



# Regional Railroad Authority Agenda

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651-266-9200

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November 12, 2024 - 10 a.m.

Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300

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## ROLL CALL

1. **Agenda of November 12, 2024 is Presented for Approval** [2024-489](#)  
Sponsors: County Manager's Office  
Approve the agenda of November 12, 2024.
2. **Minutes from October 15, 2024 are Presented for Approval** [2024-490](#)  
Sponsors: County Manager's Office  
Approve the October 15, 2024 Minutes.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

3. **Transit Impacts Research Program Presentation and 2024 Funding Request** [2024-485](#)  
Sponsors: Public Works  
Approve the expenditure of \$30,000 for Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's share of the Transit Impacts Research Program for 2024.

## CORRIDOR UPDATES

## ADJOURNMENT



# Regional Railroad Authority

## Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651-266-9200

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**Item Number:** 2024-489

**Meeting Date:** 11/12/2024

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**Sponsor:** County Manager's Office

**Title**

Agenda of November 12, 2024 is Presented for Approval

**Recommendation**

Approve the agenda of November 12, 2024.



# Regional Railroad Authority

## Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651-266-9200

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**Item Number:** 2024-490

**Meeting Date:** 11/12/2024

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**Sponsor:** County Manager's Office

**Title**

Minutes from October 15, 2024 are Presented for Approval

**Recommendation**

Approve the October 15, 2024 Minutes.

**Attachments**

1. October 15, 2024 Minutes



# Regional Railroad Authority

## Minutes

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651-266-9200

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October 15, 2024 - 10 a.m.

Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300

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The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met in regular session at 10:01 a.m. with the following members present: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Reinhardt, Xiong and Chair Ortega. Also present was Ling Becker, County Manager.

### ROLL CALL

Present: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

1. Agenda of October 15, 2024 is Presented for Approval [2024-468](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the agenda of October 15, 2024.

Motion by Xiong, seconded by Reinhardt. Motion passed.

Aye: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

2. Minutes from September 24, 2024 are Presented for Approval [2024-469](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the September 24, 2024 Minutes.

Motion by McGuire, seconded by Xiong. Motion passed.

Aye: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

### ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

3. Amendment to the Agreement with HNTB Corporation for Project Management Services to Close-out the Engineering and Pre-Environmental Phase of the Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar Project [2024-355](#)

Sponsors: Public Works

1. Approve an amendment to the agreement with HNTB Corporation for Project Management Services to close-out the Engineering and Pre-Environmental Phase of the Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar Project for the period of August 19, 2024, through February 9, 2025, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$2,338,871.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the amendment.

Motion by Reinhardt, seconded by Xiong. Motion passed.

Aye: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Resolution: [R2024-018](#)

### CORRIDOR UPDATES

Updates provided by Commissioner Reinhardt. Discussion can be found on archived video.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Ortega declared the meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Item Number: 2024-485

Meeting Date: 11/12/2024

**Sponsor:** Public Works

### Title

Transit Impacts Research Program Presentation and 2024 Funding Request

### Recommendation

Approve the expenditure of \$30,000 for Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's share of the Transit Impacts Research Program for 2024.

### Background and Rationale

Professor Jason Cao of the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs will present the results from the last Transit Impacts Research Program (TIRP) funded research project: the value of dedicated right of way to transit ridership. Professor Cao will also give an overview of the current, proposed research project to be funded with the 2024 funding request.

The TIRP studies the economic and community impacts of transitway projects. The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA), an active participant in the program since 2008, along with other local governments and the University of Minnesota support various research initiatives through the TIRP. The 2024 TIRP funding request to RCRRA is in the amount of \$30,000 to research strategies to connect riders to suburban transitway stations.

Continued research will take advantage of skills at the University of Minnesota to provide useful information for decisions on transitway development. Additional information about the Transit Impacts Research Program can be found on their website:

[≤https://www.cts.umn.edu/programs/tirp>](https://www.cts.umn.edu/programs/tirp)

### County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

Well-being

Prosperity

Opportunity

Accountability

### Racial Equity Impact

Throughout Ramsey County and the Twin Cities metro, transitways provide reliable, low-cost, and high-amenity transportation options. These transitways serve many transit-dependent households and areas of racially concentrated poverty. Additionally, transitways provide access to jobs, workforce training opportunities, and other key destinations. The \$30,000 in funding will allow further research to be done to better understand the impacts of transitways and how best to design and improve lines to serve marginalized communities, reduce racial and economic disparities in accessing high-quality transit, and ensure they equitably meet the needs of the public.

### Community Participation Level and Impact

Research done by the Transit Impacts Research Program includes qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering input from those who currently use or benefit from transitway projects, as well as those in need of improved access.

Inform

Consult

Involve

Collaborate

Empower

**Fiscal Impact**

Funding in the amount of \$30,000 is available in the 2024 Multimodal Planning operating budget.

**Last Previous Action**

On April 12, 2022, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorized \$25,000 for the Transit Impacts Research Program in 2022 (Resolution R2022-011).

**Attachments**

1. Presentation 1
2. Presentation 2
3. Letter

# The values of dedicated right of way

Jason Cao and Tao Tao

[cao@umn.edu](mailto:cao@umn.edu)





# Transit operating environments

- Mixed traffic
  - Share roadways with other traffic
  - Subject to the same delays as other traffic
  - 98+% of directional route miles in North America
- Semi-exclusive ROW
  - Partially dedicated for transit use
    - Certain times of a day
    - Right turning traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists
    - HOV/HOT lanes used by buses



# Transit operating environments

- Exclusive ROW
  - Dedicated for transit use
  - At-grade crossing
    - Subjective to delays from traffic control
  - Marq2 & LRT
- Grade separation
  - Dedicated for transit use
  - No at-grade crossing
- Dedicated ROW
  - Exclusive ROW
  - Grade separation



# Benefits of dedicated ROW

- Speed and travel time savings
  - Reduce running time loss due to traffic blockage
- Reliability
  - Not subject to traffic volume and congestion
- Capacity
  - Vehicle capacity and people capacity
- Economic development
  - Permanency
  - Transit advantages can be capitalized into land values.



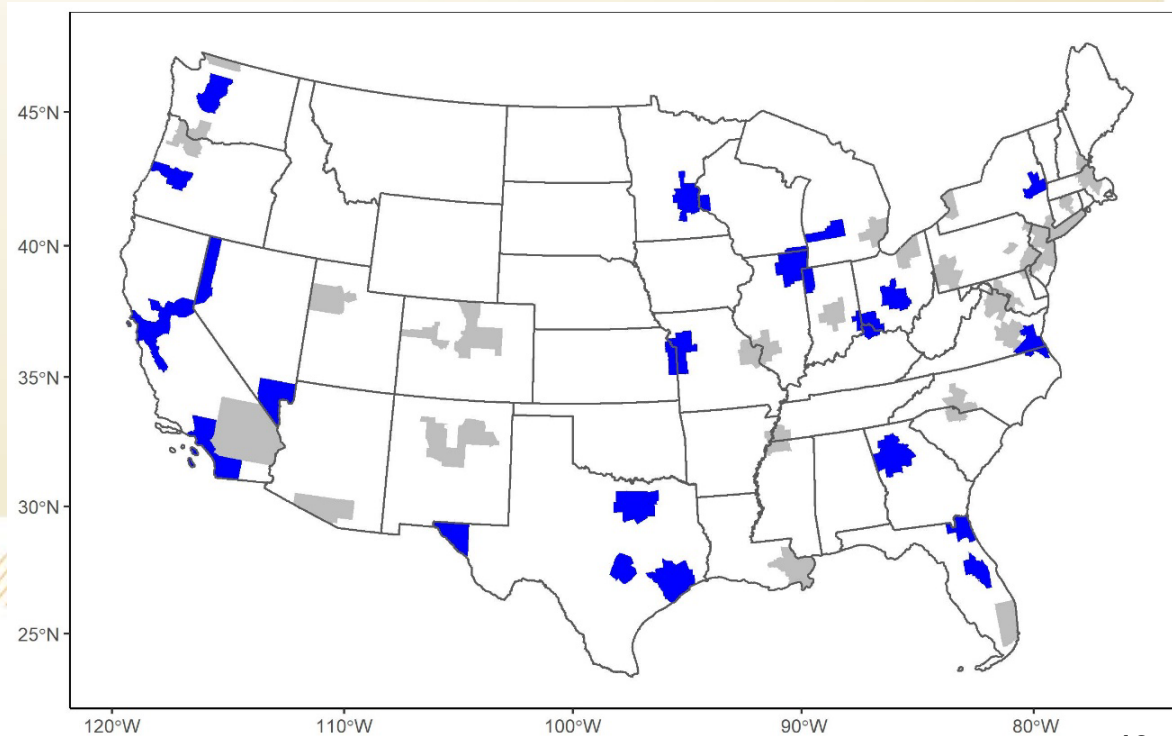
# Costs of dedicated ROW

- High construction costs
- Take road spaces
  - For other traffic
  - Loss of on street parking
  - Loss of vegetation
- Low volume
  - Visible
  - Push back



# Ridership impacts

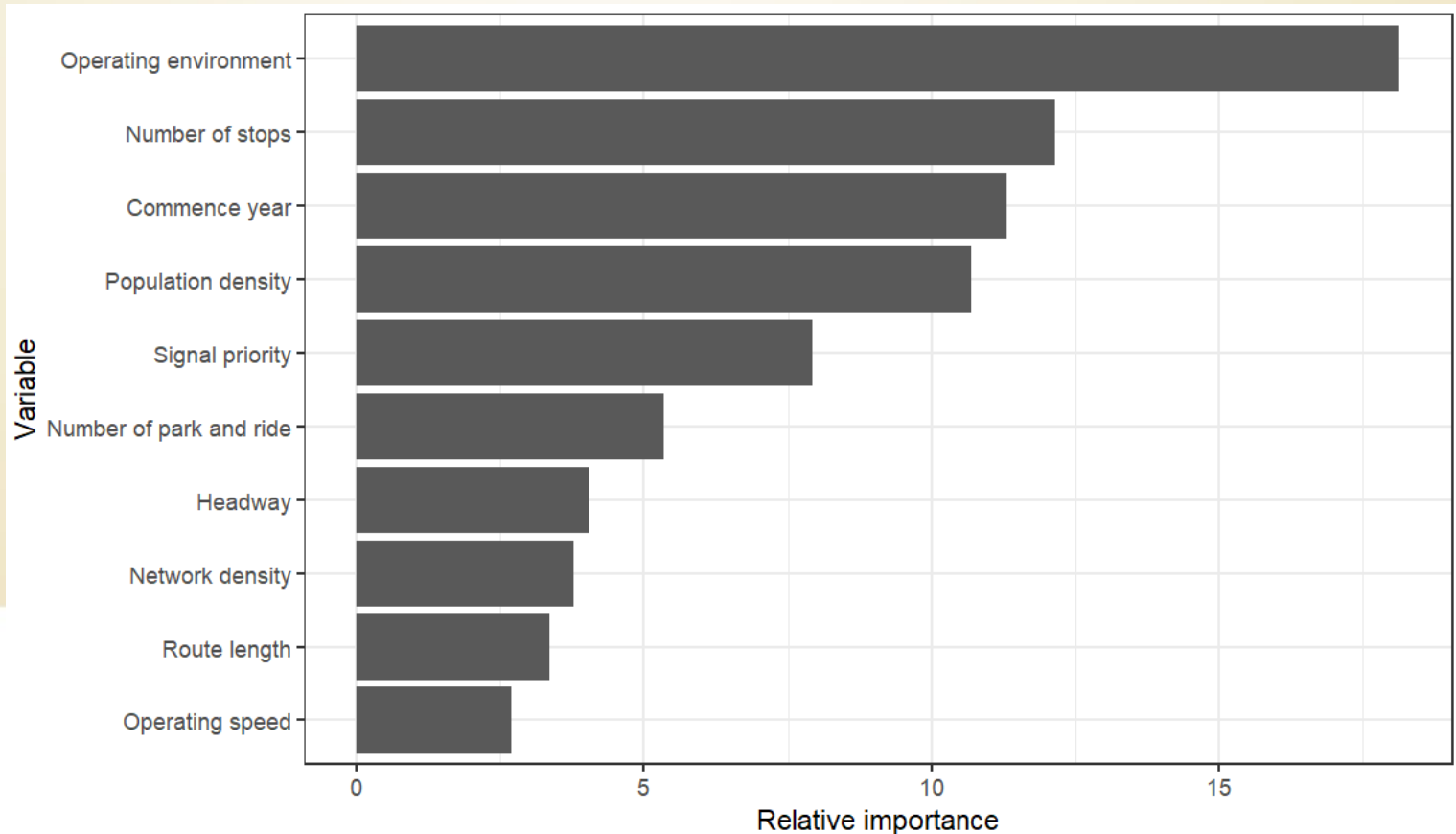
- 78 transit routes served by 31 transit agencies
  - 20 LRT or streetcar
  - 58 BRT or bus transit sharing some features with BRT



Locations of the transit routes

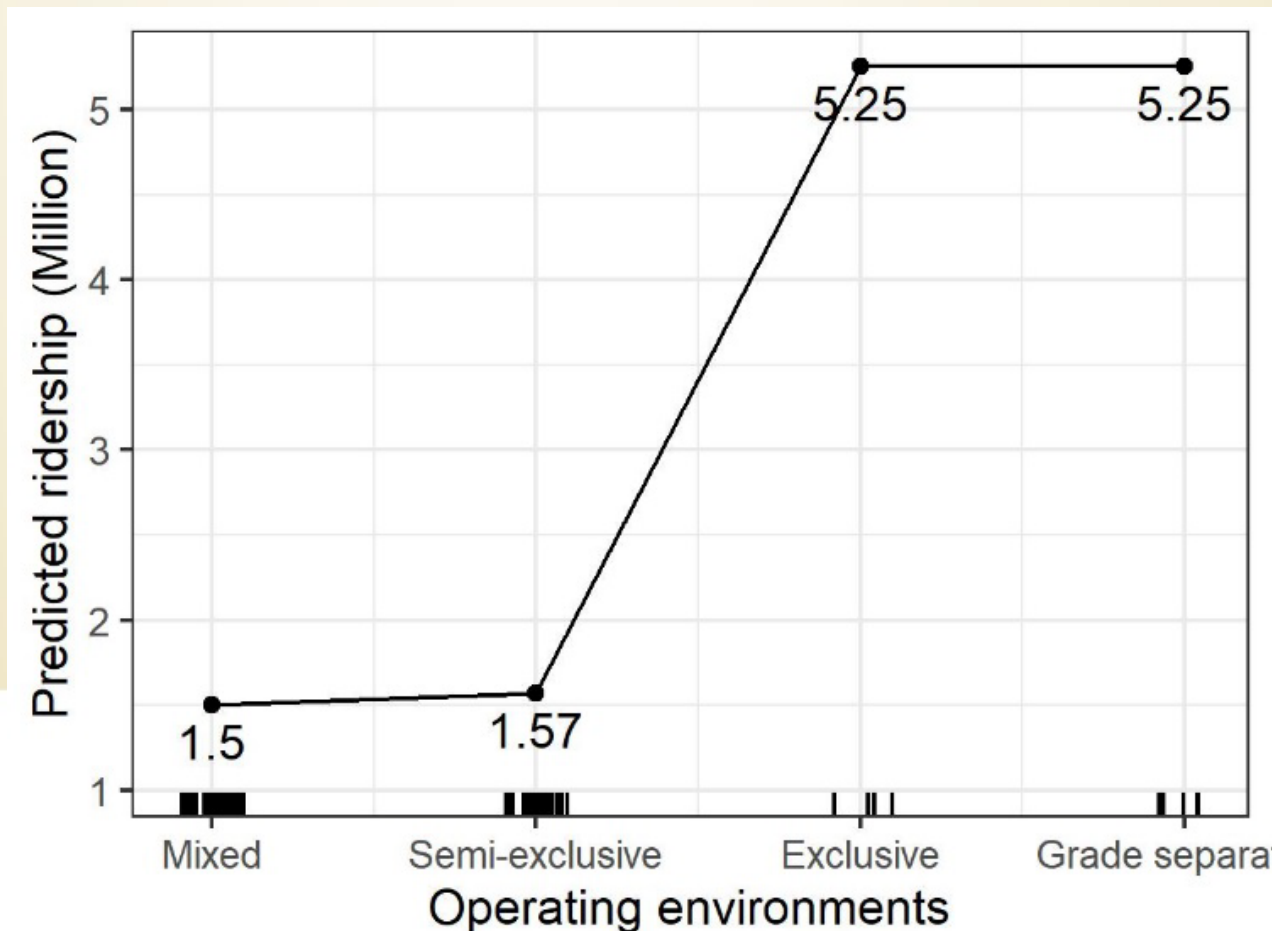
# Model results

- The operating environment is the most important predictor of transit ridership.



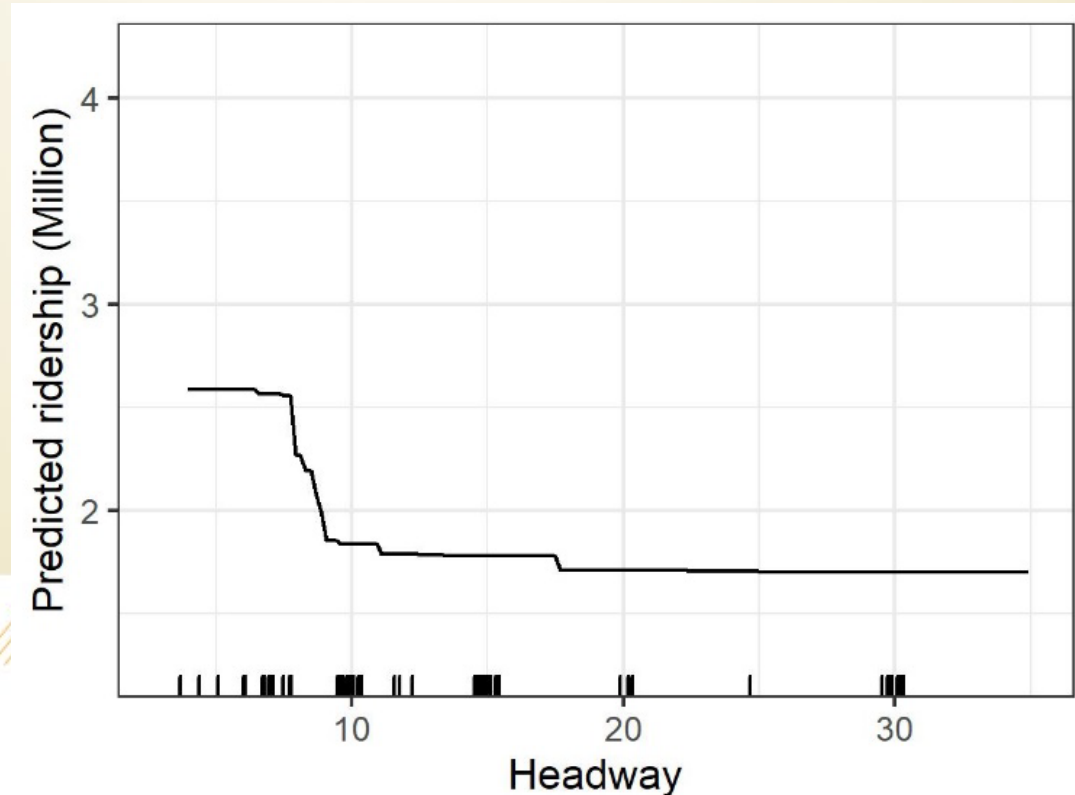
# Operating environment

- 3.78 million passengers



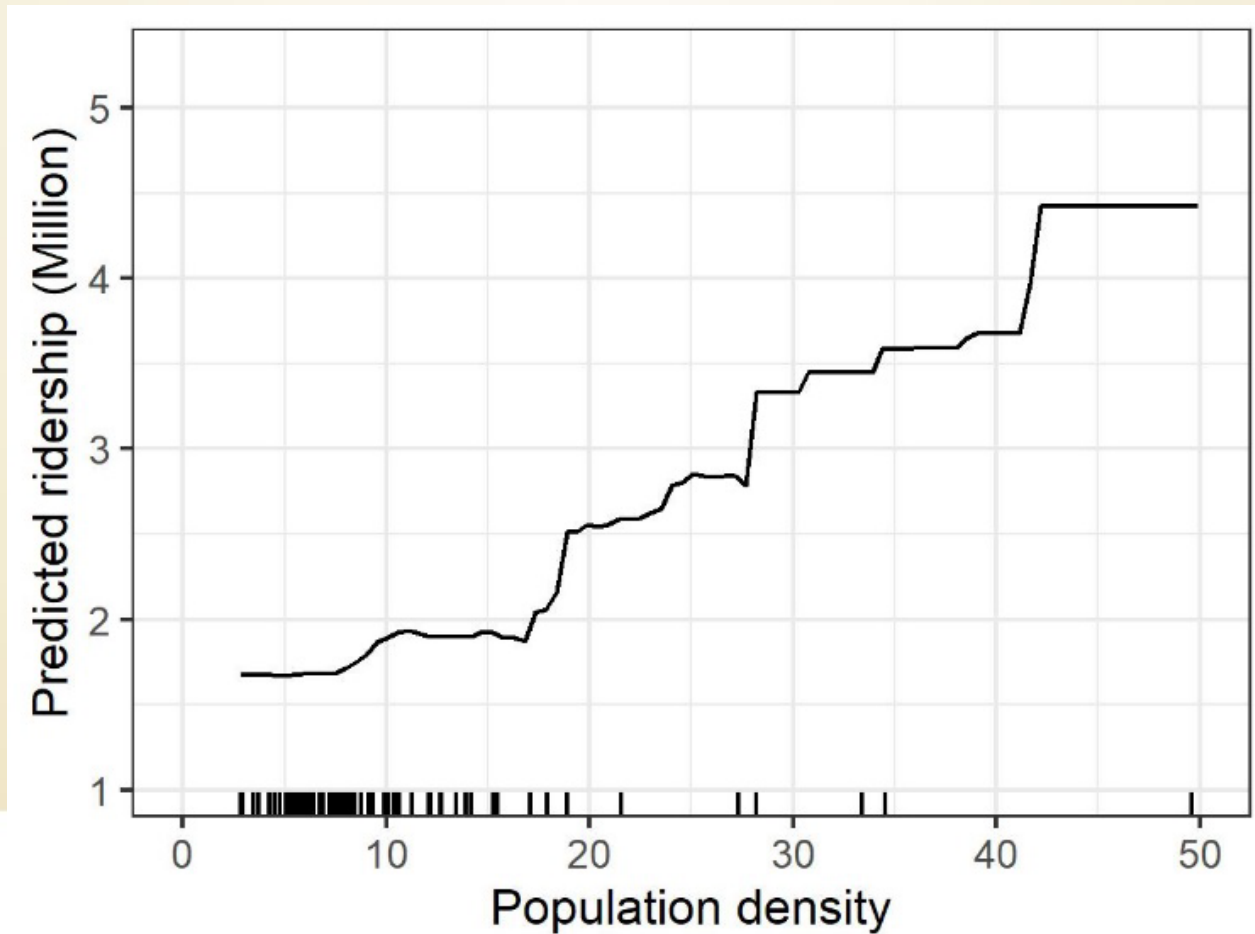
# Headway

- 64,000 passengers from 15 to 8 minutes
- Little impact from 15 to 10 minutes





# Population density



# Key results

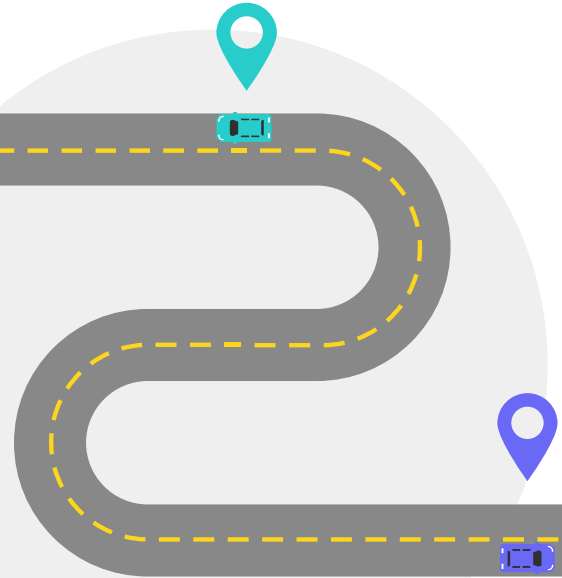
- Upgrading to an operating environment with a higher level of ROW could substantially improve transit ridership.
- Enhancing the frequency of transit service could boost ridership.
- Locating transit routes in the areas with adequate population density and well-connected road network could improve their performance.



# Strategies for Promoting Rider Connections to Suburban Transitway Stations

Soren Dunn

Jason Cao



The background features stylized road graphics in shades of gray and yellow. At the top, there are three road elements: a partial curve on the left, a full curve in the center, and a straight vertical segment on the right. At the bottom, there are three more road elements: a straight vertical segment on the left, a full curve in the center, and a partial curve on the right. Large, light gray circles are also visible on the left and right sides of the page.

# Strategies for Investigation

# General Strategies

**Improve bike  
and pedestrian  
networks**

**Density,  
diversity, and  
design**



**Improve  
perceived and  
real safety**

**Find a niche,  
know your  
market**

# Deviated Route Service

Transit that operates along a fixed route but which can deviate from the route to pick up or drop off passengers.

It blends elements of conventional transit and demand-responsive services.

Vehicles are typically allowed to deviate from the established route by a specific distance, generally one mile or less.

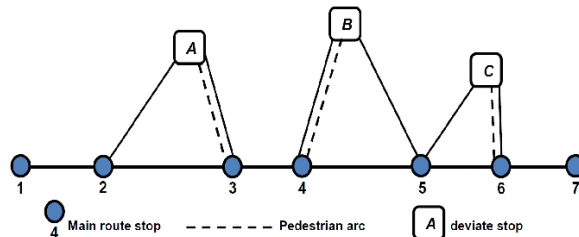


Figure 2. Basic graph layout of a route deviation bus line [4].

Pros:

- Combine regularity of conventional transit with the flexibility of demand-responsive services
- Can help increase ridership in less-dense areas
- Can serve the role of complementary paratransit required by ADA

Cons:

- Greater operating expense
  - Paratransit may require special training and/or infrastructure investments.
- Longer travel times
- More susceptible to delays

# Microtransit

Microtransit refers to demand-driven transit enhanced with technology, typically involving real-time dynamic routing.

Examples include:

- Autonomous vehicles
- Paratransit
- Ride-hailing
- Minibuses



Pros:

- Door-to-door service
- Improved passenger satisfaction
- Potential to serve intra-suburban trips
- Potential to enhance conventional transit service

Cons:

- Higher cost
- Reduced regularity
- Less efficient compared with conventional transit

# Micromobility

Micromobility refers to lightweight vehicles, commonly bicycles or scooters, that are operated by a single person and meant for travel over short distances.

Examples of micromobility include:

- Pedal-assist electric bikes
- Docked bikeshare
- Dockless bikeshare
- Electric scooters



Pros:

- Inexpensive solution to short-distance trips
- Modal shift from personal vehicle use
- Can be used to supplement conventional transit
- Flexible, door-to-door service

Cons:

- Ridership greatly contingent on weather, other factors
- Suitable only for short-distance trips
- Safety concerns
- Exclusive



# Park-and-Ride

In suburban areas, increased distances and decreased safety and comfort for pedestrians put transit services out of reach for many residents.

Park-and-rides offer a politically palatable solution to common urban problems such as road congestion, airborne pollutants, and low transit ridership.



## Pros:

- Increased rider cost and time savings
- Reduced roadway congestion
- Reduced air pollution
- Better land use in urban centers
- Modal shift from personal vehicle use

## Cons:

- Rates of park-and-ride use have declined significantly since COVID-19 pandemic
  - Usage contingent on suburban-urban commuters
- Ineffective land use in suburban areas

# Land Use

Ridership declines over the past 50 years can be attributed to, at least in part, the lack of transit systems appropriately connecting dispersed employment and commercial centers with populations.

Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD):  
Development designed mainly to encourage the use of public transit and create a pedestrian-friendly urban environment.



Pros:

- Can promote transit ridership, walking, biking.
  - Modal shift from personal vehicle use
- Associated with positive environmental and health benefits

Cons:

- Expensive
- Politically contentious
- Requires considerable time to implement properly

# Multidestination Network Design

Traditional fixed route services linked radially to downtowns are ill-suited for lateral suburb-to-suburb journeys, the most rapidly growing travel market.

Transit service strategy that focuses only on the central business district (CBD) will capture only a portion of potential transit riders.



Pros:

- Greater flexibility
- Greater accessibility
- Greater destination options

Cons:

- Greater complexity
- Higher operational costs
- Reduced capacity to core areas



# Next Steps

The next steps of our work involve gathering further data on strategies, case studies, and route-specific transit data.



## Future Research Avenues

- Pedestrian and bike improvements
- TNC-supported transit connections
- Transit bike storage
- Employer bike lending programs
- Communication with transit agencies
- Route-specific ridership data
- Identification of additional relevant case studies
  - Case study SWOT analysis

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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October 1, 2024

Jennifer Jordan  
Transit Project Manager  
Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority  
210 Courthouse  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Jennifer,

On behalf of the University of Minnesota, we sincerely thank you for your past funding contributions to the Transit Impacts Research Program (TIRP) administered by the Center for Transportation Studies. With your support, TIRP continues to be a driving force for informed local and national-level policy discussions related to economic, community and transportation impacts surrounding transitway development.

Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has committed \$30,000 in funding to support TIRP in 2024. This funding will help support a research project called "Strategies for promoting rider connections to suburban transitway stations." This topic was selected by the TIRP Program Management Team (PMT), who have worked directly with PI Jason Cao (Humphrey School of Public Affairs) to finalize the scope. Work is set to begin this fall.

Hennepin County has offered to continue acting as the program's fiscal agent for county funds. Please send your contribution to Hennepin County at the address below per the attached invoice prepared by Hennepin County.

Hennepin County Treasurer  
300 South 6th Street, MC 683  
Minneapolis, MN 55487

Thank you for your past and continued generous contributions to this program. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Eric Lind, PhD  
PMT Chair, Transit Impacts Research Program  
Director, Accessibility Observatory

cc: Emma Lucken, Ramsey County  
Jordan Preuss, Ramsey County