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
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.
Metro Transit riders... are 45% Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC)
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

7-county region is 73% white

Metro Transit system ridership is 54% white

% regional population
% riders

*population: ACS 2014 – 2018
transit riders: TBI on-board 2016*
Green Line:
44,000 trips on typical weekday
Blue Line: 33,000 trips on typical weekday
Route 5 (Chicago/Fremont): 12,000 trips on typical weekday
Route 21 (Lake St): 10,000 trips on typical weekday

Metro Transit Route 21 difference from regional demographics

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

[Map of Minneapolis with Route 21 shown]

[Bar chart showing percentage differences for various demographics]
**Top 10**

**Commuter-Express Routes:**

11,300 trips on typical weekday

* Routes 850, 535, 250, 768, 270, 467, 355, 852, 375, 365

---

**Metro Transit Top 10 Commuter-Express**

Difference from regional demographics

- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Multiple identified
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian
- Black/African American
- White
Race and Ethnicity by Route Class

self-identified race / ethnicity

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

Route classes:
- Suburban Local
- Core Local
- LRT
- Supporting Local
- BRT
- Commuter & Express
- Commuter Rail
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

areas of concentrated poverty + >50% people of color
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

Listening and Learning

- American Indian, Alaska Native
- Black, African American
- Asian or Asian American
- Hispanic, Latinx
- Other
- White
- East African
- Middle Eastern North African

Pre-COVID Ridership

30
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 than 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

[Bar chart]

self-identified race / ethnicity
- White
- Black or African American
- Asian or Asian American
- Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- multiple identified
- Other race, ethnicity, or origin
- no response
What We Learned: Priorities of Current Riders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>inPerson</th>
<th>online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total travel time is reasonable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles are clean</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bus or train is on time</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles have enough room for me to ride comfortably</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe and secure while on board a bus or train</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **mentioned as priority**
- **more important now**
- **always has been important**
Advancing Equity Outcomes through BRT Investment

Katie Roth, Assistant Director, BRT Projects
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)
- 73% of Route 5 riders are BIPOC
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

Map showing travel times for different areas:
- 60 min
- 45 min
- 30 min
- 15 min
B Line will Significantly Improve Access to Destinations
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 change
- 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
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
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 proposed 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.
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.
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