

October/November 2024

Connecting Communities:

A Comprehensive Public Transportation
Vision for Shrewsbury, Northborough, and
Westborough

Stakeholder Presentation



Agenda

- 1 Introductions
- 2 About the Project & Today's Meeting
- 3 Early Findings
- 4 Discussion
- 5 Next Steps



Introductions



1

We're a team of transit and engagement experts – and your points of contact for this project



Greg Nordin
Project Manager
Nelson\Nygaard



Adija Manley
Deputy Project Manager
Nelson\Nygaard



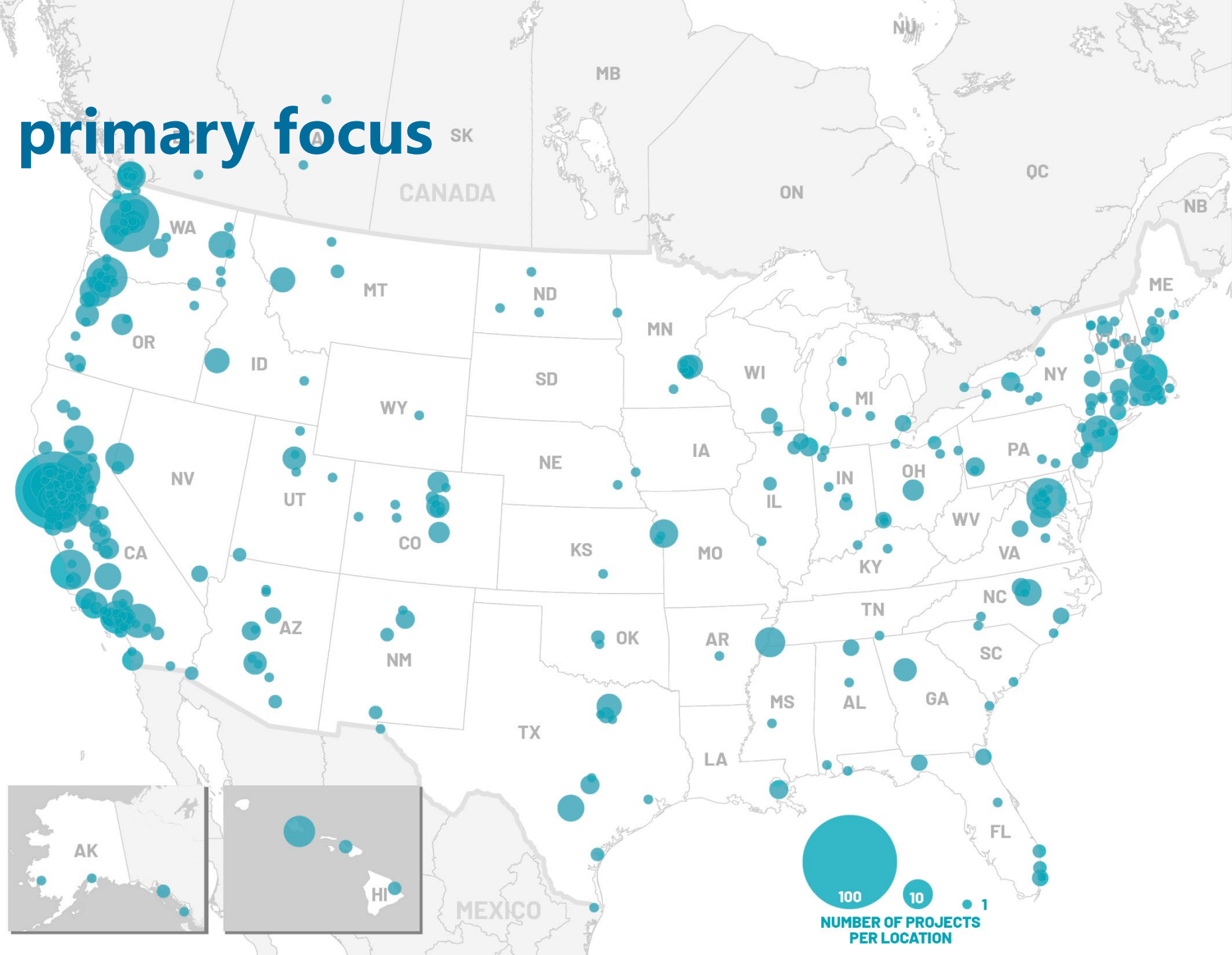
Daphne Politis
Engagement Lead
Community Circle

Transit is our primary focus

Our experience includes urban, suburban, and rural environments.

Our perspective is unique:

- We have worked at transit agencies, and we are daily transit riders.



About The Project & Today's Meeting



2

What is this project?

- Comprehensive operational analysis of current transit services in Shrewsbury, Northborough, and Westborough:
 - Review all services offered within these communities
 - Better understand and align resources with need for public transportation
- Develop a service plan for transit service that:
 - Reflects community needs
 - Incorporates robust community feedback
 - Is approximately revenue-hour and peak-vehicle neutral

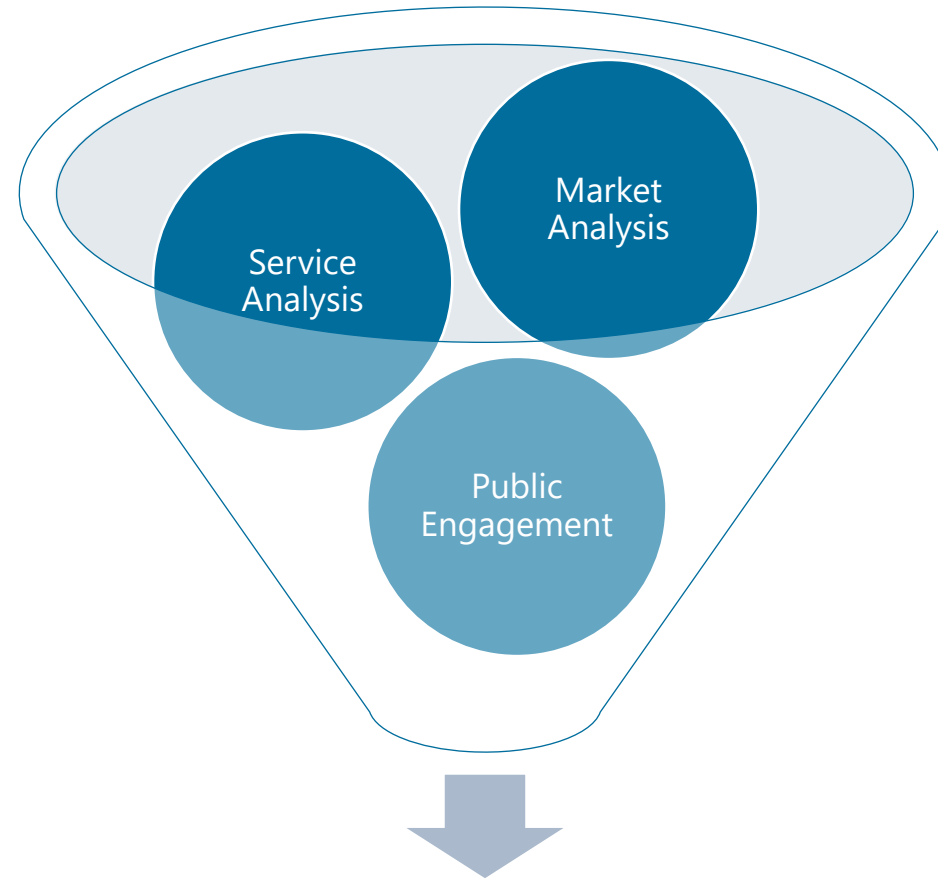


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What can you expect from us?

- Our process is informed by data, but not bound by data.
- Public transportation is not “one size fits all.”
- Our role is to contribute our professional expertise about how public transportation operates to find solutions that meet your communities’ individual needs.
- We develop implementable plans.

What is our process?



Recommended Public Transportation Network

Why are we here today?

- We want to hear from you!
 - What do you want out of a public transportation network?
- Share what we have learned so far
 - Does it align with your own experiences?
- One of multiple key stakeholder meetings
- Share next steps of the project



Public Engagement

- Community Pop-Ups!
 - Shrewsbury
 - Westborough
 - Northborough
- Community Workshops:
 - Northborough Community Workshop
 - Westborough Community Workshop
 - Shrewsbury Community Workshop
 - Regional Topic Meetings:
 - Disability Commissions and Advocates
 - Councils on Aging and Senior Centers
 - Economic Development Groups
 - Planning and Public Health
 - MBTA Commuters
- Public Meeting at the End of the Project



If you have questions about specific trip or ride:

WRTA Customer Service

- www.therta.com/customer-service/cs-feedback-form
- 508-791-9782
- csfeedback@therta.com



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Early Findings

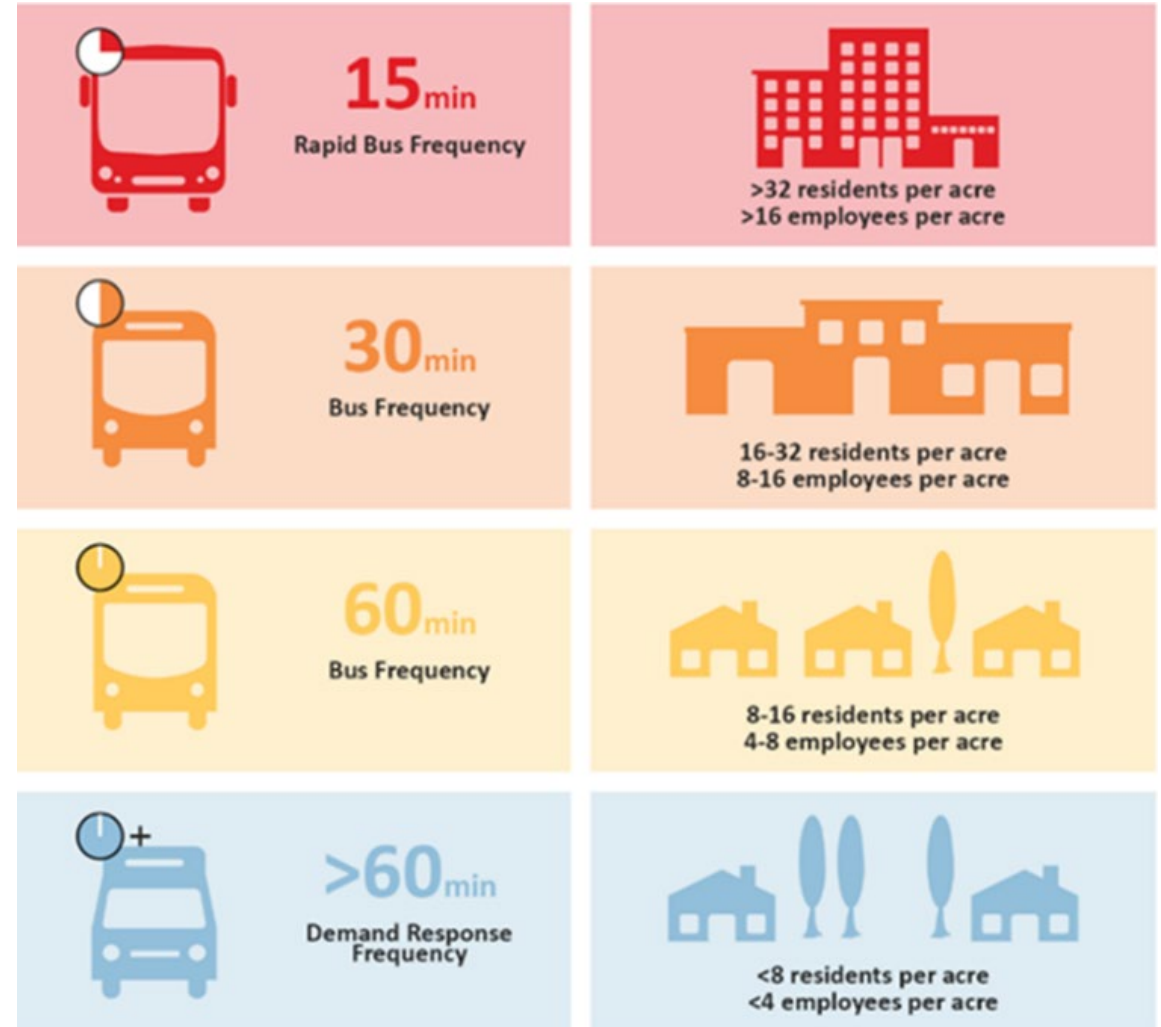
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Market Analysis

Market Analysis

The market analysis provides an analysis of the underlying demand for transit service in a community. It includes:

- **Population and employment density**
 - Where do people live and work?
- **Key socioeconomic characteristics**
 - Who would benefit most from transit service?
 - Where are those populations concentrated?
- **Travel flow analysis**
 - Where are people trying to go?

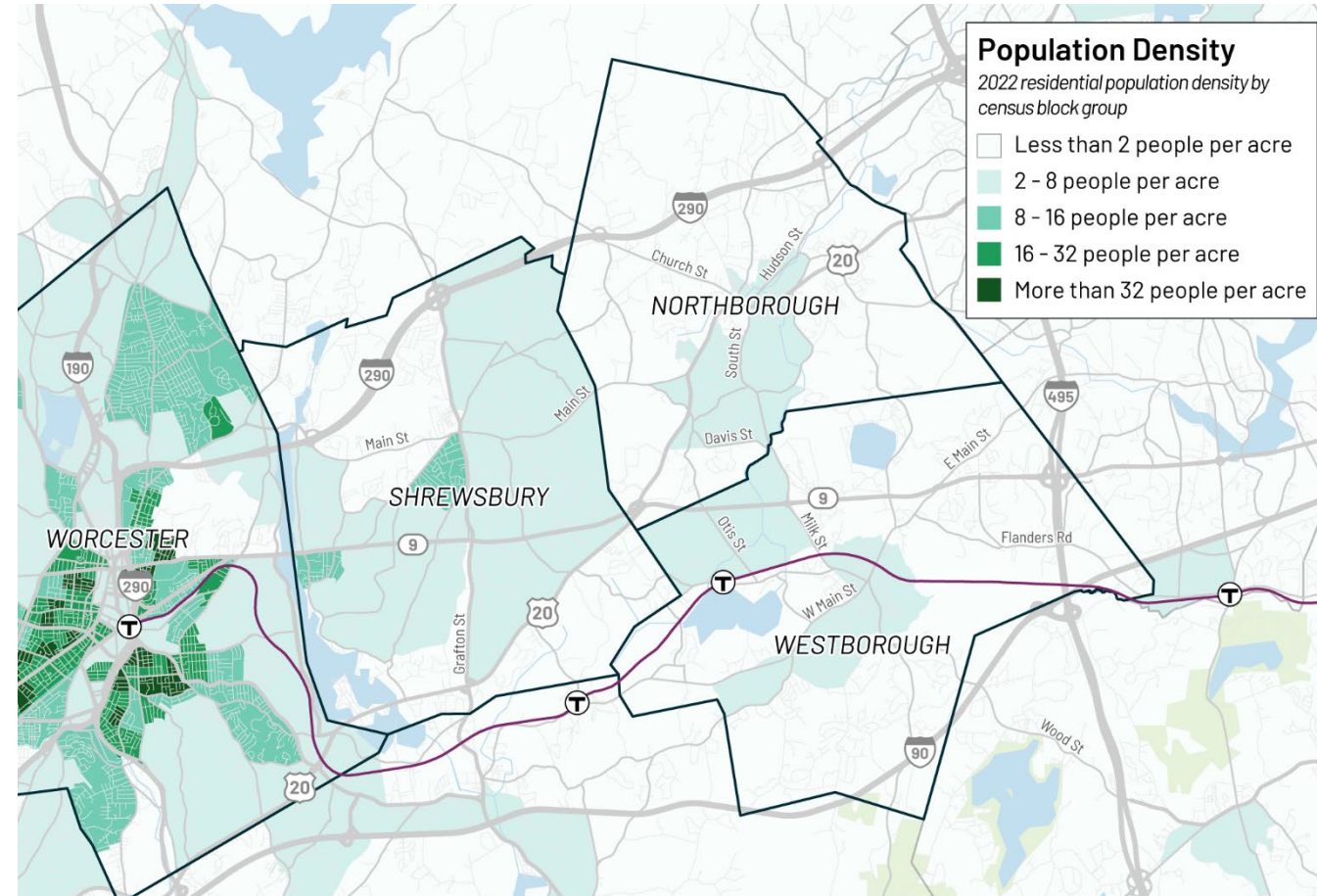


Density is a key determinant for transit: higher levels of population and employment density can support more frequent and higher capacity transit services

Transit Demand

Population Density

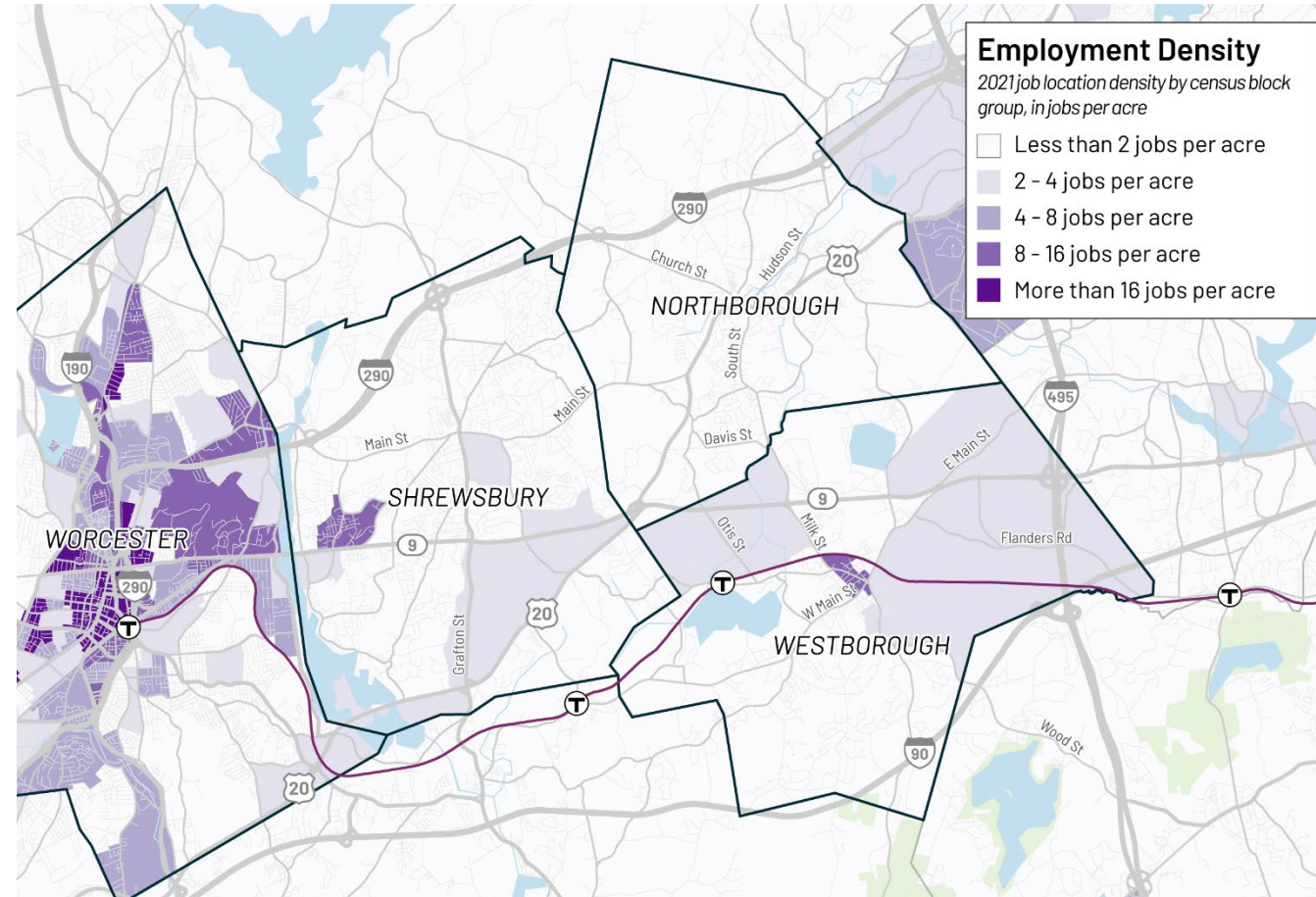
- Population density decreases as distance from the Worcester city center increases.
- In much of Northborough and Westborough, there are fewer than 2 people per acre.
- Shrewsbury is a little more dense than Northborough and Westborough with 2 to 8 people per acre in much of the community.
- Population density is highest in central Shrewsbury and south of Route 9 by the waterfront.



Transit Demand

Employment Density

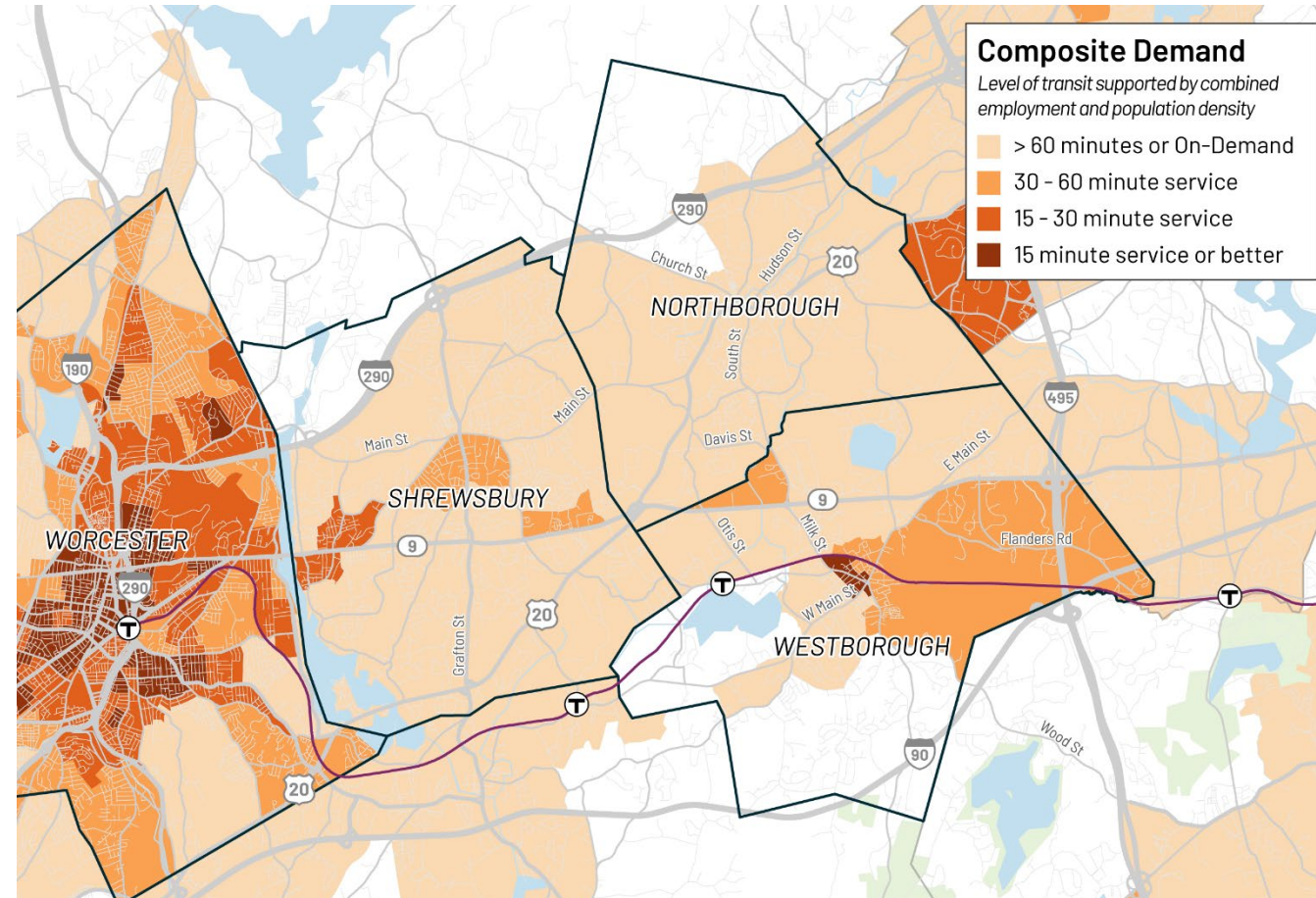
- Jobs not only generate demand from the employees that travel there to work, but also from the potential customers, clients, and patients that visit a business
- Employment density is low outside the Worcester urban core
- Limited pockets of job density in the study area
 - Shrewsbury: Route 9 and Maple Ave shopping areas
 - Westborough: Downtown Westborough



Transit Demand

Composite Density

- Composite density combines the previous two analyses to identify overall level of demand that may be supported by residential and employment density
- Demand response service may be a more appropriate transit service in these communities
 - There are pockets that could support more intensive transportation
- Key areas of higher composite demand include:
 - Central and southwest Westborough
 - A pocket of density on the Westborough/Northborough border
 - The Route 9-Maple Avenue-Main Street corridor in Shrewsbury

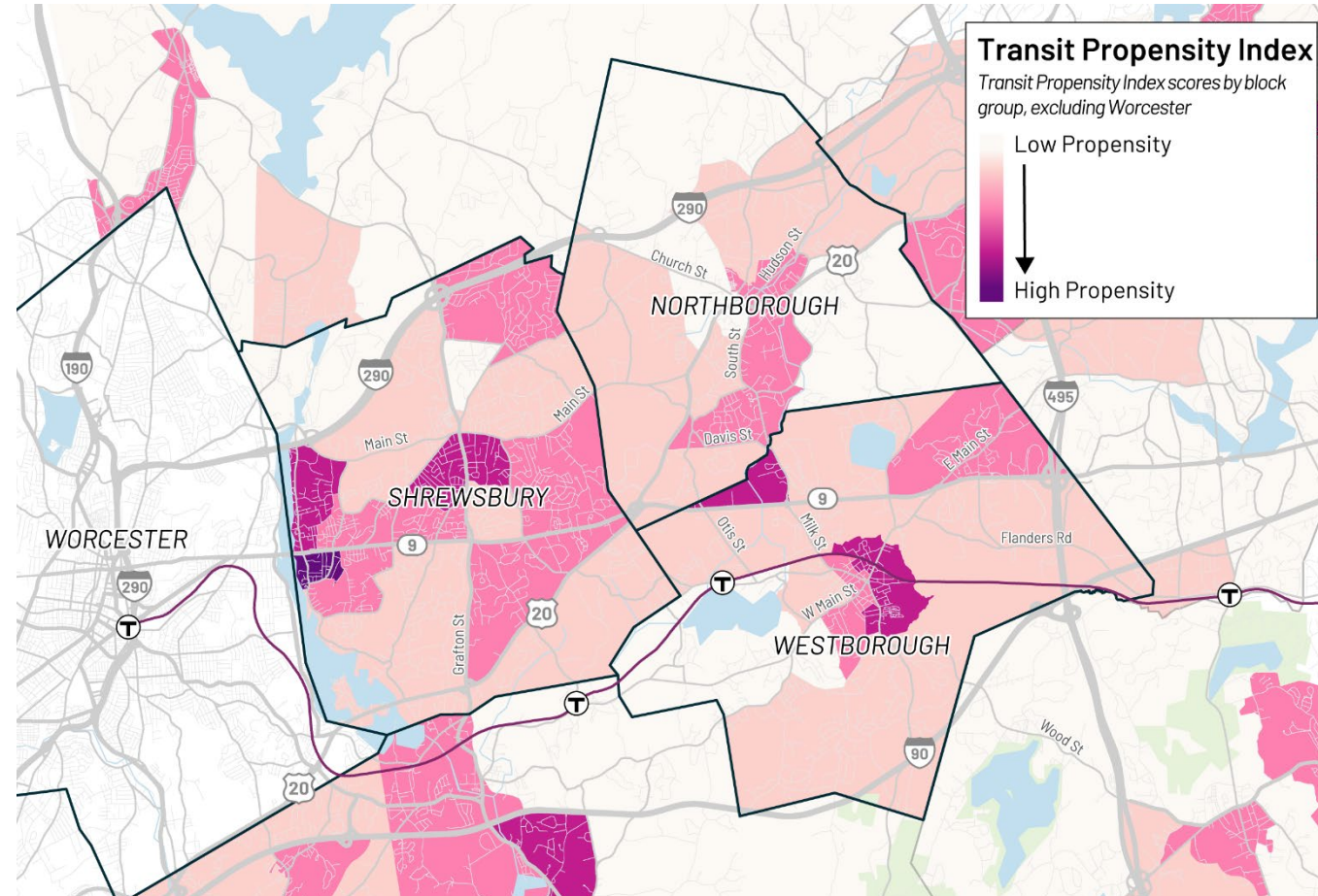


Transit Propensity Index

Transit propensity looks at the populations most likely to ride transit and compares the densities of those groups across a study area:

- Below 150% of the federal poverty level
- 0-vehicle households
- People of color (Hispanic and/or non-white)
- People with a disability

The TPI map shows areas of higher potential transit need with darker colors. These areas have greater densities of people more likely to use transit.

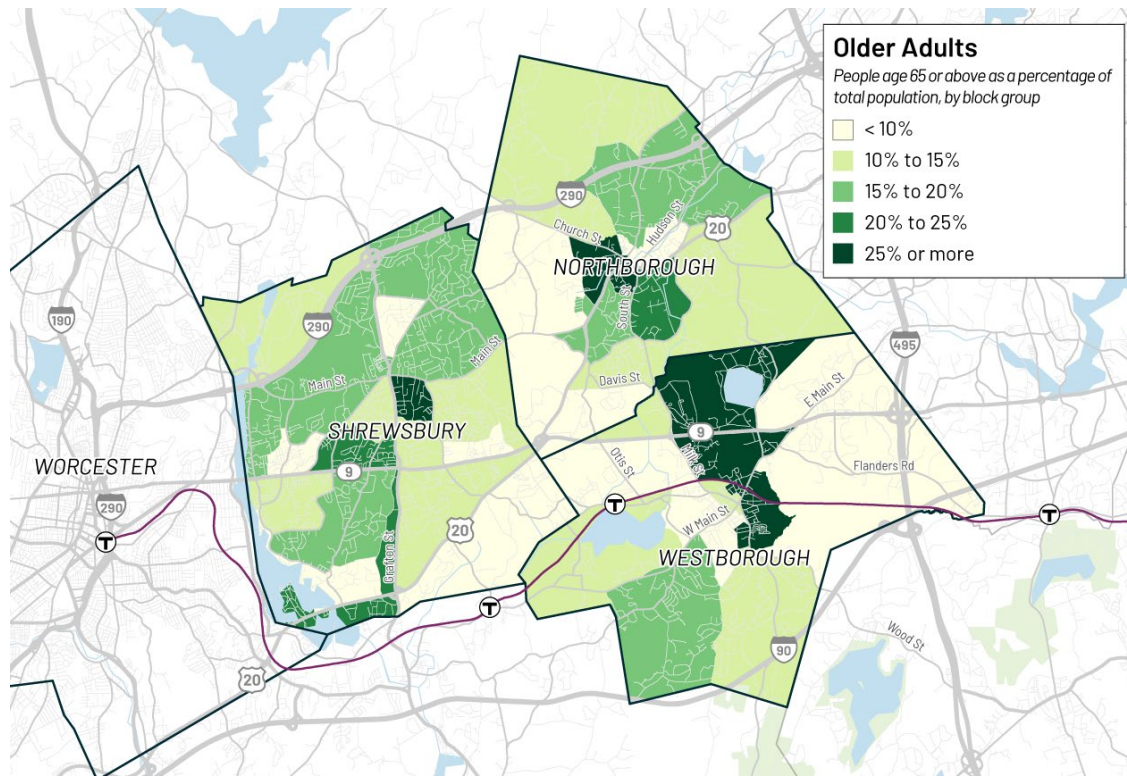


**While Worcester was included in the calculations, the focus for the map is on the study area to better see internal variances. This is why data for Worcester is not showing.*

Additional Populations of Consideration

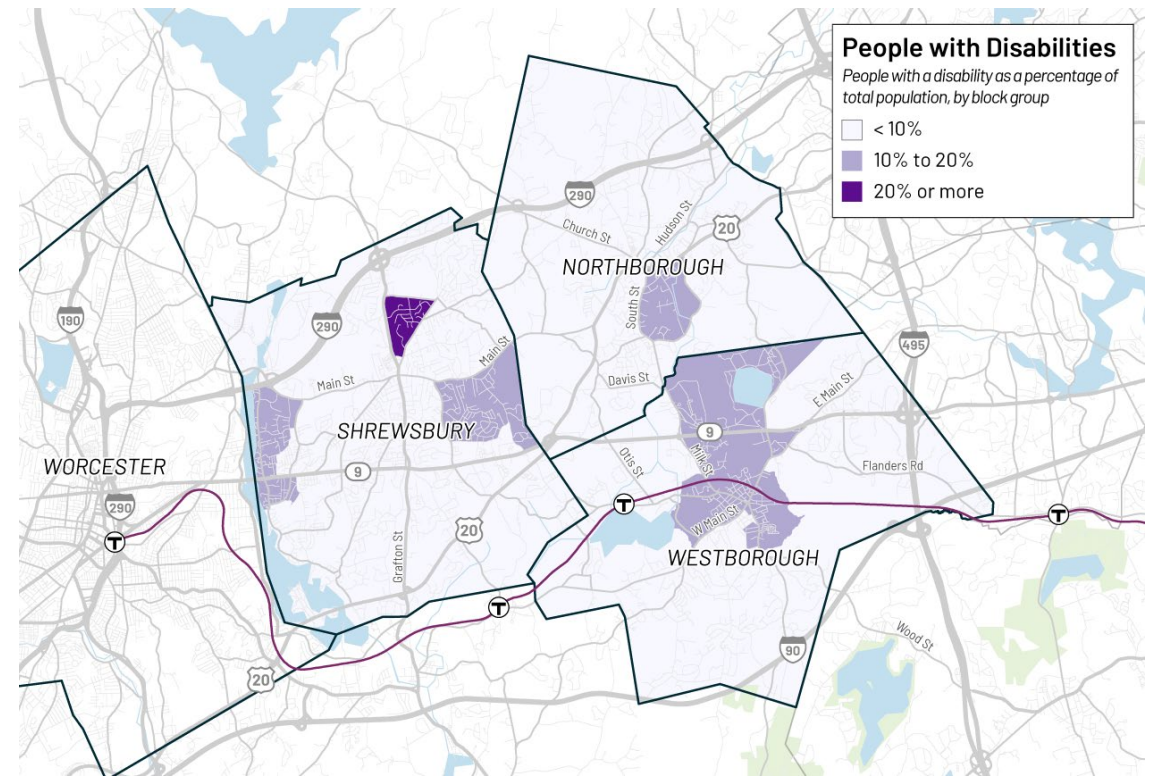
Older Adults

- Throughout the study area municipalities, there are numerous neighborhoods where older adults make up at least 15% of the population.



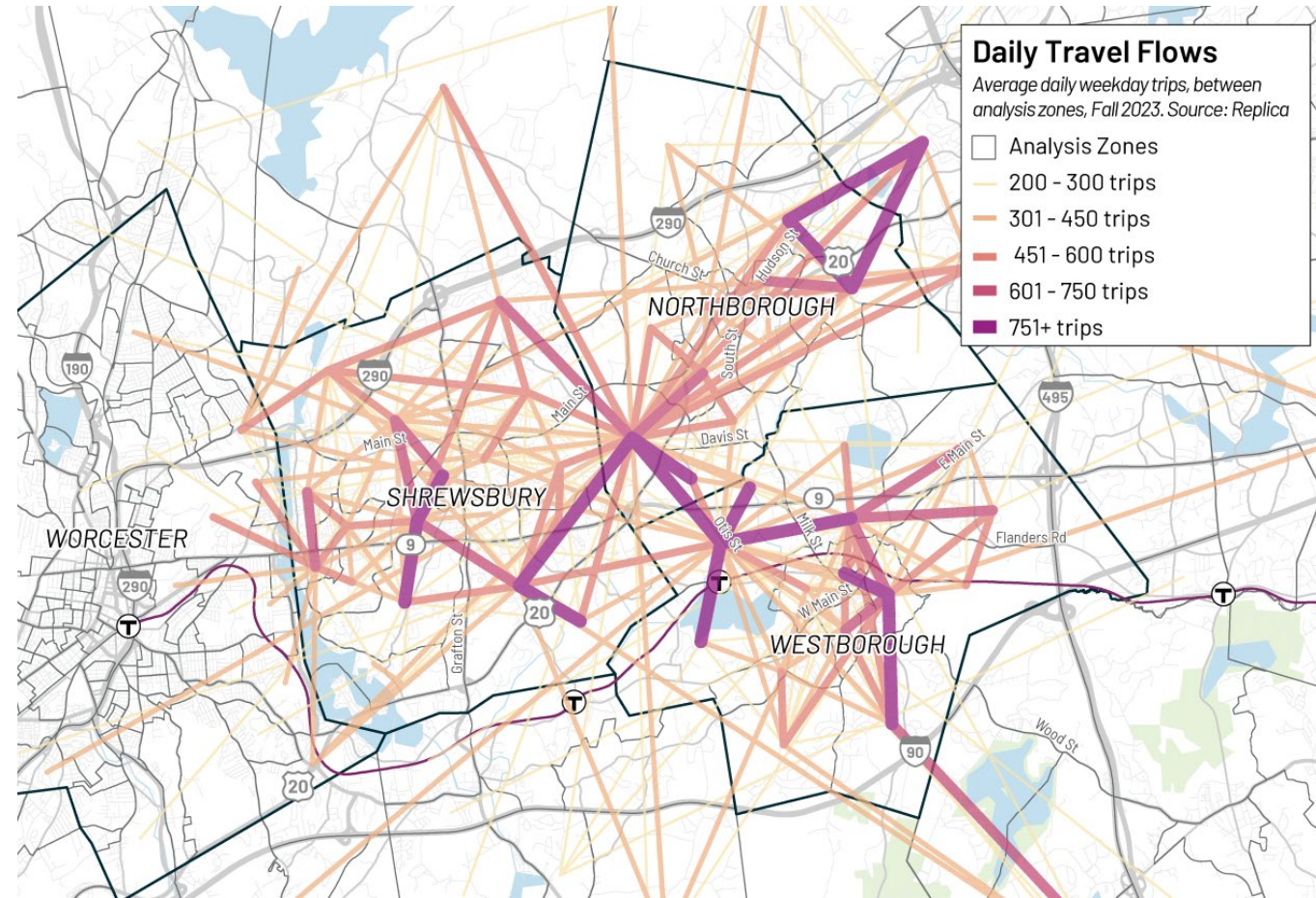
People with Disabilities

- Although already included in the Transit Propensity Index, people with disabilities have unique transportation needs separate from other targeted demographics



Travel Flow Analysis

- Travel flows of all trips that begin or end in the study area in Fall 2023.
 - Using data that models average daily traffic patterns.
- Many trips occur over short distances within municipalities, and the strongest origin-destination pairs are neighboring zones.
 - Likely due to the major activity centers located in that area, such as Northborough Crossing.
- Southern Northborough generates a relatively significant number of local trips
 - Likely due to the major activity centers located in that area, such as Northborough Crossing.



Route Profiles

Route 12

Key Features

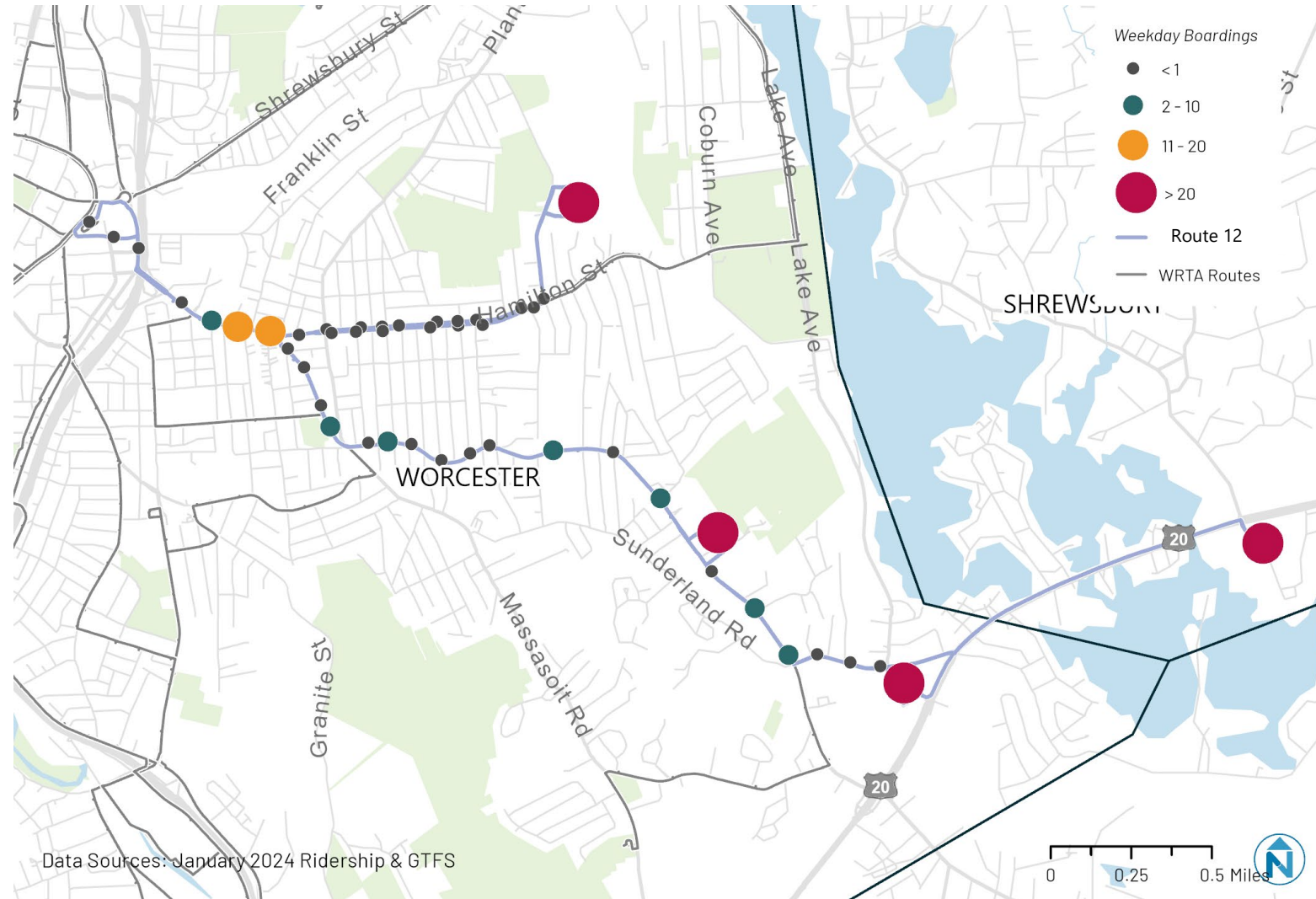
- Secondary fixed-route service in Shrewsbury
- Select service to North High School

Metric	March 2024 Value
Service Span	6:10 am – 9:25 pm
Headways	50 – 70 Minutes
Daily Riders	448
Riders per Trip	13.2

Key Findings

- Significant on-time performance issues in both directions. Most inbound trips are late.
- Ridership is concentrated at three shopping centers and 90% of outbound boardings occur within one mile of Hub Center.
- Ridership is mildly peak-directional, with higher inbound ridership in the morning and higher outbound ridership in the afternoon.

January 2024: Weekday Inbound Ridership to Hub Center



Route 15

Key Features

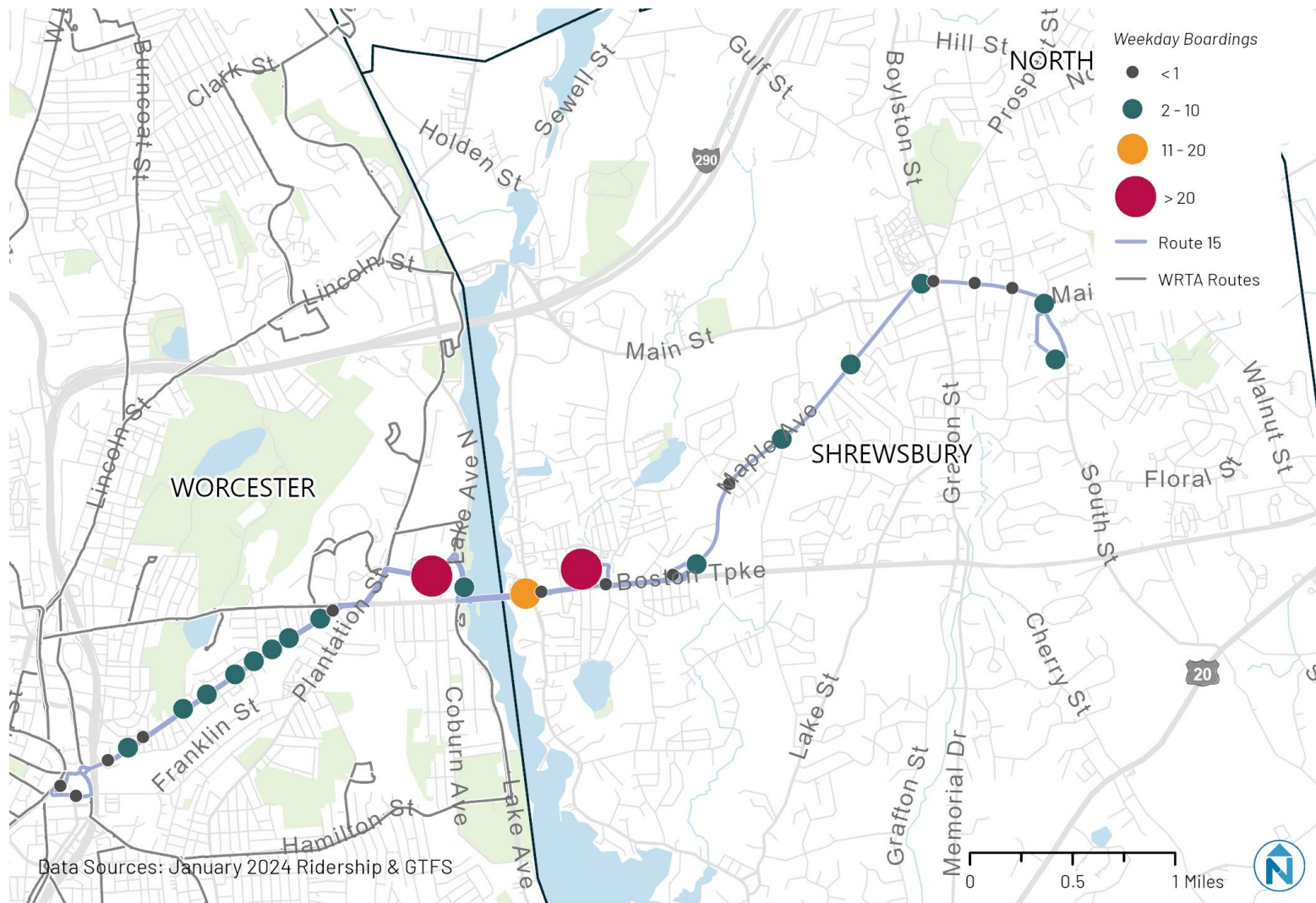
- Primary fixed-route service in Shrewsbury
- Service to Lakeway Commons and Southgate Retirement Community

Metric	Weekday	Saturday
Service Span	5:50 am – 9:10 pm	9:50 am – 5:50 pm
Headways	60 Minutes	60 Minutes
Daily Riders	303	132
Riders per Trip	10.8	8.5

Key Findings

- Inbound trips are on-time fewer than 70% of the time.
- Ridership decreases significantly between Lakeway Commons and Southgate.
- Ridership is moderately peak-oriented. 57% of trips range between 5 and 10 boardings.

January 2024: Weekday Outbound Ridership to Hub Center





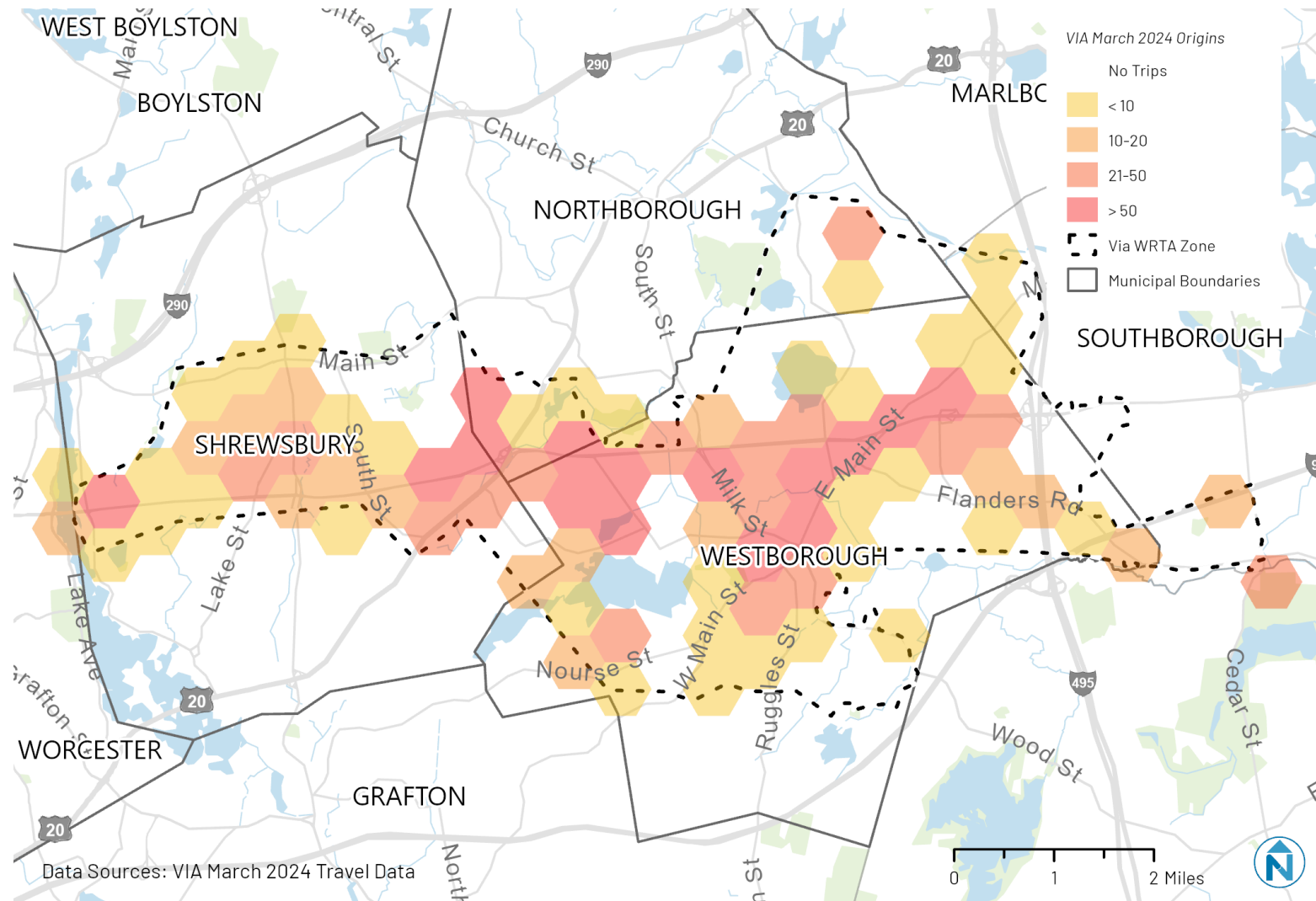
Key Features

- Origin-to-Destination service to much of the developed areas of Westborough and Shrewsbury

Metric	March 2024 Value
Service Span	Mon-Fri: 7:00 am – 7:00 pm
Daily Riders	145
Average Wait Time	18.4 Minutes
Average Trip Distance	4.7 Miles

Key Findings

- Nearly 100 regular users (10 or more trips)
- Two-thirds of pickups are within five minutes of the estimated arrival to the origin.
- Only 43% of trips arrive within five minutes of the estimated arrival to the destination.
- Two-thirds of trips are not shared*



*shared defined as two or more passengers picked up from different origins on the same trip

Council on Aging

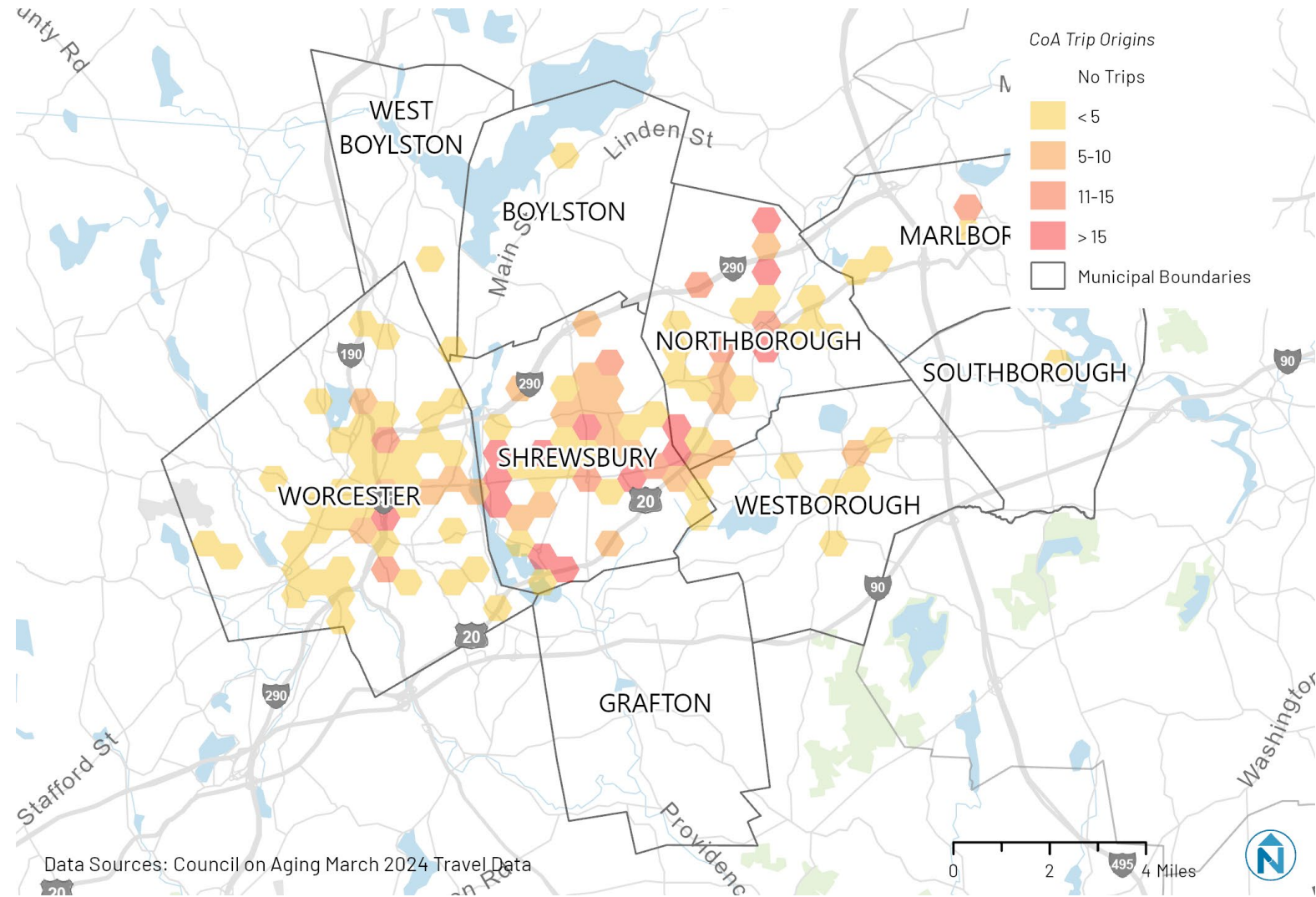
Key Features

- Service Area across 150 square miles for both Northborough and Shrewsbury services
- Free curb-to-curb service

Metric	Northborough	Shrewsbury
Service Span*	4 – 8 hours	3 – 7.5 hours
Riders per Day	16	26
Trips per Day	14	23
Riders per Rev Hour	1.6	2.1

Key Findings

- Shrewsbury has a higher percentage of internal trips (39%) than Northborough (28%), indicating fewer destinations in the latter.
- Northborough residents travel farther, likely due to fewer destinations within the municipality
- A plurality of trips, though diffuse, involved travel to /from Worcester



*Service is only provided on weekdays with operating hours varying by day.

Public Engagement To-Date

Shrewsbury Pop-Up

September 25

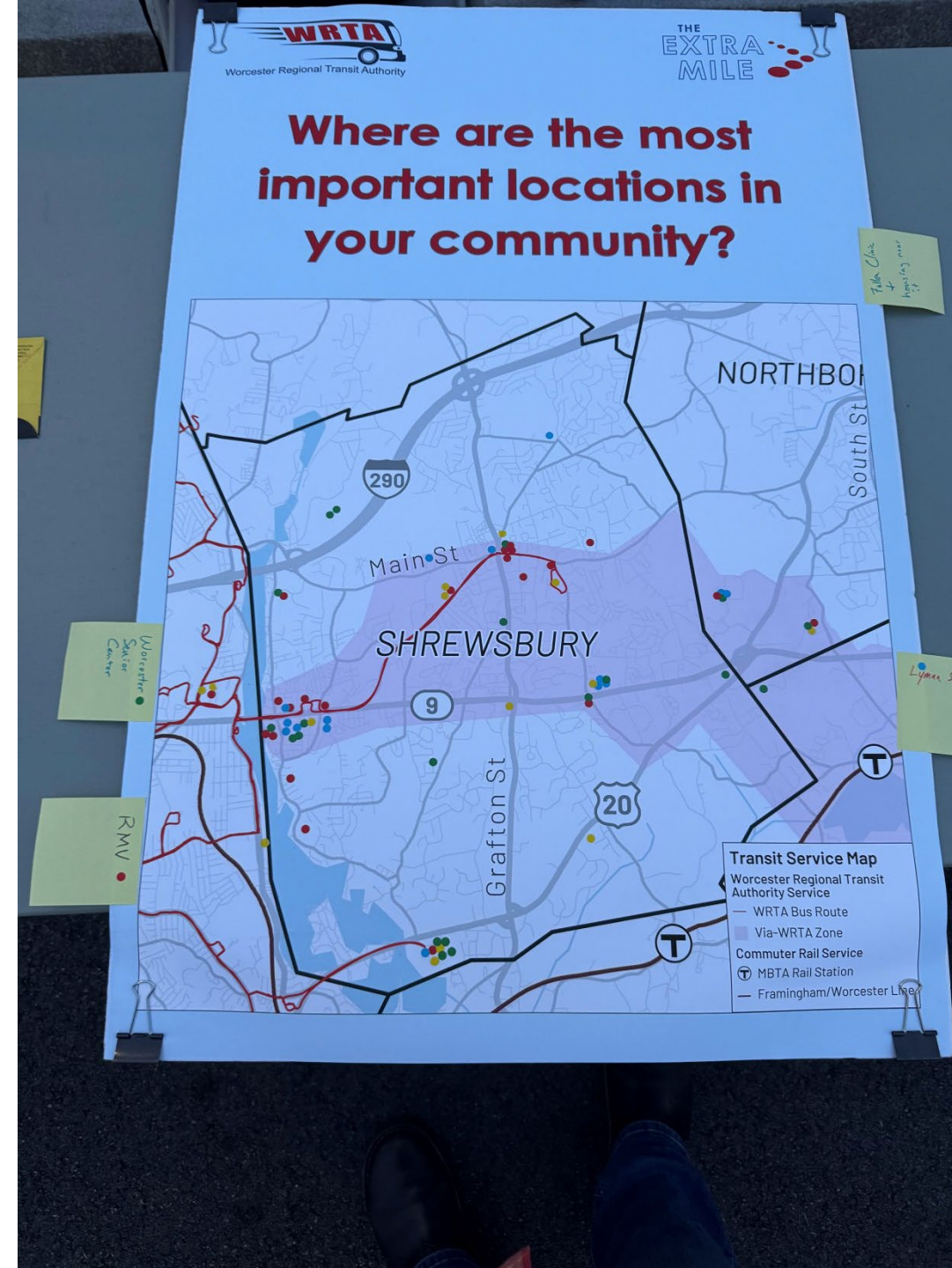
Shrewsbury Community Night

We asked:

- Where are the most important locations in your community?

We heard:

- White City Shopping Center
- Market Basket
- Walmart (Northborough)
- BJs (Northborough)
- Downtown Shrewsbury



Westborough Pop-Up

October 10

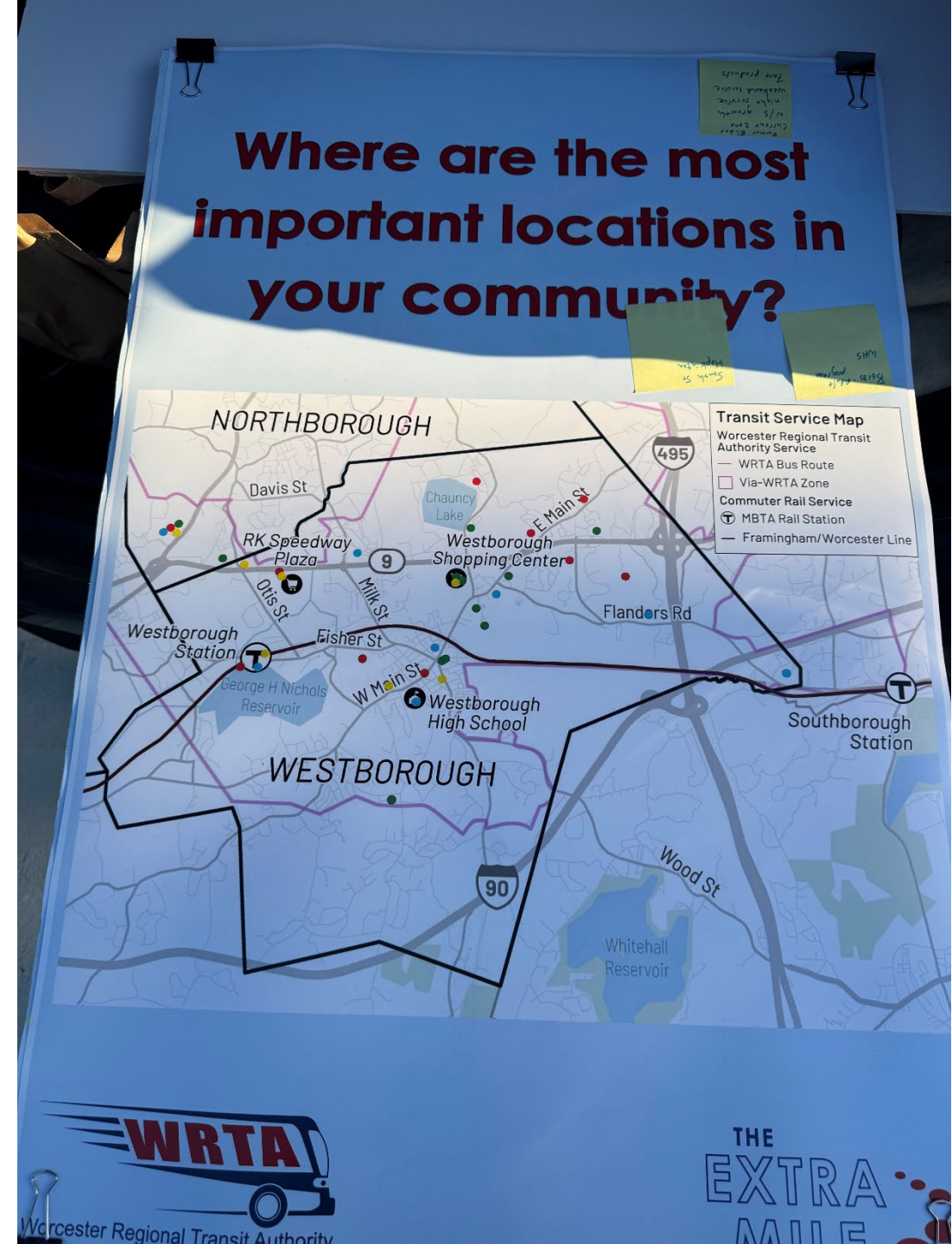
Westborough Farmers' Market

We asked:

- Where are the most important locations in your community?

We heard:

- Northborough Crossing
- Westborough Shopping Center
- Downtown Westborough
- Walmart (Northborough)



Northborough Pop-Up

October 22

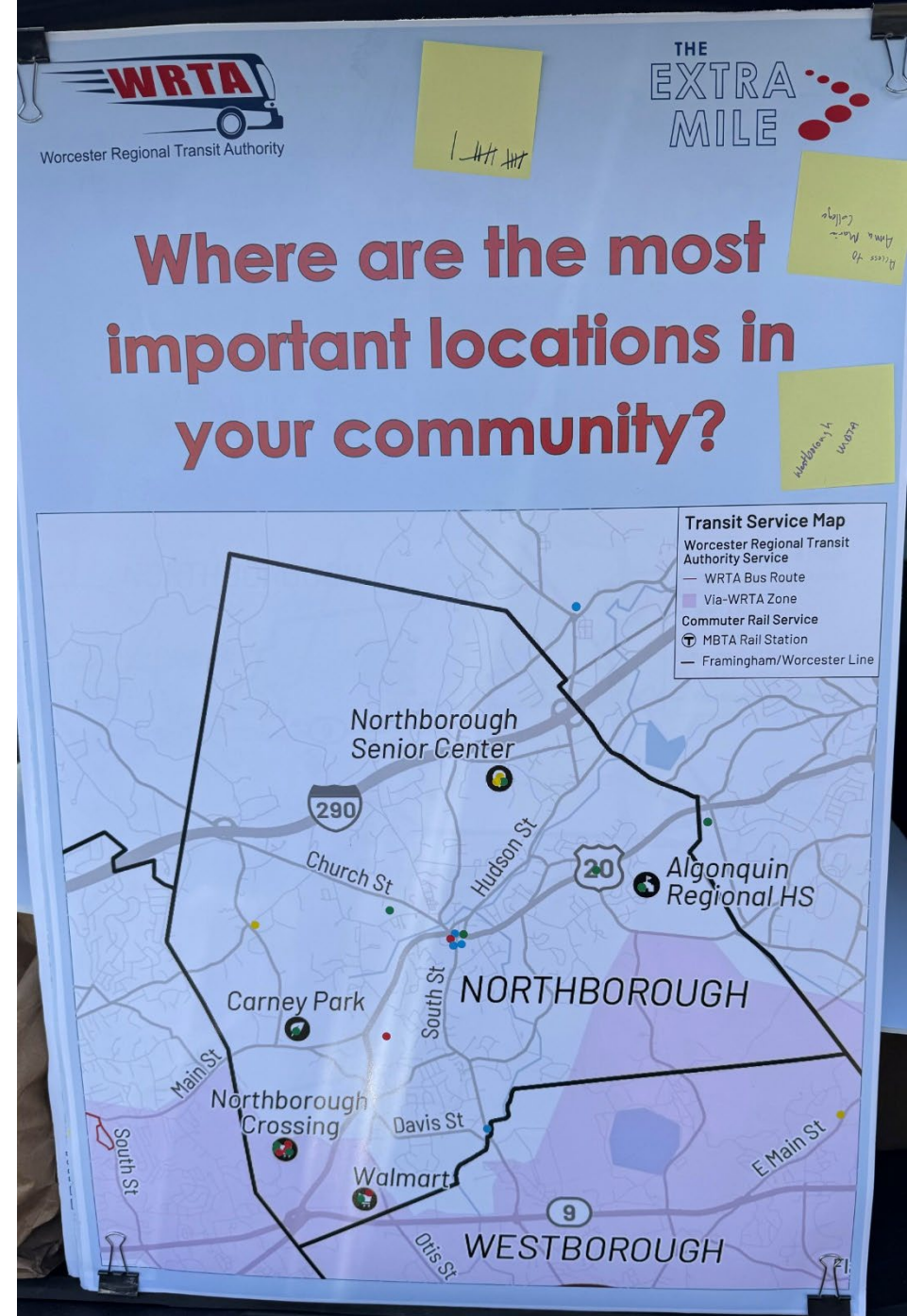
Northborough Trunk or Treat

We asked:

- Where are the most important locations in your community?

We heard:

- Northborough Crossing
- Northborough Senior Center
- Downtown Northborough
- Walmart



Discussion

4

Next Steps

5

What's Next for Connecting Communities

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Market Analysis						
Service Analysis						
Public Engagement		Pop-up events	Pop-up events Community Workshops	Community Workshops Regional Topic Workshops Virtual Public Meeting		
Draft & Final Recommendations					Draft Recs.	Final Report

What's Next for Connecting Communities

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