Appendix E   December 2020 Policymakers Workshop Summary Memo

MEMORANDUM

To: The Met Council & Regional Policymakers

From: Thomas Wittmann, Nelson\Nygaard

Date: December 10, 2020

Subject: The Met Council Bus Service Allocation Study —
Policymakers Workshop Summary #2

This memo summarizes the approach and findings from the Met Council Bus Service Allocation Study Policymakers Workshop #2. The workshop was held on December 3, 2020 between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. on the Zoom video conferencing platform. In total, 58 attendees participated, including 10 Council members, 8 TAB members, and 18 additional regional stakeholders, as well as Met Council support staff and members of the consultant team.

In order to generate feedback from those not able to attend the workshop, all invitees who did not attend were provided with a copy of the presentation, access to the meeting recording and transcript, and an opportunity to provide feedback via Mentimeter polling software survey used during the workshop.

The workshop presented the evaluation findings of two future service investment strategies. Scenario 1 prioritized investment in frequent, all-day transit that could be used for a variety of trip types, while Scenario 2 prioritized expanding basic transit access to more areas of the region.

Key takeaways from the workshop include:

- Regional policymakers express consistent support for transit service improvements that prioritize equity, including service to low-income populations and communities of color.
- Regional policymakers express a moderate preference for improving transit service frequency over expanding geographic coverage.
- In small-group discussions, participants indicated they recognize the ridership benefits and accessibility improvements of Scenario 1. However, they also noted a need to expand the areas of region where all-day service is offered, as well as to look other modes beyond fixed-route transit—both strengths of Scenario 2.
- With respect to COVID-19, participants indicated a desire to explore transit service that meets the needs of people who rely on transit the most, including for non-work trips.
- When evaluating future transit expansion options, the region's planning and funding structures should be resilient in a range of possible future travel conditions.
- While most participants prefer a balanced scenario of some sort, the group expressed a moderate preference for Scenario 1 compared to Scenario 2.

Introduction

Like most metropolitan areas across the country, the Twin Cities region faces challenges in distributing transit dollars in a way that meets all needs. The overall goal of the Met Council Bus Service Allocation Study is to facilitate a discussion about how the region could invest in an expanded transit system. Project recommendations are not meant to replace any agency specific guidelines or supplant the ongoing service provider planning processes (e.g. Network Next), but instead be a regional construct about the opportunities and options available to regional stakeholders and elected officials.

On April 22, 2020, project staff held an initial virtual workshop with policymakers that was intended to share results of the existing conditions analysis, discuss the service design trade-offs inherent to transit planning, and generate input from regional policymakers on the priorities and values that should guide future transit service allocation.

From April to December 2020, project staff worked to develop, refine, and evaluate two alternative scenarios to illustrate the likely outcomes associated with different transit investment strategies. Scenario 1 prioritized investment in frequent, all-day transit that could be used for a variety of trip types, while Scenario 2 prioritized expanding basic transit access to more areas of the region. In order to evaluate these investment strategies, detailed route-level service improvements were identified for each scenario based on existing service performance, planned transitway connections, and the priorities of each regional transit service provider as expressed in stakeholder interviews. Once defined, Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 were analyzed for their likely impact on measures of ridership, equity, geographic coverage, and access to destinations.

At the second regional policymakers' workshop on December 3, 2020, project staff presented the results of the scenario evaluation process, provided a forum for discussion, and solicited feedback from policymakers on the benefits and drawbacks of each scenario.

Workshop Approach

Planning

As with the first policymaker workshop, an online meeting was held via Zoom in place of in-person workshops due ongoing precautions related to COVID-19 in Minnesota. The workshop was planned and hosted by a consultant team from Nelson\Nygaard and SRF Consulting in collaboration with staff from the Met Council.

The workshop invitee list included Council Members and staff from the Met Council, representatives from the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), regional stakeholders from advocacy, business, educational, and cultural organizations, and support staff from the region's transit agencies and local governments. The invite list was intended to balance geography and unique perspectives on transit (e.g. cultural or business interests). The list of invitees, RSVPs, and attendees can be found in Appendix A. Email invitations were sent out in advance of the meeting with instructions for registering for the meeting via the Zoom video conferencing application. A copy of the presentation and a list of expected attendees were also sent out prior to the meeting.

Prior to the meeting, workshop planning staff consulted with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on the scenario evaluation results and the contents of the workshop. The TAC is made up of members from the region's counties, cities, and transit agencies, as well as the Minnesota

Department of Transportation staff. Feedback from the TAC was integrated into the materials presented at the workshop.

Meeting Format

The format of the workshop consisted of a presentation by Thomas Wittmann and Mariel Kirschen of Nelson\Nygaard, as well as interactive polling exercises and small group discussions.

Cole Hiniker of the Met Council provided an introduction, including background on the purpose of the project and the goals for the workshop.

Thomas Wittmann provided a summary of the April policymaker workshop, followed by an explanation of the scenario development process that was used to identify specific route-level service improvements for Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

Mariel Kirschen presented the results of the scenario evaluation process, including a detailed explanation of each scenario's implications for regional ridership, as well as service availability across the region's Transit Market Areas (TMAs) and for priority demographic groups. Preliminary findings on regional job accessibility (developed under contract by the University of Minnesota's Accessibility Observatory), were also presented.

During each of these presentations, Nelson\Nygaard staff solicited feedback from policymakers using Mentimeter interactive polling software; a series of questions relevant to overall priorities, evaluation criteria, and the scenario results were asked at relevant points in the discussion. Participants in the workshop were also permitted to ask questions of the project team via the chat function in Zoom; this tool was primarily used to clarify methodological details related to the scenario evaluation criteria and results.

Following the main presentation, workshop participants were divided into four breakout groups for a facilitated small-group discussion. The consultant team, assisted by Met Council project and support staff, guided participants in a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of each scenario, as well as how policymakers' opinions and priorities may have shifted based on the presentation of scenario results, as well as the region's ongoing experience with the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the conclusion of the small group discussions, attendees were reconvened into the main workshop room for a final Mentimeter polling question on the percentage of regional transit expansion funding that should be allocated toward the types of service improvements represented in each scenario.

Thomas Wittmann and Cole Hiniker then provided an explanation of next steps, including the development of additional "hybrid" scenarios, the conclusion of the consultant role after December 2020, and ongoing engagement activities to be conducted by the Met Council.

The meeting presentation can be seen in Appendix B.

Additional Requests for Feedback

Workshop invitees who were unable to join the scheduled workshop were also given the opportunity to provide feedback. Following the workshop, Met Council staff emailed the outstanding invitees the presentation slides, a link to the Zoom meeting recording and transcript, and the Mentimeter survey questions asked during the meeting.

Workshop Feedback

This section summarizes the feedback provided during the workshop presentation, live Mentimeter polling questions, breakout rooms, and follow-up survey. Notes from each breakout group are included in Appendix C. The full chat transcript from the meeting can be found in Appendix D. Open-ended comments from the Mentimeter survey can be found in Appendix E.

What does a successful regional transit system look like?

As an introductory exercise, project staff asked participants to submit an open-ended response to the question "What does a successful regional transit system look like?". Responses were displayed via a real-time Mentimeter feed to allow participants to view comments from the entire group. Below is a summary of themes submitted (the full list of comments is included in Appendix E).

- Access to all parts of the region
- Access for populations who rely on transit
- Access to jobs
- Ease of use
- Equity and inclusivity
- Frequency and reliability (including all-day service)
- Integration or coordination between providers
- Safety and perception of safety
- Service for essential trips (work, grocery, healthcare, etc.)
- Utilization and productivity

Of these, the most frequently mentioned themes included equity (prioritizing service to underserved populations or communities with a legacy of disinvestment), access to jobs and destinations, and the expansion of safe, frequent, and reliable service to more parts of the region. Several participants noted that frequent, all-day service should be expanded to transit-supportive suburban areas, while others expressed a need for a basic level of service across all parts of the region.
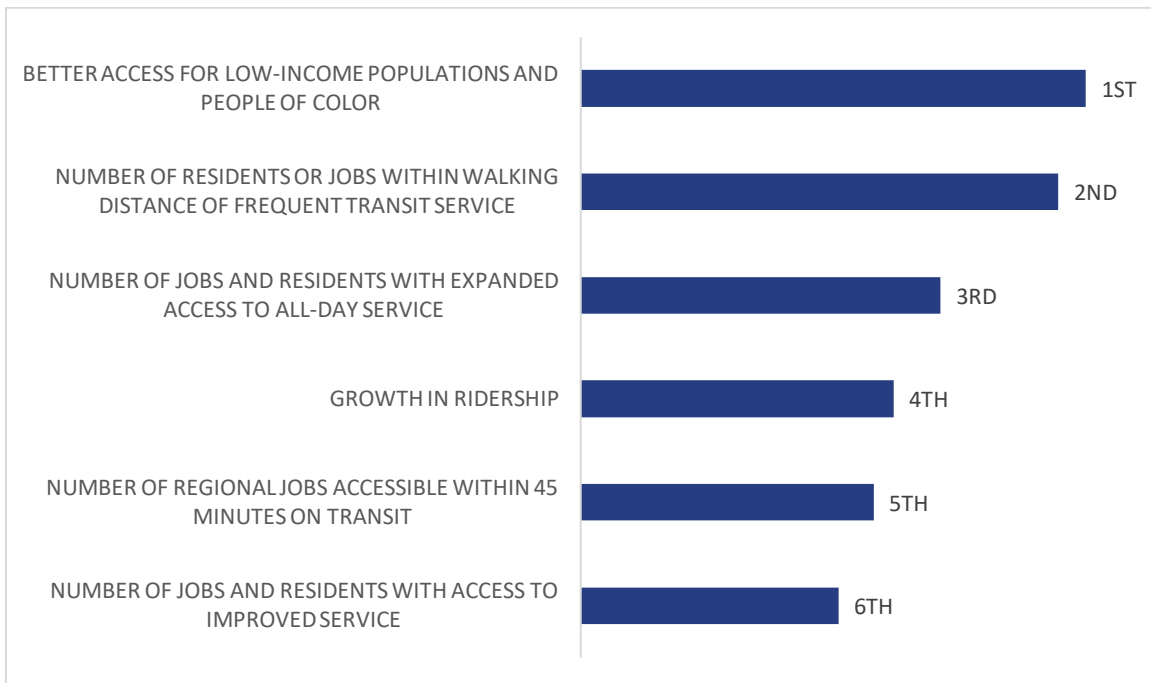
Scenario Evaluation Criteria

Ranking Exercise

After presenting the metrics used to evaluate each scenario (but before the presentation of results), project staff asked participants to rank the main categories of evaluation criteria from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important). The rankings were tabulated via Mentimeter and displayed to all participants to guide the discussion of scenario results.

Results from the exercise can be seen in Figure 1. The top-ranking evaluation criteria were better access for low-income populations and people of color (1st) and the number of residents or jobs within walking distance of frequent transit service (2nd). These values echoed the themes of equity and service frequency that were expressed in the open-ended responses earlier in the presentation, as well as much of the feedback received in the April 22 workshop.

Figure 1   **Rank the relative importance of the Evaluation Criteria in prioritizing expansion / future investment of the regional transit network (n = 31)**

Scenario Evaluation Findings

Methodology Questions

After presenting the results of the scenario evaluation process, project staff fielded a number of questions from participants related to the methodology and data sources used. Questions and answers included the following:

- **Q:** Can you remind us over what future timeframe the benefits in the scenarios are being evaluated?
  - **A:** The evaluation is based on current year data, or the most recent available data, depending on the source.
- **Q:** If you factor a 30% reduction in jobs in downtown Minneapolis, how would it change the calculations generally?
  - **A:** This is a current issue; there is uncertainty as to how long this will last. In the longer term, history has told us that urban centers will continue to be a strong region center and center for growth and will continue to be a place where people congregate and work.
- **Q:** Are there order of magnitude cost estimates for each scenario at this point?
  - **A:** Both scenarios are approximately equal and represent a 25% increase.
- **Q:** Can you comment about the potential to expand the total expansion potential of overall employment and population between the two scenarios?
  - **A:** There are two different strategies here, and both of them increase the population that has access to transit. Scenario 2 expands the number of people and jobs with

access to transit, and Scenario 1 expands the number of people that have access to high-quality transit.

- **Q:** Was the same level of weight given between improved access than went from "None to Some" as "Some to Better?"
  - **A:** Yes.
- **Q:** Does this factor in the suburban providers service levels as a part of the whole transit system?
  - **A:** Yes.
- **Q:** Was the access to employment segmented between jobs that are: 1) Performed on-site, 2) Often be performed on-site, 3) Not required to be performed on-site? (i.e. Increased telecommuting impacts job buckets #2 & #3 more than #1.)
  - **A:** This level of detail is not available in the employment data.
- **Q:** How do these account for local affordable housing plans across region?
  - **A:** We just looked at what exists currently on the ground right now. And actually, just because of data availability, we didn't look at any sort of population and employment projections into the future; however, transitway expansion plans may factor in future population and employment forecasts.
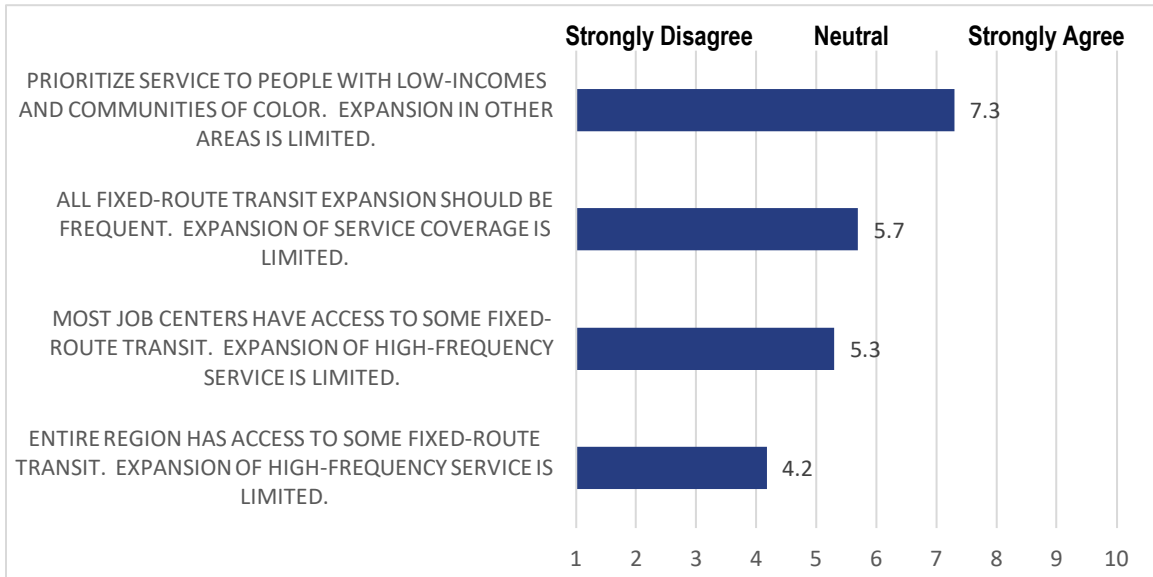
Ranking Exercises

After presenting scenario results and answering questions on methodology, project staff solicited feedback on two Mentimeter ranking exercises. The first asked participants to rate the extent to which they agree (10) or disagree (1) with four statements reflecting different transit expansion priorities and tradeoffs:

- **Service Frequency:** "All fixed-route transit expansion should be frequent. Expansion of service coverage is limited."
- **Geographic Coverage:** "Entire region has access to some fixed-route transit. Expansion of high-frequency service is limited."
- **Geographic Coverage**: "Most job centers have access to some fixed-route transit. Expansion of high-frequency service is limited."
- **Equity Considerations** "Prioritize service to people with low-incomes and communities of color. Expansion in other areas is limited."

Results of this ranking exercise are shown in Figure 2. As in previous results, regional policymakers expressed strongest agreement with the statements prioritizing equity considerations (weighted average = 7.3) and service frequency (weighted average = 5.7). Responses to statements emphasizing geographic coverage prioritized access to job centers (weighted average = 5.3) over access across the entire region (weighted average = 4.3).

Figure 2   How much do you agree with the following statements? (n = 35)

The second ranking exercise related to scenario results asked participants to rank the order in which they would pursue various transit expansion options. As in previous exercises, participants indicated they would prioritize adding frequent service that served all trip types (Rank: 1st) and a adding service in communities of color and areas of concentrated poverty (Rank: 2nd). Results of this exercise are shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3   What would you do first in prioritizing expansion/future investment in the regional transit network? [Rank in order of importance.] (n = 31)
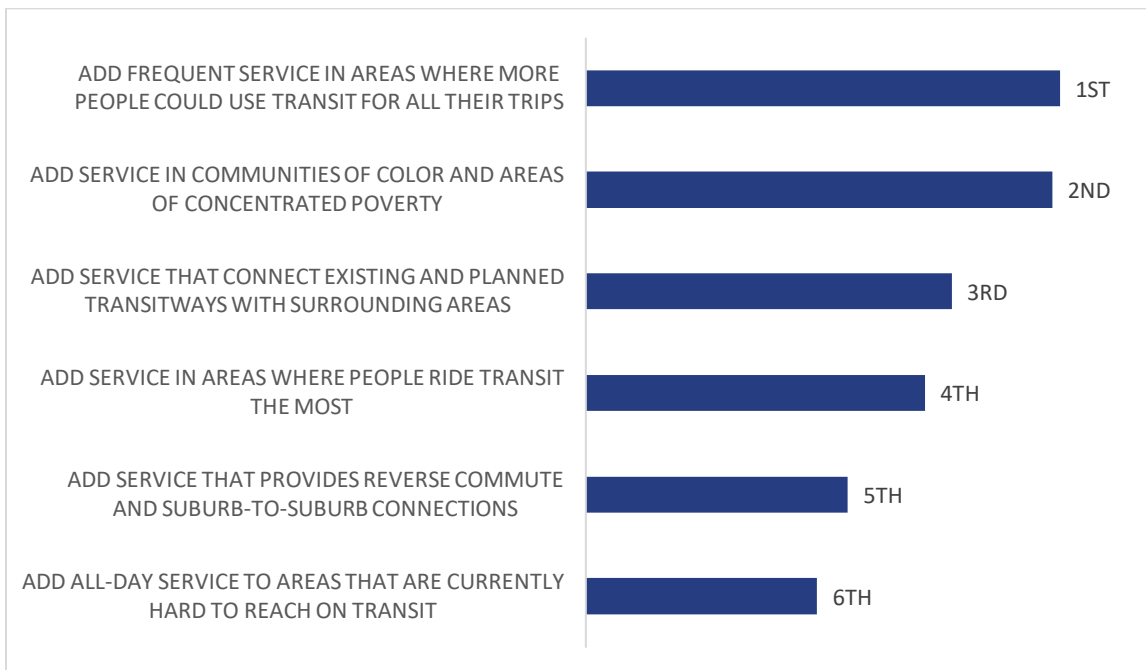
Small Group Discussions

Following the presentation on service evaluation findings, workshop participants were divided into four Zoom breakout rooms for facilitated conversations led by project staff. Participants in each breakout room were asked to discuss the following open-ended questions:

- What do you value about Scenario 1 specifically? What are your concerns?
- What do you value about Scenario 2 specifically? What are your concerns?
- Are there additional considerations or comments on how to evaluate transit service allocation?
- How has COVID-19 influenced your thinking on the role of transit in a community?
- What percentage of expansion resources should go toward improvements and outcomes that reflect Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2?

Notes from each breakout room (recorded by Met Council staff) are included in Appendix C. General themes from these discussions include the following:

- **Scenario 1**:
    - Participants indicated that Scenario 1 seemed to strengthen transit service in the core of the region. Many saw this as a strength, while others noted that it would provide improvements to residents who already have access to high-quality transit.
    - Some participants were surprised at the degree to which Scenario 1 improved regional ridership compared to Scenario 2.
    - Participants noted that Scenario 1 improved service to low-income populations and communities of color to a greater degree than Scenario 2.
- **Scenario 2:**
    - Participants indicated that Scenario 2 could provide expanded access to areas of the region that currently lack all-day transit. This was described as a strength.
    - Some participants noted that suburban residents currently may be discouraged from using transit in general if it works for commuting but not for other trips.
    - Others noted that suburban residents are not all high-income; low-income suburban residents need access to affordable, reliable transit options.
- **Other Considerations:**
    - Participants noted that suburb-to-suburb trips and first-and-last-mile access are challenging transit problems that may not be fully addressed by fixed-route service. Other modes outside the scope of this study may be needed.
    - Participants noted a need to consider how future affordable housing would be served by future transit expansion plans, as well as how transit investment can be coordinated with land use more generally.
- **COVID-19:**
    - Participants noted that COVID-19 has created challenges to forecasting future transit demand. This will need to be addressed in future transit planning projects.
    - Given the uncertainty around future demand, some participants expressed the need for a funding strategy that could be resilient in a range of possible future conditions.

–   Participants noted that COVID-19 has accelerated the transition to remote work, which could lead to an increased need for transit that serves local needs, rather than long-distance commutes.

▪ **Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2:**

–   Participants expressed support for using data and performance to guide transit expansion, rather than using a purely political process.

–   There was no strong consensus that either scenario was "better" than the other; most participants recognized that a balanced or blended scenario would be more desirable.

–   Some participants expressed frustration with the framing of this question (and the framing of previous studies) around scarcity rather than investment. These participants noted a need to focus on a balanced transit expansion approach that can meet multiple needs and justify local, regional, and state investment in transit.

## Final Ranking: Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2

Following the small group discussions, a final ranking exercise was completed via Mentimeter to determine policymakers' perspective on the proportion of regional transit expansion resources that should be allocated toward Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 on a sliding scale.

The results of this ranking exercise are shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5. Overall, the results show a broad range of investment priorities. While the highest number of individuals submitted a preferred scenario of about 80% of resources toward Scenario 2, the weighted average was 4.8. This indicates an overall preference a balanced scenario slightly weighted toward Scenario 1.

Figure 4   **If expansion resources were available, how would you balance the investment strategies? [Rankings by Number of Respondents] (n = 30)**
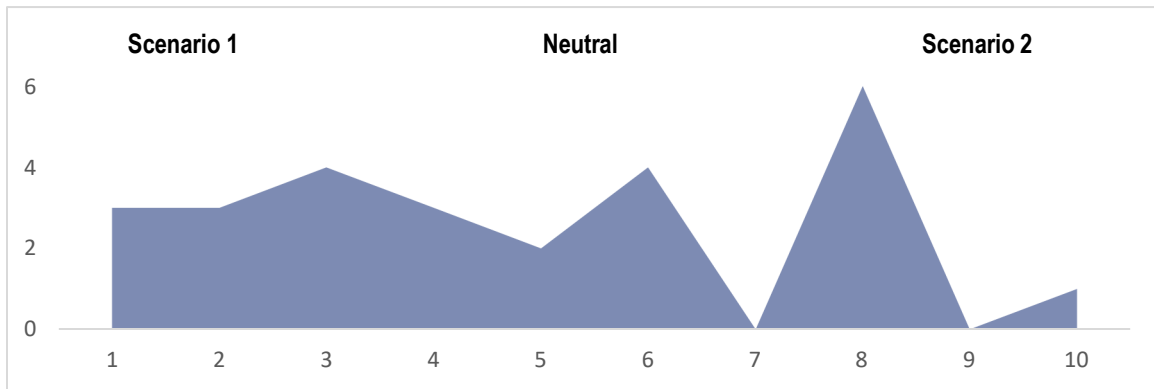
Figure 5   **If expansion resources were available, how would you balance the investment strategies? [Weighted Average] (n = 30)**
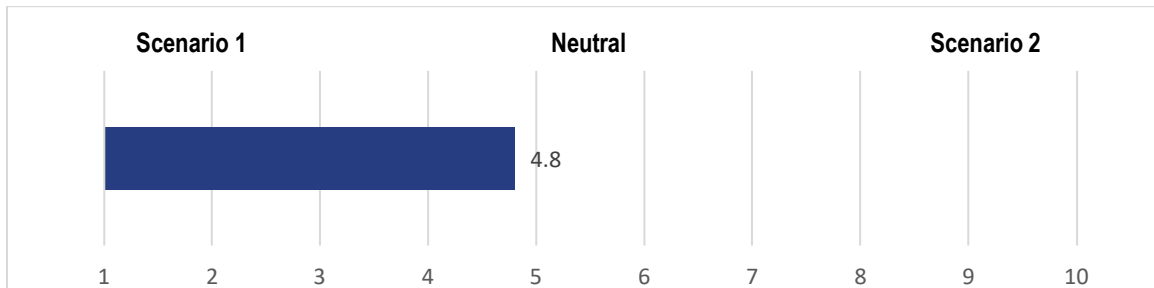
Next Steps

The feedback and values summarized in this memo will be used to guide the development of five additional scenarios representing varying investment levels between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 of future service. Those scenarios will be evaluated according to the same metrics as Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. The consultant team will also assist the Met Council in developing outreach tools and content that can be used to further engage regional stakeholders following the conclusion of the consultant role in December 2020.

Appendix A Invitee and Attendee List

Name (First)	Name (Last)	Organization Name	RSVP	Attended	Did Not Attend
Nelima	Sitati Munene	African Career Education and Resources, In. / Equity Advisory Committee			X
Sheri	Riemers	Ain Dah Yung Center			X
Jim	Erkel	Alliance for Metropolitan Stability	N		X
Jeremy	McFarland	Anoka Area Chamber Commerce			X
Peter	Turok	Anoka Area Chamber Commerce			X
Meghan	Mathson	Anoka County Commute Solutions			X
Shirley	Barnes	Anoka County Workforce Development Board			X
Linda	Her	Asian American Organizing Project			X
Dorian	Grilley	Bicycle Alliance of MN			X
Ekta	Prakash	CAPI			X
Andrea	Ferstan	Center for Economic Inclusion	Y	X	
Amanda	Koonjbeharry	Citizens League			X
Mary	Hamann-Roland	City of Apple Valley, Mayor; TAB Vice Chair; TAB Metro Cities Representative	Y		X
Vince	Workman	City of Burnsville			X
Mike	Huang	City of Chaska	N		X
Myron	Bailey	City of Cottage Grove Also Vice President of Metro Cities			X
Gary	Hansen	City of Eagan	Y	X	
Kevin	Reich	City of Minneapolis			X
Kathi	Hemken	City of New Hope			X
Dan	Roe	City of Roseville			X
Mark	Finken	City of Saint Paul Public Works			X
Russ	Stark	City of Saint Paul, Mayor's Office	Y	X	
Steve	Morris	City of Woodbury			X
Ruby	Azurdia-Lee	CLUES			X
Mohamud	Noor	Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota			X
Mary Liz	Holberg	Dakota County	Y	X	
Maureen	Failor	Dakota County Chamber of Commerce	Y	X	
Lin	Nelson	Dakota County Chamber of Commerce			X
William	Schroeer	East Metro Strong	Y	X	
Alberto	Monserrate	Great MN Schools			X
Peter	Frosch	GREATER MSP			X
Jonathan	Palmer	Hallie Q Brown			X
Joe	Gladke	Hennepin County	Y	X	

Anne	Kilzer	Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board			X
Phil	Klein	Hugo City Council			X
Brad	Aho	I-494 Corridor Commission	N		X
Doran	Schrantz	ISAIAH			X
Gerald	Bruner	LUAC	Y	X	
Noah	Keller	LUAC	Y	X	
Courtney	Schroeder	LUAC			X
Alfredo	Martel	Meda			X
Steven	Huser	Metro Cities			X
Lynnea	Atlas-Ingebretson	Metropolitan Council			X
Deb	Barber	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Patrick	Boylan	Metropolitan Council			X
Reva	Chamblis	Metropolitan Council	N		X
Molly	Cummings	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Christopher	Ferguson	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Kris	Fredson	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Francisco J.	Gonzalez	Metropolitan Council			X
Judy	Johnson	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Chai	Lee	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Robert	Lilligren	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Peter	Lindstrom	Metropolitan Council			X
Abdirahman	Muse	Metropolitan Council			X
Susan	Vento	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Wendy	Wulff	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Charlie	Zelle	Metropolitan Council			X
Raymond	Zeran	Metropolitan Council	Y	X	
Phillip	Sterner	Metropolitan Council	Y		X
John	Slade	Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing			X
Mary	LaGarde	Minneapolis American Indian Center			X
Lisa	Beck	Minneapolis Public Schools	Y	X	
Jonathan	Weinhagen	Minneapolis Regional Chamber	N		X
Jonathan	Watson	Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers			X
Bentley	Graves	Minnesota Chamber of Commerce			X
Kristen	McHenry	Minnesota Hospital Association			X
Paul	Cerkvenik	Minnesota Private Colleges Council			X
Paul	Shepherd	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities			X
William	Droste	Minnesota Valley Transit Authority			X
Sheila	Kauppi	MnDOT			X
Molly	McCartney	MnDOT			X

Jon	Solberg	MnDOT	Y	X	
Mary	Morse Marti	Move Minneapolis	Y	X	
Sam	Rockwell	Move Minnesota			X
Ken	Rodgers	Move Minnesota			X
Trista	Matascastillo	Ramsey County	Y	X	
Ken	Smith	Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce	Y	X	
Tom	Burr	Saint Paul Public Schools	N		X
Jackie	Turner	Saint Paul Public Schools			X
Lisa	Freese	Scott County	Y	X	
Nicole	Hendrickson	Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	Y	X	
Doug	Anderson	TAB			X
Michael	Barnes	TAB			X
Michael	Beard	TAB			X
Lisa	Bender	TAB			X
Scott	Berger	TAB			X
Todd	Biewen	TAB			X
Frank	Boyles	TAB	Y		X
Jan	Callison	TAB			X
Carl	Crimmins	TAB			X
Steve	Dennis	TAB			X
Peter	Dugan	TAB	N		X
Kathleen	Finnegan	TAB			X
Amity	Foster	TAB	Y	X	
Nickolas	Fox	TAB			X
Kathleen	Gaylord	TAB			X
Christopher	Geisler	TAB	Y	X	
Mary	Giuliani Stephens	TAB			X
Debbie	Goettel	TAB			X
Mathews	Hollinshead	TAB	Y	X	
Clint	Hooppaw	TAB			X
Mitra	Jalali Nelson	TAB			X
Julie	Jeppson	TAB			X
Glen	Johnson	TAB			X
Wayne	Johnson	TAB			X
Stan	Karwoski	TAB	Y	X	
Elaine	Koutsoukos	TAB			X
Phil	Leith	TAB			X
Andrew	Lewis	TAB			X
William	Lindeke	TAB			X
Matt	Look	TAB			X

Randy	Maluchnik	TAB			X
Brian C	Martinson	TAB	Y	X	
Jerry	McDonald	TAB			X
Craig	McDonnell	TAB			X
Mary Jo	McGuire	TAB	Y	X	
Dan	Miller	TAB			X
John	Morast	TAB			X
Ashwat	Narayanan	TAB	N		X
Rick	Olson	TAB	N		X
Kyle	Olson	TAB			X
Becky	Petryk	TAB			X
Sue	Sanger	TAB			X
George	Schember	TAB	Y	X	
Scott	Schulte	TAB			X
Mark	Steffenson	TAB			X
Dick	Swanson	TAB			X
Sam	Villella	TAB			X
Mark	Windschitl	TAB			X
Jeff	Wosje	TAB	Y	X	
David	Fenley	Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee			X
Chelsea	Arbury Prorok	Twin Cities Shared Mobility Collaborative			X
Jason	Besler	Twin West Chamber			X
Shannon	Full	Twin West Chamber			X
Ross	Allanson	University of Minnesota	Y	X	
Sandra	Cullen	University of Minnesota	N		X
Joseph	Dahip	University of Minnesota			X
Lonetta	Hanson	University of Minnesota	Y	X	
Emily	Jorgensen	Washington County Public Works			X

Appendix B Workshop Presentation

Met Council Bus Service Allocation Study

Scenario Evaluation

Policymakers Workshop

Presented by: Thomas Wittmann

December 3, 2020

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

NELSON NYGAARD

WHAT ARE WE COVERING TODAY?

3:10 – 3:20   **Study Introduction**

3:20 – 3:25   **Recap of April 2020 Workshop**

3:25 – 3:35   **Scenario Development & Criteria**

3:35 – 4:00   **Service Evaluation Results**

4:00 – 4:10   *BREAK*

4:10 – 4:25   **Interactive Discussion**

4:25 – 5:15   **Small Group Discussion**

5:15 – 5:30   **Next Steps**

STUDY INTRODUCTION

Facilitate regional discussion with policy makers on transit priorities

Understand region-wide need for better mobility options

Develop and evaluate a series of expansion scenarios that reflect regional goals

Document regional values to inform future service investment

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FUTURE MET COUNCIL WORK

- Outreach, outreach, outreach!

- Adjusting policies and informing partners of regional values
  - o Transit Service Design Guidelines and Performance Standards
  - o Regional Solicitation
  - o Transit provider service improvement plans
  - o Transitway connecting bus service planning

- Keep the conversation going!

SERVICE ALLOCATION STUDY AND COVID-19

- Transit service and use are down and will likely take time to recover, and travel patterns may be different

- Metro Transit *local service* is now at ~90% of its pre-COVID schedules

- Ridership levels have rebounded the most where frequent all-day routes serve areas with residents living without access to cars

- Demand for express bus service has not returned

Study Implications

- Service allocation study is asking for high-level, long-term policy guidance

- The study is not intended to guide how, where, or when agencies bring services back

- For today's workshop, we are focused on values to determine service allocation

- The COVID crisis shows the need for considering factors such as social equity when planning for service expansion or contraction

ICEBREAKER

What does a successful regional transit system look like?

**Visit menti.com on your phone or computer browser
and use the code 67 12 43**

See slide 1 to answer.

RECAP OF APRIL 2020 WORKSHOP

RECAP OF APRIL 22 POLICY-MAKER WORKSHOP

- **Presentation included:**
  - Characteristics of current riders
  - Summary of agency interviews
  - Population and employment served within region
  - Level of socioeconomic groups are served within region
  - Trade-off questions
- **Discussion of Priorities**

Workshop Survey Results
What does success look like for area transit?

MORE RIDERSHIP — 1ST

MORE SERVICE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST — 2ND

MORE LINES ON THE MAP — 3RD
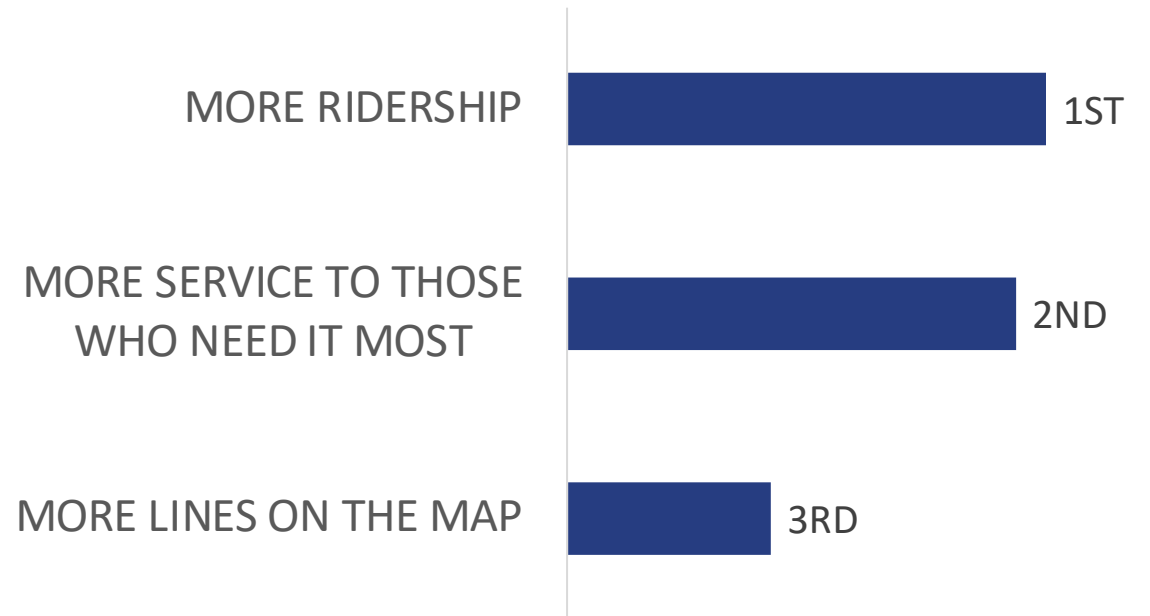
RECAP OF APRIL 22 POLICY-MAKER WORKSHOP

Key Themes

- Regional transit success looks different for different policymakers.

- Providing service to those who need it most was a top priority for measuring success

- Other themes included increasing ridership, connecting people to destinations, neighborhood coverage, serving high-need communities, and matching service with land use

- Serving low-income populations and improving job access were the top priorities for service expansion scenarios

SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

- **Two different networks** were developed to illustrate different service delivery strategies

- Service built on **pre-COVID network and Met Council Funded transitways** as outlined in 2040 Transportation Policy Plan

- Both scenarios were developed under assumption of **25% service increase** (based on hours of service)

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
Invest additional resources in improving transit that serves all trip types	Invest additional resources in increasing regional access to transit

BENEFITS OF FREQUENCY IMPROVEMENTS

Why is improving frequency important?
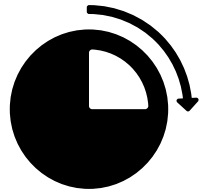
	15-minutes or better	You do not need a schedule to ride. Greater frequency = greater ridership. Travel is more reliable and leads to more options for potential riders.
	30-minutes or better	Market research has shown that most users will consider using transit if it comes at least every 30 minutes or better.
	Greater than 30-minutes	A schedule must be consulted for every trip, which limits the potential ridership market. Infrequent service can provide access, but typically does not add many riders.
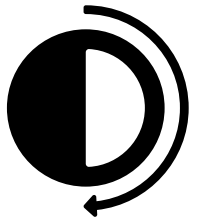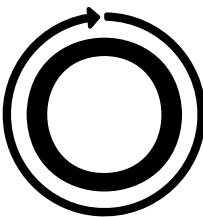
SCENARIO 1

Goal: To expand the range of communities where it is possible to live without a car

- Focus on increasing the amount of service that is convenient and can be depended on for all trip types—high-frequency, all-day, all-week service

- Prioritized expanding service to areas of highest transit use potential and maximizing ridership

- Used an equity lens to distribute expanded services to communities of color and low-income populations

- **Scenario development process:**
  1. Selected the most productive bus routes in the existing network
  2. Selected routes that serve the areas of highest transit potential, communities of color, and areas of concentrated poverty
  3. Upgraded existing routes and extend service to provide frequent connections to funded transitways

SCENARIO 2

Goal: To strengthen connections to suburban jobs and opportunities throughout the fixed-route transit service area

- Prioritized suburb-to-suburb transit access, reverse-commute services, and job access for suburban residents

- Expanding service to areas of highest transit use potential was a secondary priority

- **Scenario development process:**
    1. Identified expansion priorities identified by transit providers
    2. Identified most productive basic transit routes
    3. Identified reverse commute and suburb-to-suburb connections
    4. Expanded connecting bus service with planned transitways, and
    5. Expanding coverage services

SUMMARY OF SCENARIO INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

IMPROVEMENT TYPE	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
High-frequency routes improved	6	-
Local routes improved to high-frequency	27	-
Basic routes improved to local	5	20
Commuter routes improved	-	4
New reverse commute and suburb-to-suburb routes	-	5
New local routes	5	30
New commuter routes	-	2
Expanded on-demand service	-	✔

SCENARIO EVALUATION CRITERIA

ACCESS TO TRANSIT POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROUPS

Population

- Total population
- Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)
- Low-income population: individuals with an individual or family income below 185% of the federal poverty threshold
- Affordable housing units: housing units for households with an income below 30% of the Area Median Income
- Low-vehicle access population: individuals aged 16 or older without access to an automobile
- Older population: individuals aged 65 or older

Employment

- Total employment
- Low-wage employment: jobs earning less than $40,000 per year
- High-wage employment: jobs earning more than $40,000 per year

TRANSIT MARKET AREAS
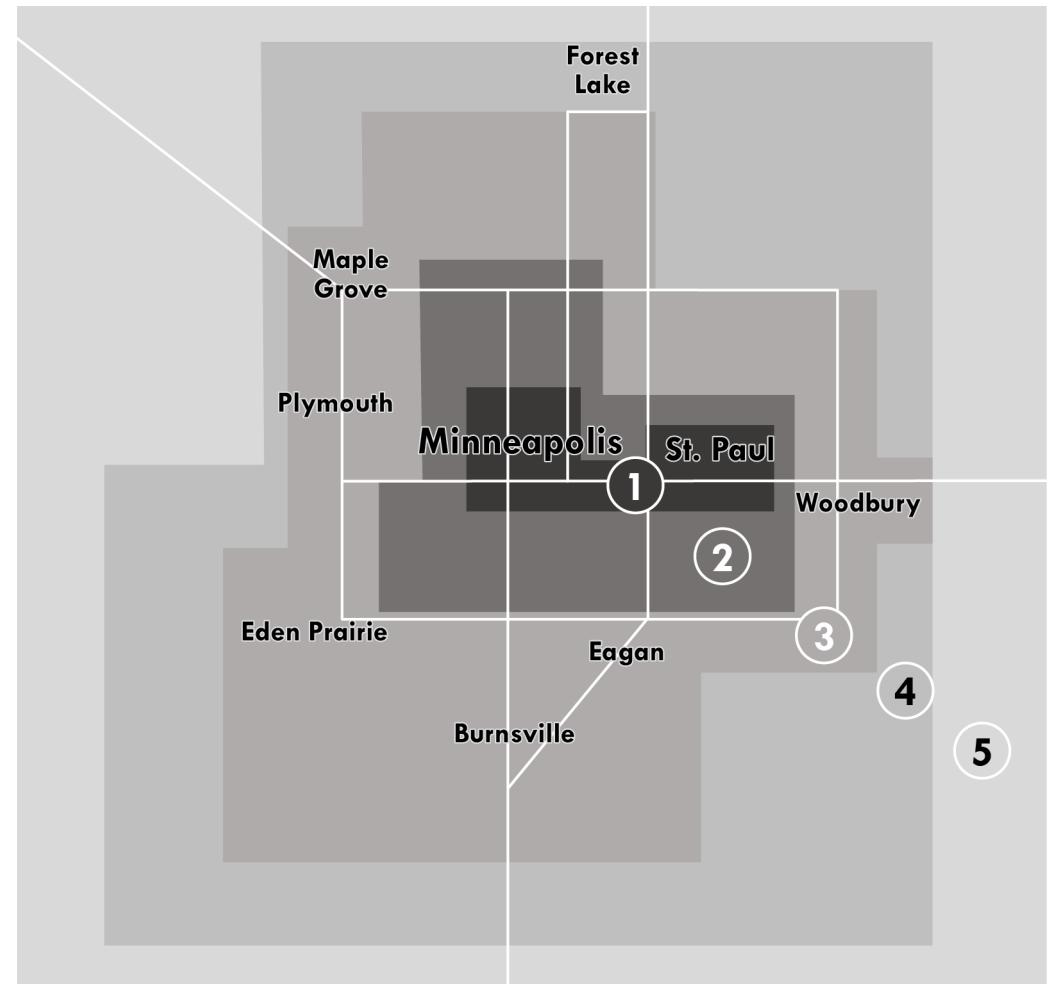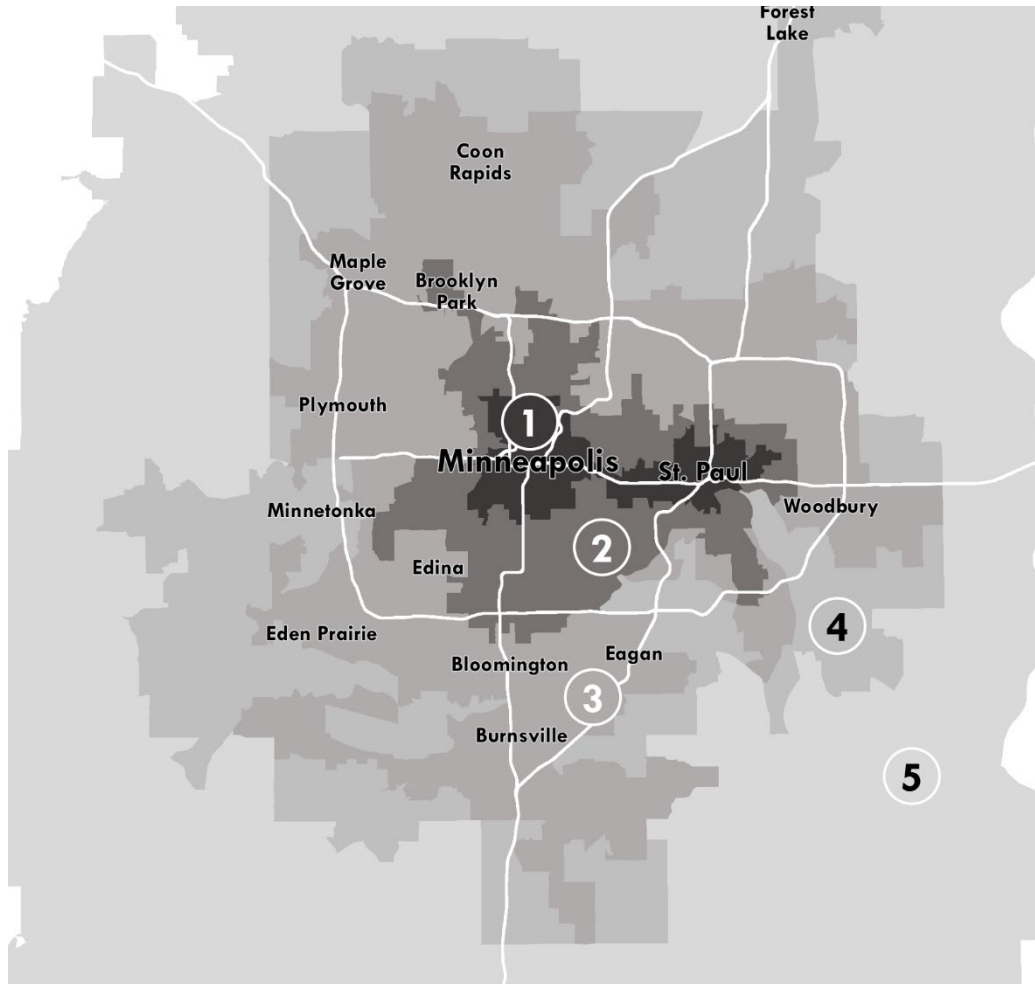
SCENARIO EVALUATION

- Evaluation of the two 2040 expansion scenarios that were developed to illustrate the **potential outcomes of differing investment strategies**

- Criteria were designed to measure how well each network addresses **potential needs of the region**

- The criteria were informed by **feedback from Met Council staff, area transit providers, regional policymakers, key stakeholders, and national experience**

Ridership Potential

Access to Transit

Expanded Access to All-Day Transit

Improved Transit Service

Change in Access to Transit by Service Level

Network Access to Jobs

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Planning-level estimate of **how much ridership will increase** based on the improvements in each scenario

Ridership Potential

Access to Transit

Expanded Access to
All-Day Transit

Improved Transit Service

Change in Access to Transit
by Service Level

Network Access to Jobs

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- The **population and employment** within walking distance of a fixed-route bus that provides **new all-day service** (runs regularly on weekdays) for each scenario **over the base network**

Ridership Potential

Access to Transit

Expanded Access to All-Day Transit

Improved Transit Service

Change in Access to Transit by Service Level

Network Access to Jobs

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Population and employment** within walking distance of a fixed-route with **improved or expanded service** for each scenario

Ridership Potential

Access to Transit

Expanded Access to All-Day Transit

Improved Transit Service

Change in Access to Transit by Service Level

Network Access to Jobs

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Population and employment** served by an **upgraded level of service or by a new route** for each scenario compared to the base network

- For example, an upgraded level of service would include going from "Local" to "High-Frequency" service. Residents currently served by "High-Frequency" service that is made even more frequent would not be counted under this metric

Ridership Potential

Access to Transit

Expanded Access to All-Day Transit

Improved Transit Service

Change in Access to Transit by Service Level

Network Access to Jobs

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Measures the average number of jobs that are reachable on the regional transit network in a specified travel time

Ridership Potential

Access to Transit

Expanded Access to
All-Day Transit

Improved Transit Service

Change in Access to Transit
by Service Level

Network Access to Jobs

EXERCISE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Rank the relative importance of the Evaluation Criteria in prioritizing expansion / future investment of the regional transit network – see Slide 2 in Mentimeter.

- Growth in ridership
- Better access for low-income populations and people of color
- # of regional jobs accessible within 45 minutes on transit
- Number of residents or jobs within walking distance of frequent transit service
- Number of jobs and residents with access to improved service
- Number of jobs and residents with expanded access to all-day service

SCENARIO EVALUATION FINDINGS

WHICH SCENARIO BETTER…	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
Generates ridership	✔	
Improves service for region's population and employment	✔	
Expands new access to all-day transit to population and employment		✔
Serves more diverse population groups	✔	
Expands 15-minute transit to population and employment	✔	
Expands 30-minute transit to population and employment		✔
Better serves Market Areas 1 and 2	✔	
Better serves Market Area 3		✔
Better increases transit access to jobs	✔	

RIDERSHIP POTENTIAL

Planning-level estimate of **how much ridership will increase** based on the improvements in each scenario

HIGH-LEVEL RIDERSHIP ESTIMATE

Scenario 1 will generate between 30 and 40% more new ridership than Scenario 2.

19% Increase

14% Increase
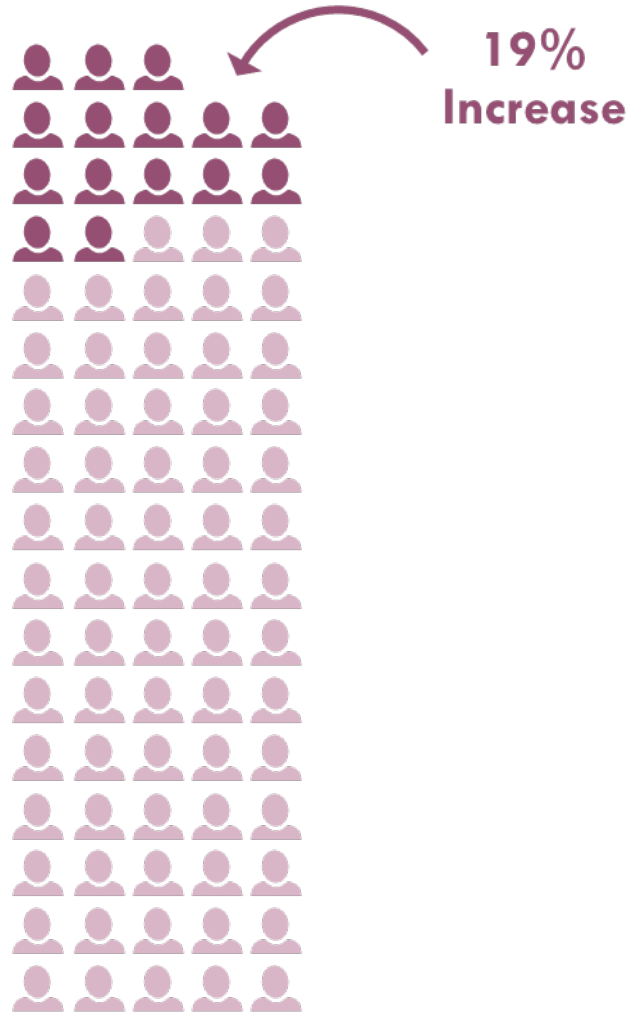
SCENARIO 1

SCENARIO 2

EXPANDED ACCESS TO ALL-DAY TRANSIT

The **population and employment** within walking distance of a fixed-route bus that provides **new all-day service** (runs regularly on weekdays) for each scenario **over the base network**

EXPANDED ACCESS TO ALL-DAY TRANSIT – POPULATION

Scenario 2 expands new all-day transit access to more people than Scenario 1 compared to the base network.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
+3%	**+9%**

= 10,000 people

EXPANDED ACCESS TO ALL-DAY TRANSIT – EMPLOYMENT

Scenario 2 expands new all-day transit access to more jobs than Scenario 1 compared to the base network.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
+4%	**+10%**

💼 = 10,000 jobs
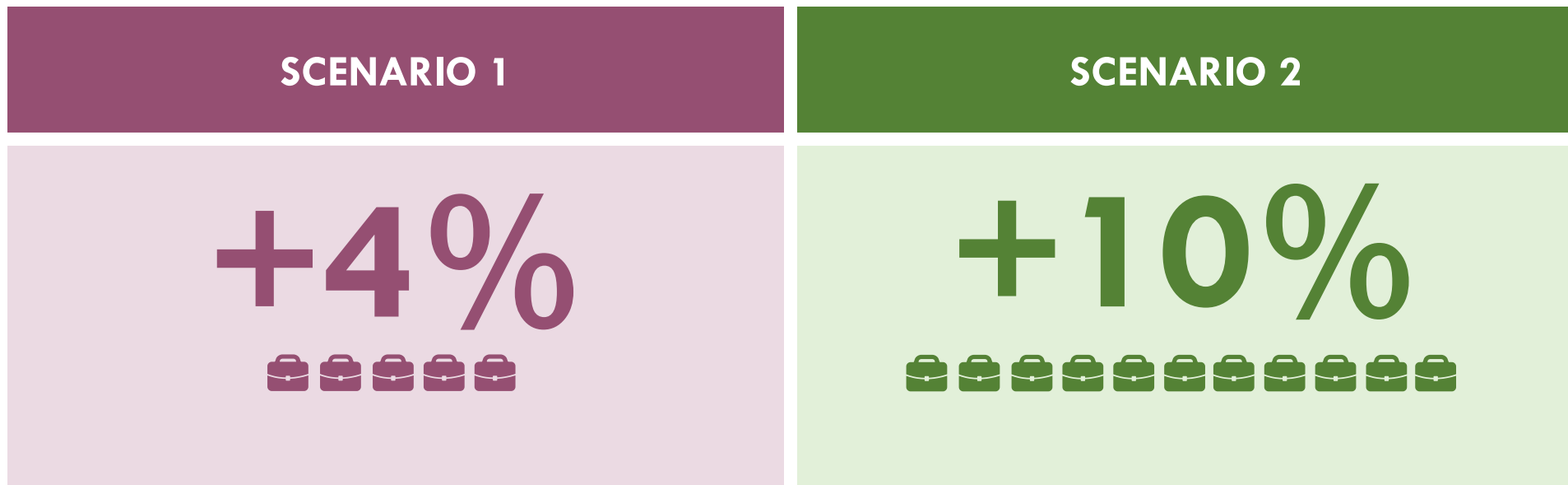
EXPANDED ACCESS TO ALL-DAY TRANSIT – SOCIAL EQUITY

Scenario 2 expands new all-day transit access to more people and jobs than Scenario 1 across all social equity groups compared to the base network.

	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
BIPOC	+ 👤	+ 👤👤👤
Low-income population	+ 👤	+ 👤👤
Affordable housing units	+ 🏢	+ 🏢🏢🏢
Low-auto access population	* Less than 2,000 increase	* Less than 2,000 increase
Older people	+ 👤	+ 👤👤
Low-wage jobs	+ 💼💼	+ 💼💼💼💼💼
High-wage jobs	+ 💼💼💼	+ 💼💼💼💼💼💼💼

👤 = 10,000 people, 🏢 = 10,000 housing units, 💼 = 10,000 jobs

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE

Population and employment within walking distance of a fixed-route with **improved or expanded service** for each scenario

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE – POPULATION

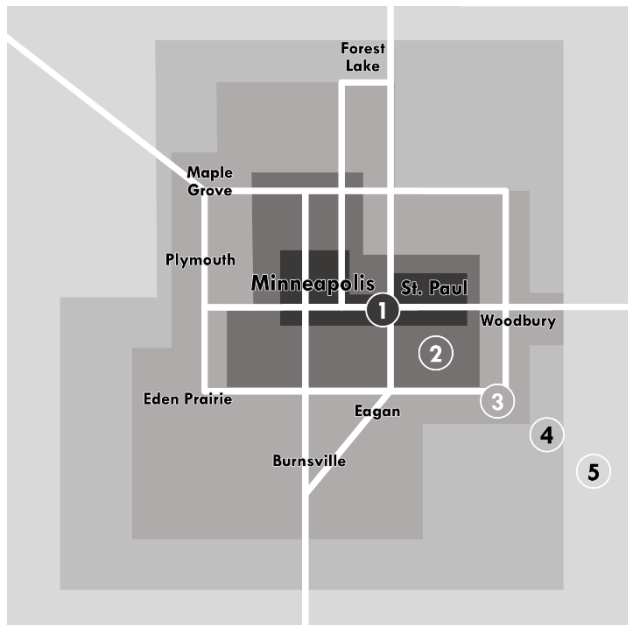Scenario 1 provides more people with improved or expanded transit than Scenario 2.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
37%	**27%**
of the region's population	of the region's population

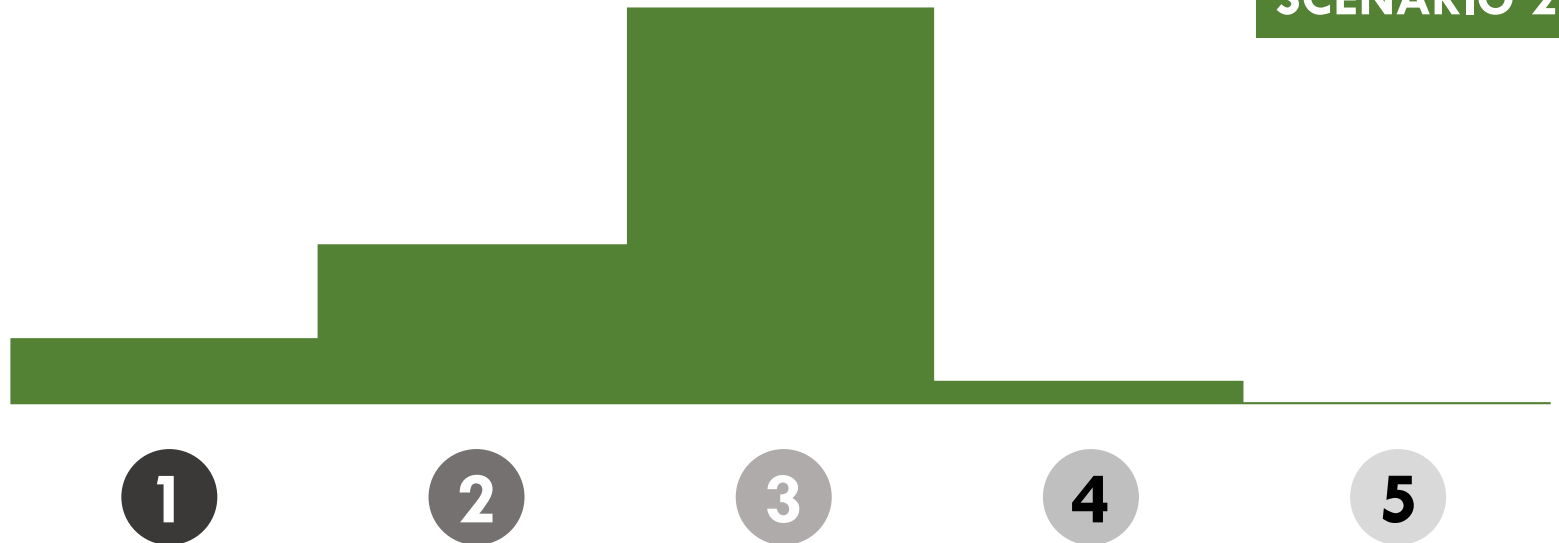👤 = 10,000 people

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE BY MARKET AREA – POPULATION

37

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE BY MARKET AREA – POPULATION
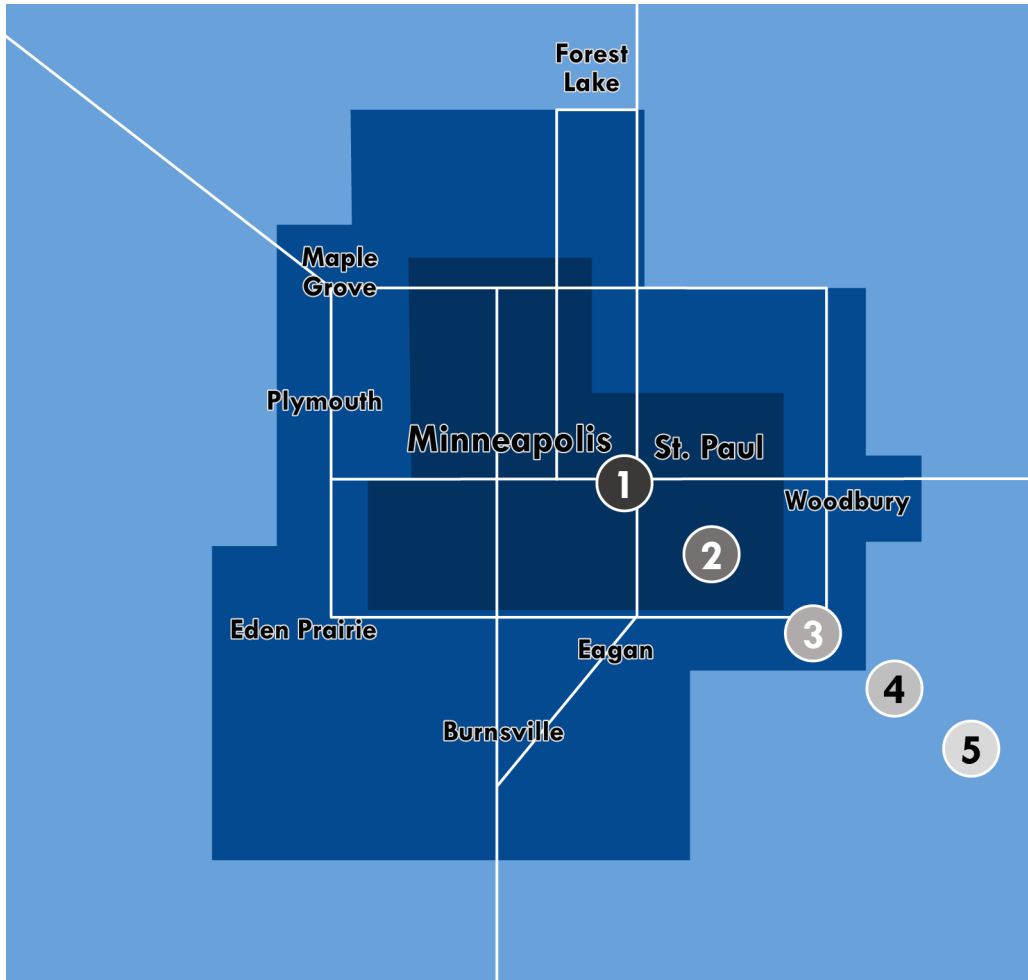
SCENARIO 1

SCENARIO 2
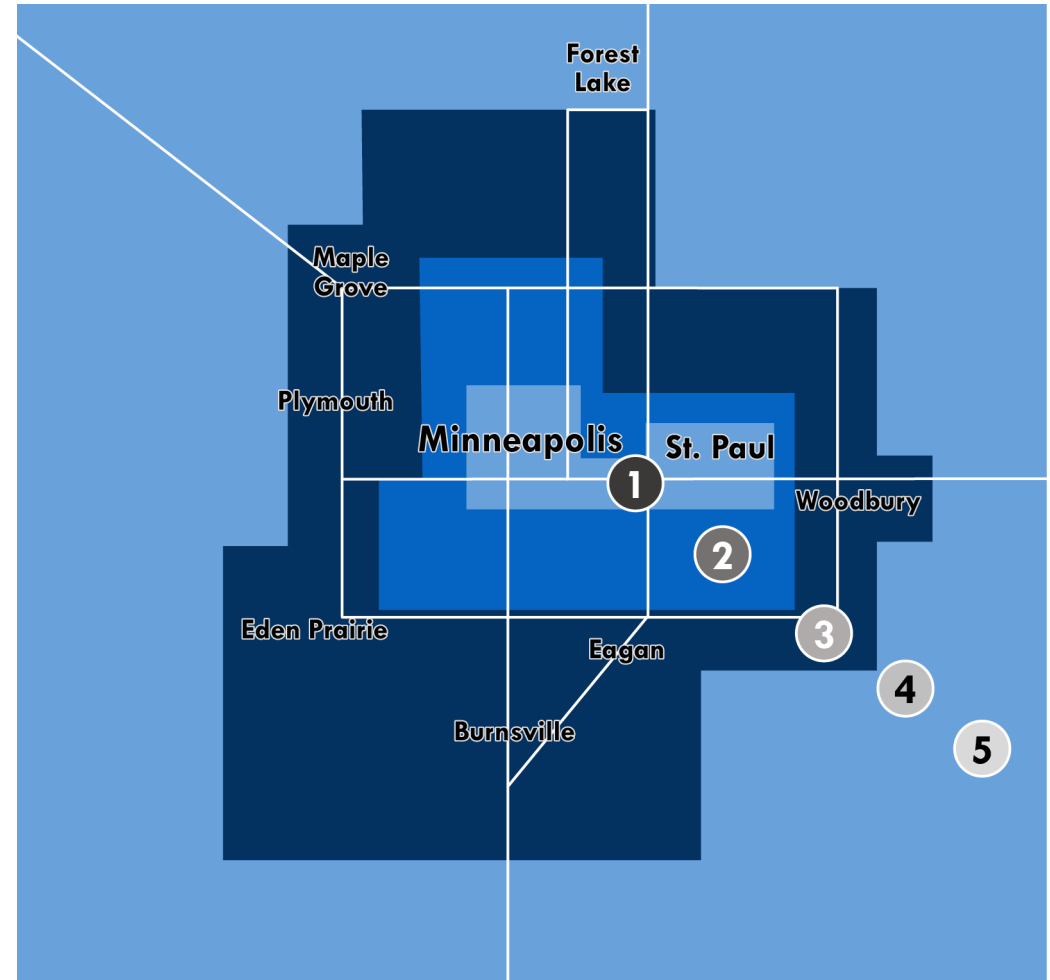
Population with Improved Service

Less than 50K | 50K-100K | 100K-200K | 200K-300K | More than 300K

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE – EMPLOYMENT

Scenario 1 provides more jobs with improved or expanded transit than Scenario 2.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
51%	**44%**
of the region's employment	of the region's employment

💼 = 10,000 jobs

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE BY MARKET AREA – EMPLOYMENT

SCENARIO 1

SCENARIO 2

40
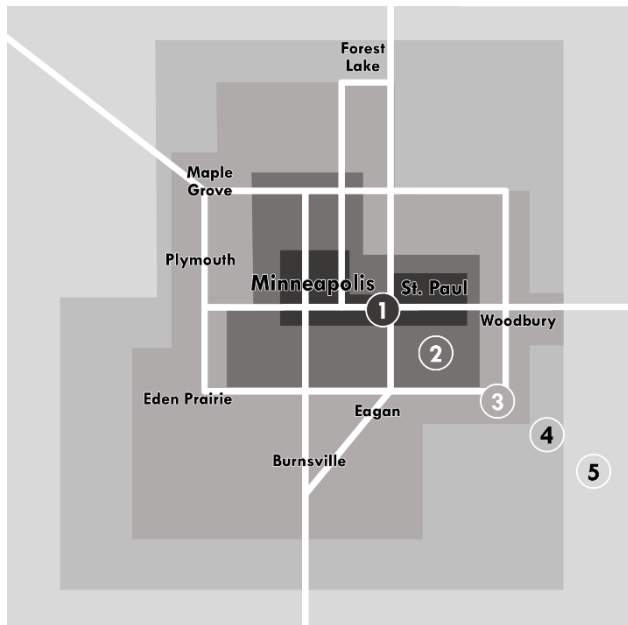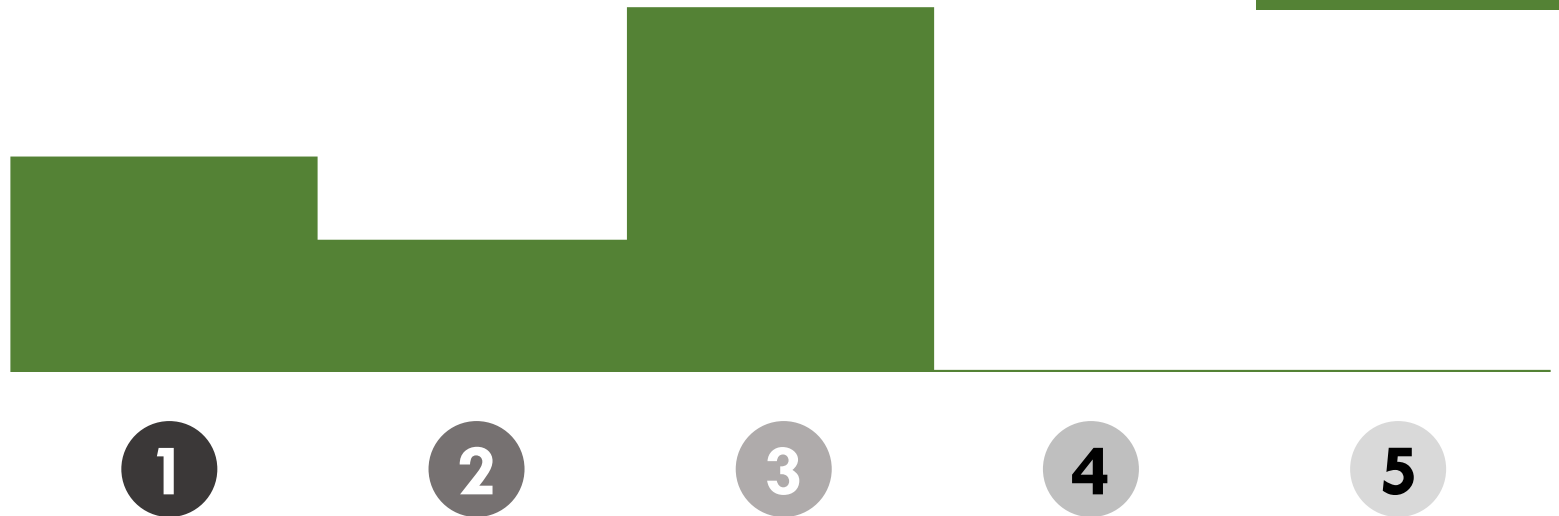
IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE BY MARKET AREA – EMPLOYMENT
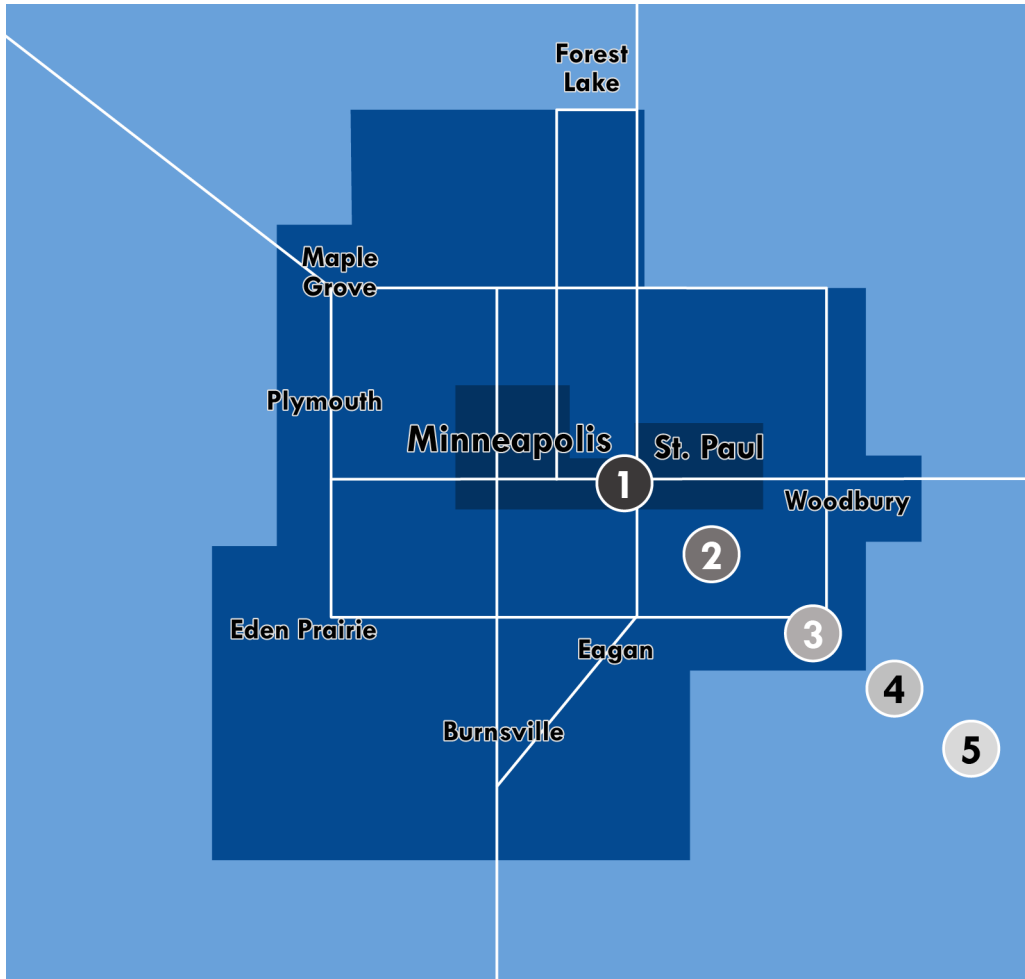
SCENARIO 1
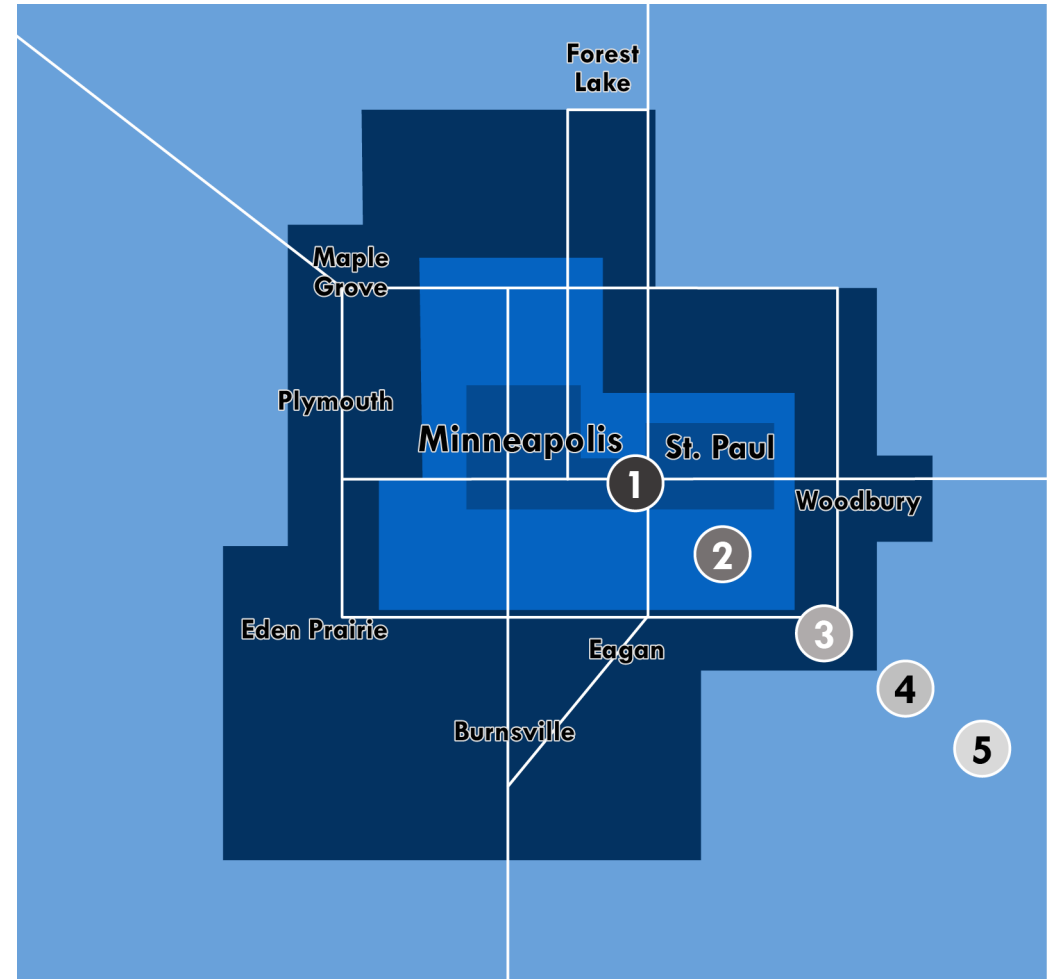
SCENARIO 2

Employment with Improved Service

Less than 50K | 50K-100K | 100K-200K | 200K-300K | More than 300K

IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE – SOCIAL EQUITY

Scenario 1 provides more improved or expanded transit service to more people and jobs within social equity groups than Scenario 2.

	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
BIPOC		
Low-income population		
Affordable housing units		
Low-auto access population		
Older people		
Low-wage jobs		
High-wage jobs		
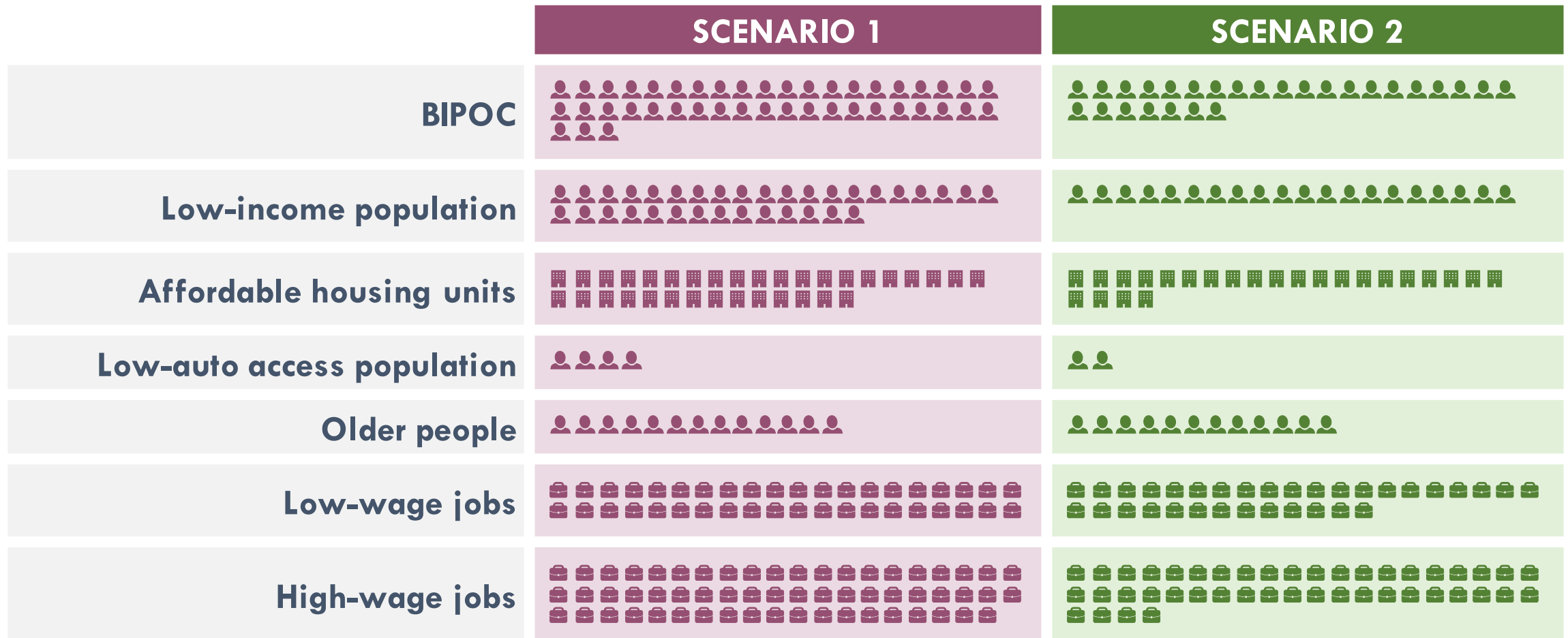
👤 = 10,000 people, 🏢 = 10,000 housing units, 💼 = 10,000 jobs

CHANGE IN ACCESS TO TRANSIT BY SERVICE LEVEL

Population and employment served by an **upgraded level of service or by a new route** for each scenario compared to the base network

For example, an upgraded level of service would include going from "Local" to "High-Frequency" service. Residents currently served by "High-Frequency" service that is made even more frequent would not be counted under this metric.

CHANGE IN ACCESS TO TRANSIT BY SERVICE LEVEL

What are the different service levels?
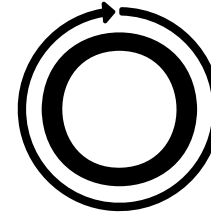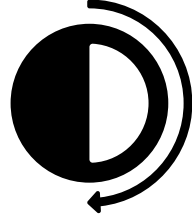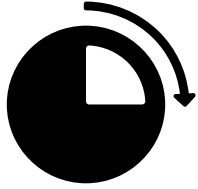
High-Frequency	Local	Basic	Commuter & Express
15-minute or better frequencies throughout most of the day on weekdays and Saturdays	**15- to 30-minute frequencies** throughout the day on weekdays	Corridors and flex services with **greater than 30-minute frequencies** throughout the day	**Peak-only service** into the two central business districts, peak-only reverse commute service that targets suburban employers, all-day service with long-non-stop segments

CHANGE IN ACCESS TO TRANSIT BY SERVICE LEVEL - POPULATION

Scenario 1 provides people with new access to high-frequency transit and local transit.
Scenario 2 provides people with new access to local transit.

	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
High-Frequency	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●	
Local	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
Basic		
Commuter & Express		* Less than 1,000 increase

👤 = 10,000 people

45

CHANGE IN ACCESS TO TRANSIT BY SERVICE LEVEL BY MARKET AREA - POPULATION

SCENARIO 1

LOCAL

HIGH-FREQUENCY

LOCAL

SCENARIO 2

COMMUTER & EXPRESS

Forest Lake
Maple Grove
Plymouth
Minneapolis
St. Paul
Woodbury
Eden Prairie
Eagan
Burnsville

1 2 3 4 5
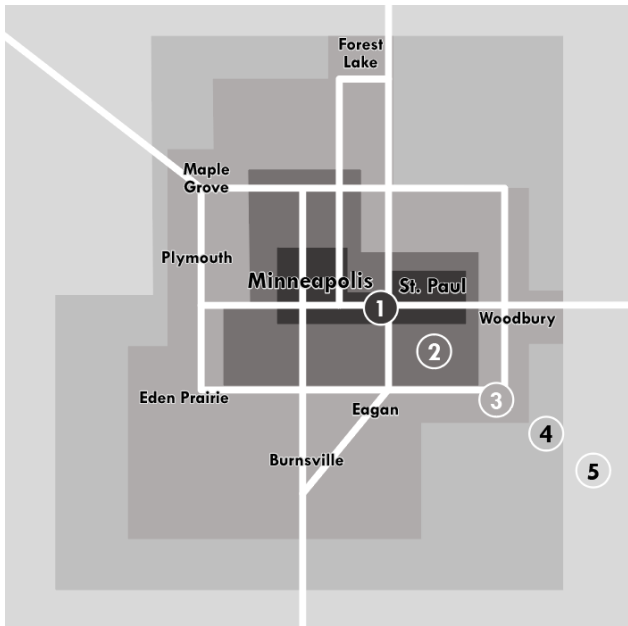
CHANGE IN ACCESS TO TRANSIT BY SERVICE LEVEL - EMPLOYMENT

Scenario 1 provides jobs with new access to high-frequency transit and local transit.
Scenario 2 provides jobs with new access to local transit.
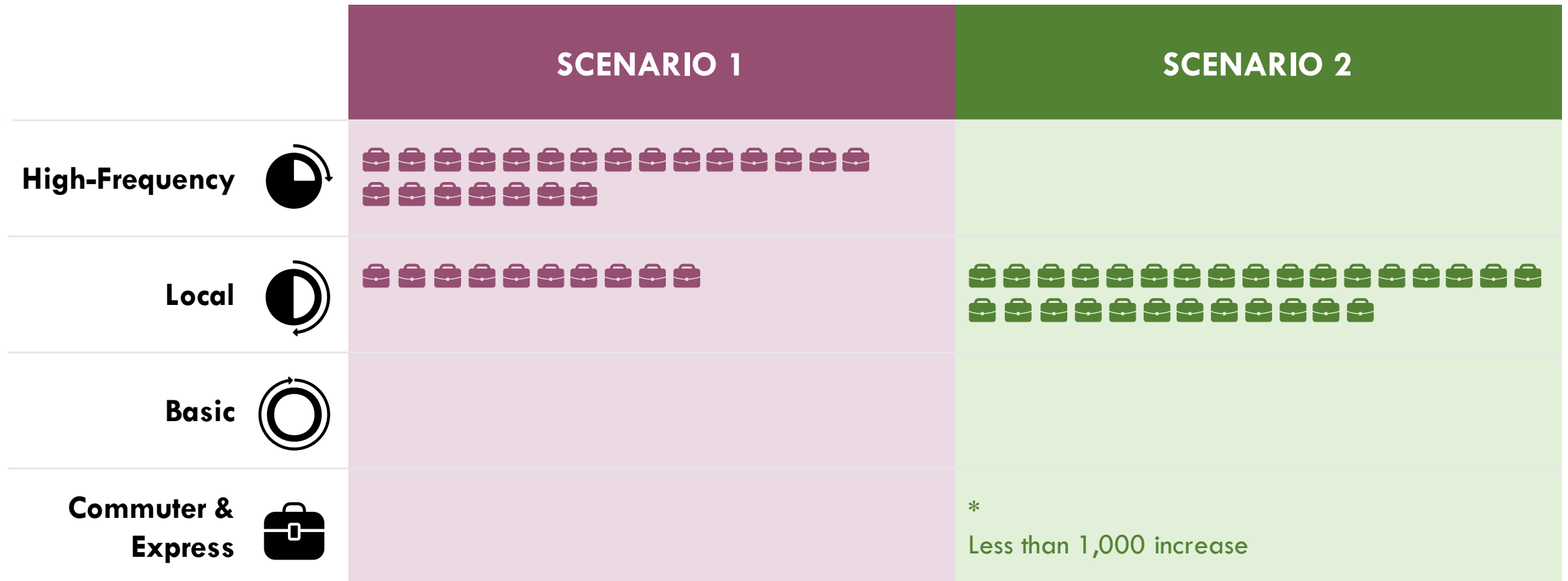
	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
High-Frequency	💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼	
Local	💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼	💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼💼
Basic		
Commuter & Express		* Less than 1,000 increase

💼 = 10,000 jobs

CHANGE IN ACCESS TO TRANSIT BY SERVICE LEVEL BY MARKET AREA - EMPLOYMENT

SCENARIO 1

LOCAL

HIGH-FREQUENCY

SCENARIO 2

LOCAL

COMMUTER & EXPRESS

1 2 3 4 5
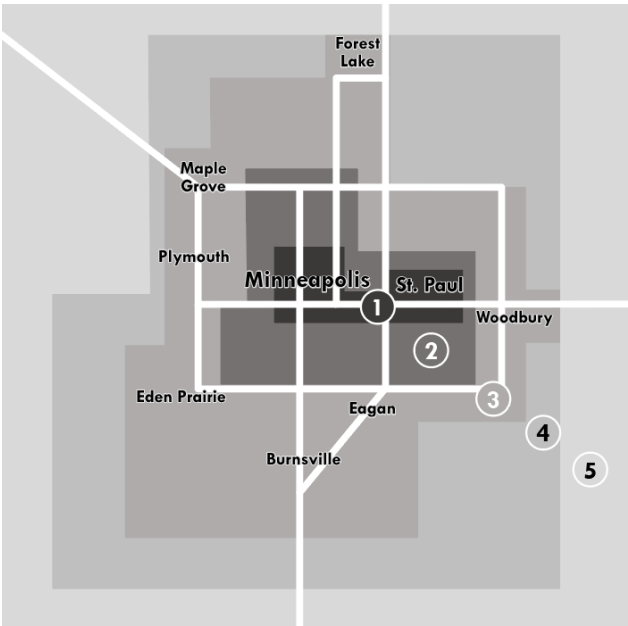
NETWORK ACCESS TO JOBS

Measures the average number of jobs that are reachable on the regional transit network in a specified travel time

NETWORK ACCESS TO JOBS

- Person-weighted average: accessibility is averaged across the region weighted by the population of Census Blocks
  - o Impact of scenario is influenced by the land use, job density, and population density

- Combines different elements of transit improvements into one metric
  - o Measures the network effect of various transit improvements: frequency, coverage, access
  - o Best measure for evaluating improved frequency because it factors reduced travel time and reduced transfer wait times

NETWORK ACCESS TO JOBS

Scenario 1 expands access to more jobs for the average resident than Scenario 2.

	SCENARIO 1 OVER BASELINE	SCENARIO 2 OVER BASELINE	RELATIVE CHANGE SCENARIO 1 OVER SCENARIO 2
30-minute transit trip	●	●	7x
45-minute transit trip	●	●	3x
60-minute transit trip	●	●	2x

Note: Results are preliminary and in the process of being finalized under contract with University of Minnesota Accessibility Observatory

SCENARIO EVALUATION SUMMARY

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

Ridership Estimate
- Will generate between 30-40% more additional ridership than Scenario 2

Improved Transit Service
- Improves service for 37% of the region's population and 51% of the region's employment vs. Scenario 2's 27% of the population and 44% of employment
- Improves service for 280,000 more people than Scenario 2, 150,000 of which are low-income people and 160,000 are BIPOC
- Improves service for 120,000 more jobs than Scenario 2, including 60,000 low-wage jobs

Change in Access to Transit by Service Level
- Provides 400,000 additional people and 220,000 additional jobs with access to high-frequency transit
- Most people and jobs with a change in access are in Market Areas 1 and 2

Network Access to Jobs
- Scenario 1 expands access to between 2-7 times more jobs for the average resident than Scenario 2

Expanded Access to All-Day Transit
- Scenario 2 provides 110,000 more people with access to all-day service, and 20,000 more affordable housing units than Scenario 1
- Scenario 2 provides all-day access to 60,000 more jobs, of which 30,000 are low-income, than Scenario 1

Change in Access to Transit by Service Level
- Provides 380,000 additional people and 290,000 additional jobs with access to local transit
- Most people and jobs with a change in access are in Market Area 3

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND QUESTIONS

EXERCISE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

How much do you agree with the following statements? (Strongly agree to strongly disagree) – See Slide 3 in Mentimeter

- **Service frequency:** All fixed-route transit expansion should be frequent. Expansion of service coverage is limited.
- **Geographic coverage:** Entire region has access to some fixed-route transit. Expansion of high-frequency service is limited.
- **Geographic coverage** Most job centers have access to some fixed-route transit. Expansion of high-frequency service is limited.
- **Equity considerations** Prioritize service to people with low-incomes and communities of color. Expansion in other areas is limited.

EXERCISE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

What would you do first in prioritizing expansion/future investment in the regional transit network? (Rank in order of importance) – See Slide 4 in Mentimeter

- Add frequent service in areas where more people could use transit for all their trips
- Add service in areas where people ride transit the most
- Add service in communities of color and areas of concentrated poverty
- Add service that connect existing and planned transitways with surrounding areas
- Add all-day service to areas that are currently hard to reach on transit
- Add service that provides reverse commute and suburb-to-suburb connections

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

Open ended questions

- What do you value about Scenario 1 specifically? What are your concerns?

- What do you value about Scenario 2 specifically? What are your concerns?

- Are there additional considerations or comments on how to evaluate transit service allocation?

- How has COVID-19 influenced your thinking on the role of transit in a community?

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS OF EACH SCENARIO

What percentage of expansion resources should go to Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2?

WHICH SCENARIO BETTER…	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
Generates ridership	✔	
Improves service for region's population and employment	✔	
Expands new access to all-day transit to population and employment		✔
Serves more diverse population groups	✔	
Expands 15-minute transit to population and employment	✔	
Expands 30-minute transit to population and employment		✔
Better serves Market Areas 1 and 2	✔	
Better serves Market Area 3		✔
Better increases transit access to jobs	✔	

EXERCISE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

What percentage of expansion resources should go toward improvements and outcomes that reflect Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2? – See Slide 5 in Mentimeter

NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

Develop blended scenarios and evaluate relative benefits of each

Create "slider tool" to show how evaluation metrics change as expansion strategies change

Document the role and opportunities for coverage services

Document final results

THANK YOU!

Thomas Wittmann

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twittmann@nelsonnygaard.com

Appendix C Notes from Small-Group Discussions

Breakout Room 1 (Main Room)

Attendees

- Christopher Ferguson
- Christopher Geisler
- Deb Barber
- Elaine Koutsoukos
- Hannah Pallmeyer
- Jeffry Wosje
- John Levin
- Lisa Beck
- Mary Liz Holberg
- Mary Morse Marti
- Mathews Hollinshead
- Nick Thompson
- Peter Dugan
- Robert Lilligren

Facilitator/Note-Taker

- Matthew Stegeman (SRF Consulting)
- Sara Maaske (Met Council)

Discussion Notes

- **What do you value about Scenario 1 specifically? What are your concerns?** – 5 minutes
  - Mary Morse Marti – facing from a position of scarcity making decisions without thinking about additional funding. Legislature is not interested in funding. Harmful when we must make these decisions.
  - Chris G. – Spend money where we know we're going to get an outcome. Safer of the 2 guarantees we'll see where the investments will go. Does exactly what we expect it to do.
- **What do you value about Scenario 2 specifically? What are your concerns?** – 5 minutes
  - Jeffry – We've seen an exodus of manufacturing jobs to the suburbs. Getting people from the inner ring to the suburbs. Jobs are more spread out, good paying manufacturing jobs. More densely populated areas getting people to these areas.
  - Chris G. – A lot of jobs out in the middle of nowhere and we rarely have 24-hour service when we get into Market areas 3,4,5. People can get to work but can't get home. You need acres of land to build more manufacturing jobs. How do you get more people out into the suburban ring and able to do daily living trips. Scenario 2 addresses that more future regional concerns.
  - Jeffry – suburb-to-suburb services, partnered with the large employers for the last mile service. How do you solve for the last mile? Using dial-a-ride service in industrial areas to be able to access their jobs. If you don't solve for the last mile, you won't be able to sustain suburb to suburb service.
- **Are there additional considerations or comments on how to evaluate transit service allocation?** – 5 minutes

- Mary Liz – park-and-ride utilization not consistent across the region. There were commuter routes that were viable, financially an important component of the system.
- Mary Liz – Challenges of the downtown workforce go toward safety or perception of safety but downtown business area. Crime issues are driving people and businesses out of the downtown core. Commuter routes not coming back for a super long time. MSP have unique problems that other core cities don't. Reduction in willingness to use transit b/c of safety. Congestion down, parking will be plentiful and cheap. Secure parking space not walking in downtown areas. Focus on transit-dependent and put the investment into those area. Don't see a time again when 200,000 will work downtown again. Hearing this from her constituents.
- Mary Morse-Marti – Real estate powerfully strong in Minneapolis. Does not agree that there are the extreme problems fall in the downtown area. Feels that scenario 1 is clearly the way to go.
- Chris G. – Perception matters when you're talking about safety. People have to trust it and want to use it.
- Matthews – The likelihood that crime is not as statistically significant but that perception does matter. If carjacking gets worse, I'll get rid of my car. I think that the idea that crime is paired with transit is not right if it's utilized correctly.

- **How has COVID-19 influenced your thinking on the role of transit in a community?** – 10 minutes
  - We should invest in a system that maximizes ridership and focuses on the first mile last mile. This will attract more people to. Find new solutions to coverage that feeds the spine.
  - Jeffry - Accelerated the teleworking 10 years ahead of where we would have otherwise been because of COVID. We need to be flexible with our transit dollars and focus on those who are transit dependent.
  - Chris G. – People are rebuilding their entire business models around the outbreak. It's a legitimate disrupter that we'll continue to see a ripple affect. Work from home a requirement instead of a benefit. Transit for daily life not my work life.
  - Robert – we're not sure yet what the permanent and we'll need a flexible model of transit allocation that shifts as needed.

- **What percentage of expansion resources should go toward improvements and outcomes that reflect Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2?** – 15 minutes
  - Addressed above.

Breakout Room 2

Attendees

- Amity Foster
- Joseph Gladke
- Kathy Bodmer
- Maureen Failor
- Molly Cummings
- Peter Grafstrom
- Deb Barber

Facilitator/Note-Taker

- Thomas Wittmann (Nelson\Nygaard)
- Cole Hiniker (Met Council)

Discussion Notes

- **What do you value about Scenario 1 specifically?
  What are your concerns?** – 5 minutes
  – Scenario 1 liked a lot, focus on equity
  – COVID will change the transit landscape for a very long time
  – Better for a post-COVID transit system because those riders are the ones that are coming back and still riding
  – If dollars are really limited, lean toward scenario 1 because of return on investment, better performance
- **What do you value about Scenario 2 specifically?
  What are your concerns?** – 5 minutes
  – Addresses more of the region beyond urban core and first-ring suburbs
  – Serves broader needs of the geography and the system will fail without serving a broader geography
  – Appreciation for it because Dakota County is an exporter of employees and hears a lot from stakeholders about lack of transit access to suburban jobs
  – More on-demand, hybrid, technology-based transit modes
  – Building transit system around the job centers, focusing services to these areas, working with land use and big developments to plan for transit
- **Are there additional considerations or comments on how to evaluate transit service allocation?** – 5 minutes
  – Need to make sure we have access to suburbs and emerging job centers
  – How to tie transit improvement to specific job types or opportunities to connect the right workers to those jobs, find innovative ways to serve them
  – Might need innovative service models to connect to the jobs in suburban areas and build on improvements like those in Scenario 1
  – Where will the money come from? How do we get support for transit when the state controls the funding?
  – Future growth potential, where is development headed or where has it gone?

- How do we measure where growth is and where it is going?
- Growth isn't just about new development on the fringe, also includes redevelopment

▪ **How has COVID-19 influenced your thinking on the role of transit in a community?** – 10 minutes
  - Becoming more aware of scenario 2 benefits, but scenario 1 focuses on essential in a post-COVID world
  - Think about and follow how people change their behavior, may give up car but also might become more transit dependent as they adapt to new travel patterns
  - Supportive of scenario 1 before and after COVID
  - Concerns that perceptions of COVID might change the view of transit as a cuttable social service
  - Flexible transit might be an opportunity to redefine what it is in a post-COVID world
  - People that stuck with transit through the pandemic are people that don't have other options, should focus on those riders and their broader set of needs
  - College students coming out with a lot of debt, need smaller housing and access to transit to save costs of buying a car and making budget work economically
  - Make the case that our transit system is a path away from car ownership, that it can meet their needs
  - More to life than work, have to access grocery stores, etc. Important to connect with family members, other people.
  - Measure how many people do you have access to, not just jobs? Social opportunities.
  - A lot of opportunities to grow the transit system, the numbers show the potential

▪ **What percentage of expansion resources should go toward improvements and outcomes that reflect Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2?** – 15 minutes
  - Addressed above.

Breakout Room 3

Attendees

- Ross Allanson
- Lorretta Hanson
- George Schember
- Gerald Bruner
- Stan Karwoski
- Noah Keller
- Wendy Wulff

Facilitator/Note-Taker

- Mariel Kirschen (Nelson\Nygaard)
- Daniel Pena (Met Council)

Discussion Notes

- **What do you value about Scenario 1 specifically? What are your concerns?** – 5 minutes
    - George Schember: Seems to strengthen the core, key piece of the transit system; while the metrics don't show it helping TMA III as much as the others, but they help the whole region by strengthening the corridor they should help the rest of the network
    - Wendy: Giving better transit to those that already have it; also the assumption that nothing is going to change; concern that things have changed so dramatically that we can't assume that things are going to back to the way things were
    - We have to acknowledge where the money comes from and where it gets spent
    - Ross: expansion of the system as seen as the LRT system; we saw expansion and its impacts really benefitted
- **What do you value about Scenario 2 specifically? What are your concerns?** – 5 minutes
    - Ross: I think scenario 2 will have more access for all people throughout the region, the people in the core are going to have greater access; transit advocates in the suburbs find it frustrating to live in the suburbs with service that only connects to the urban core; I think we are going to see that COVID-19 is going to change how people work
    - Loretta: People that work in suburbs use it to get to work at the U but they are discouraged of using transit more widely seeing as they can't use it in their suburban neighborhoods. Also a common misconception that the suburbs have no low-income populations
    - Wendy: Important to build up access to new jobs; scenario 1 is just going to make it easier for the same people that had the same access before
    - Ross: Reverse commute is a great benefit
    - Stan: We are the fifth biggest county in the state and we have no transit. I don't think we know the full ramifications of COVID-19, we think that WFH is going to have some permanence. People WFH may decide that they are more likely to be able to live without a car if they don't need one for their commute.

- – Loretta: Scenario 1 may work better for the students at the U of M, but scenario 2 is better for the staff; both scenarios are important
- ▪ **Are there additional considerations or comments on how to evaluate transit service allocation?** – 5 minutes
  - – George: wants a greater evaluation of affordable housing; how does improved transit make different communities more attractive in terms of communities with affordable housing?
  - – Wendy: SFR affordable housing in TMA III could use better access to transit. It'd be great to see how the stock of affordable housing matches with transit
  - – Stan: how do we deal with increased housing costs as a result of transit investments?
  - – Ross: another interesting dynamic; U of M has free transit; what is our cost of collecting revenue? We should think of transit as infrastructure; if we go to a revenue-free model how would that impact the transit system?
  - – Wendy: Spreading out the bus system; makes it less likely that any given transit investment will cause an increase in housing prices.
  - – Stan: More viable affordable housing if we stretch the network out
  - – Wendy: Not sure how well circulators do; if there's any kind of transfer involved that requires a timed transfer, probably not going to take it
  - – Stan: difficult to make transitways attractive enough to attract people from miles away
- ▪ **How has COVID-19 influenced your thinking on the role of transit in a community?** – 10 minutes
  - – Stan: just went through process of validating Gold Line ridership; the federal government has not adjusted to COVID; how does it affect transit modelling?
  - – Wendy: had a lot of travel behavior inventory work that they were going to do but pushed off; lots of realtors and small businesses are looking to downsize their spaces, having everyone come back doesn't make sense financially
  - – Ross: Our economy has learned to work remotely, because of that prefers scenario 2; see this as an opportunity have better local service in a greater geography
  - – George: Think about how much we get delivered to us; different travel patterns
  - – Stan: haven't discussed younger generations, not motivated to have a car; seeing with these generational patterns with the Gold Line; employers are going to where people want to live; younger generations find jobs based on the communities where they are live
  - – Lonetta: Scenario 1 really impacts the students; people are more likely to try new things
  - – Ross: needs to touch on the sustainability issue; they are more likely to try new things
  - – Wendy: My son takes it as a point of pride that he hasn't used a car
  - – George: People have trouble of understanding how to travel without a car in the region
- ▪ **What percentage of expansion resources should go toward improvements and outcomes that reflect Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2?** – 15 minutes

– Stan: everything is using a rating system; merits should dictate the funding; let the data dictate; very political; we need a vision of what we are trying to accomplish

– Ross: 75% scenario 2/ 25% scenario 1: that's where things are headed

– Lonetta: Scenario 2 needs investment to give them a shot

– Ross: Amazon failure in Shakopee, but we need to try harder

– George: common thread more ridership; budget constraints are going to demand more productivity

– Ross: not sure if ridership is answering the question correctly

– Wendy: decided that in depth discussion gave more heft to scenario 2: weigh more heavily towards scenario 2: maybe not 75%; need more local service in the suburbs; if bus is only coming one hour it is a major deterrent.

Breakout Room 4

Attendees

- Brian C Martinson
- Gary Hansen
- Jason Gottfried
- Judy Johnson
- Mary Jo McGuire
- Russ Stark
- Susan Vento

Facilitator/Note-Taker

- Joseph Kapper
  (SRF Consulting)
- Amy Vennewitz
  (Met Council)

Discussion Notes

- **What do you value about Scenario 1 specifically?**
  What are your concerns? – 5 minutes
  - RS – Surprised at degree of difference between 2, higher ridership, better for low income and POC,likely green house gas reduction better
  - GH Equity needs to be foremost and better in #1, population centers better erved, remember POC populations in suurbs, need to get into core cities
  - JK Scenario 1 multiplies the network better
  - JJ Trying to work with Council's goals Equity is primary, ending disparities, lifting people up and connecting them to better opportunities must be built in, current system does not have great BIPOC outcomes, need to layer on the goals (of the Council), build systems that work for everyone
  - BM Struck that the social equity benefits are somewhat evenly distributed or closer than he would have guessed, how to factor future into this, how do people's choices change under these systems in terms of moving or job change, how will culture change, consider transit as 1st mode choice more often and more people doing this, this will help generate funding support, not sure if either scenario would be more supported for funding
  - SV Suburbs need a lot of collaboration with the cities (government?) to be successful ie walkable to transit on the suburban streets, accessible, how will older suburban residents access and rely on transit, safety
  - MJM Wants transit to be where the people and job are but hard to choose Suburbs also have POC, jobs and population, wants to do it all! Based on shared values and outcomes, not sure one of the two scenarios gets her ther , she has the same questions about trade-offs, torn
  - RS Has experienced an area where transit has greatly improved over time, not the same people, riders once it is there, once the frequent service is there more people work to figure out how to orient their lives around access to transit, best to create more areas like this where you can live your life using transit, unfortunately can't do this everywhere all at once but need to start
  - GH How to blend the scenarios

– JG Appreciates the metrics and study, wasn't surprised by results, weighs which benefits the most people and which is more cost-effective, favors scenario 1, better impact on land use with high frequency transit, better ridership increase, cost effective, but also wants benefits spread

▪ **What do you value about Scenario 2 specifically?**
   What are your concerns? – 5 minutes

   – GH Seems to have a broader based impact

   – Addressed above.

▪ **Are there additional considerations or comments on how to evaluate transit service allocation?** – 5 minutes

   – JJ Is there a way to use an economic development lens to understand impacts? Particularly (positive) impacts on BIPOC and those impacted by Covid, help solve greater goal of reducing disparities and building wealth, connect BIPOC not just to jobs but better paying jobs, how to transform

   – SV Though about access to higher ed system and how important this is for upward economic movement, transit to higher ed very important, education assists wealth building, Normandale and others in suburban locations

   – How/hard to anticipate the next "shock" to our economic system? Need to think about housing and transportation together, need connections to jobs and schools that aren't necessarily close to them but hard to do both things well, i.e. frequency and coverage

   – MJM Resiliency, we know things are going to happen, need a system that can help us be resilient and serve us well under a variety of future scenarios

   – JK Suburb to suburb commute is a big challenge, core high quality, high frequency build out can help the network get there, land use supportive of transit – walkable, not across big parking lots (i.e. higher ed facilities)

   – BM need a tight tie between housing, land use and transit, for an individual dollars are able to be saved by not owning a vehicle if you can live using transit, housing choices affect this, also livability issues of not commuting, need to reinforce publicly the connection between these choices, how to help people do this accounting

   – JG connect the choices and investment to land use

   – First and last mile connections are important don't seem to have been taken into account in the scenarios

   – MJM just heard amazing presentation on land values from economic development director, places with low parking have higher land value, better land use, parking lots don't have value

▪ **How has COVID-19 influenced your thinking on the role of transit in a community?** – 10 minutes

   – Wasted space in parking lots

   – JJ hard to think about the future absent Covid when it is changing so many things, future of downtowns is key, will jobs leave, need to focus on our values with flexibility, bus is most flexible mode, what have we learned, use data, opportunity to learn and change

- MJM Don't talk to goin back to normal at the county, things will never be the same, move forward looking for opportunities
- Reinforced the importance of transit, people are using cars as personal protective equipment, looking forward to getting back on transit, transit often the middle piece of a trip with bike or walk on either end, transit should become more important
- RS not sure he will return to 5 days per week work and transit use, expects to telework some, may not return transit use with commute trips, likely other trip types will be key, how will downtowns be used – maybe residential. Needs will change.

- **What percentage of expansion resources should go toward improvements and outcomes that reflect Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2?** – 15 minutes
    - Addressed above.

Appendix D Workshop Chat Transcript

00:17:39   **From Amity Foster:**
Ross, I like your background!

00:17:59   **From Ross Allanson:**
Inside our just delivered new Artics!

00:30:15   **From Matthew Stegeman:**
Mentimeter code: 94 99 86 8

00:56:29   **From Joe Kapper:**
Mentimeter code: 94 99 86 8

01:15:03   **From Brian C Martinson:**
Can you remind us over what future timeframe the benefits in the scenarios are
being evaluated?

01:15:52   **From Cole Hiniker:**
Brian, the current evaluation is based on current year data

01:16:14   **From Cole Hiniker:**
or the most recently available data, depending on the source

01:16:48   **From Mary Liz Holberg:**
If you factor a 30% reduction in jobs in downtown Minneapolis, how would it
change the calculations generally?

01:19:24   **From Christopher Geisler:**
I've got 2 questions that I'd like to ask

01:19:53   **From George Schember:**
Are there order of magnitude cost estimates for each scenario at this point?

01:20:31   **From Joe Kapper:**
[Comment from participant]: Can you comment about the potential to expand
the total expansion potential of overall employment and population between the
two scenarios.

01:20:35   **From Christopher Geisler:**
Was the same level of weight given between improved access than went from
"None to Some" as "Some to Better."

01:21:58   **From Judy Johnson:**
Does this factor in the suburban providers service levels as a part of the whole
transit system?

01:22:26   **From Christopher Geisler:**
For employment numbers: Was the access to employment segmented between
jobs that are: 1) Performed on-site, 2) Often be performed on-site, 3) Not
required to be performed on-site. (i.e. Increased telecommuting impacts job
buckets #2 & #3 more than #1.)

01:23:46   **From Cole Hiniker:**
Chris, to your second question, we don't have that level of detail in our job data

01:23:57   **From Andrea Ferstan:**
How do these account for local affordable housing plans across region?

01:24:41   **From Cole Hiniker:**
We could estimate based on income levels and use that as a proxy and that data is included

01:25:53   **From Joe Kapper:**
Question from George Schember: Are there order of magnitude cost estimates for each scenario at this point?

01:27:37   **From Cole Hiniker:**
We will do a 5-minute break as we transition to small group discussions

01:28:09   **From Joe Kapper:**
Mentimeter code: 94 99 86 8

01:29:29   **From Mary Morse Marti:**
Suburban express service is down 95%. Those residents are teleworking and we might expect many to continue, from 1-3 days or more per week. Does this point to the greater importance of Scenario 1?

01:35:03   **From Mary Morse Marti:**
Thanks, Thomas. I appreciate the clarification on no further (or little further) long-haul commuter services. We've spend millions on park and rides and they're not close to full utilization (prior to COVID-19)

01:35:35   **From Judy Johnson:**
How does the "low wage" jobs and "high wage jobs" factor into this? Does it show up by location/service area?

01:36:47   **From Judy Johnson:**
I am curious how we can get low-income people to better paying jobs.

01:37:22   **From Christopher Geisler:**
As someone working in IT, every one of my peer IT folks are investing in telecommuting and collaboration tools for the long haul. I agree that some will return but there will be a material amount of remote workforce that will never or rarely return to the office via commuter services. (just a viewpoint from the industry.)

01:38:55   **From Judy Johnson:**
There are a lot of manufacturing good-paying jobs that continue to grow and need workers and are not remote - hoping that transit can connect workers to jobs.

01:42:55   **From Matthew Stegeman:**
FYI - we will be opening the breakout rooms momentarily.

01:43:18   **From Matthew Stegeman:**
Some participants will stay in the main room, which will also function as a breakout.

02:39:14   **From Brian C Martinson:**
This felt like time well-spent. Thanks for the great work!

02:39:26   **Mary Morse Marti:**
Thanks, all!

02:39:26   **Matthew Stegeman:**
Thanks all!

02:39:30   **Molly Cummings:**
Thank you, it was great!

Appendix E Mentimeter Survey Open-Ended Comments

Question: What does a successful regional transit system look like?

Number	Response
1	Access for work, school, family, doctors for those who are most dependent on transit
2	Access to all parts of the region
3	Affordable, safe, equitable access and convenience
4	Connects people to destinations with frequent, reliable and safe service
5	Easy and predictable
6	Easy to use
7	Easy to use and fast and efficient
8	Flexible
9	Frequent service. All day service
10	fully integrated into the fabric of the community
11	High utilization with steady growth into new areas
12	Highly utilized
13	I'm included jobs corridors - equitable
14	Improved worker access to jobs.
15	Integrates all transit networks including suburban/rural services
16	interconnected and equitable
17	Networked transit that serves people in dense residential area. Private organizations that establish operations outside the transit belt must be held accountable for providing transportation to their workforces.
18	Number of regional jobs with expanded access to all-day service
19	One that is robust such that if one's primary mode is not accessible for whatever reason, there is at least one other option that is intuitive and efficient.
20	One that offers good access to jobs & core needs (food, healthcare and education)
21	One that takes all kinds of trips into account not just work trips
22	one where the whole metro is served and routes cover areas which cover diverse geography across race and class
23	Perceived as safe
24	Productive and equitable
25	Providing competitive choices for how people travel
26	Reliable, safe, clean & frequent no cost service for every neighborhood.
27	Riders must feel safe
28	Safe and affordable service for those who want and need it.
29	Safe, well-maintained, timely & inclusive of those who need/use public transit
30	Safely and effectively moves people to work, shopping services and play. Provides equitable access.

31	serves areas that have been historically underserved; and previously cut out by disinvestment into transit.
32	Serves urban and supportive suburban neighborhoods with high-frequency all day transit
33	Transit is sufficient to be the backbone of a transit-based lifestyle