

EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

DETROIT PEOPLE MOVER –
SYSTEM PLAN AND DOWNTOWN MOBILITY STUDY

OCTOBER 2025



AECOM



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAATA	Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority
ADR	Average daily rate
APM	Automated People Mover
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
AV	Autonomous vehicle
BRT	Bus rapid transit
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rates
CARES Act	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
CBD	Central Business District
CFDF	Convention Facility Development Fund
COD	City of Detroit
CPC	City of Detroit City Planning Commission
CRRSSS	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act
CTF	Comprehensive Transportation Fund
CY	Calendar Year
D2A2	Detroit to Ann Arbor Express
DAX	Detroit Air Xpress
DDOT	Detroit Department of Transportation
DDP	Downtown Detroit Partnership
DEGC	Detroit Economic Growth Corporation
DMC	Detroit Medical Center
DPM	Detroit People Mover
DPW	Department of Public Works
DTC	Detroit Transportation Corporation
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	DTC fiscal year (July 1 to June 30)
FFY	Federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30)
HRD	City of Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department
IJJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
JLA	Joe Louis Arena
JTA	Jacksonville Transit Authority
LBO	Local Bus Operating Assistance Program
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
MEDC	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
MOD	Mobility-Oriented Development
OMI	Office of Mobility Innovation
PCA	Public Center Adjacent
PDD	City of Detroit Planning and Development Department
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
PTS	Passenger transit Station



RPTC	Rosa Parks Transit Center
RTA	Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan
SCADA	supervisory control and data acquisition
SEMCOG	Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
SEMTA	Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority
SMART	Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation
TAM	Transit Asset Management
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
TTC	Toronto Transit Commission
UMTA	Urban Mass Transportation Administration
UPT	Unlinked Passenger Trip
UTDC	Urban Transportation Development Corporation
U2C	Ultimate Urban Circulator
UZA	Urbanized Area
WSU	Wayne State University



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY PURPOSE

The Detroit People Mover (DPM) System Plan and Downtown Mobility Study is an opportunity to align future investments in transit services to address the needs of residents, employees, employers, and visitors in Downtown Detroit. The study will result in actionable strategies to improve the DPM and other transit services in the short- and long-term. These strategies will seek to improve the existing system, rethink its current configuration, and explore opportunities for expansion.

The DPM opened for service in 1987 and was built to help support a declining downtown, as cities across the U.S. experienced disinvestment in the face of suburbanization. Today, this trend has reversed, and the DTC seeks to identify how it can invest in improved mobility, accessibility, and overall quality of life in a vibrant downtown. Through this study, the Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC, the organization that owns and operates the DPM) seeks to address three key challenges:



The DPM is approaching its useful life and is in need of investment to maintain and improve operations.



Downtown Detroit is evolving from an office-centric district into a neighborhood that supports residents, businesses, workers, and tourists, with entertainment, shopping, parking, and special events



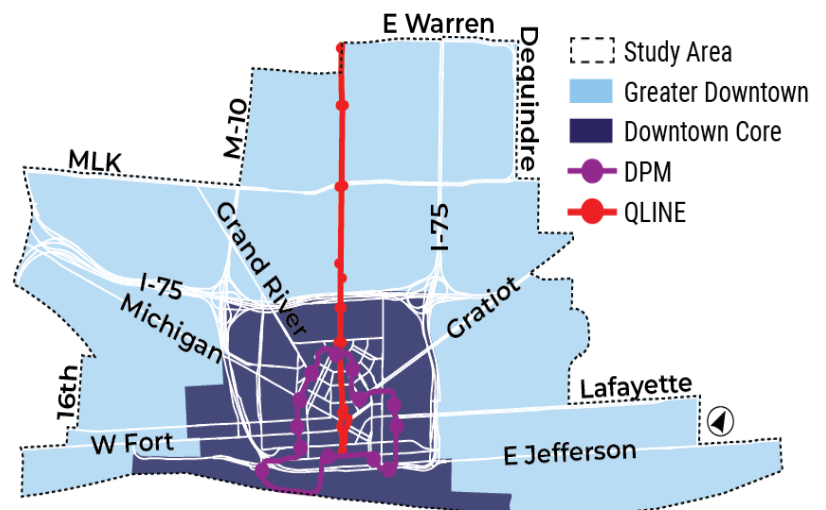
Changing land uses and post-covid travel patterns are changing how people interact with the DPM and Downtown Detroit.

STUDY AREA

This plan looks beyond Detroit's traditional Central Business District to explore DPM's role in improving mobility across a larger area. The study area for this process comprises the census tracts within a 1-mile radius of a DPM station.

There are two zones: the **Downtown Core**, which includes the census tracts in which the DPM currently operates, and **Greater Downtown**, which includes the census tracts that are fully or partially within a 1-mile radius of existing DPM stations.

Figure 1: Study Area





THE DETROIT PEOPLE MOVER

The DPM is an elevated rail system serving 13 stations in Downtown Detroit. As an automated people mover (APM), the system’s driverless two-car trains rely on an automated train control system to complete its 2.9-mile one-way loop. The fully grade-separated system is not affected by traffic congestion, signal delays, or street closures, allowing it to maintain consistent travel times and operations. The system maintains one maintenance facility spanning 49,000 square feet.

The DPM opened on July 31, 1987, as part of an effort to improve circulation downtown and help catalyze development and interest in the area, reaffirming Downtown Detroit’s role as the commercial, financial, and recreational center of the region.

Table 1 provides an overview of the DTC’s operational and financial performance. It highlights the changes in performance before and after the pandemic, and shows a drop in ridership and passenger miles followed by gradual recovery.

Table 1: DPM System and Trends

Measure	System Statistic
Mode	APM
Route Miles	2.9 Miles
Stations	13
Maintenance Facilities	1
Vehicles	12
Year Built	1987
2019 Ridership	1,606,083
2023 Ridership	655,283
2024 Ridership	1,075,364
2019 Passenger Miles	2,395,476
2023 Passenger Miles	839,393
2019 Revenue Miles	506,223
2023 Revenue Miles	208,566
Fares	Free
2023 Operating Expenses	\$15.4 M
2023 Capital Expenses	\$1.7 M

DPM Ridership

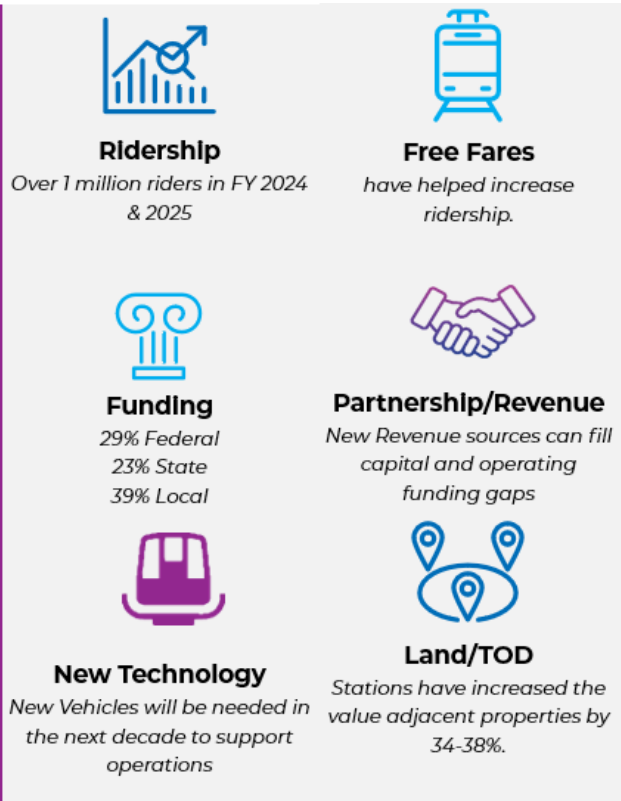
Despite fewer office workers downtown, entertainment, major events, and free fares are supporting a rebound after Covid-19 shutdowns. New developments and activity centers may change how stations are utilized.

DPM Funding

The DPM is heavily reliant on federal, state, and city resources to fund its \$20.6 million budget. There may be opportunities to explore other funding options, such as the partnership with Priority Waste that subsidizes fares.

DPM System Assets

The DPM system is approaching its useful life and in need of investment. Stations could be more recognizable, and the trains need to be replaced. Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) trains and new technologies are potential short- and long-term solutions.

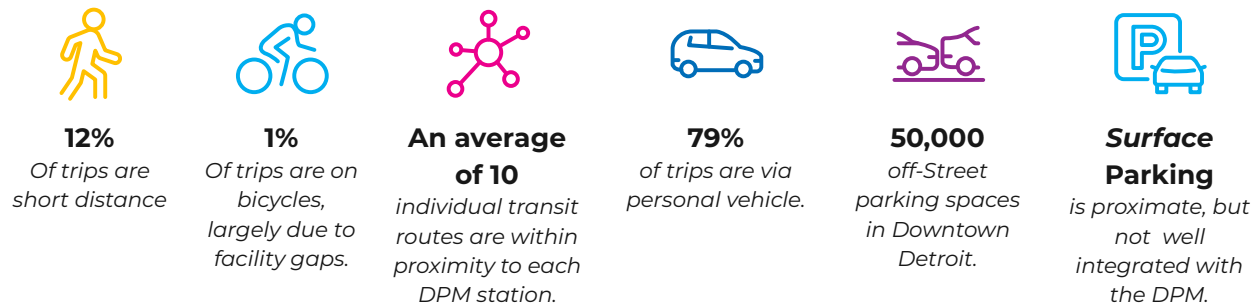




Travel Patterns

Downtown Detroit is accessible to multiple transportation modes, mostly with a focus on travel into and out of the Downtown Core, while the DPM facilitates travel across the Downtown Core. Private vehicles are a primary mode, largely due to the automobile-centric planning and the availability of parking. Public transit is provided by multiple that connect at key hubs in Downtown and serve the broader region. Micromobility movement to and in the Downtown Core is supported by a mix of dedicated and on-street infrastructure, though their large gaps in the network, contributing to low utilization. Shared bicycle and e-scooter programs are also available.

Fast Facts



Across the study area, some key travel patterns are currently indirectly served by transit, requiring a transfer between routes and services. There are opportunities to more directly connect Downtown with other neighborhoods that are common origin-destination pairs including: West Side Industrial, Lafayette Park, Eastern Market, the Detroit Medical Center, and the Cass Corridor.



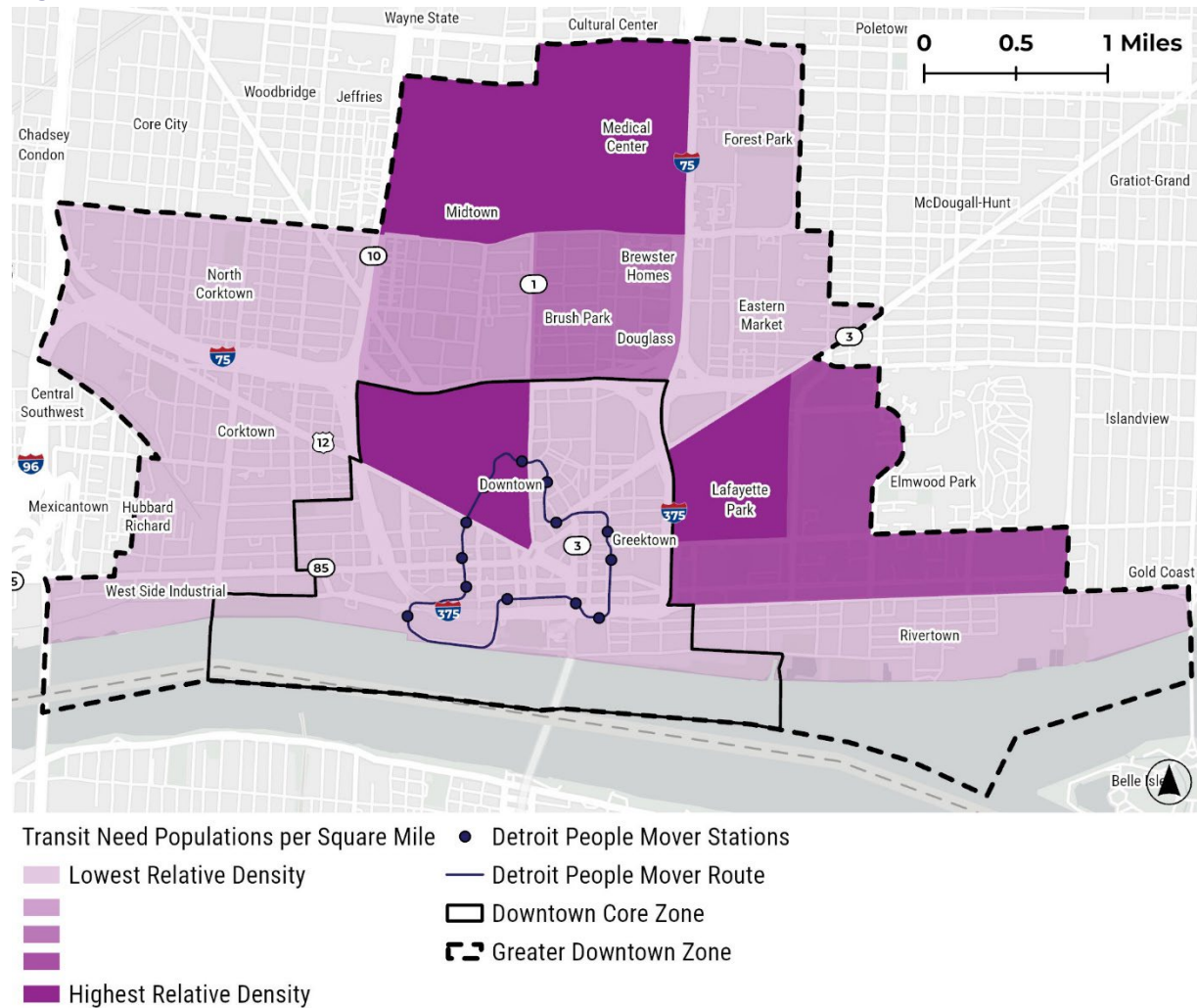
Demographics and Development

The total population in the study area, Greater Downtown, and the Downtown Core has not experienced significant change over the last decade. Of the downtown Detroit population:

- Residents are slightly younger than the average for City of Detroit residents.
- Both the study area and the Downtown Core contain a majority-minority population. However, when compared with the City of Detroit, both areas have a smaller minority proportion.
- Households without a vehicle are significantly higher in both the study area and the Downtown Core than citywide.
- The number of housing units in the study area increased gradually from 2014-2020, followed by a decline in 2021 and a modest recovery near 2020 levels by 2023.

- Jobs are currently concentrated in the Downtown Core and at the Detroit Medical Center. Between 2014 and 2021, job numbers have fluctuated in the study area
- Areas with high transit need based on the density of populations that tend to rely more on transit are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Transit Need



Population and jobs are both projected to grow across the study area between 2020 and 2050, according to the SEMCOG 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast:



Jobs

Total jobs are expected to grow across the study area. Areas with high relative job density that are also projected to grow the most are Midtown, Medical Center, and Downtown.



Changing Markets

Job growth in leisure and hospitality is projected to be significant. The sector is predicted to be the largest in the study area by 2050, overtaking public administration.



Population is Growing

Areas with high relative population density that are also projected to grow the most are Brush Park, Lafayette Park, Elmwood Park, and Downtown.

Wayne State

Woodbridge

Jeffries

Core City

Chadsey Condon

Medical Center

Forest Park

Midtown

North Corktown

Brewster Homes

Brush Park

Douglass

Eastern Market

Central Southwest

Corktown

Hubbard Richard

Mexicantown

West Side Industrial

Downtown

Greektown

Lafayette Park

Elmwood Park

Rivertown

Gold Coast

Belle Isle

Gratiot-Grand

McDougall-Hunt

Polertown

0 0.5 1 Miles

2020 People per Square Mile

2020-2050 Projected Change in People per Square Mile

36,481

0

-6,528

+23,642

● Detroit People Mover Stations

— Detroit People Mover Route

□ Downtown Core Zone

□ Greater Downtown Zone



Growth Areas and Transit Need

Residential and hotel development are likely to comprise the majority of new development activity in the study area in the near future, with sporadic opportunities for new office and retail development.

The areas of greatest real estate density are concentrated in the Downtown Core Zone, in the Midtown/Medical Center District, and in the areas between these districts. These areas are also where much of the new real estate development has occurred in recent years, and where many of the development pipeline projects are located.

Office



The Downtown Core contains 78 percent of all office buildings constructed or renovated since 2010 in the study area, indicating strong investment in future growth.



Retail

Retail space in Detroit is concentrated in the Downtown Core. However, unlike office space, retail extends further beyond the core, along major roads such as Jefferson, Michigan, and Woodward Avenues, Randolph Street, and throughout Cass Corridor.

Multifamily



As of 2024, there are 269 multifamily buildings concentrated in the center of the Downtown Core as well as in Midtown.



Tourism

The Downtown Core is a key hospitality district, home to about 20 hotels offering roughly 5,100 rooms. Since 2010, about 21 hotels have been built or renovated in the study area, and 17 of them, or roughly 81 percent, are located in the Downtown Core.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Key goals and strategies to improve transit services and downtown mobility include:



Increasing awareness and visibility of the DPM's existing services.



Enhancing connectivity to amenities, key activity centers, and growth areas.



Improving integration between transit services, parking, and other modes.



Leveraging existing DPM assets to facilitate transit-oriented development and placemaking.



Catalyzing and supporting economic development and opportunity.



Identifying new revenue/funding sources to maintain and expand services.



INTRODUCTION

The Detroit People Mover (DPM) is an elevated rail system that serves 13 stations in Downtown Detroit along a 2.9-mile looped guideway. Operating since 1987, the DPM has become an iconic feature of the City of Detroit. In 2024, the system helped over one million riders traverse Downtown Detroit. As the system approaches its 40th year in operation and as Downtown Detroit experiences renewed interest and investment, it is time to reconsider realigning the DPM's with how people want to move around Downtown Detroit today.

The DPM was planned and designed at a time when downtowns across the U.S. were in decline and suburbs were booming. The system was part of a broader set of strategies and investments meant to support the revitalization of Downtown Detroit by improving mobility, reducing congestion, and encouraging private investment. Today, this trend has reversed, and downtowns are thriving.

The *DPM System Plan and Downtown Mobility Study* is an opportunity to shape the future of how people move around Downtown Detroit and the neighborhoods that surround it. Downtown Detroit is changing, with new investment transforming the area into a vibrant neighborhood where people live, work, and visit for its parks, restaurants, shopping, entertainment, and special events. The DPM has seen this same shift, particularly with significant ridership increases from residents and tourists. Through this study, the Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC, the organization that owns and operates the DPM) will be reimagining the role of the DPM in how people travel to and around Downtown Detroit and its environs, aiming to enhance access for all. The study will result in actionable strategies to improve the DPM and other transit services in the short- and long-term. These strategies will seek to improve the existing system, rethink its current configuration, and explore opportunities for expansion.

To contextualize these changes, DTC is analyzing and documenting existing conditions in Downtown Detroit and its surrounding neighborhoods. Through documentation and analysis of the original goals of the DPM, the characteristics of the system, the current state of Downtown, and forecasts of the area's future, the Existing Conditions Assessment will inform a shared vision for the future of the DPM and its role in shaping mobility in Downtown Detroit.

The *DPM System Plan and Downtown Mobility Study* is being conducted in parallel to a strategic plan for the DTC. Together, these planning processes will guide the future of the DTC and DPM, and therefore, how people get around Downtown Detroit.

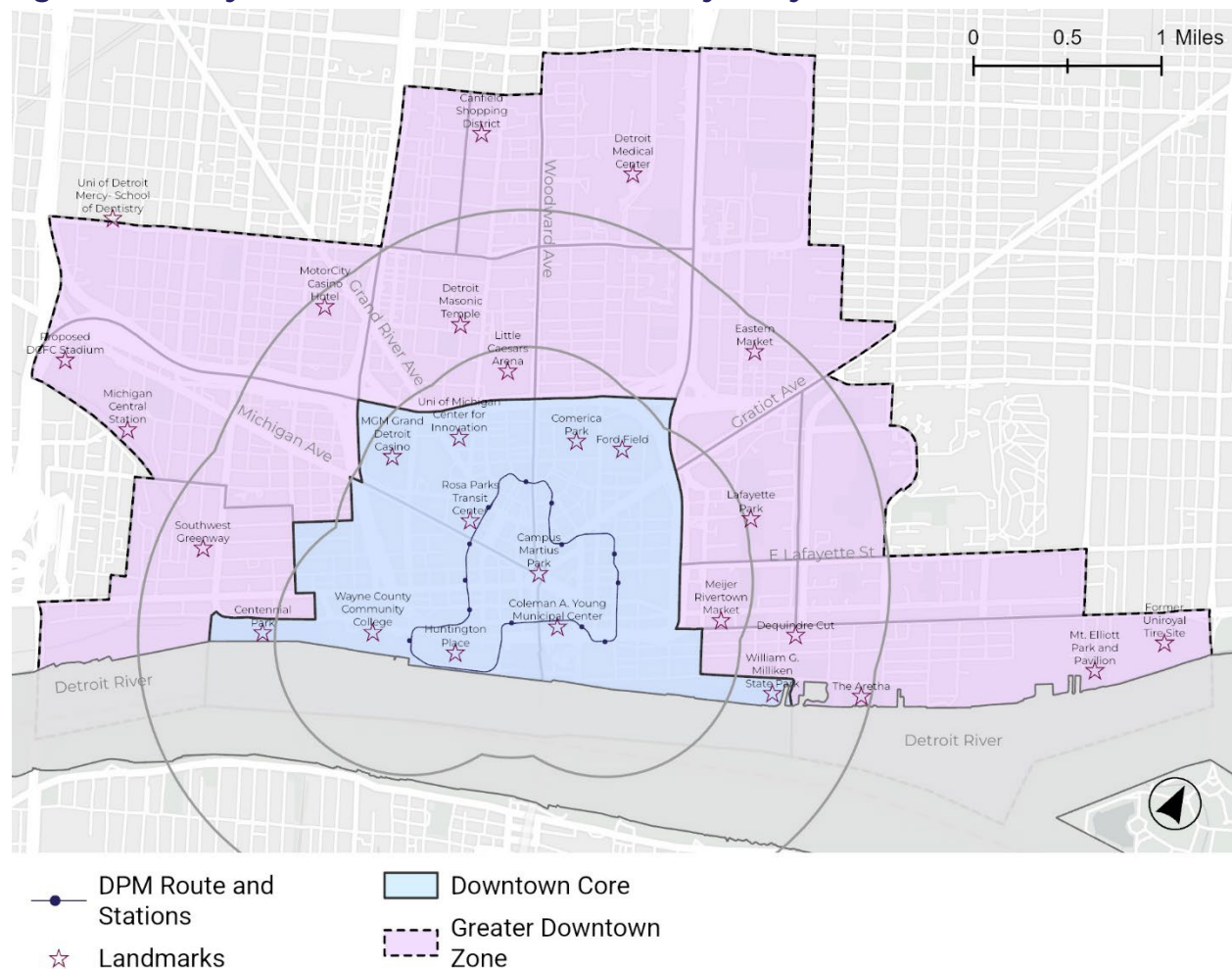
STUDY AREA

This plan looks beyond Detroit's traditional Central Business District (CBD), to explore patterns in a broader swath of the city, and to consider the DTC and DPM's roles in improving mobility across this area. The study area for this process comprises the areas within a 1-mile radius of a DPM station. For the purposes of data aggregation for demographics and travel

patterns, census tracts that are fully or partially within this radius are used to define this study area (see Figure 4).

This study area includes two zones: the Downtown Core and Greater Downtown. The **Downtown Core** includes the census tracts in which the DPM currently operates. This corresponds approximately with the boundaries of Detroit's CBD. This zone will primarily be used to assess the existing DPM service area. **Greater Downtown** includes all census tracts that are fully or partially within a 1-mile radius of existing DPM stations, excluding those in the Downtown Core. This zone includes areas that are a longer walk from DPM service area or are accessible by transferring to another service or mode. Analysis will help reveal strategies to strengthen connections between these zones.

Figure 4: DPM System Plan and Downtown Mobility Study Area





THE DETROIT PEOPLE MOVER

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The DPM is an elevated rail system serving 13 stations in Downtown Detroit. As an automated people mover (APM), the system's driverless two-car trains rely on an automated train control system to complete its 2.9-mile one-way loop (Figure 5). Though it is automated, central control operators monitor the system 24 hours a day. The DPM is a unique transit mode in North American cities. APMs are more commonly seen in airports where they serve short trips in a relatively small service area. They are also used as downtown circulator systems (e.g., Miami's Metromover) and to provide transit service to broader urban areas (e.g., Vancouver's SkyTrain).

The DPM's trains generally operate at 5-minute frequencies 7 days a week. Service runs on weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to midnight, Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to midnight, and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Completing a full circuit takes about 15 minutes. The DPM currently runs in a counterclockwise loop but can be operated in either direction.

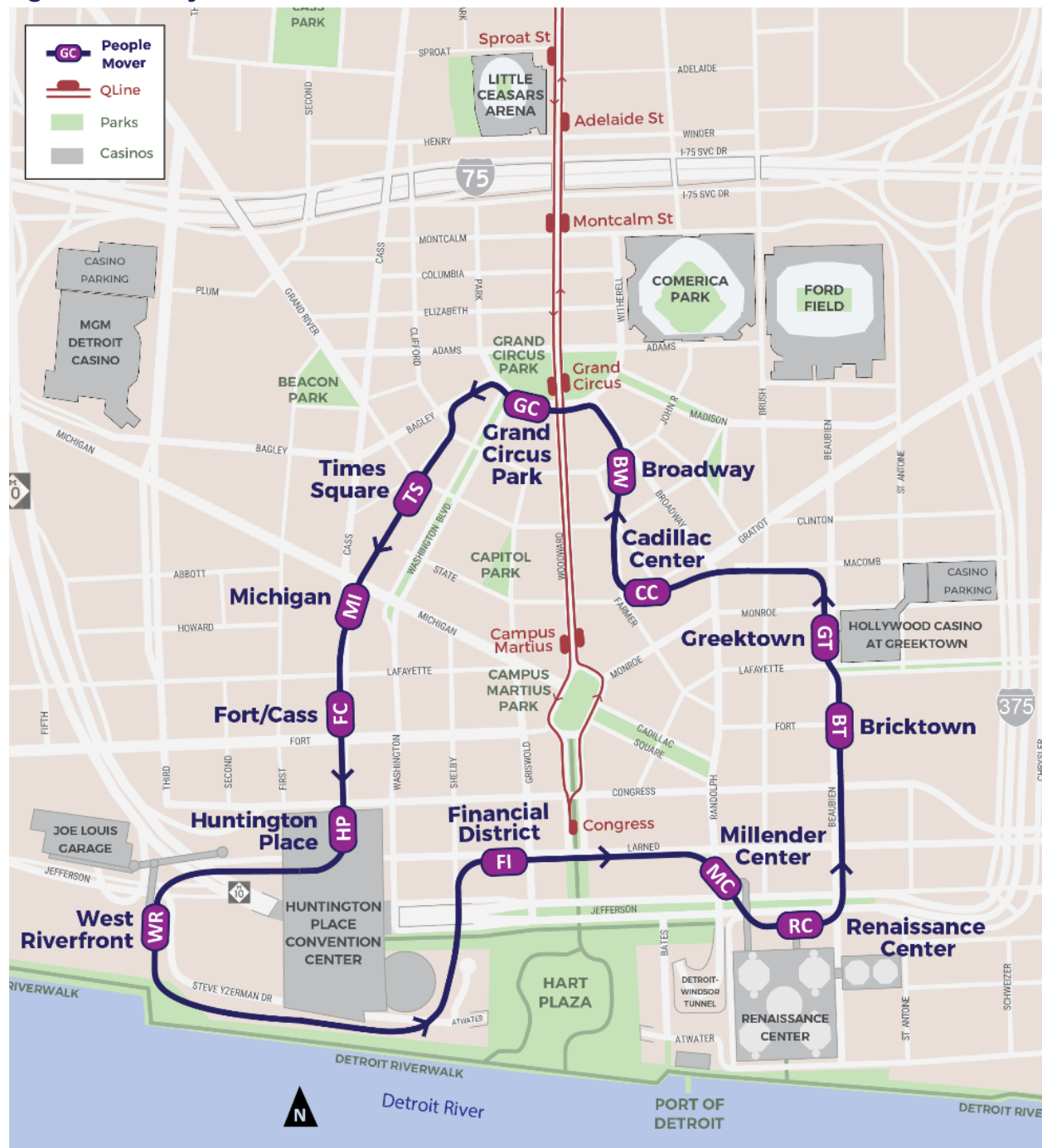
By serving the region's downtown area, the DPM provides access to housing, jobs, shopping, entertainment venues, and other downtown attractions and amenities. In both fiscal year (FY) 2024 and 2025, over one million riders used the system to get to their destinations or to explore Downtown Detroit. The DPM connects riders to other fixed-route transit services in the region including Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation's (SMART) bus routes, and the QLINE streetcar, which is operated by the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA). The DPM also connects with RTA's Detroit to Ann Arbor (D2A2) express bus service, and Detroit Air Xpress (DAX) bus service. Parking facilities are also available near DPM stations, allowing people to park once while visiting Downtown Detroit.

The DPM is owned and operated by the DTC, a public body corporate that was created to construct and operate the DPM. The DTC was organized in 1985 through an interlocal agreement between the City of Detroit and the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA), which later became SMART. The DTC is governed by a six-member board. Four of the board members are City of Detroit employees appointed by the mayor, including the director of DDOT, the finance director, and executives responsible for transportation infrastructure and community and economic development. The Detroit City Council president and the chair of SMART's Board of Directors also sit on the board.¹ The Detroit Transit Police, an independent police force that patrols the DPM's vehicles, stations, and facilities, is also a division of the DTC.

¹DTC. "Articles of Incorporation of Detroit Transportation Corporation, a Michigan Public Body Corporate." October 3, 1985.



Figure 5: DPM System Route



Source: DTC.

THE DETROIT PEOPLE MOVER'S INCEPTION

The DPM opened on July 31, 1987, as part of an effort to improve circulation in Detroit's CBD and help catalyze development and interest in the area, reaffirming Downtown Detroit's role as the commercial, financial, and recreational center of the region. At the time, downtowns across the U.S. were in decline as cities deindustrialized and competed with growing suburbs



as employment, retail, and population centers. New malls and office parks were being developed outside the city, leading to disinvestment downtown. The DPM was intended to support Downtown Detroit by improving navigation in the area, making it easier for people to access retail, increasing the city's attractiveness for conventions and event programming, and encouraging redevelopment of parking lots to higher density, more productive land uses as a result of lower downtown parking demand. The DPM would allow people to park on the periphery of Downtown, so that more valuable land in the core could be redeveloped, creating a more vibrant downtown and generating more tax revenue for the city. At the time, development (such as the Renaissance Center and Hart Plaza) had been occurring along the Detroit River, on the southern edge of downtown. Proponents of the DPM believed that the system would help generate optimism to redevelop and strengthen other parts of Downtown where businesses were closing, offices were vacant, and buildings were being demolished and converted to parking lots. The DPM would connect these new developments with the city's historic downtown core.²

The concept for a downtown people mover was part of a larger proposal developed by SEMTA for a regional transit network that included local and feeder bus services, intermediate-capacity bus and light rail services, and high-capacity rail service. This regional network was intended to support population growth and meet forecasted demand for rush hour travel. Additional people movers were considered desirable to facilitate connections to other parts of the region as well, including the Detroit Medical Center (DMC) and Wayne State University (WSU) area, Fairlane Town Center (where one was built and later decommissioned), Southfield, and Metropolitan Airport.³

Both the federal and state governments were interested in exploring new transportation technologies.⁴ In 1976, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA, the forerunner to the Federal Transit Administration [FTA]) solicited proposals through the Downtown People Mover Demonstration Program, which sought to fund projects that would demonstrate the effectiveness of automated transit systems in city centers. Of interest was understanding how automated systems might reduce operating costs because they did not require drivers. UMTA also wanted to understand how these systems might act as feeder systems or substitutes for more expensive transit modes (such as heavy rail) and what economic impacts they might have on downtown areas.⁵ Cities across the U.S. were initially interested in UMTA's program, which received 38 proposals.⁶ Ultimately, three projects were

² U.S. Department of Transportation Urban Mass Transit Administration. "Downtown People Mover, Detroit, Michigan: Final Environmental Impact Statement." December 1980. <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/296>.

³ SEMTA. "A Preliminary Proposal for High and Intermediate Level Transit in the Detroit Metropolitan Area." March 1974. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015016524368&seq=5>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation UMTA. "Downtown People Mover, Detroit, Michigan: Final Environmental Impact Statement." December 1980. <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/296>.

⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation UMTA. "People Mover Profile: Technology Sharing, a Program of the United States Department of Transportation. 1977.

⁶ U.S. of Transportation UMTA. "Review of Downtown People Mover Proposals: Preliminary Implications for Downtown Applications of Automated Guideway Transit." December 1977.



completed: the DPM, the Miami Metromover (completed in 1986), and Jacksonville's Skyway Express (completed in 1989). All three systems remain in operation, and Jacksonville and Miami's systems have both been extended.

The DPM was projected to accommodate 71,000 weekday passengers in 1990.⁷ When launched, average daily boardings was 14,000. By 2005, it had declined to around 6,000 daily riders. The original ridership projections were never realized, which can be attributed, at least in part, to the decentralization of population and employment patterns with continuing growth in suburban communities, and the cancellation of the feeder rail system.

Ultimately, Detroit's suburbs, and suburbs across the U.S., continued to grow while downtowns foundered. In 1986 and 1987, 11.7 million square feet of office space opened in Detroit's suburbs, equivalent to more than two Renaissance Centers of office space.⁸ The DPM and other revitalization efforts in Detroit were not enough to buck national trends.

Despite disinvestment in Downtown Detroit, evidence suggests that the system did lead to some development and has had a positive impact on property values. The DPM can be attributed in part to the success of Comerica Park and Ford Field, the Opera House, and Campus Martius.⁹ One study found that the DPM has increased the value of commercial properties within its footprint by 39 percent and residential property values by 34 percent.¹⁰

THE DETROIT PEOPLE MOVER TODAY

In recent years, Downtown Detroit, alongside downtowns across the U.S., has been experiencing a revival. There has been renewed optimism about development downtown. Just as the closure of the J.L. Hudson Department Store in 1998 signaled the dominance of the suburban market, recent closures of suburban malls, such as Northland Center, now echo opportunities for downtown businesses.¹¹

Developments downtown are supporting this revitalization. Recent developments on the riverfront at Water Square include luxury residences and a 600-room JW Marriott hotel that is under construction and planned to be completed by 2027.¹² The iconic Hudson's Detroit tower, now Michigan's second tallest building, will soon host GM's new global headquarters alongside retail, residences, and a five-star hotel. Meanwhile, the University of Michigan's

⁷ Beard, Steve and Thomas Rushfeldt. "Environmental Impact Statement for Detroit People Mover" *Transportation Research Record* 921, 19-24. Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 1983. <https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/trr/1983/921/921-005.pdf>.

⁸ Kirk Pinho, "Office Space Race: '80s Building Boom May Have Had Lasting Impact," *Crain's Detroit Business*. March 1, 2015. <https://www.craindetroit.com/article/20150301/NEWS/303019976/office-space-race-80s-building-boom-may-have-had-lasting-impact>.

⁹ American Society of Civil Engineers. "Detroit People Mover: Past, Present and Uncertain Future: Lessons Learned." Utpal Dutta, Ph.D., P.E. and Ramakrishna R. Tadi, Ph.D. April 26, 2012.

¹⁰ DTC. "Transit Oriented Development Study for the Detroit People Mover." April 29, 2016.

¹¹ Costar. "Why Retailers Area Abandoning Traditional Malls." Katie Burke and Linda Moss. May 22, 2023.

¹² City of Detroit. n.d. "Hotel Water Square" <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/planning-and-development-department/community-benefits-ordinance/past-cbo-engagements/hotel-water-square>. Accessed August 1, 2025.



Detroit Center for Innovation is planned to provide an anchor for research and entrepreneurship on the northwest side of Downtown.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of remote work, there have been fewer daily office workers Downtown, with only 50 percent recovery of average daily workers in June 2025 compared with June 2019.¹³ However, Downtown is becoming more of a neighborhood where people live. Since 2019, the number of average daily residents Downtown has grown more than 30 percent since 2019, with a substantial jump in the number of residential units becoming available since 2023.¹⁴ Downtowns have also become places people visit for entertainment, and tourism has become a more critical part of downtown economies. New hotels, the country's best riverfront and public square, and major events like the Detroit Grand Prix and the 2024 NFL Draft are also big draws.^{15, 16} The NFL Draft was a three-day event that is estimated to have brought 775,000 people Downtown.¹⁷ Since the pandemic, the average number of daily Downtown visitors (excluding residents and workers) has been steadily increasing, and on occasion has approached or surpassed 2019 numbers.¹⁸

After the closure of the Joe Louis Arena (JLA) in July 2017, the DPM's 2018 ridership declined by 12 percent and another 11 percent in 2019. The DPM was a key mode of access to the JLA, with people parking in other parts of Downtown Detroit. Then in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a temporary suspension of service that continued to May 2022 as many people shifted to working from home, in-store shopping and dining out halted, and major events and travel plans were cancelled. When the DPM reopened in May 2022, only 6 of the 13 stations were served due to maintenance needs following the prolonged closure. To help attract riders, the \$0.75 fare was waved from May 2022 through October 2022. By June 2023, all stations had reopened. In January 2024, the DTC piloted a zero-fare program sponsored by Priority Waste. In the first 3 months of the year, year-over-year increases in monthly ridership ranged from 96 to 139 percent. Then in April 2024, due in large part to the NFL Draft held in Downtown Detroit, ridership was 270 percent higher than in April 2023. In fall 2024, the DPM had to temporarily suspend service for 11 weeks for a track replacement project but still finished the calendar year with a 64 percent increase in ridership. Despite several setbacks

¹³ DDP. Downtown Detroit Activity Dashboard. "Measuring Downtown Activity." Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://downtowndetroit.org/downtown-dashboard/>.

¹⁴ DDP. "DDP Dataspace Trends: 2023 by the Numbers." Joshua Long. February 28, 2024. <https://downtowndetroit.org/news-insights/2023-by-the-numbers/>.

¹⁵ DDP. "Downtown Detroit celebrates a three-peat victory in USA Today's 10 Best Reader's Choice Awards." August 16, 2025. <https://downtowndetroit.org/news-insights/detroits-campus-martius-park-named-no-1-public-square-in-america-for-third-consecutive-year/>.

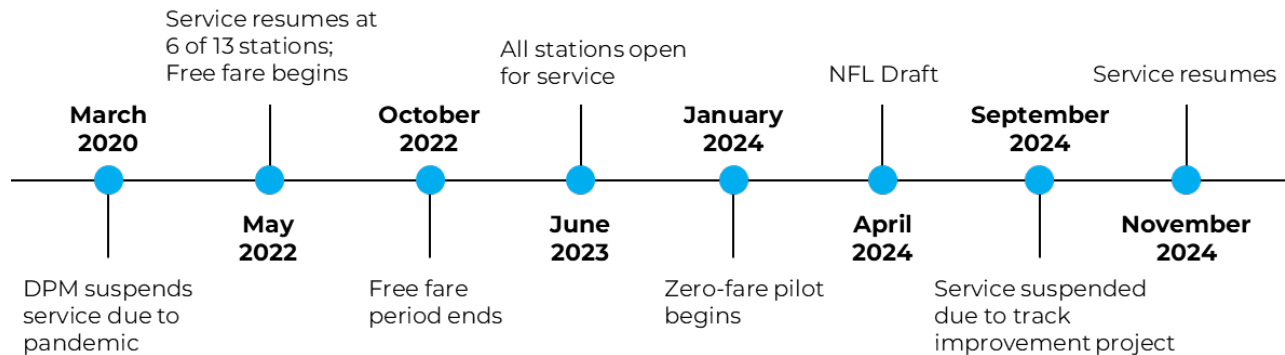
¹⁶ Mackay, Hannah and Myesha Johnson. "Detroit Riverwalk Named Best in US for Third Straight Year." *The Detroit News*, February 19, 2023. <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2023/02/19/detroit-riverwalk-named-best-in-us-for-third-straight-year/69918864007/>.

¹⁷ DDP. "NFL Draft by the Numbers." Joshua Long. June 25, 2024. <https://downtowndetroit.org/news-insights/nfl-draft-by-the-numbers/>.

¹⁸ DDP. Downtown Detroit Activity Dashboard. "Measuring Downtown Activity." Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://downtowndetroit.org/downtown-dashboard/>.

between 2017 and 2023, DPM's ridership has been recovering in recent years and exceeded one million rides in both fiscal years (FY) 2024 and 2025 (see Figure 6 and Table 2).¹⁹

Figure 6: Timeline of Service Suspensions and Key Milestones, 2020 to 2024



In July 2025, the DPM turned 38 years old. As it approaches its useful life benchmark and needs to invest in replacement vehicles and system upgrades, it is time to consider how Downtown Detroit is different than it was in 1987 and what changes are forecasted to come. The *DPM System Plan and Downtown Mobility Study* is an opportunity to consider how the downtown neighborhood is changing and how to adapt the system to unlock Downtown Detroit's potential through improved transit and mobility. When the DPM was originally constructed, it was part of an effort to reverse national trends to restore Downtown Detroit as the regional center of commerce, finance, and recreation. Today, the DPM is part of a downtown that has already achieved that role. A revisioning of the DPM will help develop strategies for how the system can better support the changes that are already happening in Downtown Detroit.

SERVICE DATA

The DPM has had a varied recent service history. Ridership decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic and related closures, but is now increasing in conjunction with downtown reinvestment, fare-free travel opportunities, and the recovery of some pre-pandemic trip patterns. As a result, ridership in FY 2025 was 1,074,884,²⁰ representing the highest annual ridership since the pandemic and the reopening of the DPM. At a station level, ridership is varied and generally aligns with activity surrounding stations.

System Trend Analysis

Most recently, the DPM saw an 80 percent increase in ridership in 2024 and was among the American Public Transportation Association's transit agencies with top ridership gains for

¹⁹ DTC's fiscal year starts on July 1 and ends on June 30.

²⁰ June 2025 Complete Monthly Ridership (with adjustments and estimates).



that year.²¹ DPM ridership has shifted significantly over the past decade, but this most recent success is a key indicator of the DPM's trajectory moving forward.

In FY 2019, the last full year before the pandemic, system-wide ridership totaled 1,735,900, down from 2.4 million in FY 2015, reflecting a gradual decline that was already underway. Declining ridership may be attributable to multiple factors including changing land use patterns Downtown, the closure of the JLA, declining population and employment in the city of Detroit, the opening of the QLINE in 2017, and declining ridership trends both nationally and in the region.

Starting in March 2020 (FY 2020), the DPM experienced a significant disruption in service due to the pandemic, including a full suspension of service from March 2020 to May 2022. FY 2023 marked the first full year of restored service, and the DPM saw a significant rebound across ridership, revenue miles, and hours. Service increases continued in FY 2024 with annual revenue miles and hours increased approximately 30 percent from FY 2023. While still below pre-pandemic levels, increases in service have supported increases in ridership, which increased sharply between FY 2022 and 2023, and continued to climb in FY 2024. In FY 2024, DPM ridership reached over 1 million, marking the highest total since service resumed in May 2022, and the largest increase in ridership for systems with under 3 million annual riders in the country. This recovery, coupled with strong improvements in service effectiveness (i.e., passengers per revenue mile and hour), signal that the DPM is well positioned to continue its ridership recovery in the future. While still below pre-pandemic levels, this recovery in service combined with higher ridership resulted in a strengthening utilization of service.

The sharp decline in FY 2021 operating expenses coincides with the suspension of service. However, costs began to rise again in FY 2022 as service resumed on a limited basis starting in May, increasing to \$11.5M that year. Although service levels and ridership were still limited, significant maintenance work was needed to rehabilitate stations prior to reopening. FY 2023 operating expenses reached \$15.4 million, below pre-pandemic levels, reflecting the continuation of reduced service levels throughout FY 2023, as only partial service was offered until full service resumed at the start of FY 2024. In FY 2024, operating expenses increased sharply to \$20.6 million. However, increasing ridership recovery led to a decline in operating expense per passenger from \$25.35 in FY 2023 to \$19.82 in FY 2024.

Fare revenue followed a steeper and more prolonged decline, falling by 42 percent between FY 2019 and FY 2020 and dropping to \$0 in fare revenue in FY 2022 due to fares being waived from May through October 2022. Although fares were reinstated by late FY 2022, FY 2023 fare revenue was only about 20 percent of pre-pandemic levels in FY 2019. Fare revenue dropped again in 2024 due to the zero-fare pilot program that began in January 2024.

From FY 2018 to 2019, unit costs rose moderately as ridership declined slightly. In FY 2020, the cost per trip, mile, and hour increased further due to reduced service and ridership. Severe

²¹ METRO. December 9, 2024. *American Public Transportation Association's "Transit Wrapped" Names Agencies with Top Ridership Gains*. <https://www.metro-magazine.com/10232607/aptas-transit-wrapped-names-agencies-with-top-ridership-gains>.



maintenance issues due to prolonged service suspension led to FY 2022 having the highest unit costs by at least sevenfold across FY 2014-2024. By FY 2023, with a full year of operation and recovering ridership, costs fell from FY 2022 levels but remained at almost or more than double the pre-pandemic rates.

The FY 2014 to 2024 analysis shows how pre-pandemic ridership decline, service suspension, and recovery challenges have greatly affected the DPM's operational and financial position. While ridership recovery since resumption of service has been strong, the system faces significantly higher unit costs and reduced fare revenue compared to pre-pandemic levels. These trends provide important context for evaluating current service performance and informing strategic planning decisions as the DPM continues working toward full operational and financial recovery. Table 2 summarizes the annual operational and financial performance metrics from FY 2014 to 2024.

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**Table 2: DPM Annual Service and Financial Metrics, FY** 2014 to FY 2024**

Metric/FY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022*	2023*	2024
Ridership & Service Trends											
Annual Unlinked Passenger Trips (UPTs)	2,150,068	2,442,031	2,286,383	2,212,661	1,952,505	1,735,852	998,823	0	57,099	608,256	1,040,277
Annual Passenger Car Revenue Miles	544,552	550,636	543,526	555,462	566,926	506,223	281,815	0	20,045	208,566	269,195
Annual Passenger Car Revenue Hours	46,946	47,529	43,872	47,889	48,877	42,954	24,297	0	1,728	17,982	23,208
Service Effectiveness											
Passengers per Revenue Mile	3.9	4.4	4.2	3.9	3.4	3.4	3.5	N/A	2.9	2.9	3.9
Passengers per Revenue Hour	45.8	51.4	52.1	46.2	39.9	40.4	41.1	N/A	33.0	33.8	44.8
Financial Trends											
Operating Expenses (\$M)	\$12.7M	\$15.3M	\$17.1M	\$18.2M	\$17.6M	\$19.2M	\$16.6M	\$9.8M	\$11.5M	\$15.4M	\$20.6M
Fare Revenue (\$M)	\$1.7M	\$1.5M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$1.2M	\$1.0M	\$0.6M	\$660	\$0	\$0.23M	\$0.19M
Operating Expenses per Passenger Trip	\$5.93	\$6.27	\$7.47	\$8.21	\$9.00	\$11.06	\$16.66	N/A	\$201.55	\$25.35	\$19.82
Operating Expenses per Revenue Mile	\$23.40	\$27.82	\$31.41	\$32.70	\$30.98	\$37.93	\$59.04	N/A	\$574.11	\$73.92	\$76.59
Operating Expenses per Revenue Hour	\$271.44	\$322.30	\$389.14	\$379.26	\$359.36	\$447.00	\$684.80	N/A	\$6,659.75	\$857.40	\$888.44
Farebox Recovery Ratio	13%	9%	8%	8%	7%	5%	4%	0%	0%	1%	1%

*DPM service was suspended in March 2020 due to the pandemic and resumed in May 2022.

** DTC's fiscal year starts on July 1 and ends on June 30.

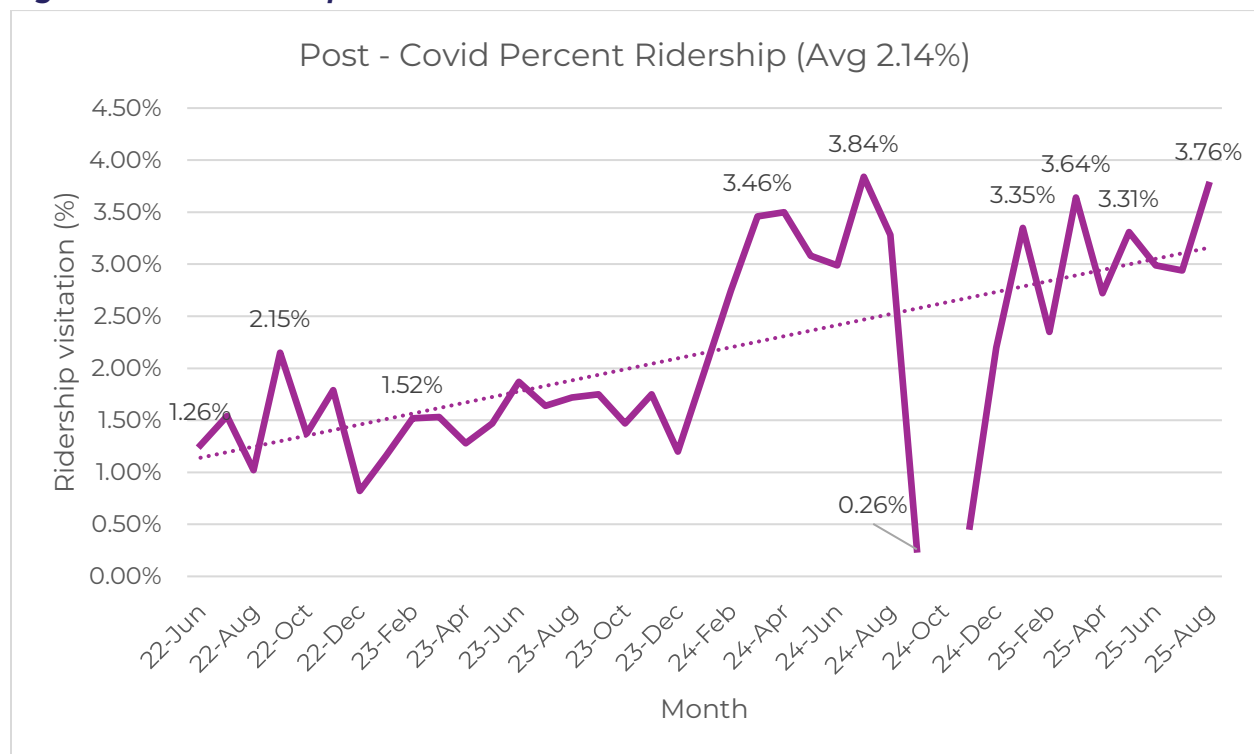
Sources: 2014-2023 National Transit Database, 2024 data provided by DTC.



Station-Level Ridership

As a result of ridership recovery and changing travel and land use patterns, station-level usage patterns have shifted. Ridership activity has steadily increased across the system since the DPM reopened in 2022, attributed to the introduction of 'fare free' travel, and an increase in Downtown Detroit visitation. Ridership data shows a correlation between Downtown Detroit visitors and DPM ridership, where DPM ridership increases in line with Downtown visitation. Figure 7 shows that ridership is increasing as a proportion of visitation, and indicates that there is further room for growth in DPM usage. The data suggests that free-fares, which started in January 2024, have led to a sharp increase in the ratio of Downtown visitors riding the system.

Figure 7: DPM Ridership as a Percent of Downtown Detroit Visitation



At a station-level, some stations that previously had the highest ridership saw greater declines and slower recoveries. Greektown Station, which had the highest ridership in Calendar Year (CY) 2019, experienced a 48 percent drop by 2024. The Renaissance Center Station, on the other hand, became a top-performing station post-pandemic, outpacing Greektown with stronger recovery, though still at 39 percent below its 2019 level.

Other stations like Grand Circus Park and Financial Center have seen steady ridership and recovery. Both were among the few stations that grew before the pandemic and have performed well since. Grand Circus Park Station saw one of the highest ridership increases between CY 2023 and 2024. Financial Center Station has seen steady growth, likely due to its proximity to special events at Hart Plaza and Huntington, hotels, offices, and other transit options.



Along with Grand Circus Park Station, Cadillac Square Station also had one of the highest increases in ridership from 14,653 in CY 2023 to 68,391 in CY 2024, suggesting a strong return of downtown activity nearby. In contrast, Water Square Station²² had nearly returned to its pre-pandemic ridership by CY 2023, reaching 90,536 compared to 91,309 riders in 2019. However, the station saw a sharp decline in CY 2024, dropping to 45,018, cutting its recovery in half, and showing how quickly the ridership pattern shifted. This pattern is likely to change again with the new Residences at Water Square apartments, which opened in February 2024, and the JW Marriott anticipated to open in early 2027.

Fort/Cass Station, one of the least utilized stations, showed relatively strong improvement post-pandemic. Ridership rose from 5,025 in CY 2022 to 22,609 in CY 2023 and then to 46,197 in CY 2024, an increase of 86 percent. This growth contrasts with Bricktown Station, which continues to show low ridership. Although Bricktown Station grew from 15,359 in CY 2023 to 29,334 in CY 2024, these numbers are well below its CY 2019 total of 49,124. Similarly, Broadway Station has the lowest ridership, with 53,210 boardings in CY 2024, down from its pre-pandemic levels of around 70,000.

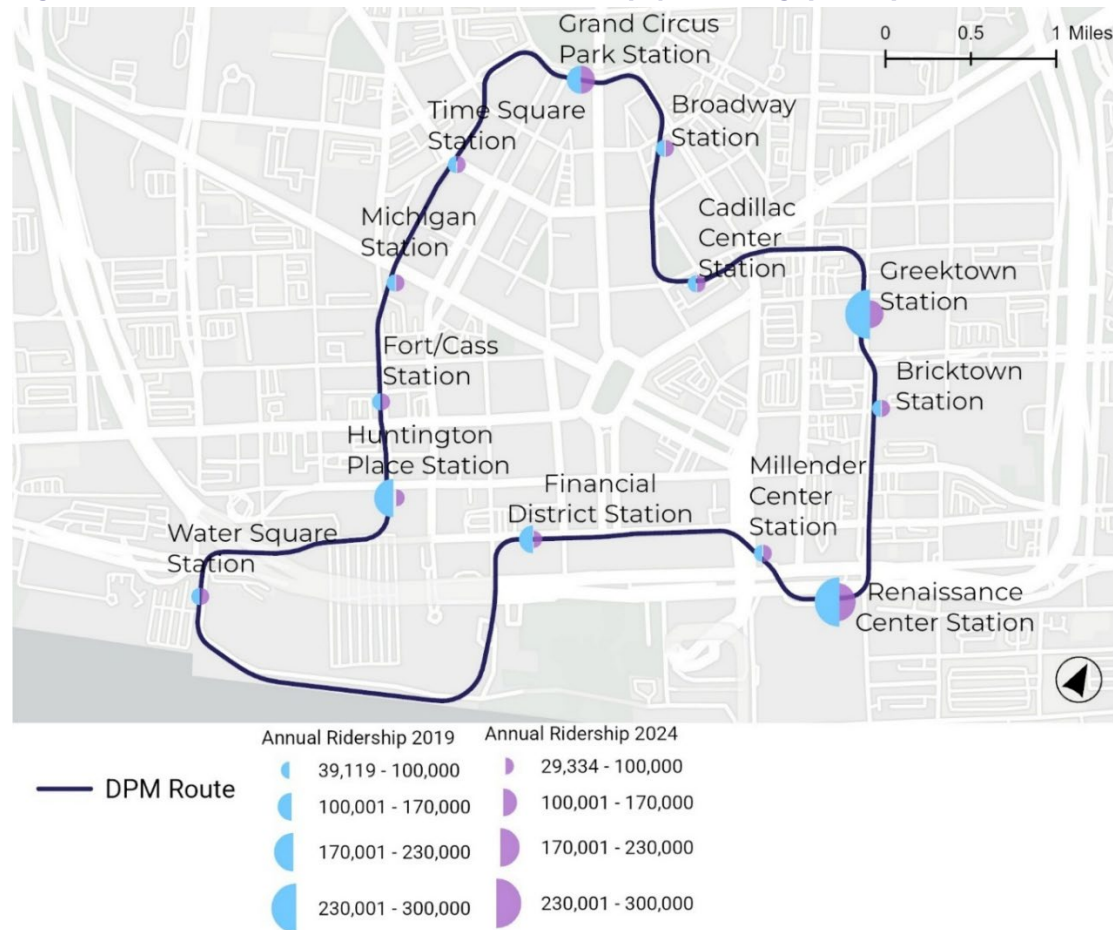
Huntington Place Station, once a top three station with over 200,000 boardings in CY 2019, has had a slower recovery. While it improved from 50,459 in CY 2022 to 90,35 in CY 2024, it still falls short to its pre pandemic levels of 211,092, a decline of 57 percent.

These patterns show that while total ridership has improved system-wide, recovery remains uneven across stations (Figure 8). Some stations like Cadillac Square, Grand Circus Park, and Fort/Cass have gained ridership, while others such as Bricktown, Broadway, and Huntington Place have yet to fully regain their ridership (Table 3). These differences highlight how changing land use, shifts in downtown activity, and travel behavior are reshaping transit demand in Downtown Detroit.

²² Water Square Station was renamed as such in July 2025. It was formerly named Joe Louis Arena Station until May 2022, and West Riverfront Station from May 2022 to July 2025.



Figure 8: DPM Annual Station Level Ridership (Boardings) Comparison, CY 2019 and 2024



Source: DTC.

Table 3: DPM Station Level Ridership (Boardings), CY 2017 to 2024

Station Name	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021*	2022*	2023	2024
Times Square	118,467	95,493	80,065	10,528	-	-	15,654	73,548
Michigan	102,720	89,221	64,186	11,664	-	30,973	45,517	57,691
Fort/Cass	51,557	46,339	39,119	6,288	-	5,025	22,609	46,197
Huntington Place	237,549	261,453	211,092	40,872	-	50,459	55,489	90,350
Water Square	144,571	77,557	91,309	21,806	-	59,730	91,856	45,018
Financial Center	88,379	96,830	102,927	13,783	-	24,221	40,268	81,048
Millender Center	107,049	90,923	78,767	15,000	-	54,841	45,963	73,169
Renaissance Center	366,043	375,155	279,715	44,955	-	28,783	96,243	170,756
Bricktown	67,252	59,947	49,424	14,091	-	2,084	15,359	29,334
Greektown	495,731	387,074	298,827	48,077	-	36,490	106,722	156,757
Cadillac Square	76,777	88,210	85,230	8,815	-	-	14,653	68,391
Broadway	73,387	70,436	75,501	9,770	-	26,204	41,777	53,210
Grand Circus Park	165,933	176,535	149,921	23,409	-	54,547	63,173	129,895
TOTAL	2,095,415	1,915,173	1,606,083	269,058	-	373,357	655,283	1,075,364

Source: DTC.

*DPM suspended operations from March 2020 through May 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Service Data Key Findings

The DPM was initially slow to recover ridership after the COVID-19 pandemic; however, as more people are visiting Downtown Detroit, and with the introduction of the zero-fare pilot program, ridership has rebounded since FY 2024. Station boarding patterns are also changing, reflecting new developments and changing land uses Downtown. The system's ridership has become more focused on tourist activity and less on serving downtown office workers. As ridership continues to recover and new developments are completed, it will be important to continue to monitor station utilization.

Ridership increases have supported a reduction in operating expense per passenger trip, which reduced from \$25.35 in FY 2023 to \$19.82 in FY 2024. However, as the system is fare-free supported by sponsorship, ridership increases will not lead to additional costs being recouped, meaning that overall costs will remain high.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The financial performance of the DPM depends on its ability to balance spending and the available revenue. Similar to public-access roads and other infrastructure, public transit relies heavily on tax-supported local, state, and federal revenue streams. In addition, directly generated revenue can include resources such as fares, fees, partnerships and sponsorships, advertising revenue, and other financial instruments such as interest, rebates, or reimbursements. Three primary categories of expenses include:

- Capital: Significant infrastructure projects such as the construction of new facilities or the acquisition of new vehicles, which are expected to last for many years.
- Capital maintenance: Major half-life or end-of-life repair and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure and vehicles to extend the useful life of the asset. Because of more favorable FTA grant eligibility and industry accounting practices, most agencies include capital maintenance as part of the capital budget.
- Operating: Labor and materials costs associated with providing services such as staffing, fuel and power consumption, insurance, and as-needed maintenance.

The free-fare pilot (launched January 1, 2024) is sponsored through the end of 2025, but additional, stable operating revenue sources will need to be identified in order to adopt this program long term.

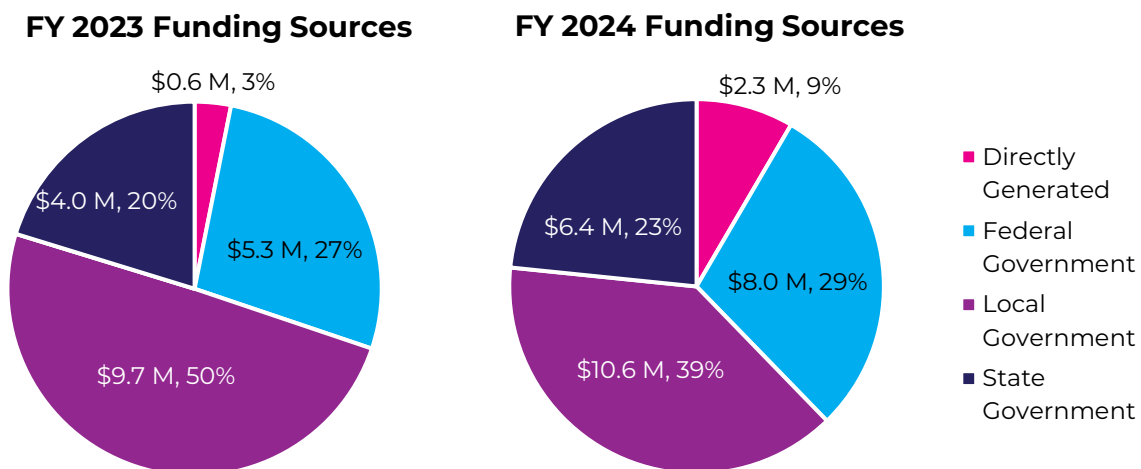
Budget and Funding Sources Overview

In FY 2023, half of the DPM's funding came from local government contributions, primarily the City of Detroit's General Fund. Federal grants were the second largest funding source, comprising 27 percent of the DPM's funding. Federal grants included both traditional sources such as Urbanized Area (UZA) Formula Grants (Section 5307) and State of Good Repair Grants (Section 5337), as well as temporary operating relief provided to transit agencies following the COVID-19 pandemic through resources such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The State of Michigan provides funding for the DPM, primarily through the Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF), which supports both capital and operating costs. In FY 2023, the DPM received 20 percent of its total funding from the state, including federal grant matching funds and operating assistance. Directly generated revenue from fares, advertising, and leasing a parking lot accounted for 3 percent (Figure 9).

Total funding in FY 2024 increased by approximately \$7.6 million from FY 2023, rising from \$19.7 million to \$27.3 million. Local government funding increased by approximately \$1 million between FY 2023 and FY 2024, but represented a lower share of funding, 50 percent in FY 2023 to 39 percent in FY 2024. State, federal, and directly generated revenues all increased by more than \$1 million each. Notably, the proportion of directly generated revenues tripled in FY 2024.

Figure 9: DPM Funding Sources, FY 2023 and FY 2024



Source: 2023 National Transit Database, 2024 data provided by DTC.

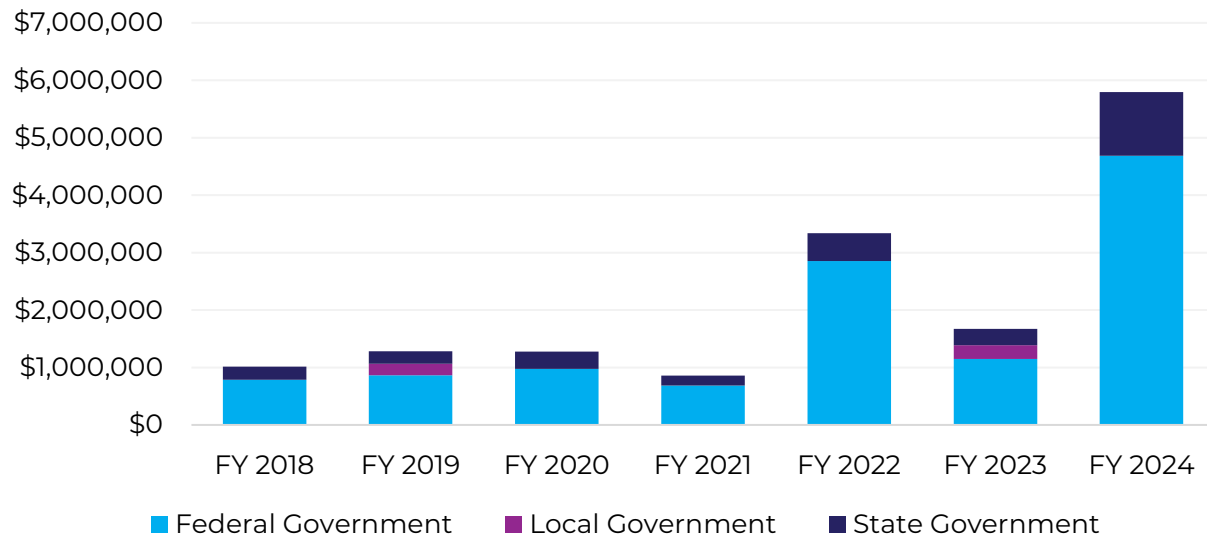
Capital Budget

The DPM receives capital funding from a mix of federal, state, and local sources to support long-term infrastructure upgrades such as rail replacements, technology and communication systems, and station upgrades. In FY 2022, there was a four-fold increase in federal capital funding to over \$2.8 million followed by a decrease to \$1.1 million in FY 2023 and another sharp increase to over \$4.6 million in FY 2024. These federal funds come primarily through FTA's Section 5337 Program, and mimic trends in major capital projects and rehabilitation. State capital funding from Michigan was approximately \$287,000, and local funds contributed by the City of Detroit totaled approximately \$240,000.

Capital expenditures between FY 2018 and 2021 were generally used for state of good repair projects and vehicle capital maintenance. In 2022, additional resources were required to prepare the system for operations after its 2-year closure. Capital projects in 2022 included vehicle maintenance, new surveillance cameras and automated passenger counters, and power substation capital maintenance.

In FY 2024, both state and federal funding substantially increased, reaching \$1.1 million and \$4.7 million, respectively. Trends from FY 2018 to 2024 reflect a typical range of 60 to 80 percent federal funding for capital spending, with a high of 85 percent in FY 2022 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Sources of Funds Expended on Capital, FY 2018 to 2024



Source: 2018-2023 National Transit Database, 2024 data provided by DTC.

Operating Budget

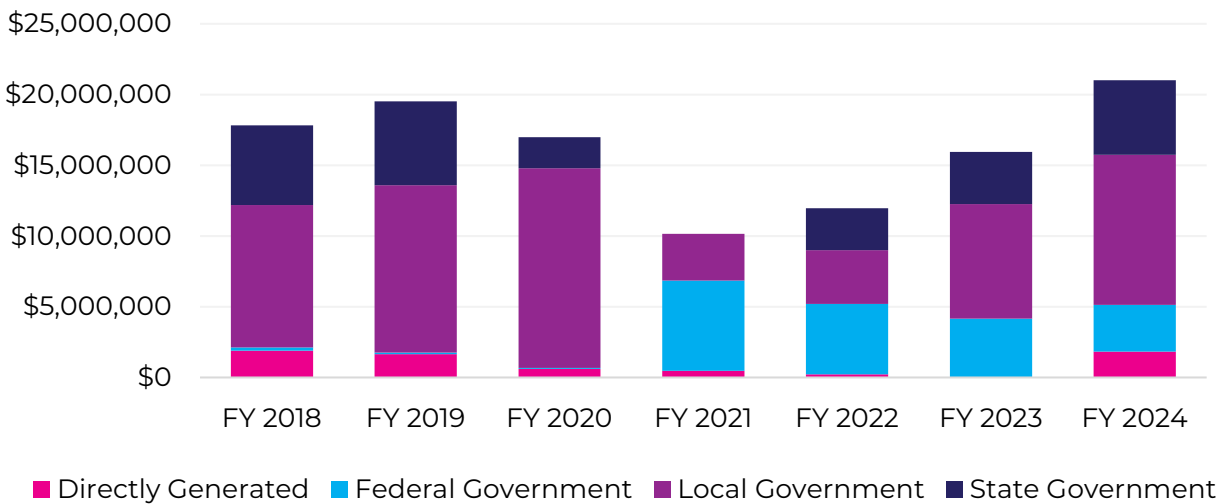
From FY 2018 to FY 2024, the DPM's operations were primarily funded by local and state government funding (over 75 percent for FY 2018 to FY 2020 and FY 2024). The exception to this trend were years impacted by suspension of service, during which time federal sources, including the CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARPA funds, contributed over \$4.1 million to help cover costs that could not be deferred during closure, such as insurance facility upkeep and salary and wages for non-furloughed staff. Another portion of federal funds are managed through the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) Planning Assistance Program. Directly generated funds (e.g. fare or advertising revenue) remained minimal at approximately \$616,000. Since the suspension of service from March 2020 to May 2022 and implementation of free fares from May 2022 to October 2022 and again in January 2024, directly generated funding for operational spending has been extremely low, indicating the DPM primarily relies on public funding sources (Figure 11).

General administration and vehicle operating costs have remained consistently significant portions of the DPM's annual operating costs.

In FY 2024, the DPM still received federal funding from remaining CARES Act and related relief allocations, which agencies are permitted to spend through 2025. Beyond FY 2025, the DPM anticipates no further relief funds. A temporary increase in local funding is projected to offset this gap in FY 2026, but by FY 2027, the DPM may face a potential financial cliff as this local funding is depleted. Increased advertising revenue is planned to help bridge future gaps, but this relief will phase in gradually.



Figure 11: Sources Annual Operating Funds Expended on Operations, FY 2018 to 2024



Source: 2018-2023 National Transit Database, 2024 data provided by DTC.

Transit Funding in Southeast Michigan

In Southeast Michigan, public transit is funded through various federal, state, and local sources. The RTA primarily oversees the distribution of federal and state funds, while local funds are managed by various entities, depending on the source. Annually, the RTA manages a process to allocate FTA formula funding apportioned to the D2A2 UZAs. The RTA also reviews and approves annual funding requests submitted to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Passenger Transportation.

Federal Funding

Federal funding can be used to support capital, planning, and preventive maintenance activities. The FTA provides funding for transit agencies through formula programs as well as through competitive grant programs. In 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), which provided historic levels of funding for public transit. IIJA expires in 2026 and there is uncertainty about what will be included in future authorizations.

Federal formula funding for the D2A2 UZAs is allocated by the RTA. In the Detroit UZA, funding is split between the DTC, DDOT, RTA, and SMART. Of the funding provided through the UZA Formula Grants Program (Section 5307) and the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program (Section 5339(a)), 50 percent goes toward providers that primarily operate in the City of Detroit and 50 percent goes toward SMART, which primarily operates in the Detroit suburbs. For federal fiscal year (FFY) 2025, 48 percent of Section 5307 funding was allocated to DDOT and 1 percent each was allocated to the DTC and RTA. As the fixed-route bus service operators, only DDOT and SMART received Section 5339(a) funding. All of the region's Section 5337: State of Good Repair Grants have historically been allocated to the DTC. In FFY 2025, the DTC received 65 percent of Section 5337 funding and the RTA received 35



percent for the QLINE. As its seventh year in operation, FFY 2025 was the first year that QLINE service was included in the formula calculation that is used to apportion Section 5337 funds to the Detroit UZA, which resulted in an increase in funding for this program. In FFY 2025, the DTC received over \$2.0 million in FTA formula funds, including approximately \$0.6 million from the Section 5037 program and \$1.5 million from the Section 5337 program, 3 percent of the region's apportionment of federal formula transit funds (Table 4).²³

Table 4: FTA Formula Funding Allocations, Detroit UZA, FFY 2025

Agency	5307 Total	5307 Percent	5337 Total	5337 Percent	5339(a) Total	5339(a) Percent	Total Amount	Total Percent
DDOT	\$27,247,662	48%	\$0	0%	\$2,406,860	50%	\$29,654,522	47%
DTC	\$567,660	1%	\$1,469,282	65%	\$0	0%	\$2,036,942	3%
RTA	\$567,559	1%	\$790,000	35%	\$0	0%	\$1,357,559	2%
SMART	\$28,382,982	50%	\$0	0%	\$2,398,949	50%	\$30,781,931	48%
Total	\$56,765,963	100%	\$2,259,282	100%	\$4,805,809	100%	\$63,831,054	100%

Source: RTA.

Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities funding is allocated by the RTA through a biannual regional application process. Funding is generally provided to community transit providers and nonprofit organizations. Funding for the Ann Arbor UZA is allocated to the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA), which provides transit service in that area. The DTC received FFY 2016, 2019, and 2020 Section 5310 funding to support upgrades to station security and public communication systems, and braille signage.

Some Federal Highway Administration programs allow for funding to be transferred to the FTA to support public transit projects. SEMCOG allocates these funds to transit agencies to support specific projects. Typically, SEMCOG will award multiple years of funding through a call for projects process for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, Carbon Reduction Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Respectively, these programs can fund transportation projects that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality, projects designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from on-road highway sources, and projects that support pedestrian, cyclist, and green stormwater infrastructure. SEMCOG does not typically flex Surface Transportation Block Grants program funding to support transit projects but has for past projects. SEMCOG also provides transit agencies with funding to support planning activities through the FTA's Section 5303 Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program.

State Funding

MDOT provides funding to transit agencies to support operating and capital expenses. The primary state funding sources for the DTC are the Local Bus Operating Assistance Program (LBO) and State Capital Assistance Program, though there are other programs available that

²³ Julia Roberts to the RTA Board of Directors, Memorandum, May 15, 2025. "RTA 2025 Federal Fund Programming."



fund different activities and modes. These programs are funded through the CTF, which generates revenue through fuel taxes and sales taxes on automotive items. Agencies submit an applicant for funding on an annual basis, which is reviewed and approved by the RTA's Board of Directors.

The LBO reimburses agencies' operating expenses. For urban agencies, such as the DTC, Public Act 51 allows the program to reimburse up to 50 percent of operating expenses. Due to funding levels, in recent years the program has reimbursed closer to 30 percent.²⁴ For the FFY 2026 application process, MDOT is using a reimbursement rate of 26.04 percent for urban agencies. This amount is subject to change after the end of the fiscal year based on actual audited eligible expenses.²⁵

The State Capital Assistance Program provides matching funds for federal capital grant programs. Per Public Act 51, the state is required to provide at least two-thirds of the required match, though MDOT typically provides the full match if funding is available.²⁶

MDOT also provides funding through discretionary programs including the Service Initiatives Program and the Metropolitan and Statewide Planning and Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program. These programs can be used to fund a range of activities including planning and feasibility studies, technology implementation projects, and demonstration projects. The Statewide Planning and Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program is funded through the FTA's Section 5304 program.

Though not managed by MDOT, the state's Convention Facility Development Fund (CFDF), which is funded through hotel and liquor taxes, provides \$5 million a year to support QLINE operations. CFDF funding for the QLINE began in FFY 2020 and is approved through FFY 2039. The CFDF was originally established to support convention facility projects. The QLINE provides transit access to Huntington Place, Detroit's regional convention center.

Local Funding

In Southeast Michigan, local funding for transit is provided through a combination of dedicated transit millages, municipal general funds, fare payments, sponsorships, and advertising revenue. DDOT's operations are funded through the City of Detroit's General Fund. The DTC is allocated funding from DDOT's budget to support DPM operations. Typically, the DTC receives \$6.50 million in operating support from DDOT; however, in FY 2026, DTC is receiving \$7.45 million, a 1 percent increase.

AAATA and SMART are funded through millages, which must be approved through a ballot measure. Millage rates and terms vary depending on the jurisdiction. Wayne County, where

²⁴ MDOT, "Formula Distribution Percentage." <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/travel/mobility/pub-transit/audit-and-accounting-information/formula-distribution-percentage>.

²⁵ MDOT. "FY 2026 Application Instructions for Public the Transit Programs." <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/-/media/Project/Websites/MDOT/Travel/Mobility/Public-Transportation/Applications/File/Application-Instructions-Public-Transit-Programs.pdf>.

²⁶ Michigan Legislature. "State Trunk Line Highway System, Act 51 of 1951." <https://legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/MCL-ACT-51-OF-1951.pdf>.



the City of Detroit is located, levies a 0.994 mill property tax in municipalities that have opted in to SMART service. Detroit, which is served by the DTC, DDOT, and the RTA, does not opt-in to SMART's service, and therefore, the millage does not apply. Wayne County is currently exploring a ballot proposal in 2026 that would eliminate opt-out communities and generate millage revenue from all municipalities in the county, raising additional funding for public transit in Detroit. The RTA is also authorized to collect revenue through a millage and a vehicle registration tax, subject to voter approval in its four-county service area. The RTA does not currently collect revenue through either tax.

In 2024, the DPM instituted a zero-fare program sponsored by Priority Waste. The program was extended in 2025 and the sponsorship provided \$500,000 for both years. Prior to this program, the DPM collected revenue through fares. The DPM also generates revenue through advertising in stations and on vehicles. In 2025, the DTC sold a lot located at 1259 Broadway, generating approximately \$300,000 in revenue. Prior to the sale, the DTC leased this property to a private entity that used it as a paid parking lot. Given remaining federal interest on the property, the DTC is currently discussing potential options for utilizing the revenue.

Key Funding Findings

Prior to the pandemic, the DTC was heavily reliant on subsidy funding provided by the City of Detroit. While federal pandemic relief funding was available, the DTC leveraged this funding and was less reliant on local funds. Directly-generated revenue has increased, due to a sponsorship that supported the zero-fare pilot. Reliance on federal, state, and city funding has limited potential for growth. Regional funding constraints also present challenges for capital improvements. The DTC is currently unable to leverage other local sources, such as the levying of taxes to support operations and capital improvements.

There is a budget shortfall predicted from FY 2027 onwards, which presents challenges for providing service and addressing capital needs. DTC is working to resolve this gap, however opportunities to leverage other funding mechanisms while exploring new sources should be considered in this study. The existing partnership with Priority Waste has supported an increase in directly generated revenue. Additional partnerships, especially to offset ridership increases, may be an opportunity to explore. Monetizing other aspects of the DPM, such as increasing advertising revenue, should continue to be explored, particularly to support capital improvements.

As IJIA ends in 2026, there is uncertainty about future federal discretionary grant programs. The DTC should continue to explore discretionary grants to address capital improvements.

DETROIT PEOPLE MOVER ASSETS

The DTC's 2022 Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan describes the agency's assets, their conditions, maintenance procedures, and capital needs. The plan discusses the agency's full portfolio of assets, including revenue and support vehicles, major equipment, facilities, guideway and tracks, and major systems (e.g., automatic train control, traction power, supervisory control and data acquisition [SCADA], communications, and fare collection).



The agency also maintains a capital project list that outlines planned investments through FY 2028. These include ADA enhancements, preventive maintenance, station renovations, revenue vehicles, planning projects, equipment, and upgrades to major system upgrades. Most of these projects are funded with federal and state grants, though some funding sources are to be determined.

Key assets include revenue vehicles, the fare collection system, and facilities and real property. Other assets include:

- 3.17 miles of elevated concrete guideway, built in 1986 with an effective life of 11 years remaining.
- 0.27 miles of non-revenue and 2.42 miles of revenue tangent track, built in 1986 with an effective life of 11 years remaining.
- 0.48 miles of curve track, several sections of which have been more recently replaced due to shorter 30-year lifespan.
- Nine track turn outs, including two on the main line and seven in the maintenance facility.
- Two traction power substations and associated substation equipment and power distribution, built in 1986 with an effective life of 11 years remaining.
- Train control and signaling equipment, rebuilt prior to 2010 and exceeding the range of its 15-year expected useful life.

Revenue Vehicles

The DPM owns 12 automated guideway vehicles that were manufactured by the Urban Transportation Development Corporation (UTDC) in 1986. Service is operated with two-car trains, each with a capacity for 34 seated and 66 standing passengers.²⁷ Four trains are operated for typical service, and an additional train is used during special events. Eleven vehicles are still actively used in revenue service. These vehicles are in good condition but are approaching their 40-year useful life benchmark and will need to be replaced in the near term to maintain service. One vehicle has been retired from revenue service and is used to provide parts to the remaining vehicles, given challenges in acquiring rare or obsolete components. Regular maintenance is conducted to maintain the vehicles in a state of good repair, and between 2007 and 2010, rail vehicles received a mid-life overhaul.

Replacement vehicles are identified as one of the DTC's highest capital investment priorities in the agency's TAM Plan. The project is estimated to cost over \$70 million, which would be the largest investment in the system since it was originally constructed, and represents a large unfunded capital need. When the DPM's vehicles were originally built, UTDC (now Bombardier Transportation) also manufactured similar APM vehicles for the Toronto Transit Commission's (TTC) Scarborough Rapid Transit line and Vancouver's SkyTrain.

²⁷ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration National Transit Database. "2023 Annual Database Revenue Vehicle Inventory."

²⁸ WXYZ Detroit. Detroit People Mover replacing entire fleet with railcars from Toronto, 2024. <https://www.wxyz.com/news/detroit-people-mover-replacing-entire-fleet-with-railcars-from-toronto>.



In 2024, the Detroit City Council approved the purchase of 12 train cars from TTC, which is decommissioning the Scarborough Rapid Transit line and extending a subway service. The DTC is exploring options to either put the TTC vehicles into service or to use their parts. The TTC vehicles have been more recently upgraded and could allow the DTC to defer a larger replacement project for another 10 years. City Council provided the DTC with \$6.6 million to purchase and place the TTC vehicles into service. In the longer-term, however, replacement vehicles will remain a high-priority capital need.

Fare Collection System

The DTC owns a fare collection system that includes token machines, turnstiles, and gates that are available for people who are not able to use the turnstiles. There are 64 turnstiles or gates across the system. As of January 2024, the DPM is operating fare-free, but the turnstiles are still in use as passenger counters.

The fare collection equipment was installed between 1986 and 1988, when the system was constructed and launched, and has exceeded its useful life, and is considered obsolete. The system accepts tokens and coins, as well as magnetic stripe cards, but is not compatible with DDOT, SMART, and QLINE's fare collection systems. Additionally, the system is not connected to a network, requiring each turnstile to be individually probed in order to collect ridership data. Should the DTC begin collecting fares again, it should explore options that allow seamless transfers between agencies, centralized data collection, electronic payment options, and that provides a return on investment within its estimated useful life. Per the DTC's TAM Plan, this system is estimated to cost at least \$2 million. DDOT and SMART are currently exploring new fare systems. Any future effort to deploy a fare collection system should involve coordination with these agencies, as well as with RTA, and MoGo.

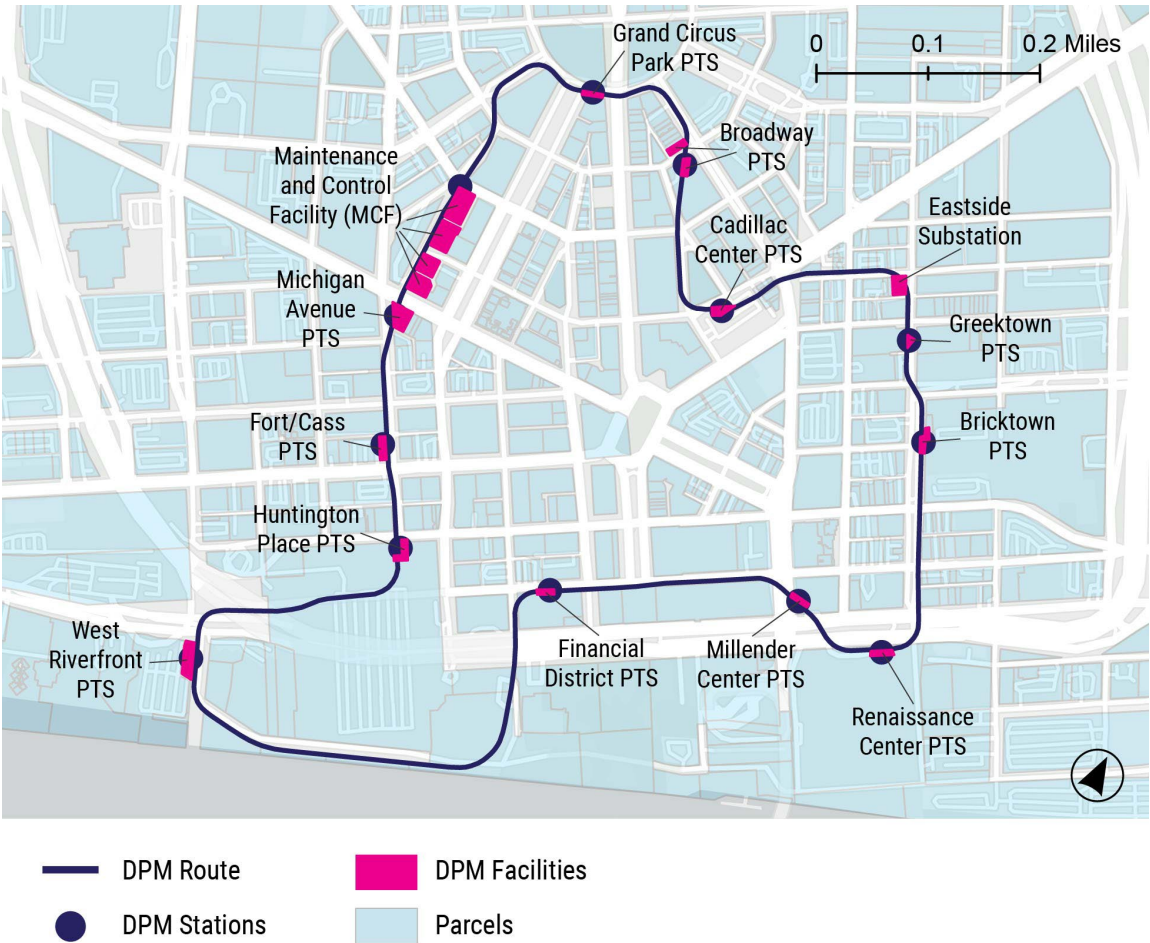
Facilities and Real Property

The DTC's facility assets include a 49,000 square foot maintenance and storage facility located at 1250 Park Place as well as 13 elevated rail stations along the alignment. The majority of these facilities were constructed in 1986, with an effective age of 39 years. Two reconstructed stations include Renaissance Center (21 years) and Grand Circus Park (11 years). Following system level rehabilitative maintenance in FY 2022, all facilities have a condition rating of three or better, indicating good working order. Figure 12 maps the DTC's facilities.

The Michigan Station includes vacant property around the station that was originally used for construction staging. This property, including the station, is approximately a quarter acre. Given its location in the Downtown Core, Alternative uses for the vacant portion should be explored.



Figure 12: DTC Facilities



Source: DTC and City of Detroit. PTS stands for Passenger Transit Station.

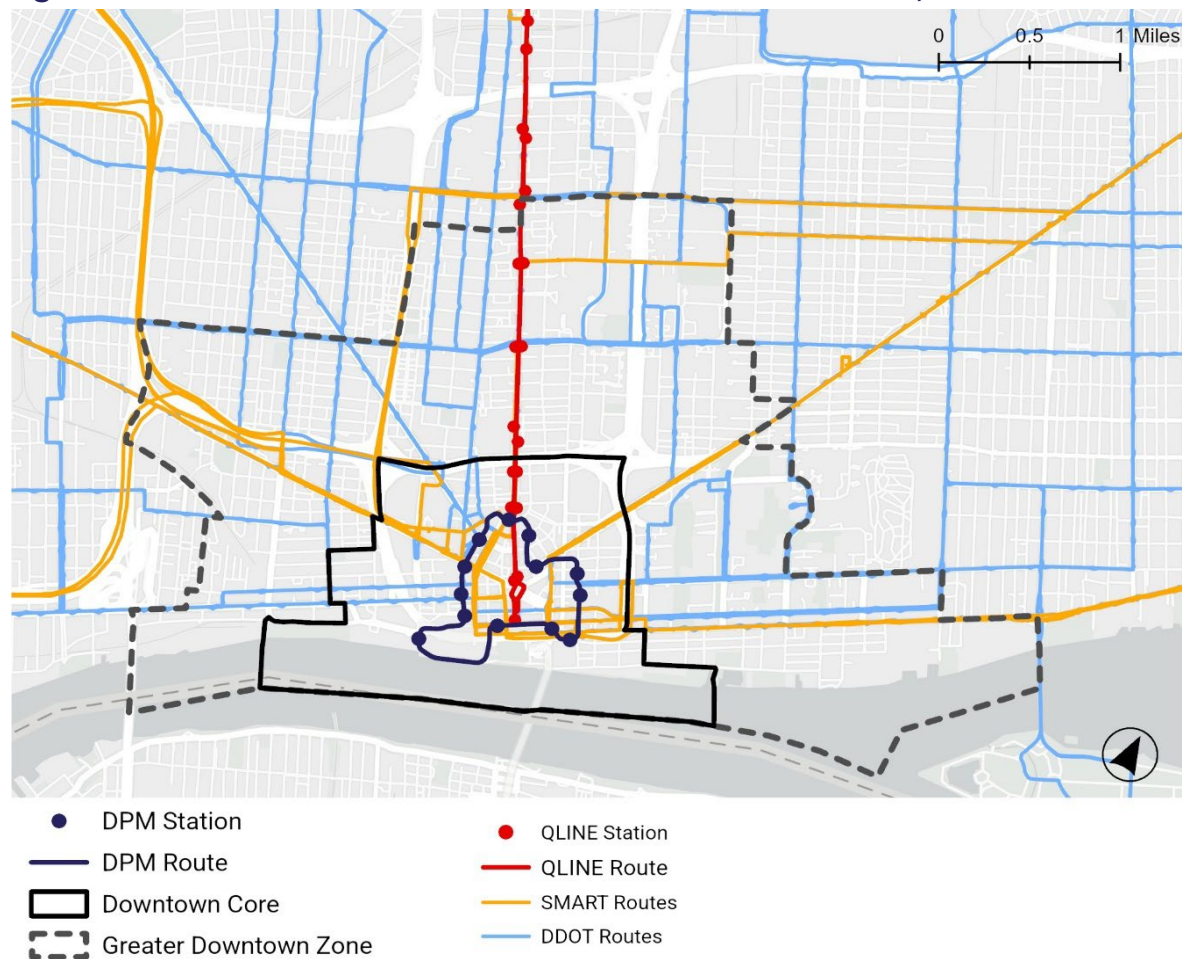
TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Downtown Detroit is accessible to multiple transportation modes, most with a focus on travel into and out of the Downtown Core. Private vehicles are a primary mode, largely due to the automobile-focused planning and the availability of parking. Public transit is provided by a number of operators with connections Downtown and to the broader city and region. Bicycle movement to and in the Downtown Core is supported by a mix of dedicated and on-street infrastructure, and shared bicycle and e-scooter programs are also available.

TRANSIT

The DPM is a component of a broader regional transit system in the RTA's four county region, which includes Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. In addition to the DTC, three entities operate transit service in the study area: the RTA, DDOT, and SMART. The RTA operates the QLINE streetcar, D2A2 express bus service, and the DAX bus service. DDOT and SMART both operate fixed-route bus services as well as demand-response services. Figure 13 provides a map of transit services in the study area.

Figure 13: Transit Services in the Greater Detroit Downtown Zone, 2025



Sources: DDOT, DTC, RTA, SMART.

The DPM provides connections to and from DDOT, SMART, and RTA services in the Downtown Core. DDOT operates a fixed-route bus network and paratransit service in the City of Detroit and in portions of neighboring suburbs. A number of DDOT's routes serve Downtown, connecting the area to neighborhoods across the city. Routes connect with or are within a short walk of all DPM stations, except for Water Square Station, which is more physically isolated. The Rosa Parks Transit Center (RPTC) is a major transit hub in Downtown Detroit that is served by many of DDOT's routes. Two DPM stations, Times Square and Michigan Avenue, are adjacent to the RPTC on its north and south sides, respectively.

SMART predominately operates service in the region's suburbs, but a number of routes, including SMART's limited-stop Frequent Affordable Safe Transit (FAST) routes, serve the study area. These routes connect with the DPM in multiple locations, providing a key link for regional commuters. Figure 14 depicts FAST routes and stops in Downtown Detroit.

Figure 14: SMART's FAST Routes





Source: SMART.

The RTA's QLINE streetcar operates along Woodward Avenue with 12 stations between Congress Street downtown and Grand Boulevard in New Center. The DPM and QLINE both have stations in close proximity at Grand Circus Park, and the QLINE's Congress Street Station is located less than two blocks from DPM's Financial District Station. The DPM and RTA's Grand Circus Park Stations also provide access to the RTA's D2A2 service, which stops on Park Avenue at Bagley Street. The RTA's DAX service stops on Washington Boulevard at Michigan Avenue, near the Michigan Avenue DPM Station and the RPTC.

The DPM is within proximity to Detroit's broader transit network, with stations offering access to bus and streetcar services within walkable distances. Table 5 summarizes the number of services within an eighth-mile radius (approximately a 2-minute walk) of each DPM station. The Times Square and Michigan Avenue stations are closest to larger numbers of routes, with Times Square providing access to 16 DDOT bus routes and Michigan Avenue connecting with 17 DDOT and 10 SMART routes. The Financial District is also within proximity to a number of SMART routes within a 2-minute walk, and the QLINE Congress Street station within a 3-minute walk.

Many of these connections are not clear to riders, with limited wayfinding to and from the DPM, low visibility of some stations, reducing awareness of the DPM. Similarly, while the QLINE is within a short walk of the Financial District Station, it is not visible from the station and wayfinding signage is needed for improved connectivity. The DPM also connects to the QLINE at the Cadillac Center and Grand Circus Park stations, though again the connection between stations, particularly Cadillac Center and the Campus Martius QLINE stations may not be evident to all riders.

While physical wayfinding is limited, trip planning tools like Transit app, Moovit, and Google Maps can be used to provide directions, trip itineraries, and real-time arrival information for the DPM and other Detroit transit services. As of November 2025, Southeast Michigan transit riders can purchase Dart passes to ride DDOT and SMART directly in Transit app and will be able to use advanced app features. This is the result of an RTA contract with Transit app that is supported through grant funding provided by MDOT's Office of Passenger Transportation.

Table 5: Number of Routes Within Proximity of Each DPM Station

DPM Station	QLINE	DDOT	SMART	D2A2	DAX
Times Square (TS)	0	16	2	0	0
Michigan (MI)	0	17	10	0	1
Fort/Cass (FC)	0	13	3	0	0
Huntington Place (HP)	0	6	3	0	0
West Riverfront (WR)	0	0	0	0	0
Financial District (FI)	0	9	12	0	0
Millender Center (MC)	0	5	9	0	0
Renaissance Center (RC)	0	5	9	0	0
Bricktown (BT)	0	3	4	0	0
Greektown (GT)	0	2	0	0	0

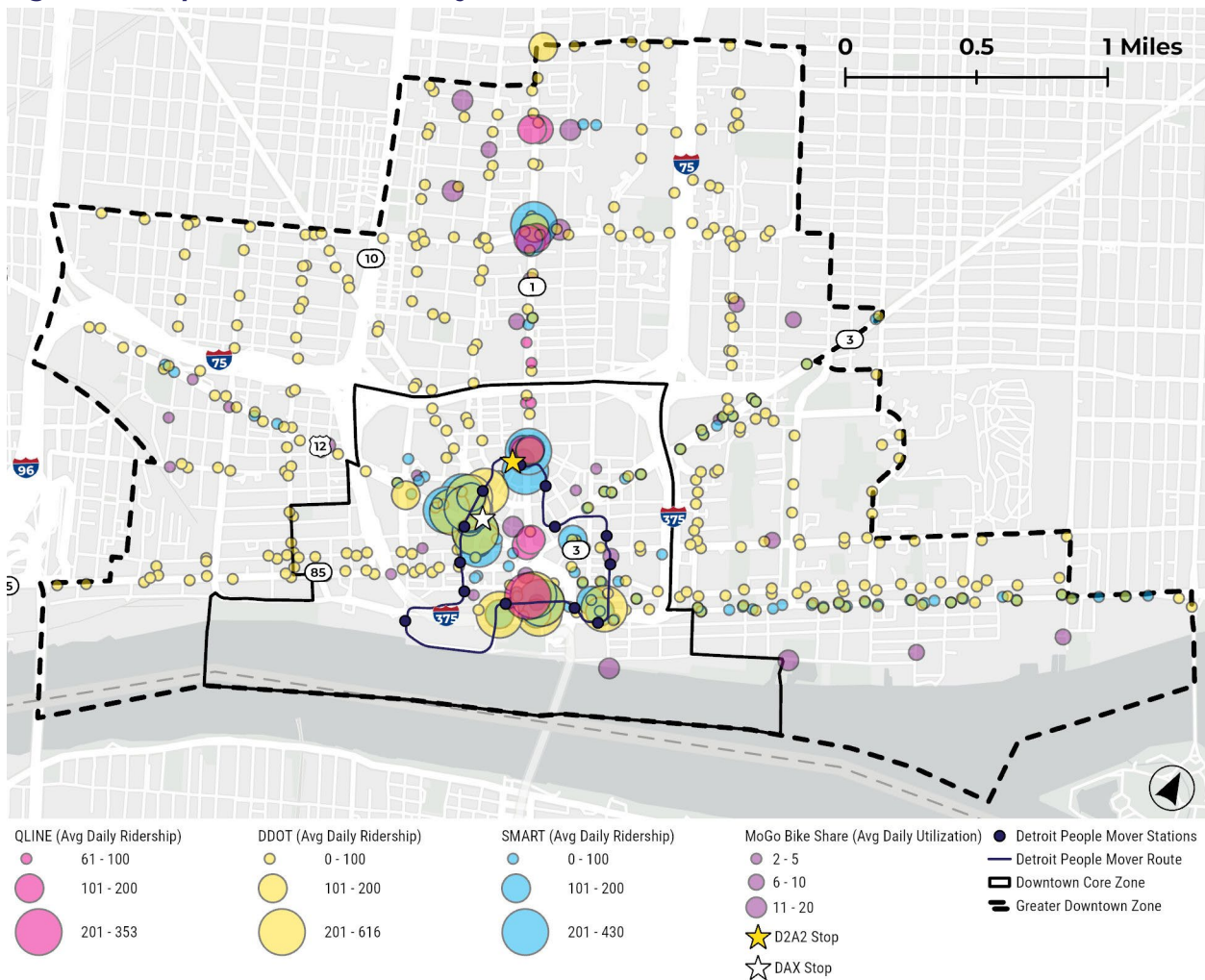
Cadillac Center (CC)	1	3	2	0	0
Broadway (BW)	0	0	3	0	0
Grand Circus Park (GC)	1	4	3	1	0

Sources: DDOT, DTC, RTA, SMART.

Locations with the highest stop-level ridership across the different transit services (Figure 15) include:

- The Rosa Parks Transit Center/Michigan Avenue and Washington Boulevard, coinciding with the Michigan and Times Square DPM stations.
- Woodward Avenue and Larned Street.
- Jefferson Avenue and Beaubien Street, coinciding with Renaissance Center Station.
- Grand Circus Park, coinciding with the Grand Circus Park DPM station.
- Woodward Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Figure 15: Stop-Level Micromobility and Transit Utilization Patterns



Source: RTA, DDOT, SMART, MoGo, SMART.



Transit Travel Patterns

An analysis of current travel patterns for all transit services to or within the study area using fall 2024 Replica²⁸ data revealed that:

- Approximately 7,560 transit trips to the study area are made by 5,920 trip takers on an average weekday, accounting for only 2 percent of all trips to the study area.
- The primary purpose of transit trips is for work (54 percent), followed by returning home (19 percent).
- Transit trips are concentrated in the morning, especially between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.; about 11 percent of transit trips begin during that hour.
- The most common transit trip duration is between 40 and 80 minutes long (36 percent of all trips).
- The most common transit trip distance is between 8 and 16 miles long (31 percent of all trips).

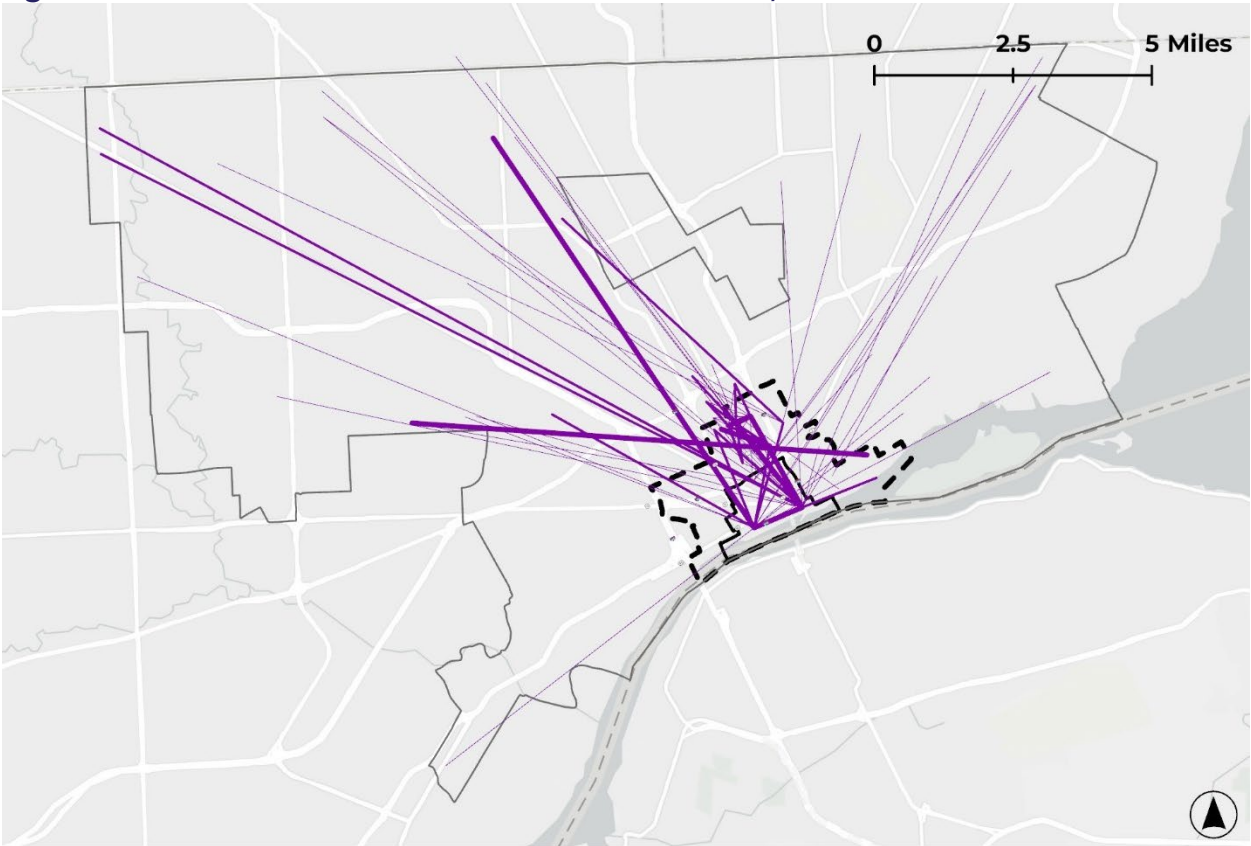
Figure 16 and Figure 17 show the top 100 transit trips to or in Greater Downtown Replica data. The most common travel patterns are between the following Detroit neighborhoods:

- Midtown – Downtown
- Midtown – Douglass
- Aviation Subdivision (outside Greater Downtown) – Elmwood Park
- West Side Industrial – Downtown
- Midtown – Medical Center

²⁸ Replica uses mobile location and other data to create a model of trips simulating real-world conditions. The transit patterns analysis is based on Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data, using the Greater Downtown census block groups as the destination and public transit as the primary mode.

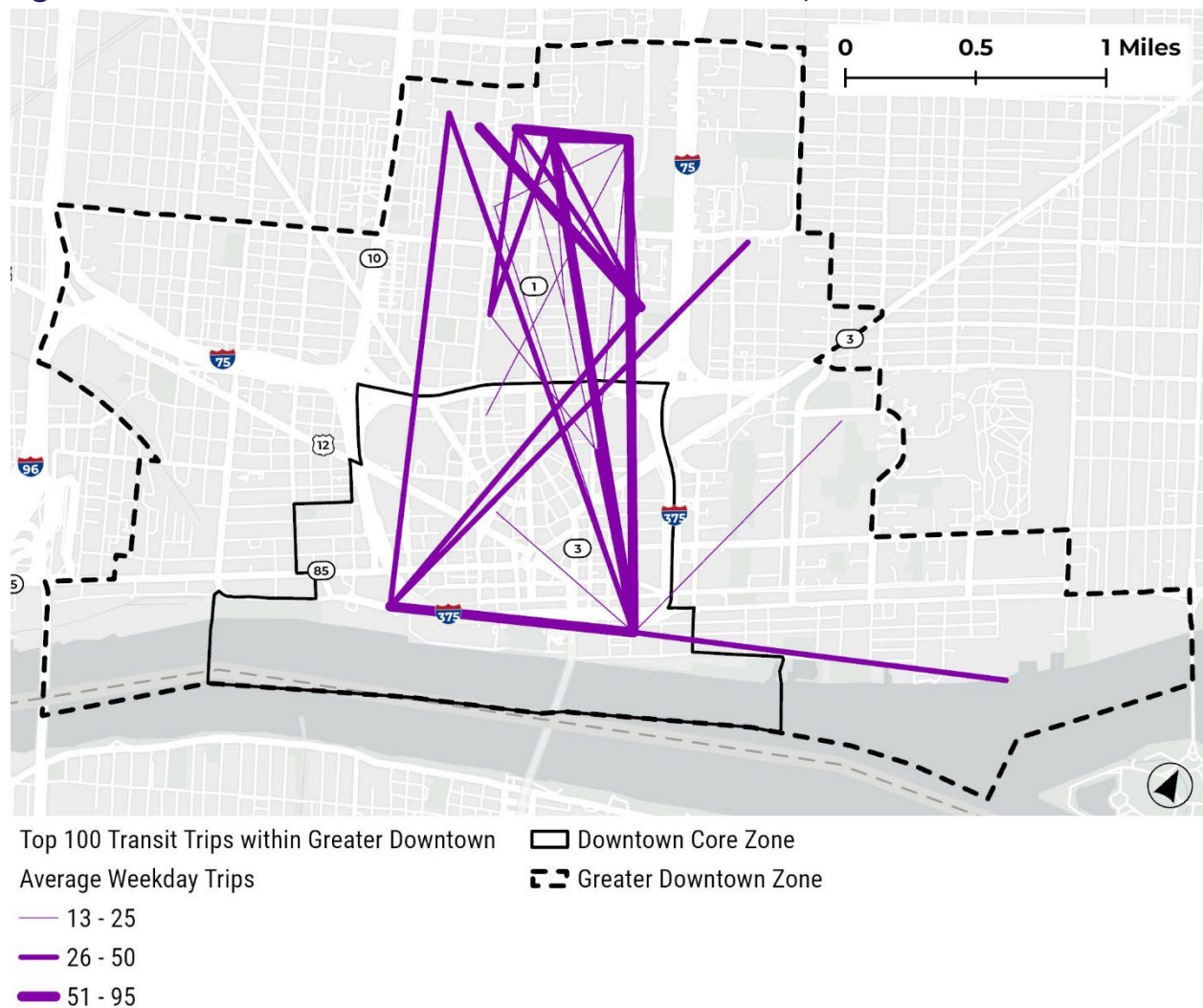


Figure 16: Transit Travel Patterns to Greater Downtown, Fall 2024



- Top 100 Transit Trips
Average Weekday Trips
- 13 - 25
 - 26 - 50
 - 51 - 95
- Downtown Core Zone
Greater Downtown Zone
City of Detroit

Source: Replica fall 2024 Thursday.

Figure 17: Transit Travel Patterns within Greater Downtown, Fall 2024

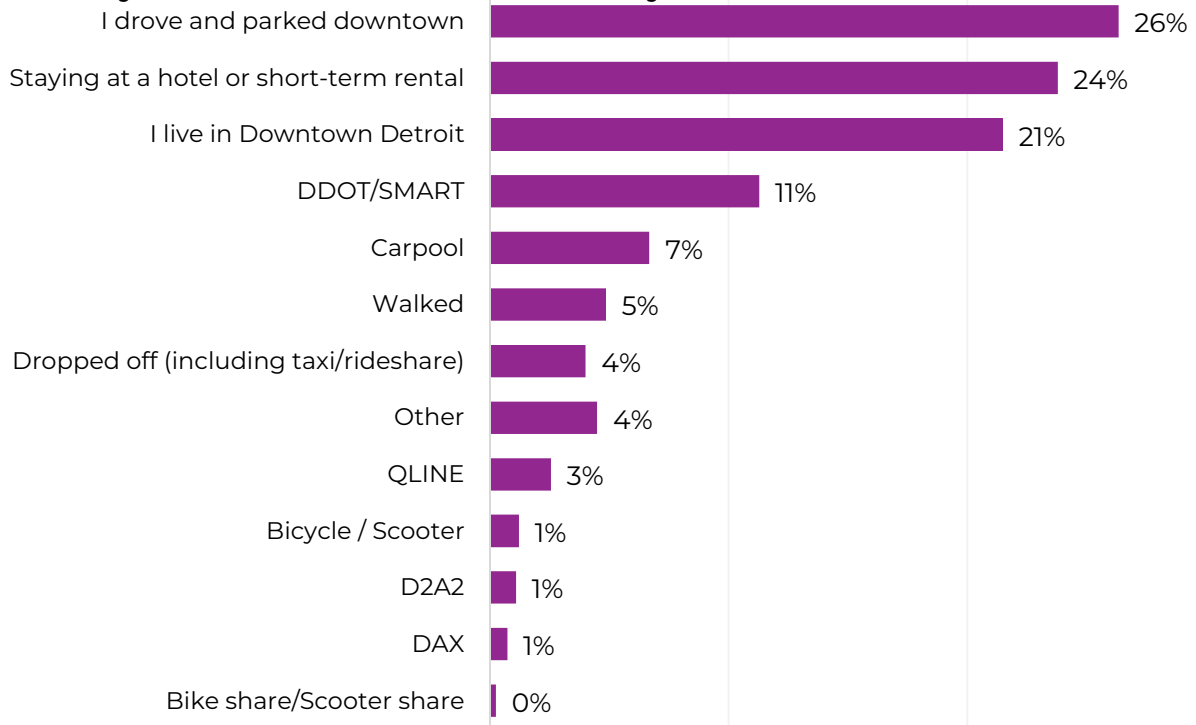
Source: Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data.

Building upon the Replica analysis, results of the 2024 DPM on-board survey reveal that DPM riders' primary purpose for being downtown varies based on their residency, as shown in Table 6. Work and eating out are top purposes across all categories, but conventions have a unique draw for non-Detroit residents. Furthermore, the survey reveals that most DPM riders drive to get Downtown (Figure 18). Survey responses indicate that a significant share of DPM riders are either tourists staying Downtown or residents of Downtown.

**Table 6: DPM Riders' Primary Purpose for Being Downtown**

	Downtown Resident (Zip Code 48226)	Detroit Resident	Non-Detroit Resident
Number of Respondents	72	244	596
Work	44%	36%	22%
Eating Out/Restaurant	43%	32%	24%
Travel /Tourism /Sightseeing	4%	9%	13%
Shopping	13%	9%	6%
Concert/Entertainment	14%	8%	8%
Sporting event	8%	6%	9%
Casino	6%	5%	6%
Live Here/Visiting Family	4%	4%	2%
Convention	4%	2%	23%
School/Religious Service	0%	1%	1%

Source: DTC.

Figure 18: Mode of Access Downtown for DPM Riders, 2024**How did you reach Downtown Detroit today?**

Source: DTC.

Pandemic Recovery Service Metrics

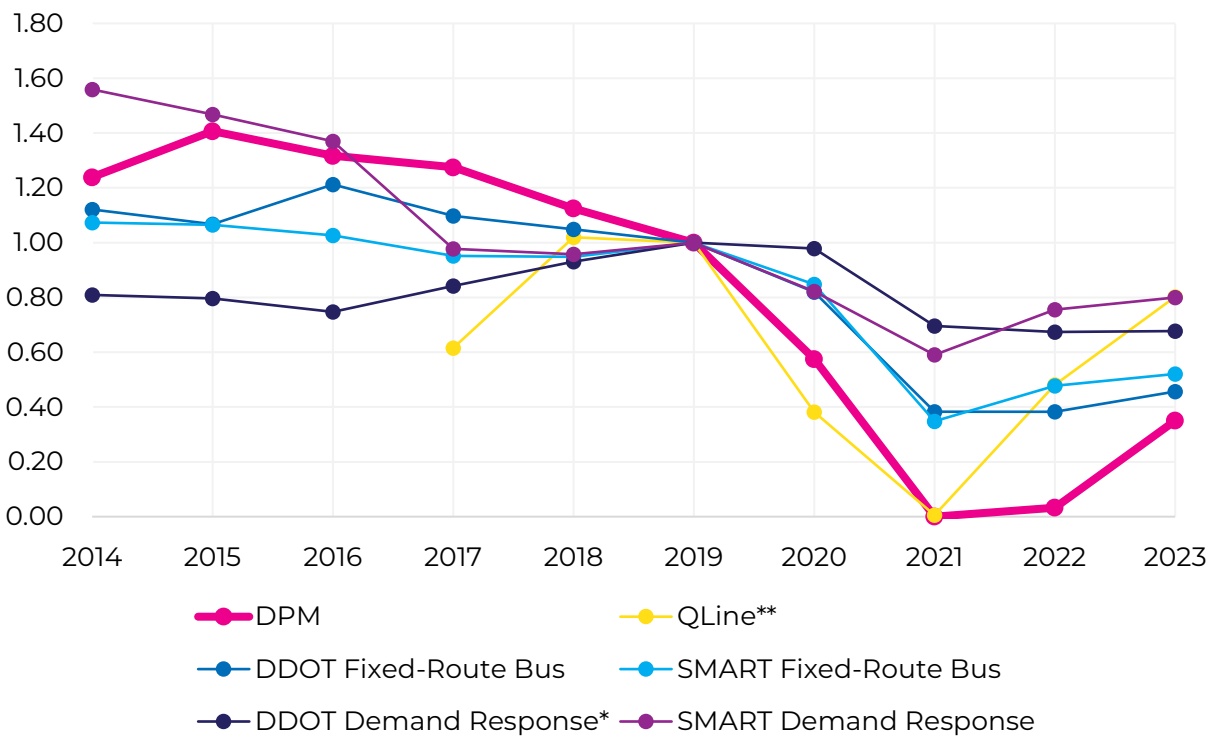
This section compares the DPM's FY 2014 to FY 2024 ridership to other Detroit transit modes to provide additional context to understand post-pandemic recovery trends. Figure 19 shows annual ridership (UPTs) percentage changes normalized against 2019 levels.



Between 2014 and 2019, DDOT demand-response service and the QLINE were the only local transit services that were growing. All other service modes had stagnant or declining ridership pre-pandemic. Following these trends, DDOT demand-response service remained stable following the pandemic and never fell below 68 percent recovery. Fixed-route bus services across DDOT and SMART showed nearly identical recovery patterns, with both falling to below 40 percent of pre-pandemic levels in 2021 and DDOT achieving 46 percent and SMART 52 percent recovery by 2023.

In contrast, the DPM and QLINE, both rail services that experienced complete suspensions of service, have had dramatically different recovery outcomes. The QLINE suspended service on March 29, 2020, and resumed service on September 27, 2021, while the DPM suspended service on March 30, 2020, and resumed service on May 20, 2022, giving QLINE an 8-month head start on recovery. Both systems implemented free fares—the QLINE has remained free since its reopening, while the DPM was free from May through October 2022 and resumed fare collection until January 2024. Yet, by FY 2023, the QLINE rebounded to 80 percent of its pre-pandemic ridership while the DPM only achieved 35 percent recovery.

Figure 19: Annual UPT, Normalized to FY 2019, by Agency and Mode



Source: 2014-2023 National Transit Database

* This analysis combines DDOT demand-response and demand-response Taxi for 2014 to 2017, to maintain consistency with NTD reporting categories for 2018 to 2023.

** The QLINE began operating service in May 2017.



MICROMOBILITY AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE PILOTS

In addition to transit services, Greater Downtown has micromobility service operated by MoGo Detroit, a bikeshare system, as well as e-scooters operated by private companies. In recent years, the City of Detroit's Office of Mobility Innovation (OMI) has been piloting autonomous vehicle (AV) services to better understand their potential to support public transit services and fill gaps in mobility.

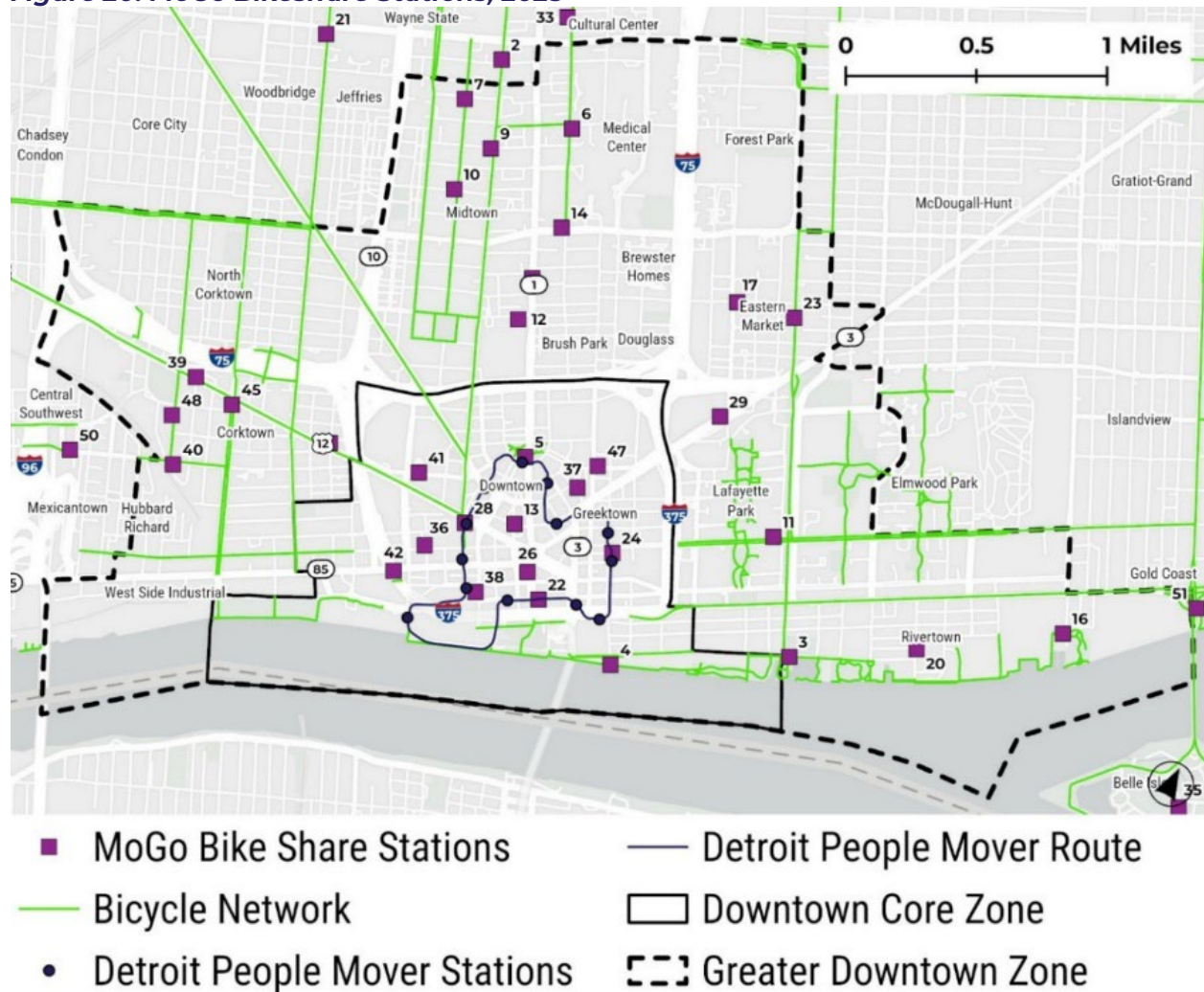
Micromobility

MoGo is Detroit's bike share program and a nonprofit affiliate of the Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP). The program is supported through partnerships with Henry Ford Health, Health Alliance Plan, and DDOT. Equipment is provided by PBSC Urban Solutions, and the system is operated by Shift Transit.²⁹ MoGo operates in parts of Detroit as well as in some of the city's northern suburbs of Ferndale, Oak Park, Huntington Woods, Berkley, and Royal Oak. MoGo stations in proximity to study area are shown in Figure 20. Four DPM stations are co-located with a MoGo station: Huntington Place, Michigan, Grand Circus Park, and Bricktown.

Table 7 shows the relative utilization of each MoGo station shown in Figure 20, with each station's rank number corresponding to its number on the map. Two of the most popular stations in the MoGo network (WSU – West Kirby and Third Avenue and WSU – Cass Avenue and Gilmour Mall) are located just north of the study area. Most MoGo stations are located along the bicycle network, although MoGo stations are present throughout the Downtown Core despite the limited bicycle network.

²⁹ "About MoGo." n.d. MoGo. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://mogodetroit.org/about/>.

Figure 20: MoGo Bikeshare Stations, 2025



Source: MoGo Detroit.

Numbers correspond with the station utilization rank in Table 7.

Table 7: Study Area MoGo Bike Share Stations by 2024 Utilization

Rank	Station	Total 2024 Utilization
1	WSU - West Kirby & Third Avenue	11,129
2	Cass Avenue & West Hancock Street	10,592
3	Atwater Street & Orleans Street	7,438
4	Renaissance Center Plaza & Detroit Riverwalk	7,327
5	DMC - John R Street & East Canfield Street	6,080
6	Second Avenue & Prentis Street	5,903
7	Grand Circus Park - West	5,881
8	Second Avenue & Selden Street	4,420
9	Mack Avenue & John R Street	4,169
10	Capitol Park - Griswold Street & State Street	4,151
11	WSU - Cass Avenue & Gilmour Mall	3,845
12	Woodward Avenue & Temple Street	3,471
13	East Lafayette Street & Orleans Street	3,463



14	West Willis Street & Cass Avenue	2,900
15	Wilkins Street & Russell Street	2,882
17	Jos Campau & Guoin Street	2,724
18	Wight Street & Mt Elliott	2,535
19	Dequindre Cut Freight Yard	2,524
20	Larned Street & Woodward Avenue	2,406
21	Woodward Avenue & West Fort Street	2,395
22	Trumbull Avenue & Warren Avenue	2,330
23	Beaubien Street & East Lafayette Street	2,316
24	Woodward Avenue & Peterboro Street	2,302
27	Belle Isle Conservatory	1,993
28	Brooklyn Street & Michigan Avenue	1,917
29	Belle Isle Casino	1,761
30	Rosa Parks Transit Center	1,621
31	Kirby Street & Woodward Avenue	1,548
32	Agnes Street & Parker Street	1,535
33	Wabash Street & Michigan Avenue	1,409
34	Gratiot Avenue & Russell Street	1,407
35	Bagley Street & Plaza Drive	1,339
36	MacArthur Bridge & Gabriel Richard Park	1,336
37	Farnsworth Street & John R Street	1,322
38	Bagley Street & 14th Street	1,279
39	Paradise Valley - Gratiot Avenue & Randolph Street	1,236
40	14th Street & Dalzelle Street	1,100
42	Rosa Parks Boulevard & Michigan Avenue	950
43	Huntington Place-Washington & West Congress	913
44	Wayne County Community College - West Fort Street	862
45	WDIV & West Lafayette Boulevard	718
46	Brush Street & Madison Street	703
47	20th Street & Bagley Street	697
59	West Vernor Highway & Scotten Avenue	251

Source: MoGo.

Locations with the highest micromobility utilization are largely the same as locations with the highest stop-level transit ridership (Figure 15). This indicates that micromobility use is consistent with first- and last-mile transportation to and from transit. Exceptions to this pattern include high micromobility utilization along the riverfront (some of which may be recreational), in Midtown, and at Eastern Market where there is not high transit ridership, which may indicate unmet transit demand at these locations.

Shared e-scooters are also available in Detroit, provided by Bird, Boaz Bikes, Lime, and Spin. Detroit residents that participate in any state or federally run assistance program are eligible for discounts on scooters.³⁰ MoGo has a similar program that qualifies registered members of state benefit programs for a discounted annual pass.³¹

³⁰ City of Detroit. n.d. Scooters.

<https://detroitmi.gov/departments/departments-public-works/complete-streets/moving-city/scooters>.

³¹ MoGo Detroit. n.d. Pricing. <https://mogodetroit.org/pricing/>.



Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Pilots

The City of Detroit, through its OMI, has been piloting AV shuttle services to understand the potential for this technology to fill transportation service gaps. OMI has piloted two of these services: Connect Detroit and Accessibili-D.

Connect Detroit is an electric and autonomous shuttle service that operates on a fixed 10.8-mile route from Michigan Central Station to Walker Street on the East Jefferson riverfront. Connect Detroit shuttles are free for all riders. Service started in August 2024 with manually operated shuttles with AV assistance. Fully autonomous operations began in August 2025. MDOT has provided funding for this service through 2026.

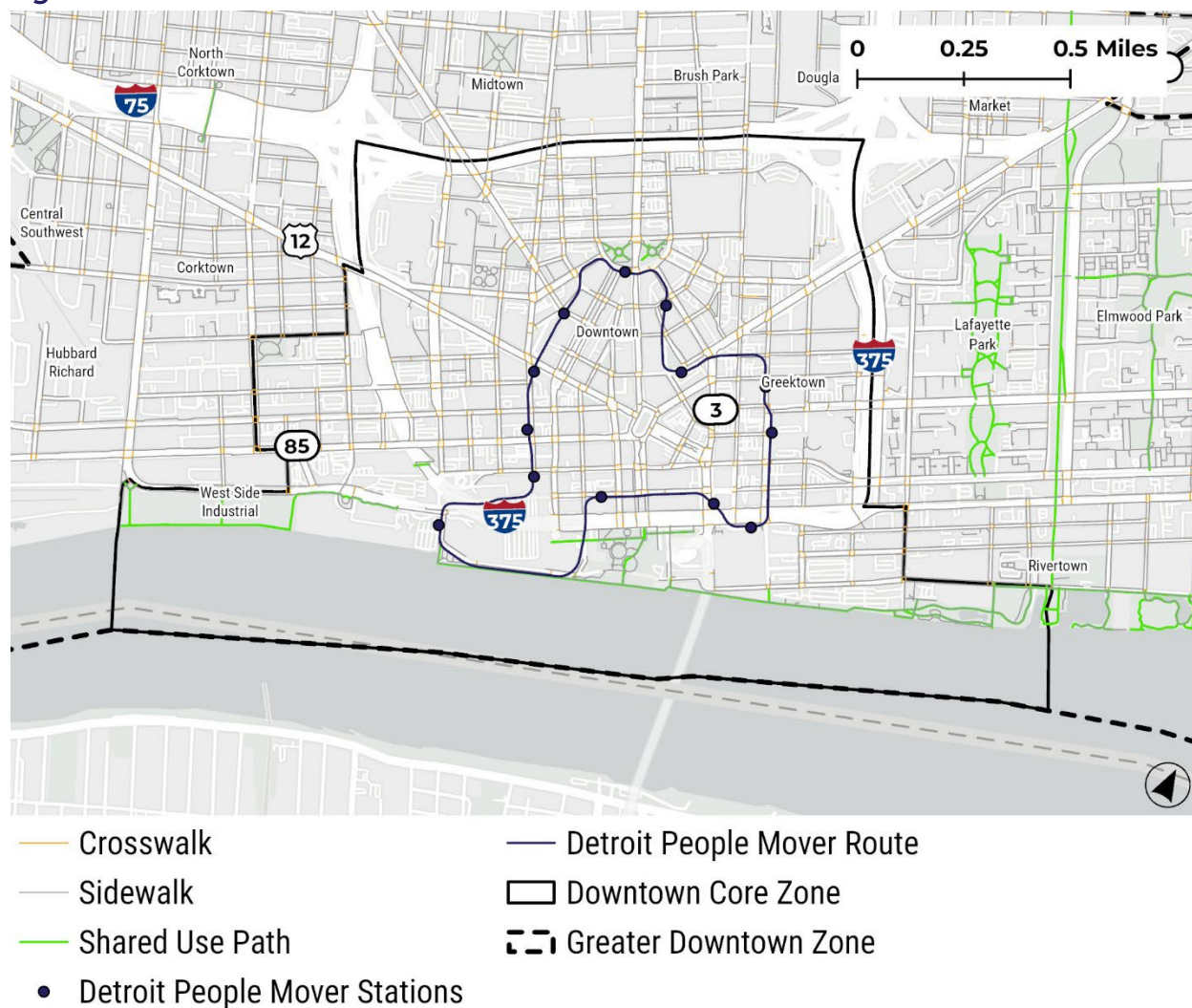
Accessibili-D was an autonomous shuttle service operated by May Mobility that provided older adults and people with disabilities with access to grocery stores, medical appointments, and other essential services. A rider could be picked up or dropped off at over 110 registered locations across Detroit that the shuttle autonomously navigated to. The pilot was available to people 62 years or older or who have a disability and was free to ride.³² The pilot operated from June 2024 to June 2025. OMI is exploring funding options to reinstate this service.

PEDESTRIAN TRIPS

Shaped largely by the roadway network, which is described in more detail in the VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING section of this report, walking infrastructure in study area follows the radial network of streets branching out from Campus Martius. Sidewalks are present on both sides of nearly every street and crosswalks are at nearly every intersection, especially in the Downtown Core (Figure 21).

While walking infrastructure is widespread, Downtown Detroit is disconnected from surrounding neighborhoods due to the highways that encircle it on three sides and limit pedestrian crossing, including M-10 to the west, I-75 to the north, and I-375. In addition, M-10 and I-375 transition into Jefferson Avenue at the south end of Downtown, and the traffic speeds and lane configuration on this roadway contribute to similar conditions as the highways, limiting comfortable and safe pedestrian connections to the riverfront. Several recent and ongoing projects seek to implement improvements that reconnect the communities divided by these roadways, including the I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project, the I-75 Cap Project, the extension of 2nd Avenue, and the redevelopment of the former JLA site into Water Square. These projects have the potential to improve connectivity between the Downtown Core and Greater Downtown, encouraging more activity on and around the DPM.

³² "Office of Mobility Innovation." n.d. City of Detroit. Accessed July 2, 2025.
<https://detroitmi.gov/government/mayors-office/office-mobility-innovation>.

Figure 21: Downtown Core Pedestrian Infrastructure

Source: SEMCOG.

Pedestrian Travel Patterns

Based on an analysis using fall 2024 Replica³³ data, approximately 38,900 walking trips to or in the study area are made by 26,800 trip takers on an average weekday, accounting for 12 percent of all trips to the study area. Analysis of pedestrian travel patterns revealed that:

- The primary purpose of walking trips is for shopping (32 percent), followed by returning home (19 percent) and dining out (14 percent).
- Pedestrian trips are concentrated in the afternoon, especially between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.; about 17 percent of walking trips begin during those hours.
- The most common pedestrian trip duration is under 5 minutes (51 percent).

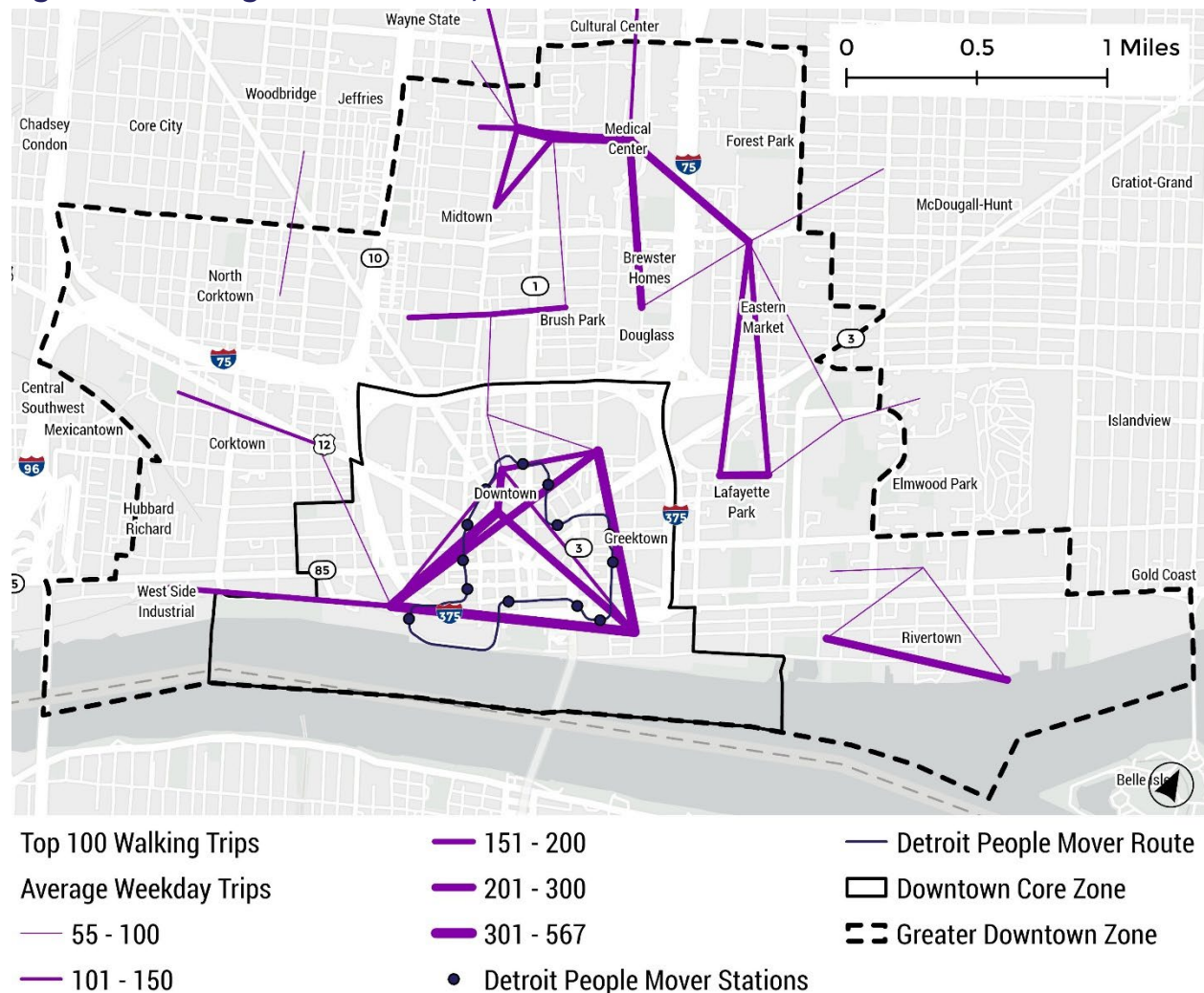
³³ Replica uses mobile location and other data to create a model of trips simulating real-world conditions. The transit patterns analysis is based on Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data, using the study area census block groups as the destination and walking as the primary mode.

- The most common pedestrian trip distance is under a half-mile long (65 percent).

Figure 22 portrays the top 100 walking trips to or in the study area. The most common travel patterns are between the following neighborhoods in the study area:

- West Side Industrial – Downtown
- Within Downtown
- Midtown – Medical Center
- Within Midtown
- Medical Center – Douglass

Figure 22: Walking Travel Patterns, Fall 2024



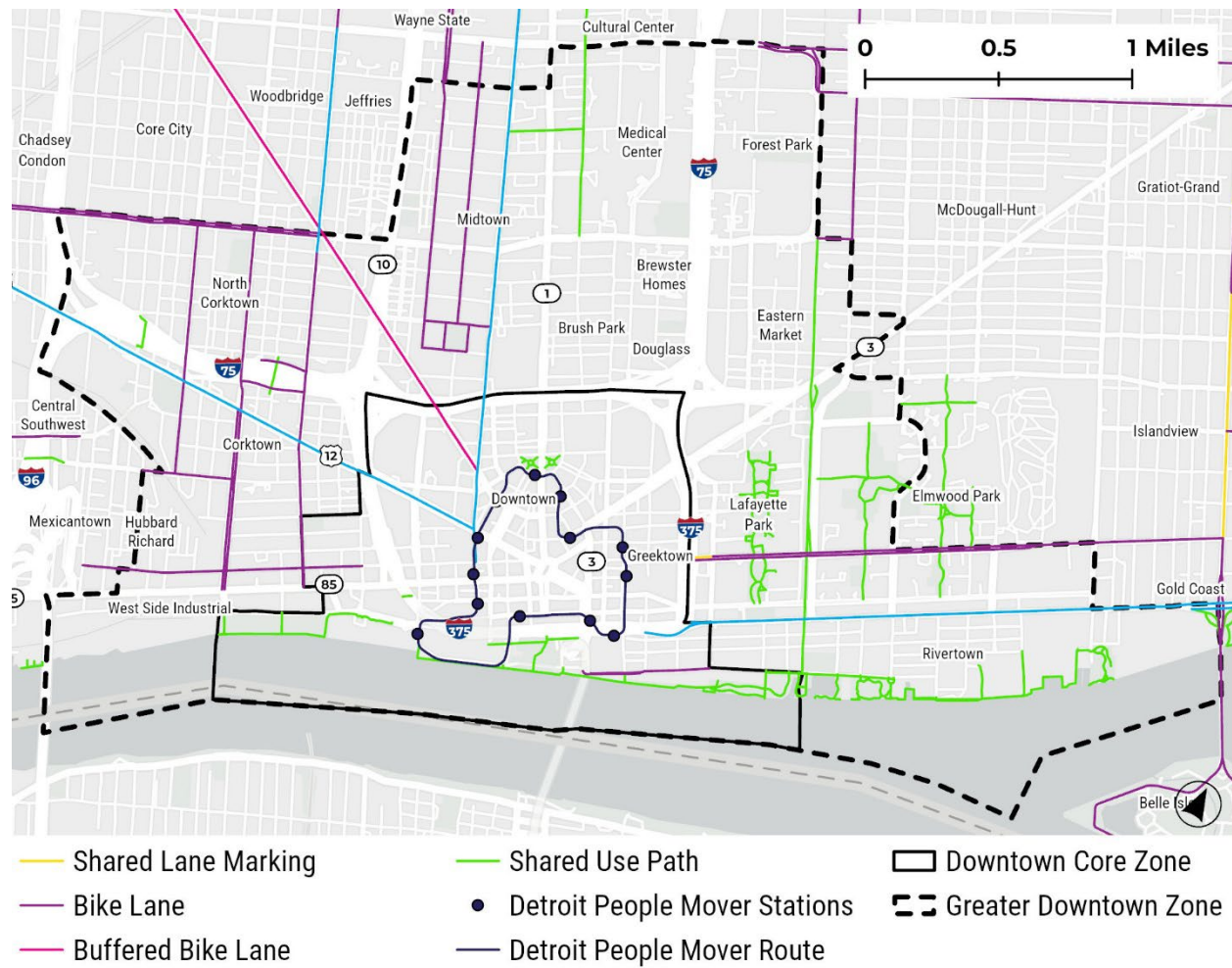
Source: Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data.

BICYCLING

Bicycling infrastructure in the study area is limited. Connections are strongest between the east side of Downtown and Belle Isle, within Midtown, between North Corktown and

Corktown, and between Eastern Market and Rivertown (Figure 23). The only DPM stations with direct bicycle network connections are Michigan and Water Square.

Figure 23: Study Area Bicycling Infrastructure



Source: SEMCOG.

Bicycling Travel Patterns

An analysis of bicycling travel patterns to or in the study area was conducted using fall 2024 Replica³⁴ data. The analysis of bicycling travel patterns revealed that:

- Approximately 3,500 bicycling trips to the study area are made by 2,910 trip takers on an average weekday, accounting for only 1 percent of all trips to the study area.
- The primary purpose of bicycling trips is to return home (39 percent), followed by shopping (15 percent), dining out (13 percent), and work (10 percent).

³⁴ Replica uses mobile location and other data to create a model of trips simulating real-world conditions. The transit patterns analysis is based on Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data, using the study area census block groups as the destination and bicycling as the primary mode.

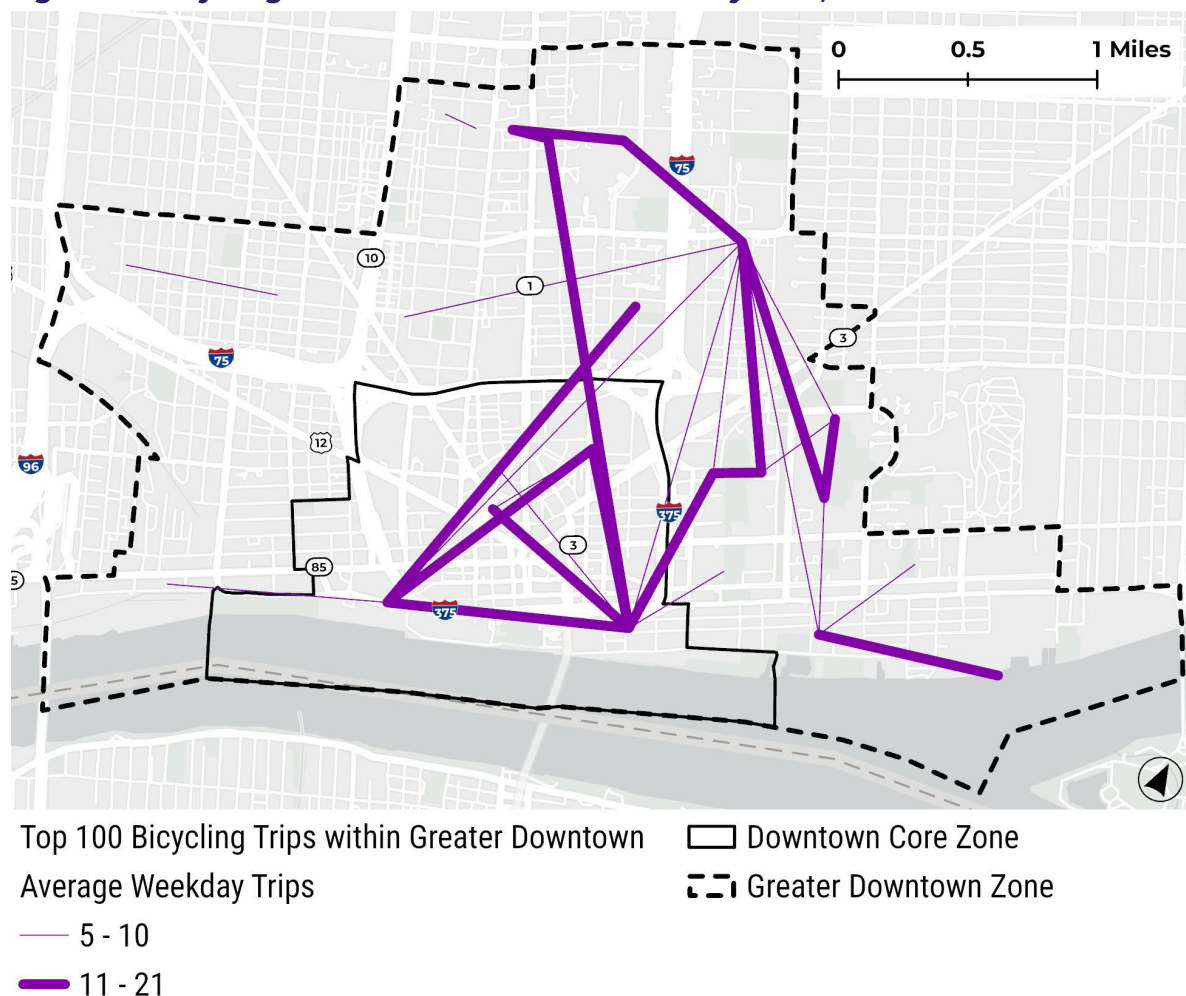


- Bicycling trips are concentrated in the afternoon, especially between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.; about 39 percent of bicycling trips begin during those hours.
- The most common bicycling trip duration is under 5 minutes (24 percent), followed by 40 to 80 minutes long (21 percent), potentially illustrating the transportation versus recreation split among bicycling trips.
- Bicycling trip distances vary widely; no one distance range is more prominent than the others.

Figure 24 portrays the top 100 bicycling trips within the study area. The most common travel patterns are between the following Detroit neighborhoods:

- Eastern Market – Elmwood Park
- Piety Hill (outside of the study area) – Downtown
- Within Downtown
- Within Midtown
- West Side Industrial – Douglass

Figure 24: Bicycling Travel Patterns within the Study Area, Fall 2024.



Source: Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data.



VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING

An analysis of travel patterns to the study area from other places as well as within the study area was conducted to gain insight into where people are traveling in the study area.

Roadway Network

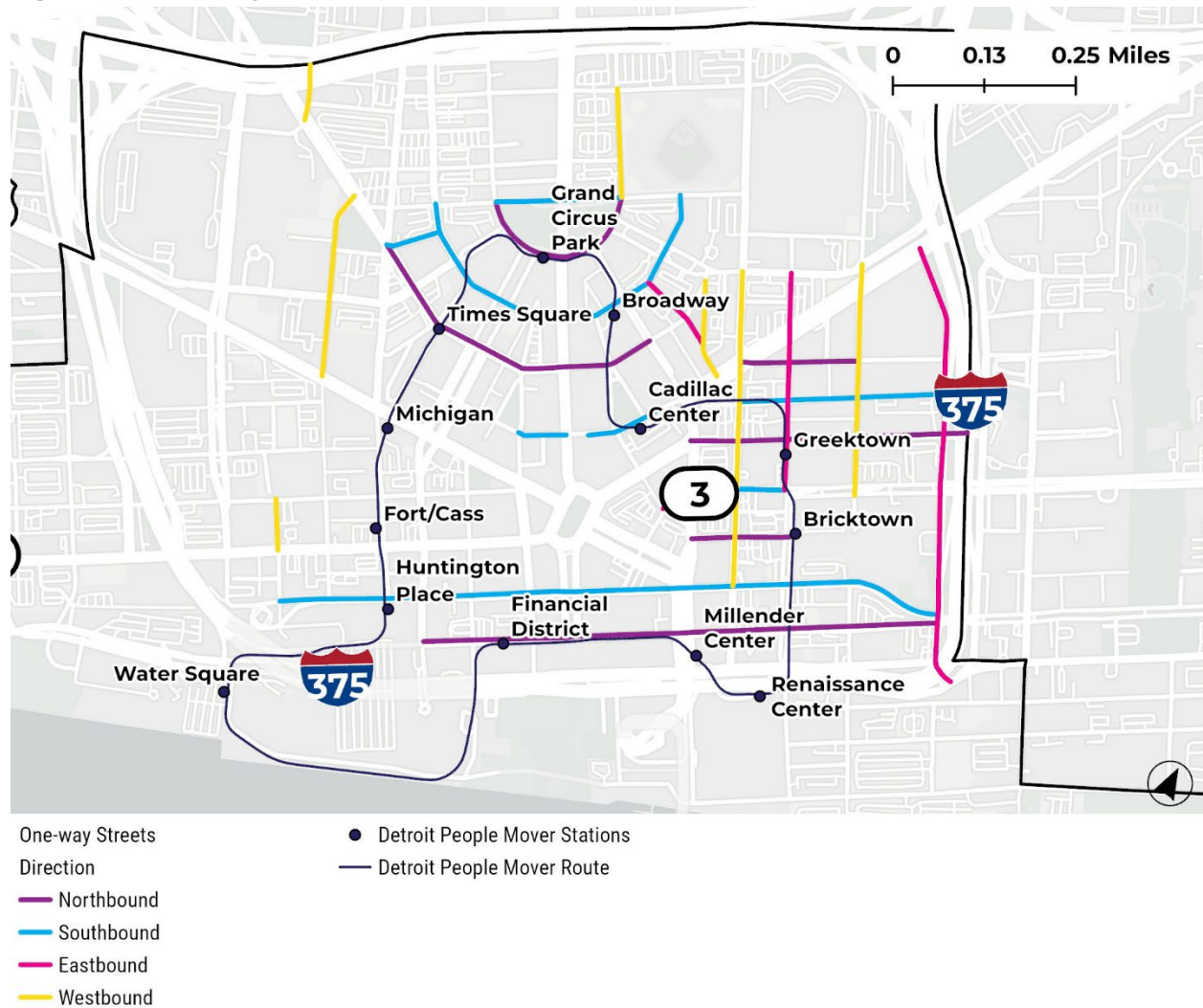
Detroit's Downtown Core is served by a combination of freeway connections, major arterials, and a dense one-way street network. Access into downtown is possible from all directions, but the street grid and traffic patterns create uneven connectivity. Ongoing and planned projects including the Second Avenue Extension, the I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project, the US-12 (Michigan Avenue) Corktown Improvement Project and the M-3 (Gratiot Avenue) Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study may help to strengthen connections to downtown by creating more direct routes.

Some existing DPM stations, including Cadillac Center, Broadway, Greektown, and Times Square, are surrounded by one-way street networks, which can be more challenging to access via vehicle. Cadillac Center, Broadway, and Greektown stations rely on specific northbound and eastbound streets with limited direct westbound access, making these station areas difficult to access by car during peak hours. Times Square Station is primarily accessed from southbound and westbound streets, and northbound connections are limited. The original Purpose and Need statement for the DPM identified one-way streets as a challenge for navigating Downtown with a vehicle, which could be mitigated by using the DPM to navigate the area instead.³⁵ One-way restricted streets are shown in Figure 25.

Other stations such as Water Square, Huntington Place, and Renaissance Center also have limited connecting streets and directional options. Huntington Place Station has only one northbound and westbound approach, while southbound access requires detouring through adjacent streets. Water Square Station is located on the edge of the network with a single northbound route and east-west access primarily via the riverfront corridor.

In contrast, stations like Financial District, Millender Center, and Grand Circus Park serve as connectivity hubs with multiple directional streets, offering more flexibility and accessibility.

³⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation UMTA. "Downtown People Mover, Detroit, Michigan: Final Environmental Impact Statement." December 1980. <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/296>.

Figure 25: One-way Street Network within the Downtown Core

Source: City of Detroit Open Data, 2023 Traffic Volumes.

Parking

In the Downtown Core, public parking is available both on- and off-street in addition to private off-street facilities. When the DPM was originally conceived of, one of the goals of the system was to encourage the redevelopment of parking facilities in the center of downtown, where land was more valuable, by facilitating access to and from parking facilities on the periphery of downtown.³⁶

On-street parking options are distributed across Downtown and are available for \$1.00 per hour for two hours at a time, with payment enforced from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. According to a perception survey administered by the DDP, 42.5 percent of

³⁶ U.S. Department of Transportation Urban Mass Transit Administration. "Downtown People Mover, Detroit, Michigan: Final Environmental Impact Statement." December 1980.
<https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/view/dot/296>.



respondents are satisfied with the amount of on-street parking available, and 32.5 percent believe that there is affordable parking available Downtown.³⁷

Off-street parking options are distributed across the Downtown Core. There is a high concentration of surface lots north of Grand Circus Park and on either side of Gratiot Avenue. As of 2018 (the most recently available comprehensive data), there were approximately 50,000 publicly available, off-street parking spaces in the Downtown Core and at least 34 percent of all land parcels in Downtown Detroit are fully or partially utilized for off-street parking (See Figure 26).³⁸ The Parking Reform Network, a nonprofit organization focused on educating the public about the impact of parking policy, calculates a parking score for over 70 U.S. cities, with a high score indicating a downtown dedicates more land to parking compared to the median amount for a city of comparable size. Downtown Detroit receives the highest score.³⁹

While parking may not be the most profitable use of valuable downtown land, it can be an easy source of income for downtown property owners, who may lack incentives to pursue alternative development or feel constrained by zoning limitations.⁴⁰ Within certain districts, including Major Business District (B5), Market and Distribution District (MKT), Public Center District (PC), Central Business District, and the New Center Major Commercial Area, developers are exempt from off-street parking requirements.⁴¹ However, many downtown developers still opt to construct parking despite the high costs associated with constructing parking. This signals a concern that customers may not be able to access developments via transportation modes other than a personal vehicle.

Both the DPM and QLINE currently market the benefits of using their systems to park further from one's destination to avoid congestion and to utilize less expensive parking. The QLINE, in partnership with WSU, offers a \$5 park-and-ride option. Findings from a 2024 customer satisfaction survey noted that the DPM could be leveraged to support parking reduction policies, offering methods to extend the reach of existing parking infrastructure. Additionally, the Park Detroit app, which is used to pay for on-street parking, now allows users to reserve

³⁷ DDP. "2022 Perceptions Survey Stakeholder Insights: Perceptions of Downtown and Detroit Transportation." Accessed August 19, 2025.

³⁸ DDP, "Parking Downtown," <https://data-downtowndetroit.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/downtowndetroit::parking-downtown/explore?location=42.335557%2C-83.046754%2C14.81>

³⁹ Parking Reform Network, <https://parkingreform.org/resources/parking-lot-map/>. **Parking Lot Map - Parking Reform Network** "A low parking score means the city devotes much less land in its central area to parking than the median. Conversely, a high score translates to more land dedicated to parking compared to the median for a city in a UZA of that size. This scoring system was created to evaluate cities on an equal basis and should not be used outside of this context."

⁴⁰ Detroit Free Press. "Detroit parking lot owners make a lot of money: Who they are." John Gallagher. November 30, 2018. <https://www.freep.com/in-depth/money/business/john-gallagher/2018/11/30/detroit-parking-lot-owners/1980619002/>

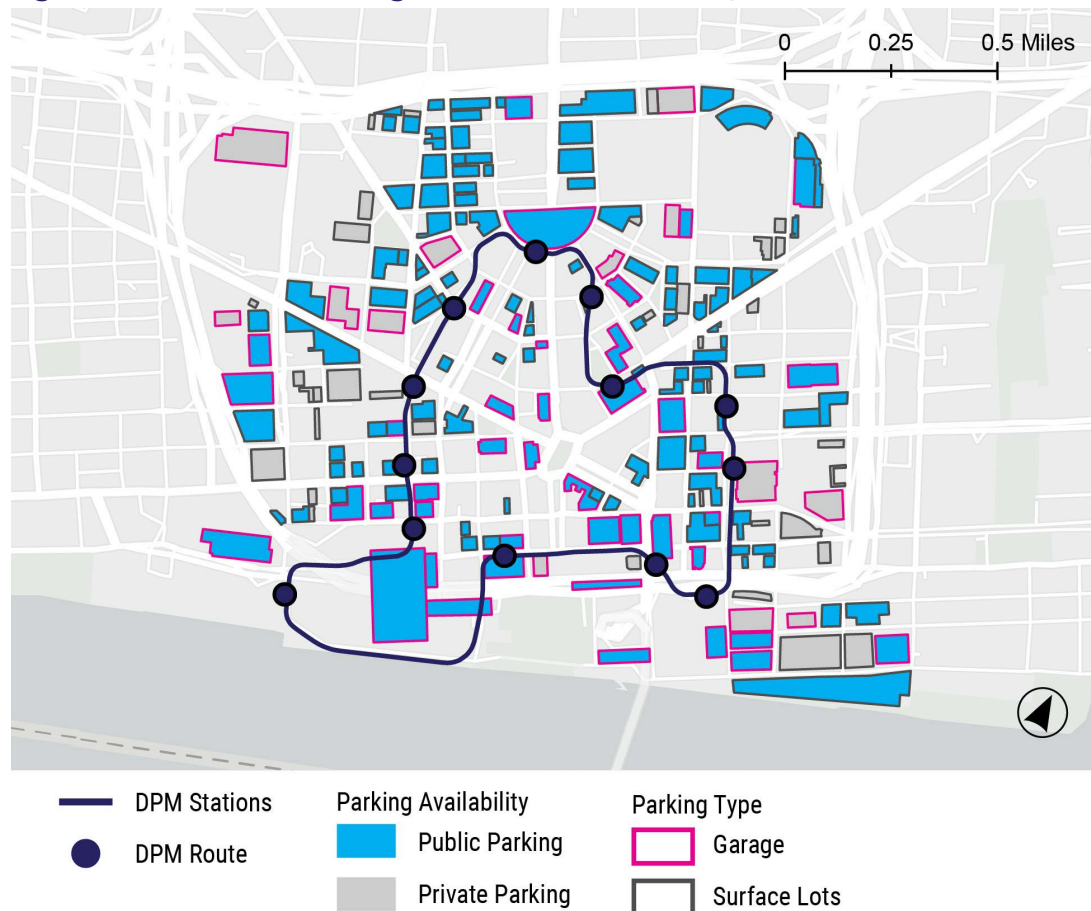
⁴¹ Detroit City Code of Ordinances. Chapter 50 – Zoning. Article XIV. Division 1. Subdivision A. Sec. 50-14-7. https://library.municode.com/mi/detroit/codes/code_of_ordinances.

surface lot or garage parking options in advance (for participating off-street parking locations).

As originally intended, the DPM does enhance access to large event centers. Riders use the system to park further from events, taking advantage of less expensive parking options and riding the DPM to get to their final destination.⁴² The DPM also helps eliminate the need to drive for some users who either use the DPM as their primary transportation mode or transfer from another transit service or non-motorized mode (walking, biking, etc.). Still, almost half of the 2024 customer satisfaction survey respondents who were infrequent riders noted that they typically drive and park to get around Downtown Detroit, likely due to the ease of this option.

These findings suggest that there may be additional opportunities to provide information on parking options that connect with the DPM and opportunities to better facilitate access to Downtown Detroit through transit modes.

Figure 26: Off-street Parking in the Downtown Core, 2018.



Source: DDP.

⁴² The 2024 customer satisfaction survey showed that the greatest share of on-board respondents got to Downtown Detroit by driving and parking downtown before getting on the DPM.



Personal Vehicle Travel Patterns

An analysis of current personal vehicle travel patterns to the study area was conducted using Replica data.⁴³ The analysis revealed that:

- Approximately 259,000 personal vehicle trips to the study area are made by 168,000 trip takers on an average weekday, accounting for 79 percent of all trips to the study area.
- About 29 percent of personal vehicle trip takers are carpool riders.
- The primary purpose of personal vehicle trips is for work (39 percent), followed by shopping (15 percent), returning home (14 percent), and dining out (12 percent).
- Personal vehicle trips are concentrated in the morning, especially between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.; about 10 percent of personal vehicle trips begin during that hour.
- The most common personal vehicle trip duration is between 10 and 20 minutes long (34 percent).
- The most common personal vehicle trip distance is between 8 and 16 miles long (29 percent) or between 16 and 32 miles long (24 percent).

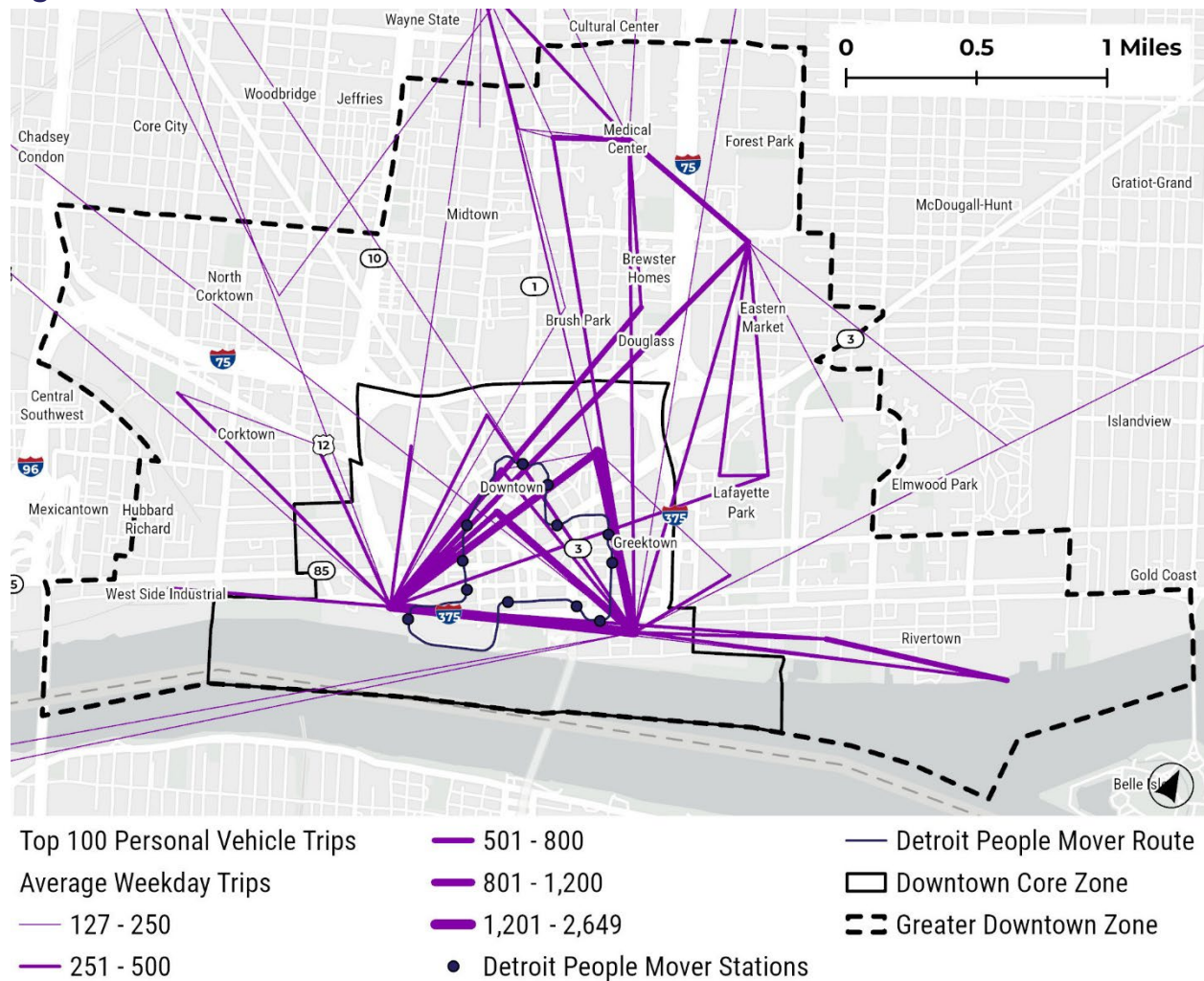
Figure 27 shows the top 100 personal vehicle trips to or in the study area. The most common place for trips to originate is in the study area itself, indicating that a significant volume of personal vehicle trips are made in this area. The most common places for personal vehicle trips to originate outside of the study area are:

- WSU
- Cultural Center neighborhood of Detroit
- Warrendale neighborhood of Detroit
- Lincoln Park
- Crary/St. Mary's neighborhood of Detroit
- Outer Drive-Hayes neighborhood of Detroit
- North Campau neighborhood of Detroit
- Davison-Schoolcraft neighborhood of Detroit
- Warren

⁴³ Replica uses mobile location and other data to create a model of trips simulating real-world conditions. The vehicle travel patterns analysis is based on Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data, using the Greater Downtown census block groups as the destination and private auto and auto rider as the primary modes.



Figure 27. Personal Vehicle Travel Patterns



Source: Replica fall 2024 Thursday trip data.

International Travel

Between July 2024 and June 2025, there were almost 6.4 million inbound passenger trips into Detroit from Ontario, Canada (Table 8), including trips via both the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel.⁴⁴ The vast majority of people cross the border via personal vehicle, but 1 percent of crossings was via bus. Transit Windsor previously operated a tunnel bus service between Windsor, Ontario, and Downtown Detroit with stops along Jefferson Avenue, Washinton Boulevard, and at the RPTC. Special event bus service is also available for select concerts and sporting events in Detroit. Tunnel bus service was discontinued on August 31, 2025, and special events service will end on December 20, 2025 due to budgetary

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Bureau of Transportation Statistics Border Crossings by Mode, Border, and State, June 2024 to June 2025 <https://data.bts.gov/Research-and-Statistics/Border-Crossings-by-Mode-Border-and-State/erjk-mneb>.



challenges. The Linq, a private operator, began tunnel bus service in October 2025 to replace these cross-border services.

Table 8: Inbound Passenger Border Crossings, July 2024 to June 2025

Mode	Total Border Crossings	Percent
Bus Passengers	65,421	1.0%
Personal Vehicle Passengers	6,306,059	99.0%
Total	6,371,480	100.0%

Source: USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

KEY TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS

Travel patterns in Detroit are largely commuter-oriented, with a high proportion of movements into and out of the study area being for work. This is supported by a robust amount of transit service, but mode share is car dominated. This presents an opportunity to shift more trips from driving to transit, especially trips originating in Detroit neighborhoods just north of the Greater Downtown zone, including Wayne State University and the Cultural Center. Transit service improvements in these areas could mitigate the amount of personal vehicle trips taken between these areas and downtown.

Table 9 provides an overview of different transportation modes in Downtown Detroit, including the DPM, DDOT and SMART’s fixed route bus services, QLINE streetcar, walking, private vehicles, biking, and rideshare. Based on a review of peak-period schedules on a sample of routes that operate in the Downtown Core, DDOT and SMART buses have an average speed of approximately 9 to 10 miles per hour. These speeds are derived from published bus schedules and reflect dwell time at stops, traffic signals, and due to roadway congestion. The DPM has numerous positive characteristics when compared to other modes. For example, the DPM operates at an average speed of 11 to 13 miles per hour with 98 to 99 percent on-time performance. As a fully grade-separated, elevated system, DPM is not affected by traffic congestion, pedestrian crossings, speed limits, signal delays, or street closures, allowing it to maintain consistent travel times and operations, allowing it to reach maximum speed of 27 miles per hour. This separation also makes it safer and reliable for short, frequent trips around downtown. By comparison, bus services operate in mixed traffic at average speeds ranging from 12 to 16 miles per hour, slower than the DPM, with a moderate on time performance of 74 percent.⁴⁵ The QLINE streetcar, which also operates in mixed traffic, has the lowest average speed (7.5 miles per hour) and on-time performance of 70 percent.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Detroit Department of Transportation. (2025). DDOT performance dashboard. Retrieved October 15, 2025, <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/detroit-department-transportation/ddot-performance-dashboard>.

⁴⁶ DeVito, L. (2024, January 23). Detroit’s QLINE reports that ridership is up, while wait times are down. Metro Times. Retrieved from <https://www.metrotimes.com/news/detroits-qline-says-ridership-is-up-wait-times-are-down-35250958/>



The DPM represents a generally safer and more efficient mode of travel Downtown. According to the City of Detroit's official Traffic Crashes dataset (2023), available through the Detroit Open Data Portal:

- The Greater Downtown Detroit zone recorded 192 vehicle-related injury incidents during the year.
- In the same year, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle-related incidents each had approximately 58 reported injuries.⁴⁷
- According to the TomTom Traffic Index, congestion in Detroit increased travel times by 21 percent in the morning and 35 percent in the evening compared to normal traffic conditions.
- On average, Detroit drivers spent 38 extra hours per year in rush-hour traffic, which is increasing year-on-year (2025 experienced an increase of over five hours when compared to 2023).⁴⁸

Table 9: Key Transportation Metrics – Downtown Detroit Modes

Metric	DPM	Bus	QLINE	Walking	Private Auto	Biking	Taxi
Avg. Downtown Speed (mph)	11-13	9 - 10	7.5	3	25-30	4-18	25-30
Reported Injuries (Downtown)	1	58	23	58	192	16	N/A
On-Time Performance (%)	98% - 99%	74%	70%	N/A	38 hours*	N/A	38 hours*
Guideway Separation	Fully separated	Mixed traffic	Mixed traffic	Fully separated	Mixed traffic	Partially separated	Mixed traffic
User Cost per trip	\$0	\$2 (4-hour pass)	\$0	\$0	\$3.75**	\$1 (unlock) + 0.25/mile	\$9-\$14
O&M Cost per Passenger Mile (2023)	\$18.37	\$2.40	\$6.67	N/A	\$0.25**	N/A	\$0.25**

* Annual data show that drivers spent an average of 38 hours in rush-hour congestion during 2024.

** The average O&M cost for a new vehicle is \$0.25 per mile, resulting in an estimated \$3.75 per trip (based on a 15-mile average trip), with total ownership and operating cost of \$0.82 per mile (assuming 15,000 miles annually).

When considering the Greater Downtown Zone, the most common travel patterns across the different modes of transportation are West Side Industrial to Downtown, Midtown to Medical Center, within Downtown, and within Midtown. The DPM already provides trips within the

⁴⁷ City of Detroit, "Traffic Crashes 2023" dataset via Detroit Open Data Portal.

[Traffic Crashes 2023 | Detroit Open Data Portal](#)

⁴⁸ TomTom Traffic Index. *Detroit, MI Traffic Report 2024*. Accessed October 2025.

<https://www.tomtom.com/traffic-index/detroit-mi-traffic/>



Downtown Core, and DDOT and SMART operate along corridors in the other neighborhoods. However, key desire lines in the study area are currently unlinked by transit, notably between downtown and:

- West Side Industrial
- Lafayette Park
- Eastern Market
- DMC
- Cass Corridor

Around a quarter of DPM riders identified that they drove and parked downtown, representing the largest classification of DPM riders. This indicates that the DPM is used as a last-mile connector and presents an opportunity to continue to leverage parking facilities near stations as “park-and-ride” facilities, and to consider partnerships with facilities to introduce new revenue sources. Conversely, 21 percent of DPM riders surveyed live downtown, indicating that the service is used as a single transport mode, and opportunities exist to support increased ridership in this demographic.

When considering individual station area connectivity, the Grand Circus Park, Michigan, and Financial District DPM stations are within proximity to other transit services and to MoGo bikeshare stations. However, there are opportunities to improve connectivity and service awareness across the transit network. Clearer wayfinding is a particular gap at these stations, and in the network more broadly.

Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is variable across the network. Generally, DPM stations are well connected to the surrounding network. However, the Water Square Station is currently separated from the rest of the Downtown Core by M-10 and Huntington Place, and the Renaissance Center station is disconnected from the riverfront, a key destination. Similarly, most stations have limited or no bicycle connectivity and facilities, despite a high number of bicycle movements within the city.



PLANNING AND POLICY REVIEW

The DPM operates in Downtown Detroit, where a broad range of public and private entities are responsible for different aspects of planning and the provision of services. To coordinate planning efforts across agencies and organizations, a review of ongoing and previously completed plans and of zoning and land use policies in the study area was conducted. This review will help identify shared visions, goals, and values, as well as potential projects and initiatives, anticipated changes, and opportunities for collaboration.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PLAN REVIEW

Downtown Detroit has been the subject of numerous planning studies over the last 15 years. The main goals identified in land use, economic, and neighborhood plans are outlined in Table 10, and those identified in transportation plans are outlined in Table 11.

Land Use, Economic, and Neighborhood Planning

Plan Detroit, Ongoing (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department)

Plan Detroit will replace the citywide master plan of policies, intended as a long-term roadmap for Detroit's future—considering where the city is now, what it hopes to be in the future, and what policies or actions are needed to reach that point. The planning process began in 2024 and is anticipated to end in 2026, incorporating extensive data collection, previous plan review, stakeholder and public outreach, and shared vision and policy consensus-building. The plan will propose land use policies that will impact the future of the city as a whole, including the study area and the DPM, shaping growth patterns and connectivity needs. Though still in process, *Plan Detroit* represents an opportunity for collaboration on downtown development and transportation goals moving forward.

City of Detroit Historic Preservation Plan, Ongoing (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department)

Detroit is in the process of creating a Historic Preservation Plan, its first comprehensive planning process of this nature. Its intent is to guide the surveying and identification of significant areas and inform decision-making. It involves reviewing piecemeal surveys to date and identifying existing policy conflicts and recommended incentives and policies. The results of this plan may impact the potential development around DPM stations, as well as highlight important historic destinations to connect and celebrate through DPM planning.

Downtown Detroit Partnership Downtown Detroit Community and Development Update, 2024 (Downtown Detroit Partnership)

This update produced by the DDP, with support from the Downtown Detroit Business Improvement Zone, benchmarks growth in and around Downtown, highlighting completed and in-progress commercial real estate projects as well as supporting infrastructure, public space, and mobility projects. The report notes growth in general population, residential units, hotel rooms, and hotel occupancy rates, all of which could be positive for the DPM ridership and represent opportunities for collaboration. It also mentions advances in transportation



infrastructure and technology, including Michigan Central Station, the I-75 Cap, and nearby greenways, emphasizing the importance of connectivity in and to Downtown Detroit. Improvements to the DPM, including lighting installed on supporting columns and critical track replacement, are specifically highlighted. The plan presents the goal of a thriving, connected downtown.

City of Detroit Climate Strategy, 2023 (City of Detroit Office of Sustainability)

The Climate Strategy provides the city with a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change, informed by extensive community engagement and cross-department collaboration. The strategy highlights four priorities, one of which is increasing sustainable mobility so that Detroiters can get where they need to go in clean, safe, affordable ways. The DPM can be a central part of that mission downtown. Actions listed include adopting a single pass for all public transit, investing in public transit infrastructure, and supporting mobility innovation and investment.

Vibrant Blocks for Business, 2023 (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department)

This citywide design guide provides a tool for developers and business owners to create commercial corridors that are: safe and comfortable, clean and maintained, green and resilient, walkable and human-scale, unique and authentic, lively and activated, and inclusive and diverse. For each of these groups of goals, the document provides design checklists, conceptual diagrams, and links to relevant city ordinances. It also includes a step-by-step development guide and design considerations for elements such as facades, lighting, parking lots, and signage in various building types. These guidelines will influence development that may take place around DPM stations as well as the general feel of the corridors downtown. They also highlight ongoing challenges with safety and maintenance of commercial areas that may be relevant to the DPM.

City of Detroit Zoning Analytic, 2020 (City of Detroit Planning Commission)

This report was produced as part of the ZoneDetroit code modernization process, with recommendations for discussion aiming to create an ordinance that is easy to use, well organized, rooted in best practices, and up to date. Recommendations for growth and commercial areas including downtown are to facilitate mixed uses, modernize site development requirements, right-size parking requirements, remove barriers to sustainability, emphasize the built environment, and reduce design review barriers. These recommendations will impact development opportunities around DPM stations, expanding potential building uses and increasing densities. Building on this document, the city has continued developing an updated zoning ordinance, and the DTC can be a partner in finalizing and implementing recommendations.

Greater Corktown Neighborhood Planning Framework Study, 2020 (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department)

The Greater Corktown Area is defined from the Lodge Freeway west to the Fisher Freeway and from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard south to just north of West Fort Street. The plan focuses on implementation strategies for neighborhoods and the business districts along



Michigan Avenue and Trumbull Avenue and the redeveloping area around Michigan Central Station. The Southwest Greenway traverses the neighborhood, and Michigan Avenue is the primary transit spine radiating out of downtown. Mobility recommendations relate to improvements on Michigan Avenue, Rosa Parks Boulevard, Trumbull Street, 14th Street, and Bagley Street and improving connections to the riverfront. Several sites are highlighted for catalytic housing redevelopment, some of which have been planned or built, and connections to Downtown can be an opportunity for collaboration with the DPM.

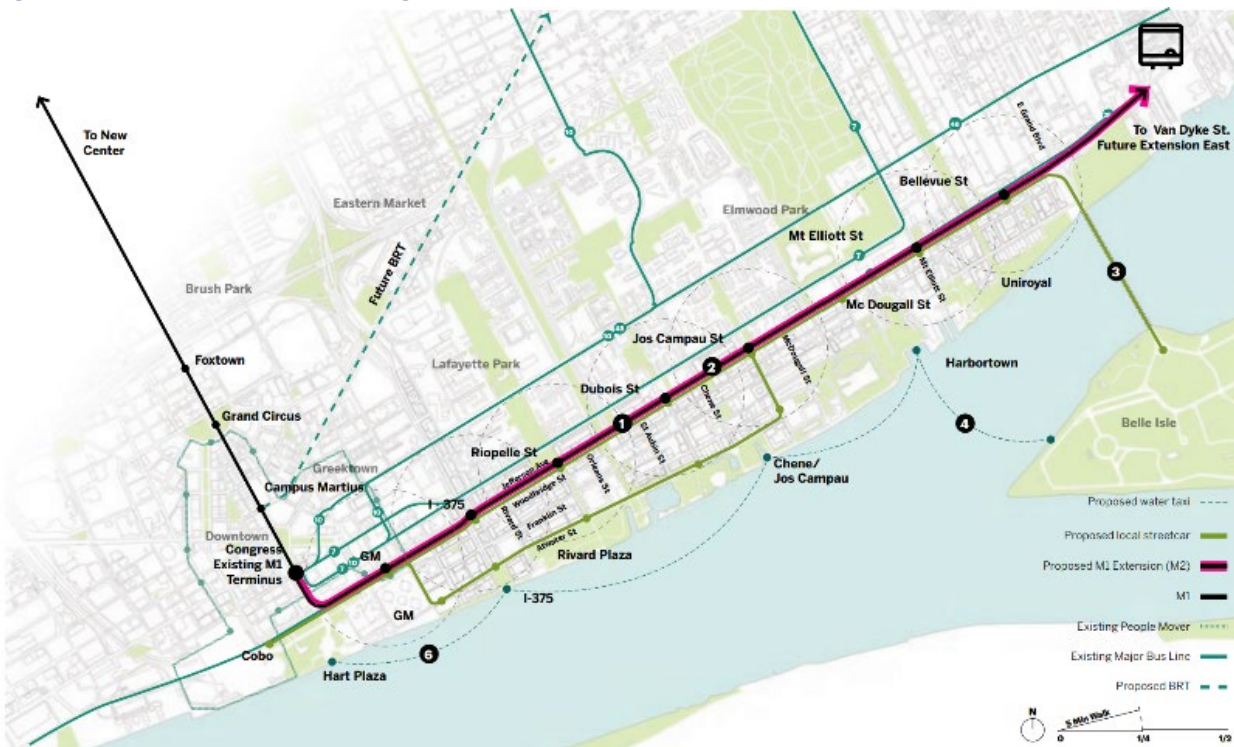
Multifamily Affordable Housing Strategy, 2018 (City of Detroit, Housing and Revitalization Department)

This report, led by the Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD), lays out a plan to build 2,000 and preserve 10,000 affordable housing units in the following 5 years, with a goal of inclusivity, increased opportunity, and anti-displacement. The study area is identified as one of the targeted multifamily housing areas and hosts many of the existing regulated affordable housing developments. Proximity to transit is also identified as one of the prioritization factors for affordable housing development on publicly owned land, creating access to the DPM and other amenities for affordable housing tenants.

East Riverfront Neighborhood Framework Plan, 2017 (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department)

The East Riverfront neighborhood stretches along the riverfront from Rivard Street to the Belle Isle Bridge, emphasizing connections from the Detroit Riverwalk to greenways and improvements along East Jefferson Avenue. Since this plan's completion, work has continued throughout the district with completion of the Riverwalk across the former Uniroyal site, Robert C. Valade Park, East Jefferson bikeway, greening and wayfinding, and infill development and reuse of some historic properties. The plan calls for an extension of the QLINE on East Jefferson Avenue (with a dedicated bus lane in the short term) as well as a water taxi and local streetcar or trolley circulator via Atwater Street (Figure 28). These improvements to connectivity are potential opportunities that may warrant further exploration.

Figure 28: East Riverfront Neighborhood Framework Plan Transit Recommendations



Source: Planning and Development Department (PDD), 2017.

Transit-Oriented Development Study for the Detroit People Mover, 2016 (Detroit Transportation Corporation)

This study tallies the benefits of the DPM, noting that the overall benefits of trips extend beyond just transit riders. Through improved mobility, safety, air quality and economic development, the DPM also benefits users of the roadway network and the community at large. The overall benefits of public transit can be divided into two broad categories: social benefits (representing a net gain in society's welfare) and economic impacts (accounting for the multiplier effects of spending on the economy). The social benefits can be further broken down into:

- **Transportation cost savings**, which consist of out-of-pocket cost savings (i.e., vehicle operating cost savings), travel time cost savings, travel time reliability benefits, pavement cost savings, accident cost savings and environmental emissions cost savings – these are essentially the benefits of taking cars off the roads. The study estimates the overall transportation, social, and economic cost savings of the DPM at \$4.49 million in 2016 (\$6.016 million in 2025⁴⁹).
- **Low-cost mobility benefits**, which consist of affordable mobility benefits (the economic value to access services such as healthcare and education for transit dependent people) and cross-sector benefits (budget savings for welfare and medical

⁴⁹ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025, *Inflation Calculator*
https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.



services due to the presence of public transit) – these are essentially the benefits of providing an affordable mode of transportation to people with low-incomes. Low-cost mobility benefits are relatively small for the DPM given the profile of riders (many of them are visitors) and are estimated at \$0.17 million.

- **Community (or transit-oriented) development benefits**, which represent the impact on property values of proximity to rail transit stations – these benefits can be broken down into individual benefits for analysis. The analysis determines that the DPM has contributed to increases in commercial property values of 38 percent, and residential property values of 34 percent, a total of over \$119 million.

Finally, DTC's expenses generate direct, indirect, and induced effects on the economy (economic benefits). These effects were estimated with capital expenses generating more than \$12 million in business output in 2013, including \$6.75 million in value added. They also created 89 (full-time and part-time) jobs in the local economy. This study highlights that the DPM provides societal value and has potential for further transit-oriented development (TOD).

[Read More about the DPM TOD Study here.](#)

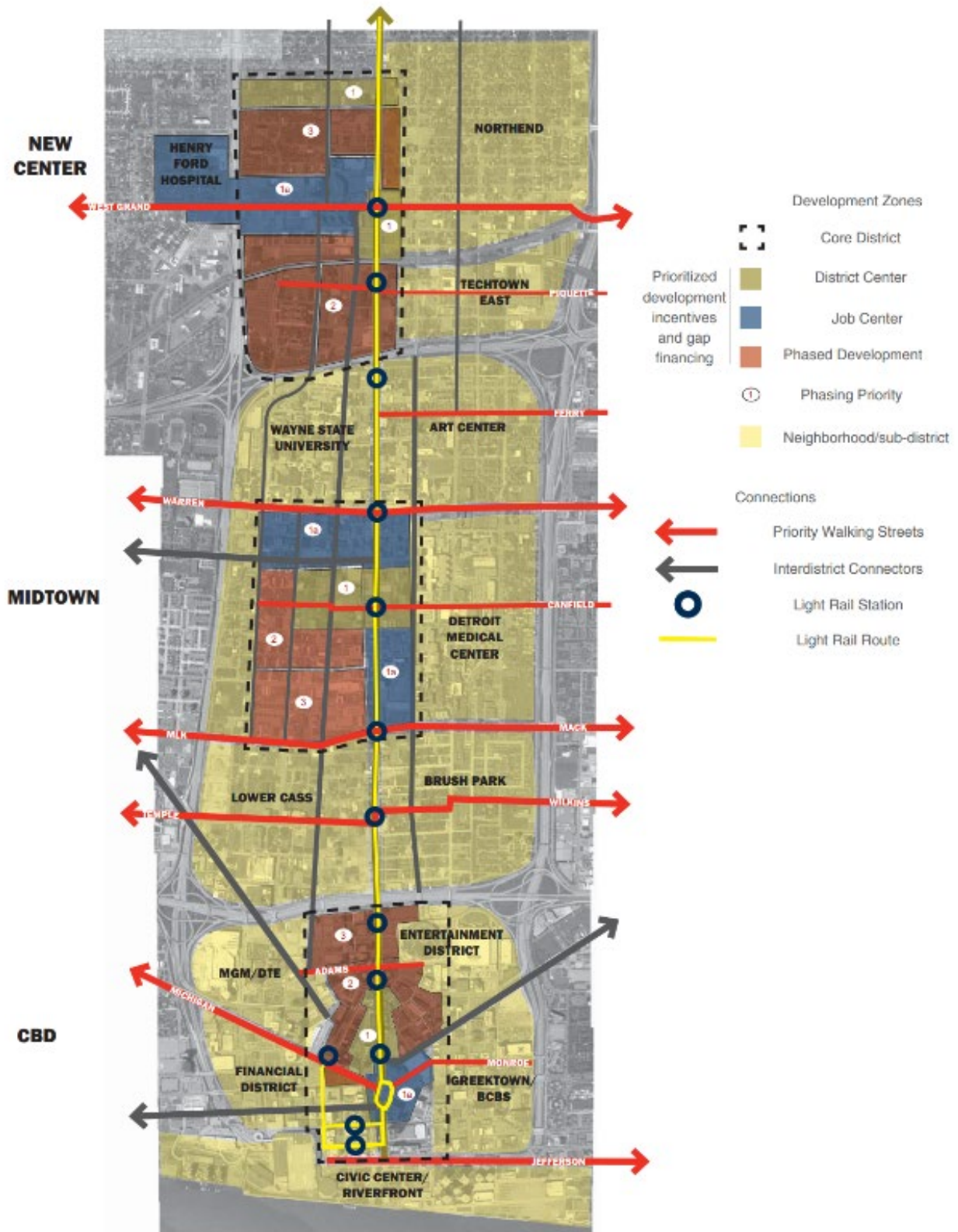
7.2 Square Mile Study, 2013 (Downtown Detroit Partnership)

This study focuses on a 7.2 mile area, encompassing Downtown, Midtown, New Center, and several other adjacent neighborhoods. It reviews data and trends for these neighborhoods regarding demographics, education, visitors, vibrancy, housing, employment, commercial space, and real estate development. The study notes the strong development pipeline, high residential occupancy rates, and full festival schedule in Downtown, as well as the positive population and economic trends of the study area. These trends suggest that the study area has been growing in ways that can position the DPM to help residents and visitors thrive.

Greater Downtown Transit-Oriented Development Strategy, 2011 (Detroit Economic Growth Corporation and Downtown Detroit Partnership)

This report reviews the opportunities presented by what was then the conceptual Woodward Light Rail, now known as the QLINE, to link jobs, residents, and destinations and reshape mobility in Detroit. It recommends a focus on adding density to three district centers, New Center, Midtown, and the CBD, to increase walkability and economic development. The next proposed step involves connecting these district centers to adjacent neighborhoods through multimodal connector streets (Figure 29) The report lays out a model of dense nodal development and connectivity that is relevant to plans for the DPM.

Figure 29: The Greater Downtown TOD Strategy Phasing for Connectivity and Density



Source: Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) and DDP.



Transportation Planning

SMARTer Mobility Program, Ongoing (Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation)

The ongoing SMARTer Mobility Program, which began in early 2023, evaluates SMART's fixed-route service, connector service, and the microtransit pilot program to identify recommended services changes that seek to improve travel times, reliability, and connectivity across SMART's service area. The final recommended SMARTer Network includes increased frequencies on FAST routes, which connect the region's suburbs to Downtown Detroit. The plan also includes a recommended new route on Fort Street that would improve connections between Downtown Detroit and the communities downriver. The plan also recommends additional microtransit services in lower-density areas.

I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project, Ongoing (Michigan Department of Transportation)

The I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project seeks to address aging infrastructure, safety and reliability challenges, and increasing mobility options for people who cannot or choose not to drive. A key component of the project is considering how to strengthen connections between neighborhoods bisected by I-375. MDOT was advancing with a project that would convert I-375 to from an interstate highway to a surface-level boulevard. MDOT completed a PEL study in 2015, and the Environmental Assessment was completed in 2020, narrowing the original six boulevard design alternatives down to one preferred alternative. Since 2020, the design has been iterated on through continued public engagement, further enhancing connectivity around Eastern Market and removing lanes from the boulevard to address safety and connectivity concerns. In August 2025, MDOT announced that it is reevaluating the design alternatives due to rising costs and public and stakeholder concerns.

US-12 (Michigan Avenue) Corktown Improvement Project, Ongoing (Michigan Department of Transportation and City of Detroit Department of Public Works)

MDOT's ongoing US-12 (Michigan Avenue) Corktown Improvement Project is redesigning US-12 from I-96 to Campus Martius Park. MDOT completed a PEL report in 2023, and a National Environmental Policy Act report is underway. The project aims to improve safety for all road users and to enhance the pedestrian, cyclist, and transit experience. Additionally, the project seeks to implement connected and AV infrastructure. These improvements would occur on Michigan Avenue, improving connectivity to Michigan Central Station. Construction is anticipated to occur from Winter 2026 through Winter 2027.

I-75 Cap, Ongoing (Downtown Detroit Partnership)

The I-75 Cap project proposes to reconnect the neighborhoods bisected by the highway by creating new public spaces for parks and community resilience over the highway. The preferred concept is to develop three separate caps: one by Grand River Avenue, one at Woodward Avenue, and one between John R. Street and Brush Street. A vision and alternatives analysis was completed in 2024, and a feasibility study further exploring options will begin in 2025. These three caps, located at the northern edge of the Downtown Core, will be activity hubs near key event venues and proposed developments, restoring pedestrian



and cyclist access and creating new green spaces and public amenities. They are also intended to support recent and planned developments and address the need to catalyze development on vacant and underutilized lots in the area.

DDOT Reimagined, 2024 (Detroit Department of Transportation)

DDOT Reimagined proposes improvements to DDOT's network that aim to better align routes with when and where people are traveling, reflect residents' mobility needs, improve reliability, and enhance the customer experience. The plan calls for seven future bus rapid transit (BRT) lite corridors, five of which would converge in Downtown Detroit. Additionally, a new route would operate as a shuttle along the Detroit riverfront, serving locations between the Gordie Howe Bridge and Belle Isle, connecting with the DPM at multiple points.

Regional Transit Master Plan, 2024 (Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan)

The RTA's *Regional Transit Master Plan* (RTMP) documents top transit priorities for the region. It discusses some major projects that impact downtown, including the DAX Detroit to airport express bus service and the D2A2 bus service. To establish a regional rapid transit network, a top priority, RTA seeks to complete a Corridors Framework project aiming to improve roadway infrastructure, technology, safety, and accessibility along priority regional transit routes, enhancing connections between Downtown Detroit and the wider metro area.

Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, 2022 (City of Detroit Department of Public Works)

The City of Detroit Department of Public Works' (DPW) *Detroit Comprehensive Safety Action Plan* aims to make streets safer for all users by reducing and eliminating severe crashes. As of 2020, Detroit ranked second overall in traffic fatalities per capita and third overall in pedestrian fatalities per capita for major U.S. cities. Easier access to transit was one of the proposed solutions most supported by respondents, with over 80 percent highlighting it as "very important." The plan also notes that the city's high injury network (the city's most dangerous streets) includes many of the city's transit routes, posing a challenge for riders, and recommends considering transit access when prioritizing projects.

Streets for People, 2022 (City of Detroit Department of Public Works)

The City of Detroit *Streets for People* report, like the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, is focused on transforming streets to make them safer for all users and easier to move around the city. *Streets for People* includes recommendations to redesign streets to increase green space, reduce speeds, allocate more space to pedestrians, and improve transit access and amenities, bike lane infrastructure, and pedestrian crossings. The related *Detroit Street Design Guide* provides guidance and recommendations for different street typologies. For Downtown Detroit, the document recommends prioritizing transit and pedestrians.

Connect/D, 2021 (MoGo)

MoGo's *Connect/D* study sought to understand how MoGo riders use the bikeshare system in order to enhance connectivity between the bikeshare system and the transit network. Through survey analysis, the study recommends improved payment integration across services, and an expanded bikeshare network, wayfinding improvements, and better connectivity between MoGo stations and transit stops, among other improvements.

***East Jefferson Corridor Enhancement Plan, 2019 (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department)***

The *East Jefferson Corridor Enhancement Plan* sought to reinvigorate the East Jefferson corridor from Woodward Avenue to Alter Road to increase access to jobs and public spaces, support businesses, connect neighborhoods, and remove barriers to accessibility. The plan outlines a toolkit of improvements focused on key nodes that can enhance transportation, safety, and economic vitality. These improvements are iterative and would lead to BRT along the corridor in the long term.

Mobility-Oriented Development/Transit-Oriented Development Best Practices, 2019 (Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan)

The *Mobility-Oriented Development (MOD)/Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Best Practices* report aims to integrate MOD to enhance regional connectivity. While TOD focuses more on development around stations or transit stops, MOD focuses on first/last-mile connections and considers the transit-supportive potential of all regional development. The report centers around the Woodward Avenue corridor and the Ann Arbor–Detroit commuter rail corridor, and the study introduced a framework that emphasized creating vibrant, accessible station areas and mobility hubs. The report recommends that transit agencies focus on MOD so that their stations are better integrated into the surrounding communities.

Downtown Detroit Transportation Study, 2018 (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, City of Detroit, Michigan Department of Transportation)

The *Downtown Detroit Transportation Study* was a collaboration between SEMCOG, the City of Detroit, and MDOT to improve mobility in and around a changing downtown. The study sought to identify recommendations that support continued growth; improve safety, convenience, and efficiency; utilize “best practices;” balance the needs of all users; and incorporate diverse viewpoints. The study considered all modes, including transit, walking, cycling, and vehicular traffic. The study recommends a number of street improvement projects. Transit improvements included establishing transit priority corridors, improved stops and staging areas, transit signal priority, dedicated lanes, and curbside management. The study also identifies fare integration as a priority. Since the implementation of Dart passes for both DDOT and SMART, and free fares on the DPM and QLINE, this is less relevant. There may, however, be opportunities to coordinate fare payment with D2A2, DAX, and with micromobility services, such as MoGo.

City of Detroit Strategic Plan for Transportation, 2018 (City of Detroit)

The *Strategic Plan for Transportation* discusses the City’s effort to equitably revitalize neighborhoods, a component of which is making it easier, safer, and more affordable to travel around the city. Key initiatives include improving the bus network, increasing transit service frequency, improving bus stops, and prioritizing transit in street design and signal timing. This study highlighted strategies for simplifying fare payment, such as a unified payment system, increasing where people can buy passes, and off-board fare payment. Some of these strategies have been implemented with the launch of Dart passes in 2019.



Key Themes Identified

Through the plan review, recurring themes were identified that help inform a potential vision and goals for the future of the DPM and mobility in study area. Key themes from each plan are identified in Table 10 (Land Use, Economic and Neighborhood Plans) and Table 11 (Transportation Plans).

Across these plans, there is general alignment around themes of improved transit services, enhancing mobility, expanding opportunities for economic development, and supporting neighborhoods and people. Common goal topics include:

- **Transit Service**
 - Improving frequency and reliability.
 - Implementing transit stop and station amenities.
 - Integrating different services and modes.
 - Connecting transit services to more destinations.
 - Deploying rapid transit services along key corridors.
- **Mobility**
 - Taking a complete streets approach to infrastructure projects.
 - Prioritizing safety and accessibility for all street users.
 - Enhancing and promoting walkability.
 - Exploring new mobility technologies for the provision of service to address first- and last-mile travel.
 - Utilizing wayfinding and branding to ease navigation.
- **Economic Development**
 - Encouraging thriving neighborhoods, retail corridors, and business.
 - Enhance access to jobs and opportunity.
 - Catalyzing development.
 - Enabling TOD.
 - Connecting Downtown with other neighborhoods.
- **Neighborhoods and People**
 - Prioritizing equity and inclusion.
 - Partnering to develop and preserve affordable housing.
 - Supporting and enhancing historic and authentic neighborhood character.
 - Promoting environmental sustainability.

Table 10: Key Themes from Land Use, Economic, and Neighborhood Plans

Plan	Year	Agency	Major Goals/Objectives
Plan Detroit	Ongoing	PDD	• Provide a long-term roadmap to guide land use
City of Detroit Historic Preservation Plan	Ongoing	PDD	• Review existing surveys, policies, and incentives to



Plan	Year	Agency	Major Goals/Objectives
			• Specific goals are still in development.
Downtown Detroit Community and Development Update	2024	DDP	• Track current investments and encourage future investments. • Improve economic and social impact of the urban core. • Connect Downtown Core to neighboring communities.
City of Detroit Climate Strategy	2023	Office of Sustainability	• Transition to clean energy. • Increase sustainable mobility. • Accelerate energy efficiency and reduce waste. • Prioritize vulnerable residents and adapt to change.
Vibrant Blocks for Business	2023	PDD	• Commercial districts that are: ◦ Safe and comfortable. ◦ Clean and maintained. ◦ Walkable and human-scale. ◦ Lively and activated. ◦ Green and resilient. ◦ Unique and authentic. ◦ Inclusive and diverse.
City of Detroit Zoning Analytic	2020	City of Detroit Planning Commission (CPC)	• Conduct a transparent, equitable, and inclusive process. • Preserve and promote vibrant neighborhoods. • Retain and attract vibrant businesses. • Preserve Detroit's historic character. • Advance long-term sustainable practices. • Support livable communities.
Greater Corktown Neighborhood Planning Framework Study	2020	PDD	• Create and promote an inclusive community. • Strengthen, preserve, and increase community-serving retail options. • Activate publicly held land. • Implement parking system improvements. • Promote ecology and create active landscapes. • Protect and improve community-managed open space. • Provide a comprehensive network of complete streets. • Integrate transit network improvements. • Establish wayfinding and gateway branding.
Multifamily Affordable Housing Strategy	2018	HRD	• Preserve 10,000 units of affordable multifamily housing by 2023. • Produce 2,000 units of new affordable multifamily housing by 2023.
East Riverfront Neighborhood Framework Plan	2017	PDD	• Diverse, walkable, connected activity. • Build on the uniqueness of each neighborhood. • Everyone within walking distance of a park. • Integrated stormwater management. • Enhanced transit service on East Jefferson. • East Riverfront Trolley loop.
TOD Study for the DPM	2016	DTC	• Transportation cost savings. • Low-cost mobility benefits.



Plan	Year	Agency	Major Goals/Objectives
			• Community development benefits. • Economic impacts.
7.2 Square Mile Study	2013	DDP	• Describes trends in downtown people, place, and economy. • Reviews the strong development pipeline, residential occupancy rates, and population/economic trends.
Greater Downtown TOD Strategy	2011	DEGC	• Safe and clean environment is top priority. • Permanently connect destinations to residents, employees, and visitors. • Create walkable streets with emphasis on Woodward and east-west connections. • Develop residential and retail options in support of complete neighborhoods. • Reinforce authentic character of existing districts and neighborhoods.

**Table 11: Key Themes Identified in Transportation Plans**

Plan	Year	Agency	Major Goals/Objectives
SMARTer Mobility Program	Ongoing	SMART	• A redesigned SMART transit network that increases flexibility, efficiency, and connectivity. • Expanding microtransit services. • Recommendations include new and enhanced routes to support ridership and connectivity in metropolitan Detroit. Two routes provide new or improved connections to Downtown Detroit: ◦ Add a new route (162) westbound along Fort Street that may potentially connect to the Renaissance and Millender Center DPM stations. ◦ Modification to eastbound 610 service potentially influencing southern DPM stations.
I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project	Ongoing	MDOT	• Address aging infrastructure and maintain a state of good repair of the transportation system. • Improve safety for vehicular traffic as well as for pedestrians and cyclists. • Increase connectivity between neighborhoods and the Downtown Core. • Improve transit connectivity.
US-12 Corktown Improvement Project	Ongoing	MDOT, DPW	• Improving safety and accessibility for all road users. • Enhance the pedestrian, cyclist, and transit experience. • Implementing emerging technologies to support connected and AVs. • Preserving neighborhood character. • Supporting residential and commercial development.
I-75 Cap	Ongoing	DDP	• Reconnecting neighborhoods with a series of freeway caps that include parks and improve pedestrian and cyclist connectivity. • Emphasis and increase access to transit services. • Strengthen existing development and catalyze new development on vacant and underutilized lots.



Plan	Year	Agency	Major Goals/Objectives
DDOT Reimagined	2024	DDOT	• The goals of the plan include: ◦ Redesigning DDOT's network to better align with current travel patterns. ◦ Conducting equitable and transparent engagement to understand people's travel needs. ◦ Improving reliability and the rider experience with operations strategies, technologies, and amenities. • Recommendations include an updated service network seeks to improve efficiency and convenience, improved connections to other services, and is guided by: ◦ Improving access to opportunity and key city and regional activity hubs. ◦ Increasing connectivity to other routes, services, and modes. ◦ Leveraging and incentivizing public and private investments to improve access to high-frequency services. ◦ Created tiered services that provide different levels of frequency and coverage.
Regional Transit Master Plan	2024	RTA	• The RTA's goals are to improve existing transit services, expand transit coverage, innovate resilient projects, sustain future programs, and to increase funding to support these goals. • The RTMP identifies 10 regional priorities organized into three categories: move people, strengthen access, and enhance experience. • Key regional priorities include increasing service levels and reliability, expanding services to key destinations, investing in a rapid transit network, improving comfort and safety at transit stops, and improving connectivity between modes.
Comprehensive Safety Action Plan	2022	DPW	• Safer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. • Prioritizing projects that improve safety on the city's high injury network. • Integrating transit access into street infrastructure projects.



Plan	Year	Agency	Major Goals/Objectives
Streets for People	2022	DPW	• Focuses on safety by emphasizing safer streets, expanded bike lanes, improved transit access, and traffic calming. • Support inclusive economic development and strong neighborhoods by investing in multimodal accessibility. • Improve transparency in decision making to increase equity and dignity for residents and visitors. • Create a connected city for all people by improving access safety to transit services and pedestrian and cyclist facilities. • Provides a toolkit for prioritizing pedestrians and transit downtown: the <i>Detroit Street Design Guide</i>.
MoGo Connect/D	2021	MoGo	• Enhancing connectivity between MoGo's bikeshare system and fixed-route bus service through payment integration, bikeshare station placement, and wayfinding.
East Jefferson Corridor Enhancement Plan	2019	PDD	• Transit and streetscape improvements that support economic vitality along the East Jefferson corridor. • Pedestrian and cyclist safety improvements. • Better connectivity between neighborhoods and amenities. • Enhanced bus service and bus rapid transit.
MOD/TOD Best Practices	2019	RTA	• Incorporating MOD and TOD best practices along major corridors to support rapid transit and lively mixed-use neighborhoods. • Walkability and compact neighborhood development. • Integration of transit, active transportation, and first- and last-mile modes. • Zoning frameworks that supports TOD.
Downtown Detroit Transportation Study	2018	SEMCOG	• Safe, convenient, and efficient transportation that supports continued downtown growth. • Consideration to all modes and all users. • Transit priority corridors and street design. • Improved transit stops and rider amenities. • Transit service integration. • Identifies potential projects that improve safety, pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, and transit operations.
Strategic Plan for Transportation	2018	CoD	• Supporting economic development and opportunity through high-quality transit service. • Supporting vibrant neighborhoods and commercial corridors. • Prioritizing transit in street design. • Improving the rider experience with amenities and integrated services.



ZONING AND LAND USE

Existing Policies and Zoning Assessment

CPC staff are currently working on finishing the new zoning ordinance draft, *Zone Detroit*. Preliminary recommendations generally involve a one-to-one conversion from existing to proposed districts. The *Plan Detroit* update to the *Master Plan of Policies* is also in progress and will include a revised future land use map that will lead to future map zoning amendments. The process for map amendments (rezonings) is cumbersome, and at this stage, the zoning districts in the Downtown Core area are not expected to materially change.

Most of the DPM stations are located within B5 Major Business and Public Center Adjacent (PCA) districts. B5 and PCA (and their draft *Zone Detroit* counterparts) allow by right the typical CBD residential, civic, retail, and service uses with active first floor uses and supporting uses above (Table 12). The PCA district limits height to 35 feet. More clarification is needed from CPC staff on the future of the district and the height limitation when many buildings in PCA are nonconforming to this restriction. The height restriction may limit the potential for TOD in station areas.

Table 12: Current and Draft Zoning for the Downtown Core

Current Zoning	Draft Zone Detroit District	Draft Zone Detroit District Description
B4 General Business	B4 General Business	• Residential, office, & commercial. • Walking distance from residential neighborhoods. • 55-foot height limit.
B5 Major Business*	MX5 Large-Scale Mixed-Use	• Intense mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly. • Unlimited height except on district edge, no front parking.
B6 General Services	B6 Heavy Business	• Heavy commercial, including car repair, and low intensity industrial. • No residential.
PC Public Center (and PCA)*	PC Public Center	• For government, recreation, cultural, or civic.
SD4 Riverfront	RIV Riverfront	• Adjacent to river. • High intensity residential, commercial mixed-use.
SD5 Casino	CAS Casino	• For licensed casinos.
PD Planned Development*	PD Planned Development	• Large-scale projects, flexible but aligned with Master Plan.

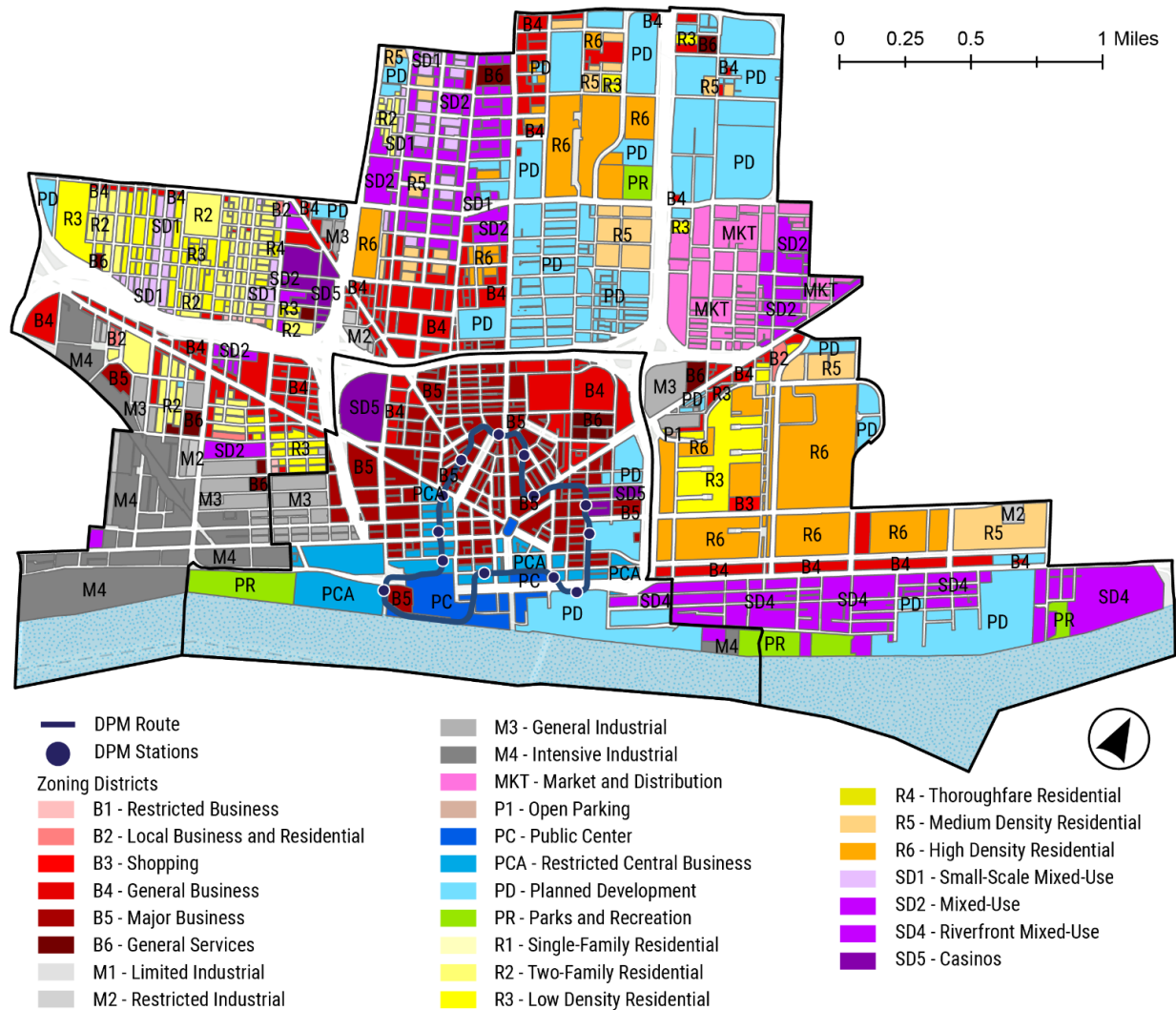
*DPM stations are in these zoning districts.

Outside the Downtown Core area, there is a wider variety of zoning districts, which generally follow the built pattern of neighborhoods, business districts, and the riverfront. Of note is the Brush Park form-based code, one of the first in the city, which will likely set the stage for future zoning updates. As the *DPM System Plan and Downtown Mobility Study* advances, ongoing coordination with PDD and CPC related to the progression of *Plan Detroit* and *Zone Detroit* will help to identify potential impacts to specific locations.

Parking Policy

All CBD districts are exempt from off-street parking requirements, and parking waivers can be obtained in other districts with a multimodal plan or shared parking agreements. Zoning code changes being considered by the city would loosen parking requirements around high-frequency transit lines. The *Zone Detroit Zoning Analytic* contains further recommendations for rightsizing parking (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Existing Zoning in the Study Area



Source: City of Detroit Open Data Portal. Zoning. Accessed July 20, 2025.

Development Review Process

In the past, some stakeholders have struggled with aspects of the City's development review process. Over the last few years, the City of Detroit has been working to streamline processes across departments. The eventual adoption of *Zone Detroit* should improve the regulatory barriers to a smooth process. Some of the efforts underway include:



- In 2021, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) conducted a Redevelopment Ready Communities assessment. The city's Lean Team headed up the review process reform and streamlining at the conclusion of the MEDC assistance.
- Through the Vibrant Blocks for Business process around 2022, small-scale developers and business owners expressed that they found the development review process difficult and unpredictable, echoing similar discussions heard through the MEDC work.
- As announced in a May 2025 [Detroit Free Press](#) article, the City is prioritizing streamlining small business licenses and launching a business concierge program. More process improvements are expected to come in 2025.⁵⁰
- Changes to the R2 zoning being considered by the City would simplify the development review process by allowing up to four-unit residential buildings by right in R2 districts and requiring less parking for certain buildings.
- Development projects that are \$75 million or more in value, or receive \$1 million or more in tax abatements or city land sales, trigger the Detroit Community Benefits Ordinance. Through engagement with a Neighborhood Advisory Council and public meetings, the developer can address negative impacts and commits to community benefits.

⁵⁰ Alfana, Dana. "Detroit officials propose changes to licensing process to ease burdens for small businesses." *Detroit Free Press*, May 21, 2025.
<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2025/05/21/mayor-duggan-plan-red-tape-small-businesses-bseed/83770297007/>.



TRENDS IN NEW VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

As the DPM was part of a larger program to better understand the potential of APM systems to address downtown transportation needs, new connected and autonomous vehicle technologies are currently being explored to similar ends. While these technologies are being explored for personal vehicle use, they are also being explored in transit operations. While projects are being developed and piloted, it will be critical to monitor and evaluate progress and service metrics.

AUTOMATED SYSTEMS

The DPM entered service at a time where closed-loop automated systems were gaining popularity in the U.S., particularly at airports. The systems emerged from research in the 1960s and 1970s into automated guideway transit and benefited from standardized technology that focused on lightweight vehicles running on dedicated guideways. Systems have central computer control, automatic train protection, and automated station docking. The addition of communications-based signaling allowed precise vehicle spacing and reliable driverless operation, while platform screen doors (where deployed) and automatic braking enhanced safety within the systems. These smaller systems formed the basis of modern autonomous vehicles and driverless metro systems.

Modern automated systems are in use globally. New vehicles are lighter and use more efficient propulsion, supporting significant energy and operating savings. Similarly, communications-based signaling is advanced, offering closer vehicle spacing and a more reliable system compared to the block-based signaling used in older systems.

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE INTEGRATION

While automated systems allow for driverless operation through a centralized control system, autonomous systems allow for varying degrees of self-driving capability by using on-board technology to process data and react to changing environments. Autonomous vehicles have been deployed in cities across the world, including Detroit. In coordination with various stakeholders, the City has helped coordinate the deployment of two AV pilots, Connect AV Shuttle and Accessibili-D.⁵¹

Autonomous vehicle technology has the potential to be integrated with existing automated systems. As existing vehicles age, other agencies are exploring how autonomous vehicles could replace existing fleets. The Jacksonville Transit Authority (JTA) is currently exploring this integration through their Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C) project. Like Detroit, Jacksonville constructed a people mover system in the 1980s called the Jacksonville Skyway. As the JTA explored scenarios to replace their existing vehicles, they began the U2C. This project aims to leverage the 2.5-mile-long people mover system by allowing autonomous, rubber tire

⁵¹ "How Detroit is paving the way with AVs." City of Detroit. December 2024, <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/-/media/Project/Websites/MDOT/Travel/Mobility/Public-Transportation/Tech-Talk/December-2024-Detroit-AV-shuttles.pdf>.



vehicles to run along the existing guideway, and then connecting down to street level where they could operate on the roadway network. This will allow the system to expand beyond the urban core to adjacent neighborhoods without expanding the guideway. The first phase of the U2C launched in the summer of 2025 with the Neighborhood Autonomous Vehicle Innovation (NAVI) initiative, which operates Avs along a 3.5-mile route in Downtown Jacksonville. Phase 2 will convert the Skyway to allow the AVs to operate along the guideway and at the stations, and will include street-level connections to the route operating in Phase 1. Phase 2 is anticipated to cost \$247 million and to be funded through a local gas tax. The third phase will extend street-level operations to additional neighborhoods.⁵² While challenges with the NAVI vehicles have been reported, it is too soon to understand the outcomes of Phase 1 of the U2C.⁵³

Like buses, autonomous, rubber-tired, vehicles can offer flexible service by operating on existing infrastructure and taking a variety of routes. However, in its current stage, autonomous vehicle technology struggles to integrate with existing infrastructure. In Detroit, both the Accessibili-D pilot (operating from 2024 to 2025) and the Connect AV Shuttle rely on safety drivers to monitor the system and manually drive the vehicle in challenging scenarios.⁵⁴ Phase 1 of the U2C in Jacksonville also relies on a safety driver and dedicated lanes for safe and effective operation.

In San Jose, California, the City is exploring an Airport Connector service that would utilize AVs along an exclusive fixed guideway to provide connections between terminals, parking, and a subway station. AVs would be available on-demand through an app and kiosks, and accommodate one to four passengers. Vehicles can platoon for larger parties. Additionally, they would operate on battery-electric propulsion and on rubber tires, removing the need for rails. Lighter-weight vehicles would potentially reduce the weight requirements for guideway infrastructure, helping to reduce costs.⁵⁵ The project is currently in the development phase.

In Ann Arbor, just 30 miles outside of Detroit, the University of Michigan is exploring an automated transit System to provide high-capacity transit between their central, medical, and north campuses. The concept could feature an elevated guideway with electric, rubber-tired, passenger cars and a complementary street level dedicated bus lane system.⁵⁶ This may signal a renewed interest in APMs to support transportation needs to urban areas.

⁵² "U²C Ultimate Urban Circulator." JTA. <https://www.jtafla.com/project-initiatives/u2c/>.

⁵³ Nelson, Marcus. "Experiencing NAVI: The 'Ultimate Urban Circulator.'" *Jacksonville Today*, July 29, 2025. <https://jaxtoday.org/2025/07/29/the-jaxson-experiencing-navi-the-ultimate-urban-circulator/>.

⁵⁴ "The Connect AV Shuttle Service." City of Detroit. <https://detroitmi.gov/government/mayors-office/office-mobility-innovation/connect-av-shuttle-service>.

⁵⁵ San Jose Connection Partners. "San Jose Airport Transit Connector Project Feasibility Validation Report." September 25, 2024. <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/117760/638747853601430000>.

⁵⁶ "Automated Transit System." University of Michigan 2050 Campus Plan. Updated June 6, 2025. <https://campusplan2050.umich.edu/updates/automated-transit-system/>.



DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

This section observes current demographic patterns, projected household and job growth trends, and housing costs and distribution. This study aims to envision a DPM system that can serve the needs of both current and future residents.

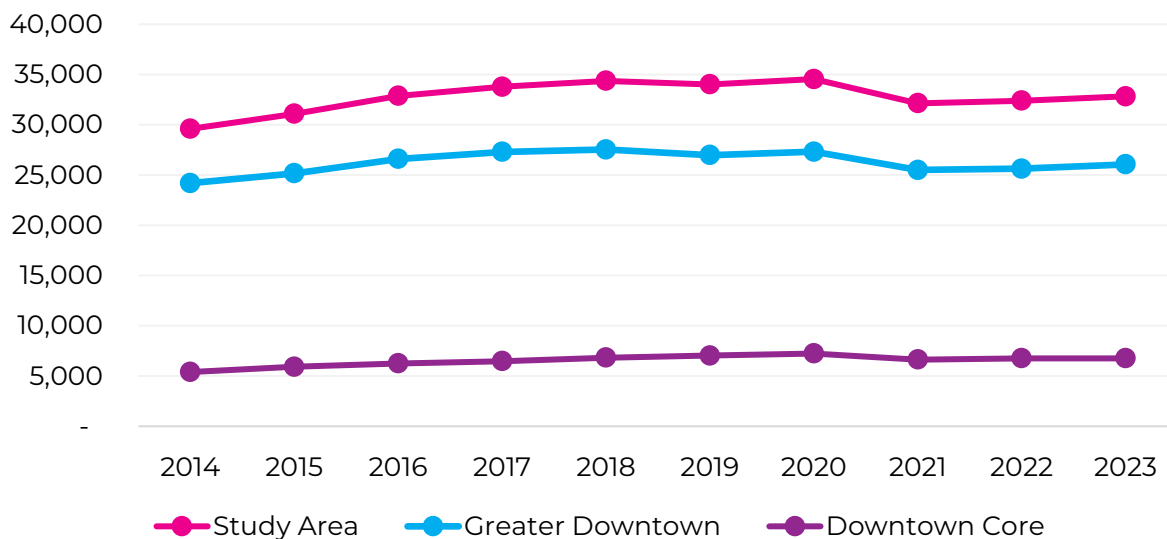
HISTORICAL AND CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2024 customer satisfaction survey results, most DPM riders come from outside of Downtown Detroit and even outside of the city. However, the system's most frequent riders are more likely to be residents of Downtown or people who are connecting to the DPM via other forms of public transit. Demographic patterns across the city shed greater insight into these survey findings.

Total Population

The total population in the study area, Greater Downtown, and the Downtown Core has not experienced significant change over the last decade. As shown in Figure 31, all three areas experienced growth from 2014-2022, followed by a decline around 2021. Most of these fluctuations were driven by changes in Greater Downtown, while the Downtown Core remained relatively stable.

Figure 31: 2014-2023 Total Population by Zone



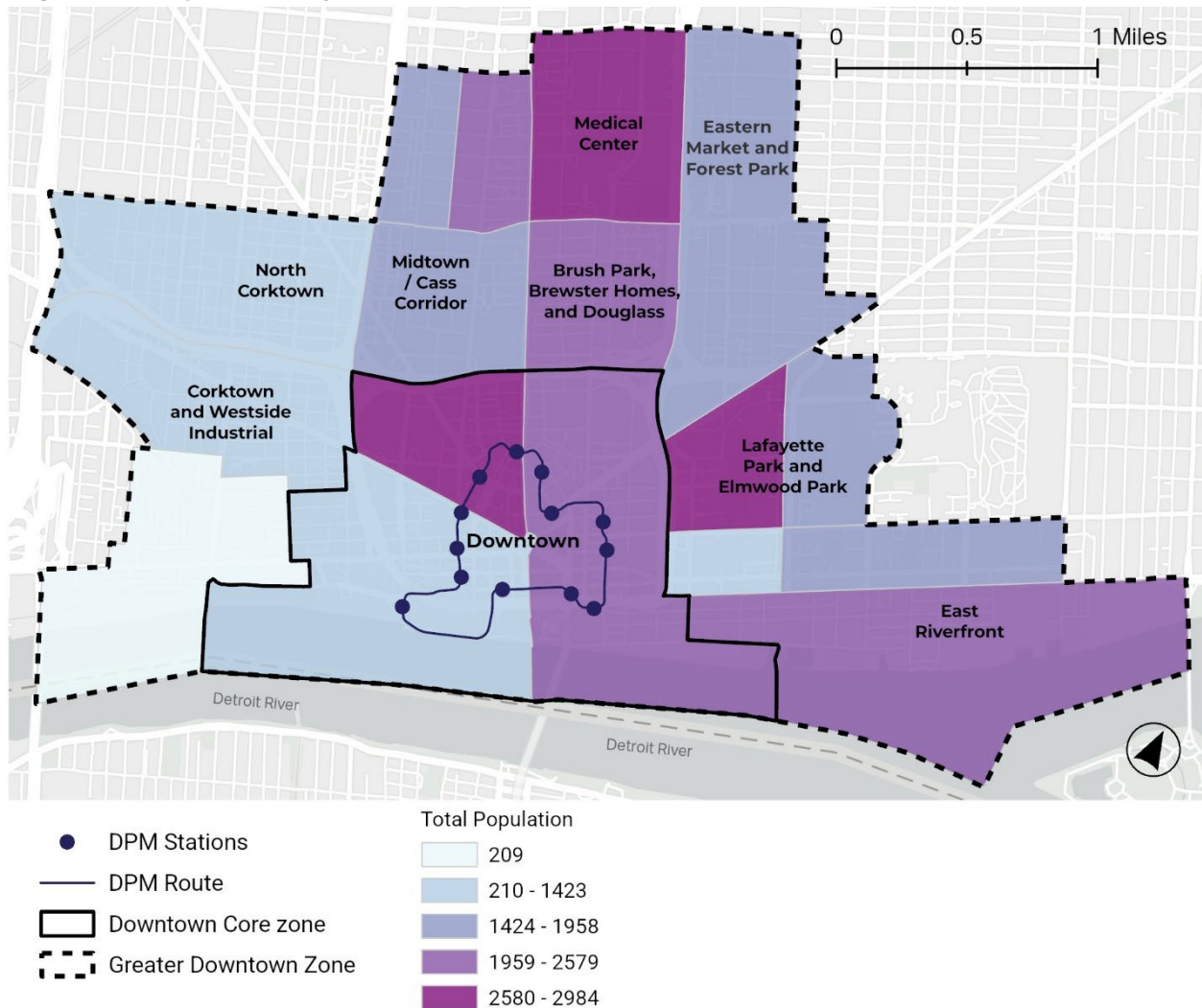
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.

Only 5 percent of Detroit's total population (32,820 residents⁵⁷) reside in the study area. The greatest combined population is in Lafayette Park and Elmwood Park (8,016 residents),

⁵⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates, <https://data.census.gov/>, accessed August 19, 2025.

followed by the Downtown (6,764), and then Midtown/Cass Corridor (6,764) (Figure 32).⁵⁸ Outside the Downtown Core, the DPM system is difficult to access on foot and typically requires transferring from another transportation mode, leaving just over 1 percent of the city's population within a quarter-mile of a DPM station.

Figure 32: Population by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

Age

While there are not a lot of households with children residing in the Downtown Core, the area attracts a lot of visiting families. Most of the 2024 customer satisfaction survey respondents were travelling in a group, and for those traveling in a group, most were travelling with their

⁵⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates, <https://data.census.gov/>, accessed August 19, 2025.



family.⁵⁹ Residents of the Downtown Core are slightly younger (Table 13) than City of Detroit residents. Less than 2 percent of residents living in the Downtown Core are under 18, compared with 26 percent of all city residents. Compared with the City of Detroit, the study area has a higher median age and a higher percentage of seniors (people age 65 and over). While Downtown residents have an average of 1.3 persons per household, visitors to the Downtown Core have an average of 2.4 persons per household.⁶⁰ Additionally, the 2024 DDP Perceptions Survey Insights show that 90 percent of Detroiters agree that Downtown Detroit is family friendly. This number is up from 2022, where 77 percent of Detroiters agreed that Downtown Detroit is family friendly.⁶¹

Table 13: Population and Age

Metric	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
Population	603,716	32,820	6,765
Median Age	36.5 years	36.9 years	35.1 years
Percent of Residents Under 18	25.7%	11.2%	1.7%
Percent of Residents 65+	14.6%	17.2%	13.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

Race and Ethnicity

Both the study area and the Downtown Core contain a majority-minority population. However, when compared with the City of Detroit, both areas have a smaller proportion of residents of color (Table 14 and Figure 33).

Table 14: Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%
Asian	1%	5%	6%
Black or African American	78%	59%	45%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	8%	3%	4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
White	11%	29%	40%
Some Other Race	5%	2%	2%
Two or more races	5%	6%	6%

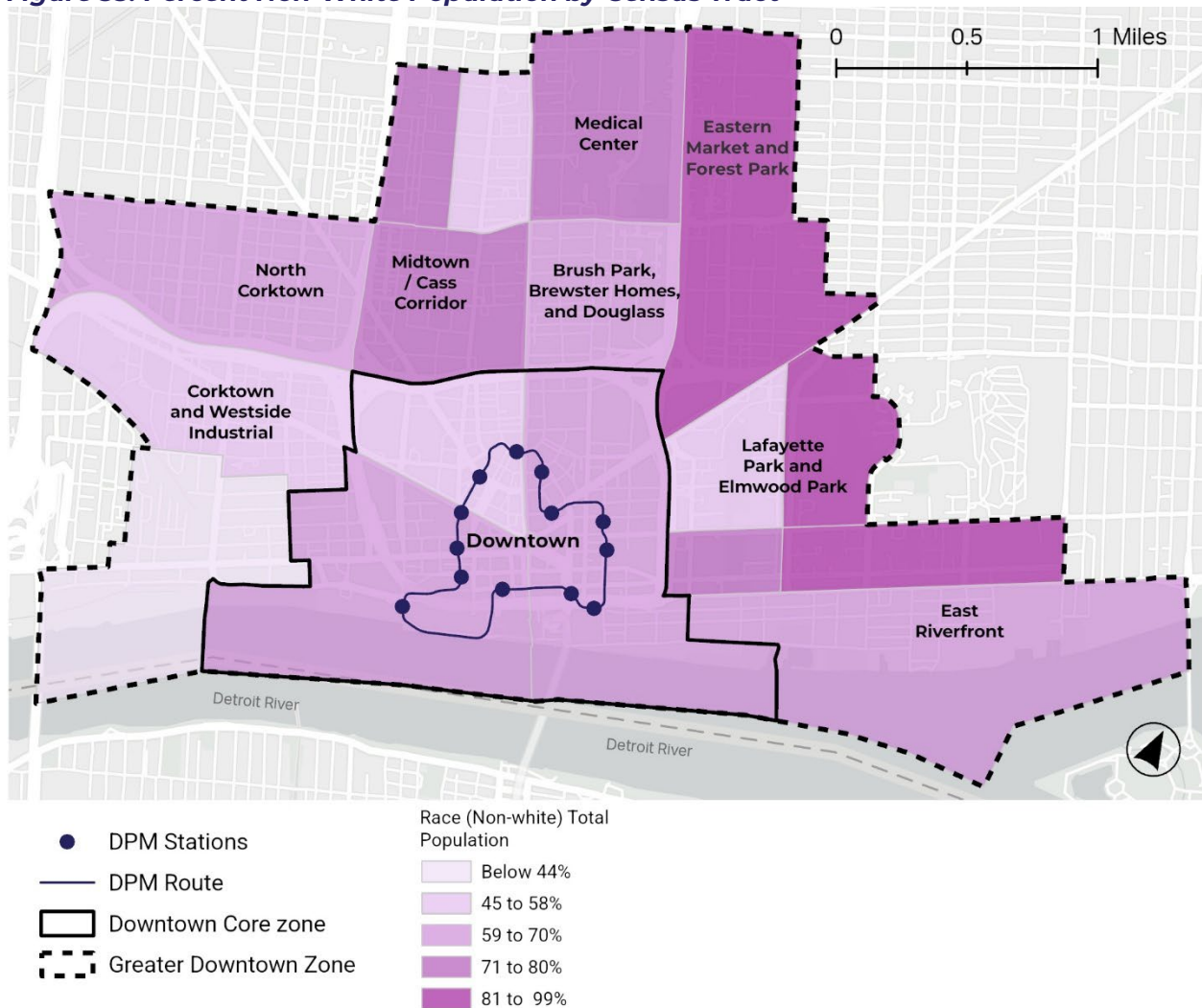
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

⁵⁹ DPM. "Detroit People Mover Customer Satisfaction Survey." October 2024.

⁶⁰ Placer.ai, Demographics: Downtown Detroit – Residents and Out-of-Market Visitors, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://www.placer.ai/>.

⁶¹ DDP. "2022 Perceptions Survey Stakeholder Insights." Accessed August 19, 2025.

Figure 33: Percent Non-White Population by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

Household Vehicle Availability

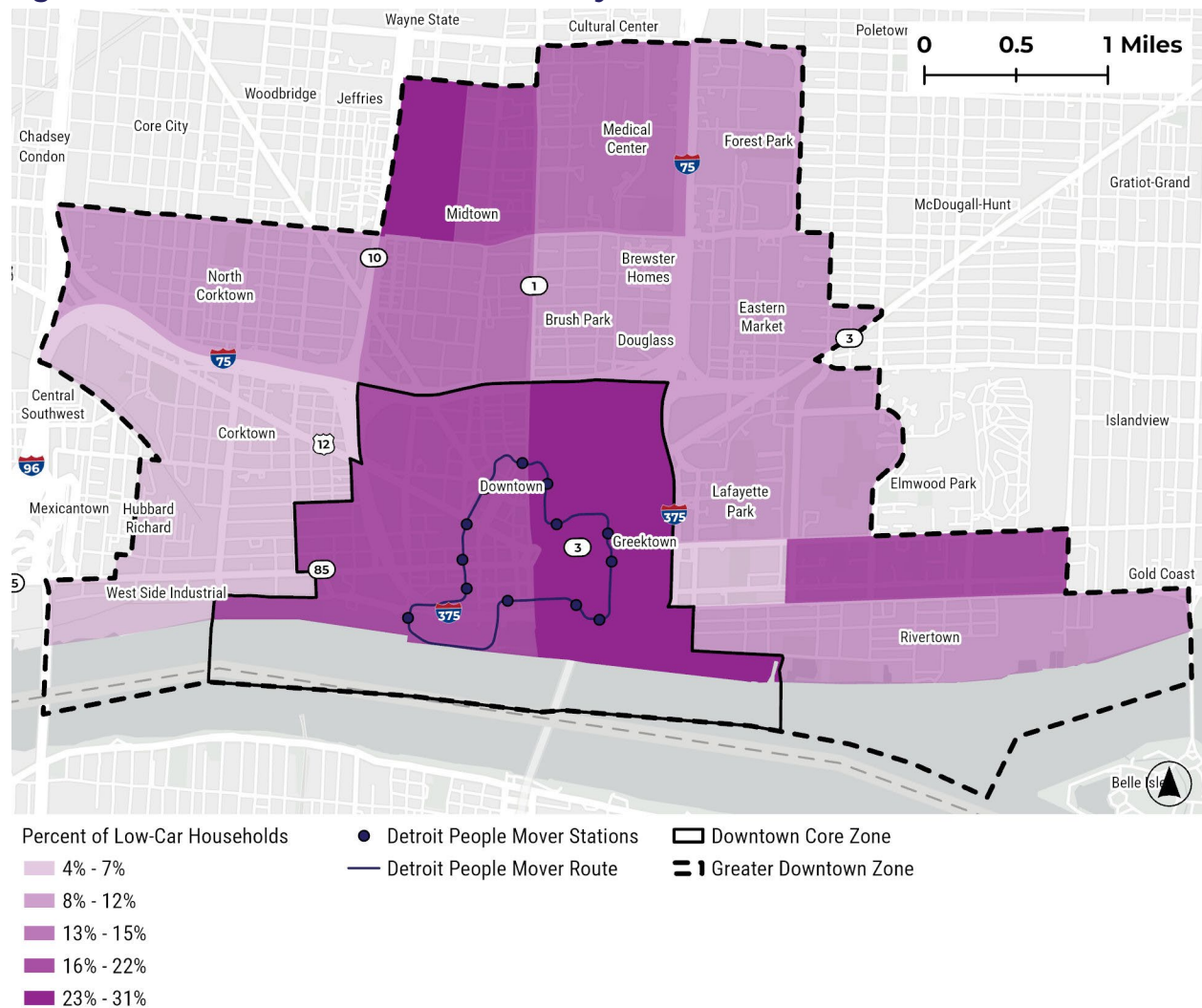
Households without a vehicle are significantly higher in both the study area and the Downtown Core than citywide (Table 15), indicating a greater reliance on other modes of transportation by residents in these zones. Low-car households, those that have more workers than vehicles available, are especially prevalent in the Downtown Core, particularly on the east side of Downtown. Parts of Midtown and the East Riverfront also have higher proportions of low-car households (Figure 34).

Table 15: Vehicle Availability at Occupied Housing Units

Vehicles Available	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
Zero Vehicles	20%	30%	28%
One Vehicle	47%	53%	61%
Two or More Vehicles	33%	17%	11%
Low-car Households (More Workers than Vehicles Available)	12%	15%	23%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics, B08203: Number of Workers in Household by Vehicles.

Figure 34: Percent of Low-Car Households by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, B08203: Number of Workers in Household by Vehicles.

Housing Units and Household Costs

Transit plays an important role in expanding access to housing. In 2023, the Downtown Core area had 5,270 housing units, with Greater Downtown providing an additional 18,459, for a



total of 23,729 housing units in the study area (Table 16).⁶² Within the study area, 18 percent of housing units are vacant. Higher residential vacancy can be found in the Lower Cass Corridor and North Cass Corridor (west of Second Avenue) neighborhoods, and within the DPM's existing footprint, including the Downtown Core area north of Grand River Avenue and west of Woodward Avenue (Figure 35).

Table 16: Tenancy and Occupancy

Metric	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
Total Housing Units	302,238	23,729	5,270
Vacant Housing Units	23%	18%	22%
Occupied Housing Units	77%	82%	78%
Owner Occupied	52%	17%	8%
Tenant Occupied	48%	83%	92%

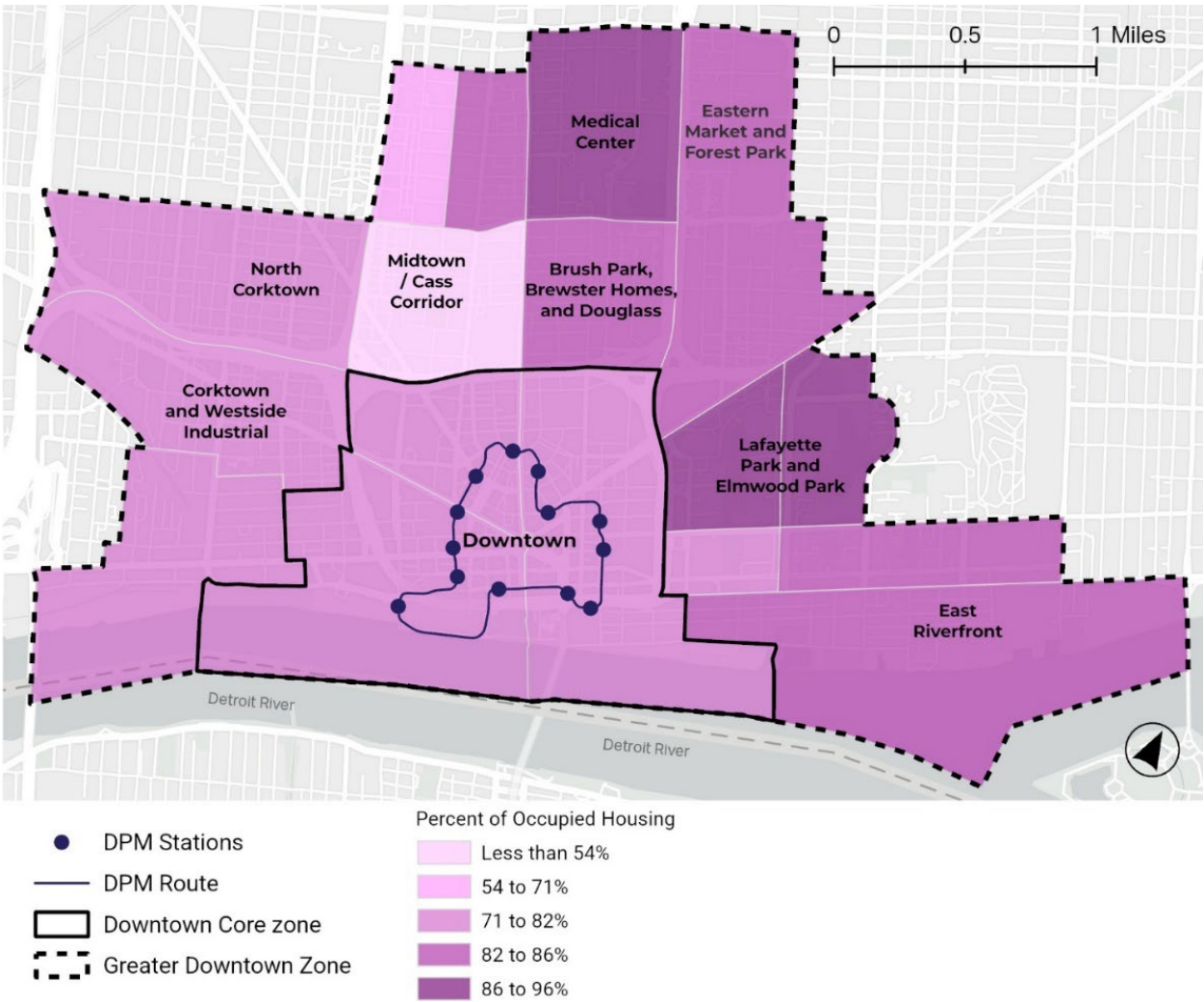
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

The number of housing units in all three areas increased gradually from 2014-2020, followed by a decline in 2021 and a modest recovery near 2020 levels by 2023. Most fluctuations were concentrated in Greater Downtown, outside of the Downtown Core, with the Downtown Core experienced steadier, small growth (Figure 36).

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Select Housing Characteristics, <https://data.census.gov/>, accessed August 19, 2025.



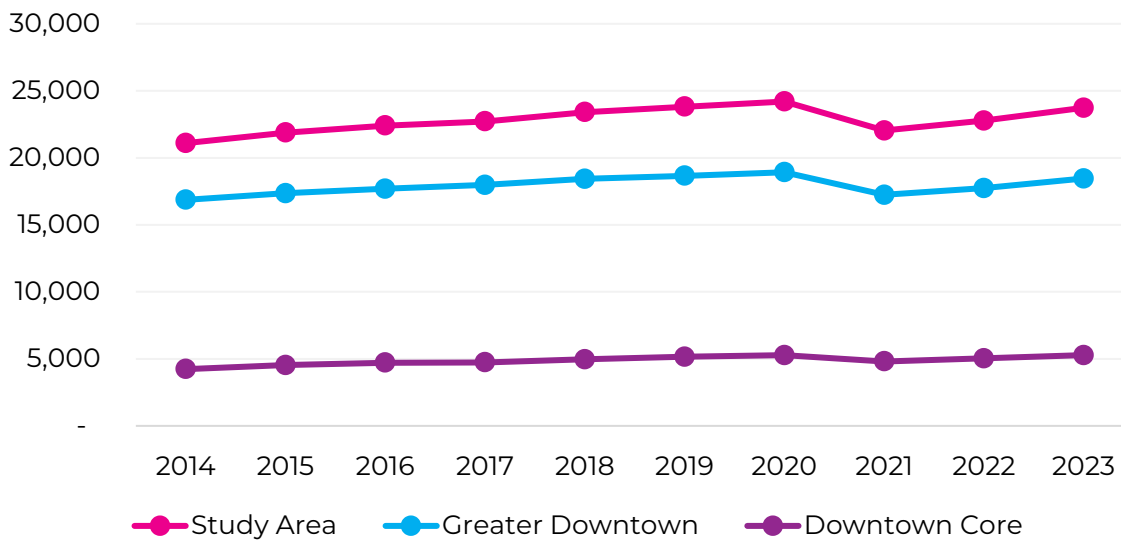
Figure 35: Percent of Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.



Figure 36: 2014-2023 Total Housing Units by Zone



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.

In the study area, relatively low median rents can be found in Medical Center (\$712), Eastern Market and Forest Park (\$832), and North Corktown (\$856) areas. The highest rents are found in the Downtown Core (\$1,773), East Riverfront (\$1,689), and Corktown and Westside Industrial (\$1,215). Downtown has a high percentage of renters (Table 17), and renters are generally more likely to be housing-cost burdened (spending 30 percent or more of their household income on housing costs) compared to owners (Table 18), and renters are generally more likely to be housing-cost burdened (spending 30 percent or more of their household income on housing costs) compared to owners (Table 18). In the Downtown Core, 44 percent of households are housing-cost burdened. Across the study area, almost half of renters are housing-cost burdened, with Lower Cass Corridor and Eastern Market having the highest proportion of housing-cost burdened residents (Figure 37).

Table 17: Renter-Occupied Housing Unit Household Costs, 2023

Metric	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
Renter Occupied: Median Rent	\$1,037	\$1,405	\$1,773
Renter Occupied: Average Household Size	2.6	1.5	1.4
Renter Occupied: Spending 30% or more of household income on housing costs	58%	48%	44%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

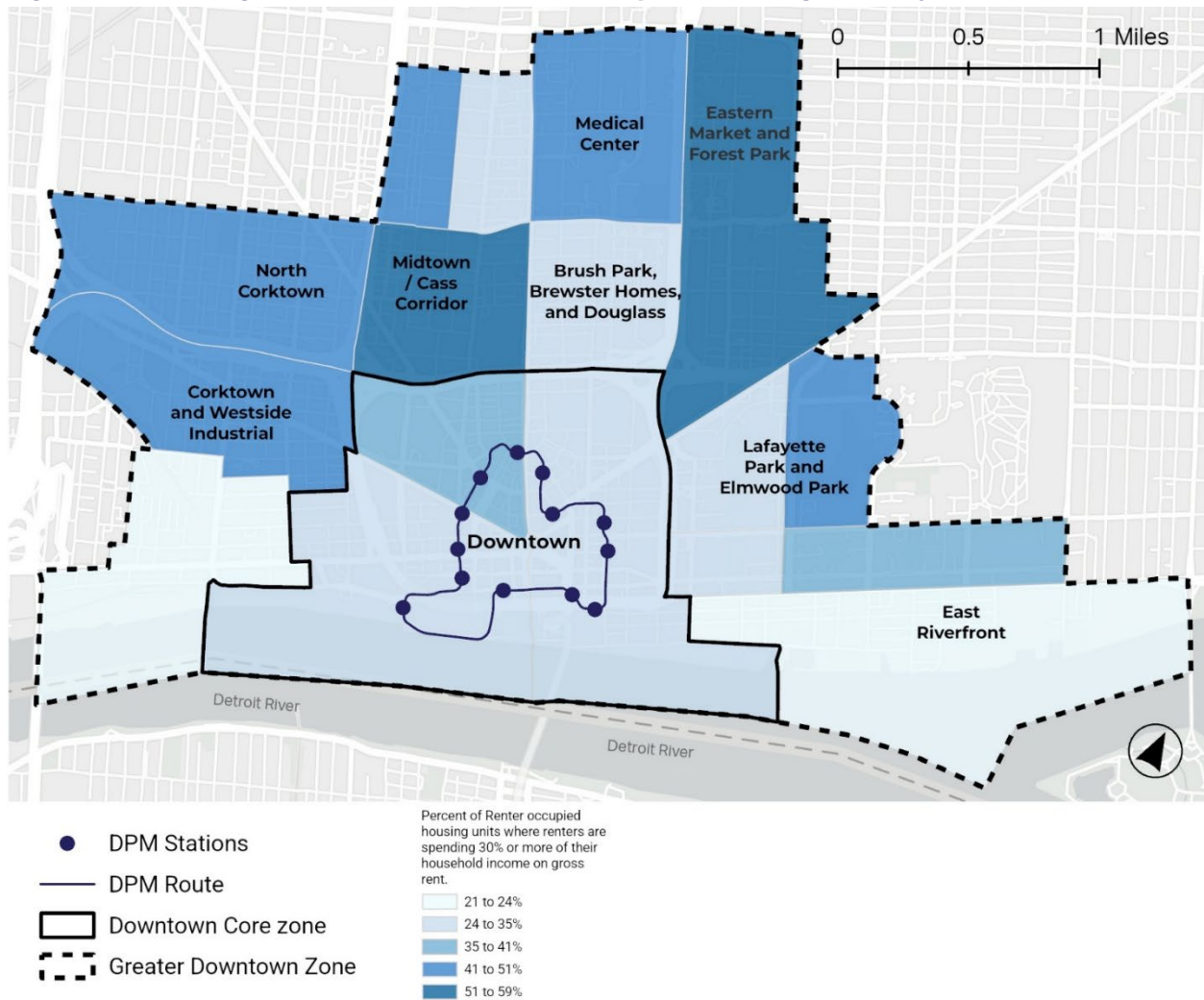
Table 18: Owner-Occupied Housing Unit Household Costs, 2023

Metric	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
Owner Occupied: Median Home Value	\$90,717	\$401,053	\$472,750
Owner Occupied: Average Household Size	2.6	1.6	1.3
Owner Occupied: Spending 30% or more of household income on housing costs	26%	31%	24%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.



Figure 37: Housing-Cost Burdened Renter-occupied Housing Units by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

Across the study area, 65 percent of units are in structures with 20 or more units or more (Table 19). In the Downtown Core, 95 percent of units are in structures with 20 units or more. Across the study area, tracts with the most occupied housing units per acre can be found in the northwest corner of Downtown, Lafayette Park, North Cass Corridor, and Elmwood Park (Figure 38).

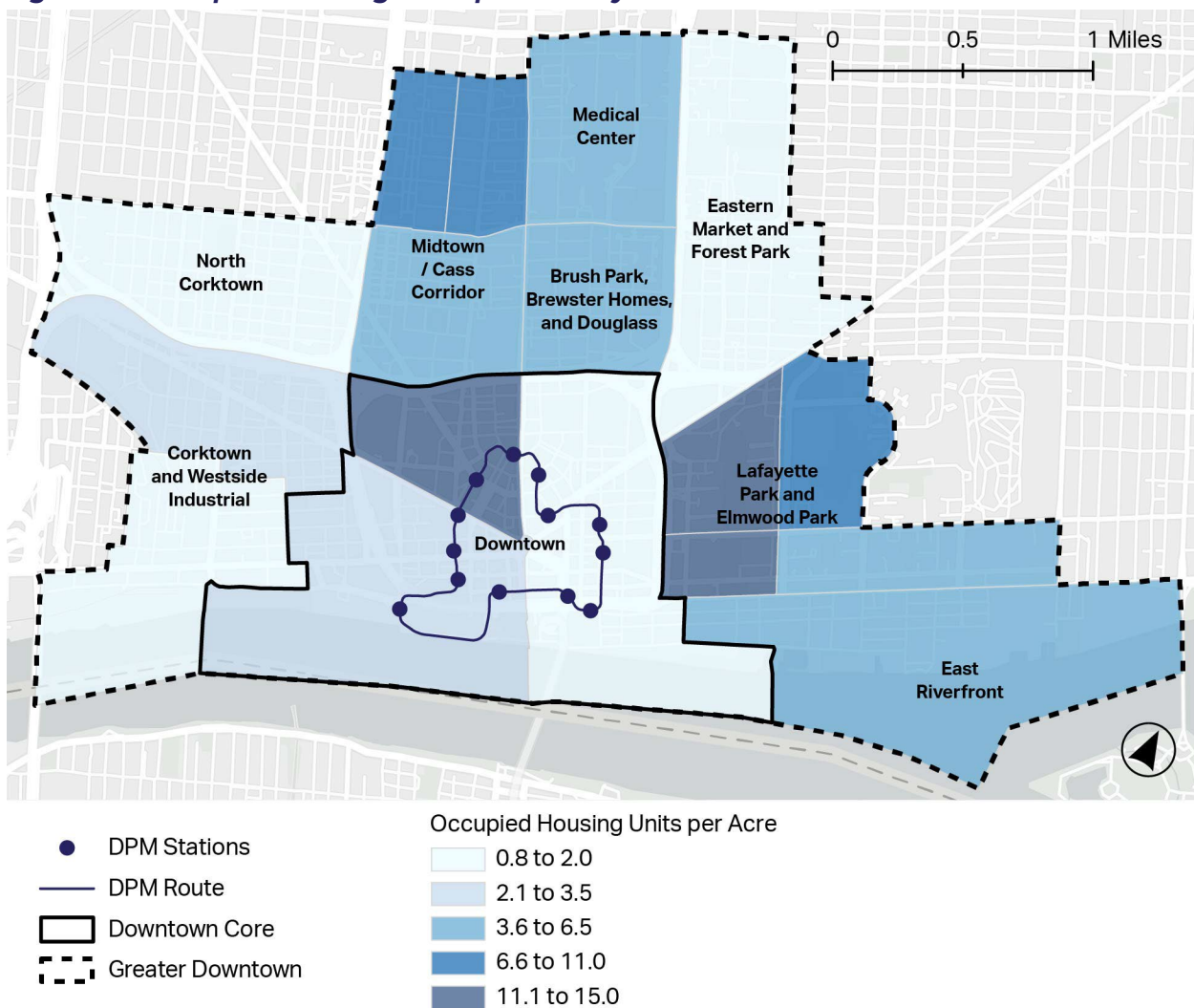


Table 19: Housing Stock, 2023

Metric	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
Total Housing Units	302,238	18,459	5,270
Percent of Units	100%	6%	2%
Buildings with 1 Unit	76%	23%	2%
Buildings with 2 Units	7%	2%	0%
Buildings with 3 to 4 Units	2%	3%	1%
Buildings with 5 to 19 Units	5%	13%	2%
Buildings with 20+ Units	9%	65%	95%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

Figure 38: Occupied Housing Units per Acre by Census Tract

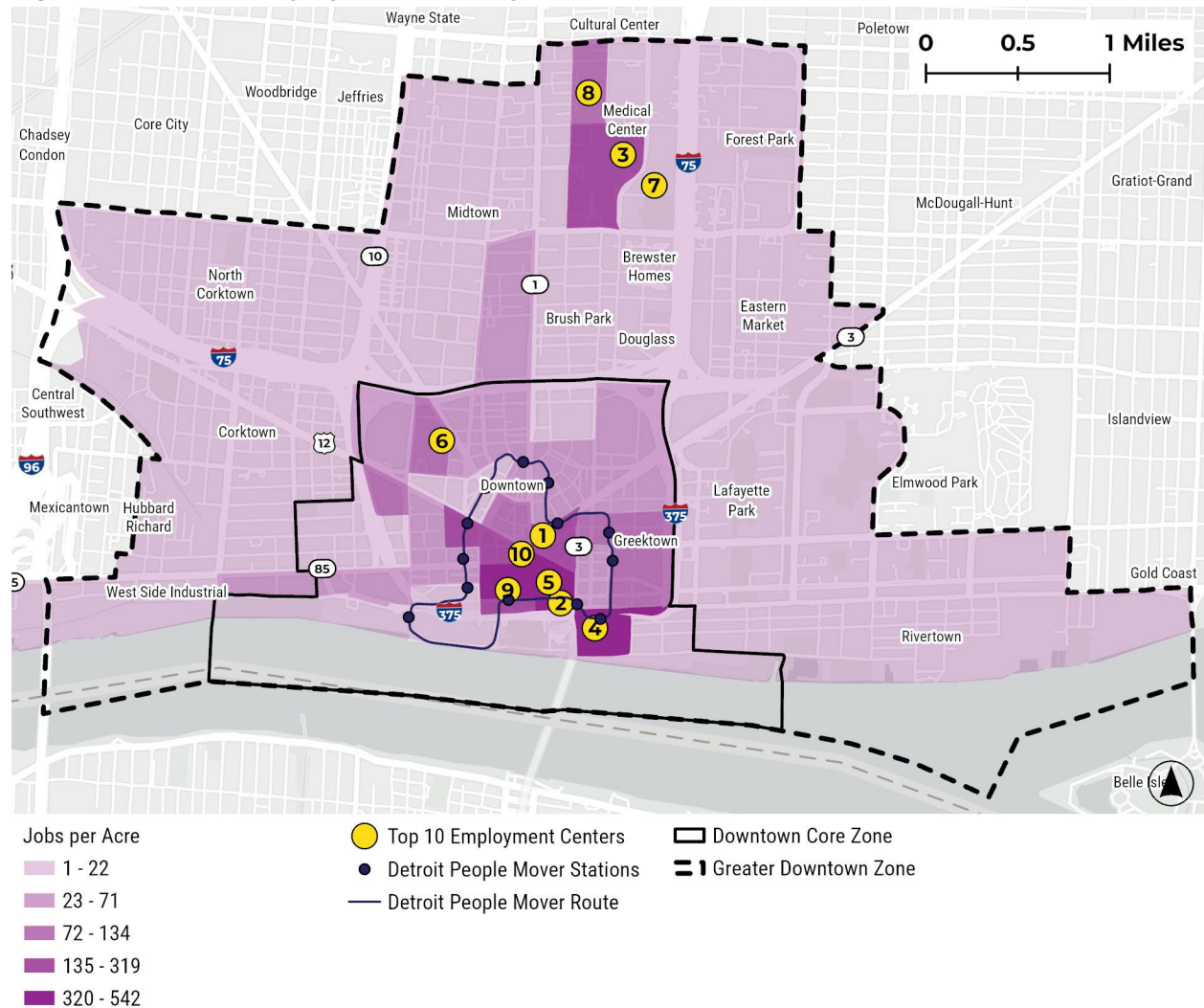


Source U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

Jobs

Jobs are currently concentrated in the Downtown Core and at the Detroit Medical Center (Figure 39). This distribution is supported by Table 20, which shows the current top employment centers in the study area.⁶³

Figure 39: Job Density by Traffic Analysis Zone



Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.

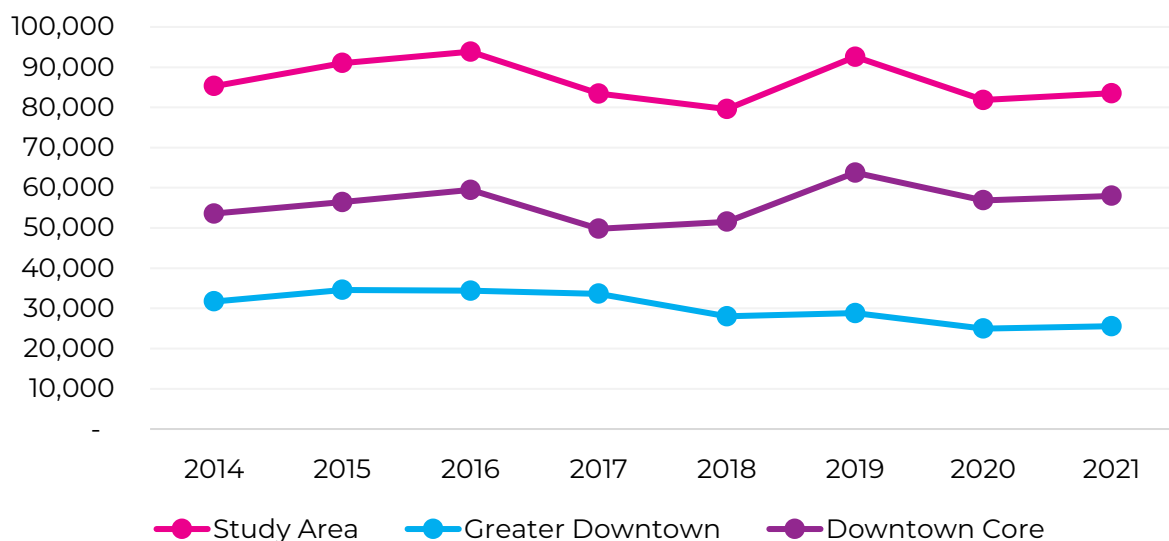
⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, OnTheMap, 2021 data, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.

**Table 20: Top 10 Employment Centers in the Study Area, 2021**

Rank	Employment Center	2021 Jobs	Major Employer(s)
1	One Campus Martius	19,939	Rocket Mortgage, various others
2	Coleman A. Young Municipal Center	7,801	City of Detroit
3	DMC	4,806	DMC
4	Renaissance Center	4,012	General Motors, various others
5	Ally Detroit Center	3,186	Ally bank, various others
6	DTE General Office Building	3,117	DTE
7	Children's Hospital of Michigan	2,445	DMC
8	John D Dingell VA Medical Center	2,147	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
9	Buhl Building	2,130	SMART, Fink + Associates Law firm, various others
10	One Kennedy Square	1,982	Ernst & Young accounting firm, various others

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data.

Between 2014 and 2021, job numbers have fluctuated in the study area. The number of jobs in the Downtown Core declined between 2017 and 2018, and in 2020, likely as a result of the pandemic. Jobs grew in Greater Downtown from 2014 to 2016, followed by a decline. They grew again between 2018 and 2019, and then declined between 2019 and 2020, again a likely impact of COVID-19 (Figure 40).

Figure 40: 2014-2021 Total Jobs by Zone

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2021 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, LODES Workplaces Area Characteristics (WAC).

Note: The latest data is available for the year 2021.

PROJECTED GROWTH

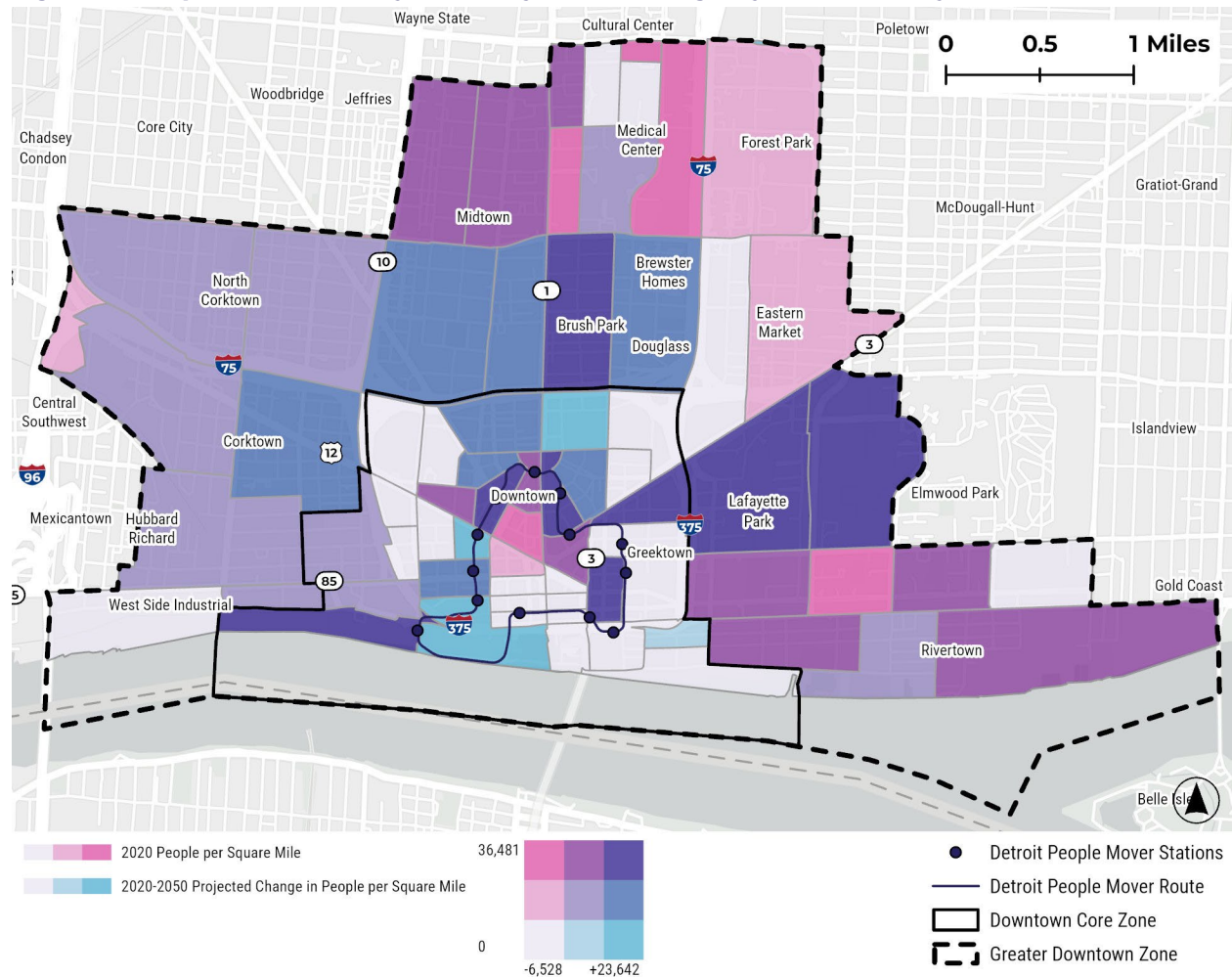
Population and jobs are both projected to grow across the study area between 2020 and 2050, according to the SEMCOG 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast. The projected increase in population aligns with efforts to increase housing stock in the study

area, as noted in the 2024 *DDP Downtown Detroit Community and Development Update* and 2018 *City of Detroit Multifamily Affordable Housing Strategy*. This growth also aligns with current efforts seen nationwide to diversify downtown areas in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (see the MULTIFAMILY section).

Population

Between 2020 and 2050, the Downtown Core is expected to see its population grow from 6,387 (2020) to 10,972 (2050) while the entire study area is expected to see its population grow from 33,235 (2020) to 46,352 (2050) (Table 21). Areas with high relative population density and that are also projected to grow the most are Brush Park, Lafayette Park, Elmwood Park, and Downtown (Figure 41). These areas may have greater demand for transit service as they grow, particularly if zoning changes promote TOD.

Figure 41: Population Density and Projected Change by Traffic Analysis Zone



Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.

Table 21. Total Population and Projected Change, 2020 to 2025

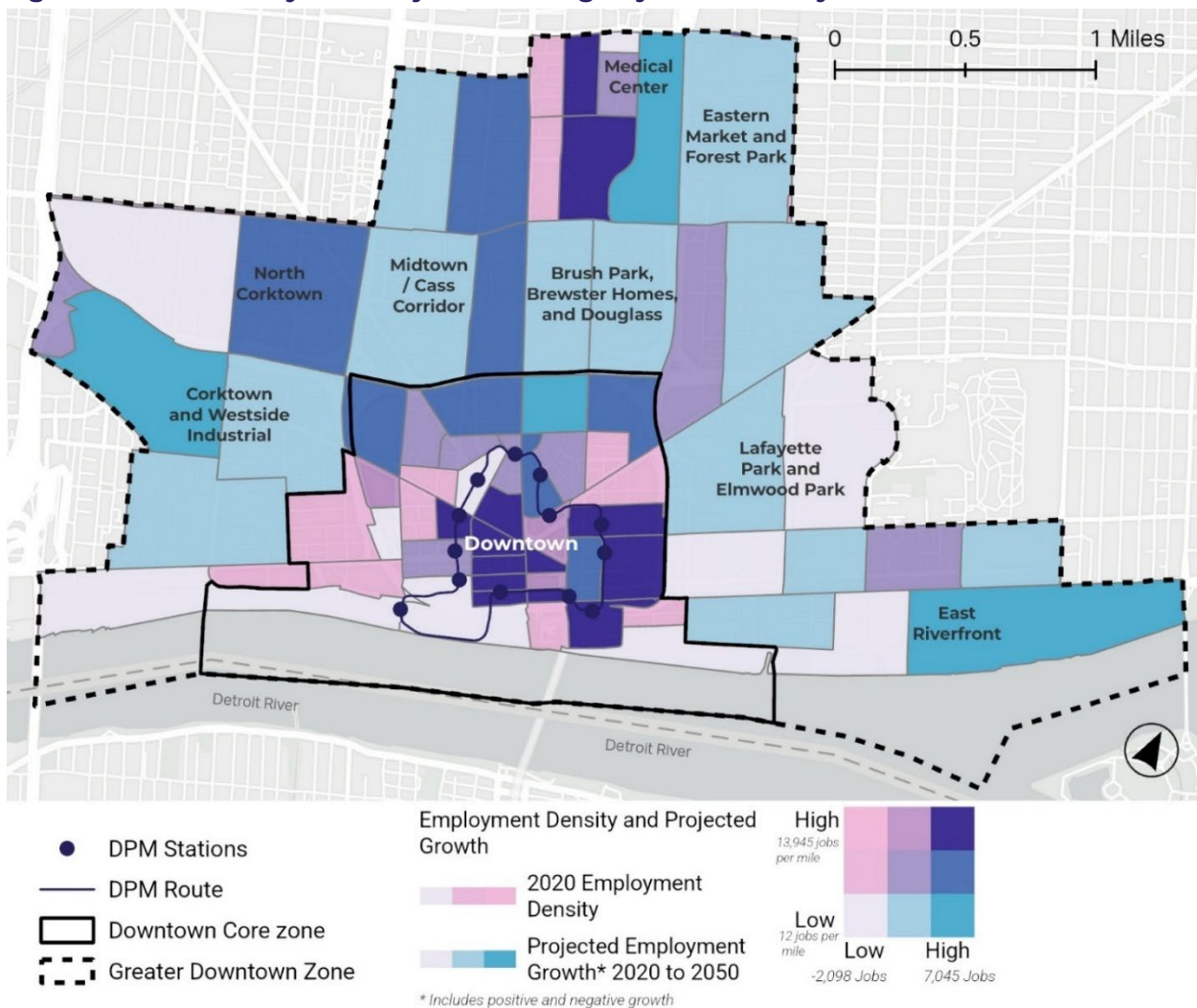
Metric	City of Detroit	Study Area	Downtown Core
2020 Total population	639,144	33,235	6,387
2050 Projected total population	632,364	46,352	10,972
Annual growth rate 2020-2025	-0.04%	1.32%	2.39%

Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.

Jobs and Job Sectors

Total jobs are expected to grow across the study area. Areas with high relative job density that are also projected to grow the most are Midtown, Medical Center, and Downtown. These areas may have greater demand for transit service as their employment densities grow (Figure 42).

Figure 42: Job Density and Projected Change by Traffic Analysis Zone



Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.



In 2050, the leisure and hospitality sector is projected to overtake public administration as the top job sector in the study area (Table 22). The leisure and hospitality sector requires more workers to be in-person than the public administration sector; therefore, this growth may contribute to a growth in commuting downtown. In the Downtown Core, financial services is projected to be the top job sector in 2050.

Table 22. Jobs and Top 10 Job Sectors, 2020 to 2050

Sector	Study Area			Downtown Core		
	2020 Jobs	2050 Jobs	Annual Growth Rate 2020 to 2050	2020 Jobs	2050 Jobs	Annual Growth Rate 2020 to 2050
Total jobs	116,470	136,965	0.59%	73,950	84,680	0.48%
Public administration	18,384	17,559	-0.15%	15,914	14,972	-0.20%
Financial activities	16,016	17,790	0.37%	14,593	16,293	0.39%
Hospitals	15,511	17,689	0.47%	31	41	1.08%
Leisure and hospitality	14,649	21,450	1.55%	9,203	13,357	1.50%
Professional and technical services	12,420	17,228	1.29%	11,057	13,409	0.71%
Management of companies and enterprises	8,373	11,137	1.10%	7,665	10,144	1.08%
Medical facilities	6,024	7,190	0.65%	1,496	1,660	0.37%
Education services	3,892	4,195	0.26%	583	645	0.35%
Other services	4,149	4,550	0.32%	2,499	2,697	0.26%
Administrative, support, and waste services	3,697	4,924	1.11%	2,656	3,401	0.93%

Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.

TRANSIT MARKET ANALYSIS

Transit demand and transit need are two measures that can help identify where there is the greatest transit market in the study area. Transit demand considers areas with greater population and job densities, which support higher transit ridership. Transit need focuses on demographics that are typically more likely to rely on public transit. These measures include:

1. Transit Demand: Population and job density
2. Transit Need: Density of people most likely to rely on transit, including:
 - a. Youth: People age 15 through 24
 - b. Older Adults: People age 65 and above
 - c. People with a Disability
 - d. Low-Car Households: Households more workers than vehicles available
 - e. Low-Income Population: People with income below the federal poverty level



Transit Demand

Transit operates most effectively in places with high densities of people and jobs. To identify areas of the study area with these characteristics, a Transit Demand Index was developed based on both current (2020) and future (2050) population and job densities, using the 2050 SEMCOG Regional Development Forecast. Categorizing each Traffic Analysis Zone into the thresholds shown in in Table 23 resulted in the index shown in Figure 43.

Areas with high transit demand based on population and job density are Midtown, Medical Center, and Downtown. The area around the Times Square DPM station, Brush Park, and Corktown are projected to increase in population and job density the most over time, as shown in Figure 44, and may generate greater transit demand over time.

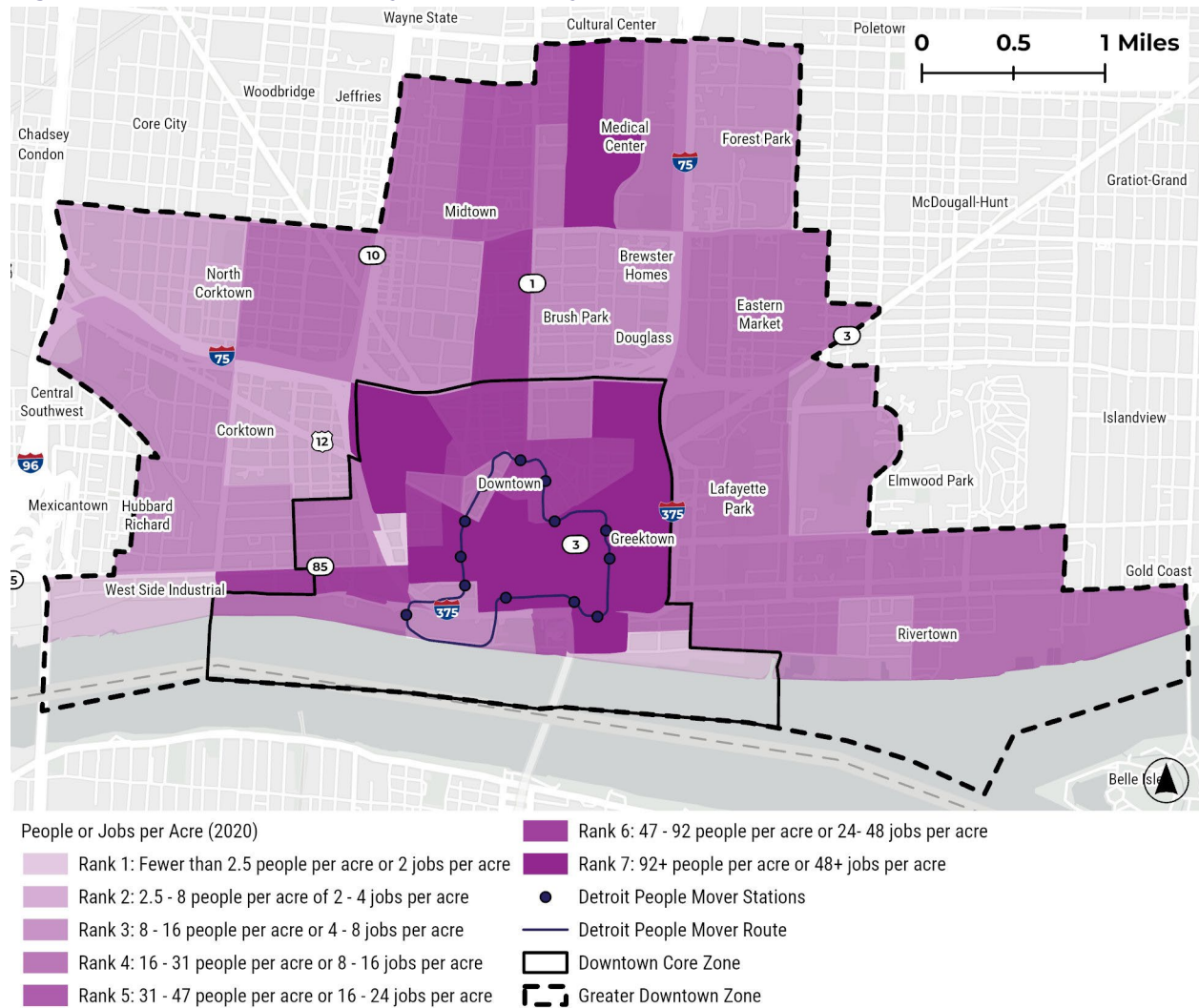
Table 23: Transit Demand Thresholds

Category	Population per Acre	Jobs per Acre
1 lowest density (lowest demand)	Less than 2.5	Less than 2
2	2.5 – 8	2 – 4
3	8 – 16	4 – 8
4	16 – 31	8 – 16
5	31 – 47	16 – 24
6	47 – 92	24 – 48
7 highest density (greatest demand)	92 or more	48 or more

Source: 2021 The Rapid Comprehensive Operational Analysis.



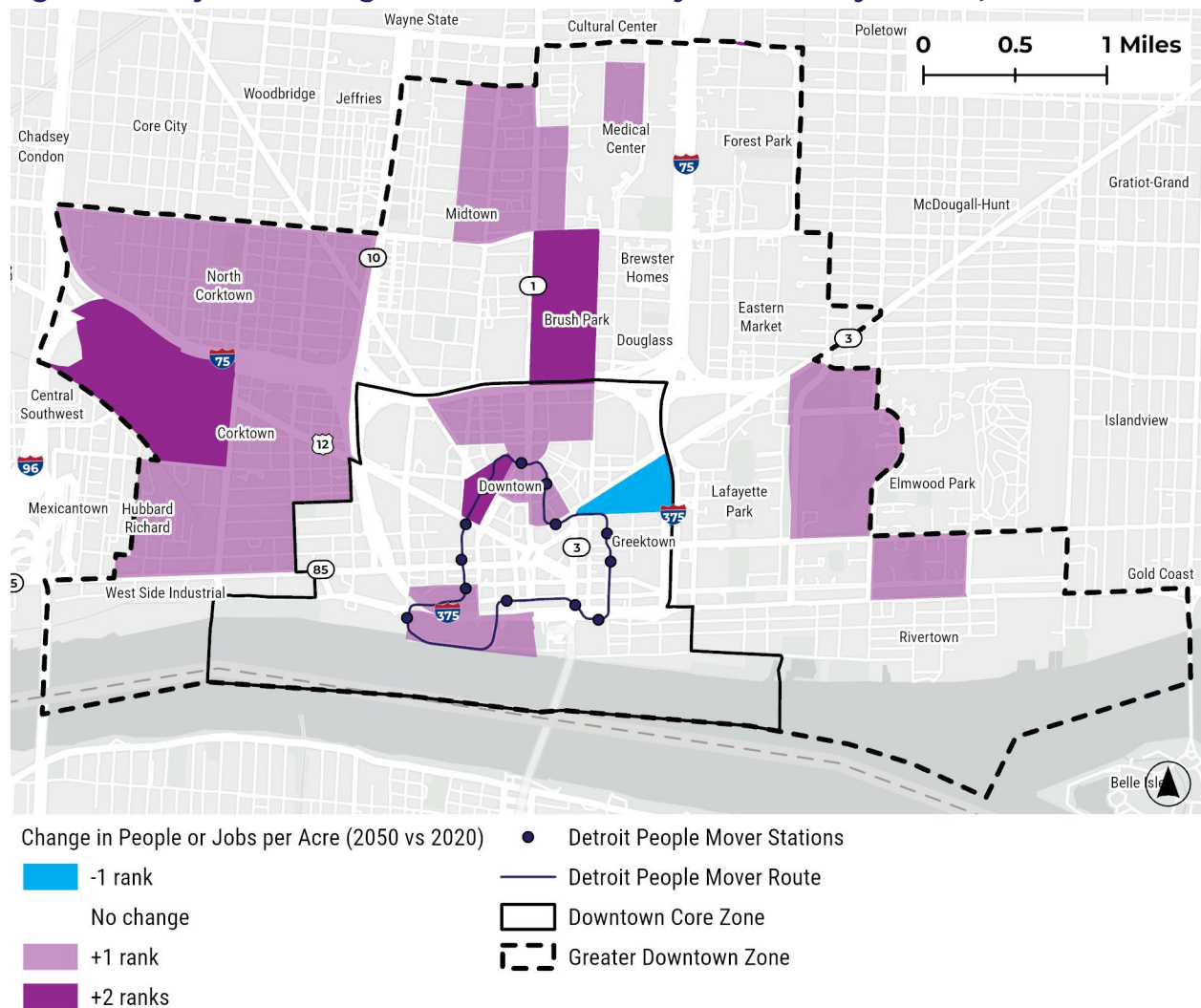
Figure 43: Transit Demand by Traffic Analysis Zone, 2020



Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.



Figure 44: Projected Change in Transit Demand by Traffic Analysis Zone, 2020 to 2050

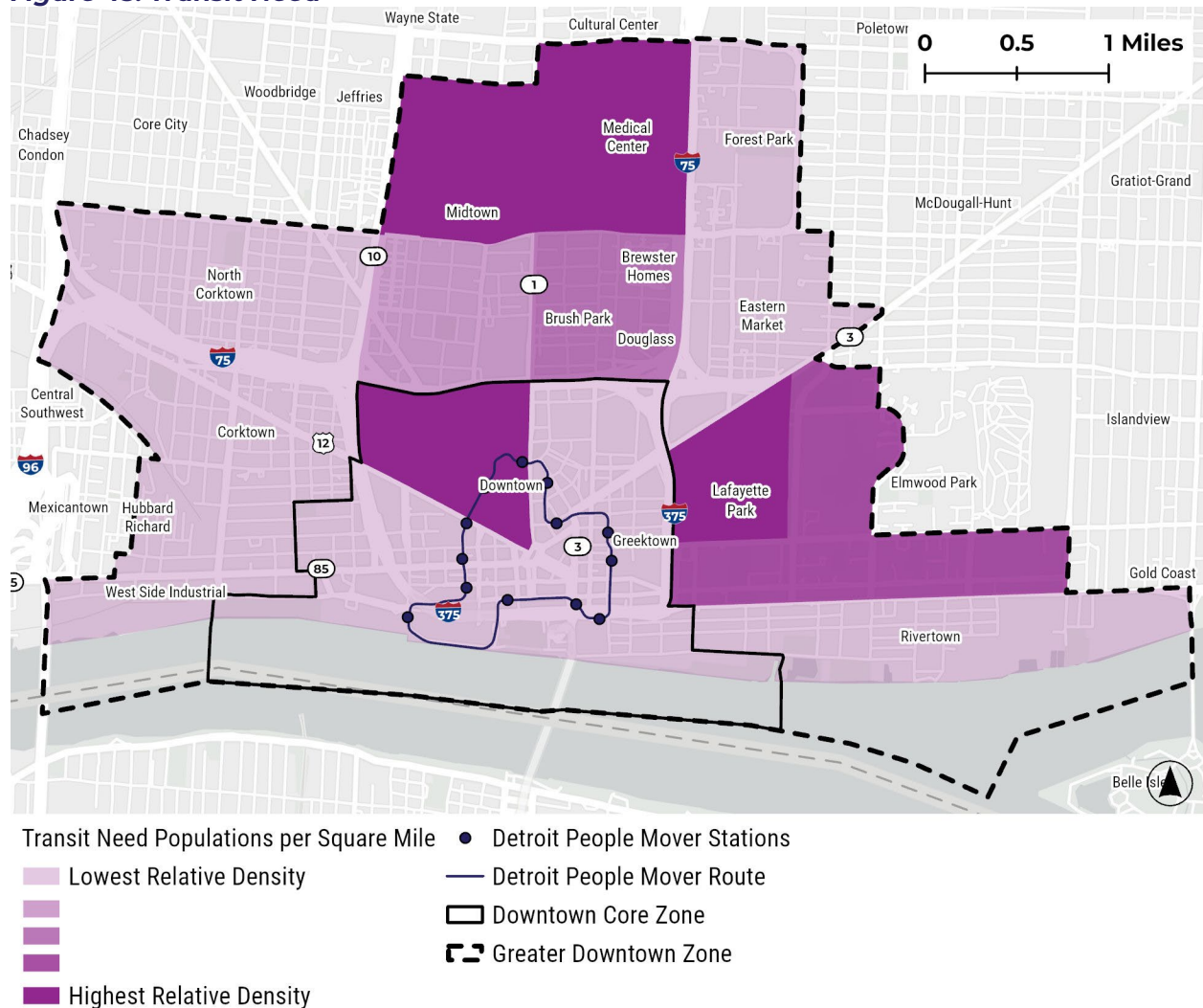


Source: SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast.

Transit Need

Successful transit services should be prioritized to places with high densities of people who rely on it most, including youth, older adults, people with disabilities, low-car households, and people with low incomes. This makes it more likely that people utilize the service and that people who need the service have it available. To identify these characteristics within the study area, a Transit Need Index was developed based on American Community Survey 2023 5-Year demographic data. Each demographic category was weighted equally. Scoring each census tract based on its relative density of each demographic category resulted in the index shown in Figure 45.

Areas with high transit need based on the density of populations that tend to rely more on transit are the northwest corner of the Downtown between Michigan Avenue, I-75, and Woodward Avenue, as well as the Lafayette Park, Midtown, and Medical Center neighborhoods.

**Figure 45: Transit Need**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, various tables.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

The demographic analysis revealed that only 5 percent of Detroit's total population resides in the study area, concentrated in Lafayette Park, Elmwood Park, the Downtown Core, and Midtown/Cass Corridor. Looking into the future, more housing is projected Downtown where it does not exist today, and population density is projected to increase in West Riverfront, Times Square, Midtown, Lafayette Park, and Elmwood Park over the coming years. This may provide opportunities to improve connections in these areas and to improve access to residential amenities.

The median age of study area residents is about 37 years old, which is slightly older than the citywide median age. The study area contains a majority-minority population; however, when compared with the City of Detroit as a whole, has a smaller proportion of residents of color.



Nearly one-third of study area households do not have a vehicle, a higher share than citywide households, indicating a greater reliance on other modes of transportation by study area residents. Renting is also much more common than owning a residence in the study area than it is citywide. Almost half of renters in the study area are housing-cost burdened, with Lower Cass Corridor and Eastern Market having the highest proportion of housing-cost burdened residents. Providing improved transit options in the study area, especially in these areas, can help reduce housing cost burdens for residents.

Jobs are currently concentrated in the Downtown Core—with top employment centers including One Campus Martius, the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, and the Renaissance Center—as well as at the DMC north of the Downtown Core. Looking into the future, leisure and hospitality is projected to replace public administration as the largest job sector in the study area. The same areas with the greatest job densities today are projected for the highest growth in jobs over the coming years, emphasizing the importance of serving these areas with high-quality transit services. Growth in the leisure and hospitality sector may suggest that more workers will need to be in-person and will be commuting downtown.

Finally, the transit market analysis revealed that key areas with both transit demand and transit need are northwest Downtown between Michigan Avenue, I-75, and Woodward Avenue, as well as the Midtown and Medical Center neighborhoods. While these areas do have transit service today, there may be opportunities to improve services, access to services, or integration between services in the future.



DOWNTOWN GROWTH

In recent years, Downtown Detroit has seen new investment in public spaces and real estate developments. Previously a focal point for the region's business and commerce, the neighborhood has seen new residential development. Now, Downtown serves as a culture, sporting, and business hub that is constantly evolving. An analysis of development trends in the study area contextualizes recent changes and informs on anticipated changes. Three geographic areas are used for comparison: the Downtown Core Zone, the Greater Downtown Zone, and the City of Detroit.⁶⁴

OFFICE

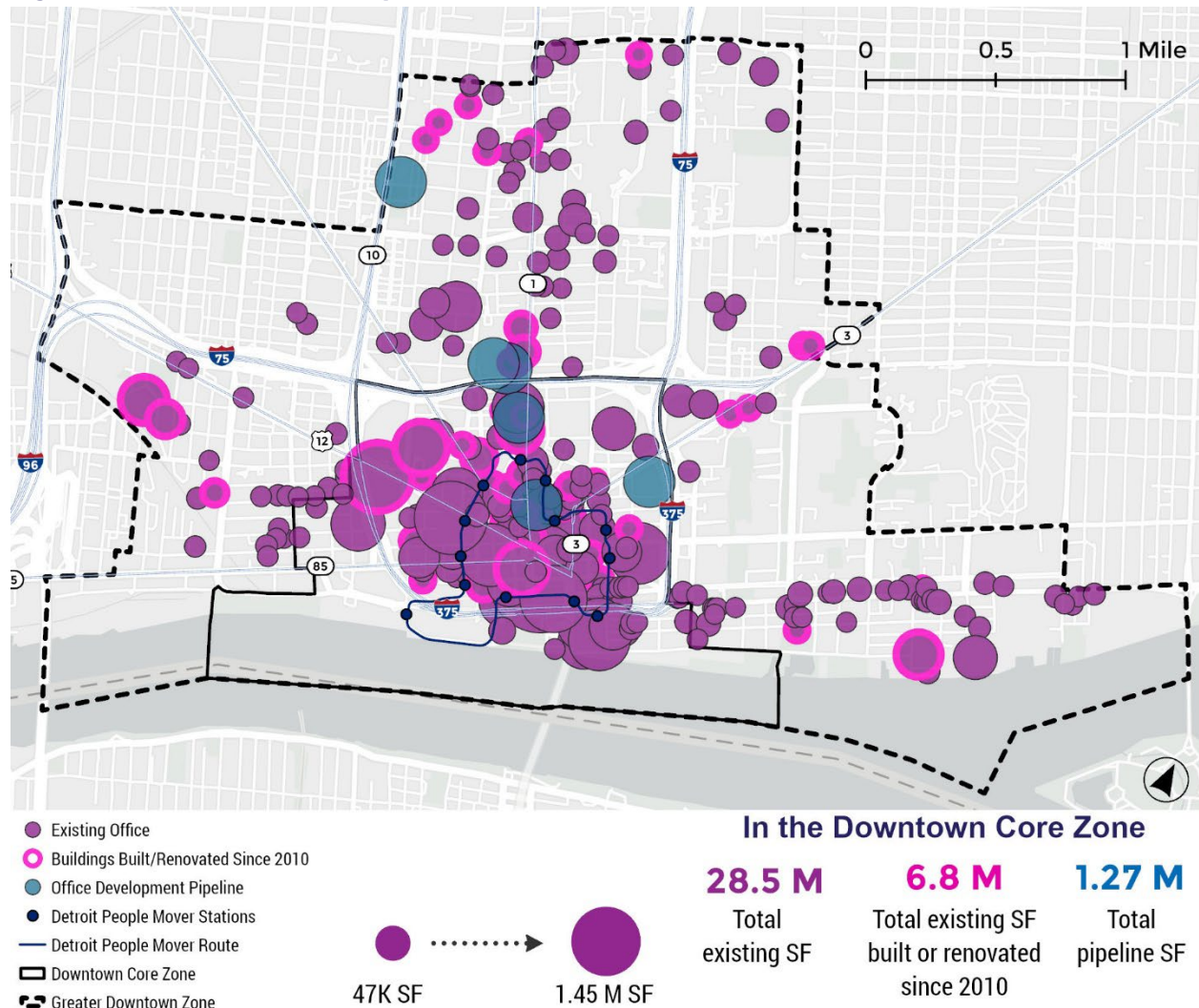
The Downtown Core serves as the primary office hub in the City of Detroit, reflecting its role as the city's central economic and employment Center. There are 145 office buildings in this area, totaling approximately 28.5 million square feet of existing office space. As is typical in most cities, office buildings are mostly clustered in the core, with their presence becoming more dispersed farther from the downtown Center. Figure 46 illustrates Detroit's office market.

The Downtown Core contains 78 percent of all office space in buildings constructed or renovated since 2010 in the study area. This concentration underscores the area's continued importance as a focal point for commercial growth and investment. Currently, there are three office projects in the development pipeline (Gratiot Innovation District—expected to be completed in 2027, Hudson's Detroit—expected to be completed in 2026, and 2200 Woodward Avenue—completion date to be determined) in the Downtown Core, totaling approximately 1.27 million square feet. This includes 220,000 square feet in final planning, 560,000 square feet under construction, and 448,000 square feet in earlier planning phases. There are also three proposed developments outside the Downtown Core, totaling approximately 320,000 square feet. The three developments are One Eleven West (completion to be determined), The Arena Lofts/120 Henry Street (completion to be determined), and Industry Detroit (expected to be completed in 2026).

⁶⁴ The data in the "Downtown Growth" section comes from Costar unless stated otherwise. Costar, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://www.costar.com/>.



Figure 46: Office Market Map



Source: Costar, Esri.

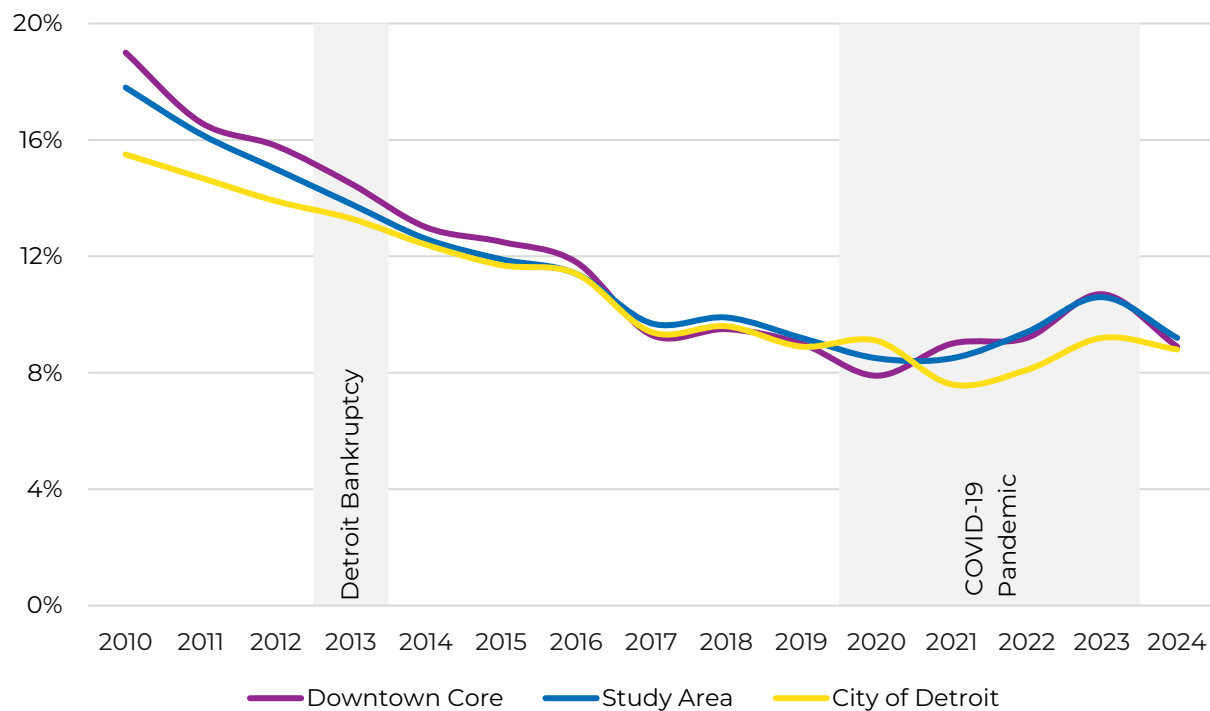
Between 2010 and 2024, office markets across the three geographic regions saw a decline in vacancies and a rise in rent per square foot, as shown in Figure 47, Figure 48, and Table 24. It is worth noting that both vacancy and rent per square foot in the three regions is lower than the national average in 2024 (vacancy: 13.9 percent and rent per square foot: \$35.30), highlighting the affordability of Detroit's office market. The trends in Detroit's office market are likely due to private investment and governments program such as "Detroit Demolition Program" after the Detroit bankruptcy in 2013. These trends are typical indicators of growing demand for office space. However, despite this long-term trajectory, new office construction has slowed in recent years. Since 2020, only one new office building (Huntington Tower) has



been completed in the Downtown Core. In the Downtown Core, office vacancy increased from 7.9 percent in 2020 to 10.6 percent in 2023 but rebounded to 8.9 percent in 2024.⁶⁵

This slowdown mirrors a broader national trend as office markets across the U.S. continue to adjust to post-pandemic workplace shifts. The rise of remote and hybrid work has prompted many companies to reassess their real estate needs, leading to increased vacancy and more cautious development activity. Still, there are signs of renewed interest and potential recovery in the Downtown Core. As noted, three new office buildings are currently in the development pipeline. Together, they would surpass the total new supply delivered over the past 4 years, suggesting emerging confidence in the long-term viability of the downtown office market. It is important to note that there are discussions and a proposal to redevelop the Renaissance Center, which would turn one of the office buildings into multifamily housing and keep the central building as a hotel.⁶⁶

Figure 47: Office Vacancy Rates

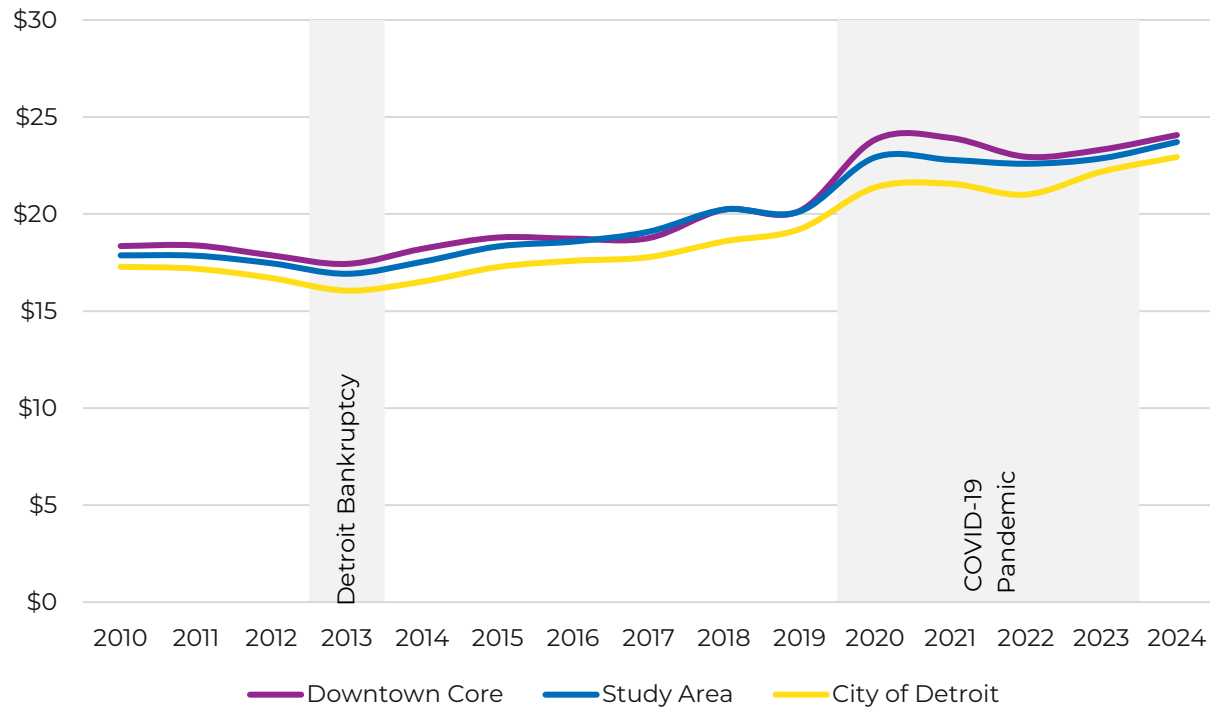


Source: Costar.

⁶⁵ This increase from 2020 to 2023 was mostly likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when a large share of U.S. office employees worked from home.

⁶⁶ Byrnes, Mark. "The Battle Over the Fate of Detroit's Renaissance Center." *Bloomberg*, May 3, 2025. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2025-05-03/detroit-renaissance-center-gm-s-giant-hq-faces-architectural-downsizing>.

Figure 48: Office Rent Per Square Foot



Source: Costar

Table 24. Office Market Overview

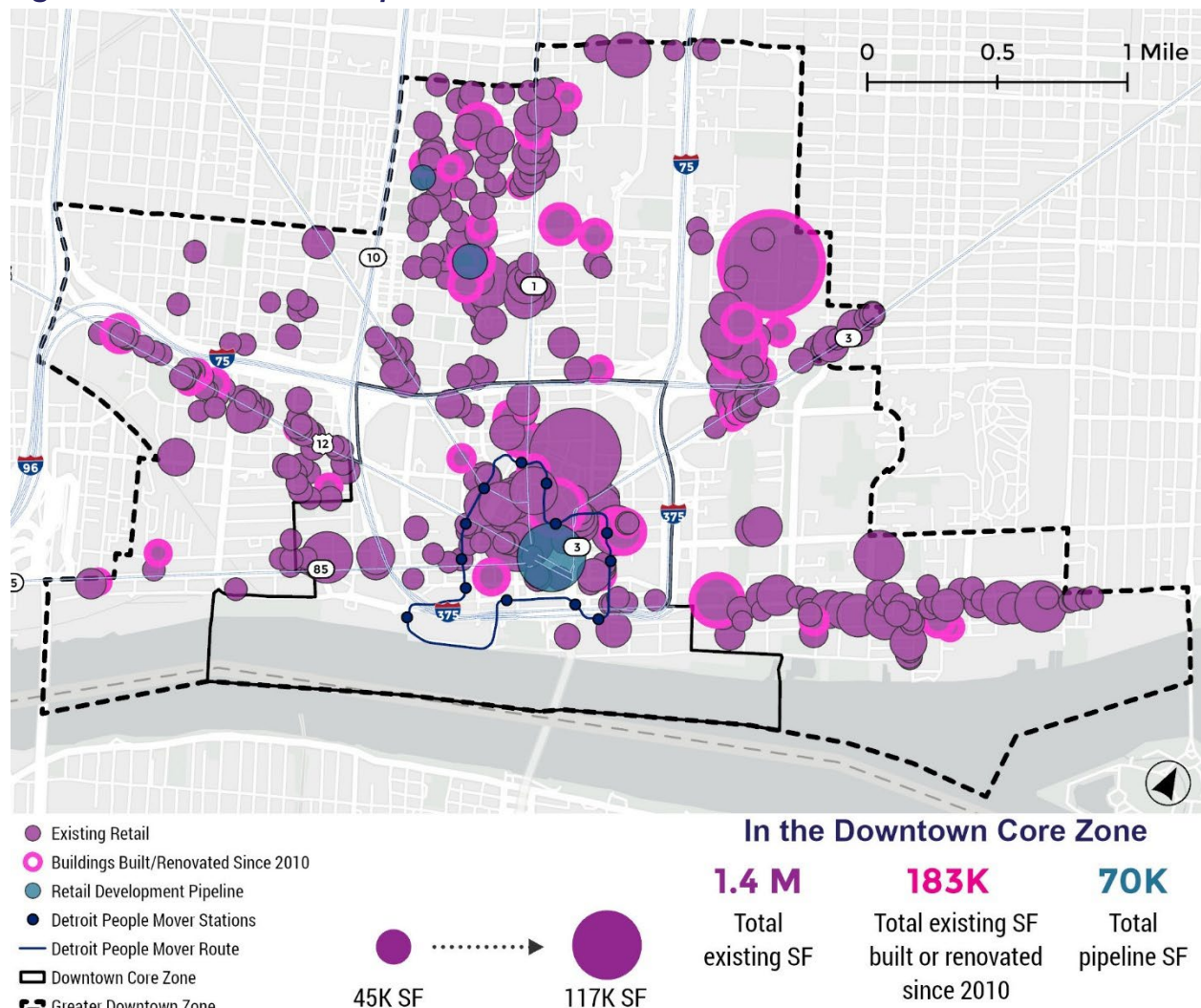
Office	Category	Number of Buildings	Inventory (Square Feet)	Rent/ Square Foot	Vacancy
Downtown Core	2010	141	27.8 M	\$18.4	19%
	2020	144	28.1 M	\$23.8	7.9%
	2024	145	28.5 M	\$24.1	8.9%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.2%	0.2%	2%	-5.3%
Study Area	2010	271	33.4 M	\$17.9	17.8%
	2020	279	34.3 M	\$21.4	8.5%
	2024	284	35.4 M	\$23.7	9.2%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.3%	0.4%	2%	-4.6%
City of Detroit	2010	9,698	152 M	\$17.3	15.5%
	2020	9,848	157 M	\$21.4	9.1%
	2024	9,919	165 M	\$22.9	8.8%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.2%	0.6%	2%	-4%

Source: Costar.

RETAIL

Similar to the office market, retail space in Detroit is heavily concentrated in the Downtown Core. However, unlike office space, retail extends more beyond the core, following key commercial corridors and high-traffic roads. Notable retail clusters beyond the Downtown Core are located along major roads such as Jefferson, Michigan, and Woodward Avenues, Randolph Street, and throughout Cass Corridor. This distribution reflects the nature of retail, which tends to follow residential patterns and transportation networks rather than being limited to the CBD. Only 26 percent of retail space built or renovated since 2010 in the study area is in the Downtown Core, indicating that new retail development is occurring in surrounding neighborhoods rather than only downtown. The 2016 DPM TOD study found that the DPM contributed to increases in commercial property values of 38 percent, indicating opportunity for the DPM to support retail expansion throughout downtown Detroit. Figure 49 maps Downtown Detroit's retail market.

Figure 49: Retail Market Map

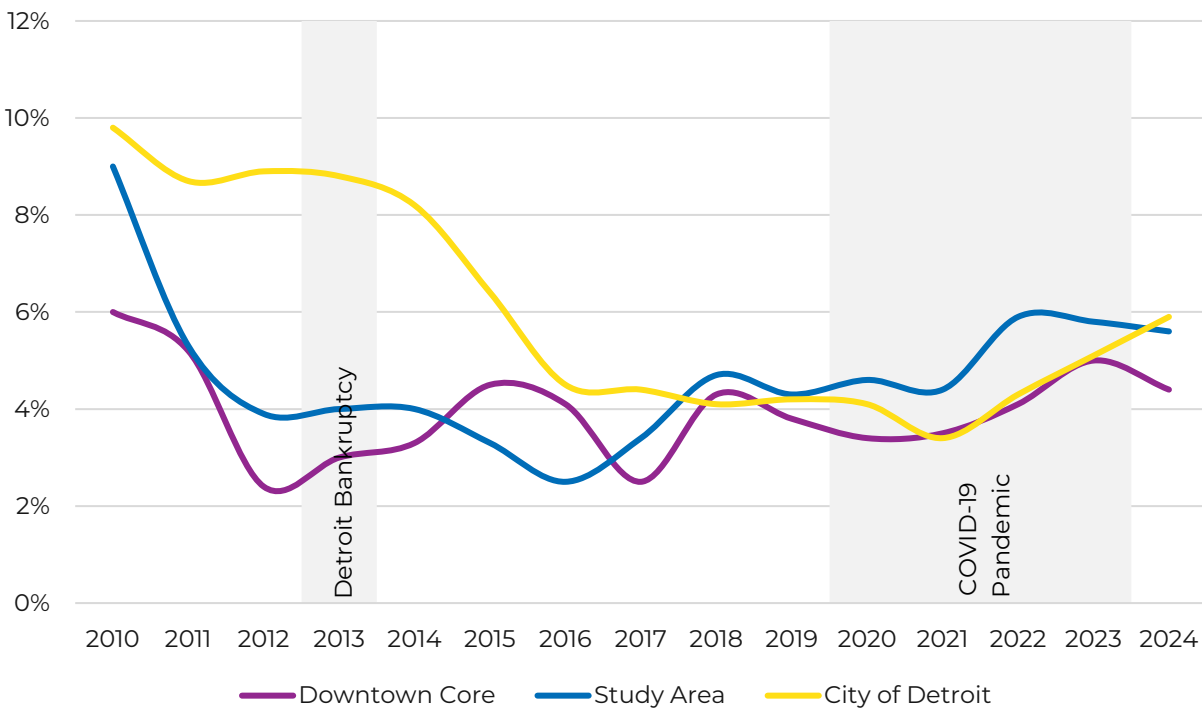


Source: Costar, Esri.

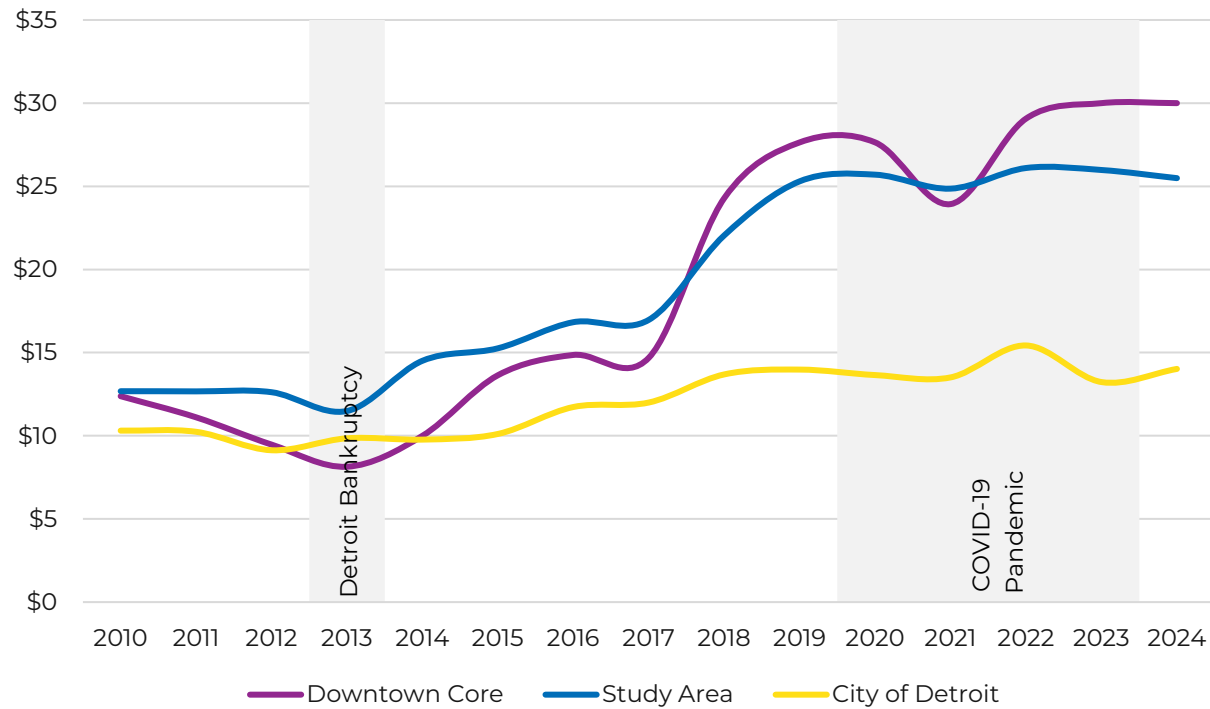
Between 2010 and 2024, all three geographies experienced growth in retail inventory, rising rents per square foot, and a decline in vacancy rates, signaling healthy demand over the long term. This is shown in Figure 50 and Figure 51. However, from 2020 to 2024, the retail market began to slow, mirroring trends seen in the office sector. During this period, Downtown rents continued to increase at an annual rate of 2.1 percent, but vacancies also increased 3.5 percent to 4.4 percent, indicating that demand may not be keeping pace with rising costs and lower foot traffic due to pandemic-induced remote and hybrid working trends. Only one new retail building (1925 Broadway St) was added in the Downtown Core during this period.

Currently, there is one retail project under construction (COSM Detroit, expected to be completed in 2026) in the Downtown Core. This suggests that developers are likely to proceed cautiously, likely due to uncertainty about long-term retail demand in an area that currently draws part of its customer base from office workers, who are not coming into Downtown as frequently as they were pre-pandemic. Retail activity is generally not focused on standalone mixed-use developments, though some retail is being added as part of larger projects, such as the Hudson's Detroit. Overall, the retail market in the study area appears to be dependent upon further diversification of land uses and visitor types, so that permanent residents and tourists can supplement office workers as Downtown retail customers.

Figure 50: Retail Vacancy Rates



Source: Costar.

**Figure 51: Retail Rent Per Square Foot**

Source: Costar.

Table 25. Retail Market Overview

Retail	Category	Number of Buildings	Inventory (Square Feet)	Rent / Square Foot	Vacancy
Downtown Core	2010	107	1.3 M	\$12.4	6%
	2020	117	1.3 M	\$27.6	3.4%
	2024	118	1.4 M	\$30	4.4%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.7%	0.2%	6.5%	-2.2%
Study Area	2010	416	3.9 M	\$12.4	9%
	2020	434	4.1 M	\$25.7	4.6%
	2024	436	4.2 M	\$25.5	5.6%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.3%	0.4%	5.1%	-3.3%
City of Detroit	2010	5,129	28 M	\$17.3	9.8%
	2020	5,190	28.9 M	\$21.4	4.1%
	2024	5,196	29 M	\$22.9	5.9%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.2%	0.6%	2%	-3.6%

Source: Costar.



MULTIFAMILY

As of 2024, there are 269 multifamily buildings in the Downtown Core, totaling nearly 20,200 residential units. Two concentrations of these units occur in the center of the Downtown Core as well as in Midtown. Multifamily buildings in Midtown are smaller, averaging about 38 units per building, while multifamily buildings in the Downtown Core are larger, averaging 116 units per building. Downtown Detroit's multifamily market has grown rapidly since 2010, at an average rate of 3.8 percent per year in the Downtown Core and 2.3 percent per year in the study area. In recent years, due to the pandemic, office to residential conversion has been a development tool in major metro areas. In 2022, there were 23,100 units converted; in 2023, 45,200 units; in 2024, 55,300 units; and in 2025, an estimated 70,700 office units are expected to be converted.⁶⁷ As of 2025, the Detroit metropolitan area has converted almost 1,000 multifamily units from office units, which ranks 20th of all metro areas.⁶⁸ Forty-four percent of all multifamily units in buildings constructed or renovated since 2010 in the study area are located in the Downtown Core, reinforcing the area's role as a central hub for recent residential development. Figure 52 depicts Detroit's multifamily market.

In terms of affordable housing, there are five buildings in the Downtown Core that receive funding through programs such as LIHTC, HUD, or Section 8.^{69, 70} Affordable housing units are shown in Figure 53. Together, these buildings provide roughly 520 units of housing. Three of the five buildings' intended targets are seniors or people with disabilities: Washington Boulevard Building, Kamper Stevens, and Himelhoch 2. These units concentrated near key transit points, including Time Square Station, Grand Circus Park Station, and Broadway Station. Looking at the broader pattern, there is also a concentration of public housing units in the northern portion of the Greater Downtown area, particularly in Midtown and Medical Center.

⁶⁷ RentCafe. "Record-Breaking 71K Units Set to Emerge From Office-to-Apartment Conversions." Florin Petrut. February 10, 2025. <https://www.rentcafe.com/blog/rental-market/market-snapshots/adaptive-reuse-office-to-apartments-2025/>.

⁶⁸ RentCafe. "Record-Breaking 71K Units Set to Emerge From Office-to-Apartment Conversions."

⁶⁹ The buildings are: Washington Boulevard Building, The Farwell Building, 28 West Grand River, Kamper Stevens, and Himelhoch 2.

⁷⁰ National Housing Preservation "National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD) Mapping Tool."



Figure 52: Multifamily Market Map

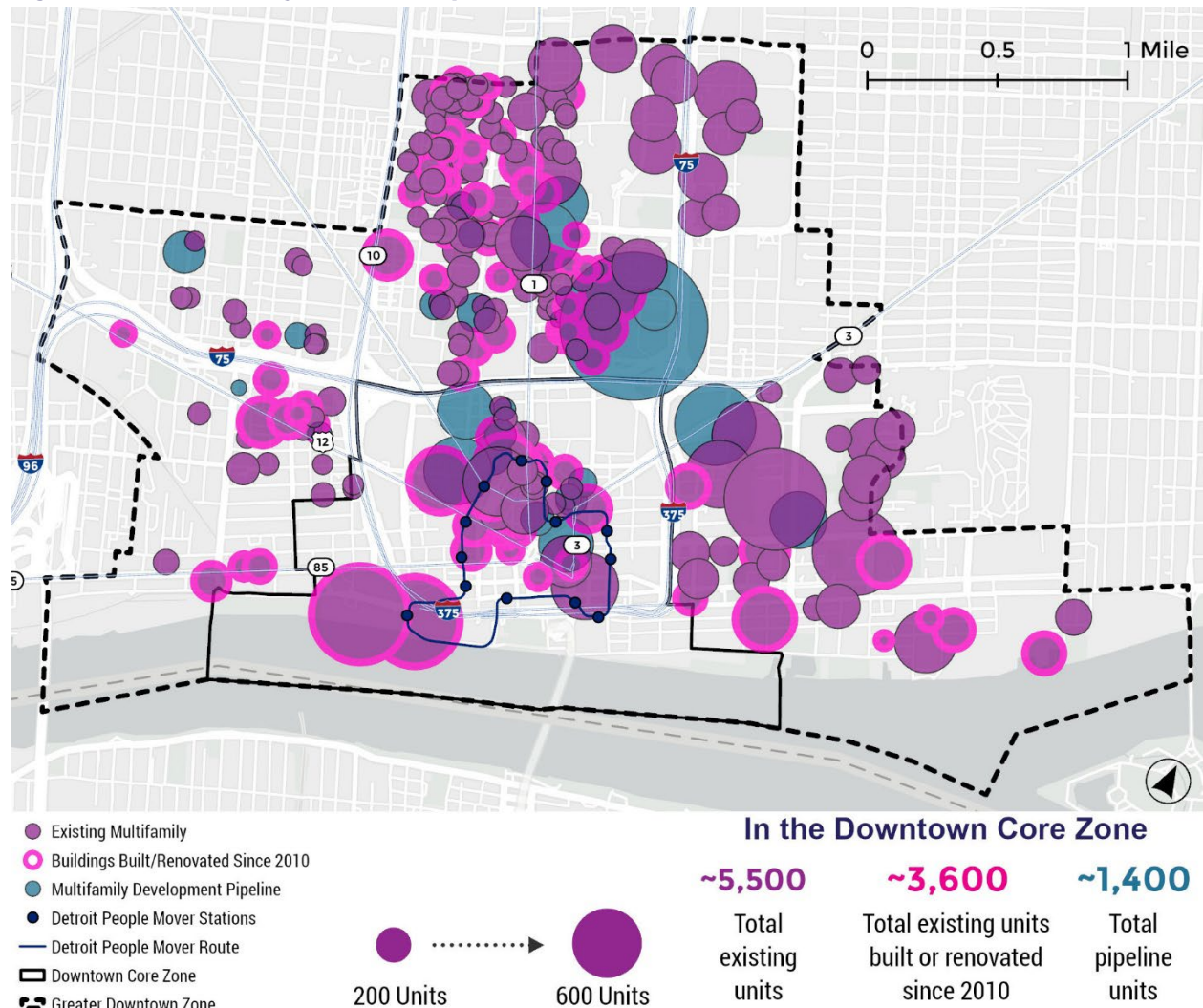
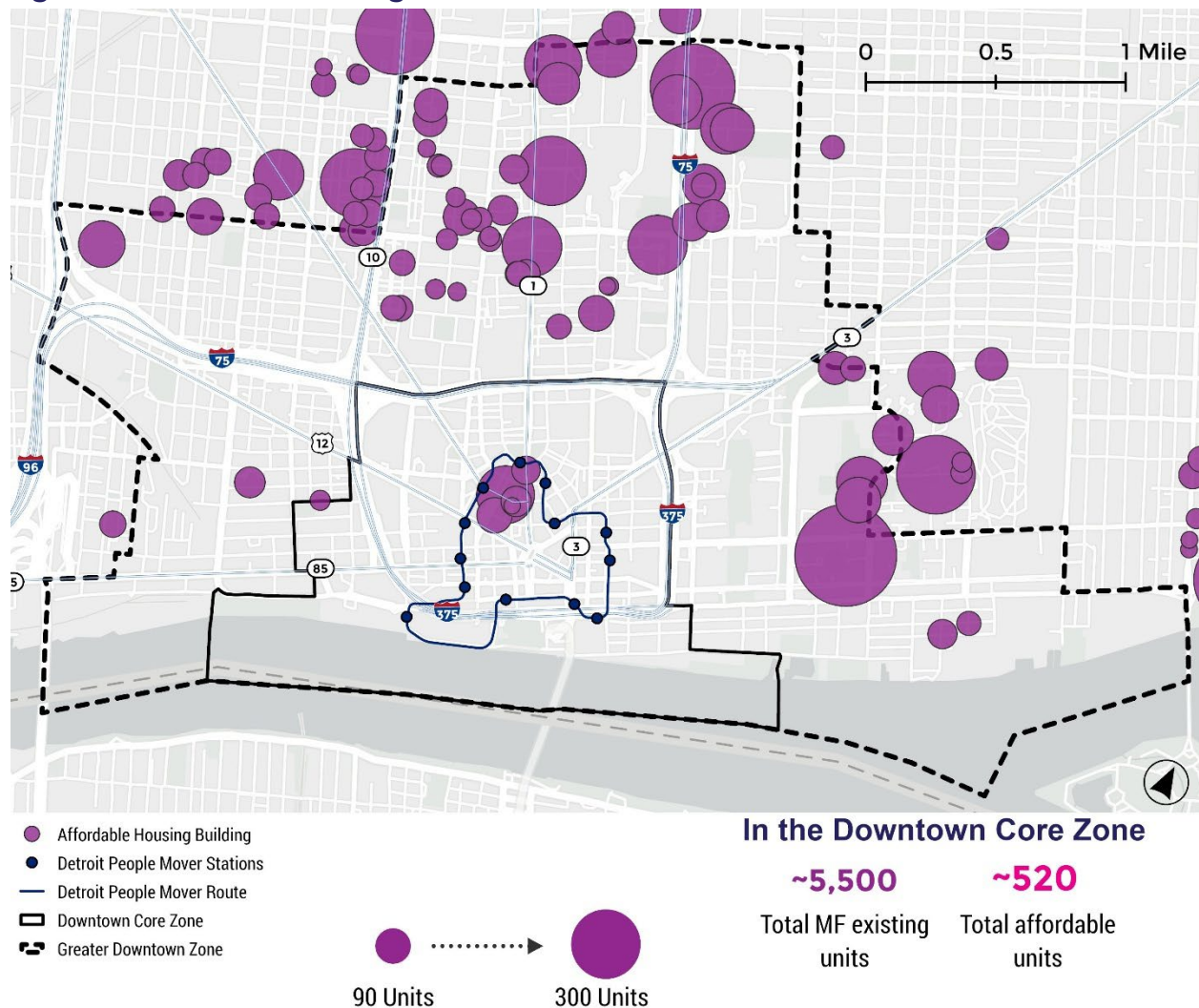


Figure 53: Affordable Housing Units

Source: National Housing Preservation Database, Esri.

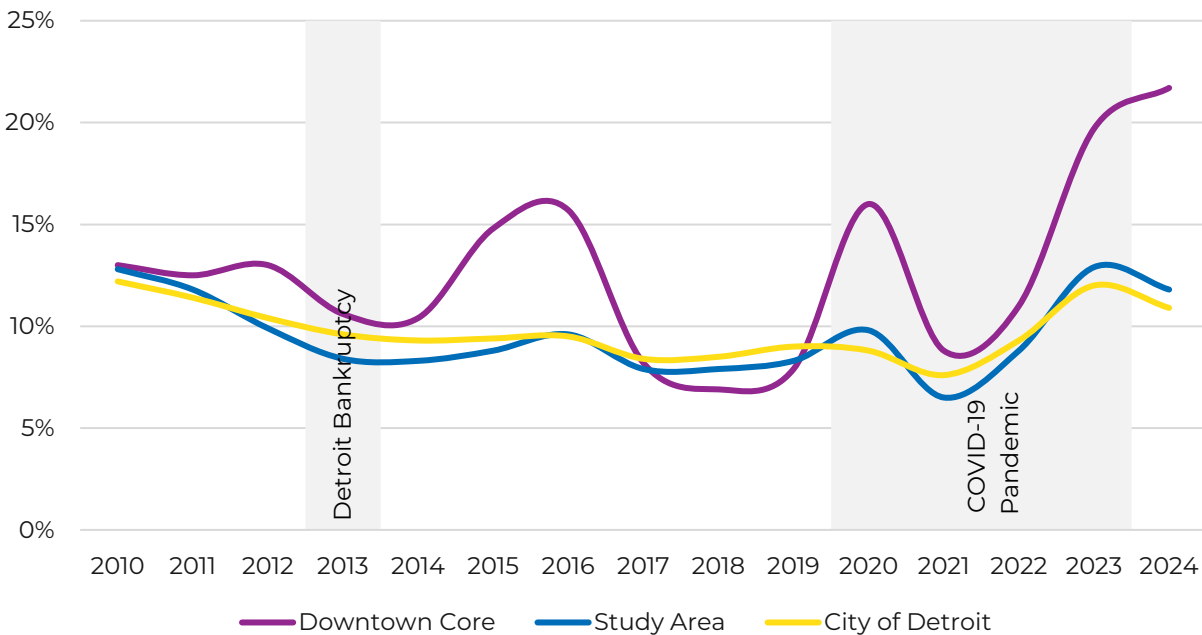
Despite this activity, the downtown multifamily market is showing signs of slowdown in the short term. In the Downtown Core, multifamily vacancy rates in 2024 were 22 percent, which is higher than in the study area's 12 percent and the City of Detroit's 11 percent. High residential vacancy rates and slow rental rate growth are outcomes of the rapid influx of new housing in the downtown area. Downtown Detroit is adding units at two to three times the citywide pace, which is temporarily driving up vacancy rates and moderating rent growth, which is shown in Figure 54, Figure 55, and Table 26. This limited growth in rent suggests it is likely that demand has not been strong enough to drive significant price increases.

Still, developers appear optimistic about the long-term outlook. There are currently 11 multifamily buildings in the development pipeline that will add more than 1,400 units to the Downtown Core in 2025 to 2026.⁷¹ These planned projects may reflect expectations of growth

⁷¹ This time frame is subject to change.

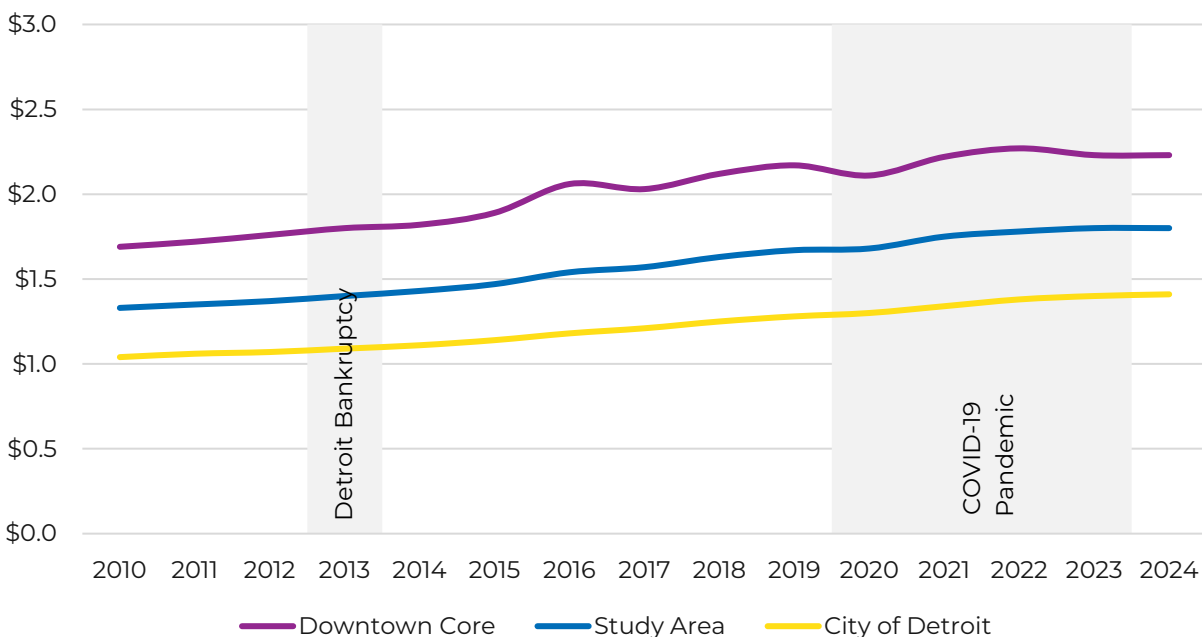
in future demand, despite a challenging nationwide environment due to increased labor, materials, and financing costs. The 2016 DPM TOD study determined that proximity to the DPM has resulted in residential property value increases of 34 percent, indicating further opportunity for developer partnership.

Figure 54: Multifamily Vacancy Rates



Source: Costar.

Figure 55: Multifamily Effective Rent Per Square Foot



Source: Costar.

**Table 26: Multifamily Market Overview**

Multifamily	Category	Number of Buildings	Inventory (Units)	Effective Rent/Unit	Effective Rent / Square Foot	Vacancy
Downtown Core	2010	30	3,223	\$1,353	\$1.7	13%
	2020	44	4,544	\$1,690	\$2.1	16%
	2024	47	5,434	\$1,780	\$2.2	21.7%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	3.3%	3.8%	2%	2%	3.7%
Study Area	2010	214	14,746	\$1,035	\$1.3	12.8%
	2020	249	17,899	\$1,310	\$1.7	9.8%
	2024	269	20,158	\$1,404	\$1.8	11.8%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	1.6%	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%	-0.6%
City of Detroit	2010	1,426	54,111	\$801	\$1.04	12.2%
	2020	1,480	58,308	\$994	\$1.3	8.8%
	2024	1,520	62,229	\$1,084	\$1.4	10.9%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.5%	1.0%	2.2%	2.2%	-0.8%

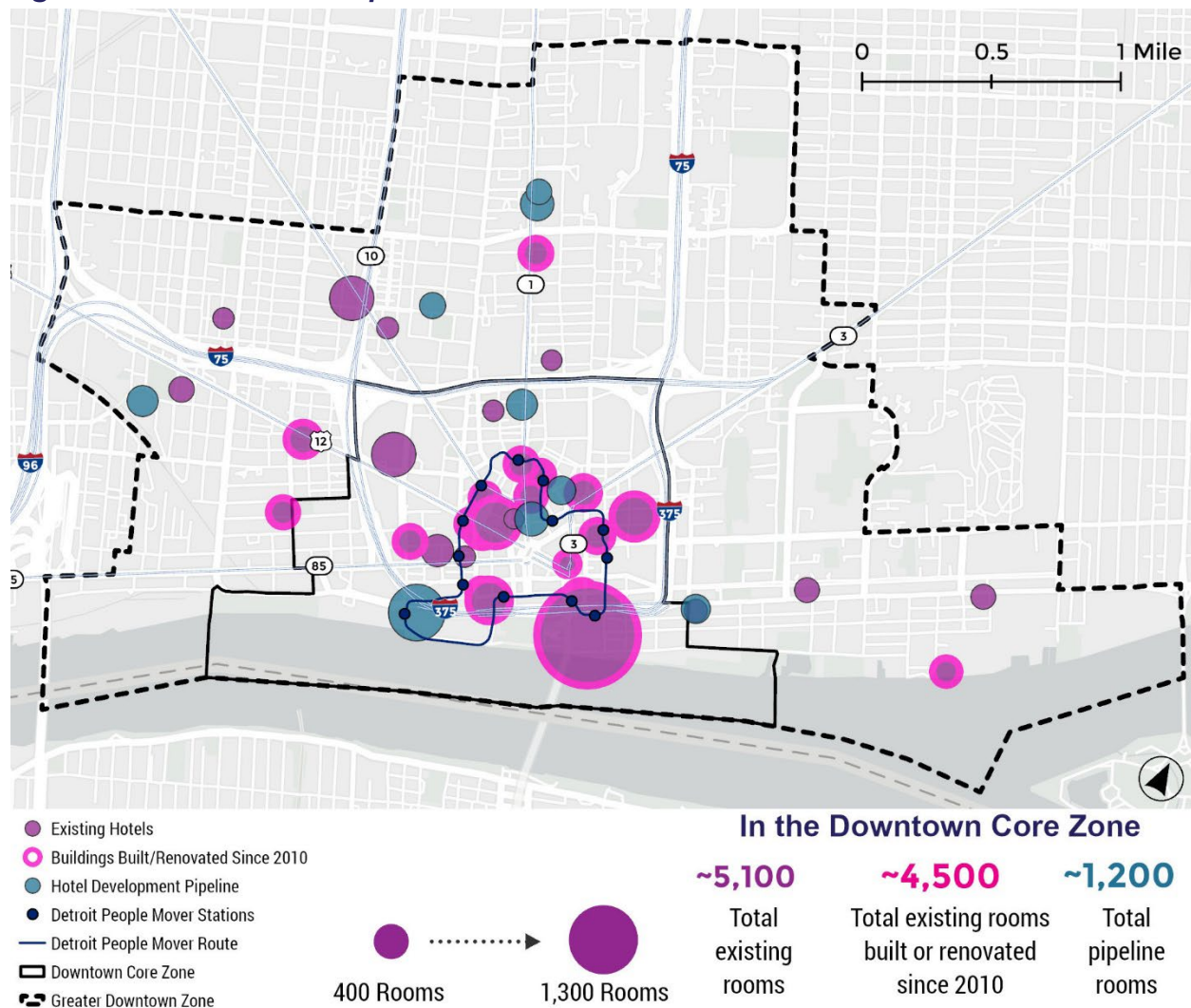
Source: Costar.

TOURISM

Hotels

The Downtown Core is a key hospitality district, home to about 20 hotels offering roughly 5,100 rooms. With an average of 254 rooms per hotel, these properties are larger than the citywide average of 150 rooms. Only 37 percent of Detroit's hotels are located downtown; however, they represent 63 percent of the city's total hotel rooms, underscoring the area's role in accommodating a larger share of visitors. Since 2010, about 21 hotels have been built or renovated in the study area, and 17 of them, or roughly 81 percent, are located in the Downtown Core. This concentration highlights the area as the primary focus of Detroit's recent hotel investment, reinforcing its status as the city's hospitality hub for leisure, business, and convention visitors alike. Despite the additional hotel development, 500 to 1,000 additional hotel rooms are estimated to be needed either attached to or within a quarter mile walkshed of the Huntington Place Convention Center to attract additional events to the city.⁷² The DPM may be an asset in helping connect hotels to the convention center. Figure 56 shows Detroit's hotel market.

⁷²Jones Lang LaSalle IP, Inc. "Detroit Lodging Market Study." September 2024.

Figure 56: Hotel Market Map

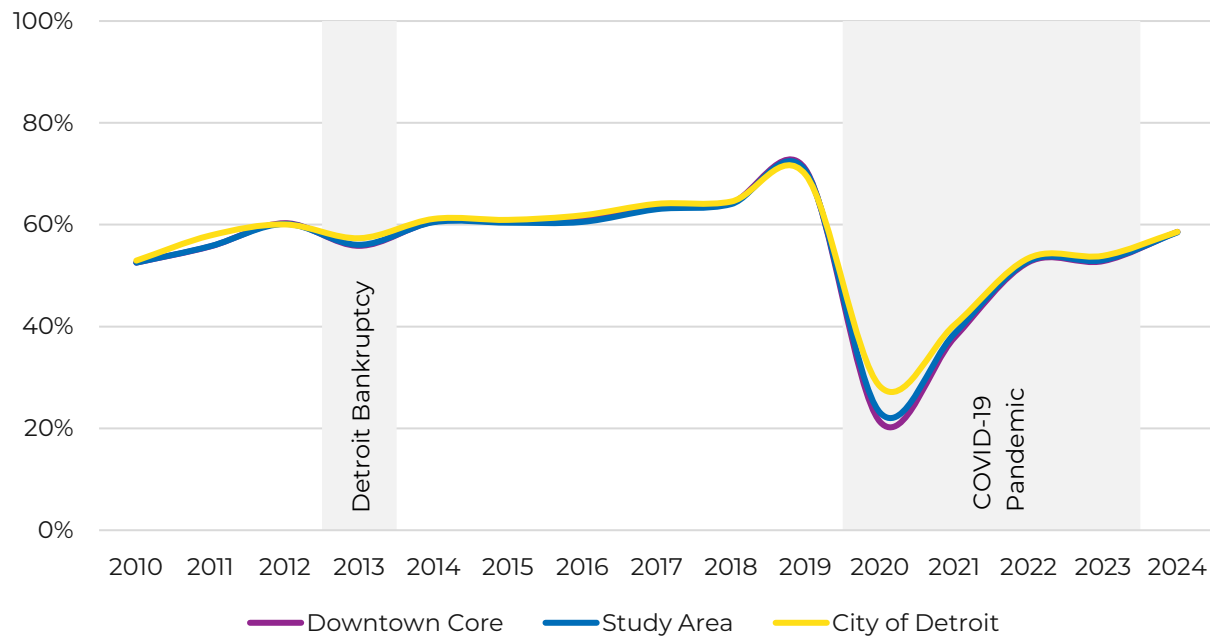
Source: Costar, Esri.

Between 2010 and 2024, hotel trends in the Downtown Core have generally mirrored trends seen across the wider study area and the broader City of Detroit, particularly in terms of occupancy rates and average daily rates (ADR). Occupancy declined in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but has steadily improved each year since. By 2024, occupancy surpassed 2010 levels, though still falls short of the pre-pandemic peaks in 2018 and 2019 (64 percent and 71 percent, respectively) (Figure 57 and Table 27). This range can be partially explained by the rapid increase in supply, with hotel rooms being added at an average rate of 2 percent per year in both the Downtown Core and study area overall.

ADR growth has demonstrated a stronger recovery in comparison to occupancy. After a decrease in 2020, ADR have grown at an annual growth rate of 11 percent, reaching a record high of \$200 in 2024, the highest it has been during the 2010 to 2024 period (Figure 58 and Table 27). This rebound signals improving market conditions and renewed interest in tourism and business travel. Supporting this trend, four new hotels (JW Marriott Detroit Downtown,

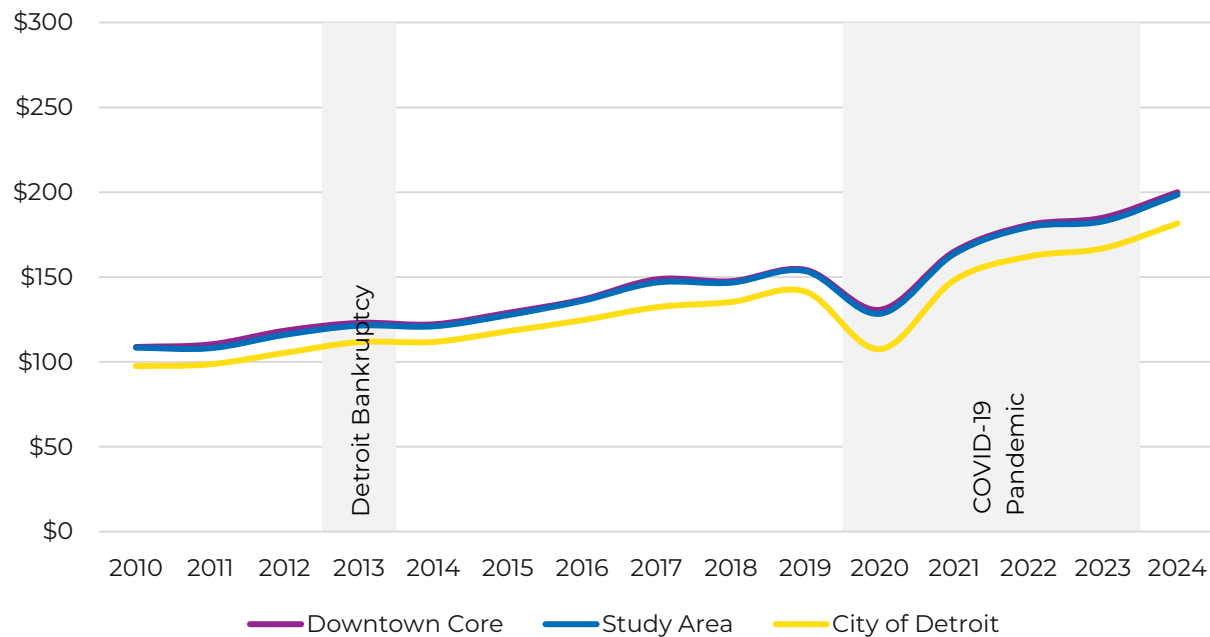
Merchants Building Hotel, The Detroit EDITION, and Fox Hotel) are currently in the Downtown Core's development pipeline, which will add approximately 1,140 new rooms combined to the market, demonstrating confidence in the downtown hotel market.

Figure 57: Hotel Occupancy Rates



Source: Costar.

Figure 58: Hotel ADR



Source: Costar.

**Table 27: Hotel Market Overview**

Retail	Category	Inventory Hotels	Inventory (Rooms)	ADR	Occupancy Rate
Downtown Core	2010	13	3,831	\$108.8	52.6%
	2020	19	4,795	\$130.7	21.3%
	2024	20	5,088	\$199.9	58.6%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	3.1%	2.0%	4.4%	0.8%
Study Area	2010	21	4,723	\$113.1	51.7%
	2020	27	5,649	\$143.2	25.5%
	2024	29	6,221	\$207.9	56.6%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	2.3%	2.0%	4.4%	0.6%
City of Detroit	2010	48	6,633	\$103.2	52.6%
	2020	52	7,487	\$125.1	29.2%
	2024	54	8,057	\$191.1	56.8%
	CAGR (2010-2024)	0.8%	1.4%	4.5%	0.6%

Source: Costar.

Events

Detroit's downtown hosts a wide variety of events throughout the year, from major sports and entertainment gatherings at Huntington Place and area stadiums to high-profile events like the NFL Draft, Grand Prix, and Detroit Jazz Festival, as well as seasonal celebrations such as the tree lighting and the city's marathon. These events attract large crowds, creating energy and activity in the city. The NFL Draft in April 2024, for example, brought an estimated 775,000 people Downtown,⁷³ coinciding with about 50,000 more DPM riders in April 2024 than in the adjacent months and 270 percent higher ridership than in April 2023. However, these events can also make navigating downtown more challenging. Street and sidewalk closures, limited QLINE service, and bus detours can all contribute to congestion and temporary disruptions for residents, workers, and visitors.

KEY DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH FINDINGS

Residential and hotel development are likely to comprise the majority of new development activity in the study area in the near future, with sporadic opportunities for new office and retail development. In the longer term, growth in the residential and hotel supply will help attract more permanent residents and transient visitors to the area, which will grow the customer base and support increased retail activity. A more vibrant retail scene could help make these areas more attractive locations for newer, higher-quality office space. Across all real estate types, existing properties would benefit from improved access to the DPM, and DPM expansion could help to catalyze increased real estate development in the future. Furthermore, the expansion of the DPM could reduce the need for parking at office and retail

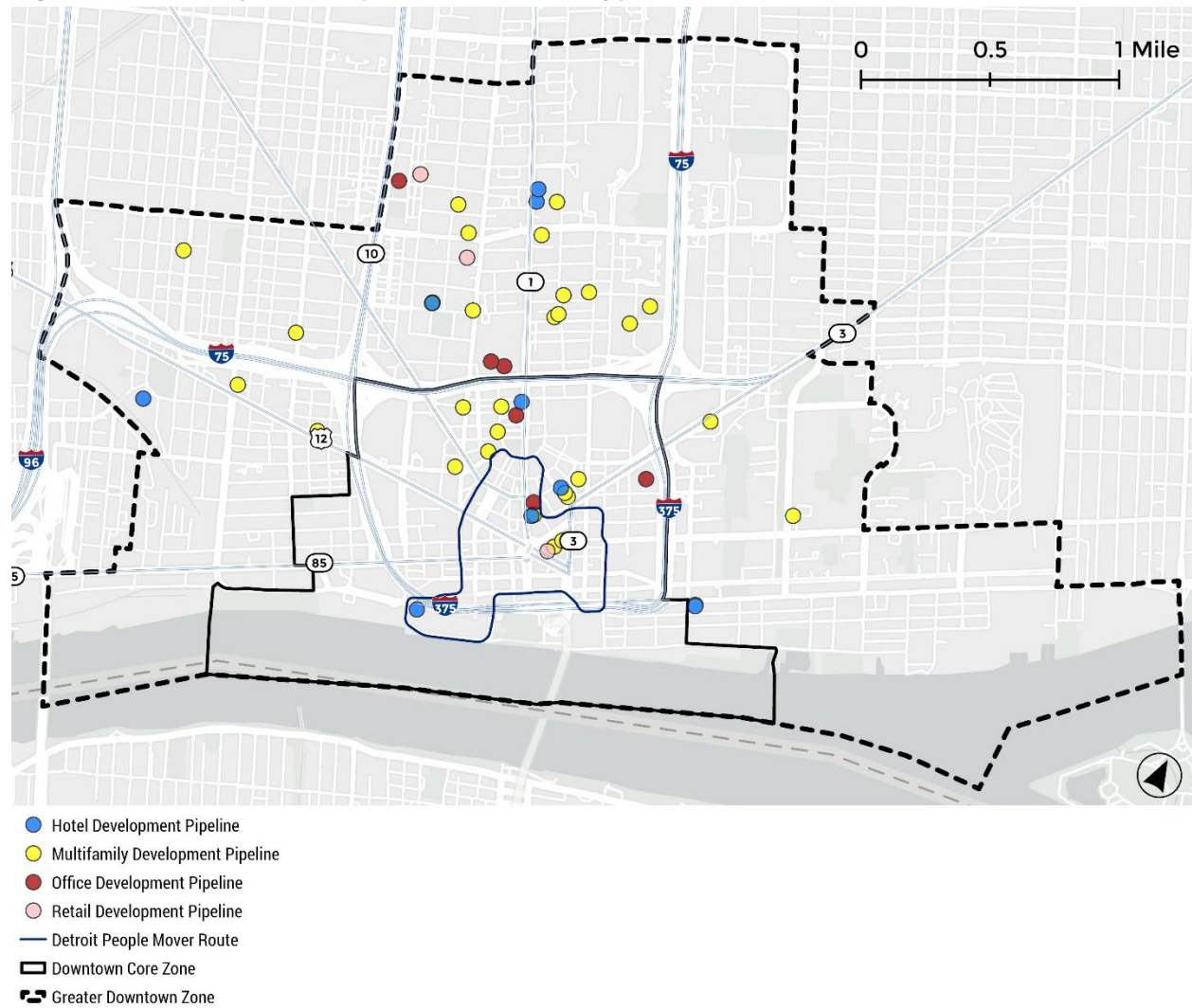
⁷³ DDP. "NFL Draft by the Numbers." Joshua Long. June 25, 2024. <https://downtowndetroit.org/news-insights/nfl-draft-by-the-numbers/>.

The areas of greatest real estate density are concentrated in the Downtown Core Zone, in the Midtown/Medical Center District, and in the areas between the Downtown Core and Midtown/Medical Center as shown in Figure 59. These areas are also where much of the new real estate development has occurred in recent years, and where many of the development pipeline projects are located (Figure 60). Other areas that have experienced high levels of recent real estate development activity include the areas within a quarter mile radius of major transportation thoroughfares like along Michigan, Gratiot, and Jefferson Avenues. Each of these areas exhibit real estate density and new development activities that may benefit from supportive transit infrastructure.

AECOM | Existing Conditions Assessment



Figure 60: Development Pipeline; Land Use Types



Source: Costar, Esri.



NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES AND SOCIAL CAPITAL INVENTORY

Greater Downtown is made up of a number of different neighborhoods. For this study, these neighborhoods were combined into five larger neighborhood groups to identify community assets, transit needs, potential opportunities, and challenges. These neighborhood groups include:

- **Downtown:** The areas bounded by M-10, I-75, and I-375, as well as a portion of land just west of M-10 along the riverfront.
- **Greater Corktown:** Includes parts of the Corktown, Westside Industrial, and North Corktown neighborhoods.
- **Midtown:** Includes parts of the Cass Corridor, Medical Center, Brush and Brewster Homes neighborhoods.
- **Eastern Market and Forest Park:** Includes Eastern Market and parts of Forest Park.
- **Lafayette Park, Elmwood Park, and East Riverfront:** Includes Lafayette Park and parts of Elmwood Park and East Riverfront.

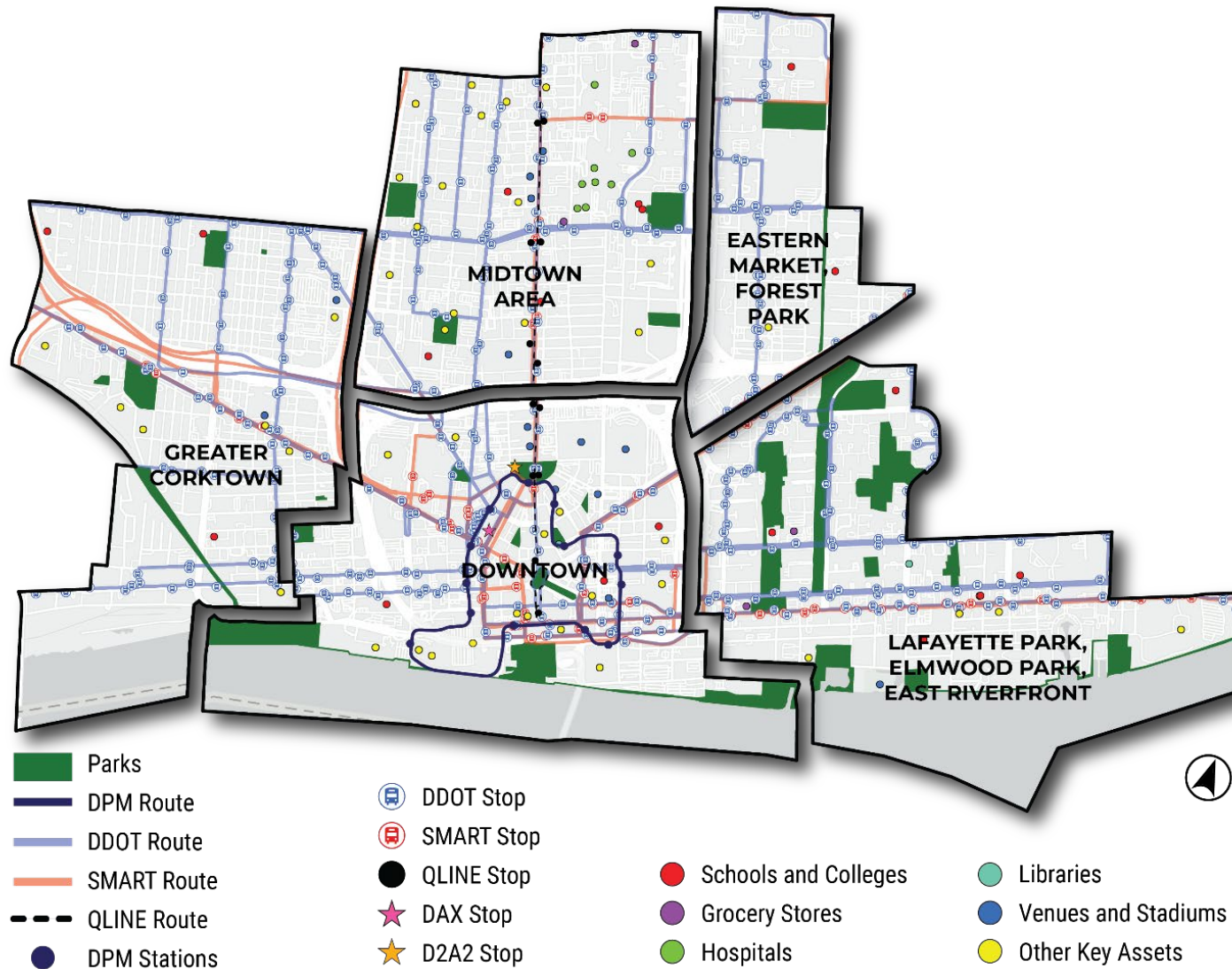
For the purpose of aggregating data, these neighborhood groups use census tracts and may not align to generally understood neighborhood boundaries.

The maps throughout this section highlight the area's role as a central hub for education, culture, healthcare, and public amenities. Key institutions including schools, sport stadiums, museums, libraries, and venues are found throughout the downtown area, creating a robust civic and cultural infrastructure. The presence of multiple stadiums and the convention center further emphasizes downtown's importance as a regional economic engine and gathering space.

Beyond the Downtown Core, there are concentration community assets found in the Midtown area, suggesting that this area functions as a secondary institutional and cultural hub in the city. The presence of major educational, medical, and cultural institutions in proximity supports a strong anchor district that likely drives foot traffic, employment, and public activity



Figure 61: Neighborhood Profiles and Social Capital Inventory



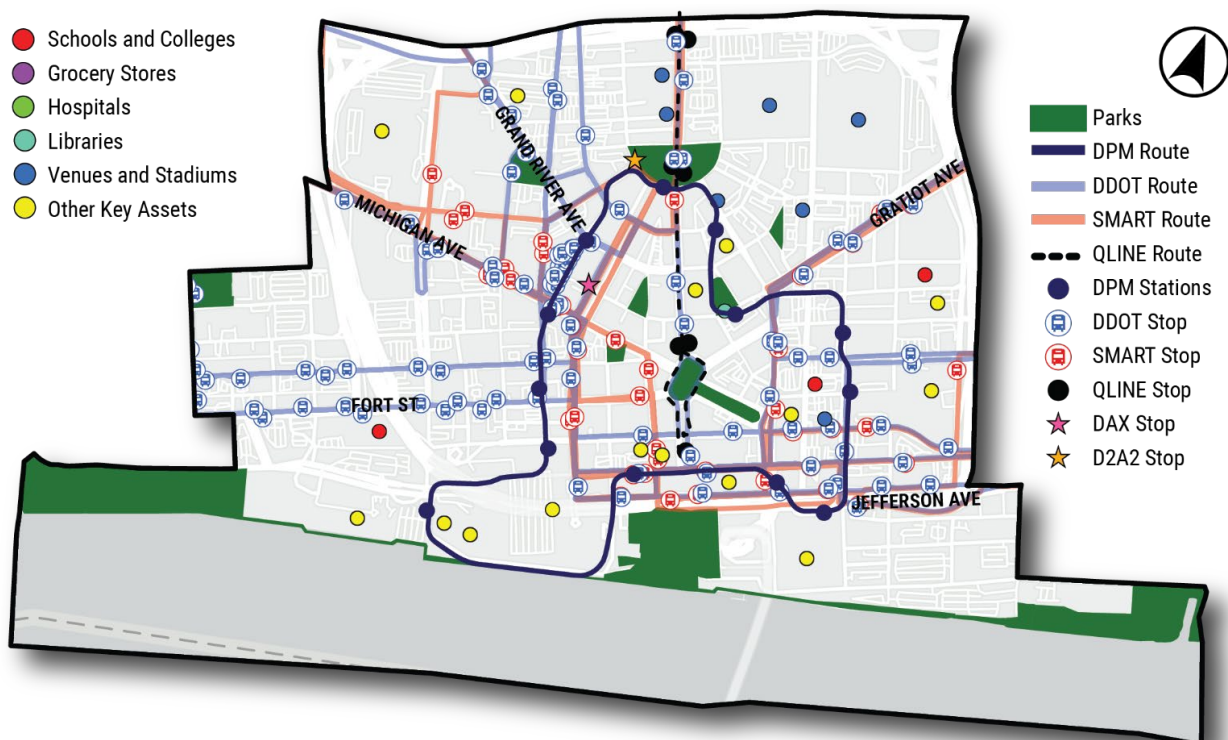
Sources: Esri, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data, Institute of Museum and Library Services, DDOT, SMART, and DPM General Transit Feed Specification data.

DOWNTOWN

The Downtown neighborhood includes the areas bounded by M-10, I-75, and I-375 and a portion of land just west of M-10 along the riverfront. Due to the spoke-and-hub nature of Detroit's main corridors and both the DDOT and SMART systems, many transit options converge Downtown. The Times Square and Michigan stations are located near RTPC, a key hub for DDOT service. Downtown is home to many activity centers, including stadiums, event venues, casinos, and the Huntington Place Convention Center. Downtown also has many key parks that serve as community gathering places and event plazas. Downtown connects to the riverfront, which attracts many out-of-town visitors, residents, pedestrians, and cyclists.

While the Greater Corktown area has the highest projected job growth rate, Downtown has the most jobs, currently and projected in 2050 (73,950 jobs in 2020, 84,690 jobs in 2050). Though Downtown ranks second in number of residents, it has the highest projected population growth rate (2.3 percent annual growth between 2020 and 2050). Of the five areas, Downtown has the highest median rent (\$1,773 per month) and one of the highest percentages of renters (second to Eastern Market and Forest Park). Due to the higher incomes of residents in the neighborhood, Downtown has the lowest housing cost burden for renters. Downtown has the highest percentage of vacant housing units (22 percent), potentially due to recent rapid influx of residential construction (see DOWNTOWN GROWTH).

Figure 62: Downtown Profile and Inventory



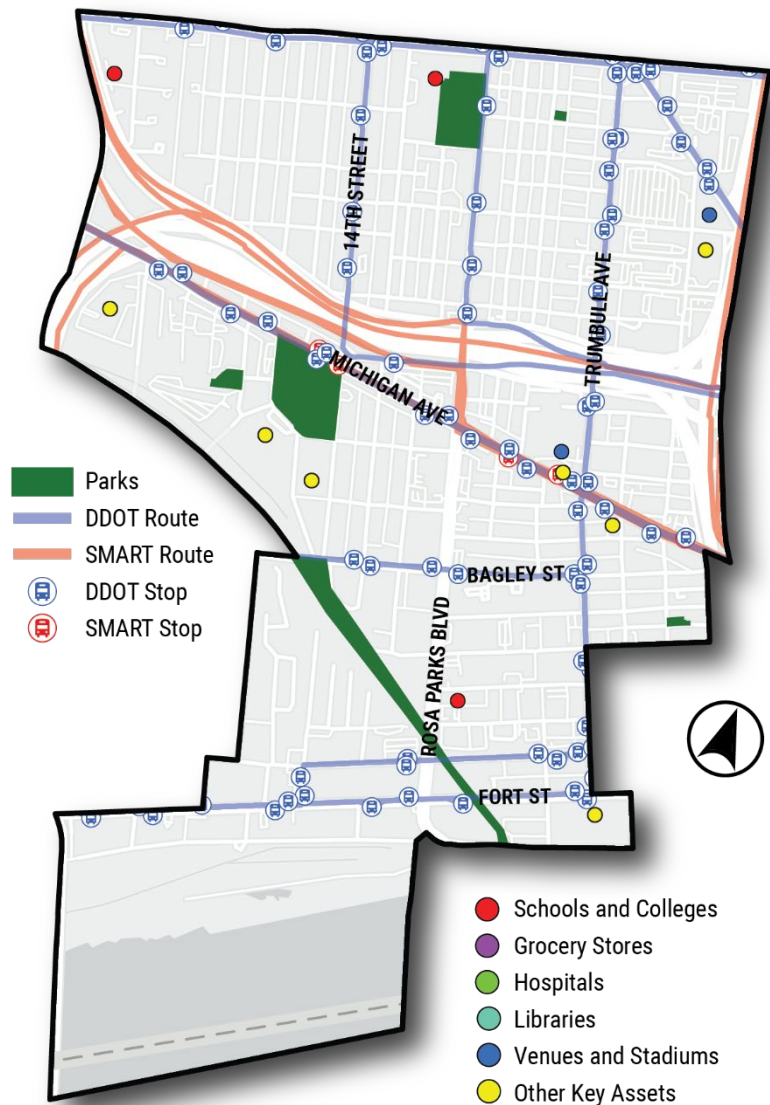
Sources: Esri, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data, Institute of Museum and Library Services, DDOT, SMART, and DPM General Transit Feed Specification data.

GREATER CORKTOWN

The Greater Corktown area includes portions of the Corktown, North Corktown, and the Westside Industrial neighborhoods. Michigan Avenue and Fort Street are key corridors in this area. DDOT and SMART both operate service along Michigan Avenue, which is planned to be reconstructed to promote transit, pedestrian, and cyclist uses. In 2023 and 2024, respectively, the Book Depository, home to New Lab, and Michigan Central Station opened in the neighborhood, bringing new jobs and activity to the area. A Detroit City Football Club soccer stadium is also being planned along Michigan Avenue, just West of Michigan Central Station. Other key amenities in the area include Motor City Casino, the Southwest Greenway, and shopping and retail along Michigan and Trumbull Avenues.

Of the five areas examined, Greater Corktown has the highest projected job growth rate (2.3 percent annual growth between 2020 and 2050).⁷⁴ This area also has the highest residential owner occupancy within Greater Downtown.⁷⁵

Figure 63: Greater Corktown Profile and Inventory



Sources: Esri, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data, Institute of Museum and Library Services, DDOT, SMART, and DPM General Transit Feed Specification data.

⁷⁴ SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://maps.semcoq.org/Forecast/>.

⁷⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Select Housing Characteristics, <https://data.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.

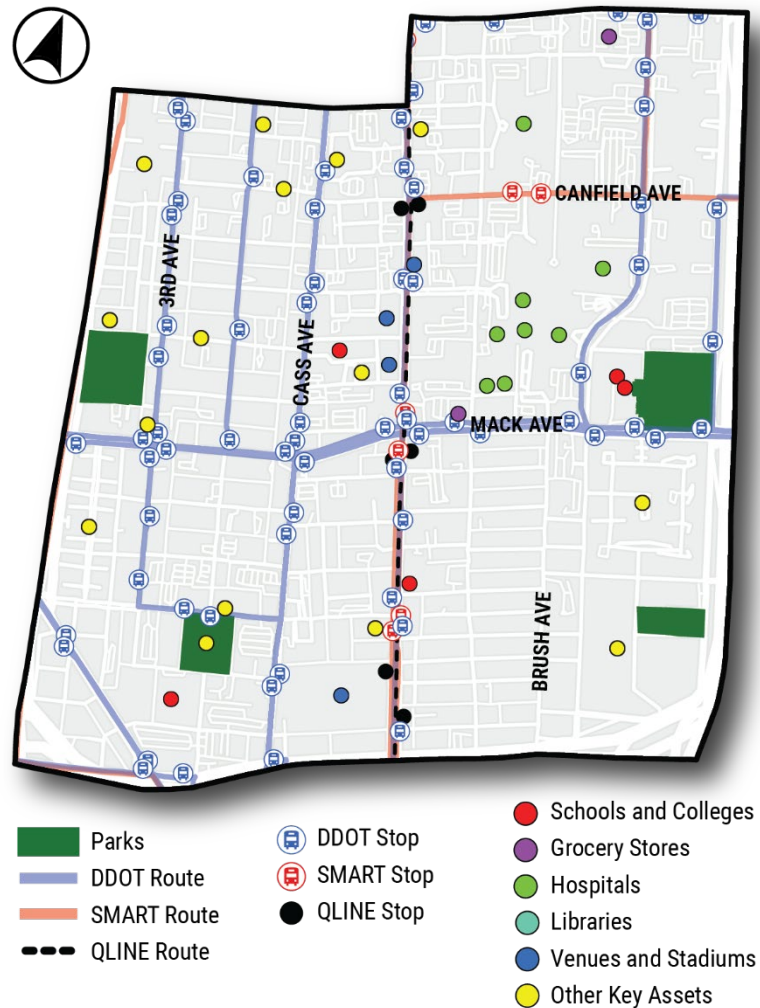
MIDTOWN AREA

The Midtown area includes portions of the Cass Corridor, the Cultural Center, Brush Park, Brewster Homes, and Douglass neighborhoods. The Midtown Area is located just north of downtown.

Woodward Avenue is the primary corridor in the area, with DDOT, SMART, and QLINE all providing service along the corridor. This area is home to the DMC, which includes many of the city's hospitals. The area also includes activity centers including Little Ceasars Arena and the Mike Illitch School of Business. WSU's main campus and the Cultural Districts are located just north of Warren.

Out of the five areas examined, Midtown had the most residents in 2023 (11,077 people⁷⁶) and the highest projected 2050 population (15,500 people⁷⁷). This area also has some of the highest residential vacancies (22 percent of housing units are vacant⁷⁸) and a high proportion of renters who are spending over 30 percent of their income on housing (53 percent).⁷⁹

Figure 64: Midtown Profile and Inventory



Sources: Esri, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data, Institute of Museum and Library Services, DDOT, SMART, and DPM General Transit Feed Specification data.

⁷⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates, <https://data.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.

⁷⁷ SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://maps.semco.org/Forecast/>.

⁷⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Select Housing Characteristics, <https://data.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.

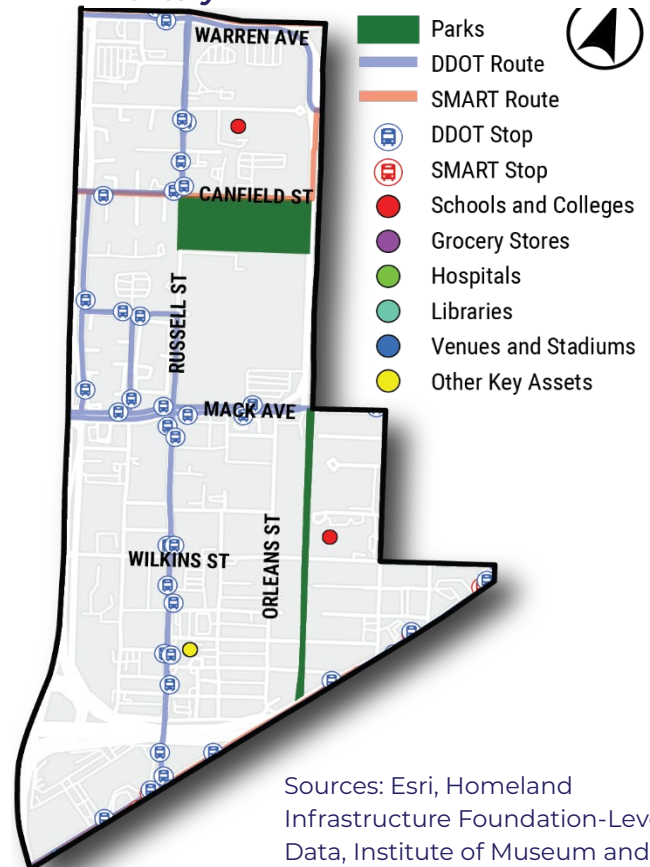
⁷⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Select Housing Characteristics, <https://data.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.



EASTERN MARKET AND FOREST PARK

This area includes Eastern Market and parts of the Forest Park neighborhood. Eastern Market is a key destination for city and metropolitan Detroit residents, as well as out-of-town visitors. Gratiot Avenue is a key transit corridor connecting the area to downtown, with DDOT and SMART bus service operating along the corridor. However, due to roadway design that encourages high vehicular speeds and fails to provide appropriate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, Gratiot Avenue is an unsafe and uncomfortable corridor for people to travel along. Gratiot Avenue is a major barrier to access, discouraging pedestrian and cyclists activity between this area and downtown. The proposed I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project seeks to enhance access by improving connections between this area and downtown and providing new non-motorized paths in the area. Key assets include the Dequindre Cut, a shared-use pathway that includes park and recreation space, and affordable housing options for both seniors and non-seniors. The City of Detroit is currently exploring residential development opportunities in this area, with a goal of integrating affordability, minimizing displacement, and improving quality of housing through new mixed-income development.⁸⁰

Figure 65: Eastern Market Profile and Inventory



Sources: Esri, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data, Institute of Museum and Library Services, DDOT, SMART, and DPM General Transit Feed

Of the five areas analyzed, this area had the lowest population in 2023 (1,869 residents)⁸¹ and lowest projected 2050 population (1,717 residents).⁸² This was the only area with a projected population decrease (0.2 percent annual decrease projected between 2020 and 2050).⁸³ This area also has the lowest projected job growth (0.4 percent growth projected between 2020 and 2050). This area has the highest housing cost burden (54 percent of renters are housing cost burdened) and the highest proportion of renters (98 percent).⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Crain's Detroit Business. "Detroit aims to transform aging public housing, add residences near Eastern Market." July 17, 2025. crainsdetroit.com/real-estate/developers-sought-eastern-market-area-properties.

⁸¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates, <https://data.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.

⁸² SEMCOG, 2050 Southeast Michigan Regional Development Forecast, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://maps.semco.org/Forecast/>.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey Data 5-year estimates, DP04: Select Housing Characteristics, <https://data.census.gov/> accessed August 19, 2025.

LAFAYETTE PARK, ELMWOOD PARK, & EAST RIVERFRONT

This area includes Lafayette Park and parts of the Elmwood Park and East Riverfront neighborhoods. Key corridors in this area include Jefferson Avenue, Lafayette Street, and Larned Street. DDOT and SMART operate fixed-route bus service along Gratiot Avenue and East Jefferson Avenue, connecting into downtown with stops near the Cadillac Center, Renaissance Center, and Millender Center Stations. This area has many large residential blocks, which makes navigating the area challenging for visitors of the area. This area also abuts I-375, hindering local connectivity between the neighborhoods and downtown. The proposed I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project proposes to improve local connectivity for all modes.

This area has many parks and multifamily housing options. The area is a key destination for entertainment and recreation, with key assets including the Dequindre Cut, the Detroit Riverfront and parks along the riverfront, the Outdoor Adventure Center, and the Aretha Franklin Amphitheater. Of the five areas analyzed, this area has the lowest residential vacancy rate (11 percent of units are vacant). This area is also one of the areas with a relatively low housing cost burden (45 percent of renters are housing cost burdened).

Figure 66: Lafayette Park, Elmwood Park, and East Riverfront Profile and Inventory



Sources: Esri, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data, Institute of Museum and Library Services, DDOT, SMART, and DPM General Transit Feed Specification data.