

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: November 13, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: December 13, 2023

Business Item: 2023-210

2022 Service Equity Evaluation Report and Title VI Review

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the results of the 2022 Title VI Service Equity Analysis (SEA) for the 2022 Service Equity Evaluation (SEE) Report.

Summary of Transportation Committee Discussion/Questions

Metro Transit Service Development Senior Planner Victoria Dan and Equity & Inclusion Senior Manager Celina Martina presented this item.

Vento asked whether there is a correlation between Black and Native American residents' access to more trips and the on-time performance they experience, relative to other populations by race/ethnicity. Martina stated that there is no current calculation to confirm a correlation, but it is possible and a consideration.

Carter, Toni asked for clarification on what is considered a Major Service Change and if the FTA ever requires looking at changes over periods longer than one year. Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington stated that the Council policy is that if there is a 25% change (negative or positive) in hours on a route or in an area, that would be consistent with a Major Service Change and require a Title VI Service Equity Analysis. Harrington continued that in 2020, Metro Transit started looking at the whole year due to the level of service changes occurring. The triennial review that is completed for the FTA includes the past three years, so those changes are tracked over time. Martina added that the FTA doesn't specify a Major Service Change threshold for a Title VI Service Equity Analysis, but the Council itself establishes the policy.

Clarification: Council policy defines Major Service Change as limited to a 12-month period, which can include one or multiple cumulative changes.

Cameron stated that this report doesn't address or help us understand what systemic barriers are in place for the BIPOC community to access transit and asked if there are other tools at our disposal that we should start using to address those questions. Martina answered that we do have data from the Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) (collected every two years) and the Transit On-Board Survey (collected every five years) that tells us a little more about who uses travel, how they identify, live, income level, etc., and this is used for route planning, etc.

Dolkar suggested that in the future, a link to the entire study be provide and that Metro Transit thinks about adding a Transit Equity Manager that would work with all departments (scheduling, operations, fare structure, etc.) to ensure the data collected is used to inform operations and other decisions.

Clarification: The full 2022 SEE report will be published on metrotransit.org by mid-December 2023.

Motion by Carter, Toni, seconded by Dolkar. Motion carried, Consent to Council.

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2022 Service Equity Evaluation Report and Title VI Review

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1b OEE0 1-1 Equity Policy; OEE0 6-1 Title VI Major Service Change Policy; OEE0 6-2 Title VI Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policy
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Lesley Kandaras, General Manager, 612-349-7513 Adam Harrington, Director, Service Development, 612-349-7797 John Levin, Director, Strategic Initiatives, 612-349-7789 Celina Martina, Senior Manager of Equity & Inclusion, 612-349-7582 Cyndi Harper, Manager of Route Planning, 612-349-7723 Rachel Dungca, Manager of Strategy & Performance, 612-349-7536 Victoria Dan, Senior Planner, 612-349-7648
Division/Department:	Metro Transit

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the results of the 2022 Title VI Service Equity Analysis (SEA) for the 2022 Service Equity Evaluation (SEE) Report.

Background

To improve transparency of service-related decisions, Metro Transit is committed to producing an annual report assessing service equity, including a Title VI SEA reviewing service changes that occurred in the 12-month period. The Title VI SEA reviews service changes to determine whether there is potential for discrimination based on race or income. This business item pertains to the latest SEE documenting all cumulative 2022 service changes.

2022 Service Changes and Metrics

Compared to December 2021, Metro Transit scheduled 15% fewer trips in December 2022 due to the workforce shortage. Despite efforts to increase wages and recruit more operators, staffing levels remained below required levels until December 2022. Service reliability and equity were among the guiding principle used by Metro Transit to inform service reduction decisions. Metro Transit uses service metrics related to service availability, utility, and reliability, disaggregated by race, to understand potential differences in how residents access and experience transit.

Title VI SEA Results

The Title VI SEA examined effects of cumulative changes over one year (December 2021 –

December 2022) and three years (December 2019 to December 2022). The review concluded that in both scenarios there was no disparate impact on BIPOC residents and no disproportionate burden on low-income residents due to service changes in 2022. The 2022 review showed that non-low-income and White, non-Hispanic groups experienced about an 8% decrease in service, while BIPOC and low-income communities had a very slight increase in service. This demonstrates that, even when facing a challenging workforce shortage Metro Transit continued to prioritize and protect those who rely on transit the most.

Rationale

Prior to implementation of a Major Service Change, FTA and Council policy requires providers to complete a Title VI SEA to determine if the change may adversely affect BIPOC communities or disproportionately burden low-income populations.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The SEE and Title VI SEA primarily advance the Thrive Equity outcome, which means that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. This is especially important in the context of severe reliability issues stemming from the operator shortage, which forced significant service reductions over the course of 2022. By providing a transparent accounting of 2022 service changes and their potential effects on low-income and BIPOC residents, the evaluation is an important status check that reinforces equitable transit service planning decisions.

Funding

The SEA is funded with the Metro Transit operating budget.

Small Business Inclusion

The Title VI analysis was performed by SRF Consulting as a work order under master contract 19P018 Contract for Fulfilling Title VI Requirements. The master contract was procured in 2019 in compliance with the Council Procurement procedures, which include a review by the Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity. They did not set a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goal.





BI 2023-210:

2022 Service Equity Evaluation Report and Title VI Review

Celina Martina | Senior Equity Manager

Victoria Dan | Senior Transit Planner, Service Development

Preface

In 2020, to improve transparency of service-related decisions, Metro Transit committed to producing an annual report assessing service equity. This is the third annual report.

- **Retrospective** – The 2022 Service Equity Evaluation (SEE) and 2022 Title VI Service Equity Analysis (SEA) focus on service changes within the 12-month period.
- **Cumulative** – This review highlights outcomes at the end of 2022 resulting from net changes over the year.
- **Changes in 2023** – Strong operations hiring has led to an 8% increase in scheduled service compared to December 2022. The next annual report will provide an updated account of service changes and their impacts.

Service Equity Evaluation

- How did we change our service between 2021 and 2022?
- How did ridership patterns change?
- Did our service changes meet Title VI thresholds?
- How did different racial and ethnic groups experience our service?
 - Service availability
 - Service quality
 - Service outcomes
- How do Metro Transit's practices promote equitable service planning?



Changing Context in 2022

- Remote work and commuter trip changes
 - Workers and students continue return to in-person activities
 - Not a complete reversal: Some remote learning and work-from-home continues
- Workforce shortage worsens
 - Wage increases and recruitment are insufficient to address shortage
 - Service reliability continues to decline, requiring planned service reductions



2022 Service Baseline

- **Early 2022 service levels similar to late 2021**
- METRO LRT every 12 minutes
- METRO BRT every 10-15 minutes
 - Orange Line every 30 minutes on weekends
- Routes remain suspended
 - 12 Local routes
 - 52 Commuter and express routes
- 2 morning and afternoon Northstar trips

2022 Service Change Highlights

March & June

- Suspended low ridership branches on some routes
- Frequency reduced one "step" on busiest routes
- High school and U of M service reduced

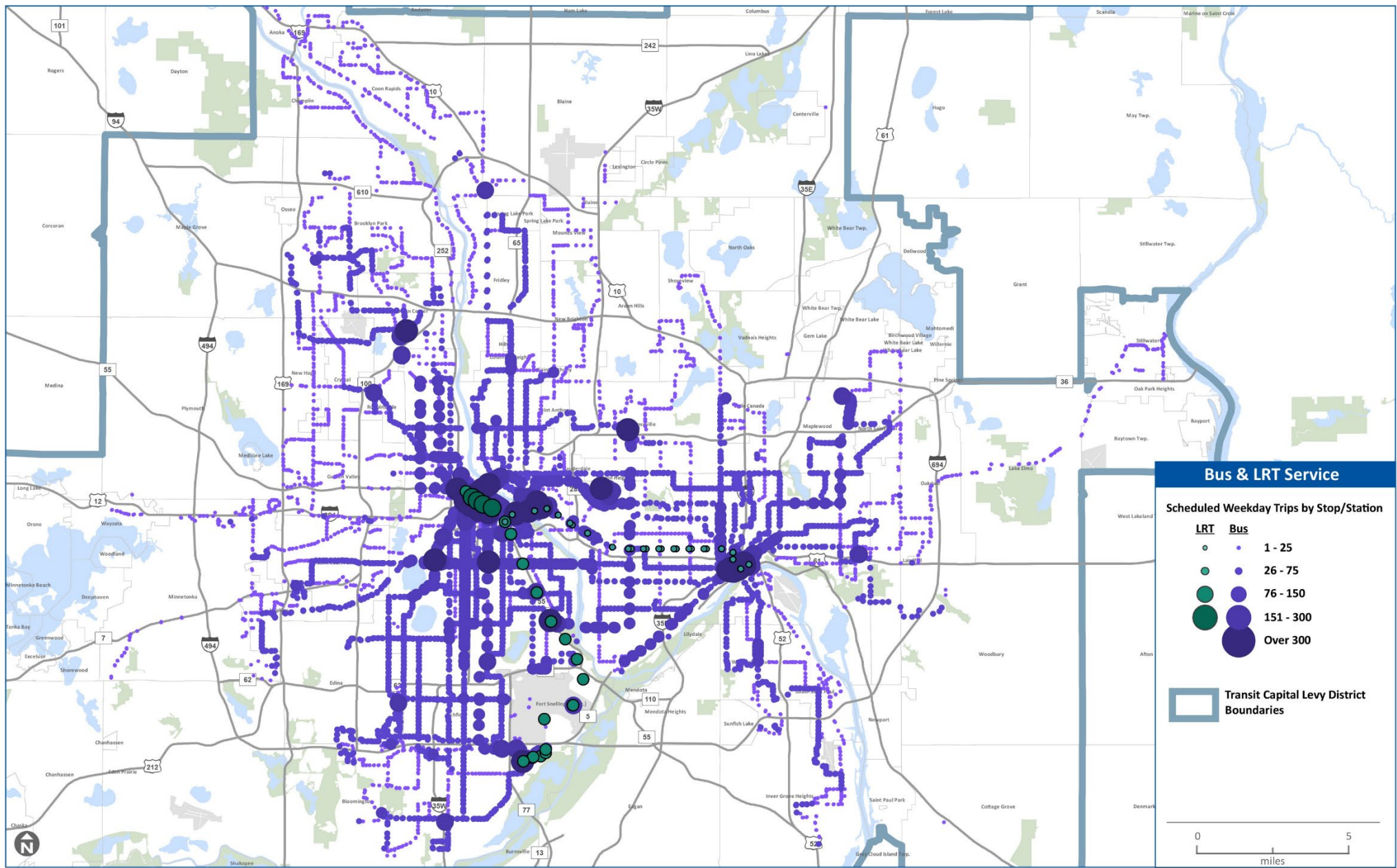
August & October

- LRT reduced from 12 to 15 minutes
- 2 more routes suspended
- 5 routes reduced to trips every 2 hours

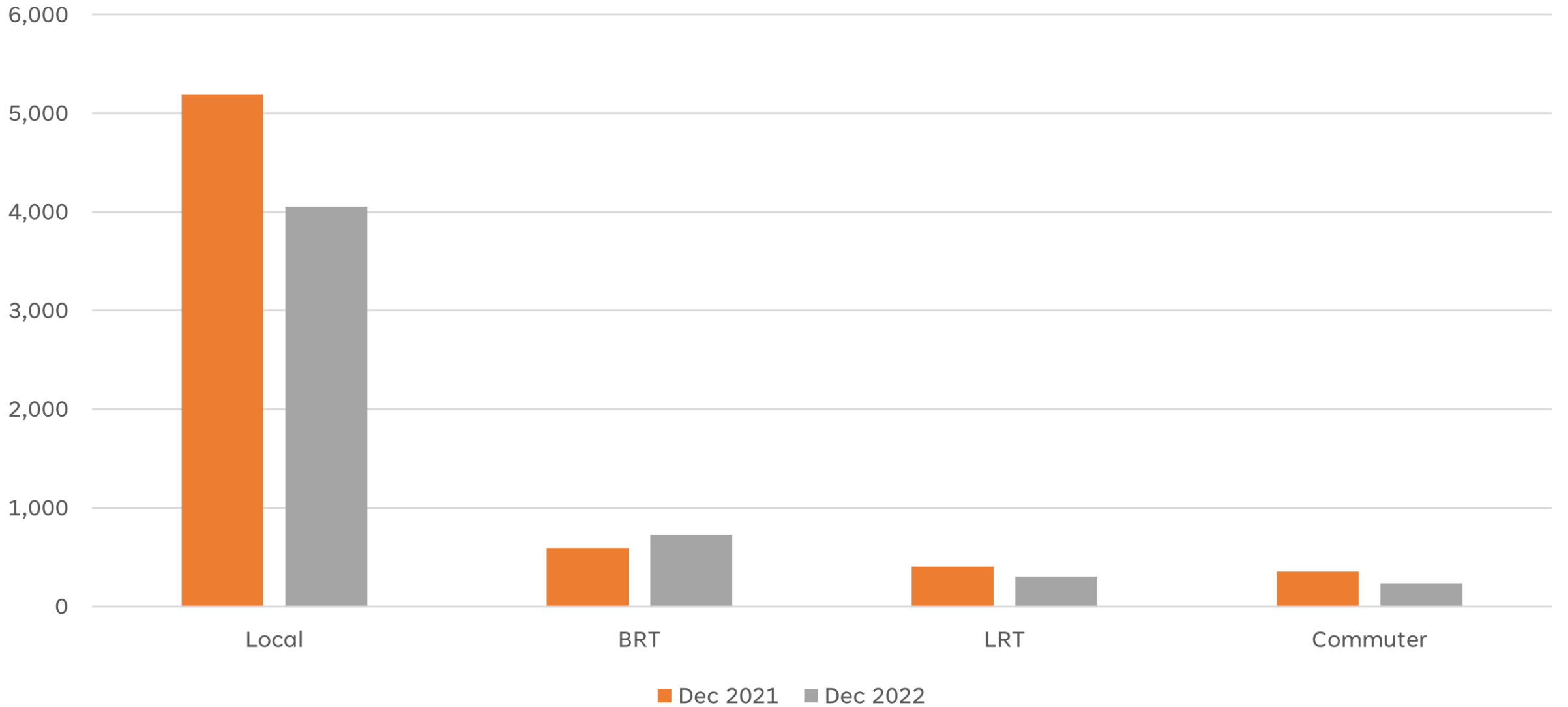
December

- METRO D Line opened, Rt. 5 reduced/shortened, and other corridor services replaced
- Weekday and/or weekend service suspensions on four routes
- Some routes restructured
- Frequency reductions on 37 routes, including Orange Line

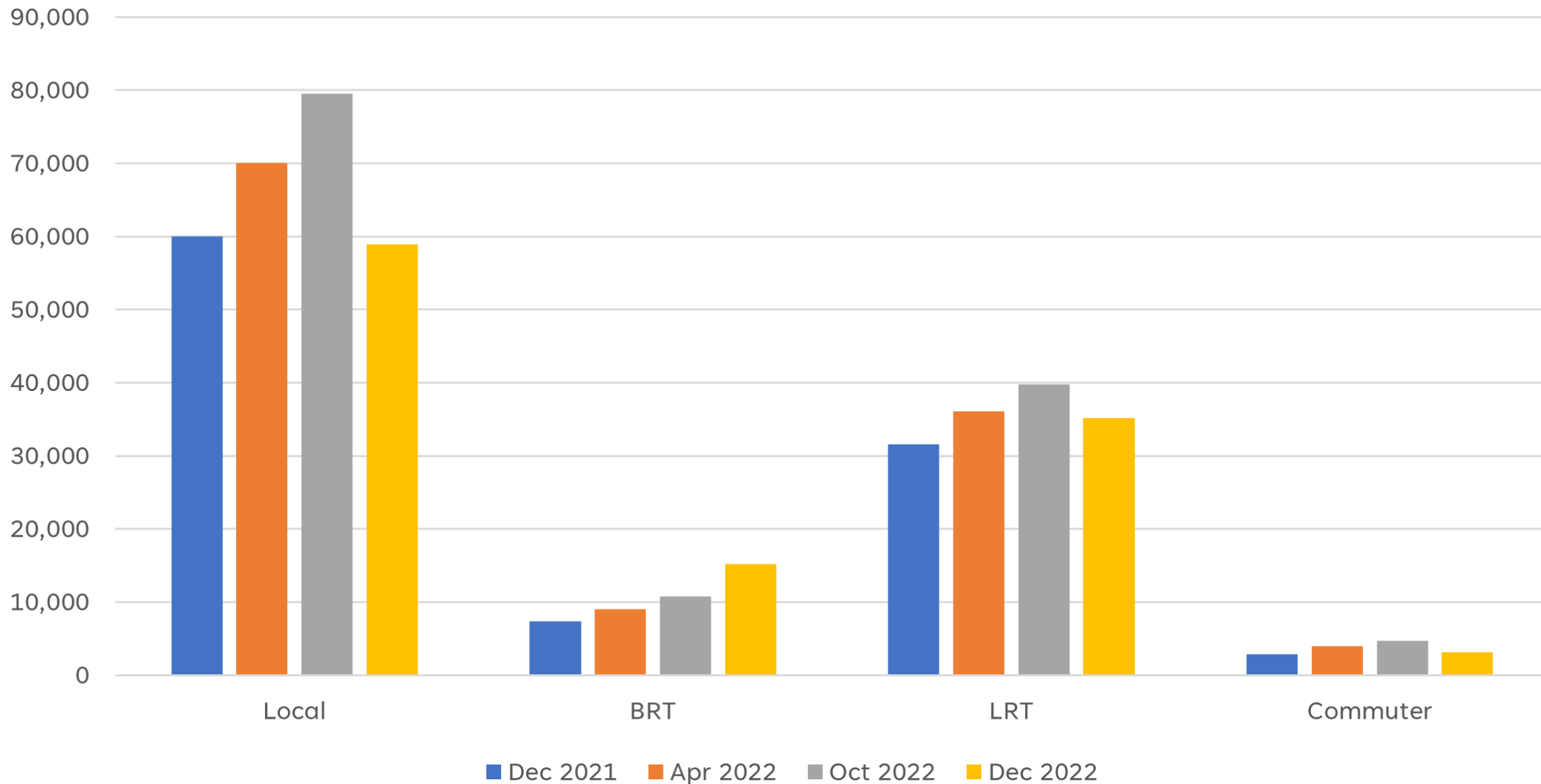




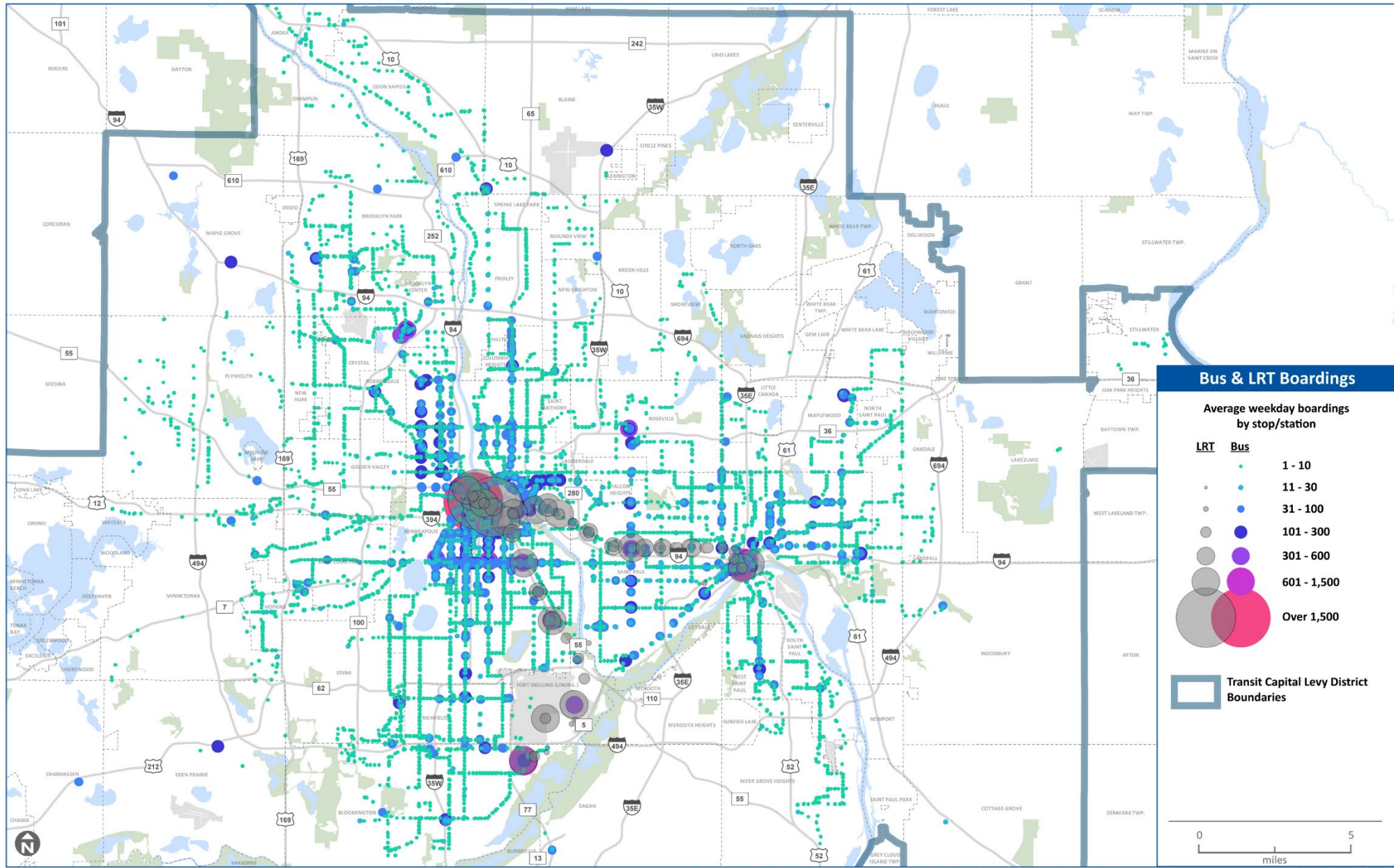
Weekday Trips by Stop, Dec 2022



Weekday Trip Counts, Dec 2021 & Dec 2022



Weekday Ridership by Route Class, Dec 2021 – Dec 2022



Weekday Ridership by Stop, Dec 2022

Title VI Service Equity Analysis (SEA)

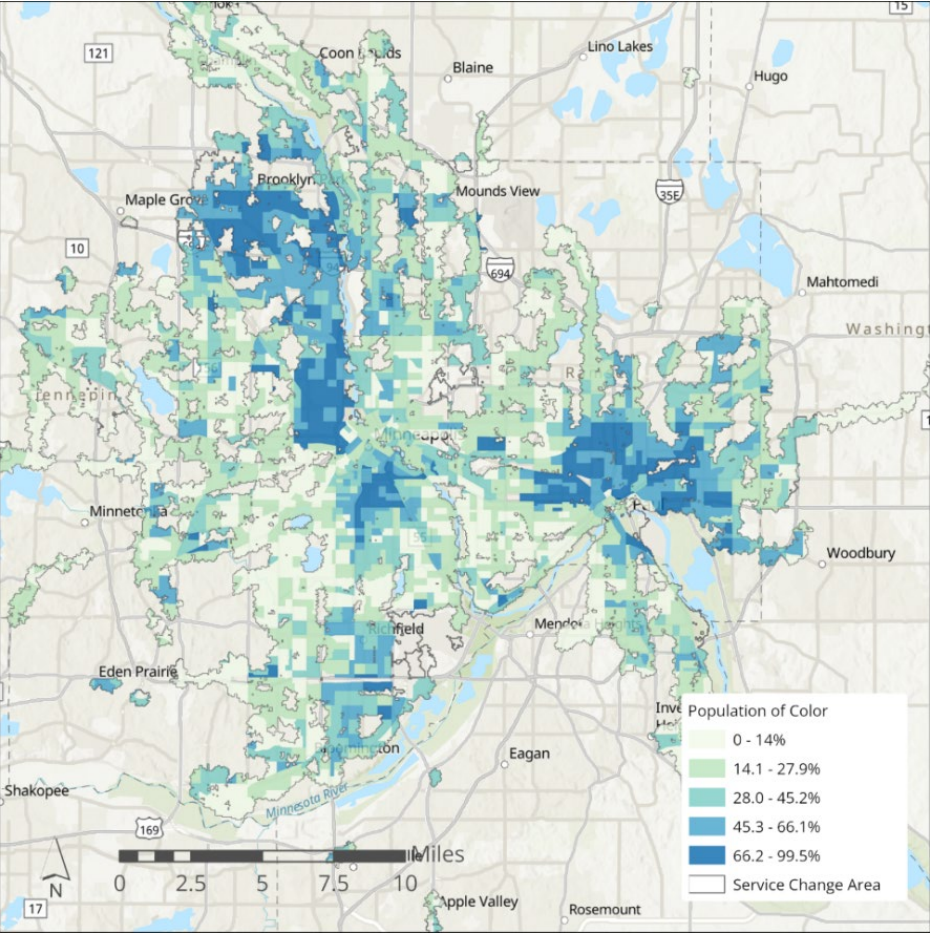
- Federal law requires transit agencies to show they are not discriminating when providing transit service
 - Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) groups
 - Low-income communities
- SEA reviews how access to transit changed in 2022
 - Service availability is defined as the number of trips in a given area
 - Change in how much service is available for average resident in a given area
 - Review how the impacts of those changes differ based on race and income
 - Non-home trips are a challenge



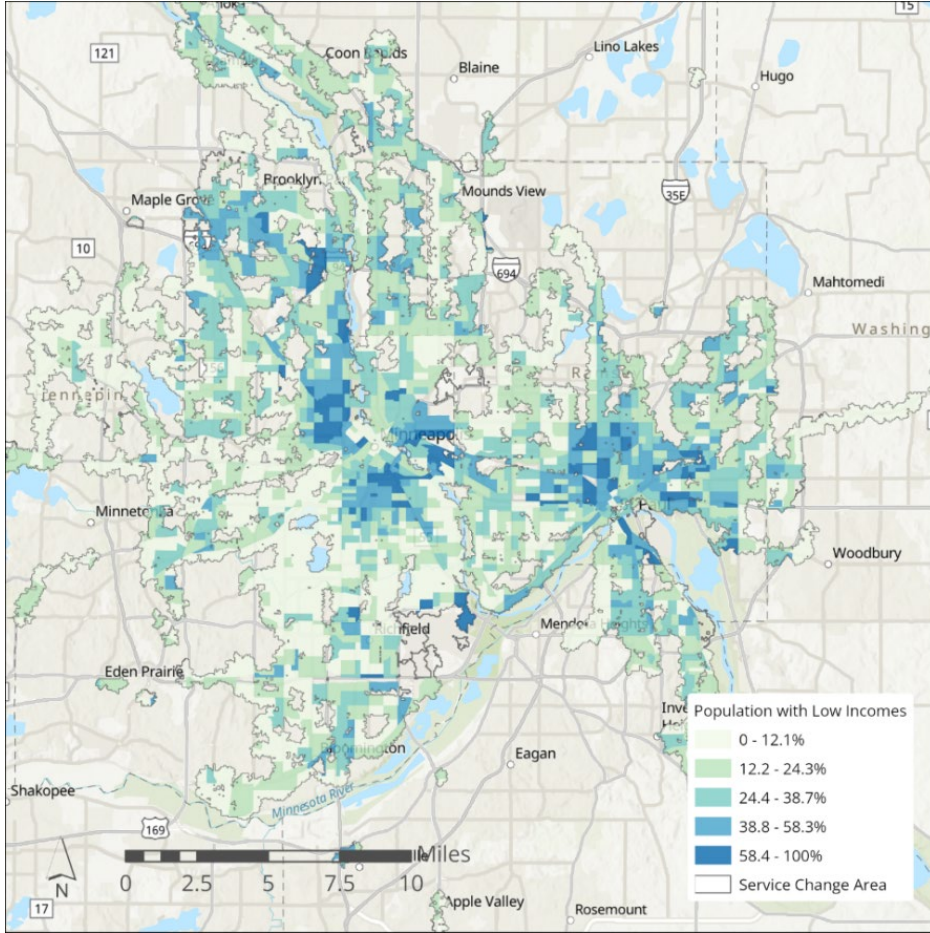
Title VI Service Equity Analysis (cont.)

- Required for all major service changes
 - 25% change in hours on a route or in an area
 - New routes and eliminated service
- Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) threshold
 - Determines when a difference is significant enough to result in a potential for discrimination
 - Updated Council DI/DB policy
 - If adverse or beneficial effects of service changes borne by BIPOC or low-income groups are not within 10% of the effects borne by White or non-low-income populations (respectively), then there is potential for discrimination
 - Not evidence of potential discrimination if beneficial effect beyond 10% to BIPOC or low-income populations

Communities Living Near Transit



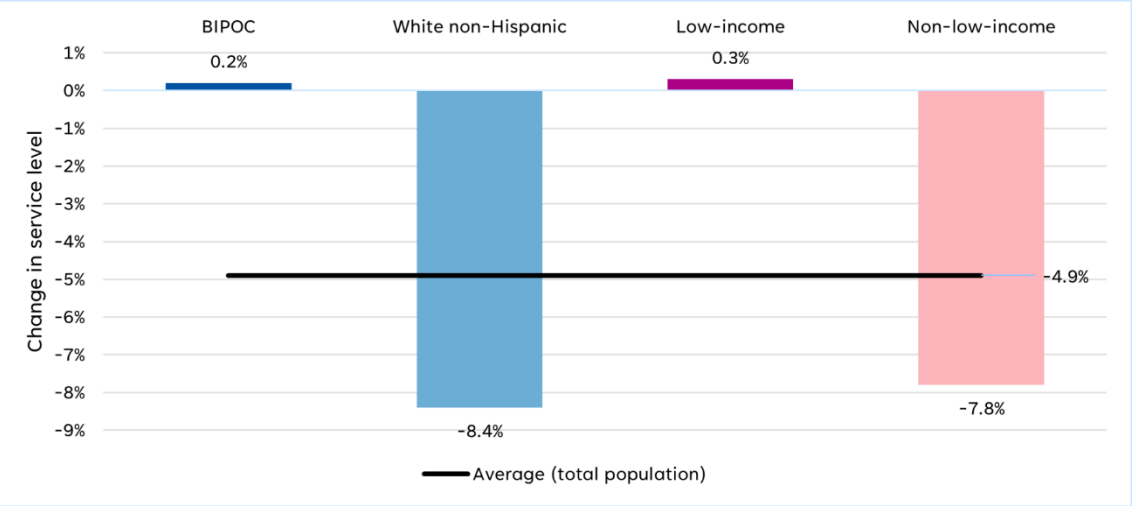
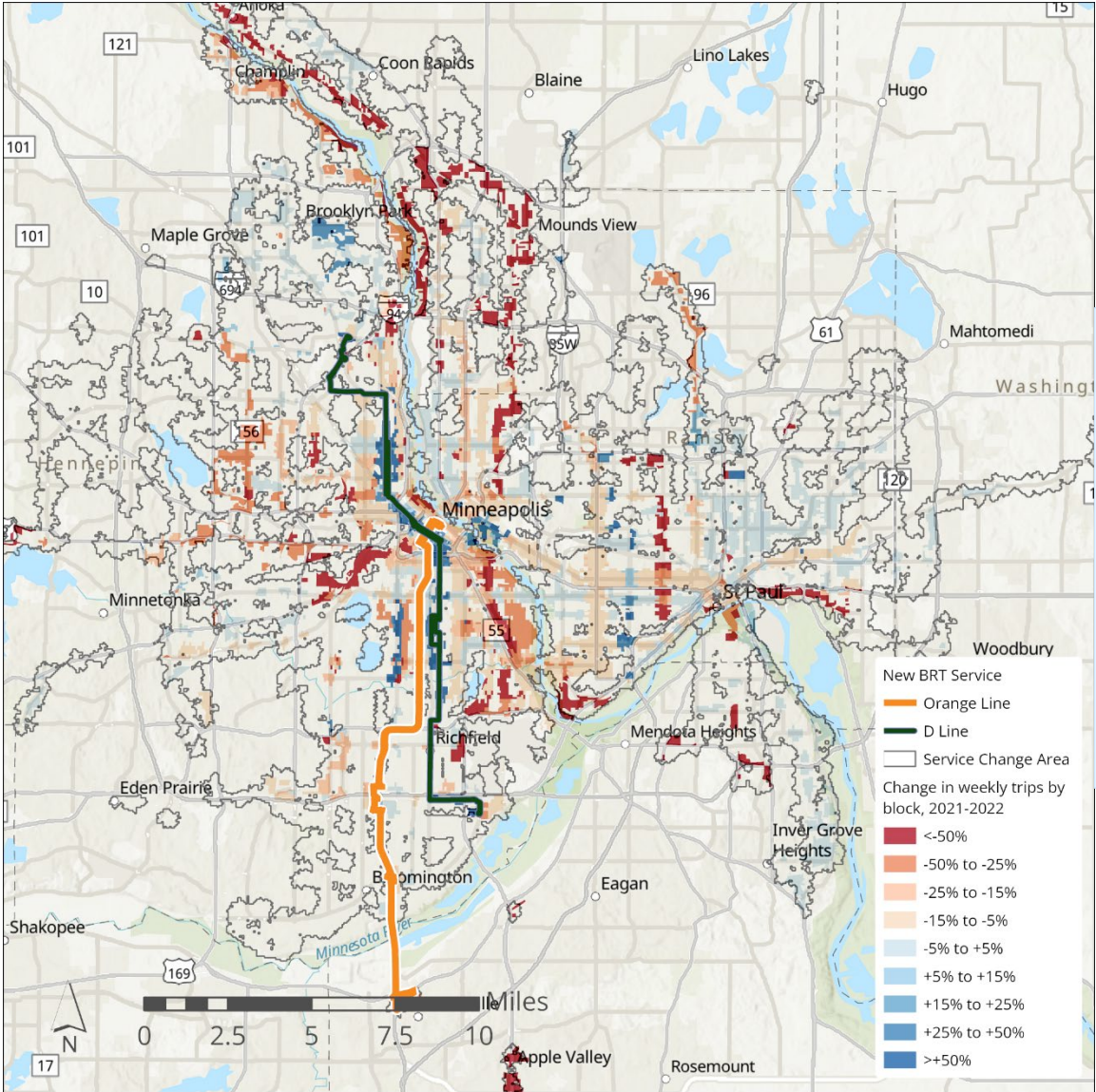
Communities of Color



Low-income communities



Change in Service Availability: Dec 2021 vs Dec 2022



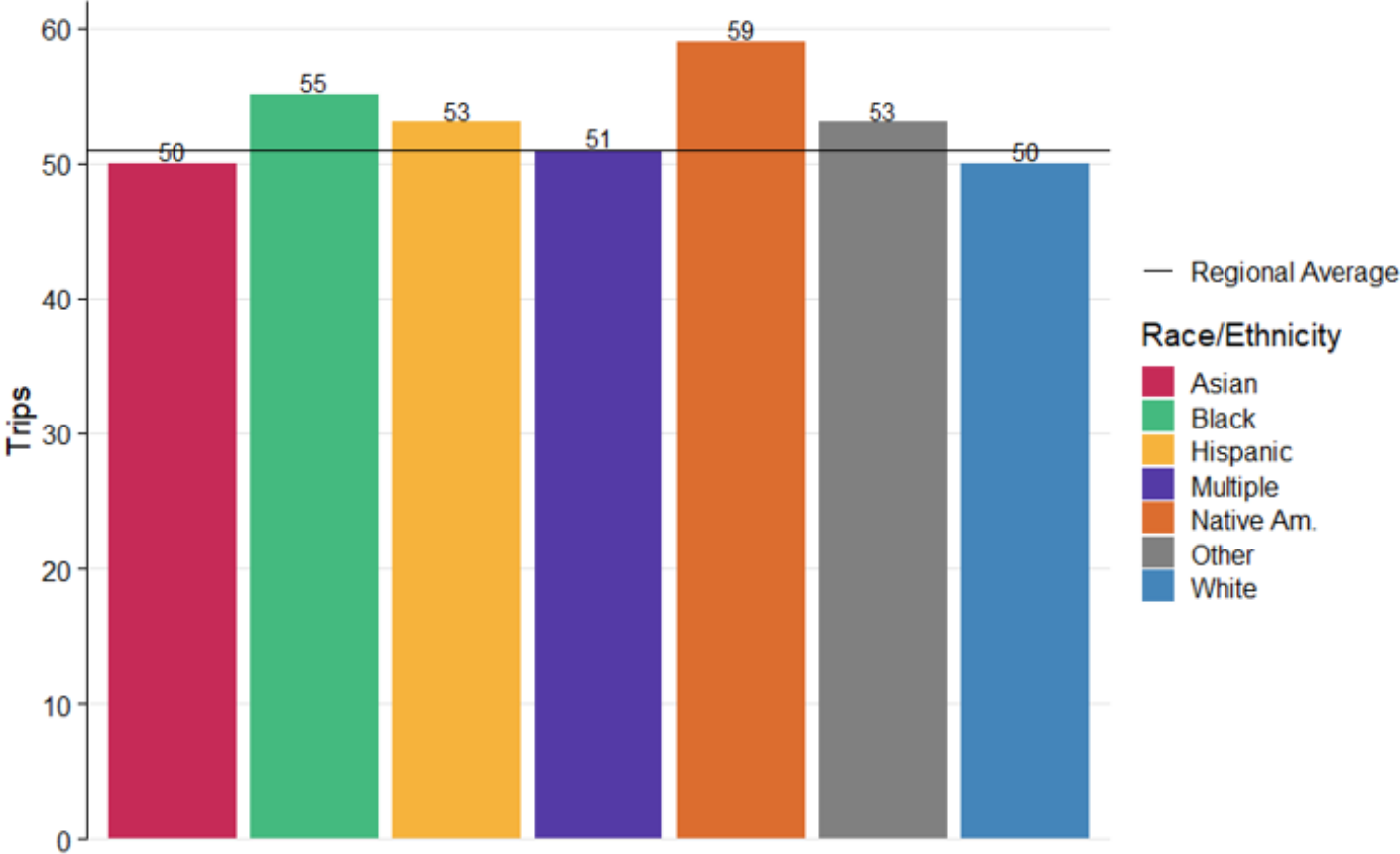
Service Metrics by Race & Ethnicity

- Service Availability
 - Trip Count
 - Frequent Service
- Service Reliability
 - On-time Performance
 - Service Delivered (Trip Cuts)
- Service Outcomes
 - Access to Jobs



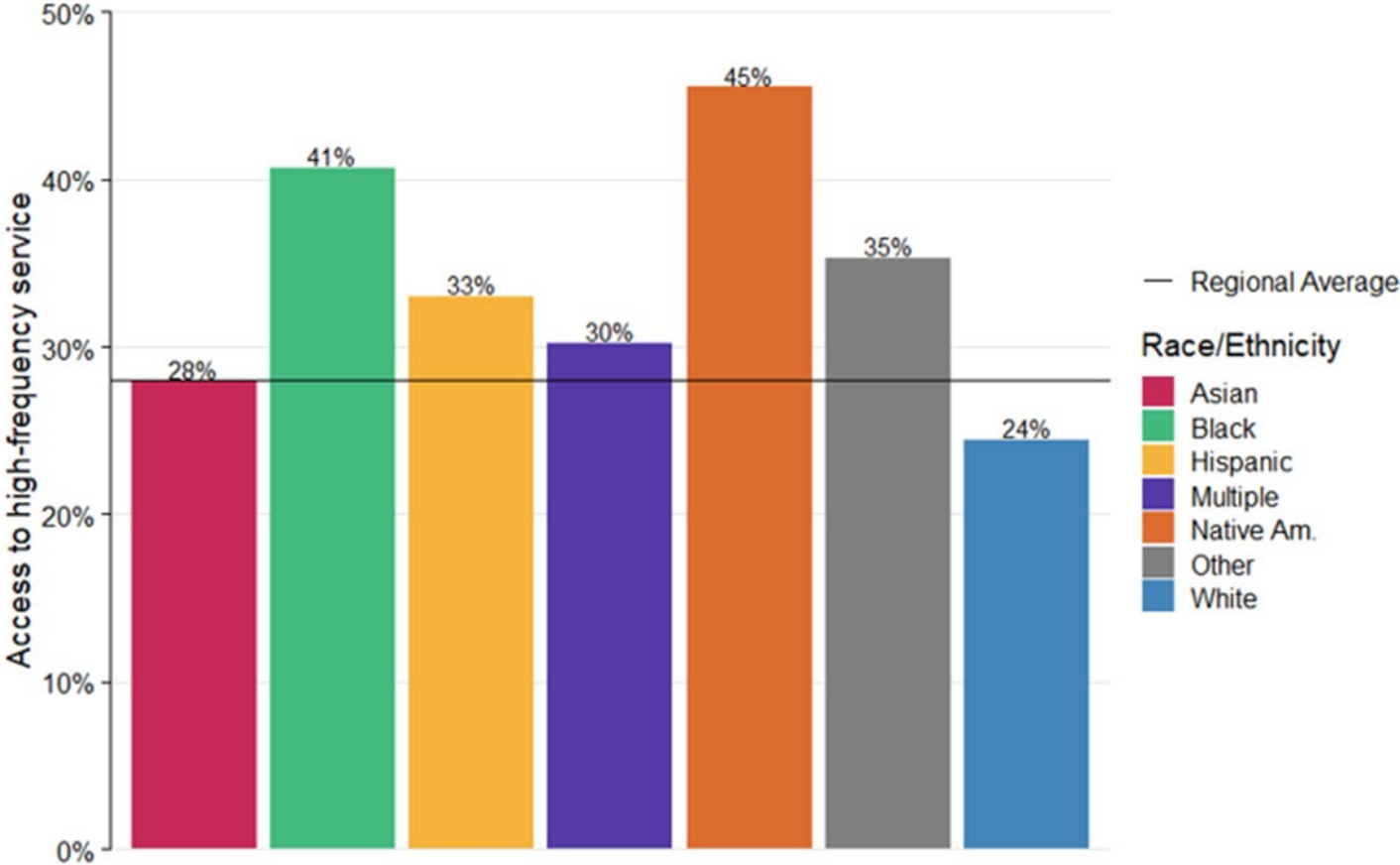
Service Availability by Race & Ethnicity: Trip Count

Residents identifying as Black or Native American had access to **more trips** compared to other groups, on average.



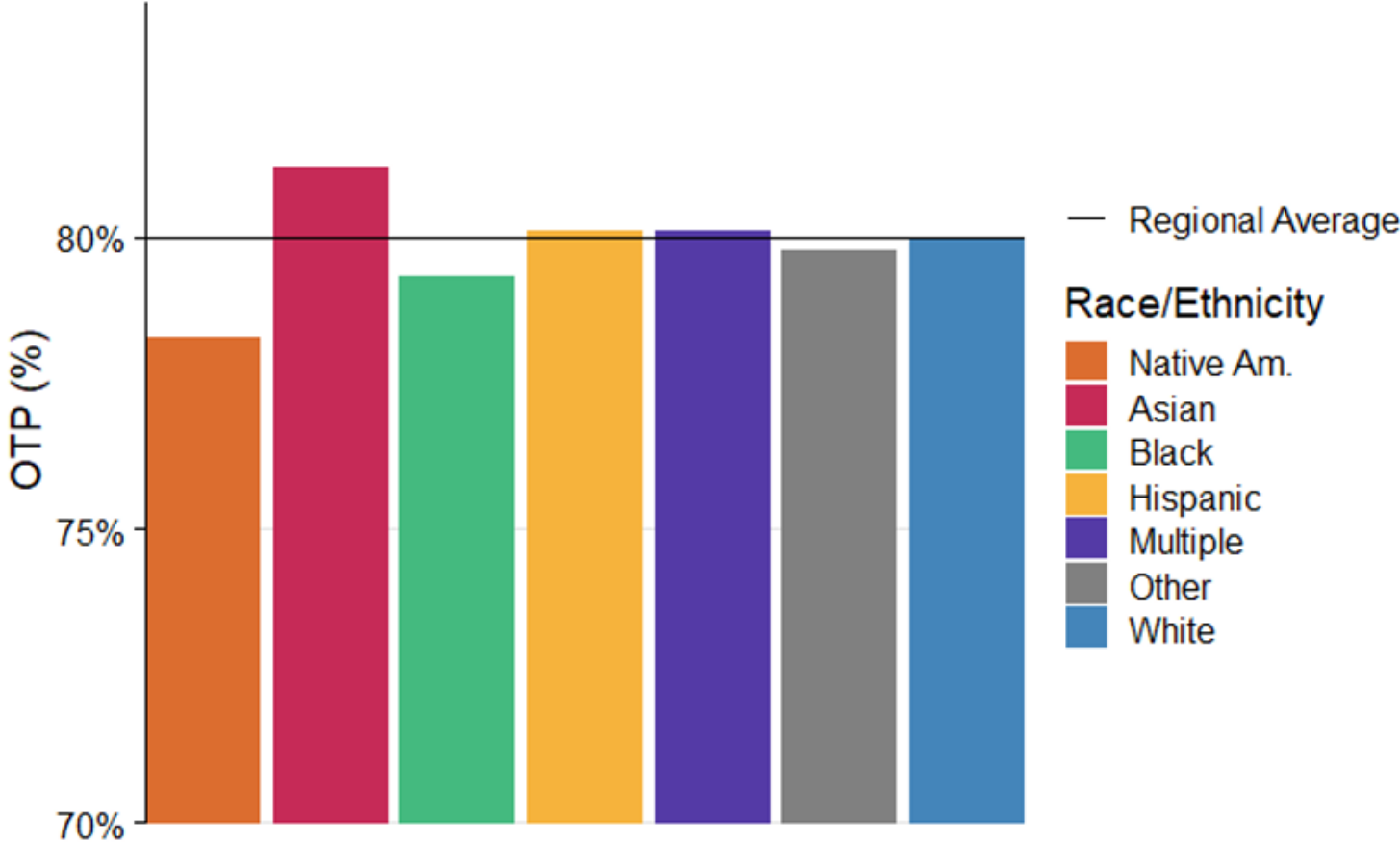
Service Availability by Race & Ethnicity: High Frequency Service

A **larger percent** of residents identifying as Black or Native American had access to high-frequency service.



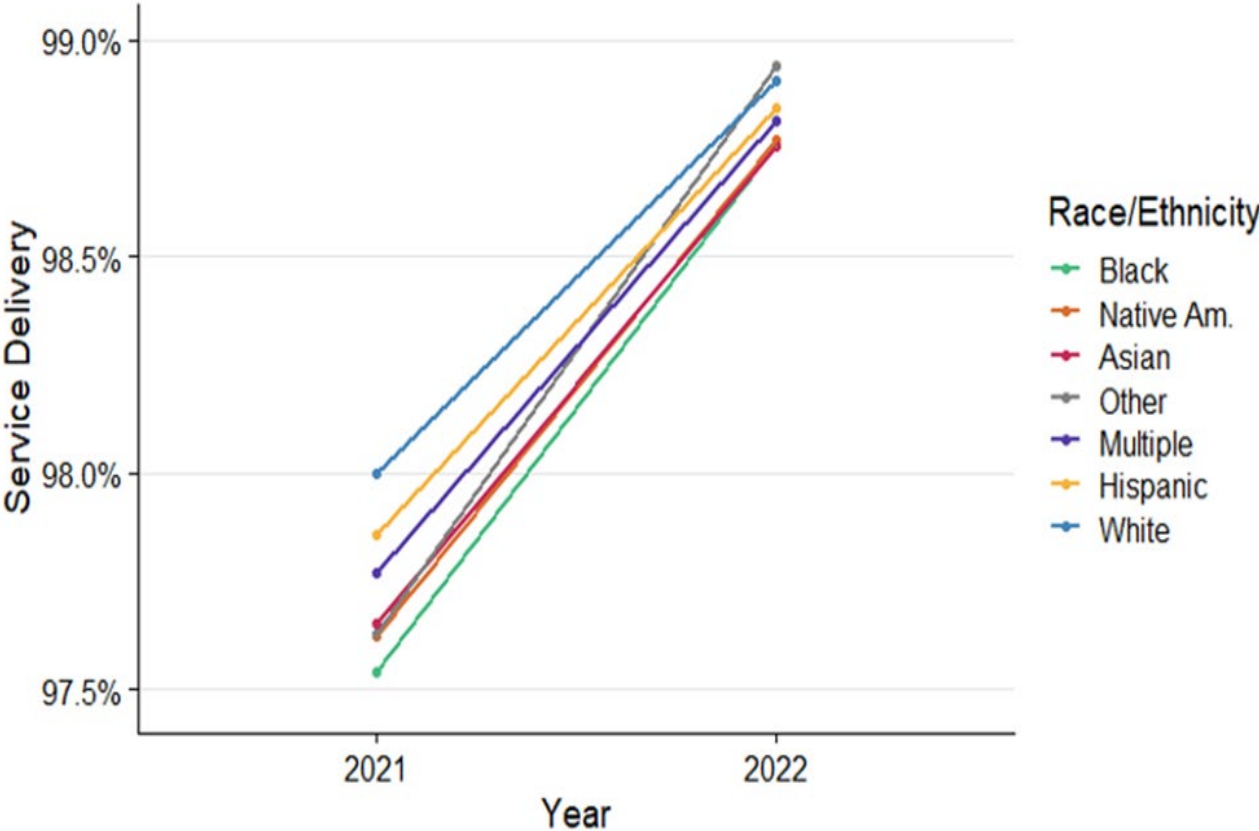
Service Reliability by Race & Ethnicity: On-Time Performance

Residents identifying as Black or Native American had access to **less reliable (on-time)** service compared to all residents living near stops and stations, on average.



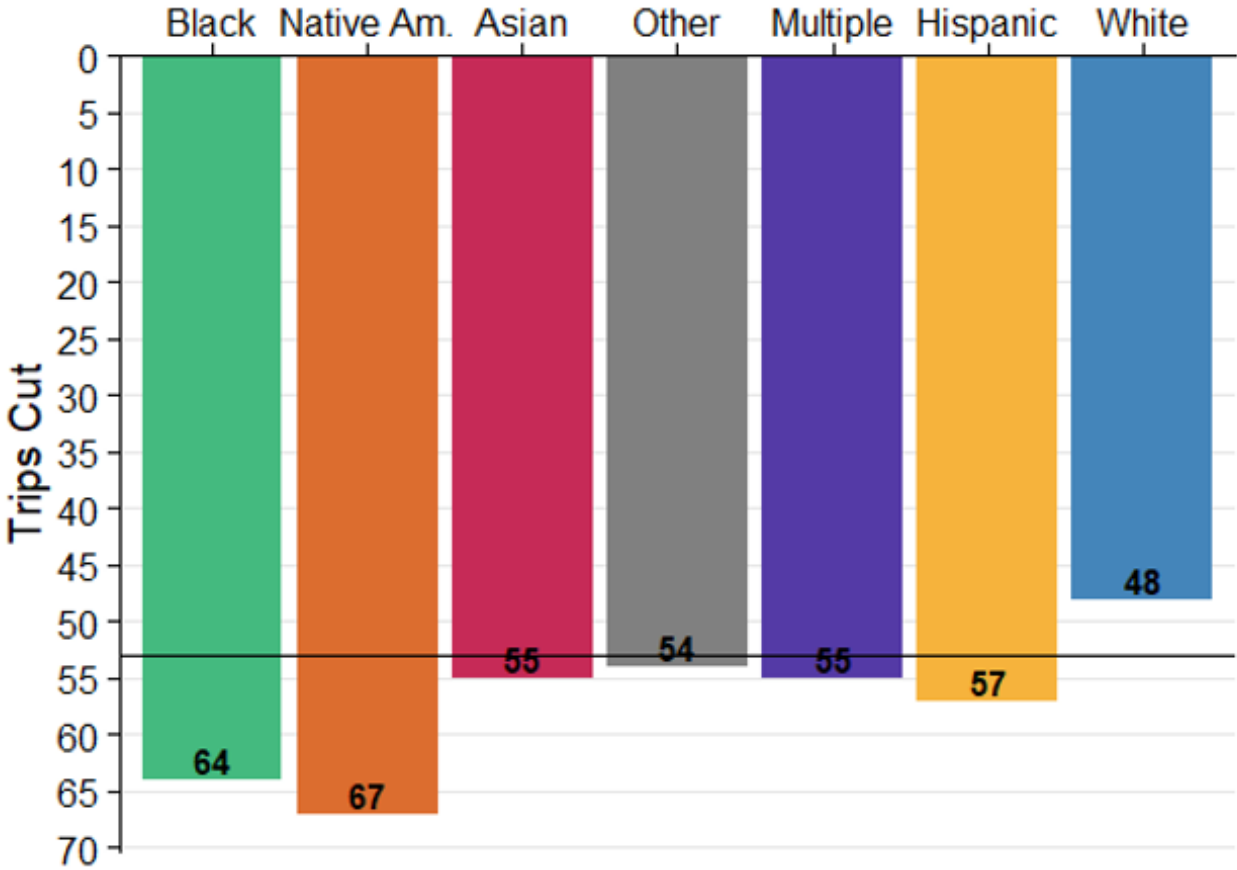
Service Reliability by Race & Ethnicity: Scheduled Service Delivered

All residents had access to **more reliable** (% service delivered) service in Fall 2022. Residents identifying as White had access to 0.15% more reliable (% service delivered) service compared to residents identifying as Black, Native American, Asian, or Hispanic.



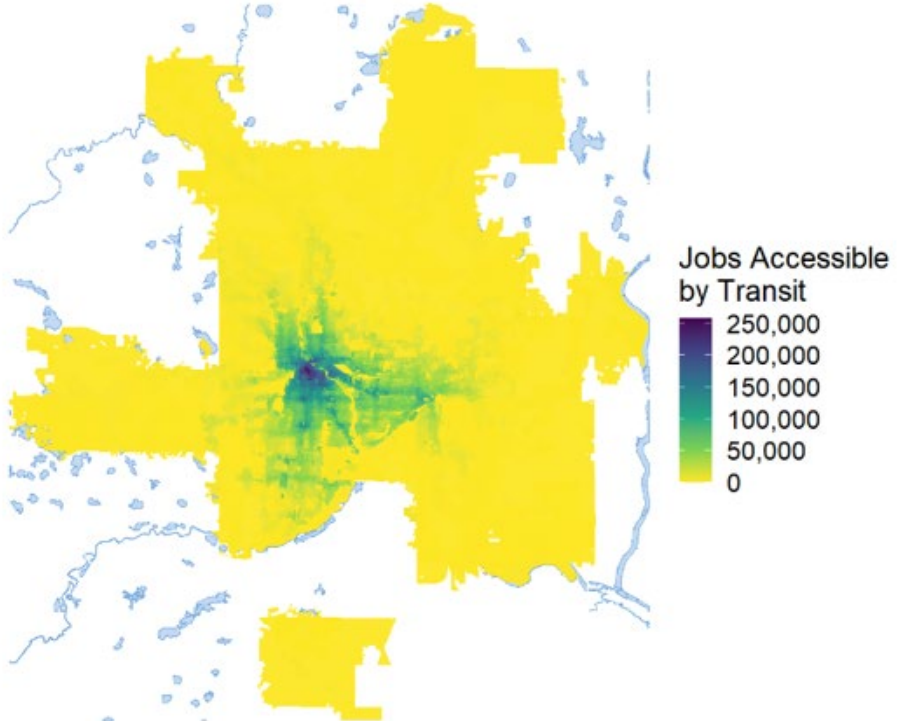
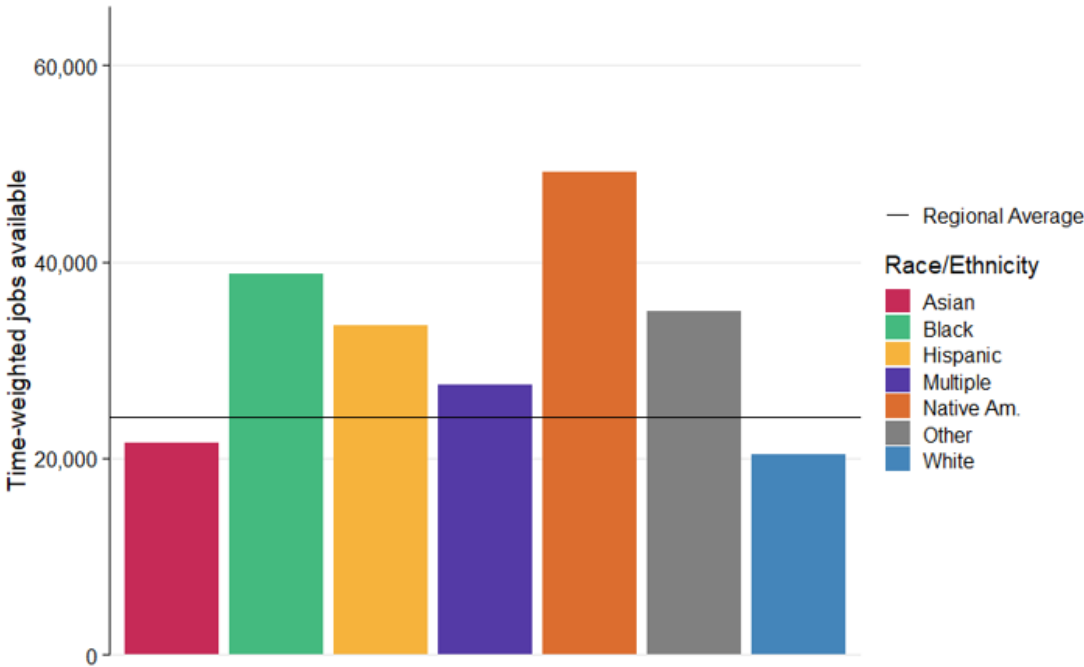
Service Reliability by Race & Ethnicity: Fall 2022 Cut Trips

Residents identifying as Black and Native American had **more trips** cut at the stops and stations nearby compared to other groups.



Service Outcomes by Race & Ethnicity: Access to Jobs

Residents identifying as Black, Native American, and Hispanic had **more jobs** accessible by transit compared to other groups.



Time-weighted access to jobs, Weekday Midday service, August 2022 Pick



2022 Equity Practices in Service Planning

- Title VI Practices
 - Adjusted disparate impact/disproportionate burden threshold as part of Title VI Plan update
 - Approved the results from the Service Monitoring Study
 - Conducted SEAs for new METRO D Line corridor changes and all December 2022 service changes
- Routine Practices
 - Transit Equity Statement
 - Network Now
 - Customer Surveys
 - Prioritizing Speed and Reliability Improvements



Proposed Action 2023-210

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Thank You!

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Assigning Demographics

Block-group	Walkshed in block-group	BIPOC in Isochrone	White in Isochrone
1	50%	$0.50 \times 100 = 50$	$0.50 \times 1000 = 500$
2	50%	$0.50 \times 500 = 250$	$0.50 \times 500 = 250$
3	33%	$0.33 \times 1000 = 333$	$0.33 \times 100 = 33$
Walkshed:		$50 + 250 + 333 = 633$	$500 + 250 + 33 = 783$

