Metro Transit Proposed Fare Policy Updates: Public Engagement Report

June 2026

Public Engagement Phase

Executive summary

On March 25, 2026, the Metropolitan Council approved Metro Transit's request to hold a 60-day comment period, including three public hearings, regarding a series of proposed fare policy changes. These proposals included standardizing the express fare, expanding youth fare eligibility, and increasing the Metro micro fare set, among other adjustments and system improvements. The public engagement phase of this project ran from March 26 through May 26. It aimed to promote the public comment period, public hearings, and educate the public about the proposed fare changes and future payment improvements.

Metro Transit's outreach and engagement team implemented several outreach and communication strategies to reach customers and community members throughout the region, including:

- Customer interception at popular Metro Transit stations and on-board express buses, Metro micro buses, Green and Blue Line trains, and C, D, and E METRO lines
- Community member engagement at activity centers in downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis
- Metro Transit system advertisements, Transit and Metro micro application announcements, organic and paid social media posts, Rider Alert notices

Metro Transit invited the public to provide their feedback through an online comment form, by contacting Metro Transit Customer Relations, or attending a public hearing. Metro Transit received 500 online comment form submissions, 22 email and phone inquiries and comments, and three formal letters during the public comment period.

The public supports the following proposed changes:

- One fare for express buses
- Changes to the reduced fare on express buses
- Youth pricing, and
- More ways to pay

Individuals who responded negatively to the proposed changes oppose the Metro micro proposals, particularly:

- The proposed $4 fare and
- Discontinuation of pass acceptance

Inquiries regarding the proposed changes focused on:

- Planned pricing changes to passes, such as Metropass
- Fare capping and updates to the fare collection equipment
- Rationale behind the Metro micro proposals
- Requests from municipal partners and peer agencies for a presentation about the proposed changes

Introduction

Over a 60-day comment period, Metro Transit received input from nearly 600 people through in-person meetings and written comments. Overall, commentors were supportive of fare policy changes, expressing strong support for one fare for express buses, youth pricing, and more ways to pay. The most frequent inquiries concerned pass costs. Commenters opposed the increase in Metro micro fares and the discontinuation of pass acceptance for that service. Those most impacted by the Metro micro proposal expressed apprehension about their continued ability to connect to the Metro Transit system and afford the $8 roundtrip fare, given the elimination of passes as a form of payment. Some of the opposition and concern about the Metro micro proposal also stemmed from the degree of fare evasion customers and operators observed on the service. Some commenters assumed the proposal was meant to address the issue, while others felt the agency should resolve it before implementing a fare increase.

Overview

Strategies to reach customers and community

Community Meetings

Metro Transit held three formal Public Hearings – two in-person and one online – during the public comment period. The two in-person hearings were held at the George Latimer Central Library in St. Paul and at the Minneapolis Central Library in Minneapolis on May 6th and May 7th, respectively, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. All locations were accessible by transit. The virtual hearing was held on Microsoft Teams on Thursday, May 14 from 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. There were approximately 36 total attendees across all events. All Public Hearings followed a consistent format, beginning with a presentation by subject matter experts and followed by an open period for comments and questions.

Pop-Ups & Briefings

- 11 Community Pop-ups, staff spoke with or distributed buckslips to approximately 314 community members
- 5 briefings and presentations with stakeholders, such as the Washington County Transportation Consortium, the Minneapolis Public Schools, East Metro Strong, the City of Brooklyn Park Coalition of Rental Property Managers, and the Sheridan Neighborhood Association

Customer Interception and Great Day in Transit (GDIT)

- 4 outreach and engagement staff spoke with customers on express Routes 94, 850, 768, and 250
- 8 express bus onboard shifts, 15 hours, staff spoke with or distributed buckslips to approximately 131 customers
- 2 outreach and engagement staff spoke with customers in all Metro micro zones
- 7 Metro micro onboard shifts, 14 hours, staff spoke with or distributed buckslips to approximately 37 customers
- 65 GDIT ambassadors were on Green and Blue Line trains and C, D, and E Line buses
- 140 GDIT onboard shifts, 113 hours, staff talked to or handed buckslips to over 2,800 customers

Digital communication channels

- Metro Transit website news item: 7,140 visits
- Rider Alert email went out to 6,597 (express route) subscribers
- Social Media (Paid) – Reach: 223,661; Engagement: 2,576
- Social Media (Organic for Public Hearings): 5/6- Responded: 27, Went: 2, Interested: 25; 5/7- Responded: 43, Went: 6, Interested: 37; 5/14- Responded: 4, Went: 1, Interested: 3
- Banner campaign on the Transit app for the survey ran from April 22 to May 6
    - Views: 20,254
    - Taps: 2,029
- Click-through-rate: 10.02%
- Banner campaign on the Transit app for the Public Hearings ran from May 6 to May 14
    - Views: 14,674
    - Taps: 877
- Click-through-rate: 5.98%

Online Comment Form

Purpose

All comment form submissions are part of the official record. The agency will use findings from the public comment form to inform its final fare policy proposals, which will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council in August 2026.

Method

The public comment form included 11 total questions (three multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question about the proposals and five multiple-choice and two open-ended questions about demographic information). All questions were optional. The comment form was exclusively available online.

The comment from was available in English, Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Karen. It included a summary of the pricing changes and a link to the Metro Transit News Item that included an overview of all the proposed fare policy updates and planned improvements to the fare collection system. The comment form began with a multiple-choice question asking respondents to indicate their level of support for the pricing changes. Then, respondents were asked to rank the pricing changes based on the degree to which each change would personally impact the respondent. Following the ranking question, respondents were invited to share their comments about the proposals and then asked to indicate which of the proposals their comment addressed (this question used a select-all-that-apply format).

The comment form was promoted using digital communication methods and printed materials, including:

Social media and subscriptions services

- Organic social media
- Paid social media
- Email to express route express route Rider Alert subscribers

Metro Transit System Advertisements

- Interior cards
- BRT and LRT platform digital ads
- Bus shelter digital ad
- Transit Store monitor ad
- Buckslip detailing the changes and directing customers to the News Item for more information, public hearing dates and locations, and instructions for providing feedback – with Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Karen, and Hmong translations

General Advertisements

- Transit App announcement
- Metro micro app announcement

Metro Transit also shared partner outreach packets (which included a QR code to the News Item, web and social media copy, a translated fact sheet, and a graphic) with 86 municipal staff, 35 Metro micro stakeholders, 269 Transit Assistance Program partners, 30 College Pass customers, 46 Student Pass customers, 5 Universal Pass customers and 280 MetroPass Program customers to extend the agency's reach through those existing networks.

Metro Transit's outreach and engagement team applied a systematic review process to categorize and analyze all online comment form submissions.

Demographics of respondents

This section only includes demographics of those who submitted the comment form. Staff intercepted customers and attended community events to ensure we were reaching diverse groups of people as we consistently hear less from youth and people of color through electronic methods alone.

Gender

Of the **475 respondents** who answered the "gender" question, approximately **half identify as men (46%)**, and **half identify as women (44%)** and **8% identify as non-binary**.

Race and ethnicity

Of the **496 respondents** who answered the "race and ethnicity" question, **80% of respondents identify as white.**

Age

Of the **479 respondents** who answered the "age" question,

- 27% of the respondents are between 25-34 years old
- 17% of the respondents are between 35-44 years old
- 15% of the respondents are between 55-64 years old
- 14% of the respondents are between 18-24 years old
- 13% of the respondents are between 45-54 years old

- 11% of the respondents are 65+ years old
- 2% of the respondents are under 18 years old

Disability

Of the **478 respondents** who answered the "disability status" question, **27% identify as having a disability or chronic health condition**.

Income

Of the 443 respondents who answered the "household income" question, **20%** reported a **household income of $150,000+**, **19%** reported a **household income between $100,000-$150,000**, and **16%** reported a **household income of less than $30,000.**

Comment Form Findings

Introduction

Overall, 72% of respondents support the fare policy proposals, while 20% are against the proposals, and 7% were neutral. Respondents indicated support for the agency's efforts to simplify and standardize express fares, expand access to youth pricing, and transition to an open-payment system. Respondents noted that the planned fare standardization will make it easier for customers to plan their trips, use the public transit system, and anticipate their travel costs. Senior respondents who supported the reduced-fare proposal indicated that the update would improve transit affordability for those who live on fixed or limited incomes.

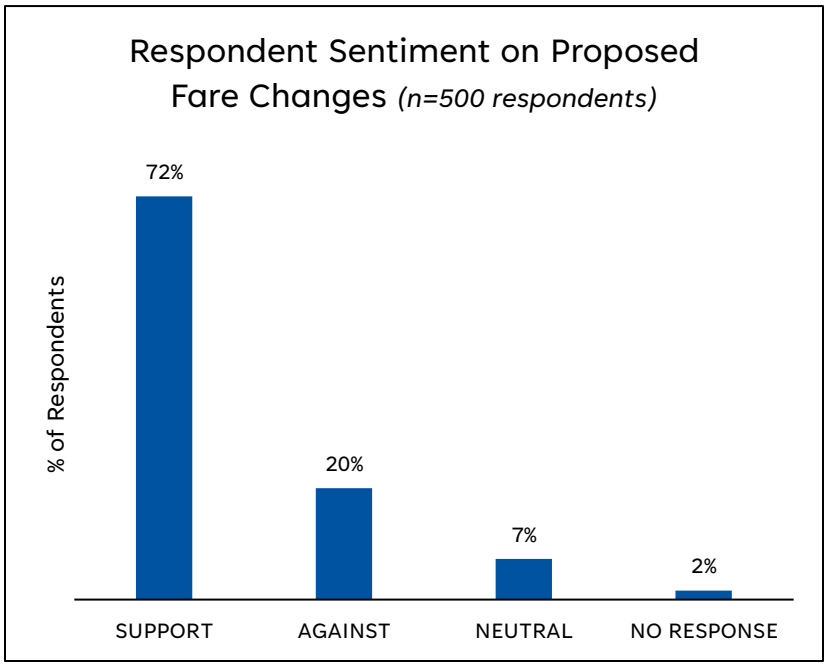


Figure 1. Respondent sentiment on proposed fare changes (n=500)

While most respondents indicated that they support the fare policy proposals, the responses to the open-ended question asking respondents to share their thoughts about the proposed changes revealed more ambivalent feelings about the changes. Respondents who reacted negatively opposed the Metro micro fare proposals, though respondents who supported the proposals also expressed concern about the Metro micro fare increase. Many respondents expressed that they view Metro micro as a direct replacement for fixed-route service instead of an on-demand complement to the broader public transit system. Respondents also noted that the combined effect of the proposed fare increase and the discontinuation of pass program acceptance would limit customers' ability to travel to work, school, or medical appointments or connect to fixed-route system. In response to the affordability and accessibility concerns, some respondents advocated maintaining the acceptance of College and Metropass passes and reduced-fare eligibility for youth, seniors, Limited-Mobility customers and Medicare card holders. Respondents also suggested aligning the Metro micro fare with the local or express bus fare. Lastly, underlying some of the opposition to the Metro micro proposal was a concern about fare evasion. Some respondents either assumed the proposal was intended to address the fare evasion they observed, or argued that Metro Transit should address fare evasion first before raising prices. These respondents expressed a sense of injustice, feeling that the proposed fare increase was planned at a time when they had observed a moderate degree of fare evasion and longer wait times in some of the micro zones.

A Note about Metro micro

Because Metro micro is a relatively new service, with four of the five micro zones having opened in 2025, the proportion of Metro micro customers may be smaller relative to Metro Transit's broader customer base. Therefore, fewer respondents may have commented about the proposed changes to Metro micro or ranked this topic high among the changes directly impacting them. It is important to keep this context in mind when interpreting the findings.

How Respondents Groups Weighed the Proposed Changes

Before reviewing comments on each proposed change, it is helpful to understand how different respondent groups perceive the relative impact of these changes on themselves. The chart below illustrates how different groups of respondents ranked the proposed pricing changes based on the degree to which each change would personally impact them (average ranking per proposed change).

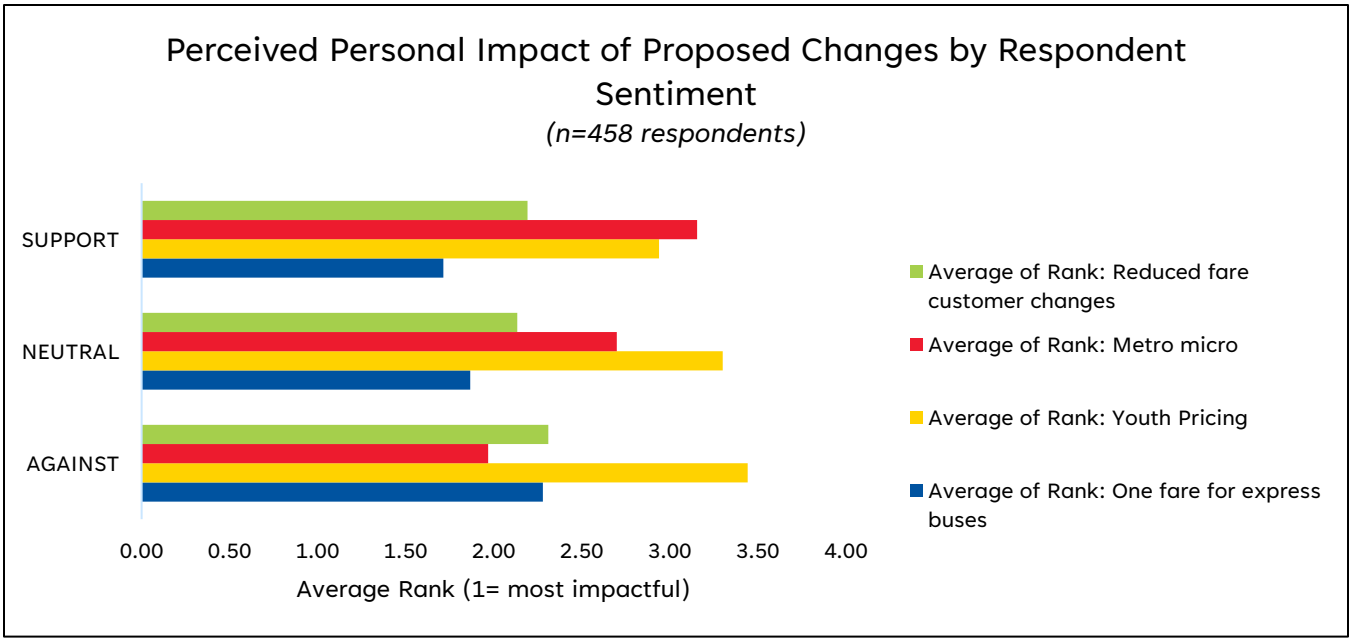


Figure 2. Perceived Personal Impact of Proposed Changes, by Respondent Sentiment (n=458)

Respondents who indicated support for the proposals ranked "one fare for express buses" as the most impactful and "Metro micro" as the least impactful to them personally. In contrast, respondents who indicated opposition to the proposals ranked "Metro micro" as the most impactful and "youth pricing" as the least impactful to them personally.

Findings by Proposed Change

Respondents could select more than one proposal when indicating which topic(s) their comments addressed. In total, there were 344 valid comments accounting for 510 total topic selections. Sentiment breakdowns below do not sum to the number of topic selections per proposal because the contents of comments did not always reflect the topic(s) selected.

One fare for express buses

- Respondents selected "One fare for express buses" as a comment topic 112 times
- 87 positive comments citing ease of use, budget predictability, trip flexibility, public transit accessibility, and increased ridership

In their comments, respondents noted that the proposed change will make the **fare structure simpler and easier to understand.** Respondents also indicated that this change would provide customers with **more flexibility** when planning their trips and encourage others to use public transit.

"having a fixed price on Express Routes is actually something I support. Not only will everyone understand that it'll have a fix[ed] rate, but now we don't have to worry about taking a route during certain times."

"the simpler [the fare] is, the easier it is to predict what it will cost me, the more likely I am to ride it (and less intimidating for others to try it)."

- 15 negative comments citing fare elimination, one standard fare, inequity, impact on agency revenue, and affordability concerns

Respondents raised **equity concerns** explaining that the proposed change would disproportionately impact workers who work non-traditional hours or work part-time. Some respondents also expressed concern about the potential impact on Metro Transit's revenue and advocated for a further increase in the express fare.

"I think the assumption was that Express riders work full time downtown, but that is not the case, many riders are part time or shift workers that do not have a higher salary to match the higher fare."

"one fare for express buses favors commuters. It's not fair to raise the prices for non-rush hour riders, just to even out the fare for commuters."

"express buses should be $5. It's a fantastic service that I would gladly pay more for."

- 5 comments expressing clarification about the proposed change

Respondents **inquired** about changes to **pass program prices**, impacts to the **2.5-hour transfer period**, fares on Route 94, and the **reduced fare** for seniors.

"How will this affect our current MetroPass pricing given we receive a special pricing based on a group rate for our firm?"

When the Gold Line extends to Minneapolis and replaces the 94, will you have to pay express fare on it?

"Do these fares still only cover 2.5 hrs of time or is its (sic) one cost for all day fares?"

"I am 66 and would like more information on the reduced senior amount and how the driver knows you are a senior and a reduced amount."

Metro micro

- Respondents selected "Metro micro" as a comment topic 133 times
- 15 positive comments citing fare simplification, ease of use, fairness

Respondents who reacted positively to the Metro micro policy proposals expressed **enthusiasm about the fare standardization** and the **introduction of an open-payment system**. They also perceived the proposal as **fair.**

"I love that we're implementing streamlined fares for express and micro, introducing fare-capping, and are able to use credit or debit cards to pay! This is great."

"agree strongly with the simplification of fares into whole dollar amounts."

"...Metro Micro fare is 'fair' and also makes total sense, including the updated rules"

- Negative: 109 comments citing affordability concerns, reduced-fare eligibility, accessibility and connectivity, fare evasion

Many respondents who reacted negatively to the Metro micro pricing and policy proposals described themselves as frequent Metro micro users or newer to the service. These respondents **perceive this service as a one-to-one substitute to fixed-route bus service**, regarding this as their form of local route service, or use this service in combination with fixed-route service to travel to their final destinations.

"I feel like Metro Micro should remain on par with local fixed route as for most customers that IS their sole local route."

"The Metro Micro fare increase is too punitive, especially for passholders. Micro, particularly in the suburban context, serves as coverage service rather than a "luxury" option. The ideal would be to treat it as local or express service. If a surcharge is needed for passholders, a $1 "upgrade" fee per ride would be more acceptable than a full $4 charge for each ride. The cost should also be aligned with Transit Link. With a $4 fare there's an incentive to try and use Transit Link, which is much more resource constrained, than Micro as it'll be 50 cents cheaper at non-peak times."

"i am struggling to make ends meet as is, bumping up micro fare would affect me greatly in the long run. i HAVE to rely on metro to get to and from roseville to fridley for my job, which i barely make minimum wage as is."

Most respondents cited **affordability concerns** as one of the primary reasons for opposing the proposals and argue that **lower-income groups, such as seniors (65+), youth, and limited mobility customers, should remain eligible for reduced fares**.

"Fare increases for Metro Micro are inequitable and harm the people most reliant on affordable public transit, older adults, and students. TAP is great, but the process has many barriers that the other two discounts do not."

"My worry is with the Metro Micro proposal. With the increase to $4 per boarding, as well as the elimination of monthly passes, fares not counting towards fare capping, and no micro to micro transfers for round trips, it will really make the service unattractive and expensive. At that rate ($8.00/round trip), it will seem more economical to drive a private car, and also to will put a harder financial burden on those who can't afford a private car. I would support keeping it in line with the express bus fares, including monthly passes, transfers, and fare capping."

"Seniors depend on the Metro Micro in Woodbury. Raising the fare would be a detriment to them as they're on a fixed income and need the reduced fare"

"I think it is unfair to exclude customers with limited mobility, youth, seniors (65+) and Medicare card holders from the reduced fare on Metro Micro, as those are people who would most likely use this service and have the cost be prohibitive."

Respondents also indicated that the proposals, notably the **combined effect of the fare increase and the discontinuation of pass acceptance**, would **prevent customers from connecting to and accessing the broader Metro Transit system** while discouraging more infrequent public transit users, or those less familiar with micro, from using the service.

"I am a college student and rely off metro micro's acceptance of college passes to get to my college since I don't live near a fixed route metro bus. I think it would be fair to at least allow passes such as the 7-Day or 31-Day passes to be accepted or at least result in a reduced fare. Thank you for your consideration."

"I am concerned about eliminating the senior rate for Metro Micro, particularly in the Woodbury Zone where we older adults are just learning about the benefits of transit. I believe that increasing the fare from $1 to $4 will discourage older adults from using Metro Micro to connect with the Gold Line and other transit."

"Please continue to allow college pass on micro. I know a lot of students (including me) who use the micro to get around and not allowing college pass to be used would be extremely distruptive (sic). A lot of college students I know use the micro to get to and from fixed route stops (ex. Northtown transit). Especially in suburbs, there are limited fixed route stops. For those who use public transport, micro has been a huge help. From where I live, you cannot walk to the northtown transit center in any feasible time. PLEASE do keep accepting college pass for micro"

"I already have metro pass. I really love micro,, it makes transit more accessable (sic) to all. I can't wait for it to come into my neighborhood. The few times I've used micro, it seems under utilized. I'm unlikely to use micro if my metro pass doesn't cover it. One of the great benefits of metro pass is it works everywhere--I don't need to worry if my pass covers a fare."

Some respondents expressed frustration with the proposed change while **indicating that Metro micro experiences a moderate degree of fare evasion**.

"I am a senior with a vision disability who lives in a section of Woodbury not serviced by Metro Micro. I walk 3/4 of a mile to be able to ride the Micro. I see MANY people!, Mainly youth, get on without paying. Enforce the fares instead of penalizing those who do pay. I really appreciate the service and being able to get from place to place on one fare. discontinuing the metro to metro transfer is another big unwelcome change, remind kids that the tide is NOT free., maybe then the rates won't need to quadruple."

"There are people riding these busses without paying to ride but for us that are paying, the cost is increasing for us.."

"Metro Micro Bus. There are kids riding these busses (sic) without being forced to pay for their bus fare. They are loud, they're rude and disrespectful on these busses (sic). These kids are always on these busses joy riding. I'm aware that it's called share rides. Adults are using this bus to get to work or to the store. As far as work adults are being late due to the fact the kids are taking over these busses (sic) again & not paying. Now this bus want to increase the bus fare. So only the adults are being forced to increase to pay for riding these busses (sic). If the bus fare increase why increase the fare to the point where we can't use a monthly bus card on these busses (sic)? Metro Mobility busses already does that so why are the Metro Micro company also trying to do the same thing? At least thae (sic) Metro Mobility bus go further then the Micro bus. It's unfair not to be able to use a monthly bus pass on this bus. What steps are y'all

taking to deal with these kids not paying fare & holding up these busses (sic)? The bus is a blessing to use but this system needs to deal with the kids joy riding. Also please allow adults to be able to use a monthly bus pass on these Metro Micro busses."

- Few respondents indicated that the **micro fare should be higher than the proposal.**

"wonder if metro micro should be more expensive since it is competing with uber etc and is so expensive to run."

"I think metro micro is going to be more expensive to operate as it expands than expected and put fixed route service at risk in a tough federal and state budget environment. I think it should cost more to ride metro micro."

- 6 comments expressing confusion or inquiring about the **rationale for the proposed changes**

"Why Micro not accept the Hennepin County "GoTo Access Pass" in fare changes? I do have a GoTo Limited Mobility Debit (Stored Value) for back-up."

"I am confused about the proposed Metro Micro changes."

"I think the proposed changes to express fares and youth pricing are great! The proposed changes to Metro Micro seem complicated and expensive for riders. Is Metro Micro still meeting riders' needs at that price?"

Reduced-fare customer changes

- Respondents selected "reduced-fare customer changes" as a comment topic 85 times
- 45 positive comments citing easier access to transit, anticipated ridership growth, affordable and accessible fares, budget predictability

"One fare for express buses : good idea, simplifies payment for riders Reduced fare customer changes : good idea, people need to ride during rush hours Youth pricing : good idea, extending to age 18 allows high school kids to ride cheaply I regularly ride express buses to downtown for work. We need affordable and convenient transit to attract more riders, combat rising costs and climate change."

"As a senior frequent metro transit user on a limited income, I appreciate the reduced fare for seniors at all times."

"I think simplifying the pricing system and extending the discounts to the groups listed is a huge step forward in keeping transit accessible and less intimidating/confusing."

"I support this simplification of fares and what it may bring for disadvantaged groups, such as youth, elderly, and low income individuals."

- 11 negative comments citing reduced-fare eligibility expansion, cross-county surcharge, $2 universal fare, free transit, retain peak and off-peak pricing, impact on agency revenue

"There should be a surcharge when crossing the county lines. It is very discouraging for residents that say live in St. Paul to pay the same fares to get downtown as those who live in Woodbury or any other city in a neighboring county. Especially when trying to use transit to get to events and the buses or whatever are either full or have no seating available by the time they arrive (or drive by because they are full) at closer in stations/stops. The fares should represent a fair price to get downtown or to a farthest point if traveling the opposite direction - draw some circles with a compass and identify some change points. By doing something as this I would fully support all day price simplification within locations."

"Please consider lowering the senior fare eligibility age to 60 or 62. Many adults in this age range are already retired or living on limited incomes, and this change would meaningfully improve affordability and access to essential transportation for medical appointments, groceries, and daily needs. Thank you for your consideration."

"Keep fares affordable $1 for ALL -non-rush hour $2 for ALL Rush Hour"

Youth Pricing

- Respondents selected "youth pricing" as a comment topic 84 times
- 51 positive comments citing age-appropriate pricing, improved access to public transit, fare simplification, anticipated ridership growth

"The Youth pricing really meets a need for me. My youth goes to MPS but is ineligible for the free school pass due to the large 2 mile "walk zone." My dream is that all MPS and SPPS students get the free rides school pass, but $1 fares are a big improvement."

"I think bumping up the youth age is going to be really great. If they are too young to vote for candidates that would affect transit, they should have a flat, reduced fare no matter what."

"I think that continuing to reduce fares for youth is a great idea, and ensures that our young adults have access to destinations in an affordable way."

"Flat pricing is easier to remember and extending access to older teens is a great idea to build a relationship with public transit."

- 30 negative comments citing free transit, fare elimination for youth under 18, fare evasion rates among youth, equity concerns

"Simplify Youth Pricing and make fares free for all children up to age 18 if possible."

"The youth should be up to 21 in my opinion because there are students who don't receive cards through their college."

"Youth fares should be ages 6-17 not 6-18. Extending reduced times is a good idea – its (sic) too difficult for seniors etc. to run to catch the bus in time."

"Youth don't need reduced price, are they even paying to begin with? I see a lot of people just don't pay at all. Go after them first."

"I disagree with changes for youth fare. My experience on bus and literail (sic), it is the older kids that cause the most problems. Why give them a reduced fare of $1? 18 yr olds are adults and should be able to pay full fare. If they are in school, maybe there's a special rate/card for them."

Other

- Respondents selected "Other" as comment topic 96 times
- 33 positive comments citing support and excitement for more ways to pay and fare capping, ease of use, ridership incentive

"Really excited for tap to pay Apple Pay!"

"I am VERY excited about the new fare collection system — long overdue!"

"I love that we're implementing streamlined fares for express and micro, introducing fare-capping, and are able to use credit or debit cards to pay! This is great."

"I am most in favor of expanding youth pricing, and incentivizing ridership by having daily/monthly fare caps"

- 10 negative comments citing the need for free fares for youth, affordability concerns, fare elimination

"Has there been a cost benefit done on eliminating fairs altogether? you eliminate the costs associated with enforcement and fair equipment. The second order effects of free buses would be a huge boon to working people and businesses. Public good shouldn't be expected to turn a profit."

"Its (sic) crazy to be talking about raising prices now, which will only affect the most impacted by inflation. You'd be better off trying to reduce the amount of fraud and waste in MN budgets."

Formal Letters

Metro Transit received letters from Washington and Anoka counties and the advocacy organization East Metro Strong opposing the proposed changes to Metro micro. These stakeholders expressed a concern that the Metro micro proposals would diminish the progress they have made to encourage public transit use among residents. They noted that the elimination of non-cash passes as forms of payment would prevent customers from accessing the Metro Transit system more broadly. Additionally, Washington County and East Metro Strong anticipate that the proposals would have a particularly negative effect on METRO Gold Line ridership.

In their letter, Washington County asked what financial support the Metropolitan Council would offer to help residents transition to the Transit Assistance Program (TAP), should the proposals be approved. They noted that county community services staff serve lower-income residents, and that the proposed changes would require additional resources to facilitate the transition to TAP. Anoka County proposed increasing the fare to $3 per micro trip and maintaining the reduced-fare eligibility for individuals with limited mobility, youth, seniors, and Medicare card holders. They noted that because the service is intended to

offer a more flexible transit option for short-distance trips, the proposed $4 fare for Metro micro raises concerns about affordability and access for customers, particularly those who have fewer public transit options available to them.

East Metro Strong suggested that Metro Transit wait to collect more data about the proportion of point-to-point trips on Metro micro before updating the service's fare policy.

Phone and Email Inquiries and Comments

Most inquiries sought clarification about the updates to pass prices, current pricing on express and local routes, and the impact to fares for seniors. Comments expressed opposition to the express bus fare standardization due to the $.50 increase in fares for off-peak customers. There were also comments that advocated maintaining discounted fares for select groups on Metro micro.

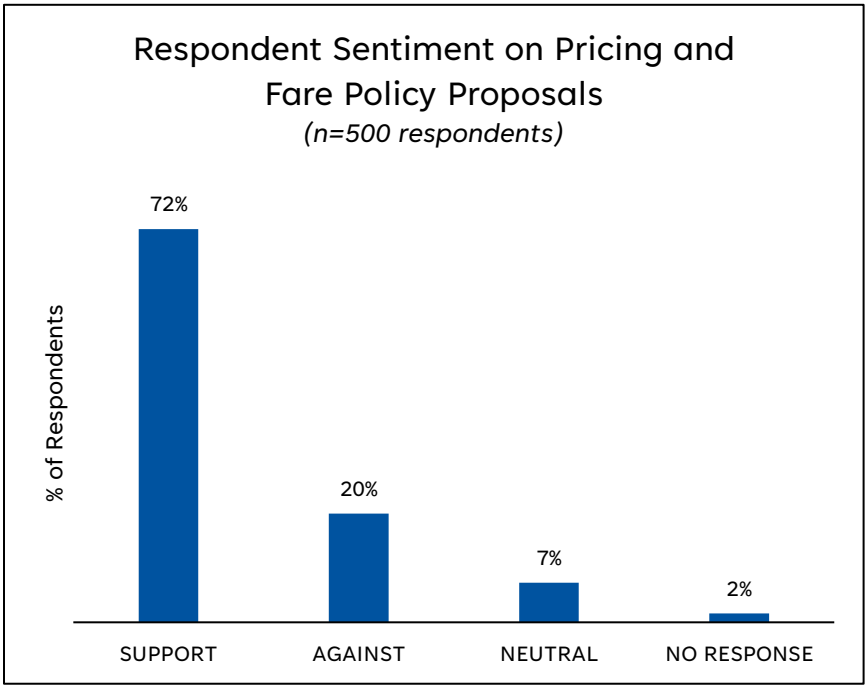
In-Person Engagement

Public input gathered through in-person outreach, including onboard engagement and pop-up events at transit stations and activity centers, aligns with the findings from the formal public comments. Most customers reacted positively or neutrally to the fare policy proposals, with many responding enthusiastically about the updates to the fare collection system. Customers also raised questions about changes to pass prices, the continued acceptance of cash and Go-To passes as payment methods, and the validity of pre-purchased tickets after implementation.

Metro micro customers had a mixed response to the proposed Metro micro fare changes. Some indicated that they understood the rationale for the fare increase and would continue to use the service if the proposal were adopted. Others noted they may seek alternative forms of transportation, such as bikeshare, scooter share, or local bus service. Some customers advocated for the continued availability of discounted fares for seniors (65+) and Limited Mobility customers, who have come to rely on this service and have limited alternative transit options that offer the same degree of flexibility.

Appendix A: Survey Results by Question

Question 1: Overall, how do you feel about the proposed fare updates?



Question 2: Please rank these updates from greatest to least impact on you. (Place the update that affects you the MOST at the top and the update that affects you the LEAST at the bottom.)

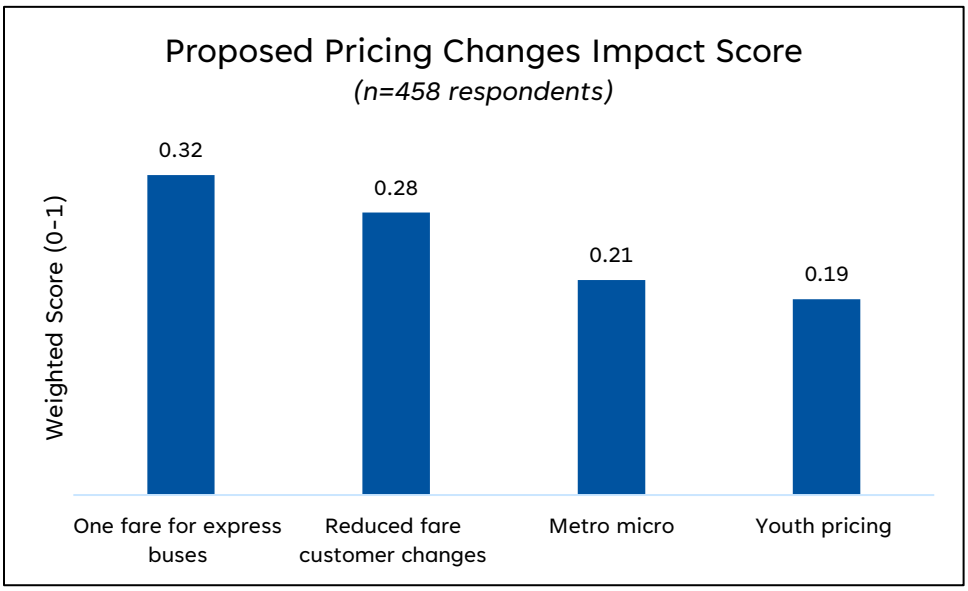


Figure 3. Proposed Pricing Changes Impact Score (n=458). The highest score indicates greatest perceived impact among respondents. Scores are weighted averages where Rank #1=40%, Rank #2= 30%, Rank #3=20%, and Rank #4= 10%.

Question 3: Please share your comments about any of these proposed updates here. (Open-ended question)

- 500 comment form submissions
- 106 respondents did not leave a comment
- 394 total comments
- 50 comments were excluded from analysis. Exclusions addressed fare evasion enforcement, included unrelated service requests, or reflected a misunderstanding of the proposals
- Response tags were determined based on **344 valid comments**
- Respondents could select more than one proposal when indicating which topic(s) their comments addressed. In total, 344 respondents made 510 total topic selections.
- Note: Sentiment breakdowns may not total to the number of topic selections per proposal. Respondents' comments did not always reflect the topic(s) they selected.

Comment Sentiment Breakdown by Topic (n=344 respondents, 510 total topic selections)

One fare for express buses: 112 selections

- Positive: 87 comments citing easier access to transit, budget predictability, trip flexibility, anticipated ridership growth
- Negative: 15 comments citing fare elimination, one standard fare, inequity, impact on agency revenue, affordability concerns, free transit
- Unclear: 5 comments asking for clarification about the Gold Line extension, pass pricing, transfers

Metro micro: 133 selections

- Positive: 15 comments citing fare simplification, ease of use, fair proposals
- Negative: 109 comments citing affordability concerns, reduced-fare eligibility, accessibility and connectivity, fare evasion
- Unclear: 6 comments expressing confusion about the changes or inquiring about rationale behind changes

Reduced-fare customer changes: 85 selections

- Positive: 45 comments citing easier access to transit, anticipated ridership growth, affordable and accessible fares, budget predictability
- Negative: 11 comments citing reduced-fare eligibility expansion, cross-county surcharge, $2 universal fare, free transit, retain peak and off-peak pricing, impact on agency revenue
- Unclear: N/A

Youth pricing: 84 selections

- Positive: 51 comments citing age-appropriate pricing, improved access to public transit, fare simplification, anticipated ridership growth
- Negative: 30 comments citing free transit, fare elimination for youth under 18, fare evasion rates among youth, youth fare evasion, equity concerns
- Unclear: N/A

Other: 96 selections

- Positive: 33 comments citing support and excitement for more ways to pay fare capping
- Negative: 10 comments citing the need for free fares for youth
- Unclear: N/A

Question 4: Which topic is your comment about? (Select all that apply)

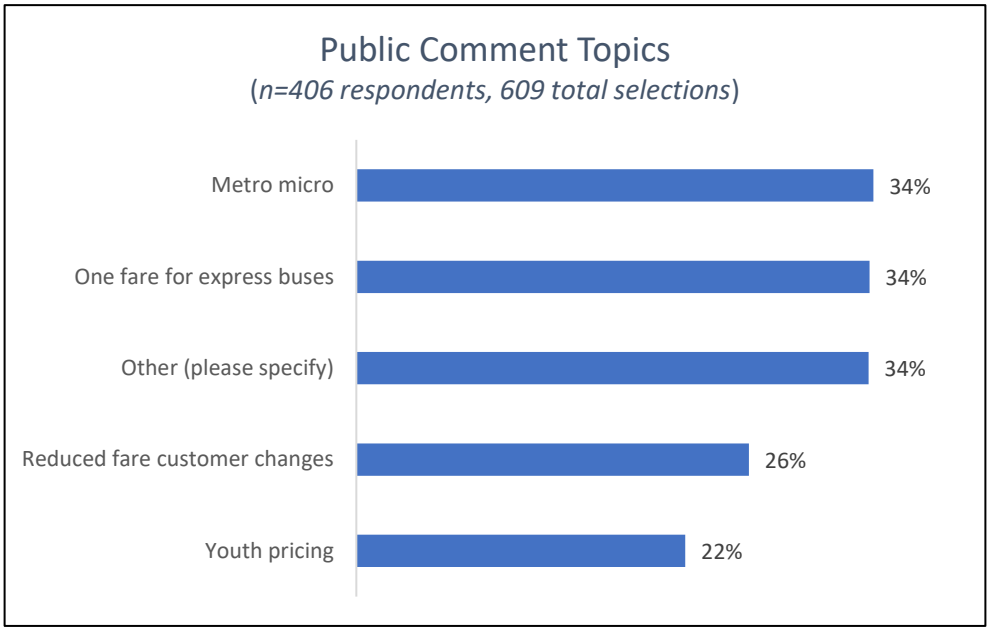
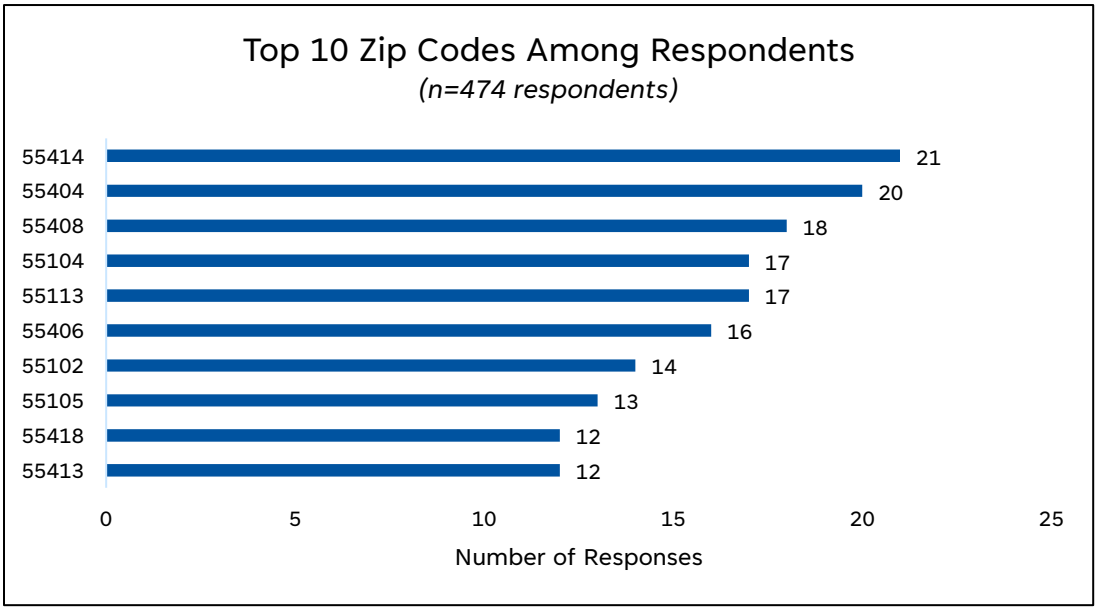


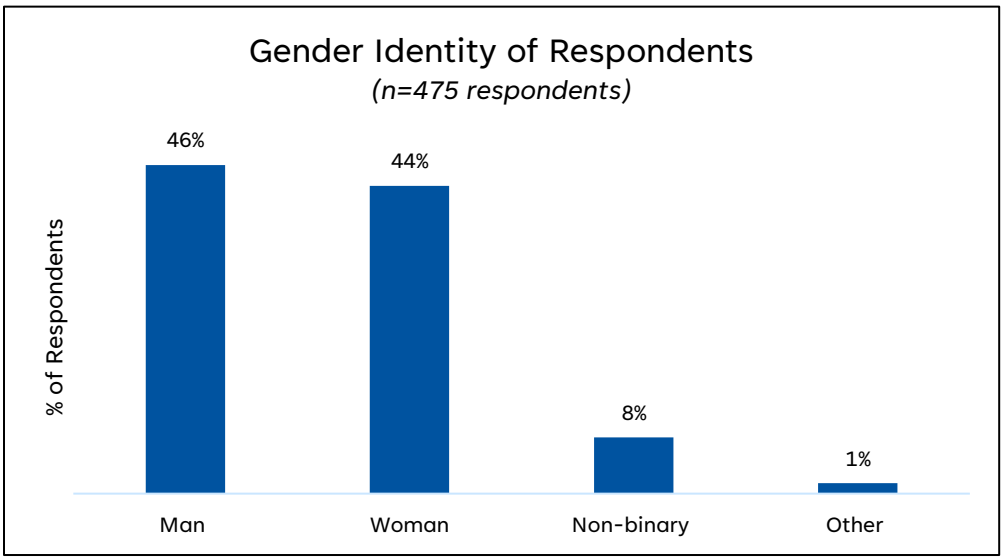
Figure 4. Percentage of respondents (n=406) selecting each proposal as a topic of their comment. Respondents could select multiple proposals, yielding 609 total selections, so percentages sum to more than 100%

Demographic Information:

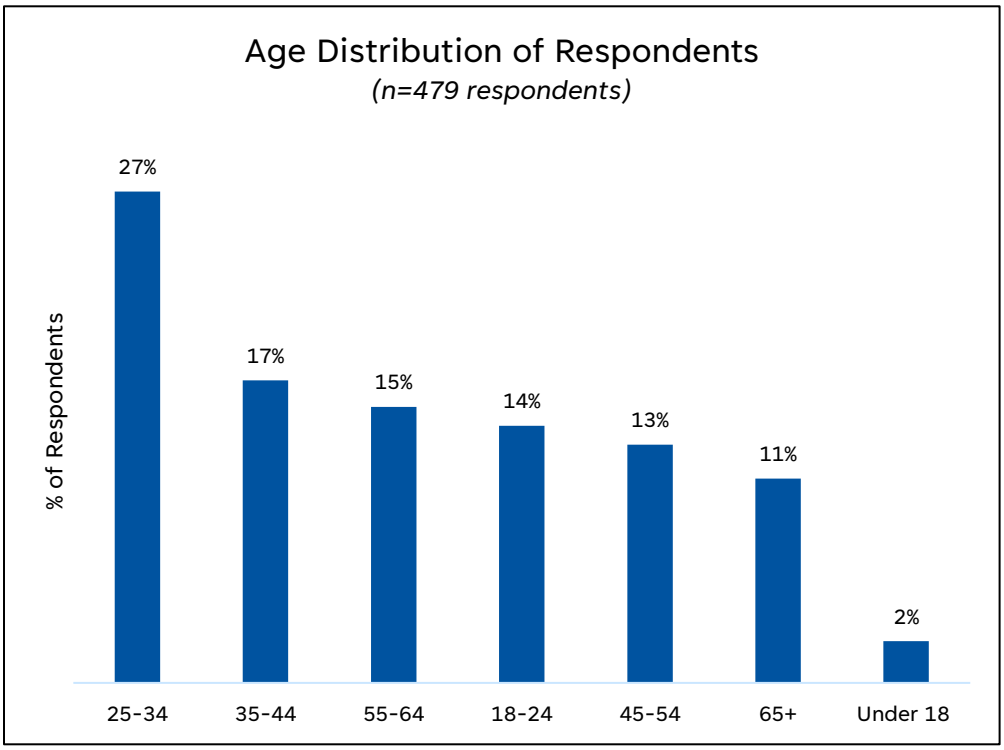
Zip code



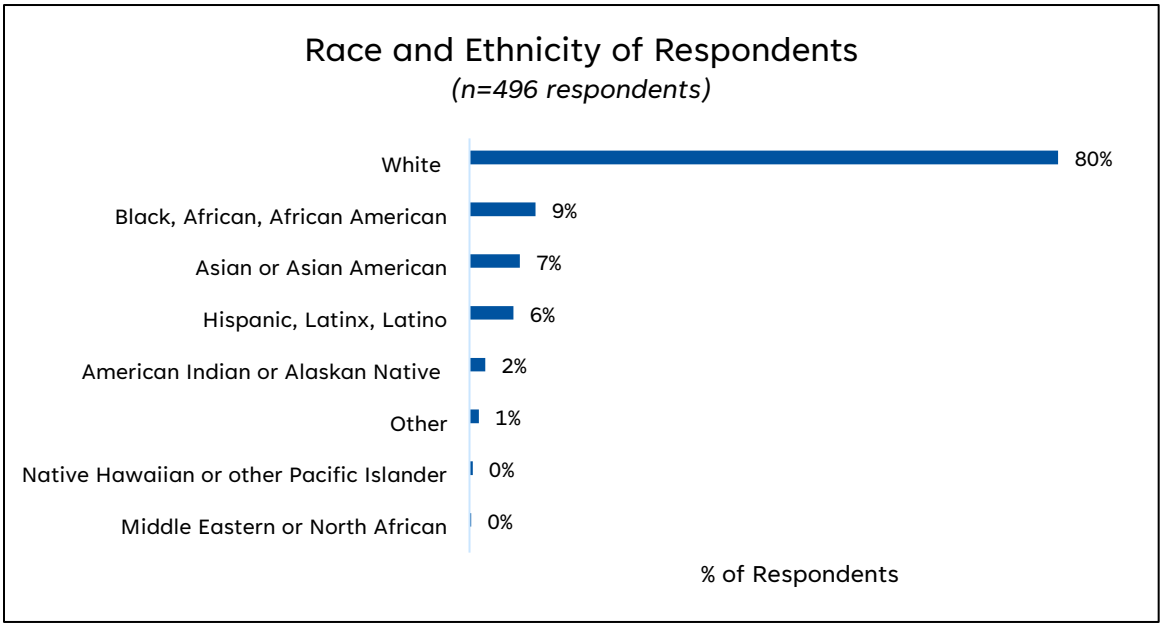
Gender


Gender Identity of Respondents
(n=475 respondents)
% of Respondents
46%
44%
8%
1%
Man
Woman
Non-binary
Other

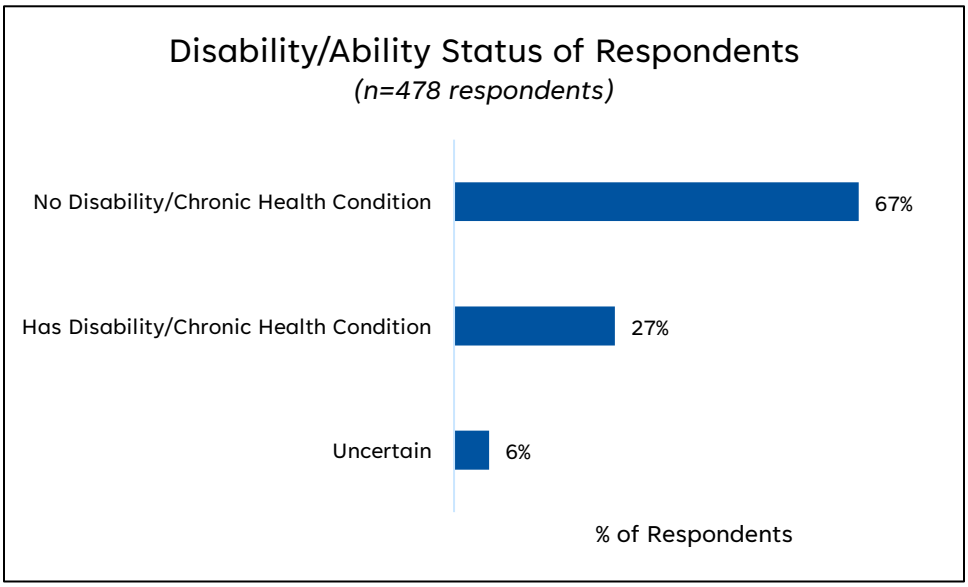
Age


Age Distribution of Respondents
(n=479 respondents)
% of Respondents
27%
17%
15%
14%
13%
11%
2%
25-34
35-44
55-64
18-24
45-54
65+
Under 18

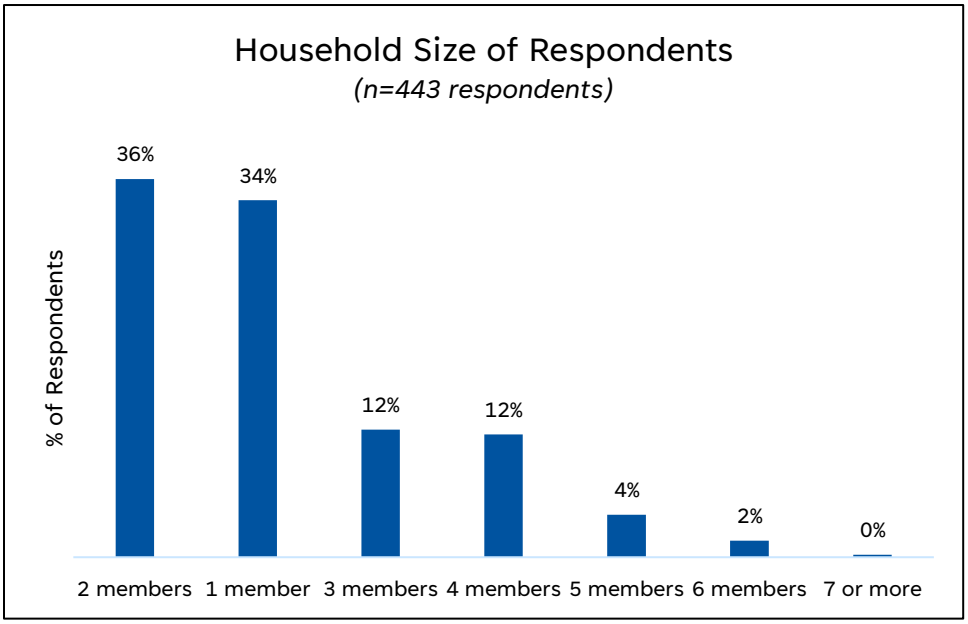
Race and Ethnicity



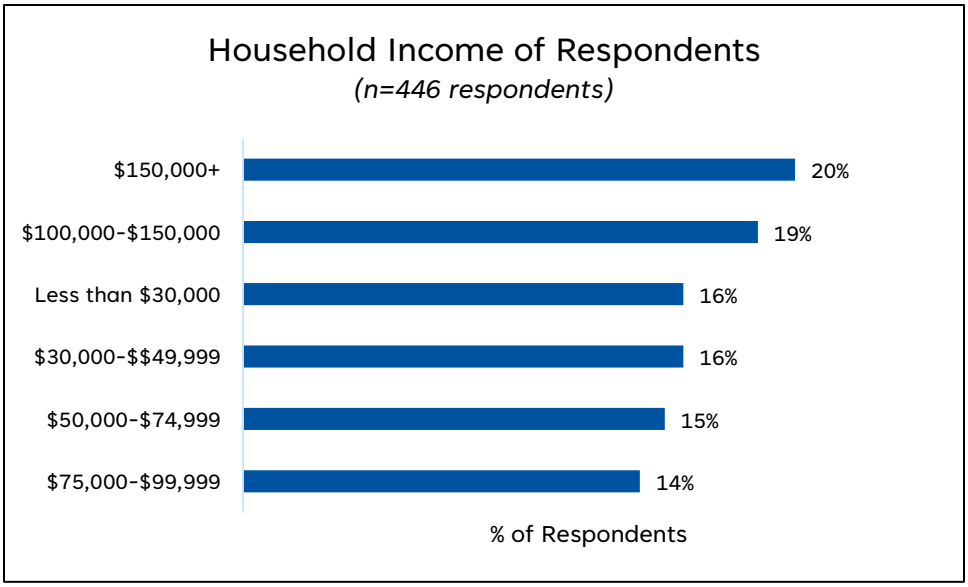
Disability



Household Size



Household Income



Appendix B: In-Person Engagement

Onboard Engagement – Metro micro zone

Outreach staff engaged customers across all five Metro micro zones (i.e., North Minneapolis, Roseville, Woodbury, Bloomington, and Blaine). Due to limited staff capacity and the on-demand nature of this service, outreach staff were unable to reach customers across all five buses within a zone simultaneously.

Outreach staff visited each zone at least once during a 2-hour period during the afternoon rush hour, apart from the North Minneapolis zone. Considering that the North Minneapolis zone represents the inaugural Metro micro zone, serves a historically underserved part of the city, and primarily serves students due to safety and security concerns associated with the D Line, outreach staff conducted **three rounds of onboard outreach** during the mid-morning and afternoon. Staff connected with customers about the proposed updates to Metro micro.

Outreach staff traveled on the same micro bus during the 2-hour period onboard and spoke with customers and the operator about the Metro micro fare proposals.

Date	**Location/Context**	**# of People**	**Notes and Themes**
4/21	North Minneapolis	5	The operator on this bus had been working as a Metro micro operator for approximately two months and had not heard about the proposed changes prior to this engagement. Staff observed that all riders onboard micro bus paid their fare. *Operator safety* - N. Minneapolis operators encounter problematic riders. - Operators request support from dispatch to explain rules regarding child safety onboard, but this often leads to customer frustration and "can lead them to get violent." - "It gets scary here." - Operator explained that riders have threatened his life. - Some school kids/ youth behave inappropriately on board and have assaulted operators Though the operator often expressed frustration about this zone's riders and customers, he also noted that "there's a lot of good people here too." *Fare evasion* - Operator noted that "70-80% of riders don't pay."

			- Operator inquired about the proposed transfer policy and how it would work if riders did not pay. - One customer suggested having security officers on board micro. This person has lived in North Minneapolis all of her life and is grateful for the service. She feels positive about the proposed micro fare policy and understands that micro is a curb-to-curb service. She noted, "uber would be more expensive." *New policy enforcement* Operator inquired about how the agency planned to enforce the new fare and transfer policy while ensuring operators' safety. *Travel needs and patterns* One customer was a student. They use the micro bus to travel to school and practice.
4/28	Roseville	6	This operator on this bus has four months of experience working in most or all Metro micro zones. He had not heard about the proposed changes prior to this engagement. *Fare evasion* - Operator noted that "80-90% of passengers in North Minneapolis don't pay." And a few customers in Woodbury and Blaine also don't pay for the service. - Operator has observed that youth and students comprise a significant proportion of fare evaders on this service. *Fare enforcement* Operator suggested that customers should be able to pay before they board the bus like customers on Metro Move and Metro Mobility are able to do. *Service quality* Operator explained that seniors must wait longer for this service because of fare evaders. *Travel needs and patterns* Operator has observed a broad variety of trips, including Target and the Sienna Green nursing home.

			Affordability concerns One customer noted that they were concerned about how customers with a disability and the elderly would be able to afford the $4 fare. They expressed that "many people depend on this [service]" and that the proposed changes "don't sound too good for [them]." *Ridership impact/Customer response* - One customer has been using Metro micro to travel to and from work and saves 1.5 hours on their commute as a result. They were disappointed that fares on Metro micro would not qualify for the fare capping benefit. If the fare increases to $4 they would continue to use micro, however, this price increase may encourage them to finally purchase a vehicle. - One customer, who is also a Metro Mobility customer and typically uses that service to travel to health appointments, noted that they felt fine about the micro proposal. She also expressed that she felt safer on Metro transit buses than in a private rideshare vehicle. Customer Questions - If the Go-To card readers are not working, how will customers receive fare capping benefit? - One customer noted that they do not "mind paying the premium but would like to know implementation date for budgeting reasons." Will the new Metro micro fare show up on the Metro Transit app?
4/30	Woodbury	5	- Observed three teens using the service and not paying, operator confirmed they are regular riders - One customer is also a Metro Mobility customer but usually takes fixed route to get around. Hopes the changes to micro don't go through.
5/1	North Minneapolis	6	The operator on this bus expressed a preference for working in the North Minneapolis zone. She has been a micro operator for longer than six months. She noted that she has received questions from customers about the proposed changes.

			Staff observed that youth often did not pay when they boarded the micro bus. One student on board was not aware that the service was not free. *Ridership impact/Customer response* - One customer noted that if the micro fare were to increase, they may choose to walk or rider their bike instead and use Metro micro less frequently. This person typically makes short trips to the store or to the local YMCA. - One customer uses micro to connect to other buses. If the micro fare were to increase, they noted that they would use a Lime scooter or search for alternatives. *Customer suggestions* One customer suggested that micro-to-micro transfers should be allowed. *Travel needs and patterns* - The operator has observed that mothers who use micro do not want to bring their children on the C or D Lines because of the drug use they have experienced on board. "[Riders] have to book a ride using an app or by calling, [one] can't be drunk and wander onto this bus." - The operator noted that many customers in the zone use passes to pay. *Service quality* One young customer noted that if the agency planned to increase the fare on Metro micro, then the wait time should be less than 30-minutes, noting, "make the experience worth the $4." This customer also acknowledged that there are many youth who could walk to their destination who request a ride instead. She continued "don't make [this service] $4 for the elderly. When the elderly use it, [it's because] they need it." *Fare enforcement* One customer noted that if customers had the ability to pay their fare on the Metro micro app, then it would be easier to enforce the fare.

5/4	Blaine	6	- The operator noted that the fare boxes on the Metro micro buses are frequently out of order. - A customer noted that if the Metro micro fare were to increase, then they would take Route 805 to complete their trip.
5/19	North Minneapolis	6	The operator on this bus only drives in the North Minneapolis zone once a week. She was not aware of the proposed changes prior to this engagement. *Fare evasion* - The operator noted that "the price increase won't affect those who don't pay" - The operator has observed that only "5% of customers pay." And that "[operators] become personal limo drivers." - The operator believes that customers think Metro micro is free because "we are not forcing them to pay." She also noted that the "go-to pay reader doesn't work." - Operator has observed that youth in Woodbury also do not pay the fare. *Service quality* The operator explained that the people who can pay the fare prefer to get an Uber because of the higher wait times in the zone. *Operator safety* Operator explained that because operators must help enforce conduct and rules about child safety onboard, they are put in an uncomfortable position. *Fare enforcement* The operator suggested that customers should be able to pay using the Metro micro app before boarding. *Travel needs and patterns* One customer is an elderly woman who works at Cub foods. She is a TAP customer and noted that there is a need for more buses in the zone, noting "it's disheartening when it's cold and there are no available cars." She typically uses this service to go to work.

In-person engagement – Pop-ups

Outreach and engagement staff connected with an estimated 314 residents, workers, and transit customers through 11 community pop-ups in downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul, including five popular transit stations in the metro area. Staff partnered with the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, Friends of Global Market, and Wells Fargo Place in St. Paul to promote the public comment period among customers and downtown workers.

This section includes summaries of customer interactions and frequent comments and questions regarding the fare policy proposals. It does not include a summary of every scheduled outreach event as some events did not yield comments or questions directly related to the proposals.

Date	**Location/Context**	**# of People**	**Notes and Themes**
4/21	Mall of America Transit Station	35	Most customers were neutral or positive about the proposed fare changes. Customer questions: - How will pass program pricing change as a result of the pricing adjustments? - Will the Go-To access pass still be available as a payment method? - How will the updated fare collection system assess how much a customer should pay?
4/29	Wells Fargo Place, St. Paul	30	Customer questions and comments: - Do these proposals include any changes to the Metro Mobility program? - One Metropass customer inquired about the customers' ability to purchase tickets for out-of-town visitors. In response to learning more about "more ways to pay" she suggested Metro Transit should continue to accept cash as she is concerned about "getting hacked." She said "cash is good, keep cash." - One customer suggested that seniors 65+ should be able to ride for free. - In response to the Metro micro proposal, one Metro Mobility customer noted that the proposal would still be less expensive than Uber. - One customer suggested implementing tap-to-pay and eliminating 50 cent fares downtown.

5/5	46th St. Station	38	Customer questions and comments: - One customer uses Metro micro and explained that he would use it less as a result of a fare increase. He may use a Lyft bike instead. - One customer inquired about planned changes to Metropass. While he does not use Metro micro, he would pay the increase in fare.
5/12	Wells Fargo Place, St. Paul	30	Customer questions and comments: Will I still be able to use the tickets I purchased in advance after the changes take effect? Many customers express interest in "more ways to pay"

Onboard engagement – Great Day in Transit (GDIT) and Key Express Routes

Throughout April and May, Metro Transit staff engaged customers on board express Routes 250, 94, 768, and 850 and on Green and Blue Line trains, and C, D, and E Line buses during April's Great Day in Transit (GDIT). This section reflects insights from conversations between customers and Metro Transit staff about the pricing and fare policy proposals.

Date	**Location/Context**	**# of People**	**Notes and Themes**
4/15	Great Day in Transit (Ambassador Feedback Survey – 23 respondents)	Approx. 2800 customers	Positive responses: - Customers are excited about the updates the fare collection system, specifically "more ways to pay" - General support for the pricing and fare policy proposals with some excitement about raising the youth age to 18. - Customers expressed the most support and excitement about the "more ways to pay" update. Ambassadors noted that there was less excitement about fare capping. - One ambassador noted that they encountered many customers who were interested in learning more about the fare updates. They distributed over 125 buckslips during their shift. Negative responses: - One ambassador noted that they heard a few positive opinions and concerns about the proposed changes. For example, while the youth pricing will

			help more students, some parents will still have to pay the full fare. Additionally, not every customer has a smart phone to take advantage of the fare capping benefit or participate in more ways to pay. Lastly, some riders raised concerns about fairness, access, and reliability upon learning about the Metro micro proposal, noting they felt the proposed Metro micro fare is too high. - An ambassador noted that although customers were willing to submit a comment form online, some felt that their comments would not have an impact on the final proposals and that the agency would proceed with the updates they initially proposed. Customer questions: - One ambassador received questions about the impact on the UPass and what steps customers needed to take before the changes took place. - One ambassador noted they received several questions about the future of the Metro Transit app with the transition to open payments. Suggestions: One ambassador suggested a more thorough explanation/ public education campaign about fare capping as they noticed some customers were confused about this topic.
4/20	Route 94 Express Bus	28	Customers onboard RT 94 responded neutrally about the proposed changes. One customer suggested free fares on Metro Transit. An elderly customer asked whether Medicare Card holders would still qualify for $1 reduced fares under the new fare policy proposals. Another customer asked for an explanation for the pricing adjustments.
4/23	Route 94 Express Bus	22	Staff received a question about the possibility of being able to pay for fare using the Transit app.