



Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

for the Rockford Region



Final Report
June, 2025

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This document has been prepared by Region 1 Planning Council in collaboration with its member agencies, partnership organizations, and local stakeholders.

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Federal Highway Administration
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The contents, views, policies, and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the above agencies.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Purpose

The 2025 Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) for the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) serves as a comprehensive guide for improving mobility, enhancing public transportation services, and addressing the critical transit needs of the region's most vulnerable populations, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income population, and other transit-dependent groups. The 2025 update builds upon previous iterations of the plan by incorporating new data, stakeholder feedback, and guidance on updated federal and state transportation policies to ensure that the region's transit system remains accessible, safe, and efficient.

As the Rockford Region continues to pursue new economic opportunities and urbanization, the transportation challenges residents face become more apparent. The HSTP intends to identify service gaps, existing and new transportation needs, and opportunities for collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers. Through coordination, the plan seeks to enhance mobility options for those who require them most while aligning with regional goals for economic development, sustainable planning, and enhancing the quality of life.

Additionally, this update ensures compliance with federal requirements under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Environmental Justice (EJ), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It also positions the region's transit and human-service organizations for funding opportunities such as Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), which supports enhanced mobility for those vulnerable populations. With a clear set of goals, strategies, and prioritized projects, the HSTP will help guide transit providers, planners, and policymakers in creating a more inclusive and connected transportation network that meets the evolving needs of the Rockford Region.

Regional Context

The study area for the HSTP is the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The MPA boundary is based on the Urbanized Area (UA), as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau, the adjusted Urbanized Area, as determined by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and its partner agencies, and any other contiguous area anticipated to be urbanized in the next twenty years.

The MPA boundary is developed in partnership with local jurisdictions, local stakeholders, the state, and the MPO Policy Committee. The last updates to the MPA boundary occurred after the 2020 Decennial Census.

Figure 1-1 depicts the MPA boundary, along with the U.S. Census-defined Urbanized Area.

As shown in Figure 1-1, the Rockford MPA is smaller than the boundaries of Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties and covers approximately 682 square miles. However, to a limited extent, the MPO coordinates transportation planning and improvement activities throughout those counties. This occurs voluntarily via communication and cooperation of Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago County officials serving on the MPO Policy and Technical Committees.

All data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), 2022 5-Year Estimates, and represents the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), unless stated otherwise.¹ For the purposes of this study, the Rockford Region and Rockford MPA are used interchangeably.

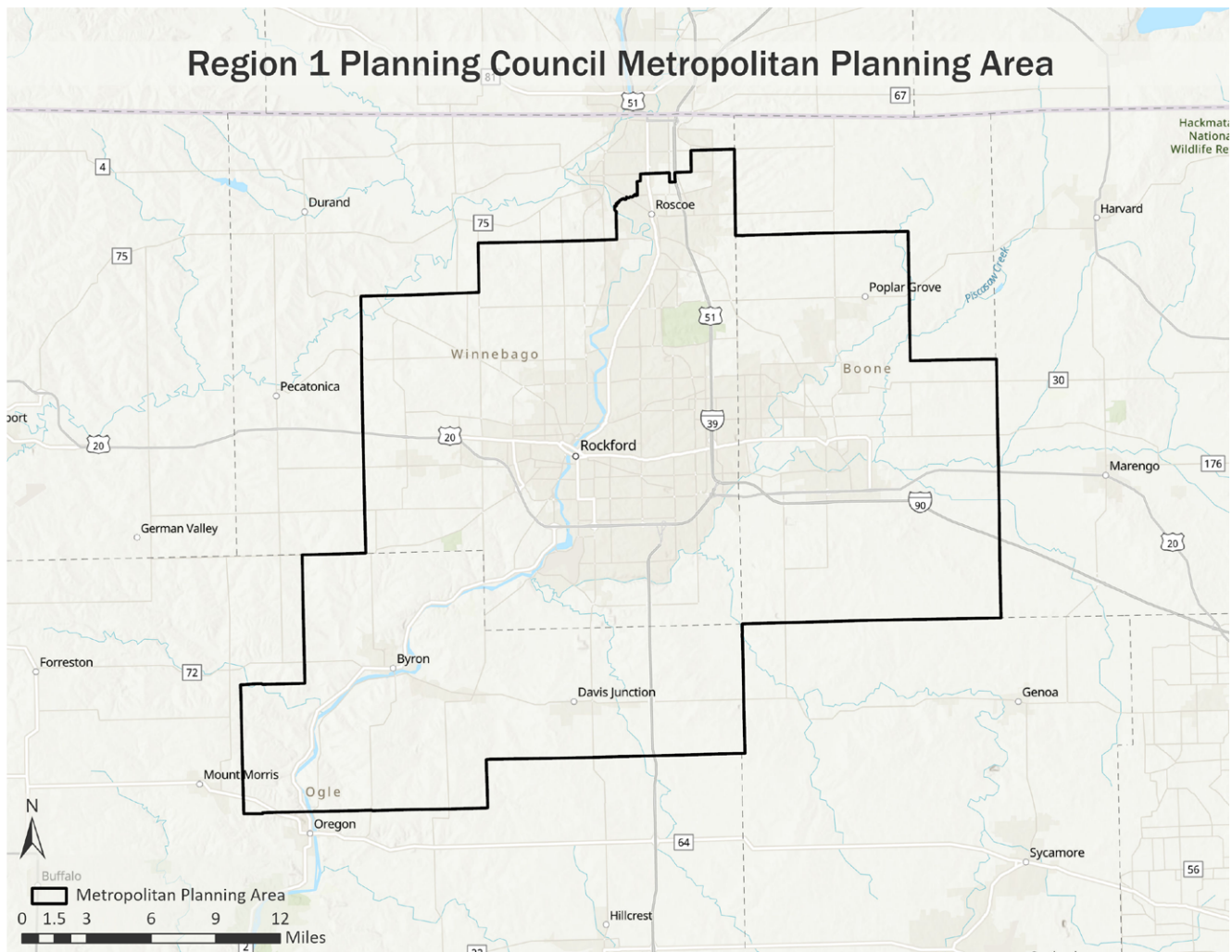
Urbanized Areas

Urbanized Areas are determined by the US Census Bureau every 10 years in conjunction with the decennial census and define an area with a population of 50,000 or more that is considered currently urban in character.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

¹ The Rockford MPA encompasses the following: Belvidere, Bonus, Caledonia, Flora, Poplar Grove, and Spring Townships in Boone County; Bryon, Marion, Monroe, Rockvale, and Scott Townships in Ogle County; and Burrirt, Cherry Valley, Harlem, Owen, Rockford, Roscoe, and Winnebago Township in Winnebago County. A portion of Roscoe Township is located in the Beloit, WI MPA, however for statistical purposes the entire township is included in the data.

Figure 1-1: Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Federal Requirements and Programs

As mentioned, the HSTP is mandated by the federal government and is designed to improve public transportation access and equity, particularly for vulnerable populations. The Federal transportation policies guiding the HSTP require coordination among agencies and organizations in its development to ensure transportation needs for seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income, and other transit-dependent users are addressed. Complying with federal regulations ensures agencies maintain federal funding eligibility through a variety of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs.

Formula grants for the enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities (Section 5310) states that recipients of funds are required to include project details in a coordinated HSTP. Additionally, that the HSTP must be approved with the participation of seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human-services providers, and other members of the public.ⁱ Lastly, projects funded through Section 5310 should be coordinated with transportation services assisted by other federal departments and agencies.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or nationality in any program or activity that receives federal funding. As a result, recipients of FTA funds are required to make certain that transit services and facilities are equitably provided and that all members of the public have access to those servicesⁱⁱ.

Therefore, the HSTP is required to:

- Produce an equity analysis for any major service changes or capital improvements.
- Engage the public through surveys, open houses, and/or community forums.
- Continuously keep track of the impact of transit services on disadvantaged populations.

Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) requires agencies to identify and act upon disproportionately high and harmful human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. Agencies should develop strategies to incorporate Environmental Justice (EJ), engage the public, and promote nondiscrimination in federal programs affecting human health and the environment. Goals of the HSTP align with EJ policies through:

- Studying transit service to understand its impact on EJ communities.
- Ensuring transit projects do not disproportionately affect minority or low-income communities.
- Stimulating public involvement in the plans that directly affect minority or low-income populations.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all transit agencies to provide accessible services to individuals with disabilities. Therefore, transit agencies in the Rockford Region are required to meet accessibility standards within existing fixed-route and paratransit services. The HSTP explores the existing accessibility of these services and suggests necessary improvements to comply with ADA regulations, such as:

- Paratransit service improvements that accommodate users with disabilities who cannot use fixed-route services.
- Further development of accessible infrastructure, including wheelchair lifts on vehicles, curb ramps, bus shelters, and more.

By following these federal regulations, the HSTP will guide the coordination between transit agencies and human-service organizations within the Rockford MPA to provide equitable, safe, and accessible transportation services for all users. This plan also aligns with overarching regional goals that support economic development, sustainable practices, and enhancing the quality of life. Further information on funding structures can be found in the Appendices of this plan.

Organization of the Report

The HSTP is organized as follows:

Part 1: Introduction. The first chapter includes general information about the HSTP and the purpose for updating the plan. Regional context and federal requirements to produce and update the plan are also included.

Part 2. Existing Services. The second chapter highlights the current public transportation and human-services transportation in the Rockford Region. This includes fixed-route, demand-response, and other transportation options. The coverage, frequency, and accessibility of these services is highlighted.

Part 3. Transportation Needs Assessment. The third chapter identifies the populations that this plan will highlight (seniors, individuals with a disability, and other transit-dependent groups). Explains the details of population trends, such as aging populations, urbanization, and changing travel behaviors on transportation needs and services.

Part 4. Identified Transportation Needs and Gaps. The fourth chapter summarizes the transportation needs and gaps identified through outreach and engagement efforts with the public and transit agencies.

Part 5. Looking Forward. The fifth chapter provides a future lens for public transportation services in the Rockford Region. Additionally, this chapter discusses potential strategies and action items in a matrix based on the identified transportation needs and gaps.

Part 6. Appendix. The sixth chapter of the HSTP includes additional information and materials that support the plan.

Part 7. Endnotes. The seventh and final chapter is reserved for references based on the research conducted during the development of the plan, which is referenced throughout the plan's narrative.

Chapter 2: Existing Services

The Rockford Region’s transportation network connects thousands of residents to essential services each day. While the vast majority travel by way of personal vehicle, a number of residents rely on or opt for alternative modes of transportation to reach their destination. Public sectors attempt to fill this necessity through various applications such as fixed-route, demand-response, and paratransit services, but often fall short on accessibility and efficiency due to a lack of funding. The private sectors provide ride-hailing and charter buses, which typically address efficiency but lack affordability, deeming them to be more of a luxury than a solution to transit-dependent populations. Understanding exactly what services exist in the Rockford Region allows transportation decision-makers to address their shortfalls and expand their capabilities.

Public Transportation Services

The Rockford Region’s public transportation network is comprised of four separate transit agencies, along with a number of human services organizations. Often coordinating together, these entities help connect Rockford residents to services such as healthcare, employment, education, and retail. Collectively providing over 1.3 million rides annually, these agencies play a vital role in boosting the economic success of the region.

Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD)

Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) is dedicated to providing safe, efficient, affordable, dependable, and accessible transportation to the residents of Rockford and the surrounding area. For over 50 years, RMTD has provided federally subsidized and coordinated, fixed-route transit service for the Rockford Urbanized Area. A three-person board appointed by the City of Rockford oversees RMTD and is empowered through the Downstate Transportation Act of 1971. Funding for RMTD comes from a combination of federal, state, and local subsidies or contractual payments.

Connections with surrounding transit agencies like Boone County Transit (BCT) and Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD) occur at RMTD’s East Side Transfer Center and Target in Machesney Park, respectively. These connections allow RMTD users to still access areas outside of RMTD’s service area, as well as allow the other agencies’ riders to access anywhere in RMTD’s service area. Additionally, RMTD

provides complimentary origin-destination paratransit services within Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, and any other areas located within a quarter-mile radius of their fixed routes

Figure 2-1: RMTD Electric Hybrid Bus



Source: Region 1 Planning Council, RTMD

Table 2-1: RMTD Statistics

RMTD	Statistics
Service Area	121.09
Service Population	277,458
Number of Fixed Routes	18
Fixed Route Bus Fleet	41
Buses in Peak Service	24
Paratransit Fleet	33

Source: RMTD

Fixed Route Service

Fixed-route operations include 18 daily routes (Monday-Saturday), six weeknight routes, and six Sunday routes. Additionally, two Saturday and Sunday routes were added in September 2024 to service the Amazon warehouse, each going through Rockford’s east and west sides, respectively. Most of RMTD’s fixed route services are provided on a hub-and-spoke radial operation pattern originating from RMTD’s Downtown Transfer Center in Rockford. General service hours include service to all municipalities during weekdays, service to Rockford, Loves Park, and Machesney Park on Saturdays, and only select areas in Rockford on Sundays.

Services are not provided on Saturday and Sunday nights. There is no service on six major holidays throughout the year.

Most of RMTD’s 18 routes operate at 60-minute intervals, except for State Street and School Street routes, which operate at 30-minute intervals, and Huffman and Kilburn routes, which operate at 90-minute intervals. Additionally, RMTD operates a trolley bus route in downtown Rockford from May through September to accommodate access to popular public events such as Rockford City Market. Through regular analysis and feedback, RMTD regularly considers and implements service updates to help provide service to more residents and destinations.

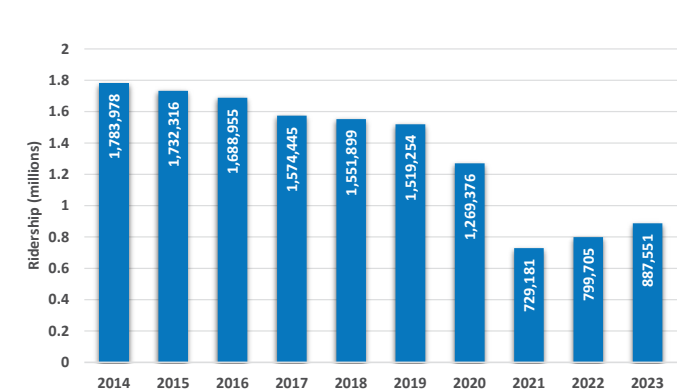
All RMTD buses are wheelchair accessible, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Efforts are regularly made to aid persons with disabilities and the general public in reading transit schedules and using the transit system. Demand-response service is provided in accordance with ADA guidelines in the RMTD service area.

Table 2-2: RMTD Hours of Operation

Day of the Week	Time
Monday- Friday	4:15 AM- 6:15 PM
Saturdays	6:00 AM- 6:15 PM
Sundays	9:15 AM- 5:15 PM
Night Service	6:15 PM- 12:15 AM

Source: RMTD

Figure 2-2: RMTD Fixed-Route Ridership



Source: Region 1 Planning Council, RMTD

Riders can now utilize the Token Transit smartphone application to purchase various ride passes and obtain transfers for the fixed-route service. Additionally, seniors, disabled citizens enrolled in the Illinois Benefit Access Program, veterans, children under Age 5, and all students from elementary to post-secondary enrollment can ride for free. Disabled citizens not enrolled in the Illinois Benefit Access Program can still ride for half the price of regular fares. Note that in order to access free or discounted service, eligible riders need to fill out a form to receive a photo ID from RMTD if approved.

Demand-Response/Paratransit Service

In addition to fixed-route transit services, RMTD provides complimentary origin-destination paratransit service at a minimum of three-quarters of a mile from their fixed route system in accordance with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Where applicable, this service is also extended to the incorporated limits of Rockford, Loves Park, and Machesney Park. Service is provided daily in Rockford and six days a week in Loves Park and Machesney Park.

Paratransit riders must submit an application to RMTD that outlines their mobility challenges in order to be eligible to use the service. Demand-response has become more widespread in eligibility, but the service does have certain limitations. For example, RMTD provides Medicaid rides to individuals with a medical card at no cost if they are traveling to or from a medical appointment. Other demand-response services include call-to-connect, which requires scheduling 24 hours in advance, and same-day rides, which require scheduling at least three hours in advance and have more limited operation hours.

Table 2-3: RMTD Demand-Response Ridership

Fiscal Year	Ridership
2014	97,485
2015	101,313
2016	100,658
2017	102,549
2018	117,125
2019	128,724
2020	113,721
2021	96,791
2022	111,732
2023	107,203

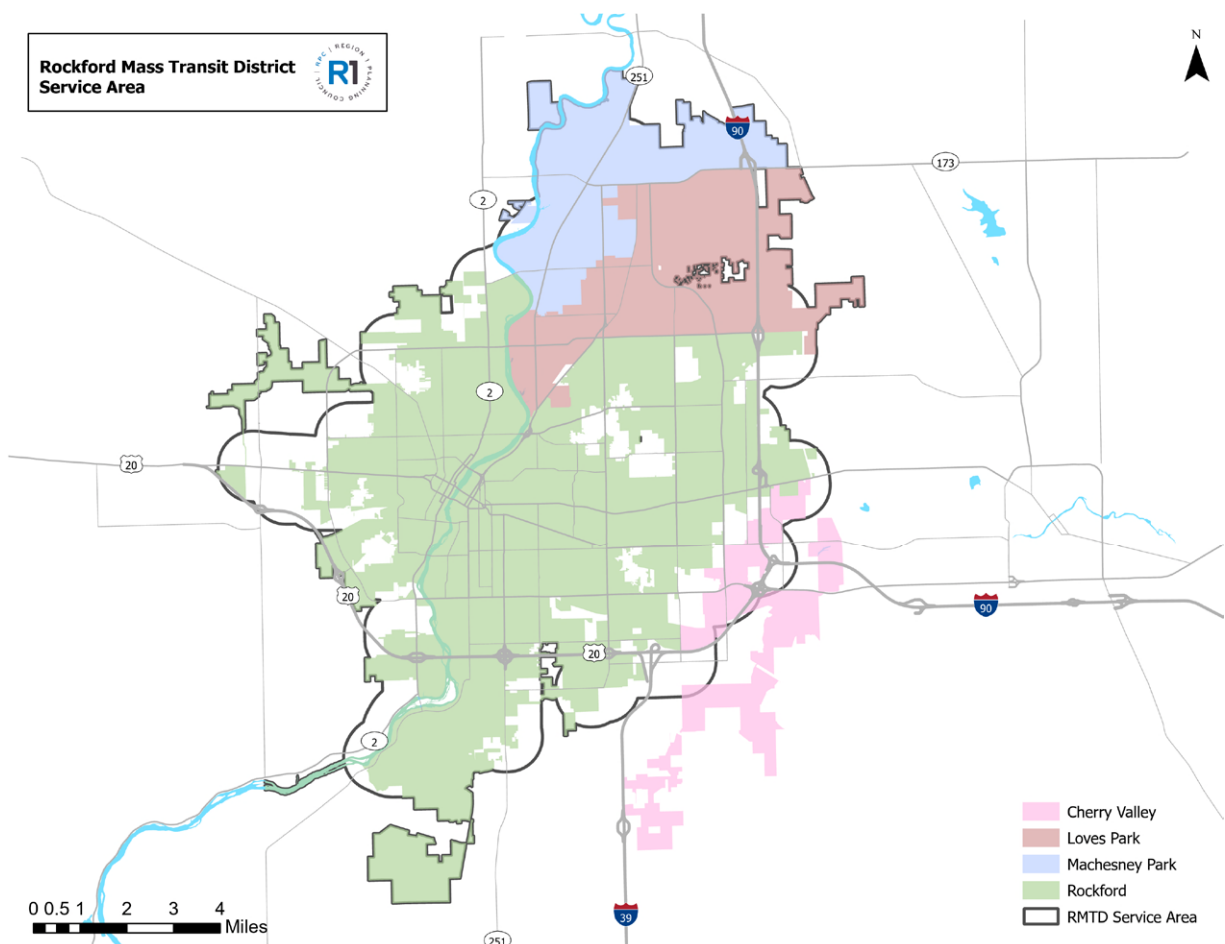
Source: RTMD

Table 2-4: RMTD Crash Fare Structure

Fare Type	Cost
Adult Fare (Age 15 & above)	\$1.50
Disabled Citizen Half Fare* (w/valid RMTD Photo ID)	\$0.75
Disabled Citizen enrolled in Illinois Benefit Access Program**	Free
Senior Citizen (Age 65 and above (w/valid RMTD Photo ID))	Free
Veteran (w/valid RMTD Photo ID)	Free
Children Under Age 5	Free
Student Age 5-14 (w/valid School or RMTD Photo ID)	Free
Student Age 15-18 (w/valid School or RMTD Photo ID)	Free
College Students (w/valid School or RMTD Photo ID)	Free
Transfers	Free
1-Day Adult Pass	\$3.00
1-Day Disabled Citizen Pass* (w/valid RMTD Photo ID)	\$1.50
Ten-Ride Adult Pass	\$15.00
Ten-Ride Disabled Citizen Pass** (w/valid RMTD Photo ID)	\$7.50
7-Day Unlimited Ride Saver Pass	\$16.00

Source: RMTD

Figure 2-3: RMTD Service Area



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Boone County Transit

Demand-Response/Paratransit Service

Boone County Transit (BCT) offers demand-response public transportation to all residents of Boone County and provides approximately 31,000 rides annually. Door-to-door service assists paratransit riders in reaching their destinations safely and efficiently. Coordination with RMTD at the East Side Transfer Center on Lyford Road in Rockford helps connect riders with more destinations outside of Boone County. This demand-response service replaces a previous fixed route operated by RMTD that traveled to and from Belvidere.

Rides must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance, but exceptions are made for same-day rides to medical appointments. Service is available Monday through Friday and on Saturday mornings, with the exception of inclement weather and eleven major holidays each year. There is a discounted fare for children, and free rides are available for users aged 60 and older (donations are encouraged).

Table 2-5: BCT Service Information

Service Area	Boone County
Hours of Operation	M-F: 7:00 AM- 6:00 PM Sat: 8:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Service Type	Demand-Response
Level of Service	Door to Door
Scheduling	24 Hours in Advance
Fare Structure (One-Way)	Adults: \$2.00 Children: \$1.00 60 years and older: Donation

Source: BCT

Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD)

Demand-Response/Paratransit Service

Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD) contracts with RMTD to provide door-to-door demand-response service to all patrons residing in Rockton, Roscoe, South Beloit, and unincorporated areas of Rockton Township. In 2024, SMTD provided just under 28,000 rides. Children aged five through 16 years old can ride for half fare. Children under five years old and veterans can ride for free. Additionally, personal assistants helping a rider with mobility limitations are able to ride for free.

A transfer point at the Machesney Park Target along IL-173 allows SMTD riders to transfer to the RMTD fixed-route and paratransit systems. Additionally, transfers with the Beloit

Transit System are possible on Shirland Avenue in Beloit for users travelling into Wisconsin. However, trips must begin or end within the SMTD service area. Lastly, SMTD offers service outside of the service area for trips to pre-approved medical facilities.

Table 2-6: SMTD Service Information

Service Area	Roscoe, Rockton, South Beloit
Hours of Operation	M-F: 5:15 AM- 10:00 PM Sat: 6:00 AM- 6:00 PM Sun: 8:15 AM- 4:30 PM
Service Type	Demand-Response
Level of Service	Door to Door
Scheduling	24 Hours in Advance
Fare Structure (One-Way)	Adult (17-64 yrs): \$3.00 Senior (65 and older): \$1.50 Disabled: \$1.50 Youth (5-16 yrs): \$1.50 Child (under 5 yrs): Free Personal Care Attendants: Free Veterans: Free (must provide proof)

Source: SMTD

Reagan Mass Transit District (RMTD)

Demand-Response/Paratransit Service

Reagan Mass Transit District, previously Lee-Ogle Transportation System, operates curb-to-curb demand-response service in Lee and Ogle Counties. Service is provided Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. However, service is not provided during severe weather events or observed holidays. In-town rides should be booked at least 24 hours in advance, and out-of-town rides are to be booked at least 48 hours in advance.

At least three times a month, Reagan Mass Transit District provides service to Rockford for persons who either need to attend medical appointments or would like to go shopping. College riders can travel to and from Sauk Valley Community College and Kishwaukee Community College. The cost for rides outside of Lee and Ogle Counties is \$0.35 per mile. However, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and veterans can do so at a \$5.00 maximum per ride. Additionally, rides for medical appointments are eligible for Medicaid under certain restrictions.

Table 2-7: Reagan Mass Transit District Service Information

Service Area	Lee and Ogle Counties
Hours of Operation	M-F: 6:00 AM- 6:00 PM
Service Type	Demand-Response
Level of Service	Curb to Curb
Scheduling	In Town: 24 Hours in Advance Out of Town: 48 Hours in Advance
Fare Structure (One-Way)	General Public: Within Zip Code: \$2.00 Outside Zip Code- \$0.35 per mile Seniors, Disabled, Veterans: Within Zip Code: \$1.00 Outside Zip Code: \$0.35 per mile (capped at \$5.00)

Source: Reagan MTD

Rockford Public School District (RPS) #205

The Rockford Public Schools (RPS) District #205’s Department of Transportation provides transportation services for more than 18,000 students. As required by Illinois law, service is provided to students who reside outside of a one-and-a-half-mile radius of the school they attend. Students living within a one-and-a-half-mile radius of their school may have to rely on other options such as walking, riding with parents, or public transit.

Exceptions to the one-and-a-half-mile radius limit are made for students with special needs. These students participate through an Individual Education Plan (IEP). For these students, transportation is provided by Sunrise, a transportation provider contracted through the RPS Department of Transportation.

Human or Social Service Transportation

Human services organizations may offer transportation services to members or residents whose transportation needs are not accommodated by or met by public and private transportation services.

Individuals enrolled in social and human service programs throughout the region often utilize transportation services related to that program. Agencies and organizations tend to supply their clientele with transportation to community events and development activities. However, these services are generally not open to the public.

Barbara Olson Center of Hope

The Barbara Olson Center of Hope is a human service organization that has served Rockford since 1948. Currently, the Barbara Olson Center of Hope provides vocational opportunities and employment for teens and adults with developmental disabilities. Members can be involved in a variety of programs aimed at improving each individual’s quality of life through careful assistance, targeting mobility, sensory, educational, and memory impairments. Other programs include ways for members to express themselves through art and music. Lastly, the center’s clients make and sell handmade dog biscuits to help fund programs.

As part of their mission, Barbara Olson offers transportation services to their clientele for off-site programs and outings. Clients can be transported within Winnebago and Boone counties. On average, the center provides 5,280 rides for its members annually, making its transportation services vital to a sizeable list of users. Funding for transportation is reliant on a combination of state and federal grants. The Barbara Olson Center of Hope currently has 13 vehicles used to transport their clients. However, about five of these are expected to require replacement in the next five years.

Table 2-8: Barbara Olson Service Information

Service Area	Winnebago and Boone Counties
Hours of Operation	M-F: 9:00 AM- 2:00 PM
Service Type	Program Transportation
Level of Service	Curb to Curb

Source: Barbara Olson

Lifescape Community Services, Inc.

Lifescape Community Services is a human service organization that works to promote independent living and enhance the quality of life for seniors by providing nutritious meals and healthy living support. Lifescape offers a variety of programs related to nutrition, volunteering, senior dining, mental health, adult protective services, and day programs based on individual interests. Additionally, Lifescape provides transportation for its members to and from the facility, as well as demand-response service for their Senior Choice program. Destinations include but are not limited to medical, recreational, religious, shopping, and dining sites within Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, and Cherry Valley. Transportation services are reliant upon Section 5310 funding to maintain their vehicle fleet.

Wesley Willows

Wesley Willows is a continuing care retirement community on Rockford's northwest side that works to provide programming, services, and amenities to seniors. Transportation services for residents include destinations such as churches, hospitals, dining, fitness, shopping, and more. Apart from transportation services, Wesley Willows offers additional services, such as, but not limited to, health and rehab, memory care, therapy, nursing, meals, and a variety of activities. Additionally, Wesley Willows is a non-profit organization committed to providing its clients with a lifetime of care, even if they outlive their financial resources.

Regional Accessibility and Mobility Project (RAMP)

The Regional Accessibility and Mobility Project (RAMP) is a non-profit Center for Independent Living (CIL). Services are offered to individuals in multiple counties, including Boone, DeKalb, Stephenson, and Winnebago. Offices for RAMP are located in Belvidere, DeKalb, Freeport, and Rockford, Illinois. While RAMP does not supply transportation services directly through its organization, it provides services that support the success of transportation.

The goal of RAMP is to encourage individuals with disabilities to reach their full potential through a variety of programs and services related to independent living. Services are available for adults and youth, as well as for the community at large. Adult services focus on employment assistance and support to overcome physical limitations. Youth services focus on education and workforce readiness that support individual aspirations. Lastly, community services include educational offerings such as informative sessions on how to ride public transportation and technical assistance for accessibility assessments relative to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Workforce Connection

The Workforce Connection is a partnership of 22 federal- and state-funded employment training programs and educational entities servicing individuals and businesses in the region. This entity is vital to the publicly funded workforce development system and is committed to providing a workforce that meets the needs of the local business community. The Workforce Connection provides a workforce development system for individuals seeking employment as well as educational training opportunities. Programs are available in Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties. The system is made up of partnerships with regional stakeholders, training providers, educational entities, federal and state departments, board members,

and chief elected officials. While the program does not directly provide transportation services, the system's One-Stop Career Centers provide information about various transportation services and communicate regularly with the providers in their service areas.

Milestone Inc.

Milestone, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides services to adults and children with developmental disabilities. Services include vocational and life skills training, employment opportunities, social services for families, and various activities through their Downtown Community Services Center and their community center. Milestone provides residential facilities and transportation for its clients to places throughout the community, such as day training centers and industrial workshops. Additionally, Milestone has a dental clinic that focuses on providing oral health care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Shelter Care Ministries

Shelter Care Ministries is an organization that provides shelter and support for individuals living with a chronic mental illness and families experiencing homelessness. Services include emergency and transitional housing, as well as a soup kitchen. The Jubilee Center in Rockford has over 300 active members and focuses on assisting adults with mental illness. Shelter Care Ministries provides transportation services for individuals who utilize their programs for activities and special events. Additionally, the organization offers some extra transportation assistance by way of RMTD bus tickets or passes.

Bridgeway

Bridgeway is a non-profit organization focused on providing vocational training opportunities and services for individuals with disabilities. Bridgeway's goal is to empower all individuals to live to their full potential through a set of services and education programs. Services are wide-ranging and include things such as employment, housing, community support, mental health treatment, and more. Educational programs at Bridgeway focus on mental health and disability issues, with a goal of increased empathy and compassion. Bridgeway offices in Loves Park and the Greater Rockford Area are accessible through RMTD's fixed-route and paratransit services.

Fish-Abled Foundation

The Fish-Abled Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities in the Rockford Region. Fish-Abled seeks to

enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities through events and life-enrichment activities such as fishing outings, bowling, and baseball and hockey games. Additionally, the organization provides transportation to outings.

Private Transportation Services

In addition to a variety of public transportation outlets, certain private options are available, typically at a higher cost with more efficient and direct service. Within the Rockford Region, private transportation options include intercity bus service through Van Galder Bus Company and ride-hailing from independent taxi companies, Uber, and Lyft. By supplementing certain gaps in public services, private transportation services can also assist individuals without reliable access to a personal vehicle.

Intercity Private Bus Service

Intercity bus service is provided to the Rockford Region through Van Galder Bus Company, which operates out of its terminal on the east side of Rockford, and Greyhound Lines and FlixBus, which depart from RMTD's East Side Transfer Center.

Van Galder destinations include Madison, Janesville, and South Beloit, Wisconsin, as well as Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) and Chicago Union Station. Each day, there are 27 separate departure times from Rockford to ORD on their Airport Shuttle service. Typically, 12 of these trips extend to Chicago Union Station. Return trips from ORD continue through Rockford up to the destinations listed in Wisconsin. Departure times vary from as early as 3:20 AM and extend to 7:20 PM. Pricing for a one-way trip to Chicago averages approximately \$28 to \$30.

Figure 2-4: Van Galder Bus Service



Source: Coach USA

FlixBus and Greyhound Lines provide one daily trip to Chicago from Rockford in the morning and afternoon, respectively. Each of the trips take riders to the Greyhound bus station in downtown Chicago. Prices for trips from FlixBus and Greyhound Lines to Chicago average approximately \$11 to \$16. Through additional fees and transfers, riders are also able to reach any of Greyhound's bus stations throughout the country.

Ride Hailing

Transportation Network Companies

In addition to public transportation, human service transportation, and private transportation, ride-hailing services, commonly referred to as Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), play a vital role in supporting travel in the region. Unlike taxis, TNCs use smartphone applications to connect drivers to riders, providing a convenient and efficient experience. On the applications, users can see the price of a ride when scheduling, pay using mobile payment, and track the progress of the driver to their location or during their trip. Services such as Uber and Lyft operate throughout the region, offering flexible, on-demand rides for the general public. In locations and during times where public transit is not accessible, TNCs can provide valuable mobility solutions for all residents, including transit-dependent populationsⁱⁱⁱ. Offering 24-hour service, Uber and Lyft users can book rides at any time of the day or night. The growth of shared-use mobility services presents new potential opportunities for enhancing regional connectivity, particularly in underserved areas^{iv}.

Taxi Services

Taxi services offer transportation services to and from specific destinations for compensation. This fee is assessed using a taximeter and based on the mileage and distance of the trip. While pre-arranged transportation isn't provided, drivers are dispatched to locations on an as-needed basis.

Chapter 3: Transportation Needs Assessment

The transportation needs assessment evaluates the current state of population characteristics in the Rockford Region as they pertain to the transportation network and individual needs of certain groups, such as transit-dependent populations. Understanding individualized needs through such an assessment can help transportation decision-makers further improve existing services by making informed decisions in coordination with transportation providers. The groups outlined in this chapter highlight those whose transportation access can significantly impact their quality of life. Needs for transportation services in the Rockford Region were identified through a review of regional demographics, transportation service reach, common service destinations, infrastructure, engagement, and a transportation accessibility analysis.

Regional Demographics and Travel Patterns

Analysis of demographic and population data is crucial to understanding the transportation needs of transit-dependent populations in the region. Seniors, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low income, teenagers under 18, and zero-vehicle households have been identified as the groups that make up the transit-dependent population. Many individuals within these groups do not have access to personal vehicles, making transit their only reliable mode of transportation.

Boundaries for demographic data for the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) update include county-level data due to the lack of nationally comparable datasets, such as the U.S. Census’ American Community Survey (ACS) at the MPA level. While the MPA boundaries do not cover the extents of Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties, coordination occurs among transit providers covering these counties. For the purposes of this study, demographic data will be reported on at the county level, and in some instances, census block groups and census tracts within the MPA boundary.

Total Population

Population is often directly associated with transportation services due to levels of demand. In most cases, areas with larger populations have more transportation services, and areas with smaller populations tend to have more limited options. Transportation options and the reach of those

services directly affect accessibility for residents, or their ability to travel without a personal vehicle. Population density helps transportation providers understand potential demand for their services.

According to 2022 ACS 5-year estimates, approximately 325,106 people reside within the MPA. Of those, 282,817 people live within the census-defined urban areas, or approximately 87 percent of the region’s population. The total population of the three-county area is 389,722. Since the previous iteration of the HSTP, there has been a decline in population in Boone and Winnebago counties. This trend has been ongoing in the state of Illinois for roughly 10 years now.

Table 3-1: Total Population by Counties (2018 & 2022)

County	2018	2022
Boone	53,606	53,459
Ogle	51,328	51,672
Winnebago	286,174	284,591
Rockford MPA	328,716	325,106

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 3-2: Municipal Populations within the Rockford MPA, 2022

Municipalities	Population
Rockford	148,173
Belvidere	25,389
Loves Park	22,935
Machesney Park	22,840
Roscoe	11,134
Poplar Grove	4,727
Byron	3,739
Winnebago	3,003
Cherry Valley	2,951
Davis Junction	2,697
Timberlane	1,458
New Milford	1,272
Monroe Center	460
Caledonia	241

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Seniors

Similar to the rest of the country, the Rockford Region's senior population is continuing to grow. Seniors are often associated with more adverse health issues, many times creating a reliance on public or human service transportation to medical facilities or other essential services. Addressing the increasing demand for such services is crucial for the continued growth and quality of life for these individuals. Strategic coordination among transit, human services, and healthcare providers is necessary to support the seniors in the region.

According to 2022 5-year ACS 5-year estimates, there are 57,556 seniors aged 65 and older residing in the Rockford MPA, comprising 17.7 percent of the total population. The total senior population of the three counties is 69,906, or 17.9 percent. Since 2015, the senior population has grown by over 5,000 individuals, approximately an 8.4 percent increase.

Figure 3-1 displays the total senior population within the MPA at the census block group level. Areas with darker shading symbolize a higher concentration of individuals 65 years and older.

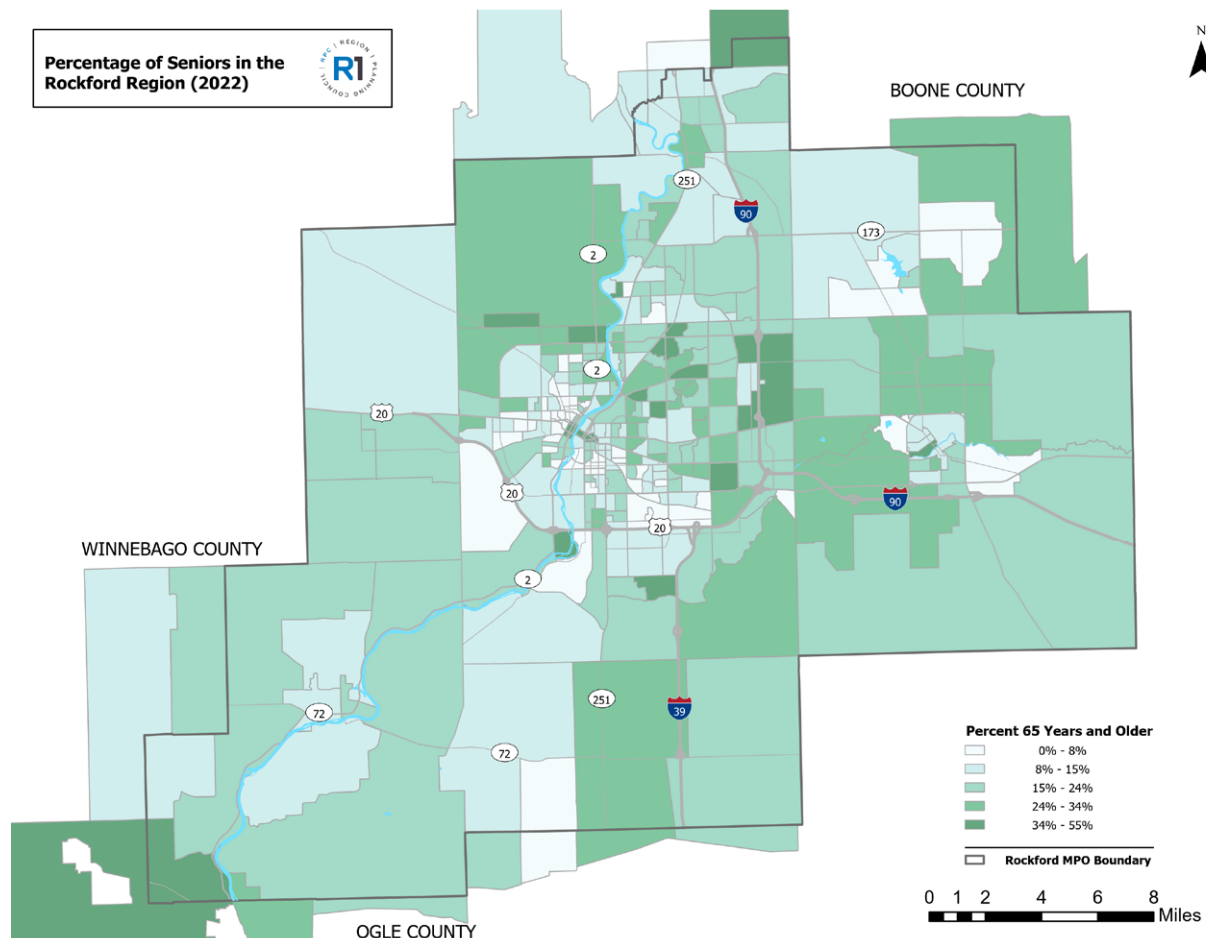
While a large percentage of residents reside within the urbanized area of the Rockford Region, many also live outside of this area, leaving them with no direct access to the only fixed-route transit system in the region. Even for those within the urbanized portion, many live too far from a stop to be able to rely on using it consistently. Therefore, a significant percentage of seniors rely solely upon demand-response or paratransit services from transit agencies or human services organizations to attend medical appointments and other essential services. Limited operation hours and additional requirements of scheduling ahead cause many seniors in the region to still rely upon personal vehicles or other forms of private transportation.

Table 3-3: Senior Population by Counties (2022)

County	Seniors 65+	Percent
Boone	8,692	16.3%
Ogle	9,961	19.3%
Winnebago	51,253	10.8%
Total	69,906	21.5%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3-1: Senior Population



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

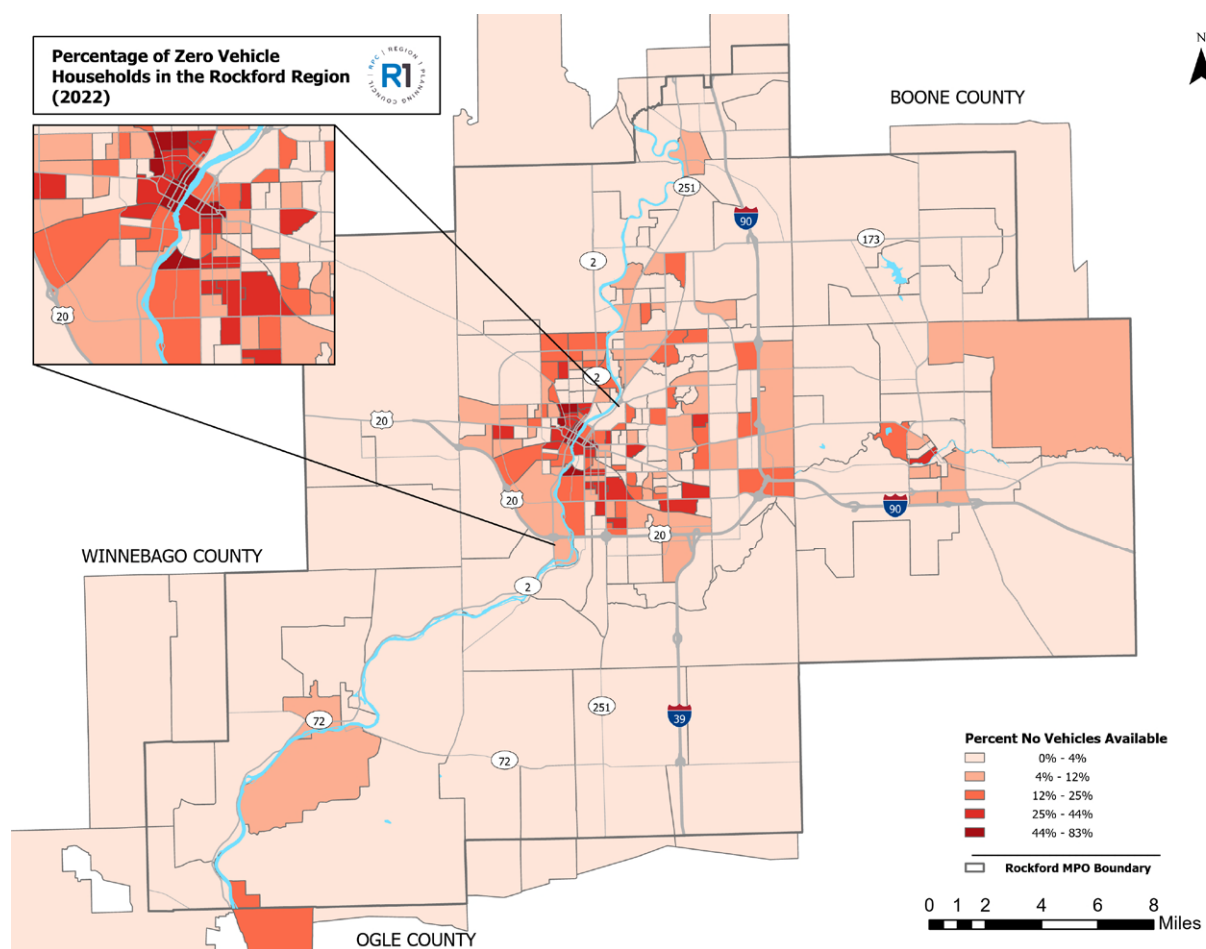
Zero-Vehicle Households

In some scenarios, individuals who live in walkable neighborhoods with access to essential services may choose not to own a personal vehicle. However, the majority of zero-vehicle households are located in areas with higher percentages of low-income individuals. Many low-income individuals cannot take on the financial burdens associated with vehicle ownership, often resulting in an increased reliance on public transportation.

According to the 2022 ACS 5-year estimates, the total number of zero-vehicle households within the MPA was 10,712, or approximately 9.9 percent of occupied households and apartments. Within the three-county area, the number of zero-vehicle households was 12,226, or approximately 7.9 percent. The majority of zero-vehicle households are within Winnebago County. Figure 3-2 displays the percentage of zero-vehicle households within the MPA at the census block group level.

Although the majority of zero-vehicle households are concentrated within the City of Rockford and have better access to fixed-route public transportation, they are still limited by destinations along routes and service hours. Households outside of Rockford Mass Transit District’s (RMTD) service area must rely more on demand-response transit services to reach essential services, often making it far more difficult to actively participate in society.

Figure 3-2: Population of Zero-Vehicle Households



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Individuals with a Disability

Mobility impairments affect individuals with disabilities to varying degrees. Therefore, suitable infrastructure and amenities are necessary to assist with their transportation. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements help ensure certain systems are navigable by all users. However, additional service accommodations such as paratransit service can be further-reaching.

According to 2022 ACS 5-year estimates, the total population of individuals with disabilities within the three counties is 55,023. Between 2018 and 2022, this population grew by over 3,000, with the most significant increase occurring in Ogle County.

Figure 3-3 displays the population of individuals with disabilities within the MPA at the census block group level. Disability data was based on the population aged 20 to 64 for whom poverty status is determined.

While the majority of individuals with disabilities live in areas with better access to transit and paratransit services, such as downtown Rockford, many live outside of these

boundaries and have far less access to public transportation services. Furthermore, even the individuals with the best access to such services in the region still do not have accessible infrastructure in those same areas, such as curb ramps and Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). Additional accommodations, such as level sidewalks, wide doorways, and tactile strips for those who are visually impaired, allow more individuals with disability to travel more independently.

Additionally, because all disabilities vary in mobility limitations and are not always physical or evident, providing additional provisions beyond ADA requirements can ensure assistance is available to help complete a trip. Individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities, such as autism, may require clarity and simplicity in trip-planning, fare payment, and other policies. In contrast, changes in facility design or customer service may best accommodate those with mental health conditions. As increases in mental health conditions rise across the globe, focusing on ways to share clear transit information, improve rider and transportation staff interactions (i.e., bus drivers), and cultivate a comfortable travel experience can begin to address the multitude of barriers that may deter an individual from using transit services.

Table 3-4: Population of Individuals with a Disability by County, 2022

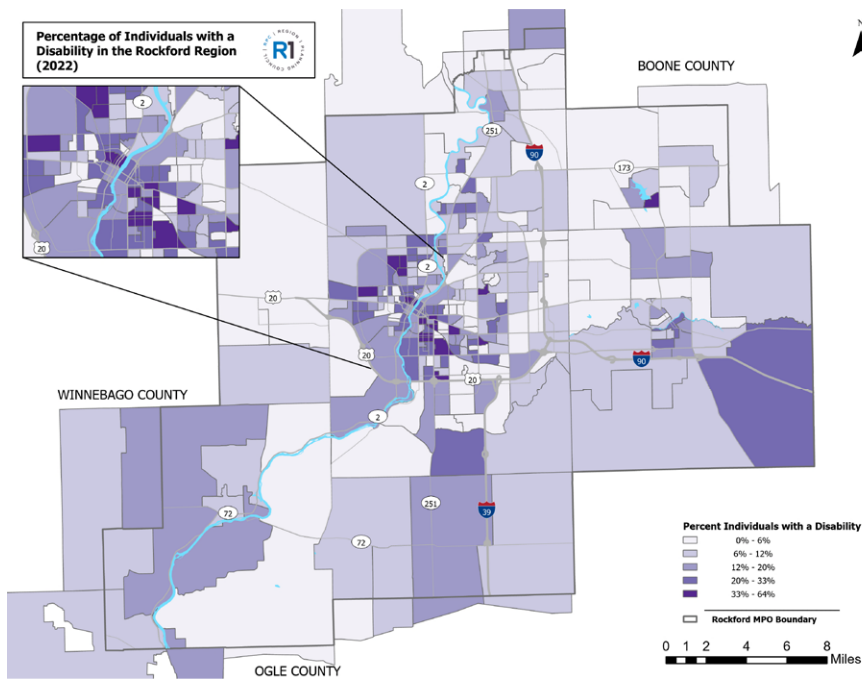
County	2018	Percent	2022	Percent
Boone	6,055	11.4%	7,001	13.1%
Ogle	6,180	12.2%	7,600	14.7%
Winnebago	39,535	14.0%	40,422	14.2%
Total	51,770		55,023	

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)

APS use sounds and vibrations to alert pedestrians with visual impairments that it is safe to cross an intersection.

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3-3: Population of Individuals with a Disability



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Low-Income Individuals

For the purposes of this plan, low-income individuals will include those with incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, which is determined annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. Five-year estimates for Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in 2022 were used to ensure consistency with other data points.

Transit dependence is common among individuals with lower incomes, primarily due to the financial burden associated with car ownership. Therefore, service gaps in public transportation systems can disproportionately affect these individuals. Individuals with low incomes represent the largest group when compared to other transit-dependent groups (shown in Table 3-5). While the level of income among these individuals still varies, addressing their transit needs can assist in reducing economic inequalities and advancing social equity.

Block groups surrounding central Rockford, particularly just west and south of the city center, have the highest percentages of low-income individuals. While existing transit

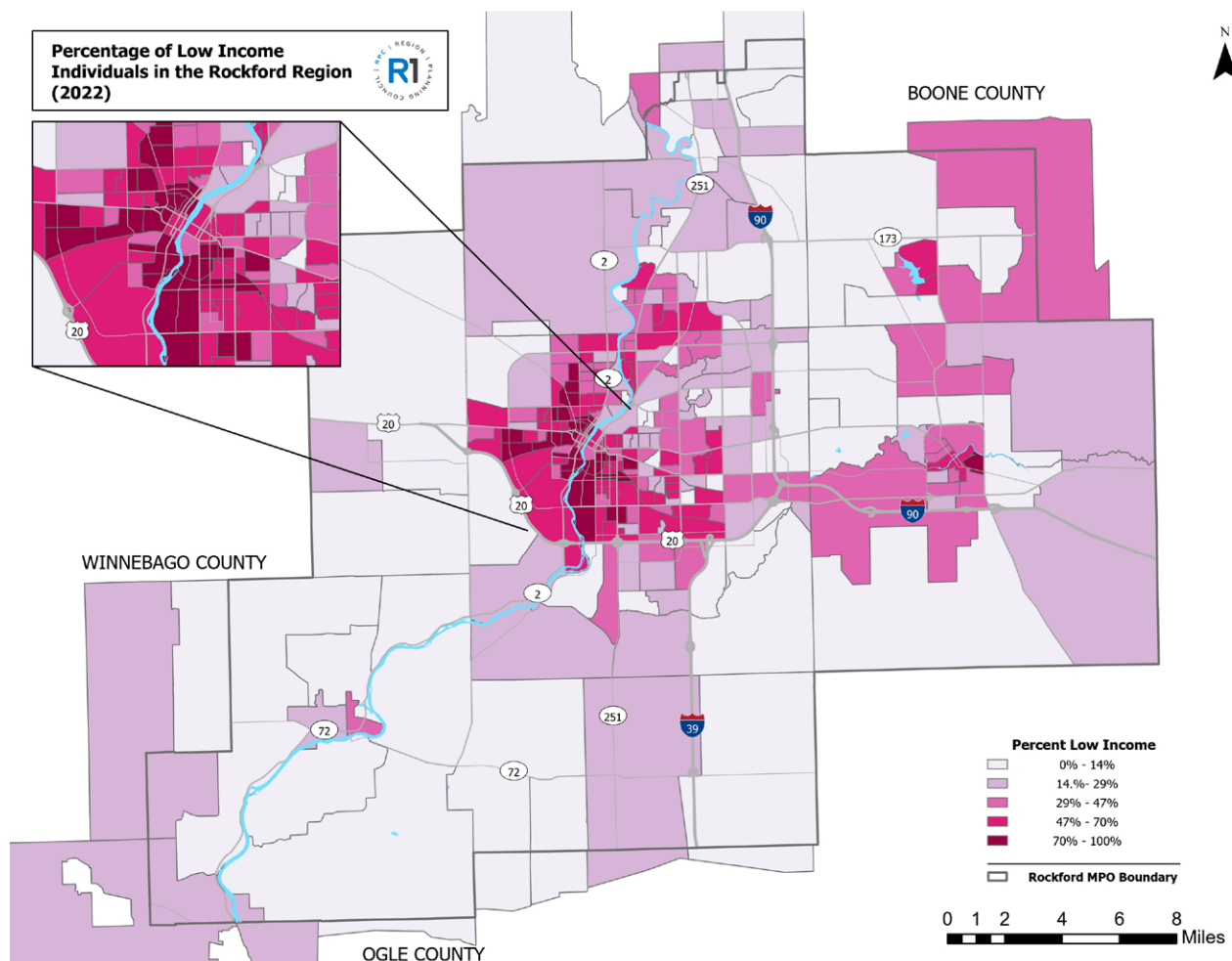
routes provide transportation options for the individuals in need in these areas, the frequency and amenities directly accessible from such routes can be limited. In some cases, public transit users are required to transfer to a secondary route to reach their essential services, such as but not limited to, grocery stores, work, and medical services. This would require the use of two buses on each leg of a trip, making many trips far more time-consuming. For low-income individuals who rely on public transportation to get to and from work, route-directness to a workplace is crucial.

Table 3-5: Population of Low-Income Individuals by County, 2022

County	Population	Percent
Boone	14,303	26.8%
Ogle	12,548	24.3%
Winnebago	97,700	34.3%
Total	124,551	32.0%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3-4: Population of Low-Income Individuals



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Teenagers (under 18)

In the United States, teenagers become eligible for a driver’s license at the age of 16. However, a variety of factors can impact a teenager’s ability to get a driver’s license, leaving behind a large number of teenagers in need of independent transportation. In 2022, it was estimated that under 34 percent of teenagers under 18 had a driver’s license^v. Additionally, not all teenagers with a license own or have a regularly accessible vehicle. Figure 3-5 shows the concentration of teenagers under the age of 18 in the Rockford Region in 2022.

Trips for teenagers include, but are not limited to, getting to school, after-school clubs, work, or a social gathering. While other transportation options exist for many teenagers, some rely solely upon public transportation to reach necessary destinations. Ensuring public transit access to schools is vital for the teenage population. Additionally, knowledge of the public transportation system or lack thereof can impact teenagers’ use of existing services. Therefore, it is recommended to constantly spread the word of transit services at schools, through parents, or online.

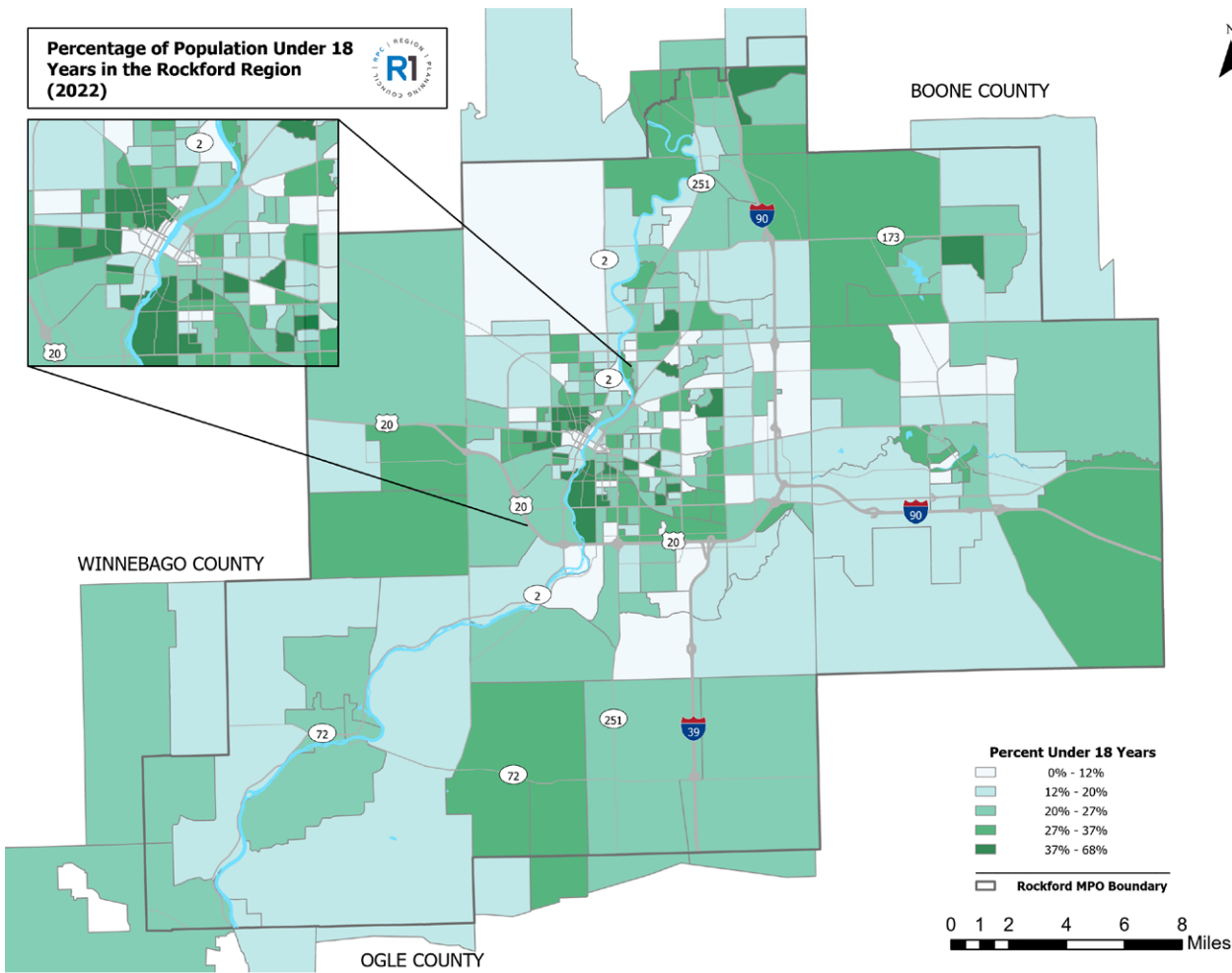
Including considerations for teenagers when planning service updates or other transit planning projects can make public transportation more approachable for a younger group of users. Public transportation education programs in schools can also teach students how to use transit services. Within the Rockford Region, Stateline Mass Transit District and RMTD go to local schools to demonstrate how to use their services. Additionally, RMTD offers free rides for students all the way up through post-secondary education. Offering free rides can help incentivize young riders to utilize transit services or even try services on occasion.

Table 3-6: Population of Teenagers Under 18 by County, 2022

County	Under 18	Percent
Boone	12,906	24.1%
Ogle	11,503	22.3%
Winnebago	66,483	23.4%
Total	90,892	28.0%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3-5: Population of Teenagers Under 18



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Transit-Dependency

Transit-dependency is the lack of access to an independent transportation source and reliance on public transportation. In most cases, not having an independent transportation source means not having access to, or being unable to drive a personal vehicle. A variety of factors can impact an individual's access to a personal vehicle, but often leave them without a reliable transportation option to reach necessary destinations, including but not limited to work, school, grocery stores, and medical services.

A Transit Demand Index (TDI) was calculated to better understand the number and general location of transit-dependent populations within the Rockford Region. Since these individuals are disproportionately affected by transit-dependency, these population groups were used in combination to develop the TDI:

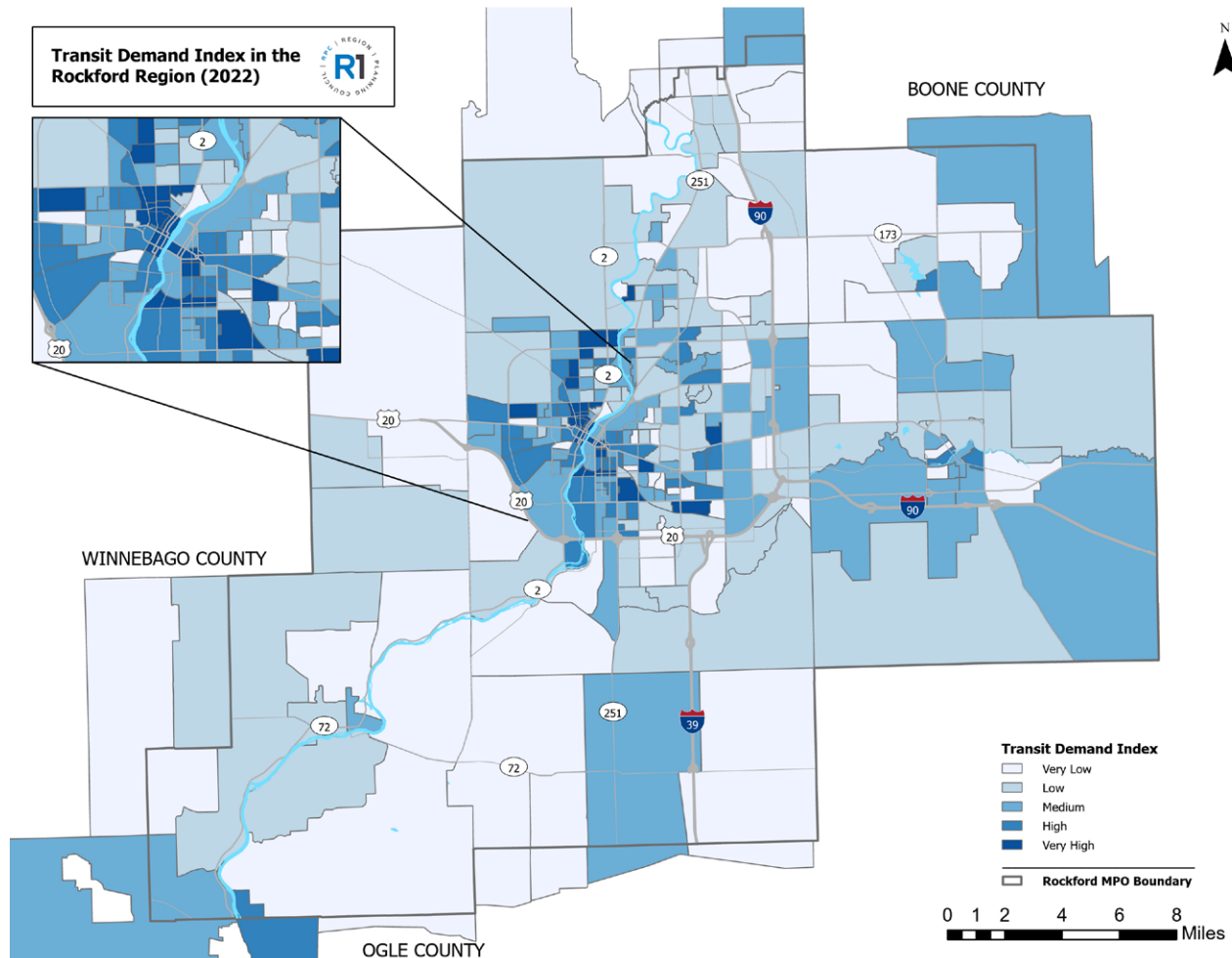
- Seniors (27.5 percent);
- Individuals with a Disability (27.5 percent);
- Zero Vehicle Households (15 percent);

- Low-Income Individuals (15 percent); and
- Teenagers Under 18 (15 percent)

Weighting (shown as a percentage) was given to each group to develop the TDI in a way that incorporates transit-dependent populations. Seniors and individuals with disabilities were assigned higher weights, as they frequently encounter additional mobility challenges. After each statistic was gathered on a block-group level, percentages were calculated before each variable was normalized with a value of zero to one. Then, a composite score was calculated using the individual normalized values in combination with determined weighting. The composite score represents a block group's TDI, with higher values reflecting areas of higher transit demand.

Transit-dependency is directly related to TDI, as it focuses on the same groups of people who are most likely to have a reliance on alternative transportation options such as public transit and paratransit. Addressing the service needs of these groups first can ensure more equitable participation in society without reliance on a personal vehicle.

Figure 3-6: Transit Demand Index (TDI) in the Rockford Region



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

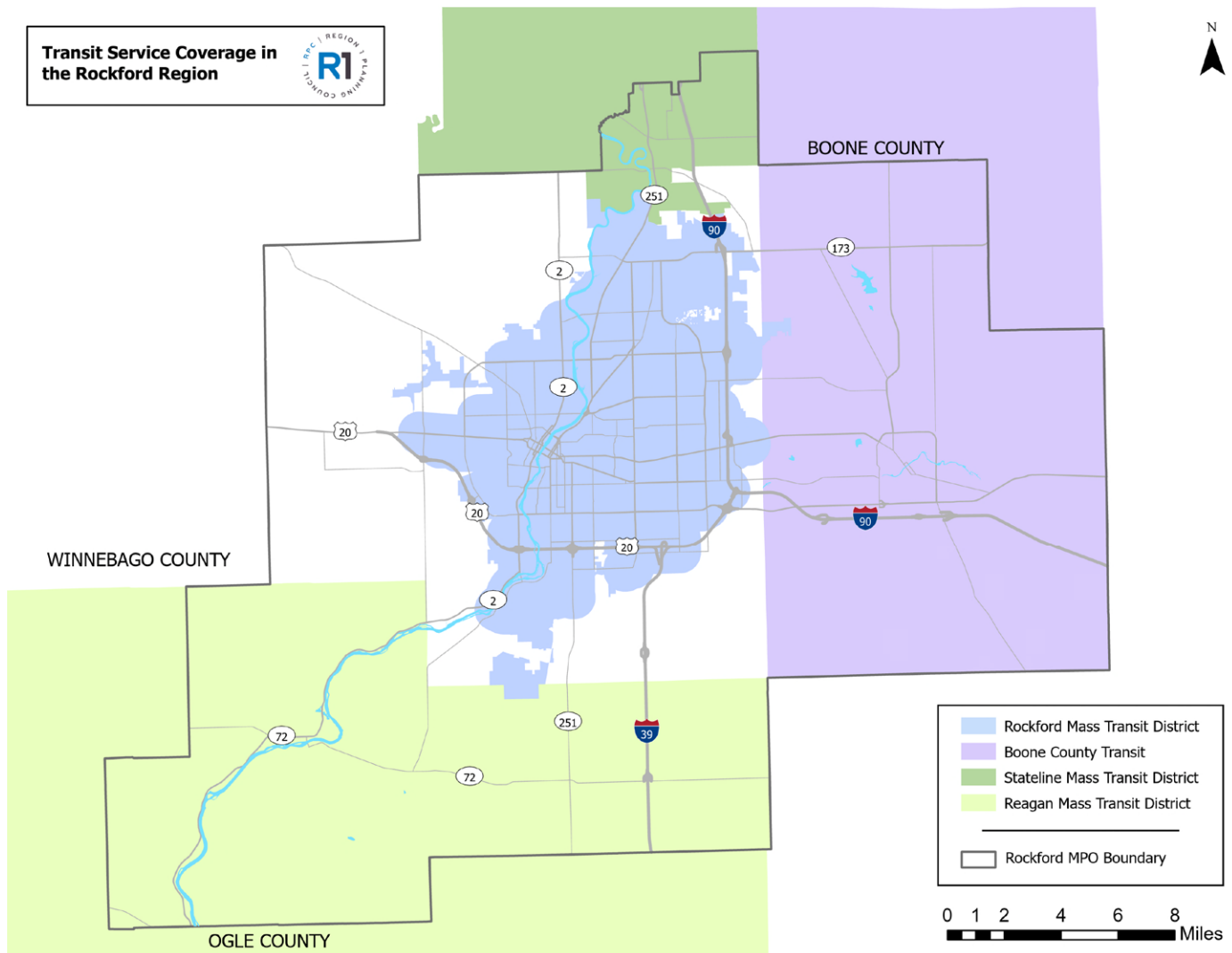
Transit Service Reach

Proximity to fixed-route transit stops, as well as living within a demand-response service area, help determine how individuals can access public transit services. Paratransit service is required to be available within a 3/4-mile of a fixed route for those who are unable to access the general transit system. With this in mind, the proximity to transit services has a large impact on transit-dependent populations, specifically seniors and individuals with disabilities.

In addition to providing transit to those who are unable to access the fixed-route transit system, demand-response services are in place to provide transit service to those in peri-urban or rural areas.

Figure 3-7 displays the paratransit and demand-response service reach within the MPA in an effort to identify any spatial gaps in service. As illustrated, Winnebago County is the only county within Northern Illinois where rural areas are not currently served by transit. However, the Winnebago County Rural Transit Service is expected to begin in the summer of 2025, which will help cover many of these network gaps. Furthermore, it should be noted that areas with designated services may not offer service on all days of the week. For example, Boone County Transit (BCT) and Reagan Mass Transit District do not currently offer weeknight or weekend service, making personal automobile and private transportation services the only options during these time periods. Paratransit and demand-response services from RMTD are still offered on the weekends, however Machesney Park and Loves Park do not have paratransit service available on Sundays.

Figure 3-7: MPA Transit Service Coverage

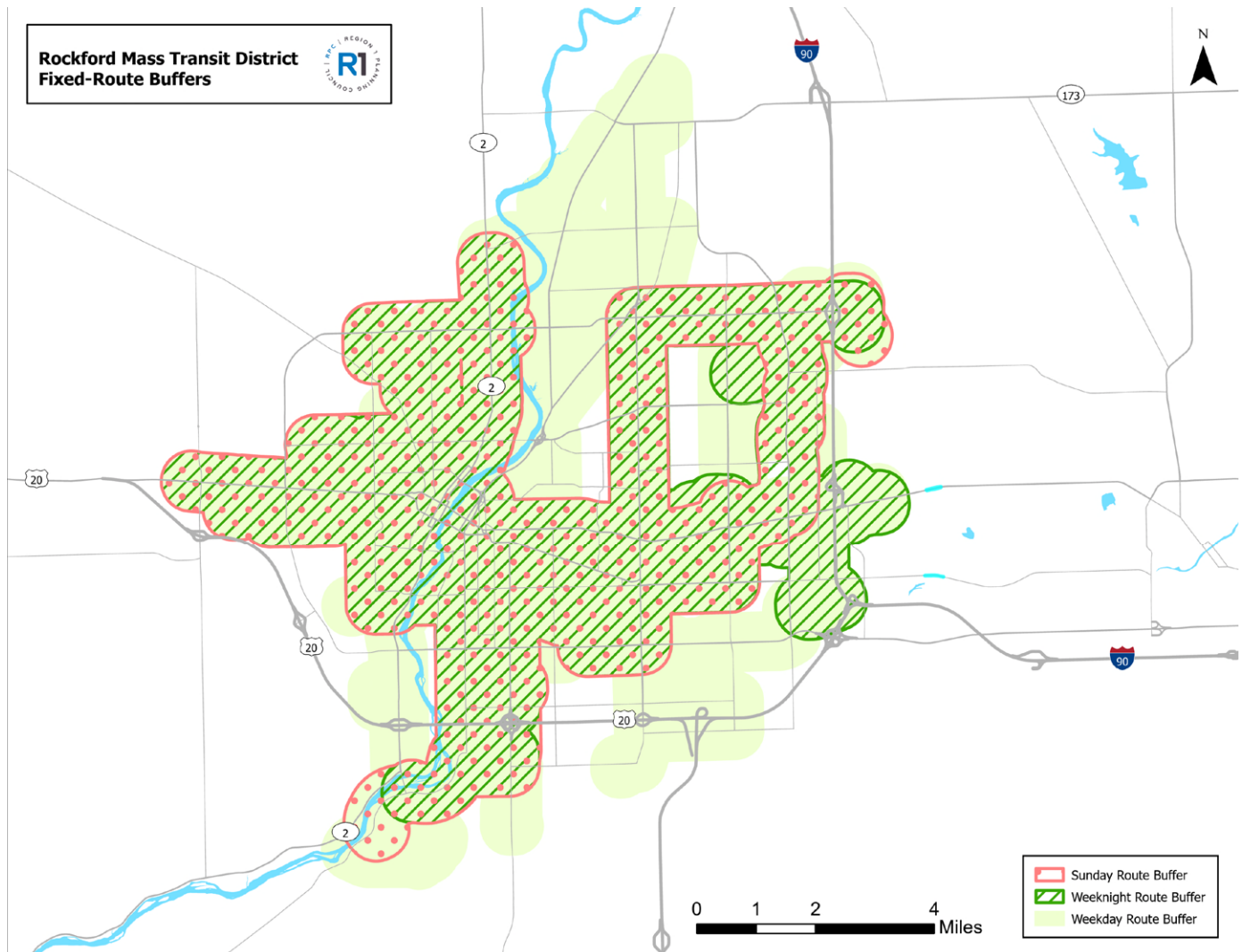


Source: Region 1 Planning Council

While individuals 65 years and older, as well as individuals with a disability, have higher chances of qualifying for paratransit service, those without access to a personal vehicle depend more heavily on fixed-route service when demand-response service is unavailable. Fixed-route transit services also tend to have more service times compared to paratransit and demand-response. Because of this, the service reach of a fixed-route system is a strong determinant of accessibility in regards to transit-dependent populations.

Figure 3-8 displays the transit reach of RMTD’s fixed route system during the times with the most services available and the least amount of services available (i.e., weekdays and Sundays). Reach was determined by a half-mile buffer surrounding each transit route, which is approximately a 10-minute walk to a transit stop.

Figure 3-8: RMTD Fixed-Route Buffers



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

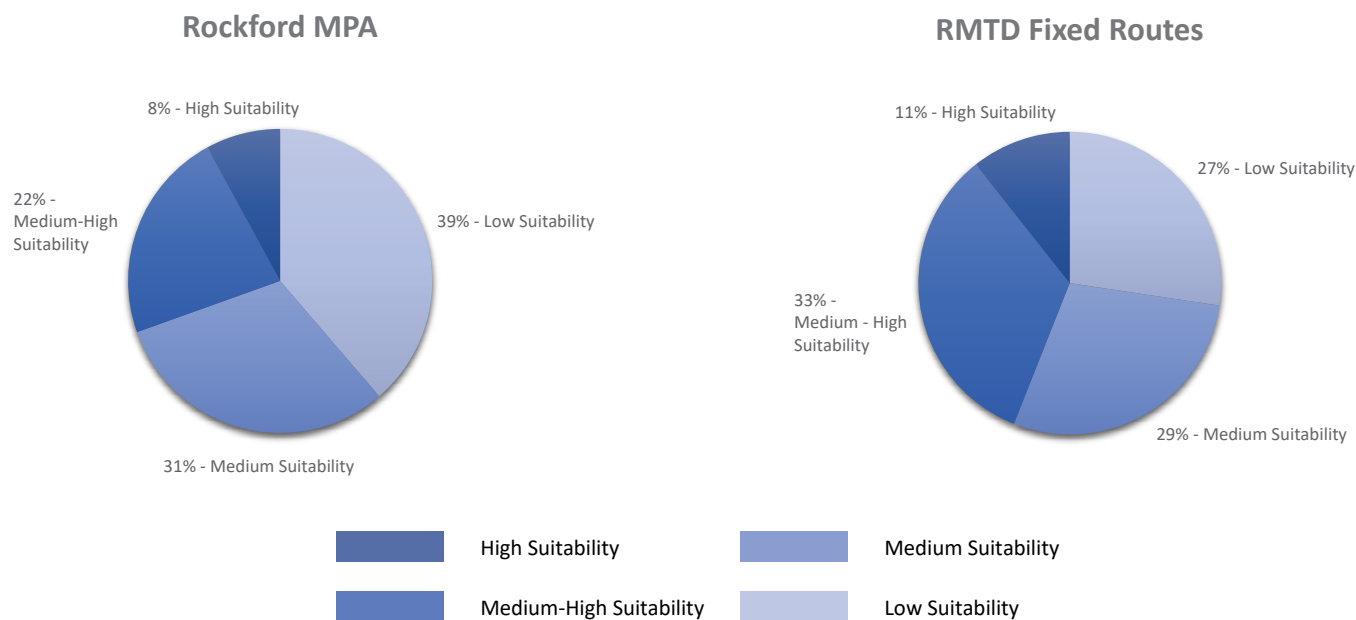
Pedestrian Suitability

While proximity to transit service is a key determinant of usability and access, transportation infrastructure plays an additional role in supporting safe and efficient transit mobility. As part of the MPO’s 2023 update to the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, a Pedestrian Suitability Index (PSI) was calculated to determine how suitable the region’s pedestrian facilities are. A composite score was established based on how well each roadway (i.e., roads with a federal functional classification of collector or above) met certain roadway and pedestrian space characteristics. Characteristics included speed limit, traffic volume, number of lanes, truck route status, sidewalk presence, midblock crossings, presence of pedestrian signals, and crosswalk visibility. Higher scores indicate an environment more suitable for pedestrian travel.

As illustrated in Figure 3-9, most roadways outside of the urban core tend to be less suitable for pedestrian travel, aligning with the features of urban sprawl. Main corridors of commercial development, where residents access essential goods and services, are located along unsuitable roadways where access to transit is needed most. Figure 3-10 shows that less than half of the surveyed roadways along RMTD fixed routes are of high or medium suitability, which can present challenges for those looking to access fixed-route transit service.

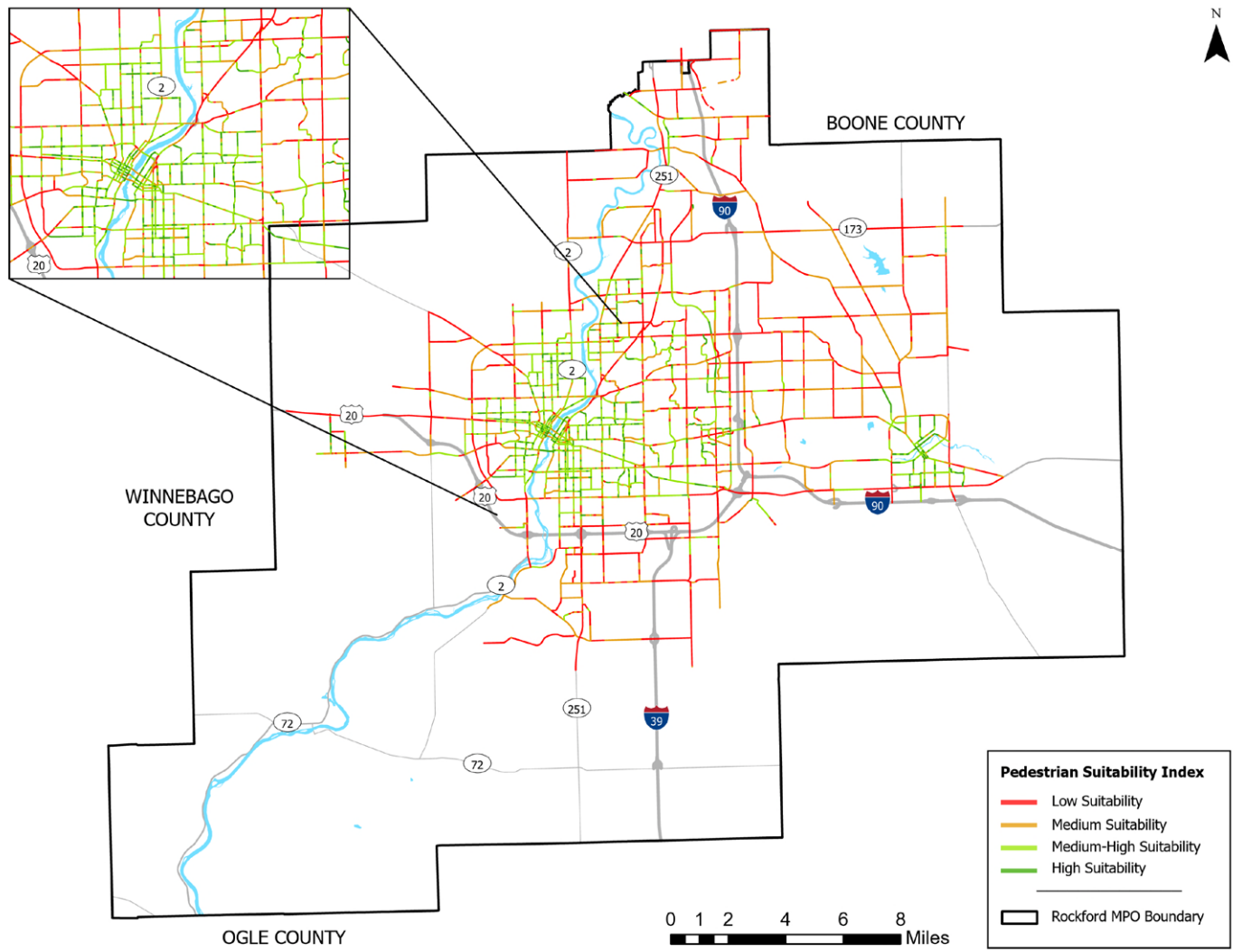
It should also be noted that the last Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was developed prior to the expansion of the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The next update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will incorporate updated data and the larger planning area to develop an updated PSI.

Figure 3-9: Pedestrian Suitability Comparison



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Figure 3-10: Pedestrian Suitability Index



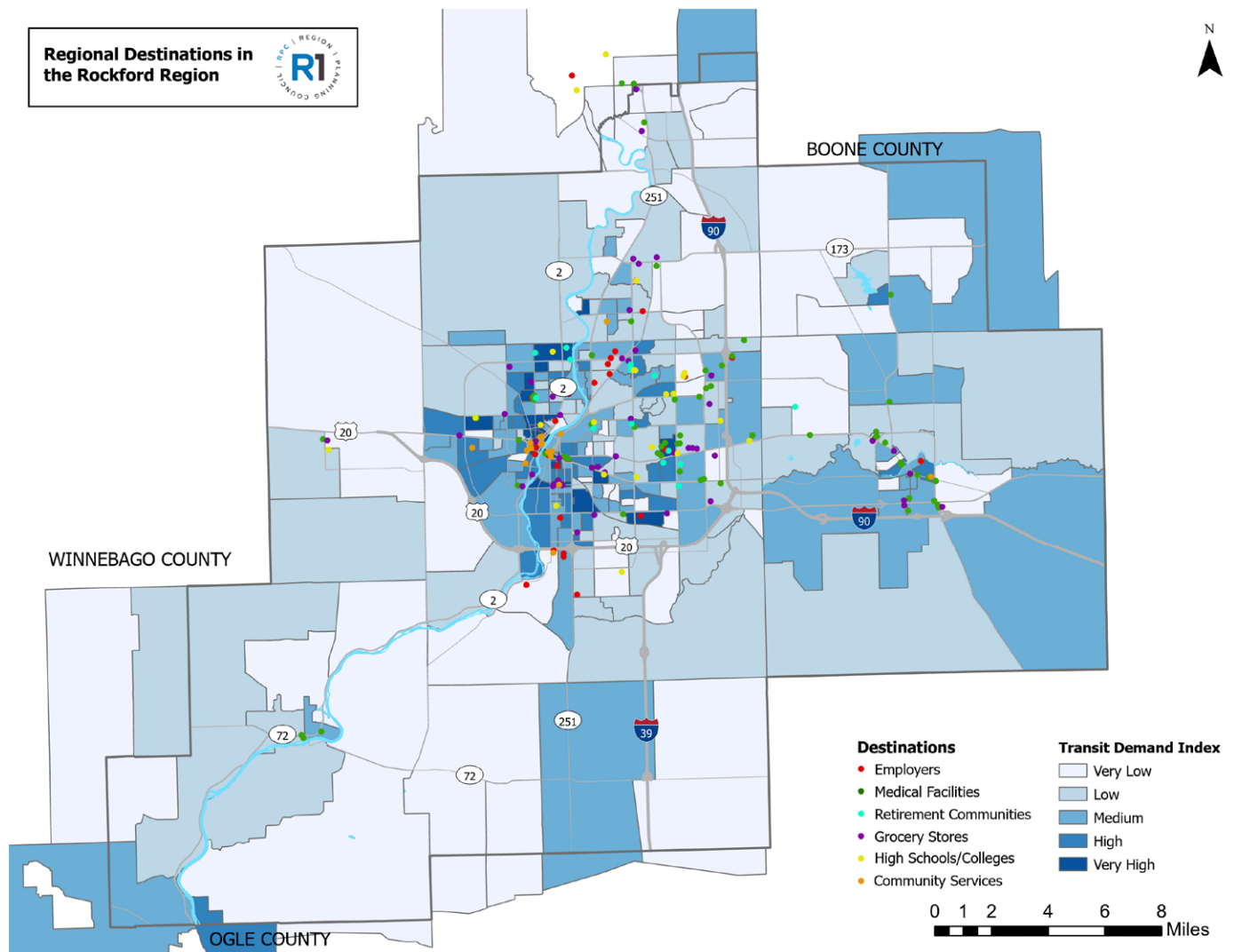
Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Regional Destinations

Public transportation services in urban areas offer connections to a variety of essential destinations such as grocery and retail stores, jobs, residences, and medical facilities. Transit-dependent populations often rely solely on the public transportation available to help them reach these destinations and maintain their way of life. Therefore, it is crucial that public transportation systems get users where they need to go safely and reliably.

Identifying and understanding the region's most significant destinations can help transit providers prioritize better access for those who need it most. Since there are a large number of varying trip destinations that cannot all be considered, this plan will focus on destinations related to the social determinants of health, as these are most frequented by individuals with special transportation needs. These include medical facilities, grocery stores, major employer locations, and community services. Figure 3-11 shows the regional destinations within the Rockford MPA.

Figure 3-11: Regional Destinations



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Employment

Access to employment opportunities plays a key role in the demand for transportation in the region. Public transportation services provide vital connections for residents traveling to and from jobs, especially for individuals without reliable access to a personal vehicle. Distribution of job locations can inform transit providers of areas where convenient and efficient service is needed most. The City of Rockford has the highest number of residents commuting to work via public transportation in the region. Therefore, high employment density areas must be adequately served by transit to ensure residents maintain employment opportunities, regardless of their mobility options.

The largest employers within the Rockford Region are widely dispersed, making it difficult for transit providers to adequately service each on a fixed-route system. Additionally, many jobs start and end during times when

public transit operations are more limited, making trip planning more difficult. It should be noted that employment concentrations may not be fully representative of the region since some employers have multiple locations. For example, while one of the largest employers in the region is Rockford Public Schools (RPS), employees work in many different schools and administrative facilities. Table 3-7 lists the major employers within the Rockford Region.

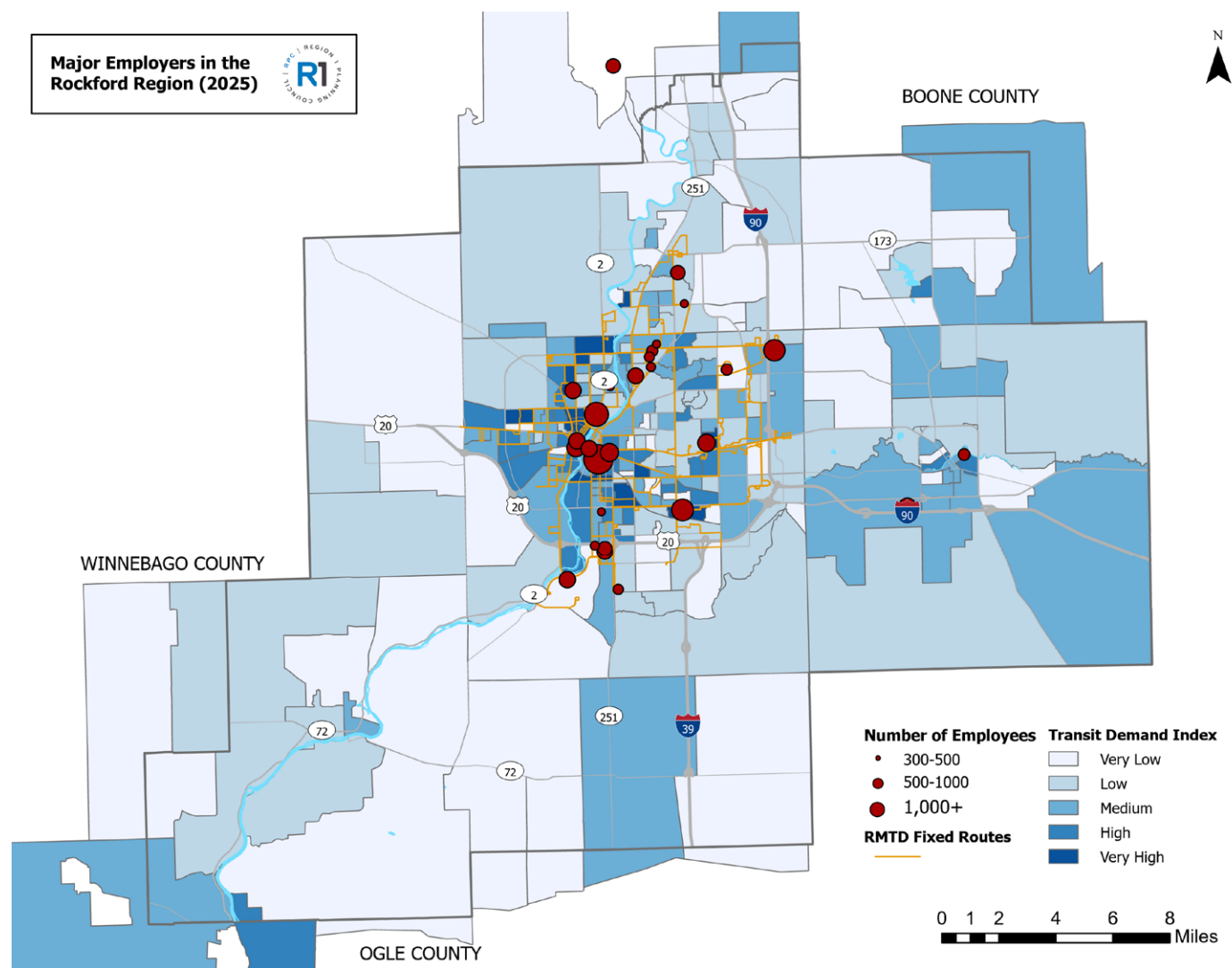
To better understand the spatial relationship between major employment locations and areas with the highest concentrations of transit-dependent populations, the largest employers were geographically overlaid on the TDI map. As shown in Figure 3-12, many of the largest employers are located in or near areas with higher transit demand. Apart from employers in Boone County, which can be accessed with BCT's demand-response service, most major employers are accessible by RMTD's fixed-route network.

Table 3-7: Major Employers in Rockford Region

Employer	Address	Employment	Industry
Rockford Public Schools	501 7th St, Rockford, IL 61104	4200	Education
Catholic Diocese of Rockford	1243 N. Church St, Rockford, IL 61103	2800	Education
Collins Aerospace	4747 Harrison Ave, Rockford, IL 61108	2300	Advanced Manufacturing
Mercyhealth	2400 N. Rockton Ave, Rockford, IL 61103	2200	Healthcare & Medical Services
Swedish American Hospital	1401 E. State St, Rockford, IL 61104	1600	Healthcare & Medical Services
Rockford Park District	401 S. Main St, Rockford, IL 61101	1600	Government & Public Administration
Stellantis (Belvidere Assembly)	3000 W Chrysler Dr, Belvidere, IL 61008	1500	Advanced Manufacturing
OSF Healthcare System	5666 E. State St, Rockford, IL 61108	1500	Healthcare & Medical Services
Amazon (Rockford Fulfillment Center)	11200 Venture Dr, Loves Park, IL 61111	1300	Logistics & Distribution
Winnebago County	401 Elm St, Rockford, IL 61101	1300	Government & Public Administration
City of Rockford	425 E. State St, Rockford, IL 61104	1300	Government & Public Administration
Rockford Health Physicians	2300 N. Rockton Ave, Rockford, IL 61103	1300	Healthcare & Medical Services
PCI Pharma Services	4545 Assembly Dr, Rockford, IL 61109	1200	Logistics & Distribution
Woodward	1000 E. Riverside Blvd, Loves Park, IL 61111	1200	Advanced Manufacturing
United Parcel Service, Inc. (UPS)	1235 Research Pkwy, Rockford, IL 61109	1000	Logistics & Distribution
Taylor Company	750 N. Blackhawk Blvd, Rockton, IL 61072	1000	Advanced Manufacturing
Harlem School District	8605 N. 2nd St, Machesney Park, IL 61115	1000	Education
General Mills, Inc.	915 E. Pleasant St, Belvidere, IL 61008	650	Food Processing
Rock Valley College	3301 N. Mulford Rd, Rockford, IL 61114	600	Education
Physicians Immediate Care	1000 E. Riverside Blvd, Loves Park, IL 61111	600	Healthcare & Medical Services
Bergstrom	2390 Blackhawk Rd, Rockford, IL 61109	500	Advanced Manufacturing
City of Loves Park	100 Hearts Blvd, Loves Park, IL 61111	500	Government & Public Administration
Lowe's Distribution Center	2801 W. Rockton Rd, Rockton, IL 61072	500	Logistics & Distribution

Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Figure 3-12: Major Employer Locations in the Rockford Region



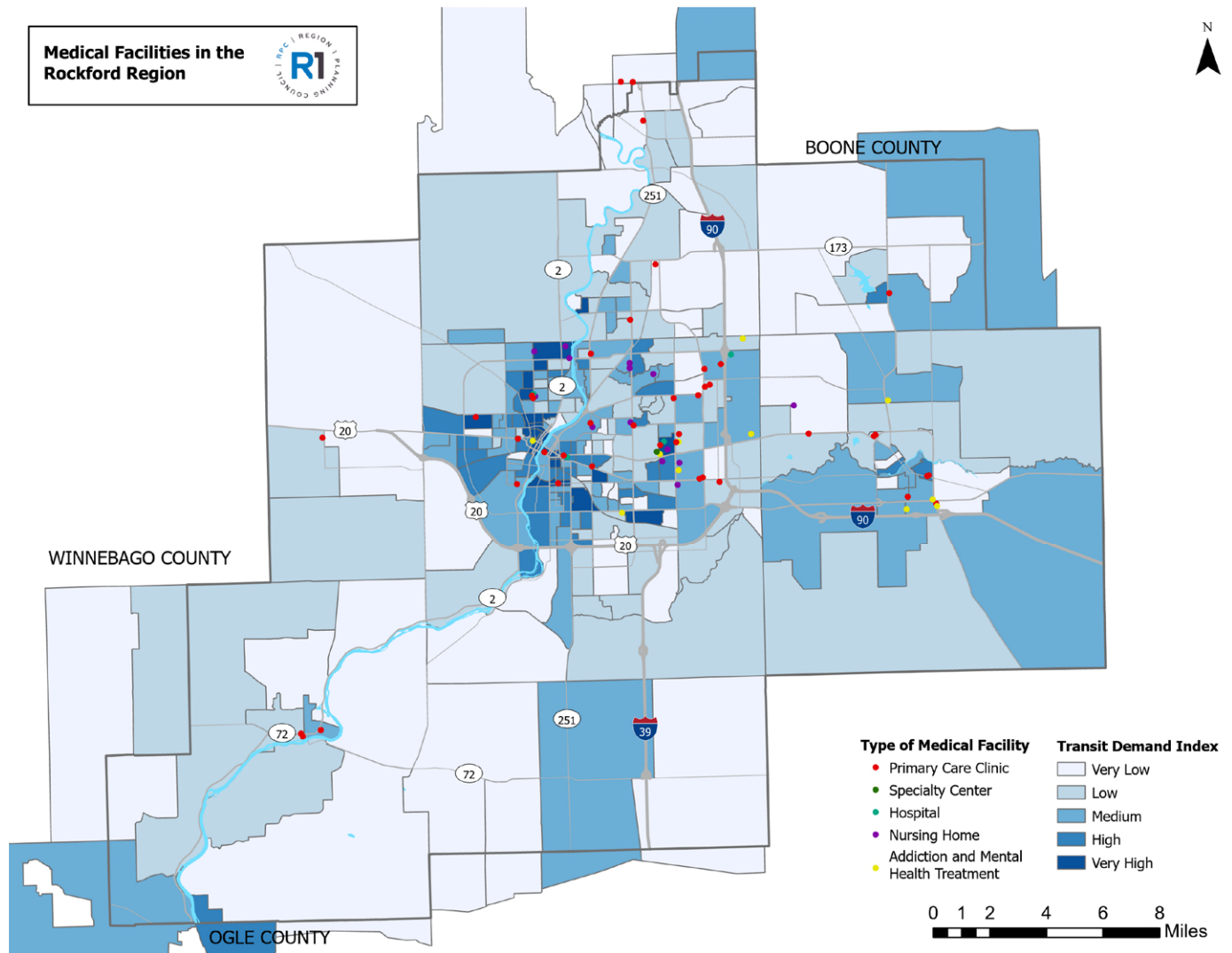
Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Medical

Medical appointments and other healthcare services make up a large portion of trips taken by seniors and individuals with disabilities, particularly those with chronic health conditions. However, other population groups also require reliable transportation options to and from medical services. Demand-response and paratransit users residing in rural locations often schedule rides to and from medical destinations, which tend to be located in

urbanized areas. Additionally, demand for certain medical services, such as mental health services, has continued to rise. Ensuring reliable and consistent public transportation access to medical services is crucial for the wellness of transit-dependent populations. Figure 3-13 displays the major medical facilities within the Rockford MPA, including hospitals, nursing homes, mental health and outpatient facilities, etc.

Figure 3-13: Medical Facilities in the Rockford Region

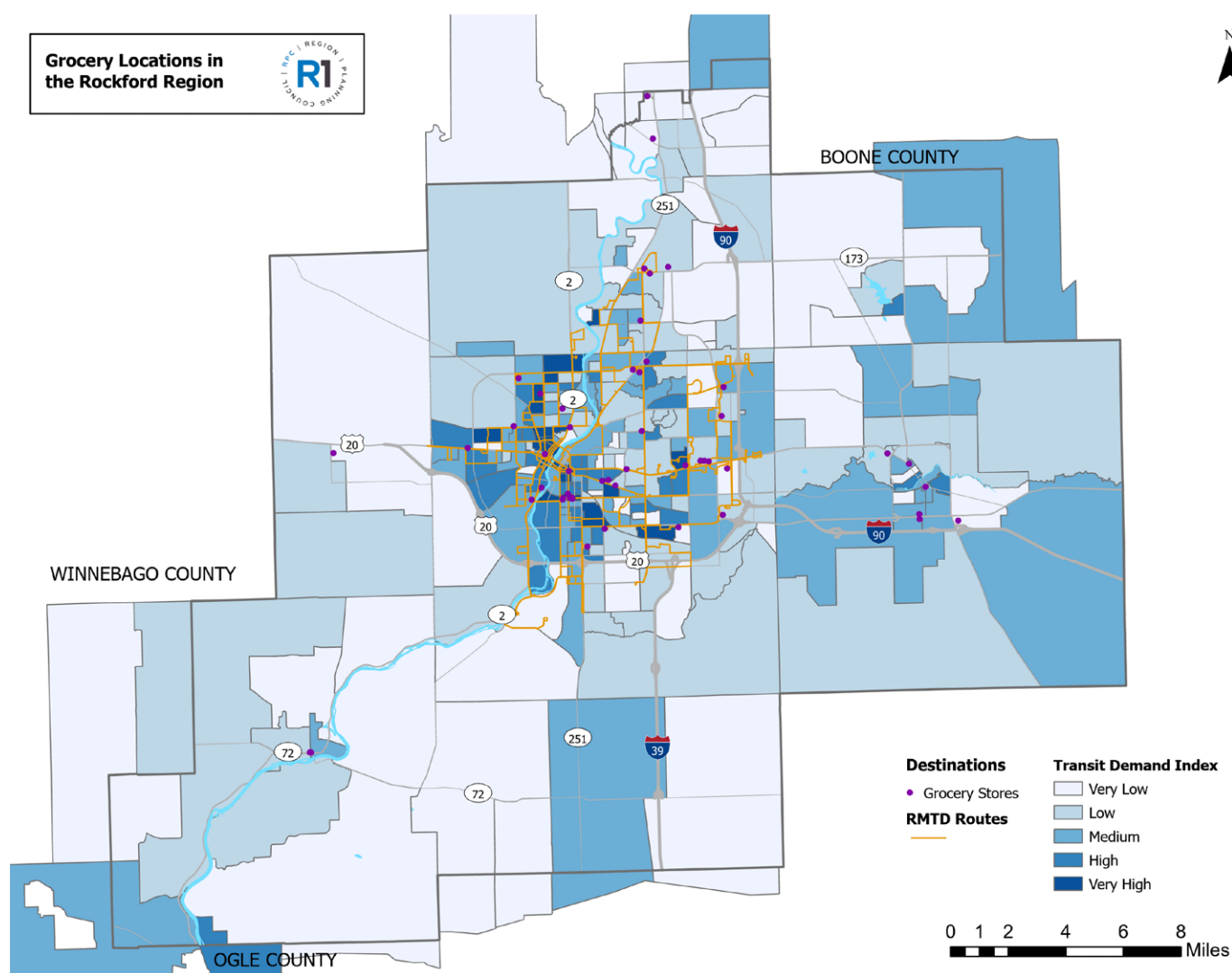


Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Grocery and Retail

While the majority of transit-dependent populations reside near downtown and western Rockford, many of the large grocery and retail stores are located further east and north of downtown, making these destinations more challenging to access without a personal vehicle. Figure 3-14 shows the concentration of transit-dependent areas along with the locations of grocery stores. To access many of these stores using public transportation, residents often have to transfer to a secondary route, requiring four individual bus trips to make a round trip. Understanding frequented grocery and retail stores can help transit providers better plan for service demands and ensure residents have reliable access to essential goods.

Figure 3-14: Grocery Locations in the Rockford Region



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Outreach

Public Survey

It is important to regularly engage the public about the available public transportation services. This is often conducted by a local transit agency, whether alone or with the help of partner agencies. Understanding the meaningful feedback that residents provide in a public survey can help transit agencies adapt their service and plan for service updates that better serve the community. Additionally, a survey can be used as a tool to inform the general public or the base of riders who frequently use the service but may not be aware of all existing services and amenities. A wide range of information can be obtained from a public survey administered by public transportation agencies. Examples include, but are not limited to, demographic statistics, ridership usage, frequented routes, desired service updates, safety concerns, comfort of buses, and trip purpose.

RMTD Ridership Feedback Survey

In the Spring of 2023, RMTD conducted a ridership survey aimed at getting feedback from individuals who utilize their service. Since this was targeted at RMTD users, surveys were administered in person on the bus and at the transfer center. With the help of Region 1 Planning Council (R1), RMTD was able to survey over 250 riders. The survey was focused on understanding the overall experience of riders by asking general questions related to RMTD's fixed-route service. Survey respondents received a free all-day pass for their time filling out the questions.

Responses relative to riders' experience riding on RMTD buses were generally favorable, with a majority of users reporting good and very good overall satisfaction. Trip purposes reported highest by users included work, medical, shopping, and social. With over 87 percent of respondents, the survey also found that the vast majority of users walked to get to and from their bus stop. Additionally, almost half of all respondents indicated that they would walk to their destination when RMTD service is not available.

Other questions related to rider satisfaction asked about the value of RMTD's fares, feedback relative to service information, courtesy of drivers and customer service, cleanliness of buses and facilities, ADA accessibility, bus timeliness, and more. Additionally, RMTD used the service as an opportunity to ask about awareness and use of their recently implemented Token Transit application that helps riders pay for tickets on their phone. Responses were roughly divided evenly among respondents reporting they use the application, don't use it and are unaware of it, or are aware of it and don't use it.

RMTD College Survey

In the Spring of 2024, RMTD also conducted a survey targeted

at college students in their service area. Due to agreement limitations, surveys were only able to be conducted at Rock Valley College (RVC). The college survey was aimed at gauging awareness of RMTD service and interest in their U-Pass program, which offered discounted 30-day passes to local college students. Additionally, questions related to students' commute to school, including length, average arrival and departure times, and how they currently travel to campus.

A total of 49 responses were gathered from in-person surveying at RVC's main campus. Survey results found that the majority of students had not ridden an RMTD bus, with the most reported reasons being a lack of convenience and being unaware of the service. When asked what would make them more likely to use public transportation, responses checked most were more frequent routes, better coverage, longer service, cheaper rates, and increased safety. Students were also asked if they were aware of RMTD's U-Pass program, to which about two-thirds of respondents stated they weren't. Lastly, students were asked if they would use the public transportation service if it were free for college students in Rockford, with over 83 percent stating they would.

It should be noted that as of February 1st, 2025, RMTD offers free rides to students enrolled in post-secondary education programs or a local adult General Educational Development (GED)/High School Equivalency (HSE) program in the Rockford Region.

Capital Needs Survey

Stakeholder engagement is a key component of the coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). One component of the stakeholder engagement completed for the Rockford Region's HSTP was administered through a capital needs survey. This survey was sent to transit agencies and human services organizations in the region, and a variety of questions related to their transportation service were asked. Additionally, more targeted questions were aimed at understanding the funding, maintenance, labor, and other constraints of each organization or agency. Certain questions related to bus facilities and related infrastructure were only applicable to some respondents. However, each response helped gauge many of the necessities of each organization or agency.

In total, five separate agencies and organizations filled out the capital needs survey: Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD), Boone County Transit (BCT), Reagan Mass Transit District, The Workforce Connection, and Barba Olson Center of Hope. Other agencies were also engaged in separate manners such as meetings or calls, whose responses will also be included in this plan. The results from the capital needs survey will be discussed along with other stakeholder engagement in Chapter 4: Identified Transportation Needs and Gaps.

Chapter 4: Identified Transportation Needs and Gaps

Through stakeholder engagement by means of the capital needs survey, individual provider meetings, and the Transportation Alternative Selection Committee (TASC), a list of needs and gaps in existing transportation services was created. The gaps have been divided into five overarching categories: financial, service, education, infrastructure, and coordination. Many of the needs and gaps identified in the previous Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) are still applicable to the region. However, additional needs and gaps have been identified and included. This section outlines the identified needs and gaps for the region and informed the development of the goals and strategies discussed in Chapter 5: Looking Forward.

Financial

Financial gaps are related to financial resources and the cost of transportation services, both for the providers and for the users.

Provider Funding Needs

The lack of sufficient funding for transportation services is a significant barrier to fulfilling transportation needs for the region. In many respects, this gap itself affects several other gaps. For instance, more services and rolling stock purchases could be made if more funding were readily available. The quality and accessibility of services are often constrained when transportation agencies face financial limitations brought on by a lack of funding. The ability to maintain vehicles and retain riders may worsen due to the reliance on funding to sustain operations and maintenance.

Despite the awareness of the value public transportation services provide for the region, funding challenges have continued to burden local providers. Funding was listed as a constraint by each of the respondents in the capital needs survey, and continues to be a voiced concern in other outlets and engagement by providers. Improving service reach and efficiency requires adequate funding, leading to many providers having to make tough decisions based on limited state and federal funding sources. In order to further grow services, providers will likely require more adequate funding at the local level. Certain restrictions on state and federal grants require transportation agencies and organizations to provide a local match. These restrictions can be burdensome and often unobtainable by many

providers due to already constrained local budgets, leading to providers being ineligible to apply.

Additional funding from local sources would help alleviate some of the constraints related to supplemental state and federal grant requirements. Furthermore, funding plans should always seek a diverse set of sources to help with local match requirements and create a more resilient funding structure to support ongoing transportation service and infrastructure improvements.

User Affordability

Although less expensive than alternative modes, the cost of public transportation services can be unaffordable for some riders, especially seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those living in poverty. When funding shortages occur at the agency level, user costs can sometimes increase to offset shortages and ensure continuous service. The RMTD ridership survey indicated that the vast majority of respondents did not believe fare prices were too high. However, many respondents indicated they were living below the poverty line, making the price of fares a topic that should continuously be examined.

Fare Programs

Consequently, each of the local providers in the Rockford Region have fare programs that allow many users to ride their buses for a discounted rate or for free. For example, seniors and individuals with disabilities can use Reagan Mass Transit District and Stateline Mass Transit District's services for a discounted rate. Seniors are also able to ride for free on RMTD and Boone County Transit's buses. Additional fare programs for RMTD include free service for children under the age of five, students from elementary through post-secondary programs, individuals with a disability enrolled in the Illinois Benefit Access Program, and veterans. A full list of active fare programs can be found on each of the local transit agencies' websites.

Service

The following gaps are related to services that do not meet the needs of the region for one reason or another. Service gaps can be related to unserved or underserved areas in the region, arrival times and headways, travel time from one destination to another, and service hours.

Long Headways

Consistent and frequent services are pertinent to both rider retention and the reliability of the transit system overall. When headways are long, potential users can become frustrated and less willing to use the transit system, as it may not meet their schedule needs. The time it takes to get from one destination to another using public transit is also an essential factor for users, as they may need to reach work, medical appointments, or other destinations at a particular time. In the RMTD college student survey, respondents stated the reason for not using RMTD service was due to a lack of convenience, also stating that more frequent service could make them more likely to use the service.

Headway

The time it takes between one bus leaving a stop and the next one arriving.

Source: FHWA

Long Travel Times

Due to the sprawling nature of the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), traveling throughout the region using the transit system can be an inconvenient and lengthy process. For instance, with most commercial activity occurring along the eastern corridors, travelers located west of the Rock River may see particularly long travel times. In the RMTD College student survey, a majority of respondents (approximately 80 percent) indicated that their current travel time to campus was 20 minutes or less. Additionally, over 70 percent of respondents stated they typically drive to class.

Direct and frequent public transit service is crucial to the efficiency of the system, as well as making it a viable option not only for transit-dependent populations but also for vehicle owners alike. Commuters and job seekers, including those using workforce development and human services, have often seen transportation as a barrier to their employment and training opportunities. Additionally, there is a spatial gap between populations of lower income and major employment centers, as well as post-secondary institutions. While the fixed-route system often does provide service to those locations, long travel times can make frequent use of public transit for commuting purposes difficult. Another spatial gap exists between areas with low-income populations and some hospitals. For example, Mercyhealth's Javon Bea Hospital is located along I-90, making it more accessible for those using the interstate, but a longer trip for those living west of the Rock River.

Unserved/Underserved Areas

While the fixed-route transit system is designed to provide access to as many locations as possible in the Rockford Urbanized Area, there are areas in the greater Rockford Region that are either underserved or have no direct system access. These spatial gaps are most evident in rural areas of Winnebago and Boone Counties, as well as certain portions of Rockford's urbanized area. These gaps become more prominent when new development occurs or companies move into the region, causing an increase in demand for services. Furthermore, some locations within RMTD's transit service area could benefit from additional service coverage or frequency. In the RMTD ridership survey, Loves Park and Machesney Park were identified as top underserved locations for which RMTD should prioritize service. Fixed-route coverage in northwestern Loves Park and Machesney Park could create additional transportation options for residents and visitors of these areas.

Certain factors contribute to unserved or underserved areas, including new housing developments and employment centers constructed without consideration for the existing transit system. Many times, creating new routes or updating existing routes to service these new areas can be expensive or, in the case of rerouting, a disruptive process. This issue is discussed further in the Coordination section of this chapter.

Spatial gaps are more prominent barriers for transit-dependent populations, as alternative transportation options may not be available. Those seeking certain public services, educational, recreational, employment, or professional development destinations from an underserved area can often be discouraged by limited or infrequent public transportation services. The lack of reliable transportation options for adults and children looking to attend school or participate in after-school programs or employment presents an additional barrier to low-income or zero-vehicle households.

Limited Service Times (Nights and Weekends)

Traveling during evening hours and on weekends tends to be more difficult in comparison to weekdays. Service hours for most transportation services in the region fall within normal weekday business hours (5:00 AM and 6:00 PM). While RMTD is an exception, offering night and weekend service, service times and routes are limited. This makes it difficult for riders to reach many destinations at certain times. This is a larger problem for late-night workers, as well as transit-dependent populations who may not have other transportation options available to them. The RMTD ridership and college student surveys indicated that longer service hours would benefit many existing and

prospective users. Additionally, approximately 50 percent of respondents on the RMTD ridership survey indicated they use RMTD to commute to work. With many riders relying on RMTD's fixed-route system to get to work, extending service hours and coverage to accommodate more work schedules can support economic opportunity in the region.

Education

Gaps also exist pertaining to the education and awareness of transportation services available in the region. When such services exist but are unknown to the public, associated with negative perceptions, or accompanied by inaccurate information, individuals are less inclined to use them.

Lack of Service Information

Being unaware of existing transportation services, service hours, service coverage, or how to use services can disincentivize use by those members of the public. Additionally, being unaware of certain fare programs that could assist with the cost of transportation can lead potential users to bypass public transit as an option. Finding new and effective ways to communicate with users and potential users is a prominent goal for providers.

Information regarding the presence of transportation services in an area can sometimes be complex and challenging to navigate, making it difficult for some potential users to understand and discouraging others altogether. Furthermore, uncertainty around how to navigate the public transit system is a barrier that may be remedied through more proactive engagement efforts. Educational outreach aimed at teaching members of the community how to utilize existing transit services effectively could help prospective riders feel more comfortable.

Transit Use Perceptions

Members of the public may not feel comfortable using public transit due to perpetuated safety perceptions and negative stereotypes. Some of the concerns influencing a person's choice to utilize public transportation include safely crossing busy roads, being stranded in unfamiliar places, or the inability to make a return trip due to limited service hours. Seniors and individuals with disabilities tend to face more physical limitations than the average person when using transit, a situation that can be exacerbated by negative perceptions. Additionally, those with medical conditions may feel it is too dangerous or uncomfortable to travel using public transportation due to long travel times or older transit vehicles.

The auto-centric culture in the United States, particularly in the Midwest, contributes to the idea that public

transportation is only for low-income individuals or those without access to personal vehicles. While public transportation may suit the needs of those populations, utilization of transit services by all people can promote sustainable lifestyles, lower the number of vehicular crashes, spur economic development, and help expand the efficiency and reach of existing services. Identifying additional population groups that may be more interested in using public transportation, such as young professionals, can effectively alter negative perceptions about transit. The more positive press public transit receives on the benefits it provides, regardless of socio-economic status, the more positive the overall perceptions may be.

Additionally, raising awareness of the relationship public transit has to other modes of travel could help change negative perceptions. Connections to active transportation options, such as bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, and sidewalks, support the use of public transportation services. When effectively integrated, the presence and maintenance of infrastructure and support services for multi-modal connectivity can result in increased transit ridership and investment.

Infrastructure

The following gaps are related to the state of facilities, capital equipment, and data.

Pedestrian Facilities

A lack of sidewalks presents a barrier to those looking to access public transit services safely and effectively. This barrier is even more prohibitive for individuals with mobility impairments, who may already find it challenging to reach fixed-route stops and other destinations. The vast majority of transit trips extend past a bus stop, making first- and last-mile connections an essential consideration for transit infrastructure and planning projects. Currently, some corridors within the region lack the pedestrian facilities and amenities needed to address mobility and transit route access. This is particularly evident along East State Street in Rockford, where large gaps hinder access to retail stores and restaurants in sidewalk coverage.

Individuals with physical limitations may find infrastructure gaps such as these to be a daunting challenge to navigate, especially those who rely on personal mobility assistance devices such as walkers, wheelchairs, or electric scooters. As previously mentioned, the vast majority of respondents on the RMTD ridership survey indicated walking to and from their bus stop, as well as walking when service is unavailable. Accessibility along corridors with existing but incomplete sidewalk coverage could be significantly enhanced with

limited additional investments, making transit use more convenient. Many major corridors in the region have sidewalks on only one side of the roadway, lack buffer zones, and are accompanied by high vehicular speeds.

Additionally, a lack of designated crossing facilities and equipment at major intersections throughout the region poses another layer of safety issues for pedestrians. Equipment such as pedestrian signals, high-visibility crosswalks, and audible signals for visually-impaired persons can increase the safety of transit users and pedestrians. Whether crossing a busy street to reach a bus stop or their final destination, transit users can be discouraged when there is no safe way to do so.

It should be noted that the maintenance of pedestrian facilities must be considered along with infrastructure improvement plans. Cracked or damaged sidewalks are less navigable and could present a hazard to users with mobility limitations. Routine maintenance, such as snow or ice removal, is also crucial to the safety of all pedestrians. Furthermore, deteriorated paint along crosswalks and a lack of curb ramps hinder safe travel. Without continual maintenance of equipment and infrastructure, the usability and effectiveness of pedestrian facilities are reduced. Due to regular snowfall and ice accumulation in the region during winter months, coordination and planning of sidewalk clearing is pertinent for municipalities and other responsible parties.

Bus Stops

When equipped with functional amenities, bus stops can be highly accommodating pieces of transit infrastructure. Most notably, bus shelters provide protection from adverse weather conditions and the sun. Benches are another common amenity at bus stops that allow transit users to wait comfortably for the arrival of their bus. Benches are particularly important for those with physical limitations, such as seniors and disabled persons.

Figure 4-1: Bus Stop Example



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Additional amenities include, but are not limited to, wayfinding, power outlets, garbage cans, Wi-Fi, real-time signage, and heaters. Although over 60 percent of respondents on RMTD's ridership survey indicated a good or very good experience at bus stops, more stops throughout the region could benefit from investment in amenities such as shelters and benches.

ADA Compliance

Ensuring transit-related infrastructure and bus shelters accommodate the mobility needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities should always be a priority. While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to new construction or alterations, pre-existing infrastructure should still be accessible. Guidelines from the ADA can help with planning accessible infrastructure that accommodates all users. At times, the costs associated with ensuring ADA compliance can present a financial barrier for transit providers. However, such accommodations are essential for many transit users and should be prioritized during infrastructure planning. It should be noted that over 80 percent of RMTD ridership survey respondents felt ADA accessibility was good or very good.

Data and Technology

Understanding when and where service could be expanded or improved can help improve the overall transit system in a highly effective manner. Technology insights can assist with this by allowing providers and planners to view frequented stops and destinations. Equipping buses with automated counters and vehicle location services can provide valuable insights into ridership trends and service efficiency. Moreover, seeking opportunities for data sharing with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) and local agencies can help transit providers identify areas where transit services can be improved or expanded. As ridesharing continues to become more prominent, looking into locations with high numbers of pickups and drop-offs could help inform changes to paratransit and fixed-route service throughout the region.

In the summer of 2023, RMTD began incorporating Battery-Electric Buses (BEBs) into its fixed-route fleet. These vehicles come equipped with tracking technology that allows for sophisticated data tracking and insights such as fuel efficiency, idling times, real-time tracking, and more. As RMTD's fixed-route fleet continues to be replaced by BEBs, data insights will continue to play a larger role in service planning and coordination.

Coordination

Coordination gaps and needs reference opportunities for collaboration among transit providers, human service organizations, governmental entities, and other interested groups and parties.

Service Coordination

Many agencies and partners in the region provide, manage, or impact transportation service delivery. However, these services do not always work collaboratively due to restrictions in funding, insurance, resources, clientele-only service, and potential risks of exposure. Without a centralized source for information on providers, services, and funding opportunities, it can be hard for partners and agencies to understand what is available in the region and how to achieve better coordination.

When possible, providers should coordinate services for easier, more seamless connections. Since traveling between counties via demand-response service can be difficult and time-consuming, coordination among providers can help alleviate this gap. Identifying the linkages that exist between agencies like RMTD and Reagan Mass Transit District, as well as BCT and SMTD, can help connect users of all systems within the MPA.

Additionally, finding ways to connect users to destinations without the need for multiple transfers and associated fees is key to ensuring users reach their destination in a timely and affordable way.

- **Scheduling:** Riders utilizing paratransit service must plan trips in advance, making it difficult for transit-dependent populations to reach necessary destinations on short notice. Those seeking medical care because of an urgent or unexpected injury may particularly see this as a barrier.

Mobility Management

An innovative approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services. While transportation planning traditionally focuses on aggregating demand along highly traveled routes of a transit system, mobility management focuses on diversifying travel options to reach a wide range of customers through trip planning support, travel training, and aggregation of transportation service information. Programs work to connect customers to the transportation service that is most responsive to their needs.

Source: FHWA

- **Eligibility:** Transportation restrictions regarding who is eligible to use a service and the geographic bounds of a service can be a barrier to an efficient transportation system. Different agencies may have vehicles traveling in the same corridor at one time, but may offer different services or have eligibility restrictions that prevent certain levels of ride coordination. Consequently, some riders must plan for multiple trip arrangements with different providers.

Asset Coordination

Ensuring vehicles are available and adequately equipped to handle the various needs of passengers is essential to service efficiency and coordination. Community and human service organizations continue to express a need for reliable, versatile vehicles to support the growing needs of their programming. Funding procurement can often be the biggest hurdle when it comes to maintaining a fleet of adequate vehicles capable of everyday service. For example, the Barbara Olson Center of Hope has expressed an ongoing need for updated vehicles to continue transportation services for its members. However, a lack of consistent funding sources makes service planning unpredictable.

Additionally, entities who are not direct recipients of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding may find it difficult to obtain funding for vehicles or experience lengthy procurement procedures. For instance, Section 5310 funding for vehicles can often include delayed vehicle delivery due to circumstances outside of a service provider's control. Since vehicle acquisition, operations, and maintenance costs can constrain providers, sharing resources among providers where possible could be a cost-effective coordination practice.

Lastly, with agreements in place, it is possible for transit providers to use the same software programs, maintenance facilities, and other assets jointly to reduce overhead costs. The specifics of each asset must be individually tailored to ensure legal, contractual, and insurance-related issues are properly handled, but could lead to higher cost savings and service provisions.

Planning Coordination

As discussed, coordination between human service providers, transit agencies, city governments, riders, and other partners is an important element that can save time and money and result in a transit network that is more efficient in transit service delivery. Coordination efforts need to take place at the beginning of a project and continue throughout the development process. New residential and commercial development is often planned outside of the urban core and fixed-transit system, which can result in spatial service gaps and a lack of transit-supportive infrastructure.

Regionally, recent growth has continued to occur along the urban fringe and in unincorporated areas of surrounding counties, creating an environment that will continue to strain municipal resources, reinforce auto-dependence, and exacerbate the challenges of access this plan highlights. Taking a mixed-use and transit-oriented approach to future development can work to address challenges brought about by current land development patterns; ultimately improving accessibility for those without personal vehicles whilst supporting healthier lifestyles, pollution reduction, and decreased sprawl.

Additionally, continued participation by transportation providers, municipal partners, riders, and the public in planning activities is critical. Initiating collaborations with other sectors outside of transportation can help develop a policy environment that recognizes the interconnected role communities play in supporting transit. Moreover, it better positions interested parties to advocate for legislation that paints transit as a public utility. To help encourage coordination in the Rockford Region, the Transportation Alternative Selection Committee (TASC) was developed and meets semi-annually to discuss service updates, allocate Section 5310 funding, and express service needs. Committee representatives include state and local planners, community and human service organizations, transit providers, and other government agencies.

Chapter 5: Looking Forward

Future Services

Winnebago County Rural Transit Service

At the time of writing, the Winnebago County Rural Transit Service is expected to begin on July 1st, 2025. The service will be curb-to-curb demand-response and administered by Reagan Mass Transit District, operating out of Lee and Ogle Counties. Connections with Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD), Boone County Transit (BCT), and Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) will give users access to a broader range of destinations throughout the region. This service will provide thousands of rural residents, including many transit-dependent individuals in Winnebago County, access to a public transportation option that previously did not exist.

Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a form of transit that creates a high-quality rider experience similar to rail service but uses rubber-tire vehicles. BRT uses various technologies to achieve a fast, reliable, convenient, and efficient service at a relatively low cost. In 2024, RMTD, Region 1 Planning Council (R1), and consultant Sam Schwartz completed a Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study. This study included a series of data collection and analyses that informed a scoring criterion for eligible corridors in the RMTD service area. Scoring criteria were based on a variety of metrics, including but not limited to ridership, employment density, access to trip generators, low-income households, access to healthcare facilities, and integration with the existing RMTD network.

Additionally, Sam Schwartz completed a full peer agency review of existing and planned BRT systems in cities with similar populations and demand. Throughout the duration of the study, Sam Schwartz met regularly with RMTD and R1 staff to give updates at each phase of the project, allowing for critical feedback and direction. Towards the end of the study period, Sam Schwartz’s staff recommended three corridors that would be best suited for BRT implementation in the Rockford Region. These corridors included State Street and a combination of Kishwaukee Street, North Main Street, and Riverside Boulevard. Lastly, Sam Schwartz included operational and capital cost projections for a few separate scenarios, along with potential funding opportunities.

While BRT is an ultimate goal for transit in the region, RMTD has recognized the importance of improving service

efficiency through reduced headways on its busiest routes. Service updates are regularly considered and implemented by RMTD, and the findings of the BRT Feasibility Study will continue to influence future updates.

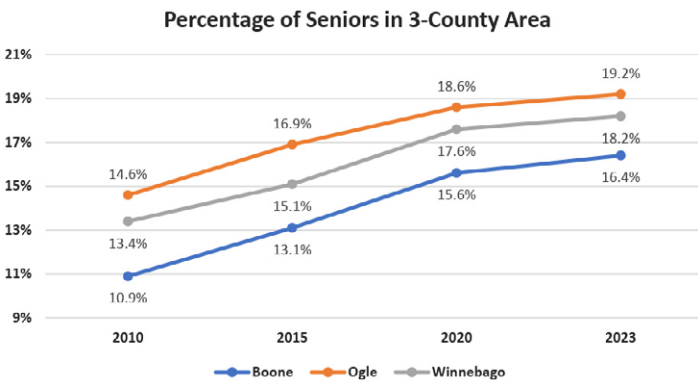
Chicago-Rockford Passenger Rail Service

In 2023, IDOT was awarded funds from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to make the connection between downtown Rockford and the current Metra facility on Big Timber Road in Elgin, IL. This line will run express service from downtown Rockford, stopping only in Belvidere prior to connecting to the Union Pacific (UP) West line. After the connection at Big Timber station, service will run express to downtown Chicago, not making the same local stops as the current service on the UP-West line. There will be two bidirectional trains daily, and service is set to begin in December 2027^{vi}. Transit connections to the stops in downtown Rockford and Belvidere will be a priority for RMTD and BCT.

Aging Population

In recent years across many nations throughout the world, life expectancy has grown while birth rates continued to decline; this phenomenon creates a growing population of seniors^{vii}. This trend is apparent in the Rockford Region, with the average senior population in the three-county area of Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties growing from 13 percent to 17.9 percent from 2010 to 2023. Figure 5-1 shows the growing percentage of seniors in each of the three counties.

Figure 5-1: Percentage of Seniors in 3 - County Area



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

As the proportion of seniors continues to grow, additional considerations for safe, reliable transportation options will become increasingly necessary. Current demand-response and paratransit service may require expansions to service a larger user base of seniors in coming years. Ensuring adequate public transportation options for seniors is essential to maintain their quality of life, allowing them access to essential destinations even when private transportation is unavailable. Proactively addressing these needs now and in the near future can better prepare the Rockford Region for potential challenges and future needs in the years ahead.

Goals & Strategies

The following goals and strategies were developed in coordination with the Transportation Alternative Selection Committee (TASC) and aim to address the needs and gaps identified in Chapter Four of this document. Each goal is accompanied by strategies intended to guide outreach efforts, investments, and project planning. Because of the interconnectedness of transit planning, strategies under one goal may apply to other goals and address multiple gaps and needs identified in the plan. Unforeseen factors may arise, such as adjusting community needs and availability of resources. As such, the following goals and strategies are subject to change.

1. Increase Public Awareness and Promote Ridership Growth

- Regularly engage the public through events, targeted advertisements, and other outreach campaigns.
- Connect with existing riders through frequent ridership surveys to better understand potential complications and needs of the regular user base.
- Continue showcasing the transit system by providing shuttle services during community events.
- Implement programs demonstrating how to use transit systems to make new users feel more comfortable and confident.

2. Expand and Enhance Regional Transit Connectivity and Coverage

- Ensure routes and stops service Chicago-Rockford Passenger Rail stations prior to the start of service.
- Support Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)-readiness through increasing service frequency and investing in BRT-capable infrastructure.
- Regularly consider opportunities to expand route frequency, service hours, and network coverage to serve more residents.

- Continue coordinating services across agencies and organizations through regular communication and route connections.

3. Continue Utilization of Improved Technologies for Data Tracking/Insights

- Expand ride-scheduling opportunities for demand-response service to ensure scheduling is not a barrier to service use.
- Regularly monitor ridership statistics and develop insights from patterns.
- Explore innovative solutions to persisting problems and barriers.
- Track fleet insights, such as utilization, fuel efficiency, maintenance, etc., to help recognize vehicle problems and improve vehicle reliability.

4. Advance Sustainability and Environmental Resilience in Transit Systems

- Promote the adoption of low—and zero-emission vehicles and support infrastructure development (e.g., electric charging stations) to reduce the carbon footprint of transit operations.
- Engage with the community to promote transit solutions that reduce emissions and enhance public health and quality of life.
- Advocate with city/county officials to ensure routes to and around bus stops are adequately clear of snow during winter storms to ensure accessibility.
- Pursue innovative, environmentally responsible transit projects that seek to reduce net emissions.

5. Advance Equitable Access to Essential Destinations for Vulnerable Populations

- Identify and address service gaps that disproportionately affect seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, and those in rural areas through ongoing needs assessments and community engagement.
- In service planning, continue prioritizing transportation access to essential destinations such as healthcare, grocery stores, community centers, and employment hubs.
- Incorporate demographic and health data into planning processes to ensure transit investments align with the needs of high-priority populations.
- Develop regional equity performance indicators to evaluate how well services meet the needs of underserved communities.

Appendixes

Includes additional information and supplementary materials that support the HSTP. This may include detailed data tables, maps, survey results, and other relevant documents.

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Appendix A: Section 5310 Process

Section 5310 Programming

The Rockford urbanized area annually receives an allocation of Section 5310 funds. Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) are the co-designated recipients of the allocated funds to the region. The Metropolitan Planning Organization, in coordination with RMTD as the subrecipient, awards these funds through a call for projects utilizing an application that aligns with the IDOT Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program submission form.

The MPO utilizes an application based on IDOT's Consolidated Procurement Program (CVP) so information collected during the call for projects aligns the information required by IDOT in the latter stages of the process, and prepares applicants to apply for additional statewide funding if the program is opened up to agencies that fall within an urbanized boundary. Because RMTD and IDOT are co-designated recipients of funds in the region, using the IDOT form makes stages of the process simpler for smaller transit providers. When a transit provider other than a designated recipient in the region is awarded Section 5310 funds, IDOT acts as a purchasing agent and oversees the capital that those funds acquire. The use of the IDOT's CVP streamlines the application process and reduces duplication of information, saving smaller providers and agencies time and effort.

As part of the programming process of Section 5310 funding, the MPO reviews each applicant's submittal, received during the call for projects, to determine if the projects meet federal requirements. While the MPO does not formally score any of the applications for vehicles, the MPO's Transportation Alternative Selection Committee (TASC) screens applications for HSTP compliance. The TASC then provides a program recommendation to the MPO Technical Committee, which subsequently provides a recommendation to the Policy Committee. Once projects have been approved by the Policy Committee, the MPO transmits the applications and corresponding TIP amendment(s) to IDOT.

A Rolling Stock and Needs Analysis Survey is distributed to providers and partners by Region 1 Planning Council (R1) staff to allow the committee to assess the current needs of the region, particularly as it relates to existing rolling stock. The results of this Survey will be brought before the TASC, and the Program of Projects will be updated accordingly.

The Program of Projects, when updated, shall consider the current and following year in order to sustain commitment towards planning for future needs. Applications for the regional allocation of Section 5310 funds that coincide with the Program of Projects will be given preference during the TASC's review of any application not on the 'Program of Projects'. However, any applicant may make the case for their application's need to the TASC. The ultimate determination of the recommendation of funding allocation is to be completed by a majority vote of the TASC.

Program of Projects

Applications for Section 5310 funds within the Program of Projects will be given preference during the TASC's review. In any year in which remaining funding exists after the programmed project's unit costs have been considered, and it is determined the level of funding remaining is not capable of supporting an additional vehicle purchase, the remaining funding may be prioritized to provide for surveillance and other necessary equipment to the vehicles from the Program of Projects. Amendments to the Program of Projects may be made by a majority vote of the TASC. The Program of Projects will be reviewed prior to the assessment of Section 5310 applications. During this review, the TASC will take appropriate action to bring the Program for Projects into alignment with current needs and realities. This will include prioritizing next year's Project Program.

Appendix B: Funding Sources

Metropolitan & Statewide Planning and Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning (Section 5303, 5304, 5305)

Provides funding and procedural requirements for multimodal transportation planning in metropolitan areas and states. Planning needs to be cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive (3-C), resulting in long-range plans and short-range programs reflecting transportation investment priorities. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) annually sub-allocates these funds to Region 1 Planning Council (R1) and other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) throughout the state and is aimed primarily at planning needs related to public transit and paratransit.

Urbanized Area Formula Grant (Section 5307)

Under the Urbanized Area Formula Grant, the FTA allocates Section 5307 funds as subsidies to eligible public transit agencies to use for capital equipment (buses, equipment, structures, etc.), planning, job access and reverse commute projects, mobility management, and some limited operating expenses related to the federally required assistance transit agencies must provide to persons with disabilities. The minimum required local match for capital purposes is 20 percent.

Capital Investment Grants (Section 5309)

This discretionary grant program funds major transit capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, and bus rapid transit. Instead of an annual call for applications and selection of awardees by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the law requires that projects seeking Capital Investment Grant funding complete a series of steps over several years to be eligible for funding. Under the Section 5309 program, New Starts, Core Capacity, Small Starts, and other interrelated projects are eligible for funding.

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)

Section 5310 provides formula funding to states to assist private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meet these needs. Projects and programs previously under FTA's New Freedom program are eligible for Section 5310 funds. Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) and IDOT are the co-designated recipients for Section 5310 funding allocated to the Rockford Urbanized Area. While not directly allocated to the MPO, in coordination with RMTD, the MPO has created a process to help determine the best use of the Section 5310 funds received. The program requires a 20 percent local match for eligible capital costs and a 50 percent match for operating assistance.

Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311)

The Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. The program also provides funding for state and national training and technical assistance through the Rural Transportation Assistance Program.

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program (Section 5339)

The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program (49 U.S.C. 5339) provides funding to states and designated recipients to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities, including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no-emission vehicles or facilities. A sub-program, the Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program, provides competitive grants for bus and bus facility projects that support low and zero-emission vehicles. The program requires a 20 percent local match.

State/Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP)

The Downstate Public Transportation Act, also known as the Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP), was established by the Illinois General Assembly to provide operating funds to assist in the development and operation of public transportation services statewide. Currently, DOAP pays up to 65 percent of eligible expenses, and each eligible participant receives an annual appropriation from the general assembly. The program is administered by IDOT's Office of Intermodal Project Implementation (OIPI).

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants Program

The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, or RAISE Discretionary Grant program, provides an opportunity to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Previously known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants, Congress has dedicated nearly \$8.9 billion for twelve rounds of National Infrastructure Investments to fund projects that have a significant local or regional impact.

Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI)

The Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) Program funds projects that demonstrate innovative and effective practices, partnerships, and technologies to enhance public transportation effectiveness, increase efficiency, expand quality, promote safety, and improve the traveler experience.

Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Program

The MOD Sandbox Program provides funds to integrate MOD concepts and solutions, supported through local partnerships, into real-world settings that advance the transportation system. Through this program, the FTA seeks to support innovation that connects users with mobility

options through a transportation user interface that enables technical capabilities such as integrated payment systems. Transit agencies looking to integrate technology to support their services may find this program of interest.

Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM)

The Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) Program seeks to improve access to public transportation by building partnerships between health, transportation, and other service providers. This competitive grant program focuses on supporting individuals in transportation-disadvantaged communities by providing funding to projects that innovatively enhance the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services (NEMT). The ICAM program awards funding to innovative projects that provide these services for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. These groups are considered by the FTA to be a part of transportation-disadvantaged communities.^{viii}

Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants Program

The Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants Program (CFI) provides funds for the implementation of publicly accessible EV charging and alternative fueling infrastructure. Funds are awarded to applicants who propose strategically located infrastructure near the places people live and work or within a designated Alternative Fuel Corridor. The program includes locations in both urban and rural areas, such as downtowns and neighborhoods, and emphasizes providing charging and fueling infrastructure to underserved and disadvantaged communities. The CFI program provides the opportunity to reduce transportation emissions, thereby providing a positive impact on community health.^{ix}

Appendix C: Acronyms and Glossary

Abbreviations and Acronyms

A

ACS: American Community Survey

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

APS: Accessible Pedestrian Signals

B

BCT: Boone County Transit

BRT: Bus Rapid Transit

BUILD: Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development

C

CFI: Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants Program

CIL: Center for Independent Living

CVP: Consolidated Procurement Program

D

DOAP: Downstate Operating Assistance Program

E

EJ: Environmental Justice

F

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

G

GED: General Educational Development

H

HSE: High School Equivalency

HSTP: Human Services Transportation Plan

I

ICAM: Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility

IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation

IEP: Individual Education Plan

IMI: Integrated Mobility Innovation

M

MOD: Mobility on Demand

MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization

N

NEMT: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

O

OIPI: Office of Intermodal Project Implementation

ORD: Chicago O'Hare International Airport

P

PSI: Pedestrian Suitability Index

R

R1: Region 1 Planning Council

RAISE: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity

RAMP: Regional Accessibility and Mobility Project

RMTD: Rockford Mass Transit District

RPS: Rockford Public Schools

RVC: Rock Valley College

S

SMTD: Stateline Mass Transit District

T

TASC: Transportation Alternative Selection Committee

TDI: Transit Demand Index

TNC: Transportation Network Company

TIGER: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery

U

UP: Union Pacific

USDOT: United States Department of Transportation

UA: Urbanized Area

Glossary of Terms

A

Accessibility:

The ease of reaching valued destinations, such as jobs, shops, schools, entertainment, and recreation.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Alternative Transportation:

Any mode of personal transportation other than a single-occupant vehicle, including biking, walking, carpooling, and public transportation.

Source: MPO Transportation Alternative Selection Committee Bylaws

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The legislation defining the responsibilities of and requirements for transportation providers to make transportation accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Automated Counters:

Equipment that counts passenger boardings/alightings but is not part of the farebox.

Source: American Public Transportation Association

B

Battery-Electric Bus (BEB):

A bus that runs on electricity only and requires recharging its onboard battery packs from an external power source.

Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory

Benefit Access Program:

Benefits for seniors and persons with disabilities, such as a fee discount on license plates and free rides on fixed-route transit. Eligibility is determined by age, disability, residency, and income.

Source: Illinois.gov

Bike Lane:

A portion of roadway designated for preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists by pavement markings and, if used, signs.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials

Bus Rapid Transit:

A form of transit that creates a high-quality rider experience similar to rail service, but using rubber-tire vehicles.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials

C

Collector:

A street that provides direct access to neighborhoods and arterials.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Complete Streets:

A transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, and maintained to enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all modes of travel. At the core of the complete streets philosophy is the idea that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Corridor:

A broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow connecting major sources of trips that may contain a number of streets, highways, and transit route alignments.

Source: American Public Transportation Association

D

Disability:

Any condition that makes it more difficult for a person to do certain activities or interact with the world around them. This includes cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, and sensory impairments.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division

Demand-Response:

Descriptive term for a service type, usually considered paratransit, in which a user can access transportation service that can be variably routed and timed to meet changing needs on an as-needed basis.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Dwell Time:

The time a vehicle, such as a public transit bus or train, spends at a scheduled stop without moving.

Source: Transportation Research Board

E

Electric Vehicle (EV):

A vehicle that has an electric motor instead of an internal combustion engine.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

F

Fixed-Route:

Term applied to transit service that is regularly scheduled and operates over a set route; usually refers to bus service.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

H

Headway:

The time it takes between one bus leaving a stop and the next one arriving.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

I

Intercity Bus:

Regularly scheduled public service using an over-the-road bus that operates with limited stops between two urbanized areas or that connects rural areas to urbanized areas.

Source: Federal Transit Administration

Intermodal:

The ability to connect, and the connections between, modes of transportation.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

J

Jurisdiction:

The authority and obligation to administer, control, construct, maintain, and operate a highway subject to the provisions of the Illinois Highway Code.

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

L

Livability:

A livable community provides more transportation choices that are safe, reliable, and economical; promotes equitable, affordable housing options; enhances economic competitiveness; supports and targets funding toward existing communities; and values communities and neighborhoods.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

M

Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA):

The geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607) must be carried out.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):

A regional policy body, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, and designated by local officials and the governor of the state to carry out the metropolitan transportation requirements of federal highway and transit legislation.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Mixed-Use Development:

Pedestrian-friendly development that blends two or more residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and/or industrial uses. Mixed use is one of the ten principles of Smart Growth, a planning strategy that seeks to foster community design and development that serves the economy, community, public health, and the environment.

Source: MRSC of Washington

Mobility:

The ability to move or be moved from place to place.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Mobility Management:

A customer-centered approach to designing and delivering mobility services. It embraces a shared table of transportation providers, planners, and community stakeholders to collaborate, plan, implement, and maintain transportation services. It includes local and regional solutions customized to fit community needs and visions, and involves innovation in transportation service, coordination, and connectivity. Mobility management strives for easy information and referral to assist individuals in learning about and accessing community and regional transportation services.

Source: National Center for Mobility Management

Multimodal:

The availability of transportation options using different modes within a system or corridor.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

P

Paratransit:

A variety of smaller, often flexibly scheduled and routed transportation services using low-capacity vehicles, such as vans, to operate within normal urban transit corridors

or rural areas. These services usually serve the needs of persons that standard mass-transit services would serve with difficulty, or not at all. Often, the patrons include the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Pedestrian:

A person travelling on foot as a mode of transport. This includes walking and running on roads or other paved surfaces of the transportation system, such as sidewalks and paths.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Public Participation:

The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Public Transportation:

Public Transportation (also called transit, public transit, or mass transit) is transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but not including school buses, charter, or sightseeing services.

Source: American Public Transportation Association

R

Reliability:

The degree of certainty and predictability in travel times on the transportation system. Reliable transportation systems offer some assurance of attaining a given destination within a reasonable range of an expected time.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Ridesharing:

A formal or informal arrangement where commuters share a vehicle for trips from a common origin, destination, or both.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

S

Shared Use Path:

A bikeway physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials

Speeding:

Driving in excess of the posted rate of travel permitted on a road, typically expressed in miles per hour.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Sprawl:

Urban form that connotatively depicts the movement of people from the central city to the suburbs. Concerns associated with sprawl include loss of farmland and open space due to low-density land development, increased public service costs, and environmental degradation, as well as other concerns associated with transportation.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Stakeholders:

Individuals and organizations involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. Include federal/state/local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, and the general public.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

T

Transit Agency:

A Transit agency (also called a transit system) is an entity (public or private) responsible for administering and managing transit activities and services. Transit agencies can directly operate transit service or contract out for all or part of the total transit service provided.

Source: American Public Transportation Association

Transit Dependency:

The reliance on public transportation for daily needs due to factors such as not owning a personal vehicle, having a disability, or limited access to transportation.

Source: Georgia Institute of Technology

Transit-Oriented Development:

Development that includes a mix of commercial, residential, office and entertainment centered around or located near a transit station.

Source: Federal Transit Administration

U

Urban Area:

Collective term referring to urbanized areas and urban clusters.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Urbanized Area (UA):

An area consisting of a densely developed territory that contains a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix D: Public Comment

The public comment and review period for the draft Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for the Rockford Region was open from May 5, 2025 through June 2, 2025. The draft was made available for review via R1's [Engage R1](#) website, along with other project information. Additionally, there were four open houses during the public comment period where stakeholders and members of the public were encouraged to come read and/or comment on the plan. Two of the public open houses were held at R1 offices, and the other two were in Boone County and Ogle County.

Comments Received

During the public comment period, one in-person comment was received during one of the public open houses at R1 offices. The comment suggested including a section in Chapter 5: Looking Forward about the aging population and how that may affect the future outlook on public and human services transportation.

Updates and Revisions

Since the release of the draft plan on May 5, 2025, some technical and formatting corrections have been made to the text, outline, and visualizations of the plan. Additionally, a section on an aging population in the Rockford Region was added to Chapter 5: Looking Forward based on a public comment received during the public comment period.

Appendix E: Resolution of Adoption



AN ENGINE FOR COLLABORATION IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS

MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

MPO Resolution 2025-14

- RE:** Adoption of the Region 1 Planning Council Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
- WHEREAS** the Federal Highway Act of 1962, as amended, and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended, provide for an urban transportation planning process; and
- WHEREAS** the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) currently authorizes funding to improve our nation’s transportation system for highways, highway safety, public transit, alternative non-motorized forms of transportation, and freight; and
- WHEREAS** the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and its predecessors, require a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as well as a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and
- WHEREAS** the Region 1 Planning Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Urban and Metropolitan Area, and the MPO Policy Committee has the specific responsibility to direct and administer the continuing urban transportation planning process: and
- WHEREAS** the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires a “locally developed, coordinated transportation plan that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation”; and
- WHEREAS** a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is required to utilize Federal Transit Administration Section 5310, (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities / New Freedom eligible projects); and
- WHEREAS** FTA encourages public transit systems in all areas to continue to participate in the coordinated public transit–human service transportation planning process in order to identify and develop job access and reverse commute projects for funding under Section 5307; and
- WHEREAS** a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, which assesses the transit needs and gaps for transit dependent populations, has been prepared by the MPO in the interest of promoting, developing and maintaining, safe, efficient and viable transportation options for individuals with disabilities, individuals with low income and elderly individuals within the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA); and
- WHEREAS** in response to the above, MPO has developed a document entitled, “Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan”; and
- WHEREAS** the public comment and review period for draft HSTP was from May 5, 2025 until June 6, 2025 and made available for review via the MPO website (posted May 5, 2025) as well as through contacting the MPO offices.
- WHEREAS** the MPO Technical Committee has recommended approval of the “Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan” (dated June 18, 2025); and

WHEREAS "Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan" (dated June 20, 2025) and MPO Resolution 2025-13) supersedes the "Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan" (August 27th, 2021 version) and R1 Resolution 2021-17.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

the MPO Policy Committee adopts the June 20, 2025 version of Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan;

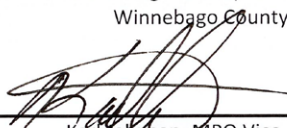
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

that the MPO staff is instructed to distribute the of Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (dated June 20, 2025) in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Process.

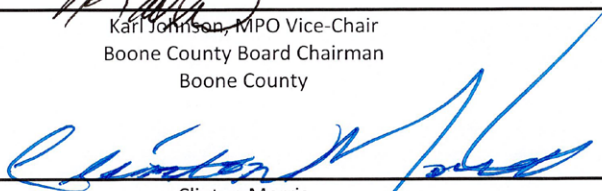


Dated this 20th day of June 2025.

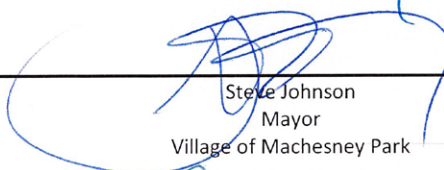
Joseph Chiarelli, MPO Chairman
Winnebago County Chairman
Winnebago County



Karl Johnson, MPO Vice-Chair
Boone County Board Chairman
Boone County



Clinton Morris
Mayor
City of Belvidere



Steve Johnson
Mayor
Village of Machesney Park



Tom McNamara
Mayor
City of Rockford



Greg Jury
Mayor
City of Loves Park



Michael Stubbe
Executive Director
Rockford Mass Transit District

Illinois Department of Transportation



Endnotes

- i Formula grants for the enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities, 49 U.S.C. § 5310 (2016).
- ii Federal Transit Administration. Circular 4702.1B: Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2012.
- iii Pew Research Center. The State of Ride-Hailing Services in America, 2022. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2022.
- iv Shared-Use Mobility Center. 2023 Shared Mobility Policy Database. Chicago: Shared-Use Mobility Center, 2023.
- v “Table DL-20 - Highway Statistics 2022 - Policy | Federal Highway Administration.” 2022. Dot.gov. 2022. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2022/dl20.cfm#foot1>.
- vi “Chicago to Rockford | Illinois Passenger Rail.” 2024. Chicagotorockfordrail.org. September 3, 2024. <https://www.chicagotorockfordrail.org/>.
- vii World Health Organization. 2024. “Ageing and Health.” World Health Organization. October 1, 2024. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>.
- viii Federal Transit Administration. “Fiscal Year 2024 Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Notice of Funding Opportunity,” November 15, 2023. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/notices-funding/fiscal-year-2024-innovative-coordinated-access-and-mobility-notice-funding>.
- ix Federal Highway Administration. “Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program,” March 4, 2024. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/>.



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