



UTM STUDENTS' UNION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

TRANSIT

UTMSU LOBBY WEEK

2024/2025

table of contents

INTRODUCTION

Why make transit more accessible?

01

NECESSITY

Pressing concerns for transit access

02

STATE OF AFFAIRS

2024-2025 Transit Satisfaction Survey

05

ANALYSIS

Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area Network Analysis

11

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION

17

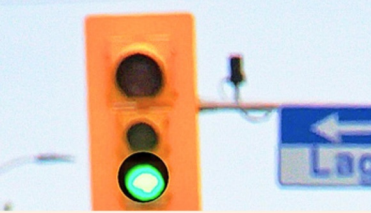


introduction

Transit access is a right, not a privilege.

The City of Mississauga has a population of roughly 700,000 and is the second most populated city in Ontario. Due to its size, it is no surprise that Mississauga is home to the third largest municipal transit system in Ontario, which services 41 million riders annually (1). This robust transit system is composed mainly of buses and primarily involves two transit authorities, MiWay and GO. These two agencies work together to try and bring people over greater distances without the use of a car.

Canada has committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 (2), and the transportation sector was a major contributor to Canada's greenhouse gas emissions in 2021, accounting for roughly 28% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions in that year. As it stands, roughly 83.9% of commuters in Canada use either a car or truck to commute which is not a sustainable mode of transportation (3).



NECESSITY

Improvements in transit accessibility is necessary due to several pressing reasons:

Research has shown that longer commute times correlate with lower academic performance (4).

This being the case, receiving adequate transit service should be a priority as it is an investment in the future.

In addition to this, improved transit service for a city or region can effectively reduce commuter reliance on automobiles. Excessive dependence on cars is commonly correlated with key public concerns such as:

01

CARBON FOOTPRINT

Private vehicles such as cars and trucks are known to be major contributors to Canada's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, less frequent automobile usage can lower our carbon footprint.

02

FINANCIAL BURDEN

Automobile ownership is associated with many fees such as maintenance costs and monthly insurance costs, which can cost drivers upwards of hundreds or thousands of dollars per year.

03

ACCESSIBILITY

Some commuters do not have the option of a private vehicle for a multitude of reasons. As citizens and tax-payers, they are entitled to a reliable transport option.

04

CONGESTION

High rates of private vehicle usage lead to increased congestion due to the commuter capacity to size ratios of automobiles being much lower than those of public transit.

The indirect impacts of public transit on car usage suggests that improving public transit to an institution like UTM may provide benefit to not only students but the residents of the Greater Toronto Area as a whole.

It is in light of these facts that the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (the "UTMSU") has collected data with the aim of demonstrating the need for increased transit service, particularly regarding the service to the University of Toronto Mississauga Campus ("UTM").

The primary goal of this document, the 2025 UTM Transit Report (the "Report"), is to provide a structured overview of the key elements, findings, and insights obtained from said data. We use these findings to make realistic recommendations for improvements in transit connectivity to UTM.

By creating this Report to act as an intermediary between unstructured data, collected from primary sources, and the reader, the UTMSU intends to bridge the gap between the data we need to improve public transit to UTM, the organizations who have the capacity to take action, and the individuals who wish to stay informed and participate.

-
- 1 Jonathan English (2023, June). *Needs Improvement: Getting to World-Class transit*. Toronto Region Board of Trade.
<https://bot.com/Resources/Resource-Library/Transit-Report-Cards>
 - 2 Environment and Climate Change Canada. (2024, September 3). *Net-zero emissions by 2050*. Government of Canada.
<https://canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/net-zero-emissions-2050.html>
 - 3 Statistics Canada. (2023, June 9). *Canadians' commutes: Still car-heavy, but some lighter footprints*. Government of Canada.
<https://statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/3798-canadians-commutes-still-car-heavy-some-lighter-footprints>
 - 4 Kobus, M. B. W., Van Ommeren, J. N., & Rietveld, P. (2015). Student commute time, university presence, and academic achievement. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 52, 129-140.
[sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166046215000216](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166046215000216)



CURRENT STATE OF *affairs*

The final version of the 2024-2025 UTM Transit Satisfaction Survey (the "Survey") was released on November 7, 2024. Across all versions of the Survey 278 responses were collected; however, the dataset used in this analysis includes only the 199 responses collected in the final version. The Survey collected transit usage data and opinions on transit, and identified areas where improvements may be needed from the students of the University of Toronto Mississauga ("UTM").

The Survey focused on four MiWay bus routes servicing UTM:

- 110 University Express Service
- 101 Dundas Express Service
- 126 Burnhamthorpe Express Service
- 44 Mississauga Road Local Service

Routes 110 and 101 were combined into one section of the Survey focusing on weekend Express Service. Additionally, sections for commuters who take the Brampton Transit 199 UTM Express Service, commuters who drive (frequently and occasionally), commuters who walk, cycle, or take scooters, and commuters who use rideshare services (such as Uber or Lyft) were included in the survey (5).

The data was then processed, visualized, and interpreted, the results of which are included in this Report.

5 Only the sections for the four MiWay routes were included due to low response counts in the other sections, which resulted in small sample sizes.

ROUTE 110 & 101

EXPRESS WEEKEND SERVICE

123 Respondents of the Survey indicated they commuted on the 110 or 101 Express. The respondents were asked about what modes of transit they use on weekends when the 110 and 101 express buses are not running. Respondents were permitted to choose multiple options.

The following figures were produced:

FIG 1: ALTERNATE MODES OF TRANSIT USED BY 101 AND 110 EXPRESS COMMUTERS ON WEEKENDS



40.7% of respondents drive or take Uber/Rideshare, more than those who use other MiWay bus lines (30.6%). Meanwhile, 17% of respondents avoid traveling on weekends entirely.

2024-2025 Transit Satisfaction Survey

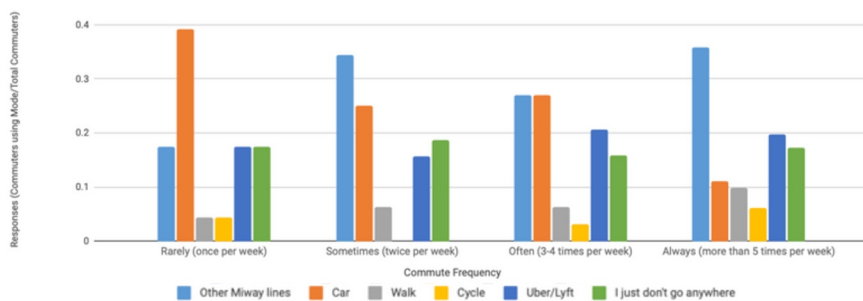


FIG 2: ALTERNATE MODES OF TRANSIT USED BY 101 AND 110 EXPRESS COMMUTERS ON WEEKENDS SORTED BY COMMUTE FREQUENCY, NORMALIZED BY NUMBER OF COMMUTERS



By sorting responses based on commute frequency and normalizing the data, we can identify key patterns.

One notable trend visible in Figure 2 is an inverse relationship between commute frequency and car usage, suggesting that **students who have access to a car—though not necessarily owning one—tend to prefer driving, possibly due to unreliable transit options.**

To produce Figure 3, we assessed interest in weekend service for the 110 and 101 Express routes, respondents rated their likelihood of using the service on a scale from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 meant they were "very unlikely" to use it, while a rating of 5 indicated they were "very likely."

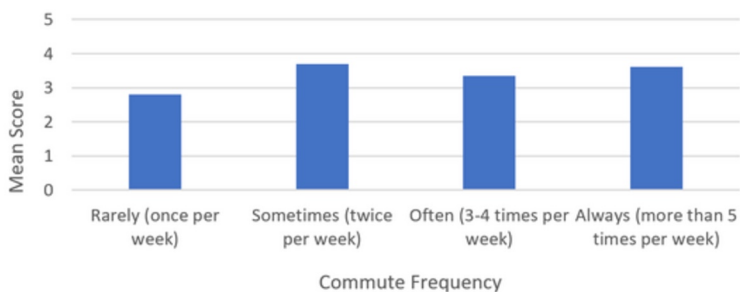
A rating of 3 signified neutrality, meaning they were neither likely nor unlikely to take advantage of the service.

The rating given by a respondent can help us understand the potential impact of the proposed service on their commute:

- A **high rating** suggests the service would be highly beneficial, significantly improving weekend commutes.
- A **middle rating** may indicate that the service may provide some convenience, such as enhancing route redundancy, without significantly altering commute quality
- A **low rating** implies that the service would have little to no impact on the respondent's commute.

The mean score for all respondents was 3.45, indicating that, on average, the service would have a notable effect to the average 101/110 Express commuter
2024-2025 Transit Satisfaction Survey

FIG 3: LIKELIHOOD OF RESPONDENTS WHO COMMUTE ON THE 110 AND 101 EXPRESS USING A WEEKEND SERVICE, IF PROVIDED



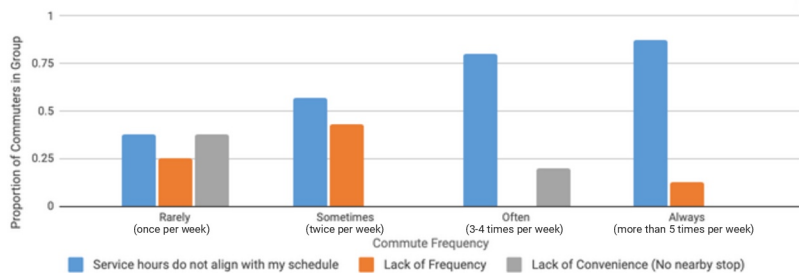
Commuters who use the 101 and 110 Express two times a week or more all scored over 3. Notably, 57.7% of respondents rated the service a 4 or 5, indicating that adding weekend service to the 110 and 101 Express routes would greatly improve the travel experience of over half of students already using the weekday service.

ROUTE 126

BURNHAMTHORPE EXPRESS

Respondents who commuted using the Route 126 Burnhamthorpe Express were asked about their primary reason for not taking the route when it otherwise would have been on their commute path.

FIG 4: REASONS FOR CHOOSING LOCAL 26 BUS SERVICE OVER THE 126 EXPRESS, SORTED BY COMMUTE FREQUENCY, NORMALIZED BY NO. COMMUTERS



126

Cawthra Rd

Lakeshore

FIG 5: REASONS FOR CHOOSING LOCAL 26 BUS SERVICE OVER THE 126 EXPRESS

- Service hours do not align with my schedule
- Lack of Frequency
- Lack of Convenience (No nearby stop)



The majority (64.2%) of respondents listed their primary reason for not taking the 126 when travelling on it's route as a lack of adequate service hours. This was more pronounced for frequent commuters who relied on the 126 more, being listed as the primary reason for 80% and 87.5% of commuters who took the 126 "Often" or "Always", respectively.

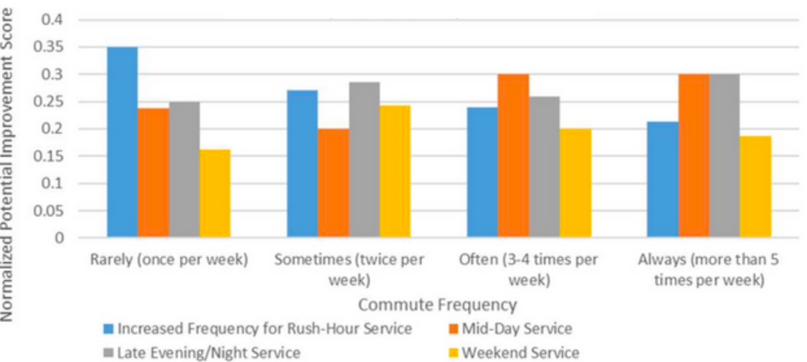
2024-2025 Transit Satisfaction Survey

Respondents were asked to rank four possible improvements to the 126 Express based on which would have the most positive impact on their usage.

The trends shown in Figures 4 and 5 are also evident in Figure 6. Frequent commuters wish to prioritize mid-day and late evening/night service over increased frequency, while infrequent commuters prefer more frequent buses. Three out of the four groups ranked weekend service as the lowest priority.

FIG 6: POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS RANKED BY RESPONDENTS, NORMALIZED BY COMMUTE FREQUENCY

Each rank was assigned an arbitrary score – 4 for the highest rank, then 3, then 2, then 1 for the lowest. The scores were summed and normalized.



ROUTE 44

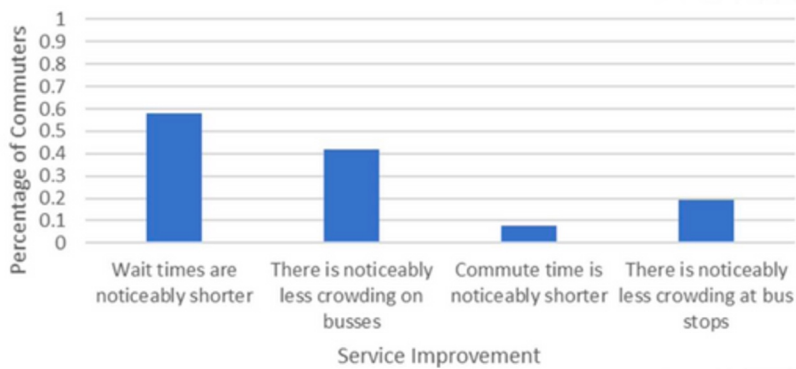
The majority of respondents (58.2%) observed that the improvements made to Route 44 on September 2, 2025, significantly reduced wait times, making their commutes more predictable and efficient.

2024-2025 Transit Satisfaction Survey

Additionally, 41.8% noted that buses were less crowded, improving passenger comfort and reducing the likelihood of delays caused by overcrowding.

These enhancements not only make transit more reliable but also encourage more people to choose public transportation over driving, potentially reducing traffic congestion and environmental impact. Given this overwhelmingly positive response, continuing to prioritize and build on these improvements will further enhance rider satisfaction, accessibility, and the overall efficiency of the transit system.

FIG 7: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO INDICATED THAT THE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT LISTED APPLIED TO THEIR EXPERIENCE TAKING MIWAY ROUTE 44 AFTER THE SERVICE CHANGES MADE ON SEPTEMBER 2, 2024





GREATER TORONTO- HAMILTON AREA NETWORK *analysis*

Using the Network Analyst toolkit included in ArcGIS Pro and General Transit Feed Specification data provided by local transit agencies, we generated a public transit network dataset.

The network dataset was used to generate maps indicating commute by public transit to and from UTM. Furthermore, student populations data provided by the UTM Administration was used to generate maps indicating large clusters of student populations in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area.

The commute time maps and student population maps were analyzed and compared to determine service gaps in public transit to UTM.

The network dataset contained GTFS data from the following transit agencies:

- GO Transit
- Toronto Transit Commission
- MiWay
- York Region Transit
- Oakville Transit
- Brampton Transit
- Burlington Transit
- Hamilton Street Railway
- Durham Region Transit
- Orangeville Transit
- Guelph Transit

01

COMMUTE TIME

Figure 8 illustrates travel times to UTM from various parts of the GTA at 9:00 AM on January 6, 2024, representing a typical Monday morning commute. Key features to note are:

- Most areas of Milton can reach UTM within 90 minutes.
- Many northern areas of Brampton have a commute from 90-120 minutes long.
- Many other areas in the GTHA, such as Vaughan, Scarborough and Hamilton have commute times of over 90 minutes in some areas and over 120 minutes in others.

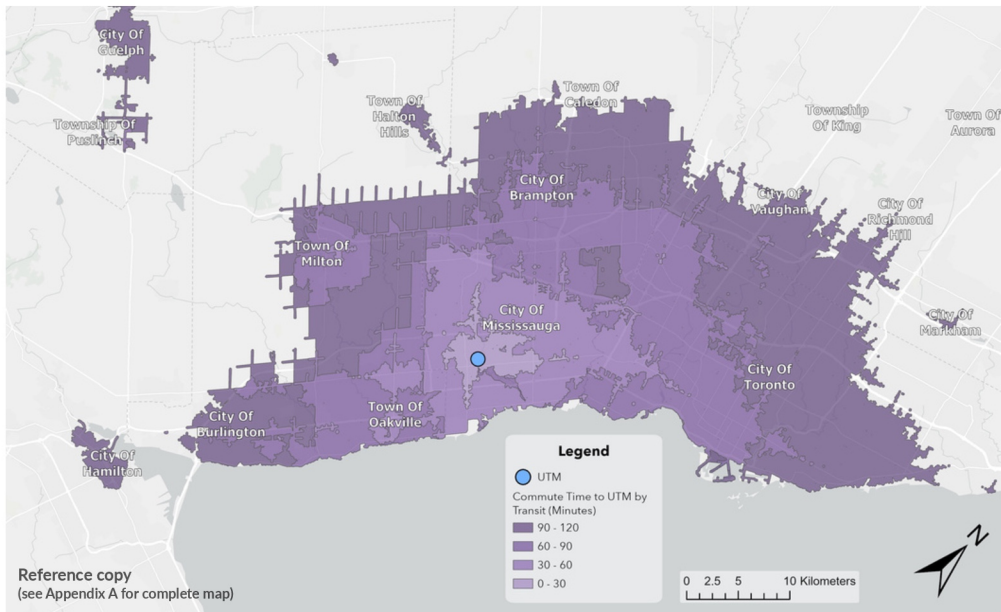


FIG 8: COMMUTE TIME TO UTM BY PUBLIC TRANSIT AT 9:00 AM ON MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025 (6)

Since many classes start later in the day, a significant number of students begin their commutes during off-peak hours. Figure 9 shows the travel times to UTM from different parts of the GTA at 12:00 PM on January 6, 2024, representing a typical afternoon commute. In this case, most areas in Milton take 90-120 minutes to reach UTM at the minimum, while Brampton, on average, maintains the commute time it has during rush hour.

⁶ Map graphics included in this section are for reference only and intended to be seen within the context of the report. For full-resolution, complete maps including titles, descriptions, sources, and credits please see Appendix A, attached to this Report

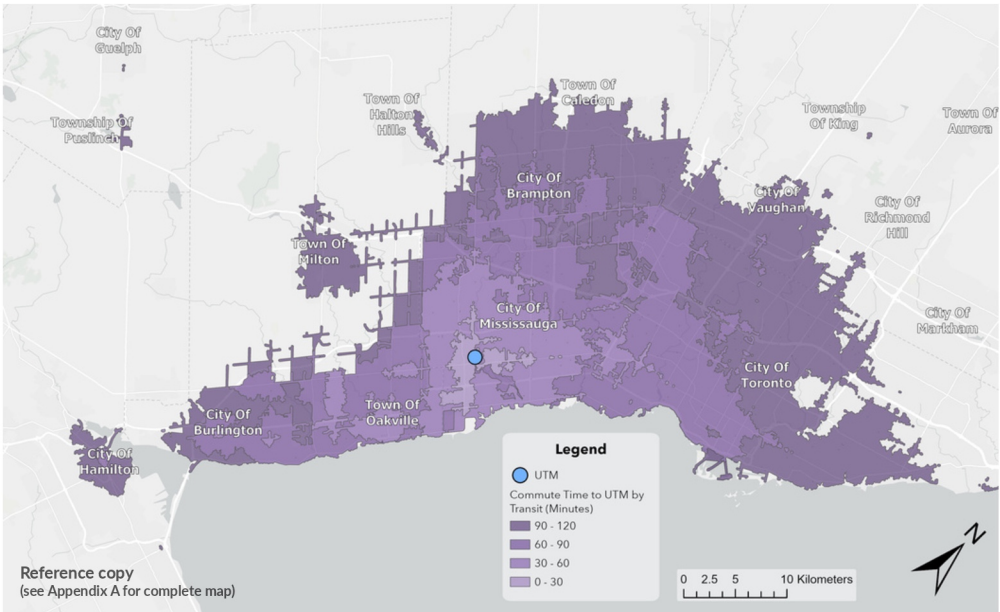


FIG 9: COMMUTE TIME TO UTM BY PUBLIC TRANSIT AT 12:00 PM ON MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025

02

STUDENT POPULATIONS

By using student population data from the UTM Administration and normalizing it based on the size of different census tracts, we create a choropleth map that highlights areas with high concentrations of students in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area, as shown in Figure 10.

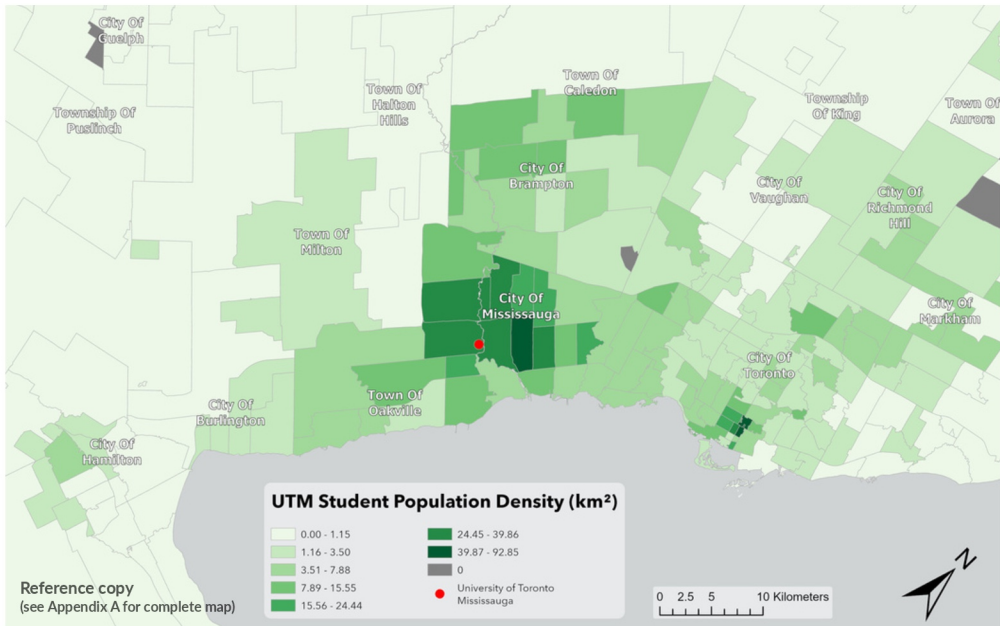


FIG 10: UTM STUDENT POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT

The map reveals clusters of students in the following areas:

- Downtown Toronto, concentrated around the UofT St. George Campus
- Mississauga - Erindale, Erin Mills, Cooksville, East Credit, and surrounding areas
- Northern Brampton, particularly north of Bovaird Dr,
- Hamilton, near and around Rolston
- Central North York - Yonge St. and Finch Ave.
- Milton

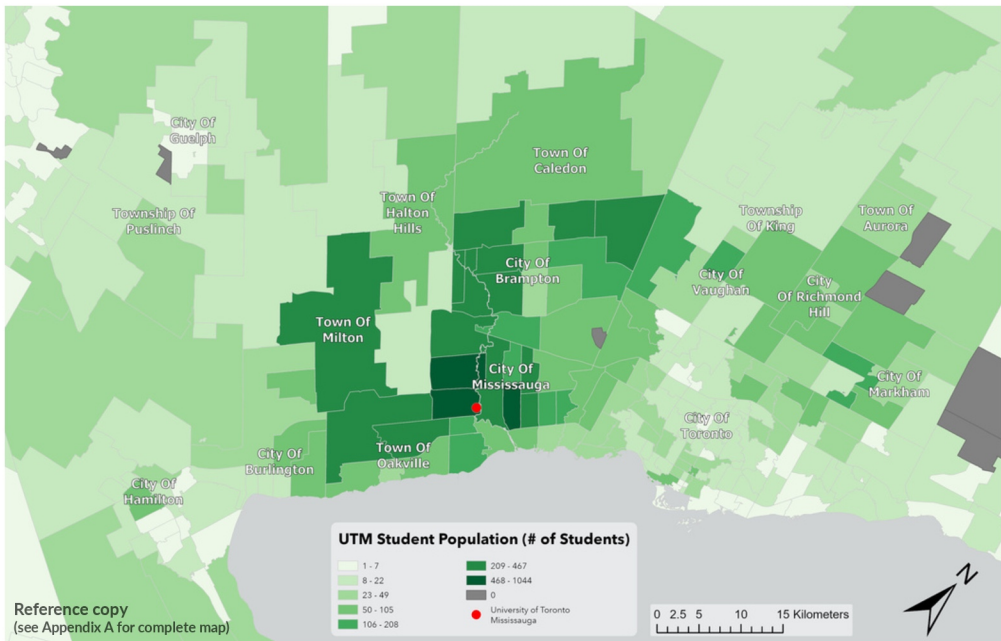


FIG 11: UTM STUDENT POPULATION TOTAL BY CENSUS TRACT

It is important to note that Milton may be misrepresented through normalization. Although it appears to be low in student population density, this is likely due to the inclusion of lots of rural land in the census tract. The majority of Milton residents reside in the Town of Milton. As seen in Figure 11, the census tract has a high total student population (383 students).

In Figures 12 and 13, we compare the Commute times to UTM at noon and UTM student populations to emphasize key areas with lackluster transit connectivity to UTM during non-rush-hour service, despite their high student populations.



The town of Milton has a commute time of up to 120 minutes during non-rush-hour times, such as 12:00pm.

Much of northern Brampton, particularly the census areas L7A, L6X, L6Z, L6V, L6R, and L6P, have a total student population of 1290 but remain underserved for UTM students, with an expected commute time of 90-120 minutes during 12:00pm or over 120 minutes in some areas.

Much of downtown Toronto seems underserved in this analysis, however it should be noted that it excludes the UTM-St. George Shuttle, which is often used by students who commute to and from downtown.

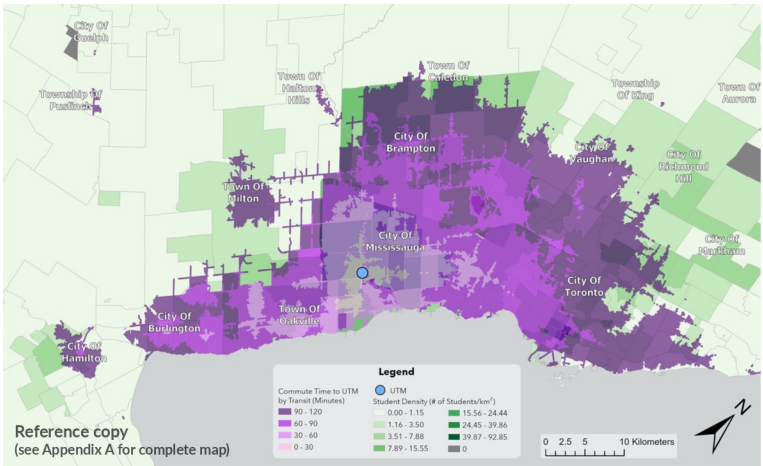


FIG 12: UTM STUDENT POPULATION DENSITY VS. COMMUTE TIME TO UTM AT 12:00PM

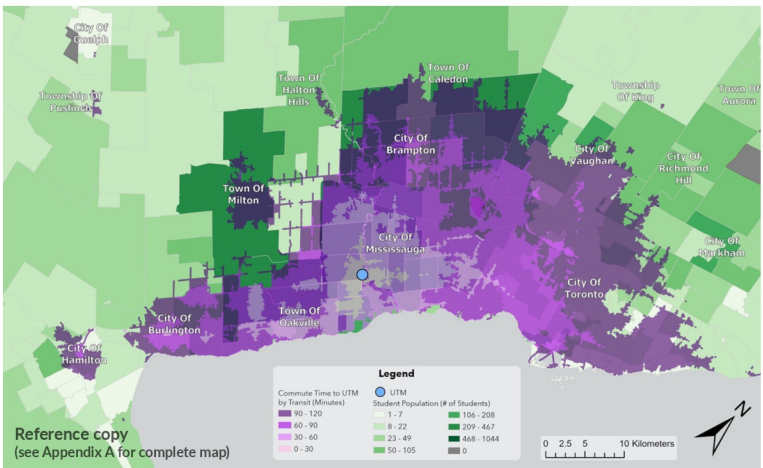


FIG 13: UTM STUDENT POPULATION VS. COMMUTE TIME TO UTM AT 12:00PM



RECOMMENDATIONS & *implementation*

Based on research, and discussions with students and faculty, the following suggestions would improve access to transit.

To address the significant transit challenges faced by UTM students, the following key recommendations focus on enhancing service accessibility, improving connectivity, and promoting sustainability.

These recommendations are based on student feedback, survey data, and network analysis, highlighting critical gaps in transit service that impact commute times and academic performance.

In addition, this reflects the UTMSU's unwavering commitment to increasing accessibility to reliable transit and alleviate burdens on students.

RECOMMENDATION 1

INTRODUCE WEEKEND SERVICE FOR 110 AND 101 EXPRESS ROUTES

The absence of weekend service on these routes forces students to drive, take rideshare options, or avoid travelling on the weekends. This can significantly restrict opportunities for students, especially regarding extra-curricular activities, and may be a contributing factor to a lack of campus life during weekends, disincentivizing extra-curricular and social events during these times.

By implementing weekend service for the 110 and 101 Express routes, campus activity on weekends would be incentivized, furthering opportunities for both students who rely on these routes and those who do not.

RECOMMENDATION 2

EXPAND 126 EXPRESS SERVICE TO MID-DAY AND LATE-NIGHT HOURS

The 126 Burnhamthorpe Express currently operates only during rush hours, making it inaccessible for students with mid-day or evening classes. Given that the majority of frequent commuters wish to prioritize providing service during non-rush hour times, we recommend extending the 126 Express service throughout the day and into the evening to better accommodate student schedules.

A pilot program can help test the demand for mid-day and late-night service, and may be adjusted based on usage data.



RECOMMENDATION 3

INCREASE FREQUENCY AND CAPACITY ON ROUTE 44

The improvements made to Route 44 have had a real impact on commuters, reducing wait times and crowding for a significant portion of commuters, indicating that minor service improvements can have a realistic impact. However, there remains a significant portion of students who have not experienced enough of an improvement in any aspects of their commute to report an improvement.

The UTMSU recommends that MiWay keep providing incremental improvements to Route 44, such as increasing bus frequency, to continue the pattern of positive changes for commuters of the route.

RECOMMENDATION 4

IMPLEMENT A DIRECT TRANSIT SERVICE BETWEEN UTM AND THE TOWN OF MILTON

383 UTM Students live in Milton, but commute times can exceed 90-120 minutes during off-peak hours due to poor transit connectivity. Long, unreliable commute times disincentivize the use of public transit, leading to increased car usage, carbon footprint, and traffic, as well as contributing to parking capacity issues at UTM. The location of Highway 401 as the primary arterial highway from Milton to Mississauga means that students who commute by car from Milton contribute to the extensive congestion issues on what is North America's busiest highway (7).

There are several potential options when it comes to alleviating this issue. GO Bus Route 21, which as of April 5, 2025, will serve Erindale GO approximately every hour on weekdays (8), can be redirected to stop at UTM prior to serving Erindale GO. The proximity of UTM to the existing route means that minimal detour is required to provide this service, providing significant benefit to students while maintaining a minimal impact on travel time for other passengers.

An alternative option would be for MiWay to provide a new, direct express service between UTM and Milton GO. Such a service could take UTM Students from the Milton GO Station to UTM or vice versa in under 30 minutes (9).

The free parking available at Milton GO would incentivize commuters who drive to UTM to park at Milton GO instead and take the bus directly to UTM, saving them money on gas, car maintenance, and parking costs at UTM. Additionally, the UPass would be a further financial incentive if the service was to be provided by MiWay, or if the UPass is further extended to GO Transit.

RECOMMENDATION 5

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN UTM AND THE CITY OF BRAMPTON

Northern Brampton is home to a high concentration of students who have little access to reliable transit to UTM. Much like for Milton's students, this perpetuates car dependency.

A realistic option to addressing this issue would be for Brampton Transit to extend the 199 service both in terms of routing and hours. By continuing the 199 up Main St instead of terminating at the Brampton Gateway Terminal, making stops at intersections with other routes, commuters traveling from northern areas of Brampton would have one less transfer to make, saving time and providing convenience. Additionally, extending the service hours of Route to include evening service, beyond 6:00pm, would solidify the service as being reliable, as at the moment students with classes beyond this time do not have a reliable way to get to and from UTM.

7 Hocking, K. (2023, March 29). Highway 401: Is it North America's Busiest Highway? CityNews Toronto. <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2023/03/28/401-north-america-busiest-highway/>

8 Metrolinx. (2025). GO Transit Bus Route 21. [Transit Schedule]. GO Transit. <https://assets.metrolinx.com/image/upload/v1729510751/Documents/GO/full-schedules/FS03112024/TABLE21.pdf>

9 Google Maps. (n.d.). [Directions for driving from Milton GO Station to University of Toronto Mississauga]. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/W23NkcFV8rjbpCj87>

FIG 8 (PAGE 14)

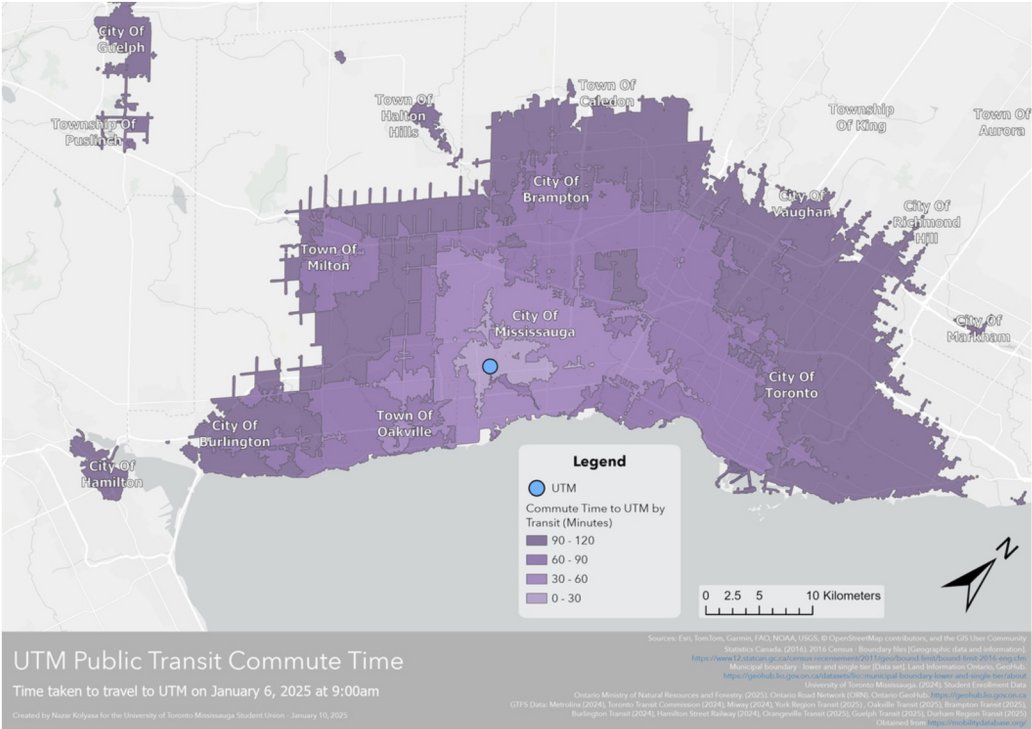


FIG 9 (PAGE 15)

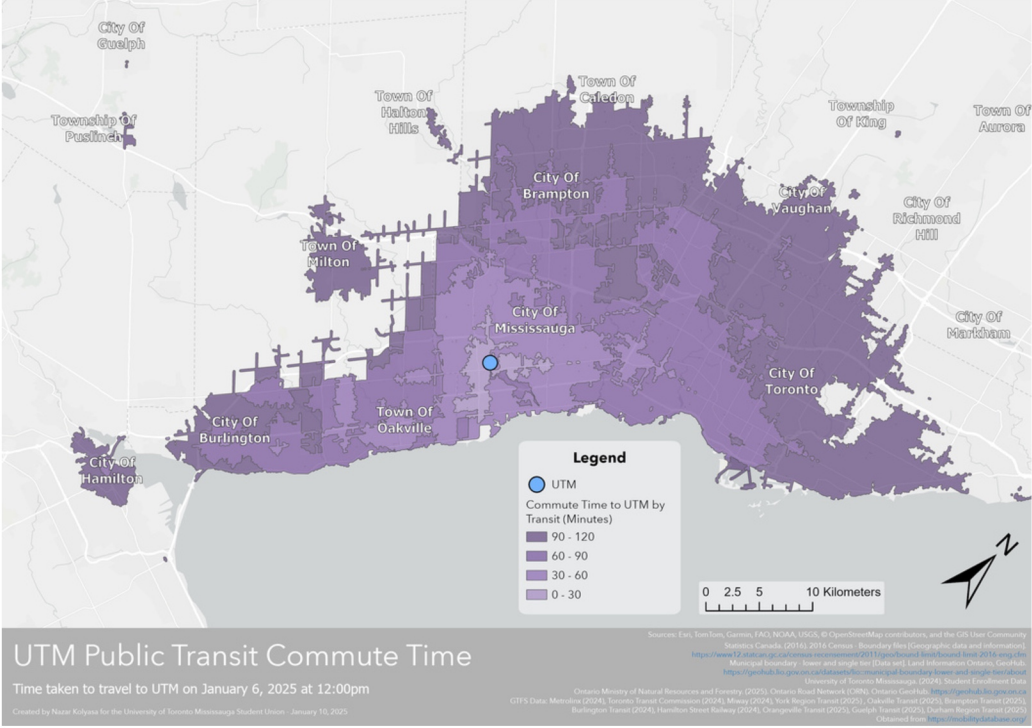


FIG 10 (PAGE 15)

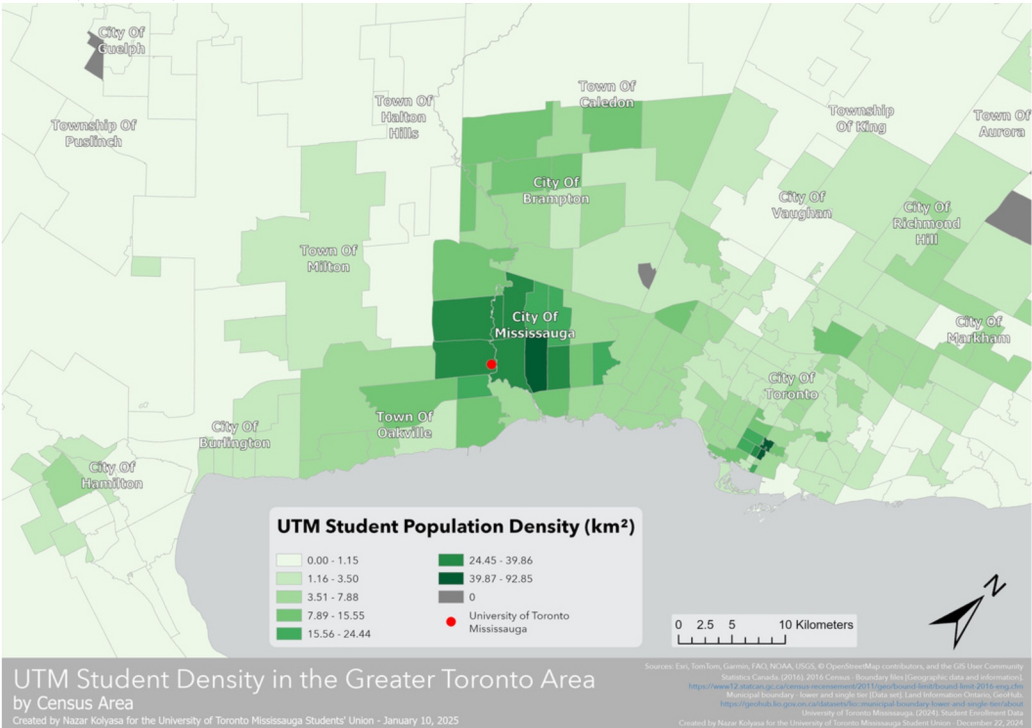


FIG 11 (PAGE 16)

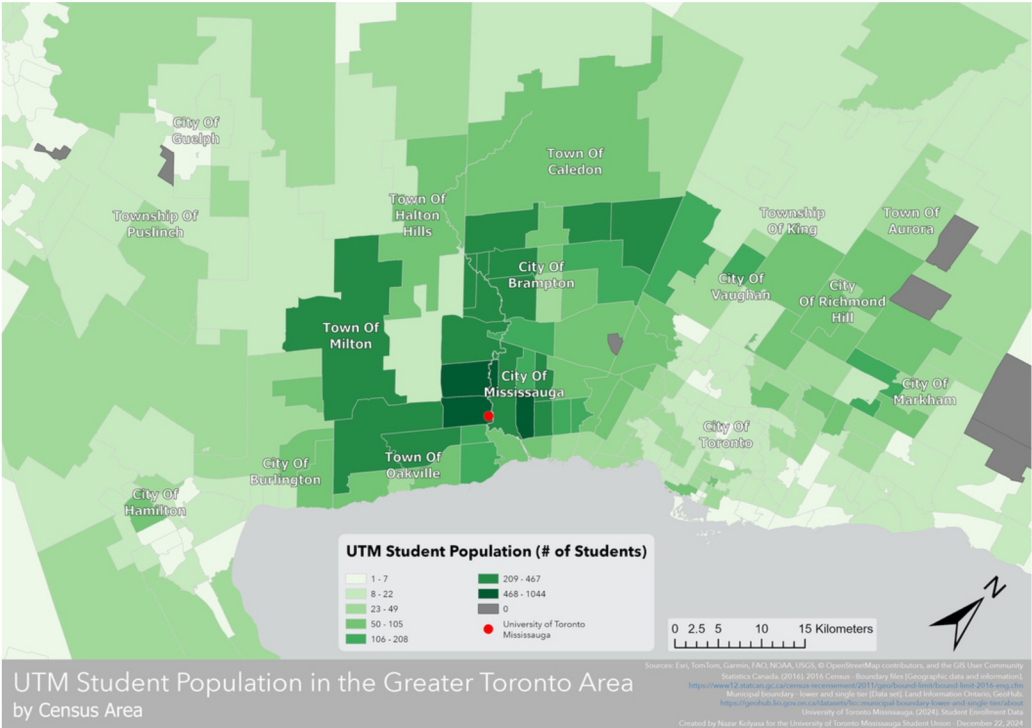


FIG 12 (PAGE 17)

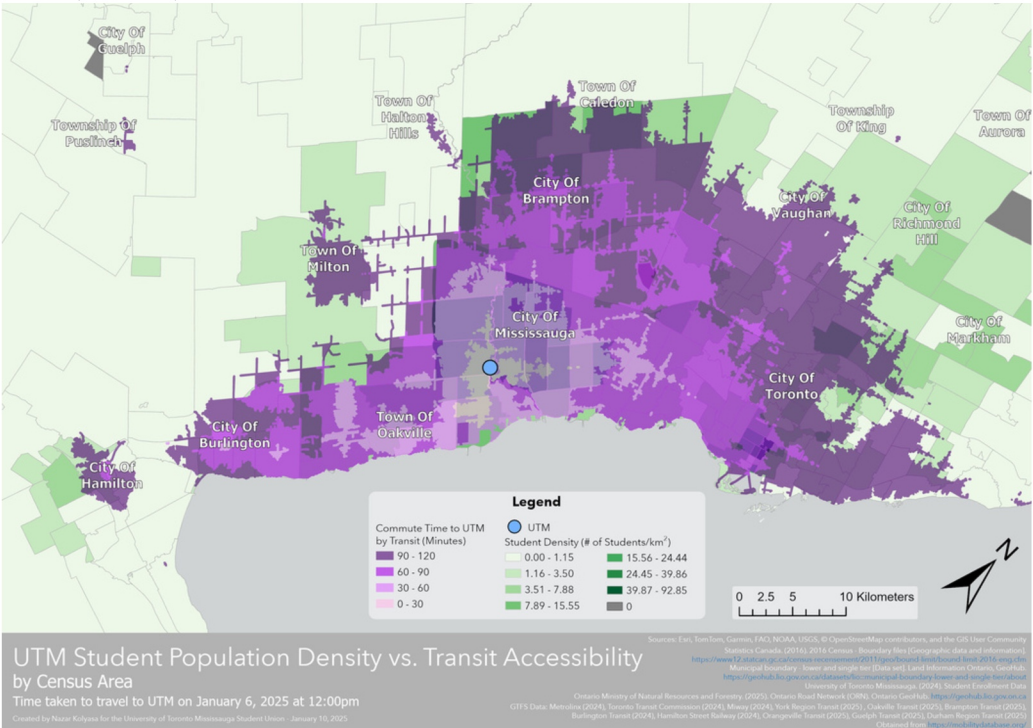
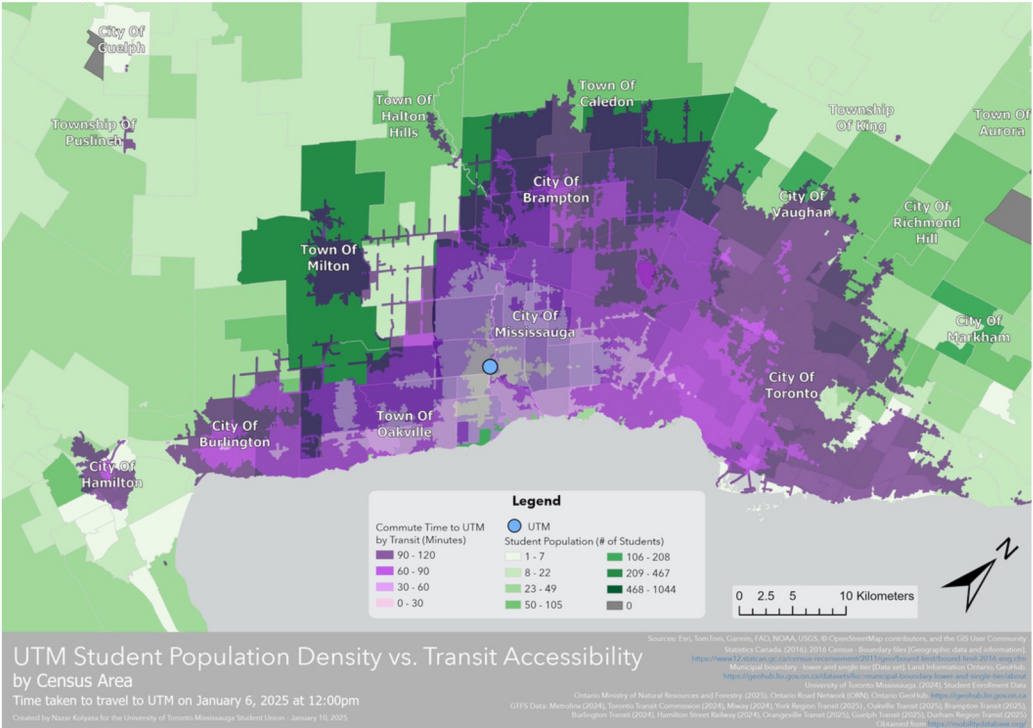


FIG 13 (PAGE 17)





**UTMSU LOBBY DOCUMENT
2024/2025**