Final Network Report

Reimagine DART

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1 Introduction & Executive Summary

What is Reimagine DART?

Reimagine DART is a collaborative effort to transform public transit in Greater Des Moines. This initiative has been a continuous conversation with riders, the general public, stakeholders, City Councils and the DART Commission about what the future of DART's bus network could look like within a set budget.

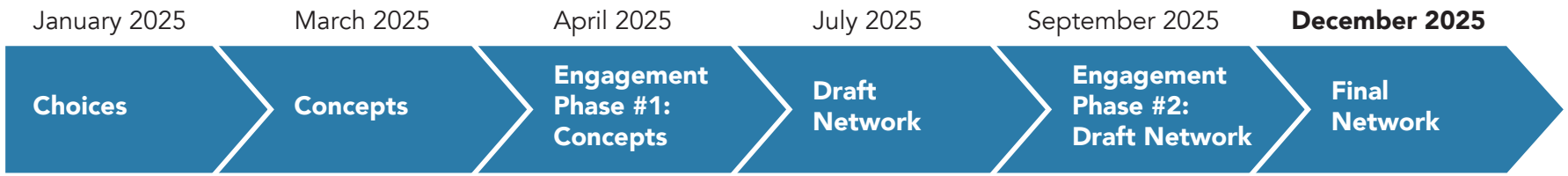
This project will chart a fresh course for how DART can strengthen and connect communities within a growing region by having a clear conversation about the community's goals for transit and designing a new transit network based on those goals.

Since DART formed as the regional transit authority in 2006, it has adapted some service to shifting travel patterns, but many things have changed in the past few years:

- Where people live and work changed through the pandemic
- Communities have developed city centers and Downtown Des Moines has experienced residential growth
- More central Iowans are aging at home or choosing not to drive

In addition, the cost to provide service has increased due to inflation, supply chain challenges and workforce pressures, while at the same time, DART member communities are grappling with how to fund services with new limits restricting property tax revenue growth.

Through Reimagine DART, the project team has reviewed the entire network and taken a fresh look at the region's priorities for public transit. As part of this process, the DART Commission has decided how much service the region can afford and how to use that funding to meet communities' and riders' needs of today—and tomorrow.



What is the Product of Transit?

Public transit can achieve many goals, but a commonly held goal for transit is to help people access opportunities: work, shopping, medical needs, education, and all the economic, social, cultural, and natural riches that a community has. Everyone has a limited amount of time in their day and, therefore, can only spend so much time traveling to meet their needs. Maximizing the destinations that people can reach in a limited amount of time is something we can calculate in assessing how well transit is meeting this goal. The figure to the right shows how we calculate this.

What Access Achieves

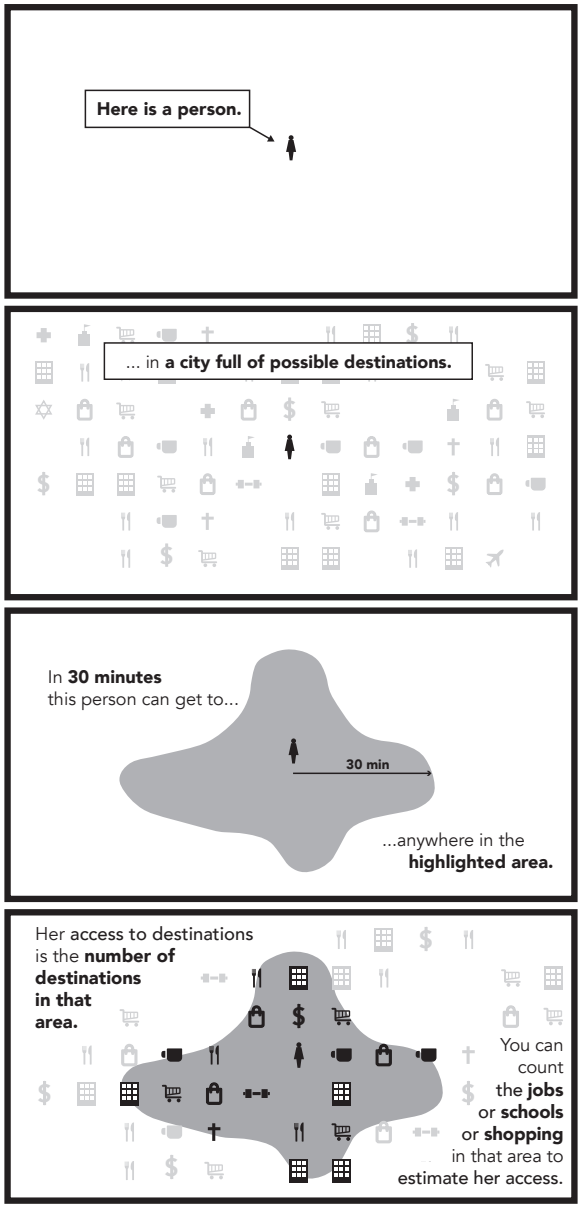
When we expand access for as many people as possible, we achieve many important things:

- We **make service more useful** for the trips people are already making and for other trips people might want to make by transit.
- We **increase ridership potential**, as a result of service being more useful. When transit is more useful, more people use it.
- We increase transit's potential to help with **pollution and congestion**. Ridership is the key to how transit achieves these things, and improving access is the path to ridership.
- We **expand access to opportunity** (jobs, education, shopping, services) for people who need transit for that purpose.
- We **increase the economic attractiveness** of the urban area. Connecting people with opportunities is the whole point of cities, so improving those connections makes any community more effective.

That's why DART's Final Network looks the way it does.

The Final Network increases access to jobs and opportunities for most people and places in the region. The average resident will be able to reach 15% more jobs within 45 minutes compared to today's network.

WHAT IS ACCESS?



How the Plan Expands Access

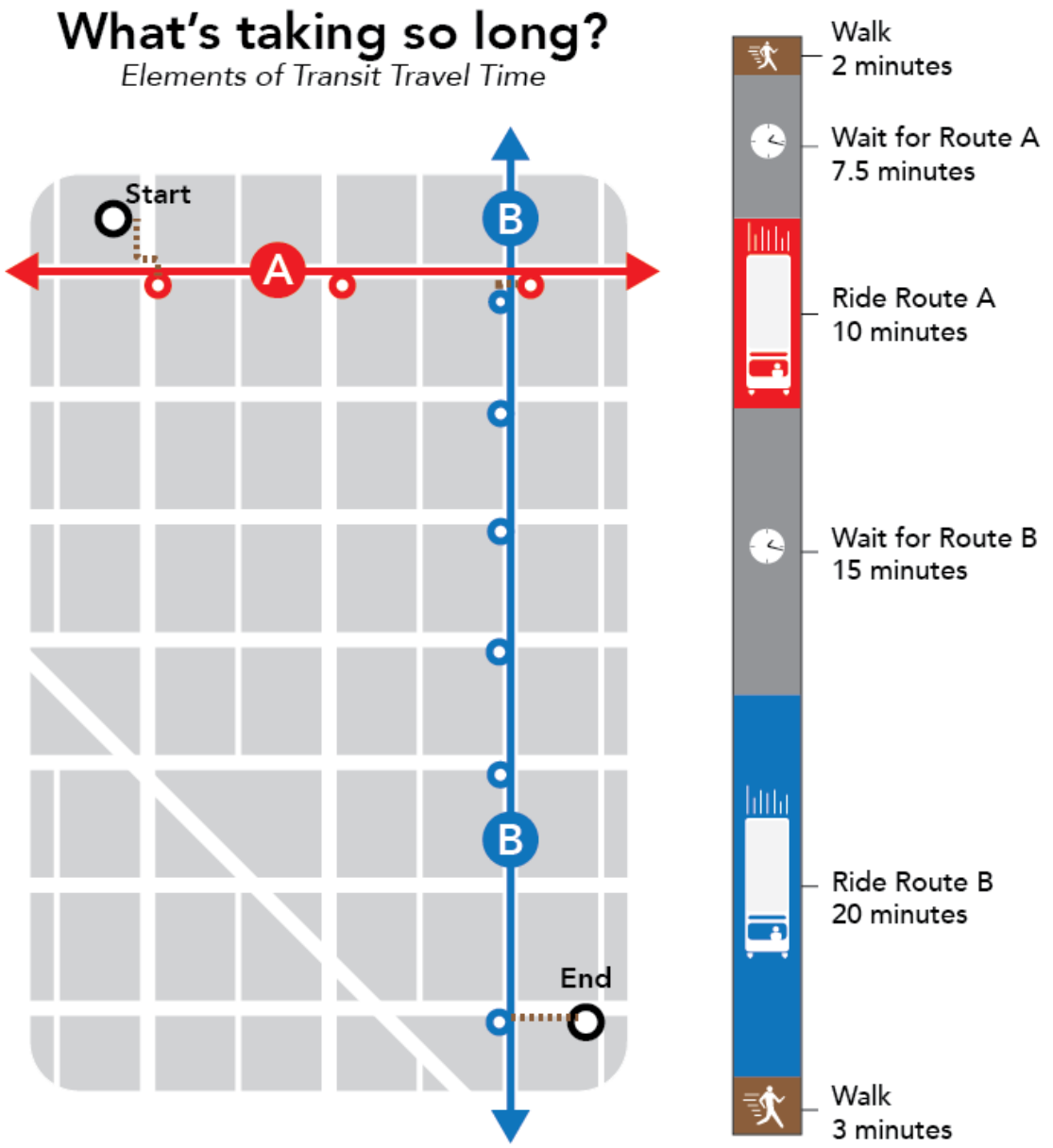
Frequency is Freedom

Transit travel time has three elements: **walking**, **waiting**, and **riding**. If a trip requires changing buses, the steps may be repeated. Waiting is often the most onerous part of a transit trip since it is time spent somewhere other than where you want to be.

Even with apps that provide real-time information, people still have to wait somewhere. A person that clocks in at 9 am might need to take an hourly route that will get them to work at 8:20 am or 9:20 am. If they want to be on time, they will have to wait 40 minutes at work before their shift starts.

The solution to the problem of waiting is **frequency**. Frequency—the amount of time between buses—is a dominant factor in determining travel time, so it's a focus of any plan that tries to expand where people can go in a reasonable time. Frequency does three things:

- **It reduces waiting**, the most onerous part of a transit trip.
- **It makes it easy to transfer**, so that you can go all over the network instead of just along one route.
- **It improves reliability**. If a bus breaks down, the next will be coming soon.



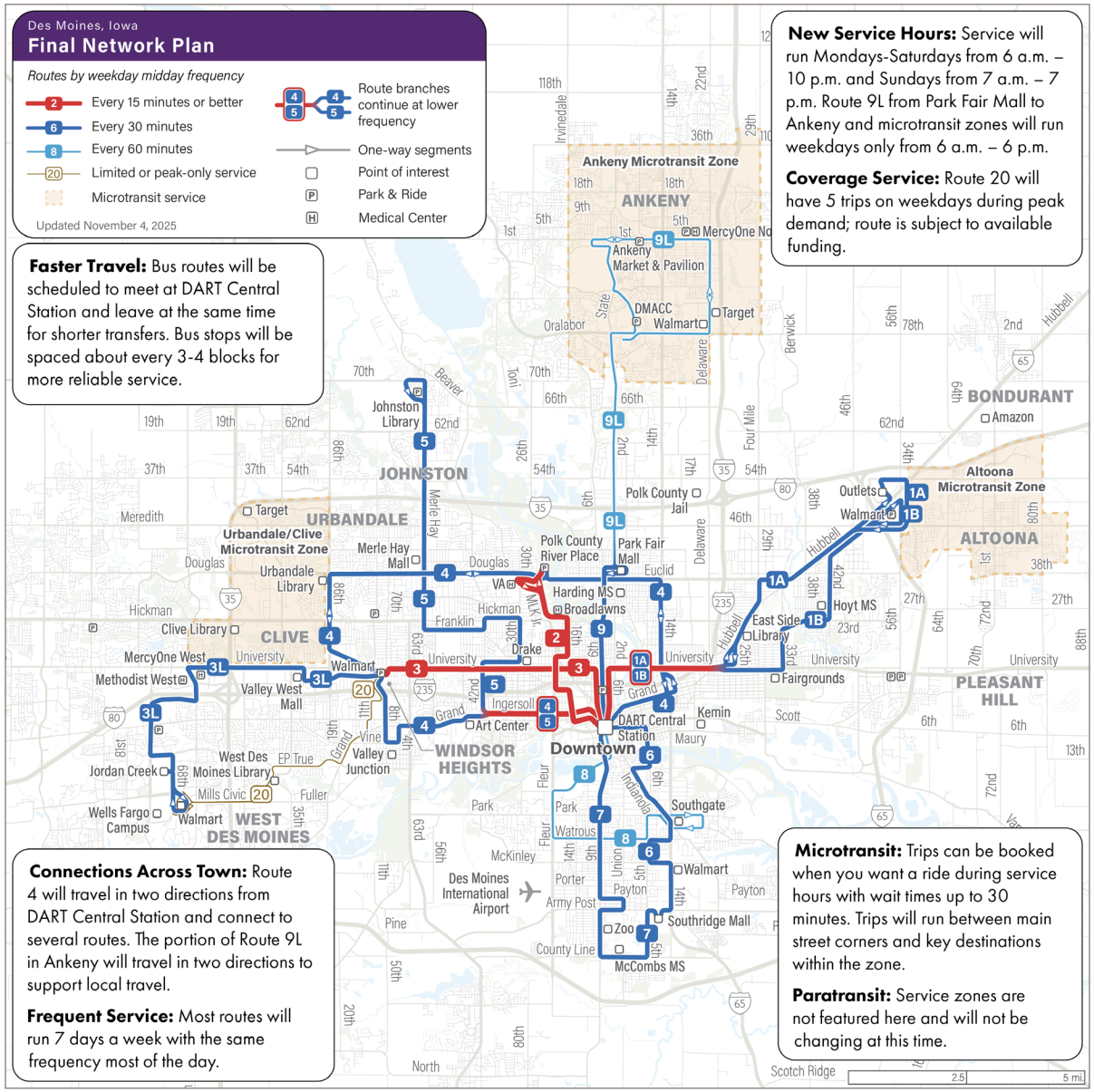
Final Network

This map shows DART's Final Network. Every route is color-coded based on its frequency during the midday on a weekday.

- **Red lines** run every 15 minutes,
- **Dark blue lines** run every 30 minutes,
- **Light blue lines** run every of 60 minutes, and
- **Brown lines** run less frequently or only during peak periods.
- **Brown zones** are areas where microtransit service is provided.

Based on public input and direction from the DART Commission, the Final Network has been designed to focus on services that maximize ridership region-wide with coverage services in Altoona, Ankeny, and Clive. In addition, the Final Network has been designed with 90% of the current total service hours to limit property tax growth in member communities.

The Final Network concentrates services on fewer routes but with better frequencies. Whereas today, there is only one route that comes every 15 minutes, the Final Network has four frequent corridors.



Outcomes

Change in Job Access

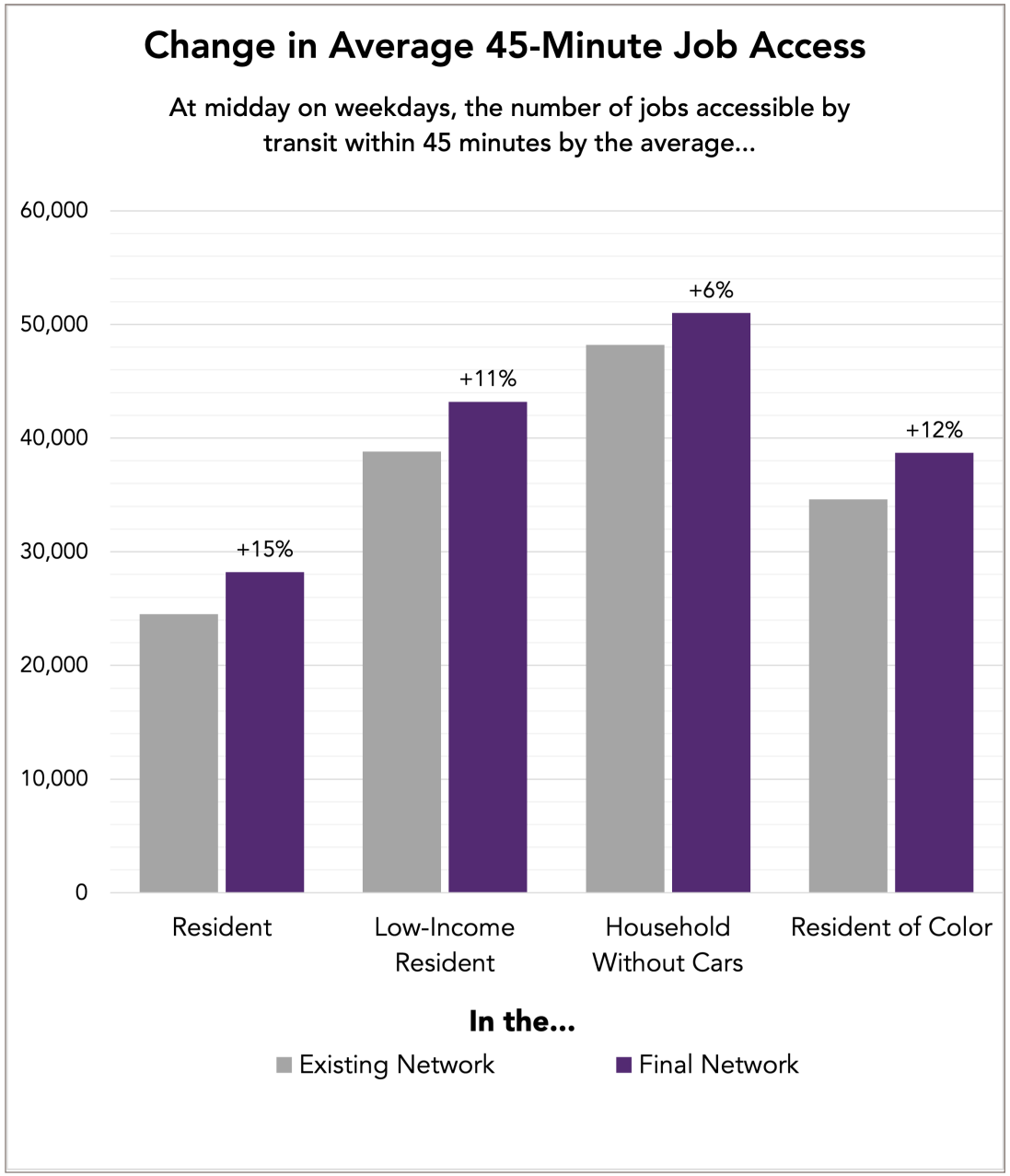
The Final Network will allow the average person to reach 3,700 more jobs within 45 minutes by walking and taking transit, **15% more jobs than are reachable within the Existing Network.** Likewise, the average person in poverty and the average resident of color will be able to reach 11% more jobs. **On Sundays, the average resident will be able to reach 89% more jobs.**

This analysis measures jobs, but it reflects a wide range of opportunities that a person can reach. This means a person can get to more shopping, education, recreational areas, social events, places of worship, and any other opportunities that the region offers. The outcomes of the Final Network are explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

Proximity to Transit

Another way to measure the impact of the Final Network is by calculating the number of people near transit.

The Final Network will reach 5% more total residents, mostly because of new microtransit zones in some suburban communities. Some areas covered by the Final Network will also **increase the number of residents near 15-minute service by 7%**.



2 How Did We Get Here?

Steps to Design the Final Network

Designing the Final Network has been a collaborative effort between DART, member communities, riders, the general public, and key stakeholders. These are the steps we have taken to reach this design.

Step 1. Analyze the Existing Network

We assessed the performance of existing routes and the network as a whole. By looking at ridership and land use patterns in Greater Des Moines, we learned about how the network is used today and where there is potential for improvement.

Step 2. Consider Key Goals

There are different ways to design a transit network based on the community's goals and priorities. In particular, we can concentrate along dense corridors to provide frequent service and achieve high **ridership** or we can provide geographic **coverage** to large areas with low frequency service. We considered these goals to help understand what the network could look like.

Step 3. Develop Concepts

To illustrate the tradeoff between ridership and coverage, we developed two contrasting conceptual networks using the same total hours of service as DART provides today. These are the opposite ends of a spectrum for what the network could be.

Step 4. Engagement on Concepts

We had extensive engagement with riders, the general public, key stakeholders, City Councils, and the Commission about the key goals of transit. We asked their preference between the conceptual networks to understand what the public wants the future of DART to be. The Commission then voted on the priorities and budget for designing a draft bus network.

Step 5. Design the Draft Network

Based on public input and direction from the DART Commission, we designed the Draft Network. The Draft Network focused on services that maximize ridership region-wide with coverage services in Altoona, Ankeny, and Clive. The Draft Network was also designed with 10% less total hours of service.

Step 6. Engagement on the Draft Network

We held a second phase of engagement to ask the public if we had the network right. We got feedback from the public and DART staff on what they liked about the draft network and what DART should consider changing.

Step 7. Refine the Final Network

Using the input received during the last engagement phase, we slightly modified the Draft Network to turn it into the Final Network. The Final Network is the result of a collaborative effort with the public. The DART Commission voted to adopt the Final Network in December 2025

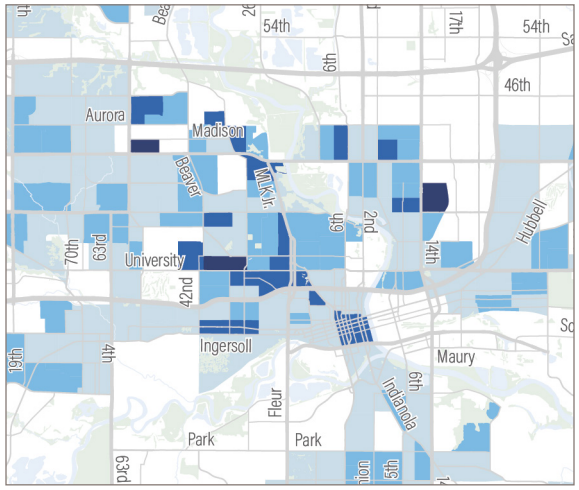
Step 1. Analyze the Existing Network

To understand how the network functions, our first step was to analyze the Existing Network. We looked at every route individually as well as the network as a whole. Ridership patterns told us when and where the network is being used today. Yet, we didn't just look at ridership numbers, we also compared them to the level of service provided to understand how productive each route is. We generally saw that higher frequency routes are more productive.

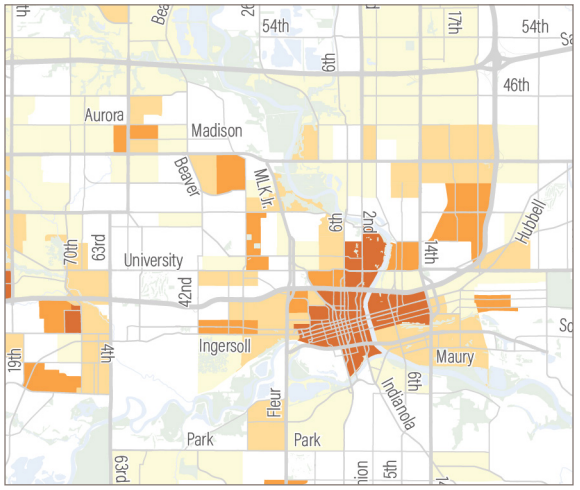
Because existing ridership patterns only reflect how people can travel with the current layout of the network, we took a deep look at the land use patterns in Greater Des Moines. We analyzed demographic data including residential density, job density, low-income resident density, and people of color density. This gave us a better understanding of where activity is concentrated in the region. We learned where there is a strong market for transit.

For more information about the analysis of the Existing Network, see the ***Choices and Concepts Report***.

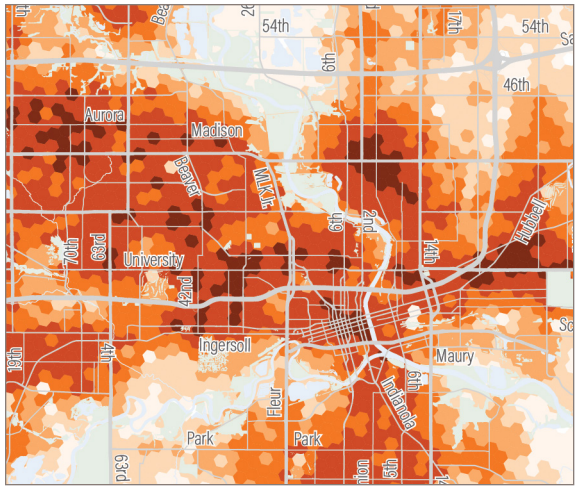
Residential Density



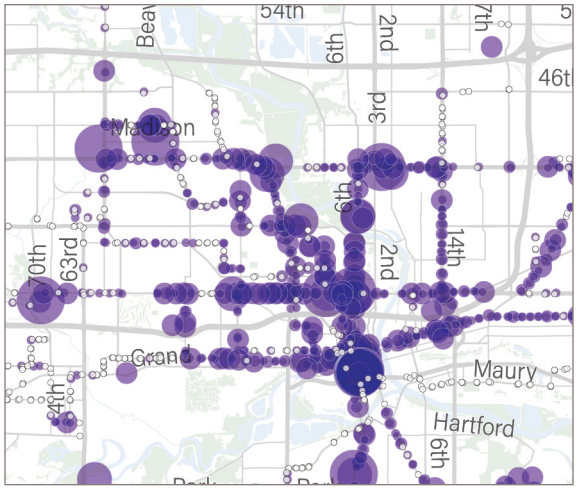
Job Density



Walkability



Ridership



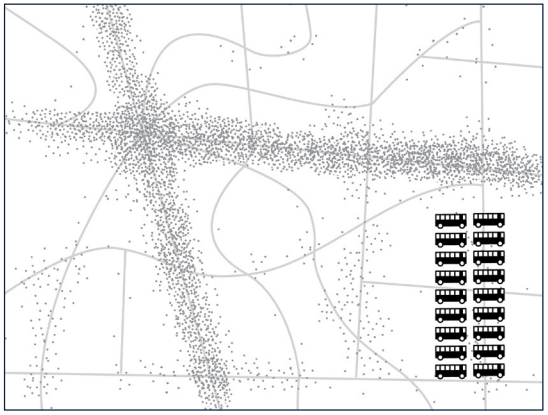
Step 2. Consider Key Choices

Transit can serve many different goals. But different people and communities value these goals differently. It is not usually possible to serve all of them well all the time.

Some goals are served by high transit ridership. For example, the environmental benefits of transit only arise from many people riding the bus rather than driving. The subsidy per rider is lower when ridership is maximized. We call such goals **Ridership goals** because they are achieved in part through high ridership.

Other goals are served by the mere presence of transit. A bus route through a neighborhood provides residents insurance against isolation, even if the route is infrequent, not very useful, and few people ride it. We call these types of goals **Coverage goals** because they are achieved in part by covering geographic areas with service, regardless of ridership.

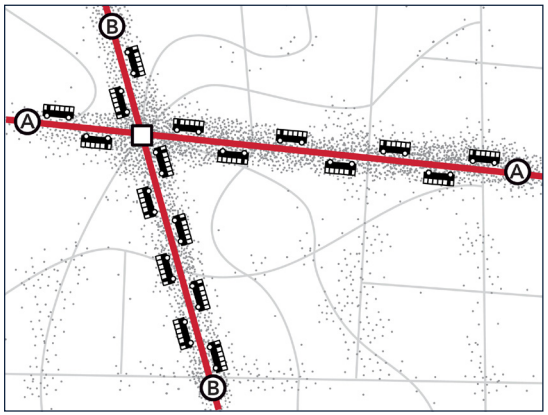
All transit agencies must balance the competing goals of high ridership and high coverage. Within a limited budget, if an agency wants to do more of one, it must do less of the other. This problem arises from the fact that the two goals produce opposite kinds of design. We explain this trade-off in the image at the right. The "right" balance of ridership and coverage goals is different in every community.



Imagine you are the transit planner for this fictional town. The dots are people and jobs—most are concentrated around two roads, as in many towns.

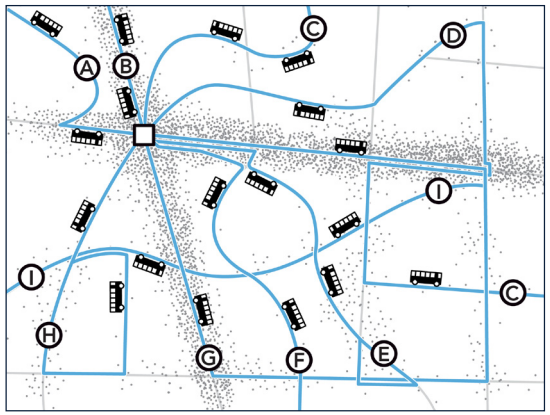
You have 18 buses to design a transit network.

Before you can plan transit routes, you must first decide: What is the purpose of your transit system?



High Ridership Goal

All 18 buses are focused on the busiest streets, so buses come frequently (maybe every 15 minutes). Waits are short but walks to service are longer for people in less populated areas. Frequency and ridership are high but some places have no service.



High Coverage Goal

The 18 buses are spread around so that there is a route on every street. Everyone lives near a stop, but buses come infrequent (maybe every 60 minutes). Only a few people can bear to wait that long, so ridership is low.

Step 3. Develop Concepts

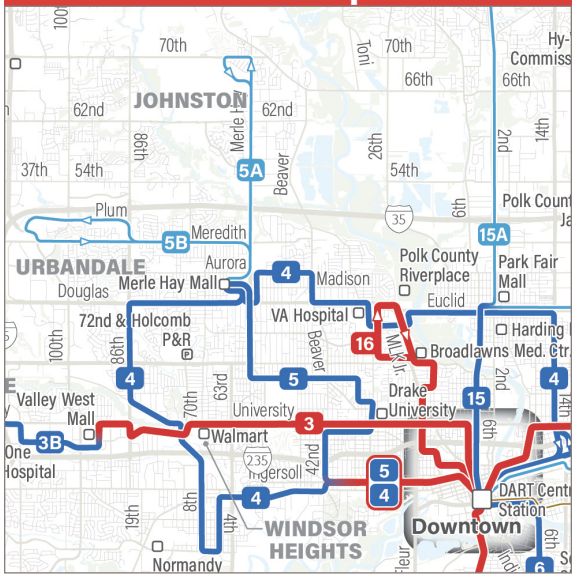
To clarify the trade-off between Ridership goals and Coverage goals in Greater Des Moines, the consultant team and DART staff and other city planners worked together to create two conceptual transit networks.

The **Ridership Concept** provided much higher frequency along the region's most active and walkable corridors, but some people in lower density areas would lose bus service. It had five frequent 15-minute routes that many people would find useful.

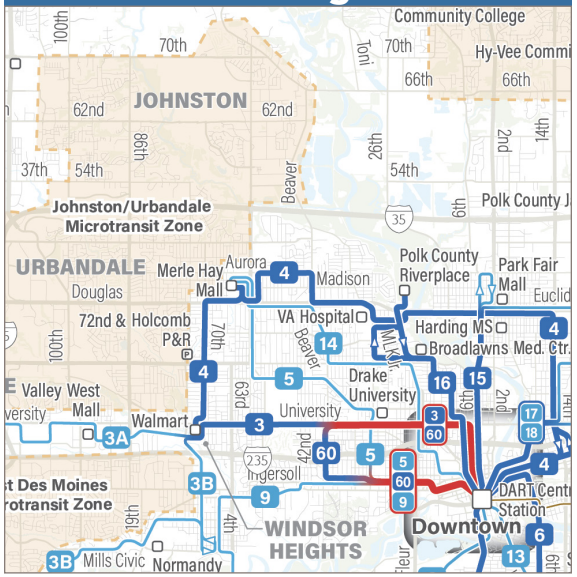
The **Coverage Concept** expanded the number of people that are close to transit service overall. It provided less frequent service and more microtransit zones to cover more areas with some service.

For more information about the Concepts, see the ***Choices & Concepts Report***.

Ridership



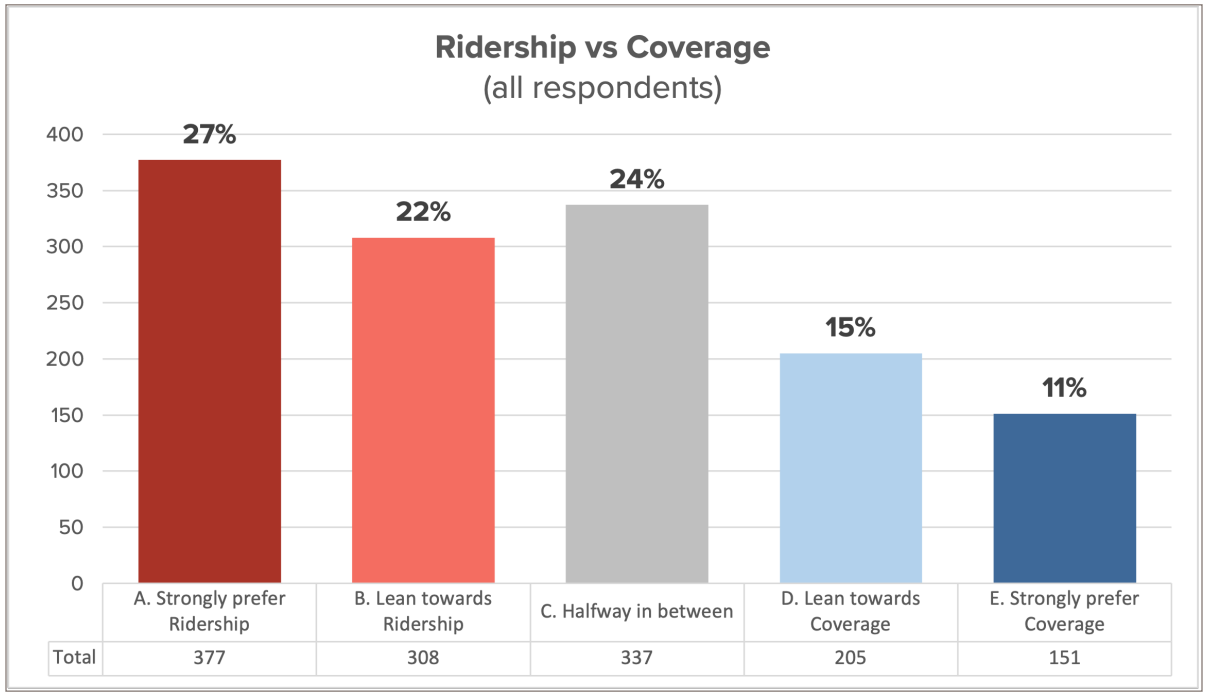
Coverage



Step 4. Engagement on Concepts

By showing the public, stakeholders, and decision-makers the range of possibilities, we asked: **"Now that you see the outcomes of emphasizing one goal over another, how do you balance the Ridership and Coverage goals? In other words, if you want better service, what is your definition of better?"** The Concepts were used to explain the trade-offs between ridership and coverage and ask the public which one they prefer.

Of all respondents, 49% preferred or strongly preferred the Ridership Concept, while 26% preferred or strongly preferred the Coverage Concept. The remaining 24% said they were halfway in between the two concepts. This shows that the public had a preference towards the Ridership Concept.



Policy Direction

The public survey responses were presented to the DART Commission to help them make a decision on how resources should be allocated between ridership and coverage. **The Commission directed the Final Network be designed to maximize ridership for the region overall with a preference for coverage in Altoona, Ankeny and Clive.** In addition, the Commission provided direction to design the Final Network with 90% of the current total service hours to limit property tax growth in member communities.

Step 5. Design the Draft Network

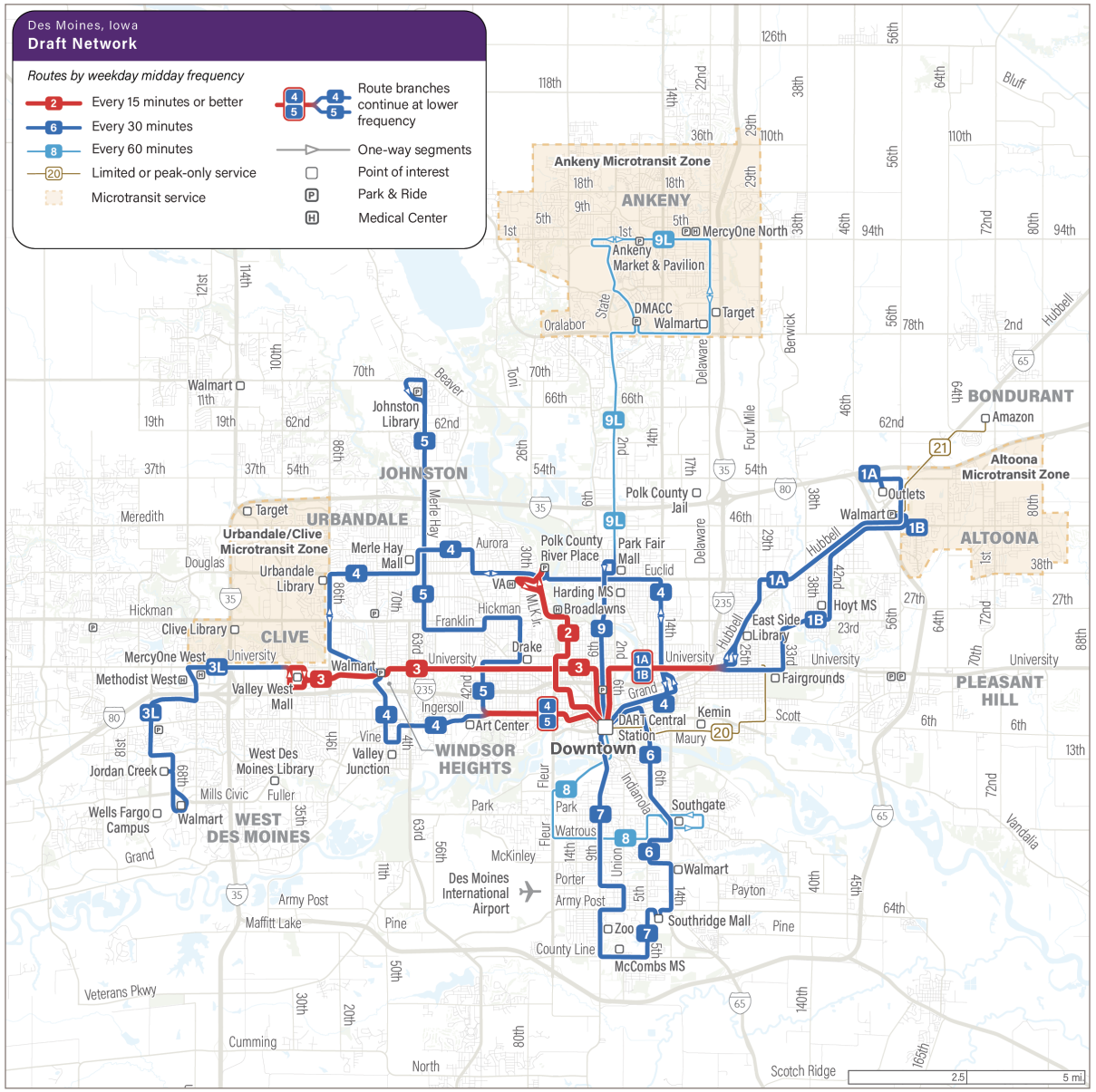
Using the input that we got from the public and the direction from the DART Commission, we developed a Draft Network. The Draft Network concentrated 15-minute service on the densest and most active corridors, with frequent service on Ingersoll Avenue, University Avenue, East University Avenue, and along MLK Jr. Parkway to Polk County River Place. It also had three microtransit zones to provide wide coverage in Altoona, Ankeny, and Clive and Urbandale.

The Draft Network also featured:

- More service on weekends
- Timed transfers that allow riders to change buses more quickly.
- Wider bus stop spacing for faster, more reliable bus service.

These elements are all part of the Final Network. You can read more about each one in Chapter 3.

For more information about the Draft Network specifically, see the ***Draft Network Report***.



Step 6. Engagement on the Draft Network

We went back to the public with the Draft Network to ask them if we had the network right. To understand what the public thought, we asked if they agreed with this statement—"Compared to the Existing Network, the Draft Network will be better for the region overall." This is how the public responded:

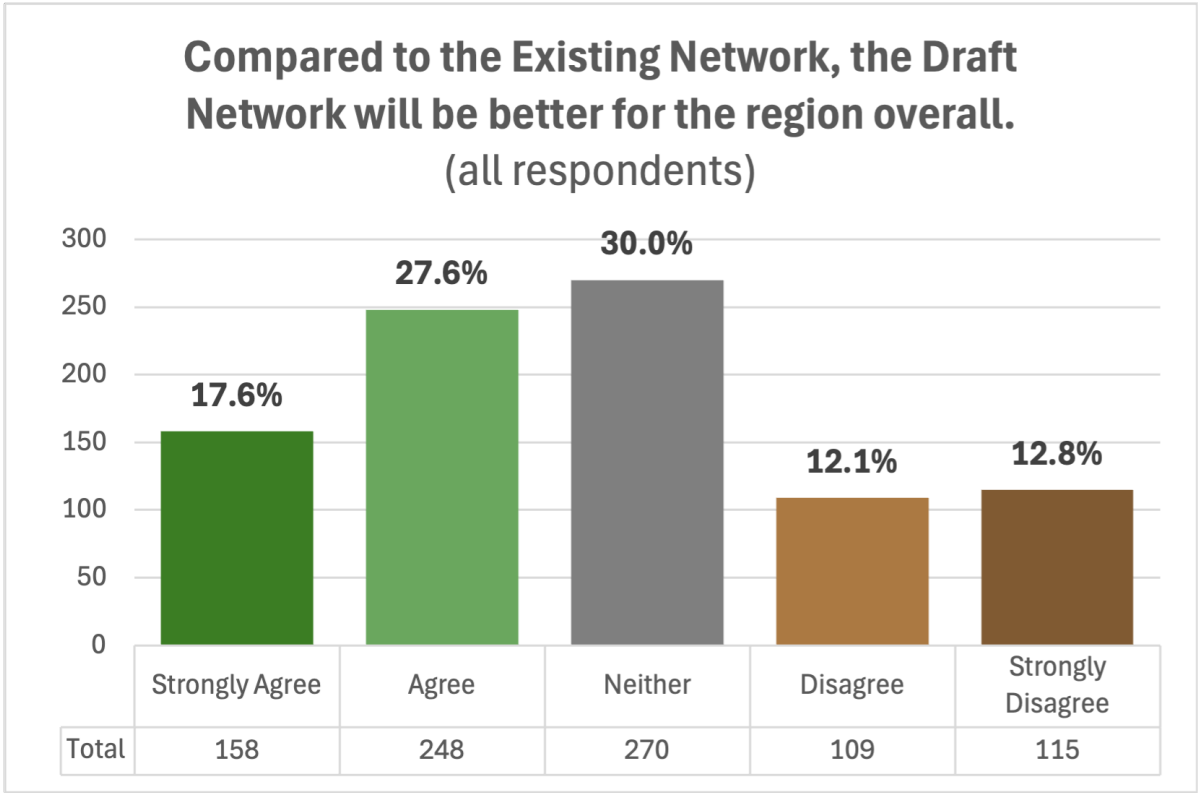
- 45% either strongly agreed or agreed
- 25% either disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 30% said neither

Many people agreed that the Draft Network would be better. We asked what respondents liked about the network, and this is what we heard:

- Higher frequency on bus routes
- More service on weekends
- Easier to get to major destinations
- Timed transfers at DART Central Station for faster travel times
- Wider bus stop spacing for faster, more reliable service
- Microtransit service in new places

We also asked, what changes we should consider as we refine the network, and these are the main themes we heard:

- Keep express routes
- Longer walks due to wider bus stop spacing
- Specific areas losing service
- Spans of service
- Change in microtransit service design in Ankeny

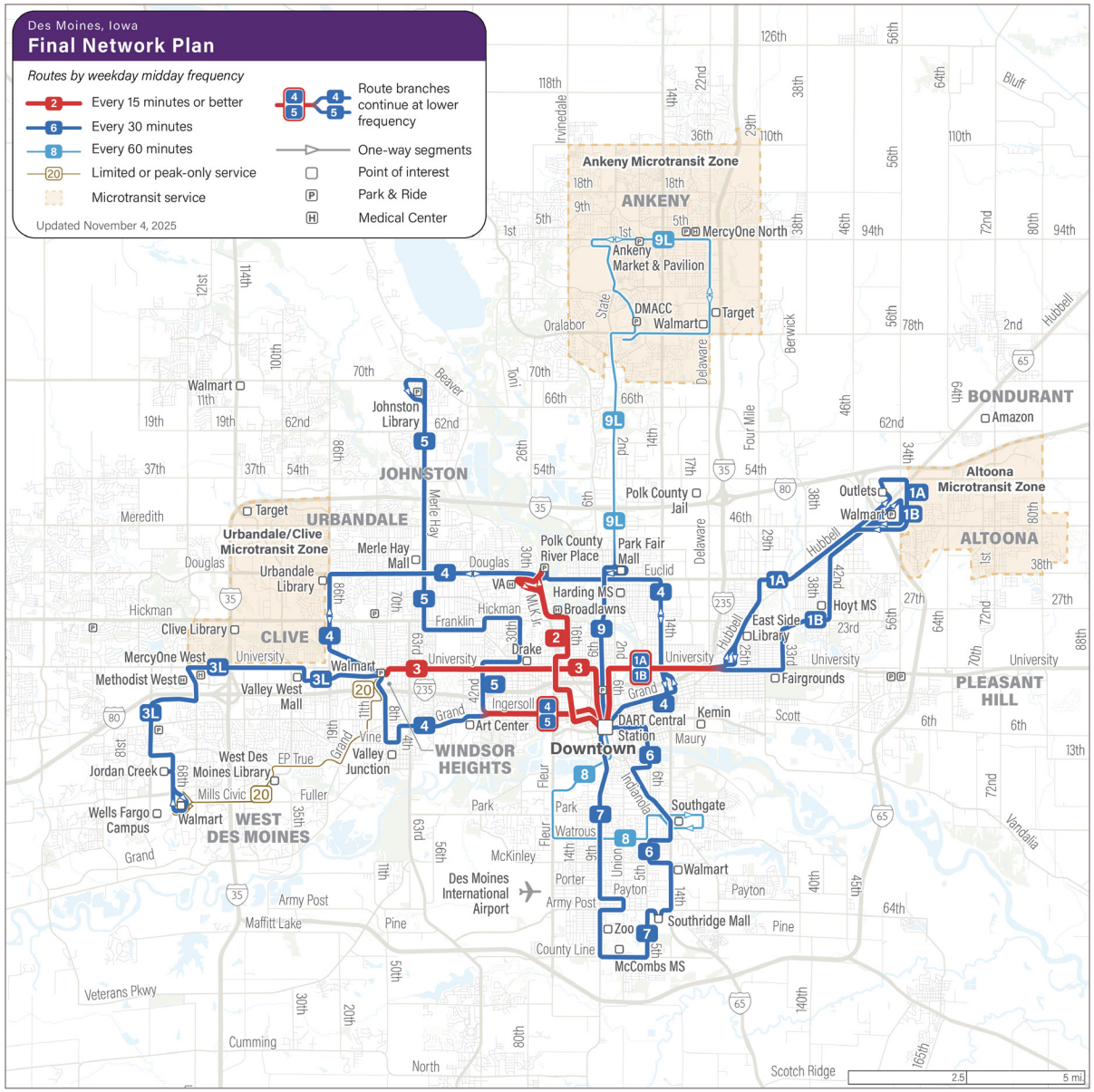


Step 7. Refine the Final Network

Using input from the public and DART operators, the Draft Network was revised. These are the changes from Draft to Final.

- The end of Routes 1A and 1B were modified to run faster and have a common stop by the Walmart.
- Route 6 uses Hartford Avenue between SE 6th Street and Indianola Avenue to avoid a difficult turn for buses. It now also uses East MLK Jr. Parkway to get to DART Central Station faster.
- Route 7 uses Payton Avenue to get to SW 9th Street.
- The loop at the end of Route 8 was reversed because it's easier for buses to operate.
- Route 3 provides 15-minute service to Walmart instead of Valley West Mall. This was modified to ensure that the route can operate reliably.
- With additional funding from West Des Moines, a new Route 20 will provide five trips each weekday to serve an area where residents expressed concern about losing service. West Des Moines and DART will evaluate the usefulness of the route after the first 1-2 years of service and determine if it will remain a part of DART's bus network.
- Route 4 stays on Douglas Avenue by Merle Hay Mall. This makes the route straighter, faster, and more reliable.
- Route 9L's terminal in Ankeny will be modified. DART will find a suitable location for a layover.
- Ankeny's Microtransit zone boundaries have been changed to more closely resemble today's On Demand zone.

You can read more about the Final Network in Chapter 3.



3 Final Network

Existing Network

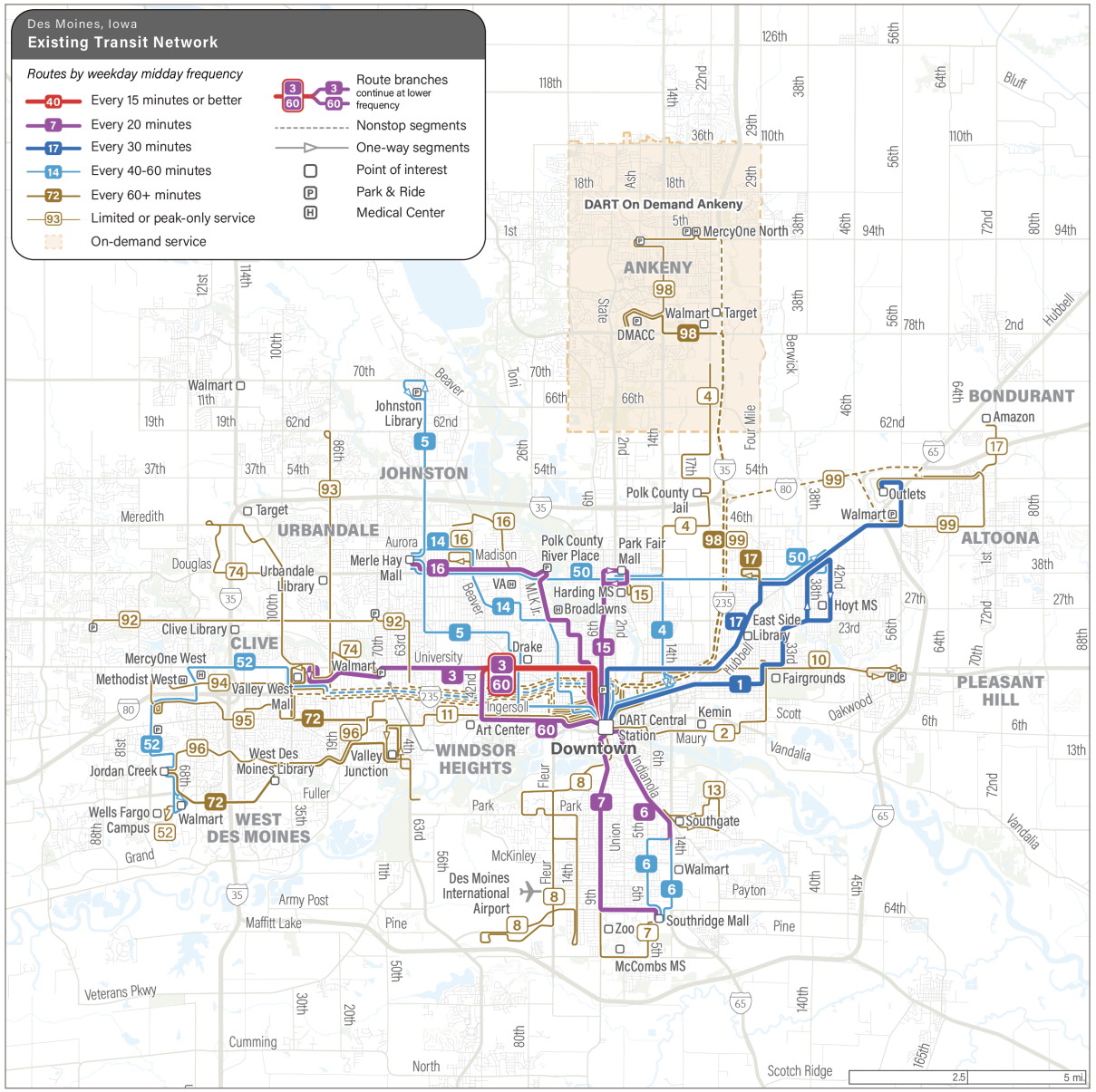
This map shows DART's existing bus network and the map on the following page shows the Final Network.

In both maps, every route is color-coded based on its frequency during the midday on a weekday. In the network maps, colors make all the difference.

- **Red lines** run every 15 minutes or better,
- **Purple lines** run every 20 minutes,
- **Dark blue lines** run every 30 minutes,
- **Light blue lines** run every of 40-60 minutes, and
- **Brown lines** run less frequently or only during peak periods.
- **Brown zones** are areas where microtransit service is provided.

Today, DART has one frequent route: The combination of Route 3 and 60 along University. This is DART's most useful route for people in a hurry since people don't have to wait a long time for a bus.

Most routes run every 20-60 minutes, but many other routes run only during peak morning and afternoon hours on weekdays.



Final Network

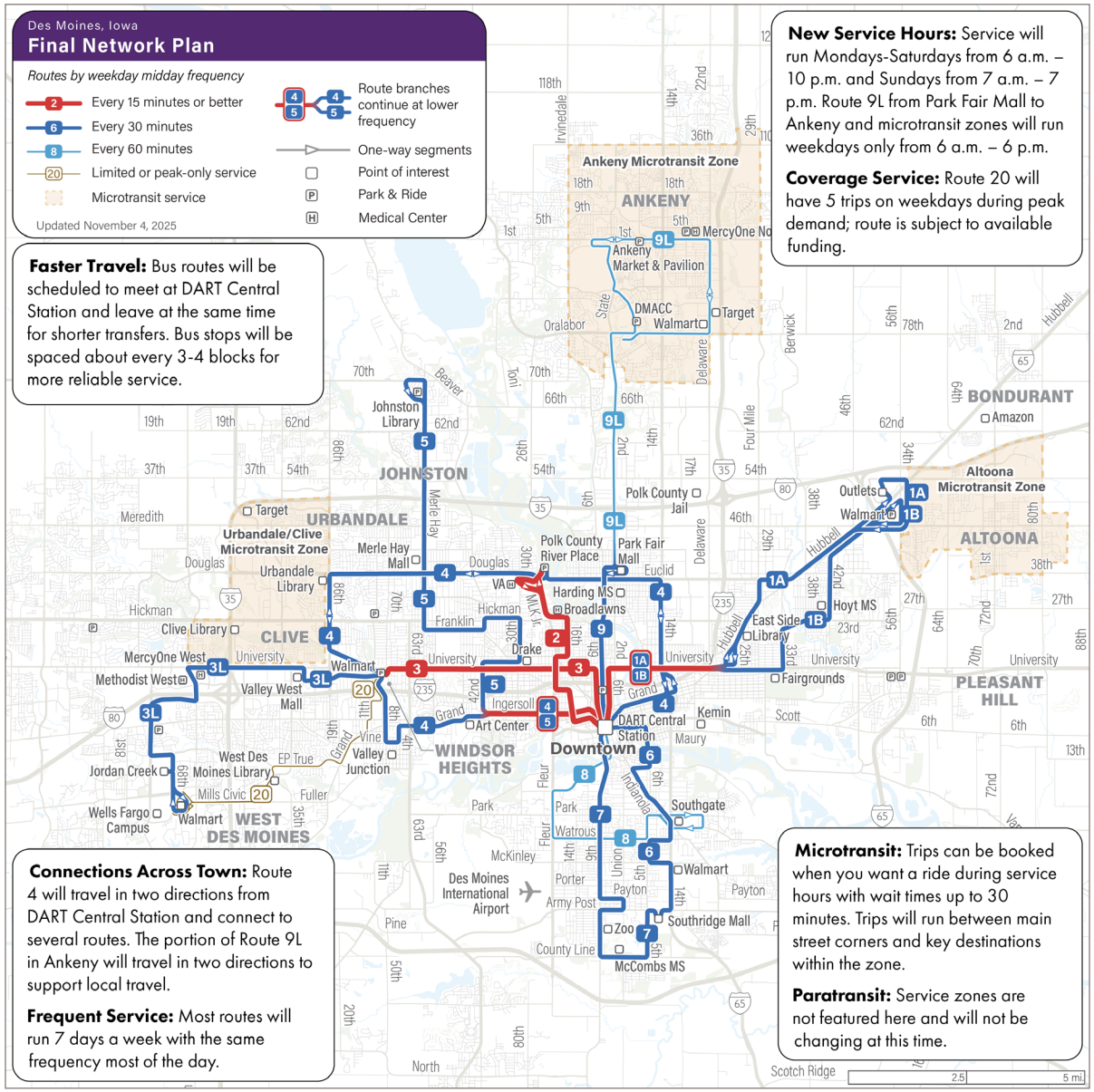
This map shows the Final Network. Based on the direction from the DART Commission, the Final Network has been designed to focus more on service that can maximize ridership with a preference for coverage in Altoona, Ankeny, and Clive. The Final Network concentrates frequent service on the four densest and most active corridors, with service every 15 minutes along:

- University Avenue to Windsor Heights Walmart,
- East University Avenue to Hubbell,
- MLK Jr Parkway to Polk County River Place, and
- Ingersoll Avenue to 42nd Street.

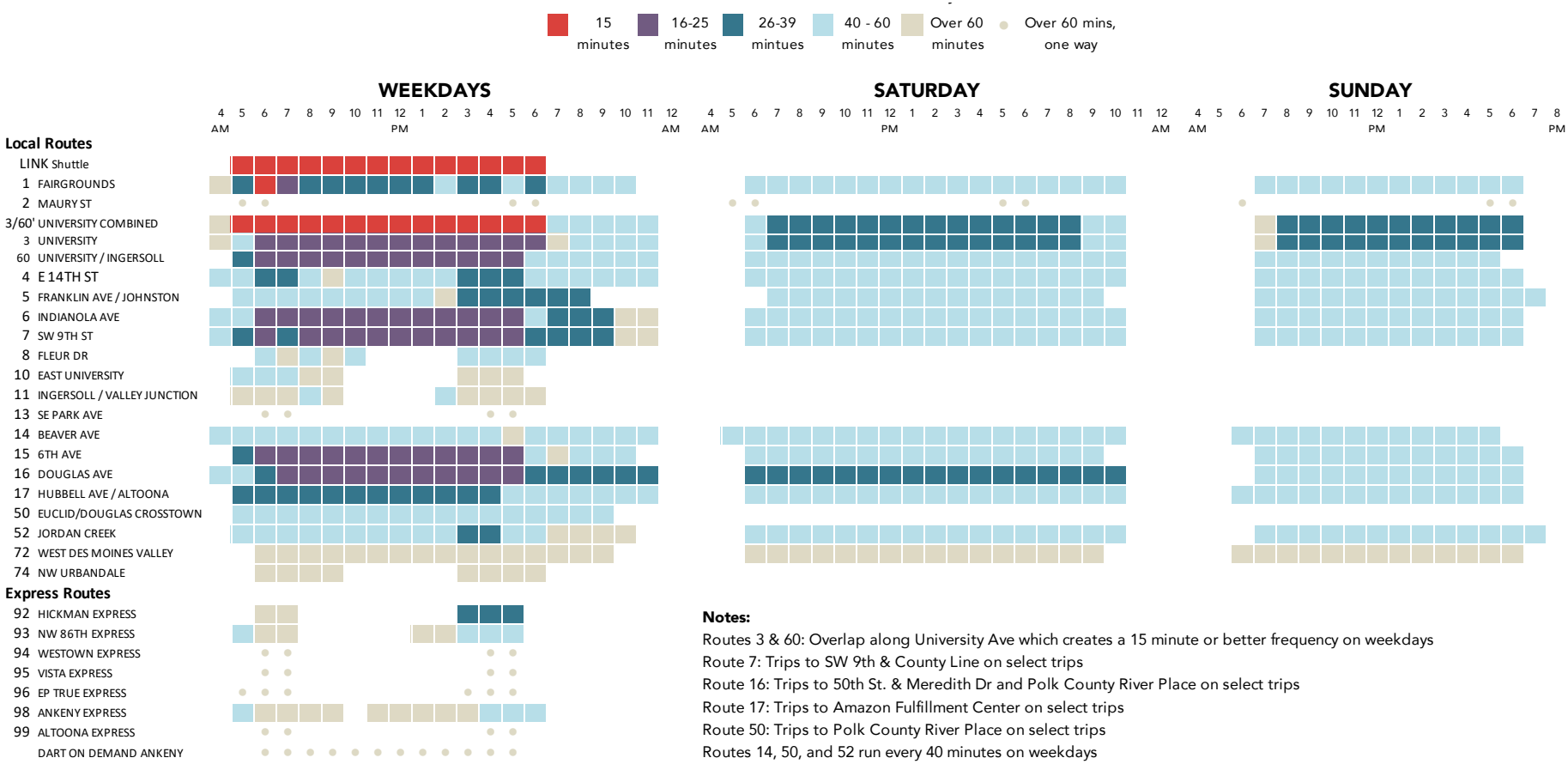
The Final Network also features:

- Less duplication and simpler routes throughout the region.
- More service on weekends (see the next pages for more information).
- Timed transfers that allow riders to change buses more quickly at DART Central Station.
- Wider bus stop spacing for faster, more reliable bus service.
- Three microtransit zones to cover areas in Altoona, Ankeny, and Clive and Urbandale.

To get these improvements, some services have been shifted. This means that in some places, people may have to walk farther to get to transit. This includes Woodland Avenue, parts of Beaverdale, and Grand Avenue near the Fairgrounds. Other places lose service entirely, including parts of East Euclid Avenue.



Spans and Frequencies: Existing Network



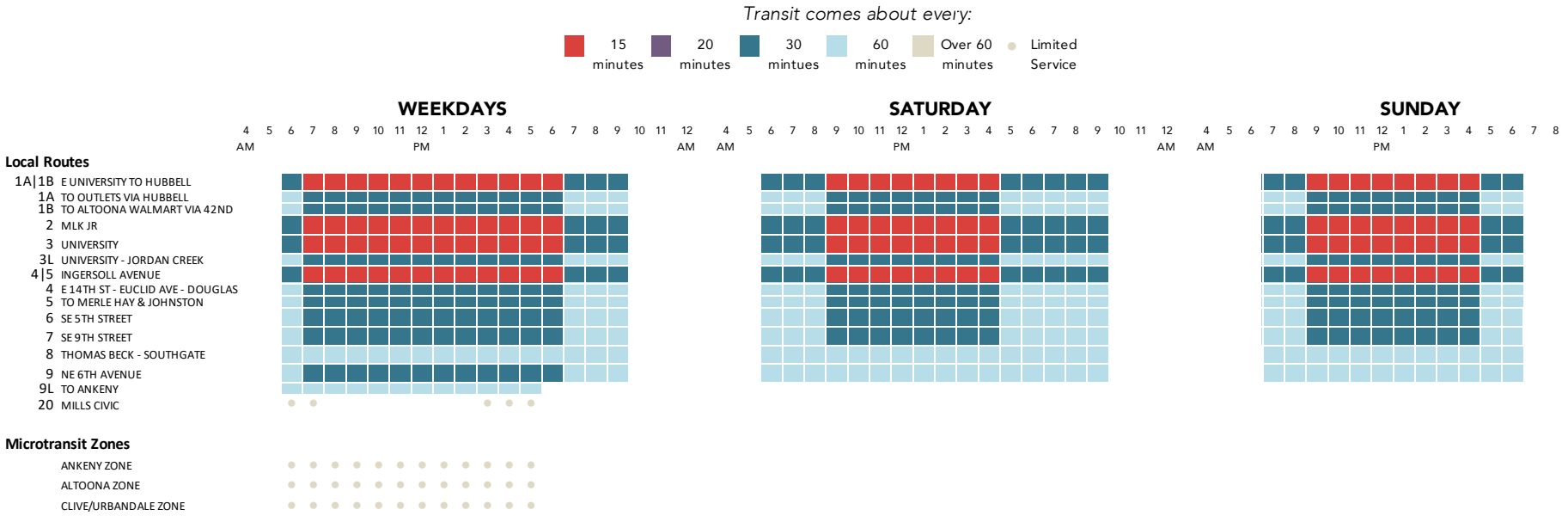
Notes:
Routes 3 & 60: Overlap along University Ave which creates a 15 minute or better frequency on weekdays
Route 7: Trips to SW 9th & County Line on select trips
Route 16: Trips to 50th St. & Meredith Dr and Polk County River Place on select trips
Route 17: Trips to Amazon Fulfillment Center on select trips
Route 50: Trips to Polk County River Place on select trips
Routes 14, 50, and 52 run every 40 minutes on weekdays

The chart above summarizes each route's frequency throughout a weekday. Every row represents a route and every column is an hour of the day. The color of each single block is the frequency of that route at that hour. From left to right, each section shows Weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

In the Existing Network, Routes 3 and 60 run every 20 minutes north of Downtown and along University Avenue, but they are scheduled so that a bus comes every 10 minutes along that segment. That's why the combined row is red on this chart and the combined route is red on the previous map. Most routes start around 5 am and end around 11 pm.

Peak-only routes vary, but generally they run from 6 am to 8 am and from 4 pm to 6 pm. On Saturdays, routes run roughly from 6 am to 11 pm, but most routes run every 60 minutes. Route frequencies on Sundays are very similar to Saturdays, but the span of services is shorter. Most routes run from 7 am to 7 pm.

Spans and Frequencies: Final Network



The chart above shows the frequency by time of day for the routes in the Final Network. You can compare this to the Existing Network spans and frequencies on the previous page.

In the Final Network, most routes would have more consistent spans that are easier to understand. Since service is consolidated into fewer routes, routes can be more frequent. Whereas today, there is only one frequent route, the Final Network has four frequent routes.

Routes that are shown as red on the map run every 15 minutes for 12 hours a day on weekdays and for 8 hours on weekends. They also run every 30 minutes in the evenings and early mornings. This is more service on the weekends compared to today. This increase in all-day and weekend frequencies reflects the fact that more jobs are on nontraditional schedules, requiring shifts on weekends and during non-peak times. This trend is especially pronounced for lower-wage jobs in retail, healthcare, restaurants, and personal services, so improving weekend service helps improve the lives of people with lower incomes.

However, total spans of service are shorter by two hours on weekdays and one hour on Saturdays, running from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. This decision was made because DART needed to reduce the total amount of service by approximately 10%. The early morning and late evening hours are when the least amount of people use DART.

Route 9L and the microtransit zones run for 12 hours during weekdays only. Routes 20 is tailored to meet specific needs in West Des Moines, only providing a few trips during the morning and evening peak hours.

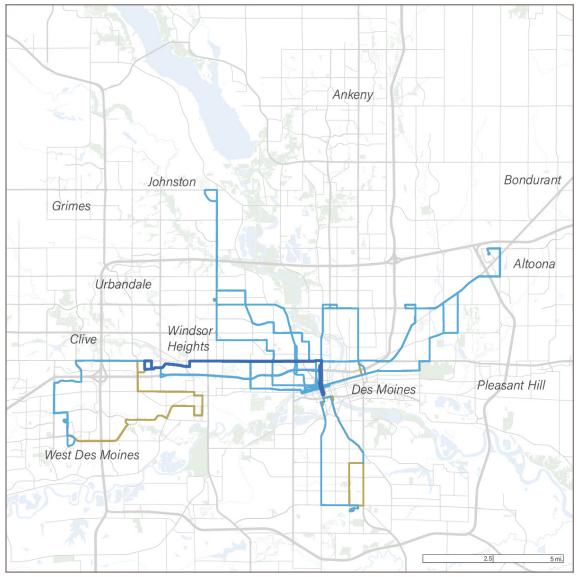
Weekend Service

The maps on the right show the network available on Sundays at 12 pm for the Existing and the Final Networks. The lines are color-coded by frequency like in the previous maps.

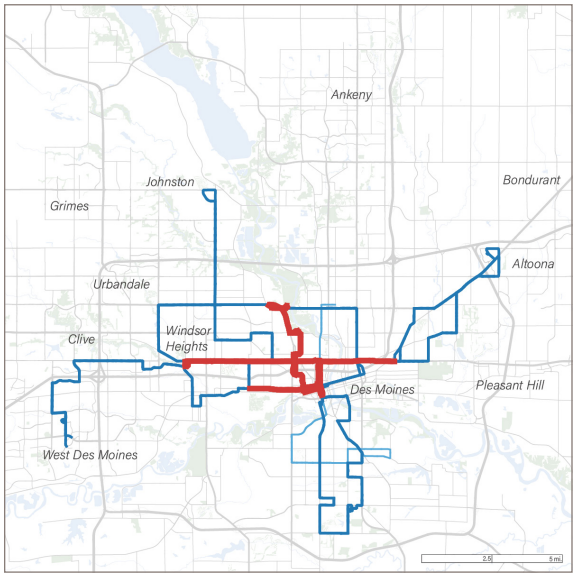
Many routes in the Existing Network run on Sundays, but only every 60 minutes. In the Final Network, most routes also run, but they keep the same frequency as the midday on weekdays. This is a big improvement over today's network.

Many retail and service sector workers have to work on Sundays, so it's important that transit is useful seven days a week.

Existing Network Sunday, 12pm



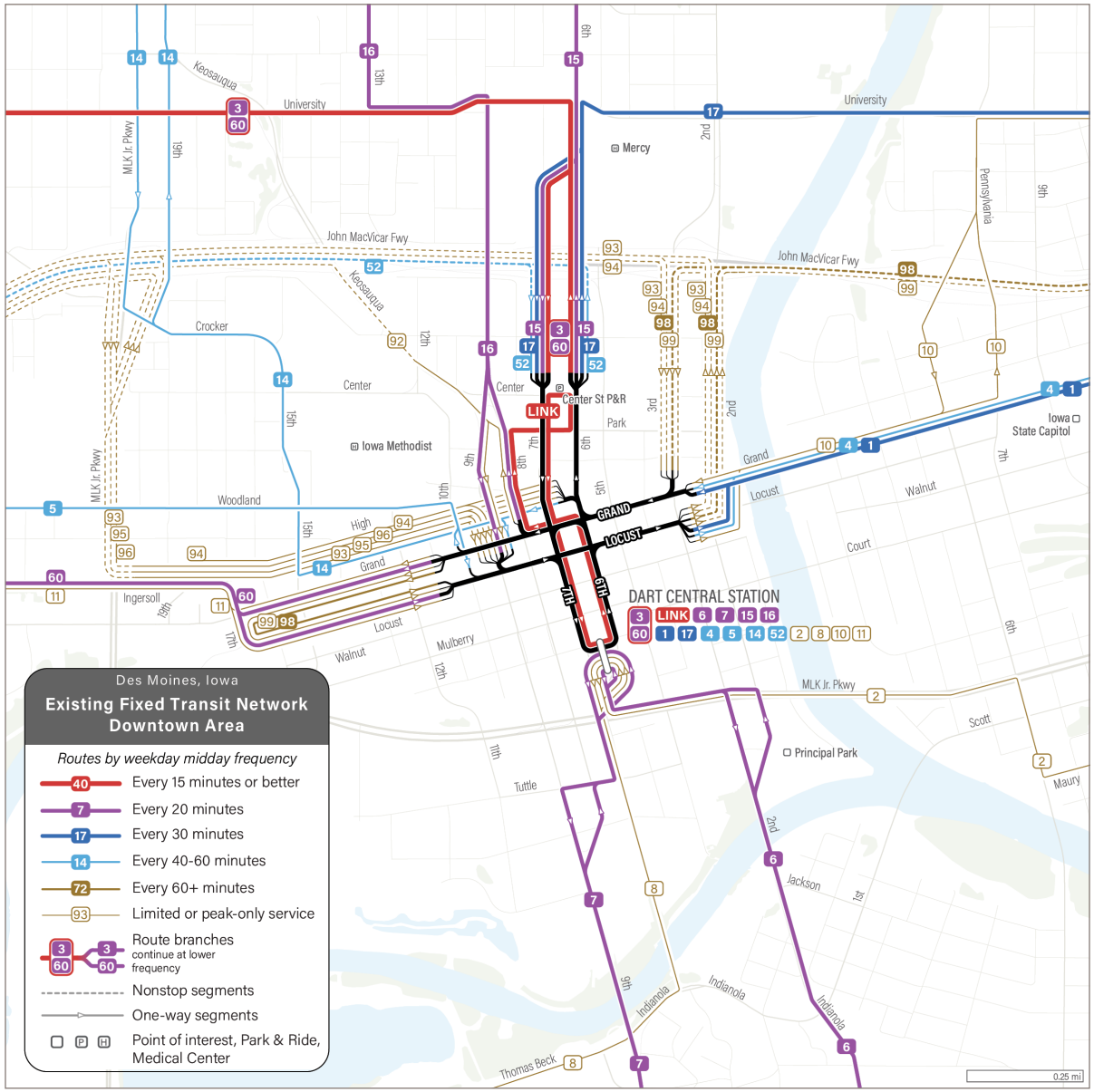
Final Network Sunday, 12pm



Downtown Des Moines: Existing Network

Downtown Des Moines has the strongest offering of transit service in the region. Most routes come into DART Central Station to provide an opportunity for customers to transfer from one route to another. This convergence of lines means that Downtown Des Moines is where most transfers in the DART system happen.

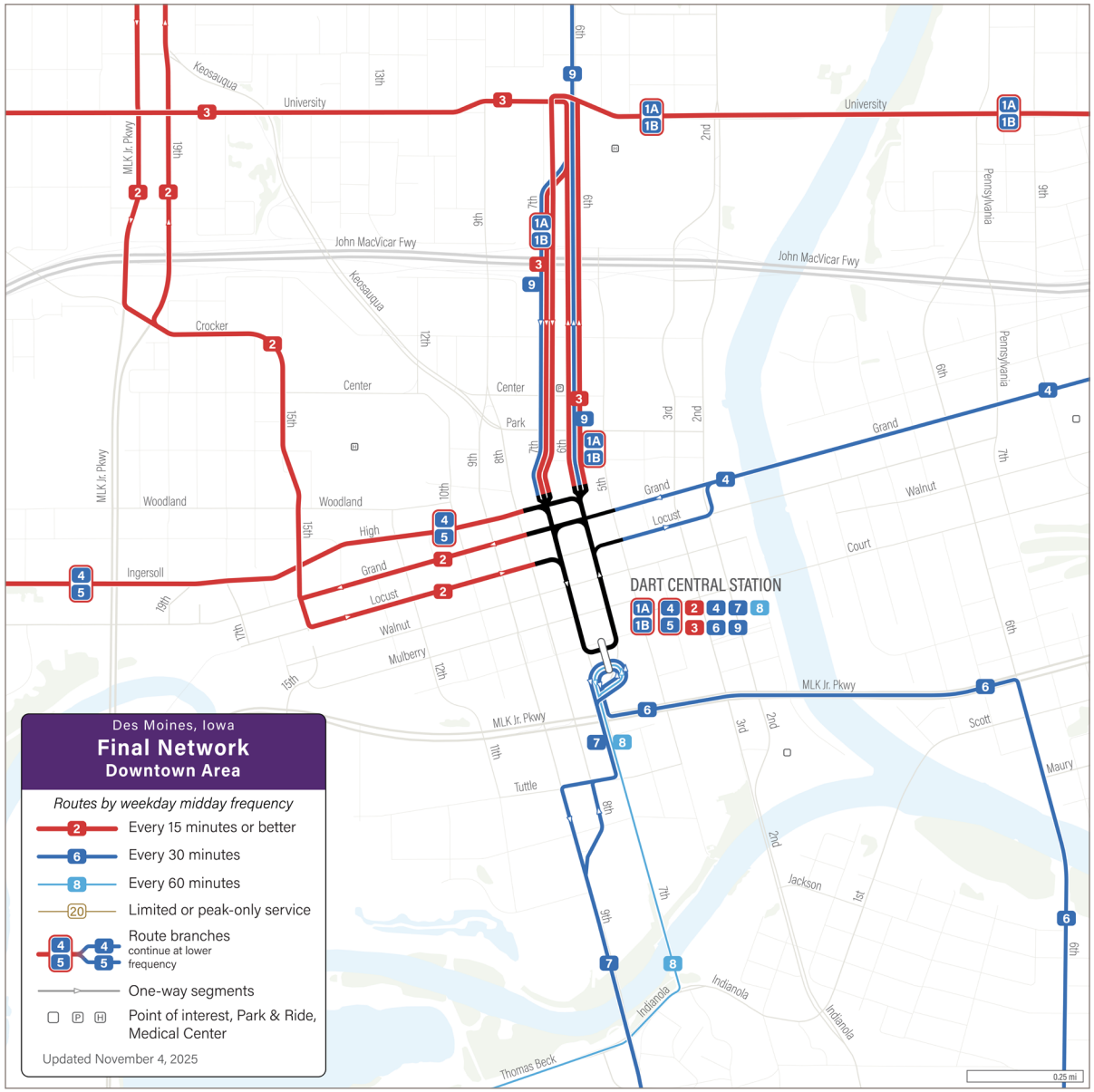
Adding to this concentration of radial routes, DART operates one short connector route, the LINK. The LINK is a free shuttle between the 7th and Center Street parking garage and the Principal Financial campus, Polk County Courthouse, and other key downtown destinations. As more parking garages were built downtown, use of the 7th and Center parking garage has dwindled, along with ridership on the LINK. While the LINK runs relatively frequently, it's so short that if you miss a bus, you can likely walk to your destination before the next bus arrives. That is why the LINK is the least productive service that DART runs today. It's also mostly duplicative with five other routes.



Downtown Des Moines: Final Network

The Final Network in Downtown Des Moines uses streets where service runs today but on fewer streets total. This makes the network simpler and easier to remember.

In the Final Network, the LINK has been removed, and its resources have been reallocated to other routes. Since there are many routes running along 6th and 7th Streets, the LINK would have provided duplicative service that wouldn't have been adding any more useful service than those routes.

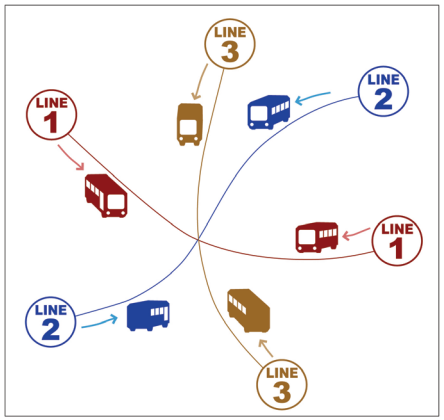


Timed Connections

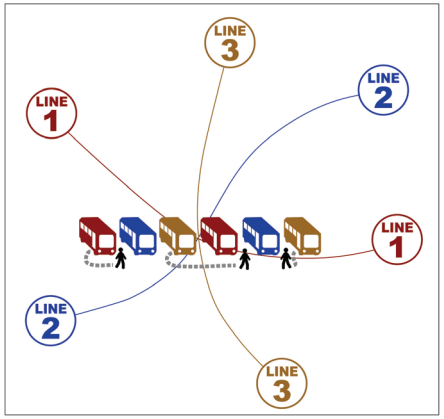
The Final Network makes better use of DART Central Station by providing a timed connection.

Connecting between two 60-minute routes can be cumbersome. You may have to wait a long time for the first bus, and if you just miss the second bus, you'll have to wait 59 additional minutes. To facilitate transfers, the Final Network has a timed connection at DART Central Station. This means that all routes are scheduled to get to DART Central Station at the same time. They wait 5-10 minutes to allow people to change buses and then depart. Instead of waiting up to 59 minutes for a bus, you now only wait 5-10 minutes every time you transfer.

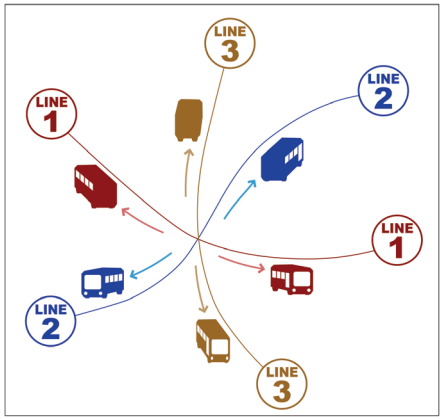
Transferring is necessary for passengers to be able to reach more of the network (and more of the region). With timed connections, transfer time is reduced, allowing people travel farther within the same amount of time.



Routes are designed to come together at one central location. Buses can terminate here or simply stop along their route.



Buses come together and wait for 5-10 minutes allowing people to transfer from one bus to another.



After 5-10 minutes, buses depart at the same time and continue their trip.

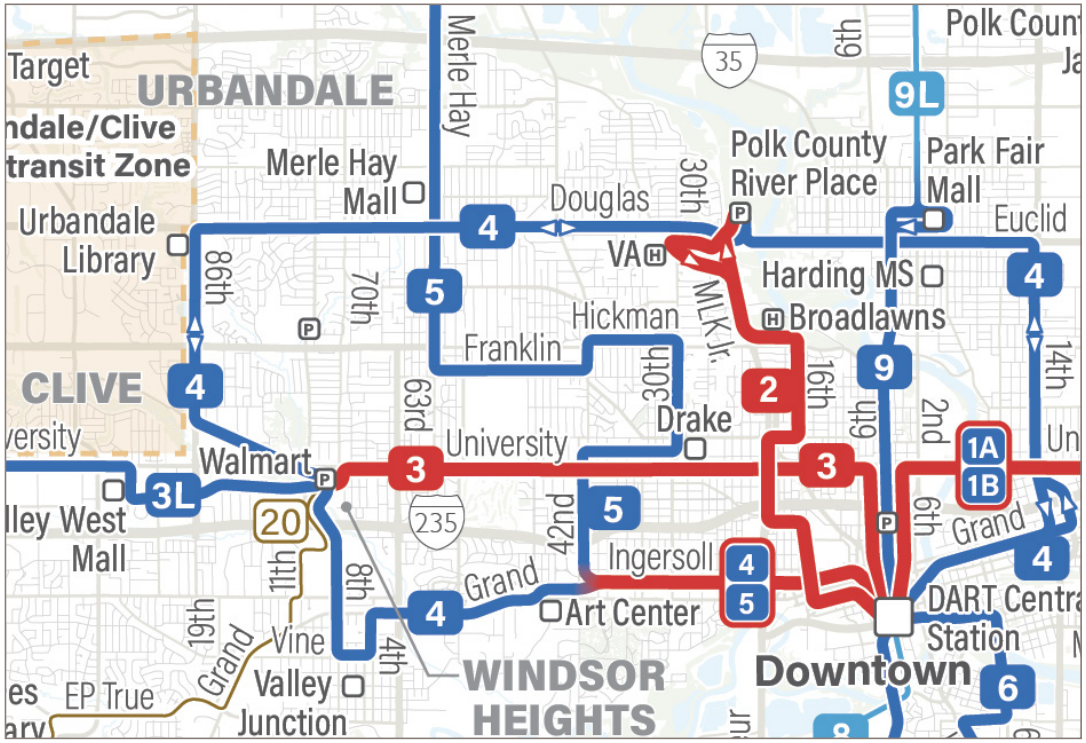
Connections Across Town

Downtown Des Moines is the place in the region with the most activity and the highest walkability; however, it is not the only important destination. Throughout the first engagement phase, we heard the public and stakeholders express interest for connections across the region. Route 4 in the Final Network provides some of these connections.

Route 4 is a two-way loop that starts and ends in Downtown passing by:

- East Village
- Park Fair Mall,
- Polk County River Place,
- Veterans Affairs of Central Iowa,
- Merle Hay Mall,
- Urbandale City Hall and Library,
- Walmart in Windsor Heights,
- Valley Junction,
- Des Moines Art Center, and
- All the activity on Ingersoll Avenue.

By connecting all of these locations with one route, people will find it useful for many different trips.



Stop Spacing

There is a geometric trade-off between closer stop spacing and faster bus speeds. The figure on the bottom-left shows the basic trade-off in conceptual terms. As stops are placed farther apart, buses can travel faster and cover more distance in the same time. Much of the time lost when stopping for passengers is the time to slow down, open the door, and pull back out into traffic. That time is about the same for 1 passenger or 50.

When there are many stops, passengers spread themselves out among them, so the bus stops more for the same number of people. When passengers gather at fewer stops, stopping time is used more efficiently, resulting in faster travel times.

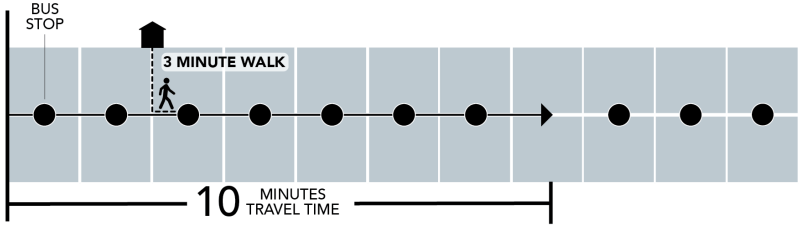
On average for DART, bus stops today are about every 0.15 miles (800 feet) apart. For many people along a route, it is easy to walk to any of several stops on a route. Having several stops is not necessarily better.

The Final Network spaces bus stops farther apart. Instead of having a bus stop every 1-2 blocks, the Final Network has a bus stop every 3-4 blocks. Since this is a big change from today, we asked the public if they agree that wider stop spacing will be better for the region. The figure on the bottom-right shows the results.

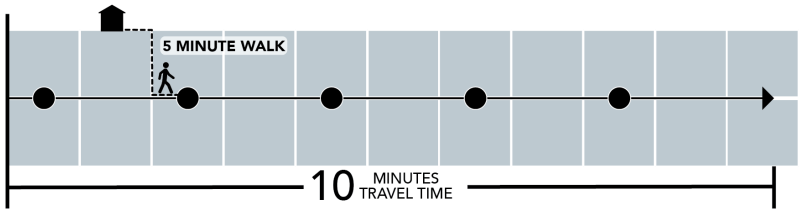
Out of all respondents, 53% either agreed or strongly agreed, 21% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 26% said neither.

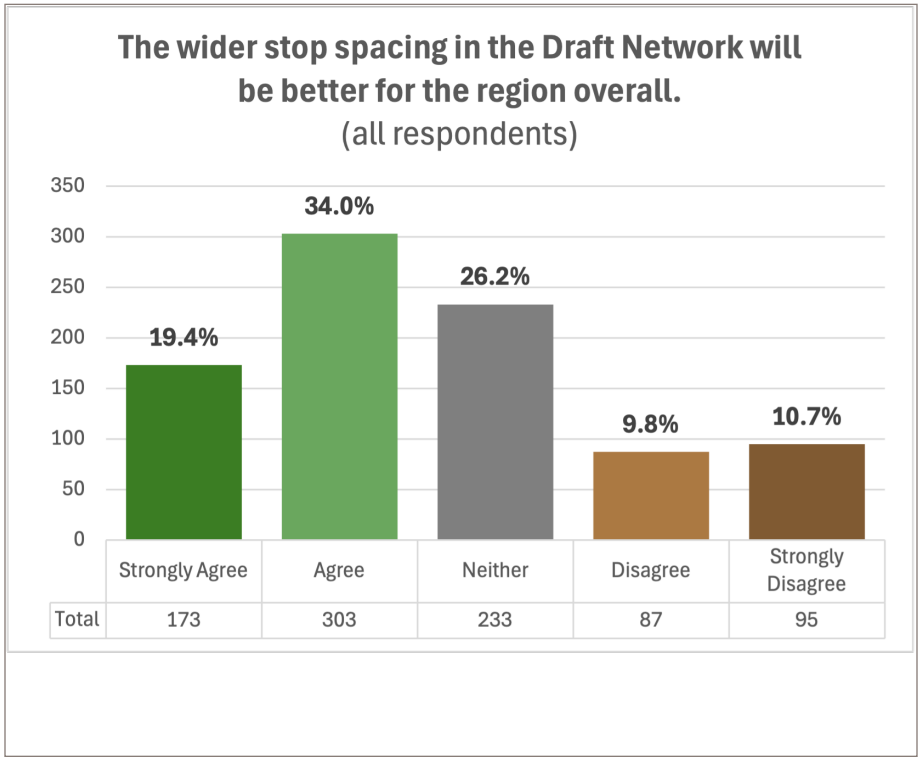
Stop Spacing and Travel Times

Closer stop spacing: Shorter walk, slower bus



Wider stop spacing: Longer walk, faster bus





Microtransit

You may have heard about taxi-like services that pick you up when and where you request them, rather than running fixed routes. You may have even seen DART running this type of service. This is often referred to as "microtransit," "dial-a-ride," "flex-route," "on demand," or "demand-response."

Using today's DART On Demand service in Ankeny, someone can get a ride from anywhere to anywhere within the zone. When a rider requests a ride, a driver will come to pick them up and then drop them off at their desired destination. This service is generally convenient for riders because it doesn't ask them to walk to a bus stop, but these features don't come free.

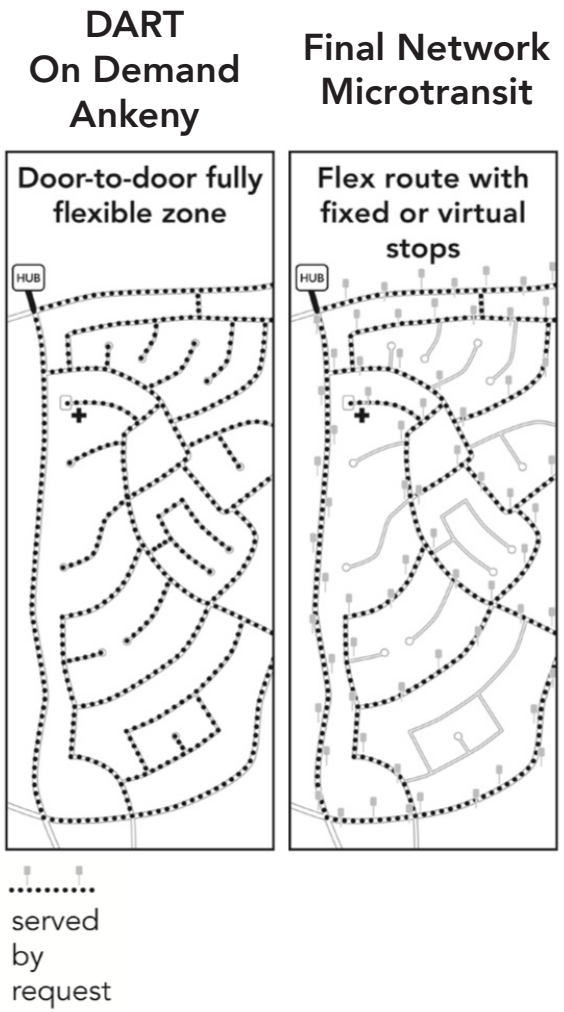
On demand trips can be more expensive, sometimes vastly more expensive, than fixed-route trips. Almost no on demand services are able to average more than 5 boardings per vehicle, per hour, compared with the average of 18 passengers per hour on one of DART's fixed-routes. If you think about what the vehicle has to do – driving around to each person's requested pick-up spot, then their requested drop-off spot – it's clear why it would be so hard to do this many times in an hour. That is why on demand service is a coverage tool. It can provide a little bit of service to many areas, but it will never get high ridership per cost.

Following the DART Commission's direction to provide coverage services in Altoona, Ankeny, and Clive, the Final Network includes three microtransit zones. However these services are a little different than today's DART On Demand service in Ankeny. The graphics to the right show how these service differ.

Picking up every passenger at their front door is time consuming. With limited resources for providing this service, DART is able to serve more people by adjusting how the service works. Therefore, the microtransit services in the Final Network will only take passengers from main street corners to key destinations within the zone. This is called a "corner to hub" model.

By staying on the main roads, microtransit vehicles can travel with less deviations to improve reliability and fulfill more trips. It also allows for more shared trips. Since the biggest cost is paying drivers to operate the vehicle, this will make the service more efficient.

Today, riders can request a ride up to seven days in advance. This blocks available time slots that people then can't use if they try to book a ride when they need it. Additionally, some people book a ride, and then don't show up, so no one uses the service. To fix this, the microtransit service in the Final Network will only allow riders to request a ride when they want to travel without pre-booking.



"Corner to hub" service and on-demand booking can make the microtransit in the Final Network more reliable than today.

4 Comparing Outcomes

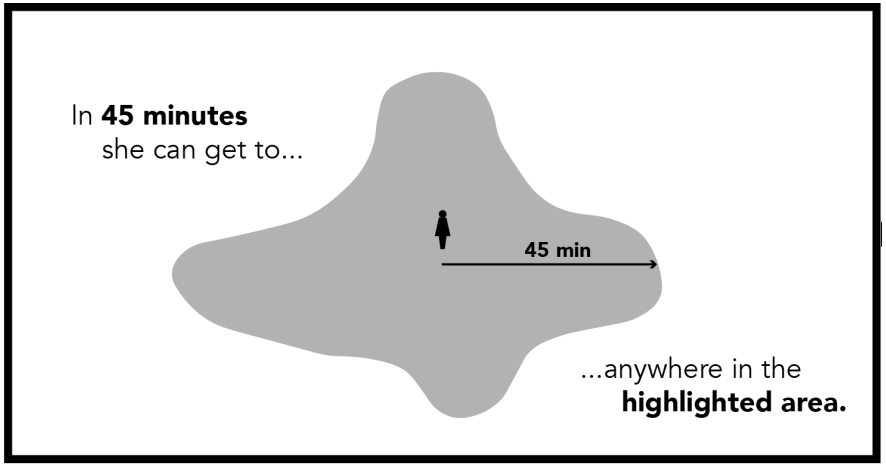
Freedom, Access, Usefulness

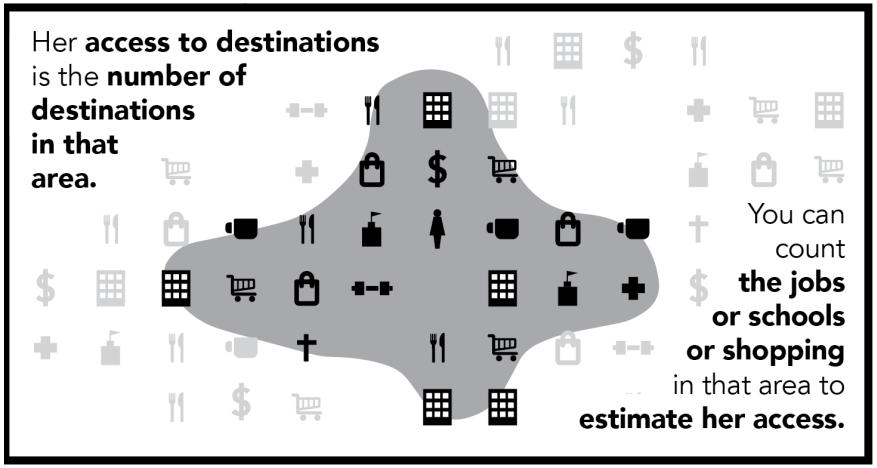
Wherever you are, there is a limited number of places you could reach in a given amount of time. The figure on the right shows an example of this type of visualization of transit access. This bubble determines what your options are in life: for employment, school, shopping, or whatever place you want to reach. If you have a bigger bubble, you have more choices, so in an important sense you are more free.

Access is a Matter of Geometry

Freedom is about what you could do, not a prediction of what you will do. Access is how network design generates ridership, because it measures how likely it is that any particular trip will be viable on transit.

- **Access to jobs** is a key concern for keeping people employed.
- **Access from a particular place** gives a location value. In dense cities, transit access can be an important factor in land value.
- Access describes an outcome in terms that many people will care about. **If you are deciding where to live based on whether you'll be able to get to your job, school, or relatives, you are asking a question about access.**
- The reason people live in urban areas is to have access to opportunities. **So, access is a measure of whether a city is functional.**





Measuring Access to Opportunities

The real measure of usefulness is not just how much geographic area someone can reach, but how many useful destinations are in that area. Ridership arises from service being useful, helping more people get to more places.

The example on the right shows how access changes for DART Central Station with the Final Network compared to existing:

- **Purple** shows areas reachable in both networks,
- **Blue** shows newly reachable areas, and
- **Pink** shows places no longer reachable within 45 minutes.

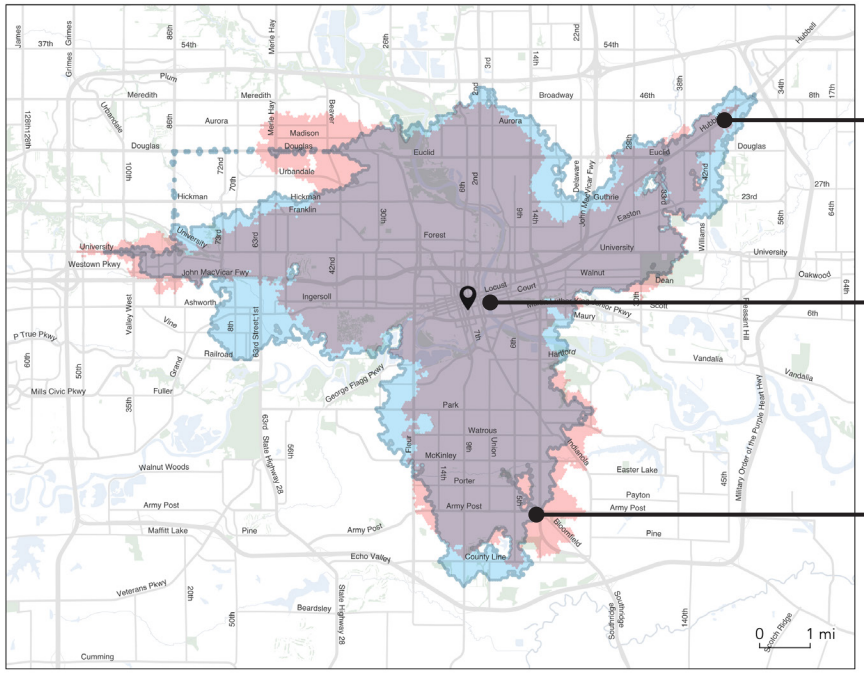
The change in jobs and people reachable is shown below the map. The technical term for this map is an isochrone. The maps on the next two pages show the same comparison for four other example locations, and the appendix includes many more.

When reviewing these maps remember that **waiting time counts**, and in most cases, a longer walk to a high-frequency route can get people farther and faster than a shorter walk to an infrequent route. Also remember that some of the access shown in these maps isn't reached on a single route, but requires a transfer.

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

DART Central Station

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?



Blue areas are newly reachable in 45 minutes in the Final Network

Purple areas are reachable in 45 minutes in both the Existing and Final Networks

Pink areas are reachable in 45 minutes in the Existing Network, but not in the Final Network

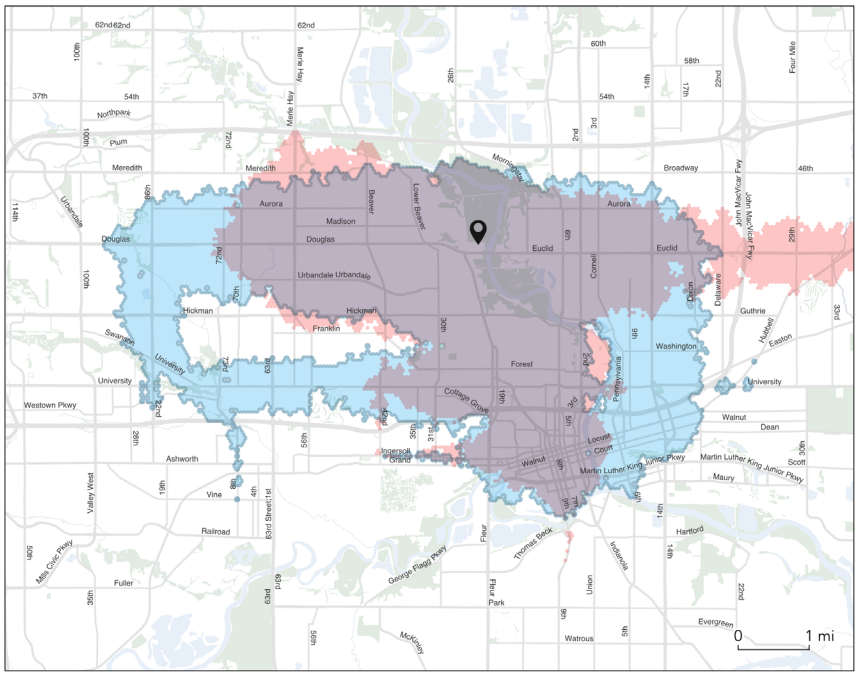
	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+1,900	+1.5%
Residents Accessible	+2,300	+1.5%

Isochrone Examples

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Polk County River Place

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

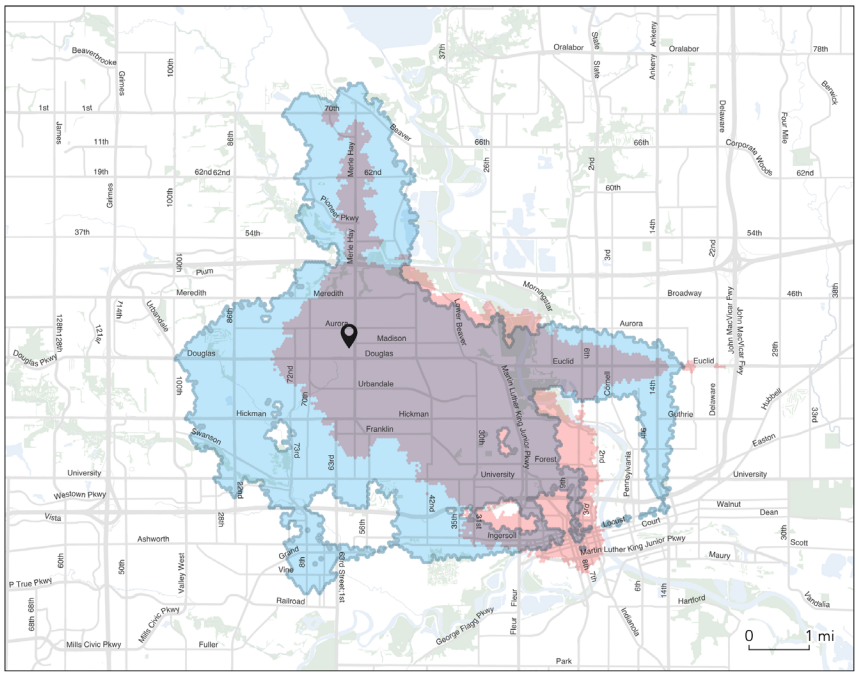


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+15,300	+19.5%
Residents Accessible	+18,700	+21.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Merle Hay Mall

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?



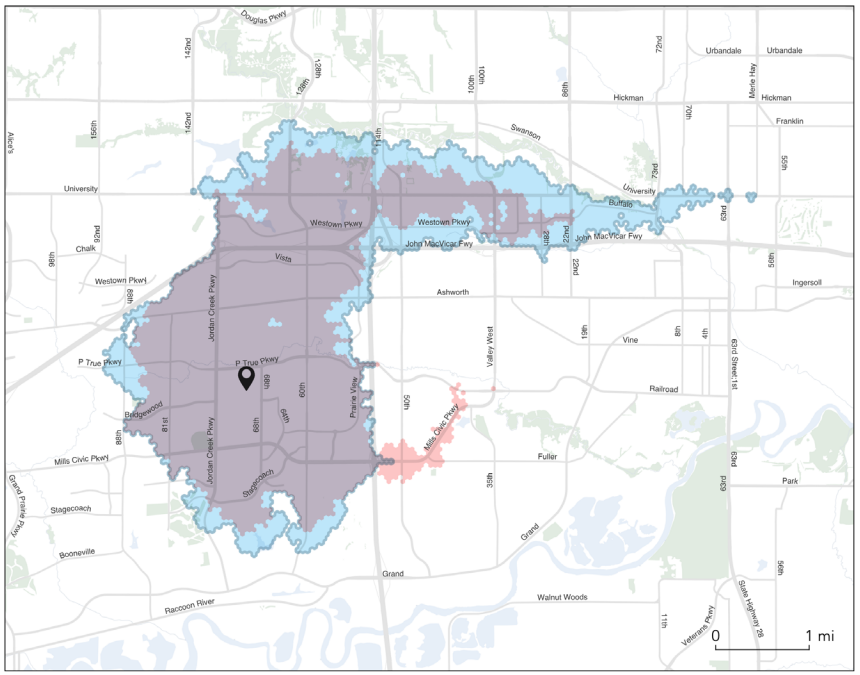
	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-9,800	-15.0%
Residents Accessible	+35,900	+44.5%

Isochrone Examples

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Jordan Creek Town Center

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

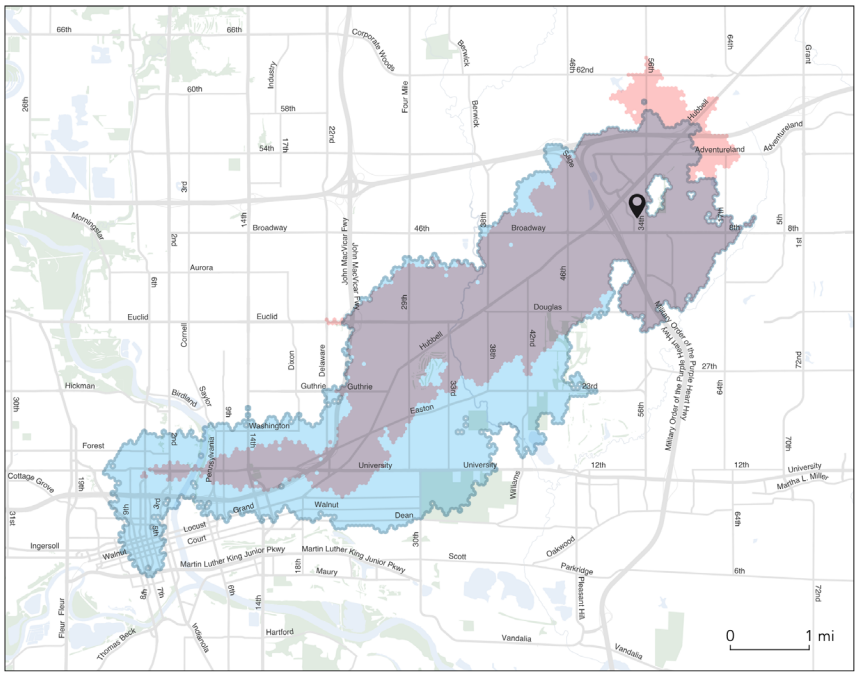


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+12,100	+35.0%
Residents Accessible	+4,100	+20.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Walmart in Altoona

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?



	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+30,400	+315.5%
Residents Accessible	+20,100	+87.0%

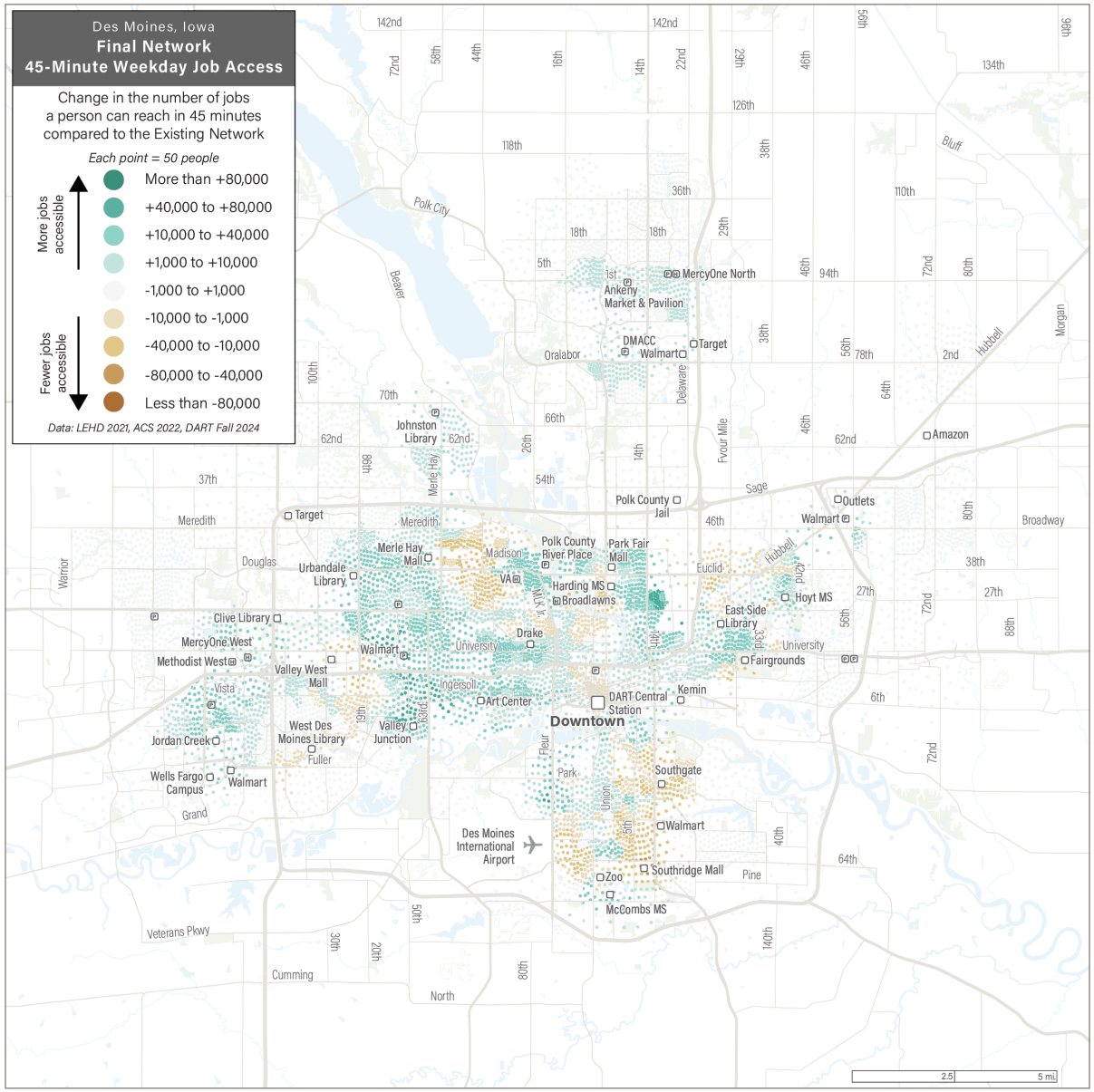
Change in Access

The previous maps show how the Final Network changes where people could go in 45 minutes from certain places. The same analysis can be done on a grid of locations to estimate the access impacts of the Final Network on job access throughout the region.

The map on this page summarizes the change in jobs reachable everywhere. In this map, every dot represents 50 residents and the color indicates the jobs that can be reached in 45 minutes as compared to the Existing Network. In this map:

- **green dots** represent more jobs accessible,
- **brown dots** represent fewer jobs accessible, and
- the darker the color, the greater the change in jobs accessible.

In general, the Final Network increases access to jobs for the densest areas, which is clear because many areas are green, some with dark shades of green. People have to wait less for a bus where there is more frequent service, allowing them to travel farther within the same amount of time. Not all parts of the region benefit. There is a loss of access along SE 6th Street in southern Des Moines because there is lower frequency (from 20 to 30 minutes on those bus routes due to budget constraints). There is also a loss of access along East Euclid, Mills Civic Parkway, and in Beaverdale because of the removal of low frequency routes.



Change in Access: Summarized

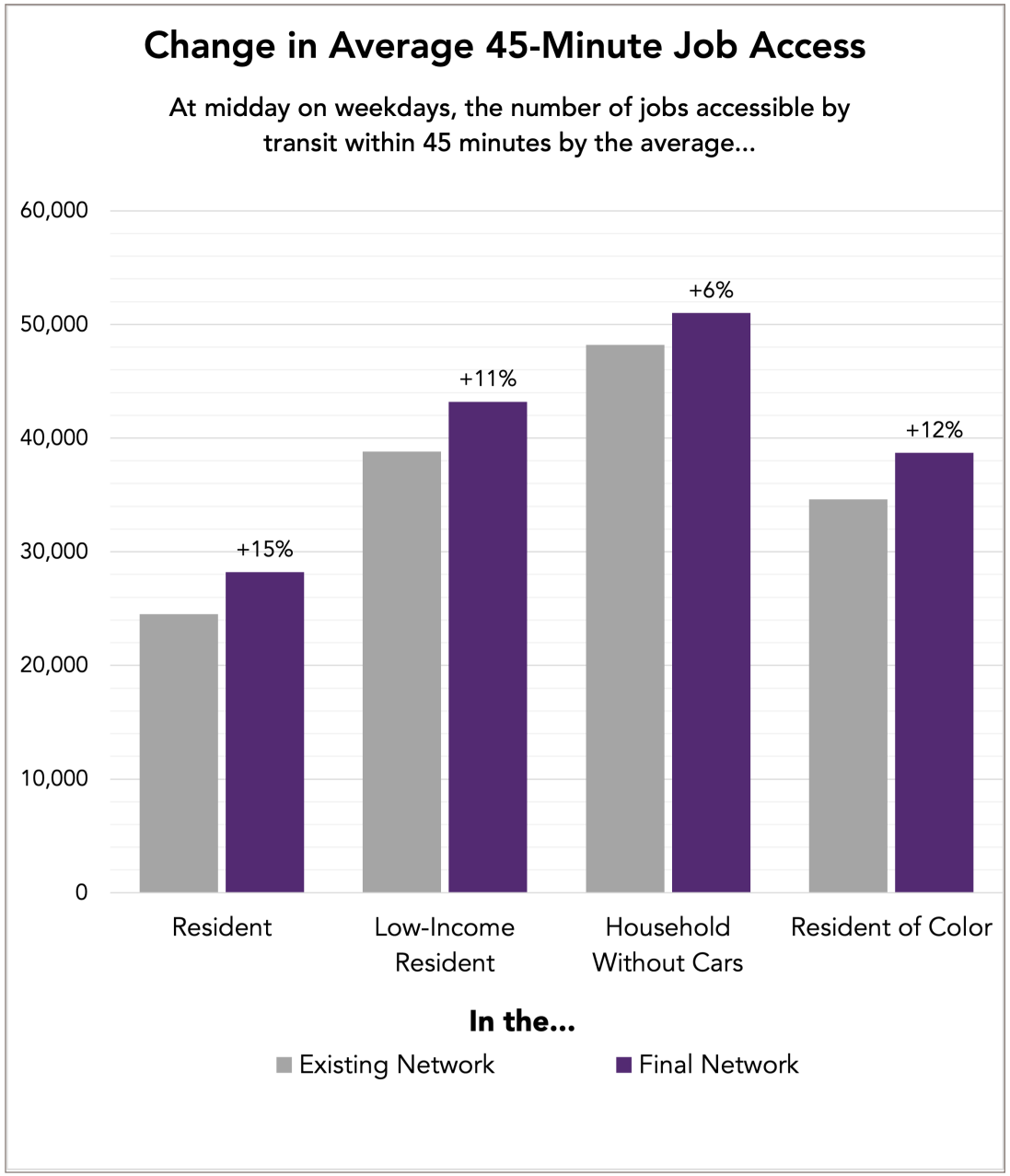
The data in the map on the previous page can be used to estimate the change in access for the average person and for different subgroups as shown on the right.

The change in access in each dot can be multiplied by the population, added up, and then divided by the total population, to calculate that the Final Network allows the average person to reach 3,700 more jobs within 45 minutes by walking and taking transit. **15% more jobs are reachable in the Final Network compared to the Existing Network.**

The same calculations can be applied to different population groups.

- The average low-income resident can reach 11% more jobs in 45 minutes.
- The average household without a car can reach almost 6% more jobs in 45 minutes.
- The average resident of color can reach 12% more jobs in 45 minutes.

This analysis measures jobs, but it reflects a wide range of opportunities that a person can reach. This means a person can get to more shopping, education, recreational areas, social events, places of worship, and any other opportunities that the region can offer.



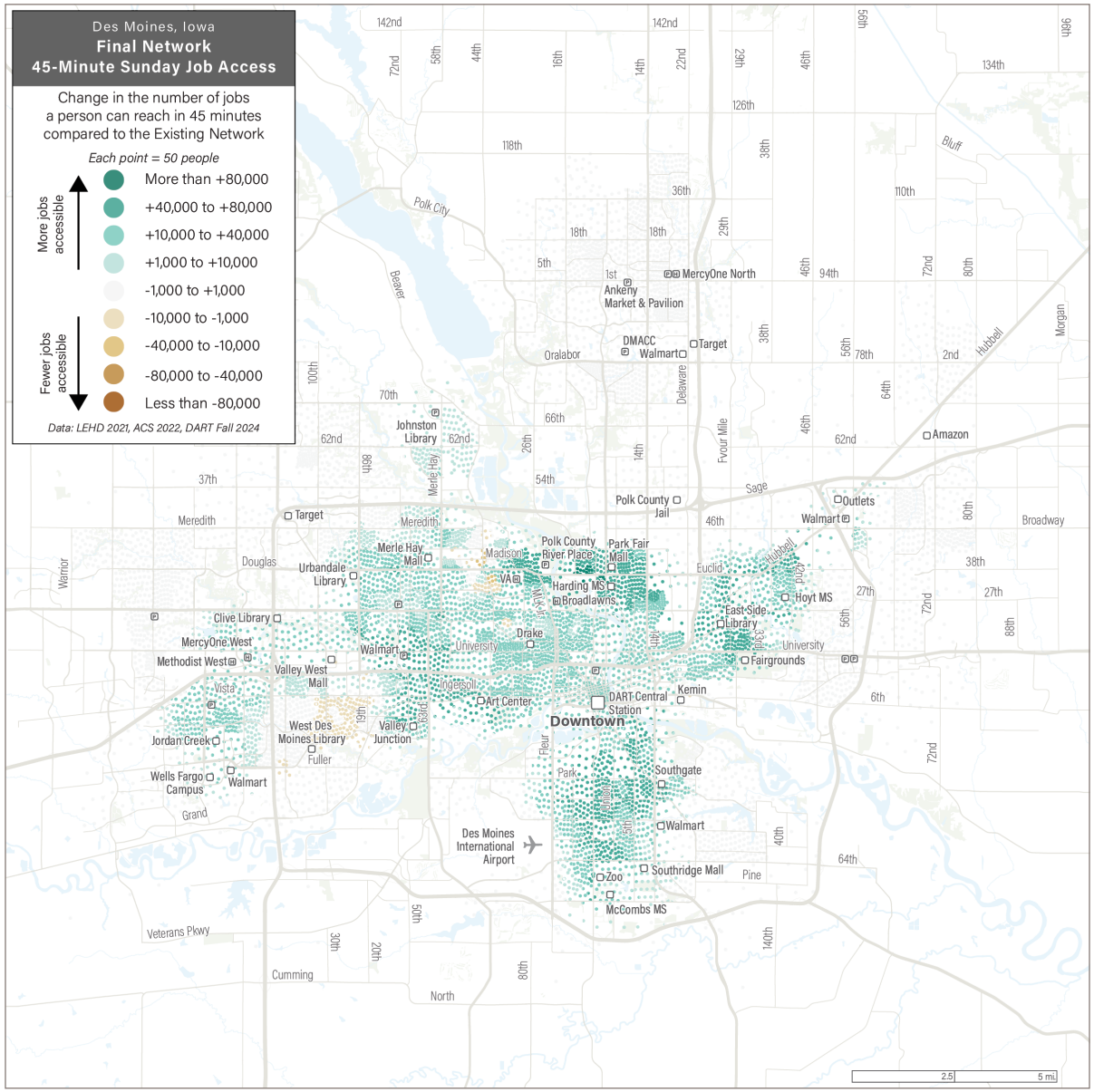
Change in Access: Sundays

In the Existing Network, most routes that run in the midday on weekdays run on Sundays but only every 60 minutes. That means that service workers potentially have longer travel times to get to work on Sundays. In the Final Network, most routes run on Sundays with the same frequency as they do on weekdays.

This map summarizes the change in jobs reachable on Sundays at 12 pm. Most of the map is dark green, which means that many people would see a big increase in the number of jobs they can reach in 45 minutes. This is because routes run at higher frequencies in the Final Network. People would spend less time waiting for a bus, so they can travel farther in the same amount of time.

By combining this analysis, it is possible to calculate that, **on Sundays, the average resident could reach 89% more jobs in 45 minutes in the Final Network when compared to the Existing Network.**

- The average low-income resident can reach 74% more jobs in 45 minutes.
- The average household without a car can reach 65% more jobs in 45 minutes.
- The average resident of color can reach 84% more jobs in 45 minutes.



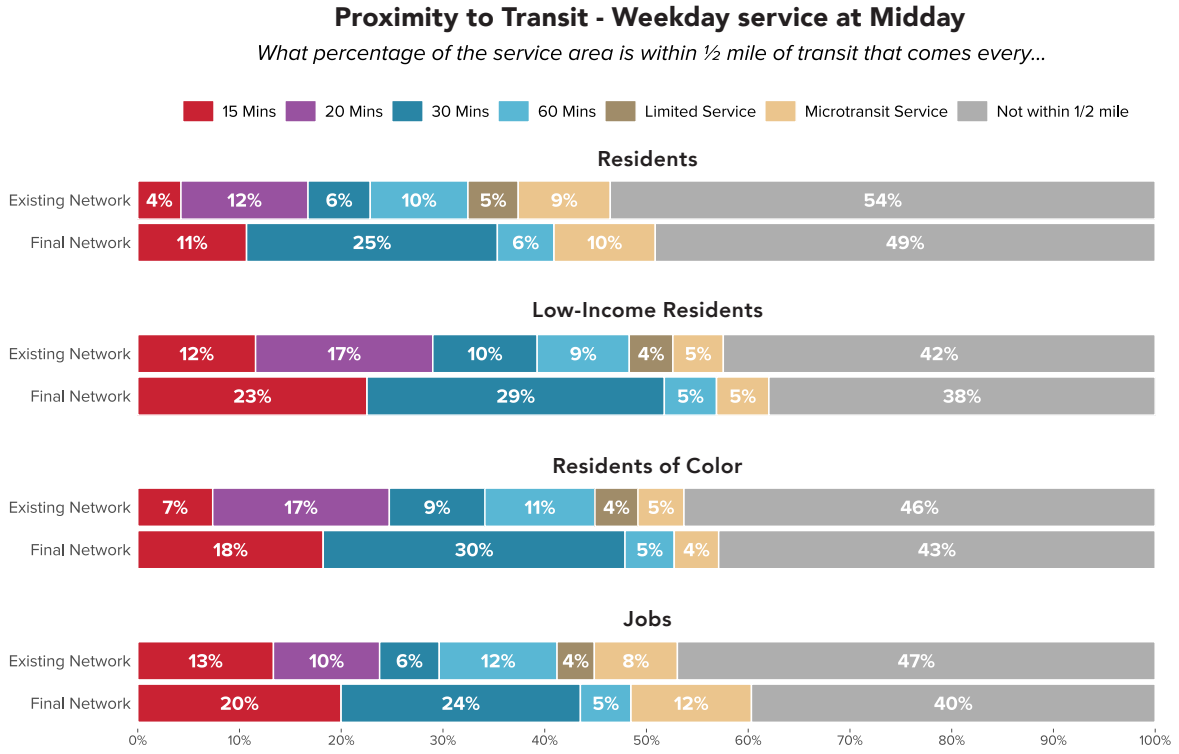
Proximity to Transit

The number of people and jobs within a certain distance from transit is the simplest measure of transit outcomes. In this report, this measure is called "proximity to transit."

The Existing Network reaches 46% of residents within 1/2 mile of a transit stop. Yet because service is spread so thinly, only 4% are near frequent, 15-minute service.

Compared to existing, the Final Network would **increase the total number of residents near transit by 5%**. This is mostly due to the new microtransit zones (Altoona and Clive/Urbandale). Some areas covered by The Final Network would also **increase the number of residents near 15-minute service by 7%**.

The figure to the right also shows how proximity to transit changes for different subgroups. Low-income residents and residents of color would see a similar increase in total people near any service (3-4%), but a larger increase in residents near frequent service of 11%. That is because many low-income residents and residents of color live along the new frequent corridors. Jobs close to transit also see a similar pattern.

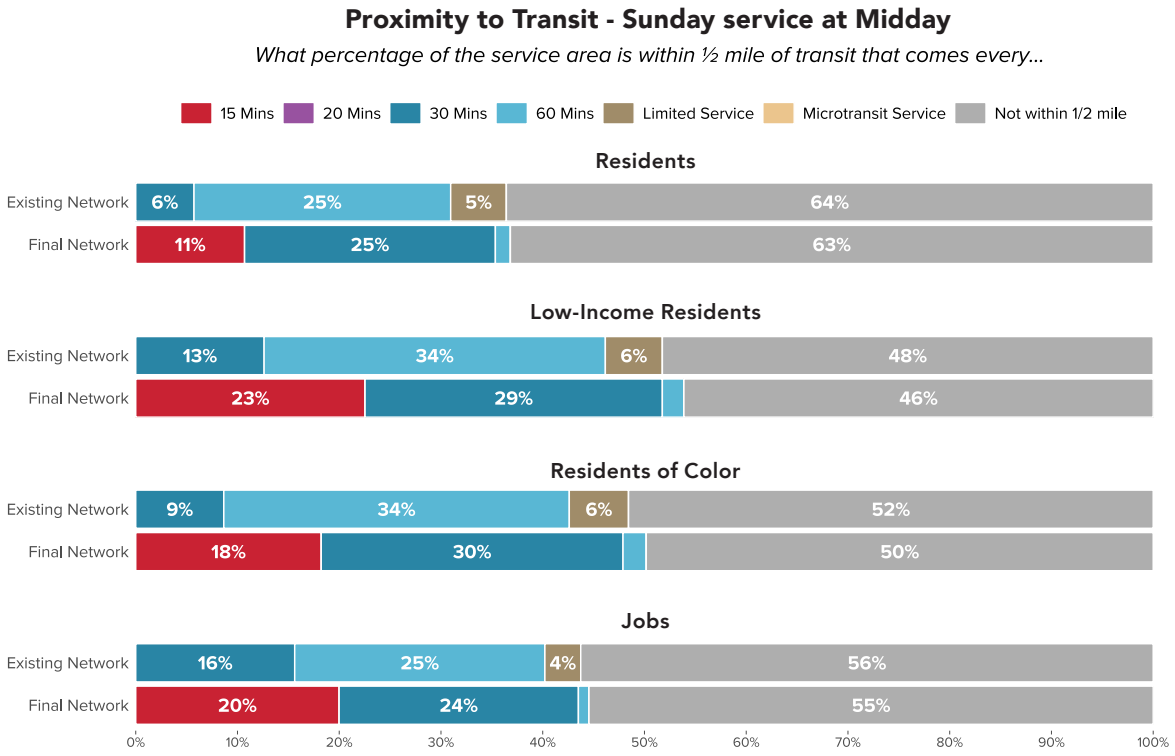


Proximity to Transit: Sundays

In the Existing Network, most routes that run on weekdays also run on Sundays but only every 60 minutes. In the Final Network most routes run on Sundays with the same frequency as weekdays. By analyzing proximity to transit, we can see how many residents would be affected.

On Sundays, the Existing Network provides service near 36% of residents. The Final Network provides service near 37% of residents—a small increase. However, today there is no frequent service on Sundays, and only 6% of residents are close to 30-minute service. **In the Final Network 11% of residents are close to frequent service and 25% more are close to 30-minute service, just like on weekdays.**

All subgroups are affected the same way—the same number of residents are near 15- and 30-minute service as on weekdays and there is a small percentage increase in the number of residents near any service.



What's next?

The network redesign is a major component of Reimagine DART, a collaborative effort to transform public transit in Greater Des Moines.

Moving forward, Reimagine DART will include these significant projects in 2026 and 2027 (on the right).

Learn more about the new network implementation at rideDART.com/newroutes.

Learn more about Reimagine DART at rideDART.com/reimagine.

NETWORK LAUNCH

DART will begin implementing the redesigned service network, with new bus routes in June 2026 and new microtransit zones in fall 2026.

FARE STUDY

DART staff and the Commission will conduct a comprehensive study to evaluate DART's fare policy and recommend updates.

PARATRANSIT REVIEW

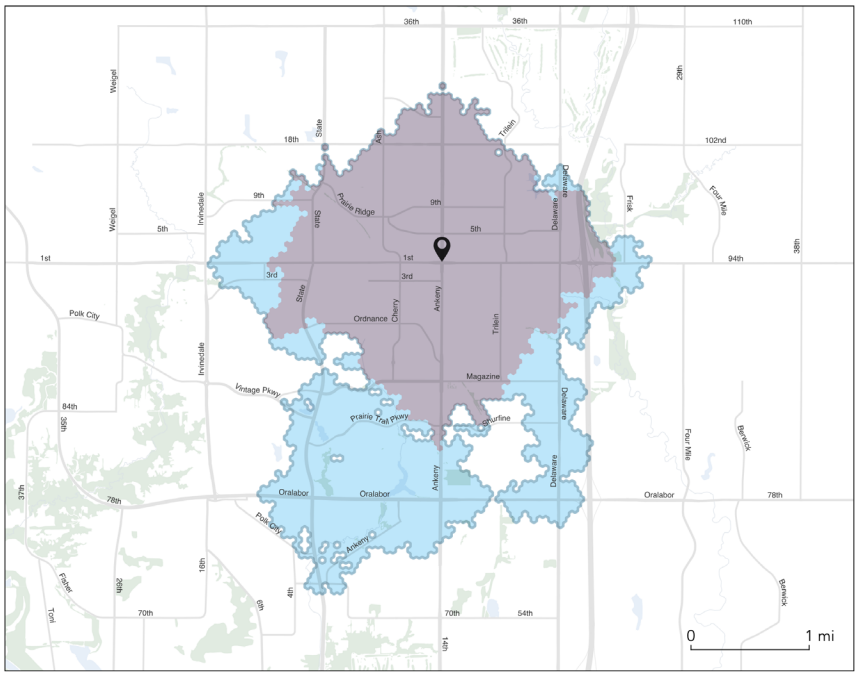
The DART Commission will consider revising Paratransit boundaries and how to best deliver this critical service with limited resources.

A. Appendix: Isochrones

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Ankeny Corner of W 1st St and S Ankeny Blvd

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

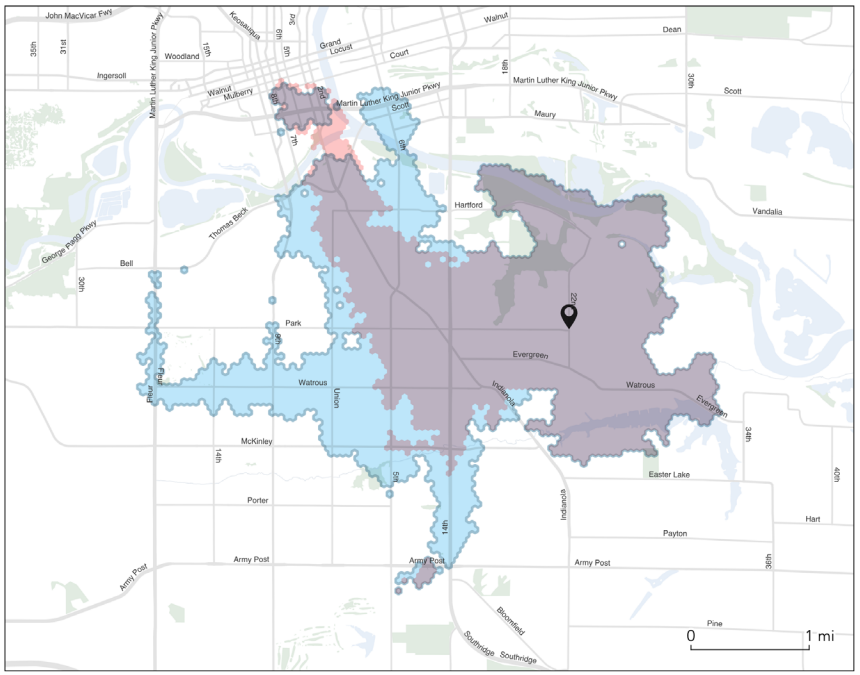


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+5,100	+58.0%
Residents Accessible	+9,200	+51.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Apartments on E. Park Avenue

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

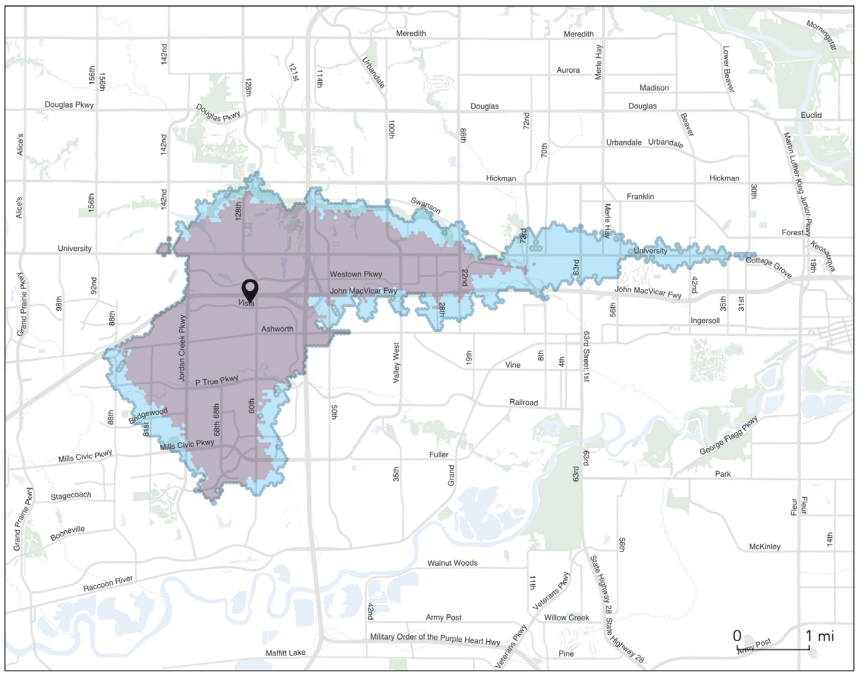


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+0	0.0%
Residents Accessible	+8,600	+53.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Apartments on Vista Drive

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

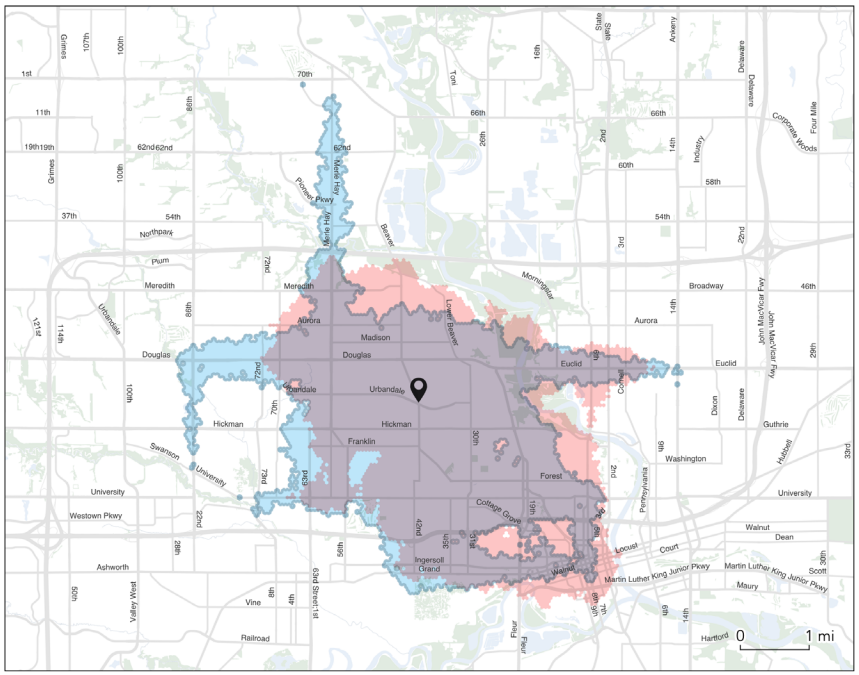


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+7,700	+18.5%
Residents Accessible	+11,300	+56.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Beaverdale

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

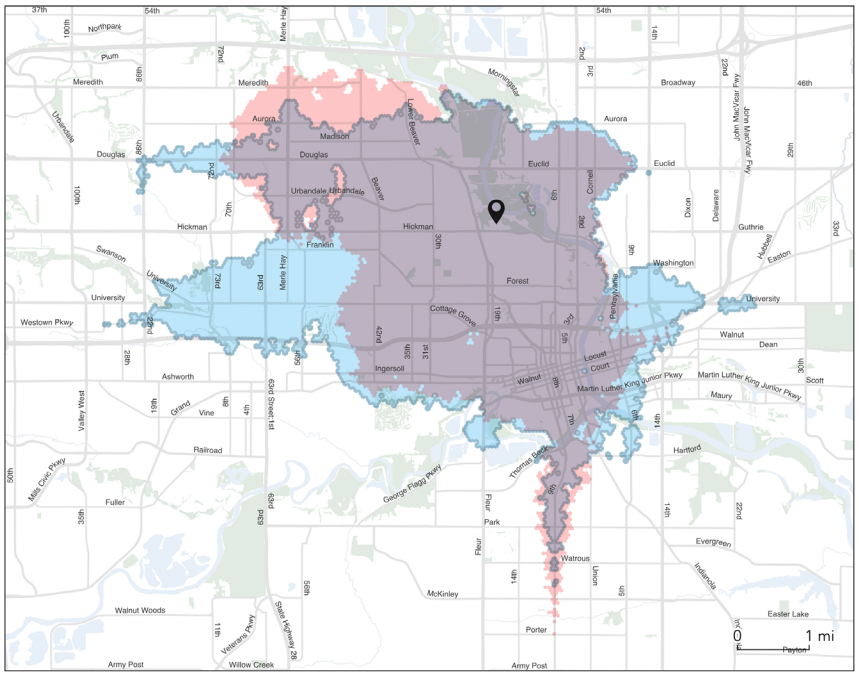


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-24,200	-38.5%
Residents Accessible	-4,400	-5.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Broadlawns Medical Center

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

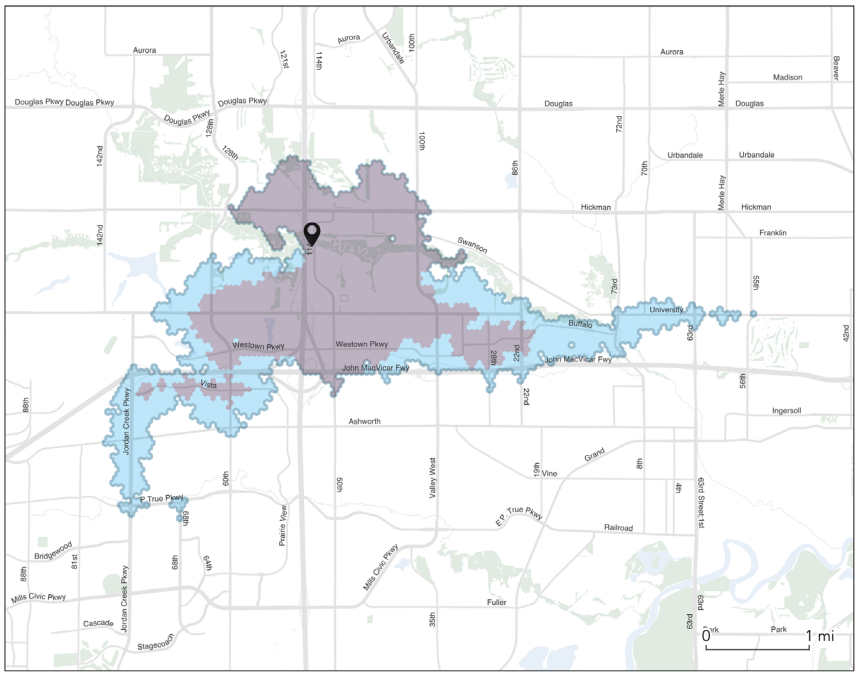


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+7,900	+9.5%
Residents Accessible	+9,700	+11.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Clive Public Library

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

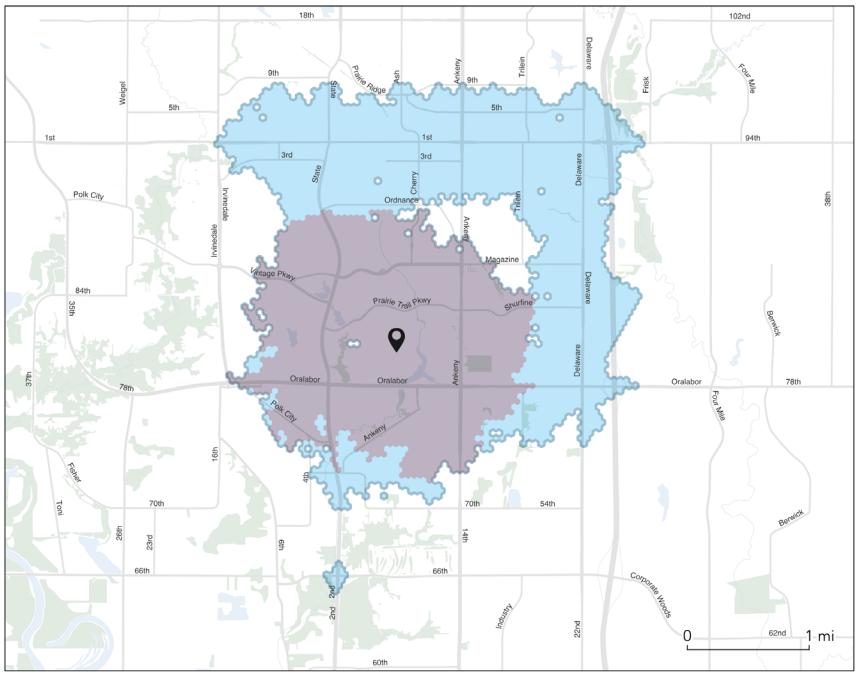


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+10,300	+53.5%
Residents Accessible	+5,200	+95.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Des Moines Area Community College (Ankeny)

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

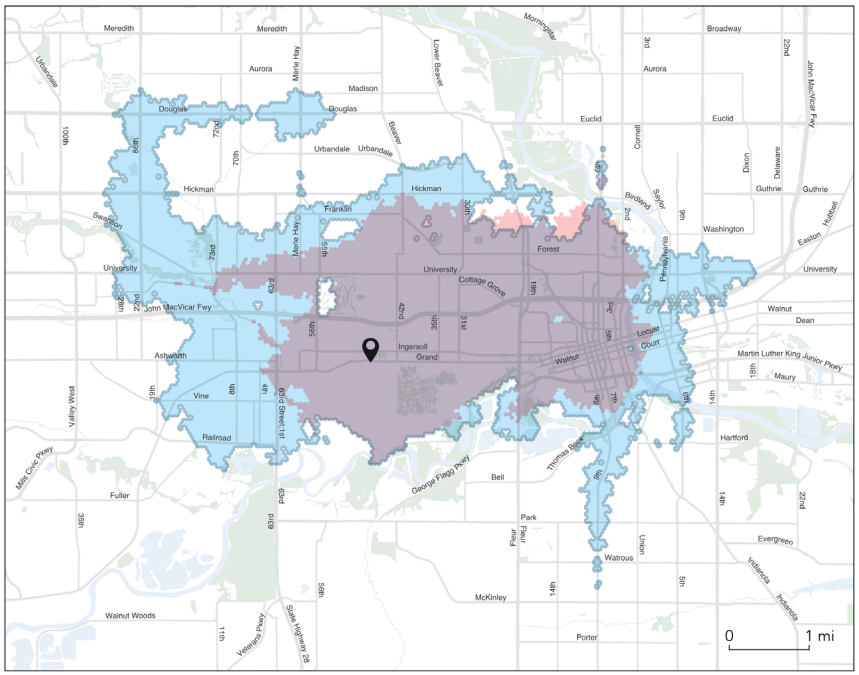


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+8,800	+159.5%
Residents Accessible	+14,800	+173.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Des Moines Art Center

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

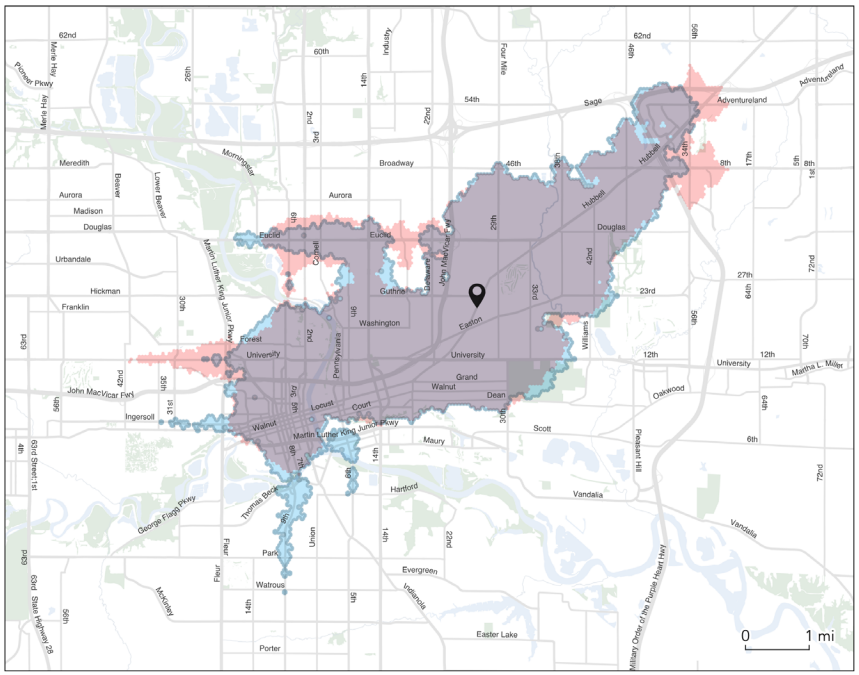


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+23,800	+40.0%
Residents Accessible	+30,200	+62.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Des Moines East Side Library

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

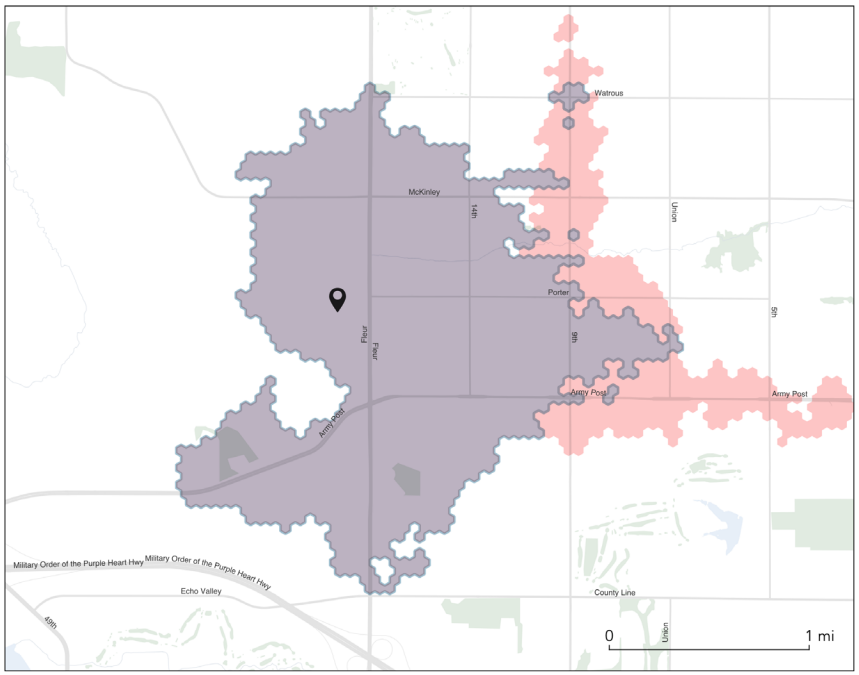


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-1,900	-2.5%
Residents Accessible	-4,100	-6.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Des Moines International Airport

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

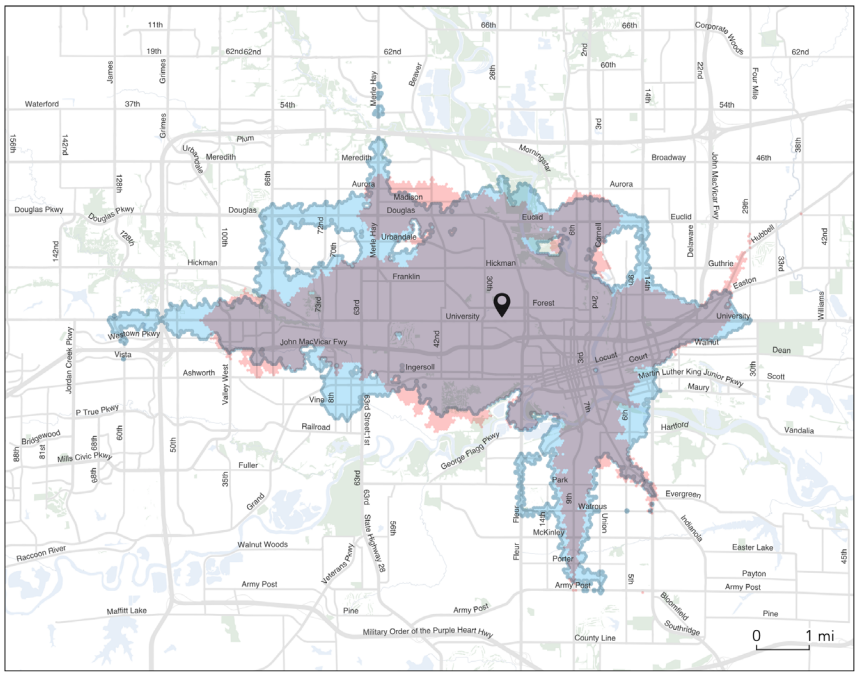


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-500	-12.5%
Residents Accessible	-3,100	-29.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Drake University (Old Main Building)

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

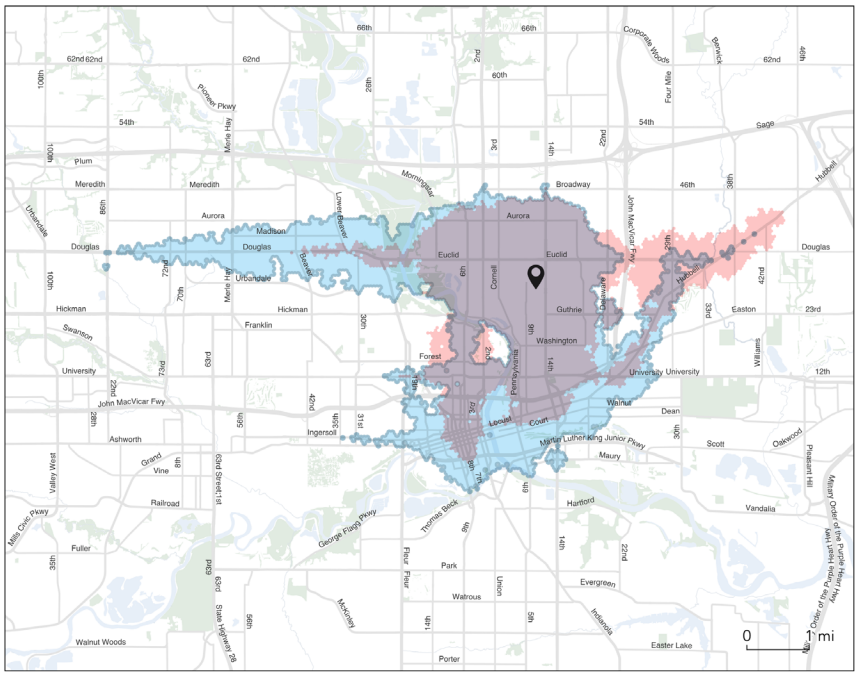


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+11,100	+11.0%
Residents Accessible	+15,400	+14.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Grand View University

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

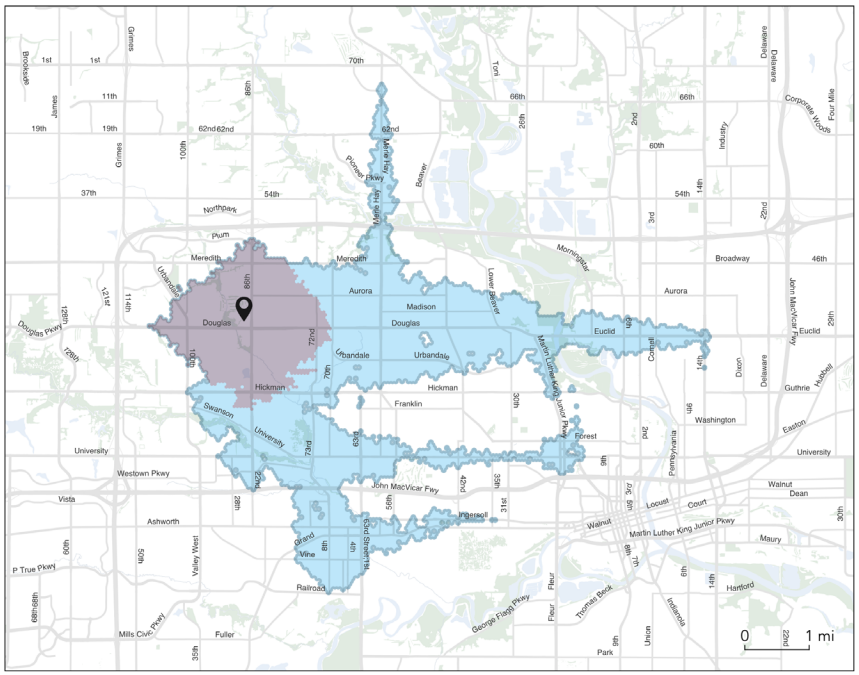


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+32,100	+68.5%
Residents Accessible	+16,200	+36.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Hy-Vee on Douglas Avenue

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

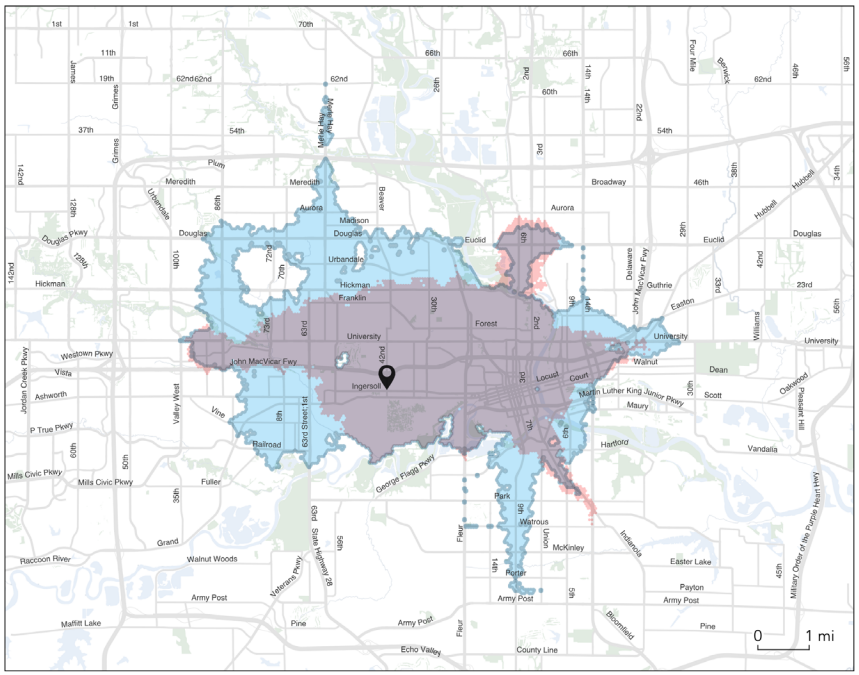


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+23,900	+327.0%
Residents Accessible	+52,200	+369.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Ingersoll Avenue & 42nd Street, Des Moines

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

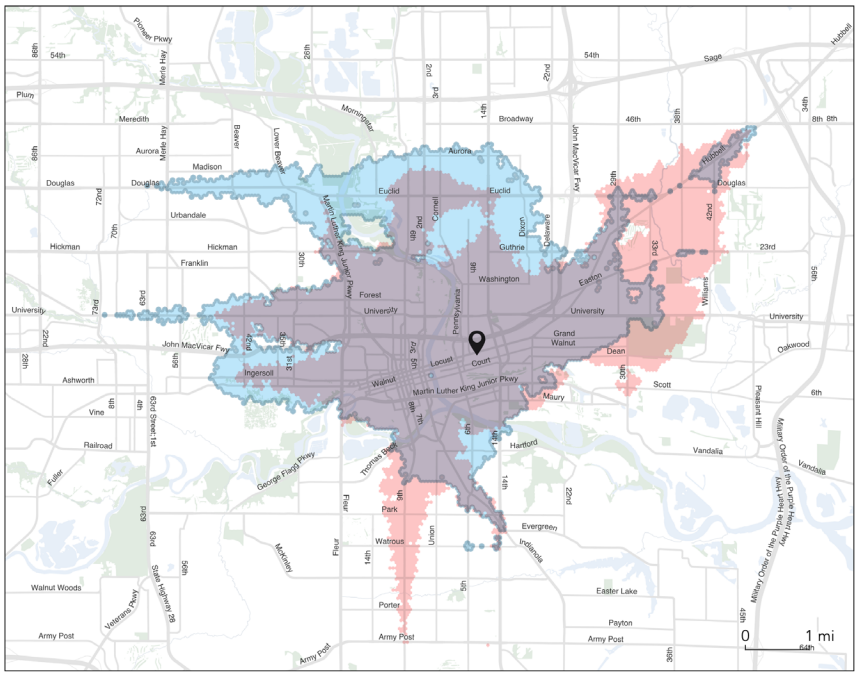


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+20,400	+24.0%
Residents Accessible	+43,200	+58.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Iowa State Capitol

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

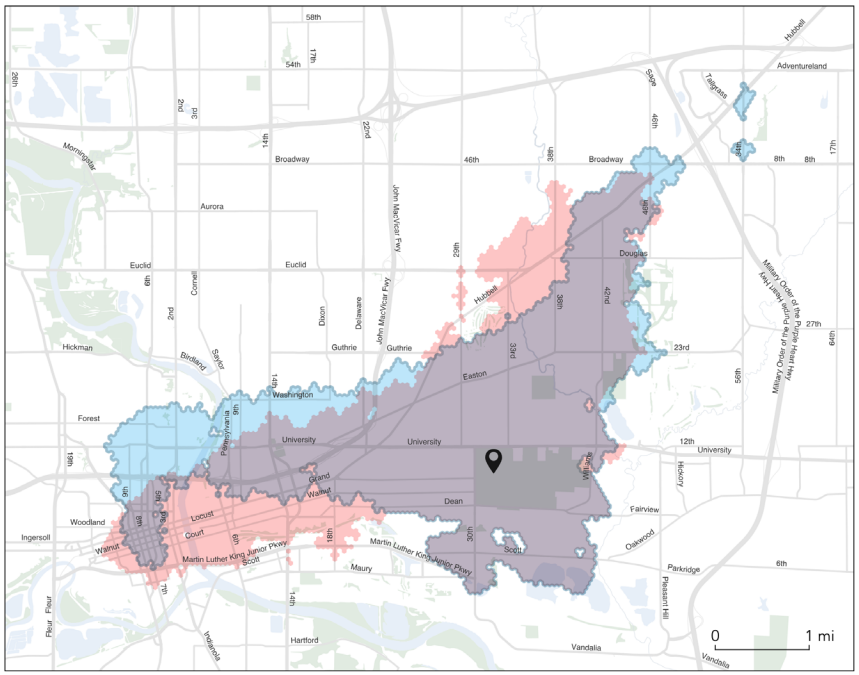


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+6,400	+7.5%
Residents Accessible	+6,100	+7.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Iowa State Fairgrounds

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

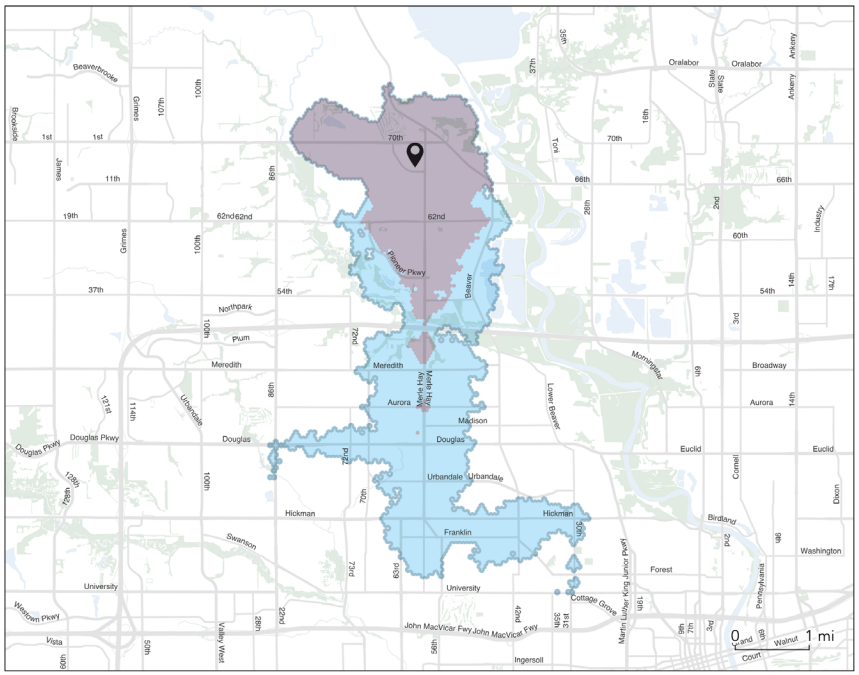


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-17,400	-36.5%
Residents Accessible	-3,400	-10.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Johnston Public Library

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

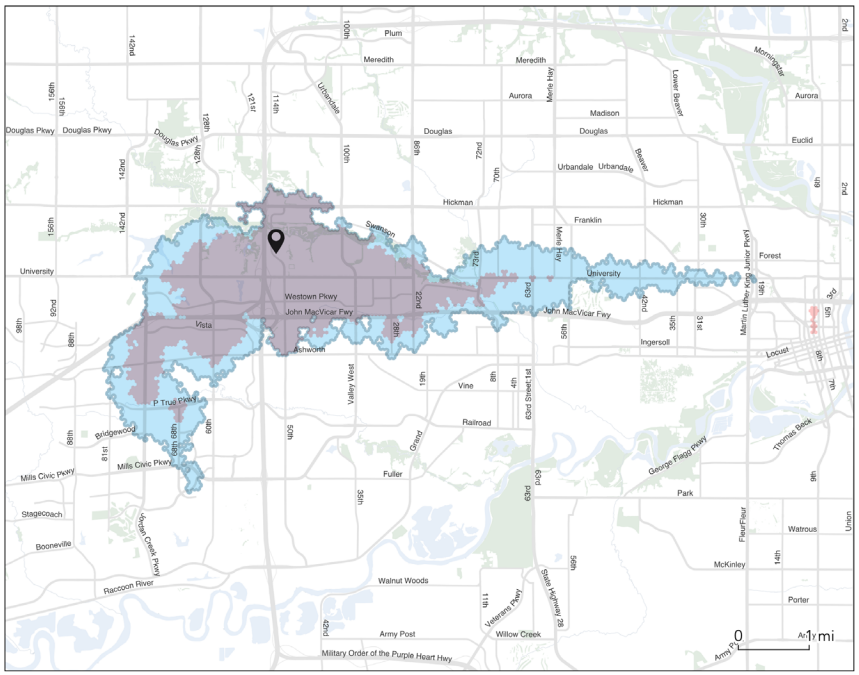


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+8,700	+199.5%
Residents Accessible	+23,500	+337.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

MercyOne Clive

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

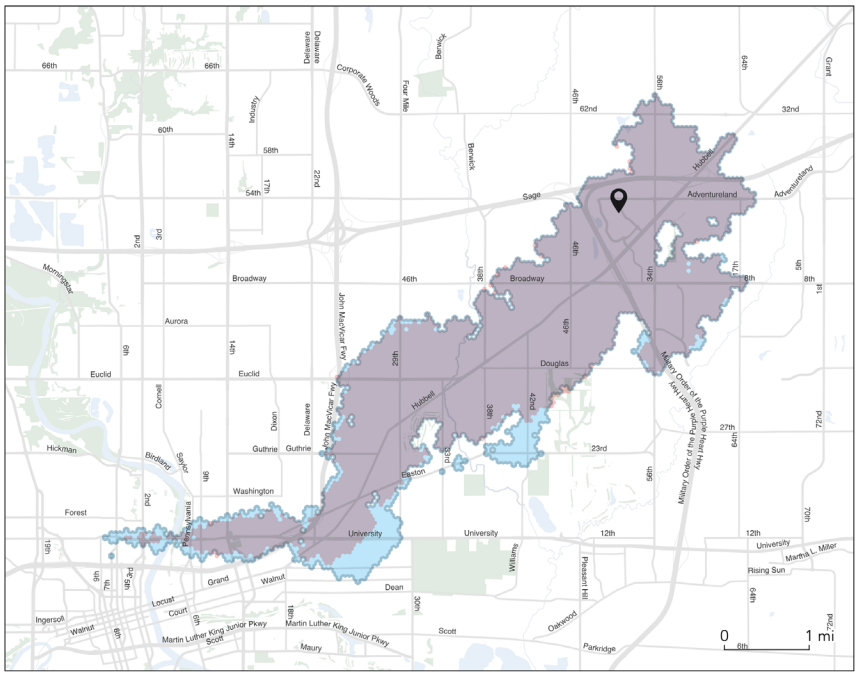


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+11,500	+37.0%
Residents Accessible	+15,600	+127.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Outlets of Des Moines

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

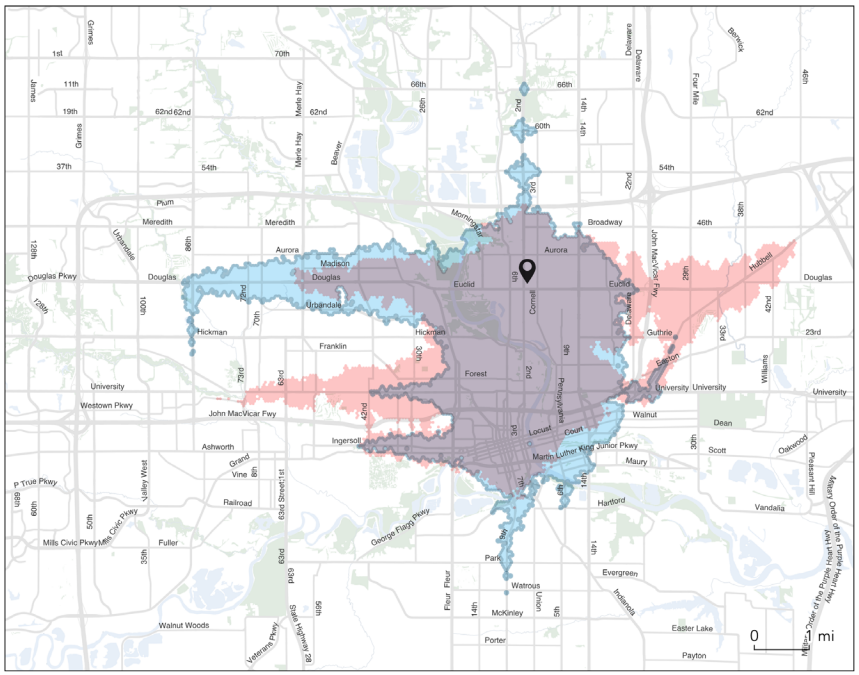


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+2,000	+25.0%
Residents Accessible	+4,000	+19.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Park Fair Mall

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

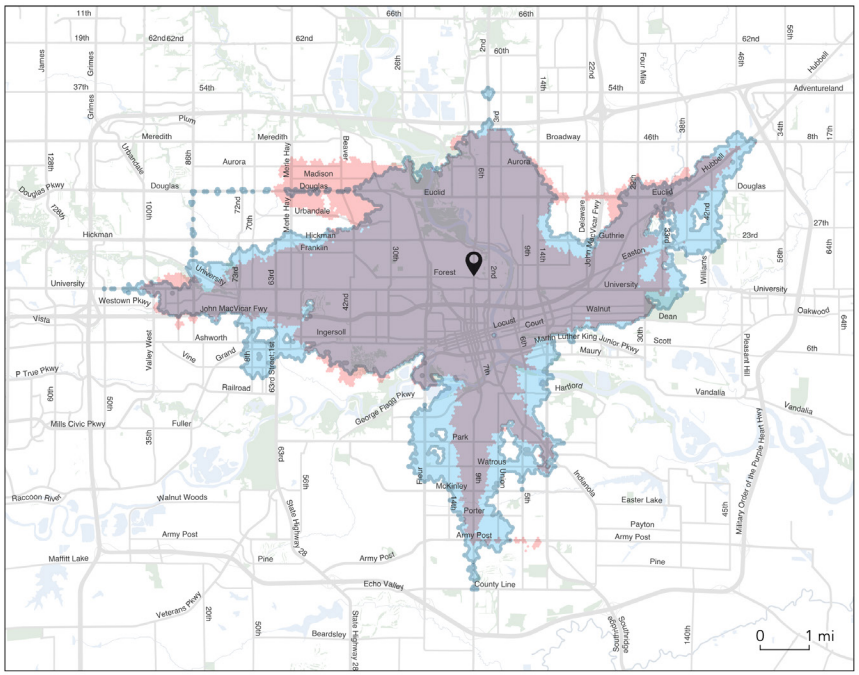


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+1,000	+1.0%
Residents Accessible	-11,500	-13.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

River Bend

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

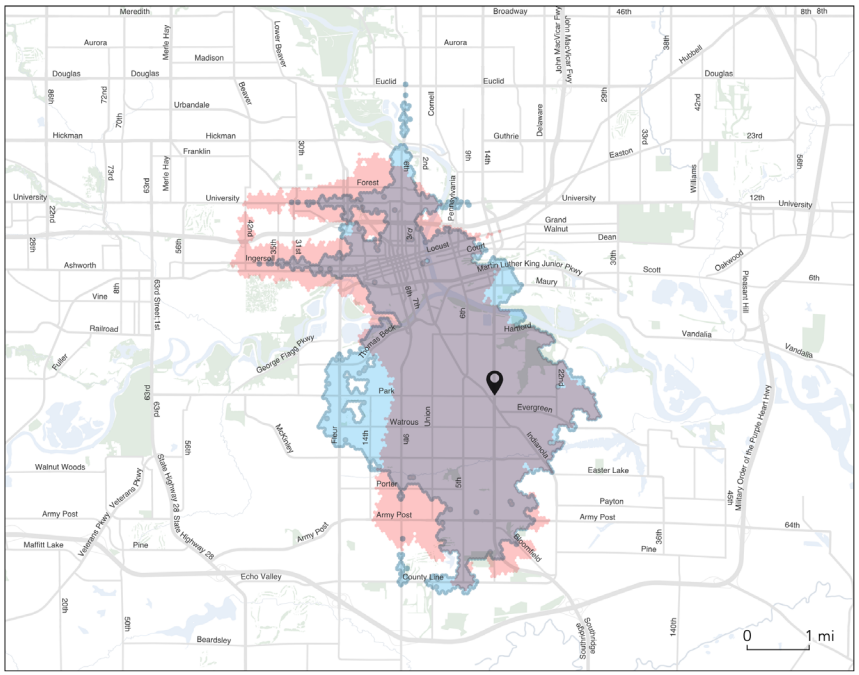


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+3,500	+3.0%
Residents Accessible	+13,500	+10.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Southgate Shopping Center

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

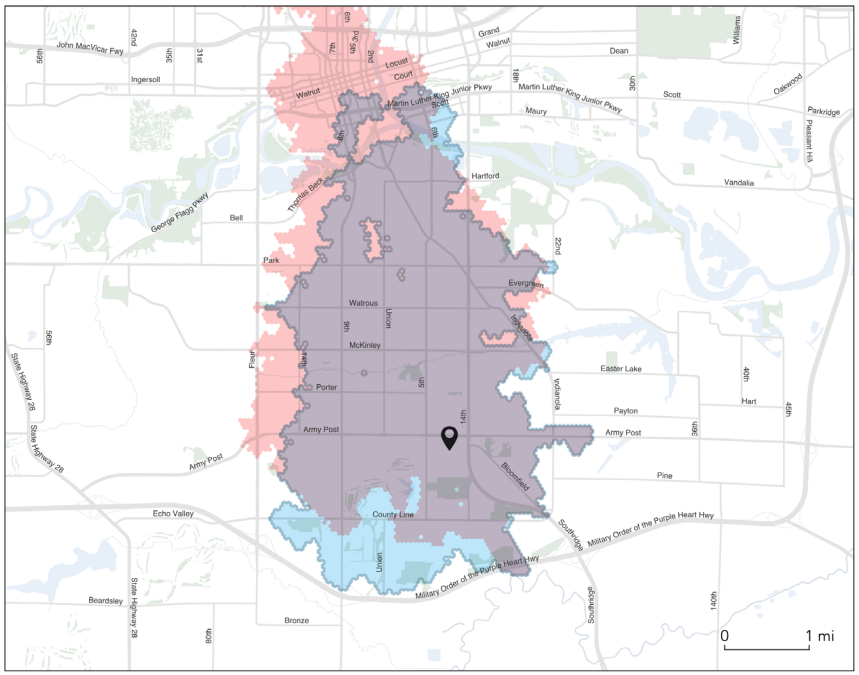


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-6,200	-9.0%
Residents Accessible	-14,000	-22.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Southridge Mall & DMACC

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

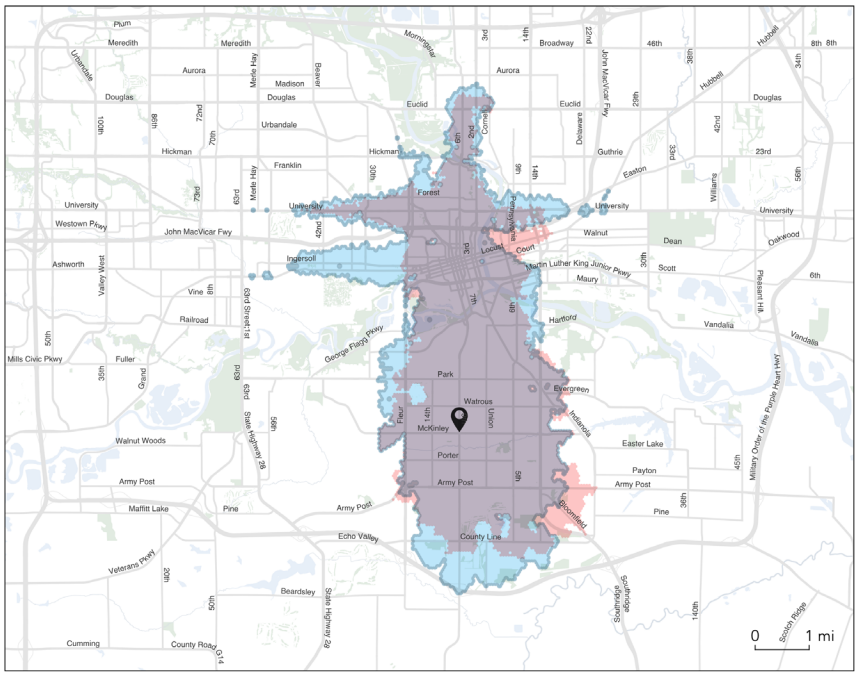


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-42,900	-74.5%
Residents Accessible	-12,200	-24.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

SW 9th Street & McKinley Avenue, Des Moines

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

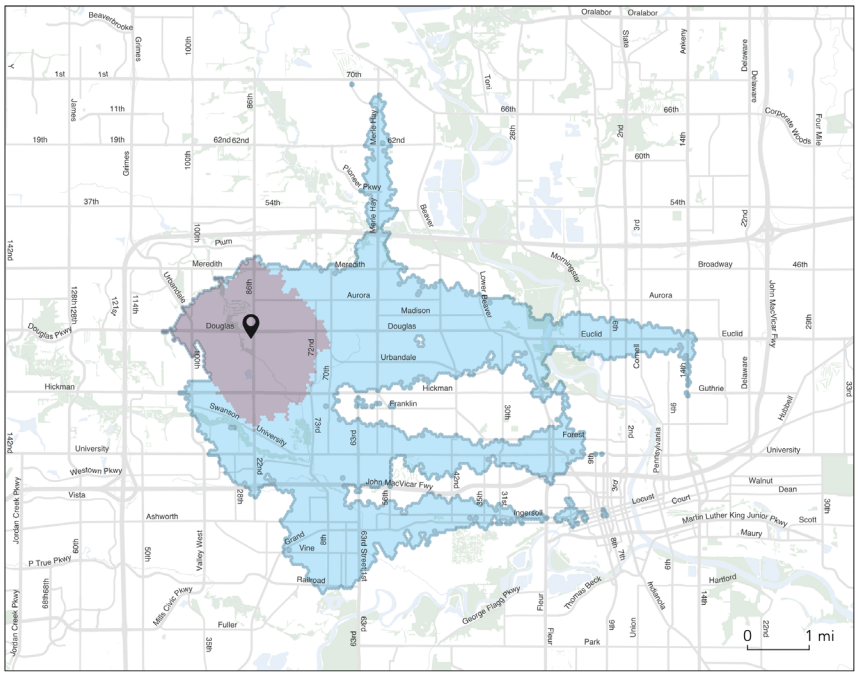


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+1,700	+2.5%
Residents Accessible	+11,400	+17.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Urbandale City Hall

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

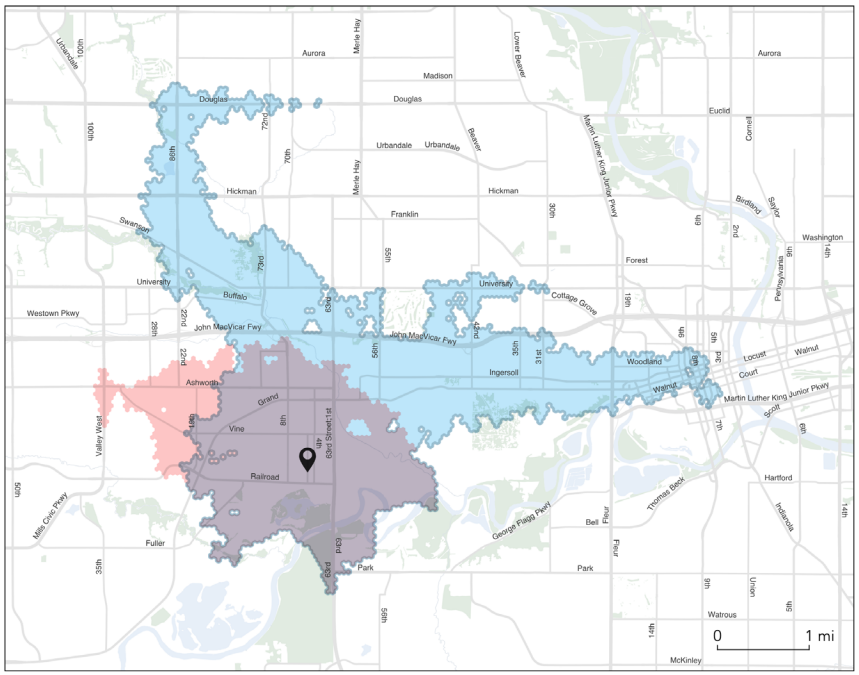


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+34,200	+457.5%
Residents Accessible	+69,500	+465.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Valley Junction

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

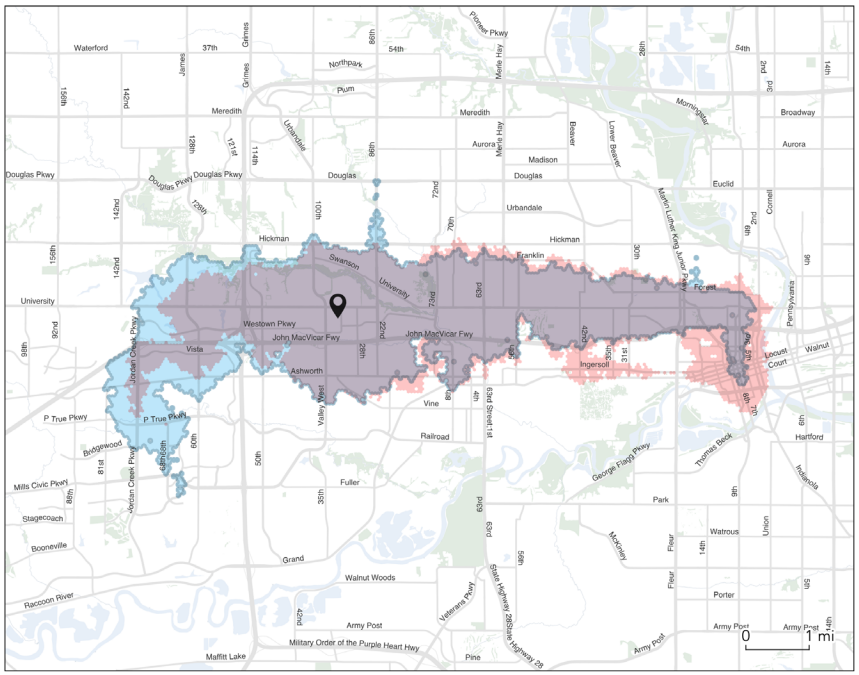


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+27,100	+349.5%
Residents Accessible	+20,300	+139.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Valley West Mall

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

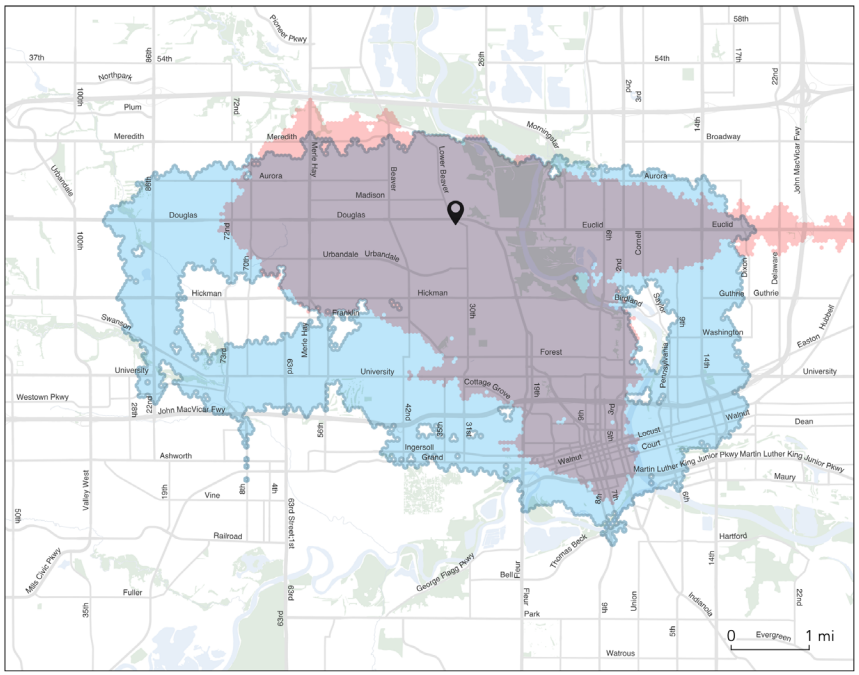


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-25,600	-30.5%
Residents Accessible	-5,600	-9.5%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Veterans Affairs - Central Iowa

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

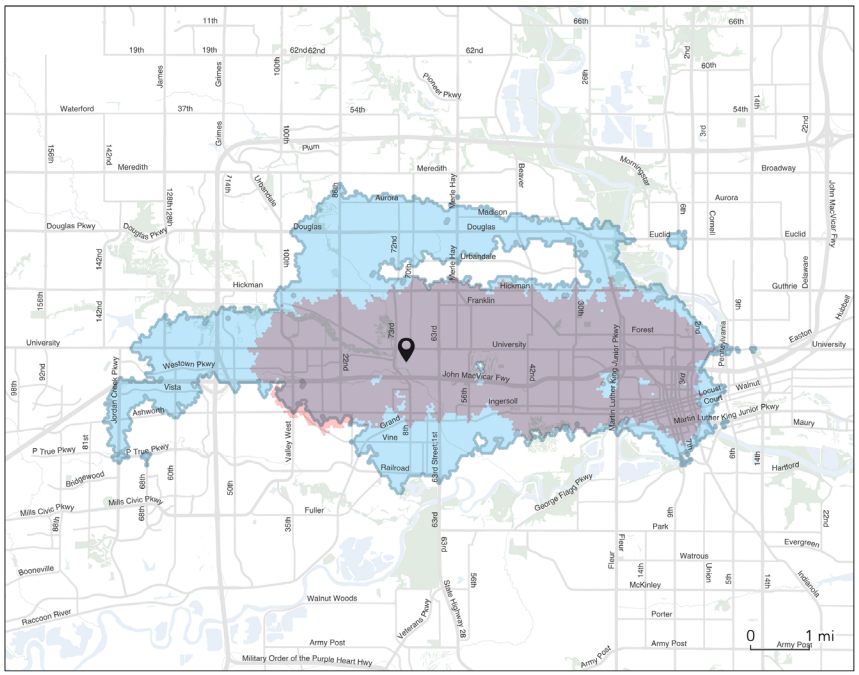


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+29,000	+44.5%
Residents Accessible	+39,800	+54.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

Walmart in Windsor Heights

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?

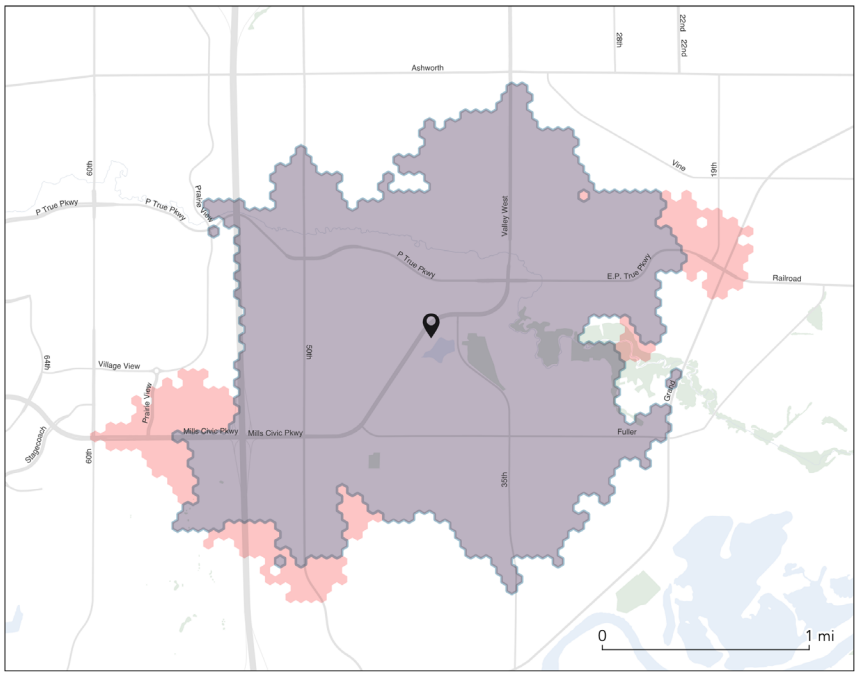


	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	+37,000	+49.0%
Residents Accessible	+40,600	+61.0%

Compared to the Existing Network, how far can I travel in **45 minutes** from

West Des Moines Public Library

on weekdays at noon using the Final Network?



	Change	% Change
Jobs Accessible	-1,100	-28.0%
Residents Accessible	-1,500	-11.0%