NOVEMBER 2025

RAIL TRANSIT STUDY

PREPARED FOR:

Tyler Area TAMPO

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Expect More. Experience Better.

Acknowledgements

The Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) initiated this Rail Transit Study to develop a vision for converting existing freight rail to passenger service in the Tyler area. This effort was made possible through the collaboration of numerous partners across the region.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 1
Table of Contents 3
List of Figures 3
Key Acronyms and Terms 4
Executive Summary 5
Introduction 6
About the Tyler Area MPO 8
Collaborating with Our Partners 8
Process 9
Existing Conditions Analysis 10
Review of Current Plans 10
Existing Transportation Network 11
Travel Market 11
Right-Of-Way Analysis 15
Passenger Experience Considerations 16
Peer Example – Denton A-Train 17
Long-Term Transit Vision 19
Phased Implementation Plan 21
Appendix ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Study Area 7
Figure 2: Transit Vision Implementation Steps 8
Figure 3: Existing Travel Patterns. 13
Figure 4: Activity Index 14
Figure 5: Right-of-Way Analysis 16
Figure 6: Vision Map 19

KEY ACRONYMS AND TERMS

- **Capital Investment Grants (CIG)** are a program of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding capital investments for transit including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, and bus rapid transit (BRT).
- The **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** provides financial and technical assistance to local public transportation systems.
- **High-Speed Rail (HSR)** is a long-distance passenger train system operating at speeds significantly higher than traditional rail, typically exceeding 125 mph on existing lines or 160 mph on newly built lines.
- **Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)**: A project selected from a range of options after a data-driven analysis.
- **Light Rail Transit (LRT)** is a medium-capacity transit system that typically operates at-grade and can run in mixed traffic or dedicated lanes. Unlike trams, LRT systems are faster and more segregated from traffic. Unlike heavy rail, LRT uses lighter, smaller vehicles and more flexible infrastructure.
- **Microtransit** is an on-demand transportation service that allows users to hail rides on a dynamic or individualized route, usually on a vehicle that is smaller than a typical city bus.
- **Right-of-Way (ROW)** is the land that a railroad owns or leases for its track and operations.
- **Tyler Area MPO** – Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Executive Summary

The Tyler Area MPO Rail Transit Study establishes a long-term rail transit vision for Smith County, focused on the feasibility of converting existing freight rail corridors to high-capacity passenger service. After analysis of existing conditions, travel demand, and public input, the study recommends a phased approach beginning with a north-south corridor from Whitehouse to Lindale via Downtown Tyler as Phase One. This segment was selected for its strong existing travel market, high job and population density, and broad stakeholder support. Extensions toward Troup, Mineola, and Longview are proposed for future phases based on projected growth, regional connectivity needs, and opportunities to link Tyler to existing Amtrak services and potential high-speed rail corridors.

Key findings driving this vision include:

- The north-south corridor, especially Downtown to Midtown, has four times as much travel demand compared to the east-west corridor, making it the most promising corridor for initial transit investment.
- Public and stakeholder engagement consistently prioritized the Downtown to Midtown segment, with additional interest in extending service to Whitehouse and Lindale to maximize ridership and regional impact.
- While the east-west corridor is expected to grow, it is not projected to surpass the north-south corridor in demand; however, future extensions toward Longview and Mineola could connect Tyler to broader intercity networks.
- A right-of-way analysis identified infrastructure constraints, particularly in Downtown Tyler and north of Lindale, which will require further study as part of the phased implementation plan.
- The proposed Phase One corridor could serve as a relief route for South Broadway Avenue, providing a transit alternative to help alleviate congestion.

This report recommends next steps including securing right-of-way, creating a regulatory framework for transit-supportive development, restoring fixed-route services near rail corridors, and advancing detailed corridor planning. Continued coordination among the Tyler MPO, Tyler Transit, and regional partners will be essential to realize the vision and position Tyler for future federal funding and plan implementation.

Introduction

As the City of Tyler and surrounding areas grow, shifts in employment and population have motivated an increased desire for alternative transportation options connecting key Tyler activity centers, as well as future regional transit routes. To address these long-term transportation needs, the Tyler Area MPO initiated this Rail Transit Study focused on the feasibility of using existing freight rail corridors for a high-capacity rail-based transit service in Tyler, with potential to expand through the surrounding region.

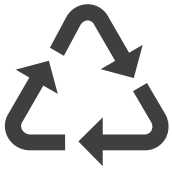
This Rail Transit Study was developed with three goals in consideration:

Mobility and Connectivity

Increase regional transportation choices by connecting activity centers with high-capacity transit that is fast and reliable.

Economic & Workforce Development

Develop a transit system that inspires economic development to promote growth in the region and national competitiveness.



Sustainability & Viability

Provide a cost-effective sustainable system that invests resources responsibly.

The following sections of this report address these three goals by evaluating the possibility of implementing a passenger rail system on the east/west and north/south rail corridors within Smith County, establishing a long-range vision for regional rail transit in the Tyler Area, and developing recommendations for next steps to implement the long-range rail transit vision.

Existing rail infrastructure considered as part of this study is depicted in **Figure 1** below, along with other relevant transportation projects within the project study area.

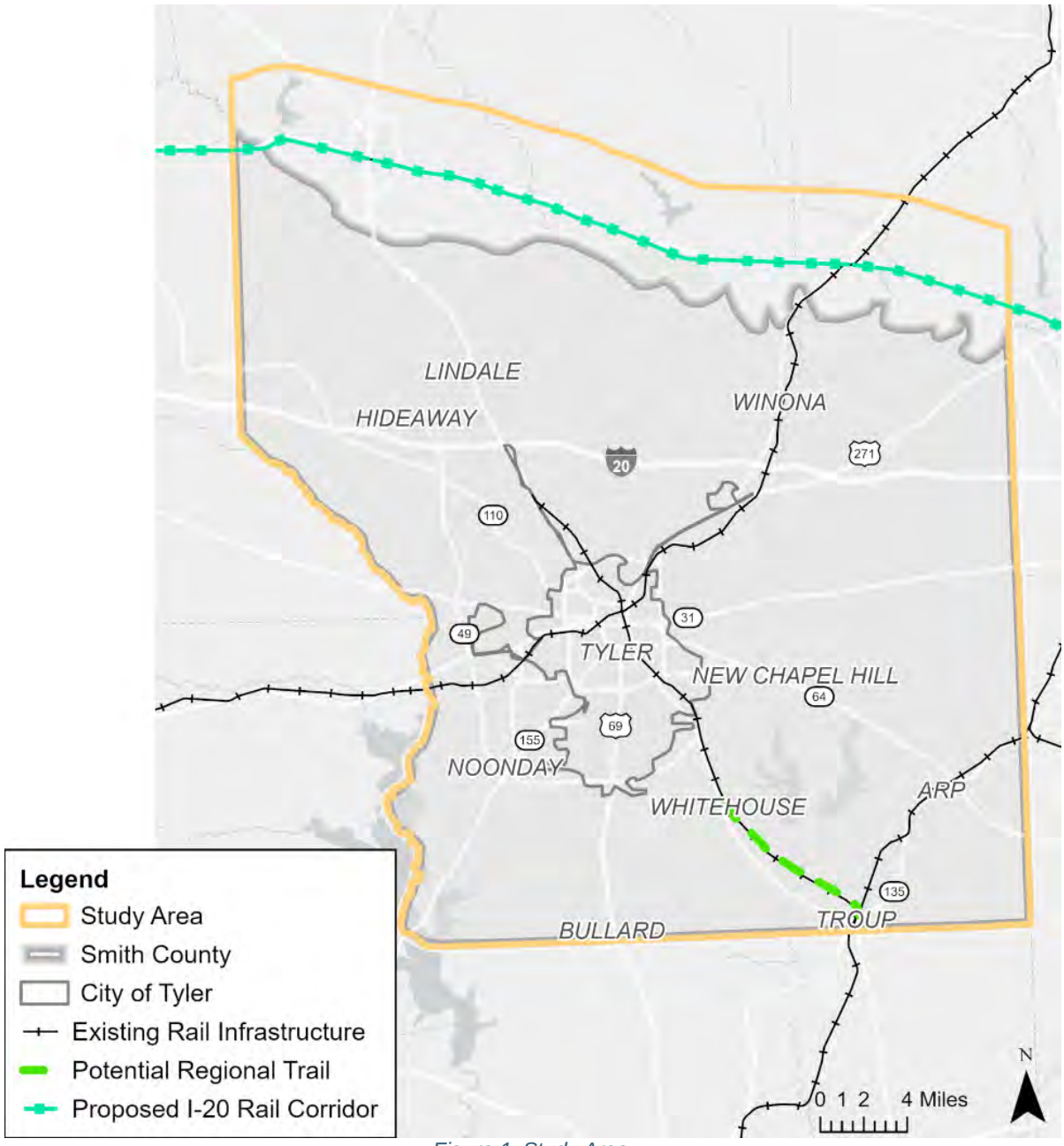


Figure 1: Study Area

This study sits at the beginning of a long-term process to implement high-capacity transit corridors in the region. Following the current long-range planning phase, future steps will include advanced planning, transportation improvement programs, corridor and service design, and ultimately, implementation and deployment of transit service, shown in **Figure 2** below.

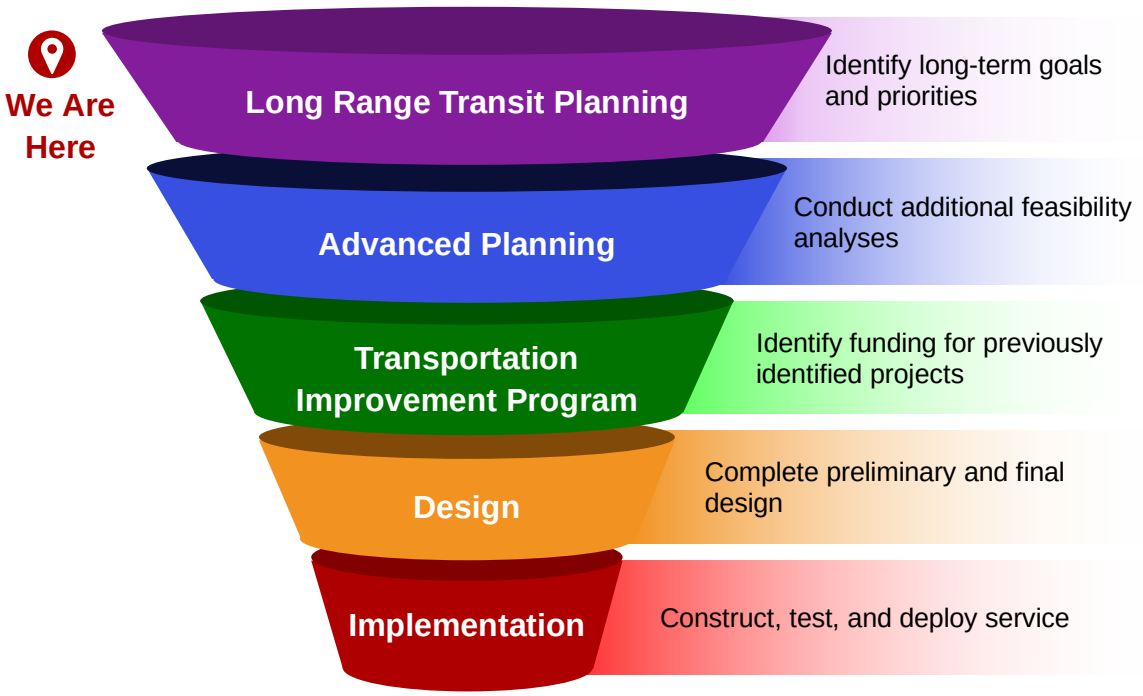


Figure 2: Transit Vision Implementation Steps

ABOUT THE TYLER AREA MPO

The Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization ("Tyler Area MPO"), established in 1974, is a federally designated regional transportation planning organization responsible for the Tyler metropolitan area. The Tyler Area MPO's jurisdiction includes most of Smith County, containing the cities of Arp, Bullard, Hideaway, Lindale, New Chapel Hill, Noonday, Troup, Tyler, Whitehouse, and Winona. Facilitating this Rail Transit Study is part of the Tyler Area MPO's role in prioritizing how federal transportation funding is utilized while supporting the economic, social, and environmental goals of the region.

COLLABORATING WITH OUR PARTNERS

The development of the Tyler MPO Rail Transit Study was made possible through a collaborative effort among key partners and stakeholders.

Guidance and input from local leadership and community representatives were integral throughout the study. A Steering Committee designated by the Tyler Area MPO and a Stakeholder Committee made up of local government agency and transportation organization representatives participated in a

series of engagement activities. These included three in-person sessions for each group. The participants in each group are provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Steering and Stakeholder Committee Participants

Steering Committee	Stakeholder Committee
Short- to mid-term timeline	**Long-term timeline**
City of Tyler focus	**Regional focus**
City of Tyler	City of Tyler
NETRMA	NETRMA
Texas Department of Transportation	Texas Department of Transportation
UT Health	UT Health
Trane Technologies	Tyler Area MPO
Tyler Junior College	Tyler Economic Development Council
	Smith County
	East Texas Council of Governments
	Christus Health

PROCESS

The Tyler Area MPO initiated planning efforts for high-capacity transit in the region following the schedule outlined in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: 2025 Rail Transit Study Schedule

Milestone / Meeting

Task Name	Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
Project Management										
Short Term Assessment		■								
Steering Committee				■					■	
Long Term Assessment							■			
Stakeholder Committee					■				■	
Public Involvement								■		
Final Report										■

Public engagement efforts conducted throughout the fall of 2025 helped guide the selection process and provided an understanding of local transit needs and priorities. A **Public Engagement Report** was developed summarizing all public engagements. Additionally, findings from the map-based survey, written survey, and town hall can be found in the **Appendix**, along with the **Public Involvement Plan**.

Existing Conditions Analysis

To understand the existing landscape of transit within the study area and identify opportunities for long-term high-capacity rail service, the Rail Study reviewed relevant previous transit and transportation plans, analyzed the existing transportation network and existing travel patterns, and provided a peer case study.

REVIEW OF CURRENT PLANS

A review of previous plans informed the development of the Tyler Area MPO Rail Transit Study. These previous plans were identified by the Tyler Area MPO due to their potential impact on growth patterns, development priorities, and transit opportunities for the Tyler Area. The Tyler Area MPO began developing its vision for high-capacity transit corridors in the Tyler Area by leveraging ongoing research and community feedback collected in these plans, described in **Table 3**. A complete **Previous Plan Review** document is provided in the **Appendix**.

Table 3: Review of Current Plans

Year	Plan Name	Sponsor	Key Findings/Purpose
2024	Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory and Assessment	Tyler Area MPO	Corridors being considered for future LRT development would require at-grade crossing safety improvements.
2023	Downtown Tyler Traffic Study	Tyler Area MPO	Growth around downtown Tyler may increase travel demand while roadway conversions may change how people move around.
2021	Tyler Texas Transit Route Study	Tyler Area MPO	Recommends serving key destinations in Tyler with frequent and direct fixed bus routes.
2019	Texas Rail Plan	Texas Department of Transportation	Long-term Texas rail projects mentioned largely exclude the Tyler area, except for potential Amtrak passenger rail from DFW to Meridian.
2019	Active Tyler Transportation Plan	Tyler Area MPO	Tyler's expanding active transportation network should be intentionally integrated with transit stops.
2017	Dallas/Fort Worth to Meridian Passenger Rail Study	Texas Department of Transportation	Improvements to the Amtrak corridor could increase passenger rail service to nearby Mineola and Longview.
2017	Rose Complex Master Plan	City of Tyler	Development of the Rose Complex as a major tourism, events, and economic center may increase demand for transit.
2012	Midtown Area Development Plan	City of Tyler	Institutional expansion could lead to more high-density mixed-use development adjacent to rail ROW in Midtown.

2010	Texas College Area Development Plan	City of Tyler	Recommends upzoning the rail-adjacent area around Texas College.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Rail Corridors

Two Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) freight rail lines cross through downtown Tyler and connect to the proposed high-speed rail along I-20 (see **Figure 1**). This study explored whether the rail lines could be adapted for passenger service to better serve the City of Tyler and Smith County. More details are provided in the **Shared Use Rail Agreements**, **Appendix 4**.

Transit

Until early 2025, Tyler Transit operated five fixed bus routes within the City of Tyler, but budget constraints prompted a shift to a more cost-effective service model. In January 2025, Tyler Transit discontinued the fixed bus routes and launched on-demand microtransit using smaller vehicles that pick up passengers at former bus stops.

Greyhound provides intercity bus service connecting Tyler to Dallas, Longview, and Shreveport.

Active Transportation

In 2021, the City of Tyler had 25 miles of on-street bike lanes and routes. Plans recommend expanding to 300 miles of bike facilities, including a proposed multiuse path along the rail corridor between Whitehouse and Troup (see **Figure 1**).

Proposed High-Speed Rail

State and regional agencies have been engaged in planning an 815-mile high-speed rail (HSR) line along I-20, connecting Fort Worth to Atlanta, with possible stops in Mineola and Longview near Tyler. Though in the segment nearest Tyler, the corridor is designed to run parallel to US Highway 80 where the Texas Eagle Amtrak route currently runs, before merging with I-20 farther east.

TRAVEL MARKET

To understand the travel market along Tyler's freight rail corridors, the Tyler Area MPO analyzed existing travel patterns, job and population distribution, and future growth projections. The primary takeaways for this analysis are shown below:

Existing Travel Patterns	Jobs and Population	Future Growth
• North/south rail corridor sees about 4x more trips than east/west. • High travel between Downtown and Midtown.	• Most jobs and residences are within Tyler city limits. • 4x more jobs and population along north/south corridor compared to east/west, especially Downtown to Midtown. • South Broadway is a major cluster for jobs and population.	• East/west corridor expected to grow. • Regional growth projected outside city limits. • North/south corridor will continue to have highest job and population density.

This analysis identified the north-south corridor, especially from Downtown to Midtown, as the strongest travel market. While future east-west growth is expected, it will not surpass demand generated along the north-south corridor. Opportunities to connect with Longview or Mineola hold long-term strategic value, as these nodes could link Tyler to the proposed HSR in coming decades.

The analysis of existing travel patterns shown in **Figure 3** showed strong concentrations of trips to Texas College, Downtown, Midtown, and South Broadway commercial areas. The Activity Index

shown in **Figure 4** demonstrates where jobs and population are currently concentrated. More details about the existing conditions analysis are available in **Appendix 5**.

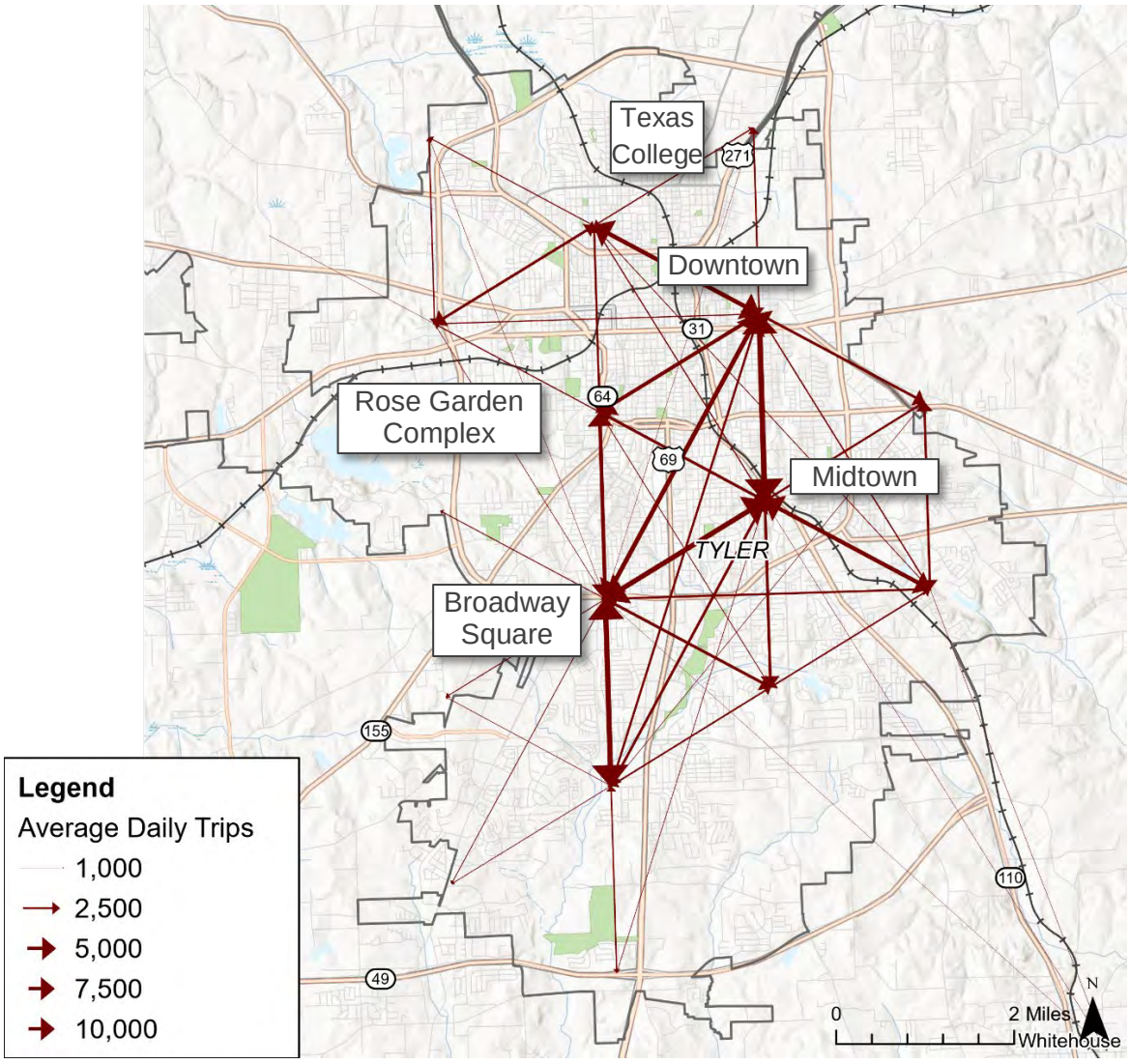


Figure 3: Existing Travel Patterns.

Midtown

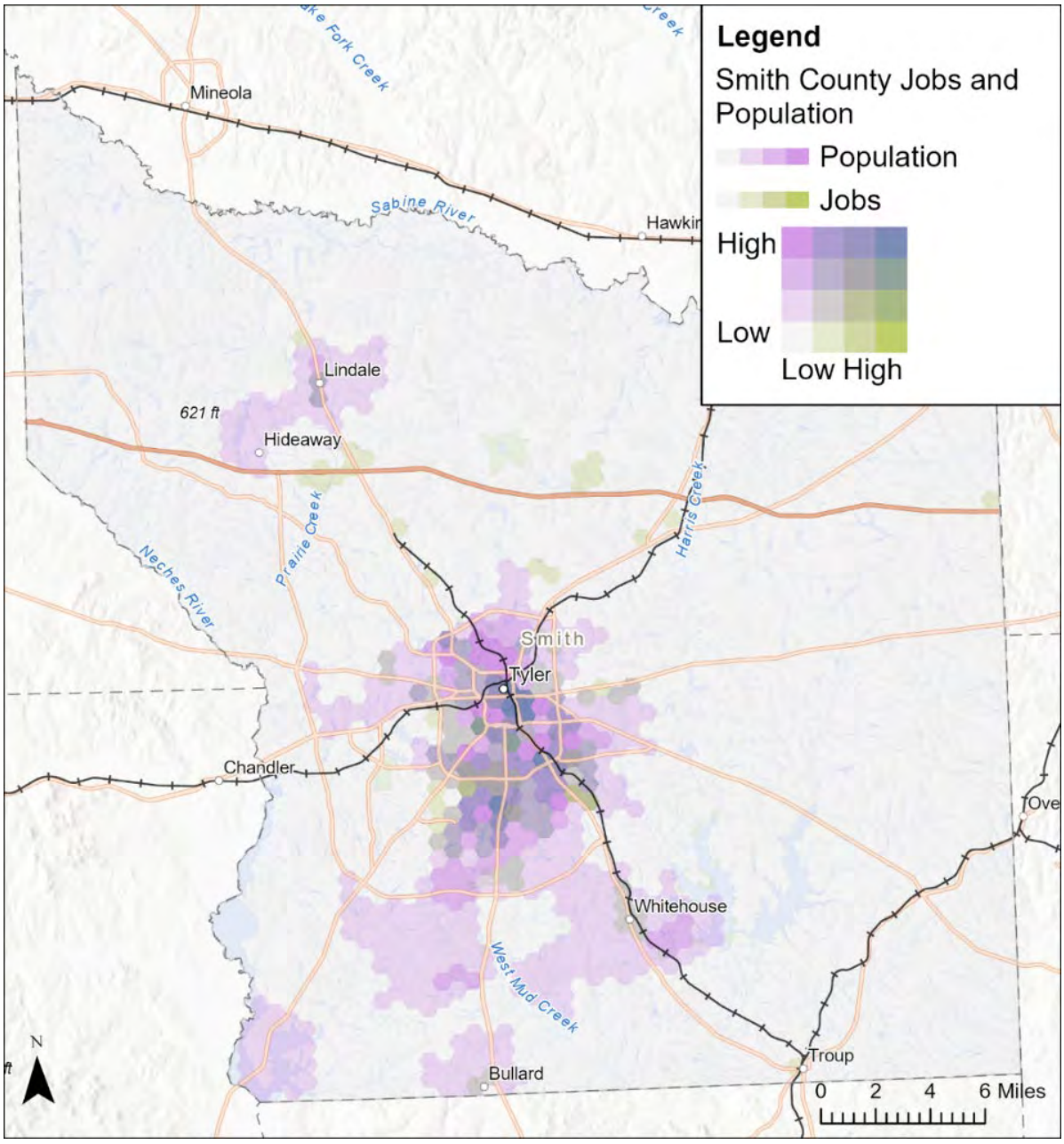
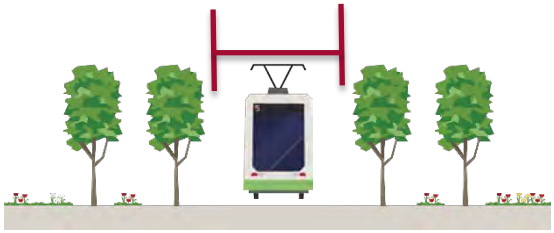


Figure 4: Activity Index[1]

[1] *Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Survey*

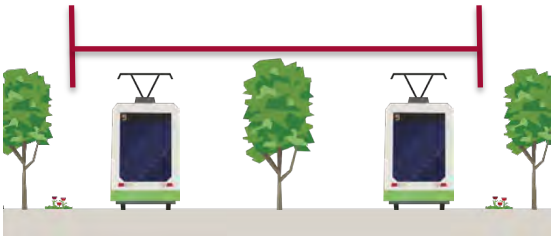
RIGHT-OF-WAY ANALYSIS

To identify potential constraints that could impact future transit development, the Rail Transit Study analyzed the width and high-level condition of existing rail corridors. Four alignment scenarios were considered to represent varying levels of rail infrastructure investment: minimum single track, standard single track, double track, and double track with an adjacent trail.

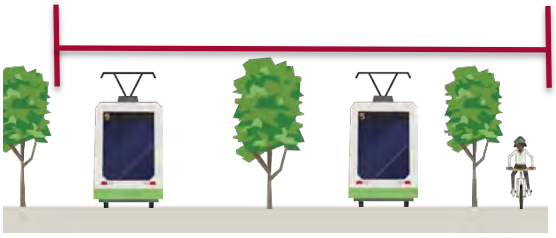


20 ft – One track (minimum)

40 ft – One track (typical)



60 ft – Two tracks



80 ft – Two tracks + trail

The ROW analysis revealed space limitations between Whitehouse and Troup and some constraints in Downtown Tyler. In contrast, the east and north corridors had minimal physical barriers. Areas with the most constrained ROW are shown in dark blue in **Figure 5** below. Expanding ROW would be necessary in all scenarios to support double-track service, and even single-track service may require targeted ROW expansions.

Additional infrastructure challenges were also identified in the ROW analysis. Downtown Tyler lacks train signalization, requiring substantial upgrades for safe passenger service. The north corridor has no existing track beyond Tyler city limits, meaning new infrastructure would need to be built. The east-west corridor's track conditions are uncertain and likely require further investigation and investment.

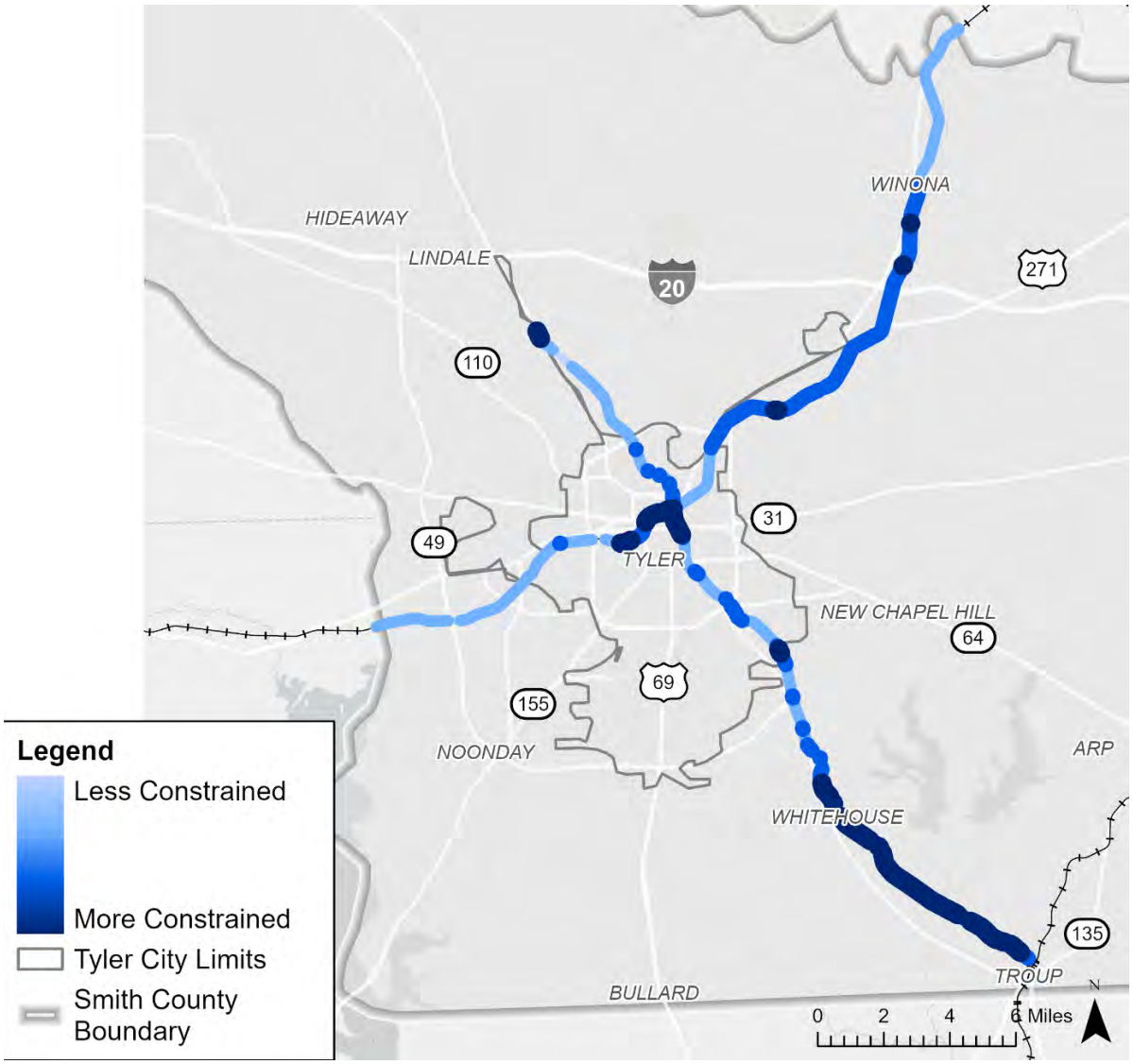


Figure 5: Right-of-Way Analysis

PASSENGER EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis of ROW constraints revealed that implementing rail service, particularly through developed areas like Downtown Tyler, would require substantial investment and infrastructure upgrades. Balancing infrastructure costs with passenger experience tradeoffs will be a major component of future design phases, so it is important to understand what makes transit appealing to riders.

To provide service that is attractive and competitive with driving, it is essential to consider the full passenger journey, including first and last mile connections. Most importantly, for Phase 1 to attract strong ridership, maximum travel speeds must exceed 60mph. Reaching these speeds will require rebuilding and significantly upgrading the existing rail infrastructure.

While faster travel times are ideal, transit can still appeal to riders at lower speeds. Benefits such as avoiding traffic, reduced parking costs, and the ability to relax during the trip contribute to a positive passenger experience. More background about the travel time and passenger experience considerations are provided in **Appendix 5**.

PEER EXAMPLE – DENTON A-TRAIN

To better understand how similar communities have approached freight-to-passenger rail conversion, the Tyler Area MPO studied several national examples and found Denton, Texas to be the most comparable to Tyler. Denton shares similar land use patterns, demographics, and a steadily growing population. Unlike Tyler, Denton has already developed a higher transit capacity through its local bus and commuter rail services.

The Denton A-Train is a 21-mile commuter rail line connecting Denton to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) system. Part of the corridor was purchased by the City of Denton in 1993 and initially used as a rail trail. Today, the A-Train serves approximately 700 passengers daily. Based on the transit capture analysis, Tyler's Downtown-to-Midtown corridor may reach similar ridership levels with targeted growth and investment.

Shared-Use Rail Agreements

Denton's experience also helped the Tyler Area MPO understand the process of converting freight corridors to passenger use through shared-use agreements. In Tyler, this would involve engaging UPRR, the current owner and operator of the freight lines, during the next phase of planning.

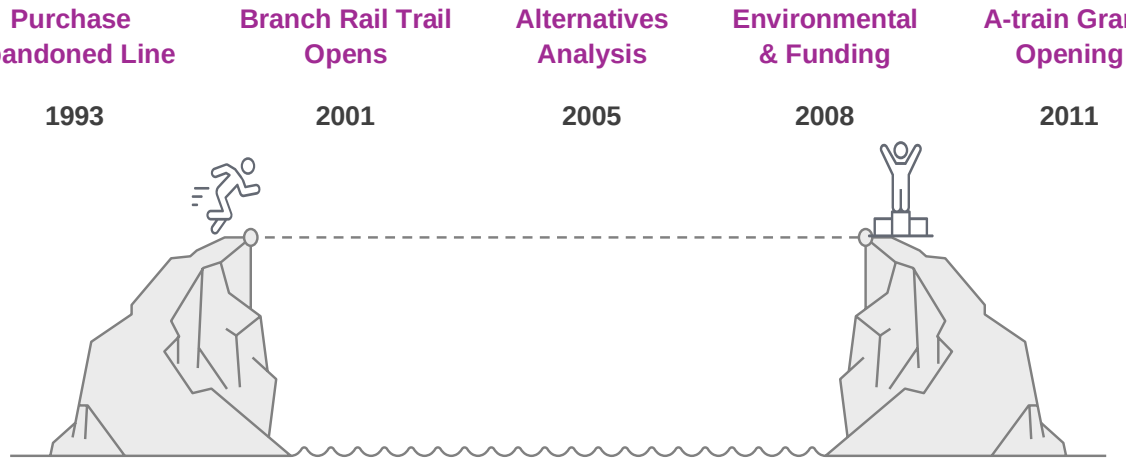
When initiating a shared-use agreement, agencies must present a clear operational proposal, including service frequency, station locations, and hours of operation, while aligning with broader policy goals. To achieve mutually beneficial results, the negotiation should be initiated after first understanding freight priorities, involving decision-makers, and translating operational needs into feasible plans.

There are several models for sharing rail infrastructure with a freight operator:

- **Infrastructure Owner Model:** The transit agency owns the corridor (as in Denton).
- **Shared Infrastructure:** The transit agency pays to use freight-owned tracks.
- **Shared Corridor**: The transit agencies own adjacent right-of-way.

The DCTA A-train is an example in which DCTA owns the infrastructure.

DCTA: From Trail to Rail



Denton's journey from abandoned rail corridor to active commuter service was a multi-decade effort, beginning with the purchase of the right-of-way in 1993 and culminating in the launch of the A-Train in 2011. This timeline illustrates the level of planning, coordination, and investment required to convert freight corridors to passenger service. For Tyler, the next phase will involve advanced planning to prepare for the shared-use rail agreement and federal funding processes.

Long-Term Transit Vision

Based on the existing conditions analysis, public input, and guidance from stakeholder and steering committees, the Tyler Area MPO developed a conceptual route designed to maximize ridership, connect key destinations, and address local transit needs. The proposed vision begins with Phase One, a north-south corridor running from Whitehouse to Lindale through Downtown Tyler. Phase One is intended to address congestion along South Broadway by offering a high-capacity transit relief route to the east. Future extensions could link this corridor to Troup, Mineola, and Longview.

While the conceptual route focuses on rail corridors, the broader transit network should also account for major destinations like Tyler Pounds Regional Airport and other high-demand corridors such as the South Broadway corridor. While not located on existing rail alignments, future planning should include strategies to connect these locations to support a cohesive regional network. The transit vision is shown in **Figure 6**.

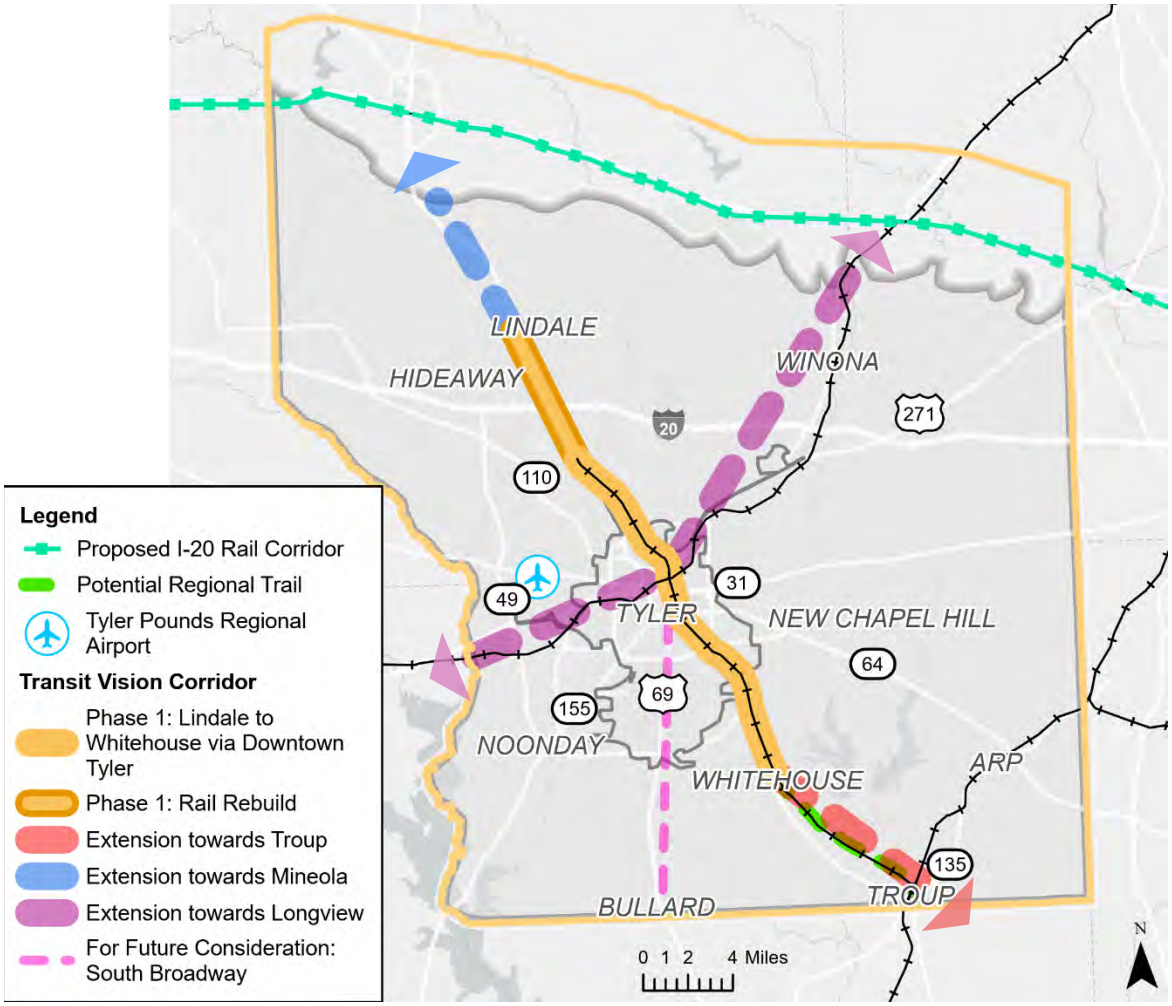


Figure 6: Vision Map

Phase 1: Whitehouse to Lindale via Downtown Tyler

The initial vision for Phase One began as a short rail segment connecting Downtown and Midtown. Public and stakeholder input supported extending the route to span from Whitehouse to Lindale, forming the backbone of a future regional transit network.

Existing trip patterns, job concentrations, and population density indicate that Phase One has the strongest ridership potential of all options studied. Survey responses emphasized the Downtown-to-Midtown segment as a top priority, and map-based survey feedback revealed interest in destinations throughout the corridor, including Lindale, Texas College, Tyler Junior College, Christus Health and Whitehouse. These responses supported extending the northern terminus to Lindale and the southern terminus to Whitehouse.

Travel pattern analysis confirmed strong alignment with this corridor, particularly between Downtown and Midtown, where jobs and population are concentrated and projected to remain so through 2050. Phase One could serve as an east-side relief route for South Broadway, supporting congestion relief for one of Tyler's most traveled corridors. Population clusters to the north in Lindale and to the south in Whitehouse further support the corridor's extended reach.

This corridor presents notable challenges. The northern segment to Lindale lacks existing rail infrastructure and would require new construction. Downtown Tyler's limited right-of-way may pose cost and land-use challenges, but serving this area remains essential due to its density of jobs and destinations.

Operationally, the north-south corridor containing Phase One presents fewer freight conflicts than the east-west corridor, where UPRR trains still run regularly. Substantial infrastructure upgrades would be needed throughout the corridor to convert freight tracks for passenger use. Freight rail curves must be straightened to support safe passenger speeds around 60mph, which is key for capturing riders. Existing tracks along Phase One offer the advantage of established right-of-way and compatible surrounding infrastructure.

Key destinations, including Tyler Pounds Regional Airport, the Rose Complex, Mineola, Winona, Longview, Bullard, and Noonday, remain unserved by Phase One. It also does not reach the proposed high-speed rail corridor or existing Amtrak stations north of Tyler along US Highway 80. Future planning should explore the following extension options and consider complementary non-rail transit services to build a truly connected regional network.

Extension towards Longview

Shown in purple on the Vision Map (see **Figure 6**), this would be the longest extension of the proposed options. The alignment offers potential to connect Tyler with Longview, it's largest neighboring city, which has a staffed Amtrak station and may provide a stronger link to future high-speed rail than Mineola. The corridor could serve Winona and Big Sandy to the northeast, and Chandler, Lake Palestine, and the Rose Complex to the west, while also bringing service closer to the Tyler Pounds Regional Airport. Growth projections indicate job and population increases along this east-west corridor by 2050, making it an important candidate for future transit investment. Existing freight rail operates along the entire corridor, which introduces operational challenges that would need to be addressed by entering a shared use agreement or purchasing the corridor outright.

Extension towards Mineola

The extension towards Mineola, shown in blue on the Vision Map (see **Figure 6**), was proposed primarily because Mineola is an existing Amtrak stop and a potential station on the proposed high-speed rail project. Unlike the Longview extension, which positions passengers closer to Shreveport, this route offers a stronger connection towards Dallas.

Extension towards Troup

The proposed Troup extension, shown in red on the Vision Map (see **Figure 6**), builds on existing plans to develop a regional rail-to-trail corridor between Whitehouse and Troup along the abandoned rail tracks. As demonstrated by the Denton A-Train example, converting a rail corridor to a recreational trail can be an effective first step toward future passenger rail service.

Other Transit Considerations

Public engagement, stakeholder feedback, and travel demand analysis consistently highlighted South Broadway as a corridor in need of transit service. This major commercial corridor carries substantial traffic and employment activity but currently lacks fixed-route transit. The Tyler Area MPO also heard strong interest in connecting to Tyler Pounds Regional Airport, which is not addressed by the regional transit vision. Even with the Longview extension, tracks still run about five miles away from the airport, requiring an additional connection.

While this report focuses on rail corridors, future planning should integrate these destinations into the broader transit network. Connections along South Broadway, the airport, and other high-demand areas should be considered for complementary transit services.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This phased implementation plan outlines the key actions necessary to transition from planning to construction of a light rail system, while building transit ridership and institutional capacity along the way.

Foundational Actions: Begin Now and Sustain

Transit-Supportive Development

Prioritize mixed-use and denser development around corridors and implement recommendations from existing area plans. The City of Tyler's forthcoming comprehensive plan, Tyler Tomorrow, may include recommendations for mixed-use, transit-supportive development in corridor areas, which could be prioritized. Progress towards corridor-readiness should be tracked using indicators like increased residential and employment density, corridor-specific planning efforts, and zoning changes that enable more dense and mixed-use development.

Restore Fixed Bus Service

Restore fixed-route transit along roads near transit vision rail corridors to build transit-oriented transportation habits. The 2021 Transit Study provides a foundation for identifying priority routes. In addition to reinstating service, improving bus speed can help make transit a viable alternative to driving. Monitoring ridership trends will help determine when the system is ready for further investment.

Interim Use of Acquired Right-of-Way

As implementation progresses, there may be periods when ROW is acquired but rail construction remains years away. During these interim phases, the Tyler Area MPO and its partners could consider activating the corridor through temporary uses that align with long-term goals. Given that the corridor follows key travel patterns, it presents a valuable opportunity to develop rail trails and complementary active transportation infrastructure. These interim uses can build public familiarity with the corridor, support multimodal travel, and demonstrate early benefits of the corridors while planning, funding, and design for light rail are underway.

Rail Corridor Implementation Steps

The following steps outline the path to converting existing freight rail infrastructure into a rail transit system in alignment with the region's long-term transit vision. These steps focus on the Phase One corridor but are applicable to all corridors within the vision.

Step 1: Identify Organizational Structure

For the Phase One corridor to be advanced, representatives of Tyler and the surrounding region must identify the organization which will take the lead in further developing the project. This organization could be a new entity, such as a Regional Transportation Authority, or it could be an expansion of responsibility for an existing organization in the region. This agency should eventually be capable of administering, through in-house staff or consultant staff, advanced planning, program development, and financial planning. In addition, the agency should eventually apply for federal recipient status, to be eligible to receive and administer federal funding to support the Phase One program.

Step 2: Corridor Refinement and Alternatives Analysis

The Phase One corridor identified in the Rail Transit Study should be further refined through detailed planning and evaluation. This includes conducting an Alternatives Analysis, a required step in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grant (CIG) process. This analysis will help determine the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), develop station areas, and define service characteristics. These efforts will lay the groundwork for preliminary engineering and environmental review.

The timing of these advanced planning efforts should be informed by conditions that indicate growing demand or operational constraints. These indicative conditions include a significant increase in the serviceable market such that projected trips align with peer systems, limitations emerging within existing transit services, and rising congestion that lengthens travel times and reduces economic productivity. Additionally, momentum behind the I-20 Corridor rail project would signal an opportunity to advance planning in coordination with regional initiatives.

Step 3 (can happen at any time): Interim Improvements for High-Capacity Transit

To build ridership and demonstrate demand, interim transit solutions should be considered. A pilot project using branded buses along State Highway 110, parallel to the Phase One rail corridor, could serve as a testbed for future service. To maximize the effectiveness of this pilot service, it is critical that these services offer travel times that are competitive with driving to attract new riders and build a strong case for rail investment. To support faster buses as part of this pilot service, Bus Rapid Transit

(BRT) improvements should be considered, including signal priority, bus-only lanes, and enhanced bus stations.

Step 4: Acquire Right-of-Way or Access to Right-of-Way to Support Phase One

Next, the lead organization should identify and secure access to the rail corridor ROW through shared-use agreements or purchase. The lead organization should be positioned to act quickly if an opportunity for outright purchase from UPRR arises. If outright purchase is not immediately feasible, the leading organization can negotiate for a shared-use agreement with UPRR

Step 5: Rail Corridor Implementation

Once the LPA is selected, the project should be advanced through formal adoption into regional transportation plans. The MPO and its partners should pursue state and federal funding opportunities, initiate engineering and environmental processes, and continue stakeholder engagement to maintain momentum. Finally, the rail corridor can continue into design, construction, and implementation.

Funding

To pursue federal funding, the Tyler MPO and its partners must first establish a governance structure and organization to lead the development of the program. Completing the Alternatives Analysis will be a critical early milestone to support entry into the FTA's CIG program. Demonstrating strong local financial commitment by leveraging local bond measures will enhance the competitiveness of the application and signal regional readiness for investment.

List of Appendices

1. Public Engagement Report
    a. Public Engagement Summary
    b. Stakeholder Outreach Summary
    c. Virtual Town Hall Presentation
2. Public Involvement Plan
3. Previous Plan Review
4. Shared Use Rail Agreements
5. Existing Conditions Analysis
6. Travel Time Analysis

NOVEMBER 2025

Appendix 1: Public Engagement Report

Stakeholder Outreach Summary

RAIL TRANSIT STUDY

PREPARED FOR:

Tyler Area TAMPO

PREPARED BY:

Kimley»Horn

Expect More. Experience Better.

Steering and Stakeholder Committee Outreach

Over the course of the Tyler LRT study, both a Steering Committee and a Stakeholder Committee were convened to provide input on the conceptual transit vision. The Steering Committee and Stakeholder Committee each met twice individually, followed by a final joint meeting.

The Steering Committee maintained a local focus, guiding the initial assessment of rail feasibility and identifying key destinations within Tyler. The Steering Committee consisted of representatives from:

- The City of Tyler
- Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NETRMA)
- Texas Department of Transportation
- University of Texas Health
- Trane Technologies
- Tyler Junior College

The Stakeholder Committee had a broader regional perspective, contributing to the development of a long-range transit vision and supporting integration with other intercity rail projects. The Stakeholder Committee consisted of representatives from:

- The City of Tyler
- Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NETRMA)
- Texas Department of Transportation
- University of Texas Health
- Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TAMPO)
- Tyler Economic Development Council
- Smith County
- East Texas Council of Governments
- Christus Health

This appendix summarizes the feedback received at each Steering and Stakeholder Committee meeting and includes the slide decks used to facilitate these discussions.

STEERING AND STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Steering Committee #1 – May 1, 2025

- The Steering Committee identified the connection between Midtown Tyler and Downtown Tyler as the highest priority corridor in the region.
- Members noted that anticipated growth outside of Tyler, especially to the east and west, represents potential opportunities for future expansion.
- The committee recognized planned industrial development along I-20 near Lindale as a potential opportunity for future connections.

Stakeholder Committee #1 – May 13, 2025

- The Stakeholder Committee expressed interest in aligning the transit vision with planned trail projects.
- Members requested information on the right-of-way available along existing rail corridors and explored opportunities for a second track to expand corridor capacity.

Steering Committee #2 – August 13, 2025

- The committee recommended extending the Phase 1 alignment from Lindale in the north to Grande Boulevard in the south.
- Members suggested generalizing potential future extensions to the north and south to keep options open for future consideration.

Stakeholder Committee #2 – August 14, 2025

- The committee reiterated the desire to align future rail with the trail project between Whitehouse and Troup.
- Members emphasized the importance of considering future connections to Tyler Pounds Regional Airport and along South Broadway Avenue in the long-term plan.

Steering Committee and Stakeholder Committee #2 (Combined) – October 10, 2025

- Both committees discussed and approved the proposed long-term transit vision.

NOVEMBER 2025

Appendix 1: Public Engagement Report

Public Engagement Summary

RAIL TRANSIT STUDY

PREPARED FOR:

Tyler Area TAMPO

PREPARED BY:

Kimley»Horn

Expect More. Experience Better.

Public Engagement Summary

The project team led a three-pronged public engagement effort in the Fall of 2025 to inform and shape the regional transit vision for Smith County. Engagement activities included a map-based online survey, a written online survey, and a virtual town hall, each designed to gather input on transit needs, priorities, and preferences. The surveys and town hall were advertised with a press release, and on the City of Tyler website.

MAP-BASED SURVEY

Hosted on a PublicCoordinate website from September 11 to October 7, 2025, this interactive map invited users to drop pins indicating desired transit destinations. Categories included Home, Work/School, Recreation and Entertainment, Shopping and Errands, Health Care, and Civic Services. The primary takeaways from the map-based survey are shown below and in Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3.

- 259 pins submitted, with high engagement in the Work/School category (86 pins and 86 upvotes)
- Top destinations aligned with the proposed rail corridor, especially Downtown to Midtown
- Outliers included South Broadway and long-distance destinations (Dallas, Shreveport, Houston).

Figure 1: Snapshot of PublicCoordinate Map-Based Survey with Public Pins

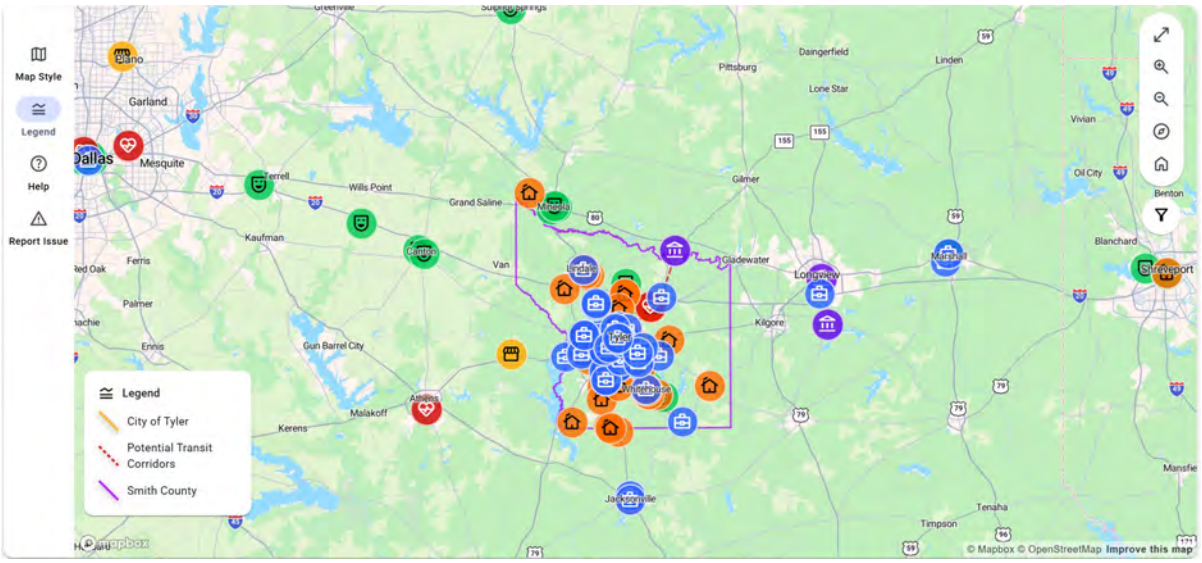


Figure 2: PublicCoordinate Map-Based Survey Public Pins, Excludes Several Pins Outside of Smith County

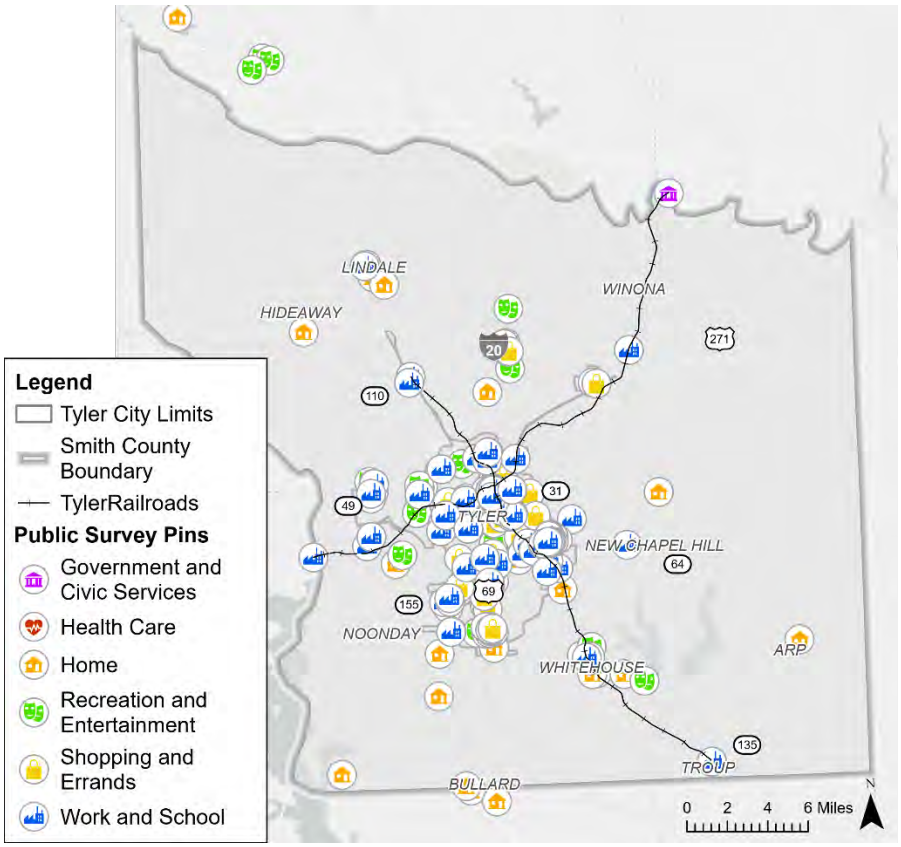
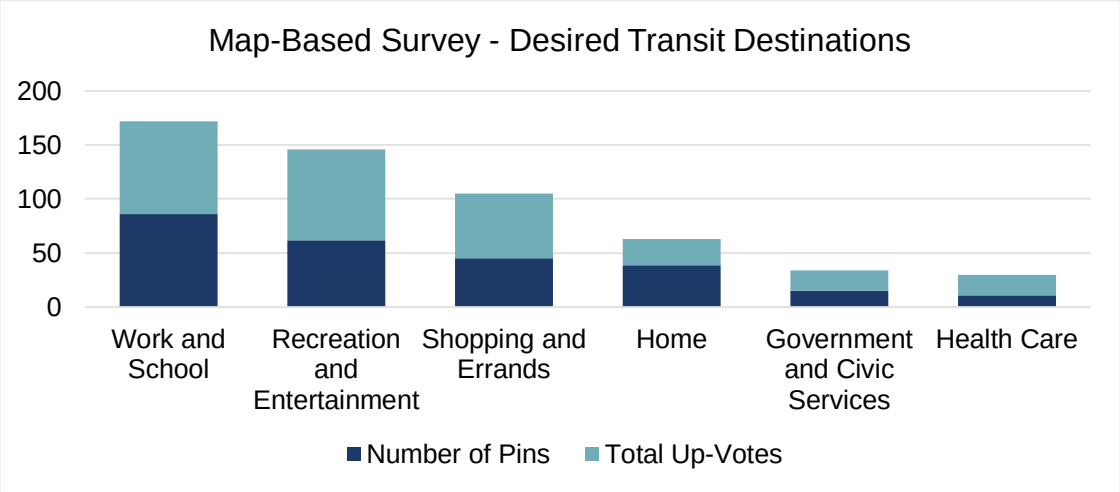


Figure 3: Map-Based Survey Results - Desired Transit Destinations



WRITTEN SURVEY

Between September 11 and October 7, 2025, a written survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey to gather public input on transit needs and preferences. A total of 720 individuals participated; the majority indicated they rarely use transit today but would be interested in doing so if improvements were made. Respondents were predominantly between the ages of 25 and 34, aligning with Tyler's median age, and expressed strong interest in reducing car trips and using transit for a variety of purposes. These survey results are shown in Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6 below.

Figure 4: Frequency of Public Transportation Use

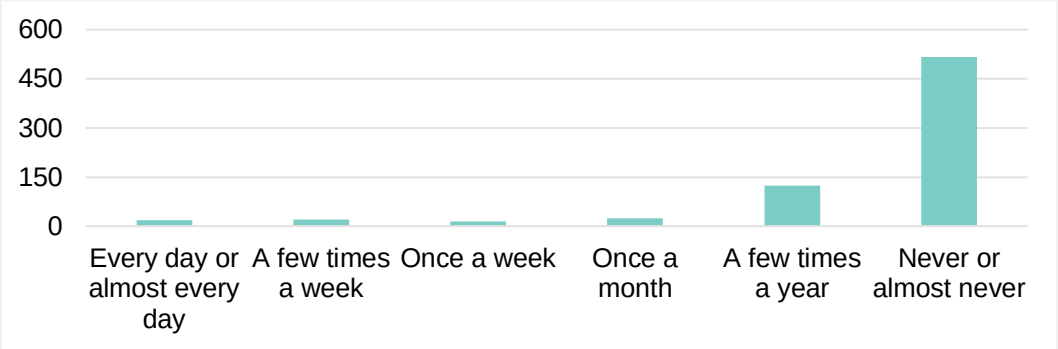


Figure 5: Age of Respondents

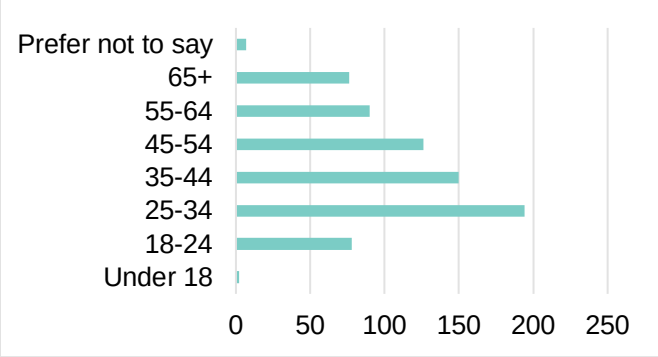
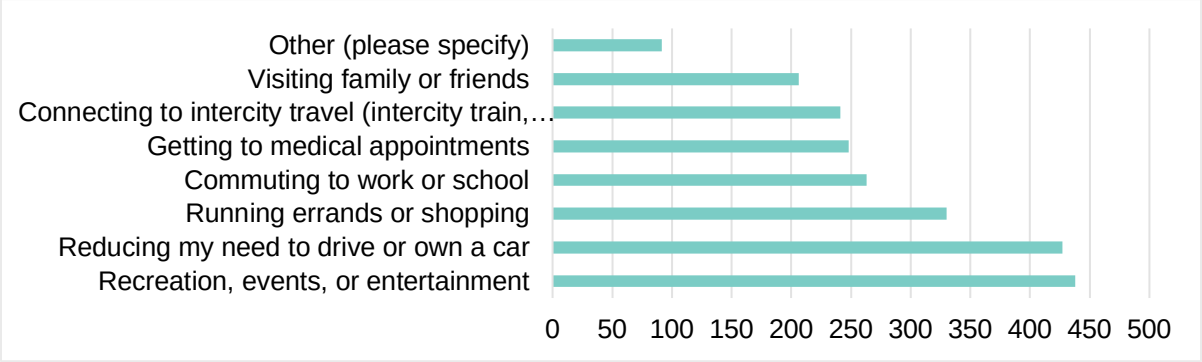


Figure 6: Desired Purpose for Transit Trips



When asked about the most valued features of a future transit system, respondents ranked frequency, safety, speed, and reliability the highest. Respondents frequently requested better local bus service, regional connections to Dallas/DFW, and improved walkability and bike infrastructure. The Downtown to Midtown corridor emerged as the top priority for investment, and most participants said they would be likely to use a train connecting Lindale to Grande Blvd via Downtown Tyler. These survey results are shown in Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10 below.

Figure 7: Transit-Related Requests

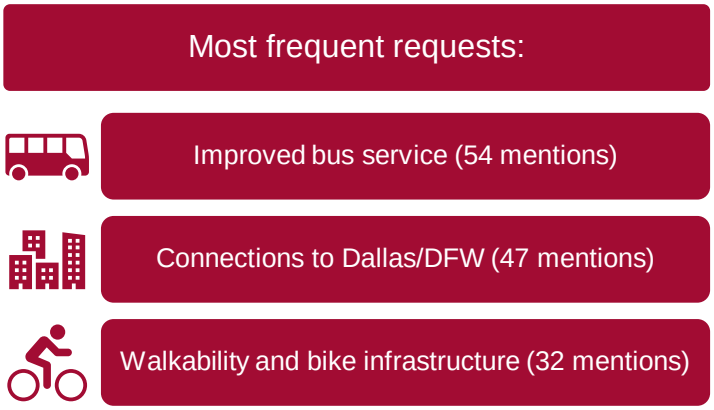


Figure 8: Transit Feature Priority Ranking

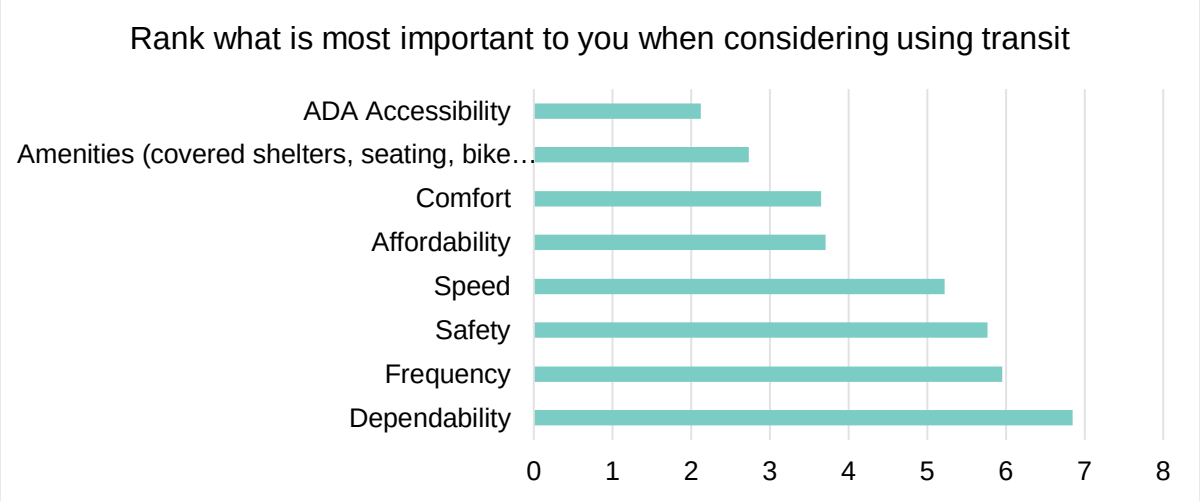


Figure 10: Transit Corridor Priority Ranking

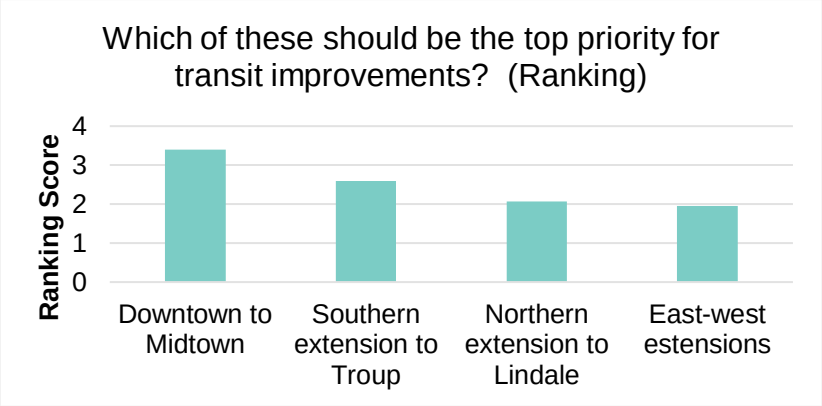
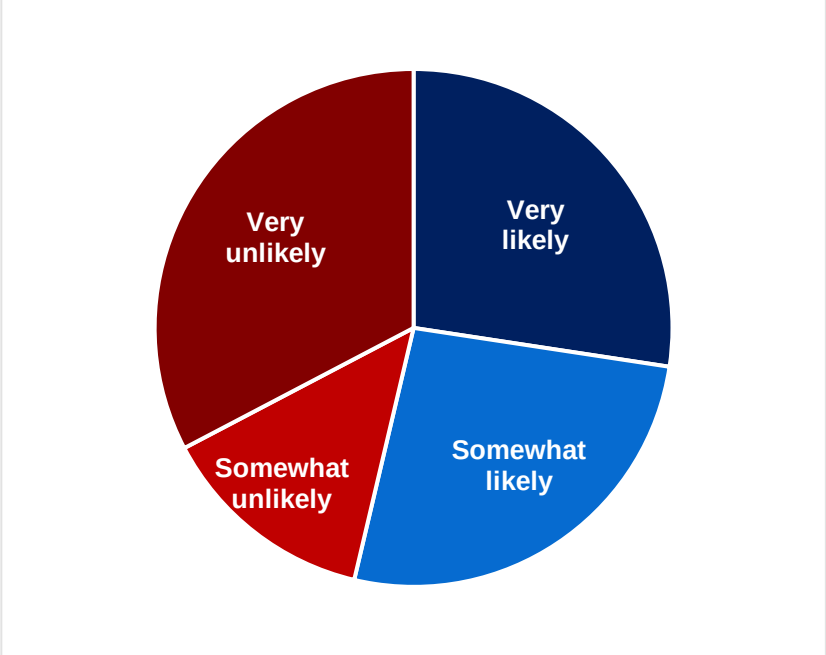


Figure 9: Likelihood of Using a Train from Lindale to Grande Blvd. via Downtown Tyler



To ensure the integrity of the survey data, the project team reviewed responses for users submitting survey responses multiple times. Of the 720 responses, 637 (88%) came from unique IP addresses, suggesting broad individual participation. A small number of IPs appeared more than once, likely reflecting shared networks in households or offices. The average time spent on the survey was 2 minutes and 45 seconds, an appropriate time for a seven-question survey. SurveyMonkey's automated quality screening flagged only five responses: four for profanity and one for being completed too quickly.

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Held via Zoom on September 23, 2025, the town hall had 24 participants. The session included a presentation of a summary of the existing conditions analysis conducted by the project team, a summary of the transit vision, and an interactive Q&A.

Key themes from Q&A:

- **Regional connections**
  - Support for intercity connections to Dallas area and Amtrak/HSR corridor
  - Some preference for Longview over Mineola as inter-city rail connection point
- **Infrastructure**
  - Questions about at-grade crossings and needed rail infrastructure upgrades
  - Desire for active transportation improvements to access future transit services

CONCLUSION

Public engagement confirmed strong local and regional interest in expanded transit options, including rail. Input consistently prioritized the Downtown-Midtown corridor and regional connections.

APPENDIX 1: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

September 23, 2025
Tyler MPO Rail Study

The Town Hall will begin at 4pm CDT.

Please use the Q&A function at the bottom of the screen to submit questions for the live Q&A portion of the event. Chat is disabled.

A recording of the event will be posted online.

Closed captioning will be turned on for the duration of the Town Hall.

TYLER MPO RAIL STUDY

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

Tyler Area MPO

Kimley»Horn

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Presentation Recording

A recording and a PDF of the presentation will be made available online.

Live Q&A

You can provide written questions or comments using the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen for our panel to answer today.

Timing

- **4:00 pm – 4:35 pm CDT** | Introductions & Presentation
- **4:35 pm – 4:55 pm CDT** | Question & Answer Session
- **4:55 pm – 5:00 pm CDT** | Closing Remarks

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. PROJECT BACKGROUND
3. EXISTING CONDITIONS
4. TRANSIT VISION
5. Q&A SESSION

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Stakeholder and Steering Committees

TRANE TECHNOLOGIES

CHRISTUS Health

TYLER Economic Development Council

TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE

East Texas Council of Governments

UTHealth East Texas

NET RMA North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority

Texas Department of Transportation

Government Partners

Tyler Area MPO

City of Tyler

The County of Smith Texas

Operating Partners

Consultants

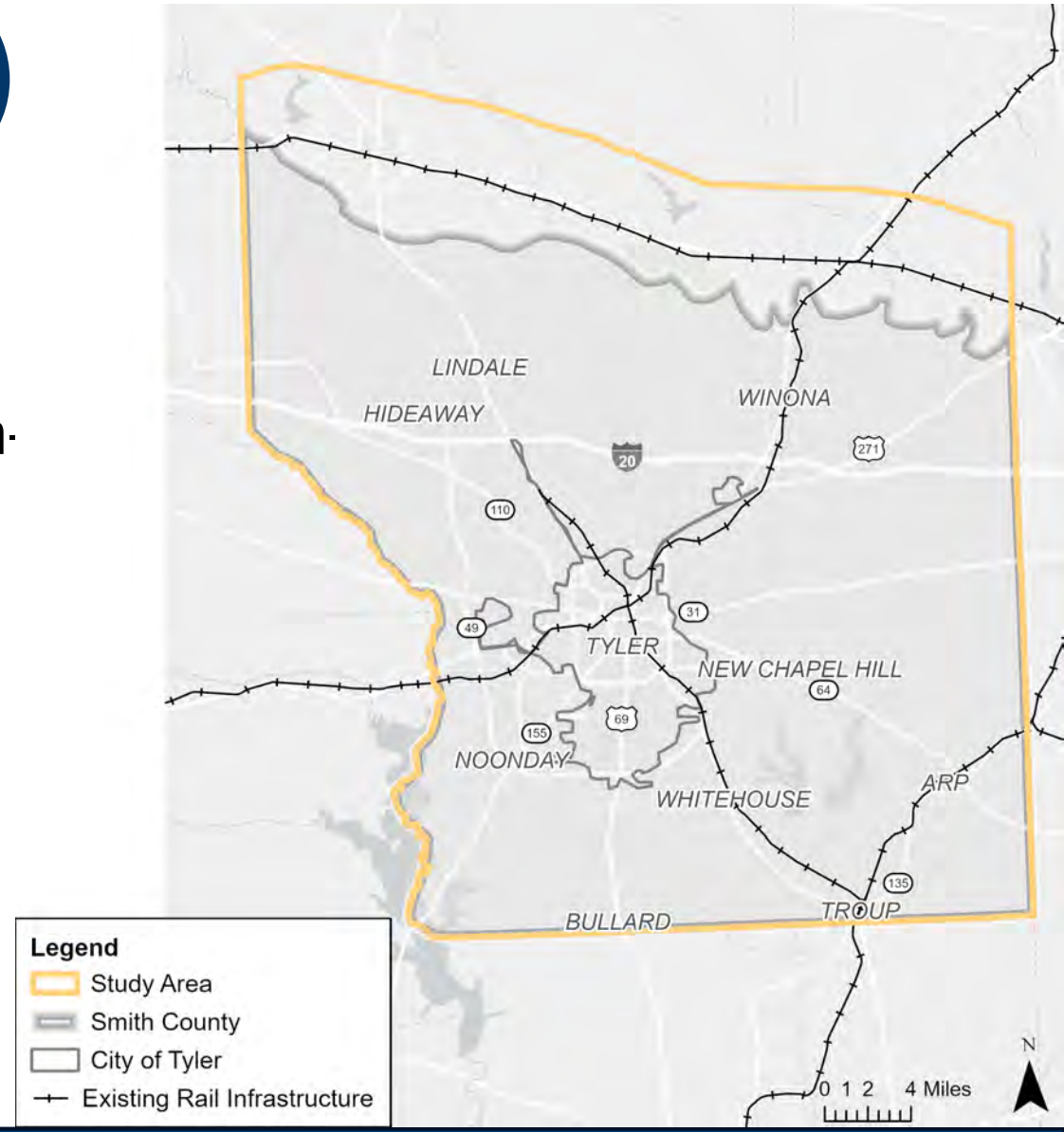
Kimley»Horn

DB

PROJECT BACKGROUND

THE TYLER MPO RAIL STUDY WILL:

- Assess feasibility of passenger rail transit service on existing rail corridors
- Identify potential links to proposed I-20 high-speed rail and Amtrak's Texas Eagle
- Develop a long-term regional transit vision for Smith County



REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE VISION GOALS

Mobility & Connectivity

Increase regional transportation choices by connecting activity centers with high-capacity transit that is fast and reliable.

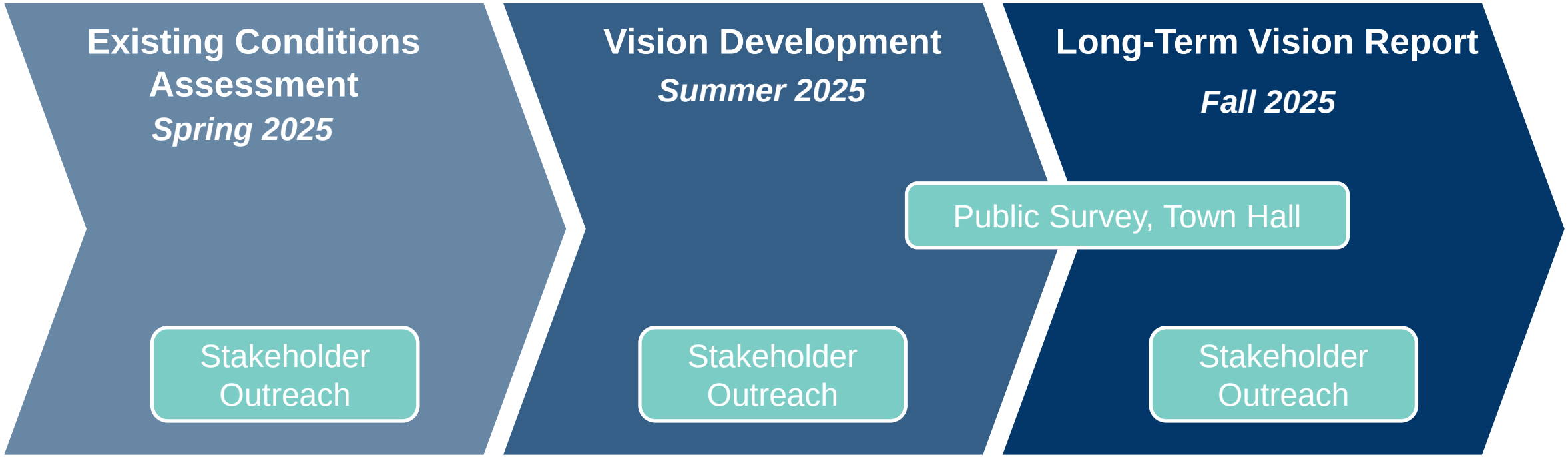
Economic & Workforce Development

Develop a transit system that inspires economic development to promote growth in the region and national competitiveness.

Sustainability & Viability

Provide a cost-effective sustainable system that invests resources responsibly.

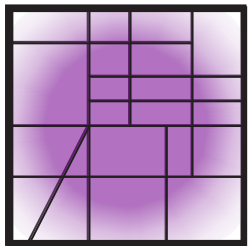
PROJECT TIMELINE



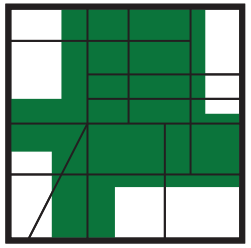
STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

We Are Here

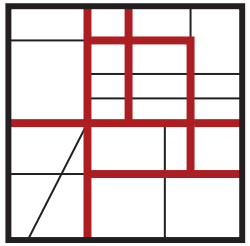
Long-term

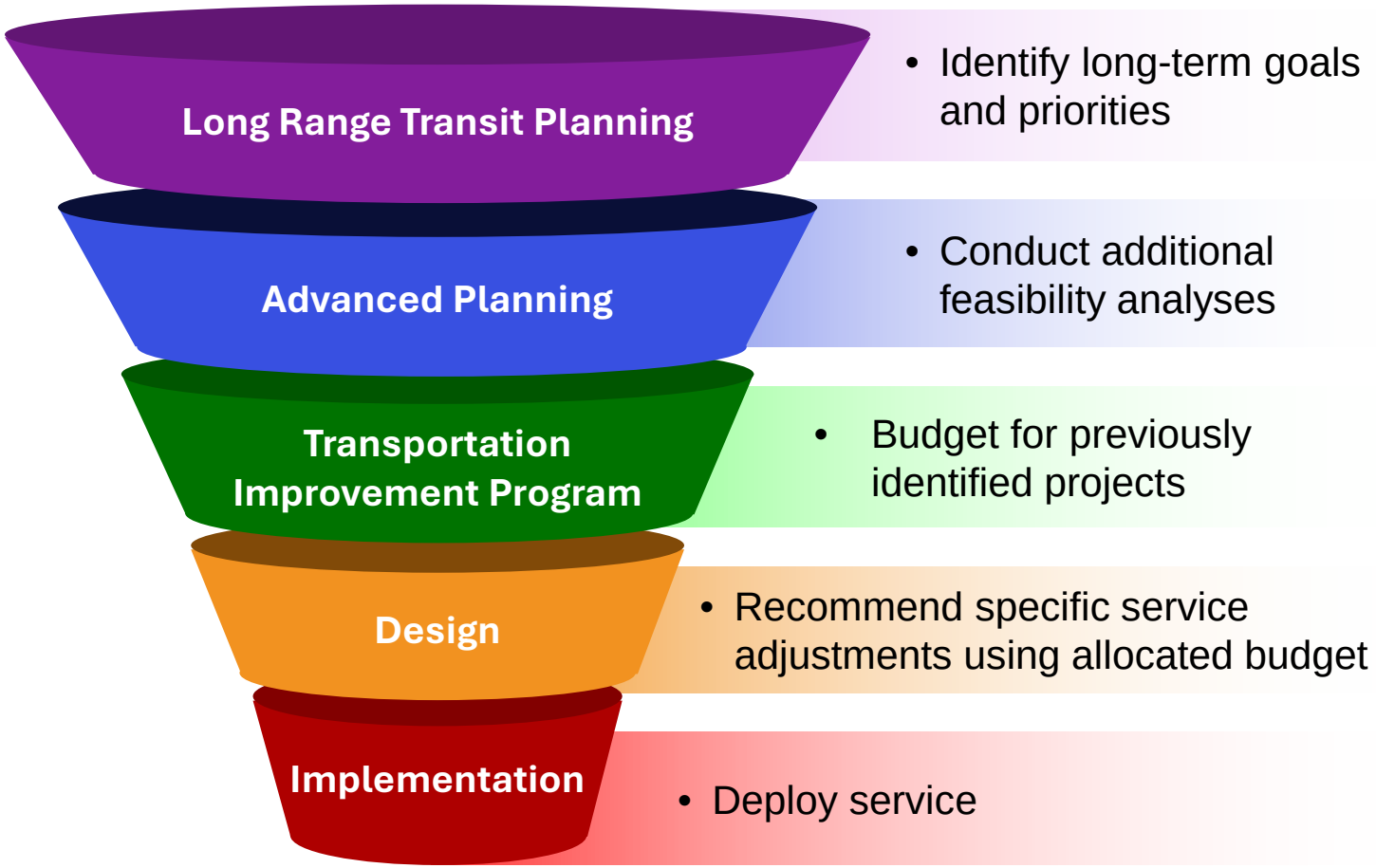


Medium-term



Short-term



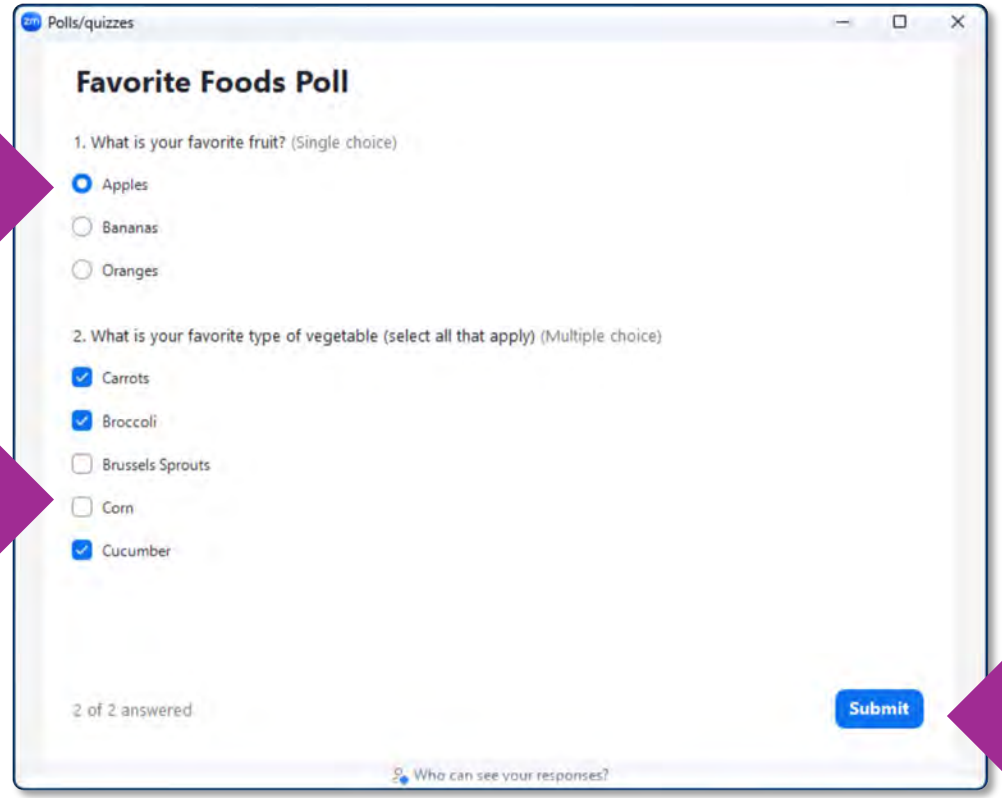


ICEBREAKER SESSION #1

ZOOM FUNCTIONS FOR ICEBREAKER

For single choice questions:
Click the button next to your answer

For multiple choice questions:
Click the button next to your answer

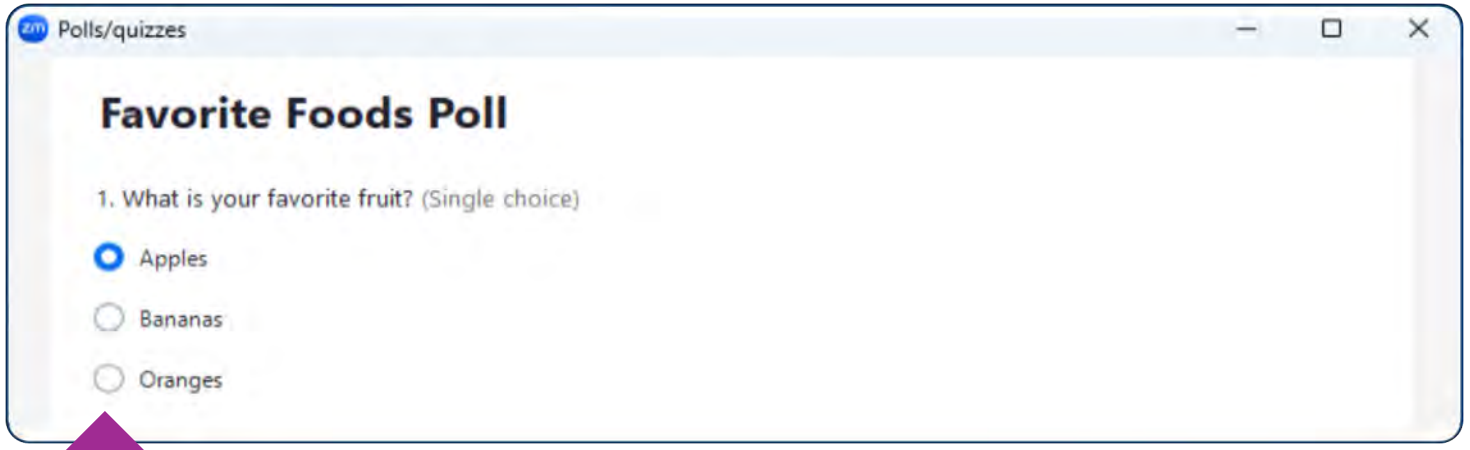


Once complete:
click submit

QUESTION #1

Have you used Tyler Transit or experienced transit in other places?

- All the time
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times per year
- Not at all



Click the button next to your answer

QUESTION #2

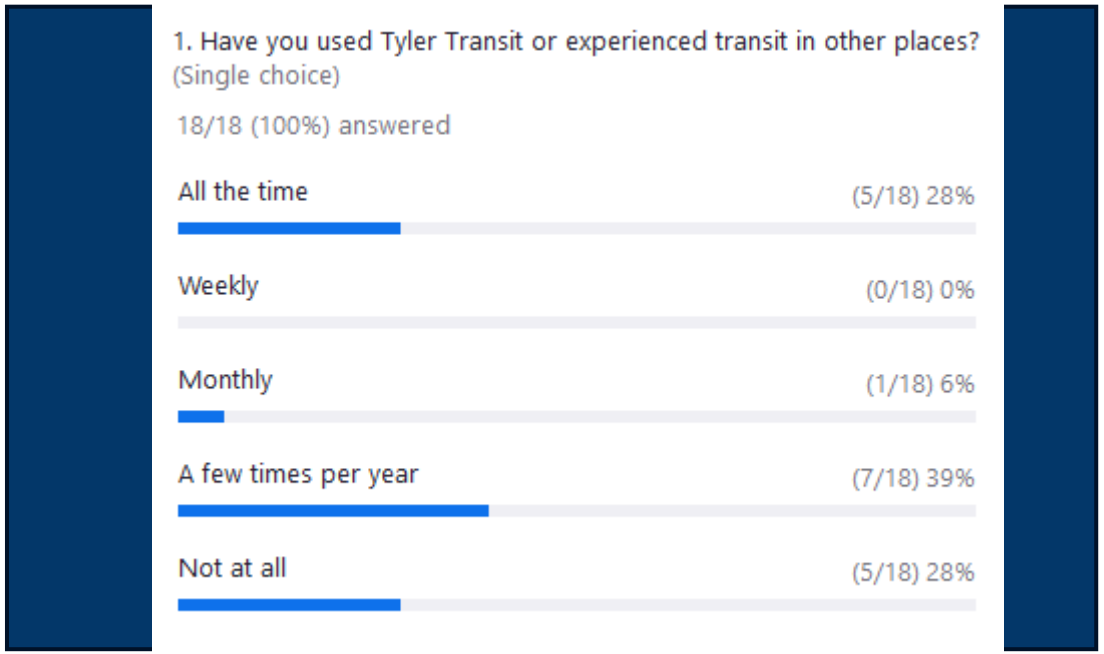
Which type of transit service would you use the most?

Local Bus	
On-Demand Service	
Streetcar	

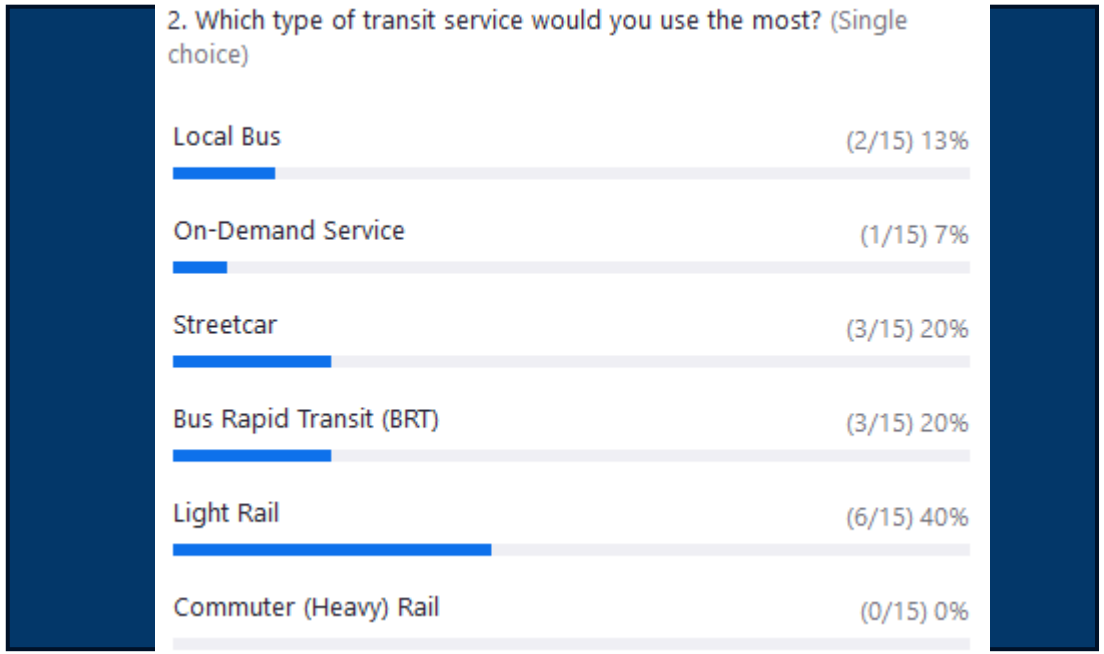
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	
Light Rail	
Commuter (Heavy) Rail	

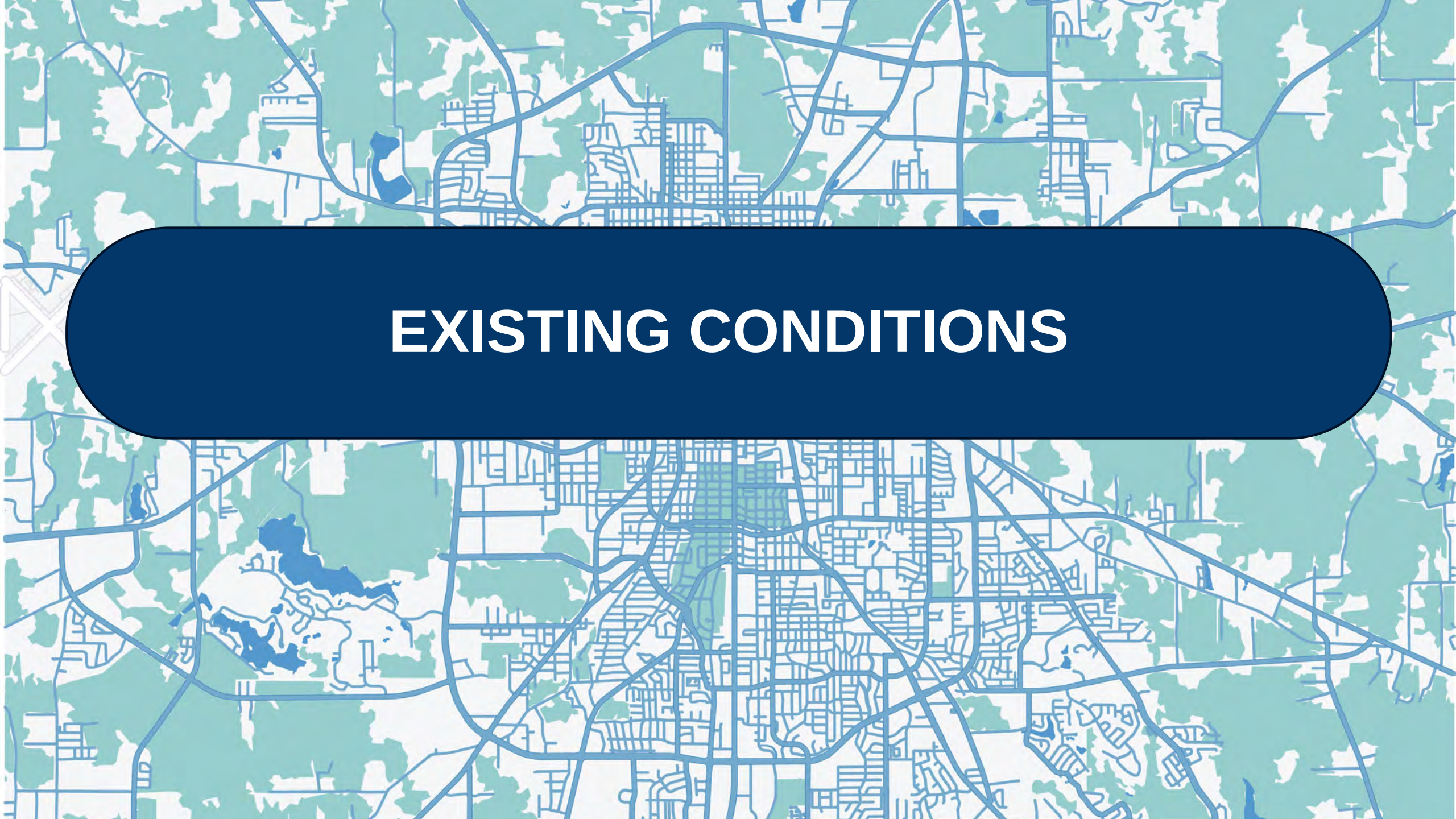
ICEBREAKER SESSION RESPONSES

Question #1



Question #2

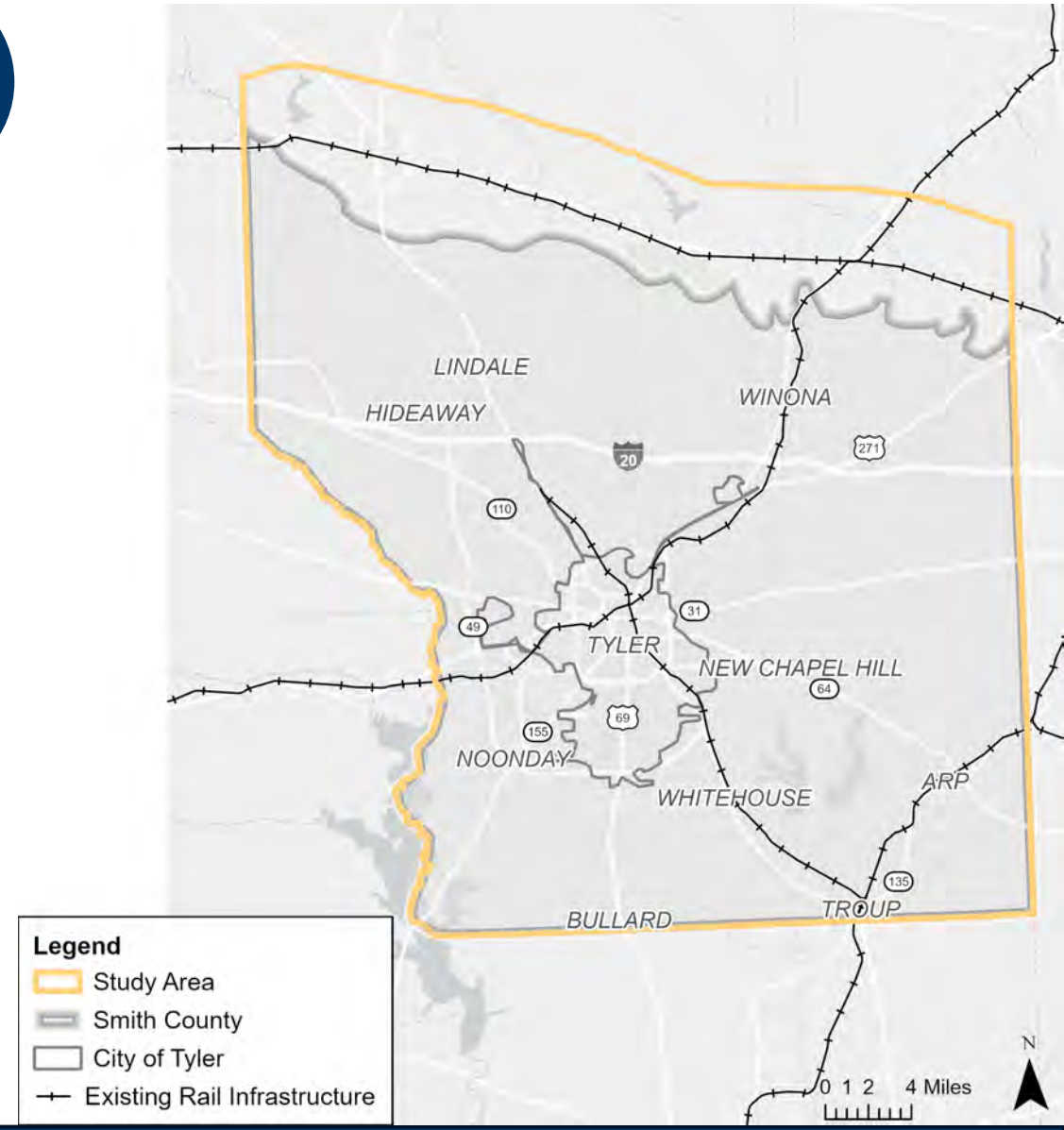




EXISTING CONDITIONS

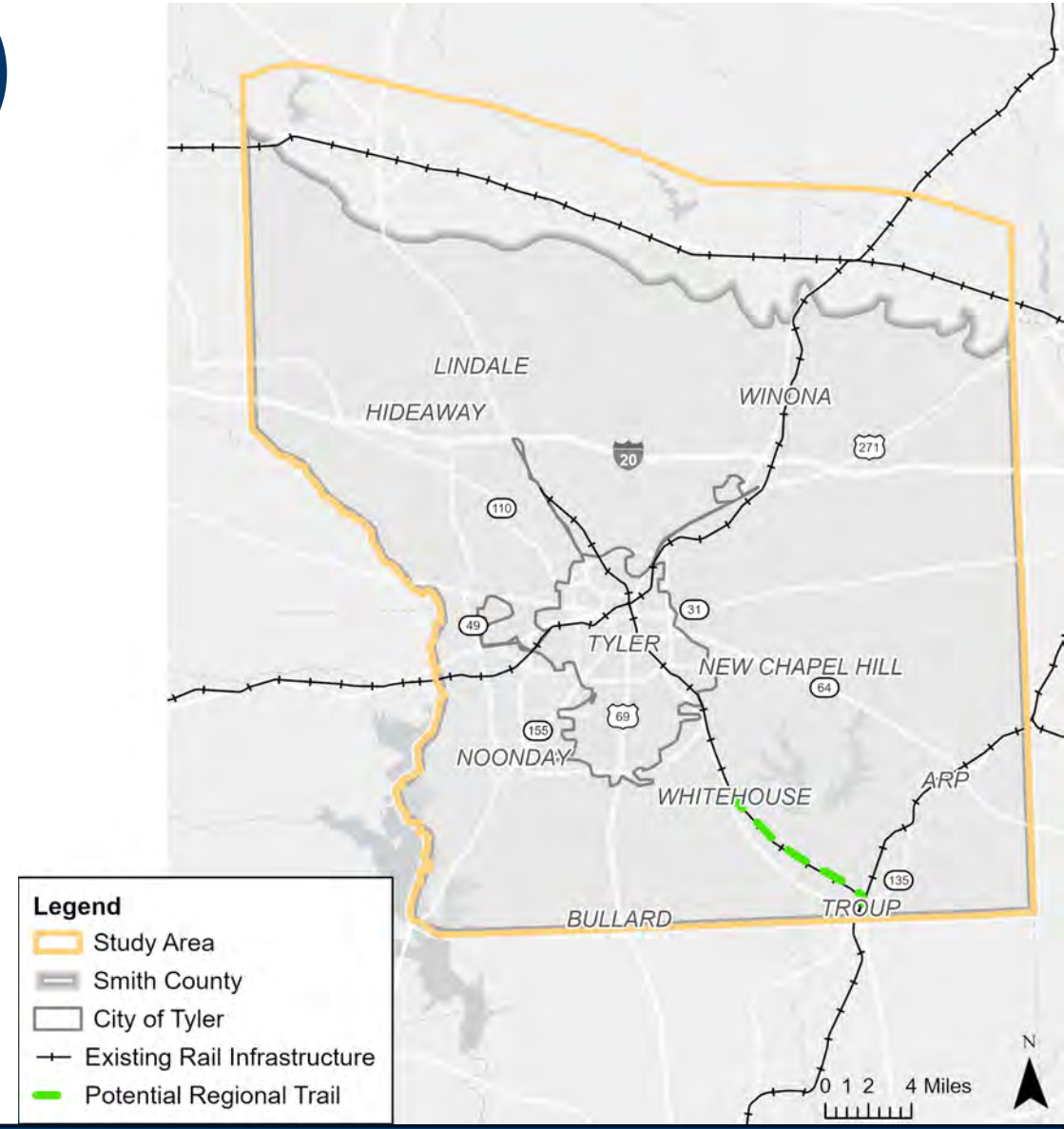
STUDY AREA

- Smith County + Amtrak Corridor
- Existing rail infrastructure



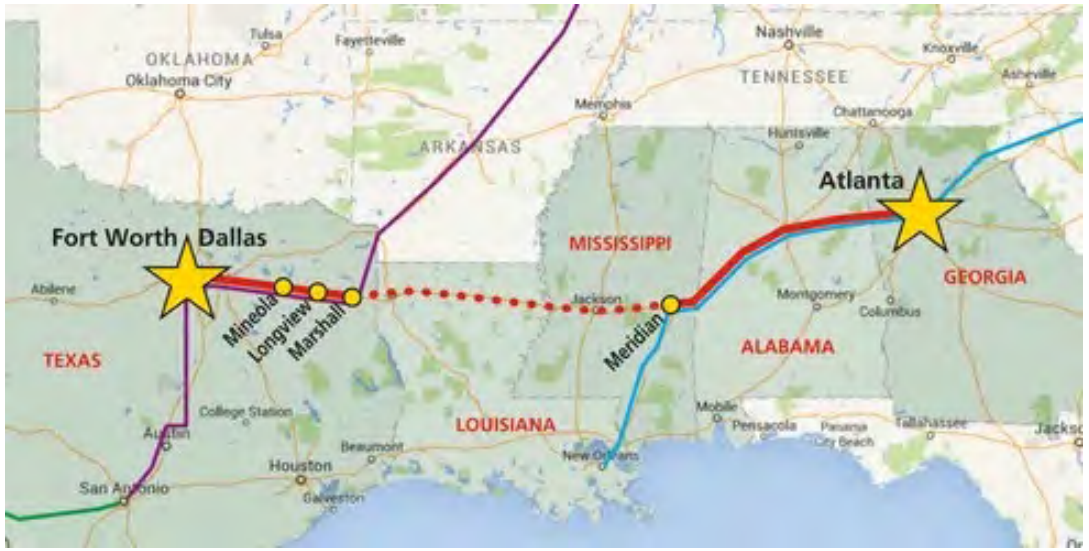
REGIONAL TRAIL

- Proposed regional trail from Whitehouse to Troup
- 8-mile corridor planned for recreational uses

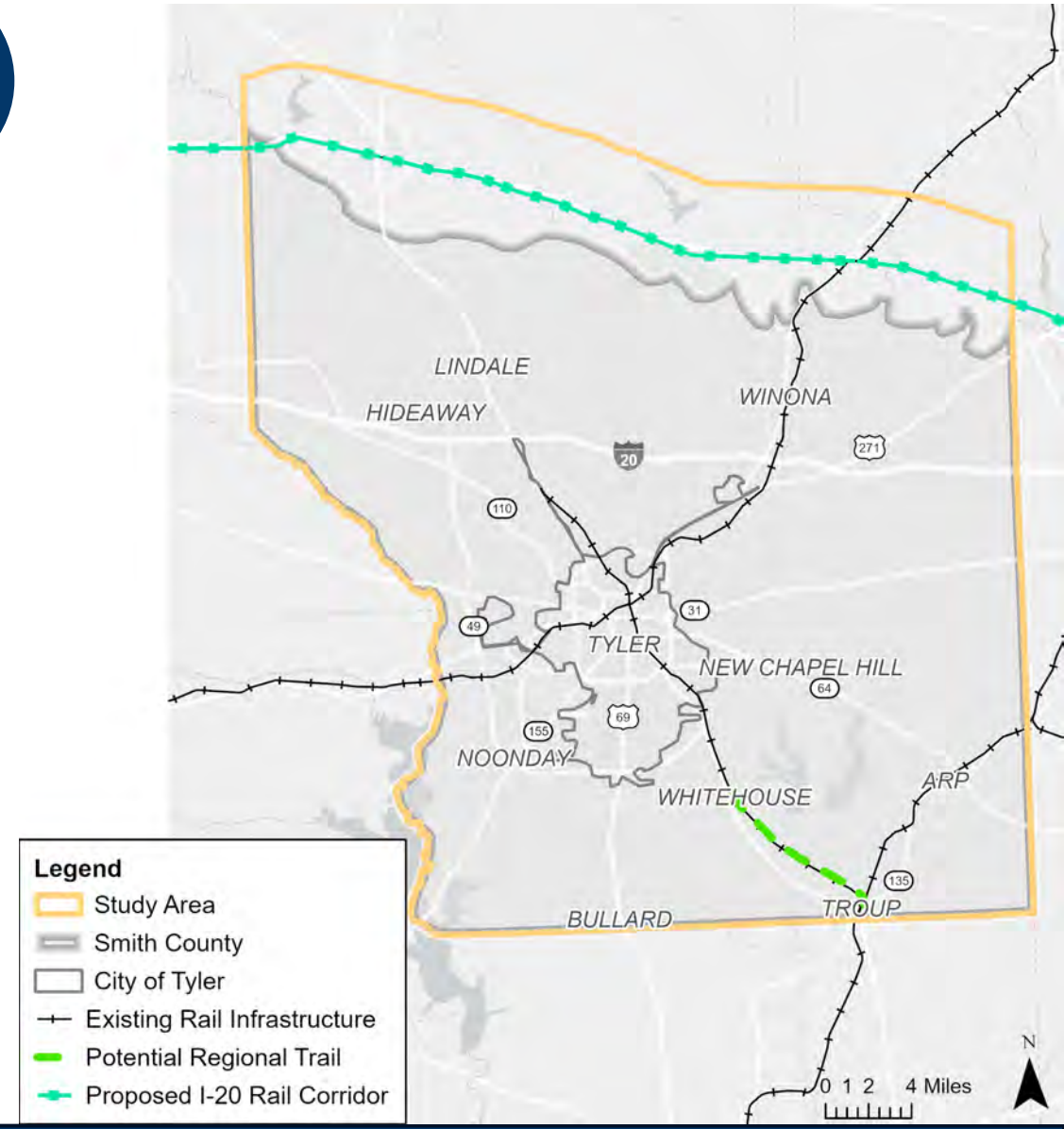


PARALLEL RAIL PROJECTS

- Far future: Proposed High-Speed Rail along Highway 80 and I-20
  - Stop in Mineola, Longview
  - Connects Dallas to Atlanta

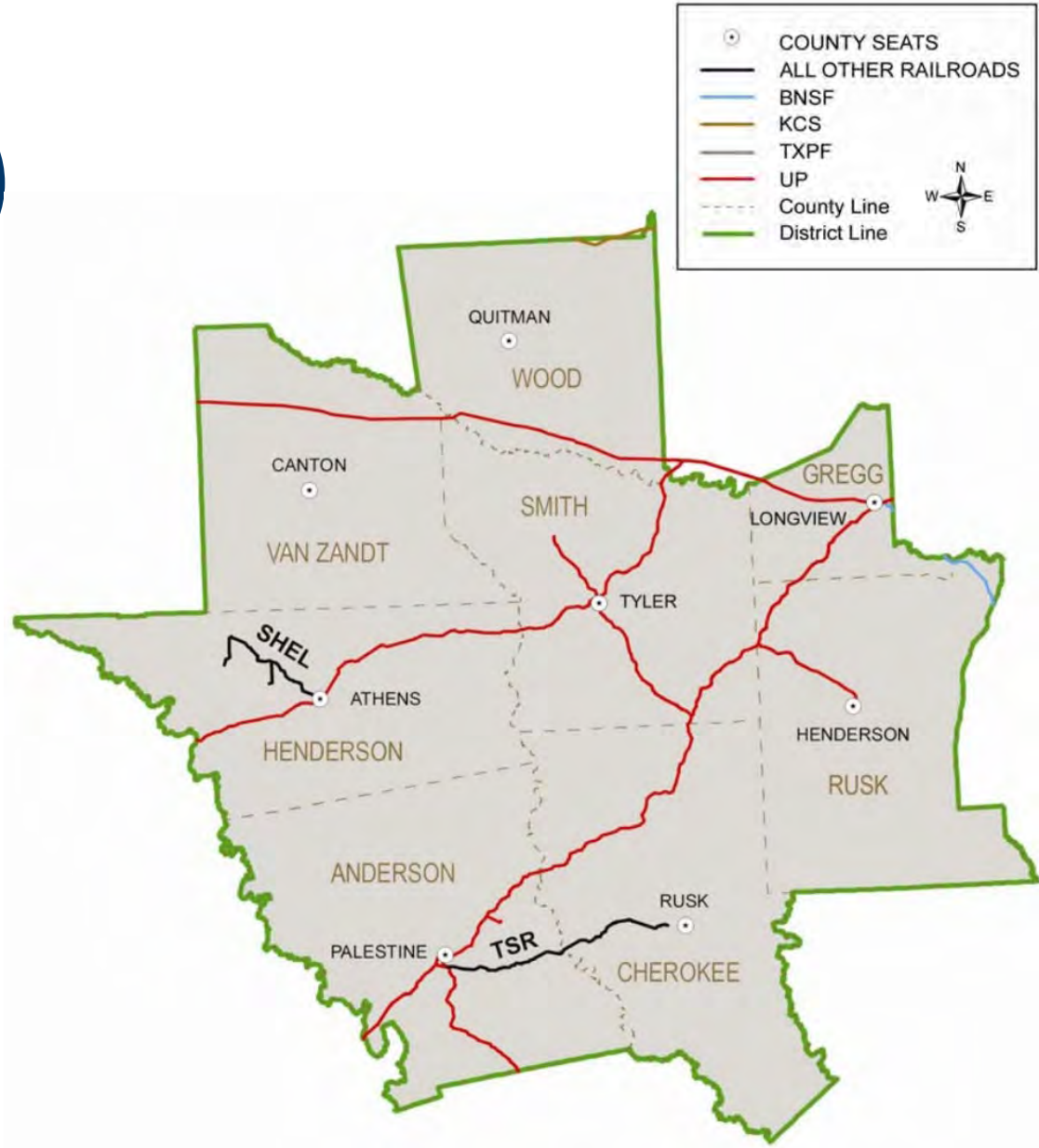


I-20 Corridor Council



EXISTING FREIGHT RAIL

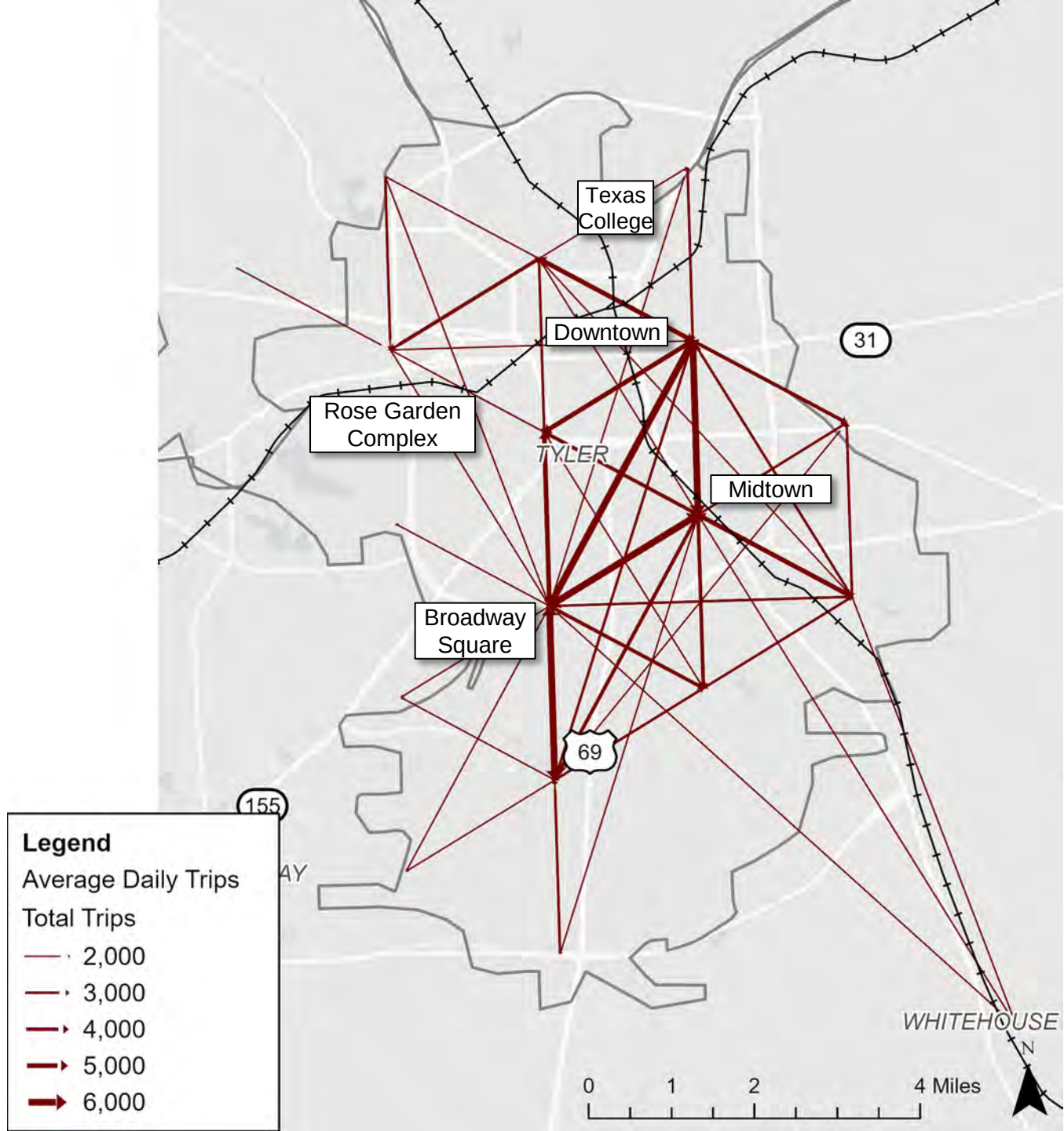
- Tracks are built for slow-speed freight with tight curves and not for faster passenger trains
- N/S corridor has gaps in infrastructure
- E/W corridor has many daily freight trips



TxDOT Texas State Railroad Map

EXISTING TRAVEL PATTERNS

- High volume of existing travel along N/S rail corridor
- Trips between Midtown, Downtown, and UT Health/Christus Hospital



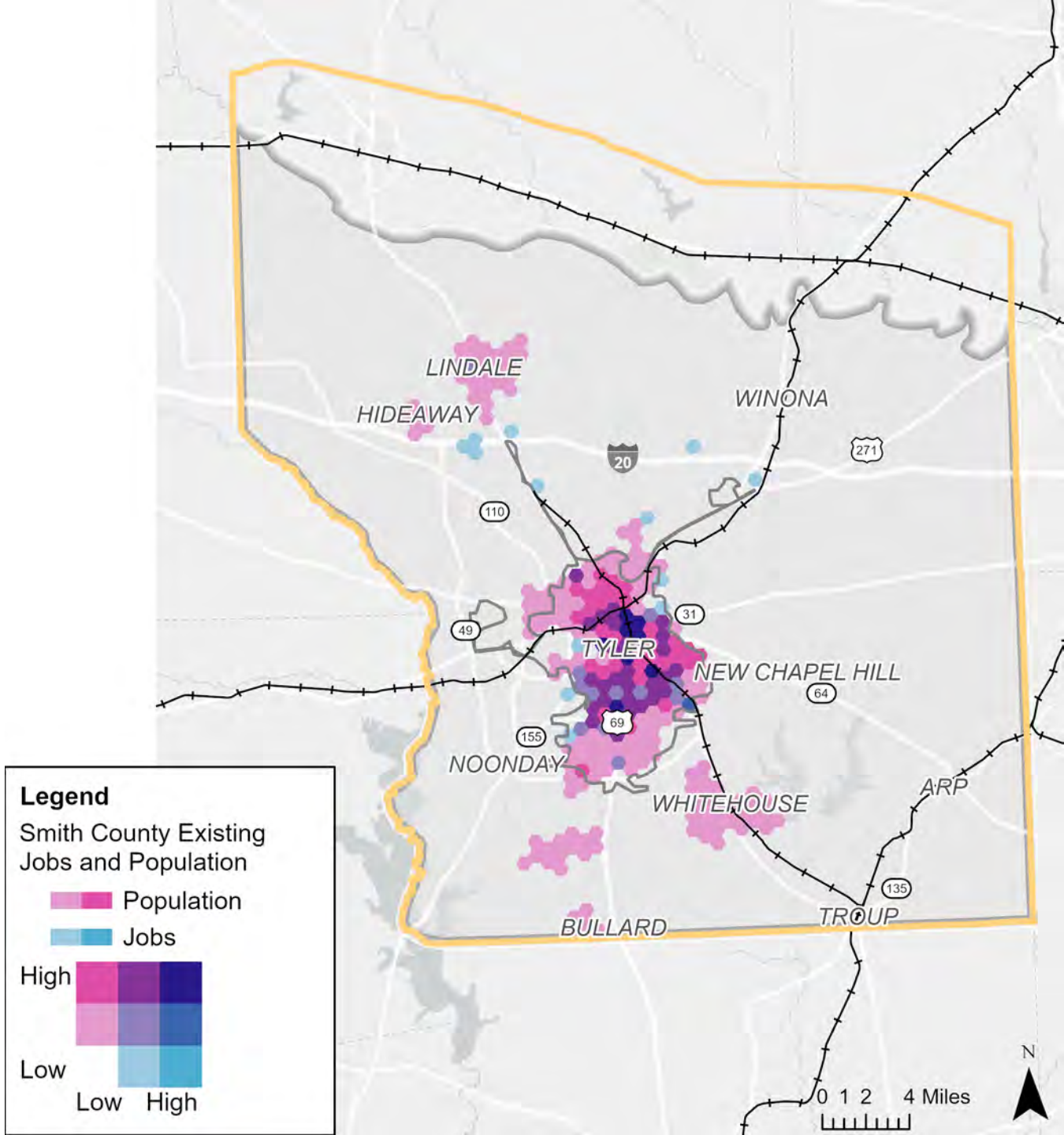
Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

EXISTING JOBS AND POPULATION

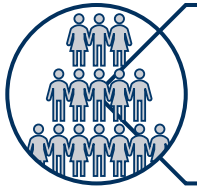
- Concentration of both jobs and population in central Tyler
- Some light population density exists outside of Tyler city limits
- Most job density exists within Tyler city limits

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

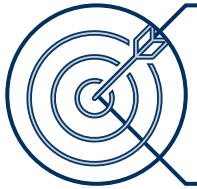
Serviceable trips: non-freight trips that begin and end within a half-mile of the rail corridor



EXISTING CONDITIONS TAKEAWAYS

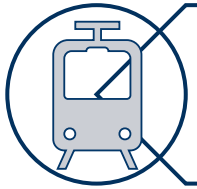


Stronger trip volumes along N/S Corridor



Jobs and population density higher in central areas

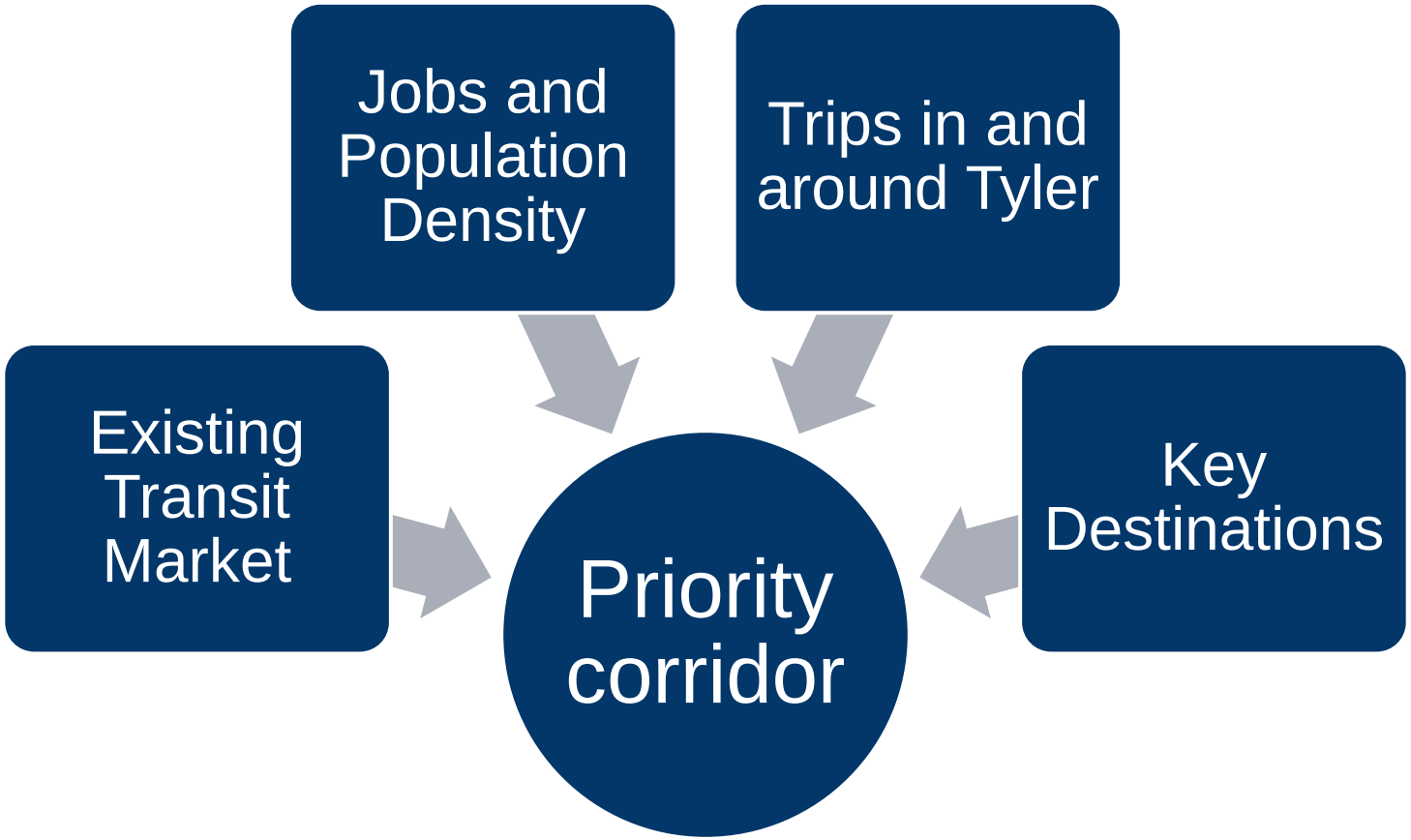
Downtown to Midtown Corridor has highest market capture potential



Where should we strategically focus investments?

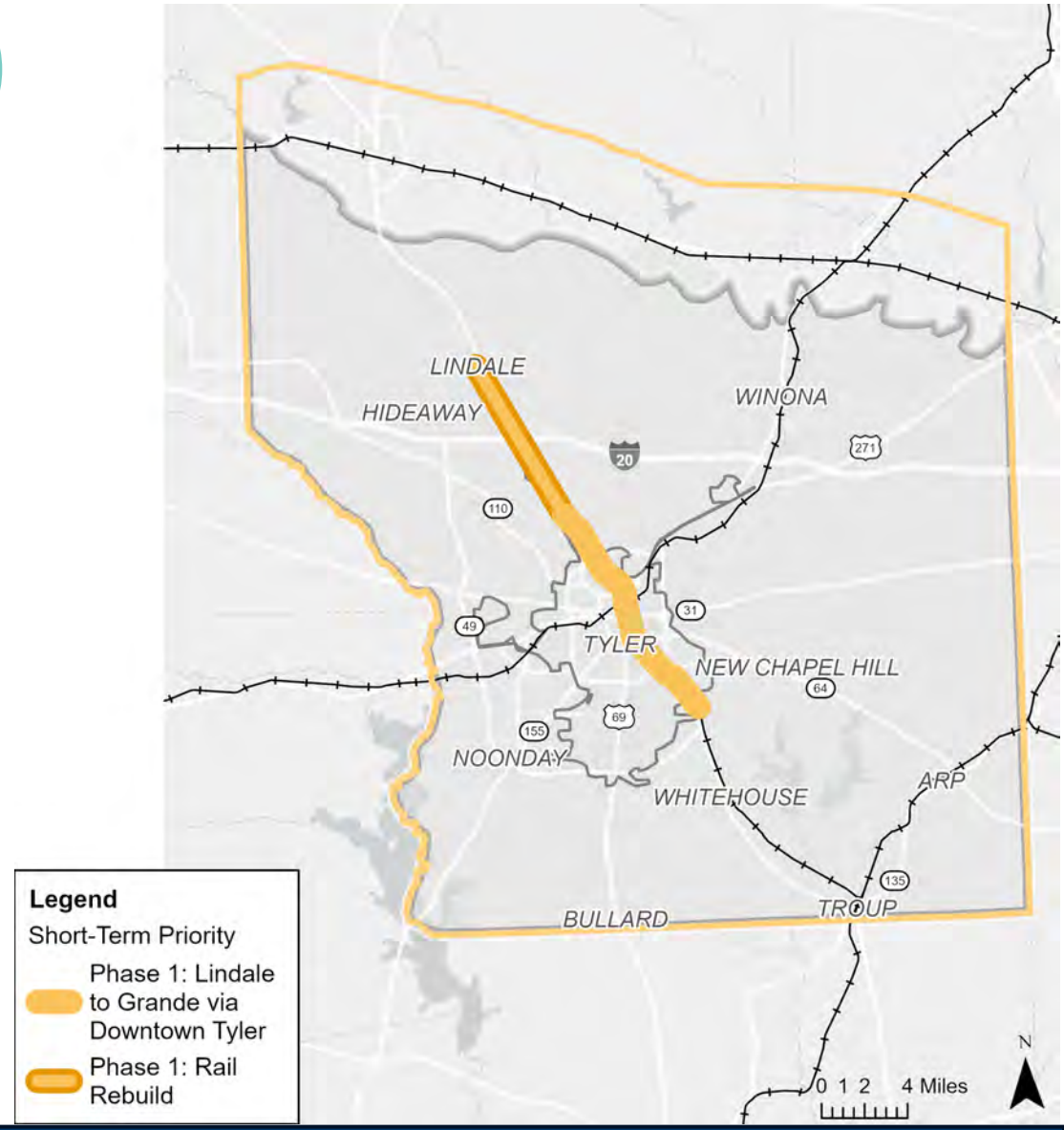
TRANSIT VISION

TRANSIT VISION CONSIDERATIONS



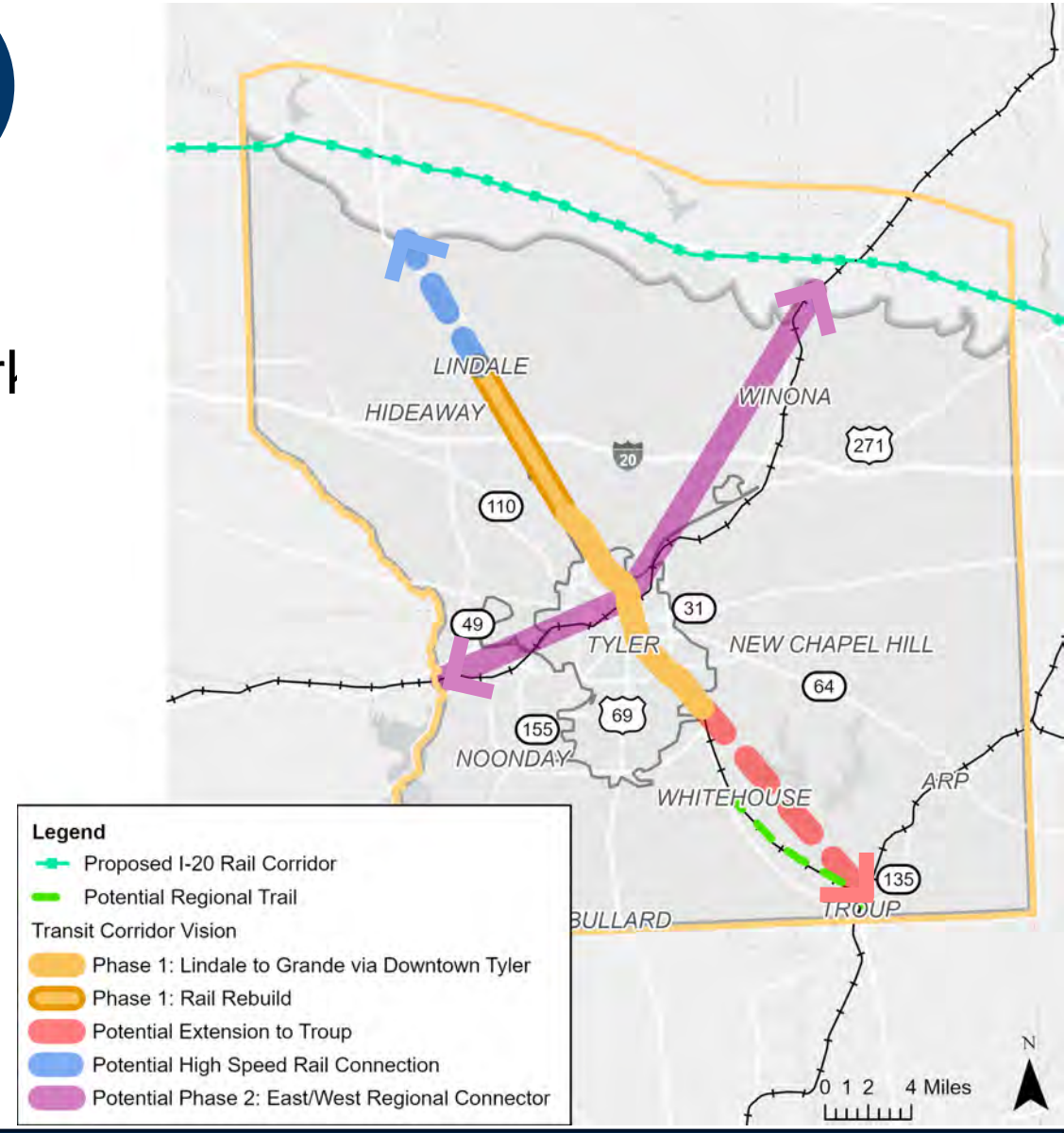
SHORT-TERM PRIORITY

- **Alignment:** Lindale to Grande Boulevard via Downtown Tyler, using existing rail
- **Infrastructure Consideration:** Northern stretch has no rail infrastructure
- **Next Steps:**
  - Build existing transit ridership base
  - Encourage transit-supportive land uses



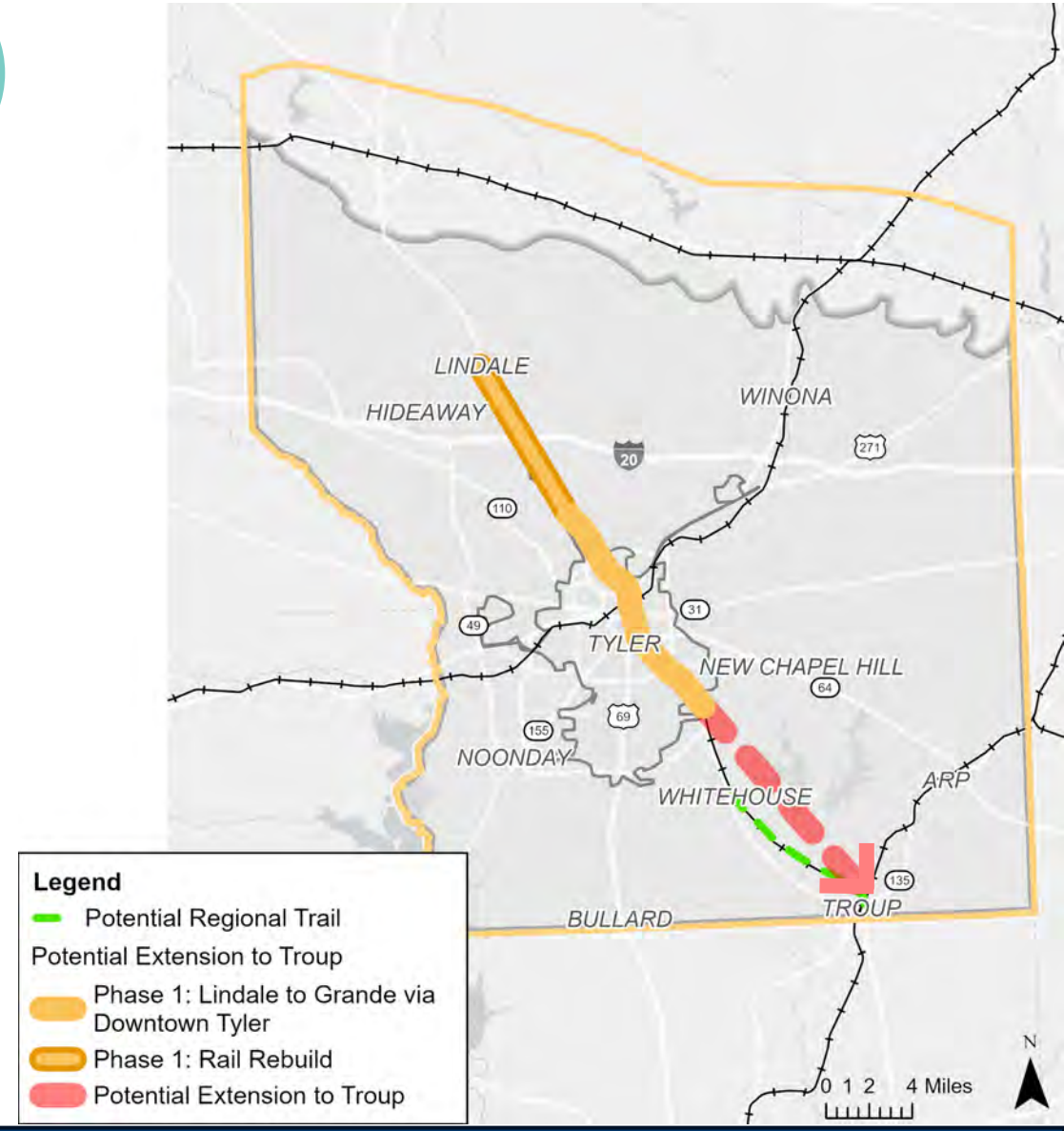
LONG TERM VISION CONSIDERATIONS

- Additional corridors
- Connections to future transportation networl
- Future growth patterns



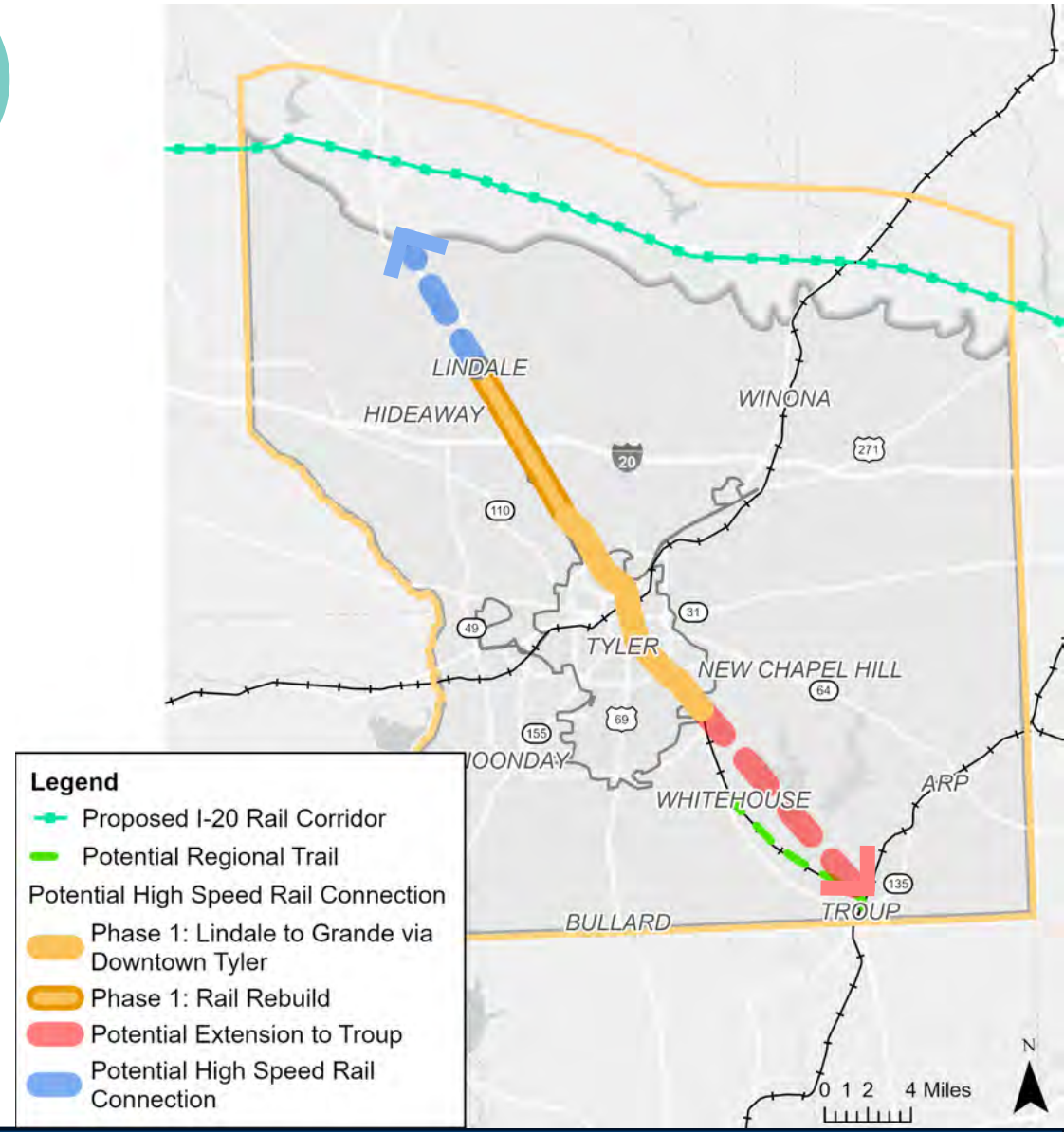
POTENTIAL EXTENSION TO TROUP

- Regional trail project consideration
- Clusters of population in Whitehouse and Troup



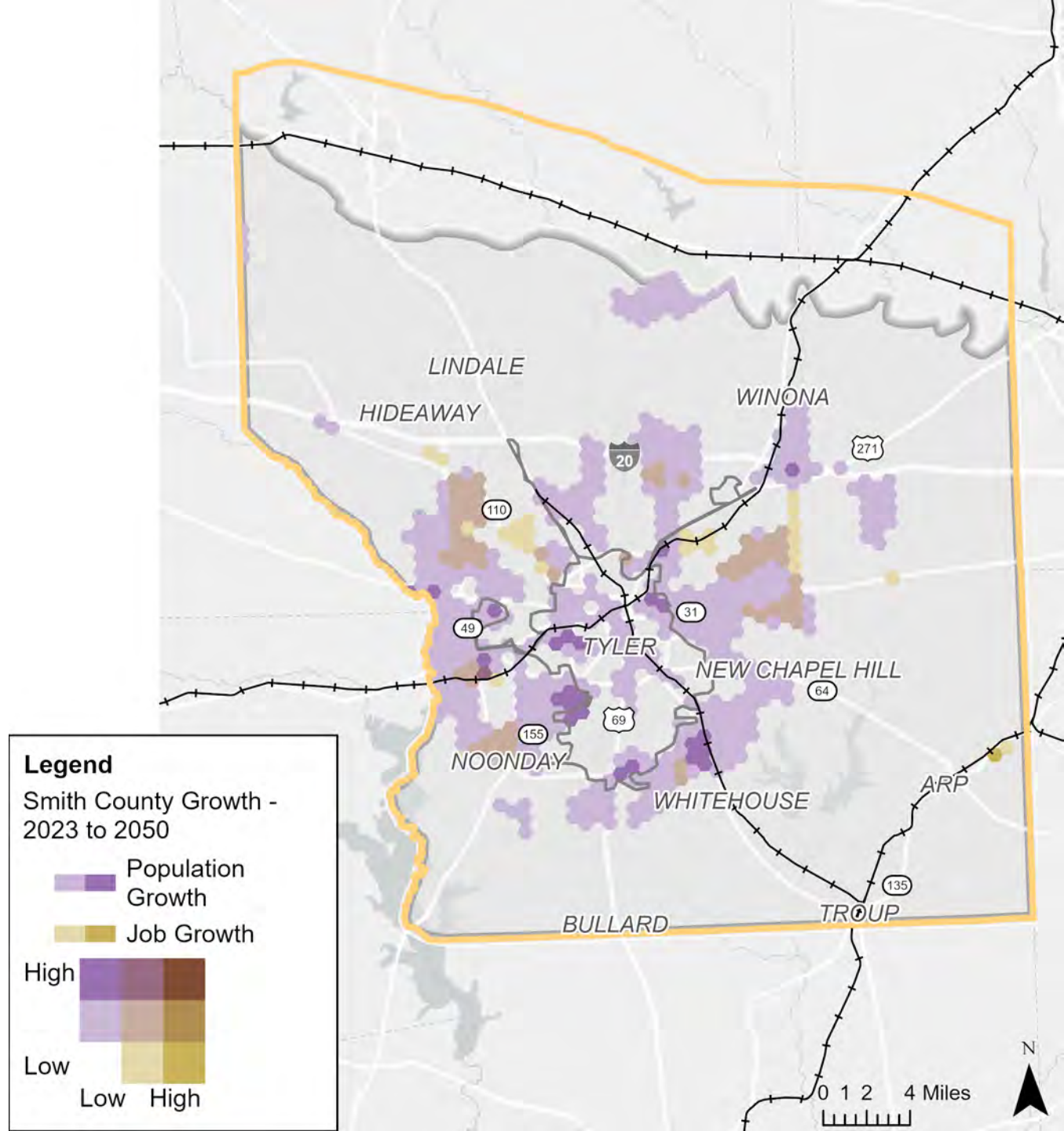
POTENTIAL HIGH SPEED RAIL CONNECTION

- 12 miles from Lindale to Mineola
- Existing Texas Eagle Amtrak stations in Mineola and Longview



FUTURE GROWTH

- Significant job and population growth expected outside Tyler city limits
- Some population growth, but little job growth centrally

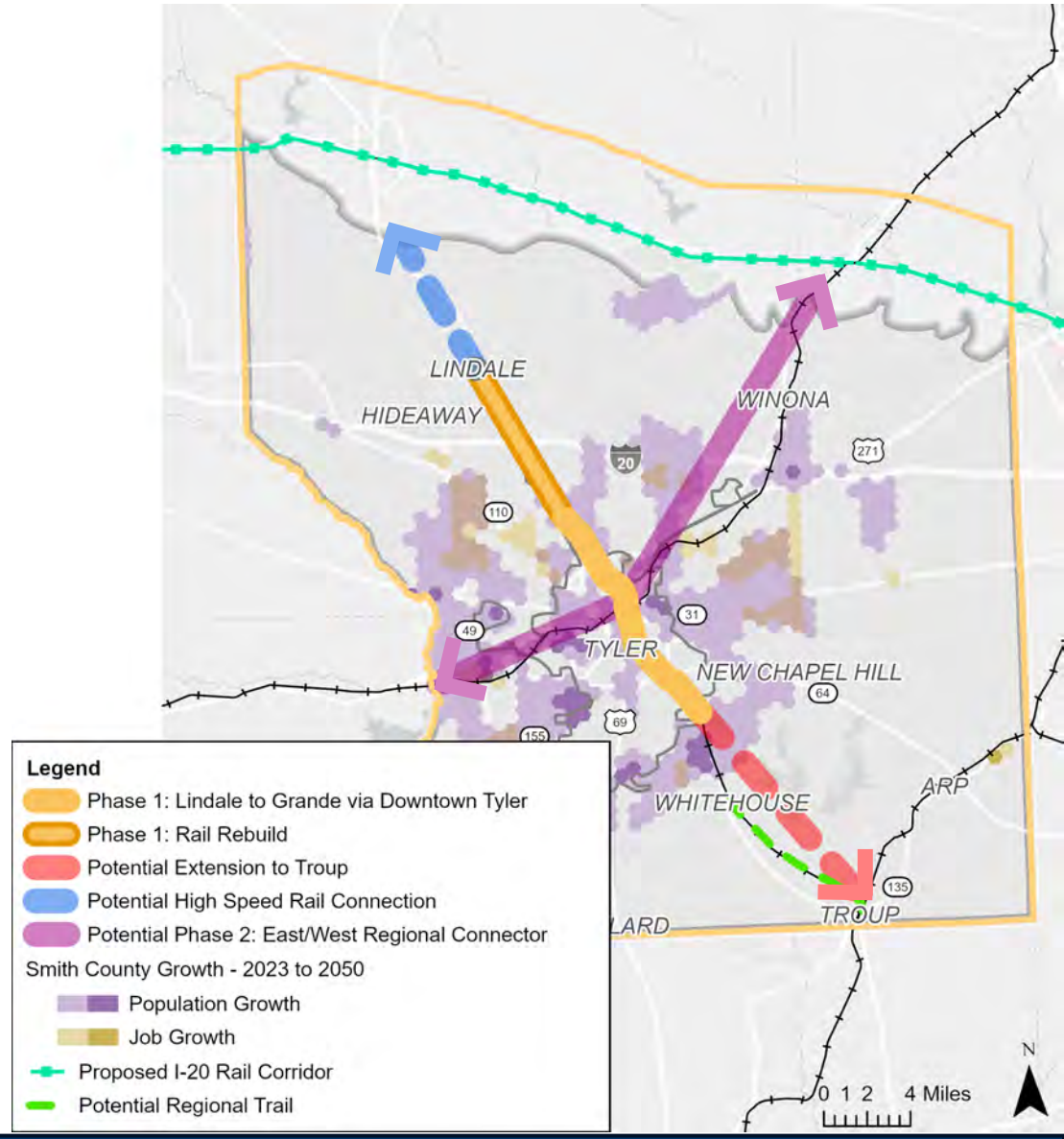


Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

Serviceable trips: non-freight trips that begin and end within a half-mile of the rail corridor

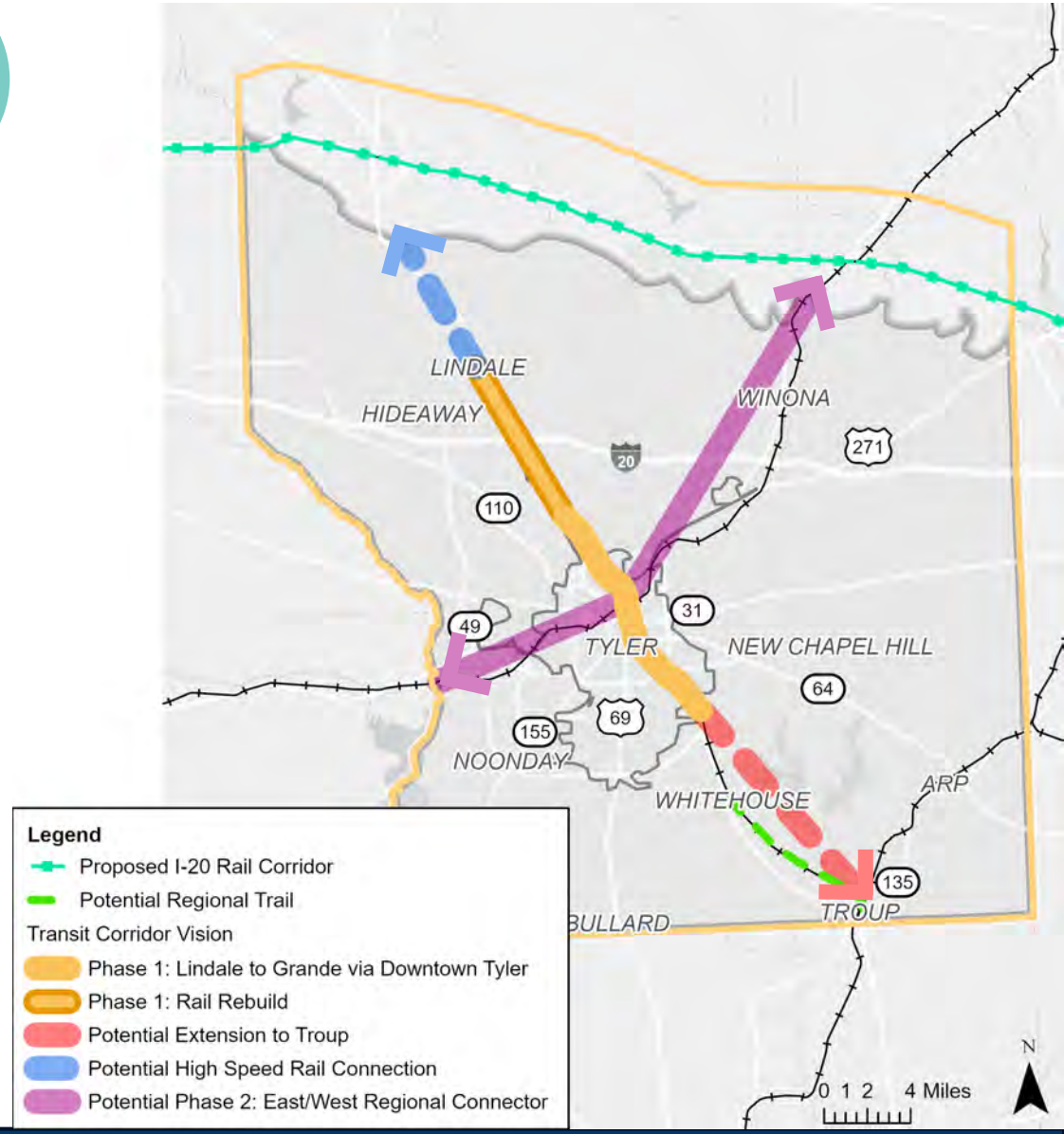
POTENTIAL PHASE 2: EAST/WEST REGIONAL CONNECTOR

- Addressing 2050 growth patterns
- Existing freight rail continues northeast to Big Sandy, southwest to Chandler/Lake Palestine



VISION MAP

- **Short-Term:**
  - Lindale to Grande Blvd via Downtown Tyler prioritized
  - Northern stretch would require ground-up rebuild of rail infrastructure
- **Long term:**
  - Synergy with regional trail
  - Connection to I-20 HSR corridor
  - Serve E/W growth

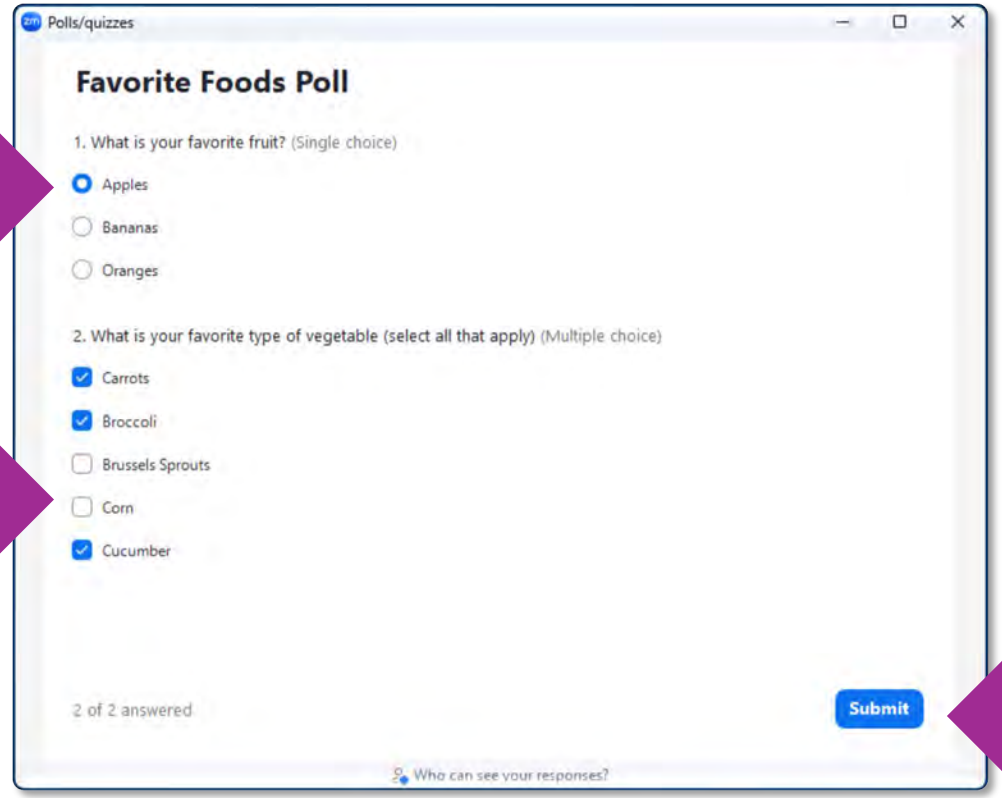


ICEBREAKER SESSION #2

ZOOM FUNCTIONS FOR ICEBREAKER

For single choice questions:
Click the button next to your answer

For multiple choice questions:
Click the button next to your answer



Once complete:
click submit

QUESTION #3

Based on the proposed vision, which benefits are you most excited about?
(check all that apply)

- Congestion relief (I want less traffic in the region)
- Easier access to jobs (I want to get to my job via transit)
- More flexibility in trip types (errands, school, visiting friends, etc.)
- More access to different parts of the region and state (I want to travel regionally or across the state)

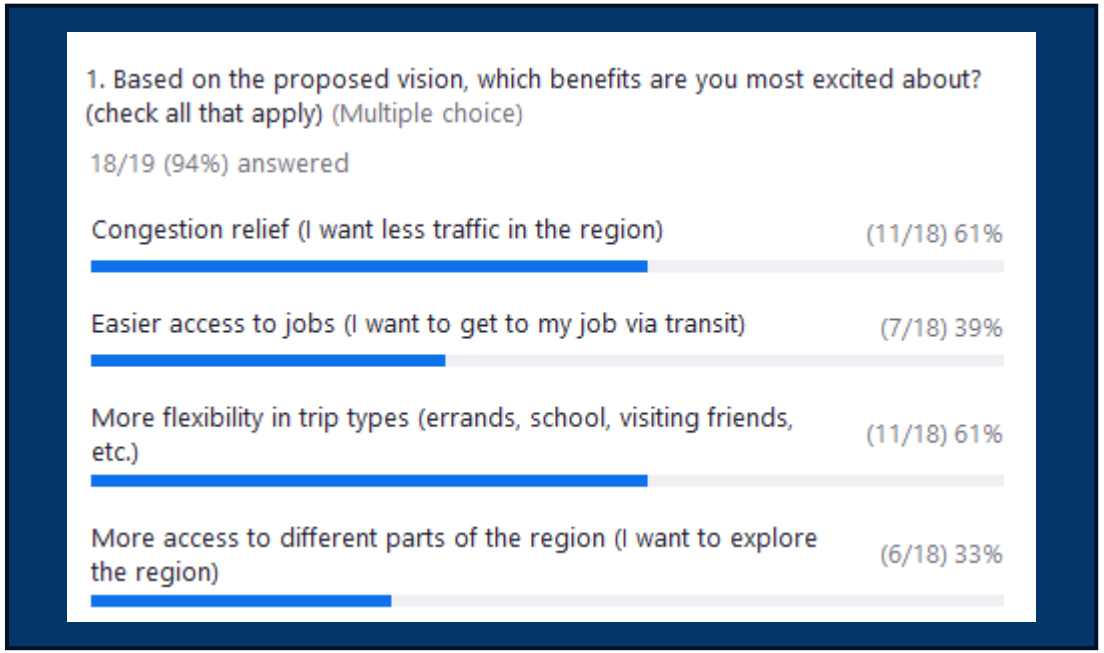
QUESTION #4

How likely are you to use the transit service presented in the vision?
(multiple choice)

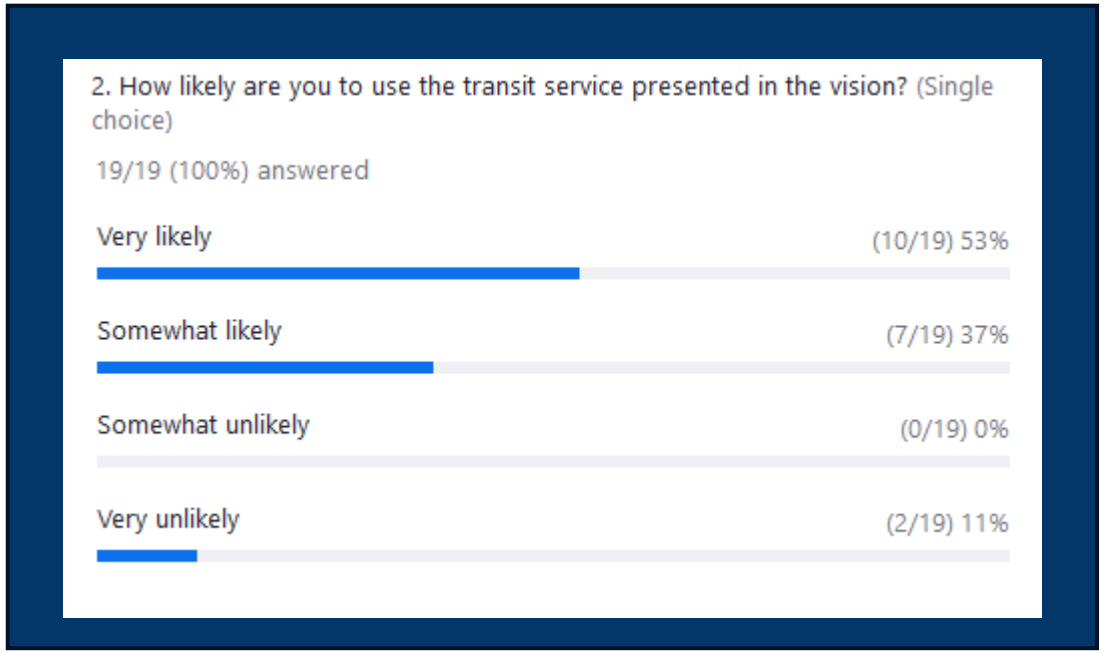
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

ICEBREAKER SESSION RESPONSES

Question #3

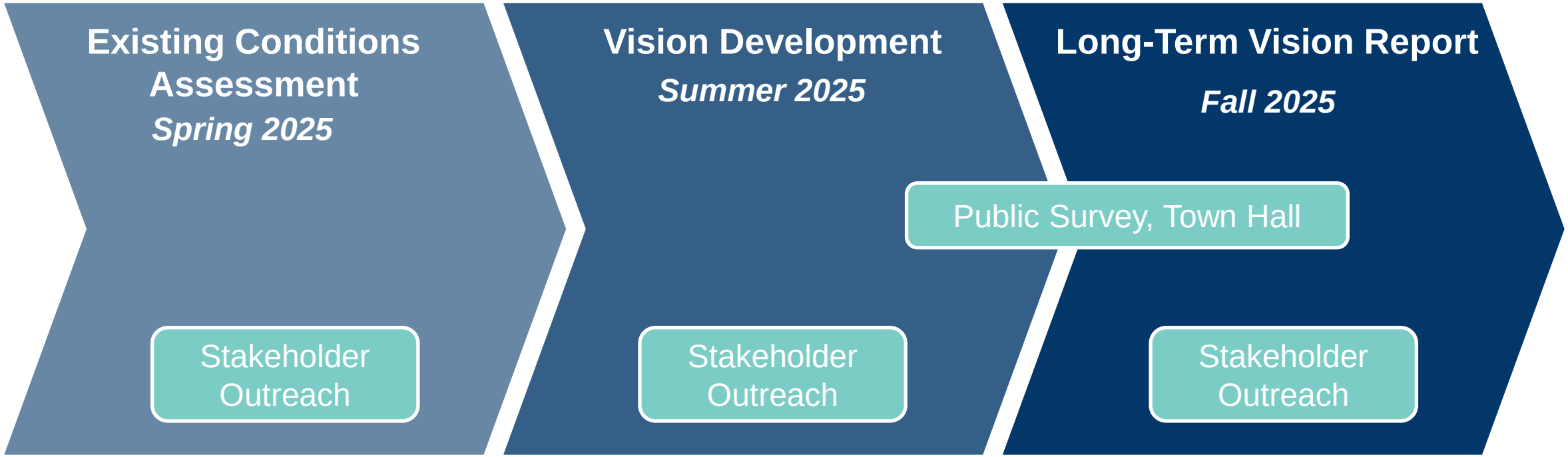


Question #4



PROJECT NEXT STEPS

PROJECT TIMELINE

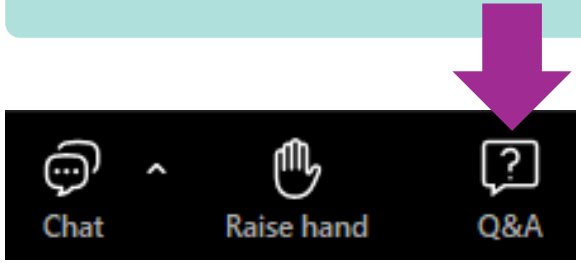



Q & A SESSION

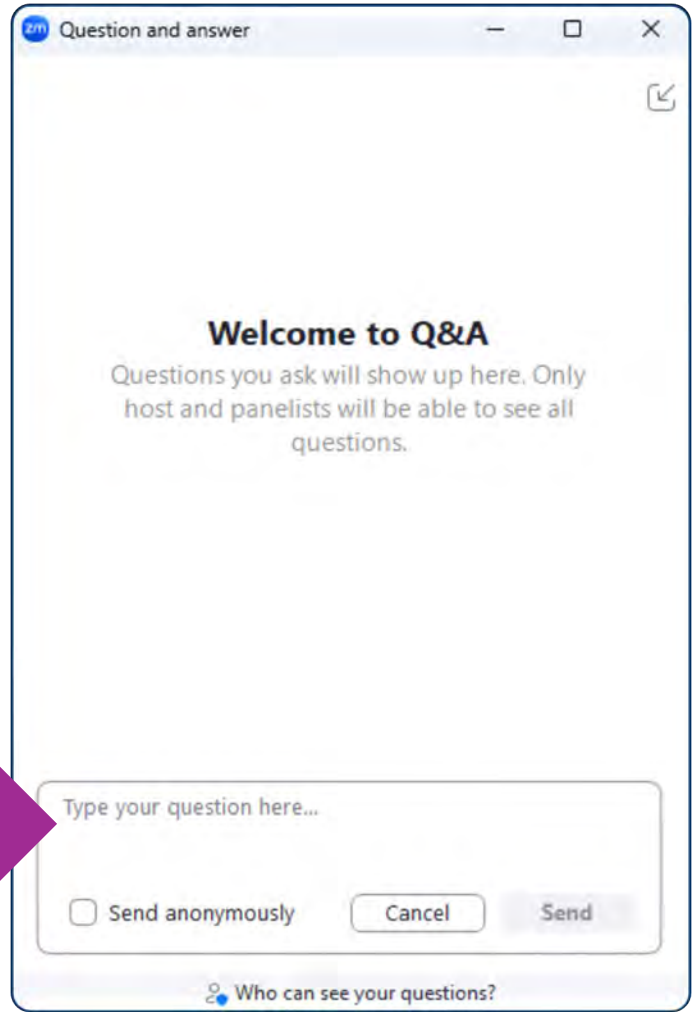
ZOOM FUNCTIONS FOR Q&A

1. Use the Q&A for any comments or questions
2. The Chat and Raise Hand Functions are turned off and will not be used
3. All questions may not be answered live due to time constraints.

Step 1:
Click the Q&A icon



Step 2:
Enter your question in the new window



GET INVOLVED!

Follow us for project updates

www.facebook.com/CityofTylerTexas/

@CityofTylerTexas

MPO@TylerTexas.com

Take the survey:

Closing Tuesday, October 7th

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 2:

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

TYLER MPO LIGHT RAIL STUDY

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

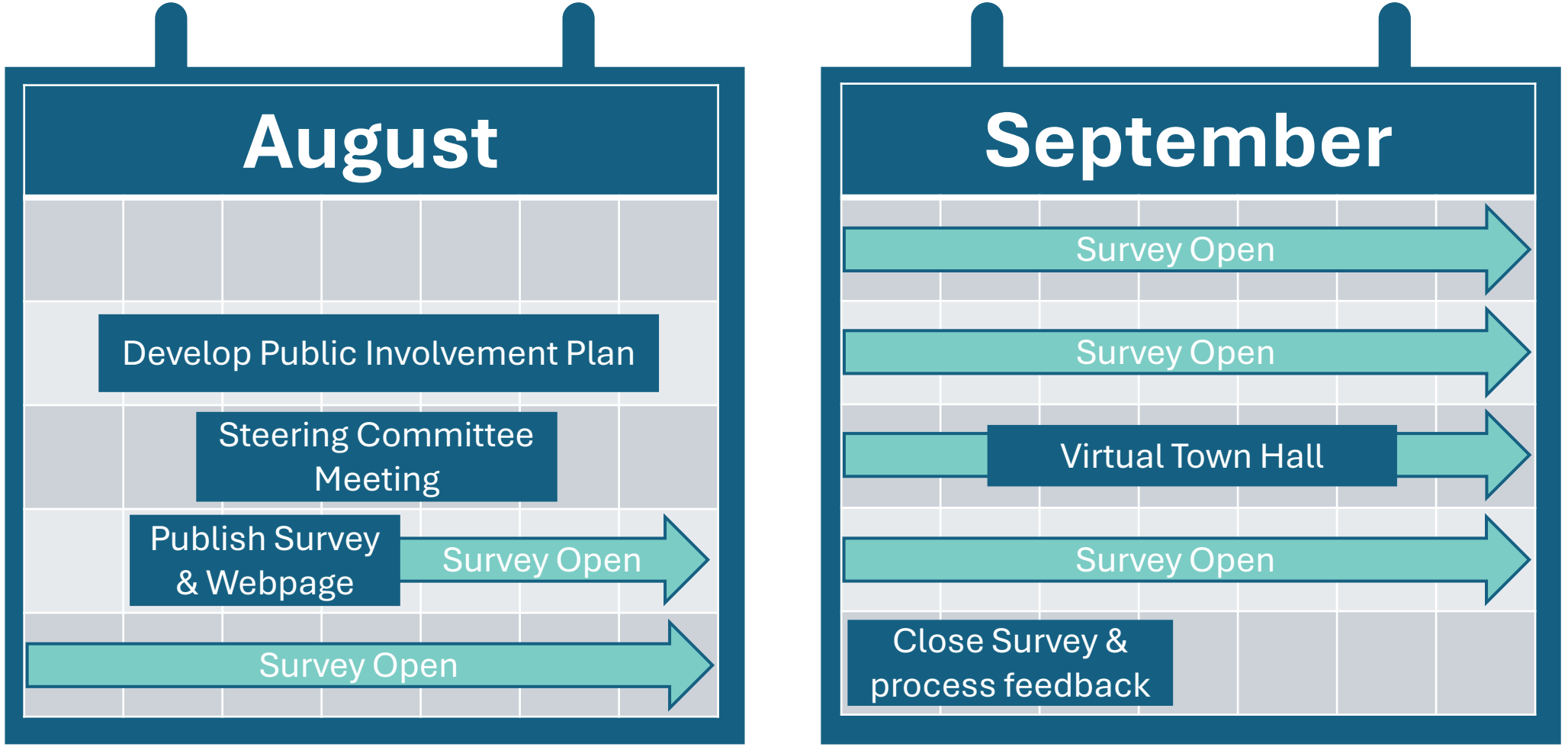
Tyler Area MPO

Kimley»Horn

AGENDA

1. TIMELINE
2. VIRTUAL TOWN HALL
3. PUBLIC SURVEY
4. PROJECT WEBSITE
5. SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC OUTREACH APPROACH

PROPOSED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TIMELINE



VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

OVERVIEW

Location: Zoom

Date/Time: TBD (Mid-September)

Purpose: Educate the public and inform the project.

ROLES

Tyler MPO staff:

- Promote the Virtual Town Hall (paid placements on socials?)
- Inform speaking roles and content

Kimley-Horn:

- Prepare presentation and related materials

CONTENT

Presentation:

- Project Introduction
- Process Overview
- Findings
- Options

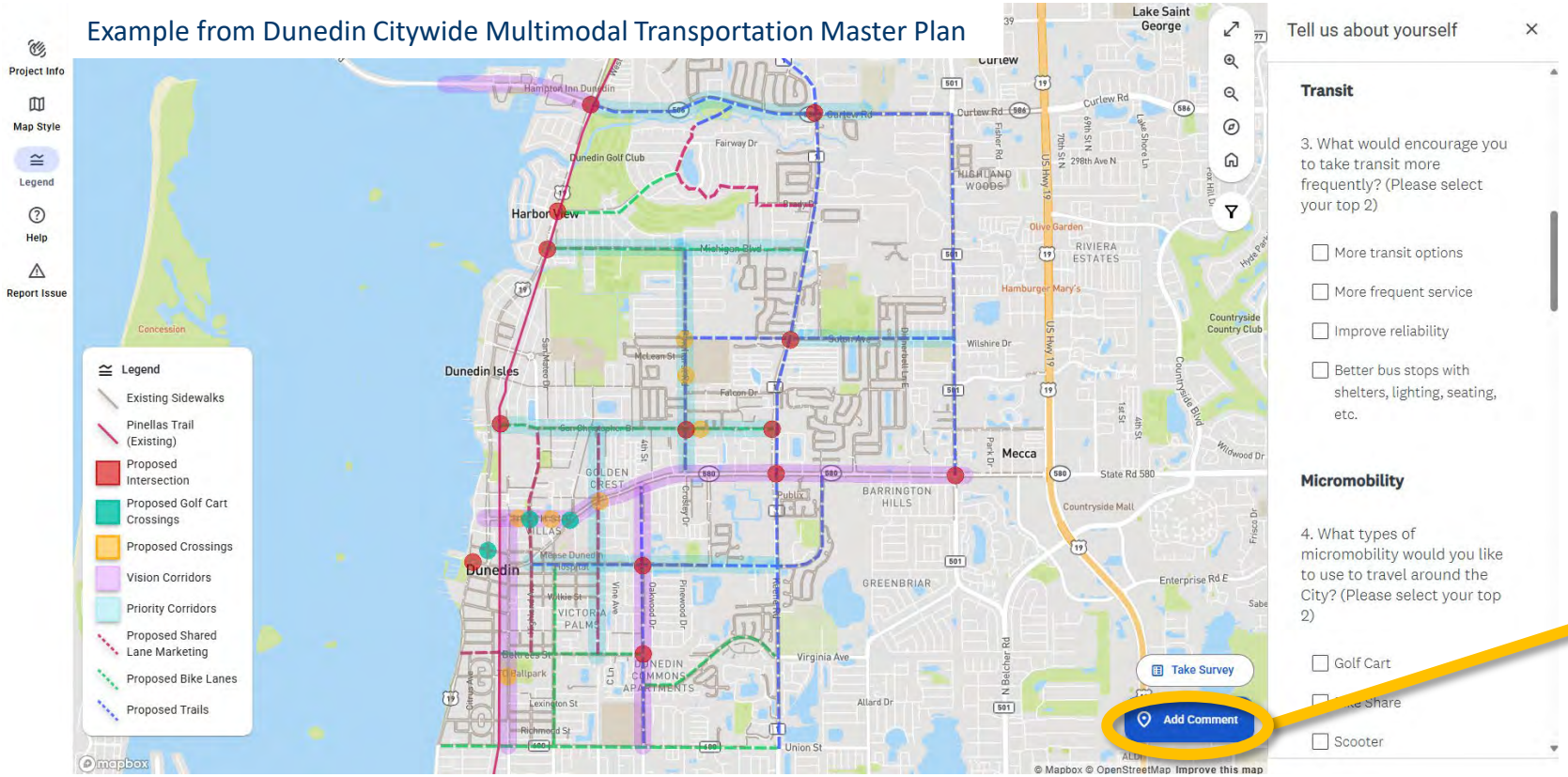
Discussion/Participation

Share Survey

MAP-BASED FEEDBACK

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO USING TRANSIT?

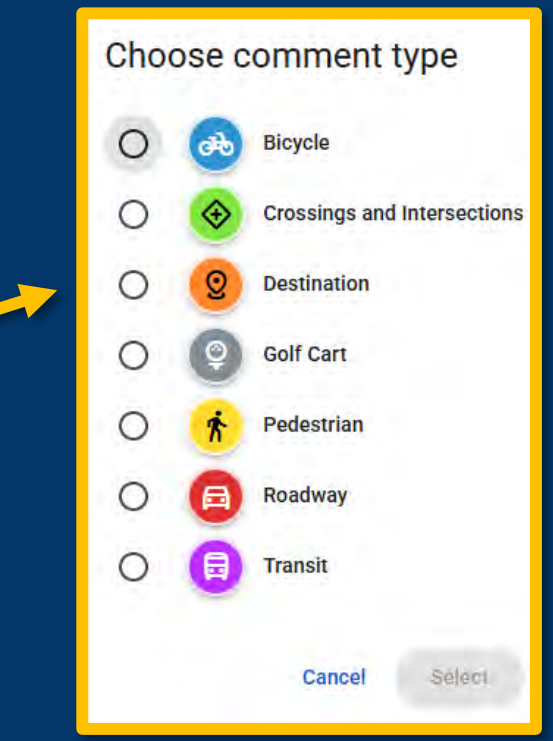
Example from Dunedin Citywide Multimodal Transportation Master Plan



PublicCoordinate

ADD COMMENT

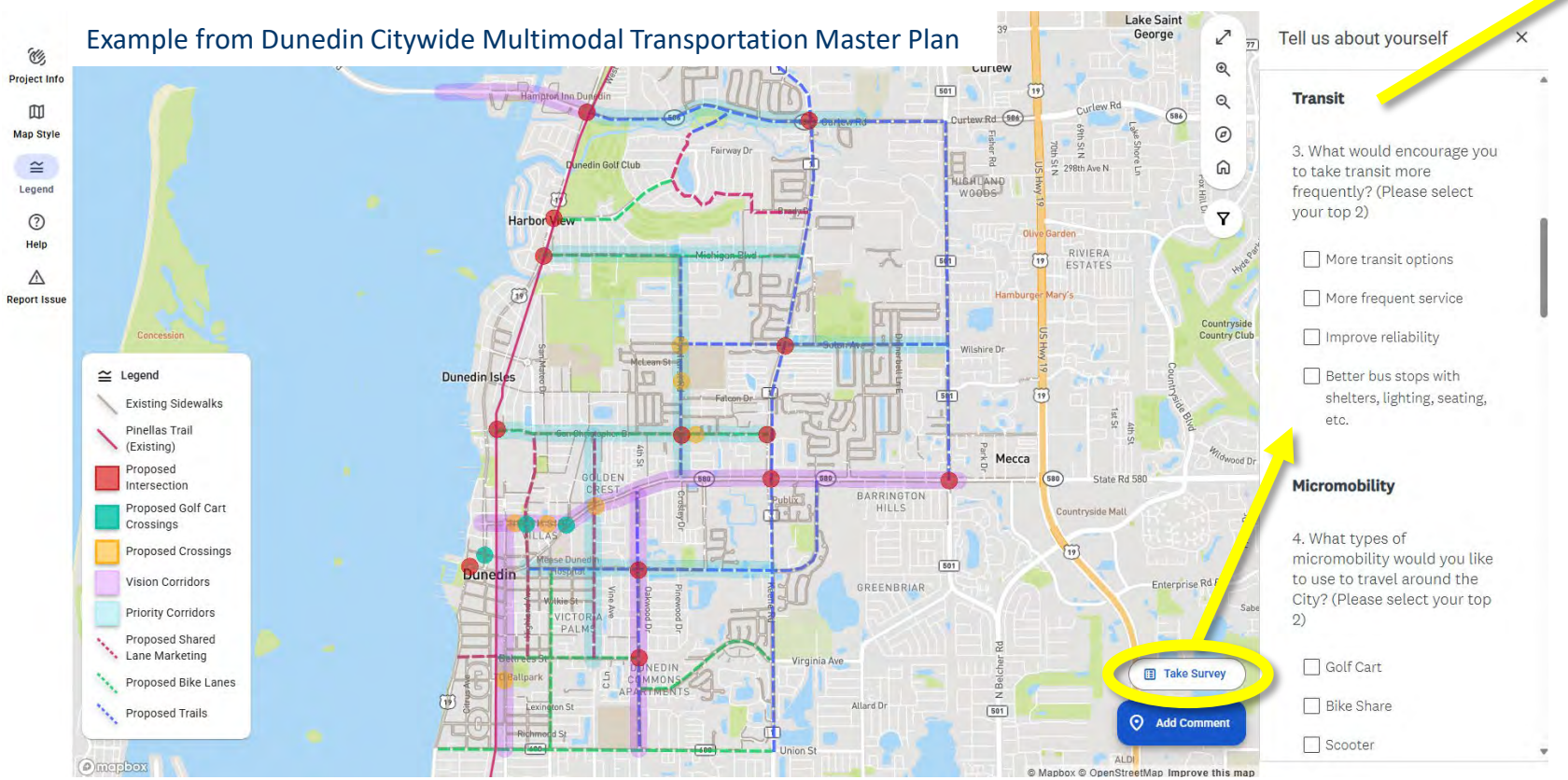
Respondents can select and place icons representing destination types, e.g.:



MAP-BASED FEEDBACK

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO USING TRANSIT?

Example from Dunedin Citywide Multimodal Transportation Master Plan



PublicCoordinate

EMBEDDED SURVEY

- Demographic questions
- How often do you use public transportation?
  - ❑ Never
  - ❑ A few times a year
  - ❑ Once a month
  - ❑ One a week
  - ❑ A few times a week
  - ❑ Every day or almost every day
- What is most important to you when considering using transit?
  - ❑ Dependability
  - ❑ Frequency
  - ❑ Speed
  - ❑ Safety
  - ❑ Comfort
  - ❑ Amenities (covered shelters, seating, bike parking, etc.)
  - ❑ Affordability

PROJECT WEBSITE

Project Updates and Information

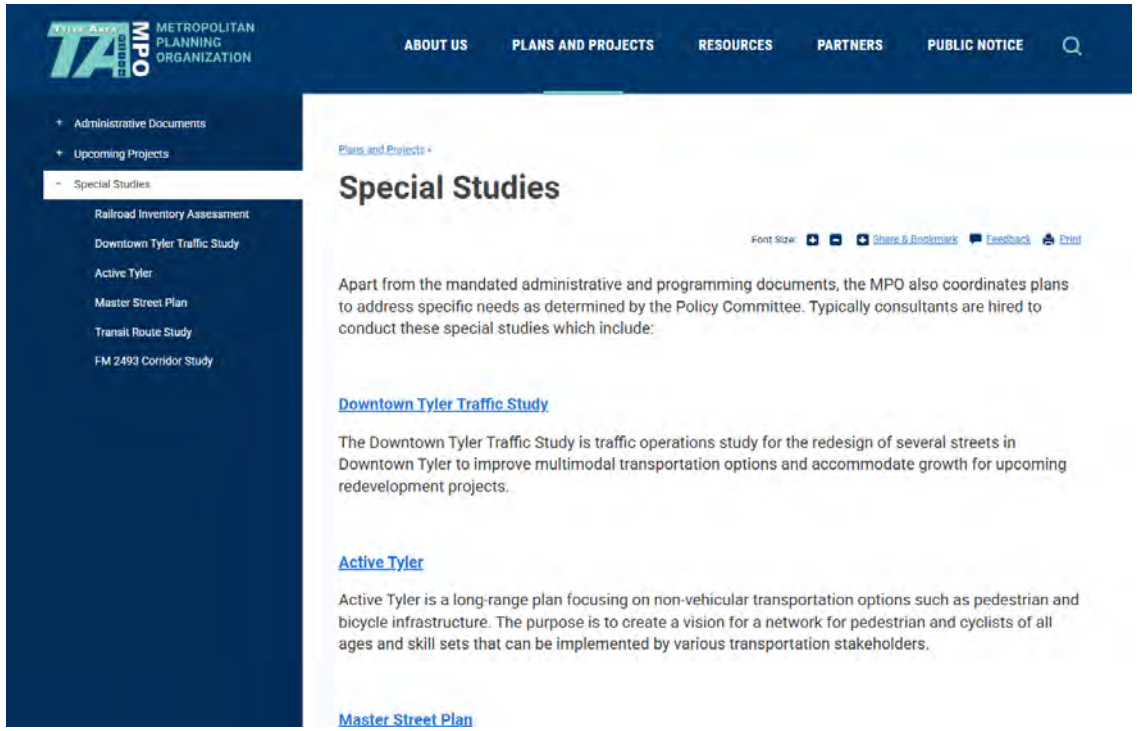
- Project Summary
- Project Goals
- High-Level Timeline

Virtual Town Hall Link

Public Survey Link

After report is complete...

- *Project Outcomes and Next Steps*



SOCIAL MEDIA APPROACH AND MEDIA OUTREACH

- Tyler MPO posts updates and advertisements
- How can we assist these efforts?
  - Press releases
  - Social media copy
  - Social media graphics

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 3:

PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

TYLER MPO LIGHT RAIL STUDY

REVIEW OF CURRENT PLANS

PLANS AND STUDIES REVIEWED

TxDOT

- Dallas/Fort Worth to Meridian Passenger Rail Study (2017)
- Texas Rail Plan (2019)

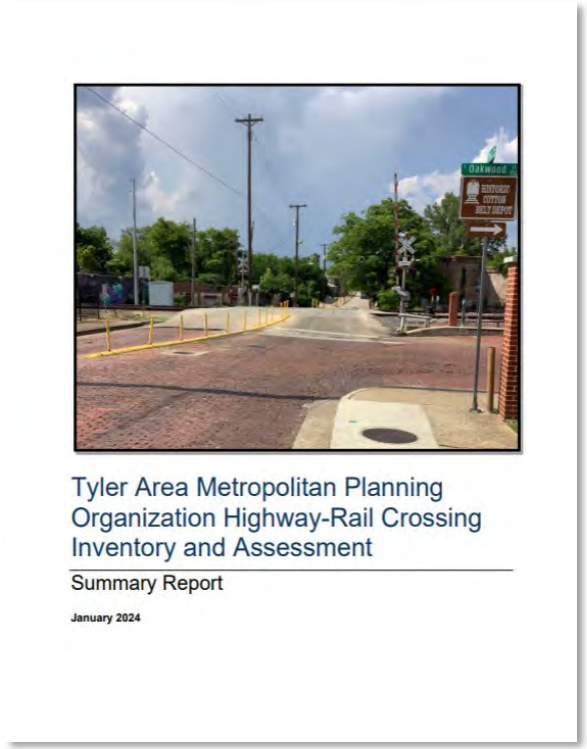
Tyler MPO

- Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory and Assessment (2024)
- Downtown Tyler Traffic Study (2023)
- Tyler Texas Transit Route Study (2021)
- Active Tyler Transportation Plan (2019)

City of Tyler

- Medical and Tyler Junior College District Midtown Area Development Plan (2012)
- Texas College Area Development Plan (2010)
- Rose Complex Master Plan (2017)

MPO – HIGHWAY-RAIL CROSSING INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT



TAMPO Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory and Assessment (2024)

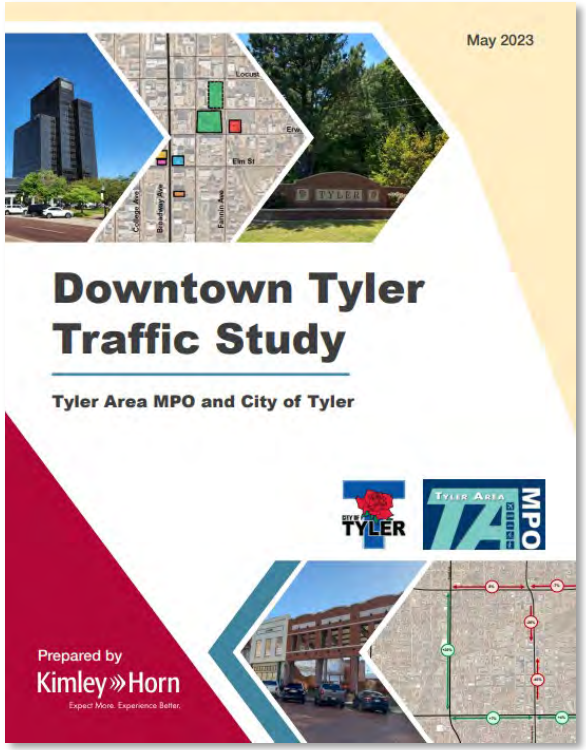
Background

- This plan documents and inventories all existing rail infrastructure within Smith County
- At-grade infrastructure is analyzed on a grade scale
- The plan identifies existing safety features at each of the at-grade railroad crossings within Smith County

Takeaways

- The plan identifies grade crossings on many corridors that are being studied for LRT
- The corridors being studied within Tyler are currently active
    - Improvements will need to be made at crossings as part of any LRT service

MPO – DOWNTOWN TYLER TRAFFIC STUDY



Downtown Tyler Traffic Study (2023)

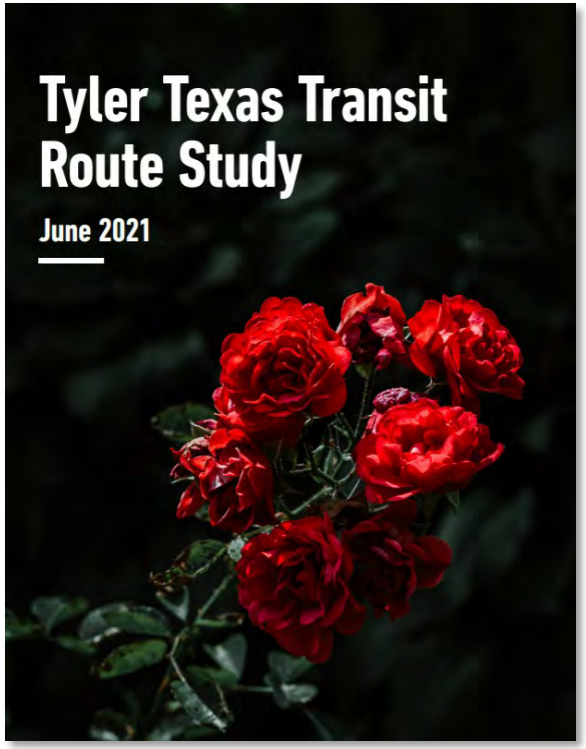
Background

- This study evaluated the operations and feasibility of various roadway conversions and network changes to the Downtown Tyler network
  - Includes one-way to two-way conversions, future traffic demand, intersection conversions, and road diets

Takeaways

- Implementation will change how people move around Downtown Tyler
- Proposed developments around downtown Tyler may increase travel demand

MPO – TRANSIT ROUTE STUDY



Tyler Texas Transit Route Study (2021)

Background

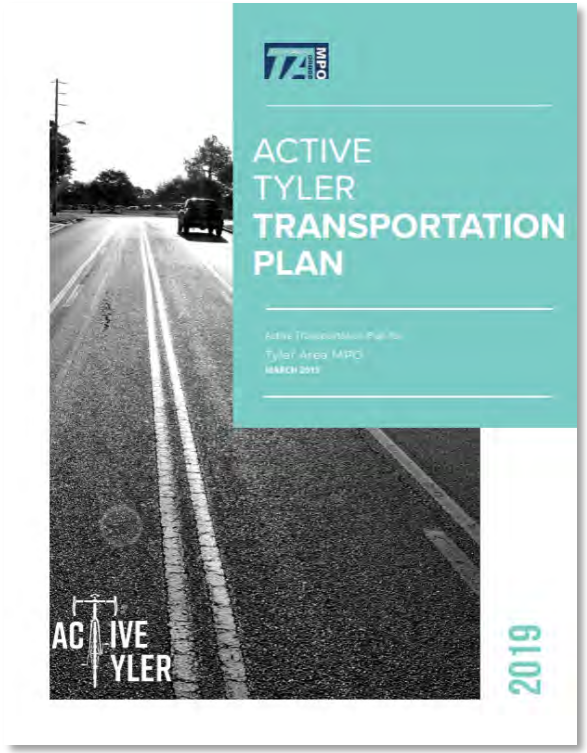
- This study evaluated current regional connections as well as local transit within the Tyler area
- Includes challenges that riders face using transit within Tyler
- Study highlighted recommendations such as simplified routing, consistent headways, and multimodal connections at transfer hubs

Takeaways

- Tyler replaced all fixed route transit services with microtransit service in early 2025

Discussion question: why did microtransit replace the fixed route service? How was that decision made?

MPO – ACTIVE TYLER



Active Tyler Transportation Plan (2019)

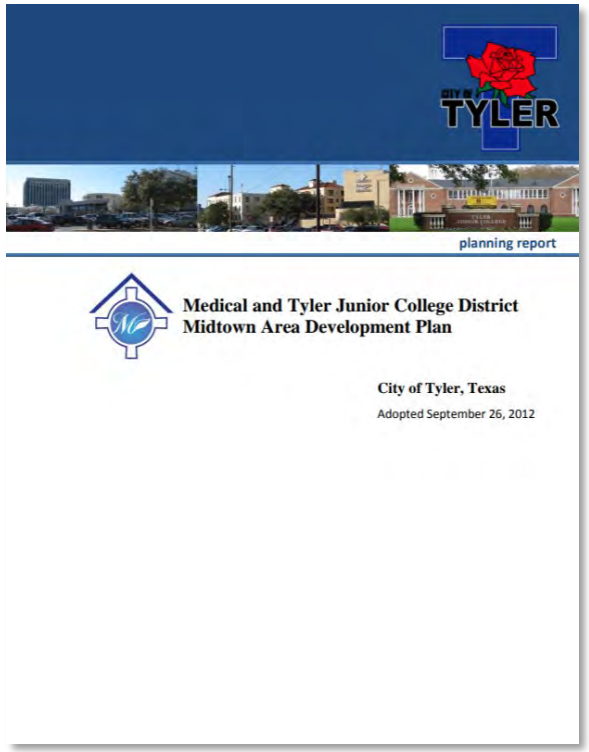
Background

- This plan resulted in an active transportation network that includes sidewalks as well as local and regional bike connections
- Analyzed inputs such as public feedback, density, attractors, and existing facilities to develop an effective active transportation network

Takeaways

- The plan identifies strategies for implementing the active transportation network.
- The plan highlights the role transit has in active transportation
  - Transit stops should be safe and connected for uses especially for first- and last-mile connectivity.
- The LRT plan should consider strategies highlighted in this document regarding their relationship with transit facilities

CITY OF TYLER – MIDTOWN AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Medical and Tyler Junior College District Midtown Area Development Plan (2012)

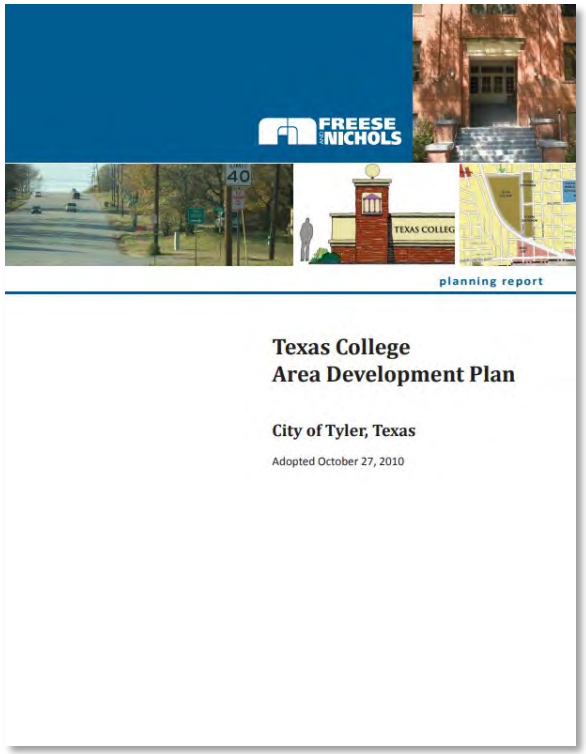
Background

- Development plan for areas around UT Health Tyler, Tyler Junior College, and Christus Trinity Mother Frances hospital.
- Recommendations for institutional expansion and “high-density mixed use” areas adjacent to rail ROW and the medical campus.

Takeaways

- All the institutions in the area have since been expanding
  - Tyler Junior College has since expanded towards the tracks since the 2012 publication of this plan
- UT Health Tyler is adjacent to Missouri Pacific rail ROW

CITY OF TYLER – TEXAS COLLEGE AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Texas College Area Development Plan (2010)

Background

- As of 2010, limited land use change or new construction has been occurring in the vicinity of the campus.
- Areas around campus are largely zoned for single-family housing – lacks commercial, restaurant, and entertainment.
- This plan recommends upzoning parcels in the vicinity and creating a new “Texas College District.”

Takeaways

- Recommendations for higher-density and mixed uses around the campus
- Texas College is bounded by Union Pacific tracks that eventually connect to downtown.

CITY OF TYLER – ROSE COMPLEX MASTER PLAN

Rose Complex Master Plan (2017)

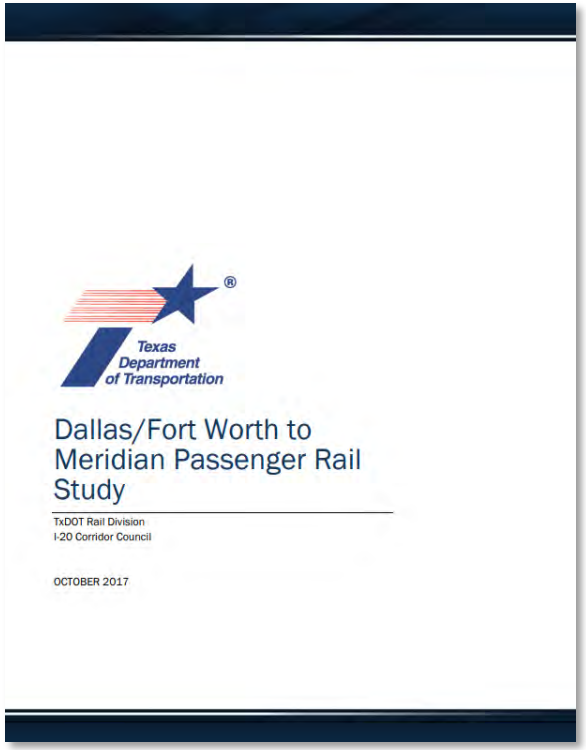
Background

- This plan highlights the future of the Rose Complex
- City owned complex with municipal functions and parks
- Recommended improvements included adding a new conference center, improved parking, and additional greenspace

Takeaways

- Many of the improvements and convention center have been completed
- The complex is located along one of the rail corridors within the city.
  - There is a desire for transit connectivity for events/tourism

TXDOT – DALLAS/FORT WORTH TO MERIDIAN PASSENGER RAIL STUDY



Dallas/Fort Worth to Meridian Passenger Rail Study (2017)

Background

- Identified improvements to existing rail infrastructure and additional rail infrastructure that would be needed to connect Amtrak services
  - Improvements consisted of new sidings, section of double track, and grade separations.
- Nearest segment to Tyler: UPRR Mineola Subdivision

Takeaways

- New service would increase the amount of passenger rail service to Mineola and Longview.
  - Currently served by Amtrak Texas Eagle
  - Service would provide more direct connection to Amtrak Crescent, increasing access to places on the East Coast
- No additional funding/planning has occurred to advance this plan.

TXDOT – TEXAS RAIL PLAN

Texas Rail Plan (2019)

Background

- The plan highlights the 2040 rail plan for the state
- The plan mostly documents existing passenger and freight rail infrastructure in Texas
- The plan inlcudes:
  - Public financing options
  - Passenger rail needs and opportunities
  - Potential passenger rail improvements and investments

Takeaways

- There are many potential passenger rail corridors/plans being discussed, but nothing that directly relates to the Tyler area.
  - Exception of DFW to Meridian passenger rail study.

NOVEMBER 2025

Appendix 4:

Shared Use Rail Agreements

RAIL TRANSIT STUDY

PREPARED FOR:

Tyler Area TAMPO

PREPARED BY:

Kimley»Horn

Expect More. Experience Better.

MEMORANDUM

To: Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

From: Hamza Khan, P.E. and Erik Mumm, AICP

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: November 5, 2025

Subject: Shared Use Rail Agreements

Introduction

Shared-use rail agreements allow local governments or transit agencies to run passenger trains on tracks that freight railroads already own. It might sound relatively straightforward, somewhat like asking to borrow a neighbor's lawnmower, but in reality, it involves careful planning of schedules, infrastructure improvements, and legal frameworks. The primary goal is ensuring reliable passenger operations can proceed without undermining the railroad's ability to deliver freight on time.

Under most arrangements, the public agency either purchases or leases access to a freight corridor. In doing so, it often provides funding for upgrades such as additional track capacity or modernized signaling that can benefit both passenger and freight movements. In many cases, the freight railroad remains in control of dispatch, functioning somewhat like a referee assigning time slots. Passenger trains may receive priority during specific windows, while freight runs at other times. The legal and liability considerations are nontrivial: freight railroads typically require the passenger agency to hold comprehensive insurance and assume any potential legal risk.

This document will cover the following breakdown:

- Tyler's considerations when reviewing the shared-use options,
- Common themes and lessons,
- Overview of shared-use rail agreements in Texas,
- Examples of other communities outside Texas that have made agreements with Class 1s,
- And, capital and cost-sharing agreements.

Whether the agreement involves outright corridor ownership, structured easements, or negotiated schedules, the key is ensuring both parties see enough advantages that neither feels shortchanged. For agencies like Tyler, it is vital to address capacity concerns by investing in infrastructure, for instance, by adding sidings or upgrading the signal (movement authority) system, so freight operators do not feel squeezed out. Ultimately, these shared-use rail solutions show that passenger and freight operations can successfully coexist on the same tracks, provided responsibilities and benefits are clearly defined and beneficial to everyone involved.

Tyler's Considerations

Tyler's main objective is to establish a reliable, efficient passenger-rail service that fits local needs, and there are multiple options to achieve it. For example, Tyler may consider the purchase of an abandoned line, or Tyler could go for a lightly used freight corridor, which reduces land-acquisition issues but means negotiating with the freight carriers over scheduling and track usage. Sometimes, agencies strike an easement deal in lieu of a full corridor purchase. However, it can present its challenges on the operating end of the service with service goals and the actual operator of the passenger trains. And then there's the idea of developing a full-on greenfield corridor, which affords much more autonomy but comes with higher construction costs and more environmental issues to resolve. Each path has pros, cons, and a unique set of wrinkles, so Tyler's leadership will want to think about the trade-off between cost and control. Often, we see a phased approach: start small with fewer trains, then expand once you've proven demand because that can help manage both the budget and the relationship with whichever railroad (or corridor) you ultimately deal with. Ultimately, whether you buy the line outright, share it, or build fresh, the real key is a negotiation strategy that benefits everybody, including local freight interests, because forging that win-win scenario usually makes passenger-rail partnerships more resilient over the long haul.

This study explores how local governments can collaborate with freight railroads to run passenger trains on freight-owned corridors. Although the prospect seems straightforward, it requires careful planning of schedules, payment structures, and liability coverage. Repeatedly, public agencies must invest in track improvements, negotiate time windows that favor passenger service during peak periods, and indemnify the railroad against extra risk. From Texas examples like Trinity Railway Express and TEXRail to broader national cases like Metrolink, these partnerships confirm that freight and passenger rail can successfully share the same tracks, provided both parties' operational and financial needs are met.

Common Themes and Lessons

Several consistent patterns emerge from these different cases, providing a roadmap for Texas local governments seeking similar arrangements:

- **Scheduling and Priority Windows:** Many agreements designate separate times for passenger priority and freight operations, especially in single-track or constrained corridors. Passenger trains typically get morning and evening peak periods, while freight has more leeway during off-peak times. This arrangement ensures reliable commuter service without unduly harming freight schedules.
- **Compensation and Capital Contributions:** Public agencies must generally compensate freight owners, either with direct payments or through substantial infrastructure investments—often both. From building additional sidings to funding major upgrades, the goal is to keep the railroad at least cost-neutral and ideally better off.
- **Maintenance and Dispatch:** Freight railroads tend to keep dispatch control, although in some cases (like TRE) a public agency takes over if it owns the corridor outright. Maintenance responsibilities are spelled out in detail, with the passenger agency covering any extra costs for higher-speed standards or increased wear. Joint committees often smooth out any conflicts.
- **Liability and Insurance:** Every successful shared-use agreement heavily addresses liability. Freight railroads require indemnification from passenger agencies, along with significant insurance coverage (often $200 million). This can involve specialized legislation or policy structures, but it's considered non-negotiable by the railroads.

- **Capacity Improvements and Future Expansion:** Agreements typically link additional passenger trains to new infrastructure. For instance, a third main track might be required before extra commuter trips can be added. This guarantees that freight operations won't be compromised if passenger service grows. Clear guidelines on who pays for expansions are essential to avoid future stalemates.

Overview of Shared-Use Rail Agreements in Texas

Implementing passenger rail on existing freight tracks typically requires shared-use agreements between local governments (or transit agencies) and the freight railroad owners. Around Texas, there are several models of such agreements, each detailing service types, operating windows, cost-sharing, liability, and maintenance responsibilities. Key examples include:

Trinity Railway Express (Dallas–Fort Worth, TX) – Initially established in the 1990s via an interlocal agreement between DART (Dallas Area Rapid Transit) and Trinity Metro (Fort Worth). The agencies purchased the corridor from freight railroads and now own the tracks, but freight trains are still allowed during off-peak hours. Under the TRE agreements, the transit agencies handle dispatching and maintenance, while freight railroads retain trackage rights at certain times. This arrangement required up-front capital (to acquire and upgrade track) and ongoing coordination with freight operators. Maintenance is performed by contractors for the public owners, and costs are covered by the transit agencies, with some reimbursement from freight fees.

TEXRail (Fort Worth to DFW Airport, TX) – A more recent example of negotiating shared use. TEXRail runs on a route involving multiple freight stakeholders; before service began in 2019, Trinity Metro had to sign eight separate agreements with four railroads to secure permission to use or cross their tracks. These included deals with Union Pacific and others to allow new passenger track to be built alongside or on existing rights-of-way. The agreements clarified operating scheddules (TEXRail mostly runs passenger service in its own dedicated track sections, but interfaces with freight at junctions), capital improvements (Trinity Metro funded track upgrades, signaling, and new infrastructure like bridges to mitigate freight interference), and maintenance roles (generally Trinity Metro maintains the portions it built, while freight companies maintain their own tracks that TEXRail may cross). The TEXRail case highlights that multiple stakeholders may need to be brouhght to consensus, and often public funds must be invested to add capacity (e.g. sidings or double track) so both freight and passenger can co-exist safely.

Capital MetroRail (Austin, TX) – A commuter rail line using a former freight corridor from downtown Austin to Leander. Here, the public entity (Capital Metro) actually owns the 32-mile line but contracts with a freight operator to serve shippers on it. The arrangement enforces temporal separation: commuter trains (weekday peak-period diesel multiple units) run during morning and afternoon rush, while freight runs at night when no passengers are on the line. Maintenance is managed by the transit agency (or its contractor), and the freight operator pays fees. This model has worked but required the transit agency to obtain an FRA waiver to run lighter weight passenger vehicles, contingent on strict scheduling that prevents freight and passenger trains from ever meeting. It shows one way to share tracks: by time-sharing rather than concurrent operation, simplifying safety requirements.

DCTA A-train (Denton County, TX) – A smaller regional rail line connecting Denton to Dallas County, which likewise runs on ex-freight tracks. The Dallas, Garland & Northeastern Railroad (DGNO) has trackage rights to serve a few local customers on the line, under an agreement with DCTA (and DART). DCTA's agreement with DGNO allows freight service in late-night hours on the same tracks, and required installing PTC to satisfy safety regulations since freight locomotives share the line. DCTA maintains the infrastructure, but the freight railroad must comply with certain speed and scheduling restrictions. In terms

of cost, DCTA's capital costs included upgrading the track to Class 4 (to allow 79 mph passenger service) and implementing advanced signal systems; DGNO's usage is typically charged via a trackage rights fee or agreement where DCTA effectively subsidizes the corridor for both uses.

Specifics on agreements with Class 1s

Trinity Railway Express (Dallas–Fort Worth, TX) – This commuter rail service is jointly provided by Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and Trinity Metro using a former freight corridor. The cities purchased the 34-mile line from a freight railroad in 1983 and continue to allow freight railroads to operate by agreement. It's worth noting that this arrangement required detailed coordination to ensure both passenger and freight operations could harmoniously share the tracks, a practice that has become more common across the country over time.

Key Provisions

- **Type of Service:** Commuter rail (Dallas–Fort Worth) with all-day, bidirectional service on weekdays and Saturdays. Freight operations (by BNSF, Union Pacific, Fort Worth & Western, and DGNO shortline) also use the same tracks under formal trackage rights agreements. It's intriguing to see how multiple freight carriers, each with its priorities, collaborate under a unified framework.
- **Operating Schedule Restrictions:** TRE passenger trains run approximately 5:00 AM to 11:35 PM, with 20-minute headways at peak times. Freight moves are typically slotted into overnight hours or other off-peak windows to minimize conflicts. Passenger trains have dispatch priority during their operating hours, while freight generally runs in the late-night "freight curfew" period when no passenger trains are scheduled. This structured approach ensures reliable commuter rail service without unduly hampering freight schedules.
- **Track Access Payments:** Because the public agencies own the line, the freight carriers pay access fees and right-of-way leases to operate over it, bringing in revenue (for example, about $2.3 million in one fiscal year) to offset maintenance costs. Originally, the cities' purchase was an upfront investment to secure passenger access rights.[1]
- **Maintenance Responsibilities:** The public agencies, through a contractor (Herzog Transit Services), handle dispatch and maintain the infrastructure—track, signals, and crossings—to passenger standards. Freight railroads pay for any unusual wear and tear through their access fees, which help fund ongoing track maintenance and operations. Keeping the track in good repair for passenger service benefits freight operations, too.
- **Liability Agreements:** The transit agencies carry comprehensive liability insurance (up to the federal $200 million cap per incident) that covers all parties. The public owners indemnify the freight railroads for any commuter-rail-related claims, while each freight operator remains responsible for its own trains. By joining a shared liability insurance pool that includes other services (TEXRail, Denton's A-Train, and TRE itself), the agencies reduced costs and met freight railroads' strong insurance requirements. This pooling mechanism is a subtle but clever strategy to handle the significant financial exposures that can arise from passenger operations.

[1] https://railroadfan.com/wiki/index.php/Trinity_Railway_Express

TEXRail (Fort Worth – DFW Airport, TX) – Opened in 2019 by Trinity Metro, this 27-mile commuter line runs on tracks owned by two freight railroads (Union Pacific and Fort Worth & Western Railroad). In 2015, the parties signed a comprehensive Shared Use Operating Agreement that grants TEXRail the right to operate passenger service on active freight corridors.

Key Provisions

- **Type of Service:** Commuter rail linking Fort Worth, Grapevine, and DFW Airport. Trains run daily, seven days a week, on existing freight corridors. Freight service in these corridors continues, mostly serving local industries. Some folks don't realize just how intricate these freight services can be, involving a variety of cargo and local deliveries.
- **Operating Schedule Restrictions:** TEXRail trains run on 30-minute intervals during peak periods and hourly otherwise. In practice, passenger trains enjoy priority during daytime hours, while freight typically operates late at night when TEXRail runs less frequently or not at all. Daytime freight, if needed, is inserted into designated slots or requires special coordination with dispatchers.
- **Payments for Track Usage:** Trinity Metro did not buy the entire corridor outright but instead funded substantial upgrades (double-tracking, modern signal systems, sidings) to help both freight and passenger operations. In return, Union Pacific and FWWR provided passenger easements, and there are likely some nominal access fees as well—though exact figures often remain confidential. This concept of "capital investment in lieu of large ongoing payments" is a recurring theme in many shared-use rail agreements.[2]
- **Maintenance Responsibilities:** Under the pact, Trinity Metro (through its operating contractor) maintains the track portions used by TEXRail to passenger standards. The freight railroads are responsible for any exclusive freight-only track. Trinity Metro handles passenger-related upkeep on segments indeed used by both, and the freight railroads coordinate on work affecting both services. This clear delineation helps prevent confusion and ensures consistent performance.
- **Liability Agreements:** As with most shared-use deals, the freight owners demanded comprehensive indemnification. Trinity Metro assumes all liability for TEXRail service and holds adequate insurance. Freight carriers remain liable for their own freight-specific incidents, but passenger-related risks fall on the agency. These clauses replicate the standard U.S. model where the new passenger service does not add to the freight railroad's liability burden, thereby easing the railroad's concerns about potential lawsuits.

Lone Star Rail District Proposal (Austin–San Antonio, TX) – This now-canceled project illustrates the complexities of securing passenger rights on a heavily used freight mainline. The Lone Star Rail District (LSRD) attempted from 2010 to 2016 to negotiate with Union Pacific to run commuter trains on the

[2] https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/funding/grant-programs/capital-investments/130286/tx-tex-rail-ffga-profile.pdf

existing Austin–San Antonio corridor, which is a major freight artery. They explored rerouting most UP freight traffic onto a new bypass line to free capacity for passenger trains.

Key Aspects of the Attempted Arrangement

- **Type of Service:** The vision was for an intercity/commuter rail operation on Union Pacific's busy mainline, offering all-day trains between Austin and San Antonio. The idea was to blend commuter-style frequencies with intercity distances, capturing local riders and longer-distance travelers alike.
- **Operating Times:** The I-35 freight corridor is extremely active for UP. The plan was to shift a significant volume of through-freight to a new route, allowing daytime passenger windows. Otherwise, the only option would have been massive capacity upgrades or severe schedule constraints for passenger trains.
- **Payments/Costs:** The LSRD proposed funding a new freight bypass line and various improvements as a kind of "entry fee." This might have cost over $1 billion, covering items like double-tracking, modernizing bridges, and so on. Although ongoing access fees were never finalized, UP would have undoubtedly demanded coverage of all incremental maintenance and dispatching costs tied to passenger service.
- **Maintenance Responsibilities:** UP would have continued owning and maintaining the line after improvements. The passenger agency would pay for any maintenance above normal freight needs—like higher track standards for faster passenger speeds. From a railroad's perspective, it's all about remaining "cost neutral" or even cost positive if possible.
- **Liability Terms:** As expected, UP required that the new commuter service add no extra liability risk. LSRD and possibly the State of Texas would have been on the hook to indemnify UP. Although there was talk of state law reforms to facilitate this, UP withdrew in 2016, citing operational and liability concerns, effectively killing the project. This underscores how liability and capacity issues can derail a potential deal if not resolved to the freight railroad's satisfaction.

Examples of other communities outside Texas that have made agreements with Class 1s

Metrolink – Southern California Agreements on Freight-Owned Tracks (California) – Metrolink, the commuter rail system serving Los Angeles and surrounding counties, provides a prime example of negotiating with multiple Class I freight railroads for track access. It operates over corridors owned by BNSF Railway and Union Pacific, establishing terms that allow frequent commuter service alongside busy freight operations.

Key Provisions

- **Type of Service:** Metrolink runs commuter trains during peak periods and beyond, sharing corridors with BNSF (like the San Bernardino Line) and Union Pacific (including the Ventura County and Antelope Valley lines). Freight trains continue on these routes under carefully negotiated conditions.

- **Operating Windows:** Metrolink agreements set aside "commuter windows," roughly aligned with morning and afternoon rush hours, during which passenger trains have clear priority. Freight must stand aside or wait on sidings in these periods, though both BNSF and UP can dispatch their trains more freely off-peak. This helps Metrolink maintain punctual service while still preserving freight capacity outside those core times.
- **Payments and Fees:** Metrolink pays freight railroads using models that may include per-train-mile fees (as was done with BNSF) or easement cost-sharing (as with Union Pacific). Upfront capital investments in track, signals, and other enhancements are also common. If the agency later purchased a segment outright, it then assumed full maintenance and dispatch responsibility, flipping the typical dynamic and charging freight railroads a usage fee instead.
- **Maintenance Responsibilities:** Usually, the freight operator continues daily track maintenance, funded partly by public agency payments. Metrolink invests in improvements that benefit both freight and passenger trains. Over time, some corridors were fully purchased by public agencies, shifting maintenance and dispatch into Metrolink's control. But for lines that remain freight-owned, the railroad maintains the infrastructure to an agreed-upon standard, with the agency covering the additional costs of higher-speed passenger operations.
- **Liability Provisions:** Metrolink (through its member agencies) indemnifies the freight owners against almost all passenger-related liability, maintaining a hefty insurance policy of at least $200 million. Each railroad covers its own employees and freight incidents, but if a Metrolink train is involved, the commuter agency's insurance takes the lead. This arrangement is non-negotiable for freight railroads, who want no extra exposure from passenger service.

Metra Commuter Rail (Chicago, IL – Union Pacific Agreements) – Metra's largest commuter lines are on tracks owned by Union Pacific (formerly the Chicago & North Western). These corridors carry heavy commuter traffic and significant freight, demonstrating a longstanding, multifaceted partnership.

Key Provisions

- **Type of Service:** Three Metra lines on UP-owned tracks radiate out of Chicago, with UP itself historically contracted to operate commuter trains (using UP crews). Metra funds the service, provides equipment, and plans schedules. Freight traffic shares these lines, especially on the UP West route.
- **Operating Times:** Dense commuter service occupies the morning and evening rush hours, with frequent midday and evening trains. Freight slots in between, using overnight hours and mid-day lulls. Dispatchers keep Metra trains on time as a priority during scheduled commuter periods, reflecting the terms of the purchase-of-service agreement.
- **Payments and Financial Terms:** Metra compensates Union Pacific through annual operating payments that cover crew wages, track maintenance, dispatching, and overhead. In some years, this arrangement cost around $100 million. Metra also invests in capital improvements on UP's property—effectively subsidizing track renewal and upgrades. Meanwhile, UP retains all freight revenue but is freed from a big chunk of infrastructure expense. This synergy has kept the partnership stable for decades, although in recent years UP has shown some desire to exit commuter operations (but not to relinquish freight).

- **Maintenance Responsibilities:** UP maintains track, signals, and other railroad infrastructure, with Metra paying the bills. Metra also contributes to larger capital projects, such as bridge repairs, positive train control installation, and track replacements. While it may seem redundant to invest so heavily in another company's asset, this is necessary to secure reliable service for Metra's passengers. It's a practical trade-off that ensures the line remains in good shape for both freight and commuter rail.
- **Liability and Indemnity:** Metra generally indemnifies Union Pacific for passenger-related claims. The agreement caps liability at $200 million per incident, per federal regulations. Union Pacific indemnifies Metra for freight-related mishaps. Though UP operates the commuter trains with its employees, the ultimate responsibility for passenger incidents rests with Metra's insurance coverage.

Capitol Corridor (Northern California – Intercity on UP Lines) – The Capitol Corridor is a state-supported, Amtrak-operated service connecting San Jose, Oakland, and Sacramento. It runs extensively on Union Pacific's tracks and uses a performance-based agreement with incentive payments to achieve high on-time performance.

Key Provisions

- **Type of Service:** Intercity passenger rail with commuter-like frequencies (up to 15 daily round-trips in the core segment). Freight trains—both local and long-distance—also rely on this busy corridor. There's something striking about how seamlessly these two traffic types mingle here, largely because of a carefully crafted dispatch strategy.
- **Operating Priority and Schedules:** Amtrak has statutory priority by law, but Capitol Corridor's agreement with UP emphasizes incentives rather than rigid enforcement. There is no strict freight curfew; instead, Union Pacific is rewarded financially if passenger on-time performance stays above agreed thresholds. This creates a direct motive for dispatchers to favor passenger schedules without entirely neglecting freight moves.
- **Payments and Investments:** The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) provides an annual track usage fee, plus additional funds for maintenance that exceeds normal freight needs. The state also invests in major capital improvements—new sidings, double-tracking, upgraded signals—benefiting both passenger and freight. Incentive payments reward UP for hitting on-time performance metrics, which they've managed to achieve consistently.
- **Maintenance Responsibilities:** UP retains full control over track maintenance and dispatching. CCJPA funds a dedicated maintenance gang to keep the corridor at higher passenger standards (Class 5, allowing up to 90 mph). This arrangement leverages UP's existing workforce, while ensuring passenger interests remain a high priority. Although slightly tangential, one might imagine that such a dedicated maintenance team also contributes to fewer disruptions for freight, as the track is in consistently good condition.
- **Liability Agreements:** Amtrak's national statutory framework covers Capitol Corridor, with a $200 million cap on passenger claims, but supplemental agreements protect UP from liability related to passenger operations. Amtrak (with state backing) indemnifies UP, barring situations of gross negligence. This system has proven robust over years of consistent service growth, and Union Pacific has often praised this model of partnership.

Virginia Railway Express (Washington, DC – Virginia) – Although it's outside Texas, VRE's example highlights important elements of commuter operations on freight-owned corridors. VRE relies on track owned by CSX (one of the busiest lines on the East Coast) and Norfolk Southern, demonstrating the delicate balancing act of hosting commuter trains in a territory dominated by heavy freight flows.

Key Provisions

- **Type of Service:** Commuter rail serving DC suburbs, primarily during weekday rush hours, on tracks that also carry extensive freight traffic plus Amtrak intercity trains. In such a corridor, even small disruptions can ripple across the network, so carefully drawn agreements are vital.
- **Operating Windows:** VRE has reserved "freight curfew" blocks in the morning and evening rush periods, where freight operations must not hinder commuter trains. Off-peak, VRE runs fewer trains, and freight has greater freedom. VRE is contractually limited to a certain number of daily trains—expansion requires new negotiations and infrastructure. This structure allows the railroad to plan its freight movements confidently while letting VRE preserve service reliability.
- **Payments:** VRE pays multimillion-dollar annual fees for track access and invests heavily in capacity expansions (like triple-tracking certain segments, upgrading bridges, and modernizing signals). As new projects come online, additional commuter train slots open. This straightforward "pay-to-play" approach ensures the host railroad remains whole, or in some respects, better off than before.
- **Maintenance:** Freight railroads maintain their own track, with costs partially offset by VRE's payments and state funding for incremental work. If VRE or the state pays to upgrade a track segment to continuous welded rail, for example, the freight railroad's maintenance costs may decrease in the long run. And it's beneficial for passenger comfort and speed, too.
- **Liability:** VRE, through state laws and contractual provisions, must comprehensively indemnify the freight railroads. Its insurance coverage currently extends above the federal $200 million cap, offering maximum assurance that the freight railroads won't face significant exposure. This was a non-negotiable piece of the puzzle—without robust indemnification, the host railroads likely would not have allowed VRE onto their tracks.

Capital and Cost-Sharing Agreements

There are a couple of illustrative case studies that showcase how capital expenditures and cost-sharing arrangements can foster integration of passenger service on freight-owned corridors. Although each case arises from different regions and different goals, all of them revolve around the idea of mutually beneficial collaboration, one in which the freight railroad receives meaningful improvements and the public agency gains expanded passenger rail capacity or better service options. In a sense, these agreements boil down to a "shared wins" model, where railroads see enhanced infrastructure that accelerates or streamlines freight traffic, and agencies achieve the reliability they need for passenger operations.

- **Tower 55 (Fort Worth, TX)**: One of the prime examples involves the Tower 55 project in Fort Worth, where capital costs were split among multiple parties—Union Pacific, BNSF, local agencies, and federal grant programs. Each partner contributed a portion of the funding, thereby distributing both the financial burden and the expected benefits. The underlying rationale was to reduce congestion and upgrade the infrastructure for more fluid traffic movement, which benefits both freight carriers and existing passenger services. Interestingly, it also served as a public relations success story, highlighting how different stakeholders can pull resources together for the

greater good. Sometimes, reading about these collaborations prompts us to reflect on how many interests must align for a complex project to take off: from city planners to federal agencies, everyone had a stake in Tower 55, and it was a testament to the power of collective effort.

- **San Joaquin Valley (California)**: Another case is about California's phased approach for San Joaquin service expansions—though it may not be in Texas, it provides a useful model for how capital and operating agreements can be introduced in stages. Rather than sinking all funding into one giant project at once, the agencies and BNSF approached it incrementally. This not only made it easier to secure the necessary money but also allowed for reassessment at each phase. If it turned out that ridership or freight conditions changed, there was room to adjust. The key takeaway is that costs and schedules were revisited whenever the proposed passenger service plan evolved. Such flexibility might resonate with local leaders who are cautious about committing to a massive up-front investment, preferring to confirm viability step by step.

- **Smaller Cases of Shared Capital**: There are also smaller-scale agreements—like those between BNSF and regional or state agencies for modest route improvements—and underscores how a railroad may sometimes invest even when it doesn't urgently need the capacity. The highlight here is that good community relations and positive media attention can be drivers of these deals. In the Milk River Sub or Ottumwa Sub, for instance, BNSF contributed around 20% of the project cost, reinforcing the point that freight carriers might be willing to pay a slice of the bill in exchange for goodwill and possible future benefits. Admittedly, it can be slightly surprising to see a major railroad agree to invest in corridors that aren't immediately mission-critical. Yet, it comes back to that mutual benefit perspective—improved rail infrastructure often pays off for everyone involved.

- **Service Cost-Sharing Agreements**: Beyond pure capital outlays, there are service cost-sharing setups—like per-train-mile fees, time-window slots, or lump-sum payments. Whether it's slots per hour or purchased easements on railroad property, each framework ensures the freight railroad is compensated for passenger train use and any additional wear or dispatching complexities. The discussion of such arrangements underlines that passenger agencies should anticipate providing ongoing financial contributions, not just a one-time infrastructure investment. Freight railroads, for their part, typically accept these deals if it means they won't be burdened by new unfunded obligations or higher liability risks. It's an ever-repeating theme: "protect the railroad while aiding the community," which recurs across nearly every corridor negotiation.

Sources:

- North Central Texas Council of Governments – *Public Use of Rail Right-of-Way in Urban Areas* (2014), Texas Transportation Institute report (case studies of TRE, TEXRail, etc.) (untitled) (Rail Insider-Passenger rail expansion in Dallas-Fort Worth: Transit agencies work together to plan and build passenger rail in North Texas. Information For Rail Career Professionals From Progressive Railroading Magazine) (Public Use of Rail RoW in Urban Areas).
- Trinity Metro FY2015 Budget – Trinity Railway Express summary (ownership, freight access agreements, revenue) (untitled) (untitled).
- Progressive Railroading – "Passenger rail expansion in Dallas-Fort Worth" (Feb 2012) – discusses TEXRail shared-track agreements and regional coordination (Rail Insider-Passenger rail expansion in Dallas-Fort Worth: Transit agencies work together to plan and build passenger rail in North Texas. Information For Rail Career Professionals From Progressive Railroading Magazine)
- Restart Lone Star Rail District – Statement on Union Pacific negotiations (Jul 2023) (Public affairs rep: Union Pacific is open to considering new passenger rail plans for Central Texas) *San Antonio Express-News* (Mar 22, 2016) on UP's withdrawal from LSTAR agreement (Union Pacific's pullout might cost Lone Star Rail District more funding).
- ECO North America presentation – Metrolink commuter agreements (Santa Fe & UP lines), terms of easements, cost-sharing, and priority windows (231012 OKC Network Notes.pdf) (231012 OKC Network Notes.pdf).
- U.S. Surface Transportation Board filings – Metra/Union Pacific purchase-of-service agreement litigation (Metra vs. UP, 2019) ().
- Capitol Corridor JPA – Public presentations and business plans detailing Union Pacific agreements (track usage fees, maintenance funding, incentive payments) (Business Plan 2007 Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA)
- Express – Public reports and NVTC briefing materials on CSX/NS agreements (operating windows, fees, and liability arrangements) (Public Use of Rail RoW in Urban Areas)
- NCTCOG Tower 55 Summary - https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/2a929203-7104-4310-95de-6b9cd29e98d3/T55Appl.pdf

APPENDIX 5:

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

TYLER MPO LIGHT RAIL STUDY

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

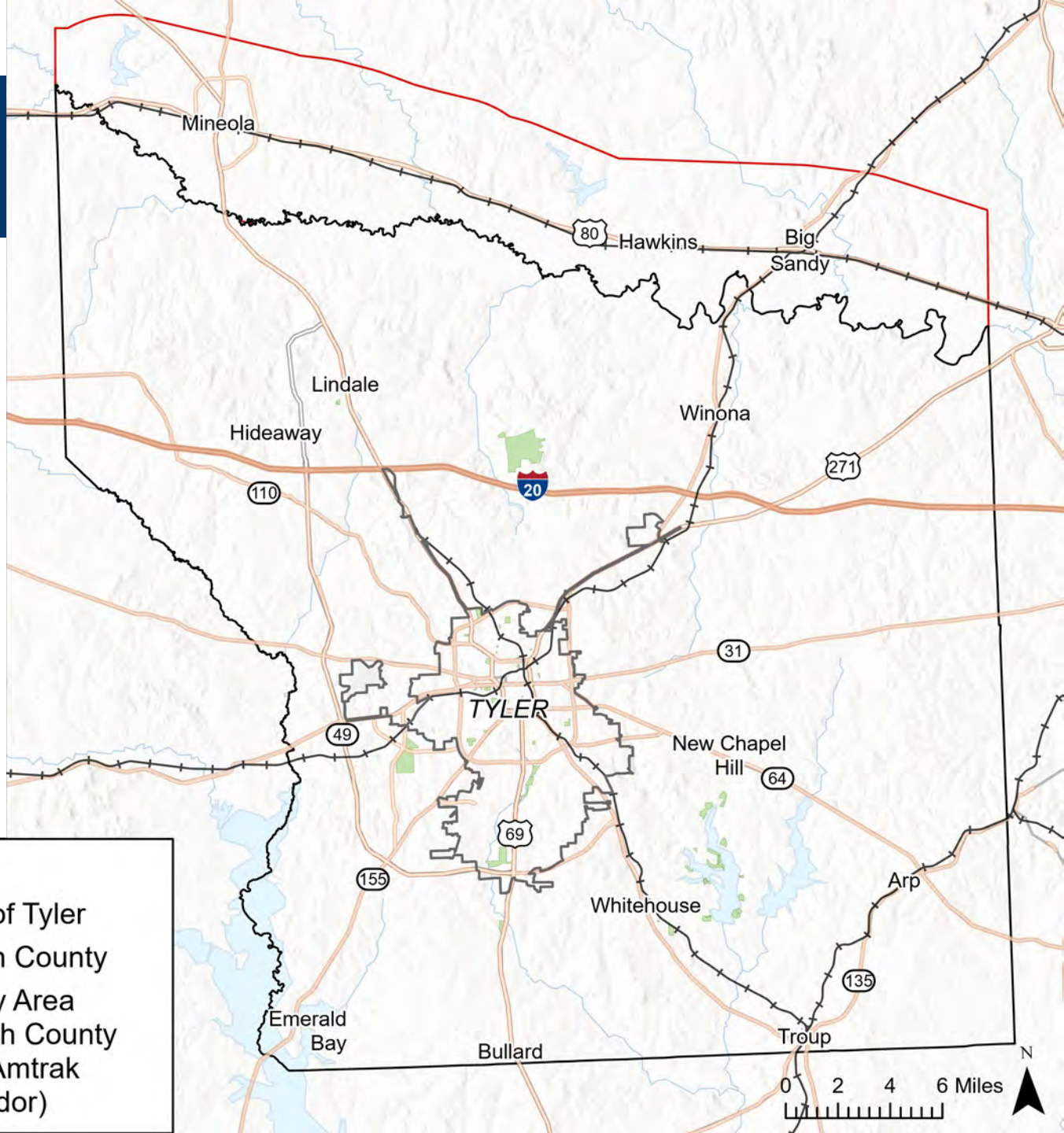
Tyler Area MPO

Kimley»Horn

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

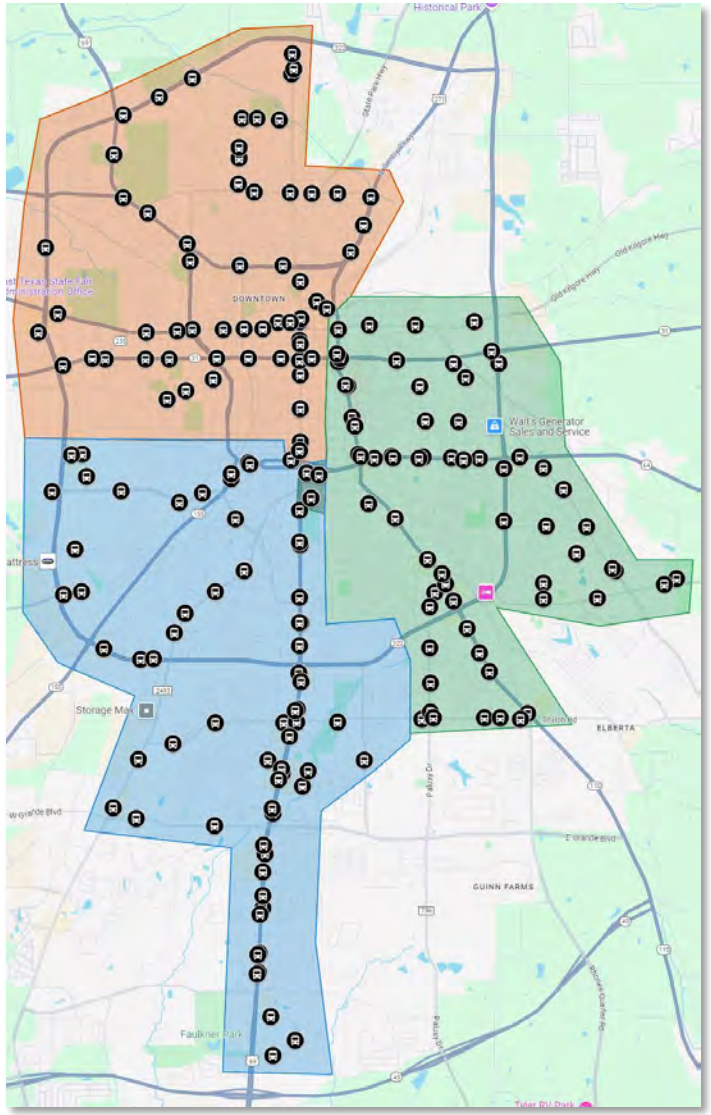
PROJECT STUDY AREA

- City of Tyler
- Smith County
- Amtrak Texas Eagle Corridor



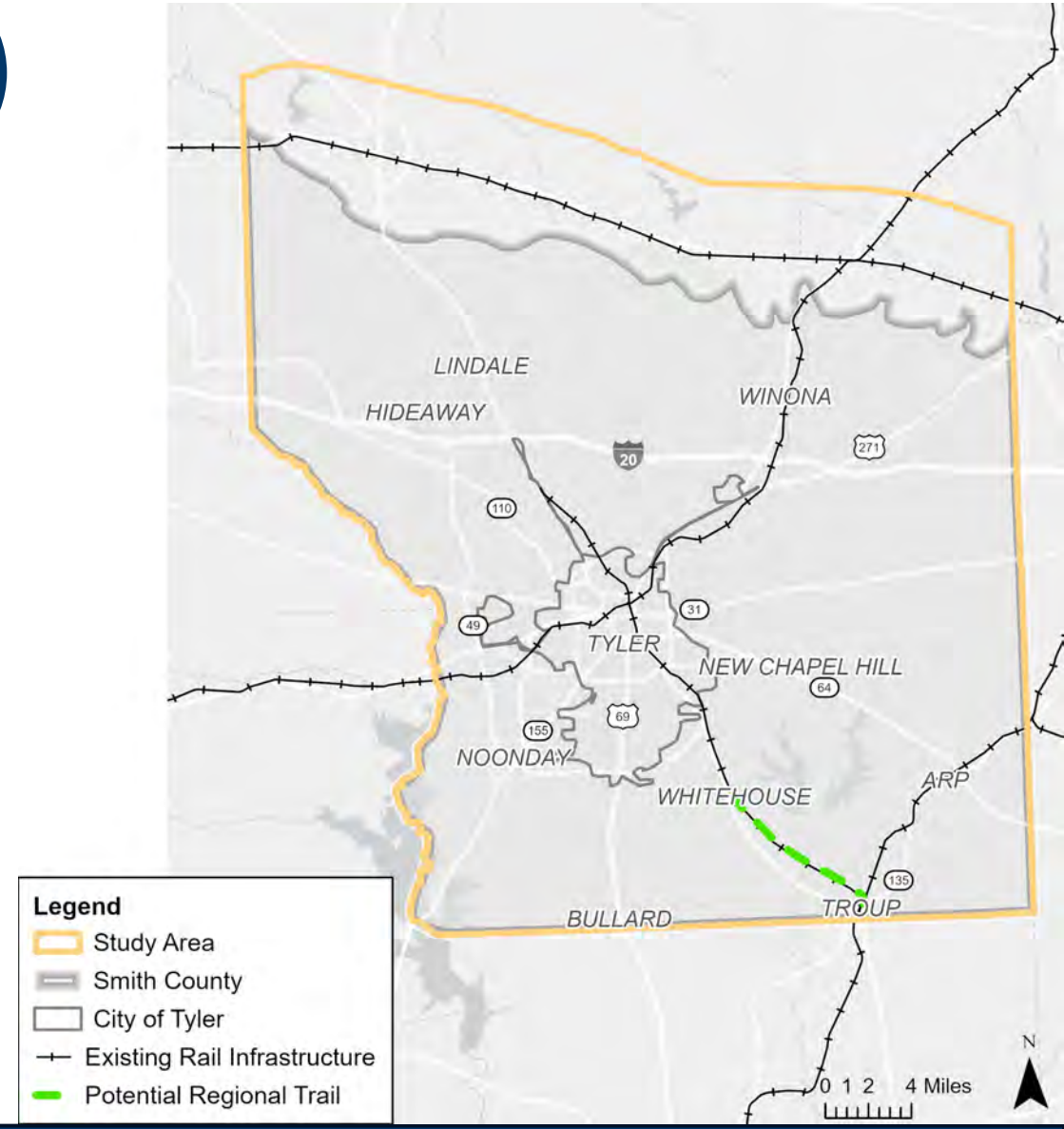
TYLER MICROTRANSIT

- Implemented in January 2025
  - Pilot programs conducted in May and June 2024
- Replaced fixed route transit within Tyler
- Three zones within city limits
  - Two drivers per zone
  - Dropoff locations within sight of the closest stop on any existing route



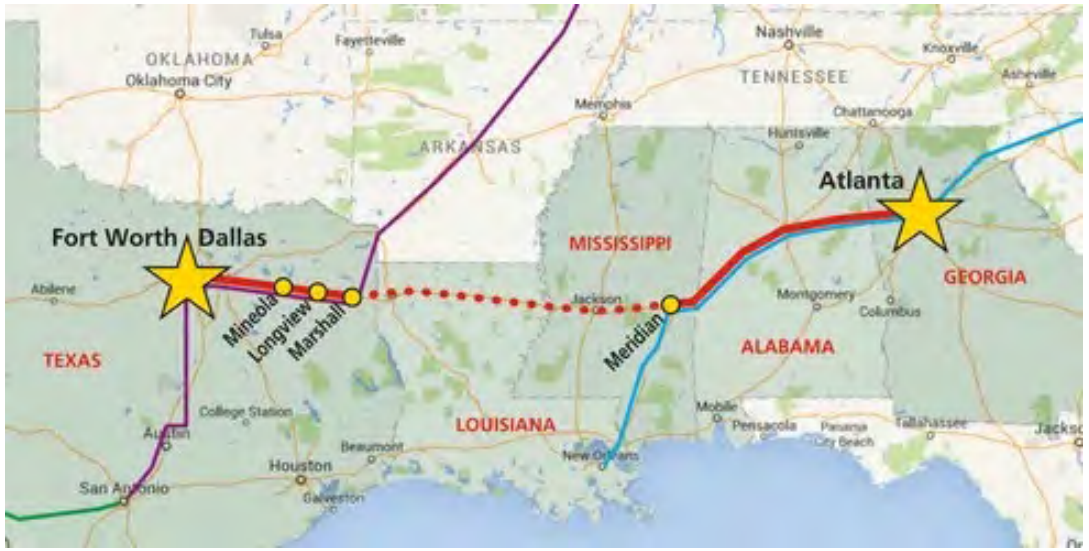
REGIONAL TRAIL

- Proposed regional trail from Whitehouse to Troup
- 8-mile corridor planned for recreational uses

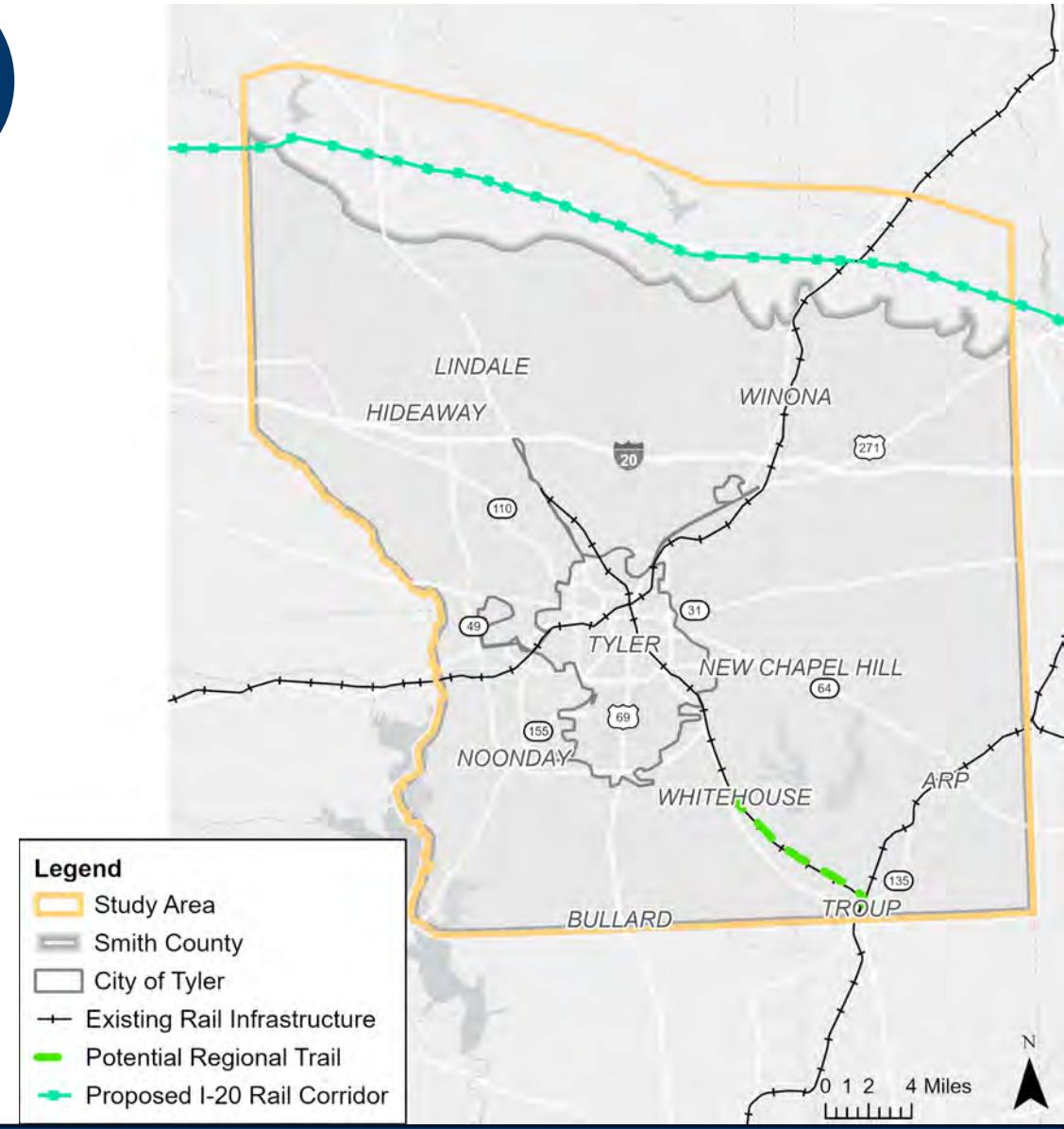


PARALLEL RAIL PROJECTS

- Far future: Proposed High-Speed Rail along Highway 80 and I-20
  - Stop in Mineola, Longview
  - Connects Dallas to Atlanta

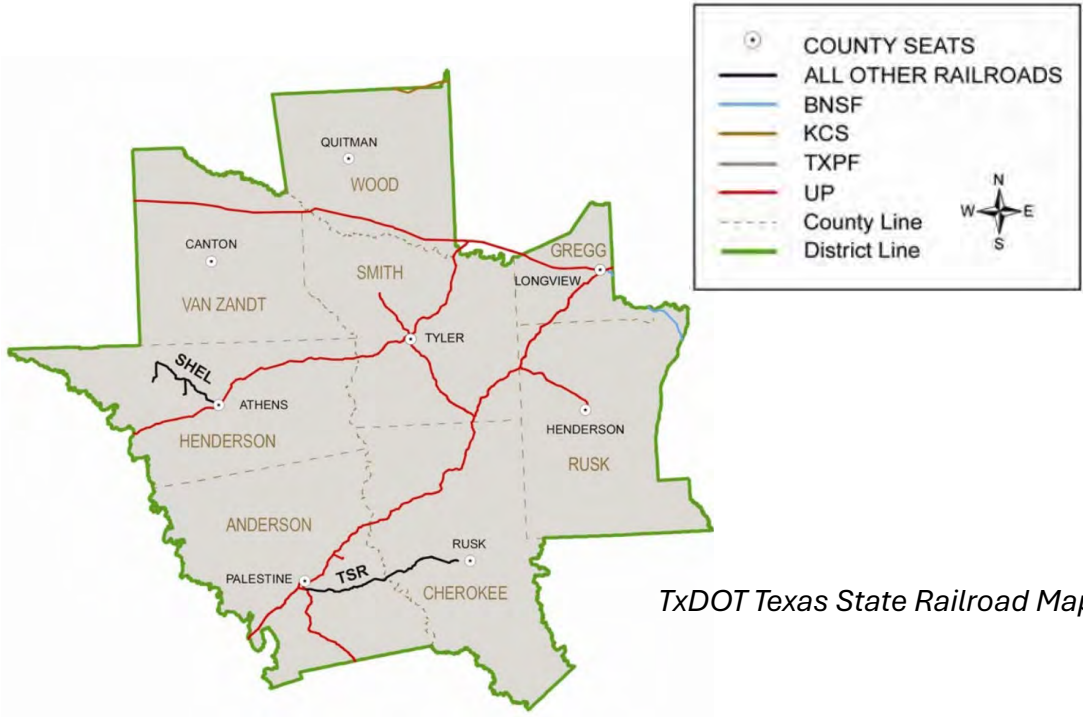


I-20 Corridor Council



EXISTING FREIGHT RAIL

- Tracks are built for slow-speed freight with tight curves and not for faster passenger trains
- N/S corridor has gaps in infrastructure
- E/W corridor has many daily freight trips



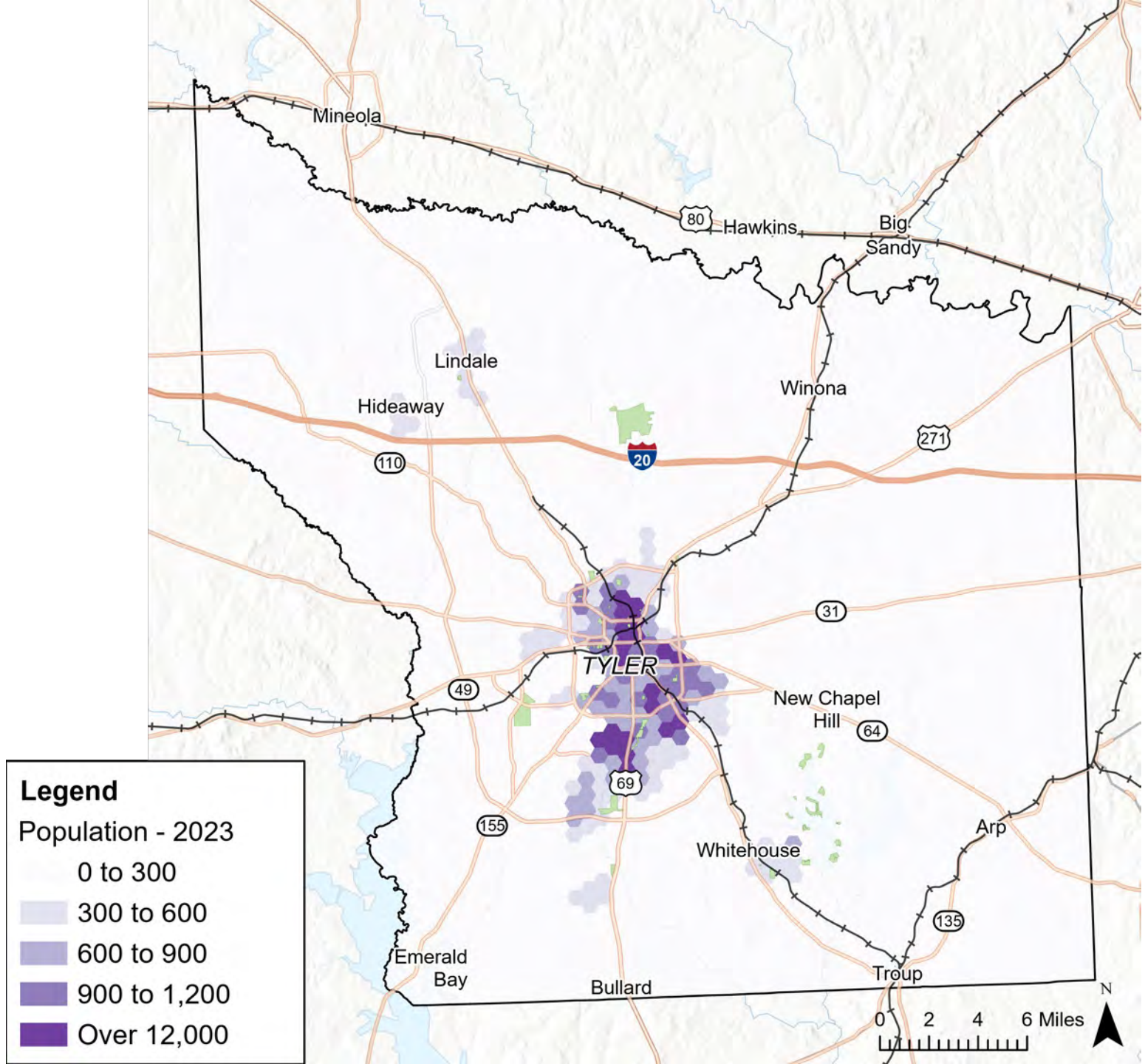
TxDOT Texas State Railroad Map

TRAVEL MARKET

9

POPULATION - EXISTING

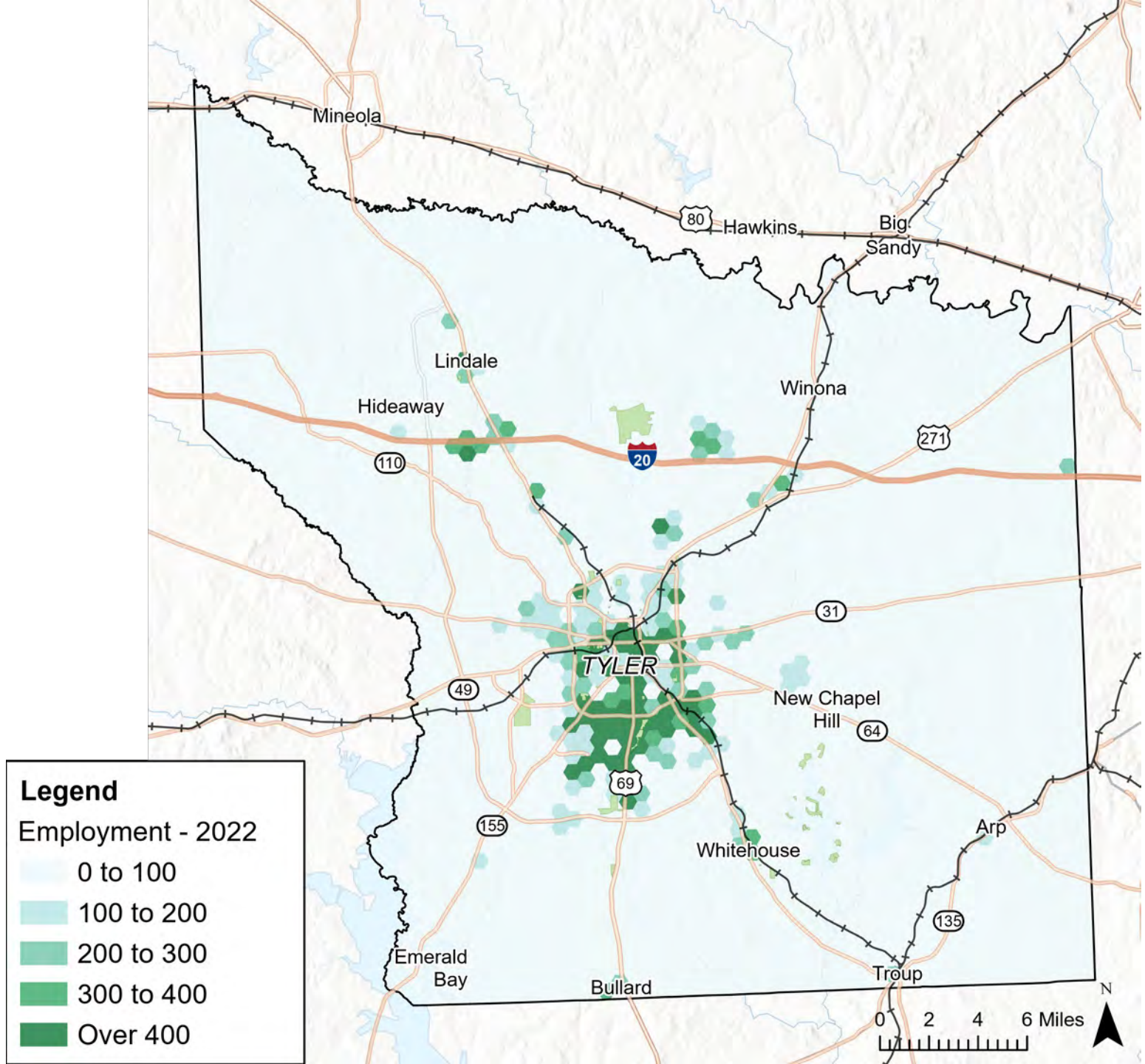
- Areas with the highest population density include:
  - Broadway Avenue corridor
  - Tyler Midtown
  - South Tyler along TX-110 and Hwy 69



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), Five-year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT - EXISTING

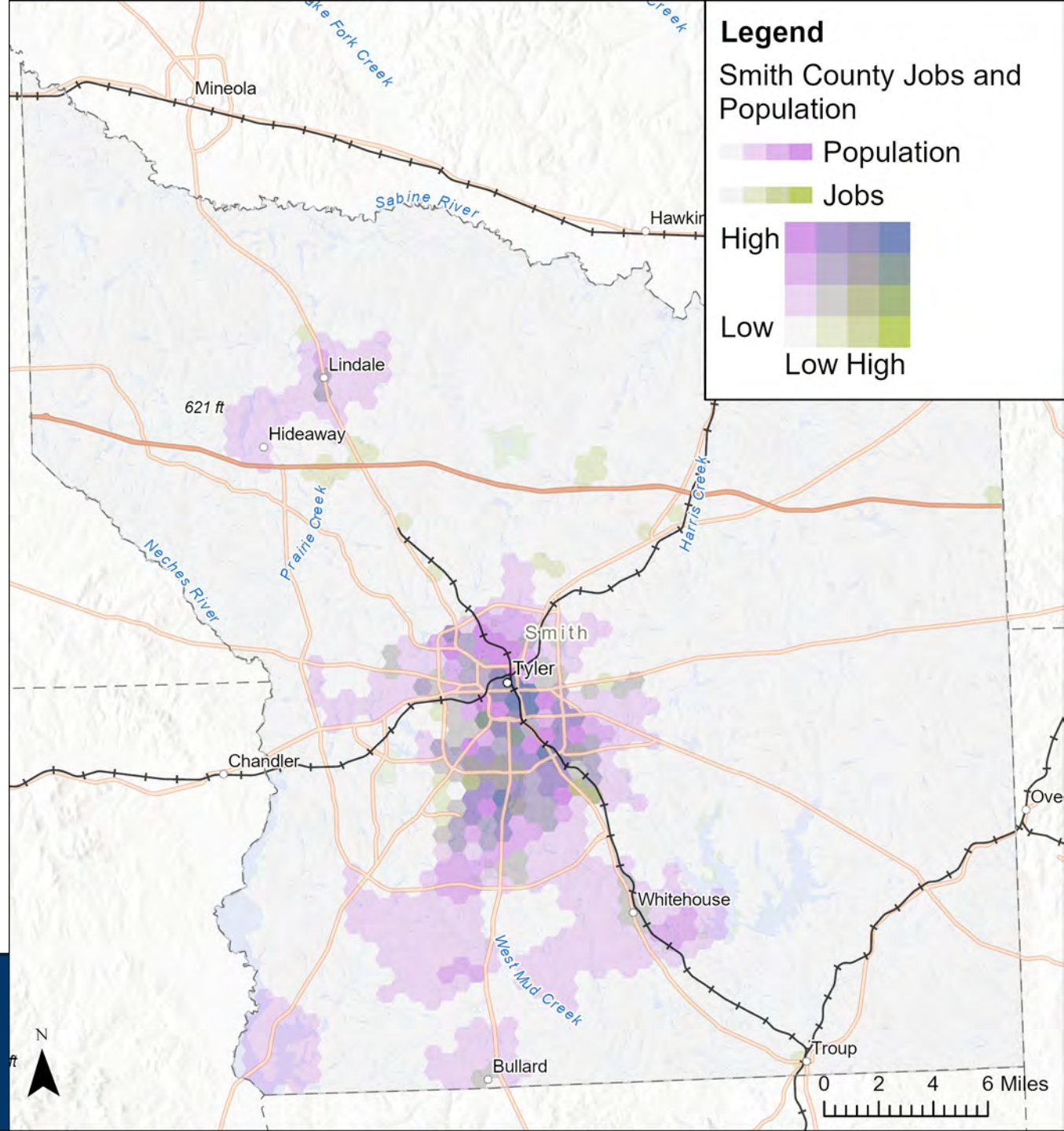
- Jobs are slightly more spread out across Tyler and Smith County than population
- Pockets of employment in Lindale, Whitehouse, along I-20



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Survey

ACTIVITY INDEX - EXISTING

- Areas with highest activity within the TX-323 Loop and in South Tyler
- Population and job density both align well with the N-S rail corridor



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), Five-year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Survey

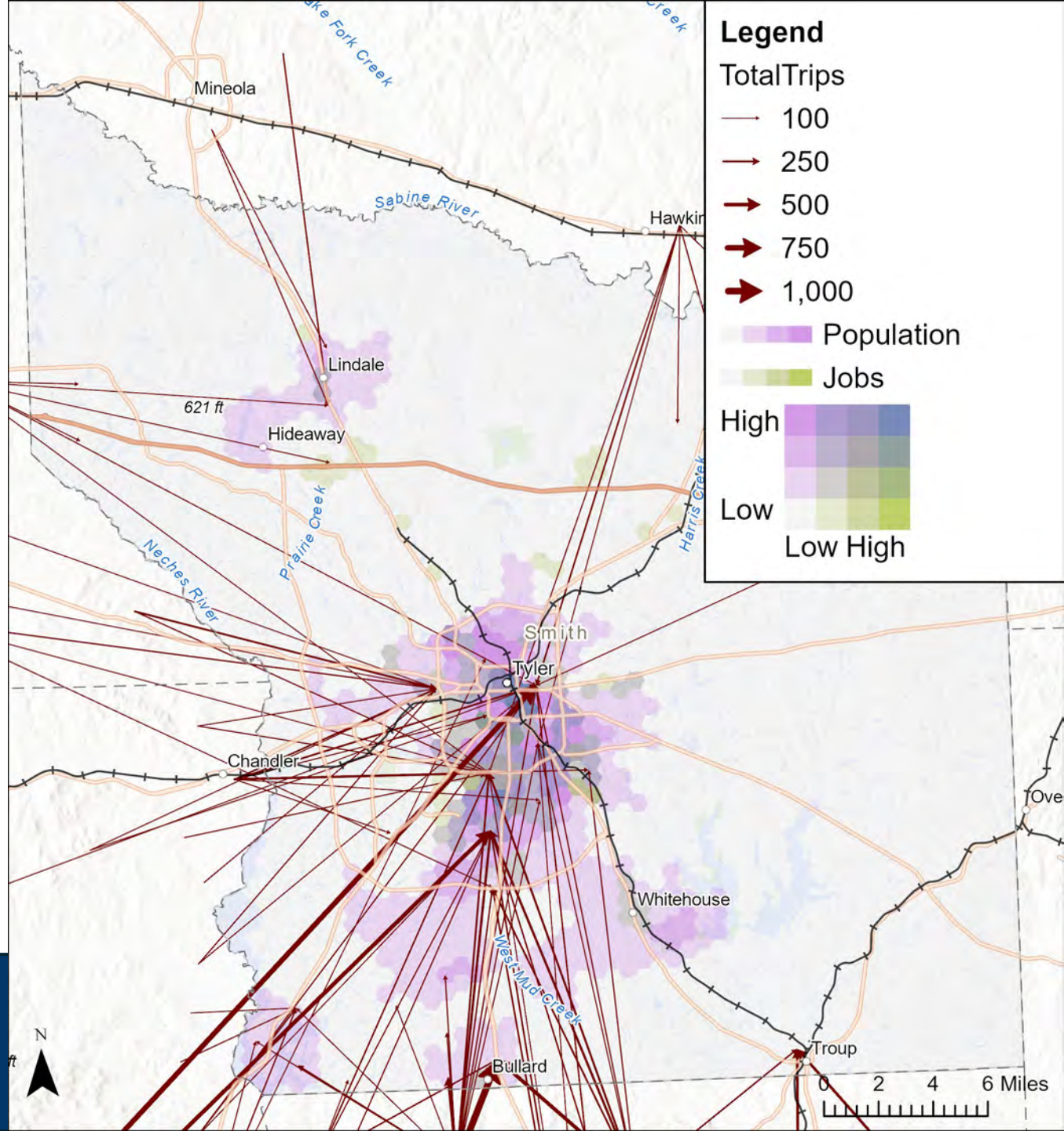
ORIGIN-DESTINATION ANALYSIS

ORIGIN-DESTINATION ANALYSIS: REPLICA DATA

- Origin-Destination Data from Replica
  - Average Weekday, Spring 2024
- Replica is a third-party data provider
- Compiles anonymized data from internet-connected devices
  - Smartphones, GPS devices, etc.

TRIPS INTO SMITH COUNTY

- Highest trip volumes from areas south of Smith County
  - Anderson County and Cherokee County

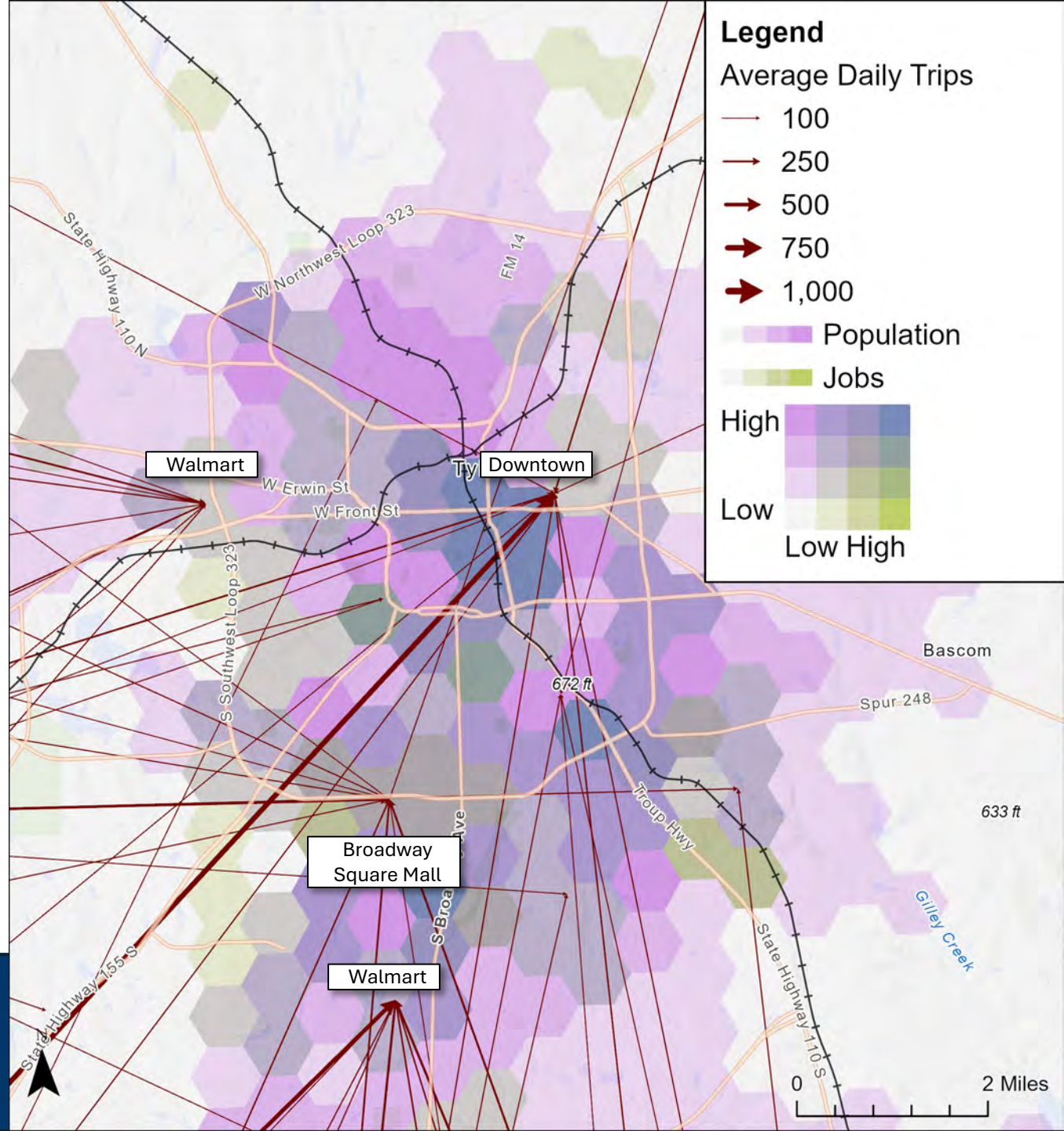


Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

TRIPS INTO SMITH COUNTY

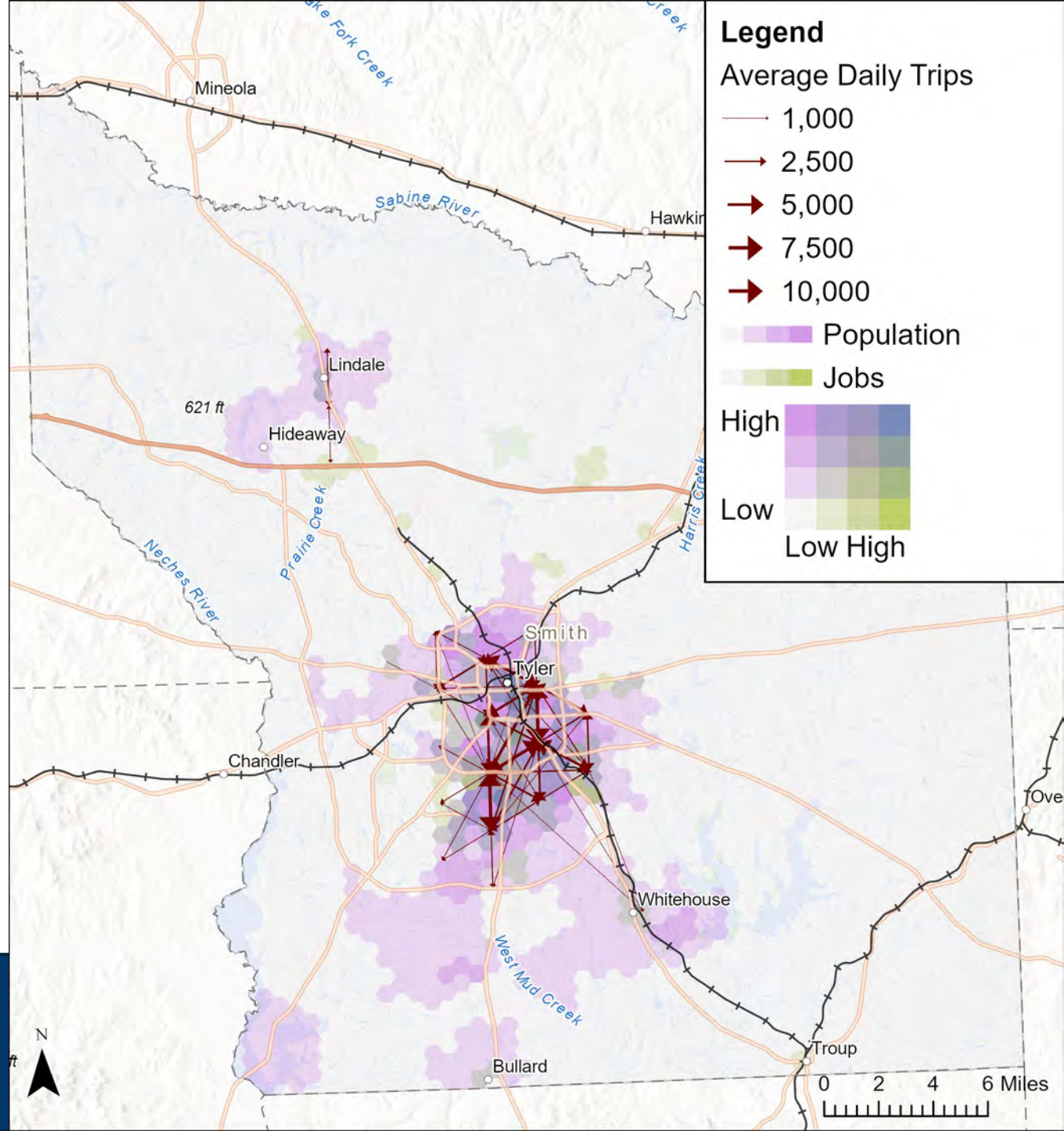
- Most trips from outside of Smith County are ending in Tyler
  - Downtown Tyler
  - Walmart on South Broadway
  - Walmart on TX 323
  - Broadway Square Mall

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday



TRIPS WITHIN SMITH COUNTY

- Highest volume of trips occurring within Tyler
- Small volume of trips between Lindale and I-20
  - About ~700 daily trips between Lindale and Downtown Tyler

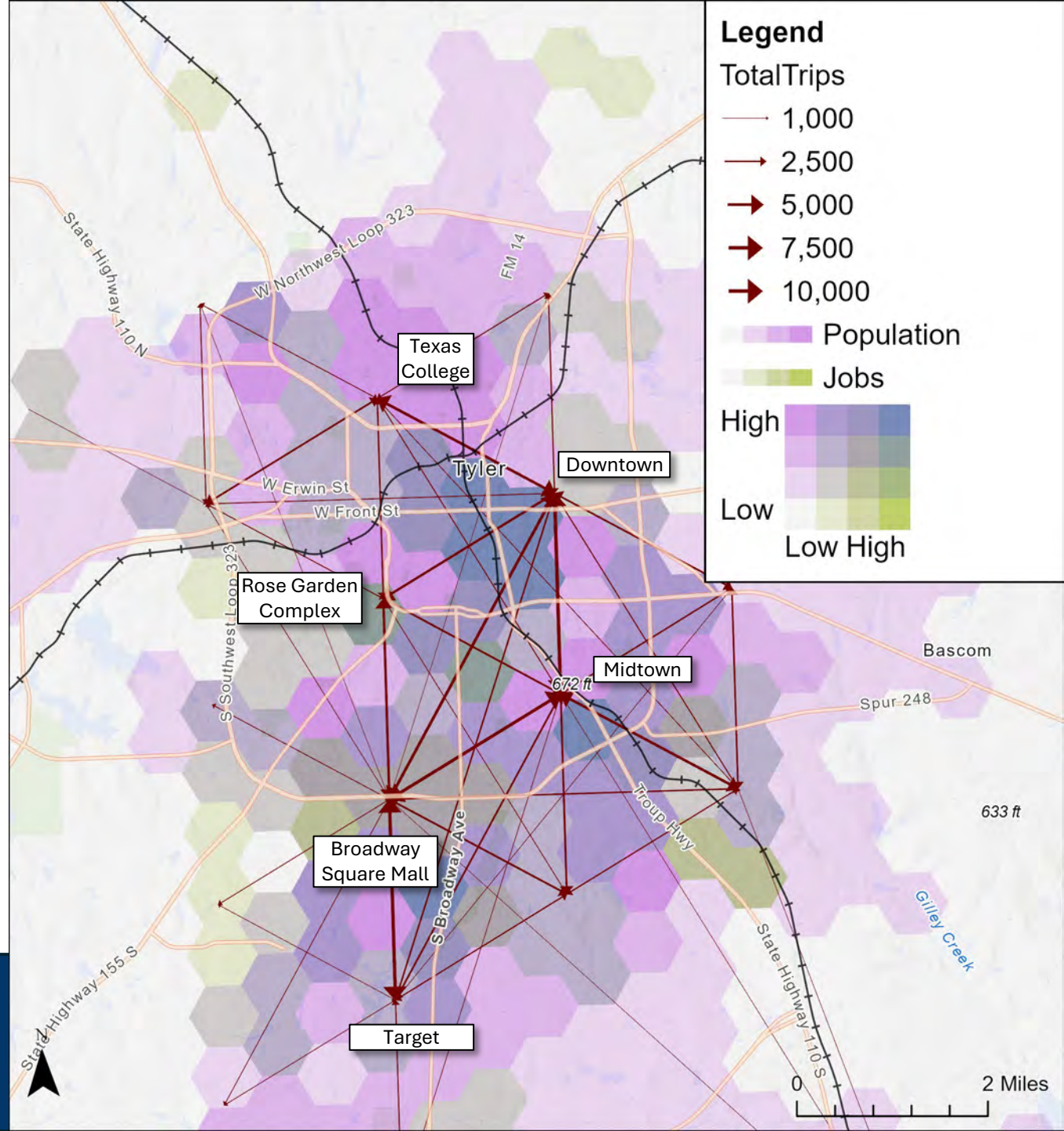


Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

TRIPS WITHIN TYLER

- Major activity centers:
  - Downtown
  - Christus TMF/Midtown
  - Broadway Square
- Lower volume activity centers:
  - Target
  - Caldwell Zoo/Texas College
  - Rose Garden Complex

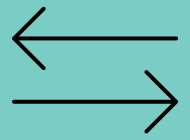
Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday



ORIGIN DESTINATION ANALYSIS

Origin-Destination Data from Replica

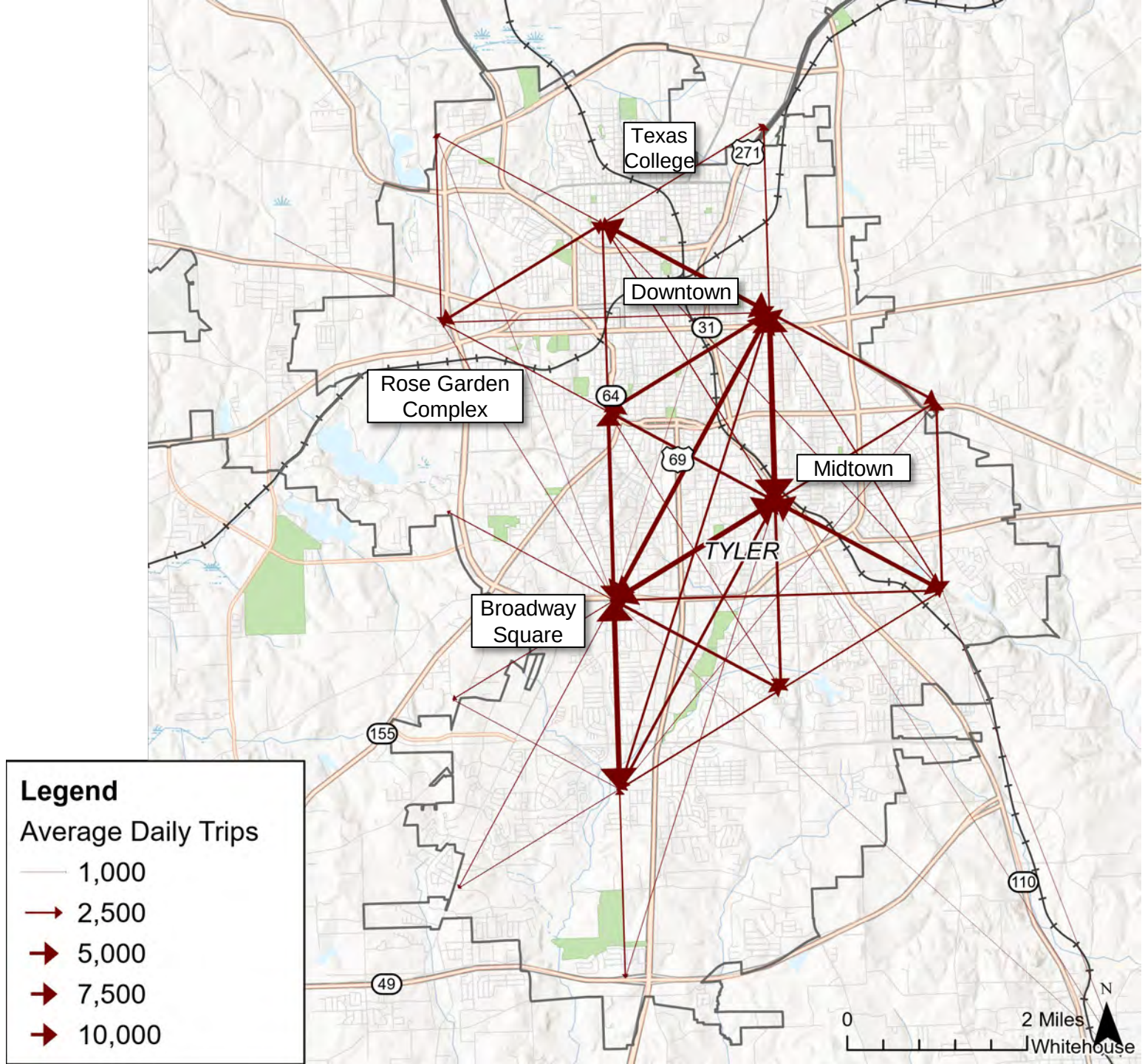
Replica is a third-party data provider that compiles anonymized data from internet-connected devices



Allows for an understanding of daily travel patterns and common origin and destination locations

EXISTING TRAVEL PATTERNS

- High volume of existing travel along N/S rail corridor
- Between Midtown, Downtown, and UT Health/Christus Hospital



Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

EXISTING TRIP VOLUMES

Serviceable Trips – City of Tyler

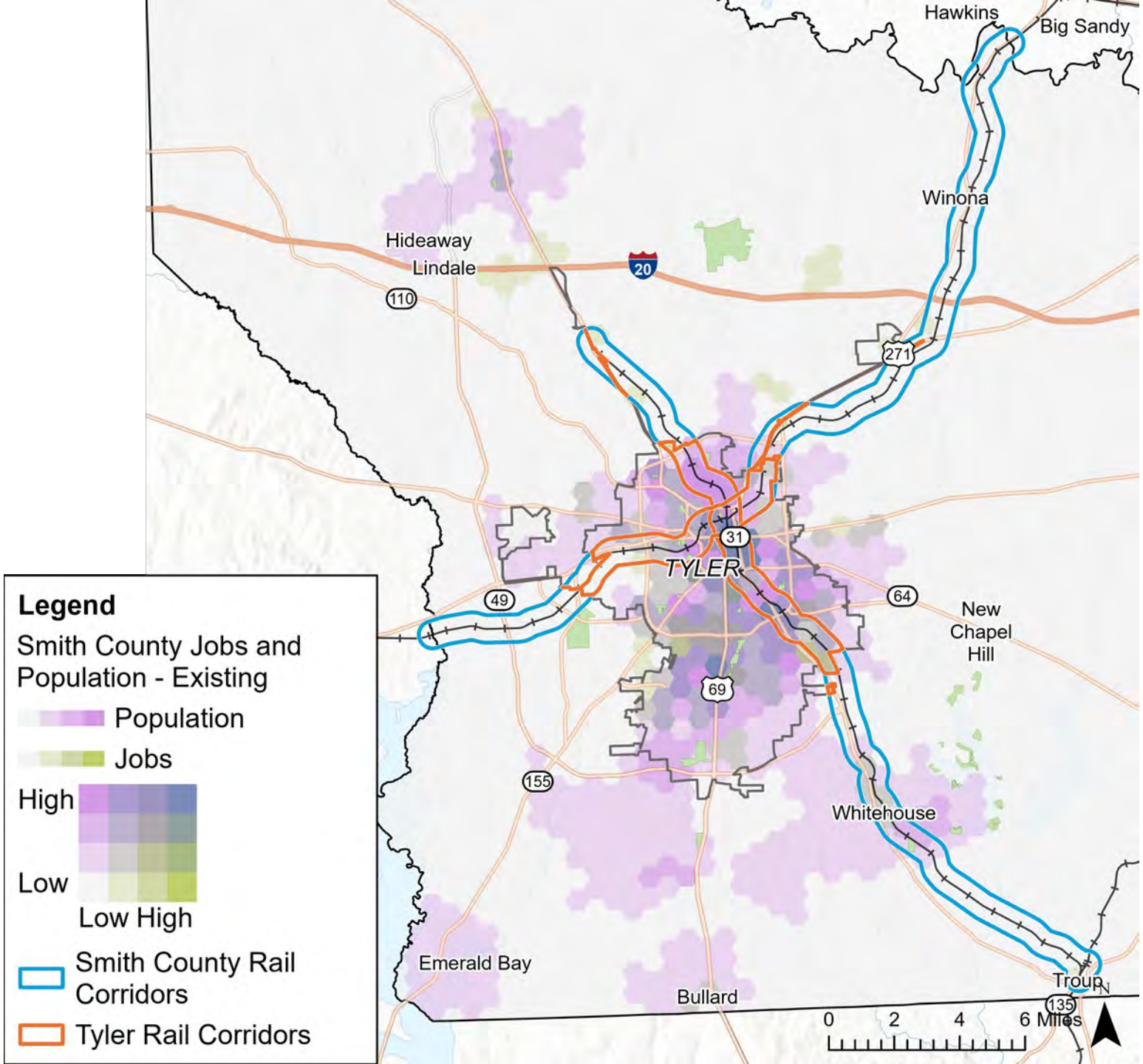
- E-W Corridor: 4,300
- N-S Corridor: 20,000

Serviceable Trips – Smith County

- E-W Corridor: 8,500
- N-S Corridor: 28,000

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday

Serviceable trips: non-freight trips that begin and end within a half-mile of the rail corridor



FUTURE TRIP VOLUMES

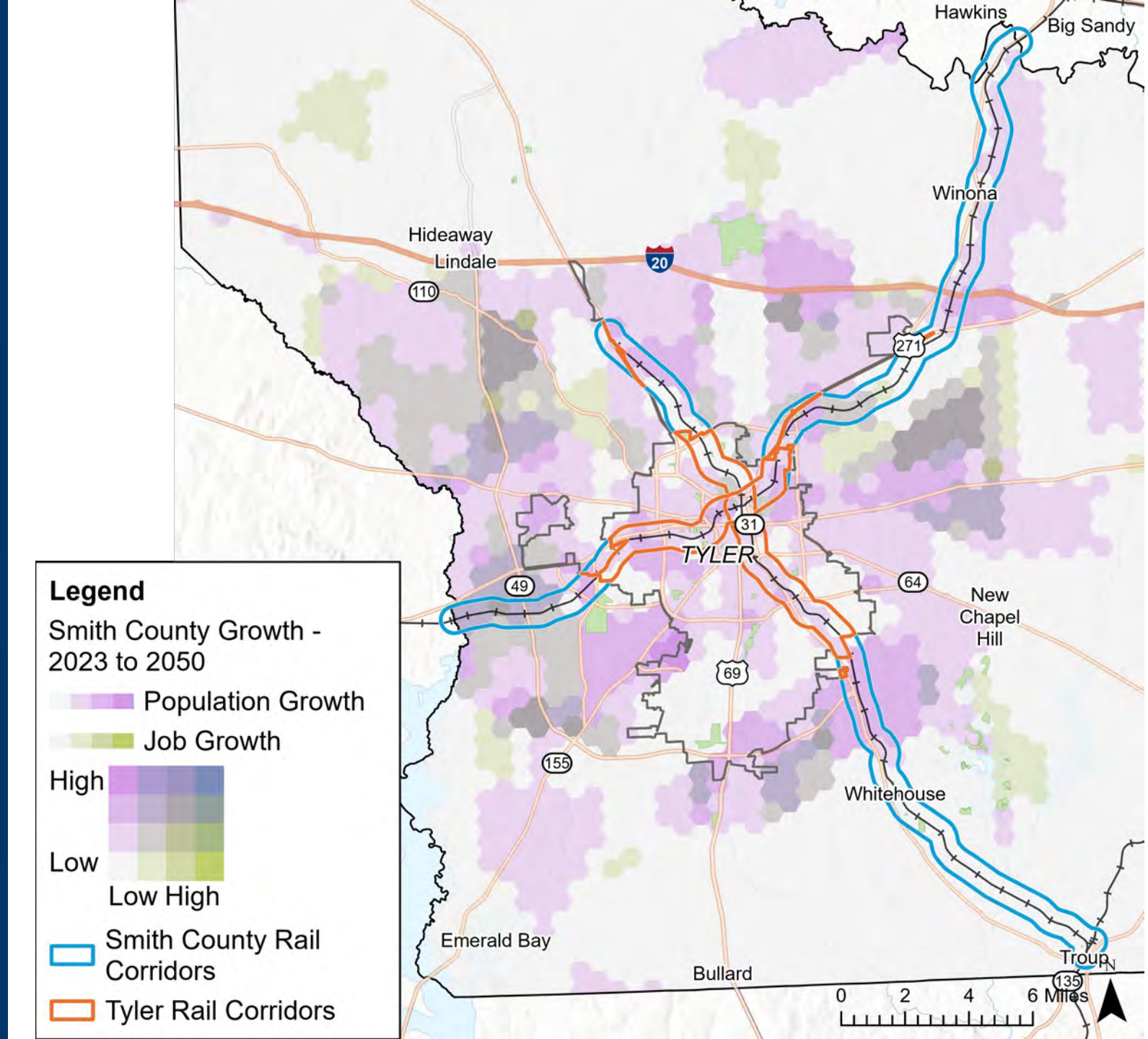
Serviceable Trips – City of Tyler

- E-W Corridor: 7,400 (+70%)
- N-S Corridor: 29,000 (+46%)

Serviceable Trips – Smith County

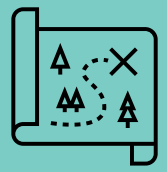
- E-W Corridor: 12,600 (+50%)
- N-S Corridor: 40,000 (+43%)

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Weekday. Extrapolated to 2050 based on Tyler MPO growth projections
Serviceable trips: non-freight trips that begin and end within a half-mile of the rail corridor



ADDRESSABLE MARKET ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

Trips within the City of Tyler are the majority of serviceable trips



Current daily trip volumes greatest within the City of Tyler along the N-S rail corridor

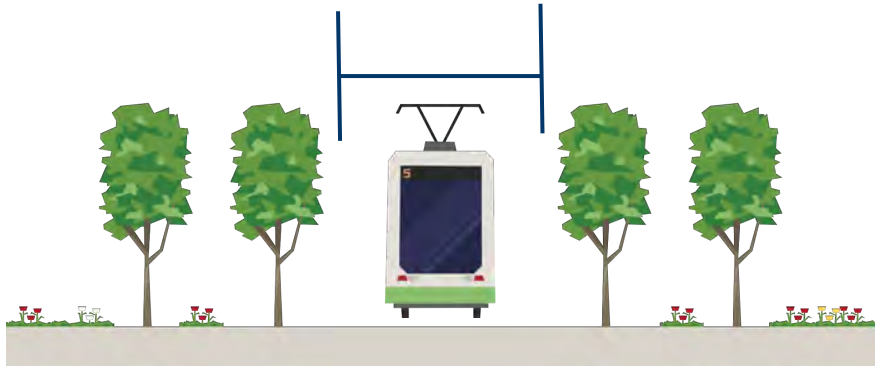
More population and job growth anticipated along the E-W rail corridor

RIGHT-OF-WAY ANALYSIS

ROW ANALYSIS

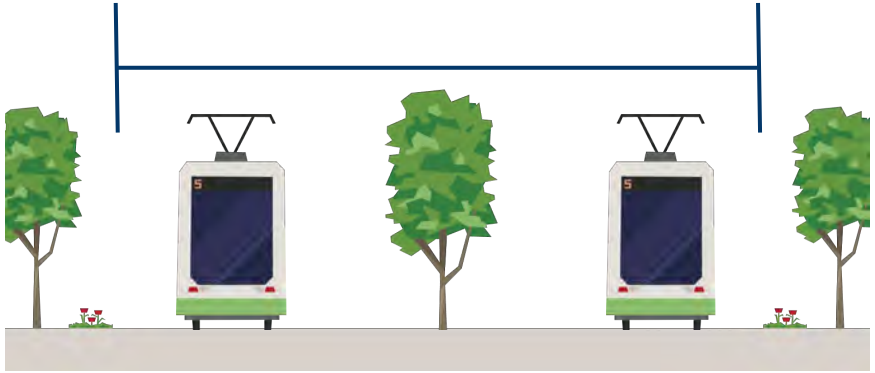
- Analyzed the right-of-way width of existing rail corridors in the study area
- Goal: Identify ROW constraints for consideration in the transit vision and implementation plan
- Four scenarios:
  - Absolute minimum single-track LRT alignment
  - Standard single-track LRT alignment
  - Double-track LRT alignment
  - Double-track LRT alignment - trail

RIGHT-OF-WAY ANALYSIS SCENARIOS

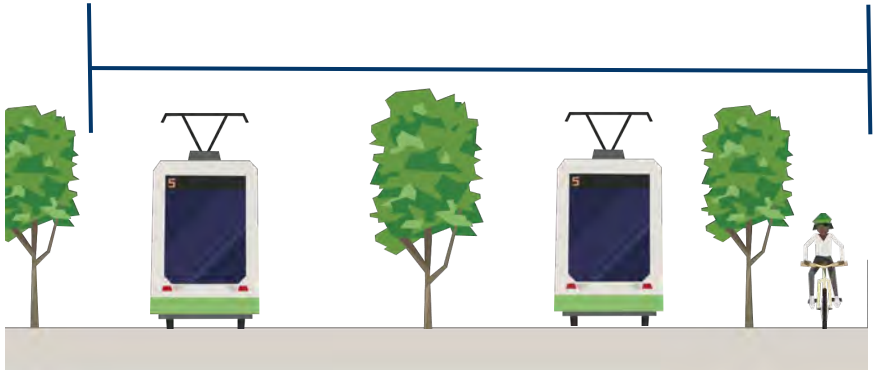


20 ft – One track (minimum)

40 ft – One track (typical)



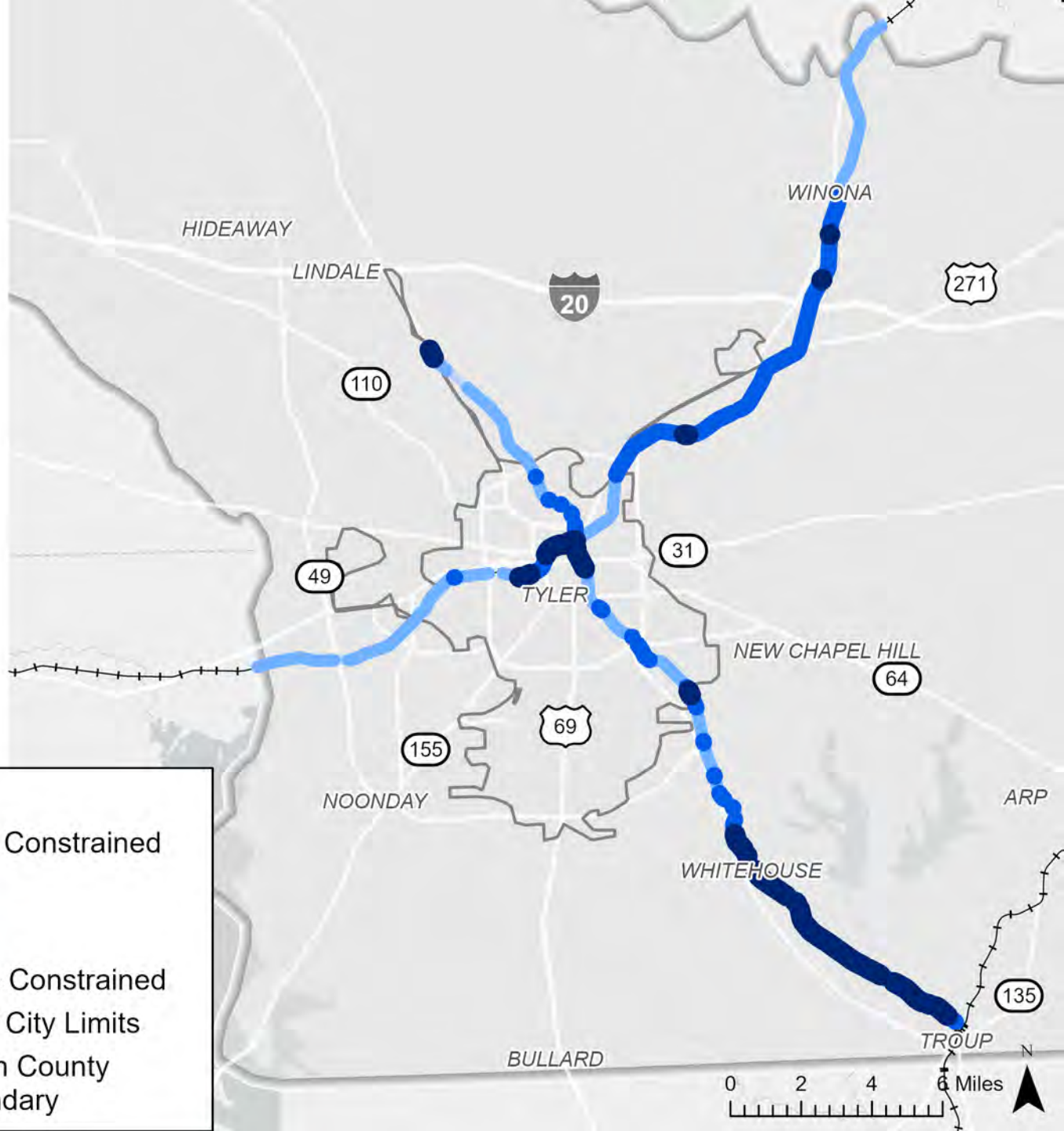
60 ft – Two tracks



80 ft – Two tracks + trail

ROW ANALYSIS FINDINGS

- Takeaways:
  - Significant constraints between Whitehouse and Troup
  - Some constraints in Downtown Tyler
  - East and North corridors have minimal constraints



ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to ROW constraints, existing track conditions will require upgrades

Downtown Tyler
No train signalization – will require substantial upgrades to support safe passenger service

North Corridor
Non-existent track will need to be built to support any rail service

East/West Corridor
Status of track infrastructure, will need further investigation and likely significant investment

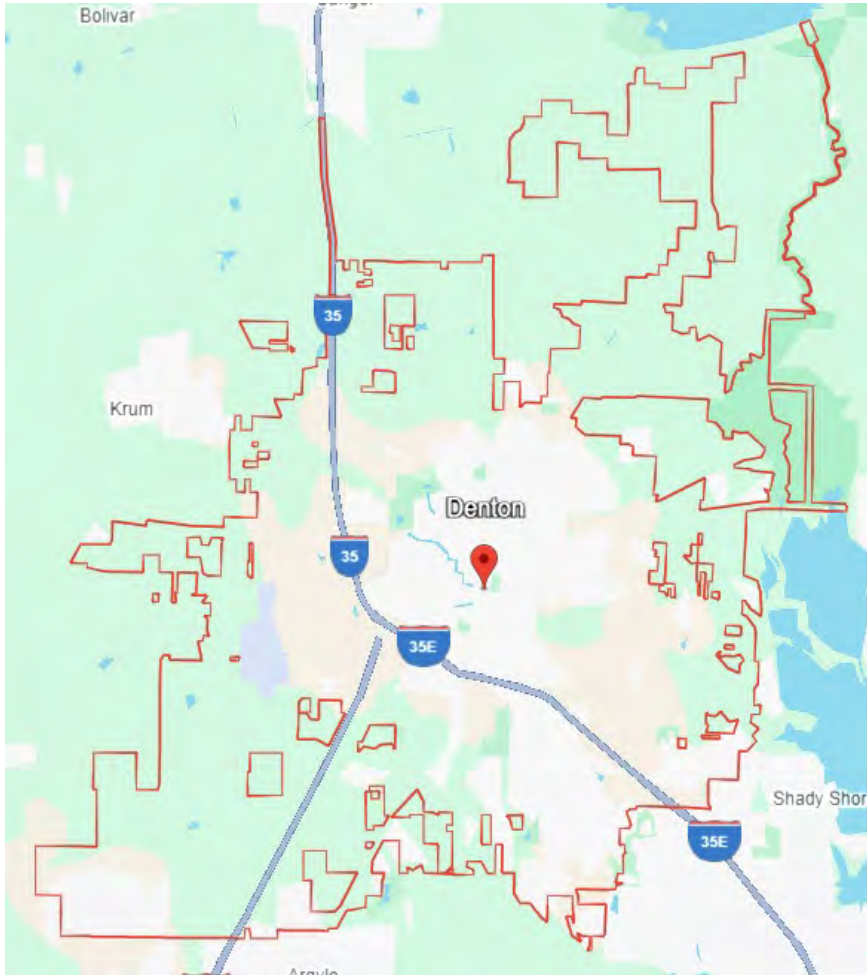
CORRIDOR SUMMARY

Segment	Travel Market	Regional Connections	Infrastructure Considerations
Phase 1: Downtown Tyler to Midtown	• Employment centers • Hospitals • Tyler Junior College	• None	• Moderate ROW constraints
South Corridor: Midtown to Troup	• Whitehouse • Troup	• Planned regional trail between Whitehouse and Troup	• Significant ROW constraints
North Corridor: Downtown to I-20	• Texas College • I-20 employment centers • Lindale	• Future I-20 rail corridor • Amtrak Texas Eagle	• Abandoned corridor • Rail service would require rebuilding rail corridor
East/West Corridor	• Job and population growth outside of Tyler	• Future I-20 rail corridor	• Minimal ROW constraints • Active freight traffic

PEER COMPARISON – DENTON A TRAIN

WHY DENTON?

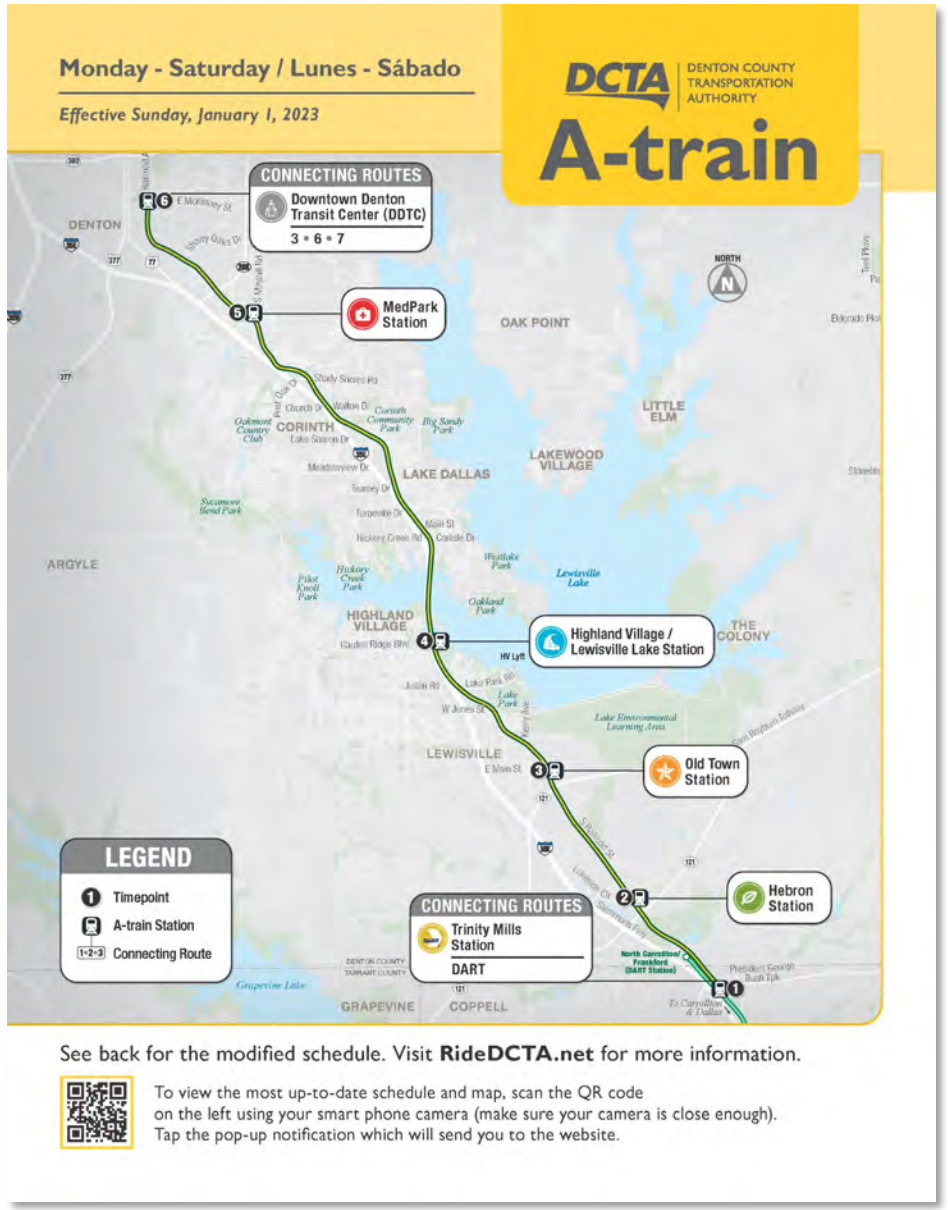
- Similar land use and demographic patterns to Tyler
- Both cities have been growing steadily
- Denton has existing local bus and commuter rail services



	Tyler	Denton
Population	110,327	158,349
Av. Age	33	31
Median Household Income	$72,313	$73,719

DCTA A-TRAIN

- 21-mile commuter rail line connecting Denton to DART LRT services
- Part of the corridor purchased by City of Denton in 1993, Initially used as a rail trail
- Serves an average of ~700 passengers daily



32

TRANSIT MARKET ANALYSIS

- Developing a “transit capture” estimate to assess existing transit demand
- Comparing Denton and Tyler using existing travel patterns and transit ridership
- Allows for an understanding of when corridors should be advances for additional planning

TRANSIT MARKET ANALYSIS – METHODOLOGY

Peer City Ridership Data

Average daily boardings on DCTA bus and train services

Serviceable trips

Average daily trips that begin and end near DCTA bus and train services

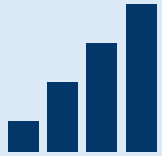
Transit Capture Rate

Ratio of daily boardings to serviceable trips for DCTA services

Estimate Existing Local Transit Capture

Apply DCTA transit capture rate to study area corridors

Estimate Future Local Transit Capture

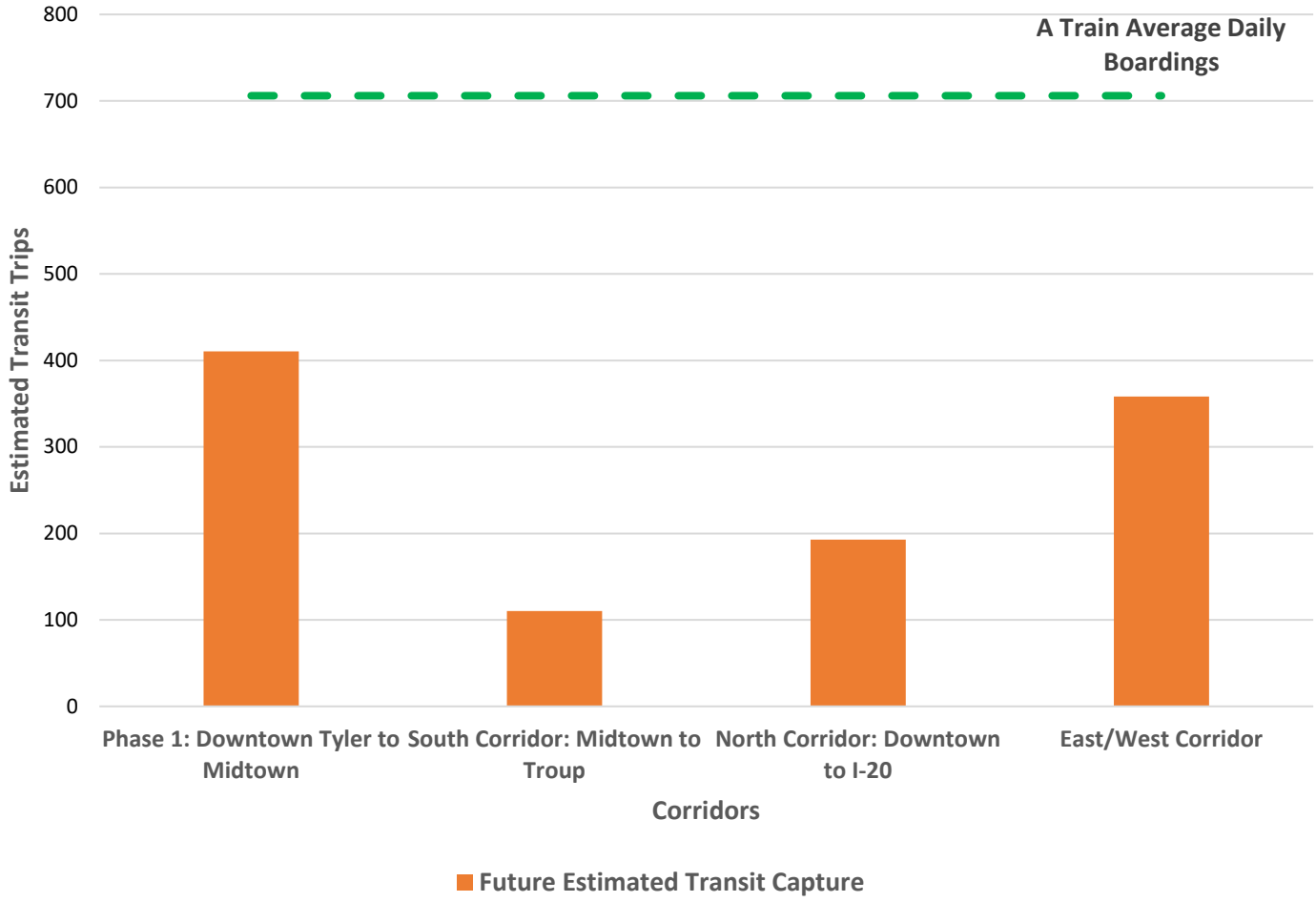


Calculate potential future-year trips based on growth forecasts

ESTIMATED TRANSIT CAPTURE – 2%

- With 2% of total trips taken on transit, transit in Tyler may have lower ridership than the A-Train does today

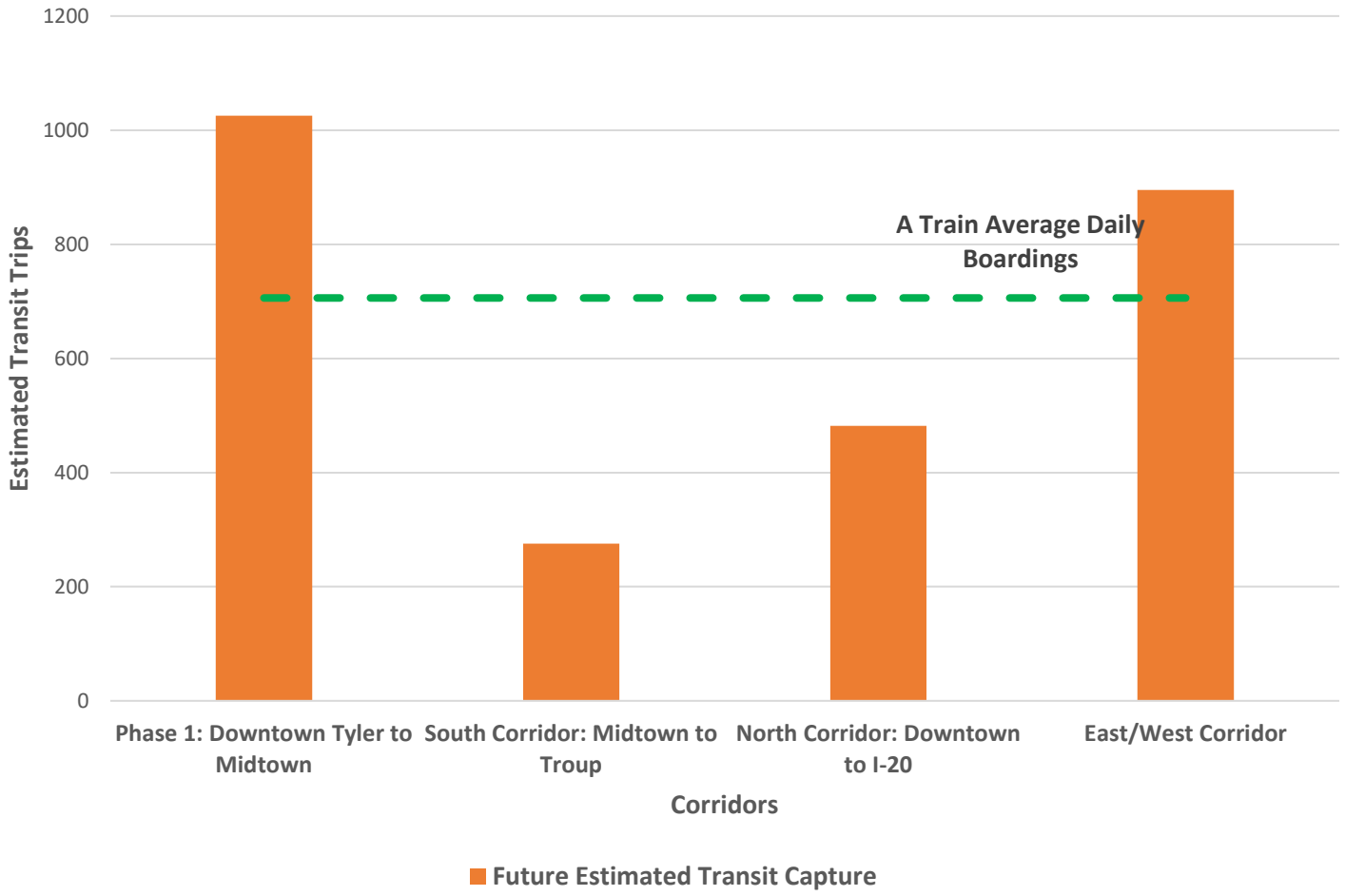
- Downtown to Midtown Corridor has highest levels of trips
  - Trip levels may reach A-train levels with targeted growth



ESTIMATED TRANSIT CAPTURE – 5%

- With 5% of total trips taken on transit, transit in Tyler may have higher ridership than the A-Train does today

- Downtown to Midtown Corridor has highest levels of trips
  - Trip levels may reach A-train levels with targeted growth



PASSENGER EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS

UNDERSTANDING THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

Phase of Experience	Inspiration & consideration	Planning & booking	First mile	At the station	Last mile	Post-travel / booking
						
Definition	Understanding your market will inspire the type of travel experience	Ability to book (before or at station)	The burden of getting to the first station needs to be convenient.	Stations need to meet the travelers' needs: safe, convenient, clean, and accessible.	Distance to destination needs to be convenient	Integrate customer feedback before and after travels to improve travel experience

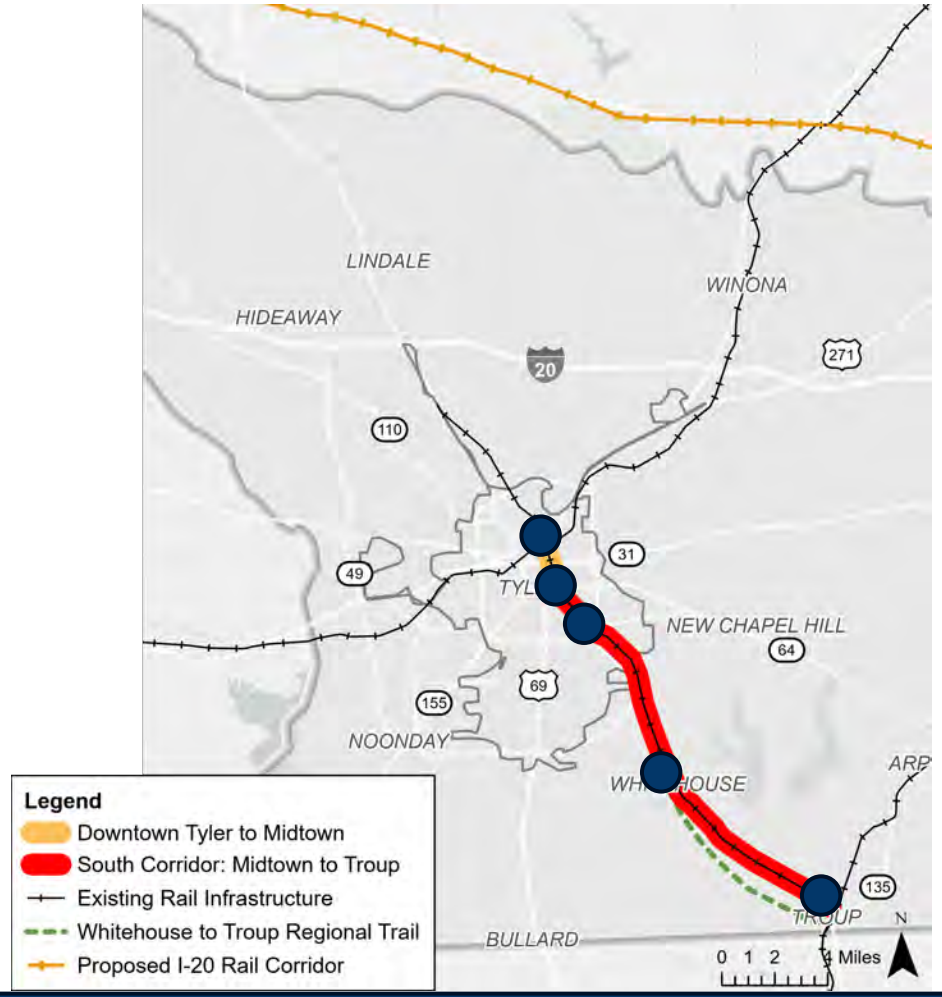
Focus of this Discussion

UNDERSTANDING THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

How do passenger priorities inform operations?

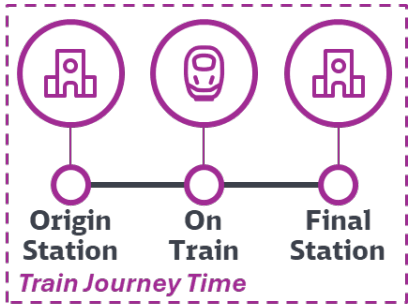
- How fast do we need to be end-to-end?
- What days do we want to serve? (i.e., everyday vs. weekday only)
- What hours of service do we want?
- What frequency do the trains run? (i.e., Every hour all day, or every 10 minutes during rush hour.)

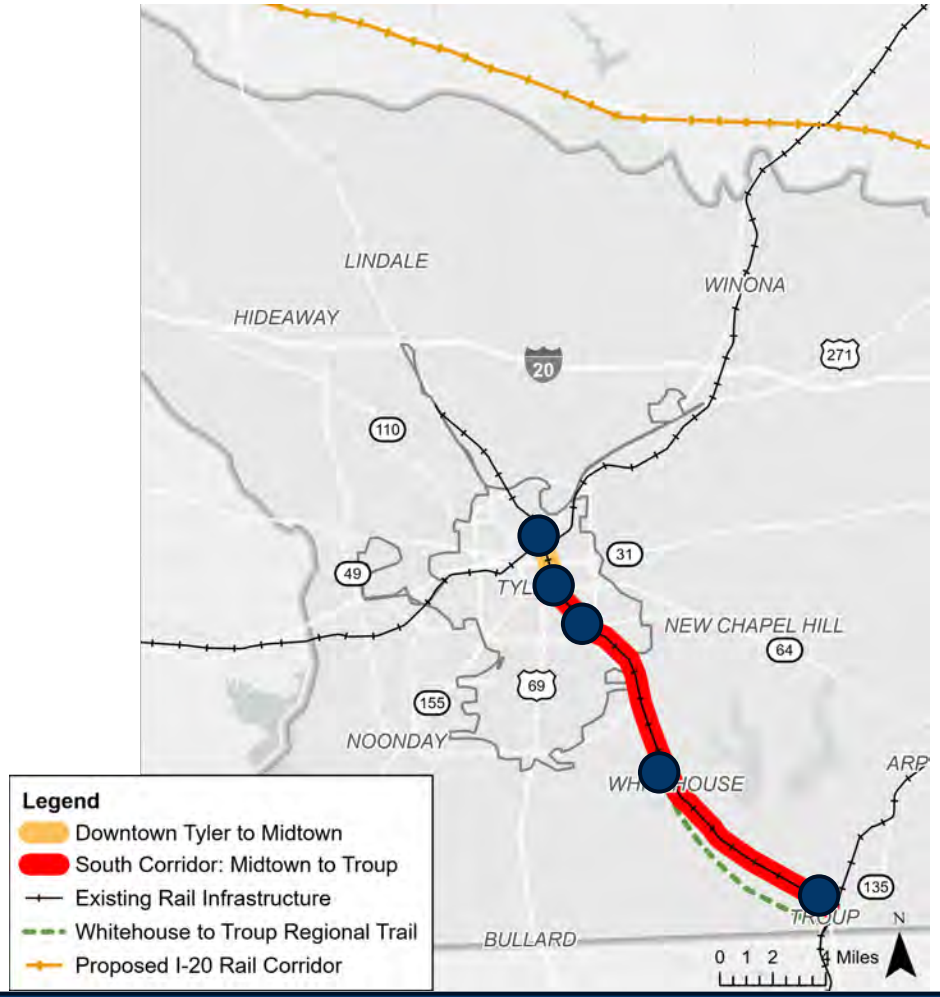
EXAMPLE TRAVEL TIME ANALYSIS: SOUTH CORRIDOR



	Stations	Distance *(miles)*	Avg. Speed to be competitive: Transit only	Avg. Speed to be competitive: Entire Journey
1	Downtown Tyler	0		
2	Midtown Tyler	2.7		
3	The Loop	5.4		
4	Whitehouse	13.6		
5	Troup	19		

TRAVEL TIME COMPETITIVENESS: TRANSIT TRAVEL TIME ONLY





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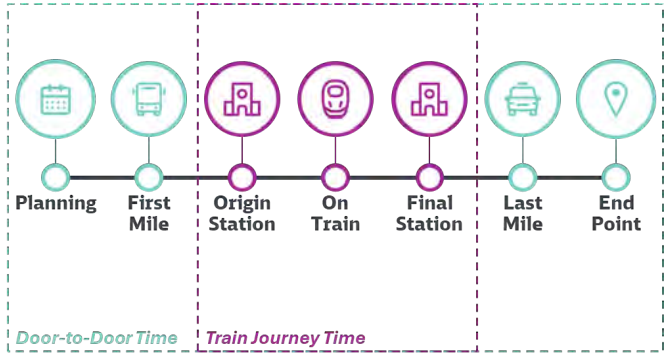
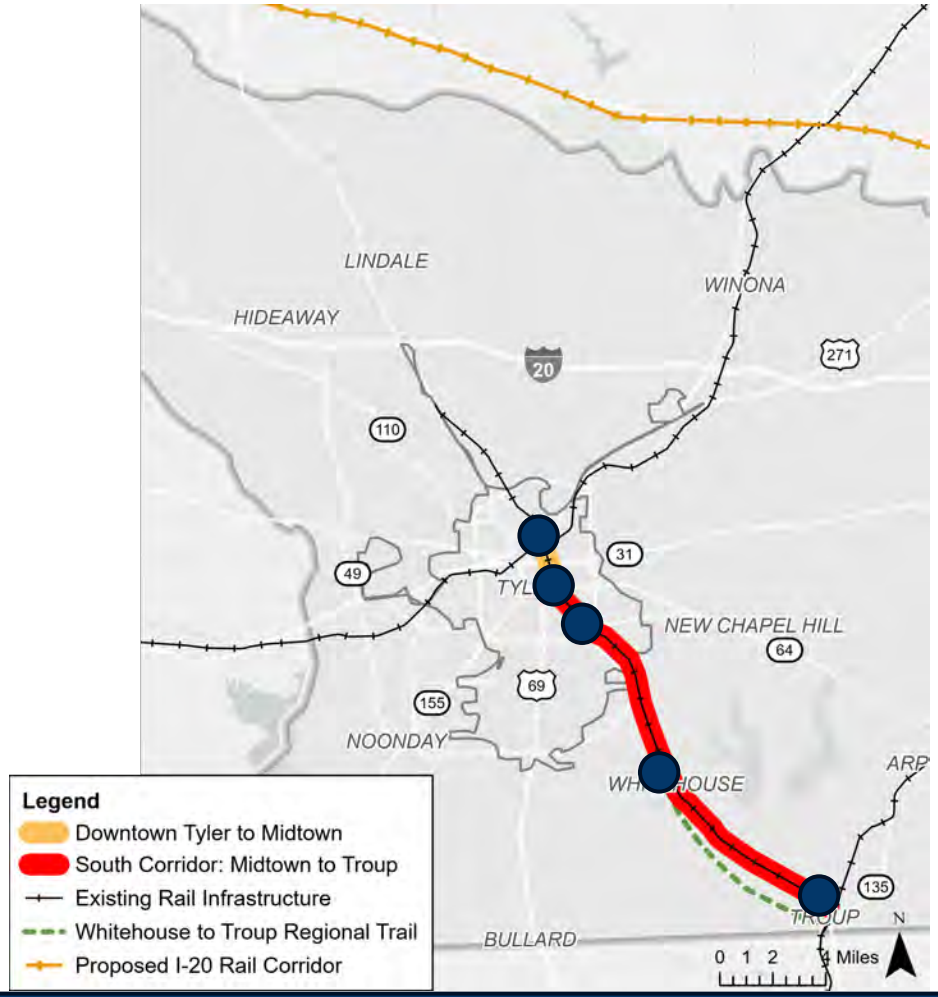
5	Troup	19	30 mph	

TRAVEL TIME COMPETITIVENESS: ENTIRE TRANSIT JOURNEY





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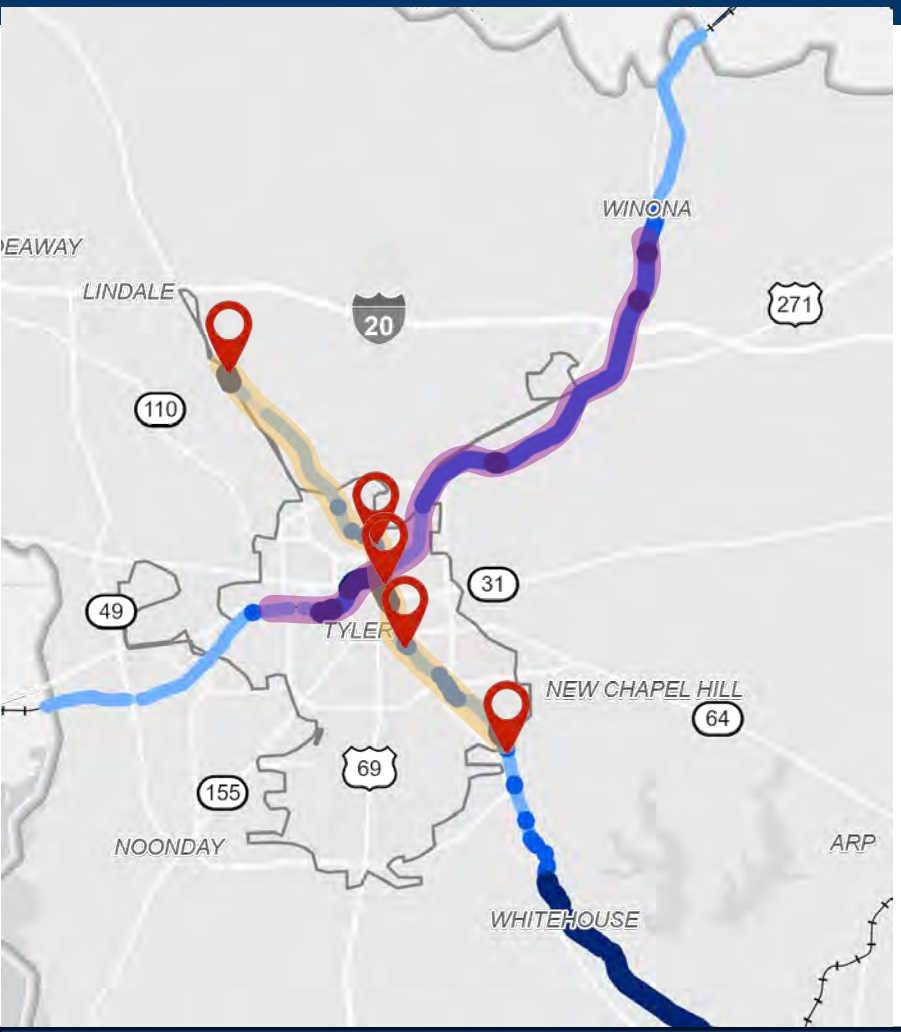
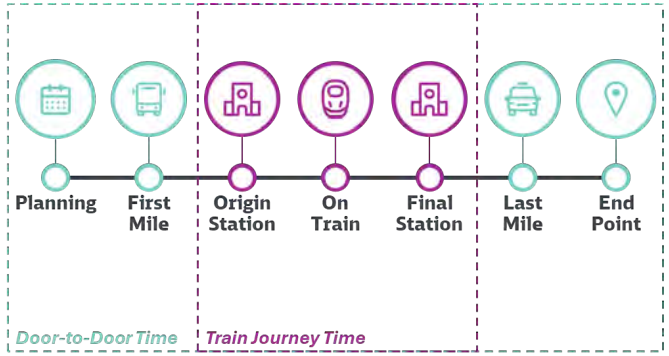




	Stations	Distance *(miles)*	Avg. Speed to be competitive: Transit only	Avg. Speed to be competitive: Entire Journey
1	Lindale	0	30 mph	60 mph
2	Texas College	12.60	30 mph	60 mph
3	Downtown Tyler	2.20	30 mph	60 mph
4	Midtown	1.50	30 mph	60 mph
5	Grande Blvd	5.2	30 mph	60 mph

Transit Time end-to-end: 48 mins

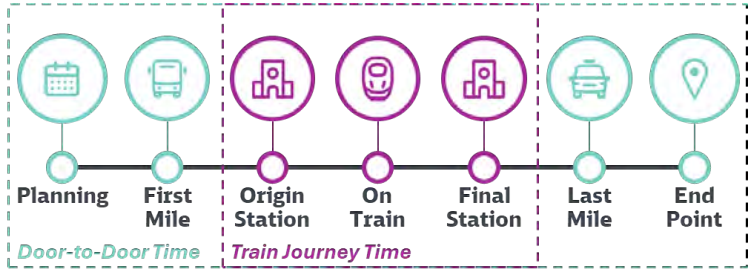
PASSENGER EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY

- **To be most competitive with driving, maximum travel speeds on Phase 1 corridor should exceed 60mph**
- To support these speeds, existing infrastructure needs significant upgrades
- An effectively planned transit service should consider the entire passenger experience, including door-to-door travel times

PASSENGER EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY

Even if slower, transit can be more appealing than driving because:

- Traffic is frustrating
- Transit can be easier/cheaper than parking
- You can ride without care (enjoy coffee, electronics)



APPENDIX 6:

TRAVEL TIME ANALYSIS

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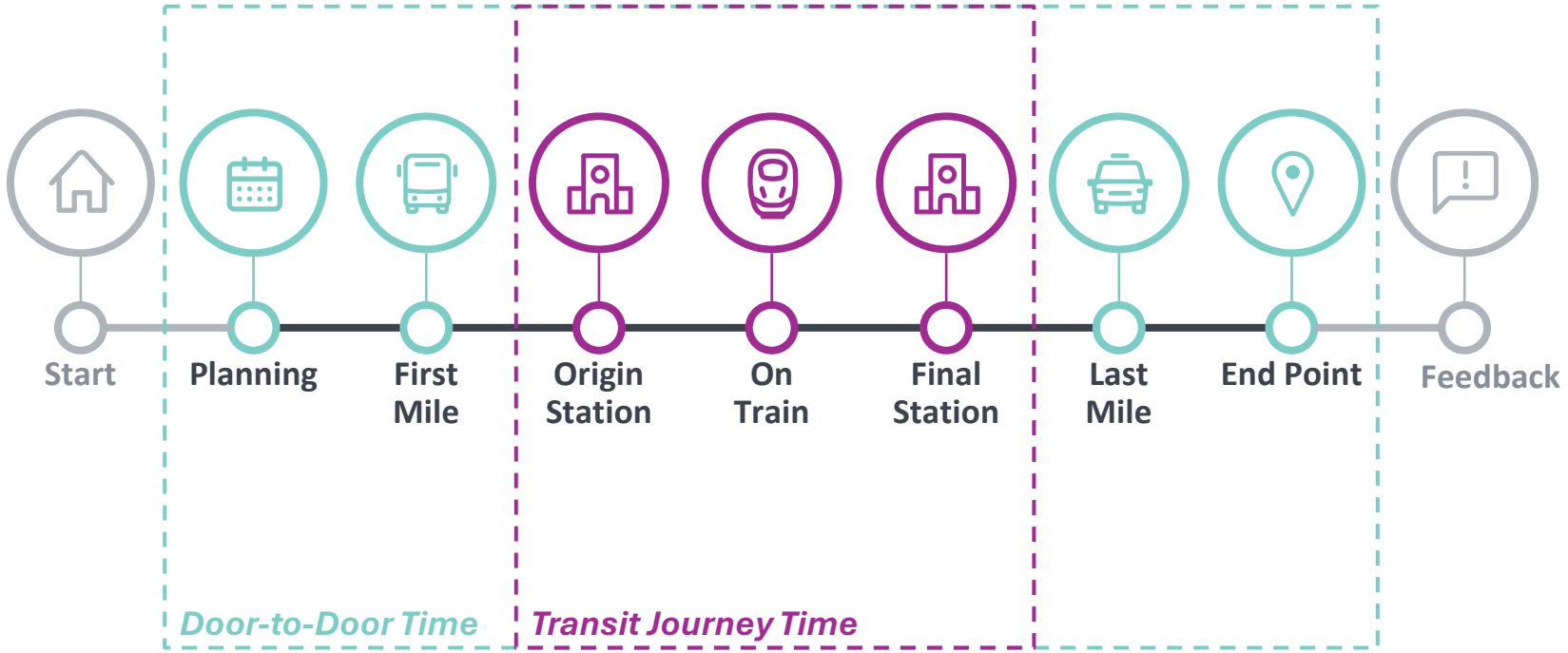
TOTAL TRANSIT JOURNEY TIME



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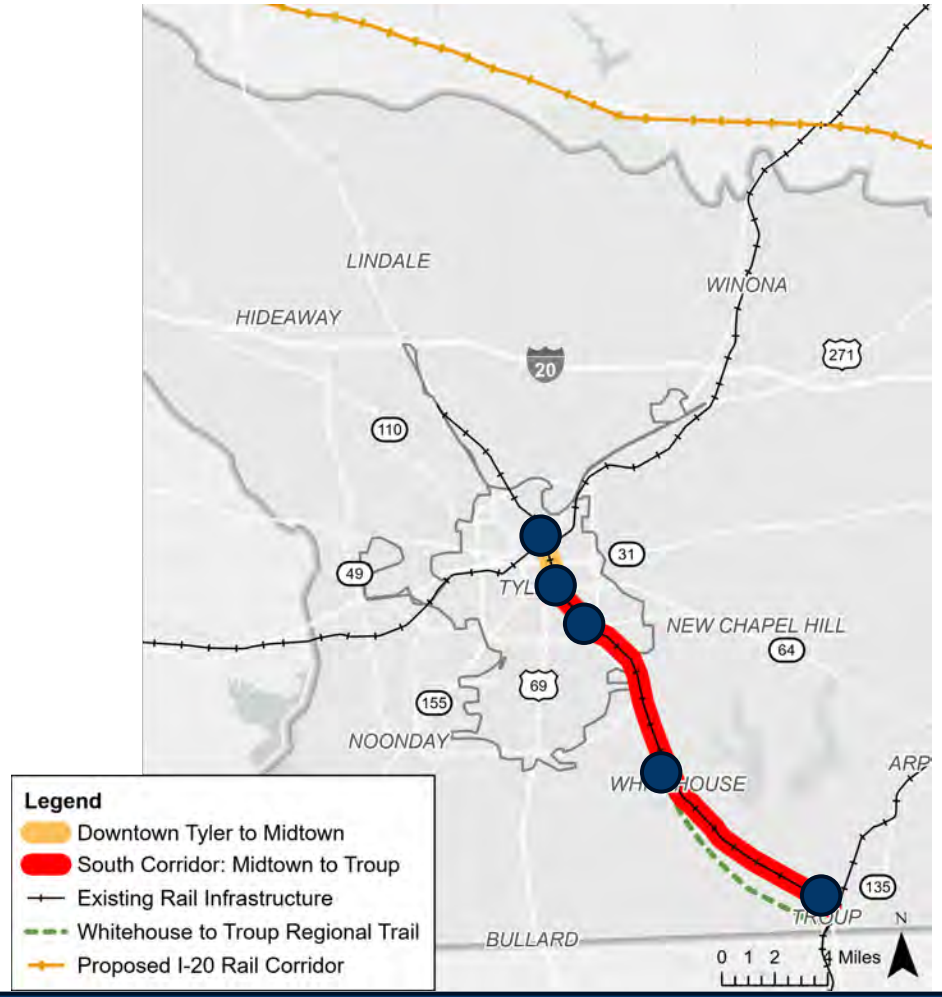

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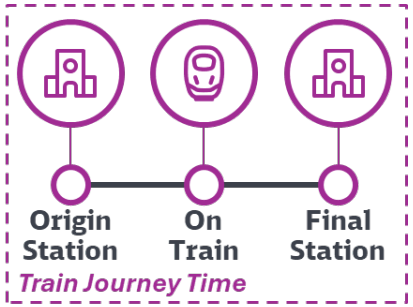

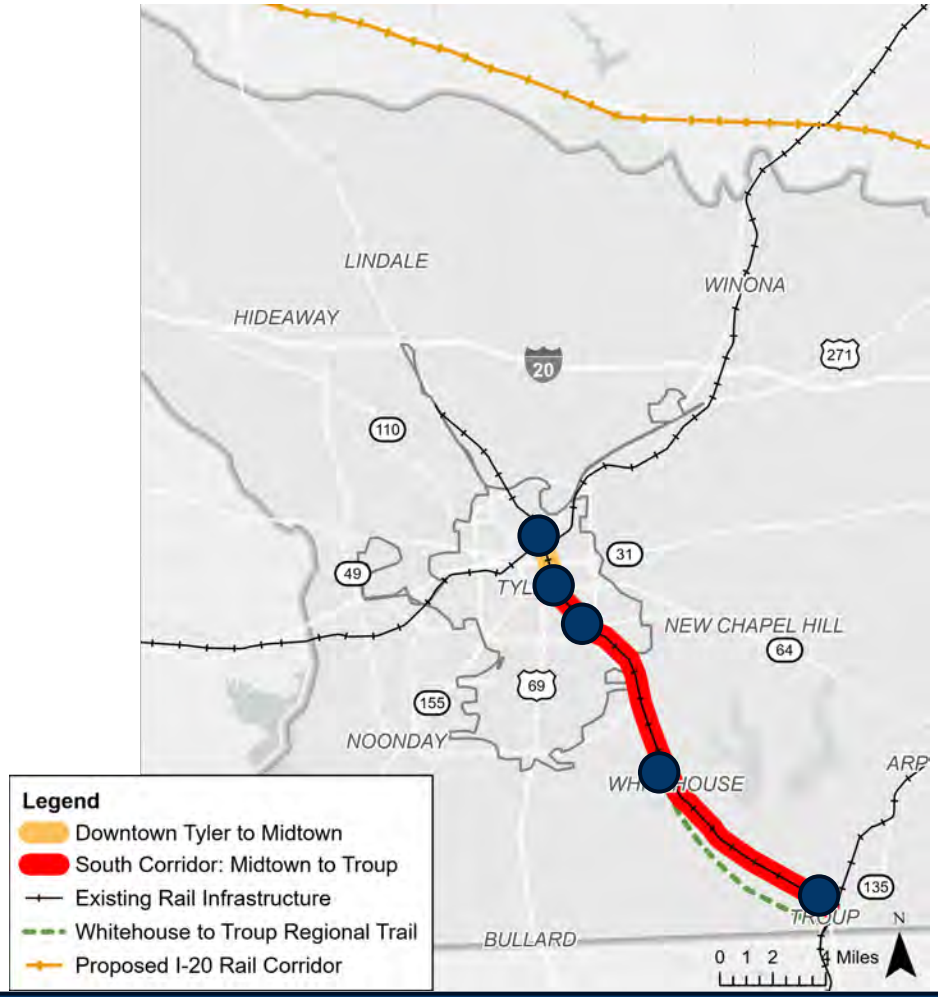

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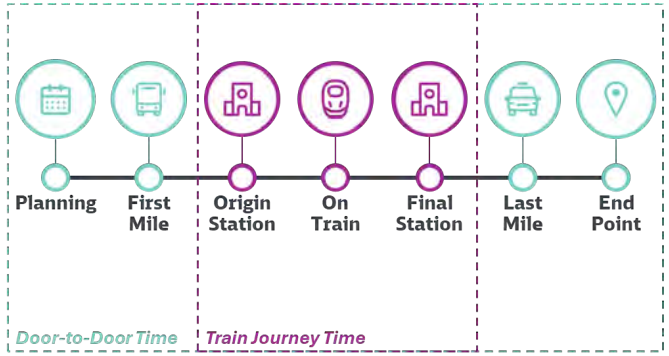

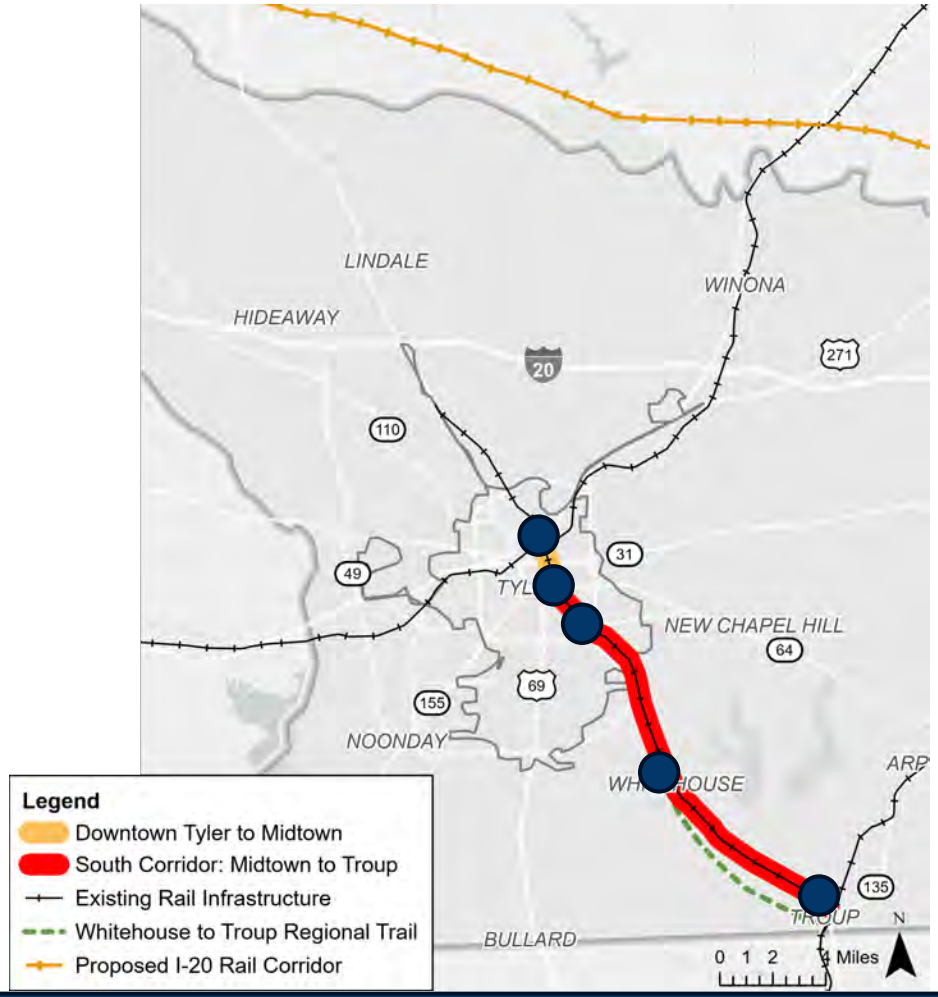

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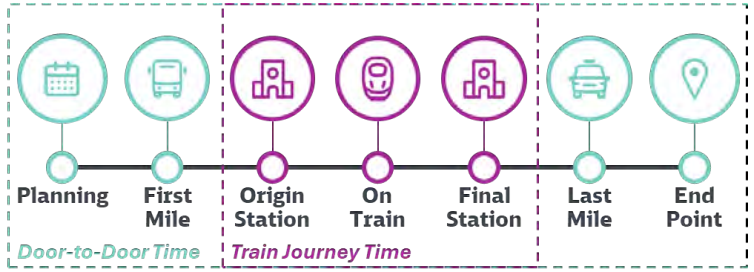
PASSENGER EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY

An effectively planned transit service should:

- Meet passenger needs
- Provide competitive travel times
- Consider the entire passenger experience



PASSENGER EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY

Even if slower, transit can be more appealing than driving because:

- Traffic is frustrating
- Transit can be cheaper than the costs of paid parking