

Stronger & Better Part I: what do the data suggest?

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transit trends topics

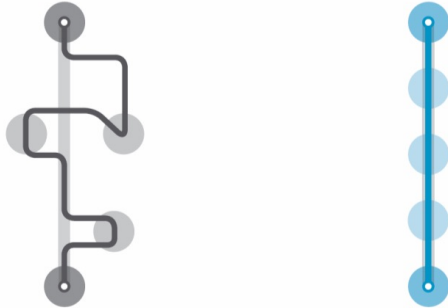
1. what we know: transit fundamentals
2. what we are watching: trends in the data
3. implications: data-informed planning
 - near-term service changes
 - operator resources and hiring



transit planning fundamentals

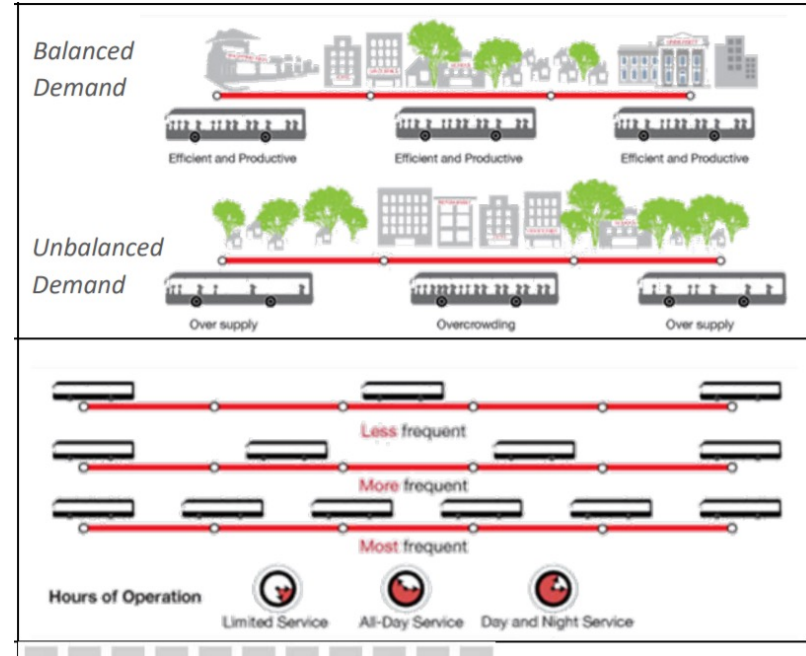
WHAT WE KNOW

Transit supply & demand



- direct
- frequent
- time of day match
- competitive travel time

- Not everywhere for every trip
- Match transit service to demand

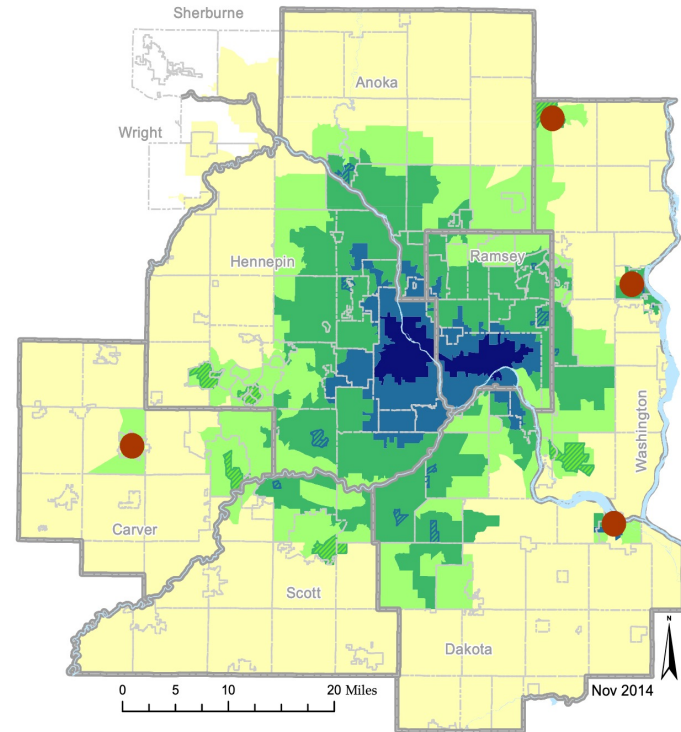


regional policy guides transit supply

[TPP Appendix G](#)

- Transit route types
- Frequency, span
- Bus stop spacing
- Route spacing
- Customer facilities
- Route productivity
- Subsidy/passenger

Transit Market Areas

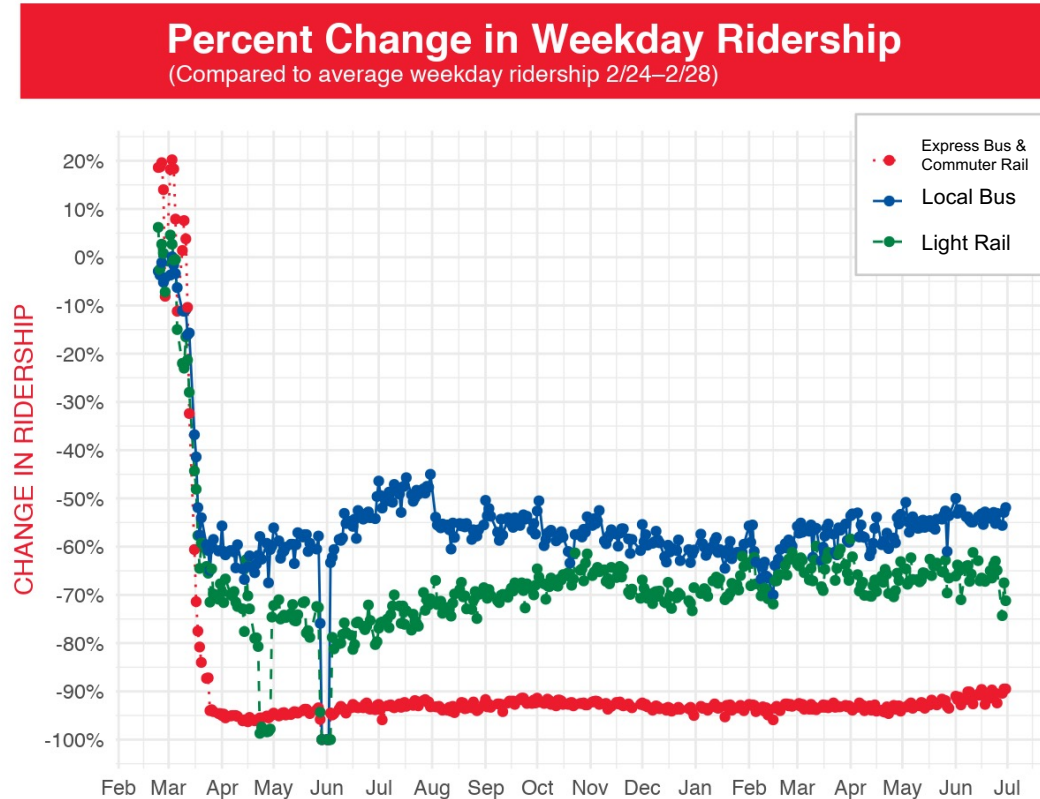




trends in the data

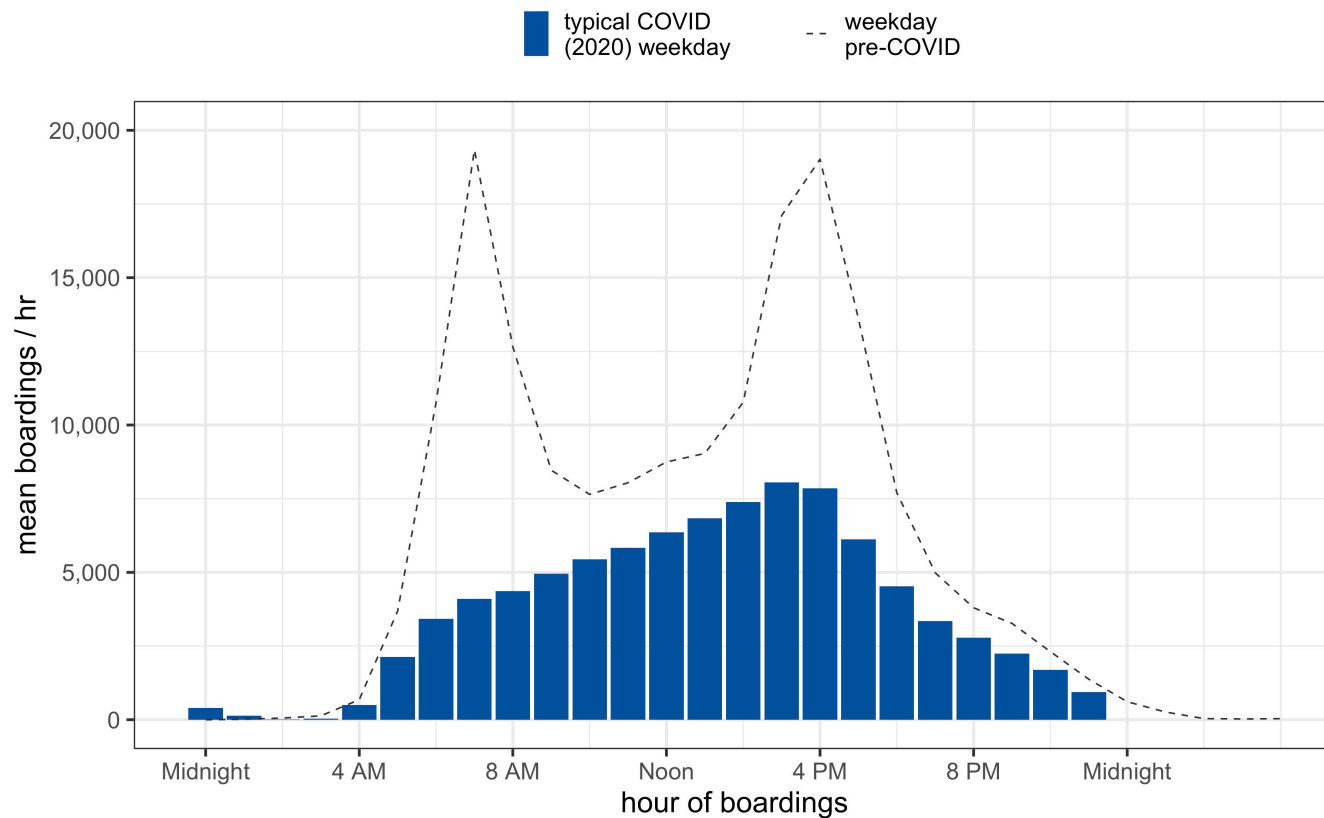
WHAT WE ARE WATCHING

trip making transition: stable state?



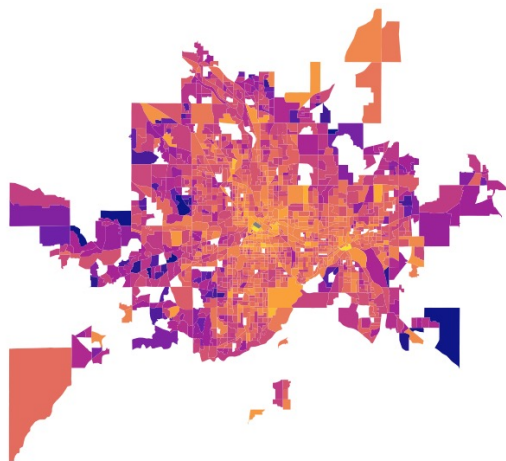
*Preliminary estimates, subject to change

two peaks have become one

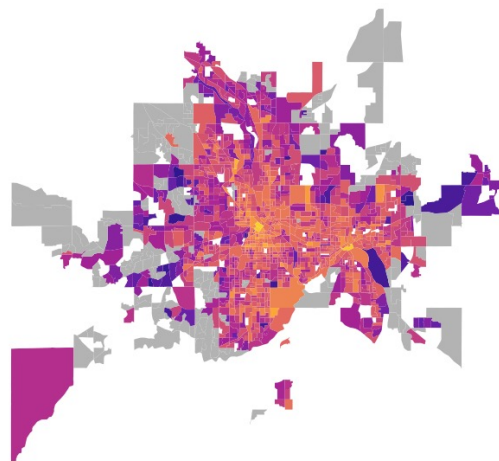


ridership during COVID is geographically concentrated

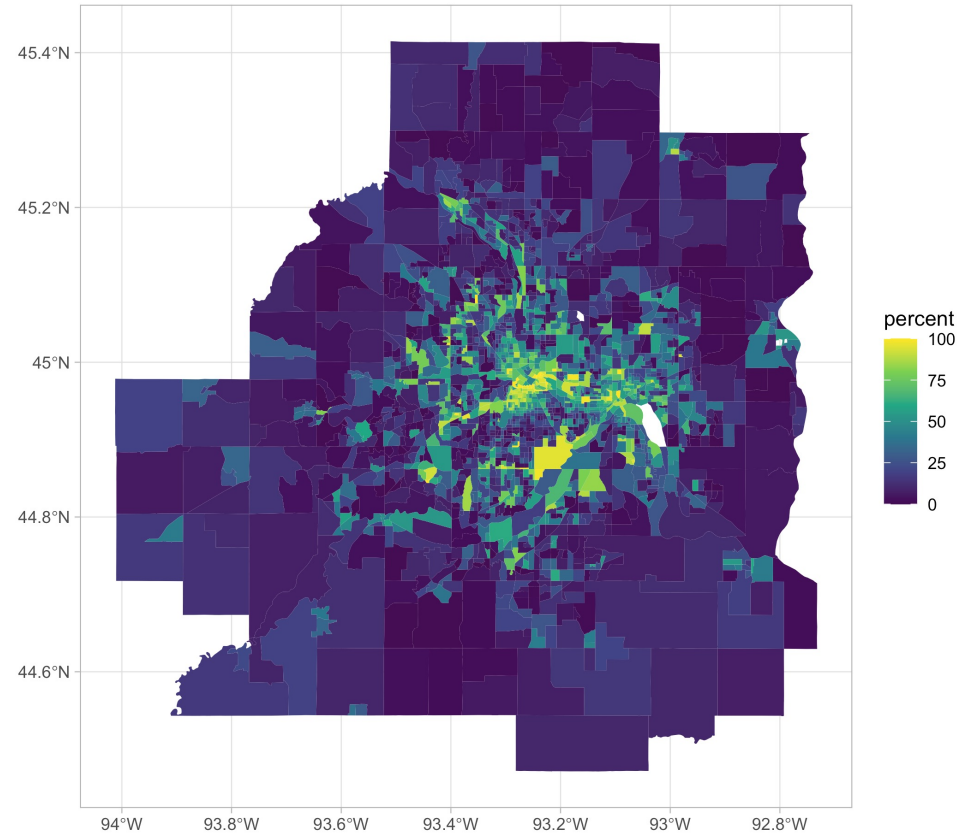
Average daily boardings,
Jan - December 2019



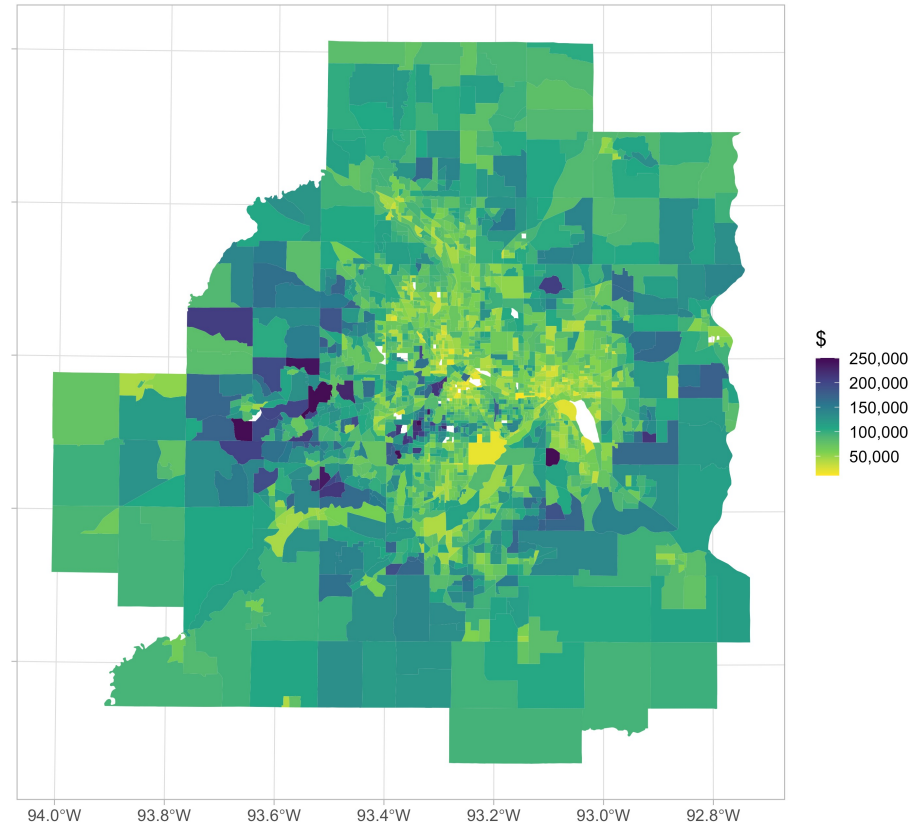
Average daily boardings,
March - September 2020



Percent of housing units occupied by renters
By Census Block Group, 2018



Median Household income
by Census Block Group



Spatial approach: renters, income best predictors* of COVID ridership

Predictors used in ridership model

Variable	Meaning	coefficient
x_1	Employment density	0.06
x_2	Walkability	0.03
x_3	Percent of households with no vehicle	0.06
x_4	Percent of residents aged 18 to 34	0.04
x_5	Presence of college or university campus	0.08
x_6	Presence of rail station	0.52
x_7	Presence of hospital campus	0.00
x_8	Presence of MSP International Airport	0.00
x_9	Median household income	-0.20
x_{10}	Percent of housing units occupied by renters	0.15
x_{11}	Percent of residents identified as white alone	-0.07

* - amount of service (trips) is included in model

Most Important Reason to Return to Metro Transit

Avoiding traffic and parking hassles is the most indicated reason to return to Metro Transit use (44%) among all respondents. Among those with their own or shared access to a vehicle, that reason is even more prevalent (53%). Among those without regular access to a vehicle, 73% indicate that travel without access to a vehicle is most important.

Most Important Reason to Return to Metro Transit Use



44% AVOIDS TRAFFIC AND PARKING HASSLES

22% ALLOWS TRAVEL WITHOUT OWNING OR HAVING ACCESS TO A VEHICLE

17% SAVES MONEY OVER OTHER OPTIONS

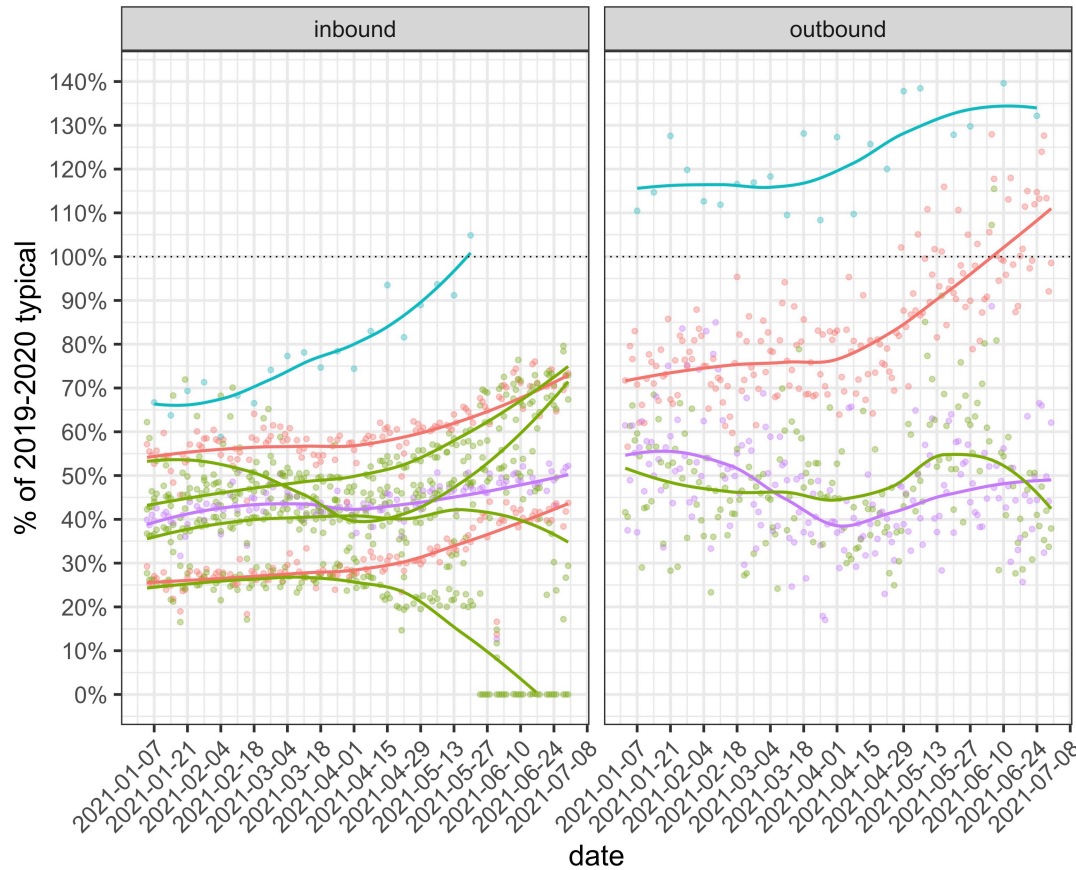
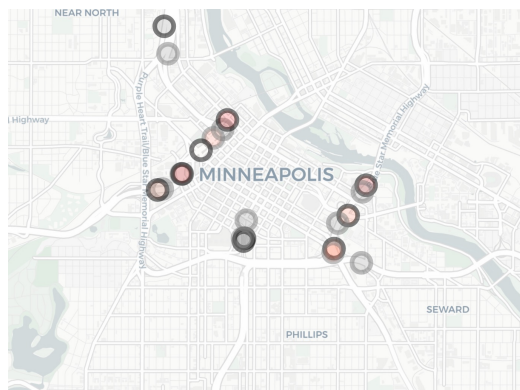
11% IS ENVIRONMENTALLY MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN OTHER OPTIONS

6% GIVES ME TIME TO MYSELF WHILE TRAVELING

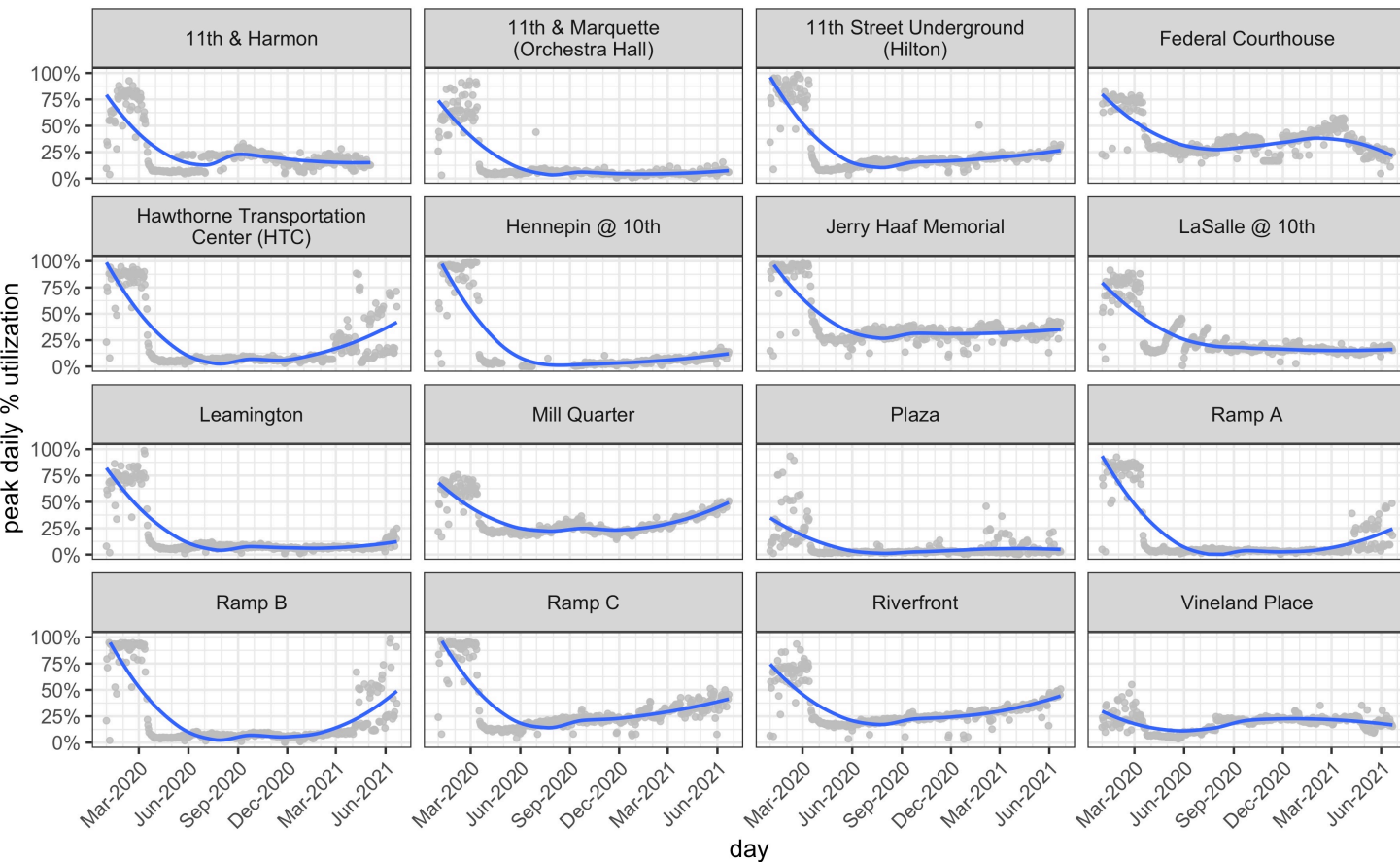
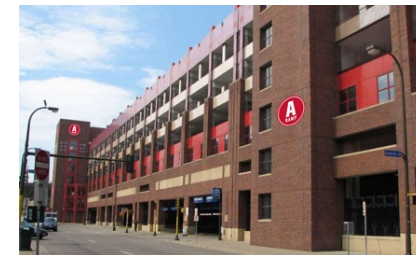
n=435

Q9 Which of the following would be the **most** important reason that you would return to using Metro Transit services? Metro Transit:

peak hour Mpls traffic



Minneapolis municipal parking trends through June 2021



*data courtesy of
City of Minneapolis*

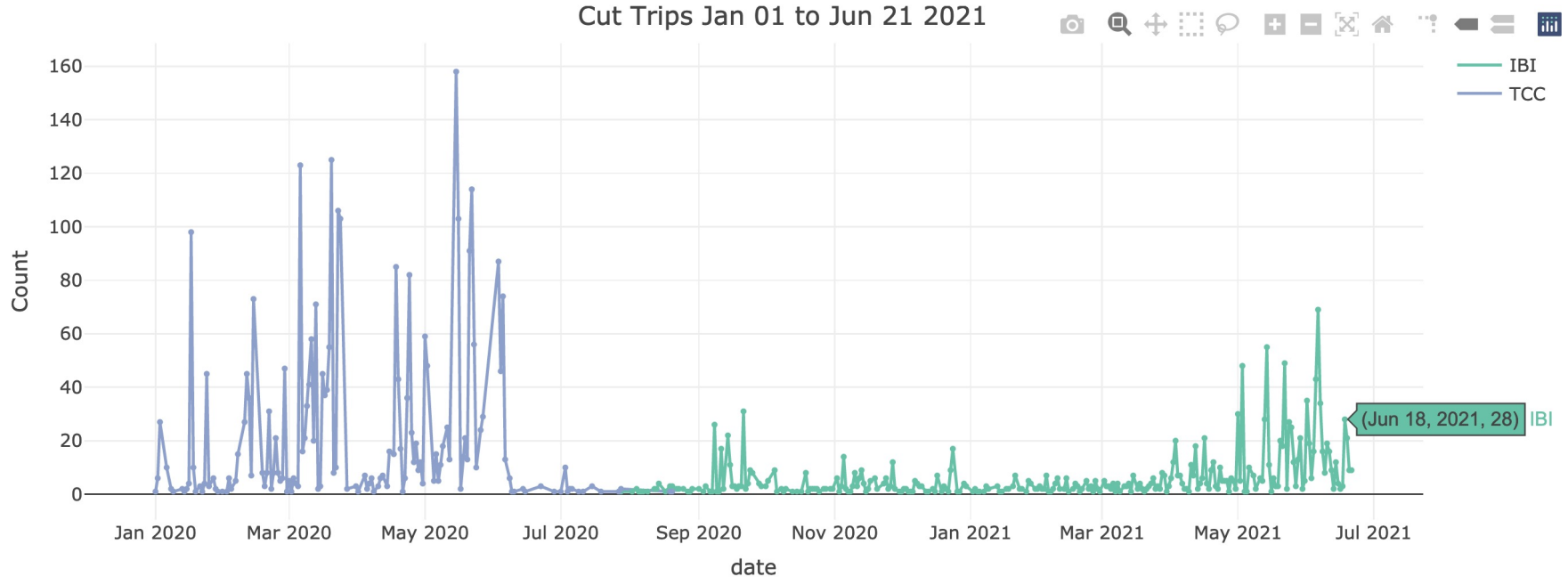
Cut Trips

Strategic Initiatives

Data labels between the two sources are not exactly the same. Filters applied are as follow:

- TCC data = Cut & Cut Trip & Late & Partial cut
- IBI data = Cancellations and Delay

number of operators limits service provision



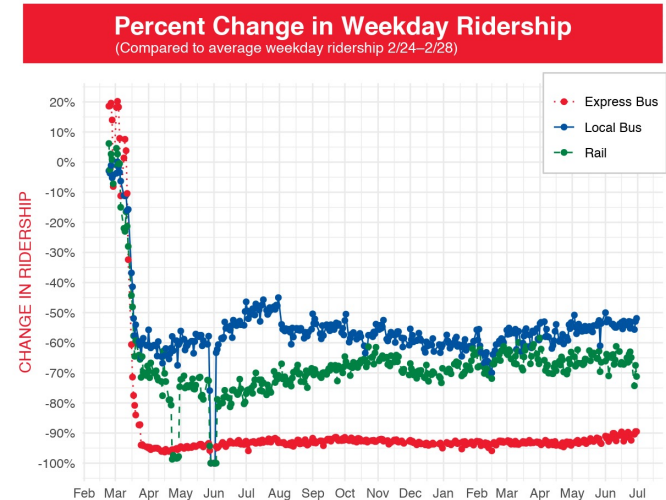


data-informed planning

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRENDS

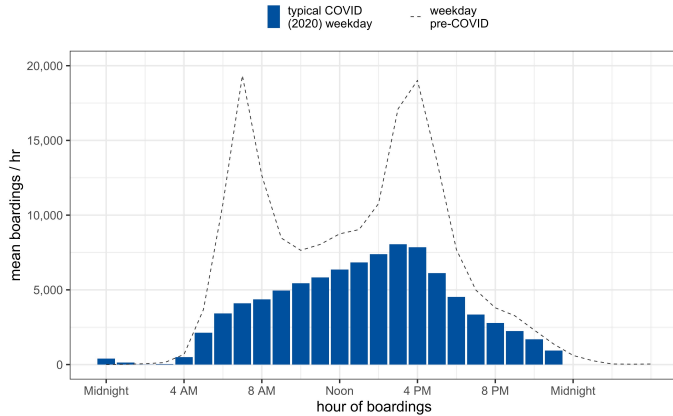
ridership trend implications

- expect slow change in ridership
 - especially true of “sticky” behavior of commuter/express riders
 - provide supply, measure demand
- possible perturbations:
 - massive return to work in downtown job centers in September
 - sudden and sustained congestion from increased private auto trips
 - gas price spike
 - policy intervention to make driving & parking more expensive



*Preliminary estimates, subject to change

time of day peak implications

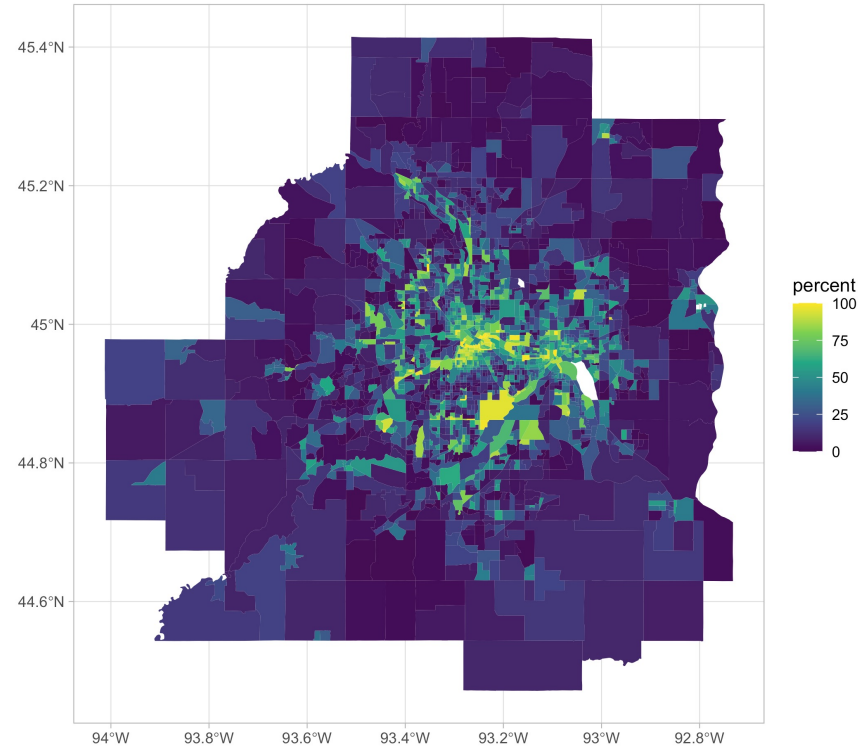


- all-day, frequent service best matches all-purpose travel
- **transit designed for single-purpose trips is fragile to disruption**
- improve speed, reliability of well-used local service to build ridership

spatial trends implications

- we know where to put service to build on current ridership
- service in low-propensity areas should not be expected to be productive
- alignment with equity mission

Percent of housing units occupied by renters
By Census Block Group, 2018

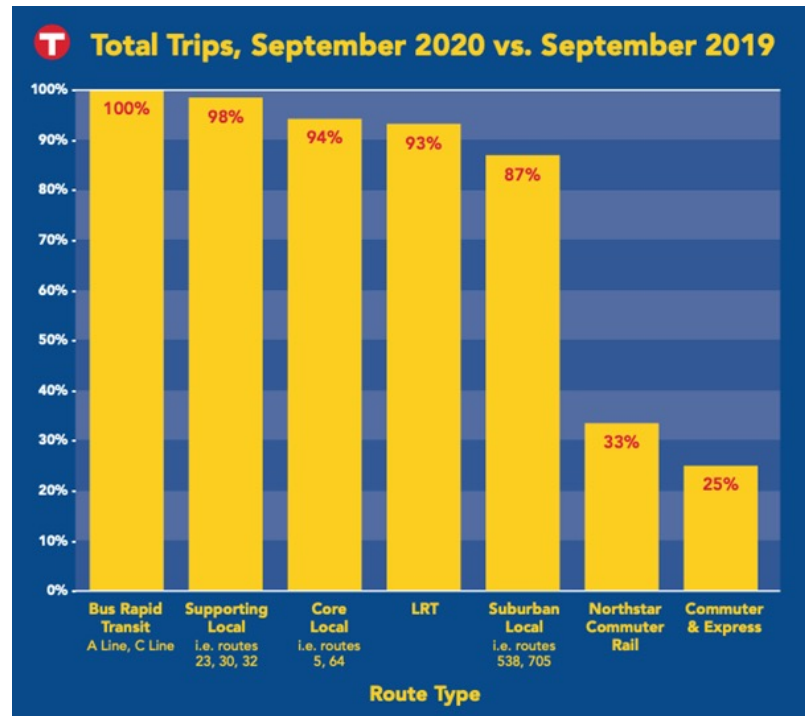
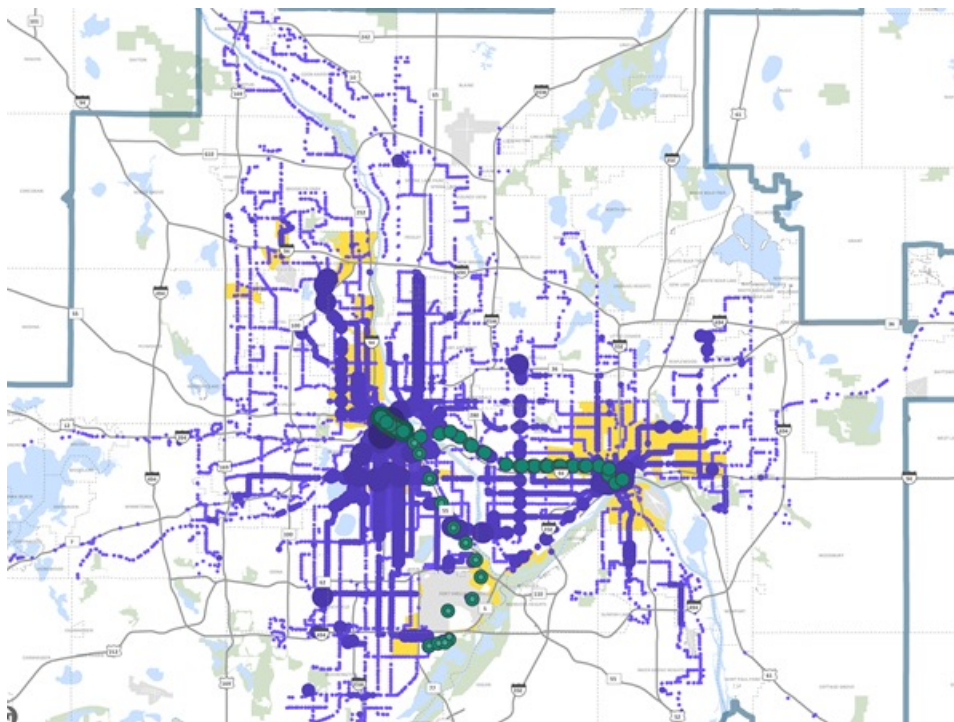




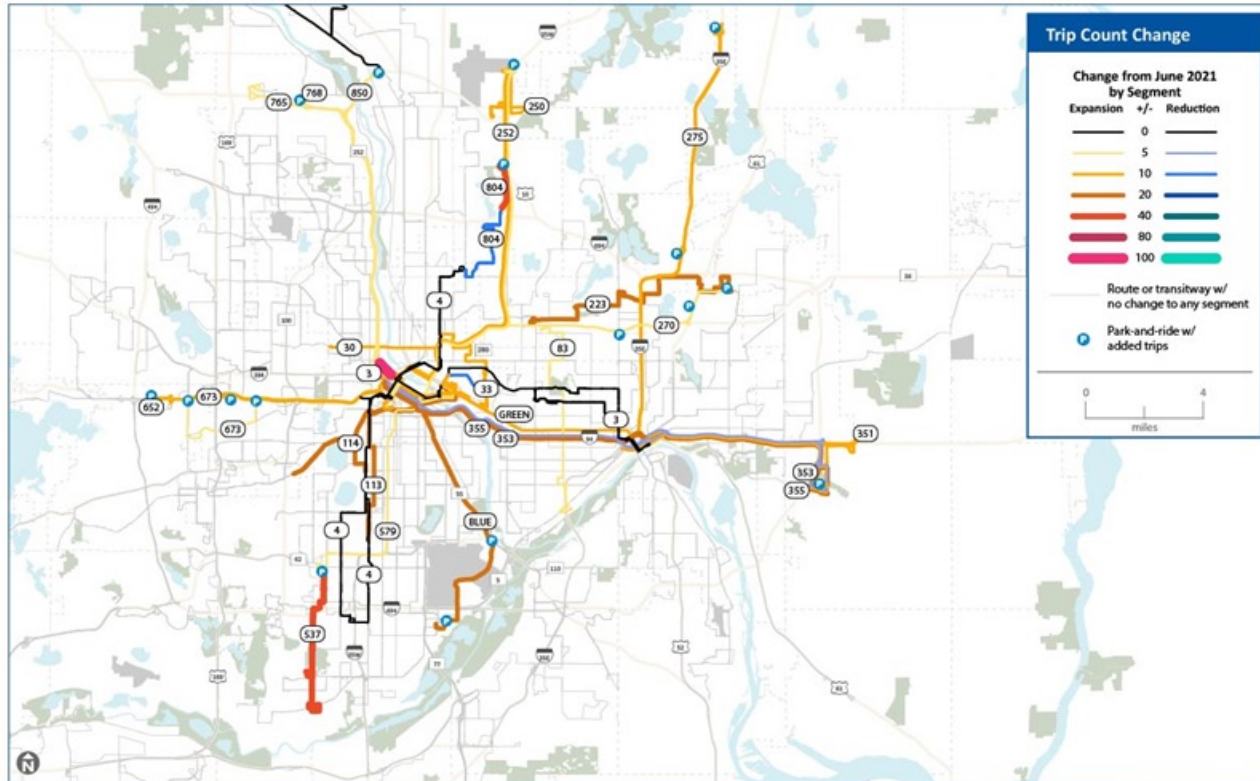
data-informed planning

NEAR-TERM SERVICE CHANGES

Current Service levels



August 21, 2021 service changes



August 21, 2021 service changes

- Commuter Express focused on primary freeway corridors
 - Large park and rides, and U of M
 - Restoring/improving service on 14 routes
- Route 3 high frequency Snelling to North Loop
- Restoring Route 223, 537
- Restructure Route 4
- LRT start 10" frequency in morning rush hour
- 40 routes remain suspended



staff levels and hiring

OPERATOR RESOURCES

operator resource implications



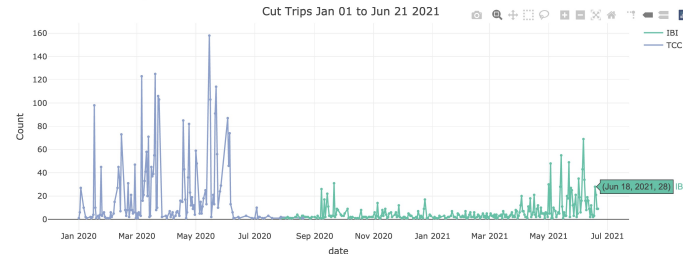
- expansion of service must be prioritized within operator resources
- hiring will drive service expansion

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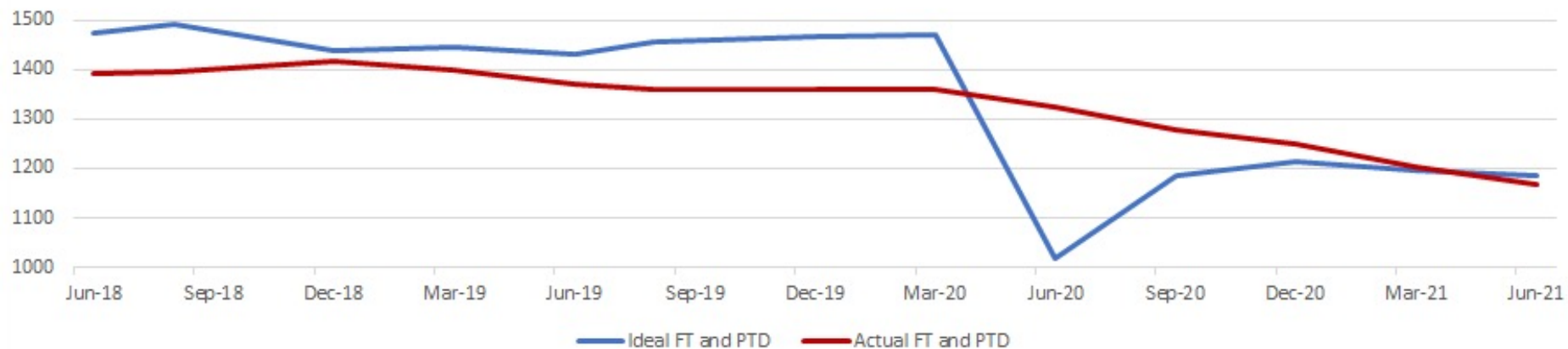


bus operator staffing and hiring update

- Key measure is full-time plus part-time weekday
 - Current ideal: **1186**
 - Current actual: **1163**
 - August service includes slight increase
 - Students in training: **6**
 - Applicants in late stages of hiring process: **42**
 - Goal: **12** students for each bi-weekly class



Bus Operator staffing actual vs. ideal
June 2018 thru June 2021



bus operator recruitment efforts

- Marketing campaign and Outreach efforts
 - metrotransit.org/drive
- Hiring for full-time careers
- \$1000 hiring bonus
- \$600 employee referral bonus
- Streamlined process
- Next hiring event
 - July 17, 9a-12p at 725 North 7th Street, Minneapolis
- New Project Manager for Operations – **Amina Wolf**

