4 MARKET ANALYSIS

The market analysis maps demographic characteristics associated with the market for transit ridership in the Iowa City area. The primary purpose of this analysis is to:

- Identify areas with potentially high transit demand that are currently unserved by transit
- Identify areas with low demand that may currently be overserved by transit

Nine different demographic indicators (shown in Figure 4-1) are used in this analysis. Seven of these indicators are then combined into a Transit Propensity Index (TPI). The TPI uses this combination of relative densities to highlight the overall potential demand for public transit in different neighborhoods.

Figure 4-1 lists each demographic indicator included in this analysis, along with its data source and the geography at which it was originally reported. Each measure is related to a community's potential demand for transit and is explained in more depth before each map in the section below.

Figure 4-1   Market Analysis Indicators

Indicator	Measure	Source	Geography
Population	People per square mile	2017 ACS Five-Year Estimates	Census Block Group
Occupied Rental Units	Occupied rental units per square mile		Census Block Group
Zero-Vehicle Workers	Workers (over age 16) without access to a vehicle per square mile		Census Tract
Seniors	People aged 65 and over per square mile		Census Block Group
College-Aged Youth	People aged 18 through 21 per square mile		Census Block Group
Low-Income	People with incomes below the poverty line in the past 12 months		Census Block Group
People of Color	People identifying themselves as a race/ethnicity other than non-Hispanic/Latino white, per square mile		Census Block Group
Employment	Jobs per square mile	2015 LODES	Census Block Group
Low-Wage Employment	Jobs paying $1,250 or fewer dollars per month per square mile		

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)

KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, downtown Iowa City shows the greatest potential demand for transit. High-density student housing southeast of University Heights, a small area of Coralville between I-80 and Highway 6, and Iowa City's Northside and College Green neighborhoods also score highly.

- Most low-earning jobs are concentrated in downtown Iowa City and in the commercial plazas along Highway 6 in Coralville.

- College-aged youth, workers without cars, and the general population are concentrated in high-density neighborhoods such as those around downtown Iowa City. People aged 65 and older, however, are concentrated in lower-density, outlying communities.

ANALYSIS INDICATORS

Population Density

Figure 4-2 shows population density for the greater Iowa City area. Population density is an important measure of potential transit demand, as higher concentrations of people represent more potential transit riders. In the Iowa City area, population density is highest in downtown Iowa City and its nearby residential neighborhoods. There is also high population density southeast of University Heights, in Iowa City's Wetherby neighborhood, in a small Coralville neighborhood, and south of Finkbine Golf Course. Coralville, outlying Iowa City, and North Liberty consist of primarily lower-density communities.

Figure 4-2   Population Density

Apartment Density

People who live in rented apartments are typically more likely to ride transit than homeowners. In the Iowa City area, occupied rental units (Figure 4-3) are primarily concentrated southeast of downtown Iowa City and south of the main University campus, suggesting that renters are predominantly students. Other areas with moderate density of rental units include neighborhoods along Highway 6 in Coralville and in Iowa City's Northside neighborhood. Coralville north I-80, North Liberty, and northeast Iowa City all have low densities of rental units.

Figure 4-3   Density of Occupied Rental Units

Density of Workers without Autos

Workers without access to a vehicle are typically frequent transit users, as their trips to and from work must be conducted without an automobile. Figure 4-4 shows the density of these workers in the Iowa City area. Downtown Iowa City, the Northside neighborhood, and the University of Iowa East Campus have the highest densities of workers without access to vehicles. Other areas with relatively moderate densities of workers without auto access include the area south of University of Iowa and the Coralville communities between I-80 and Highway 6. Communities north of I-80 and in northeast Iowa City have the lowest densities of workers without access to a vehicle.

Figure 4-4   Density of Workers without Access to a Vehicle

Senior Density
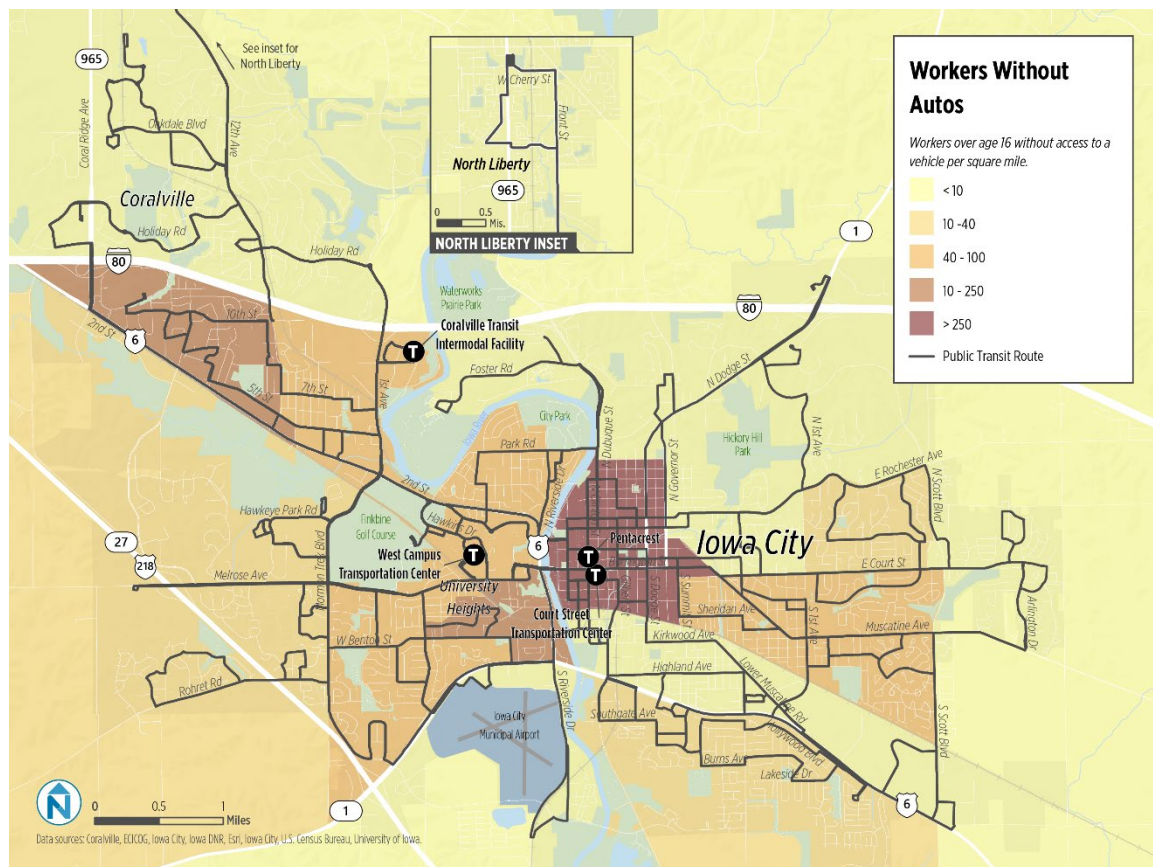
People over the age of 65 may ride transit more often than other community members, for reasons related to income, health, and safety. Figure 4-5 shows the density of people over 65 in the Iowa City area. These older residents are primarily concentrated in the eastern and southeastern neighborhoods of Iowa City and south of University Heights. The lowest densities of people over age 65 are in North Liberty west of Coral Ridge Avenue and north of W Cherry Street, northeast of Hickory Hill Park, and west of Mormon Trek Boulevard.

Figure 4-5   Density of Seniors

College-Aged Youth Density

College-aged residents are typically more likely to ride transit than other community members, for reasons related to income, travel patterns, campus parking policy, and personal preference. Figure 4-6 shows density of college-aged youth in the Iowa City area. Unsurprisingly, the highest densities are near the University of Iowa campus and in the residential areas surrounding downtown Iowa City. Relatively moderate density of college-aged youth also exists in Coralville near Coral Ridge Mall, and in the Wetherby neighborhood of Iowa City. The rest of the area has considerably lower densities of college-aged youth.

**Figure 4-6   College-Aged Youth Density**
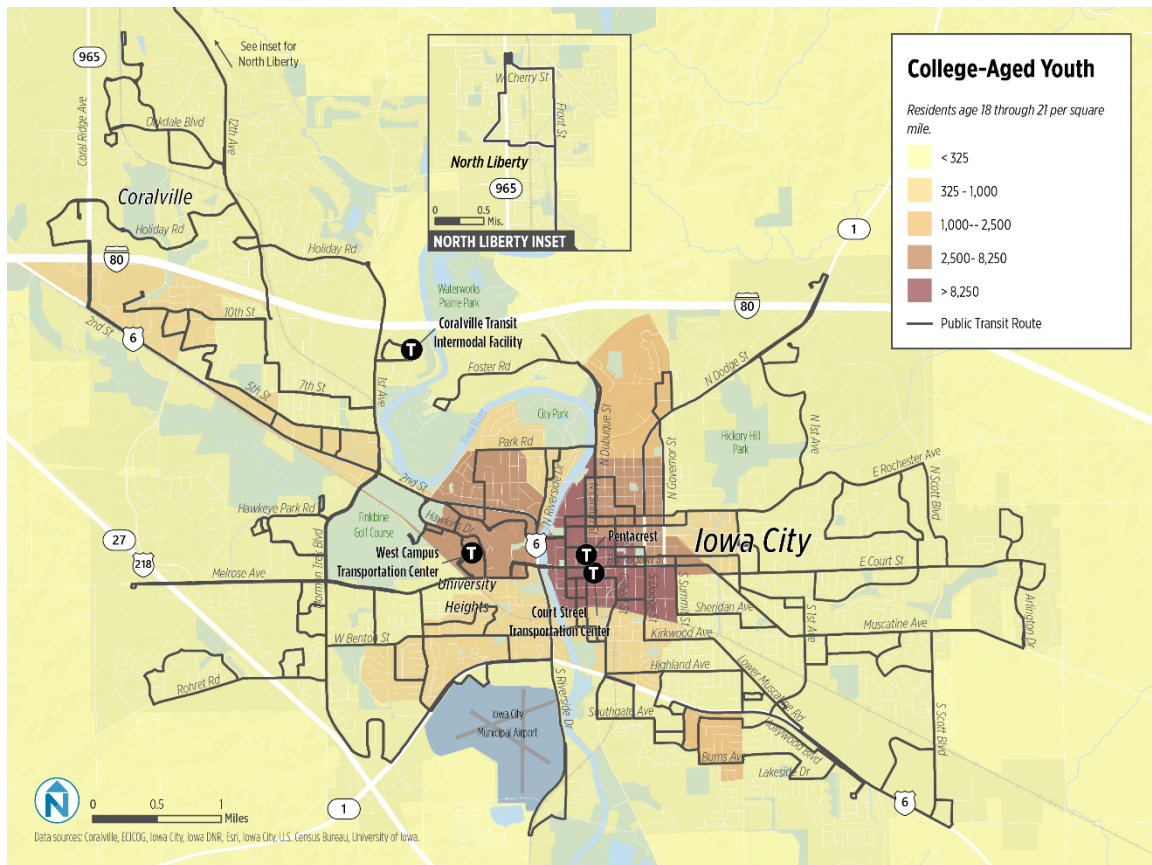
Low-Income People Density

People with low incomes are often more likely to ride transit than people with higher incomes, due to the low cost of a transit trip and possible financial barriers to vehicle access. People with low incomes are concentrated most densely near downtown Iowa City, in student neighborhoods. Outside downtown Iowa City, people with low incomes are most densely concentrated in the Oakcrest Street area, north of Lantern Park Plaza in Coralville, and between 5th Street and Highway 6 in Coralville. There are also some concentrations of people with low incomes throughout west Iowa City and south of Highway 6 between Keokuk Street and Sycamore Street.

**Figure 4-7   Low-Income People Density**
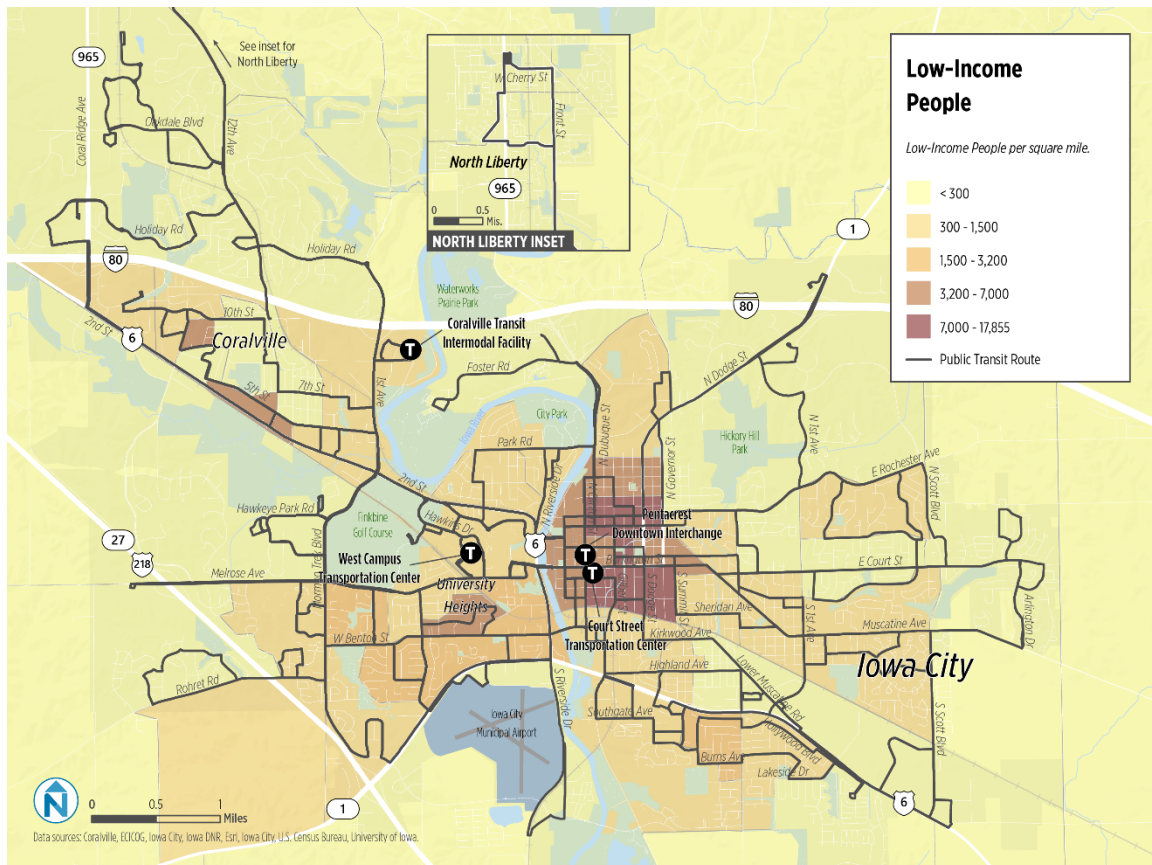
Density of People of Color

Understanding where concentrations of people of color exist in the Iowa City area is important for assessing racial equity impacts of any changes to the transit network. People of color live at the highest densities south of Highway 6 between Keokuk Street and Sycamore Street, just south of downtown around Ralston Creek, and in Coralville north of Lantern Park Plaza. There are also relatively high concentrations of people of color in places with high densities of University-affiliated residencies, such as the Westgate Street area, downtown Iowa City, high-density neighborhoods in west Coralville, and the Oakcrest Street corridor.

**Figure 4-8   Density of People of Color**
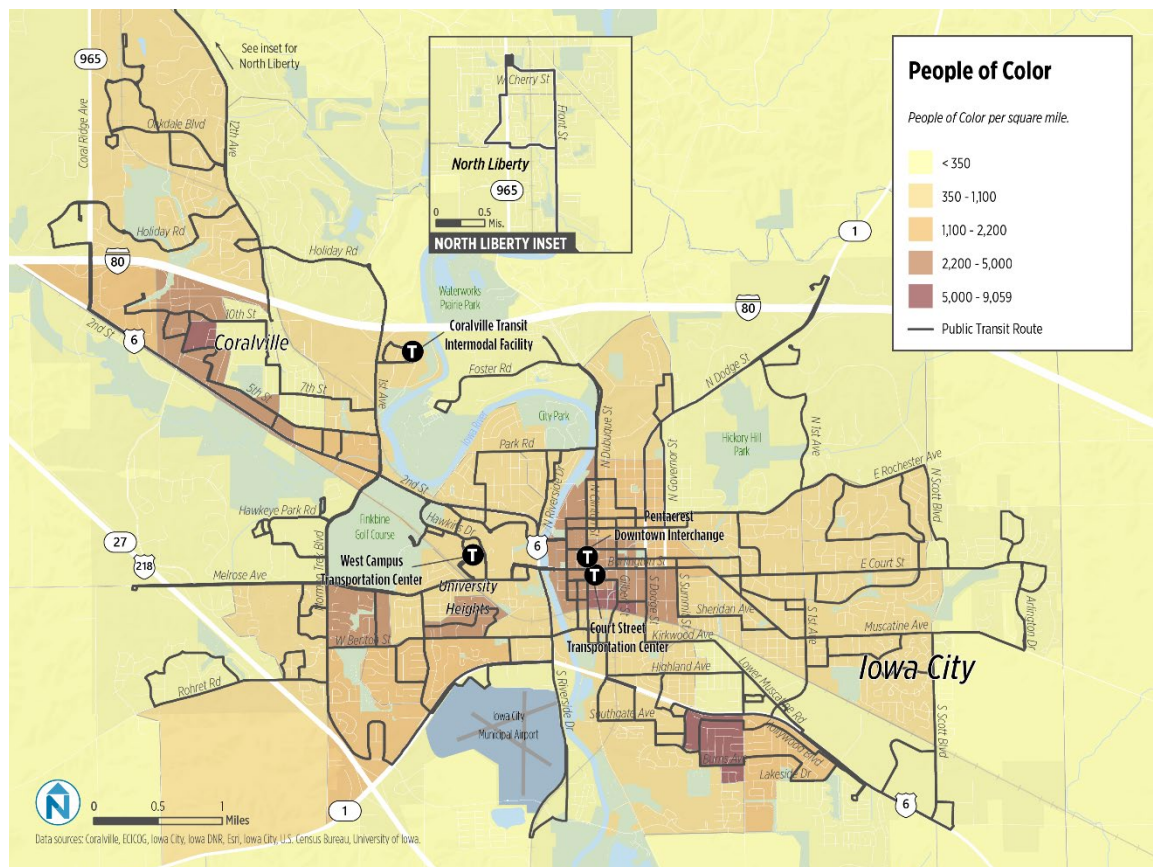
Job Density

Like population density, job density is an important predictor of transit demand; places with higher concentrations of jobs are more likely to support transit service. Job density in the Iowa City area (Figure 4-9) is highest in downtown Iowa City, on University of Iowa Campus, in Iowa City's Northside neighborhood, and along Highway 6 in Coralville. Other neighborhoods with a relatively high density of jobs include the area along Highway 6 in Iowa City. North Liberty and much of outlying Coralville and Iowa City have relatively low job density.

Figure 4-9   Job Density
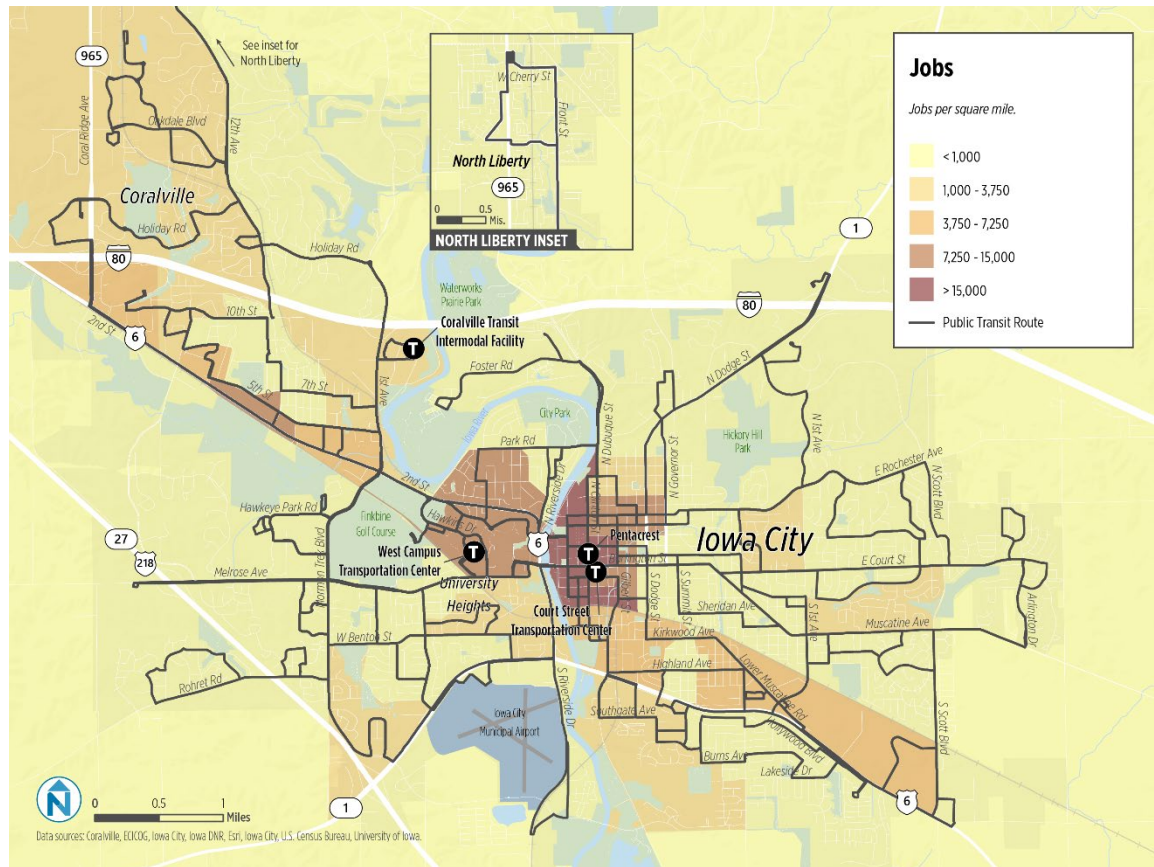
Low-Income Job Density

Low-income job density is also an important predictor of transit demand, as workers earning relatively low wages are less likely to be able to afford a vehicle for commuting. Figure 4-10 shows the density of low-income jobs in the Iowa City area. Downtown Iowa City, the Coral Ridge Mall area, and the Highway 6 shopping corridor in Coralville have the highest concentration of low-income of jobs. Other neighborhoods with a relatively moderate density of low-income jobs include the commercial corridor along Highway 6 in Iowa City, south Iowa City neighborhoods, and Iowa City's Muscatine Avenue neighborhood.

Figure 4-10   Low-Income Job Density
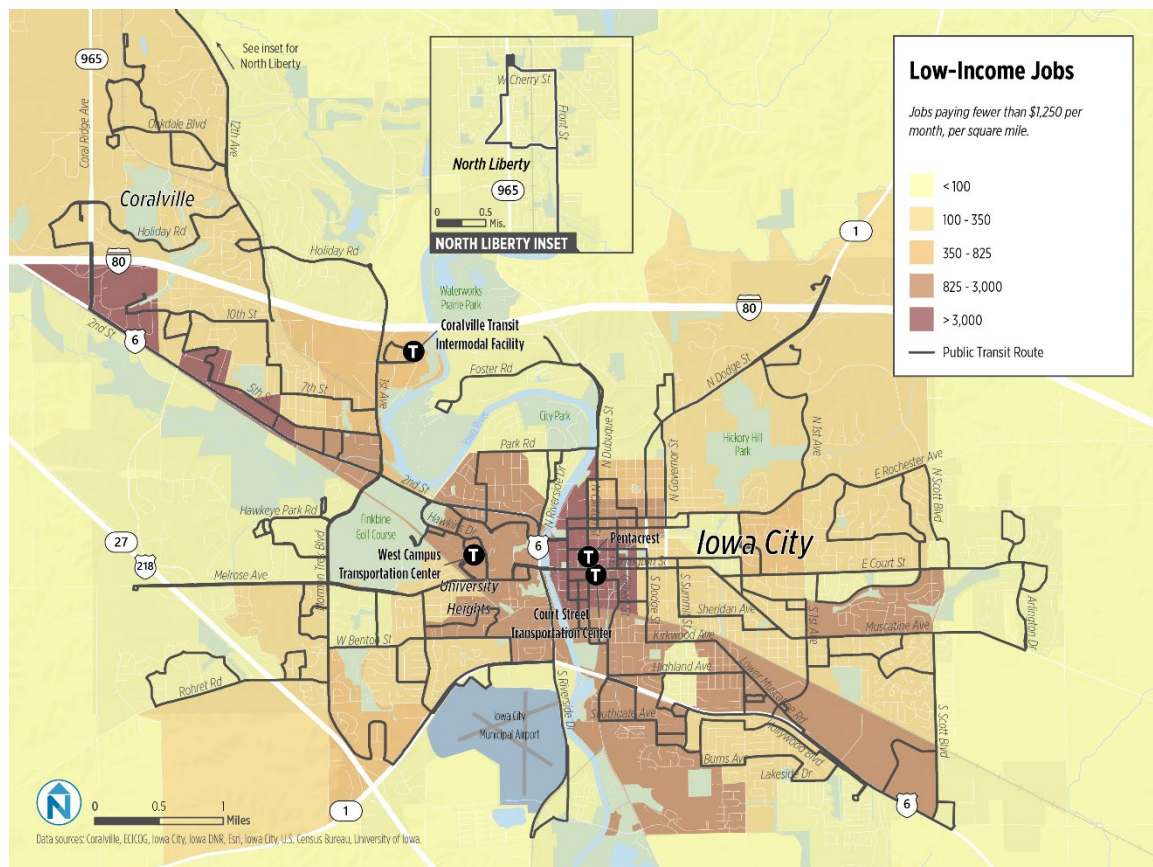
Transit Propensity Index

Figure 4-11 shows a Transit Propensity Index (TPI) for the Iowa City area. A TPI is a composite score of the density of population, occupied rental units, workers without access to autos, seniors, college-aged youth, employment, and low-wage employment. This score is relative to Johnson County as a whole and represents each census block group's overall potential demand for transit. In the Iowa City area, places with the highest TPI score are downtown Iowa City, the Northside neighborhood, the area south of University Heights, and part of the Highway 6 corridor in Coralville.

Neighborhoods in the area with the lowest TPI score include neighborhoods at the outskirts of Iowa City, Coralville north of I-80, the municipality of North Liberty, and communities west of Mormon Trek Boulevard.

Figure 4-11   Transit Propensity Index