RAMSEY COUNTY

Service Redesign Evaluation
Service Center Survey Interim Report

Introduction

In 2018, Ramsey County began the work to define and describe the provision of county services in a Way that centered on the resident and their experience. This launched the strategic priority of Residents First which has brought forward concepts and plans such as Residents First: Effective, Efficient, and Accessible Operations. This strategic priority challenges the county to create service centers in which a variety of resident needs can be addressed in one location, anchoring our services to residents' needs rather than department specific buildings. In March 2020, Ramsey County identified the need to expedite these changes to the resident experience as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and our rapid redesign effort to serve our residents during this time.

The goals of the project are that:
- Residents are easily connected to needed services.
- Service delivery is centered on resident needs, rather than policies, rules, budgets, or building locations. The service delivery system is invisible to residents.
- Establish a "one door" system where there is parity in services and quality of services regardless of how a resident contacts the county.

The major components in the next six months, which set the stage for future changes over the next two to three years, are to:
- Establish five services center hubs which will offer comprehensive services in person. Initially these service centers will include: Workforce Solutions, Financial Assistance Services, Social Services, and Property Tax services.
- Staff service centers with navigators who will act as a guide to county services, connecting people to needed services and ensure people get the services they need.
- Provide technology access at service centers so that residents can connect online to services, access technology for other things like completing applications, job searches and applications, and other things that require the internet.

This interim report looks at the results of a survey offered at all five sites in the last two weeks of October. The intent of the survey was to understand the resident experience of the service center and answer the question: how well are we providing services? A second survey will be done in December, as well as potential on-site interviews with residents to better understand the context behind their responses. Interviews with navigator staff and supervisors are scheduled for November and a final report will be available in February 2021.

Survey Method

Evaluation staff delivered surveys and $10 Target gift cards as completion incentives to the site supervisors on Monday, October 19. The number of surveys to each site were based on weekly average interactions in the navigator tracking log in September. Surveys were provided in English, Hmong, Somali, Spanish, and Karen. Site supervisors and navigators were directed to offer surveys to residents whose interaction met the criteria to be entered into the navigator tracking log. Some sites, in particular the West Side and Roseville Library, had large numbers of people visiting to vote or drop off ballots who did not otherwise interact with the navigators. Because the intent of the survey was to understand navigator interactions, navigators were told to avoid offering surveys to these visitors who would not be there outside of the election.

Evaluation staff picked up the surveys on Monday, October 26, except for Downtown, which was given another week to complete more surveys.

Results

A total of 114 surveys were completed. There were 429 visits logged into the navigator tracking log for the time period the surveys were available, for a completion rate of 27%. Table 1 shows the sites, number of surveys provided, number of navigator visits logged, and surveys returned. The Roseville Library did not complete any surveys. Maplewood Library staff mistakenly gave out surveys to people coming to the site to vote or return ballots, resulting in a high response rate. Five surveys from Maplewood were requesting services for things other than elections; 25 were for elections. These surveys were included in the results but reported separately. Downtown was given a second week to complete surveys. Evaluation staff discussed extending the survey at other sites, but navigator supervisors felt that there was so little traffic that very few additional surveys would be completed. Ninety-two percent of surveys were completed in English, 4% in Somali, 3% in Karen, and 1% in Spanish. No surveys were completed in Hmong.

Table 1: Survey Responses by Site

Site	Surveys Provided	Visits Logged	Surveys Returned	Completion Rate
Total	500	429	114	27%
Roseville	25	13	0	0%
Maplewood	50	3	5/25	167%/833%
Shoreview	75	2	2	100%
West Side	100	2	6	300%
Downtown	250	409	76	19%

People tended to visit the building where they would have received that type of service prior to the creation of the service centers. For example, people seeking help with cash assistance or food support tended to come to the Downtown site and those seeking help with property taxes went to the West Side site. Table 2 shows what assistance people were seeking. Totals exceed 100% because some people were seeking help with more than one thing.

Table 2: Visit Reason by Site

Service	Total	Downtown	Maplewood	Shoreview	West Side
Income, food, or childcare	39	38	0	1	0
Elections or Voting	29	3	25	0	1
Use the computer	10	7	1	1	1
Help with medical bills	9	8	1	0	0
Property Tax	7	3	0	0	4
Help applying for a job	6	6	0	0	0
Use the scanner or copier	6	3	3	0	0
Other	13	8	0	0	2

Other reasons for visiting included: help with a disability, housing, passport assistance, and obtaining identification. Twenty respondents listed other services or resources they would like to see offered. Most of these were services they could already receive at the site, such as application assistance for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or use of the copier. The most common other recommendations were a food shelf (3 responses), employers or job fairs (4 responses), assistance with housing (3 responses), help using the computers (2 responses), and mental health counseling (2 responses).

Overall, 52% of visits were a residents' first time visiting a service center, 18% had visited two or three times in the last month, and 16% had visited four or more times in the last month. Fourteen percent left the question blank. Downtown was the busiest site, with 76 surveys completed and was most likely to have repeat visits, with 40% reporting this as their first visit, 26% visiting two to three times, and 15% visiting four or more times. Figure 1 shows the percent of visits by number of visits and site with people visiting Maplewood for elections separately than others.

Figure 1: Frequency of Service Center Use
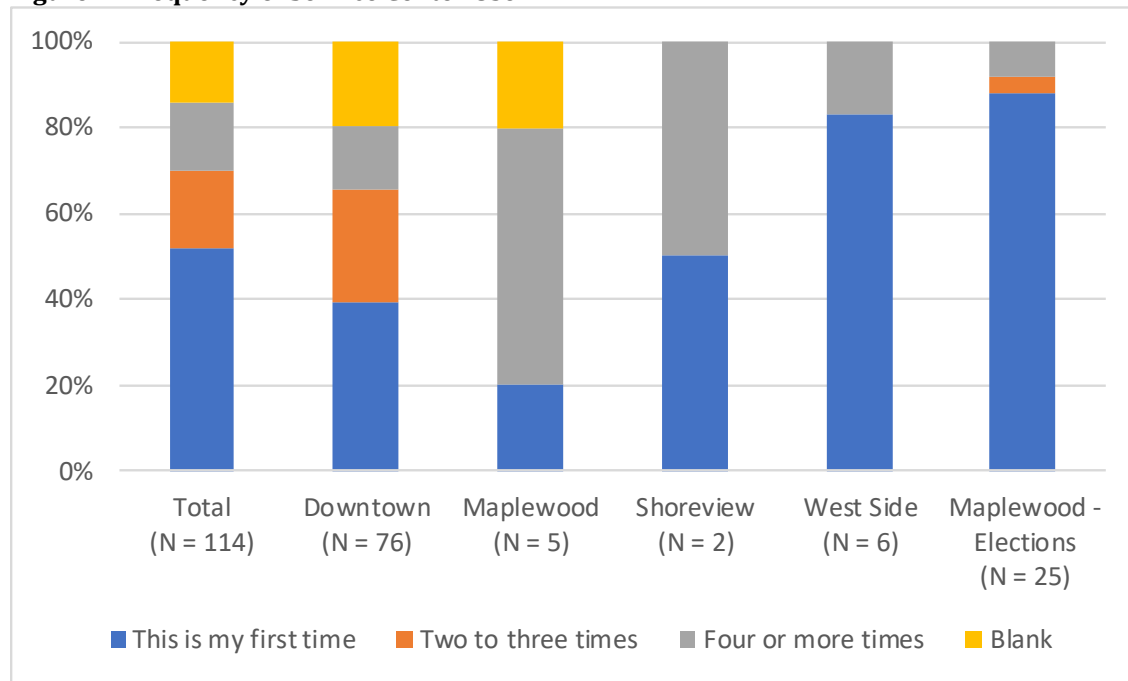
Frequency of use varied by what services residents were seeking. Most people seeking assistance with elections or voting, and property taxes were first time users (85% and 60%, respectively). Two-thirds of people visiting to use a computer, copier, or scanner had visited more than once in the last month, with 40% visiting four or more times. Nearly half of people seeking assistance with income, food, childcare, or Medical Assistance visited more than once, with 27% visiting two to three times in the last month.

**Figure 2: Frequency of Use by Service Requested**
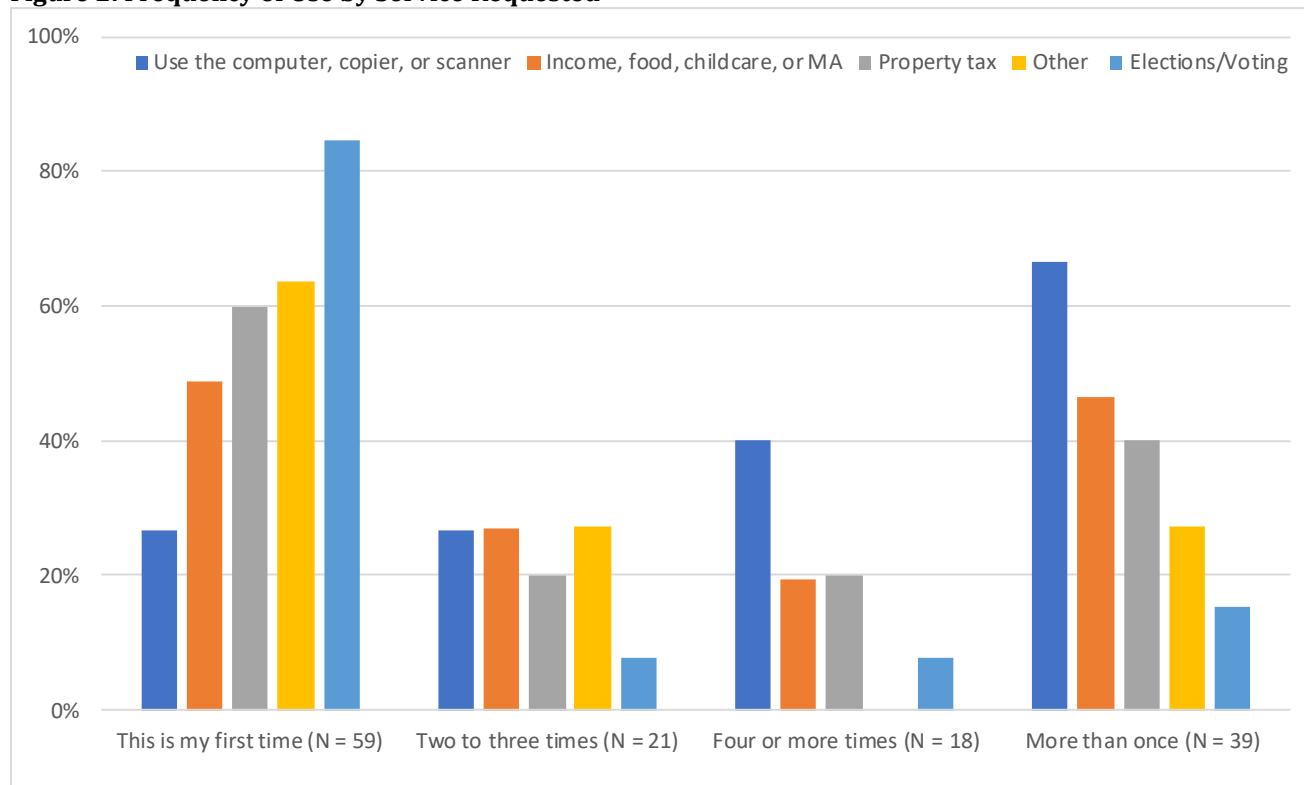
Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point scale whether they received the help they needed, whether the staff were helpful, whether the staff were kind and respectful, and whether the space was welcoming. All sites had similar responses with the averages overall shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Average Rating Customer Satisfaction

| Question	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Did you get the help you needed?	4.7	2	5
Were the staff helpful?	4.8	2	5
Were the staff kind and respectful?	4.8	2	5
Was the space welcoming?	4.8	1	5

Overall, the majority (63%) prefer to get help in person, ranging from 20% to 83% depending on the site. Overall, 20% prefer to receive help via the internet or online, ranging from none to 48% depending on the site. Only 5% prefer to receive help via the telephone and 11% did not answer the question. (Figure 3)

**Figure 3: How People Prefer to Access Services**
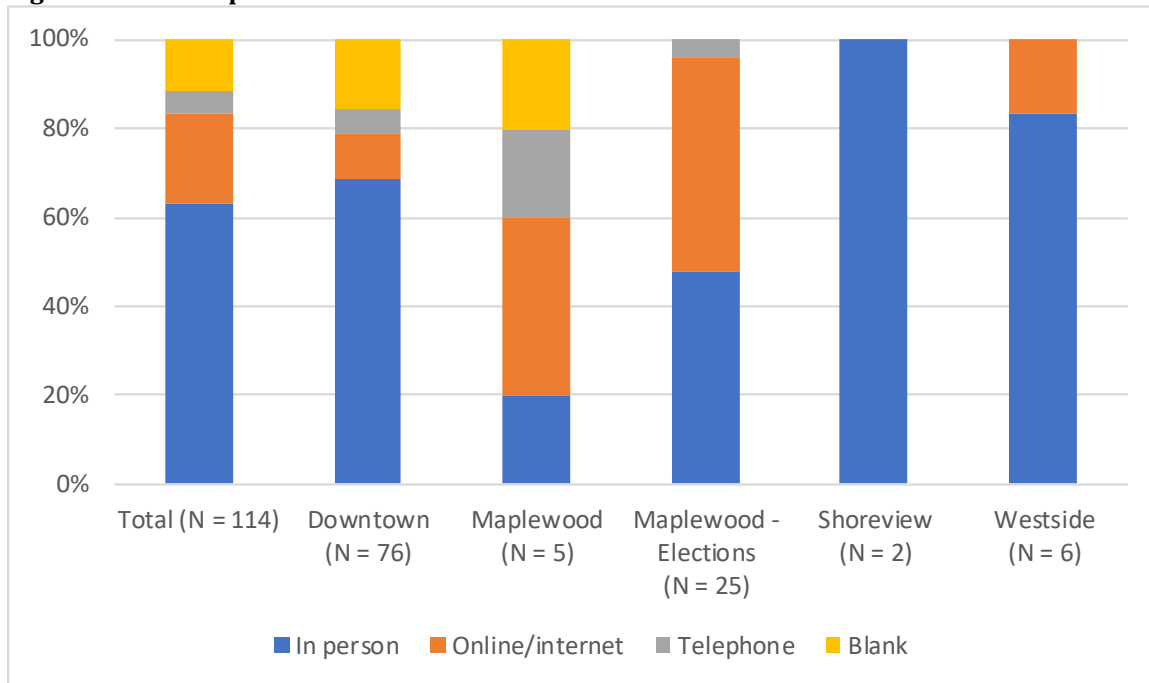
Overall, 54% of respondents drove themselves to the site, 18% took public transportation, 13% received a ride from a friend or relative, 9% walked, and 2% used other means. Except for Downtown, the majority of respondents drove themselves, ranging from 60% of Maplewood non-elections respondents to all of the people going to Shoreview. At the Downtown site, 40% drove themselves, 28% took public transit, 15% received a ride, 13% walked, and 3% took some other means. (Figure 4)

Figure 4: How People Got to the Service Centers
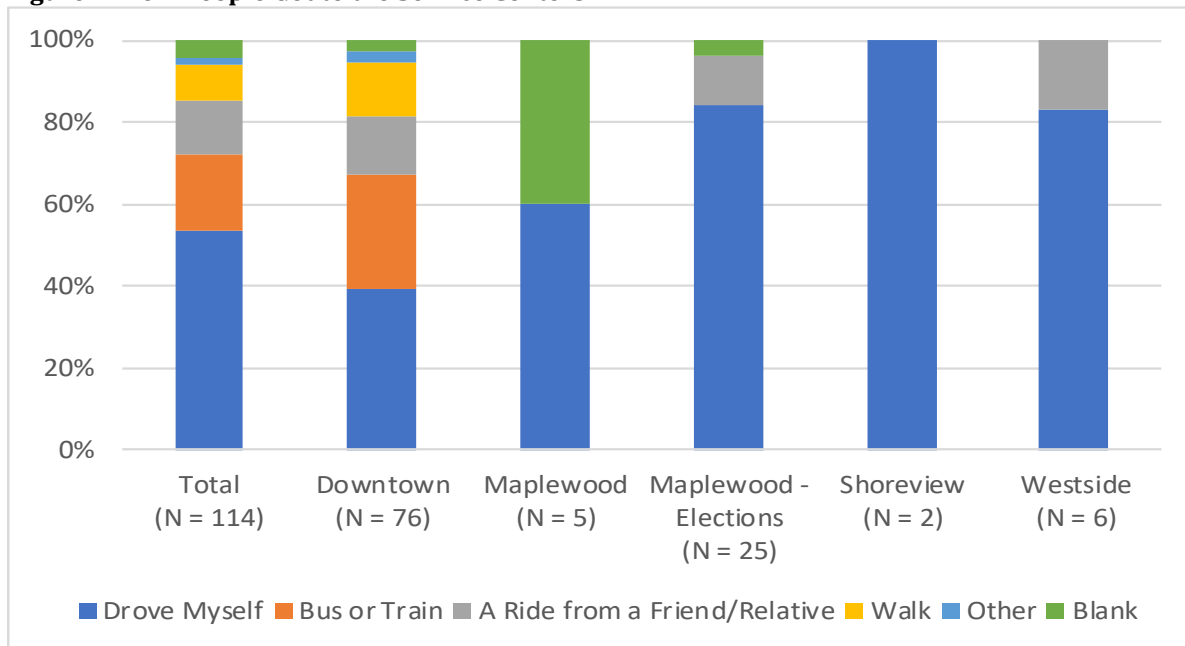
Overall, about half of respondents always have internet access at home, 21% do not have internet access, 14% have internet access sometimes, and 3% did not know whether they have internet access. For visitors for Downtown, 38% always have internet access at home, 29% do not have internet access, 18% sometimes have internet access, and 4% did not know whether they have internet access at home. (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Home Internet Access
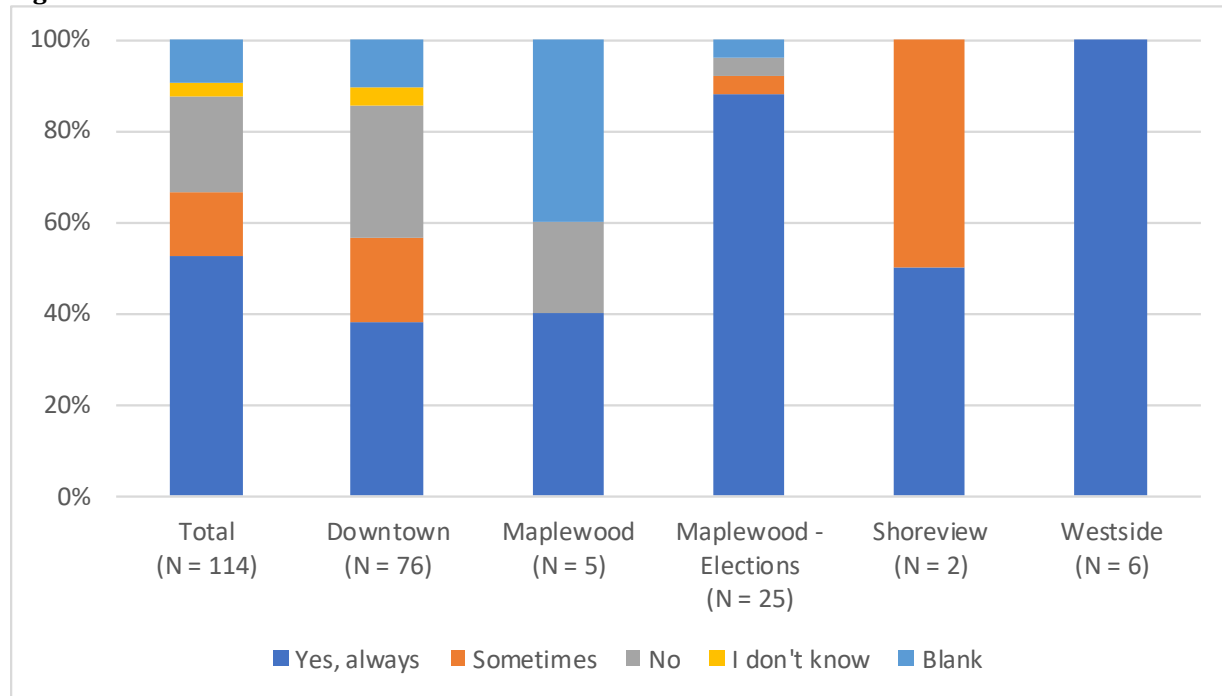
As shown on the zip code map (Appendix A), survey respondents tended to use service centers closer to where they live. Saint Paul residents tended to use either Downtown or West Side sites and most suburban residents use library sites. Combined with information of services requested, this does not indicate that suburban residents are not in need of financial assistance. It only tells us that those using library service centers did not request those things. We do not know how many suburban residents needed or wanted assistance with cash, food, childcare, or Medical Assistance and accessed those services online, via telephone, or some other way or did not access them.

Fourteen percent of respondents accessing the Downtown site reported that they were staying in an emergency shelter or camping. No respondents at the other sites reported homelessness.

Table 4 compares demographics of survey respondents to those tracked in the metrics log. In both data sources, females were more likely to visit service centers than other genders and survey results were similar to the metrics log. About 60% of visitors from both data sources were female with 35% of survey respondents saying they were male and less than 1% non-binary/third gender compared to 39% of visits in the tracking log being male and none being non-binary/third gender.

Survey respondents were more likely to report their race as White (26% compared to 17% in the tracking log), having Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity (7% compared to 4% in the tracking log), or leave race blank (13% compared to 0.2% in the tracking log).

When asked what language they preferred to receive services in, 79% of survey respondents said English, which was similar to language preferences in the tracking log (78%). Six percent said Somali (compared to 11% in the tracking log), 5% said Karen (compared to 4% in the tracking log), and 3% said Spanish (compared to 2% in the tracking log). Two percent of people in the tracking log spoke Hmong and no survey respondents said they prefer Hmong. Three survey respondents said they preferred other languages. Those languages were Russian, Oromo, and Amharic.

The average age of survey respondents who reported their age was 42.8 years. Fifteen percent of survey respondents did not report their age, but of those who did, the survey respondents are slightly older than the overall visits tracked by navigators. Eight percent were ages 18 to 24 compared to 4% of overall visitors tracked, 30% were ages 25 to 39 compared to 38% overall, 35% were ages 40 to 59 compared to 52% overall, and 12% were ages 60 and older compared to 7% overall.

Table 4: Survey Respondent Demographics Compared to Navigator Metrics Log

	Survey		Metrics Log	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	114	100.0%	429	100.0%
Gender				
Male	40	35.1%	167	38.9%
Female	67	58.8%	262	61.1%
Non-Binary/Third Gender	1	0.9%	0	0.0%
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian	4	3.5%	1	0.2%
Asian	9	7.9%	38	8.9%
Black	55	48.2%	299	69.7%
Multiple	1	0.9%	0	0.0%
White	30	26.3%	71	16.6%
Unknown	15	13.2%	1	0.2%
Latinx/Hispanic	8	7.0%	19	4.4%
Language				
English	90	78.9%	336	78.3%
Somali	7	6.1%	47	11.0%
Karen	6	5.3%	18	4.2%
Spanish	3	2.6%	10	2.3%
Hmong	0	0.0%	8	1.9%
Other	3	2.6%	10	2.3%
Age				
18 to 24	9	7.9%	16	3.7%
25 to 39	34	29.8%	161	37.5%
40 to 59	40	35.1%	224	52.2%
60 and older	14	12.3%	28	6.5%
Missing	17	14.9%	0	0.0%

Discussion

This survey is a preliminary look at the service centers and provides some insight into actions that will be helpful as the services centers transition to the Information and Public Records Service Team. A second survey in December, along with interviews with navigators, their supervisors, other key stakeholders, and service center visitors will help round out the recommendations and provide a more complete picture.

This survey suggests that:

- **Further Communications support around navigator/one door services is needed.** The majority of people came to the site they would have traditionally visited for that service. For example, 38 of the 39 respondents needing help with income, food, or childcare came to the Downtown location and more than half of those needing help with property taxes came to the West Side location. Very few people visited the library sites. This indicates that. Although a communications campaign and materials were distributed in early October, more of these communications are necessary. For decades people accessed services in a certain manner and messages about the availability of services in a new way has not overcome years of doing it one way.

  Communications need to be addressed more broadly to suburban residents letting them know of services available at the libraries. Targeted messages to city residents using the Downtown site should include information on other services available at that site. This may include suggestions or information provided by navigators as they interact with people.

- **In person services and alternatives to the internet will continue to be important.** About half of respondents always have internet access at home and only 38% of users of the Downtown site always have internet access at home. Eighteen percent of all users said they came to the service center to use the computer, scanner, or copier which may be related to lack of computer or internet access at home. In addition, 63% of respondents prefer to receive services in person, particularly users of the Downtown and West Side sites.

- **Consider the needs of people who will be infrequent users as compared to frequent visitors.** The election clearly changed the way services were offered and the types of visits during October; staffing and navigator roles were changed to reflect that dynamic. Annual events or events tied to the calendar (such as paying property taxes) are one type of service to train for and adjust to.

  However, site planning needs to consider the frequent user and how their needs may be unique. Thinking about how to better address the needs of computer, copier, and scanner users, 67% of whom visited the site more than once a month, is an emerging issue. Most people visiting to access Financial Assistance Services also visited more than once. Understanding why they need to come back multiple times to get their needs met may be one way to provide improved service and decrease the need for in-person contact.
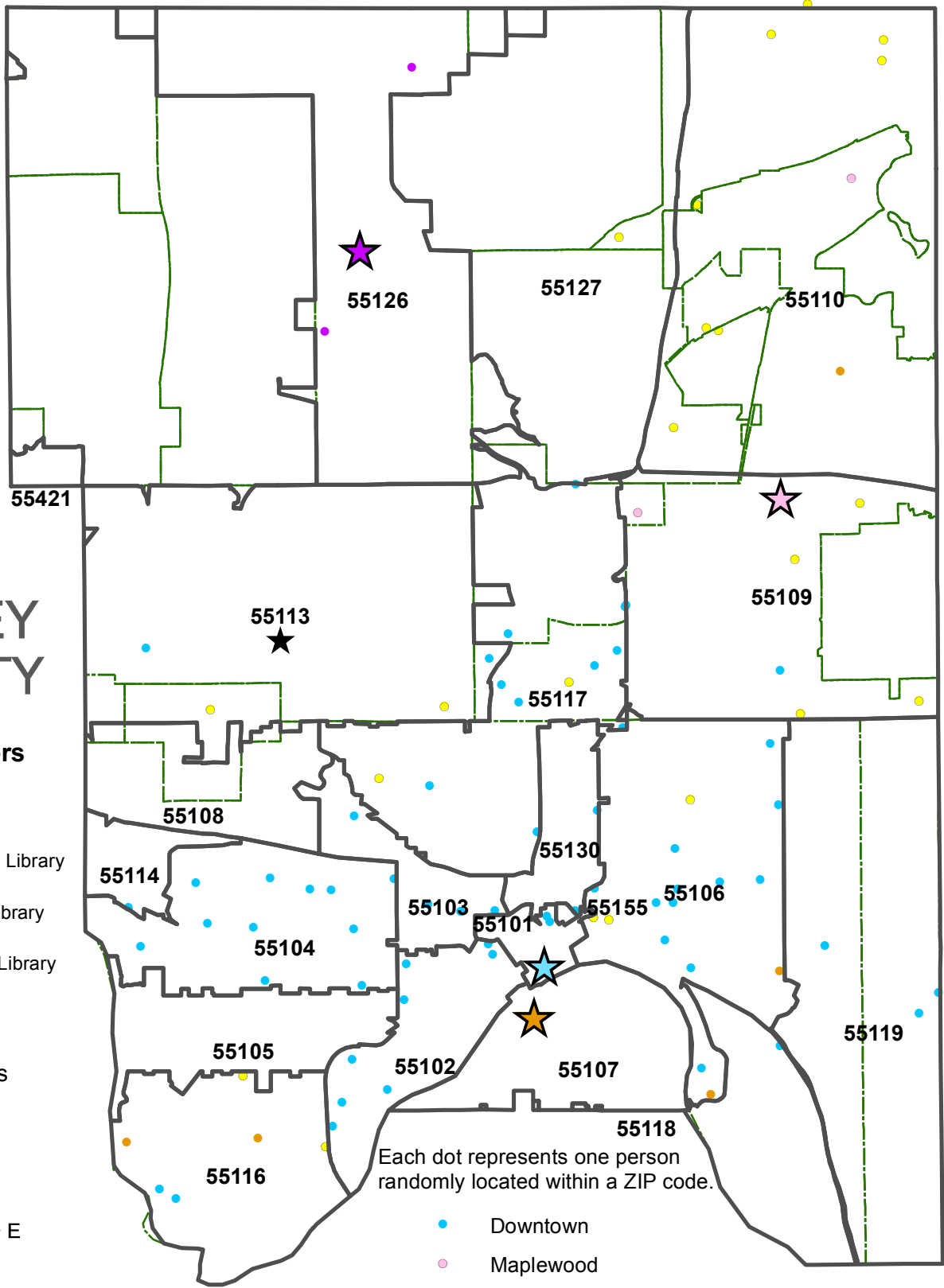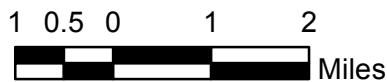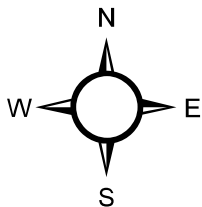
Appendix A: Ramsey County Service Centers, Clients Surveyed by ZIP Code, October 2020

55421

55126

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RAMSEY COUNTY

Service Centers

⭐ Downtown

⭐ Maplewood Library

★ Roseville Library

⭐ Shoreview Library

⭐ West Side

▢ Zip Codes

▦ Cities

N
W E
S

1 0.5 0 1 2
Miles

Each dot represents one person
randomly located within a ZIP code.

● Downtown

● Maplewood

● MaplewoodElections

● Shoreview

● Westside

Appendix B: Service Center Use Survey

Thank you for completing this survey. It will help Ramsey County provide better services at our service centers. Completing this survey is voluntary and will not impact the services or help you receive. Your name and other identifying information will not be connected to your response. To thank you for your time you will receive a gift card for completing the survey.

1) What was the main reason for your visit today?

To use the computer	Help with medical bills or Medical Assistance	Help with mental or chemical health
Property tax (payments, questions, paperwork)	Income, food, or childcare help	Help applying for or finding a job
Help with a disability	Use the copier or scanner	
Elections/voting	Another county service:	

2. In the last month, how often have you visited this service center?

This is my first time	Two to three times	Four or more times

3. What other types of services or resources would you like to have at the service centers?

4) Did you get the help you needed?

5) Were the staff helpful?

6) Were the staff kind and respectful?

7) Did the space feel welcoming?

8) How do you most prefer to get help accessing county services?

In person	Online/internet	Telephone

9) How did you get here today?

Drove myself   A ride from a friend/relative   Rideshare like Uber or a taxi

Bus or train   Walk   Bicycle

Some other way

10) Do you have internet access at home?

Yes, always   Sometimes   No

I don't know

11) What is your home zip code? _____   ☐ I am camping or staying in a shelter

12) What is your gender?

Male   Female   Non-binary/Third Gender

Prefer to self-describe: _____   Prefer not to say

13) Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?

Yes   No   Prefer not to say

14) Please tell us which race you consider yourself to be. Circle as many as apply.

American Indian or Alaskan Native   Asian   Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander   White   Prefer not to say

15) What is your age? _____

16) What language(s) do you prefer to use?

English   Somali   Hmong

Spanish   Karen   American Sign Language

Something else: _____

(OPTIONAL) If you are interested in participating in a town hall or other event to give more feedback on the service centers, please provide you name and email or telephone number. This information will not be kept with your survey responses.

Name: _____   Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you!