

# Metropolitan Council & Metro Transit Equity approach

This document provides an introduction to major equity initiatives underway at Metro Transit. It begins with broad policies and programs of the Metropolitan Council and moves to regional transit equity issues and initiatives under the direction of Metro Transit. It is not meant to be a comprehensive review of the Council's work in the field of equity, but rather a high level summary. Finally, it responds directly to equity issues raised by the Equity Commitments Coalition for SWLRT and demonstrates the Council's willingness to take action within its jurisdiction.

- Regional policy: Thrive MSP 2040
- Regional focus: 2014-15 Metro Transit service, customer facilities and regional planning
- Sub-regional focus: North Minneapolis & SWLRT connections

## ***Regional Policy: Thrive MSP 2040***

Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life. For more information about *Thrive MSP 2040*, see [thrivemsp.org](http://thrivemsp.org).

## ***2014-15 Metro Transit Equity Initiatives***

The 2014-2015 Metro Transit Equity Initiatives is just the beginning. It is a high-level regional approach and first step in identifying areas to improve transit equity and initial action steps. This document is a summary of how our service performs today and how transitways strengthen access and connections to jobs for people living in racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs). It also outlines action steps to enhance equity, which will be implemented by the end of 2015. These steps include:

- Adding 150-200 new or replacement customer waiting shelters. Nearly 100 of them will be located at new locations, the majority of which are within RCAPs;
- Providing enhanced shelter amenities like heat, light and transit information;
- Strengthening our commitment on equal opportunity employment at the Metropolitan Council, with added emphasis on Metro Transit's new transitway projects;
- Expanding community engagement by building on our previous efforts and partnering with local community members and advocacy groups in a meaningful way.

Metropolitan Council members and staff will be reaching out to communities and advocacy organizations in the coming weeks and months to:

- Refine equity planning and develop new initiatives;
- Review the Council's response the SWLRT/North Minneapolis "equity commitments" document;
- Engage community members about opportunities to improve service and related amenities

## I. Transit Customer Shelters

Metro Transit owns and maintains 900 customer waiting shelters throughout the region, including those at Transitway stations, park and ride lots, transit centers and bus stops of which there are 800 (Map A). By the end of 2015, new shelters will be installed at 75-100 bus stops with a focus on RCAPs. An additional 75-100 old shelters, many recently acquired from CBS advertising, will be replaced, with the combined result of 150-200 new shelters available for our riders (Chart A).

Metro Transit has historical guidelines based on passenger demand to determine bus stop shelter placement. The minimum number of weekday passenger boardings required to consider placement of a shelter is 40 in the core cities and 25 in suburban areas, and more than 80 weekday boardings in any area to consider the addition of heat. These guidelines were developed to provide geographic coverage at lower boarding bus stops for transit customers in areas outside of core cities - many of which are destinations for Minneapolis and St. Paul residents.

Currently Metro Transit provides a shelter at about 50 percent of the stops that meet these minimum ridership requirements (Chart B). To meet 100 percent of shelter placement with these guidelines, an additional 400 shelters would need to be placed at bus stops at a cost of \$3-5 million - not including amenities such as light and heat, or unforeseen site conditions.



Image A: Old shelter



Image B: New shelter

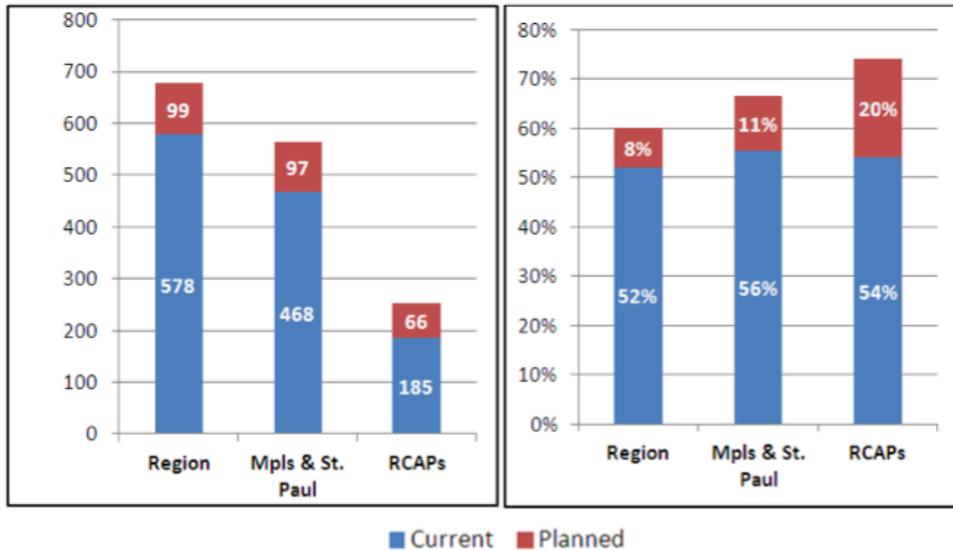
Not all bus stops are suitable to place shelters. Locating shelters includes consideration of site suitability and space, spacing between shelters, transfer connections and ability to meet ADA requirements. Comprehensive and equitable shelter placement and amenity guidelines will be developed by Metro Transit with input from the community in 2014-2015.

2014 Estimate Metro Transit Shelters and Amenities	Cost	Minimum weekday boardings to consider placement*
Standard Shelter	\$7,500	40 urban area
		25 suburban area
Advertising Panel	\$1,500	
Light (solar or standard) w/o heat	\$5,000	
Heat	\$30,000	80
*Heat can range from \$10,000-\$60,000		
**Light (solar or standard) with heat	\$500	
Real time schedule infor (existing power source)	\$15,000	

\*As noted above, shelter placement guidelines are under review.

**Chart A: Shelter count**

**Chart B: Shelter placement meeting minimum requirements**



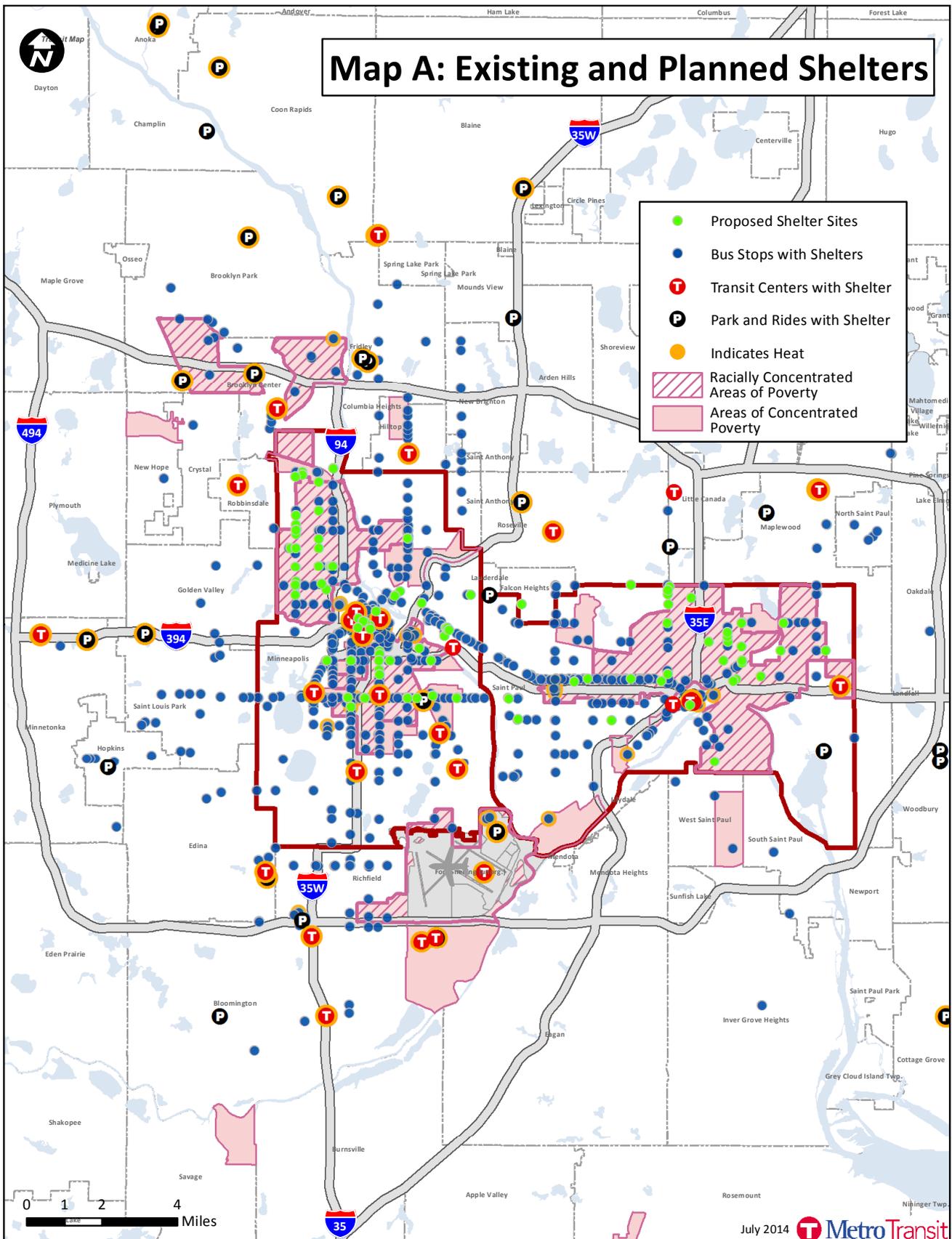
### Shelter Amenity Improvement

In addition to the new shelters already programmed for 2014 and 2015, Metro Transit will also apply for funding to improve amenities at existing bus stops through the federal Ladders of Opportunity Grant to be awarded this year. Our application requests:

- \$3 million in funding
- Improvements to existing customer waiting shelters like solar powered light, heat and schedule information
- 125-150 locations

A minimum of 10 percent of project funds to be dedicated for community engagement. Metro Transit will continue to pursue funding to make improvements to customer amenities, should this application be unsuccessful.

Map A: Shelters



## II. Transit Service

### Background

Some of Metro Transit's most frequent (operating every 15-minutes or better on weekdays) and highest ridership transit routes serve Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty (RCAP) and Areas of Concentrated Poverty (ACP), including the METRO Green Line and Blue Line and bus routes 2, 3, 5, 18, 19, 64 and 84.

Portions of 46 local bus routes serve RCAPs. Ridership on these 46 routes totals nearly 20 percent of the region's weekday rides. Since 2010, weekday bus trips increased on these routes an average of 5% on weekdays, 3% on Saturdays and 13% on Sundays. Examples of increased service include:

- Route 5 by 7% on weekdays
- Route 19 by 33% on weekdays
- Route 723 by 47% on weekdays
- Route 3 by 74% on Saturdays
- Route 62 by 33% on Saturdays
- Route 68 by 38% on Saturdays

Nearly 56,000 of 260,000 weekday boardings system wide, occur at bus stops within RCAP and ACP (see Map C).

### Service Improvement Plan

Metro Transit is developing a 10-15 year service improvement plan (SIP) for expanding the local and express route bus network. This plan will help us prioritize where and how to improve our service when additional funding becomes available. Workshops with elected officials and community groups were held in November 2013. In addition, nearly 4,000 people completed our online survey. Staff are currently reviewing this feedback, identifying common themes, patterns and the most-requested improvements to develop a list of project ideas.

Goals of the SIP include:

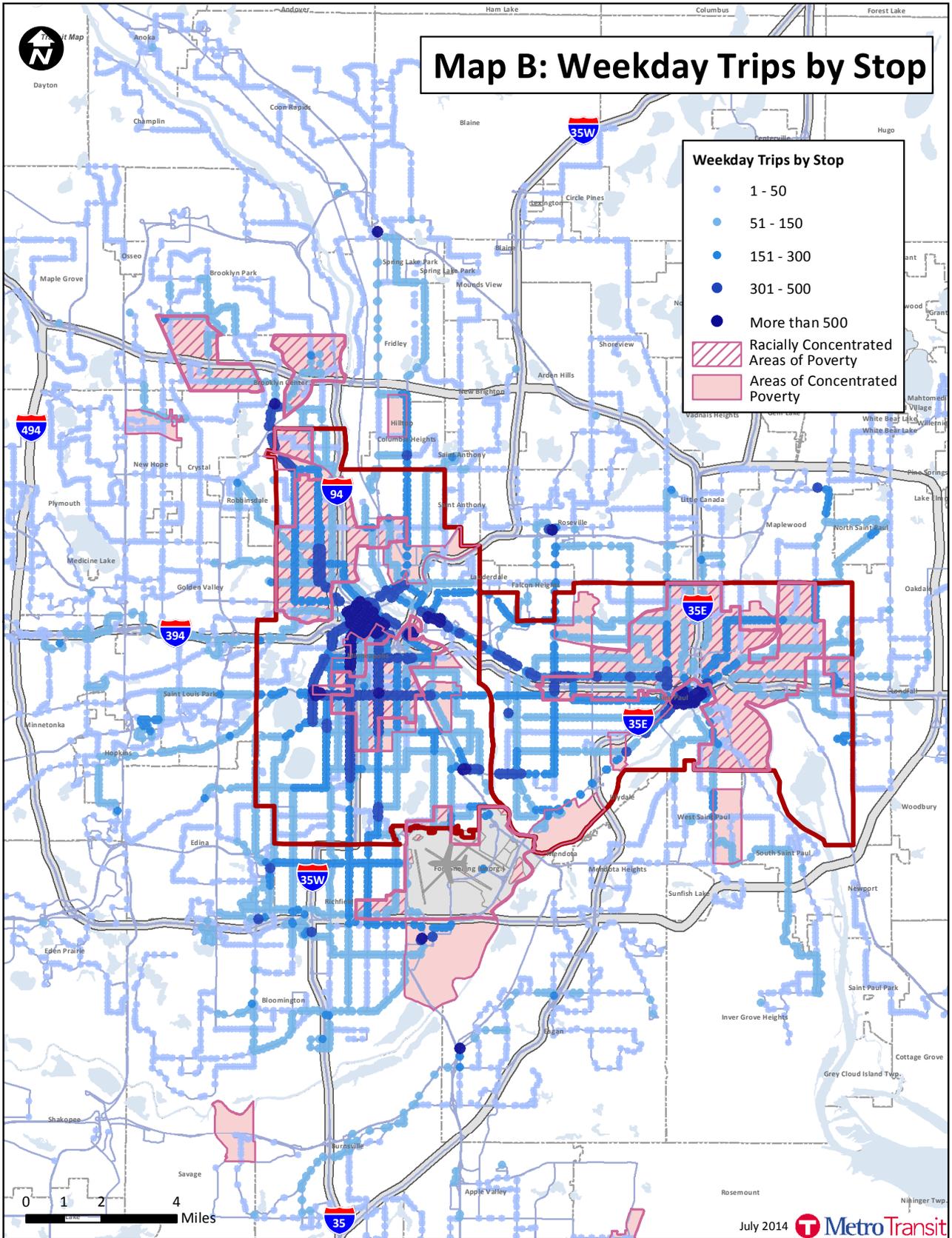
- Maximize ridership growth
- Improve transit equitably
- Emphasize high productivity/low-subsidy projects
- Provide faster travel time
- Enhance connectivity of transit system
- Support transit-friendly land use and design
- Expand service for off-peak trip purposes

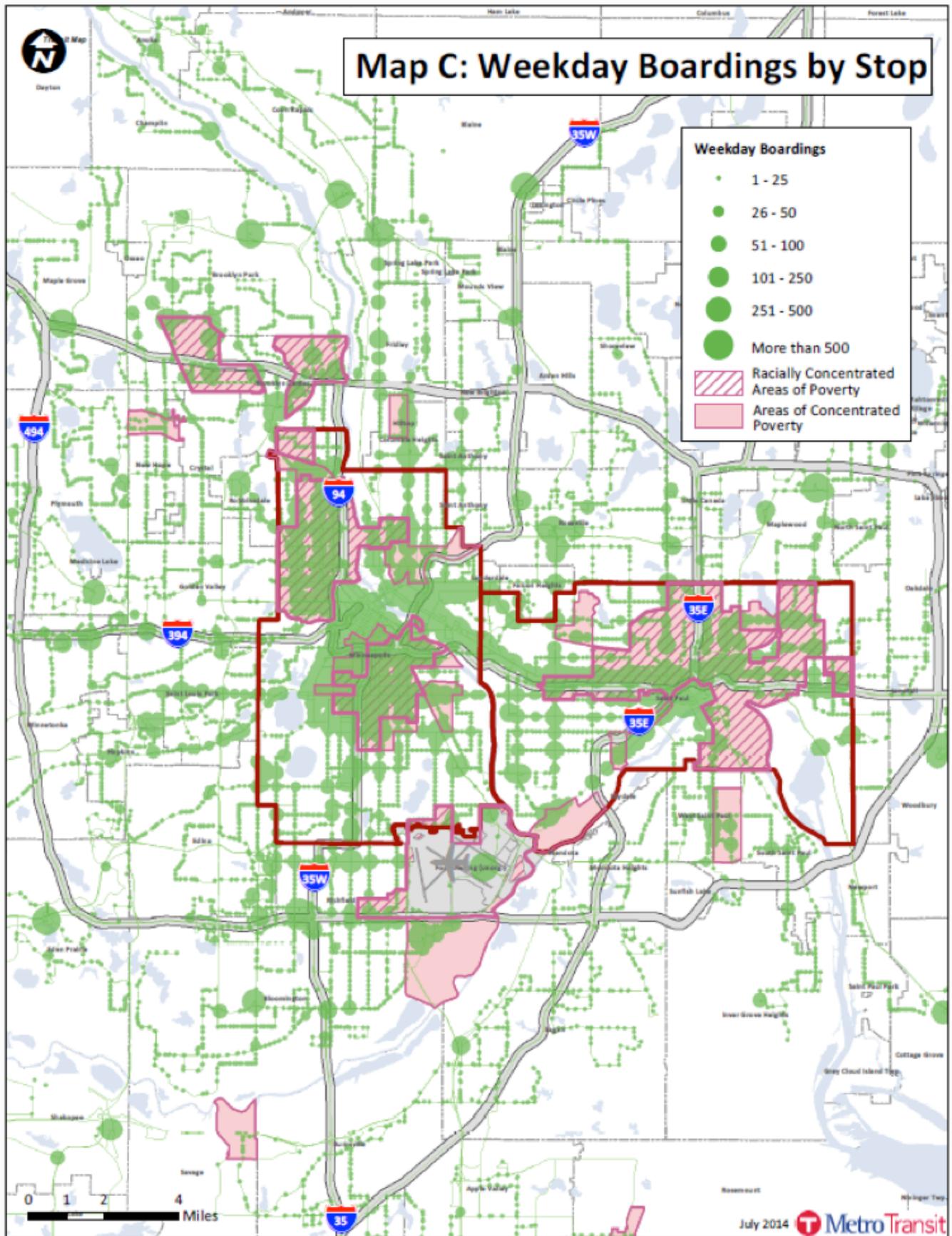
We can best achieve these goals by following four guiding principles in transit planning:

- **Design simple, direct routes.** Simple routes that travel in nearly a straight line are easy to understand and provide faster and more frequent service. A route that zigzags will be slower, more confusing and cost more to operate.
- **Serve areas with high density of uses.** Places with many people and destinations within a compact area are more cost-effective to serve with transit. Higher density allows for a smaller number of routes to serve a greater number of people and needs, making transit useful to more people.
- **Balance frequency and coverage.** This is the big tradeoff in transit. Metro Transit must balance its limited resources between providing fast, frequent service that people may have to walk longer distances to reach with service that covers more area, resulting in a shorter walk, but operates less frequently. The goal: serving the highest number of people while providing basic access across the region.
- **Match level of service to demand.** Whenever possible, we offer bigger buses and more frequent service where needed. Providing too much service is expensive and prevents trips and routes from being added in another area that needs it. Providing too little service makes transit less useful and can lead to crowding on existing service.

We are currently finalizing the review of survey input, incorporating feedback from other projects and re-visiting input from previous customer relations comments for overlooked project ideas. Our next steps are to estimate project costs and ridership and then determine prioritization evaluation criteria based on best practices and community transit values. Draft results will be available this fall for public review and feedback, with a goal of finalizing the SIP in early 2015.

Map B: Frequency





### III. Bus Fleet

Metro Transit operates nearly 900 transit buses and remains committed to providing a fleet of clean, comfortable and reliable buses to operate its service throughout the region, including in RCAPs. An analysis of vehicle assignments conducted as part of our Title VI Service Monitoring Study in 2012 showed that the average age of buses used on predominantly low-income and/or minority routes is newer than for the overall system. This means that newer buses, which are most likely in better condition, are used on routes operating in low-income and/or minority areas, such as RCAPs. This analysis will be completed again in 2015.

The newest generation of buses is 12% more efficient and has 90% cleaner emissions as compared to the late 1990s. Improved focus on maintenance has resulted in an 85% improvement in reliability. The number of bus miles between breakdowns improved from approximately 3,500 miles in 2003 to nearly 7,500 miles in 2012 and 2013. Our newest vehicles are considerably quieter, both inside and outside the vehicle.

Metro Transit's 2012 Rider Survey indicated that local bus riders are overall quite satisfied with Metro Transit service. RCAPs are primarily served by local bus routes. On a scale of 1-5 (5 is highest) local bus riders gave us a score of 4.10. This compares favorably to the score from all customers of 4.23. An indicator of the high level of satisfaction on local routes is that local bus customers rated the following categories equal to or higher than the score of express riders:

- Vehicles are comfortable
- Drivers operate vehicles safe/responsible
- Vehicles are environmentally friendly
- Availability of seats

### IV. Transitway and connecting service planning

Existing and planned transitways (as shown on Map D), including LRT, arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) and highway BRT, will strengthen the overall network serving RCAPs and employment centers, facilitating the movement towards greater economic opportunities for individuals living within the RCAP areas. Transitways improve mobility by providing faster service to new destinations. They also offer increased frequency and span of service, particularly in core transit market area.

#### Light-Rail Transit

In June of 2014 Metro Transit started service on its second light-rail (LRT) line: the METRO Green Line. This route connects downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul via the University of Minnesota and University Avenue. The METRO Green Line builds upon the success of the METRO Blue Line which began service in 2004. Both of these routes enhance the customer experience with:

- A faster, smoother ride
- Low-floor vehicles for easier boarding
- Stations that offer heat, light, way finding information and security cameras
- Frequent service, with trips operating every 10 minutes throughout the day, every 10-15 minutes evenings and every 30-60 minutes overnight

## Bus Rapid Transit

In 2015, Metro Transit will introduce a new kind of bus service for the Twin Cities' busiest urban streets starting with Snelling Avenue: A Line. Bus rapid transit – or BRT – improves existing station and roadway infrastructure, vehicles, technology and scheduling to provide a **faster trip** and an **improved experience**. BRT can be implemented in both urban corridor and highway settings. The benefits of BRT include:

- **Frequent service:** Service so frequent passengers won't need a schedule, along with fewer stops so riders be moving more of the time;
- **Train-like features:** Riders save time by paying the fare before boarding and wait at enhanced stations;
- **Enhanced stations with more amenities:** Real-time departure signs so ensure riders always know when the bus is coming; enhanced maps and signage provide additional information;
- **Enhanced security:** Stations include cameras and emergency phones as well as additional fare enforcement by Transit Police and improved lighting;
- **Specialized vehicles:** Unique, recognizable buses with wider aisles and additional doors serve BRT lines so more people can get on and off easily.

Metro Transit's goal is to implement one BRT line each year. Before 2020, and following Snelling Ave in 2015, BRT on West 7th Street in St. Paul and Penn Avenue in North Minneapolis are planned for implementation.

### Arterial BRT station concept



### Station Area Development

#### Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit corridors

As our region makes significant investments in transit, particularly transitways, we must also ensure that the inevitable changes in neighborhoods along transit do not displace existing low-income residents. The increased accessibility that transit investments provide can lead to rising housing costs, making it more important to take proactive steps to preserve housing affordability and protect housing options for existing low-income residents. To promote a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit corridors, the Council will:

- Align its resources and work with other partners to help preserve a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit routes and corridors to help low-income households benefit from transit investments.
- Promote transit-oriented development that ensures a mix of housing affordability in transit station areas.



## VI. Community Outreach

As was the case leading up to the METRO Green and Blue Line implementations, Metro Transit will conduct an extensive transit service planning process (local routing and Transitway connections) once a Transitway project is funded.

The Council and Metro Transit continue to demonstrate a commitment to community-based and community-led engagement practices through a combination of strategies employed to foster open and transparent public dialogue. Our sincere interest in hearing and including community voice in planning and decision-making is highlighted most recently in Metro Transit's Central Corridor (Green Line) Transit Service Study during which we utilized a partnership with the District Councils Collaborative (DCC) of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and their Trusted Advocated Advocate Pilot Project, funded by the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative, to better "make sure that the bus service and LRT meet the transit needs of the communities served."

The **Trusted Advocate Pilot Project** is modeled after a program of the similar name in Seattle for land use planning, as well as in Oakland. The model uses different approaches than traditional engagement models to allow the public sector to collect information from and build relationships with community members. The pilot project, as applied locally to the Central Corridor Transit Service Study (CCTSS) had five goals that guided its work:

- Increase participation of underrepresented communities in the CCTSS Study.
- Promote learning by building capacity of underrepresented persons, including learning from available communication tools and information.
- Generate a transit service plan that serves the needs of those who live on the corridors (with particular attention to underrepresented communities).
- Strengthen the relationship between Metro Transit and underrepresented community members to create a shared solution that will influence changes in the system for future planning.
- Bring new model of engagement to the Twin Cities region.

On April 10, 2012, Metro Transit and the DCC accepted the WTS Minnesota Chapter, Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award which honors the positive transformation of the transportation industry. More information about the project can be found at [www.metrotransit.org/central-transit-study](http://www.metrotransit.org/central-transit-study)

Metro Transit understands that each project is unique and no one model of engagement is appropriate for each scenario. In planning the connecting transit service with the METRO Green Line Extension, Metro Transit will seek creative partnerships and innovative engagement practices suitable to this corridor. In the end, Metro Transit strives to fully engage local communities all along the alignment to participate in a dialog that will mutually educate, communicate and address the needs of the community and the goals of the Metropolitan Council during the plan development and implementation of the Green Line extension project.

## VII. Transit Security

Police officials—those whose professional ideal is to protect and serve people equally from all backgrounds—must face the challenges and complexities of a diverse society. They should live up to both our modern Community Policing charge to be both reflective of and responsive to the community we serve as well as Peels 7th principle:

“ To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen, in the interests of community welfare and existence.”

Over the last year, and moving forward, the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) acted on numerous initiatives that both support the equity initiative and enhance security for our customers. These include:

- Diversification of police department reflective and responsive to the community. 50% of most recent officers hired are minority or women.
- Establishment of a new inner-city beat team at 7th and Nicollet with diverse staff serving a new community storefront, and creating a police presence at the bus stop with the highest number of riders and a high concentration of diverse riders.
- Initiation of Safe Zone team from downtown Minneapolis to North Minneapolis with a concentrated onboard police presence on Routes 5 and 19.
- Creation of downtown St. Paul Community foot and bike patrols
- Creation of new full-time two-officer foot patrol in North Minneapolis focusing on West Broadway.
- Establishment of Bike Rapid Response Team (BRRT) patrol serving downtown and north Minneapolis which allows for greater engagement and community contact.
- Creation of Joint Enforcement Team (JET) working with Minneapolis Police, Hennepin County Sheriff and Minneapolis Parks Departments to reduce gun violence in North Minneapolis.
- Engagement with the North Side Summer Safety Summit initiative in conjunction with the Minneapolis Police Department and Sherman Patterson.
- Participation in the “Broadway is Black” community study sponsored by Minneapolis City Councilman Blong Yang.
- Participation in the Jerry Vick Human Trafficking Task force to reduce and prevent human trafficking through education and enforcement.
- Support for the establishment of, and provided leadership in, the Twin Cities Black Police Officer Association and Asian American Police Officer Association.
- Participation in the St. Paul community ambassadors partnership with YWCA
- The Metro Transit Police Department has also increased its police community outreach to 46 events scheduled this year. Examples of community events and other community outreach by MTPD include:
  - Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo, Somali Independence Day
  - Co-sponsorship of youth events including Zulu District Cub Scout Pinewood derby at Broadway YMCA and proposed bike rodeo North Minneapolis
  - Green Line and public safety presentations, translated into Somali, Eritrean and Oromo languages
  - Lao Family Board presentation on police and Green Line safety
  - Hmong community safety tips broadcast by Jan Vang on Hmong radio
  - Summit University Planning Council, MTPD and Green Line safety presentation conducted at SPPD Western District office
  - St. Paul Human Rights and Green line safety presentation at St. Paul Council of Churches
  - Xcel Energy and Green Line safety presentation at Rice Street offices

New Transitway stations will include security features such as cameras and phones. Metro Transit Police will work with local entities to develop information and camera access sharing at stations and bus stops where possible.

## **Sub-regional focus: North Minneapolis & SW LRT Connections**

In this document, the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit respond directly to the list of transit-related equitable outcomes identified by the Equity Commitments Coalition for SWLRT made up of 30 community-based organizations and supported by Congressman Ellison. The focus of this document is on those items where the Council has authority. Responses are arranged by broad categories rather than by the order of the “Equity Commitments for SWLRT” document, as they were referenced in a number of areas and are inter-related.

### **Bus & Southwest LRT Transitway Service Planning**

The Council commits to engaging members of the community and other stakeholders in identifying opportunities and weighing options to improve service in conjunction with development of the Southwest LRT corridor.

North Minneapolis is served by the most frequent bus routes in the region (Routes 5, 19) and is served by multiple connecting routes (7, 14, 22, 32). Route 30, a new route along Broadway was added this year on a demonstration basis and is partially funded by a federal grant.

- Map E shows existing bus routes, number of weekday boardings/stop, existing shelter locations. Future LRT lines are shown for reference.
- Since March 2010 Metro Transit **increased** weekday service on:
  - Route 5 by **7%** (+20 weekday bus trips)
  - Route 19 by **33%** (+53 weekday bus trips)
- Map F shows the number of weekday transit trips serving bus stops

Metro Transit will continue to look for opportunities to improve frequency of service where appropriate, as well as connections between bus routes. These improvements will be considered within the Metro Transit Service Improvement Plan (SIP) referenced in the previous section. The SIP will consider local bus route improvements as suggested by the Equity Coalition, but which are unrelated to Southwest LRT.

As was the case leading up to Green Line (Central Corridor) implementation <http://www.metrotransit.org/central-transit-study> and Blue Line (Hiawatha) <http://www.metrotransit.org/central-south-restructuring.aspx>, Metro Transit will conduct an extensive transit service planning process once Southwest LRT (Green Line extension) is fully funded.

This will include:

- Reviewing opportunities for bus service connections at all stations.
- Considering of new service connecting north Minneapolis to SWLRT stations at Penn Avenue, Van White Blvd, 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station and Royalston.
- Considering how the objectives of a North Minneapolis circulator could be accommodated
- Coordinating with Arterial BRT and other existing transit services

This process will include extensive community outreach and engagement work.

Additionally, this will build on our transit planning and outreach efforts with Northwest Metro Restructuring 2004-9, details at: <http://www.metrotransit.org/expansion-northwest-metro.aspx>, and more recent interaction with Bottineau Corridor community outreach. Future Bottineau LRT connections will be considered as part of the Southwest bus connection planning.

## Arterial BRT and Streetcar

Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) is included in the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) as shown on Map D and discussed in previous section. A number of transitway studies are exploring the modern streetcar alternative as a possible addition to the regional transitway system. While the TPP acknowledges that a broader discussion on modern streetcars needs to occur at the local and regional level, there are opportunities for projects to move forward on a case-by-case basis

The Metropolitan Council took action this year to recognize the conclusions of the Midtown Alternatives Analysis led by Metro Transit. The corridor is one of the region's busiest transit corridors and is promising for both BRT and rail implementation. These potential investments depend on increased future revenue and local support from Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

The Council received several accolades for a unique and community-centered approach to public engagement through the Midtown study, an approach Metro Transit will expand and implement in the upcoming West Broadway study. Like the Midtown study, the West Broadway study has a strong emphasis on community representation within the various project teams. In the past, project teams have primarily been composed of technical staff from Metro Transit and its government partners.

During the West Broadway study, streetcar improvements will be evaluated in detail, including potential economic development benefits. The study will provide sufficient information to support a Locally Preferred Alternative recommendation for a streetcar along West Broadway, should the project be technically viable and supported by community and by city, county, and Metropolitan Council policymakers overseeing the study. The Metropolitan Council is also working with Minneapolis and St. Paul and other communities to develop a regional streetcar policy.

As identified in previous section, the BRT Stations will include enhanced features such as shelter, light, heat and security.

Penn Avenue, as identified in the Council's Transportation Policy Plan, is slated to be the site of the Council's third arterial bus rapid transit line. Penn Avenue BRT (C Line) will provide fast, reliable service with enhanced station amenities similar to LRT. Development of the C Line would occur in conjunction with street improvements currently being considered by Hennepin County. This route is designed to carry the high volume of riders in along Penn Ave and Hwy 55 to downtown. A strong C Line-SWLRT connection is planned at Royalston Station which optimizes better service along Olson Highway and faster travel for most users' trips, and a seamless connection to the METRO rail system within north Minneapolis.

C Line is not a good candidate for connecting with Southwest LRT directly at Penn Avenue Station. The majority of C Line riders will be destined for downtown and adding a stop at Penn Avenue would create a significant time penalty for those riders.

Other connecting bus service to Penn Ave LRT station will be considered in the connecting bus route planning phase for Southwest LRT.

## **Bus Stops, Stations and Transit Centers**

Transit Centers facilitate high numbers of passenger transfers between multiple routes at a subregional level. All have shelters, heat and light most North Minneapolis bus routes serve transit centers in Robbinsdale, Brooklyn Center, Rosedale, and Chicago-Lake Transit Center.

In North Minneapolis, there are nearly 40 bus stops with shelters. As noted in the previous section, Metro Transit will install or replace 150-200 new shelters throughout the region between 2014-2015. Metro Transit commits to 24 new and 15 replacement shelters in North Minneapolis (Map E).

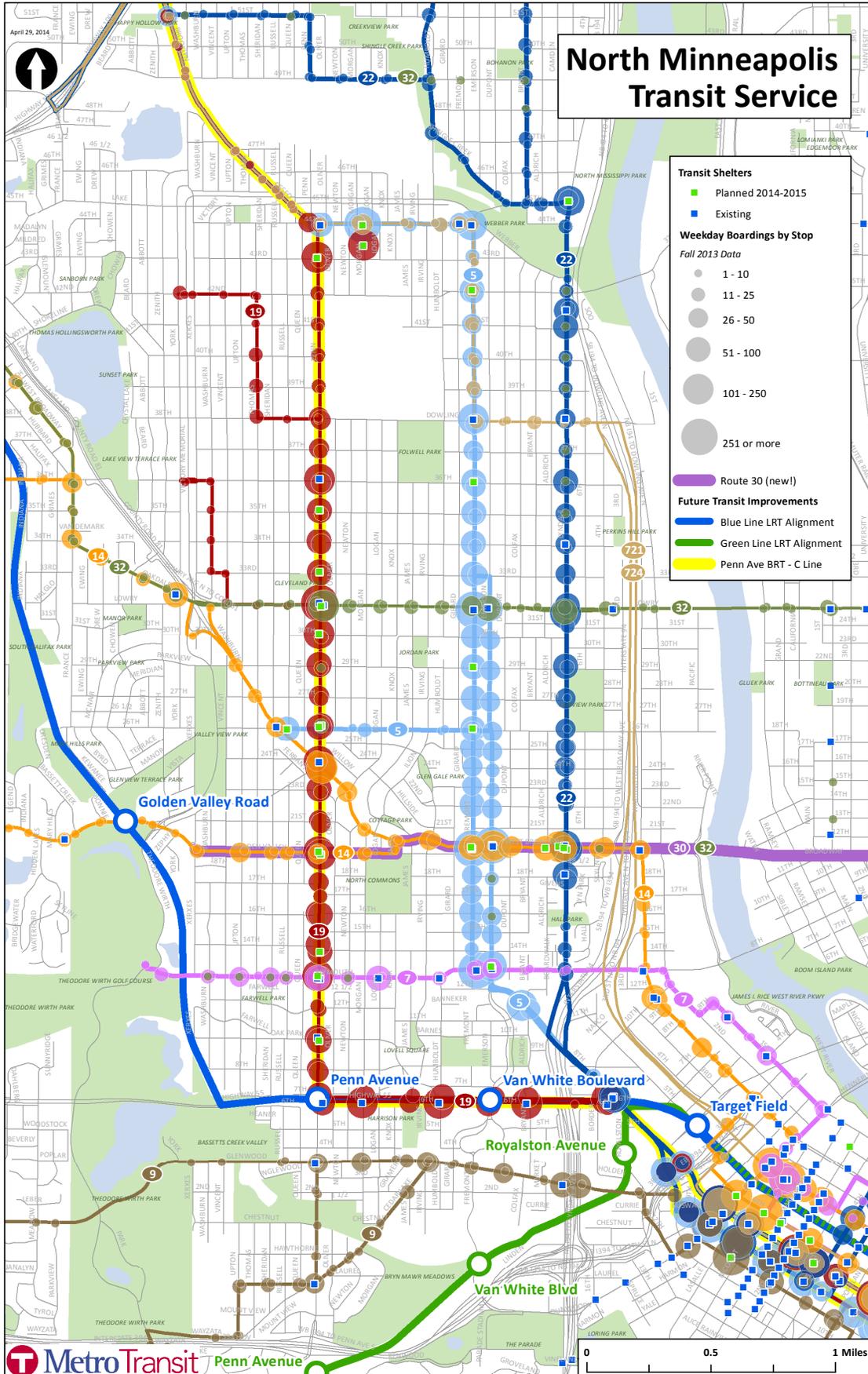
Two bus stops in downtown Minneapolis (7th/Nicollet and 7th/Hennepin) serve the largest number of (thousands) of North Minneapolis transit customers each day. Both stops are planned to have custom shelters with heat and light by 2015.

Future bus stop improvements are planned with Arterial BRT stations in the Transportation Policy Plan. These include Penn Avenue (prior to 2020), Emerson-Fremont and West Broadway.

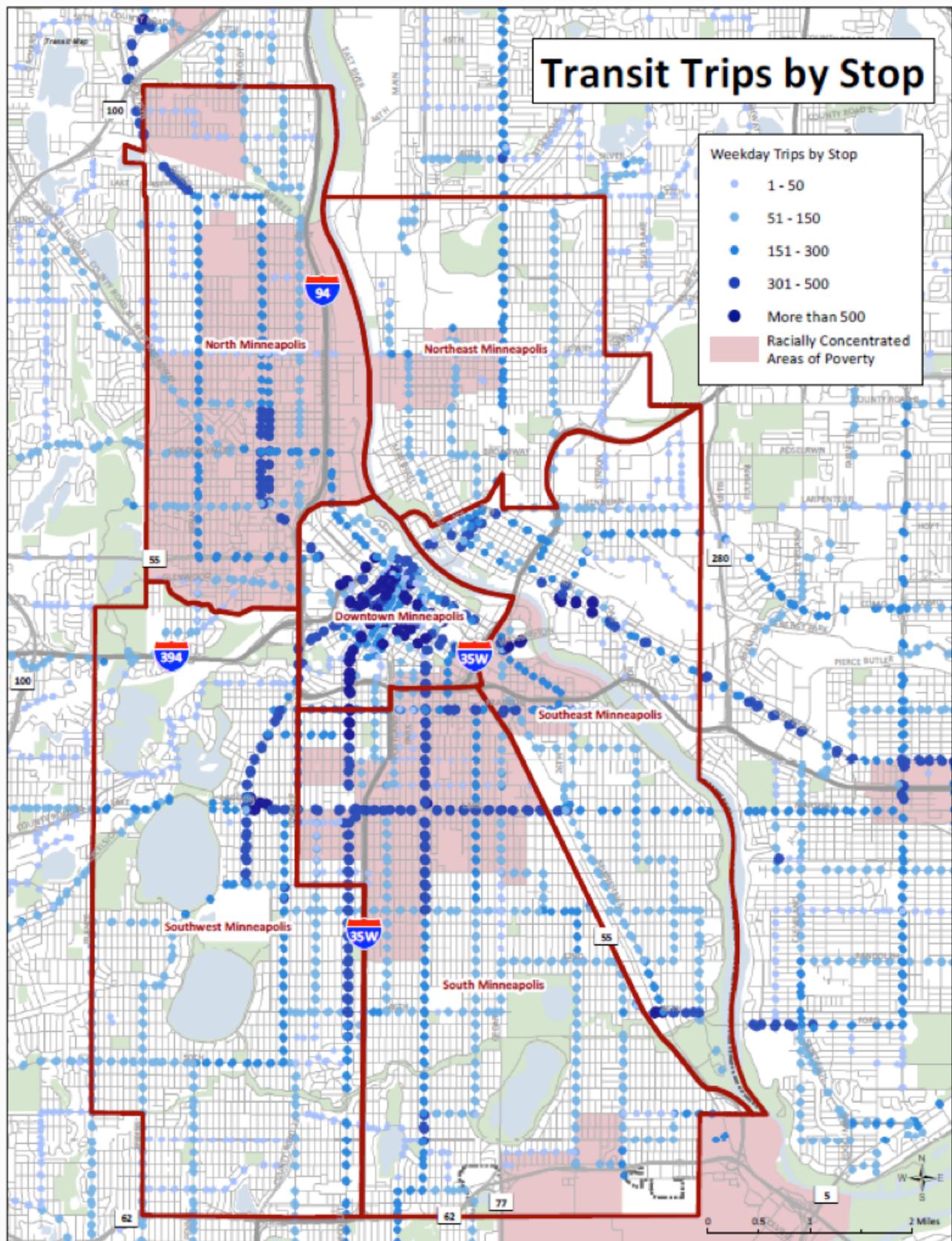
A primary Southwest LRT connection will be Royalston Station (7th Street & Olson Highway), and will facilitate service with Routes 5, 19 and 22. This location will function much like a transit center with ABRT and LRT stations adjacent. Both will have light, heat, cameras and schedule information

Metro Transit will discuss with community members how to improve amenities at locations where riders transfer between two or more routes. Metro Transit will work to expand shelter amenities such as light and heat through the Ladders of Opportunity Grant, to be awarded this year.

During winter, Metro Transit practice is to remove snow after streets have been plowed.



Map F



## Community Outreach

As discussed in the previous section, the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit will continue to pursue creative approaches to authentic engagement related to planning and work with community-based organizations.

## Station Facility and Area Planning

Authority on land use and zoning requirements is held by cities, county and property owners. The Metropolitan Council will coordinate with these entities to encourage transit supportive energy efficient development. Residents can expect that pedestrian sidewalk improvements will be made near stations with the South-west LRT project.

The City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and MNDOT are responsible for Commuter Train storage, City Impound Lot, and local planning and zoning around transit stations. The Metro Transit Office of Transit Oriented Development is prepared to support the work of these three entities to address community requests around these issues.

Bicycling has grown significantly as a mode as is important to a sustainable and healthy region. The Council provides excellent resource to using our regional bicycle network and Metro Transit provides guidance and infrastructure to accommodate bicycles on buses and at stations. More information on current initiatives here: <https://www.metrotransit.org/bicycle>

In addition, Metro Transit is working to develop innovations that support bicycle and transit integration. A pilot station at 7th Street and Olson Hwy in north Minneapolis is currently at 90% design and features integration of the station with an existing bike lane. Working with Minneapolis staff, the station will remove a potential conflict point by bringing the bike lane behind the station platform. An illustration of this station is attached. Results and feedback of this pilot station will guide potential designs for integrated bicycle and transit facilities in the future, including on Emerson/Fremont Avenues.

Several business development activities led by neighborhood associations and nonprofit community development organization are supported by Livable Communities Act grants awarded by the Metropolitan Council to the City of Minneapolis in the past. As neighborhoods and community development organizations plan new business development along commercial corridors, the City of Minneapolis is eligible to seek Livable Communities grants to support these efforts. The Council looks forward to collaborating in these efforts through its new Office of Transit-Oriented Development.

The Council will explore establishing a capital fund targeted at entrepreneurs of color with appropriate government and philanthropic entities. The Council cannot undertake this endeavor alone.

## Security

Through the development of arterial BRT, Metro Transit plans substantial increases in security infrastructure. Stations will feature multiple security cameras as well as emergency call boxes. To be effective, substantial communications systems are required along the length of the corridor to support station camera and phone infrastructure. For this reason, these installations will typically be installed through a transitway project such as arterial BRT planned for Penn Avenue and Chicago-Emerson-Fremont and potentially along West Broadway through BRT or streetcar implementation.

Because of the significant communications infrastructure required, camera placement at every bus stop may not be practical. However, Metro Transit Police collaborates with Minneapolis Police Department and Hennepin County Sheriff in downtown Minneapolis in sharing camera information. Metro Transit Police will work with local entities and businesses to develop information and camera access sharing at stations and bus stops where possible.

## **Fares**

In 2013 and 2014, the Metropolitan Council is conducting a review of Regional Fare Policy. The guiding principles of the review of Regional Fare Policy include: 1) Simplify fare system to improve customer service and fare compliance; 2) Preserve and enhance the common regional approach to fare policy that provides seamless travel for riders among providers and modes; 3) Promote ridership growth; 4) Increase customer use of Go-To Card technology that benefits riders and providers; 5) Mitigate negative impacts on those most reliant on transit and least able to afford fare increases; 6) Ensure compatibility with existing regional fare collections systems, processes and devices while supporting the need to integrate enhancements with technology, and 7) Maintain or increase revenue recovery rate.

Suggestions will be considered within this framework, and community engagement is expected in 2015.

## **Van White Station development**

The Council heard the concerns of Harrison leaders and local businesses and will work with governmental partners to help facilitate the resolution of differences on the land use around the Van White Station. However, station area planning must be lead by the City of Minneapolis, in coordination with Metro Transit Transit Oriented Development (TOD) office. Pedestrian sidewalk and bridge improvements will be made with the Southwest LRT project.

Efforts to prevent a land transfer at Van White Station must be lead by the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and MNDOT. Additionally, the removal of the City of Minneapolis Impound Lot must be an effort spearheaded by the City of Minneapolis. Land use aspects should coordinate with Metro Transit Transit Oriented Development (TOD) office.

## **Affordable housing base**

The Council's Housing Policy Plan, currently in draft form, has the overall policy priority to, "Create housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, an affordable homes." Within this plan, the Council is committing to help create or preserve a mix of housing affordability along transit stations. The Council's Livable Communities Act grants provide financial assistance to developments that support a mix of housing affordability.

Under the new Housing Policy Plan, the Council will continue to use affordability definitions based on the regional area median income (AMI) but will begin to encourage cities to meet need for housing to serve households earning 30% of the AMI, 30-50% of AMI, and 50-80% of AMI.

The work of Urban Home Works and the City of Lakes Community Land Trust to maintain and preserve a variety of housing choices and affordability for current and future residents has been supported by Livable Communities Act grants awarded by the Metropolitan Council to the City of Minneapolis on several occasions. This type of work and partnership will continue to compete well for these grants.

## **Disadvantaged Business Enterprises working on Southwest LRT**

On all federally funded construction projects, the Metropolitan Council sets goals for the project that ensure firms owned by women and people of color (referred to as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or DBEs) receive some of the subcontracts made by the primary contractor on the project. Each contract receives a specific goal, depending on the ready, willing and able DBEs available to work and the scope of work for the project. The Council takes responsibility for evaluating the performance of its contractors against the goals and assisting the DBEs and primary contractors in achieving those goals.

Prior to the release of any proposals and/or bids on the Southwest LRT project, the Metropolitan Council will perform a goal methodology to determine the appropriate goals DBEs. This methodology is defined in federal regulations. Factors that will be considered in setting these goals include: the relative availability of ready; willing and able DBE certified firms in the 7 county metro area; the past Council DBE achievement in meeting goals on similarly priced and sized projects; the capacity of the currently certified DBE firms who are able to perform the required types of work or service called for; and the number of other projects already being performed in the Twin Cities area that may deplete our pool of existing DBE firms.

Unbundling large contracts, a practice that helps ensure small, minority and women-owned businesses are able to bid on work with the Council is a routine Council practice. This was demonstrated in the building of the Green Line. The Metropolitan Council's procurement system is bound by several state and federal laws and regulations. The Federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and the Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business Program are part of the procurement system and the Council actively engages with Itasca's projects for Minnesota businesses to buy equitably.

Over 135 DBEs were used on this project with over \$115 million going to those DBEs. Outreach and engagement with current DBEs and companies that would like to be DBEs is targeted to areas where insufficient DBE firms exist to meet Council and contractor needs.

The Council has a history of providing opportunities to introduce business to technical assistance provided by a wide variety of organizations including Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA). Those organizations also partner with us in training events where subject matter experts come together to provide information and assistance for DBE businesses.

### **Workforce**

As a major employer in this community the Metropolitan Council is committed to ensuring our workforce is representative of the community. 30 percent of the Council workforce are people of color. The Council is currently working with a wide range of community-based training organizations to grow the workforce in a way that could meet the Council's hiring goals and needs now and in the future.

Many jobs at the Council and with Council contractors, whether temporary contracted construction jobs or permanent Council operations jobs, require specialized skills and training. It is not enough for us to rely on educational institutions to provide our future workforce with all of the training necessary to do the jobs we offer. That's why the Council is pursuing apprenticeship programs for many technical jobs within Metro Transit. The Council's programs will work to recruit candidates from Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty areas whenever possible.

When the Council builds a major project like the METRO Green Line or Southwest LRT, it hires construction firms to do the work. When it contracts with those firms, the Council works to ensure the contracts have a positive local economic impact. Not only is it important that firms owned by women and people of color receive work; it is also important that the workforce represent the community and that opportunities are available to women and people of color who want a job on the project.

The hiring goals for the Southwest LRT project are set by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR). Council project goals previous to the Green Line were 10% people of color. The MDHR increased the goal to 18% people of color for construction of the Green Line. That goal was reached. While the goal for the Southwest LRT set by MDHR will be 32% people of color, the Council will strive to exceed the goal based on available workforce.

The DBE/AA Oversight Committee on the Green Line asked the contractors to voluntarily provide information on the ethnicities of their workforce. The contractors complied and they reported on it at every meeting. In the future, for all mega projects at the Council, contractors will be required to report on the ethnicity of their workforce. This information will be reported every month at the Oversight Committee meeting.

The Green Line construction workforce data analysis illustrated which construction trade areas need assistance expanding the pool of qualified workers of color and female workers. The pool of minority and female workers in trades such as electricians, sheet metal workers, pipe fitters and iron workers must increase on the Southwest LRT. The Council has a plan to do just that. This plan would include working with a team of trainers, the unions, educational institutions and our LRT Works project. We would need to do more analysis to provide a cost benefit analysis. Partnerships with educational and workforce institutions are not new to Metro Transit or the Council, but additional work is underway to create a more direct pipeline

for graduates into the many positions available at Metro Transit.

More research will need to be done to see how viable it would be for the Council to pursue a contract with a Community Based Recruitment and Training Organization, as suggested by the Equity Coalition. By the time the SWLRT project begins construction, several projects that now have an Employment Assistance Firm (EAF) will be completed. We want those workers that have already been trained and identified to continue in their quest to become journeymen and women. Hiring them for the Southwest LRT project will be a priority.

The Green Line construction contracts did not have goals targeted by zip code and Council contracts did not require the contractors to provide this information. The DBE/AA Oversight Committee, made up of community members along the Green Line and a variety of advocacy organizations, asked the contractors to provide that information. The contractors complied and reported on it at every public meeting. In the future, for all large projects at the Council, this reporting requirement will be part of major contracts. This information will be reported every month at the Oversight Committee meeting and posted on-line.

#### **IV. Reporting**

The Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit report the outcomes of operations, workforce, programs, and initiatives and makes every effort to be transparent in all of its activities.