



We Need Transit to Achieve Racial Justice

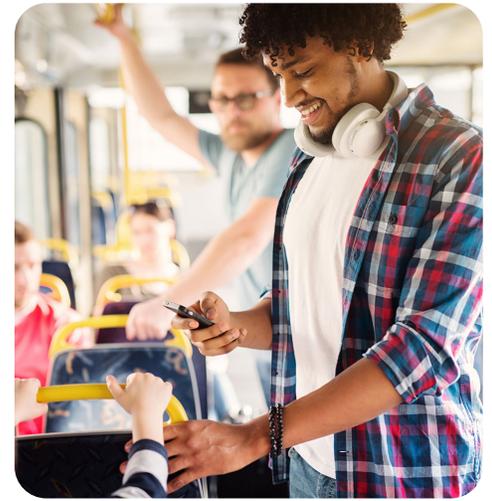
Transit is a key to repairing decades of racial injustice and creating vibrant, equitable communities.



To create communities that fully and fairly meet the needs of people of color, we need to rethink the way we use our streets. Transit is a solution that creates opportunity, addresses racial disparities, and helps communities of color thrive.

- > **44% of transit riders are people of color.** This is disproportionate: people of color make up around 25% of the population of the Twin Cities yet account for 44% of Metro Transit riders.^{1,2} While car drivers receive priority and are privileged on our roads, the transit system is woefully underfunded, creating long wait times, slow rides, and unreliable service for the people who rely on it. Providing adequate support to transit is an important step in the fight for racial justice.
- > **Transit riders are cut off from millions of jobs—and similarly aren't given access to other opportunities.** Only about 18,000 jobs are accessible by 30 minute transit ride in the Twin Cities out of a total of 1.9 million jobs.³ This lack of access holds true across all kinds of opportunity, from education to enrichment and cultural opportunities. Transit riders of color are disproportionately affected by this lack of access, especially given that 38% of riders do not own a vehicle.⁴ Transit creates more opportunity for the communities of color who rely on it.
- > **Transit can save families about \$11,000 dollars a year⁵—and recover up to \$2M in lost wealth over a lifetime.**⁶ Transportation is the second highest expense in most households, with average cost of over \$11,000 a year to own and maintain a car, while an unlimited transit pass is just a fraction of that.⁷ This has ripple impacts on the disproportionate number of families of color living in poverty.⁸ Providing transit access helps stabilize families of color struggling to meet their expenses and retain money for things like rent, mortgages, food, child enrichment experiences, and more.
- > **Transit reduces the particulates that pollute neighborhoods of color,⁹ causing health problems and killing community members.**¹⁰ Communities of color, especially Black communities, are disproportionately subject to poor air quality¹¹ and a host of negative outcomes due to the lingering impacts of racial covenants in housing and highway construction.^{12, 13} On average, a transit user produces less than half the pollution per mile of a driver¹⁴—meaning that improving transit quality and use in these areas not only helps under-served riders, but promotes much cleaner air than the highways that often run through communities of color.

The transportation system we have today has divided people and deepened disparities. Expanding and improving transit access is critical to addressing our longest-standing inequities and ensuring needs in communities of color are fully and fairly met.



Sources

- 1 Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area Data. Census Reporter (n.d., retrieved March 1, 2022) <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US33460-minneapolis-st-paul-bloomington-mn-wi-metro-area/>
- 2 Metro Transit Facts. Metro Transit (2019).
- 3 Access Across America: Transit 2019. U of MN Center for Transportation Studies (October 2020). https://access.umn.edu/research/america/transit/2019/documents/AccessAcrossAmerica-Transit2019_sm.pdf
- 4 IBID
- 5 The annual average cost of car ownership is \$11,054. Averages by vehicle type range from \$8,249 to \$13,332. *Your Driving Costs*, AAA (2021). <https://newsroom.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-YDC-Brochure-Live.pdf>
- 6 If you invested the average annual cost of car ownership at 6% interest in a 401K starting at age 21, you would have over \$2M by the time you retire.
- 7 Metro Transit offers a variety of affordable transit passes: Metropass (\$996 or less), College Pass (\$330/year), Student Pass (free), as well as discounted fares. Full local bus fare twice a day for a year costs \$1825. (Metro Transit, 2022).
- 8 37% of Indigenous people and 26% of Black people in the Twin Cities live in poverty, while only 5% of white people live in poverty. *Minnesota Compass*, 2019. <https://www.mncompass.org/topics/demographics/race-ethnicity?disparities-by-race#7-11416-g>
- 9 Twin Cities Environmental Justice Mapping Tool, Center for Earth Energy & Democracy (n.d., retrieved March 1, 2022) <http://ceed.org/twin-cities-environmental-justice-mapping-tool-released/>
- 10 *Community Health Profile Information: Minneapolis Sites*, Minnesota Department of Health (Feb 13, 2013). <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/docs/herc021513.pdf>
- 11 Understanding Environmental Justice in Minnesota, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (n.d., retrieved March 1, 2022). <https://mpca.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f5bf57c8dac24404b7f8ef1717f57d00>
- 12 Racial covenants in housing were used across Minnesota to keep Black people and other people of color from purchasing property in areas that white people considered desirable until their prohibition in the 1950s, long after the damage was done (Mapping Prejudice, University of Minnesota (n.d., retrieved March 1, 2022) <https://mappingprejudice.umn.edu/>). These racial covenants forced Black people to cluster their homes near highways (Freeways Minneapolis Black Population, IBID <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/217472>), or in cases like the construction of I-94 through the Rondo community, were built purposefully through Black neighborhoods. The end result is that Black neighborhoods were and still are disproportionately subject to poor air quality and a host of negative health outcomes associated with living near highways, while white people disproportionately reap the benefits of better air quality and access to resources.
- 13 Rondo was a flourishing black neighborhood located just east of the State Capitol. By the 1930s, Rondo was the cultural center for the Black community of Saint Paul with half of the city's Black population. Using funding from the Federal Aid Highway Act, the Minnesota Legislature decided to construct I-94 between the Twin Cities. The US Department of Transportation targeted Rondo as a Black community to minimize impacts on white neighborhoods. The road destroyed Rondo. <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/2020/08/24/transportation-racism-has-shaped-public-transit-america-inequalities>
- 14 Public Transportation's Role in Responding to Climate Change. U.S. Department of Transportation (Jan. 2010). <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/PublicTransportationsRoleInRespondingToClimateChange2010.pdf>



Move Minnesota leads the movement for an equitable and sustainable transportation system that puts people first. We are passionate about connecting communities, ending the climate crisis, expanding access to jobs and resources, and improving daily life for Minnesotans of all ages, races, incomes, and abilities. Learn more at movemn.org.

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