

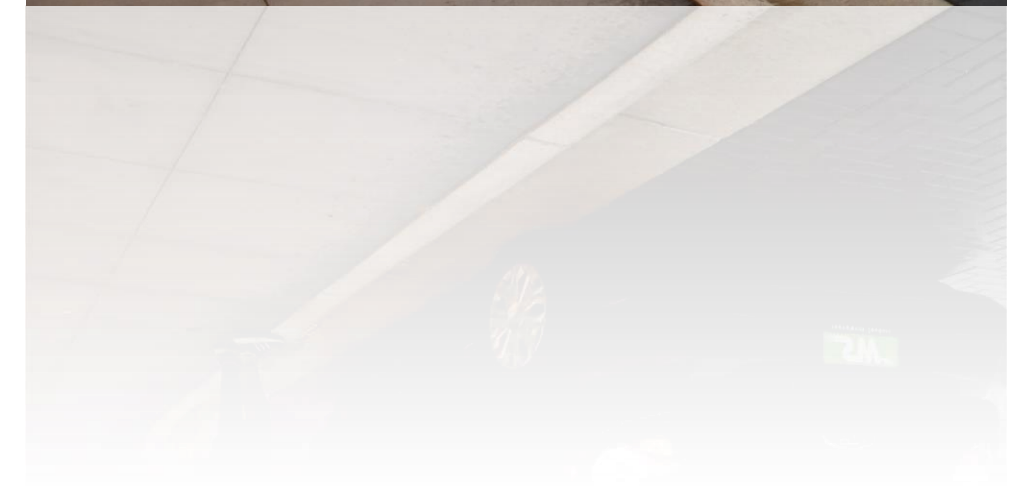
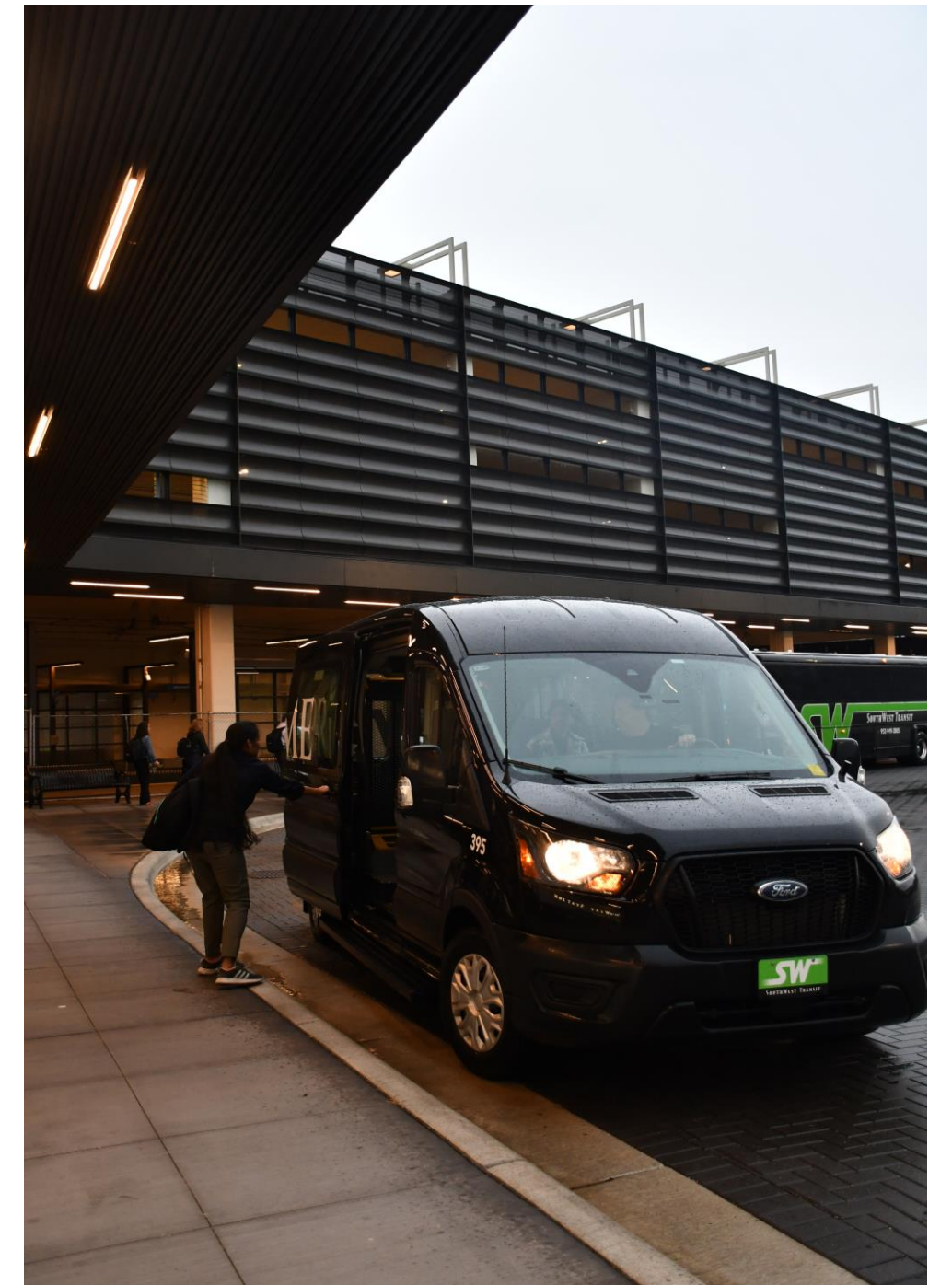


SouthWest Transit

How Technology is Reimagining Senior Mobility

Erik Hansen, CEO

Let's GO!



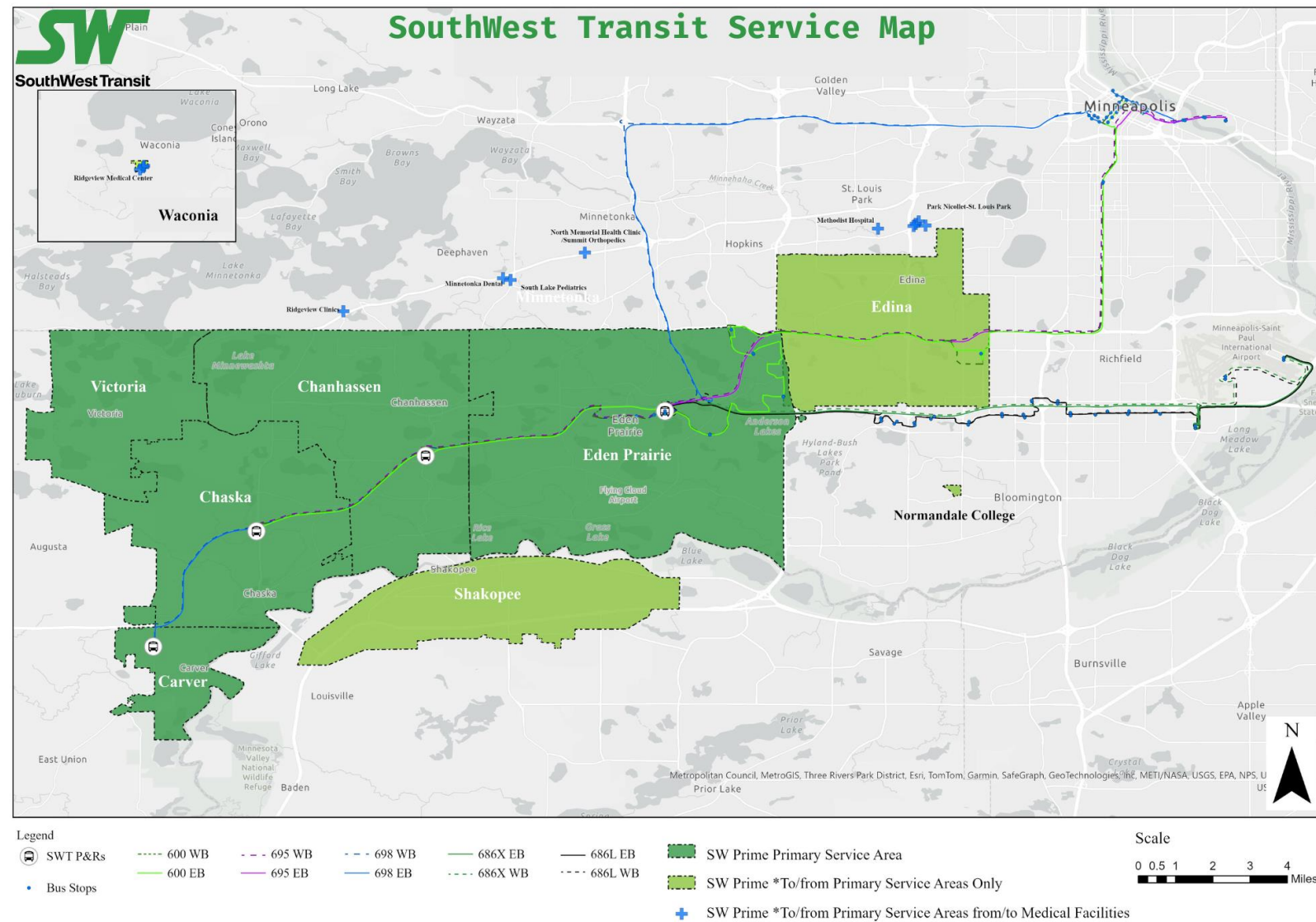
MEET THE CEO

Erik Hansen was appointed the CEO of SouthWest Transit in 2023. He has served in local government for more than 20 years after a successful career in the private sector. He is a long-time advocate for transportation and transit.



WHO WE ARE

- SouthWest Transit is a suburban transit agency serving the southwest suburbs with fixed route bus, microtransit (Prime), and special events shuttle services
- 537,878 ridership in 2024 with 147,922 of that microtransit trips
- 2024 MPTA transit system of the year
- Launched our autonomous service April 15, 2025



ROADMAP

Data

- Demographics
- Pre & Post-Covid

Challenges

- In Aging Communities
- Legislative Barriers

Discussion

Future Focused

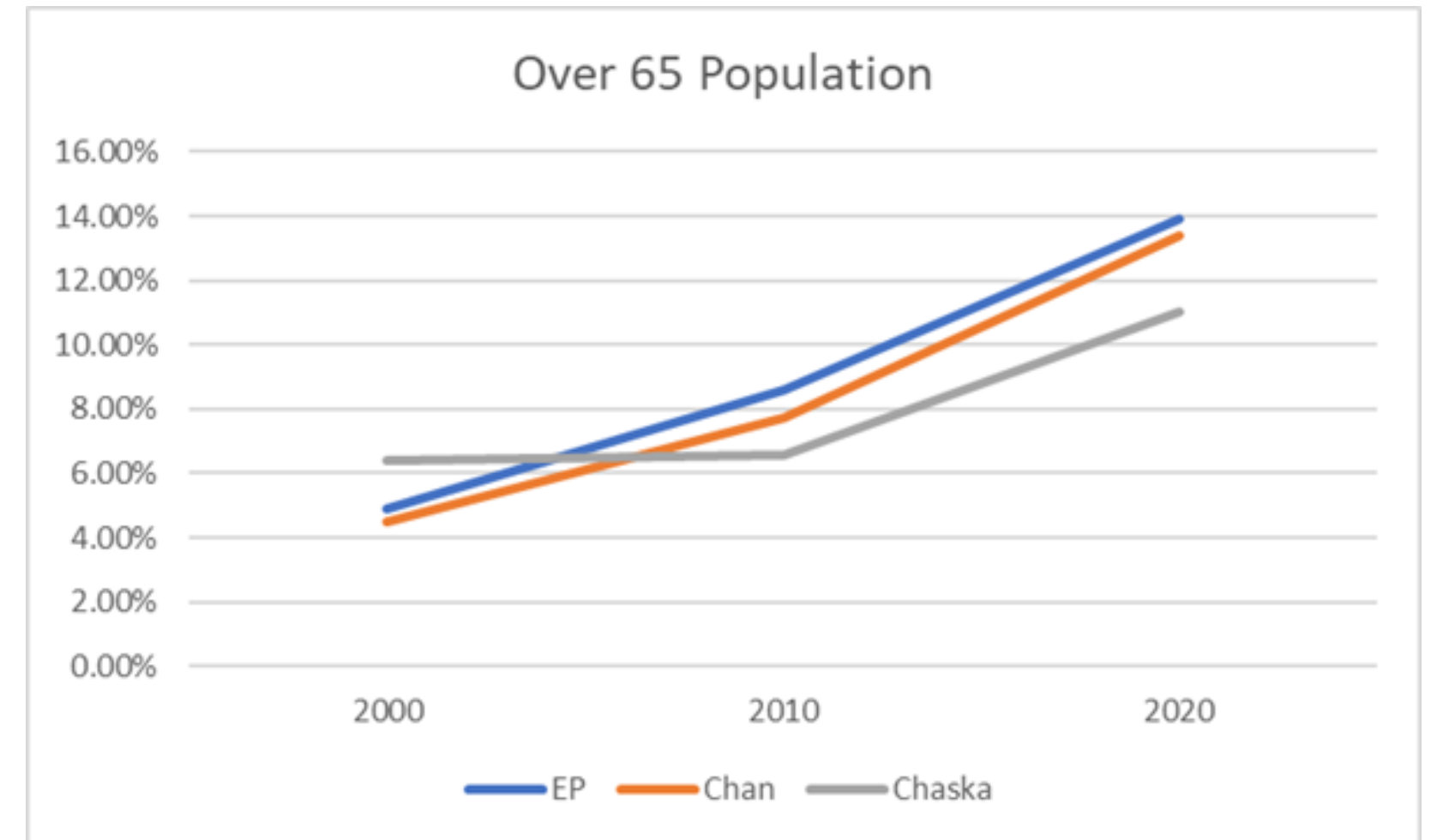
- Seamless Journeys
- The Southwest Transit case
- What's next?



DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Our community is aging

- The over 65 population is expected to be 20% of the population in Minnesota by 2038
- Aging populations will not need commuter service
- transit dependent and may be more in need of micro-transit type services



*US Census American Community Survey, 2023

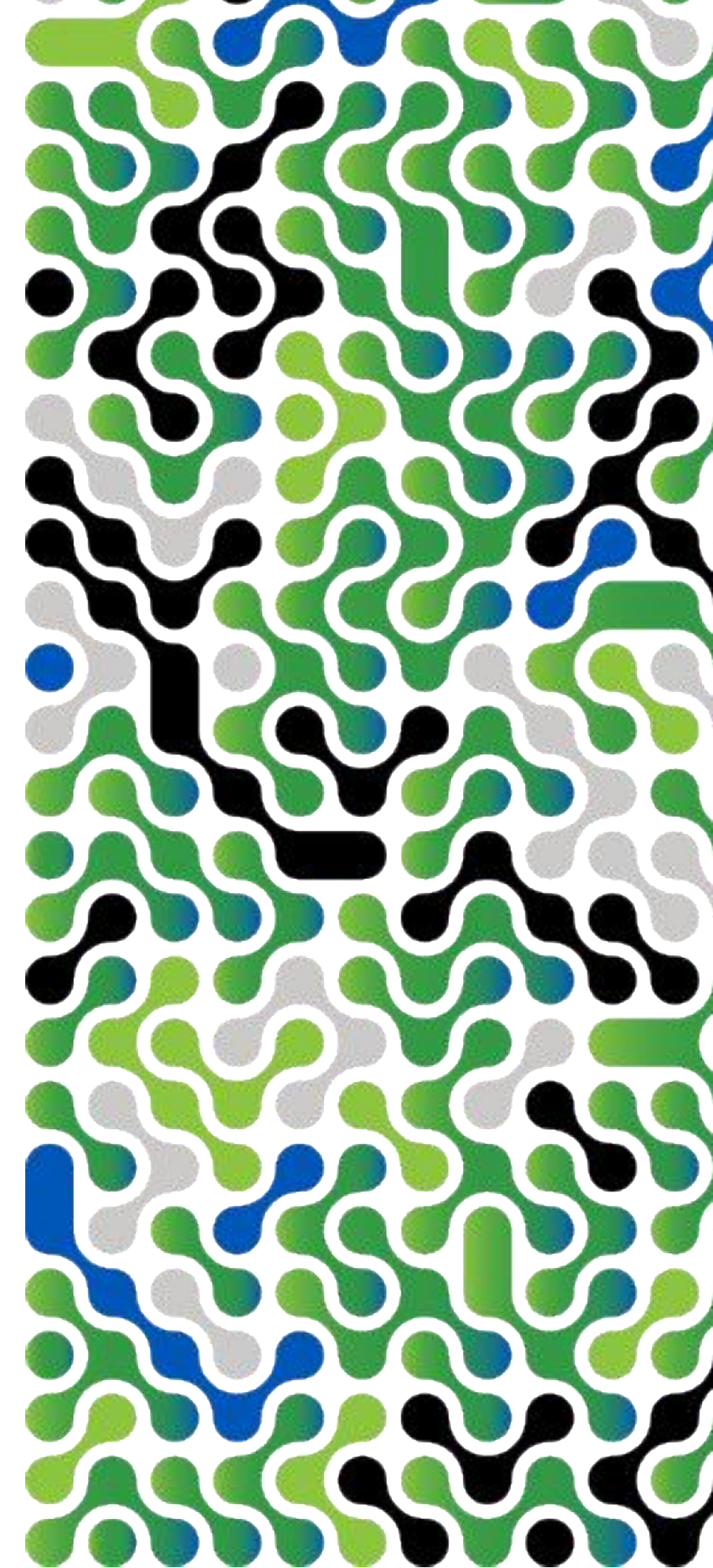
TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES IN AGING COMMUNITIES

- Aging populations will not need commuter service to and from work
 - Study from the Transportation Research Board in 2018 showed that as populations age they use less public transit
 - These aging populations will need more micro-transit type services
- Society has moved away from bus token and cash to tapping cards and smartphones and studies show seniors are less likely to plan and pay for transit using digital tools
- Lack of transportation can result in social isolation, reduced access to healthcare and loss of independence



FINANCIAL & LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS

- The state demographer notes that as populations age there will be more pressure to put tax dollars into services for seniors – like transit
- Sustainable and long-term funding is a key to sustainable service – microtransit and other on-demand services have higher subsidies than commuter bus services



WHAT TECHNOLOGY & TRANSIT MEANS TO YOU



Have you used rideshare services? Where did you go and why?

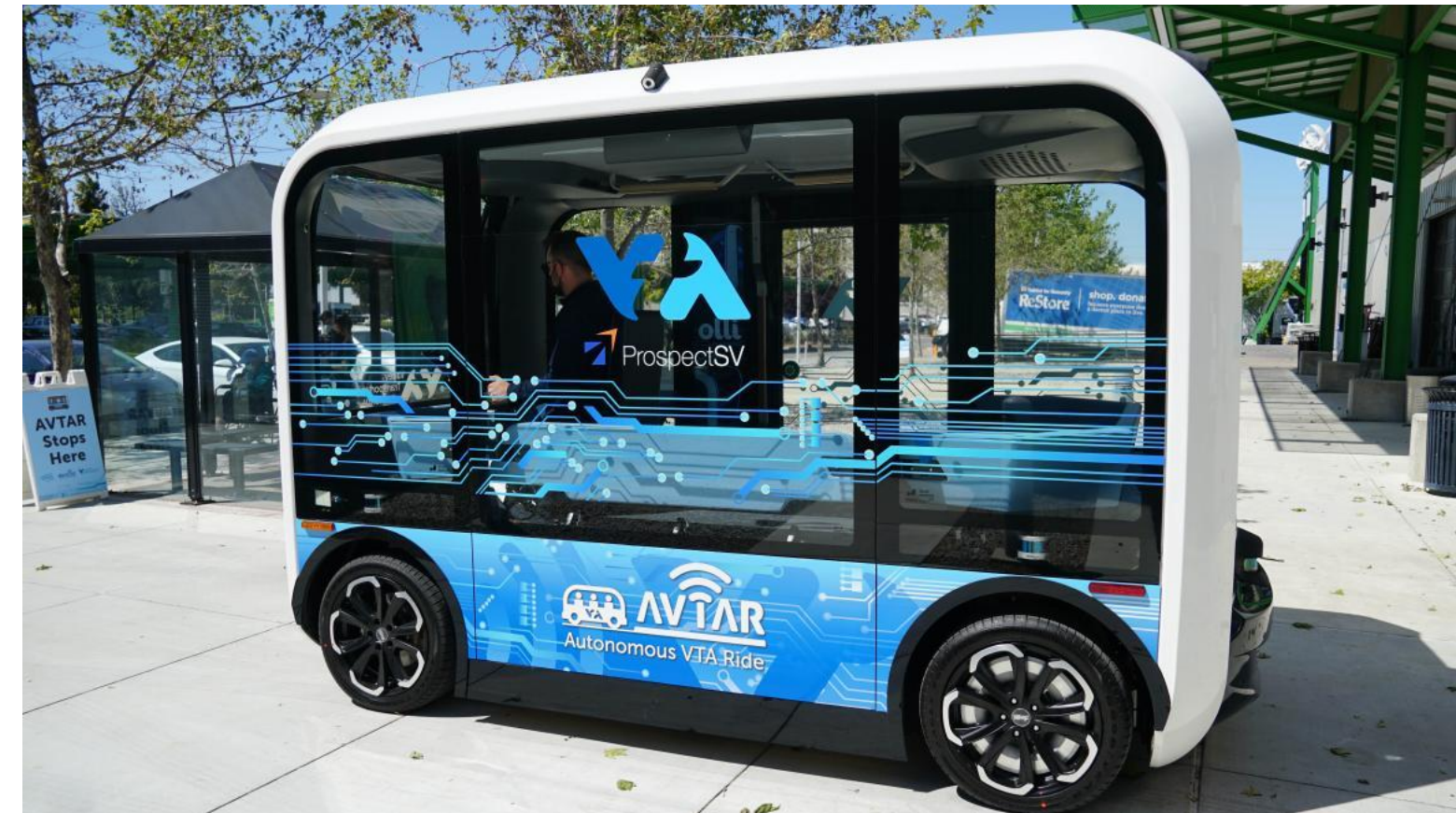
Would you use public transit more if it was easily available to you? Where would you go?

What would make you feel more confident and encourage you to use public transit?

What issues have you encountered trying to use public transit?

Technology Trends

- Artificial Intelligence
 - The global market for AI in transportation is expected to be \$3.5 billion in 2026
 - Used for AVs, driver monitoring, transit optimizing routes & planning and more
- Autonomous Vehicles
- Electric Vehicles – sustainability
 - 42% of all vehicles produced worldwide in 2030 are expected to be electric (S&P Global Mobility)
- How do we help seniors adapt to this rapidly changing landscape?

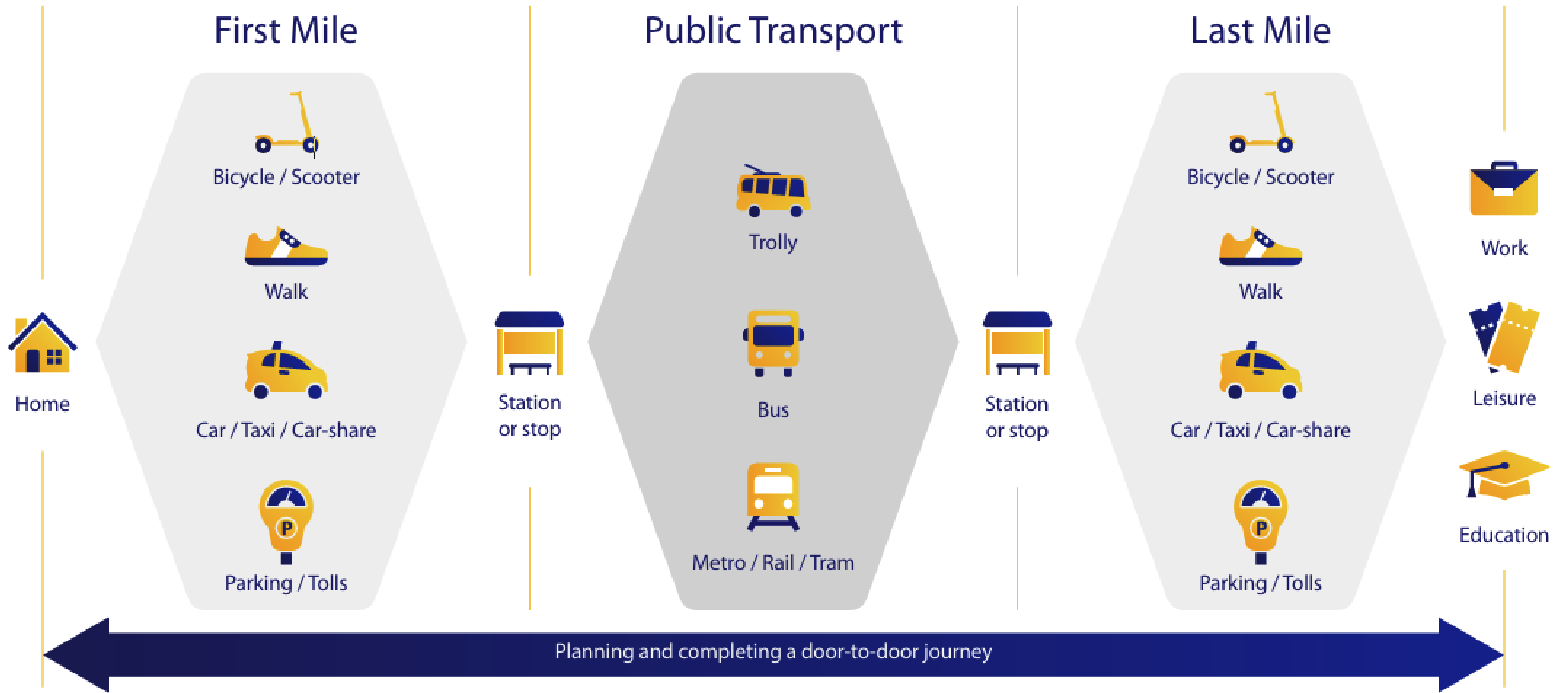


SEAMLESS JOURNEYS

- A travel experience that is smooth, efficient, and free of disruptions, often facilitated by technology
- Minimizing friction and maximizing convenience for the rider, from booking to arrival
- Transit agencies operating in silos
- Multimodal Transportation



SEAMLESS JOURNEYS



Source: Visa — [Transforming Urban Mobility](#)

SEAMLESS JOURNEYS

- More focus on local trips to meet needs
 - First & last mile rides
 - Autonomous Vehicles
- More special event services
- Enhanced and expanded customer service through AI
- User experience on our website and apps



The SouthWest Transit case:

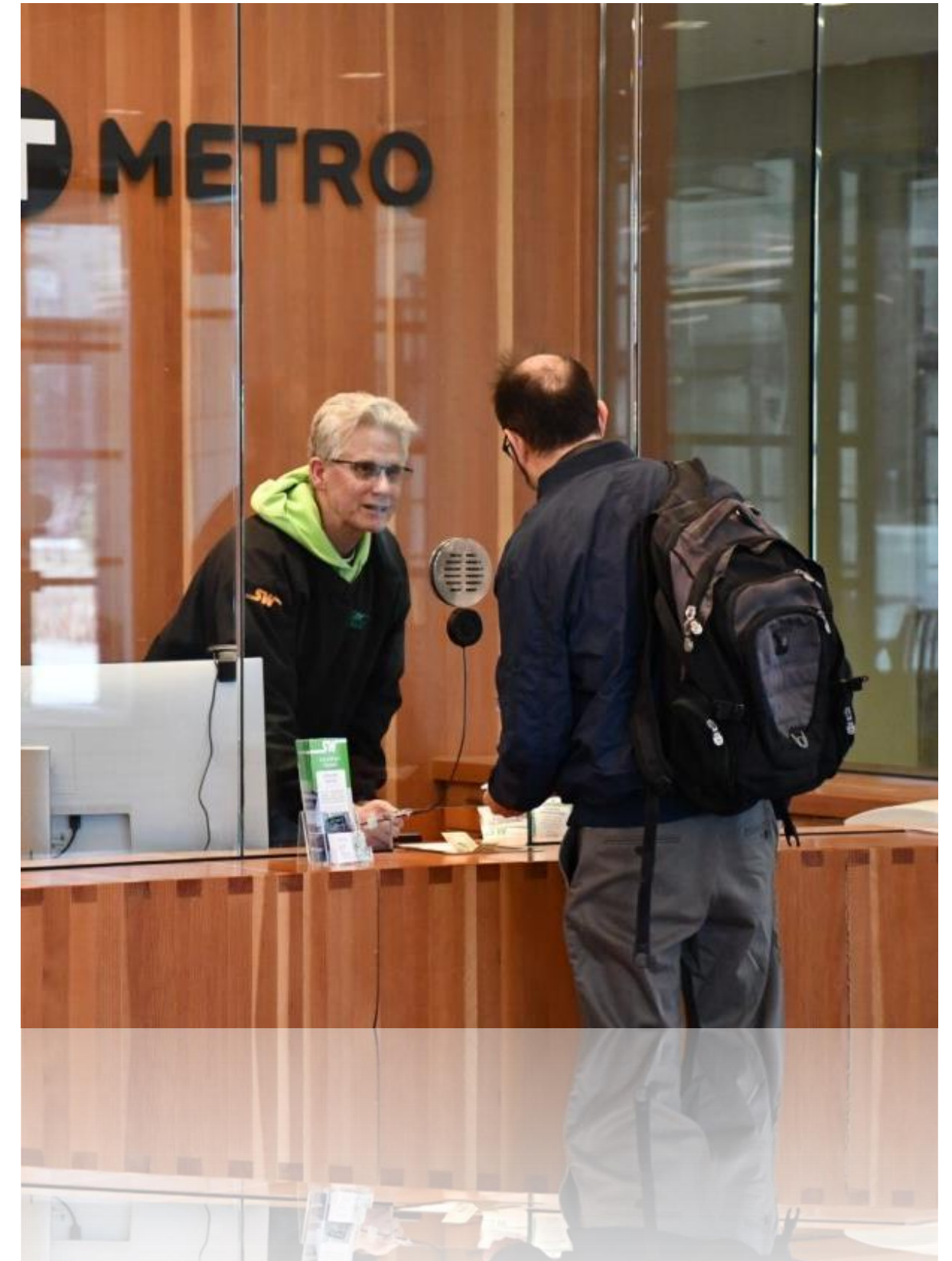
- Minnesota's first microtransit service (2016), SW Prime, providing flexible and convenient transportation options for seniors
- Minnesota's first autonomous microtransit service (2025) in Eden Prairie
- In partnership with Metro Transit, tap to pay fare boxes will be available within the next years



IMPACT STORIES

A senior needed transportation to Chaska Ridgeview Medical Center (just two blocks away from the senior home he resided)

- Before finding SW Prime, he said he was paying \$185 one-way (limited transportation options due to the medical nature)
- SW Prime provided his transportation, return trip was \$5
- Ensured affordable, reliable access to essential medical care



IMPACT STORIES

There was a woman living in Senior Housing in Chanhassen after losing her husband

- She wanted to attend a Timberwolves game, but was nervous to navigate it alone
- Our staff guided her step-by-step
- Later, she told us that thanks to us, she went to the game feeling confident and empowered



INVESTING IN TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS



- Transit services can combat social isolation, improve health outcomes, and increase economic participation among older adults
- The broader community benefits of modernizing transit systems with senior-friendly, accessible, and sustainable solutions
- Education for seniors regarding transportation

WHAT'S NEXT?

- The GOOD NEWS!
 - Technology will reimagine transit to allow seniors more access to more options for local transportation
 - This technology has the promise to connect seniors to service and community and increase health outcomes and reduce isolation
- What we need
 - Improved education and community outreach for the use of these new technologies and programs
 - Sustainable and sufficient funding for these resources



[questions]

REFERENCES

Erhardt, G. D., Mahmud Hoque, J., Watkins, K., Brakewood, C., Berrebi, S., & Goyal, V. (2022, May 19). *Why has public transit ridership declined in the United States?*. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856422000945>

Bureau, U. C. (2023, July 31). *American Community Survey Data*. Census.gov. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>