

METRO BUS FORWARD

Long-Range Transportation Plan

METRO BUS FORWARD



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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729

BIRD

725

NOT IN SERVICE



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Bus
RAMP

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EXACT FARE



Wheelchair
RAMP

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Chapter 1

Introduction

WHAT IS A LONG-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN?

Metro Bus Forward is a Long-Range Transit Plan, which assessed the transit system in Central Minnesota to look for **opportunities to improve the transit riders' experience** in St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell and Waite Park.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro Bus has seen a change in how the community uses transit services. With the development of new travel patterns brought on by the pandemic, as well as growth in parts of Central Minnesota, Metro Bus wanted to evaluate their services to make sure people are getting the most out of their transit experience.

This project included an assessment of the service area, its change over the past few years, and current Metro Bus services to figure out how transit and other mobility resources can best help people get to the places they want to go. Metro Bus Forward included several phases of data analysis and community engagement to learn about the needs of the community and to get feedback on some potential changes to the transit system.

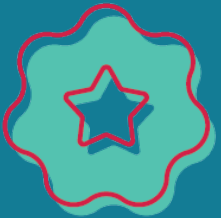
Metro Bus Forward, a Long-Range Transit Plan, outlines a vision for the future of Metro Bus. It provides recommendations for providing transit services to meet the needs of the communities of St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell and Waite Park.

OUR GOALS FOR MOVING METRO BUS FORWARD



BUILD TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

Over the years ridership has been declining, even before the pandemic. Across cities in the US and here at Metro Bus, we have seen how and why people's travel has changed. A primary focus of this project was to develop transit strategies to maintain and grow ridership among existing riders, as well as attract new riders.



DELIVER EFFICIENT TRANSIT TO THE COMMUNITY

Most transit providers across the country have been struggling to meet existing service commitments due to a variety of factors such as available funding, lack of transit operators, or supply chain challenges and maintaining transit vehicles. An important outcome of this study was to develop strategies for improving the efficiency of delivering transit in the service area.



SUPPORT LOCAL EQUITY GOALS

Metro Bus provides service throughout St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell and Waite Park. This project needed to develop recommendations that aligned with - and continued to advance - local equity and inclusion goals. Having regular conversations with stakeholders and collecting information from riders and non-riders helped to ensure that we can provide a service that supports the community.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSIT AND METRO BUS

Cities and regions support public transportation services for a variety of reasons, including that transit provides travel choices beyond the private automobile, creating a diversified, accessible and equitable transportation network. A successful transit system creates opportunities to support a variety of community interests.



ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND INDEPENDENCE

Metro Bus's service is especially important for households that do not have access to a vehicle and for individuals who have limited abilities. Metro Bus's service provides community members the ability to participate in daily activities and to travel throughout St Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park. It also provides access to places of work, recreation, education and health care.



SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

Transit service is among the safest ways to travel. Bus riders help reduce the number of vehicles on the road and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.



AFFORDABILITY

Well-functioning transit services can reduce household expenses for individuals and families. On average, residents in Central Minnesota spend about 21% of their incomes on transportation costs (H+T Index). Just the average costs of owning and operating a car, including gas, insurance and maintenance, are estimated at \$11,480 a year. By comparison, one year of monthly Metro Bus transit passes costs a fraction of this: \$564.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Transit has a demonstrated ability to attract economic investment along corridors as well as in specific commercial areas. Transit is also critical for low-income households by providing access to jobs and economic opportunity.

METRO BUS FORWARD INCLUDED...



IDENTIFICATION OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

We collected and analyzed data about the region to develop an understanding of the State of the System and surveyed the community and riders on their preferences.



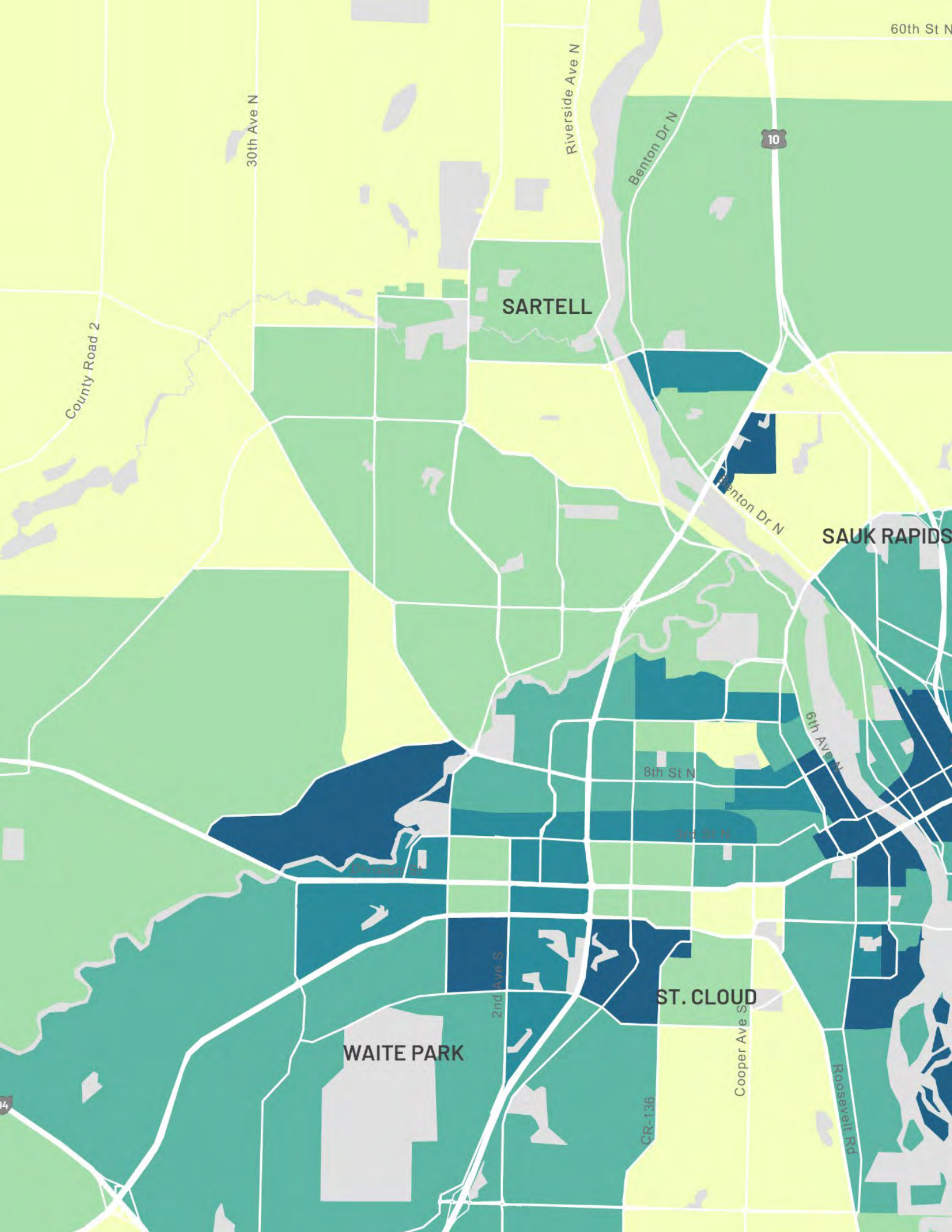
ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAFF

Throughout the project, we attended local events, surveyed riders at the Transit Center, and talked to people all over the region about Metro Bus and the draft service recommendations.



DRAFT AND FINAL SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Using what we learned, we developed service recommendations for the future of Metro Bus that focuses on bringing more frequent service to the community.



60th St N

Riverside Ave N

Benton Dr N

10

30th Ave N

County Road 2

SARTELL

Benton Dr N

SAUK RAPIDS

6th Ave N

8th St N

3rd St N

Chippewa St

ST. CLOUD

2nd Ave S


WAITE PARK

CR-136

Cooper Ave S

Roosevelt Rd

14



Chapter 2

State of the System

WHAT ANALYSIS DID WE COMPLETE?

The **State of the System** report provided a detailed evaluation of existing Metro Bus services and an understanding of transit markets, demand and service needs in the Metro Bus service area (St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell and Waite Park). To **understand the strengths and opportunities of the existing system**, this document provided:

- Documentation of existing services, routes and operating characteristics
- Analysis of existing ridership trends and performance
- Definition of transit markets through an assessment of population, employment and socioeconomic characteristics, as well as activity centers and travel patterns
- Summary of how well existing services are matched with demand and community needs

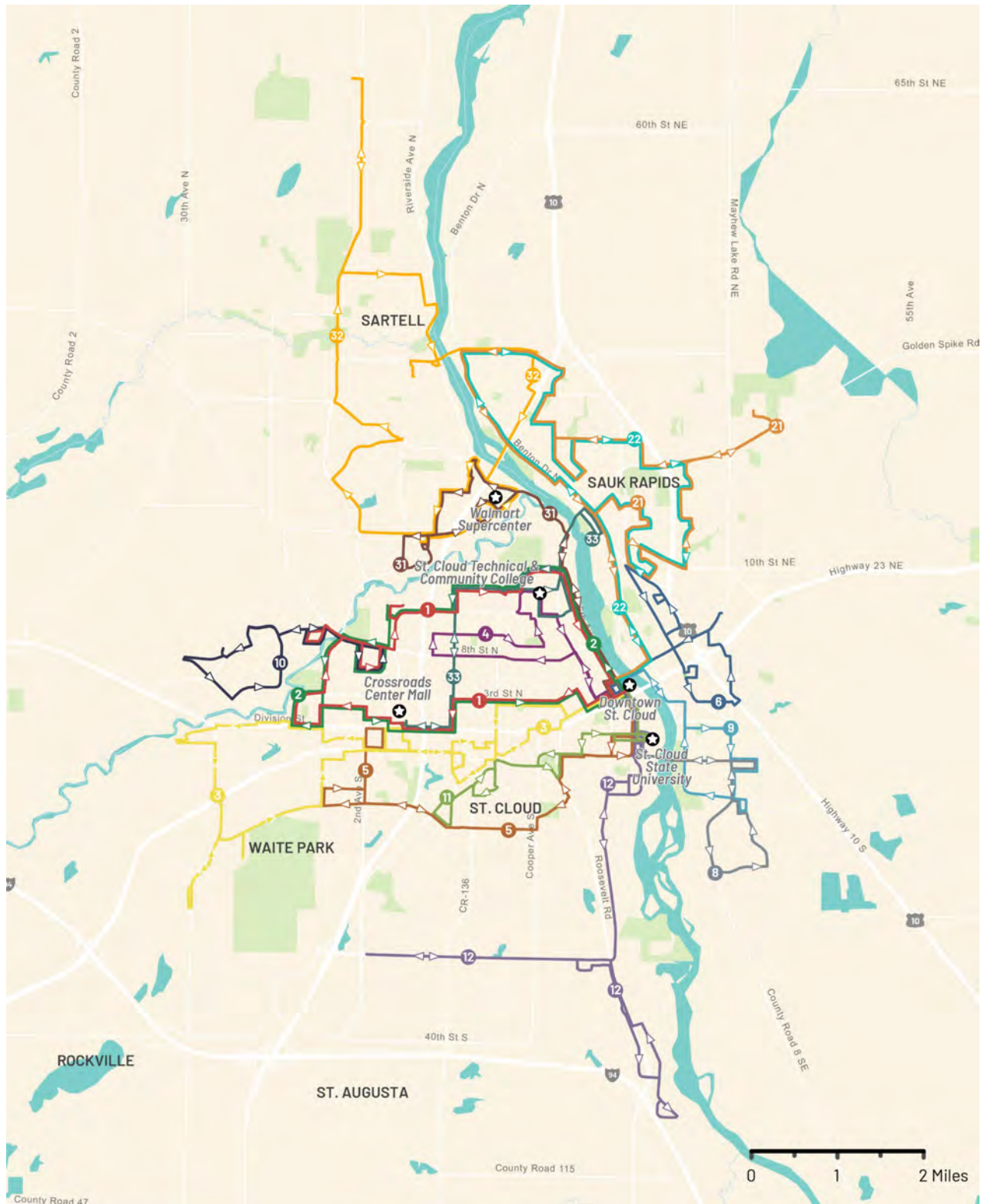
WHAT TRANSIT SERVICES EXIST TODAY?

Metro Bus is the primary public transit provider for the cities of St. Cloud, Sartell, Waite Park and Sauk Rapids. The Fixed Route network operates largely as a “hub-and-spoke” model with most bus routes beginning or ending in downtown St. Cloud. The existing network is supported by several routes that provide “crosstown” service and that connect to other major destinations outside of downtown St. Cloud, such as Crossroads Mall, St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) and St. Cloud State University (SCSU).

Metro Bus operates several service types including:

- 16 weekday, 15 Saturday and 14 Sunday **local Fixed Routes**.
- The **Northstar Link** route that provides connections to the Northstar Commuter Rail in Big Lake on weekdays.
- **Dial-a-Ride** which offers demand response paratransit service to people with disabilities within at least three-quarters of a mile of the Fixed Route network.

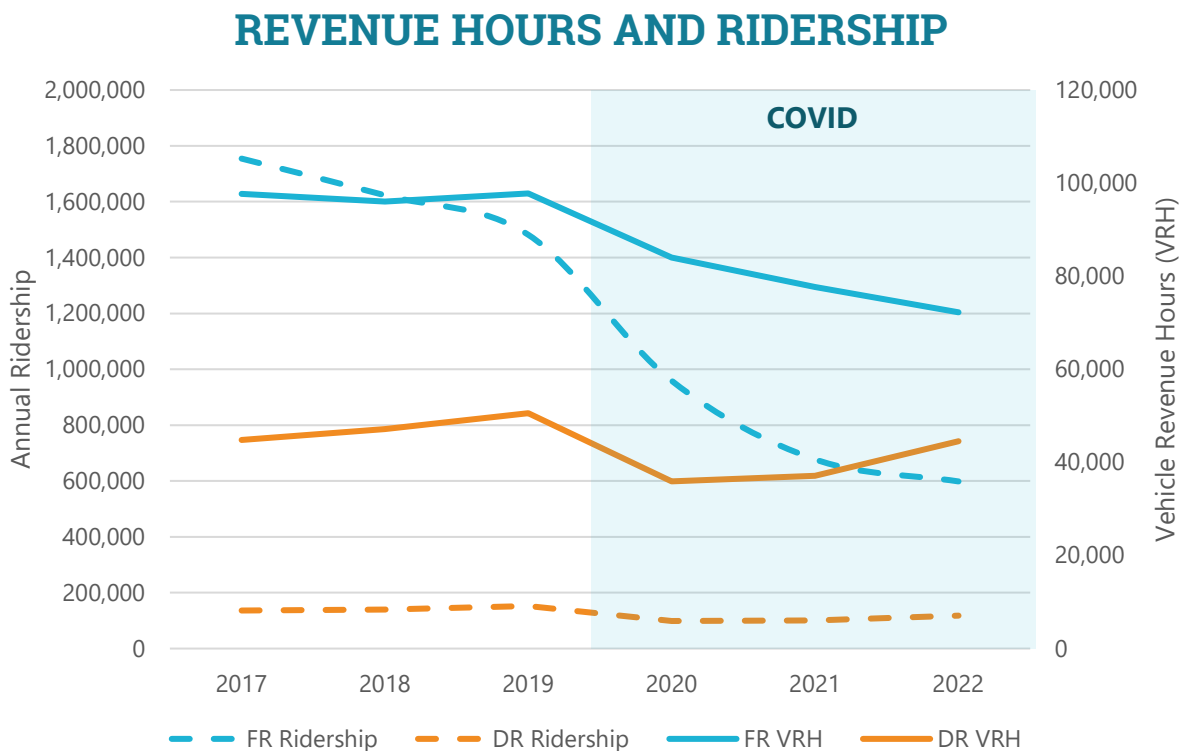
METRO BUS TRANSIT SERVICES TODAY



THE STATE OF TRANSIT SERVICE TODAY

Metro Bus services typically operate on weekdays from around 6:00 AM to 10:00PM and almost all routes operate with hourly frequency. Most routes operate on the weekends as well, but service starts later and ends earlier. One of the ways we study the state of a transit system is through a review of the number of transit riders compared to the number of vehicle revenue hours (VRH) provided, or “productivity.” The further apart the ridership and revenue hours are on the graph the less value being generated for that money. Fixed Route ridership at Metro Bus has been declining in the past five years (since 2017), even prior to the reduction in revenue hours in 2020 and again in 2021. Dial-a-Ride ridership has remained steady.

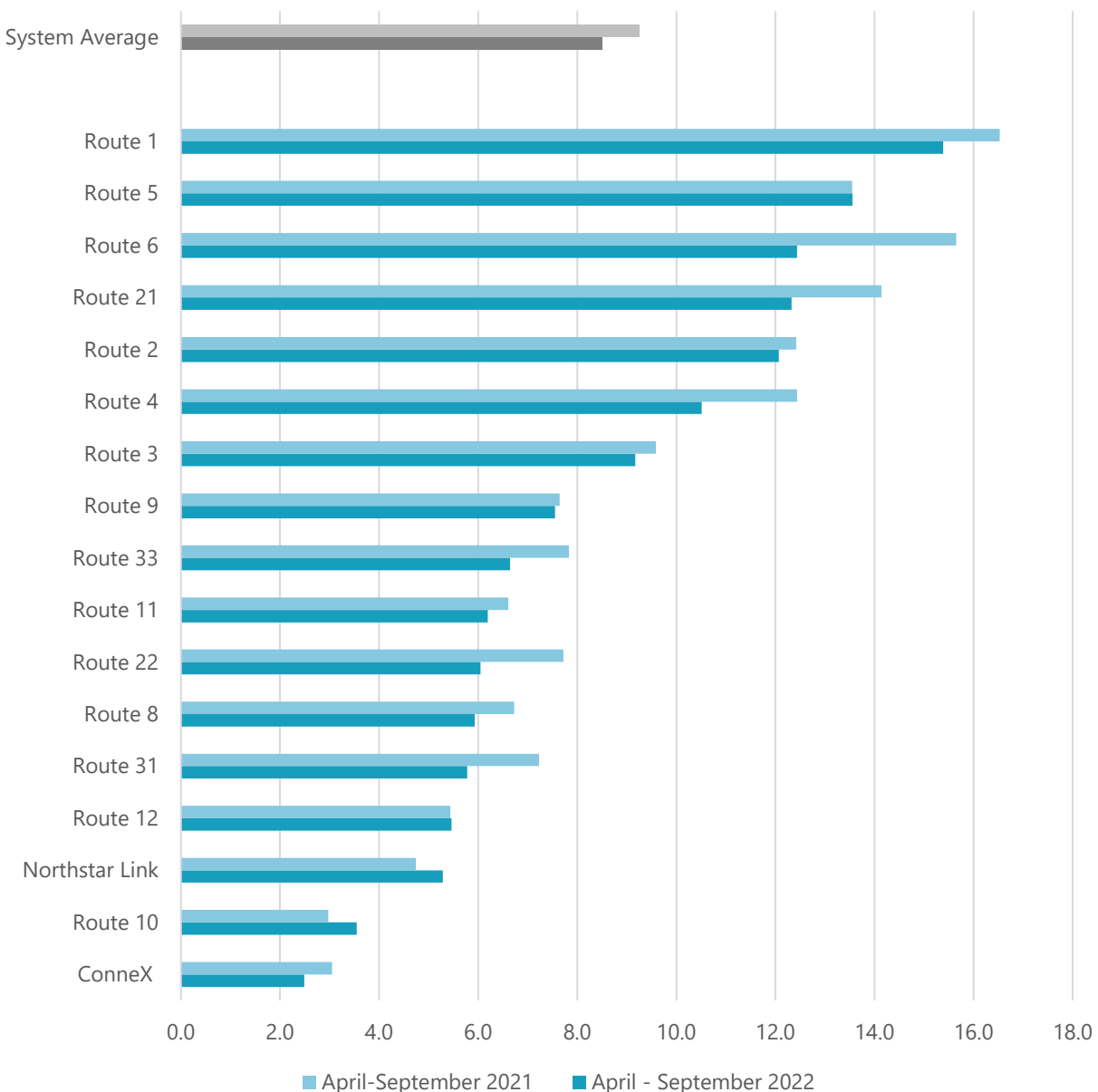
Typically, routes are more productive when the level of service provided matches the level of demand for transit. If a route continually shows low productivity, that may be a sign that the route should be evaluated for improvements, such as making a route more direct or addressing any issues if the service is not arriving/departing on time. If a route is highly productive, it might warrant a higher frequency to continue to meet demand.



FIXED ROUTE PRODUCTIVITY

The most productive routes in the system include Routes 1, 5, 6, 21, 2 and 4, while the least productive routes are Routes 10, 12 and Northstar Link. Note that the ConneX service – a general-public demand response service that operated as a pilot project in Sartell but is no longer operating – is shown here for context and to compare to the Fixed Route services.

ROUTE RIDERS PER REVENUE HOUR

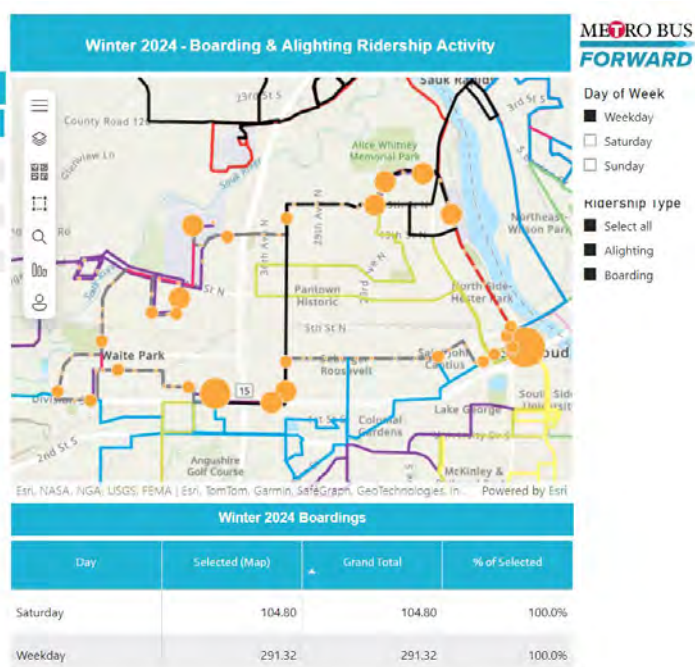
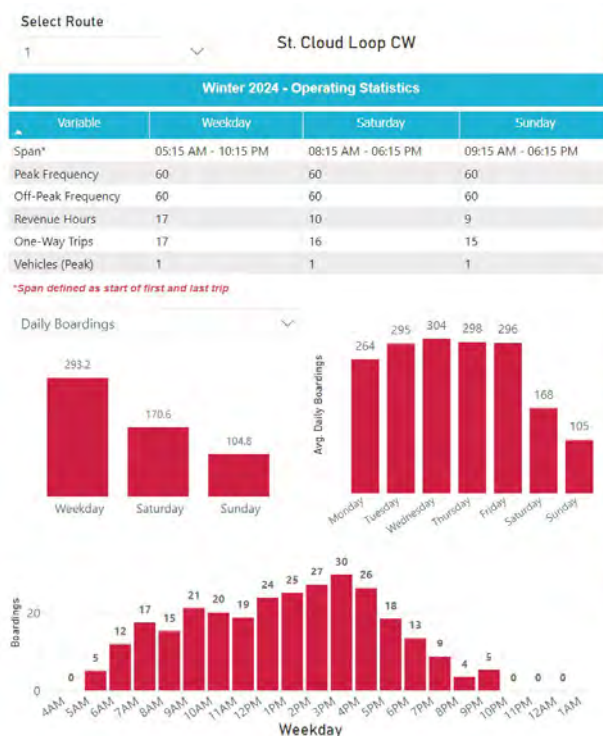


METRO BUS DATA COLLECTION

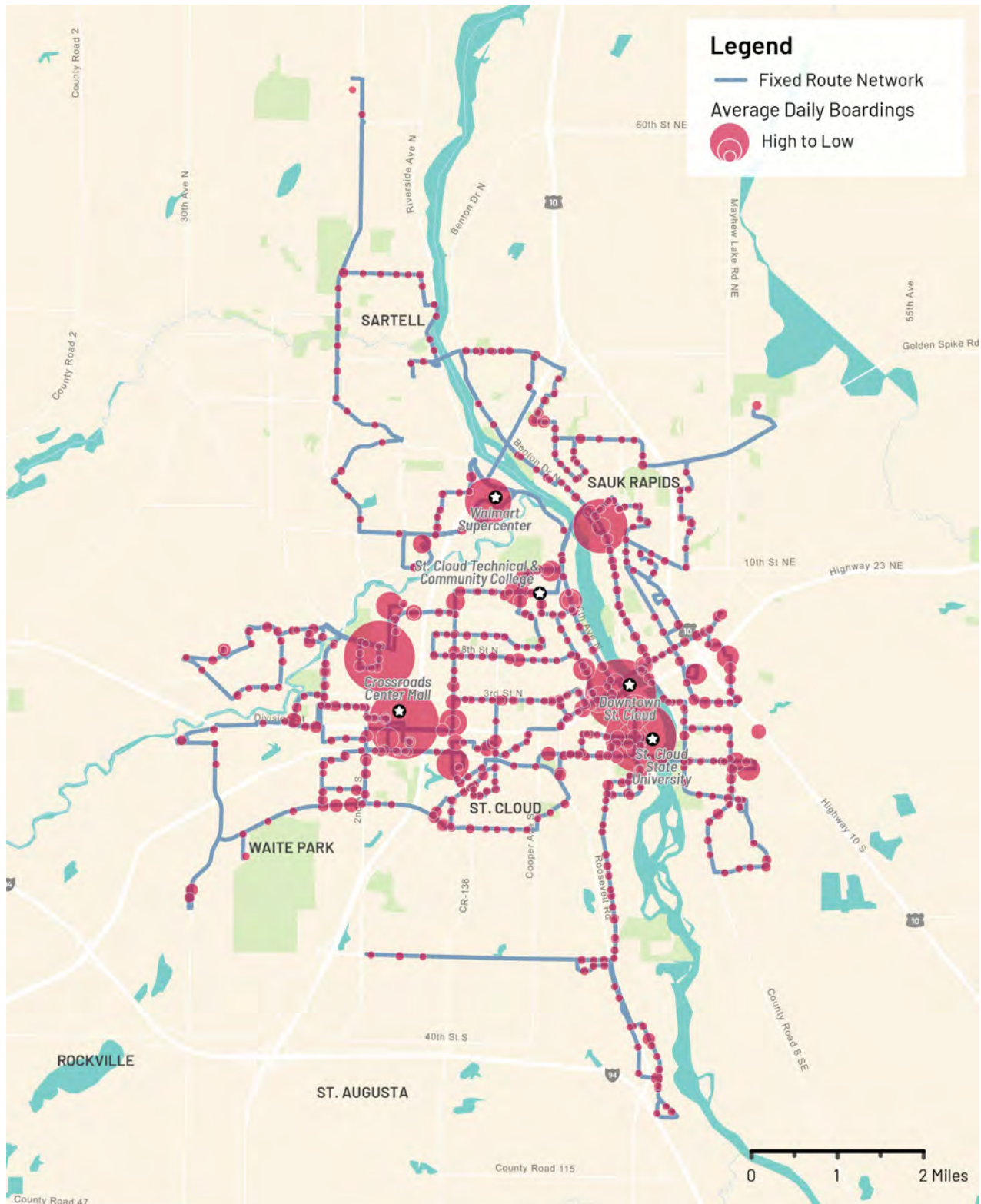
To gain a full understanding of the productivity of different routes and segments in the system, Metro Bus procured and installed technology called Automated Passenger Counters (APCs) on their vehicles. APCs track the number of people getting on and off the bus at different stops in the system, which then allows staff to calculate the average daily riders for different time periods and for different areas so that data-driven decisions about service can be made. This technology was purchased and installed in the late 2023 to support the Metro Bus Forward plan and data from winter 2024 was collected and reviewed to further develop our understanding of the State of the System.

This new technology provided an understanding of the most and least used stops in the system. In a hub and spoke system like Metro Bus, where many routes come together, there is higher rider activity as riders are often making a transfer to another route to complete their trip. In the map of Fixed Route Ridership, Crossroads Center Mall, Downtown St. Cloud and a stop in western St. Cloud on McLeland Road show high ridership, not entirely due to the destinations themselves but also because these are hubs where multiple routes connect.

The ridership data was used to develop an interactive online Route Profile dashboard to enable detailed review and assessment of segments to support the development of route recommendations for Metro Bus Forward. The Route Profiles can be found in **Appendix B**. The APCs will continue to be important in assessing how routes perform when service changes are made.



FIXED ROUTE RIDERSHIP



DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE

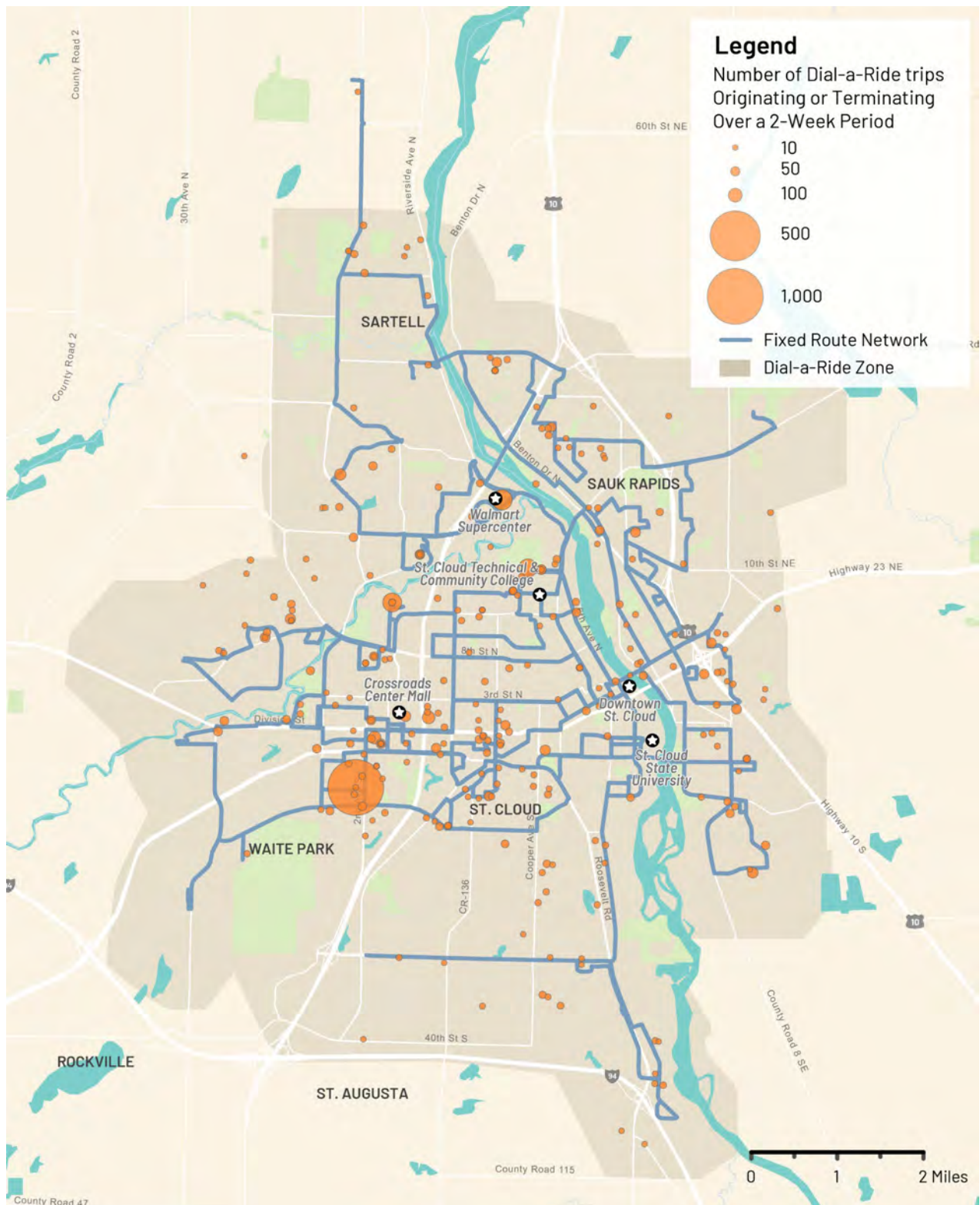
Dial-a-Ride is the complementary paratransit service offered to individuals who are unable to ride or access the Metro Bus Fixed Route service. Certification to use Dial-a-Ride is required and service hours are comparable to Fixed Route service. As the paratransit service for the region, Dial-a-Ride is required within three-quarters of a mile of all Fixed Routes. Service on Dial-a-Ride is provided door through door.

Ridership on Dial-a-Ride grew by about 25% between 2013 and 2019 but declined significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership on Dial-a-Ride has somewhat recovered in 2022 but is still below pre-pandemic levels.

Based on a two-week period in 2023, WACOSA in Waite Park is the top Dial-a-Ride trip generator in the Metro Bus service area, followed by the Walmart in Sartell and the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud. Other major trip generators include the YMCA, shopping centers (like Crossroads Center Mall and the Sartell Coborn's) and large residential complexes, like Country Manor in Sartell and Carefree Living in St. Cloud.

TOP 15 ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS	% OF ALL DAILY TRIPS
Wacosa – Waite Park	7.5%
Walmart – Sartell	2%
VA Medical Center – St. Cloud	2%
YMCA – St. Cloud	1.8%
Homewood Suites – St. Cloud	1.1%
Crossroads Center Mall – St. Cloud	0.9%
Coborn's – Sartell and St. Cloud	0.9%
Culvers – St. Cloud	0.8%
Carefree Living – St. Cloud	0.8%
Wacosa-Whitney Senior Center – St. Cloud	0.8%
Country Manor – Sartell	0.8%
Centra Care Plaza (Woodlands) – St. Cloud	0.8%
Cash Wise – St. Cloud	0.8%
Walmart – St. Cloud	0.8%
Cash Wise – Waite Park	0.8%

DIAL-A-RIDE MOST POPULAR DESTINATIONS



METRO BUS FACILITIES

Bus shelters are an important part of a transit system as they help provide a more comfortable trip and weather protection to riders. Metro Bus has 728 bus stops across its Fixed Route system. Of these, 72 or 8.7% have shelters. Other amenities include benches, lighting, a trash can and a posted schedule.

OPERATIONS CENTER

The Metro Bus Operations Center, located on Franklin Avenue NE, houses administrative offices, Dial-a-Ride call center, maintenance and vehicle storage. It was originally built in 1985 and has been expanded multiple times, most recently in 2017. Additional cold storage is adjacent to this site.

MOBILITY TRAINING CENTER

The Metro Bus Mobility Training Center is the first facility of its kind in Minnesota, located on West St. Germain Street in downtown St. Cloud. The facility offers new bus users the opportunity to learn how to ride the bus in a comfortable, controlled environment. The facility houses the Community Outreach and Travel Training program and serves as a location for determination of Dial-a-Ride eligibility.

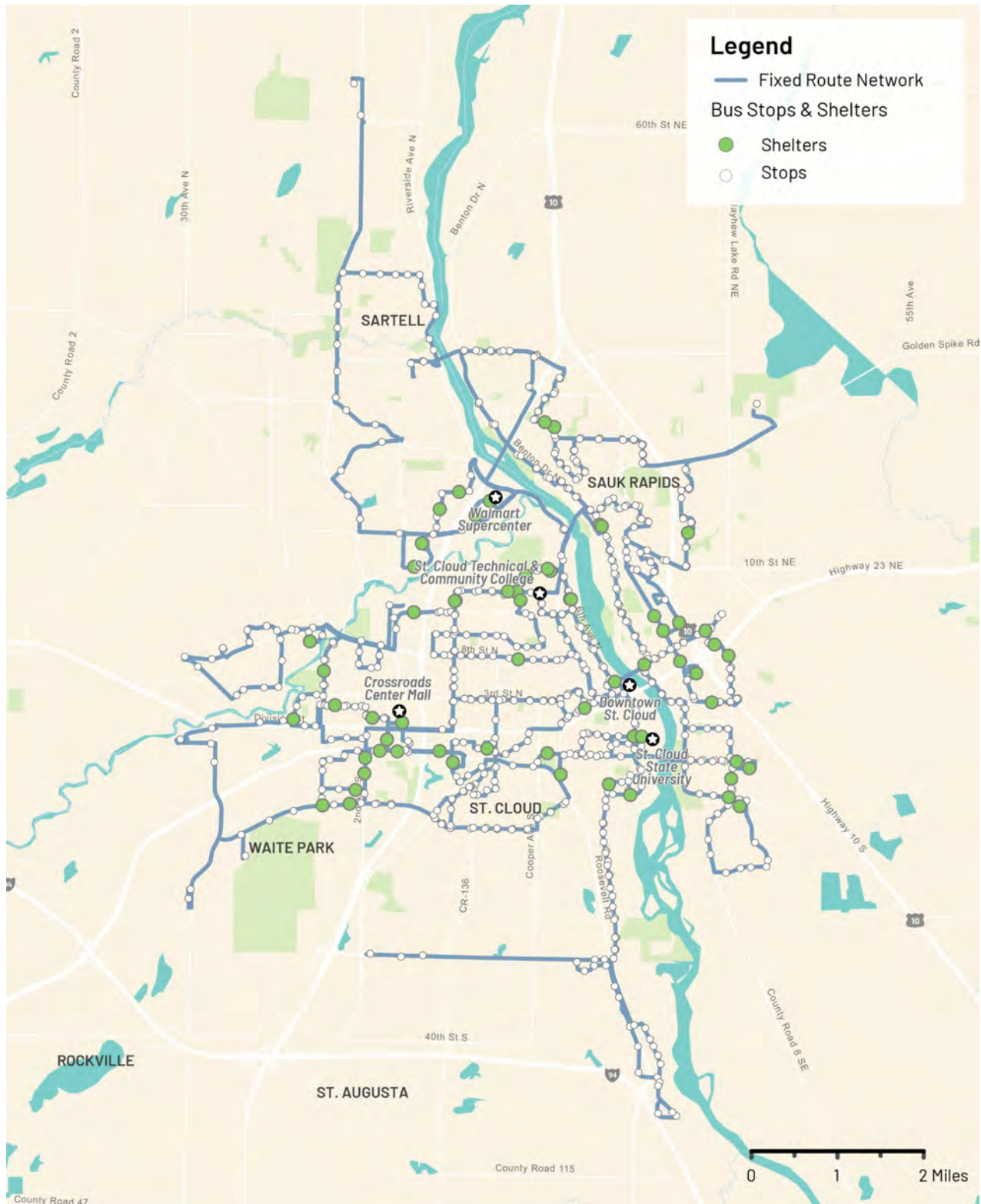
DOWNTOWN TRANSIT CENTER

Located at the intersection of 1st Street S and 5th Avenue S in downtown St. Cloud, the Metro Bus Transit Center is a multimodal transfer hub built in 1992 and expanded most recently in 2012. Here, passengers can transfer between several local Metro Bus routes, Northstar Link and private carriers such as Jefferson Lines and Greyhound. Additional connections include private taxi companies and rural public transit systems.

PROPOSED WESTERN TRANSIT CENTER

In 2019, Metro Bus conducted a Transit Operations Feasibility Study, in part to evaluate sites for a potential transit center on the western part of the service area. The primary goal of a new transit center would be to better link the Fixed Route system to growing residential and industrial areas, including Crossroads Center Mall and surrounding commercial areas. Over the duration of Metro Bus Forward, a site has been procured in Waite Park at the corner of 2nd Avenue S. and Sundial Drive.

BUS STOPS AND SHELTERS



THE MARKET FOR TRANSIT

Where people live and work tells us where transit service can be best supported, or where potential riders might live. As of 2020, around 112,900 people live in the four cities that are part of the Metro Bus service area, and it is projected that around 23,200 more people will reside here by 2050.

There are around 60,300 jobs in the service area with as many as 13,400 additional jobs projected by 2050. Most of the jobs in the region are office jobs, but the greatest growth is projected to be jobs in retail, although industrial and office jobs are also increasing, just at a slower rate.

One of the strongest indicators for where fixed-route transit can be most successful is where people and jobs are concentrated in the community. The analysis looked at each of these factors for the region to develop a baseline understanding of the specific market for transit in greater Central Minnesota.

TRANSIT DEMAND IS STRONGLY DRIVEN BY:



Population density and demand



Socioeconomic characteristics



Employment density and demand



Development patterns



Activity centers



Travel patterns



Visitors, tourism and special events

TRANSIT LEVELS BY DENSITY TYPE



The Highest density areas support the most transit frequency



>47 people and jobs per acre



15-minute service or better



Medium to High density areas support good fixed-route transit



31- 47 people and jobs per acre



15- to 30- minute service



Low to Medium density areas support some fixed-route transit or microtransit



12- 30 people and jobs per acre



30- to 60- minute service



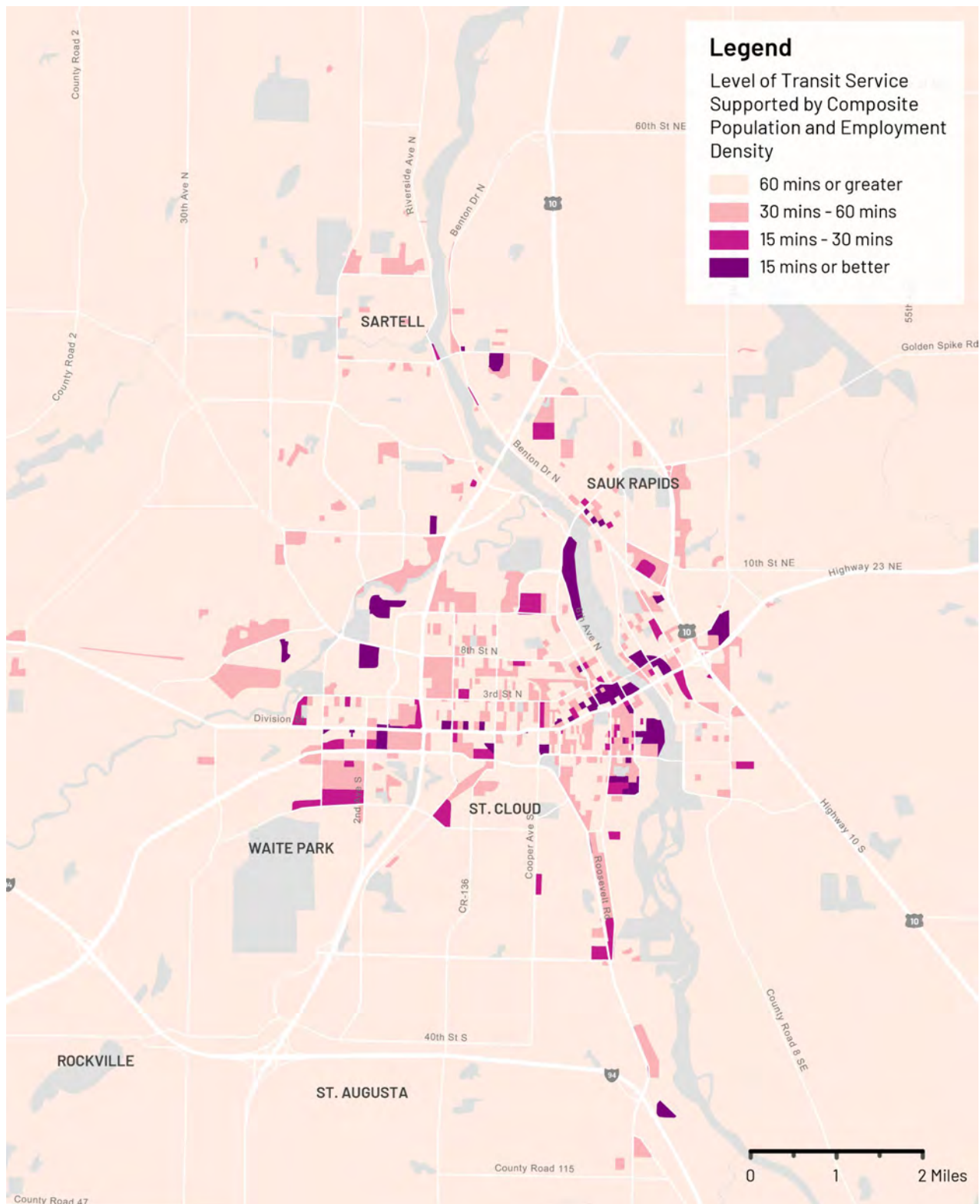
<12 people and jobs per acre



60-minute service and microtransit

Source: Nelson\Nygaard, Google Earth, and Google Street View

WHERE IS TRANSIT DEMAND LOCATED?





→ North Patient Pick-up



251 7433
ROUTES
2 31 33

THE PROPENSITY FOR TRANSIT USE

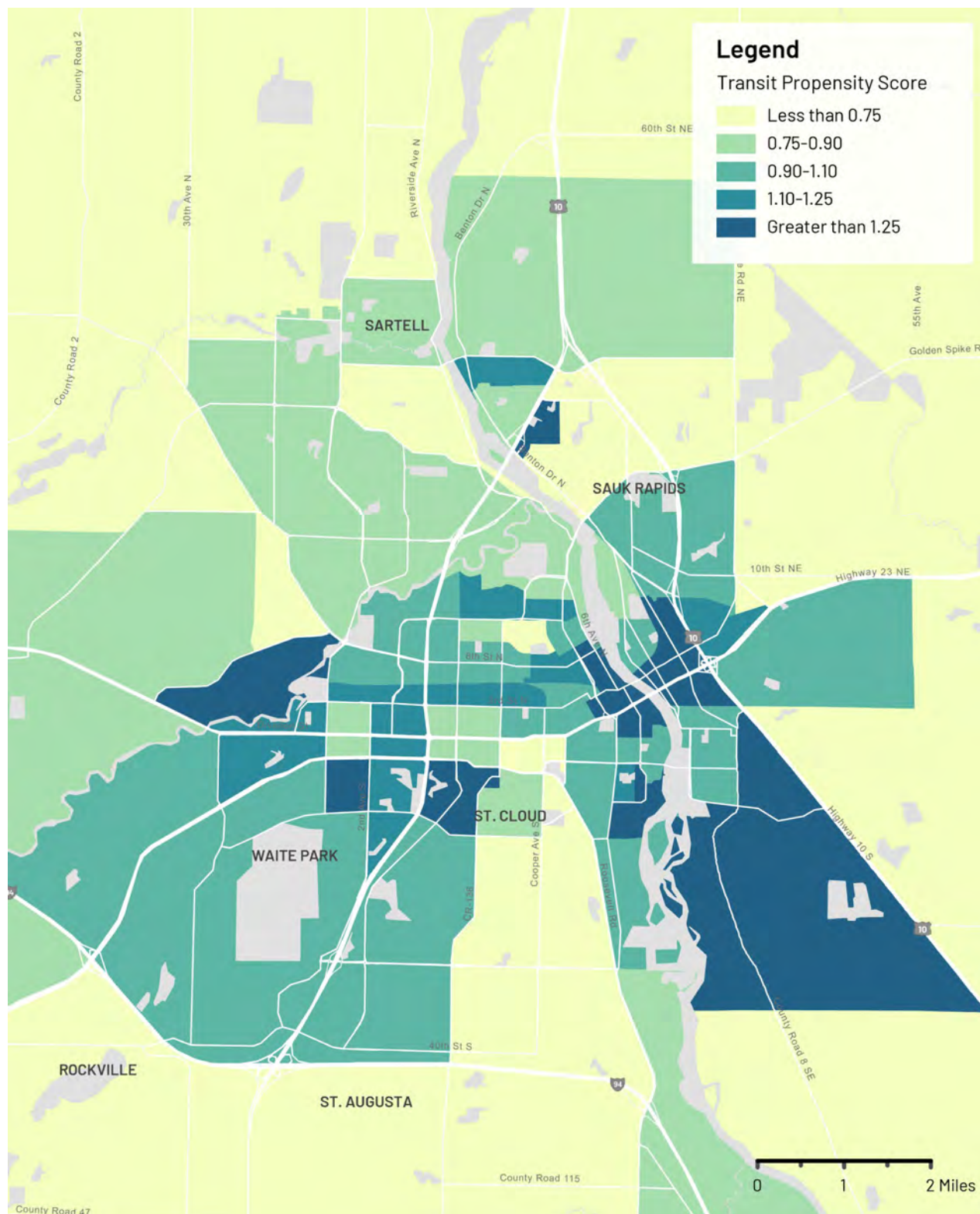
In addition to where people live and work, socioeconomic characteristics influence people's propensities toward using transit. Many population groups use transit more often than the overall population, generally groups that are more disadvantaged in society. When a significant number of people from the demographic groups described earlier live in clustered areas, the underlying demand for transit in these areas may be higher than is captured by just looking at population or job density alone.

Conversely, in areas where populations who are likely to take transit have lower representation, the transit demand may be lower than what is captured purely by population or job density. To account for this, a measure called the Transit Propensity Score, which measures the relative demand for transit in different areas of the service area based on demographic characteristics, is calculated. The table below shows the relative transit propensity among different groups. A factor greater than 1 means that the group is more likely to use transit than the average population.

DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP	TRANSIT PROPENSITY
Race/Ethnicity	
Black	1.91
Asian	2.57
White (Non-Hispanic)	0.79
Hispanic	0.97
Foreign-Born	
Native	0.86
Foreign-Born	2.07
Income Level (annually)	
Less than \$10,000	1.52
\$10,000-\$15,000	2.90
\$15,000-\$25,000	0.94
\$25,000-\$35,000	1.14
\$35,000-\$50,000	0.35
\$50,000-\$65,000	0.78
\$65,000-\$75,000	0.53
More than \$75,000	0.33
Vehicle Availability	
No Vehicles	5.51
1 Vehicle	1.40
2 or More Vehicles	0.41

Source: US Census (2021) American Community Survey 5YR Estimates

WHERE IS TRANSIT PROPENSITY LOCATED?



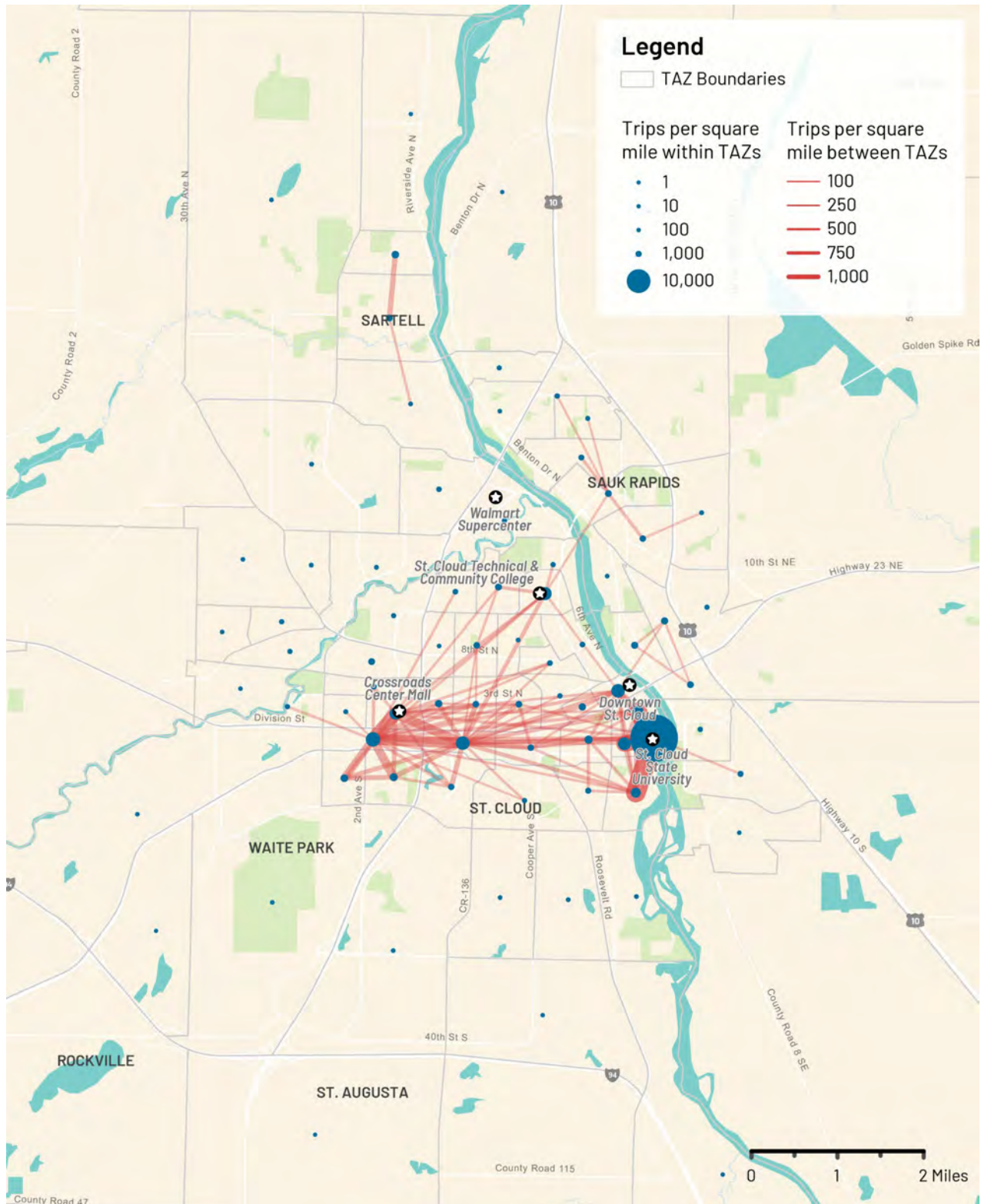
HOW ARE PEOPLE TRAVELING TODAY?

To understand how people travel to, from and within the communities in the Metro Bus service area, a travel flow – or Origin-Destination (OD) - analysis was conducted. The OD analysis uses Fall 2022 data from Replica, which utilizes a variety of data sources including mobile location data and Census data. All data are aggregated to travel analysis zones (TAZs) and all trips are represented, including transit and walking trips. The data are mapped to show trips within a TAZ (blue bubbles), as well as trips between TAZs (red lines). The size of the bubbles and thickness of the lines represent more trips within or between zones. Because there are thousands of trip pairs between zones, for clarity, only the top 100 pairs between zones are mapped.

Key travel patterns include:

- SCSU has the highest internal travel, followed by downtown St. Cloud, various locations in Waite Park and SCTCC.
- The strongest connections are between SCSU and downtown, and between SCSU and various locations in Waite Park
- Some internal travel can be seen within Sauk Rapids as well as in Sartell
- Crosstown connections are also present between Crossroads Center Mall, SCTCC and Sauk Rapids (which happens to mimic the alignment of Route 33).

MOST POPULAR TRAVEL PATTERNS





Chapter 3

Recommendations

SETTING A BASELINE FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

To draft a plan for the future of Metro Bus service that **builds transit ridership, delivers transit to the community efficiently** and **supports local equity goals**, the project team established some expectations and guidelines for developing realistic and useful recommendations.

Any recommendations will be nearly cost-neutral or not require more resources than are generally available today to ensure that the recommendations are constrained to realistic funding expectations. Recommendations can then include additional improvements that require more resources; however, those will be considered for longer-term improvements to allow for time to ensure service can be reliably operated within projected resources.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS EXPLORED:

- **Route realignments** to better serve current markets given any revised demand estimates, changes in infrastructure (such as the Western Transit Center) or other relevant changes
- **Service frequency adjustments** to better match service levels with demand
- **Elimination or reduction of non-productive services** to improve overall performance and redistribute resources to the highest demand areas
- **Route interlinings** to standardize headways and eliminate some transfers
- **Route extensions** to serve new areas or changing demographics
- **New routes** to increase coverage to unserved communities and address unmet travel patterns, including additional crosstown routes
- **Revised spans of service** to provide either longer or shorter hours of service to better reflect demand levels
- **Introduction of alternative mobility options** including emerging mobility, demand response and partnerships with transportation network companies such as Uber or Lyft
- **Development of key transit corridors** by leveraging existing resources to provide higher quality services and provide a framework for future capital investments

WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU

A critical component of Metro Bus Forward was engagement with the community and transit riders through different surveys and events (see Chapter 5 for more details). These key findings were important to shaping the recommendations.



TRANSIT CONTRIBUTES TO QUALITY OF LIFE

Both transit riders and non-transit riders are equally in agreement that transit contributes to quality of life in the area, contributes to the economic health of the region and that **transit is important to have in the community**.



WORK, SHOPPING AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES MATTER

Work and school related trips are the most common type of trip taken, followed by “shopping/errands” and “personal/recreational/social activity.”



MORE SERVICE FREQUENCY MATTERS THE MOST

Improved frequency was the **most requested improvement** across the surveys and workshops which would support riders and non-transit riders.



EARLIER AND LATER SERVICE HOURS ARE EASIER TO PLAN TRIPS AROUND

Riders noted that the **current service hours are inconvenient** and did not meet their needs. Having trips that run earlier in the morning or later in the evening is especially helpful for those with later work shifts.



COMFORTABLE STOPS ENHANCE THE RIDER EXPERIENCE

While riders were mostly satisfied with safety on Metro Bus, fewer riders were satisfied with stop amenities and some specifically requested additional shelters, benches and lighting be considered.



EXPANDING SERVICE COVERAGE COULD BRING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTING TO JOBS OR HOUSING

Both riders and non-riders sometimes cited the current service coverage as a limitation for being able to use the service. Some riders specifically expressed interest in **expanding Metro Bus to new areas** including St. Joseph and Opportunity Drive.

DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS IS AN ITERATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

After we finished collecting and analyzing existing transit services in the region and preferences of the community, we facilitated a **Planning Game Workshop** to build some consensus around the focus areas of the recommendations. Around 40 stakeholders and staff gathered into small groups to put lines on the map to build out service concepts that best met their goals. A few of the key takeaways from the groups included:

- Bringing back on-demand service in different areas
- Adding frequent bidirectional service in central St. Cloud between major destinations
- Connecting the VA and west side of St. Cloud to Sartell from Crossroads
- Continuing the use of bidirectional loop route in Sauk Rapids and East St Cloud
- Connecting to the Technical HS
- Connecting to St. Joseph
- Frequently connecting to Walmart and CentraCare in Sartell

Following the workshop, we developed two contrasting sets of recommendations to get input on needs and priorities. The first option focused more on providing higher frequency and the second option focused more on providing wider coverage. Metro Bus staff reviewed the concepts and agreed to move forward with an option that focuses on bringing more frequent routes to the communities of St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell and Waite Park.

With input from Metro Bus staff including operators, the project team refined the concepts into Draft Service Recommendations and brought the draft route alignments and schedules and future expansion options to the public for community input during Summer 2024. The survey was open from mid-June to mid-October with staff attending multiple events to discuss the recommendations with the community. For more information about the engagement process see Chapter 5.

Finally, we revised the recommendations based on what we heard from the community and further refinement of budget and resource needs. The future expansion priorities were also prioritized by the community, and both increasing frequency of routes and adding more on demand service areas are high on the list of priorities.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU ABOUT OUR DRAFT SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

"I am more than happy with the current transit service, but would greatly appreciate seeing an occasional route into St. Joseph and earlier service on Saturdays. "

"More covered stops would be good for higher-ridership areas, so people aren't waiting in the snow/rain."

"A Metrobus App to see Route Schedules, Info and Trip Planner. It will also reduce paper schedules."

"That fixed routes be more frequent"

"These will make the MetroBus Student Experience much better."

"Go out to opportunity drive"

"ConneX was a good thing for riders of all abilities or ages"

"I would happily give up one of my cars and use the bus for in-town transport if it was feasible. With buses only coming once an hour, though, it isn't really feasible. If buses ran every 30 minutes, then I could take it to work. If buses ran every 15 minutes, I could take the bus everywhere."

"It takes too much time to get around using the metro bus. Families need to leave the house over an hour before they need to be some place, which makes the service not user friendly"

WHAT IS ON DEMAND SERVICE?



On Demand or Microtransit service is a general public curb-to-curb transportation service that allows for riders to request a trip when they want to travel and be picked up within a specified wait time. It is similar to private rideshare like Uber or Lyft, but it operates within certain zones and can pick up multiple riders at a time. Riders request a ride by either calling or using an app on their phone. Riders can be picked up and dropped off anywhere within the zone or at a hub, such as the Walmart in Sartell, where they can connect to other transit routes.

On Demand service is a good way to serve areas with lower demand or density that are more difficult or expensive to serve with Fixed Route. These areas are most often found in lower-density suburban and rural areas at or near the edge of the fixed route system. However, On Demand services are not as efficient at moving people as a Fixed Route service, so it is not as cost effective as it costs more per rider to operate. On Demand service is not a one-size fits all solution for all areas as it can be expensive for transit agencies to operate this type of service that carries fewer riders.

Metro Bus previously operated an On Demand service named ConneX. It was piloted in Sartell in 2019 through 2022.

COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT TRANSIT SERVICES

FAQ	FIXED ROUTE	DIAL-A-RIDE	ON DEMAND
Who can ride?	Anyone can ride	Pre-approved customers only	Anyone can ride
Where will I be picked up or dropped off?	Bus stop to bus stop	Door through door	Nearby intersection or curb-to-curb
Where can I ride?	Trip must begin and end at a Fixed Route bus stop	Trip must begin and end in the Dial-a-Ride Zone	Trip must begin and end within a defined zone or drop off location
Do I need to book a ride in advance?	No advanced booking is required	1 to 7 day advanced booking is required	Same-day booking
Is the service ADA-accessible?	Wheelchair Accessible	Wheelchair accessible and assistance provided	Wheelchair accessible
Will I share a ride with another passenger?	Yes	Often	Often

SHORT-TERM METRO BUS FORWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are key themes of the **Metro Bus Forward short-term recommendations**. The recommendations are shown on the map on the following page.



Providing **more frequent service** between major destinations to provide service where demand is strong



Operating direct and bidirectional service on many routes to **improve efficiency and usability**



Reallocating service from areas with little or no ridership to **make the best use of existing resources**



Maintaining the **same hours of service** as today



Introducing and **improving crosstown connections** to better serve new travel patterns



Providing **on-demand service** in low-density areas to more effectively provide service coverage



Redesigning routes to serve the future **Western Transit Center** in Waite Park



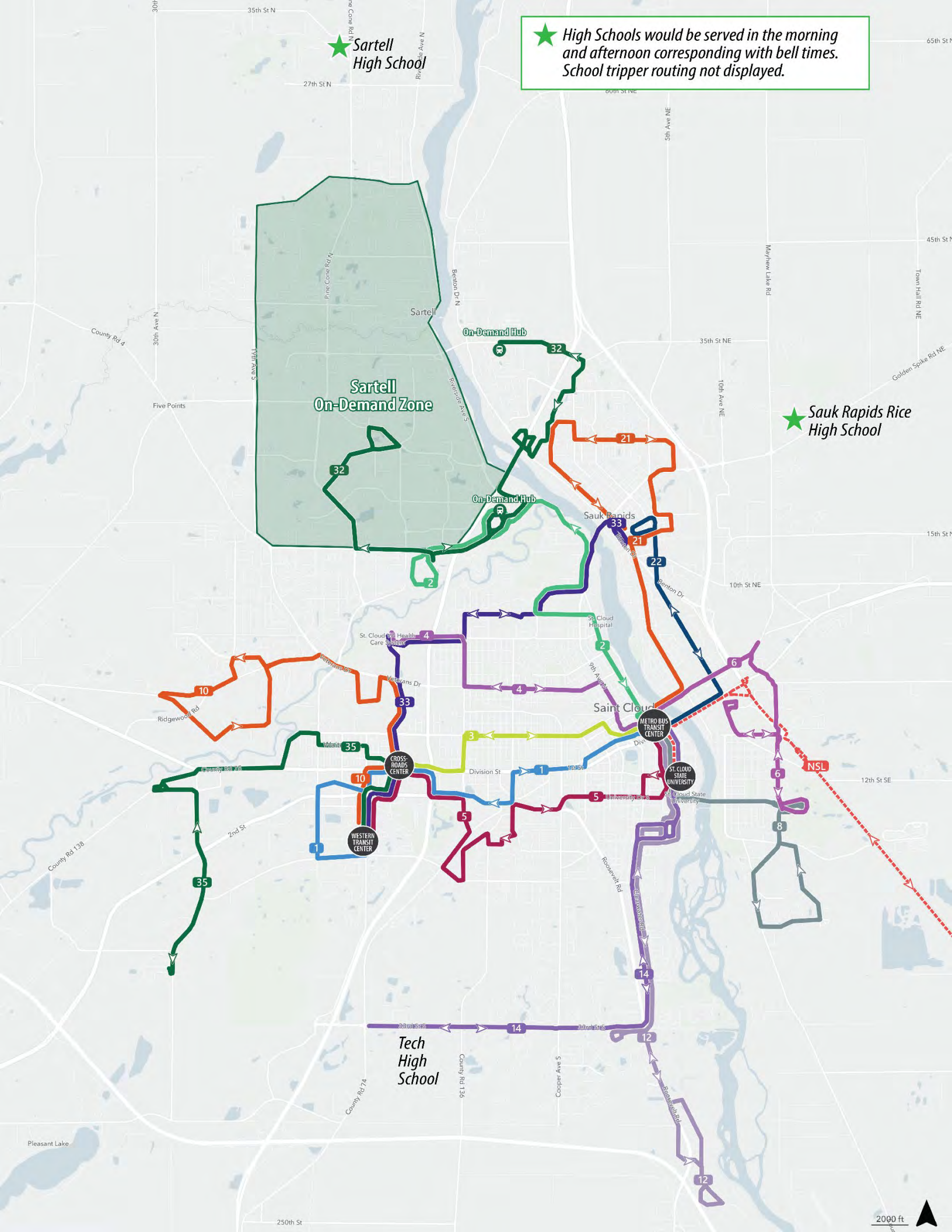
Providing a **baseline network** using existing resources that can be improved over time

★ **Sartell High School**

★ **High Schools would be served in the morning and afternoon corresponding with bell times. School tripper routing not displayed.**

★ **Sauk Rapids Rice High School**

Sartell On-Demand Zone



PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The **prioritized list of future improvements** are listed below and shown on the map on the following page.



Route 5 improved to 30 minute weekday frequency



Route 4 improved to 30 minute weekday frequency



Expand Coverage to NW St. Cloud realigning the Route 4 and Route 10



Add a new on-demand service in **South St. Cloud**



Add a new on-demand service in **Sauk Rapids**



Routes 12 and 14 improved to 60 minute frequency



Provide a **new commuter route to Opportunity Drive** to provide access to jobs in the area




Run service earlier and/or later on **weekdays**



Run service earlier and/or later on **weekends**

 **Sartell High School**

 **High Schools would be served in the morning and afternoon corresponding with bell times. School tripper routing not displayed.**

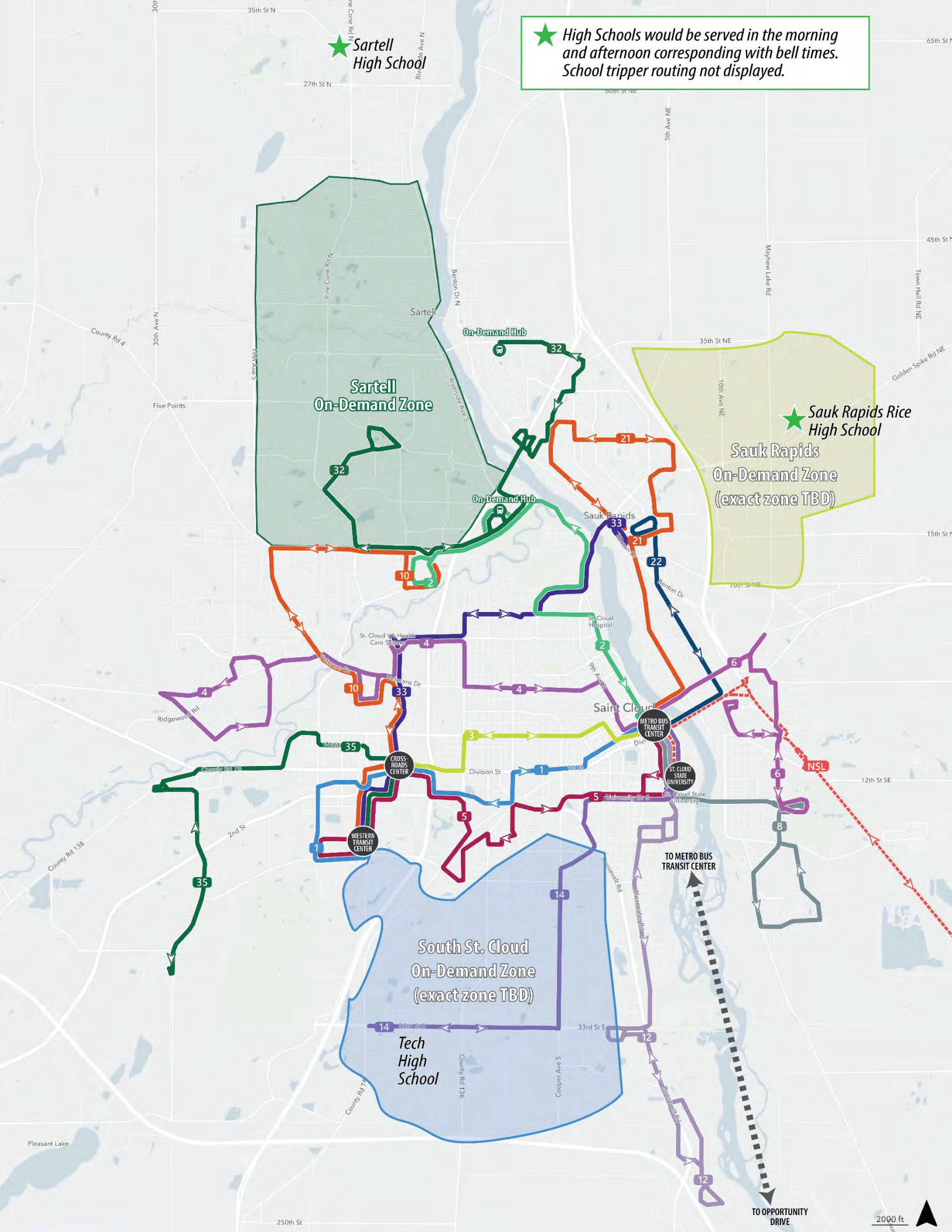
 **Sauk Rapids Rice High School**

Sartell On-Demand Zone

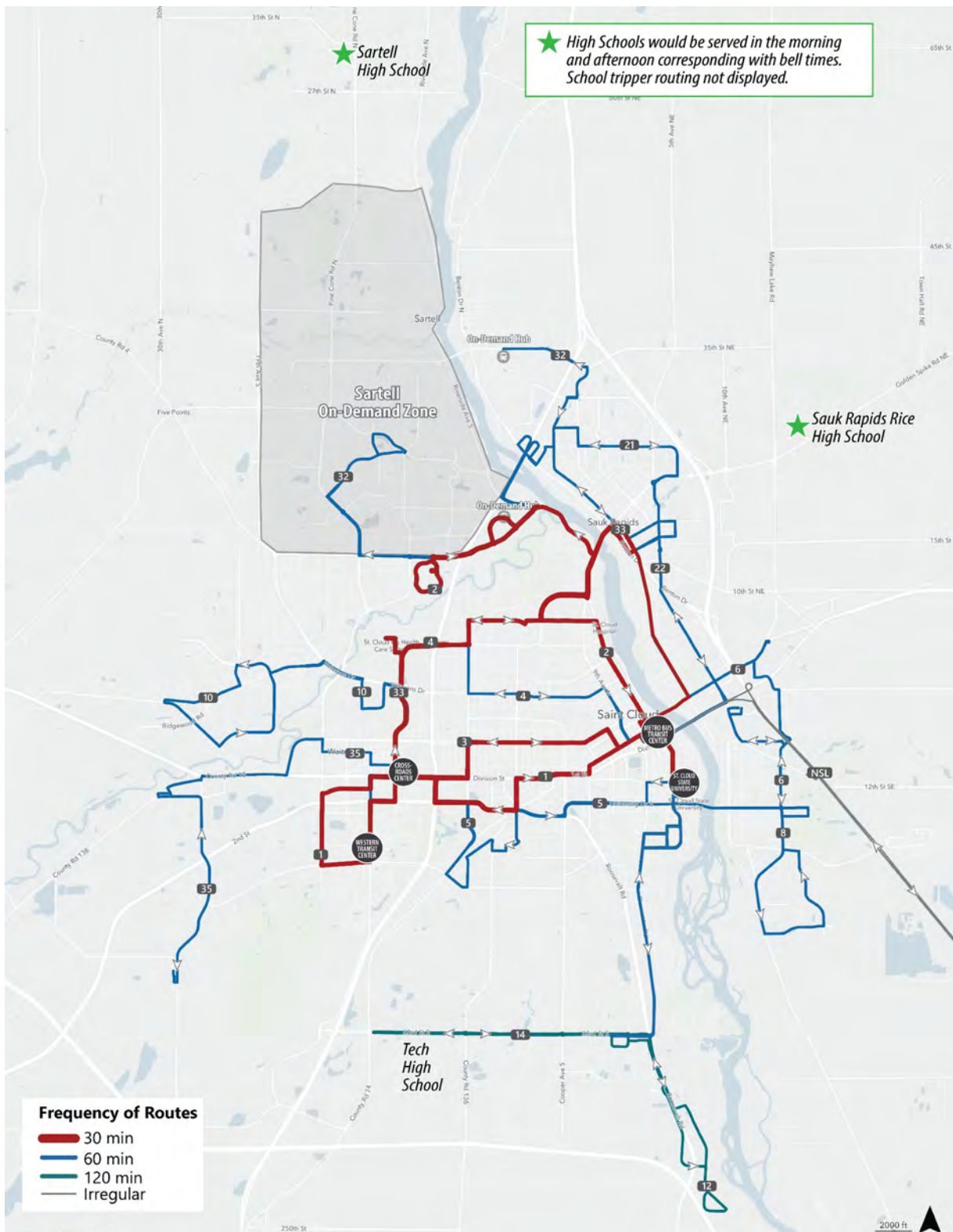
Sauk Rapids On-Demand Zone (exact zone TBD)

South St. Cloud On-Demand Zone (exact zone TBD)

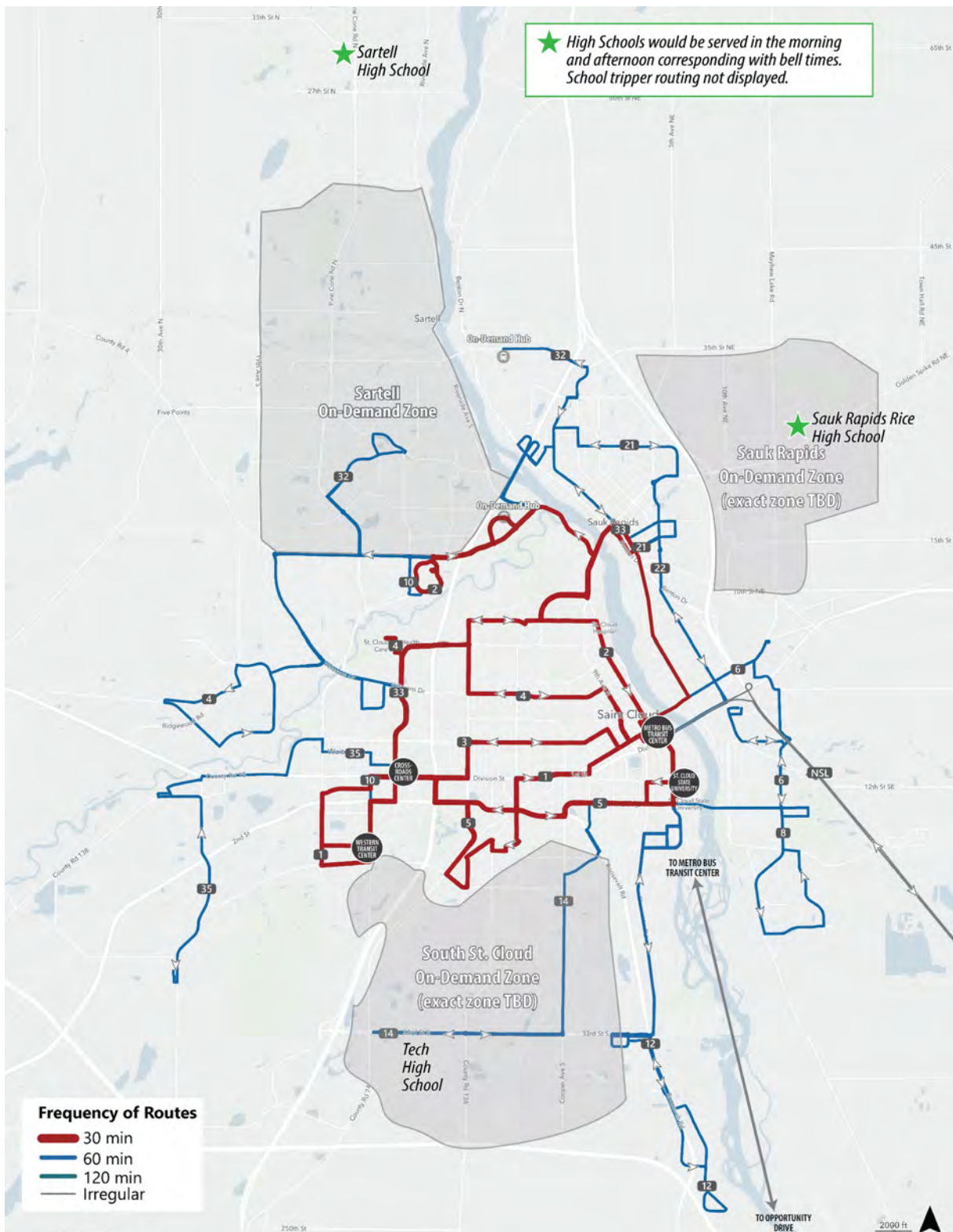
Tech High School



FREQUENCY OF SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS



FREQUENCY OF FUTURE PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

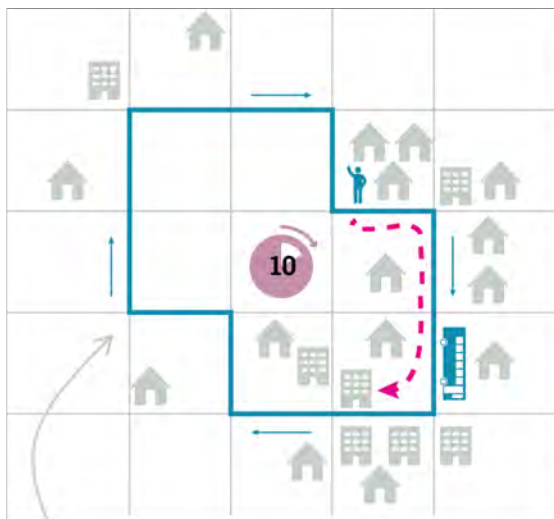


SERVICE DESIGN IMPACTS TRANSIT RIDERS

Today, many of the existing bus routes are designed as a one-way service, which has allowed Metro Bus to spread out its limited resources to serve many locations across the community. However, the tradeoff for this type of service design is that riders will have a longer return trip on most trips.

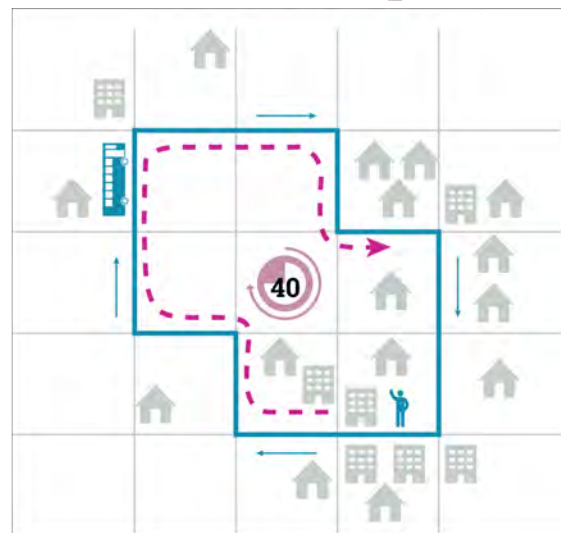
One-way loops can cover a larger geographic area...

First trip



Fewer people and jobs

Return trip



More people and jobs

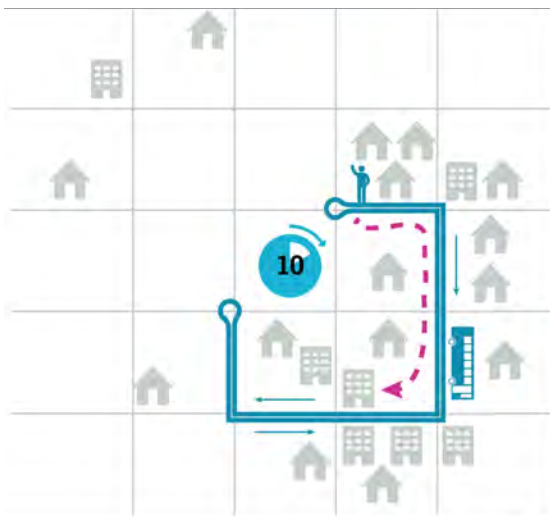
...but many round trips are **indirect and take longer**

AND BIDIRECTIONAL SERVICE IS MORE EFFECTIVE

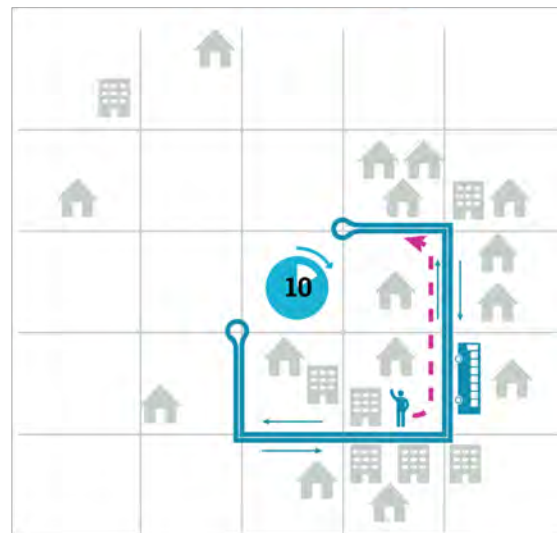
In developing our recommendations, we explored whether we could provide access to the same neighborhoods and destinations, but also try to provide more bidirectional service with the same level of resources. We did this by removing duplicative services, or services that have very little or no ridership to help free up resources so that more frequent service could be provided.

Service in both directions focuses service where it's needed most...

First trip



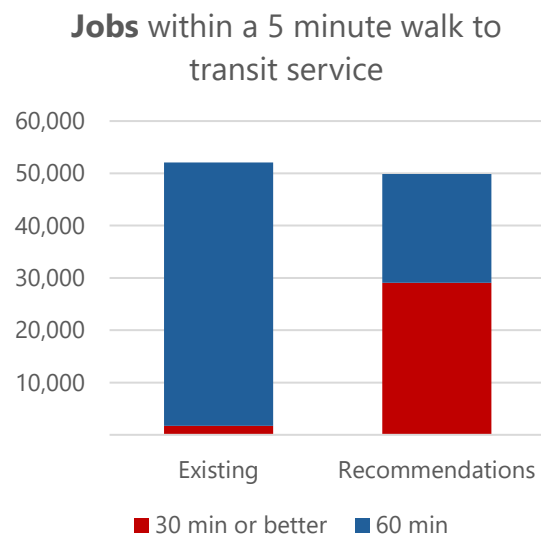
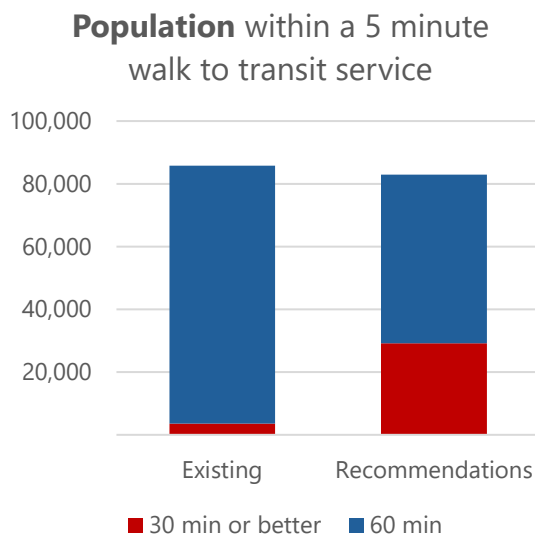
Return trip



...and travel for most people is faster and more direct

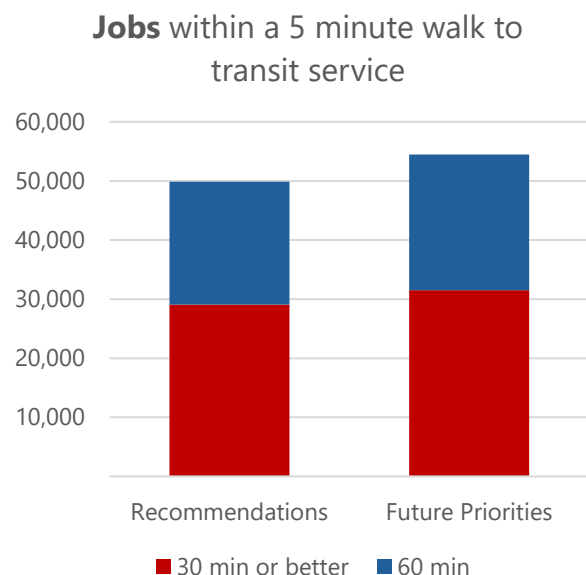
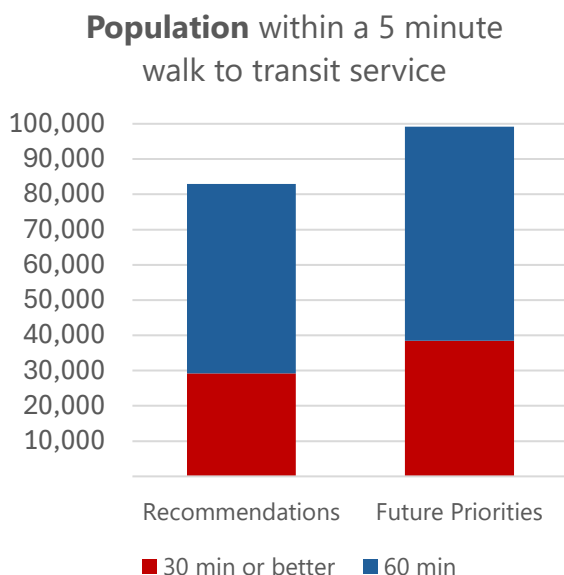
IMPACTS OF METRO BUS FORWARD

Because our recommendations emphasize more frequent service on the most productive routes and corridors, **more people and jobs will be within a short walk to more frequent service** compared to the existing service. The tradeoff is that some areas with low ridership may see less service than today and/or some passengers may have to walk further to reach transit service.



FUTURE PRIORITIES EXPAND COVERAGE AND ADD MORE FREQUENCY FOR MORE PEOPLE

With the addition of the future improvements, some of the coverage gaps can be filled and additional frequency can be brought to more of the core transit corridors.



HOW WILL SERVICES BE MONITORED?

In addition to recommendations for service for Metro Bus, we reviewed the existing Service Standards and Guidelines which are used to monitor the performance of transit services.

The purpose of service guidelines and standards is to monitor and evaluate transit services and to have an adopted process in place for resolving performance issues. Importantly, service guidelines and standards ensure a complete transit system that is designed with both the individual route *and* the network in mind. Many elements of the service guidelines have been evaluated as part of Metro Bus Forward and were considered when developing the recommendations presented in this chapter.

Metro Bus Forward recommends that service be monitored with **service guidelines** and **service standards**. Service guidelines are important for assessing or designing fixed route service but could be evaluated qualitatively, measured less regularly, and may not include a strict standard, whereas service standards can be quantified and should be measured regularly. Service standards should be used to assess and modify routes to ensure service is delivered efficiently and effectively.

The service guidelines and standards are organized into five overarching categories:

- **Service Availability** refers to service characteristics of the fixed route service, as well as how accessible that service is to existing and future customers. There are four service guidelines within this category including service coverage, bus stop spacing, service frequency, and span.
- **Service Design** deals with the way that routes and the overall network is designed like how direct and simple the route alignments are for riders. There are three service guidelines within this category.
- **Service Quality** is about ensuring that riders can depend on transit service. It is used to assess the passenger experience in terms of the upkeep and maintenance of transit and its infrastructure like bus stops amenities and fleet. There are five service guidelines in this category.
- **Financial Efficiency or Productivity** assesses the performance of the system and routes in terms of fare revenue and passengers per revenue hour. There are four service standards included in this category.



700

WELCOME ABOARD

BUS

SUMMER SERVICE
REMINDERS
Always Use the Fare Box
Please Use Exact Fare
KIDS RIDE FREE
0-1001
FREE

PLEASE USE
EXACT FARE

Kneeling
Bus
RAMP



Chapter 4

Implementation

IMPLEMENTING METRO BUS FORWARD

The short-term recommendations in Metro Bus Forward are designed so that they do not require a significant increase in service levels over what is being provided today. However, service levels today are reduced compared to what was provided on Metro Bus prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The short-term recommendations in Metro Bus Forward include a redesigned network that starts with reduced service levels and builds the foundation for service that can be improved over time.

Implementation of the short-term recommendations, discussed in more detail by route on the following pages, are summarized by the following key themes:

- **Frequency Improvements and Direct Connections.** These improvements focus on providing frequency in corridors with the highest existing ridership, transit-supportive land use and connects the major destinations in the region.
- **Reduce Duplication and Streamline Routes.** These improvements focus on utilizing resources more efficiently by reducing duplication and designing routes that are less circuitous.
- **Modify or Consolidate Service in Low Ridership Areas.** Some routes or route segments are modified, consolidated or eliminated in areas with very low ridership. These changes shift valuable resources to other routes in the region that serve more people and jobs.

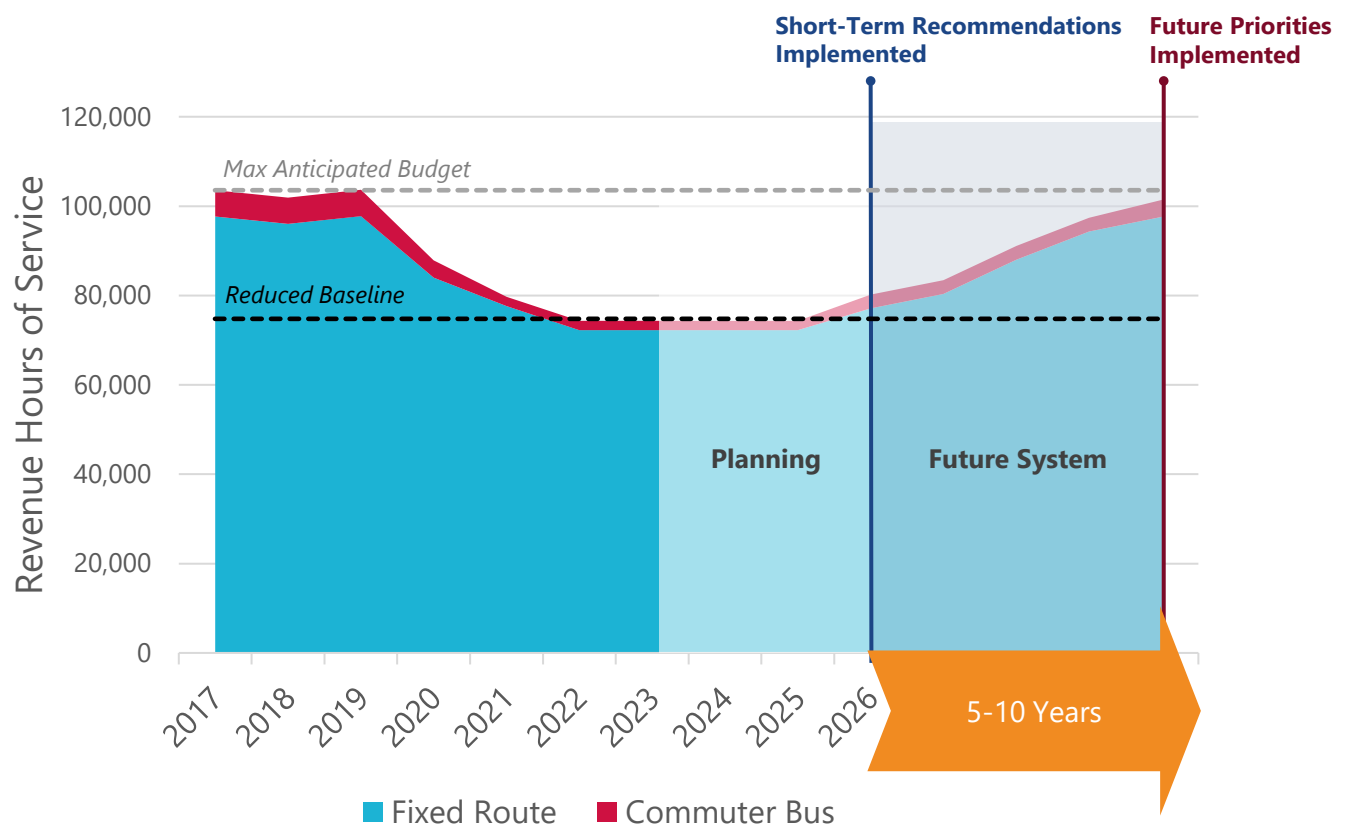
Once the short-term recommendations are implemented, a series of **future priority improvements** are provided along with how many additional resources (in terms of vehicle revenue hours) are necessary to implement each change. Many of the future priorities can be implemented within the service levels that were provided pre-COVID, but implementation of these improvements will need to be phased in over time and are dependent on available resources, vehicles and operators.

THE TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The chart below shows existing annual vehicle revenue hours (VRH)¹ for fixed route and commuter bus services between 2017 and 2022 (the last full year of data from the National Transit Database). The fixed route service levels have remained relatively stable since 2022 and are thus used as the **reduced baseline** for the short-term recommendations. Once the short-term recommendations are implemented (anticipated in 2026), the future priorities are then designed to be implemented over the next 5-10 years as future resources become available.

The Dial-a-Ride (demand response) service area will continue to serve the required three-quarter mile buffer from the recommended fixed route network² and demand response vehicle revenue hours are not expected to change significantly as the recommended fixed route network is implemented.

ESTIMATED FIXED ROUTE REVENUE HOURS FOR METRO BUS FORWARD IMPLEMENTATION



¹ Vehicle revenue hours (VRH) are defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as hours that vehicles are in revenue service, plus layover and recovery time. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/national-transit-database-ntd-glossary>

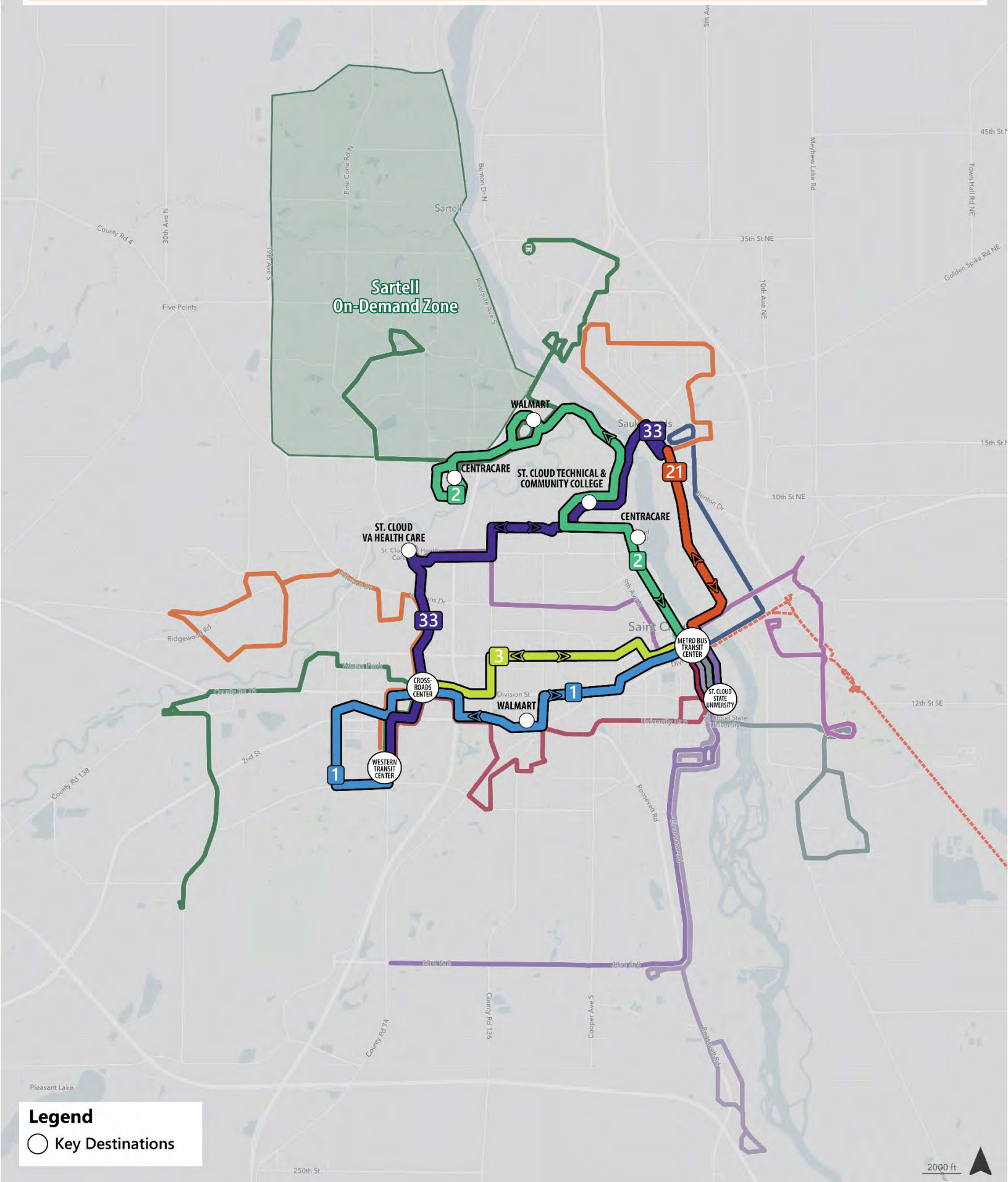
² The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that transit agencies "provide complementary paratransit service to origins and destinations within corridors with a width of three-fourths of a mile on each side of each fixed route." <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/frequently-asked-questions>

SHORT-TERM: FREQUENCY IMPROVEMENTS AND DIRECT CONNECTIONS

Five redesigned routes – identified as “core” routes – are the focus of frequency and streamlining improvements in the short-term recommendations. Each of these routes are redesigned to provide direct connections between many of the major destinations in the region and along corridors with the most transit-supportive land use. The St. Cloud State University area will also be served with 30-minute service by the combined schedules on the routes that serve that area (Routes 5, 8, 12 and 14). The table below illustrates the existing and recommended changes and are highlighted on the map on the following page.

Route	Existing Frequency		Recommended Frequency		Summary of Recommended Service Changes
	Weekday MIDDAY/EVE	Weekend Sat/Sun	Weekday MIDDAY/EVE	Weekend Sat/Sun	
1	60/60	60/60	30/60	60/60	Routes 1 and 2 will operate as separate bidirectional routes every 30 minutes on weekdays and serving some of the highest ridership destinations in the system. Route 2 will also serve the highest demand areas in Sartell.
2	60/60	60/60	30/60	60/60	
3	60/60	60/60	30/60	60/60	Existing Route 3 is split into two routes (Route 3 and Route 35) to better match service levels with demand. The new Route 3 has higher demand and will operate more frequently than Route 35, which will operate hourly and end service earlier due to lower demand.
21	60/60	60/60	30/60	60/60	Route 21 will operate as a bidirectional loop route in Sauk Rapids with 30-minute weekday service.
33	60/60	60/60	30/60	60/60	Route 33 provides a crosstown connection between Waite Park, St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids. Service will be provided every 30 minutes on weekdays.

CORE ROUTES WITH FREQUENT CONNECTIONS TO KEY DESTINATIONS



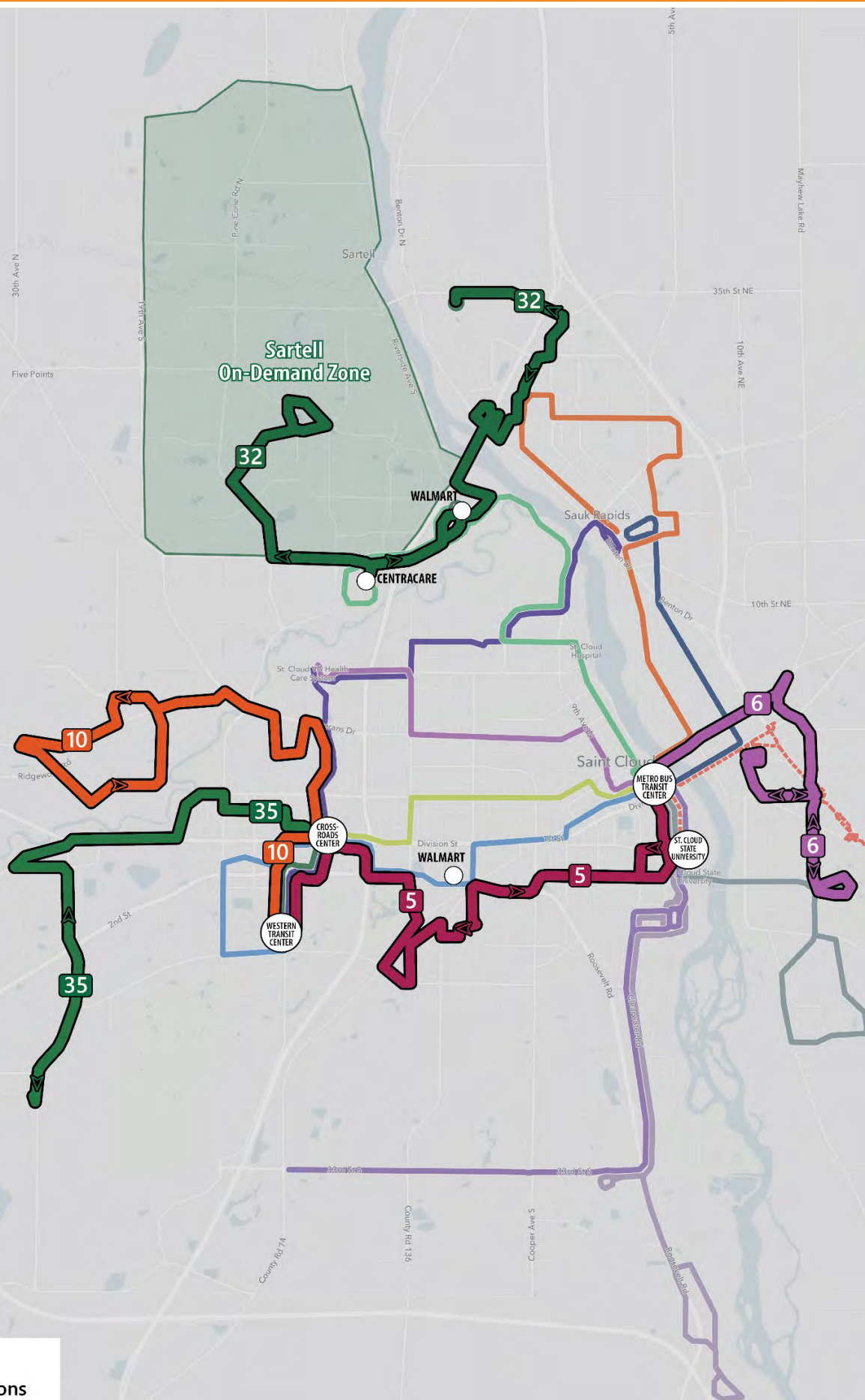
SHORT-TERM: REDUCE DUPLICATION AND STREAMLINE ROUTES

Several routes are redesigned to reduce duplication of service and/or provide more direct and streamlined service to areas with the highest ridership potential. A summary of these changes is provided below and highlighted on the map on the following page.

Route	Summary of Recommended Service Changes
5	Existing Routes 5 and 11 are consolidated into a modified Route 5 that reduces duplication and provides a new connection to Crossroads Center.
6	Route 6 is modified to provide a direct connection to a grocery store (Cashwise) and is extended to the apartments near University Dr. SE and 15th Ave SE.
10	Route 10 is modified to extend to Crossroads Center and the new Waite Park Transit Center. Service frequency on the existing Route 10 is reduced from every 30 minutes to every 60 minutes to match lower demand on this route.
32*	Existing Route 32 is modified from a large one-way loop to a bidirectional route that provides service to the major destinations in Sartell.
35	The new Route 35 assumes the western portion of the existing Route 3. Service is provided bidirectionally and serves the major destinations. Weekday service on this route ends earlier than other routes to match lower demand on this route.
Sartell Microtransit	This new service would provide on-demand service to the northern portion of Sartell with connections to the modified Routes 2 and 32.

* Sartell High School will continue to be served in the morning and afternoon corresponding with bell times. Route alignment to be determined.

STREAMLINED ROUTES WITH LESS DUPLICATION



Legend
○ Key Destinations

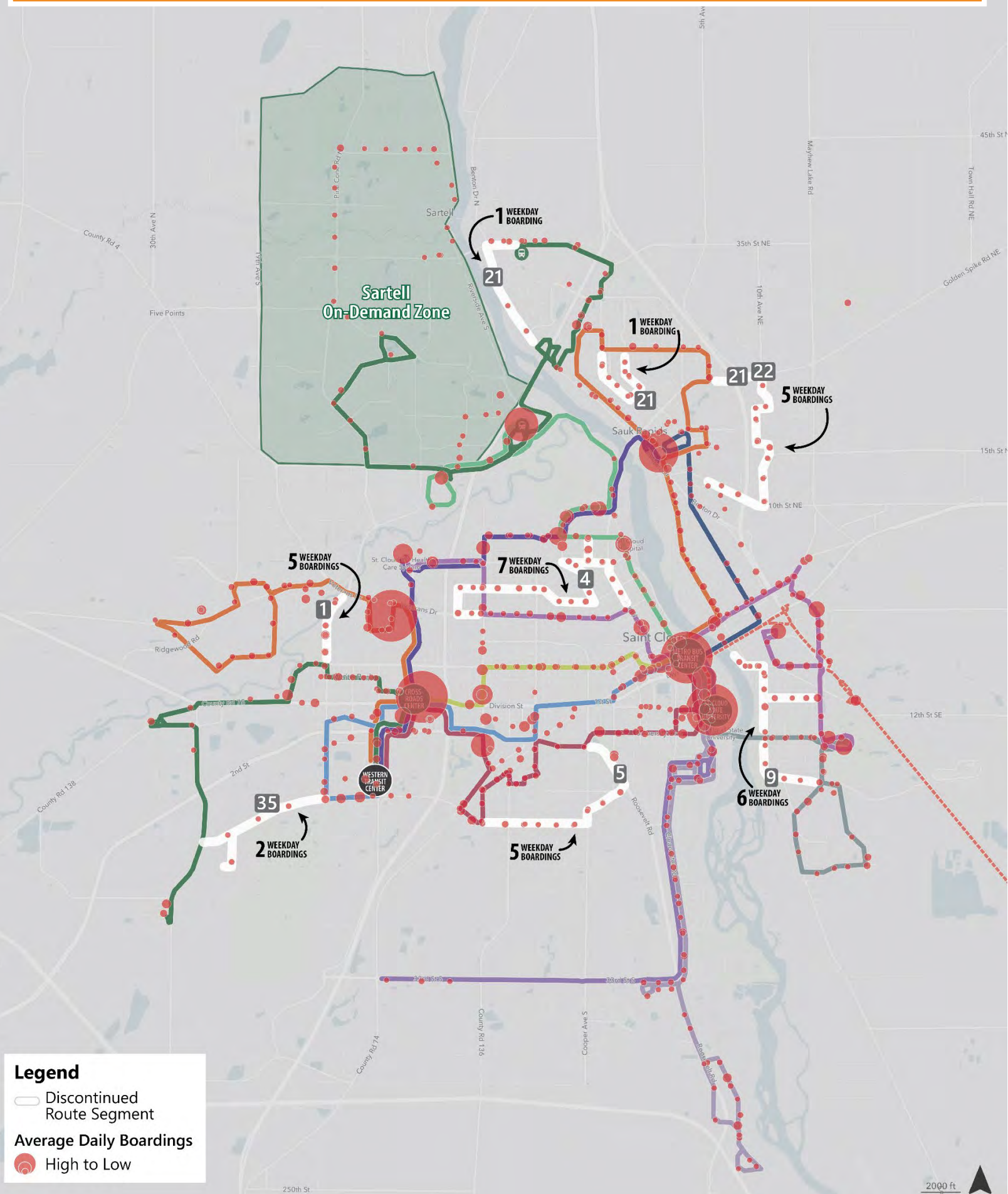
SHORT-TERM: MODIFY SERVICE IN LOW RIDERSHIP AREAS

To make the most efficient use of limited fixed route resources, several existing routes or route segments are consolidated or discontinued due to very low ridership. While the impact to individual riders who will lose direct bus service because of these changes is not taken lightly, these changes – which will provide significantly better service to most riders – impact 32 average weekday boardings out of over 2,300 total weekday boardings throughout the system (or about 1% of average daily boarding). A summary of these changes is provided below and highlighted on the map on the following page.

Route	Summary of Recommended Service Changes
4	Route 4 is modified into a bidirectional route serving the major stops along the route and terminating at the VA. This change also allows riders to make an important connection to Route 33 at the VA.
5	The segment of existing Route 5 along 22 nd St. S has very low ridership and is no longer served. In the future, a new route (Route 14) will be modified to serve a portion of this segment between University Dr. S and Cooper Ave. S and 22 nd St. S.
9	The existing Route 9 has very low ridership except for segments served by other routes. In addition, the modified Route 6 will serve the apartments south of University Dr. SE. To reduce duplication of service and make the best use of existing resources, this route would be discontinued.
11	Many segments of existing Routes 5 and 11 duplicate each other. With the recommended modifications to Route 5, this route would be discontinued. The highest future priority (discussed below in the Future Priority Improvements section) is to return Route 5 to 30-minute weekday service.
12/14	Existing Route 12 is split into Routes 12 and 14 with Route 12 continuing along the existing alignment and Route 14 providing new service to 33 rd St. S. The common segments of Routes 12 and 14 would operate hourly and the tails of each route would operate every other hour.
21/22*	Existing Routes 21 and 22 provide service to Sauk Rapids with a large one-way loop. The modifications to Routes 21 and 22 focus service on the areas of Sauk Rapids with the highest ridership, and a new connection to modified Route 32 offers a new connection to Sartell. Several segments on these routes east of Highway 10 have very low ridership are no longer served in the short-term so that more frequent service can be provided on segments with higher demand. The area east of Highway 10 would be served in the future with a microtransit service.
35	Most of the western portion of existing Route 3 would be served by the new bidirectional Route 35. A short segment of existing Route 3 on 7 th St. S with very low ridership would no longer be served.

* Sauk Rapids Rice High School will continue to be served in the morning and afternoon corresponding with bell times. Route alignment to be determined.

LOW RIDERSHIP AREAS WITH MODIFIED SERVICE



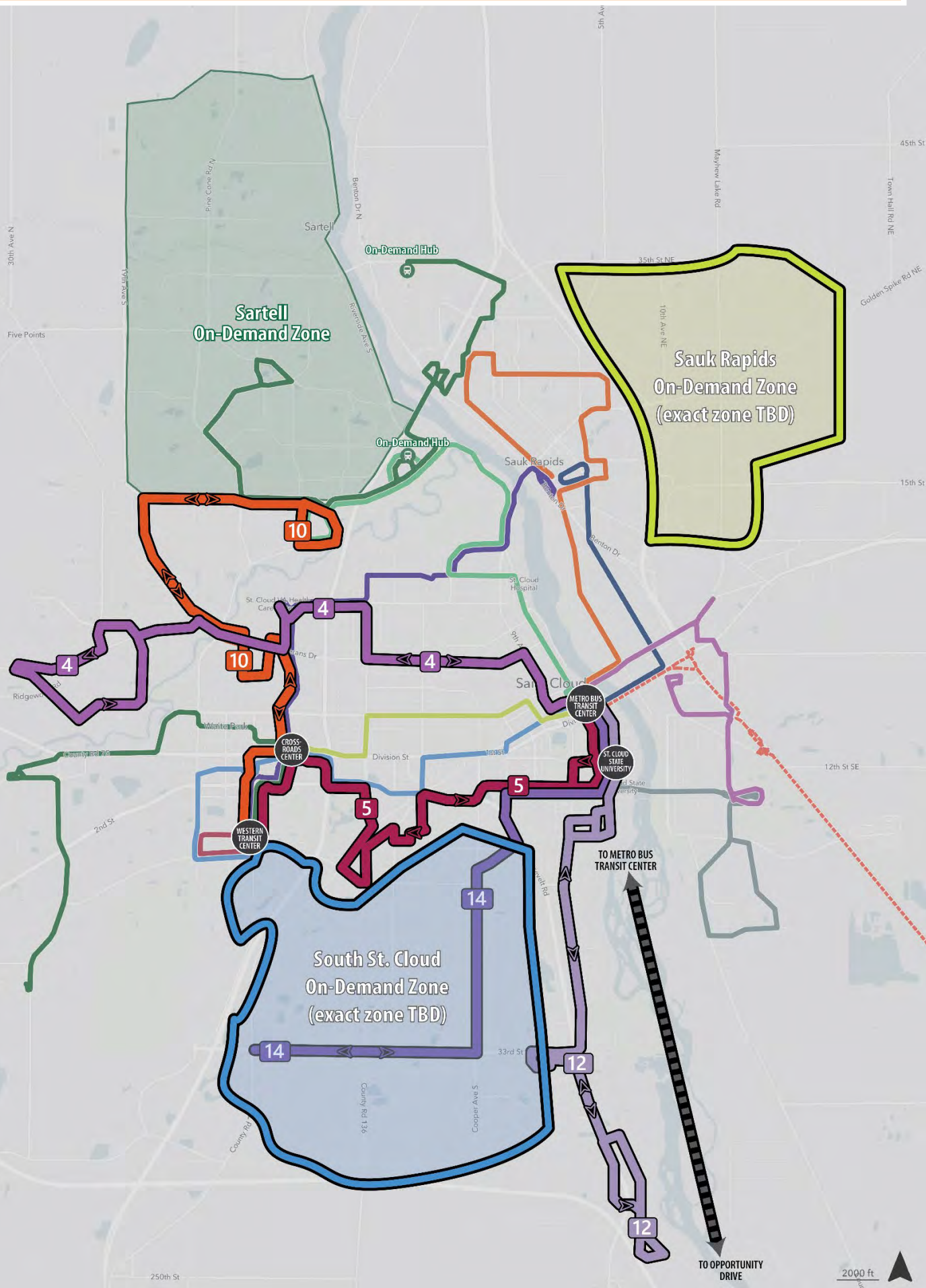
FUTURE PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

As noted earlier, the short-term service recommendations are designed as the base network that can be improved over time without significant changes to the route network. Several routes would benefit from frequency improvements, while several other routes are modified to provide new connections. The table below, and map on the following page, summarizes the future improvements in priority order based on community input. An estimate of the increase in annual Fixed Route vehicle revenue hours (VRH) compared to the recommended short-term recommendations is also provided, along with the change in peak vehicles required to operate the service.

	Route	Summary of Recommended Service Changes	Increase in Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH)	Change in Peak Vehicle Requirement
Highest Priority	5	Increase weekday frequency for most of the day from hourly to every 30 minutes.	+3,100	+1
	4	Route extended to Westwood area via Veterans Drive, Ridgewood Rd. and Saukvie Dr. Weekday service frequency increased to 30 minutes between Downtown St. Cloud and the VA. This change needs to happen at the same time as the change to Route 10.	+4,800	+1.5
	10	Modify route to operate from McLeland Rd. loop to CentraCare Plaza via Veterans Dr. and County Rd. 120.	None*	None
	South St. Cloud Microtransit	New microtransit zone on south side of St. Cloud with a connection to the Waite Park Transit Center. Exact zone TBD.	+4,400	+1
	Sauk Rapids Microtransit	New microtransit zone on east side of Sauk Rapids with a connection to downtown Sauk Rapids. Exact zone TBD.	+4,400	+1
	12/14	Increase frequency on both routes to hourly. Modify Route 14 alignment to operate via Washington Memorial Dr., Roosevelt Rd, Traverse Rd., Cooper Ave S. and 33 rd St. S.	+4,300	+1
Medium Priority	Opportunity Drive Commuter Route	New route that connects the Downtown Transit Center to Opportunity Drive. Three round trips would be provided to align with shift times (TBD). Service provided on weekdays only.	+770*	+1
	All routes	One additional hour of service in the morning on weekdays	+4,600	None
Lowest Priority	All routes	One additional hour of service in the evening on weekdays	+4,600	None
	All routes	One additional hour of service on Saturday (morning or evening)	+890	None
	All routes	One additional hour of service on Sunday and holidays (morning or evening)	+930	None

* This change would expand the extent of the Fixed Route network and would require an adjustment of the Dial-a-Ride zone to meet ADA standards. The increase in VRH for Dial-a-Ride is not included in this total.

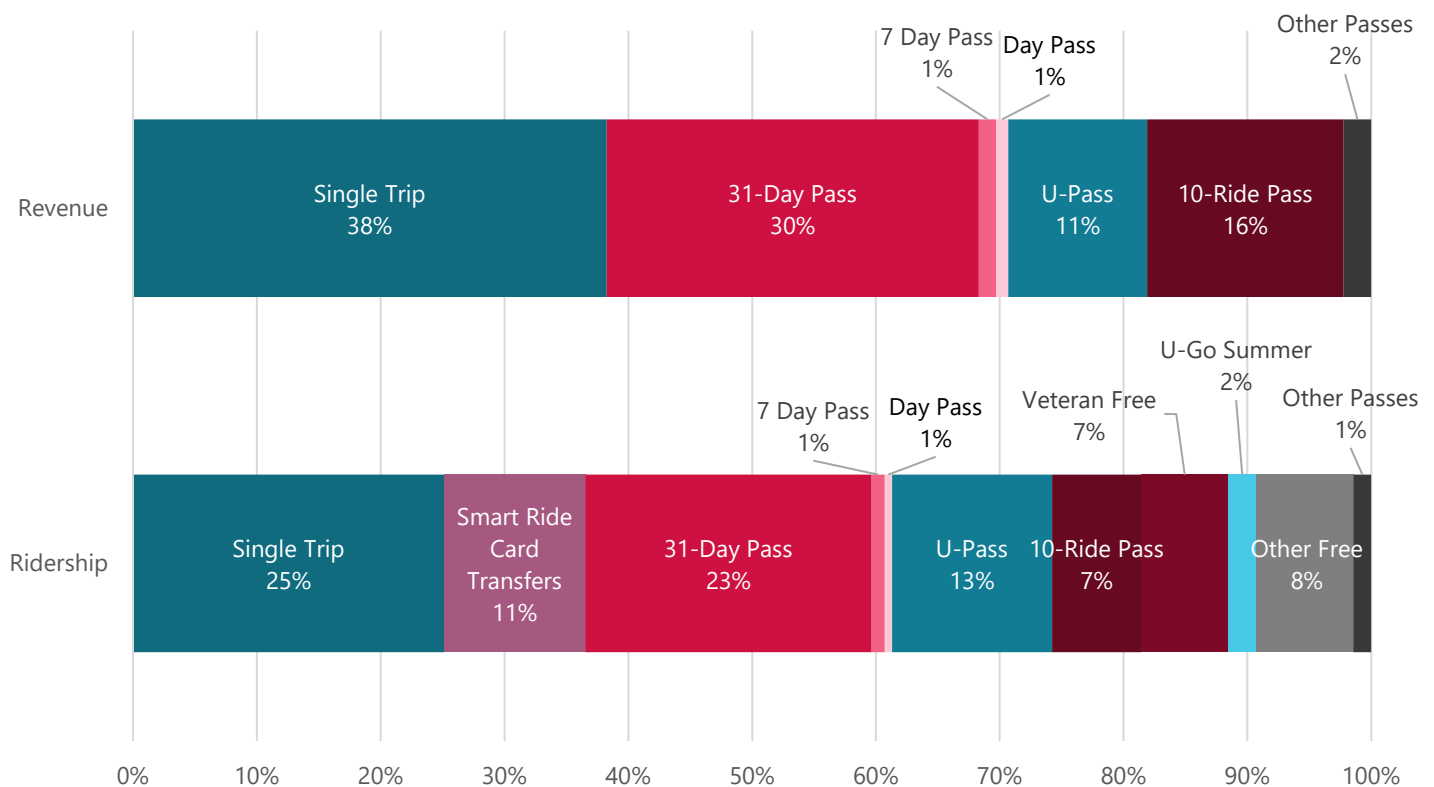
FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



WHAT ABOUT FARES AND THE COST TO RIDE?

As part of Metro Bus Forward, a fare analysis was conducted to evaluate Metro Bus's current fare structure, policies and technologies. The study also evaluated fare policies and performance of several peer agencies to determine best practices that may be applicable for Metro Bus. A sample chart from the analysis showing ridership and revenues for the various fare products is shown below.

Metro Bus Ridership and Revenue by Fare Product - 2023



Building upon this background work, a fare model was used to identify anticipated impacts to ridership and revenue based on potential changes to the fare structure.

The Fare Analysis Report provided recommendations for fare pricing and structure, fare policy changes and fare-related technology for Metro Bus. Recommendations incorporate results from reviewing national and regional best practices, an evaluation of fare scenarios, and refining concepts with Metro Bus staff.

FARE SCENARIOS

Five different fare scenarios were created to test and model potential outcomes and impacts of fare structure and policy changes. The scenarios were used to develop the proposed recommendations.

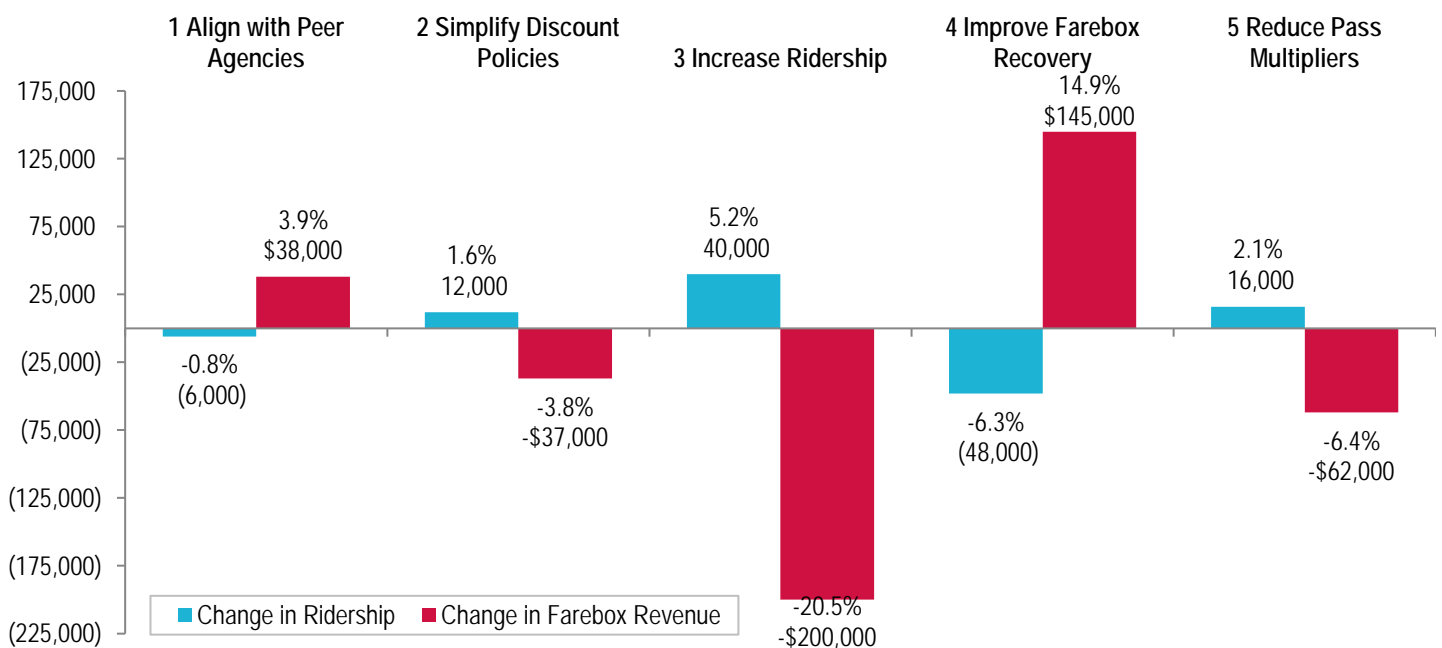
1. Align with Peer Agencies - This scenario aligns fares and multipliers closer to those of peer agencies. Notable changes include increasing the base fare to \$1.50 and reduced fare to \$0.75 (from \$0.60). Multipliers for pass products were also reduced and simplified. The 10-Ride Pass and 7-Day Pass were removed due to low utilization, alongside commensurate increases in paratransit fares. Along with making reduced fares available all day, some increases to farebox revenues (3.9%) could be found, with minor impacts to ridership (-0.8%).

2. Simplify Discount Policies - This scenario involved simplifying pass products offered and enacting fare policy changes while keeping most fares the same (apart from reduced fares being lowered to \$0.50). In addition, the 10-Ride and 7-Day Pass would be removed. This scenario would also make reduced fares available to eligible riders at all times of the day, extend the U-Go Youth Summer Pass year-round and allow free transfers for cash trips. These changes resulted in modest ridership increases (1.6%) from discount products and a decrease in farebox revenue (-3.8%).

3. Increase Ridership - This scenario simplifies and lowers fares to attract higher ridership. Through lowering base fares to \$1.00 and the reduced fare to \$0.50, removing the 10-Ride Pass and reducing most multipliers, modest ridership increases could be achieved (5.2%). This scenario led to a 20.5% reduction in farebox revenue.



















4. Improve Farebox Recovery - Recognizing the agency's desire to strengthen farebox recovery, this scenario looks at raising the base fare while lowering the multipliers to retain product attractiveness. Base fares were increased to \$2.00, with reduced fares at 50% of the base alongside the removal of the 10-Ride Pass. While this scenario yields significant farebox gains (14.9%), there are notable ridership impacts (-6.3%).

5. Reduce Pass Multipliers - This scenario aims to make pass products more attractive. While the base \$1.25 fare remains the same, 10-Ride Passes are removed and multipliers are reduced across the board, resulting in modest ridership increases (2.1%) but a 6.4% decrease in fare revenue.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FARES

From the fare modeling analysis, review of peer practices and iterative conversations with agency staff, this study recommends the changes outlined in the table below. If adopted, these recommendations can effectively address the fare analysis goals created with Metro Bus staff. Forecasted impacts can net a minor decrease in ridership (-0.4%) but a noticeable 4.9% revenue increase.

Recommended Changes	Study/Agency Goals
Increase the Fixed Route base fare to \$1.50 from \$1.25. The base fare for Dial-a-Ride would increase from \$2.50 to \$3.00.	  
Remove the 10-Ride and 7-Day Pass due to low utilization.	  
Reduce pass product multipliers on Fixed Route: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 3.4x to 3.0x on the Day Pass From 37.6x to 30x on the 31-Day Pass 	  
Make the reduced base fare for eligible riders \$0.75 at all times of the day, not just peak periods.	  
Expand youth access to the reduced base fare of \$0.75 year-round to supplement the existing U-Go Summer fare free program.	  
Explore simplifying the fare structure on Northstar Link	  

Fare Goals



**SIMPLIFY FARE
PAYING
EXPERIENCE**



**ALIGN WITH PEER
AGENCY BEST
PRACTICES**



**BALANCE FARE
REVENUE WITH
RIDER
EXPECTATIONS**

SFX



Genfare



METRO BUS

PAY WITH:

CURRENT FARE
\$1.25



INSERT



SWIPE



TOUCH



SCAN



ROUTE:
Route 1

05/26/2023
10:10 AM

*



**PLEASE USE
EXACT FARE**

OPERATORS AND FAREBOXES
ARE UNABLE TO ISSUE CHANGE







Chapter 5

Engagement

TYPES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Metro Bus Forward included robust outreach to gather diverse input and ensure that recommendations reflect the needs, priorities and values of the community. Riders, non-riders, Metro Bus staff and regional partners were engaged through the following activities and are encouraged to bring ideas to Metro Bus staff at any time.



A **project website** that provided project information, updates on outreach activities, completed deliverables and links to the online surveys. The community was encouraged to offer feedback throughout the study.



A **community survey** that asked riders and non-riders about their travel patterns, transportation needs and desired transit improvements.



An **onboard survey** that asked riders on the bus information about where they were traveling, the purpose of their trip and their preferences.



The project team and Metro Bus staff attended **community events and held pop-ups** at the Downtown Transit Center, St. Cloud State University and other events to understand rider needs and solicit feedback.



Stakeholder advisory committee and staff discussions gathered input on challenges and improvements from community organizations, operators and other staff.



A **planning game workshop** where stakeholders developed ideas for service given a financially constrained scenario to inform the service recommendations.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND OUTREACH

The engagement for Metro Bus Forward was completed in three phases over an approximately 20-month timeframe. For more details, see Appendix C: Engagement.

PHASE ONE IDENTIFY COMMUNITY AND RIDER PREFERENCES

Starting in May 2023, the project team began collecting feedback from Metro Bus staff and operators, stakeholders, the community and Metro Bus riders to establish the preferences and priorities for improving transit in the Metro Bus service area. Assisting Metro Bus in their ongoing outreach efforts, the project team talked with people in the community at local events and collected surveys throughout 2023. This feedback supplemented our understanding of local needs and priorities and helped form the recommendations for Metro Bus Forward.

PHASE TWO DEVELOPING SERVICE PLANNING CONCEPTS

In November 2023, the project team facilitated a Planning Game Workshop with around 40 stakeholders. The goal was to review the results of the existing conditions work and the survey feedback received to date and develop service planning concepts for Metro Bus. We had community members and staff put transit lines down on the map with a limited set of resources to build everyone's understanding of the tradeoffs of different ways of providing transit service. This exercise provided insights into the priorities of the region.

PHASE THREE CONFIRMATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing the recommendations of Metro Bus Forward was an iterative and collaborative process that was completed during early 2024. After narrowing the types and the scale of the recommendations Metro Bus could implement with our available resources, a draft set of recommendations were presented to the community for feedback. An online software called ArcGIS StoryMap was used to step through the tradeoffs of the design of the future system and to survey people on their thoughts about the recommendations. This feedback let us refine the plan before taking the plan to the Metro Board of Commissioners for approval in Fall 2024.

PHASE ONE IDENTIFY COMMUNITY AND RIDER PREFERENCES

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Collected staff and operator feedback on Metro Bus service
- ✓ Interviewed stakeholders to hear their thoughts on Metro Bus service
- ✓ Established and met with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- ✓ Surveyed **167 community members** on their transit preferences
- ✓ Surveyed **495 riders onboard transit**
- ✓ With Metro Bus staff, attended **5 community events or pop-ups**, interacting with around **200 people** to introduce the project, advertise the survey and collect feedback

The online community survey was available in English, Somali and Spanish.

The onboard passenger survey questionnaire was available in English and Spanish. A separate Somali survey was available upon request.

METRO BUS FORWARD

Metro Bus Forward Community Survey

Welcome to the Metro Bus Forward Community Survey!
Ku Soo Dhawoow Ra'yi ururinta Bulshada ee Metro Bus Forward!
¡Bienvenidos a la Encuesta Comunitaria de Metro Bus Forward!

OK

* Please select a language:
Fadlan dooro luqad!
Por favor, seleccione un idioma

☐ English
☐ Somali
☐ Español

METRO BUS FORWARD
Onboard Passenger Survey
Encuesta A Bordo Para Pasajeros

We want to hear from you about how you use Metro Bus services!

1. How satisfied are you with Metro Bus service? (Rate from 1 to 5)

2. What is your home zip code?

3. How often do you ride Metro Bus service?

4. Willing to transfer between routes to complete your trip?

5. What is the purpose of your trip today?

6. Could you have made this trip if this service were not available?

7. Do the current service hours of operation meet your transportation needs?

8. Are there destinations or locations you'd like to travel to but there is no service?

9. Which type of fare do you qualify for?

10. How did you pay for THIS trip?

11. Are you aware of our Free Travel Training program?

12. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of fixed-route Metro Bus Service. (Check all that apply)

13. Do you have a disability that limits your mobility?

14. What is your age?

15. How many people live in your household, including yourself?

16. Do you have access to a vehicle? (Check one)

17. What is the combined annual income for your household?

18. What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

19. What is your gender identity?

20. Do you have any other feedback about how Metro Bus could improve its services?

Thank you for your participation, your responses will be kept confidential.

PHASE TWO

DEVELOPING SERVICE PLANNING CONCEPTS

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Facilitated a **Planning Game Workshop** with around **40 stakeholders** to develop service planning concepts and to talk about the findings from the State of the System report and surveys
- ✓ Met with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- ✓ Provided the Metro Bus Board of Commissioners with an update on the project's progress
- ✓ Gathered initial feedback from Metro Bus staff and drivers on Draft Service Recommendations



PHASE THREE

CONFIRMATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Developed an interactive ArcGIS Story Map in English, Spanish and Somali to showcase the Draft Recommendations online
- ✓ Surveyed **160 community members** on the Draft Service Recommendations
- ✓ Attended **8 community events or pop-ups**, interacting with approximately **250 people** to get feedback on the Draft Service Recommendations
- ✓ Met with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- ✓ Presented the final Metro Bus Forward Plan to the Metro Bus Board of Commissioners for approval

METRO BUS FORWARD Metro Bus Forward Draft Service Recommendations

← Draft Service Recommendations Frequency

Frequency

Our transit recommendations **focus on frequency**. Route 1, Route 2, Route 3, Route 33, and Route 21 (between downtown St. Cloud and downtown Sauk Rapids) would come every 30 minutes. This means riders will experience shorter wait times for those routes.

Rte	Cycle Time	Wkday Freq (M-F)	Wkend Freq (Sat/Sun)	Peak Buses	Notes
1	60	30	30/60	2	
2	60	30	60	2	Interlined w/ Route 5
3	30	30	30	1	
4	30	60	60	0.5	Interlined with Route 22
5	60	60	60	1	Interlined w/ Route 2
6	60	60	60	1	North segment replaced by Route 22
8	60	60	60	1	
9	-	-	-	-	Replaced by Route 5
10	60	60	60	1	Interlined w/ Route 25
11	-	-	-	-	Replaced by Route 5
12	60	120	120	0.5	Interlined with Route 14
14	60	120	120	0.5	Interlined with Route 12
21	60	60	60	1	Alternating Clockwise and Counterclockwise
22	30	60	60	0.5	Interlined with Route 4

Metro Bus Forward Draft Service Recommendations Feedback

1. What do you think about the draft service recommendations?

- ☐ I think these are good changes
- ☐ I'm not sure but I think this might be good
- ☐ I'm not sure but I think this might be bad
- ☐ I don't think you should make these changes

NEXT

Versión en español

Nooca Soomaali



APPENDICES

Appendix A: State of the System

Appendix B: Route Profiles

Appendix C: Engagement