

# ***Niagara Transit Master Plan 10-Year Investment and Growth Strategy (2026-2035)***

Board Presentation  
June 17, 2025



Prepared by Left Turn Right Turn Ltd

# Why this Plan?



Mandated in the Niagara Service Standards Strategy



Enables coordinated regional planning



Adapts to changing demographics, travel needs, transit practices and technology



Addresses key issues like Specialty transit access and facility constraints



Guides long-term investments across the region

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# **What is the 2035 Plan?**

# Reimagining Transit in Niagara



Integrate and improve transit efficiency



Get more people to use transit








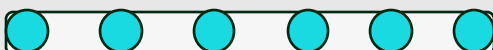






Improve the availability of transit






Respond to growth

# Services for Different Needs

Service Type	What need will it serve?	Peak Service Level (How long will I wait?)	Coverage (How far / long will I walk)
<b>Rapid</b> 	Fast urban spine with transit priority measures	~10 minutes or better	Low stop density (10-minute walk) 
<b>Express</b> 	Limited stop service that acts as precursor to Rapid service	15-30 minutes	Low stop density (10-minute walk) 
<b>Regional</b> 	Provide hub-to-hub service with network connections at key locations	15 - 60 minutes	Limited stops, mostly at hubs 
<b>Corridor</b> 	High-frequency two-way service on major roads	15 minutes or better	5-minute walk 
<b>Base</b> 	Linear two-way service on major roads forming base of transit network	20 - 30 minutes	5-minute walk 
<b>Community</b> 	Local community access in small urban centres	30 - 60 minutes	3-5 minute walk 

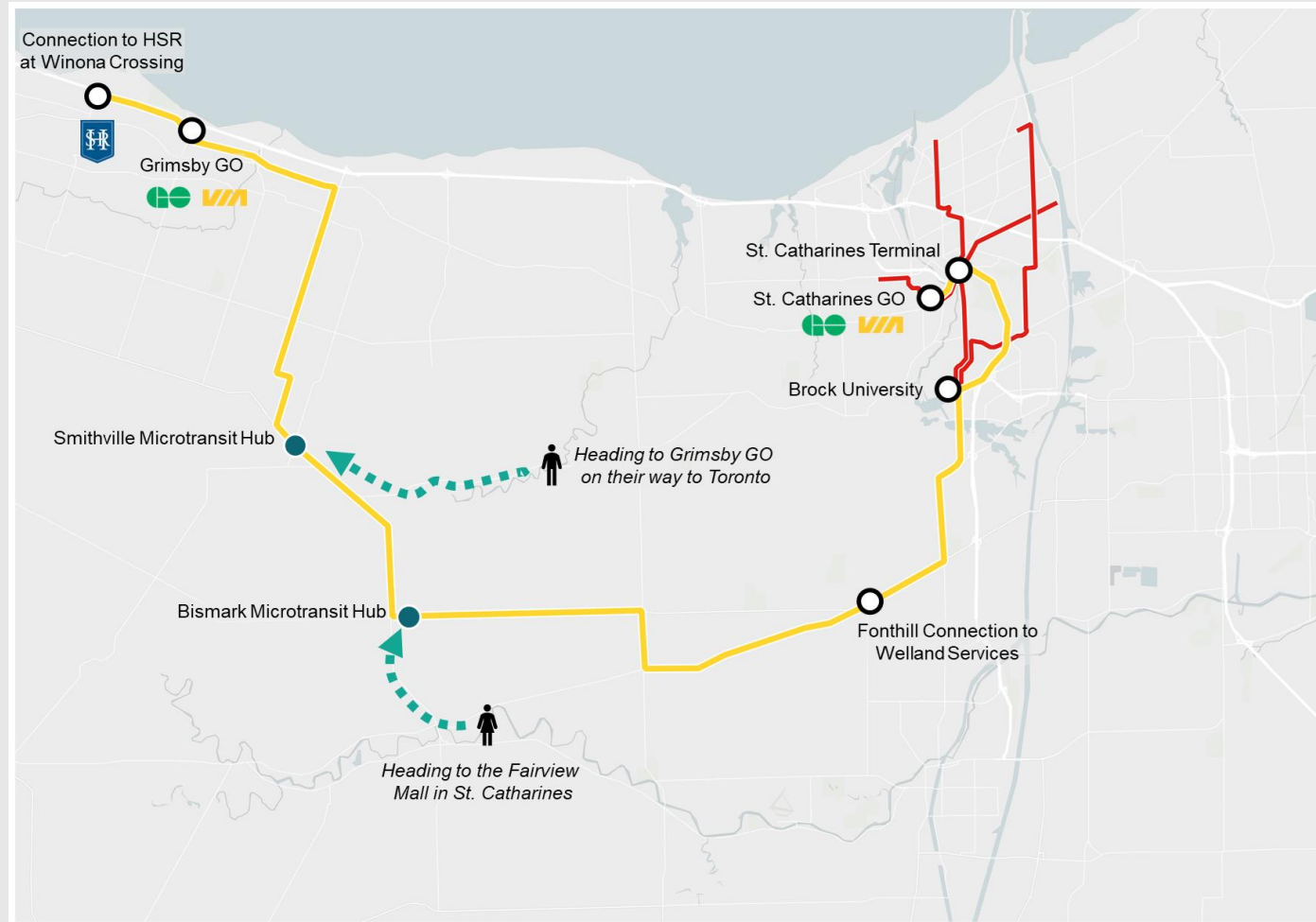
# Services for Different Needs

Service Type	What need will it serve?	Peak Service Level (How long will I wait?)	Coverage (How far / long will I walk)
<b>Micro-Transit</b> 	Demand-responsive service in lower demand periods and areas, with connections to regional and rapid routes and major transfer points	Maximum 60-minute wait	3-to-5 minute walk. Uses regular route stops where available or virtual stops 
<b>Specialized Transit</b> 	Accessible, origin-destination service	Maximum 60-minute wait	Accessible door-to-accessible door

# Service Integration

Purposely  
integrate  
service types to  
become more  
efficient

- Regional Route
- Rapid Bus Routes
- Microtransit Connection
- Major Hubs and Terminals
- Microtransit Hubs

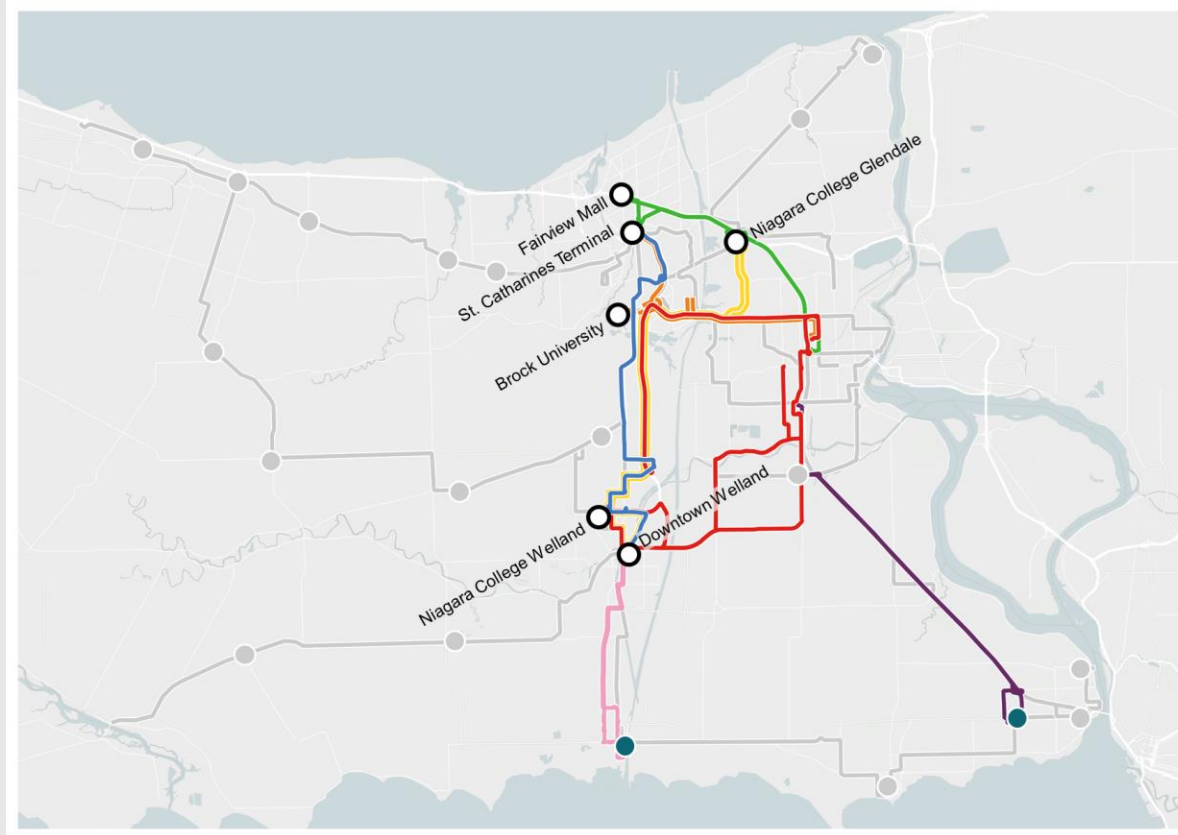


# Service Outcomes

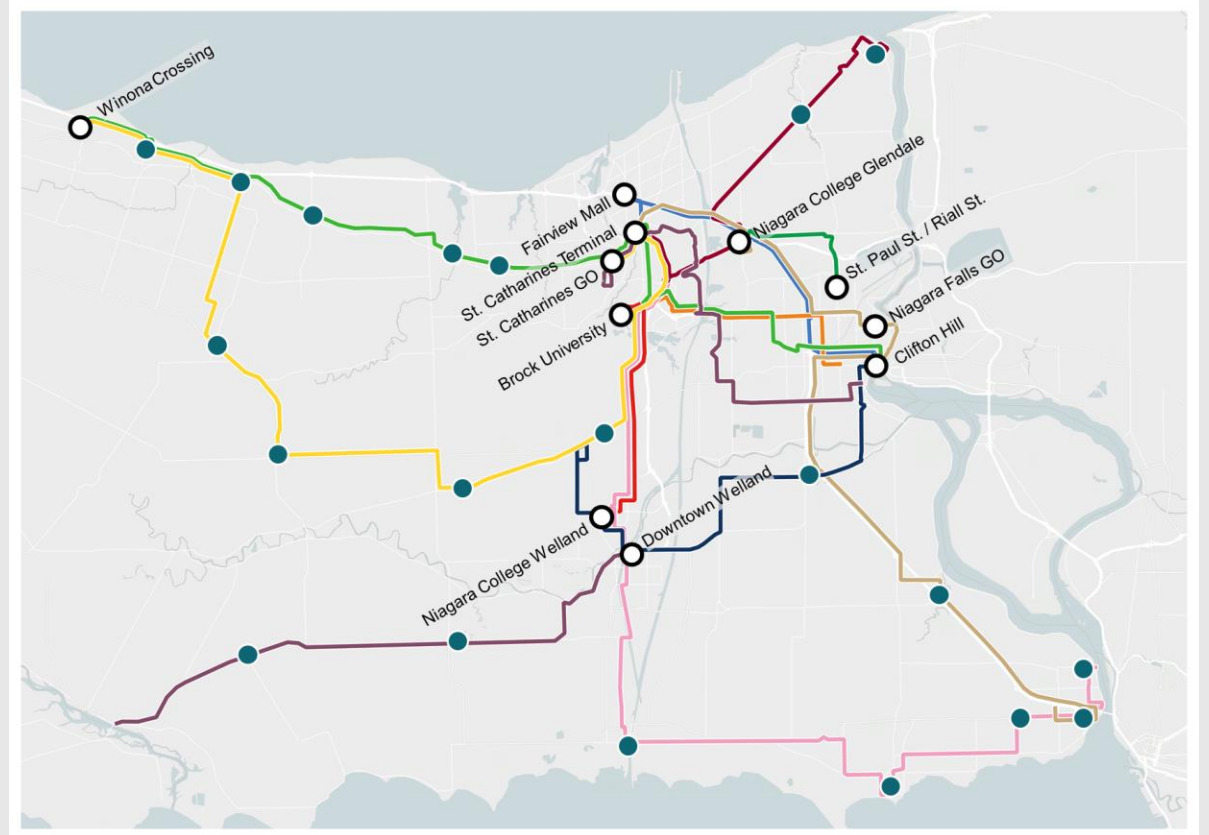
- ✓ More “One-seat” Journeys
- ✓ Faster trips
- ✓ More frequent service particularly in high demand areas
- ✓ Greater than 50% reduction in Specialty trip denials
- ✓ Access to service everywhere and anytime
- ✓ Service enhancement focused on more marginalized areas
- ✓ Improved service efficiency



# Regional Routes

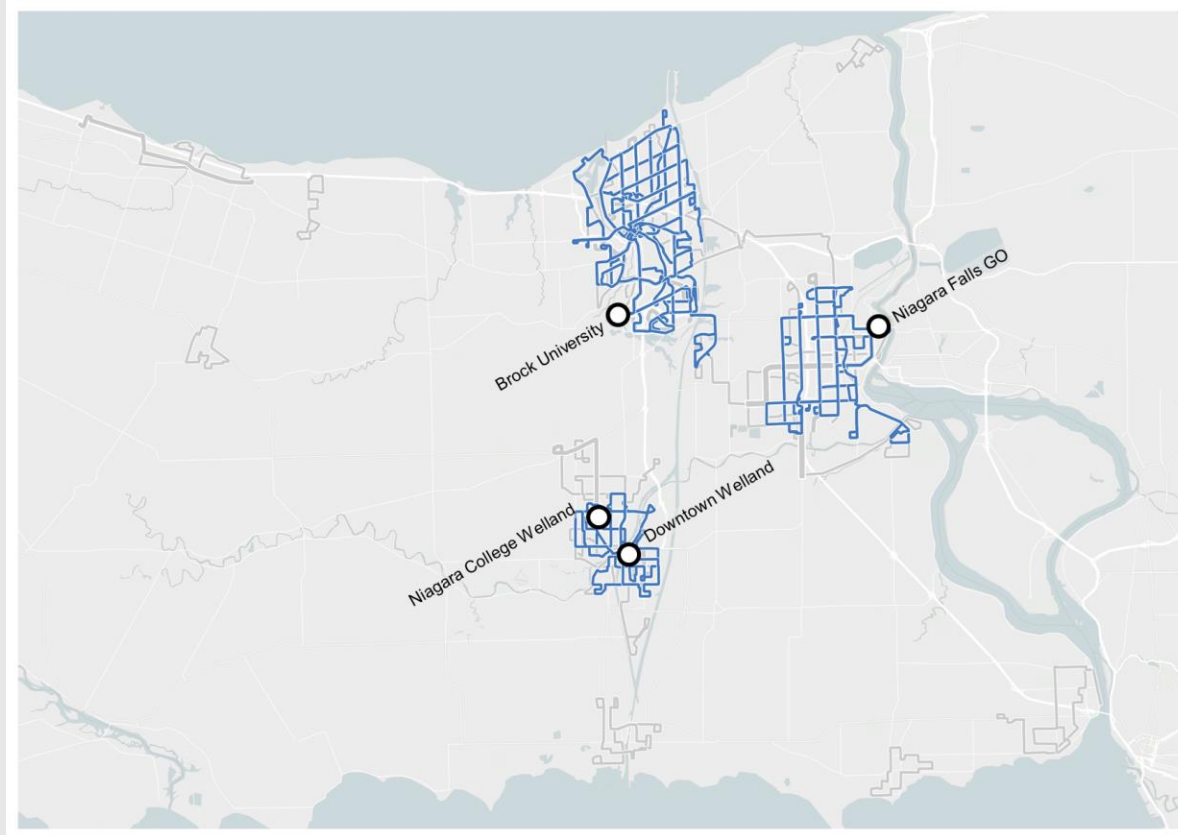


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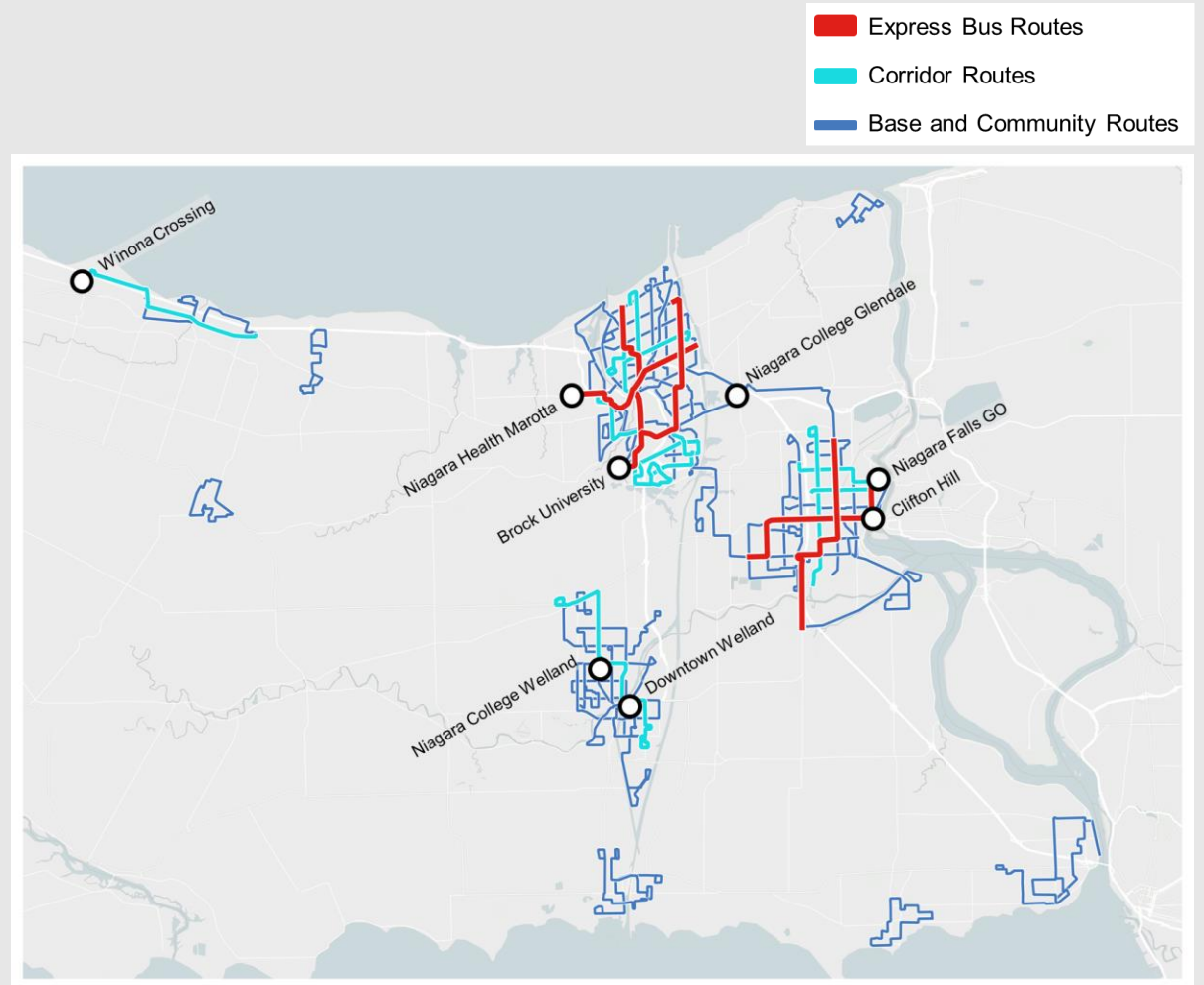


**Stage 3**

# Local Networks



**Current**



**Stage 3**

# 2035 Strategic Increase in Service



66%

Service Hour Increase

Weekday	Growth in Service
Early morning (6-8)	▶▶▶▶
Late morning (8-12)	▶▶▶▶▶▶
PM Peak (12-6)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Early evening (6-10)	▶▶▶▶▶▶
Late evening (10-12)	▶▶▶▶

Saturday	Growth in Service
Early Morning (6-9)	▶▶▶▶
Late morning (9-12)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Midday (12-6)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Early evening (6-9)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Late evening (9-12)	▶▶▶▶▶▶

Sunday	Growth in Service
Early morning (6-10)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Daytime (10-6)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Early evening (6-9)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Late evening (9-12)	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶

Service Expansion

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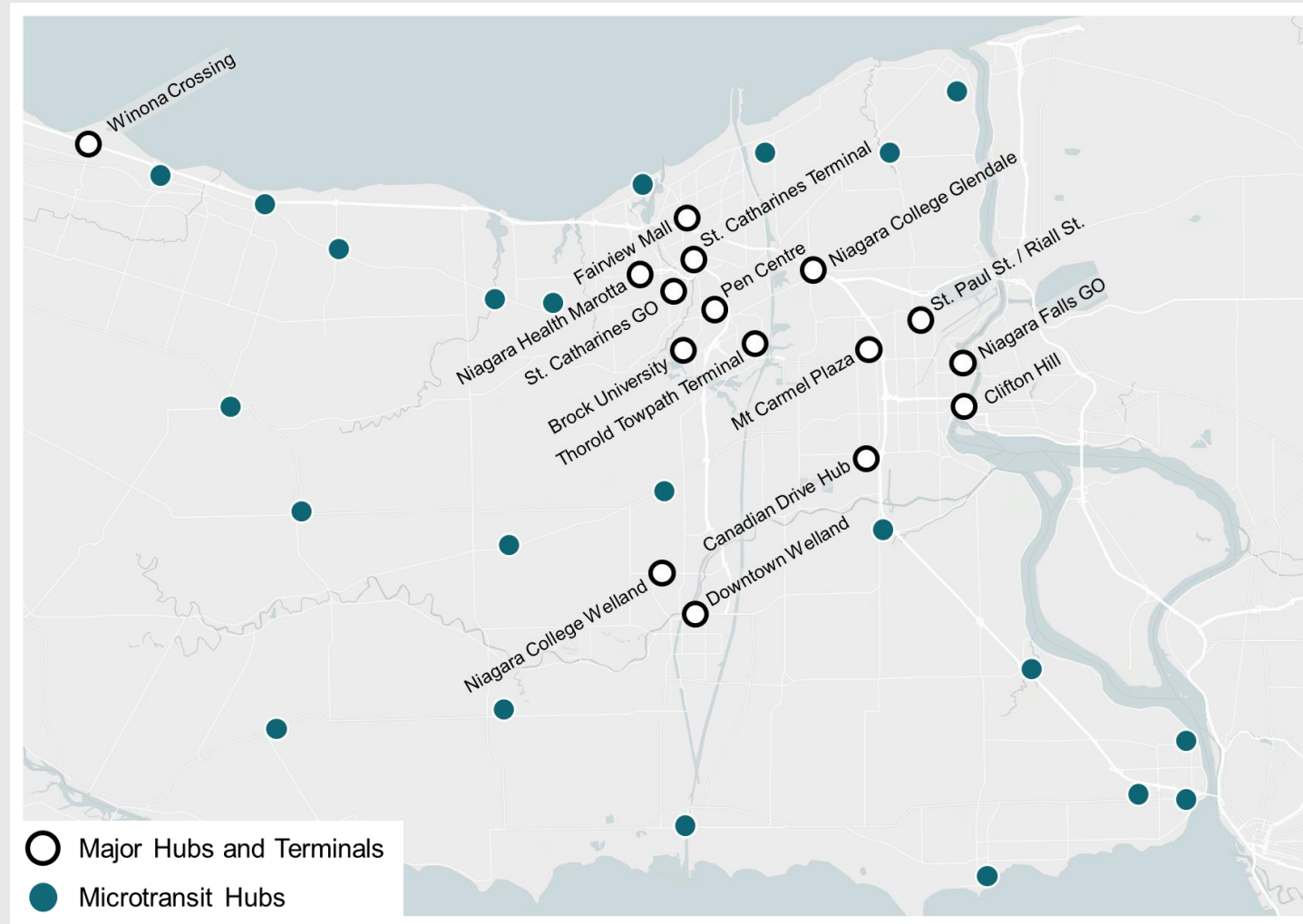
# 2035 Supporting Elements

# 2035 Fleet and Garage

- Fleet growth from 187 to 345 vehicles
- Current facilities nearing capacity
  - Room for 13 additional vehicles
- Most cost-effective option:
  - Expand Niagara Falls garage (+73 vehicles) and;
  - Redevelop and expand Welland garage (+72 vehicles)



# 2035 Passenger Hubs





# Implementation Summary

Stage	Fixed Route service hours	Specialty service hours	Total service hours	Stage Summary	
Existing	460,000	155,000	615,000		
1 (2026-2027)	480,000	195,000	675,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority network optimization</li> <li>• Major regional expansion</li> <li>• Introduce two express routes</li> <li>• Harmonize service span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Sunday service</li> <li>• Enhance specialty service</li> <li>• Infrastructure planning</li> <li>• Begin Niagara Falls garage expansion</li> </ul>
2 (2028-2030)	610,000	195,000	805,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final network optimization</li> <li>• Implement most local community fixed routes</li> <li>• Implement first Rapid lines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish high-frequency network</li> <li>• Major construction work including garage expansion</li> </ul>
3 (2031-2035)	785,000	245,000	1,020,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Rapid service</li> <li>• Investment in high-frequency peak service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete garage expansion</li> <li>• Implement full overnight service</li> </ul>

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# **Stage 1**

## **(2026 - 2027)**



# Stage 1 Objectives



Implement priority efficiencies



Address current issues



Harmonize service



Set the groundwork for long-term improvements

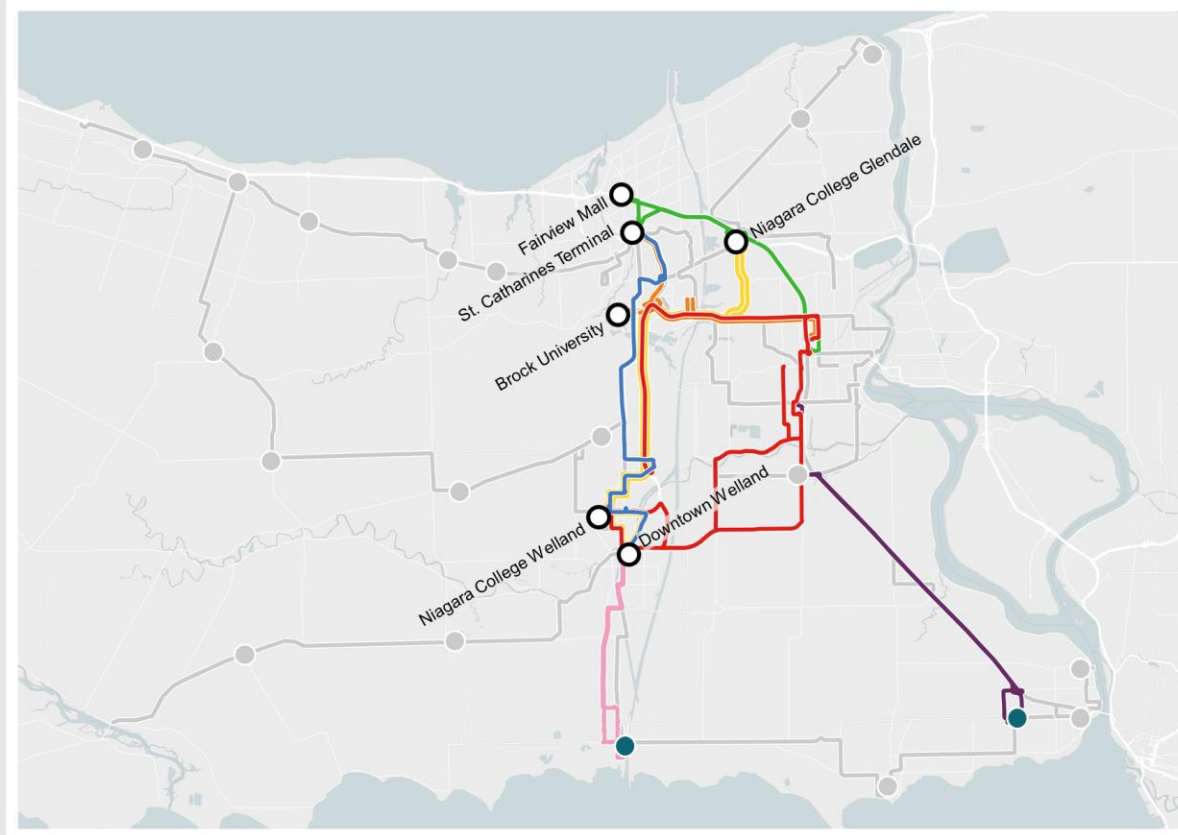


Implement quick-wins

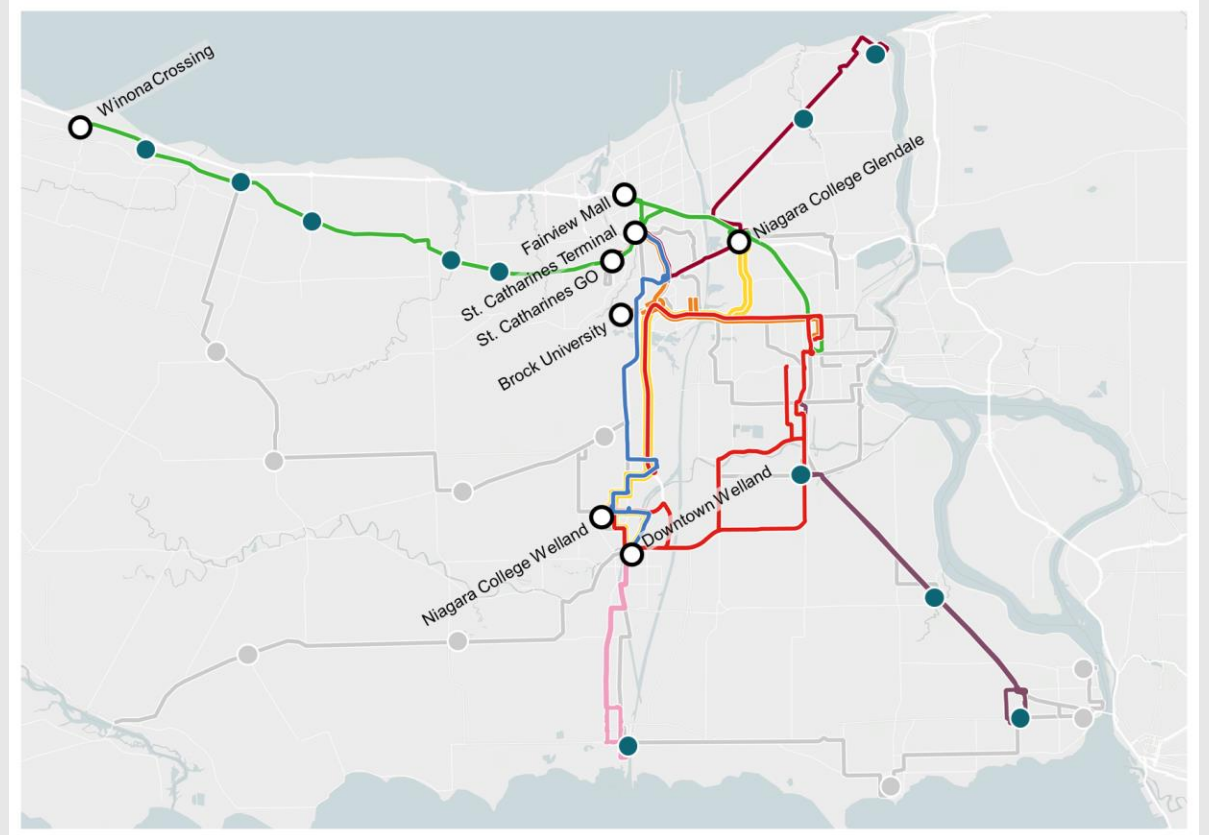


Expand regional connectivity

# Regional Routes



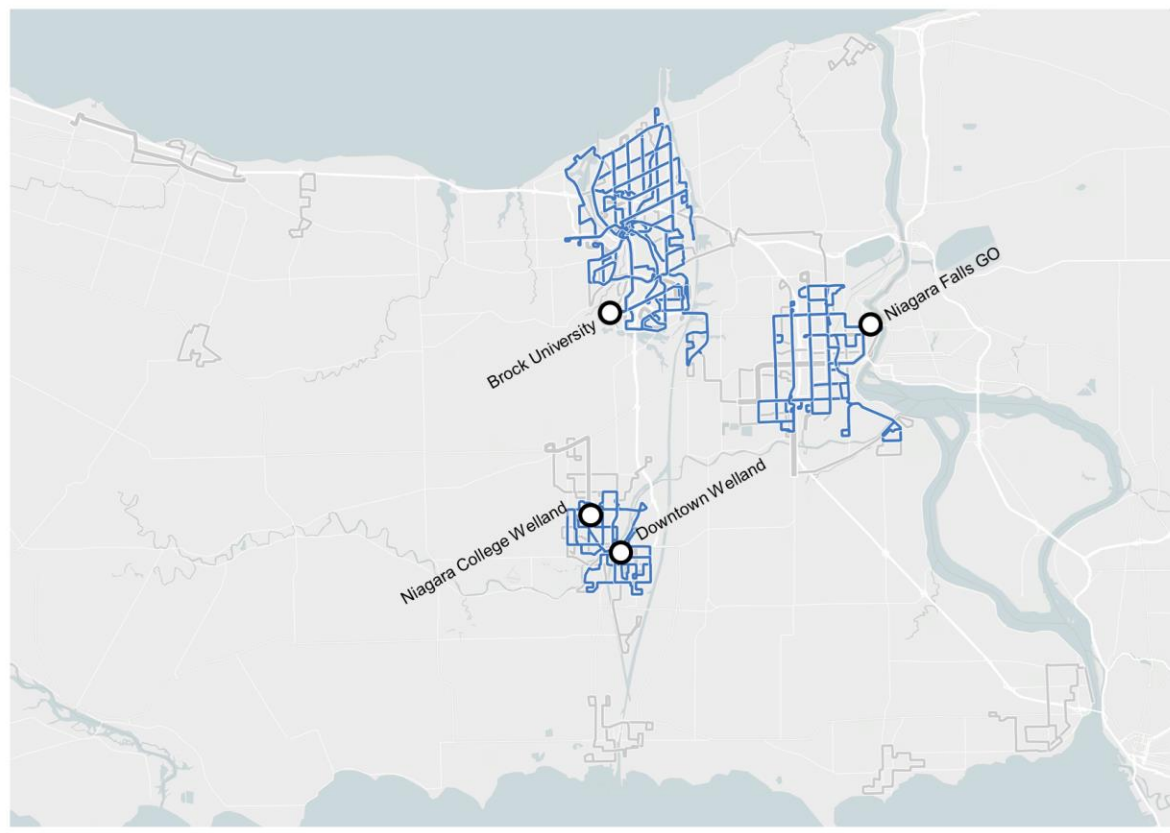
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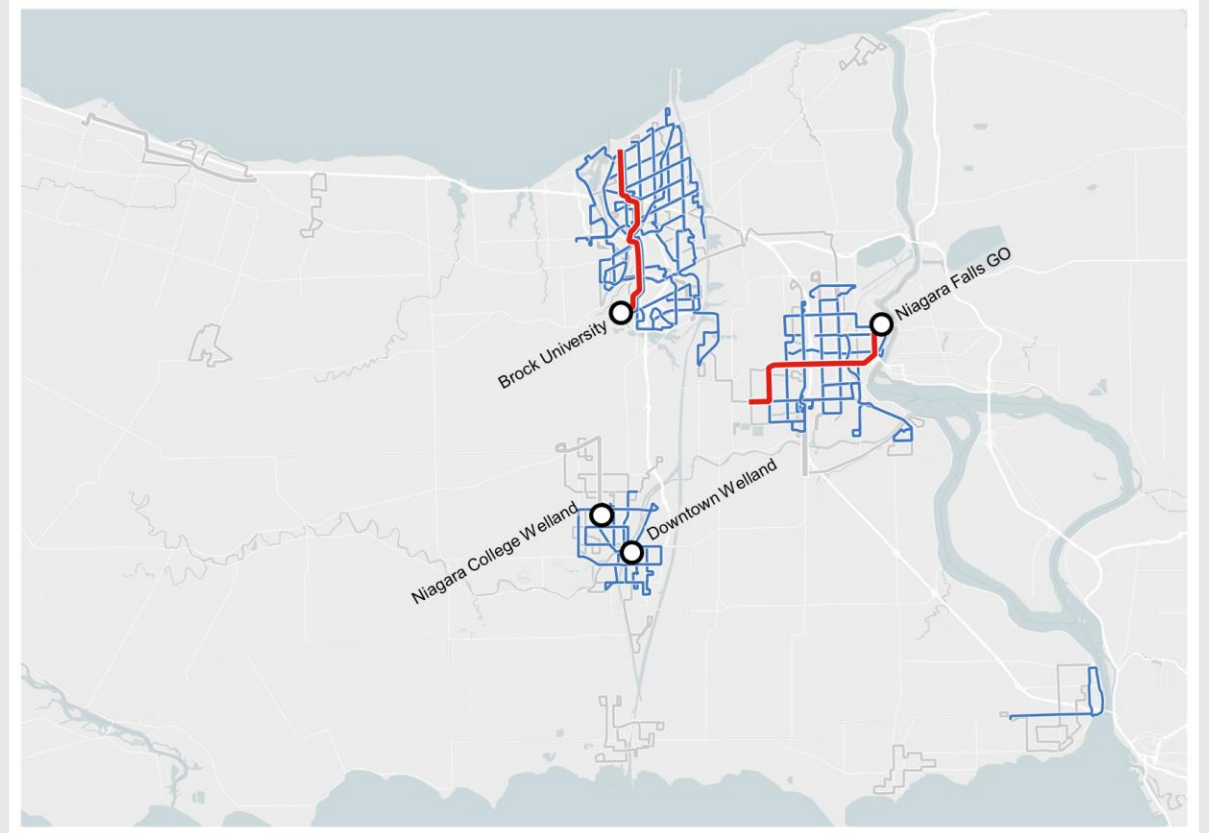
**Stage 1**

# Local Networks

- Express Bus Routes
- Corridor Routes
- Base and Community Routes



**Current**



**Stage 1**

# Microtransit



- Improve access to service by:
  - Expanding regional fixed route coverage
  - Better focus scheduling practices on service efficiency
- Expand microtransit to provide full regional coverage
- Introduce microtransit in urban areas during low-demand times
- Use microtransit to create consistent service spans

# Specialized

- Target improvements to meet AODA compliance
- Improve accessibility infrastructure
- Improve transit access by:
  - Expanding regional fixed route coverage
  - Focusing scheduling practices on service efficiency





# Key Stage 1 Elements

- Land acquisition for Niagara Falls and Welland garage development
- Planning, design and begin construction of Niagara Falls garage expansion
- Planning and design of urban hubs and transit priority
- Construction of new rural hubs and stops to accommodate network changes
- Begin planning and design for Welland garage redevelopment



Photo by Noun Project from Noun Project

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# **Stage 2**

## **(2028 - 2030)**

# Stage 2 Objectives



Continue network improvements



Grow service to meet demand



Expand access to service



Better match service to demand



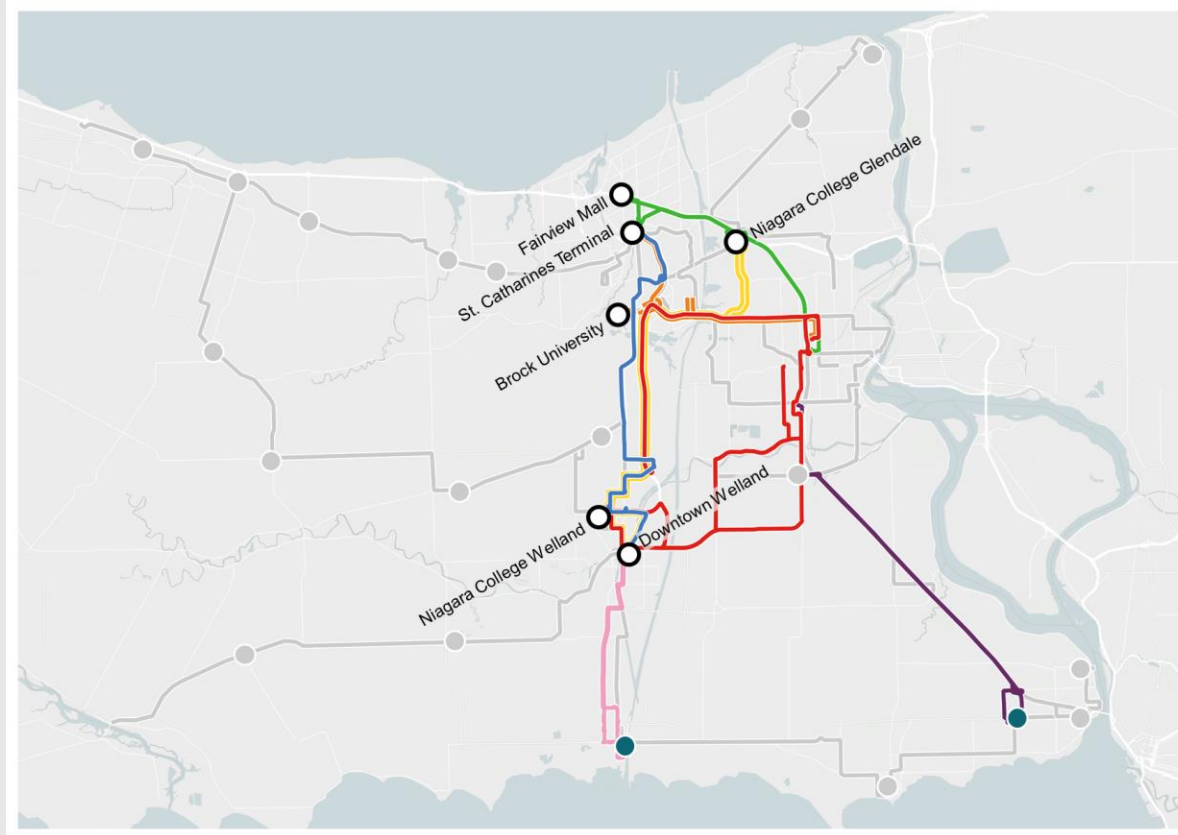
Develop a high-frequency network with Rapid Bus service



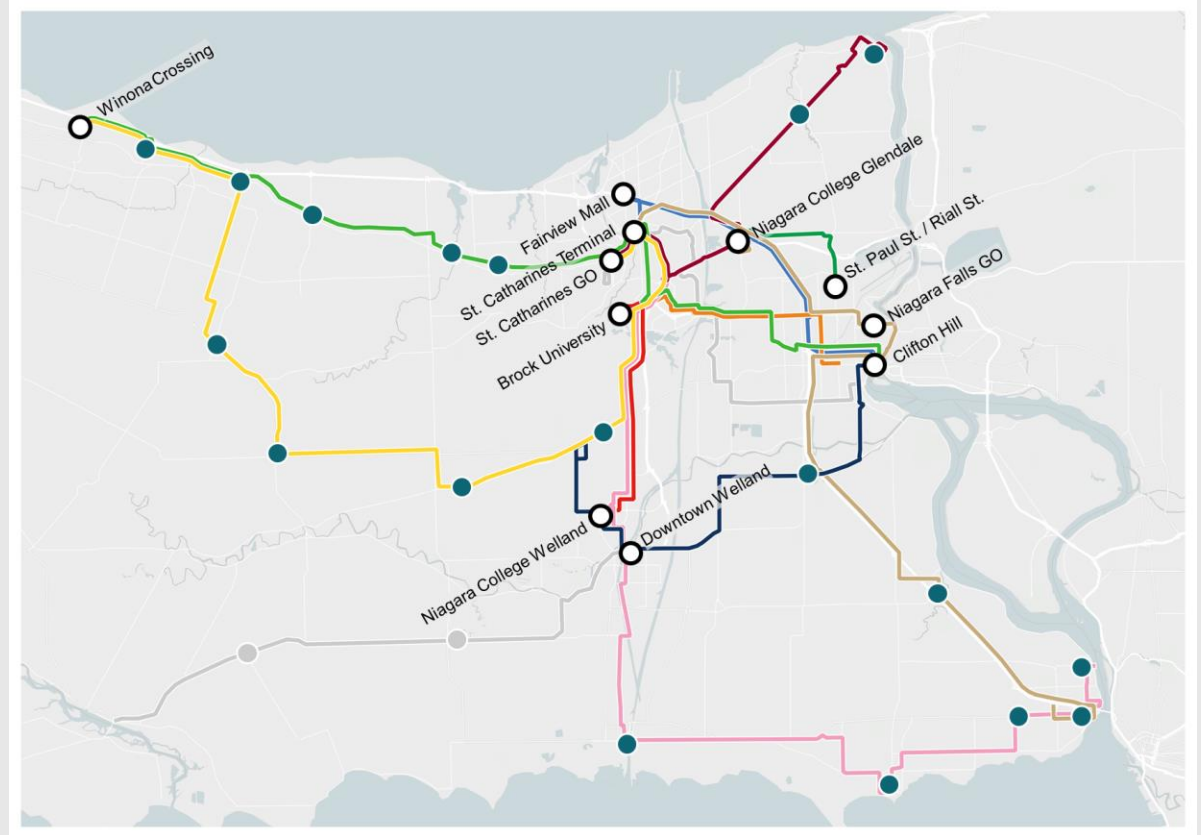
Major infrastructure work to support growth



# Regional Routes

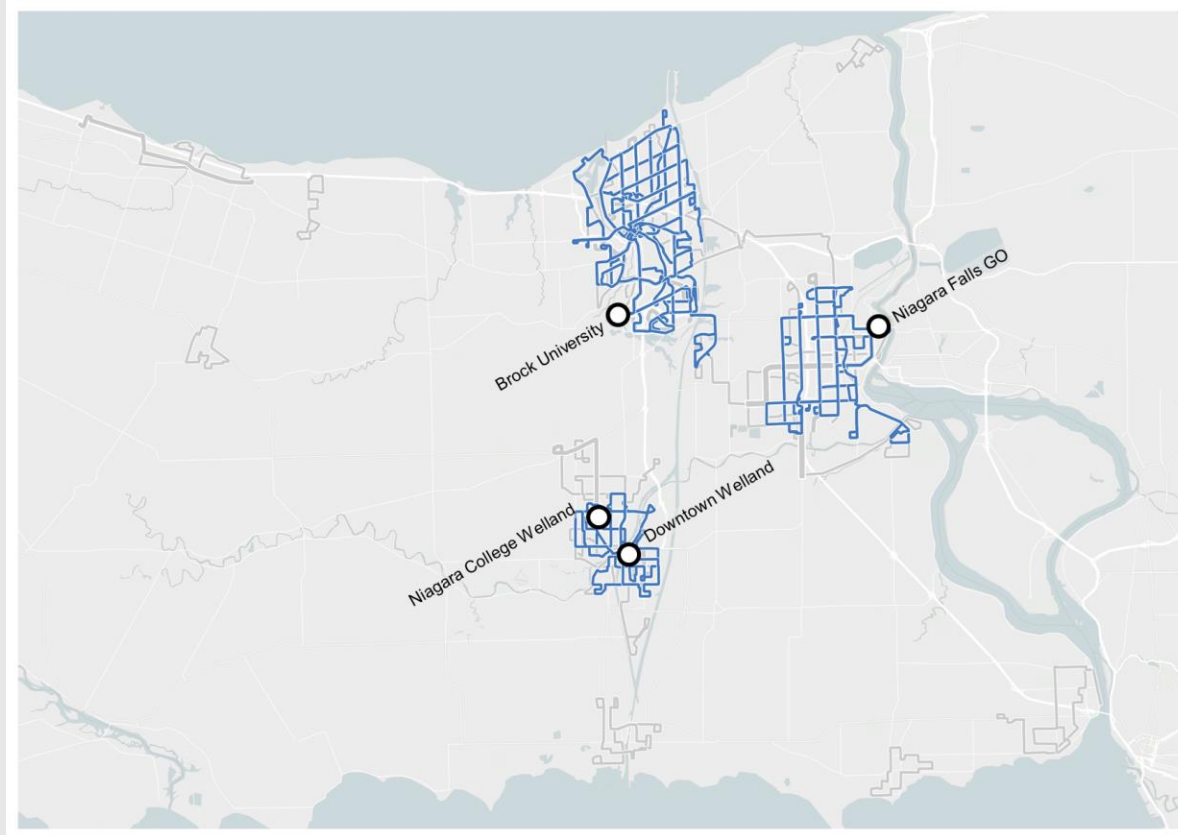


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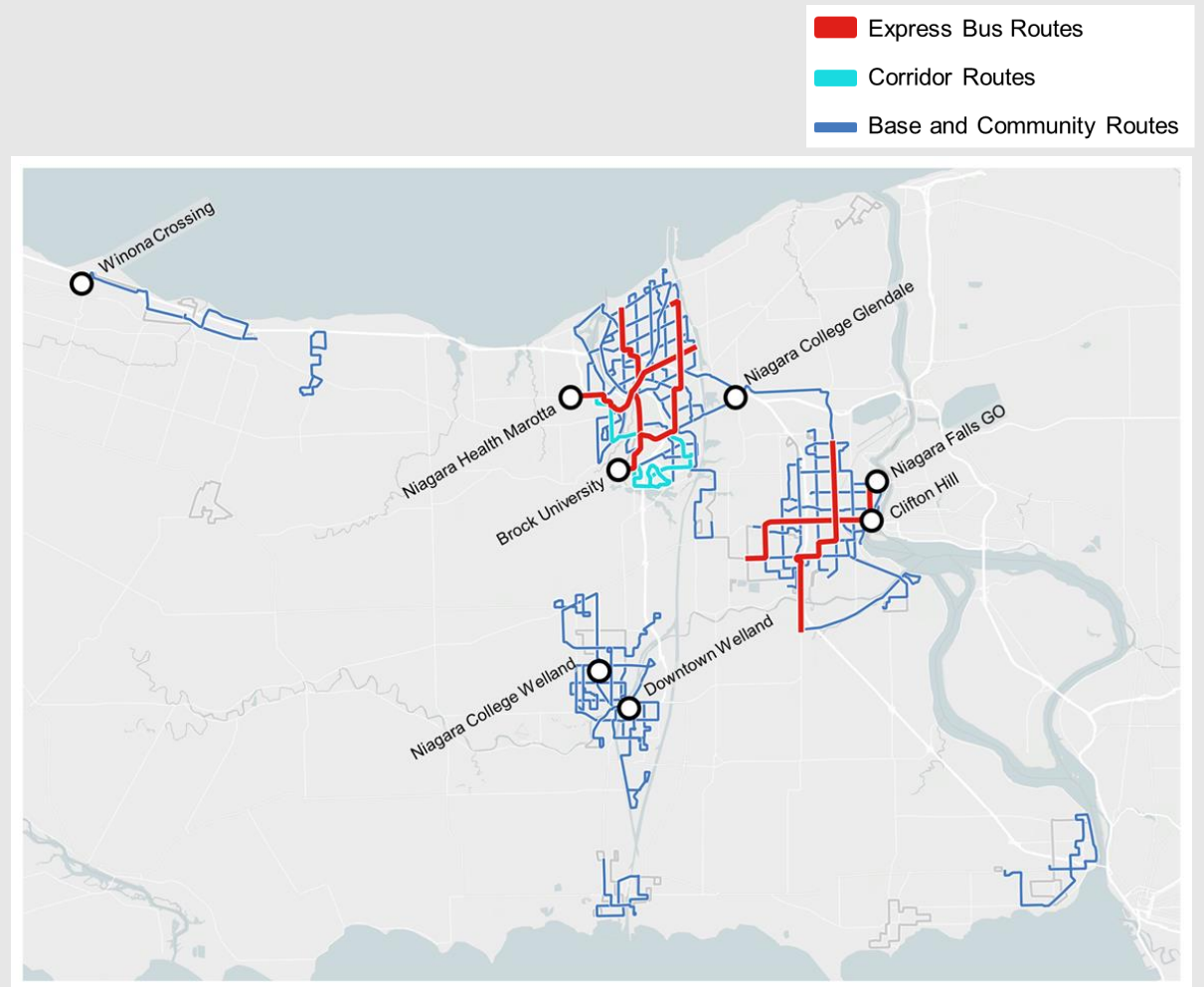


**Stage 2**

# Local Networks



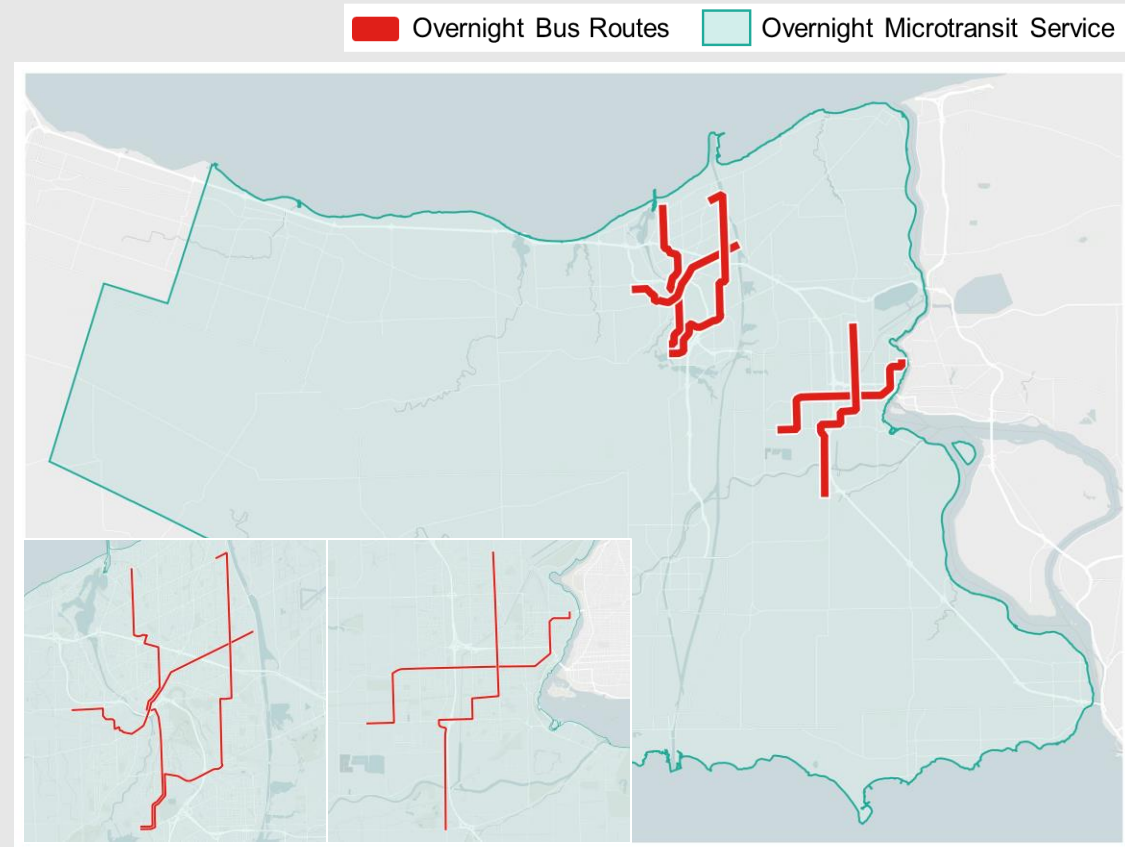
**Current**



**Stage 2**

# Overnight Service Network

- Extend service to 1:30 AM at night and from 5:30 AM in the morning
  - Supports connectivity to GO Transit and shift work
- Five fixed routes along high-demand corridors
  - Estimated 14 boardings per revenue vehicle hours
- Microtransit in all other places



# Key Stage 2 Elements

- Complete Niagara Falls garage expansion
- Begin Welland garage redevelopment
- Major urban hub construction
- Construction of transit priority measures
- Construction of infrastructure for two Rapid Bus lines
- Continue construction of new rural hubs and stops
- Rapid Bus planning and design for three remaining lines

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# **Stage 3**

## **(2031 - 2035)**

# Service Enhancements

- Significant investment in high-frequency peak service
- Broad investment in off-peak service
- Expand overnight service
- Expansion of fixed route service into new development areas
- Minor expansion of regional and local community services



# Assets and Planning



Complete Welland garage redevelopment



Construction of infrastructure for three final Rapid Bus lines



Continued construction of transit priority measures



Continue construction of new rural hubs and stops to accommodate service expansion

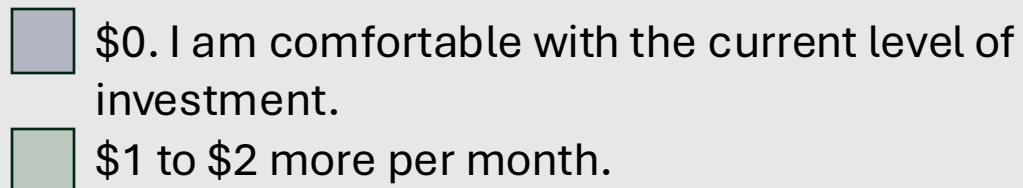
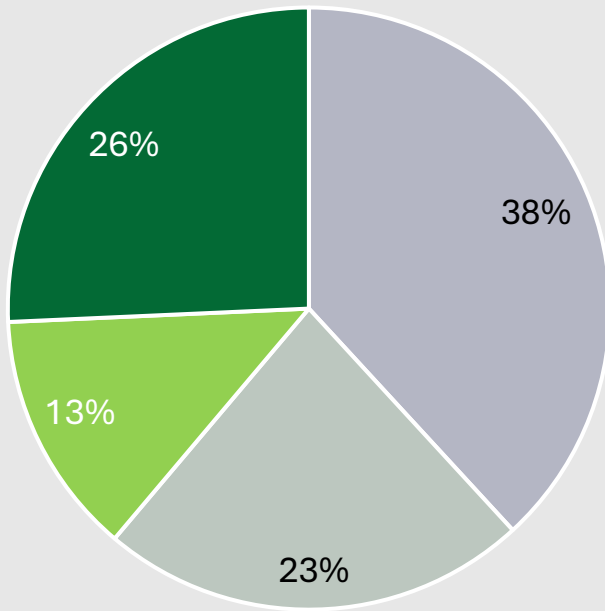
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# Financial Plan

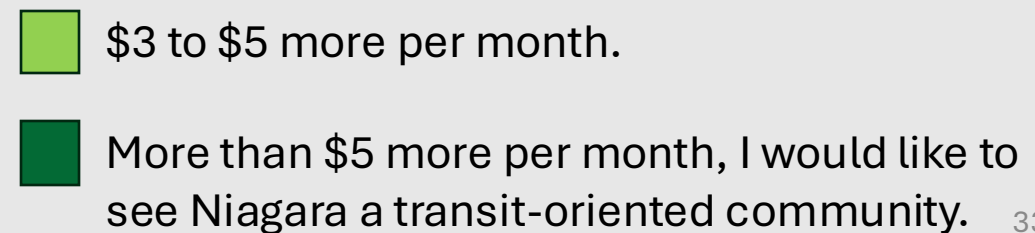
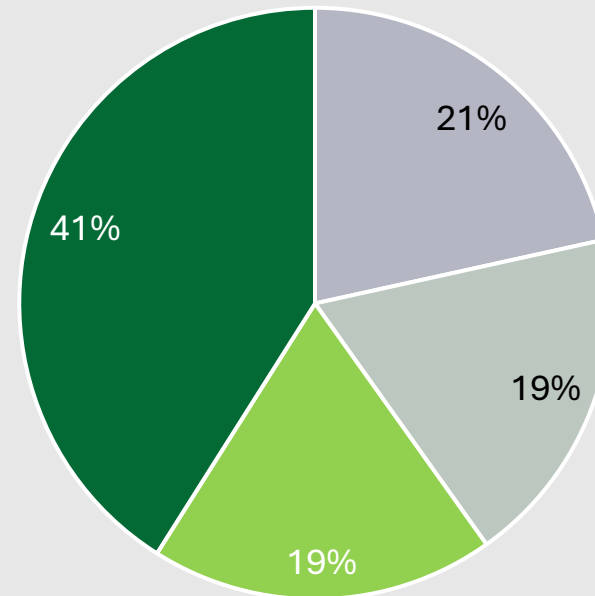


# Willingness to Invest

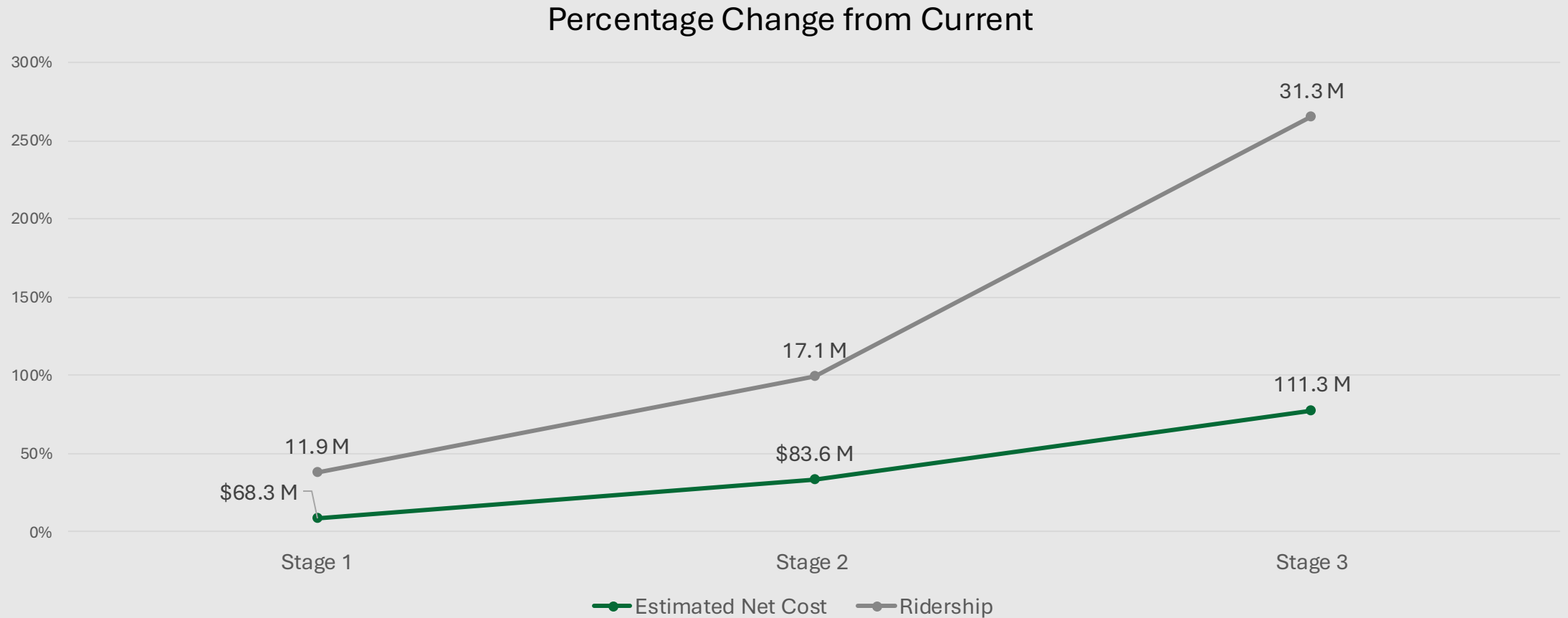
Round 1 (Q2 2024)  
739 respondents



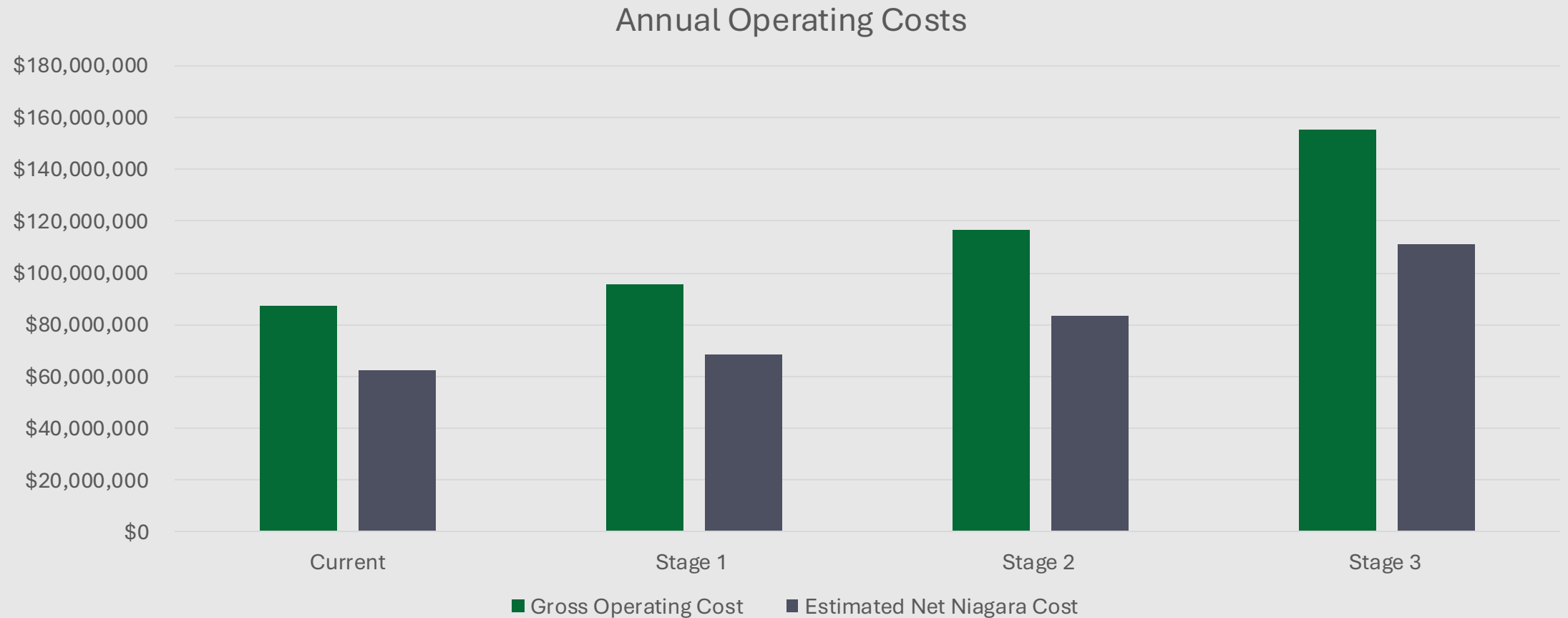
Round 2 (Q1 2025)  
919 respondents



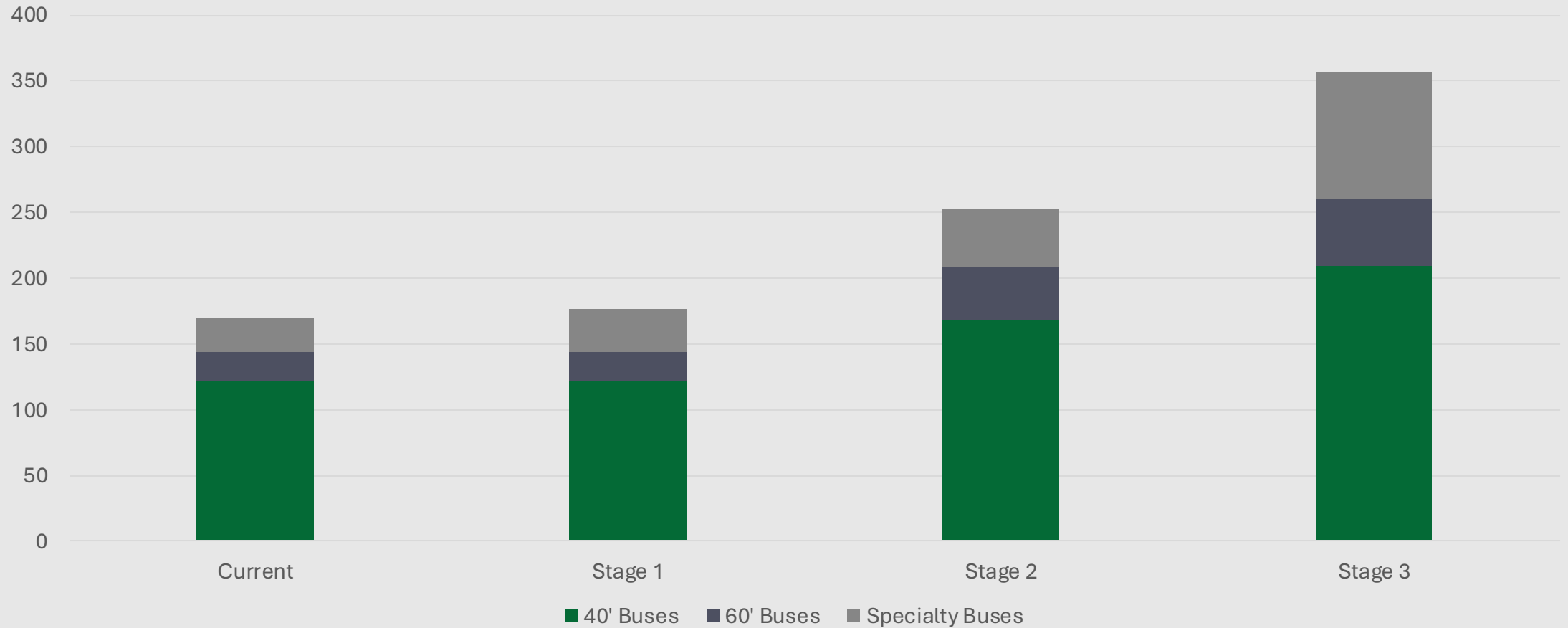
# Investing for Growth



# Annual Operating Costs



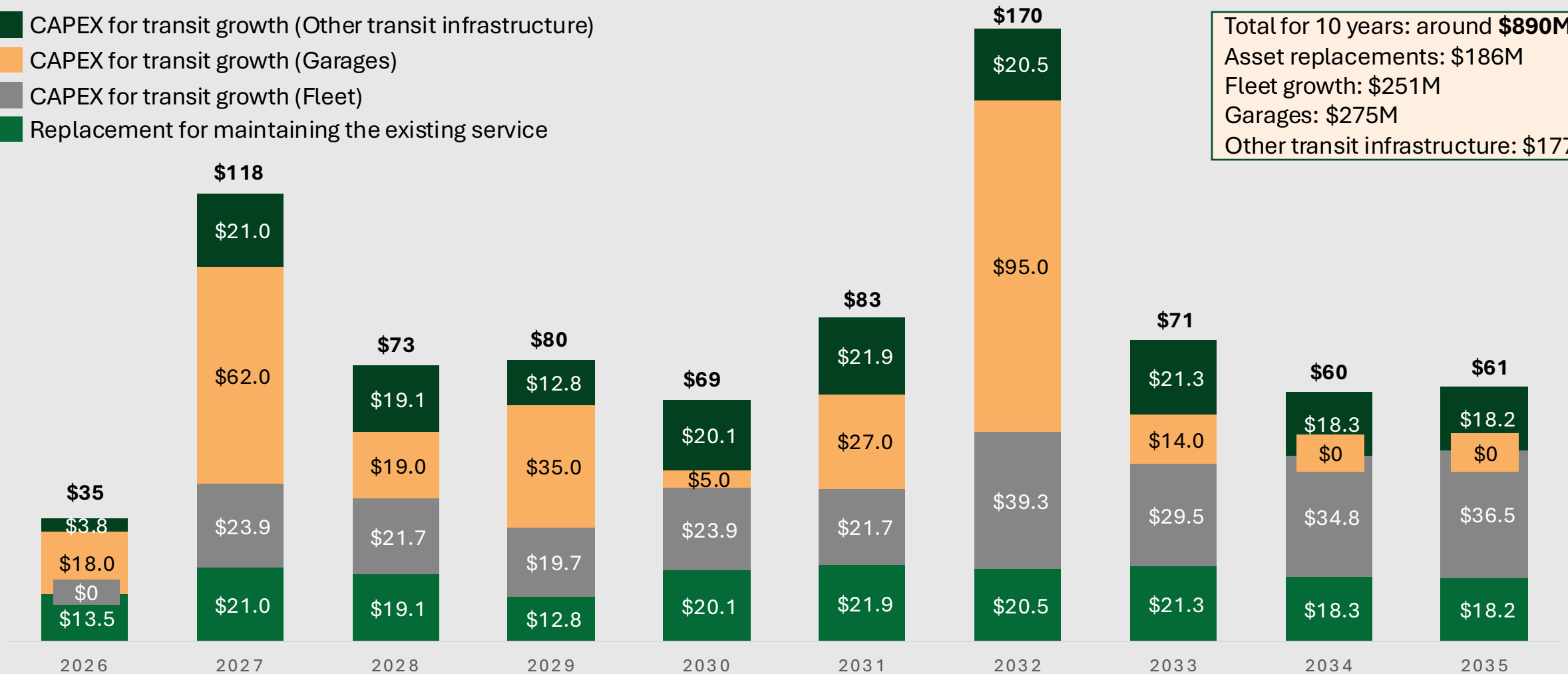
# Fleet Growth



# Capital Budget

- CAPEX for transit growth (Other transit infrastructure)
- CAPEX for transit growth (Garages)
- CAPEX for transit growth (Fleet)
- Replacement for maintaining the existing service

Total for 10 years: around **\$890M**  
Asset replacements: \$186M  
Fleet growth: \$251M  
Garages: \$275M  
Other transit infrastructure: \$177M



*Preliminary estimations – subject to refinement*

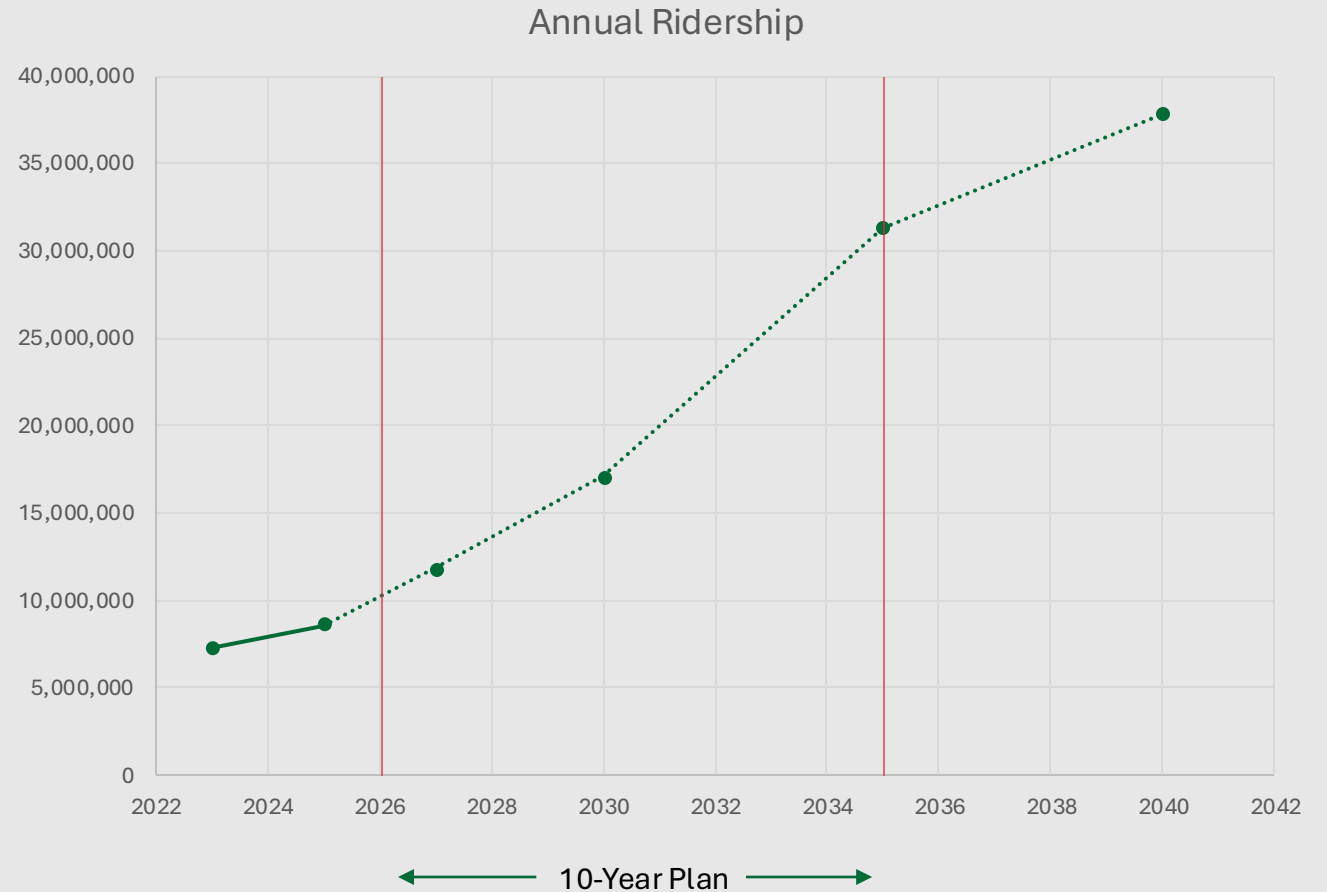
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# Summary

# Transformational Change

The Niagara Transit Master Plan will:

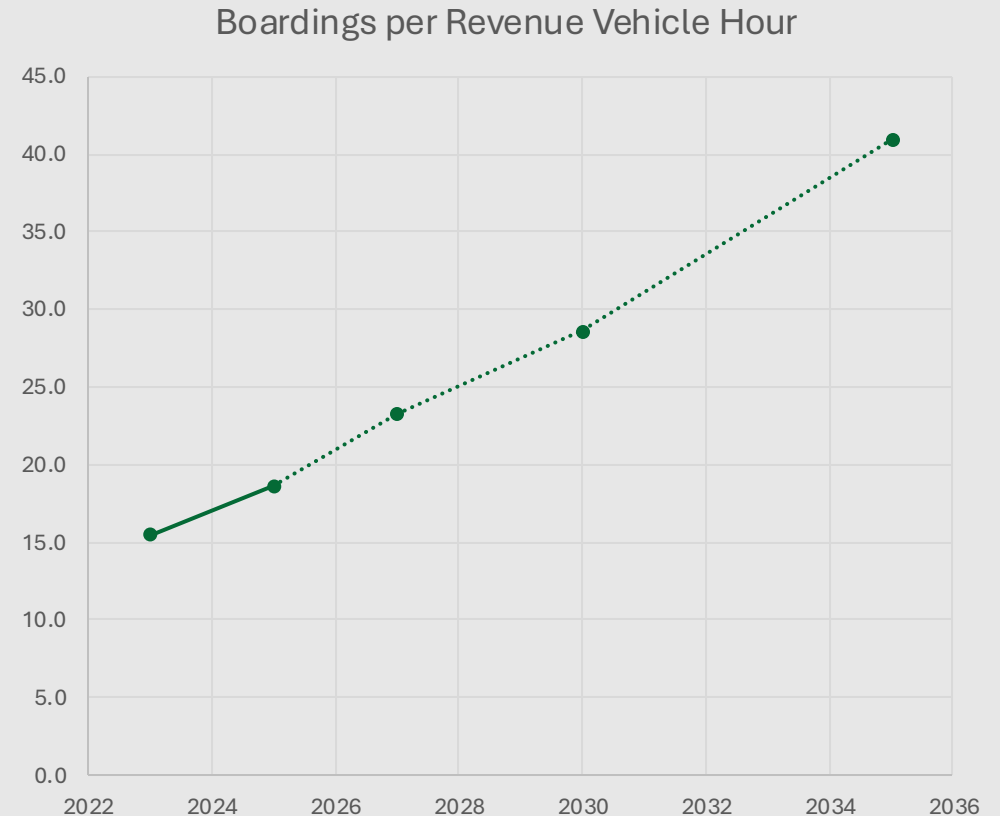
- Increase ridership
- Improve travel time savings by **24%**
- Increase the average level service for existing riders by **240%** and **1400%** for those in marginalized areas



# Transformational Change

The Niagara Transit Master Plan will:

- Increase service efficiency
- Improve high-frequency service coverage from **14% to 42%** of Niagara's total population and employment
- Improve fixed route coverage from **54% to 75%** of Niagara's total population and employment





# The Benefits of Investing in Niagara Transit

- Integrates regional transit services effectively and efficiently
- Growth in the proportion of people using transit that should result in significant economic, environmental and social benefits for the region
- Expands service to meet the needs of a growing Region
- Improving access to service and providing faster trips, making transit a viable transportation alternative for residents



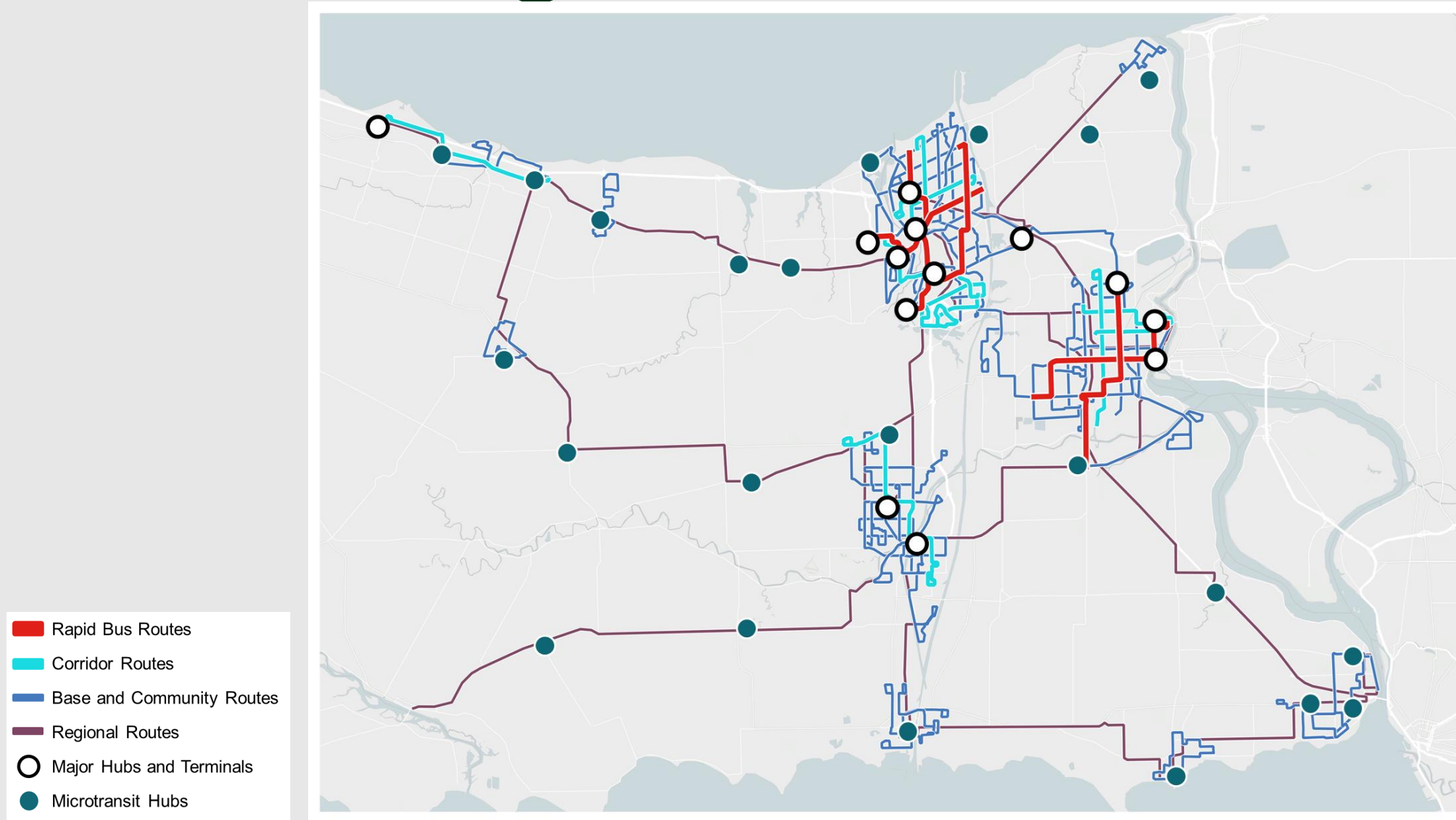


# Appendices

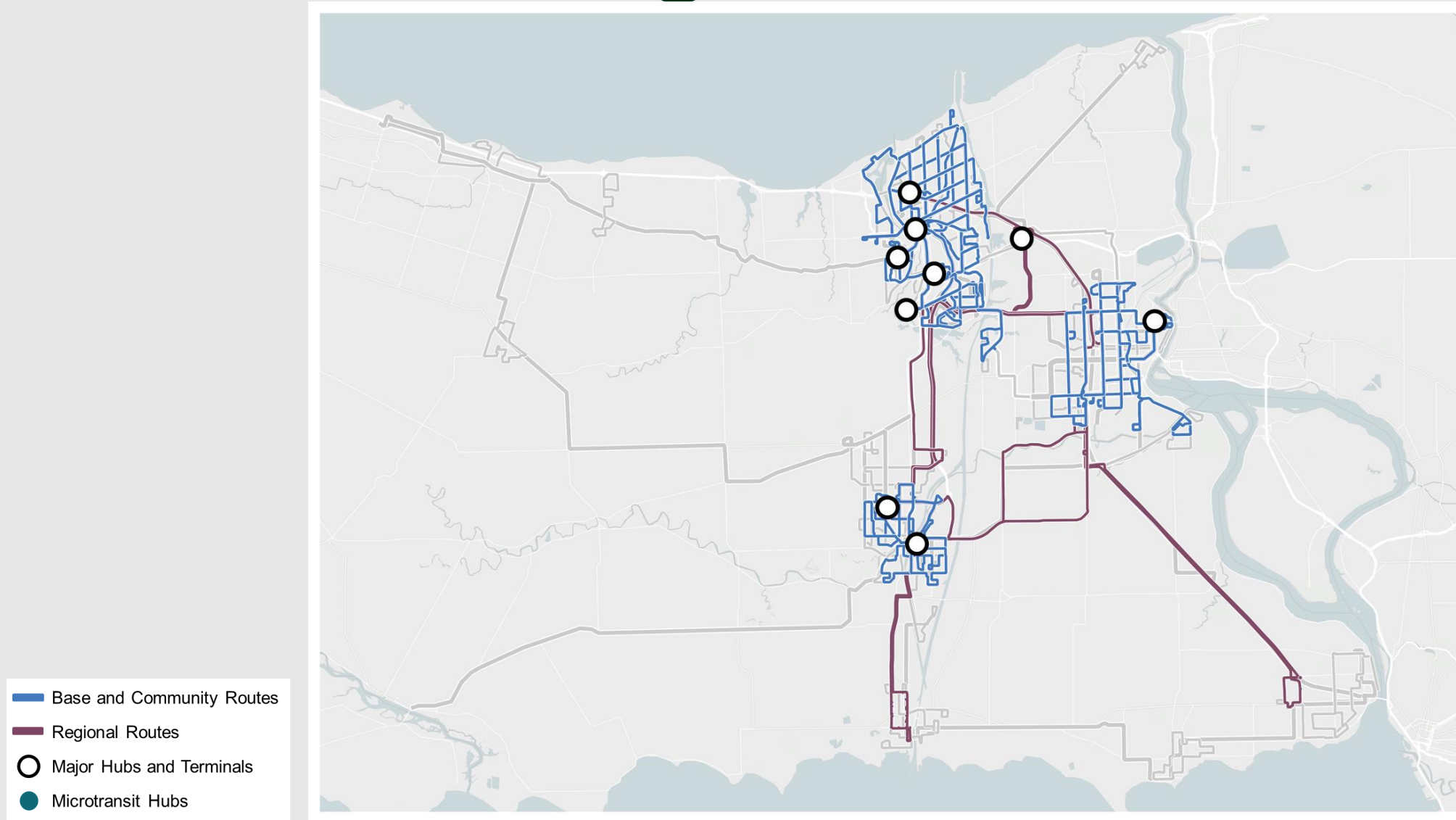
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# 2035 Niagara Transit Network

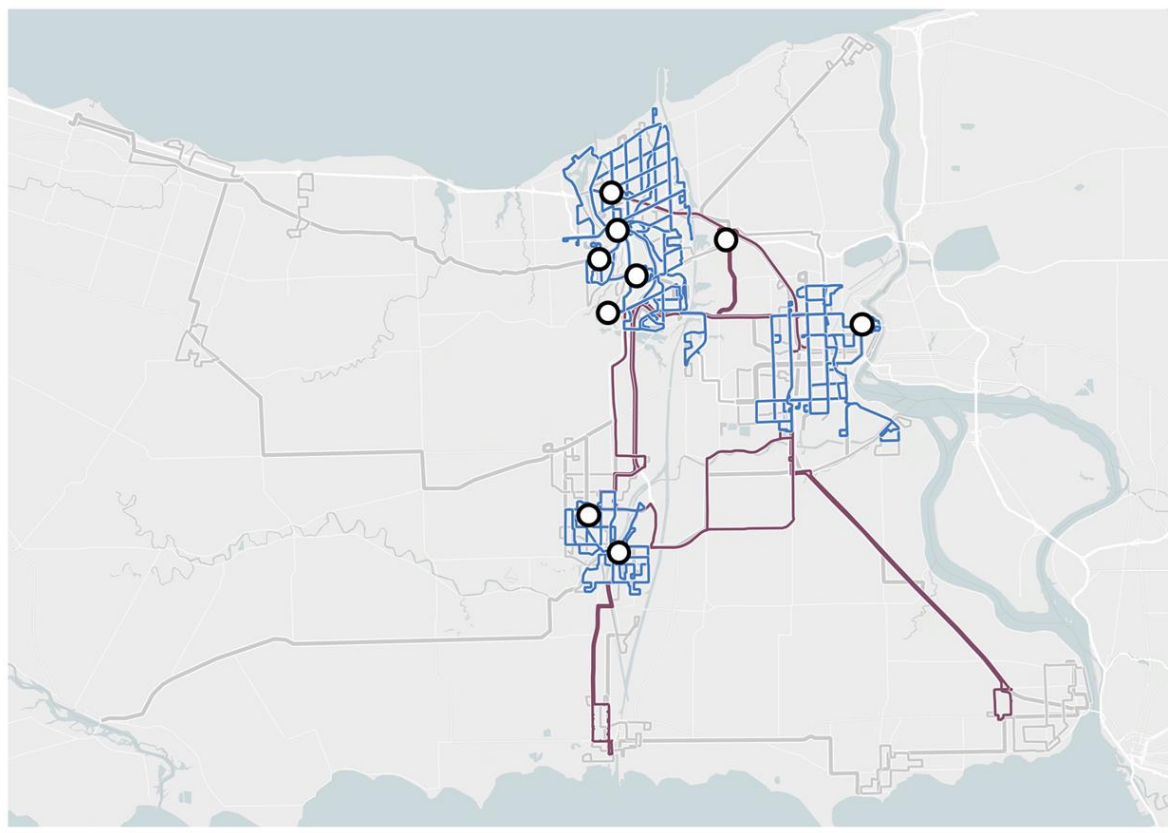
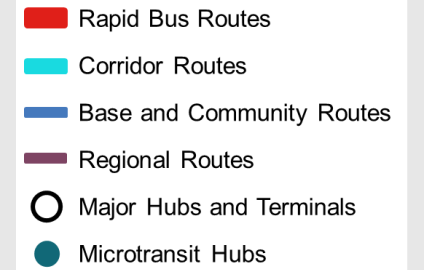


# Current Niagara Transit Network

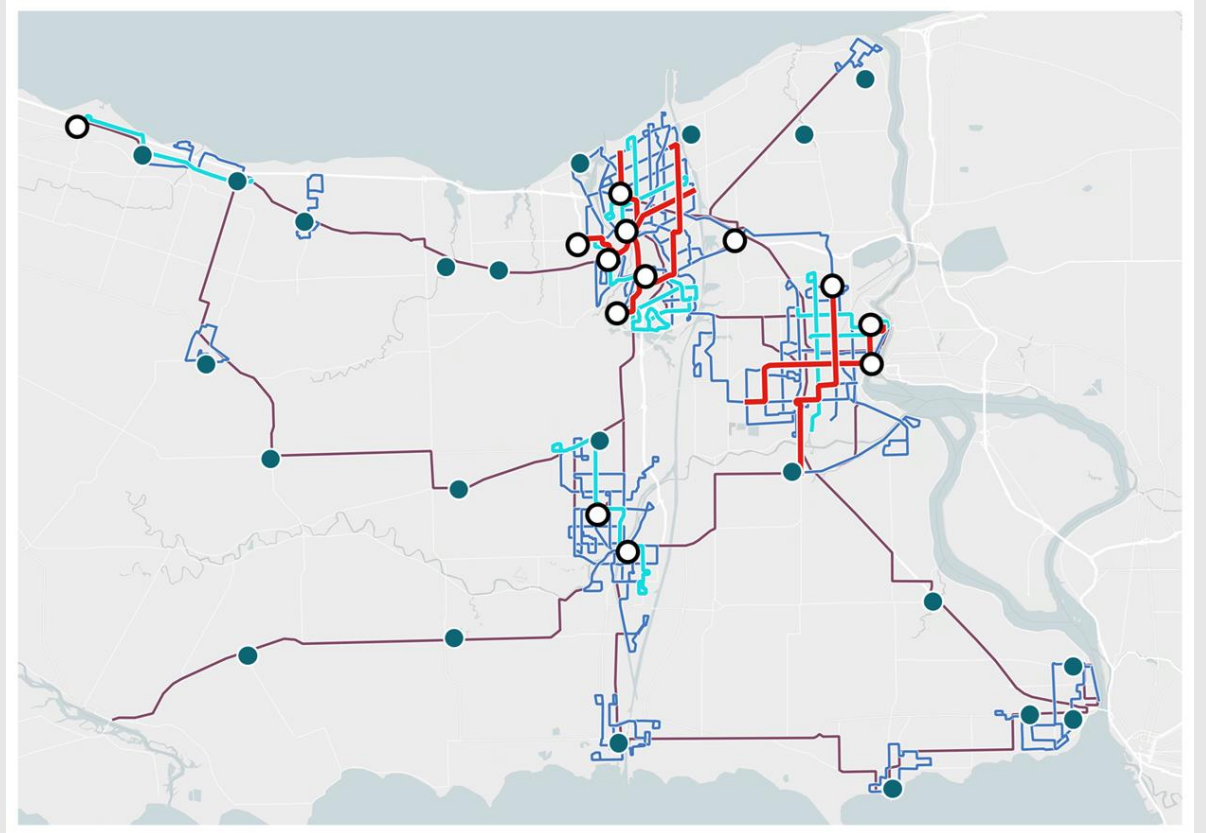




# Current to 2035 Comparison

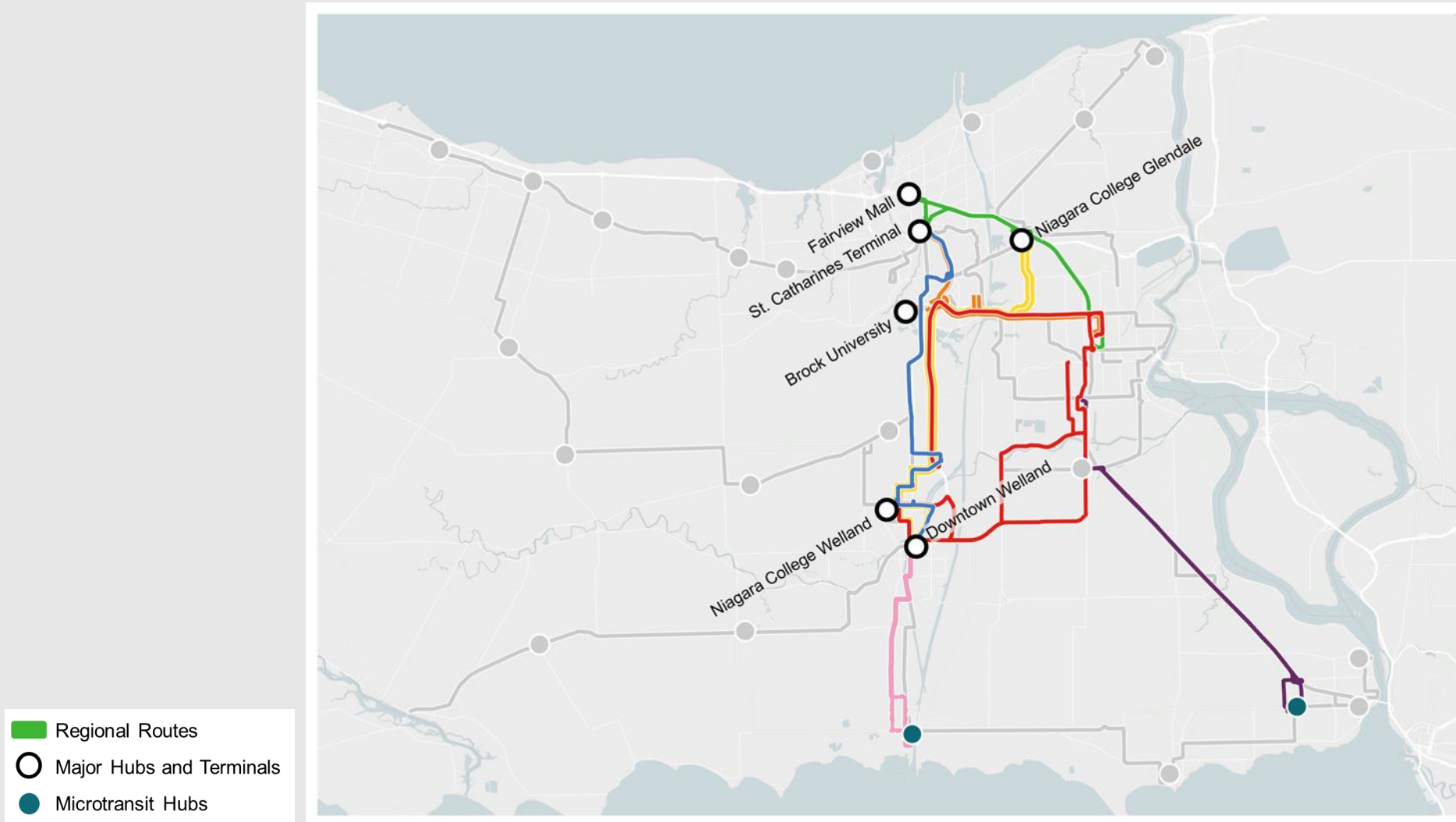


**Current**

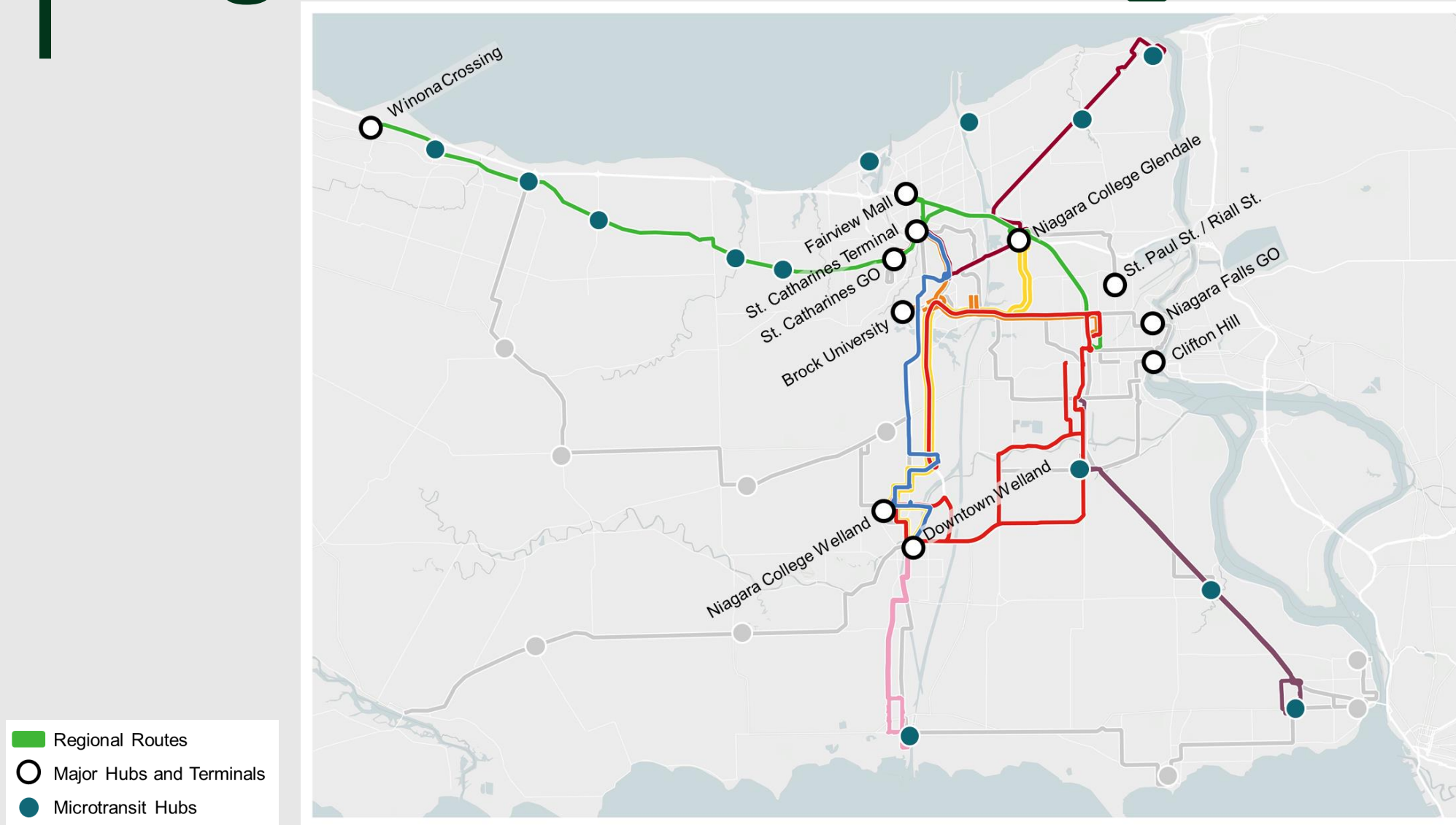


**Stage 3**

# Regional Routes – Current

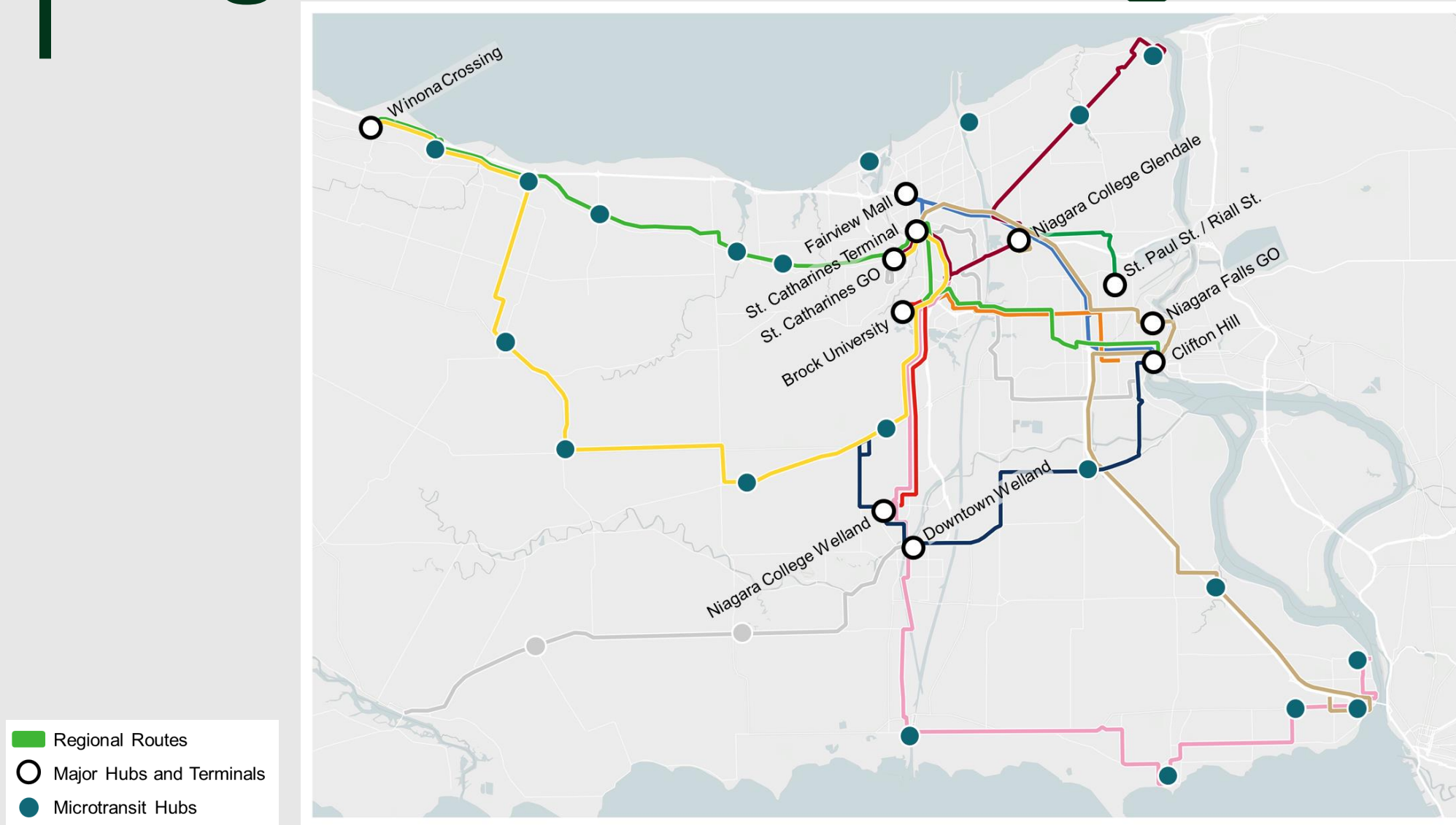


# Regional Routes – Stage 1

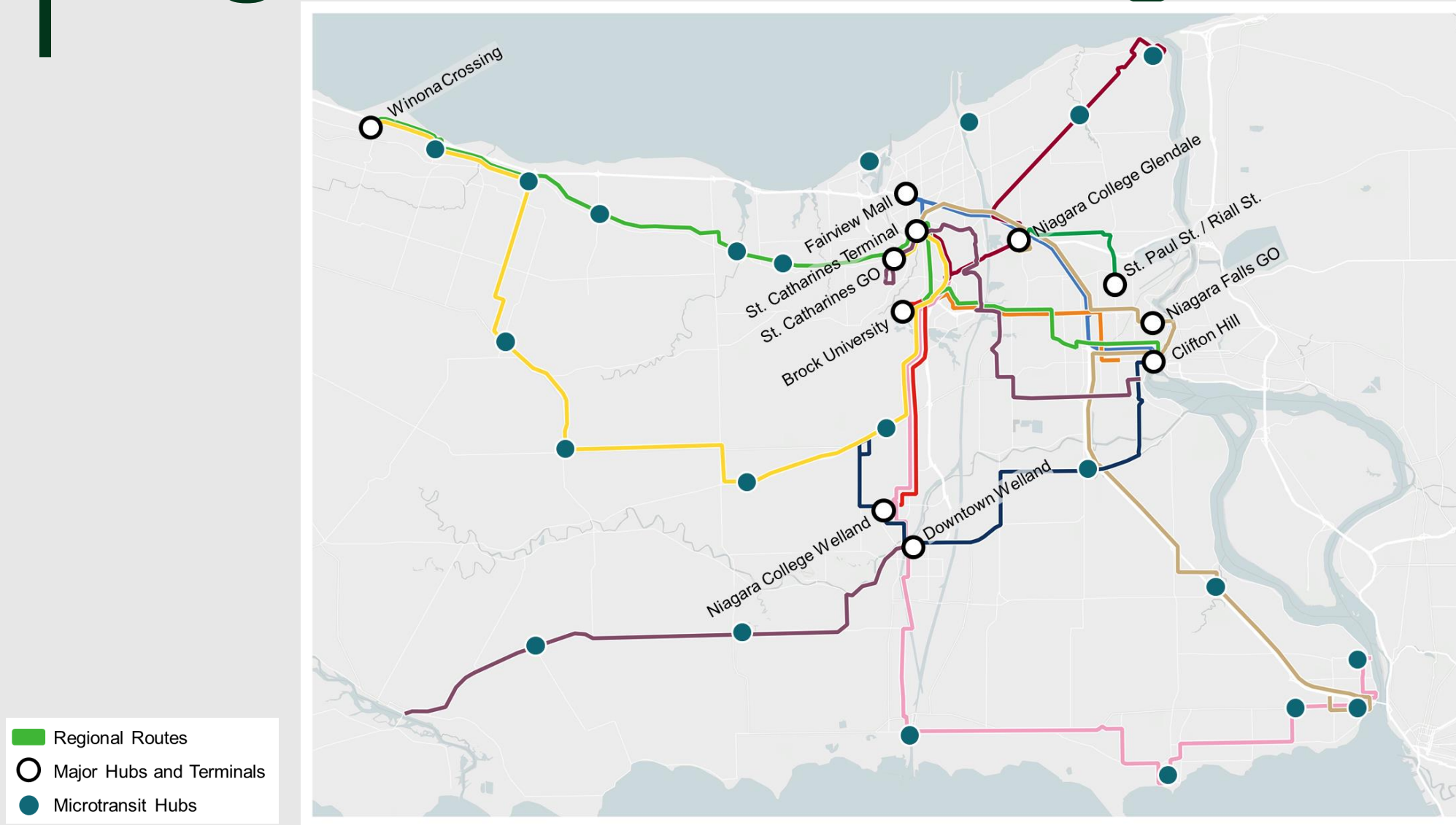




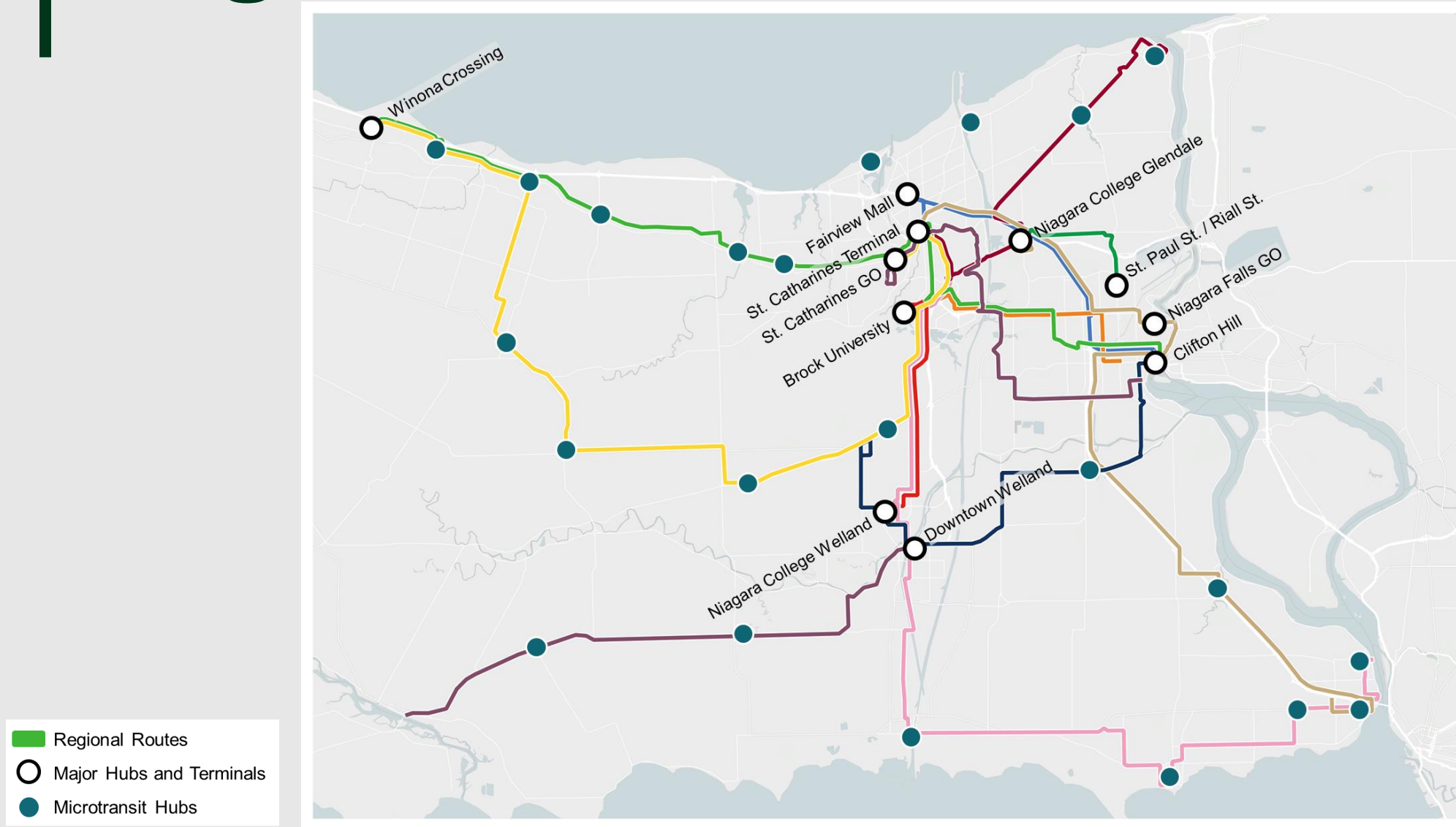
# Regional Routes – Stage 2






# Regional Routes – Stage 3

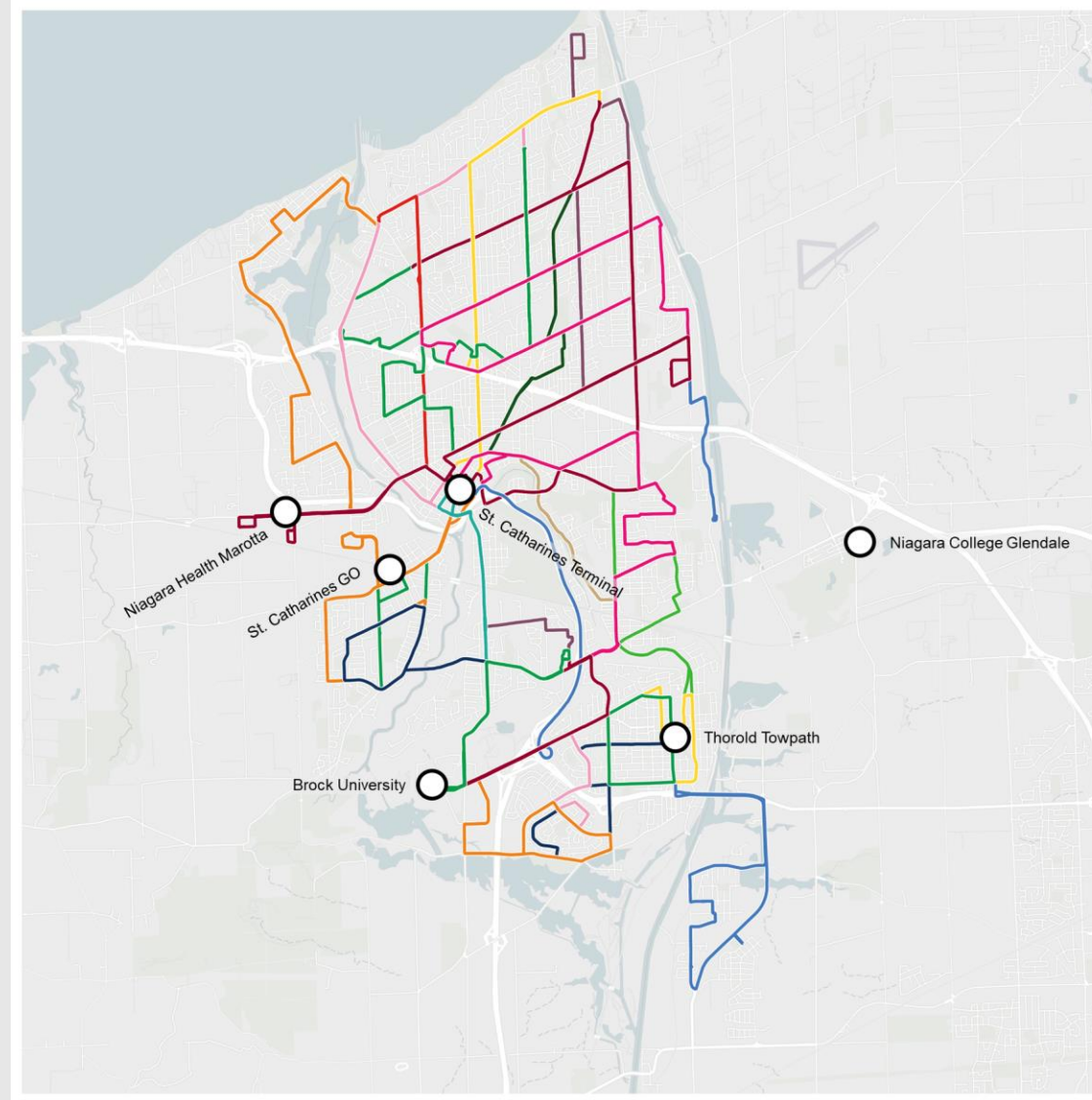


# Regional Network Evolution



# St. Catharines – Current

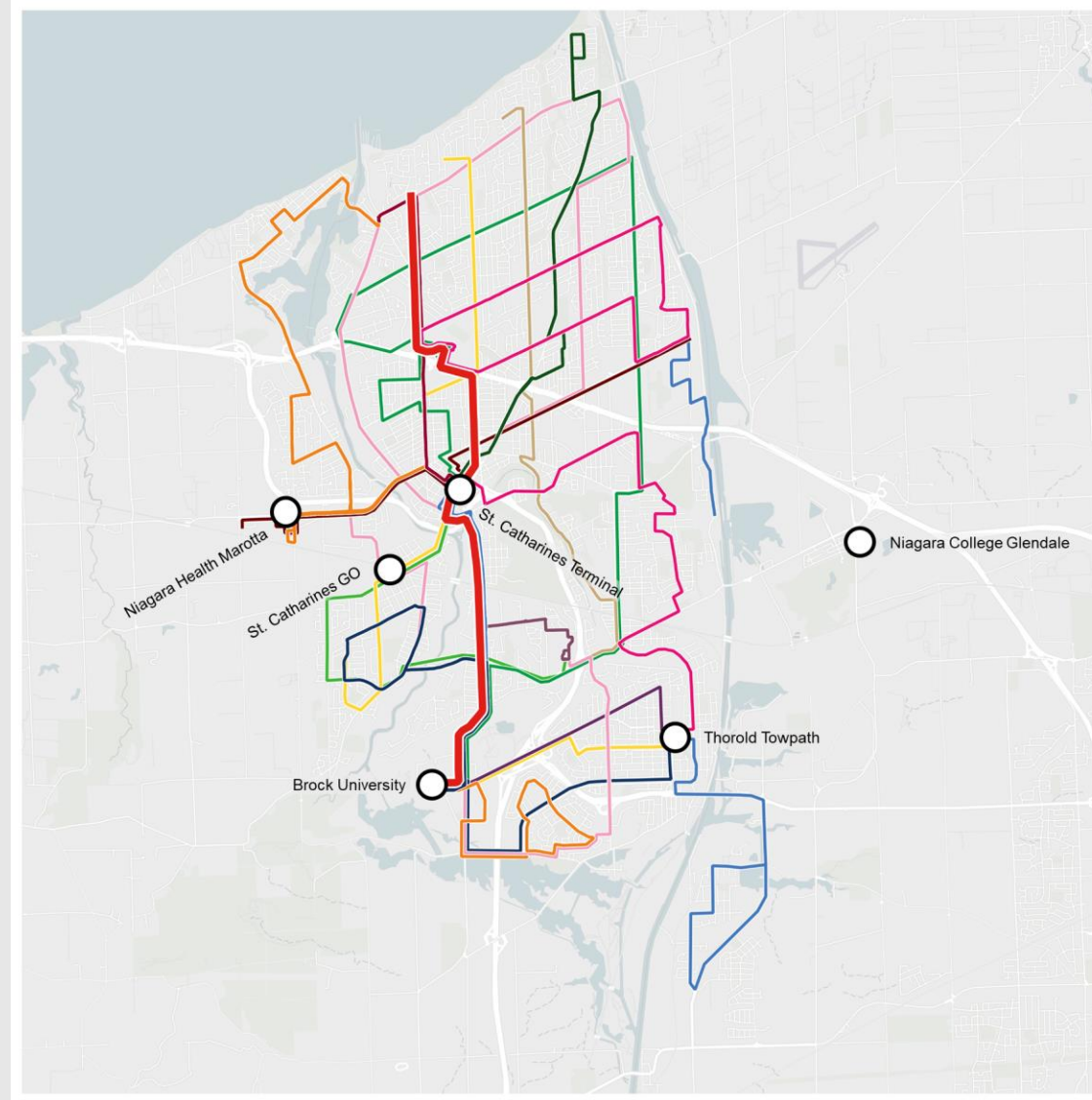
-  Rapid Bus Routes
-  Corridor Routes
-  Base and Community Routes








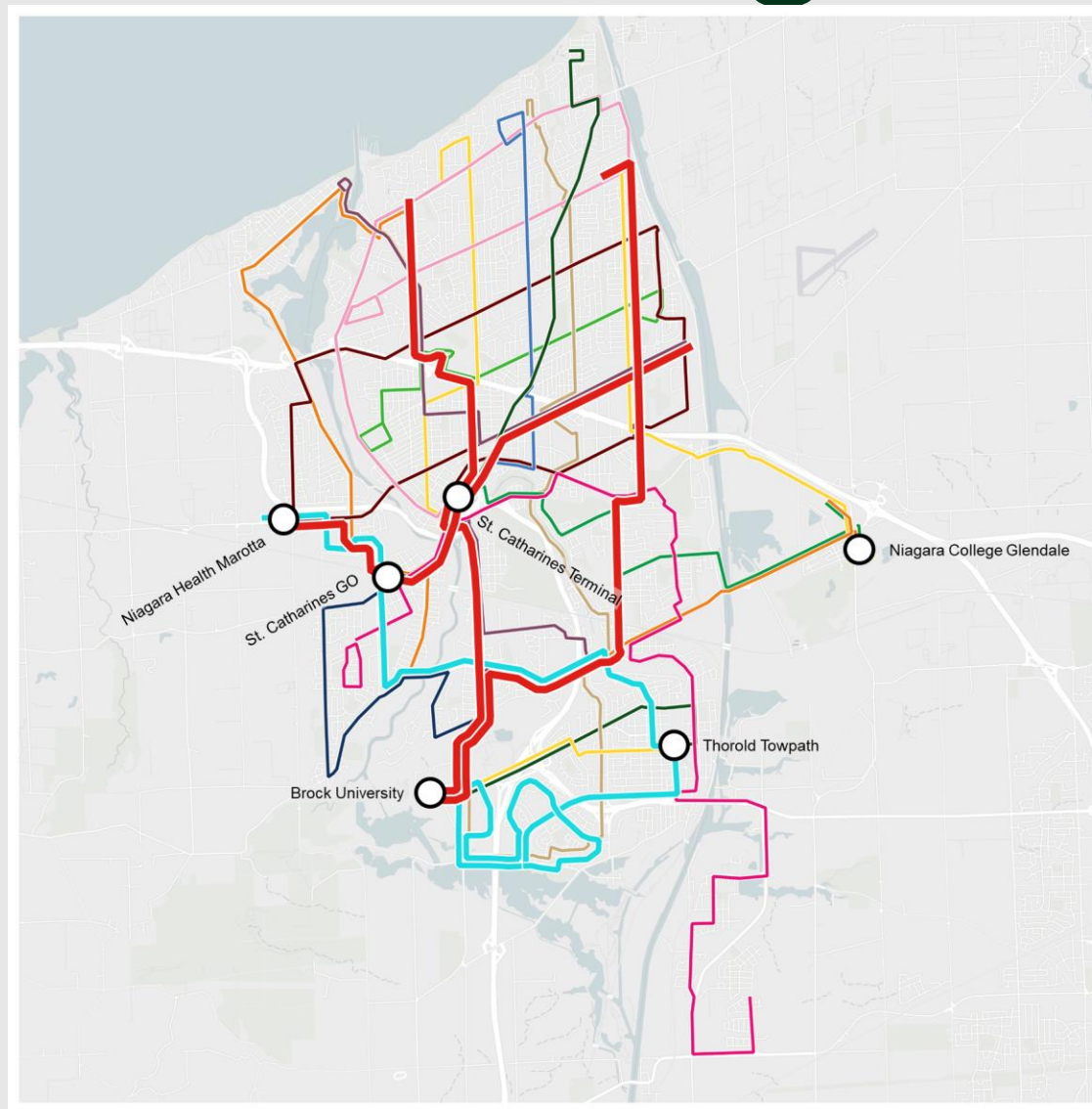
# St. Catharines – Stage 1

- Express Bus Routes
- Corridor Routes
- Base and Community Routes






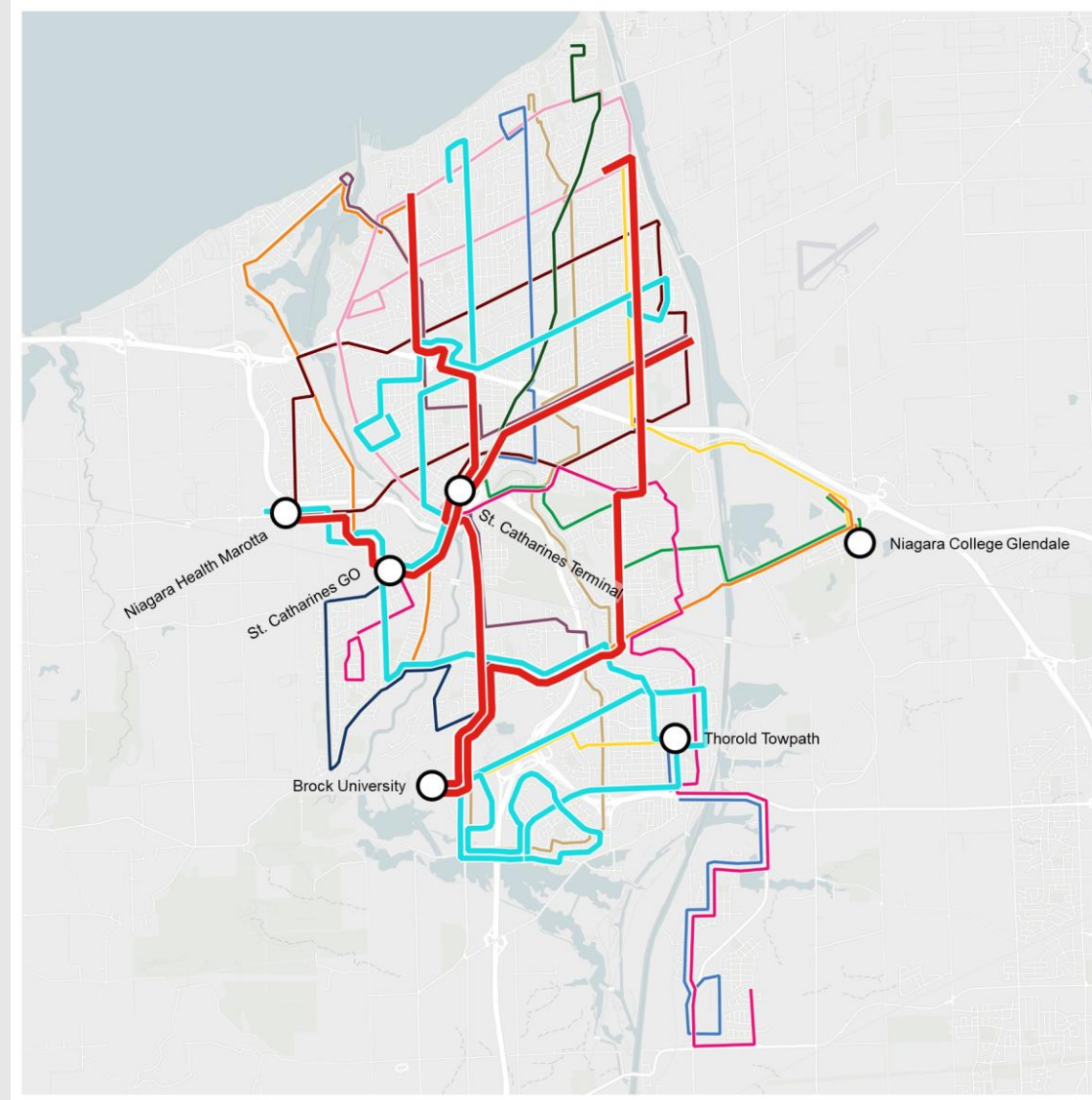
# St. Catharines – Stage 2

-  Rapid Bus Routes
-  Corridor Routes
-  Base and Community Routes

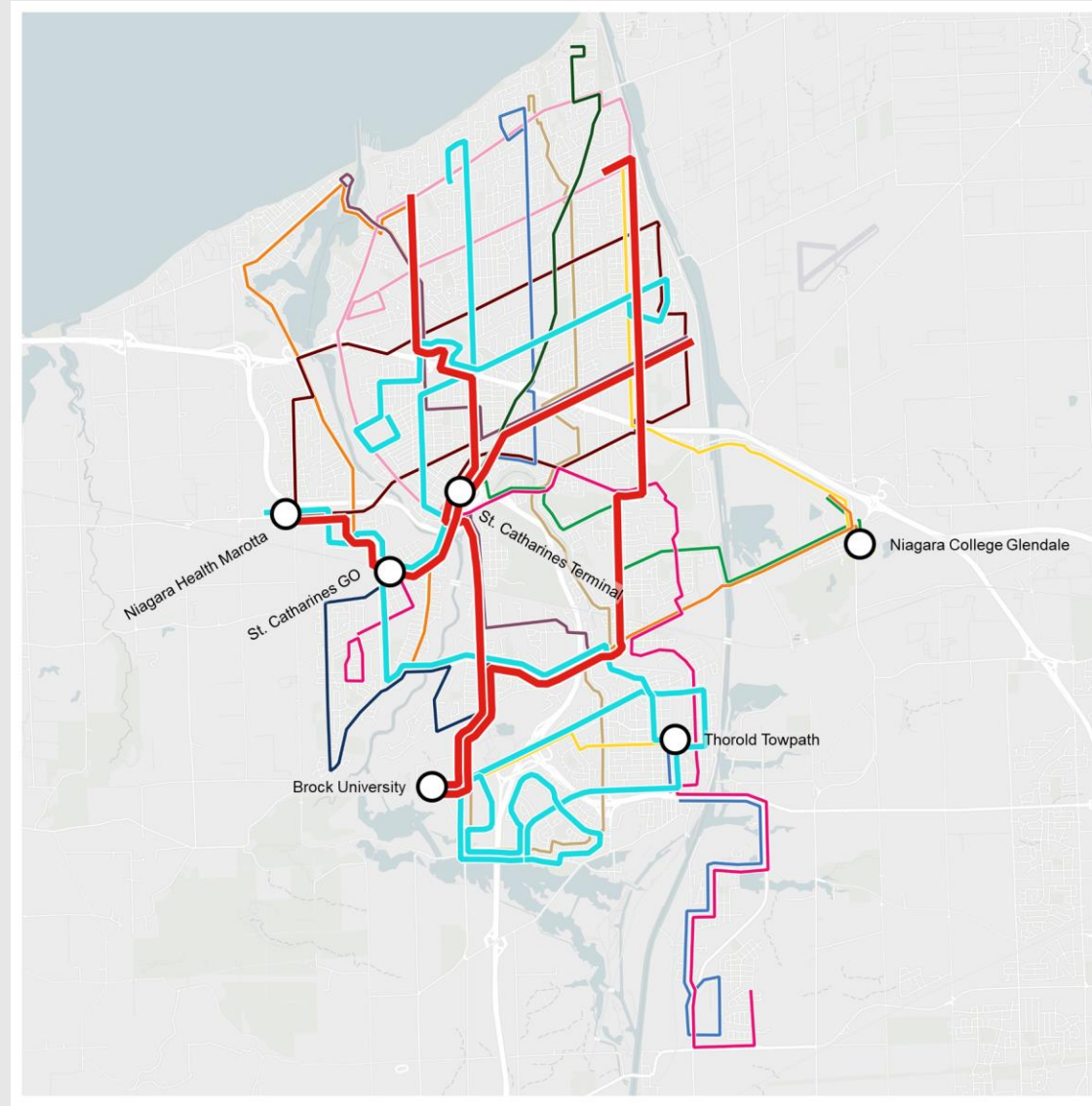
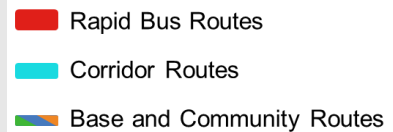


# St. Catharines – Stage 3

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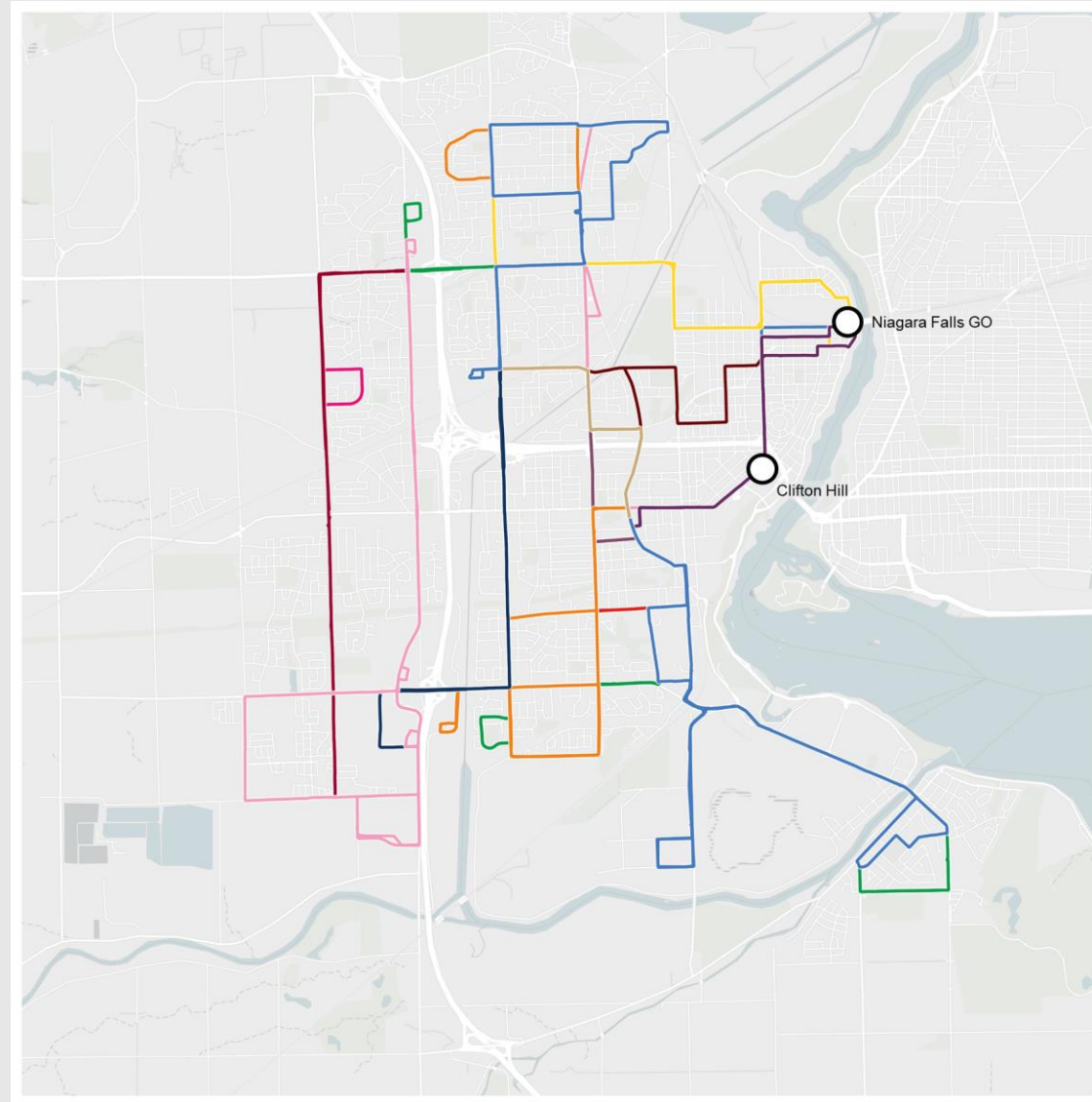


# St. Catharines Network Evolution

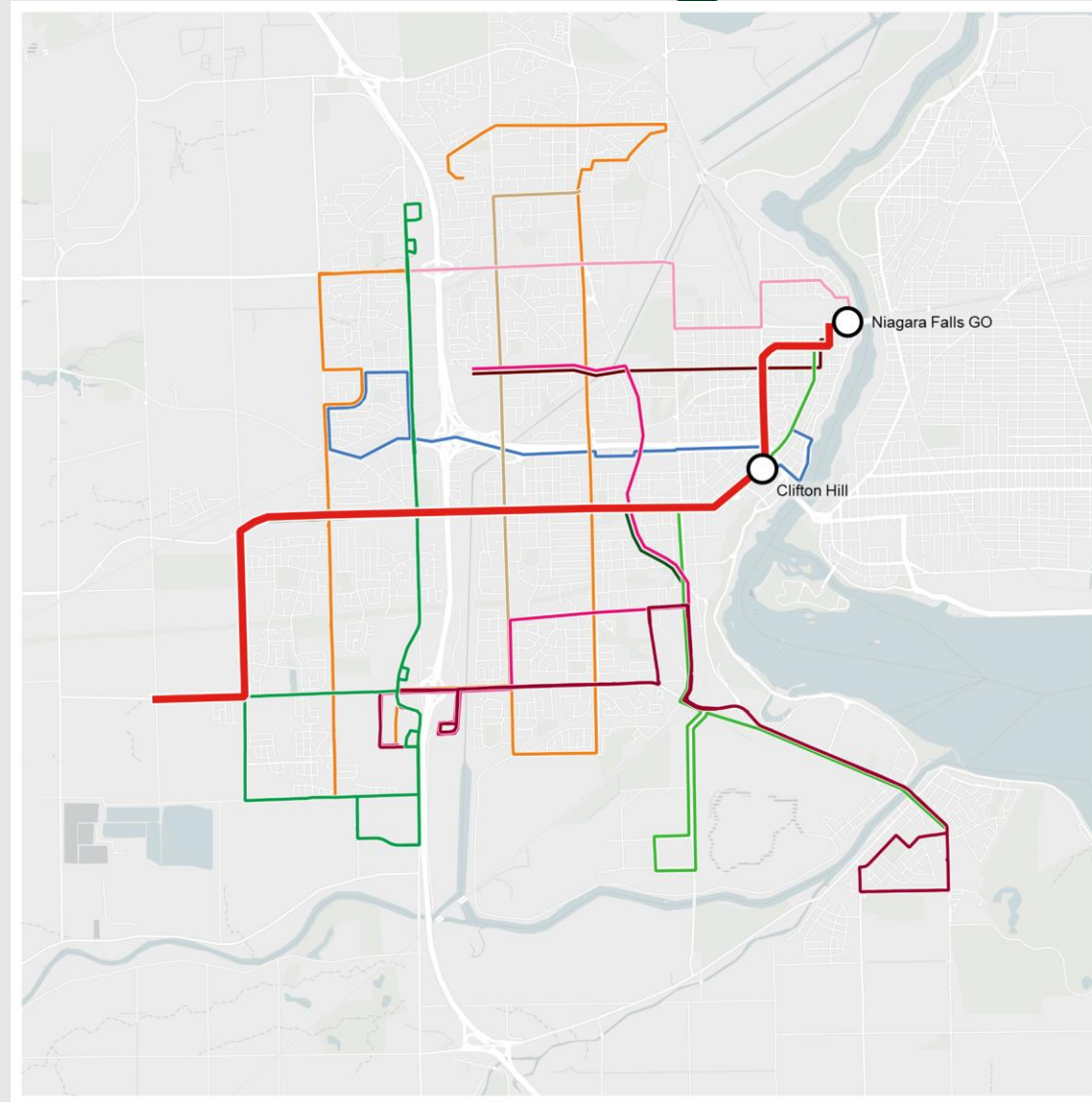




# Niagara Falls – Current

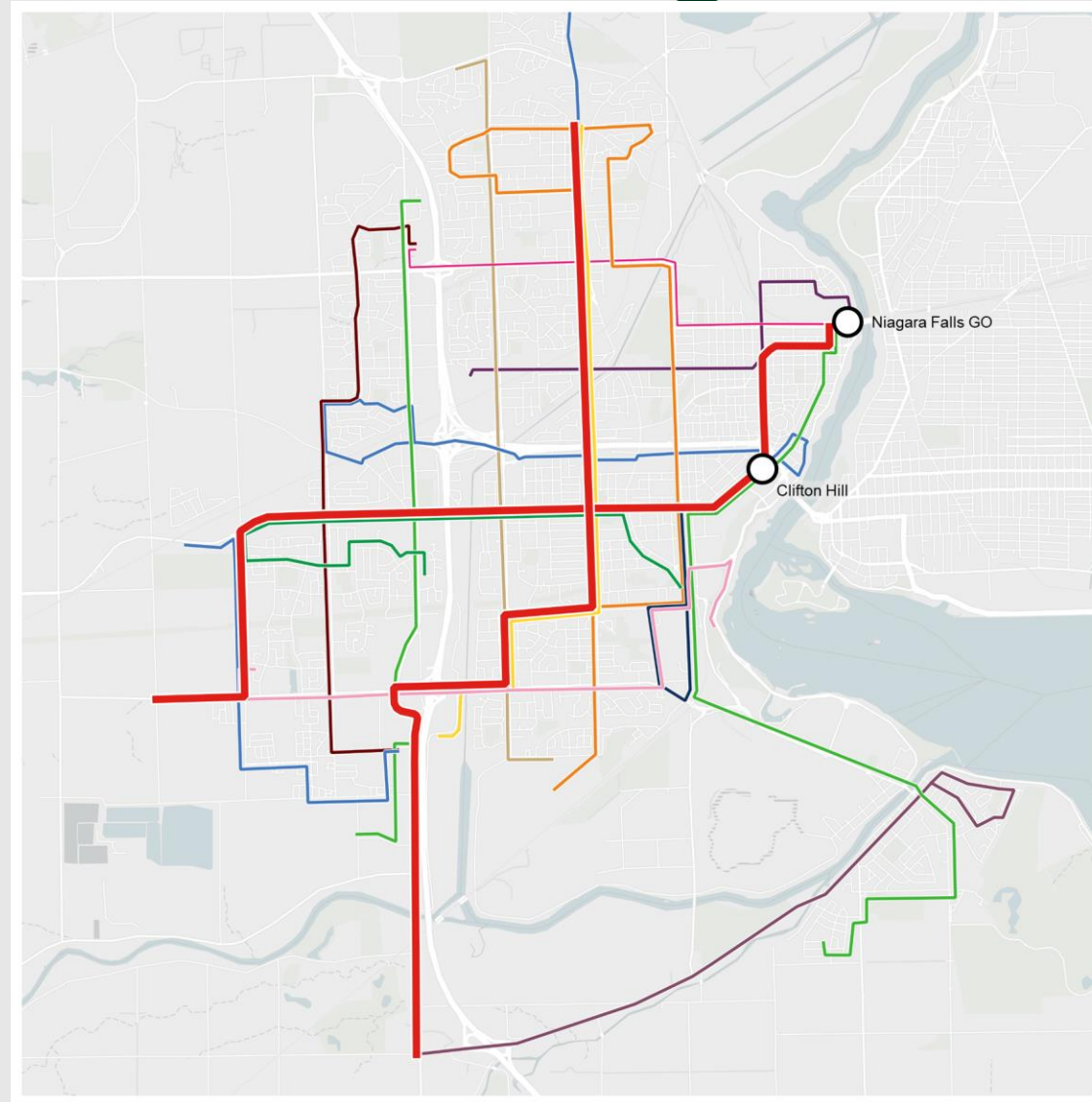


# Niagara Falls – Stage 1



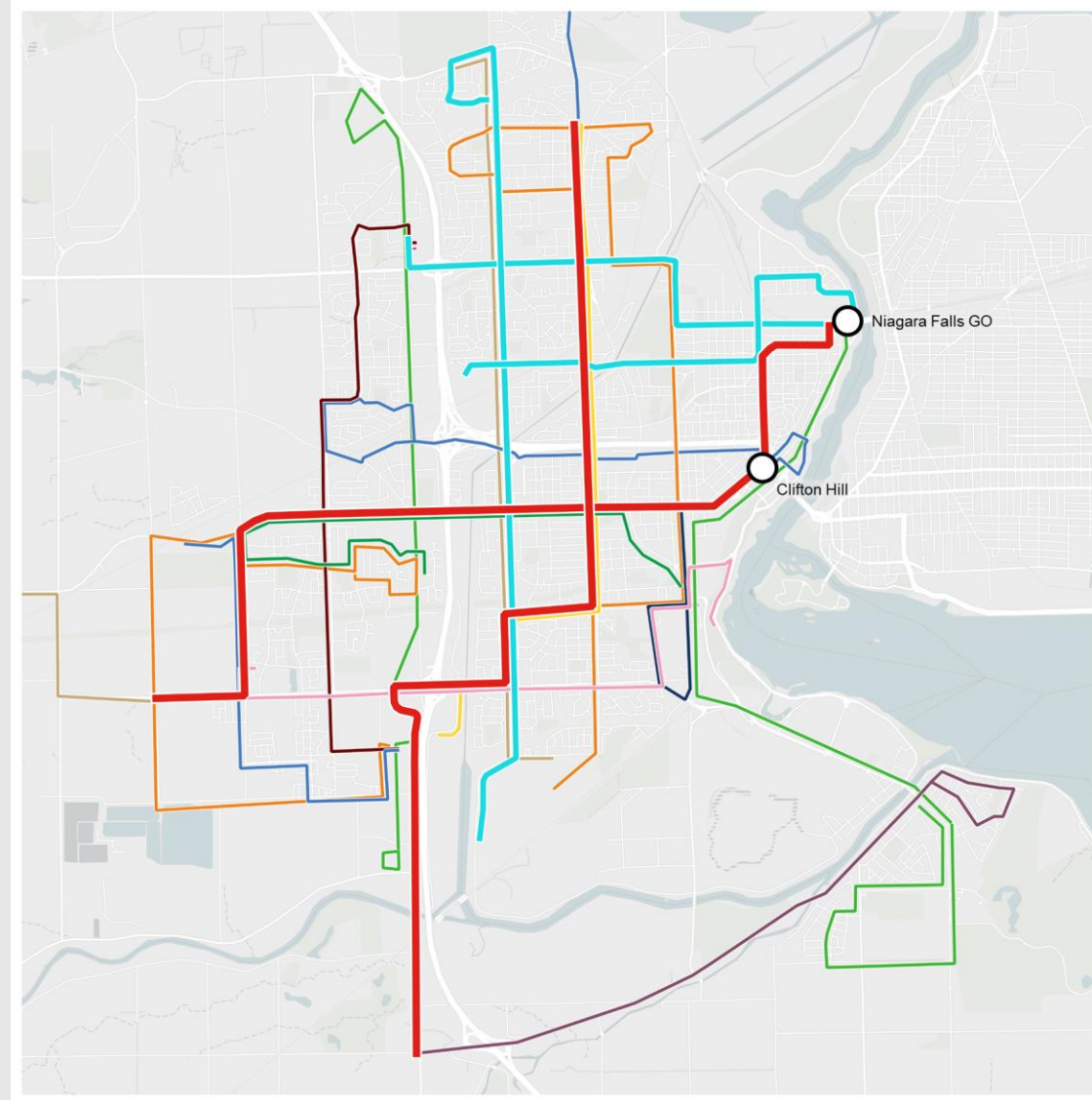
- Express Bus Routes
- Corridor Routes
- Base and Community Routes

# Niagara Falls – Stage 2



- Rapid Bus Routes
- Corridor Routes
- ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Base and Community Routes

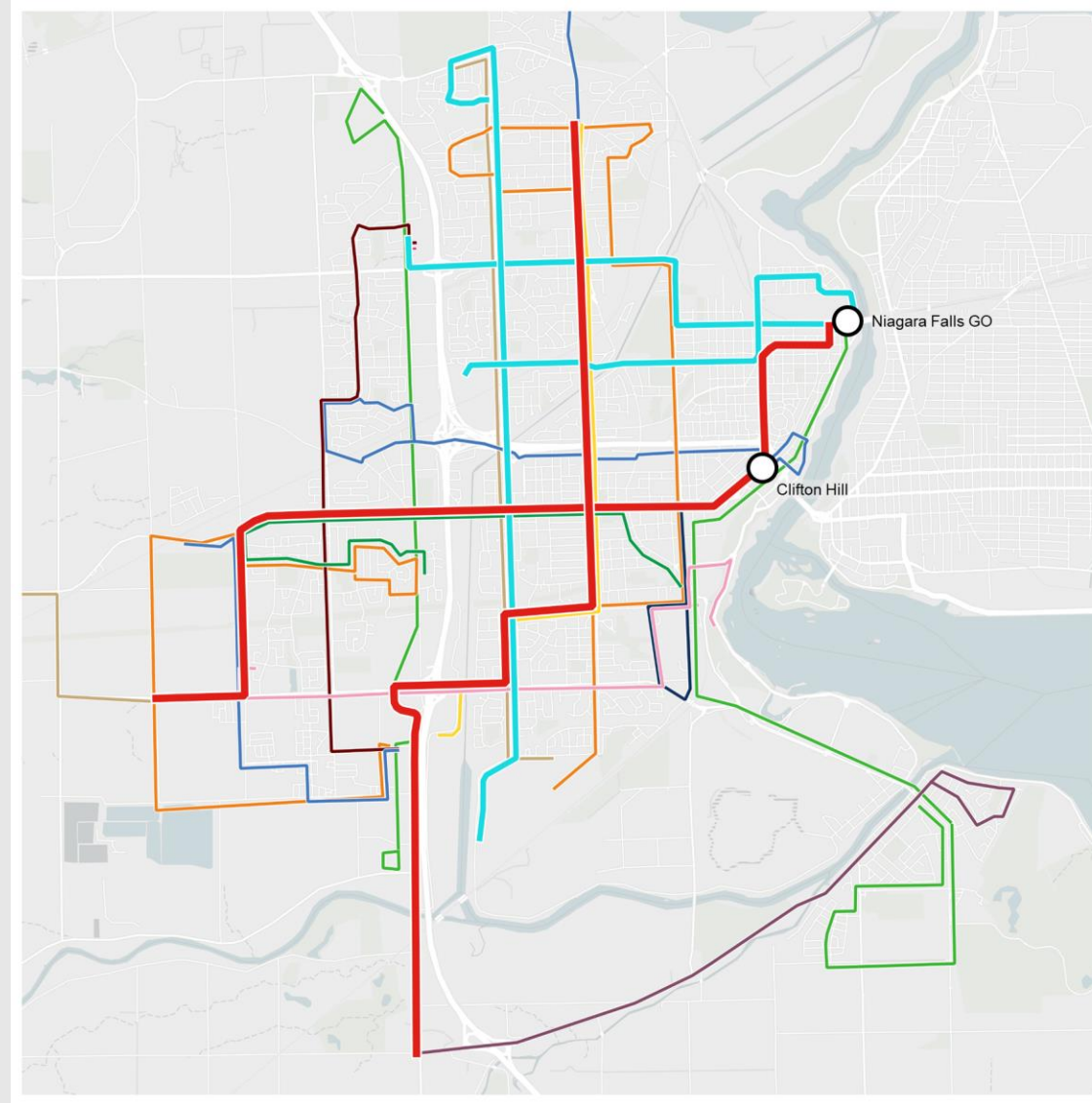
# Niagara Falls – Stage 3






- Rapid Bus Routes
- Corridor Routes
- Base and Community Routes

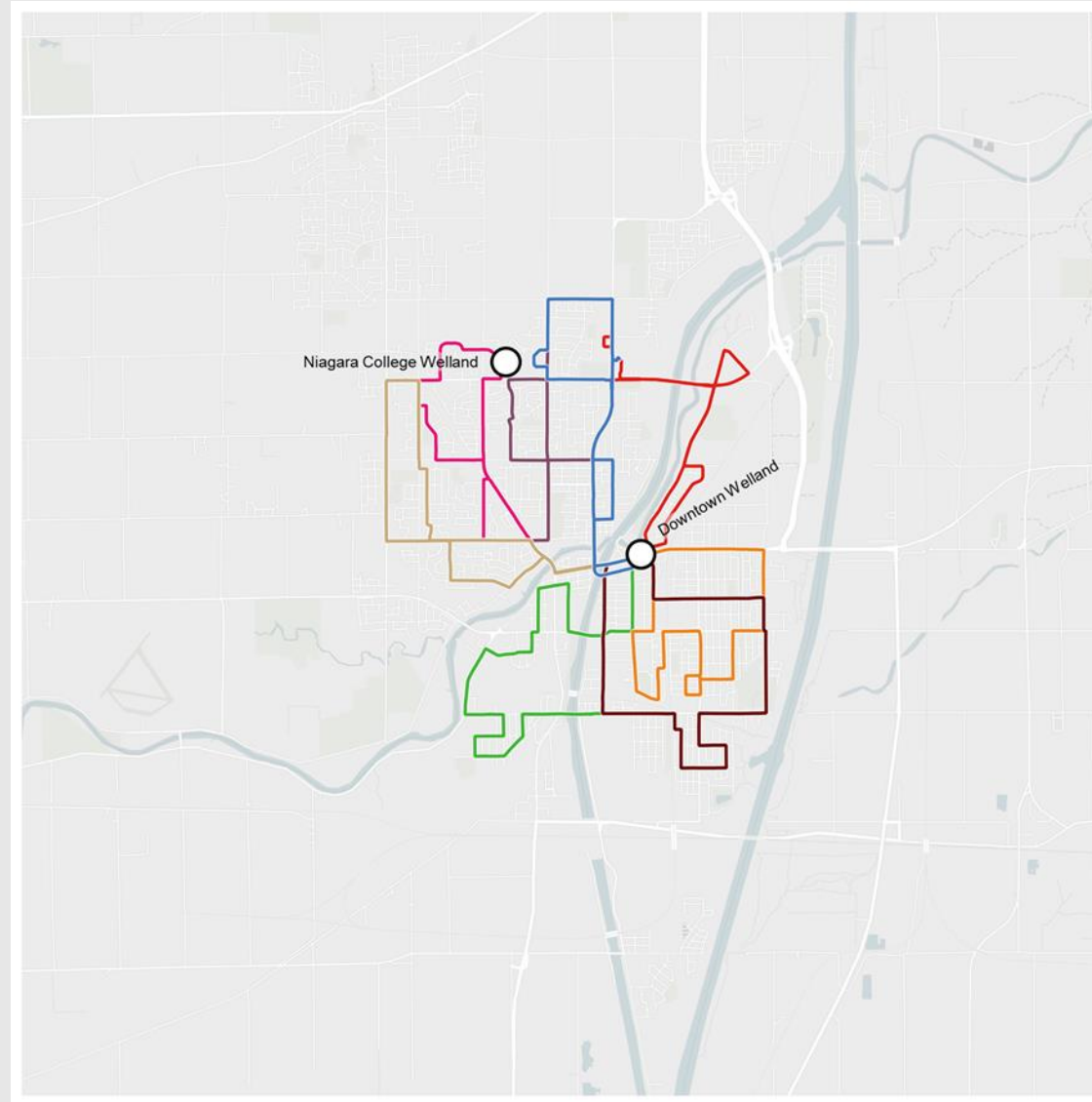


# Niagara Falls Network Evolution






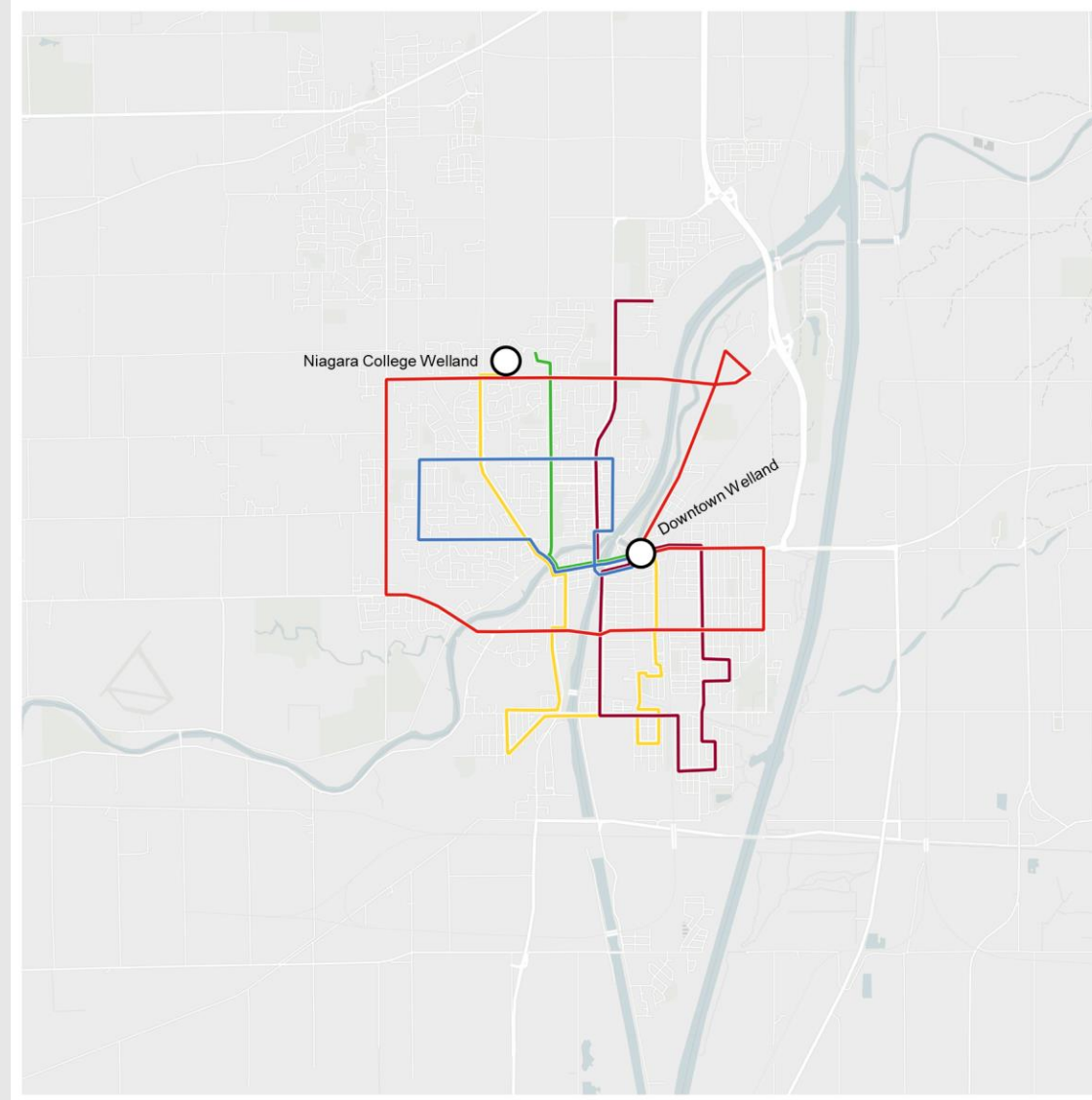
# Welland – Current

-  Rapid Bus Routes
-  Corridor Routes
-  Base and Community Routes






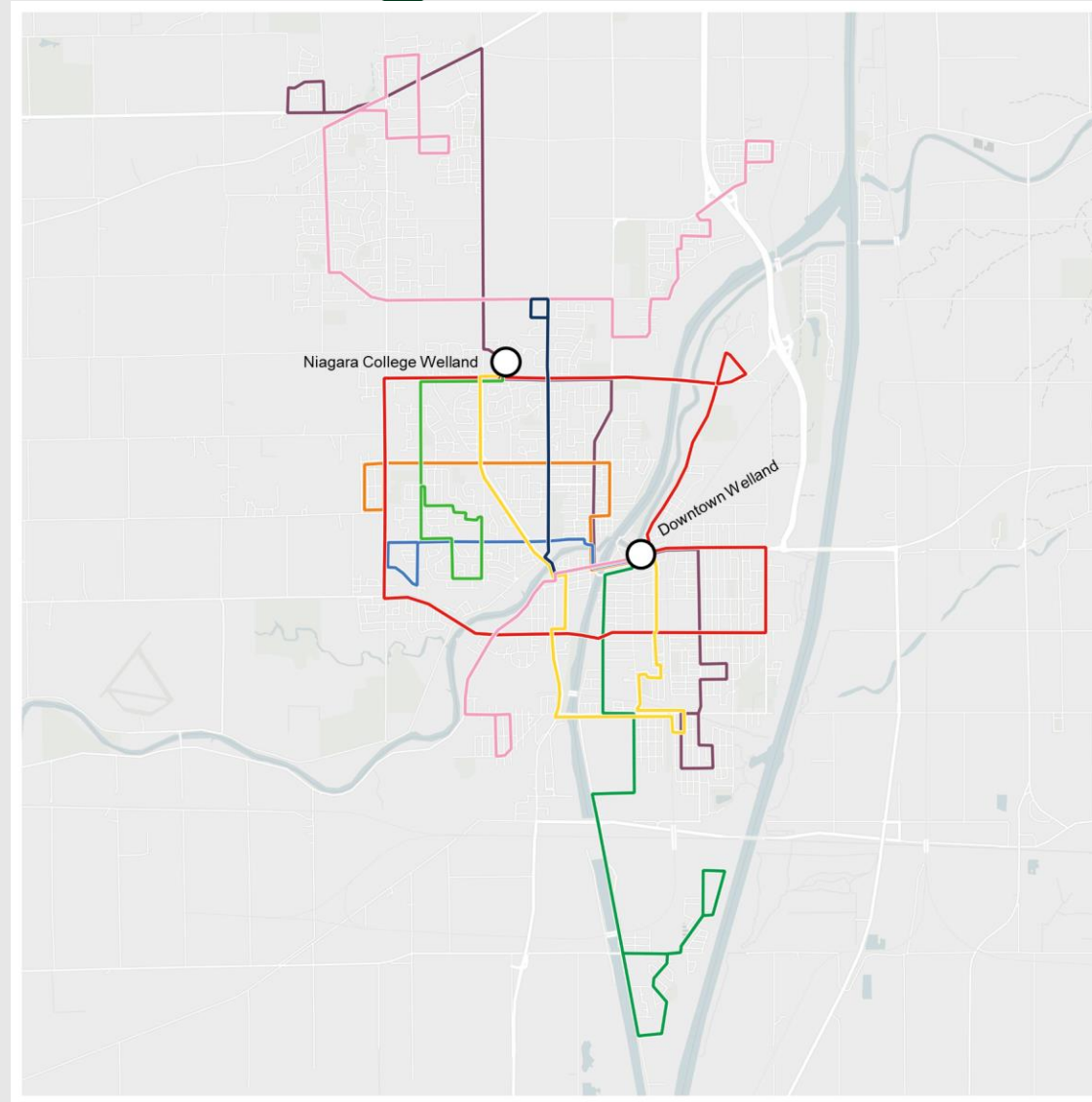
# Welland – Stage 1

-  Rapid Bus Routes
-  Corridor Routes
-  Base and Community Routes






# Welland – Stage 2

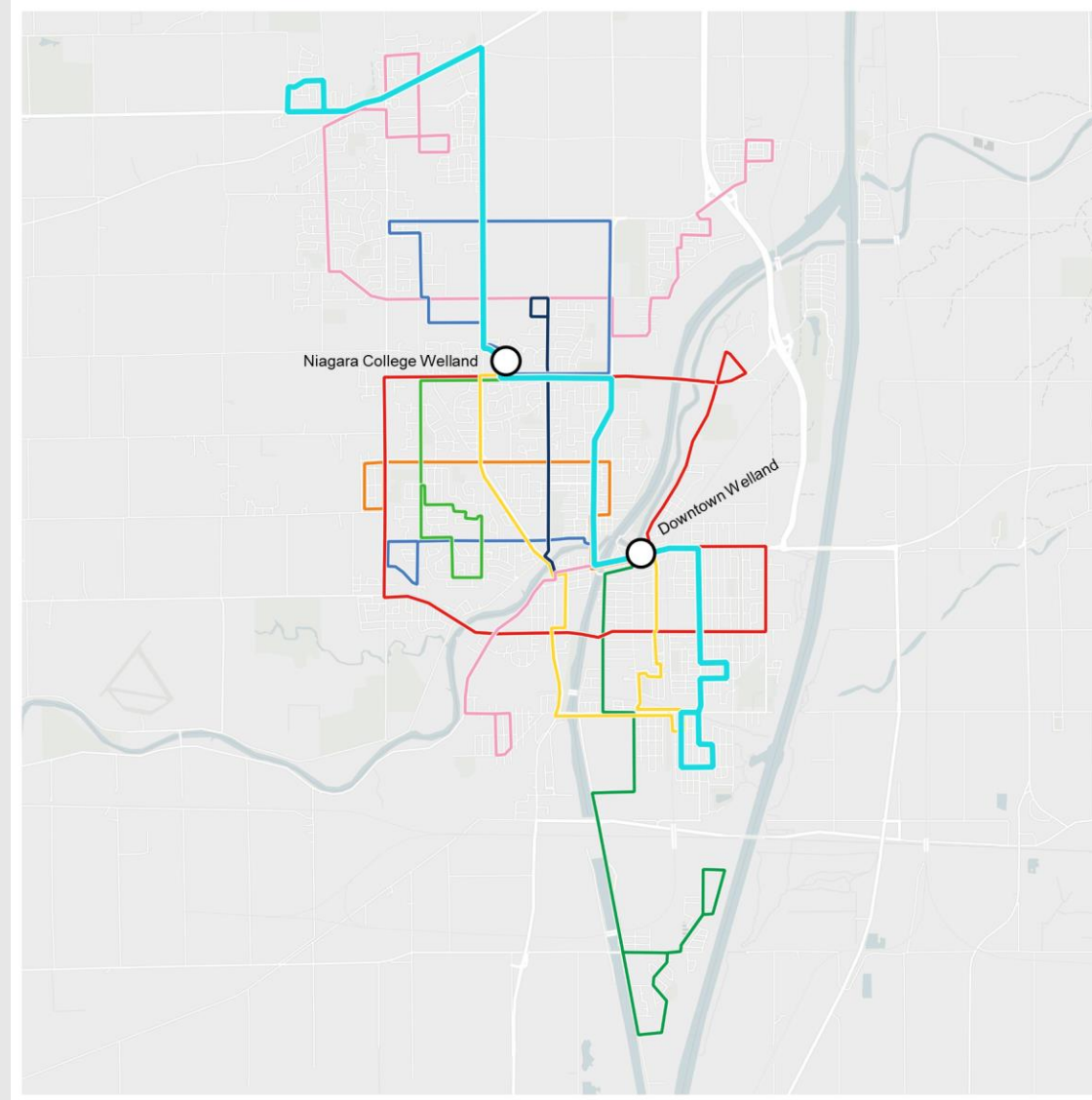
-  Rapid Bus Routes
-  Corridor Routes
-  Base and Community Routes








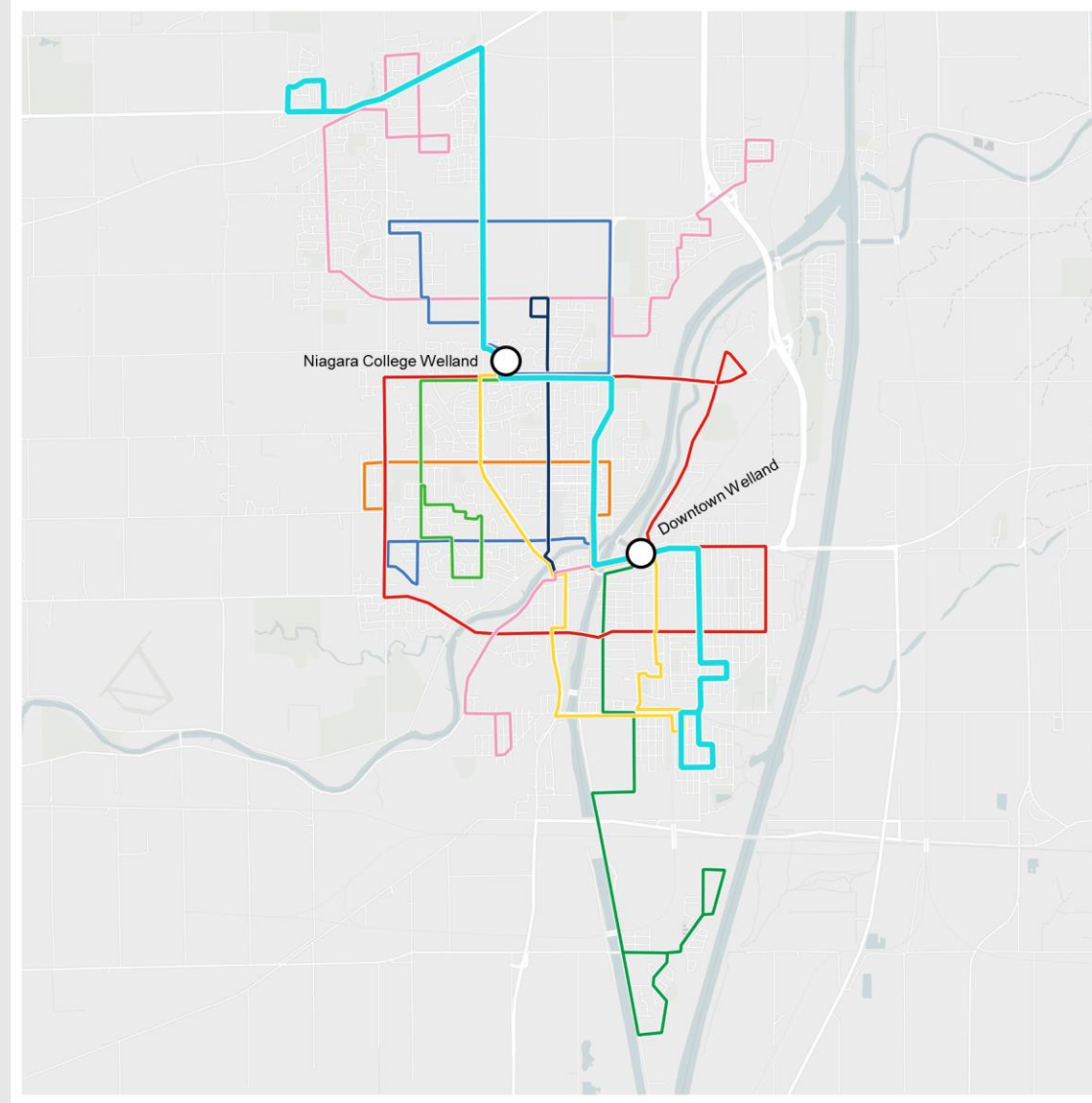
# Welland – Stage 3

-  Rapid Bus Routes
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-  Base and Community Routes



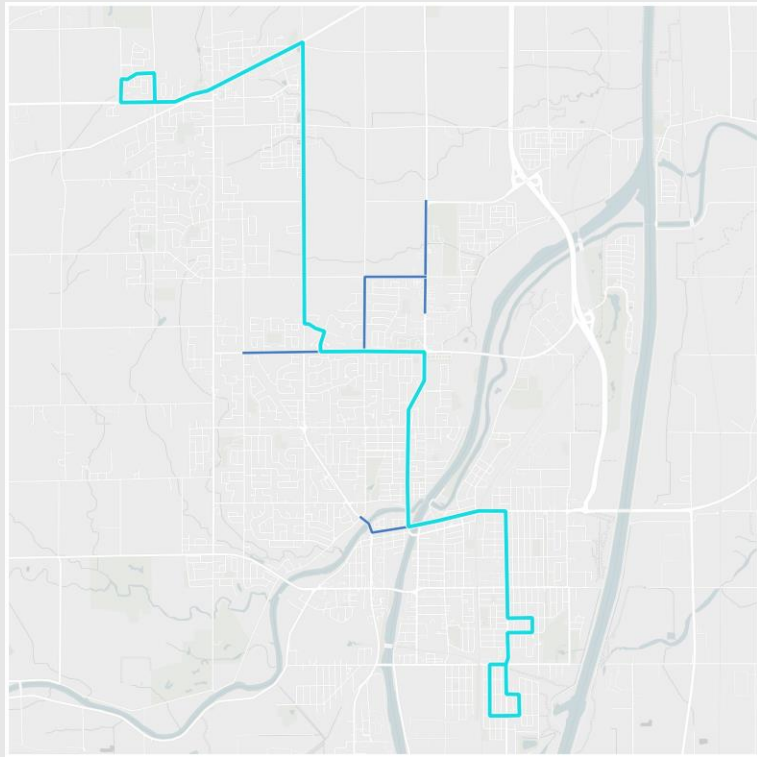
# Welland Network Evolution

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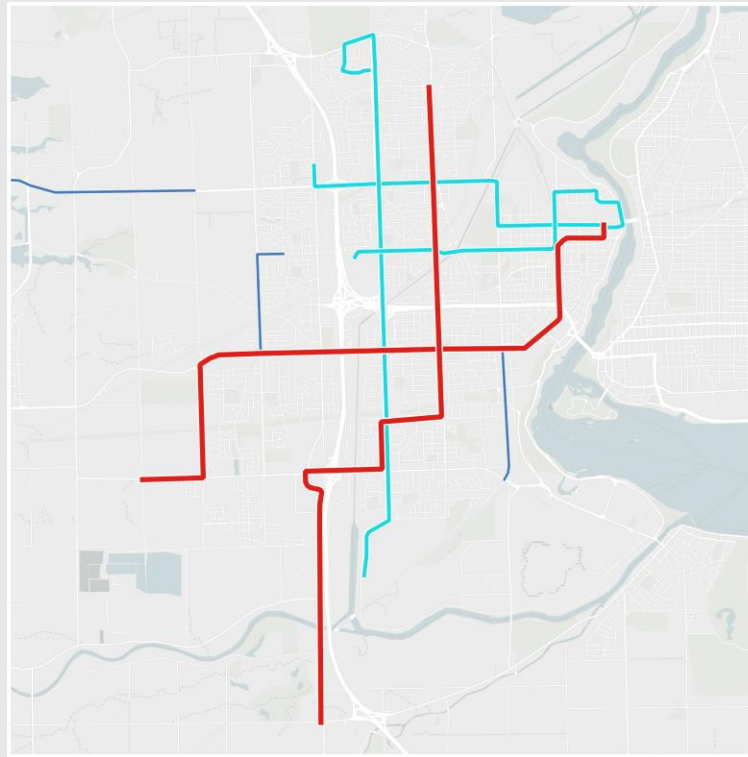


# 2035 High-Frequency Network

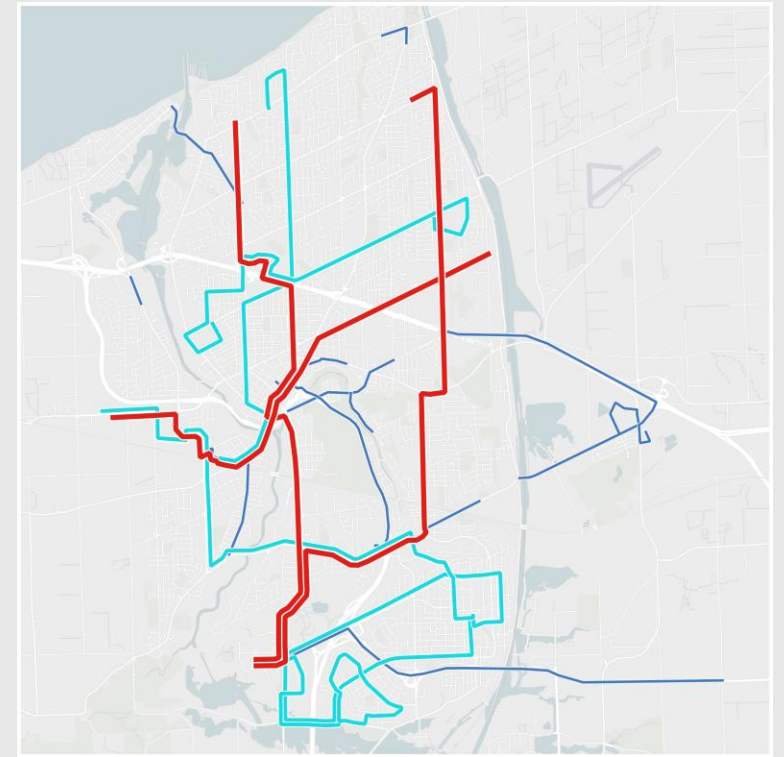
**Welland**



**Niagara Falls**

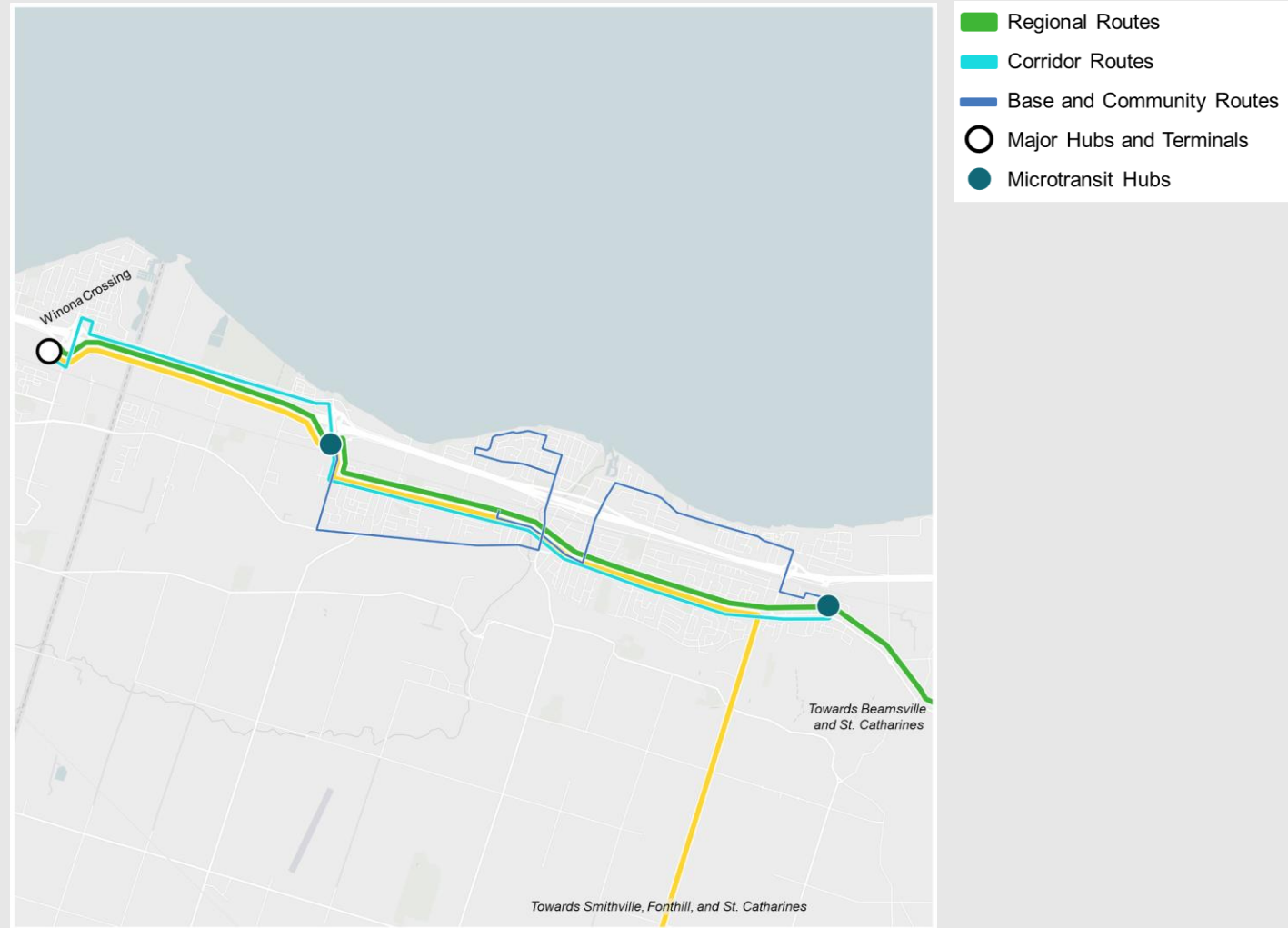


**St. Catharines**

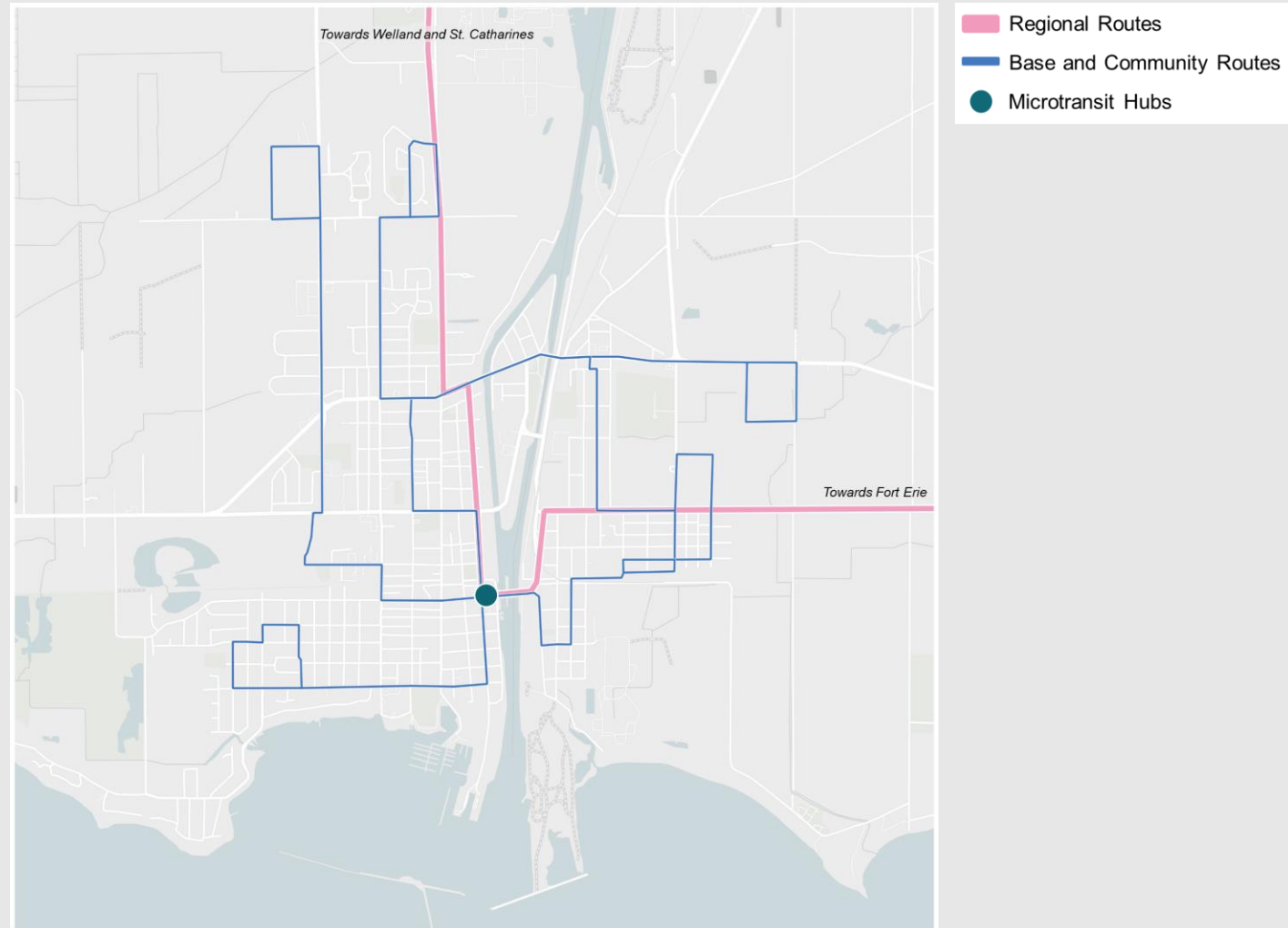


■ Rapid Bus Routes    ■ Corridor Routes    ■ High Frequency Segments

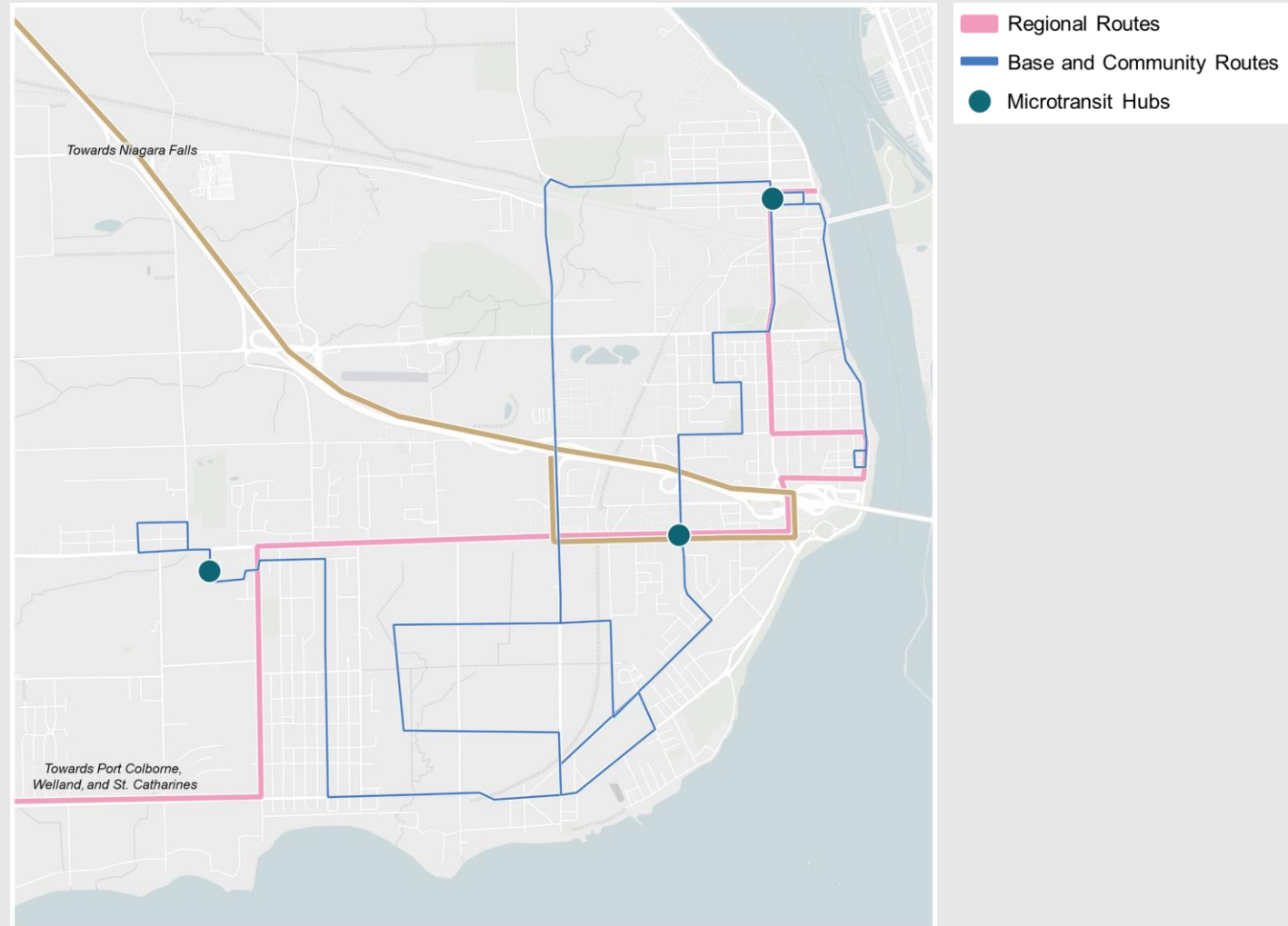
# Grimsby – Stage 3



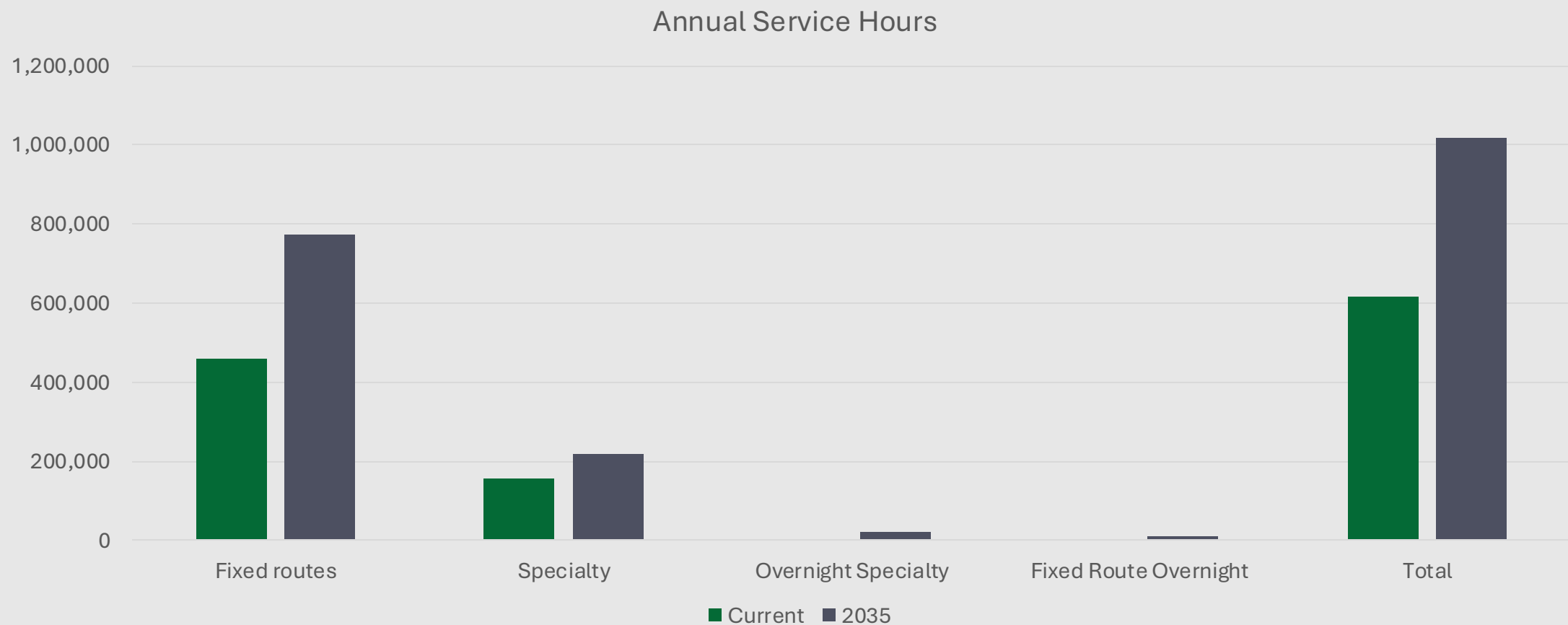
# Port Colborne – Stage 3



# Fort Erie – Stage 3



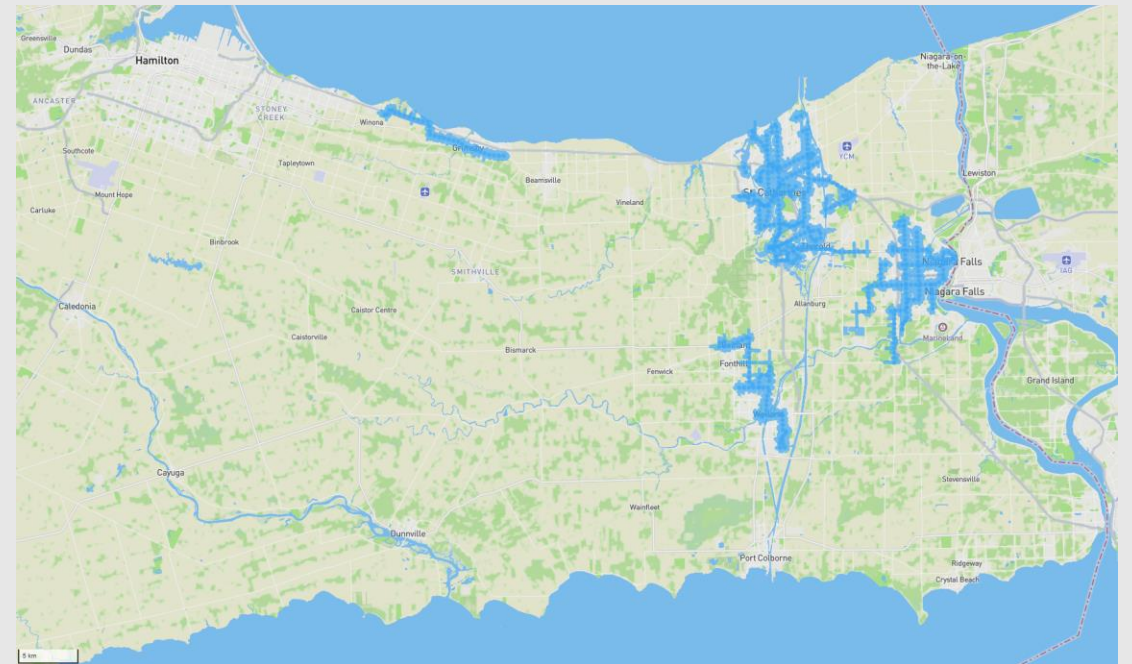
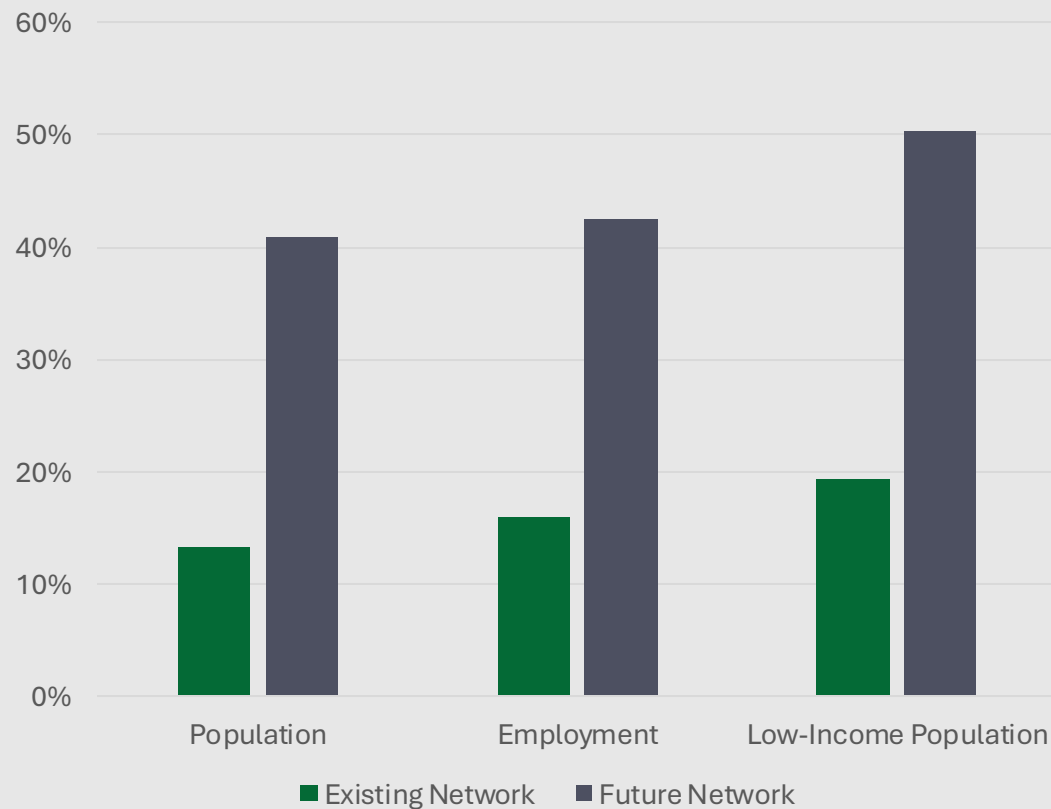
# Annual Service Hours





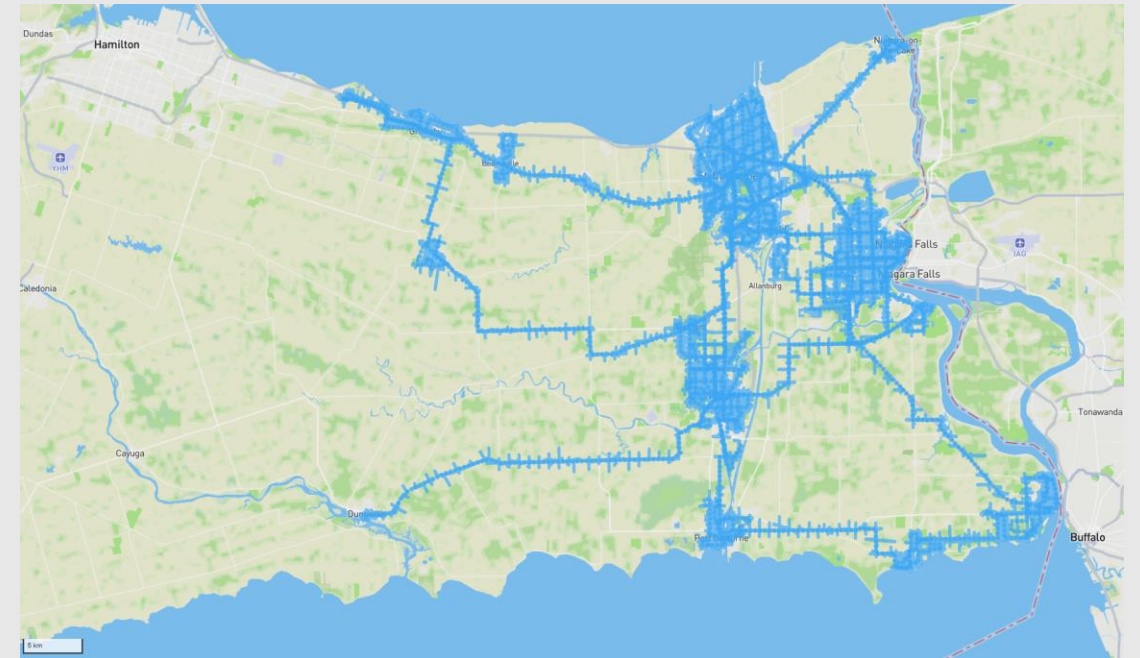
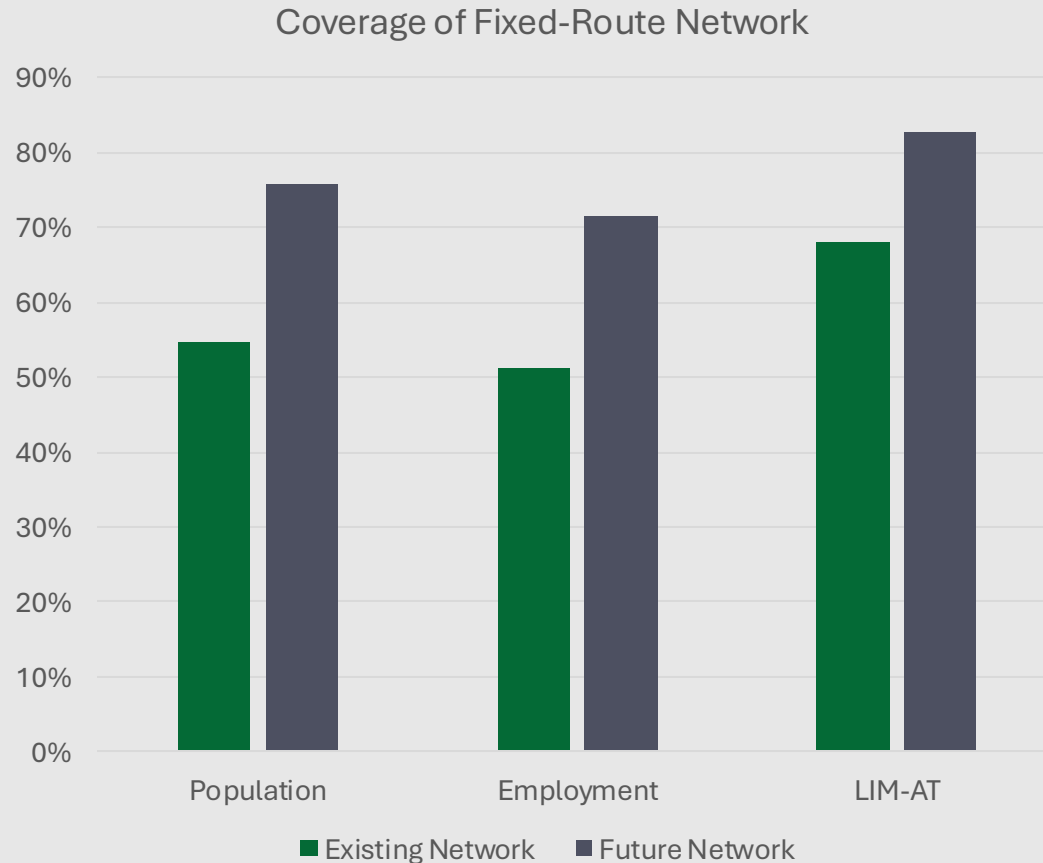
# 15-Minute Coverage by 2035

Coverage of High-Frequency Network

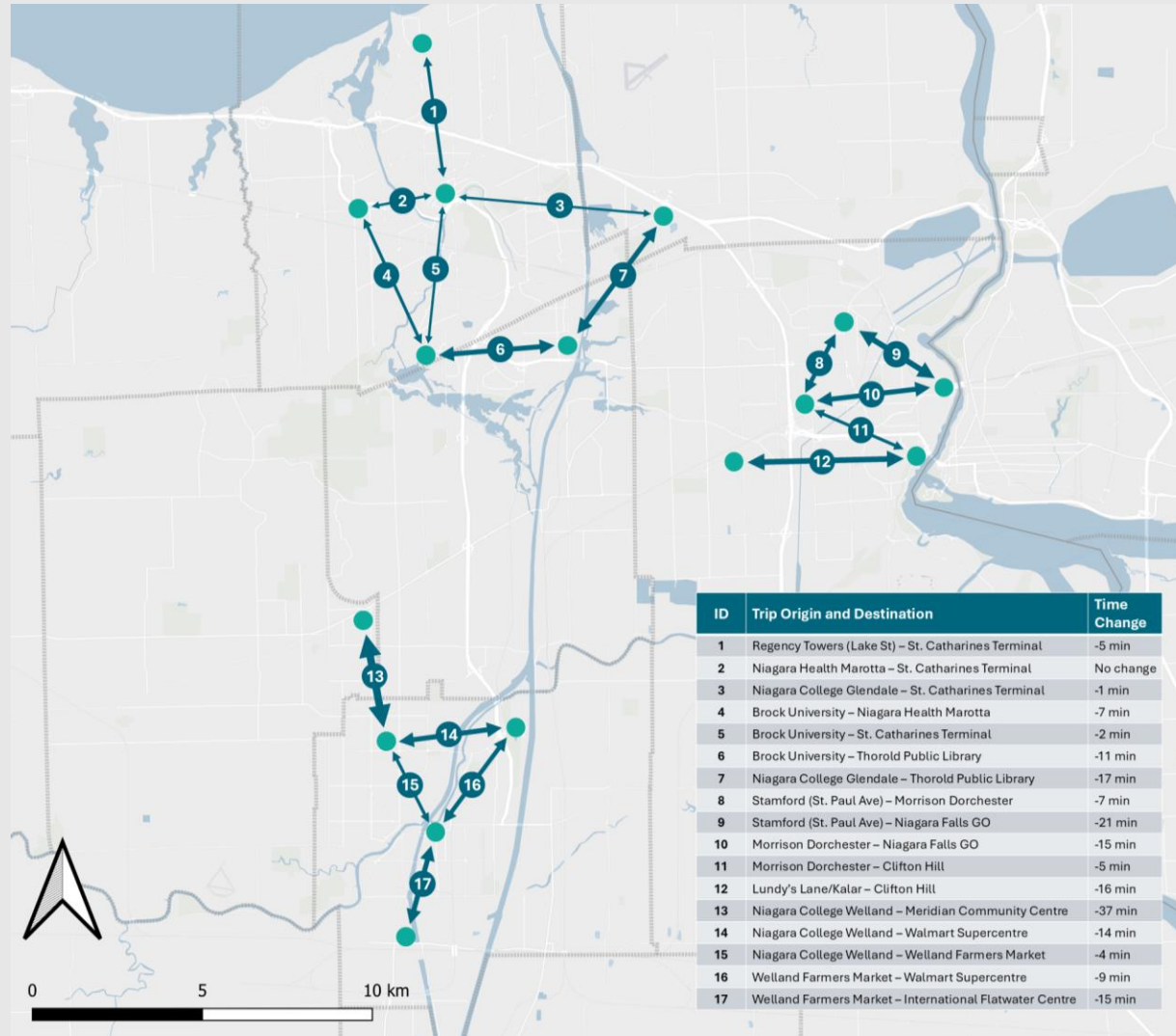




# Fixed Route Coverage by 2035



# Travel Time Savings of 24% on average



# Service Guidelines

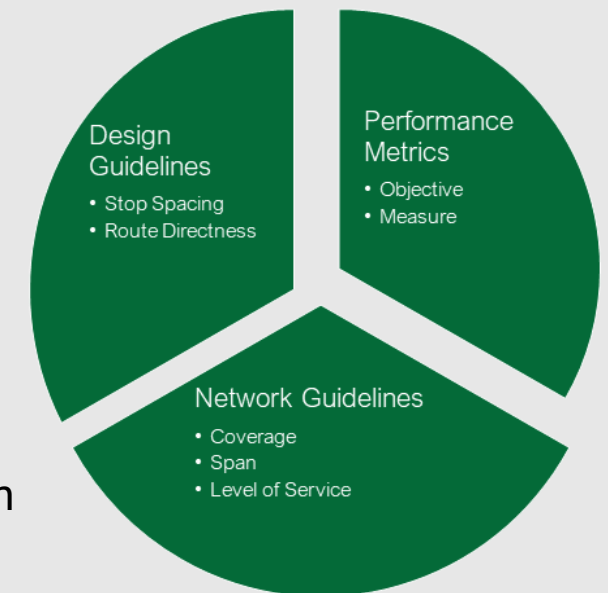
- Provides a structured approach to planning, managing, and improving transit service
- Help to maintain efficiency and consistency, support land use and infrastructure development, engage with the public, and comply with accessibility and other regulatory requirements
- Specific standards are tailored for each service type where relevant, while ensuring service consistency and efficiency
- Performance metrics will guide decisions on service level and type

## Service Span:

- Region wide – Monday-Saturday 0600 – 2400; Sunday 0700-2200
- Considers all service type: micro-transit used in low demand times and areas

## Service Intervals:

- Varies by service type
- Access to 30-minute peak service or better in major urban areas, 60-minutes in small urban areas
- Target 15-minues or better on major routes in long-term (Corridor / Rapid)
- Transition to microtransit when fixed route services are not warranted



# Using the Available Space for Extension, the Sites Will Be Operating at Full Capacity Within 10 Years

**Projected Evolution of Bus Fleet Increase by Site**  
 2026-2035; 2-years; 5-years; 10 years; 40’ equivalent bus

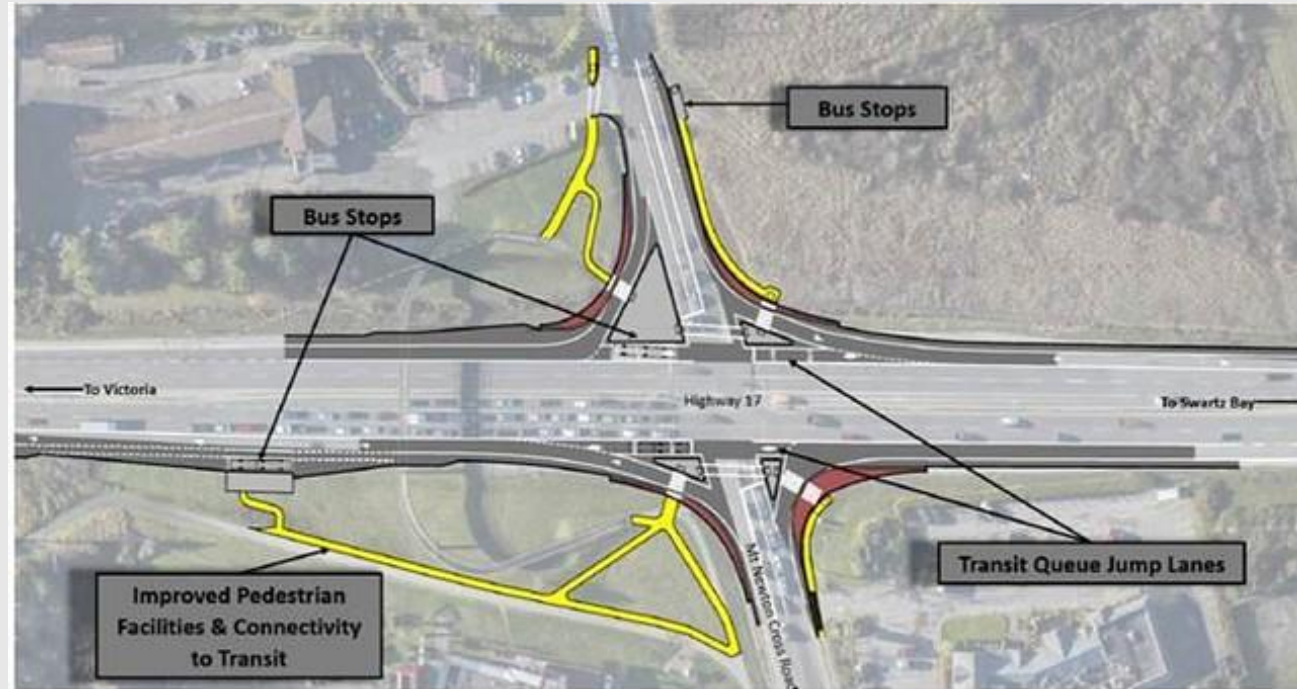
	Niagara	St.-Catharines	Welland	Total
Current (2025)				≈ 187
Stage 1 (2 years) – 2026-2027	≈ +5	≈ +8		≈ 200
Stage 2 (5 years) – 2026-2030	≈ +47			≈ 247
Stage 3 (10 years) – 2026-2035	≈ +26		≈ +72	≈ 345
<b>Total – 10-year milestone</b>	<b>≈ +78</b>	<b>≈ +8</b>	<b>≈ +72</b>	<b>≈ +157</b>

**Site Space Requirements for 10-Year Growth**  
 Per site

	Niagara	St.-Catharines	Welland	Total
Additional space required (square foot)	≈ 305 000 sf	No additional space required	≈ 245 000 sf	≈ 550 000 sf

# Transit Priority

- Rapid bus will be designed with priority measures to achieve faster and more reliable travel.
- In addition, transit priority will improve services across region:
  - 12 bi-directional queue jump lanes
  - 24 transit signal priority locations
- Plan encourages infrastructure and policy to enable direct highway travel with stops
  - Bus bays
  - Dedicated lanes
  - Bus exceptions



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

A vertical dark green line is positioned on the left side of the slide. A light green arrow points upwards and to the right, starting from the bottom left and extending towards the center of the slide.

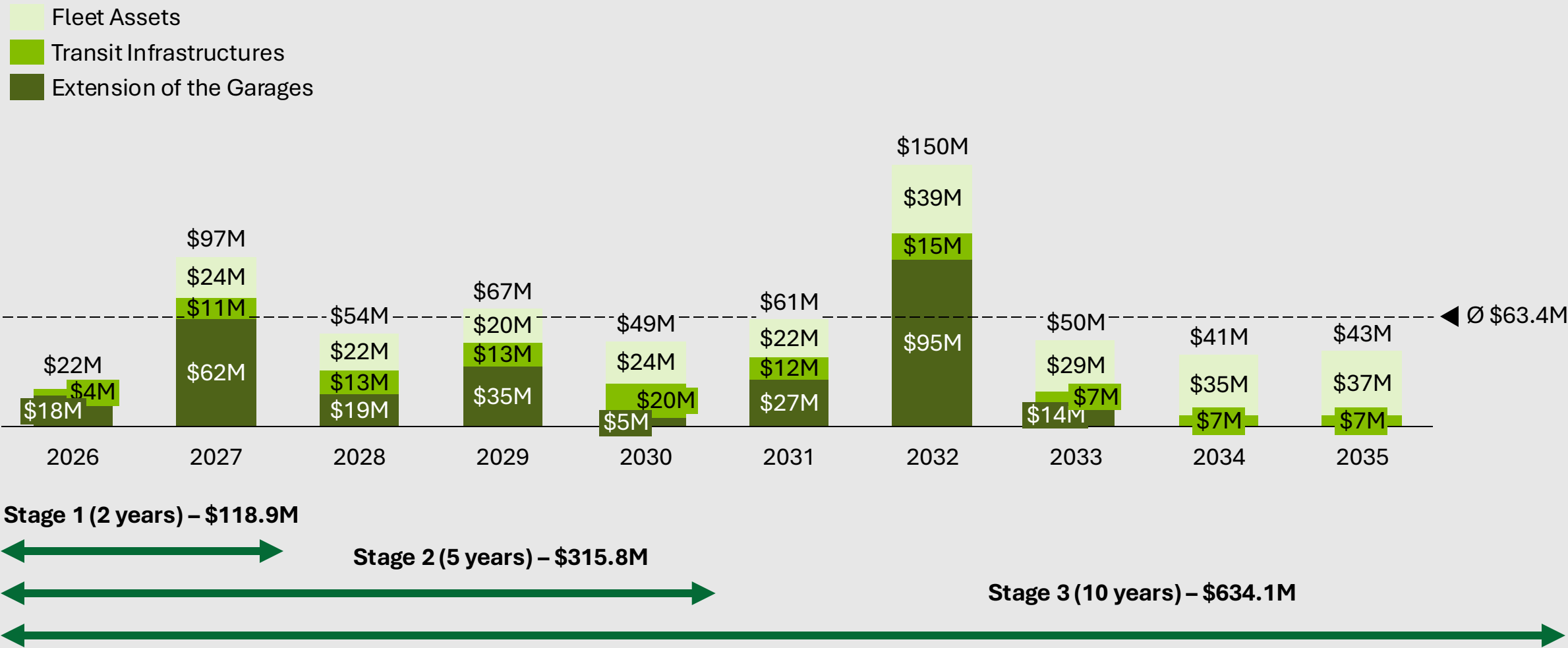
# Detailed Asset Costing



# Required CAPEX for Transit Growth

10-Year CAPEX Plan for Transit Growth  
2026-2035; \$M

CAPEX estimations for transit growth were provided to give an order of magnitude and therefore lack a high level of accuracy. They are not intended to replace estimates based on detailed studies or contractor quotes.

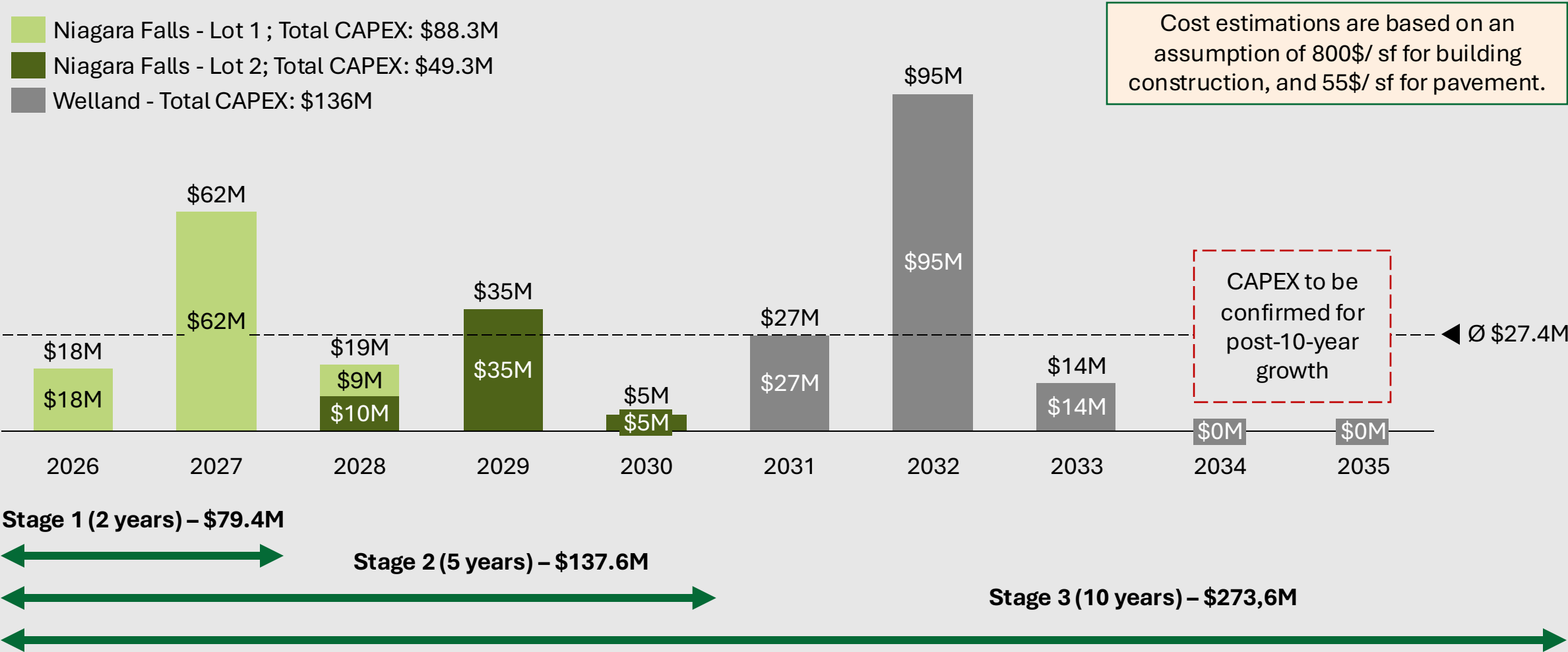


Preliminary estimations – subject to refinement

# Cash Flow for years of expenditure

10-Year Capital Budget Strategy for Garages Extension\*  
2026-2035; \$M

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\*Excluding, charging equipment, utility connection upgrades, complex excavations etc.

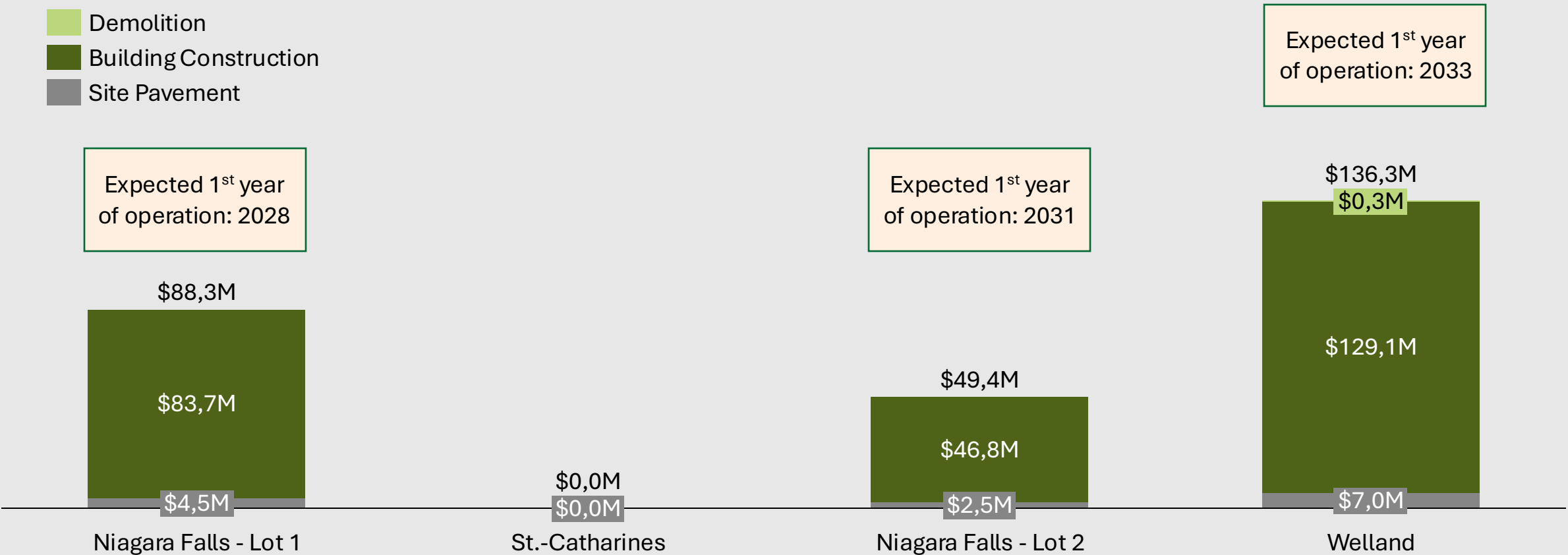
Preliminary estimations – subject to refinement



# Capital Budget Strategy for Garage Extensions and Reconstruction, per Site

CAPEX estimations for transit growth were provided to give an order of magnitude and therefore lack a high level of accuracy. They are not intended to replace estimates based on detailed studies or contractor quotes.

Capital Budget Strategy for Garage Extension and Reconstruction\*  
10 years; \$M



\*Excluding, charging equipment, utility connection upgrades, complex excavations etc.

# Four Scenarios Have Been assessed to Determine the Most Effective Way to Increase Capacity, Considering Projected Transit Growth

Scenario assessed		Description	Meet current needs	Meet future needs
1)	Expand and upgrade St.-Catharines and Niagara Falls.	Upgrade and expand the existing garages to handle the planned fleet growth by maximizing the use of current sites and possibly purchasing adjacent lots. This keeps operations decentralized but strengthens each site.	Yes	No
2)	Add a new third facility to complement current sites.	Keep the current facilities as they are, but add a brand-new garage in a strategic location to balance service demands across the region. This distributes growth across three sites.	Yes	Yes
3)	Expand Niagara site (WEGO facility); rebuild and expand Welland	Expand the garage in Niagara Falls on the two available lots (east and south of the existing building), and demolish, rebuild, and expand the Welland facility on its existing parcel.	Yes	Yes
4)	Build a centralized “super garage” and decommission current facilities.	Construct a single, large “super garage” to house the entire fleet and close the three existing garages. This centralizes operations and may generate savings by eliminating older facilities but requires major upfront investment.	No	Yes

Selected scenario

Based on the level of investment required, available space, operational efficiency and resiliency, ability to meet future needs and other criteria, we recommend the third scenario – Expansion at Niagara and Welland.

# Locations for expansion in Niagara Falls and Welland

Niagara: Total capacity for expansion: around 305k sf



Welland: Total capacity for expansion: 245 266 sf



These lots/parcels are owned by the Region, meaning that the planned expansions over the next 10 years should not require the purchase of additional land.

# Using the Available Space for Extension, the Sites Will Be Operating at Full Capacity Within 10 Years

Projected Evolution of Bus Fleet Increase by Site  
2026-2035; 2-years; 5-years; 10 years; 40' equivalent bus

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Site Space Requirements for 10-Year Growth  
Per site

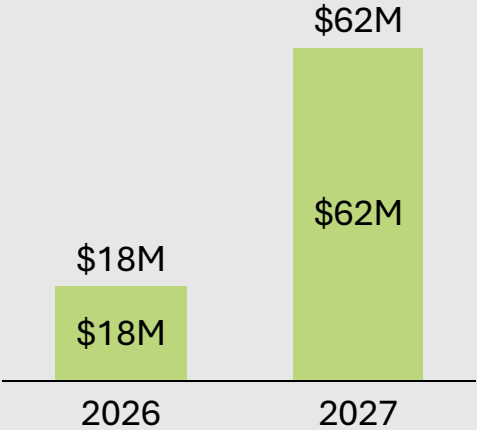
	Niagara Falls	St.-Catharines	Welland	Total
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# Cash Flow for years of expenditure

10-Year Capital Budget Strategy for Garages Extension – *Excluding, charging equipment, utility connection upgrades, complex excavations etc.*  
2026-2035; \$M

Niagara Falls - Lot 1 ; Total CAPEX: \$88.3M

Cost estimations are based on an assumption of 800\$/ sf for building construction, and 55\$/ sf for pavement.

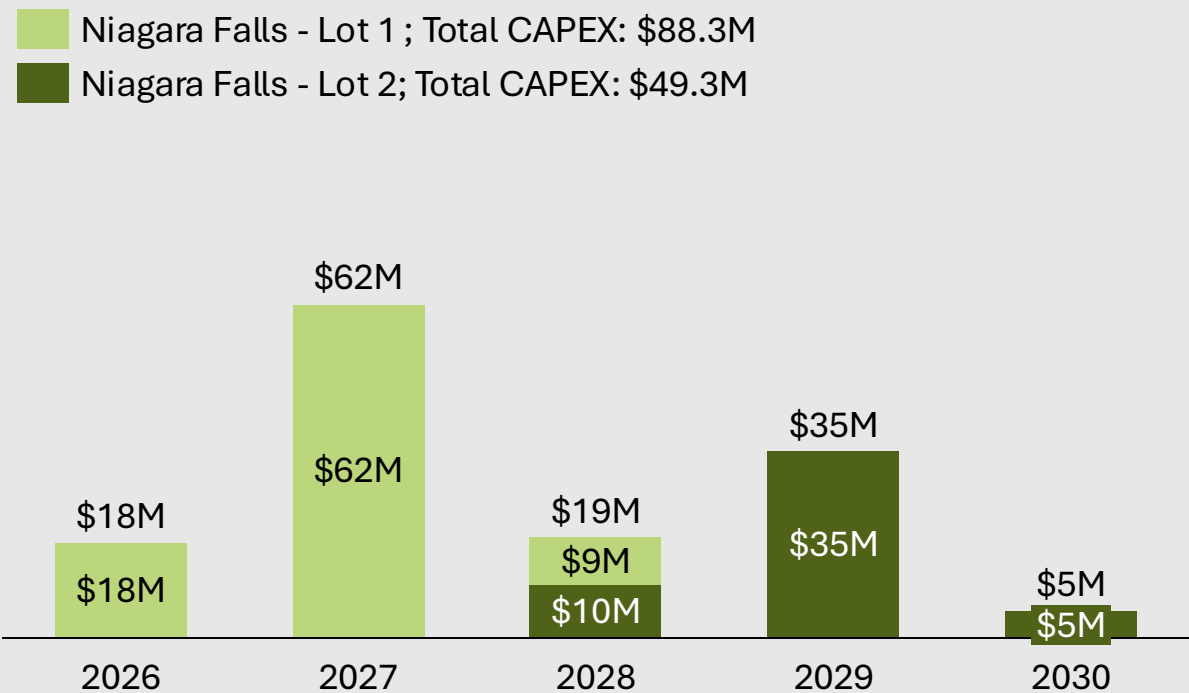


Stage 1 (2 years) – \$79.4M



# Cash Flow for years of expenditure

**10-Year Capital Budget Strategy for Garages Extension – Excluding, charging equipment, utility connection upgrades, complex excavations etc.**  
2026-2035; \$M



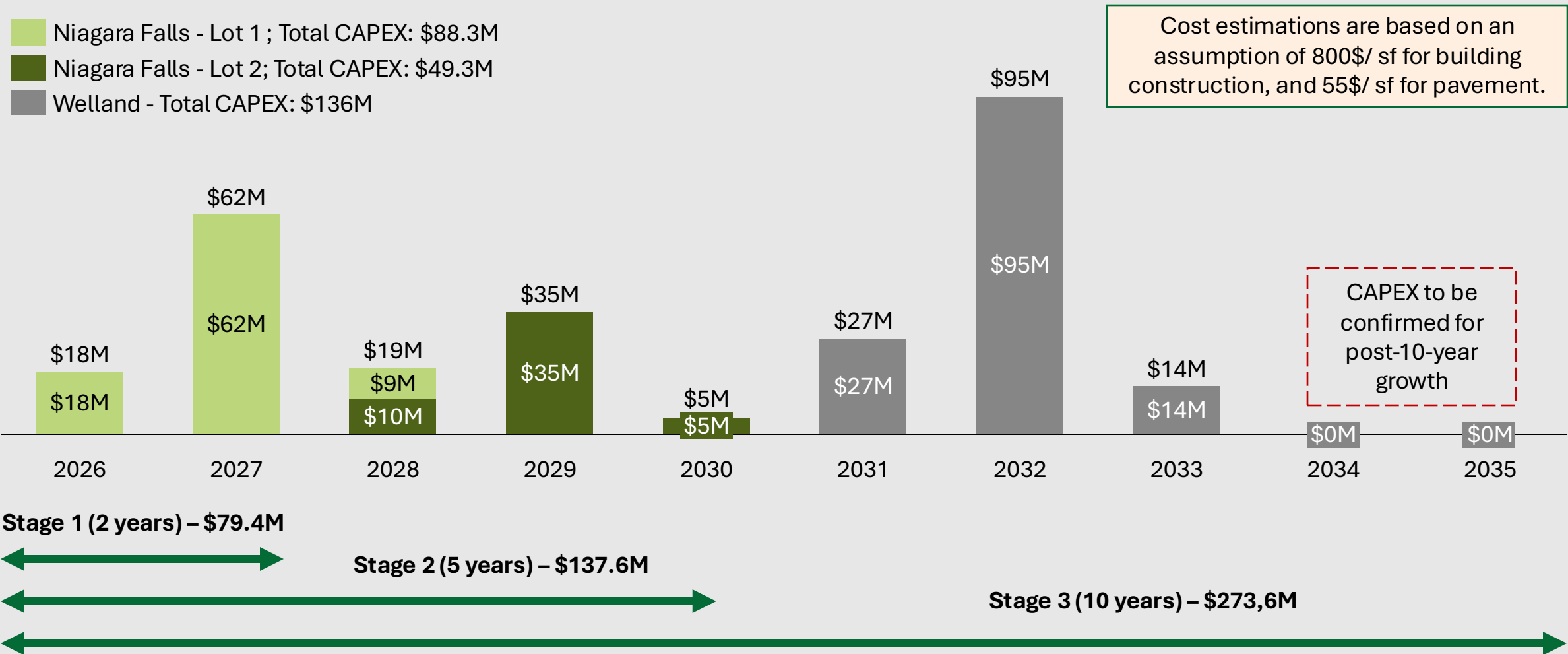
Cost estimations are based on an assumption of 800\$/ sf for building construction, and 55\$/ sf for pavement.





# Cash Flow for years of expenditure

10-Year Capital Budget Strategy for Garages Extension – *Excluding, charging equipment, utility connection upgrades, complex excavations etc.*  
2026-2035; \$M

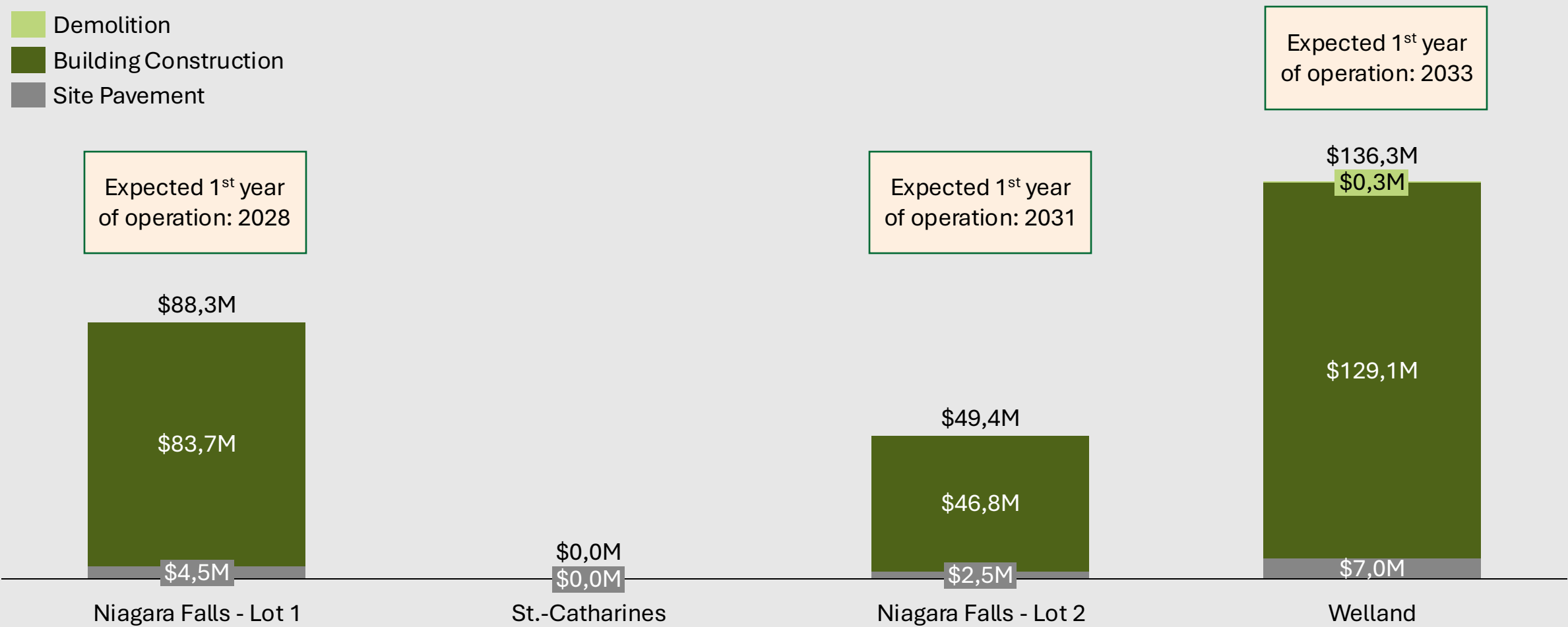


Preliminary estimations – subject to refinement



# Capital Budget Strategy for Garage Extensions and Reconstruction, per Site

Capital Budget Strategy for Garage Extension and Reconstruction\*  
10 years; \$M



\*Excluding, charging equipment, utility connection upgrades, complex excavations etc.