



# Northstar Commuter Rail to bus transition

Spring 2025 | [metrotransit.org/northstar](https://metrotransit.org/northstar)



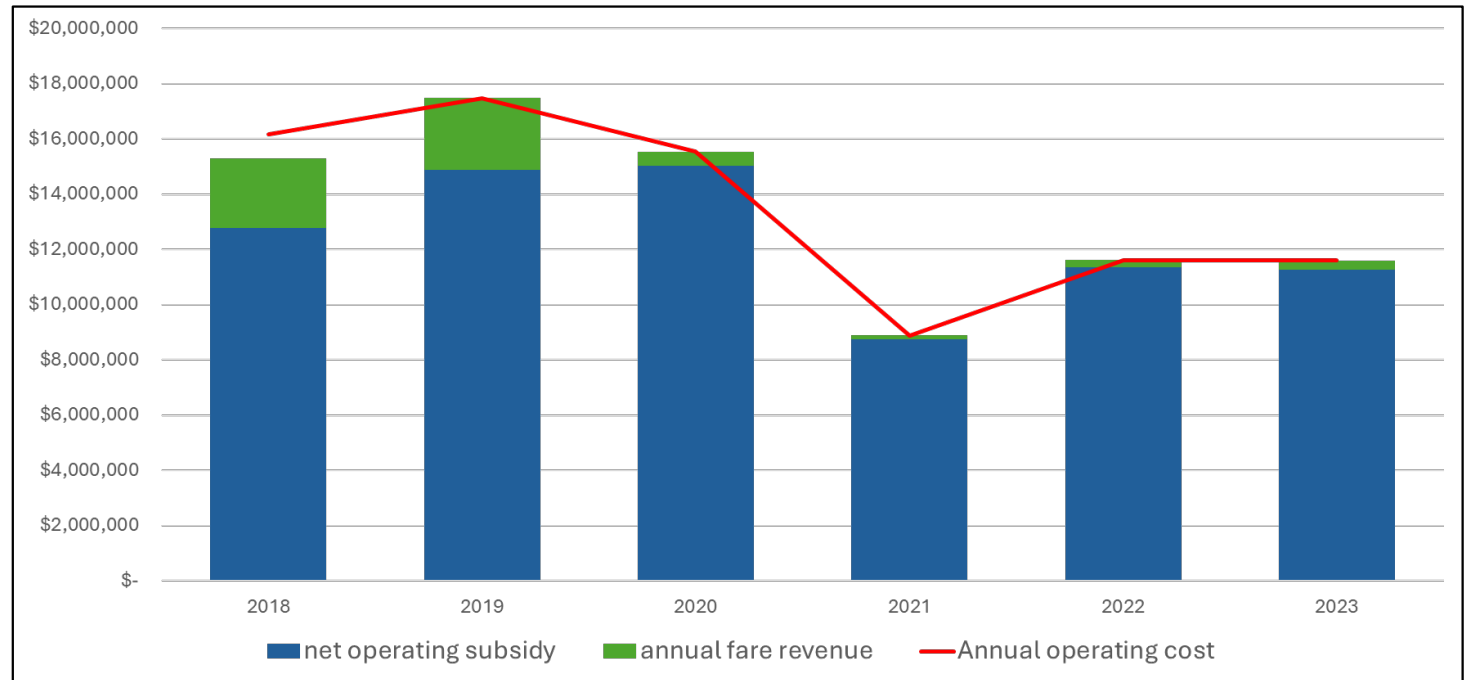
# Agenda

- Commuter Rail to bus transition
  - Why this change is being explored
    - Cost/ridership/flexibility
  - Bus service plan options
  - Process
  - How to comment
- Conversation and Q&A

# Cost

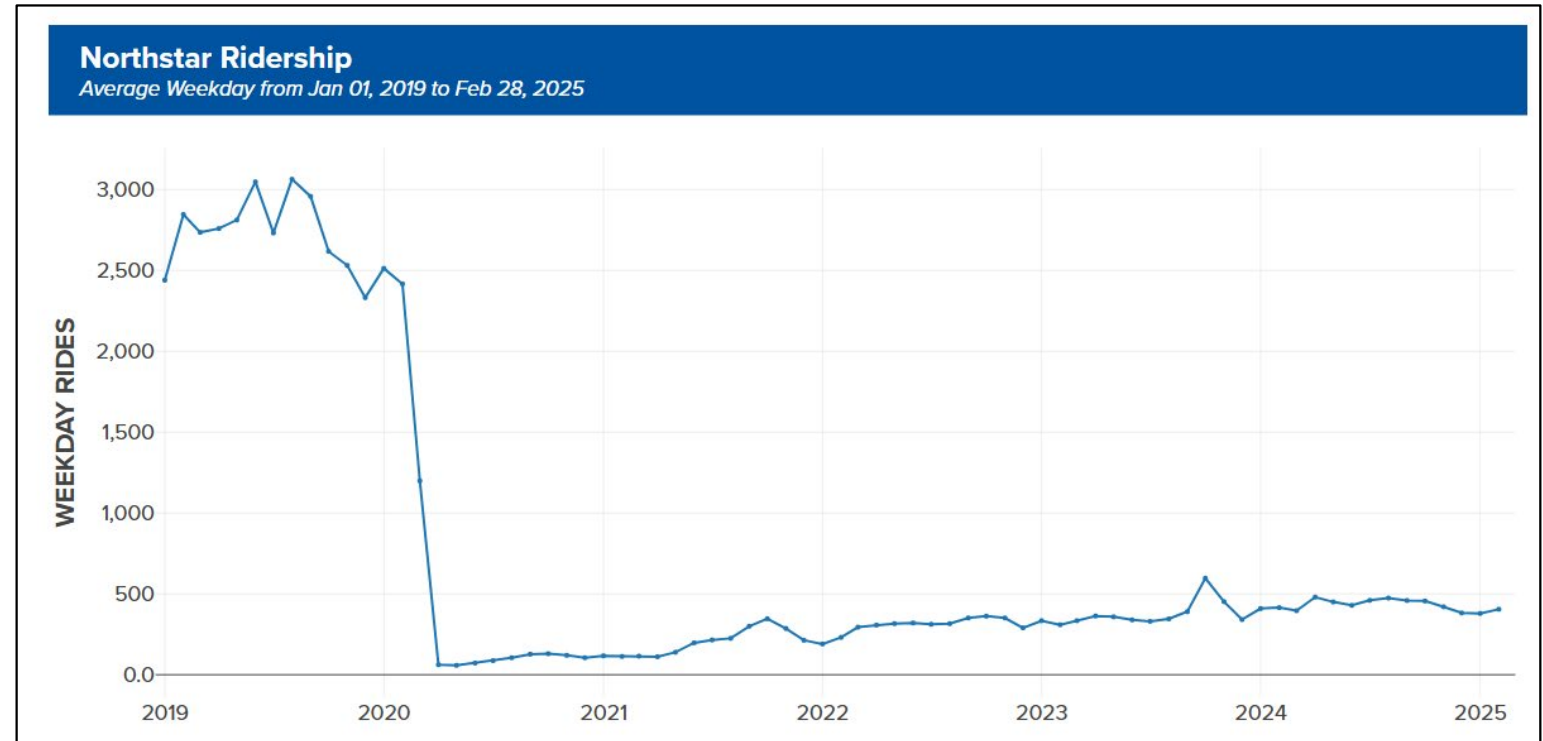
- Studies by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Metropolitan Council have explored the high cost of providing service, compared to low ridership.
- Northstar's service levels and annual operating costs remained relatively stable from its opening in late 2009 until mid-2020.

## OPERATING SUBSIDY VS FARE REVENUE



# Ridership

- The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic ridership drop of nearly 98% and while more riders have returned, service has not recovered.
- Marketing campaigns, adjustments in service and pass options were explored to increase ridership.



# Station Usage

## AVERAGE DAILY RIDES MARCH 2025

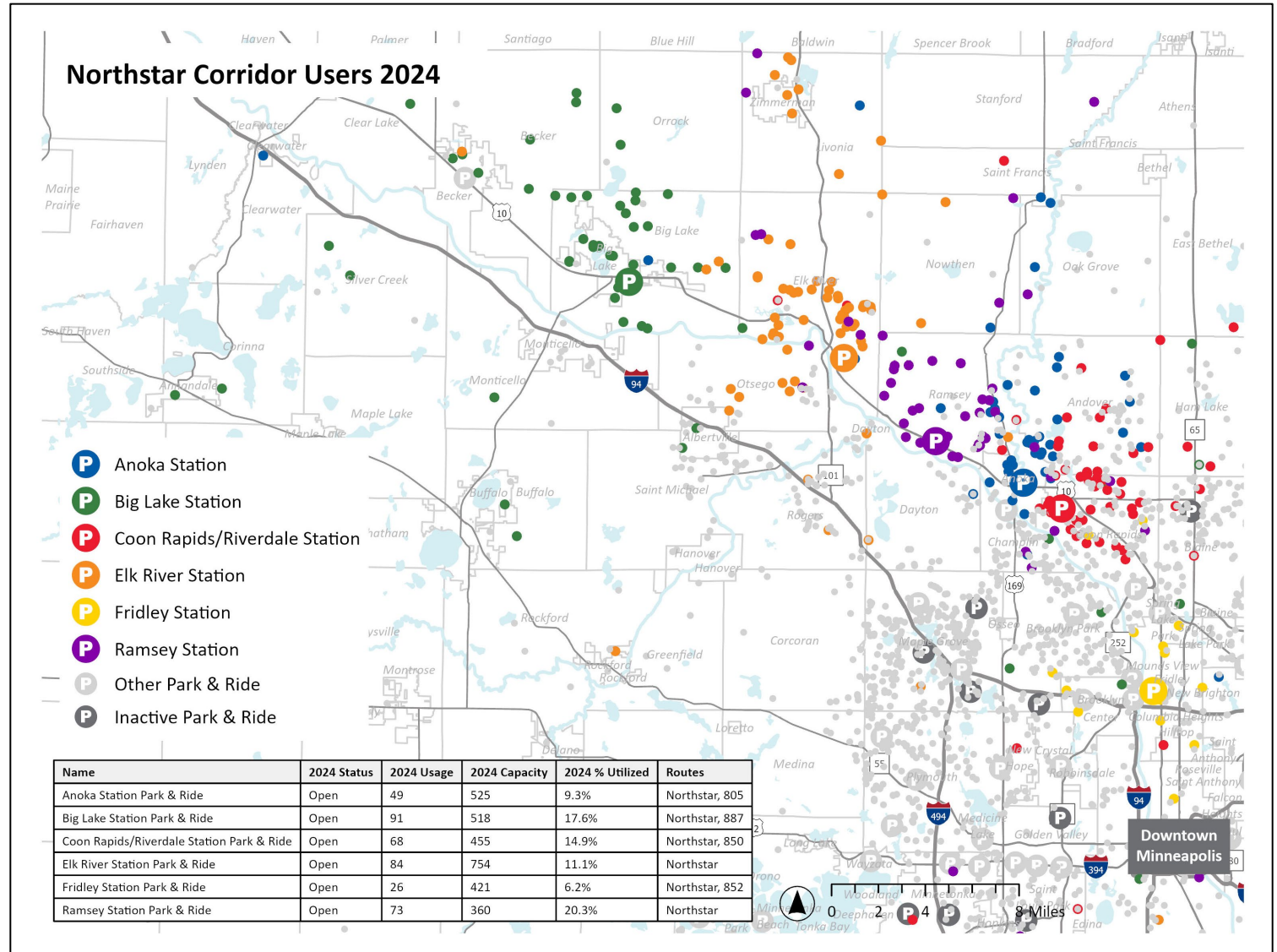
Station	Rides
Big Lake	60
Elk River	52
Ramsey	20
Anoka	35
Coon Rapids	38
Fridley	14

Station	Rides
Mpls to Fridley	13
Mpls to Coon Rapids	39
Mpls to Anoka	43
Mpls to Ramsey	23
Mpls to Elk River	49
Mpls to Big Lake	48

- Big Lake and Elk River remain the most used station
- The Fridley Station has more alternative options for riders

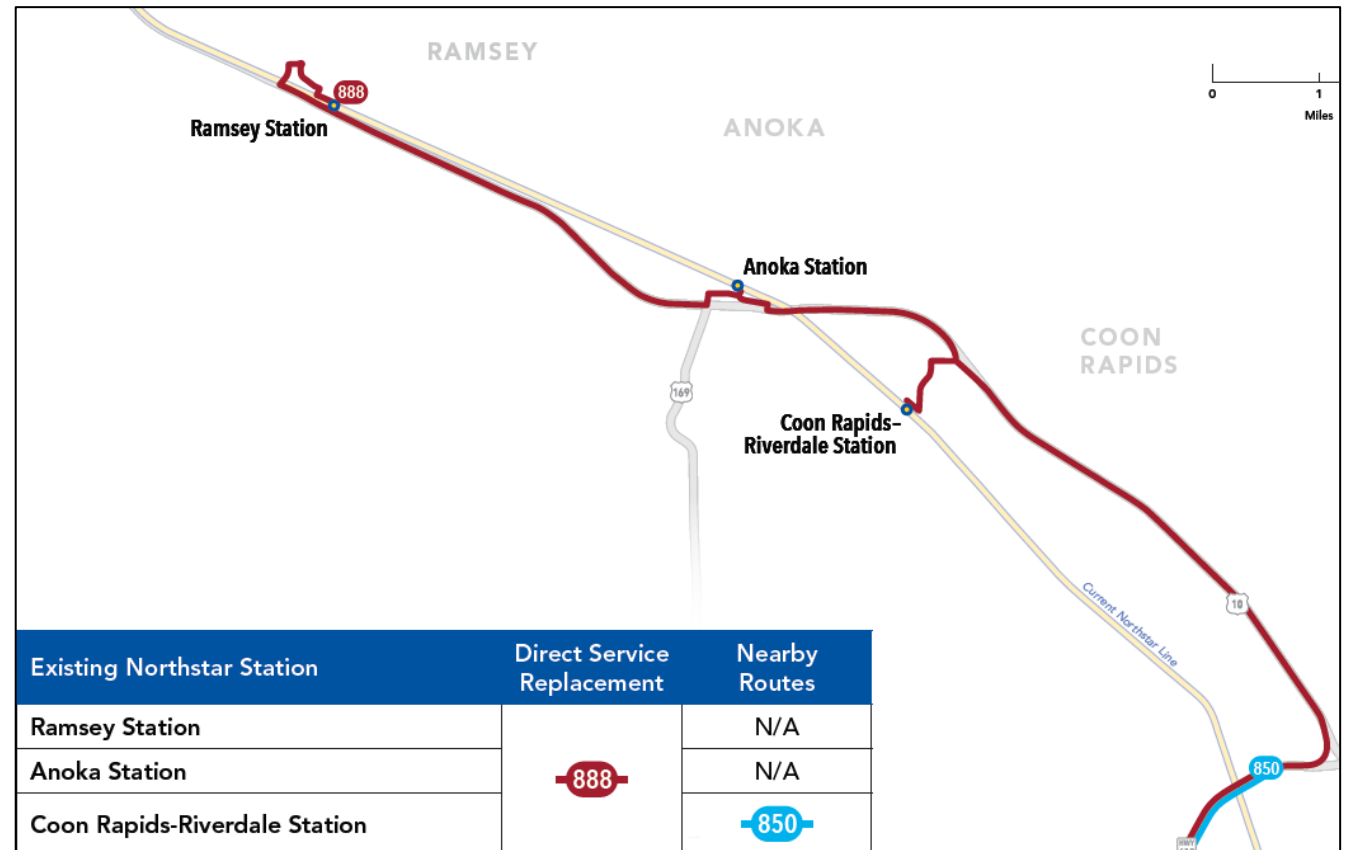
# Station Usage

- Many riders live within five miles of Northstar stations.
- Others are traveling down major highway corridors to reach Park & Rides or connecting to Northstar from other bus service



# Ramsey, Anoka, and Coon Rapids

- Route 888 would be new bus service to Ramsey, Anoka, and Coon Rapids and would provide service all-day in both direction on weekdays.
- Service would run every 30 minutes during rush hours (6 – 8:30 a.m. and 4 – 6:30 p.m.) and every 60 minutes during the midday (8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.) in both directions
- The Coon Rapids area is also served by the 850 at the Foley Park-and-Ride



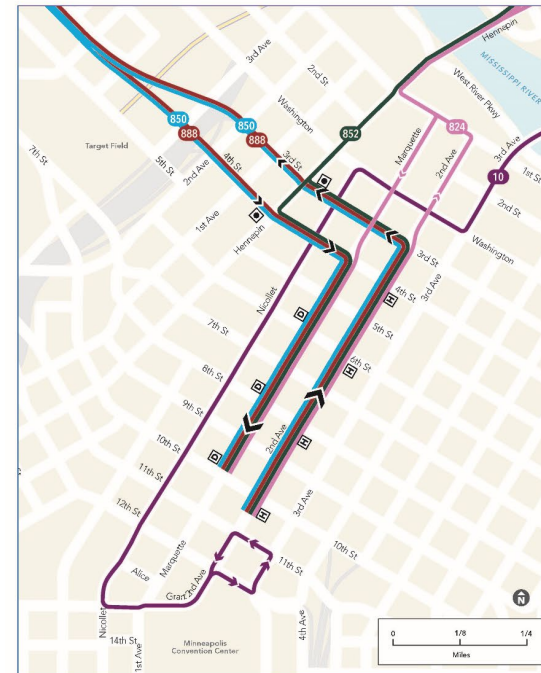
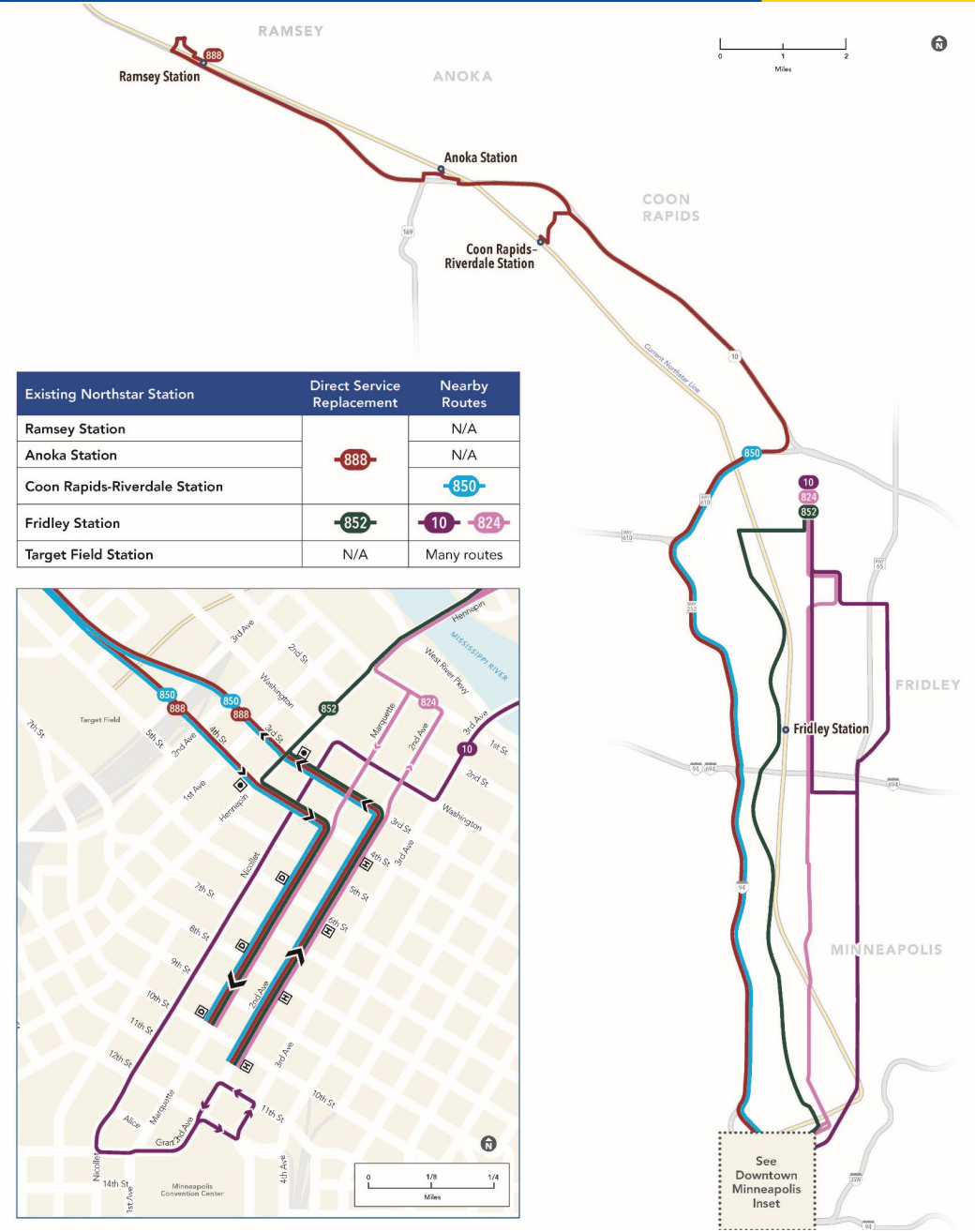
# Potential bus service to Big Lake and Elk River

- Metro Transit currently does not have the authority to operate buses to Big Lake or Elk River stations in Sherburne County.
- State law was created to allow the Metropolitan Council to run Northstar service.
- Bus service to these stations would likely need to be provided by someone else, which has not yet been determined.



# Service alternatives for Ramsey, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Fridley, and Target Field stations

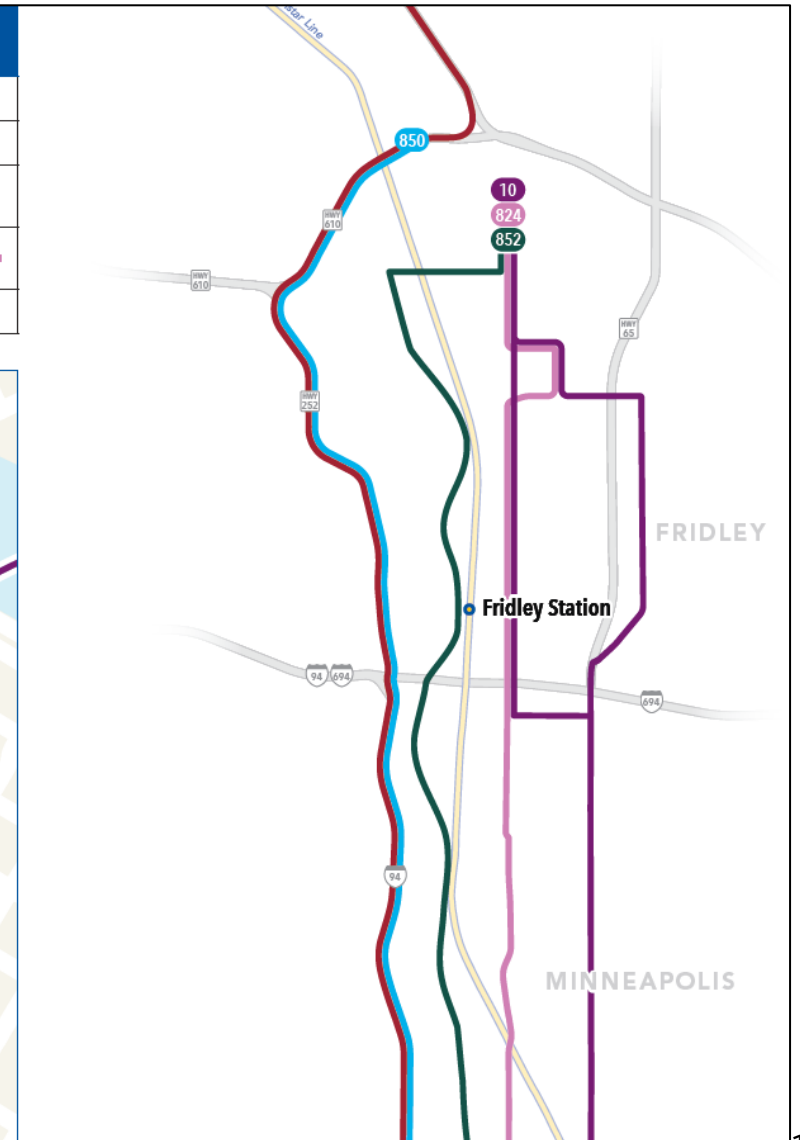
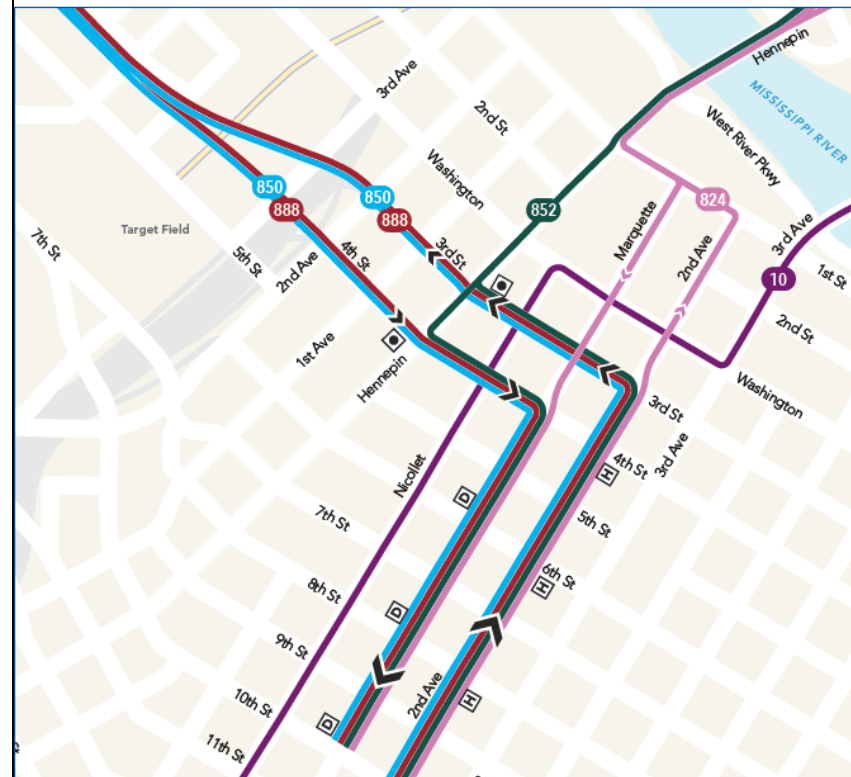
- Bus service would provide a one-seat ride into the core of downtown Minneapolis, without the need to transfer
- The Fridley Station is served by multiple routes, while a new route would be created to serve Ramsey, Anoka and Coon Rapids








# Fridley

- Routes 10, 852, and 824 serve Fridley station, offering both express service in the morning and afternoon, as well as all-day service in both direction on weekdays and weekends.

Existing Northstar Station	Direct Service Replacement	Nearby Routes
Ramsey Station		N/A
Anoka Station		N/A
Coon Rapids-Riverdale Station		
Fridley Station		
Target Field Station	N/A	Many routes



# Travel Time Comparison

Origin Station Park & Ride	   Northstar - LRT - Walk to 5th & Nicollet	  Bus - Walk to 5th & Nicollet	Added Time
Ramsey	45 min	63 min	18 min
Anoka	42 min	49 min	7 min
Coon Rapids-Riverdale	39 min	41 min	2 min
Fridley	29 min	36 min (Route 824) 44 min (Route 10)	7-15 min

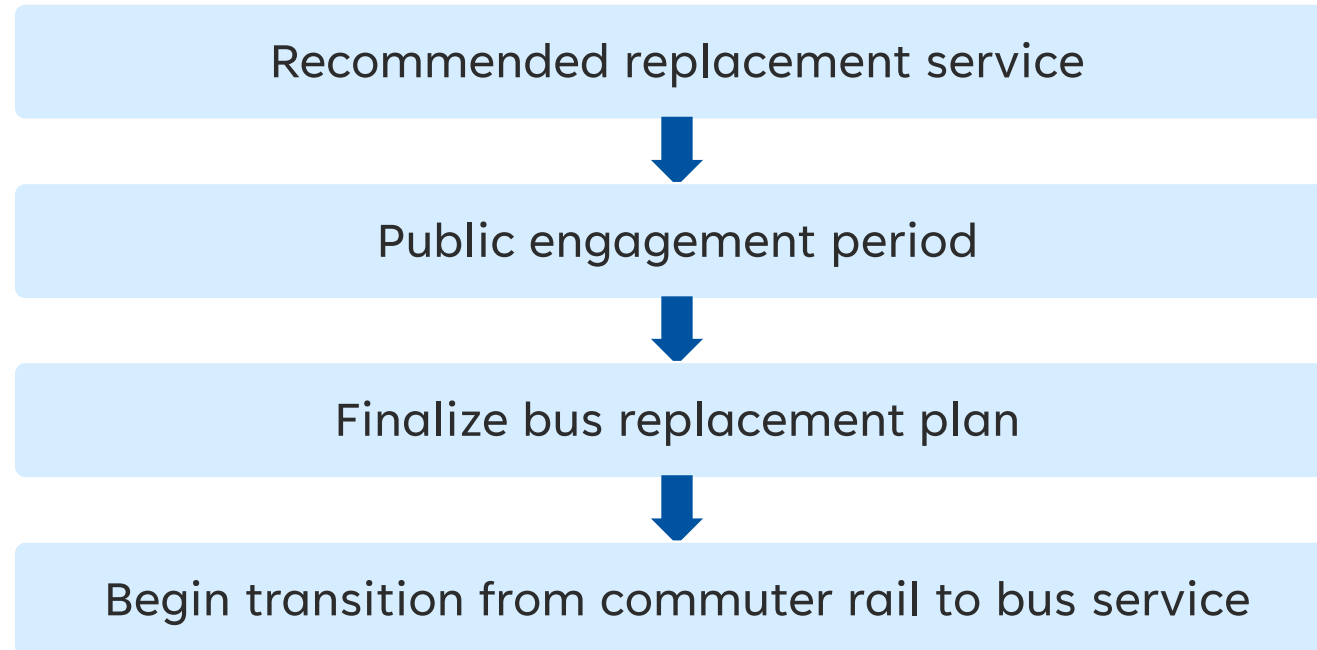
- Most Northstar riders connect to light rail at Target Field Station to finish their commutes to the core of downtown.
- Bus service would provide a one-seat ride into the core of downtown Minneapolis. Without the need to transfer, it would take you about the same amount of time to reach downtown as your Northstar trip today.
- For some locations, like Ramsey Station, it will take around 15-20 minutes longer.

# Fare Comparison

	Northstar	Local Bus / METRO		Express Bus	
Origin	Adults and Reduced fare (Youth, Seniors, Medicare)	Adult fare (ages 13-64) Good for 2 ½ hours	Reduced fare (Youth, Seniors, Medicare)	Adult fare (ages 13-64) Good for 2 ½ hours	Reduced fare (Youth, Seniors, Medicare)
Big Lake to Downtown Minneapolis	<b>\$6.25</b>				
Elk River to Downtown Minneapolis	<b>\$4.75</b>				
Ramsey to Downtown Minneapolis	<b>\$3.75</b>			<b>\$3.25 peak</b>	
Anoka, Coon Rapids, Fridley to Downtown Minneapolis	<b>\$3.25</b>	<b>\$2</b>	<b>\$1</b>	<b>\$2.50 midday</b>	<b>\$1</b>

- Mobility Fare is \$1 (regular and express)
- All-day passes now cost \$2-4
- 7-Day Passes now cost \$20

# Process



- No date has been set for the transition from rail to bus service. Regular weekday and Twins Northstar service will continue as planning efforts proceed.
- The Metropolitan Council will provide updates as transition planning progresses.

## Comment Now

- Scan the code to take the survey by May 11th or visit [metrotransit.org/northstar](https://metrotransit.org/northstar)





**Comments or Questions**

**Thank you**