

NetworkNOW

Framework

MARCH 2025



Metro Transit

SRF

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Introduction

Network Now

Network Now is a vision for transit service that best meets the needs of our region through 2027. This framework guides improvements to grow ridership, enhance mobility, and meet travel needs.

The framework outlined in this report represents the region's top priorities for transit as captured in over 8,000 comments over multiple years, coupled with policy guidance, and technical evaluation. Changes made to this report from the draft concept were guided by community feedback.

Network Now responds to the priorities outlined in Forward, Metro Transit's strategic plan, by delivering on service goals.

When fully implemented the Network Now framework will:

- Expand transit service by more than 40% to help attract more riders.
- Improve access by providing new bus routes and Metro micro service.
- Modify commuter and express service to meet today's travel patterns.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging transit use.

The framework will also resolve questions related to suspended service and facilities, as shown in Figure1.

Figure 1. What Network Now does

What Network Now does:	
Improves:	Resolves:
• New or redesigned bus routes • Frequent service at more times of day • New METRO light rail and BRT lines • Additional Metro micro service areas	• Status of suspended bus routes • Facility closure needs

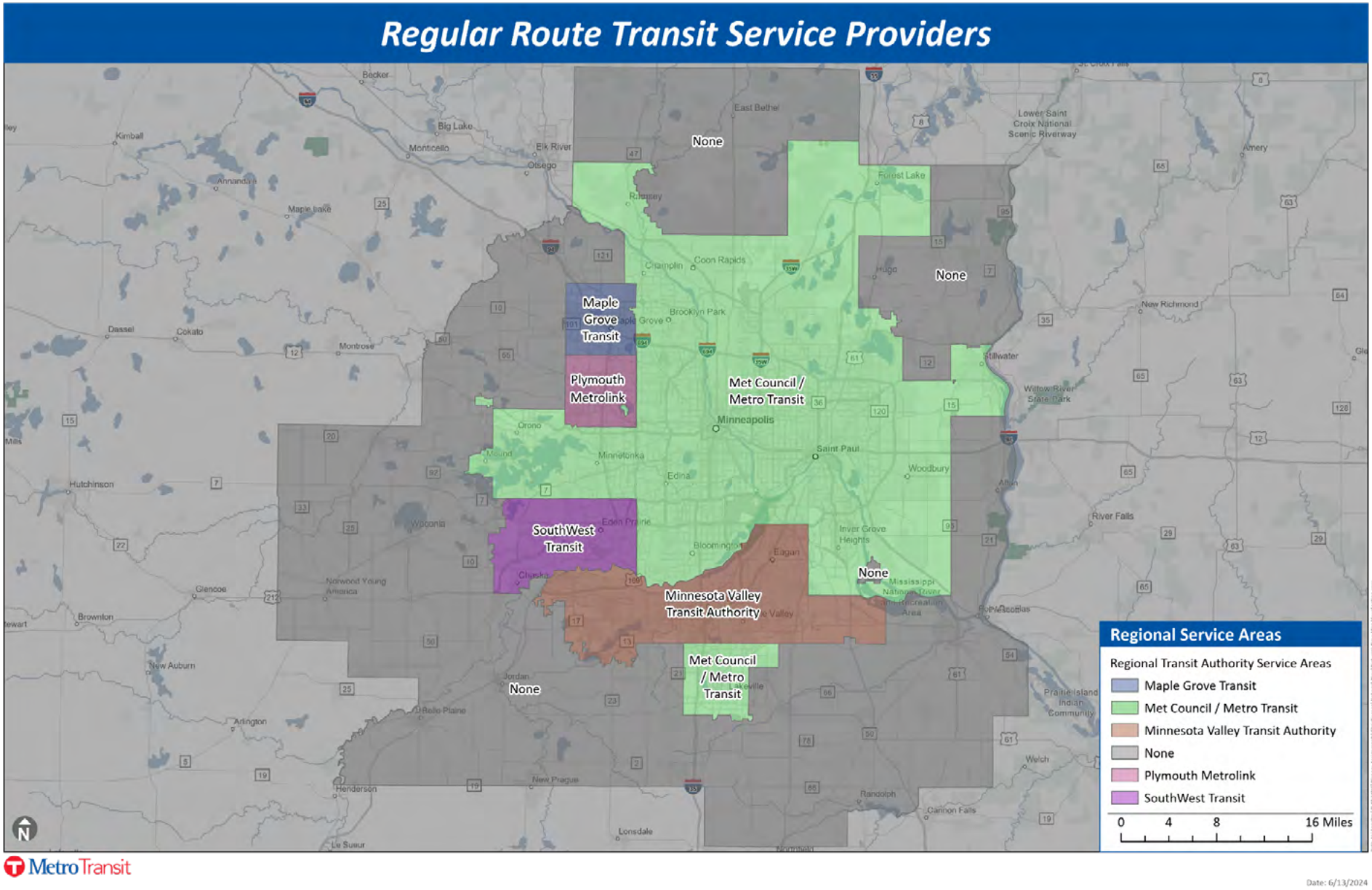
Many service investments have been made since this project began that respond to the Network Now principles and are included in the framework. Metro Transit will continue to implement improvements to the transit system as personnel and fleet resources allow, and ridership markets develop. In creating Network Now, Metro Transit collaborated across the agency to consider all the support needed to deliver this framework. This included looking at hiring trends, bus fleet expansion, and other support staff needs such as police and mechanics. We also considered the METRO projects in development through 2027 to ensure this framework prepared us for upcoming opening days.

As we continue to implement improvements, each investment helps make our transit more attractive and our region more accessible, while offering our community a greener way of travelling. As we make these changes we will keep our customers in mind, ensuring buses arrive on time, connections between routes are considered, and new METRO service is supported.

Network Now scope

Network Now describes changes to the Metro Transit service network within the Metropolitan Council service area. The framework includes routes operated directly by Metro Transit, as well as routes operated by private providers under contract with the Metropolitan Council. The framework does not include the service operated by the region's other suburban transit agencies: Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA), Maple Grove Transit, Plymouth Metrolink, or SouthWest Transit. Figure 2 shows Metro Transit's service area.

Figure 2. Metro Transit's service area



Project background

Metro Transit has considered and integrated community feedback throughout the Network Now planning process to develop a framework that is driven by values, informed by data, and consistent with regional and local priorities.

In 2023, Metro Transit engaged customers, community members, cities and counties from across the Twin Cities region on their values and priorities for transit. While collecting this feedback, Metro Transit also reviewed regional policy guidance and assessed recent network performance to understand how existing services have been meeting customers' needs. This stakeholder input informed the development of a decision-making framework, including the five Network Now guiding principles.

Network Now principles

These principles are:

Adapt service to changes in transit markets and travel patterns.
Recognizing changes to travel patterns over the past several years, this framework adds Metro micro service and focuses on multi-purpose trips such as all-day express service into an updated network.

Prepare for new METRO and high frequency routes.
From now to 2027 Metro Transit will open new bus rapid transit lines and one light rail extension. Transitway investments involve substantial resources for operations, including bus operators, supervisors, and maintenance employees.

Maintain the reliability of scheduled service consistently over time.
Metro Transit has received consistent feedback on the importance of reliability for customer experience. Metro Transit is making investments to reduce delays, improve bus speeds, and minimize unscheduled trip cancellations.

Build on success to grow ridership by adding service where people use transit the most.
Focusing resources on existing markets while planning incrementally for growth in emerging markets allows us to grow ridership.

Provide access to opportunities and services with a focus on advancing equity and reducing regional disparities.
In addition to focusing resources where ridership is already highest, Metro Transit will allocate resources to routes that may provide lifeline access to people and locations with few transportation options.

These principles as well as the Network Now decision-making framework are summarized in the Establishing the Foundation report released in fall 2023. The decision-making framework is informed by regional policy guidance, recent transit system performance, and customer feedback.

From late 2023 to mid 2024, Metro Transit conducted an agency-wide process to develop, evaluate, and prioritize transit service improvements based on the Network Now principles. These efforts culminated in the draft concept plan, which was available for more than 60 days of public comment, from Sept. 12, 2024 to Nov. 18, 2024.

Community feedback on draft Network Now draft concept plan

Metro Transit received nearly 1,600 comments during the Network Now Draft concept plan public feedback period. Over 420 hours were spent onboard buses, trains and at transit centers directly where staff talked to or handed material to over 4,000 customers.

Metro Transit held an official Public Hearing on Tuesday, October 29, from 5 – 7 p.m. Five additional in-person community meetings were held around the metro area. All locations were accessible by transit or held virtually. Staff also attended 75 community events, presented at standing meetings and connected with partner municipalities and counties.

What we heard

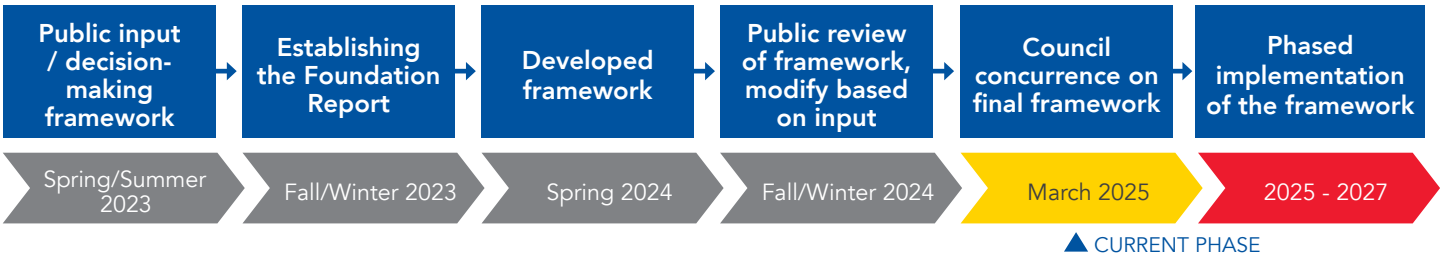
We heard that people overall like the direction of the plan. In particular, people we heard from indicated support for:

- Investments in the METRO network, speed and reliability initiatives, and in demonstrated markets where ridership can grow.
- Emphasis on all-day service meeting a variety of needs.
- Simplify routes.
- Desire for express service that operates for more of the day, giving people better options.

Of the items requested the main themes emerged:

- More frequency, late night service, and suburban to suburban connections.
- Additional microtransit services.

For more details on engagement efforts and what we heard, reference appendix B.

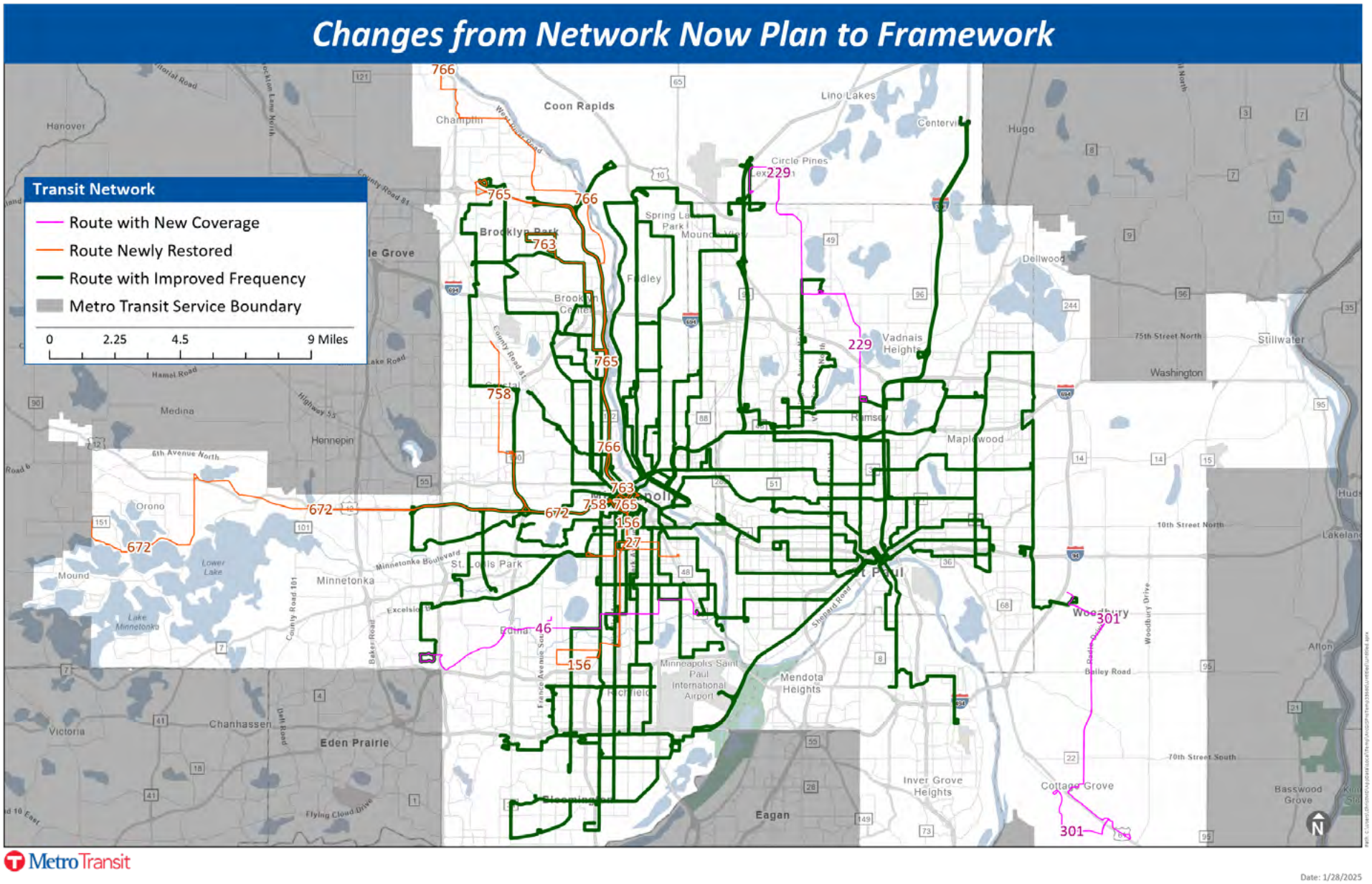


With feedback from the public considered, along with additional technical analysis, Metro Transit will bring the Network Now framework to the Metropolitan Council. Following the Council action, suspended routes will be officially discontinued, and Metro Transit will continue to focus on improvements.

Changes made to Network Now concept plan

After careful review of the feedback received during the fall 2024 public comment period, Metro Transit has modified some of the changes and improvements presented in the initial plan. The feedback helped us understand which proposals stakeholders felt needed to be revisited and highlighted those proposals that were well-received. As a result of the feedback, we are recommending additional improvements and changes to routes shown in Figure 3; these changes are also noted in Appendix A for each individual route.

Figure 3. Changes from Network Now Plan to Framework



Changes from the concept plan include:

- Frequency improvements on 48 routes.
- Restoration of seven routes.
- Significantly new coverage on three routes.

These modifications support the Network Now guiding principles and respond to the public comment period feedback in a variety of ways, including:

- Additional METRO lines and frequency improvements are ways to make investments in existing markets that already demonstrate strong ridership.
- More consistent mid-day service on the Key Express Network routes provides additional opportunities for travel outside the rush hour between downtown Minneapolis and some suburban areas.
- The frequency changes provide more service and improve transfer connections.
- Span of service improvements will benefit customers wanting to travel in the early morning and late-night hours.
- Modified route restructurings will make suburb-to-suburb trips easier.

All the feedback received was insightful but not every suggested improvement or change can be accommodated. Metro Transit determined which feedback to incorporate into the revised Network Now framework based on how often a comment was made, if proposed changes aligned with Network Now guiding principles, and whether proposed changes fit the level and type of service appropriate for the transit market area. The additional workforce, fleet and facilities needed to implement the additional projects needs to be within the resources expected to be available through 2027 based on current trends.

The following list represents some of the specific ways public feedback has been incorporated into the revised framework:

Invest in METRO network

- Improve G Line frequency from every 15 minutes to every 10 minutes.
- Add Gold Line Extension between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis.

Frequency changes

- Most suburban local routes improved to every 30 minutes or better
- More hours of **high frequency** service on Routes 2, 4, 10, 18, 54, 74
- Saturday and/or Sunday frequency improvements
    - Improved to every 10-15 minutes on Routes 11, 54, 63, 64, 74, 515
    - Improved to every 20-30 minutes on Routes 4, 22, 61, 70, 219
    - New weekend service every 31-60 minutes on Routes 25, 75, 223, 534, 852
- Midday service on Key Express Network routes will operate every 60 minutes in both directions.
- Better frequency at **night**, generally increasing from every 60 minutes to periods of 30-minute service
    - Every day of the week on Routes 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 22, 46, 64, 65, 68, 539, 724
    - Weekday evening improvement on Routes 3, 61, 71
    - Saturday evening improvement on Routes 71, 722
    - Sunday evening improvement on Route 58

Service hour improvements

- Several routes will start earlier morning/end later evening (about one hour)
    - Weekdays on Routes 80, 83, 219
    - Saturdays on Routes 61, 80, 83
    - Sundays on Routes 80, 83, 539, 546
- Late-night routes operating one hour later on routes 10, 18, C and D Lines

Commuter express routes

- Six routes that were proposed to be discontinued will be restored (Routes 156, 672, 758, 763, 765, 766).
- Three Park & Ride facilities initially planned to close will remain open (Hwy. 100 & Duluth St., Richardson Park, Wayzata Blvd. & Barry Ave.)
- Additional rush-hour service added on five routes (Routes 264, 275, 763, 764, 824).
- Route 146 will not be restored. Alternative service is available on Route 46 and Orange Line.
- Key Express Network modifications
    - Service will improve to every 60 minutes in both directions in the midday to provide reliable all-day service on five routes (Routes 250, 270, 673, 768, 850).
    - Routes 94 and 355 will no longer be part of the network because the new Gold Line extension will provide fast frequent service all day in these corridors.

Service restructurings

- Local service in the B Line corridor has been modified.
    - Instead of Route 21, service will be provided by restoring Route 27 between Uptown and Lake St. & Hiawatha Ave. via 26th and 28th streets every hour on all days.
    - Instead of new Route 60, Route 70 will be extended west of downtown St. Paul to provide a direct local trip between Selby Ave. neighborhoods and Midway shopping and service destinations north of I-94.
    - Route 83 will remain on Lexington Ave. between Hamline and University avenues every 30 minutes.
- When METRO Green Line Extension opens, Route 6 will extend to Lake St. & France Ave. to connect with B Line and Green Line extension at Beltline Station.
- No trips on Route 7 will serve Upper Harbor Terminal instead of Plymouth Ave. and Wirth Park.
- New Route 8 will connect areas of Robbinsdale, Golden Valley and Crystal, currently served by Route 14. This new route will connect Penn and Glenwood avenues in north Minneapolis with the Bassett Creek Valley station on the Green Line extension, Dunwoody and Hennepin avenues to downtown Minneapolis.
- Routes 225 and 229 will be extended north to provide all-day service in more of Shoreview, Lexington and southeast Blaine.
- In Cottage Grove Route 301 will be extended south of Highway 61 instead of Jamaica Ave.
- Routes 701, 702 and 703 will not be implemented. Routes 763 and 766 will continue to provide a direct connection with downtown Minneapolis, so customers in Brooklyn Park, Champlin and Brooklyn Center do not have to transfer to express routes at Park & Rides.
- Service on Routes 805 and 852 in western Anoka County will be modified. Route 852 service north of Northtown will be replaced by Route 805 and new Route 802. Route 805 will travel north of downtown Anoka and serve Anoka Tech. Route 852 will remain on East River Road & Marshall St. NE south of I-694 to serve Fridley and northeast Minneapolis.
- Several local routes in Bloomington are being restructured to improve frequency and on-time performance. Local routes will be realigned to connect customers to important destinations like Mall of America, Normandale Community College, 98th St. Station, Valley West Shopping Center, and Normandale Village Shopping Center in a quicker and more direct way, reducing the number of transfers required.

METRO G Line and local service adjustments

G Line is scheduled to open in two phases: Phase 1 (north of downtown St. Paul) in 2027 and Phase 2 (south of downtown St. Paul) in 2028 in conjunction with the reconstruction of Rice St. in 2027 and Robert St. in 2028. While G Line Phase 2 is planned to open beyond the 2027 framework in 2028, it is referenced in the framework with associated route restructuring to illustrate the full impact of the changes associated with the new transitway, and improvements in West St. Paul and surrounding communities.

All changes highlighted below are also included on all maps and in resource estimates throughout the framework report, as well as in Appendix A.

When Phase 1 opens, Route 62 will be discontinued north of downtown. New Route 229 will replace Route 62 north of Little Canada Transit Center and Shoreview Community Center via Rice St., Hodgson Rd., Tanglewood Dr. and Victoria St.

When Phase 2 opens, there will be additional changes on some local routes south of downtown St. Paul and in northern Dakota County:

- Route 62 south of downtown will be replaced by Route 68.
- Route 68 will be modified west of Robert St.
    - It will serve Smith Ave. between Winifred St. and Wentworth Ave.
    - The current Route 68 alignment east of Robert St. will continue to serve West St. Paul, South St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights.
    - Service will be reduced to every 30 minutes. Customers will have the option of transferring at Robert St. to the G Line for a more direct trip to downtown St. Paul.
- Route 75 will be modified to serve east of Robert St.
    - It will travel between Marie Ave. and 5th Ave. & South St. to supplement Route 68.
    - The Route 75F service south of Mendota Rd. to Lake Cove Village and Salem Green Apts. in Inver Grove Heights will be replaced by a new Metro micro zone. This new microtransit service is designed to connect with the G Line at the Northern Dakota County Service Center Station and will operate a wide span of on-demand service on all days. This is an improvement for current Route 75 customer in Inver Grove Heights.
    - Route 75 will operate every 30 minutes, which, when combined with Route 68 and G Line, will maintain service every 15 minutes between 5th Ave. & South St. and downtown St. Paul via Robert St.
    - Please note these Route 75 changes vary from what is outlined in the G Line Final Plan report.

Recent ridership and service changes

During the Network Now planning process, Metro Transit has continued to implement service changes that are consistent with performance trends and compatible with the Network Now principles. As Metro Transit's workforce situation has improved, service improvements have been implemented to aid the system's recovery from pandemic-era service levels.

The following section documents changes between March 2023, where Establishing the Foundation report left off, and March 2025, when the revised framework is be presented to the Metropolitan Council. These changes form the baseline for the Network Now framework.

Service changes in 2023

Metro Transit made modest service improvements in 2023 as it began to successfully recruit and hire more bus operators, as shown in Table 1. Key improvements included ensuring that all-day bus routes operate at least every 60 minutes, as well as improving service on high-ridership BRT and local bus routes.

Table 1. Service changes in 2023

Implementation	Description of changes
Summer 2023	• Improved service frequency on 13 local bus routes. • Orange Line improved from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes during weekday midday hours. • Added more trips to some Commuter Express routes. • Restored some branches on suburban local bus routes.
Fall 2023	• Implemented the Route 17 Better Bus Route project, which improved speed, reliability, and service frequency in northeast Minneapolis and along Minnetonka Blvd. • Improved service frequency on 17 routes, including the A Line, which improved to 10-minute service. • Minor service changes to improve weekday frequency and schedule reliability on routes still affected by construction.
Winter 2023	• Upgraded Route 724 from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes. • Extended service on Route 21 along Lake St. in preparation for Uptown construction and the opening of the B Line in 2025. • Express route improvements in the east metro were made in advance of the opening of the Gold Line in 2025.

Service changes in 2024

As workforce continued to grow, Metro Transit was able to implement additional service changes in 2024, as shown in Table 2. Key improvements include improving frequency on the Orange, Green and Blue Lines, as well as adding trips on six Commuter Express routes and restoration of suspended service on four routes.

Table 2. Service changes in 2024

Implementation	Description of changes
Spring 2024	• Resumed east-west service through the intersection of 38th St. & Chicago Ave. • Extended a new route to Rosedale Transit Center.
Summer 2024	• Restored midday service in Mounds View on Route 25. • Restored Saturday service on Route 805 in the north metro. • Increased frequency on Route 32 from every 30 minutes to every 20 minutes.
Fall 2024	• Blue Line and Green Line improved from every 15 minutes to every 12 minutes. • Sunday service on the Orange Line improved from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes. • Additional trips were added on six express routes.
Winter 2024	• Weekday rush-hour service on the Orange Line improved from every 15 minutes to every 10 minutes, and the span of service grew to 4:30 a.m.-12:00 a.m. daily. • All trips on Route 17 were extended to serve the Blake Road Station and service improved from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays in Hopkins and St. Louis Park. • Service on Route 54 between downtown St. Paul and the Mall of America improved from every 15 minutes to every 10 minutes on weekdays between 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. • Service was restored on Route 223 on weekdays and Route 46 on weekends.

Service changes in early 2025

New Metro micro zones in the Woodbury and Roseville areas opened in January. The Gold Line will open in March and service changes will again be needed to accommodate construction along I-94, Hennepin Ave. S. and Robert St. in downtown St. Paul.

Please note that there are some changes included in the Network Now framework that were implemented in late 2024 and early 2025 as workforce has continued to grow. These changes were included in the initial concept plan released in Fall 2024, so they are also included in the framework as a baseline. Specific route improvements already implemented are called out in the individual route profiles in Appendix A. They include additional rush- hour service on Orange Line, opening Gold Line and the Woodbury and Roseville area Metro micro zones, restoring service on Routes 223 on weekdays and 46 on weekends, new Route 9 alignment on 7th St. in downtown Minneapolis and frequency improvements on Routes 4, 17 and 54.

Ridership and operating trends

Since early 2023, Metro Transit has increased service, hiring, and ridership across all transit services. From March 2023 to March 2025, Metro Transit increased service by more than 15%, aided by the addition of nearly 200 bus operators. By the end of 2024, Metro Transit operated 80% of trips scheduled prior to the pandemic. Local bus routes and BRT lines were operating at 90% of 2019 service levels and light rail was at 76% of 2019 service levels.

Customers have responded positively to these service improvements. Ridership increased 16% between 2022 and 2023 and an additional 5.6% in 2024. The largest ridership increases have occurred on BRT, which grew by 13.9% in 2024 compared to 2023.

Revised Network Now framework

This section represents the entirety of the Network Now framework, incorporating the changes noted in the previous section. Changes initially proposed in fall of 2024 that have not been modified are also included. Improvements implemented in summer 2023 through early 2025 noted in the "Recent ridership and service changes" section are also still included.

The Network Now framework calls for frequency and/or span improvements on most local routes, while express bus routes will be consolidated to offer more frequent service in major travel corridors. The METRO network will see significant service expansion as new light rail and bus rapid transit projects are implemented. Coverage will be supplemented by the expansion of Metro micro, the agency's microtransit service, to eight new zones within the Metro Transit service area. Figure 4 and 5 summarize the service and frequency changes that will be implemented as part of the Network Now framework. More detail on each of these changes can be found in subsequent sections and the appendices.

Figure 4. Network Now framework – summary of service changes



Figure 5. Network Now framework - summary of weekday midday service levels



METRO regional transitways

The METRO network (Figure 6), which includes arterial bus rapid transit, highway bus rapid transit, and light rail transitways, represents a significant portion of Metro Transit's planned investment in regional transit service. The Network Now framework includes frequency and span improvements on existing transitways, as well as the implementation of four new bus rapid transit lines and extension of one light rail corridor.

The changes listed below will all occur by the end of 2027 except for Phase 2 of the G Line, which is planned for 2028. Other transitways are planned beyond 2027, including the implementation of the F Line, H Line, Purple Line, and Blue Line Extension. Specific supporting service decisions have yet to be finalized for these lines, but decisions made as part of Network Now for local and regional service will affect their planning and development.

Arterial bus rapid transit service

- A, C, and D Lines: Existing arterial BRT lines will receive 10-minute service during more times of day, including from morning rush hour into the early evening on weekdays.
- B Line: B Line is planned to open in June 2025. It will provide 10-minute weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service between Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood and downtown St. Paul via Lake St., Marshall Ave., and Selby Ave. The existing Route 21 will be discontinued. Route 27 will provide supporting service every 60 minutes between Uptown Transit Station and Lake St. & Minnehaha Ave. in Minneapolis along Lake St. and portions of 26th St., 28th St., Cedar Ave., and Nicollet Ave. An extension of Route 70 will also provide supporting service, operating every 30 minutes from the Midway shopping district in St. Paul along Selby Ave. into downtown St. Paul and along the existing Route 70 to Sun Ray Transit Center.
- E Line: E Line is planned to open in December 2025, providing service between University of Minnesota and Southdale Transit Center via University Ave. & 4th St., Hennepin Ave., and France Ave. in Minneapolis and Edina. Service will operate every 10 minutes on weekdays and every 12 minutes service on weekends. The existing Route 6 will continue to operate every 30 minutes as supporting service south of Southdale Transit Center and along Xerxes Ave. in Minneapolis. Route 6 will end at the Uptown Transit Center, where connections can be made to the B and E Lines. When Green Line Extension opens in 2027, Route 6 will have its northern endpoint at Lake St. & France Ave., connecting with B Line. Route 6 will then travel via Xerxes Ave., 39th St., Monterey Dr., Beltline Blvd., and Lake St.
- G Line: G Line will provide 10-minute weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service between Little Canada and Dakota County Northern Service Center along the Rice Street and Robert Street corridors. G Line will open in two phases. G Line Phase 1 is planned to open in 2027 in coordination with Ramsey County's reconstruction along Rice Street and will provide service between Little Canada and downtown St. Paul. Phase 1 of the project will substantially replace Route 62 along Rice Street, and new Route 229 will provide a connection from the G Line to Blaine. G Line Phase 2 will include the southern portion of the corridor from Robert St. & Fillmore Ave. to the Dakota County Northern Service Center in West St. Paul. These stations are planned to be constructed by the end of 2028. Routes 62, 68, and 75 south of downtown St. Paul will be restructured to provide supporting service when G Line Phase 2 opens in 2028.

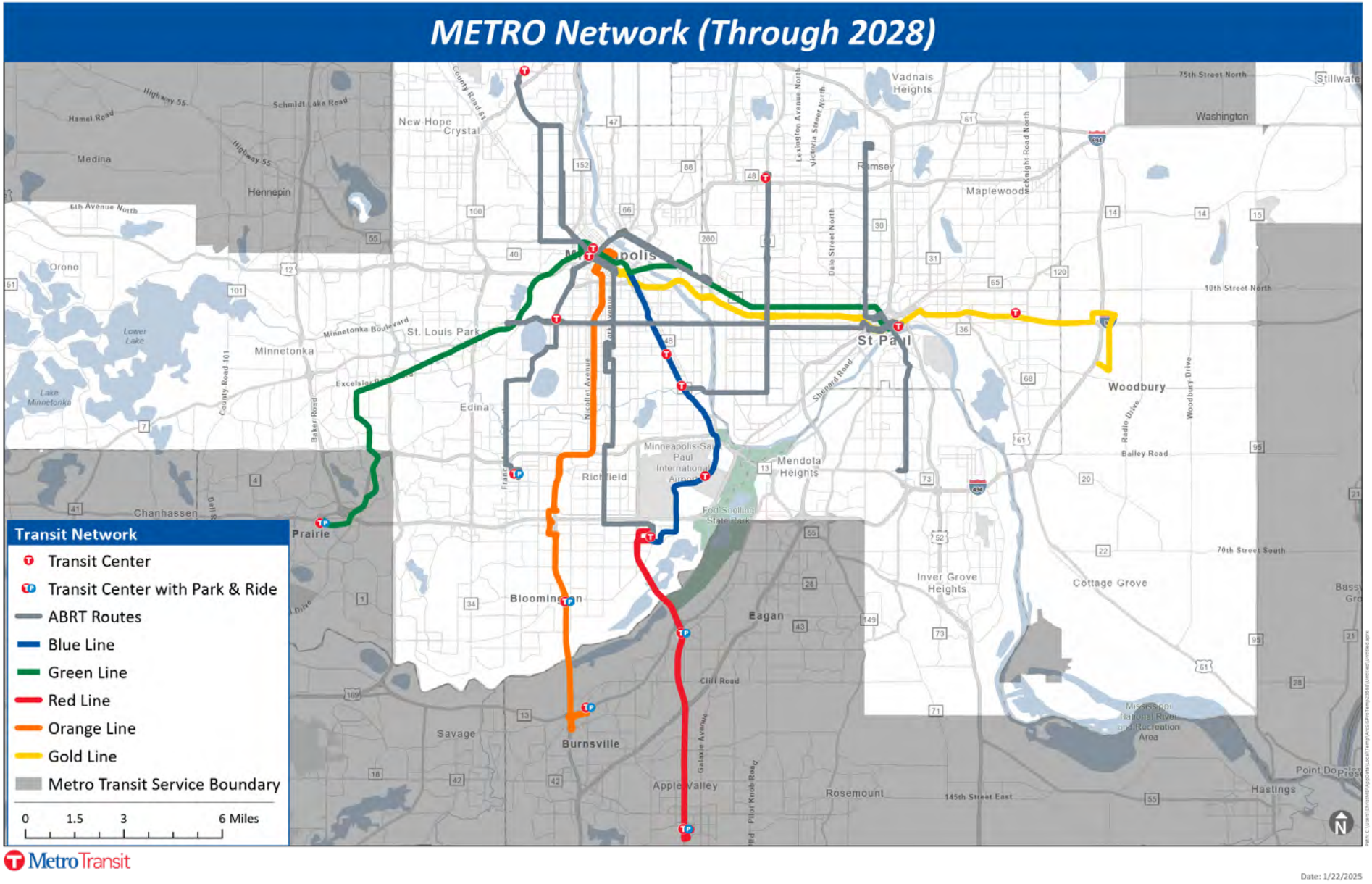
Highway and dedicated guideway bus rapid transit service

- Gold Line: Gold Line is planned to open in March 2025. It will provide 10-minute weekday and 15-minute weekend service between Woodbury and downtown St. Paul. Gold Line will connect with a new microtransit zone at four suburban stations. The opening of Gold Line Extension is scheduled for 2027. This project will extend highway BRT service from downtown St. Paul to downtown Minneapolis, replacing the existing Route 94.
- Orange Line: This existing highway BRT line will receive frequency improvements to every 10 minutes during rush hour and every 15 minutes on weekends. A new microtransit zone will provide connections at I-35W & 98th St. Station.
- Red Line: No changes are planned on this existing highway BRT line as part of Network Now.

Light rail service

- Green Line Extension: The opening of the Green Line Extension is scheduled for 2027. This project will extend light rail service from Target Field to Eden Prairie. The project's implementation plan will include changes to supporting bus routes as described in the Local Bus Service section. Fixed-bus route changes associated with the Green Line Extension will be implemented with the start of rail service. Changes include improved access to destinations for Route 9 customers on Louisiana Ave., as well as improved Sunday service. On Route 17, 15-minute service has been extended west of Uptown to the new Blake Rd. Station. New Route 38 will cover most of the existing Route 612 alignment in Hopkins and Minnetonka, while Route 615 will have Sunday service added and will be rerouted to serve the Beltline Station. Route 6 will also be rerouted to connect with the West Lake Station. A new microtransit zone will provide connections at light rail stations in Minnetonka.
- Frequency and span improvements on Blue and Green Lines: The Blue and Green Lines currently operate every 15 minutes from 5 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., and every 30 minutes from 10:30 p.m. to midnight. Under Network Now, light rail service will improve to 10-minute frequency during the rush hour, midday, and early evening. Service will operate every 15 minutes during the evening and night periods, and every 30 minutes during late-night hours. As with fixed-route service, there are changes to rail service that are expected to take place after 2027, namely, the METRO Blue Line Extension. Supporting bus service changes for the rail network expansion are in development and will be informed by bus service decisions included in this report.

Figure 6. METRO Network



Metro micro service

Metro micro is the Metropolitan Council's shared ride, curb-to-curb microtransit service allowing customers to be picked up and dropped off at any location within a designated service area. Customers can request a trip by phone or using a smartphone app, like the experience of using private transportation services like Uber and Lyft. Trips are shared, which means that during any given ride, other individuals requesting service to or from nearby locations may also be picked up or dropped off. Metro micro uses ADA-accessible mini-buses to accommodate small groups. The program initially began as a 24-month pilot within a single north Minneapolis zone, and the program was implemented permanently in October 2024. Expansion zones are planned to be piloted as part of a phased process, with a goal of up to two new zones implemented each year through 2027. New pilot zones in the Roseville and Woodbury areas were launched in January 2025.

Integration with fixed route network

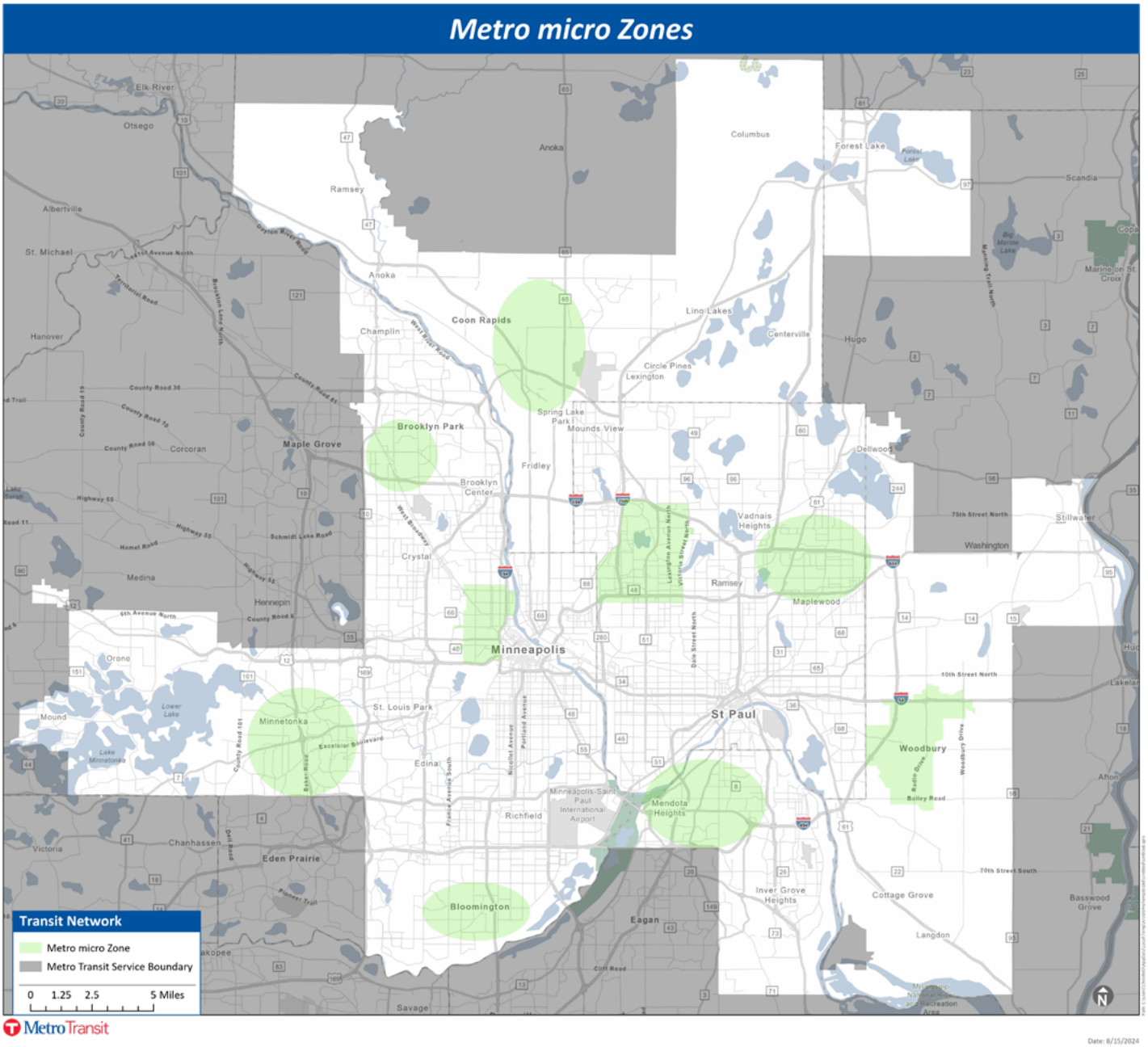
Eight pilot project areas have been identified to serve different travel markets than the current North Minneapolis project. These projects will serve lower density areas that are more difficult to serve with regular bus route service, providing access to the transit network at transit centers or transit stations, as well as access throughout the project area. Transfers between Metro micro and local buses are free and valid for 2 1/2 hours from the time of fare activation. The overall goal is to connect riders into our METRO network. The initial Metro micro zone in north Minneapolis includes multiple transfer points to the C and D Lines, as well as to several local bus routes.

Expansion plan and prioritization

Metro Transit plans to implement up to two new zones annually through the end of 2027. Each of these zones is designed to be served by five vehicles given the anticipated demand. Figure 7 shows the full extent of the future Metro micro network. The first two new zones were implemented in January 2025 in the Roseville and Woodbury areas anchored at Rosedale Transit Center and Queens Dr. Station on Gold Line respectively. Metro Transit will develop zone boundaries based on engagement with stakeholder cities and counties.

Each of the planned Metro micro zones will be developed with input from local government partners and customers, and evaluated on various metrics to ensure appropriate prioritization. These include coordination with implementation of transitways, access to transit routes within the zone and transit center connections, auto ownership statistics, demographic and land use attributes, employment opportunities and affordable housing sites, as well as connectivity with the broader transit network. Metro Transit is also developing measures for success for each zone to continue monitoring progress as the Metro micro system grows. Each zone shown on the map is subject to change, though it does represent the general area where Metro Transit plans to invest in microtransit service.

Figure 7. Metro micro zones



Local and express bus service

The Network Now framework includes service changes for every type of bus service operated by Metro Transit. The planned changes will address the status of routes that are currently suspended, increase service on local bus routes, and consolidate commuter-oriented bus routes into a new Key Express Network, which will provide frequent, reliable service to a limited number of Park & Ride locations in major freeway corridors. These changes are described in the following sections, first by service category and then by geographic subregion.

Suspended service

Metro Transit suspended service on 60 bus routes and segments of 18 other routes starting in March 2020. The Network Now framework includes restoration of a limited number of bus routes and discontinuation of others. Route restoration is considered based on performance and public input, as well as service design and the presence of alternatives. Guidelines for restoration include the following:

- Prioritizing service to large Park & Ride facilities with sufficient capacity for service expansion. Many Park & Ride customers have the flexibility to drive to a different facility in the corridor to access a better level of service.
- Reviewing the performance of the route in 2019 and expected performance today given changes in travel patterns and transit demand.
- Prioritizing service on routes where there are no reasonable alternatives for customers. For Network Now, an alternative is defined as a trip that requires no more than one transfer and where the new travel time does not exceed the original trip length by more than 50%. For a commuter express customer an alternative may require driving to a different Park & Ride in the same highway corridor.

Many routes and branches are planned for discontinuation are in areas where alternatives are available, as defined above. Conversely, bus routes slated for discontinuation are primarily those with lower ridership, inefficient travel times, or where higher-frequency alternatives are available. A public hearing was held on Tuesday, October 29, 2024 for all discontinued service.

Routes 501 and 761 are the only routes currently operating that will be discontinued. Five additional routes (Routes 39, 133, 353, 535, and 597) have already had official public hearings to discontinue or replace service as part of earlier service changes. A full list of routes that are planned for discontinuation can be found in Figure 8, with additional details about discontinued segments in Table 3 and Table 4.

Figure 8. Discontinued service

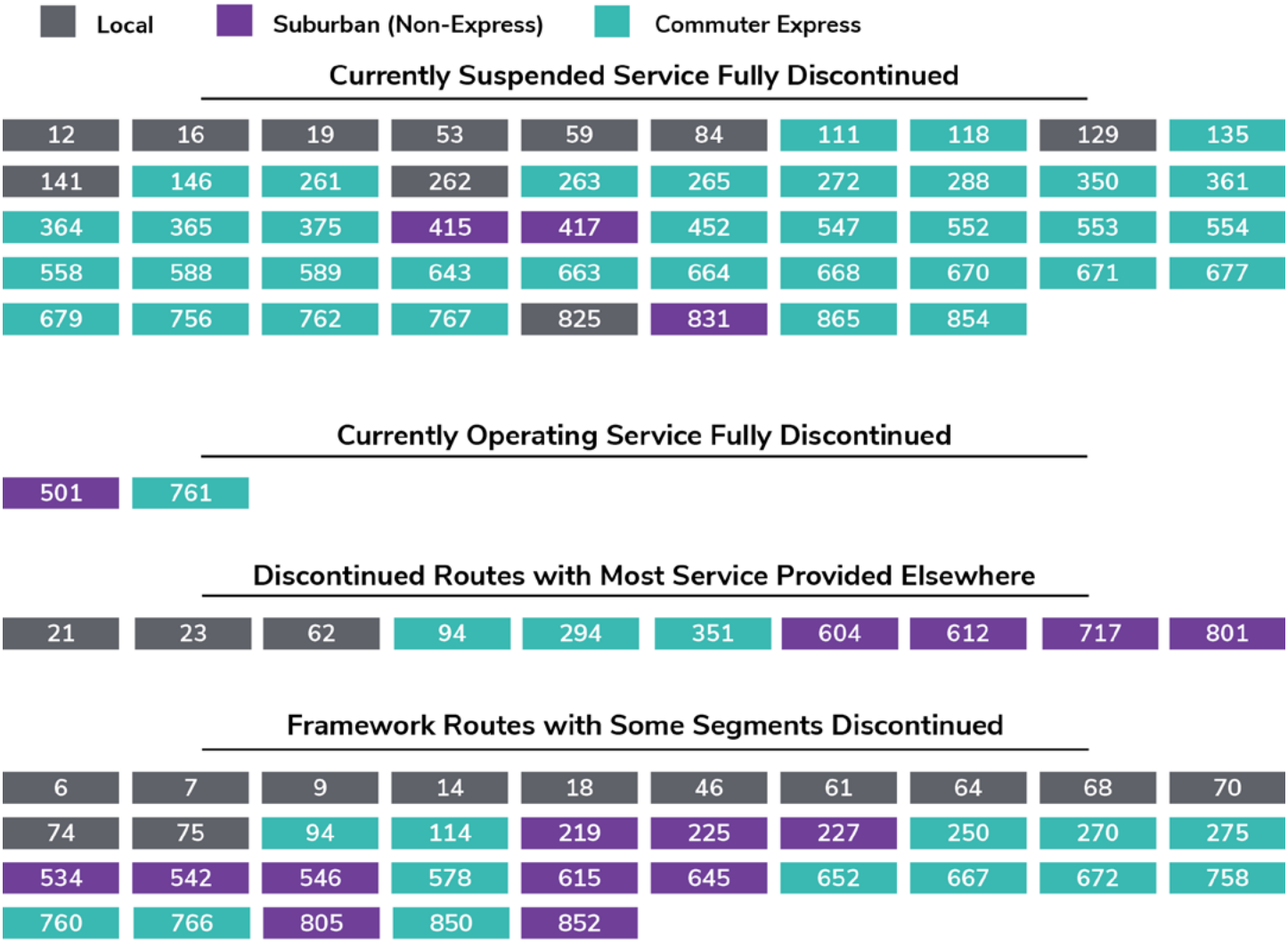


Table 3. Network Now framework discontinued routes with most service restructured

Route	Discontinued Segment
21	Lake St. (Minnehaha Ave. to Mississippi River), Marshall Ave. (Mississippi River to Snelling Ave.), Selby (Snelling Ave. to Hamline Ave.)
23	36th St. (Hennepin Ave. to Bryant Ave.)
62	W. Demont Ave. (Rice St. to Canabury Dr), Canabury Dr. (Demont Ave. to Co Rd B2), Co Rd B2 (Canabury Dr. to Rice St.); Hodgson Rd. (Highway 96 to Tanglewood Dr.), Tanglewood Dr. (Hodgson Rd. to Victoria St.), Victoria St. (Tanglewood Dr. to ShorevieW. Community Center driveway)
294	Conway Ave. (McKnight Rd. to Century Ave.), 10th St. (Century Ave. to Hadley Ave.), Stillwater Blvd. (Hadley Ave. to Curve Crest Blvd.), Curve Crest Blvd. (Stillwater Blvd. to Greeley St.), Pine St. - 3rd St. - Myrtle St. - Main St. - Water St. - Mulberry St. loop
351	Radio Dr. (I-94 to Hudson Rd.), Hudson Rd. (Radio Dr. to Bielenberg Dr.)
604	Louisiana Ave. (Cedar Lake Rd. to Louisiana Transit Center)
612	Mainstreet (Shady Oak Rd. to 11th Ave.), Excelsior Blvd. (Shady Oak Rd. to 11th Ave.), Smetana Dr. (Opportunity Ct. to Opportunity Ct.), Bren Rd. (Opportunity Ct. to Shady Oak Rd.), YelloW. Circle Dr. / Blue Cir. Dr. (Shady Oak Rd. to Bren Rd. E.)
717	Rockford Rd. (Boone Ave. to Nathan Ln.)
801	Route number change

Table 4. Network Now framework - Routes with some segments discontinued

Route	Discontinued Segment
6	France Ave. (44th St. to 39th St.), Wooddale (54th St. to Valley View Rd.)
7	1st St. N. (Hennepin Ave. to 8th Ave. N.), 2nd St. N. (8th Ave. N. to Plymouth Ave.)
9	Glenwood Ave. (Penn Ave. to Xenia Ave.), Louisiana Ave. (Cedar Lake Rd. to Wayzata Blvd.), 9th St. (Park Ave. to Hennepin Ave.)
14	Noble Ave. (36th Ave. to Golden Valley Rd.), 36th Ave. (Noble Ave. to France Ave.), 38th St. (Bloomington Ave. to Cedar Ave)*, Cedar Ave. (38th St. to 42nd St.)*, 42nd St. (Cedar Ave. to 28th Ave.)*, 28th Ave. (42nd St. to 38th St.)*
18	Grand Ave. (31st St. to 46th St.)
46	St. Paul Pkwy. (Cleveland Ave. to Edgcumbe Rd.)
61	Arcade Ave. (Maryland Ave. to Larpenteur Ave.)
64	Prosperity Ave. / Hazelwood St. (Maryland Ave. to Larpenteur Ave.), English St. (Frost Ave. to Co. Rd. B E), Co. Rd. B E. (English St. to White Bear Ave.)
67	26th Ave. S. (Franklin Ave. to Riverside Ave.), Riverside Ave. (26th Ave. to Franklin Ave); Thomas Ave. (Western Ave. to Marion St.), Marion St. (Thomas Ave. to Como Ave.), Como Ave. (Marion St. to Rice St.)
68	Oakdale Ave. (Marie Ave. to Thompson Ave.), Thompson Ave. (Oakdale Ave. to 12th Ave.), 12th Ave. (Thompson Ave. to Southview Blvd.)
70	Cretin Ave. (Ford Pkwy. to St. Clair Ave.), St. Clair (Cretin Ave. to W. 7th St.)
74	Minnehaha Ave. (Ruth St. to McKnight Rd.)*, McKnight Rd. (Minnehaha Ave. to Stillwater Rd.)*, Stillwater Rd. (McKnight Ave. to Hazel St.)*, Nokomis Ave. (Stillwater Rd. to Maryland Ave.)*, Maryland Ave. (Nokomis Ave. to Century Ave.)*, Century Ave.*, Ivy Ave.*, Ferndale St.*, Edgewater Blvd.*, Edgcumbe Rd. - Jefferson Ave. - Lexington Pkwy. loop*

Route	Discontinued Segment
75	Mendota Rd. (Dodd Rd. to Delaware Ave.), Delaware Rd. (Mendota Rd. to Marie Ave.), Marie Ave. (Delaware Ave. to Carlton St.), Carlton St. (Marie Ave. to Thompson Ave); Wentworth Ave. (Robert St. to Livingston St.), Livingston St. (Wentworth Ave. to Marie Ave.), 50th St. (Robert Tr. to Babcock Tr.), Babcock Tr. (50th St. to Upper 55th St.), 55th St. (Babcock Tr. to Audobon Ave.), Audobon Ave. (55th St. to Lake Cove Apartments), Upper 55th St. (Babcock Tr. to Robert Tr.), Robert Tr. (Upper 55th St. to 54th St.), 54th St. (Robert Tr. to Alta Ave.), Alta Ave. (54th St. to 55th St.)
94	Robert St. (5th St. to Fillmore Ave.), River Park Plaza (Fillmore St. to Fillmore St.)
114	Lake St. (Hennepin Ave. to Excelsior Blvd.), Excelsior Blvd. (Lake St. to Quentin Ave.)
219	McKnight Rd. (Lydia Ave. to Co. Rd. E), 15th St. (Century Ave. to Hadley Ave.), Conway Ave. (Howard St. to Century Ave.), 3rd St. (Howard St. to Ruth St.), Ruth St. (3rd St. to Old Hudson Rd.), Pederson St., Wilson Ave.
225	Victoria St. (Co. Rd. E to Co. Rd. F), Co. Rd. F (Lexington Ave. to Victoria St.)
227	Victoria St. (Co Rd. E to Island Lake County Park)
250	95th Ave. (Naples St. to Lexington Ave.), Lexington Ave. (95th Ave. to North Rd.), North Rd. (Lexington Ave. to Sunset Ave.), Sunset Ave. (North Rd. to Elm St.)
270	Lydia Ave. (McKnight Rd. to Century Ave.), Co Rd. D (Century Ave. to Bellaire Ave.), Bellaire Ave. (Co Rd. D to Co Rd. F), Co Rd. F (Bellaire Ave. to Century Ave.), Century Ave. (Co Rd. F to Wildwood Rd.), Wildwood Rd. (Century Ave. to Maple St.), Maple St. (Mahtomedi Ave. to Warner Ave.), Warner Ave. (Maple St. to Dahlia St.)
275	I-35E (I-35E & Co. Rd. 14 P & R to Running Aces P & R), Hwy 97 (Running Aces P & R to Forest Lake Transit Center)
534	90th St. (Penn Ave. to France Ave.), France Ave. (90th St. to 98th St.)
542	78th St. (Washington Ave. to Bush Lake Rd.)
546	Penn Ave. (98th St. to 94th St.)*, 94th St. (Penn Ave. to James Ave.)*, James Ave. (98th St. to 94th St.)*
578	70th St. (York Ave. to Antrim Rd.), Valley View Rd. / Tracy Ave. (70th St. to Benton Ave.), Benton Ave. (Tracy Ave. to Normandale Rd.)
645	Ford Rd. (Shelard Pkwy. N. to Shelard Pkwy. S.)
652	Plymouth Rd. P & R, Wayzata Blvd. (Plymouth Rd. to Ridgedale Dr.)
667	Co. Rd. 101 (Hwy 7 to Townline Rd.), 36th St. (Hwy 169 to Texas Ave.), Texas Ave. (36th St. to Minnetonka Blvd.)
672	W. Branch Rd. to Maple Plain
758	Noble Ave. (36th Ave to Golden Valley Rd.)
760	Candlewood Dr. (Broadway Dr. to Douglas Dr.), Douglas Dr. (Candlewood Dr. to 85th Ave.), Neddersen Pkwy. (Zane Ave. to Setzler Pkwy.), Setzler Pkwy. (Neddersen Pkwy. to Broadway Ave.), Broadway Ave. (Setzler Pkwy. to 85th Ave.)
766	Russell Ave. (97th Ave. to 101st Ln.), West River Rd. (101st Ln. to Noble Pkwy.), Great River Rd. (117th Ave. to Dayton Rd.)
805	119th Ave. (Northdale Blvd. to Round Lake Blvd.), Round Lake Blvd. (119th Ave. to Main St.), Riverdale Commons (thru parking lot), 9th Ln. (Lincoln St. to Grant St.)
850	(VD) Crooked Lake Blvd. / 124th Ave. (Northdale Blvd. to Riverdale Station)
852	Thurston Ave. - Lund Blvd. - McKinley St. loop, I-94 (I-694 to 2nd Ave. N.)

*Limited service trips only

Some communities in the region that had bus service available prior to 2020 will not have fixed-route service under the Network Now framework. These communities are primarily located in the northeast metro and near Lake Minnetonka. In all cases, the number of trips available in these communities was relatively low, ranging from two to eight trips per direction per weekday. Cities in the Transit Capital Levy District that will no longer have fixed-route bus service include: Forest Lake, Columbus, St. Paul Park, Maple Plain, Minnetonka Beach, Deephaven, Tonka Bay, and Shorewood. Residents of these communities can access park and ride commuter routes in adjacent areas, and can use the Metropolitan Council's Transit Link program, which provides demand-response transit service in areas where no fixed-route service is available.

Local bus routes

To focus on providing frequent, reliable service on local routes in the region's core and suburban areas, Network Now includes strategic changes to the existing system to provide coverage where it is most needed and increase frequency where it is most effective. Many routes will also be restructured to some degree to improve their performance and create better connections to high frequency transitways. Improvements to specific routes are detailed in the appendices. Key changes include the following:

- More routes with service every 10 minutes: Five more local routes including the 4, 11, 54, 63, and 724 will be improved to have periods of weekday 10-minute service. Customers in parts of south Minneapolis, northeast Minneapolis, St. Paul, Brooklyn Center, and Brooklyn Park will have service upgraded.
- More high frequency routes: High frequency service (Figure 9), comprised of routes or sections of routes offering service every 15 minutes or better on weekdays and Saturdays, will expand to include Routes 14, 17, 58, 74, 515, and 724, as well as the restructured Route 64. Customers in parts of Bloomington, Richfield, St. Louis Park, Brooklyn Park, St. Paul, West St. Paul, South St. Paul, and Maplewood will see improved service. More of the region will have connections to high frequency service in the Network Now framework, making transfer connections and travel times shorter. (Figure 10).
- 60-minute minimum frequency: All suburban local routes will operate at least every 60 minutes as compared to 90-120 minute service on some routes.
- New or restored local bus routes: New local routes will provide coverage in some areas of Brooklyn Park, Osseo, Oakdale, Cottage Grove, Woodbury, Arden Hills, Shoreview, Blaine, Lexington, and Circle Pines that do not currently have service. Route 223 was restored to provide connections with routes in Roseville, Little Canada, and Maplewood.
- Establishing new crosstown connections: New Route 354 will connect Woodbury, Newport, West St. Paul, and Mendota Heights with Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and Mall of America, offering connections with Blue Line, Gold Line, G Line, and Routes 68 and 75. Routes 717 and 801 will be combined into the new Route 817, creating a better crosstown connection for customers in Plymouth, New Hope, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Brooklyn Center, Columbia Heights, St. Anthony, and Roseville. Route 3A will be restructured to provide crosstown service on Maryland and White Bear avenues to Sun Ray Transit Center in advance of the H Line. Service to downtown St. Paul will be available via a transfer to G Line at Maryland Ave. & Rice St. In St. Paul, Route 61 will become a Larpenteur Ave. cross-town route. All Route 61 trips will be extended east from Larpenteur Ave. & Arcade St. to Larpenteur Ave. & Century Ave.
- Discontinuation of current service: Due to very low ridership, Route 501 will be discontinued, as will Saturday service on Route 33.

Figure 9. Network Now framework – High frequency routes

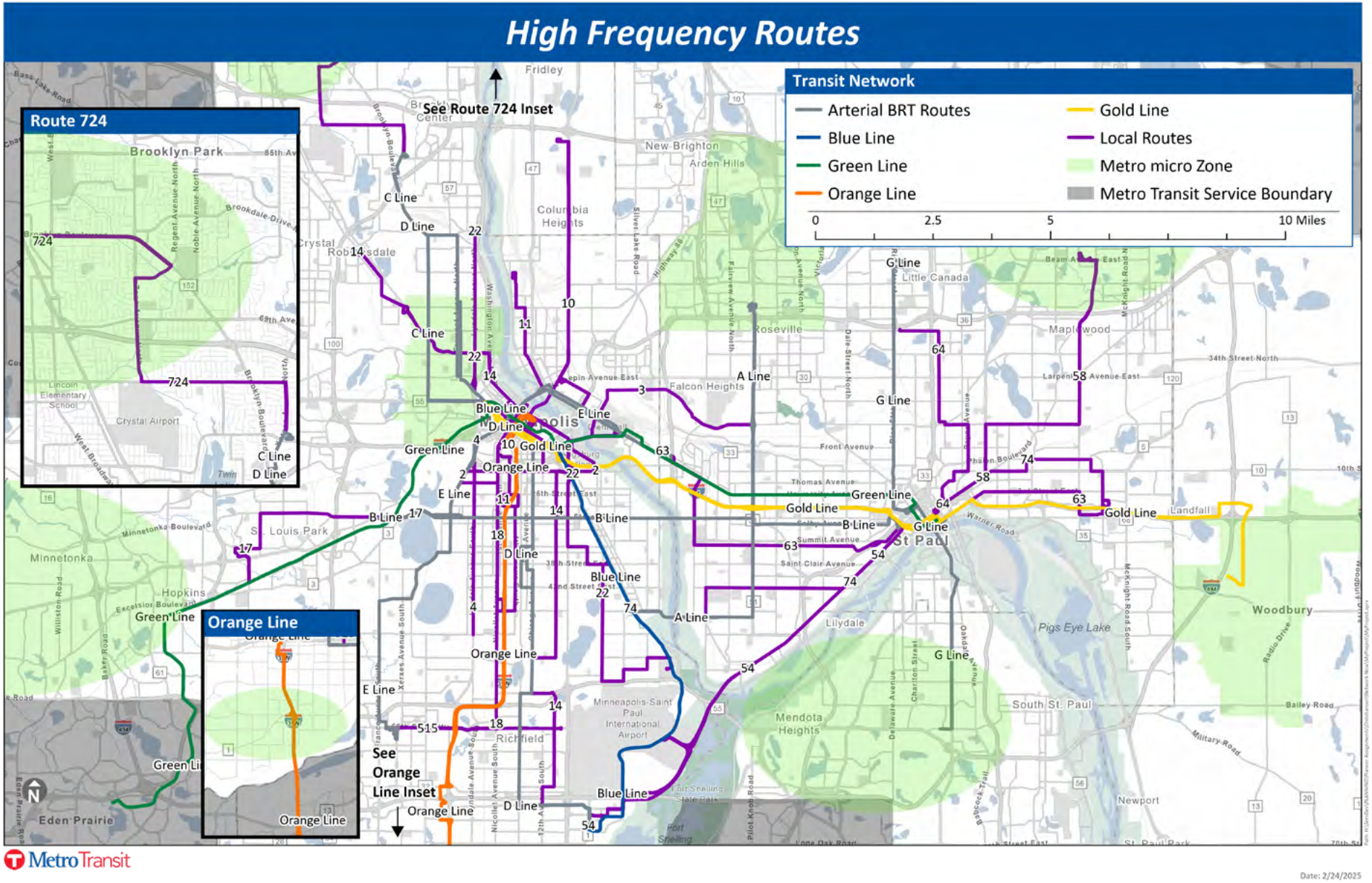
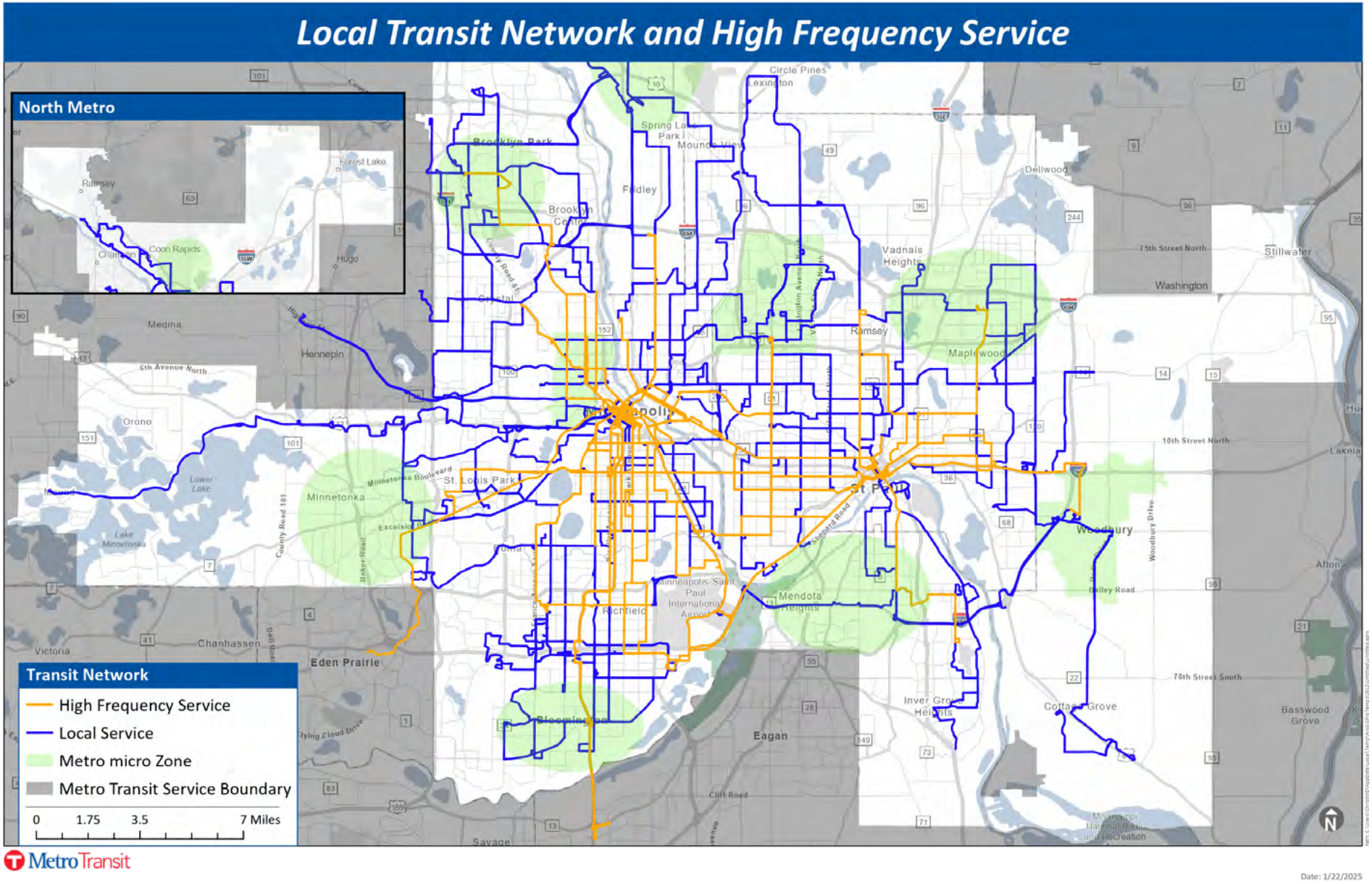


Figure 10. Local transit network and high frequency service



Commuter-oriented bus routes

Commuter-oriented routes connect suburban areas to major employment centers and destinations, including downtown Minneapolis, downtown St. Paul, and the University of Minnesota. Since 2020, express routes have been most affected by changes in commuting patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work practice and investments in regional transitways. These routes experienced the biggest loss in percentage of riders in 2020 and have been the slowest to rebound as ridership recovers on other types of service in the region.

Rush-hour commuter express routes are designed for the primary purpose of bringing suburban residents to traditional 9-to-5 jobs in congested areas where parking is inconvenient and may be expensive. The growth in telecommuting at least some days of the week means that ridership on Mondays and Fridays is less than half of the ridership in the middle of the week, and more people are choosing to drive because parking has become less expensive. Metro Transit has evaluated these conditions in the development of the framework.

Through 2027, Metro Transit will more than double our investment of service hours on frequent and reliable commuter-oriented routes throughout the region compared to our baseline of service offered in Dec. 2023.

Commuter-oriented service in the framework, including bus rapid transit, commuter rail and light rail is shown in Figure 11. The framework primarily focuses on strengthening primary express corridor service in the Key Express Network, and restoring some suspended service. Some routes in far-reaching areas with few trips that have not operated for several years will be discontinued. Figure 12 shows the number of weekly trips previously offered on discontinued routes, which are shown in red. Key Express Network, light rail and highway BRT routes are shown in purple and are also weighted by the number of weekly trips. Park & Ride lots that will close are shown in red.

Changes to commuter-oriented routes are summarized as follows:

- Maintain existing express service: Most express routes operating as of March 2025 will continue to operate. Service on Route 761 which is currently operating in Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center will be discontinued.
- Service restoration: Service on eight routes that are currently suspended will be restored: Routes 115, 134, 156, 579, 587, 652, 765, and 860. Route 46 will have service to Opus station restored during the rush-hour periods when Green Line Extension opens. Route 264 will be extended along Co. Rd. B and Lexington Ave. to Shoreview Community Center along portions of the former Route 261. These routes will offer improved service for customers in south Minneapolis, St. Paul, Edina, Minnetonka, Mounds View, Brooklyn Park, Coon Rapids, Arden Hills, and Shoreview.
- Expand service to the University of Minnesota: Due to the significant increases in ridership experienced since students, faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota were given a Universal Transit Pass, more service to the Minneapolis campus will be added:
    - New Route 352 will be added serving Woodbury to replace Route 355U trips.
    - One additional trip in each direction will be added on Route 252 in Blaine.
    - Additional frequency will be provided on Route 115, which provides service to south Minneapolis.
- Creating the Key Express Network: By opening the Gold Line and Green Line Extension and consolidating service on key highway corridors, Metro Transit will offer more reliable, frequent, and convenient service throughout the region in a way that adapts to the market. The Key Express Network will be made up of commuter express routes operating on key highway corridors that will extend from the center of the service area and provide frequent, reliable service to a limited number of Park & Ride locations. Routes 250, 270, 673, 768, and 850 are planned to be upgraded to form the Key Express Network, which is shown in purple in Figure 11. Customers who travel to a Park & Ride served by a Key Express Network route will be offered service every 15 minutes or better during rush hour and also have midday service.

Figure 11. Commuter Oriented Service Network

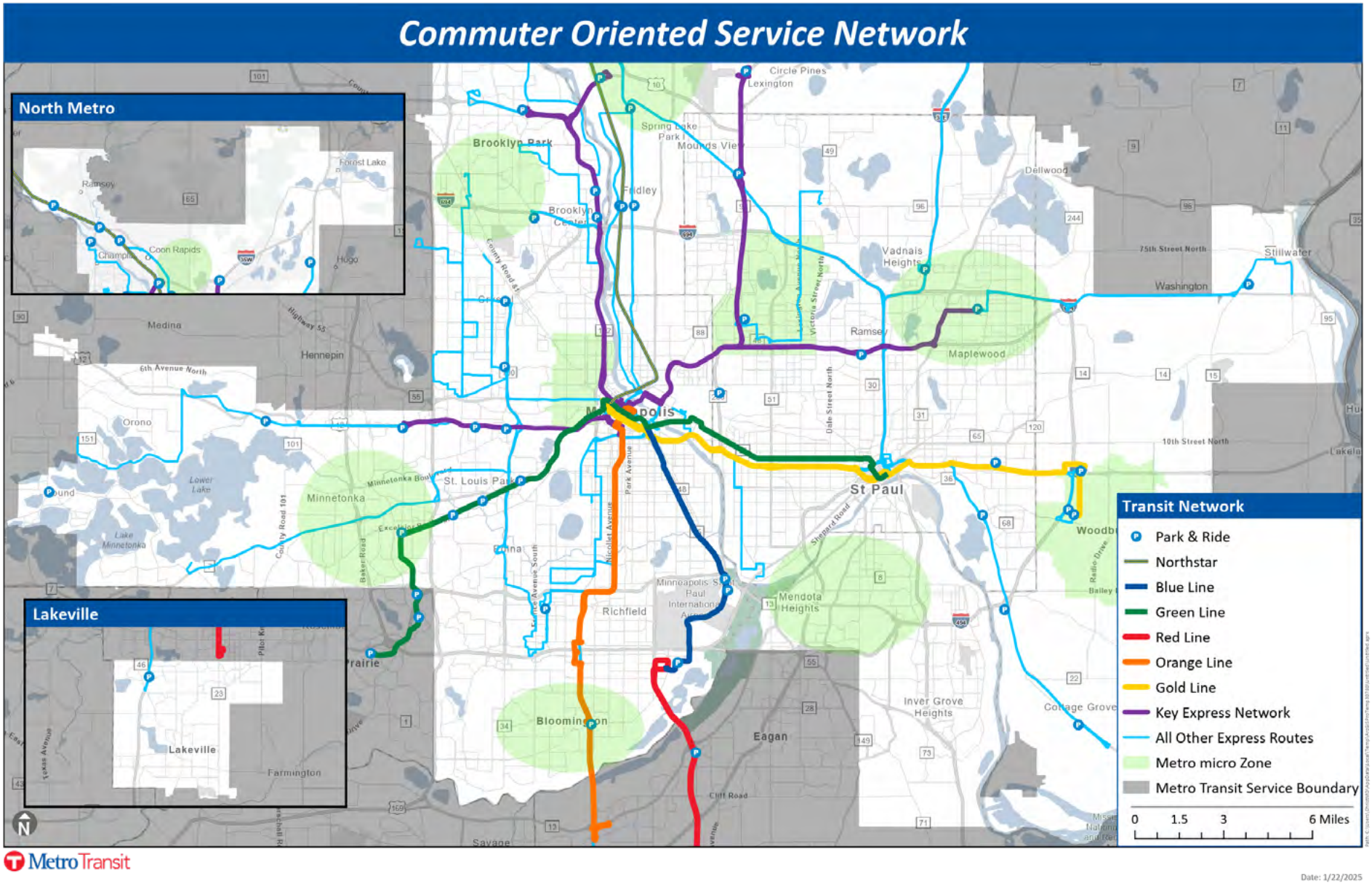
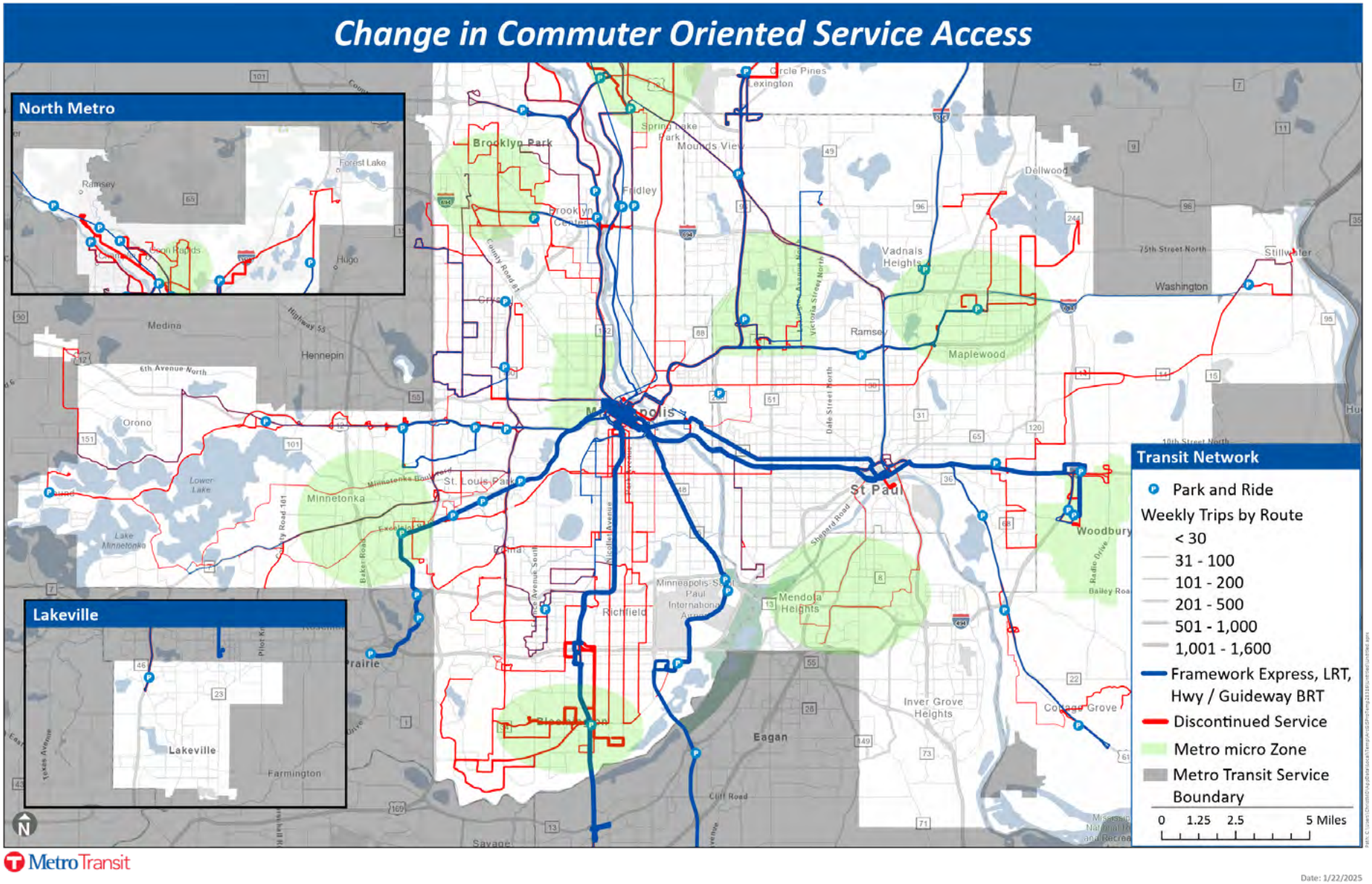


Figure 12. Change in Commuter Oriented Service Access



Changes by subregion

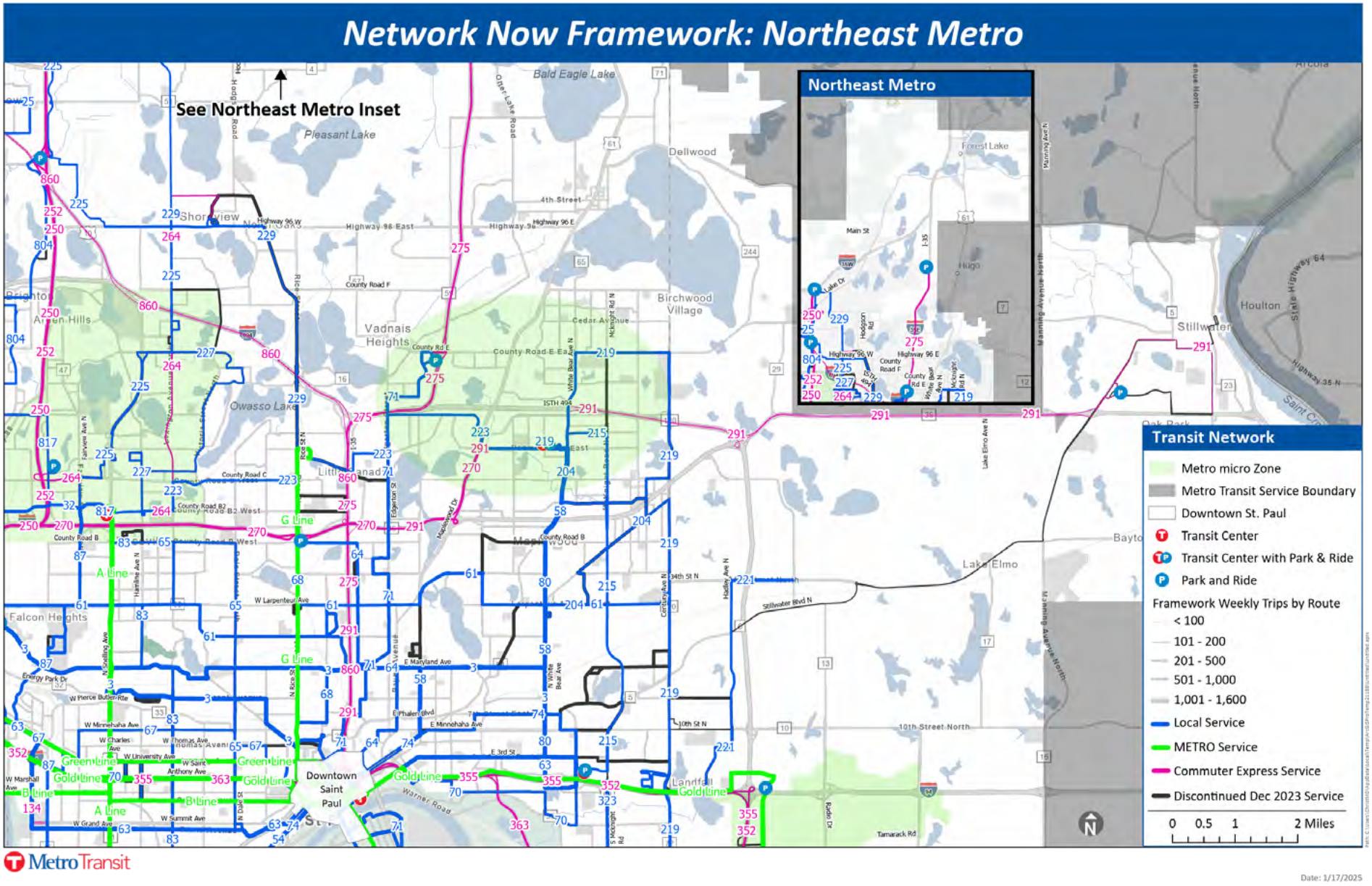
Metro Transit serves a broad and diverse set of communities throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area. To more easily communicate key transit service changes planned as part of Network Now, this section explores the concept plan in four different quadrants of the region, defined below, as well as the downtowns and the University of Minnesota. The following sections describe transit service changes planned for each quadrant, as well as developments that helped guide route planning decisions for Network Now.

Northeast metro

The Northeast metro, as shown in Figure 13, generally includes areas north of I-94 and east of Hwy 280.

- **METRO service:** A Line on Snelling Ave. is already in operation. Gold Line will operate from Woodbury to downtown Minneapolis, operating on dedicated right of way between Woodbury and St. Paul and limited bus-only shoulder lanes between downtown St. Paul and Hwy 280, replacing Route 94. The first phase of G Line will operate from Union Depot in St. Paul to Little Canada Transit Station, operating primarily on Rice St. and replacing Route 62.
- **Key Express Network:** Route 270 provides express service from Maplewood Mall Transit Center and Hwy. 36 & Rice St. Park & Ride to downtown Minneapolis and Route 250 provides express service from I-35W & 95th Ave. Park & Ride and I-35W & Co. Rd. H Park & Ride to downtown Minneapolis.
- **Restructured service:** Many east metro routes are being restructured to create a better grid network that relies on improved frequencies for better transfer connections. In addition to St. Paul, route restructuring will also affect other northeast suburban communities, such as Maplewood, Oakdale, Little Canada, and Vadnais Heights. Affected routes are as follows:
    - Route 54 will be split into two routes (Route 54 between downtown St. Paul and Mall of America and Route 58 between downtown St. Paul and Maplewood Mall).
    - Routes 3 and 61 will be rerouted to serve as crosstown routes rather than ending in downtown St. Paul.
    - Route 64 will cover parts of Route 71 and operate primarily straight north of downtown St. Paul on Payne Ave. and McMenemy St. to Hwy 36 & Rice St. Park & Ride. Route 64N in North St. Paul will be replaced by new Route 204.
    - With the opening of G Line Phase 1, the northern terminal of Route 62 will be moved to 12th St. & Robert St.
        - Route 67 will be restructured, with portions of the route on Thomas Ave., Rice St., Cedar St., and Minnesota St. eliminated. Route will serve Western Ave., University Ave., Marion St., Kellogg Blvd., 5th St., 6th St., and Union Depot.
    - Regular Route 74 service will be simplified in St. Paul to offer more direct service to Sun Ray Transit Center and will be added to the high frequency network.
    - Route 219 will remain on Century Ave. south of I-94 and will have Sunday service added.
    - New Route 291 service between Stillwater, Maplewood, and downtown St. Paul will replace parts of Routes 265 and 294.
- **Restored service:** Route 223 was restored on weekdays between Rosedale Transit Center in Roseville and Maplewood Mall Transit Center in Maplewood.
- **New service:** Route 71K will be extended to provide all-day service to the Wal-Mart in Vadnais Heights. New Route 215 will serve McKnight Rd. between Maplewood and Sun Ray Transit Center. New Route 221 will connect to Gold Line stations and primarily serve Oakdale. Route 225 will be extended to offer access to destinations at Rice Creek Commons and into Blaine. New Route 229 will connect customers from Little Canada Transit Station to Blaine, operating along Rice St., Hodgson Rd., Hwy 96, Lexington Ave., Lovell Rd./95th Lexington Ave. Route 264 will be extended to the Shoreview Community Center along portions of the former Route 261, including portions of Co. Rd. B and Lexington Ave. in Arden Hills and Shoreview. Three new Metro micro zones are planned in the Northeast metro, with service in the Woodbury area connecting to Gold Line, the Roseville area connecting to A Line, and Maplewood connecting with Maplewood Mall Transit Center.

Figure 13. Network Now framework – Northeast metro

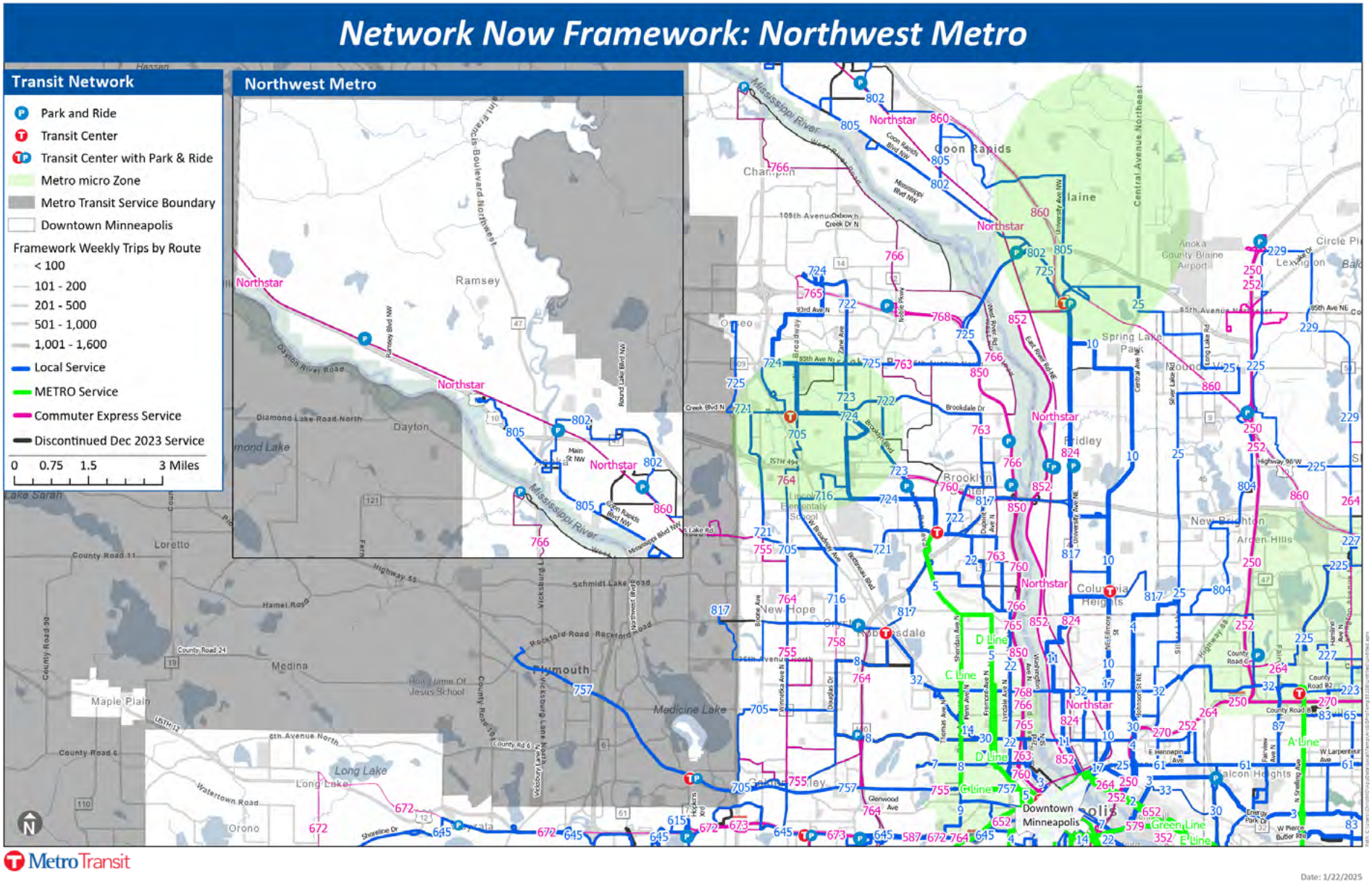


Northwest metro

The Northwest metro, as shown in Figure 14, includes the western suburbs, the area around north Minneapolis, and extends as far north as Anoka and Blaine.

- **METRO service:** C and D Lines are already in operation, and there are no new METRO lines planned in this subregion by the end of 2027. F Line will largely replace Route 10 from downtown Minneapolis to Northtown Transit Center, with an adjusted timeline outside the scope of Network Now, subject to coordinated reconstruction of Central Ave. The Blue Line Extension is also slated to open beyond the timeframe of Network Now, but will also add more fast, frequent, all-day service in this region.
- **Key Express Network:** Route 768 provides express service from Hwy. 610 and Noble Park & Ride, Church of the Nazarene Park & Ride, and Hwy. 252 and 66th Ave. Park & Ride to downtown Minneapolis. Route 850 provides express service from Foley Park & Ride to downtown Minneapolis.
- **Restructured service:** Route 850 will be restructured to reduce duplication. Restructured Route 805 and new Route 802 will replace Route 852 north of Northtown Transit Center. Routes 717 and 801 will be combined into new Route 817 and serve 36th Ave. and Lancaster Ln. in Plymouth. Route 804 service between Silver Lake Village and Northtown Transit Center will be discontinued and replaced by improved service on Route 25. Route 14 will be restructured so all trips remain on West Broadway Ave. west of Knox Ave. to serve North Memorial Hospital and Robbinsdale. New Route 8 will replace Route 14 along Golden Valley Rd., Duluth St., and Douglas Dr.
- **Restored service:** Route 765 will be restored to serve reverse commute trips between downtown Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park. Route 860 will be restored to connect customers in Coon Rapids, Blaine, and Mounds View to downtown St. Paul.
- **New service:** Metro micro service will continue in north Minneapolis, with new planned zones in portions of Blaine and Coon Rapids, as well as in Brooklyn Park near Starlite Transit Center. New Route 725 will run between Osseo, Brooklyn Park, and Blaine via Jefferson Hwy., 85th Ave. N. and Hwy. 610. New Route 757 will run limited-stop service on Hwy. 55 between downtown Minneapolis, north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, and Plymouth as a pilot for potential future bus rapid transit service. Route 852 will operate new service on E River Rd. south of I-694 (Northern Stacks) as well as on Marshall St. in northeast Minneapolis.

Figure 14. Network Now framework – Northwest metro



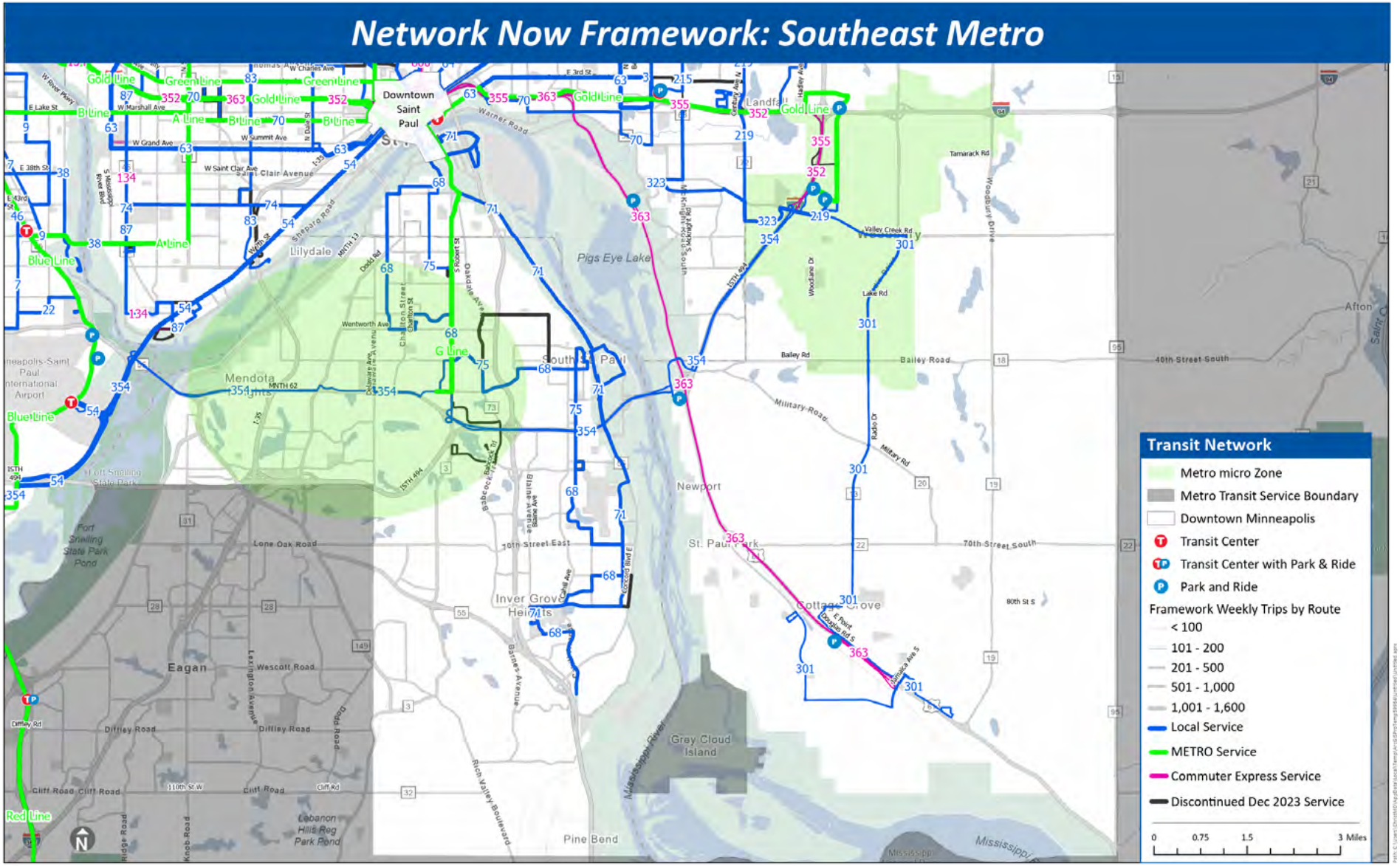
Metro Transit

Southeast metro

The Southeast metro, as shown in Figure 15, includes areas south of I-94 and east of Hwy. 280 and the Mississippi River.

- **METRO service:** A Line on Snelling Ave. and Ford Pkwy./46th St. is in operation. B Line and Gold Line are planned to open in 2025. G Line Phase 2 will include the southern portion of the corridor from Robert St. & Fillmore Ave. to the Dakota County Northern Service Center in West St. Paul. G Line Phase 2 will be constructed by the end of 2028. Routes 62, 68, and 75 south of downtown St. Paul will be restructured to provide supporting service when G Line Phase 2 opens in 2028.
- **Key Express Network:** No Key Express Network routes serve the Southeast metro.
- **Restructured service:** With the opening of B Line, Route 21 will be discontinued. In the southeast metro, supporting service will be provided by an extension of Route 70 offering connections to Midway destinations and on Selby Ave. in St. Paul. Route 54 will be split into two routes (Route 54 between downtown St. Paul and Mall of America and Route 58 between downtown St. Paul and Maplewood Mall). Routes 62, 68, and 75 will be restructured when G Line Phase 2 opens in 2028. Route 87 will be adjusted to better serve multifamily housing and senior buildings south of W. 7th St. in St. Paul. Route 94 service between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul will be replaced by Gold Line Extension.
- **Restored service:** Route 134 will be restored with limited-stop service from Highland Park in St. Paul to downtown Minneapolis along Cleveland and Cretin avenues.
- **New service:** New all-day local Route 301 will connect to Gold Line stations and serve Cottage Grove. Metro Transit will also implement two new Metro micro zones, one in parts of Mendota Heights, Inver Grove Heights and South St. Paul to support Phase 2 of the G Line and one in Woodbury and Oakdale to support the Gold Line. Woodbury express service changes include the addition of a new route between Woodbury Theatre Park & Ride and the University of Minnesota and new Route 354 with weekday service in the I-494 corridor between Woodbury, Newport, West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, the airport, and the Mall of America.

Figure 15. Network Now framework – Southeast metro

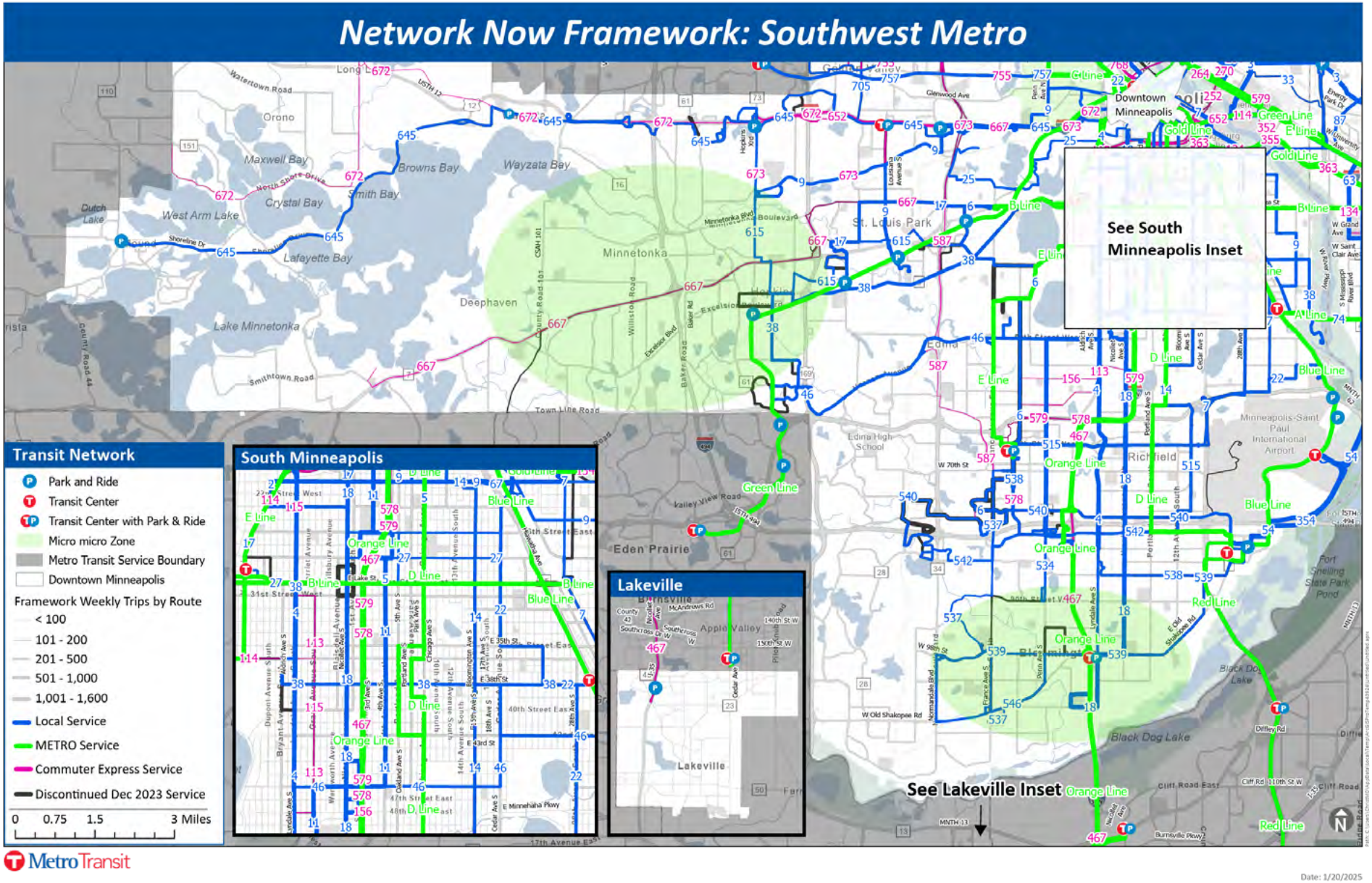


Southwest metro

The Southwest metro, shown below in Figure 16, includes areas west of the Mississippi River and south of I-394. Communities in the subregion include south Minneapolis, Bloomington, Richfield, Lakeville, and Edina, as well as west suburban St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Golden Valley, Minnetonka and communities surrounding Lake Minnetonka and Minnetonka.

- **METRO service:** Changes to service in the Southwest metro are largely driven by the addition of the Green Line Extension from Eden Prairie to downtown Minneapolis and the resulting consolidation of express service. The Southwest metro will also be served by E Line beginning in 2025 traveling between Southdale Transit Center, downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota.
- **Key Express Network:** Route 673 provides express service from Co. Rd. 73 Park & Ride and Louisiana Ave. Transit Center to downtown Minneapolis.
- **Restructured service:** The Green Line Extension includes supporting bus service improvements on routes 9, 17, and 615, as well as new Route 38 to replace existing Routes 23 and 612. Rush-hour trips on Route 46 will be provided to Opus Station via Vernon Ave. Route 6 will be restructured with the northern terminal at Lake St. & France Ave. Route 534 will be shortened to operate from 98th St. Station to 90th St. & Penn Ave. via Lyndale Ave., American Blvd., and Penn Ave. Route 537 will be rerouted along 90th St. and Collegeview Rd. to better serve residents and will operate via France Ave. north of Minnesota Dr., using 79th St. to travel via York Ave. to Southdale Transit Center. Route 538 will have the rush-hour-only deviation along 76th St. and Penn Ave. discontinued. Route 539 will be extended to Normandale Village shopping center. Route 540 will be adjusted to offer new coverage on 77th Street. Route 546 will be extended along Old Shakopee Rd. and Normandale Blvd. Route 540 and Route 542 will see slight changes to routing near the Normandale Office Park to improve route efficiency. In the far west metro, Route 667 will be rerouted from Hwy. 101 to Excelsior via Hwy. 7.
- **Restored service:** Route 46 service west of the Blue Line will be restored on all days. Route 156 will be restored. Route 652 will be restored with service from Co. Rd. 73 Park & Ride to downtown Minneapolis and University of Minnesota. Route 115 will be restored with limited-stop service to Uptown from the University of Minnesota. Route 579 will be restored with express service from Southdale Transit Center to the University of Minnesota. Route 587 will be restored with limited-stop service from Bloomington to downtown Minneapolis. Route 652 will be restored with service from Co. Rd. 73 Park & Ride to downtown Minneapolis and University of Minnesota.
- **New service:** The Orange Line's 98th St. Station will be included in a future microtransit zone and serve areas of southwest Bloomington formerly covered by Route 547. Minnetonka will be served by a future microtransit zone to connect with the Green Line Extension.

Figure 16. Network Now framework – Southwest metro



Downtown Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, and downtown St. Paul

Route changes in downtown Minneapolis and on the campus of the University of Minnesota (Figure 17), as well as route changes in downtown St. Paul (Figure 18), are guided by major transitway investments, city-led developments, and changes to the express bus travel market, as well as improvements to crosstown and weekend service.

- **METRO service:** Green Line Extension will provide a direct connection between both downtowns, the University, and Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. Orange, C, and D Lines already serve downtown Minneapolis, and the E Line will be added in 2025. Gold Line Extension will share stations along 7th and 8th streets in downtown Minneapolis. E Line also will serve the University. Gold, B and G Lines will serve downtown St. Paul, with Gold and B Lines sharing stations along 5th and 6th streets.
- **Restructured service:** In downtown Minneapolis northbound Route 9 moved from 9th St. to 7th St. Potential changes involving routes on Nicollet Mall are under discussion with the City of Minneapolis but outside the scope of Network Now. Route 6 will no longer serve downtown Minneapolis. In downtown St. Paul, Routes 3A and 61 will no longer serve downtown St. Paul. Route 54 will end at Union Depot and Route 54M will become Route 58. Route 67 will be restructured to remove the portion of the route along 25th and 26th Ave. and Riverside Ave. in Minneapolis. The route will continue straight on Franklin Ave. between 26th Ave. and Riverside Ave. Route 70 will be extended west along Selby Ave. Routes 265 and 294 will be combined into new Route 291, serving Maplewood and Stillwater.
- **Restored service:** Routes 134 and 156 serving downtown Minneapolis will have one to two trips added in each direction during morning and evening rush hours, while Route 860 serving downtown St. Paul will have two trips during morning and evening rush hours. Limited service will be restored during the University of Minnesota school session on express routes 115, 579, and 652.
- **New service:** Route 352 will provide new express service between Woodbury and the University of Minnesota, with connections to Gold and Green Lines. Route 757 will provide new limited-stop service between downtown Minneapolis, Golden Valley, and Plymouth via Hwy. 55, offering connections to the Blue, Green, Orange, C, D, and E Lines.

Figure 17. Network Now framework – downtown Minneapolis and University of Minnesota

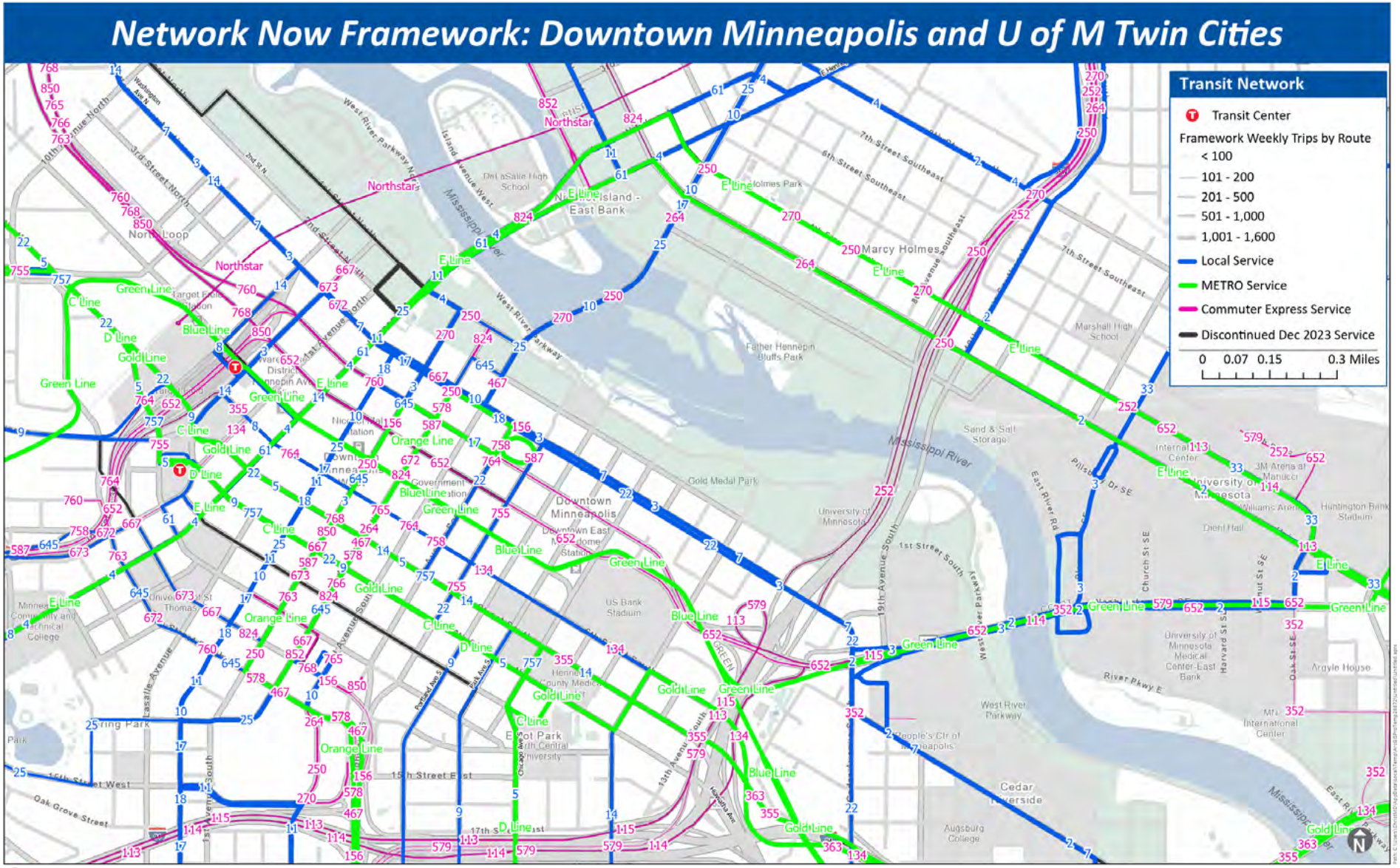
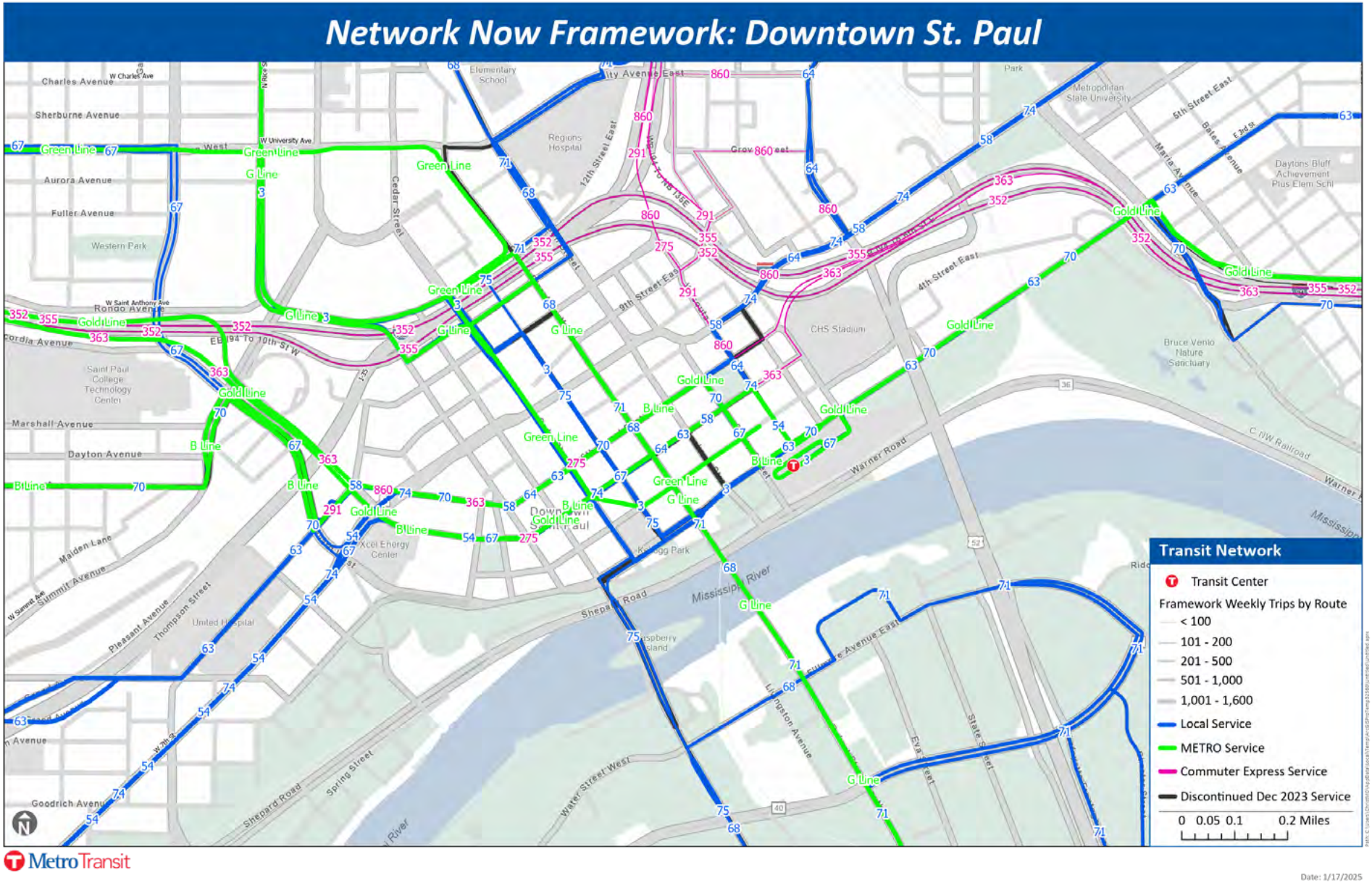


Figure 18. Network Now framework – downtown St. Paul



Regional changes

This section aggregates and summarizes framework changes across the network. Figure 19 shows the Network Now framework by route classification. Each route class (local, commuter express, and METRO service) is shown in a distinct color.

Figure 19. Network Now framework by service type

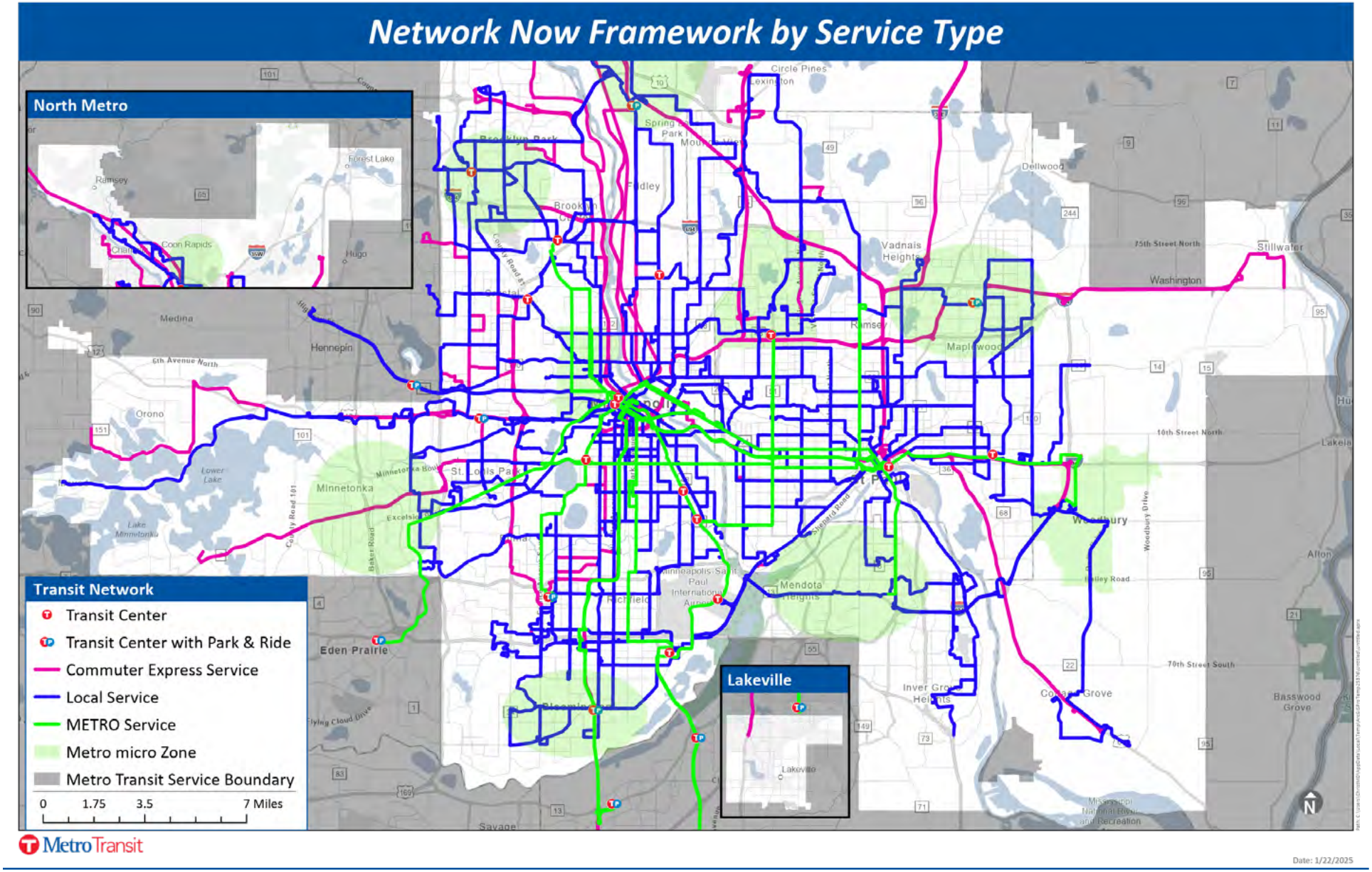


Figure 20 shows the Network Now framework in relation to service coverage provided from December 2019 through December 2023. Routes continuing to operate on the same street network are shown in color underlaid by a grey line, while areas no longer covered are shown as a distinct grey line. New areas of coverage are shown as a distinct line in color. Coverage changes are primarily in areas currently served by low-frequency express bus routes. New Metro micro areas are shown in light green, providing additional access for customers without fixed route service.

Figure 20. Network Now framework – changes in network coverage

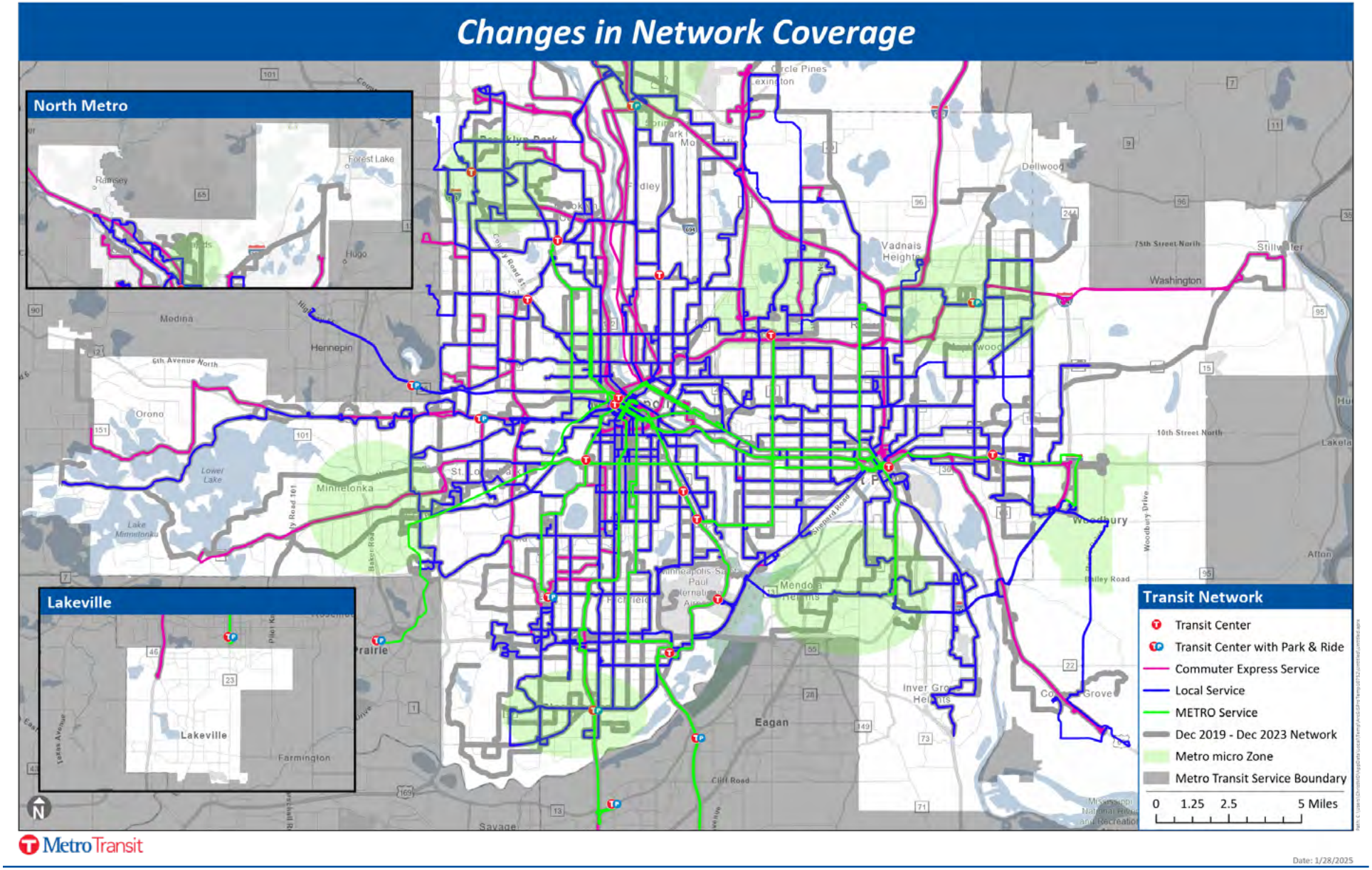


Figure 21 shows the Network Now framework in terms of the number of weekly trips planned. Relative to pre-pandemic service, the framework includes a more significant reduction in express bus service, particularly in the outer parts of the region where many routes have been suspended since March 2020. Most of the service discontinued (shown in red) has not operated in at least three years. There are limited areas where service runs currently that will see discontinued service compared to December 2023 (shown in orange).

Service frequency is measured as the number of weekly trips operated on each route. In most cases, 1,000 – 1,800 weekly trips indicate service every 15 minutes or better; 500 – 1,000 weekly trips indicate service every 30 minutes or better, and 200 – 500 weekly trips indicate service every 60 minutes or better. For express routes operating during rush hour only, 100 – 200 weekly trips indicate frequent service, 31 – 100 weekly trips indicate demand-oriented service, and less than 30 weekly trips indicate limited service availability. Frequency for each route is shown at the route level, so certain segments or branches may offer fewer trips.

Figure 22 shows routes within the framework that will see increases in frequency and/or new geographic coverage. Lines shown in blue will see frequency increases during at least part of the week on at least the main portion of the route, while lines in orange will offer access to new destinations on streets that did not have transit service from December 2019 to present. Frequency will improve on more than 70 routes. Many routes will experience both an increase in frequency and new geographic coverage; these are shown in both colors. Investing in more frequent service and new geographic coverage will help Metro Transit reduce waiting times, improve transfer connections, and provide new customers with efficient access to destinations across the Twin Cities region.

Figure 21. Network Now framework by number of weekly trips

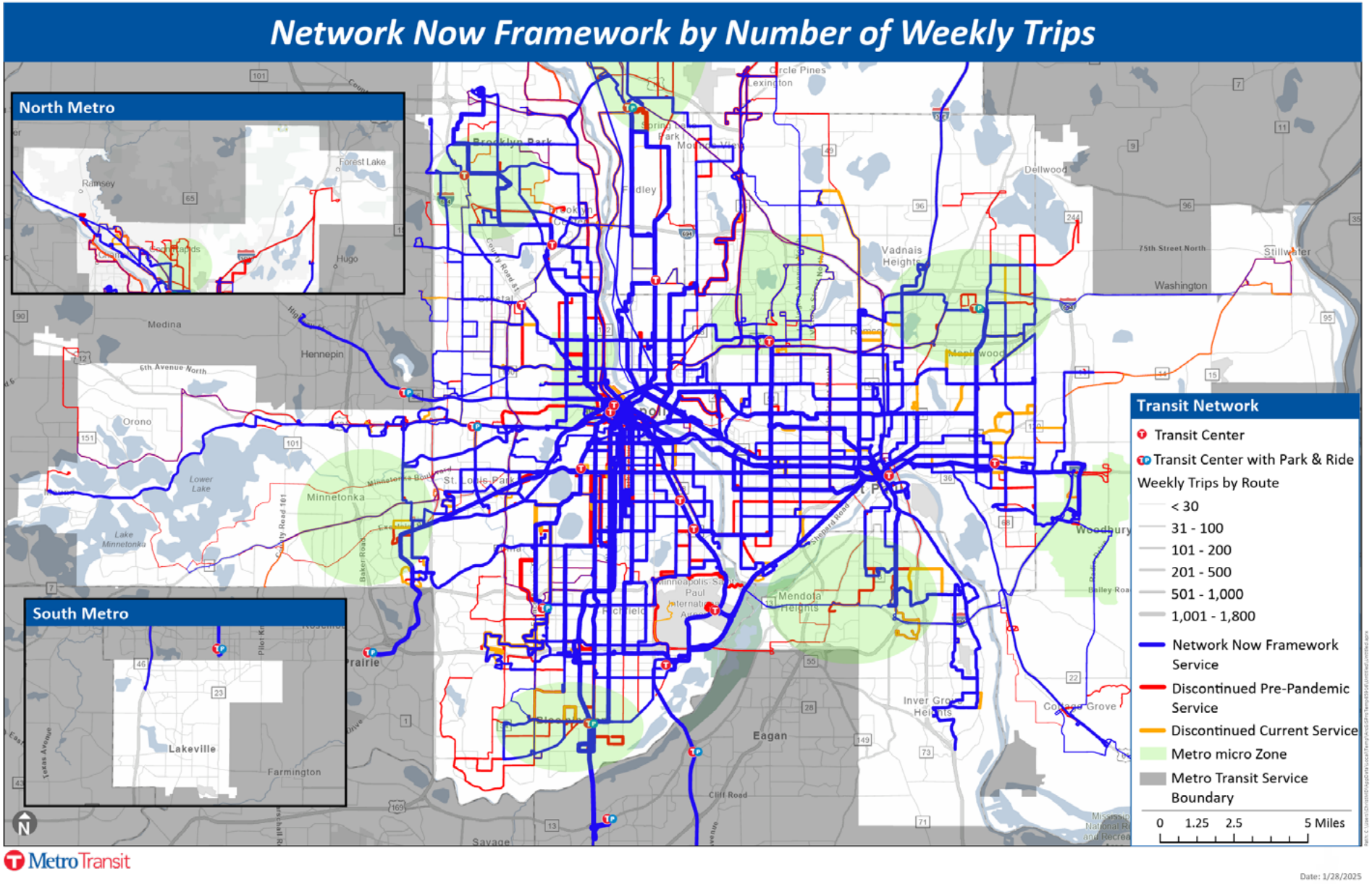


Figure 22. Improved frequency and new coverage routes

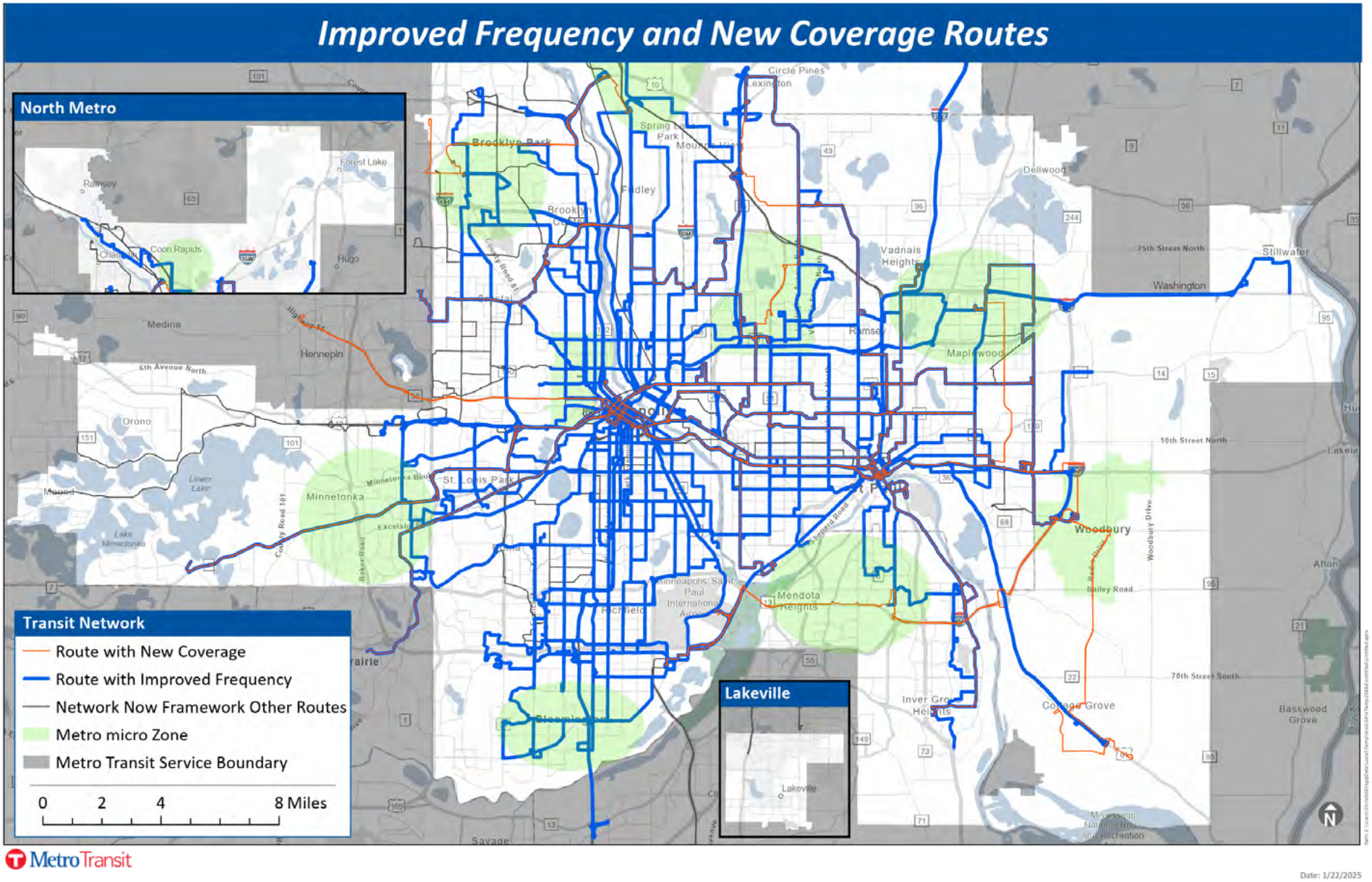
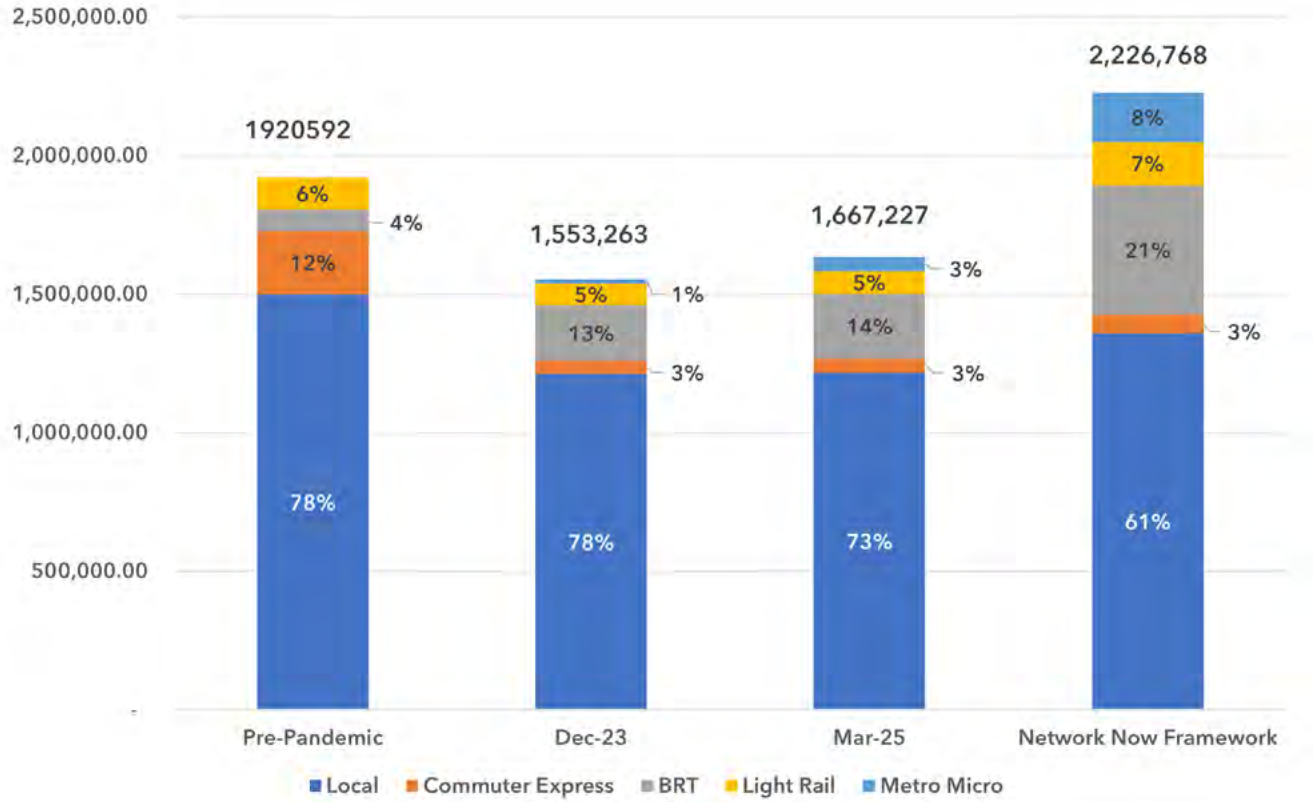


Figure 23 shows the percentage of in-service hours by service type for pre-pandemic, December 2023, March 2025, and Network Now framework. While the proportion of local service has remained the same from pre-pandemic to December 2023, local service as a percentage of total service hours will decrease by 17 percentage points within the framework. Conversely, bus rapid transit, light rail, and Metro micro will make up a larger percentage of in-service hours within the framework when compared to December 2023. Commuter express service will be maintained at the same proportion of service as the December 2023 level. Increases in service as of March 2025 reflect Metro Transit's continual effort to increase service.

Figure 23. Percentage of annual in-service hours by service type



Facilities impacts

Based on the service changes planned in the framework, Metro Transit plans to close some current facilities and add new facilities that are used for bus and rail service. This section addresses affected facilities, including light rail and bus rapid transit stations, bus stops, passenger facilities, operations and maintenance facilities, and Park & Rides.

Stations and stops

Metro Transit currently serves approximately 10,000 active bus stops, a 25% decrease since 2019. This decrease is due to not only suspended routes but also efforts to consolidate stops on existing routes in areas that exceed ¼ mile stop spacing. As the framework is implemented, Metro Transit will need to add stops in areas of new route coverage. Bus stop signs on all routes and segments that will be discontinued will be removed, and where necessary, curbside space at bus stops will be returned to the roadway owner. As changes are made to existing routes, Metro Transit will review bus stop spacing and consolidate some existing stops to better balance access needs and average speed. Bus stops on routes that are currently suspended but are planned for restoration will remain in place until service is restored.

- **Transit centers:** No changes are needed at existing transit centers to accommodate the service improvements in the Network Now framework.
- **Bus shelters and amenities:** As bus route improvements are made, Metro Transit will coordinate service changes with shelters and other customer amenities. Metro Transit's current guidelines call for new shelters may be considered at stops with at least 20 customer boardings per day. Heaters may be considered at transfer points with at least 70 daily boardings. Shelter lighting may be added where more customers board buses when it is dark outside, and where a source of power is readily available. Bus shelters may be removed due to low usage if there are fewer than 10 daily boardings and no service improvements are planned.
- **Light rail stations:** The Green Line Extension will include 14 new light rail stations by 2027.
- **Bus rapid transit stations:** The Gold Line will add 16 new bus rapid transit stations to the network in 2025 and three more stations in 2027. The B, E, and G Lines will add 87 more stations by 2028.

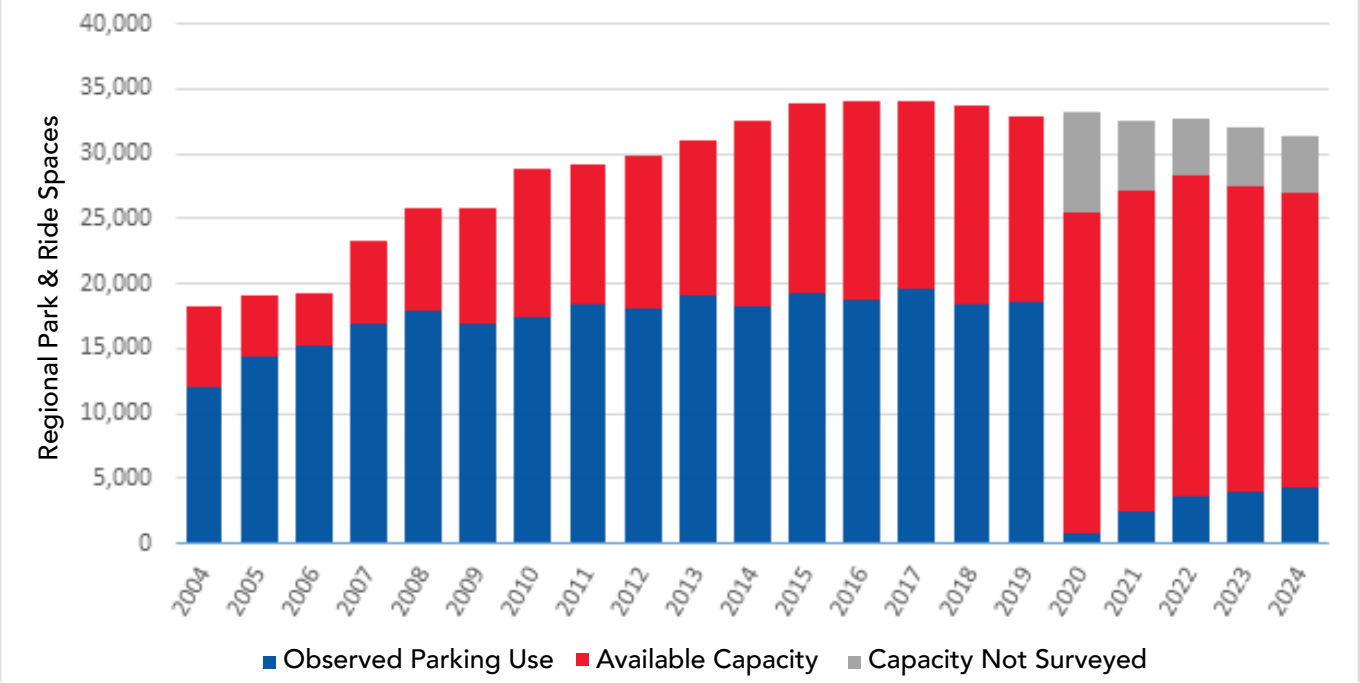
Operations and maintenance facilities

As the transit network expands, Metro Transit will invest in operations and maintenance facilities to store and maintain buses and trains. Existing garage facilities can accommodate the additional buses needed to implement the Network Now changes. By 2027, Metro Transit will also need to have facilities for the Green Line Extension. A Green Line Rail Support Facility is currently under construction in Hopkins and will complement existing light rail operations and maintenance facilities in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Park & Rides

Park & Ride use has declined due to changes in commute patterns since 2019, as shown in Figure 24. While ridership has declined on all transit services compared to pre-pandemic levels, commuter-oriented routes have been the slowest to recover. The rate of workers in downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul who telecommute at least some of the time is still significantly higher in 2024 than in 2019, and this trend is expected to be one of the more permanent changes to the region's travel patterns and transit needs.

Figure 24. Annual Park & Ride survey, 2004 to 2024



By the end of 2027, the number of Park & Ride facilities in the Metro Transit service area is expected to decline from 72 to 51, as shown in Table 5. This includes 15 facilities discontinued between 2019 and 2024, as well as 16 additional facilities expected to be discontinued by 2027. The Gold Line and Green Line Extension will add 10

total Park & Ride stations to the METRO network. Overall capacity will decrease from 21,063 to 19,754 parking spaces, a decline of 6%.

Table 5. Park & Ride system capacity

Status	Locations	Capacity
2019 Park & Ride system	72	21,063
Park & Rides discontinued 2019 through June 2024	-15	-1,982
Park & Rides expected to be discontinued 2025-2027	-16	-1,710
New METRO station Park & Rides opening 2025-2027	10	2,383
2028 Park & Ride system	**51**	**19,754**

Although the number of overall spaces available will not drop significantly, many of the region's smaller Park & Rides will be consolidated as part of the Key Express Network. Table 6 shows the facilities that have closed since 2019, and Table 7 lists the additional locations expected to close by late 2027 because they will no longer be served by commuter express service.

Table 6. Park & Rides discontinued, 2019 to 2024

Facility Name	City	Generalized Ownership	Parking Spaces
Christ Episcopal Church	Woodbury	Church	100
Excelsior City Hall	Excelsior	City & County	20
Guardian Angels Catholic Church	Oakdale	Church	415
Hopkins Municipal Park & Ride Lot	Hopkins	City	52
Hwy 61 & Co Rd C	Maplewood	Met Council & MnDOT	229
Hwy 7 & Vinehill Rd	Shorewood	Met Council & MnDOT	27
Knox Avenue at Best Buy	Richfield	City & Best Buy	426
Maple Plain	Maple Plain	City	150
Salem Covenant Church	New Brighton	Church	70
St. Edward's Catholic Church	Bloomington	Church	100
St. Joseph's Church	Lino Lakes	Church	12
St. Luke's Lutheran Church	Bloomington	Church	100
West River Rd & 117th Ave	Champlin	Met Council	151
Westwood Lutheran Church	Saint Louis Park	Church	40
Woodbury Lutheran Church	Woodbury	Church	90
Total			**1,982**

Table 7. Existing Park & Rides expected to be discontinued by 2027

Facility Name	City	Generalized Ownership	Parking Spaces
Forest Lake Transit Center	Forest Lake	County	308
Grace Church	Roseville	Church	115
Hadley Ave & Upper 17th Street	Oakdale	City	58
Hwy 7 & Texas Ave	Saint Louis Park	MnDOT	10
I-394 & General Mills Blvd	Golden Valley	Met Council & MnDOT	123
Little Canada Municipal Lot	Little Canada	City	20
Minnetonka Blvd & Baker Rd	Minnetonka	City	16
Minnetonka Blvd & Steele St	Minnetonka	County	25
Navarre Center	Orono	City	25
Normandale Village	Bloomington	Shopping Ctr	25
Paul Parkway	Blaine	Met Council	411
Plymouth Road Park & Ride	Minnetonka	Met Council & MnDOT	113
Roseville Skating Center	Roseville	City	51
Running Aces	Columbus	Racetrack	300
Shoreview Community Center	Shoreview	City	10
West St Paul Sports Complex	West St. Paul	City	100
Total			**1,710**

Table 8 lists the facilities that will continue to be served by the Key Express Network. These Transit Centers and Park & Ride locations are currently in operation and will remain open after the consolidation of commuter express routes in the region as part of the Network Now framework. These facilities will be served in addition to the several new facilities planned in conjunction with new transitway projects.

Table 8. Key Express Network

Route	Cities Served	Transit Facilities Served
250	Blaine, Shoreview, Mounds View, Minneapolis	I-35W & 95th Ave. Park & Ride, I-35W & Co. Rd. H Park & Ride
270	Little Canada, Maplewood, Minneapolis	Maplewood Mall Transit Center and Park & Ride, Hwy 36 & Rice St. Park & Ride
673	Minnetonka, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis	I-394 & Co. Rd. 73 South Park & Ride, Louisiana Ave. Transit Center and Park & Ride
768	Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis	Hwy. 610 and Noble Pkwy. Park & Ride, Church of the Nazarene Park & Ride, Hwy. 252 and 66th Ave. Park & Ride
850	Coon Rapids, Minneapolis	Foley Blvd. Park & Ride

Figure 25 shows the location of all commuter express routes and Park & Rides open in Metro Transit's service area by the end of 2027. Nearly 2,400 new spaces are expected to open as part of transitway projects such as the Gold Line and Green Line Extension, detailed in Table 9. All facilities that were open in 2019 and are not included in Table 6 or Table 7 are planned to remain open.

Figure 25. Commuter oriented service network Park & Rides

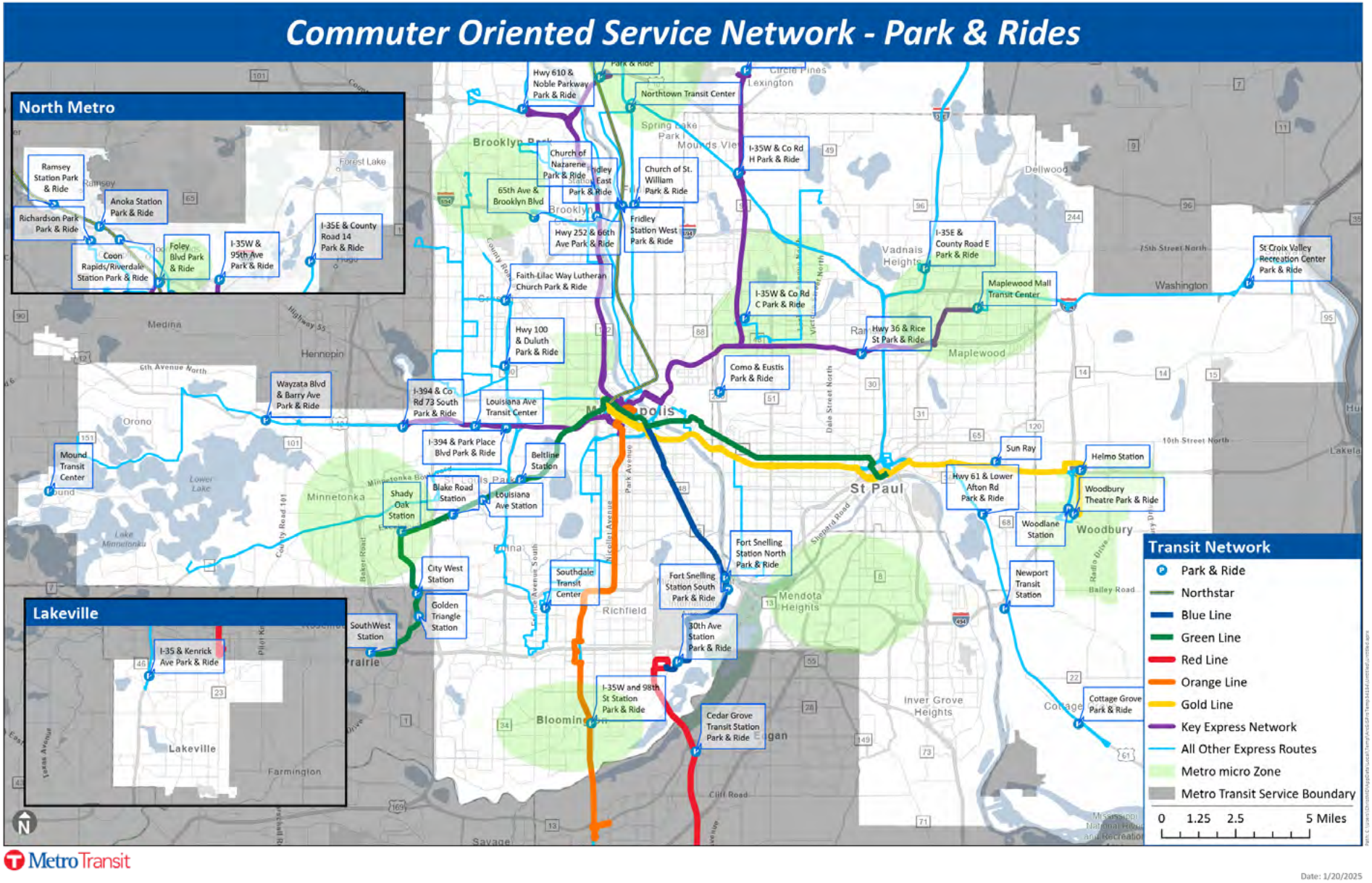


Table 9. New METRO Park & Rides planned by 2027

Facility Name	City	METRO Line	Parking Spaces
Beltline Station	Saint Louis Park	Green Line	268
Blake Road Station	Hopkins	Green Line	89
City West Station	Eden Prairie	Green Line	160
Golden Triangle Station	Eden Prairie	Green Line	74
Helmo Station	Oakdale	Gold Line	138
Louisiana Ave Station	Saint Louis Park	Green Line	348
Shady Oak Station	Hopkins	Green Line	182
SouthWest Station	Eden Prairie	Green Line	456
Sun Ray Station	St. Paul	Gold Line	150
Woodlane Station	Woodbury	Gold Line	518
Total			**2,383**

Evaluation process and results

Using the Network Now principles, the framework was evaluated based on how service impacts communities in the Metro Transit system. This includes demographic data, Title VI equity evaluation and measures of availability and usefulness of the service. Key findings are summarized as follows:

Availability describes the number of individuals that are within 5 minutes of a bus stop. An example of changes in availability for weekday midday by demographic group and timeframe of service are shown in Figure X below.

- Network Now Framework would increase the availability of most transit service to residents in the region beyond baseline and pre-pandemic services, with particular improvements for people of color and low-income residents.
- Weekday midday availability expands by 35% over baseline levels. The availability of high-frequency transit expands most dramatically on weekends (85% on Sunday), and non-rush hours, reflecting Metro Transit's goal to expand the reach of all-day, all-purpose transit service.

Usefulness describes the ability of transit to connect people to opportunities (access). Usefulness was measured as the average number of jobs accessible within approximately 45 minutes of travel time.

- The Network Now framework delivers a 27% increase in job access for residents across the Twin Cities region
- Access expands across all time periods relative to both baseline and pre-pandemic service. The improvements in usefulness match the changes in trip-making patterns and align with public priorities for transit.

A Title VI analysis was conducted to evaluate whether the Network Now Framework created a disproportionate burden or disparate impact to low income or BIPOC communities:

- The results show that there is no potential for potential disparate impact (race), or disproportionate burden (income) based on the absolute change in added trips with the Network Now changes.
- Network Now will add 392 weekly trips serving BIPOC residents, and 399 trips serving non-BIPOC residents.
- Low-income residents will see 443 additional weekly trips in Network Now, with non-low-income residents seeing 370 additional weekly trips.

Metro Transit is committed to ensuring our service is equitable. As of December 2023, 94% of scheduled transit trips serve low-income communities and 80% serve BIPOC communities. Since a greater portion of our trips currently serve BIPOC and low-income communities the additional service hours provided in Network Now further the benefits provided to each communities.

Conclusion and next steps

Network Now is a vision to grow ridership, and enhance mobility. The Network Now framework is designed to meet the needs of our customers and the communities that we serve today. The framework presented to the Metropolitan Council represents the region's top priorities for transit as represented in over 8,000 comments over multiple years, coupled with policy guidance, and technical evaluation.

In summary, when this framework is fully implemented:

- 70+ routes will have frequency or span improvements.
- 26 routes will have 15 minute or better service.
- LRT service will be back to 10-minute frequency.
- Eight new micro zones and routes with new coverage will be operating.
- 50 routes will be officially discontinued, and the resources reinvested into other service.
- 12 suspended routes will be restored, among other improvements.

We thank our customers and regional partners for your ongoing engagement and support to develop the transit system the Twin Cities deserves. While these changes will be implemented over the coming years, each improvement helps to make transit more attractive and our region more accessible, while offering our community a greener way of travelling.

Next steps

Following Met Council endorsement, Metro Transit will transition toward implementing the Network Now framework. This includes:

- Removing signs, closing Park & Rides, and updating systems maps to reflect discontinued service.
- Investing in workforce growth, facilities, and equipment to support these service investments.
- Implementing service improvements four times a year as part of Metro Transit's ongoing annual service adjustment schedule.
- Continue to evaluate improvements to ensure we are meeting the needs of riders.
- Continue to prepare for capital projects in development.
- Transition the community conversation to planning efforts to identify the next arterial bus rapid transit lines. These lines will be constructed outside the time horizon of the Network Now framework.