



BEN FRANKLIN
TRANSIT

2026 Annual Service Plan

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2026 Annual Service Plan

Executive Summary

At Ben Franklin Transit (BFT), our mission is to provide safe, reliable, and accessible transportation services that enhance the quality of life in our communities. Each year, we develop an Annual Service Plan (ASP) that reflects our ongoing commitment to meeting the evolving mobility needs of the Tri-Cities region.

In January 2021, BFT's Board of Directors adopted the ASP Policy, creating a structured approach to align service planning with operational delivery. This policy plays a vital role in shaping budgetary decisions and determining annual labor needs. The ASP is developed through a collaborative process that incorporates insights from both community members and BFT staff. As part of this process, BFT conducts a thorough analysis of service data to identify opportunities for service enhancements and operational improvements. This data-driven approach ensures that our transit services remain adaptable to the changing needs of our riders while making the most effective use of available resources.

The 2026 ASP outlines proposed service changes, performance evaluations, and strategic initiatives that support our long-term goals. It is informed by data analysis, rider feedback, and regional transportation priorities. This collaborative and transparent process ensures that BFT services remain efficient, equitable, and responsive to the needs of our riders and the communities we serve. 2026 service change recommendations are detailed in this document and include:

- 1) Additional Service to Address Overcrowding
- 2) Columbia Basin Veterans Service
- 3) Special Event Service
- 4) Richland's Downtown Loop

As we look ahead, this plan positions BFT to adapt to current challenges, pursue new opportunities, and continue delivering high-quality transit services that support sustainable growth and regional connectivity.

Recap of 2025 ASP Implementation

2025 ASP recommendations (Figure 1) emphasized efficiency, aligning with the BFT Board of Directors' directive to enhance the cost-effectiveness of systemwide services. Reducing

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travel time by providing more limited-stop, cross-town trips was also an intended outcome of the 2025 ASP service recommendations. The network saw an overall reduction of 20,303 annual revenue hours reallocated to accomplish these changes.

Figure 1 2025 Annual Service Plan Planned Operating Changes

Route	Recommendations	Implementation Date	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	2025 Estimated Annual Revenue Hour Change
Express 2X	METRO route with limited-stop express service between Richland and Pasco	June 2025 (15-minute service added August 2025)	4	7,378
Express 240X	Limited-stop express service between Richland and Kennewick	June 2025	1	4,348
Express 27X	Limited-stop express service between Queensgate and N Richland	December 2025 (planned)	2	3,842
Route 10	30-min. service (Rt. 20 interline). End at 7 p.m. on Saturdays.	June 2025	0	1,419*
Route 20	Interline for increased frequency on Route 10. 60 minutes after 7 p.m. on Saturdays.	June 2025	0	-1,639*
Route 26	End at 7 p.m. on Saturday	June 2025	0	-226
Route 40	Extend to 10 p.m. on Saturday	June 2025	0	104
Route 41	Route shortened to a 30-min one-way clockwise loop running weekday only	June 2025	-1	-4,771
Route 42	End at 7 p.m. on Saturday	June 2025	0	-208
Route 47	Route realignment to remove low ridership areas and provide more frequent service to some areas no longer covered by Rt. 41	June 2025	0	84
Route 48	End at 7 p.m. on Saturday	June 2025	0	-206
Route 50	End at 7 p.m. on Saturday	June 2025	0	-104
Route 65	Route realignment to better serve Pasco High School. End route at 7 p.m. on Saturday.	June 2025	0	-261
Route 67	30-min. mid-route interline with new Route 68 from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays. 2024 ASP extension after 8 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays. End at 7 p.m. on Saturdays.	June 2025	1	2,240
Route 68	Mid-route interline with Route 67 every 30 minutes from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays only.	June 2025	1	5,597
Route 170	End at 7 p.m. on Saturdays.	June 2025	0	-104

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Route	Recommendations	Implementation Date	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	2025 Estimated Annual Revenue Hour Change
Route 225	Extend to serve new Sageview High School from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays. Current routing after 8 p.m. weekdays and all-day Sat. and Sun.	June 2025	1	3,698
Route 268	Route eliminated.	June 2025	-3	-12,784
Total			6	8,406

*Combined total revenue hours from interline: -220.

2026 ASP Service Change Recommendations Summary

The 2026 ASP service change recommendations are projected to require a total of 9,056 additional annual revenue hours and 6,044 pro-rated revenue hours for 2026, since implementation will begin in June and August and not cover the full year (Figure 2). Total annual revenue hours will be 244,143 with a prorated total of 241,131. This expansion will add 7 additional peak vehicles and bring the total fleet requirement to 75 vehicles, with a planned spare ratio of 20% (Figure 3). Operator staffing needs are expected to grow by one position, resulting in a final headcount of approximately 173 operators.

The following service changes are recommended for fixed-route service. Implementation would begin in June and August of 2026:

- **Deploy “Tripper” Service to Address Overcrowding:** Additional service allocation to support routes operating at or near full capacity during peak periods (including Route 3), as well as employment shuttles.
- **Discontinuation of Route 123s Service:** Discontinue Route 123s morning tripper service due to low ridership and utilize resources elsewhere and remove the Leslie Road portion of the afternoon trip.
- **Discontinuation of Low-Ridership Route 26s Trips:** Discontinue 7:15 a.m. trip due to low ridership and remove the 3:00 p.m. afternoon trip.
- **Columbia Basin Veterans Service (Route 61):** Explore the feasibility of adding a local Pasco route serving the western extent of A Street and the Veterans Center.
- **Support for Special Events:** Allocation of an additional 2,000 revenue hours for upcoming special events, including the Prosser Balloon Rally and FIFA World Cup activities.

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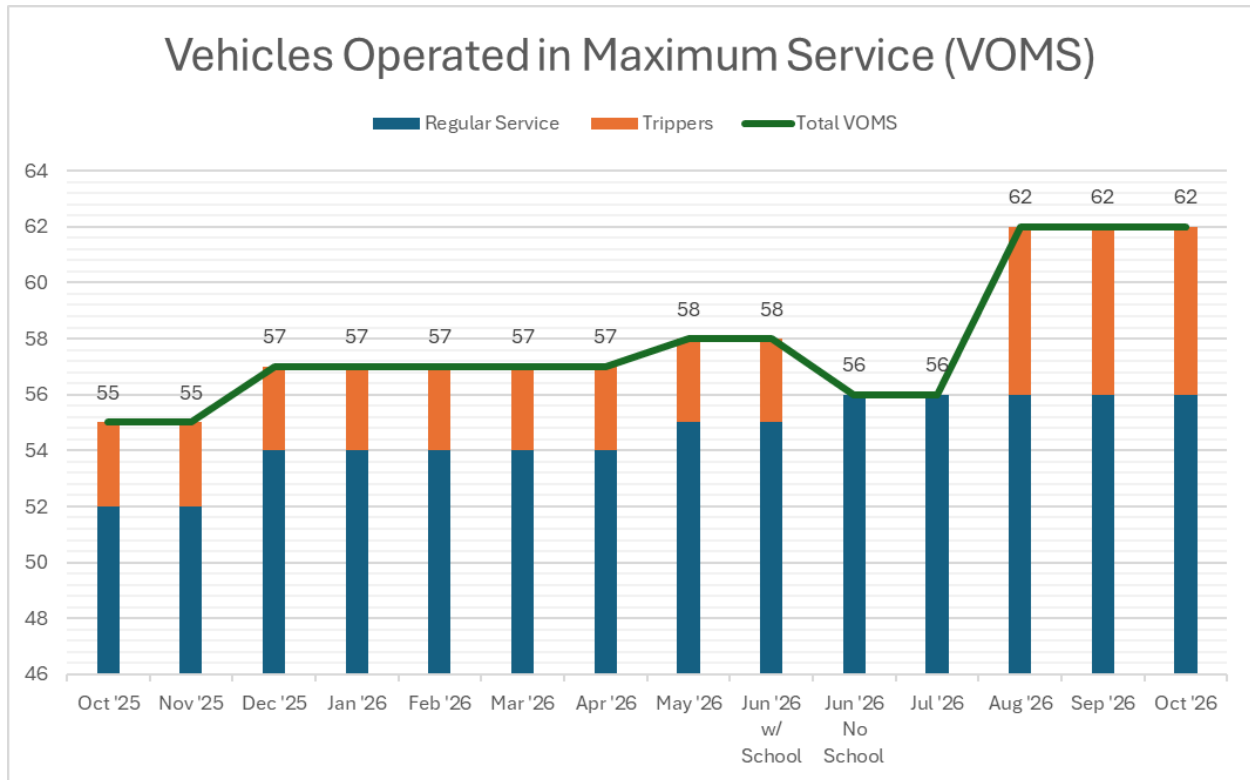
- **Pasco Aquatics Center Pilot Shuttle:** Add or modify route alignments and stop patterns to provide more direct service to the Aquatics Center and West Pasco neighborhoods.
- **Pasco Flea Market Service Pilot:** Seasonal/weekend pilot service to support access to the Pasco Flea Market beginning in August 2026 and running through the end of the market season in October. BFT will assess Flea Market attendance in Spring to determine if downward trends in attendance continue. Staff may recommend delaying implementation of this service if resource constraints exist.
- **Realignment of Routes for Richland's Downtown Loop:** Construction is expected to begin in Spring 2026. Street realignments will impact Routes 1, 26, 123, and 225.
- **Amazon Warehouse Service Adjustment:** Deploy a targeted weekday tripper or modify existing route schedules to improve service to the Amazon Fulfillment Center, aligning trips with employee shift changes.
- **Minor route realignments and schedule adjustments as needed:** Schedules can be impacted by the change in ridership, traffic variations and bus stop spacing. Planning staff will continue to monitor and update as needed.

Figure 2 2026 ASP Service Change Recommendations Summary

Route/Service	Recommendation	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Estimated Start Date	Estimated 2026 Revenue Hours	Estimated Annual Revenue Hours
Tripper and Special Event Service	Targeted service allocation to address overcrowding and employment shuttles. Special event services such as additional buses for Fair, FIFA World Cup*, and Prosser Balloon Rally.			2,500*	2,500*
Route 123s	Discontinue due to low ridership	-1	March	-97	-126
Route 26s	Discontinue 7:15 a.m. due to low ridership and third afternoon trip at 3:00 p.m.	-1	March	-49	-63
Columbia Basin Veterans (Route 61)	Local Pasco route serving West A Street and Veterans Center	1	June	1410	2560
Pasco Aquatics Center	Seasonal pilot service pattern to provide more direct, frequent service to the Aquatics Center and West Pasco	1	Memorial Day	2,100	3,590
Pasco Flea Market	Pilot service operates from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekends from March to October	-	August	180	595
Richland Downtown Loop	Route realignment to accommodate changes	-	Spring	-	-
Total				6,044	9,056
*Partial grant-funded hours for FIFA					

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Figure 3 2026 ASP Vehicle Needs Projection



The feasibility of implementing the 2026 ASP in part or whole will be contingent on staffing and available resources.

Fixed-Route Recommendations

This section describes a series of service changes recommended for BFT's fixed-route service in 2026. Implementation would be scheduled to occur in June and August of 2026.

Transit service recommendations were evaluated using a range of system performance, ridership, and demographic data detailed in the supporting appendices. Appendix A provides a systemwide summary of key metrics such as ridership, revenue hours, and on-time performance, establishing a baseline of overall service characteristics. Appendix B examines ridership by stop to highlight location-specific demand patterns. Appendix C presents results from an analysis of CONNECT ridership, offering insights into system connectivity and travel flows. Demographic considerations are addressed in Appendix D, which evaluates systemwide trends, and Appendix E, which focuses on population, employment and equity characteristics within the urban area and compares weekday versus Sunday coverage.

Together, these resources provide the analytical foundation for developing and assessing service recommendations, as well as developing potential future-year improvements that are also described in this document.

Deploy Tripper Service to Address Overcrowding

Several routes in the system operate at or near full capacity during peak periods, with Route 3 regularly exceeding optimal load levels. These trends point to an increasing need for added frequency and capacity to maintain service quality and support continued ridership growth.

While current vehicle and staffing constraints limit the ability to fully address these needs in the short term, strategic adjustments may be necessary. In particular, addressing overcrowding on Route 3 by reallocating resources from the low-ridership Route 123s tripper.

Discontinuation of Route 123s Service

In recent years, BFT staff recommended discontinuing Route 123s Tripper due to minimal ridership. However, following community feedback to preserve the route, the BFT Board of Directors instructed staff to continue operating it and increase marketing efforts, with plans to review performance at a later date. Adjustments were also made to the Tripper to address overcrowding on Route 123 in Central Richland, which boosted Tripper ridership.

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However, the deviation along Leslie Road south of Gage Boulevard has seen declining use, and as of the 2025 school year, ridership along Leslie Road is minimal to nonexistent. It is the recommendation of BFT Planning staff to completely discontinue Route 123s morning Tripper and utilize those resources elsewhere, including to help relieve overcrowding on other routes in the system.

Students who board Route 123s near Leslie and Gage will have the current Route 123 as an alternative that provides similar routing. The afternoon tripper will be kept for now to help alleviate congestion along Jadwin but eliminate the Leslie Road portion (Figure 5). Planning staff will continue to monitor the afternoon tripper to determine if it will be kept.

Figure 4 Route 123s Discontinued Service Characteristics

Service Window	Operating Hours	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	-	-1	-97	-126
Saturday	-	-	-	-
Sunday	-	-	-	-

Figure 5 Route 123s PM Leslie Road Elimination



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Route 26s Reductions

The 2025 school year has shown a decline in certain trips of Route 26s, most notably the 7:15 a.m. and the 3:00 p.m. trips. Ridership will continue to be evaluated. The regular Route 26 provides a 20-minute service and offers opportunities for load distribution. Should those trips be removed, it would result in prorated and annual reduction of 49 and 63 revenue hours respectively. Planning staff will continue to monitor throughout the fall and spring of the school year to determine feasibility.

Columbia Basin Veterans Service (Route 61)

Several areas along the proposed Route 61 have been underserved by transit, creating limited access. These include the Flamingo Village Mobile Home Park, the Columbia River Walk Apartments, Bishop Skylstad Commons, and the neighborhood between Ainsworth and A Street east of 10th Ave that includes the Columbia Basin Veterans Center and Inspire Development Centers.

For these areas, Route 61 provides connections to 22nd Avenue Transit Center, downtown Pasco, and direct service to St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank & Community Services. Route 61 will briefly overlap Route 65 along Columbia Street and Route 3 along 10th Avenue to create transfer opportunities.

The route will operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with the last trip departing at 5:00 p.m. from 22nd Avenue Transit Center.

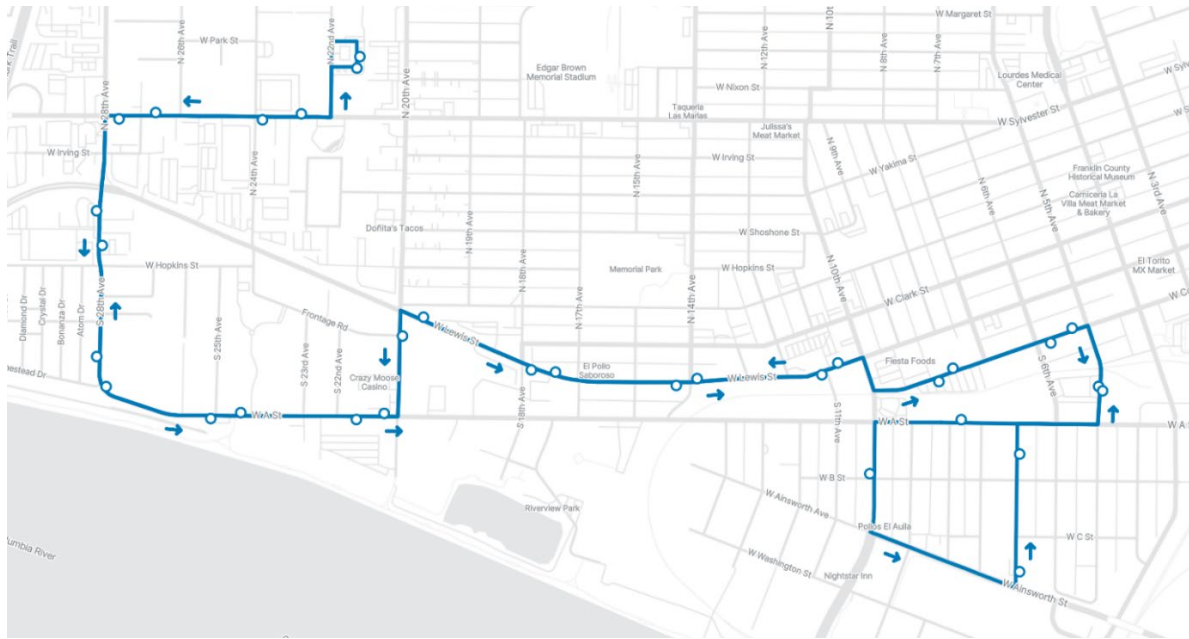
Figure 6 Route 61 Proposed New Service Characteristics

Service Window	Operating Hours	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	1	-	2,560
Saturday	-	-	-	-
Sunday	-	-	-	-

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Figure 7 Route 61 Proposed Route Alignment



Support for Special Events

The current trend in regional transportation is an increase in special event attendees using public transit to attend special events. Most local special events have seen an increase in ridership year-over-year. A recent example was providing service for the Prosser Balloon Rally's Night Glow event in September 2025. The service generated 300 boardings, which was exceptional for a first-time event. The Benton Franklin Fair & Rodeo and the City of Pasco's Lampson Cable Bridge Run are other annual events with notable increasing demand for public transportation.

In Summer 2026, Seattle will host the FIFA World Cup, which is anticipated to be the largest sporting event our region has seen. BFT staff have been in coordination with WSDOT and regional agencies awaiting plans from local jurisdictions to take shape for local watch parties.

Other seasonal activities with significant attendance are the Pasco Flea Market and the anticipated opening of the regional Pasco Aquatics Center. These are covered in more detail in the following sections.

BFT staff recommend allocating an additional 2,500 revenue hours for upcoming trippers and special events. The portion used for FIFA activities is expected to be reimbursed by WSDOT.

Pasco Aquatics Center Pilot Shuttle

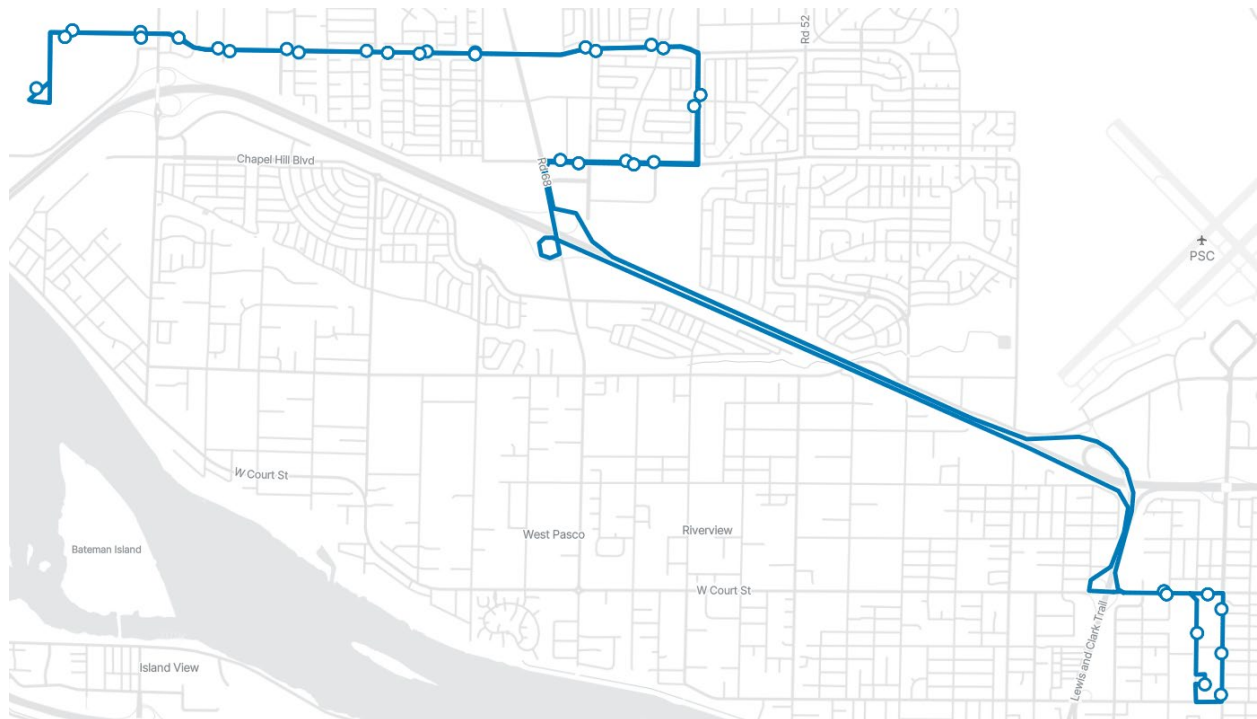
BFT intends to implement seasonal service to provide more direct and frequent connections to the new Pasco Aquatics Center and surrounding West Pasco neighborhoods, with service operating tentatively from May through September. The goal is to improve access to recreational facilities and enhance overall regional connectivity.

BFT will continue evaluating the best way to serve this area, which may require schedule adjustments or minor routing deviations to existing service. It is anticipated that weekend service could begin as early as Memorial Day in 2026.

Seasonal Weekday and Saturday Neighborhood Circulator Pilot

BFT staff proposes a neighborhood circulator serving areas north of I-182, providing direct service to the new Pasco Aquatics Center. The route connects with Routes 67 and 225 and offers more direct travel from the 22nd Avenue Transit Center by using I-182 to reach Road 68. Service will operate on weekdays during summer break and on Saturdays year-round. Operating hours will be confirmed once times are published for the Aquatics Center.

Figure 8 Pasco Aquatics Center Neighborhood Circulator Pilot



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Figure 9 Pasco Aquatics Center Proposed New Service Characteristics

Service Window	Operating Hours	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	TBD	1	-	2,560
Saturday	TBD	1	-	510
Sunday	TBD		-	

Pasco Aquatics Center Route 67 Variant – Sunday Service

Route 67 is the top priority for adding Sunday service, based on demographic data, ridership and coverage analyses, and recent public survey feedback. It will operate hourly with one bus to gauge demand, and its ending terminus will be at the Pasco Aquatics Center. Route timing will be conducted once Road 108 is finished, which may cause adjustments to the route if there is not enough time to complete it in an hour.

Figure 10 Pasco Aquatics Center Route 67 Variant – Sunday Service



Figure 11 Pasco Aquatics Center Route 67 Proposed New Service Characteristics

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Service Window	Operating Hours	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	TBD	-	-	
Saturday	TBD	-	-	
Sunday	TBD	1	-	520

Pasco Flea Market Service Pilot

Service to the Pasco Flea Market has been a long-standing request from the public. The market operates from March through October and sees a significant attendance of 8,000 to 10,000 during cooler spring/fall weather, dropping to 4,500 to 5,000 during warmer summer months. Record attendance was recorded in Spring 2025 with approximately 20,000 people attending on a Sunday. Attendance fell over the summer due to ag industry impacts, though the lowest recorded Sunday attendance was still 3,700.

To address this demand, staff recommend implementing a weekend-only pilot service beginning in August 2026 and running through the end of the market season in October.

BFT will assess Flea Market attendance in the spring to determine if downward trends in attendance continue. Staff may recommend delaying implementation of this service if resource constraints exist.

In addition to serving the Flea Market, the route will function as a Downtown Pasco circulator, helping to reduce parking congestion, increase ridership, and improve community access to local destinations.

This pilot will help evaluate long-term service potential based on ridership, operational performance, and community feedback. Feasibility will improve when the City of Pasco connects E Lewis Place with S Road 40 E.

Figure 12 Pasco Flea Market Proposed New Service Characteristics

Service Window	Operating Hours	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	-	-	-	-
Saturday	7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (seasonal)	1	-	315
Sunday	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (seasonal)	1	-	280

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Pasco Flea Market Proposed Route Alignment



Realignment of Routes for Richland's Downtown Loop

The City of Richland is converting George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue into a one-way couplet through the downtown core. Transit routes that currently run bi-directionally on George Washington Way or Jadwin Avenue will need to be reconfigured. Buses may have to loop differently, change which street is used for north- versus south-bound service, and possibly use alternate roads in parts of downtown. BFT Planning staff have been working with the city for bus stop relocation to ensure they remain accessible, safe, and convenient for pedestrians given modified crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike lanes. Construction is planned to begin in Spring 2026.

Amazon Warehouse Service Adjustment

A new tripper route is being developed to serve the Amazon warehouses along S Road 40 E in Pasco. Currently, the timing of Route 64's connections at the 22nd Avenue Transit Center causes the bus to arrive slightly late to Amazon, making it less convenient for employees.

BFT Planning staff plan to resume discussions with Amazon to design and promote a dedicated shuttle from the 22nd Avenue Transit Center. However, there has been hesitation from BFT Planning staff about providing this service due to the lack of early morning trips. The current 6:00 a.m. start time does not allow enough time for riders traveling from other cities to reach Amazon by the start of their shifts.

To address this, planning staff are exploring options to extend service hours in 2027, particularly in the early morning, to better accommodate commuter needs and make these connections more feasible, which is aligned with the goals of the long-range transit plan (LRTP).

Minor Route Realignment and Schedule Adjustments as Needed

Schedules can be impacted by the change in ridership, traffic variations, and bus stop spacing. Planning staff will continue to monitor and update as needed.

Additional Fixed-Route Service Needs and Opportunities

Sunday Service

Overall, more robust Sunday service is needed and warranted in the BFT system.

- Route 67 is the highest priority for Sunday service based on demographic, ridership, and coverage analysis, as well as requests from the public in recent survey efforts.
- Along with demonstrated ridership demand, Route 65 fills an important gap in an area of high transit need and should be considered next.
- Route 42 should also be considered for Sunday service based on ridership demand and coverage gaps.
- While ridership demand on Routes 10, 20, 26, 48, 50, and 170 does not appear to be as strong as other routes, they play a role in connecting locations where demographics suggest higher transit needs, as well as filling coverage gaps on Sunday.
- Based on survey responses received as part of BFT's LRTP effort, Routes 67, 26, 20, 170, and 65 had the highest proportion of requests for Sunday service from the public.

Depending on available resources and other BFT agency goals, potential suggested priority order for implementation of Sunday service would be Route 67, 65, 42, 20, 26, 170, 48, 50, and 10.

Potential Locations for New Service Coverage

Based on an analysis of current CONNECT trip requests, the following locations may warrant fixed-route service:

1. **Finley:** River View High School/Finley Middle School
2. **North Pasco/King City:** Pasco Processing, Americold Logistics Pasco
3. **South Kennewick:** Santiago Country View Estates
4. **West Clearwater:** West Clearwater Rd, Desert Hills Middle School, Ridgeline Drive
5. **Badger Mountain Westgate:** Dallas/Trowbridge Road new construction homes
6. **South Richland:** Leslie Road/Hills West
7. **West Richland:** Keene Road

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Additionally, based on analysis of demographics in BFT's service area, the Hildebrand/Bob Olson Parkway new construction homes area of South Kennewick represents a current service gap in a higher-need area.

Improved Service Span

Transit planners evaluate demand for longer hours of service by analyzing ridership data and travel patterns, especially on the first morning and last evening trips. Consistently high ridership on these trips often signals that passengers desire to travel earlier or later than current schedules allow, indicating unmet demand for extended hours. By examining these trends, along with customer feedback, employment patterns, and equity considerations, planners can determine where expanding early morning or late evening service would most effectively meet community needs.

Based on April/May 2025 ridership data, possible demand exists for the following service span adjustments:

1. **Route 40:** Later inbound service on Sunday
2. **Route 1:** Earlier outbound service on weekdays
3. **Route 65:** Earlier service on weekdays
4. **Route 1:** Earlier outbound service on Sunday
5. **Route 42:** Later inbound service on weekdays
6. **Route 123:** Earlier service on weekdays
7. **Route 1:** Earlier outbound service on Saturday
8. **Route 3:** Earlier inbound service and later outbound service on Sunday
9. **Route 47:** Later inbound service on Sunday
10. **Route 64:** Earlier service on Saturday
11. **Route 40:** Later outbound service on weekdays
12. **Route 48:** Later outbound service on Saturday
13. **Route 47:** Earlier outbound service on Sunday and Saturday
14. **Route 65:** Earlier service on Saturday

Additional details about potential service span improvements are provided in Figure 14

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Figure 14

Recommended Future Service Span Improvements

	Route	Proposed Service Span Adjustment	Proposed New Trip Time(s)	Adjacent Trip Daily Riders	Adjacent Trip Annual Riders	Estimated Annual Revenue Hour Impact	Adjacent Trip Riders per New Revenue Hour
1	40	Later southbound service on Sunday	6:30pm	8.4	436	26	16.8
2	1	Earlier westbound service on weekdays	5:45am	7.7	1,951	128	15.3
3	65	Earlier service on weekdays	5:30am	14.9	3,807	255	14.9
4	1	Earlier westbound service on Sunday	7:30am	9.8	507	39	13.0
5	42	Later eastbound service on weekdays	9:30pm	6.4	1,631	128	12.8
6	123	Earlier service on weekdays	5:30am outbound; 5:27am inbound	17.3	4,418	383	11.6
7	1	Earlier westbound service on Saturday	6:30am	5.7	295	26	11.3
8	3	Earlier northbound service on Sunday	7:30am	10.9	566	52	10.9
9	3	Later southbound service on Sunday	6:30pm	9.9	514	52	9.9
10	47	Later eastbound service on Sunday	6:30pm	8.4	436	52	8.4
11	64	Earlier service on Saturday	6:30am	6.3	329	52	6.3
12	40	Later westbound service on weekdays	8:15pm	6.3	1,595	255	6.3
13	48	Later westbound service on Saturday	9:30pm	5.8	300	52	5.8
14	47	Earlier westbound service on Sunday	7:30am	5.1	267	52	5.1
15	47	Earlier westbound service on Saturday	6:30am	4.8	248	52	4.8
16	65	Earlier service on Saturday	6:30am	4.6	237	52	4.6
Total					17,536	1,655	

Frequency Improvements/Trippers

Several routes in the system operate at or near full capacity during peak periods. Based on April/May 2025 data, Routes 1, 3, 40, 47, 65, 123, and 225 may warrant frequency improvements on weekdays based on strong ridership patterns. In particular, Route 3 may require extra trips to address max load issues. Route 170 should also be considered for **consistent hourly service** on weekdays and Saturday to promote useful regional connections.

The following table outlines proposed route adjustments aimed at responding to current demand while positioning the system for future growth. As ridership continues to increase, capacity-related investments will become increasingly critical.

Figure 15 Recommended Future Frequency Improvements

	Route	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Annual Revenue Hour Impact	New Peak Buses
1	65	15-minute frequency from 1:30 to 3:30pm on weekdays	1,020	2
2	40	15-minute frequency from 1:45 to 3:45pm on weekdays	1,020	2
3	3	12-minute frequency from 6am to 7am on weekdays	255	0
4	1	10-minute frequency from 1:30 to 3:30pm on weekdays	1,530	3
5	47	15-minute frequency from 1:30 to 3:30pm on weekdays	2,040	4
6	123	15-minute frequency from 6am to 8pm on weekdays	14,280	4
7	225	15-minute frequency from 6am to 5pm on weekdays	5,610	2
Total			22,755	17

Route Design/Scheduling

Based on a review of BFT's existing route network and transit planning best practices, the following opportunities were identified:

- **Consider ways to eliminate loop routes.** Routes should operate along the same alignment in both directions to make it easy for riders to know how to get back to where they came from. There are opportunities to evaluate the service design of Route 25 and Route 41 to operate bi-directional or reallocate resources to other services.
- **Evaluate opportunities to improve unproductive service.** Route 50 is one of the lowest-productivity routes in the system, and much of its alignment is duplicative with Route 123. Service and scheduling should be evaluated to ensure the best use of resources; potential opportunities include offsetting departure times from Three Rivers Transit Center with Route 123 to provide 15-minute service to Columbia

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Center Mall, extending the route to improve systemwide service coverage, or reallocating resources to other routes.

- **Review opportunities to ensure service consistency.** Service should be designed so it is easy to use and intuitive to understand. On Route 26, BFT could consider keeping evening coverage on the 8:30, 9:00, and 9:30 p.m. trips by dropping the frequency to 40 minutes instead of 30 minutes—this would retain consistent service for the “Tides at Willow Pointe” apartment complex. BFT should also consider ways to align weekday and weekend service levels. For example, this could include reinstating Saturday service on Route 41 or improving weekday service frequency on Route 170 to hourly.
- **Consider realigning service to meet new ridership generators, especially if realignment is cost neutral.** For example, BFT could consider realigning Route 10 to serve the new Costco in Queensgate once the planned roundabout at Duportail & Kennedy is constructed. There may also be demand to revise Route 10’s alignment to serve the higher-density Keene & Belmont section of West Richland, which demonstrates demand to Flat Top Community Park based on CONNECT trips.
- **Review parallel service design in Kennewick.** A large number of parallel routes (Routes 1, 40, 42, and 48) operate in Kennewick. It may be worth evaluating if the existing east-west service design matches desired travel patterns, as well as if any of these routes could be combined into higher-frequency service to better meet rider needs and maximize available resources.
- **Consider redesign of service in Richland.** Several overlapping and parallel routes exist in Richland, including high-frequency service on Route 1. BFT could consider the potential to save resources or create higher-frequency service by combining or reallocating Route 25, 26, and 123.

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Short-Range Transit Plan Outlook

BFT Planning staff expect to create a short-range plan to coincide with identified growth areas and needs identified in the LRTP. The following are tentative plans proposed for 2027.

- **West Clearwater Local Route:** Fixed-route service to support Desert Hills Middle School and high-density housing along Ridgeline Dr.
- **King City Commuter Route Pilot:** New pilot service to test fixed-route service to the Pasco Industrial Park in the King City Area
- **Route 2X Midday Service:** New 30-minute midday service
- **Weekday Service Span Improvements:** Earlier weekday service beginning at 5:30 a.m. on core network routes (Routes 1, 3, 40, 47, 64, 123, and 225) along with strategically adding trips and/or more consistent service on four routes (Route 25, 41, 42, and 170) due to scheduling adjustments.
- **Sunday Service Span Improvements:** Earlier Sunday service beginning at 7:00 a.m. on Routes 1, 3, 40, 47, 64, 123, and 225.

Figure 16 2027 ASP Service Change Potential Recommendations Summary

Route/Service	Recommendation	Estimated Peak Vehicle Change	Estimated 2026 Revenue Hours*	Estimated Annual Revenue Hours
West Clearwater	New 30-minute service from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays	1	1,974	3,584
King City	Pilot commuter service from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays	2	2,820	5,120
Route 2X	New 30-minute midday service	-	1,306	2,372
Route 1, 3, 25, 40, 41, 42, 47, 64, 123, 170, 225, and 240	Weekday service span improvements	-	2,602	3883
Routes 1, 3, 40, 47, 64, 123, and 225	Sunday service span improvements	-	573	1,040
Total			9,275	15,999
*Assumes service begins in June 2027				

Bus Stops & Amenities Program

BFT Planning staff will conduct a comprehensive analysis of all current bus stop locations between October 2025 and June 2026 to identify ideal sites that meet safety, accessibility, and efficiency standards through proper spacing. During this process, roughly 100-120 total stops will be added, moved, or removed to achieve optimal location goals.

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Construction and amenity upgrades will continue throughout 2026, with targets to bring 35 additional stops into ADA compliance, install 15 new shelters, and add 20 benches across the system.

A Reflective Pole Pilot Program will launch in early 2026 to install reflective panels on bus stop poles along two routes, improving nighttime visibility for riders and operators. Based on pilot results, a full system rollout is planned for later that year.

In Summer 2026, an updated version of the Bus Stop Guidelines and Design Standards will be released to reflect current best practices and ensure consistency across the network. Later in the fall, a full system audit of all bus stops will be conducted to assess ADA compliance, identify upgrade opportunities, and improve the accuracy of stop-level data for more effective decision-making.

As part of BFT's broader system modernization, all bus stop signage will be updated to a more informative and ADA-compliant design between late 2026 and mid-2027. The first phase will focus on design and printing, followed by a second phase completing system-wide installation.

Frequent Service Corridor (Q3 2024 – Q4 2030)

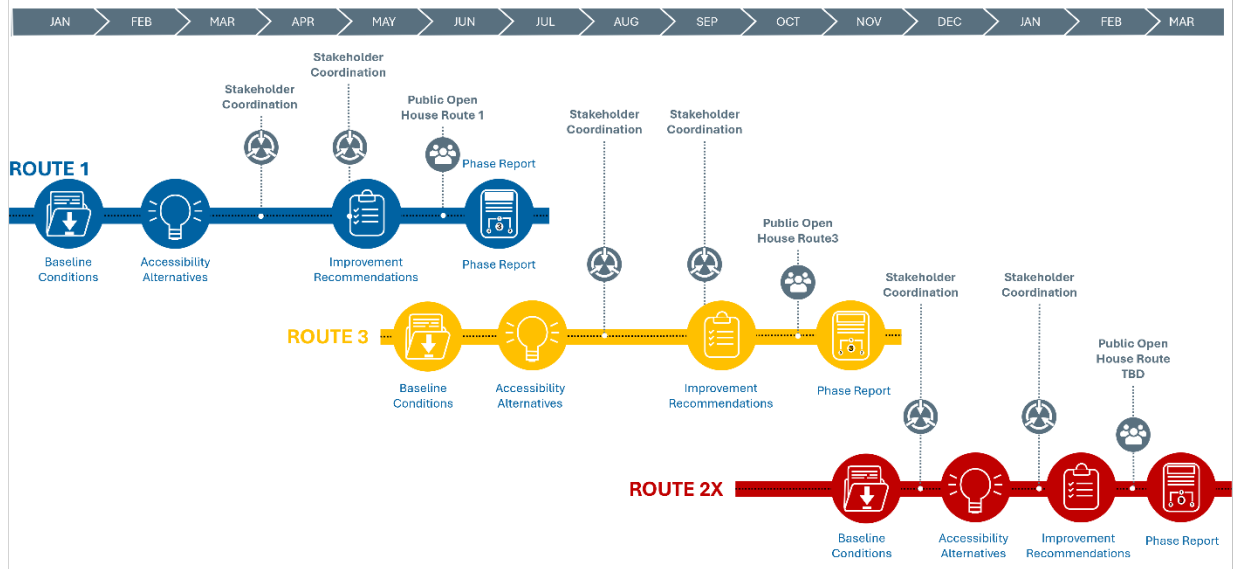
This project is one of several supported by Move Ahead Washington funding at BFT. It is a long-range corridor engineering initiative focused on the planning, design, and construction of improvements to BFT's frequent service routes (those operating every 15 minutes or better). The project includes upgrades that enhance safety, accessibility, and passenger experience at bus stops along these routes. These improvements will give the corridors a distinct identity through updated amenities and ADA-accessible stop designs.

The project officially launched in Q3 2024 with Step 1: Concept Design and Planning.

- Throughout late 2024 and 2025, BFT advanced the concept design and planning work for:
 - Phase 1 – Route 1
 - Phase 2 – Route 3
 - Phase 3 – Route 2X (a new route created in Q4 2025)

In 2026, the project will continue with concept design and planning for Phase 3 (Route 2X) and progress to the next stage for Routes 1 and 3.

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Additional Recommendations

CONNECT

In 2025, BFT focused on expanding CONNECT service while ensuring fixed routes remain the primary and most efficient transportation option. The upcoming year will include exploring opportunities for growth to meet rising demand, including adding earlier morning service span to meet demand, as well as helping make transit a more practical and dependable option for riders in the region.

Under the guidance of the BFT Board of Directors, potential enhancements to CONNECT will be carefully considered, ensuring the service continues to meet the needs of riders who lack access to fixed routes or when those routes are unavailable. BFT will also conduct a biannual customer survey through the CONNECT app to gather feedback and make data-driven decisions for future improvements. Staff will assess the need for additional points of interest as community growth demands.

BFT will focus on improving app experience across all platforms, ensuring consistent and reliable functionality for both Android and iOS users. BFT is also committed to monitoring its driver partners, ensuring comprehensive training and the necessary tools for high-quality service. To ensure improved access, BFT will actively promote CONNECT services within the Limited English Proficiency community. Service hours, zones, and coverage may be adjusted as needed based on evolving community needs or budget considerations.

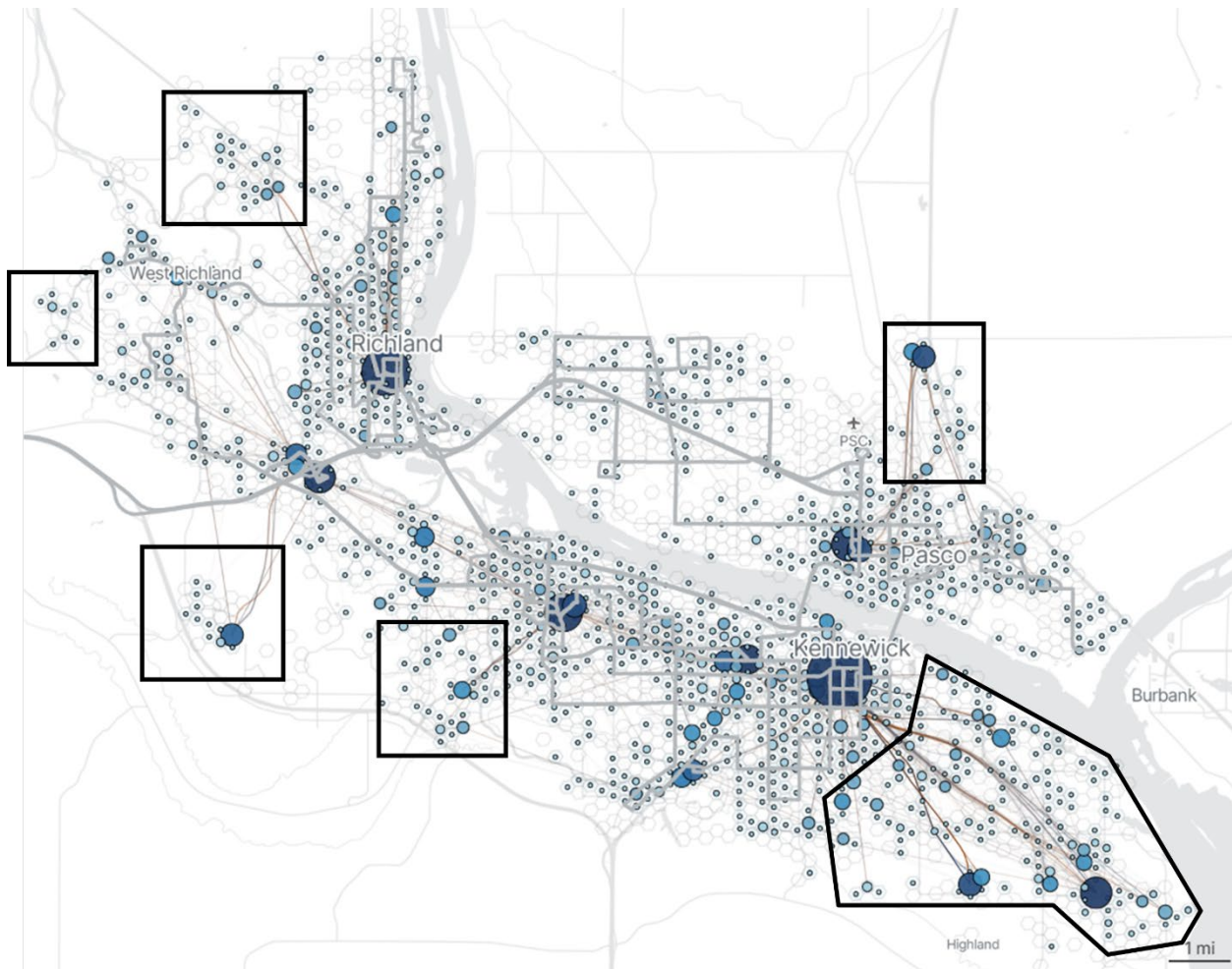
Through these efforts, BFT aims to provide convenient, reliable, and accessible mobility solutions that meet community expectations and improve the overall transportation

experience. Staff will continue to assess the effectiveness of CONNECT and may adjust in mid-2026.

CONNECT Ridership Trends

CONNECT trip data (Figure 18) reveals emerging ridership patterns beyond the current network, highlighting opportunities for strategic expansion to better serve the community and support long-term growth. The data underscores the need for consistent fixed route service in key areas to deliver higher capacity and more reliable options. While some locations suggest immediate action, all highlighted deserve thoughtful consideration.

Figure 18 *CONNECT Riders Traveling Beyond Today's Network*



As these areas grow, transit will play an increasingly vital role. Horn Rapids is expected to continue expanding, allowing BFT Planning staff to refine service strategies as development

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advances. In West Richland, completion of the SR 224 project in 2027 will provide the infrastructure needed to extend service. Badger Mountain South is expanding, with improvements along Dallas Rd and the planned extension of Gage Blvd creating strong conditions for future transit.

West Clearwater stands out as a high-priority corridor. Requests from businesses, new housing on Ridgeline Drive, Desert Hills Middle School, and housing development along Bob Olson Parkway point to strong and immediate demand. In Finley, where the community is thinly populated and pedestrian and ADA-accessible infrastructure is limited, CONNECT will remain the best option for now, ensuring residents can still access essential services.

Pasco's industrial complex in the King City area, providing nearly 2,400 jobs, has one of the largest concentrations of CONNECT trips. Employers report that new hires often ask if public transit reaches this area and share stories of workers biking to interviews or paying for rides just to get to work. Expanding reliable, affordable fixed route service here would directly support both families and businesses, ensuring transit keeps pace with the region's growth.

Figure 19 CONNECT Ridership Analysis (Ranked)

	Location	Description	Origin Trips	Destination Trips	Total Trips	Notable Trip Pair Locations
1	Finley	River View High School/ Finley Middle School, Columbia Place	2,360	2,021	4,381	Kennewick (Kennewick High School, Finley & Havana, S Oak & E 27th, S Vancouver & W 21st, S Vancouver & W 45th, Aspen Hills Apartments, Quail Ridge, Walmart)
2	North Pasco/King City	Pasco Processing, Americold Logistics Pasco	1,227	1,667	2,894	Pasco (Tierra Vida Apartments; Alderwood Police Station area apartments; Memorial Park; N 12th & W Nixon neighborhood)
3	West Finley	Santiago Country View Estates	983	563	1,546	Kennewick (Kennewick High School)
4	West Clearwater	West Clearwater Rd, Desert Hills Middle School, Ridgeline Drive	684	609	1,293	Three Rivers, Trios Southridge, Highland Village
5	Horn Rapids	Horn Rapids & Twin Bridges Communities, Horn Rapids Industrial Park	550	645	1,195	Knight Street Transit Center, Richland Airport Business Park, Stevens Park & Ride, Grocery Stores
5	Badger Mountain South	Dallas/Trowbridge Road new construction homes	651	452	1,103	Queensgate, Flat Top

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6	South Richland	Leslie Road/Hills West	522	407	929	Queensgate, Three Rivers, Cherry Blossom Meadows
7	West Richland	Keene Rd	235	82	317	Flat Top, Queensgate

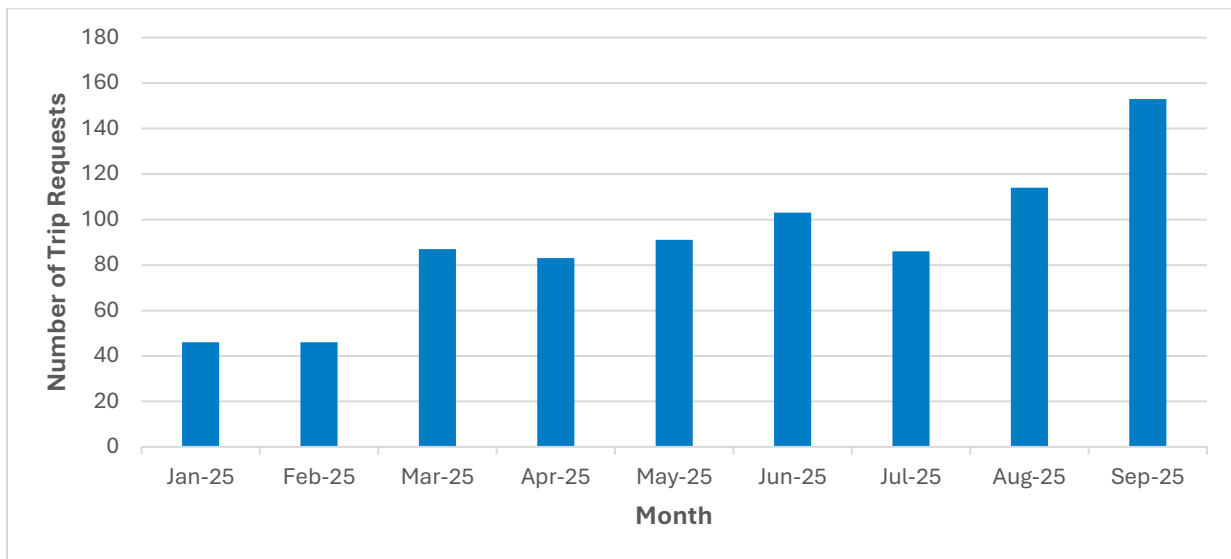
Source: Via CONNECT trip data for January through July 2025

CONNECT Service Span Evaluation

Analysis of Ben Franklin Transit's CONNECT trip requests indicates a growing demand for earlier morning service. While total ridership in the early morning hours remains modest, the data consistently shows a clear pattern of riders seeking trips at the beginning of the service day, suggesting demand for service that begins earlier.

Additionally, this trend has strengthened throughout 2025, suggesting that adding earlier CONNECT hours could better accommodate travel needs for work and other essential trips, and align with broader efforts to expand service span across the system.

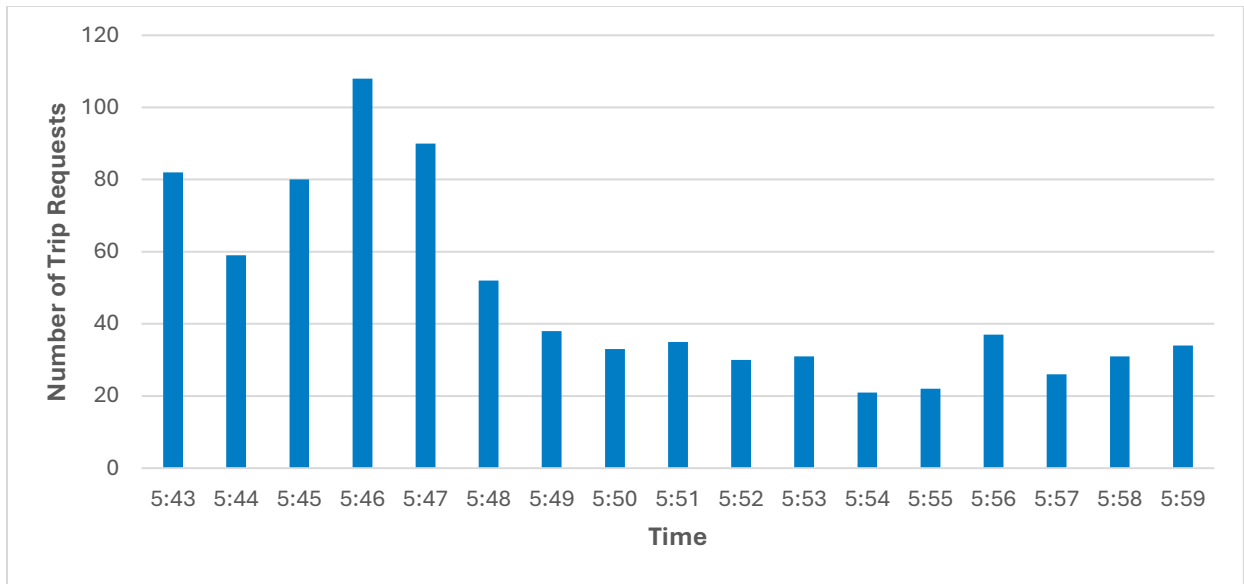
Figure 20 Growth in CONNECT Trip Requests before 6:00 a.m. in 2025



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Figure 21 CONNECT Trip Requests by Minute before 6:00 a.m. in 2025



Dial-A-Ride

BFT is committed to providing reliable and accessible paratransit service throughout Benton and Franklin Counties within the PTBA. A key objective for 2025 is to improve Dial-A-Ride (DAR) staffing levels. BFT understands that staff dedication and expertise directly affect the rider experience. To meet this goal, BFT will implement strategic initiatives to attract and retain qualified personnel, ensuring sufficiently trained staff to meet the demands of the service. In cases where staffing shortages temporarily impact service; the operations team is exploring solutions to minimize disruptions. If necessary, the team may collaborate with a third-party provider to maintain service reliability and meet rider needs.

As BFT looks toward adding service span and coverage to fixed-route service in 2026, complementary improvements will also be necessary for DAR service, as required under regulations associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This may necessitate adjustments to resources, including additional revenue hours and staffing, to ensure equitable access for riders with disabilities during the same extended service periods and locations.

In 2026, BFT is planning to roll out new DAR software designed to significantly improve service efficiency and customer experience. By optimizing route efficiency, the system is expected to reduce slack time, deadhead miles, non-revenue hours, and staff overtime. For clients, the platform will introduce a user-friendly mobile application to book rides, submit eligibility applications, and track DAR buses in real time. Trips will be automatically negotiated at the time of booking, while an AI-powered agent will manage routine calls

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such as cancellations and pickup ETA requests, reduce call volume and wait times. Staffing levels permitting, the agency also aims to pilot a premium same-day service by the end of 2026, offering greater flexibility for riders.

Rideshare

In 2026, BFT is focused on expanding the Rideshare program's reach and impact. The main goals include growing Rideshare groups, fostering a sense of community among commuters, easing traffic congestion, and reducing environmental impact. By encouraging more people to join, BFT aims to improve transportation options and promote sustainable commuting.

In addition to expanding Rideshare groups, integrating telematics, and adjusting fare structures, BFT plans to create educational videos to guide new participants through the process of starting and joining Rideshare groups, empowering them with the knowledge and resources needed to make the most of their Rideshare experience.

Potential for King City Transportation Options

In Summer 2025, BFT Planning staff took proactive steps to address the growing transportation needs of the King City area in Pasco, along with supporting ongoing transportation demand and need for longer hours of service at the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Pasco. Recognizing the region's rapid development and the increasing demand for workforce mobility, BFT staff began engaging directly with local employers to better understand the transportation challenges faced by their employees, particularly those without access to reliable personal transportation.

One such option identified was BFT's Rideshare program. As an interim measure, BFT proposed expanding access to its fleet of vans, allowing groups of employees to form Rideshare groups to commute to and from King City worksites. This approach not only offers a cost-effective and flexible solution but also supports regional employers in maintaining workforce stability while longer-term transit strategies are evaluated.

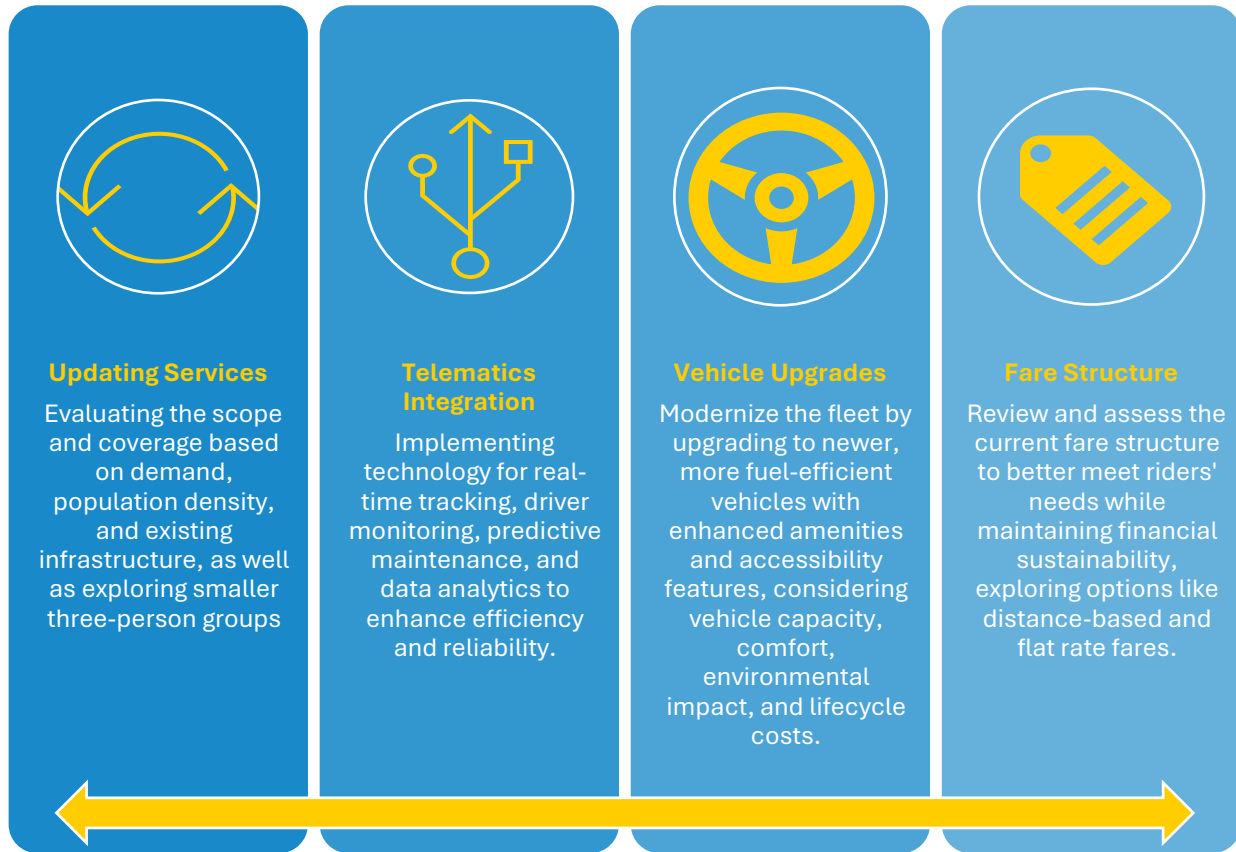
BFT remains committed to supporting economic development and improving access to employment opportunities throughout the Tri-Cities region. Our collaborative approach with King City employers reflects our ongoing dedication to building responsive, community-driven transit solutions.

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Figure 22

Planned Rideshare Initiatives



Public Engagement and Feedback

2026 ASP Process

Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) Planning staff led a coordinated outreach effort to engage the public in the development of proposed service changes. To raise awareness and encourage participation, the Marketing team promoted the public comment period across multiple platforms, ensuring wide visibility and accessibility.

To ensure community members had multiple opportunities to engage with the 2026 Annual Service Plan (ASP), BFT hosted three bilingual open house events—two in-person and one virtual. These events provided a platform for attendees to learn about proposed changes, ask questions, and share feedback.

December 4, 2025 – Mid-Columbia Libraries (In-Person)

December 9, 2025 – Virtual Open House (Zoom)

December 16, 2025 – Three Rivers Convention Center (In-Person)

Additional options for feedback included two internal driver campaigns, an online interactive Remix map, BFT Customer Service feedback and open house events.

All feedback and inquiries received during this process are documented in the 2026 Service Equity Analysis, with a summary of key insights provided below.

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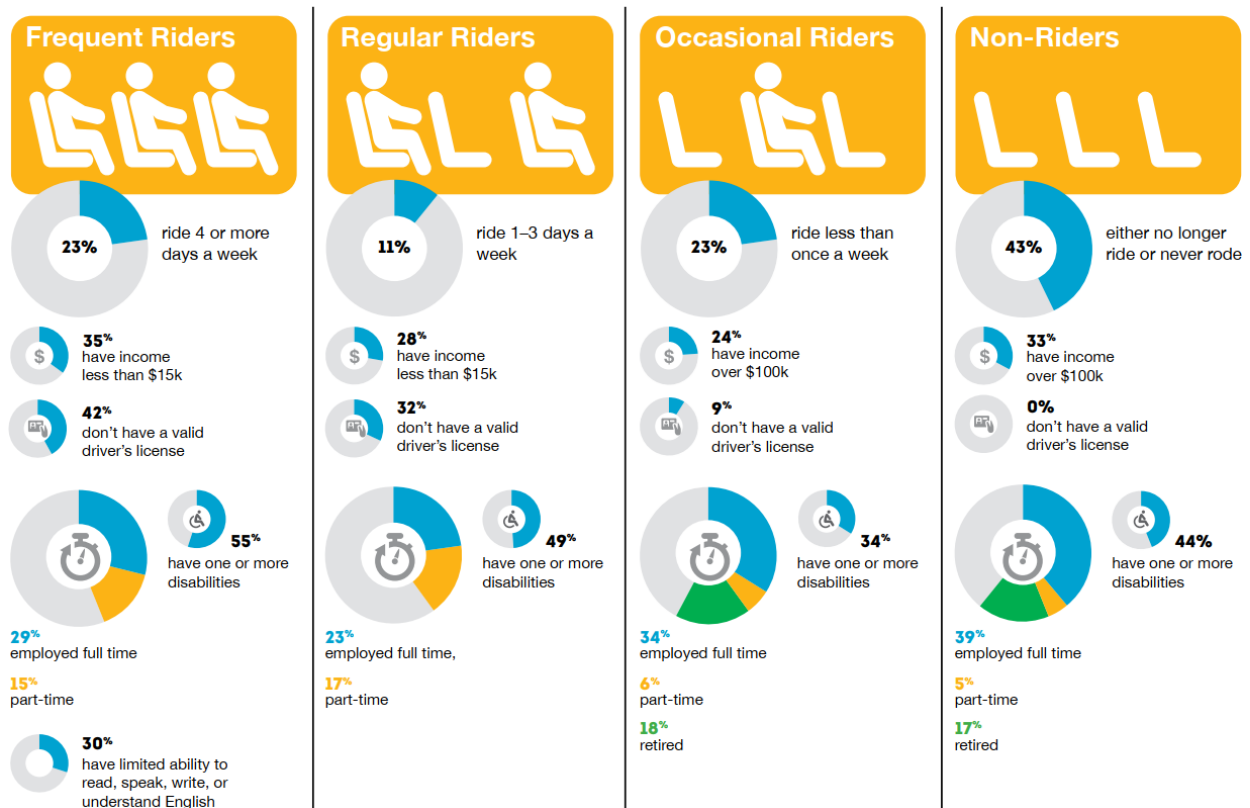
Long-Range Transit Plan (LRTP)

Phase 1 Community Survey Results

Summary

During fall 2024 through spring 2025, BFT has been working on analyzing data, including answers for the first summer 2024 community survey, to help inform and develop the LRTP to prepare for what services will look like from now through 2045. The data showed that BFT plays a big role in helping people get to work, school, appointments, and more—and that many rely on the service every day. The data also shows there's a wide network of buses, special services, and staff working hard to keep the community moving.

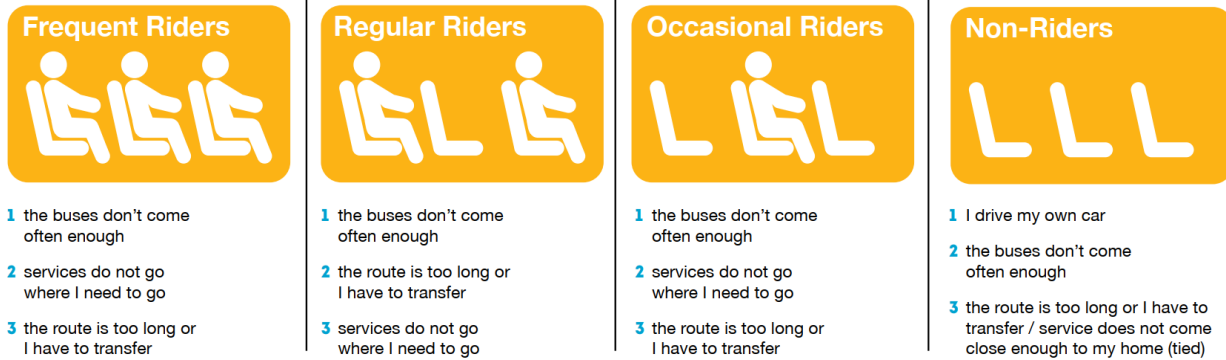
The community provided data to the team as well through the survey in the summer of 2024. More than 500 people completed a survey to share their experiences with BFT services. From the survey data the team gathered the following information:



The survey identified the top three obstacles that prevented community members from using or relying on BFT services for each rider group:

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Additionally, the survey identifies how each rider group ranked their top three choices of how they would improve BFT services:

- **Frequent riders:**
 - Buses come more often.
 - Buses run later on Sundays.
 - A tie between:
 - Buses run later on weekdays.
 - Buses run later on Saturdays.
- **Regular riders:**
 - Buses come more often.
 - Buses run earlier on weekdays.
 - A tie between:
 - Buses run later on weekdays.
 - Buses run later on Sundays.
- **Occasional riders:**
 - Buses come more often.
 - Buses run earlier on weekdays.
 - A tie between:
 - Buses run later on weekdays.
 - More routes operate on Sunday.
- **Non-riders:**
 - Buses come more often.
 - Buses run earlier on weekdays. More bus stops have amenities (for example, shelters, benches, and trash cans).

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Analysis of Open-Ended Comments

Open-ended comments were also analyzed to gather insights for use in the ASP.

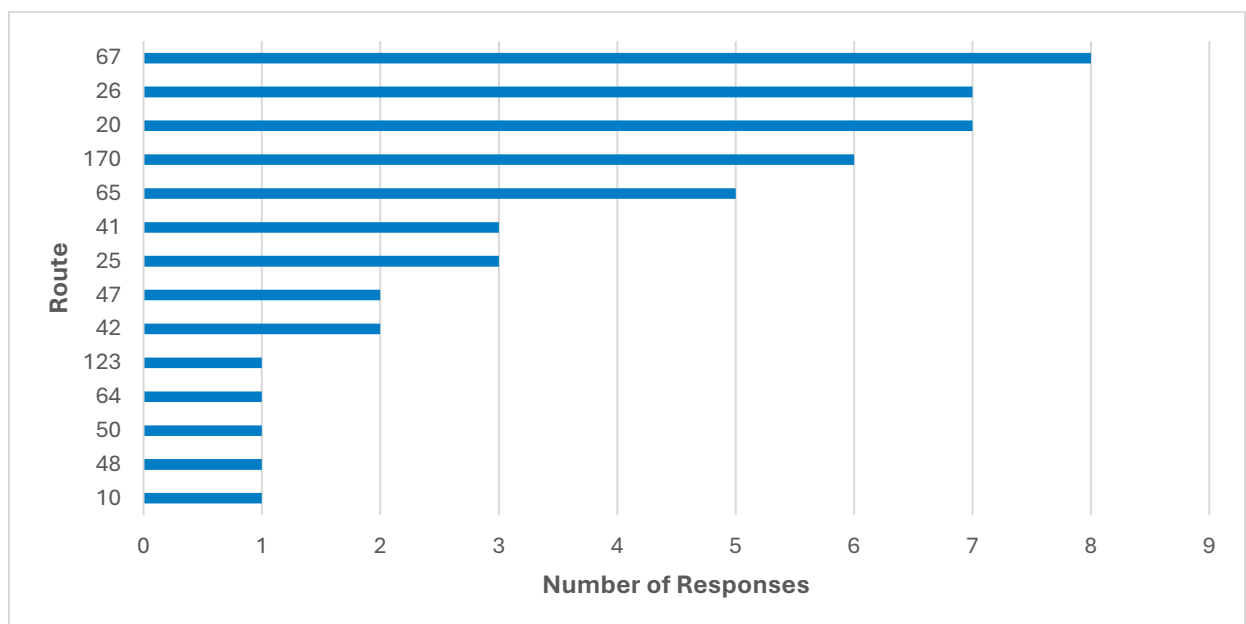
Which of the following strategies would improve your BFT experience the most? (Select open-ended comments)

- More frequent service to Prosser
- Add fixed-route service on Burns and Broadmoor in Pasco
- Add Route 67 Sunday service
- Add service to 45th & Ely
- Improve access to residential areas along Davidson
- Need transit to run down Leslie Road
- Earlier and later during week and weekends to help factory workers especially King City
- 3 and 1 to run earlier on Sunday
- One bus out to Finley
- 27th + Olympia-route down 27th west/east
- needs to be a route by Metz trailer park need a stop by 15th Ave to go to Cedar to catch the bus 47
- 65 needs to run earlier on Sunday so I can get to church
- Sunday service on 20 and/or 110 at least one line to West Richland

Which routes would you like to see operate on Sunday? (Select open-ended comments)

Figure 173

Which routes would you like to see operate on Sunday?



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If you selected “Improve transit connections between neighboring transit service areas” or “Improve regional connections,” please list the connections you would like to see improved. (Select open-ended comments)

- Grandview, south Richland near school district office
- Connections between South and West Richland.
- I would like to see the transit bus in Finley on Bowles Road
- South Richland to Kadlec
- Faster connection between Southridge and Knight Street Transit Center. Improved connection to PSC. August service changes don't adequately connect Knight Street and Queensgate Transit Centers. Route 26 should be extended to Knight Street using the Duportail bridge. Long range plan to serve Badger Mountain South with fixed route buses
- Benton City
- Connections from rural Kennewick (Finley) to the city.

Travel Demand Analysis

Transit App: Top 30 Requests (May 2024)

Figure 184

Top 30 Trip Pairs Requested in Transit App (May 2024)



Source: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/44fb434900904b80b8f42a73680ebdf6/>

Future Initiatives and Opportunities

In addition to systemwide service improvements, BFT is currently engaged in and/or planning for additional initiatives to help guide the future of transit service in the region. Current and upcoming initiatives identified in the ASP align with BFT's 2025-2031 Transit Development Plan.

Figure 195

Future Initiatives and Opportunities

Project	Description
Current and Anticipated Planning Projects	
Long-Range Transit Plan	Complete LRTP process to provide an overarching guide on how to implement agency transportation goals and policies over the next 20 years.
Frequent Service Corridor Study	Planning and engineering to inform an update and redesign of BFT's current and future frequent service (15 minutes or better) routes, as well as improving access and ADA accessibility of frequent-corridor routes.
Service Standards & Performance Measures	Update and expand on existing service standards, including establishing new metrics or thresholds as necessary.
Short-Range Transit Plan	Conduct a comprehensive planning process to develop detailed service change recommendations to be implemented within a five-year timeframe. The study will focus on enhancing service reliability, route efficiency, and rider experience while aligning with regional mobility goals and funding availability.
Fare Study Update	Re-evaluate fare study recommendations and determine a path forward for future fare structure and policies.
Passenger & Operational Capital Improvements	
Route and Bus Stop Improvements	Supports a range of projects aimed at improving the functionality of BFT bus stops, routes, and related infrastructure, such as enhanced signage, ADA accessibility upgrades, and improved passenger amenities.
Transit Center Upgrades	This program invests in existing transit centers to enhance customer experience, modernize infrastructure, improve safety, and expand capacity where feasible.

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Project	Description
Pasco Transit Hubs	Creation of a new transit facility to serve the growing West Pasco area, improving regional connectivity and access to public transportation. The transit center, along with an accompanying park-and-ride lot, will support expanding service needs, reduce congestion, and provide a convenient hub for riders traveling within Pasco and to the broader region.
22nd Avenue Transit Center	Extend and enhance the useful life of the 22 nd Avenue Transit Center through a range of improvements. Planned upgrades include, but are not limited to, reconfiguring the platform to ensure ADA compliance and improve safety through updated technology, adding a customer service window, enhancing driver comfort facilities, TOD and modernizing the park-and-ride lot.
Transit Mobility Hubs	Design and construction of three new small-scale transit hubs to support recent and long-term growth in the region. These facilities will be located in the Southridge area of Kennewick, Benton City, and Prosser, and are intended to improve transit access, enhance service efficiency, and meet the evolving transportation needs of these growing communities.
Additional Needs & Opportunities	
Growth in the Tri-Cities	The Tri-Cities region is projected to experience significant population growth in the coming decades. According to the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG), the population of Benton and Franklin Counties is forecasted to grow by nearly 140,000 by the year 2045. Population growth will have a significant impact on transportation network demand.
Ongoing Public Engagement	Ongoing public engagement in transit service planning is important because it ensures services reflect community needs, builds trust and support, and helps agencies adapt to changing travel patterns and priorities.
Transit Solutions for West Richland	When SR-224 construction in West Richland is complete in spring 2027, improved road design, sidewalks, and transit pull-outs will change travel patterns and access. Transit service will need to be revisited to optimize routes, stop locations, and frequencies to match the new infrastructure and community mobility needs.
Infrastructure Investment	BFT will regularly coordinate with jurisdictional partners

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Project	Description
Partnerships with Jurisdictions	to plan for road projects, detours, and better walking and biking access to bus stops. These meetings help BFT stay in sync with local goals and make sure transit stays safe and accessible as the region grows.
Dial-A-Ride Software Upgrade	In 2026, BFT is planning to roll out new DAR software designed to significantly improve service efficiency and customer experience. By optimizing route efficiency, the system is expected to reduce slack time, deadhead miles, non-revenue hours, and staff overtime. For clients, the platform will introduce a user-friendly mobile application to book rides, submit eligibility applications, and track DAR buses in real time. Trips will be automatically negotiated at the time of booking, while an AI-powered agent will manage routine calls such as cancellations and pickup ETA requests, reducing call volume and wait times. Staffing levels permitting, the agency also aims to pilot a premium same-day service by the end of 2026, offering greater flexibility for riders.

Title VI Service Equity Analysis

As a direct recipient of federal funding through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), BFT is committed to ensuring that all programs and services are delivered equitably, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related federal regulations. This means operating without discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.

To maintain compliance with these requirements, BFT is required to conduct a Title VI Service Equity Analysis whenever proposed modifications to the fixed-route network meet the definition of a major service change. Under BFT's policy, a major service change is defined as any adjustment to an individual route that increases or reduces route revenue miles or hours by more than 20%.

As part of the analysis, BFT also evaluates whether proposed changes could result in a disparate impact on minority populations or a disproportionate burden on low-income communities. Specifically, this occurs when affected populations would experience 20% fewer benefits or 20% more adverse impacts compared to the service area average.

Following this framework, the only change included in the 2026 ASP that qualifies as a major service change is the implementation of Route 61. Route 61 will provide more accessible, direct service to areas in Pasco with high concentrations of minority and low-income populations. This route will also provide direct service to the Columbia Basin Veterans Center. Given that the proposed changes will represent a significant increase in direct service and there are no expected adverse effects, a full Title VI Service Equity Analysis that details mitigation efforts was not complied with.

Key Findings:

- No disparate impacts to minority populations expected
- No disproportionate burden to low-income populations expected
- Service change represents a significant increase in service to minority and low-income populations in Pasco.

Service Adjustments and Mitigations:

- Adding a new Route 61 that will serve Rd 28, W A St, Lewis St, Downtown Pasco, and the Columbia Basin Veterans Center. This service will operate on weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. No mitigation efforts were required.

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Equity Impact Summary:

BFT conducted a service equity analysis through the Remix platform and found that the proposed implementation of Route 61 created no adverse impacts, so no mitigation is required. Considering this, no formal Title VI service equity analysis document was complied.

The findings of the service equity analysis are below:

- Change borne by minority populations total 85.5%, which is 42.7% over BFT's service area average.
- Change borne by low-income populations total 23.3%, which is 11.7% over BFT's service area average.
- Changes borne are positive and result in increased service and results in an additional 68,458,320 people-trips.
 - People-trips = (number of people living with ¼ of a route) × (number of trips that route makes per year)

Figure 206

Route 61 Change Borne by Title VI Population

	Low Income	Minority
Change Borne By	23.3%	85.5%
Area Average	11.6%	42.8%
Delta	11.7%	42.7%

Figure 217

Route 61 People-Trip Increase by Title VI Population

Difference				
People-Trips (Population * Trips)	Low Income People-Trips	Minority People- Trips	Change Borne By Low Income	Change Borne by Minorities
68,458,320	15,953,334	58,556,925	23.3%	85.5%
68,458,320	15,953,334	58,556,925	23.3%	85.5%

BFT remains committed to equitable service planning and will continue to monitor, engage, and adjust services to meet the needs of all communities across its service area.

Public Feedback Comments:

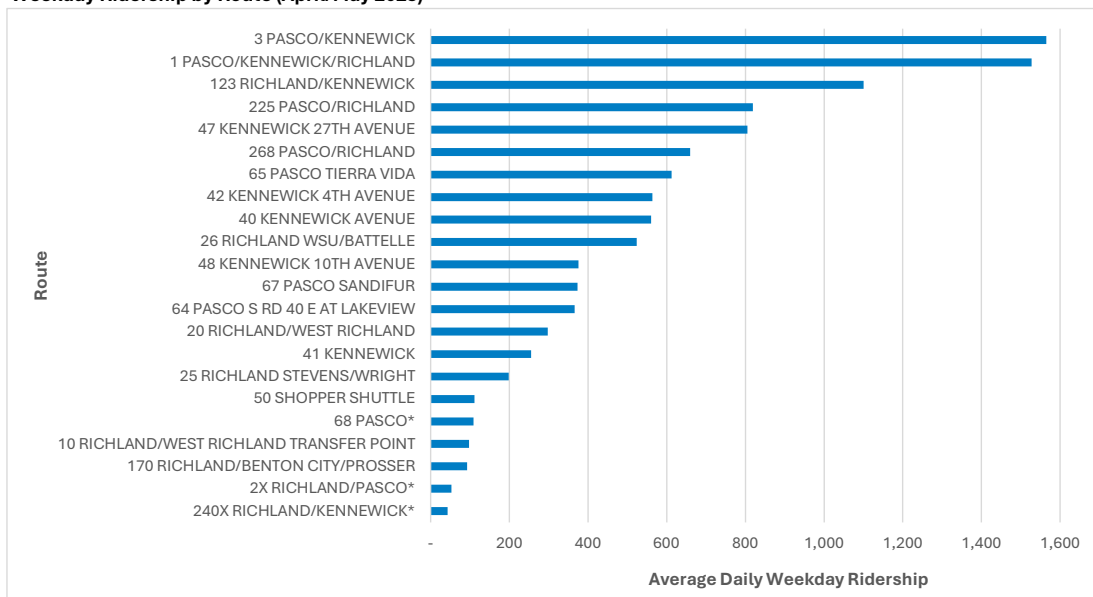
Public feedback identified several recurring and specific priorities related to the proposed service changes. The most frequent comments focused on route alignment and service coverage, particularly requests to extend or realign routes to serve key destinations such as medical facilities, employment centers, and commercial areas, as well as concerns about removing existing deviations that riders rely on. Bus stop location and accessibility were also commonly cited, with respondents noting long walk distances, limited pedestrian infrastructure near stops, and challenges for older adults and riders with mobility limitations. Many comments emphasized the need for expanded service frequency and span, especially earlier morning and later evening trips to support work schedules, along with improved weekend service. Less frequently, respondents raised concerns about low ridership segments, perceived inefficiencies, and on-time performance issues related to traffic congestion or complex routing. Overall, the feedback underscores a desire for a network that improves access to essential destinations while maintaining reliability and operational efficiency.

During the Ben Franklin Transit Board Meeting, held on January 15, 2026, the public was allowed to comment on the 2026 Annual Service Plan (ASP). Commenters raised concerns about limited-service capacity, unreliable operations, and misaligned resource allocation within the transit system, noting that existing routes, especially those serving students, are already overcrowded, delayed, and difficult to rely on. They questioned how service expansions and underperforming routes like Route 27X can be justified amid staffing shortages and low ridership, while heavily used routes such as 3, 47, 65, and 123 struggle with extreme overcrowding and accessibility issues. Commenters, including a transit employee, emphasized that the removal of school “tripper” buses has worsened these problems and urged BFT to reallocate resources toward high-demand school and community routes to improve reliability, capacity, and equitable service delivery.

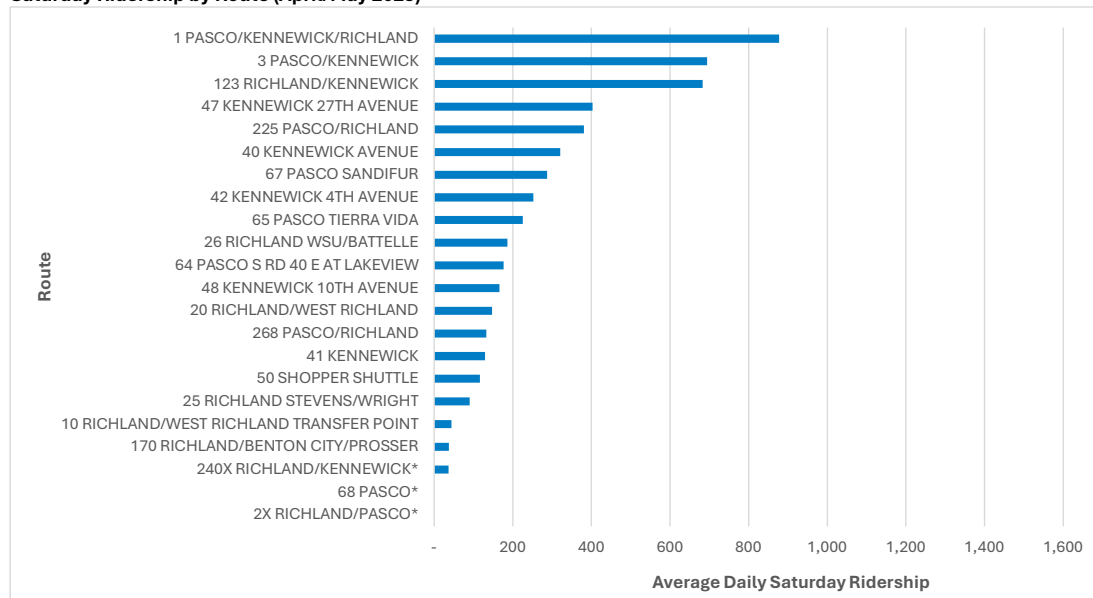
Lastly, the CEO from Three Rivers Therapy at 10505 W Clearwater Ave, Kennewick, stated a wide range of needs for their clients and requested bus service to provide access for patients.

Appendix A: System Summary

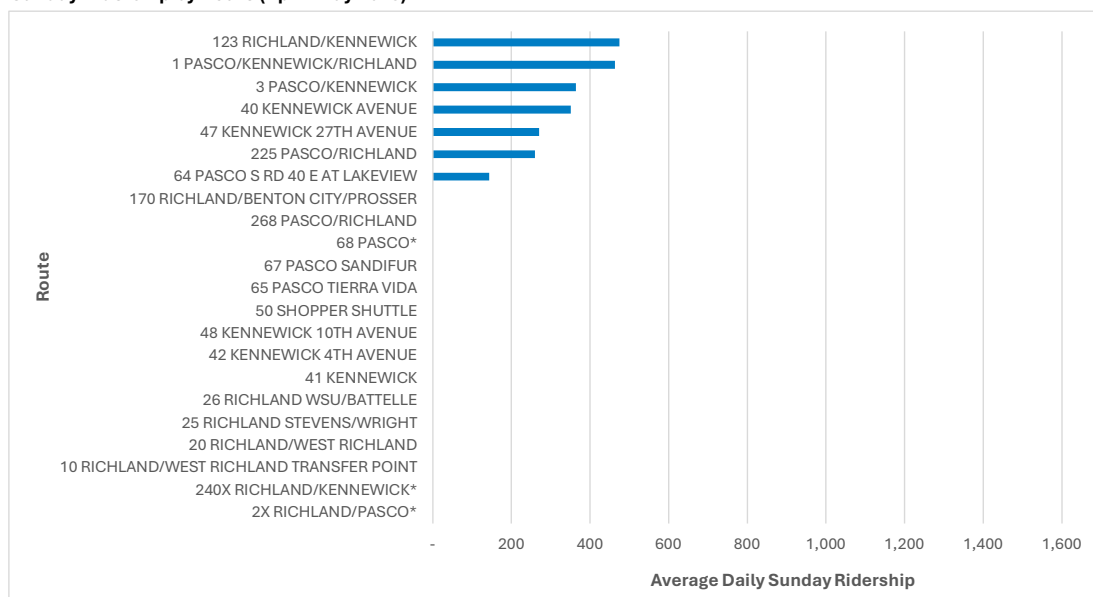
Weekday Ridership by Route (April/May 2025)



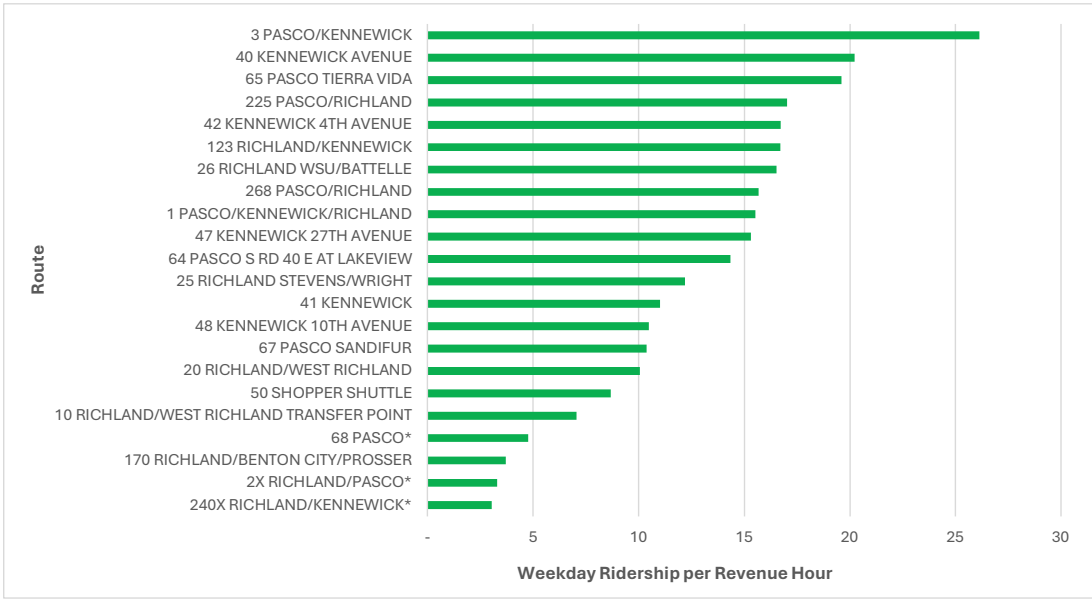
Saturday Ridership by Route (April/May 2025)



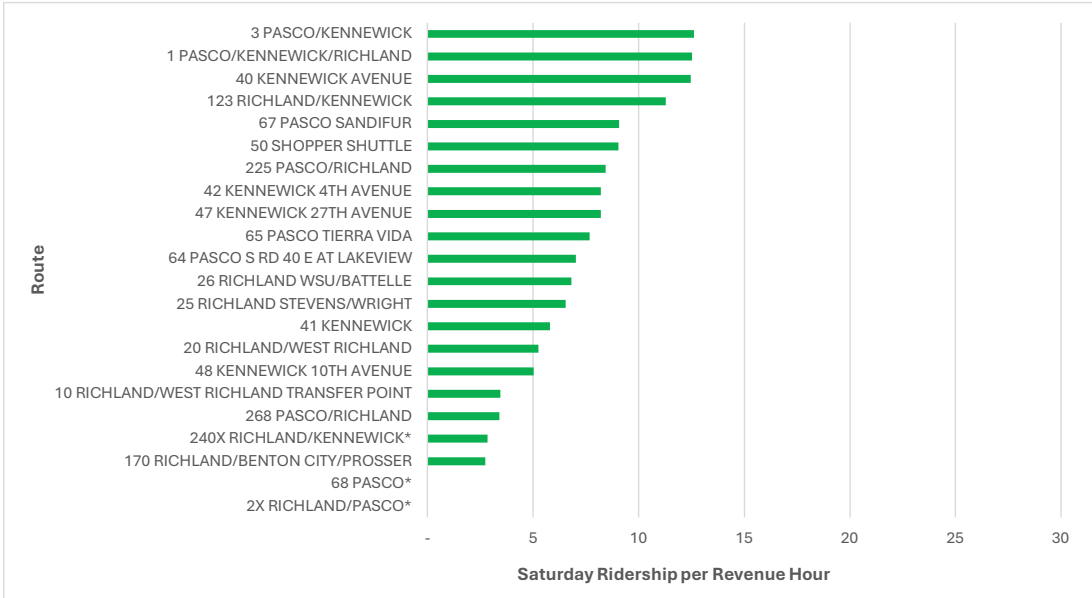
Sunday Ridership by Route (April/May 2025)



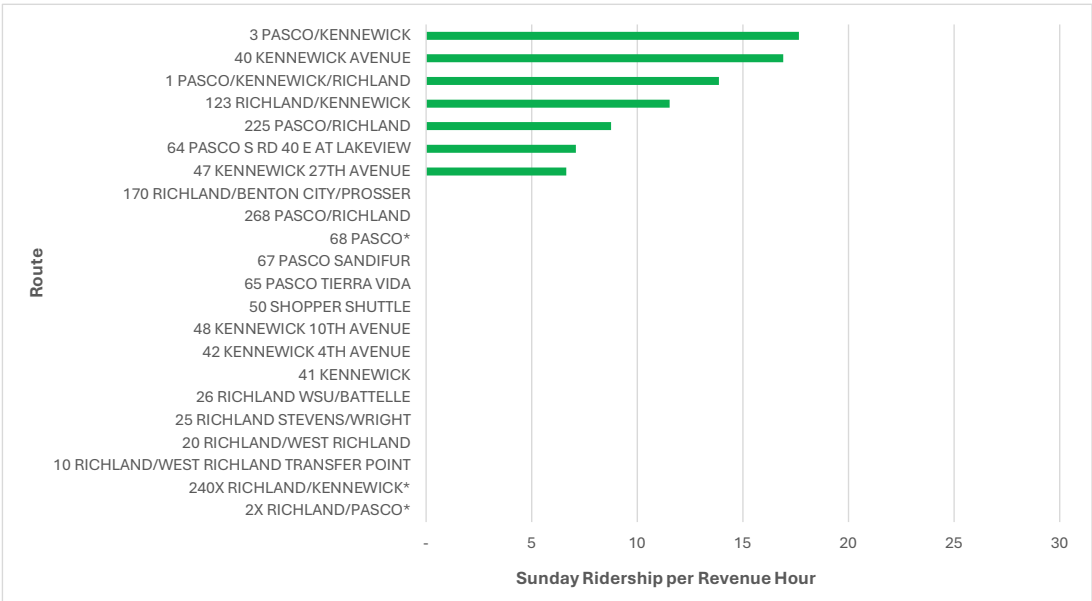
Weekday Ridership per Revenue Hour by Route (April/May 2025)



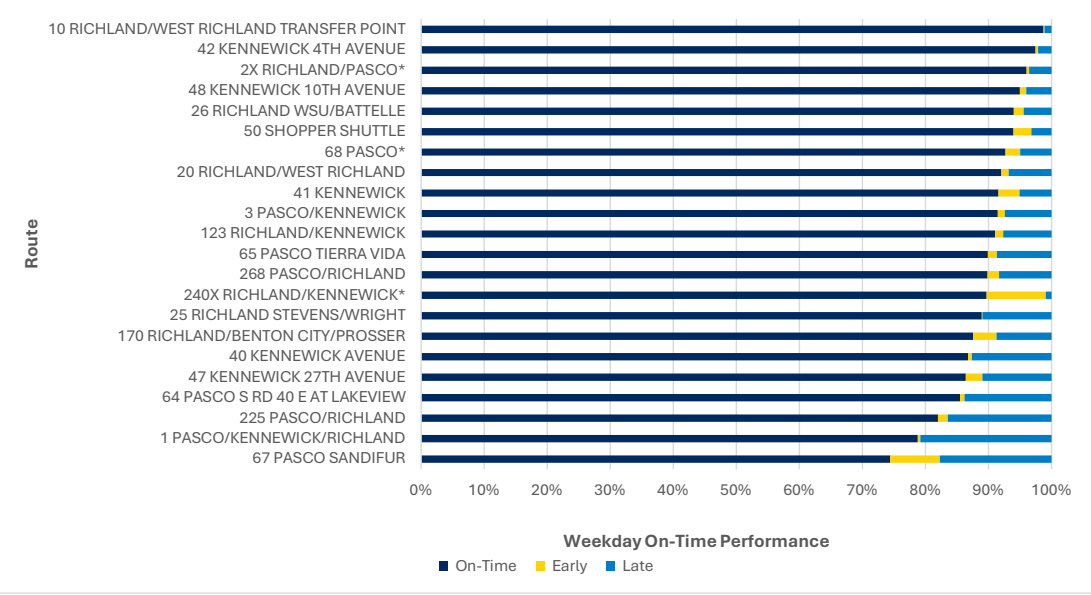
Saturday Ridership per Revenue Hour by Route (April/May 2025)



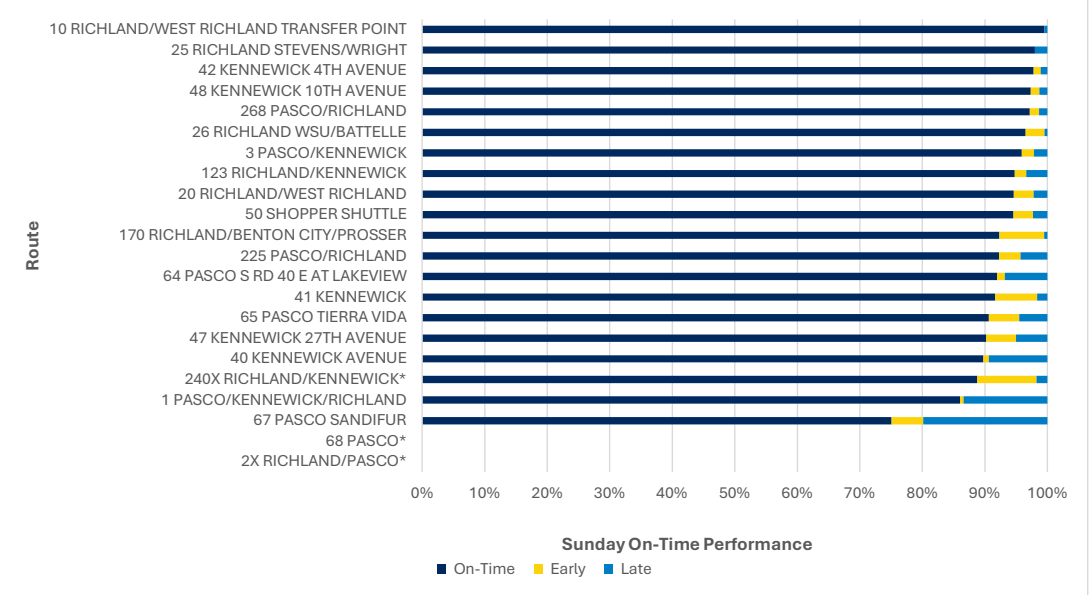
Sunday Ridership per Revenue Hour by Route (April/May 2025)



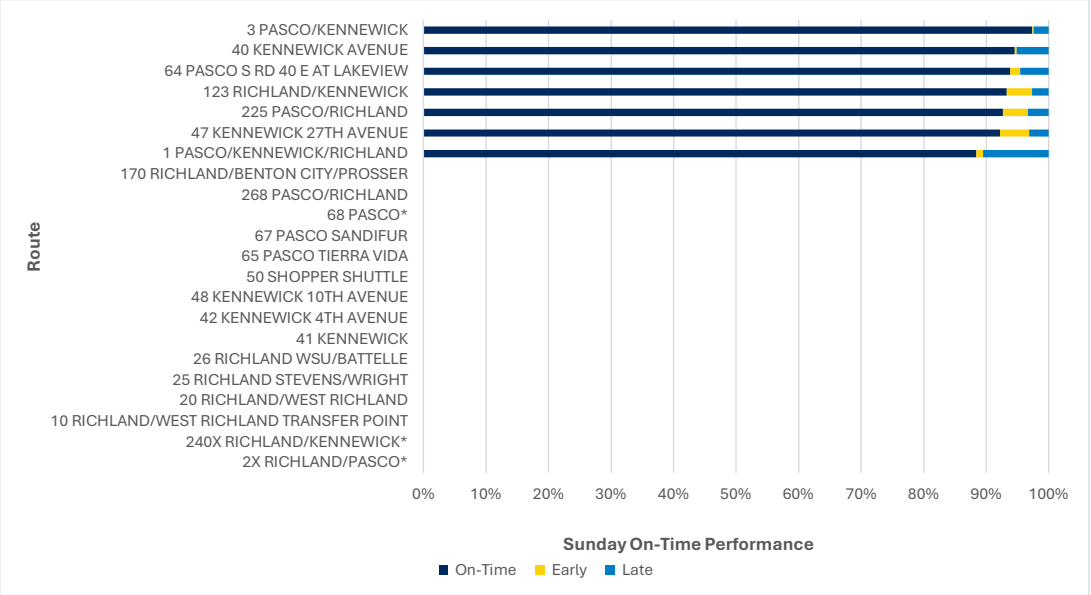
Weekday On-Time Performance by Route (April/May 2025)



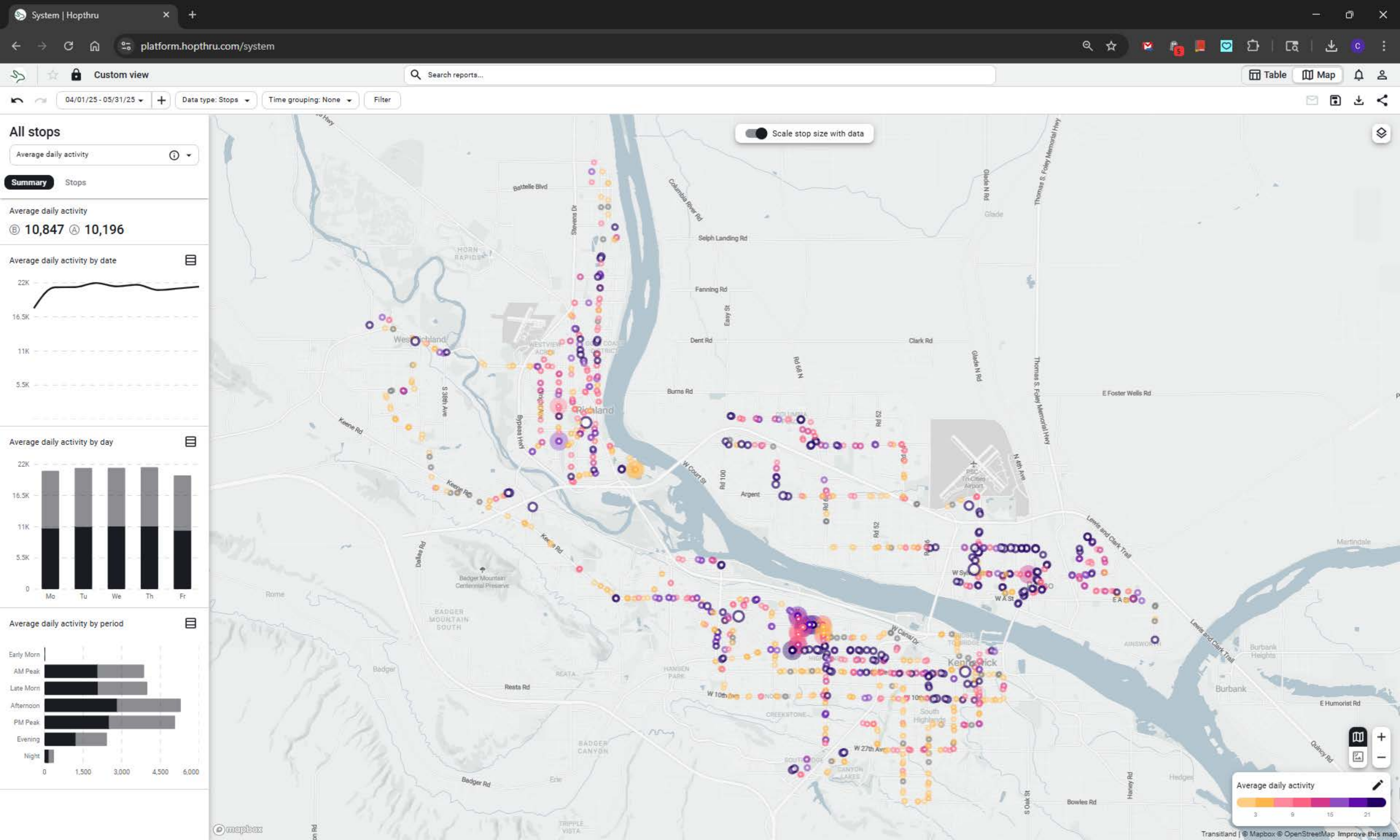
Saturday On-Time Performance by Route (April/May 2025)

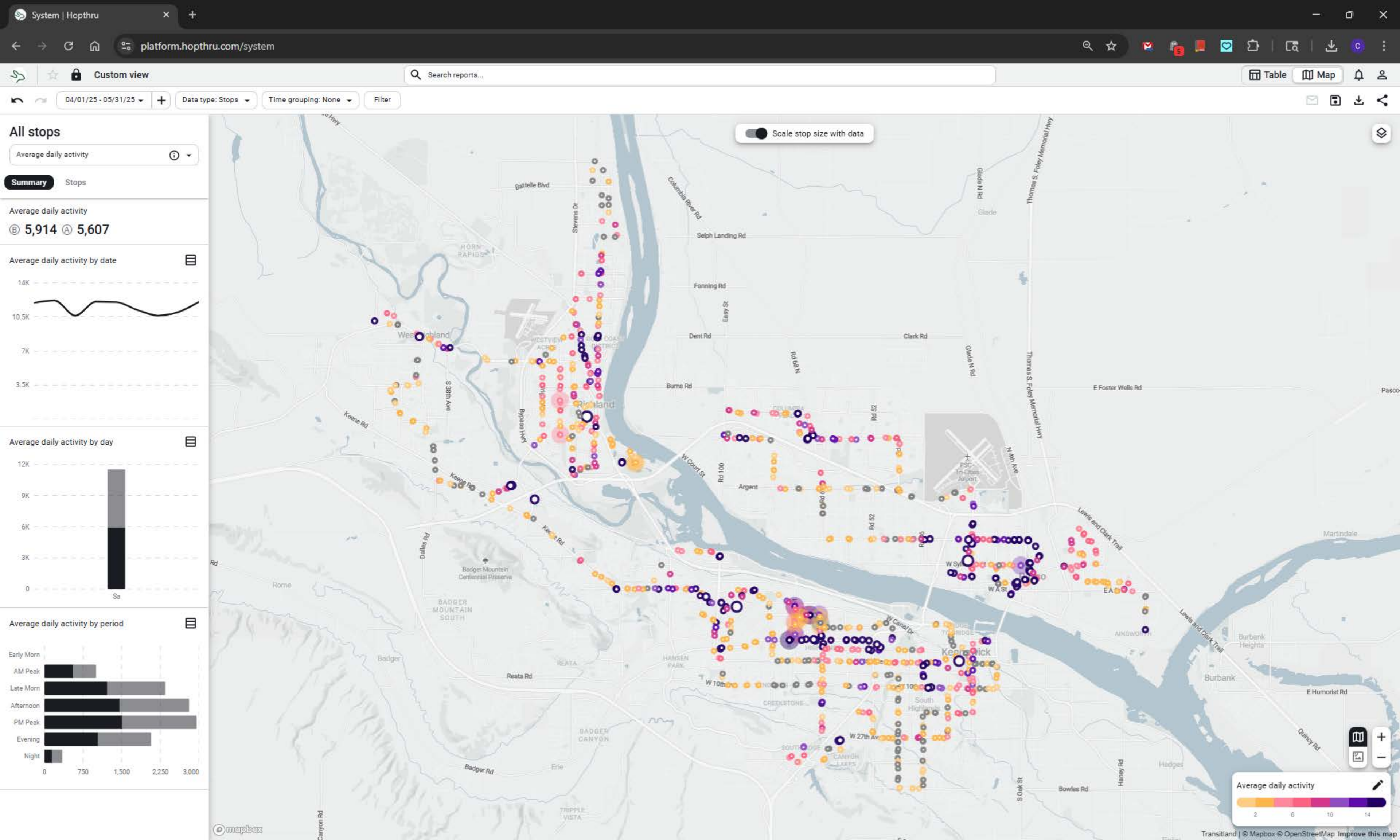


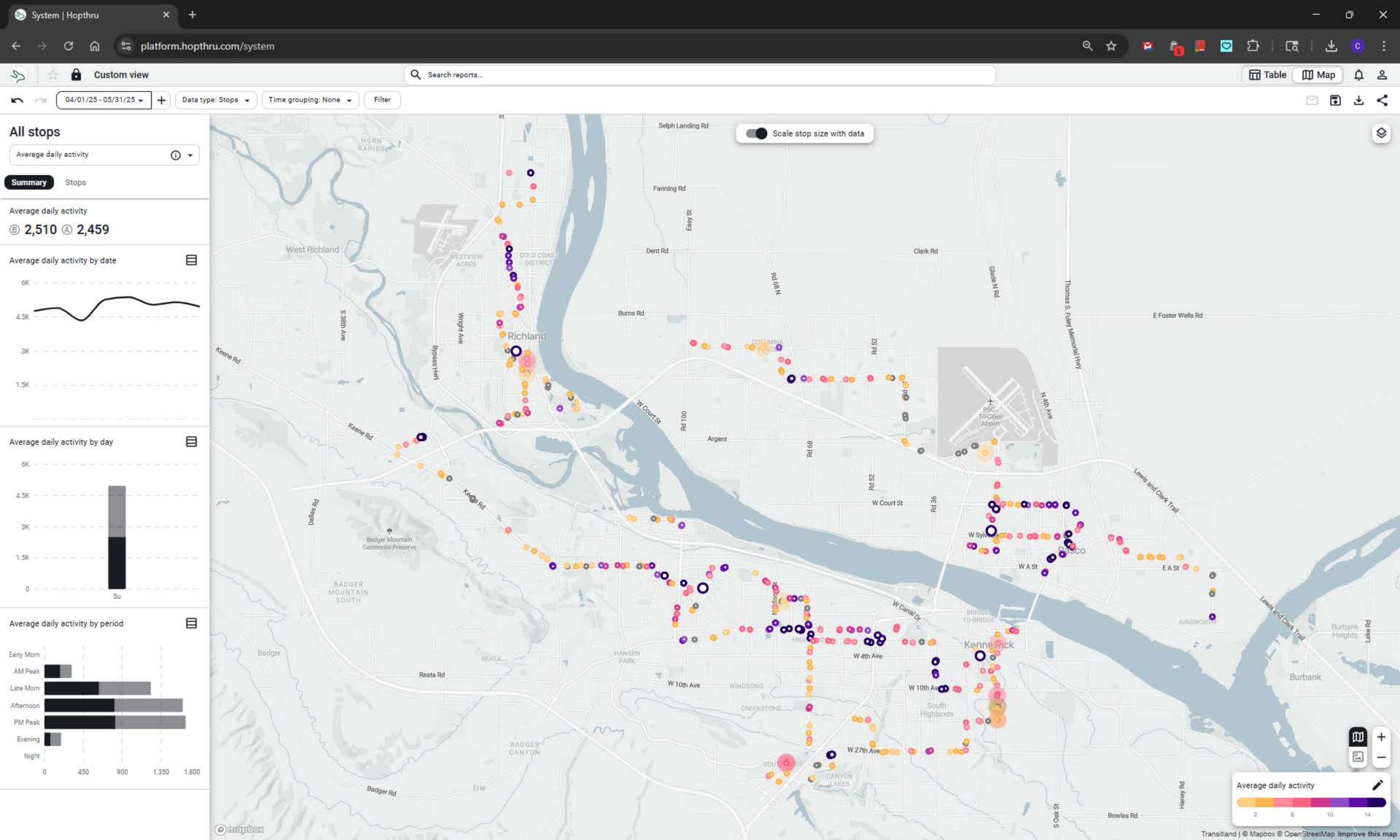
Sunday On-Time Performance by Route (April/May 2025)

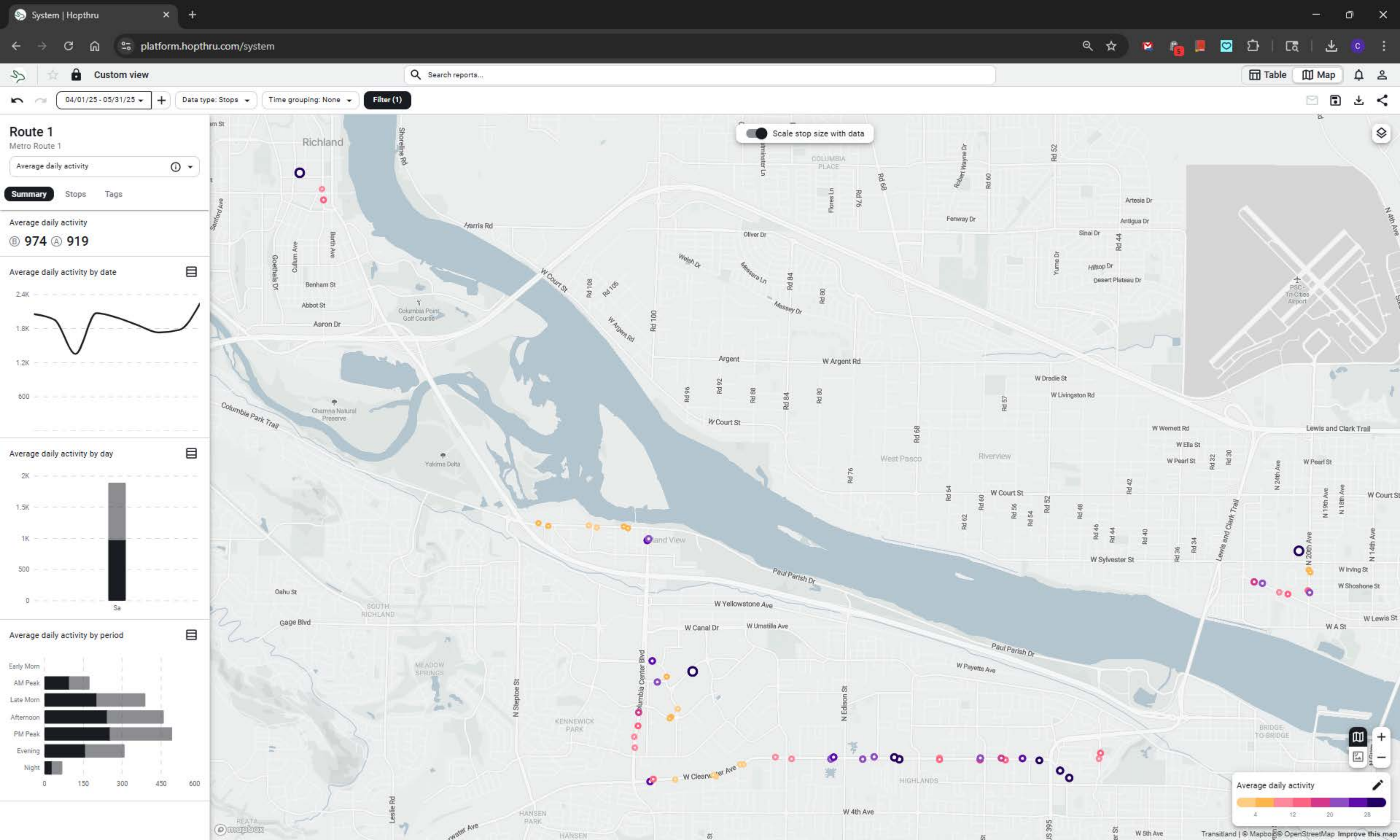


Appendix B: Ridership by Stop









Route 1

Metro Route 1

Average daily activity

Summary

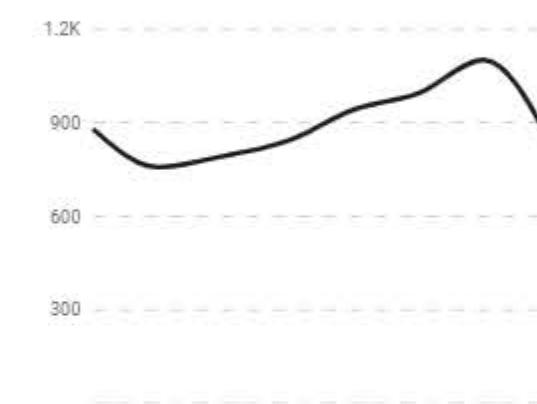
Stops

Tags

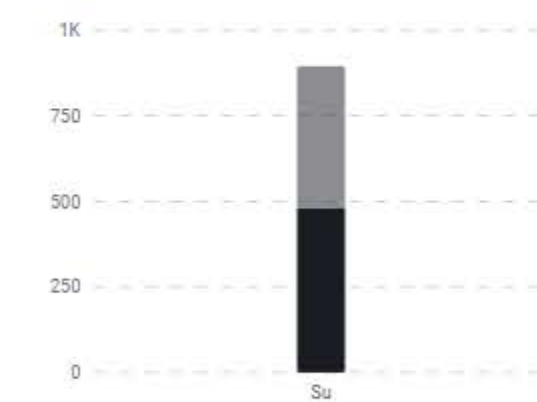
Average daily activity

ⓑ 479 ⓐ 416

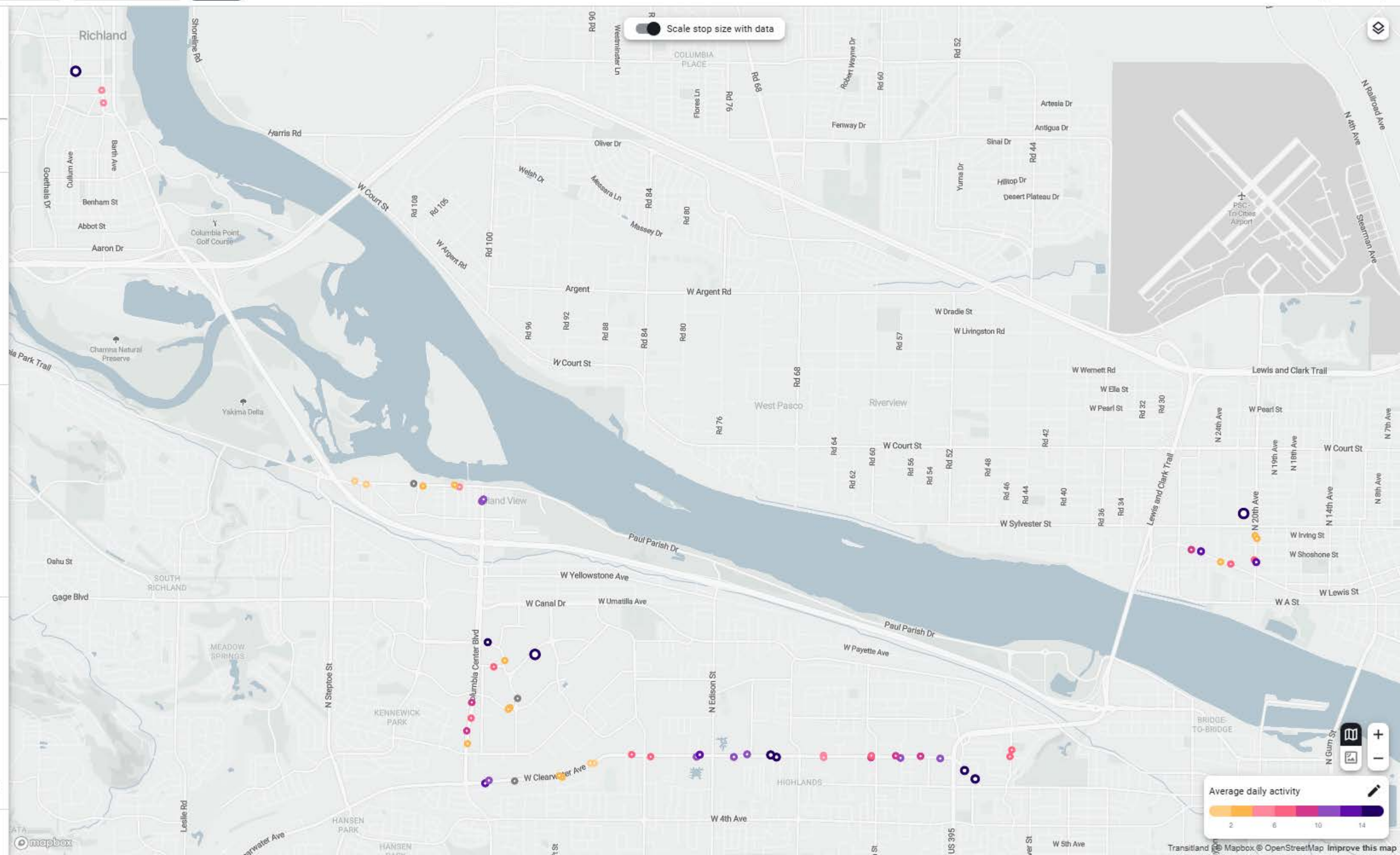
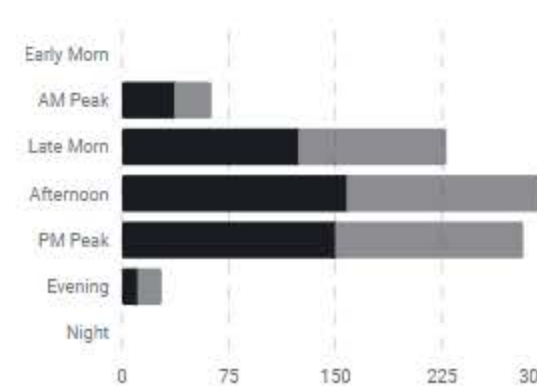
Average daily activity by date



Average daily activity by day

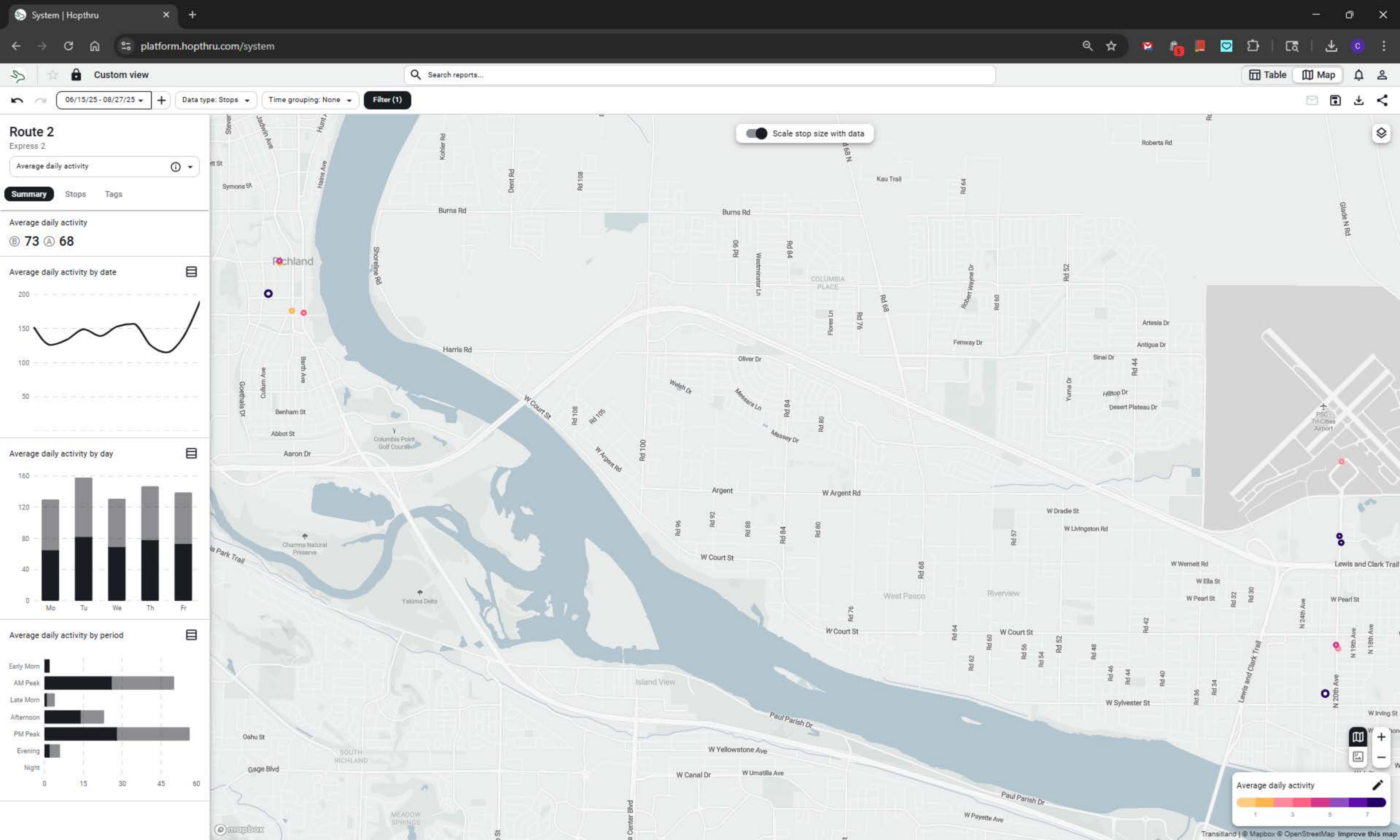


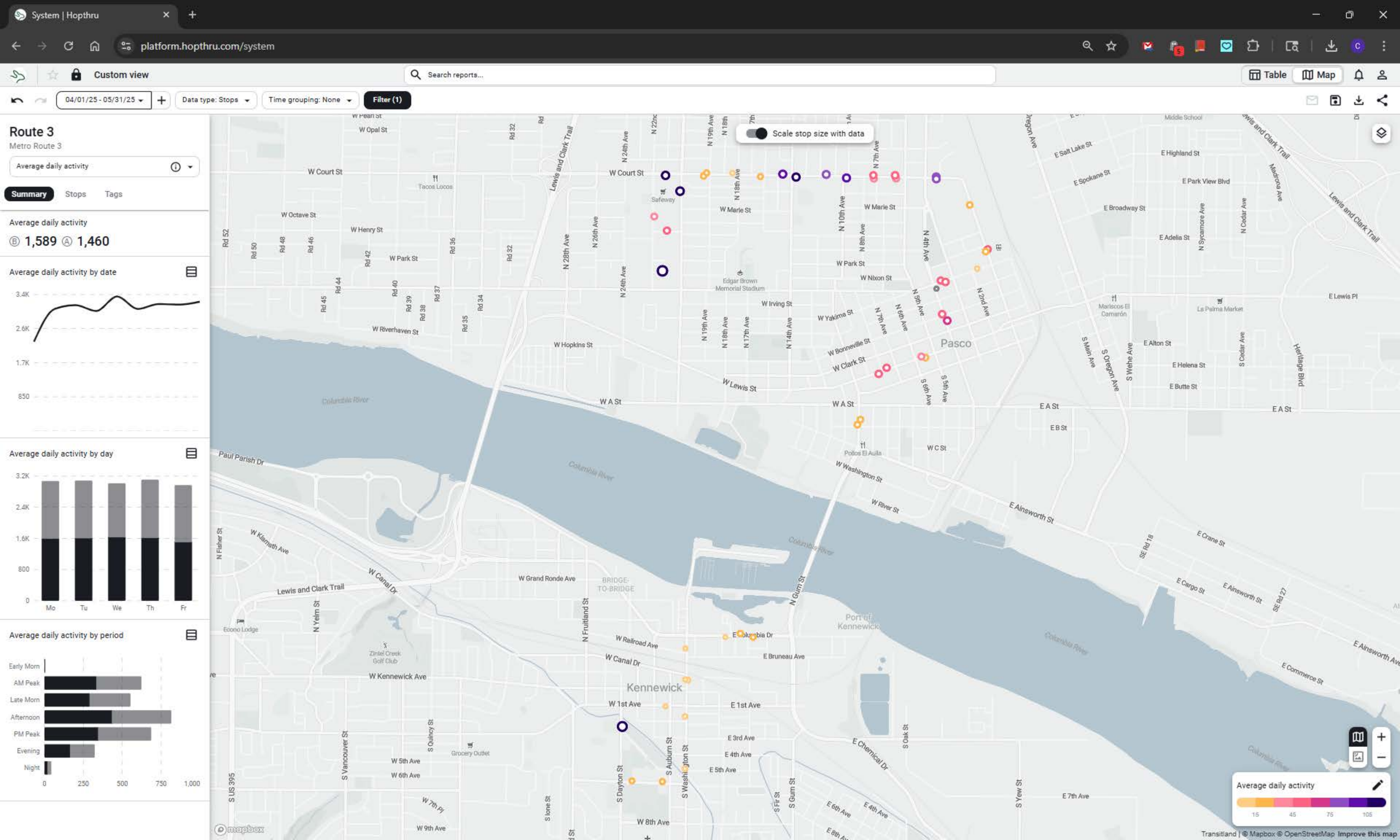
Average daily activity by period

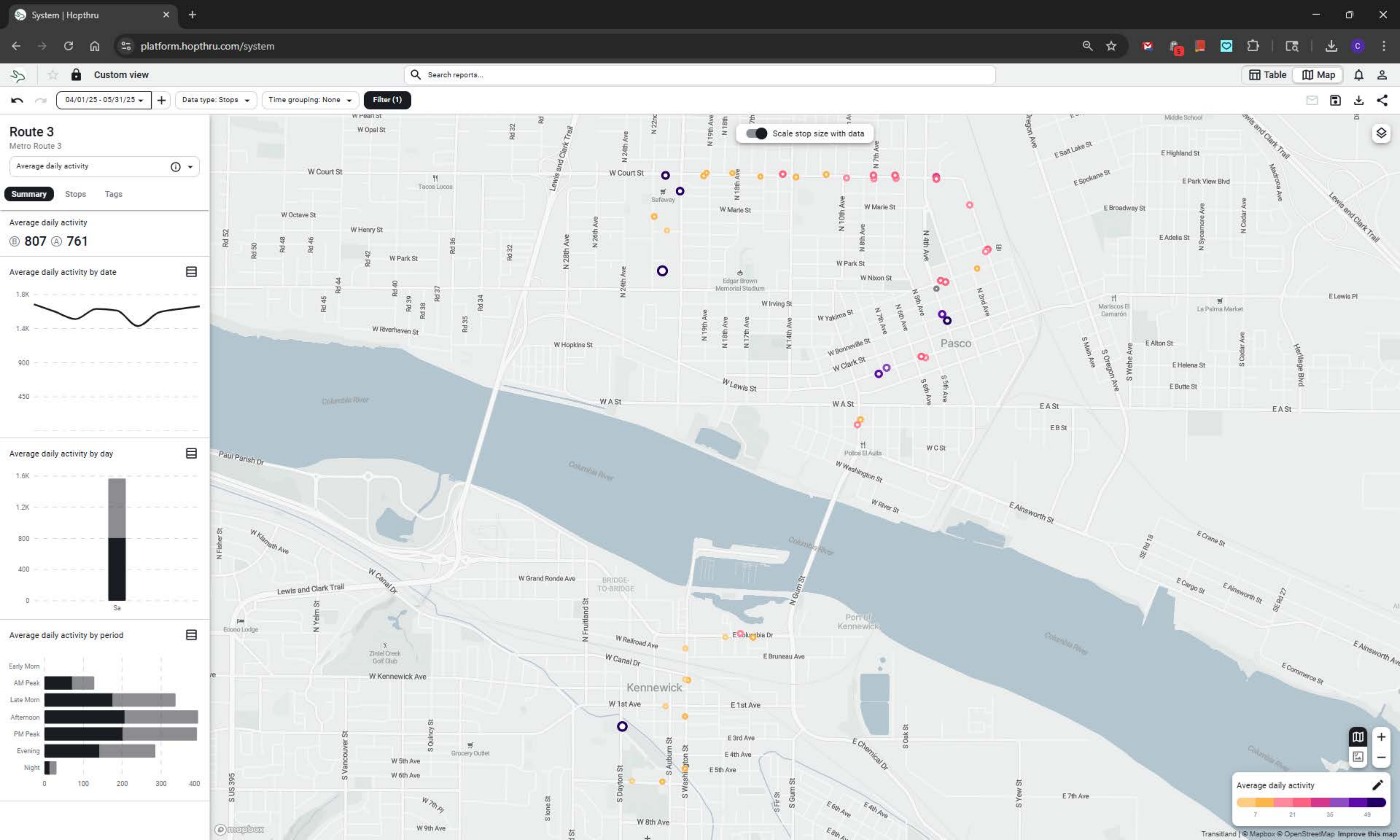


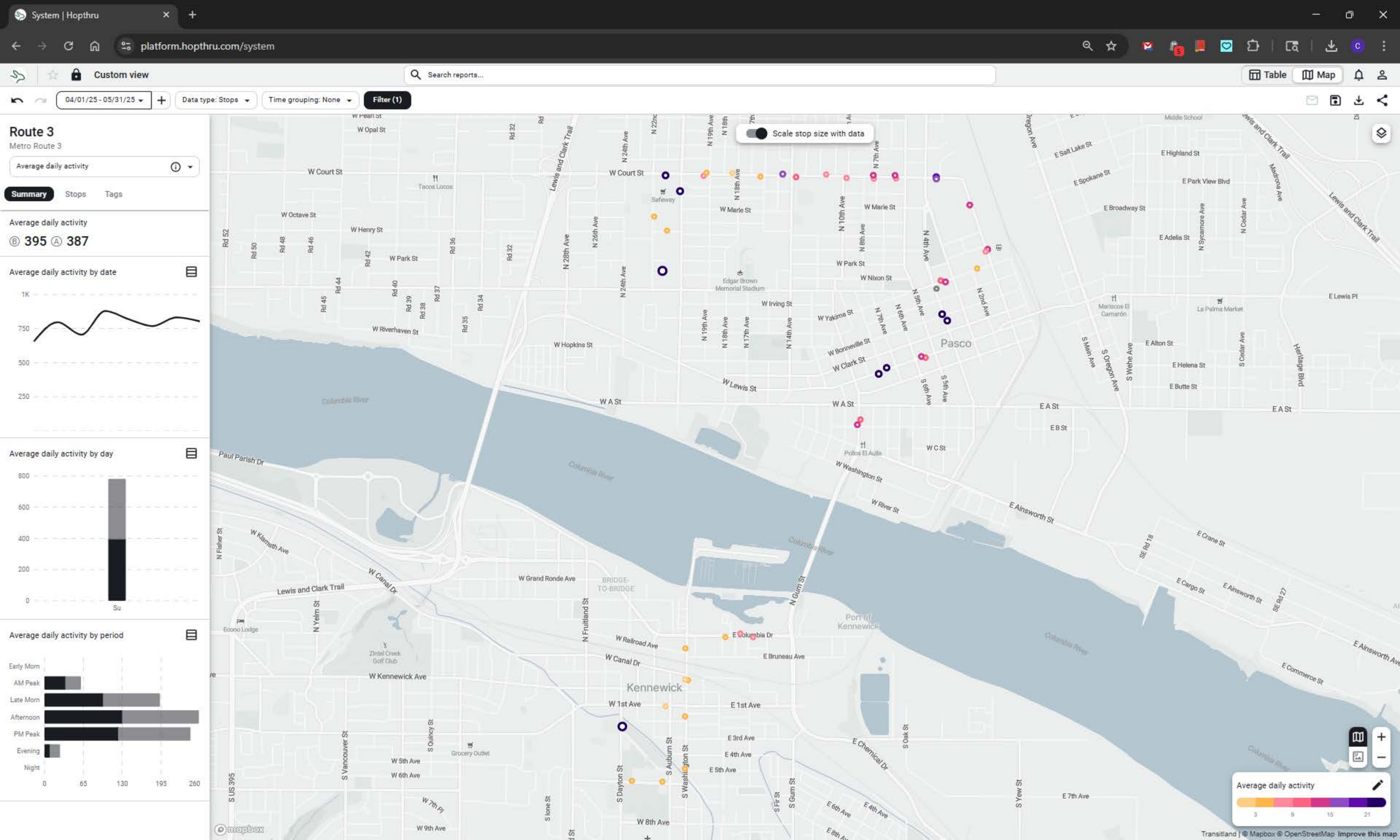
Average daily activity

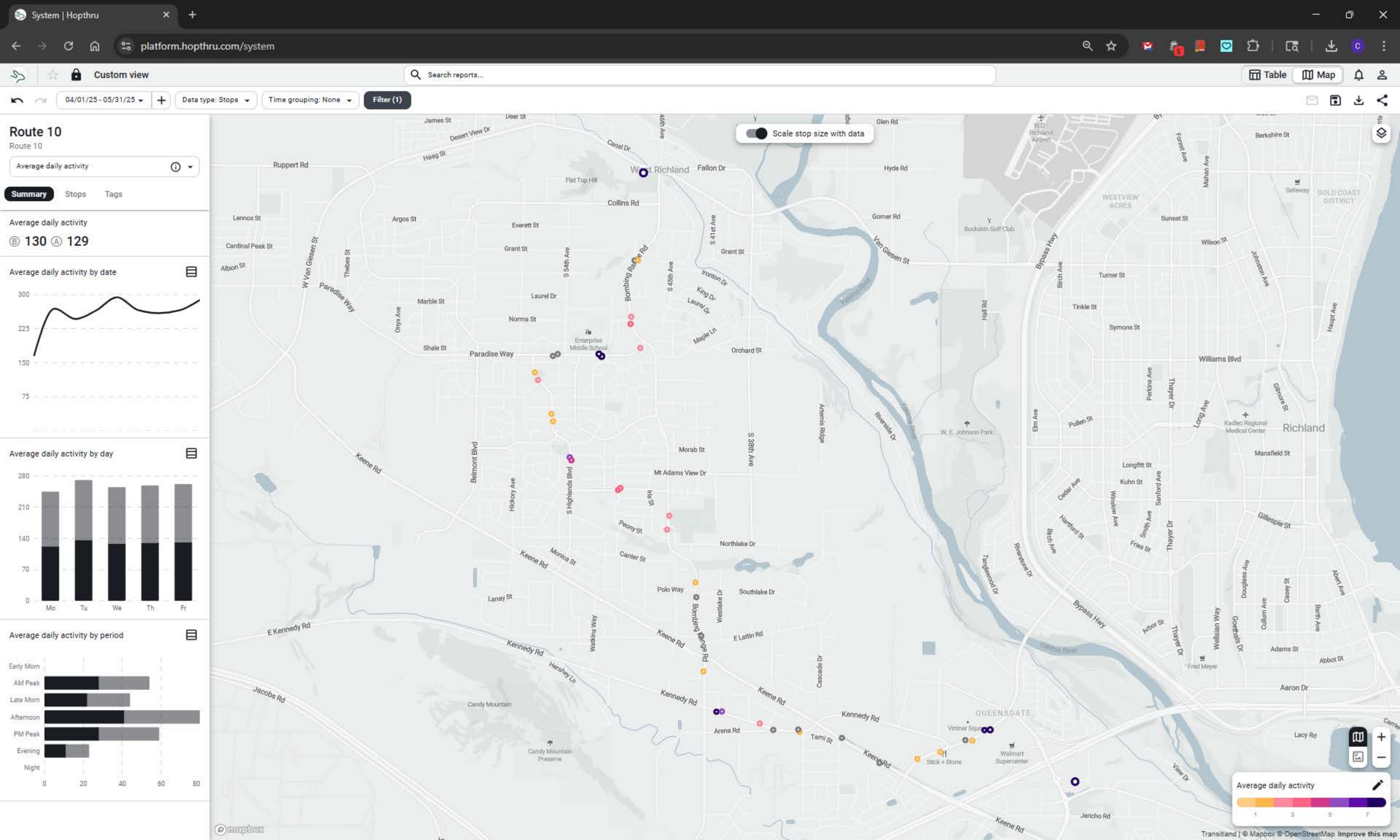


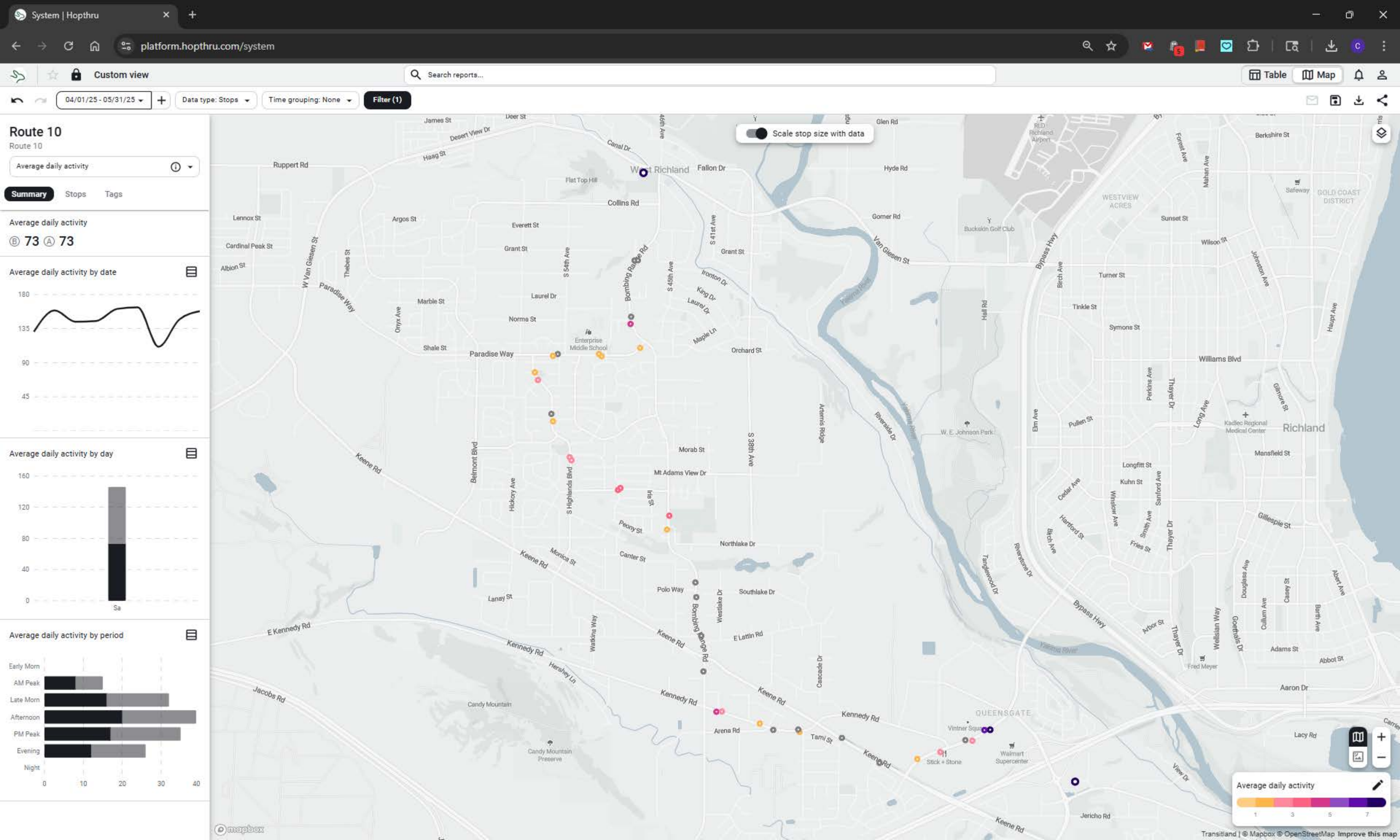


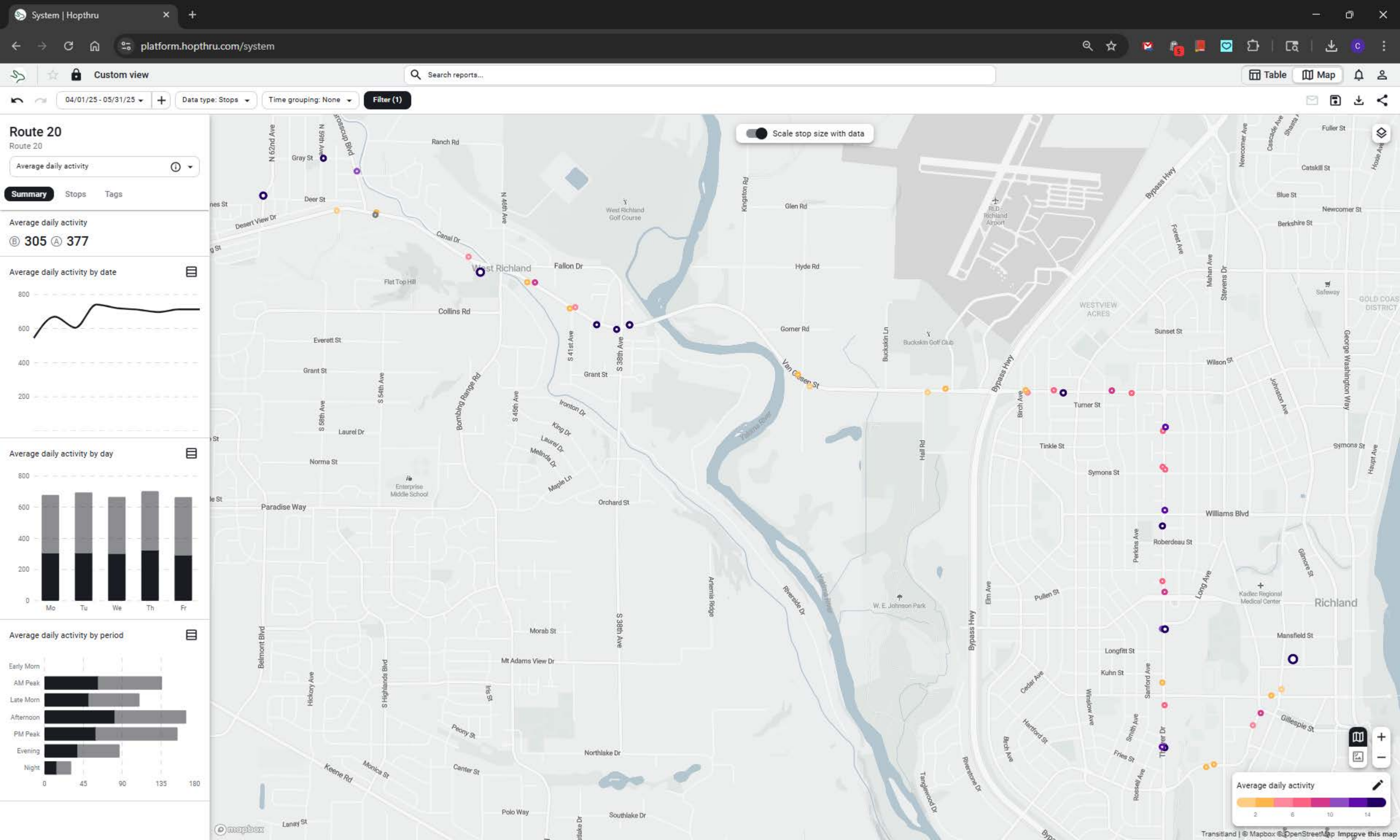


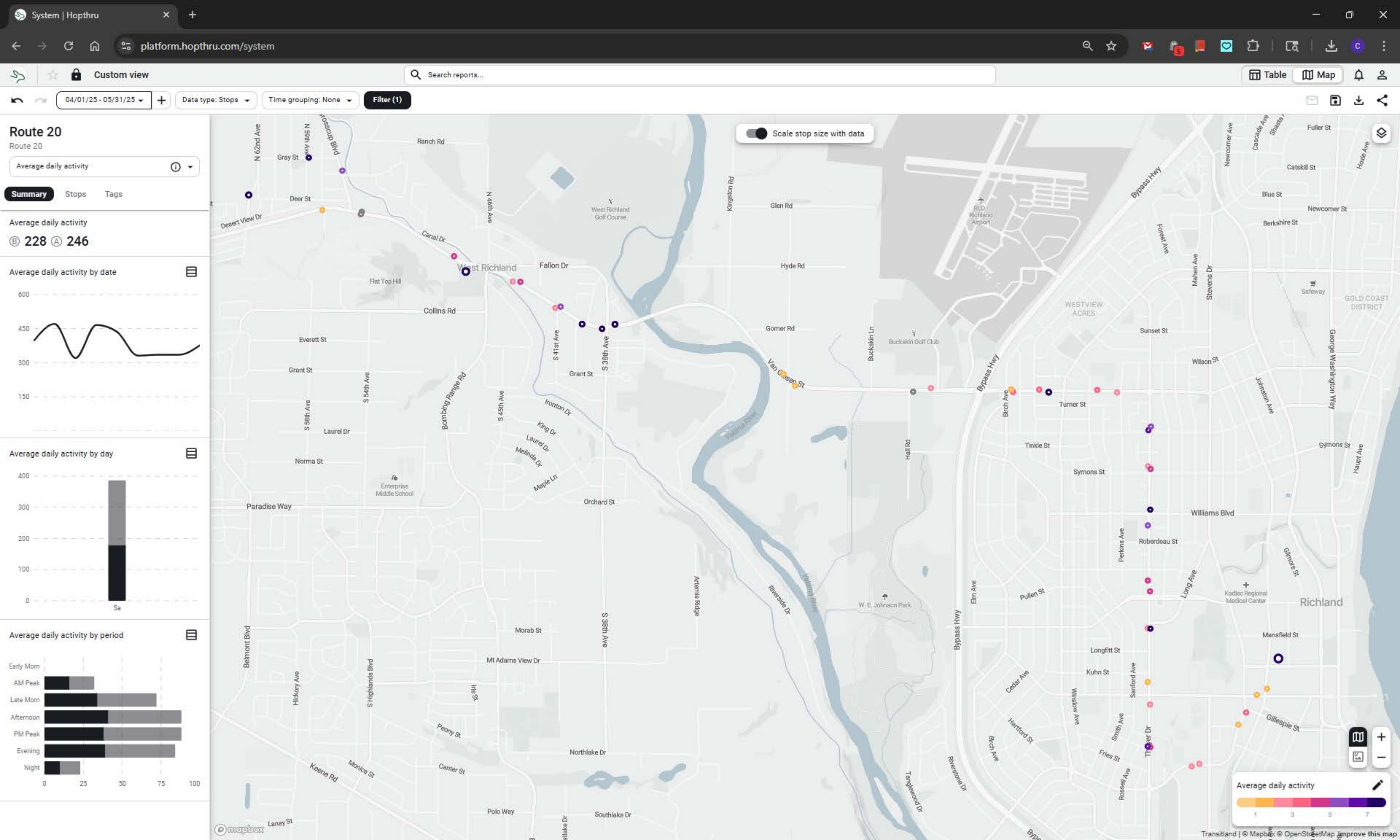


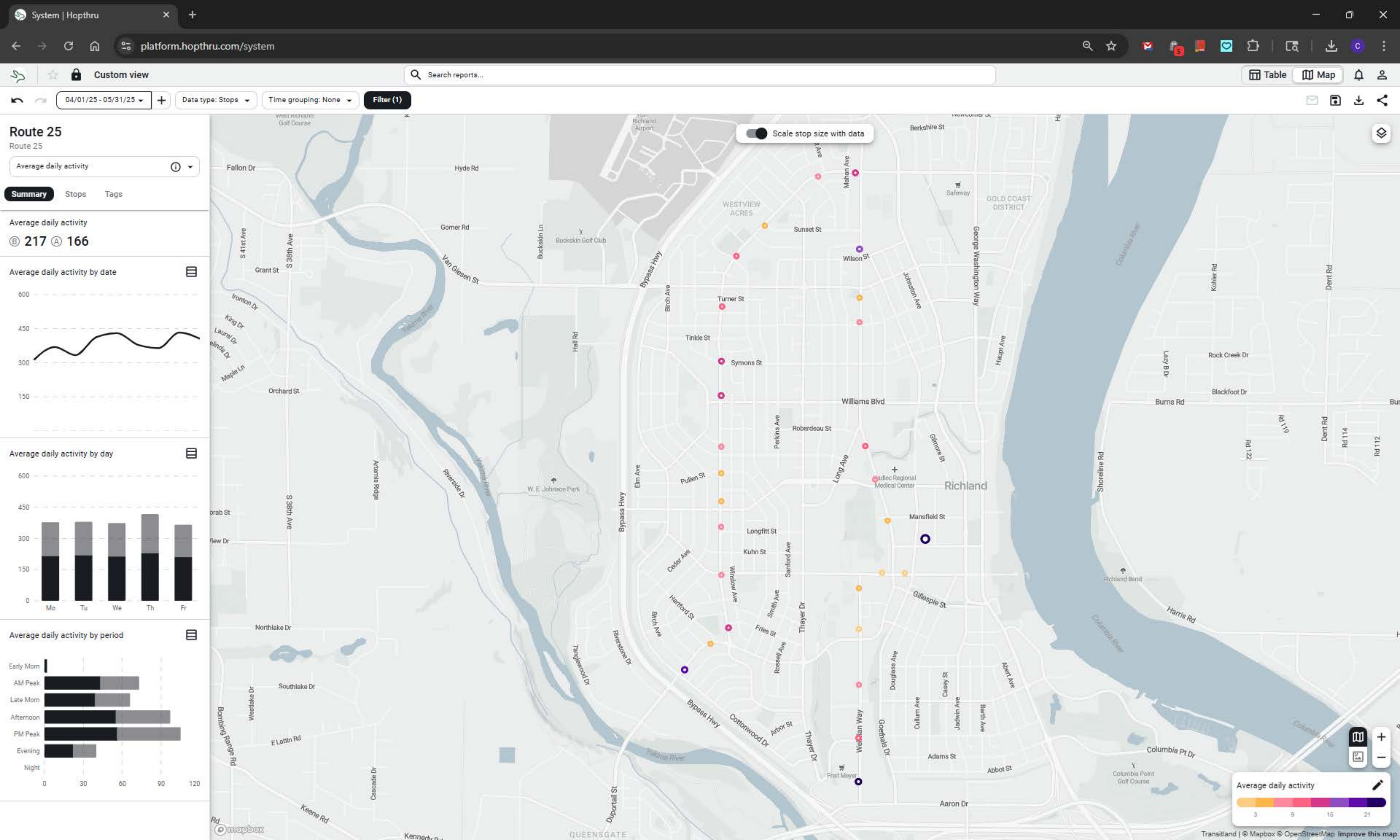


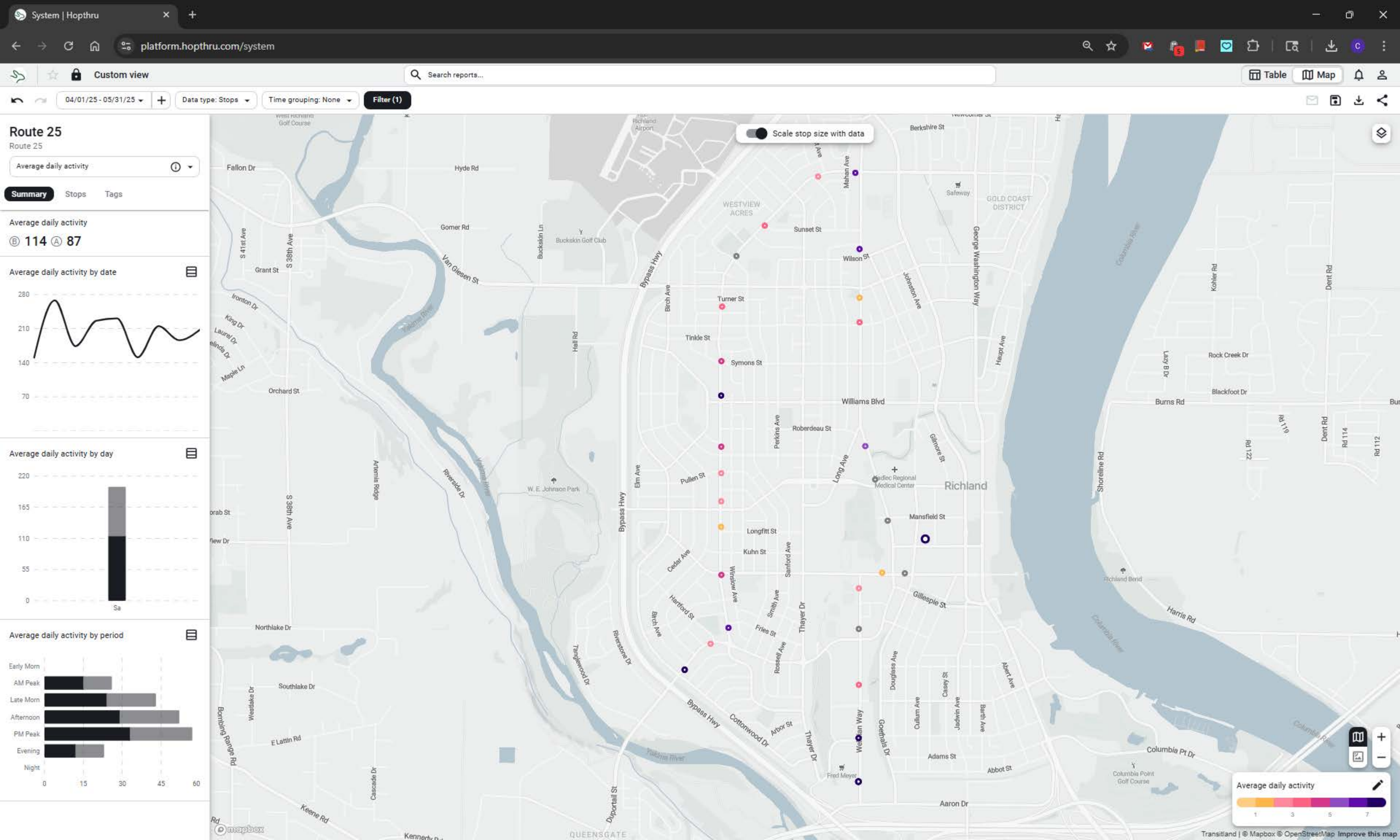


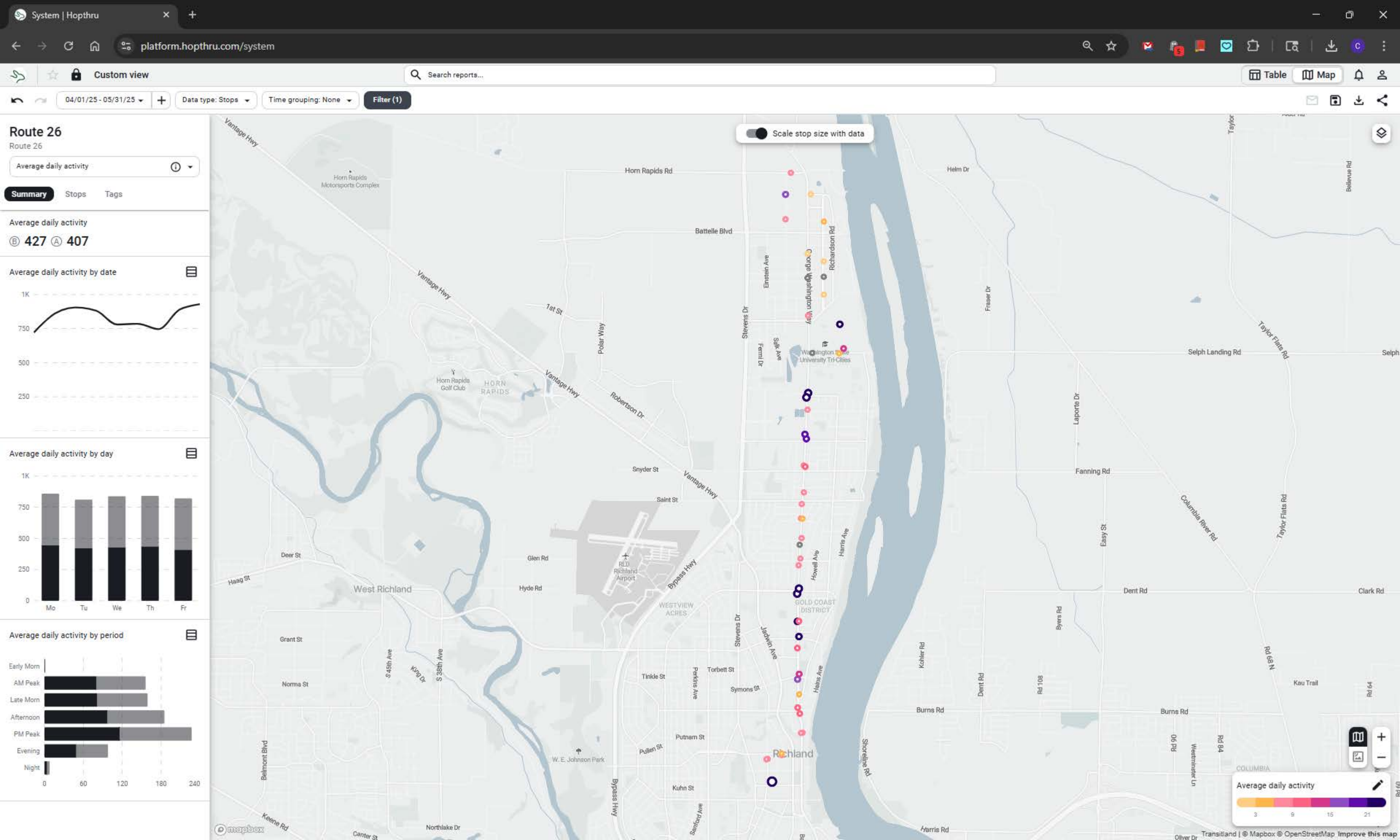


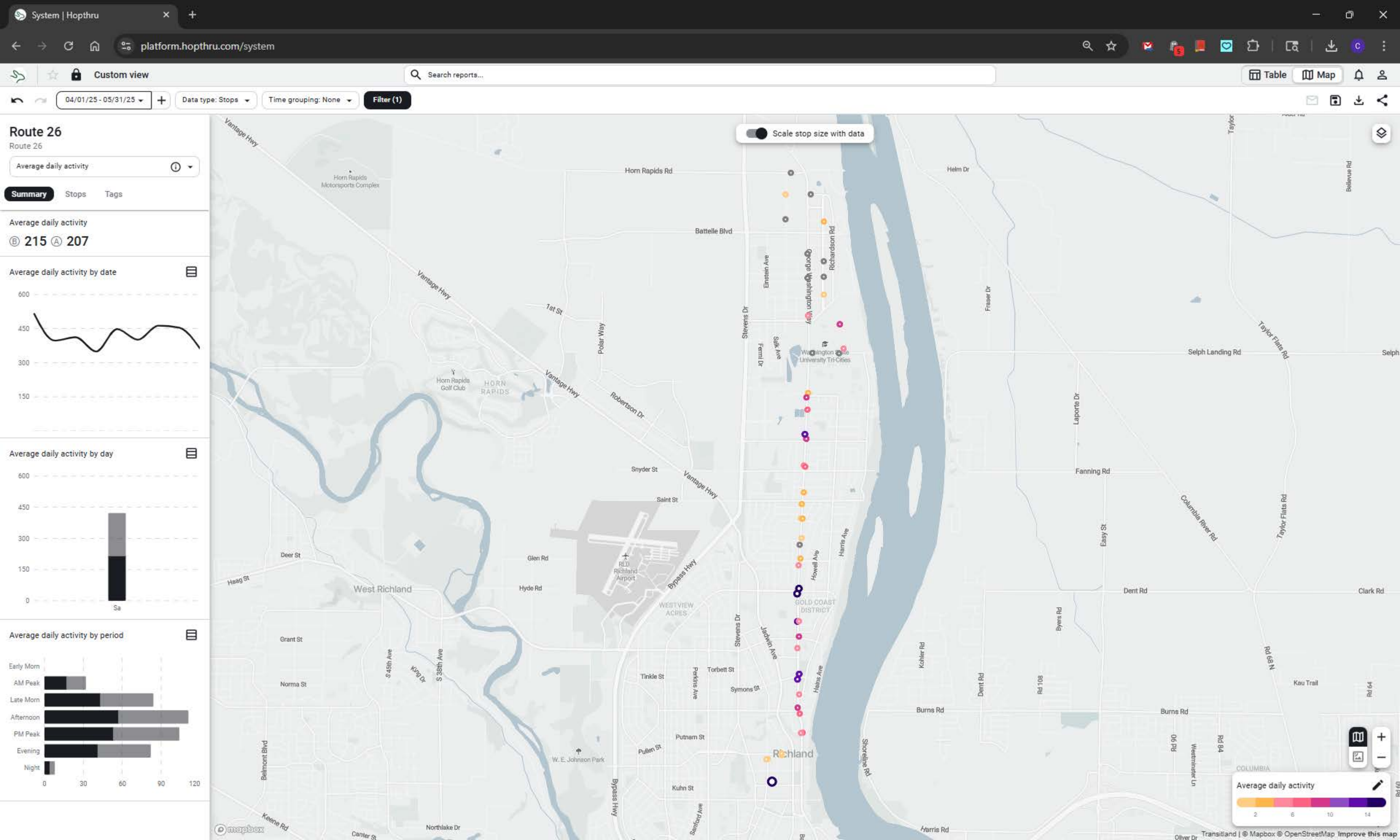


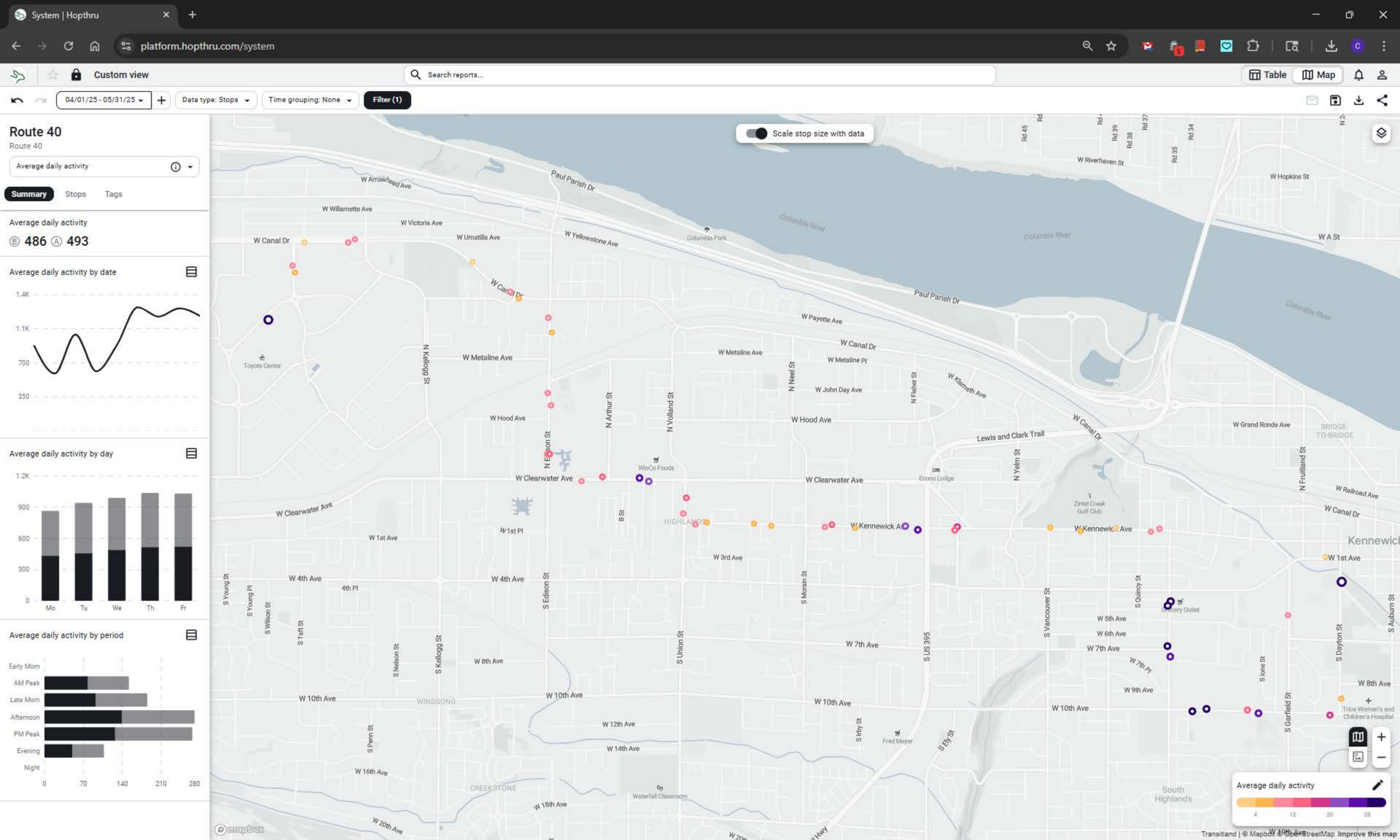


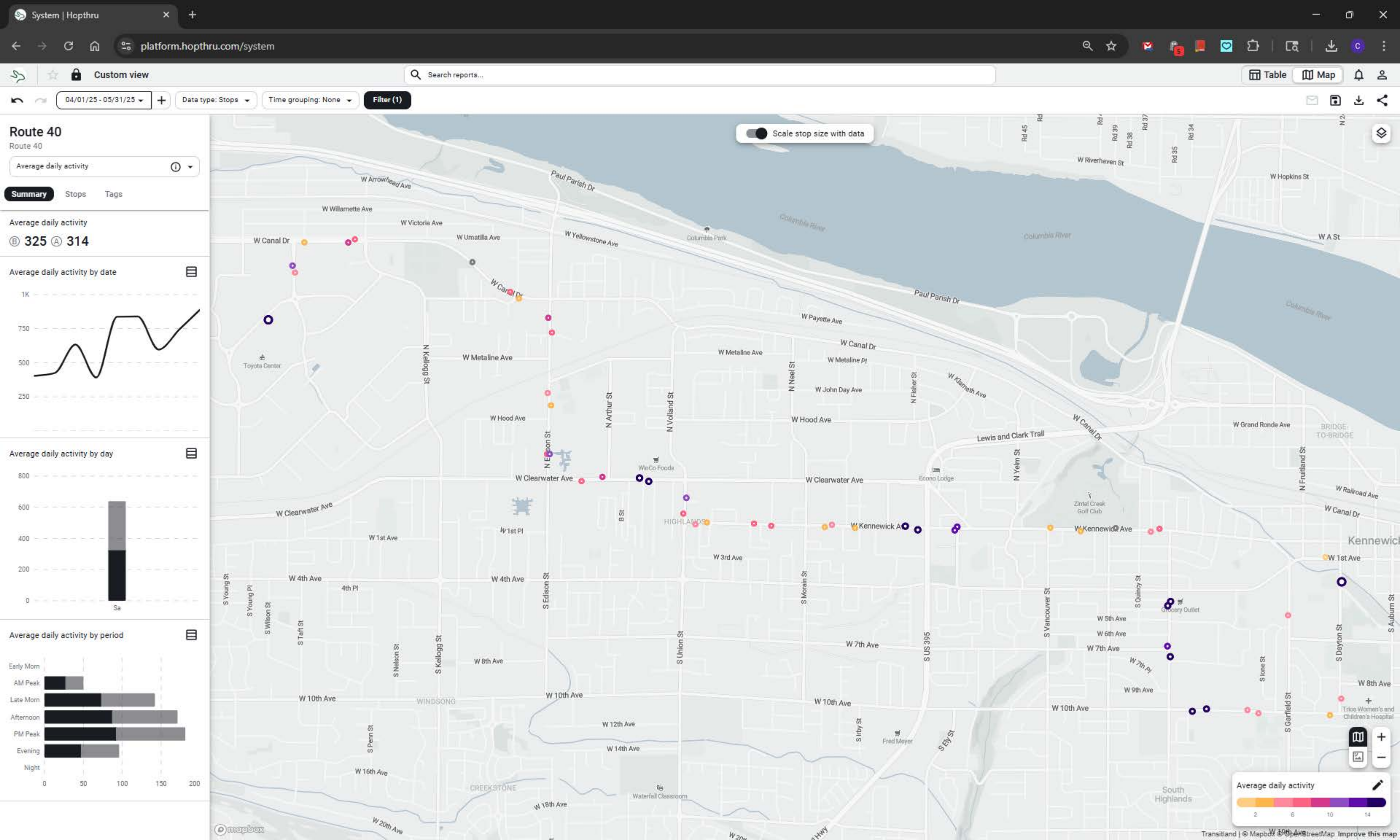












Route 40

Route 40

Average daily activity

Summary

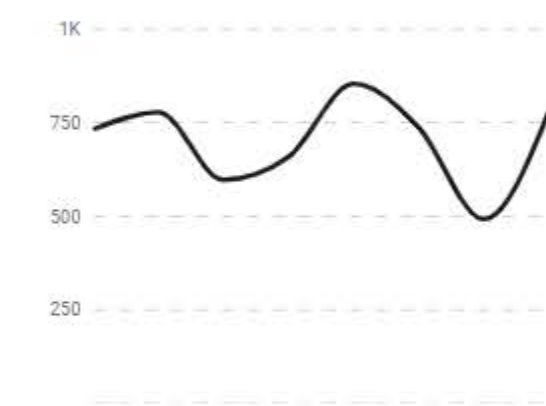
Stops

Tags

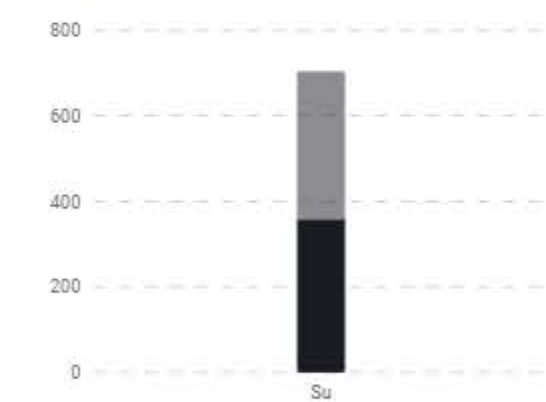
Average daily activity

ⓑ 358 ⓐ 346

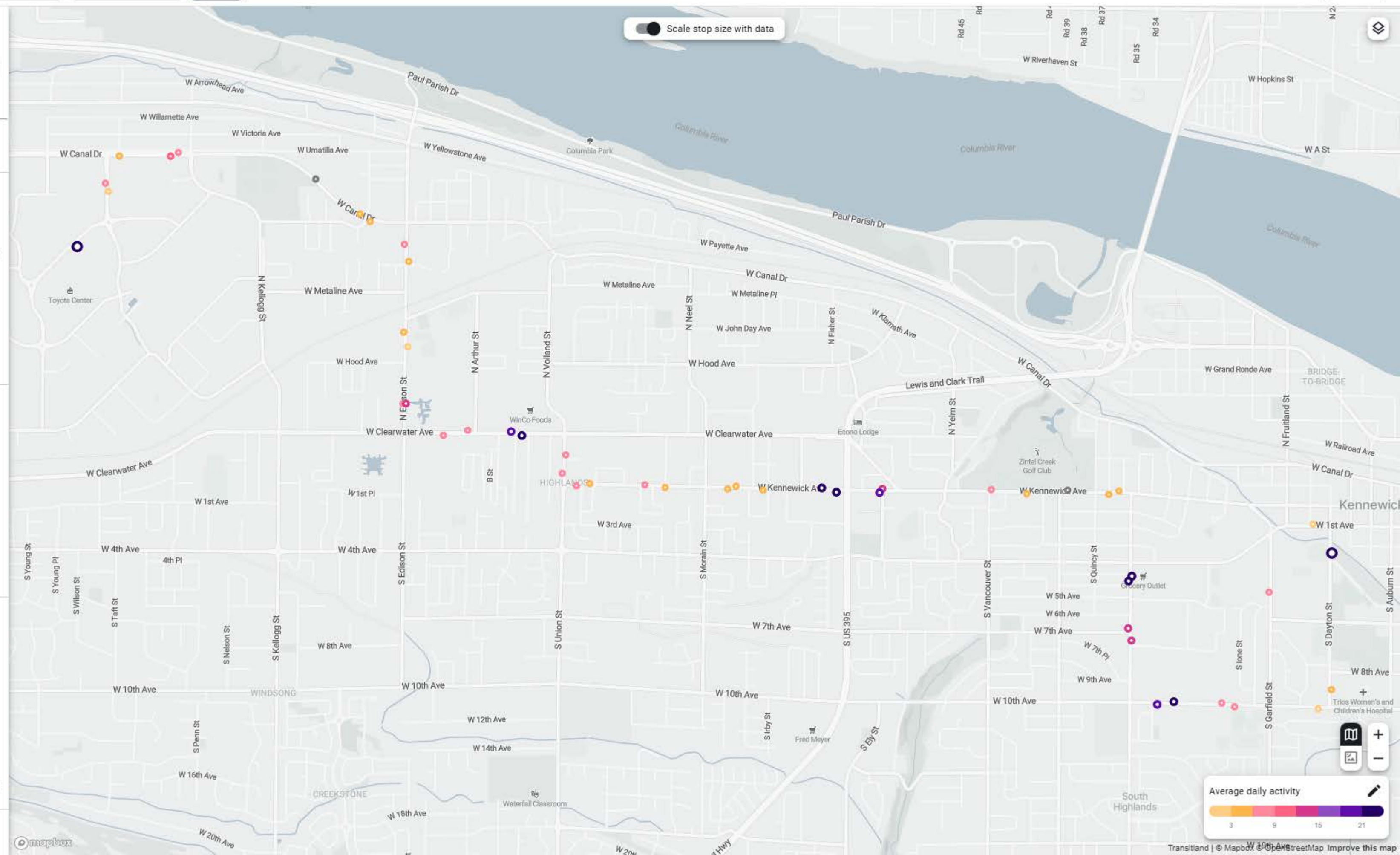
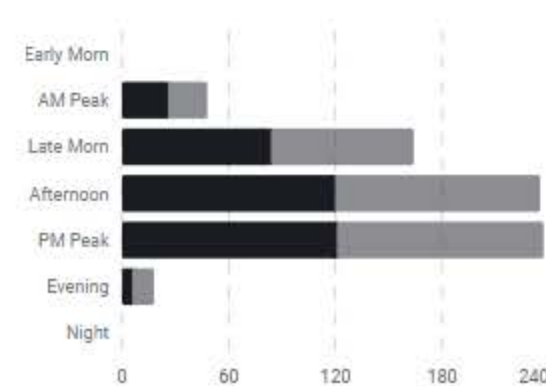
Average daily activity by date



Average daily activity by day

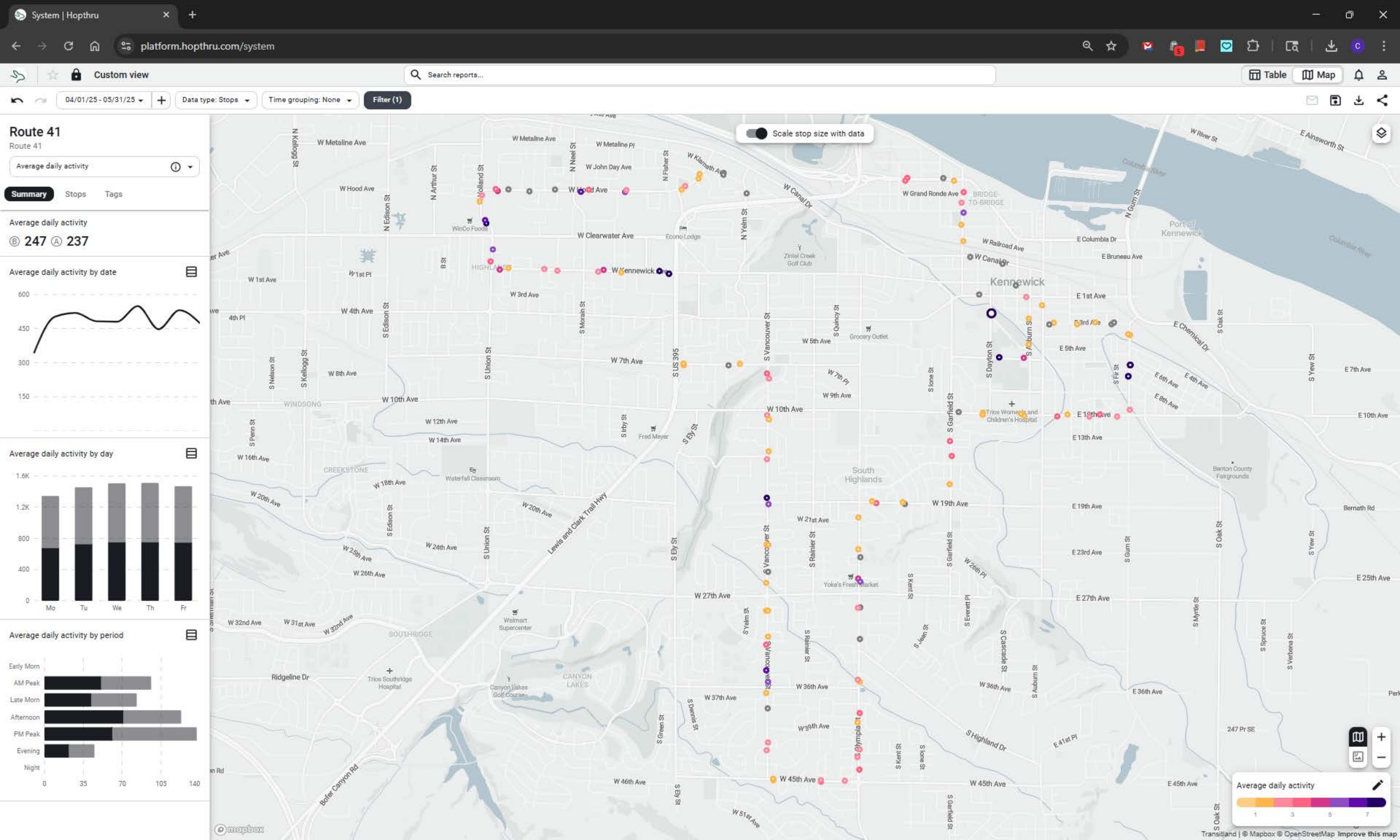


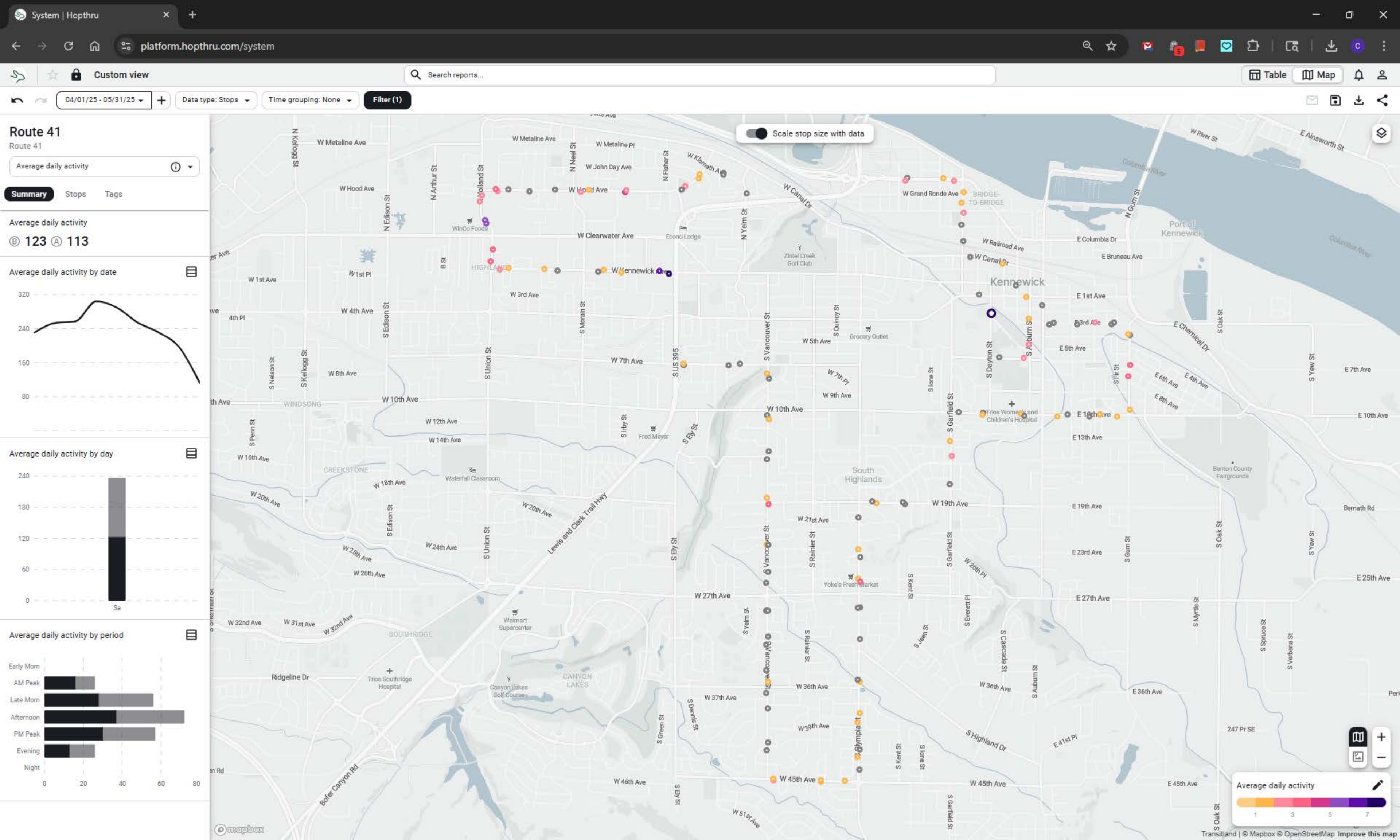
Average daily activity by period

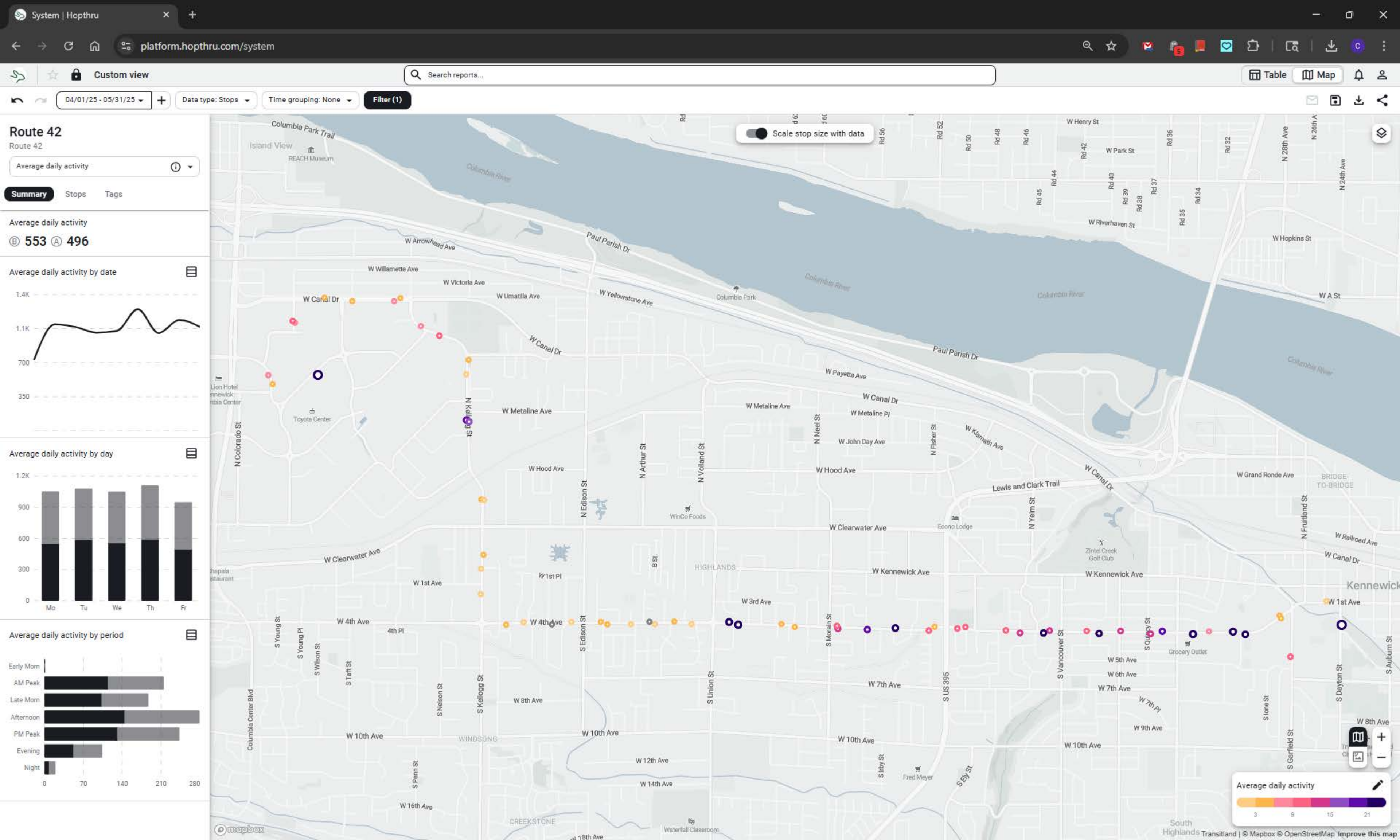


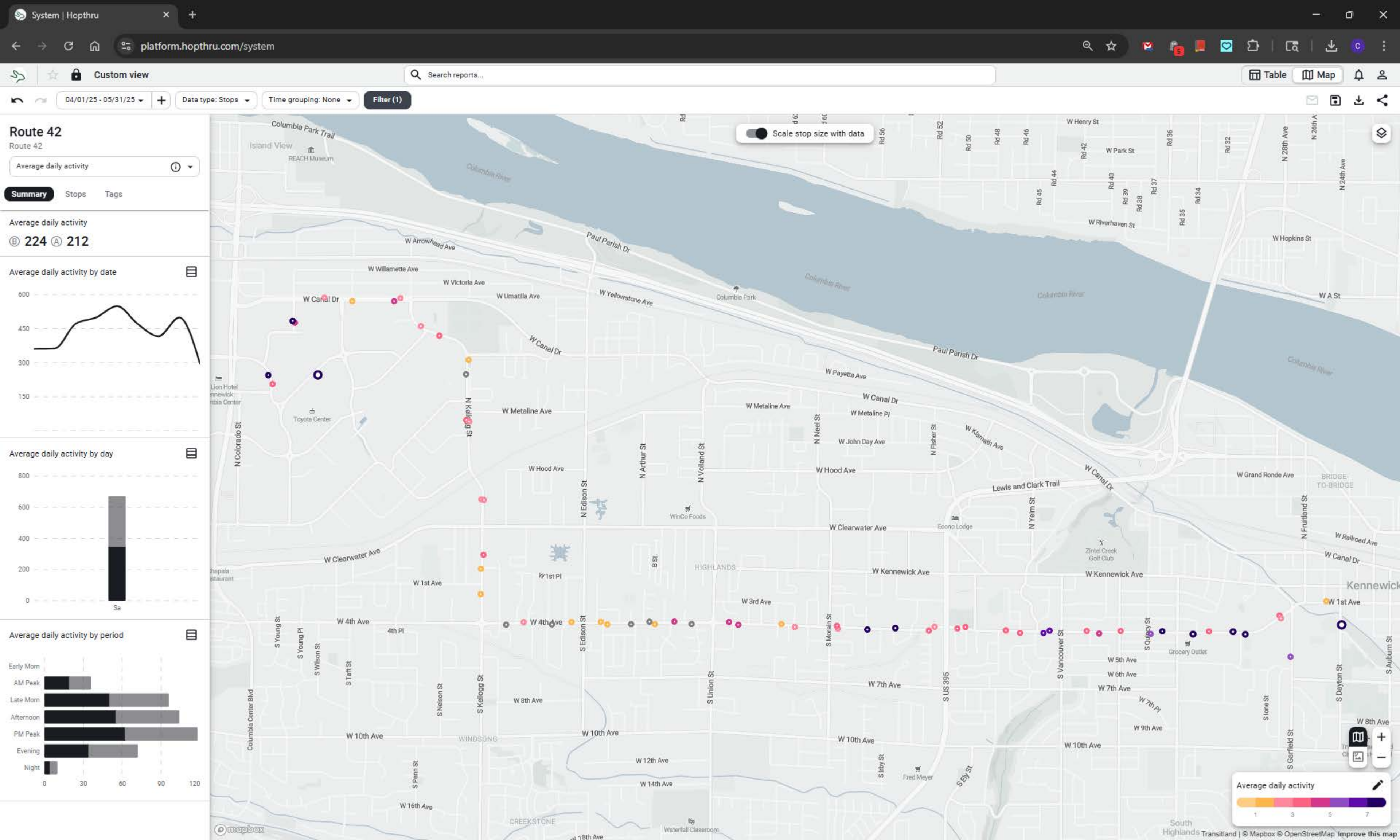
Average daily activity

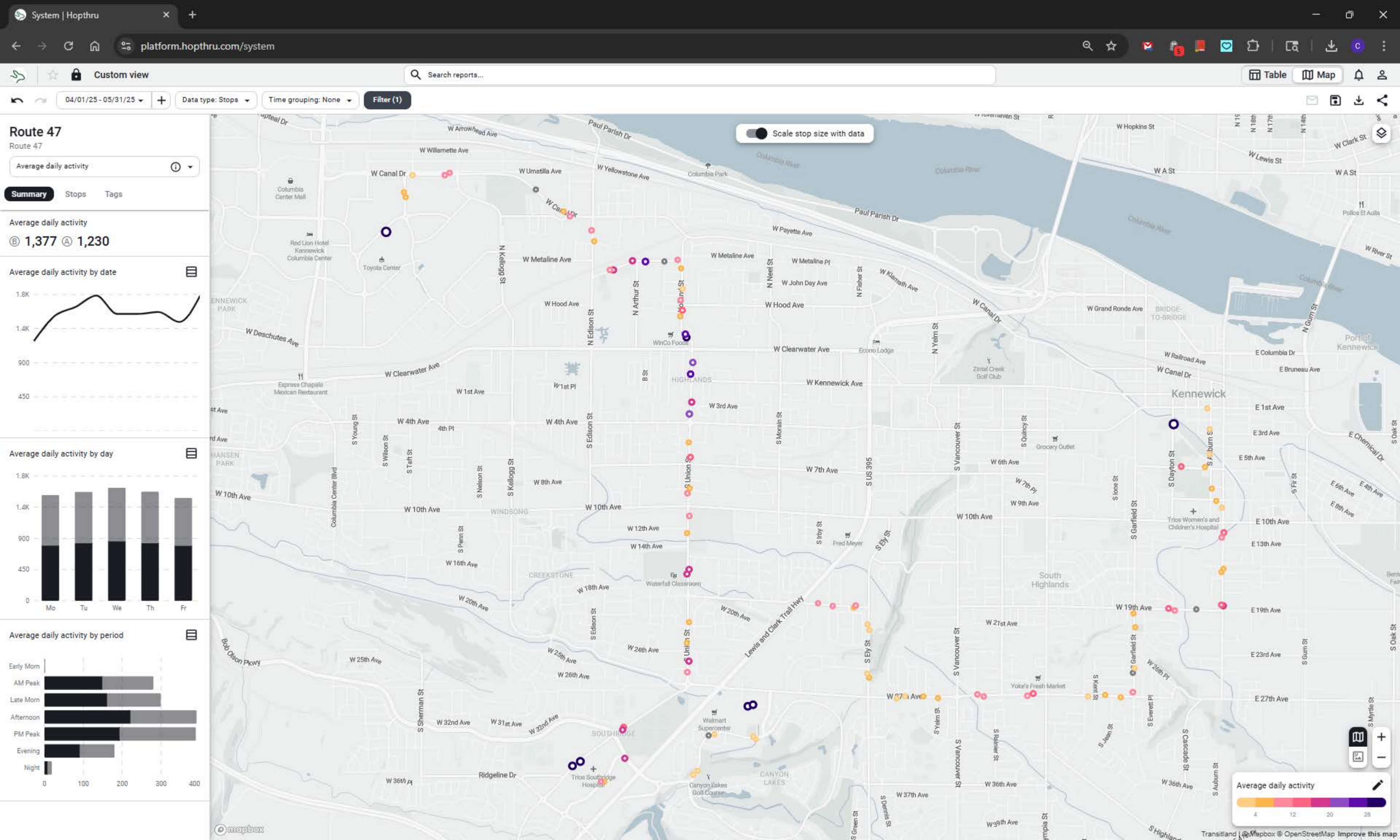


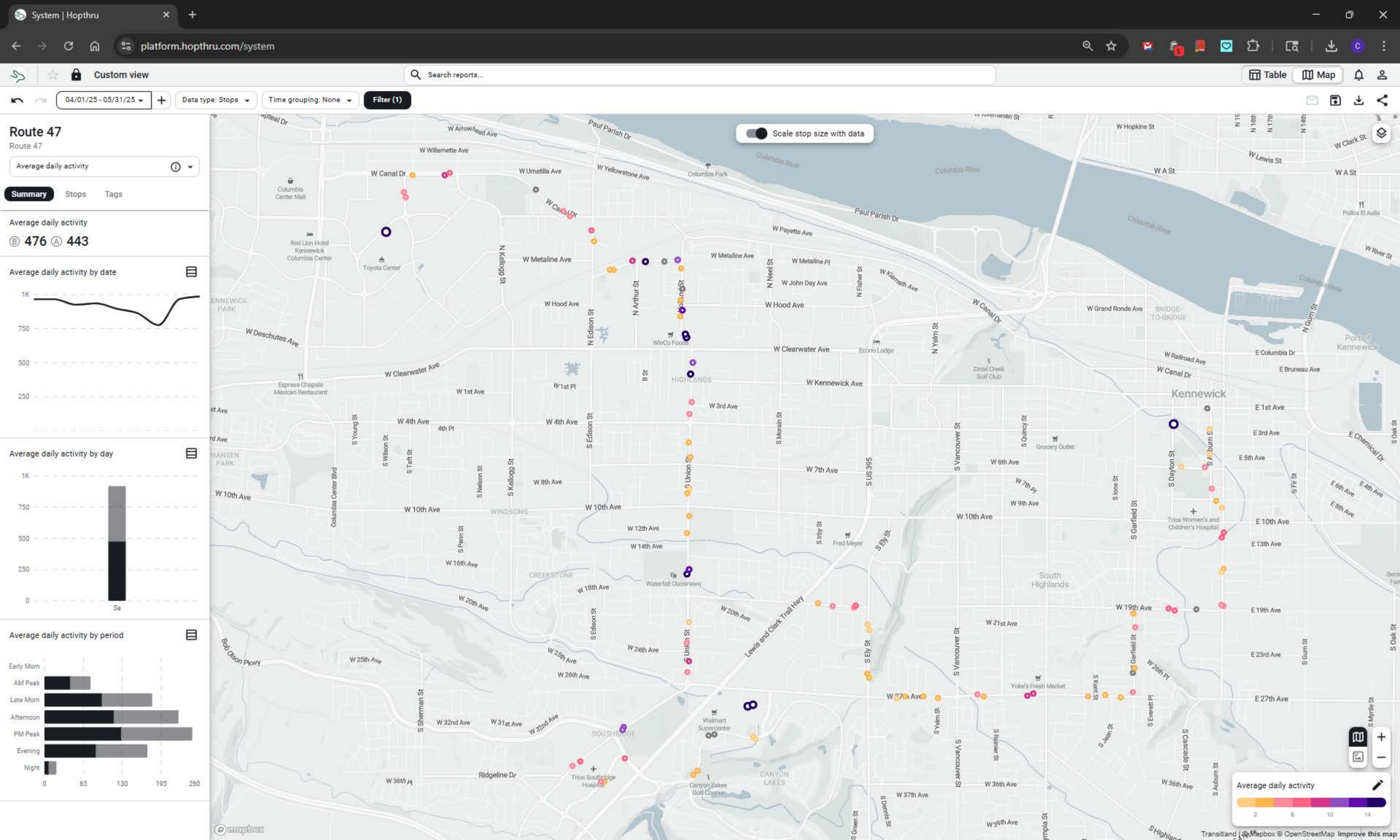


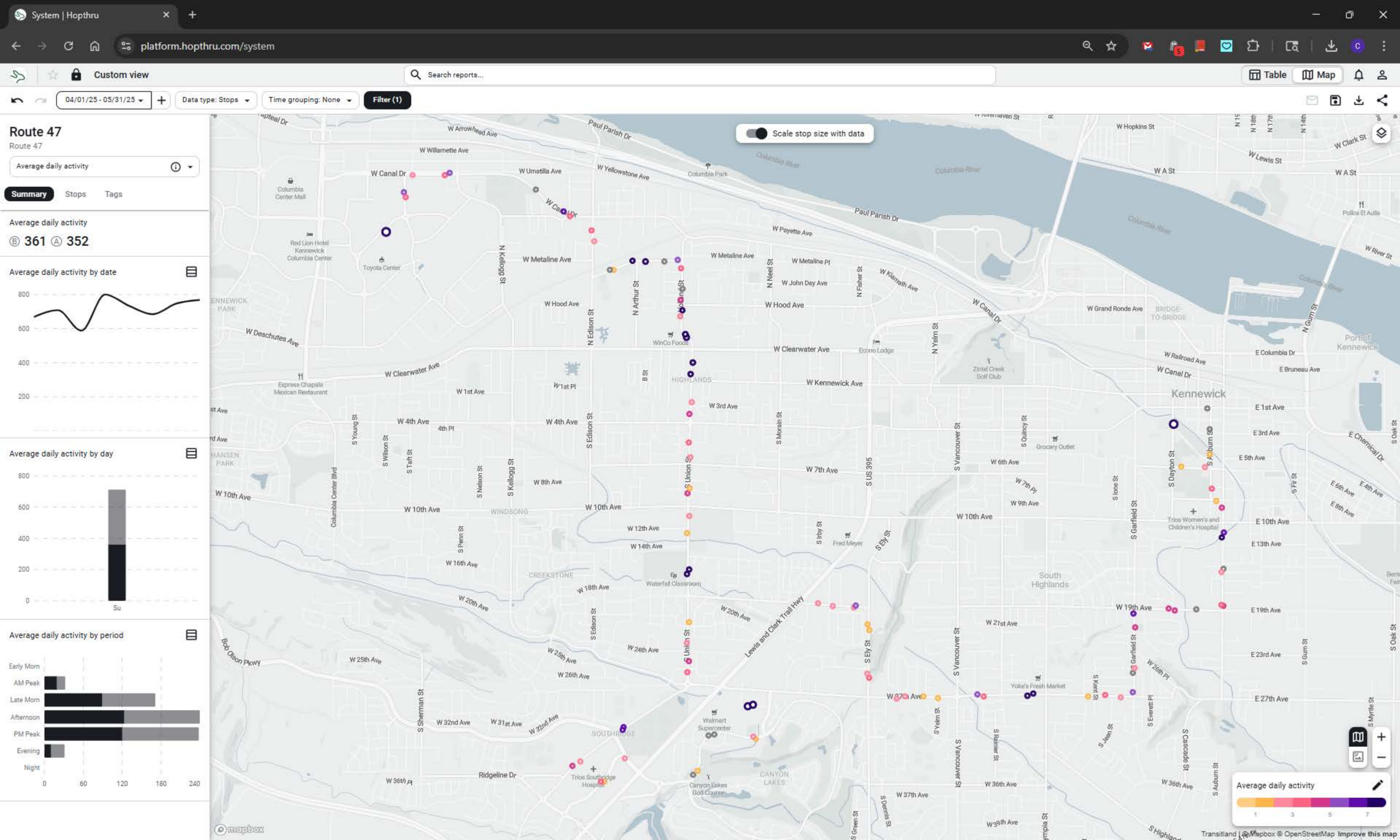


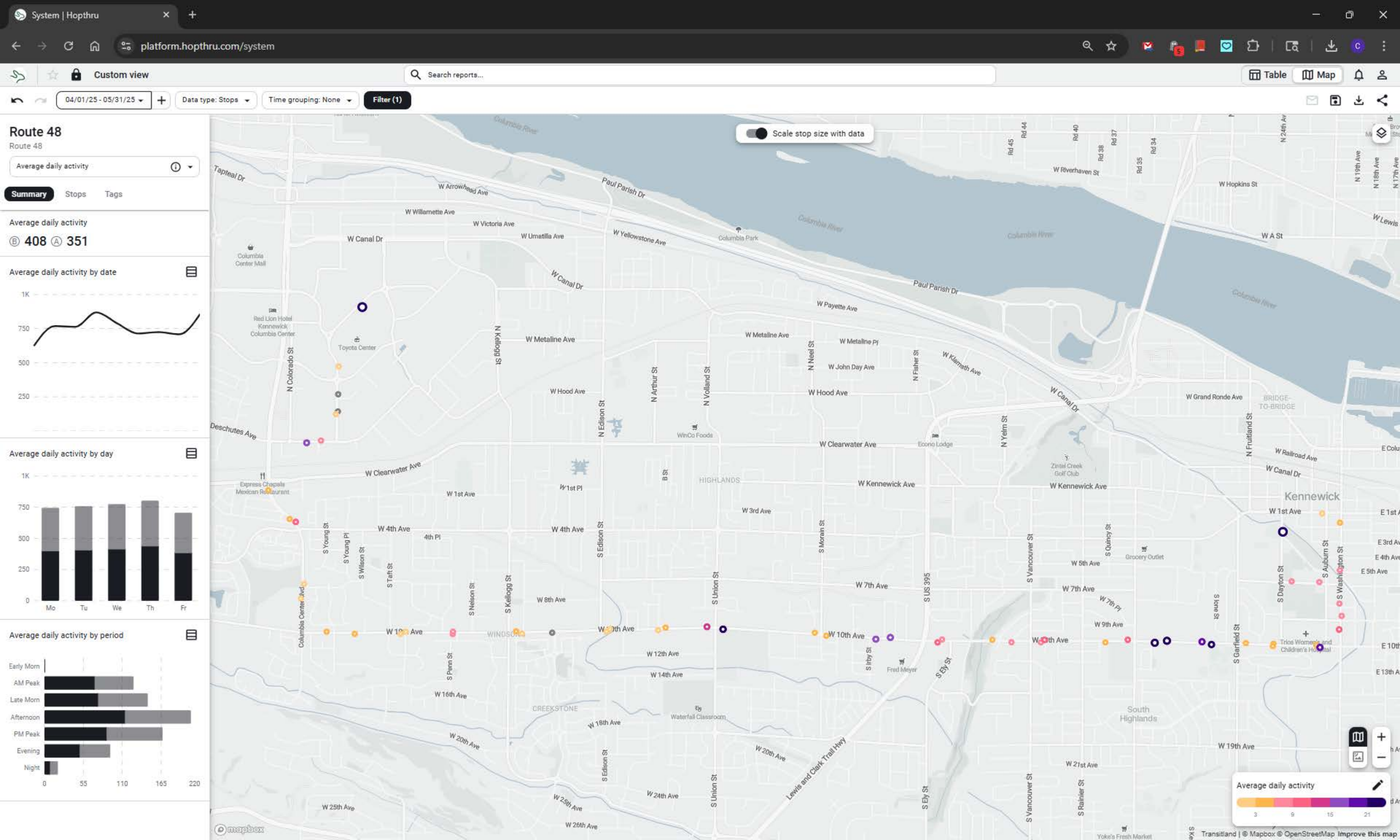


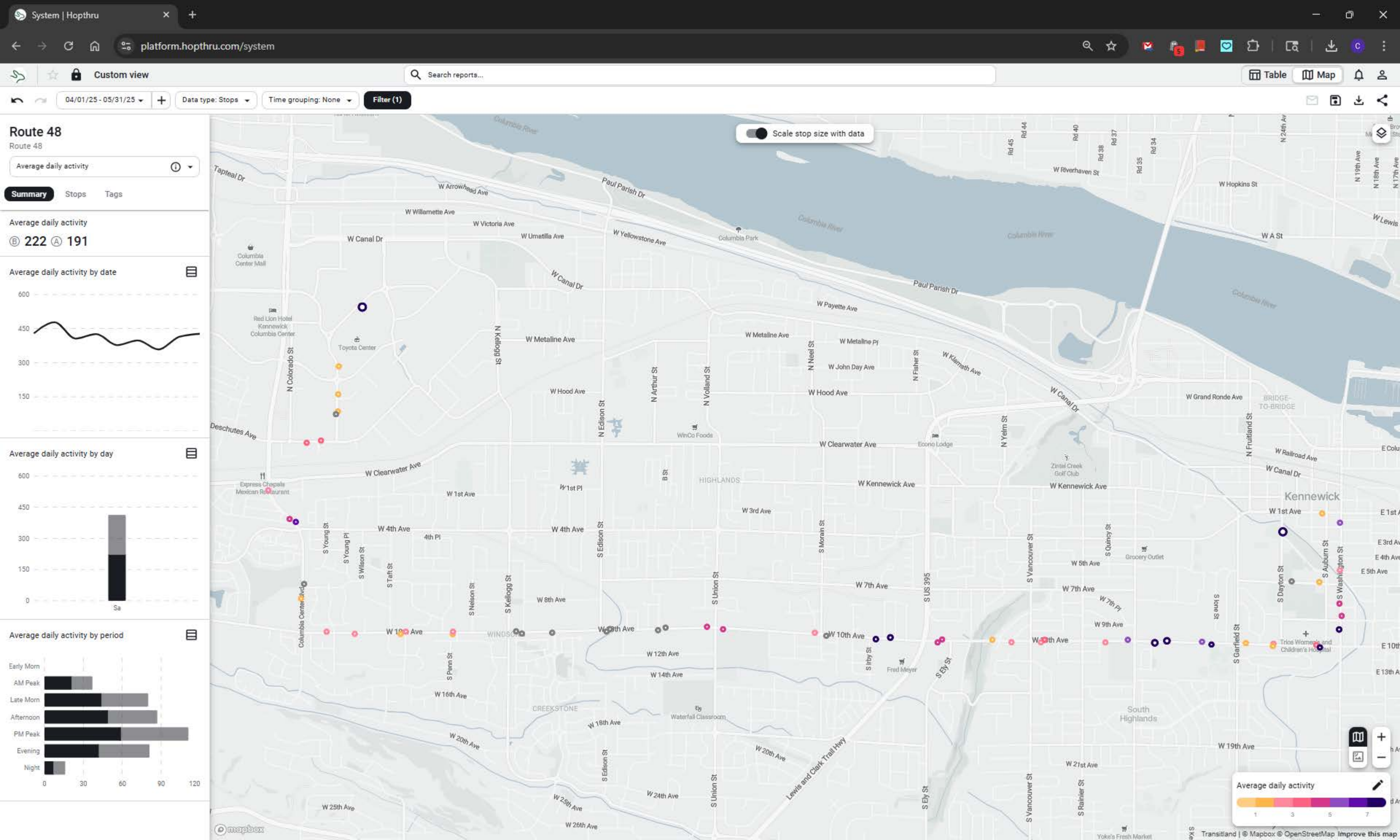


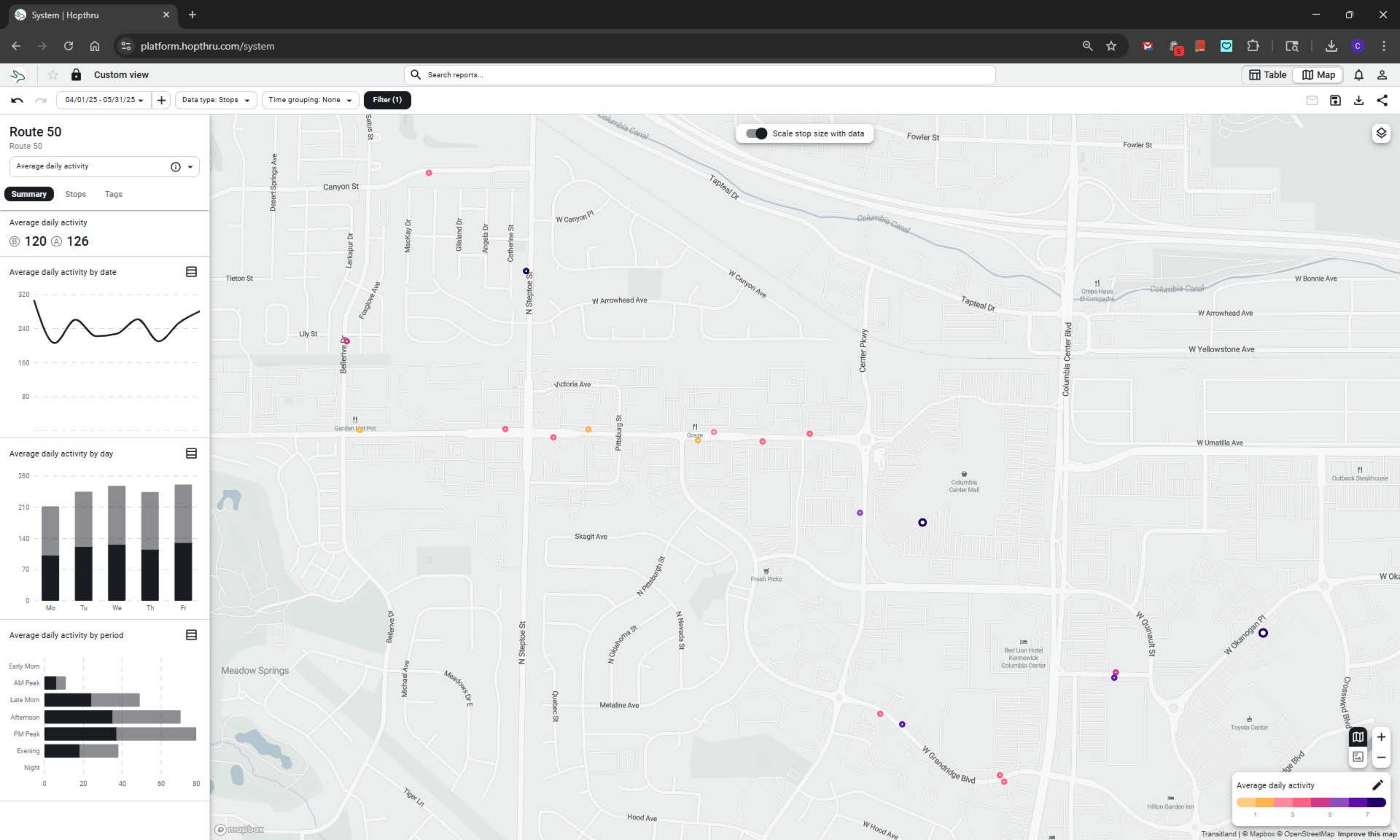


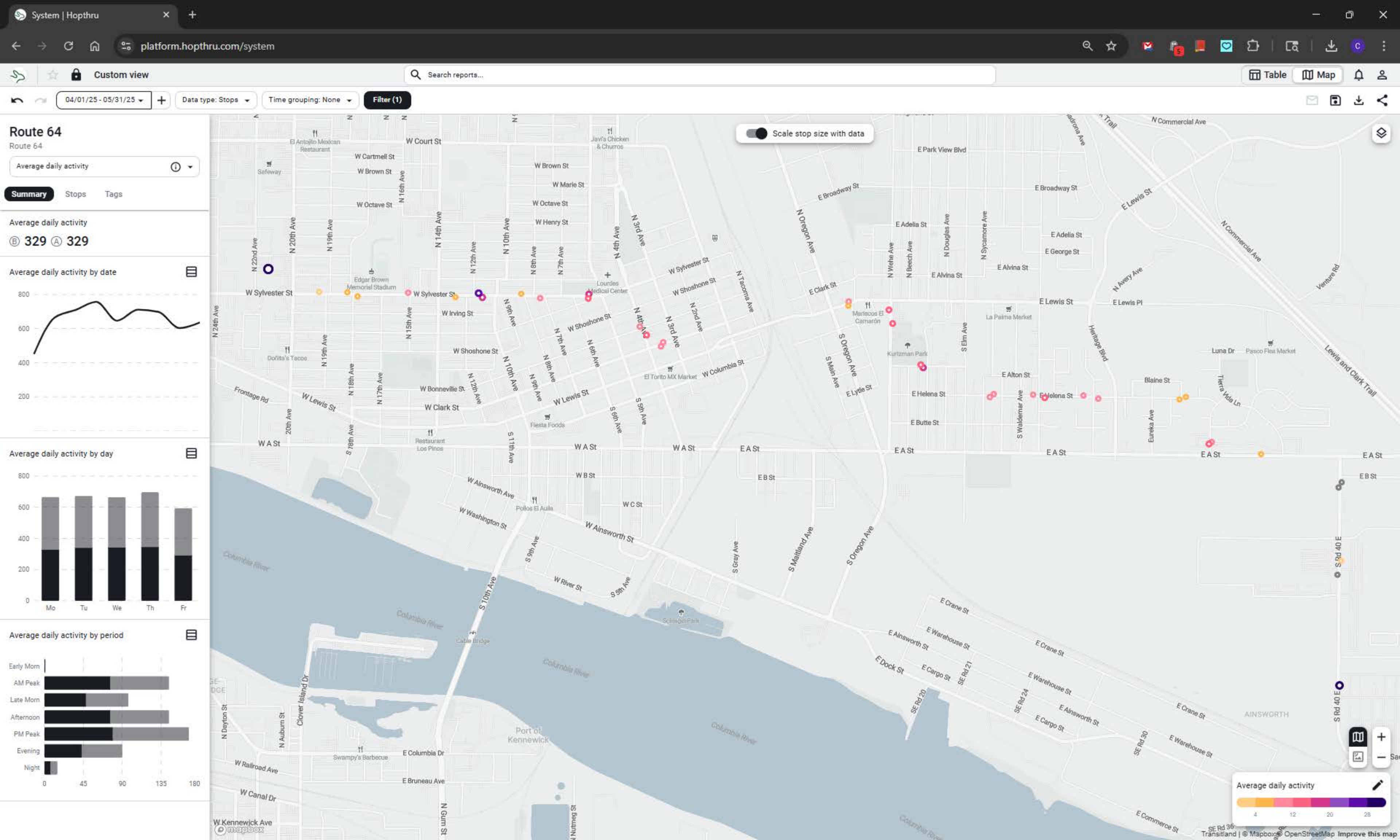


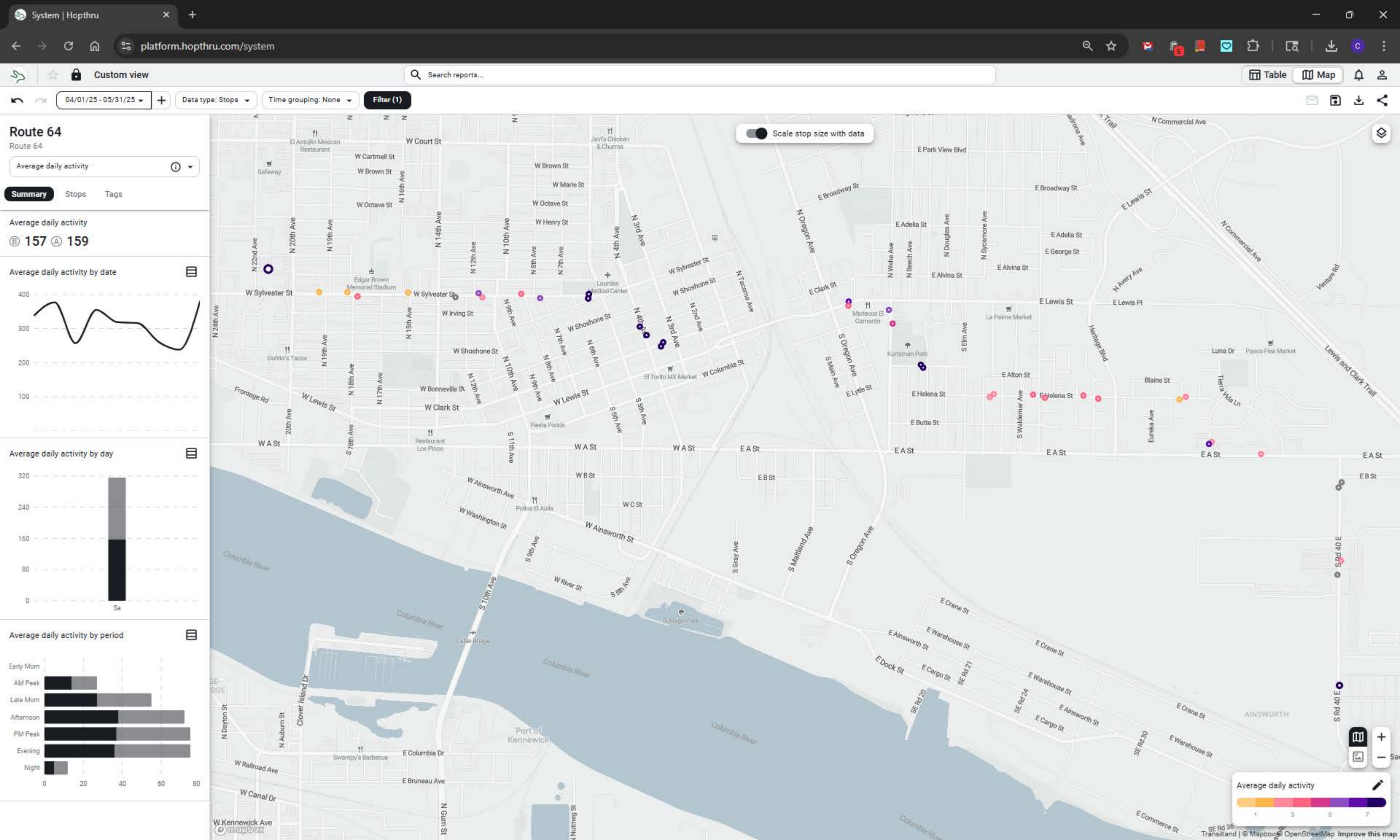


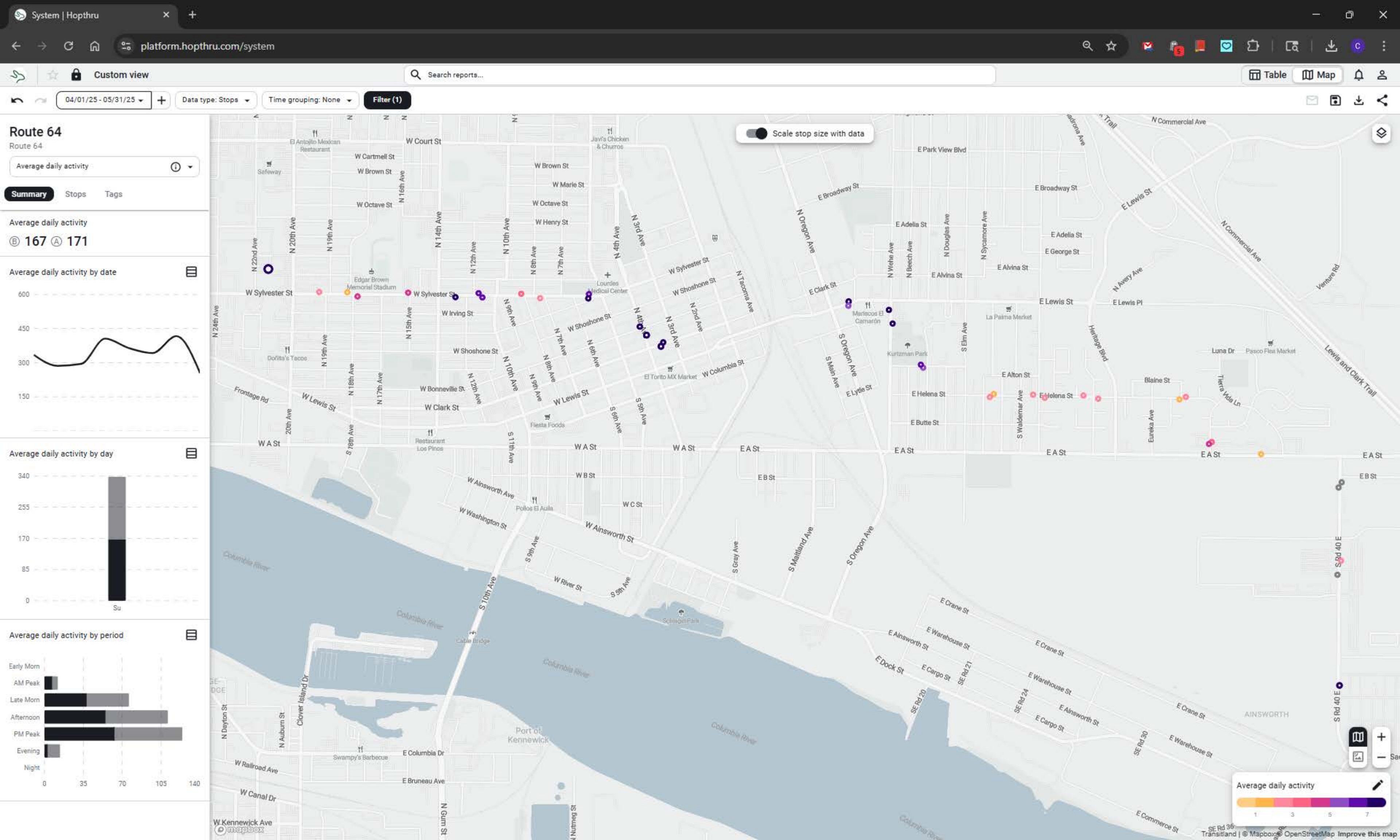


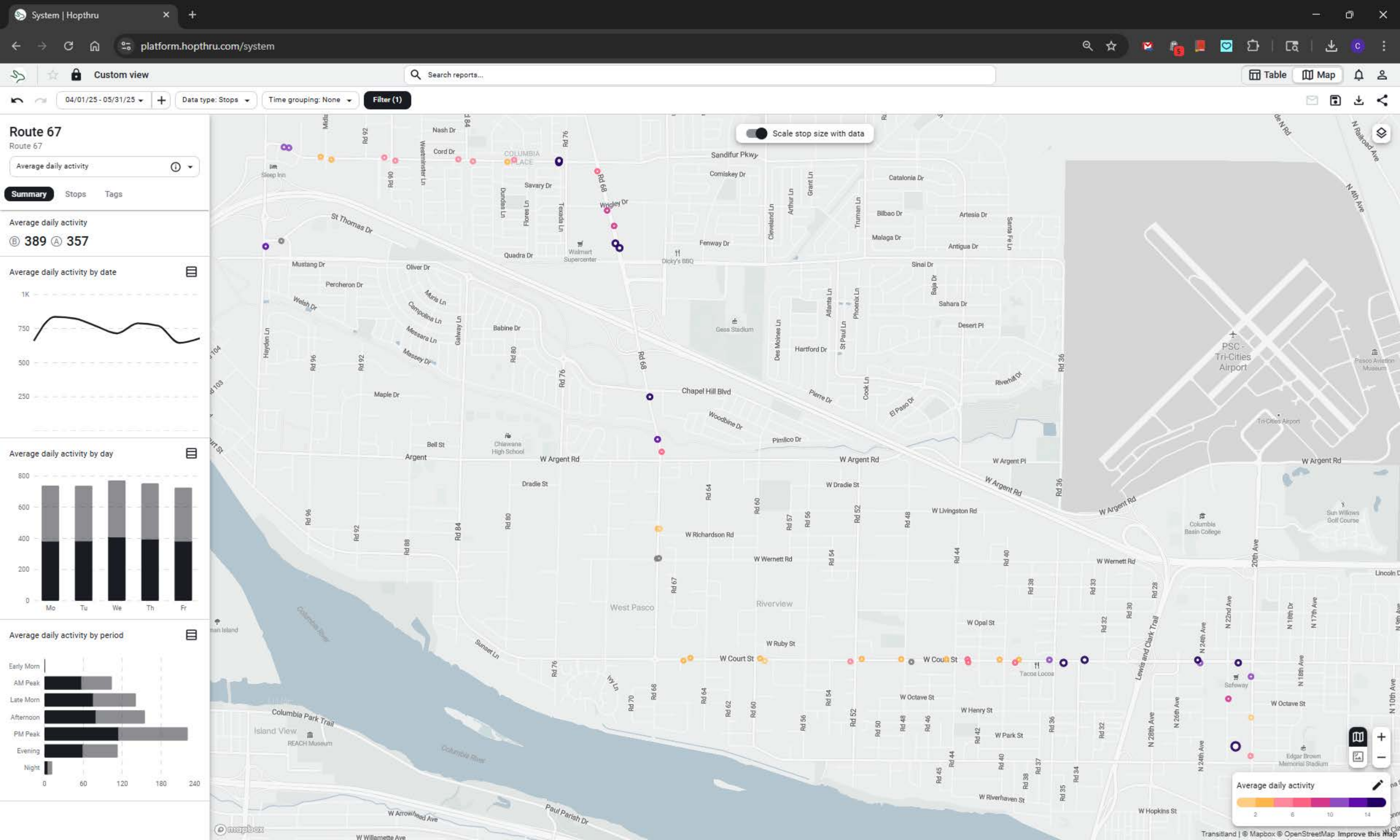


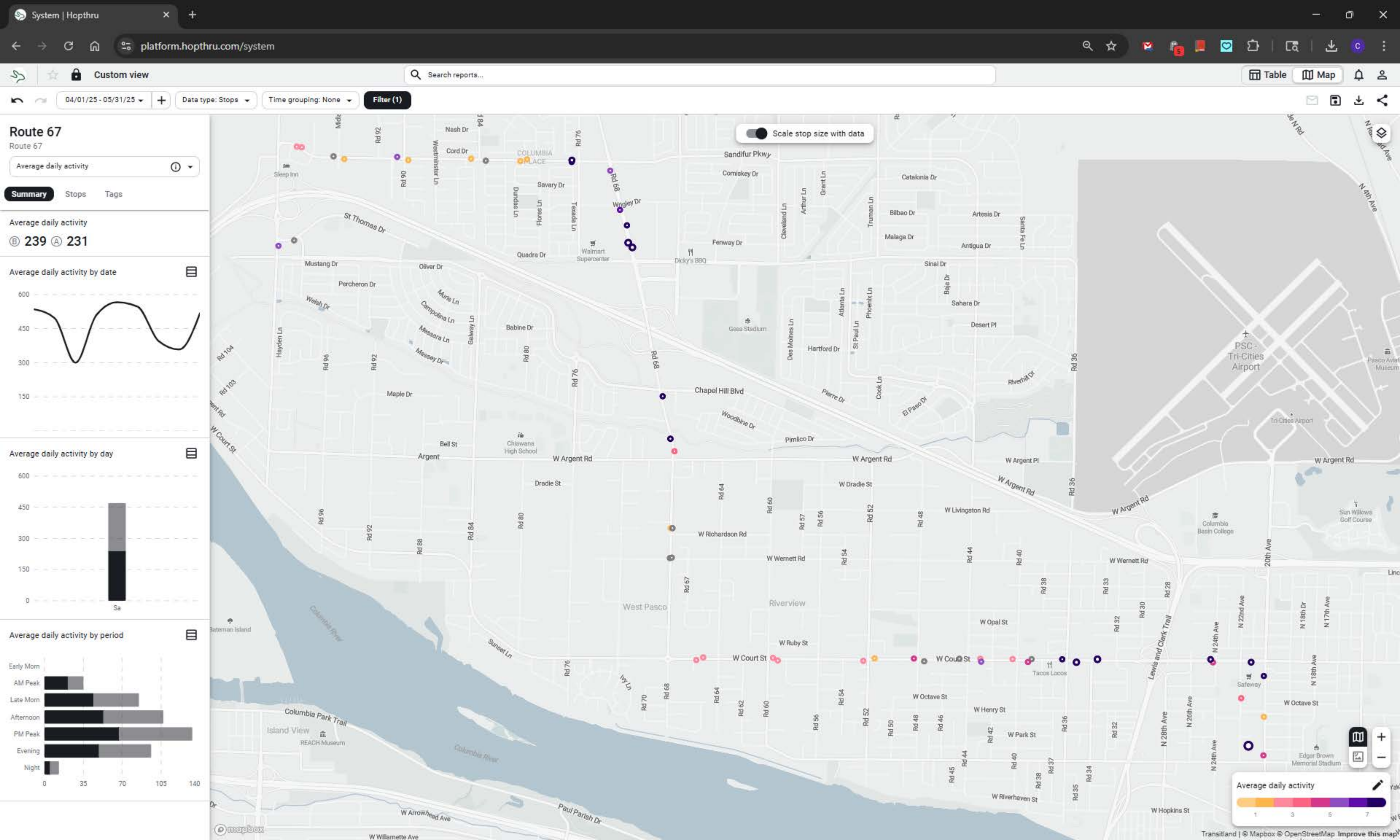


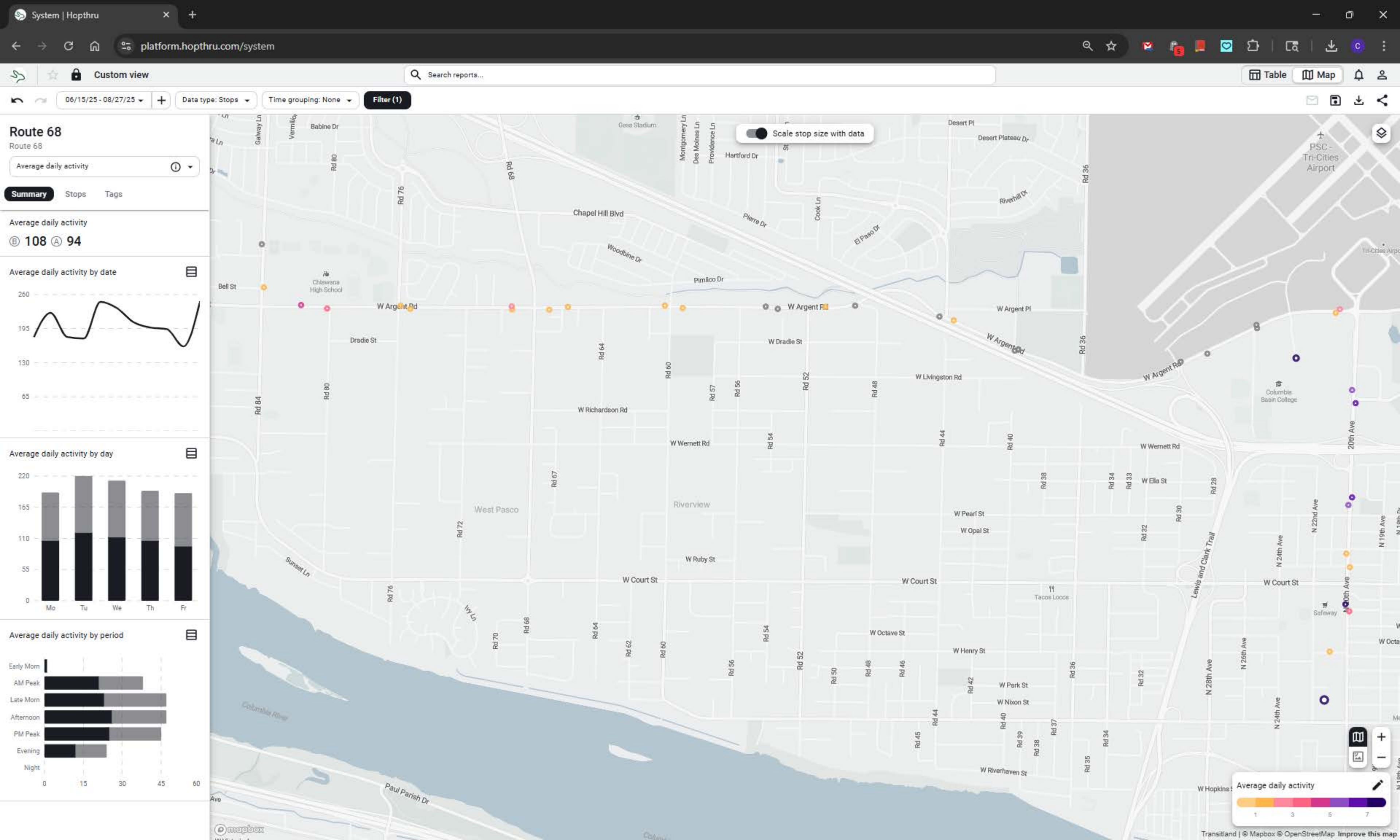


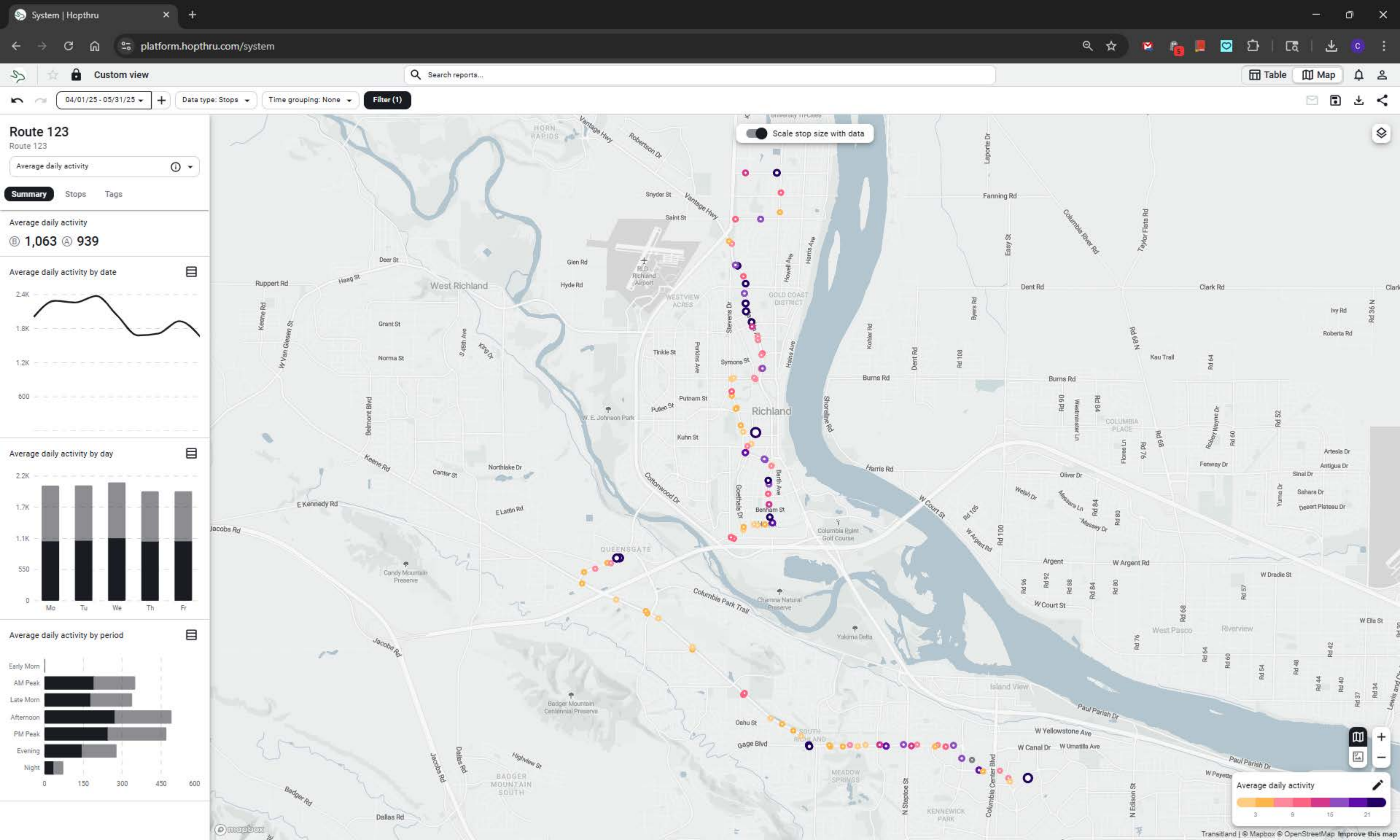


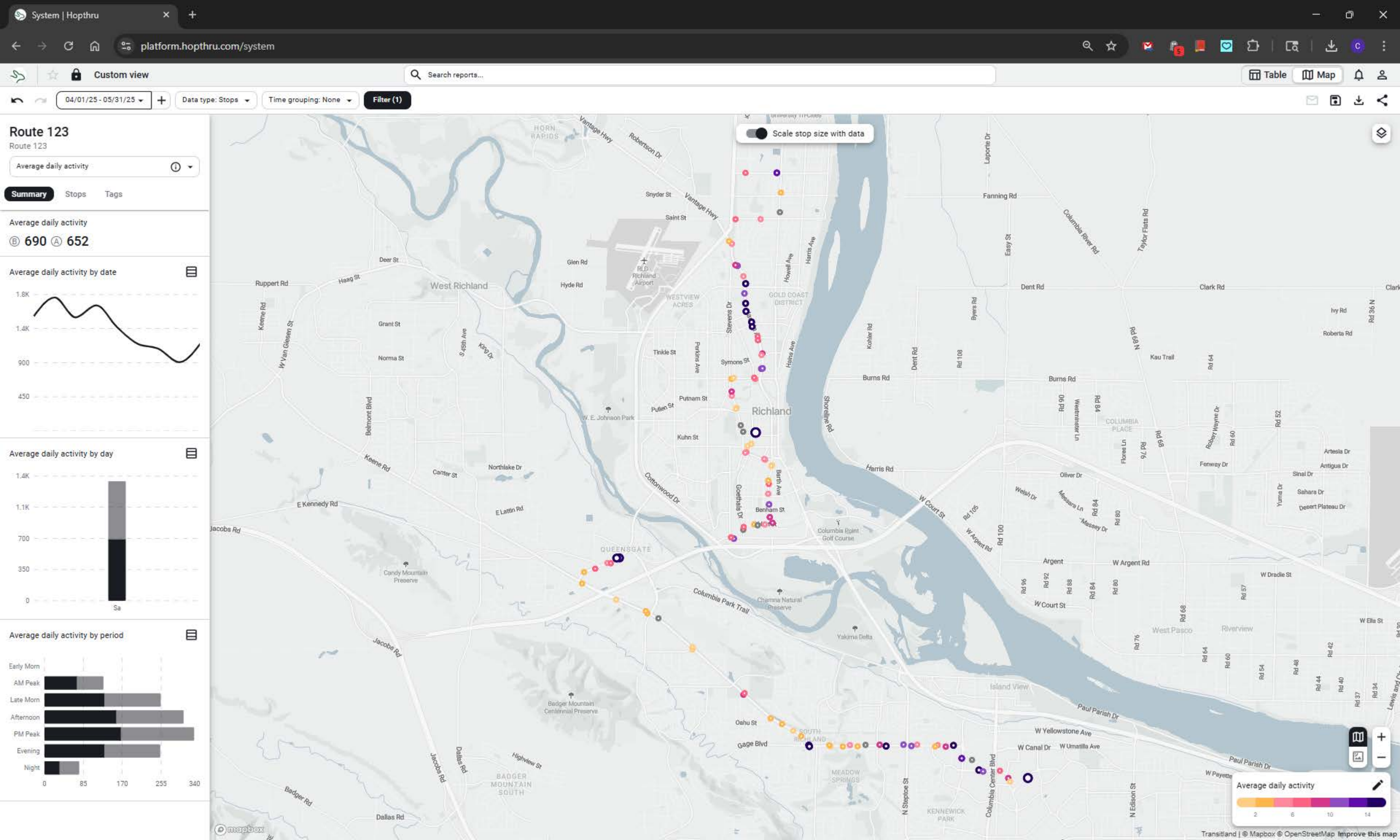


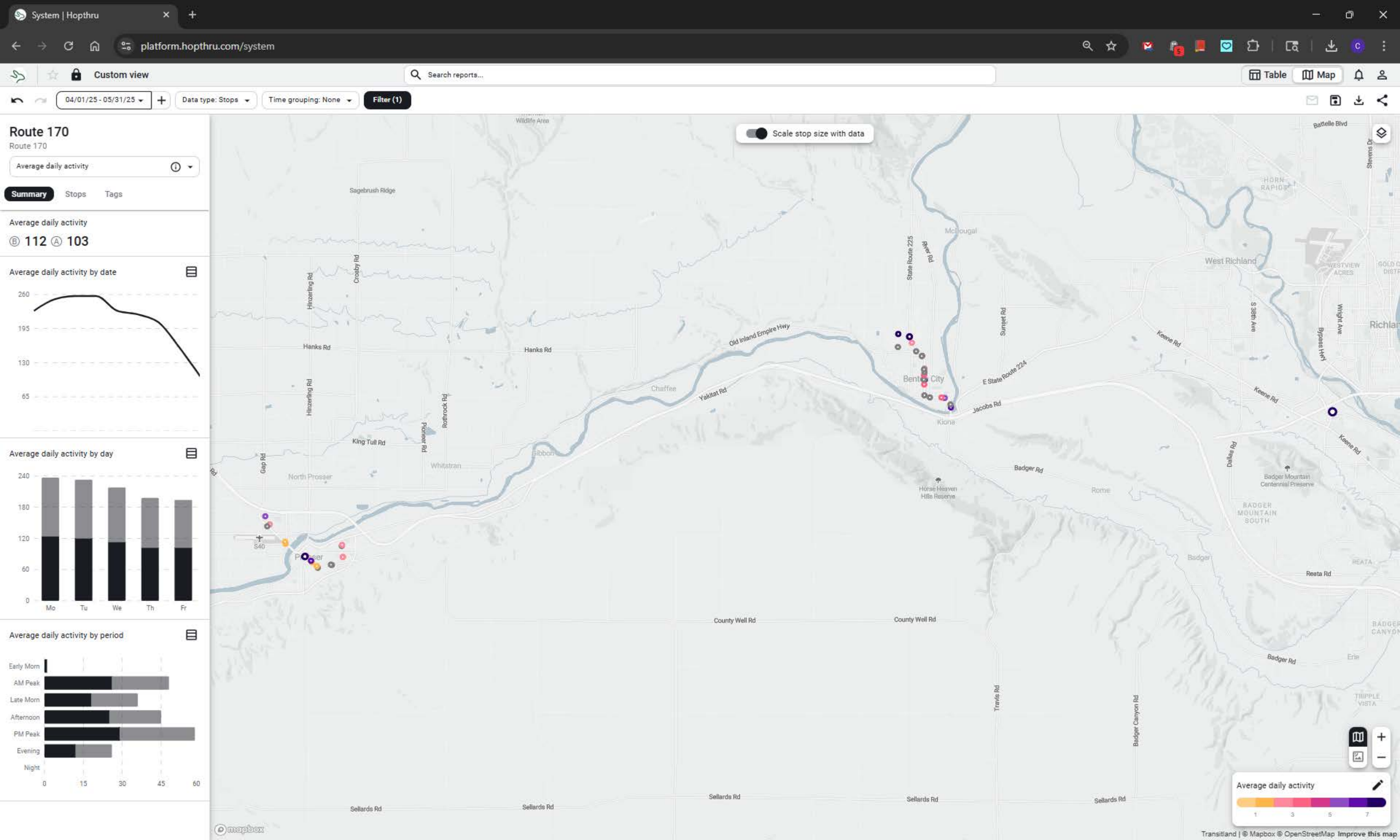


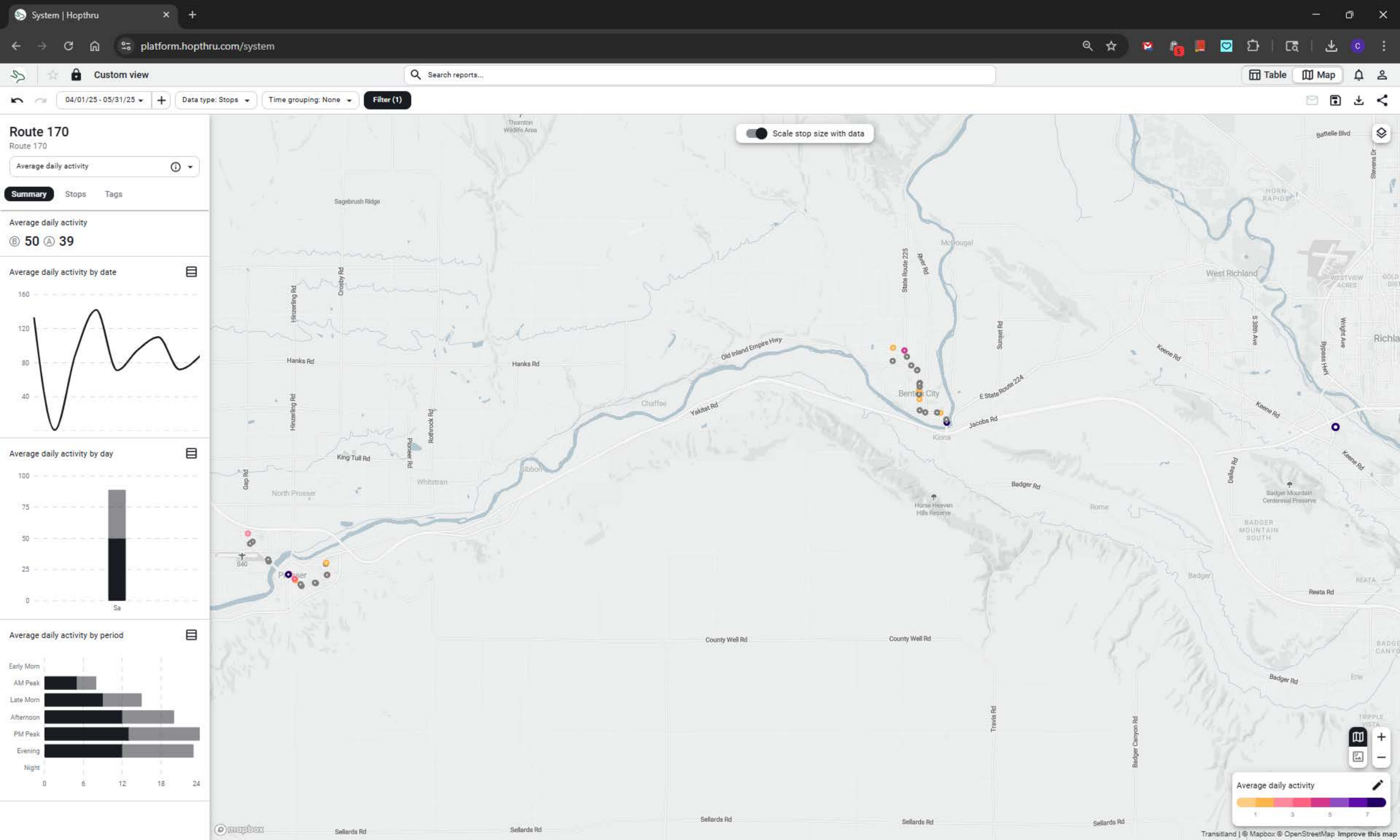


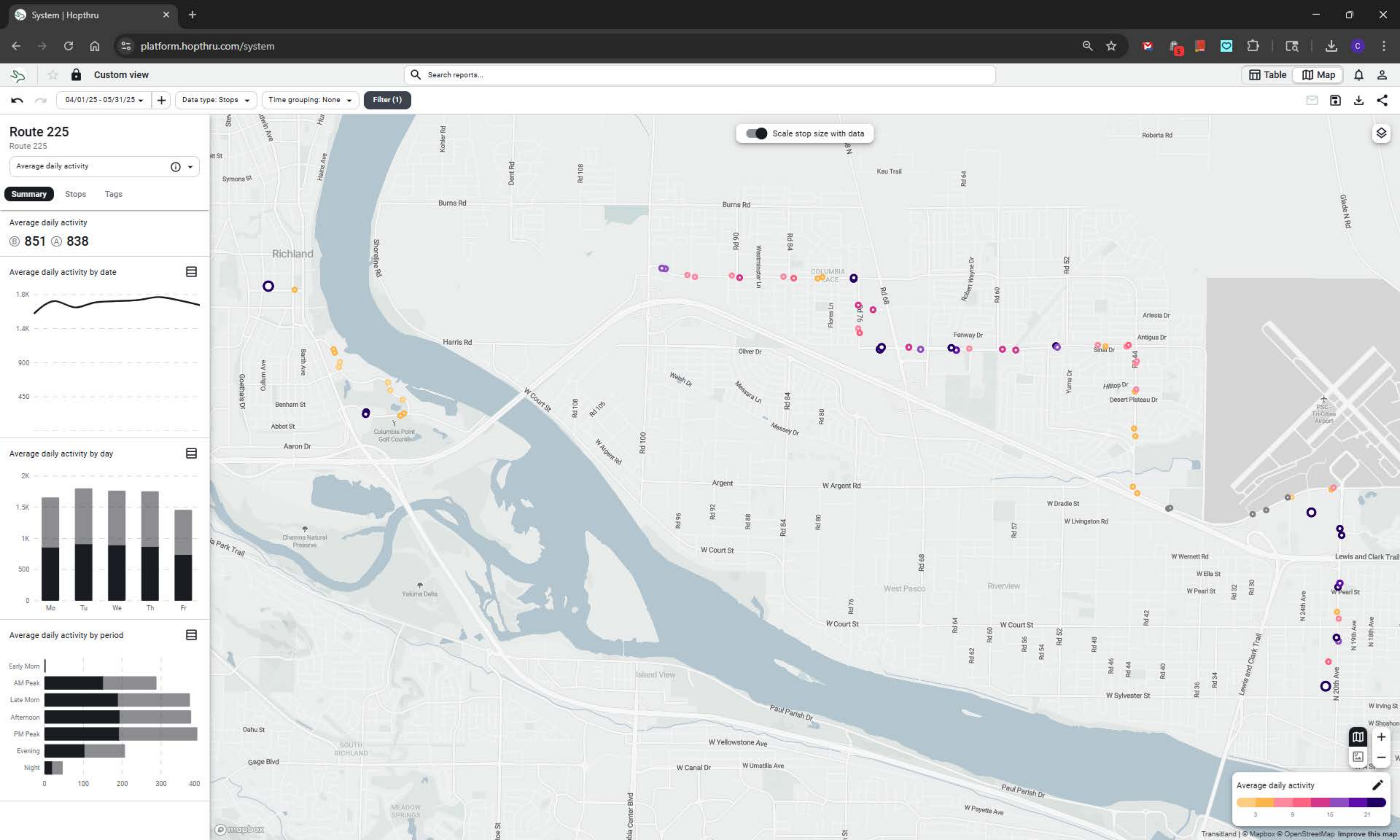


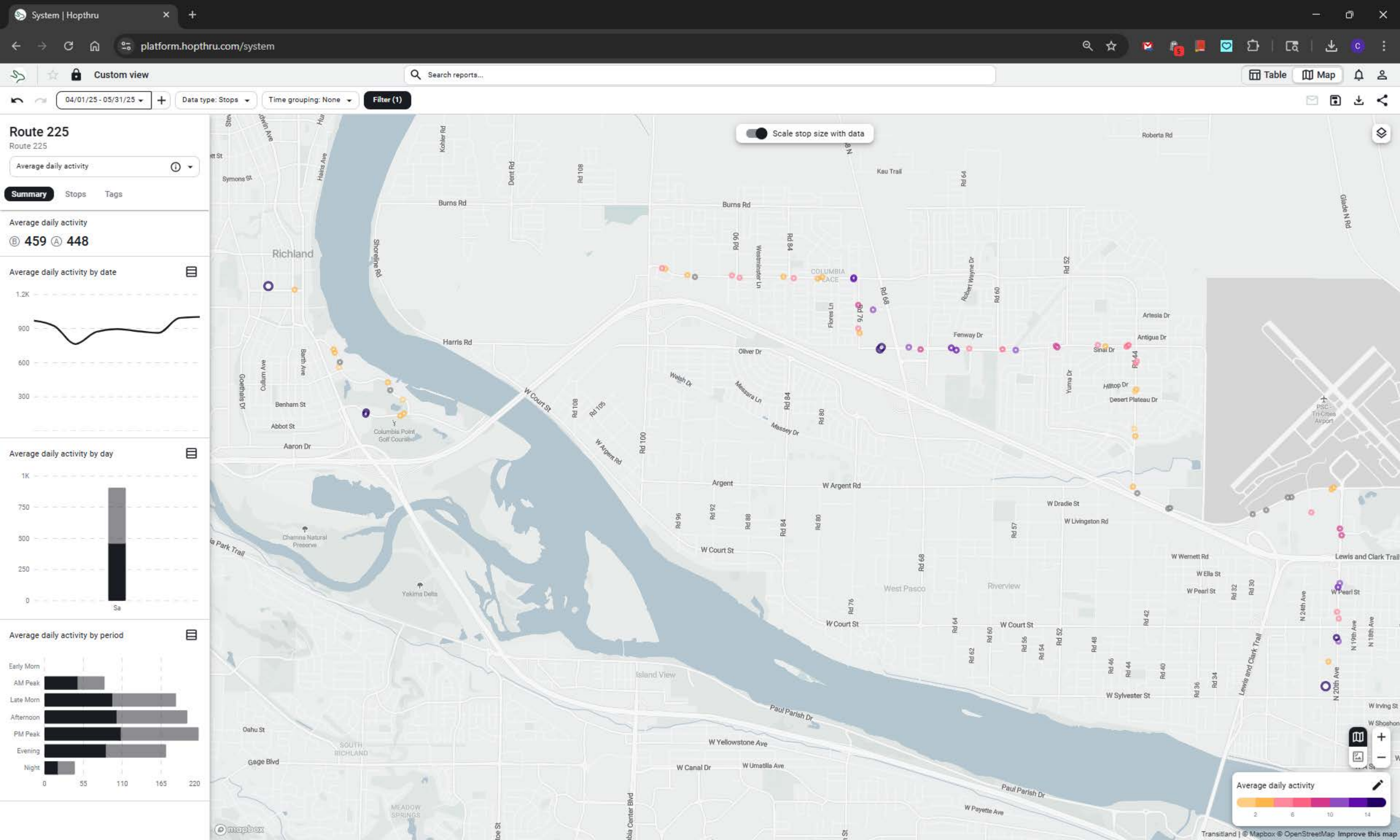












Route 225

Route 225

Average daily activity

Summary

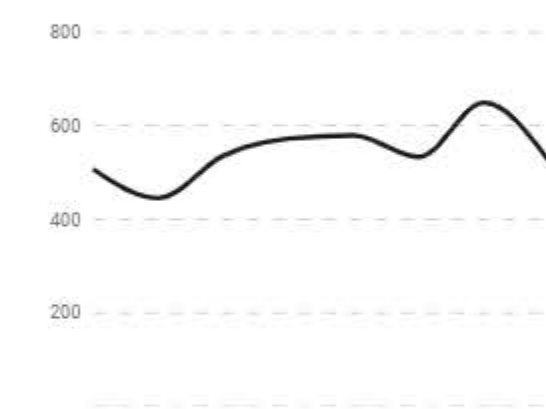
Stops

Tags

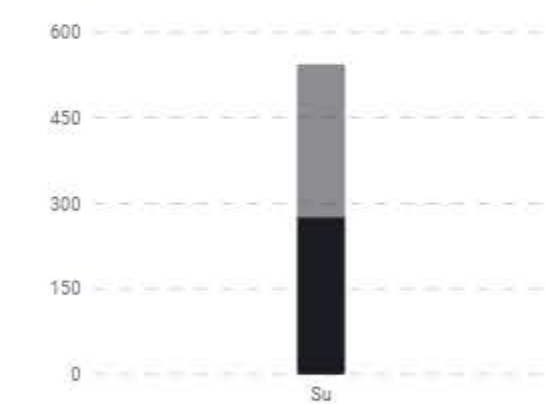
Average daily activity

Ⓐ 268 Ⓑ 276

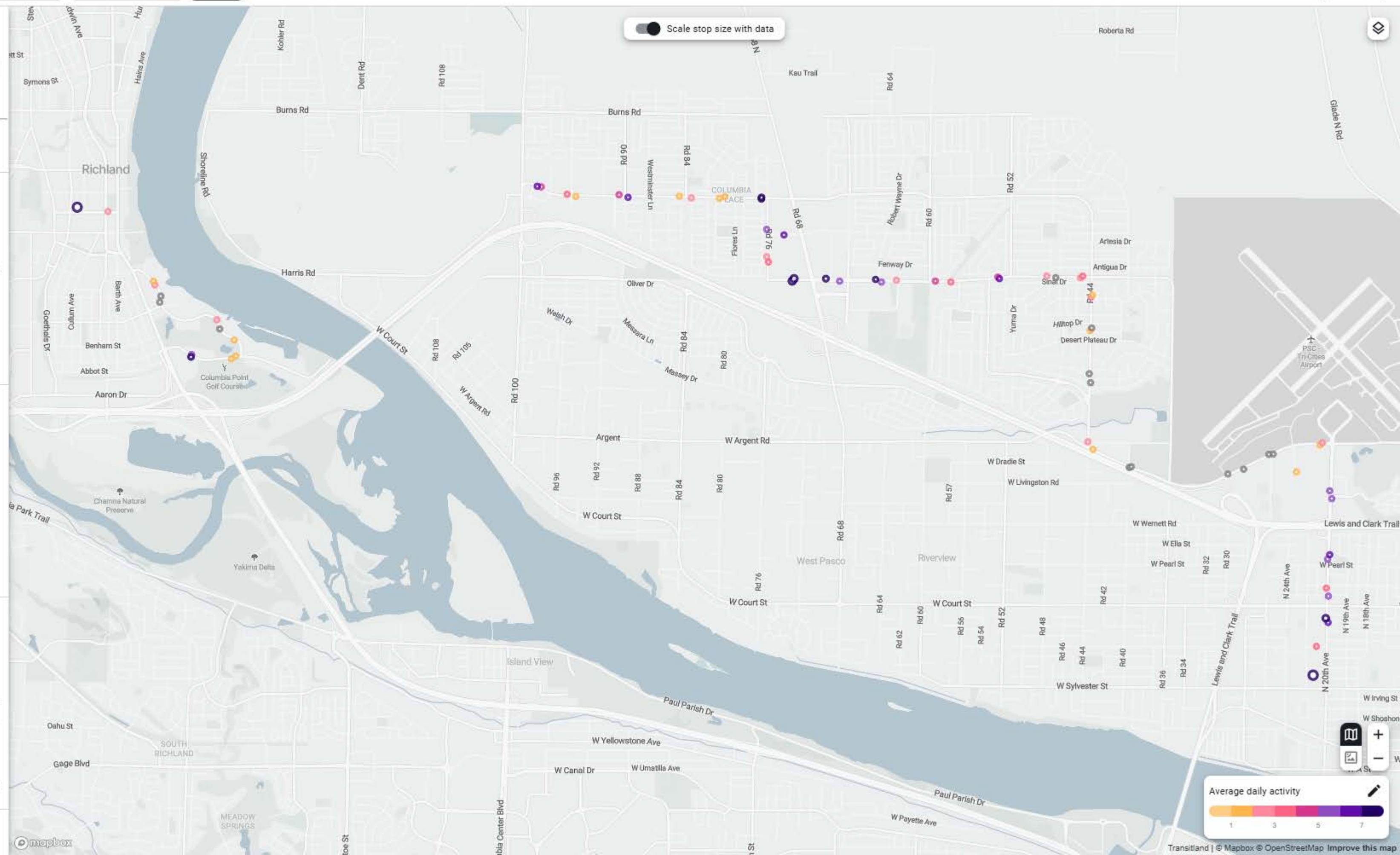
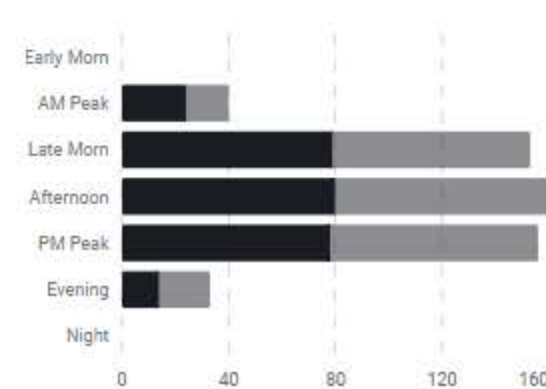
Average daily activity by date



Average daily activity by day

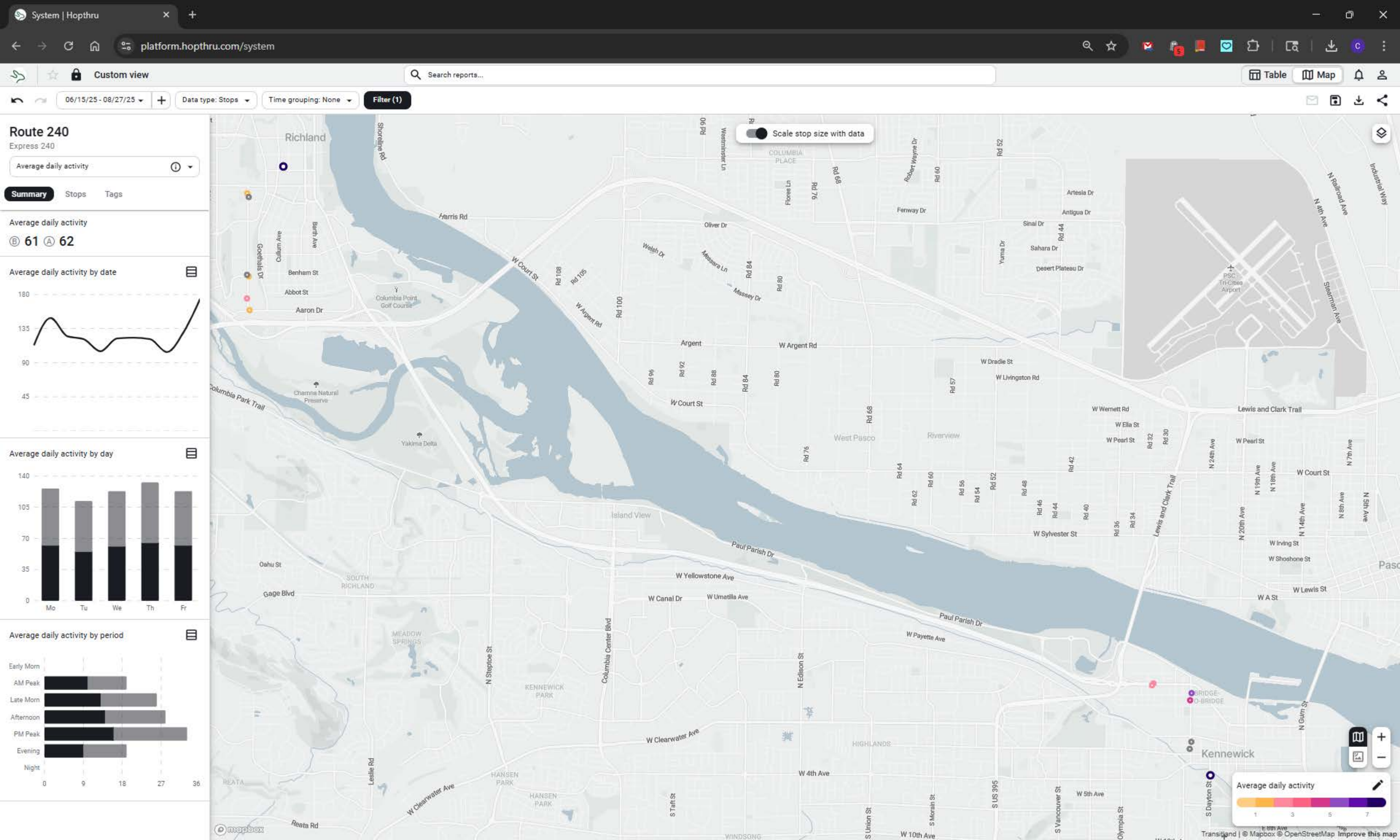


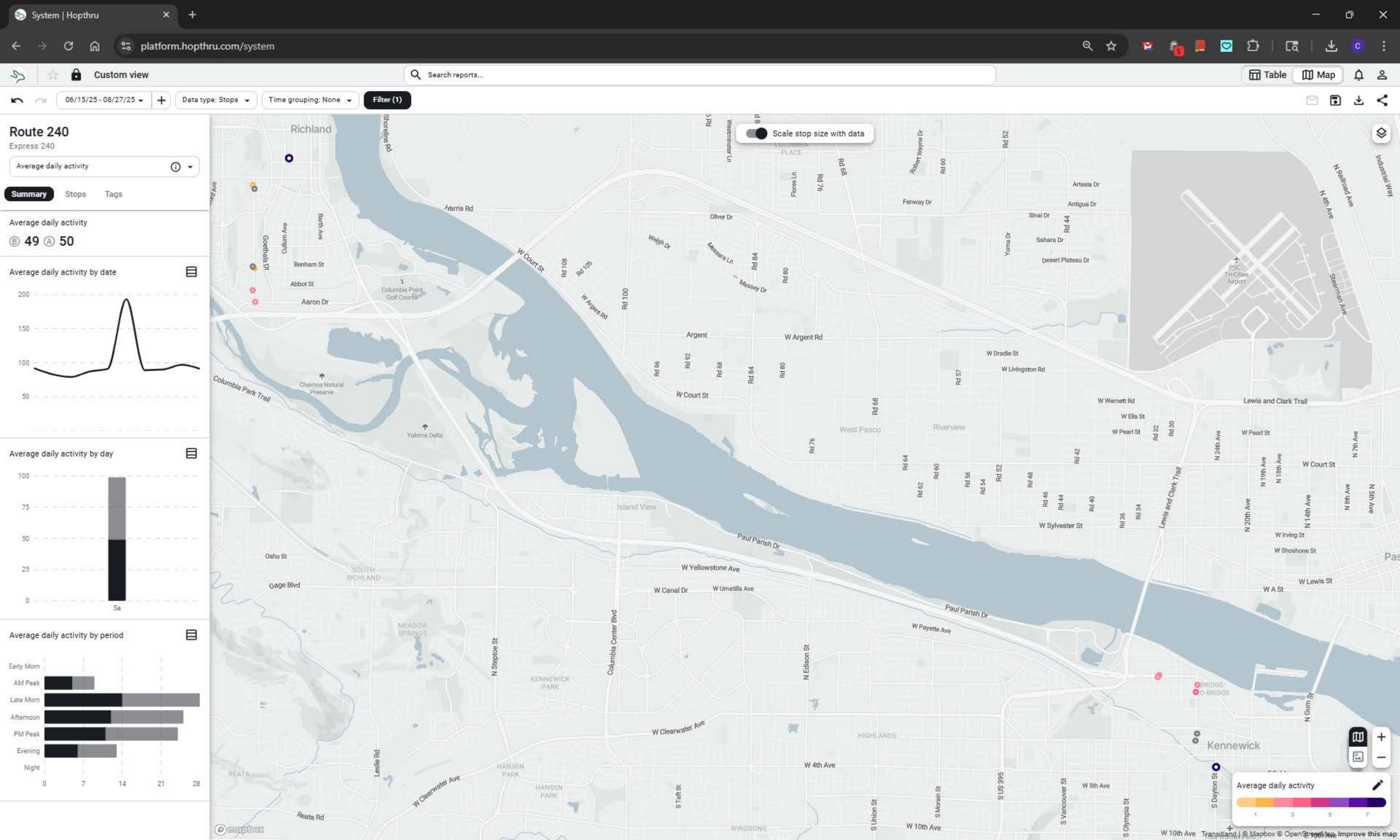
Average daily activity by period



Average daily activity







Route 268

Route 268

Average daily activity

Summary

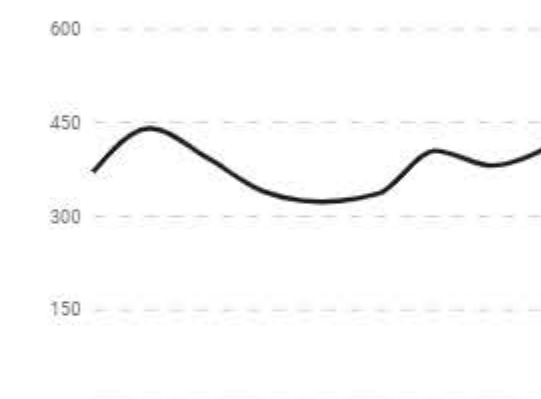
Stops

Tags

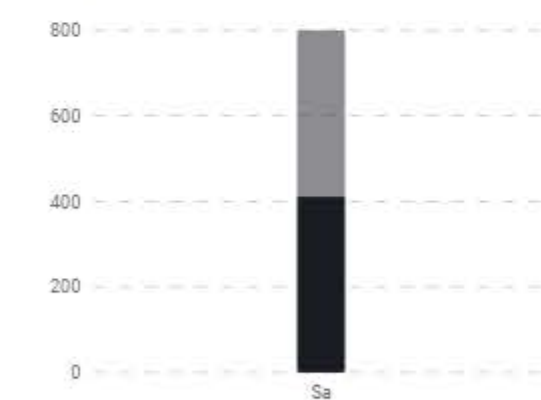
Average daily activity

Ⓐ 182 Ⓑ 196

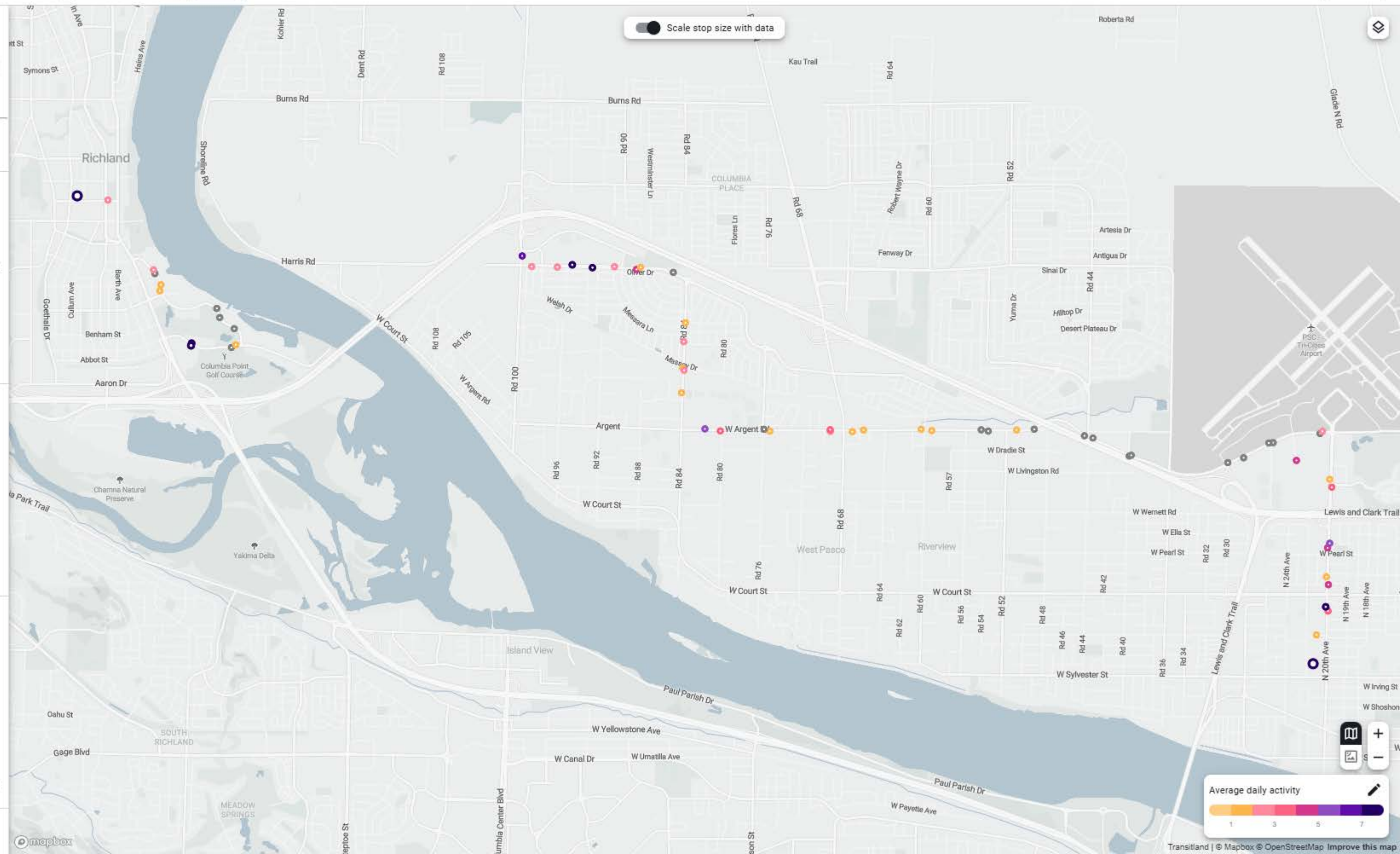
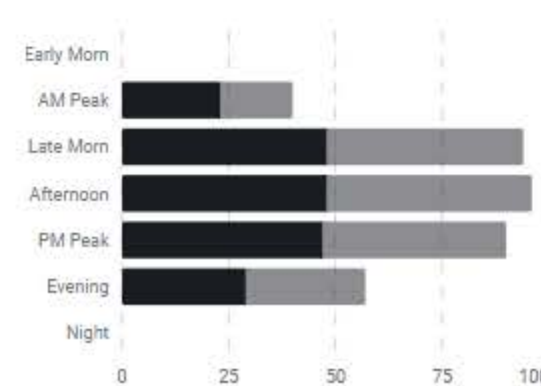
Average daily activity by date



Average daily activity by day



Average daily activity by period



Average daily activity



Appendix C: CONNECT Analysis

BFT Connect Rides - July 2025

Service data for BFT through July 2025

Display requests ▾

↑ Origin

↓ Destination



Show flow lines



DAY OF THE WEEK



Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

TIME OF THE DAY



Night Morning Noon Afternoon Evening

DATE



2024-12-31

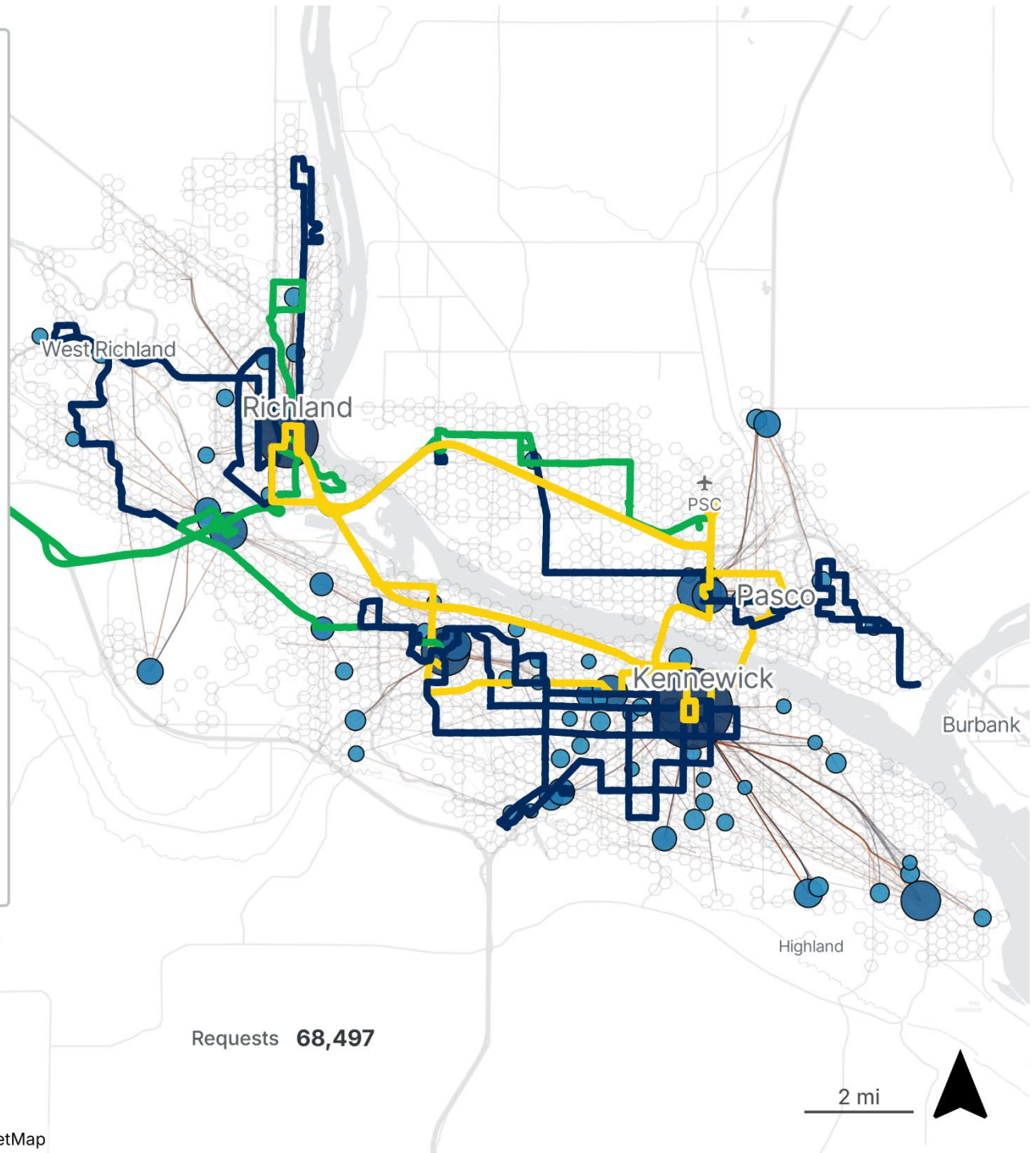
2025-07-30

REQUESTS

Rescale



0 42 155 436 824 2k 3.3k



Requests 68,497

BFT Connect Rides - July 2025

Service data for BFT through July 2025

Display requests ▾

↑ Origin

↓ Destination



Show flow lines



DAY OF THE WEEK



Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

TIME OF THE DAY



Night Morning Noon Afternoon Evening

DATE



2024-12-31

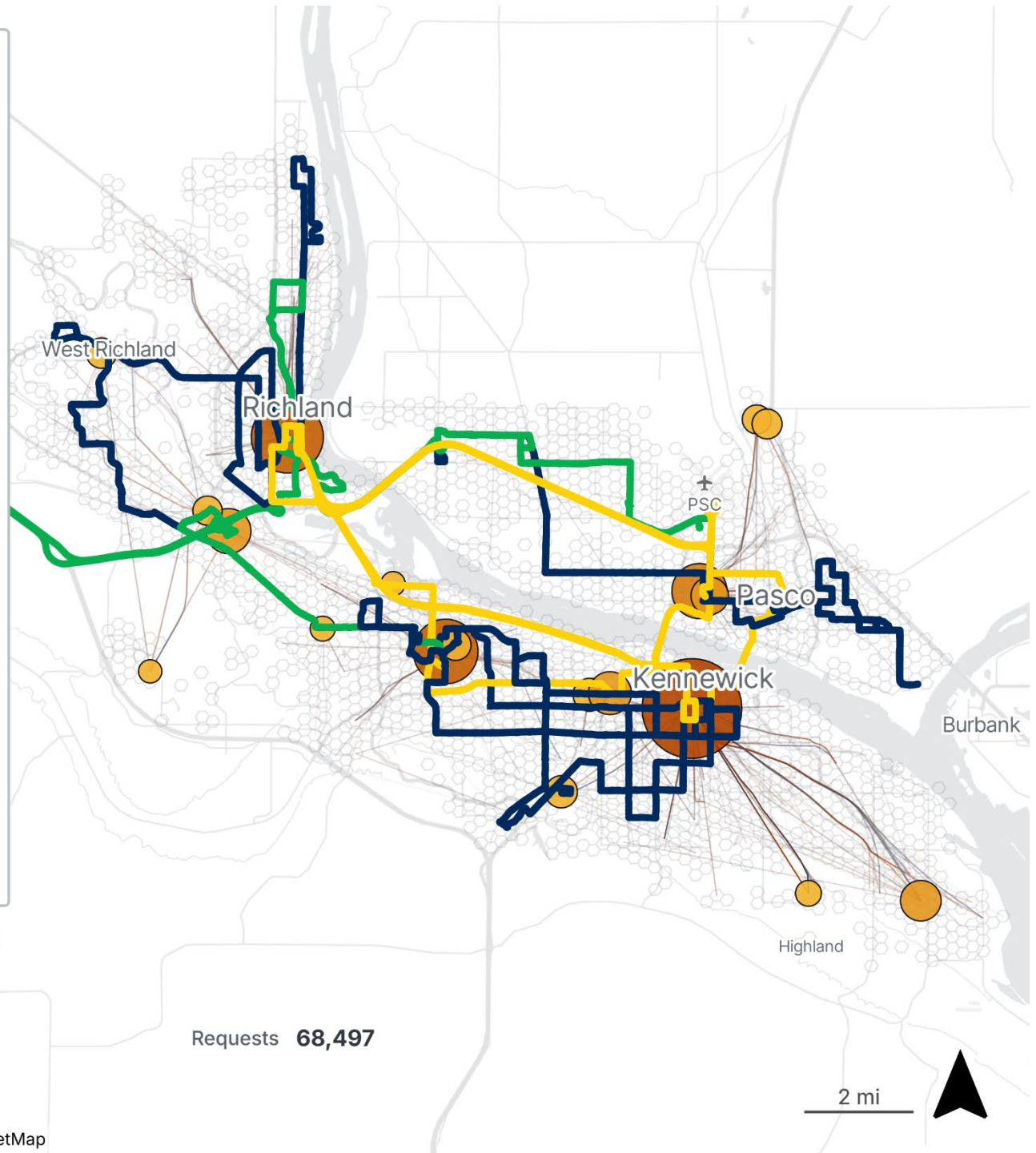
2025-07-30

REQUESTS

Rescale



0 79 452 1.2k 2.7k 3.7k 8.8k



BFT Connect Rides - July 2025

Service data for BFT through July 2025

Display requests ▾

↑ Origin

↓ Destination

Show flow lines



DAY OF THE WEEK



TIME OF THE DAY



DATE



REQUESTS

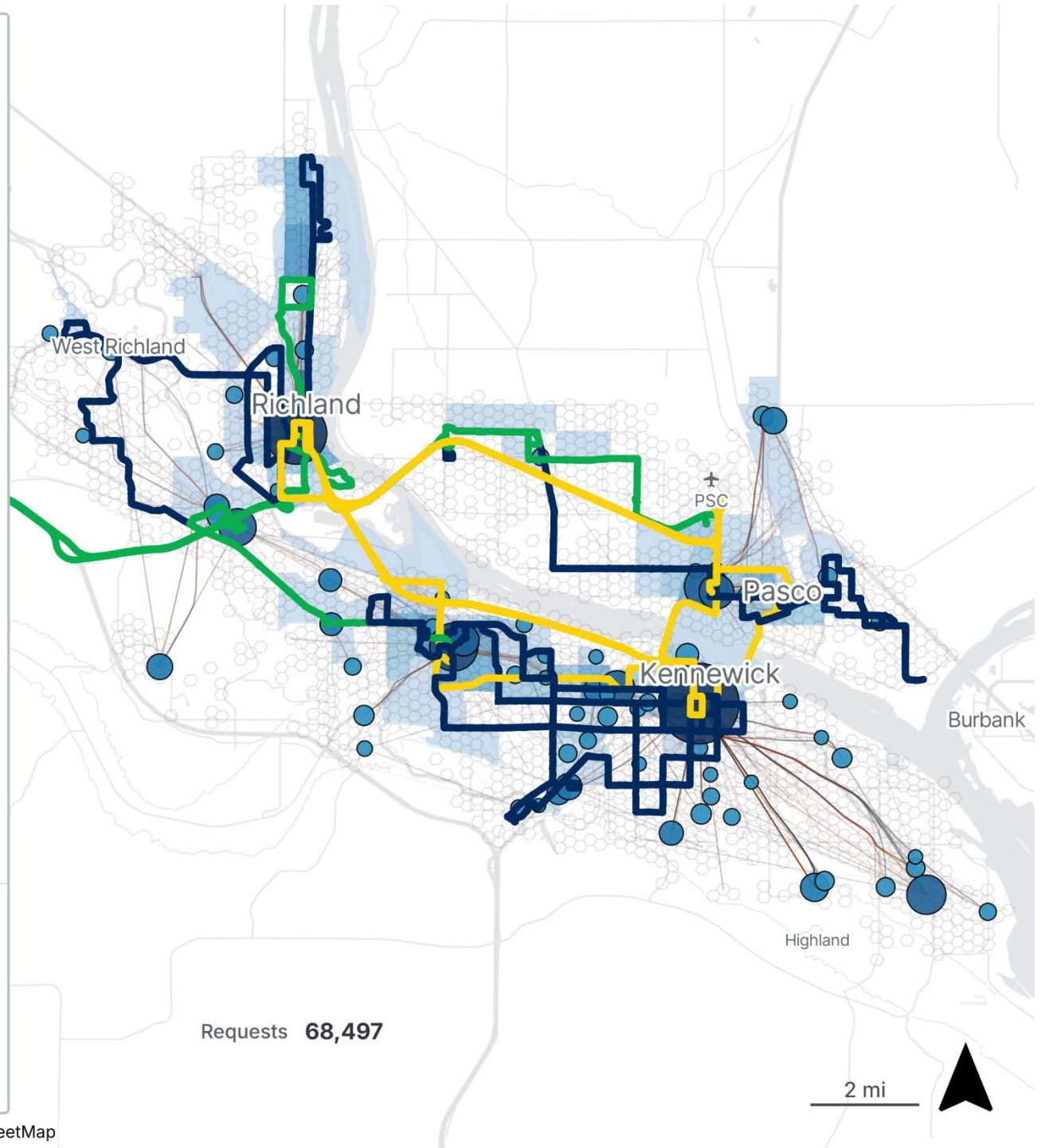
Rescale



Jobs

Jobs per square mile by TAZ.

JOBS / MI²



BFT Connect Rides - July 2025

Service data for BFT through July 2025

Display requests ▾

↑ Origin

↓ Destination

Show flow lines ☐

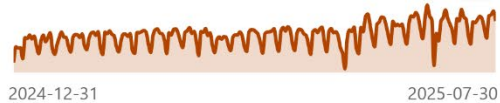
DAY OF THE WEEK



TIME OF THE DAY

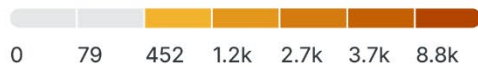


DATE



REQUESTS

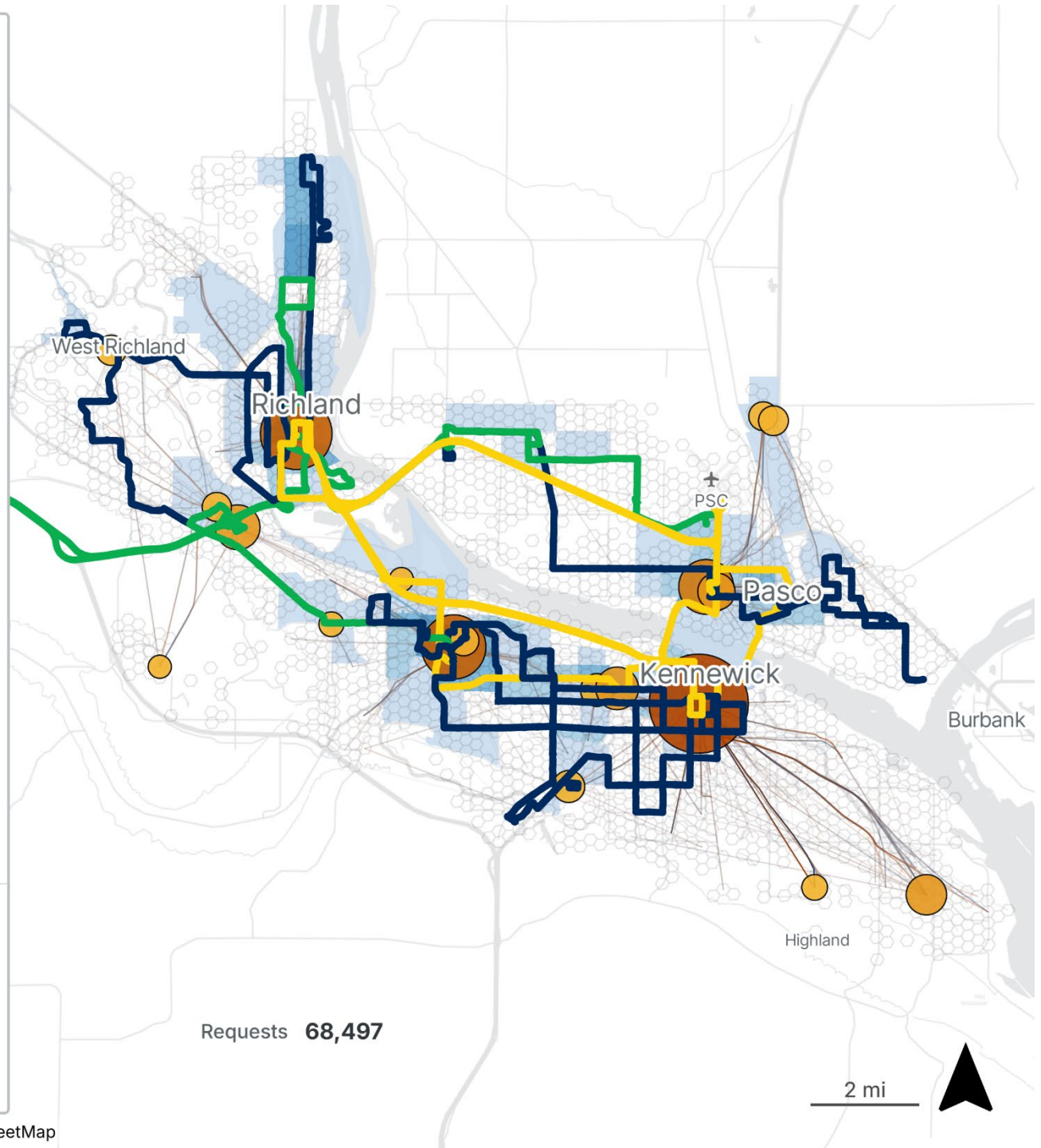
Rescale



Jobs

Jobs per square mile by TAZ.

JOBS / MI²



BFT Connect Rides - July 2025

Service data for BFT through July 2025

Display requests ▾

↑ Origin

↓ Destination

Show flow lines



DAY OF THE WEEK



TIME OF THE DAY

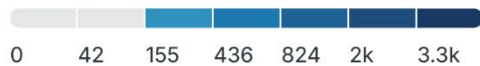


DATE



REQUESTS

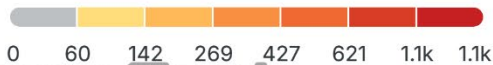
Rescale



Poverty

People per square mile falling below the [poverty threshold](#), by block group.

PEOPLE



Requests 68,497

2 mi



BFT Connect Rides - July 2025

Service data for BFT through July 2025

Display requests ▾

↑ Origin

↓ Destination

Show flow lines ☒

DAY OF THE WEEK



TIME OF THE DAY

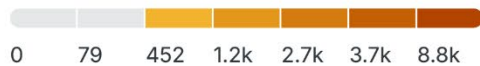


DATE



REQUESTS

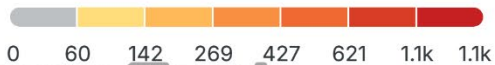
Rescale



Poverty

People per square mile falling below the [poverty threshold](#), by block group.

PEOPLE



Requests **68,497**

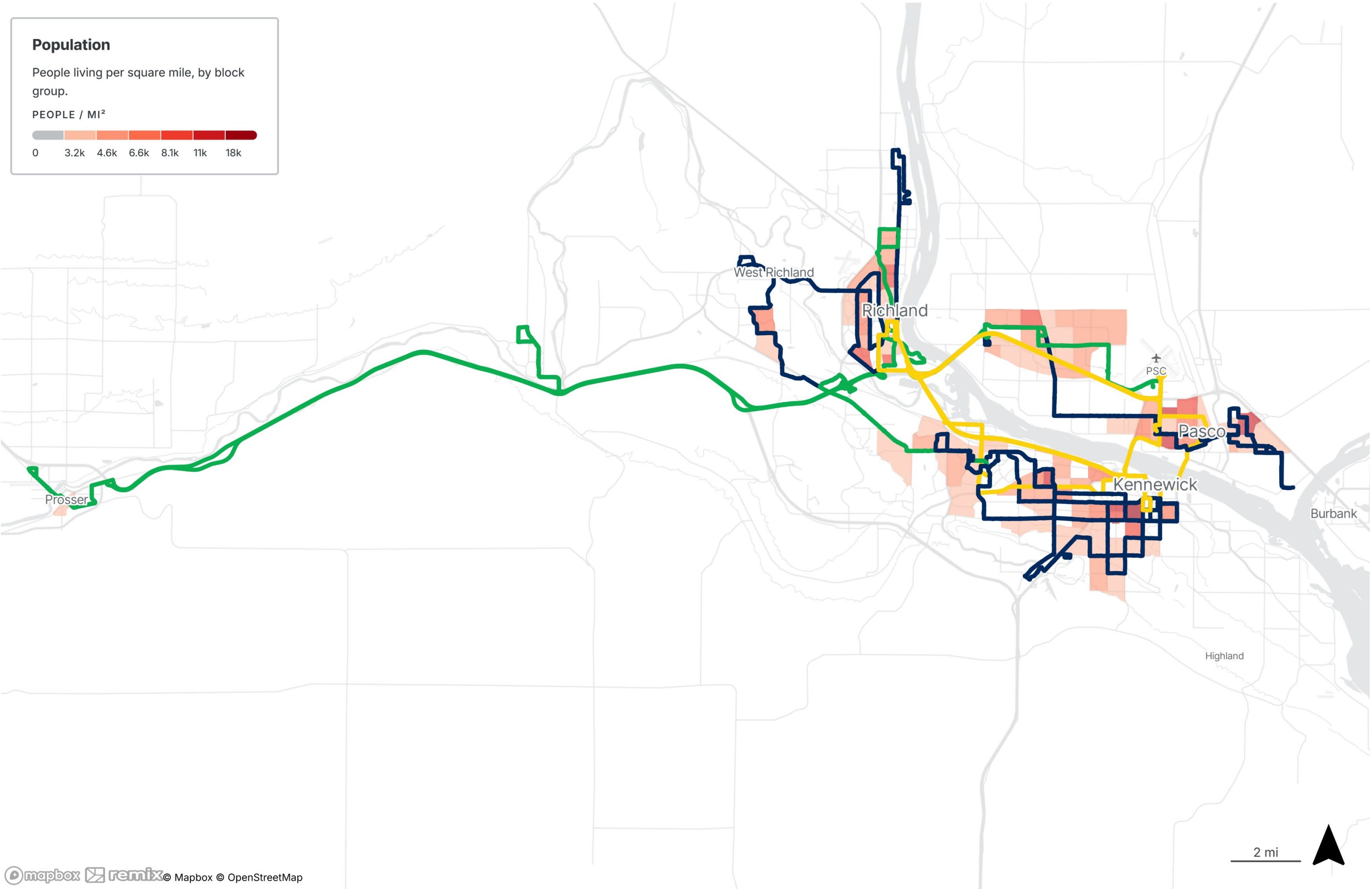
2 mi

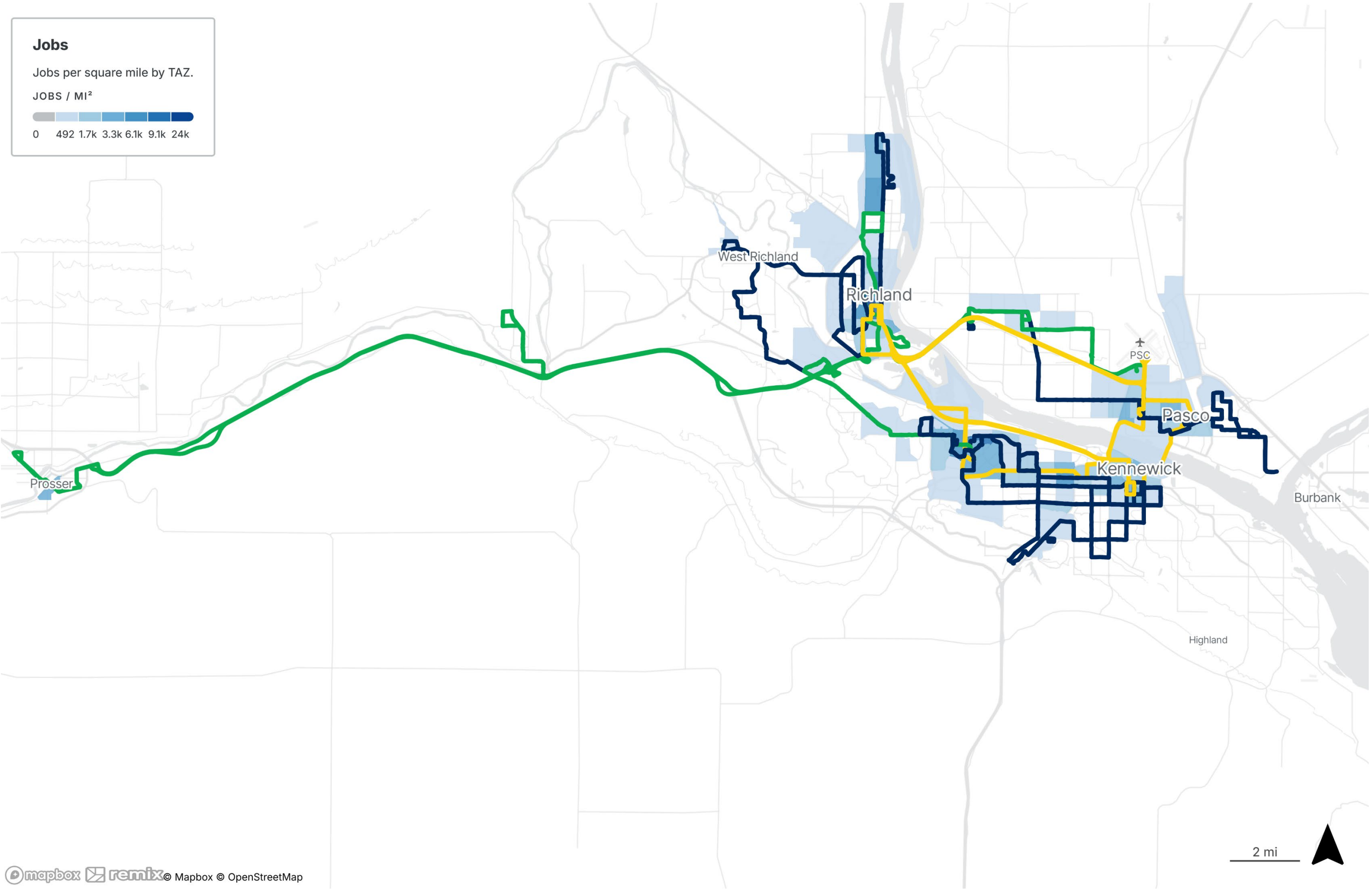
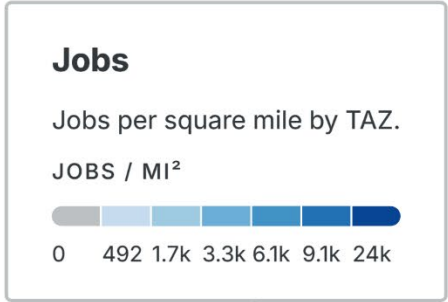
Appendix D: Systemwide Demographic Analysis

Population

People living per square mile, by block group.

PEOPLE / MI²

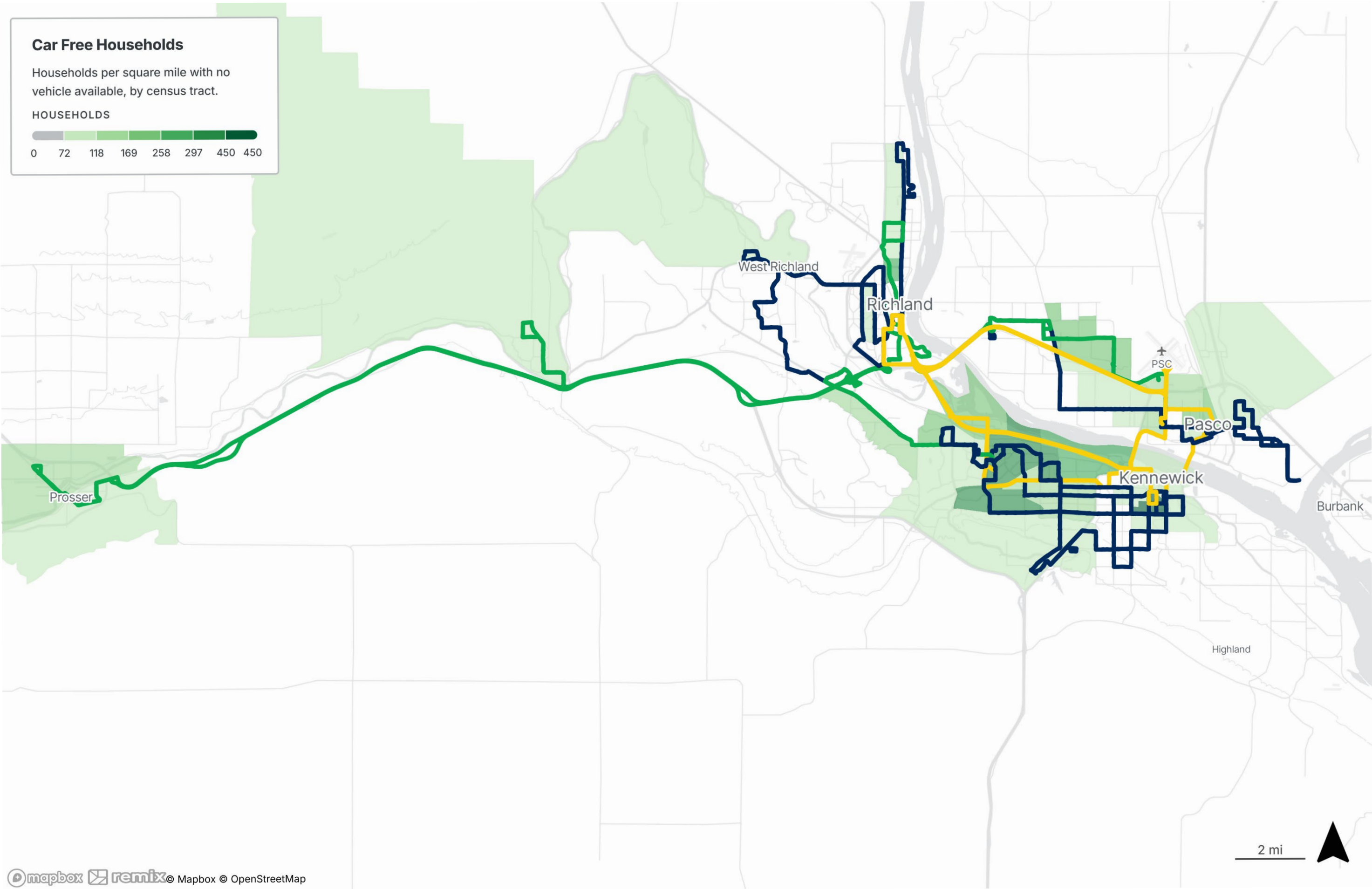




Car Free Households

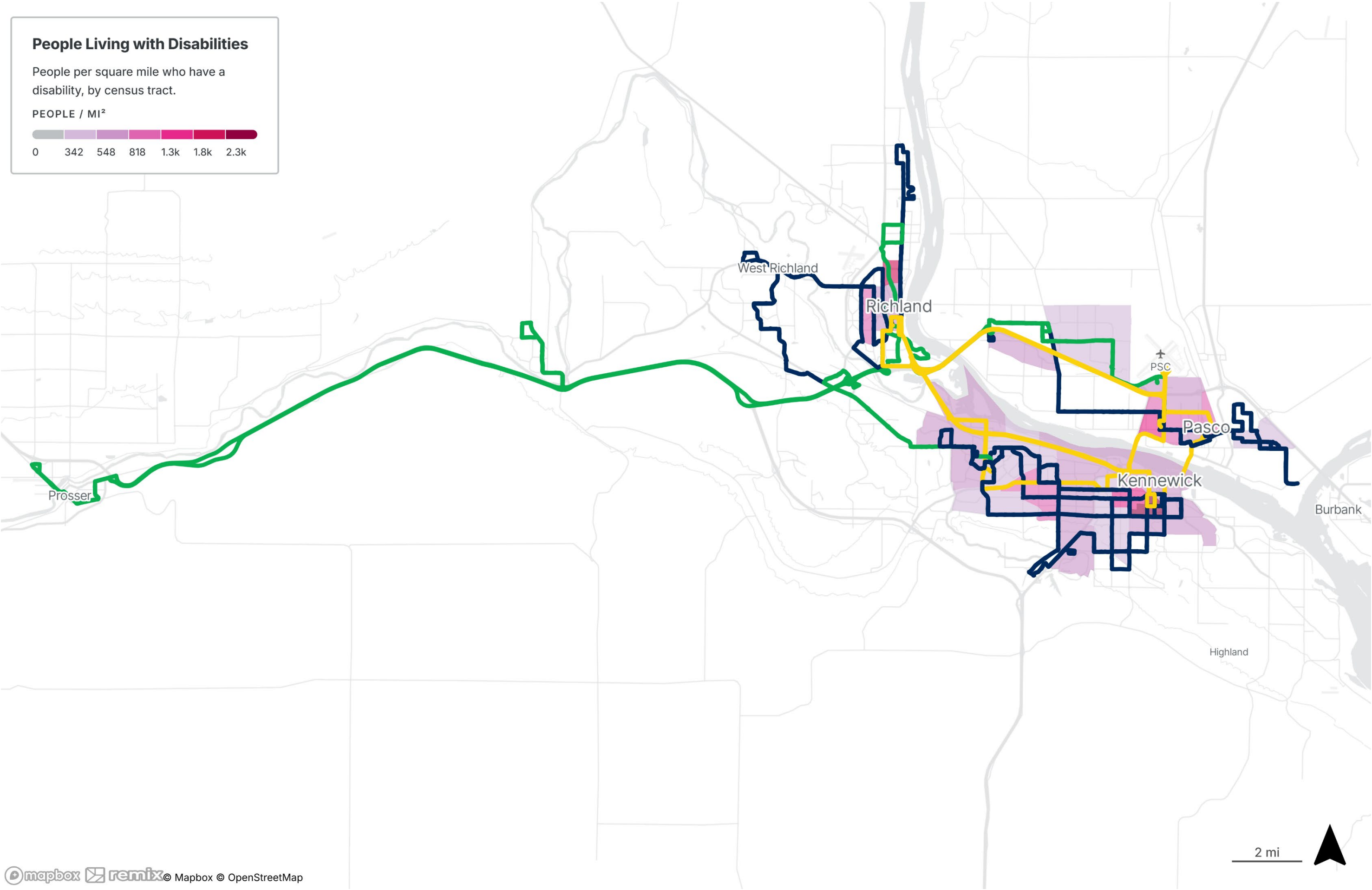
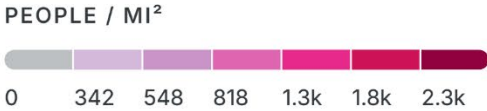
Households per square mile with no vehicle available, by census tract.

HOUSEHOLDS



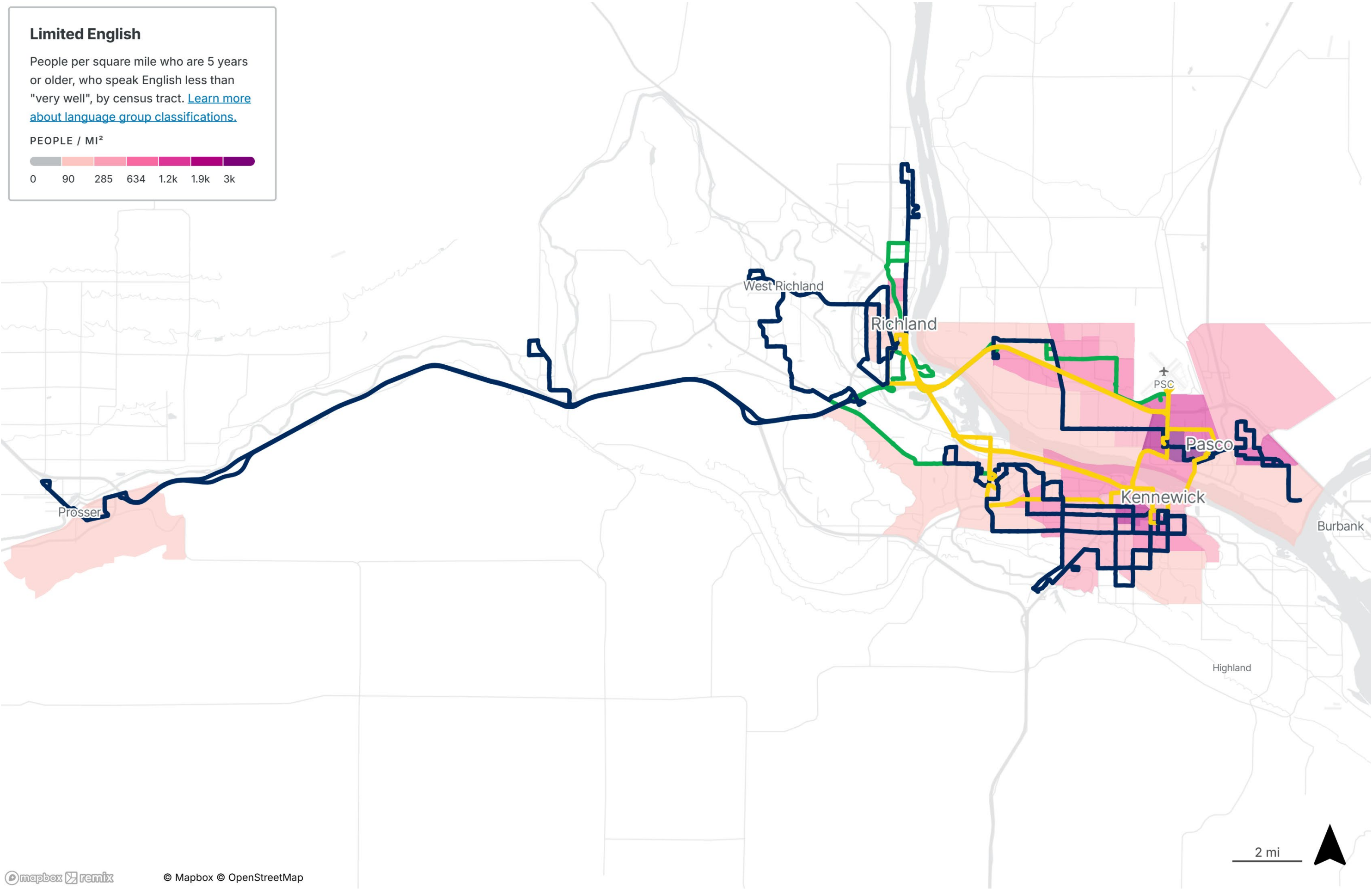
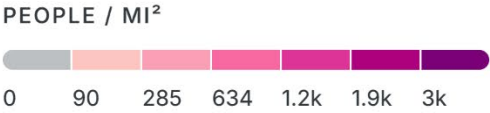
People Living with Disabilities

People per square mile who have a disability, by census tract.



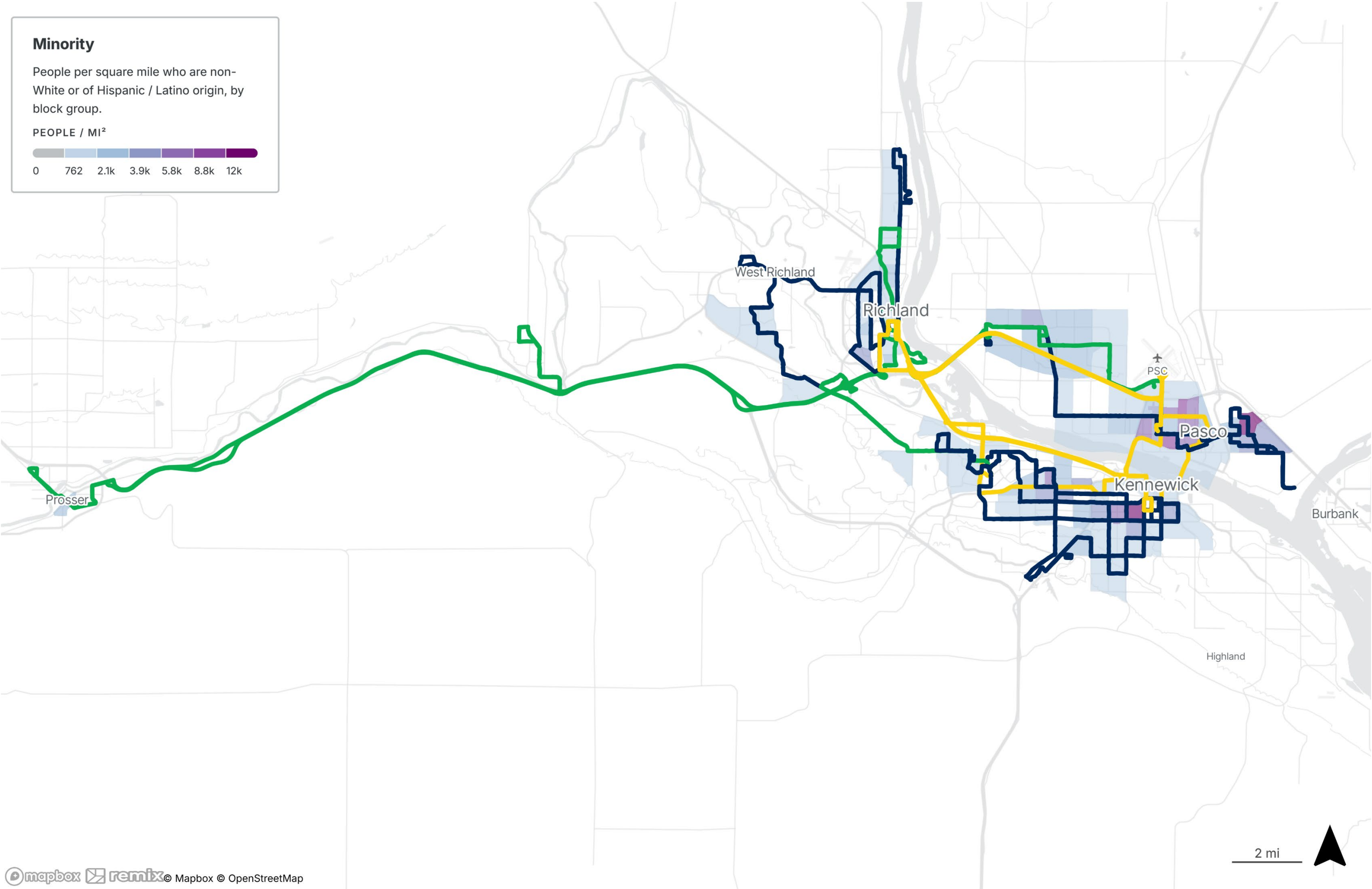
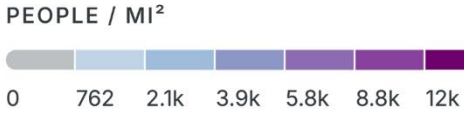
Limited English

People per square mile who are 5 years or older, who speak English less than "very well", by census tract. [Learn more about language group classifications.](#)



Minority

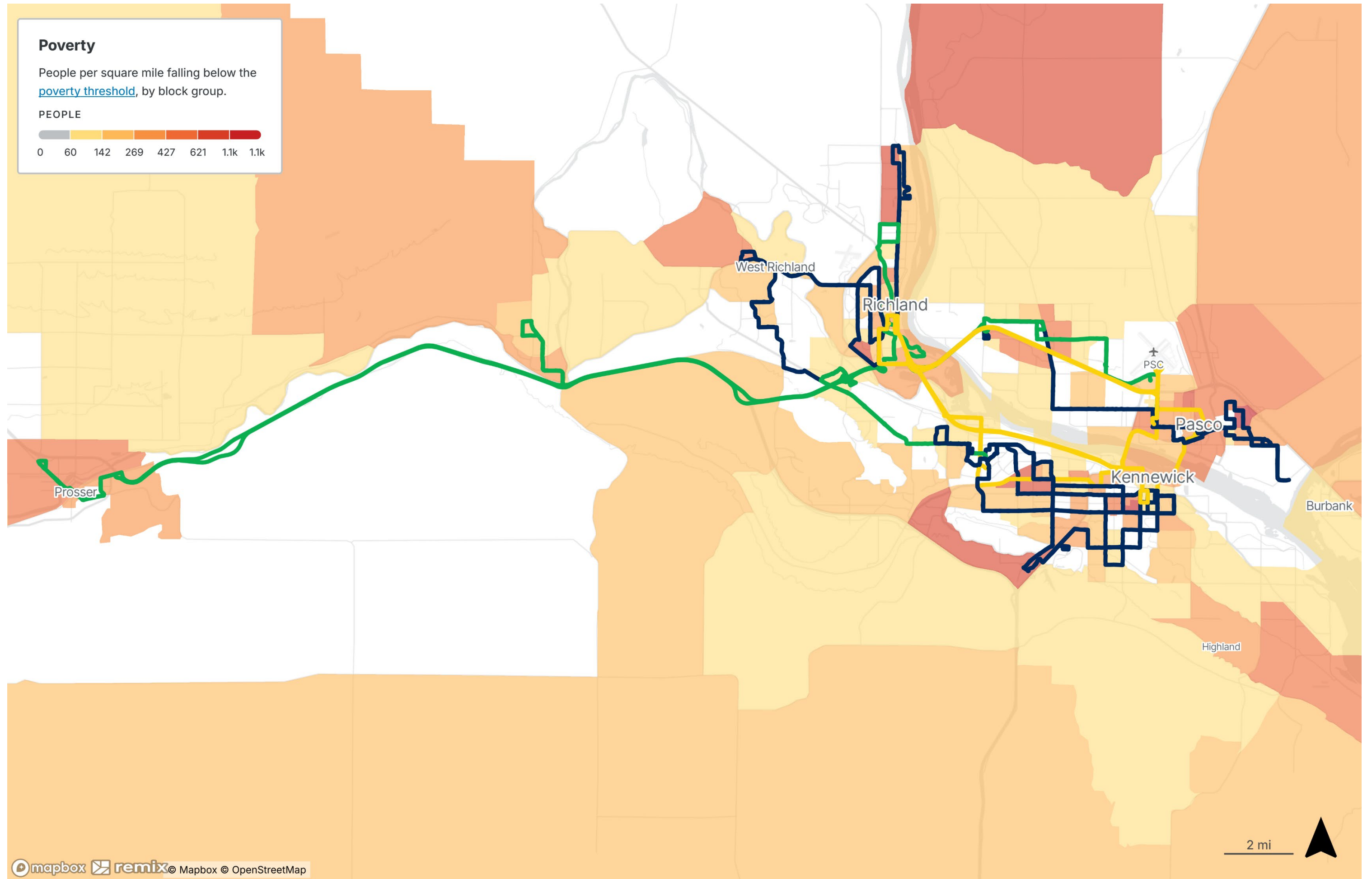
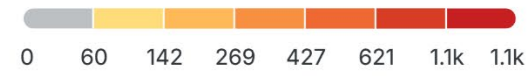
People per square mile who are non-White or of Hispanic / Latino origin, by block group.



Poverty

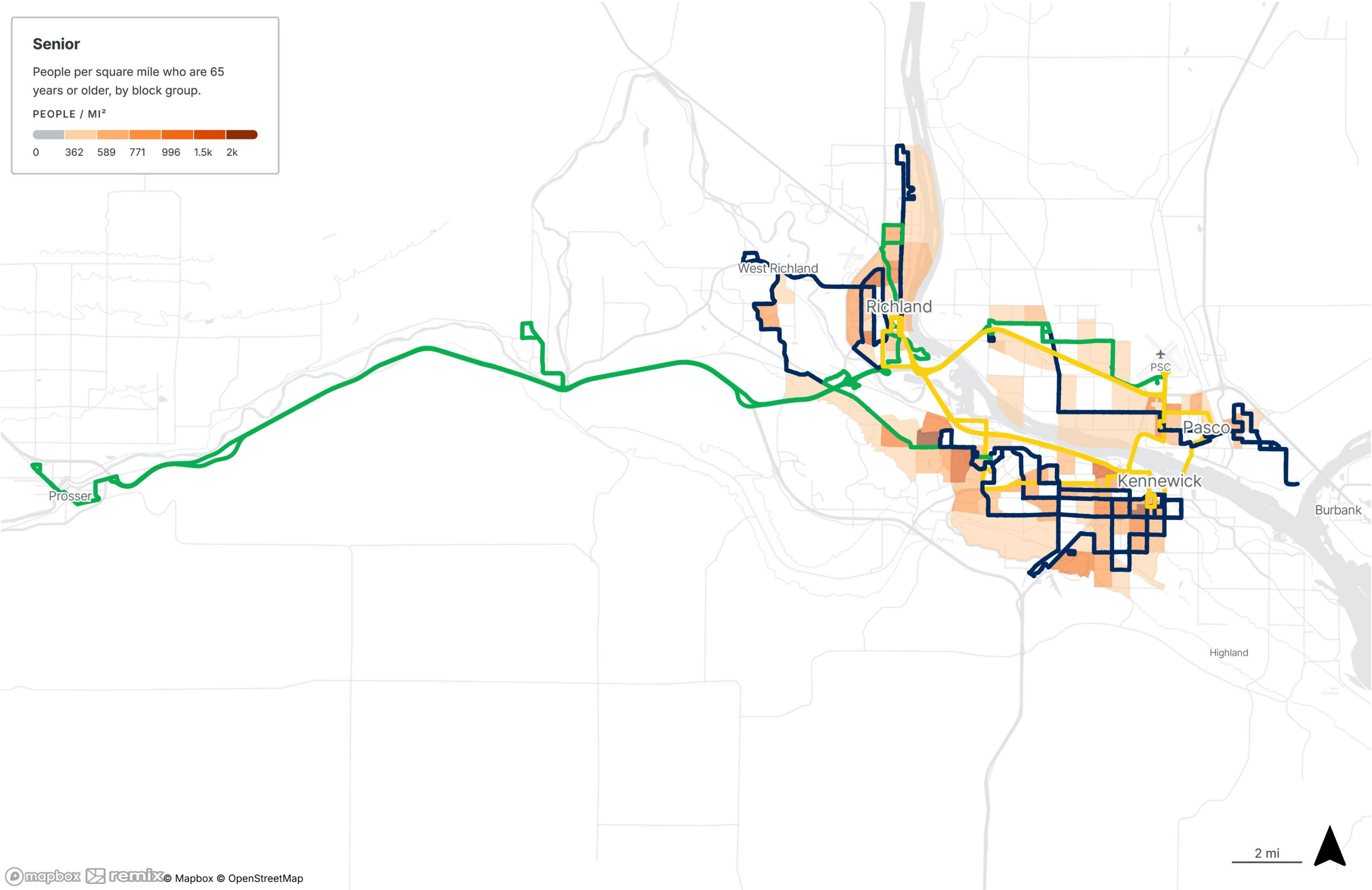
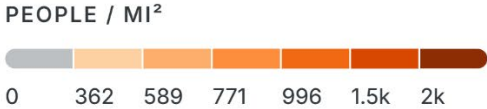
People per square mile falling below the [poverty threshold](#), by block group.

PEOPLE



Senior

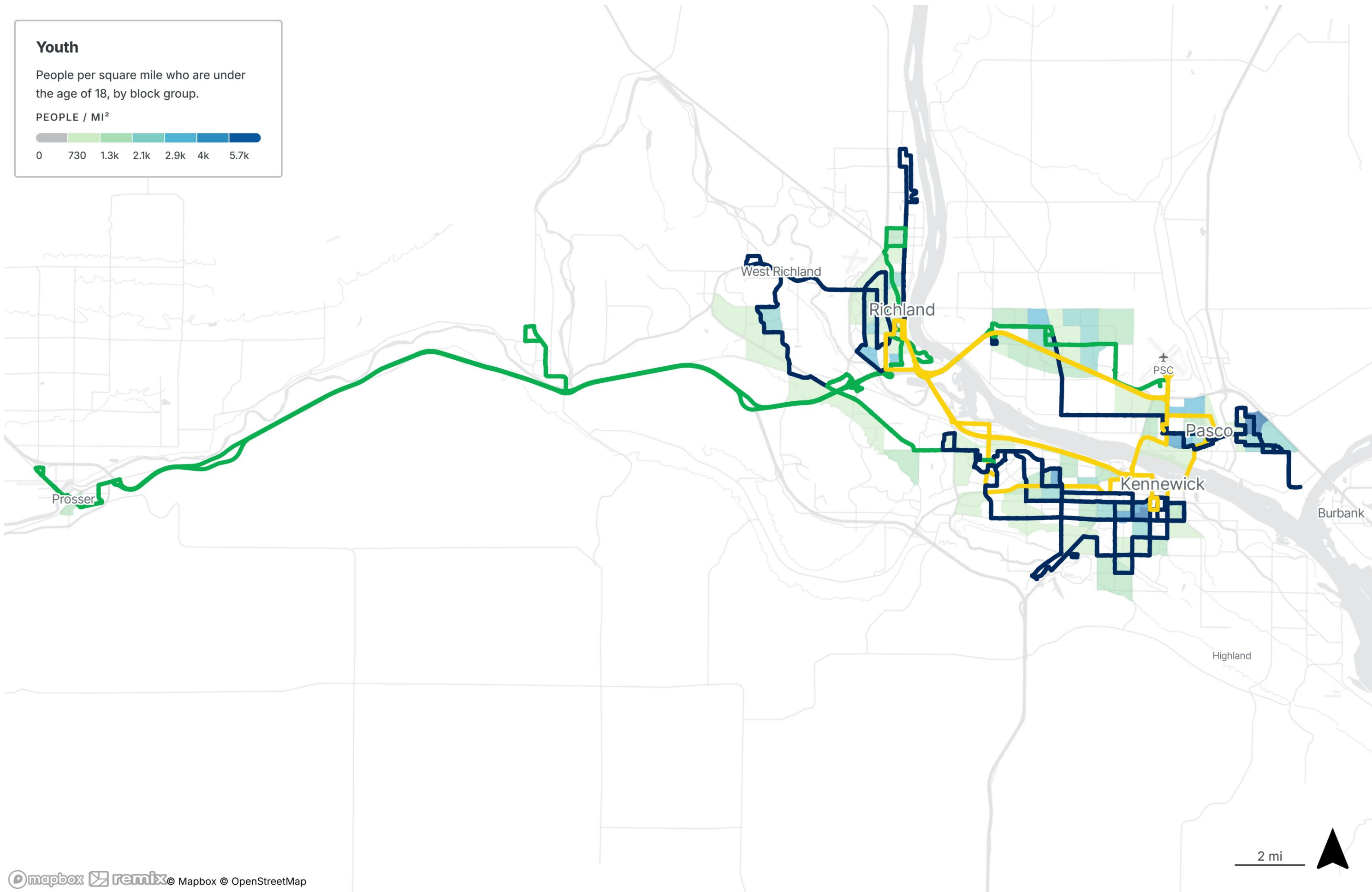
People per square mile who are 65 years or older, by block group.



Youth

People per square mile who are under the age of 18, by block group.

PEOPLE / MI²

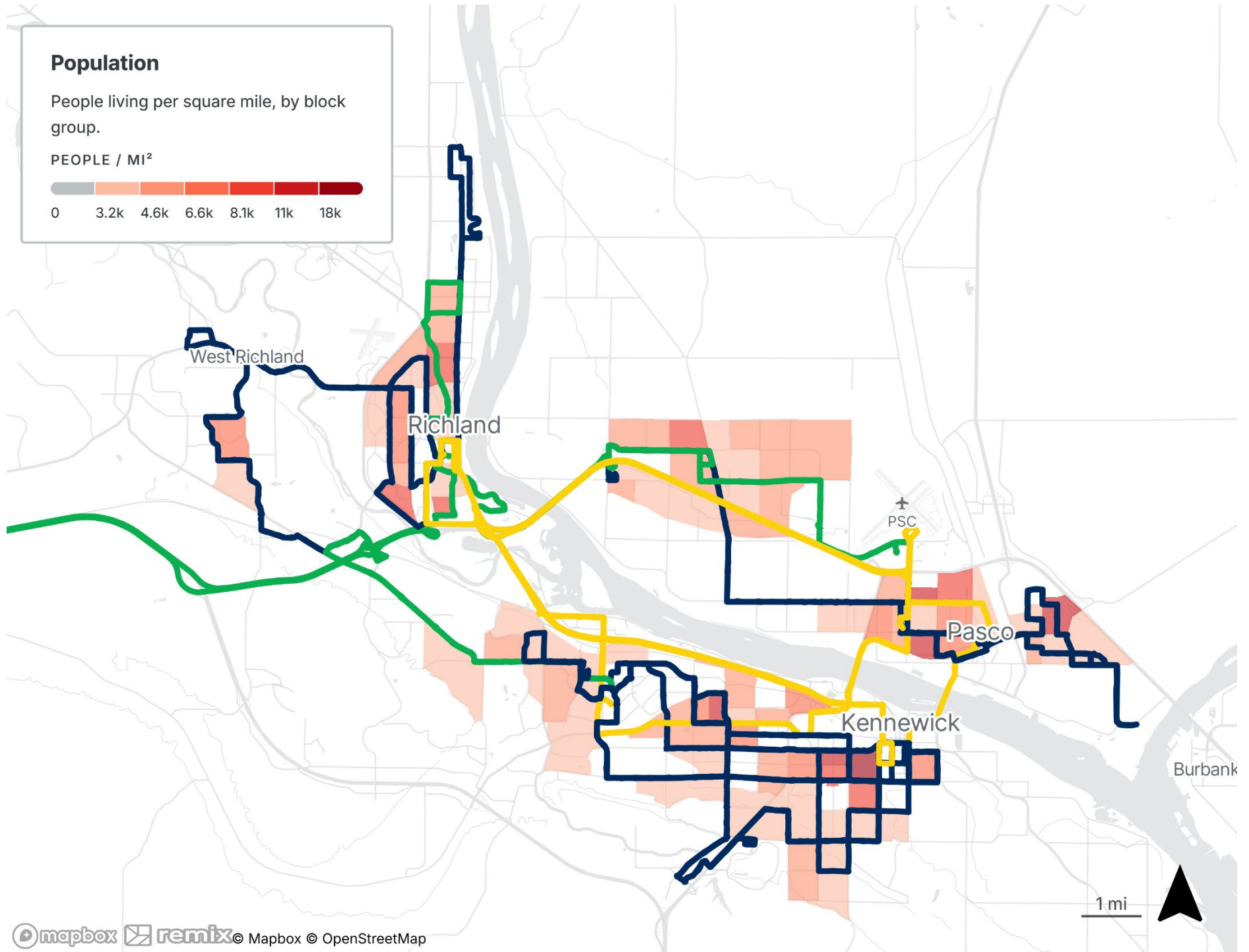


Appendix E: Urban Area Demographic Analysis

Population

People living per square mile, by block group.

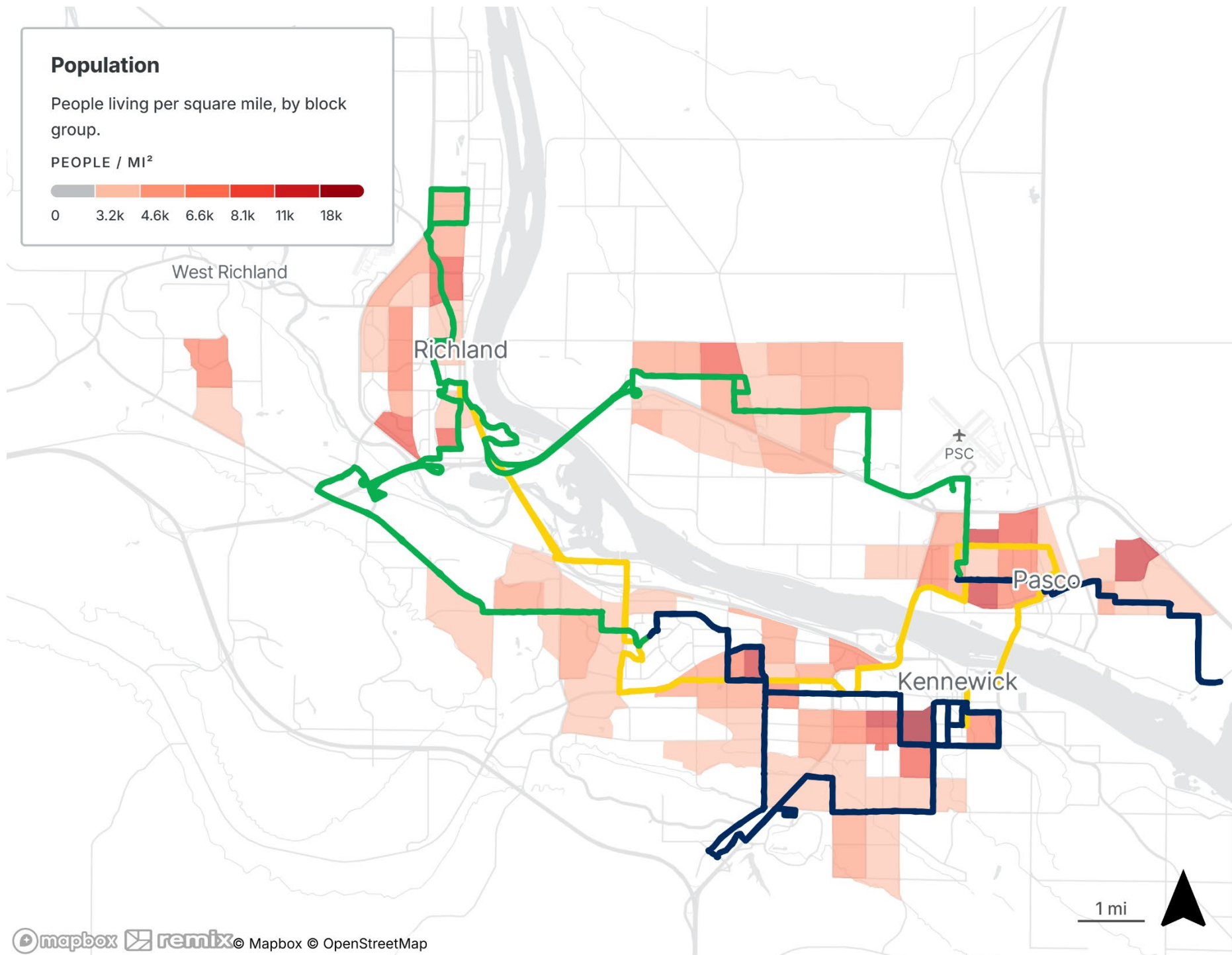
PEOPLE / MI²



Population

People living per square mile, by block group.

PEOPLE / MI²



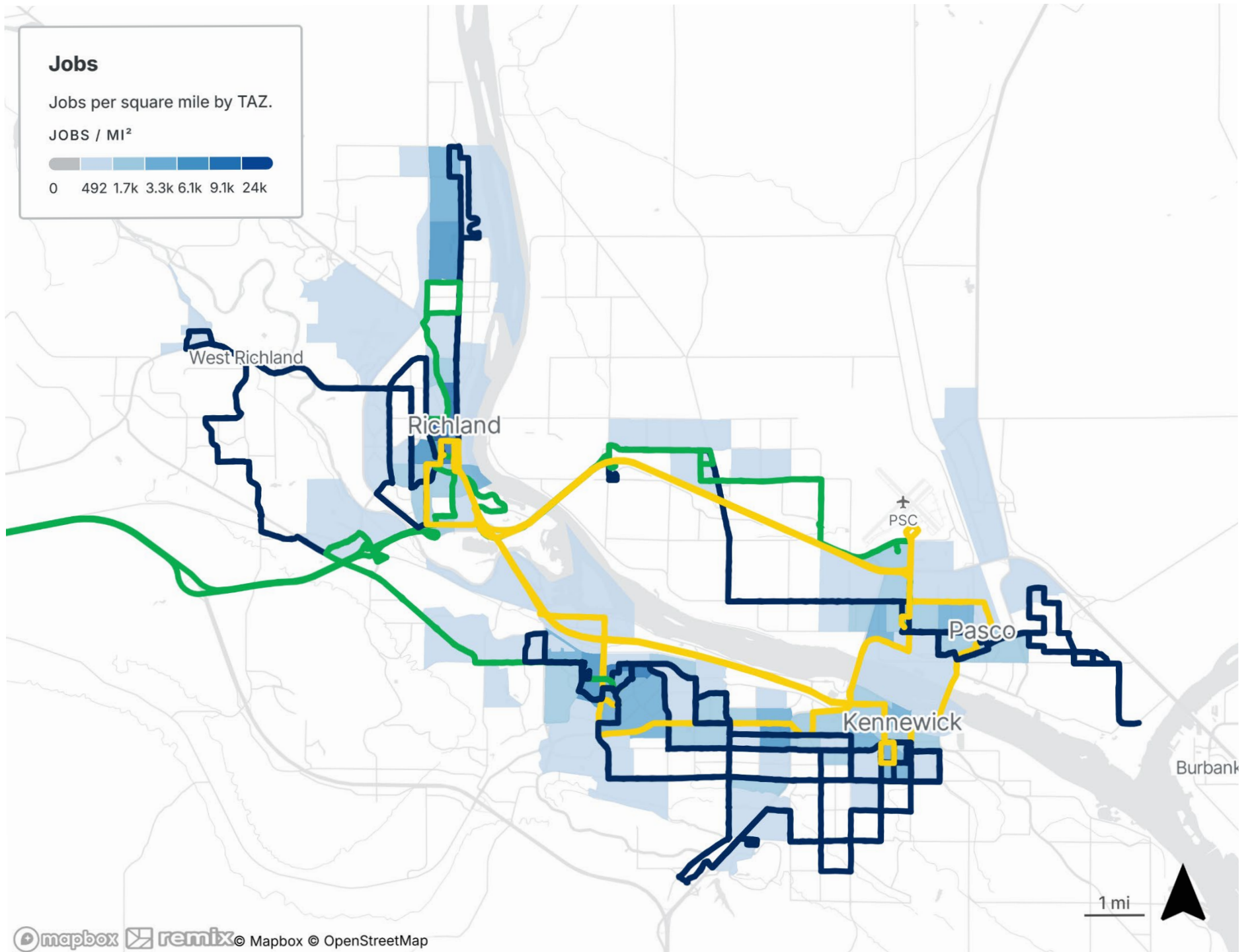
Jobs

Jobs per square mile by TAZ.

JOBS / MI²



0 492 1.7k 3.3k 6.1k 9.1k 24k



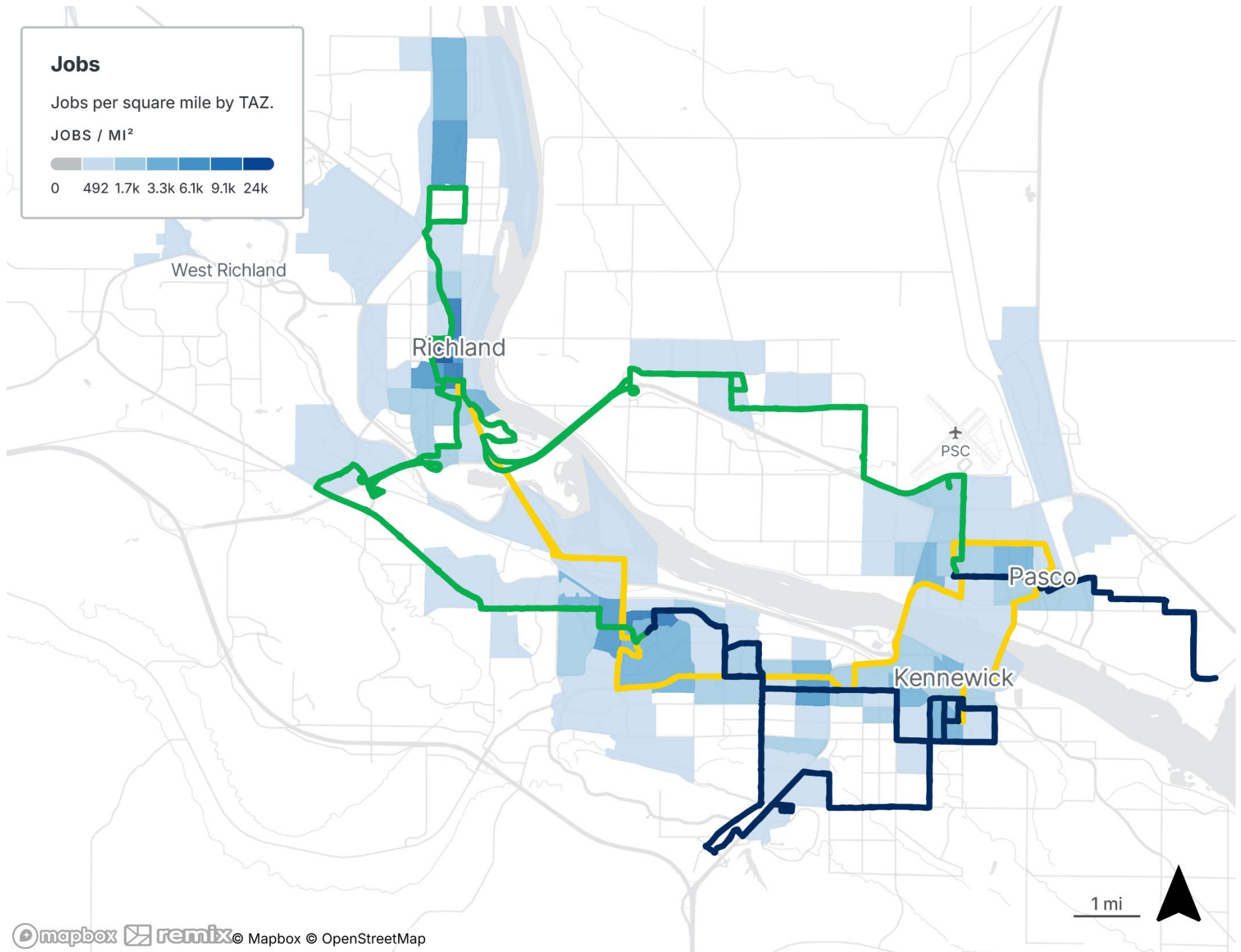
Jobs

Jobs per square mile by TAZ.

JOBS / MI²



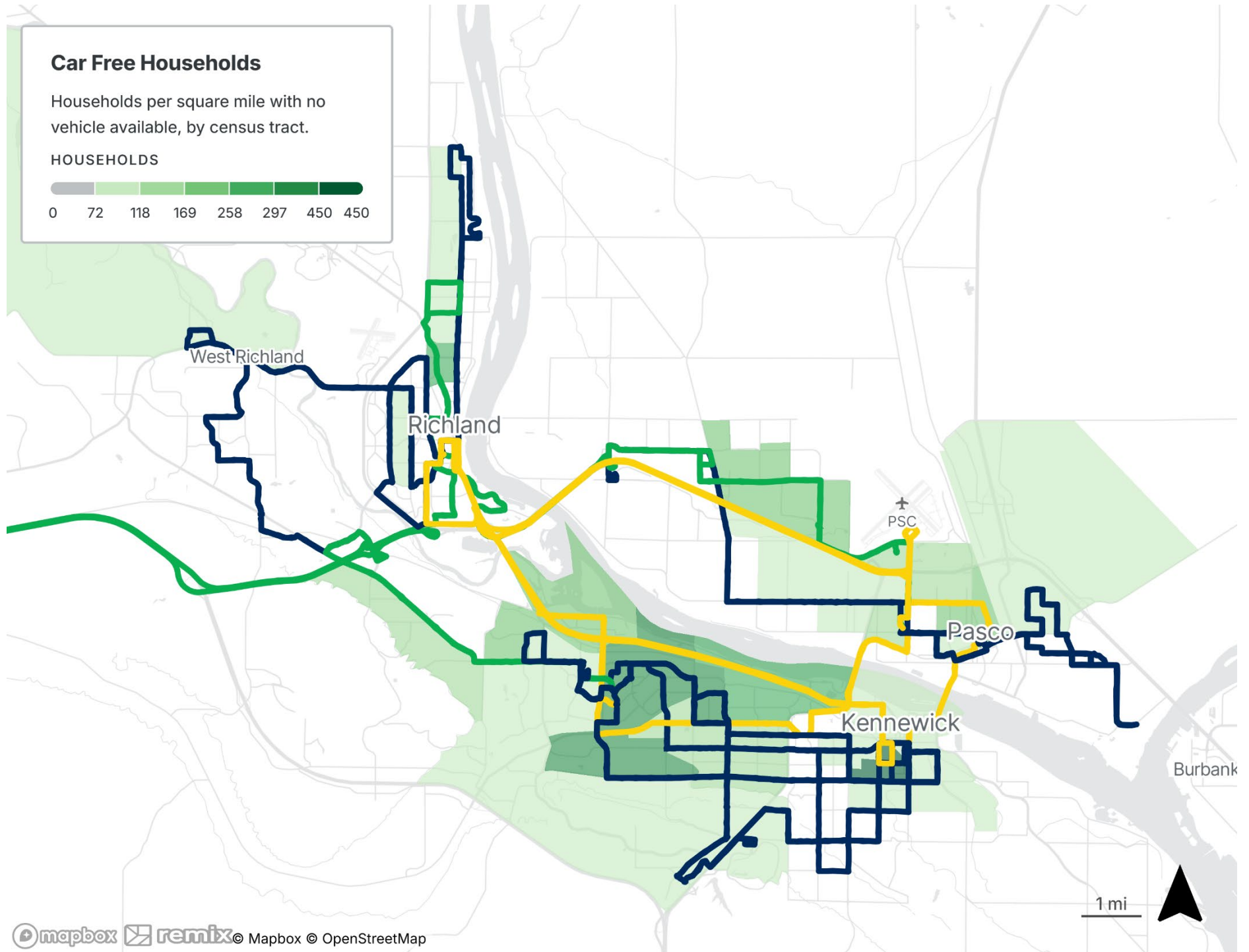
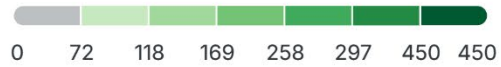
0 492 1.7k 3.3k 6.1k 9.1k 24k



Car Free Households

Households per square mile with no vehicle available, by census tract.

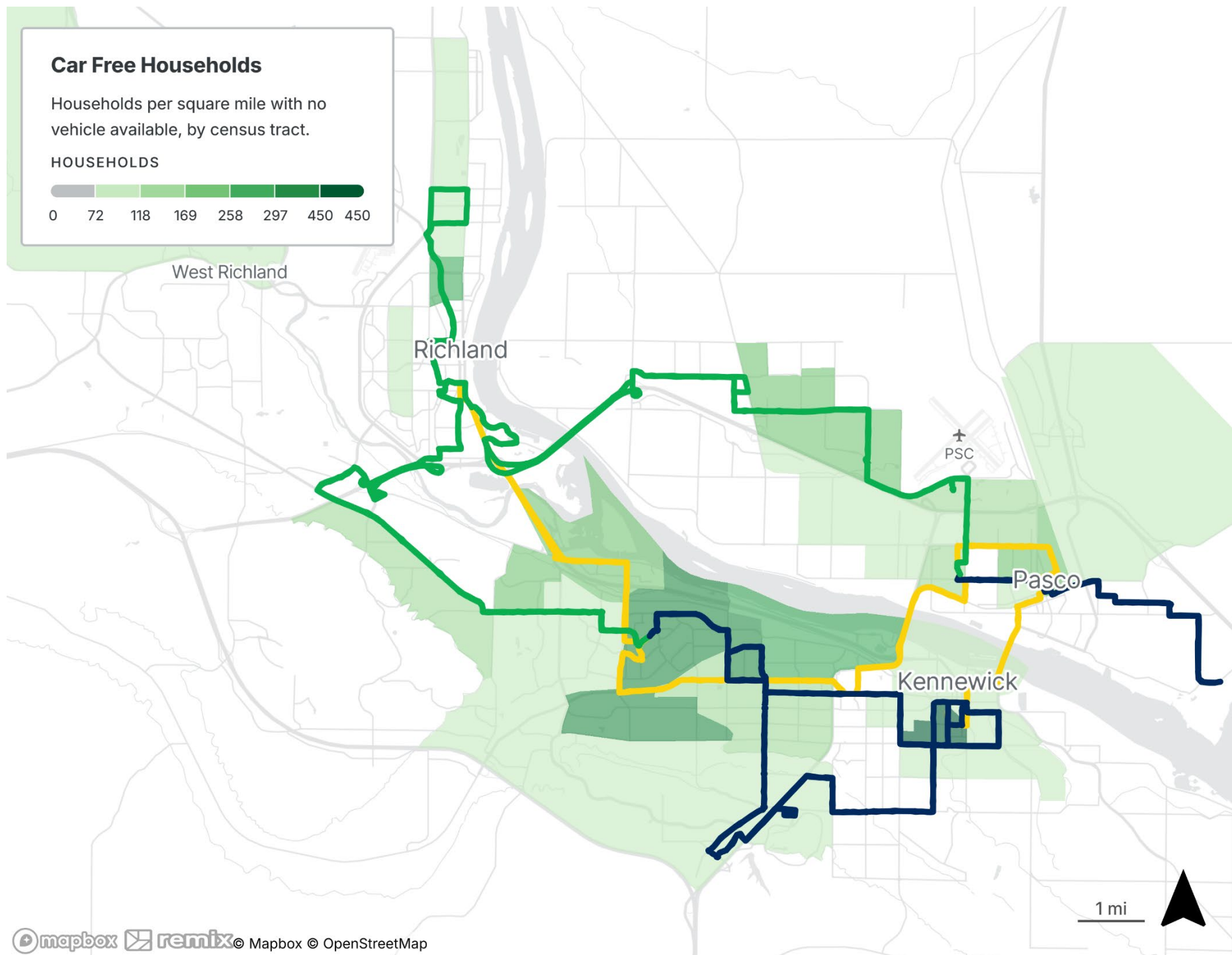
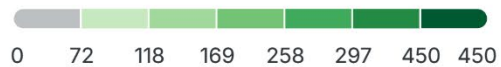
HOUSEHOLDS



Car Free Households

Households per square mile with no vehicle available, by census tract.

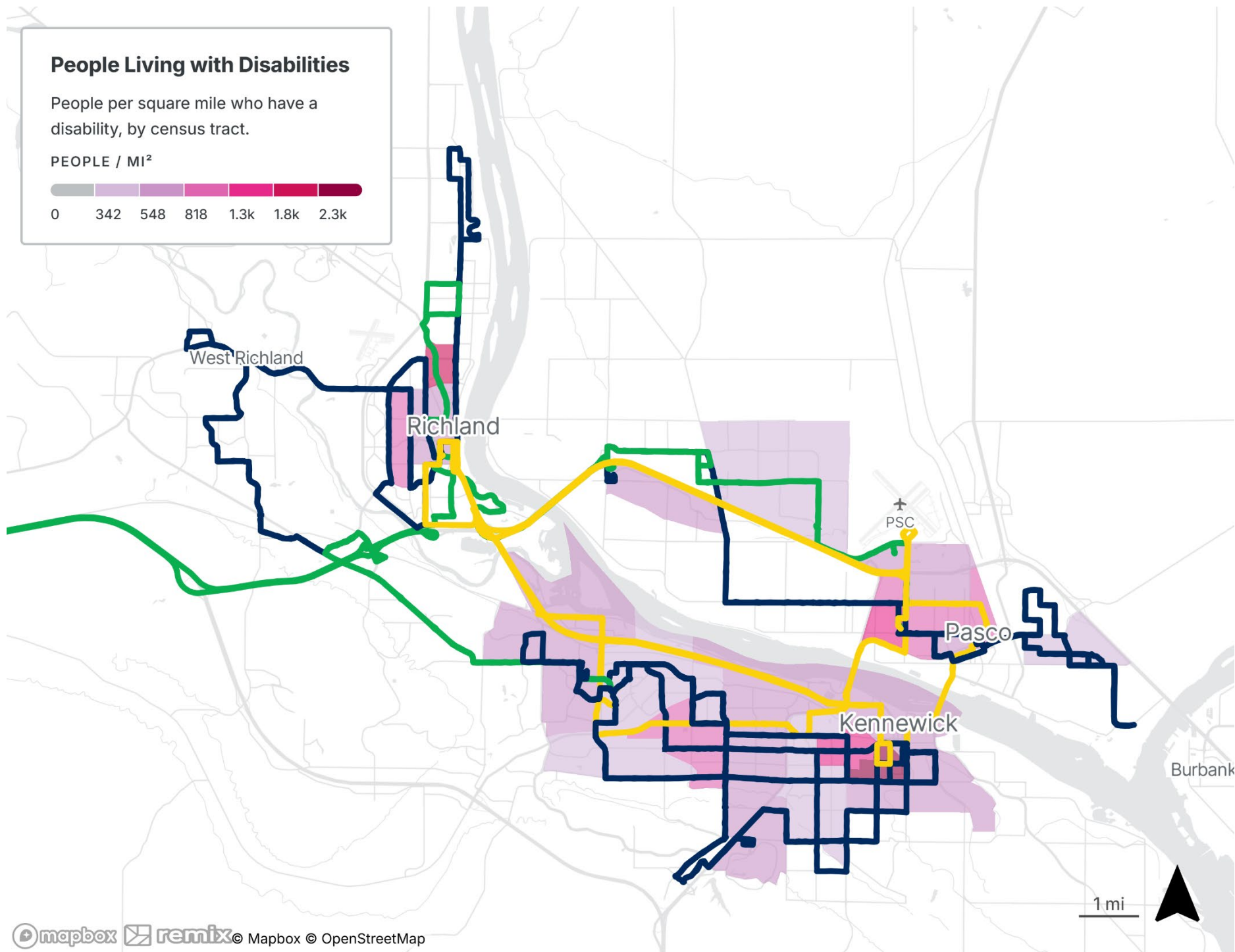
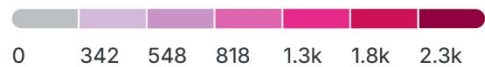
HOUSEHOLDS



People Living with Disabilities

People per square mile who have a disability, by census tract.

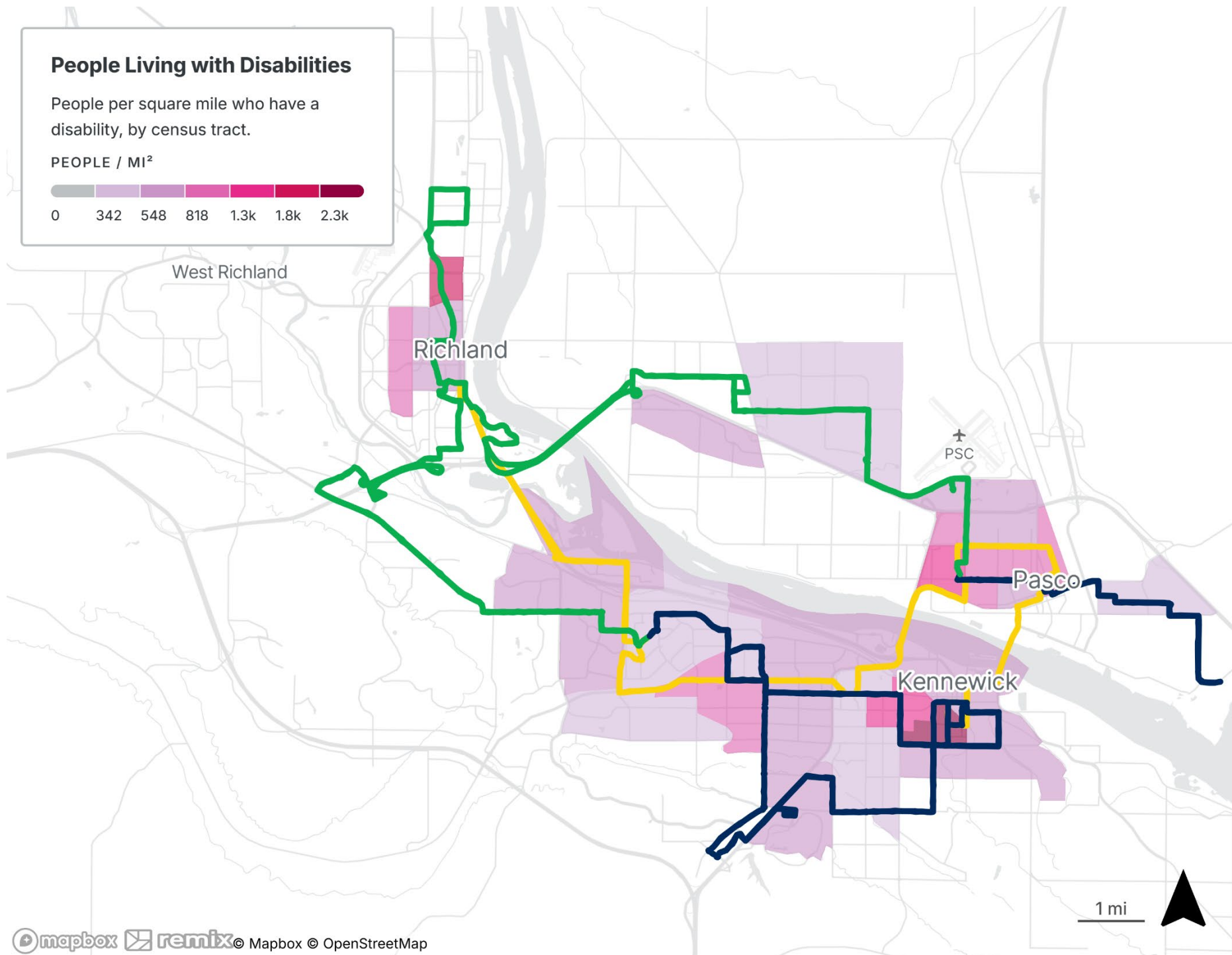
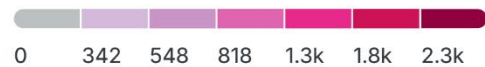
PEOPLE / MI²



People Living with Disabilities

People per square mile who have a disability, by census tract.

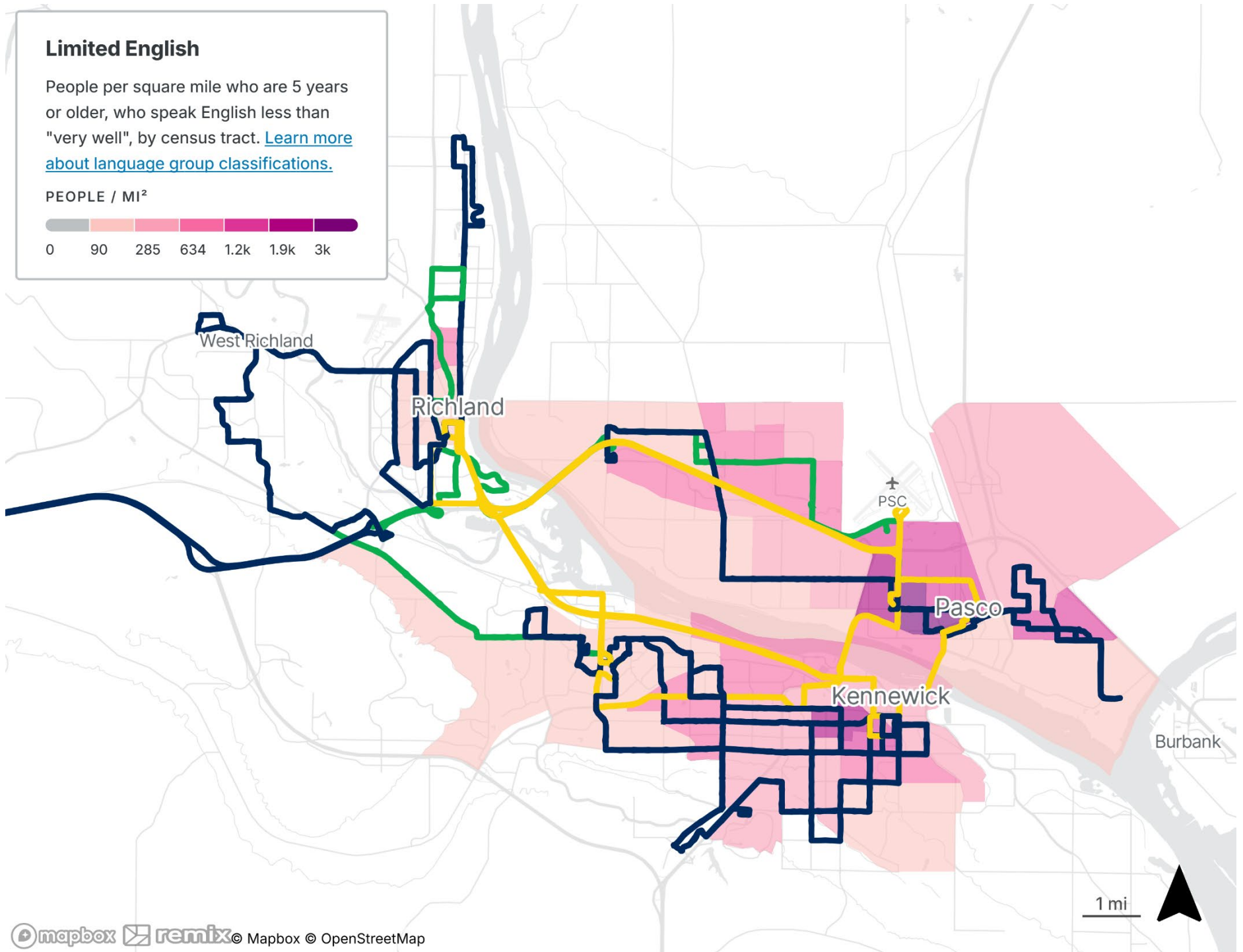
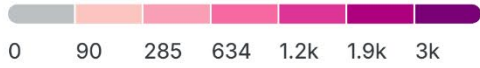
PEOPLE / MI²



Limited English

People per square mile who are 5 years or older, who speak English less than "very well", by census tract. [Learn more about language group classifications.](#)

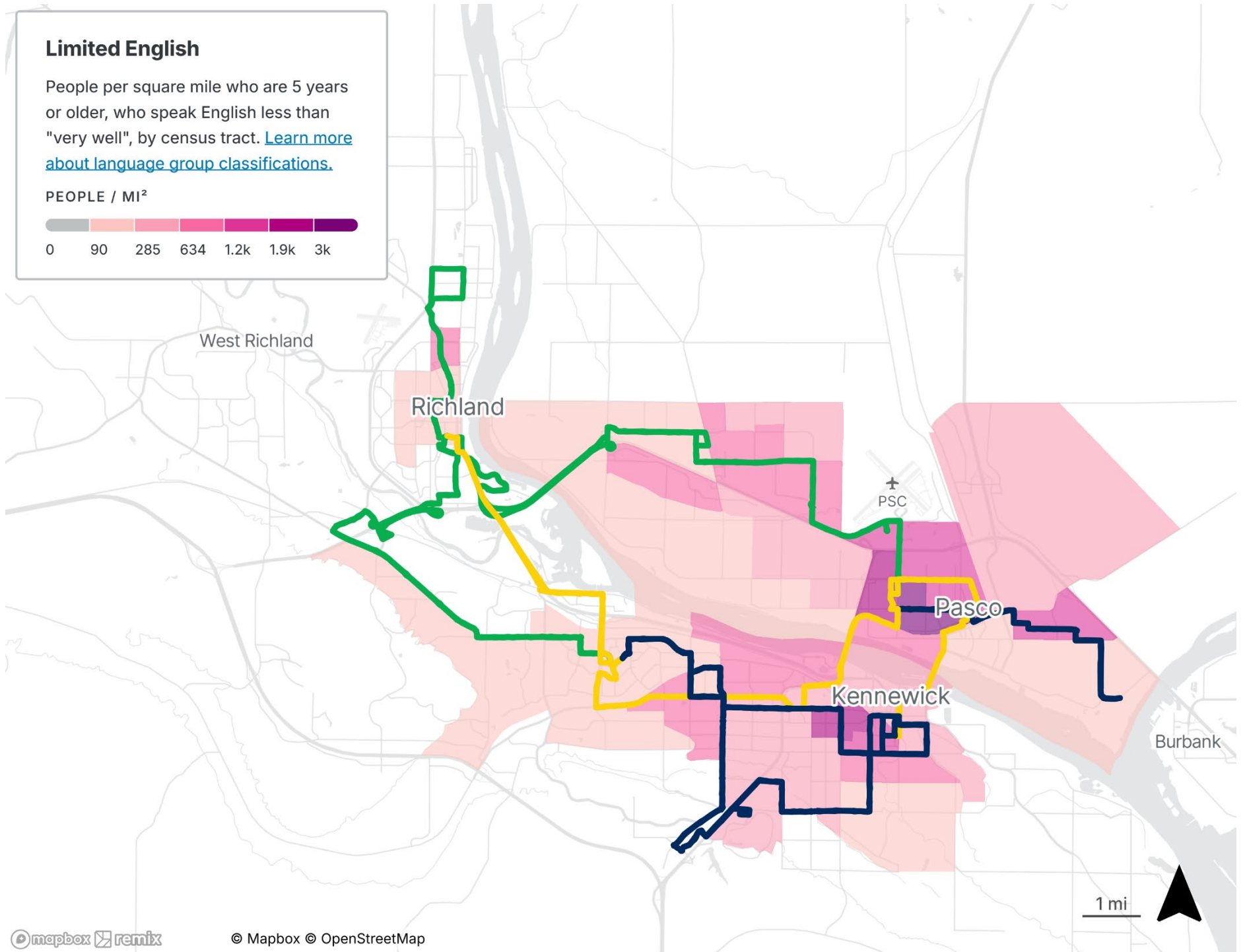
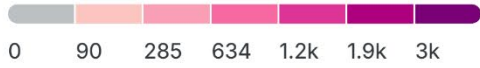
PEOPLE / MI²



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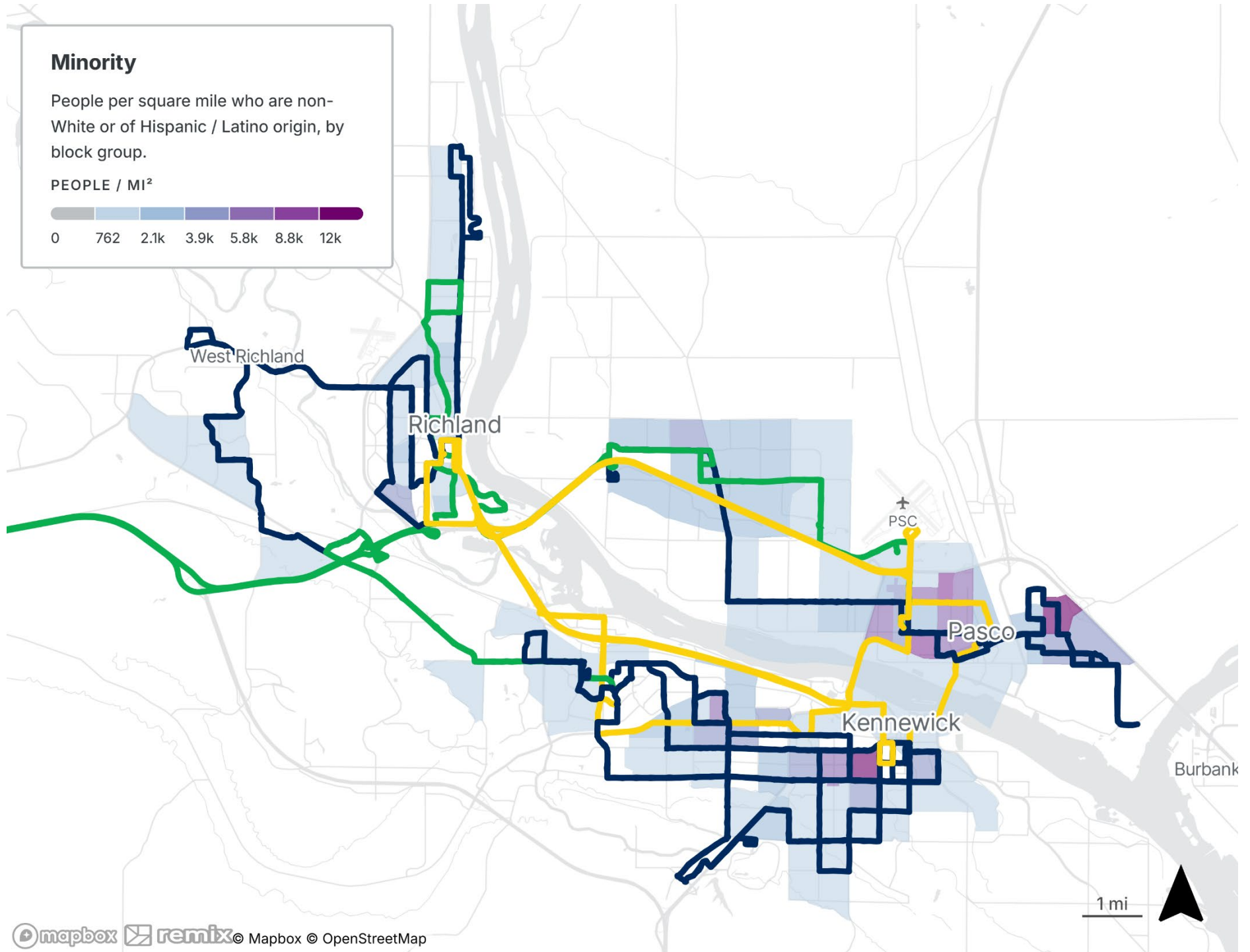
PEOPLE / MI²



Minority

People per square mile who are non-White or of Hispanic / Latino origin, by block group.

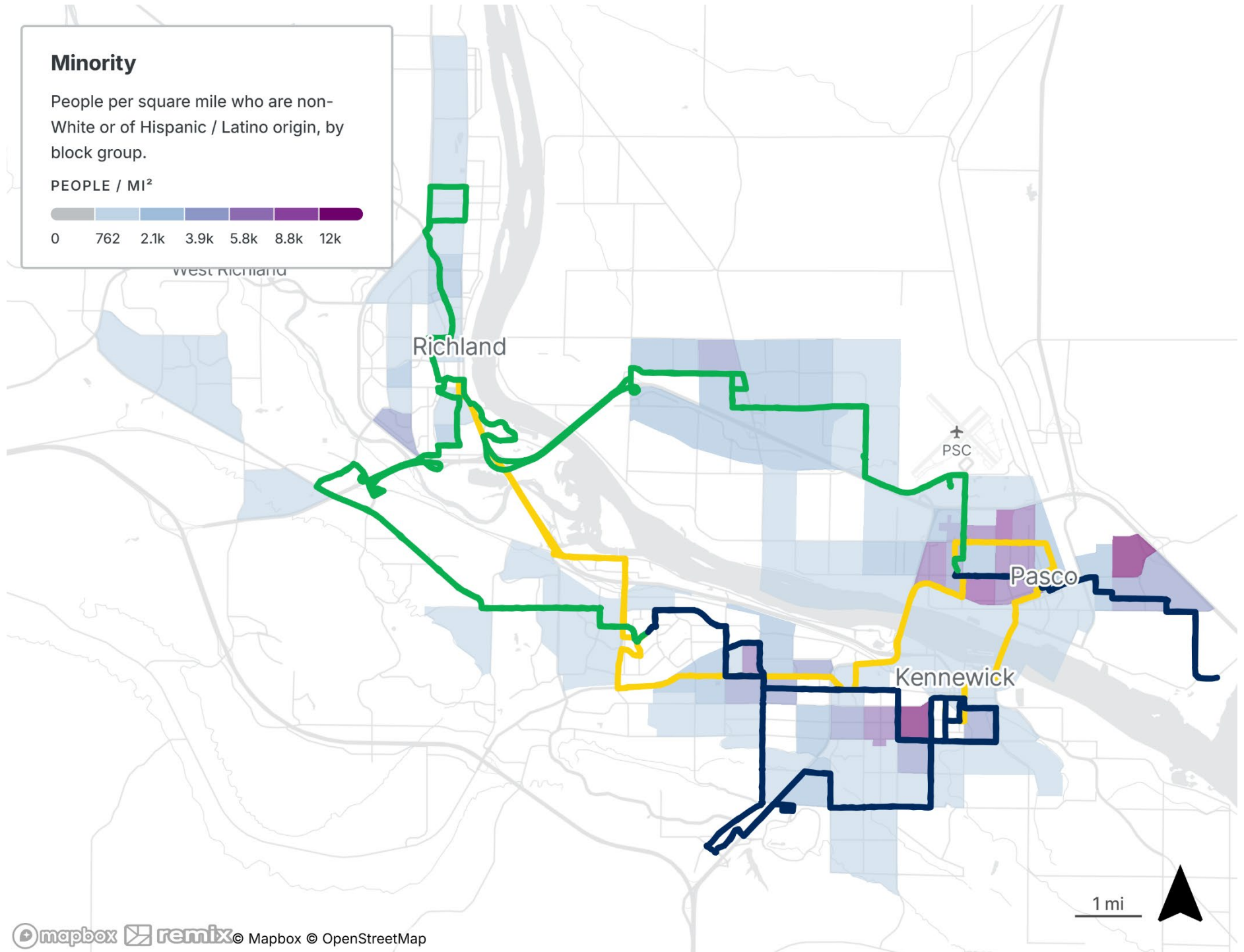
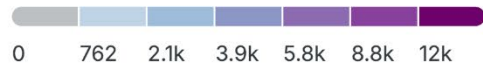
PEOPLE / MI²



Minority

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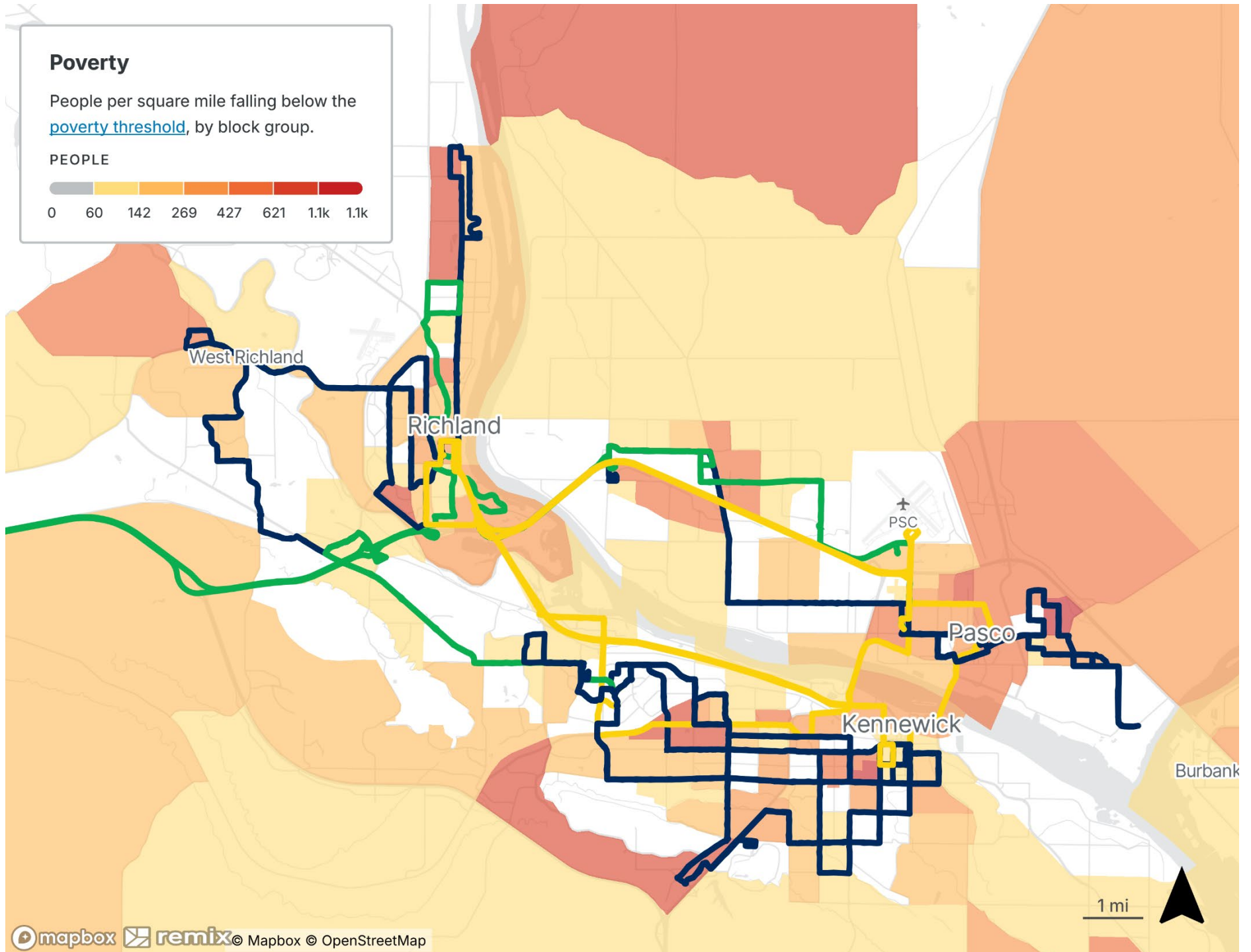
PEOPLE / MI²



Poverty

People per square mile falling below the [poverty threshold](#), by block group.

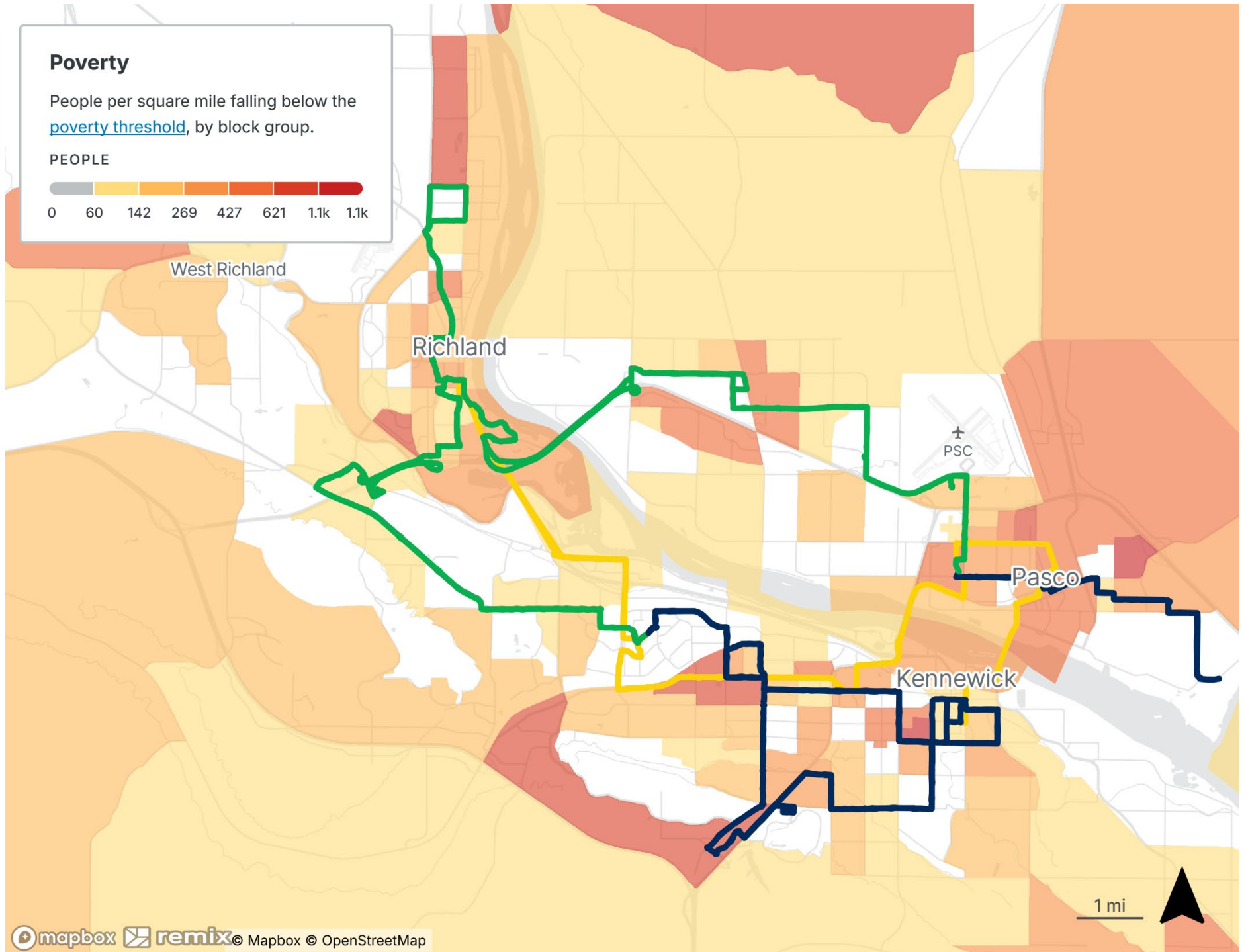
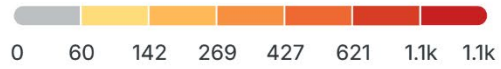
PEOPLE



Poverty

People per square mile falling below the [poverty threshold](#), by block group.

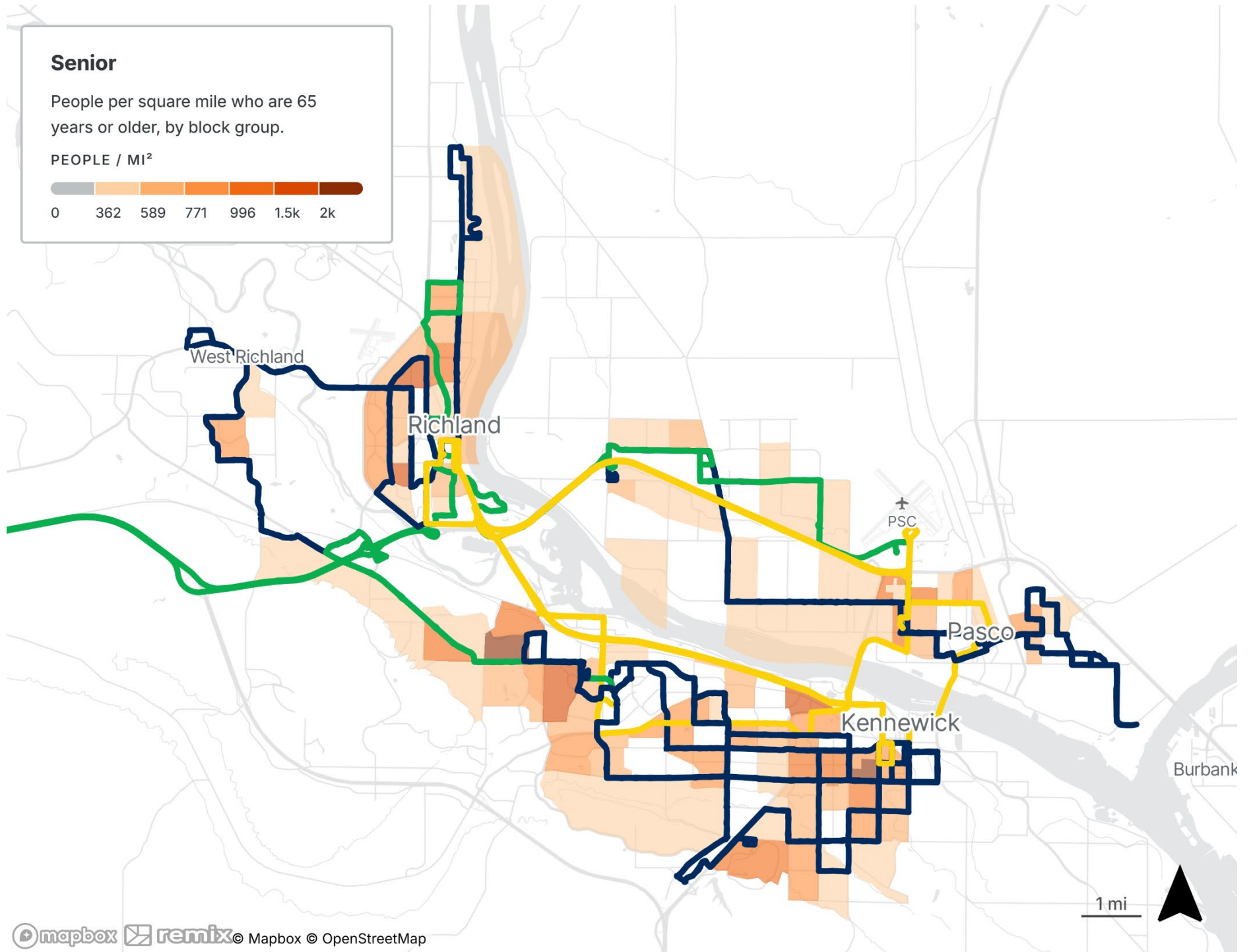
PEOPLE



Senior

People per square mile who are 65 years or older, by block group.

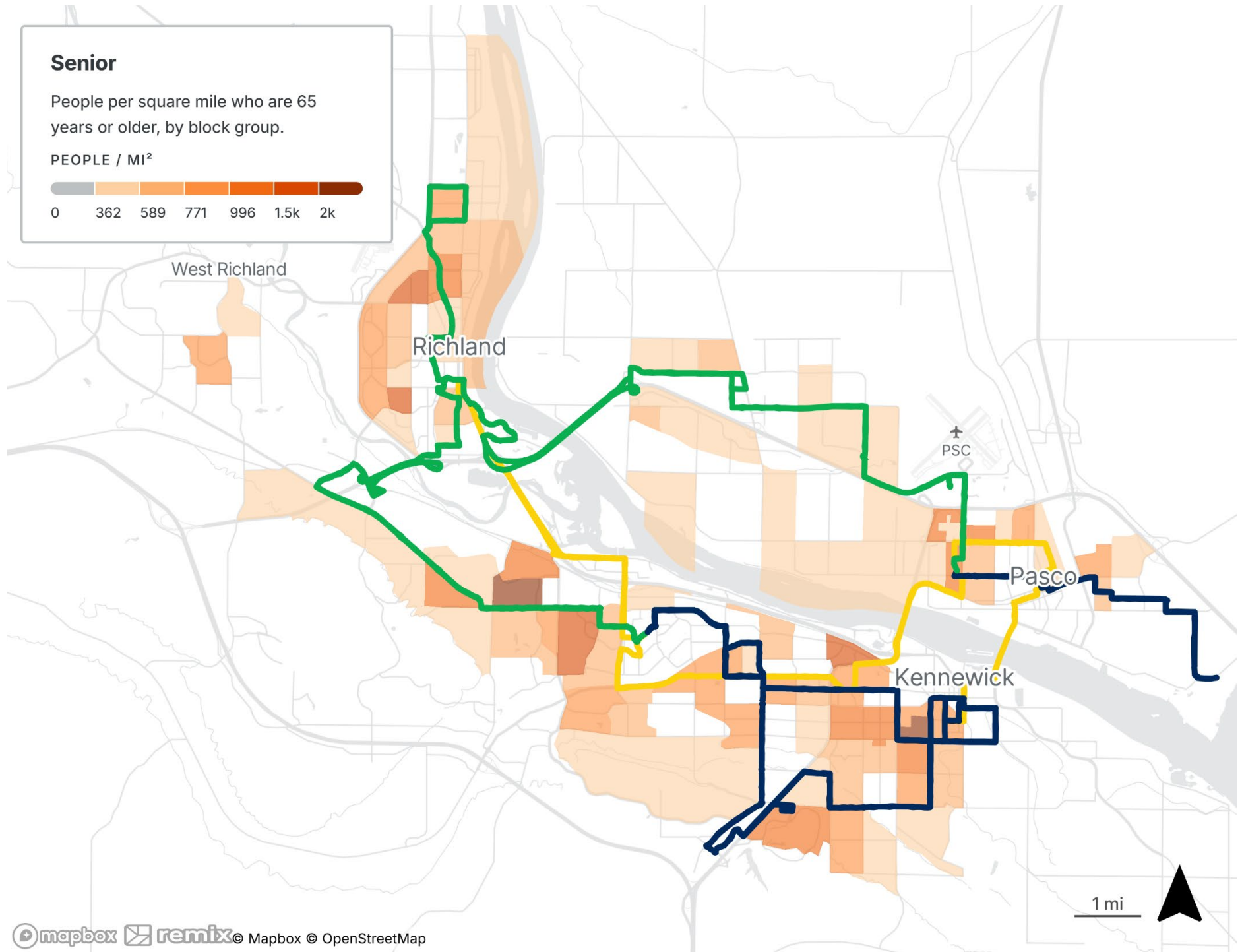
PEOPLE / MI²



Senior

People per square mile who are 65 years or older, by block group.

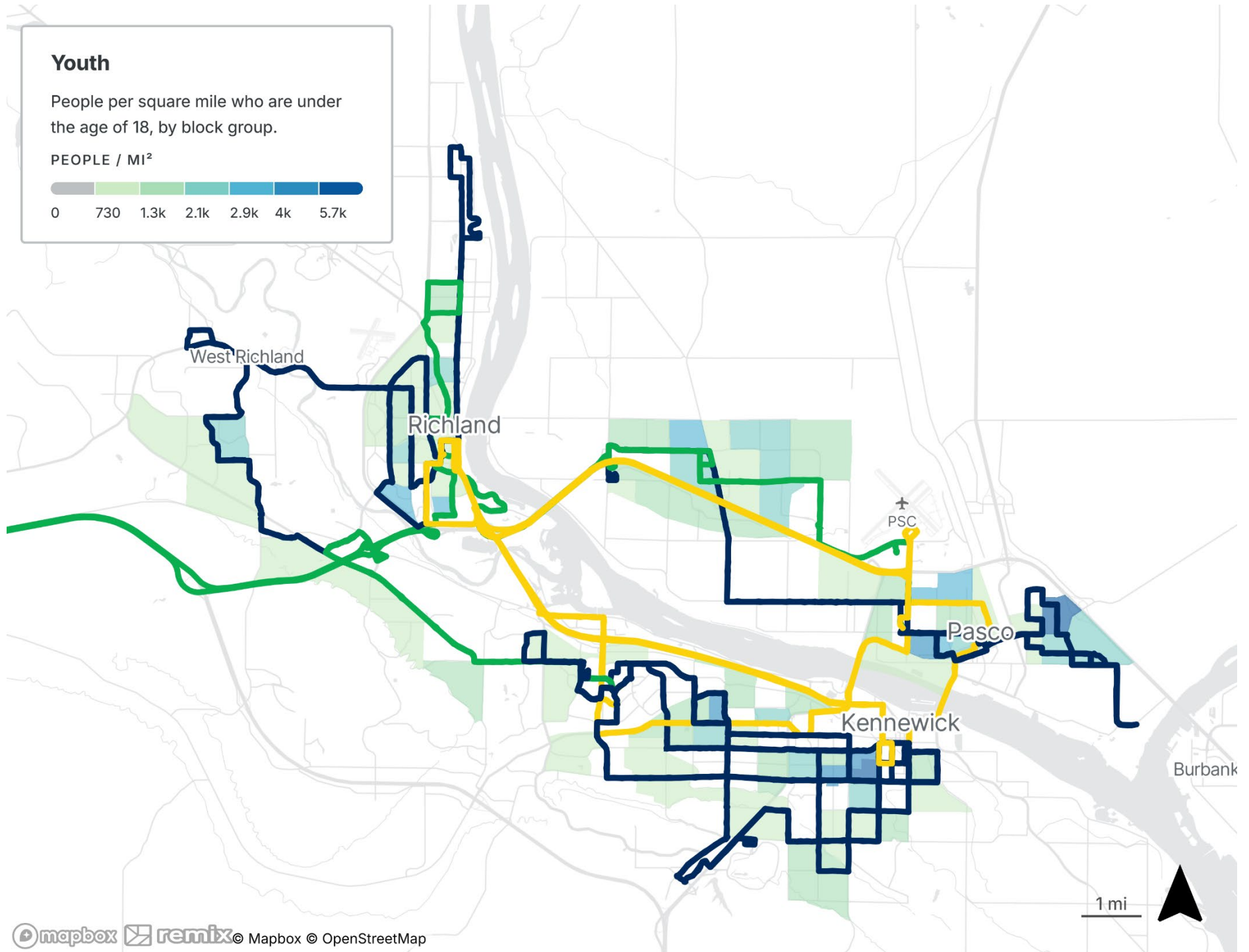
PEOPLE / MI²



Youth

People per square mile who are under the age of 18, by block group.

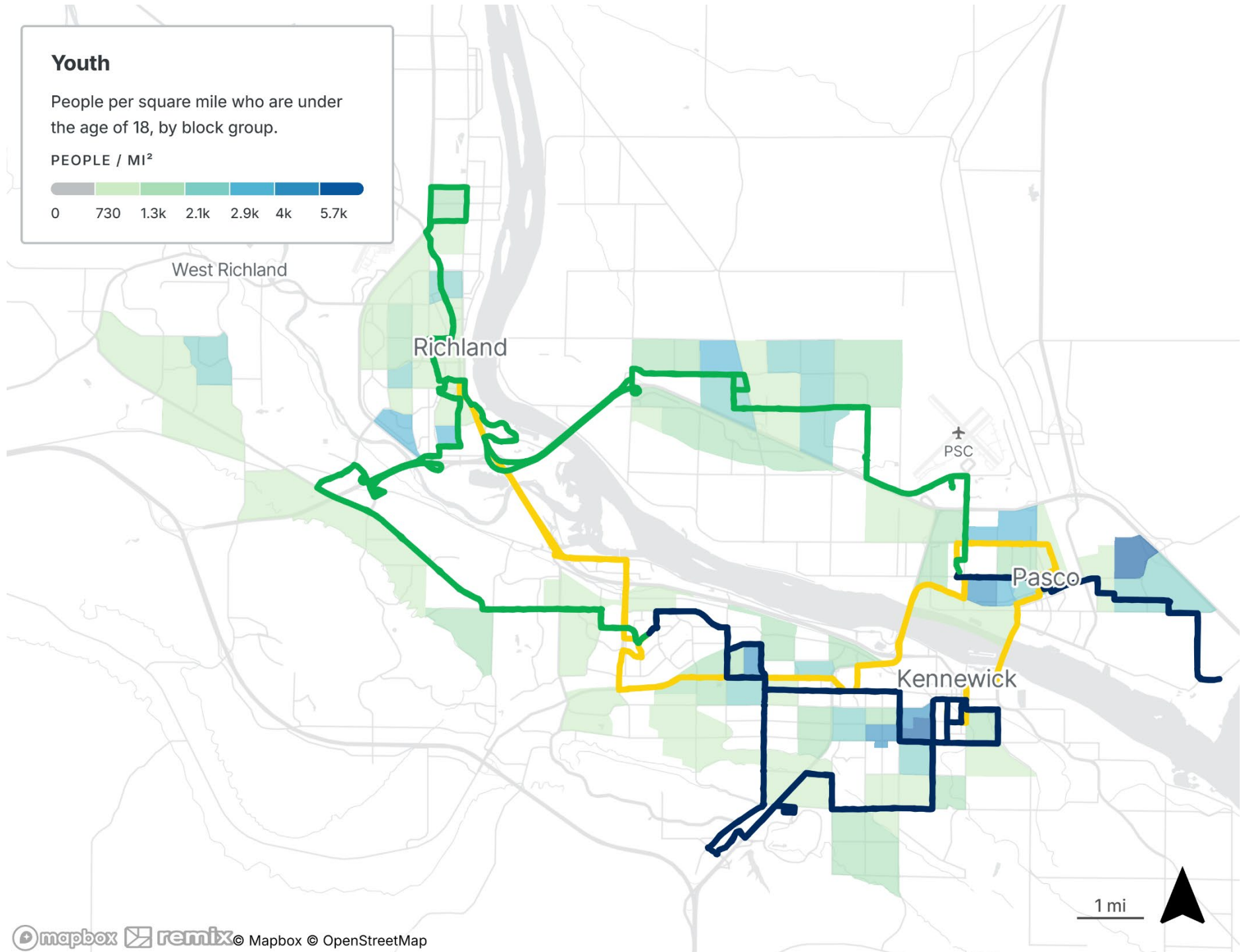
PEOPLE / MI²



Youth

People per square mile who are under the age of 18, by block group.

PEOPLE / MI²



Memorandum

Date: January 15, 2026

To: Thomas Drozt, Chief Executive Officer

From: Kevin Sliger, Chief Planning and Development Officer

Re: Authorizing the Adoption of the 2026 Annual Service Plan

Background

The 2026 Annual Service Plan (ASP) consists of service change recommendations that will continue to prioritize equity and emphasize efficiency by making changes to the fixed route network with the goal of providing faster, more frequent, and more reliable service. Additionally, staff conducted thorough cost-benefit analyses to uphold quality while remaining financially prudent when making these recommendations. Most of the recommended service changes will be implemented in June 2026 with a few starting in August 2026. The 2026 ASP was released for public comment on November 16, 2025.

Recommended Fixed Route Service Changes:

Route Eliminations:

- Route 123s Tripper – morning AM trip eliminated and only Leslie Rd. portion of PM trip.
- Route 26s Tripper – remove one bus from the AM and PM trips

New Routes:

- Route 61 – Veteran’s Route – (Mon-Fri) New weekday service along A St. to include the Columbia Basin Veterans Center.
- Pasco Aquatics Center Pilot (Mon-Sat) – service for the new aquatics center
- Route 67 – Sunday Service Pilot – hourly service from 22nd to aquatics center
- Pasco Flea Market Pilot (Sat-Sun) – seasonal service (August-October 2026) through Downtown Pasco to the Flea Market.

Special Events

- Special Events – additional service for World Cup events and the Prosser Balloon Rally

Route Adjustments & Realignments:

- Richland Downtown Loop – potential adjustments to Richland routes as the Downtown Loop begins construction in Spring 2026.
- Reallocate tripper hours to serve overcrowding on routes and a tripper service for Amazon fulfillment center employees.
- Minor route and timing adjustments as needed

Recommended CONNECT Service Changes:

- Explore opportunities for area growth to meet the increasing demand from riders by adding points of interest based on community growth and need, particularly in areas where fixed-route options are limited or unavailable
- Improving app functionality

- Monitor driver partners, ensuring contracted service provides comprehensive training and the necessary tools to deliver exceptional service consistently

Recommended ADA/Dial-A-Ride Service Changes:

- DAR plans to implement a new dispatching module in 2026 that is expected to improve efficiency and pilot same day bookings.

Planned Rideshare Adjustments:

- New vehicles continue to be introduced into service to replace aging fleet. Up to 20 vehicles per year with 10 planned for 2026.
- Fare increase of 10% and a full review of fare structure.

Title VI Service Equity Analysis:

It has been determined that Route 61 outlined in the 2026 ASP is considered a major service change per BFT's Major Service Change Policy, thus a Title VI Service Equity Analysis was required. BFT staff conducted a Title VI Service Equity Analysis, and it was concluded that none of the recommended changes will result in a disparate impact to minority populations or low-income populations based on BFT's Disparate Impact Policy and Disproportionate Burden Policy. The recommended changes will result in a net increase in service for those affected.

Labor & Vehicle Resources:

Implementation of the 2026 ASP is estimated to require seven (7) additional operators for fixed route service in 2026. However, reaching the current approved headcount of 173 would suffice. Operations and Training staff will continue a hiring effort to address current labor shortages and work towards reaching the approved fixed route operator headcount

Fixed Route Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (VOMS) are expected to grow from 57 to 62 on weekdays. The reason for this significant increase is the focus on providing more service during peak hours of the day. This expansion will be possible with BFT's current fleet and utilizing four buses from the contingency fleet to be within Federal requirements around vehicle spare ratio, which should be 20%.

Public Comment:

BFT conducted public outreach on the 2026 ASP through an online interactive map, customer service feedback, and open houses. Marketing promoted the comment period, and all feedback is included in the 2026 ASP document. Below is a summary of key comments:

Access & Mobility

- Steep terrain limits walking and biking between Alphabet homes and Queensgate.
- Interest in improved non-freeway and neighborhood connections.

Service Coverage & Gaps

- No mid-day airport service between 9:00–14:00.
- Desire to extend service to new destinations (e.g., Pasco Aquatic Center, Ridgeline Dr./schools).

Operations & Reliability

- Short left-turn lanes at Lewis and Columbia create peak-hour delays.
- Requests to reroute to avoid difficult or delay-prone movements.

Routing & Network Design

- Add a non-express route over the Duportail Bridge.
- Reroute Route 50 (e.g., Quinault/Grandridge adjustments).
- Consider moving service off the freeway to Duportail/Wellsian.
- Interline Routes 41 and 40 to reduce transfers and improve access.

Scheduling

- Adjust schedules to consistent pulse times (:00/:30 or :15/:45).

Performance

- Some route segments underperform (e.g., Grandridge section of Route 50).

Positive Feedback & Support

- Strong support for Duportail Bridge service (27X currently serves this area).
- Appreciation for frequency and direct service from Richland to Tri-Cities Airport.
- Support for planning ahead for the new aquatic center.

Public Hearing:

January 15, 2026, at 6 p.m. during the BFT Board Meeting

*Location: Ben Franklin Transit Board Room located at 1000 Columbia Park Trail,
Richland, WA 99352*

The complete 2026 ASP can be viewed on the BFT website at: <https://www.bft.org/about/annual-service-plan>

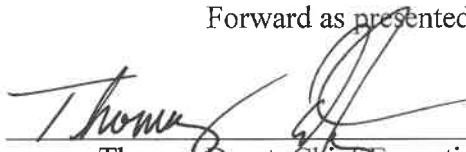
Funding

Budgeted: Yes
Budget Source: Capital and Operating Budget
Funding Source: FTA, State, and Local

Recommendation

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to adopt the 2026 Annual Service Plan.

Forward as presented:



Thomas Drozt, Chief Executive Officer

**BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT
RESOLUTION 03-2026**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE 2026 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN

WHEREAS, Planning staff have worked with Operations, Finance, and Marketing as well as the public to identify needed service changes that are intended to improve accessibility and efficiency and have incorporated the recommended changes into the 2026 Annual Service Plan; and

WHEREAS, Planning staff have completed a review of the adopted 2026 operating budget and identified labor requirements for implementation of service changes outlined in the 2026 Annual Service Plan; and

WHEREAS, A Title VI Service Equity Analysis was conducted to identify if the coming service change may impose adverse effects on low-income and minority populations, and finding no adverse impacts are expected but rather a net positive change; and

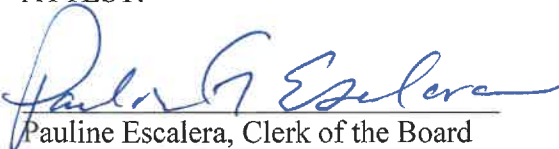
WHEREAS, Planning and Marketing staff published and advertised the draft document and incorporated public comments into the 2026 Annual Service Plan.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

The Chief Executive Office is authorized to adopt the 2026 Annual Service Plan and implement the outlined recommendations as detailed.

APPROVED AT A REGULAR BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting held Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, Washington.

ATTEST:


Pauline Escalera, Clerk of the Board


Will McKay, Chair
STEPHEN BAUMAN
VICE CHAIR

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY:


Jeremy J. Bishop, Legal Counsel