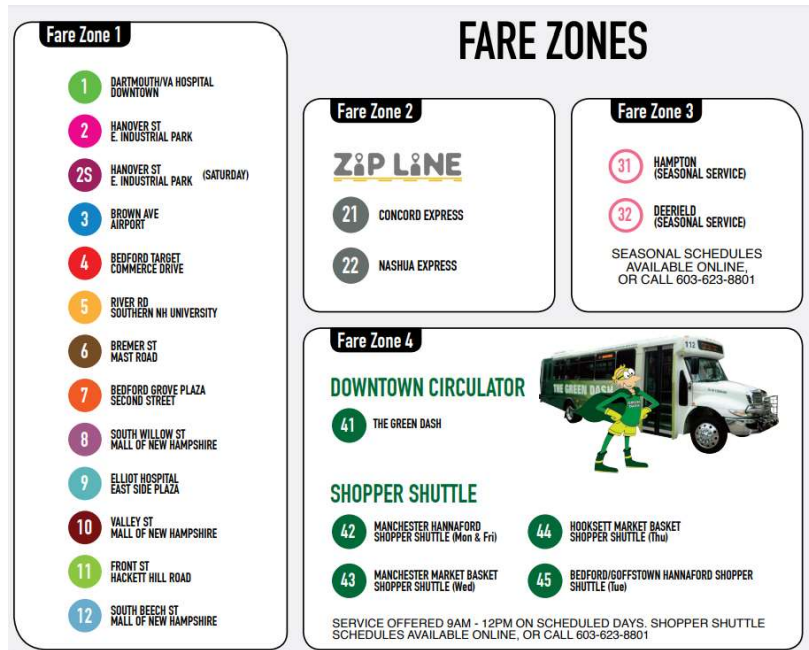
The Brown Ave./Airport (Route 3) route extends approximately one mile into Londonderry to serve Manchester-Boston Regional Airport and immediate areas.

Hooksett

The Front St. / Hackett Hill Rd. (Route 11) route extends less than a mile into Hooksett immediately around Walmart on NH 3A.

Concord

The Concord Express (Route 21) route offers express service to the Stickney Avenue Transportation Center in Concord, allowing connecting service to Concord Area Transit





destinations as well as private inter-city operators. A second stop on Main Street provides connection with Downtown Concord.

Nashua

The Nashua Express (Route 22) route offers express service to the Nashua Mall. There, passengers may connect with Nashua Transit System for service throughout Nashua.

MTA service operates Monday through Friday and offers Saturday service on 11 of 15 routes.

The 10 holidays during which no fixed route service is available are:

New Year's Day	Independence Day	Thanksgiving
Martin L. King, Jr. Day	Labor Day	Christmas
Presidents Day	Columbus Day	
Memorial Day	Veterans Day	

This schedule results in approximately 52 operating Saturdays and 251 weekdays of scheduled service, or 303 operating days annually. Tables 1 and 2 below show the frequency of service for weekday and Saturday operations.

Table 1. Weekday Frequency of Service			
Route	Before 9:30 AM	9:30 AM to 1:30 PM	After 1:30 PM
1 Dartmouth/VA Hospital	45 min. - 75 min.*		
2 Hanover St/East Industrial Park	60 min.		
3 Brown Ave/Manchester Airport	60 min.		
4 Commerce Drive/Bedford Target	7:45 run only	45 min. (10:45-12:15)	5:15 run only
5 River Road/SNHU	45 min. - 75 min.*	45 min. - 75 min.^	45 min. - 75 min.*
6 Bremer St/Mast Road	60 min.		
7 Bedford Grove Plaza/Second St	45 min. - 75 min.*	45 min. - 75 min.*	60 min. (1:00-5:00)
8 South Willow St/Mall of NH	30 min. (6:30-10:30)	60 min. (10:30-1:30)	30 min.
9 Elliot Hospital/East Side Plaza	8:00 run only	120 min. (10:00, 12:00)	120 min. (2:00, 4:00)
10 Valley St/Mall of NH	60 min.		
11 Front St/Hackett Hill Road***	60 min.		
12 South Beech St/Mall of NH	60 min.		
21 Concord Express - Zipline	120 min. (6:30, 8:30)	11:30 run only	90-120 min. (2, 4, 5:30)
22 Nashua Express - Zipline	120 min. (7:30, 9:30)	12:30 run only	180 min. (1:30, 4:30)
31 Hampton Beach Express - Seasonal	2022 dates: 6/18, 7/16, 8/13, 9/10		
32 Deerfield Fair Express - Seasonal	2022 dates: 10/1		
41 The Green DASH	30 min. (8:20a-4:50p)		
47 New Boston Shuttle	7:00a-4:30p, Mon-Fri		
48 Goffstown Shuttle	9:00a-2:00p, Mon-Fri		
49 Hooksett Shuttle	9:00a-2:00p, Mon-Fri		

*Service from 7:00 am - 5:45 pm alternating from 45 min-75 min frequency

^ Runs at 9:00, 9:45, 11:00, 11:45, 1:00

**Service six trips a day, 5:30 AM, 7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 1:30 PM, 4:30 PM
Return trips @ 6 AM, 8 AM, 10 AM, 2 PM, and 6 PM

*** Runs until 8:30p

Table 2. Saturday Frequency of Service

Route	Frequency	Hours
1 Dartmouth/VA Hospital	45 min. - 75 min.*	10:30a-4:30p
2S Hanover St/East Industrial Park	60 min.	9:30a-4:30p
3 Brown Ave/Manchester Airport	No Saturday Service	
4 Commerce Drive/Bedford Target	No Saturday Service	
5 River Road/SNHU	45 min. - 75 min.*	9:45a-5:00p
6 Bremer St/Mast Road	60 min.	9:30a-4:30p
7 Bedford Grove Plaza/Second St	45 min. - 75 min.*	9:45a-3:45p
8 South Willow St/Mall of NH	60 min.	9:30a-4:30p
9 Elliot Hospital/East Side Plaza	No Saturday Service	
10 Valley St/Mall of NH	60 min.	9:30a-4:30p
11 Front St/Hackett Hill Road***	120 min.	10:30a-4:30p
12 South Beech St/Mall of NH	60 min.	10:00a-5:00p
21 Concord Express - Zipline	120 min.	10:00a-4:00p
22 Nashua Express - Zipline	120 min.	9:30a-3:30p
41 The Green DASH	30 min.	8:20a-9:20p
47 New Boston Shuttle	No Saturday Service	
48 Goffstown Shuttle	No Saturday Service	
49 Hooksett Shuttle	No Saturday Service	



MTA Commissioners:
vacant, Chairman
Alexandra Horton, Vice Chairman
Michelle Lauder, Commissioner
Dan Elliott, Commissioner
Patrick Arnold, Commissioner
Mike Whitten, Executive Director

- Fare Zone 1**
- 1 DARTMOUTH HOSPITAL DARTMOUTH
 - 2 HANCOCK ST INDUSTRIAL PARK
 - 25 HANCOCK ST EAST SIDE PLAZA (GATUNO)
 - 3 BROWN AVE AIRPORT
 - 4 HESKETH STREET COMMENCE DRIVE
 - 5 RIVER ST SOUTHERN NH UNIVERSITY
 - 6 HANCOCK ST EAST SIDE PLAZA
 - 7 HESKETH STREET COMMENCE DRIVE
 - 8 SOUTH WILLOW ST HALL OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
 - 9 ELIZABETH ST HALL OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
 - 10 VALLEY ST HALL OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
 - 11 FRONT ST RACKETT HILL ROAD
 - 12 SOUTH BEECH ST HALL OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

FARE ZONES

Fare Zone 2

ZIPLINE

- 21 CONCORD EXPRESS
- 22 NASHUA EXPRESS

Fare Zone 3

- 31 HAMPTON (SEASONAL SERVICE)
 - 32 DEERFIELD (SEASONAL SERVICE)
- SEASONAL SCHEDULES AVAILABLE ONLINE OR CALL 603-623-8661

Fare Zone 4

DOWNTOWN CIRCULATOR

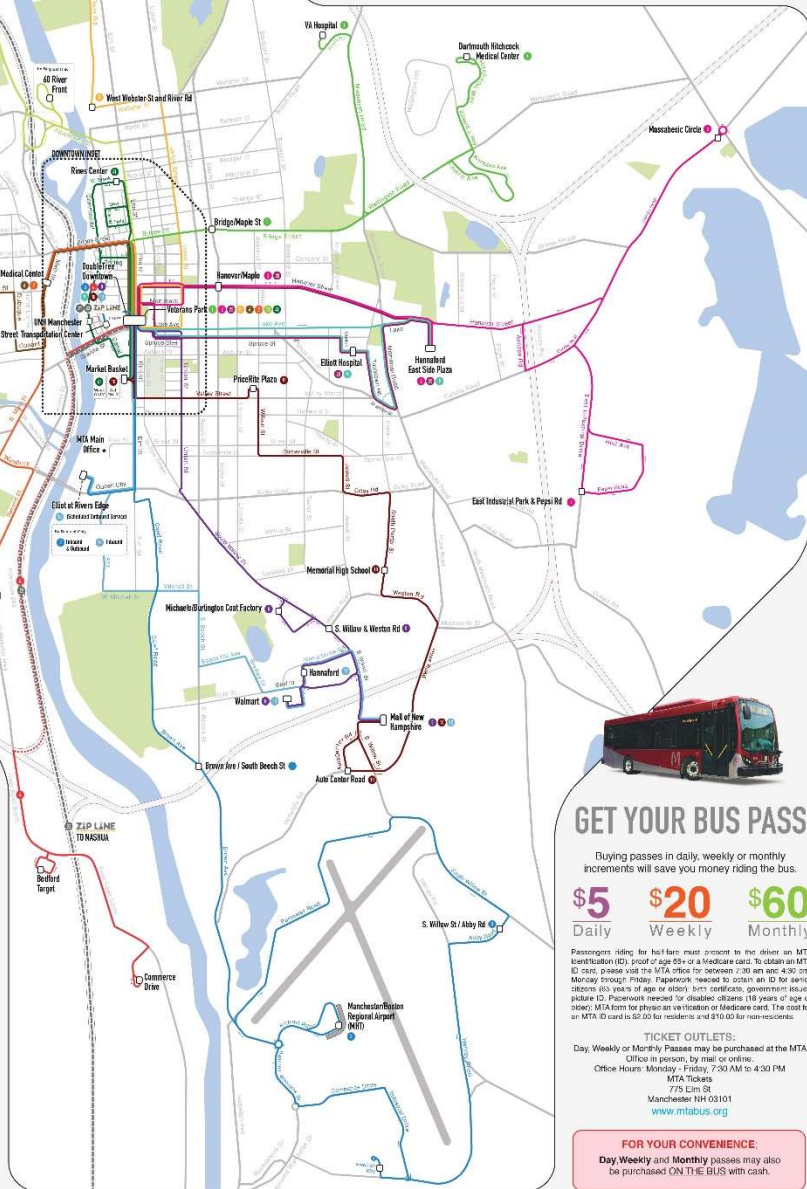
- 61 THE GREEN DASH



RouteShout 2.0 is a free mobile app that allows riders to see where the bus is and when it will arrive through an online bus tracking service from their smartphones or on the Web. It also enables riders to check the bus schedule and find the closest bus stop.



DOWNTOWN INSET



GET YOUR BUS PASS

Duymg passes in daily, weekly or monthly increments will save you money riding the bus.

\$5 Daily **\$20** Weekly **\$60** Monthly

Passengers riding for full fare must present to the driver an MTA Identification (ID), proof of age 65+ or a Medicare card. To obtain an MTA ID card, please visit the MTA office for between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Passengers need to obtain an ID for senior citizens (65 years of age or older), birth certificates, government issued picture ID. Passengers need to be disabled citizens (18 years of age or older), MTA form for physician verification or Medicare card. The cost for an MTA ID card is \$2.00 for residents and \$10.00 for non-residents.

TICKET OUTLETS:
Day, Weekly or Monthly Passes may be purchased at the MTA Office in person, by mail or online.
Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM
MTA Tickets
775 Elm St
Manchester NH 03101
www.mtabus.org

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE:
Day, Weekly and Monthly passes may also be purchased ON THE BUS with cash.

[illegible]



*Passengers 65 years of age or older as well as those with a Medicare or MTA Half Fare ID card are eligible. Please note that you will require additional documentation to qualify (including a birth certificate, picture ID with age/DOB, or a Medicare card. The cost for an MTA ID card is \$2.

**The MTA is not responsible for lost or stolen tickets or monthly passes.

Ticket Outlets:

Day/Weekly Passes can be purchased on the bus (farebox).

All passes can be purchased:

by MAIL at: MTA Tickets
110 Elm St. Manchester, NH 03101

IN PERSON at:
Manchester Welcome Center-
775 Elm Street

ONLINE at: www.mtabus.org

DEMAND-RESPONSE PARATRANSIT

StepSaver

Since November 1978, MTA has provided origin to destination service for individuals unable to use fixed route transit service due to a disability. StepSaver is a transportation program offered by the MTA as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA requires designated FTA recipients to provide a “complementary paratransit program” to individuals who are prevented from using the fixed route bus service due to their disability. Prospective StepSaver clients’ complete applications are administered by the MTA in compliance with the ADA. Certification by a physician or health care agency is required to verify that an individual has a disability that prevents them from accessing the fixed route system.

StepSaver provides transportation on an advance reservation basis. Customers eligible for the service may call the MTA dispatch office and schedule their rides up to a week in advance. Reservation hours are 5:25 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Saturday reservation hours are 9:30 am to 5:30 pm and Sunday reservations may be left via voicemail for dispatch as MTA offices and service are closed on Sundays. Transportation is provided six days a week from 5:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Friday and from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm on Saturday. The StepSaver service area is limited to an area within .75 mile of existing fixed route service. During FY2022, the MTA StepSaver Service carried 4,122 passengers, utilizing five lift-equipped vehicles. A fare of \$4.00 is charged for each one-way trip. Current StepSaver service is operated on an origin to destination basis.

More information on StepSaver can be found at:

<https://mtabus.org/shared-ride-transportation-service/>

Goffstown Shuttle

Since 2015 MTA has partnered with the Town of Goffstown to provide curb-to-curb transportation for its residents. The service is available every Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM. There is no charge for rides.

Priority Bookings will be provided to those passengers that are 62+ years old and for those going to medical appointments. Passenger destinations are permitted within Goffstown and for medical appointments in Goffstown, Manchester and Bedford only. This may require the MTA to call back passengers the day prior when a schedule conflict occurs with priority bookings. (Example: A passenger booking 7 days prior for grocery shopping may need to be cancelled or rescheduled when a passenger, even one day prior, books for a medical appointment or the passenger is 62+ years old.)

The MTA will take reservations for those passengers looking to travel within Manchester for non-medical appointments (where space is available). The Goffstown Shuttle will transport passengers to the Shaw's Plaza in Goffstown where passengers can board MTA's #6 (Bremer St.) bus; this allows passengers to travel throughout Manchester.



FREE TRANSPORTATION FOR GOFFSTOWN RESIDENTS

Ride with us to your next hair salon appointment, grocery store visit, social gathering, medical appointment, and more!

- Rides to medical appointments, riders with disabilities, and those age 62+ receive priority booking.
- Reservations can be made as early as 1 week in advance, and no later than 24 hours prior.
- Connect with MTA Route #6 at Shaw's Plaza for Manchester, Concord, and Nashua service!
- All buses are ADA accessible!

RIDE THE GOFFSTOWN SHUTTLE
Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 2:00pm



Make your reservation to ride!
Call 603.623.8801 opt. #2

For additional information contact
Jo Ann Duffy
Planning and Economic Development Director
603.497.8990 x118

Hooksett Shuttle

In July 2011, the MTA initiated a new Shopper Shuttle service linking ten Hooksett residential locations with the Hannaford Supermarket located in the Northside Plaza in Hooksett. Over the years the program has expanded beyond shopping and is now known as simply the Hooksett Shuttle.

Priority bookings are provided to passengers who are 62+ years old and passengers traveling to medical appointments. This may require the MTA to call back passengers the day prior when a scheduling conflict occurs with priority bookings. Example: A grocery shopping trip booked seven days in advance may need to be canceled or rescheduled if a passenger books for a medical appointment or if a passenger books who is 62+ years old—even if they've only provided one day of notice. Riders may go anywhere within Hooksett, Manchester or Bedford, based on availability. Rides to Concord may be limited by the schedule.



The Hooksett Shuttle transports passengers to the Walmart in Hooksett, where passengers can board the MTA’s #11 Front Street bus. This allows passengers to travel throughout Manchester. Don’t hesitate to contact us if there’s anything we can do to provide you with a better experience.

New Boston Shuttle

In FY 2020, a new demand response shuttle service was established in New Boston, which did not previously have access to any public transportation. The service was one day per week of demand response with a curb-to-curb designation operated by the Manchester Transit Authority. For FY 2021, the service was restructured based on: 1) The results of a survey of New Boston residents; 2) The continued strong support of the Town to provide a “safety net” of transportation service for the community’s neediest elderly and disabled residents; and 3) The Town’s continued commitment to provide MTA with the necessary matching funds. The service was restructured as an on-call (ad hoc) service provided by MTA and limited to 15 trips per month (180 trips per year).

The service is available 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. No charge for rides. Priority bookings are provided to passengers who are 62+ years old and passengers traveling to medical appointments. Passenger destinations are permitted anywhere within New Boston, Goffstown, and Bedford. The shuttle travels to Manchester for medical appointments only. This may require the MTA to call back passengers the day prior if a scheduling conflict occurs with priority bookings. Example: A grocery shopping trip booked seven days in advance may need to be canceled or rescheduled if a passenger books for a medical appointment or if a passenger books who is 62+ years old—even if they’ve only provided one day of notice.

The MTA takes reservations for passengers looking to travel within Manchester for nonmedical appointments (when space is available). The New Boston Shuttle transports passengers to the Shaw’s Plaza in Goffstown, where they can board the MTA’s #6 Bremer Street bus. This allows passengers to travel throughout Manchester. Don’t hesitate to contact us if there’s anything we can do to provide you with a better experience.

Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART)

The Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART) was established by the State of New Hampshire on August 14, 2005. It is a public transportation system serving the towns of Chester, Derry, Hampstead, Londonderry and Salem (with limited service to Plaistow and Windham also available).



CART merged with the MTA on September 30, 2019 in order to provide long-term staffing and organizational stability and gain the efficiencies of working with a larger organization. CART will retain its identity and service structure, working with MTA and Easterseals New

Hampshire staff to ensure a smooth transition for riders. The CART Board of Directors is made up of representatives from each CART member community, including Derry, Salem, Londonderry, Hampstead and Chester. It will continue to function as a committee of the MTA Board, and will have authority over all local and Federal funds that support CART and all decisions regarding CART service.

Facilities and Equipment

The MTA offices, maintenance facilities, and bus storage complex is located at 110 Elm Street in Manchester. This facility, completed in January 1976, contains separate office, storage, and maintenance spaces. The office area provides space for supervisory and clerical personnel, a conference room, and an operators' lounge with locker rooms. The bus storage section, consisting of seven lanes with overhead doors, contains enough space for 35 full-sized transit coaches. The maintenance area contains five bays with hydraulic lifts, a ventilated booth for spray painting and bodywork, machine shop area, and a spare parts storage room. An auxiliary building on the premises houses the automatic gantry-type washer used to clean bus exteriors. A fueling island with diesel and gasoline pumps and an overhead canopy is situated outside the main building.



MTA rolling stock (as of December 2022) includes 17 transit coaches, 12 lift-equipped ADA-accessible vehicles, 65 school buses, 2 supervisory vehicles, 1 pickup, 1 dump truck and 1 front-loader.

Table 3: MTA Supervisory/Service Vehicle Inventory

Quantity	Year	Make	Model
1	2001	International	4700 4x2
1	2003	Chevrolet	Silverado
1	2010	Ford	Explorer
1	2016	Ford	Explorer

Table 4: MTA Bus and Van Inventory			
Quantity	Year	Make	Model
1	2011	Ford	E45-E-LO
1	2012	Chevrolet	Express G3500/Glaval
1	2014	Chevrolet	Express Cutaway
2	2014	Dodge	Grand Caravan
1	2016	Dodge	Grand Caravan Entervan
1	2016	Newflyer	MD30
1	2017	Ford	E450/Champion
6	2018	Alex-Dennis	Enviro 200
3	2018	Ford	E450/Cutaway
2	2019	Ford	E450/Cutaway
1	2019	Ford	E450/Champion
2	2019	Alex-Dennis	Enviro 200
1	2020	Chevrolet	Arboc/Spirit of Mobility 23
8	2020	Alex-Dennis	Enviro 200
1	2021	Chevrolet	Arboc/Spirit of Mobility 23

RIDERSHIP

Table 5 indicates that since 2016, annual ridership on the MTA system has decreased by approximately 43 percent.

The decline was exacerbated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, as ridership fell to 247,114. FY 2022 saw an increase of 11.9%, the largest since FY 2009.



Table 5: MTA Yearly Fixed Route Ridership, FY 2016-2022

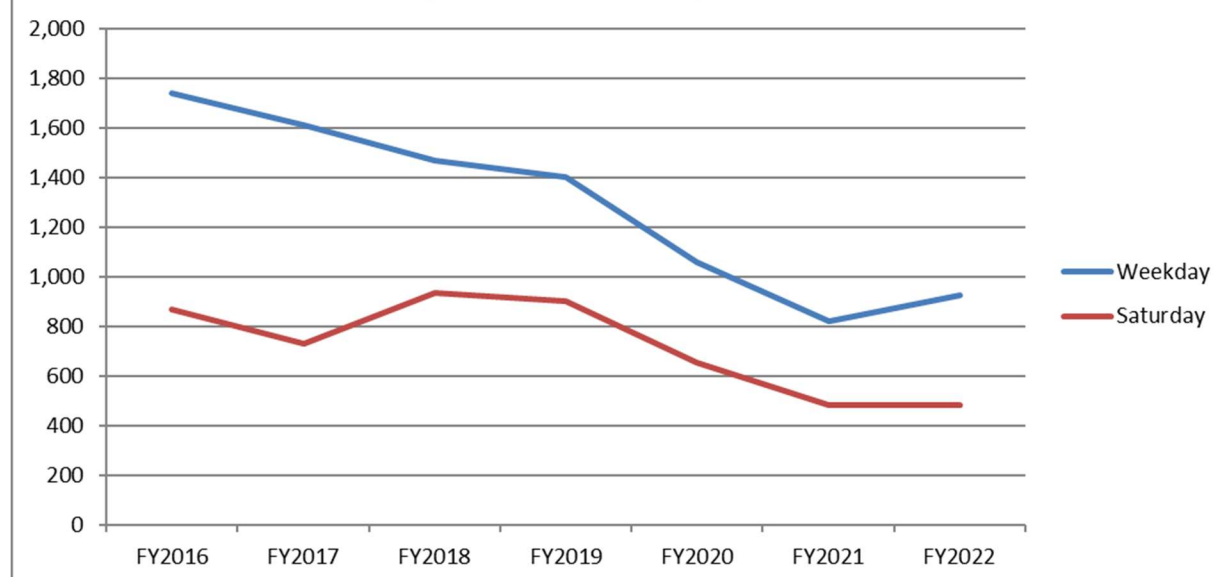
Fiscal Year	Ridership	% Change
FY2016	484,474	
FY2017	443,706	-8.4
FY2018	410,840	-7.4
FY2019	398,943	-2.9
FY2020	327,917	-17.8
FY2021	247,114	-24.6
FY2022	276,507	11.9
Change, 2016-2022		-42.9

Table 6. High and Low Months for MTA Fixed Route Ridership, FY 2016-2022

FY Year	Highest Month and Ridership	Lowest Month and Ridership
FY2016	October 45,755	January 35,402
FY2017	August 39,898	February 31,721
FY2018	October 37,869	January 29,651
FY2019	August 36,575	February 29,507
FY2020	October 32,277	February 26,845
FY2021	October 23,471	January 17,136
FY2022	June 25,916	January 19,102

*Ridership was 0 in April & May due to pandemic

Average Daily Fixed Route Ridership, Weekday vs. Saturday (FY2016-22)



Review of annual ridership statistics (Table 6) indicates that ridership tends to be highest in the summer and fall (August & October). Ridership tends to be lowest in winter months of January and February.

Every month, MTA gathers weekday and Saturday ridership data by run assignment. The data comes directly from the farebox reports on each run. Weekday ridership had been falling steadily prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic but showed strong signs of recovery in FY22. Saturday ridership trends were a bit different, increasing in FY 2018 before leveling out and experiencing a pandemic decrease that has yet to fully recover.

Table 7. MTA Average Weekday Ridership, FY 2016-2022

FY Year	Ridership	% Change
FY2016	1,740	
FY2017	1,610	-7.5
FY2018	1,466	-8.9
FY2019	1,400	-4.5
FY2020	1,057	-24.5
FY2021	819	-22.5
FY2022	924	12.8
Change, 2016-2022		-46.9

Table 8. MTA Average Saturday Ridership, FY 2016-2022

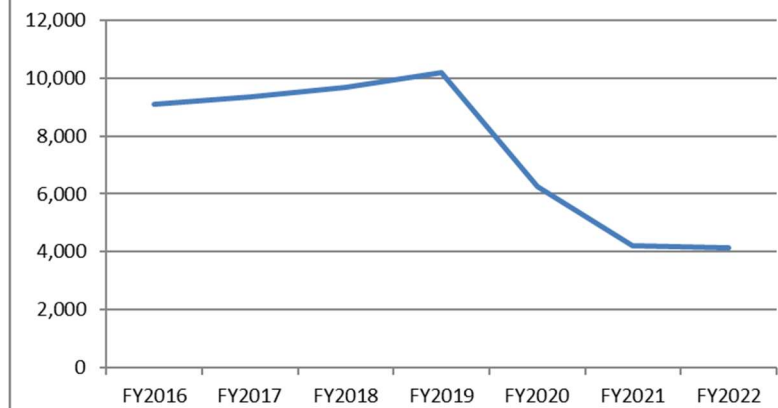
FY Year	Ridership	% Change
FY2016	866	
FY2017	729	-15.8
FY2018	934	28.1
FY2019	903	-3.3
FY2020	654	-27.6
FY2021	481	-26.5
FY2022	482	0.2
Change, 2016-2022		-44.3

StepSaver ridership increased gradually until FY2019, when it dropped significantly. It leveled off during FY2022, holding relatively steady at 4,122 trips.

Table 9. MTA StepSaver Ridership, FY 2016-2022

FY2016	9,109	
FY2017	9,364	2.80
FY2018	9,699	3.58
FY2019	10,192	5.08
FY2020	6,255	-38.63
FY2021	4,225	-32.45
FY2022	4,122	-2.44
Change, 2016-2022		-54.75

Annual StepSaver Ridership FY2016-FY2022



REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

Major sources of revenues used by the MTA to provide transit service include FTA funding, local assistance, farebox revenues, advertising, and other revenues from non-transportation sources. Non-transportation revenues include those derived from the sale of maintenance services, rental of buildings and other properties, investment income, and sale of vehicles.

The MTA receives Section 5307 funding directly from the FTA for operating subsidies and for capital costs. Local match is a requirement for these funds, and the MTA receives its local share funding for Section 5307 funds and other programs primarily from an annual General Fund appropriation from the City of Manchester. The City currently provides a local match for capital maintenance funds and for operation of the MTA's StepSaver service at a rate of 80% Federal and 20% City. The City also provides the required 50 percent match for operating subsidies. In addition, the City contributes to the local 20% match for the system's bus-related capital costs. Table 11 shows the local match funding contributed by the City of Manchester for the period FY 2016-FY 2022.

Table 11. City Contributions FY16-FY22	
FY2016	\$1,153,560
FY2017	\$1,165,724
FY2018	\$1,165,724
FY2019	\$1,171,979
FY2020	\$1,273,947
FY2021	\$1,373,782
FY2022	\$1,373,420

In FY22, Fare revenue sources included Farebox and UPASS (UNH, MCC, SNHU). Sources of transit revenue expended between FY16 and FY22 included:

- Farebox
- 5307
- 5310
- 5310 Purchase of Service
- CARES
- ARP
- City of Manchester
- Towns of Goffstown, Hooksett, New Boston
- CART Communities
- Colleges/Universities
- Callogix
- Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels
- Advertising
- NHDOT
- Trails Sponsor



StepSaver expenditures and revenues have seen an overall decrease since FY 2016. In 2016, StepSaver total operating expenses were \$560,091 and for FY 2022 these operating expenses were \$433,453, representing a decrease of 22.6%. Fare revenue dropped considerably in FY21, but made a notable recovery in FY22, nearly back to the 6+% fare recovery rate from pre-pandemic years. Table 12 depicts StepSaver operating expenses and fare revenues for the period FY 2016-FY 2022.

Table 12. Operating Expenses, FY16-FY22	
FY2016	\$3,708,251
FY2017	\$3,836,471
FY2018	\$4,086,469
FY2019	\$4,133,476
FY2020	\$5,145,599
FY2021	\$6,414,321
FY2022	\$5,219,813

Table 13. StepSaver Operating Expense vs. Fare Revenue			
FY Year	Operating Expense	Fare Revenue	%
FY2016	\$560,091	\$36,364	6.49%
FY2017	\$702,365	\$45,177	6.43%
FY2018	\$604,890	\$38,766	6.41%
FY2019	\$702,365	\$45,177	6.43%
FY2020	\$716,955	\$30,263	4.22%
FY2021	\$461,671	\$9,379	2.03%
FY2022	\$433,453	\$24,811	5.72%

EVALUATION OF EXISTING SERVICE

This SRTP includes an evaluation of existing MTA services as determined through information presented earlier in this report and from additional data and system monitoring currently being carried out by MTA. The MTA currently maintains a complaint log and investigates all complaints received in relation to transit service. Additionally, MTA maintains monthly ridership data by assignment for weekday and Saturday operations and performs regular schedule adherence checks. Data gathered from these sources will be used in the evaluation of existing service contained in this section.



Schedule Adherence

From 2012-2020, schedule adherence check forms were kept in a supervisor vehicle; any time the supervisor was out, (s)he conducted a random poll across the service day. MTA's goal was to have a minimum of 50 checks performed per month; most were performed at the Center of New Hampshire and Veterans Park stops. They were also conducted on Saturdays, but to a much smaller degree. 2020 saw an automated schedule adherence procedure take over. In FY21 and FY22, on-time performance was as follows:

Table 14. On-Time Performance, FY20-FY22		
	Fixed-Route	Non-Fixed
FY2020	N/A	91.1%
FY2021	98.6%	97.0%
FY2022	97.3%	92.9%

MAPPING MANCHESTER'S DEMOGRAPHICS

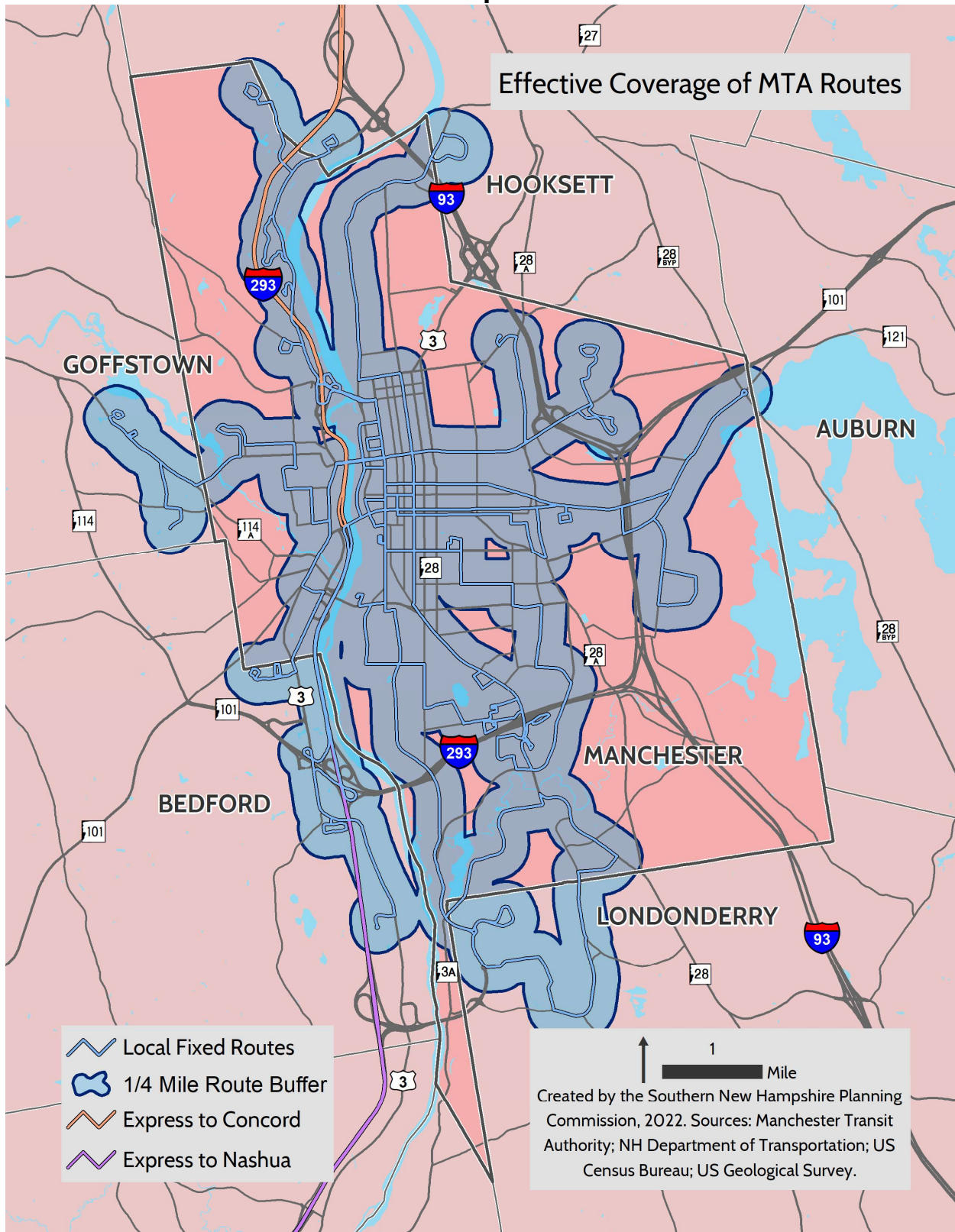
The SRTP has identified patterns of current ridership on existing MTA fixed route and StepSaver paratransit systems. The first three maps in this section are intended to spatially identify MTA's service areas:

- Map 1: Effective Coverage of MTA Routes (1/4-mile buffer)
- Map 2: StepSaver Coverage (3/4-mile buffer)
- Map 3: CART Service Area

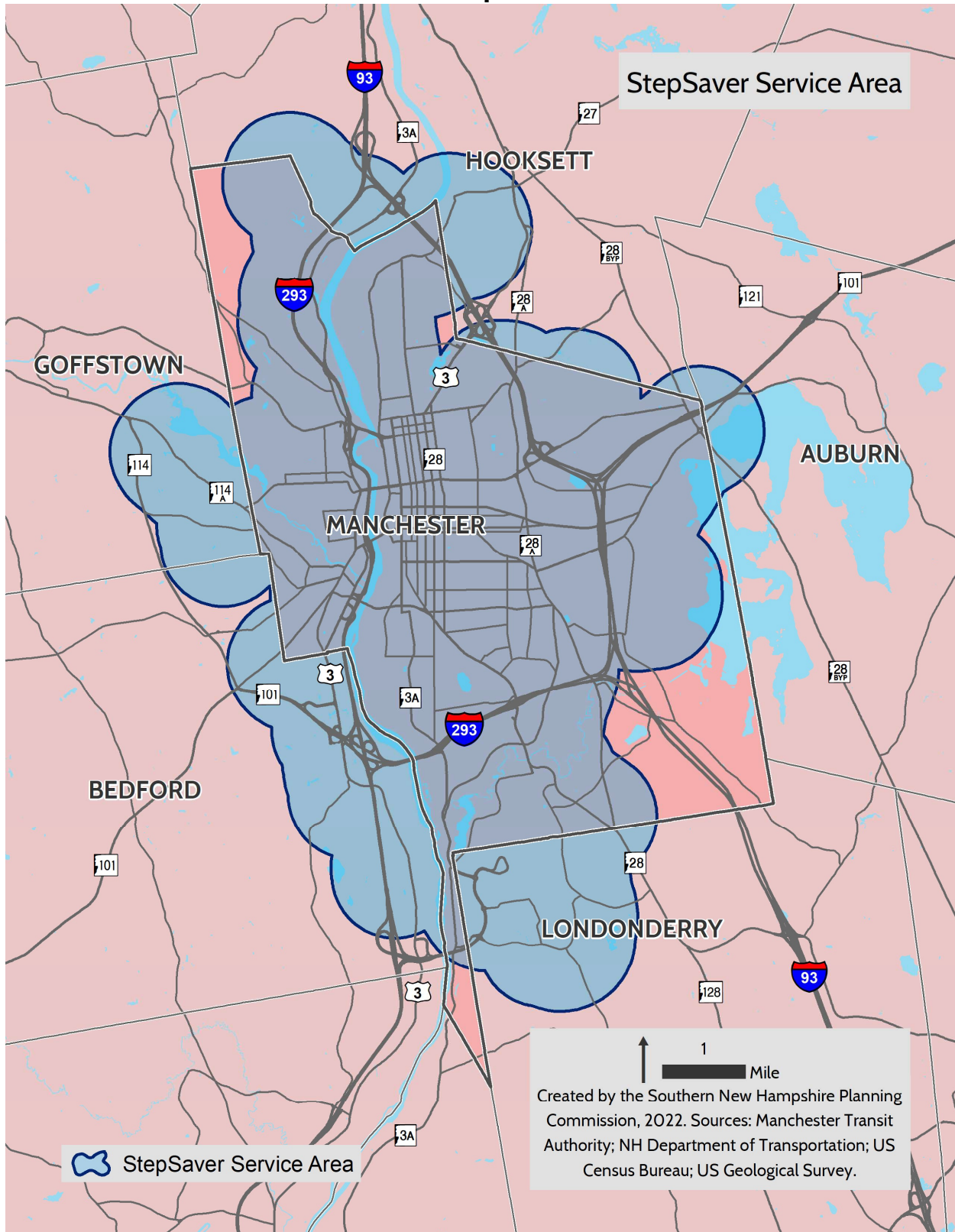
The following 12 maps showcase MTA's service in relation to transit-dependent populations, including:

- Map 4: Job Density
- Map 5: Population Density
- Map 6: Job and Population Density
- Map 7: Households without a Vehicle
- Map 8: Households with Fewer Vehicles than Workers
- Map 9: Median Household Income
- Map 10: % Living Below the Poverty Threshold
- Map 11: % with Limited English Proficiency
- Map 12: % Minority
- Map 13: % with a Disability
- Map 14: % of Population Aged 65+
- Map 15: % of Population Under Age 16

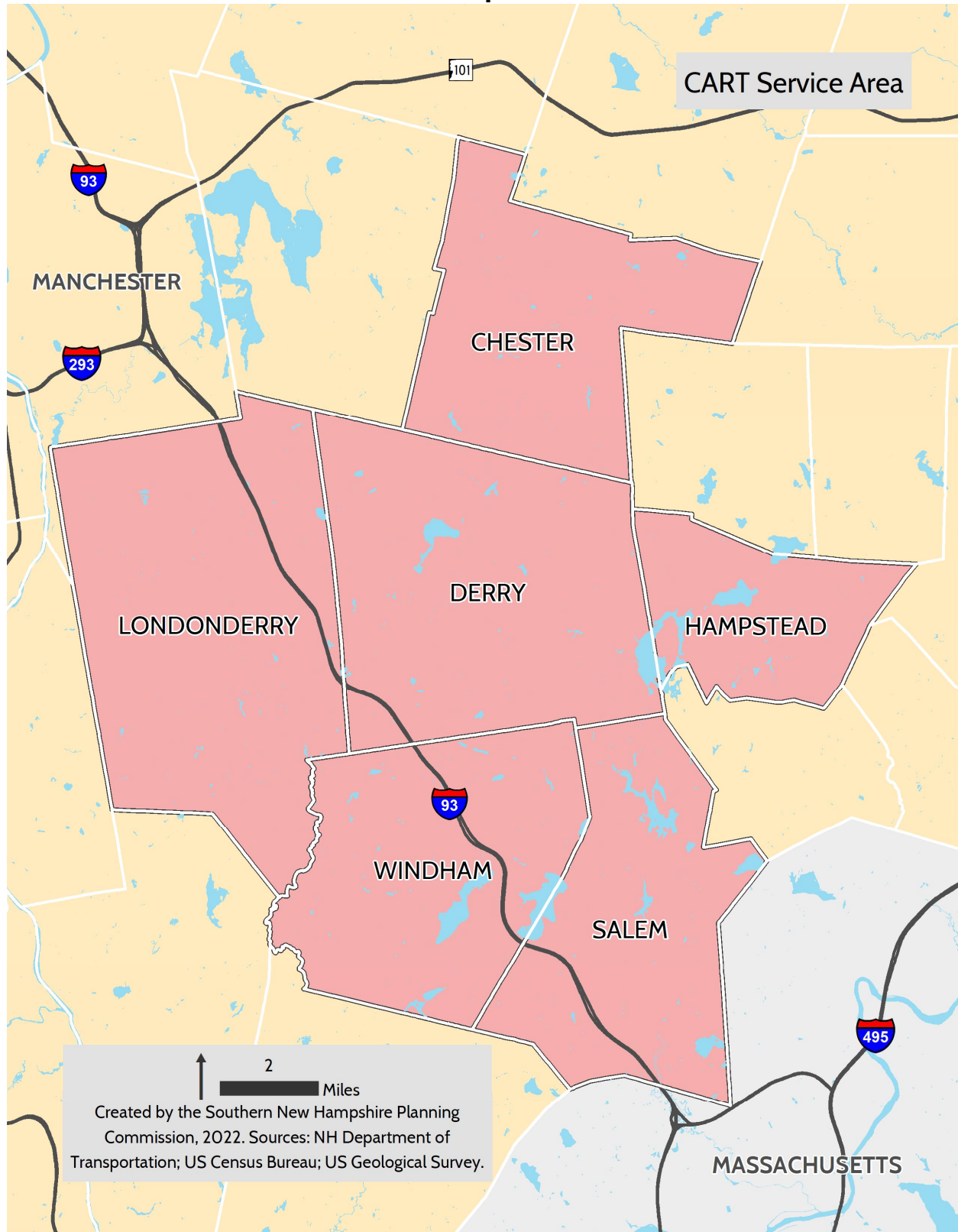
Map 1



Map 2



Map 3



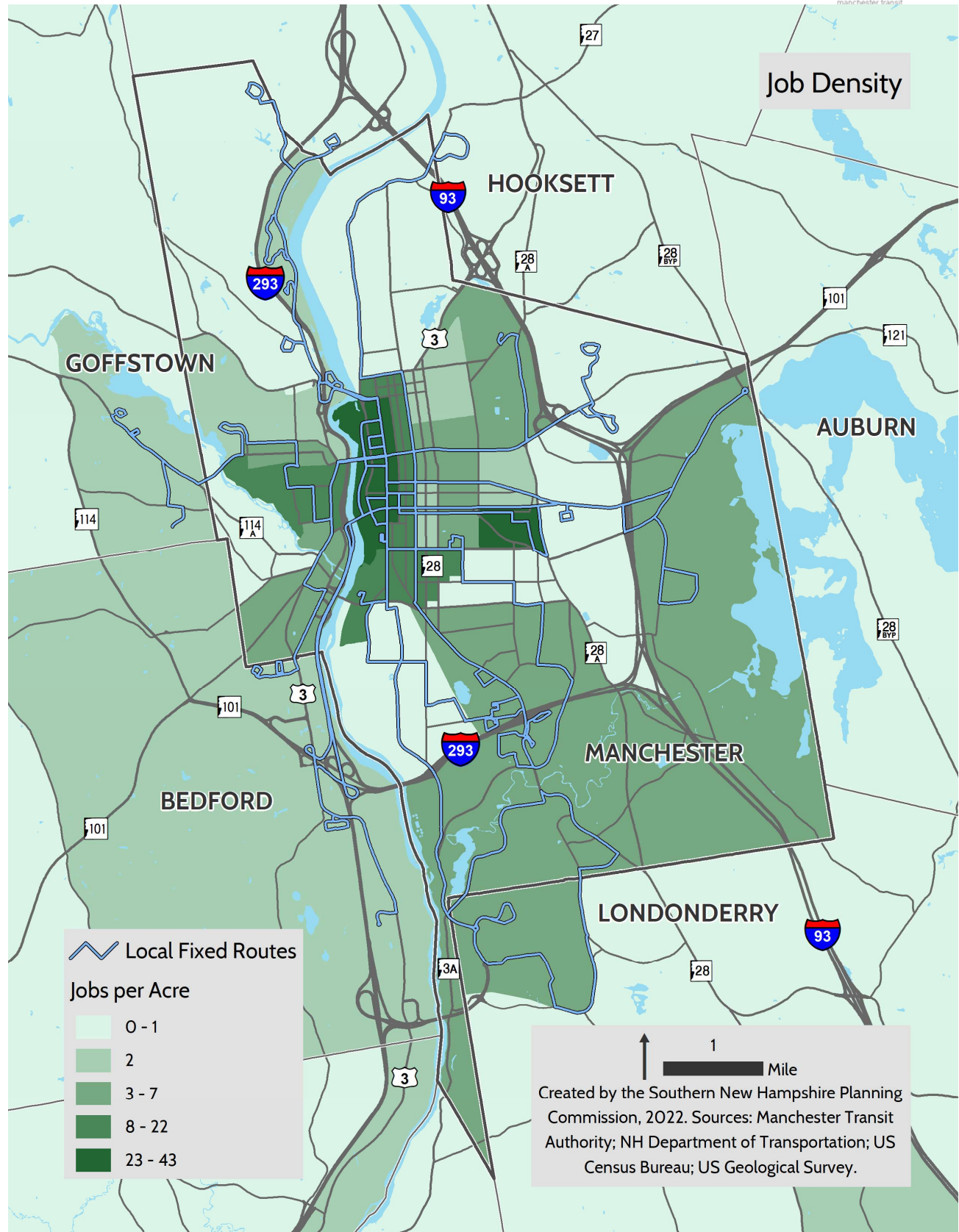
As one can see in Map 1, there are sections of far northwest, north, and southeastern Manchester that are not within walking distance of a fixed route. However, denser parts of the city to (west, central, and southern areas) are well-covered.

StepSaver service extends coverage area to $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile from MTA's fixed routes, encompassing the vast majority of Manchester's population, and extending into sections of southeast Goffstown, southern Hooksett, northwest Auburn, northern Londonderry, and eastern Bedford.

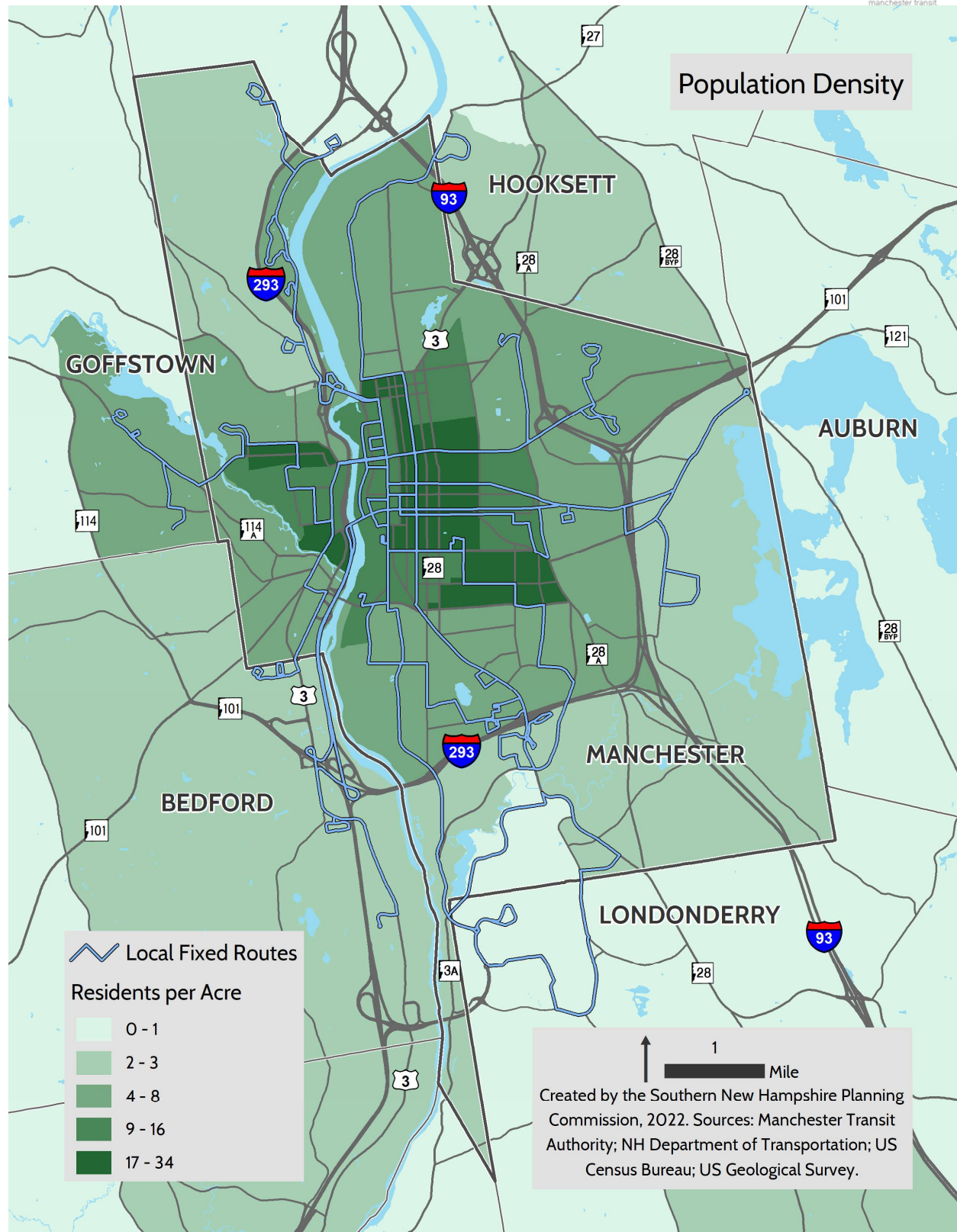
The CART service area encompasses the towns of Chester, Londonderry, Derry, Hampstead, Windham, and Salem. Its deviated fixed route/demand-response route system has more flexibility than can be displayed on a single map. These towns provide the funding for the service operated by MTA.



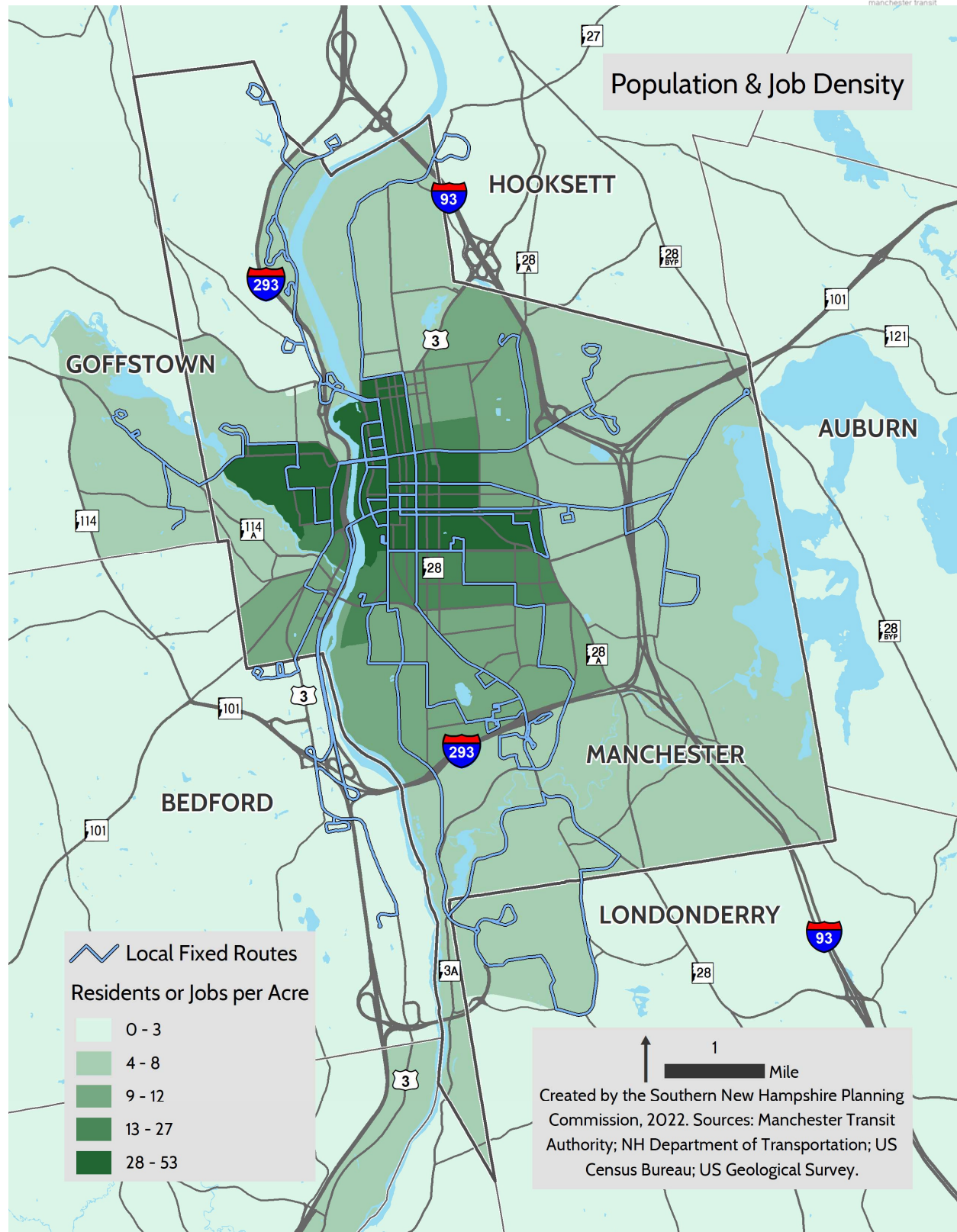
Map 4



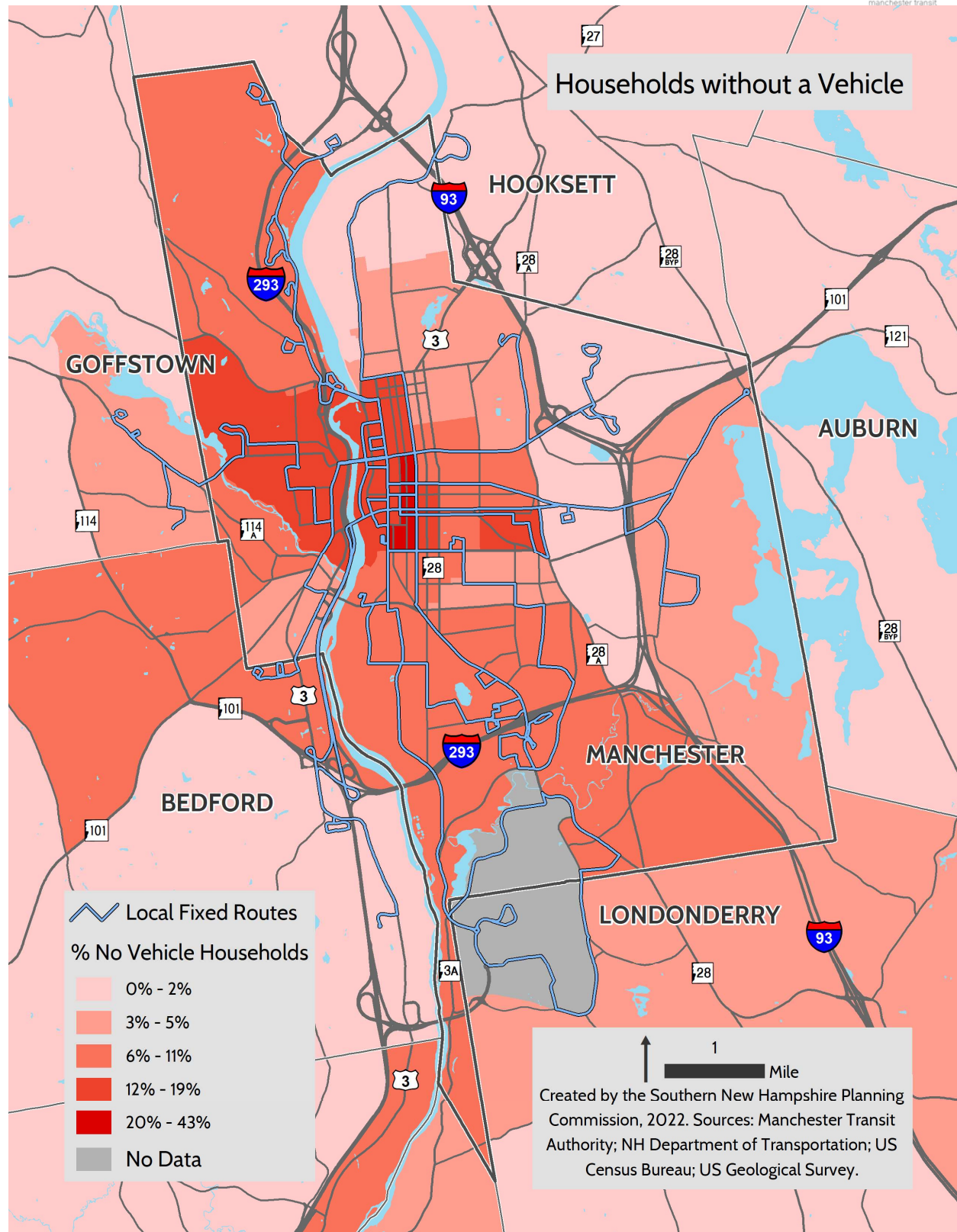
Map 5



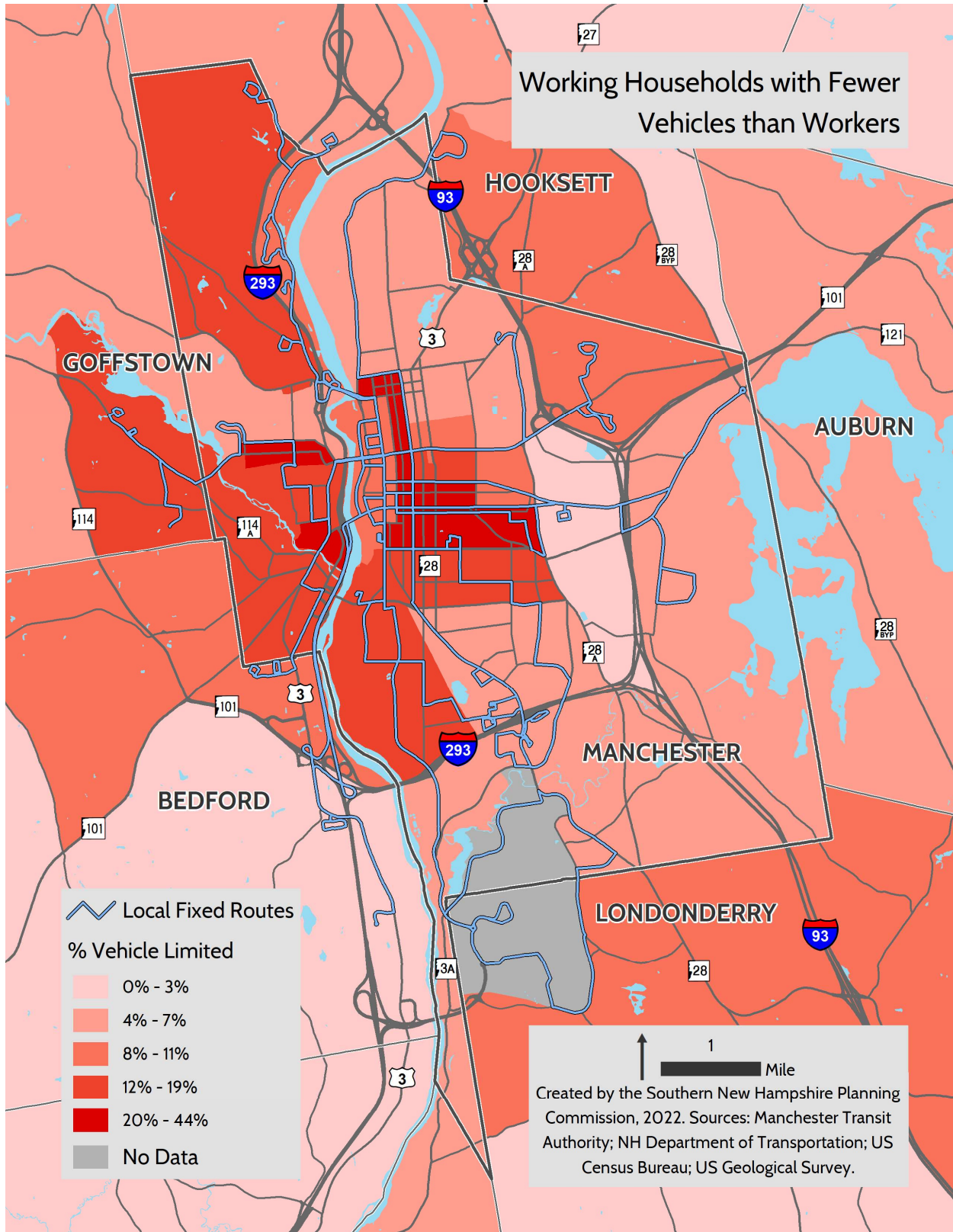
Map 6



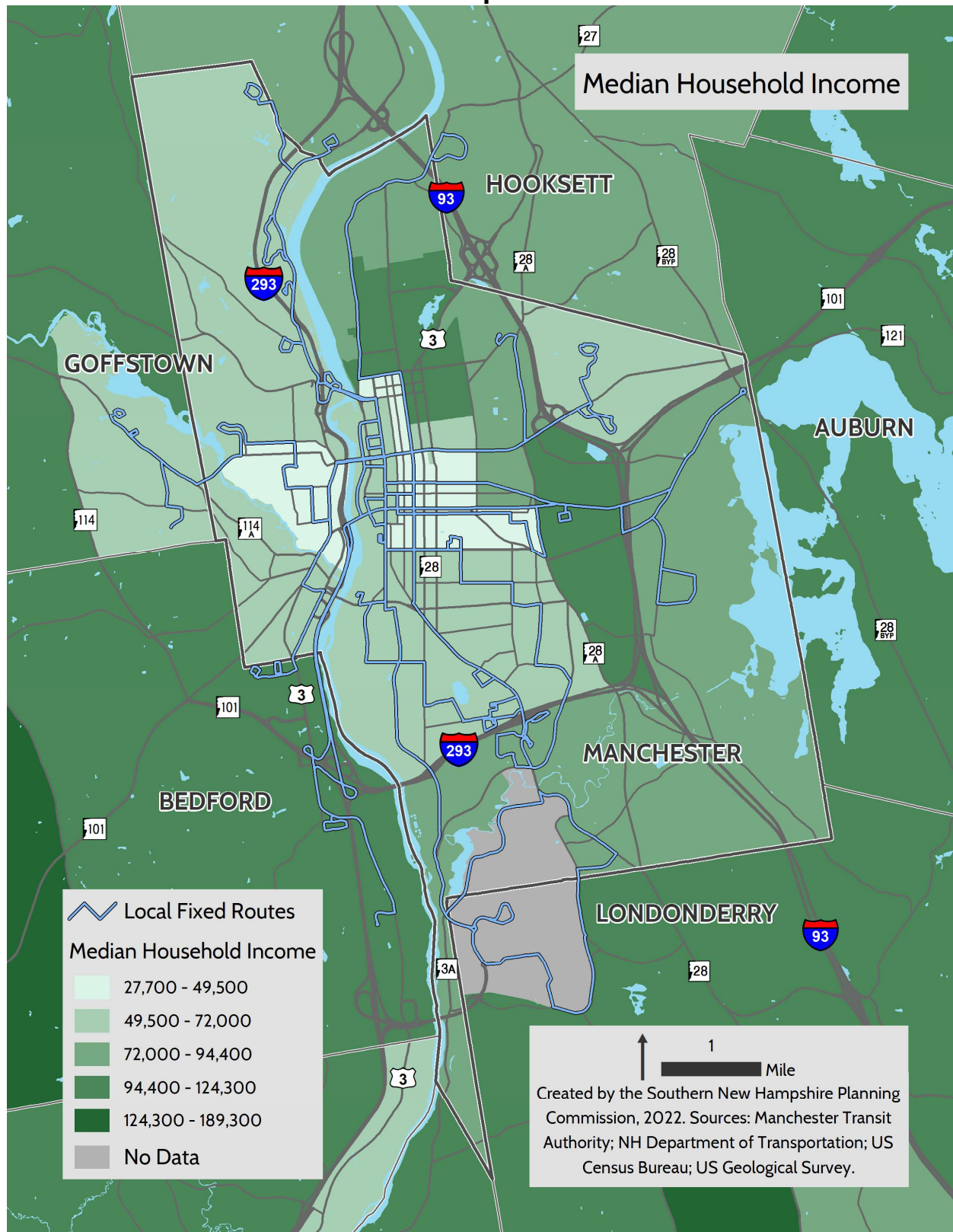
Map 7



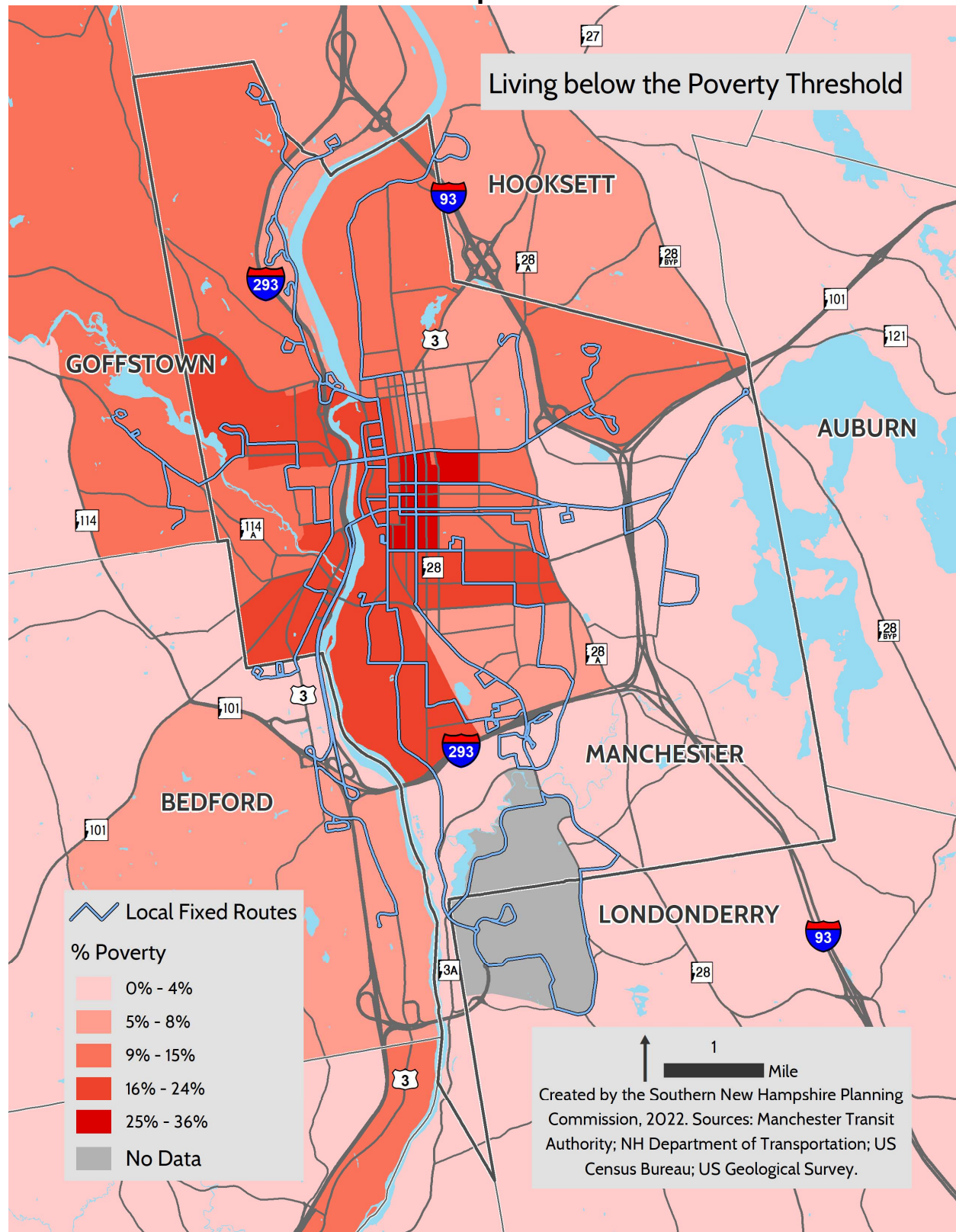
Map 8



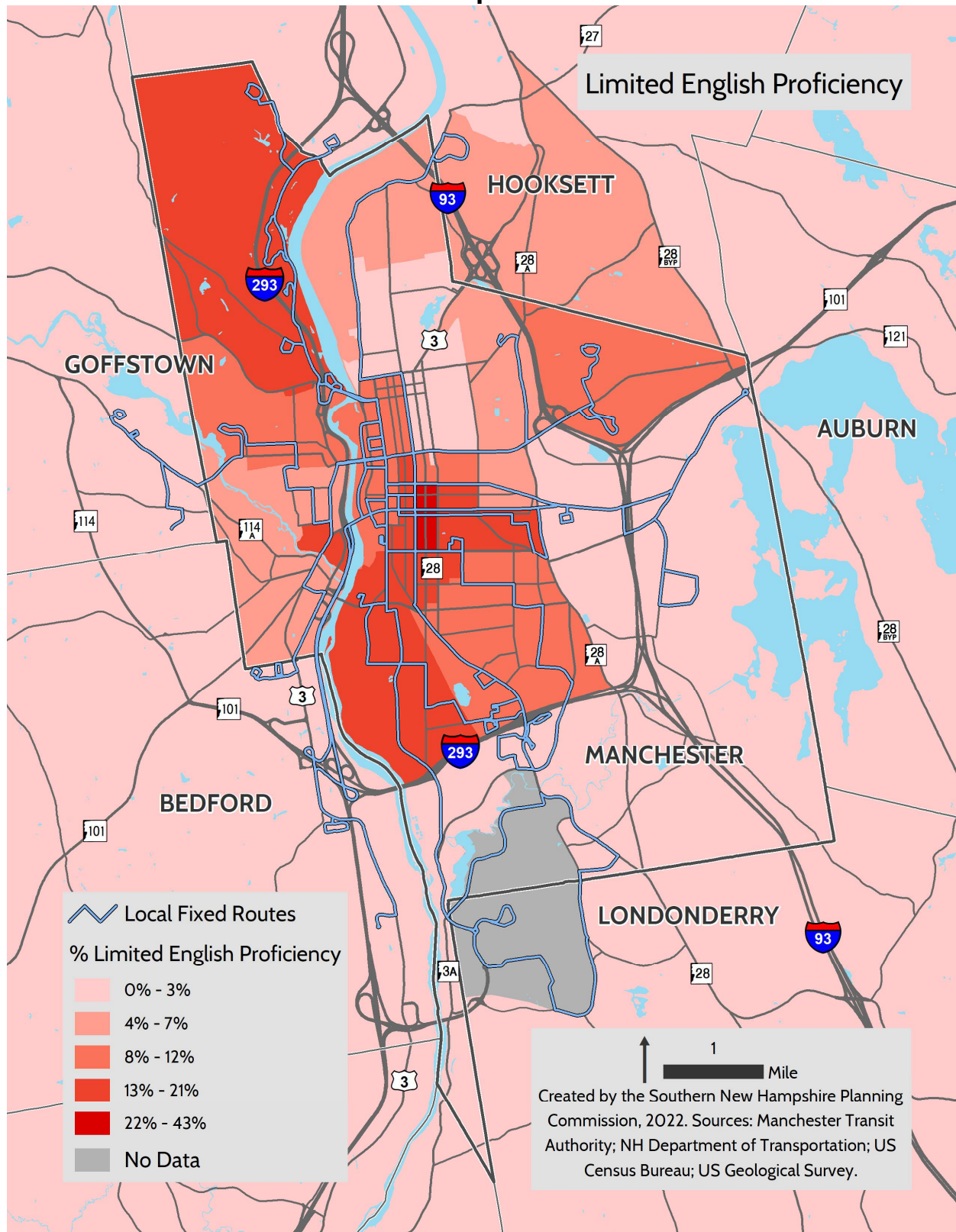
Map 9



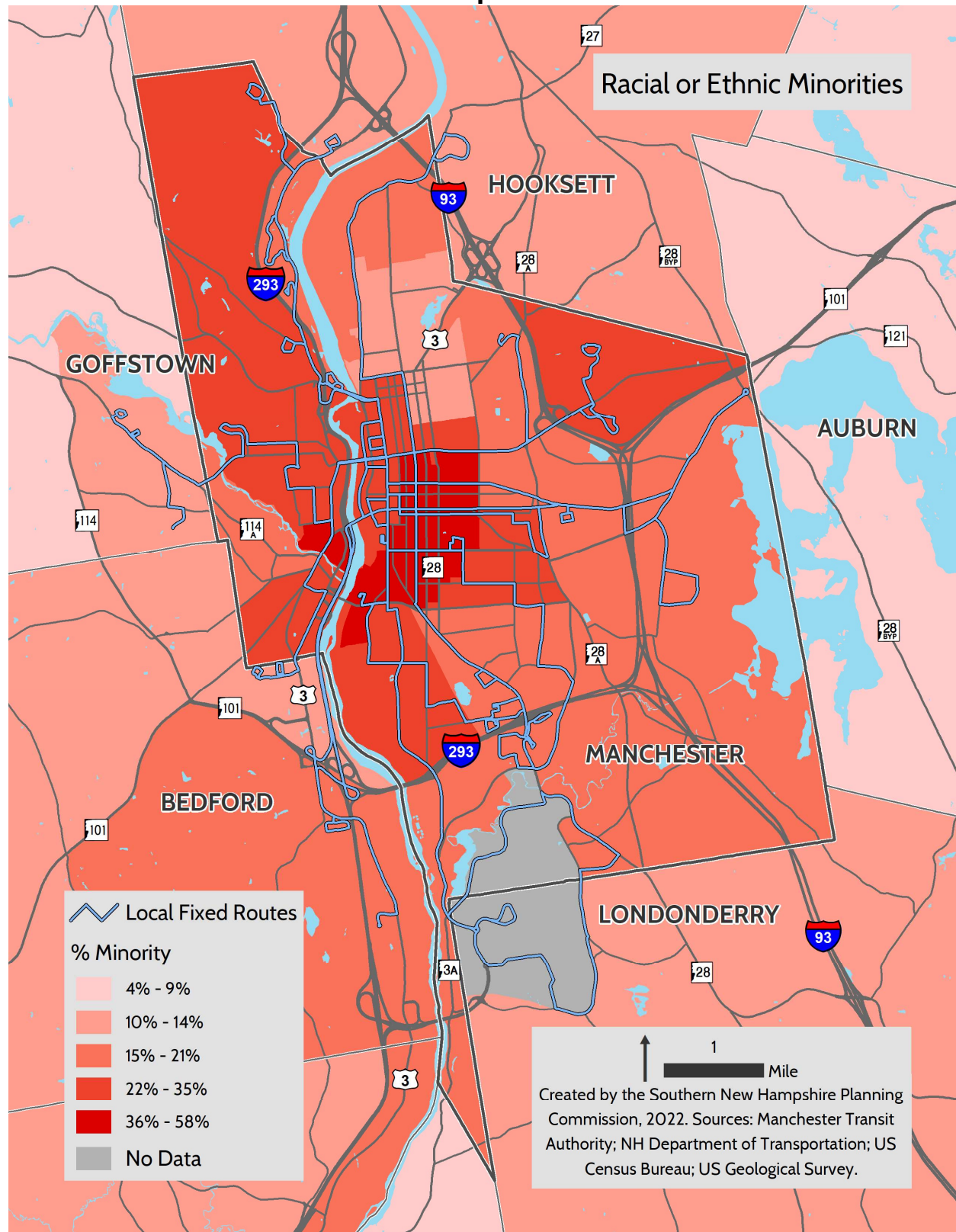
Map 10



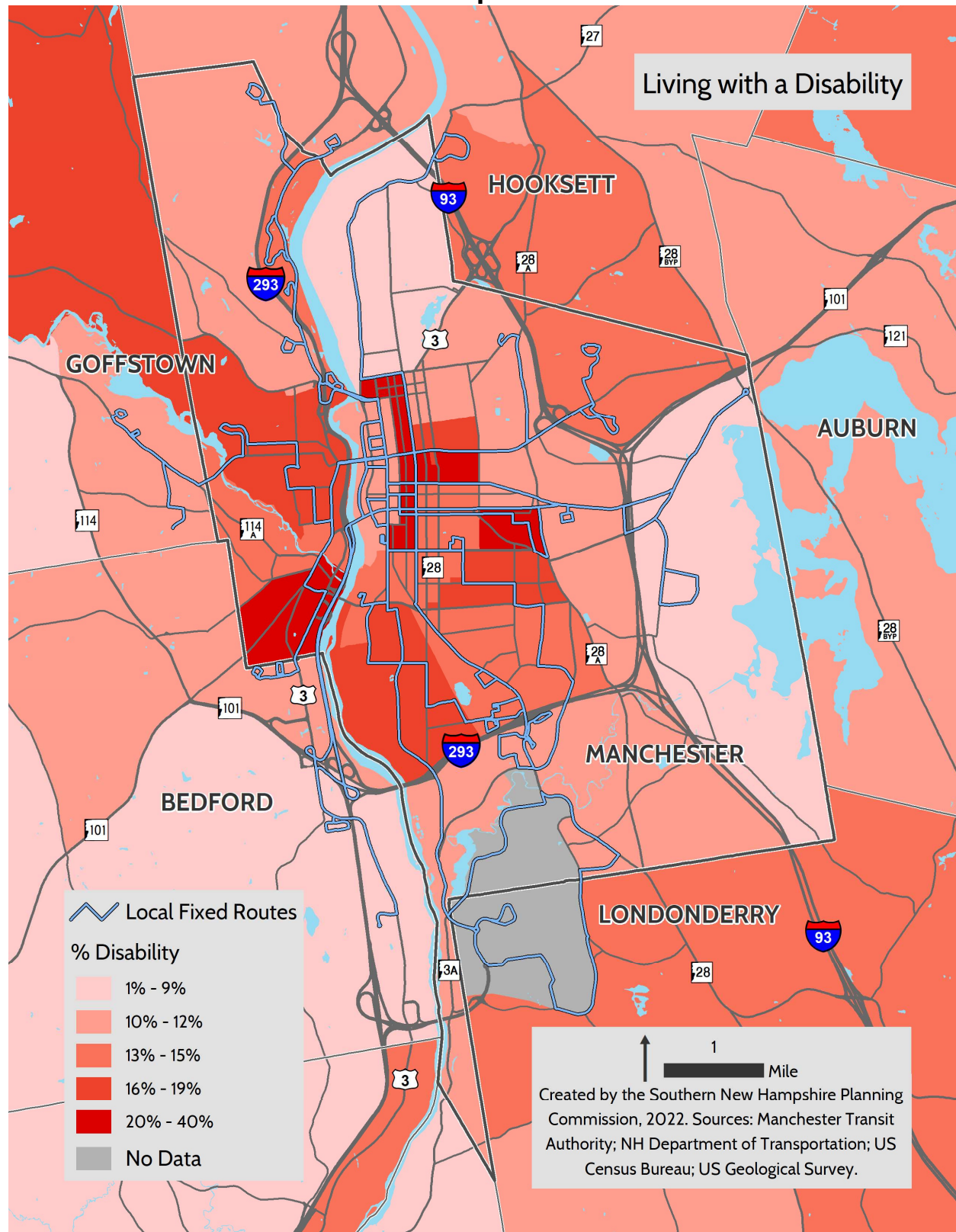
Map 11



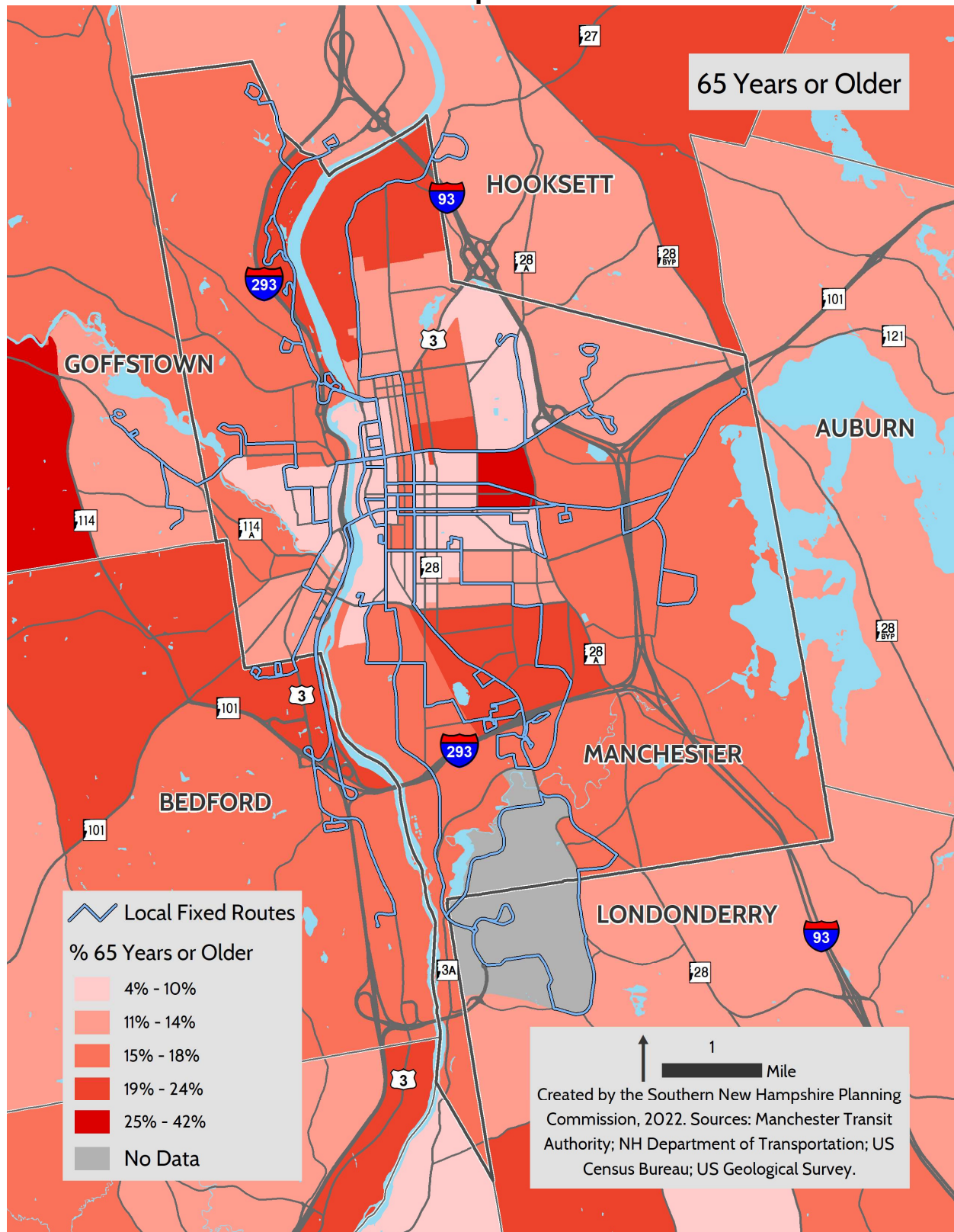
Map 12



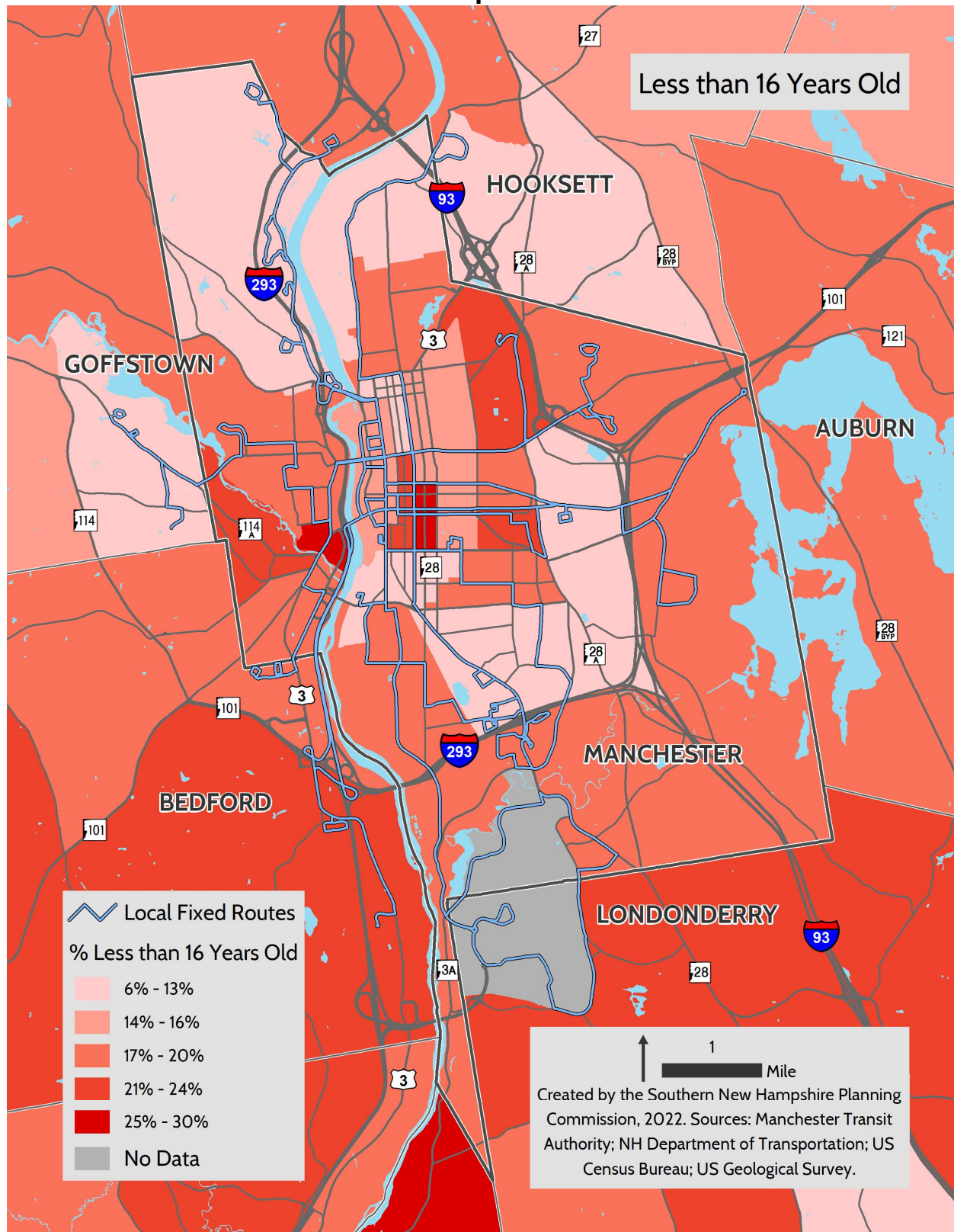
Map 13



Map 14



Map 15



Service in Relation to Elderly Concentrations

The 2020 U.S. Census reported that 15,959 (13.8%) of Manchester's population of 115,644 are aged 65+, a substantial increase from 12,929 (11.8%) in 2010 and 13,804 (12.9%) in 2000.

The Census Tracts with concentrations of elderly population generally border the downtown area or are on the West Side; both areas tend to be well served by MTA routes. Access to shopping centers, recreational facilities, parks, cultural centers, hospitals, and other medical facilities is excellent. Some of the tracts contain public housing sites for the elderly, which are managed and operated by the Manchester Housing Authority. Five such high-rise developments are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Kalivas and O'Malley buildings are located on Chestnut Street, between Central and Spruce Streets (Census Tract 14). These buildings contain 200 units with approximately 250 residents. Access to all MTA routes is readily available on Elm Street, which is two blocks west of these buildings; these buildings are served directly by the S. Willow route (Route 8).



Kalivas



O'Malley



The Pariseau Building is located at 55 Amory Street (Census Tract 3). It has 100 units and approximately 130 residents. This building is served by the Bremer St./ Mast Rd. route (Route 6). Weekday service is provided on an hourly basis.

The Reverend Burns high-rise apartment complex is located at Granite Square, which is the intersection of Granite and Main Streets (Census Tract 20). The building contains 120 units and has approximately 150 residents. The Bremer St./ Mast Rd. route (Route 6) and Bedford/ Bedford Grove route (Route 13) directly serve the complex.

The Governor Hugh J. Gallen apartments are located at 200 Hanover Street (Census Tract 14). They consist of 94 units and have approximately 120 residents. The Hanover St./ East Industrial Park route (Route 2) provides direct service to the site. Access to all other MTA routes is readily available on Elm Street, which lies two blocks to the west.



The travel needs of the elderly have been documented in the [2022 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the SNHPC Region](#). Factors that play a significant role in the use and non-use of transit by the elderly population include income level, automobile availability, and physical ability. Seniors generally tend to use the bus for shopping purposes as well as for other personal business (medical appointments, etc.). Seniors tend to be more dependent on public transportation due to economics (low incomes) and physical impairments, both of which make owning and operating an automobile more difficult. The marital status (widow, widower, etc.) also factors into this transit dependency for senior citizens.

Reduced fares on the fixed route service (\$1.00 per ride) are available every day to senior citizens and disabled individuals who possess an approved MTA identification card showing that they are age 65+. MTA fixed route service is completely accessible, i.e. lift-equipped.

Service in Relation to Low-Income Populations

Previous rider surveys have concluded that the average MTA rider is of relatively low income. Upon an examination of Manchester's census tracts, it is evident that those exhibiting high poverty rates and low median income are relatively well served by transit. These areas tend to be concentrated close to downtown.

Service in Relation to Population Density

Fixed route transit service is most viable when it serves areas of high population density. Manchester's densest neighborhoods (i.e. those with relatively high numbers of housing units per acre) are close to downtown and on the West Side. Those downtown areas are well-served, while those on the West Side have a slightly lower level of service.

Service in Relation to Vehicle Ownership

Again, the central neighborhoods are lower than the norm in terms of vehicles per household and vehicles per person. All these analyses exhibit the importance of properly and adequately serving the downtown population.

PART 2: MTA IN THE FUTURE

Transportation system management, capital improvement, and operation recommendations for the FY 2023 – FY 2027 Short Range Transit Plan are summarized in this section. After a list of accomplishments, system management recommendations cover the following categories:

- Monitoring System Performance
- Vehicle Replacement
- Community Support Activities
- System Amenities

Recommendations for each category are listed below. Recommendations for some of the categories are provided in additional detail through a listing of individual action items.

A) Accomplishments since 2017

- Transitioned to FastFare fareboxes, a robust, passenger-friendly, smartphone-based system.
- Expanded the U-Pass program to Manchester Community College (MCC), building on the success with UNH and SNHU.
- Increased advertising availability on rolling stock vehicles through design and capital purchase criteria. Incorporated considerations for advertising into vehicle selection as appropriate.
- Installed digital ticketing kiosk at Veteran's Park. Began to expand such kiosks along Elm Street, with the potential to continue at other well-used stops throughout the city.
- Reorganized fixed route numbering system to better communicate which routes are considered Zone 1, 2, or 3.
- Rebranded the fixed route buses as part of the approaching fleet replacement. Incorporated new colors and vehicle design and applied that look to all outreach materials from literature to bus stop signs to create a unified system aesthetic.
- Held a design competition among local college students to develop a new logo. Replaced the logo that had been used since 1973.
- Participated on State and National levels to develop new skills and learn successful tips from other areas as well as to shape policy and funding decisions likely to affect MTA.
- Obtained two new propane cutaway buses, making MTA the first public transit system in New England to have propane-powered vehicles.

B) Monitoring System Performance

Recommendation - Continue to generate regular ridership statistics by run and route and evaluate ridership statistics on a regular basis. Utilize data to measure and evaluate system performance and determine the impacts of service changes on ridership and on the whole system.

Action Items

- Analyze each route for productivity to identify low ridership and base recommendations for service changes on this analysis.
- Perform regular schedule adherence checks (minimum of fifty per month) to ensure reliability of service, publish the data monthly and provide the data to SNHPC for inclusion in the Congestion Management Process. Transition away from physical observation and towards use of the onboard tablet/GPS functionality to greatly increase sample size while holding cost steady.
- Obtain feedback on service quality and gain input on system expansion and improvements by administering regular surveys to MTA riders to coincide with future SRTP updates.
- Evaluate StepSaver ride time for individual trips, comparing each to the time required to travel between the same destinations via fixed route.

C) Vehicle Replacement

Recommendation - Ensure the maintenance of the fleet by adhering to the capital replacement program outlined in the FY 2025 – FY 2034 Ten Year Highway Plan.

Action Items

- Maintain state of good repair for rolling stock in line with current TAM Plan.
- Incorporate three MCI coach buses (acquired from MVRTA in 2022) into active service.
- Explore microtransit as a possible solution to low-demand corridors of MTA's service area.

D) Community Support Activities

Recommendation – MTA should remain an active participant in the community to have a positive impact on their service area as well as to expand support for public transportation to people who may never ride a bus themselves.

Action Items

- Continue to participate in community initiatives to broaden public support. These should include a broad array of organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, public health and social service agencies, and grassroots groups if applicable.
- Continue to regionalize service, evaluating opportunities to replicate successful existing services as expansion continues.

E) System Amenities

Recommendation – In an effort to attract more choice riders, targeted investment of time and resources should be made in improving system amenities.

Action Items

- Continue to provide Bus route name(s) and number(s) on signs at several key stops, preferably where multiple routes pass and post individual route maps and schedules for the route(s) in proximity to these bus signs.
- Maintain a positive image, ensure system visibility, and clearly signify community presence: 1) continue to update placement of all bus stop signs so that they accurately reflect current routes and 2) continuously replace missing /or damaged bus stop signs incorporating the new design and brand (see photo).
- Develop single-route timetables and maps for electronic availability. Enhance electronic capabilities for passenger through design of an MTA app.
- Continue adding new shelters throughout the fixed route system funded both via MTA and developers.
- Take proactive steps for a smooth transition should MTA become a large urban area in 2023.

