1. Purpose and Need

This chapter describes the location and setting of the Gateway Corridor project, the needs driving the study of the project, the purpose of the project, and the parameters that have been used to evaluate the project. An overview of previous planning studies and the environmental review process is also provided.

1.1 Project Description

1.1.1 Project Location

The Gateway Corridor project is a planned nine-mile transitway located in Ramsey and Washington Counties in the eastern part of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (**Figure 1.1-1**). The corridor is generally parallel to Interstate 94 (I-94) and would better connect downtown Saint Paul with its east side neighborhoods and the suburban cities of Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale, and Woodbury.

More broadly, the Gateway Corridor project would better connect the eastern Twin Cities Metropolitan Area to the regional transit network via the Union Depot multimodal hub in downtown Saint Paul. The project is also intended to serve and draw ridership from other portions of the metropolitan area, including portions of eastern Washington County, Dakota County to the south, and the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to the west.

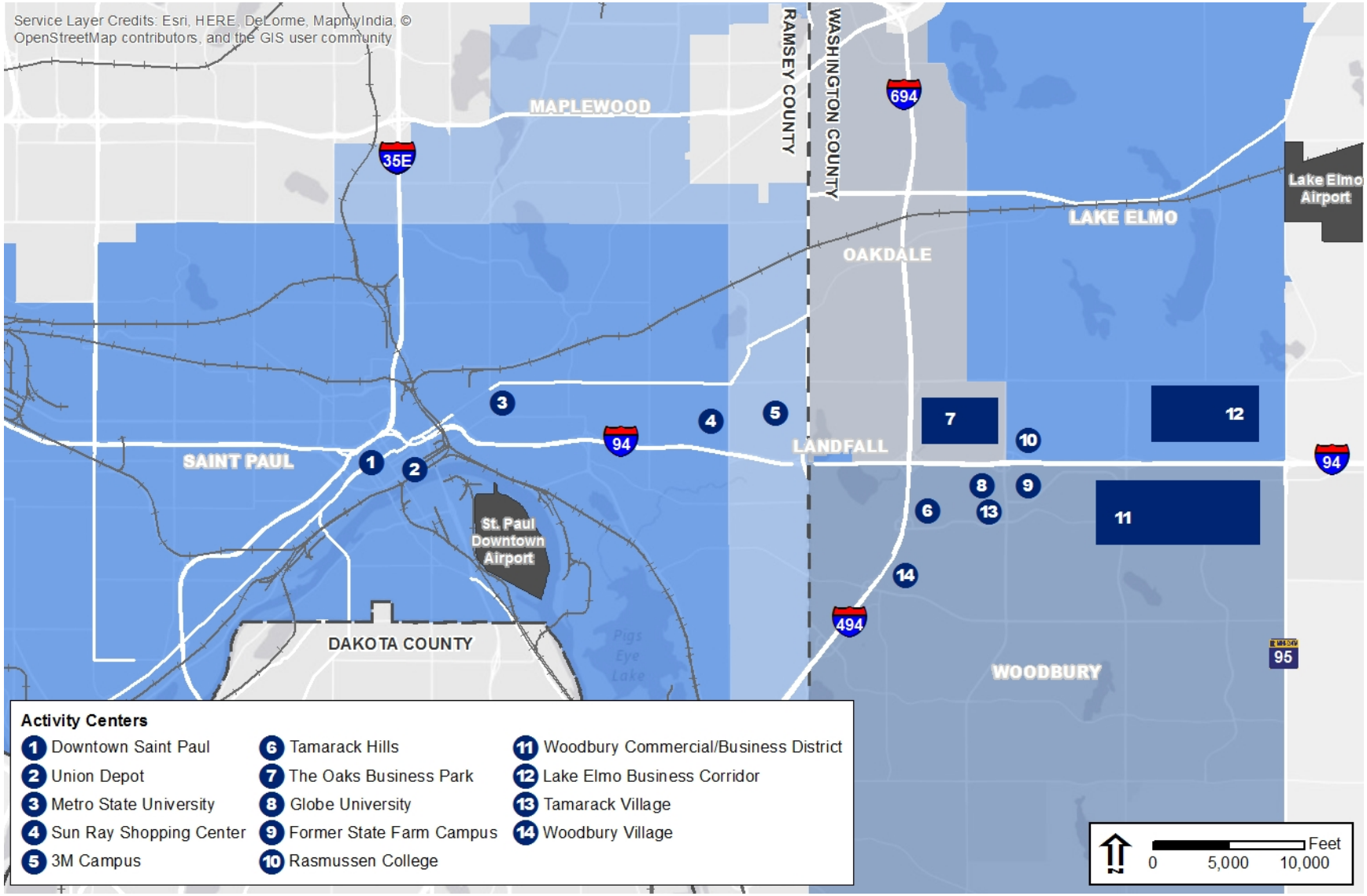
While the intended service area for the project is larger, the documentation of the project purpose and need focuses on those communities expected to be most directly served by the project (defined as communities within two miles of the proposed alignment). These communities are categorized as either *corridor communities*, those where the project is physically located (Saint Paul, Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale, and Woodbury), or *contributing communities*, those other communities within two miles of the proposed alignment (Lake Elmo). Together, the corridor communities and the contributing community make up the *project area* discussed below.

1.1.2 Project Setting

The character of the Gateway Corridor project area changes from an urban setting in downtown and the east side of Saint Paul to a transitional suburban/rural setting as it extends further east. The project area includes a wide range of land uses including single family, multifamily, and mixed use residential; retail and other commercial; office; mixed use commercial; industrial; utility; park; agricultural; and undeveloped areas. Low-density, auto-oriented land uses have heavily influenced much of the corridor's existing development patterns, which primarily reflect highway-oriented regulations and traditional suburban development forms.

A number of key activity centers are located along I-94 in the corridor communities, including downtown Saint Paul, Union Depot, Metro State University, Sun Ray Shopping Center, 3M Headquarters, The Oaks Business Park, the Woodbury Commercial/Business District, and the Lake Elmo Business Corridor (**Figure 1.1-1**). Key transportation facilities in the project area include the interstate and state highway network, the regional transit system, airports, and multiple freight railways.

Figure 1.1-1. Gateway Corridor Project Area and Activity Centers



1.1.3 Regional Transit System

The Gateway Corridor project area is currently served by a mix of local and express bus service provided by Metro Transit. Service in the western portion of the project area consists of urban local routes serving densely populated areas and the Sun Ray Shopping Center in Saint Paul and the 3M campus in Maplewood. The eastern portion of the project area is served by peak period commuter express service, primarily through park-and-ride facilities.

Key transit facilities on the corridor include Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, the Sun Ray Transit Center in Saint Paul, the Guardian Angels Catholic Church Park-and-Ride in Oakdale, and the Woodbury Theatre Park-and-Ride in Woodbury. Metro Transit is planning a new park-and-ride in the northwest quadrant of the I-94/Manning Avenue interchange in Lake Elmo to open in late 2017. Additional transit infrastructure in the corridor includes other park-and-ride facilities farther from I-94 and bus-only shoulders on most of I-94 in both directions.

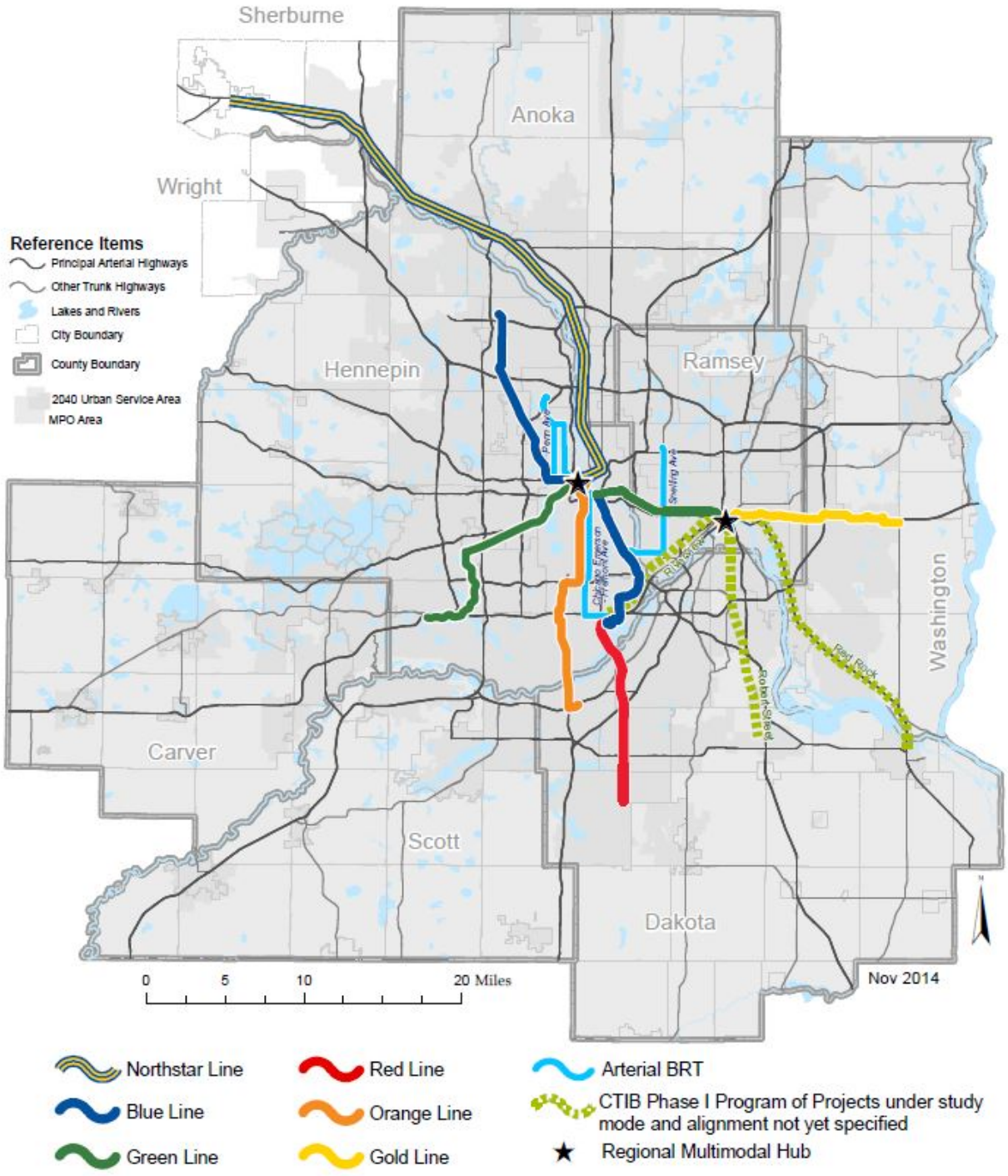
The Metropolitan Council's *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* (TPP) envisions further development of the region's local and express bus networks, with additional investment in park-and-ride facilities, as well as continued development of a regional system of transitways to meet mobility needs and increase transit system ridership. A transitway is a combination of infrastructure and transit service improvements that allows transit customers to avoid congestion on roadways and connect to regional activity centers and that boosts the potential for transit-oriented development.

The Gateway Corridor project would provide additional transit access and reliability between the region's eastern suburbs and the growing regional transitway system (**Figure 1.1-2**). Key among these is the METRO Green Line (known as Central Corridor light rail transit (LRT) during project development), which began operations in 2014 and connects Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul to downtown Minneapolis and a number of other transitways. Existing and planned transitways with connections to the Gateway Corridor project are identified in **Table 1.1-1**. With the exception of the Saint Paul Streetcar, all of these transitways are identified in the 2040 TPP.

Table 1.1-1. Transitways with Connections to the Gateway Corridor Project

Transitway	Connection Point	Status
Connections in Saint Paul		
METRO Green Line (Central Corridor)	Union Depot/Downtown Saint Paul	Existing
Riverview Corridor	Union Depot/Downtown Saint Paul	Planned (pre-project development study underway)
Rush Line Corridor	Union Depot/Downtown Saint Paul	Planned (pre-project development study underway)
Robert Street Corridor	Union Depot/Downtown Saint Paul	Planned (alternatives study completed in 2015)
Red Rock Corridor	Union Depot/Downtown Saint Paul, Mounds Boulevard Station, Earl Street Station, Etna Street Station	Planned (implementation plan underway)
Saint Paul Streetcar	Downtown Saint Paul	Planned (feasibility study completed in 2014)
Connections via METRO Green Line		
METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha LRT)	Downtown Minneapolis (US Bank Stadium Station)	Existing
METRO Red Line (Cedar Avenue bus rapid transit (BRT))	METRO Green Line to METRO Blue Line to Mall of America Station	Existing
Northstar Commuter Rail	Downtown Minneapolis (Target Field Station)	Existing
METRO Orange Line (I-35W BRT)	Downtown Minneapolis	Planned (project development underway)
Southwest LRT (METRO Green Line Extension)	Downtown Minneapolis (Target Field Station)	Planned (engineering underway)
Bottineau LRT (METRO Blue Line Extension)	Downtown Minneapolis (Target Field Station)	Planned (project development underway)

Figure 1.1-2. Regional Transitway System



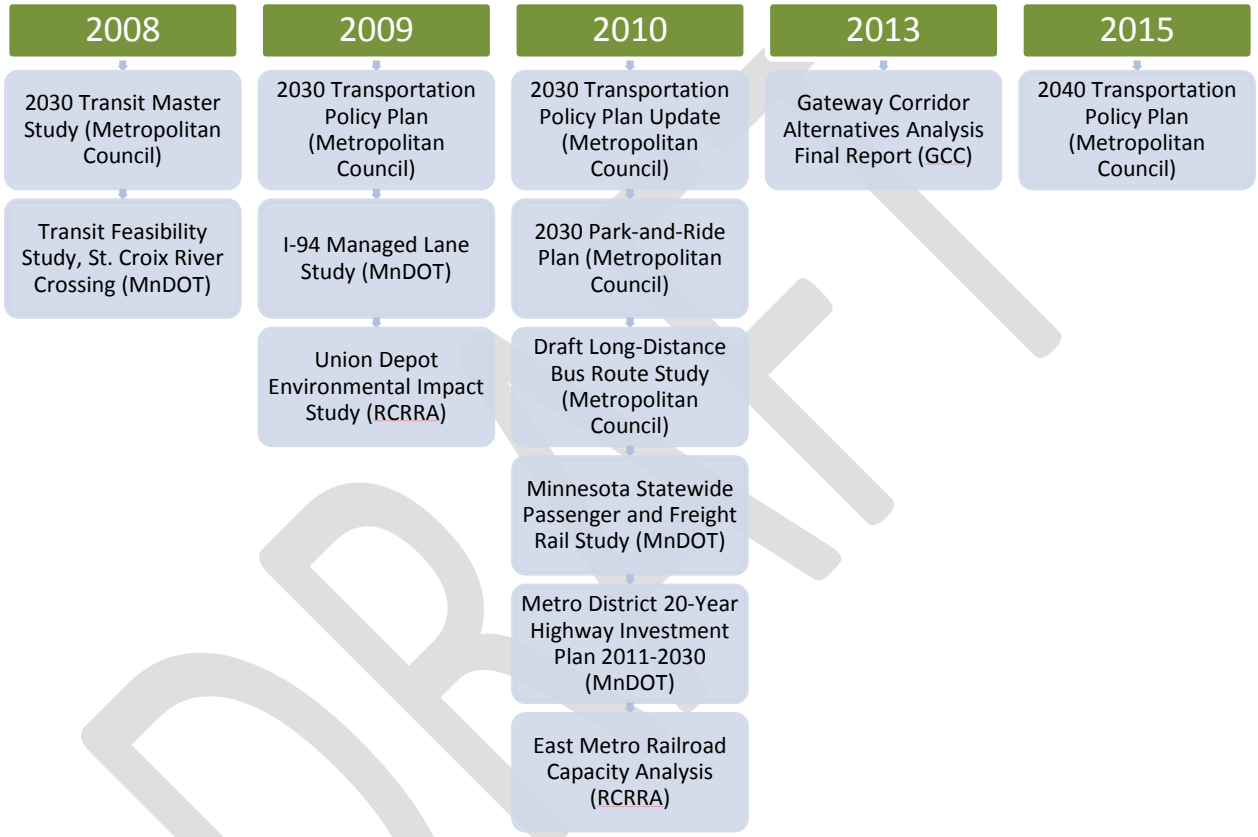
Source: *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* (Metropolitan Council, January 2015)

1.2 Project Background

1.2.1 Policy Direction and Prior Planning

Previous studies addressing transit in the Gateway Corridor include feasibility studies, park-and-ride plans, managed lane studies, and long-range transportation plans, among others. The most recent study was the *Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis*, completed in February 2013. **Figure 1.2-1** summarizes regional transportation plans and past studies in the corridor.

Figure 1.2-1. Previous Relevant Studies and Plans in the Gateway Corridor



The region's long-range transportation plan, the 2040 TPP, identified the Gateway Corridor (METRO Gold Line) as one of five corridors to be developed by 2040 (see **Figure 1.1-2**).

1.2.2 Environmental Review Process

This statement of purpose and need was prepared as part of the environmental process for the Gateway Corridor project.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA) (serving on behalf of the Gateway Corridor Commission (GCC)), and the Metropolitan Council initiated the environmental review process for the Gateway Corridor project. Federal funding for this project may be pursued through FTA's New Starts Program. As a result, FTA, designated as the lead federal agency for this project, is undertaking environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The project must also comply with the requirements of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (Minnesota Statutes, chapter 116D).

The Metropolitan Council is serving as the local lead agency and the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for completing the Environmental Assessment (EA)/Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). The EAW is included as an appendix to this EA (see **Appendix G**).

The intent of the NEPA process is to ensure that potential environmental impacts are identified and considered in the decision-making process. The primary purpose of the EA/EAW is to assist decision-makers in the assessment of impacts associated with the Gateway Corridor project. The EA/EAW documents the purpose and need for the project and alternatives considered; addresses the anticipated transportation, social, and environmental impacts; and defines appropriate mitigation measures.

The EA/EAW serves as the primary document to facilitate review of the proposed project by federal, state, and local agencies and the general public. This EA/EAW will be circulated for review to interested parties, including private citizens, community groups, the business community, elected officials, and public agencies in accordance with federal and state requirements. Public hearings will be held to provide a forum for agency and citizen participation and comment. Comments received during circulation of the EA/EAW will be responded to, and both the comments and responses will be documented in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

1.3 Project Purpose

The purpose statement below specifically defines the fundamental reasons why the Gateway Corridor project is being proposed.

> *The purpose of the Gateway Corridor project is to provide transit service to meet the existing and long-term regional mobility and local accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public within the project area.*

1.4 Project Need

This section outlines the foundation for the statement of the project purpose defined in Section 1.3. Project needs are those issues and problems that the Gateway Corridor project is intended to address.

The following primary factors contribute to the need for the Gateway Corridor project:

- Limited existing transit service throughout the day and demand for more frequent service over a larger portion of the day
- Policy shift toward travel choices and multimodal investments
- Population and employment growth, increasing access needs and travel demand
- Needs of people who depend on transit
- Local and regional objectives for growth and prosperity

1.4.1 Limited Existing Transit Service

Summary: *The project area and the I-94 corridor lack all-day, bi-directional transit service, particularly east of Saint Paul and Maplewood. This limits the ability of users in the project area to use transit to meet their transportation needs.*

1.4.1.1 TRANSIT SERVICE LIMITATIONS

Fixed-service bus routes serve the Gateway Corridor project area today, including local, high-frequency local, and express service. These routes and their geographic coverages are shown in **Figure 1.4-1**. The routes and their service characteristics are described in **Table 1.4-1**.

The western half of the project area is served primarily by all day local bus service concentrated in Saint Paul. The eastern half of the corridor is served by peak-only express service with access at select park-and-ride locations on the I-94 corridor. There is no all-day, bi-directional service connecting those communities served by I-94, particularly east of Saint Paul and Maplewood (**Figure 1.4-2**). Much of the project area is not accessible to transit or has only peak-period service.

Table 1.4-1. Existing Transit Service Characteristics[1]

Route	Span of Service	Frequency (minutes) (Peak/Mid/Eve/Wknd)	Number of Weekday Trips	Number of Weekend Trips	Cities Served
Urban Local Routes					
61	4:51 AM – 10:27 PM	15-30/30/60/60	Eastbound: 38 Westbound: 36	Saturday EB: 14 Sunday EB: 13	Saint Paul, Minneapolis
63	4:20 AM – 12:41 AM	10-20/20/20-30/20-30	Eastbound: 60 Westbound: 57	Saturday EB: 51 Saturday WB: 50 Sunday EB: 51 Sunday WB: 50	Saint Paul
64	3:30 AM – 1:16 AM	9-15/15/20-30/15-60	Eastbound: 81 Westbound: 77	Saturday EB: 67 Saturday WB: 66 Sunday EB: 43 Sunday WB: 48	Saint Paul, North St. Paul, Maplewood
70	4:26 AM – 10:15 PM	30/30/60/60	Eastbound: 30 Westbound: 30	Saturday EB: 14 Saturday WB: 15 Sunday EB: 10 Sunday WB: 10	Saint Paul, Maplewood
74	3:28 AM – 12:43 AM	15-20/20/30/20-30	Eastbound: 57 Westbound: 60	Saturday EB: 49 Saturday WB: 49 Sunday EB: 37 Sunday WB: 38	Saint Paul, Maplewood
80	6:42 AM – 7:12 PM	30/60/None/30-60	Southbound: 19 Northbound: 19	Saturday SB: 19 Saturday NB: 18 Sunday SB: 10 Sunday NB: 10	Saint Paul, Maplewood

[1] Metro Transit Route Schedules as of August 15, 2016. Available at: https://www.metrotransit.org/

Route	Span of Service	Frequency (minutes) (Peak/Mid/Eve/Wknd)	Number of Weekday Trips	Number of Weekend Trips	Cities Served
Suburban Local Routes					
219	5:48 AM – 9:42 PM	30/30/60/60	Southbound: 30 Northbound: 30	Saturday SB: 14 Saturday NB: 14	Saint Paul, Maplewood, White Bear Lake, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Landfall
Minneapolis Oriented Express and Limited Stop Routes					
353	5:41 AM – 7:05 PM	1 trip/None/None	Eastbound: 1 Westbound: 1	None	Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Woodbury
355	6:04 AM – 6:12 PM	10-20/None/None	Eastbound: 14 Westbound: 13	None	Minneapolis, Woodbury
365	5:38 AM – 6:12 PM	10-30/None/None	Southbound: 10 Northbound: 10	None	Minneapolis, Cottage Grove
375	5:51 AM – 5:37 PM	10-25/None/None	Eastbound: 10 Westbound: 10	None	Minneapolis, Oakdale
Saint Paul Oriented Express and Limited Stop Routes					
294	5:24 AM – 6:33 PM	30-60/None/None	Eastbound: 8 Westbound: 9	None	Saint Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, Lake Elmo, Stillwater, Oak Park Heights
350	5:32 AM – 5:47 PM	4 Trips/None/None	Eastbound: 4 Westbound: 4	None	Saint Paul, Maplewood
351	6:19 AM – 5:46 PM	15-30/None/None	Eastbound: 7 Westbound: 8	None	Saint Paul, Woodbury
361	6:16 AM – 5:12 PM	5-6 Trips/None/None	Southbound: 6 Northbound: 5	None	Saint Paul, Cottage Grove, Newport
364	5:53 AM – 5:25 PM	30-45/None/None	Southbound: 3 Northbound: 3	None	Saint Paul, St. Paul Park, Newport, Cottage Grove

Areas with limited or no transit service include:

- Woodbury and Lake Elmo (no off-peak express or local service)
- West Lakeland, Lakeland, and Afton (no express or local service)

Several routes in the project area have off-peak headways that exceed 30 minutes:

- Route 61 is an urban local service that operates on Larpenteur Avenue, Arcadia Avenue, and East 7th Street in the project area. On evenings and Saturdays it operates at a 60 minute frequency. There is no Sunday service on this route.

- Route 70 is an urban local service that runs between downtown Saint Paul and Maplewood along East 7th Street, Mounds Boulevard, Burns Street, White Bear Avenue, and Upper Afton Road. On evenings and weekends it operates at a 60 minute frequency.
- Route 80 is an urban local service that operates primarily along White Bear Avenue connecting Maplewood Mall and Sun Ray Transit Center. It operates at a 30 minute frequency during peak periods, 60 minute frequency during mid-day, and 30-60 minute frequencies on weekends. There is no evening service on Route 80.
- Route 219 is a suburban local service that circulates between Maplewood Mall and Sun Ray Transit Center and includes the communities of Saint Paul, Maplewood, White Bear Lake, North St. Paul, Oakdale, and Landfall along the Trunk Highway (TH) 120/Century Avenue corridor. On evenings and Saturdays Route 219 operates at a 60 minute frequency. There is no Sunday service on this route.

1.4.1.2 OPPORTUNITY FOR GREATER REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The transit service described above could be enhanced to improve the ability of people in the project area to access employment and other destinations in the greater Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. In order to access the metropolitan area's rapidly growing regional transitway network, residents, employees, and other potential transit users in the project area need a reliable and time-competitive travel option to and from downtown Saint Paul, which serves as a key access point to the regional transit system (see **Figure 1.1-2**).

Areas of downtown Saint Paul are currently served by the region's extensive bus network that connects Saint Paul to Minneapolis and suburban cities. The METRO Green Line began operating in 2014, improving access to University Avenue, the State Capitol Complex, the University of Minnesota, and downtown Minneapolis. The Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul opened in 2013 as one of two regional multimodal transportation hubs. The facility provides connections to the METRO Green Line and the regional transitway system, Amtrak passenger rail to Chicago and the Pacific Northwest, intercity and regional buses, local bus service, car sharing services, car rental service, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities (including Nice Ride bike sharing from April to November). Additionally, several local and regional transit improvements are planned to serve downtown Saint Paul including Rush Line Corridor, Riverview Corridor, East 7th Street Arterial BRT, and potential future Saint Paul Streetcar (feasibility study completed in 2014) (see **Table 1.1-1** for more information).

Transitways, by definition, provide bi-directional, high frequency, all day service. Without corresponding service levels in the project area, the benefits of the rest of the regional system are limited for the Gateway Corridor project area.

1.4.1.3 GROWING DEMAND

Metro Transit's ridership grew to 85.8 million rides in 2015, a 34-year high. Ridership in the Gateway Corridor project area is part of this regional growth. Between 2009 and 2015, park-and-ride use at the five project area park-and-rides[2] increased by 16 percent.[3] Because nearly

[2] Park-and-rides located in the I-94 corridor in Oakdale and Woodbury were counted as "project area park-and-rides." These include Guardian Angels Catholic Church, Walton Park, Christ Episcopal Church, Woodbury Lutheran Church, and Woodbury Theater.

[3] *2015 Annual Regional Park-and-Ride System Report*, Metropolitan Council, March 2016. Available at http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Publications-And-Resources/Transit/2015-Annual-Regional-Park-and-Ride-System-Report.aspx.

all park-and-ride users are express bus riders, it follows that express bus ridership in the corridor grew similarly during this time period. As of 2015, 89 percent of available spaces were occupied at the five project area park-and-rides.

Park-and-ride demand has been growing in the Woodbury/Lake Elmo area in particular. To address this demand, the Metropolitan Council is planning to construct a new 550-space park-and-ride in the northwest quadrant of the I-94/Manning Avenue interchange in Lake Elmo to open in late 2017. An extension of express bus service to downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul is planned to be added at the new park-and-ride at that time.

Figure 1.4-1. Existing Transit Service and Facilities (Twin Cities Metropolitan Area System)

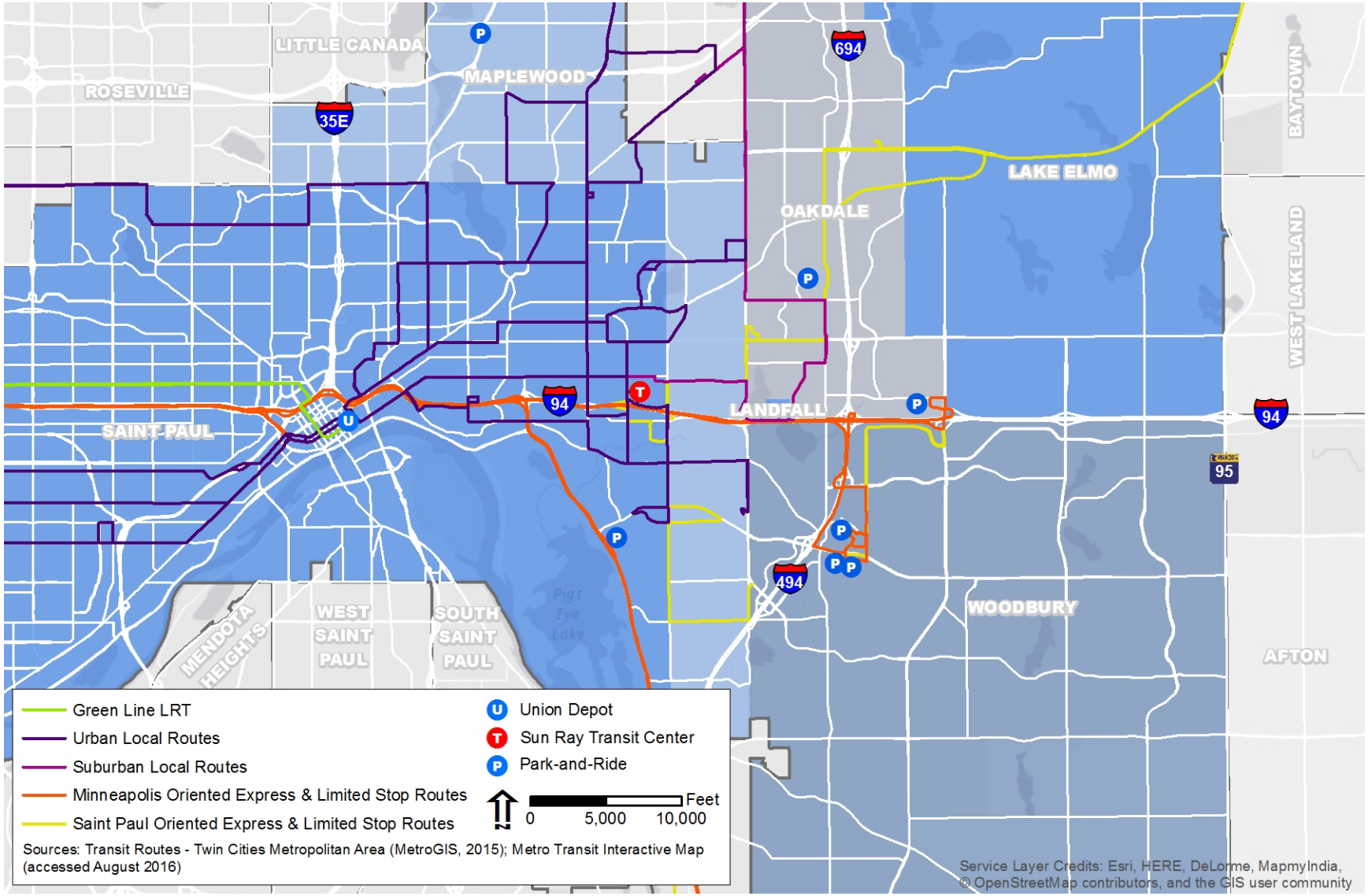
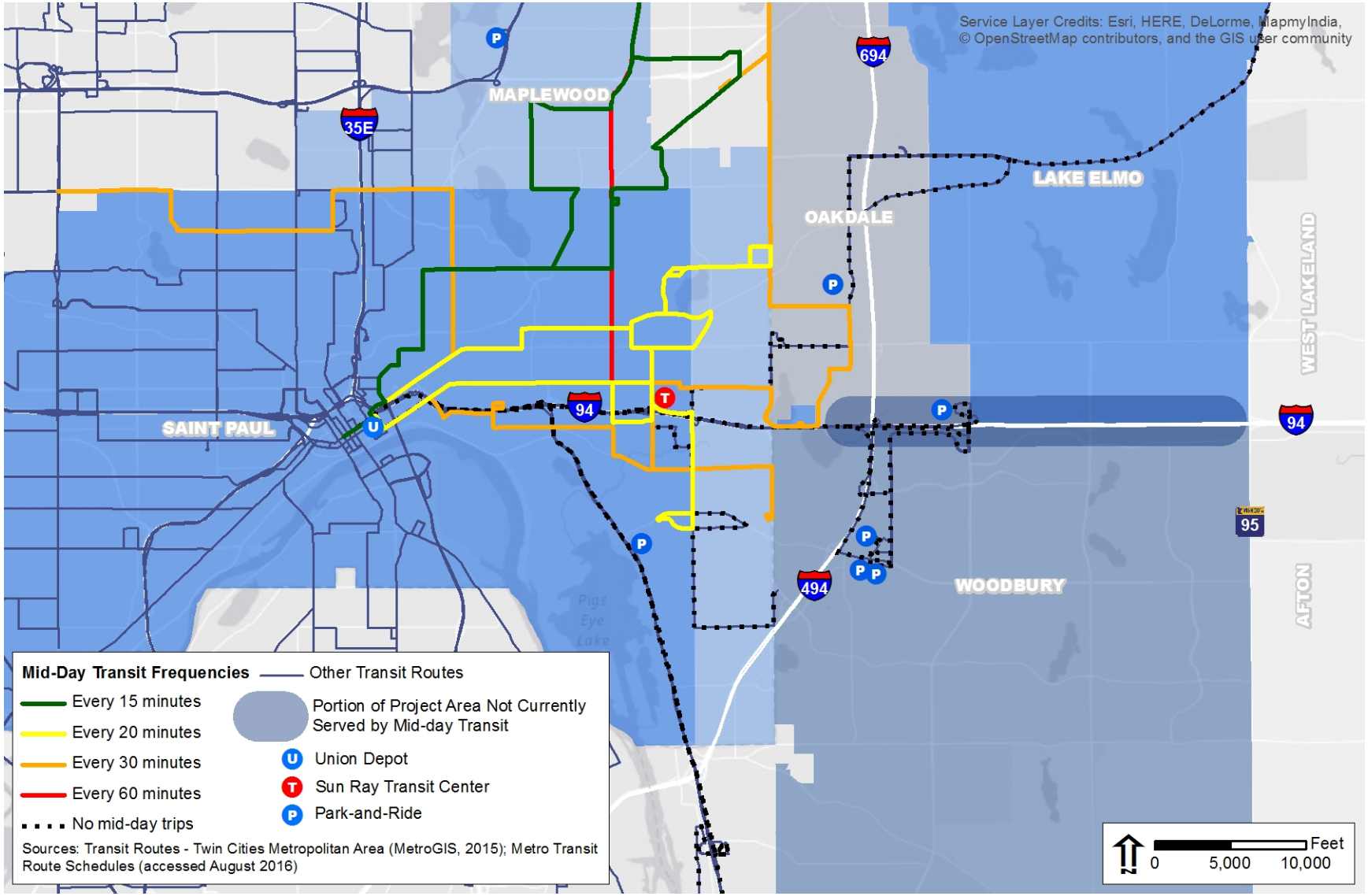


Figure 1.4-2. Mid-Day Transit Frequency (Twin Cities Metropolitan Area System)



1.4.2 Policy Shift Toward Travel Choices and Multimodal Investments

Summary: *I-94 and local roadways in the project area are congested today during peak periods. Traffic volumes and congestion are expected to increase in the future. Funding for roadway projects will not be adequate to address the congestion problem. State and regional transportation policies identify the need to provide alternatives to traveling in congested conditions.*

1.4.2.1 CONGESTION

I-94 experiences significant recurring congestion, in particular during the morning peak period between downtown Saint Paul and approximately Century Avenue at the Maplewood/Oakdale border. Morning westbound congestion ranges from one to two hours daily at the eastern end of this segment to two to three hours near downtown Saint Paul. In the evening, three or more hours of recurring eastbound congestion occurs daily on I-94 in downtown Saint Paul. The only other reported recurring evening congestion occurs between I-494/I-694 and about Radio Drive for less than one hour per day on average. Daily freeway congestion is shown in **Figure 1.4-3**.

Congestion is defined by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) as any 15-minute period where travel speeds are less than 45 miles per hour (mph). According to the *Metropolitan Freeway System 2015 Congestion Report* (MnDOT, May 2016),[4] the speed threshold of 45 mph is significant because it is the speed at which "shock waves" can occur. A shock wave is the phenomenon where the majority of vehicles brake in a traffic stream. The wave condition can be created by a number of events, including a lane ending, large traffic volumes entering the freeway, traffic incidents, weather conditions, etc. As the rate of movement of the shock wave increases, the potential for rear end or sideswipe collisions increases. Multiple shock waves can spread from one instance of a slowdown in traffic and blend together with other extended periods of congestion upstream. As with recurring freeway congestion in other locations, the locations of congestion on I-94 in the Gateway Corridor project area result not just in slower traffic and potential safety concerns but also in decreased reliability and predictability of the highway in terms of travel time.

1.4.2.2 FORECAST INCREASES IN TRAVEL VOLUMES

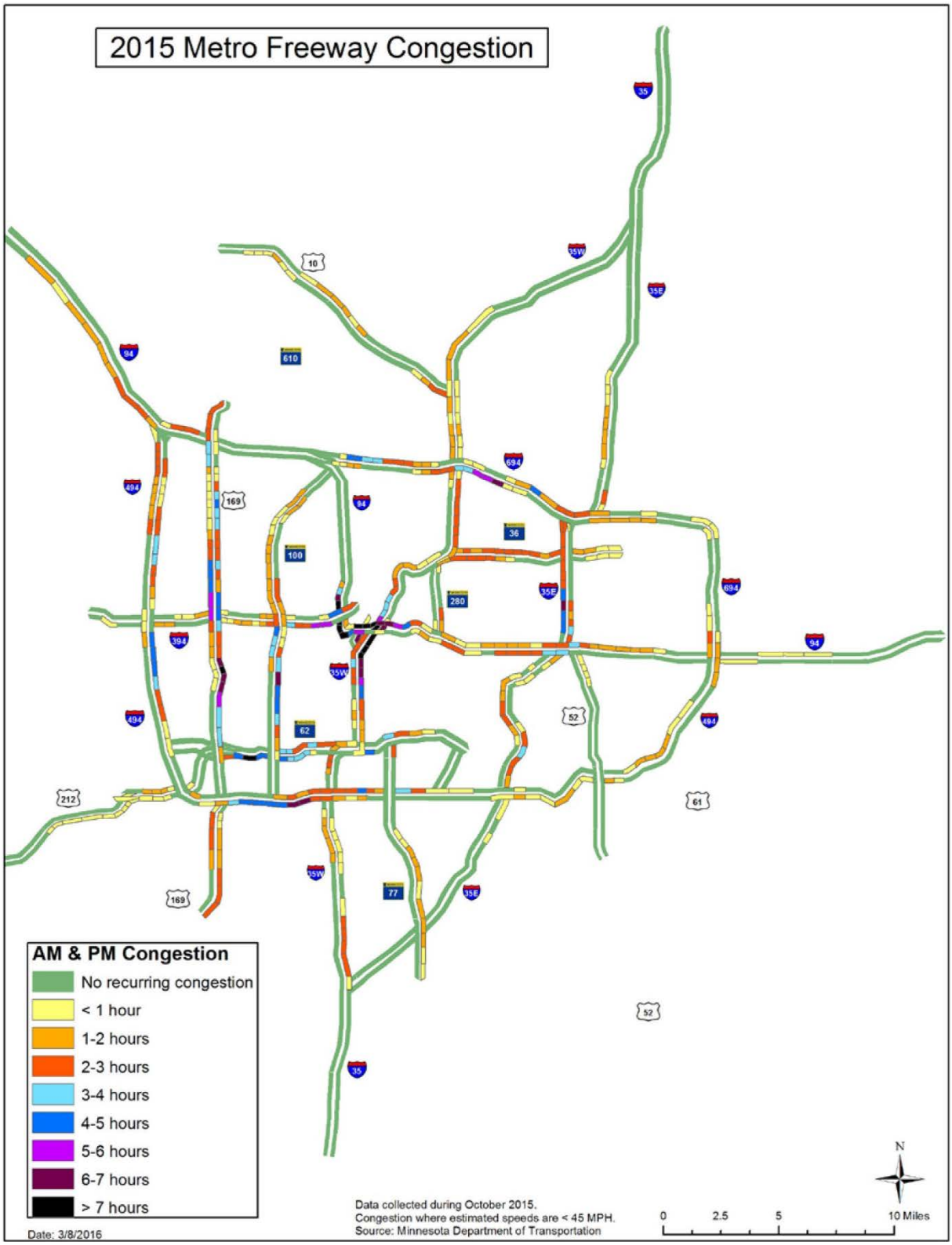
East of Century Avenue, where there is less congestion today than in the rest of the corridor, substantial traffic growth is forecast over the next 25 years. Daily traffic volumes on I-94 between Century Avenue (TH 120) in Oakdale and the St. Croix River are forecast to grow by 29 to 34 percent over the next 25 years. This equates to daily traffic volumes between 106,000 and 142,000 vehicles per day (vpd).[5]

Arterial roadway volumes in the eastern part of the corridor are also forecast to grow by 2040. Approach volumes north and south of I-94 at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13 (Radio Drive/Inwood Avenue), CSAH 19 (Woodbury Drive/Keats Avenue), and CSAH 15/TH 95 S (Manning Avenue) are forecast to reach volumes between 24,200 and 50,800 vpd, representing growth of 9,200 to 18,300 vpd for each approach (see **Figure 1.4-4**). This growth in arterial volume is anticipated to result in operational deficiencies in both the AM and PM peak hours.[5]

[4] Available at http://www.dot.state.mn.us/rtmc/reports/congestionreport2015.pdf

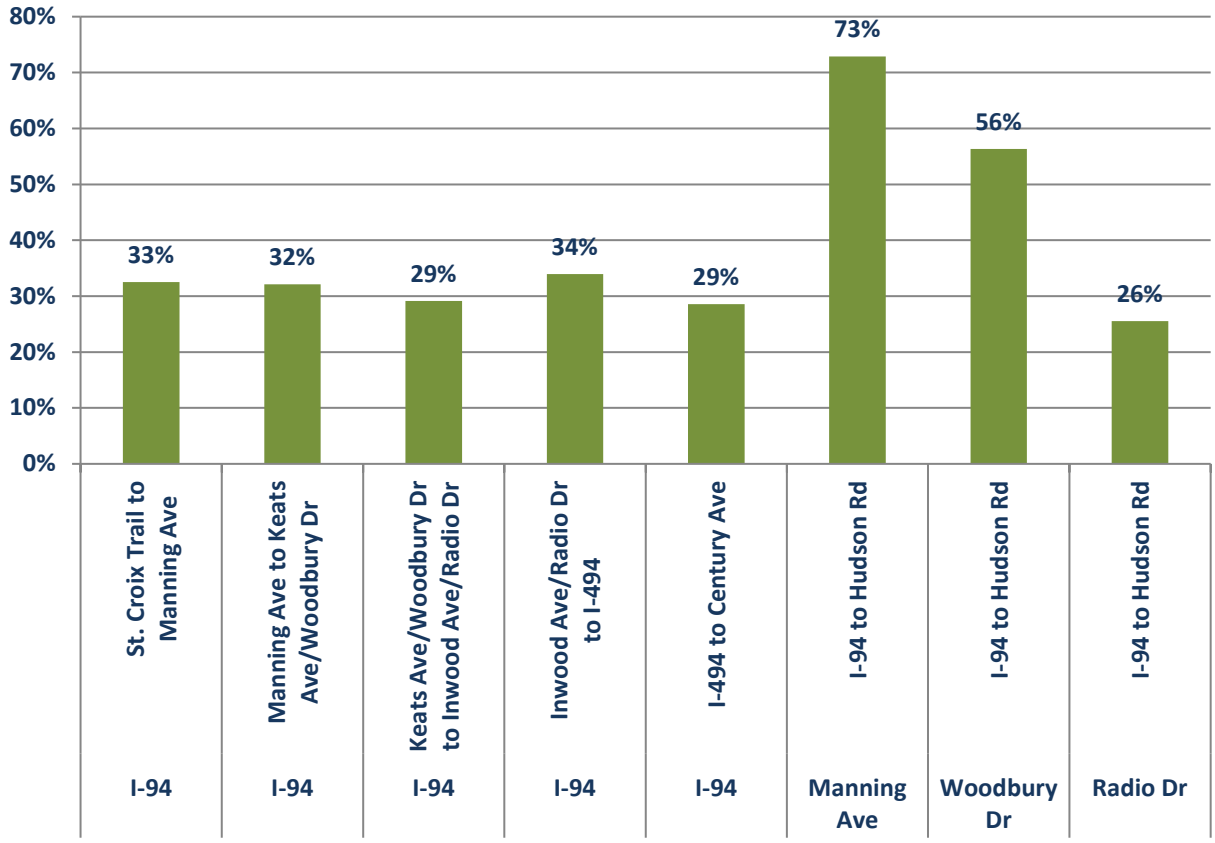
[5] *I-94 East Metro Corridor Study* (January 2011), modified by SRF to reflect expected 2040 conditions

Figure 1.4-3. 2015 Metro Freeway Congestion (Daily)



Source: *Metropolitan Freeway System 2015 Congestion Report* (MnDOT, May 2016)

Figure 1.4-4. Percent Change in Average Daily Traffic – Existing[6] to 2040



1.4.2.3 NO MAJOR INVESTMENTS PLANNED TO ADDRESS CAPACITY NEEDS

There is one regionally significant project identified in the 2016-2019 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) that would improve current traffic flow and address projected congestion within the Gateway Corridor: the construction of auxiliary lanes on I-94 eastbound between East 7th Street and Mounds Boulevard in Saint Paul. This project is included in the No-Build alternative as described in Section 2.3.1. The current draft of the 2014-2033 Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP), which incorporates the 10-year work plan for each MnDOT district by reference, includes a managed lane project along I-94 between Minneapolis and Saint Paul that may overlap the Gateway Corridor project between Mounds Boulevard and TH 61. Concepts for this project are currently being studied. For the period beyond these two plans (years 2024-2033), MnDOT plans to focus on preservation of existing assets (i.e., asset management). Specific projects are not listed for this period, but not being listed does not preclude a project being considered or programmed in the future as priorities change or more revenue becomes available. The lack of programmed major projects in the project area is consistent with highway funding constraints locally and nationally.

[6] 2014 average weekday daily traffic (AWDT) on freeways and 2010/2012 annual average daily traffic (AADT) on arterials

1.4.2.4 REGIONAL AND STATE POLICY EMPHASIS ON MULTIMODAL INVESTMENTS

The State of Minnesota and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area are shifting away from addressing highway congestion through investments in just a single mode of transportation (automobile) to include multiple modes (transit, bicycling, and walking in addition to automobile). One implication of this policy shift is to provide travelers with alternatives to traveling in congested highway conditions. To this end, a key strategy in the *Minnesota Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan* is to:

- **Apply multimodal solutions that ensure a high return on investment, given constrained resources, and that complement the unique social, natural, and economic features of Minnesota:** MnDOT will work with the Metropolitan Council to jointly pursue "lower cost, high benefit" projects that support multimodal connectivity.

Similiarly, the 2040 TPP for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area also prioritizes multimodal investments and the importance of a balanced approach to meeting travel demand. The TPP includes the goals below that emphasize transit and the need to provide alternatives to traveling in congested highway conditions:

- **Strategy C4. Access to Destinations:** Regional transportation partners will promote multimodal travel options and alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel and highway congestion through a variety of travel demand management initiatives, with a focus on major job, activity, and industrial and manufacturing concentrations on congested highway corridors and corridors served by regional transit service.
- **Strategy C1. Promoting Alternatives:** Regional transportation partners will continue to work together to plan and implement transportation systems that are multimodal and provide connections between modes. The Metropolitan Council will prioritize regional projects that are multimodal and cost-effective and encourage investments to include appropriate provisions for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

1.4.3 Population and Employment Growth

Summary: *Population and employment growth are forecast for the project area. This growth will in turn increase access needs and travel demand, particularly in the I-94 corridor.*

1.4.3.1 POPULATION GROWTH

As shown in **Table 1.4-2**, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is continuing to grow, with a projected growth rate of 29 percent between 2010 and 2040 according to the 2010 US Census and the regional forecasts from *Thrive MSP 2040* (Metropolitan Council, May 2014).[7] Population growth within Washington County accounts for approximately nine percent of the region's 2010 to 2040 projected growth, with approximately 99,674 new residents anticipated. Within the Gateway Corridor project area, particularly strong population growth is forecast in Woodbury and Lake Elmo, two of the communities not currently well-served by transit (see **Figure 1.4-5**).

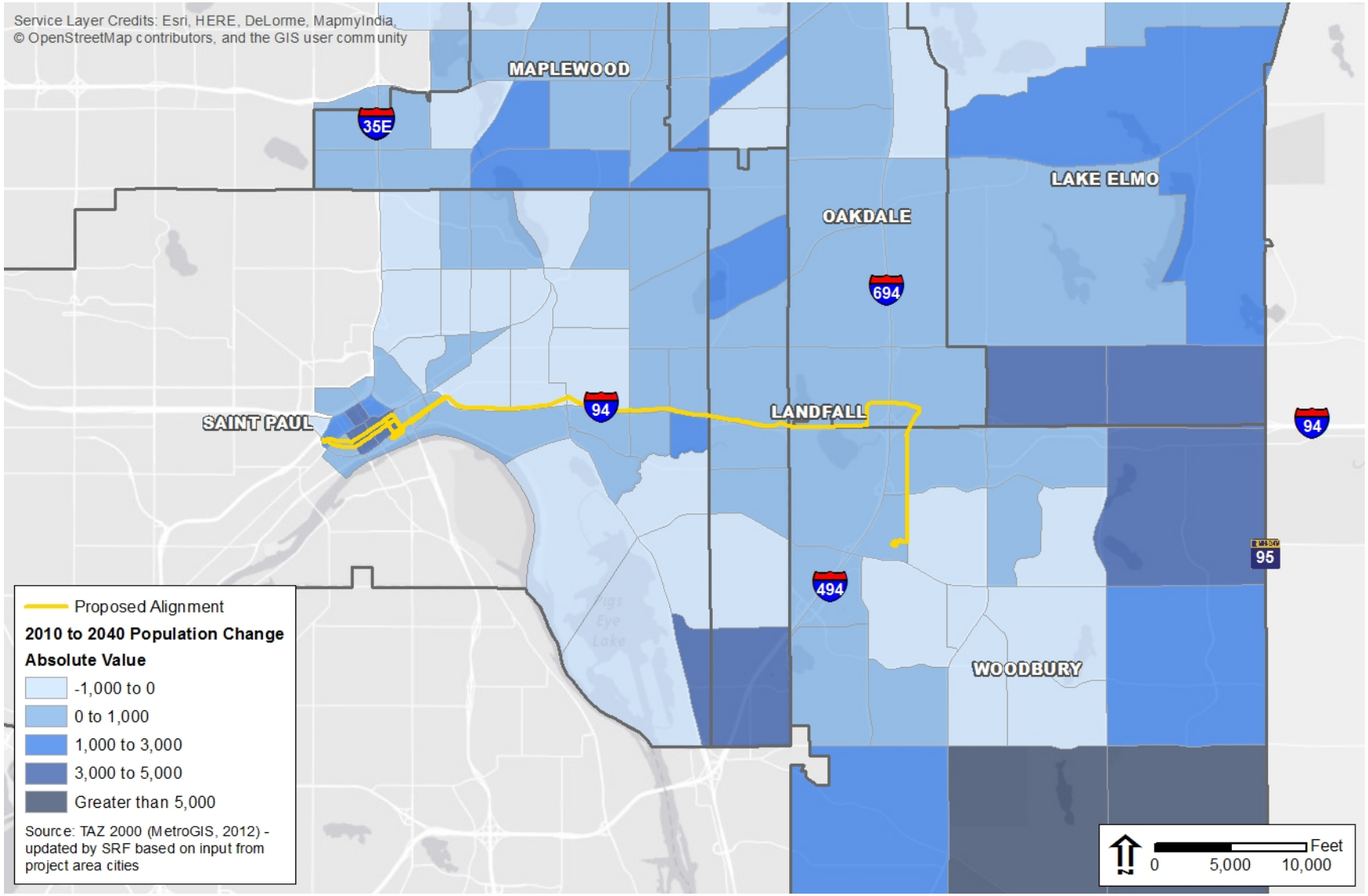
[7] *Thrive MSP 2040* is the Metropolitan Council's long-range plan for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It sets the policy foundations for systems and policy plans developed by the Metropolitan Council, including the Transportation Policy Plan, Water Resources Policy Plan, Regional Parks Policy Plan, and Housing Policy Plan.

Table 1.4-2. Existing and Future Population[8]

Area	2010	2040	% Change 2010-2040
Ramsey County	508,640	597,310	17.4%
Saint Paul	285,068	334,700	17.4%
Maplewood	38,018	47,900	26.0%
Washington County	238,136	337,810	41.9%
Oakdale	27,378	31,000	13.2%
Landfall	686	770	12.2%
Woodbury	61,961	87,200	40.7%
Lake Elmo	8,069	20,500	154.1%
Project Area Total	421,180	522,070	24.0%
Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	2,849,567	3,675,660	29.0%

[8] Population and employment forecasts are drawn from the Metropolitan Council's 2040 projections, updated based on input from Gateway Corridor communities. The Metropolitan Council uses a regional economic model to arrive at forecasted population, household, and employment figures. Once the regional forecast is complete, additional land use modeling locates future population, households, and employment to specific communities within the region. Finally, local governments and planners are engaged, and their knowledge about local development is used to adjust the results. The Metropolitan Council updates its 30-year regional and local forecasts at least once per decade. (*Census, Forecasts & Estimates*, Metropolitan Council, accessed 29 July 2015, http://www.metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Data/Census-Forecasts-Estimates.aspx)

Figure 1.4-5. 2010-2040 Population Growth in the Gateway Corridor Project Area



1.4.3.2 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Project area employment is anticipated to grow rapidly between 2010 and 2040. Ramsey County is expected to add approximately 100,000 new jobs between 2010 and 2040, and Washington County is expected to add about 40,000 jobs. Together this accounts for ¼ of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area's anticipated employment growth during that period.

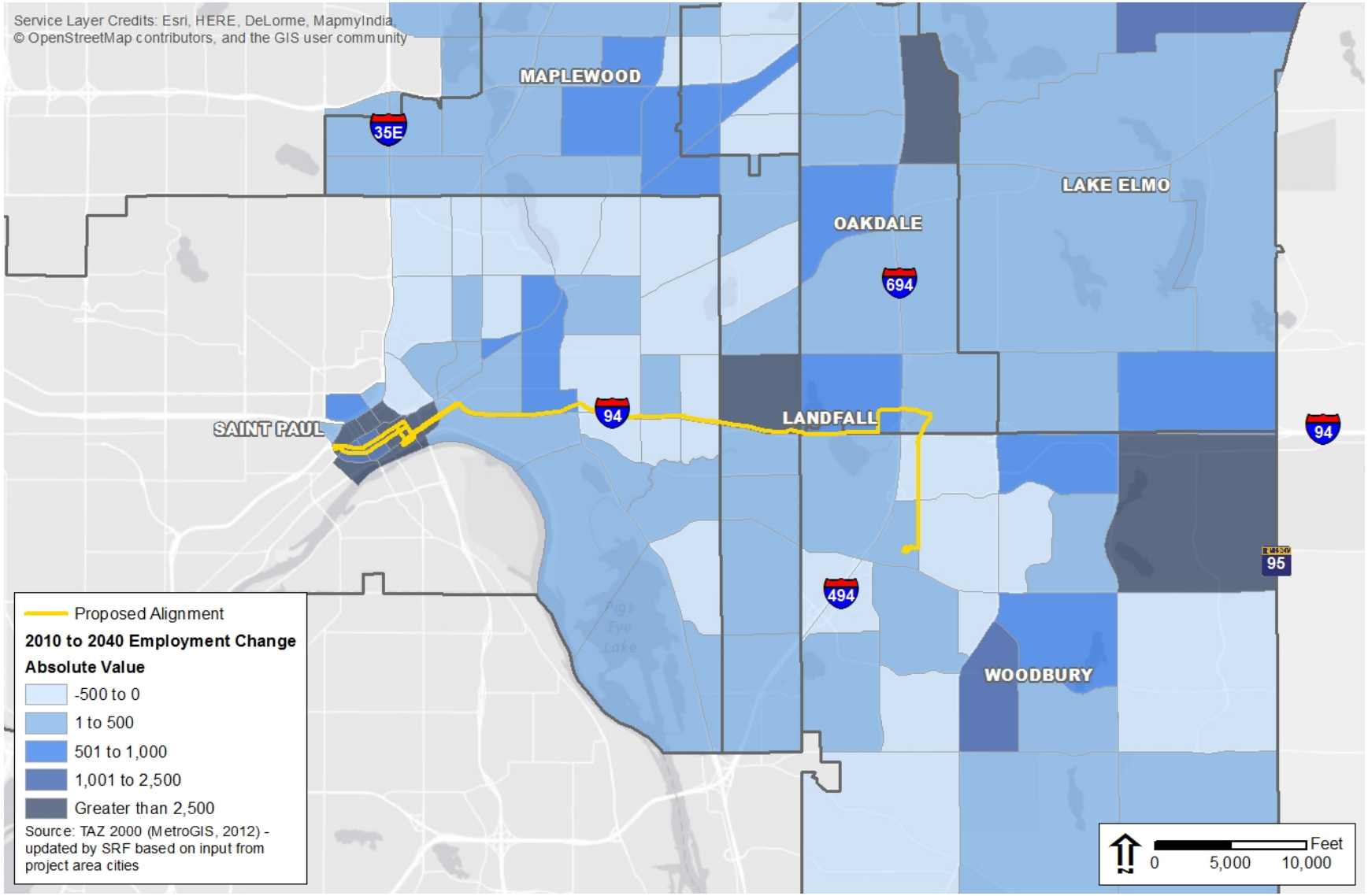
Table 1.4-3 shows current employment and future employment forecasts for the Gateway Corridor project area. Net job gains are concentrated in Saint Paul (+43,605), Maplewood (+9,429), and Woodbury (+9,407). Anticipated employment growth in Lake Elmo, Woodbury, and Oakdale is concentrated along the I-94 corridor, as shown in **Figure 1.4-6**.

Table 1.4-3. Existing and Future Employment[8]

Area	2010	2040	% Change 2010-2040
Ramsey County	315,533	408,680	29.5%
Saint Paul	174,395	218,000	25.0%
Maplewood	27,171	36,600	34.7%
Washington County	71,292	107,210	50.4%
Oakdale	8,792	15,000	70.6%
Landfall	25	30	20.0%
Woodbury	19,293	28,700	48.8%
Lake Elmo	1,934	3,160	63.4%
Project Area Total	231,610	301,490	30.2%
Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	1,537,050	2,102,090	36.8%

Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (2013), *Thrive 2040 MSP* (Metropolitan Council, May 2014), 2010 US Census, Woods & Poole (2013)

Figure 1.4-6. 2010-2040 Employment Growth in the Gateway Corridor Project Area



1.4.4 Needs of People Who Depend on Transit

Summary: *Deficiencies in transit service limit the ability of people in the Gateway Corridor project area who depend on transit to access employment and other needs.*

The corridor communities are home to a large number of people who depend on transit to meet their transportation needs. In absolute terms, there are an estimated 36,562 adults without a vehicle in the corridor communities, over 1/5 of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area's zero vehicle population (see **Table 1.4-4**). The majority of these people are in Saint Paul, including the east side neighborhoods that would be served by the Gateway Corridor project. This discussion assumes that people who depend on transit would access the Gateway Corridor project directly or via other existing transit service. For this reason, the data presented are for the corridor communities only and not the contributing communities that do not currently have transit access to the corridor.

In the corridor communities, the percentage of the adult population with zero vehicles and the percentage of zero-vehicle households are 3.7 and 3.8 percent greater than for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole, respectively. This is due to significantly higher than average numbers in Saint Paul, Maplewood, and Landfall.

People who are transit dependent rely on transit for most or all of their travel needs,[9] including work, shopping, and social trips. Such trips can occur throughout the day and throughout the week, including in the evenings or on weekends when transit service is often infrequent. The peak-hour express service in the I-94 corridor today does not serve people whose jobs are outside of the traditional workday. People who depend on transit are more likely to require transfers to complete their trips.[10] Thus, the limitations in the existing transit service described in Section 1.4.1 are particularly acute for these populations.

Transit dependence in the corridor communities in Ramsey and Washington Counties is illustrated by two different measures. **Figure 1.4-7** shows the number of zero vehicle households, and **Figure 1.4-8** shows the adult population with zero vehicles.

The percentage of the population that is low-income is also higher in the corridor communities than it is in either Ramsey or Washington Counties or the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (see **Table 1.4-4**). Of the corridor communities, Landfall and Saint Paul have the highest percentages of low-income individuals at approximately 35 and 23 percent, respectively. A more detailed discussion of low-income communities can be found in Chapter 7 Environmental Justice.

[9] Delbosc, Alexa. "Transit Dependence." *Encyclopedia of Transportation: Social Science and Policy.* Ed. Mark Garrett. Vol. 19 Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014. 1434-36. *SAGE knowledge.* Web. 10 Dec. 2015.

[10] Thompson, Gregory, Ph.D.; Brown, Jeffrey, Ph.D.; Bhattacharya, Torsha; Jaroszynski, Michal. "Understanding Transit Ridership Demand for a Multi-Destination, Multimodal Transit Network in an American Metropolitan Area: Lessons for Increasing Choice Ridership While Maintaining Transit Dependent Ridership." Mineta Transportation Institute Report 11-06, 2012.

Table 1.4-4. Vehicle Ownership and Income in the Corridor Communities

Area	Total Population	Total Occupied Households	Zero-Vehicle Households	% of Households with Zero Vehicles	Adult Population with Zero Vehicles[11]	% Adult Population with Zero Vehicles	Low Income Population[12]	% Low Income Population
Ramsey County	521,265	206,156	23,531	11.4%	44,218	11.1%	85,504	16.8%
Saint Paul	291,728	112,407	16,881	15.0%	31,694	14.5%	65,065	22.9%
Maplewood	39,261	15,168	1,425	9.4%	2,736	9.1%	3,914	10.2%
Washington County	244,103	89,898	3,090	3.4%	6,145	3.4%	13,734	5.7%
Oakdale	27,705	10,859	564	5.2%	1,089	5.2%	1,766	6.4%
Landfall	796	294	22	7.5%	43	7.5%	275	34.9%
Woodbury	64,544	23,659	515	2.2%	999	2.2%	2,241	3.5%
Corridor Community Total	424,034	162,387	19,407	12.0%	36,562	11.6%	73,261	17.7%
Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	2,920,637	1,139,615	93,117	8.2%	175,758	7.9%	317,586	11.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

[11] This is estimated using 2010-2014 American Community Survey data for number of households with no vehicles, average household size, and population age 18 and over.

[12] Defined as all persons living below the poverty line

Figure 1.4-7. Zero-Vehicle Households in the Corridor Communities

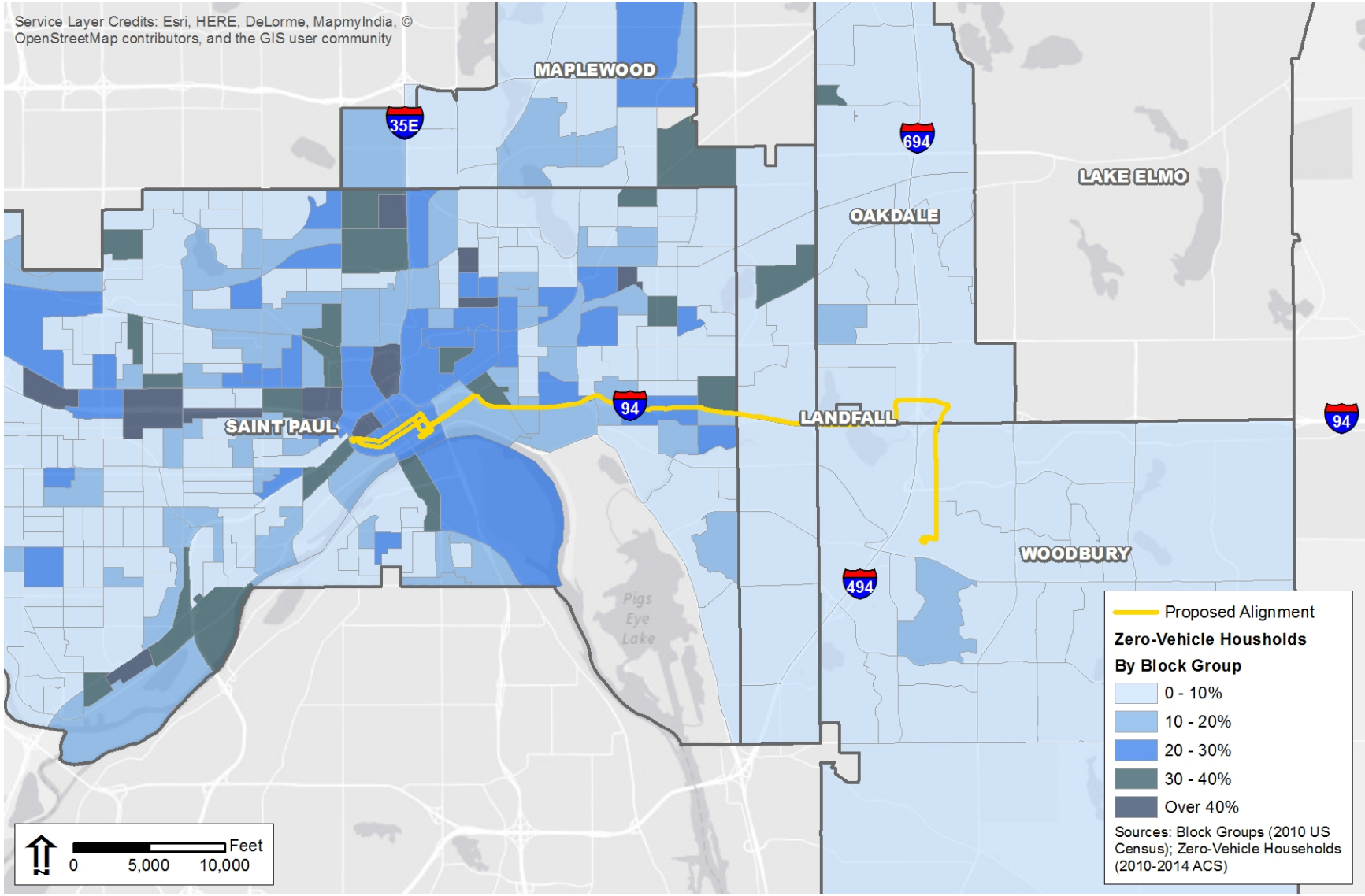
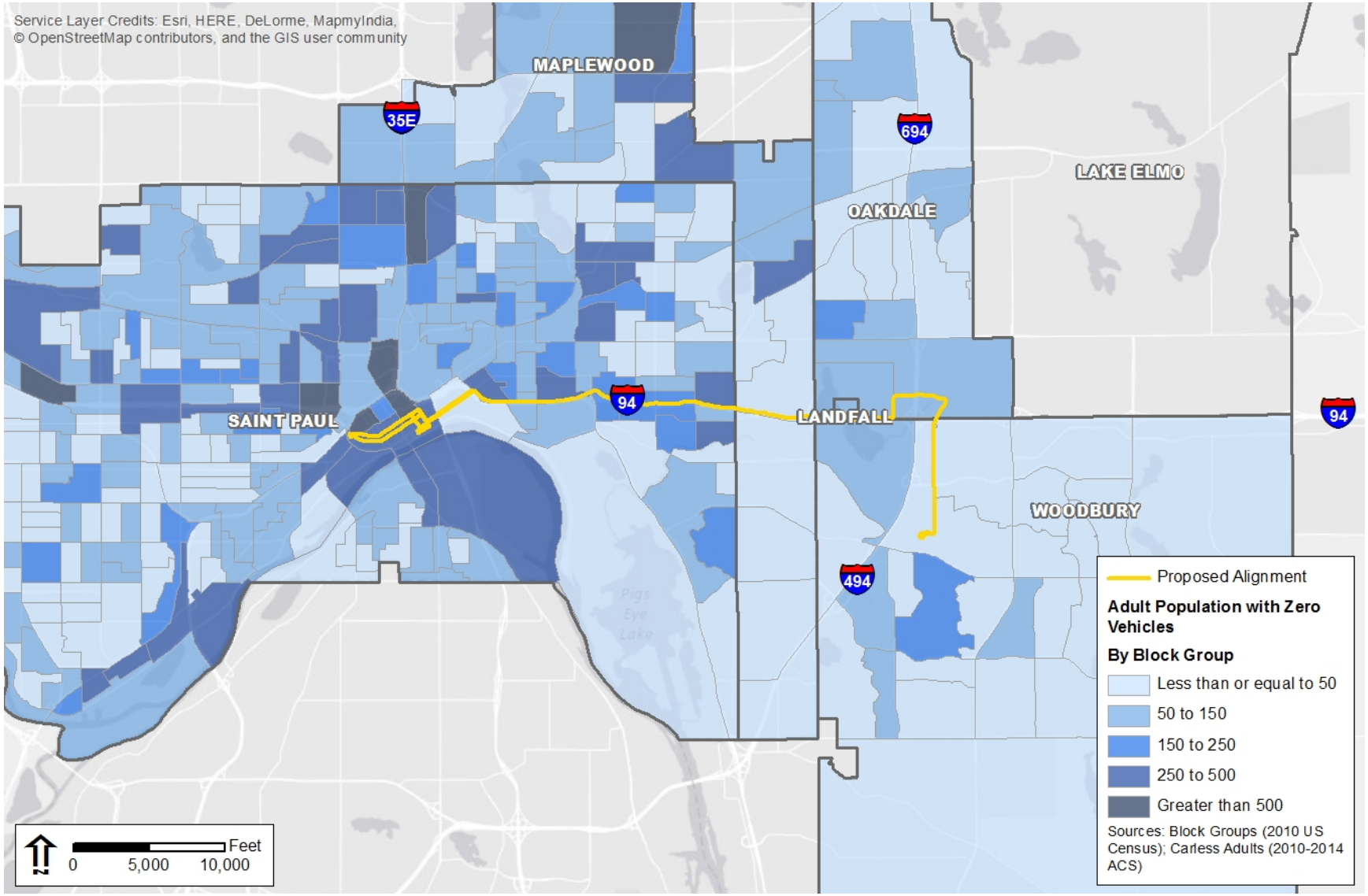


Figure 1.4-8. Adult Population with Zero Vehicles in the Corridor Communities



1.4.5 Local and Regional Objectives for Growth and Prosperity

Summary: *Without improved transit service, project area communities are limited in their ability to implement local and regional policies that encourage multimodal transportation, transit, compact development, and environmental preservation.*

Local, county, and regional governments in the Gateway Corridor project area have established planning frameworks for growth that emphasize multimodal transportation systems, encourage transit, and support maintaining and improving environmental quality.

1.4.5.1 REGIONAL PLANS

As the greater Twin Cities regional government, the Metropolitan Council has developed the *Thrive MSP 2040*, which provides a plan to ensure the orderly economic development of the seven-county region. It is focused around five outcomes that reflect a regional vision: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. The plan calls out specific ways in which Metropolitan Council authority should be leveraged to support each of these outcomes. Many of these place emphasis on transit and transit oriented development, including:

- Pivoting from expanding to maintaining our region's wastewater and highway infrastructure (Stewardship)
- Leveraging transit investments with higher expectations of land use (Stewardship)
- Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life needed for economic competitiveness (Prosperity)
- Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability (Equity)
- Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics and economic means (Livability)
- Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places (Livability)
- Operating the region's wastewater treatment and transit systems sustainably (Sustainability)

Building upon these and other outcomes, *Thrive MSP 2040* establishes four policies to guide growth in the region:

- Accommodate growth in a flexible, connected, and efficient manner
- Plan and invest in multimodal transportation choices to slow the growth of traffic congestion and serve the region's economic needs
- Encourage expanded choices in housing locations and types and improved access to jobs and opportunities
- Conserve, protect, and enhance the region's vital natural resources

1.4.5.2 COUNTY PLANS

Ramsey County and Washington County land use and transportation plans include policies and other language emphasizing transit and transit-oriented development. Key examples are provided in **Table 1.4-5.**

Table 1.4-5. Gateway Corridor County Plans for Growth and Transportation

Plan	Language/Content
Ramsey County 2030 Comprehensive Plan	The *Ramsey County 2030 Comprehensive Plan* adopts the policies outlined in the Metropolitan Council's *2030 Regional Development Framework* and further promotes multimodal transportation and transit solutions including transit-oriented development (TOD) and compact growth strategies. Specific citations are below. ▪ Page A-4: Policy 2. Plan and invest in multimodal transportation choices, based on the full range of costs and benefits, to slow the growth of congestion and serve the region's economic needs ▪ Page A-6: Goal. Promote multimodal transit and transportation solutions that effectively serve our citizens ▪ Page B-5: Transportation. Ramsey County will: (1) encourage compact development that will provide a mix of housing, jobs, and services within easy walking distance, (2) cluster jobs and commerce, and (3) design developments to accommodate walking, biking, or transit use. Linking transportation and land use planning will help provide a balance between the automobile and alternate forms of transportation. Due to the relationship between land use and transportation, Ramsey County and the municipalities should plan for future growth and transportation needs together.
Washington County 2030 Comprehensive Plan	Washington County's *2030 Comprehensive Plan* includes a series of policies and strategies aimed at effectively planning for and implementing transit (policies 3-18, 4-8, 4-9, 4-11) and encouraging TOD (policies 3-10, 4-12). The plan identifies the I-94 corridor as a potential future transitway, with reference to the Alternatives Analysis study. ▪ Policy 3-10: Encourage TOD, pedestrian-oriented, neotraditional, suburban-style growth that uses land in an efficient manner in locations that connect to transportation and transit systems ▪ Policy 3-18: Support land use patterns that efficiently connect housing, jobs, transportation, transit, and retail and commercial centers ▪ Policy 4-8: Support the delivery of appropriate levels and types of transit service to match the specific needs of the county, based on its unique values, geography, economy, and socio-economic profile ▪ Policy 4-9: Coordinate investment in transit infrastructure with land use and transportation planning ▪ Policy 4-11: Advocate and promote long-term investments in transit infrastructure that increase operating efficiency, lower operating costs, and increase ridership ▪ Policy 4-12: Support land use policies and densities that promote the development of transit supportive districts to focus transit service and capital investment

1.4.5.3 CITY AND OTHER LOCAL PLANS

Local land use plans for the corridor communities identify areas for compact growth along existing transit corridors, including I-94, and emphasize regional and local connections as critical

to economic competitiveness. Maintaining and improving environmental quality is a local priority within the corridor communities. Relevant elements of local plans are summarized in **Table 1.4-6**.

Table 1.4-6. Corridor Community Local Plans for Growth and Transportation

Plan	Language/Content
Saint Paul Land Use Plan	▪ The plan designates the following uses along the Gateway Corridor: downtown, mixed use corridor, residential corridor, transportation, industrial, opportunity sites, and neighborhood centers. The strategies below describe neighborhood centers and mixed use corridors more specifically in terms of their relation to transit and transit-oriented development. ▪ Strategy 1.2: Permit high density residential development in Neighborhood Centers, Mixed Use Corridors, the Central Corridor, and Downtown. For Mixed Use Corridors, the City should permit residential development of 30-150, including Neighborhood Centers within Mixed Use Corridors. Residential development in Downtown should be permitted at a density of 35-200 dwelling units per acre. ▪ Strategy 1.12: Balance the following objectives for Neighborhood Centers through the density and scale of development: accommodating growth, supporting transit use and walking, providing a range of housing types, providing housing at densities that support transit, and providing open space and recreational opportunities ▪ Strategy 1.14: Plan for growth in Neighborhood Centers ▪ Strategy 1.28: Promote conditions that support those who live and work along Mixed Use Corridors, including frequent transit service, vibrant business districts, and a range of housing choices
Saint Paul Transportation Plan	▪ The plan aims to "provide balance and choice," "support active lifestyles and a healthy environment," and "enhance and connect the city." As a part of these strategies, the plan notes that regional and local connections are critical to the City's competitiveness. The plan calls out the Union Depot as a critical hub for growing transportation connections. ▪ Page T-11: The map illustrating Saint Paul's preferred transitway network identifies the I-94 corridor as a transitway ▪ Strategy 2-6: Calls for Saint Paul to work with other agencies to study and implement new limited stop, express service, bus rapid transit, or rail service where ridership or future land use potential warrants

Plan	Language/Content
Maplewood Transportation Plan	Page 8-5: Transit Policies: ▪ Maplewood will work with regional transit agencies to help secure transit service that better serves the needs of the residents of the City ▪ Maplewood supports Metro Transit's construction of new or improved bus stops and shelters ▪ The City supports efforts by Metro Transit to…improve off-peak service and improve express service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis ▪ Maplewood supports efforts by other agencies to improve transit service in the City by the addition of transitways on the arterial roadways. When transitways are added to arterials, the City will encourage higher-density economic development and redevelopment near such corridors. ▪ The City should coordinate its sidewalk and trails plan to encourage walking, biking, and bus usage
Maplewood Land Use Plan	▪ Page 5-4: Goals 6-9 encourage coordinating land use planning with transportation and intensifying development along existing transit corridors, while maintaining and upgrading environmental quality
Landfall Village 2008 Policy Plan	▪ Policy 3: "It is the policy of the City of Landfall Village to protect its natural resources and environment while preserving the affordability of the community." ▪ Policy 6: "It is the policy of the City of Landfall Village to offer access to transit for all residents…The City will continue to work with Metropolitan Transit providers to increase the variety of transit destinations available to residents."
Oakdale Land Use and Redevelopment Plan	▪ Land Use Goal 2, Redevelopment Goals 1 & 2: Direct development where opportunity exists in a way that conserves and protects environmental features and amenities ▪ Page 7-19: Redevelopment/Transit Access, "When possible, connections to transit facilities should be made to enhance accessibility"
Oakdale Transportation Plan	▪ Goal 3 promotes an integrated approach to transportation and land use planning ▪ Page 8-19: The transit section identifies potential local incentives to encourage transit, as well as park-and-rides and car/van pool lots
Woodbury 2010 Vision and Guiding Principles	▪ Woodbury's Guiding Principles include, "provide for a safe and healthy community," "manage growth," and "plan for an effective transportation system"
Woodbury Land Use Plan	▪ High density residential and mixed land uses are directed to areas served by transit
Woodbury Transportation Plan	▪ The plan identifies the I-94 corridor as important to Woodbury's transportation system and development. It identifies the corridor as suitable for LRT or BRT to the east.

1.5 Goals and Objectives

The establishment of goals and objectives articulates the desired benefits of the proposed Gateway Corridor project and establishes a foundation for the definition of evaluation measures, including quantitative and qualitative criteria to be used in comparing the performance of the alternatives.

The following goals have been developed to serve as a framework to evaluate the alternatives under consideration for the Gateway Corridor project. Goals 1 and 2 (Tier 1 goals) identify the minimum requirements that an alternative would be expected to meet in order to continue to be considered. Goals 3-5 (Tier 2) reflect broader community goals and may be helpful in comparing alternatives that meet the Tier 1 goals. These goals, along with the identified project needs, provide the basis for the analysis of alternatives discussed in the EA.

Project goals and objectives are shown in **Table 1.5-1**.

Table 1.5-1. Project Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives		Measures
Tier 1 Goals			
Goal 1: Improve Mobility	1	Maximize number of people served (future)	▪ 2040 population and employment within ½ mile of stations ▪ Number of zero-car households within ½ mile of stations in 2040
	2	Maximize transit ridership	▪ Weekday transit trips ▪ New transit trips ▪ Total corridor-wide transit trips
	3	Maximize travel time savings	▪ Performance against regional guidelines ▪ Travel times during the morning peak hour compared to single occupant vehicle and express bus service
	4	Minimize traffic mobility impacts	▪ Changes in local street capacity and accessibility (intersection restrictions, lane reductions, traffic diversions)
Goal 2: Provide a Cost-Effective, Economically Viable Transit Option	5	Minimize costs and maximize cost-effectiveness	▪ Capital costs ▪ Annual operating and maintenance costs ▪ Cost-effectiveness

Goals	Objectives		Measures
Tier 2 Goals			
Goal 3: Support Economic Development	6	Maximize number of people served (existing)	▪ Population and employment within ½ mile of stations
	7	Maximize future development opportunities	▪ Capacity and likelihood of development and/or redevelopment in station areas
Goal 4: Protect the Natural Environmental Features of the Corridor	8	Minimize potential environmental impacts	▪ Acres of surface water (wetlands, waterbodies, and waterways), floodplain, and parkland impact ▪ Net new impervious surface ▪ Impacts to potential environmentally sensitive areas (historic districts, wild and scenic rivers, national river recreation areas)
Goal 5: Preserve and Protect Individual and Community Quality of Life	9	Maximize potential benefits to and minimize potential impacts on the community	▪ Consistency with land use and transportation plans ▪ Number of full and partial property acquisitions ▪ Impact on noise sensitive land uses
	10	Minimize adverse parking, circulation, and safety impacts	▪ Intersection closures ▪ Intersections converted to right-in/right-out ▪ Estimated loss of on-street parking ▪ Number of at-grade transitway street crossings