Metro Transit Equity Update

Metropolitan Council Committee of the Whole

October 21, 2020

Introduction

Wes Kooistra, General Manager

Part 1: Equity in Transit Data Overview

Eric Lind, Manager, Research and Analytics

"In most cases, evidence is used to convince an Other of a thing that they did not encounter. Ironically, data is not very good at this."

- Mimi Onouha

When Proof Is Not Enough
Throughout history, evidence of racism has failed to effect change.
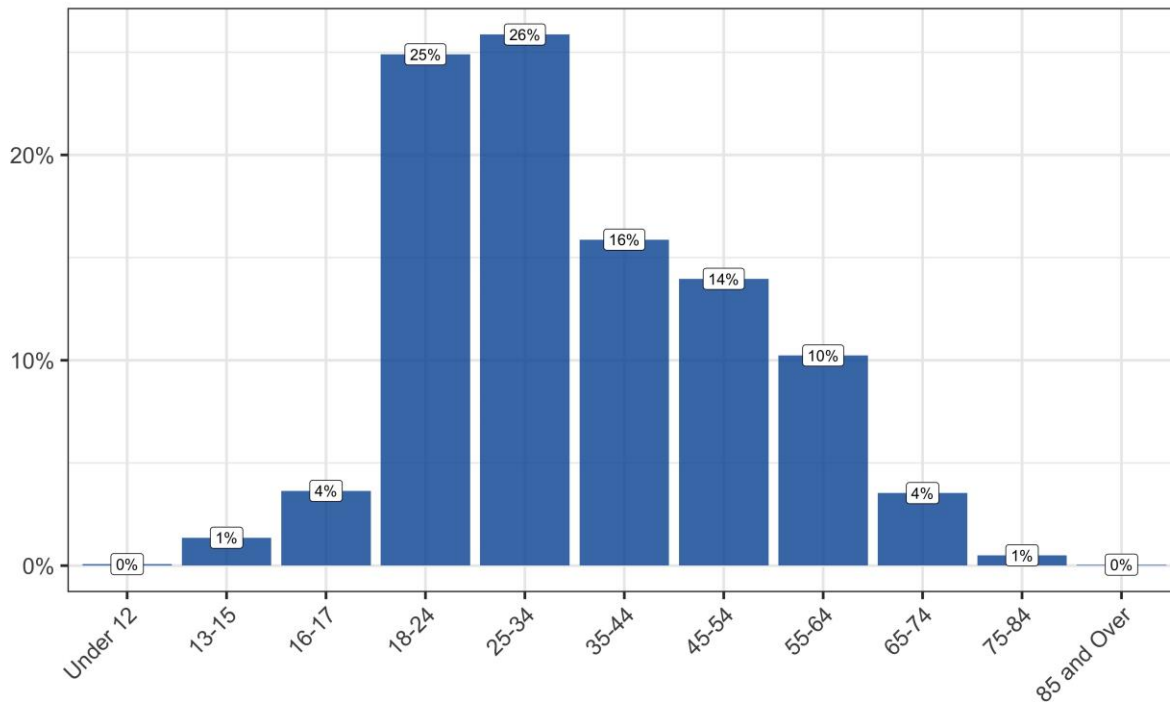
providing equitable mobility

RIDERS

Understanding (Pre-COVID) Riders

- Travel Behavior Inventory
  - 2016 TBI on-board

- Statistically robust
  - random sampling
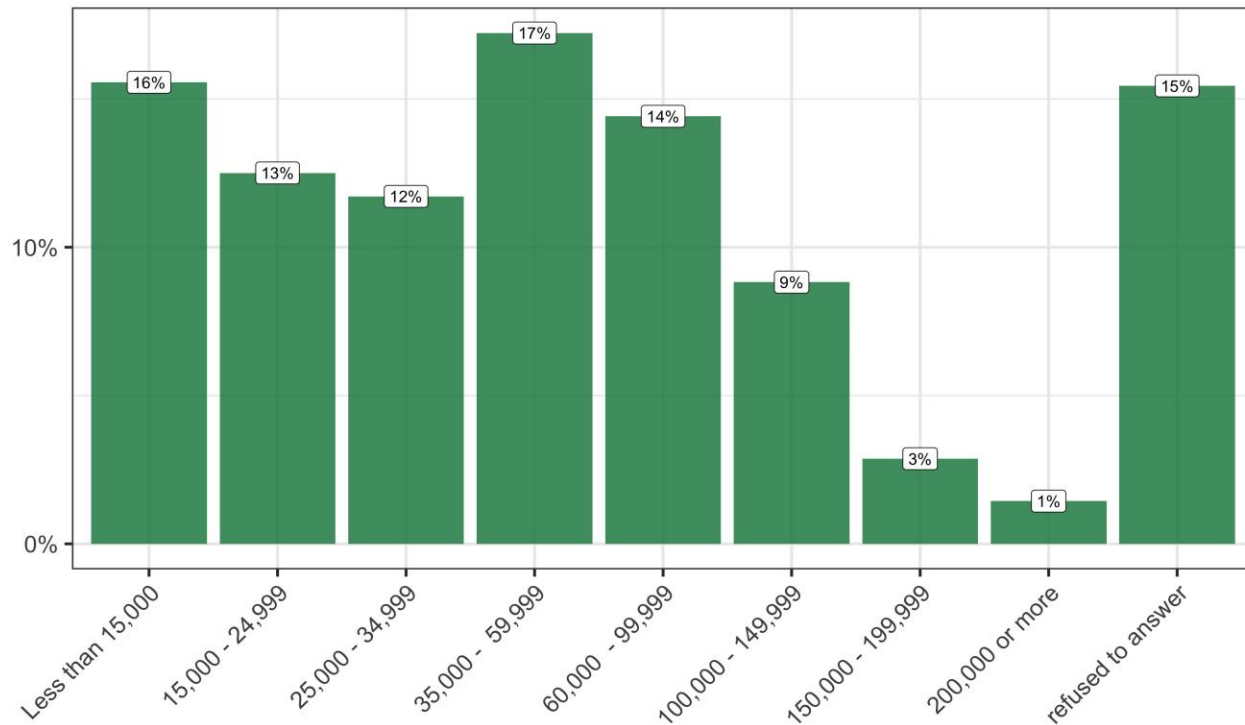 - trained interviewers
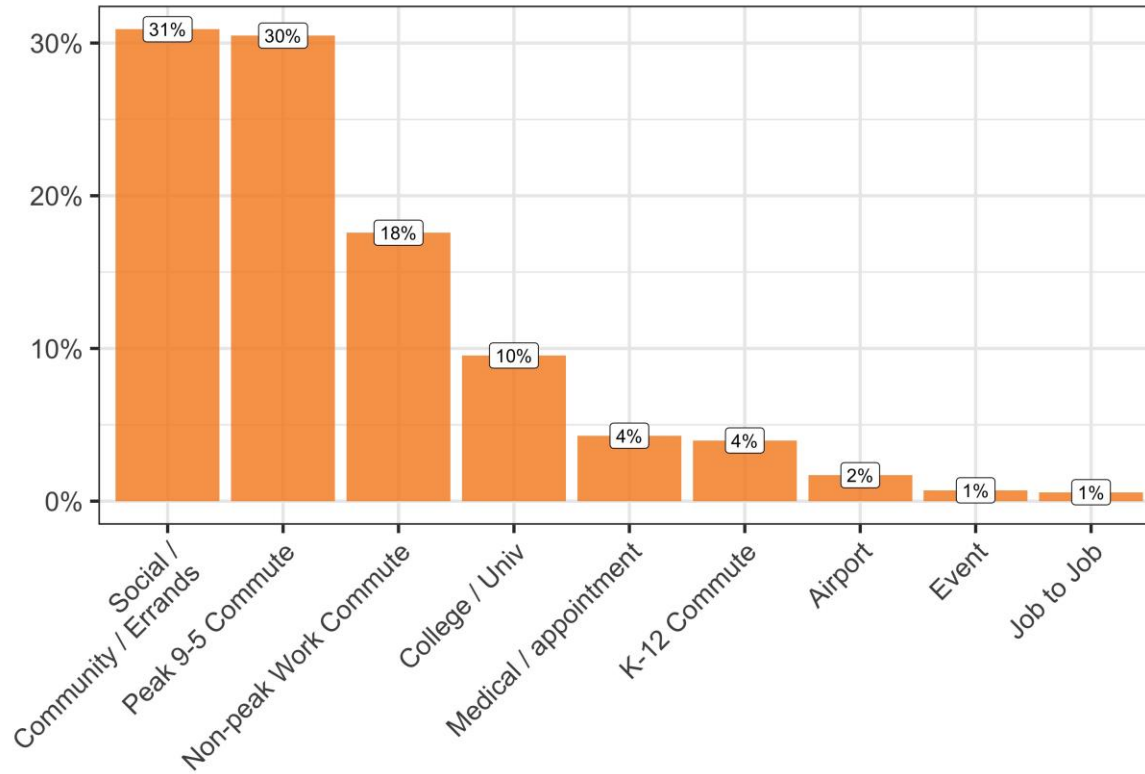 - weighted by ridership

- Public data

Metro Transit riders…

are mostly under 35 years old

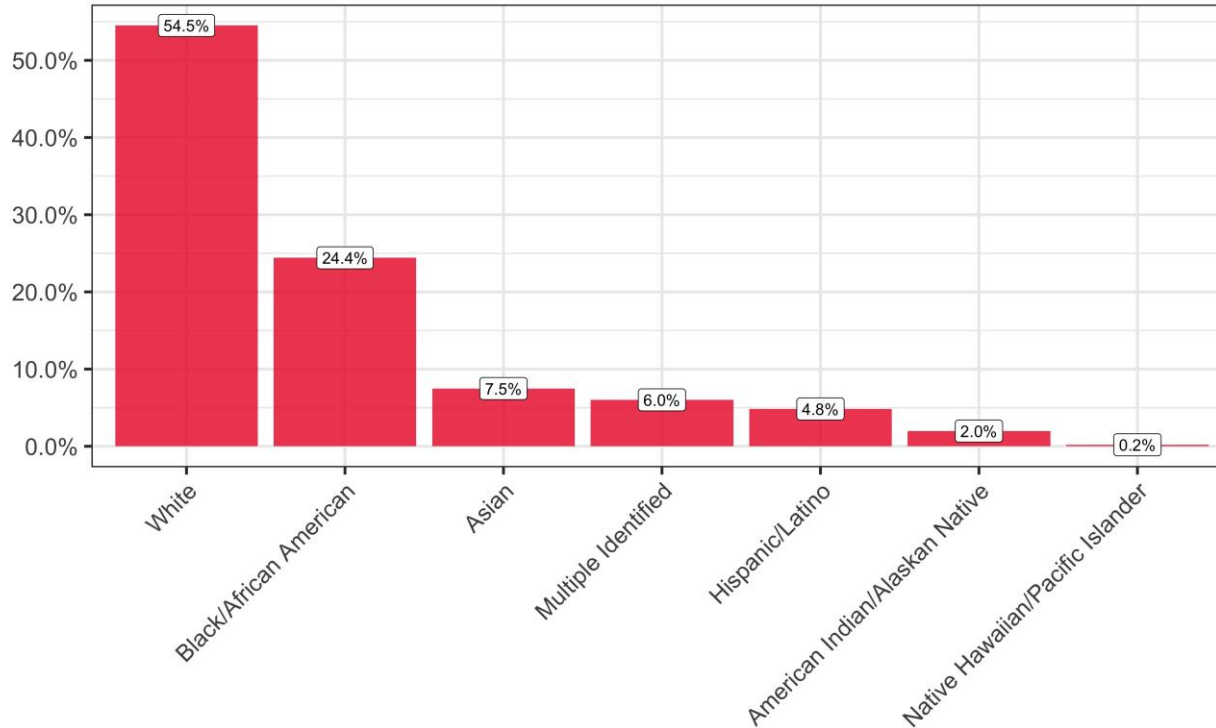*TBI on-board survey profile*

Metro Transit riders…

41% make less than $35K *household* income annually

TBI on-board survey profile

Metro Transit riders…

have a diverse set of trip purposes beyond 9-5 work commutes

TBI on-board survey profile

Metro Transit riders…

are 45% Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC)

TBI on-board survey profile

Transit riders are more likely to be BIPOC

Metro Transit system
difference from regional demographics

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
American Indian/Alaskan Native
multiple identified
Hispanic/Latino
Asian
Black/African American
white

Metro Transit system ridership is 54% white

7-county region is 73% white
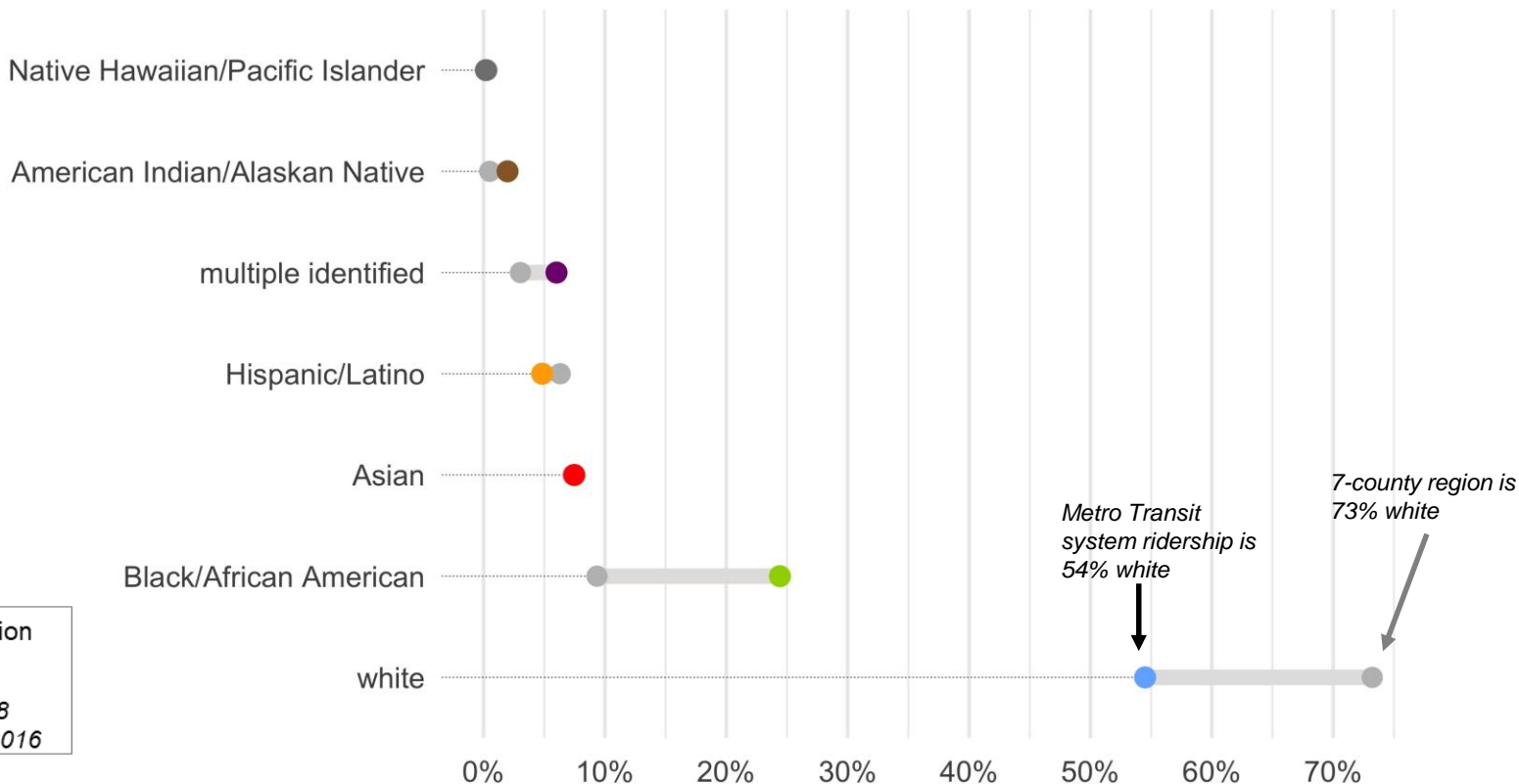
Legend:
- ● % regional population
- ●●●● % riders

population: ACS 2014 – 2018
transit riders: TBI on-board 2016

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Green Line:
44,000 trips on typical weekday

Metro Transit Green Line
difference from regional demographics
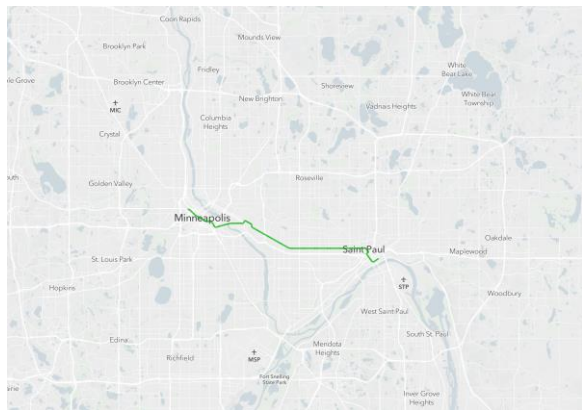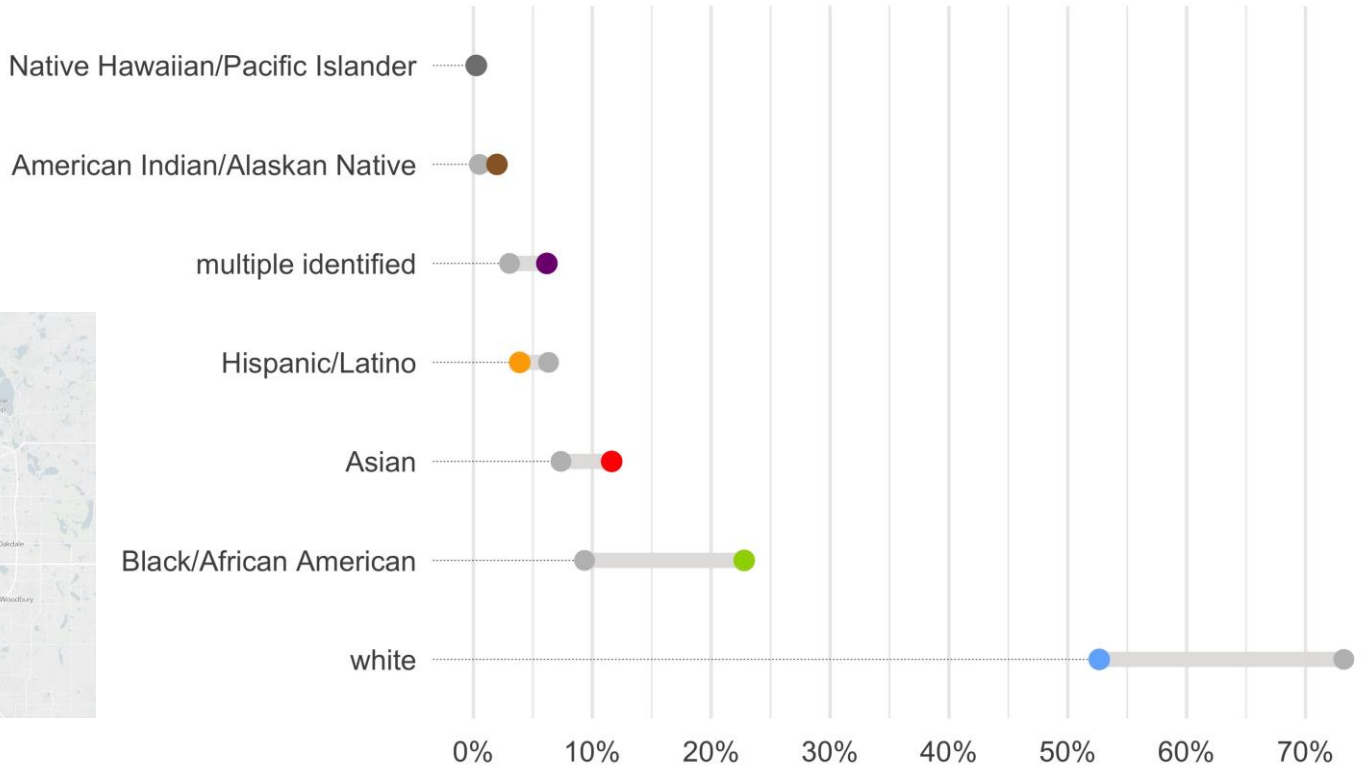
Blue Line:
33,000 trips on typical weekday

Metro Transit Blue Line
difference from regional demographics
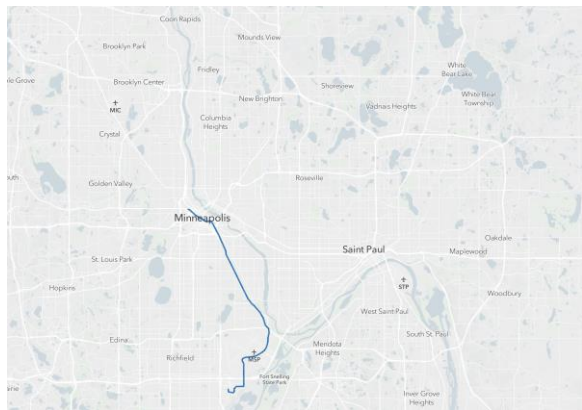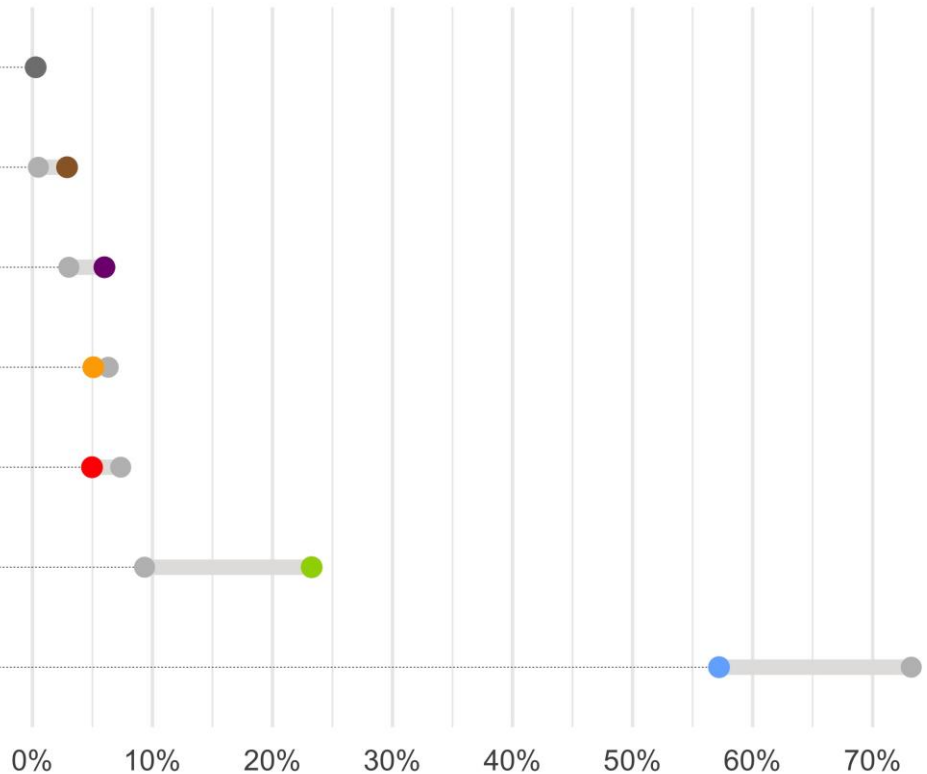
Route 5 (Chicago/ Fremont):
12,000 trips on typical weekday

Metro Transit Route 5
difference from regional demographics
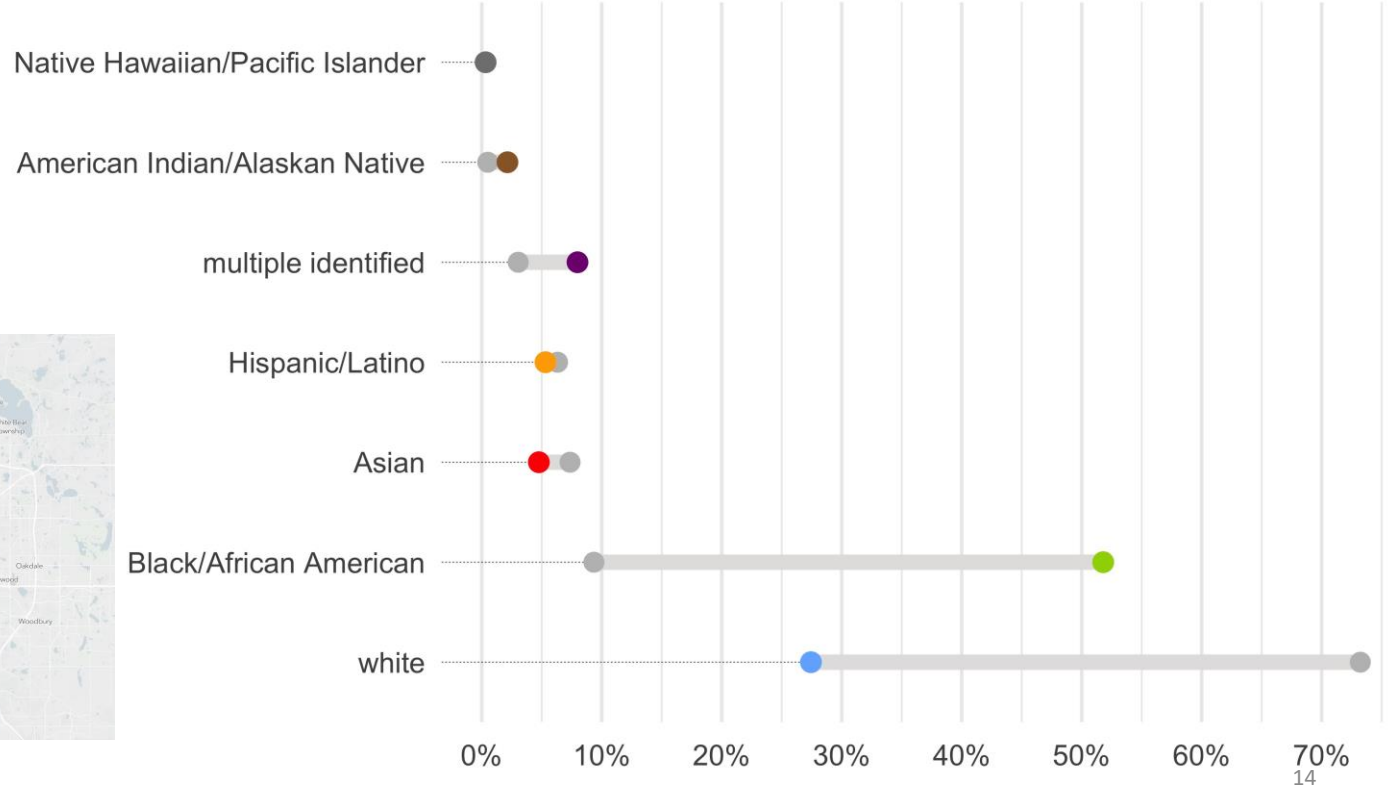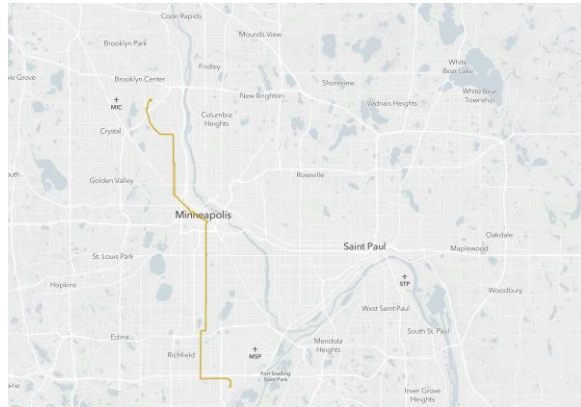
Route 21 (Lake St):
10,000 trips on typical weekday

Metro Transit Route 21
difference from regional demographics
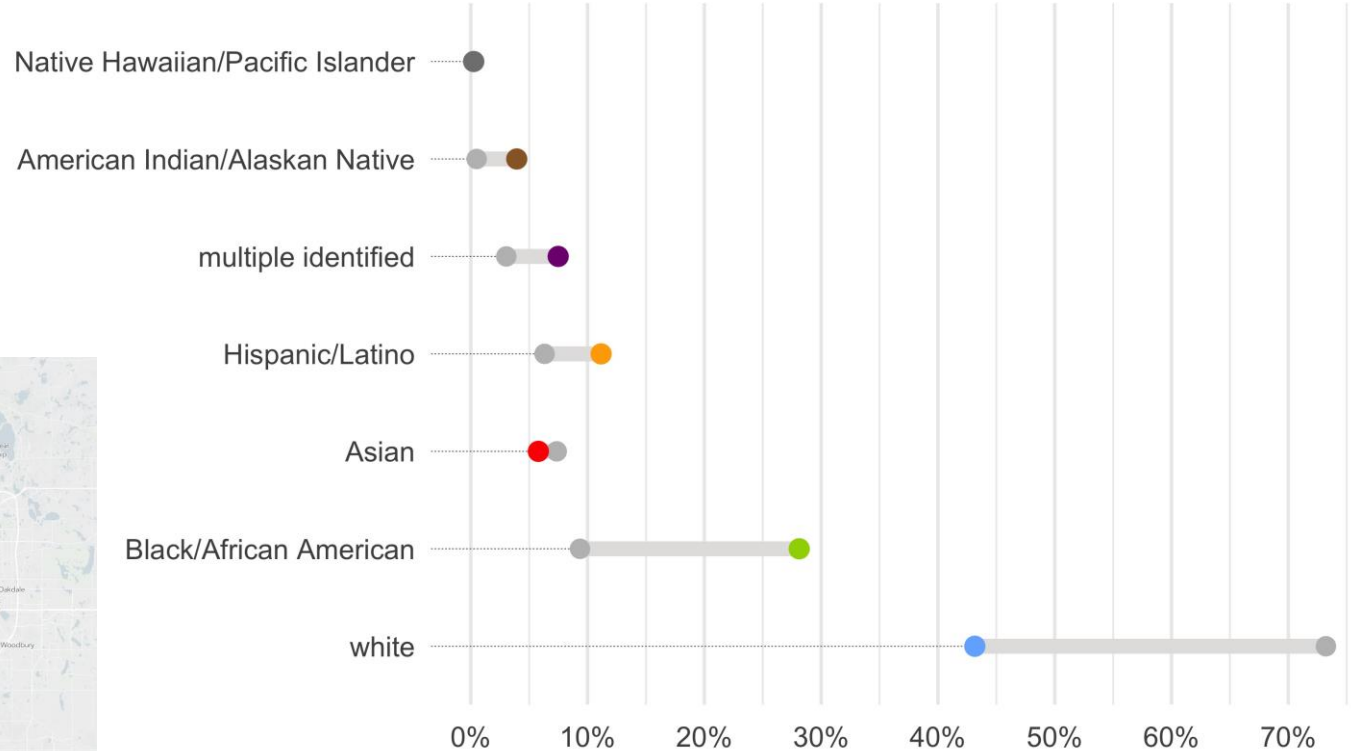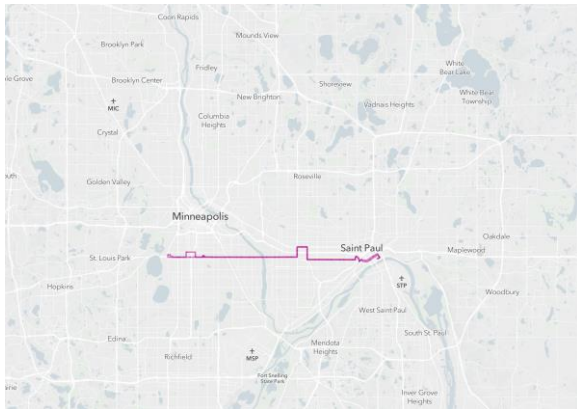
Top 10* Commuter-Express Routes:
11,300 trips on typical weekday
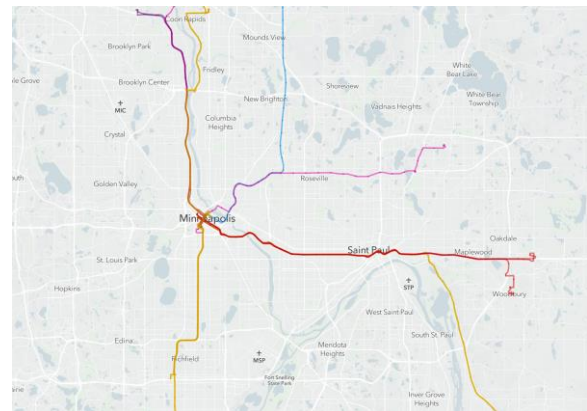
Metro Transit Top 10 Commuter-Express
difference from regional demographics
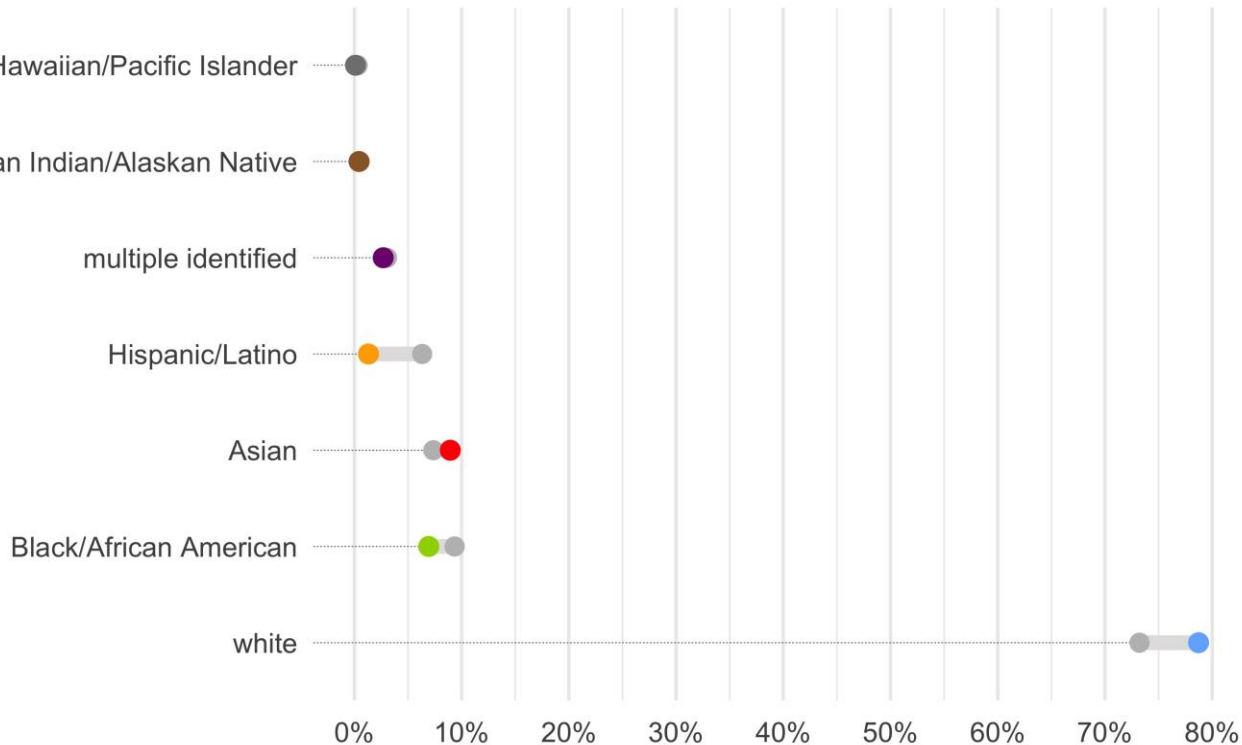
* Routes 850, 535, 250, 768, 270, 467, 355, 852, 375, 365

self-identified race / ethnicity
- Black/African American
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian
- multiple identified
- white
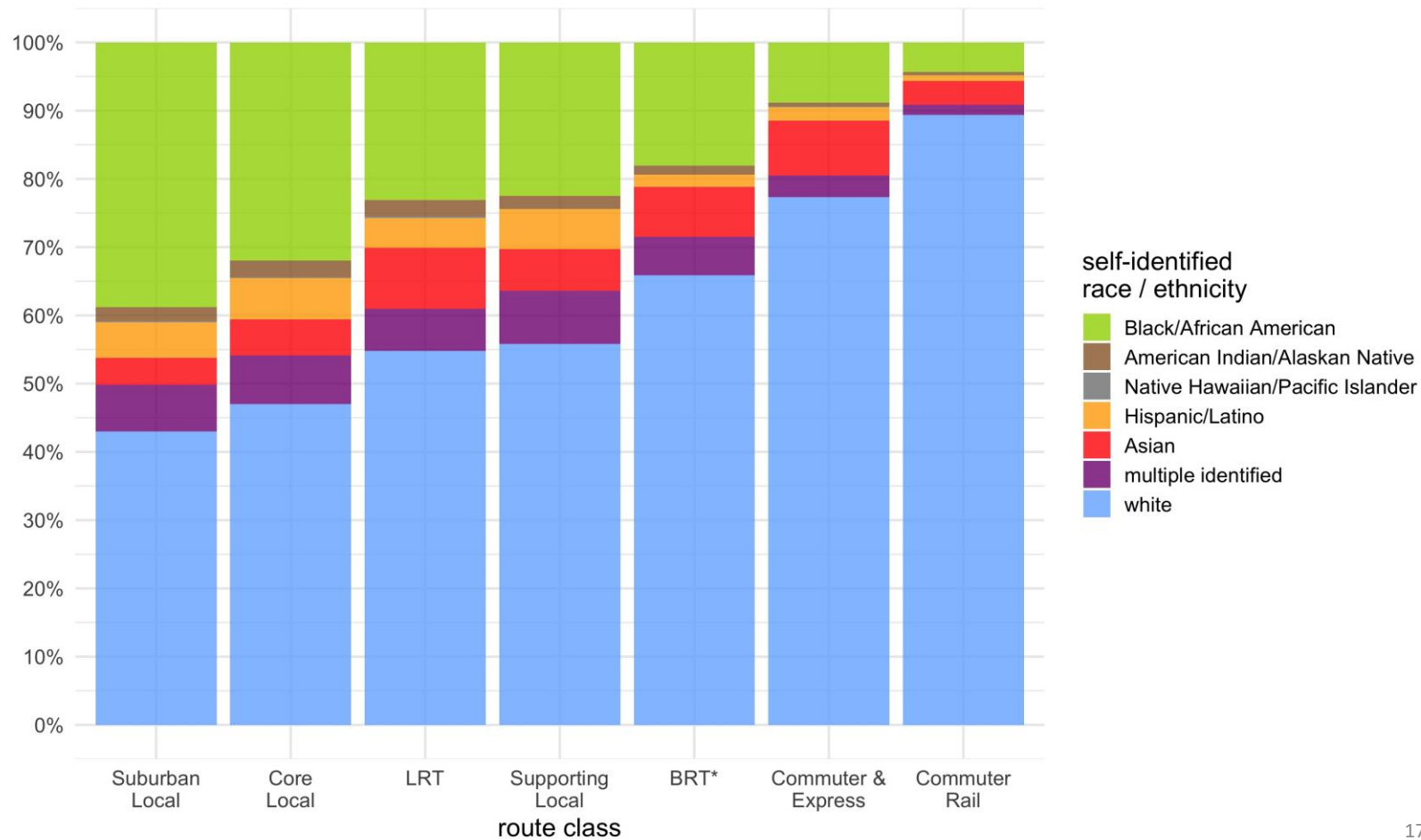
BRT and local bus ridership has been more resilient during COVID-19
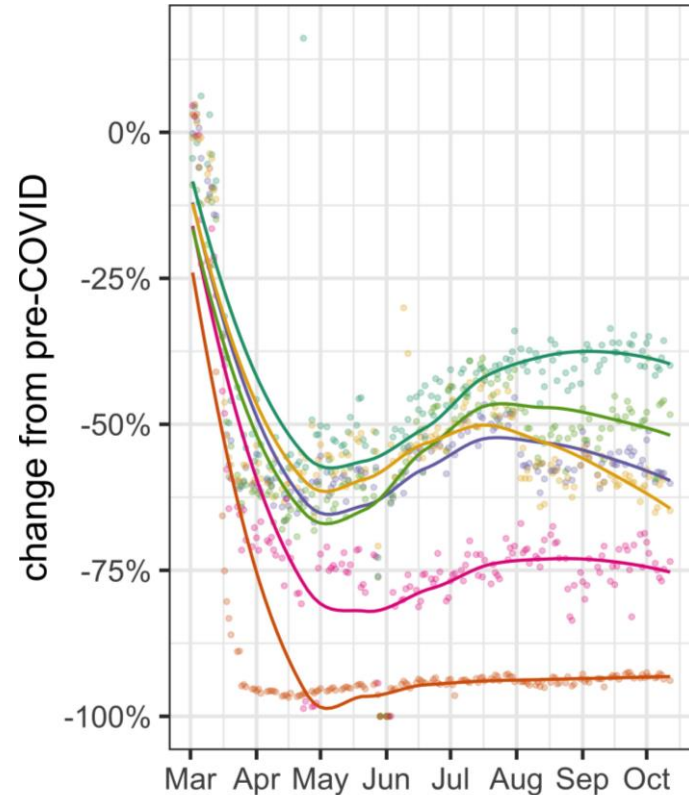
- BRT
- Suburban Local
- Core Local
- Supporting Local
- Light Rail
- Commuter Express & Northstar

Sept Weekday ridership

- Bus: ~ 62,000
  - 2019: ~ 151,000
- LRT: ~ 27,000
  - 2019: ~ 77,000
- Northstar: ~ 120
  - 2019: ~ 2,400

Weekday boardings: COVID condition

typical number of boardings daily
Sept 21 - Sept 25

- 0 – 200
- 200 – 400
- 400 – 600
- 600 – 800
- 800 – 1,000
- 1,000 – 1,200

areas of concentrated poverty + >50% people of color

19
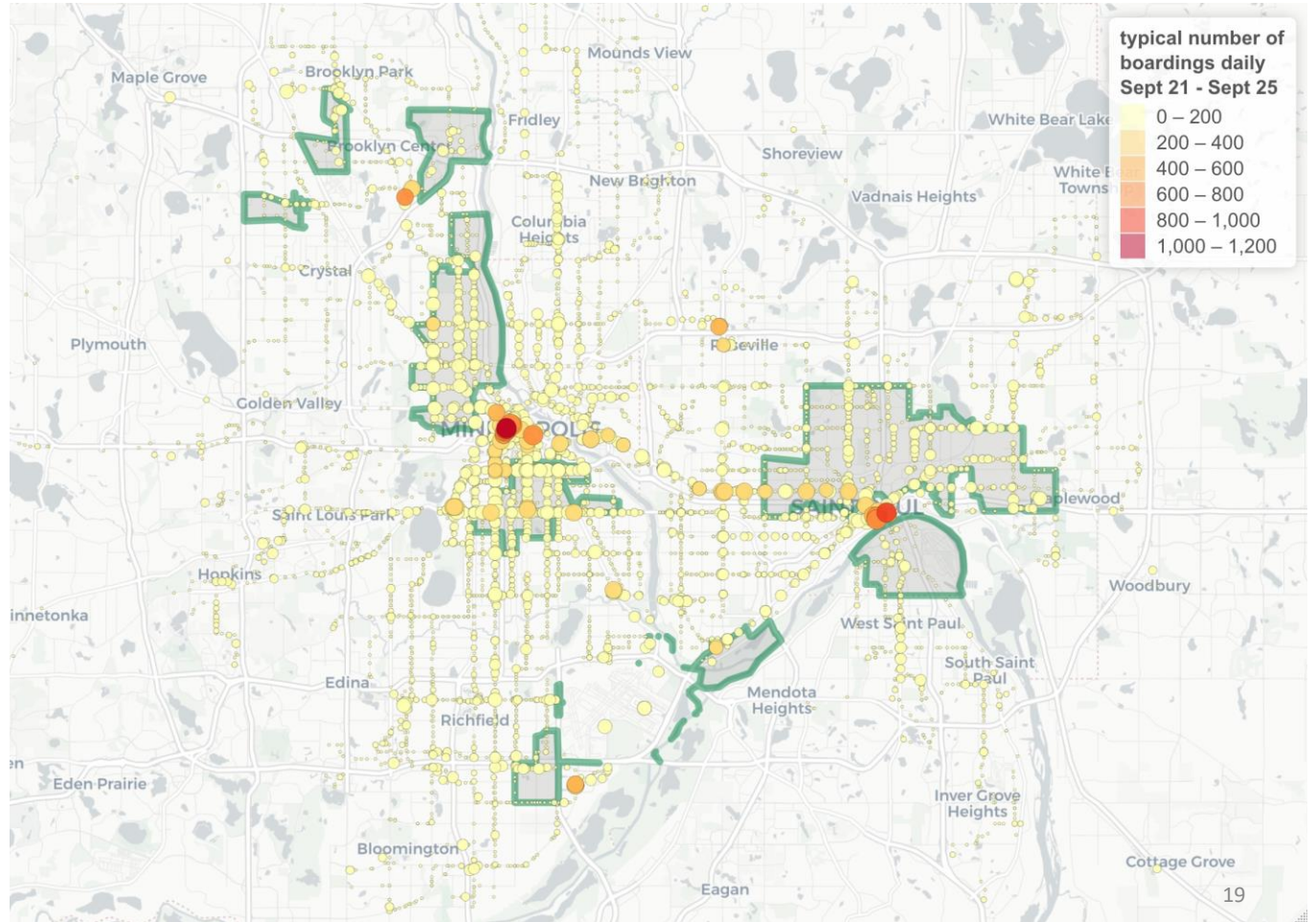
questions & discussion

Part 2: Status Updates on 2020 Work

Overview of 2020 Work

Lesley Kandaras, Chief of Staff

Initial Equity Action Steps in 2020

- Charging the Equity & Inclusion Team with gathering employee ideas and developing recommended action steps

- Strengthening processes for centering our work on public engagement and riders' experiences

- Developing equity evaluation of quarterly service changes

- Developing transit equity metrics

- Performing budget equity analyses

Initial Equity Action Steps in 2020 - continued

- Identifying ways to strengthen programs that improve people's lives

- Requiring "Equity" to be addressed as part of Thrive Lens analysis in business items

- Partnering with Human Resources to improve workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Partnering with Office of Equal Opportunity to increase contracting and purchasing with disadvantaged/underutilized businesses

- Continuing to pursue legislation for administrative citations for fare evasion

- Participating in Metropolitan Council's Metro Transit Police Department Review

Equity & Inclusion Team - Recommended Action Steps

Andrew Kimbell, Operator (MJR Garage)
Sarah Berres, Specialist, Equity & Inclusion

Equity & Inclusion Team

Mickey Albert, Operator

Sophia Ali, Operator

Jessica Cross, Market Development

Jamie Holt, Mechanic

Liban Ibrahim, MTPD Officer

Andrew Kimbell, Operator

Sam O'Connell, SWPO Public Affairs

Tray Pollard, Operator

Bev Rodriguez, MTPD Officer (HAT)

Jonah Yang, Operator

Not pictured, Theresa Bell, Operator

Equity & Inclusion Team's Recommendations

Overview and Process

- Gathered 285 comments/ideas from employees (June-September)

- Developed recommended action steps that will be addressed as part of the Strategic Framework development (October-November)

Developed 55 recommended action steps across themes that emerged

1. Accountability and Transparency
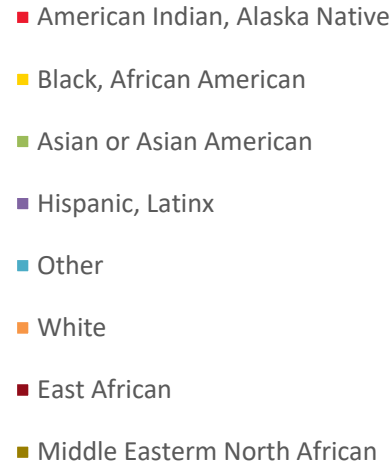2. Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion
3. Training and Education
4. MTPD
5. Workplace Culture
6. Leadership Commitment
7. Community Partnerships & Engagement
8. Employee Engagement
9. Safety
10. Defining Equity
11. Council Collaboration
12. Equity Audit
13. Emergency Response
14. Investment
15. Fares

Listening and Learning Through Crises

Robin Caufman, Director of Administration

Engagement Strategies Resulted in Hearing from Representative Group

- Set goal of 1,000 responses with 45% BIPOC

- Used variety of strategies
  - Website
  - Emails
  - Social media
  - Ethnic media
  - In person surveys at transit stops, centers, stations

- Surveyed and talked to over 1,800 people
  - 1,400 online
  - 400 in person conversations

Legend:
- ■ American Indian, Alaska Native
- ■ Black, African American
- ■ Asian or Asian American
- ■ Hispanic, Latinx
- ■ Other
- ■ White
- ■ East African
- ■ Middle Eesterm North African

Listening and Learning
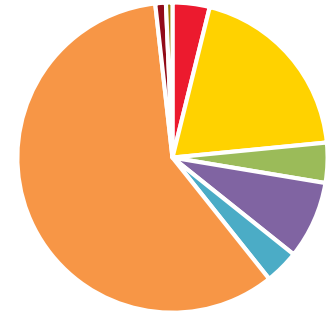
Pre-COVID Ridership
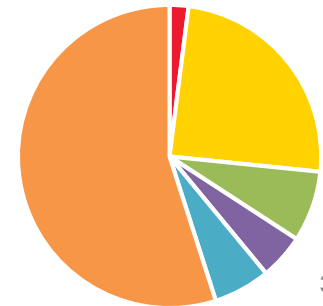
What We Learned: Overview

- Demographics, responses differ between online and in person

- Need to use multiple strategies to engage a diverse community

- Some strategies were more effective then others

- Community doesn't have a lot of capacity for meetings

What We Learned: Survey Method Matters

riders active during COVID

race by survey type
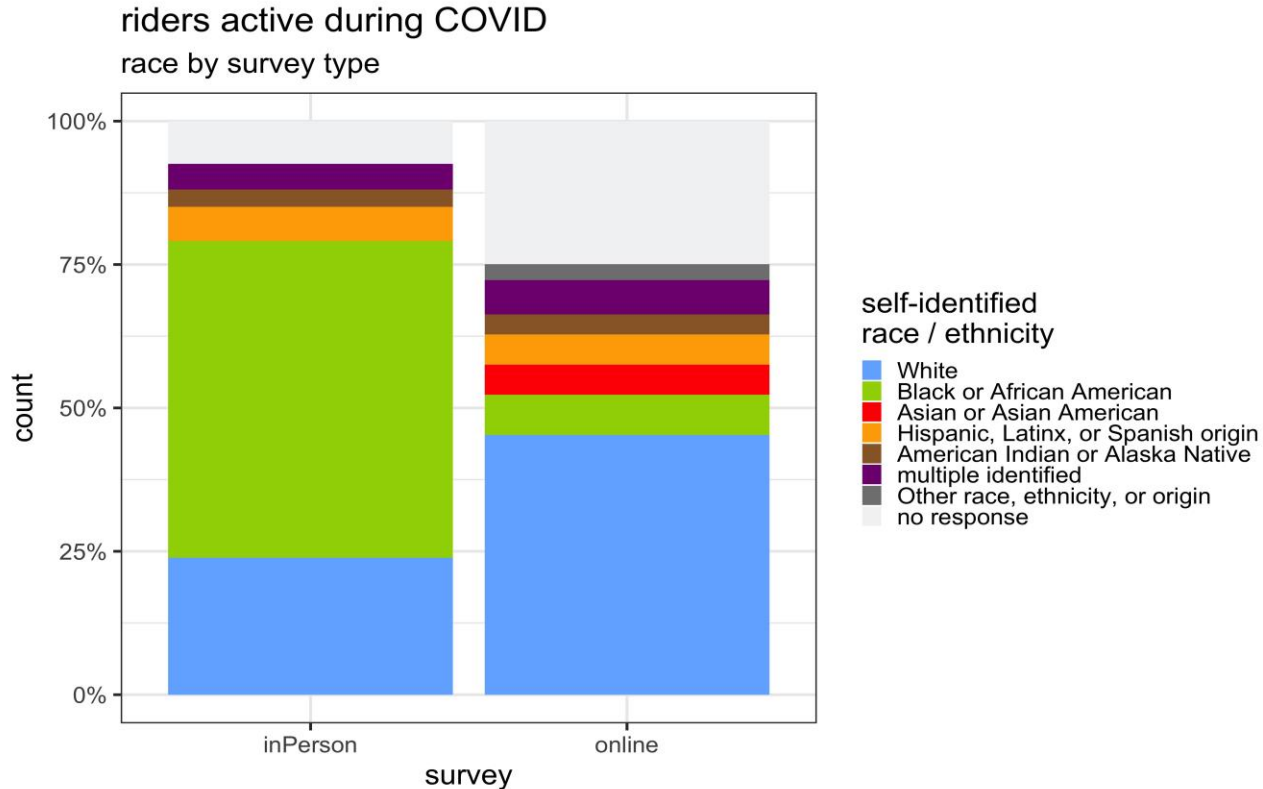
What We Learned: Priorities of Current Riders

33
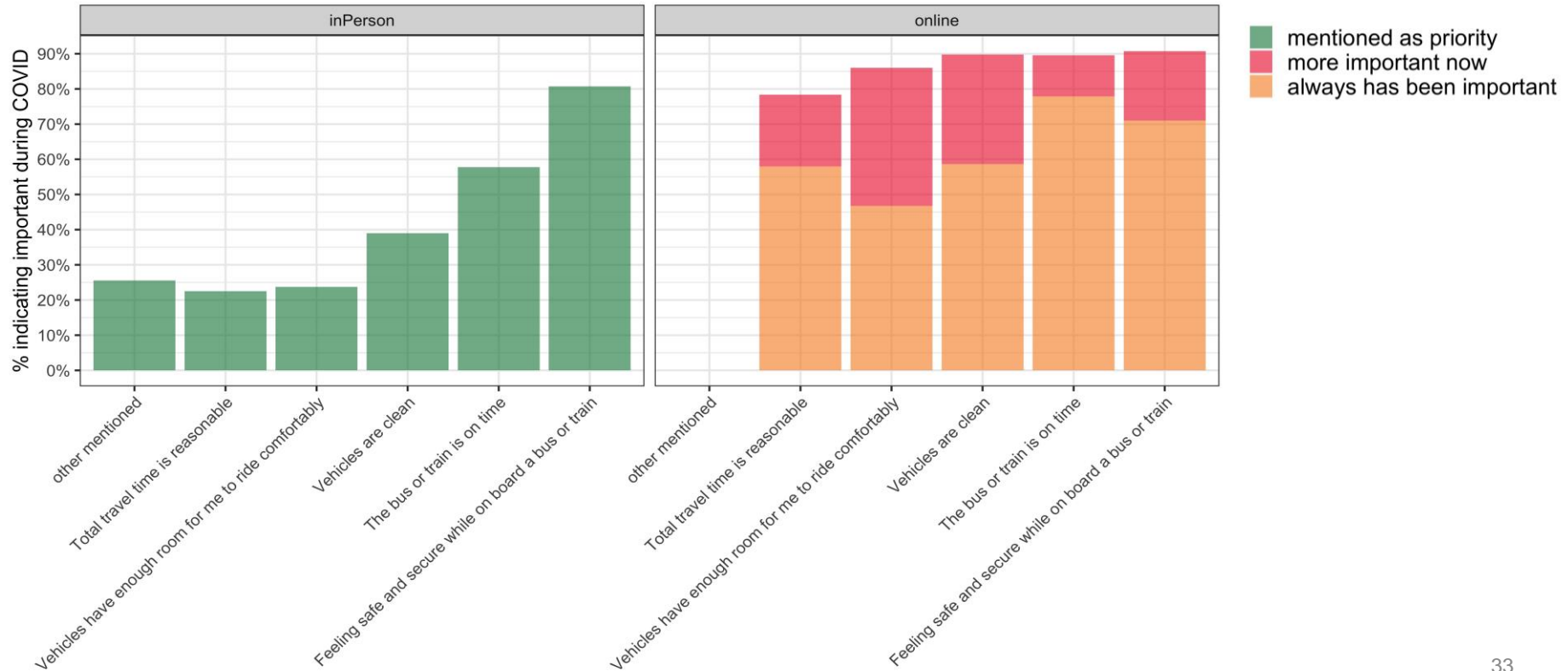
Advancing Equity Outcomes through BRT Investment

Katie Roth, Assistant Director, BRT Projects

Metro Transit
a service of the Metropolitan Council

BRT is an Efficient Investment in Access and Service Quality

2018 annual ridership
50% of all Metro Transit rides were on 8 routes
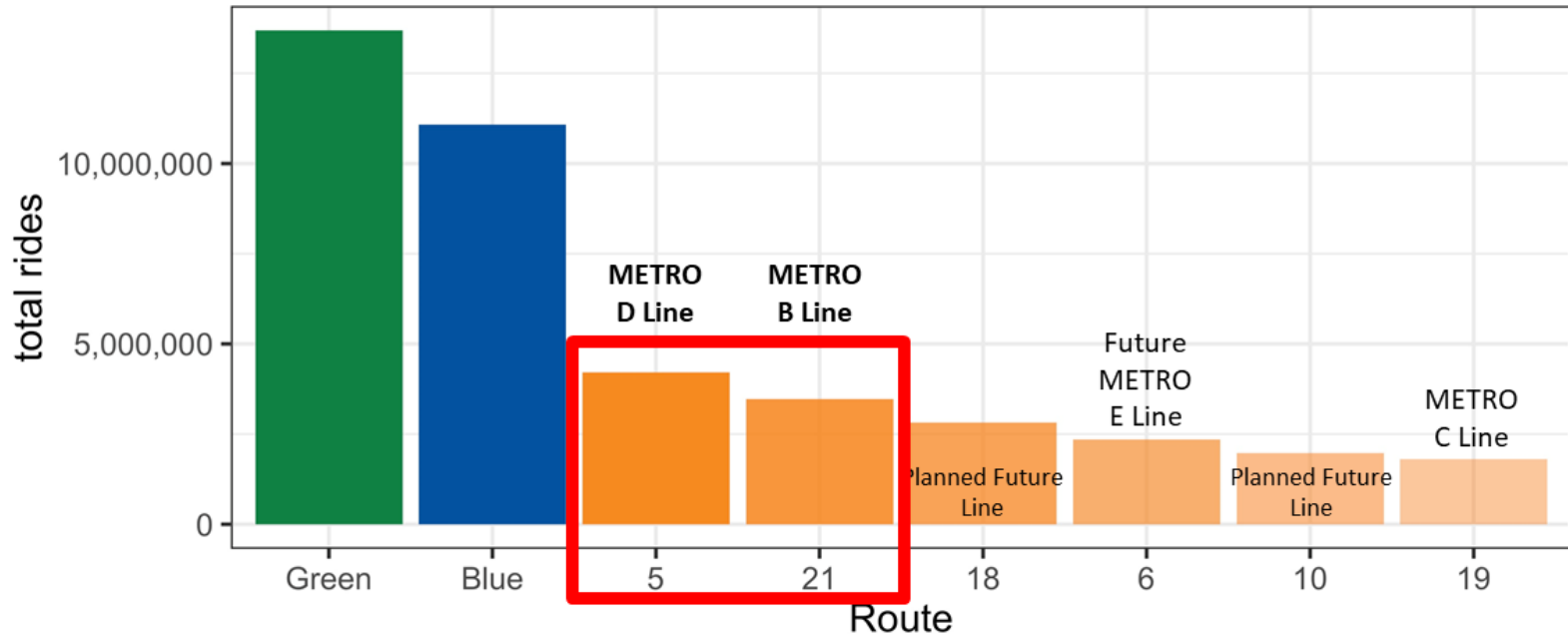
Who would the D Line serve?

Corridor Residents

- More than 120,000 people live within 1/2 mile (a 10-minute walk or roll) of the D Line
  - About 1/4 are youth
  - Nearly 10% are seniors
  - 57% are BIPOC
  - More than 40% have low incomes
- One-bus access to more than 200,000 jobs
- 1 of 4 households on D Line does not have a vehicle

Route 5 Riders (before COVID)

Metro Transit Route 5
difference from regional demographics

73% of Route 5 riders are BIPOC

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
American Indian/Alaskan Native
Multiple Identified
Hispanic/Latino
Asian
Black/African American
White

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%
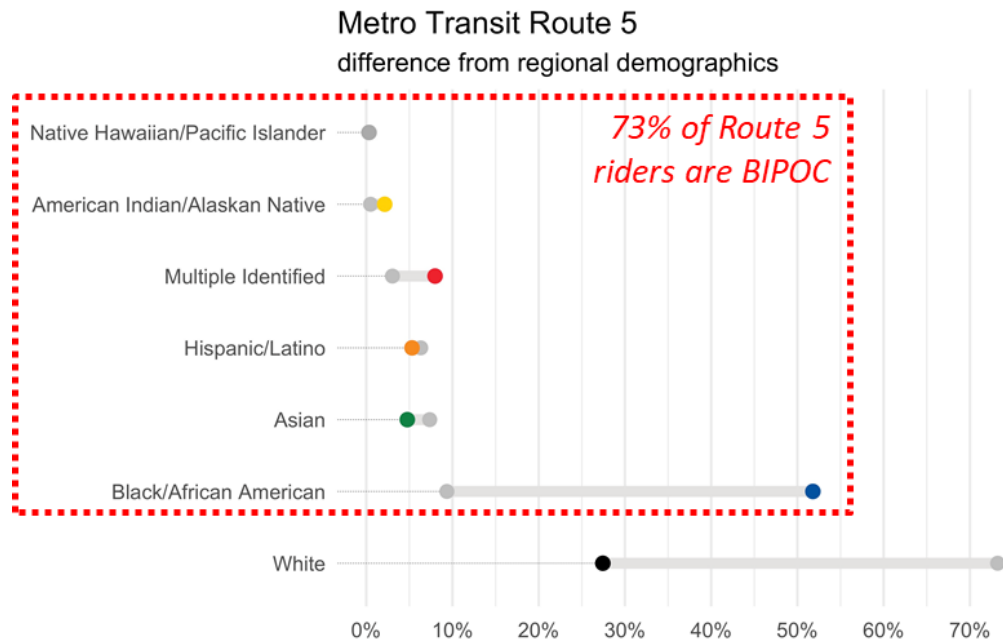
METRO B Line: Upgrading Route 21

- 106,000 people live within a 10-minute walk or roll of the B Line, of whom 42% are Black, Indigenous, or people of color

- 38% of people who would be served by the B Line have low incomes

- 19% of households on the B Line corridor do not have access to a vehicle

- B Line would provide access to 131,000 jobs, including more than 50,000 low-wage jobs
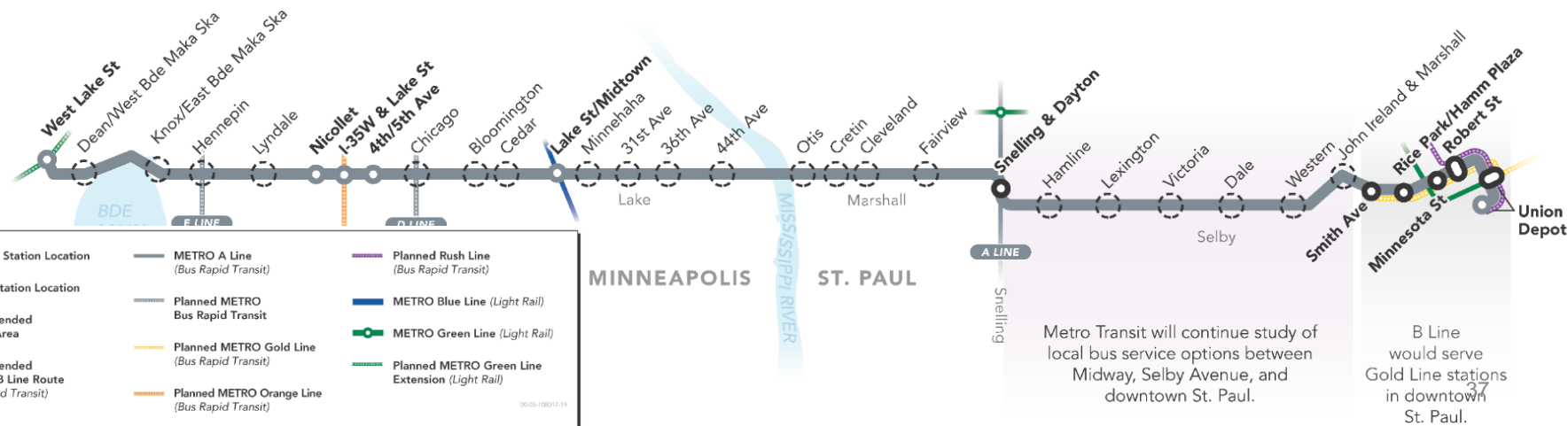
Existing Route 21 Access

Travel Time
- 15 min
- 30 min
- 45 min
- 60 min

60 min   45 min   30 min   15 min
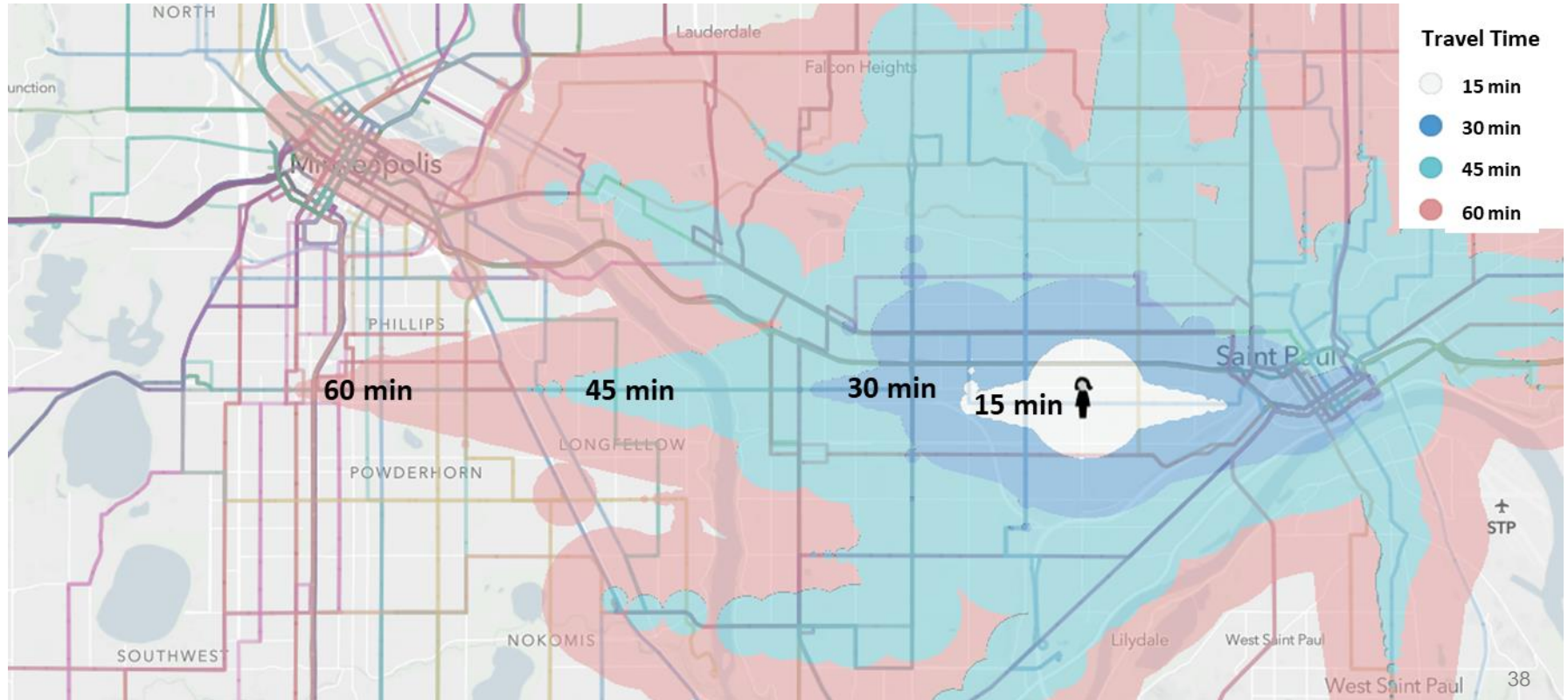
B Line will Significantly Improve Access to Destinations

Travel Time
- 15 min
- 30 min
- 45 min
- 60 min
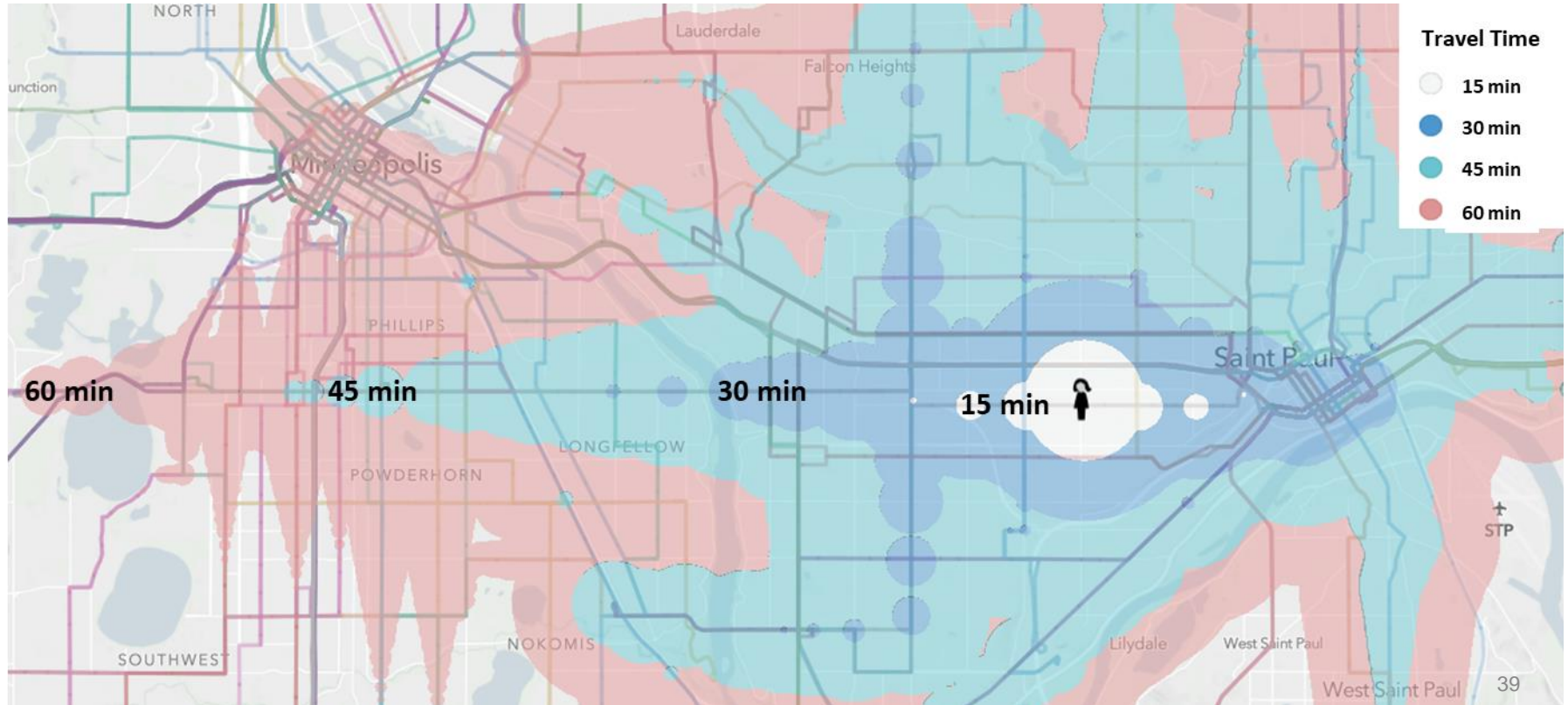
Network Next: Equity is Core to Prioritizing the F Line & Beyond

Network Next Principles

Advance equity and reduce regional racial disparities

Build on success to grow ridership

Design a network that supports a transit-oriented lifestyle

Ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the bus network

- Equity as a principle shapes:
  - What routes are included
  - How they're evaluated and prioritized
- Engagement
  - Focused on ongoing relationships, multiple methods, and continual improvement to elevate rider voices
  - Goal to reach respondents who represent our ridership (45% BIPOC)

Metro Transit Service Equity Evaluation

Adam Harrington, Director of Service Development

- Annual, quarterly
- Equity gap/opportunity identification
- Future equity measures

Planning process

- Evaluate existing conditions, Data analysis
- Customer, Operations, Stakeholder input
- Community engagement, depending on level of chan
- Plan development
- Equity lens
- If Major Change (25%+ of route), Title VI analysis
- Schedule development
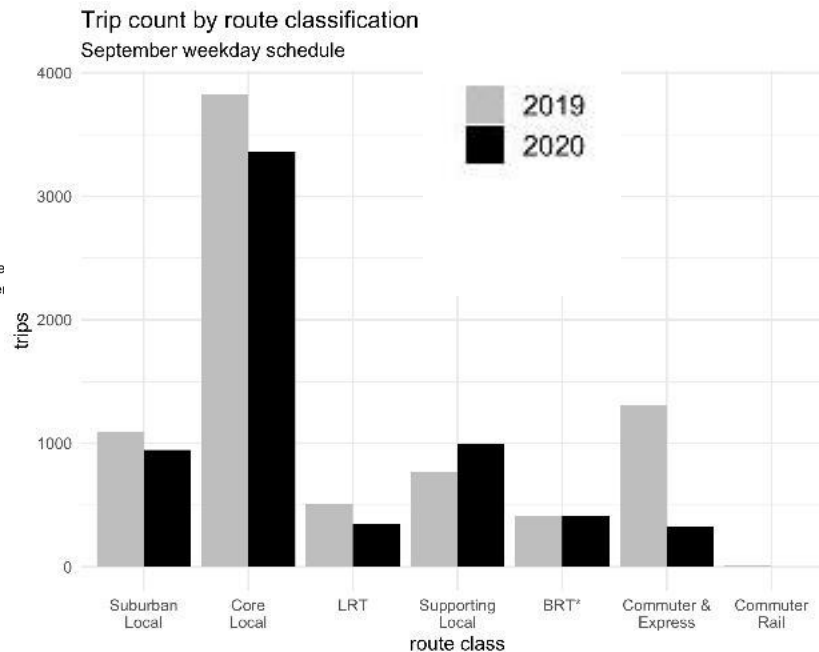- Implementation
- Evaluation

Metrics, reporting what we do: Measurable, repeatable

- Review of bus and rail service changes
- Distribution of service/changes by geography
  - Scheduled trips/**bus stop or station and census tract**
  - service to People of Color and **ACP50**
  - Title VI Analysis; minority and low-income by **census tracts**
  - TBI demographic survey at **route level**

- Hours of service by route type and geography
- Bus ridership bus loads/capacity
- Bus stop changes
- Speed and Reliability projects, new initiatives
- Community/customer engagement/feedback

Demographics and Service Levels

Trip count by route classification
September weekday schedule

self-identified race / ethnicity
- Black/African American
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian
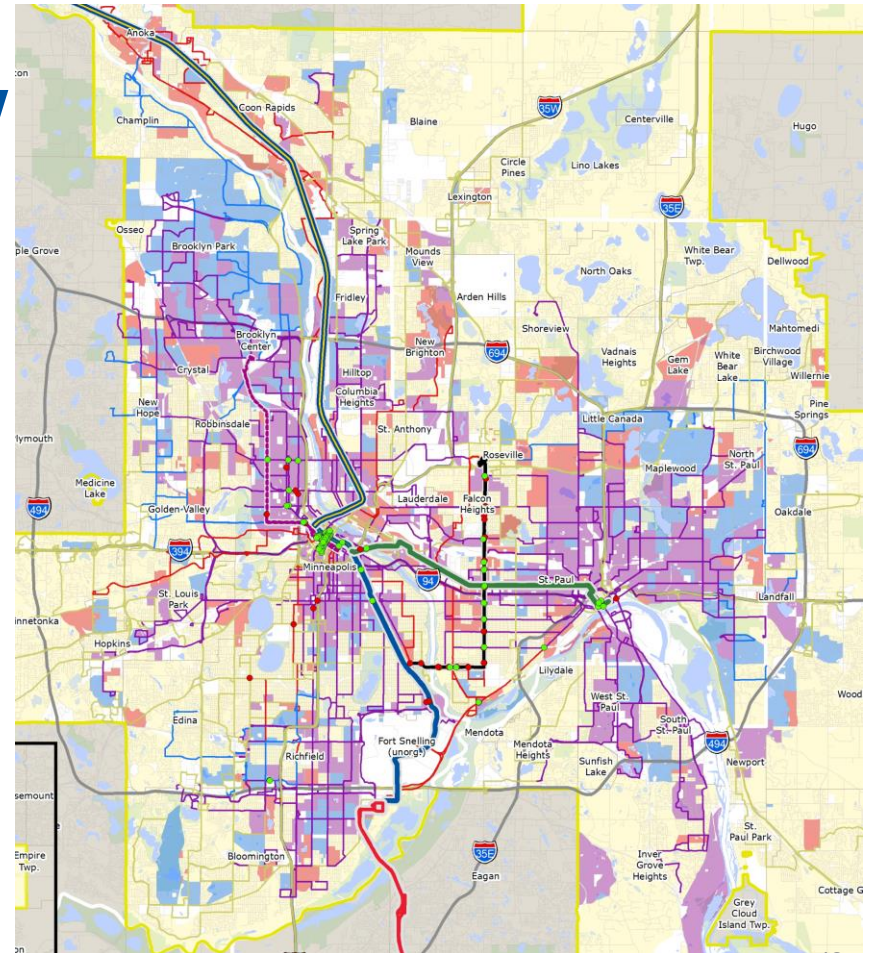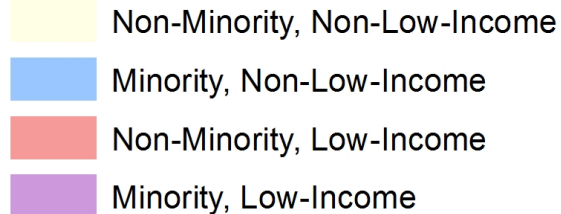- multiple identified
- white

44
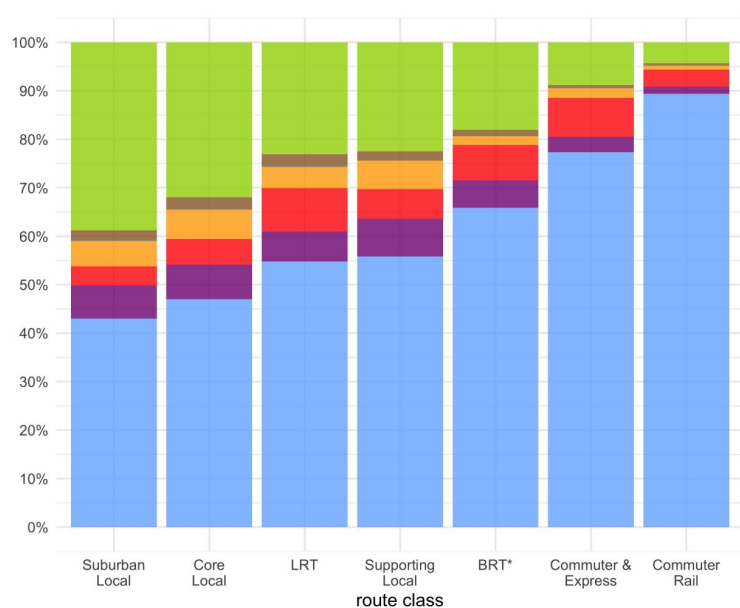
September 2020 Scheduled bus trips
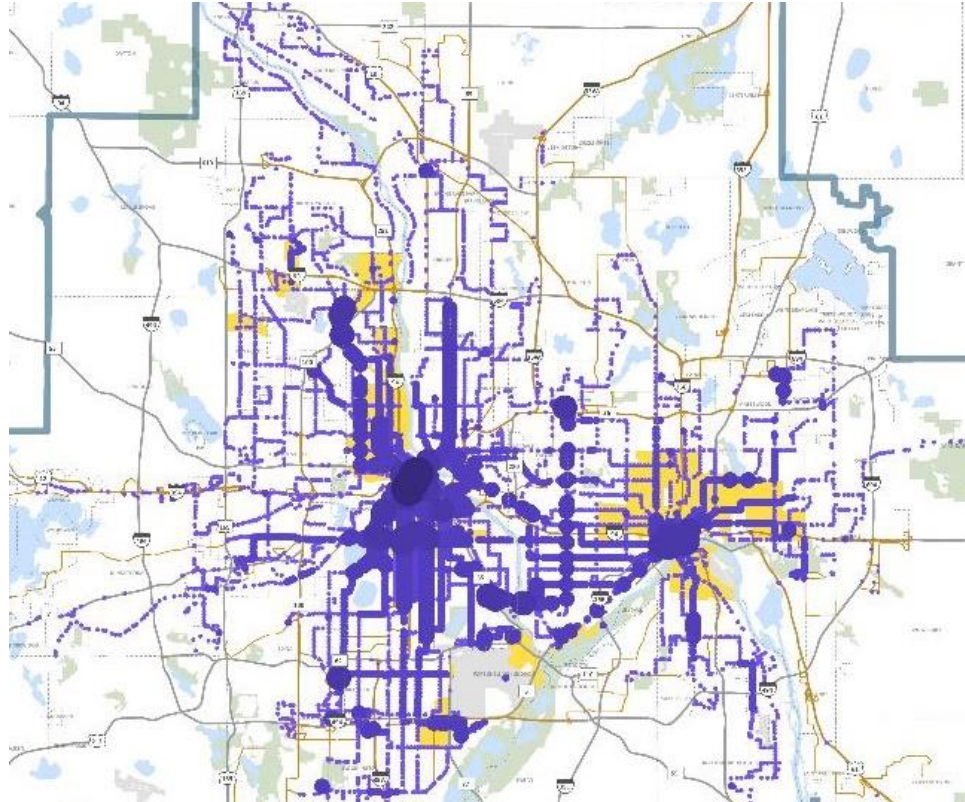
2018 Title VI, FTA Review

- System review 3 years
- Council approved
- Found no disparate impact
  - Minority communities
  - Low-income communities

Demographic Predominance

- Non-Minority, Non-Low-Income
- Minority, Non-Low-Income
- Non-Minority, Low-Income
- Minority, Low-Income

Comparing 2020 service levels to 2019 service levels

September 2020 vs. September 2019

On average, residents of census blocks served by fixed route transit in would experience a 20.6% decrease in weekly scheduled transit trips under the propose service changes effective September 2020, compared to the amount of service available in September 2019.

The service decrease affecting residents of color (14.5%) would be 39.9% less than the decrease affecting white residents (24.0%), on average.
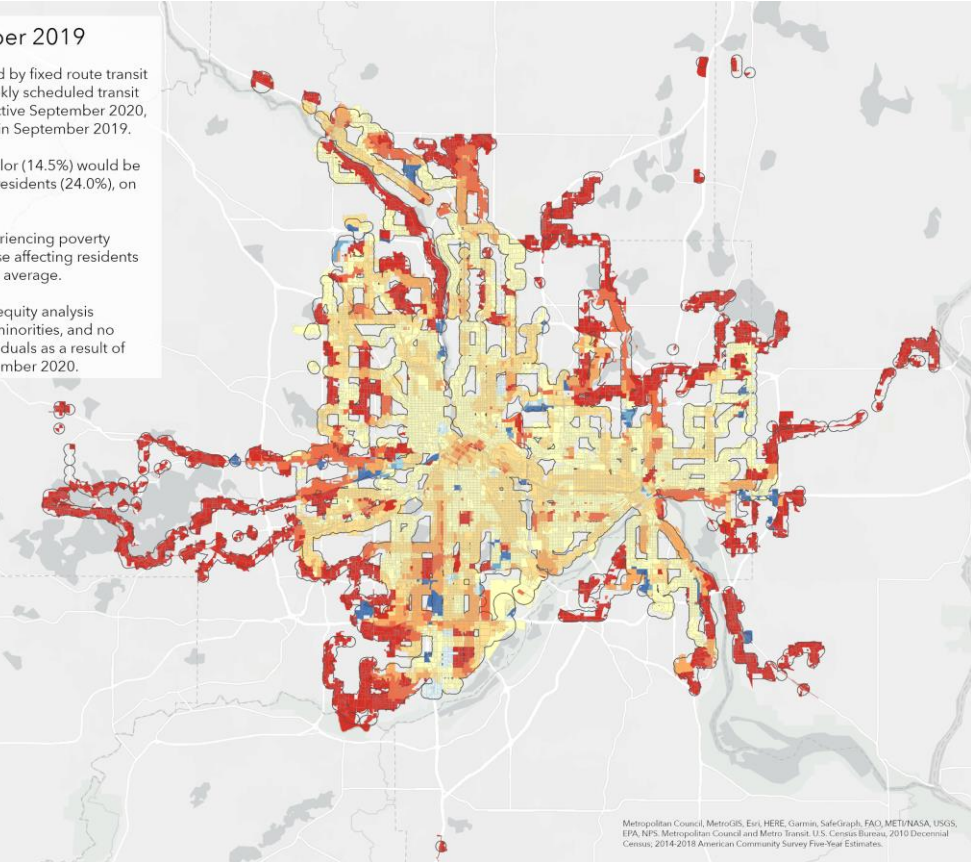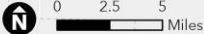
The service decrease affecting residents experiencing poverty (11.8%) would be 46.8% less than the decrease affecting residents who are not experiencing poverty (22.1%), on average.

The quantitative results of the Title VI service equity analysis suggest no disparate impact to racial/ethnic minorities, and no disproportionate burden to low-income individuals as a result of the proposed service changes effective September 2020.

Fixed Route Service Area

Change in Weekly Scheduled Trips

By Census Block

- <-50%
- -50% to -25%
- -25% to -15%
- -15% to -5%
- -5% to +5%
- +5% to +15%
- +15% to +25%
- +25% to +50%
- > +50%

0   2.5   5
Miles

Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS. Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census; 2014-2018 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

Metro Transit Service Equity Evaluation

- Annual and Quarterly analysis: Fall 2020

- Equity gap/opportunity identification

- Future equity metrics to develop or refine
  - Redefining ACP 50
  - Average transit speed improvements
  - Speed and Reliability of local service
  - boarding speed, fare policy/tools,
  - frequency and span investments
  - Bus stop investments
  - Evaluate bus and train loading standards
  - Financial investment by mode (cost, ridership and revenues)
  - Congestion Mitigation, Air Quality impacts
  - Disparate impact threshold analysis

Equity Metrics

Rachel Dungca, Manager of Strategy and Performance

Metro Transit and Equity Metrics

- **Why?** To understand if we are making progress and communicate what we are giving our attention

- **Who?** Our riders, community, and employees

- **How?** With goals, metrics, targets and accountability

Areas of Exploration and Approach

- Service Levels, Quality and Infrastructure
- Customer Experience
- Interactions with Police
- Procurement and Budget
- Employees

- *What is our goal and target? [equal? affirmative?]*
- *What is our measure and approach to disaggregation?*
- *Who reviews and how do they influence changes in strategy or investment?*

Example

- **Equity Goal:** Race does not relate to the access to high frequency service. *Equality is the target in this example.*

- **Equity measure:** Population-weighted access to high frequency services defined as High-Frequency or METRO networks
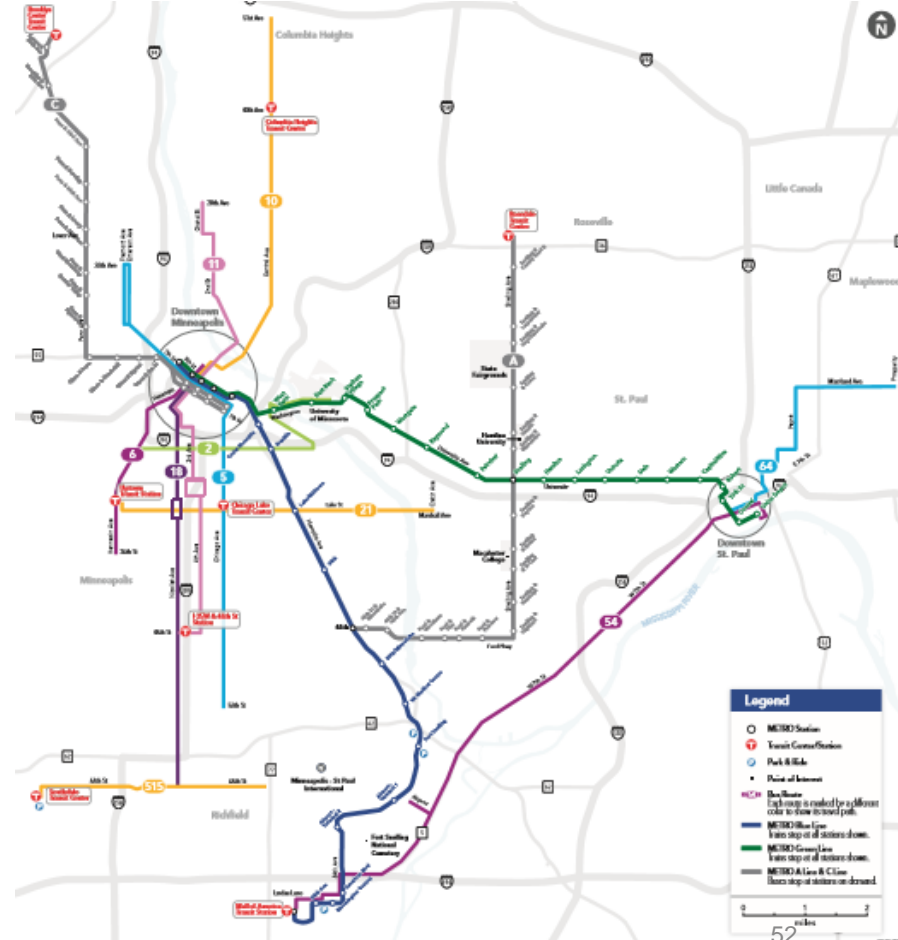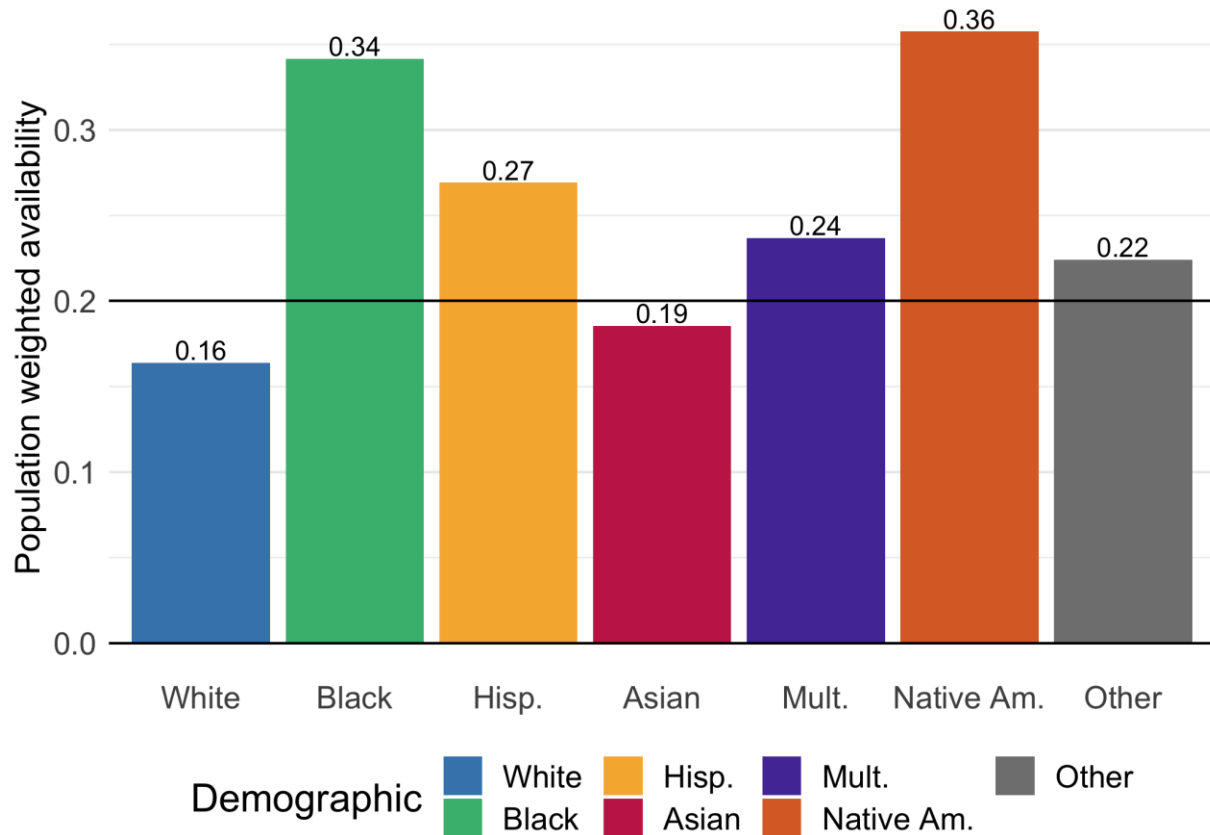
For residents living near a transit stop, 16% of white residents have access to high frequency service - while 34% of black residents have access to high frequency service

Insight: For those living near transit, race is not a predictor of access to frequent service

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Black, Indigenous and People of Color Will Guide Selection and Prioritization of Goals and Equity Metrics

- Asking Equity Advisory Committee for input on how they would like to influence development and reporting of equity metrics

- Aligning work with Metro Transit's Equity and Inclusion Team's areas of recommendations

- Working with OEO, HR to with Council-wide goals

- Using existing information that can be disaggregated by race (surveys, listening sessions, engagement feedback and current performance) to guide development and reporting

Equity in Budgeting

Lesley Kandaras, Chief of Staff

Equity in Budgeting

- Initial focus on
  - Transit service we provide
  - Programs to improve transit access and quality
  - Organizational practices critical to equitable processes and outcomes

- 2020 a "learning year" – identifying process changes to more effectively embed the results of equity analyses into future budget development and decision making

questions & discussion