

TO: Capital Metro Board of Directors

FROM: Sharmila Mukherjee, Executive Vice-President, Planning & Development

DATE: November 15, 2021

SUBJECT: August 2021 Service Change Equity Analysis

Summary

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Capital Metro has provided service at varying levels. As of the August 2021 service change, most service was restored to its pre-pandemic level. However, two sets of changes have been in place since March of 2020 and a service equity analysis was conducted for these changes. The changes are to commuter bus service and to university service routes.

No disparate impact was identified. These changes are not disproportionately borne by minority populations. There is no disproportionate burden by low-income populations for the university service routes. A disproportionate burden was identified for the commuter bus service changes. The disproportionate burden impacts were minimized through an intentional approach to reducing service and the availability of alternatives. Since Capital Metro took steps to minimize the disproportionate burden impacts, these changes can proceed.

Additional information regarding the analysis is contained in this memo.

Analysis

The analysis was conducted in accordance with Title VI policies adopted by the board on June 28, 2021. Since service levels for individual commuter bus service and university service routes were reduced by more than 25% a service equity analysis is required. The service equity analysis was conducted using the Title VI component of Remix Transit, an online transit planning software¹. The output of the Remix Transit VI analysis is then summarized to compare the people trips for minority/low-income to non-minority/non-low income for the prior service to the existing service. A difference of 2 percentage points or more results in a disparate impact/disproportionate burden (see following tables).

¹ Remix Transit Title VI methodology can be found at <https://help.remix.com/en/articles/1439215-remix-101-using-the-remix-title-vi-engine>

Commuter Bus Service

Commuter bus service includes express and flyer bus routes. Ten of Capital Metro's commuter routes have had their service reduced in response to COVID while two routes have been suspended (Routes 981 & 987). Commuter routes have experienced a 90% decrease in ridership as employees have worked from home or work alternative schedules. With the Delta variant surge, many employers delayed plans for employees to return to the office. The demand for commuter service remains low and commuter routes have been adjusted to meet this reduced demand. Four of these 12 routes are classified as minority routes. Every route that was reduced or suspended qualify as a major service change.

Disparate Impact (Minority)

Minority populations experienced a 73.4% reduction and non-minority populations experienced a 74.5% reduction. Since minority populations experience fewer reductions than non-minority populations, there is no disparate impact.

	Non-Minority People Trips	Minority People trips
After	127,943,190	98,513,640
Before	501,034,455	370,217,925
Percent Change	-74.5%	-73.4%
Percentage Point Difference	-1.1%	

Disproportionate Burden (Low-Income)

Low-income populations experienced a 76.8% reduction and non-low income populations experienced a 72.6% reduction. Since low-income populations experience more reductions than non-low income populations, there is a disproportionate burden. Capital Metro's Title VI policy states "Capital Metro will take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts when practicable". Because of the 90% loss in commuter ridership Capital Metro needed to reduce commuter service to use our resources wisely. When reducing service, Capital Metro attempted to retain the trips with the highest ridership so that the fewest customers would be impacted. The Red Line also provides an alternative service for many of the commuter routes allowing residents of Capital Metro's northwest service area to access the largest commuter destinations: University of Texas, Capitol Complex and downtown. The disproportionate burden impacts were minimized through the intentional approach to reducing service and the availability of alternatives.

	Non-Low-Income People Trips	Low-Income People trips
After	160,474,784	65,982,046
Before	586,735,443	284,516,937
Percent Change	-72.6%	-76.8%

University Service Routes

University service is the routes that serve the University of Texas. Five of the 12 routes experienced a major change resulting from the elimination of three combo routes that operated on Sundays and weekday evenings. Instead of combining routes, additional service was added to the individual routes resulting in a service improvement. All the affected routes are classified as minority routes.

Disparate Impact (Minority)

Minority populations experienced a 10.4% reduction and non-minority populations experienced an 11.7% reduction. Since minority populations experience fewer reductions than non-minority populations, there is no disparate impact.

	Non-Minority People Trips	Minority People trips
After	1,357,985,415	1,278,542,205
Before	1,537,597,725	1,427,162,835
Percent Change	-11.7%	-10.4%
Percentage Point Difference	-1.3%	

Disproportionate Burden (Low-Income)

Low-income populations experience a 9.2% reduction and non-low income populations experience a 12.6% reduction. Since low-income populations experience fewer reductions than non-low income populations, there is no disproportionate burden.

	Non-Low-Income People Trips	Low-Income People trips
After	1,450,279,789	1,186,247,831
Before	1,658,715,429	1,306,045,131
Percent Change	-12.6%	-9.2%
Percentage Point Difference	-3.4%	

To: CapMetro Board of Directors
From: Sharmila Mukherjee, Executive Vice-President, Planning & Development
Date: August 7, 2020
Re: January 2024 Service Change Equity Analysis

Summary

In September of 2021, CapMetro temporarily suspended E-Bus service and reduced daily service frequencies on Routes 18, 217 and 335. The decision to temporarily suspend these services and reduce frequencies was a necessary step to efficiently distribute limited resources to provide reliable service for our customers. Staff is recommending that the status of these service adjustments be classified as permanent, based on current availability of resources and needs. The update ensures that we are reliably meeting our established service levels and communicating clearly and transparently to our customers and the general public.

Analysis revealed no disparate impact borne by minority populations or disproportionate burden borne by low-income populations. CapMetro's Title VI policy states "Capital Metro will take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts when practicable". CapMetro minimized the impacts of these changes by making sure alternative service exists. Changes were implemented due to limited resources and mitigation options were not possible.

Additional information regarding the analysis is contained in this memo.

Analysis

The analysis was conducted in accordance with Title VI policies adopted by the board on June 28, 2021. Since service levels for Routes 18, 217, 335 and E-Bus (Routes 410, 411, & 412) were reduced by more than 25% a service equity analysis is required. The service equity analysis was conducted using the Title VI component of Remix Transit, an online transit planning software. The output of the Remix Transit VI analysis is then summarized to compare the people trips for minority/low-income to non-minority/non-low income for the prior service to the existing service. A difference of 2 percentage points or more results in a disparate impact/disproportionate burden (see following tables).

Route 18, 217, and 335

Prior to the start of the pandemic, Routes 18, 217, & 335 consistently had the lowest average daily ridership and lowest performance when compared to other High-Frequency Routes. They continued to have low performance compared to other High-Frequency Routes during the pandemic. When CapMetro needed to reduce service in fall of 2021, these routes were selected due to lagging ridership. These routes now operate every 30 minutes, to ensure that customers still have access to transit.

Disparate Impact (Minority)

Minority populations experienced a 42.4% reduction and non-minority populations experienced an 42.9% reduction. Since the percentage point difference is less than CapMetro's 2% threshold, there is no disparate impact.

	Non-Minority People Trips	Minority People trips
After	401,986,095	253,465,280
Before	704,521,805	439,866,965
Percent Change	-42.9%	-42.4%
Percentage Point Difference	0.57%	

Disproportionate Burden (Low-Income)

Low-income populations experienced a 42.6% reduction and non-low income populations experienced a 42.8% reduction. Since the percentage point difference is less than CapMetro's 2% threshold, there is no adisproportionate burden

	Non-Low-Income People Trips	Low-Income People trips
After	530,846,771	124,604,604
Before	927,356,124	217,032,646
Percent Change	-42.8%	-42.6%
Percentage Point Difference	0.17%	

E-Bus

E-Bus service (Routes 410, 411, and 412) operated on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from 10:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. during the University of Texas' Fall and Spring semesters. Before the suspension, ridership on the E-Bus had been declining as students chose other options to travel downtown and service span and frequency had previously been reduced. CapMetro's Night Owl service is an alternative with 6-days-a-week year-round service.

Disparate Impact (Minority)

Both minority and non-minority populations experienced a 100% reduction. Since minority and non-minority populations, there is no disparate impact.

	Non-Minority People Trips	Minority People trips
After	0	0
Before	31,000,970	43,729,290
Percent Change	-100.0%	-100.0%
Percentage Point Difference	0.0 %	

Disproportionate Burden (Low-Income)

Both low-income and non-low income populations experienced a 100% reduction. Since the reduction is equally borne by low-income and non-low income populations, there is no disproportionate burden.

	Non-Low-Income People Trips	Low-Income People trips
After	0	0
Before	40,440,559	34,289,701
Percent Change	-100.0%	-100.0%
Percentage Point Difference	0.0 %	