

Chapter 5 Passenger Transportation



Passenger transportation serves to move multiple people for many purposes and destinations. Passenger transportation can include regional and fixed-route public transit, private taxis and on-demand ride services, passenger rail service, or commercial air travel. Regional and intercity passenger services in the Quad Cities offer options for those who cannot or choose not to operate a car. Redevelopment in the urban core of the Quad Cities, especially in the downtowns, benefit passenger transportation services by increasing commercial and residential densities that create and draw potential new ridership. Multimodal travel, or combining modes of transportation, is an option in the Quad Cities, as all fixed-route buses have bike racks for riders to complete the first mile and last mile of their trips using a bicycle. Multimodal transportation also contributes to a thriving community, as many residents and visitors may use multiple modes to travel in the metro area to explore sites and activities.

Passenger transportation services offer more than just a means to get around, they enhance economic development opportunities to communities wishing to take advantage of street-side activity, such as in the form of transit-oriented development. Some members of the community are transit dependent, meaning public transit, and other passenger transportation may be the sole means of travel for these residents (seniors, low-income, and individuals with disabilities, for example). Others choose to use public transportation for a variety of reasons: environmental, economic, and health benefits. Improving access for all in the community, both transit-dependent as well as choice riders, will lead to a healthier, more efficient, and livable region.

Effective passenger transportation systems contribute to a more economically thriving Bi-State Region. Future improvements across the region will increase access

to employment centers, schools, shopping centers, and medical facilities while spurring economic activity and mitigating congestion, as well as air and noise pollution. According to the Federal Transit Administration, public health and safety also improve with the use of public transportation. On-going promotion of multimodal transportation, such as the availability of bike racks on buses or microtransit services, expand mobility choices in the Quad Cities metropolitan area. The benefits of public transportation are clear, and the Quad Cities Area is capable and prepared to take advantage of its existing and future passenger transportation infrastructure.

Urban Transit Services

The Quad Cities Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is served by three urban fixed-route transit services: Bettendorf Transit, Davenport CitiBus, and the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK) (see Map 5.1). Coordination among the three independent systems is an ongoing effort that includes quarterly meetings to discuss service and fare changes, operational challenges, and services marketing. In total, approximately 71.73%¹ of the MPA population is located within a quarter-mile, or about a five-minute walk, of a bus route. Development along the most popular corridors expands economic opportunities that could bolster ridership and quality of life resulting in greater accessibility, cleaner air, and a healthier lifestyle. Economic activity is already high near existing fixed transit routes. Approximately 80.69%² of businesses in the urban area, representing approximately 134,386 employees, are located within a quarter-mile of a transit route. Transit priority corridors are discussed later in this chapter and align high potential for transit-oriented development.

¹ ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Decennial Census 2020

² ESRI Business Analyst, ESRI-Data Axel (2024)

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Passenger Access – Stations and Hubs

The Quad Cities transit operators have worked to improve passenger access to their respective facilities through investments in new transit-oriented developments and upgrades to stations. The three systems are connected at transfer points, allowing passengers to switch between them. All three systems operate as flag-down service, meaning that riders may stand anywhere along a route and request a bus to stop.

Locations with bus shelters must meet ADA accessibility standards, as do all transfer facilities. Additionally, developments, such as the partnership between MetroLINK, the City of Rock Island, and Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation called The Locks, have improved station access while also promoting transit and multimodal transportation. The residential development consisting of a 34-unit apartment building next to the transit station is also located across IL-92 from the Great River Trail.

New access can also be utilized between Centre Station in Moline and the Q passenger rail station. The pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks was completed in 2020 and connects future passenger rail service; local fixed-route service; intercity bus, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities; and the water taxi in one centralized location.

In 2015, MetroLINK completed construction of the Mega Stop at South Park Mall to accommodate shoppers and employees. The project consists of an improved walkway to connect directly with the “front door” of the mall and a 3,400 square-foot covered platform designed to accommodate four buses. South Park Mall was sold in April 2025 to an investment firm. The mall has seen diminishing economic activity over the past decade, and any potential redevelopment or revitalization would affect the transit systems serving the area.

Ground Transportation Center (GTC) in downtown Davenport serves passengers of CitiBus’s 15 routes that converge there, as well as intercity bus service. Its central location in Davenport offers easy access to jobs and residences downtown, as well as recreational and active transportation facilities, such as the Mississippi River Trail and riverfront parks, farmers markets, and other cultural amenities. Future facility consid-

erations will have to consider the aging building and the city’s priorities for transit service and downtown development.

Ridership

Since 2005, local transit ridership had been on the rise until its peak in 2014 at 5,361,975 trips taken. Since then, ridership has steadily declined at all transit systems. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic decreased ridership to 2,080,863 total trips taken in 2021, a decrease of 61% since 2014. Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 both illustrate unlinked trips from 2005 to 2023. The three systems in our metro area all experienced a decline in ridership; however, it was not entirely shared. CitiBus and MetroLINK both had peaks in 2014, whereas Bettendorf Transit peaked in 2013. CitiBus and Bettendorf Transit hit their lowest ridership numbers in 2022, while MetroLINK experienced their lowest ridership numbers in 2021. Bettendorf Transit and Davenport CitiBus saw ridership declines of 82% and 78% respectively. MetroLINK saw a decline of 54%. Ridership numbers have also fluctuated within the last 10 years due to Bettendorf Transit and Davenport CitiBus adjusting their headways and implementing route adjustments.

Nationwide, trips taken by transit have increased by 17% nationwide between 2022 and 2023, which equates to about 6.9 billion trips according to the Federal Transit Administration. This shows a positive trend that may be reflected by local transit agencies as transit has a resurgence.

COVID-19 Impacts

Transit faced unprecedented challenges beginning in the early spring of 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic began to affect the daily lives of Americans across the country. Residents of the Quad Cities, likewise, altered their travel behaviors depending on work and school distancing requirements determined by the respective

Unlinked Trips

The number of times passengers board public transportation vehicles

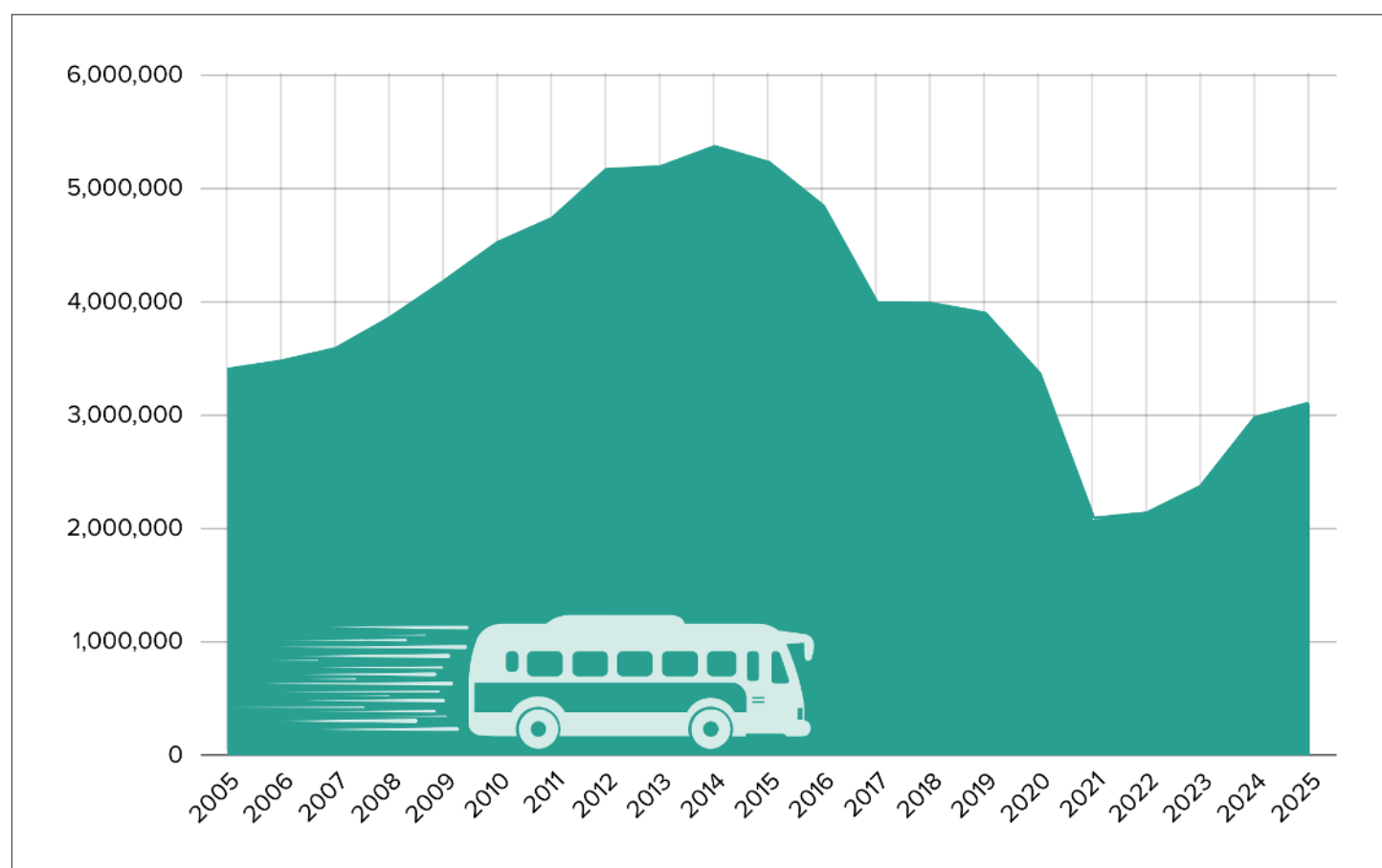
Headways

The time or distance between vehicles traveling on the same route

state. Ridership on public transit decreased by 50-60% in each fixed-route system. Nonetheless, many essential workers continued to rely on transit services throughout the pandemic. Demand-response service, such as River Bend Transit, experienced a decrease of approximately 80% in ridership. Davenport CitiBus and Bettendorf Transit both offered free fares for three months during the pandemic. MetroLINK began COVID-19 Restore Committees, which were put in place to ensure operations continued to run smoothly.

The U.S. Congress passed the CARES Act in Spring 2020 to assist with, among other things, budgetary shortfalls at public transit agencies. The one-time infusion of funds helped bridge the funding gap. All three transit agencies have experienced recoveries in ridership numbers over the past few years; however, COVID-19 impacts still affect the transit community today.

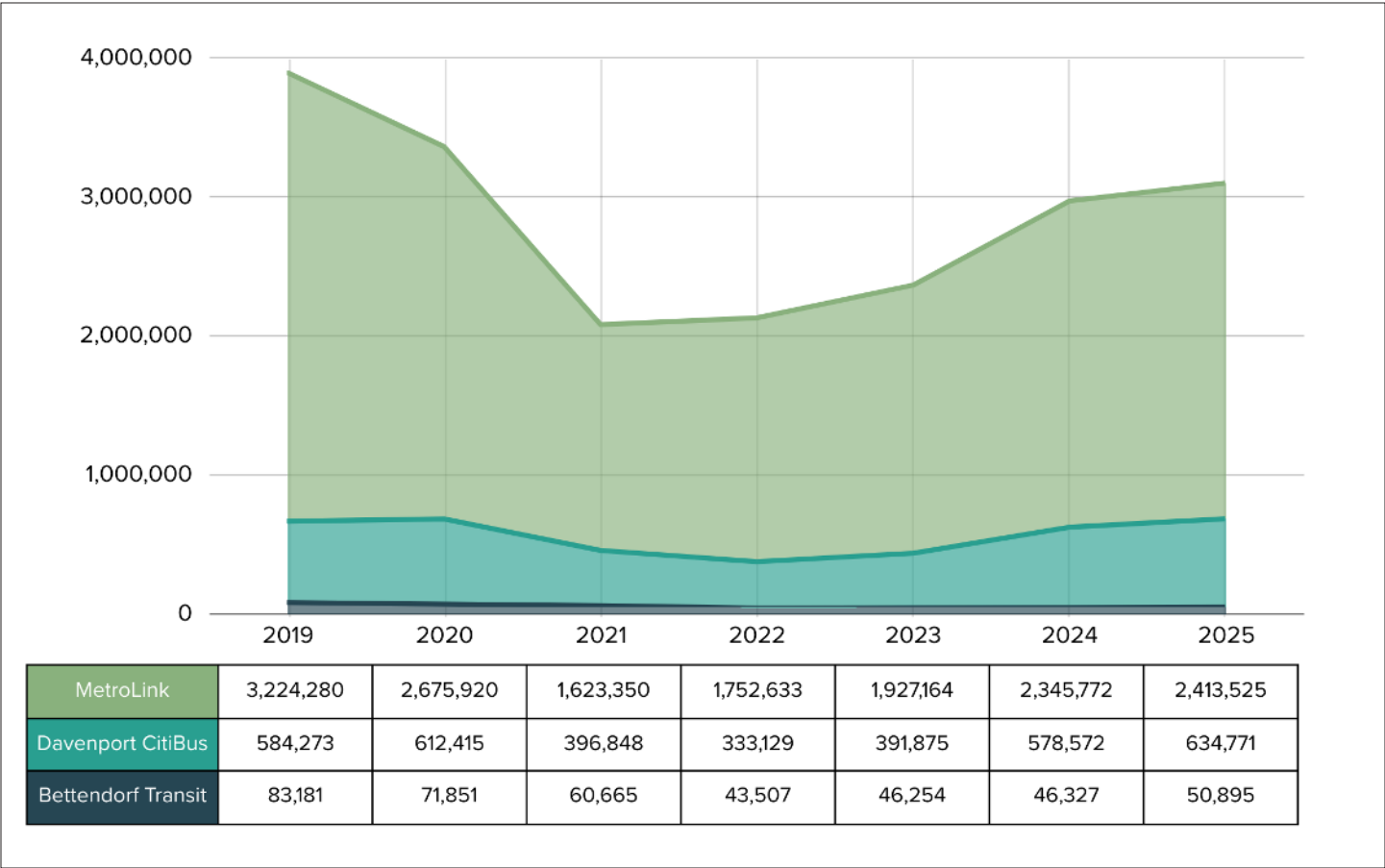
Figure 5.1 – Annual Unlinked Trips in Quad Cities Urbanized Area, FY2005-2025



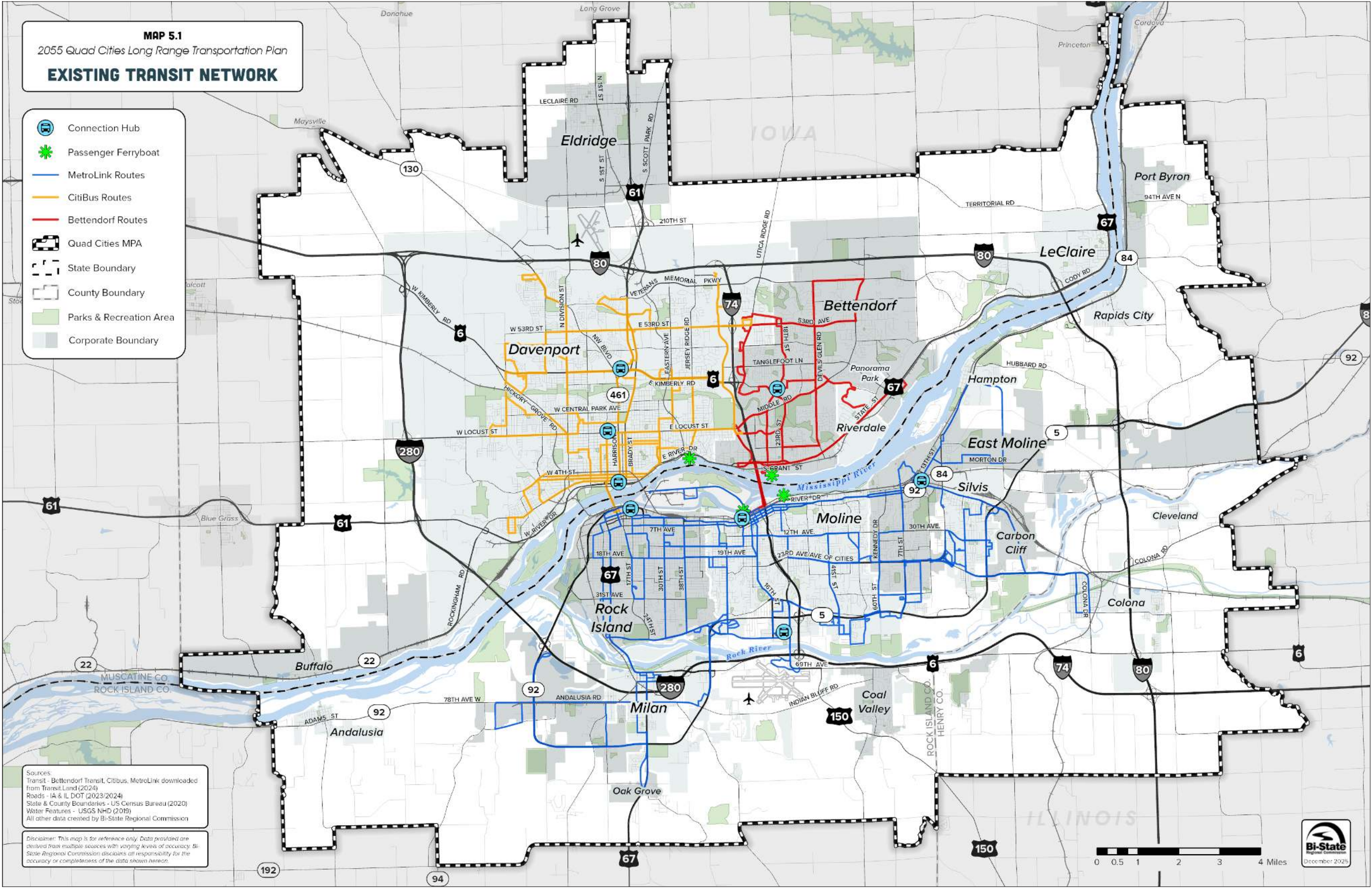
Source: FY2005-2011 data self-reported by transit agencies. FY2012-2023 data retrieved from National Transit Database, FY24-25 data self-reported by transit agencies.

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Figure 5.2 – Annual Unlinked Trips by Transit Agency, FY2019-2025



Source: National Transit Database, Annual Agency Profiles, 2017-2023, FY24-25 data self-reported by transit agencies.



Bettendorf Transit

Routes/Service Area

The City of Bettendorf operates a municipal transit system known as Bettendorf Transit. Table 5.1 summarizes Bettendorf's operations along with the other two public fixed-route transit systems. The system was established in 1980 and currently operates three routes. Riders are able to connect to CitiBus near the intersection of Middle Road and Kimberly Road as well as at the North Ridge Shopping Center on Corporate Park Drive. Cross-river access is provided with a connection point to MetroLINK at Centre Station in downtown Moline. The three routes extend from two main transfer points along Middle Road and a Central Hub location at Faye's Field located near the Bettendorf Family Museum and Public Library. Service is provided to the most densely populated areas of the city in addition to many employment and activity centers, including the Family Museum, Scott Community College, the Isle Casino Hotel, and the Arconic Industrial Plant among many others.

Hours and Fares

Service hours for Bettendorf Transit vary depending on the day. Currently, weekday service is provided from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Saturday service is from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There is no service provided on Sundays or major holidays.

Regular fares are \$1.00 for all fixed-route buses; however, a reduced fare of \$0.50 is available for seniors and individuals with disabilities. College Students, K-12 students, Veterans, and children under age five accompanied by an adult may ride free. Riders may also purchase the QC Monthly Pass for \$30.00. The QC Monthly Pass is a universal bus pass that entitles the pass holder to unlimited rides for the calendar month on all three Quad Cities fixed-route systems.

Bettendorf Transit



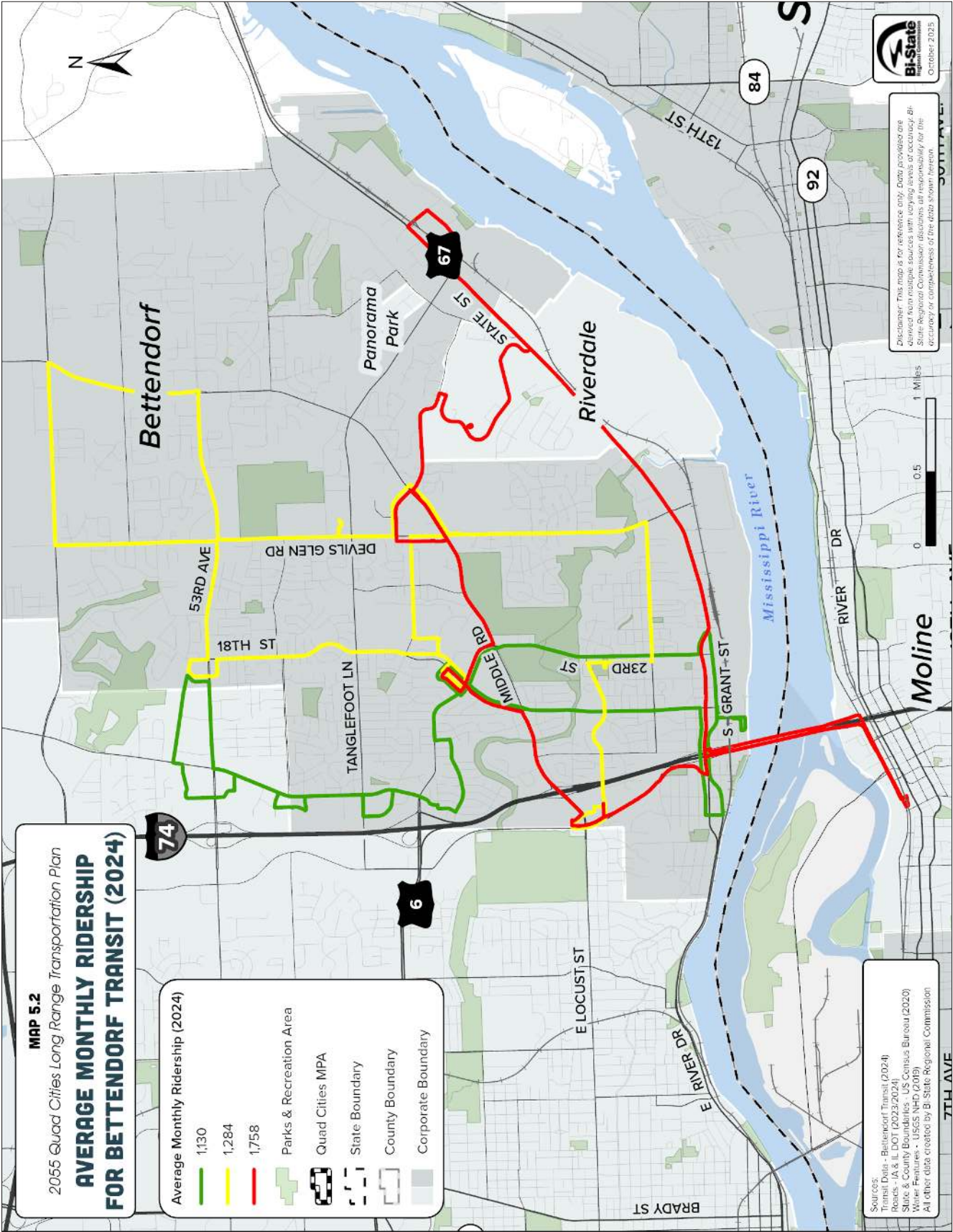
Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

Fleet and Operations

Bettendorf Transit currently operates a fixed-route revenue fleet of five ADA-accessible 14-passenger buses with 2 wheelchair securement areas. None of the active revenue fleet is at or beyond their lifespan. All vehicles were acquired in 2024 and are equipped with bicycle racks to encourage multi-modal travel. Vehicles are stored indoors at the Bettendorf Public Works facility. Bus maintenance and fueling are done onsite.

Operational and administrative functions are handled in-house by Bettendorf Transit staff. Staff includes a Transit Operations Manager, dispatchers, and drivers. Bettendorf Transit has also implemented a computer-aided dispatch/automatic vehicle location (CAD/AVL) system, Google Trip Planner, and mobile app in recent years, increasing the availability of on-demand information.

Bettendorf Transit's average monthly ridership by route can be seen in Map 5.2. This data shows that the highest ridership occurs along the U.S. 67 and Middle Road corridors.



Davenport CitiBus

Public investment in transit in Davenport began in 1969 with the creation of the City Transit Authority, which subsidized the privately-held Davenport City Lines Bus Company. The city purchased Davenport City Lines and placed the operation of the transit service under the jurisdiction of the city's Department of Municipal Transportation.

Routes/Service Area

Today, the City of Davenport operates a fixed-route system known as CitiBus. Table 5.1 summarizes CitiBus operations. The 15 CitiBus routes are largely oriented in a grid pattern, with seven serving the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) located in the heart of downtown Davenport on River Drive between Ripley and Harrison Streets.

The CitiBus service area encompasses much of the city, approximately 26 square miles. Numerous schools, shopping centers, hospitals, businesses, and several local tourist attractions are within short walking distances of CitiBus routes. CitiBus links to the other two fixed-route transit systems in the Quad Cities. CitiBus connects to Bettendorf Transit at a transit hub at Lincoln and Kimberly Roads and at 53rd Street by the Northridge Shopping Center. CitiBus crosses the state line by traveling to the MetroLINK Rock Island District Station transfer hub via the CitiBus Route 7.

CitiBus provides service to the Eastern Iowa Industrial Area north of Interstate 80 during peak hours for the businesses located in this area. The City of Davenport contracts this service, along with their complimentary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service and other demand-response services, to River Bend Transit, the regional transit provider.

The increase in the downtown residential population over the past 15 years, which is anticipated to continue to grow modestly, will provide continuing demand for alternative transportation and bus service to retail, employment, and recreation centers throughout the city and the region. Additionally, redevelopment along major corridors, such as the U.S. 61 corridor, offers the City of Davenport and CitiBus numerous opportunities to increase residential and commercial density to appeal to more transit-oriented development.

Davenport CitiBus



Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

Likewise, throughout the Quad Cities Region, corridor planning has indicated the demand and potential of transit service in providing for a more livable community in the future. The average monthly ridership throughout the CitiBus system is depicted in Map 5.3 showing a high concentration of riders along the U.S. 61 corridor and along and south of Locust Street. The area south of Locust Street includes downtown Davenport and older neighborhoods with higher population densities.

Hours and Fares

The approximate service hours for most routes are 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday. Headways vary by route and time of day, but are generally 30 or 60 minutes.

Paratransit service is available during the hours that fixed-route service operates. Demand-response service is available on Saturday mornings for work-related trips, from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., before regular fixed-route service begins. These services are also operated by River Bend Transit.

General single trip fares are \$1.00, with special reduced fares available for seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, unemployed individuals, students, and children. In addition to the QC Monthly Pass for \$30.00, CitiBus launched a CitiPASS program in October 2007, allowing unlimited rides throughout Davenport for the month. Riders can purchase a monthly

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CitiPASS for \$23.00, which allows unlimited rides and transfers on any routes within the Davenport system.

Davenport CitiBus has transit agreements with Scott Community College, Palmer College of Chiropractic, and Saint Ambrose University enabling students, faculty, and staff to ride without incurring any additional cost. Saint Ambrose University utilizes three CitiBus routes to enhance student access to and from its Health Sciences Building at MercyOne Genesis Davenport West. The agreements are reciprocal with Illinois college and university agreements.

Beginning in 2011, the City of Davenport and the Davenport Public Schools System partnered to provide free transit service to schoolchildren between kindergarten and grade 12 upon presentation of their school ID.

Fleet, Facilities and Operations

Davenport CitiBus has 21 operating vehicles in its fleet, which are 35-foot, 32-passenger low-floor heavy duty buses. Out of this operating fleet, 17 vehicles are diesel and 4 are battery electric. Twenty-nine percent of the vehicles are at or beyond their lifespan. All vehicles are ADA-compliant and equipped with bicycle racks to

promote multimodal connections. Vehicles are maintained at the city's Public Works building.

With all buses equipped with bike racks, CitiBus provides easy access to the nationally designated Mississippi River Trail, which runs one block south of the facility, just by taking a bus to the downtown station

The City of Davenport currently owns and operates a centralized Ground Transportation Center (GTC) in downtown Davenport. Built in 1985, the facility is in fair condition and is ADA-accessible. The GTC has limited office space for supervisors, modest driver break room accommodations, and acts as the primary transfer location for the majority of CitiBus routes.

Construction of an addition to the Davenport Public Works building was completed in 2014. CitiBus management/administrative staff relocated to the new addition, which houses new administrative offices, a large conference area, multiple workstations, and driver accommodations. Limited supervisory staff remain at the GTC during operating hours for customer assistance. Dispatch services are coordinated out of the Public Works building.

Davenport CitiBus Electric Buses

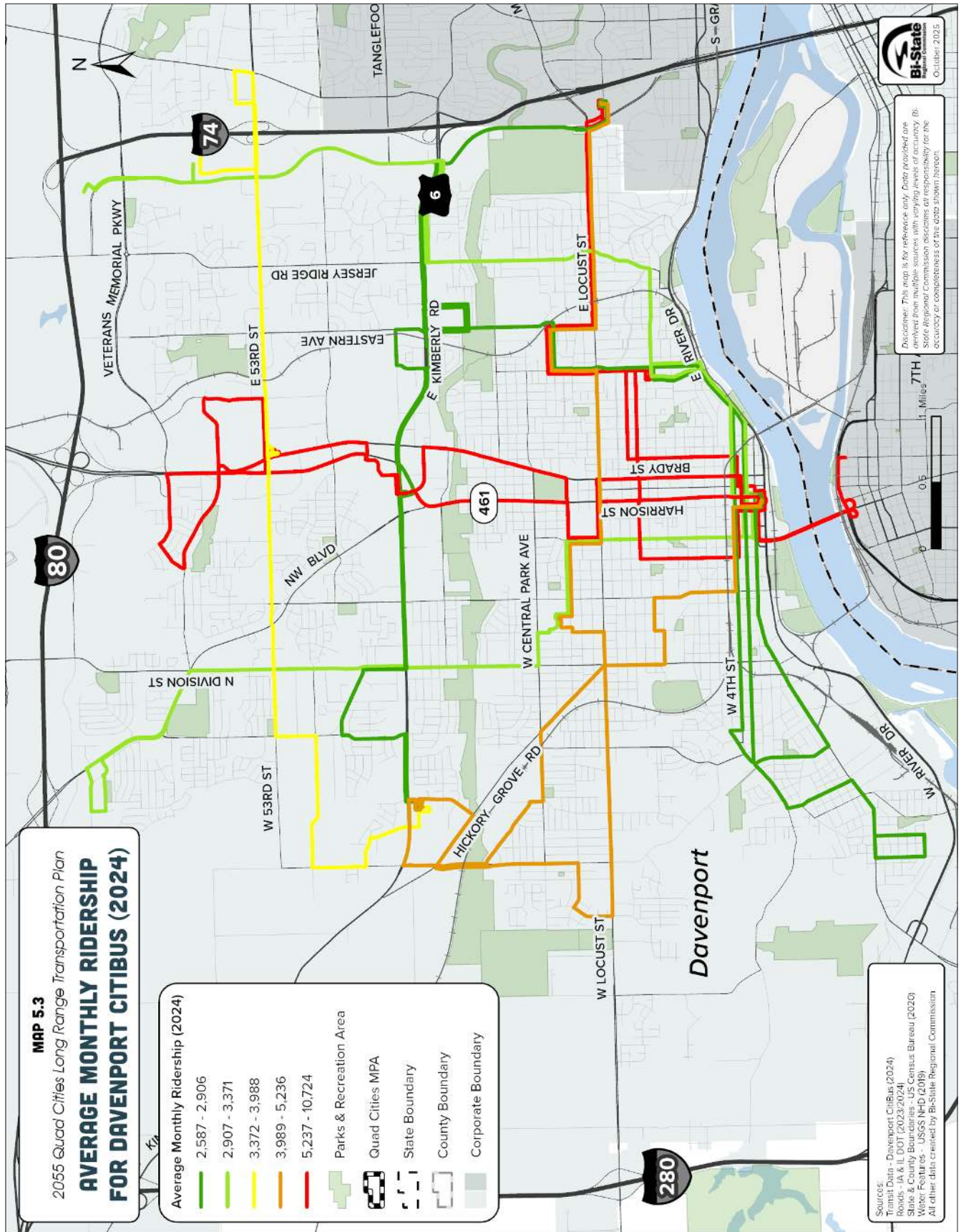


Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

Davenport CitiBus Ground Transportation Center



Source: Davenport CitiBus



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Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK/Metro)

Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District, commonly referred to as MetroLINK, is a multi-city public transit system that was created in 1970 to serve the Illinois Quad Cities. Table 5.1 summarizes MetroLINK's transit operations along with the other two fixed-route public transit systems.

Routes/Service Area

Fixed-route service is provided to the communities of Carbon Cliff, Colona, East Moline, Hampton, Milan, Moline, Rock Island, and Silvis. In addition to fixed-route transit service, MetroLINK serves as a ticketing agent for Greyhound and Jefferson Bus Lines; provides paratransit, special transportation, and microtransit services; and operates a passenger ferry, locally known as the Channel Cat Water Taxi.

MetroLINK's fixed-route services, referred to as "Metro," operate seven days a week on 15, 30, or 60-minute headways. The system is comprised of 12 fixed routes, with additional peak service to serve employment and education centers. The system is a combination of grid and radial route service with connections to Davenport CitiBus and River Bend Transit at Rock Island's District Station, and Bettendorf Transit and River Bend Transit at Centre Station in Moline.

In 2019, MetroLINK introduced microtransit service in the Milan area as a supplement to existing fixed-route service. The service offers an on-demand public transportation option within the corporate limits of Milan and part of Southwest Rock Island. Passengers can be picked up and dropped off anywhere within the designated service area. Multiple riders may be grouped together based on demand and the location of their destinations.

Hours and Fares

MetroLINK buses run from 4:25 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday and on Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Their Microtransit in Milan runs from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and no service on Sundays. The adult base fare is \$1.00. Special reduced rates are available for seniors, college students, individuals with disabilities, and children. Pre-paid passes provide discounts for

MetroLINK



Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

purchasing multiple rides. Seniors and individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in the Illinois Benefit Access Program can ride the Metro fixed-route services free of charge. Metro also accepts the QC Monthly Pass, which costs \$30.00 for unlimited rides on any of the Quad Cities fixed-route services.

MetroLINK also operates the Channel Cat Water Taxi. The service includes three 49-passenger ferryboats equipped with bicycle racks that create cross-river access between two docks each in Illinois and Iowa. The Channel Cat operates between Memorial Day and Labor Day, weather permitting, and provides 45,000 trips annually. Tickets are \$8.00 for an adult and \$4.00 for ages 2 to 10. Hours may vary depending on the day, but range from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Microtransit

IT-enabled private multi-passenger transportation services...that serve passengers using dynamically generated routes, and may expect passengers to make their way to and from common pick-up or drop-off points. Vehicles can range from large SUVs to vans to shuttle buses. Because they provide transit-like service but on a smaller, more flexible scale, these new services have been referred to as microtransit. [TCRP Research Report 188]

Fleet, Facilities and Operations

MetroLINK's active revenue fleet consists of 67 buses, 14 cutaways, 3 minivans, and 3 passenger ferryboat vessels. Seventy-two percent of the fixed-route fleet is powered by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). About 19% of the buses are at or beyond their useful life. In 2018, MetroLINK introduced its first electric bus and has expanded its electric fleet to 13% of its overall fleet as of 2020, resulting in quieter operations and substantially less pollution resulting from transit operations. The agency uses a 12-year replacement cycle for its fixed-route fleet, with major rehabilitation on the vehicles after approximately six years of use. All transit coaches and modified vans meet ADA requirements and are equipped with low-floor ramps or lifts and passenger notification signals.

Metro's transportation network includes three key terminals located in Moline, East Moline, and Rock Island. Centre Station, Metro's premier transportation hub, was constructed in 1998 and is a joint-use facility in Downtown Moline. Centre Station, the premier transportation hub for MetroLINK's services, is a central piece of the John Deere Commons development downtown Moline, and was completed in 1998. The station is prominently located on River Drive, and includes a fully enclosed, 12,000 square-foot terminal on the ground floor of a parking garage. Centre Station is a mixed-use transit center that offers a convenience store, a banquet space for business meetings, weddings, and special events, as well as office space for Rock Island County Sheriff's Deputies to maintain safety and security of MetroLINK's services and facilities.

MetroLINK Centre Station



Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

MetroLINK Electric Bus



Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

Passengers at Centre Station can connect to additional modes of transportation via Greyhound Lines, Jefferson Lines, the Great River Trail, the Channel Cat Water Taxi, and the Q Multi-Modal Station. Major renovations to Centre Station were completed in 2025. East Pointe in East Moline is a 4,500 square-foot facility, built in 2006, with a covered outdoor waiting area and indoor restrooms for riders. The building features an indoor training facility with space to accommodate up to 40 people, a kitchenette, and office for MetroLINK staff. East Pointe's training room serves MetroLINK's training needs and is also made available to community groups and businesses. District Station in Rock Island, completed in 2014, is a LEED Gold certified facility that has 2,000 square feet of interior passenger waiting area with restrooms, an information kiosk, and a monitor displaying next bus arrival information. Ten (10) exterior bus bays with canopies are designed for easy pull-in and pull-out, and each is equipped with real-time signage.

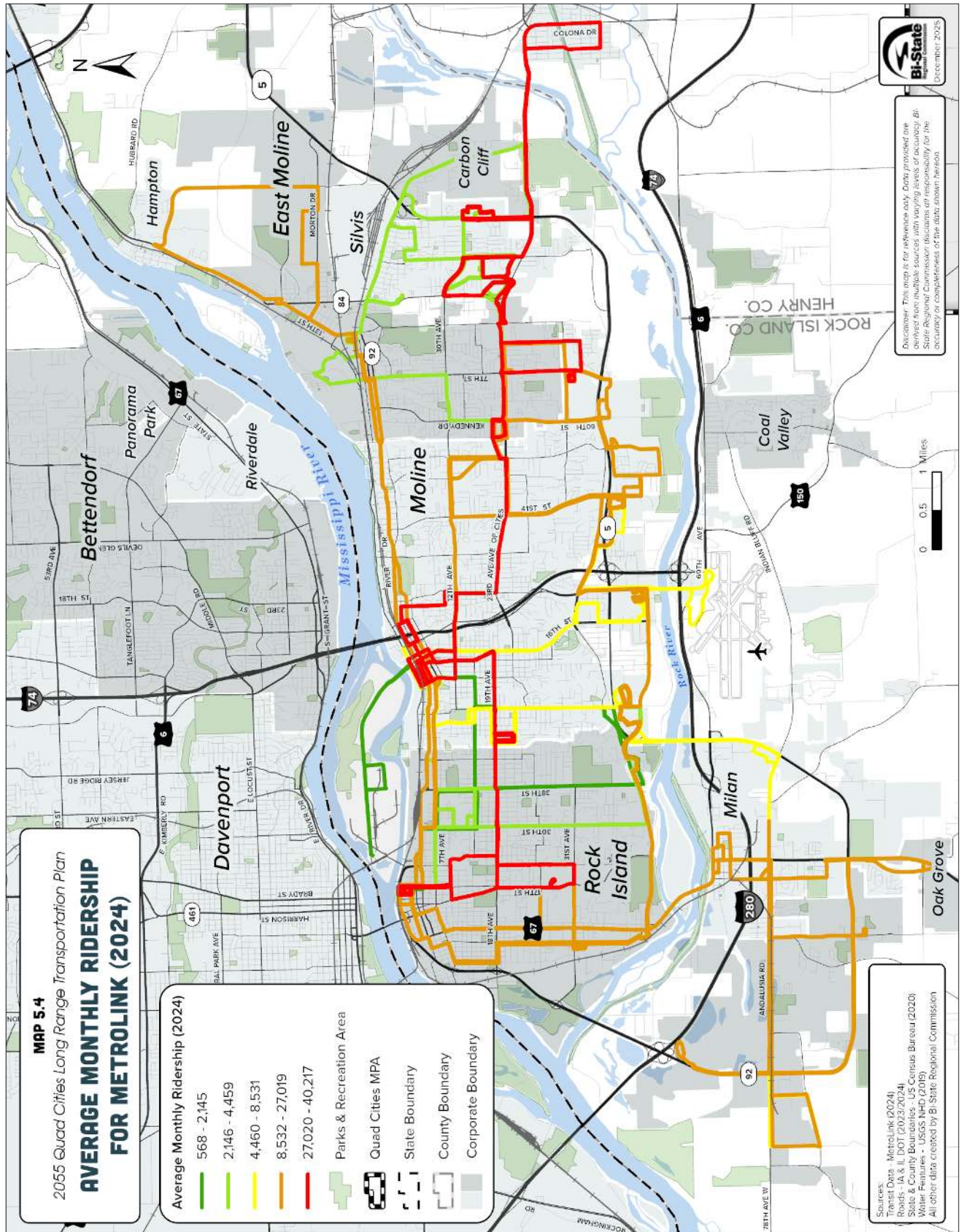
Other major transfer points in the Metro system are Sunset Heights and Rock Valley Plaza in Rock Island; City Line Plaza, Black Hawk College, UnityPoint-Trinity, and Walmart in Moline; Kennedy Square in East Moline, and Walmart in Silvis. There are also two "Mega Stop" locations at SouthPark Mall and the Quad Cities International Airport. In 2015, MetroLINK completed construction of a signature transfer hub at SouthPark Mall. MetroLINK's Operations and Maintenance Center in Rock Island is a 150,000 square-foot facility built in 2014. The complex houses Operations staff, training and dispatch areas, and a state-of-the-art bus maintenance garage. It also includes indoor storage

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for the fleet, fueling bays, and infrastructure to support battery-electric technology and fleet expansion. MetroLINK's ADA and STS operations are served by a second facility in Rock Island, with vehicle maintenance being contracted by a third-party vendor. Administrative functions for the agency are provided at a separate location in downtown Moline.

The Channel Cat Water Taxi has four landing locations along its route. The home port, known as Riverbend Commons, was built in 2016 and is located upstream from downtown Moline. The other ports are located in downtown Moline, the Village of East Davenport (Davenport, Iowa), and downtown Bettendorf, Iowa. Planning is underway for a fifth location in East Moline, and major improvements are either completed or underway at both the downtown Moline and Village of East Davenport locations.

MetroLINK's average monthly ridership is shown in Map 5.4. For fixed-route service, the most heavily traversed routes generally run east-west. They serve downtown areas, key transit terminals, and major shopping and medical facilities. All routes also serve residential areas throughout the Illinois Quad Cities. MetroLINK buses are equipped with automated passenger counters at each door. Ridership data is downloaded every evening when buses pull into the garage.



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Table 5.1 – Transit Operations Summary

Transit System	# of Routes	# of Vehicles	Weekday Hours	Weekend Hours	Service Frequency on Routes (Headways)	Adult Basic Fare	Annual Unlinked Trips (FY25)
Bettendorf Transit	3	5	6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. varies by route	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. varies by route; Saturday only	60 minutes	\$1.00	50,895
Davenport CitiBus	15	21	6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. varies by route	9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Saturday only	30 or 60 minutes by route	\$1.00	634,771
Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK)	12	67; 3 vessels (Channel Cat)	4:25 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.; Channel Cat is seasonal	4:25 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.; Saturday and 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; Sunday	15, 30 or 60 minutes by route	\$1.00	2,413,525

Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

Regional Transit Services

River Bend Transit

Service Area

In addition to the fixed-route services described above, the Iowa Quad Cities are served by River Bend Transit (RBT). River Bend Transit, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation that has been designated as the regional transit provider for the Iowa Counties of Muscatine, Scott, Cedar, and Clinton. RBT utilizes a contractual relationship with counties, municipalities, social service agencies, and other organizations within its service area to provide curb-to-curb demand response to specific clients of these organizations and to the general public for medical appointments, work, school, and education trips. Both Bettendorf Transit and Davenport CitiBus provide paratransit services under contract through RBT. Principal clients are 64% disabled, 17% elderly, and 19% other.

Hours and Fares

RBT's regular demand-response service operating hours are 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. RBT also provides extended work-related transportation hours that include service from 7:00 p.m. to midnight, Monday through Saturday, and 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Sunday. Fares for seniors (age 60+) and

River Bend Transit



Source: River Bend Transit

individuals with disabilities are a round-trip suggested donation of \$1.50 for in-town service, \$3.00 round-trip for county service, and \$3.00 round-trip for Bettendorf/Davenport trips. An additional fare of \$5.00 has been established for the general public.

RBT also coordinates with Davenport CitiBus to provide early Saturday morning demand-response work trips within the CitiBus service area. The CitiBus fixed-route service does not start until 9:00 a.m. on Saturday. This service allows low-income workers access to their early morning jobs that start before the fixed-

route service begins. Hours of service are 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. every Saturday. This service is limited to passengers going to and coming from work only. Riders can utilize the CitiBus service for their return trips later in the day.

Fleet, Facilities and Operations

The RBT fleet includes a total of 72 lift or ramp-equipped vehicles ranging in size from mini-vans to 25' coaches. RBT completed construction of a maintenance and administrative center in 1996 and has expansion capabilities at its existing site. Vehicle wash bay and parking lot improvements were completed in 2010. RBT received an FTA Bus and Bus Facility grant in 2023 to construct a bus storage facility for its fleet. The facility will have many LEED-certified elements and will also include five charging stations for future electric vehicles. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2025.

RBT annually provides more than 200,000 rides, approximately 45,000 of which are paratransit services for Davenport and Bettendorf. The agency utilizes a 15-year replacement cycle for its fleet, replacing one-third of its revenue fleet every five years. However, due to inadequate funding, RBT has not been able to replace many of its vehicles until they have reached 10 to 12 years of age and have accumulated 170,000+ miles.

RICO Rural Transit

Service Area

RICO Rural Transit is a public transportation system operated by Project NOW to serve rural Rock Island County. RICO began providing service in March 2010. Operations are managed through Project NOW's transportation program. In 2025, Mercer County withdrew from the intergovernmental agreement with Rock Island County and entered into an agreement with Warren County to operate its rural transit service. RICO still operates senior services within Mercer County.

Hours and Fares

Hours of operation are currently 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and fares range from \$3.00-\$7.00, depending on the length of the trip. Plans are underway to expand services to enhance mobility options in the RICO service area. Trips that are 41 miles and higher have a fee of \$7.00.

Fleet, Facilities and Operations

RICO's vehicle fleet includes ten minivans and three 12-passenger paratransit vehicles ranging in model years from 2010 to 2024.

Other Passenger Transportation Options and Services

There are a variety of private for-profit transit providers that offer service within the Bi-State Region and serving within the MPA. These include commercial intercity bus services, charter bus services, shuttle services, and taxi companies. Charter services may include short-term or multi-day travel, local or long-distance travel, tours or group accommodations, shuttle services, and school transportation services. Taxis, limousines, and special event services also address travel needs within the Quad Cities and surrounding region. Many of these transportation services offer local airport service and shuttles to Chicago. However, a majority of these providers in the region are not currently ADA-accessible.

As an example of newer service, Yellow Cab Company started operating in the Quad Cities in April 2025. The company is central Iowa's largest transportation provider. The company is starting off with 6 cabs in the metro area and will grow to meet the community's needs.

Bi-State Regional Commission updates a Transit Development Plan (TDP) every three years that contains a specialized transportation services inventory for the Bi-State Region. The list elaborates on who the companies serve and how they are funded. The TDP is available on Bi-State's website.

The Iowa DOT reinstated their Iowa Rideshare website in the spring of 2025. Residents can go to the Iowa Rideshare website and select where they want to depart from, where to arrive, the time and day, and they can select advanced options if they need additional services. The website only lists transit agencies within the state of Iowa. There is currently not a similar website in Illinois. Transit agencies in Illinois will have to register with Iowa Rideshare in order for Quad Cities residents to request an over the state line ride.

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On-demand, app-based transportation services, like Uber and Lyft, are other transportation options in the region. Consumers begin by using a smartphone application to request service. Once the ride is requested, the service providers send a driver to the requested location for pick-up. Drivers utilize their own vehicles and must pass extensive background checks before employment. The effect of these services on the broader transportation system will be monitored as their businesses evolve.

Carpooling is another integral component of transportation for the Quad Cities. It represents the second-most used method of commuting to work according to the 2023 ACS 5-year estimates and the 2014 household travel survey. The ACS estimated that 6.9% of workers used a carpool to travel to work, while 81.9% drove alone. Typically, these arrangements are less formal between neighbors or coworkers traveling to the same destination. In other cases, they can be more formalized through mobile or web-based applications to link people needing a trip with other taking a similar trip. Other formalized programs include employer-based vanpools where shared travel to employment is coordinated through an employer program.

With carpooling being an important component of transportation for the Quad Cities and an important component to the overall transportation system within the State of Iowa, the Iowa DOT conducted a statewide study of the topic in 2014. Entitled the *Statewide Park and Ride System Plan*, it proposed two candidate locations in the Quad Cities for a park and ride facility. The first candidate location was proposed for near the intersection of U.S. 61 and Kimberly Road close to North Park Mall. The second location would capture traffic coming into or going out of the Quad Cities on the west side of Davenport at U.S. 61 and Iowa 22. The second option was established in 2017.

Since the pandemic, there has also been an increase in jobs that offer a work from home option. The 2023 ACS estimated that 6.9% of workers work at home. The transformation in work practices is expected to have a lasting impact on the transportation system, as commuting patterns adapt to these changes.

Intercity Transportation

Travel between cities outside the Quad Cities Area, either coming in or passing through, affects residents and businesses in the Quad Cities Area every day. Intercity transportation affects air quality, congestion, and the economy, depending on the mode used to travel. A multimodal and interconnected intercity passenger transportation system can have beneficial effects on all of these issues. Passenger rail, for instance, offers riders a more environmentally-friendly choice of regional travel, reducing the emissions released by driving alone. Travelling by rail removes cars from the roads, reducing congestion and the cost of road maintenance due to wear and tear. The regional economy benefits from having interconnected local and regional transportation systems to move people and goods to local and other markets. Tourism benefits as well from being able to draw visitors from other regions to visit area attractions and festivals while staying in local hotels. A well-connected passenger system offers environmental, economic, and tourism benefits that contribute to regional prosperity.

Intercity Bus

Commercial intercity bus service in the Quad Cities is available through Greyhound Bus Lines and Jefferson Bus Lines at Moline's Centre Station. Greyhound Bus Lines is also available through Davenport's Ground Transportation Center (GTC). Intercity bus services provide mobility options extending east, west, and south from the Quad Cities and is a cost-effective means to reducing congestion, air pollution, and energy consumption. Until 2025, the Quad Cities was also served by Burlington Trailways, but service ceased in September of that year.

The I-80 corridor is traversed by Greyhound heading west toward Iowa City and heading east toward Chicago. Greyhound Bus Lines began operating Greyhound Connect service in 2015 from Davenport along the I-88 corridor to Moline, Dixon, Rochelle, Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Naperville, and then to Chicago. The rural bus service is funded through the Federal Transit Administration to connect rural communities to larger urban areas. Burlington Trailways also provided Amtrak's Thruway service to communities not served

by passenger rail, such as the Quad Cities and Peoria. Travelers were able to buy one ticket for combined bus and rail service. However, the future of Amtrak's Thruway service serving the Quad Cities is uncertain.

Passenger Rail

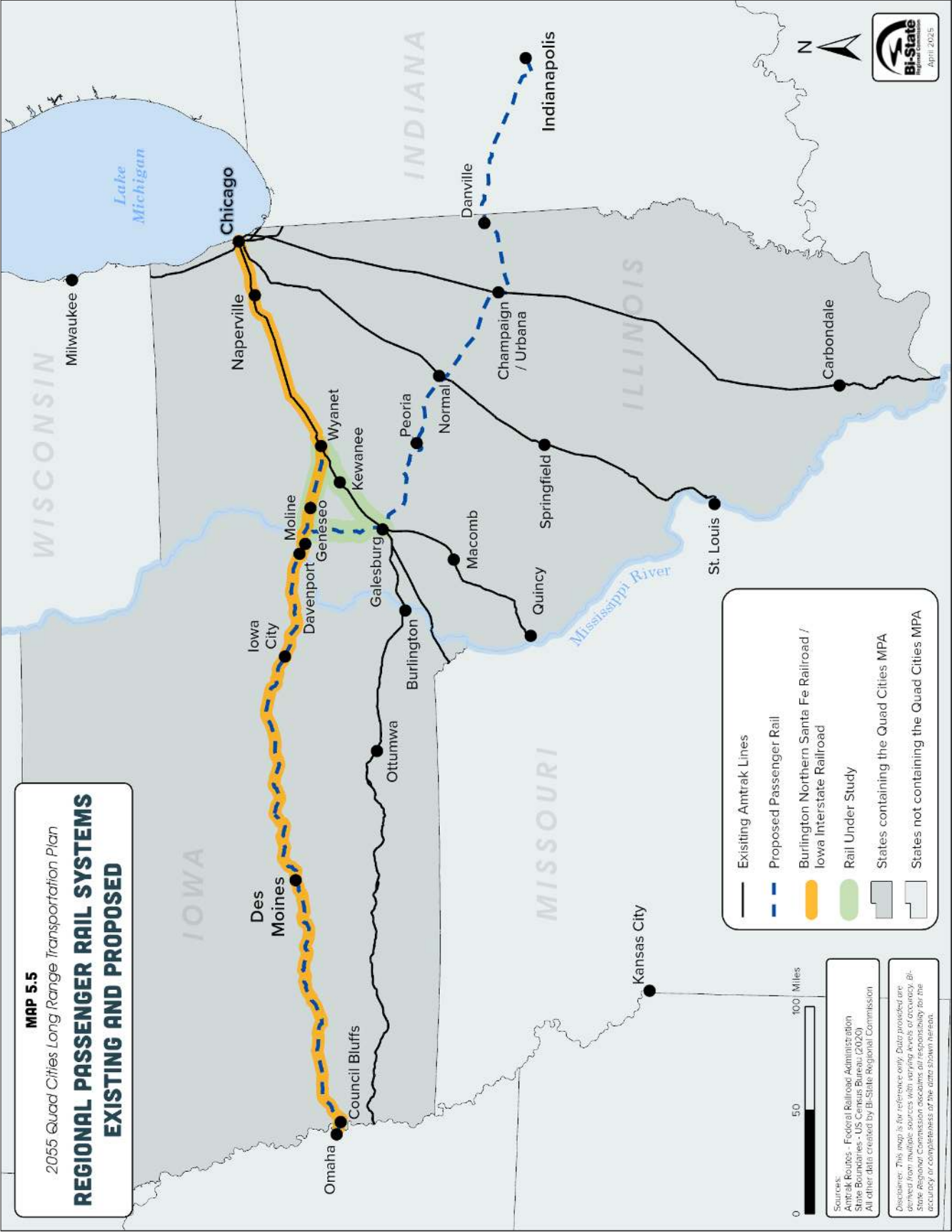
Passenger rail in the United States has increased in popularity over the past two decades. Amtrak ridership is increasing routes across the country. Chicago has passenger rail destinations to places like St. Louis, MO, Detroit, MI, Milwaukee, WI, and Galesburg, IL. Between SFY 2019 and SFY 2023, Amtrak ridership in Illinois had a dip due to COVID-19, but is currently bouncing back with growth each year since the pandemic. According to Amtrak, there were 40,132 boardings and alightings in Iowa and 3,898,203 in Illinois in FY 2023. In early 2025, Amtrak announced that they had their highest year of ridership nationally in CY2024. Ridership growth is expected to continue as new routes in Illinois begin to be implemented, namely Chicago-to-Rockford, which is set to begin service in 2027, and Chicago-to-Quad Cities with two-thirds of the route complete and one-third being engineered. Map 5.5 showcases the regional passenger rail systems that are existing and proposed in our region. Passen-

Amtrak



Source: Amtrak website

ger Rail is a popular subject among many elected officials and residents. Implementing a passenger rail system from Chicago to the Quad Cities would strengthen regional connectivity, drive economic growth, and enhance mobility for residents and visitors alike.



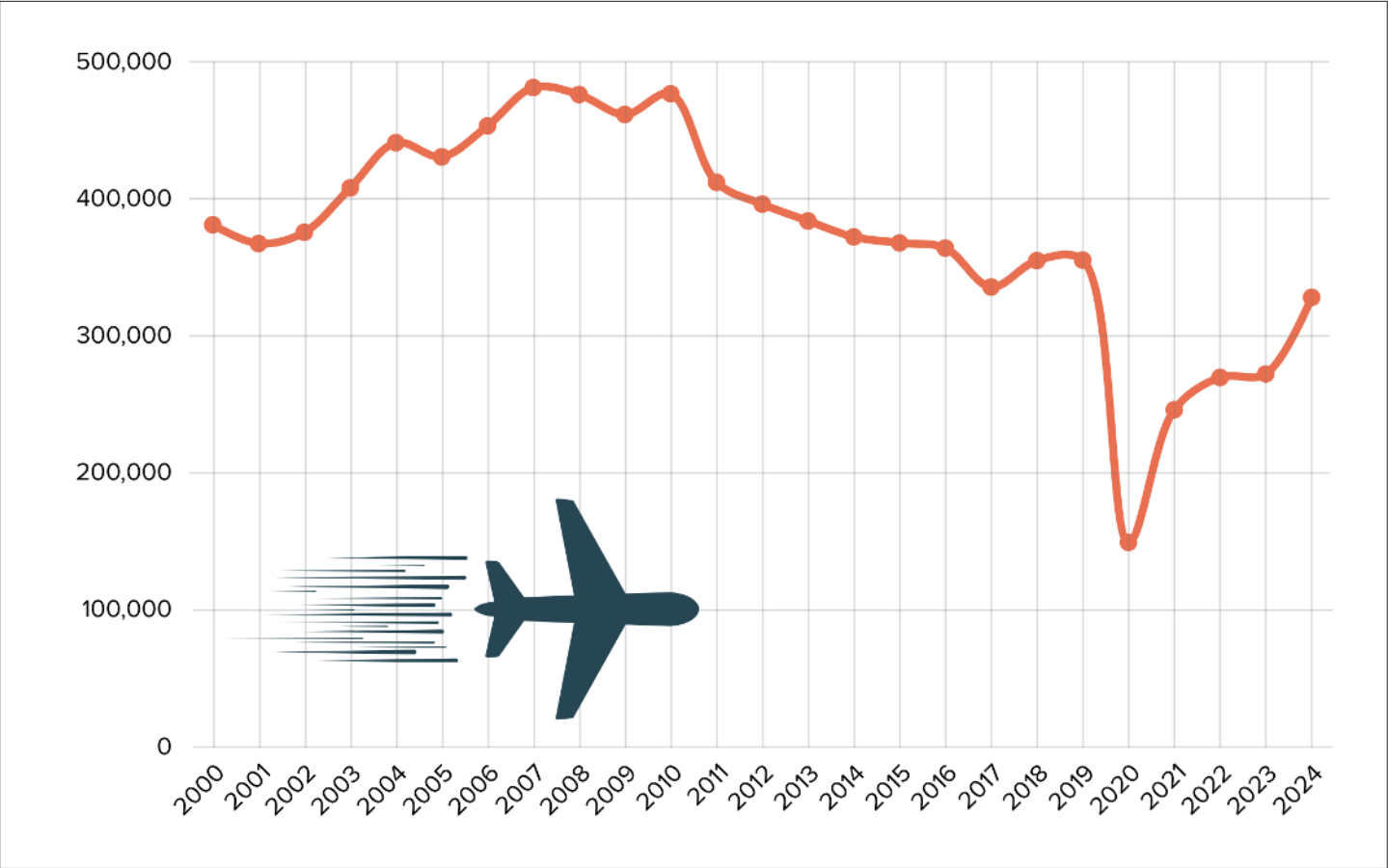
Passenger Air Travel

The Quad Cities is served by two airports in the urban area: the Quad Cities International Airport and the Davenport Municipal Airport. The Quad Cities International Airport (MLI) is a full-service airport serving commercial aviation for eastern Iowa and western Illinois. It is the 4th busiest airport in Illinois. Four commercial airlines provide service from the airport to 11 destinations, as shown in Map 5.6, totaling 328,351 passenger enplanements in CY 2024 (see Figure 5.3). Airlines serving MLI include Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and United Airlines. Destinations include major hubs, such as Chicago-O’Hare, Charlotte



Douglas International Airport, Denver, Dallas Ft-Worth, and Atlanta Hartfield, as well as popular vacation destinations, such as Las Vegas, St. Pete, Punta Gorda, Sarasota, Phoenix-Mesa, and Orlando-Sanford. Airport infrastructure is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Figure 5.3 – Annual Enplanements at Quad Cities International Airport (Origin Airport)



Source: Quad Cities International Airport & The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration. Passenger Boarding (Enplanement) and All-Cargo Data for U.S. Airports - Previous Years.

Passenger Transportation

Quad Cities International Airport



Source: Quad Cities International Airport

Nonstop service from the Quad Cities International Airport to Charlotte, North Carolina was added in December 2023. Allegiant Air also added seasonal service to Sarasota, Florida in February 2025.

The Quad Cities International Airport is served by public transit via MetroLINK. Taxis services and car rentals are also available.

The Davenport Municipal Airport (DNV), a general aviation airport, is located in northern Davenport, providing basic transport with a full instrument landing system (ILS). The ILS runway is 5,511 ft. long, while the secondary runway is 4,001 ft. The Davenport Municipal Airport does not offer public passenger trips. Airport infrastructure is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Both airports in the region contribute to a thriving community by attracting tourists and businesses to invest in the economy.

Passenger Cruise Ship Travel

The Quad Cities region has two local cruise ships that station in the region. Two large cruise ship lines also dock in the Quad Cities. The two local cruise ships are Riverboat Twilight, stationed in LeClaire, and Celebration Belle, which is stationed in Moline. Riverboat Twilight runs more than 115 days out of the year, and Celebration Belle runs more than 130 days out of the year. Between the two cruise ships, there are destinations starting from Burlington, Iowa, and all the way to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Dubuque, Iowa, is a hub for both of these cruise ships. According to Visit Quad Cities, 98% of Celebration Belle visitors reside in either Illinois or Iowa, whereas 88% of Riverboat Twilight visi-

tors reside in either Illinois or Iowa. A small percentage of cruise ship visitors reside in other states such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, California, Texas, and Massachusetts. In 2024, Riverboat Twilight had a total of 3,939 trips, and Celebration Belle had a total of 10,870 trips. Both cruise ships peaked in visitors between the months of June and October. Both of these cruise ships represent the historical paddle wheel boats that were prevalent when riverboat captains piloted the tricky navigation of the Mississippi River before the lock and dam system was built.

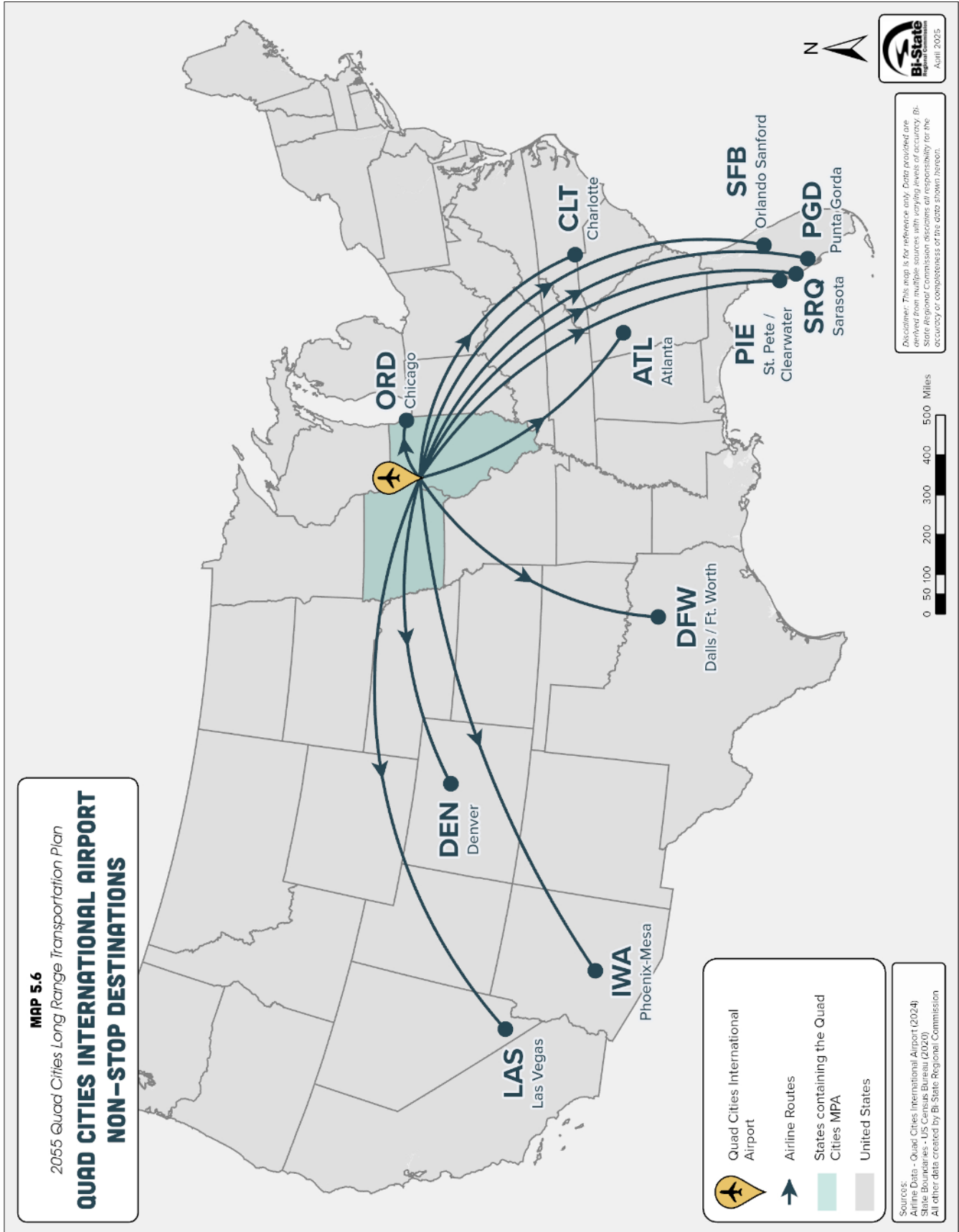
There are two nationally recognized large cruise ship lines that visit the Quad Cities region: Viking and American Cruise Lines. Both of these cruise lines dock in Davenport at River Heritage Park. American Queen Voyages previously docked at the Isle Casino Marina in Bettendorf, but ceased operations in 2024. According to Visit Quad Cities, most of the cruise line visitors are domestic travelers. All three cruise ship lines visited the Quad Cities region in 2022 and 2023. Altogether, the Quad Cities hosted 97 cruises and 16,417 visitors in those two years. In 2024, only Viking and American Cruise Lines visited the Quad Cities region, and there was a total of 20 cruises hosted in the region and 4,163 visitors. Both cruise lines dock in the region starting in the early summer months and visit around 4 times a month until October, as reported by Visit Quad Cities.

For on-shore excursions, passengers typically utilize the cruise lines motor coaches. Local fixed-route transit would also be available. River Heritage Park is located on the Mississippi River Trail adjacent to U.S. 67/River Drive.

Twilight Riverboat



Source: WheeltheWorld.com



Passenger Transportation

Advancing Passenger Transportation for a Thriving Region

A State of Good Repair

One of the most important priorities for the future of passenger transportation systems in the Quad Cities Region is the maintenance of the existing system. Table 5.2 lists the anticipated public transit vehicle replacement needs through 2055 with their projected costs in year of expenditure dollars that are tied to average inflation. Base year costs are based on information from the transit agencies and the *Quad Cities: Davenport-Moline-Rock Island Urbanized Area FFY 2025-28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*. While some elements will change from their current form, such as technological and fleet advancements, the core transit services will be maintained and enhanced when feasible.

Table 5.2 – Vehicle Replacement Schedule

FY2025-FY2029		
Transit System	Anticipated Vehicle Replacements	Estimated Costs
Bettendorf Transit	None	\$—
Davenport CitiBus	21 buses (30'-42')	\$12,600,000
MetroLINK	(20) 35' or 40' CNG or electric buses and accompanying chargers; (14) Med/Light Duty buses and/or mini-vans	\$18,146,135
FY2030-FY2034		
Transit System	Anticipated Vehicle Replacements	Estimated Costs
Bettendorf Transit	5 buses	\$950,000
Davenport CitiBus	21 buses (30'-42')	\$10,800,000
MetroLINK	(30) 35' or 40" CNG or electric buses and accompanying chargers; (13) Med/Light Duty buses and/or mini-vans	\$46,943,840
FY2035-FY2039		
Transit System	Anticipated Vehicle Replacements	Estimated Costs
Bettendorf Transit	5 buses	\$1,050,000
Davenport CitiBus	21 buses (30'-42')	\$11,070,000
MetroLINK	(16) 35'-40' CNG or electric buses and accompanying chargers; (8) Med/Light Duty buses and/or mini-vans	\$22,525,930
FY2040-FY2044		
Transit System	Anticipated Vehicle Replacements	Estimated Costs
Bettendorf Transit	5 buses	\$1,150,000
Davenport CitiBus	21 buses (30'-42')	\$11,346,750
MetroLINK	(39) 35'-40' CNG or electric buses and accompanying chargers; (12) Med/Light Duty buses and/or mini-vans	\$49,321,750
FY2045-FY2049		
Transit System	Anticipated Vehicle Replacements	Estimated Costs
Bettendorf Transit	5 buses	\$1,250,000
Davenport CitiBus	21 buses (30'-42')	\$11,630,419
MetroLINK	(26) 35'-40' CNG or electric buses and accompanying chargers; (9) Med/Light Duty buses and/or mini-vans	\$38,365,950

	FY2050-FY2055	
Transit System	Anticipated Vehicle Replacements	Estimated Costs
Bettendorf Transit	5 buses	\$1,350,000
Davenport CitiBus	21 buses (30'-42')	\$11,921,179
MetroLINK	(26) 35'-40' CNG or electric buses and accompanying chargers; (9) Med/Light Duty buses and/or mini-vans	\$39,325,099

Source: Bettendorf Transit, Davenport CitiBus, and MetroLINK, 2025

*Forecast adjusted to show linear growth as opposed to compounded. 2.5% growth from FY2035-2055 for Davenport CitiBus. 2.5% growth from FY2045-2055 for MetroLINK.

Land Use and Transit Services Optimization

Public transportation will continue to play a pivotal role in the development of the Quad Cities Region and allow a wider selection of personal travel choices. Public transportation will also continue to enhance the quality of life of all those who rely on it as a means to get around the region. Moving people quickly and efficiently will help the region develop in an organized and sustainable manner, and providing access to all members of the community will assist in equitable access to development and services.

Growth Service Areas

Multiple growth areas in the Quad Cities are not currently served by public transit. Dispersed, auto-oriented developments strain the efficiency of transit infrastructure, requiring more travel time to access a smaller number of destinations and fewer people compared to compact, urban, developmentally diverse, and walkable environments. Additionally, population and economic growth forecasts show more growth occurring on the edge of the current built-up environment in the Quad Cities Area. This dispersed development poses difficulties for transit services, as access to employment and housing options becomes more challenging when travel demand is spread out over a greater distance. The issue of access to services, such as shopping or medical care, affects residents of all ages. Seniors, for instance, may experience personal isolation due to health and mobility issues that limit their ability to physically move from place to place. From a land development perspective, new development in the fringe areas that cluster employment and housing may help public transit efficiency by encour-

aging more concentrated development and potential customers. However, if those new developments detract from existing ones in denser areas, the net effect may be negative on transit efficiency. The decision to serve new developments at the outer limits of the metro area should consider the effects on the transit network as a whole, and efforts to focus on increased route efficiency in the established areas of the Quad Cities where people and their destinations are more concentrated.

Existing Development Service Areas

Development along existing and established corridors increases route efficiency by adding potential riders and destinations without the negative travel effects caused by sprawling developments. Input received indicated a desire to consolidate the three urban fixed-route systems into one bi-state system. System consolidation was studied by the three systems, which found numerous challenges in governing and financial consolidation. In 2025, the Iowa Quad Cities initiated a route optimization study to address system improvements and potential service to outlying development areas and communities, such as Eldridge and LeClaire for development present in 2025 and anticipated in the next five years.

Future Gaps and Needs

Ridership projections on the three urban fixed-route systems are shown in Figure 5.4. Projections were made by using the population projection formulas from Chapter 1. In order to produce the 2055 projections, data from between 2021 and 2025 were used, which accurately reflected current conditions and expectations. Based on this analysis, it is anticipated that annual ridership across the three systems could range

Passenger Transportation

between 3 and 4 million by the year 2055.

In the TDP, an analysis was conducted to identify transit trends in the region. In the metro area, there is a negative correlation between route frequency and total population. Meaning route frequency is not meeting the needs of the total population in the region. Route frequency would need to increase in order to serve more of the population.

All three transit agencies are continuing to look for ways to strengthen this connection. Map 5.7 and Map 5.8 show two different analyses, one showing service area gaps and the other showing service frequency. Map 5.7 was created using a minimum-maximum method that combined the variables of density, percent of households with no vehicle, percent of households below the poverty index, and the percent of households with 1+ person with a disability. The areas with darker composites are areas with a higher need for transit. The areas that are darker, shaded yellow, are the areas where transit service is most frequent. The analysis shows that transit service suggests increasing frequency in the high-need areas. Map 5.8 depicts the average bus frequency by 5-minute walkshed. The darker areas have a high bus frequency and a short walk to the bus route. Downtowns experience a higher bus frequency and shorter walking distances to bus stops. Many locations on the outskirts do not have the same experience.

Map 5.9 displays another analysis, transit route coverage and access to residential and commercial areas. The yellow areas on the map are low-density residential, the orange areas are medium/high-density residential, and the red areas on the map are identified as commercial areas. This analysis shows that transit routes provide service to the commercial areas, but there are still gaps in residential areas and some commercial areas.

Another gap in service that was stated in recent transit summits was limited nighttime hours of service. Riders would like to see an expansion of hours, so that they feel less restricted. Connections within the transit system were also a concern, as many riders want to expand the mobility landscape. Earlier in the chapter, Table 5.1 outlined all three transit systems' operation schedules. MetroLINK on the Illinois Quad Cities has

longer service hours than the fixed-route systems on the Iowa Quad Cities. All three systems differ when it comes to weekend services as well, which limits cross-state travel in a metro area that needs greater connectivity between jurisdictions to function well. MetroLINK begins fixed-route service at 4:25 a.m. and operates until 10:30 p.m. on the weekdays and Saturdays. Their fixed-route service on Sunday runs from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Weekend subscription service is offered to help assist riders with early morning commutes. Davenport CitiBus and Bettendorf Transit riders may schedule rides through River Bend Transit during third shift or other off-hours. These rides can include river crossings. The future needs of the transit agencies are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Future Public Transit Services

Future fixed-route transit service is dependent on a number of variables including availability of resources, such as funding and drivers, support by the local community and officials, and sustained users of the system. Operating Expenses per Vehicle Revenue Mile, obtained from agencies' annual National Transit Database (NTD) reports, offer insight into a transit agency's efficiency. The metric indicates the general cost per mile of a vehicle in service. An increase in the cost per mile may be interpreted as less efficient, whereas a decrease in the cost per mile may allow the system to be more efficient and able to optimize service and prioritize other needs. All three transit agencies reached a peak cost per mile between 2021 and 2022. Bettendorf Transit and Davenport CitiBus have since decreased. MetroLINK has slightly decreased but remains steady.

Bettendorf Transit

Bettendorf Transit is actively assessing the need for expanded bus service and identifying the areas where it is most necessary. As the City of Bettendorf continues to grow, new areas will require access to public transit. The evaluation will include potential additional routes, improved signage, and enhanced pedestrian access. The city recognizes the significant impact that public transit has on accessibility to jobs, shopping, and entertainment.

Davenport CitiBus

The City of Davenport, in partnership with the cities of Bettendorf, Eldridge, and LeClaire, is conducting a transit study to optimize bus routes in the Iowa Quad Cities, as there has been significant geographical growth in Davenport and Bettendorf over the past several years. There are a number of large businesses and community college facilities in and near the Eastern Iowa Industrial Center (EIIIC) as it continues to add new development. The city is exploring additional service options to that area to address work-trip and education needs. Additionally, the city will be transitioning to becoming a large National Transit Database (NTD) reporting agency to more fully and accurately report the level of transit being consumed in Davenport to the federal and state governments. It is expected that this will result in increased funding for Davenport that can be used to sustain transit.

Improvements to rider amenities and system performance, such as improved bus shelters and security systems, will be implemented to provide a more comfortable and reliable service. CitiBus introduced electric buses to its fleet in 2025. The buses will decrease the overall diesel emissions, leading to cleaner air. As wind is the State of Iowa's single largest source of energy, the electricity used by the buses will largely come from renewable sources.

MetroLINK

MetroLINK's focus is currently on providing service to core corridors, while maintaining a balance of service to communities within its service area. There are several capital projects planned or currently underway, including the reconstruction of the Village of East Davenport Channel Cat terminal, the construction of a new Channel Cat terminal at The Bend development in East Moline, the expansion of the Operations and Maintenance Center, the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at various downtown locations within the service area, and the installation of "on-street" charging infrastructure for the battery-electric bus fleet. MetroLINK also anticipates upgrading fare-boxes and implementing an open-loop payment option on its buses, as well as replacing the CAD-AVL system on their vehicles in coming years. The construction of additional "Mega Stops" or streetscape improvements will be made in conjunction with local governments to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) concepts.

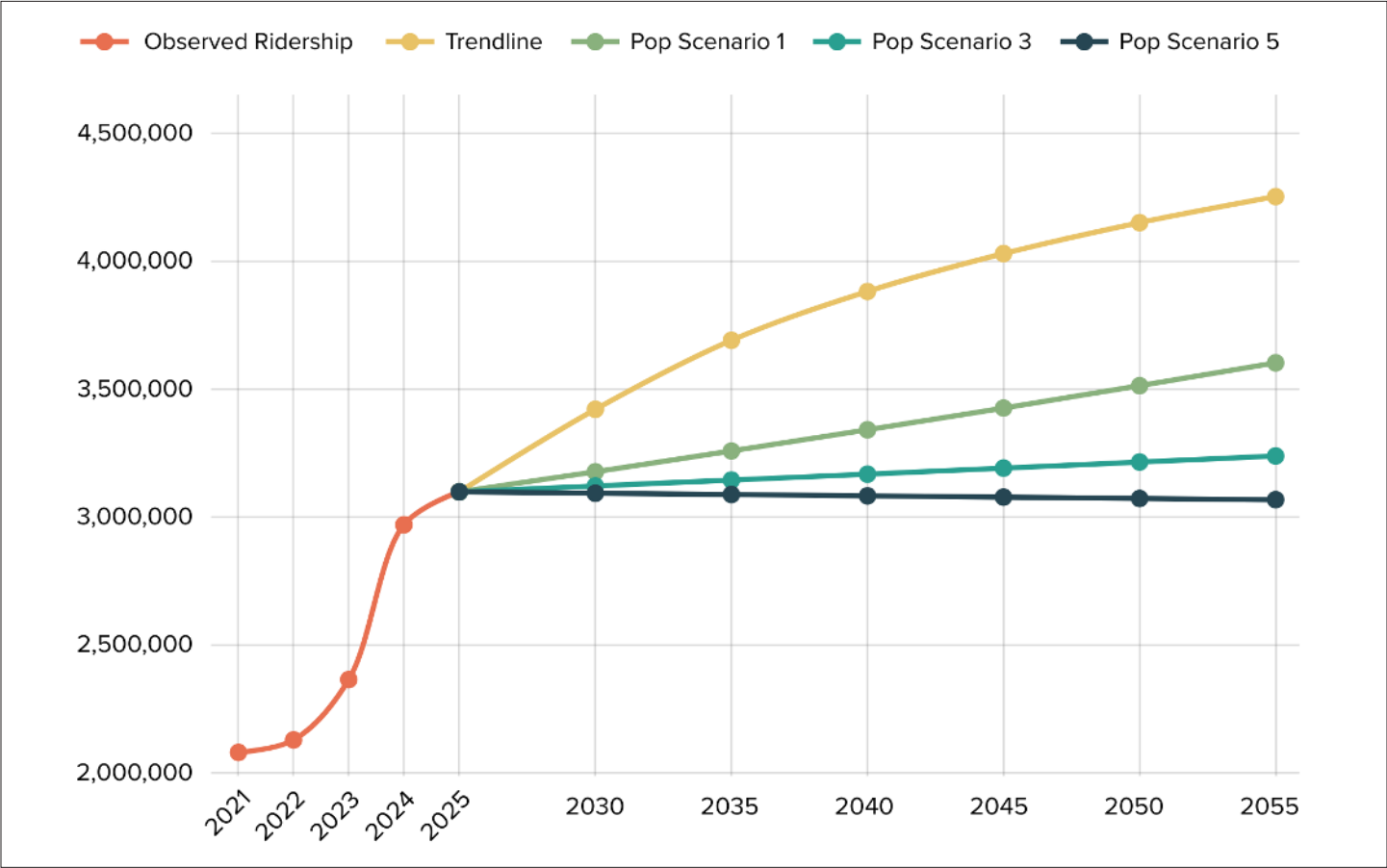
What is transit-oriented development (TOD)?

The FTA says TOD creates compact, mixed-use communities near transit where people enjoy easy access to jobs and services.

<https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/TOD>

Passenger Transportation

Figure 5.4 – Annual Ridership Growth Trendline



Transit Priority Corridors

Focusing development along specific corridors amplifies the potential for walkable, transit-oriented development to take place. As transportation of all kinds, not just transit, is strongly tied to land use decisions, development favoring alternative transportation will leave a lasting, beneficial effect on the urban landscape. By providing mobility options for people of all ages, transit priority corridors will lead to a more thriving and healthy community and will allow residents to feel connected to their community.

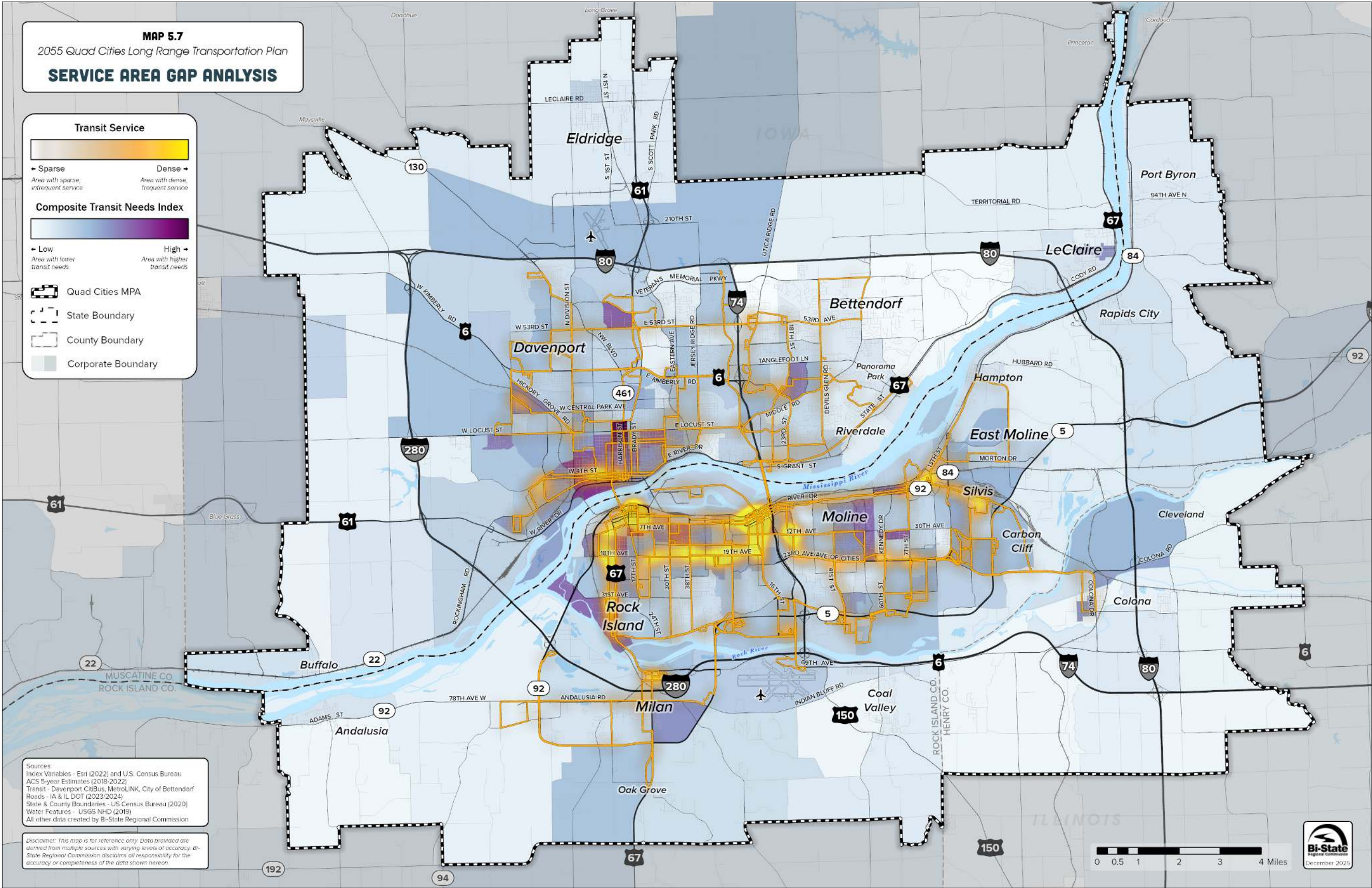
Within the Quad Cities, a number of corridors have been identified as Transit Priority Corridors (Map 5.10) during conversations with metropolitan area transit managers and as part of prior studies and plans. Identification of these transit priority corridors are to promote density of housing units and commercial activity and supplement existing infrastructure with transit-supporting elements, such as bus turnouts, shelters, properly maintained sidewalks, and a mix of land uses near bus stops.

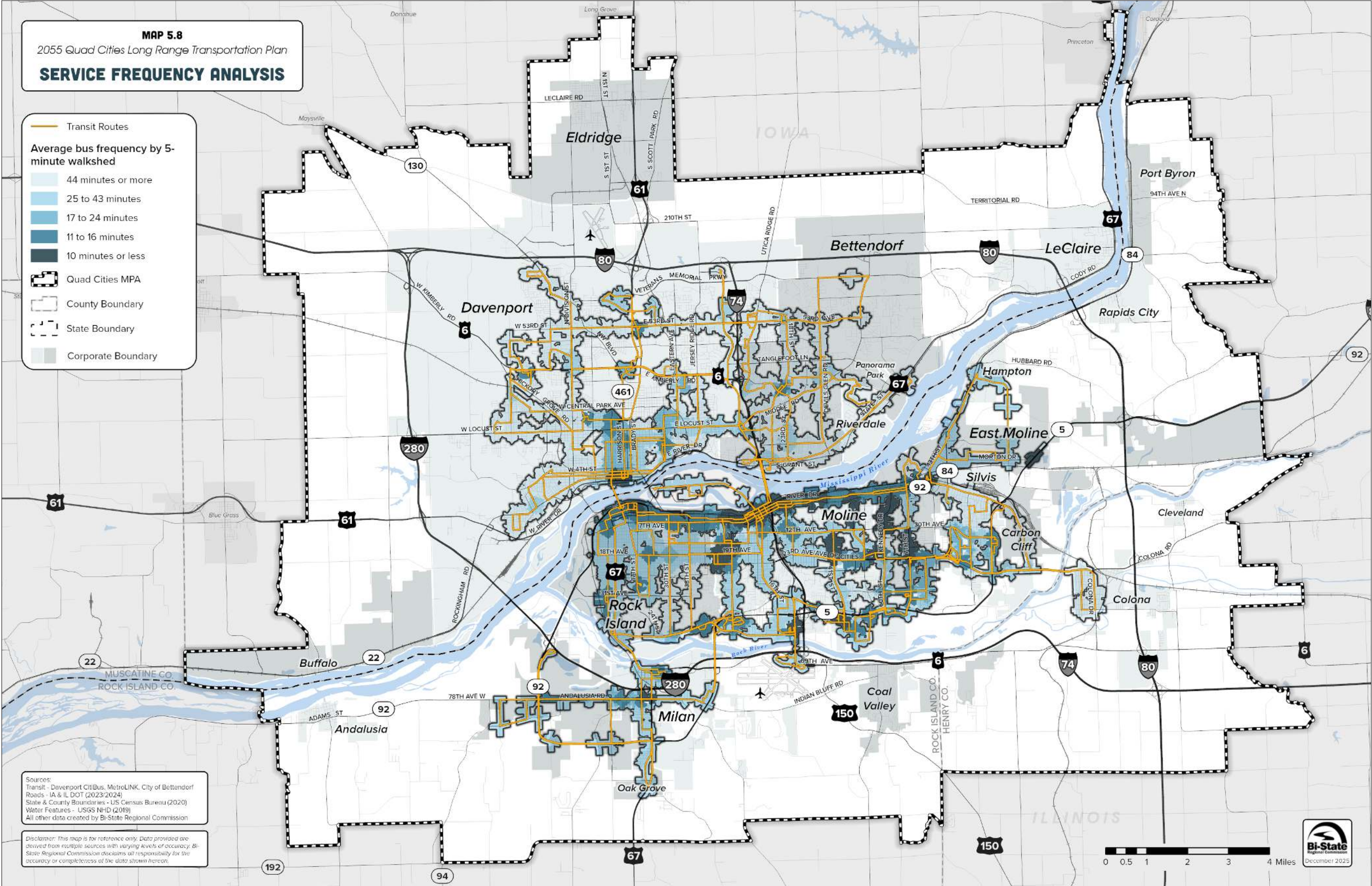
In 2015, MetroLINK, in partnership with Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation (GROWTH) and the City of Rock Island, implemented a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), a downtown Rock Island development, called The Locks. This development is located directly adjacent to MetroLINK's Rock Island Transfer Station adjacent to IL-92, and offers 34 units of rental housing. Ongoing development efforts in downtown Moline, likewise, employ transit-oriented development elements near the constructed multi-modal station,

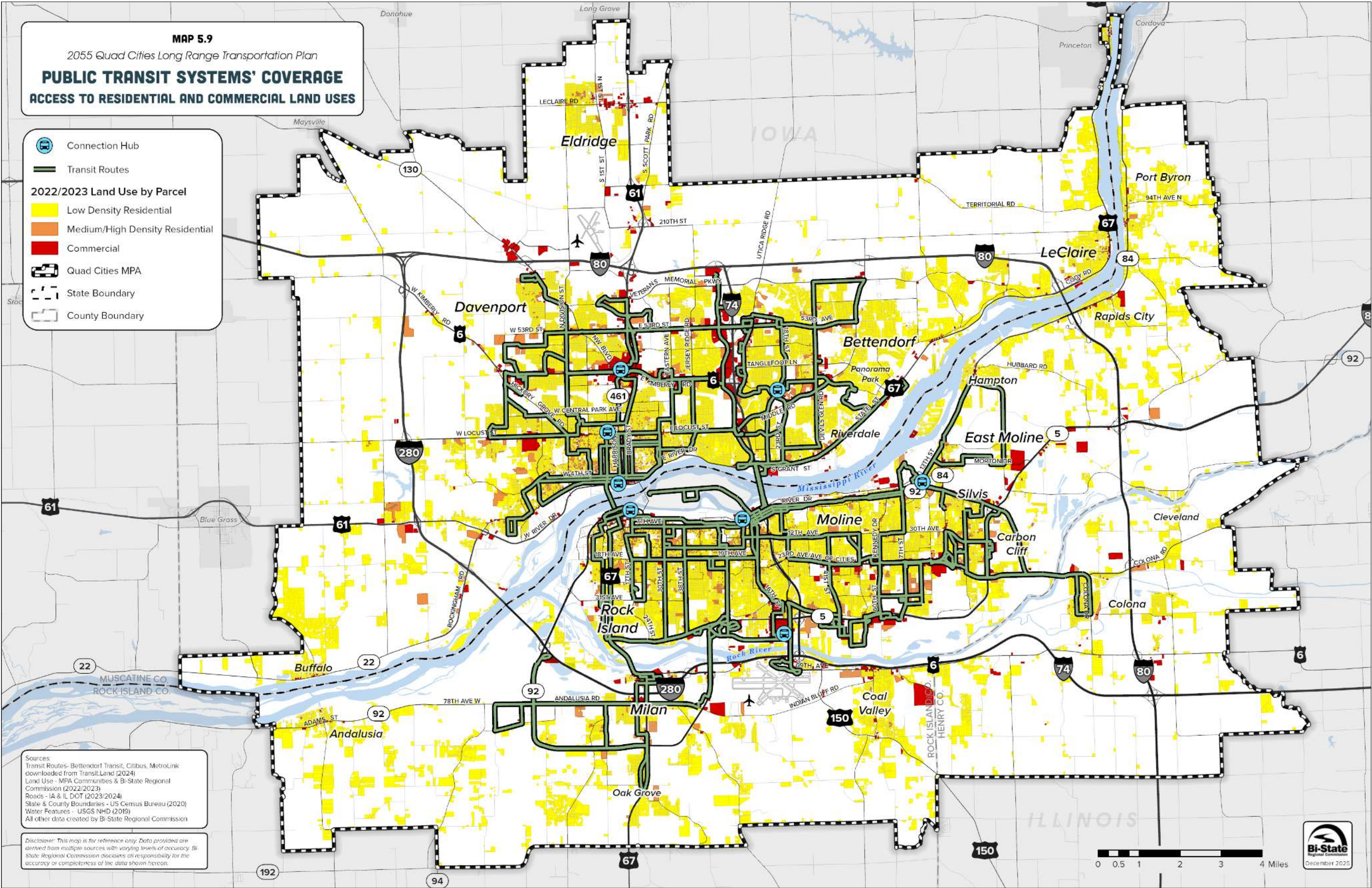
with existing public transit and awaiting passenger rail service. In addition, MetroLINK continues working with Silvis, East Moline, and Moline on potential TOD projects. Efforts will be initiated in other service communities as opportunities arise.

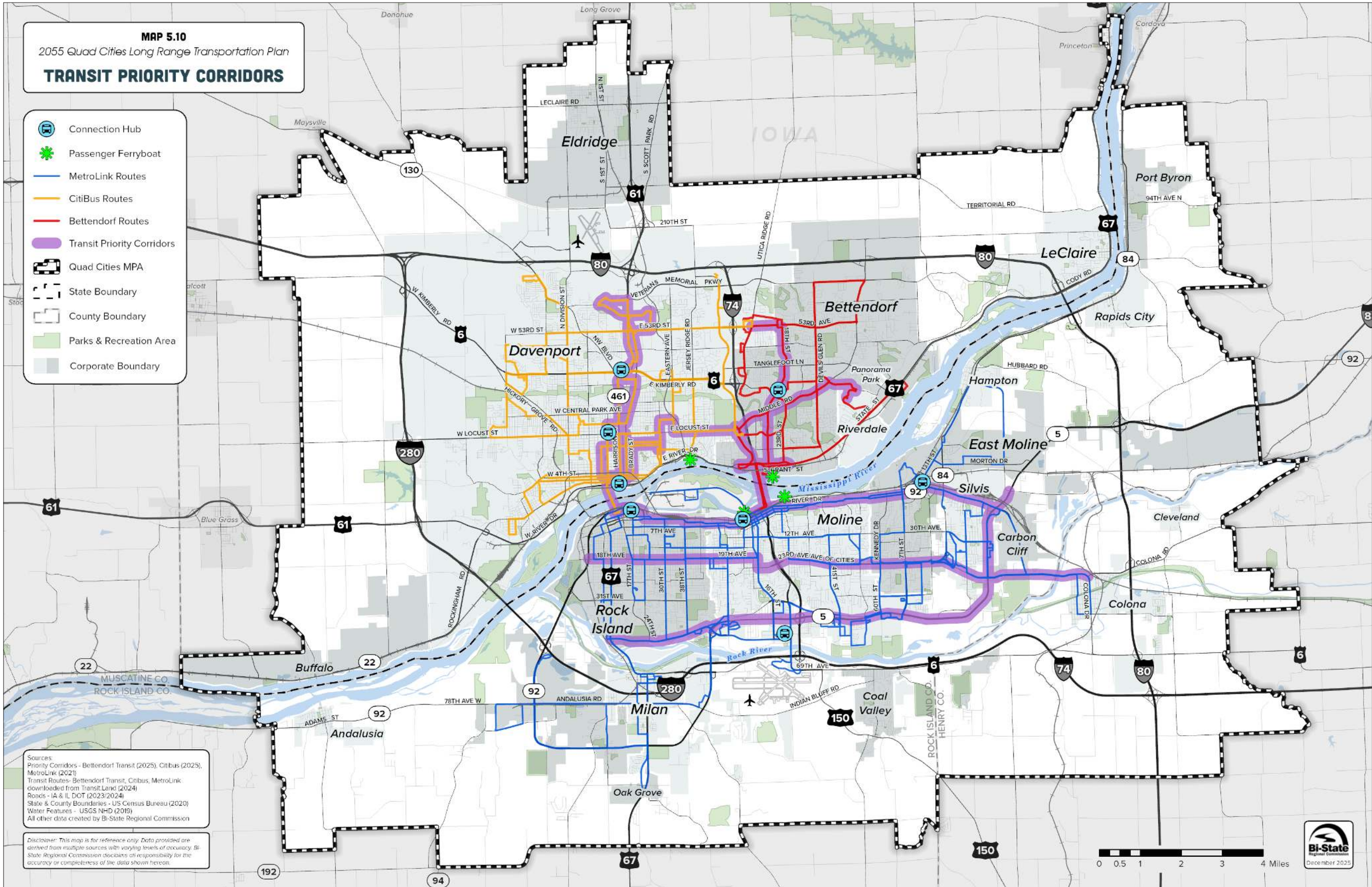
The identified Transit Priority Corridors, including cross-river routes via Centennial Bridge (U.S. 67) and the I-74 Bridge, offer opportunities to implement more intensive transit services, such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). BRT has become a popular alternative to much more expensive rail options like light rail or streetcars. BRT is characterized as having various features to make travelling by bus easier and faster. Bus-only lanes in the roadway allow buses to move without being slowed down by traffic. Prepaid fares allow for faster boarding times at designated stations along the route. Buses and stations are built to ADA standards to allow no-step boarding for riders in wheelchairs, increasing the mobility options for individuals with disabilities. The cumulative result of these improvements upgrades the rider experience by offering amenities that streamline overall transit service. Bus Rapid Transit will require additional study for feasibility and where this type of service would be optimal for the investment. Future implementation would depend on ridership in the transit priority corridors and the density of development and its travel demand.

Other noted corridors were identified cumulatively by the region's transit managers in keeping with system plans.









Thriving in a More Connected Region

Transportation into and out of the region will continue to thrive as new transit infrastructure, such as electric buses and charging stations, are deployed by the transit agencies and future route extensions are examined by transit agencies. The Quad Cities will build a more connected region based on its current fixed-route and on-demand services by adding intercity passenger rail in the short term, and investigating Bus Rapid Transit when travel demand in the high priority transit corridors reaches a ridership density that would support more rail-like routes in the metro area. When the Quad Cities Area is introduced to new modes, such as passenger rail, transit agencies will work with their current fixed routes in a productive manner to ensure smooth operations in the Quad Cities Area. These new modes will offer more mobility options for Quad Cities residents to travel in the region and across the country.

The implementation of passenger rail service from Chicago to Moline remains a priority for the Quad Cities Region and Illinois DOT. The Chicago-to-Moline service, described earlier in this chapter, would be the first step in establishing potential service to Iowa City, Des Moines, and Omaha. Initial speeds on the line would be 79 mph, but could be increased with further investment. The Q passenger rail station was completed in 2018 and will provide intermodal connectivity from regional passenger rail to local fixed-route transit services, and on-demand services, like taxis and app-based rides. A skyway connecting the train platform to Centre Station was constructed in 2020 in anticipation of rail service.

The Q Passenger Rail Station



Source: Bi-State Regional Commission

Along with Chicago-to-Moline passenger rail service, additional passenger rail service was proposed in 2014 that would serve several downstate Illinois communities: Moline, Galesburg, Peoria, Bloomington-Normal, Champaign-Urbana, and Danville. The Illinois General Assembly approved non-binding legislation in 2014 (HJR0072) in support of the route that would serve numerous state and private higher education institutions, including Bradley University, Illinois State University, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The ILDOT has indicated it has no plan to study the route at this time.

In the future, a more connected region may benefit from advances in technology. The systems are already deploying greater automation in data collection, dispatching and public information sharing, as well as vehicle improvements. FTA and U.S. DOT are monitoring the development of automated vehicle (AV) technology, including its deployment for transit buses. Several fully automated shuttle vehicle prototypes have been introduced in the U.S. and abroad. According to the FTA, most, if not all, AVs will meet the definition of “bus” and will require the same program specifications affecting Buy America, ADA, Title VI, etc. The first phase of AV development has launched and includes driver assistance features. There are currently several pilot deployments using almost entirely automated shuttles, but they are in very controlled settings. AV development will continue to be monitored as it will likely affect transit usage in the years to come.

The local economy benefits from new and enhanced services, as well as paving the way for a prosperous community for years to come. According to the American Public Transportation Association, every \$10 million in operating investment yields \$32 million in increased business sales. Our transit agencies’ combined total operating costs are \$28,366,996, which has a local business impact of \$90,774,387 within the Quad Cities Region. Thriving transit in the Quad Cities region will feature continuous communication between the transit agencies and local governments that will enhance mobility and improve connections throughout the region. Certain corridors will feature transit-friendly developments when reconstruction occurs.

