



City of Sierra Vista Transit Route Study

Executive Summary

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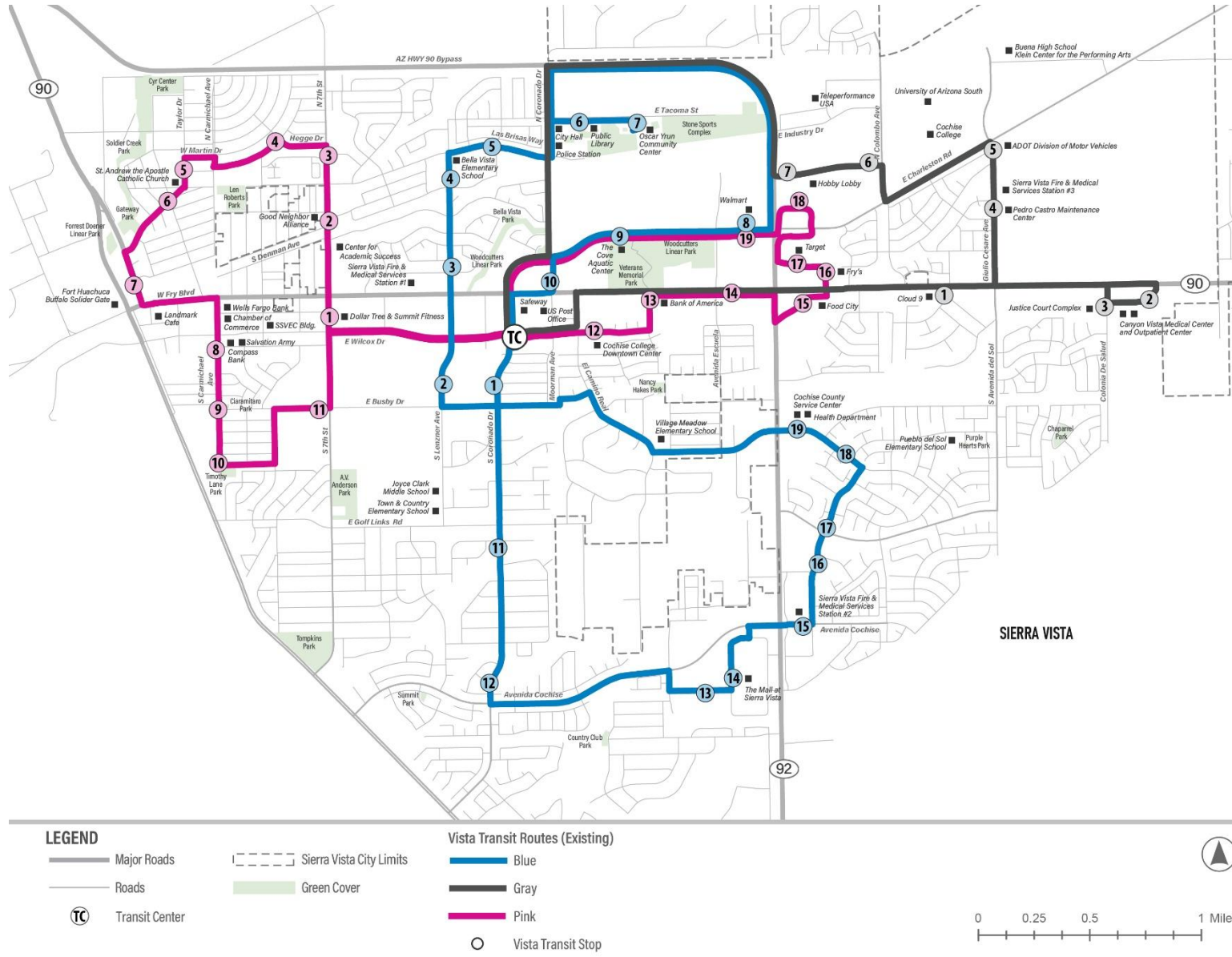
1.0 BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Vista Transit, which is part of the Sierra Vista's Public Works Department, has seen extraordinary recovery in transit ridership since the COVID-19 pandemic impacted service, with total ridership (fixed-route and paratransit services) increasing from 73,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 to 153,000 in FY 2025. With the award of an FTA grant, the city initiated the Sierra Vista Transit Route Study to identify service improvements that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of fixed-route services and enhance the overall rider experience. The existing transit network is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

2.0 STUDY PROCESS

The study included a review of existing conditions through socioeconomic and demographic analyses, an assessment of transit performance data, and a review of previous plans and studies. Community engagement efforts included surveys of local transit riders, a public perception survey, and targeted outreach at local community events. The key findings from these efforts helped shape the final recommendations. The existing conditions analysis and community engagement efforts are described in further detail in the *Sierra Vista Transit Route Study: Final Report*.

Figure 1. Existing Vista Transit Network



3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Service recommendations were developed in consideration of both the findings from the existing conditions analysis and engagement efforts as well as the City’s own transit priorities. The primary objectives of the service recommendations are as follows:

- **Maintain service coverage:** continue to provide service to the same general area and activity centers to the greatest extent possible.
- **Limit duplicative service:** eliminate overlapping route segments to improve service efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Optimize service efficiency:** maximize service efficiency by investing in productive services and identifying modifications to help improve underperforming services.
- **Extend service hours and days of operation:** extend hours and days of operation to provide passengers with more flexibility and transportation options outside of peak business hours.

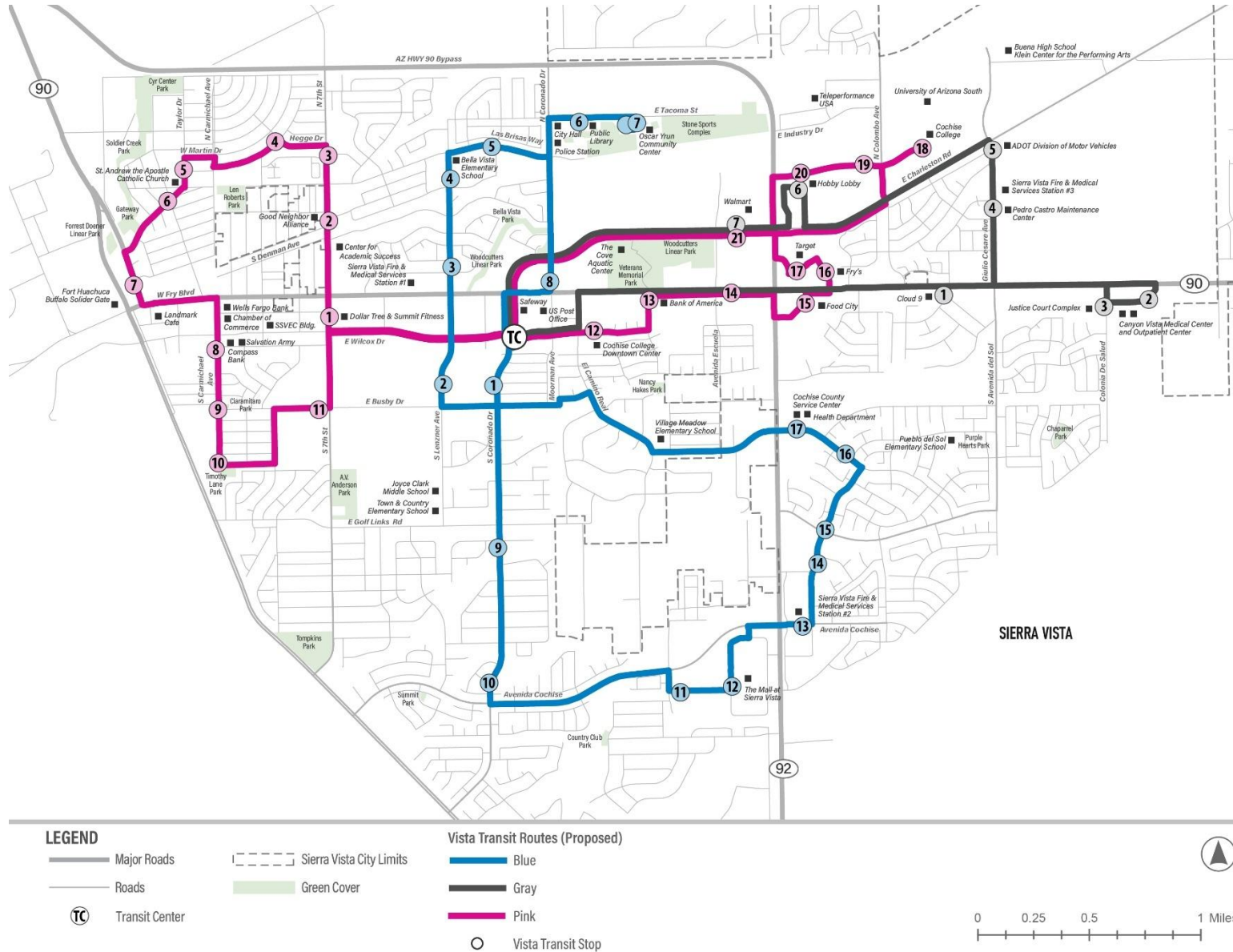
Recommendations were developed in close coordination with the City of Sierra Vista, ensuring that any changes met financial and operational constraints while reflecting the needs of the community. Recommendations were developed for the short-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3+ years) planning horizons. The short-term recommendations include prioritizing service on the Pink route (the highest performing and most efficient route in the system) and adjusting service levels on the Gray route to more effectively match demand. Route modifications and frequency adjustments were also recommended for all fixed route services in the short-term. Long-term recommendations focused on implementing weekend service on all fixed route services and evaluating the feasibility of intercity bus service.

The short- and long-term recommendations are summarized in **Table 1**. The recommended transit network with proposed route modifications is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Table 1. Short- and Long-term Recommendations

| Route | Type | Recommendation / Description |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS | | |
| Pink | Frequency & service span adjustment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 30-minute all day frequency and extend service for two additional hours on weekdays (12 hours total). Increased operating costs associated with this recommendation would be partially offset by right-sizing service on the Gray route. |
| Pink | Route modification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify Pink east loop to serve Cochise College and existing stops on Campus Drive. Eliminate Hobby Lobby deviation (to be served by modified Gray route). New stop location at Cochise College would provide a convenient connection to the campus, linking students and staff alike to destinations throughout Sierra Vista |
| Blue | Frequency & service span adjustment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 30-minute all day frequency and extend service for two additional hours on weekdays (12 hours total). |
| Blue | Route modification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate State Route 90/Walmart segment on Blue north. From the Ethel Berger Center/Oscar Yrun Community Center stops on Tacoma Street, the revised route will proceed south on Coronado Drive to serve the Denny's/VA Clinic stop before proceeding to the transit center. |
| Gray | Frequency & service span adjustment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce frequency to 60 minutes and extend service for two additional hours on weekdays (12 hours total). Operating cost savings from this recommendation could be used to offset frequency improvements on Pink route. |
| Gray | Route modification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate route segment on Campus Drive, State Route 90, and Coronado Drive (to be served by modified Pink route). From the Guilio Cesare Ave/Charleston Rd (DMV) stop, the revised route will continue west on Charleston Road to serve the Hobby Lobby and Walmart stops before proceeding back to the transit center. |
| LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS | | |
| Pink, Blue, Gray | Expanded service days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 60-minute service on Saturday/Sunday for span of 12 hours. Recommendation applies to all fixed-route services. |
| Future Intercity Bus Service | Feasibility study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In coordination with state and regional partners, evaluate the feasibility of future intercity bus service. |

Figure 2. Proposed Vista Transit Network



4.0 FLEET REQUIREMENTS AND OPERATING COST ESTIMATES

As summarized in **Table 2**, implementation of the short-term recommendations would require six vehicles in operation, or one additional vehicle as compared to existing operations. This additional vehicle would be required to operate the modified Pink route, which is longer than the existing route and would operate at higher frequency. Implementing weekend service in the long-term recommendations would require four vehicles in operation, or one less than existing operations and two less than required for the short-term recommendations.

Table 2. Operating Information and Fleet Requirements

| Route | Roundtrip Length (Miles) | Run Time (Mins) ¹ | Layover (Mins) ² | Total Cycle Time (Mins) | Peak Frequency (Mins) | Vehicle Requirements | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| | | | | | | Peak | Spare ³ | Total |
| EXISTING | | | | | | | | |
| Pink | 11.0 | 58 | 12 | 70 | 40 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Blue | 13.4 | 60 | 0 | 60 | 30 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Gray | 8.8 | 30 | 0 | 30 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total: | | | | | | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS | | | | | | | | |
| Pink | 12.2 | 64.0 | 10 | 74 | 30 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Blue | 11.2 | 48.0 | 8 | 56 | 30 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Gray | 7.8 | 26.0 | 4 | 30 | 60 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total: | | | | | | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS | | | | | | | | |
| Pink (weekend) | 12.2 | 64.0 | 10 | 74 | 60 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Blue (weekend) | 11.2 | 48.0 | 8 | 56 | 60 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Gray (weekend) | 7.8 | 26.0 | 4 | 30 | 60 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total: | | | | | | 4 | 3 | 7 |

¹ Assumes existing route-specific operating speeds, per posted schedule & runtimes.

² Assumes 15 percent of roundtrip runtime, per industry standard. Note: layovers on existing blue and gray routes are built into the scheduled runtime.

³ Assumes 20 percent spare ratio, per industry standard.

Operating cost estimates were developed for the existing network and the short- and long-term recommendations using the FY 25 cost per mile identified in Vista Transit’s NTD reporting (\$7.03) escalated three percent to 2026 dollars (\$7.29). As summarized in **Table 3**, implementation of the short-term recommendations is estimated to cost \$1,188,410 annually, a net change of \$179,583 (17.8 percent) from existing operations. If this cost increase is not immediately feasible, the city could opt to implement only the route modifications and frequency adjustments (annual cost: \$990,341) and delay implementation of the weekday service span extension (annual cost: \$198,068) until

additional funding is available. This phased approach would represent a 1.8 percent reduction in costs in the first phase as compared to existing operations.

Implementation of the long-term recommendations is estimated at \$316,407. These recommendations could also be implemented in phases if desired based on existing demand/ridership.

Table 3. Operating Cost Estimates

| Route | Annual Revenue Miles ¹ | Annual Revenue Hours ² | Gross Operating Cost ³ |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| EXISTING | | | |
| Pink West/East | 41,160 | 4,358 | \$300,153 |
| Blue North/South | 53,306 | 3,984 | \$388,728 |
| Gray | 43,874 | 2,490 | \$319,945 |
| Total (Existing): | 138,339 | 10,832 | \$1,008,826 |
| SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS | | | |
| Pink - Modified Route & Frequency Increase (30 min) | 60,706 | 6,142 | \$442,694 |
| Pink - Expanded Weekday Service Hours (+2 hours) | 12,141 | 1,228 | \$88,539 |
| Blue - Modified Route & Frequency Increase (30 min) | 55,676 | 4,648 | \$406,015 |
| Blue - Expanded Weekday Service Hours (+2 hours) | 11,135 | 930 | \$81,203 |
| Gray - Modified Route & Frequency Decrease (60 min) | 19,422 | 1,245 | \$141,633 |
| Gray - Expanded Weekday Service Hours (+2 hours) | 3,884 | 249 | \$28,327 |
| Total (Short-Term): | 162,966 | 14,442 | \$1,188,410 |
| LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS | | | |
| Pink - Weekend Service (12 hours, 60 min frequency) | 16,968 | 1,717 | \$123,741 |
| Blue - Weekend Service (12 hours, 60 min frequency) | 15,563 | 1,299 | \$113,488 |
| Gray - Weekend Service (12 hours, 60 min frequency) | 10,858 | 696 | \$79,178 |
| Total (Long-Term): | 43,389 | 3,712 | \$316,407 |

¹ Assumes 249 weekdays, 52 Saturdays, and 64 Sundays/Holidays.

² Assumes existing route-specific operating speeds, per posted schedule & runtimes.

³ Assumes cost per mile of \$7.29 (2025 value per Vista Transit NTD Report of \$7.03, escalated at 3.0 percent to \$2026)

Additional information on the study and the service recommendations is provided in the *Sierra Vista Transit Route Study: Final Report*.