

PANEL SESSION

# Digital Shift, Real Impact

## Modernizing Rider Engagement

Exploring real tactics that moved riders into the app and kept them there.



# Your Co-Hosts from Spare



**Jess Savage**

**Product Manager, Rider & Driver Apps**

- Owns the rider-facing experience: app, booking flow, notifications
- Decides what features to build that drive results for agencies and provide a seamless experience for riders and drivers



**Peter Redpath**

**Senior Partner Success Manager**

- Works hands-on with agencies launching and scaling digital channels
- Spends his days helping transit teams move riders to a digital service model

# Meet today's panel



**Christina Pflueger**

**Project Administrator, Met Council /  
Metro micro  
Minneapolis · Saint Paul**



**Amanda Baird**

**Director of Communications &  
Marketing, PSTA  
Pinellas County, Florida**



**Jessica Clark**

**Director of Marketing,  
Waco Transit  
Waco, Texas**

**Transit isn't  
just a service.**

**~45% of all  
Spare trips  
are now self  
serve**



# Your agency's digital front door

## Book a trip

Self-serve booking in seconds.

## Pay in-app

No cash, no calls.  
Streamlined transactions.

## Trip Notifications

Real-time alerts direct to riders' phones.

## Announcements

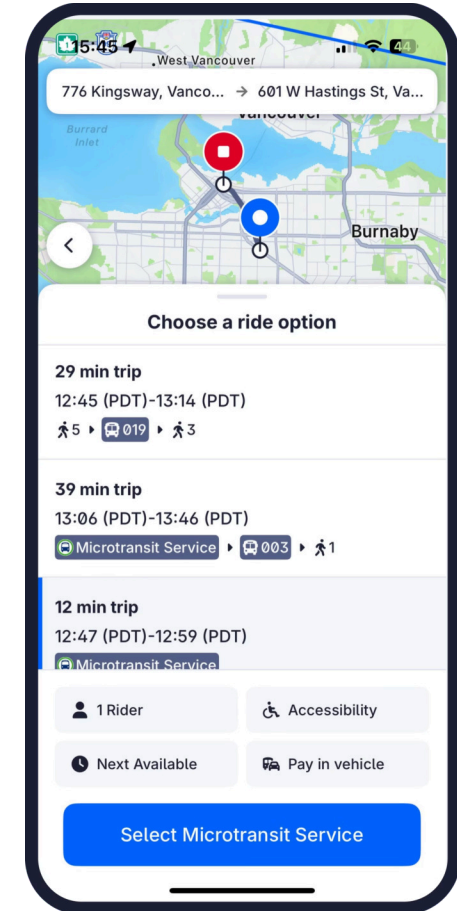
Broadcast updates to your full rider base instantly.

## Guest mode

Reducing friction for new users.

## Multimodal trip planning

Microtransit and fixed route options, all within one app.



**Adoption doesn't  
happen automatically**

**Three agencies, three  
different strategies**



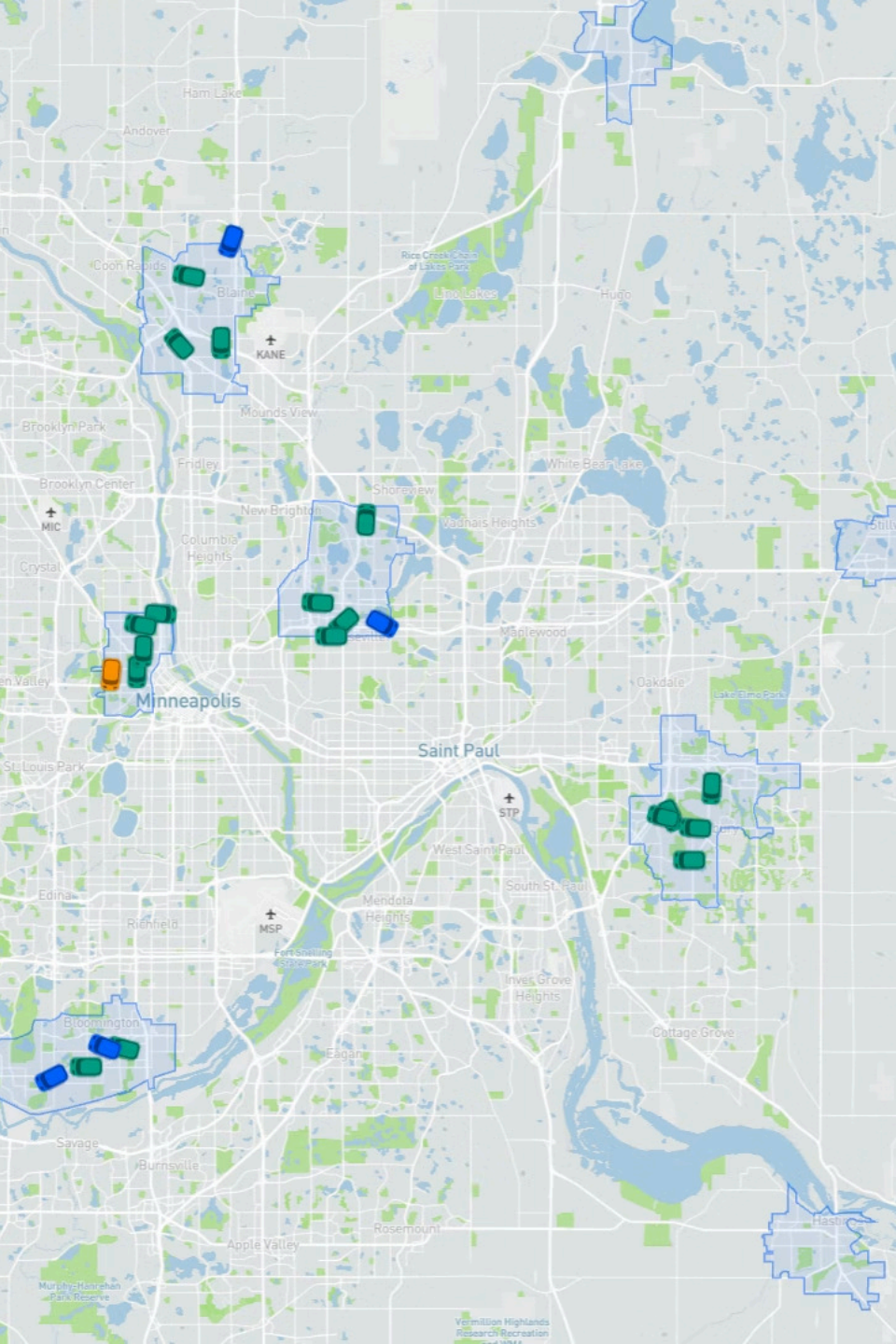
# Metropolitan Council

Minneapolis · Saint Paul



**Christina Pflueger**

**Project Administrator**



# 5 Microtransit Zones - One app

## Metro micro Zones

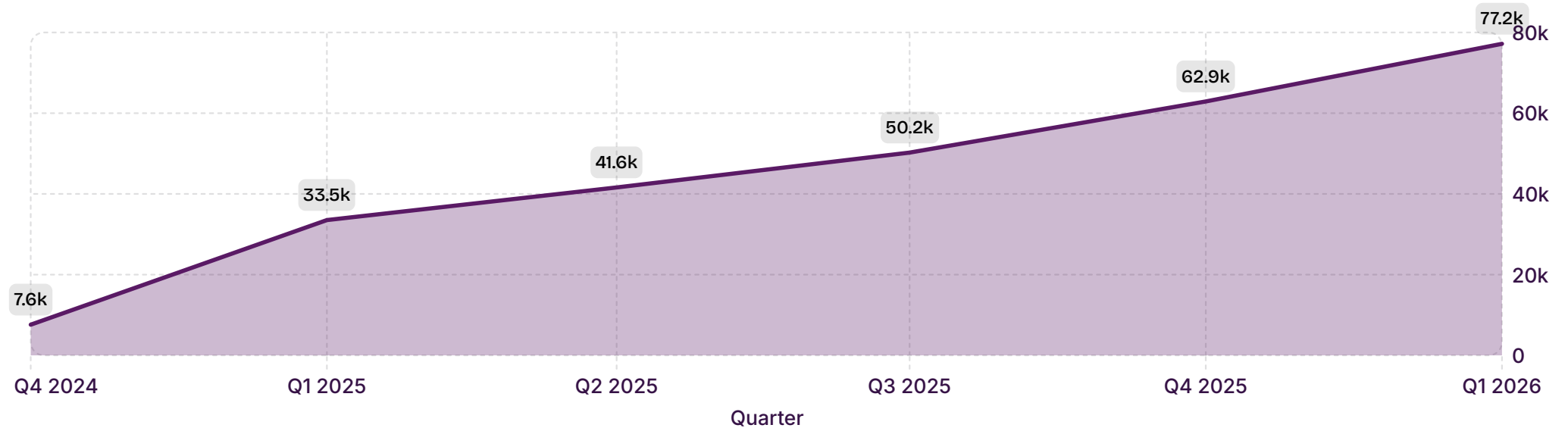
Blaine · Bloomington · North Minneapolis · Roseville · Woodbury

## TransitLink Areas

Forest Lake · Hastings · Stillwater

# 10× Growth in Six Quarters

From one zone in Q4 2024 to nine zones serving ~80K quarterly boardings – a remarkable scale-up driven by rider demand and digital-first booking.

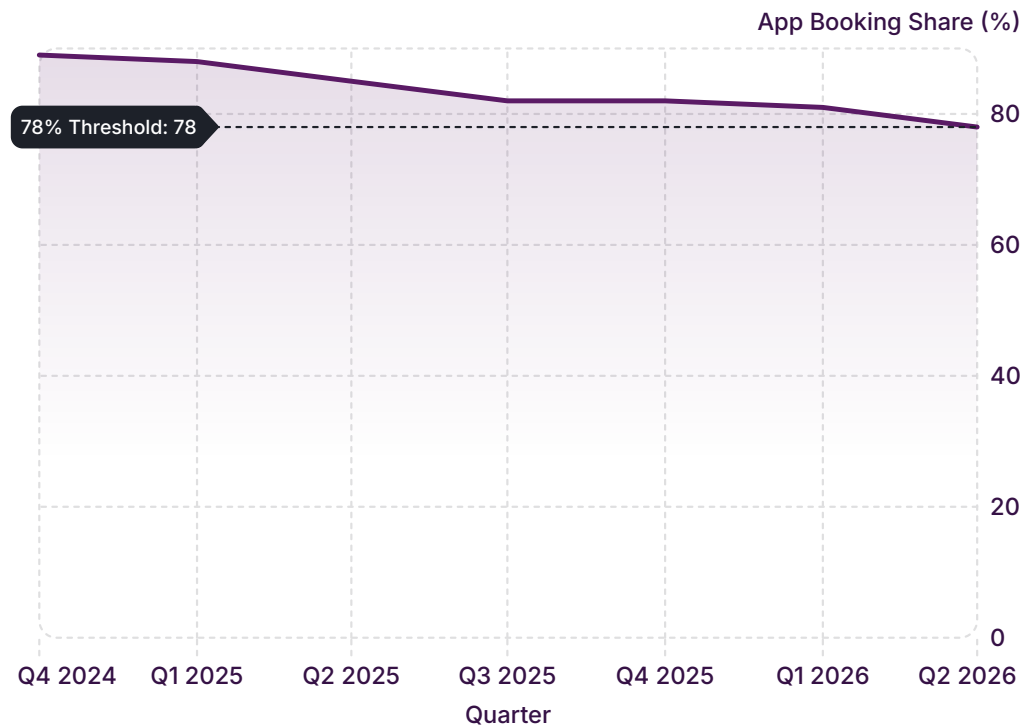


**1→8 Zones Expanded**

Metro micro + TransitLink combined

# Scale Without the Admin Overhead

Metro micro has maintained ~80% of trips booked in the rider app every quarter since launch.



## The Digital Toolkit

App-First Booking

- SMS Notifications

- End to End Trip Planning

- Live Vehicle Tracking



# PSTA

Pinellas County, Florida



**Amanda Baird**

**Director of  
Communications &  
Marketing**

# PSTA SYSTEM MAP

Connect with PSTA | @RidePSTA



PSTA.NET  
INFOLINE 727.540.1900

Mapa del sistema de autobuses

All PSTA routes and features are wheelchair accessible. Todos los autobuses y sus servicios de PSTA son accesibles a personas en sillas de ruedas.

Full routes and schedules:



psta.net

Plan your trip here:



psta.net/transitapp

transit



Pay your fare here:



flamingofares.com



Legend



Downtown Clearwater



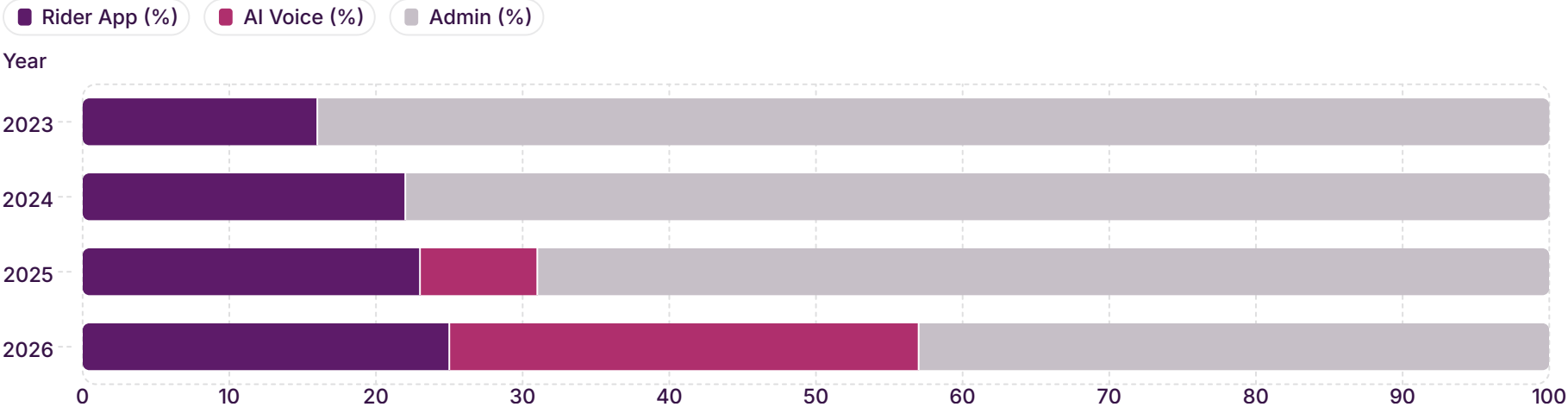
Downtown St Petersburg & Grand Central Station



# Pushing the digital frontier since 2021

- 2021  
Launched with Spare – paratransit goes digital
- 2022  
Rider app + MOD introduced – self-serve booking begins
- 2024  
Digital eligibility – ADA applications move online - Grouper App launches!
- Oct 2025  
AI Voice added – second digital channel launches

# 57% of bookings arrive via a digital channel



**25%**

Bookings via Rider App

Q4 2024 → Q1 2026

**32%**

Bookings via AI voice

**YoY Growth**

Consistent app usage growth YoY as riders continue to find and begin use of the app even years after launch



# Waco Transit System

*Waco, Texas*



**Jessica Clark**

**Director of Marketing**

# Multiple Services - One Platform



## Urban ADA

Same-day + advance booking in the city core



## MicroDash

Central, Northcrest, South-Hewitt Zones



## Evening Link

After-hours service for late-night riders



## Rural

Same-day + advance across McLennan County



## Medicaid Service

Urban + rural eligibility trips

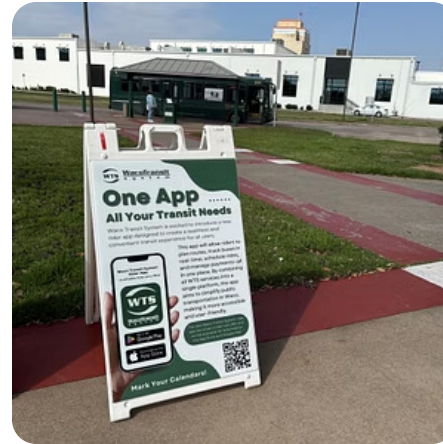
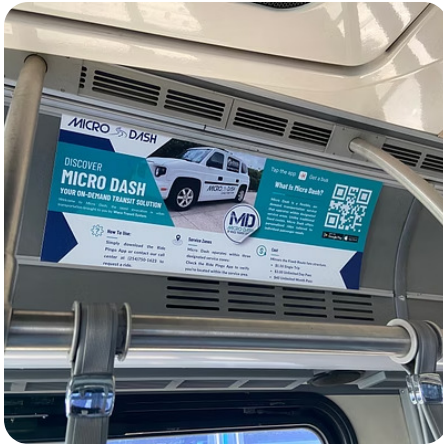


## CTSM

Rural McLennan ↔ Waco connector

# Meeting Riders Where They Already Are

Waco didn't just ship an app. They showed up — in places and channels riders already use.



...using the new Waco Transit System app!  
Enjoy a smoother experience with:  
✔ Quick & easy ride booking  
✔ Real-time ride tracking  
✔ Seamless access to Waco Transit services  
Be ready for the switch—download the app now! #MicroDash #wacotransit #wacoba



## Social-First Announcement

Facebook post on Feb 10 with the new app, hashtags, and customer-service phone numbers right in the copy.

## Hub-of-Presence

Physical A-frame signs help riders approach new technologies right where they are

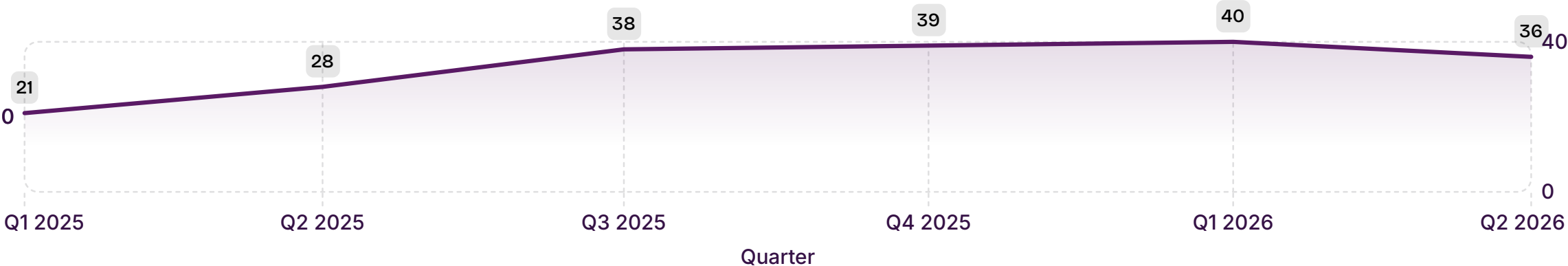
## In-Trip Discovery

Interior bus posters reach current paratransit and fixed-route riders during the journey they're already taking.

## One-Tap Conversion

Every printed and digital piece carries the same QR code → instant App Store / Google Play, no typing required.

# App Adoption Nearly Doubled in Five Quarters



## App Adoption by Program

**80% – Microtransit**  
MicroDash and urban on-demand riders overwhelmingly self-serve in the app

**33% – All Programs**  
Combined app share across every Waco Transit service

**19% – Paratransit**  
Still growing – paratransit riders adopting digital at their own pace

Panel Discussion

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**Jessica Clark**

**Director of Marketing, Waco Transit**  
Central Texas

Open Q&A

# Thank You



## Set Explicit Goals

Set an explicit goal for rider-app downloads and usage. Then raise the bar as you go.



## Tailor Education

Tailor education to the rider type – paratransit, microtransit, rural and Medicaid riders all need different support.



## In-Person Still Matters

Amanda has run Snapper service intros at PSTA community meetings where riders helped design door to door new service offerings.



**Resources we'll share:** Rider-app materials · Spare resources for rider engagement · Panelist contact info.