



Proposed Fixed Route, Paratransit Revisions

June 2016

Bis-Man Transit delivers valued public transportation, linking people, jobs and communities.

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Introduction

The Need for Revisions

Due to federal and state funding cuts over the past year, concern has been expressed about the sustainability of the public transportation systems provided by Bis-Man Transit. These concerns have prompted the organization to take a critical look at its structure and at how resources are dedicated within that structure.

Bismarck-Mandan's fixed route system, Capital Area Transit, began providing service in 2004. Presently the system is comprised of 12 routes totaling about 123 miles of service. Of those dozen routes, 10 exclusively serve Bismarck, while two routes link Mandan and Bismarck. Service begins Monday through Saturday at about 6 a.m. and is concluded by 7 p.m., depending on the route. At peak transportation times, as many as seven fixed route buses are in service.

The demand response system has been providing door-to-door service to up to two miles outside the corporate city limits of Bismarck, Mandan, Lincoln and the University of Mary since 1990. The system operates 24/7/365. During peak travel times, as many as 17 paratransit vehicles are in service. This service currently employs liberal eligibility standards resulting in a 'membership' of over 13,000 riders.

Ridership between the two systems has been relatively stagnant for the past five years, and decreased about 8 percent from the end of 2014 to the conclusion of 2015. The two systems provided 283,263 rides in 2015, with Capital Area Transit delivering 133,348 rides while the paratransit system accounted for 149,915 rides.

Bis-Man Transit is proposing a number of revisions to improve how the fixed route service, as well as the demand response system, provides service to the community. These changes have taken into account comments and suggestions from the public through listening sessions, as well as the Mobility 2017 study that was performed in 2012. This document is intended to give an overview of those changes, as well as try to answer initial questions that may arise from the alterations.

The goal of the proposed revisions is to make the fixed route system easier and more convenient for the areas producing the most ridership and transitioning as many capable riders from paratransit to fixed route service. Paratransit service is a variable expense which increases with ridership, as opposed to the fixed route service which has a flat cost based on service hours, regardless of ridership. By switching riders from one mode of service to the other, overall operating costs will eventually reduce by as much as 20% and those who truly need paratransit service will receive a higher quality service.

Background Summary

In October 2015, a fixed route ridership survey was conducted. The following list includes some of the priorities that ridership felt the system needed to address:

- 28% of individuals surveyed wanted earlier or later hours for the fixed route system.
- 15% of individuals surveyed wanted higher route frequency for the fixed route system.

- 52% of individuals surveyed said the time it takes to reach a destination on the fixed route system was “good”.
- 53% of individuals surveyed said the fixed route was a “good” use of their time.
- 47% of individuals surveyed said the overall stress of using the fixed route was good.

Some suggestions gathered from individuals participating in the survey included the following:

- More direct routes.
- Go to the University of Mary.

In January 2016 Bis-Man Transit held the first of three listening sessions to give the organization another chance to gather input from advocacy groups, current stakeholders, current riders, and the community at large. Both staff and Bis-Man Transit Board members attended these listening sessions, listening to the inquiries and comments from attendees and answering questions. The listening sessions were held at locations in Bismarck and Mandan:

- January 29, 2016, at Bis-Man Transit Center.
- February 3, 2016, at Mandan City Hall.
- February 10, 2016, at Bismarck Veteran’s Memorial Public Library.

The listening sessions also provided a number of opportunities for input from the general public. Some public responses included the following:

- Fixed route service to the University of Mary.
- Frequency of fixed route service is inconsistent and needs to be higher.
- The paratransit needs to be more streamline and efficient.
- Paratransit needs to be more consistent with pickup times and the duration until clients are dropped off.
- There needs to be balance between the fixed route and paratransit systems that doesn’t currently exist.

Based on all of the input provided by the community well as recommendations from the Mobility 2017 study, Bis-Man Transit staff created a draft proposal for a new transit system structure to replace what is in place currently. This proposal would include a new route structure for the fixed route system, eligibility changes for the paratransit system, revised hours of service for both the fixed route and paratransit systems, and the creation of a third service that would be available for night and Sunday service.

A Community Public Transportation Task Force was pulled together that included a collection of community leaders and professionals to provide additional suggestions and recommendations for improvements to the overall system and review the draft of existing revisions. The initial meeting on March 10, 2016, resulted a great deal of discussion and the task force requesting more information about how the present system is constructed and to see the completed proposal. The task force would

meet a second time on May 25, 2016, and subsequently voted to support the proposed revisions to the public transportation system.

Following this endorsement, several advocacy agencies were approached to discuss the revisions and how they might affect their clientele. Overall, the responses were positive. Those agencies that serve the disabled community thought that the proposed revisions would result in higher quality service with only a few minor drawbacks. One agency that serves the aging population determined that the revisions would most likely impact negatively on their organization but conceded that they were probably beneficial to the transit system and the overall community.

At its monthly meeting on May 26, 2016, the Bis-Man Transit Board voted to approve the proposed system revisions, and take them to the Bismarck City Commission for a public hearing and opportunity to implement changes if given the Commission's approval.

Between now and that potential July public hearing, Bis-Man Transit will also host another public listening session to answer questions and address any concerns of the community. Implementation of the proposed revisions is able to begin on September 1, 2016, to allow for dissemination of new rider information.

Fixed Route System Changes

Overview of Fixed-Route Service

The most significant revision for the fixed route will be the philosophical switch from utilizing a large geographic footprint to cover the greatest possible area, that of higher frequency within the core ridership areas. This alteration will allow for more consistent and convenient runs along major ridership corridors by providing greater bus frequency.

- Routes are being reconfigured to reduce the geographical footprint of the service and focusing them on higher usage areas.
- The 12 circuitous interlined routes will be replaced with six direct routes.
- Fixed Route service will operate Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Five routes will have one hour headways with one being a pilot route to service U-Mary and there will be one circulator with a two-hour headway.
- A “My Ride” pilot program for Student Fares will begin, allowing for six month Semester passes good from July 1 to December 31 and January 1 to June 30. This will be a sponsored program and rates will be based on the number of pre-sold passes, with the option to extend to private sector.
- Passengers that are 65 years of age or older and passengers that are ADA qualified or receiving Medicare will be able to ride the Fixed Route service for free, with an appropriate Transit-issued ID.
- Overall revenue hour increase will be negligible and offset by reduced maintenance and deadhead cost savings.

Route Examination

Black Route – Kirkwood Mall to Gateway Mall

This route follows the center-most corridor of Bismarck, streamlining one of our top-performing routes and moving customers to the north and south parts of the city. It will also provide service to St. Alexius, Bismarck High School and the State Capitol grounds.

Blue Route – Kirkwood Mall to Bismarck State College

This route will connect individuals coming from, and going to, Mandan with Bismarck, as well as people utilizing Bismarck State College with Kirkwood Mall. Other areas highlighted on the route will be Dan’s Supermarket, Dakota Zoo, Riverside Education Center, High Rise, Arrowhead Plaza, and YMCA.

Green Route – Kirkwood Mall to University of Mary

This route will connect the University of Mary with Kirkwood Mall and ultimately Bismarck. Other highlights along the route include United Tribes Technical College, intermodal options through Bismarck Municipal Airport, south Super Wal-Mart, and Cash Wise Foods.

Red Route – Kirkwood Mall to Gateway Mall, Gateway Mall to Bismarck State College

This route will provide service from Bismarck State College to north Bismarck, as well as connect customers in the eastern portion of town with north and south Bismarck. Other highlighted areas on the route includes Burleigh County Senior Center, Simle School, Ruth Meiers, Bismarck Veterans Memorial Library, Sanford, Bismarck Event Center, Gateway Mall, Pinehurst Shopping Center, north Dan's Supermarket and north Super Wal-Mart.

Brown Route (Mandan) – Dan's Supermarket to Kirkwood Mall

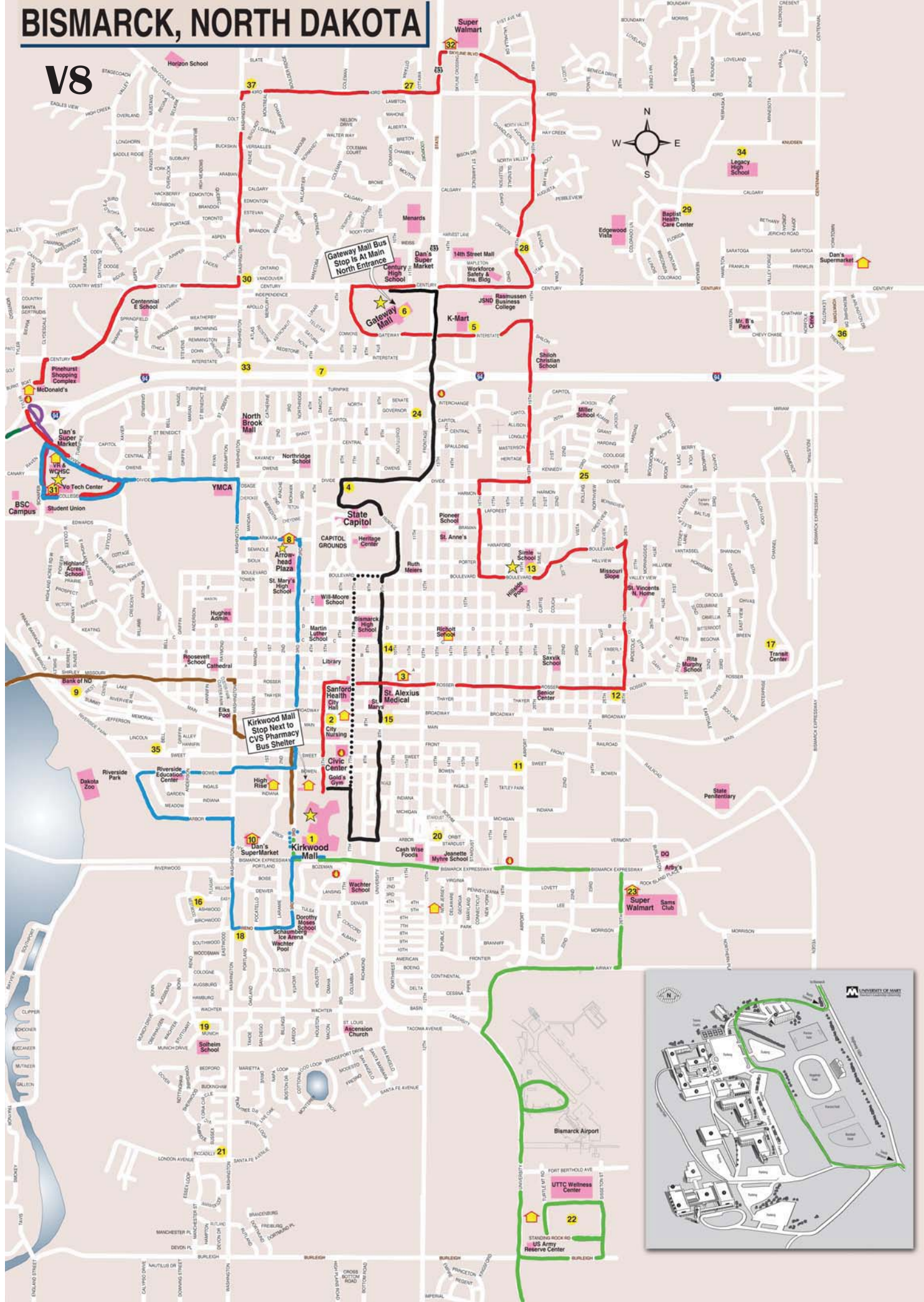
This route will provide service to South Mandan and connect Mandan with Bismarck. Service will also be provided to the Fort Lincoln Trolley, a number of businesses along the Strip, as well as Raging Rivers Water Park and the soon-to-be-built YMCA.

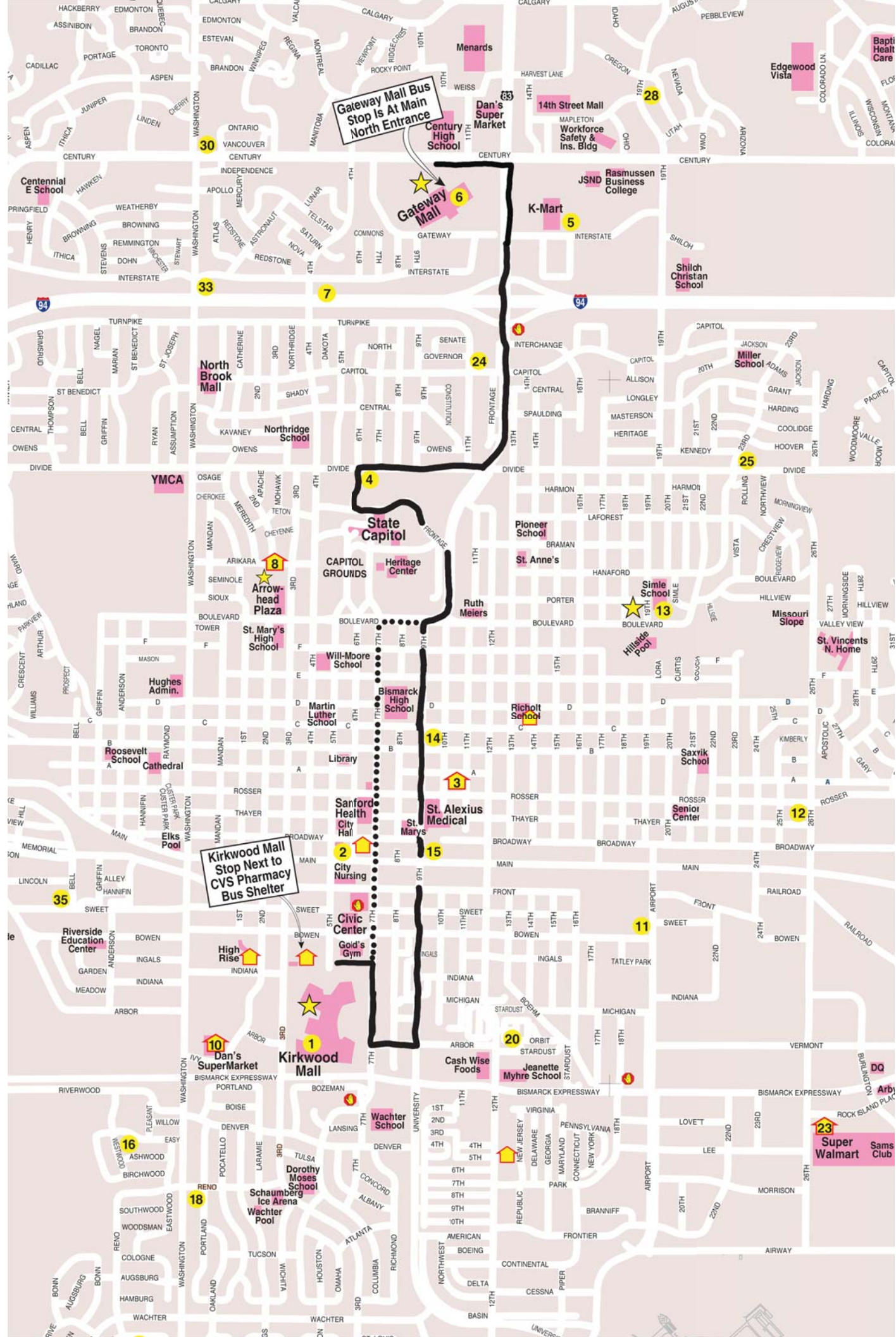
Purple Route (Mandan) – Dan's Supermarket to Bismarck State College

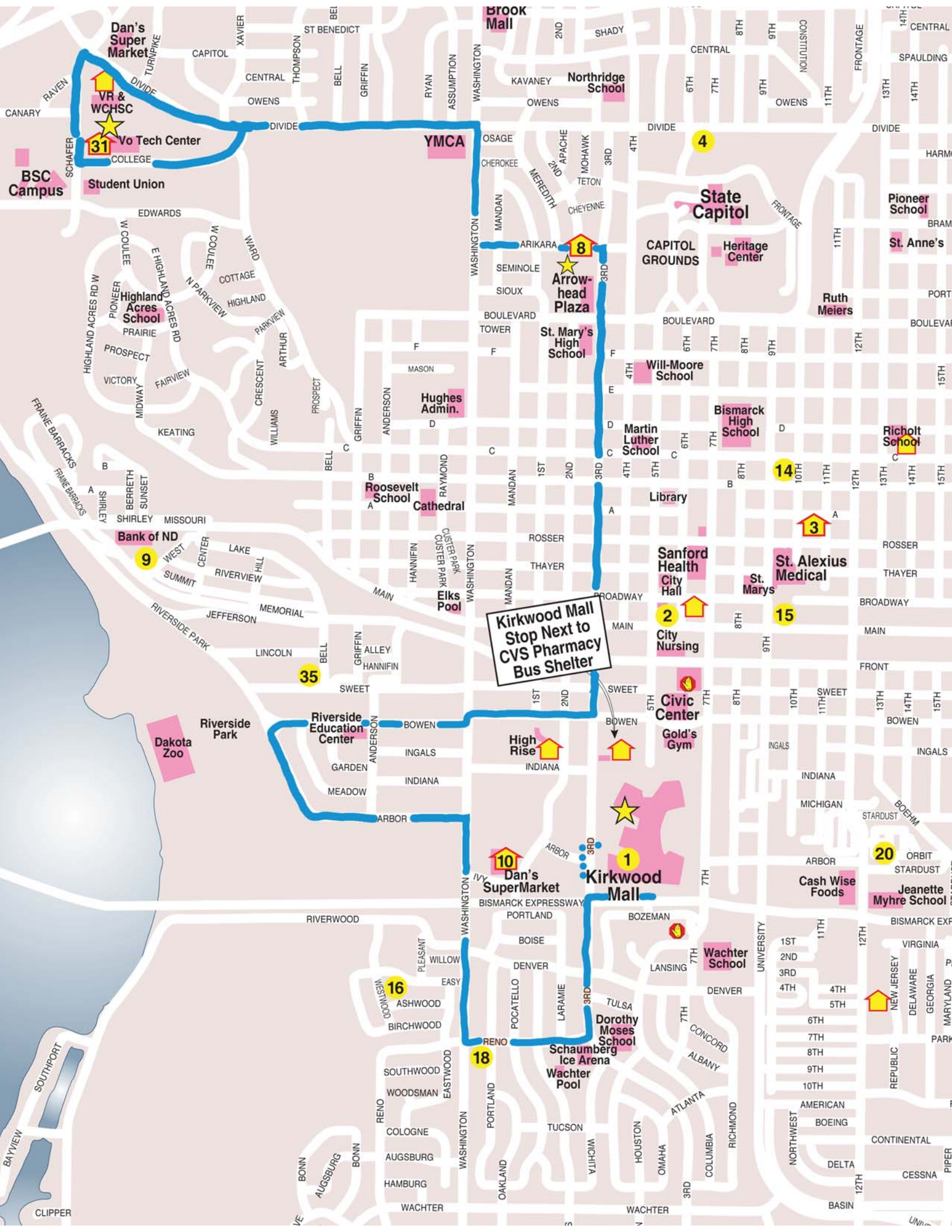
This route will provide service to North Mandan and connect Mandan with Bismarck. Service will also be provided to the Mandan Braves Center, Sanford Health Sunset Drive Continuing Care Center, Super Wal-Mart, Liberty Heights, and Sanford East Mandan Clinic.

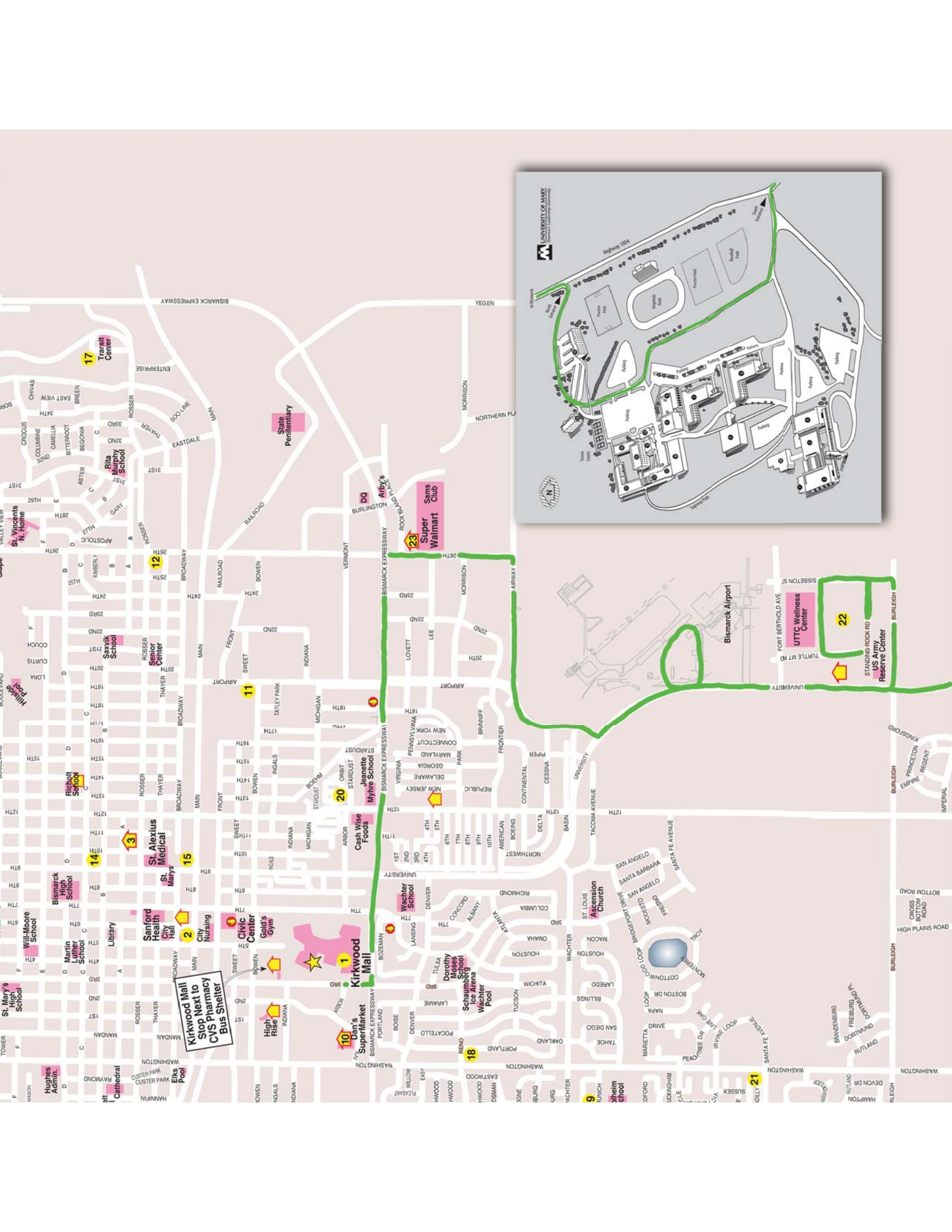
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

V8









BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

V8

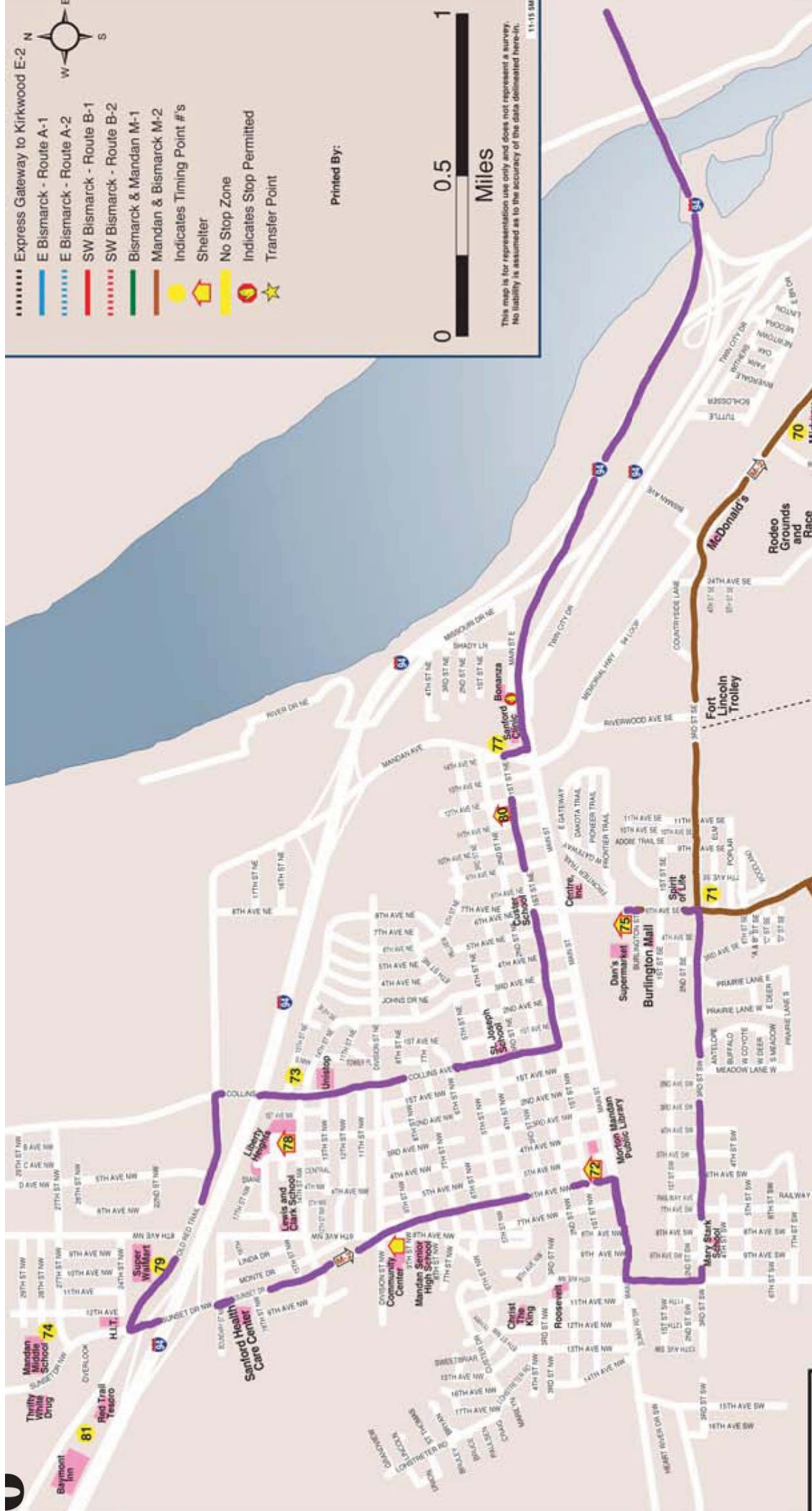


MANDAN, NORTH DAKOTA

V6

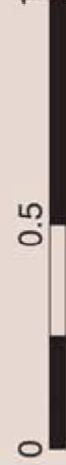






- Express Gateway to Kirkwood E-2
- E Bismarck - Route A-1
- E Bismarck - Route A-2
- SW Bismarck - Route B-1
- SW Bismarck - Route B-2
- Bismarck & Mandan M-1
- Mandan & Bismarck M-2
- Indicates Timing Point #'s
- Shelter
- No Stop Zone
- Indicates Stop Permitted
- Transfer Point

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Miles

This map is for representation use only and does not represent a survey. No liability is assumed as to the accuracy of the data delineated here-in.

11-15-24

Fixed Route Schedule

Weekdays	Start Time	Mandan	Kirkwood	BSC	Gateway	U-Mary	End Time
Purple	7:00	:00		:30			7:00
Brown	6:30	:30	:00				6:30
Blue	7:00		:00	:30			6:30
Black	7:00		:00		:30		7:00
Green	7:00		:00			:30	7:00
Red (2hr Headway)	7:30		Even Hr :30	Odd hour :30	:00		7:00

Saturdays	Start Time	Mandan	Kirkwood	BSC	Gateway	U-Mary	End Time
Purple	8:00	:00		:30			7:00
Brown	8:30	:30	:00				6:30
Blue	8:00		:00	:30			6:30
Black	8:00		:00		:30		7:00
Green	8:00		:00			:30	7:00
Red (2hr Headway)	8:00		Even Hr :30	Odd hour :30	:00		7:00

Demand Response System Changes

Overview of Paratransit Service

The paratransit system will be altered to a curb-to-curb service with an origin-to-destination option upon request. Service hours will be close to the fixed route system, beginning at 5:30 a.m. and completing at 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays. Service will be provided within the city limits of Bismarck and Mandan, or within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from a fixed route. For passengers outside of that area, West River Transit is available to address their needs.

ADA standards require service to be comparable to that provided by the fixed route system. The paratransit system is not intended to be a transportation service that meets every need of the population it serves. Instead, it serves as a safety net for persons whose disabilities prevent them from using the accessible fixed route system. Eligibility will be based on ADA standards, and age alone, will no longer be a qualifier for the paratransit system.

The cost for a one-way trip on the paratransit system will remain at \$2.50. The system will observe the same holidays as the fixed-route system, and not provide service New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

- ADA paratransit service is provided to complement the fixed route service as required by law. This ADA regulated service will be operated at a minimum of the same hours as the fixed routes. It is a curb-to-curb service with origin-to-destination upon request.
- Eligibility for the service will adhere strictly to ADA standards based solely on a customer's physical and/or mental inability to ride on the accessible fixed route service.
- Eligibility of customers will be renewed every 3 years, or as needed, if accepted on a conditional basis.
- The service area for complementary ADA service will be within the boundaries of Bismarck and Mandan or within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a fixed route.
- Complementary ADA service will be provided Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Areas currently served by Bis-Man Transit that do not fall within the new service area can obtain service through West River Transportation.
- There will be no service on holidays that the fixed route does not operate.

Overview of Extended Hours Service

To address the needs of individuals who require transportation options later in the evening, such as 2nd and 3rd shift employees, a new service will be created to complement the paratransit and fixed route systems, after those services have concluded for the day. This curb-to-curb, ride-share service will begin providing service at 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and conclude at midnight. The system will observe the same holidays as the fixed-route system, and not provide service New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

- Extended Hour Service will be available as a curb-to-curb service only.

- Service will be available to the general public on a first-come first-served basis.
- Fare per trip will be \$5.00.
- Service Hours will be Monday through Saturday, 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. and Sundays, 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- The service area will remain the same as the ADA paratransit service.
- There will be no service on holidays that the fixed route does not operate.
- The number of buses available will be determined by both budget and demand.

Overview of Sunday Service

To address the need for transportation services on Sundays to get clients to and from services such as religious worship, a demand response service will be available to the general public on Sundays from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Four cutaway buses will be utilized to provide service.

Similar to the Extended Hours Service, this will be a curb-to-curb service with origin-to-destination available upon request. Rides must be scheduled at least a day in advance, but no more than a week ahead of time. Automatically-populated rides are not available with this service.

The cost per ride is \$5. The system will observe the same holidays as the fixed route system, and not provide service New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.