



Working Together for Transit Solutions

Metro Cities

August 28, 2023

Who We Are

- In 1982, fast-growing suburbs in the south and west of the Twin Cities sought legislation to create dedicated transit agencies to serve communities that were paying for transit services but, were not being served.
- Today, despite the pandemic and institutional obstacles, community needs for transportation continue to grow and change, underscoring the need for the Suburban providers funding and autonomy.
- 2020 Blue Ribbon Panel: “The Committee recognizes the value of local input that is part of the suburban transit provider model and that dedicated funding allows suburban providers to try innovative ideas.”



STA's Vision

Providing high-quality, community-driven, and reliable transit service that meets identified customer needs.

- Ensuring customers first- and last-mile needs are being met across service areas, including connecting to existing and planned Metro Transit BRT and LRT lines.
- Building a dynamic and flexible transit system that serves the new normal of the post-pandemic world and meets sustainability goals.
- Guaranteeing reliably safe and on-time rides.
- Improving regional coordination that's inclusive of all providers and transportation modes.

Market Drivers

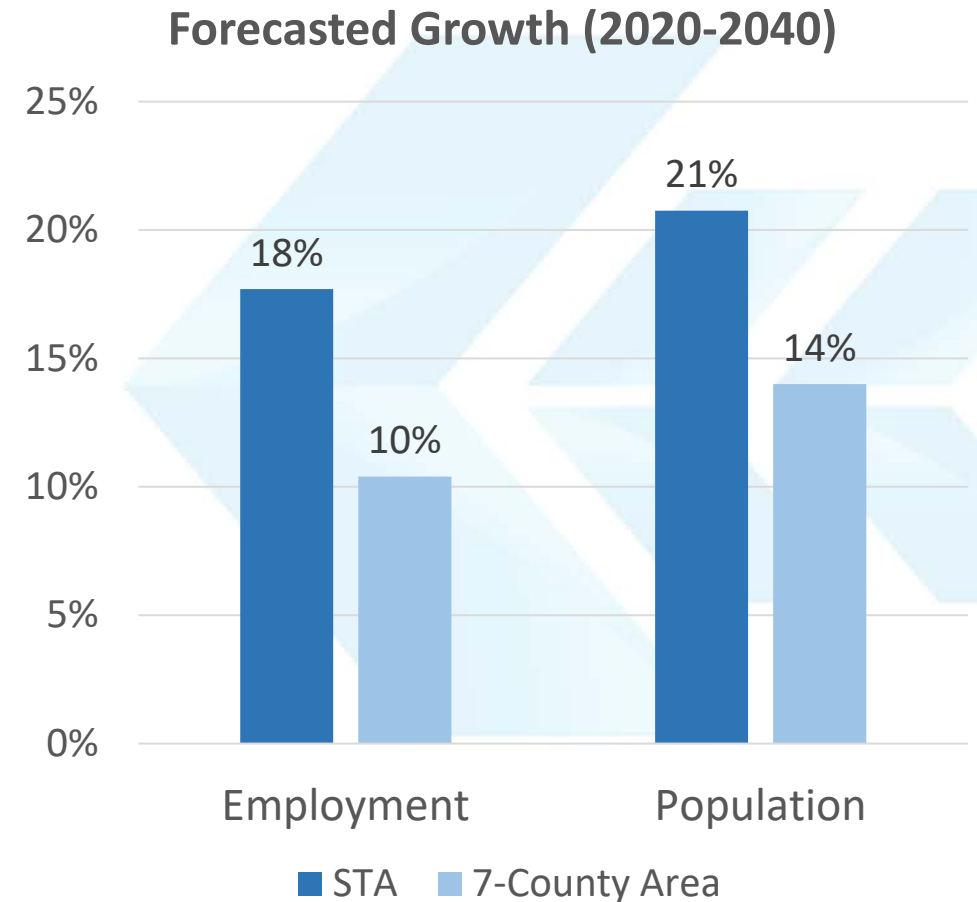
- During the pandemic, **suburban local routes** showed more resilience than most regional services and provided key connections for transit-dependent populations.
- **Microtransit service** has outgrown pre-pandemic levels and continues to see growth – with demand regularly out-stripping capacity.
- **Express service** adapting to a new normal shaped by work-from-home and uneven downtown recoveries.
- **Customer and policy maker** calls for improved sustainability and carbon reduction.



STA Population/Jobs to Outpace 7-County Area

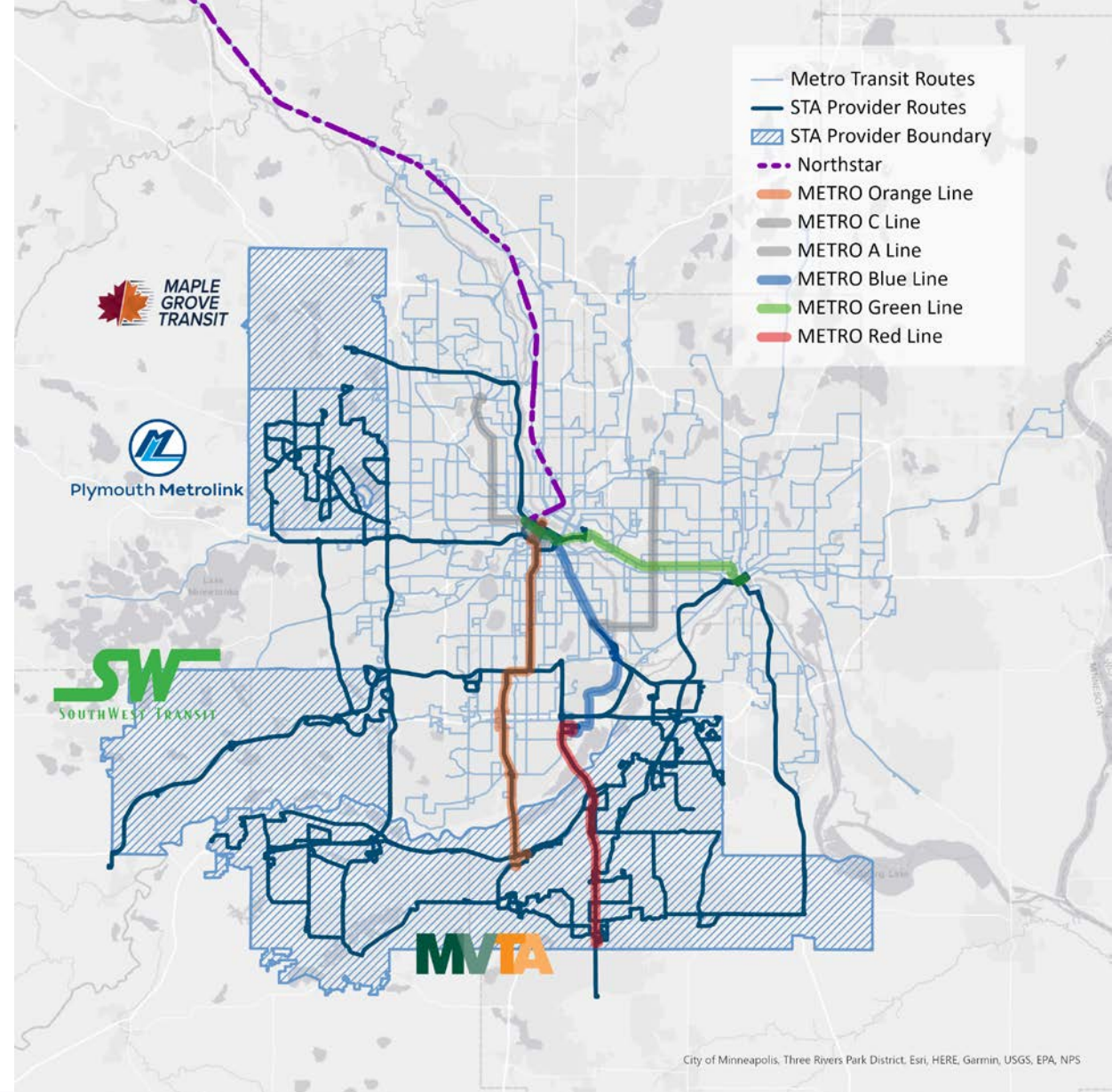
- Over next 20 years, STA population to grow by 123,000 – 20.75%, compared to 14% for rest of 7-county area.
- STA employment to grow by 61,880 workers – 17.7%, compared to 10.4% for rest of 7-county area.
- Already pressed suburbs need additional work force transportation as labor force grows.

Data Source: Met Council



Interconnected with Region

- **Interconnected bus services** feeding into BRT/LRT services key to linking urban metro and suburban/exurban communities.
- **Microtransit** services provide both first- and last-mile and door-to-door connections.
- **Essential links** to suburban entertainment and employment destinations and MSP Airport.
- STA connections **critical to economic recovery** of entire region.
- **Increased regional suburban transit** use will provide significant reductions in highway traffic and carbon emissions.



Service Update

- Despite operator shortages and current change in commute patterns STA ridership increased from 2021.
 - Express service – **All STA providers had an increase in Express over 60%.**
- Microtransit
 - SW Prime – Ridership increased by over 100% compared to 2021, surpassing pre-pandemic ridership levels.
 - Maple Grove MY RIDE – Ridership higher than pre-pandemic levels.
 - Plymouth Click and Ride – Ridership up by 30%.
 - MVTA Connect – Ridership increase of 185% over 2021, higher than pre-pandemic ridership.

2023 Session Impact on Microtransit

- HF2700/SF2804 bill to dedicate \$22 million to expand services for the STA members.
 - Bill heard in the House and Senate Transportation Committees.
- Authors:
 - Senators: Carlson, Dibble, Port, Coleman, Jasinski
 - Representatives: Hornstein, Huot, Bierman, Kotyza-Witthuhn, Reyer, Rehm, Kraft, Bakeberg, Nash, Petersburg, Nadeau, Myers, Quam, Hanson J.
- Goals of the Bill:
 - **Fleet Modernization and Expansion**
 - **Service Area and Hours Expansion**

March 20, 2023

Dear Chair Hornstein and Members of the House Transportation Committee:

Metro Cities, representing the collective interests of cities in the metropolitan area, appreciates the opportunity to comment on HF 2700 (Hornstein) that will be heard in the Transportation Committee on Tuesday. Metro Cities supports this bill.

Metro Cities supports an effective, efficient, and comprehensive regional transit system as an invaluable component in meeting the multimodal transportation needs of the metropolitan region and to the region's economic vibrancy and quality of life. The regional transit system should recognize the diverse needs of the communities it serves as it connects residents to jobs, schools, health care, and other destinations. Demand for microtransit service has grown during the pandemic. If passed, HF 2700 would provide important funding for the region's suburban transit providers to expand and improve their demand response transit services.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Lund
Government Relations Specialist
Metro Cities

2023 Session Impact--Increased and Dedicated funding for Microtransit

- Funding to expand microtransit for the Suburban providers was ultimately included in the final Transportation bill as part one of the uses for the Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax—requiring at least \$9 million for the Suburban Providers in the first year.





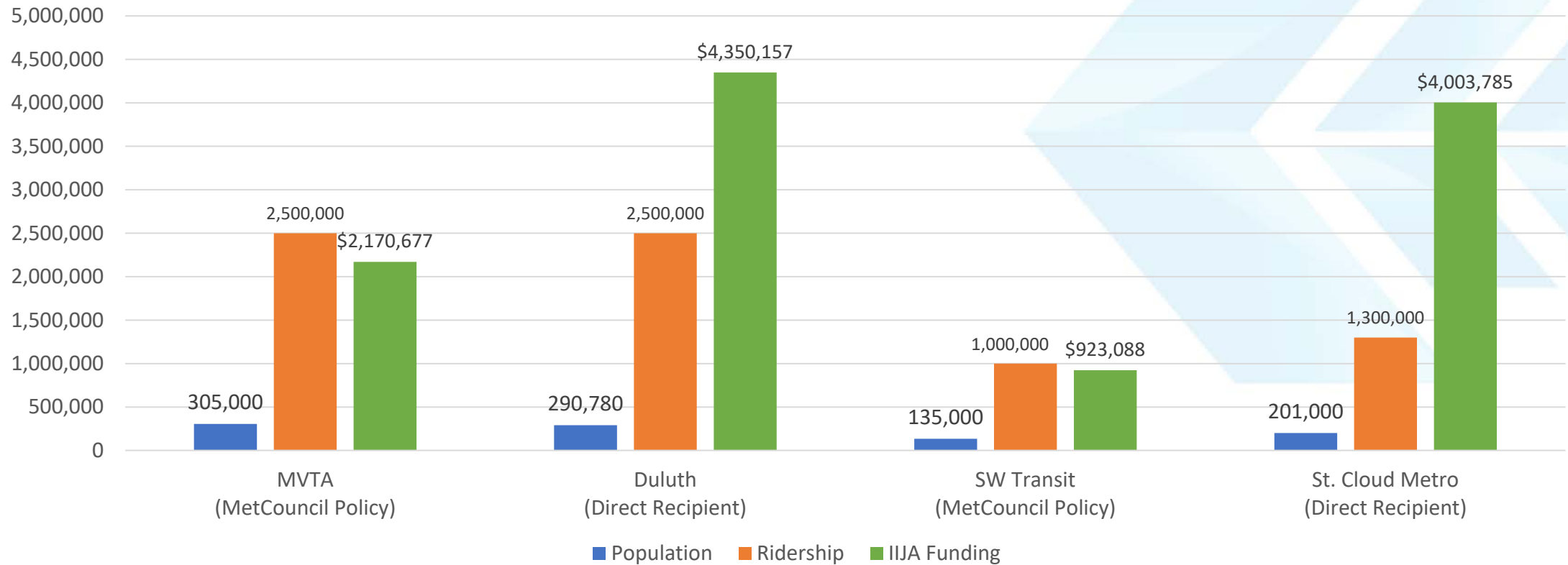
On-Going Effort: Name Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and Southwest Transit Direct Recipients of Federal Funding

- STA supports **Southwest Transit (SWT) and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA)** having designation changed by Governor from Sub-Recipient to **Direct Recipients**.

What is the difference between a "direct" recipient and a "designated" recipient?

- Direct recipients receive funding directly from FTA and ability to apply directly for FTA competitive grants I.e. No Low Grant. (transit.dot.gov)
- **SWT and MTVA** redesignated would allow for more efficient regional planning/coordination, improve procurement processes, and streamline FTA grant submissions.

IIJA Federal Allocation Direct Recipient v. Met Council Policy





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