

Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Introduction of the METRO D Line & Local Service Changes to Routes 5, 39, 133, 721, and 724

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Prepared by:



Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council is the regional policy-making body, metropolitan planning organization (MPO), and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities metropolitan region. The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous region.

The 17-member Metropolitan Council is a policy board, which has guided and coordinated the strategic growth of the metro area and achieved regional goals for more than 50 years. Elected officials and residents share their expertise with the Council by serving on key advisory committees.

The Council also provides essential services and infrastructure - Metro Transit's bus and rail system, Metro Mobility, Transit Link, wastewater treatment services, regional parks, planning, affordable housing, and more - that support communities and businesses and ensure a high quality of life for residents.

Metro Transit

Metro Transit is the transportation resource for the Twin Cities, offering an integrated network of buses, light rail, and commuter trains, as well as resources for those who carpool, vanpool, walk, or bike. Metro Transit is developing a network of enhanced transitways throughout the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

METRO D Line Project and Proposed Service Changes

Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council are preparing to introduce the METRO D Line bus rapid transit (BRT) route in December 2022. The 18-mile D Line will substantially replace Route 5 with faster, frequent, and all-day service, and will connect neighborhoods and destinations in Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis, Richfield, and Bloomington. Additionally, Metro Transit is proposing changes to other routes that operate within or connect to the D Line corridor, including Routes 5, 39, 133, 721, and 724. These local service changes would be implemented concurrently with the D Line.

Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review proposed service changes associated with the implementation of the METRO D Line **to ensure the impacts of proposed changes would be made in a nondiscriminatory manner based on race, color, national origin, and low-income status.**

As part of its Civil Rights and Environmental Justice obligations, Metro Transit is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to conduct a Title VI service equity analysis for any proposed service change that meets the agency's "major service change" threshold. Elements of the proposed service changes associated with implementation of the D Line meet this threshold, and this report fulfills Metro Transit's requirement to conduct a Title VI service equity analysis.

This analysis reviewed changes in service along the proposed D Line corridor to understand how service availability - or access to transit - would change for residents and the extent to which impacts differ between Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and white non-Hispanic residents, and between low-income and non-low-income residents.

Framework for Evaluating Impacts

Metro Transit's existing Title VI framework uses the percent change in access to transit service for the average resident as the metric used to assess the impact of proposed service changes. Put another way, we attempt to quantify how much bus or rail service is within a reasonable walk or roll from one's home, and how that would change because of the service change. This is measured by the number of weekly scheduled transit trips (count of transit vehicle trips from public route schedules) available to each census block and the people that live within them.

For Title VI service equity analyses, Metro Transit uses its disparate impact and disproportionate burden thresholds and policies as evidence of impacts severe enough to result in potential discrimination, following FTA guidelines. As outlined in Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council's Title VI Program, Metro Transit has defined its disparate impact and disproportionate burden policies and thresholds using the "80% rule," which states that there may be evidence of disparate impact if:

- *Adverse effects* are being borne by non-BIPOC populations at a rate less than 80% of the adverse effects being borne by BIPOC populations, or
- *Benefits* are being provided to BIPOC populations at a rate less than 80% of the benefits being provided to non-BIPOC populations.

The same framework is used when evaluating whether low-income populations would experience disproportionate burden relative to the impacts on non-low-income populations.

Summary of Results

A large majority of residents within the service change area would receive an increase in service resulting from the proposed D Line, Route 5, and associated service changes.

- 76% of the total population living within the service change area would receive an increase in weekly scheduled transit trips;
- 53% of residents would receive an increase in weekly scheduled transit trips greater than 50%; and
- Just 7% of residents would receive a decrease in weekly scheduled transit trips greater than 5%.

Table i summarizes the average percent change in service level for each target population group. On average, the proposed service changes associated with introduction of the D Line result in a notable increase in transit service availability for all population groups within the service change area.

The average person living in the service change area - regardless of race, ethnicity, or low-income status - would experience a 52.2% increase in transit service after the proposed changes. The average BIPOC resident would experience a 52.8% increase, greater than the average for white resident, who would experience a 51.2% increase. Therefore, per Metro Transit's Title VI policies, this analysis identifies **no disparate impact on BIPOC residents** resulting from the proposed service changes as part of implementing the METRO D Line.

Table i. Average percent change in service

Population Group	Average Percent Change in Service	Affected Population
Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	52.8%	59,866
White non-Hispanic	51.2%	37,933
Low-Income	56.0%	35,983
Non-Low-Income	49.3%	61,339
Total Population	52.2%	97,799

The average low-income resident in the service change area would experience a 56.0% increase in transit service after the proposed changes. This service increase is greater than that for the average for non-low-income individual, who would receive a 49.3% increase. Therefore, per Metro Transit's Title VI policies, this analysis identifies **no disproportionate burden on low-income residents** resulting from the proposed service changes as part of implementing the METRO D Line.

Conclusions

Upon conducting the technical analysis and applying Metro Transit's Title VI policies in accordance with Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council's Title VI Program, this review finds that the **proposed service changes would not result in disparate impact on BIPOC populations nor disproportionate burden on low-income populations.**