

**GENESEE TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION**

**Resolution 23-9     Accepting the RGRTA Regional Village Local Service Study as evidence of completion of UPWP Task 8543**

**WHEREAS,**

1.     The *FY 2023-2024 Unified Planning Work Program* includes Task 8543, Regional Village Local Service Study, for the purpose of studying the feasibility of local transit and microtransit routes in rural village centers to increase the frequency of public transit service to community destinations;
2.     Said Task determined the best way to deliver public transit in selected towns and villages; proposed a range of different service models including local and intercity bus service, on-demand microtransit, and pre-booked microtransit depending on which is best suited for the specific community; and identified best practices for implementing new transit services in small towns and villages in the Genesee-Finger Lakes region;
3.     Said Task has been completed and has resulted in the *RGRTA Regional Village Local Service Study*, and
4.     Said Plan has been reviewed by GTC staff and member agencies through the GTC committee process and has been found to be consistent with the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**

1.     That the Genesee Transportation Council hereby accepts the RGRTA Regional Village Local Service Study Executive Summary as evidence of completion of UPWP Task 8543; and
2.     That this resolution takes effect immediately.

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned duly qualified Secretary of the Genesee Transportation Council certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Genesee Transportation Council held on June 8, 2023.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHRISTOPHER REEVE, Secretary  
Genesee Transportation Council

# RGRTA Regional Village Local Service Study

April, 2023



Provided by



# Executive summary

The Regional Transit Service (RTS) Regional Villages Study was commissioned by the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) to determine how to best serve 27 communities across six counties in Western New York. These towns were selected for inclusion in the study as they currently have limited or no local public transit service. For example, the majority of these communities have some bus service, but it typically only offers limited connections to a nearby community, and in many cases only operates a few trips per day.

## Project Goals:

- 1** Determine the best way to deliver public transit in selected towns and villages
- 2** Propose a range of different service models including local and intercity bus service, on-demand microtransit, and pre-booked microtransit depending on which is best suited for the specific community
- 3** Identify best practices for implementing new transit services in small towns and villages in Western New York



RTS Vehicle

## Study Area

The study area covers 27 towns and villages in Ontario, Livingston, Wayne, Wyoming, Genesee, and Orleans counties. The municipalities are LeRoy, Oakfield, Bergen, Dansville, Avon, Mt. Morris, Caledonia, Lima, Livonia, Nunda, Victor, Clifton Springs, Phelps, Manchester, Shortsville, Bloomfield, Naples, Holley, Newark, Lyons, Palmyra, Clyde, Sodus, Wolcott, Perry, Attica, and Castile.



## Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary

To gather feedback from the Finger Lakes community, the study included a survey and interviews with key stakeholders. The survey gathered responses from over 120 current or potential transit users. Responses were gathered both online and in-person (while riding RGRTA bus routes). The key takeaways from the survey include:

- 1** Most respondents who use public transit in the region do so infrequently. Only one in five respondents use public transit 'very often' and half of respondents who use public transit do so a few times a month or less. It is likely that they rely on other modes of transportation when possible, and public transit is considered a backup option. This suggests that improvements to public transit could encourage existing users to travel more often using public transit.
- 2** Respondents showed enthusiasm for improved public transit service, with 40% of respondents indicating they would use a local public transit service daily if it was available and convenient.
- 3** When considering different ways to expand public transit, most respondents would prefer access to more geographic areas, followed by weekend service and extended hours on weekdays.
- 4** The most common reasons to use public transit would be grocery shopping and access to work and medical services. Therefore, improvements to public transit should prioritize grocery stores, employers, and medical services.
- 5** The survey respondents did not indicate a clear preference between microtransit and deviated fixed-route bus and many respondents were not sure which would be better suited to their needs.

Promotional poster for the study's community engagement efforts



**RTS** Regional Transit Service:  
**Call for Public Input**

**Tell us about your experience using public transit to get around your community!**

Your input will help us understand how you want to travel and what improvements would benefit our region. There are two easy ways to participate:

- Take our short survey!**  
It takes 15 minutes and participants can enter a gift card drawing.
- Attend a public meeting!**  
**In-Person:** Thursday, August 4th at 2 PM at Lyons Community Center, 9 Manhattan St, Lyons, NY 14489  
**Virtual:** Wednesday, August 10th at 5 PM (register using the link below for Zoom details)

**Participate here!**  
 <https://tinyurl.com/RTS-Survey>  
Scan the QR code or follow the link to complete the survey or register for a meeting

Questions? Email [cathal@ridewithvia.com](mailto:cathal@ridewithvia.com)

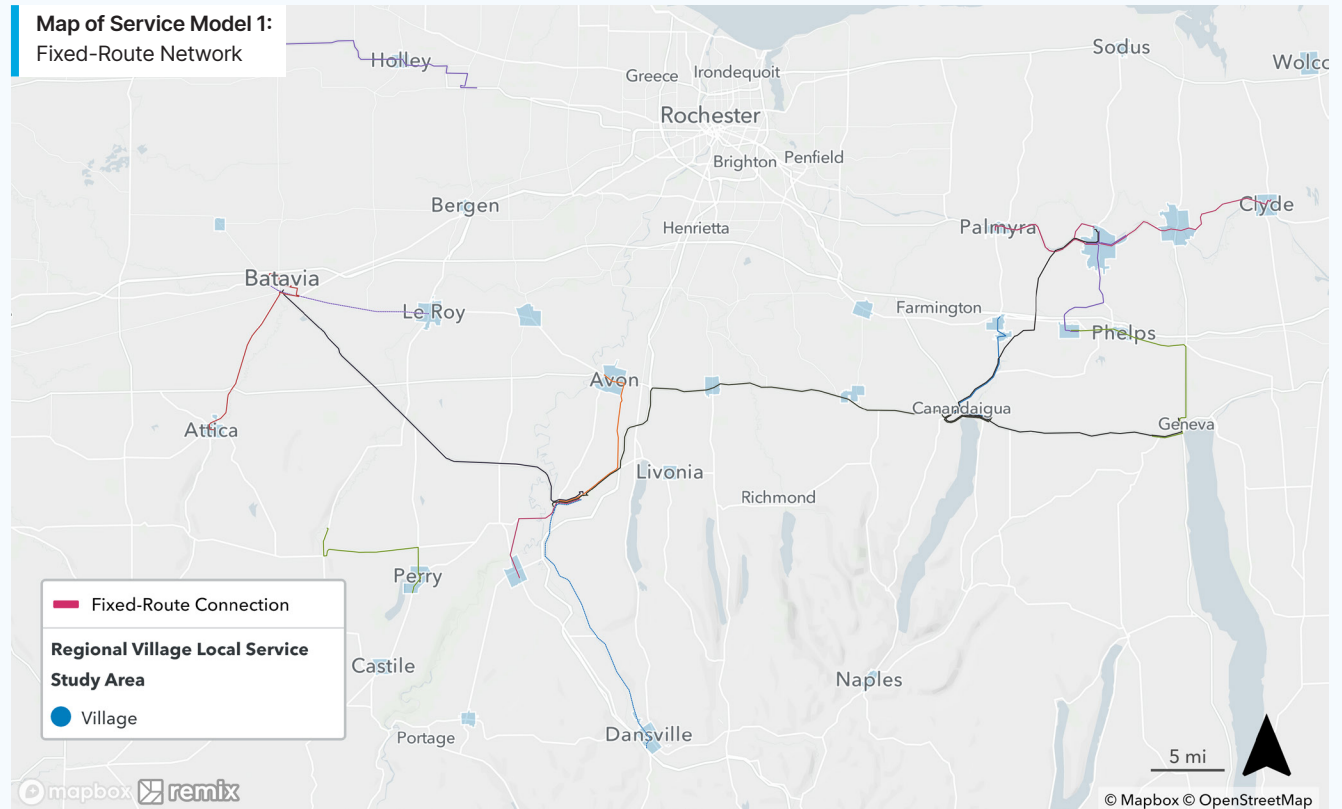


## Service Delivery Recommendations

Based on a demographic analysis of the villages, a review of the current transit services, and the survey results, the following three transit delivery models were developed. Together, these three models will enable RGRTA to serve the community in a cost-efficient manner, by ensuring the level of service matches the expected ridership and density of the different communities. The three models are described below:

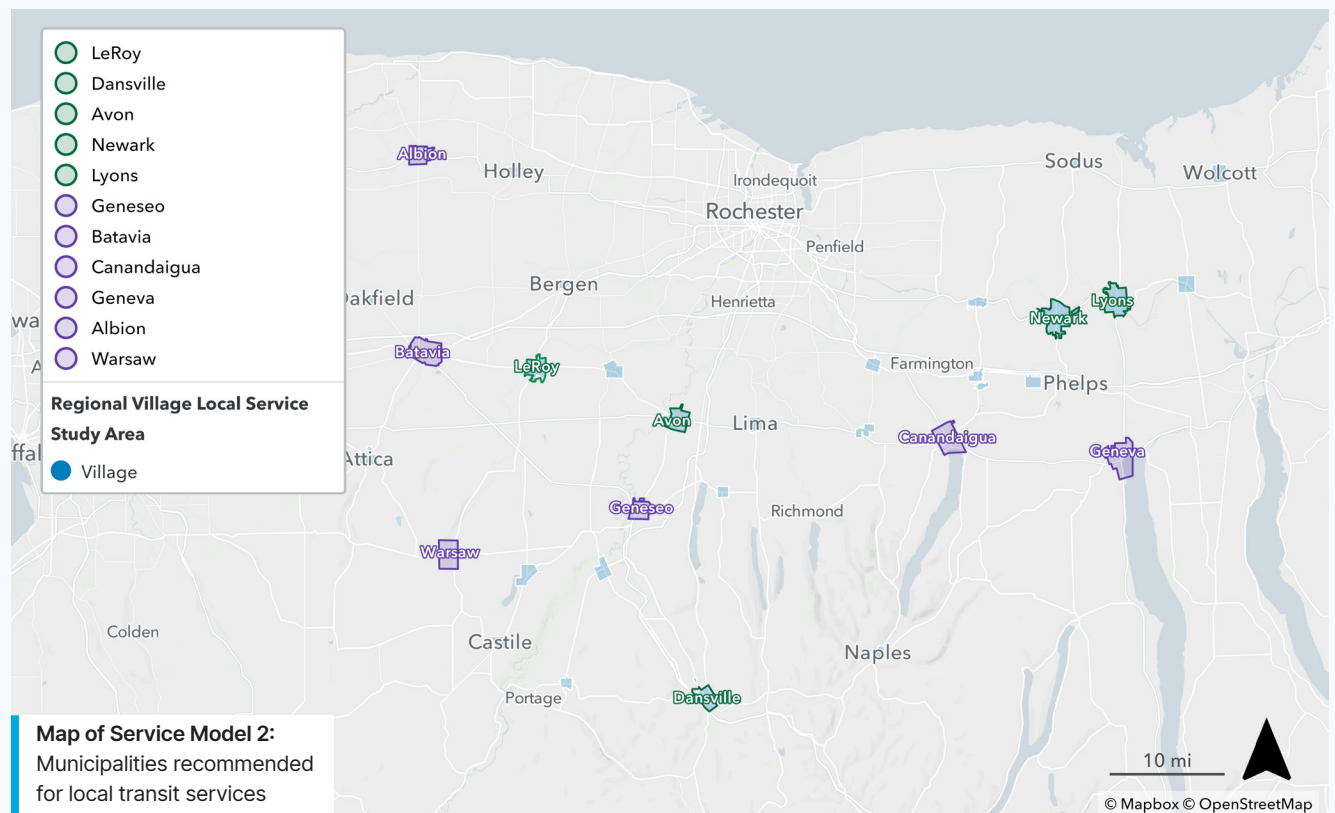
- **Service Model 1 - Frequent, Intercity Fixed-Route Network**

The first service model would be used to connect the largest towns and villages across the region. The fixed-route connections should be direct and run often enough to be useful for the local population, likely around every 20 to 40 minutes, depending on the route's popularity. Service model 1 could also provide intercounty connections and serve smaller villages that are on the route between larger municipalities.



- **Service Model 2 - Local On-Demand Microtransit or Fixed-Route Service**

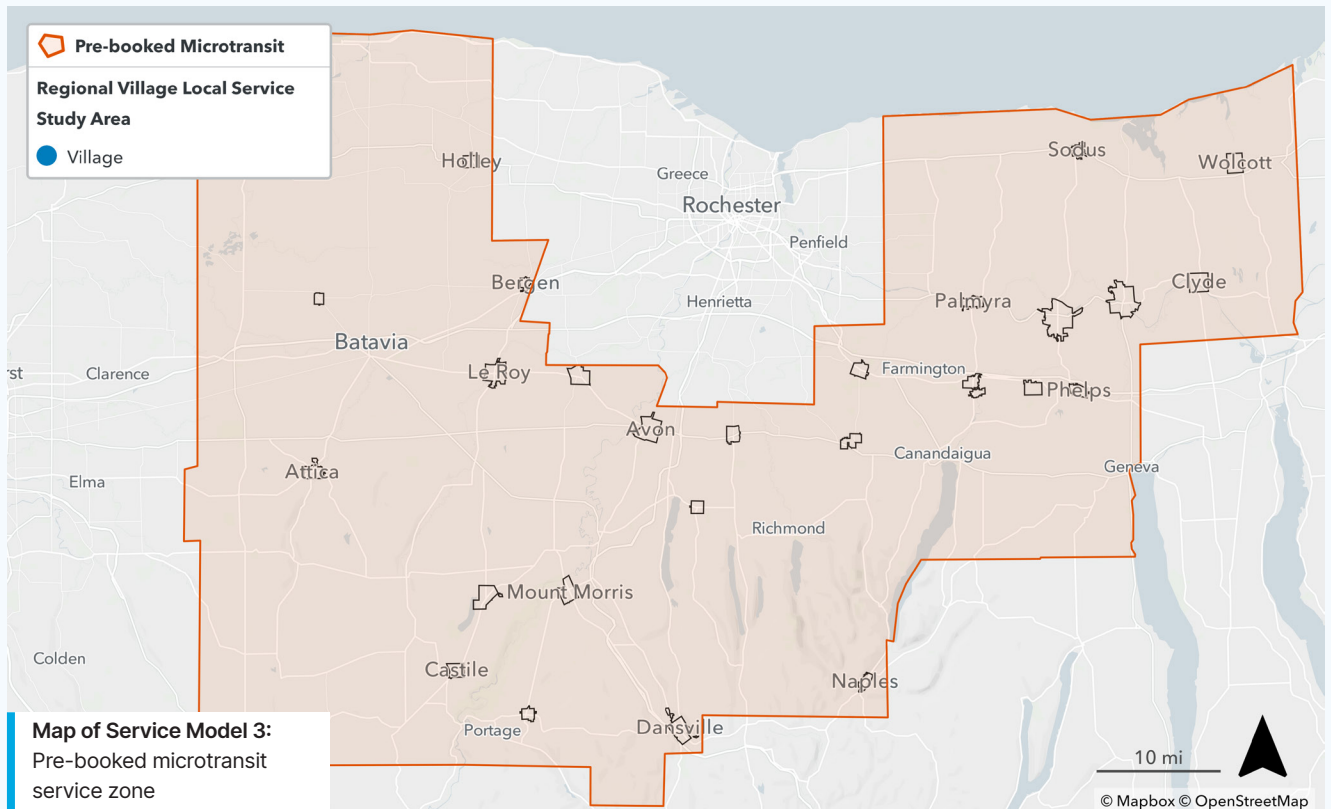
The second model would provide local transit services for the largest towns and villages in the study. Local service can be provided through fixed-route buses or microtransit service. This study mostly evaluated microtransit for the application of Service Model 2. Microtransit is a technology-enabled demand-response service that provides shared rides based on where and when people want to travel within a pre-defined service area. Customers usually book trips on a smartphone application and wait between 5 and 20 minutes for their ride. There are no schedules or pre-defined routes and stops. Microtransit can be more efficient if demand is dispersed throughout the village and travel patterns are more varied. Microtransit also requires less capital infrastructure and can work well in areas with poor pedestrian infrastructure. Service Model 2 would provide a convenient service for local trips, including commuting, grocery stores, and medical appointments.





- **Service Model 3 - Regional Pre-booked Microtransit**

For villages that are too small to support a local transit service and not located along any Service Model 1 fixed-routes, a pre-booked microtransit service could fulfill transportation needs. Service Model 3 could also provide service for those who do not live near a fixed-route bus and therefore avoid deviations that would make the fixed-routes less efficient. Pre-booked microtransit works best in large rural areas and would operate similarly to the current Dial-a-Ride services offered by RGRTA.



This table outlines how each service model would be applied to the 27 villages of the study. The most significant change recommended by this study is the launch of microtransit (Service Model 2) in several of the larger communities; Newark, Lyons, Dansville, LeRoy, and Avon. Most of the smaller communities do not have enough residents and destinations to support a local microtransit service, and would be better served by fixed-route bus connections to larger towns (Service Model 1), or inclusion in a regional pre-booked microtransit service (Service Model 3).

Table summarizing recommendations by village and service model

Village	Service Model 1 Frequent, Intercity Fixed-Route Network	Service Model 2 Local On-Demand Microtransit or Fixed-Route	Service Model 3 Regional Pre-booked Microtransit	
Newark	To Canandaigua; To Clifton Springs; To Palmyra; To Clyde via Lyons	Lyons + Newark On-Demand Zone	Not required as the local on-demand microtransit service will complete all trips within the village.	
Lyons	To Clyde and Newark via Palmyra			
Dansville	No fixed-route recommended			Dansville On-Demand Zone
LeRoy	To Batavia			Le Roy On-Demand Zone
Avon	To Geneseo			Avon On-Demand Zone
Perry	To Warsaw	None of these villages have sufficient population and/or local destinations to support a local on-demand microtransit or fixed-route.	The regional pre-booked microtransit service can be used to provide accessible trips for disabled passengers within ¼ mile of fixed-routes in these villages. <sup>1</sup> This means the fixed-routes do not need to deviate and can offer improved on-time performance.	
Palmyra	To Clyde via Newark and Lyons To Eastview Mall			
Manchester	To Canandaigua via Shortsville			
Shortsville	To Canandaigua and Manchester			
Mt. Morris	To Geneseo			
Victor	To Eastview Mall			
Attica	To Batavia			
Clifton Springs	To Newark; To Geneva via Phelps			
Clyde	To Palmyra via Lyons and Newark			

<sup>1</sup>The ¼ mile limit is based on ADA requirements for paratransit.

Table summarizing recommendations by village and service model (*Continued*)

Village	Service Model 1 Frequent, Intercity Fixed-Route Network	Service Model 2 Local On-Demand Microtransit or Fixed-Route	Service Model 3 Regional Pre-booked Microtransit
Lima	On Canandaigua to Geneseo route	None of these villages have sufficient population and/or local destinations to support a local on-demand microtransit or fixed-route.	The regional pre-booked microtransit service can be used to provide accessible trips for disabled passengers within ¾ mile of fixed-routes in these villages. <sup>1</sup> This means the fixed-routes do not need to deviate and can offer improved on-time performance.
Phelps	To Clifton Springs and Geneva		
Holley	To Albion and Brockport		
Bloomfield	On Canandaigua to Geneseo route		
Caledonia	None of these villages are located along a frequent intercity bus route and/or have the population to support a dedicated fixed-route to a nearby community.		Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Oakfield			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Sodus			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Wolcott			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Livonia			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Nunda			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Bergen			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Castile			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)
Naples			Trips to nearby towns (based on regional pre-booked microtransit rules)

<sup>1</sup>The ¾ mile limit is based on ADA requirements for paratransit.

## Implementation Recommendations

The implementation chapter of this report focuses primarily on recommendations for microtransit, as RGRTA already has extensive experience operating deviated fixed-route buses. If RGRTA chooses to launch new microtransit services, this report includes a set of recommendations on how to successfully implement new services, including:



### Selecting vehicles

Microtransit works well with small buses or vans that hold 6 to 12 passengers. Vehicles should be RGRTA branded.



### Marketing

Marketing efforts such as press releases, websites, social media campaigns, and flyers can be important ways to grow ridership on new services. For many residents, microtransit will be a new form of public transit. An education campaign including How-To videos and informational meetings can be useful to teach people how to use the new service.



### Community Engagement

In addition to the marketing efforts, the community should be engaged with throughout the planning and launch process to ensure that the service meets the needs of the community.



### Accessibility

The service should be curb-to-curb and use wheel-chair accessible vehicles. For customers without smartphones, booking by calling a dispatcher should be available.



### Commingling demand-responsive services

By commingling microtransit with the dial-a-ride services, RGRTA can improve the overall efficiency of all demand-responsive services.



### Fares

Fares should be comparable to existing transit services, and multiple payment options should be available, especially for those without access to a debit/credit card.



RTS Wyoming bus route 228 and RTS staff

