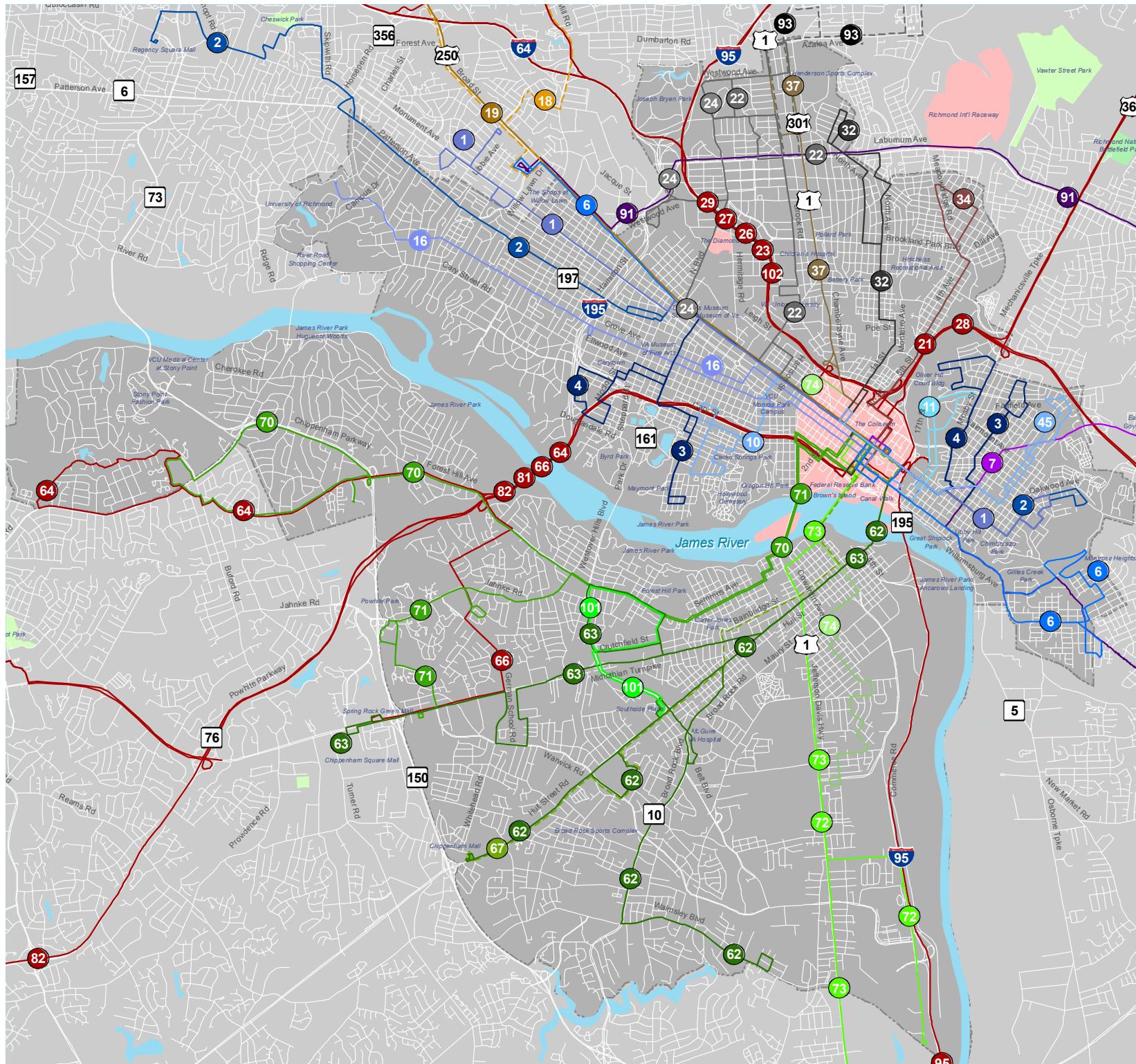


Figure 9: GRTC Routes



### 3: Transit

#### Introduction

Public transportation systems directly benefit individuals, businesses, and governments by improving mobility and economic opportunities, while reducing road congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and travel times within the region. The GRTC Transit System (GRTC) is the primary public transportation provider for the Richmond region, providing service to the City of Richmond, Henrico County, and parts of Chesterfield County. In 2008, GRTC received recognition from the American Public Transportation Association as the “Best Transit System in North America for 2008”.

#### GRTC Routes

GRTC operates a hub-and-spoke system with routes converging on the downtown area near the VCU MCV campus and government buildings along Broad Street. As of May 2010, GRTC operates 23 local bus routes and 12 express routes using 161 buses and cutaway vans. While the local routes provide local access via fixed route service, express routes provide direct service, on a limited stop basis, between downtown Richmond and residential and business areas in outlying jurisdictions.

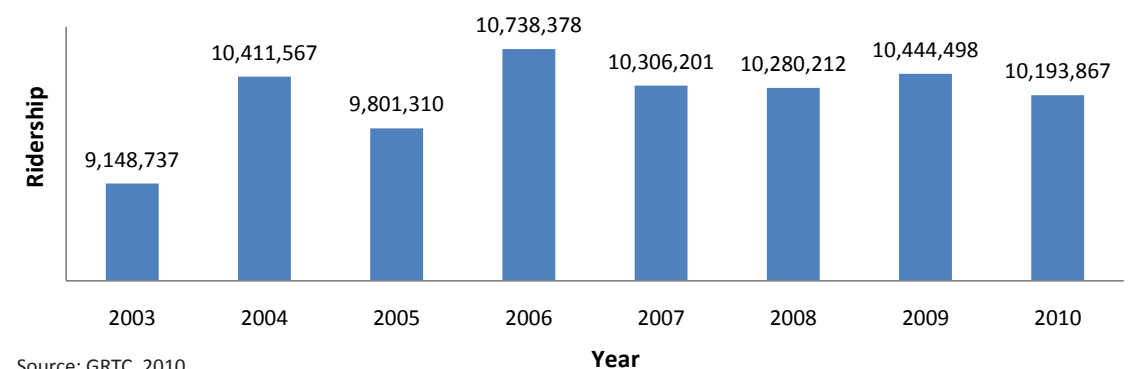
#### GRTC TRANSIT SYSTEM FLEET & SERVICES



#### Ridership

As the primary public transportation provider within Richmond, GRTC has significant ridership and is depended on by many to provide necessary transportation. The chart below shows ridership trends for GRTC over a seven year period between 2003 and 2010. GRTC had its highest ridership rate in 2006 when it provided 10.74 million trips, and had its lowest ridership rate in 2003 when the system provided 9.15 million passenger trips. Since 2006, GRTC has consistently provided between 10.2 million and 10.4 million trips.

#### GRTC Systemwide Ridership



Source: GRTC, 2010

### Availability of Bus Service

Figure 10 shows the GRTC Routes and their ¼-mile services areas categorized into five groups based on the level of service provided by each route. Groupings were determined by the average headways of each route and the hours each route serves. Routes with shorter headways and longer service times provide a higher level of service and, when headways are short enough, allow riders to use the service without being tied to a particular schedule. The general characteristics of each group are listed as follows.

- Level 1.** Routes with a long service span (18 hours or more) and short headways (often less than 20 minutes). This service level is nearly high enough that users could be schedule independent, meaning users could arrive at a bus stop without knowing the schedule as wait times between buses are relatively short.
- Level 2.** Routes with a long service span (generally 18 hours or more) and headways of 20 to 30 minutes on average. While headways are not high enough that users could be schedule independent, the service span and headways indicate a moderately good level of service.
- Level 3.** Routes with a medium to long service span (12-17 hours) and headways of 30 to 45 minutes on average. These routes provide a necessary service, but their headways mean users must be closely tied to the service schedule.
- Level 4.** Routes with a medium to long service span (12-17 hours) and headways of over an hour on average. These routes provide a necessary service, but their headways mean users must be closely tied to the service schedule. Typically, these routes have about 10-12 buses per direction per day.
- Level 5.** Special routes with either very long headways or very short service spans. Most of these routes have extremely limited service range or availability. Within the city, there are few of these routes that are not already overlapped by higher service level routes. Therefore, they are not shown in Figure 10.

*The highest level of bus service is found in the Broad Street corridor and along some Northside routes.*

As seen in Figure 10, the pattern of service indicates the highest levels of service along the Broad Street corridor and two Northside routes, 32 and 34. Additionally, service along Broad Street from Boulevard to Downtown is particularly high given how many bus routes overlap along this segment. Due to the branching and short turn-

backs of some routes, the frequency and thus the level of transit service tends to decrease the further from downtown one goes. Much of the Fan, Museum District, Church Hill, Randolph, Manchester and surrounding Southside neighborhoods, and the Chamberlayne Avenue, Jefferson Davis, and Patterson Avenue corridors all have moderately good Level 2 services. Areas with Level 3 services include Fulton Hill and Montrose Heights, as well as the Forest Hill Avenue, Grove Avenue, Monument Avenue, and Boulevard/Hermitage Road corridors. Areas with Level 4 service include much of Southside west of Belt Boulevard and the Forest Hill Avenue corridor west of Chippenham, due to branching of routes 62, 63, 70 and 71. Most of the city is within a ¼-mile of a transit route with Level 3 or higher service, but large swaths of the Southside are not. This is due in large part to the lower density of population in these relatively newer neighborhoods and commercial areas and to the more auto-dominated land use pattern in the western portions of the Hull Street, Midlothian Turnpike and Forest Hill Avenue corridors.

Figure 10: Transit Routes and Service Areas by Level of Service

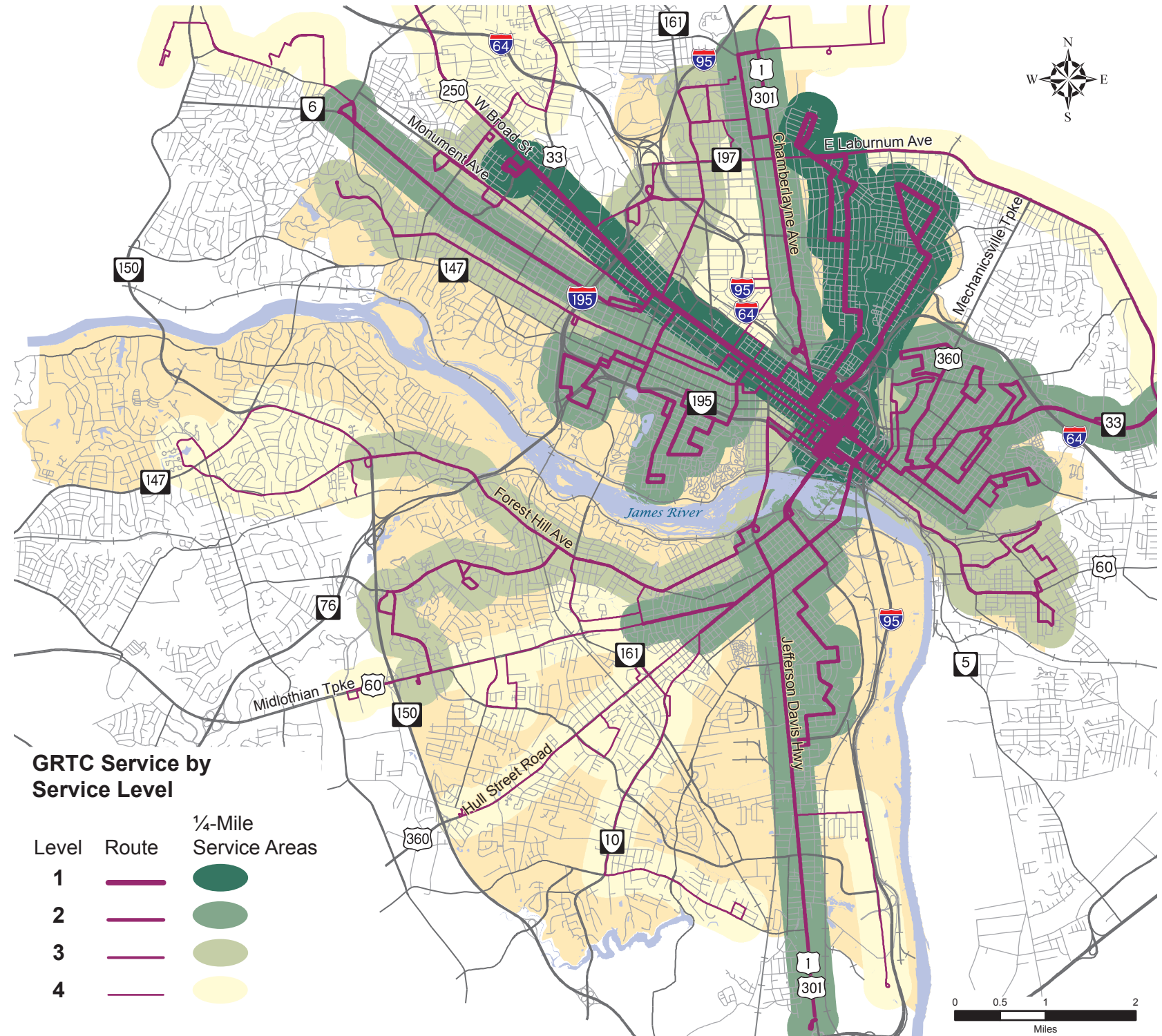
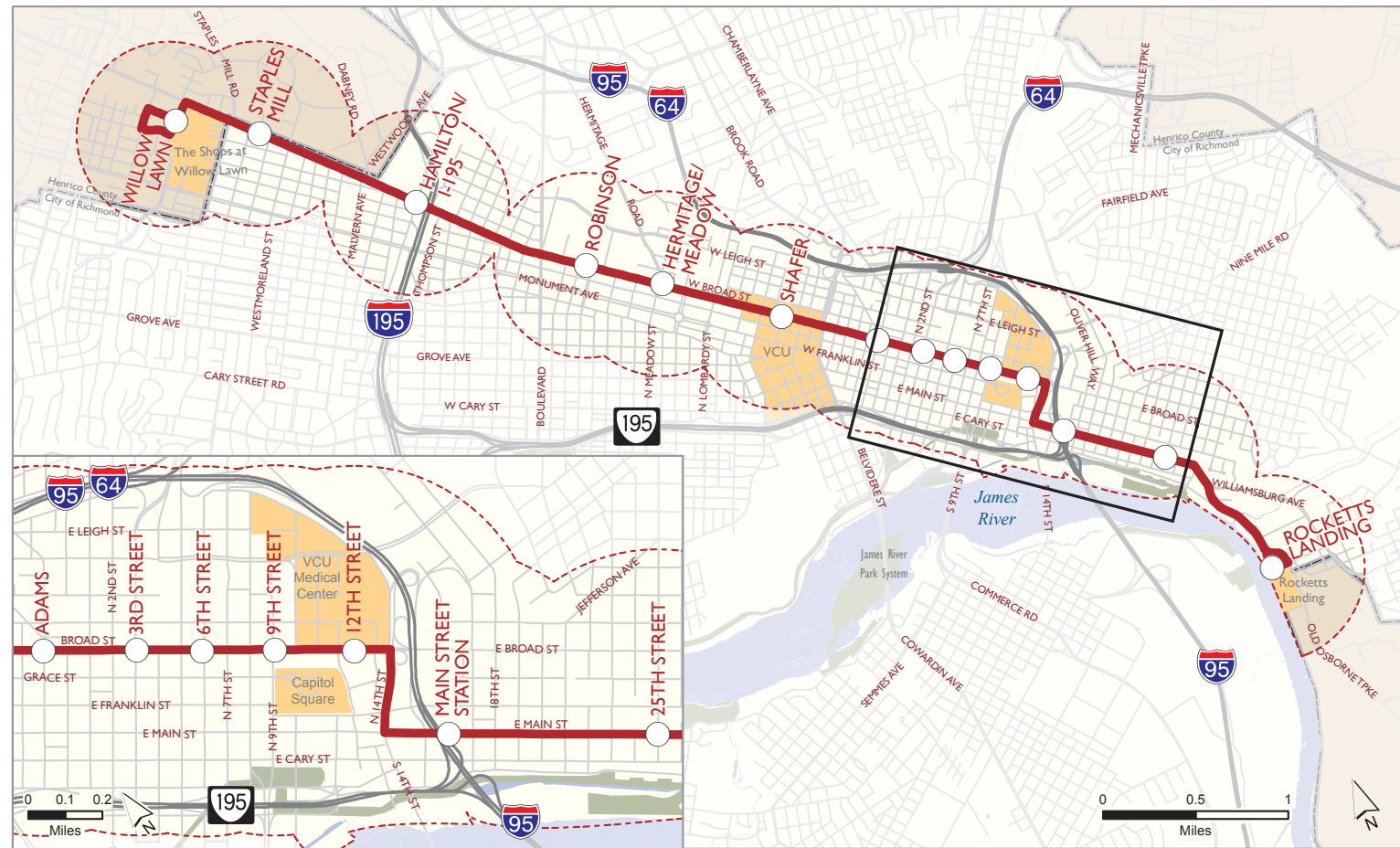


Figure 11: Proposed Broad Street BRT Service (Under Study)



Bus Rapid Transit corridor with median lanes, City of Nantes, France.



Bus Rapid Transit corridor example, Eugene, Oregon. Photos courtesy of Chris Phan.



**RideFinders, CARE and C-VAN**

In addition to providing fixed route public transportation service, GRTC also administers the RideFinders, Community Assisted Ride Enterprise (CARE) and the C-VAN programs. RideFinders is a regional program to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and promote economic development and sustainability by promoting carpooling, vanpooling, park and ride usage, telework consultations, commuter guides, and many other services. RideFinders also promotes Travel Demand Management strategies through outreach to workers, assisting employers with developing tax-free transportation benefits programs and operates the Emergency Ride Home Program for commuters who bike, walk, carpool, vanpool, or take the bus to work at least three days a week. RideFinders currently has 108 operating vanpools and nearly 900 registered carpoolers.

The CARE program is a demand responsive, curb-to-curb paratransit service provided to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligible persons with the City of Richmond, Henrico County and parts of Chesterfield County. C-VAN provides transportation assistance to participants in the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW) program. In Fiscal Year 2010, CARE services and C-VAN services carried 237,065 and 15,686 passenger trips, respectively.

**Expansion Plans in Comprehensive Operations Analysis**

GRTC completed a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) in 2008 that laid out plans to expand current GRTC service over three phases. Phase I recommends simplifying the route structure and increasing service to neighborhoods by increasing route efficiency and productivity, while simultaneously reducing redundant and unnecessary service. Phase II calls for the construction of multiple transfer centers. The COA recommends building a downtown transfer center, along with neighborhood transit centers at Willow Lawn, Southside Plaza near Hull Street, and Belt Boulevard, and a Southside-Downtown center near Hull Street and Commerce Road. By constructing these transit centers, routes can converge at these destinations to facilitate bus transfers and reduce bus bunching along Broad Street. Phase III calls for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to be implemented along Broad Street between Willow Lawn Drive and the Rocketts Landing development in eastern Henrico County. The BRT system would improve transit operations along Broad Street and provide faster public transportation service along the Broad Street corridor.

*GRTC's COA recommends a downtown transfer center, neighborhood transit centers and a BRT system for Broad Street*