SERVICE REDUCTION POLICY AND PILOT TEST

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

ETA

EPATS Board Meeting
September 18, 2024

SERVICE REDUCTION POLICY

POLICY REVISIONS SINCE LAST BOARD BRIEFING

- Redefined "non-member jurisdiction" with respect to eligibility to join EPATS (per Article III of the bylaws)
  - Eligible: Incorporated cities and towns
  - Eligible: Independent school districts, common school districts, and junior college districts
  - Unincorporated cities and towns fall within jurisdiction of El Paso County (also a member)
- Added "in member jurisdictions" for clarity in some sections
- Added current headways, service spans, stop locations, and stop amenities to list of potential data needs

Governmental units eligible to become members of the Corporation shall be:

1. Incorporated cities and towns.
2. Independent and Common School Districts, and Junior College Districts.

School and junior college districts have been excluded from the policy.

PROCESS FOR APPLYING THE POLICY

1. Member leaves EPATS or jurisdiction has not joined EPATS
2. Board directs staff to apply this policy with respect to ETA services in or adjacent to the non-member jurisdiction
3. Staff conducts service review
   - Data collection
   - Analysis (may be systemwide)
   - Outreach to member and non-member stakeholders per Title VI plan (exploratory)
   - Development of service reduction options
   - Recommendation of one or more options
   - Proposed timeline for implementation of recommended option(s)
4. Board determines action(s) to be taken
5. Staff conducts public outreach per Title VI plan (notification)
6. Staff revises actions(s) if needed, and board approves revised action(s) if applicable
7. EPATS implements approved service reduction action(s)

This process is the same process presented previously.

PILOT TEST

PROCESS STEPS 1 AND 2

1. Member leaves EPATS or jurisdiction has not joined EPATS

- Assume Socorro does not join EPATS

2. Board directs staff to apply this policy with respect to ETA services in or adjacent to the non-member jurisdiction

- Board directs staff to apply this policy with respect to ETA services that operate in and adjacent to Socorro (i.e., Routes 30, 31, 40, 50, and 84)

PROCESS STEP 3

3. Staff conducts service review

- Data collection
- Analysis
- Outreach to member and non-member stakeholders per Title VI plan
- Development of service reduction options
- Recommendation of one or more options
- Proposed timeline for implementation of recommended option(s)

PROCESS STEP 3
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

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- Data reviewed for all routes operating in or adjacent to Socorro
- Current schedules and ridership
- Origin-Destination (OD) Study
  - 2-week data collection of origins and destinations
  - Video recording during all trips within the service hours (5 a.m. – 8:15 p.m.)
  - Geolocation of passengers' movements (boarding and alighting with timestamp)
  - Identification of trips in member and non-member jurisdictions
  - Data collected during weekdays and weekends from April 11-24, 2024

PROCESS ST
DATA COLLE

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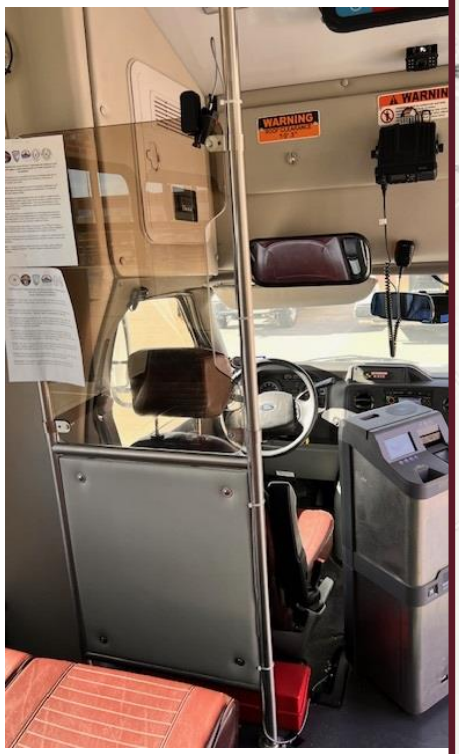

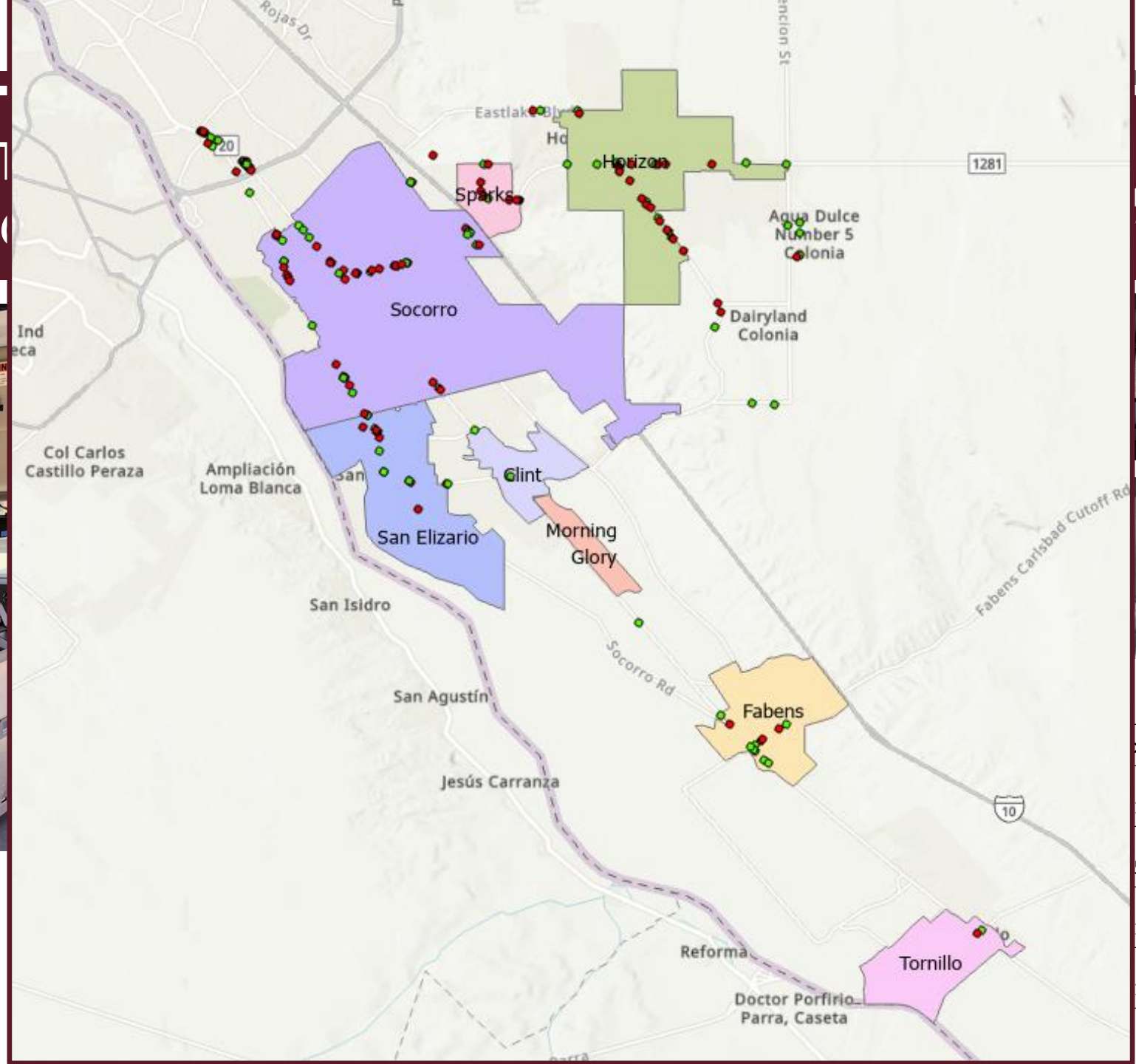

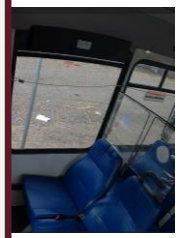

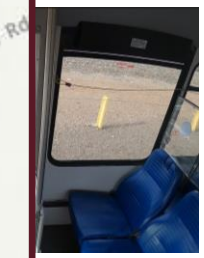

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1146	-106.5638853	1137.385
5109	-106.5638893	1138.098
1083	-106.5638909	1137.896
1064	-106.5638929	1138.258

PROCESS STEP 3
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

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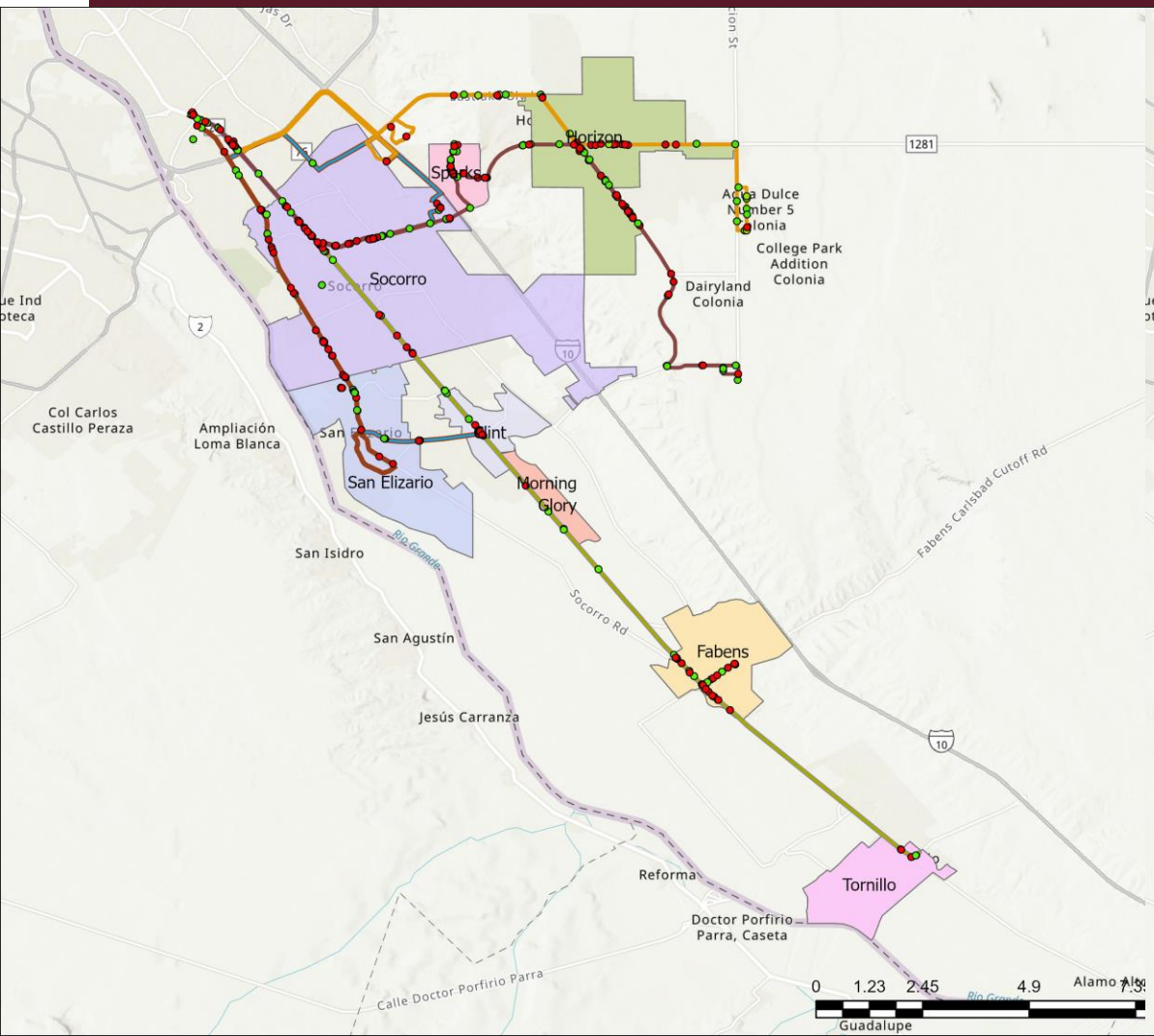

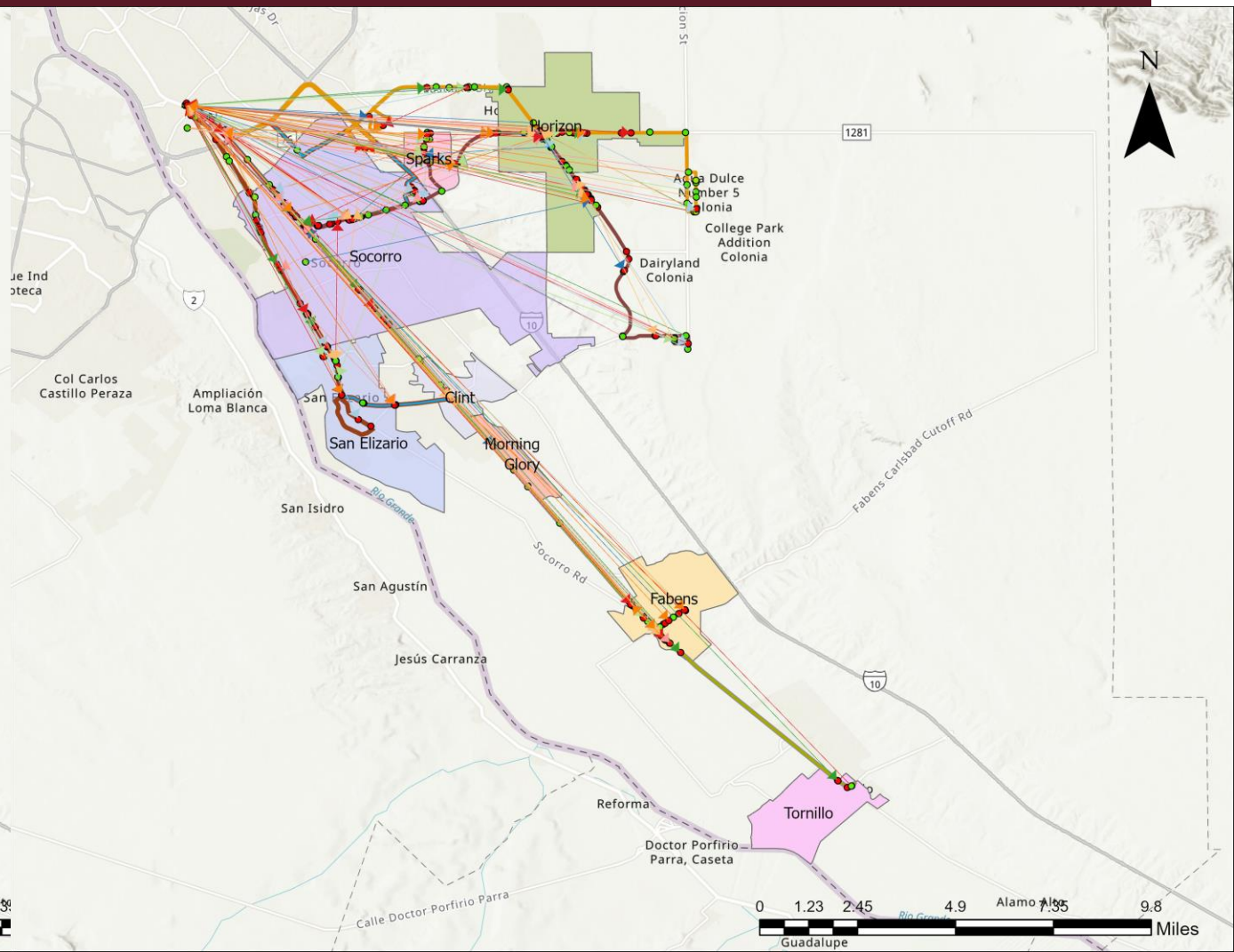

PROCESS STEP 3
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

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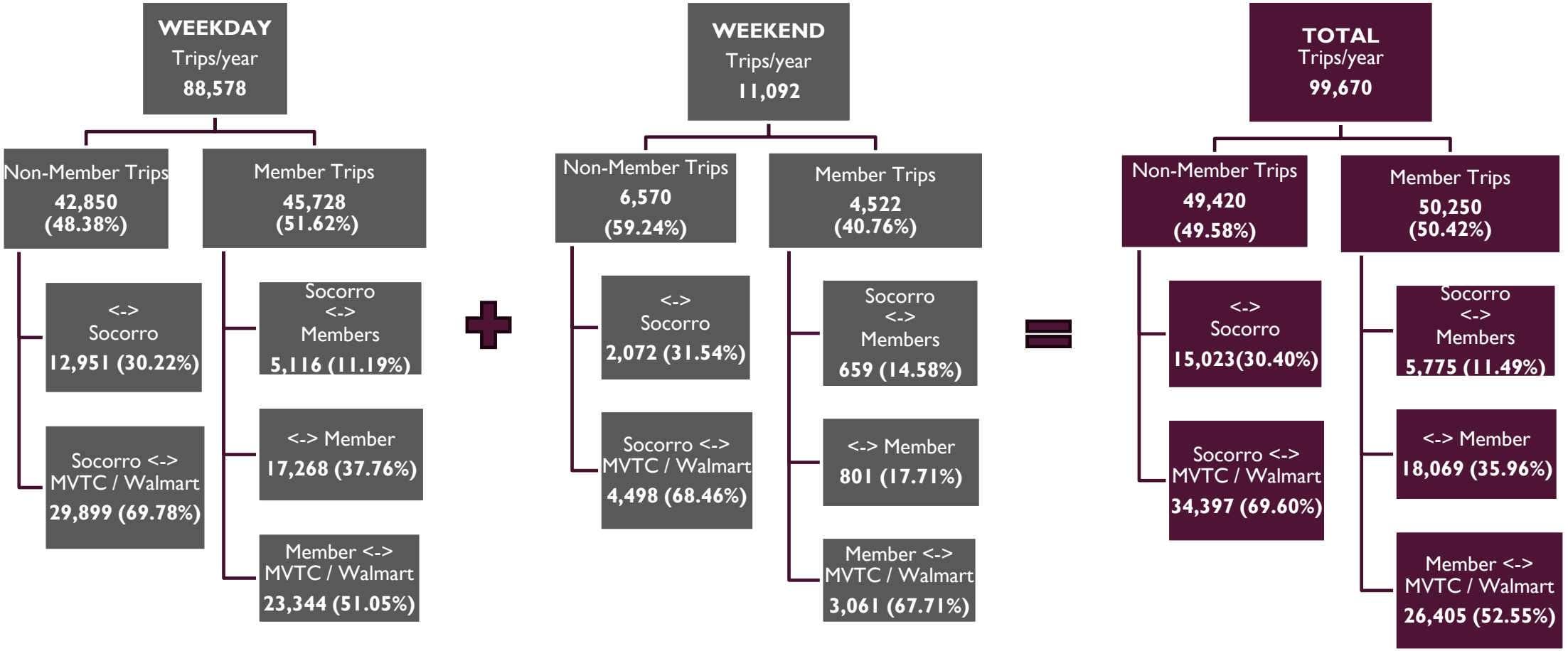
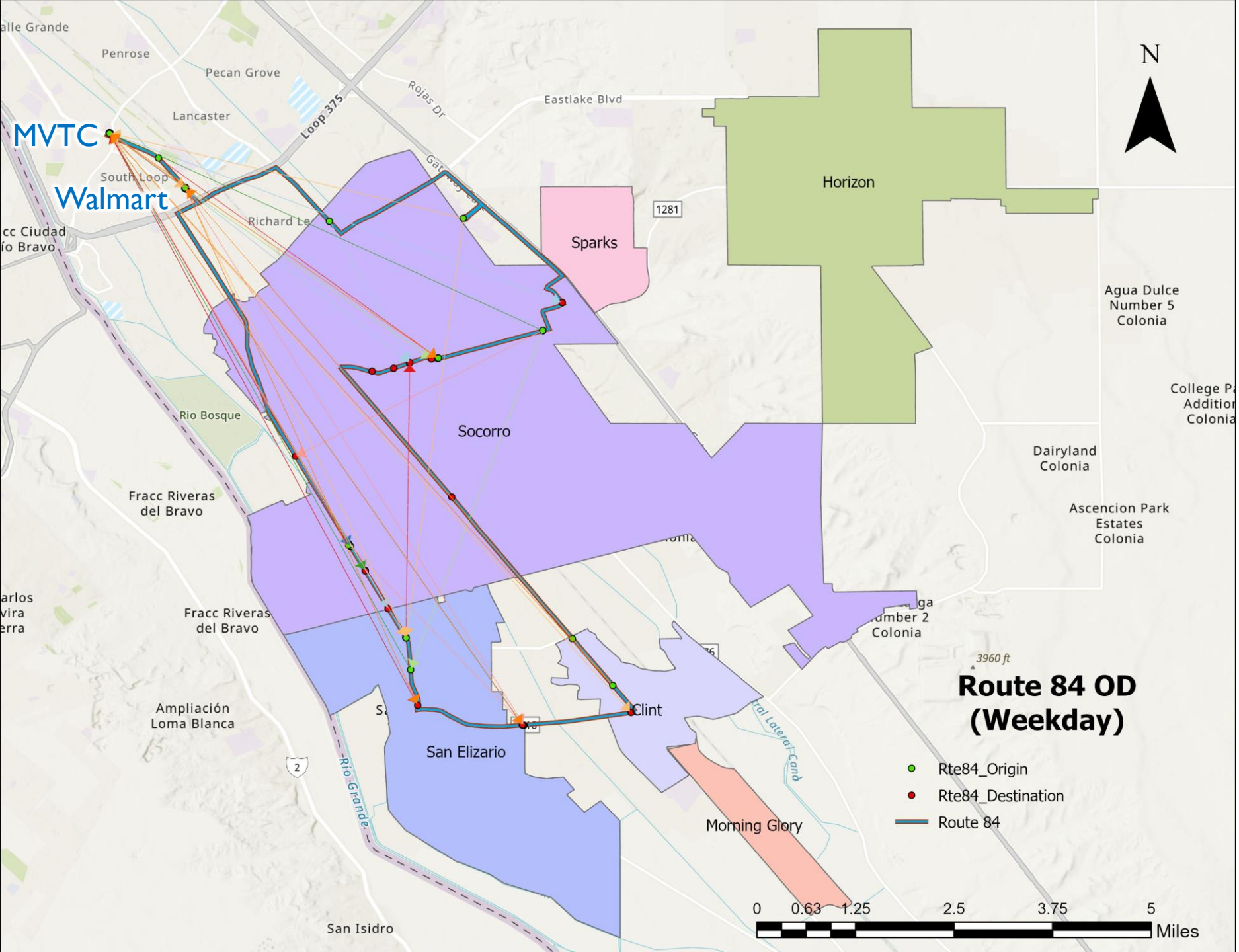
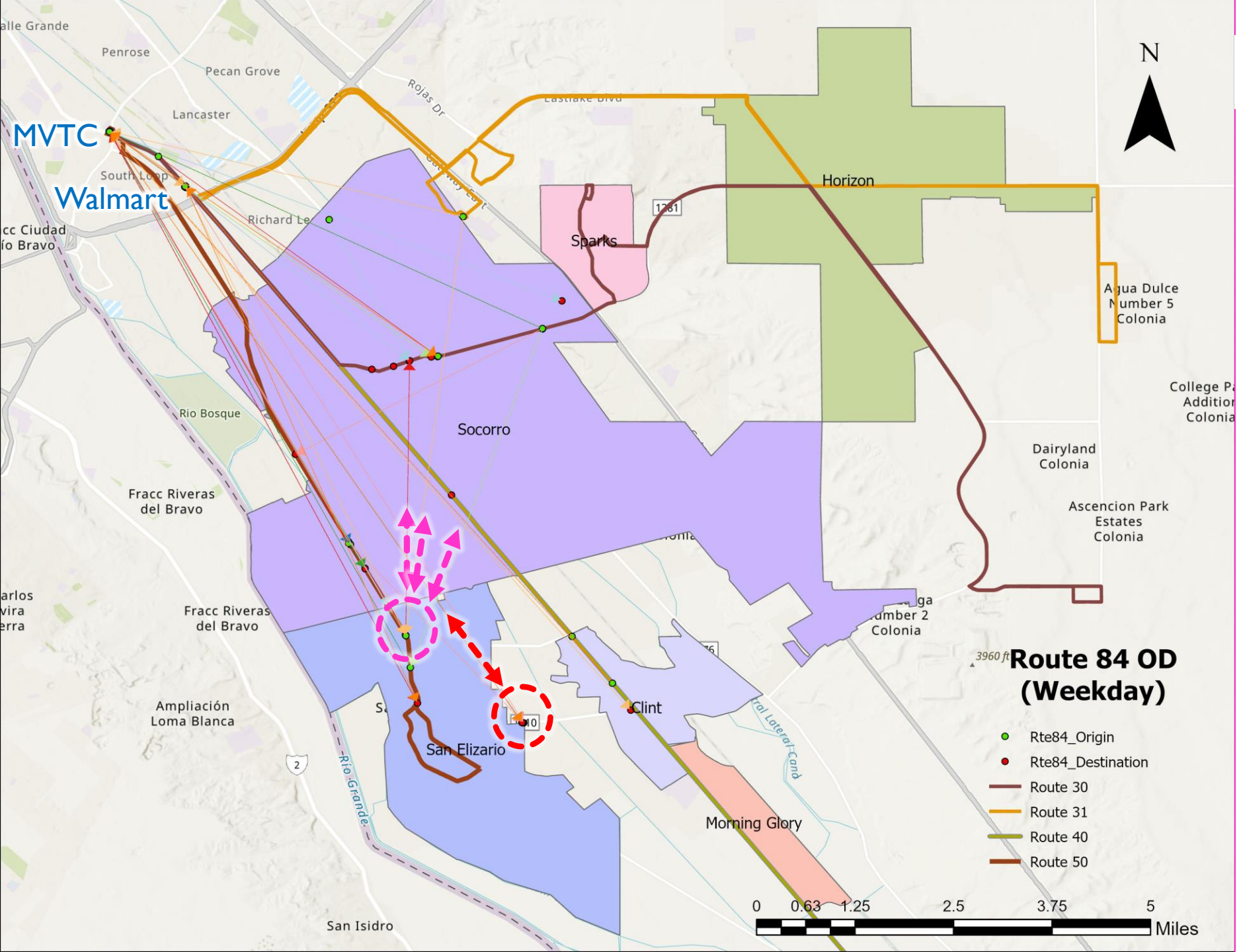


Annual trips in each area were estimated from the April 2024 observations. Total riders were reported by operating agencies.



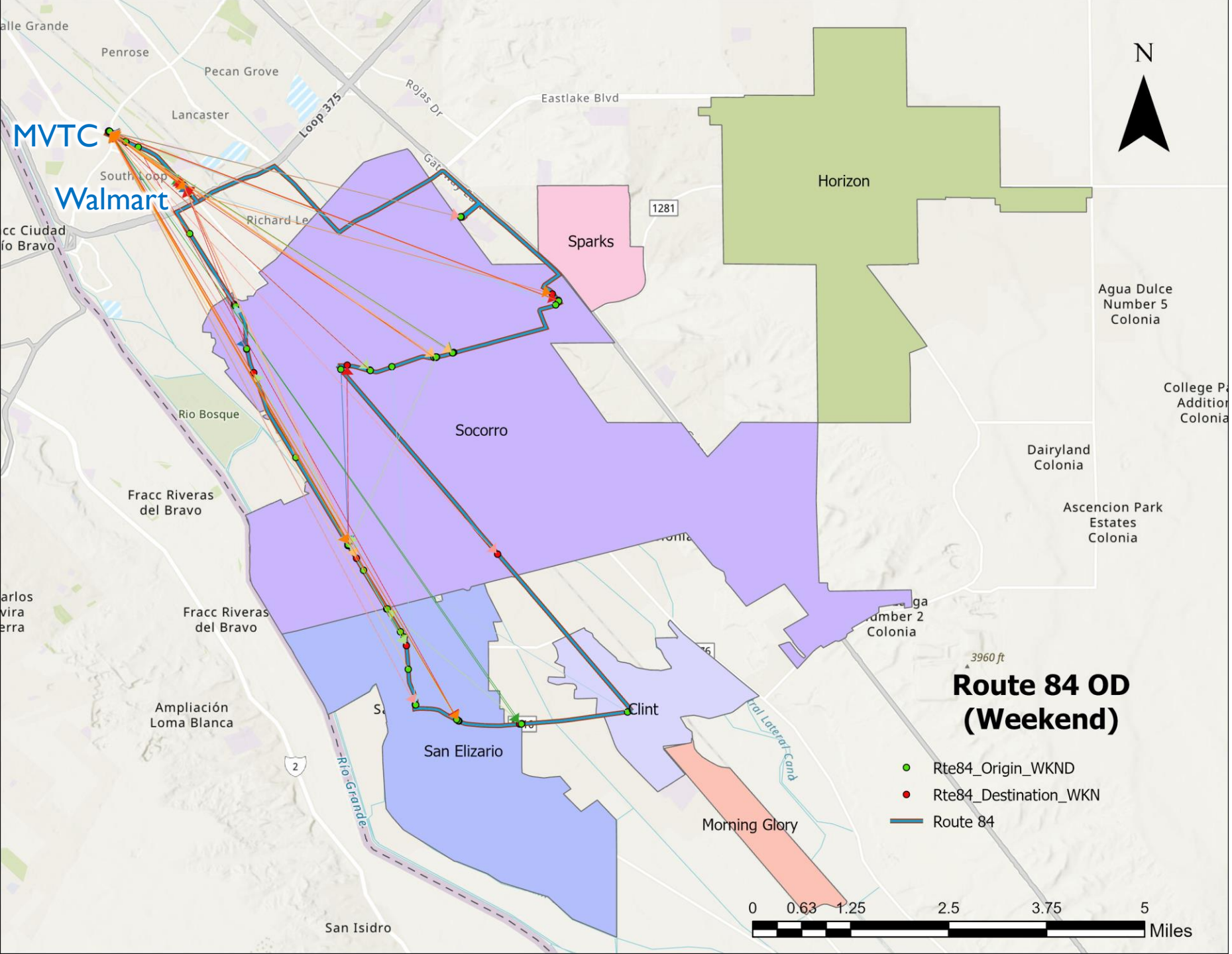
Observation:

- Most member-jurisdiction trips that use Route 84 on weekdays begin or end at Mission Valley Transfer Center (MVTC) or Walmart



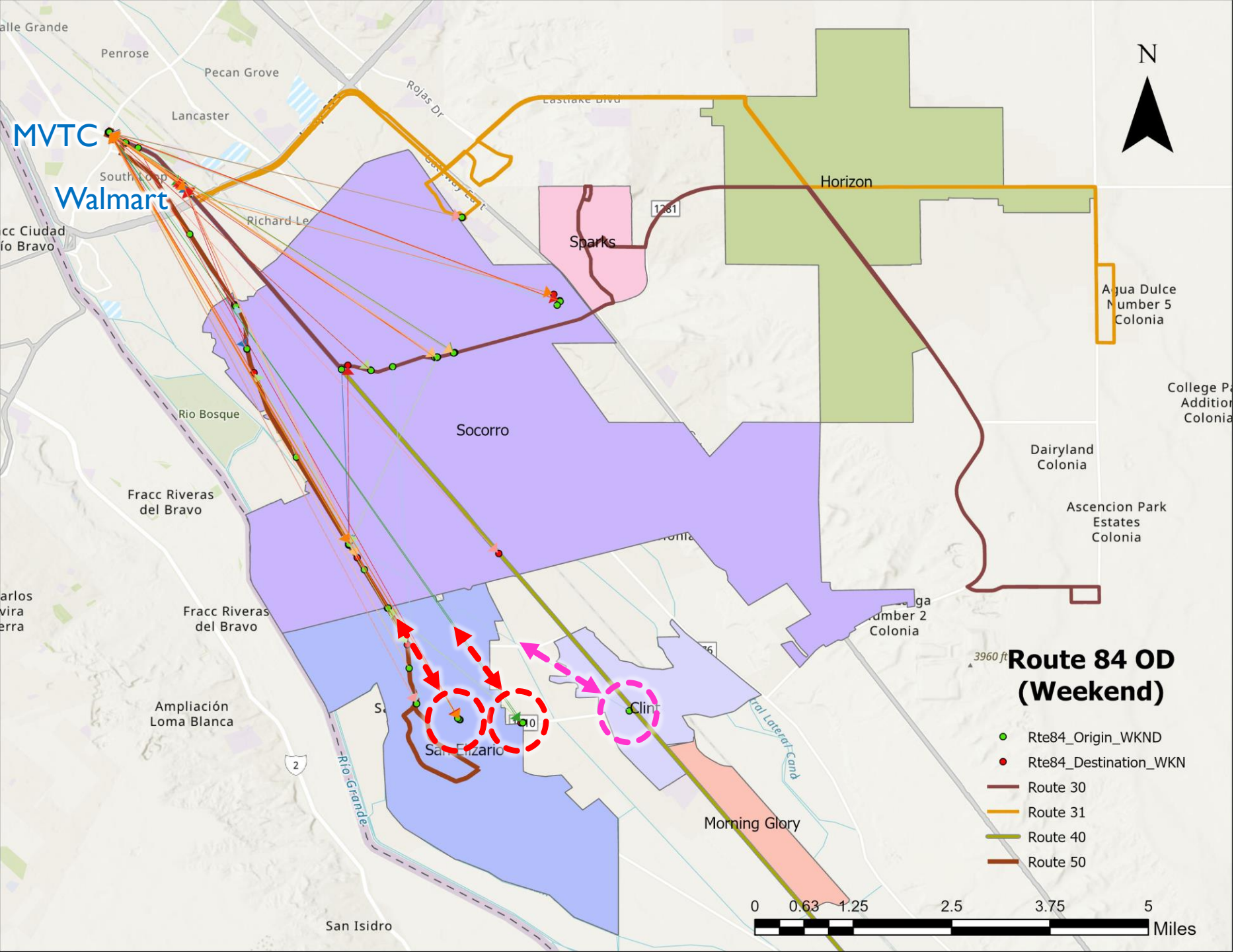
Observations:

- Red-flagged member-jurisdiction trips would effectively not be possible if Route 84 is eliminated on weekdays
- Pink-flagged member-jurisdiction trips would require a transfer



Observation:

- Most member-jurisdiction trips that use Route 84 on weekends begin or end at MVTC or Walmart



Observations:

- Red-flagged member-jurisdiction trips would effectively not be possible if Route 84 is eliminated on weekends
- Pink-flagged member-jurisdiction trips would require a transfer

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTIONS

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3. Staff conducts service review

- Data collection
- Analysis
- Outreach to member and non-member stakeholders per Title VI plan
- Development of service reduction options
- Recommendation of one or more options
- Proposed timeline for implementation of recommended option(s)

Stakeholder outreach activities not included in pilot test

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTIONS

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- Develop three service reduction options
  - Each is a package of service reduction actions
  - Each considers fixed-route service and ADA paratransit service
- Quantify impacts of each option in terms of ridership, revenue hours, and operating costs
- Identify pros and cons for member jurisdictions
- Identify options for mitigating adverse impacts (if any) on member jurisdictions

Service Reduction Actions Considered

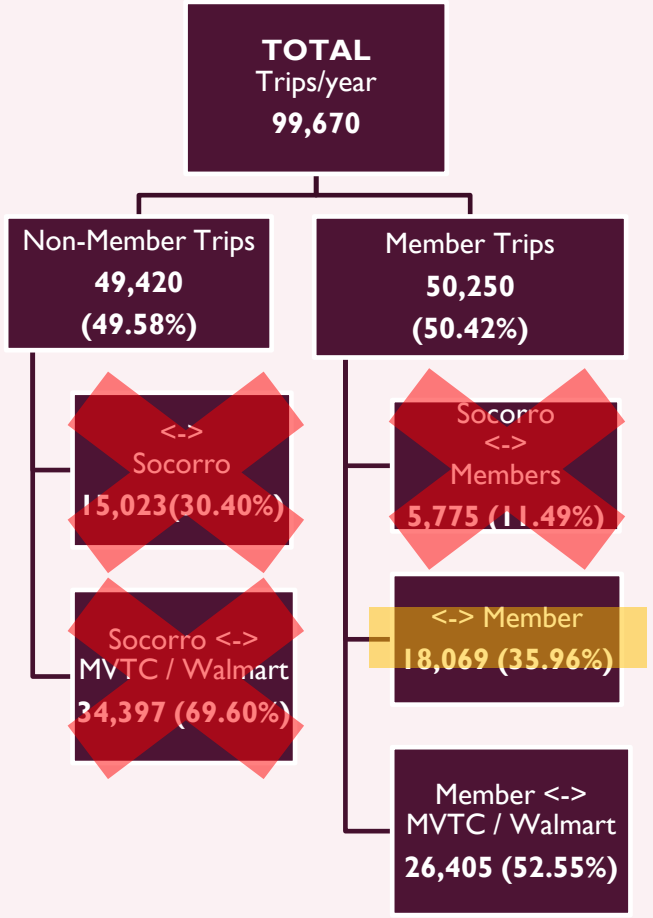
- Non-prioritization of future service and infrastructure investments
- Stop consolidation (i.e., stop removal)
- Increased headways
- Reduced service span
- Reduced service days
- Route realignment
- Elimination of route or service

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 1

"No Socorro Service"

- Eliminate Route 84
- Realign Route 30 to bypass Socorro
- Make no changes to Route 31
- Operate Routes 40 and 50 "closed door" in Socorro
- Provide no ADA paratransit service in Socorro (excepting overlap from bus stops outside Socorro)
- Implement no future services or infrastructure investments in Socorro

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 1



Eliminated

Restricted

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 1

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Measure	Estimated Change
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Ridership	-37%
Estimated Annual Revenue Hours	-22%
Estimated Annual Operating Cost	-22%

Notes: Includes ridership only for 30, 31, 40, 50, and 84. Operating cost/revenue hour is from the FY25 EPATS financial plan (in progress).

Measure	Estimated Change
Estimated Annual ADA Ridership	-63%
Estimated Annual Revenue Hours	-63%
Estimated Annual Operating Cost	-63%

Notes: Ridership and revenue hours are based on CY25 forecasts in the ADA Plan. Operating cost/revenue hour is from the FY25 EPATS financial plan (in progress).

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 1

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- Pros for member jurisdictions
  - Potential for reduced operating cost
  - Travel time might be reduced with realignment of Route 30 and closed-door operations on Routes 40 and 50
  - Potential to relocate all Socorro stop infrastructure to member jurisdictions
- Cons for member jurisdictions
  - Some current trips no longer possible (e.g., bus stop no longer within walking distance)
  - All routes have different service spans and headways (e.g., Route 50 span is shorter than Route 84 span)
  - Some current riders will have to transfer between ETA routes (= longer travel time)
  - Transfers to Sun Metro at MVTC are not free
  - Potential overcrowding on ETA's smaller buses
  - Effectively no transit access to/from Socorro

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 1

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- Possible mitigation
  - Modify schedules and headways of Routes 30, 40, and 50 to operate at levels comparable to the current Route 84
  - Realign Route 50 in San Elizario and extend to Clint
  - Use ADA capacity available during ADA ramp-up to serve fixed-route member trips no longer possible (until GPDR is implemented)
  - Rely on Project Amistad, social service organizations, or others to serve fixed-route member trips no longer possible (until GPDR is implemented)
  - Explore feasibility of timed transfers at MVTC
  - Allow free transfers between ETA and Sun Metro at MVTC (Title VI implication)

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 2

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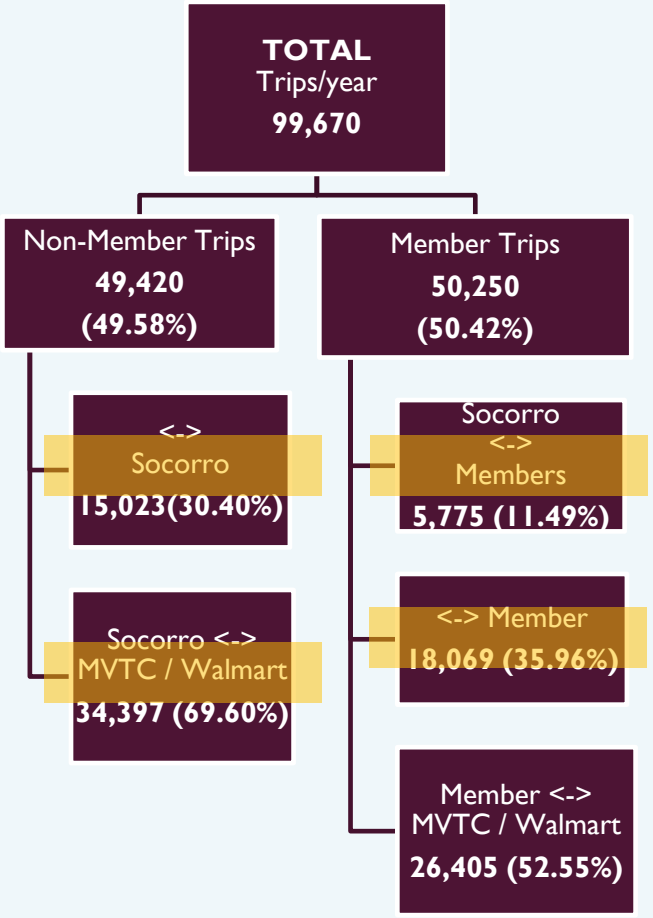
"Limited Socorro Service"

- Eliminate Route 84
- Make no changes to Routes 30, 31, 40, and 50
- Continue providing ADA paratransit service in Socorro at currently forecasted levels
- Implement no future services or infrastructure investments in Socorro

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 2



Eliminated

Restricted

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 2

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Measure	Estimated Change
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Ridership	-11%
Estimated Annual Revenue Hours	-11%
Estimated Annual Operating Cost	-11%

Notes: Includes ridership only for 30, 31, 40, 50, and 84. Operating cost/revenue hour is from the FY25 EPATS financial plan (in progress).

Measure	Estimated Change
Estimated Annual ADA Ridership	0%
Estimated Annual Revenue Hours	0%
Estimated Annual Operating Cost	0%

Notes: Ridership and revenue hours are based on CY25 forecasts in the ADA Plan. Operating cost/revenue hour is from the FY25 EPATS financial plan (in progress).

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 2

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- Pros for member jurisdictions
  - Potential for reduced operating cost
  - Potential to relocate some Socorro stop infrastructure to member jurisdictions
  - Compared to Option 1, some transit access to/from Socorro retained
- Cons for member jurisdictions
  - Some current trips no longer possible (e.g., bus stop no longer within walking distance)
  - All routes have different service spans and headways (e.g., Route 50 span is shorter than Route 84 span)
  - Some current riders will have to transfer between ETA routes (= longer travel time)
  - Transfers to Sun Metro at MVTC are not free
  - Potential overcrowding on ETA's smaller buses

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 2

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

- Possible mitigation
  - Modify schedules and headways of Routes 30, 40, and 50 to operate at levels comparable to the current Route 84
  - Realign Route 50 in San Elizario and extend to Clint
  - Use ADA capacity available during ADA ramp-up to serve fixed-route member trips no longer possible (until GDPR is implemented)
  - Rely on Project Amistad, social service organizations, or others to serve fixed-route member trips no longer possible (until GDPR is implemented)
  - Explore feasibility of timed transfers at MVTC
  - Allow free transfers between ETA and Sun Metro at MVTC (Title VI implication)

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 3

"No Changes"

- Implement no future services or infrastructure investments in Socorro

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 3

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- No impacts on current or near-term service

PROCESS STEP 3
SUMMARY OF SERVICE REDUCTION OPTIONS

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Measure	Option 1 "No Socorro Service"	Option 2 "Limited Socorro Service"	Option 3 "No Changes"
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Ridership	-37%	-11%	0%
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Revenue Hours	-22%	-11%	0%
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Operating Cost	-22%	-11%	0%

Measure	Option 1 "No Socorro Service"	Option 2 "Limited Socorro Service"	Option 3 "No Changes"
Estimated Annual ADA Ridership	-63%	0%	0%
Estimated Annual ADA Revenue Hours	-63%	0%	0%
Estimated Annual ADA Operating Cost	-63%	0%	0%

PROCESS STEP 3
RECOMMENDED SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION(S)

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3. Staff conducts service review

- Data collection
- Analysis
- Outreach to member and non-member stakeholders per Title VI plan
- Development of service reduction options
- Recommendation of one or more options
- Proposed timeline for implementation of recommended option(s)

PROCESS STEP 3
RECOMMENDED SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION(S)

- Optimal approach identified by TTI, EPATS staff, and EPATS executive committee
- Two phases
  1. Option 2 for six months or until new contractor starts service
     - Mitigation: Realign Route 50 in San Elizario and extend it to Clint
     - Mitigation: Adjust span of Routes 40 and 50 to match up with current Route 84 span
     - Mitigation: Explore/implement free transfers to/from Sun Metro at MVTC
     - Mitigation: Explore/implement options for "grandfathered" trips
  2. Option 1 after six months or when new contractor starts service
     - Continue above mitigation

EPATS staff to adjust/refine this approach, conduct necessary coordination, and develop policies and operating strategies

PROCESS STEP 3
RECOMMENDED SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION(S)

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- What do we mean by "grandfathered" trips?
  - Members currently taking trips that would no longer be possible under either option*
  - Members currently taking trips that would require a transfer or excessively increased travel time under either option*
- "Safety net"
  - Temporary solutions for grandfathered trips*
  - Might include subsidized taxi trips and/or use of excess ADA paratransit capacity

*Until GPDR is in place

PROCESS STEP 3
RECOMMENDED SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION(S)

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Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug*	Sep*	Oct*	Nov*	Dec*	...
Option 2 ("Limited Socorro Service")						**Option 1 ("No Socorro Service")**						
Eliminate Route 84												
Make no changes to Routes 30 and 31.						Realign Route 30 to bypass Socorro. Operate Routes 40 and 50 "closed door" in Socorro.						
Continue providing ADA paratransit service in Socorro at currently forecasted levels.						Provide no ADA paratransit service in Socorro.						
Realign Route 50 in San Elizario and extend it to Clint.												
Adjust service spans on Routes 40 and 50 to match up with current Route 84 span.												
Explore/implement free transfers at MVTC.												
Explore/implement safety net for grandfathered member trips.												
Implement no future services or infrastructure investments in Socorro.												

*Anticipated

PROCESS STEP 3
RECOMMENDED SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION(S)

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Measure	Option 1 "No Socorro Service"	Option 2 "Limited Socorro Service"	Option 3 "No Changes"	Optimal Approach
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Ridership	-37%	-11%	0%	0%
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Rev. Hours	-22%	-11%	0%	-8%
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Op. Cost	-22%	-11%	0%	-8%

Measure	Option 1 "No Socorro Service"	Option 2 "Limited Socorro Service"	Option 3 "No Changes"	Optimal Approach
Estimated Annual ADA Ridership	-63%	0%	0%	-31%
Estimated Annual ADA Revenue Hours	-63%	0%	0%	-31%
Estimated Annual ADA Operating Cost	-63%	0%	0%	-31%

Note: Operating cost will vary with different safety net solutions.

PROCESS STEPS 4-6

4. Board determines action(s) to be taken

- Today's board meeting

5. Staff conducts public outreach per Title VI plan

- Pending

6. Staff revises actions(s) if needed, and board approves revised action(s) if applicable

- Pending

PROCESS STEP 7

7. EPATS implements approved service reduction action(s)

- Pending

NEXT STEPS

CURRENT SCHEDULE

- September 18 EPATS board meeting
  - Possible board action: Adopt service reduction policy
  - Possible board action: Direct EPATS staff to move forward with phased service reduction option
  - Possible board action: Provide safety net direction to EPATS staff
- Finalize policy to address board comments by September 30 (if applicable)

APPENDIX: SERVICE REDUCTION POLICY

POLICY OVERVIEW

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Policy Goal

Identify, evaluate, and implement reductions in
EPATS transit service in non-member jurisdictions

- Applies to fixed-route and ADA paratransit services (amendable for future service types)
- Applies when a member leaves EPATS or a jurisdiction does not join EPATS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Prioritize maintaining transit service standards in member jurisdictions
   - Title VI plan
   - Service standards document (if developed)
2. Use member contributions and other funding responsibly
3. Focus transit investments (e.g., new service and amenities) in member jurisdictions
4. Minimize adverse impacts of service reductions on member jurisdictions
5. Minimize the costs of applying this policy
6. Recognize that providing transit service in non-member jurisdictions may serve the interests of residents, employers, and businesses in member jurisdictions
7. Support long-term service sustainability
8. Provide equitable service in member jurisdictions
9. Comply with federal and state regulations

Will be considered when identifying and analyzing potential service reductions

PROCESS FOR APPLYING THE POLICY

1. Member leaves EPATS or jurisdiction has not joined EPATS
2. Board directs staff to apply this policy with respect to ETA services in or adjacent to the non-member jurisdiction
3. Staff conducts service review
   - Data collection
   - Analysis (may be systemwide)
   - Outreach to member and non-member stakeholders per Title VI plan (exploratory)
   - Development of service reduction options
   - Recommendation of one or more options
   - Proposed timeline for implementation of recommended option(s)
4. Board determines action(s) to be taken
5. Staff conducts public outreach per Title VI plan (notification)
6. Staff revises actions(s) if needed, and board approves revised action(s) if applicable
7. EPATS implements approved service reduction action(s)

This process is the same process presented previously.

PROCESS FOR APPLYING THE POLICY

- Prerogative of the board to determine if and when a service review is to be conducted
- Board may choose to take other measures instead

CONSIDERATIONS

- Resource allocation
- Operational inefficiencies
- Cost-effectiveness
- Service complexity
- Service stability

Can be explored in the service review

- Impact on access
- Equitable distribution of service
- Local economic impact
- Availability of alternatives
- Feasibility of substitutes

Pros and cons for member jurisdictions

DATA COLLECTION

- Existing ridership
- Origin-destination patterns
- Operating costs
- Travel times
- Bus arrival and departure times
- Demographic data
- Stakeholder input/feedback

Data that may be collected to inform the service review

POTENTIAL ANALYSES

- Ridership evaluation (current and impacts)
- Efficiency and effectiveness evaluation (current and impacts)
- Origin-destination pattern evaluation (current)
- Demographics assessment (current)
- Re-calculation of members' financial contributions
- Equity evaluation
- Stakeholder input/feedback evaluation
- Service availability evaluation
- Vehicle load evaluation
- On-time performance evaluation
- Title VI fare evaluation

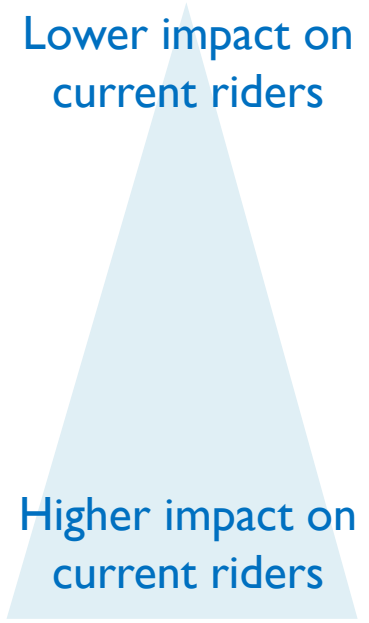
One or more may be conducted at the discretion of board and staff

May be conducted with respect to member jurisdictions, non-member jurisdictions, or both

Will consider ADA requirements

SERVICE REDUCTION ACTIONS

- Potential service reduction actions
  1. Non-prioritization of future service and infrastructure investments
  2. Removal/relocation of transit stop infrastructure
  3. Stop consolidation (i.e., stop removal)
  4. Increased headways
  5. Reduced service span
  6. Reduced service days
  7. Route realignment
  8. Elimination of route or service



9. Implementation of fare differential, trip prioritization, and/or other operations policies

Variable impact or impact TBD

SERVICE REDUCTION OPTIONS

- Service reduction options
  - Packages of service reduction actions
  - Balance advantages and disadvantages of service reduction actions
- Staff will recommend one or more service reduction options for board consideration
  - Advantages and disadvantages
  - Tabulation of anticipated impacts
  - Discussion of ADA obligations
  - Stakeholder input summary
- Board may select a service reduction option and/or other actions
- Final service reduction actions to be approved after public engagement activities

MONITORING AND POLICY AMENDMENTS

- EPATS to monitor impacts of service reductions to address unintended consequences and ensure that EPATS continues to meet objectives
- Policy to undergo periodic review to assess alignment with EPATS's objectives, changes in the transit landscape, etc.
- Policy to be amended if EPATS implements services other than fixed-route bus and ADA paratransit and if EPATS adopts a service standards document

APPENDIX: PILOT TEST

PROCESS STEP 3
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

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	WEEKDAYS		
	Riders/Year	Boards in Socorro	Alights in Socorro
Rte30	28,563	2,898	4,761
Rte31	9,378	0	0
Rte40	10,404	1,655	2,601
Rte50	3,685	205	2,457
Rte84	36,548	7,310	10,558
Total	**88,578**	**12,067**	**20,377**

	WEEKENDS		
	Riders/Year	Boards in Socorro	Alights in Socorro
Rte30	3,170	409	767
Rte31	1,136	0	0
Rte40	1,553	163	163
Rte50	926	51	360
Rte84	4,307	1,211	987
Total	**11,092**	**1,835**	**2,278**

	TOTAL		
	Riders/Year	Boards in Socorro	Alights in Socorro
Rte30	31,733	3,307	5,527
Rte31	10,514	0	0
Rte40	11,957	1,819	2,764
Rte50	4,611	256	2,817
Rte84	40,855	8,521	11,545
Total	**99,670**	**13,903**	**22,654**

Annual Socorro boardings and alightings were estimated from the April 2024 observations.

Total riders were reported by operating agencies.

PROCESS STEP 3
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

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Route	Current Weekday Headway	Current Weekday Span	Current Weekend Headway	Current Weekend Span
30	50 minutes	5:30a – 7:25p	105 minutes	8:00a – 4:40p
31	55-60 minutes	5:00a – 8:15p	115 minutes	8:00a – 5:30p
40	99 minutes	6:43a – 6:16p	99 minutes *Saturday only*	6:43a – 6:16p *Saturday only*
50	60 minutes	8:00a – 6:00p	60 minutes	10:00a – 6:00p
84	90 minutes	5:48a – 7:17p	90 minutes *Saturday only*	7:18a – 7:17p *Saturday only*

PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 1

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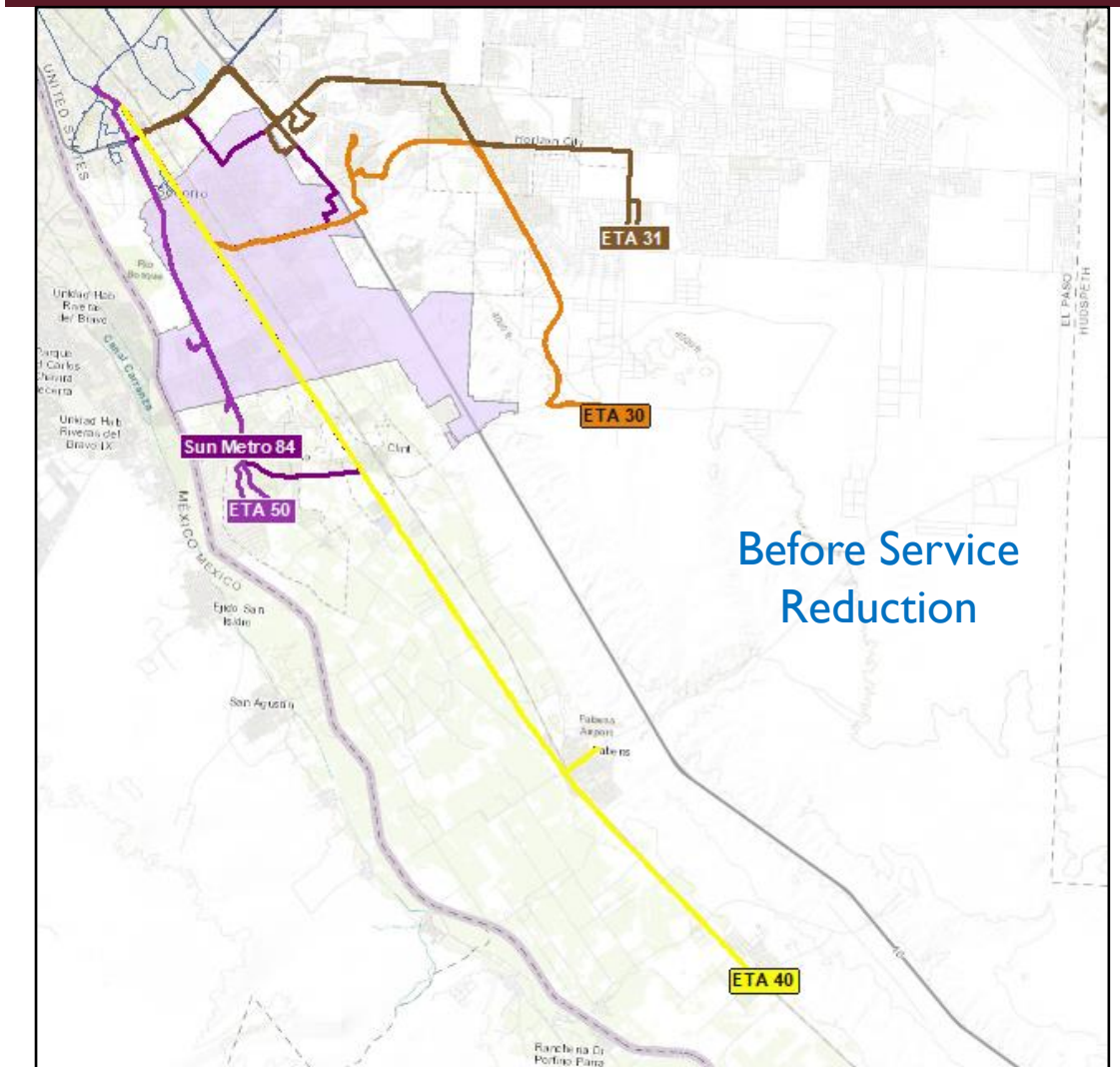
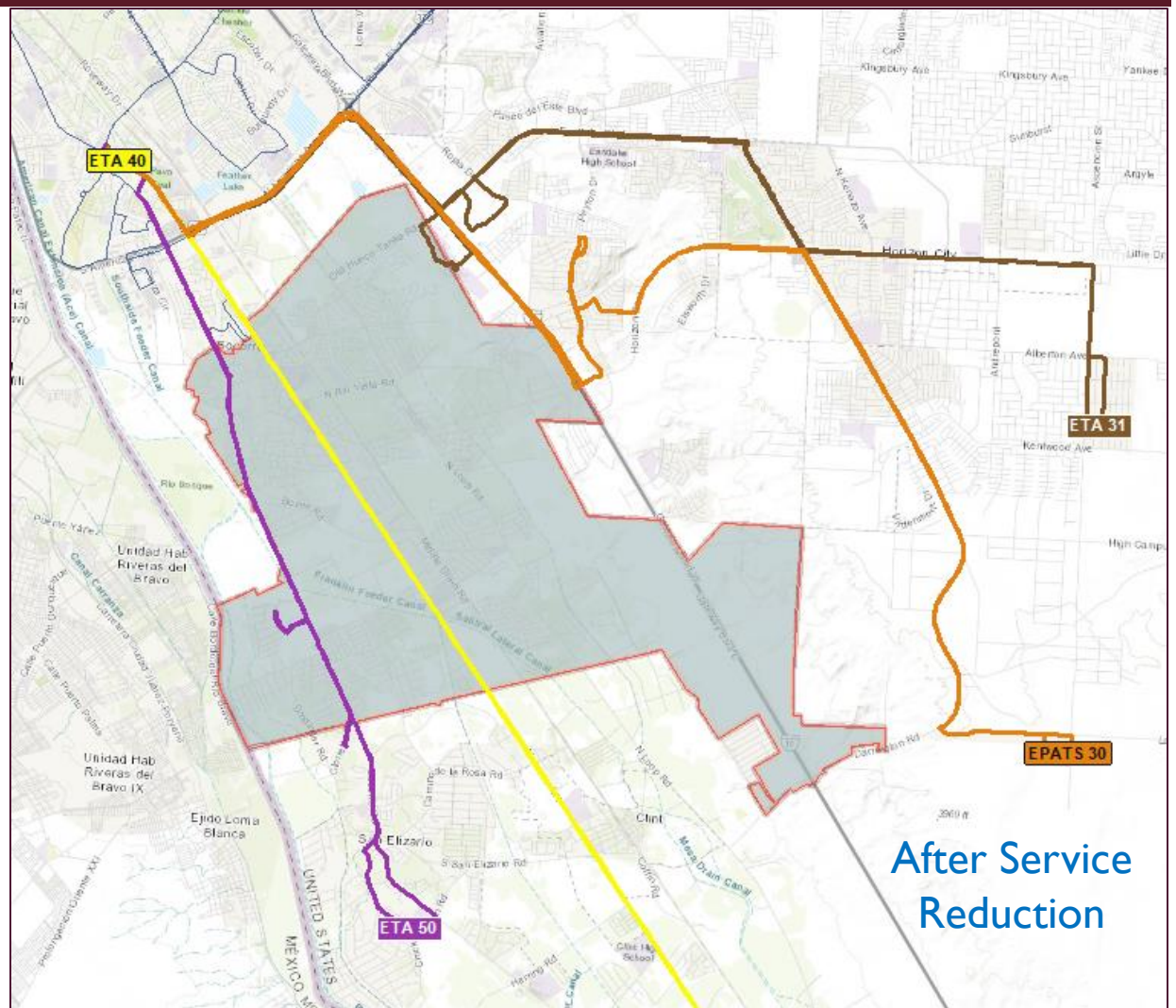
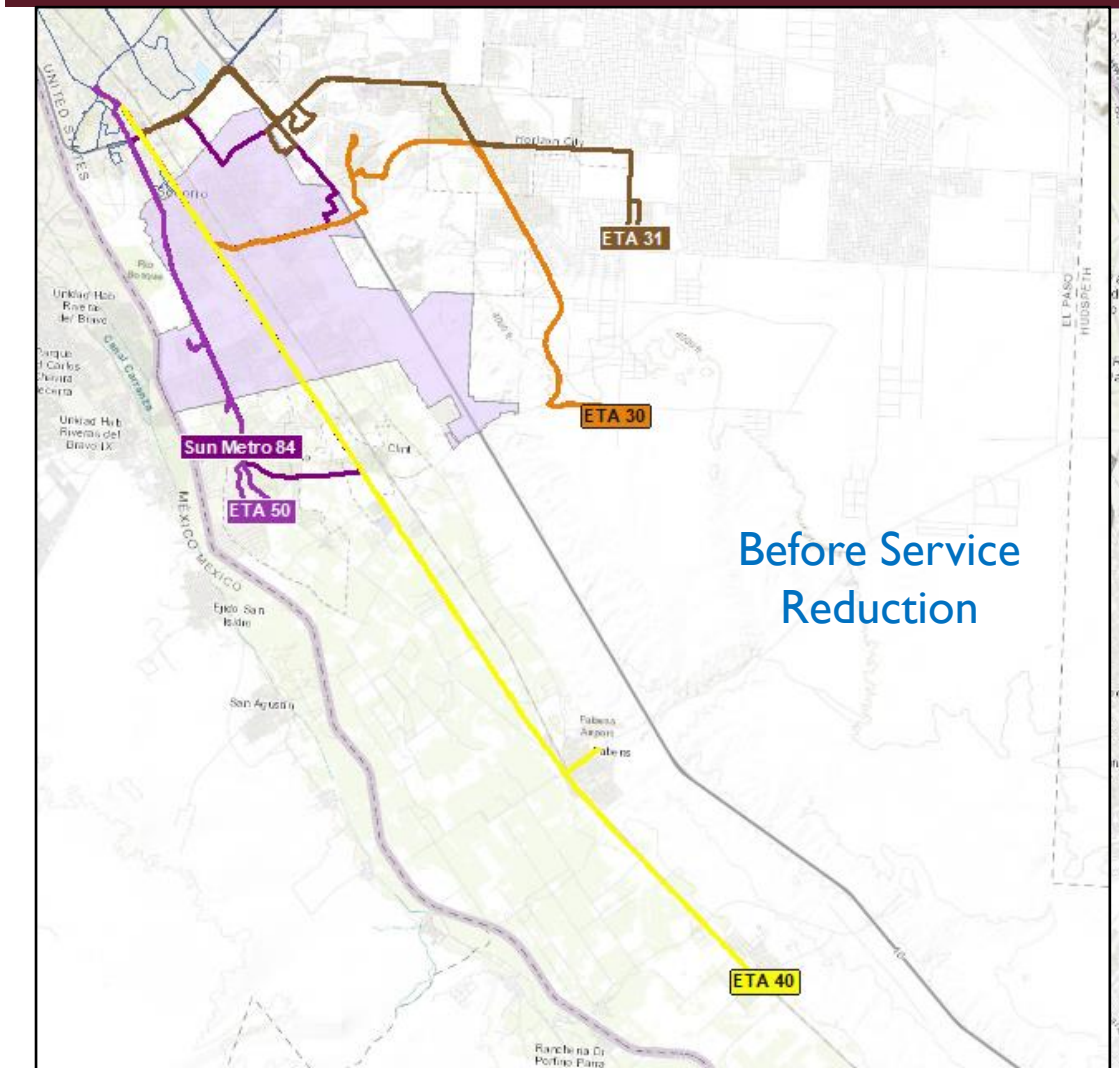
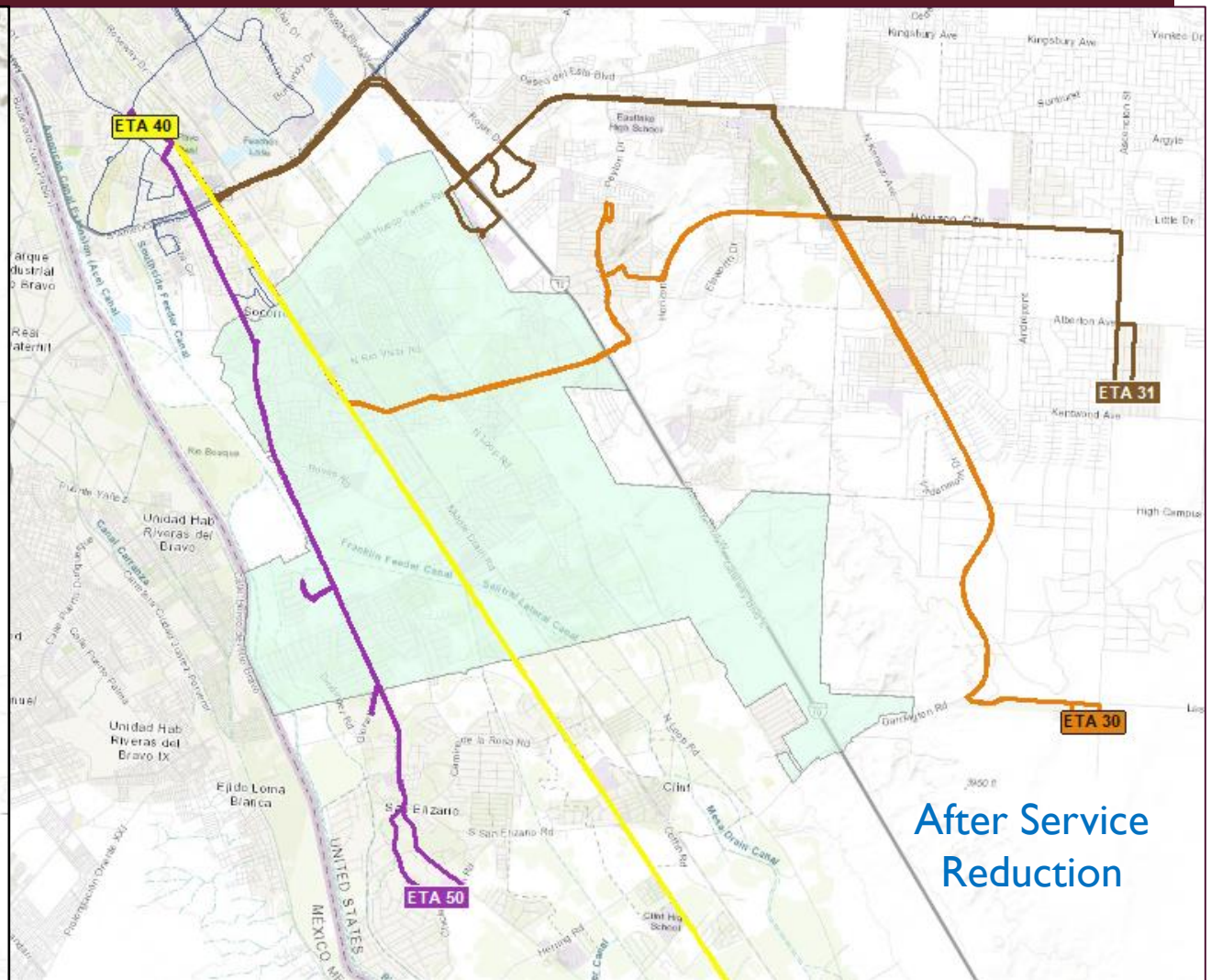




PROCESS STEP 3
SERVICE REDUCTION OPTION 2

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