

AS OF MARCH 2025

NEBRASKA
RURAL TRANSIT

GAP ANALYSIS

Northeast Region



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
CENTER FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS RESEARCH

NEBRASKA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) conducted a comprehensive analysis of rural transit in Nebraska’s Northeast region at the request of the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT). This region encompasses 15 counties in northeastern Nebraska and is served by 12 transit providers. By analyzing data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, NDOT records, and local transit providers, the study provides insights into ridership by agency, identifies common rider destinations, and examines service gaps and overlaps across the region. Based on this analysis, we propose opportunities for coordination and strategies to enhance the reach of rural transit services in Nebraska.

A key finding of the analysis is the critical importance of rural transit in meeting the needs of the region’s population, particularly its growing transit-dependent population. Nearly 18% of the region’s residents are aged 65 or older, 12% live with disabilities, 10.6% live in poverty, and 4.5% of households lack access to private vehicles. These statistics point to an increasing need for accessible and reliable transit services. Fortunately, rural transit coverage is extensive, with over 99.9% of the population residing within areas served by at least one provider and 97.7% of the population served by multiple providers.

Transit providers in the Northeast serve a diverse range of destinations, including healthcare facilities, housing developments, grocery and discount stores, schools, and workplaces. This underscores the vital role transit plays in connecting residents to essential services. Many of these services are in Norfolk, the largest city in the Northeast region; 64.9% of drop-offs in our sample occurred there. Many of the providers in the Northeast also drop riders outside the region, however, especially at destinations in southeastern South Dakota and in and around Lincoln and Omaha.

Based on the data and analysis, the study offers several actionable recommendations. Expanding local transit options in Norfolk would enhance mobility and allow residents to access multiple destinations more easily once in the city. Maintaining reliable connections to medical facilities, housing, and grocery stores is especially critical for the region’s transit-dependent populations. Additionally, improving coordination among transit providers driving to Lincoln and Omaha or to Yankton, Vermillion, and Sioux Falls could increase efficiency and reduce redundancy.

Overall, the analysis does not identify significant service gaps in the Northeast region. On the contrary, it reveals an increasingly transit-dependent population successfully using rural transit to access essential services and a network of agencies that have grown to meet this demand. This study underscores the importance of continued investment in rural transit to support the region’s residents. Strategic enhancements in local services, regional coordination, and integrated planning will ensure that transit-dependent populations have reliable access to the resources and opportunities they need.

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INTRODUCTION



This analysis examines the gaps and overlaps in Nebraska’s rural transit services to help ensure reliable access to transit across rural areas of the state. By identifying areas where service can be optimized, the study aims to improve the efficiency, reach, and effectiveness of rural transit. This work is supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), which administers funding from the Federal Transit Administration’s Formula Grants for Rural Area Programs (49 U.S.C. 5311) to public transit providers in areas with populations under 50,000. NDOT has contracted with the Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) to conduct this gap analysis as part of its commitment to strengthen Nebraska’s rural transit system.

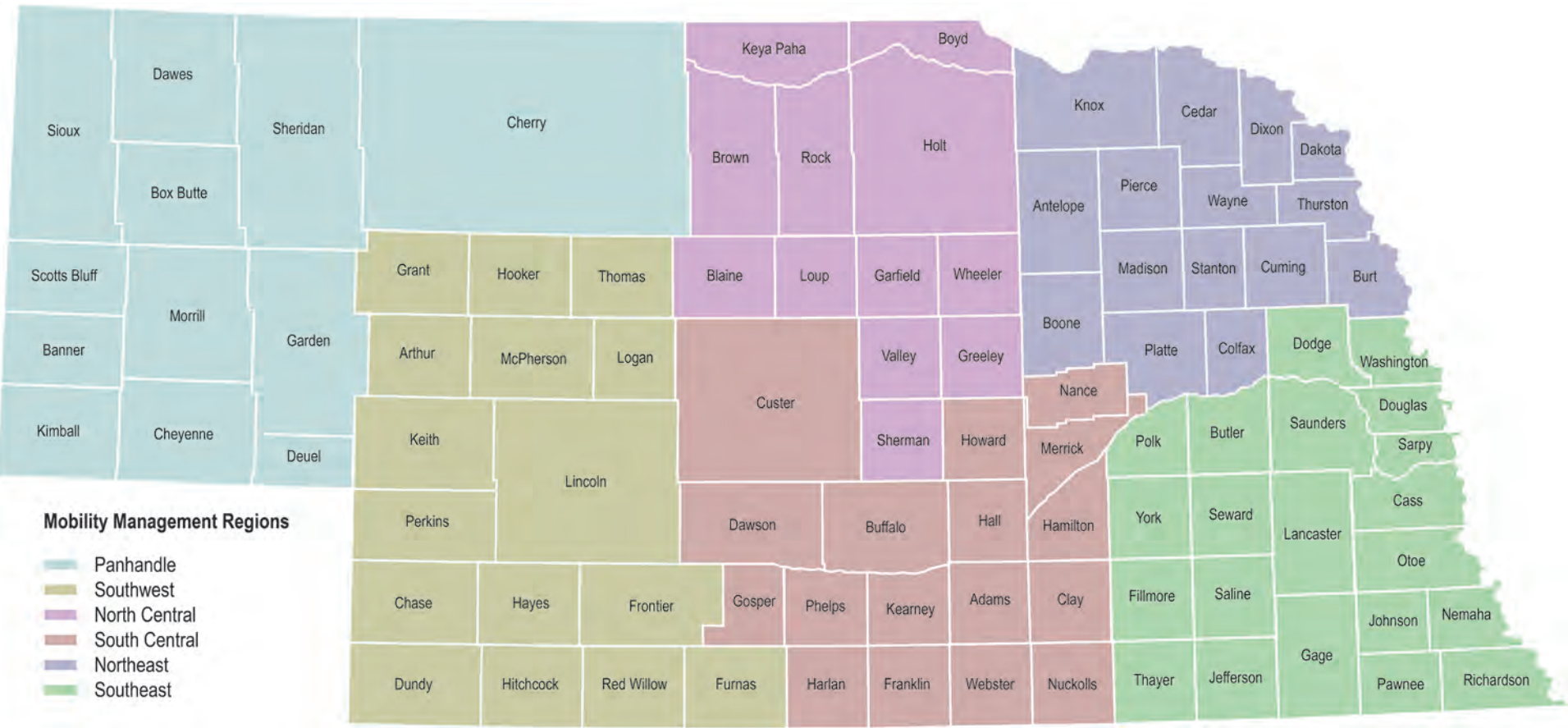
- This gap analysis has several key components:
- An overview of Section 5311 rural transit providers in the region, including their reported coverage area.
 - A summary of the most common drop-off destinations served by these providers.
 - An assessment of gaps and overlaps across providers in each region.
 - Evidence-based recommendations to support and expand efficient, effective rural transit across Nebraska.

The analysis is conducted using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and data about coverage areas, drop-off and pickup locations provided by service providers across Nebraska receiving Section 5311 funds as described in the About the Analysis section.

NEBRASKA MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REGIONS

As part of the management of Federal Transit Administration funding, NDOT divides Nebraska into six Mobility Management regions. A distinct analysis for each region is provided.

Figure 1. Nebraska Mobility Management regions, 2023



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

- Avera St. Anthony’s Hospital
- Community Memorial Health Center
- Loup City Public Transportation
- Valley County Transit System

NORTHEAST REGION

- Avera Creighton Hospital
- Cedar County Transit
- City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit
- City of Plainview Handivan
- Columbus Area Transit System
- Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit
- JoyRide Public Transit
- North Fork Area Transit
- Oakland Public Transit
- Ponca Express
- Schuyler Public Transit
- Wayne Public Transit

PANHANDLE REGION

- Alliance Public Transit
- Chadron City Transit
- City of Sidney Transportation System
- Crawford Public Transportation
- Garden County Public Transportation
- KCTS
- Open Plains Transit
- Tri-City Roadrunner

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

- Callaway District Hospital Public Transit Service
- Hall County Rural Transportation
- Harlan County Public Transportation
- Midland Public Transit
- Nance Trans, Inc.
- Phelps County Public Transit
- RYDE Transit

SOUTHEAST REGION

- Blue Rivers Transportation System
- Butler County Rural Transit Service
- City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit
- Fillmore County Rural Transit Service
- Fremont Transit Program
- Lancaster County Public Rural Transit
- Saline County Area Transit
- Saunders County Public Transportation
- Seward County Public Transit
- Southeast Nebraska Community Action
 - Cass County Transit
 - Pawnee County Transit
 - Richardson County Transit
- York County Public Transportation

SOUTHWEST REGION

- Chase County Transportation System
- City of Benkelman Handi Bus
- City of McCook Transit
- City of Ogallala Public Transit
- Grant Arthur Handi Bus
- Hitch & Hay Public Transit
- Hooker County Handi Bus
- North Platte Public Transit System
- Perkins County Public Transit
- Tri Valley Public Transportation

ABOUT THE ANALYSIS



Our analysis uses a range of data and methods to examine rural transit services in each mobility region. We built this approach by drawing on existing rural transit analyses from other states (e.g., DRPT, 2023 [Source 2]; MCDOT, 2020 [Source 3]; MOOver, 2022 [Source 4]; SWRPC, 2022 [Source 5]; Wave Transit, 2023 [Source 6]) and leveraging our own expertise.

Data for this analysis comes from three primary sources.

- The first is the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. These estimates provide detailed information about population characteristics and help us estimate transit demand for each region.
- The second source is data from rural transit agencies, provided through the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal. This data enabled us to analyze transit offerings, ridership, and geographic service coverage.
- Third, we requested samples of completed rides from transit providers. Not all agencies provided samples over the same time periods or same length of time. However, they are all illustrative of agency service. These samples included pick-up and drop-off locations in 2024. Using the U.S. Census Geocoder (Source 7), we geocoded these locations to generate latitude and longitude coordinates, which were key in creating visual representations like heatmaps and coverage maps.

The metrics we examine for each agency include: provider coverage area (e.g., city-specific, county-wide, regional), boardings per vehicle per fiscal year, miles per vehicle per fiscal year, miles per boarding per fiscal year, drop-offs at or near reported locations in the sample, observed coverage area in square miles, vehicles per square mile of the observed coverage area, and boardings per square mile of the observed coverage area.

The analysis begins with an exploration of the population characteristics and transit demand in each region. This step uses demographic and socioeconomic data to understand the needs of rural transit users. Next, we profile each transit agency’s services, detailing ridership statistics, geographic coverage, and operational metrics. These profiles offer insights into the capacity of existing transit systems.

To illustrate the state of rural transit services, we present maps derived from the geocoded ride sample data. Heatmaps highlight the density of drop-off destinations, while polygon maps delineate the observed coverage areas. These visual tools help convey the extent and uses of transit services. In addition to visual analysis, we conduct a detailed review of trip destinations and service patterns to identify gaps in coverage and overlaps between agencies. This helps assess how well current transit services meet regional needs and highlights opportunities for improvements.

Finally, we synthesize these findings into a regional summary that evaluated transit availability, accessibility, and coverage gaps. The report concludes with a set of actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing rural transit services in the region.

NORTHEAST REGION OVERVIEW

This document focuses on rural transit agencies in the Northeast Mobility Management region, comprising the 15 most northeasterly counties of Nebraska, bordering South Dakota and Iowa.

Figure 2. Northeast Mobility Management region

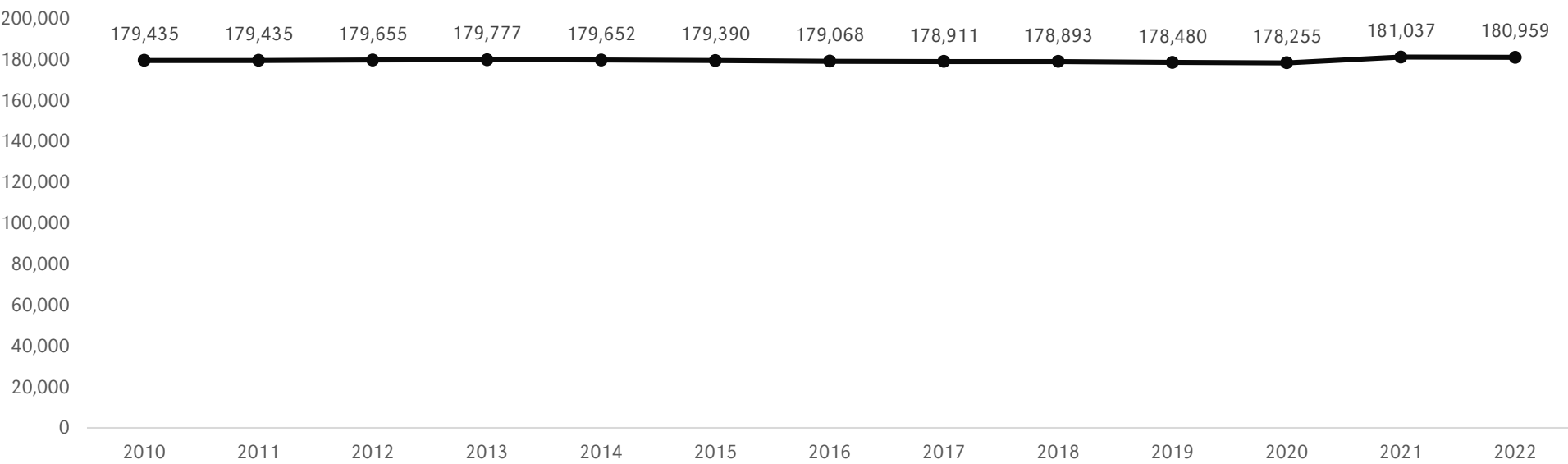


Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

POPULATION TRENDS

Overall, the population of the Northeast region has increased since 2010. From 2010 to 2020, the Northeast region showed a downward trend in total population, decreasing from 179,435 to 178,255. However, some population inflow occurred in 2021, which lifted Northeast total population to 181,037 in 2021 with a slight decrease to 180,959 in 2022.

Figure 3. Total population in the Northeast region, 2010-2022



Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2010-2022

TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATION

In addition to evaluating the overall population, we analyzed the transit-dependent population in the region. The transit-dependent population includes those who cannot drive due to age, lack financial resources to own a vehicle, or have physical disabilities (Jiao & Dillivan, 2013; Jiao & Wang, 2021). Reports from other state DOTs, such as those in Arkansas, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire, as well as local reports from agencies like DuPage County in Chicago, Illinois, and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, consider the following groups as transit-dependent:

- a. Individuals aged 65 or older.
- b. Individuals below the poverty level.
- c. Individuals with hearing, vision, ambulatory, or other physical difficulties.
- d. Households without access to a private vehicle.



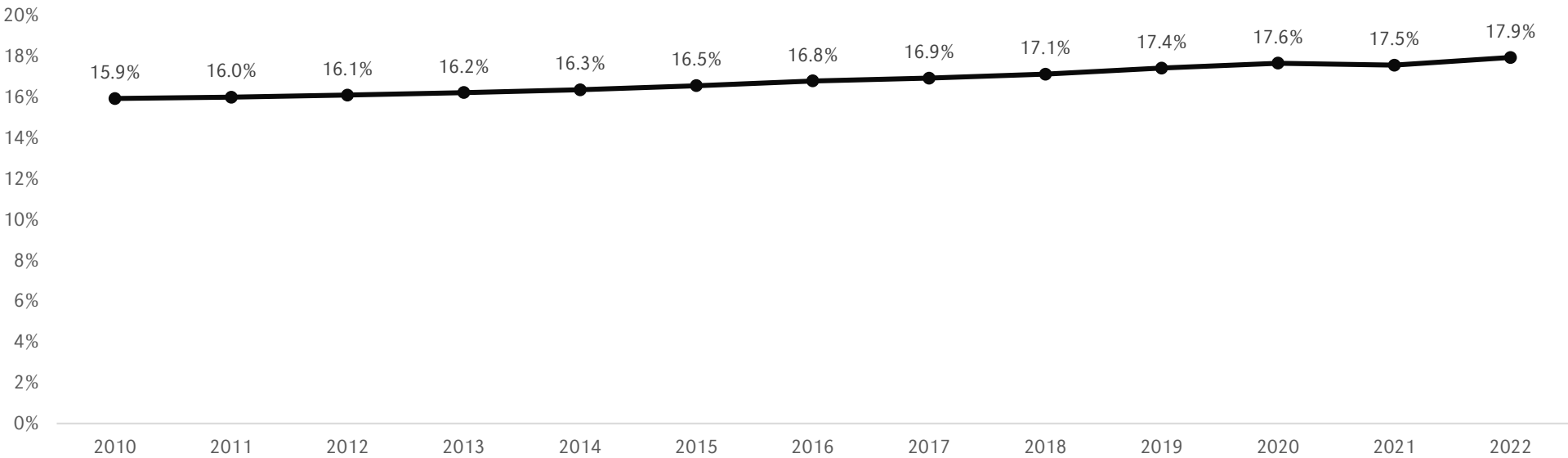
Table 1. Transit-dependent population in the Northeast Region, 2022

| Region | Total Population | Percent of Population 65 Years or Older | Percent of Population Below Poverty | Percent of Population with a Disability | Occupied Housing Units | Percent of Occupied Housing Units with No Private Vehicle |
|-----------|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Nebraska | 1,958,939 | 16.2% | 10.4% | 12.0% | 776,379 | 5.1% |
| Northeast | 180,959 | 17.9% | 10.6% | 12.0% | 69,114 | 4.5% |
| Antelope | 6,302 | 23.7% | 11.1% | 14.4% | 2,607 | 3.8% |
| Boone | 5,397 | 22.9% | 7.3% | 14.0% | 2,240 | 3.6% |
| Burt | 6,717 | 24.0% | 14.2% | 18.0% | 2,790 | 5.5% |
| Cedar | 8,375 | 21.6% | 5.4% | 10.4% | 3,354 | 2.8% |
| Colfax | 10,563 | 13.3% | 10.2% | 8.1% | 3,616 | 1.4% |
| Cuming | 9,000 | 21.6% | 7.7% | 9.9% | 3,711 | 2.3% |
| Dakota | 21,308 | 13.2% | 11.2% | 11.6% | 7,181 | 6.7% |
| Dixon | 5,579 | 20.7% | 9.4% | 12.0% | 2,215 | 2.6% |
| Knox | 8,415 | 24.8% | 12.0% | 16.5% | 3,269 | 3.6% |
| Madison | 35,538 | 16.3% | 12.2% | 11.0% | 14,002 | 4.7% |
| Pierce | 7,301 | 19.3% | 7.9% | 11.8% | 2,876 | 3.4% |
| Platte | 34,219 | 17.8% | 8.2% | 11.7% | 13,292 | 5.8% |
| Stanton | 5,828 | 19.8% | 7.0% | 11.4% | 2,237 | 2.0% |
| Thurston | 6,716 | 12.3% | 19.0% | 12.2% | 1,993 | 8.6% |
| Wayne | 9,701 | 16.6% | 16.6% | 15.5% | 3,731 | 4.9% |

Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2022

As shown in Table 1, the transit-dependent population in the Northeast region was largely comparable to the average level observed across Nebraska in 2022. The Northeast has a slightly higher percentage of population ages 65 and older than Nebraska as a whole. This percentage has been steadily growing in the Northeast since 2010, from 15.9% in 2010 to 17.9% in 2022 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percent of population age 65 or older in the Northeast region, 2010-2022



Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2010-2022

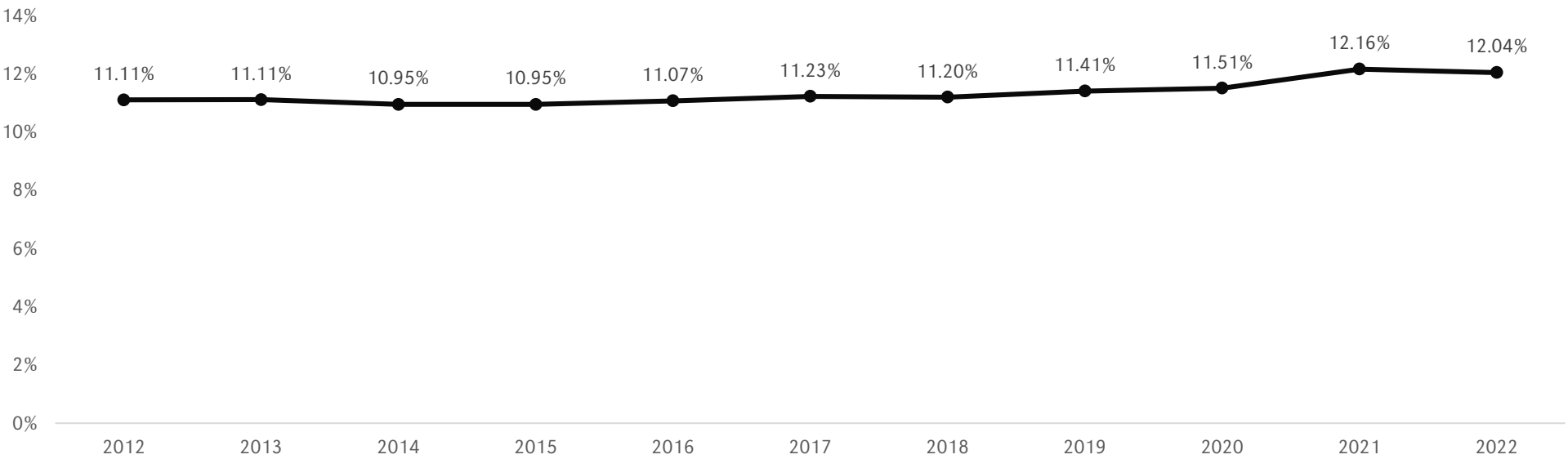


The population of the Northeast is roughly as dependent on public transit as the population of Nebraska as a whole. **The percentage of older individuals is growing in the Northeast, meaning the need for public transit in the Northeast will likely increase.** We recommend reviewing the allocation of transit resources in the counties within the Northeast region that are more transit dependent than others.

The percentage of the Northeast’s population living below the poverty level is comparable to the statewide average overall but varies widely by county. For example, only 5.4% of Cedar County’s population lives in poverty, compared to 19.0% of Thurston County’s population.

From 2012 to 2022, the percentage of individuals with difficulties living in the Northeast has remained steady without showing much fluctuation, accounting for around 11-12% of total population (Figure 5). In 2022, the percentage of the population that is disabled in the Northeast region is 12%, the same as the statewide estimate.

Figure 5. Percent of population with difficulties in the Northeast region, 2012-2022



Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2012-2022

The percentage of housing units with no vehicles comprised 4.5% of total occupied housing units, which was slightly lower than the Nebraska average of 5.1%. However, this number varies by counties in the region. Thurston County has the highest percentage of housing units with no vehicles at 8.6%.

Based on these estimates, the population of the Northeast is roughly as dependent on public transit as the population of Nebraska as a whole. However, the relative percentage of the transit dependent population, particularly older individuals, is growing in the Northeast, meaning the need for public transit in the Northeast will likely increase. Furthermore, some counties within the Northeast region are more transit dependent than others, which may indicate a need for careful allocation of transit resources.

NORTHEAST TRANSIT PROVIDERS

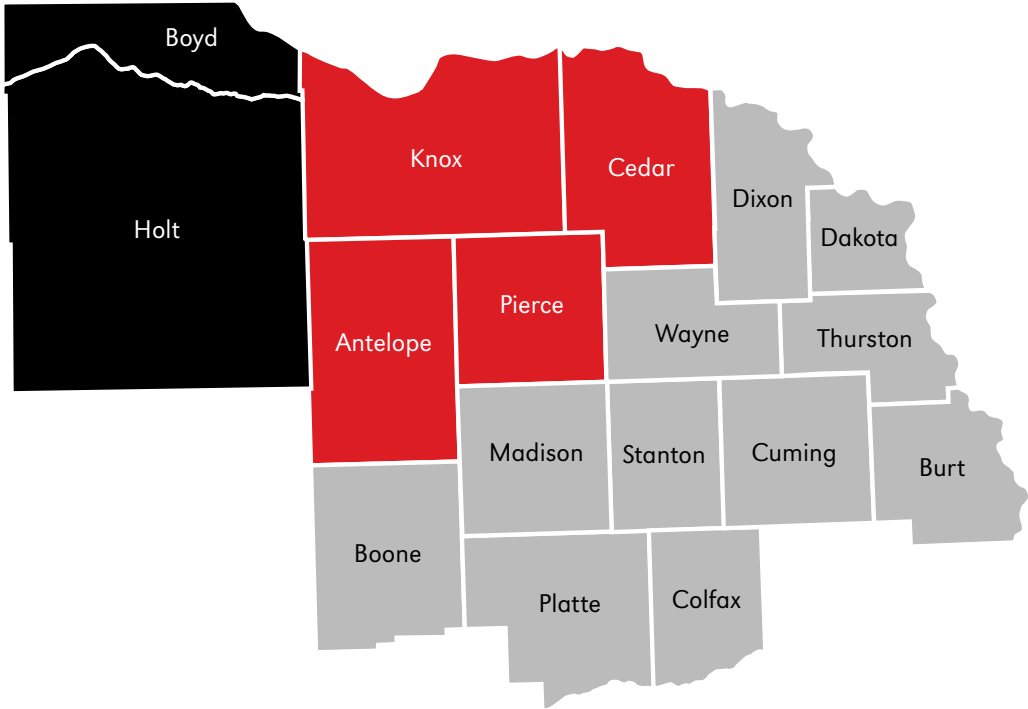
To respond to the growing transit needs of the region, the Northeast region is currently served by 12 rural transit providers. This section provides an overview of the service provided by each of those providers.



avera creighton hospital

Avera Creighton Hospital is a regional service located in Creighton, Nebraska, providing public transportation to all residents of Antelope, Boyd, Cedar, Holt, Knox, and Pierce counties. Of note, Boyd and Holt counties are part of the North Central Mobility Management region.

Figure 6. Map of Northeast region with Avera Creighton Hospital service area counties shaded in red and North Central region service area counties shaded in black



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Rides are provided Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., with rides on Saturday or Sunday by appointment. They also provide a complimentary shuttle for patients of the hospital.

Source: (20) Avera Creighton Hospital website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Avera Creighton Hospital operates five vehicles and provided just over 3,600 rides in FY 2024. The service they provide has remained steady from FY 2022 to FY 2024. Annual boardings and miles traveled increased slightly, while the size of their vehicle fleet decreased by one vehicle.

Table 2. Ridership statistics for Avera Creighton Hospital, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 6 | 6 | 5 | -16.7% |
| Boardings | 3,519 | 3,431 | 3,611 | 2.6% |
| Mileage | 143,470 | 144,990 | 149,022 | 3.9% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 586.5 | 571.8 | 722.2 | 23.1% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 23,911.7 | 24,165.0 | 29,804.4 | 24.6% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 40.8 | 42.3 | 41.3 | 1.2% |

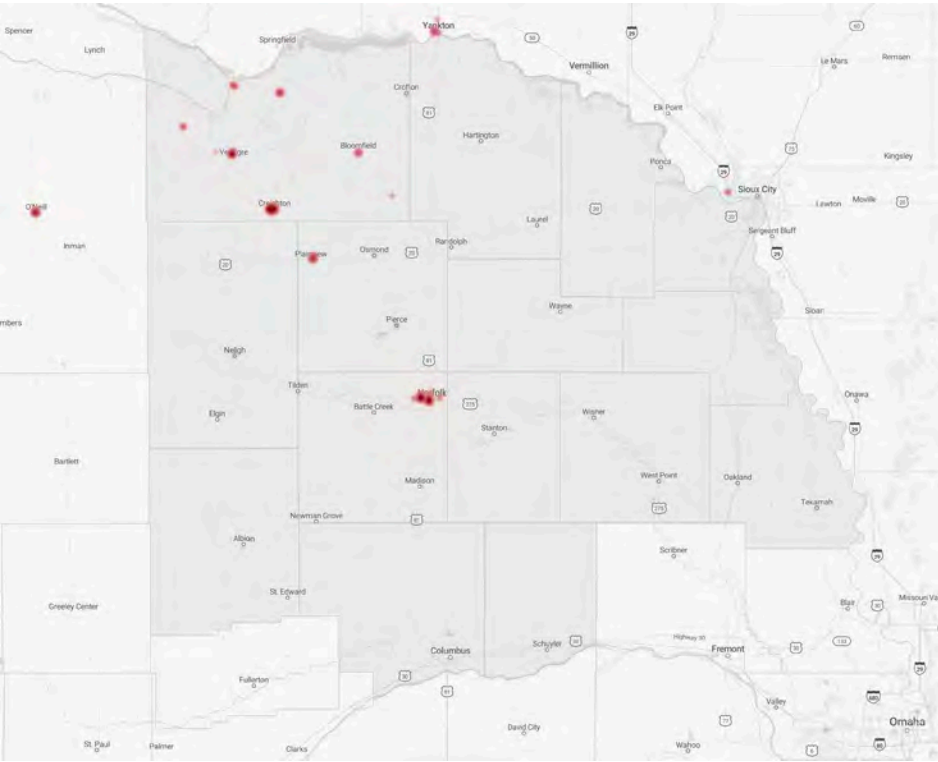
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Avera Creighton Hospital provided a sample of 698 trips taken between mid-July 2024 and mid-October 2024 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs and to estimate the coverage area. Figure 7 shows a heatmap of all drop-offs by Avera Creighton Hospital and lists the top five most frequent destinations.

Trip destinations were scattered across the Northeast region and some just beyond the region borders, concentrated near Knox County but including nearby cities of Norfolk and O’Neill, Nebraska, and Yankton, South Dakota.

The top five destinations are dominated by medical facilities, primarily Avera Creighton Hospital itself with 14.0% of the reported drop-offs. The sole exception is Southview Apartments, a USDA Section 515 low-income rental complex in nearby Verdigre, Nebraska (roughly 16 miles from Creighton).

Figure 7. Drop-off locations for Avera Creighton Hospital, July 2024 to October 2024

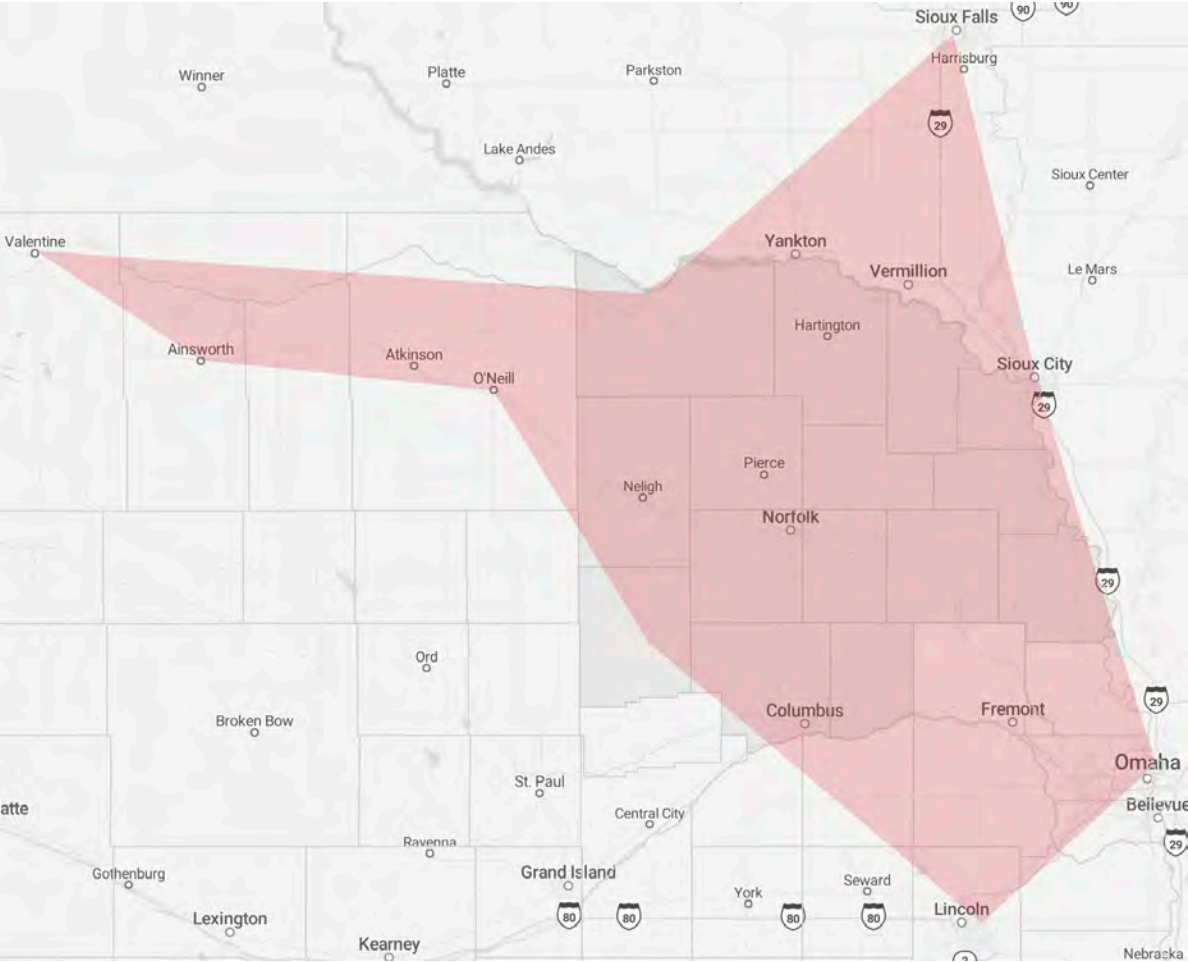


Source: (10) Avera Creighton Hospital reported ride data, July 2024 to October 2024

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Avera Creighton Hospital | Creighton | 98 |
| DaVita Dialysis | Norfolk | 58 |
| Southview Apartments | Verdigre | 46 |
| Faith Regional Hospital | Norfolk | 41 |
| Avera St. Anthony's Hospital | O'Neill | 32 |

The observed coverage area for Avera Creighton Hospital is an estimated 15,518.0 square miles, covering most of the Northeast region. Pickups were also reported outside the region – Valentine in the Panhandle region; Yankton, Vermillion, Sioux Falls, and other cities in South Dakota; and Lincoln and Omaha in the Southeast region.

Figure 8. Observed pick-up area for Avera Creighton Hospital, July 2024 to October 2024



Source: (10) Avera Creighton Hospital reported ride data, July 2024 to October 2024



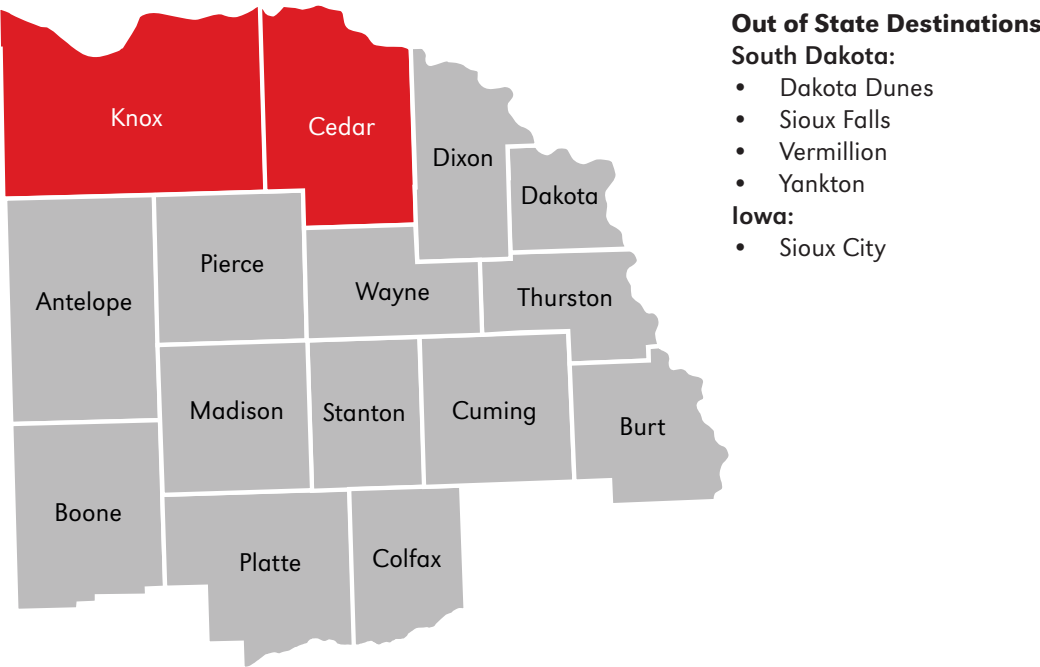
Avera Creighton Hospital has maintained a steady level of service since FY 2022. The reported drop-offs and observed coverage area are consistent with their advertised service. **We find no apparent gaps in their reported service but suggest exploring the possibility of limited service on weekends.**



CEDAR COUNTY TRANSIT

Cedar County Transit provides regional, demand response service for all residents of Cedar County and residents of Knox County within 30 miles of Hartington. Rides are provided as far as 200 miles from the main office.

Figure 9. Map of Northeast region with Cedar County Transit service area counties shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (21) Cedar County Transit info sheet, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Cedar County Transit operates 10 vehicles and provided around 13,000 rides in FY 2024. Their service has grown steadily from FY 2022 to FY 2024. Annual boardings increased by nearly two-thirds (66.2%) and annual mileage increased by 44.3%. As the number of vehicles has remained constant, the average usage of each vehicle has increased.

Table 3. Ridership statistics for Cedar County Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 10 | 10 | 10 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 7,960 | 11,235 | 13,231 | 66.2% |
| Mileage | 259,178 | 338,230 | 373,931 | 44.3% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 796.0 | 1,123.5 | 1,323.1 | 66.2% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 25,917.8 | 33,823.0 | 37,393.1 | 44.3% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 32.6 | 30.1 | 28.3 | -13.2% |

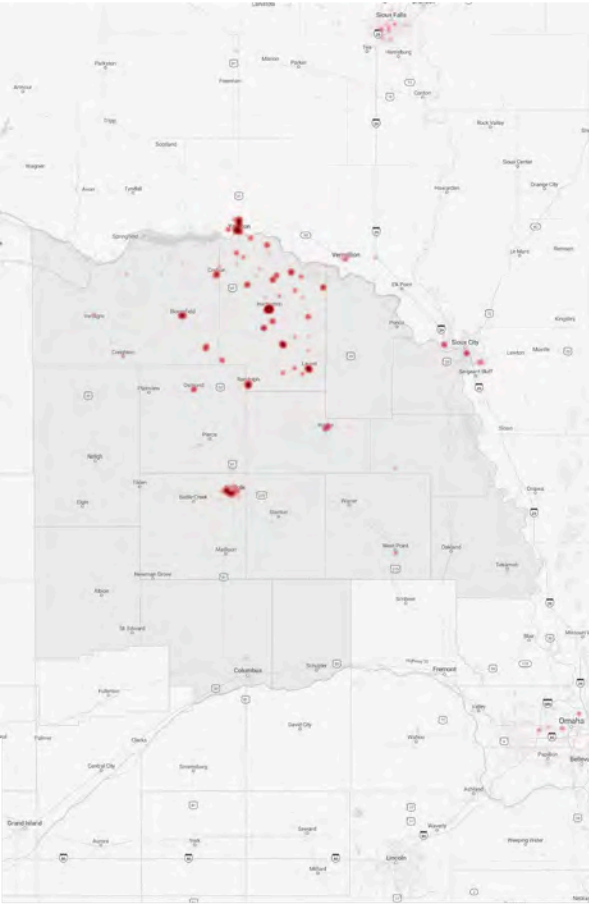
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Cedar County Transit provided a sample of 2,331 trips taken between November 2024 and January 2025 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs and to estimate the coverage area.

Figure 10 shows a heatmap of all drop-offs by Cedar County Transit and lists the top five most frequent destinations. Trip destinations were primarily located within the reported coverage area of Cedar County and eastern Knox County, but included many trips to bordering Yankton, South Dakota, as well as a few to Lincoln, Omaha, Sioux City, and Sioux Falls.

The top five destinations are all in Cedar County or in neighboring Yankton and primarily include medical or elder care facilities. The Spectacle Shop provides eyecare in Hartington. Avera Sacred Heart in Yankton is a nearby hospital. Walmart Supercenter in Yankton is the second most frequent drop-off destination.

Figure 10. Drop-off locations for Cedar County Transit, November 2024 to January 2025

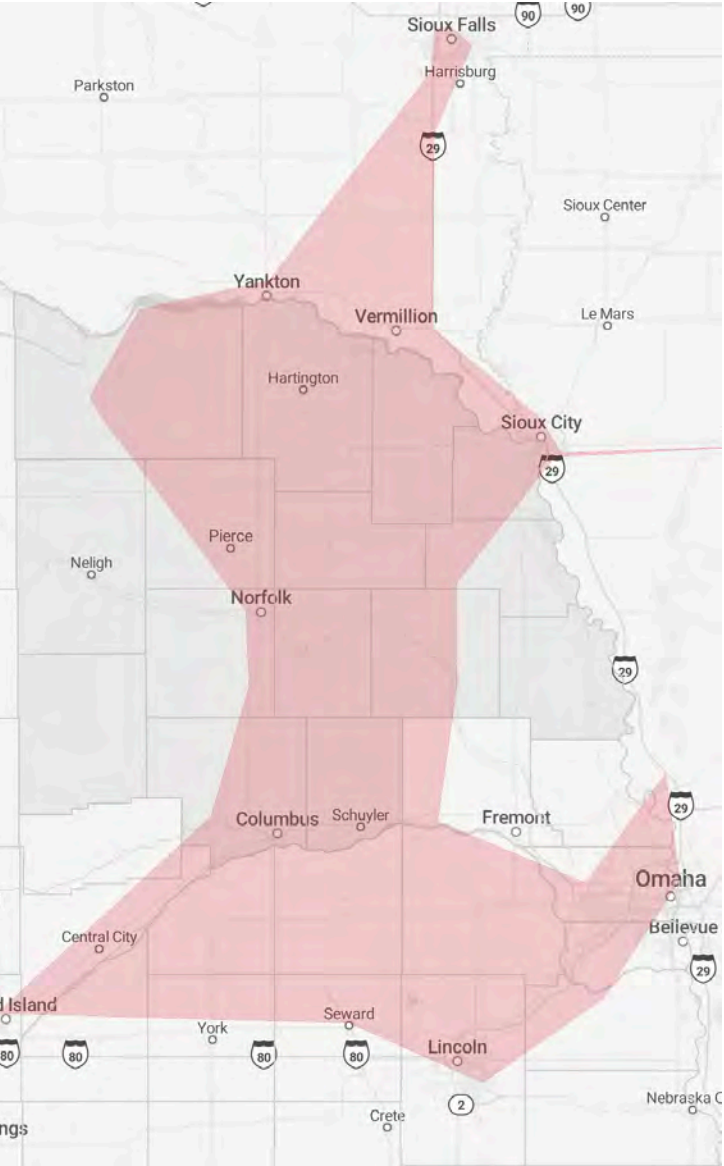


Source: (11) Cedar County Transit reported ride data, November 2024 to January 2025

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| The Spectacle Shop | Hartington | 105 |
| Walmart Supercenter | Yankton, SD | 57 |
| Hartington Senior Center | Hartington | 53 |
| Colonial Manor | Randolph | 52 |
| Avera Sacred Heart Hospital | Yankton, SD | 45 |

The observed coverage area for Cedar County Transit extends far beyond their reported area, covering an estimated 9,903.2 square miles. Most pickups were in Cedar and Knox counties or in neighboring Yankton, South Dakota, but others extended the coverage area north to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and south to Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island.

Figure 11. Observed pick-up area for Cedar County Transit, November 2024 to January 2025



Source: (11) Cedar County Transit reported ride data, November 2024 to January 2025



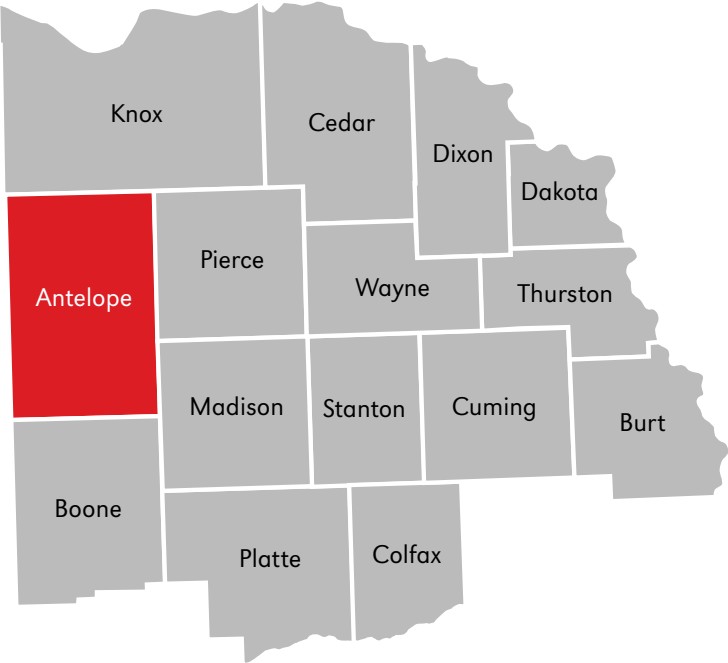
Cedar County Transit has shown a significant increase in annual boardings and mileage since FY 2022 despite maintaining a consistent fleet size. **The increased demand on those vehicles suggests that Cedar County Transit may need to expand their fleet.** The observed coverage area is also much larger than the reported area, particularly oriented south toward Lincoln and Omaha. **We recommend increasing coordination with providers serving the southern portion of the region to avoid duplicate trips to those destinations.**



CITY OF NELIGH DIAL-A-RIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT

The City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit provides a county-wide “dial-a-ride” service that travels within the City of Neligh and the surrounding areas of Antelope County, with occasional trips to Norfolk for medical appointments.

Figure 12. Map of Northeast region with the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Rides from the second Monday in August up to Memorial Day are provided Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-5 P.M. Rides from Memorial Day through the 2nd Monday in August are provided Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-4 P.M. Sunday morning rides are by appointment only.

Source: (22) City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit operates two vehicles and provided around 8,500 rides in FY 2024. Their service has grown steadily from FY 2022 to FY 2024. Annual boardings increased by 31.6% while the total annual mileage traveled by their vehicles more than doubled with a 115.0% increase. The miles per boarding—an indicator of average trip length—commensurately increased by 63.3%.

Table 4. Ridership statistics for the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 6,529 | 7,828 | 8,595 | 31.6% |
| Mileage | 5,578 | 5,699 | 11,990 | 115.0% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 3,264.5 | 2,609.3 | 4,297.5 | 31.6% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 2,789.0 | 1,899.7 | 5,995.0 | 115.0% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 0.9 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 63.3% |

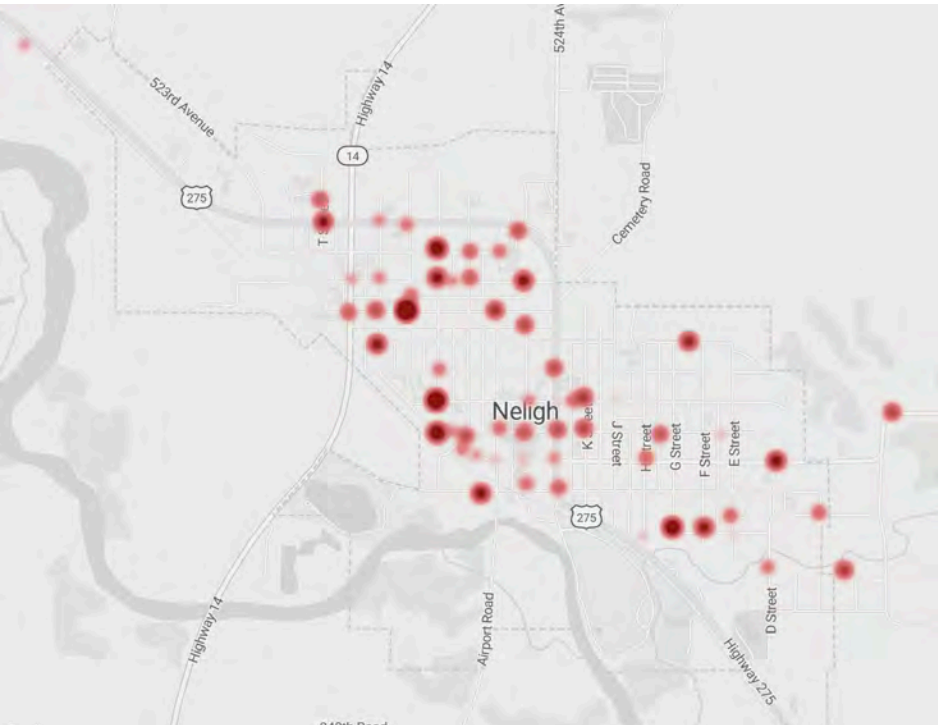
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit provided a sample of 1,935 trips taken between April 2024 and June 2024 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs and to estimate the coverage area.

Figure 13 shows a heatmap of all drop-offs by City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit and lists the top five most frequent destinations. Trip destinations were all within or very near the city limits of the City of Neligh.

The top five destinations included Neligh-Oakdale’s Westward Elementary School, the most frequent destination (17.0% of the sample trips), followed closely by two distinct housing developments managed by the Neligh Housing Authority. Other destinations in the top five were Antelope Memorial Hospital, Snider Memorial Funeral Home, and the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church.

Figure 13. Drop-off locations for the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit, April 2024 to June 2024

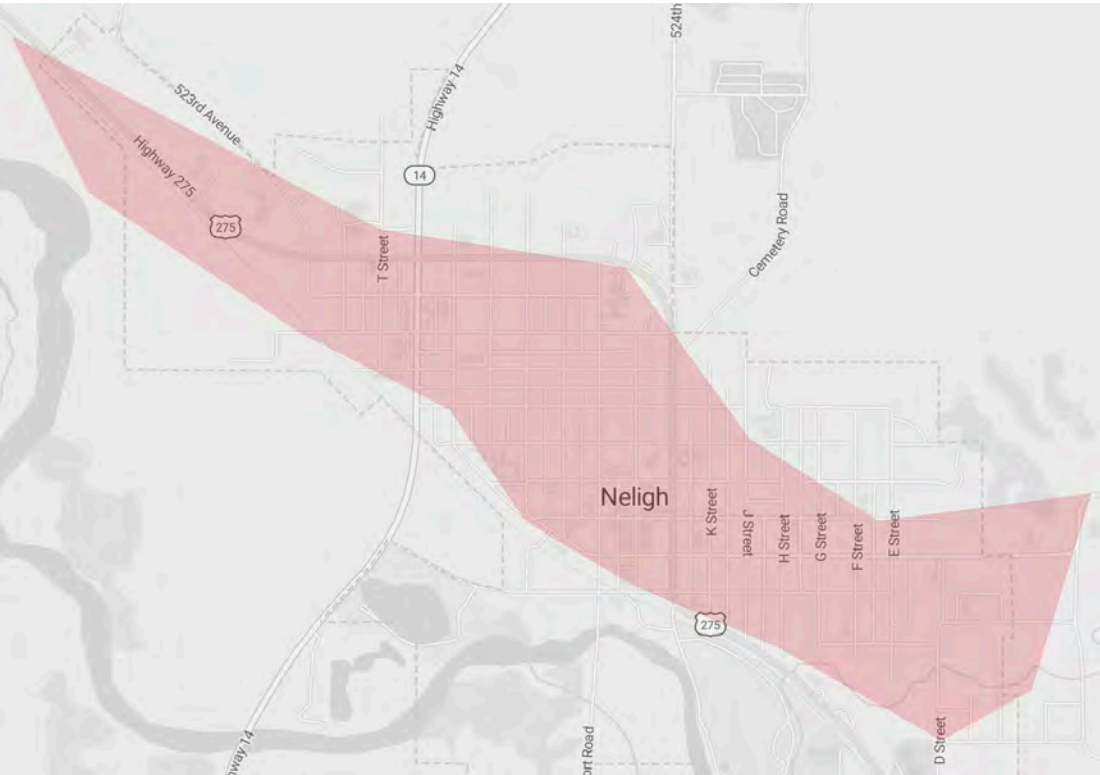


Source: (12) City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit reported ride data, April 2024 to June 2024

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|---|-----------|---------------------|
| Westward Elementary School (Neligh-Oakdale) | Neligh | 328 |
| Neligh Housing Authority | Neligh | 316 |
| Antelope Memorial Hospital | Neligh | 59 |
| Snider Memorial Funeral Home | Neligh | 56 |
| St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church | Neligh | 54 |

The observed coverage area for City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit covers most of the City of Neligh, particularly along U.S. Highway 275. The observed coverage area is approximately 0.7 square miles in total.

Figure 14. Observed pick-up area for the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit, April 2024 to June 2024



Source: (12) City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit reported ride data, April 2024 to June 2024

City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit has increased their level of service since FY 2022 in terms of both boardings and miles traveled. **The annual mileage increased more than the number of boardings, indicating that the average trip length has also increased.** Despite this increase — and the advertised coverage of Antelope County — we did not observe any pickups outside the City of Neligh. **This suggests the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit may be better classified as city-specific rather than county-wide.**

CITY OF PLAINVIEW HANDIVAN

The City of Plainview Handivan operates a city-specific demand response service within the City of Plainview and surrounding areas with a reservation.

Figure 15. Map of Northeast region with the City of Plainview Handivan service area shown as red dot



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (23) City of Plainview Handivan website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the City of Plainview Handivan operates one vehicle and provided around 1,300 rides in FY 2024. Annual boardings increased by 46.3% between FY 2022 and FY 2024, with a slight decrease from a peak in FY 2023. Total miles traveled increased less significantly (by 33.5% overall), indicating a shift toward more frequent, shorter trips.

Table 5. Ridership statistics for the City of Plainview Handivan, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 913 | 1,421 | 1,336 | 46.3% |
| Mileage | 4,502 | 5,703 | 6,011 | 33.5% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 913.0 | 1,421.0 | 1,336.0 | 46.3% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 4,502.0 | 5,703.0 | 6,011.0 | 33.5% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 4.9 | 4.0 | 4.5 | -8.8% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

The City of Plainview Handivan provided a sample of driver logs collected from May 2024 to July 2024 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs. The logs included the drop-off destination for 412 trips but did not provide detailed information about the pickup location, so we were unable to observe the pickup area.

Nearly all the drop-offs occurred within the City of Plainview, with an occasional trip to Norfolk or Creighton and a few trips to the Pierce County Courthouse in Pierce. Top destinations included grocery and discount stores in Plainview as well as local hair salons or other services.

Figure 16. Drop-off locations for the City of Plainview Handivan, May 2024 to July 2024

Source: (13) City of Plainview Handivan reported ride data, May 2024 to July 2024

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Mitch's Food Center | Plainview | 82 |
| Plainview Senior Center | Plainview | 57 |
| Dollar General | Plainview | 49 |
| Casey's | Plainview | 41 |
| Marla's Hair Affair | Plainview | 35 |

City of Plainview Handivan did not include sufficiently detailed ride data in their data sample to observe their pickup area.



The City of Plainview experienced a notable increase in annual boardings and mileage in FY 2023 but appear able to maintain the increased level of service with their current fleet of one vehicle. We were unable to estimate their pickup coverage area, but the reported drop-offs are consistent with their advertised service area. **We find no apparent gaps in their service but would suggest investigating the impact of limited service on weekends.**

COLUMBUS AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM

Columbus Area Transit System is a city-specific, demand response service that provides public transportation to all residents of the City of Columbus. Service is scheduled on a first-call, first-served basis within the Columbus city limits.

Figure 17. Map of Panhandle region with Columbus Area Transit System service area shown as red dot



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Rides are provided Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.

Source: (24) Columbus Area Transit System website, retrieved 2025


According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Columbus Area Transit System operates two vehicles and provided just under 7,500 rides in FY 2024. Annual boardings increased by 19.0% between FY 2022 and FY 2024. Total miles traveled also increased by 14.5%, suggesting that the additional trips taken cover nearly the same distance as historical trips.

Table 6. Ridership statistics for Columbus Area Transit System, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 6,251 | 6,947 | 7,438 | 19.0% |
| Mileage | 23,894 | 25,625 | 27,356 | 14.5% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 3,125.5 | 3,473.5 | 3,719.0 | 19.0% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 11,947.0 | 12,812.5 | 13,678.0 | 14.5% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.7 | -3.8% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Columbus Area Transit did not provide any detailed ride data for this analysis.



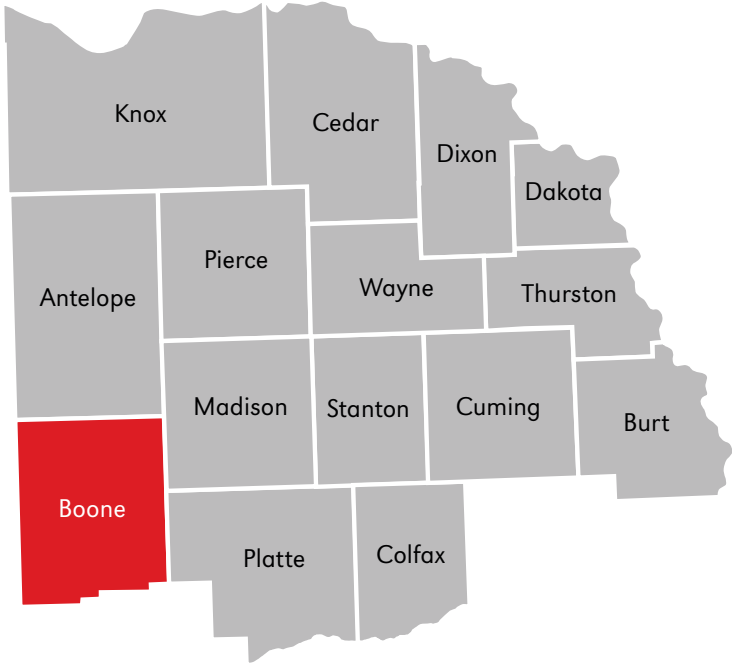
The service provided by Columbus Area Transit System has remained steady over the period of this analysis.

There has been only a slight increase in annual boardings and a commensurate increase in annual mileage; trip length has remained nearly the same, as has the load on the two vehicles in the fleet.

GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY-ALBION PUBLIC TRANSIT

Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit provides county-wide demand response services to residents of the City of Albion and surrounding areas of Boone County, including transportation to appointments outside Boone County.

Figure 18. Map of Northeast region with Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit operates two vehicles and provided just under 3,000 rides in FY 2024. Annual boardings increased by 24.9% overall, while total miles traveled increased slightly less (13.4%). The miles per boarding decreased slightly, indicating that trips are trending to be shorter and more frequent.

Table 7. Ridership statistics for Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 2,371 | 2,810 | 2,962 | 24.9% |
| Mileage | 12,420 | 14,478 | 14,085 | 13.4% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 1,185.5 | 1,405.0 | 1,481.0 | 24.9% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 6,210.0 | 7,239.0 | 7,042.5 | 13.4% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 5.2 | 5.2 | 4.8 | -9.2% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit provided a sample of driver logs collected during July 2024 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs. The logs included the drop-off destination for 109 trips, but did not provide detailed information about the pick-up location, so we were unable to observe the pick-up coverage area.

All the drop-offs occurred within the City of Albion. Top destinations included the Boone County Medical Clinic (22.3% of trips) and Boone County Health Center (10.1%) as well as local hair salons and the local Dollar General discount store.

Figure 19. Drop-off locations for Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit, July 2024



Source: (14) Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit reported ride data, July 2024

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Boone County Medical Clinic | Albion | 25 |
| Hair Razors Salon | Albion | 20 |
| Boone County Health Center | Albion | 11 |
| Dollar General | Albion | 8 |
| Good Samaritan Society | Albion | 7 |

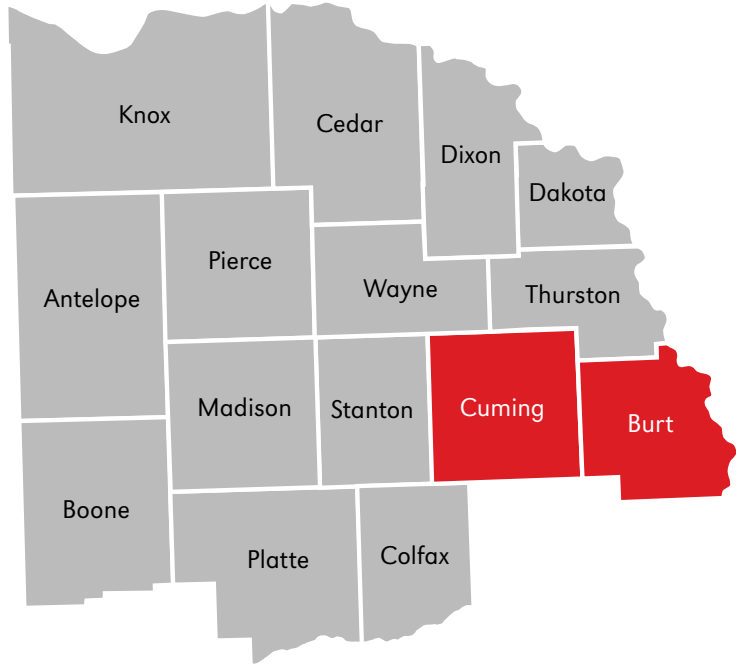
Good Samaritan Society-Albion Albion Public Transit did not include sufficiently detailed ride data in their data sample to observe their pickup area.

Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit has seen a small increase in annual boardings and mileage in recent years. **Additionally, the mileage per boarding has decreased, indicating a trend toward more frequent, shorter trips.** Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit advertised service to all of Boone County, but the sample provided for our analysis only contained rides within the City of Albion. **There may be a need to increase service in the rest of Boone County, especially since Boone County is only sparsely covered by other providers in the region.**

JOYRIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT

JoyRide Public Transit is a regional service providing rides to residents of Burt and Cuming counties, including the communities of Bancroft, Beemer, Craig, Decatur, Lyons, Oakland, Tekamah, West Point, and Wisner. They began service as a Section 5311 provider during FY 2024.

Figure 20. Map of Northeast region with JoyRide Public Transit service area counties shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (25) JoyRide Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, JoyRide Public Transit operates three vehicles and provided nearly 1,500 rides in FY 2024. As JoyRide Public Transit began service as a Section 5311 provider in FY 2024, the Portal did not include any data regarding the service provided during FY 2022 and FY 2023.

Table 8. Ridership statistics for JoyRide Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | N/A | N/A | 3 | N/A |
| Boardings | N/A | N/A | 1,477 | N/A |
| Mileage | N/A | N/A | 22,239 | N/A |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | N/A | N/A | 492.3 | N/A |
| Miles Per Vehicle | N/A | N/A | 7,413.0 | N/A |
| Miles Per Boarding | N/A | N/A | 15.1 | N/A |

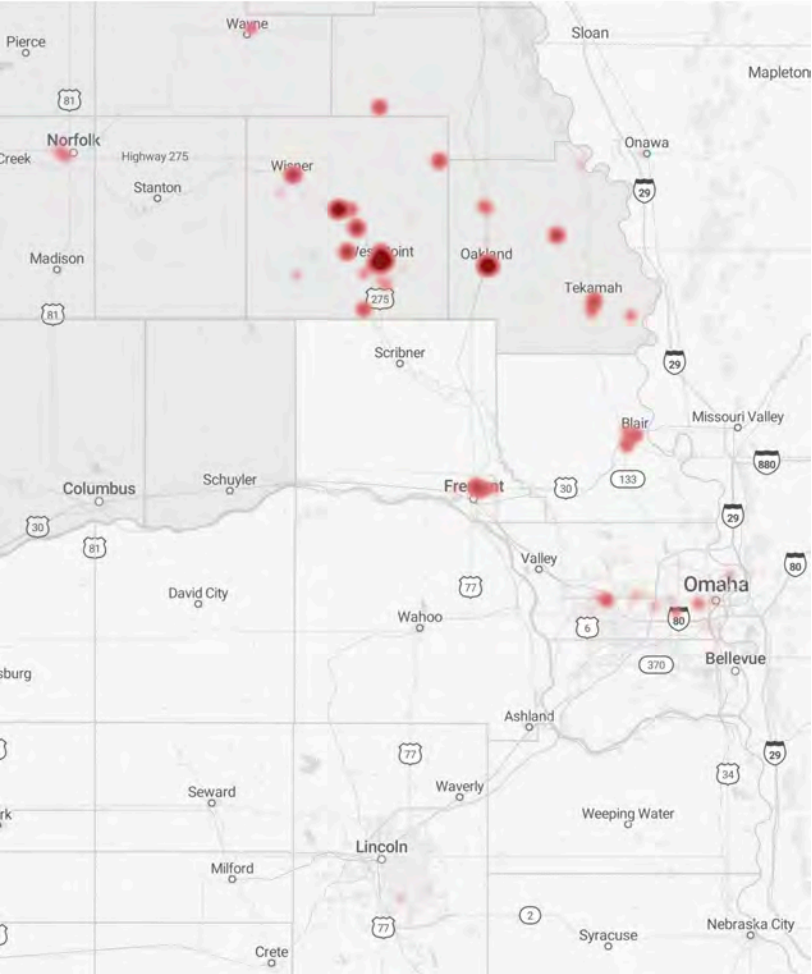
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

JoyRide Public Transit provided a sample of 1,024 trips taken between May 2024 and July 2024 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs and to estimate the coverage area.

Figure 21 shows a heatmap of all drop-offs by JoyRide Public Transit and lists the top five most frequent destinations. Trip destinations were concentrated in Burt and Cuming counties, with some trips north to Norfolk and south to Fremont, Blair, and Omaha.

Three of the top five destinations are in West Point, and two are the Franciscan Healthcare locations in West Point and Oakland. Apart from the Dollar Fresh Market grocery store in West Point, the other locations are all medical or elder care facilities.

Figure 21. Drop-off locations for JoyRide Public Transit, May 2024 to July 2024

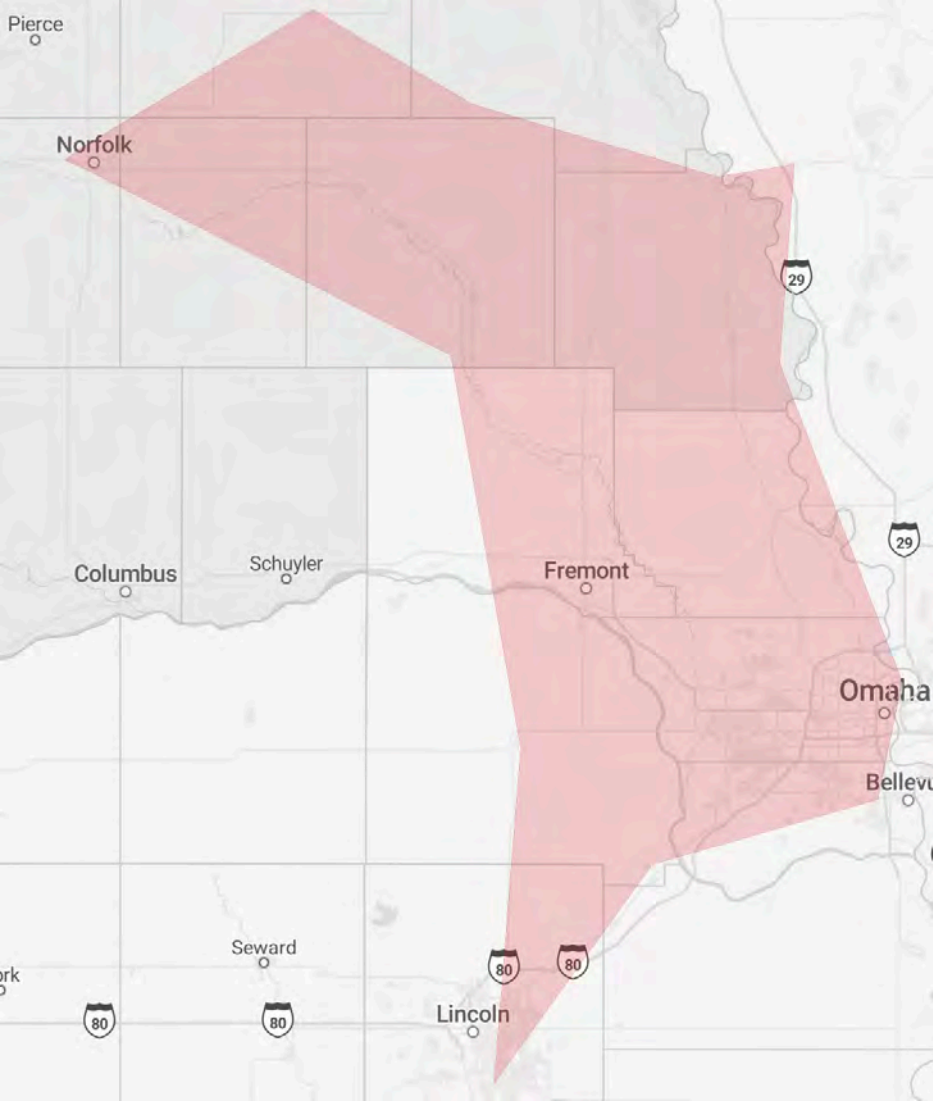


Source: (15) JoyRide Public Transit reported ride data, May 2024 to July 2024

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Franciscan Healthcare (West Point) | West Point | 90 |
| Colonial Haven Nursing Home | Beemer | 38 |
| St. Joseph's Nursing Home | West Point | 36 |
| Franciscan Healthcare (Oakland) | Oakland | 31 |
| Dollar Fresh Market | West Point | 23 |

The observed coverage area for JoyRide Public Transit includes nearly all of Burt and Cuming counties, with a few pickups reported in Norfolk and Wayne. Other pickups were reported in Lincoln, Omaha, and Bellevue, extending the coverage area toward the south. In total, the estimated coverage area is approximately 3,138.7 square miles.

Figure 22. Observed pick-up area for JoyRide Public Transit, May 2024 to July 2024



Source: (15) JoyRide Public Transit reported ride data, May 2024 to July 2024

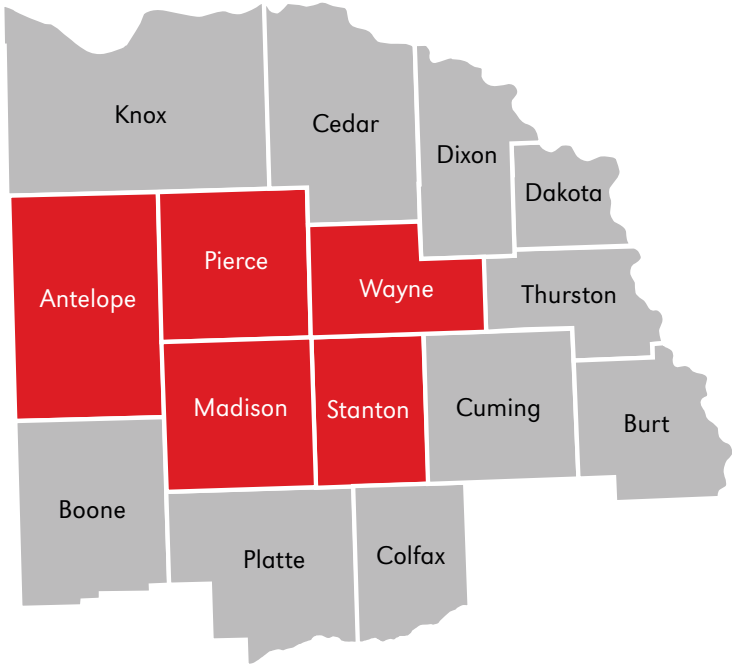
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JoyRide Public Transit began operation in 2024 and has no historical information against which to compare their current level of service. Their observed coverage area matches their advertised service and extends south toward Lincoln and Omaha. **We see no apparent gap in their current service but would suggest officially expanding service toward the cities to the south (13.6% of their drop-offs).**

NORTH FORK AREA TRANSIT

North Fork Area Transit is a regional service providing demand response rides to residents of Antelope, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, and Wayne counties as well as a fixed route service connecting the City of Norfolk and the City of Wayne.

Figure 23. Map of Northeast region with North Fork Area Transit service area counties shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Rides are provided Monday through Saturday from 5:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. and Sunday from 5:30 A.M. to 4 P.M. Fixed route buses run Monday through Thursday afternoons.

Source: (26) North Fork Area Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, North Fork Area Transit operates seven vehicles and provided approximately 36,000 rides in FY 2024. Their reported service decreased dramatically from FY 2022 to FY 2024 — the number of boardings fell by half (a decrease of 50.3%) while the total annual mileage decreased by 14.4%. Simultaneously, North Fork Area Transit reduced the size of their reported fleet by nearly two-thirds, from 21 vehicles in FY 2022 to seven in FY 2024. Thus, despite the reduction in service each vehicle handled more boardings and traveled more miles in FY 2024.

The reported changes in service at North Fork Area Transit may not accurately reflect actual shifts in service demand or delivery. Between April 2022 and December 2022 — a period spanning both FY 2022 and FY 2023 — financial irregularities within the organization, including the misappropriation of funds by a former transit manager, may have also affected data accuracy in the reporting portal.

As a result, North Fork Area Transit temporarily suspended its services, and the financial strain that followed likely contributed to the observed decline in service levels.

Table 9. Ridership statistics for North Fork Area Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 21 | 23 | 7 | -66.7% |
| Boardings | 72,649 | 72,371 | 36,133 | -50.3% |
| Mileage | 346,838 | 209,814 | 297,058 | -14.4% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 3,459.5 | 3,146.6 | 5,161.9 | 49.2% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 16,516.1 | 9,122.3 | 42,436.9 | 156.9% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 4.8 | 2.9 | 8.2 | 72.2% |

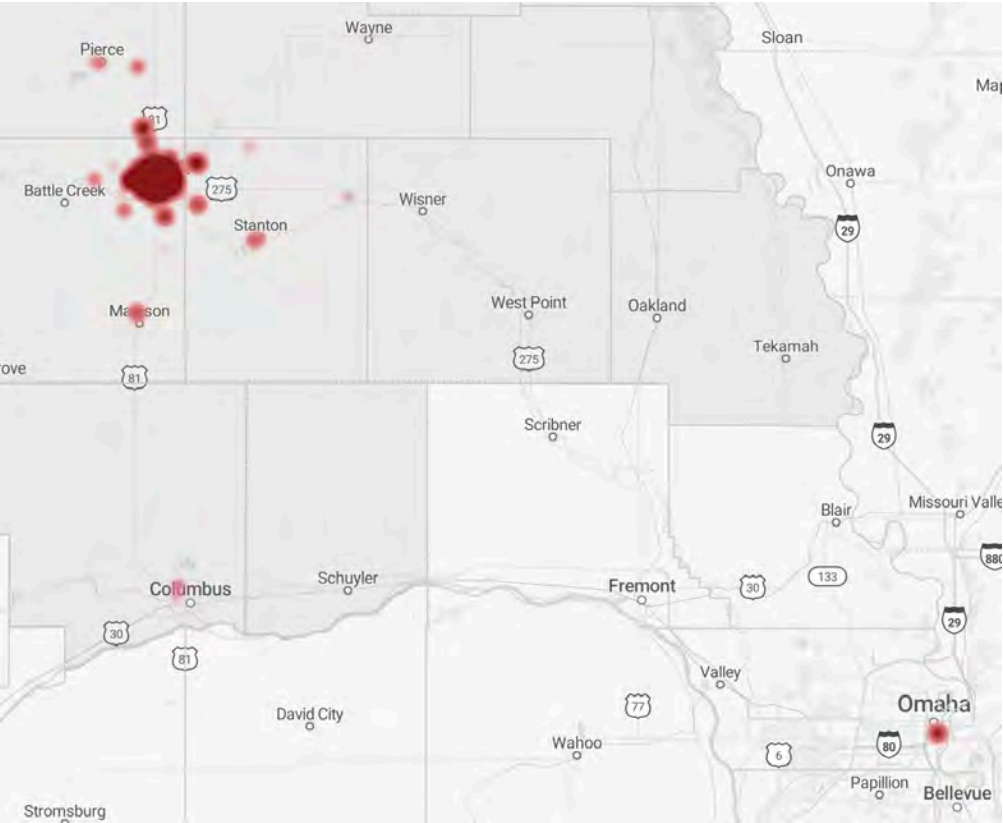
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

North Fork Area Transit provided a sample of 9,908 trips taken between May 2024 and July 2024 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs and to estimate the coverage area.

Figure 24 shows a heatmap of all drop-offs by North Fork Area Transit and lists the top five most frequent destinations. Trip destinations were concentrated in the area immediately surrounding Norfolk with a small number near Columbus and Omaha. Surprisingly, few drop-offs were reported in Wayne, despite the fixed route that connects the two cities.

The top five destinations included grocery and discount stores as well as medical facilities. The Walmart Supercenter was the most popular destination by far, accounting for 6.9% of the reported trips. The two Hy-Vee grocery stores in Norfolk were also popular destinations (3.3% and 1.5% of reported trips), as were Faith Regional Hospital (2.1%) and DaVita Dialysis (1.5%).

Figure 24. Drop-off locations for North Fork Area Transit, May 2024 to July 2024

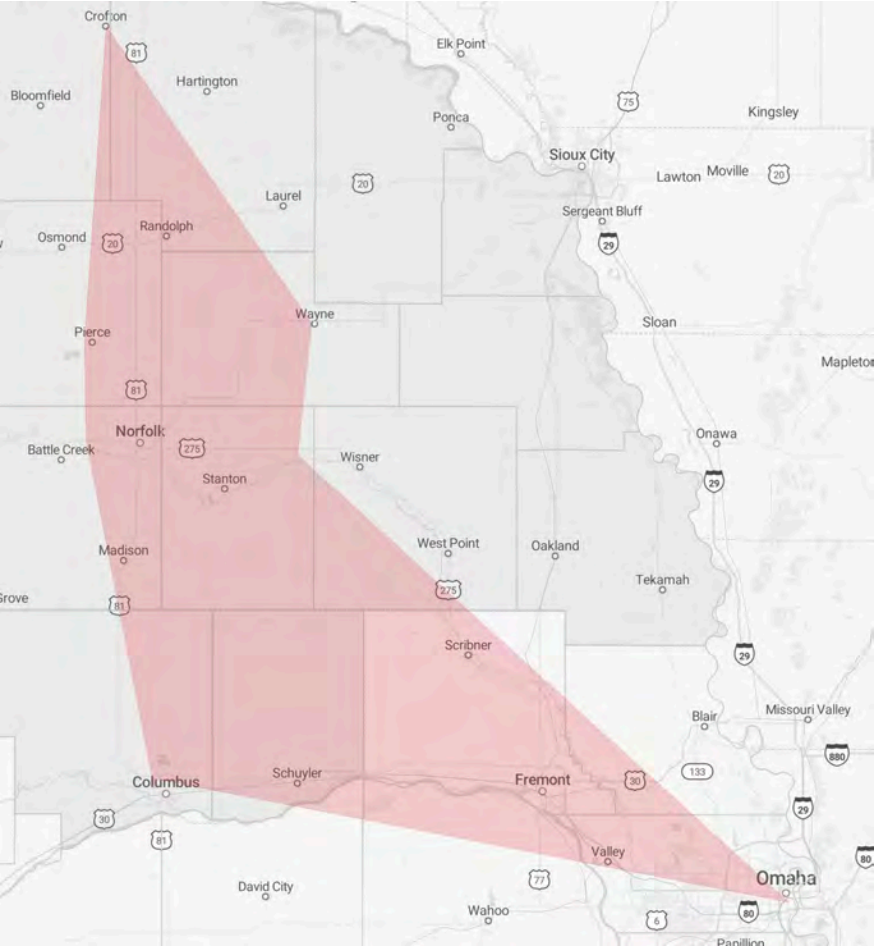


Source: (16) North Fork Area Transit reported ride data, May 2024 to July 2024

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Walmart Supercenter | Norfolk | 686 |
| Hy-Vee (West) | Norfolk | 330 |
| Faith Regional Hospital | Norfolk | 206 |
| DaVita Dialysis | Norfolk | 147 |
| Hy-Vee (Central) | Norfolk | 144 |

The observed coverage area for North Fork Area Transit is an estimated 2,889.0 square miles and includes the City of Norfolk and surrounding communities, as far north as Crofton. Pick-ups were also reported in Columbus and in Omaha, extending the coverage area south and east.

Figure 25. Observed pick-up area for North Fork Area Transit, May 2024 to July 2024



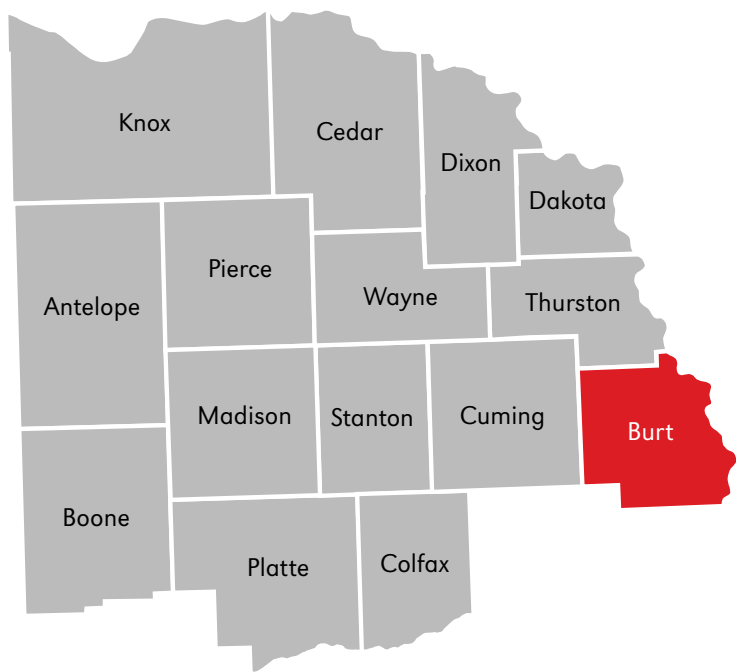
Source: (16) North Fork Area Transit reported ride data, May 2024 to July 2024

The ridership statistics for North Fork Area Transit showed a significant drop in the number of vehicles, annual boardings, and annual mileage in FY 2024 compared to FY 2022. This decrease is likely real, but the metrics available to our analysis may have been impacted by previous issues in the management of the agency. **While there are no obvious gaps in North Fork Area Transit’s service at present, the reduction in boardings may be related to the reduction in fleet size. Demand may be out-pacing North Fork Area Transit’s current resources and increasing the number of vehicles may result in a higher level of service.**

OAKLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT

Oakland Public Transit provides county-wide demand response services within the City of Oakland and surrounding areas of Burt County. Pre-scheduled rides can be provided to areas outside Burt County, including West Point, Fremont, Omaha, and Blair as well as Sioux City, Iowa.

Figure 26. Map of Northeast region with Oakland Public Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Oakland Public Transit operates four vehicles and provided just under 2,000 rides in FY 2024. Their service has fluctuated since FY 2022, rising to a peak of 2,618 annual boardings and 32,148 miles traveled in FY 2023 before decreasing in FY 2024. Overall, annual boardings and annual mileage both increased by nearly 30% between FY 2022 and FY 2024, suggesting trip length has remained relatively similar.

Table 10. Ridership statistics for Oakland Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 3 | 4 | 4 | 33.3% |
| Boardings | 1,496 | 2,618 | 1,940 | 29.7% |
| Mileage | 19,508 | 32,148 | 25,229 | 29.3% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 498.7 | 654.5 | 485.0 | -2.7% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 6,502.7 | 8,037.0 | 6,307.3 | -3.0% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 13.0 | 12.3 | 13.0 | -0.3% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Oakland Public Transit did not respond to any requests for detailed ride data for this analysis.

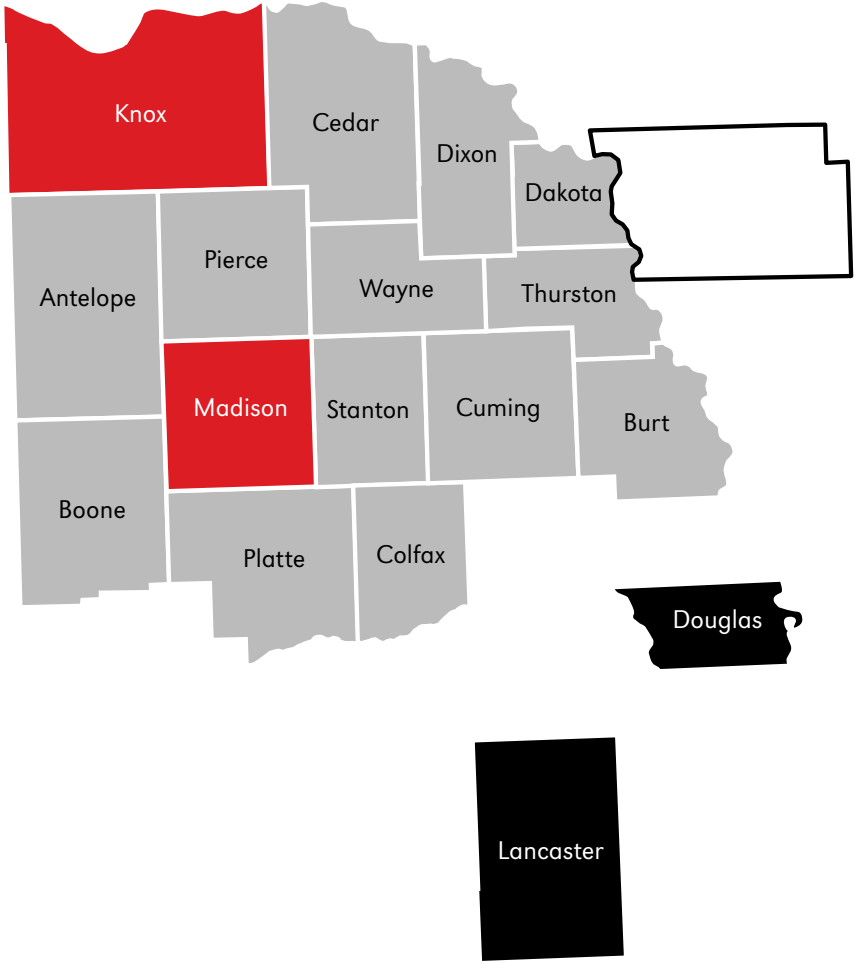


Between 2022 and 2024, Oakland Public Transit’s ridership peaked in FY 2023. FY 2024 ridership fell slightly but is still higher than FY 2022. **The length of trips appears to have remained constant, which suggests this may be due to fluctuations in demand for the types of rides Oakland Public Transit already provides.** We cannot analyze the area covered by Oakland Public Transit’s service, but their fleet appears sufficient to meet current levels of demand.

PONCA EXPRESS

The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska operates Ponca Express, a regional demand response service serving much of the Northeast region. They operate offices in Norfolk, Niobrara, Lincoln, and Omaha in Nebraska and Sioux City, Iowa, and provide rides within a three-hour radius of any of those locations.

Figure 27. Map of Northeast region with counties of Ponca Express office locations shaded in red and Southeast region office locations shaded in black and the Iowa office location in white



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (27) Ponca Express website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Ponca Express operates 12 vehicles and provided around 8,500 rides in FY 2024. The number of boardings spiked in FY 2023 before decreasing again in FY 2024 — overall, the number of boardings has remained nearly constant when comparing FY 2022 and FY 2024. During the same period, however, the total annual mileage has increased by just over one quarter (up 25.8%) in conjunction with an increase in the size of the vehicle fleet (up 33.3%). Taken together, these figures show a trend toward longer trips, which could require an increase in fleet size to ensure continued availability in core service areas.

Table 11. Ridership statistics for Ponca Express, FY 2022 to FY 2024

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 9 | 10 | 12 | 33.3% |
| Boardings | 8,609 | 10,658 | 8,548 | -0.7% |
| Mileage | 230,231 | 250,886 | 289,685 | 25.8% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 956.6 | 1,065.8 | 712.3 | -25.5% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 25,581.2 | 25,088.6 | 24,140.4 | -5.6% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 26.7 | 23.5 | 33.9 | 26.7% |

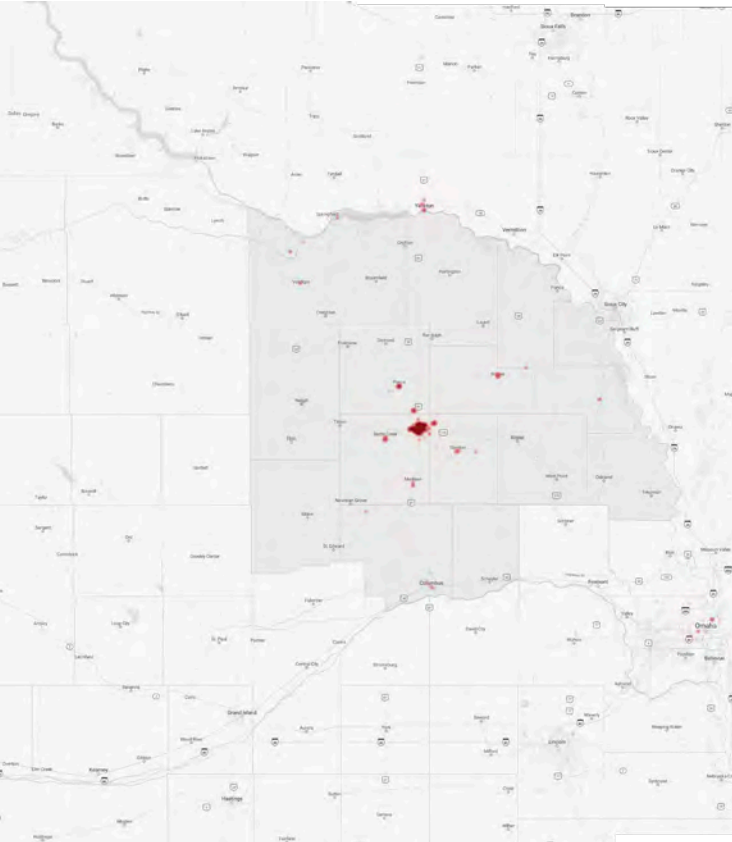
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Ponca Express provided a sample of 1,933 trips taken between November 2024 and January 2025 which we used to analyze the most common destinations/drop-offs and to estimate the coverage area.

Figure 28 shows a heatmap of all drop-offs by Ponca Express and lists the top five most frequent destinations. Trip destinations were concentrated in the areas surrounding Norfolk, but a few spread across a wide range — from Holdrege in the South Central region to Sioux Falls, South Dakota — matching the wide coverage area reported by Ponca Express.

In contrast to some of the other providers, Ponca Express’ top five destinations each represent only a small percentage of the overall number of trips; the top destination — Skyline Apartments in Norfolk — only accounted for 4.6% of the reported trips. The remaining top destinations are also all located in Norfolk, including the Faith Regional Hospital (3.5% of trips), DaVita Dialysis (3.4%), the Walmart Supercenter (3.4%), and Northeast Community College (2.9%).

Figure 28. Drop-off locations for Ponca Express, November 2024 to January 2025

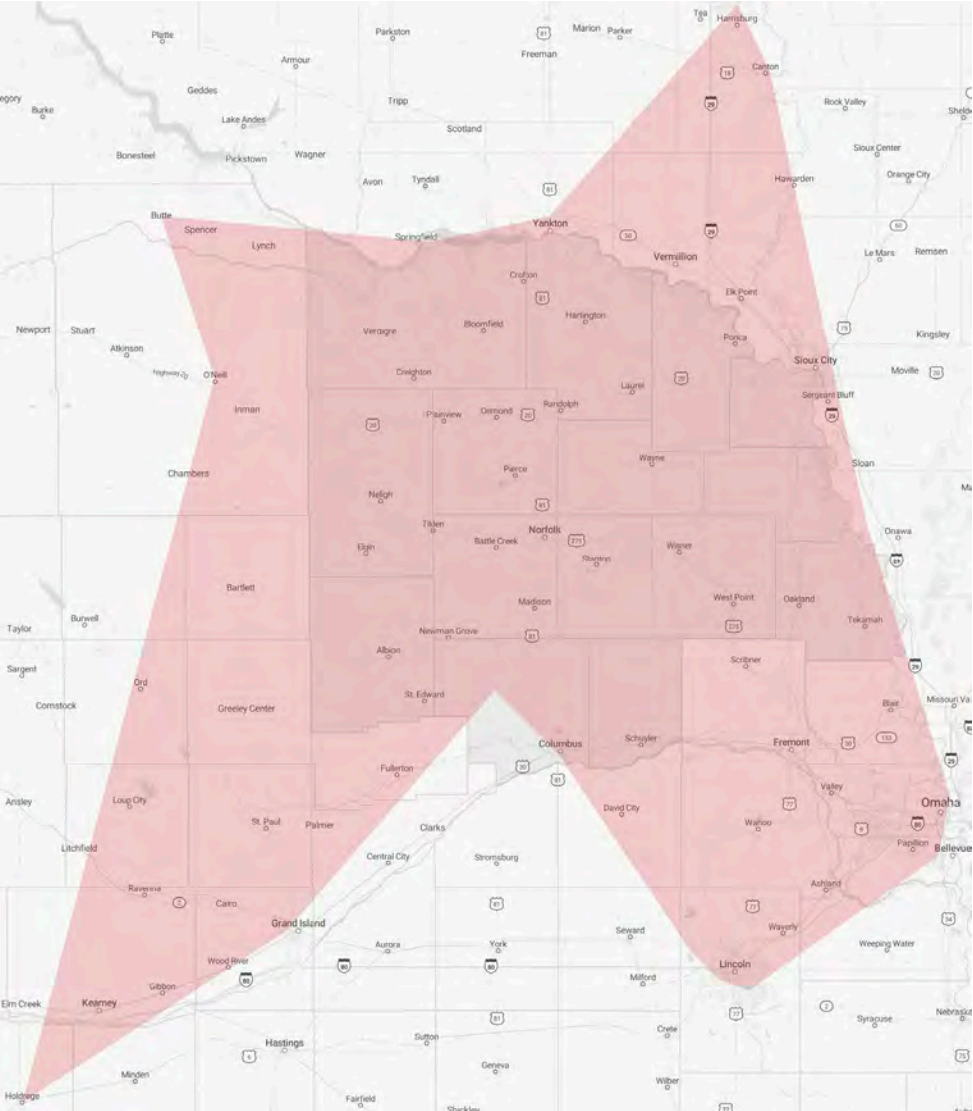


Source: (17) Ponca Express reported ride data, November 2024 to January 2025

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Skyline Apartments | Norfolk | 89 |
| Faith Regional Hospital | Norfolk | 68 |
| DaVita Dialysis | Norfolk | 66 |
| Walmart Supercenter | Norfolk | 65 |
| Northeast Community College | Norfolk | 56 |

Ponca Express has the largest observed coverage area of any Northeast region provider, covering an estimated 19,005.8 square miles. Their reported pickups cover nearly all the Northeast region and extend beyond the region in all directions. Pick-ups were reported in Butte and O’Neill in the North Central region, in Holdrege and Grand Island in the South Central region, and in and around Lincoln and Omaha in the Southeast region. Pickups were also reported in southeastern South Dakota (including in Yankton, Vermillion, and Sioux Falls) as well as Sioux City, Iowa.

Figure 29. Observed pick-up area for Ponca Express, November 2024 to January 2025



Source: (17) Ponca Express reported ride data, November 2024 to January 2025

Ponca Express covers the largest area of any of the Northeast region providers and has seen a steady increase in annual mileage over the last two years. At the same time, boardings have decreased slightly, suggesting that the average trip length is increasing. This could lead to problems with availability of drivers and vehicles. **More drivers and vehicles may be needed to maintain these services.**

SCHUYLER PUBLIC TRANSIT

Schuyler Public Transit operates a city-specific, demand response service for residents of the City of Schuyler and surrounding areas of Colfax County.

Figure 30. Map of Northeast region with Schuyler Public Transit service area shown as red dot



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (28) Schuyler Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Schuyler Public Transit operates one vehicle and provided more than 4,000 rides in FY 2024. Their service has remained remarkably consistent between FY 2022 and FY 2024, with only a slight increase in the number of boardings and little variation in the total annual mileage.

Table 12. Ridership statistics for Schuyler Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

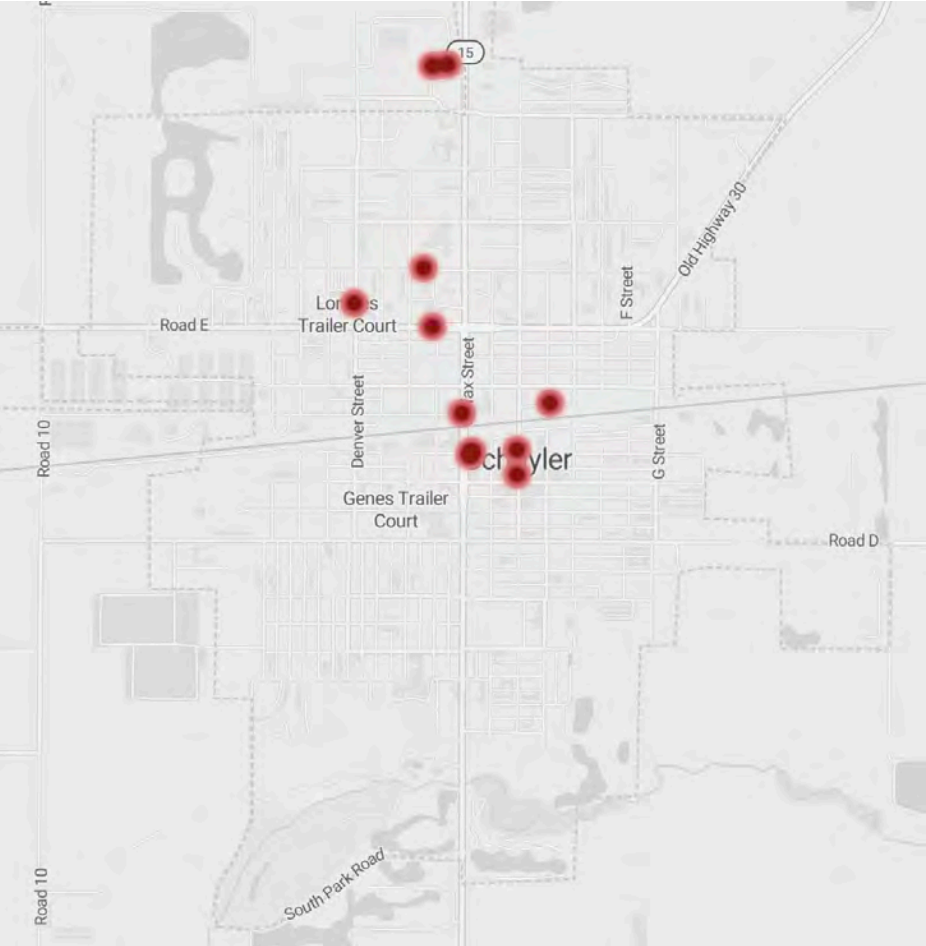
| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 4,088 | 4,188 | 4,148 | 1.5% |
| Mileage | 9,250 | 9,328 | 9,247 | 0.0% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 4,088.0 | 4,188.0 | 4,148.0 | 1.5% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 9,250.0 | 9,328.0 | 9,247.0 | 0.0% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.2 | -1.5% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Schuyler Public Transit provided a list of their most popular destinations, but did not provide detailed ride data for our analysis. Figure 31 shows a heatmap with the reported destinations marked.

All the reported destinations are within the city limits of the City of Schuyler. They include a mix of medical facilities, discount and grocery stores, hair salons, and the Schuyler Senior Center.

Figure 31. Drop-off locations for Schuyler Public Transit, January 2025



Source: (18) Schuyler Public Transit reported top destinations, January 2025

| Top Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| CHI Health | Schuyler | N/A |
| Didier's Grocery | Schuyler | N/A |
| Homestead / Pinnacle Bank | Schuyler | N/A |
| Dollar General | Schuyler | N/A |
| 352 Salon Suites / Rosa's Hair Salon | Schuyler | N/A |
| Schuyler Senior Center | Schuyler | N/A |

Schuyler Public Transit did not include sufficiently detailed ride data in their data sample to observe their pickup area.



Ridership for Schuyler Public Transit has been consistent since FY 2022. The annual mileage in 2022 was nearly identical to the annual mileage in 2024. Annual boardings changed by only 1.5%. **We do not see any apparent gap in the service provided by Schuyler Public Transit, which appears to be steadily meeting the demands of its riders.**



WAYNE PUBLIC TRANSIT

Wayne Public Transit provides a city-specific, demand response service for residents of the City of Wayne.

Figure 32. Map of Northeast region with Wayne Public Transit service area shown as red dot



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025



Source: (29) Wayne Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to data reported to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, Wayne Public Transit operates four vehicles and provided just over 6,000 rides in FY 2024. Annual boardings decreased by 12.3% overall, while total miles traveled fell by 6.9%. Taken together, this indicates the reduction in boardings may have come primarily at the expense of shorter trips rather than longer ones.

Table 13. Ridership statistics for Wayne Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

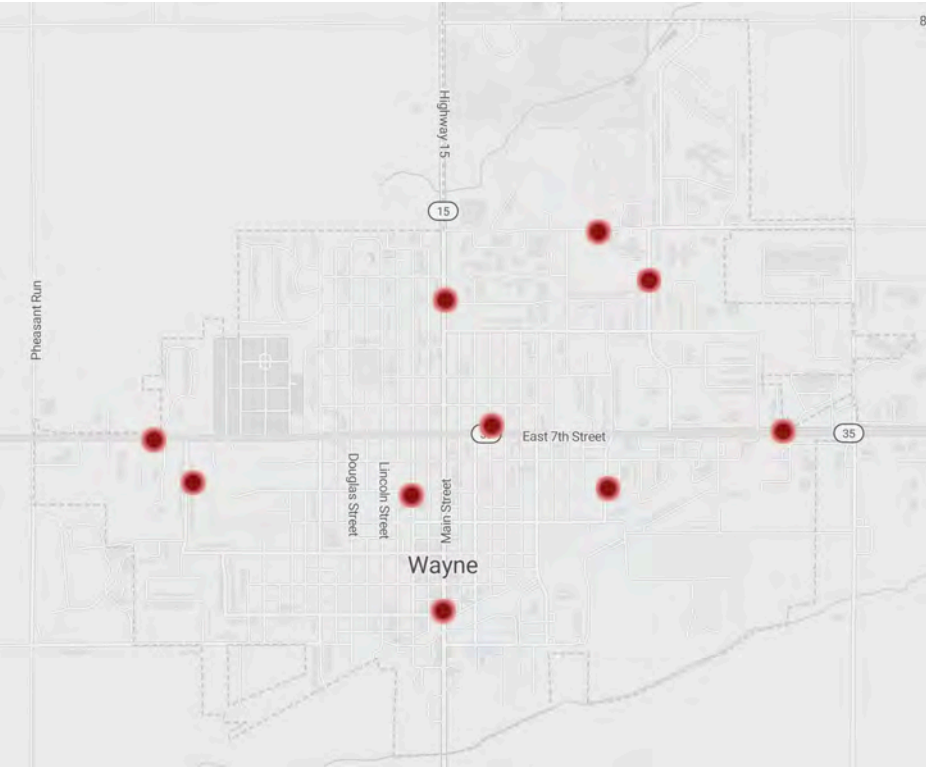
| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Vehicles | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0.0% |
| Boardings | 6,964 | 6,445 | 6,109 | -12.3% |
| Mileage | 13,042 | 12,629 | 12,136 | -6.9% |
| Boardings Per Vehicle | 1,741.0 | 1,611.3 | 1,527.3 | -12.3% |
| Miles Per Vehicle | 3,260.5 | 3,157.3 | 3,034.0 | -6.9% |
| Miles Per Boarding | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 6.1% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Wayne Public Transit provided a list of their most popular destinations, but did not provide detailed ride data for our analysis. Figure 33 shows a map with the reported destinations marked.

All the reported destinations are within the city limits of the City of Wayne. They include a mix of medical facilities, discount and grocery stores, and banks as well as the Prairie Park Apartments in southeastern Wayne and Wayne State College.


Figure 33. Drop-off locations for Wayne Public Transit, January 2025



Source: (19) Wayne Public Transit reported top destinations, January 2025

| Top Drop-off Locations | City/Town | Number of Drop-offs |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Dollar General | Wayne | N/A |
| Providence Medical Center | Wayne | N/A |
| Pac & Save | Wayne | N/A |
| Quality Foods | Wayne | N/A |
| Wayne Medical Clinic | Wayne | N/A |
| Wayne Library | Wayne | N/A |
| State Nebraska Bank | Wayne | N/A |
| Prairie Park Apartments | Wayne | N/A |
| Wayne State College | Wayne | N/A |

Wayne Public Transit did not include sufficiently detailed ride data in their data sample to observe their pickup area.



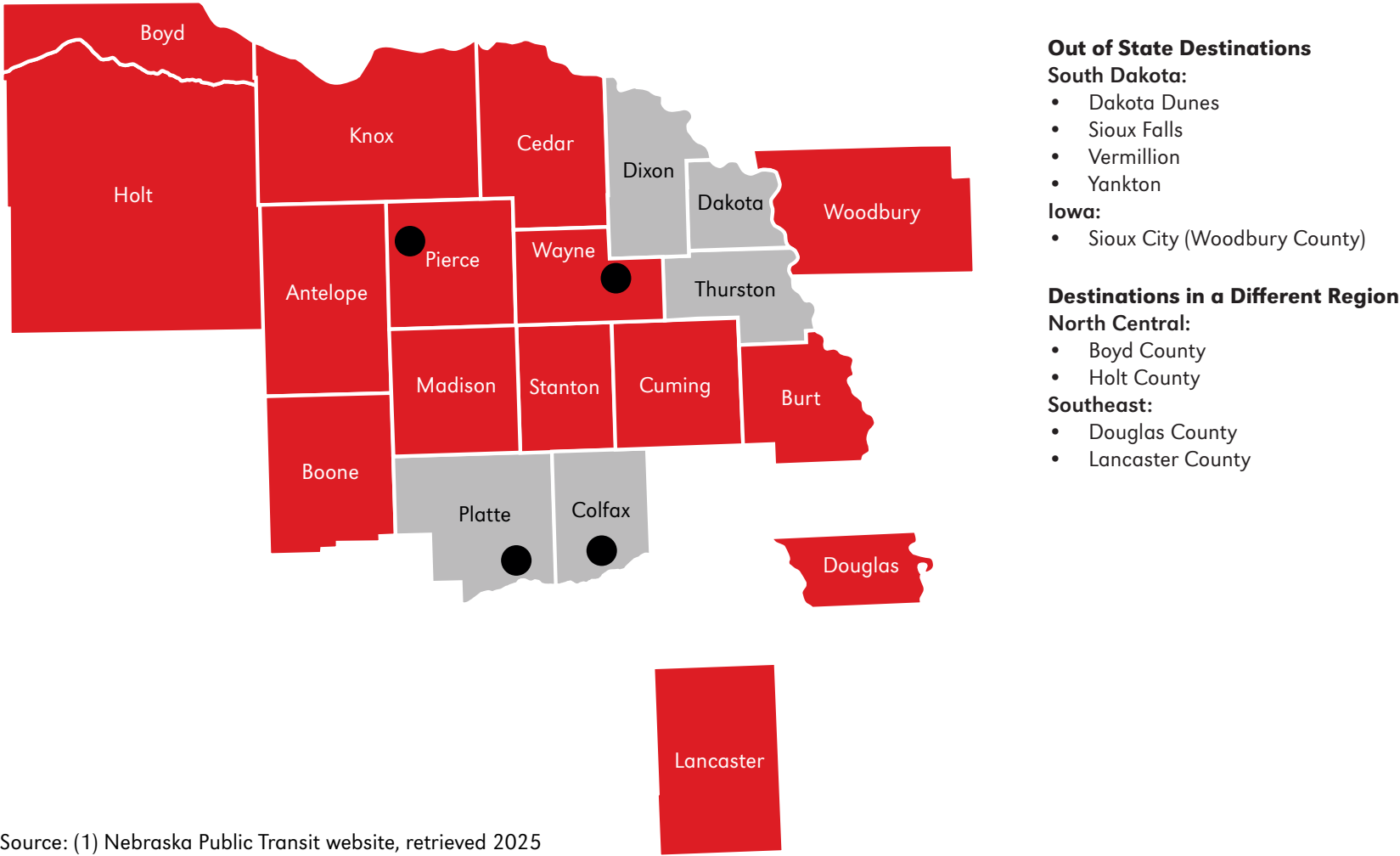
Annual boardings and mileage for Wayne Public Transit both decreased between 2022 and 2024. This may be a result of decreased demand rather than decreased availability, as the number of vehicles in the fleet has remained constant. While we were unable to estimate coverage area based on pickup locations, the drop-off destinations appear to be consistent with their advertised coverage area of the City of Wayne. **We see no gap in service for Wayne Public Transit.**

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

This section summarizes the overall services these providers offer, including miles traveled, passenger boardings, and vehicle usage. Additionally, it analyzes service changes across all 12 providers and offers insights into regional trends.

The 12 transit providers in the region serve 10 of the 15 counties, two cities within an additional two counties, and several locations outside the region and the state of Nebraska, as shown in Figure 34. The four city-specific providers operate in the cities marked with a black dot.

Figure 34. Service area of Northeast region transit providers



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

Each fiscal year, Nebraska’s rural transit providers report the total number of passenger miles traveled. This metric is critical for evaluating rural transit services, as the area served by each provider may be very large. Table 14 highlights the miles traveled by each provider in FY 2024, along with the total coverage area determined by the pick-up locations recorded in the sample ride data.

Table 14. Summary of total miles traveled and observed coverage area

| Provider | Service Category | Total Miles (FY 2024) | Percent Total Miles | Observed Coverage Area (Square Mile) |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Avera Creighton Hospital | Regional | 149,022 | 12.0% | 15,518.0 |
| Cedar County Transit | Regional | 373,931 | 30.2% | 9,903.2 |
| City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit | County-wide | 1,990 | 1.0% | 0.7 |
| City of Plainview Handivan* | City-specific | 6,011 | 0.5% | 1.1 |
| Columbus Area Transit System** | County-wide | 27,356 | 2.2% | 13.7 |
| Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit* | County-wide | 14,085 | 1.1% | 1.0 |
| JoyRide Public Transit | Regional | 22,239 | 1.8% | 3,138.7 |
| North Fork Area Transit | Regional | 297,058 | 24.0% | 2,889.0 |
| Oakland Public Transit** | County-wide | 25,229 | 2.0% | 0.9 |
| Ponca Express | Regional | 289,685 | 23.4% | 19,005.8 |
| Schuyler Public Transit* | City-specific | 9,247 | 0.7% | 2.6 |
| Wayne Public Transit* | City-specific | 12,136 | 1.0% | 3.1 |
| Totals | | 1,237,989 | 100% | |

* These providers did not provide any pick-up data in their sample. Coverage area is computed based on drop-offs.

** These providers did not provide a ride sample. Coverage area is computed based on reported coverage area.

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-17) provider reported ride data

In FY 2024, Cedar County Transit recorded the highest mileage among the Northeast region providers, traveling 373,931 miles, 30.2% of total miles traveled by all providers. North Fork Area Transit and Ponca Express closely follow with 24.0% and 23.4% of total miles, respectively. Ponca Express has a much larger observed coverage area than the other two; the disparity in annual mileage compared to coverage area is likely due to Ponca Express’s lower annual boardings. Avera Creighton Hospital also has a large coverage area with relatively low annual mileage. The other Northeast region providers each individually accounted for between 0.5% and 2.2% of the total boardings, showing consistent levels of annual mileage.

City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit, Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit, and Oakland Public Transit each advertise as county-wide providers, but our analysis of their ride sample indicates they may be better classified as city-specific. The total mileage and estimated coverage area for each are like the other city-specific providers in the region.

In summary, the data reveals two key findings about the relationship between miles traveled and coverage areas for these providers:

- The total miles traveled by a provider did not correlate with the size of its coverage area.
- City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit, Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit, and Oakland Public Transit reported annual mileage more consistent with city-specific providers than county-wide providers.

Nebraska’s transit providers also report annual boarding figures. Table 15 summarizes the number of boardings reported in FY 2024, the percentage of the region’s total boardings, the miles traveled per boarding (calculated using the total miles reported earlier), and the boardings per square mile of observed coverage area.

Table 15. Summary of passenger boardings and trip length

| Provider | Service Category | Number of Boardings (FY 2024) | Percent Total Boardings | Miles Per Boarding | Boardings Per Covered Square Mile |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Avera Creighton Hospital | Regional | 3,611 | 3.8% | 41.3 | 0.2 |
| Cedar County Transit | Regional | 13,231 | 13.9% | 28.3 | 1.3 |
| City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit | County-wide | 8,595 | 9.0% | 1.4 | 12,567.8 |
| City of Plainview Handivan* | City-specific | 1,336 | 1.4% | 4.5 | 1,234.5 |
| Columbus Area Transit System** | County-wide | 7,438 | 7.8% | 3.7 | 542.4 |
| Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit* | County-wide | 2,962 | 3.1% | 4.8 | 2,836.6 |
| JoyRide Public Transit | Regional | 1,477 | 1.5% | 15.1 | 0.5 |
| North Fork Area Transit | Regional | 36,133 | 37.8% | 8.2 | 12.5 |
| Oakland Public Transit** | County-wide | 1,940 | 2.0% | 13.0 | 2,044.1 |
| Ponca Express | Regional | 8,548 | 8.9% | 33.9 | 0.4 |
| Schuyler Public Transit* | City-specific | 4,148 | 4.3% | 2.2 | 1,574.7 |
| Wayne Public Transit* | City-specific | 6,109 | 6.4% | 2.0 | 1,953.2 |
| Totals | | 95,528 | 100% | 13.0 | |

* These providers did not provide any pick-up data in their sample. Coverage area is computed based on drop-offs.

** These providers did not provide a ride sample. Coverage area is computed based on reported coverage area.

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-17) provider reported ride data

North Fork Area Transit had the highest number of annual boardings, accounting for 37.8% of all boardings reported by providers in the Northeast region in FY 2024. North Fork Area Transit’s estimated coverage area is fifth among the 12 providers, however. There seems to be no correlation between the number of boardings and the size of a provider’s estimated coverage area, as indicated by the variance in the number of boardings per covered square mile. There is no correlation between the number of boardings and the classification of each provider. Regional and city-specific providers reported similar numbers of boardings.

In addition to total boardings, we analyzed the average miles traveled per boarding, which reflects the typical trip length. Avera Creighton Hospital, Cedar County Transit, and Ponca Express each had a high average trip length, a result of their large coverage areas. North Fork Area Transit had a notably low average trip length among the regional providers in the Northeast region, suggesting most of their trips occur in and around Norfolk itself.

From this data, we identified these key trends:

- Providers within each classification (city-specific, county-wide, and regional) reported similar numbers of boardings.
- Average trip length appears to be correlated with the size of each provider’s estimated coverage area.

In addition to tracking miles traveled and boardings, NDOT monitors the vehicles each transit provider uses in their services. Table 16 lists the number of vehicles in service for each provider in FY 2024.

Table 16. Summary of provider vehicles and vehicle usage

| Provider | Service Category | Number of Vehicles (FY 2024) | Percent Total Vehicles | Boardings Per Vehicle | Miles Per Vehicle | Covered Square Mile Per Vehicle |
|---|------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Avera Creighton Hospital | Regional | 5 | 9.4% | 722.2 | 29,804.4 | 3,103.6 |
| Cedar County Transit | Regional | 10 | 18.9% | 1,323.1 | 37,393.1 | 990.3 |
| City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit | County-wide | 2 | 3.8% | 4,297.5 | 5,995.0 | 0.3 |
| City of Plainview Handivan* | City-specific | 1 | 1.9% | 1,336.0 | 6,011.0 | 1.1 |
| Columbus Area Transit System** | County-wide | 2 | 3.8% | 3,719.0 | 13,678.0 | 6.9 |
| Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit* | County-wide | 2 | 3.8% | 1,481.0 | 7,042.5 | 0.5 |
| JoyRide Public Transit | Regional | 3 | 5.7% | 492.3 | 7,413.0 | 1,046.2 |
| North Fork Area Transit | Regional | 7 | 13.2% | 5,161.9 | 42,436.9 | 412.7 |
| Oakland Public Transit** | County-wide | 4 | 7.5% | 485.0 | 6,307.3 | 0.2 |
| Ponca Express | Regional | 12 | 22.6% | 712.3 | 24,140.4 | 1,583.8 |
| Schuyler Public Transit* | City-specific | 1 | 1.9% | 4,148.0 | 9,247.0 | 2.6 |
| Wayne Public Transit* | City-specific | 4 | 7.5% | 1,527.3 | 3,034.0 | 0.8 |
| Totals | | 53 | 100% | 1,802.4 | 23,358.3 | |

* These providers did not provide any pick-up data in their sample. Coverage area is computed based on drop-offs.

** These providers did not provide a ride sample. Coverage area is computed based on reported coverage area.

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-17) provider reported ride data

The Northeast region providers reported a peak usage of 53 total vehicles in FY 2024. In general, the agencies with more vehicles report more mileage; Ponca Express, Cedar County Transit, and North Fork Area Transit reported the largest annual mileage and the most vehicles used during peak hours. Oakland Public Transit and Wayne Public Transit, each with four vehicles, do not follow that trend. Their reported mileage is comparable to providers with fewer vehicles, indicating their vehicles may be under used based on FY 2024 reporting.

Boardings per vehicle tended to vary across all providers, regardless of their classification as regional, county-wide, or city-specific. North Fork Area Transit reported the highest number of boardings per vehicle, along with the highest annual mileage per vehicle. Coupled with their high average trip length (8.2 miles per boarding), this may indicate a need for additional vehicles added to their fleet. City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit and Schuyler Public Transit also reported among the highest boardings per vehicle; however, they have the shortest average trip length (1.4 and 2.2 miles per boarding, respectively). As each vehicle is making shorter trips, the current size of their fleets are more likely to meet current demand.

- In summary:
- Agencies with larger fleets report more mileage.
 - Oakland Public Transit and Wayne Public Transit may be operating more vehicles than are currently necessary.
 - North Fork Area Transit may need to increase the size of their fleet based on the reported annual boardings per vehicle and annual mileage per vehicle.

Table 17 summarizes ridership changes across the region from FY 2022 to FY 2024. Overall, annual boardings in the Northeast region fell from FY 2022 to FY 2024, driven primarily by the steep decline in boardings reported by North Fork Area Transit (50.3%). Even with the decline in boardings, North Fork Area Transit still accounted for 37.9% of the total annual boardings for the region; the drop in ridership in Norfolk had a large impact on overall ridership.

Table 17. Summary of changes in service from FY 2022 to FY 2024

| Provider | Vehicles | Boardings | Miles Traveled | Boardings Per Vehicle | Miles Per Vehicle | Miles Per Boarding |
|--|----------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Avera Creighton Hospital | -16.7% | 2.6% | 3.9% | 23.1% | 24.6% | 1.2% |
| Cedar County Transit | 0.0% | 66.2% | 44.3% | 66.2% | 44.3% | -13.2% |
| City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit | 0.0% | 31.6% | 115.0% | 31.6% | 115.0% | 63.3% |
| City of Plainview Handivan | 0.0% | 46.3% | 33.5% | 46.3% | 33.5% | -8.8% |
| Columbus Area Transit System | 0.0% | 19.0% | 14.5% | 19.0% | 14.5% | -3.8% |
| Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit | 0.0% | 24.9% | 13.4% | 24.9% | 13.4% | -9.2% |
| JoyRide Public Transit* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| North Fork Area Transit | -66.7% | -50.3% | -14.4% | 49.2% | 156.9% | 72.2% |
| Oakland Public Transit | 33.3% | 29.7% | 29.3% | -2.7% | -3.0% | -0.3% |
| Ponca Express | 33.3% | -0.7% | 25.8% | -25.5% | -5.6% | 26.7% |
| Schuyler Public Transit | 0.0% | 1.5% | 0.0% | 1.5% | 0.0% | -1.5% |
| Wayne Public Transit | 0.0% | -12.3% | -6.9% | -12.3% | -6.9% | 6.1% |
| Overall | -13.1% | -21.3% | 15.9% | -9.4% | 33.4% | 47.3% |

* JoyRide Public Transit began service as a Section 5311 provider in FY 2024.
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Most of the other providers in the region reported an increase in ridership. Cedar County Transit (66.2%) and the City of Plainview Handivan (46.3%) reported the highest increase in annual boardings. Cedar County may have seen an increase in ridership due to their recent expansion into Knox County, which started in 2022. They have also increased marketing and outreach efforts to increase awareness of their service in the region.

Despite the overall decrease in annual boardings, annual miles traveled increased across the region. City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit reported the highest increase, more than doubling their FY 2022 annual mileage in FY 2024. Most other providers showed a smaller increase. Cedar County Transit increased mileage by 44.3%, likely also driven by more trips into Knox County.

The increase in mileage coupled with the decrease in boardings resulted in an overall increase in the number of miles per boarding, indicating a trend toward fewer, longer trips. However, most providers reported a decrease average trip length. Trip length increased in North Fork Area Transit, City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit, and Ponca Express but decreased or remained steady for most other providers in the region.

The total number of vehicles in service decreased slightly, again driven by North Fork Area Transit. Their fleet went from 21 vehicles in FY 2022 to only seven in FY 2024. Most of the other providers in the region maintained their existing fleet with no changes. Ponca Express added three vehicles and Oakland Public Transit added one vehicle in FY 2023.

- In Summary:
- The disruption at North Fork Area Transit had a noticeable impact on transit service across the Northeast region. As one of the largest providers in the region, the reduction in boardings reported by North Fork Area Transit was enough to reduce annual boardings for the entire region, despite an increase in boardings by most other providers.
 - Most providers in the region reported an increase in annual boardings and an increase in annual mileage. These increases may indicate a growing demand for transit across the region.

TRIP DESTINATIONS



To better understand the state of rural transit across the region, we examined the most frequent drop-off destinations for all the regional providers who shared a sample of their rides. We first geocoded each reported drop-off using the U.S. Census Geocoder to determine a latitude and longitude for each destination and counted the number of drop-offs that occurred at or very near that location. We then determined the “point of interest” nearest each location to report a name for each destination, excluding locations that we determined to be single-family homes.

Eight of the providers in the Northeast region provided us with sample ride data, for a total of 18,323 individual rides taken between April 2024 and January 2025. Those rides provided a list of 1,560 unique destinations. The number of rides and unique destinations reported by each provider are summarized in Table 18, including the number of boardings reported for FY 2024.



The most common shared destinations are **medical facilities, public or affordable housing developments for low-income or elderly residents, and grocery or discount department stores** (such as Walmart or Hy-Vee).



Table 18. Number of rides, unique destinations, and boardings reported by each provider, April 2024 to January 2025

| Provider | Number of Rides in Sample | Percent Total Rides | Number of Unique Destinations | Percent Total Unique Destinations | Number of Boardings (FY 2024) | Percent Total Boardings |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Avera Creighton Hospital | 697 | 3.8% | 122 | 7.8% | 3,611 | 3.8% |
| Cedar County Transit | 2,321 | 12.7% | 506 | 32.4% | 13,231 | 13.9% |
| City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit | 1,934 | 10.6% | 73 | 4.7% | 8,595 | 9.0% |
| City of Plainview Handivan | 405 | 2.2% | 27 | 1.7% | 1,336 | 1.4% |
| Columbus Area Transit System | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 7,438 | 7.8% |
| Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit | 107 | 0.6% | 15 | 1.0% | 2,962 | 3.1% |
| JoyRide Public Transit | 1,028 | 5.6% | 196 | 12.6% | 1,477 | 1.5% |
| North Fork Area Transit | 9,900 | 54.0% | 533 | 34.2% | 36,133 | 37.8% |
| Oakland Public Transit | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1,940 | 2.0% |
| Ponca Express | 1,931 | 10.5% | 334 | 21.4% | 8,548 | 8.9% |
| Schuyler Public Transit | N/A | N/A | 11 | 0.7% | 4,148 | 4.3% |
| Wayne Public Transit | N/A | N/A | 10 | 0.6% | 6,109 | 6.4% |
| Totals | 18,323 | 100% | 1,560 | 100% | 95,528 | 100% |

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-19) provider reported ride data

Comparing the number of rides in the sample to the number of boardings reported for FY 2024, North Fork Area Transit is slightly over-represented in the sample of rides provided whereas Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit is slightly under-represented. This variance may have slightly influenced the order of the top destinations overall based on the number of drop-offs (Table 19), most of which are in the City of Norfolk. These destinations appeared in the samples from many providers, however, and so they likely represent an accurate picture of top destinations.

Table 19. Top 10 drop-off locations for 10 out of 12 Northeast region transit providers, April 2024 to January 2025

| Drop-off Location | City/Town | Number of Combined Drop-offs |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Walmart Supercenter (Norfolk) | Norfolk | 762 |
| Faith Regional Hospital | Norfolk | 668 |
| Hy-Vee (Norfolk West) | Norfolk | 360 |
| Westward Elementary School | Neligh | 328 |
| Neligh Housing Authority | Neligh | 316 |
| DaVita Dialysis | Norfolk | 307 |
| Skyline Apartments | Norfolk | 228 |
| North Park Apartments | Norfolk | 199 |
| Hy-Vee (Norfolk Central) | Norfolk | 193 |
| Sunset Plaza Mall | Norfolk | 178 |

Source: (10-19) provider reported ride data, various dates

- In summary, we make two main observations from our analysis of the drop-off data, as described in more detail in the following subsections:
- The most common shared destinations are medical facilities, public or affordable housing developments for low-income or elderly residents, and grocery or discount department stores (such as Walmart or Hy-Vee).
 - More than half of rides end in the Norfolk area, the largest city in the region. From our sample data, 64.9% of the total drop-offs and 39.4% of the unique destinations were in the City of Norfolk alone.

SHARED DESTINATIONS

To explore the intersections among the agencies, we identified destinations served by multiple transit providers. Each provider’s top individual destinations are listed in their profiles.

Based on the data from our sample, we found the following:

- Most destinations (1,361, 87.2%) were reported by only one provider, indicating there is little duplication in the drop-off destinations served by the Northeast region providers.
- Of the 199 unique destinations shared by more than one provider, most (151) were shared by only two providers.
- Many of the top shared destinations by number of drop-offs (listed in Table 20) were shared by three or more providers.
- Most of the top shared destinations are medical facilities (Faith Regional Hospital, DaVita Dialysis, Avera Creighton Hospital) or discount or grocery stores (Walmart Supercenter, Hy-Vee).

Table 20. Top 10 shared drop-off locations for 10 out of 12 Northeast region transit providers by number of drop-offs, April 2024 to January 2025

| Drop-off Location | City/Town | Number of Combined Drop-offs | Number of Providers |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Walmart Supercenter (Norfolk) | Norfolk | 762 | 5 |
| Faith Regional Hospital | Norfolk | 668 | 6 |
| Hy-Vee (Norfolk West) | Norfolk | 360 | 4 |
| DaVita Dialysis | Norfolk | 307 | 4 |
| Skyline Apartments | Norfolk | 228 | 2 |
| North Park Apartments | Norfolk | 199 | 3 |
| Hy-Vee (Norfolk Central) | Norfolk | 193 | 3 |
| Sunset Plaza Mall | Norfolk | 178 | 3 |
| Avera Creighton Hospital | Creighton | 128 | 2 |
| Northeast Community College | Norfolk | 124 | 2 |

Source: (10-19) provider reported ride data, various dates

HIGH-FREQUENCY DESTINATION AREAS

To complete our analysis of the trip destinations in the region, we also examined the geographical distribution of the reported drop-offs and identified geographical areas where many drop-offs took place. These frequent destination areas may require additional resources or further analysis, as the riders taken to these areas may need other local services within the area.

The 1,560 unique destinations reported in the sample are geographically distributed across the Northeast region and nearby areas. Many of the destinations fall in the Lincoln and Omaha metropolitan areas, with a smaller number of destinations outside Nebraska. The out-of-state destinations typically fall in the larger cities near the Northeast region, such as Sioux City, Iowa, and Yankton, Vermillion, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Figure 35 summarizes the sample drop-offs via heatmap.

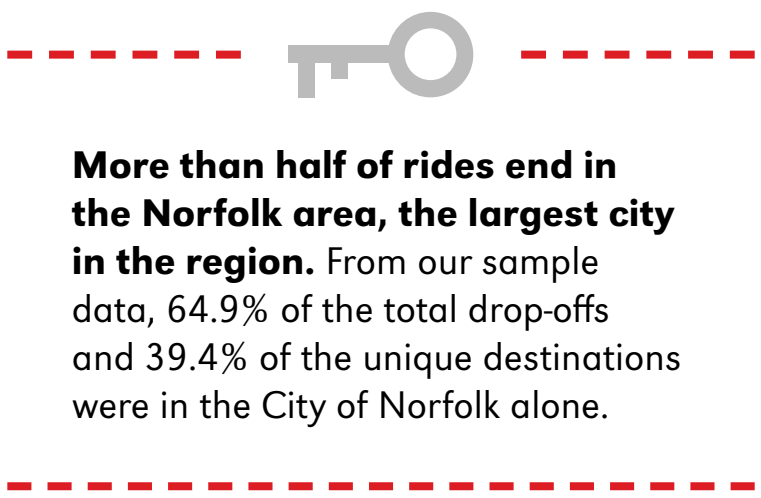
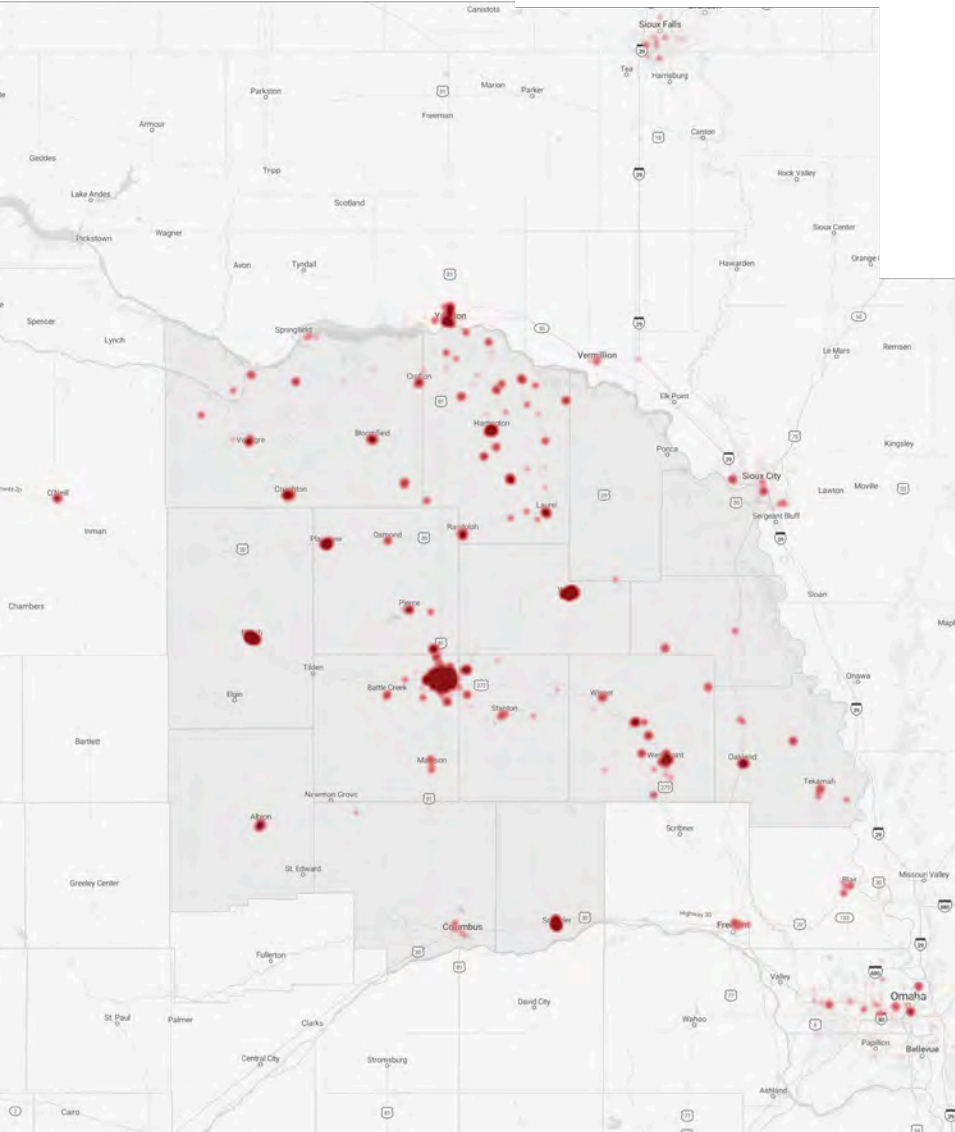


Figure 35. Drop-off locations within and around the Northeast region (shaded light gray) for reported rides by 10 out of 12 Northeast region transit providers



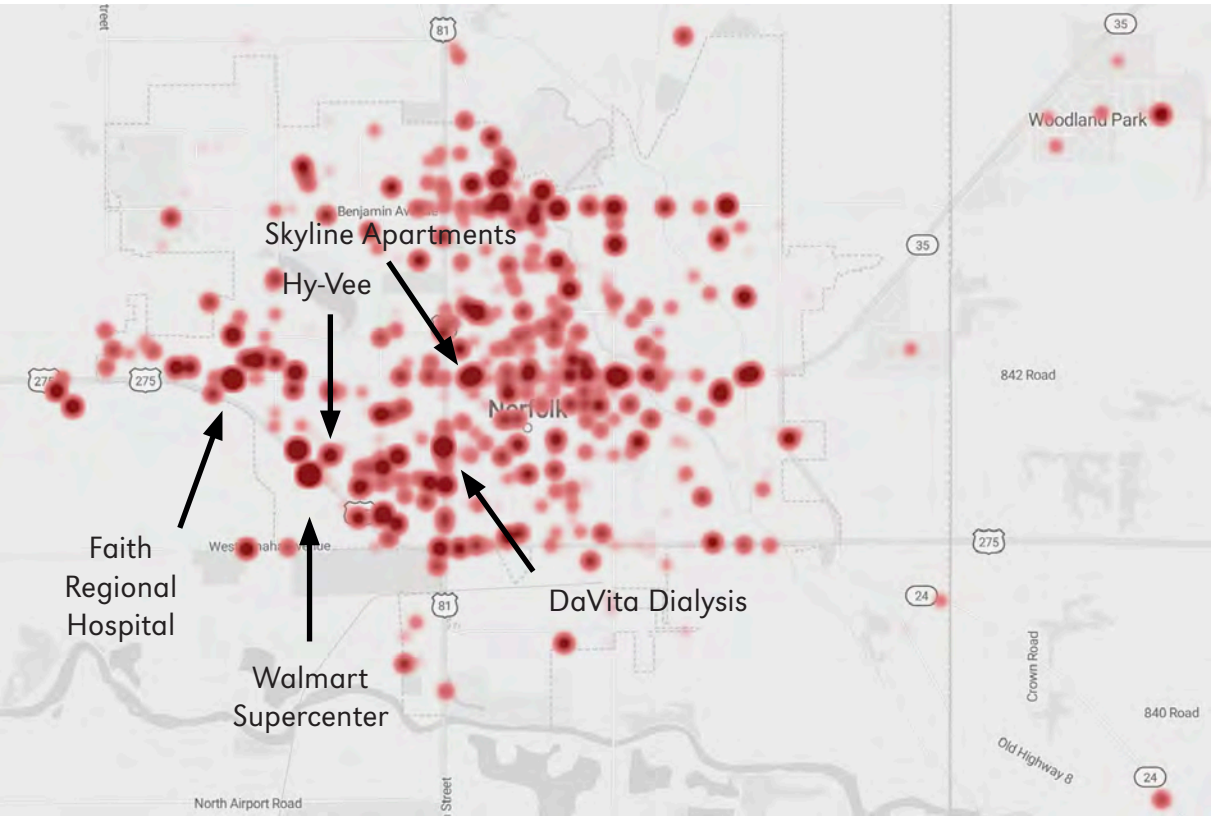
Source: (10-19) provider reported ride data, various dates

Nearly 40% of destinations (614 of 1,560, or 39.4%) and most drop-offs (11,900 of 18,323, or 64.9%) are located in and around Norfolk, the largest city in the Northeast region. Once riders disembark in Norfolk, they are likely to need services in the city.

DROP-OFFS WITHIN CITY OF NORFOLK

Figure 36 shows a heatmap of drop-offs within Norfolk with a table listing the top five destinations. The top five destinations in Norfolk are also the top five destinations overall; many of the providers in the Northeast travel to these locations, particularly to the Walmart Supercenter and Faith Regional Hospital.

Figure 36. Drop-off locations in and around the City of Norfolk by Northeast region transit providers



Source: (10-19) provider reported ride data, various dates

| Top Five Drop-off Locations | Number of Drop-offs |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Walmart Supercenter (Norfolk) | 762 |
| Faith Regional Hospital | 668 |
| Hy-Vee (Norfolk West) | 360 |
| DaVita Dialysis | 307 |
| Skyline Apartments | 228 |

AVAILABILITY OF TRANSIT



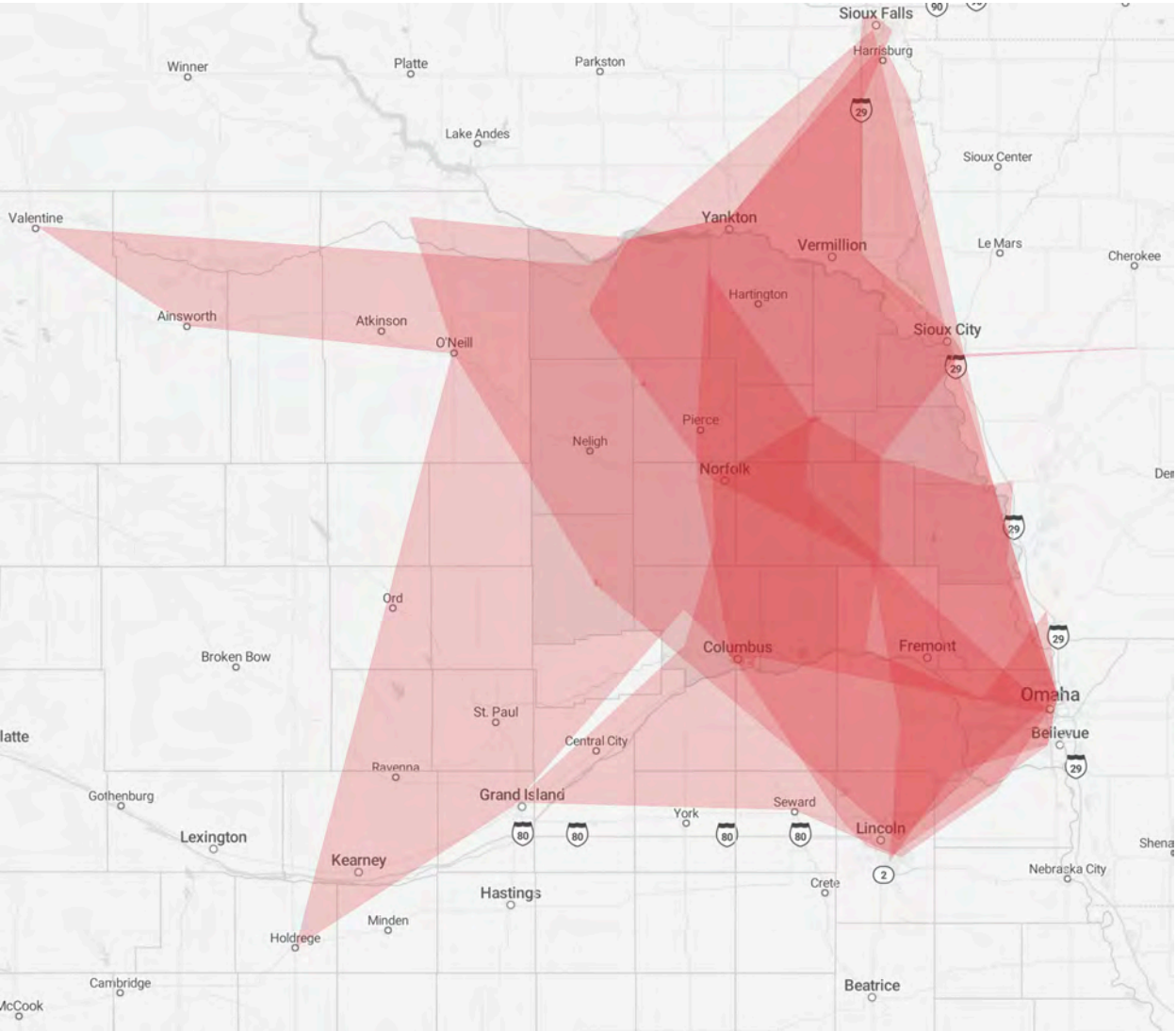
Along with frequent destinations, we also analyzed the areas in which riders were picked up by each transit provider as reported by the samples of ride data obtained from the providers. We analyzed the pickup data by first determining the observed area served by each provider and computing the estimated total and transit dependent populations that fall within each area. We then used that information to identify gaps and overlaps in service areas and any populations that may be underserved.

According to our estimated coverage area, only 0.1% of the region is not covered, as shown in the map of the observed coverage areas shown in Figure 37.



We do not find a gap in rural transit service available to the population of the region. Two or more providers cover 97.2% of the region’s population, with almost half of residents (47.9%) served by four or more. **The least served areas are in the southwestern part of the region, comprising the balance of Boone County outside Albion.**

Figure 37. Overlaid pick-up areas within and around the Northeast region for all reported rides by Northeast region transit providers; darker areas indicate overlap among pick-up areas



Source: (10-19) provider reported ride data, various dates

Nearly all the population of the Northeast region (97.2%) is covered by two or more providers, and almost half (47.9%) are served by four or more different providers. Coverage is particularly good in Norfolk and Columbus, which together account for 27.6% of the region’s total population (49,918 residents). Residents in each of those cities have access to service from at least five Northeast-based transit providers.

Table 21 summarizes the observed coverage for the total population, population aged 65 years or older, and the population with a hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, or independent living difficulty. Nearly all the transit dependent population of the Northeast has access to at least one transit provider. As with the overall population, we estimate only one tenth of one percent of the transit-dependent population live in an area with no access to transit.

Table 21. Population of reported pick-up regions, by number of providers, 2022

| | Total Population | Percent of Total Population | 65 years or older | Percent 65 years or older | With a Disability | Percent With a Disability |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Northeast | 180,959 | 100% | 32,392 | 100% | 21,787 | 100% |
| Covered by... | | | | | | |
| 6 Transit Providers | 266 | 0.1% | 36 | 0.1% | 46 | 0.2% |
| 5 Transit Providers | 31,094 | 17.2% | 4,694 | 14.5% | 3,474 | 15.9% |
| 4 Transit Providers | 57,855 | 32.0% | 10,241 | 31.6% | 6,918 | 31.8% |
| 3 Transit Providers | 61,449 | 34.0% | 11,447 | 35.3% | 7,710 | 35.4% |
| 2 Transit Providers | 26,051 | 14.4% | 5,114 | 15.8% | 3,038 | 13.9% |
| 1 Transit Providers | 4,058 | 2.2% | 871 | 2.7% | 577 | 2.6% |
| 0 Transit Providers | 187 | 0.1% | 34 | 0.1% | 19 | 0.1% |
| Avera Creighton Hospital | 176,178 | 97.4% | 31,480 | 97.2% | 21,129 | 97.0% |
| Cedar County Transit | 138,464 | 76.5% | 23,645 | 73.0% | 16,288 | 74.8% |
| City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit | 689 | 0.4% | 164 | 0.5% | 86 | 0.4% |
| City of Plainview Handivan | 1,331 | 0.7% | 265 | 0.8% | 253 | 1.2% |
| Columbus Area Transit System | 21,882 | 12.1% | 3,734 | 11.5% | 2,802 | 12.9% |
| Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit | 1,644 | 0.9% | 414 | 1.3% | 199 | 0.9% |
| JoyRide Public Transit | 38,689 | 21.4% | 7,322 | 22.6% | 4,934 | 22.6% |
| North Fork Area Transit | 62,487 | 34.5% | 10,168 | 31.4% | 6,692 | 30.7% |
| Oakland Public Transit | 1,581 | 0.9% | 389 | 1.2% | 349 | 1.6% |
| Ponca Express | 174,821 | 96.6% | 31,286 | 96.6% | 21,076 | 96.7% |
| Schuyler Public Transit | 5,522 | 3.1% | 457 | 1.4% | 312 | 1.4% |
| Wayne Public Transit | 5,694 | 3.1% | 764 | 2.4% | 978 | 4.5% |

Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2022

The greatest overlap in observed coverage area occurs in the area surrounding Norfolk extending southeast along U.S. Highway 275 toward West Point. Nearly all the providers in the region provide services to Norfolk.

The observed coverage areas indicate that Northeast region providers are often picking up riders outside the Northeast Mobility Management region. Three providers — Avera Creighton Hospital, Cedar County Transit, and Ponca Express — reported pickups and drop-offs across southeastern South Dakota, primarily in Yankton, Vermillion, and Sioux Falls. The same three providers — along with JoyRide Public Transit — reported pickups and drop-offs in and around Omaha and Lincoln.

Boone County in the southwest part of the region has the least observed coverage. Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit advertises rides to all residents of Boone County, but their ride sample only included drop-offs within the City of Albion itself. The county also falls within Ponca Express’ advertised coverage area (within 300 miles of one of their locations), but they reported no pickups or drop-offs within Boone County as part of their sample.

In summary:

- We do not find there is a large gap in rural transit services available to the population of the Northeast region.
- The balance of Boone County — outside the City of Albion — is the least covered area of the region and may require an expansion of county-wide service.
- Many of the providers in the Northeast also cover southeastern South Dakota and the areas surrounding Omaha and Lincoln.

KEY FINDINGS



Our analysis shows that the population of the Northeast region is roughly as dependent on transit as the population of Nebraska as a whole. This includes 17.9% of residents aged 65 or older, 10.6% living in poverty, 12.0% with a disability, and 4.5% of households without access to a private vehicle. These figures are growing, highlighting an increasing need for public transit in the region.

Our analysis found that ridership has increased compared to FY 2022 for all agencies, except for the region’s largest provider, North Fork Area Transit. Even with the reduction in North Fork Area Transit’s reported ridership, the annual mileage traveled by the region’s providers increased from FY 2022 to FY 2024, indicating an increase in overall transit activity.

Twelve transit providers operate in the Northeast, all working to meet growing demand. They connect residents to essential services such as healthcare, housing, groceries, schools, and workplaces, demonstrating transit’s vital role in residents’ quality of life. As a result of their efforts, rural transit is widely available in the Northeast region, with 99.9% of the population served by at least one provider and 97.7% of the population served by multiple providers.

Four of the region’s providers—Avera Creighton Hospital, Cedar County Transit, Joyride Public Transit, and Ponca Express—also cover large areas outside the region, particularly in southeastern South Dakota and in the Lincoln and Omaha metro areas. These areas—along with the City of Norfolk—are important destinations for the region’s residents. Greater coordination may be needed to ensure residents can reach those destinations without duplication of resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on our analysis, we offer the following recommendations:

- 1. Support Local Transit in Norfolk**
Overall, these findings emphasize the Northeast region’s reliance on public transit, the broad availability of services, and the dedication of providers to meet regional needs. Continued coordination and investment will be essential to sustaining and enhancing access to vital services for all residents. Many trips taken by the region’s providers end in Norfolk. Strengthening mobility options within the city will enhance access and allow riders to reach multiple destinations more easily. Incorporating transit planning into regional economic development strategies could strengthen rural economies.
- 2. Prioritize Access to Essential Destinations**
Medical facilities, public or affordable housing, and grocery or discount stores are the most common destinations for transit riders. Maintaining reliable service to these critical locations is essential, especially for low-income, elderly, and transit-dependent populations. Moreover, given that the Northeast has a growing proportion of elderly residents and individuals with disabilities than the state average, transit agencies may need to develop programs specifically tailored to these populations and destinations.
- 3. Enhance Coordination with Nearby Areas**
Four Northeast region transit providers largely operate outside the region. Better coordination among these providers and with providers in southeastern South Dakota, Lincoln, and Omaha can reduce redundant trips and improve efficiency.
- 4. Improve Coverage in Boone County**
Most of the services offered in Boone County occur in the City of Albion. As a result, there may be a need for additional transit options in that area.
- 5. Improve Data Collection and Performance Metrics**
Standardizing how transit providers collect and report ride data would provide clearer insights into service usage and unmet demand. Incorporating performance metrics such as on-time performance, rider satisfaction, and trip frequency would help providers refine operations and identify gaps more effectively.



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