



# Presentation to Houston City Council Committee Transportation, Technology, & Infrastructure Thursday, June 19, 2014



# SYSTEM REIMAGINING

## Draft 5-Year Transit Service Plan



SYSTEM REIMAGINING

# What is System Reimagining?



- A 5-year transit plan, focused on improving METRO's local bus network
- Utilizes existing METRO resources to make the bus network more useful to more people and places
- Presented as a draft to allow community feedback before any action is taken



# System Reimagining Project Timeline

**Analysis of Existing Conditions**

Completed  
Summer 2013

**Defining Goals**

Completed  
Fall 2013

**Developing Draft Plan**

Completed  
Spring 2014

**Public Outreach on the Plan**

★ **We Are Here**  
May – June 2014

**Refine and Finalize Plan**

July – August  
2014

**Implement Plan**

June 2015



# Why Reimagine the Transit Network?

- The **community has asked for improvements** to the local bus system
- **Ridership has declined** on the local bus system
- The Houston region continues to grow and evolve and **the transit system needs to evolve** with it
- To create **an integrated network of bus and rail service**
- Provide for the Houston of today and builds a **strong foundation for future growth**



2011 Long Range Plan Meetings



# Reimagining Plan Overview

## Why Reimagine?

- The community has asked for improvements to the local bus system
- Ridership has declined on the local bus system
- The transit system has not evolved with the growing Houston region
- To create an integrated network of bus and rail service
- Need to provide a strong foundation for future growth



## Draft Reimagining Plan

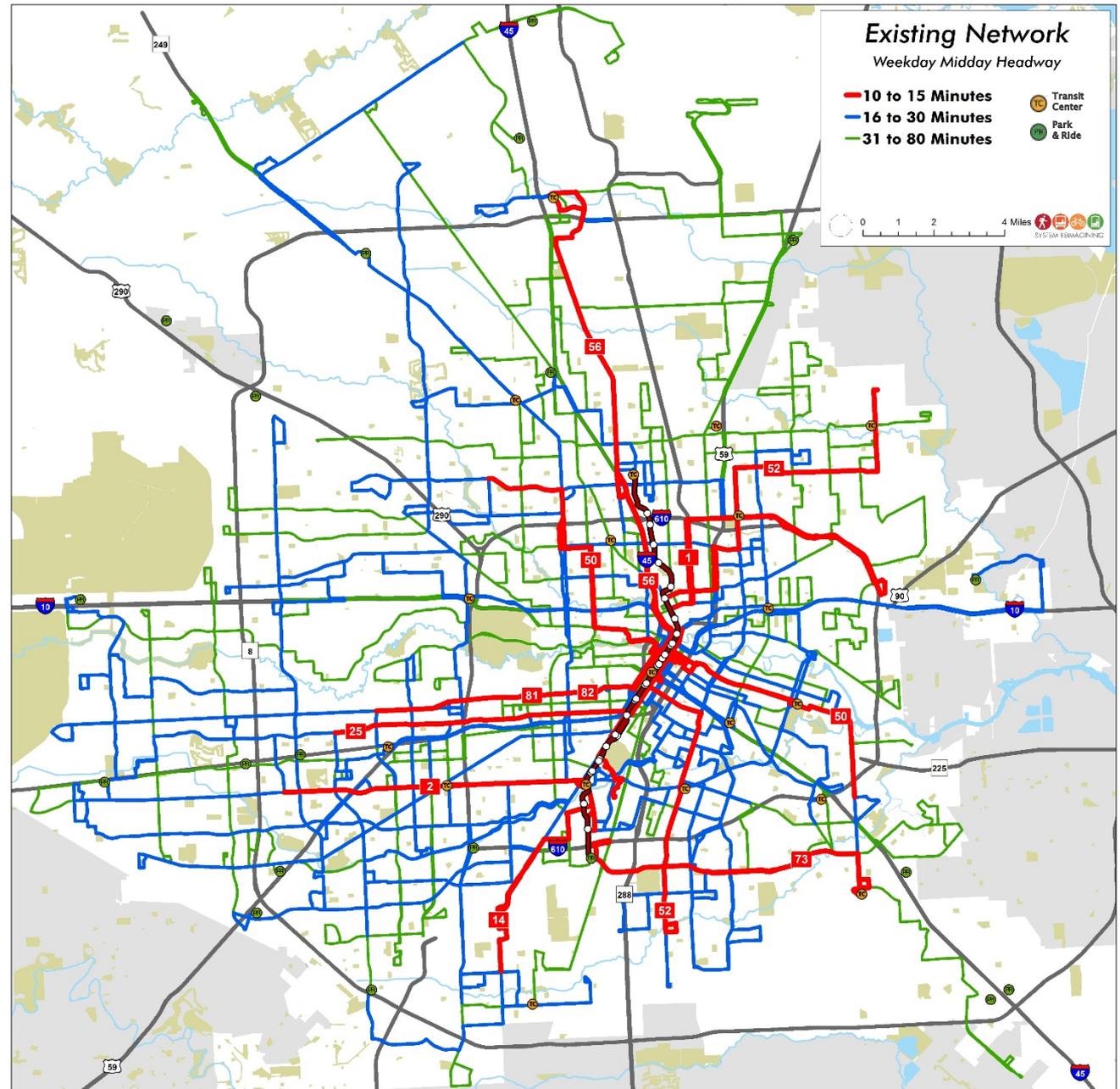
- Simpler, more frequent, 7-days a week service connecting more people to more places with faster trips
- Projected to drive local bus ridership increase of 20+% after 2 years
- A much better match with where and when people live, work, play and learn
- Stronger connections between the bus and rail network allowing for more seamless operations
- Establishes a strong foundation and clear tools to continue to improve the system as resources allow



# The Existing Network

- Difficult to learn, understand and make connections
- Not a strong fit to population and jobs in the Houston region
- Frequent service entirely radial with connections only in Downtown/TMC
- Very few frequent routes

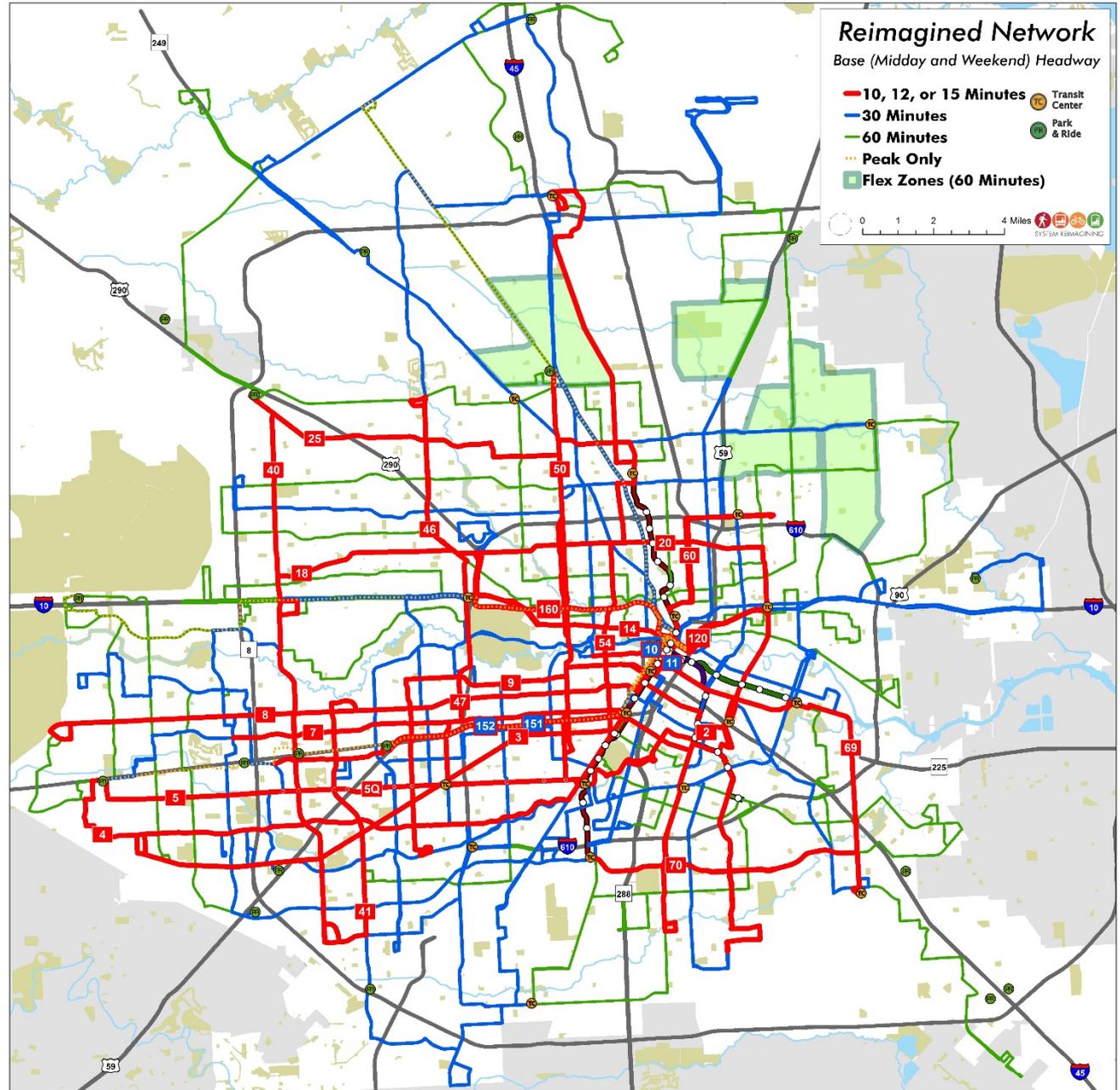
**Red:** Frequent Network  
**Blue:** 16 to 30 minute headways  
**Green:** 31+ minute headways



# The Reimagined Network

- **Frequent Network:**  
No need to consult a schedule: a bus every 15 minutes or better, 15 hours a day, all week
- Supporting local routes that provide **ridership, connectivity** and **access** to the network and major destinations
- **Flexible service** aligned with ridership demand and neighborhood context

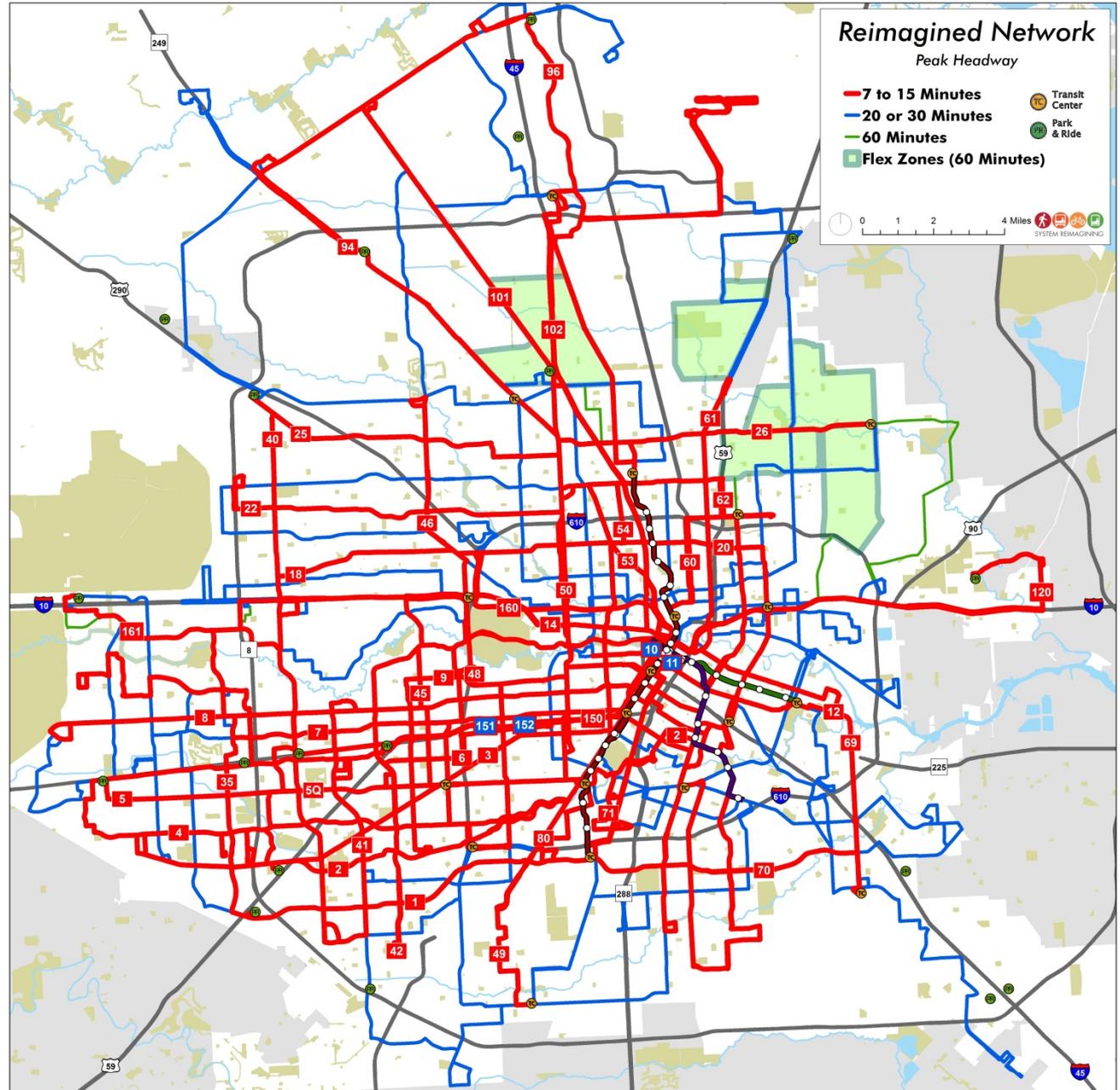
**Red:** Frequent Network  
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**Green:** 31+ minute headways  
**Orange:** Peak Only



# Proposed Peak Hour Service Levels

- The previous map shows the proposed service levels midday during the week and on weekends
- This map shows how service levels would increase during morning and evening peak hours when travel demands tend to be at their highest

**Red:** Frequent Network  
**Blue:** 16 to 30 minute headways  
**Green:** 31+ minute headways



Local service only; Map does not include Park & Ride routes



# How Does the Reimagined Network Improve the Lives of METRO's Riders?

**System Reimagining delivers a transit network that...**

- Has more frequent routes to more places
- Is much easier to understand and use
- Connects more people to more jobs
- Provides much better weekend service
- Better serves METRO's current riders
- Provides faster, more reliable trips
- Is built to support future growth

Based on the benefits of the Reimagined Transit Network, local bus ridership is estimated to increase **20+%** after 2 years



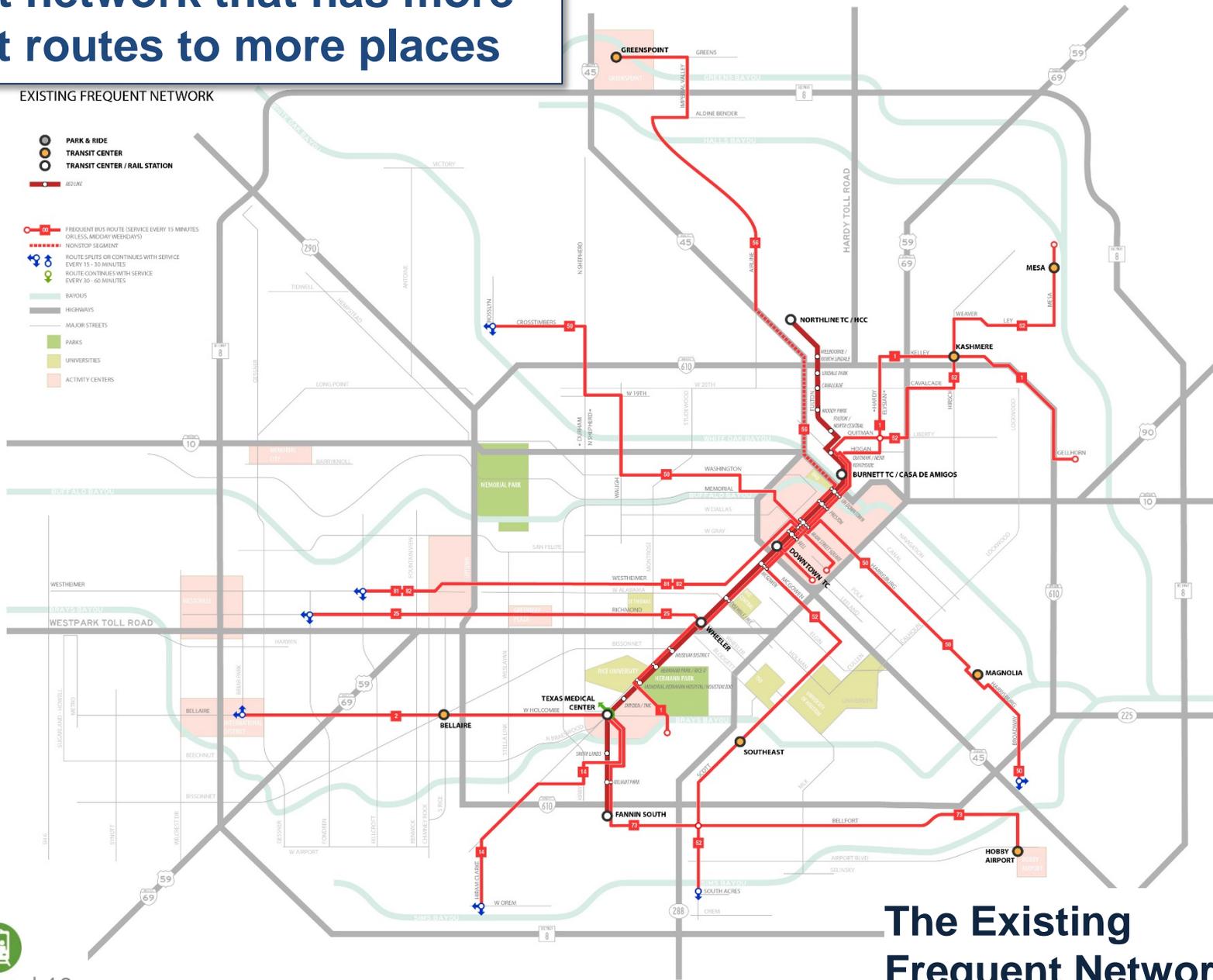
# A transit network that has more frequent routes to more places

## EXISTING FREQUENT NETWORK

-  PARK & RIDE
-  TRANSIT CENTER
-  TRANSIT CENTER / RAIL STATION
-  ROUTE

-  FREQUENT BUS ROUTE (SERVICE EVERY 15 MINUTES OR LESS, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY)
-  NONSTOP SEGMENT
-  ROUTE SPLITS OR CONTINUES WITH SERVICE EVERY 15 - 30 MINUTES
-  ROUTE CONTINUES WITH SERVICE EVERY 30 - 60 MINUTES

-  BARRIOS
-  HIGHWAYS
-  MAJOR STREETS
-  PARKS
-  UNIVERSITIES
-  ACTIVITY CENTERS



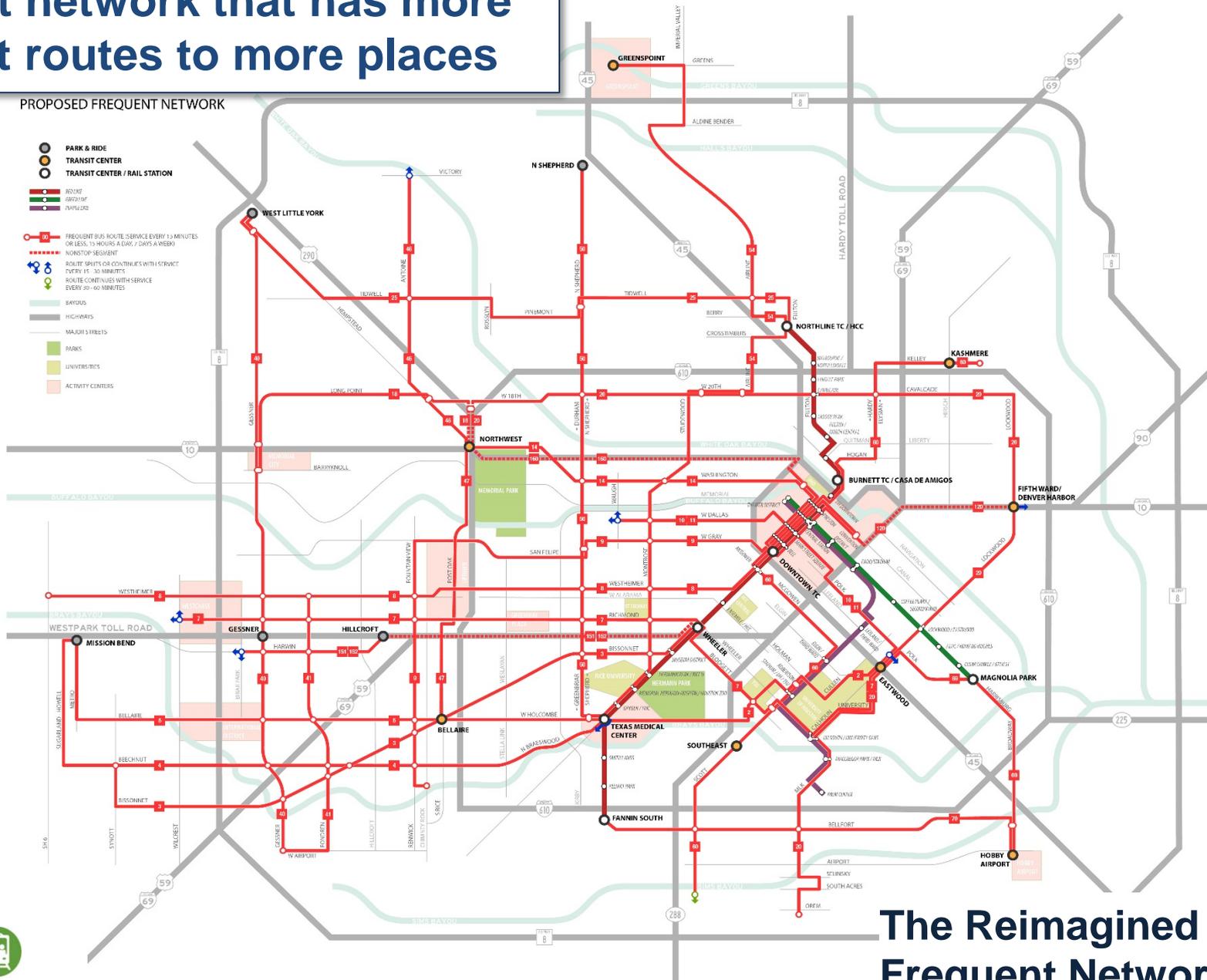
The Existing Frequent Network



# A transit network that has more frequent routes to more places

## PROPOSED FREQUENT NETWORK

- PARK & RIDE
- TRANSIT CENTER
- TRANSIT CENTER / RAIL STATION
- ROUTE
- GARDENWAY
- PARKWAY
- FREQUENT BUS ROUTE SERVICE EVERY 15 MINUTES OR LESS, 15 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK
- NONSTOP SERVICE
- ROUTE SPLITS OR CONTINUES WITH SERVICE EVERY 15-30 MINUTES
- ROUTE CONTINUES WITH SERVICE EVERY 20-40 MINUTES
- BAYOUS
- HIGHWAYS
- MAJOR STREETS
- PARKS
- UNIVERSITIES
- ACTIVITY CENTERS



## A transit network that is much easier to understand and use

- **Simpler, straighter routes** with few route branches or deviations
- **Better maps and tools** for route planning
- **Updated route numbering** that helps riders navigate the system
- **Proposed route names aligned with primary street** of travel
  - If you know the street network then you can quickly understand the transit network

Mission Bend P&R



5 Bellaire



North Shepherd P&R

50 Shepherd

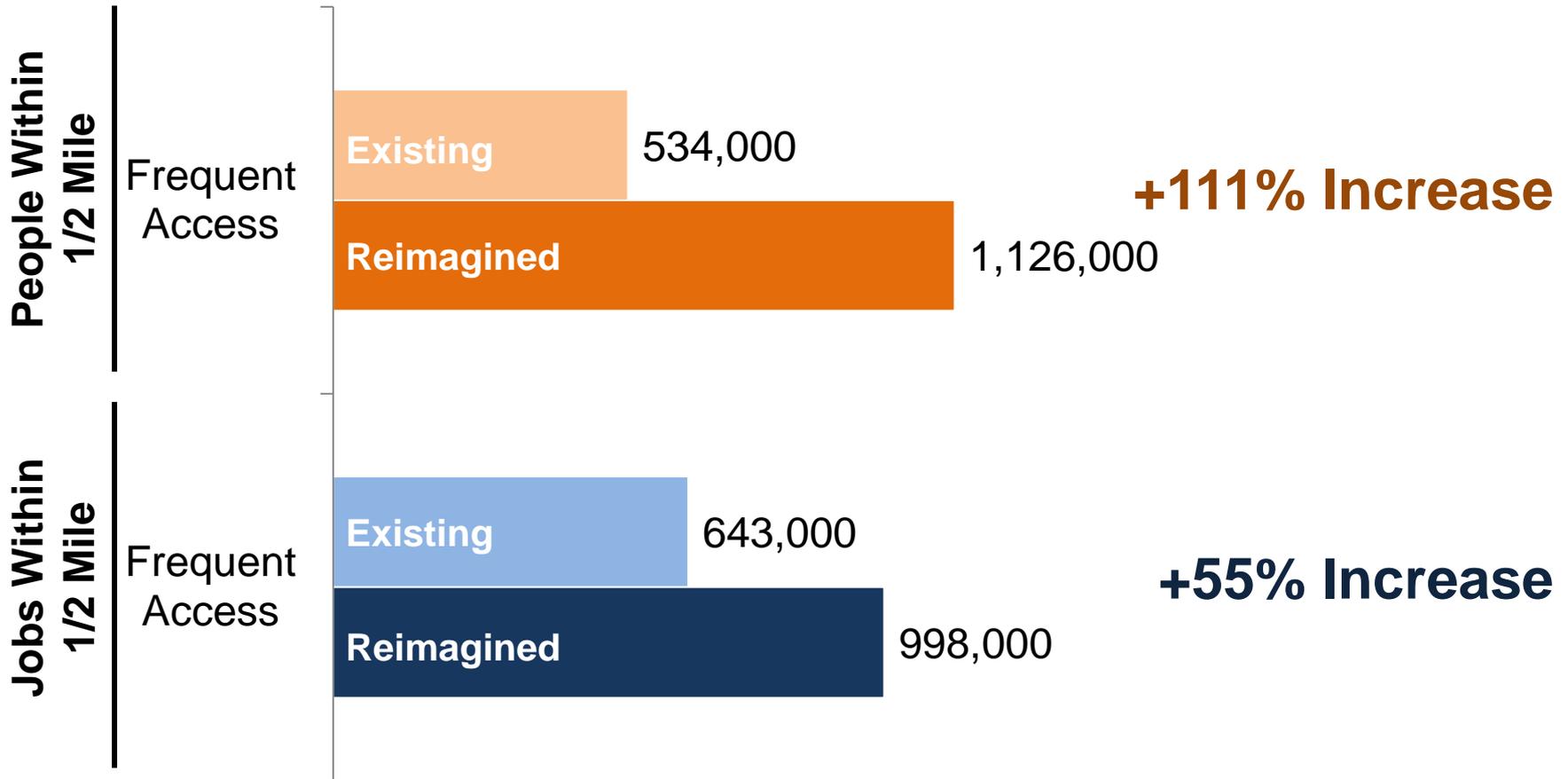
Texas Medical Center Transit Center

Examples of Straight, Frequent Route on Namesake Street



# A transit network that connects more people to more jobs

The Reimagined Network Plan **connects a million people to a million jobs on the frequent network**

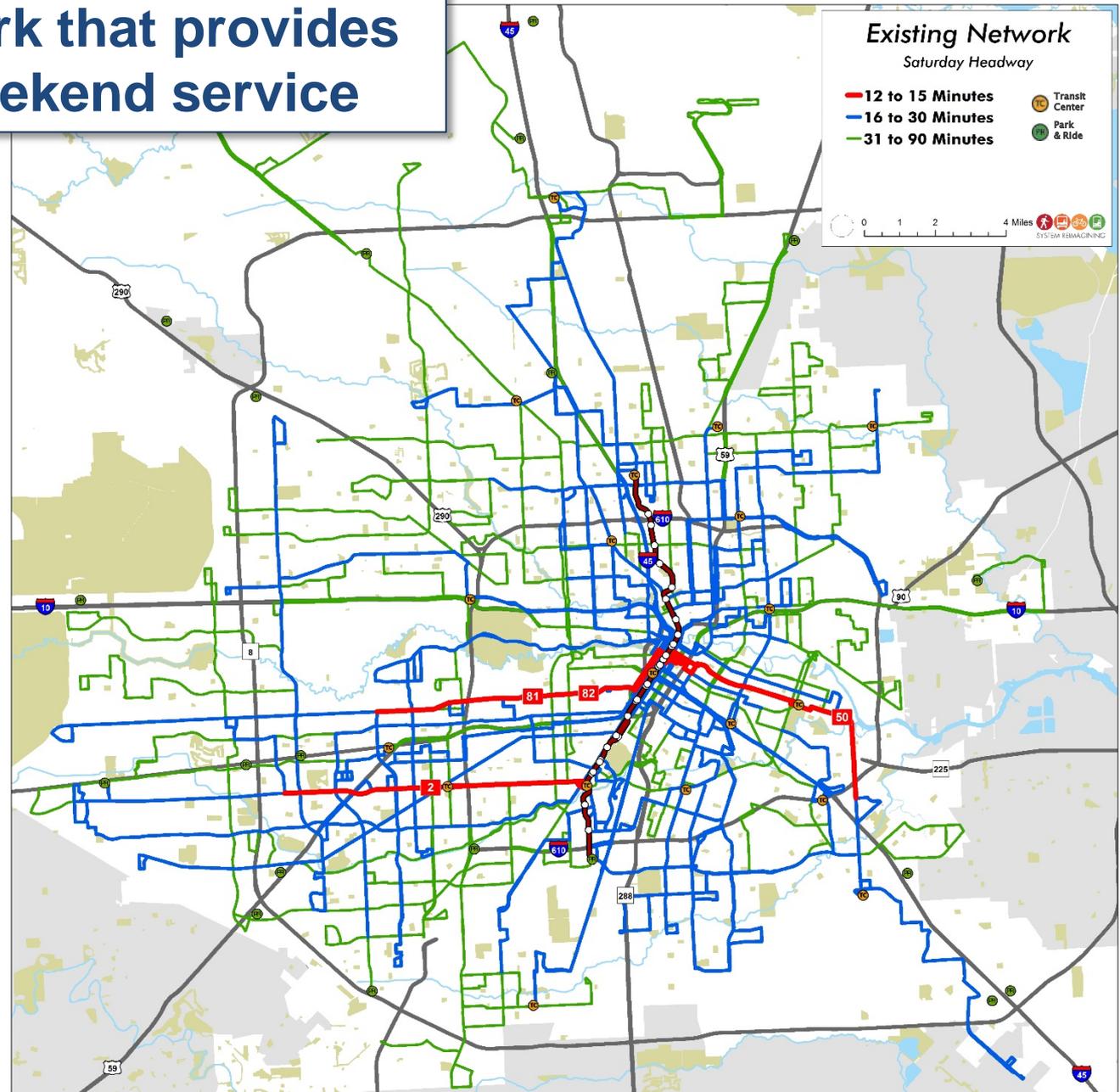


# A transit network that provides much better weekend service

## Current Saturday Service

- Significantly less service is provided on Saturdays than currently provided on weekdays

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**Blue:** 16 to 30 minute headways  
**Green:** 31+ minute headways

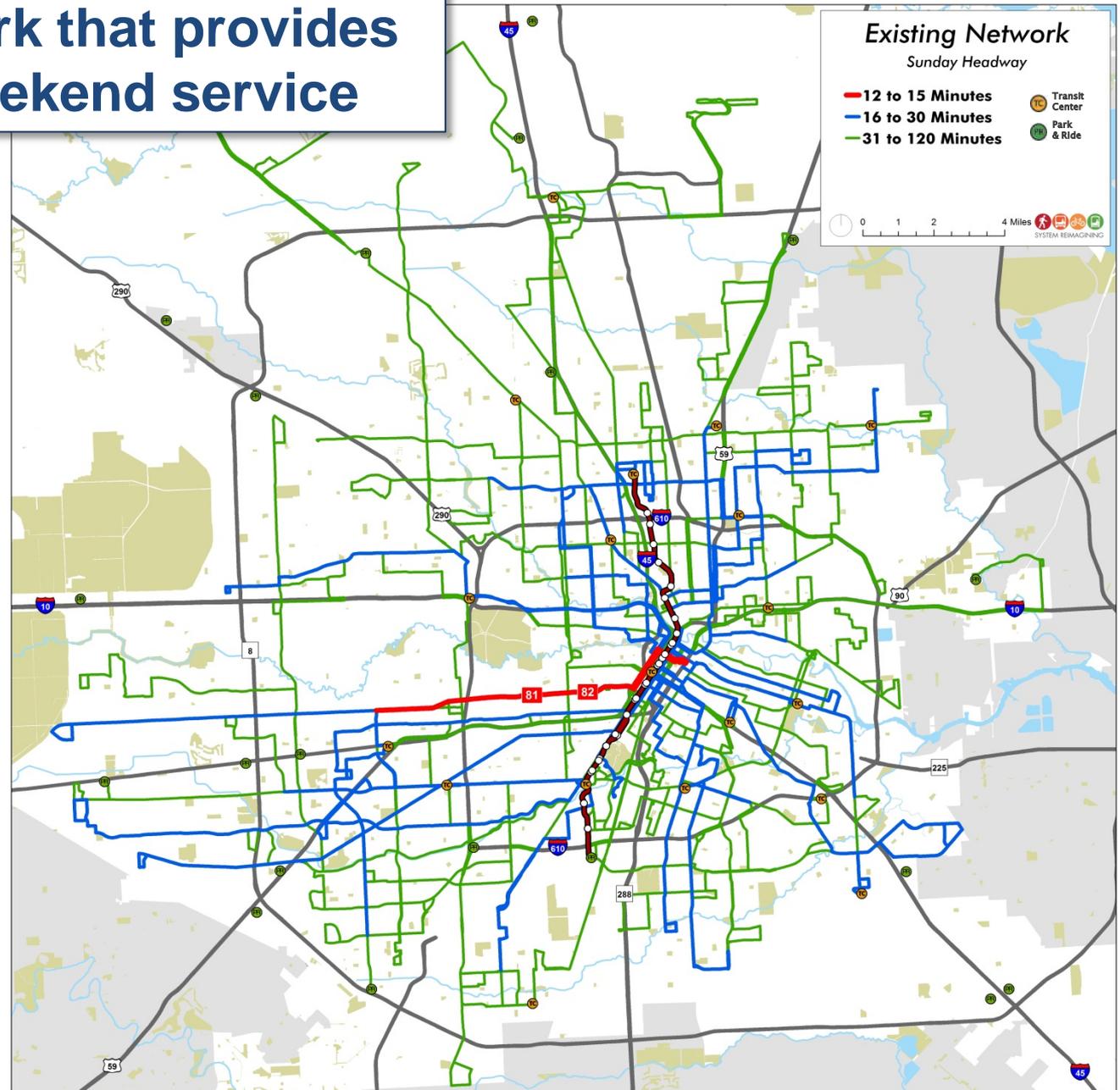


# A transit network that provides much better weekend service

## Current Sunday Service

- Even less service is provided on Sundays than currently provided on Saturdays

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**Blue:** 16 to 30 minute headways  
**Green:** 31+ minute headways

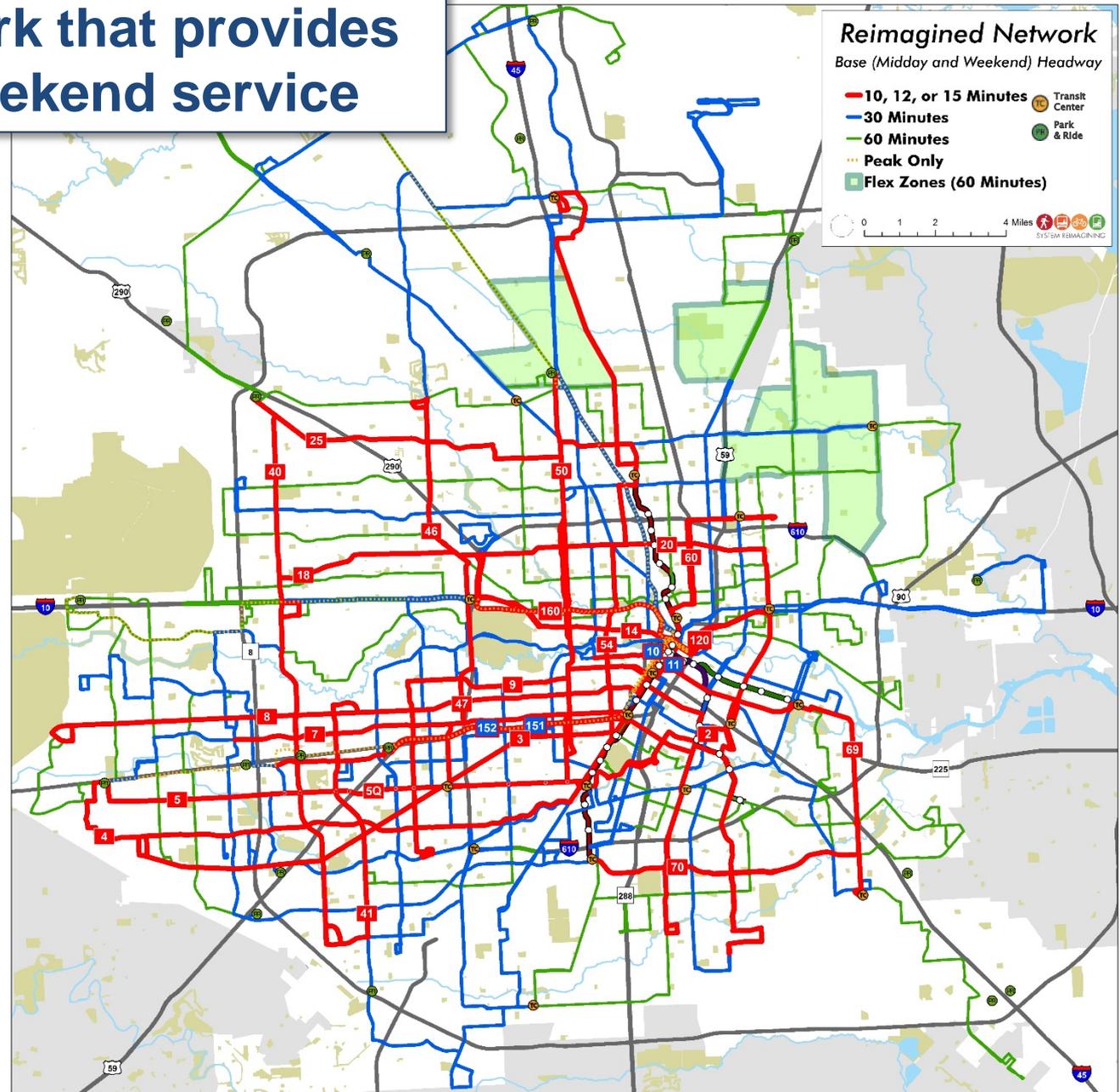


# A transit network that provides much better weekend service

## Reimagined Weekend Service

- Weekend service matching weekday midday service
- Serves non-peak employment and other trip purposes

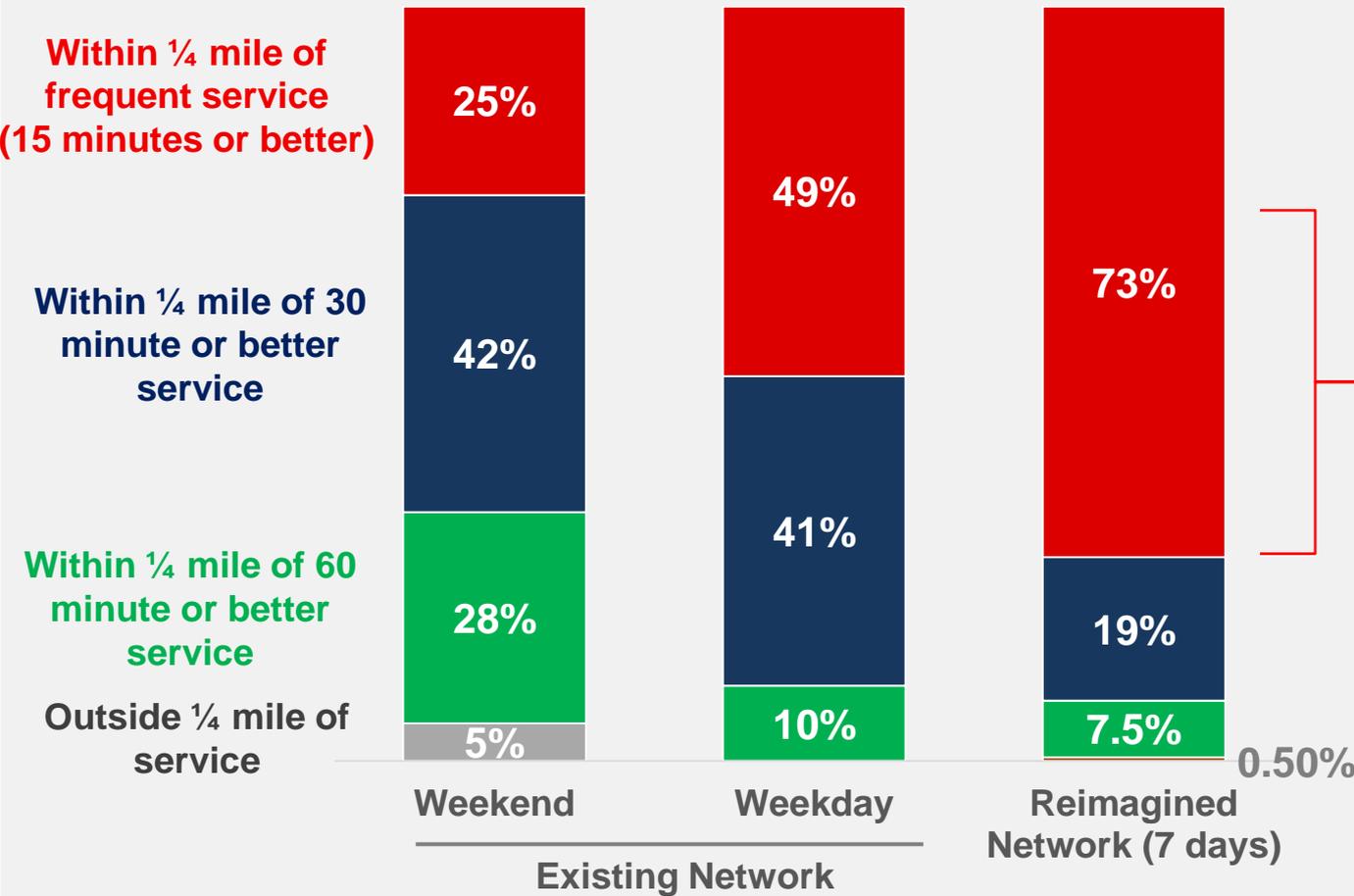
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# A transit network that better serves METRO's current riders

Percent of Typical Weekday Local Boardings of 207,000

93% of current boardings can access the system at the same stop they do today



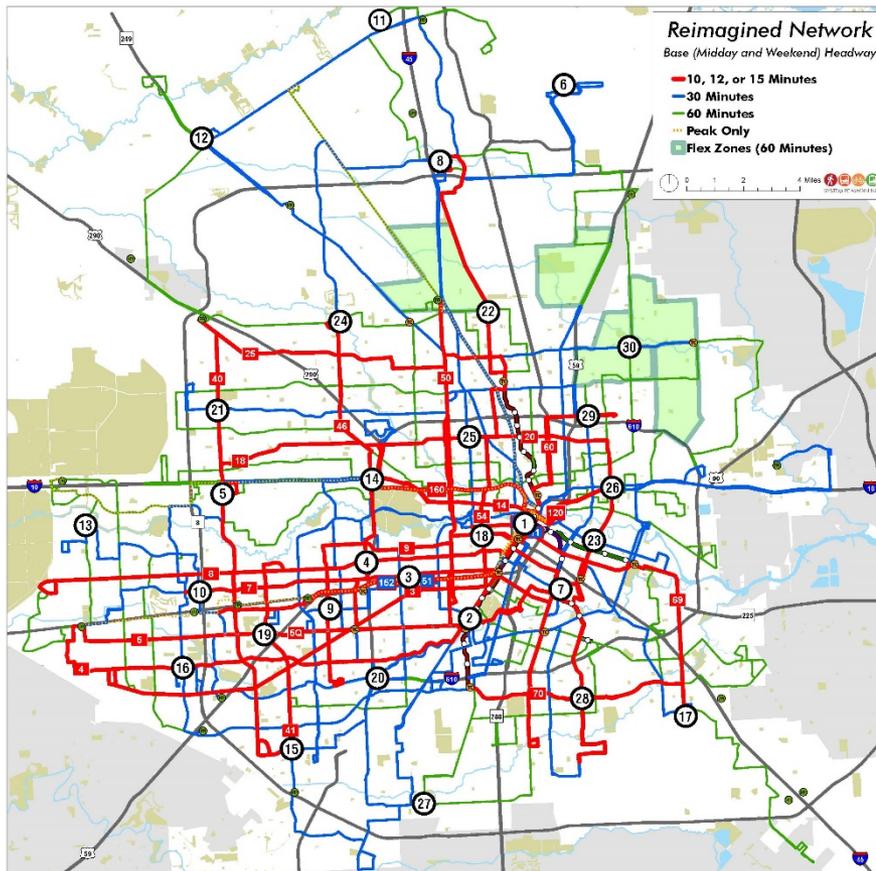
99,000 more current boardings would have close access to all-week frequent service

Most of this 0.5% are just over 1/4 mile and nearly all less than 1/2 mile; the farthest is 1.2 miles.



# A transit network that provides faster, more reliable trips

## Significant Travel Time Improvements Between 30 Regional Destinations



Map of 30 Destinations



\* Trip times include average walking, waiting and on-vehicle travel time

\*\* May be prioritized to address with future system improvements

Trip times were calculated between 30 destinations in the METRO service areas (870 total trips analyzed)

Analyzed Trips\*:

- **Faster by 20 minutes or more: 28%**
- **Faster by 10-19 minutes or more: 30%**
- **Faster by 5-9 minutes: 19%**
- **Slower by 5 minutes or more: 6%\*\***

# A transit network that provides faster, more reliable trips

## Improved Reliability for Riders

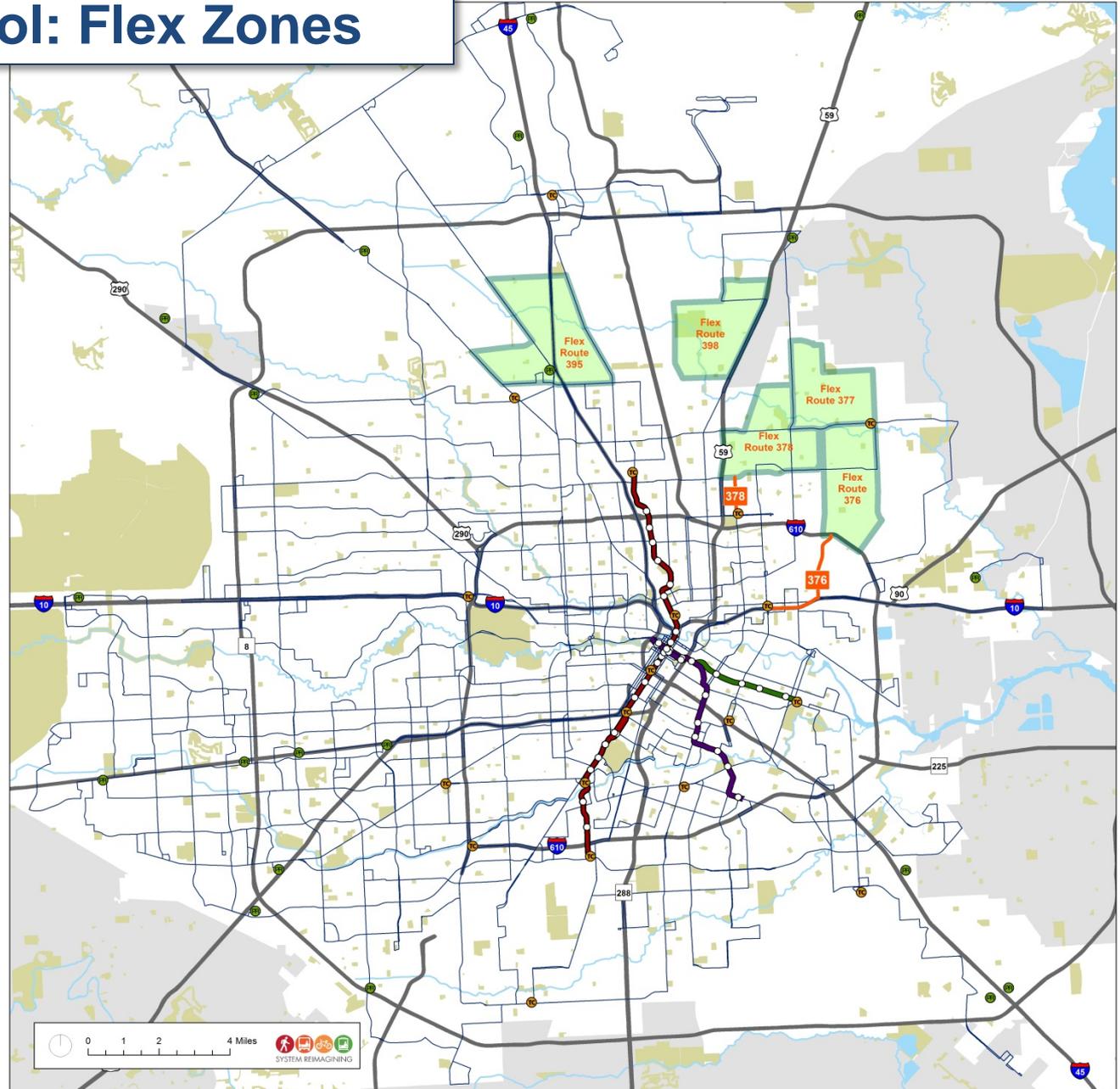
- More **higher frequency routes** mean **shorter and safer wait for next bus**, especially if one bus has issues
- Almost **30% fewer buses crossing freight rail lines** per day – a major source of delay
- **Fewer extremely long routes**, which tend to have greater on-time performance challenges
  - Zero proposed routes over 110 minutes one-way vs. 5 in current system



# New Service Tool: Flex Zones

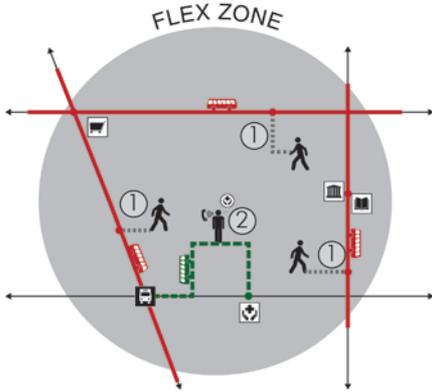
## 5 Proposed Flex Zones

- **376** - Fifth Ward/ Denver Harbor
- **377** - Mesa
- **378** - Kashmere
- **395** - North Shepherd
- **398** - Jensen



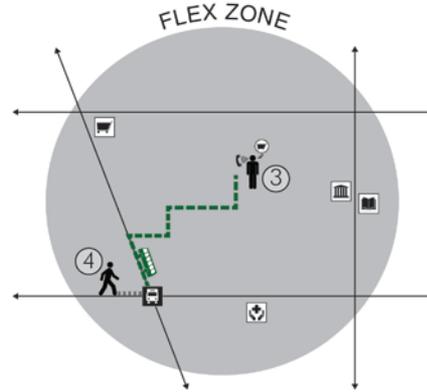
# New Service Tool: Flex Zones

## How Does it Work?



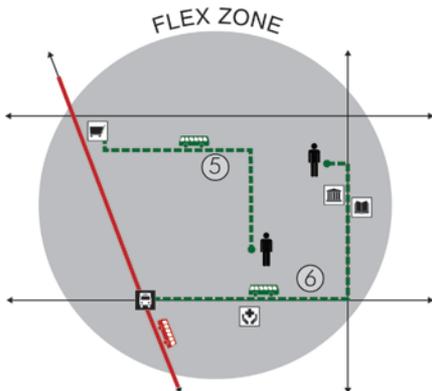
### Riders in Flex Zone Have a Choice:

- ① Walk to traditional fixed route service nearby
- ② Utilize the new Flex Zone service



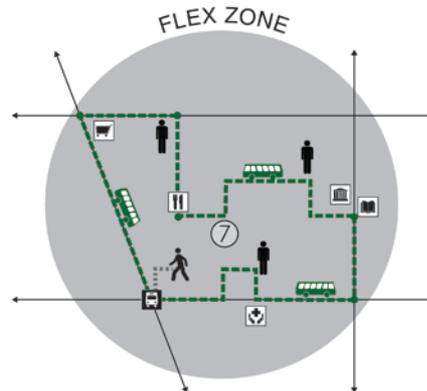
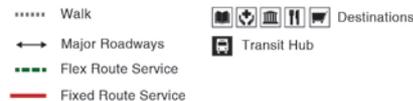
### How Flex Zones work:

- ③ Riders can call ahead to reserve a bus pickup either from their home or another destination within the zone, or
- ④ Meet the bus at a specific time and connection point, such as a transit center



### Where does it go?

- ⑤ The bus will take you to another destination within the zone, or
- ⑥ The bus will take you to the transit center where you can connect to the rest of the bus system



### How does it get there?

- ⑦ The route will depend on other pickup requests and destinations in the zone in that time period. The trip will be optimized to try and minimize riders' travel times and allow the bus to return to the connection points on schedule.



# A transit network built to support future growth

**The Reimagined Network was developed with the future in mind to make it easier to improve future service without needing to reimagine again**

## **Potential network enhancements as resources allow**

- Expand the Frequent Grid – increase frequency on existing 30 minutes (blue) routes to frequent
- Improve travel times
  - Quicklines such as Westheimer or Richmond
  - Additional express freeway service for hub-to-hub connections
- Adjust spans to meet demand
- Expand the reach of the network
- Improved amenities to enhance customer experience
- Enhanced branding and marketing of service offerings



# Providing Feedback on the Plan

**We need your input!; the METRO Board will not move forward with the plan until they hear from our customers and the community**

- **Public meetings:** Held at various locations around the METRO Service Area
- **Neighborhood and Mobile Meetings:** METRO representatives will be at neighborhood meetings and transit centers to discuss the plan
- **Website:** [www.RideMETRO.org](http://www.RideMETRO.org) Or [www.TransitSystemReimagining.com](http://www.TransitSystemReimagining.com)
  - Get more details about the plan including the interactive network map
  - Provide feedback
  - Get the latest updates on public meetings, neighborhood and mobile meetings, and event schedules
  - Download large scale maps, plan details, background information and Google Earth files of the plan



# 16 Public Meeting Locations

Open House Meetings Schedule 6 – 8 pm

- 1. Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**  
Magnolia Multi-Service Center
- 2. Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>**  
Metropolitan Multi-Service Center
- 3. Tuesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
Ellis Memorial Church of Christ
- 4. Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>**  
Trini Mendenhall Community Center
- 5. Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>**  
Houston Community College –  
Northwest - Spring Branch Campus
- 6. Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup>**  
Houston Community College –  
Northwest – Alief Campus
- 7. Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup>**  
Baker-Ripley Neighborhood Center
- 8. Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>**  
White Oak Conference Center
- 9. Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>**  
Hiram Clarke Multi-Service Center
- 10. Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>**  
Westbury Baptist Church
- 11. Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>**  
Third Ward Multi-Service Center
- 12. Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup>**  
Sunnyside Multi-Service Center
- 13. Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
Mangum-Howell Center
- 14. Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup>**  
Northeast Multi-Service Center
- 15. Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>**  
Acres Homes Multi-Service Center
- 16. Thursday, July 31<sup>st</sup>**  
Kashmere Multi-Service Center

