



Transitway Impacts Research Program (TIRP) Research Brief

Transitway Buildout Improves Accessibility to Nonwork Destinations

Why was the study needed?

This study looked at how five new transitways planned for the Twin Cities area will affect access to destinations for various demographic groups. Earlier studies have examined how the region's transitway expansion will improve access to jobs, but that's not the whole picture. In this study, researchers examined how access to key nonwork destinations—grocery stores, healthcare, and high schools—will be shaped by the new transitways.

The new transitways considered in this study are:

- **B Line Arterial BRT:** South Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul
- **D Line Arterial BRT:** Brooklyn Center through Minneapolis and to Bloomington
- **E Line Arterial BRT:** UMN East Bank through downtown Minneapolis to Edina
- **Gold Line Dedicated BRT:** St. Paul to Woodbury, generally on a frontage road just north of I-94
- **Rush Line Dedicated BRT:** St. Paul to White Bear Lake along dedicated right-of-way

Key Findings

- All five transitways improve access and travel times to grocery stores, health care, and high schools in the Twin Cities.
- The benefits brought by each transitway depend on factors such as where destinations are in relation to the route, the route frequency, and the demographics of the neighborhoods near transitway stops.
- The B, D, E, Gold, and Rush Lines shave minutes off important trips for tens of thousands of people in the Twin Cities.
- Those who benefit from the transitways are found to be diverse across age, income, education, and race demographic groups.

Additional Findings

- People living where transit service is currently minimal experience the greatest benefit from the new transitways.
- The five transitways improve access to grocery stores for the most people compared to the other destinations (schools and health care facilities) that were measured.
- Of residents living near future B, D, E, Gold, and Rush Line stops, those living near the D Line experience the greatest access improvement and shorter travel times as a result of the new line.
- People of color experience shorter travel times to health care by 3 to 9 minutes across the five transitway corridors.
- Places where existing transit service and new transitways meet create additional opportunity for residents to access more destinations in shorter travel times.

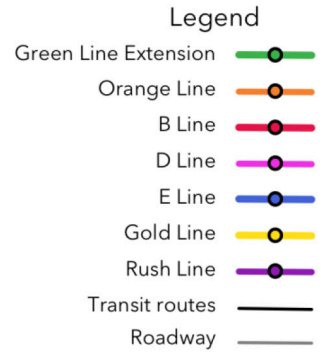
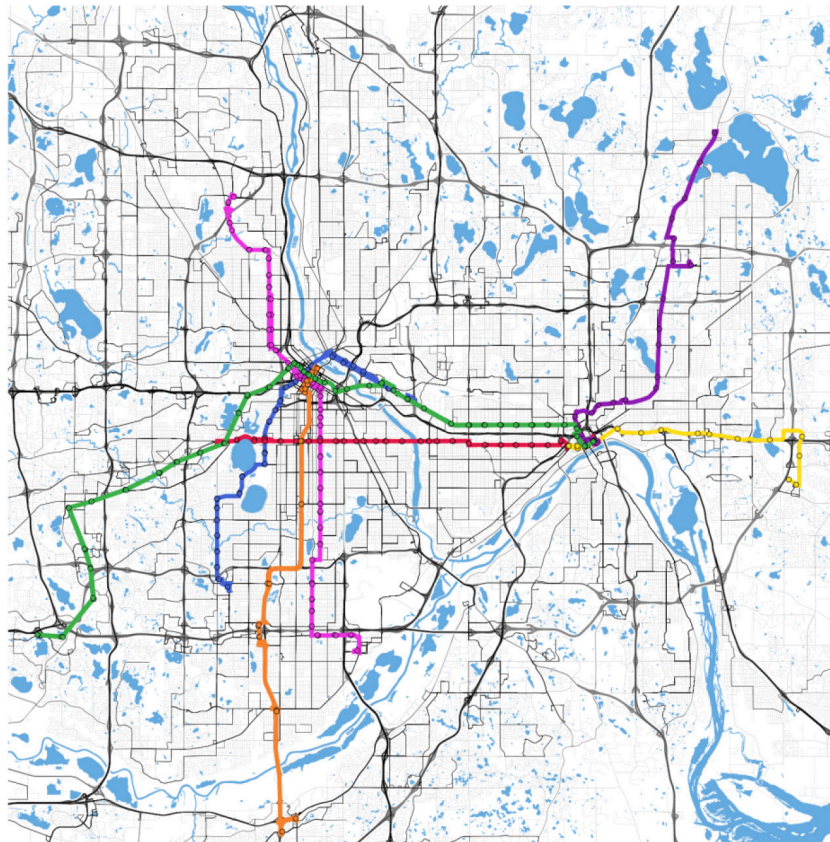
Project Methodology

The minimum travel time to two destinations was calculated for each Census block and each destination type; evaluating access to the second destination reflects the value of choice (or lack of choice) available to travelers. The transit calculations include time spent walking, waiting, transfers, and route frequency, among other details. Results are then analyzed by five demographic categories: age, education, monthly earnings, race, and sex.

TIRP Partners and Supporters:

- Anoka County
- Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota
- Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota
- City of Bloomington
- City of Minneapolis
- City of Saint Paul
- Dakota County
- Federal Transit Administration
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- Metropolitan Council
- Metro Transit
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Ramsey County
- State and Local Policy Program, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota
- University Metropolitan Consortium, University of Minnesota
- Washington County

Project sponsor:
Transitway Impacts
Research Program



The seven transitways used in study

Next Steps

This project established scenario evaluation tools and methods that can be reused to analyze how access may respond to future changes in transit networks, as well as to changes in the number and distribution of destinations. In addition, the data and knowledge gained from this research could help policymakers target transit service improvements based on access and equity goals. Neighborhoods where access to destinations improves most substantially should be considered for future development of affordable housing.

Learn More

Final report: *Addressing Accessibility and Equity Along Transitways: Toward a Mixed Methods Toolkit—Part 1* (CTS 21-04, Jan. 2021). Research team: Andrew Owen, principal investigator and director, U of M Accessibility Observatory (AO); Kristin Carlson, AO researcher.

cts.umn.edu/research/featured/transitways