2021 Service Equity Evaluation

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Service Equity Evaluation

• How have we changed our service since late 2020?
• How have ridership patterns changed?
• Do our service changes meet Title VI thresholds?
• How do 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 2021

• COVID-19 Response
  – TSA face mask mandate established in March
  – Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools resume in-person learning in April
  – Vehicle capacity limits lifted in May
  – Minnesota’s COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency ended July 1
  – Employers and colleges/universities plan increased in-person activities in fall

• Operator Shortage Emerges
  – Metro Transit re-started hiring in March, with limited success
  – Service reliability challenges in late 2021
Early 2021 service levels similar to Fall 2020

- METRO LRT, BRT and most local routes at 90-100% of pre-COVID service levels
- Limited service on commuter/express routes
  - 50+ routes remained suspended
  - 2 AM & 2 PM Northstar trips
## 2021 Service Change Highlights

### March & June
- METRO LRT: Hours of 10-minute service reduced
- School trips resume in April
- Route 63 added to High-Frequency Network

### August
- Commuter/express service expanded in key corridors
- Some commuter/express routes restored, including University of Minnesota routes
- METRO LRT: Hours of 10-minute service expanded
- Route 3 Better Bus Routes improvements

### December
- METRO Orange Line and connecting bus service implemented, scaled back from approved plans
- Frequencies reduced on METRO Blue, Green and A lines and local routes
- Commuter/express service reduced
- Service suspended on select local and commuter/express routes
Weekday Trip Counts, August 2019 – December 2021

- Core Local
- Suburban Local
- BRT
- Supporting Local
- LRT
- Commuter

Aug 2019 vs Dec 2021
Ridership Recovery by Mode

- BRT
- Local bus
- LRT
- Commuter Express

% pre-COVID RIDERSHIP

Jan-2021 to Dec-2021
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 has changed over time
  – 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

• 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 threshold
  – Determines when a difference is significant enough to result in a potential for discrimination
  – Met Council policy is “80% rule”
    • BIPOC, low-income groups must receive at least 80% of the benefits that White (non-Hispanic) or non-low-income populations receive
    • White (non-Hispanic) or more affluent residents must bear at least 80% of the adverse effects that BIPOC, low-income groups experience
Communities Living Near Transit

Communities of Color

Low-income communities
Change in Service Availability (Dec 2021 vs Sept 2019)
Change in Service Availability (Dec 2021 vs Sept 2020)
Service Metrics by Race & Ethnicity

• Service Availability
  – Trip Count
  – Frequent Service

• Service Reliability
  – On-time Performance
  – Trip Cuts

• Service Outcomes
  – Access to Jobs
Service Availability by Race & Ethnicity: **Trip Count**

Black and Native American residents live near more service.
Native American residents have twice the access to high-frequency service compared to white residents.
Black and Native American residents have access to service with slightly worse OTP than other residents.
Black and Native American residents experience more cut trips, on average, compared to White residents.
Service Outcomes by Race & Ethnicity: Access to Jobs Map

- More service, more jobs!
Service Outcomes by Race & Ethnicity: Access to Jobs

Black and Native American residents have access to more jobs within a reasonable time on transit compared to other groups.
Equity Practices in Service Planning

• Title VI Practices
  – Service Monitoring Study every three years
  – SEA for new METRO Orange Line corridor changes
  – SEA Peer and methodology review

• Routine Practices
  – Vehicle Assignment
  – Customer Surveys
  – Prioritizing Speed and Reliability Improvements
Thank You!

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