# Red Rock Corridor Commission Agenda

4:00 p.m. Monday, September 30th, 2024

St Paul Park City Hall

| | Action Requested |
|---|---|
| 1. Introductions / Roll Call | Information |
| 2. Pledge of Allegiance | Information |
| 3. Comments from the Public | Information |
| 4. Approval of Agenda | Approval |
| 5. Approval of January Minutes* | Approval |
| 6. Presentation – Metro Transit's Network Now* | Information |
| *Presenter: Adam Harrington, Metro Transit* | |
| 7. 2025 Red Rock Corridor Commission Work Plan and Budget* | Approval |
| 8. 2025 Red Rock Corridor Commission Meeting Schedule* | Approval |
| 9. Communications Update* | Information |
| 10. Other<br>a. Commissioner Reports<br>b. Next Meeting – January 23, 2025 | Information |
| 11. Adjourn | Approval |

**Enclosures*

# Meeting Minutes

**January 31, 2024, 4:30 p.m.**
**St. Paul Park City Hall**

| **Commission Members** | **Agency** | **Present** |
|---|---|---|
| Karla Bigham | Washington County RRA | X |
| Mai Chong Xiong (Alternate) | Ramsey County RRA | X |
| Monique Garza | City of Cottage Grove | X |
| Cheniqua Johnson | City of St. Paul | X* |
| Char Whitbred-Hemmingson | City of St. Paul Park | X |
| Dave Pemble | City of Hastings | X |
| Marvin Taylor | City of Newport | X |

| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Present** |
|---|---|---|
| Andrea Rehm | Washington County RRA | X |
| Lyssa Leitner | Washington County RRA | X |

| **Other Attendees** | **Agency** | **Present** |
|---|---|---|
| Emma Lucken | Ramsey County | X |
| Will Schroeer | East Metro Strong | X |
| Matthew Parent | MnDOT | X |
| Tim Marino | St Paul Resident | X |

**Present for Agenda Item 8 onward.*

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**Agenda Item #1: Introductions / Roll Call**

Chair Bigham called the meeting to order. Quorum was met.

**Agenda Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance**

The Commission stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Agenda Item #3: Election of Chair**

Pemble nominated Commissioner Bigham for Chair. No other nominations were made. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #4: Election of Vice Chair**

Bigham nominated Councilmember Taylor for Vice Chair. No other nominations were made. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #5: Approval of Agenda**

Pemble moved approval of the agenda. Garza seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #6: Approval of October 2023 Minutes**

Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes. Pemble seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #7: Recognition of Out-Going Members**

Garza made a motion to approve Resolutions 2024-01, 2024-02, and 2024-03 thanking outgoing commission members Mayor Dingle, Councilmember Khambata, and Councilmember Prince, respectively. Whitbred-Hemmingson seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #8: Presentation: Red Rock Corridor Overview**

Rehm presented the attached overview (Attachment 1) of the Red Rock Corridor.

Xiong asked if the Commission has been involved or commented on the State's current study of Highway 61.

Leitner noted that staff have met with the Highway 61 Study's project team. She stated that the study's southern boundary is at Lower Afton Road. She also noted that Matt Parent, the MnDOT project manager, is in the audience and available for questions or to provide more detail.

Bigham added that another important consideration in discussing the Red Rock Corridor is its connection to the Gold Line, and an east-west connection.

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**Agenda Item #9: Presentation: Red Rock Corridor Vision Refresh – Final Report**

Will Schroeer, Executive Director of East Metro Strong, presented the attached presentation (Attachment 2) about the Red Rock Corridor Vision Refresh – Final Report.

Schroeer stated the goal of the vision refresh was to respond to developments since the Commission adopted the 2017 Implementation Plan, and make sure the Commission is pursuing a transit system that serves the Red Rock communities as they are today.

He noted that the vision refresh process did not try to recreate all of the public engagement that was done for the 2017 Implementation Plan, rather, update it through surveys of residents and employers, as well as conducting focus groups. The public input underlined what was heard in 2016 and 2017, but the need was even stronger than before for several reasons, including the cost of transportation / maintaining a personal vehicle, employer workforce needs, and congestion reduction / environmental concerns.

He noted that corridor has some challenging land uses to serve by traditional transit, and some significant physical barriers such as the divided highway and railroad. Another layer of analysis was to consider where people live and work, and the data shows that people many begin or end their trip outside of the corridor—thus previous planning efforts solely along Highway 61 will not serve their needs.

He presented a refreshed vision for the Red Rock Corridor:

1. **Serve the whole corridor.** Transit will connect people to all parts of the communities in the corridor.
2. **Connect the corridor to other places**. Transit will connect people to and from other regional destinations and transit services.
3. **Work closely with employers and residents**. Transit providers will include employers and residents in planning and providing services.

He offered several service concepts that might fulfill the vision, noting that they were only concepts and demand further study. He also recommended to 1) continue working with stakeholders to develop expanded and new transit options; 2) advocate for those options; and 3) explore the creation of a Transportation Management Organization to help implement recommendations.

Garza voiced her support, noting her positive experience with a circulator shuttle in her youth and how it opened opportunities to her that would not have otherwise been possible, and connected communities.

Pemble stated there is continuing growth across the St Croix River, and thus there is increasing commuter traffic between the river and Highway 61. He added that this, in combination with growth southeast of Hastings, is creating a bottle neck at the High Bridge in Hastings. He voiced his support for exploring ways to relieve this pressure, such as direct service from Hastings to the western communities like Eagan.

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Johnson asked how Sunray could be included in station planning.

Schroeer stated that while he shares the opinion that Sunray ought to be an important node in the transit network in the east metro, these concepts were high level and station planning would require more study.

Bigham added that it is important to consider Sunray as an opportunity for connection, especially from cost and efficiency perspectives.

Bigham stated she has met with Mayors in her district, and they all highlighted transit as a priority for their communities. Specifically, she mentioned a conversation with St Paul Park about how they are in the transit taxing district but have no transit service—this is a problem that needs to be rectified. The same problem exists in Newport with the Newport Transit Station. She added that Cottage Grove needs transit to support economic development and fulfill the workforce needs. She noted that Washington County is currently working on their direction to spend additional money from sales tax. She emphasized the mutually beneficial relationship between the Red Rock Corridor and Gold Line.

Bigham added that service to St Paul Park is critical for many reasons, including from a jobs perspective as it relates to the refinery, and from an equity perspective because of the food shelf.

Xiong added that the east metro needs transit service and to build the Gold Line without any additional connections would be a disservice to us all. She emphasized that transportation costs are often a household's second largest expense—creating options to reduce this cost benefits other regional efforts, such as helping folks afford housing.

Rehm stated that staff recommend the approval of the vision refresh final report, noting that approving the report means accepting the new vision, but that the concepts Schroeer presented only demonstrate possibilities and do not commit the Commission to any particular model of service.

Garza made a motion to approve the Red Rock Corridor Vision Refresh Final Report. Taylor seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #10: Communications Update**

Rehm reviewed the information provided in the packet.

**Agenda Item #11: Other**

Taylor stated that a 52-unit affordable housing complex is opening next to the Newport Transit Station, and a concept plan exists for a third apartment building. The City of Newport continues to continue to pursue their long-term vision for the site and look forward to when transit is reinstated to support their vision.

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Johnson stated her excitement to be on the Commission and work with others across the east metro. She also stated she is looking forward to continued conversations about how to connect people to jobs and housing, and hearing more about the efforts of neighboring communities.

Garza noted recent conversations she had been a part of related to making the most of the river and developing along in. Bigham echoed her excitement for expanding bike and pedestrian opportunities along the river. Taylor noted that Newport staff are currently working on a trail plan to connect to a new river park, that also links to the Newport Transit Station.

No other updates.

**Added Agenda Item – Public Comment**

Tim Marino, an East St Paul resident, thanked the Commission for continuing to keep the Red Rock Corridor alive. He noted some concerns about the concepts presented for the vision refresh related to service consistency; federal funding eligibility; capacity and cost for micro transit elements; and accessibility of the system in terms of awareness and ease of use (e.g. understanding many branching routes). He emphasized the importance of connections to existing and planned transit lines.

**Agenda Item #12: Adjourn**

Chair Bigham adjourned the meeting.

DRAFT

RED ROCK
SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

**DATE:** September 30, 2024

**TO:** Red Rock Corridor Commission

**FROM:** Staff

**RE:** Metro Transit's Network Now

**Overview**

Adam Harrington, Director of Service Development for Metro Transit, will present on Metro Transit's Network Now, a vision for transit service in the region through 2027.

**Action**
Information

# Network Now: Draft Concept Plan

Red Rock Corridor Commission

September 30, 2024

# Why Network Now?

**Pivotal** time in our history

- Ridership dropped 50% between 2019 and 2020 but is now growing again
- 30% less service, with 60+ routes suspended

Travel patterns are **changing**

- Fewer downtown commuters and more diverse needs
- Customers increasingly need all-day, all-purpose transit

**Workforce** is a top priority

- Bus and rail service expansion requires operators and support staff
- Service design can impact employee satisfaction

Metro Transit is **growing**

- New regional sales tax
- 4 new transitways under construction and more in planning
- New transit modes (microtransit)

# Network Now Vision

**Resolves:**

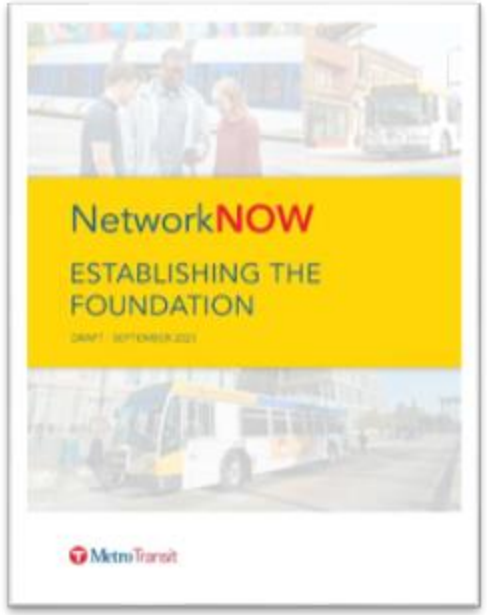
- Status of routes that are currently suspended (some since 2020)
- Facility closure needs

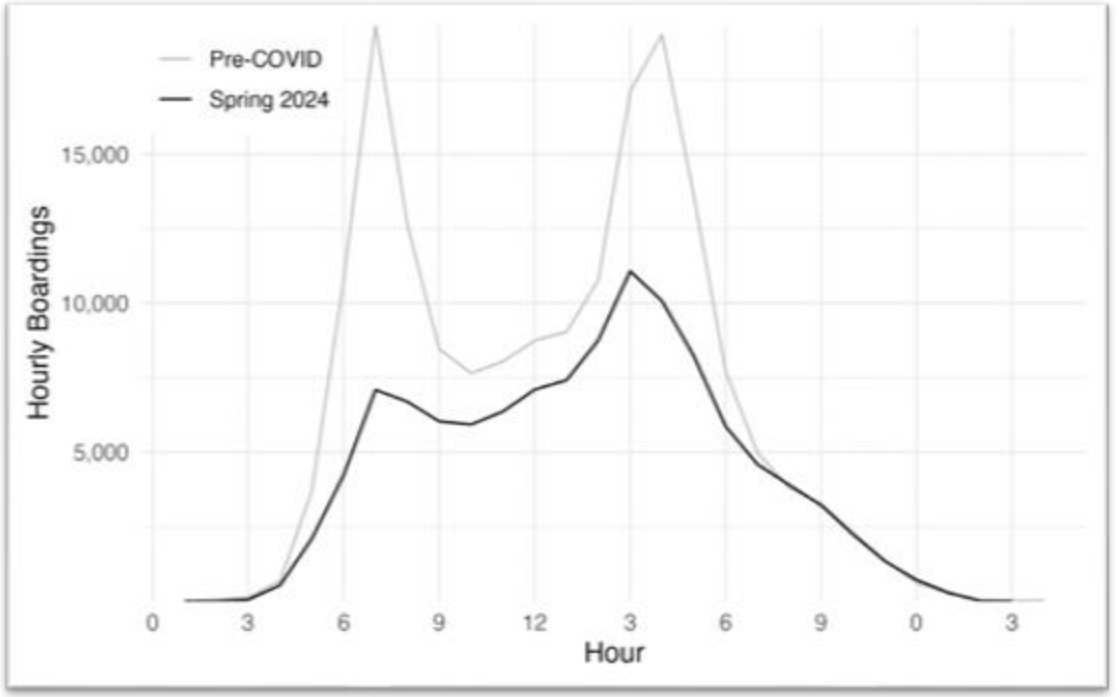
**Improves:**

- New or redesigned routes
- Frequency or span improvements
- METRO line investments
- Microtransit

# The foundation for network modification

- **Performance**: details network performance, changes since 2019, and opportunities
- **Policy**: regional policy guidance from the Metropolitan Council applied
- **Engagement**: 2023 captured values and thoughts, surveys, workshops, customer contacts, 6,000 comments



# Network Now Principles

| | |
|---|---|
| Adapt | **Adapt** service to changes in transit markets and travel patterns. |
| Prepare | **Prepare** for new METRO and high-frequency routes. |
| Maintain | **Maintain** the reliability of our scheduled service consistently over time. |
| Build on success | **Build on success** to grow ridership, adding service where people use transit the most. |
| Provide access | **Provide access to opportunities** and services with a focus on advancing equity and reducing regional disparities. |




# Draft Concept Plan

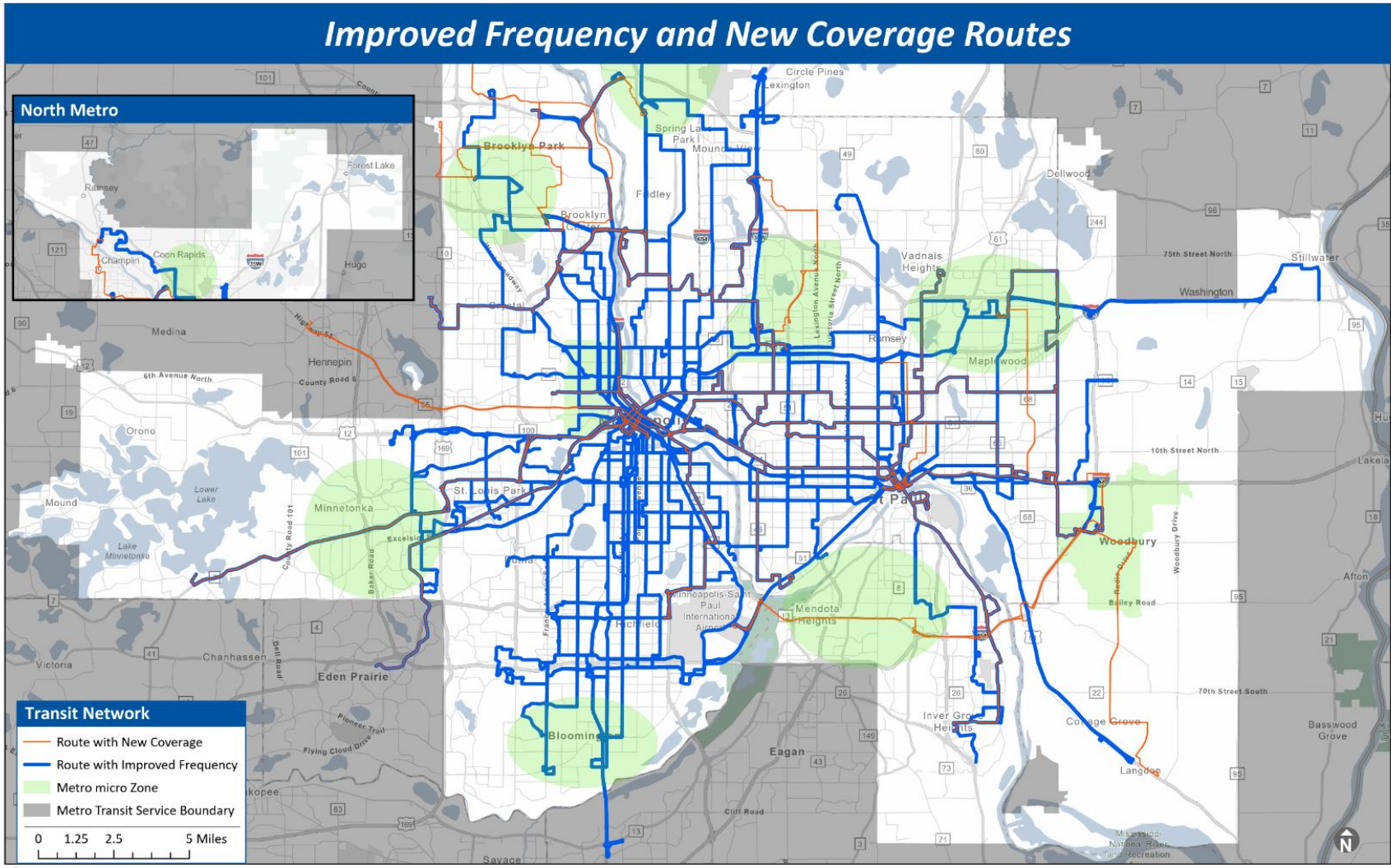
# Network Now

- Metro Transit's vision through 2027
- The proposed plan will:
  - Expand service in our network by more than 35% to grow ridership
  - Improve coverage and mobility by expanding bus routes and Metro micro service
  - Redesign our express and commuter services to meet the travel needs of our region now

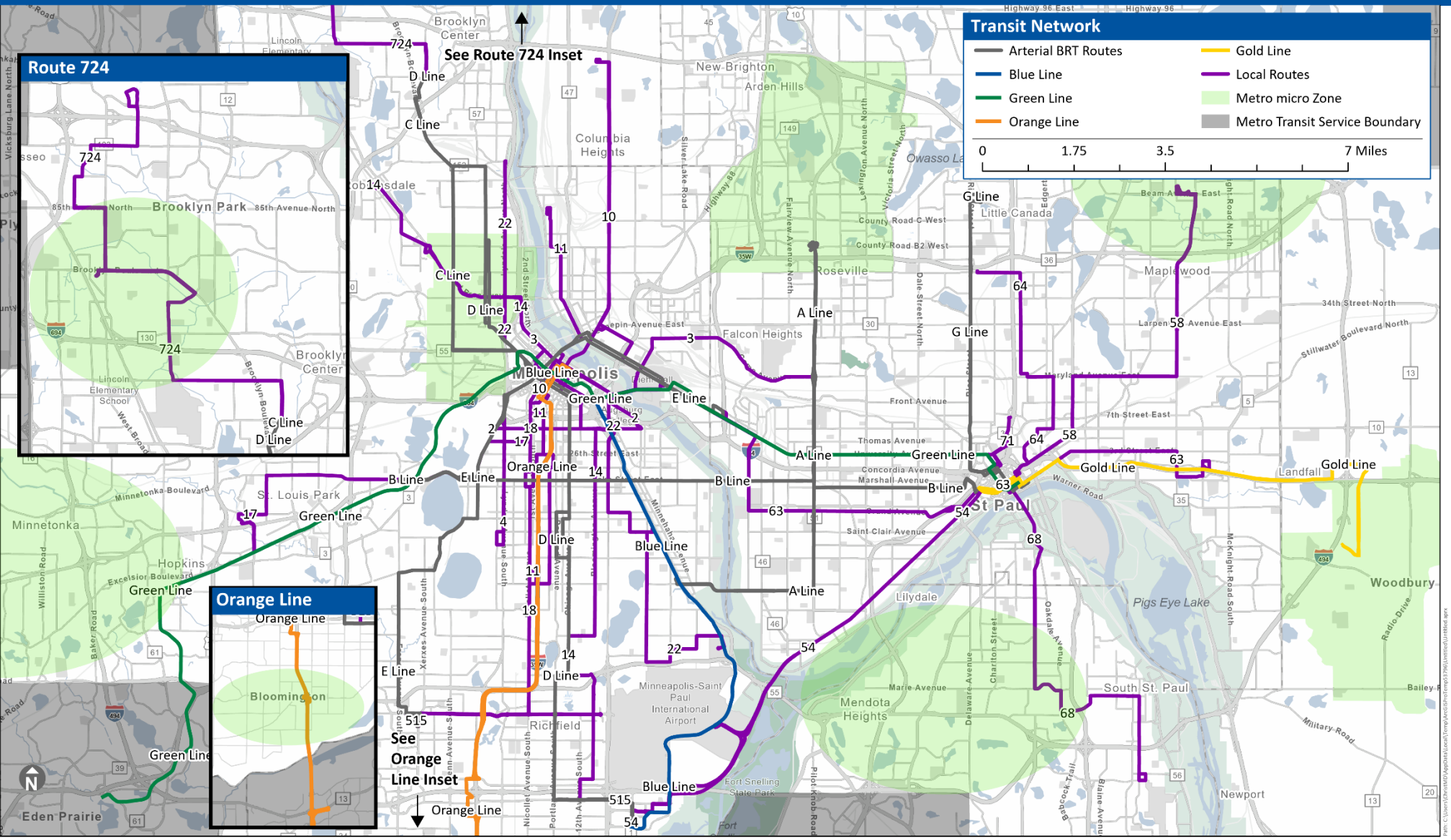


# 2027 Concept Plan Results

- **Grow ridership**
  - 65+ routes improved frequency & span
  - 15 routes with service 15” or better with added trips
  - LRT 10-minute frequency
- **Additional service coverage**
  - 8 new micro zones
  - 20+ routes with new areas of coverage
  - 25% increase in jobs accessible within 45 minutes to the average resident



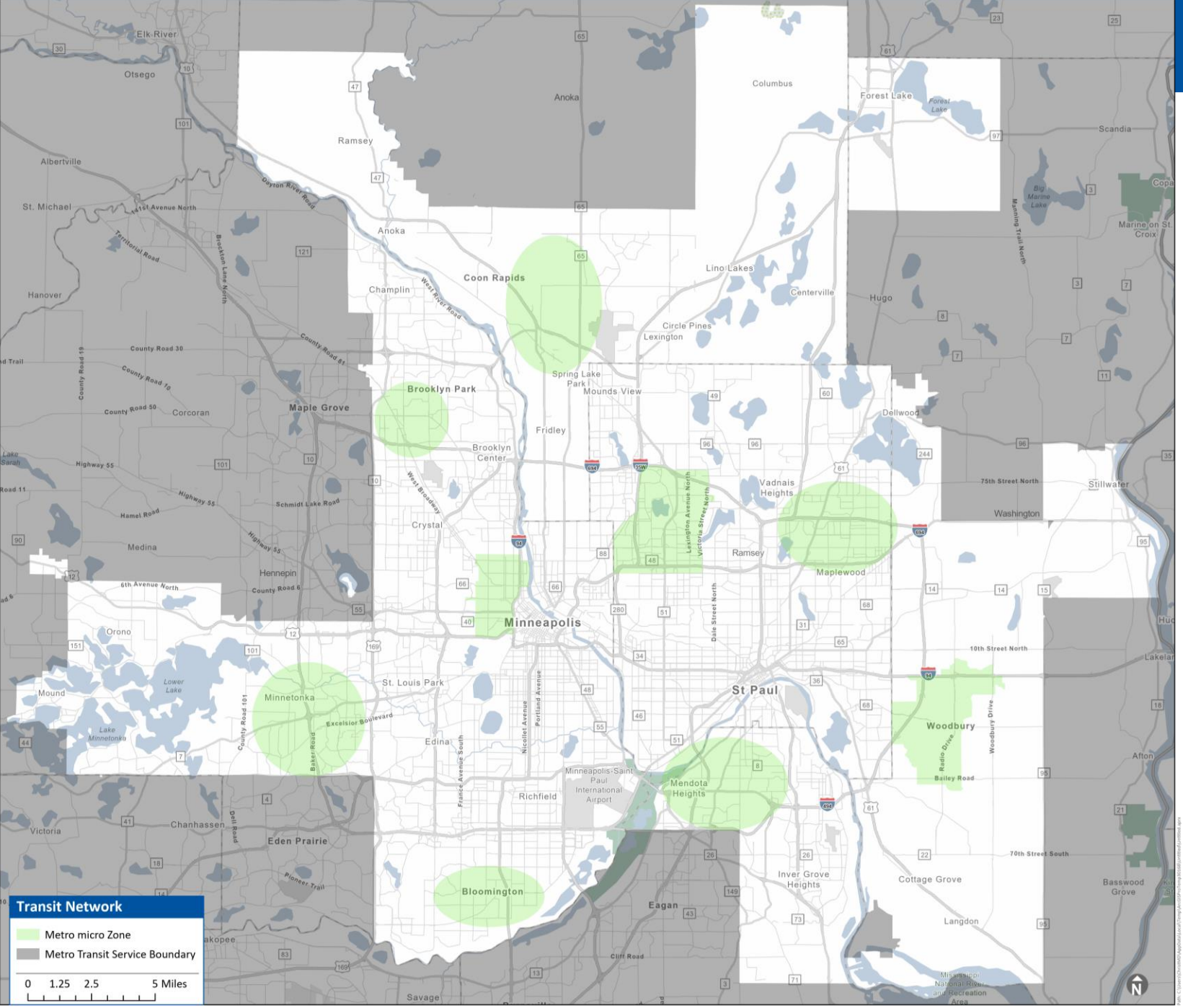
# High Frequency Routes




New high frequency service on Gold Line, Green Line Extension, B Line, E Line, G Line, Routes 4, 14, 17, 22, 58, 64, 68, 515, and 724

Metro Transit

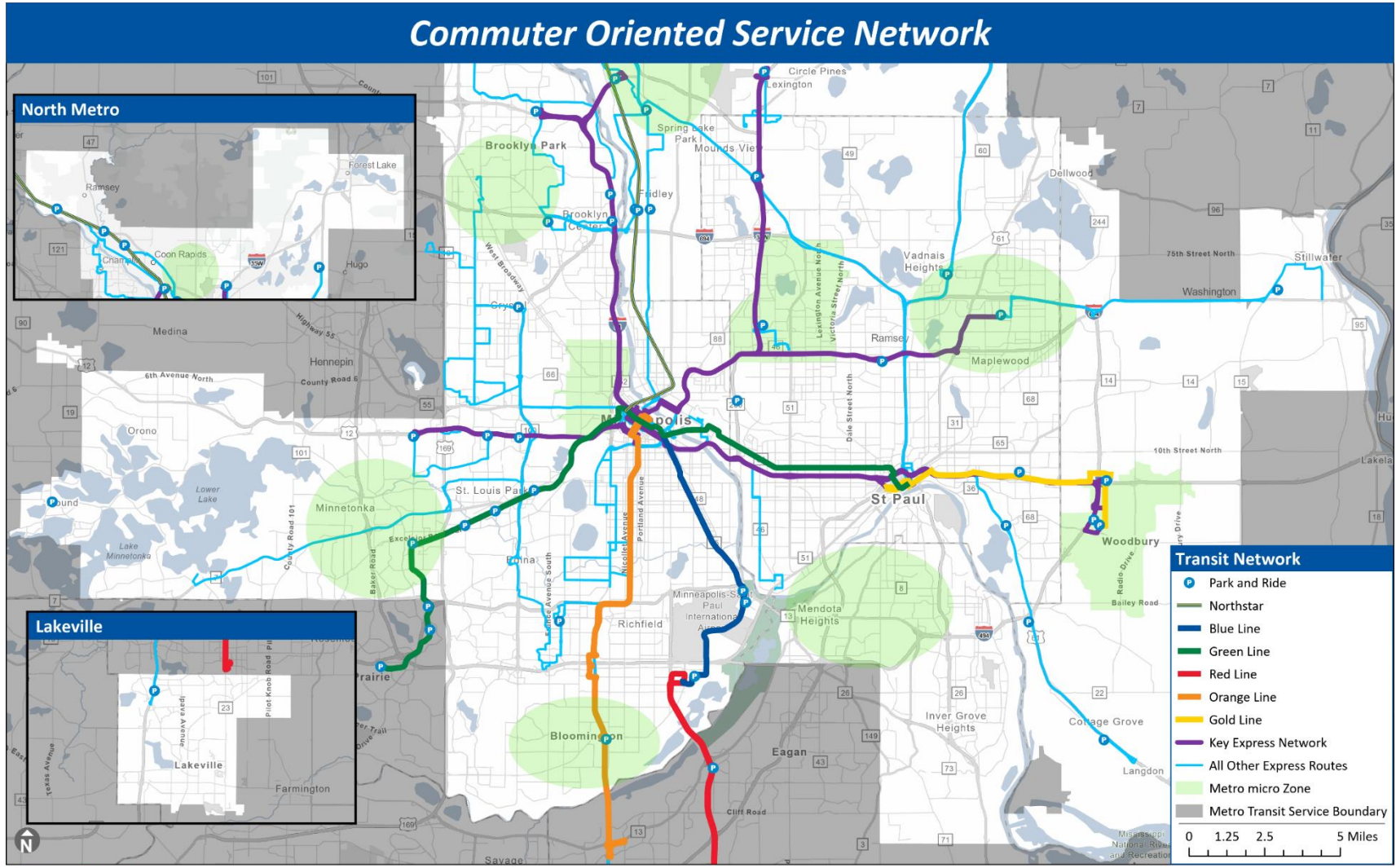
Date: 8/13/2024


Transit Network
Metro micro Zone
Metro Transit Service Boundary
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles
Elk River
Otsego
Albertville
St. Michael
Hanover
Corcoran
Maple Grove
Medina
Hennepin
Orono
Mound
Minnetonka
St. Louis Park
Edina
Minneapolis
Anoka
Ramsey
Columbus
Forest Lake
Scandia
Champlin
Coon Rapids
Lino Lakes
Centerville
Hugo
Circle Pines
Lexington
Spring Lake Park
Mounds View
Brooklyn Park
Fridley
Brooklyn Center
Crystal
Vadnais Heights
Dellwood
Stillwater
Washington
Maplewood
Ramsey
St Paul
Woodbury
Mendota Heights
Richfield
Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport
Inver Grove Heights
Cottage Grove
Eagan
Bloomington
Eden Prairie
Chanhassen
Victoria
Savage
Langdon
Afton
Lakeland
Basswood Grove
Marine on St Croix
Lake Minnetonka
Lower Lake
Lake Sarah
Anoka
Coon Rapids
Brooklyn Park
Maple Grove
Minneapolis
St Paul
Woodbury
Eagan
Bloomington
Eden Prairie
Minnetonka
Edina
St. Louis Park
Richfield
Maplewood
Ramsey
Vadnais Heights
Mendota Heights
Inver Grove Heights
Cottage Grove
Hugo
Lino Lakes
Forest Lake
Stillwater
Washington
Dellwood
Mounds View
Fridley
Crystal
Brooklyn Center
Champlin
Anoka
Ramsey
Albertville
St. Michael
Hanover
Corcoran
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Ramsey
Coon Rapids
Anoka

# 2027 Concept Plan Results

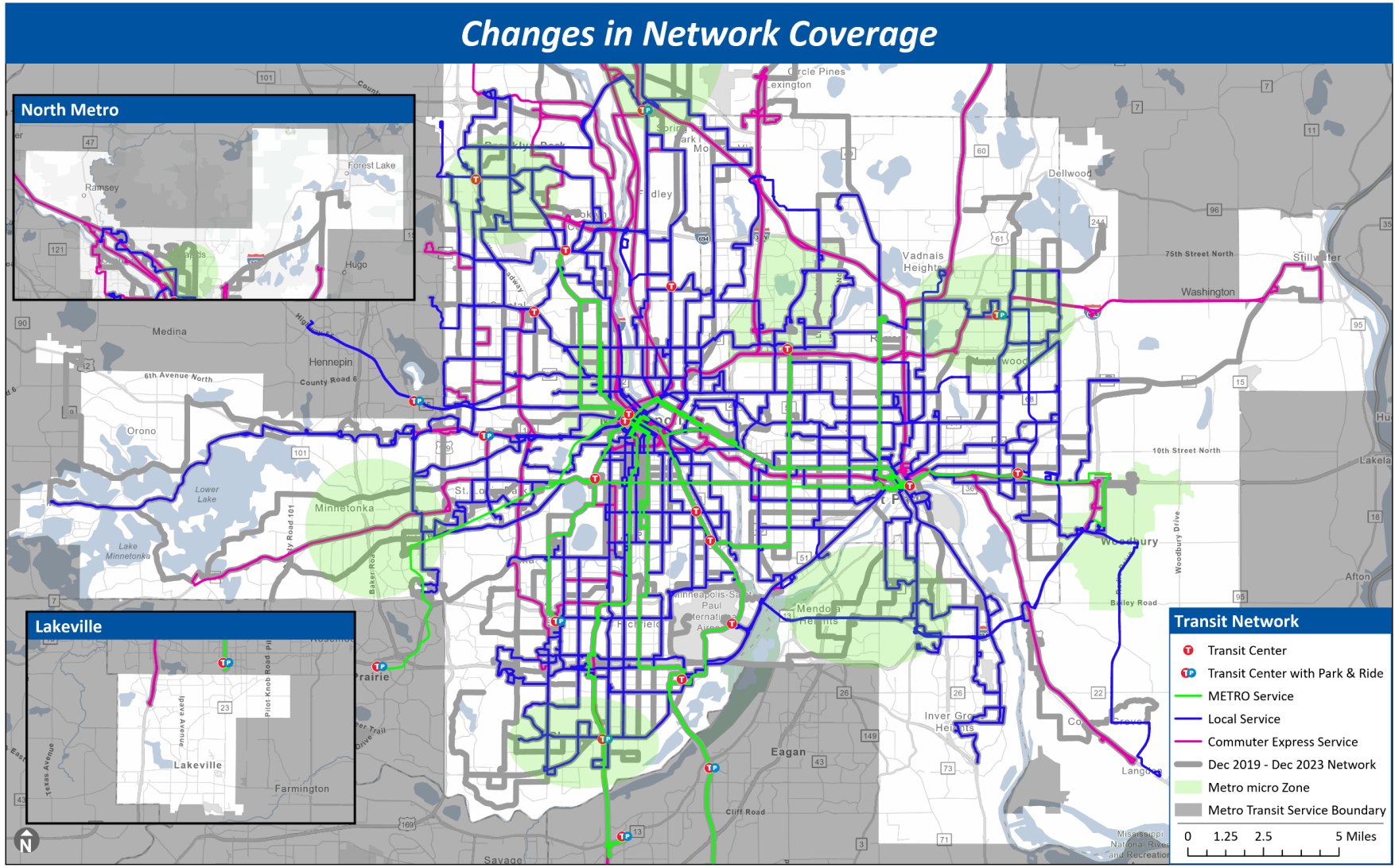
- **Adapt service** to travel patterns
  - **Key Express Network** all day service
  - 15” service during highest ridership of rush hours
  - Service to all major highway corridors

| Key Express Network Routes |
|---|
| 94 |
| 250 |
| 270 |
| 355 |
| 673 |
| 768 |
| 850 |



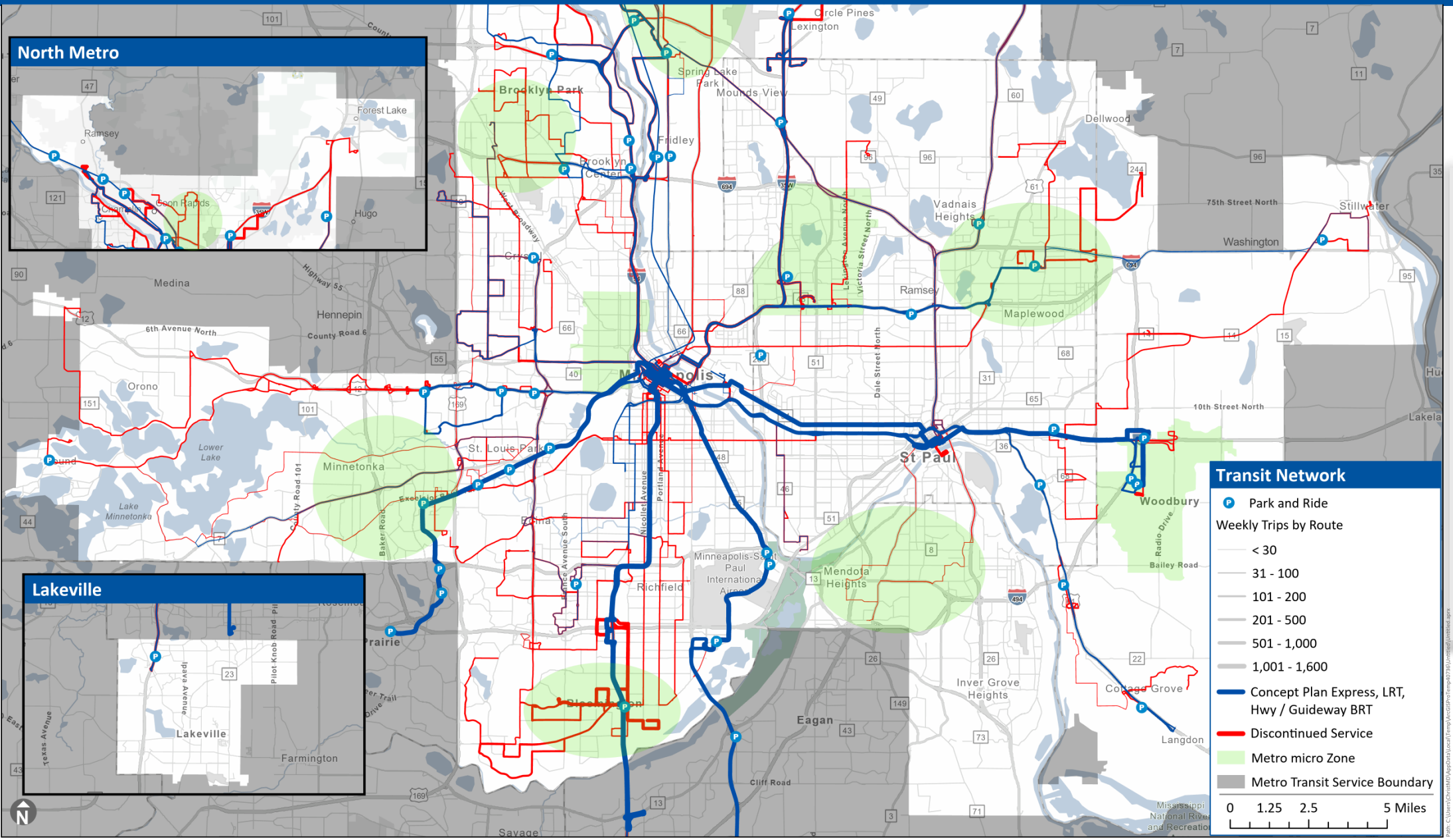
# 2027 Concept Plan Results

- **Adapt service** to travel patterns
  - 40+ routes restructured or adjusted
  - 53 suspended routes officially discontinued
  - 8 routes restored



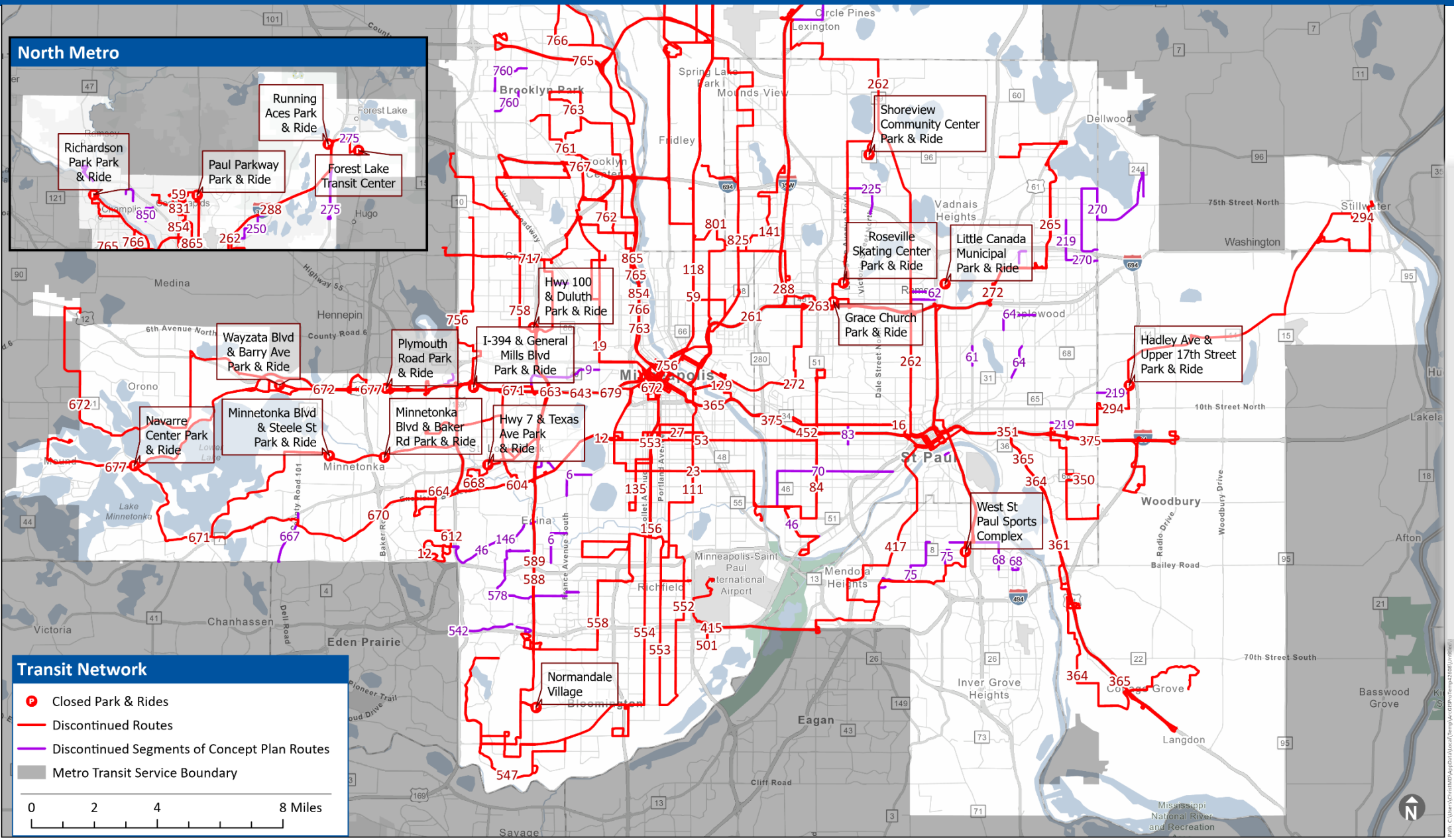

Metro Transit

# Change in Commuter Oriented Service Access




Commuter Oriented Service proposed offers robust access

# Discontinued Routes, Segments, and Facilities

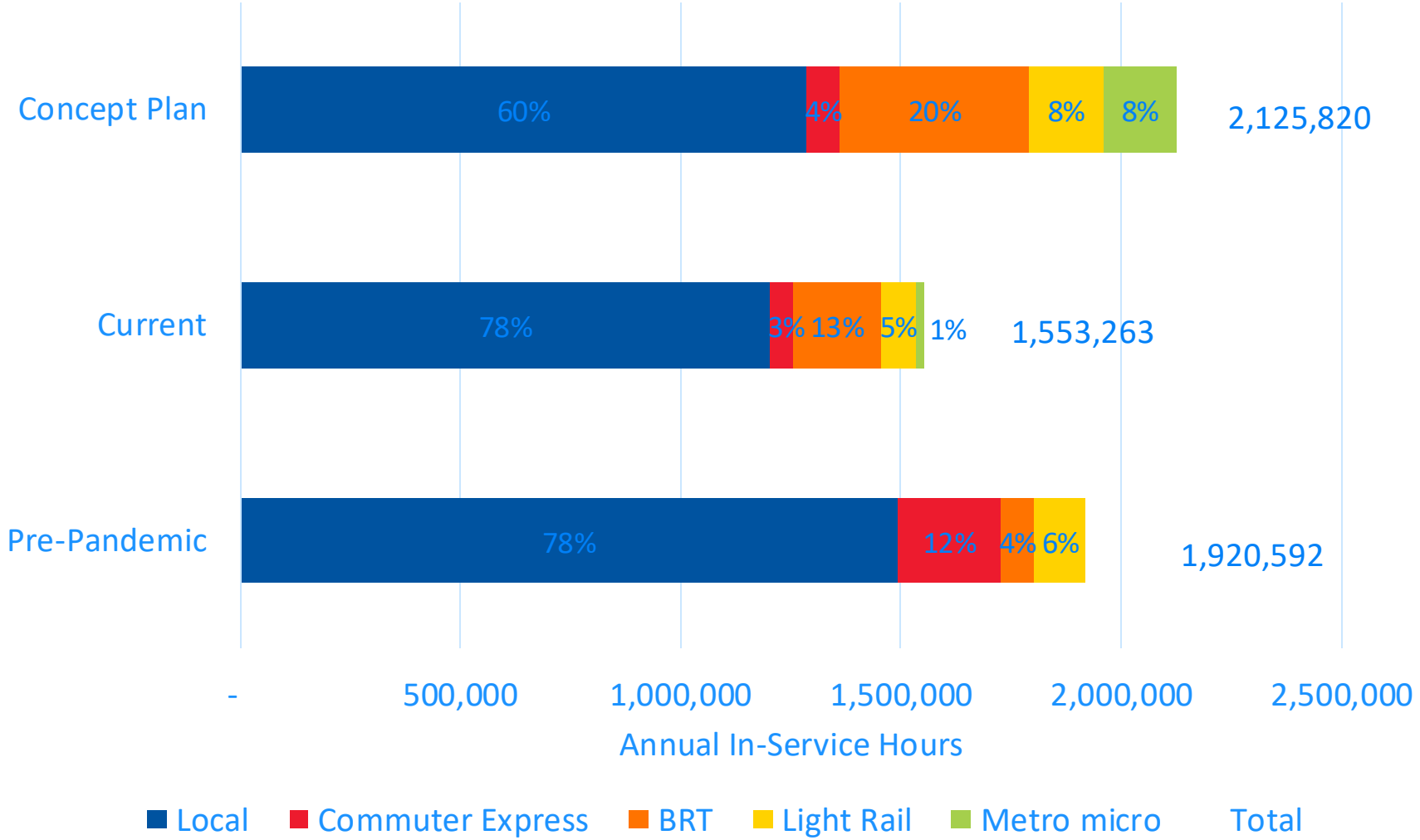



**Discontinuing service to meet travel demand and strengthen network**

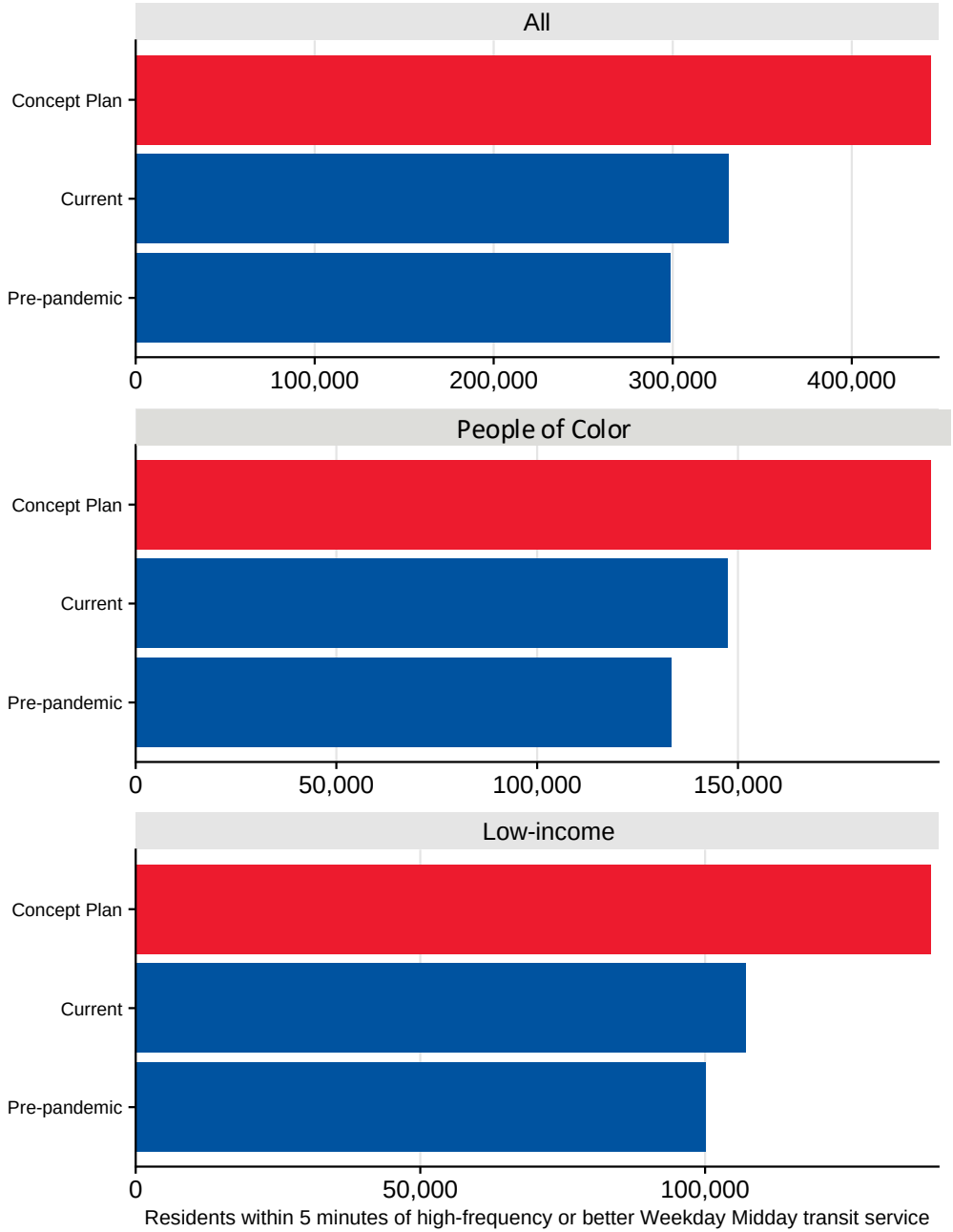


Date: 8/8/2024

# In-Service Hour Changes




- 35% more service than 2023
- Doubling investment in **METRO Lines** from current levels
- 9x investment Metro micro over today




# Results: Improvements in access to high-frequency network

- More of our region can access frequent all-day service in walking distance

## What's required?

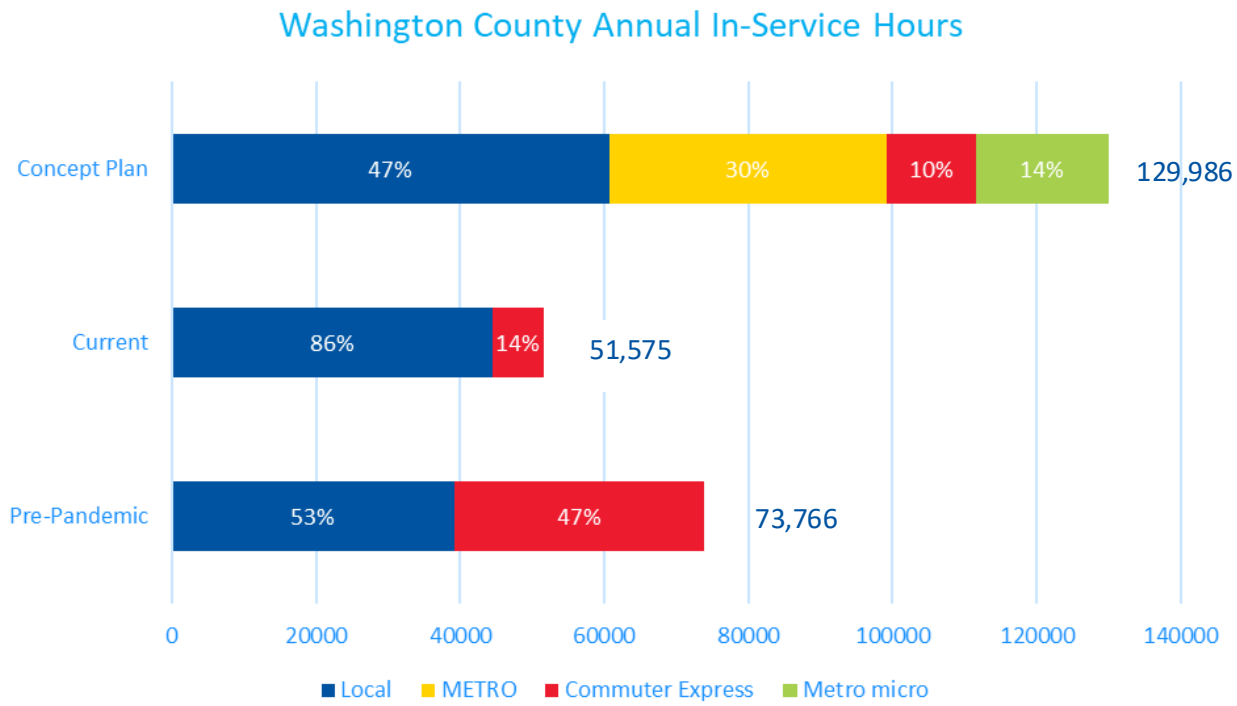
- Over 500 bus operators plus support staff will be needed to implement the improvements in this plan




# Proposed Service in the Red Rock Corridor

# Washington County Stats

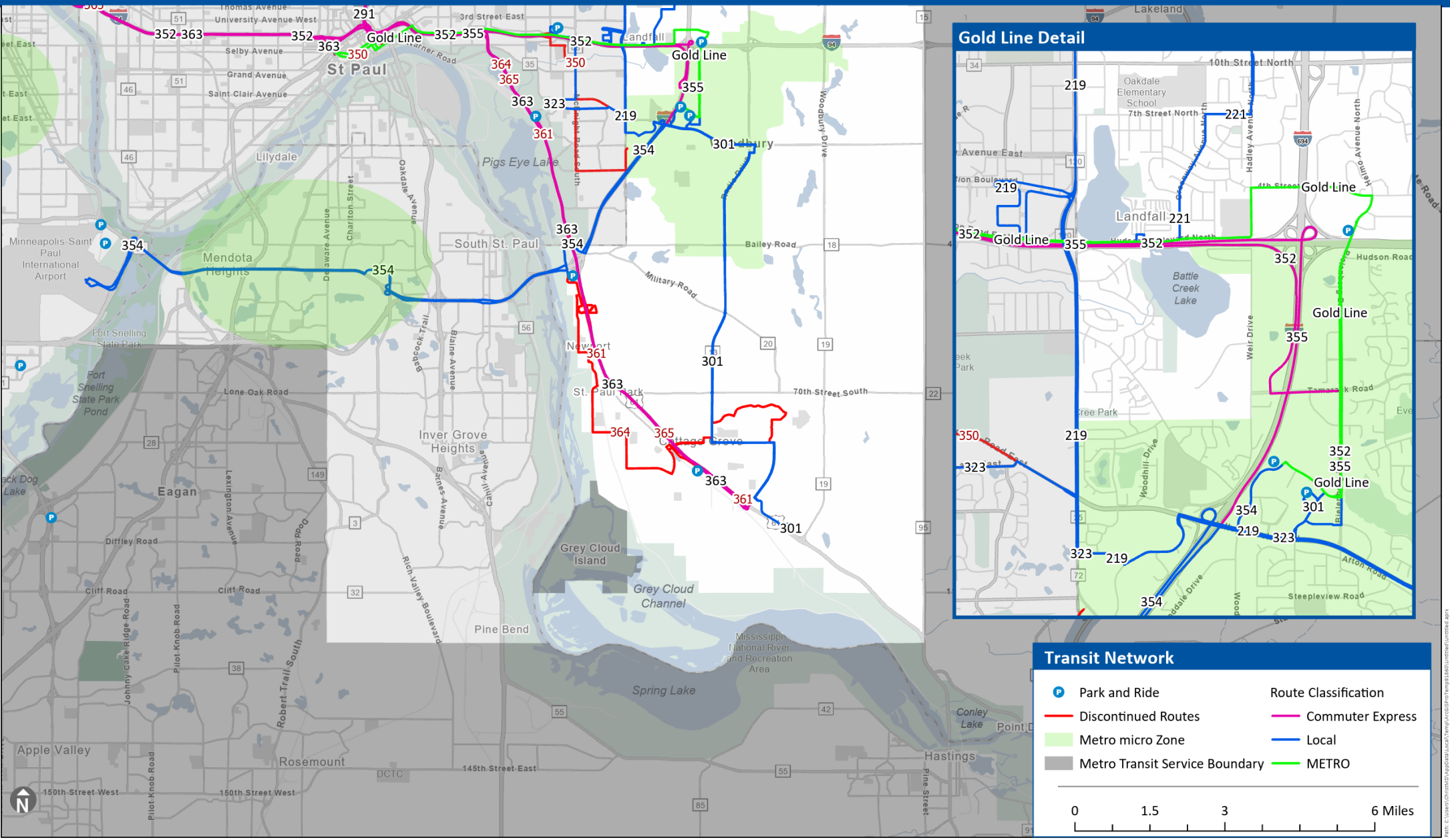
- Network Now changes result in a 152% increase in weekly in-service hours over Dec 2023 levels.
- 4 new routes *(221, 301, 352, 354)*
- 4 areas of new coverage *(61, 219, 301, 354)*
- 6 routes with frequency improvements *(61, 219, 221, 291, 355, 363)*
- 4 restructured routes *(61, 219, 221, 291)*
- 7 routes will be discontinued *(288, 350, 351, 361, 364, 365, 375)*



# Red Rock Corridor Stats

- Service in St. Paul (Hwy 61 corridor), St. Paul Park, Newport, Cottage Grove and Hastings
- 2 new routes (301, 354)
- 1 route with frequency improvements (363)
- 4 express routes will be discontinued (350, 361, 364, 365)
- METRO Gold Line opening March 2025
- 1 new micro zone in Woodbury

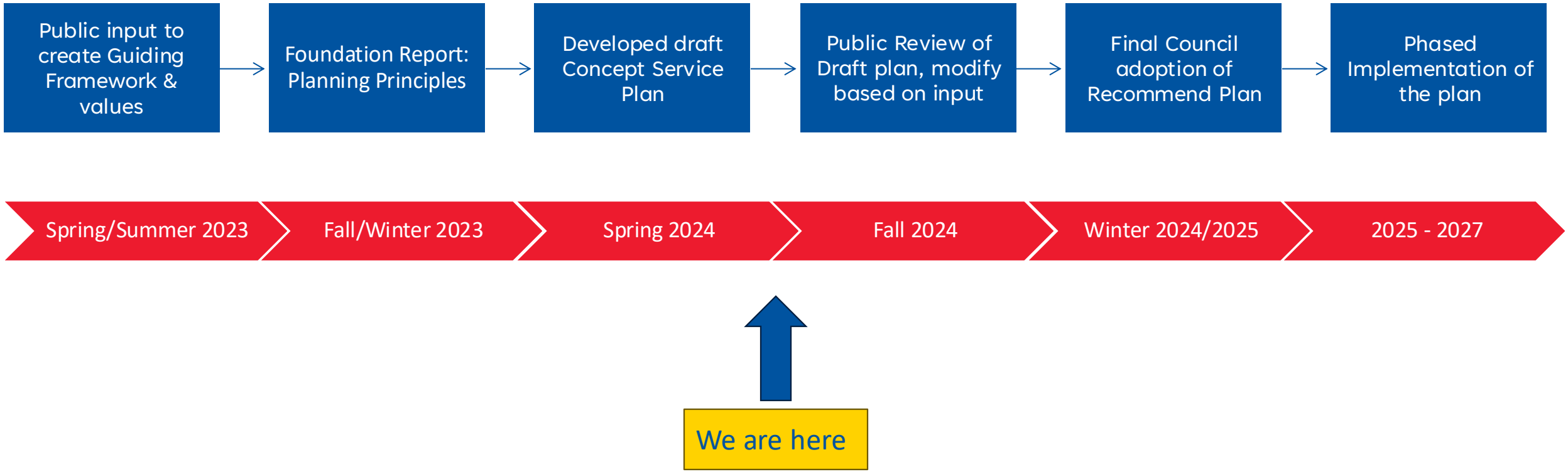
# Network Now Concept Plan Routes - Red Rock Corridor




Metro Transit

Date: 9/19/2024

# Network Now development timeline



## Engagement Process

- Online comment form
  - Paper version available for customer intercept and community work
  - Comments also accepted via email
- Community meetings
  - Public hearing on October 29
  - Virtual and in-person events around the metro
- Pop-up and customer intercept events
- Social media, rider alerts, and information shared across our system
- Direct reach out to government partners and community organizations
  - Do you have organizations or individuals that you want us to reach?

# Thank You!

*To learn more or subscribe for updates, visit* metrotransit.org/network-now.

RED ROCK
SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

**DATE:** September 30, 2024

**TO:** Red Rock Corridor Commission

**FROM:** Staff

**RE:** 2025 Red Rock Corridor Commission Work Plan and Budget

**Overview**
The proposed 2025 work plan and budget is attached for review. The work plan focuses on commission administration, community engagement, and coordination with partner agencies. The key items are also listed below:

- Continue to build off of the 2023 re-visioning process that responds to current transit needs, with further consideration to local connections and innovative partnerships with cities, employers, and other stakeholders.
- Work with Metro Transit to communicate new transit services in corridor communities as proposed in the Network Now Plan.
- Inform state and federal legislators of the need for improved transit service in the Red Rock Corridor.
- Offer guidance, monitor progress, and prepare formal comments on studies that are being conducted or that could have an impact on the activities in the Red Rock Corridor.
- Continue communication efforts through the use of social media and updating the website to coincide with the next steps in the corridor implementation.

The proposed 2025 budget is $13,500. The budget will be covered 100% by existing fund balance.

Staff will provide an overview of the draft work plan and budget at the meeting and will seek approval from the commission.

**Action**
Approval

RED ROCK
SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

# 2025 Work Plan

## Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities

Commission activities will include:

1. Prepare and adopt the annual Work Plan and Budget
2. Prepare the annual financial report
3. Review insurance as needed and procure appropriate insurance
4. Provide commission and staff administration
5. Manage commission expenses
6. Manage the consultant selected for each of the various work tasks undertaken by the commission

## General Activities

The Red Rock Corridor Commission (RRCC) will work with corridor municipalities, chambers of commerce and other business groups, community members, the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and other stakeholders as needed to continue the advancement of the Red Rock Corridor. To accomplish this, the RRCC will do the following:

1. Inform state and federal legislators of the need for improved transit service in the Red Rock Corridor.
2. Offer guidance, monitor progress, and prepare formal comments on studies that are being conducted or that could have an impact on the activities in the Red Rock Corridor.
3. Work with state and local agencies to identify regional priorities for all transportation modes in the corridor.

## Building Upon New Vision

The Commission finalized a re-visioning process and adopted the final report in January 2024. It is anticipated that 2025 activities will focus on coordination efforts to investigate options to implement the new vision's next steps, including communicating new transit services in corridor communities as proposed in Metro Transit's Network Now plan.

## Public Involvement

The commission's public involvement activities will build on past communication efforts and strategy as outlined in the Implementation Plan. The commission's activities will include:

1. Recognition of commission meetings and events though various media sources (i.e., social media, print, radio, and public access television).
2. Coordination of updates to the project website to coincide with any studies or initiatives being undertaken in corridor area.
3. Project webpage hosting, content management, and social media utilization.

# 2025 Budget

## 2025 Expenditures

| Operating Expenditure Category | Amount |
|---|---|
| Corridor Administration/General Activities[1] | |
| - Corridor Insurance | $1,500 |
| - Materials/Postage/Printing/Memberships | $1,000 |
| - Events/Tours/Advertising | $1,000 |
| **Subtotal** | **$3,500** |
| Public Involvement | |
| - Website Hosting | $2,000 |
| - Communication Services (incl. possible contract services) | $6,000 |
| **Subtotal** | **$8,000** |
| Contingency | $2,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$13,500** |

*Notes:*

1. *The county regional railroad authorities typically cover administrative functions including mailings. However, such items are eligible for reimbursement as approved by the commission.*

## 2025 Revenue

| Revenue Source | % Due | Amount Due | Fund Balance | Total Revenue |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Red Rock Corridor Commission Fund Balance | 100% | $0 | $13,500 | $13,500 |
| **REVENUE TOTAL** | | **$0** | **$13,500[1]** | **$13,500** |

*Notes:*

1. *$13,500 of the commission's 2024 end of year fund balance ($38,748 as of September 2024) will be used to cover RRCC financial members' 2025 budget contributions.*

RED ROCK
SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

**DATE:** September 30, 2024

**TO:** Red Rock Corridor Commission

**FROM:** Staff

**RE:** 2025 Red Rock Corridor Commission Proposed Meeting Schedule

The proposed dates for the 2025 Red Rock Corridor Commission meetings are listed below. Meetings are planned to be held in person at St. Paul Park City Hall from 4:30pm-6:00pm.

**Dates**
January 23, 2025

April 24, 2025

July 24, 2025

October 23, 2025

**Action:**
Approval

RED ROCK
SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

**DATE:** September 30, 2024

**TO:** Red Rock Corridor Commission

**FROM:** Staff

**RE:** Communications Update

**Facebook**
The Red Rock Corridor Facebook page has 419 likes and a total of 422 people follow the page. Staff aims to keep the page active by posting transit-related news from across the region several times per month.

**Press**
None

**Action**
Information