

DESCRIPTION

Access to public transportation connects residents to jobs, social networks, health care and healthy food. It reduces traffic-related crashes, increases physical fitness and mental health, and reduces both gasoline consumption and the carbon footprint.¹ Public transportation is especially important for job accessibility in heavily urbanized areas, where traffic and parking can be barriers. Metro Transit offers an integrated network of buses, light rail and commuter trains as well as resources for those who carpool, vanpool, walk or bike in the Twin Cities metro area. Metro Mobility provides public transit services for riders unable to use regular buses due to a disability or health condition. Vanpool and Transit Link also provide services under contract with the Metropolitan Council. In 2016, there were 109 park-and-ride facilities in the metro area used by 18,000-19,000 people in the past five years.²

HOW WE ARE DOING

Over 6 percent of Ramsey County residents utilize public transportation for their commute to work, compared to 3.5 5.1 percent of U.S. residents.³ There remain several low income neighborhoods where residents have low access to vehicles in Ramsey County where there are very few public transit routes.

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020: Increase trips to work made by mass transit
U.S. target: 5.5 percent

DISPARITIES

Transportation infrastructure can highlight disparities. Populations who are nonwhite or have low socioeconomic status (SES) tend to own fewer cars, drive less and take public transportation more.⁴ Low SES populations tend to live closer to city centers to access public transportation.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Initiatives in Ramsey County and the greater metro area to improve access to (and experience of) public transportation include:

- A series of Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects initiated by Metro Transit in 2015, beginning with the A Line, which provides an important connection between the Green Line in St. Paul and the Blue Line in Minneapolis. A nine-mile line will run between Woodbury and downtown St. Paul, connecting with the Green Line at Union Depot.
- Plans to add 150 shelters and improve an additional 75 by Metro Transit. Improvements focus on areas of concentrated poverty in St. Paul.
- Evaluation of ways to improve transit routes along the Riverview Corridor by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority who works on transit-oriented projects that address the region's needs for mobility, improved transportation affordability, mitigation of traffic congestion and enhanced environmental quality. It also oversees Union Depot in downtown St. Paul. Their additional projects include:
(continued on back)



Information to note

- Ramsey County currently meets the Healthy People 2020 target for residents commuting to work using public transportation.
- The Twin Cities metro ranks 12th among 49 other major metropolitan areas in the U.S. for using public transportation to get to work.⁵
- Even though Ramsey County currently meets the Healthy People 2020 target for residents commuting to work using public transportation, there are several low income neighborhoods lacking transit routes.



Community voice

"Sometimes I don't have transportation to stores with good products."
- Hispanic Female, age 45-54

134 responses mentioned the health burdens of limited transportation. Due to limited transit options, respondents weren't able to reach healthier grocery stores and doctor appointments.

¹ Public Transportation Benefits. American Public Transportation Association. <http://www.apta.com/mediacenter/ptbenefits/Pages/default.aspx>. Accessed December 13, 2017.

² Metro Transit. <https://www.metrotransit.org/about-metro-transit> ; <https://www.metrotransit.org/metro-mobility>. Accessed December 13, 2017.

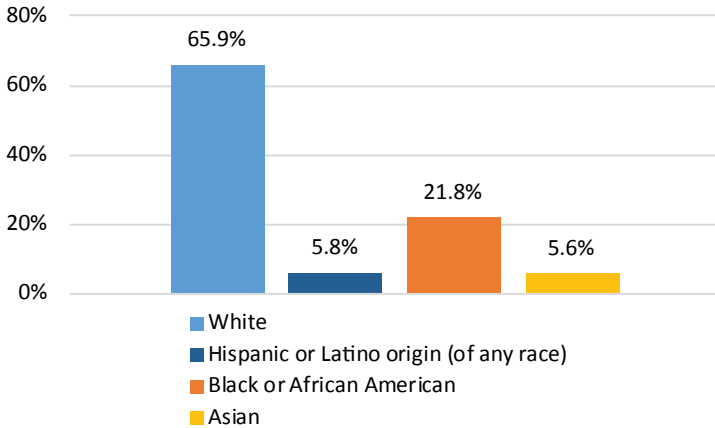
³ U.S. Census American Community Survey 2012-2016. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_B08101&prodType=table. Accessed March 13, 2018.

⁴ Pratt GC, Vadali ML, Kvale DL, Ellickson KM. Traffic, Air Pollution, Minority and Socio-Economic Status: Addressing Inequities in Exposure and Risk. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2015 May; 12(5): 5355-5372.

⁵ Access Across America: UMN ranks accessibility to jobs by transit. <https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/access-across-america-umn-ranks-accessibility-jobs-transit>. Accessed December 13, 2017.

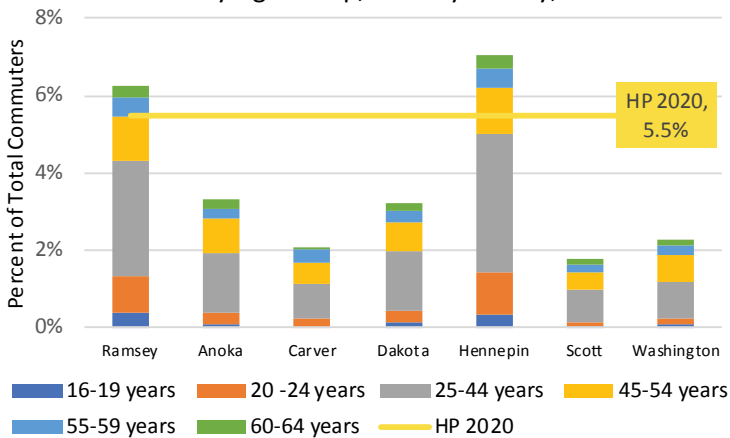
- A BRT route connecting Union Depot to downtown White Bear Lake (Rush Line);
- A BRT route connecting the southeastern suburbs to St. Paul (Red Rock Corridor); and
- A potential second daily train connecting Union Depot to Union Station in Chicago.

Use of Public Transportation to Get to Work by Race/Ethnicity, Ramsey County, 2016



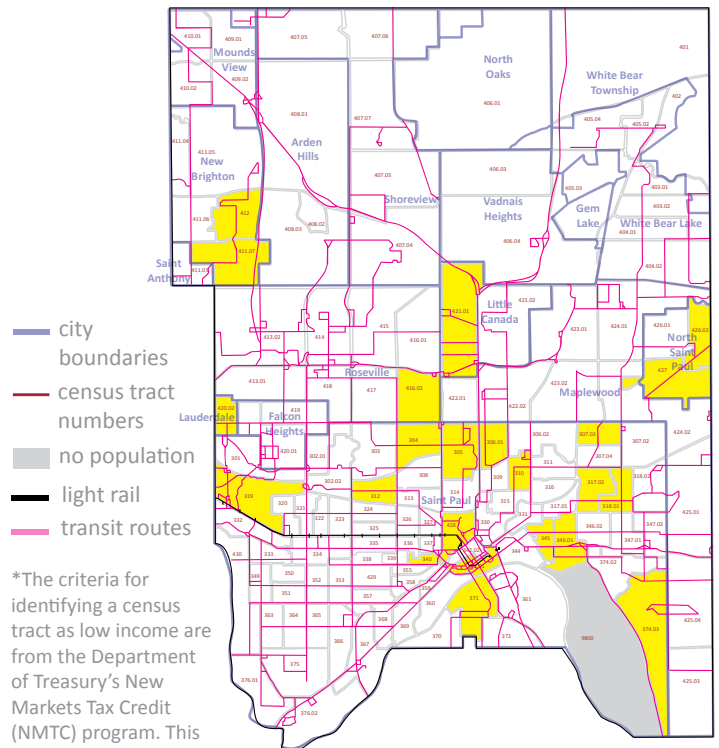
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 1-year estimates.⁶

Residents Commuting to Work Using Mass Transit by Age Group, Ramsey County, 2016



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2012-2016.⁷

Low Income* and Low Vehicle Access by City and Census Tract, Ramsey County, 2015



*The criteria for identifying a census tract as low income are from the Department of Treasury's New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program. This program defines a low-income census tract as any tract where:

- The tract's poverty rate is 20 percent or greater; or
- The tract's median family income is less than or equal to 80 percent of the State-wide median family income; or
- The tract is in a metropolitan area and has a median family income less than or equal to 80 percent of the metropolitan area's median family income.

Vehicle availability is defined in the American Community Survey as the number of passenger cars, vans, or trucks with a capacity of 1-ton or less kept at the home and available for use by household members.

Source: USDA Food Environment Atlas.⁸

⁶ U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 1-year estimates. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_1YR_S0802&prodType=table. Accessed March 14, 2018.

⁷ Census American Community Survey 2012-2016. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_B08101&prodType=table. Accessed March 13, 2018.

⁸ USDA Food Environment Atlas. Web site. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas>. Accessed December 28, 2017.