

# Commuters Trust: South Bend Pilot Program

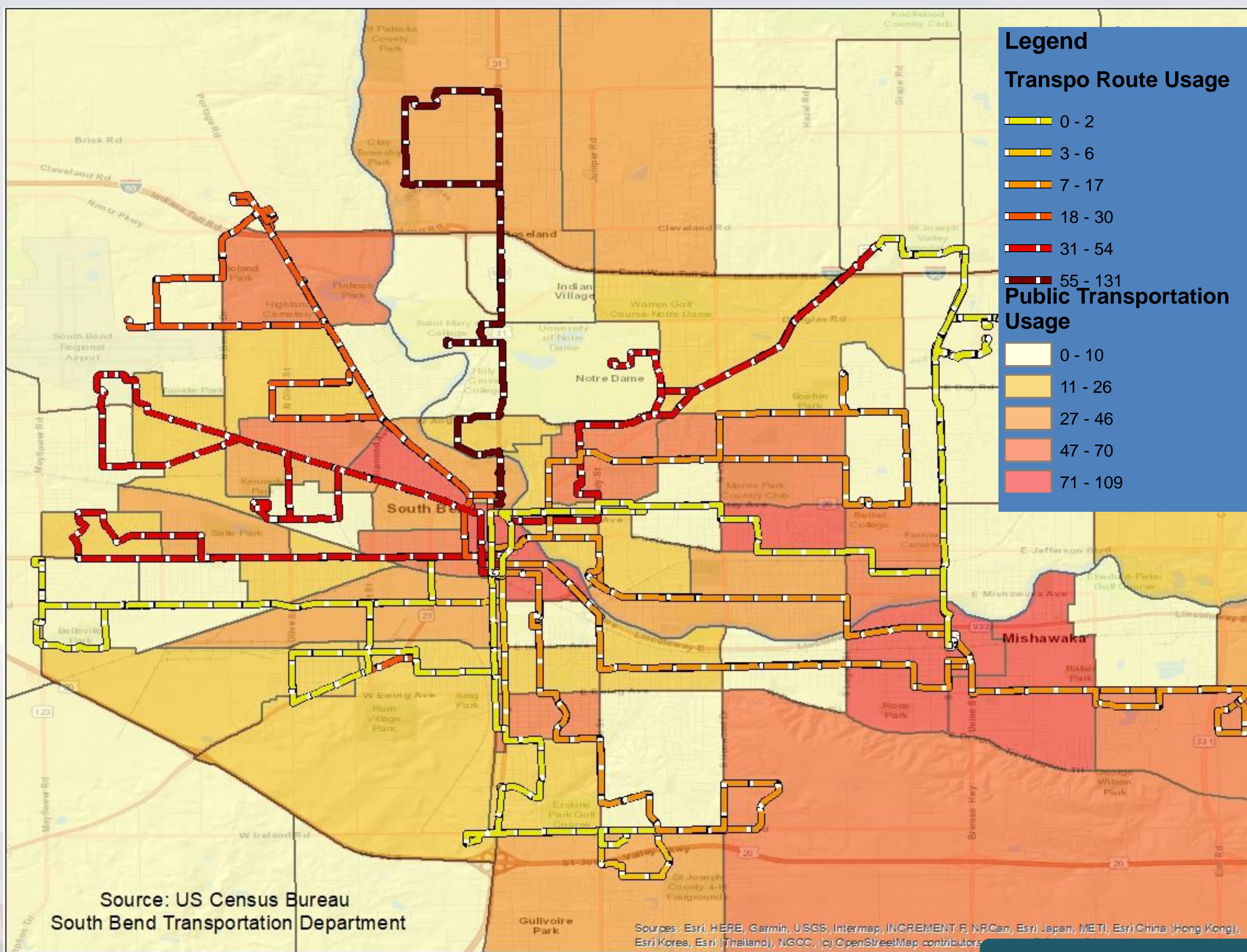
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## Introduction

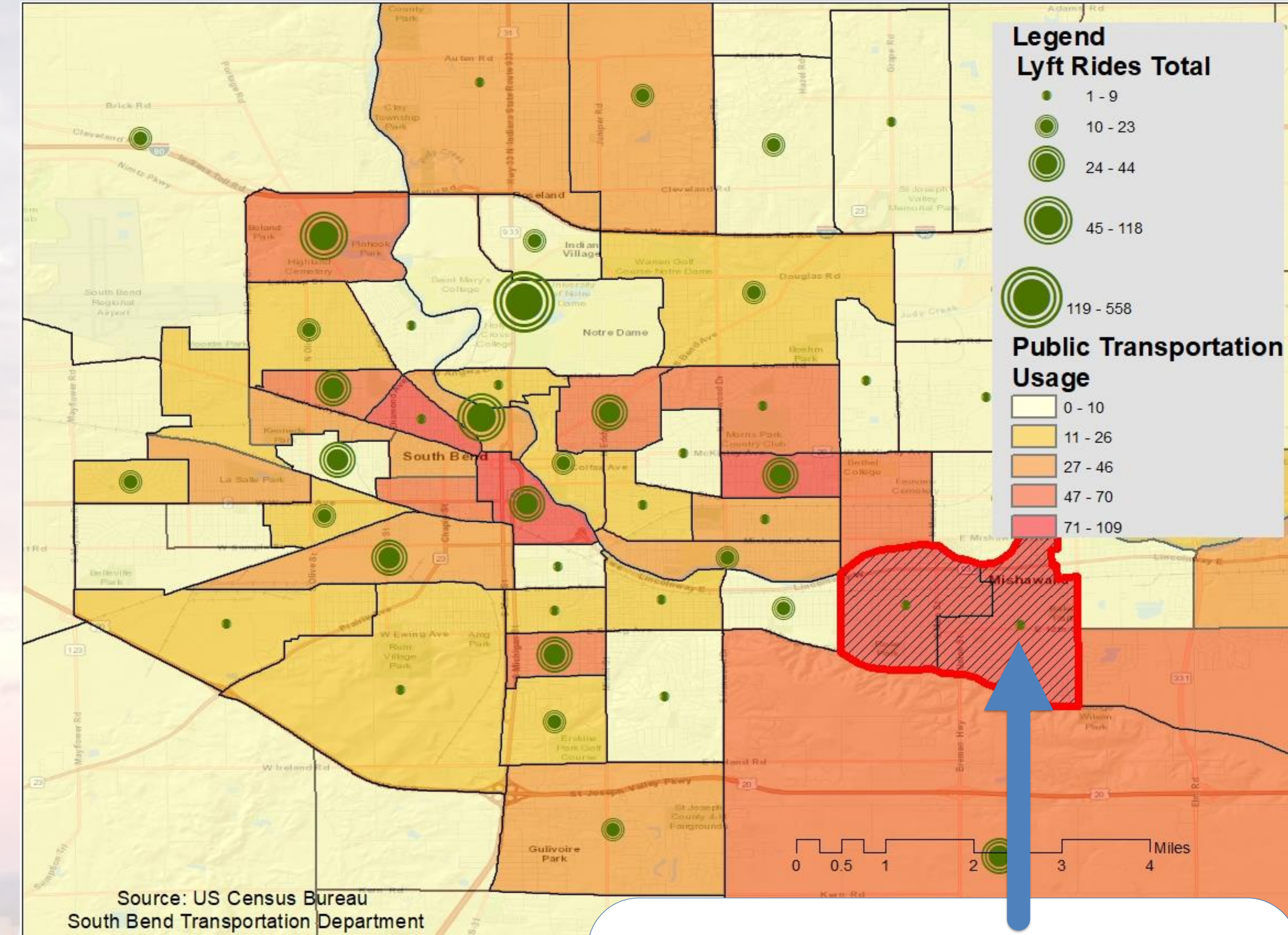
**Purpose:** Commuters Trust is a partnership between the City of South Bend and large local employers as a result of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge. Its goal is to meet the transportation needs of vulnerable workers within South Bend. As stated by the city, the lack of affordable and convenient transportation remains a major hurdle for finding or keeping employment. Since September, a pilot program has started with Lyft giving discounted rides and Transpo giving free rides to some low-income and part time workers at the University of Notre Dame, Beacon Health, and South Bend City Government.

**Research Question:** How does the pilot program address transportation needs and what are future gaps?

## Base Analysis Map 1: Transpo Usage



## Map 2: Discounted Lyft Ride Usage



## Methodology

### Map 1: Transpo Usage

As part of the pilot program, South Bend's commuter bus system, Transpo, provided data on free ride usage. This data was joined with the line file for the different routes, with darker colors representing higher usage. This is set against a choropleth map showing the number of people per census tract who require public transportation to get to work.

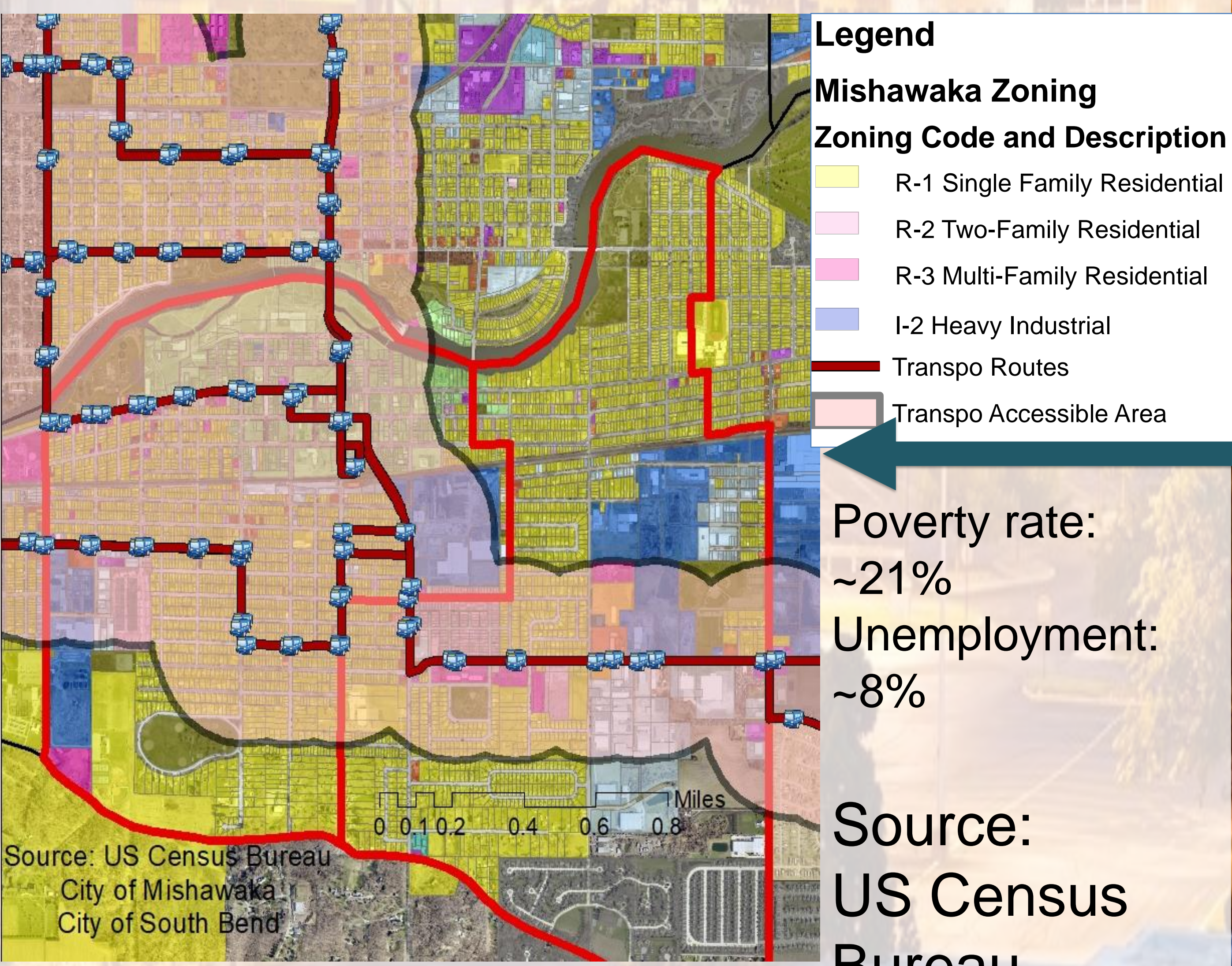
### Map 2: Discounted Lyft Usage

The same choropleth map is used. The symbols represent discounted lyft usage, joining the census tract data with lyft data with location data de-identified to the census tract level for privacy concerns.

### Map 3: Analysis of Census Tract 102/3

This map zoomed in on a potential gap in the project. A 0.25 mile buffer was placed around bus stations, overlaid upon a map showing different zoning areas of census tract 102 and 103.

## Map 3: Gap Analysis of Census Tracts 102/103



Poverty rate:  
~21%  
Unemployment:  
~8%

Source:  
US Census  
Bureau

## Discussion

The purpose of the first two maps was to perform geospatial analysis on the impacts and use of the Commuters Trust pilot program. In maps [1] and [2], we can assume to see that we would see comparatively higher usage in census tracts with higher public transportation needs. There seems to be fairly proportional coverage in most vulnerable areas, except for in census tracts 102 and 103 which is highlighted in [2]. This led to a creation of a new map [3] which focuses specifically in census tracts 102 and 103 (highlighted in red). With zoning data pulled from the city of South Bend and Mishawaka, we can see that large residential areas of both census tracts are not within an accessible distance to a bus stop (defined at 0.25 miles). The areas not covered are largely residential, consisting mostly of single-family residential homes, but with some multi-family residential homes interspersed as well. Using additional data gathered from the American Community Survey data set, we can see that the poverty rate in these tracts is around 21%, almost double the national poverty rate, while unemployment is at 8%, double the unemployment rate in Indiana the same year. This suggests that continuation and growth of the program should more highly consider vulnerable workers in census tracts 102/103 to ensure equitable benefit for all.

## Current Gap

## Conclusions and Recommendations

As we see in our geospatial analysis, there currently is a gap for workers in census tracts 102 and 103 – areas with high need for public transportation but relatively lower access. Continuation of the program in the year 2020 should do a deeper analysis on the background of workers within these tracts and spread the eligibility to more employers in the St Joseph County area.