

# Welcome



Syracuse Metropolitan  
Transportation Council



Central New York  
Regional Transportation  
Authority



# ETT Goals

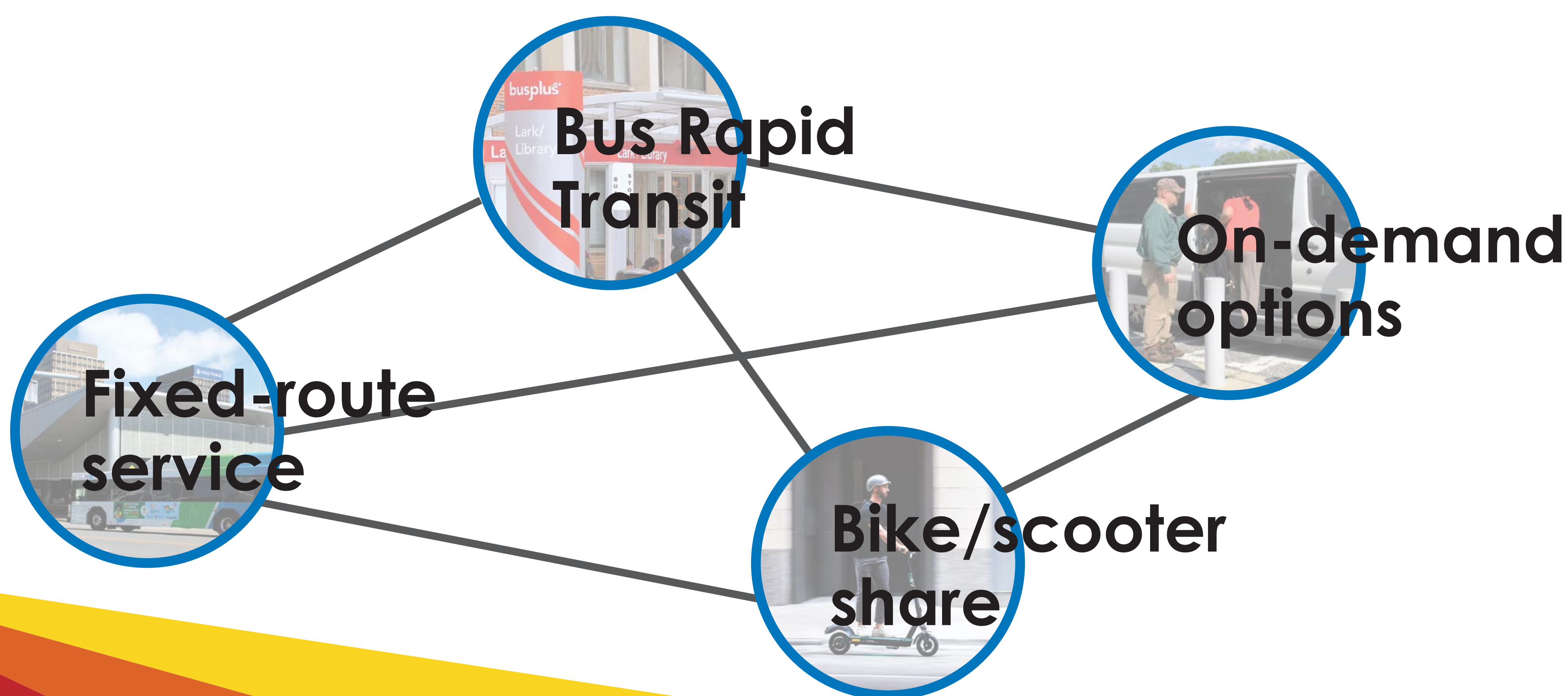
Why are we Exploring Tomorrow's Transit?

To understand the wants and needs of our community and how public transit can help meet them.

We want to learn how to *efficiently* and *effectively* serve Onondaga County's mobility needs.

Frequency  Geographic coverage

Access to jobs  Other trip types  
(shopping, appointments, recreation)







# ETT Process

## **Background Data Gathering**

- Compile existing data on how people travel and factors that influence their travel mode, such as commute data, vehicle ownership, and current Centro ridership.
- Create presentation (video) and launch project website.

## **Survey**

- Gather initial feedback from current riders and nonriders.
- Promote survey through: pop-up tabling, open houses, email/social media, advertisements on buses and at the Hub.

## **Analysis**

- Summarize survey results.
- Examine responses in context of: demographics, rider frequency, bus route, home ZIP code.
- Determine questions to ask in community discussions:
  - any surprises in survey results?
  - questions that need to be examined in more detail?

## **Community Discussions**

- Public meetings with break-out groups.
- In-depth, data-informed conversations.
- Discuss specific systemic issues and details of potential solutions.

## **Final Report**

- SMTC will summarize all feedback and provide Centro with a final report.
- Centro will use this to inform long-term service planning.

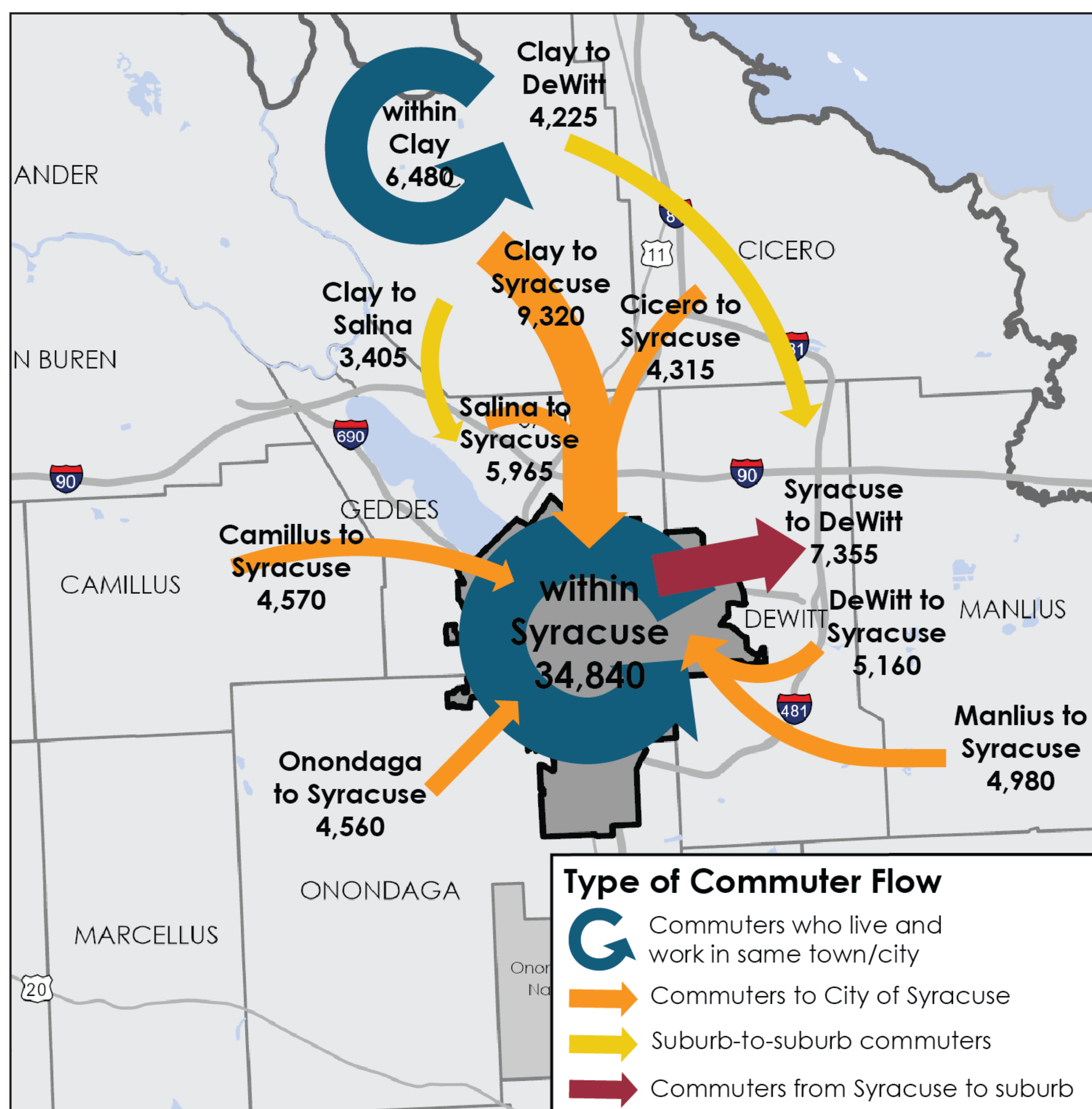


# Commuter Flows

Where we live and where we go to work

Commuting patterns within Onondaga County may not be what you expect.

**The largest group of commuters live and work within the City of Syracuse.**



Data source: 2012-2016 Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP)

Most recent available commute data from 2012-2016 show\*:

- 34,000 people both live and work inside the City of Syracuse.
- 19,600 people commute from Clay, Cicero, and Salina to Syracuse.
- Over 20,000 people are “reverse commuters,” living in Syracuse and working in the suburbs, with DeWitt the most significant destination.

\*Does not reflect recent employment growth in northern suburbs or future anticipated growth.

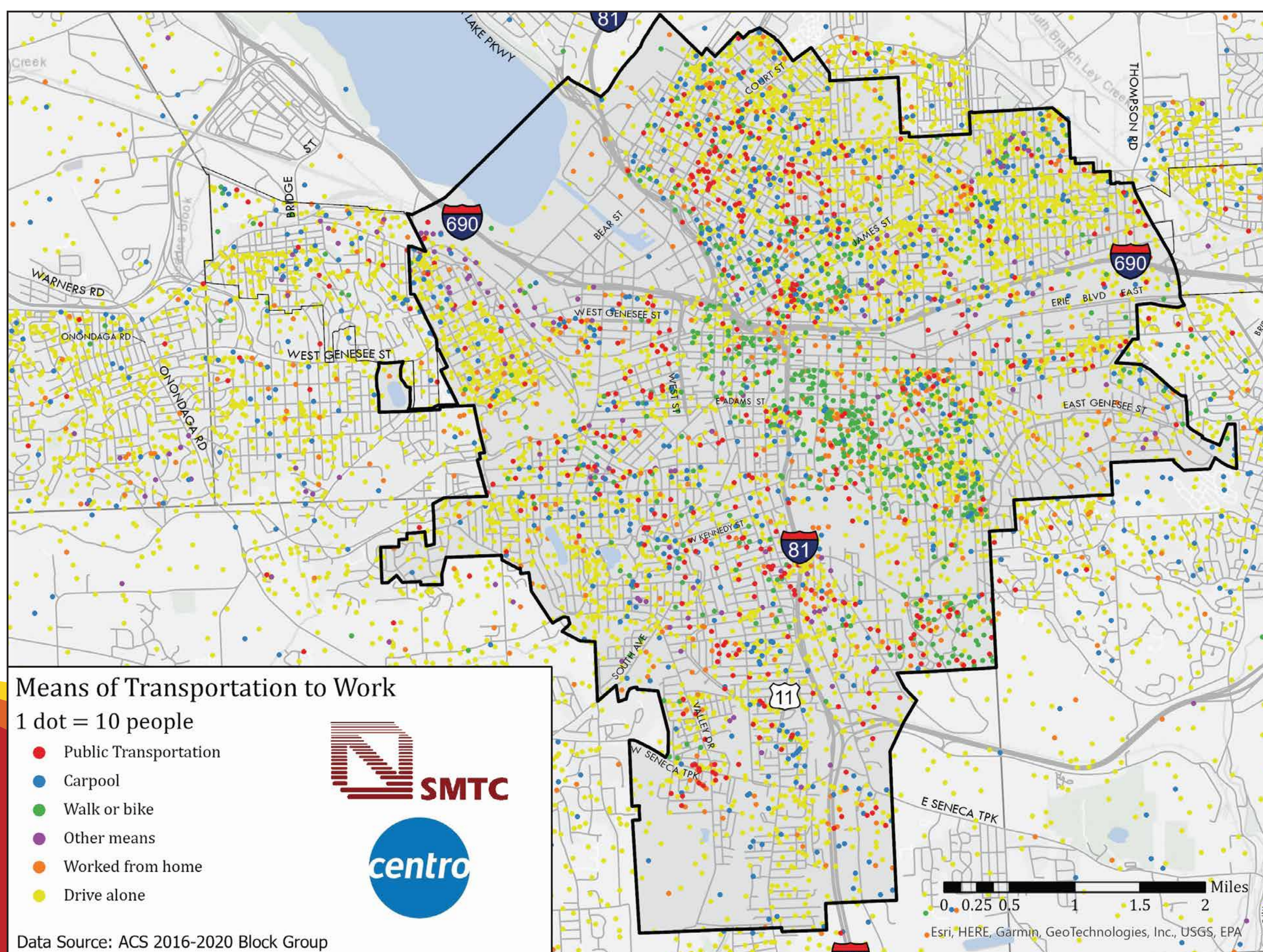
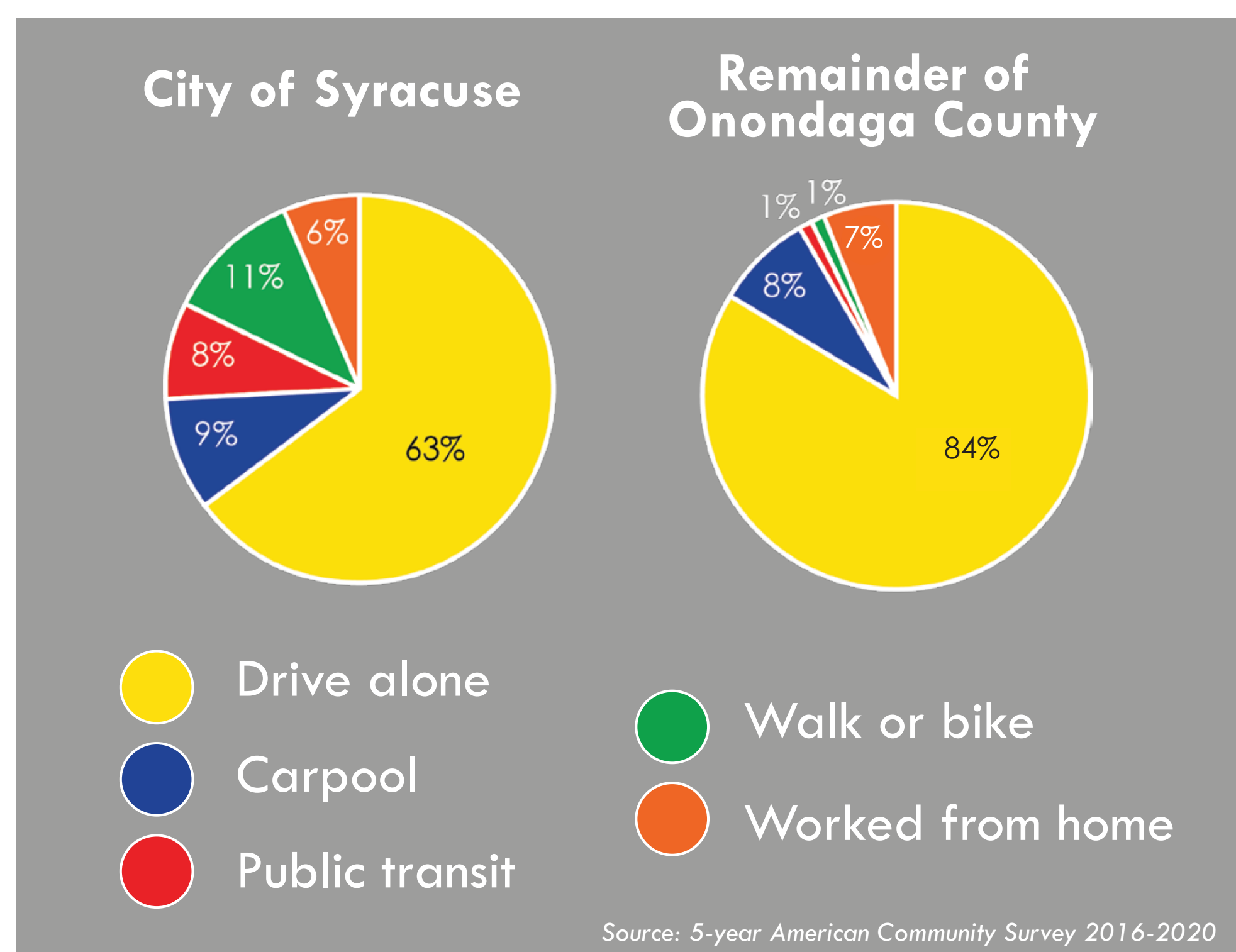


# Modes of Commute

## How we get to work

**8% of workers who live in the City of Syracuse use Centro to commute to work compared to only 1% in the rest of Onondaga County.**

- Public transit ridership is not uniformly distributed across the City of Syracuse.
- Commuters who use the bus are concentrated in the Northside, SU's South Campus, and across neighborhoods in the southwestern part of the City.
- Nearly the same proportion of workers in and outside the City work from home, 6% & 7%.



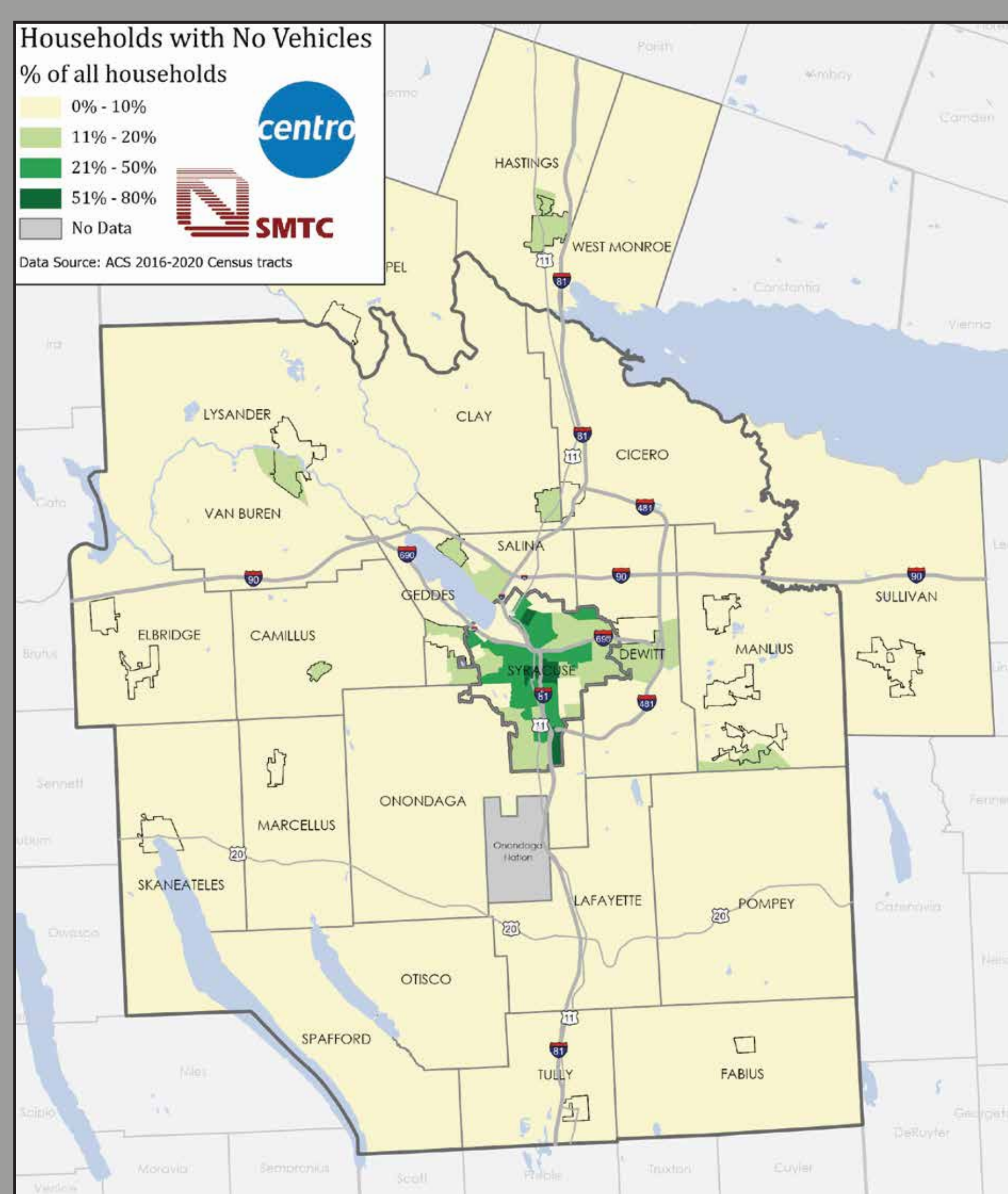
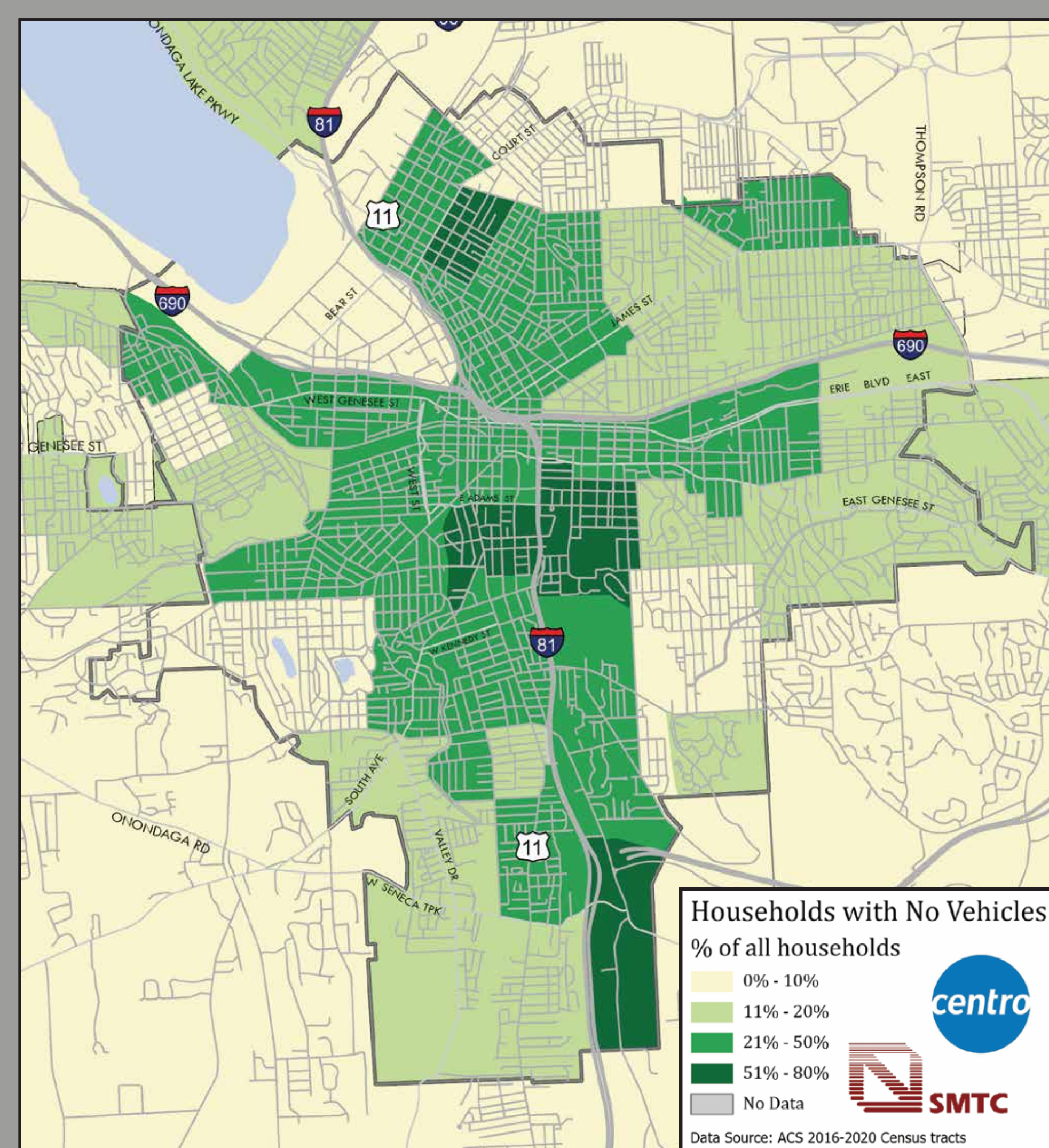


# Vehicle Ownership

Who has access to a personal vehicle

**The greatest concentration of households without a personal vehicle is within the City of Syracuse.**

- 23% of households in the City do not have access to a personal vehicle, compared to 6% in the rest of Onondaga County.
- While there are pockets of limited vehicle access in villages around Onondaga County, the greatest density of households without a vehicle is within Syracuse.
- In some areas of Syracuse, more than 50% of households do not have access to a personal vehicle.
- Communities with the highest density of households without access to a vehicle tend to be:
  - college student and senior housing communities
  - New American and low-income communities in the Northside and Southside neighborhoods nearest downtown.

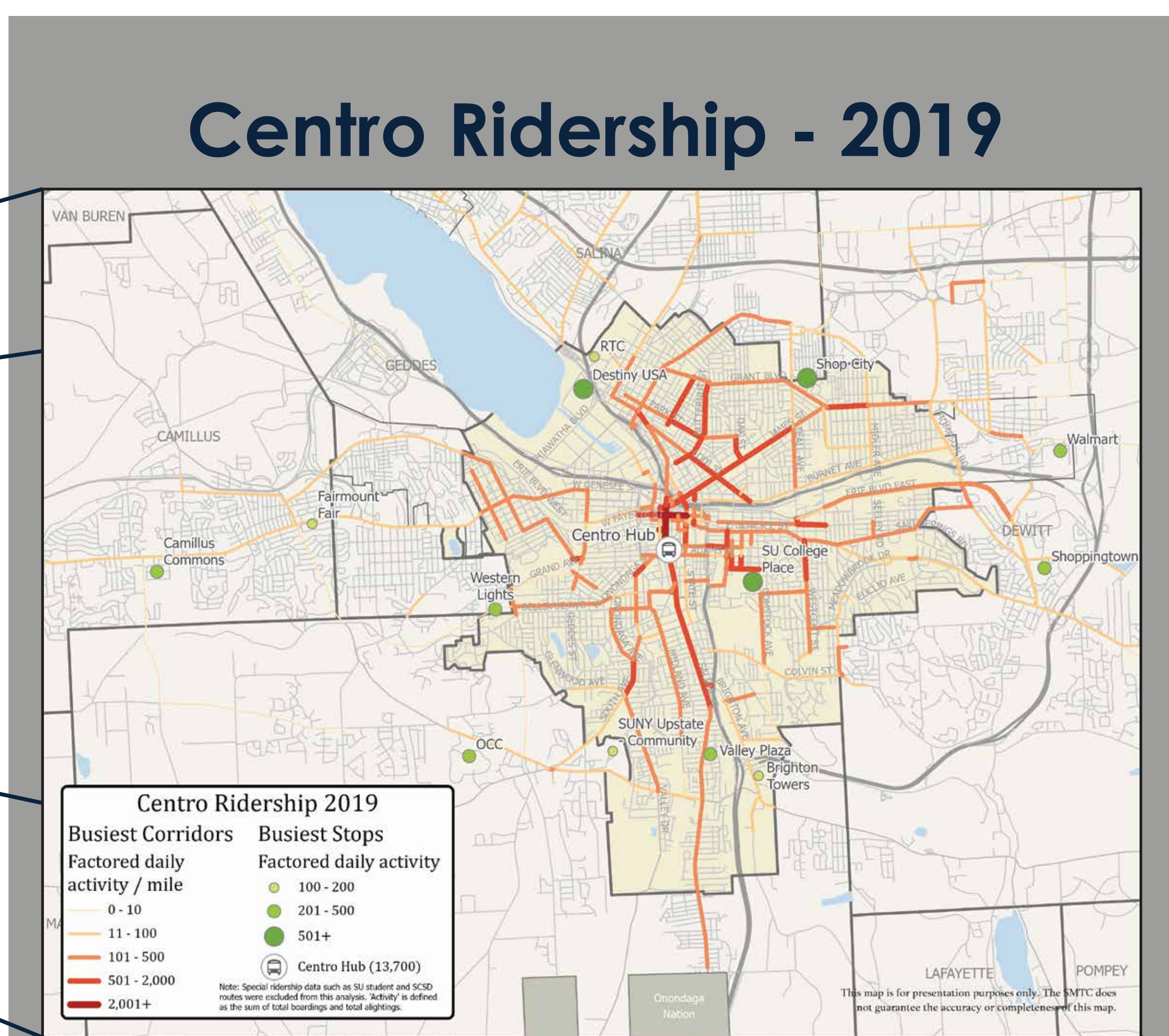
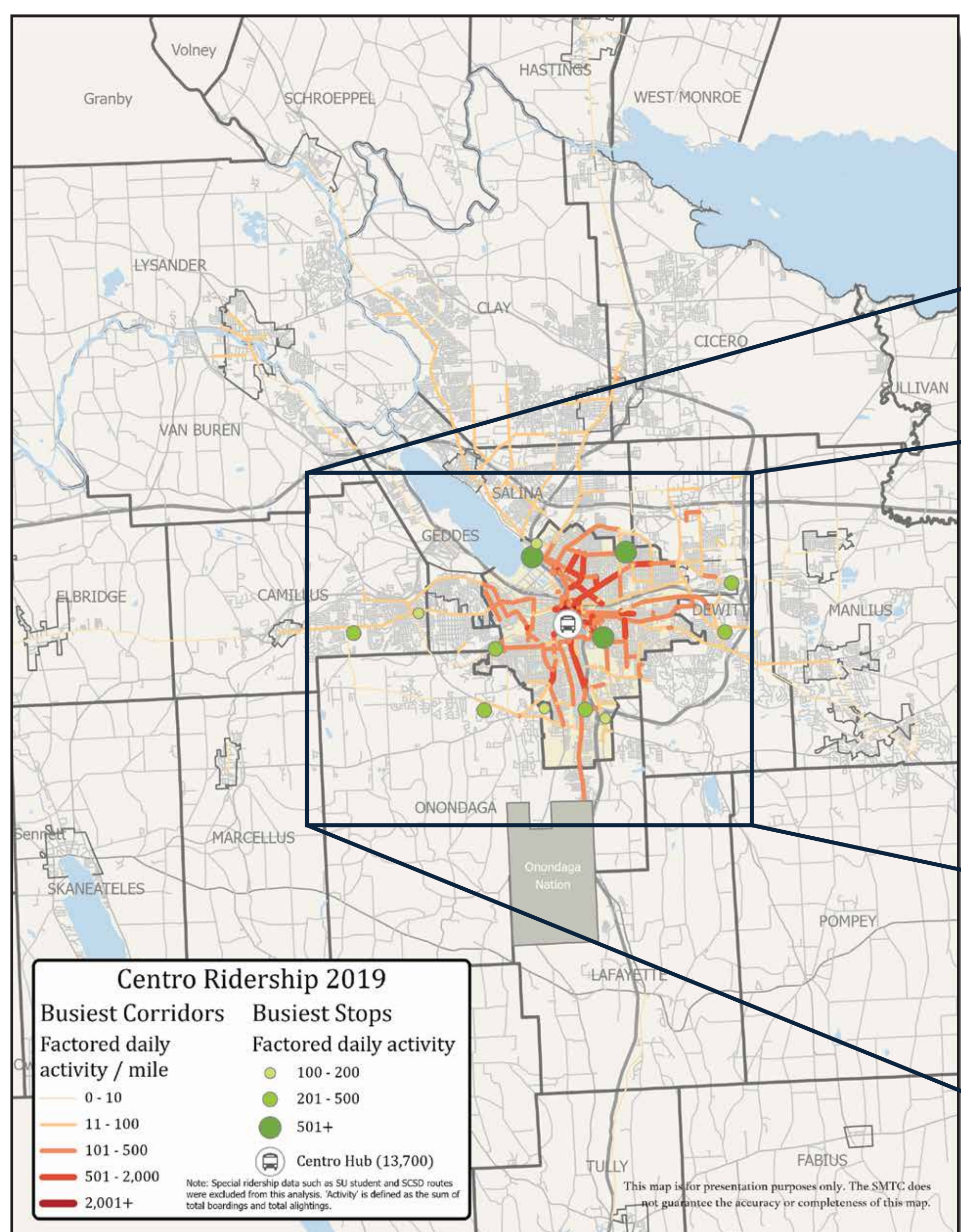




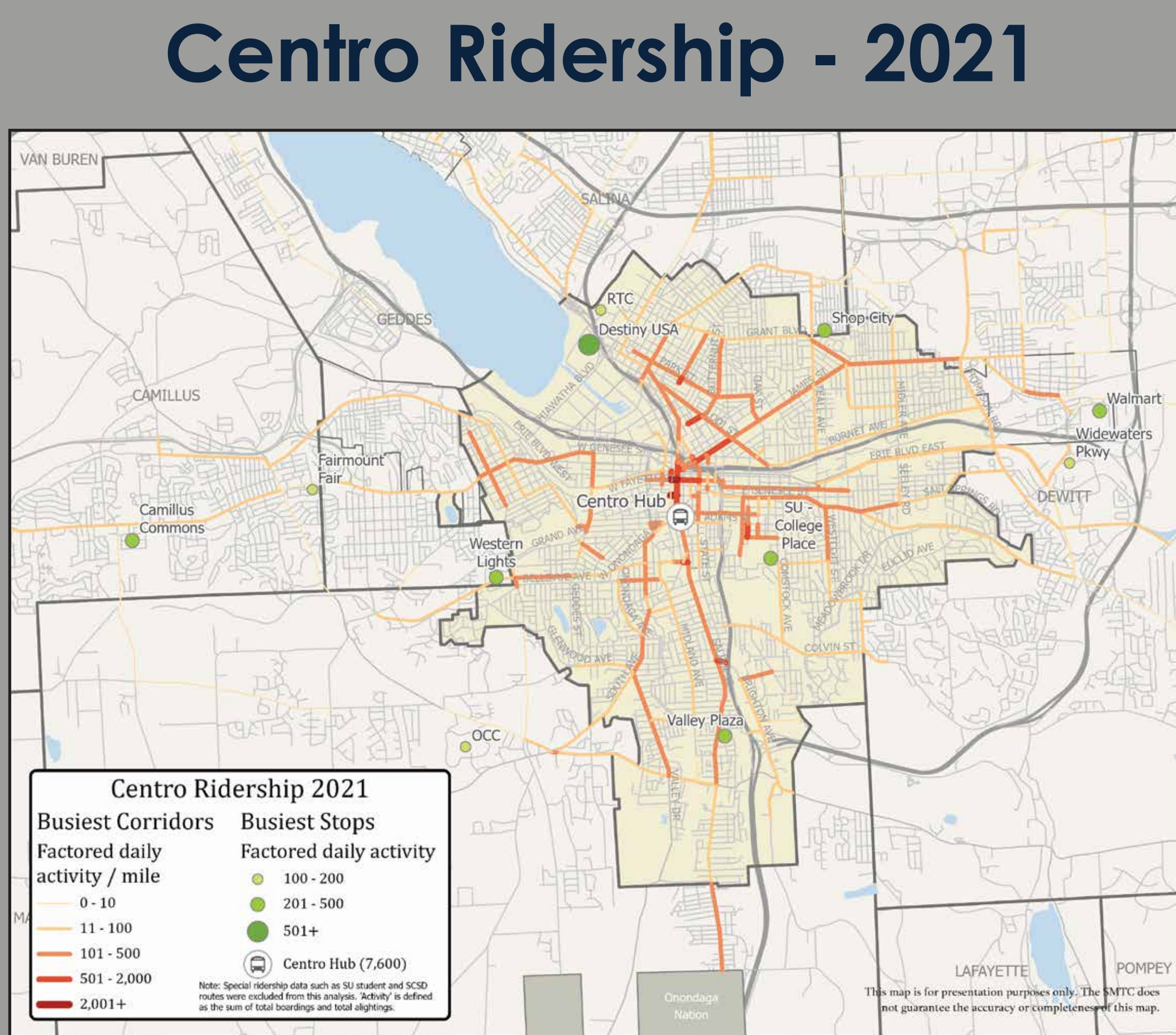
# Centro Ridership

Where people are using the bus

The busiest corridors in the Centro bus system are along major roadways in the urban core.



- Centro ridership dropped by over 40% from 2019 to 2021, similarly across all routes.
- Busiest stops include Destiny USA, Shop City, and SU - College Place.
- Ridership consistently high along S. Salina St, James St, Butternut St, Lodi St, parts of South Ave, as well as in Downtown Syracuse and SU/Hospital neighborhoods.







# Reasons for Travel Modes

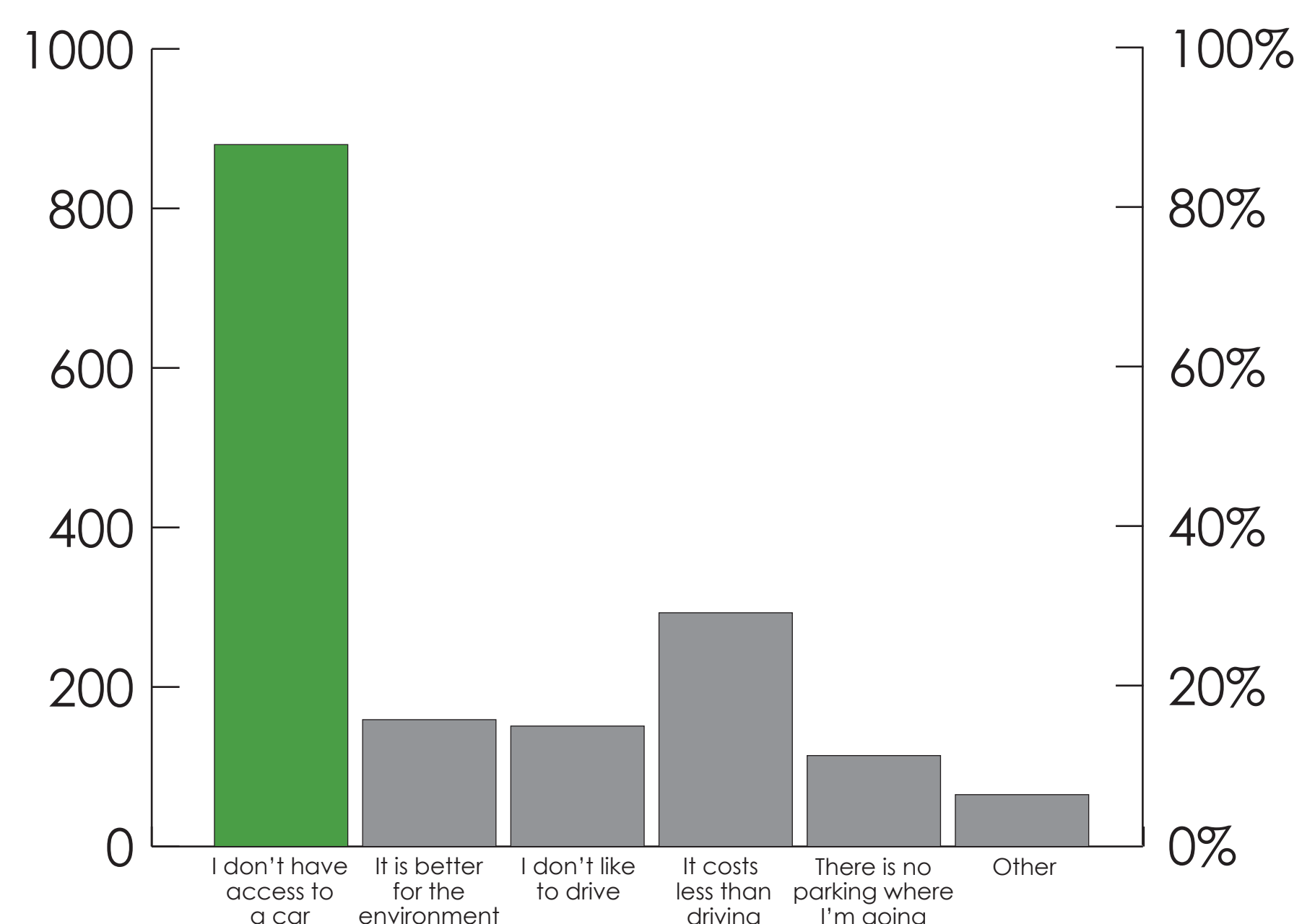
Why people ride, or do not ride, the bus

**Most of Centro's current riders use the bus because they do not have access to a personal vehicle.**

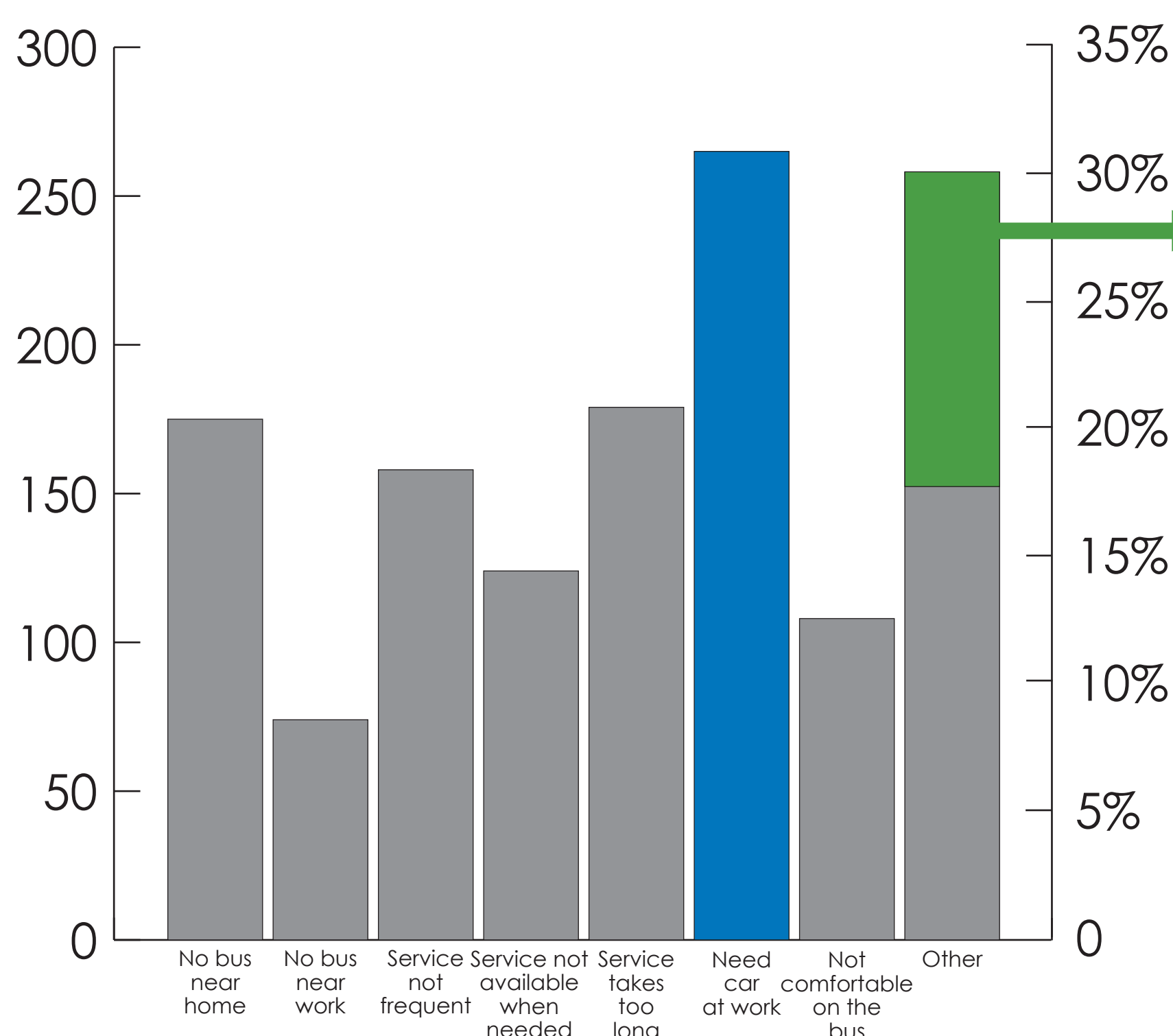
The SMTC conducted surveys in 2017, one mailed to nonriders and one handed out on buses. Both received about 1,100 responses.

## Why people ride the bus:

- In 2017, a rider survey found 80% of people ride Centro due to not having access to a car.
- Other reasons include the lower cost, the lessened environmental impact, and limited free parking.



## Why people don't ride the bus:



"Other" responses:

- Prefers freedom/convenience of a car .. 106 (41%)
- Travel/transfer time is too long ..... 39 (15%)
- Does not work outside of home ..... 27 (10%)
- Commute is too short ..... 23 (9%)
- No bus line close or at time needed ..... 20 (8%)
- Uncategorized ..... 33 (13%)

- About a third of nonriders indicated they don't use Centro because they need a car at work.

- Nearly half of those that indicated 'Other' said they prefer the freedom or convenience of a car.





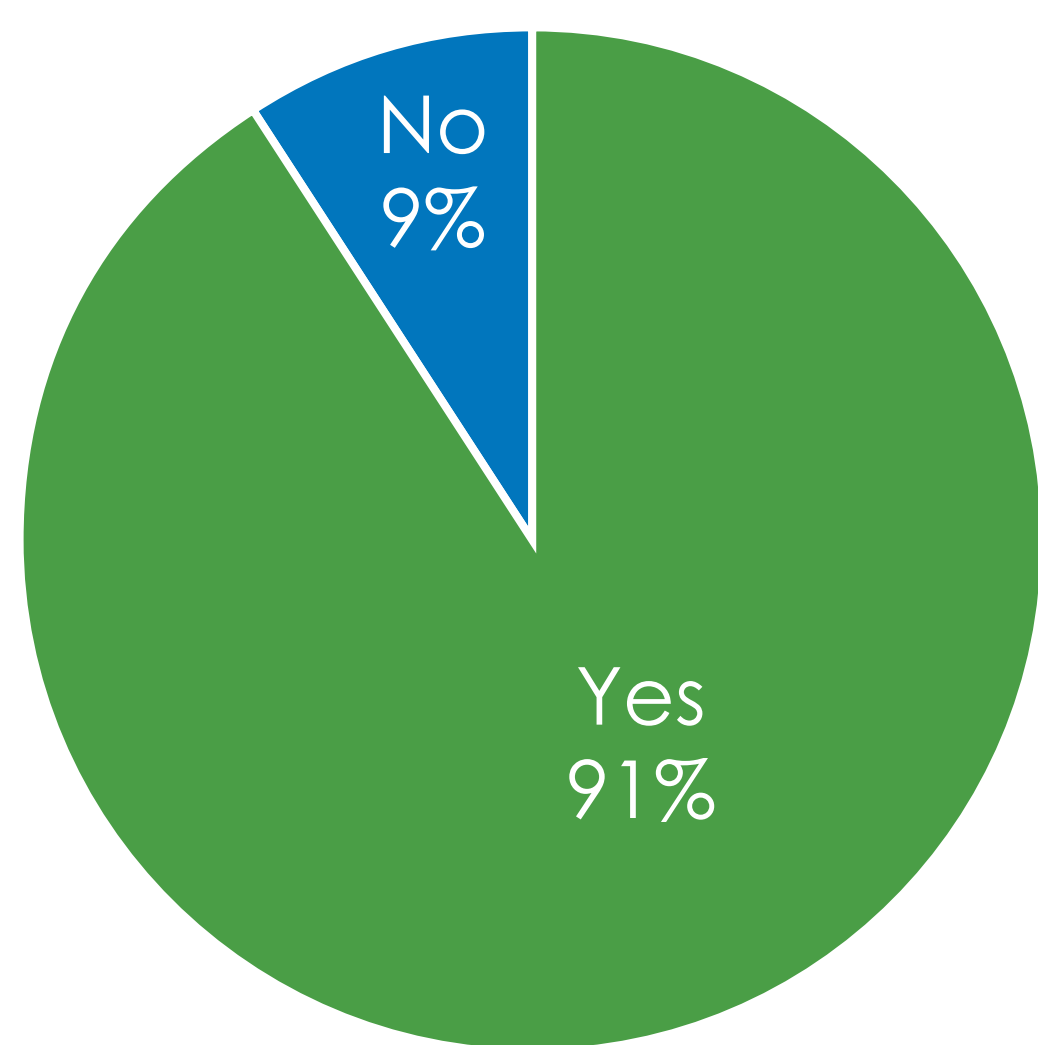
# Transit Satisfaction

How people feel about current Centro service

**Previous surveys indicate high satisfaction among riders and low interest in bus service among nonriders.**

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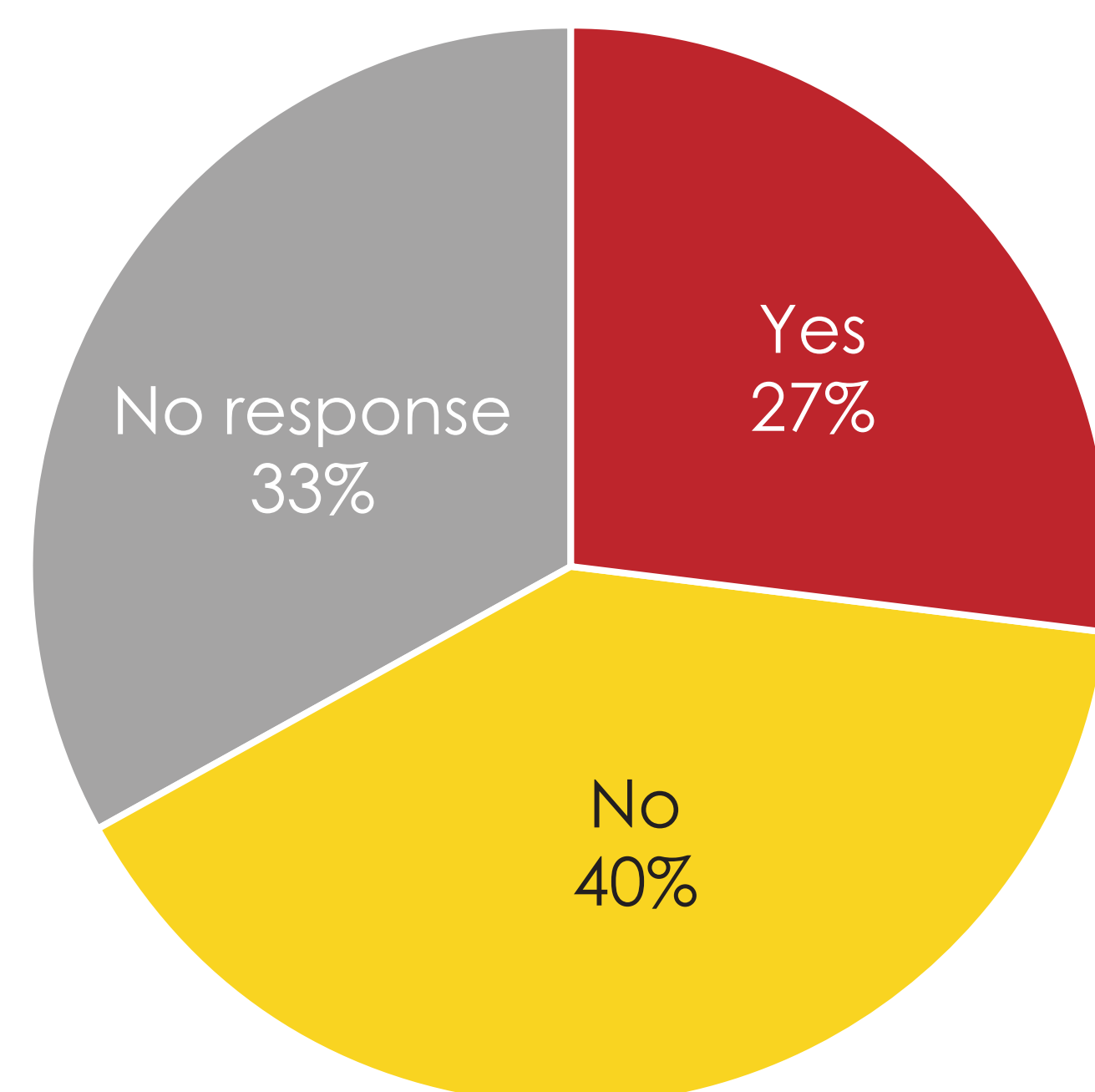
## *How satisfied are Centro riders?*



In a 2017 survey, over 90% of Centro riders responded “Yes” to the question ‘Does the current Centro bus system generally meet your needs?’

## *Could nonriders be satisfied by today’s public transit?*

In 2017, a nonrider survey found only 27% of people who do not use Centro ‘would consider taking Centro to work/school ... if their existing concerns about transit ... were addressed.’



However, 55% of nonriders indicated they would consider using Centro services for a special event.



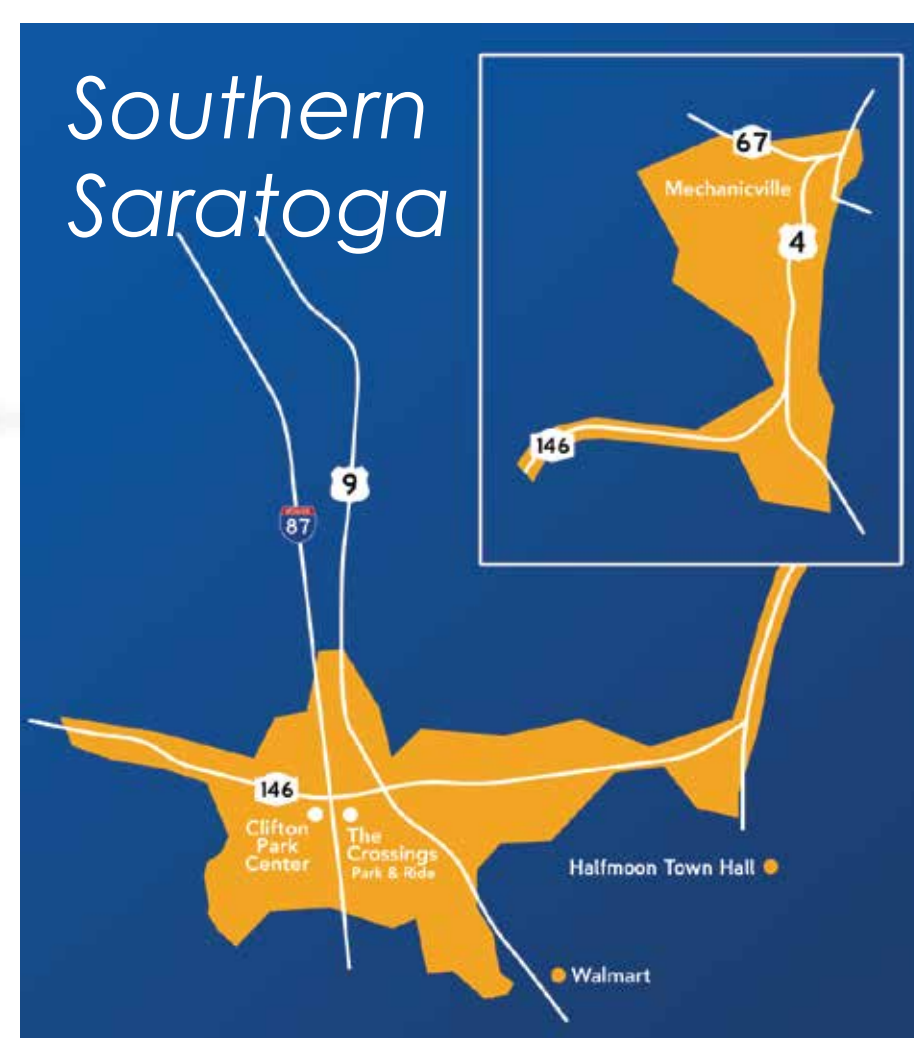
# Nearby On-Demand Services

How other cities are using on-demand service

Cities similar to Syracuse have recently implemented on-demand services.

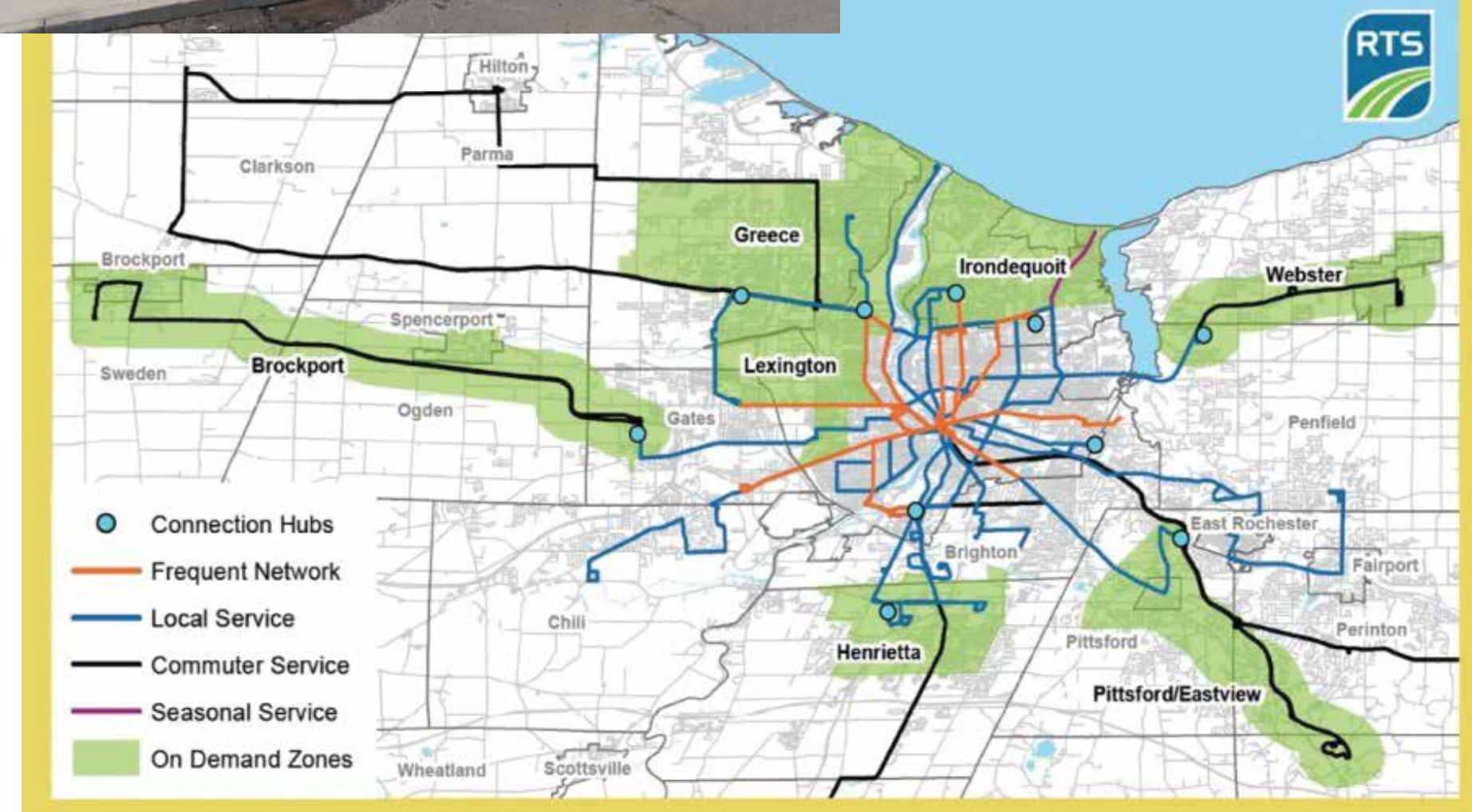
## Albany/Capital Region 'CDTA FLEX'

- 2 service zones
- Colonie/Guilderland/Latham zone
  - \$1.50 per ride
  - Numerous connections to fixed-route system
- Southern Saratoga zone
  - Free pilot program
  - Only connects to a single commuter route



## Rochester Area 'RTS OnDemand'

- 7 OnDemand zones
- 10 connection hubs
- \$1 for curb-to-hub
- \$3 for curb-to-curb
- Gave large suburban communities easier access to public transit
- Focused traditional service on 'frequent network'





# Transit Issues and Ideas

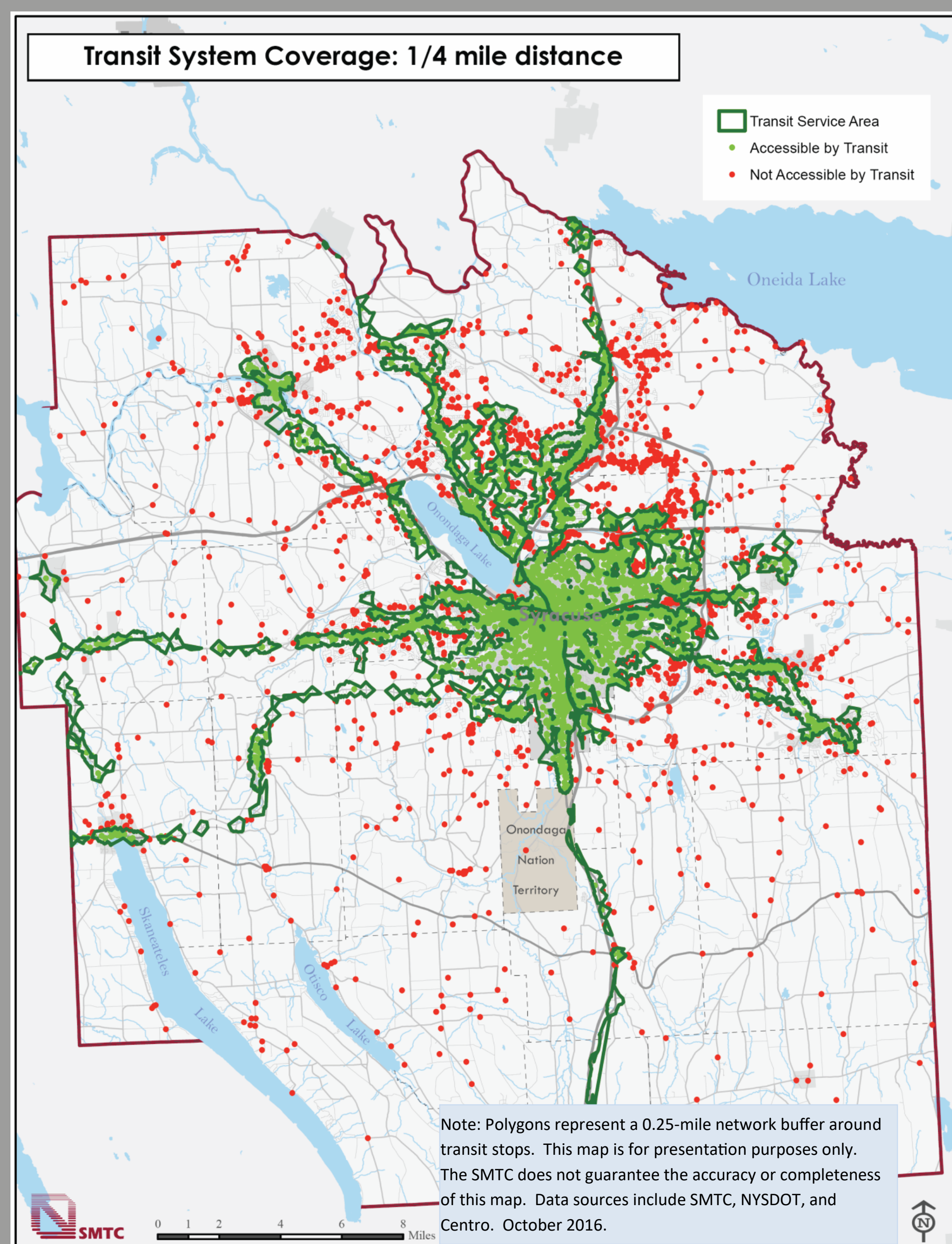
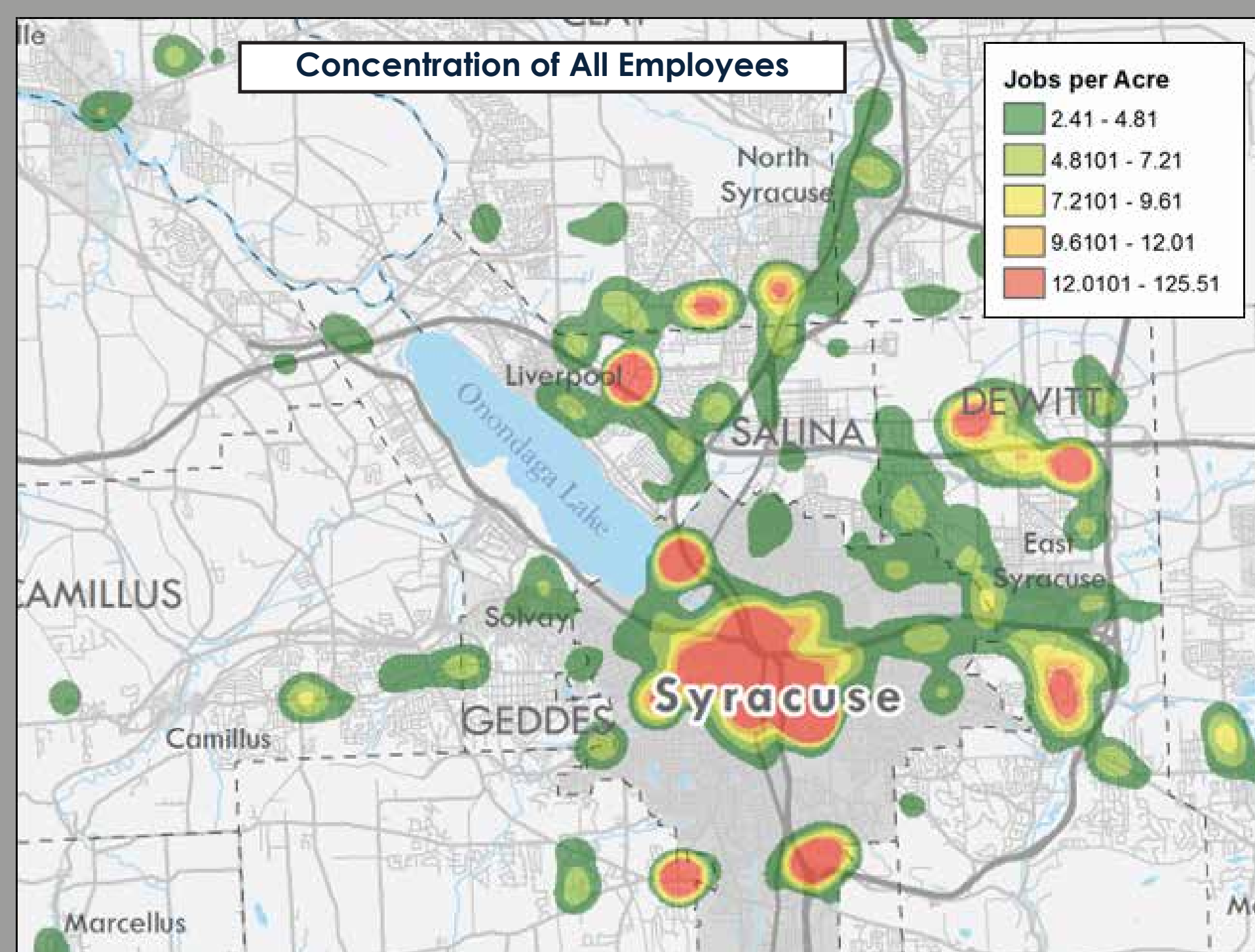
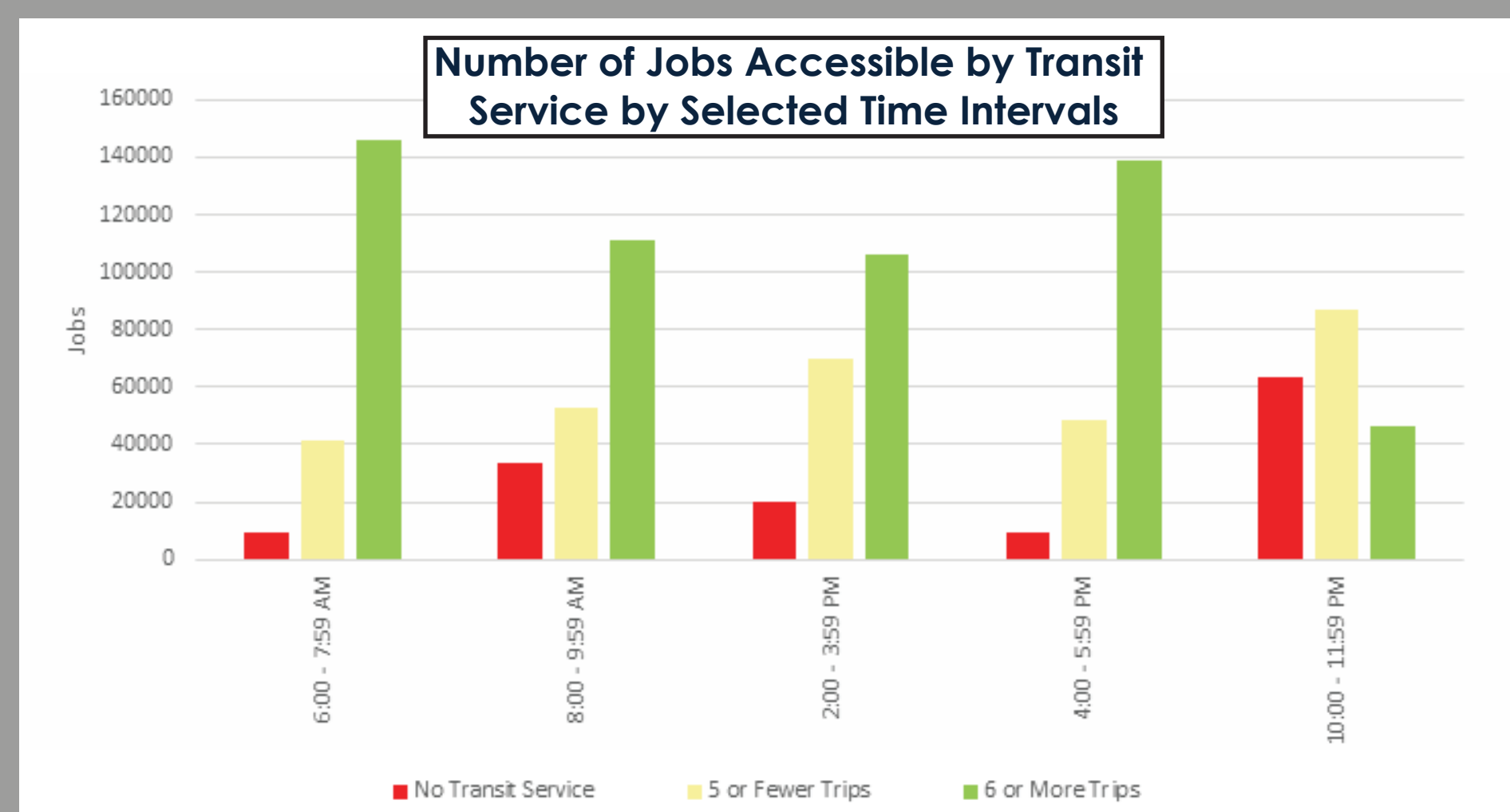
## What limits commuters from using transit

The majority of Centro riders use the bus to commute to work or school, but some commutes are more challenging than others.

- Centro has good geographic coverage within the City of Syracuse, close-in suburban communities, and to major employment centers, but not as population density decreases towards the outer suburbs.
- However, time of day impacts job accessibility by transit across most of the region, with 2nd and 3rd shift times lacking coverage.
- Travel times for people who commute by bus can be long, especially when trips require a transfer. Also, "chaining" trips (such as a stop at a childcare center on the way to work) adds challenges.

Suggested solutions to these issues from previous studies:

- On-demand van services** could provide longer service hours and greater geographic coverage into suburban neighborhoods.
- Cooperative vehicle sharing** would allow organizations to utilize vehicles that would otherwise be left unused overnight.







# Key Takeaways

What have learned so far



Many County residents rely on Centro because they do not have access to a personal vehicle.



Cost effective opportunities exist to expand transit beyond traditional 'fixed-route' bus service.

In 2017, Centro had a high satisfaction rate among riders.



Bus routes in core urban corridors have consistently high ridership; education and shopping destinations rank highest for activity.

Commuting in Onondaga County is more than just driving into the City.

