



Evaluation of Downtown Saint Paul Potential Routing Changes

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Outreach and Engagement
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Background

The City of Saint Paul plans to reconstruct Wabasha St between 6th St and Kellogg Blvd in 2022. In addition, Minnesota St between Kellogg Blvd and 11th St. will be reconstructed in 2023-2024 and Robert St between Kellogg Blvd and 11th St. will be reconstructed in 2025-2026. The projects include demolition and replacement of the pavement, sidewalks, and underground utilities along the corridor, as well as new bike lanes and potentially transit amenities.

When Wabasha St is closed, northbound Routes 62, 67 and 75 will move to Minnesota St, joining routes 3 and 16 already running on Minnesota St. Buses will not return to Wabasha Street when that project is done.

We do not know if the construction on Minnesota and Robert Street will require full closure/detour as well. Long-term, the city is interested in having all north-south routes on one street. It has already been determined that the Rush Line and G Line/Route 68 will be on Robert St., but customer input on the permanent routing for the other routes (including routes 3, 16, 62, 67, 75) is desired.

The two options that are under consideration for the permanent routing are Minnesota St. and Robert St. Even though Minnesota and Robert will undergo construction in the years to come, this move will be a permanent change that Metro Transit staff identified as a way to better serve downtown St. Paul. These streets are centralized in the downtown, have recent facility upgrades.

Purpose and Goal

The purpose of this public outreach is to seek input and feedback on what kind of impacts on our customers use of transit and what their preferences would be by moving routes to either Minnesota or Robert:

- Education about the future construction
- Inform route 62, 67, 75 riders that buses will move to Minnesota St next spring
- Understand how long-term proposed bus stop changes would affect our customers
 - Routes 62, 67, 75 move from Minnesota to Robert
 - Routes 3, 16 move from Minnesota to Robert
- Ask Route 3, 16, 62, 67, 75 riders whether they prefer Minnesota or Robert St permanently.

Methods of Engagement

The target audience is riders in downtown Saint Paul that use routes on Wabasha, Minnesota and Robert. The inability to hold or unwillingness of people to attend in person meetings due to COVID 19 remains a challenge. However, Metro Transit continues to use strategies to engage a diverse set of stakeholders.

- **General communication**
 - Website News and Events page,
 - Social media
 - Post Card to downtown residents within 2 blocks of Minnesota St. And Robert St, between the river and 94 and to all senior housing
- **Survey targeted to riders along Wabasha, Robert and Minnesota**

- Online Survey monkey promoted by
 - Email to Route 3, 16, 62, 67, 75 GoTo Cards, App users
 - News and Events page
 - Social media
 - Rider Alert signs at bus stops on Wabasha, Minnesota and Robert
- **Community organizations/groups**
 - Presentation to advisory committees and community organizations
 - September TAAC meeting
 - Downtown community organizations
 - Capitol River Council District 17
 - Integrate with the City of Saint Paul’s Downtown outreach and engagement work

Communications

DATE	ACTIVITY
9/7	Earned media to promote survey. Contacted Star Tribune, Pioneer Press, Park Bugle and Minnesota Daily offered to arrange interview
9/10	Article included in internal newsletter Insights
9/7	SurveyMonkey survey goes live in English, Somali, Hmong, and Spanish
9/7	News article on Metrotransit.org website News and Events page
9/7	emails Go-To card users and Metro Transit App users
9/7	Information packets with materials, maps, graphics and presentation to cities and counties so that they could updates to their elected officials and push information out via their newsletters, social media, and website.
9/7	Email/call about changes, survey, maps, articles for newsletters, offers to attend meeting and one pager sent to community organizations
9/8	Riders Club subscribers via GovDelivery
9/8	Riders Club e-newsletter with project update and link to the website, interactive map, and survey.
9/7	RIDER ALERTS put up at affected stops/shelters along the route with information about the changes and QR code to the survey. Removed after two weeks
9/8	Riders Club e-newsletter with project update and link to the website News and Events page and survey.
9/7	Text and email sent to Rider Alert Subscribers

Social Media

Social media was used to get word out about the survey. We also used it in a new way to prompt an online discussion. We posed a question and encouraged people to respond in the comment section. Many of the questions received good response.

POSTED	POST DESCRIPTION	FACEBOOK	TWITTER
9/7	Organic FB and Twitter posts encouraging people to complete the survey	10 comments 22 shares 24 likes	5 Quote Tweets 3 retweets 8 likes

In person outreach

Staff went out 4 days to survey customers at the following stops. If customer did not have time to take the survey, staff handed out the one-page info sheet with the URL and QR code and directed customers to the survey.

DATE	LOCATION	STAFF
9/8	Minnesota St. at 4 th St.	Nasser Mussa
9/8	4 th and Wabasha	Doug Cook
9/8	4 th and Minnesota	Scott Thompson
9/8	7 th and Minnesota	Steve Baisden
9/8	6 th and Wabasha	Yumi Nagaoka
9/8	7 th and Wabasha	Patrick Haney
9/9	7 th and Minnesota	Doug Cook
9/9	6 th and Wabasha	Steve Mahowald
9/9	4 th and Minnesota	Steve Baisden
9/9	7 th and Minnesota	Patrick Haney
9/15	6 th and Wabasha	Doug Cook
9/15	7 th and Wabasha	Yumi Nagaoka
9/15	4 th and Minnesota	Steve Baisden
9/16	6 th and Wabasha	Doug Cook
9/16	4 th and Minnesota	Andrea Kiepe
9/16	7 th and Minnesota	Steve Baisden
9/16	6 th and Wabasha	Cody Olson

Stakeholder Engagement

Project staff met with staff at cities and counties within the study area and engaged community organizations. Many of them helped to get the word out about the project and the survey.

DATE	ORGANIZATION
8/12	Postcards sent to print house then send to downtown residents
9/2	Doug Cook met with the Capitol River Council
9/7	Doug Cook emailed communications staff with information and request to help get the word out about the Downtown Saint Paul survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of St. Paul • Ramsey County • Move MN • Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce • Saint Paul Building Owners & Managers Association • Saint Paul Downtown Alliance
9/7	Doug Cook emailed 54 community organizations in the St. Paul area about the survey
9/8	In person outreach
9/9	In person outreach
9/15	In person outreach
9/16	In person outreach

Survey Respondents

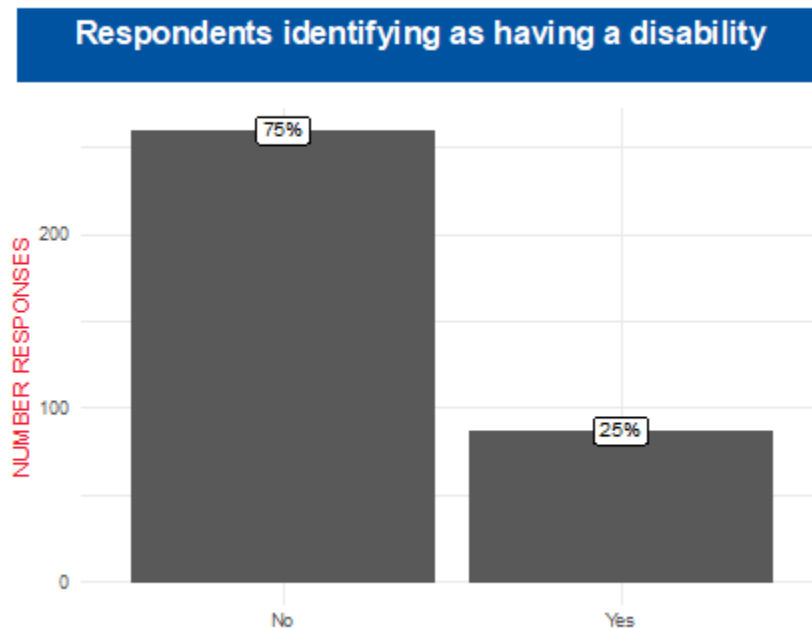
Over the course of two weeks, we received 400+ survey responses. BIPOC respondents accounted for 24.9 percent of the total surveys completed.

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENT
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.2%
Asian/Asian American	6.6%
Black/African American	12.1%
Hispanic/Latinx	2.9%
Multiple Identified	7.5%
Middle Eastern or North African	0.9%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
Other Race/Ethnicity	1.2%
Prefer not to answer	1.2%
White	66.3%

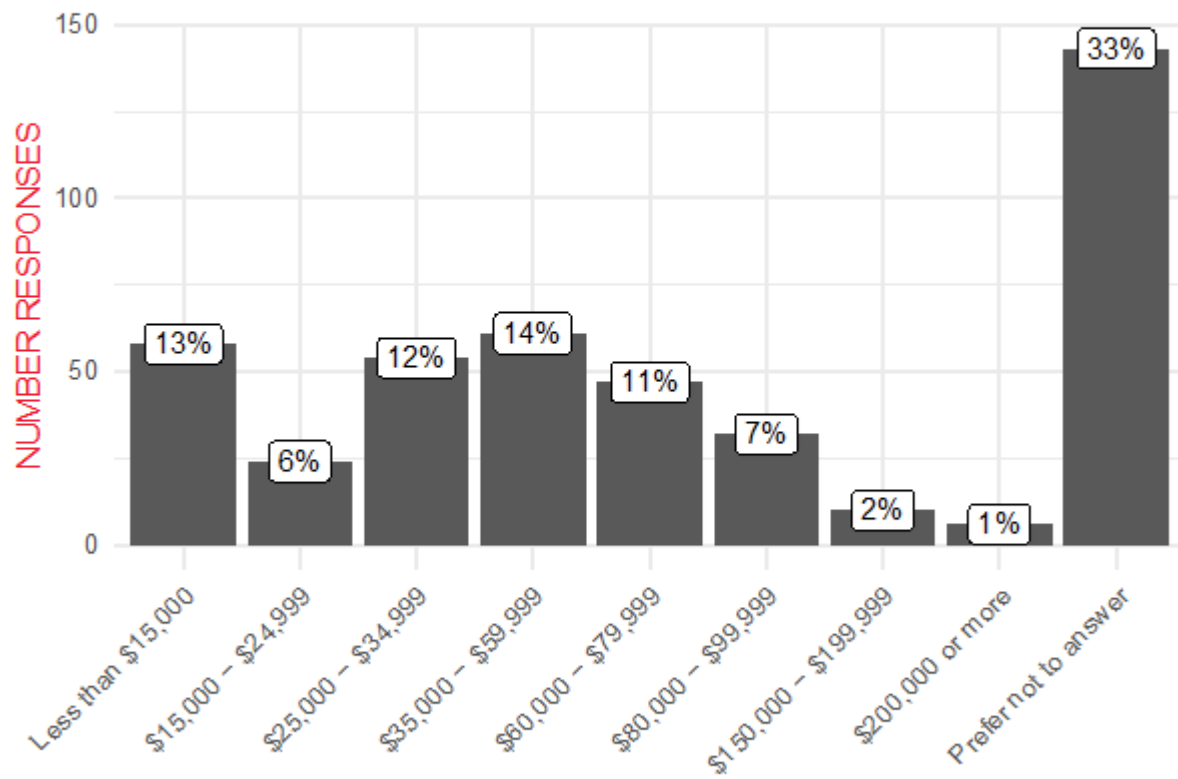
32.8 % of respondents where 55 yrs. or older

AGE	PERCENT
16-17	2 %
18-24	8.1 %
25-34	19 %
35-44	17.3 %
45-54	20.2 %
55-64	18.4 %
65-74	10.7 %
75-85	3.7 %
Over 85	0 %
Prefer not to answer	.6 %

25.1 % of respondents identified as having a disability



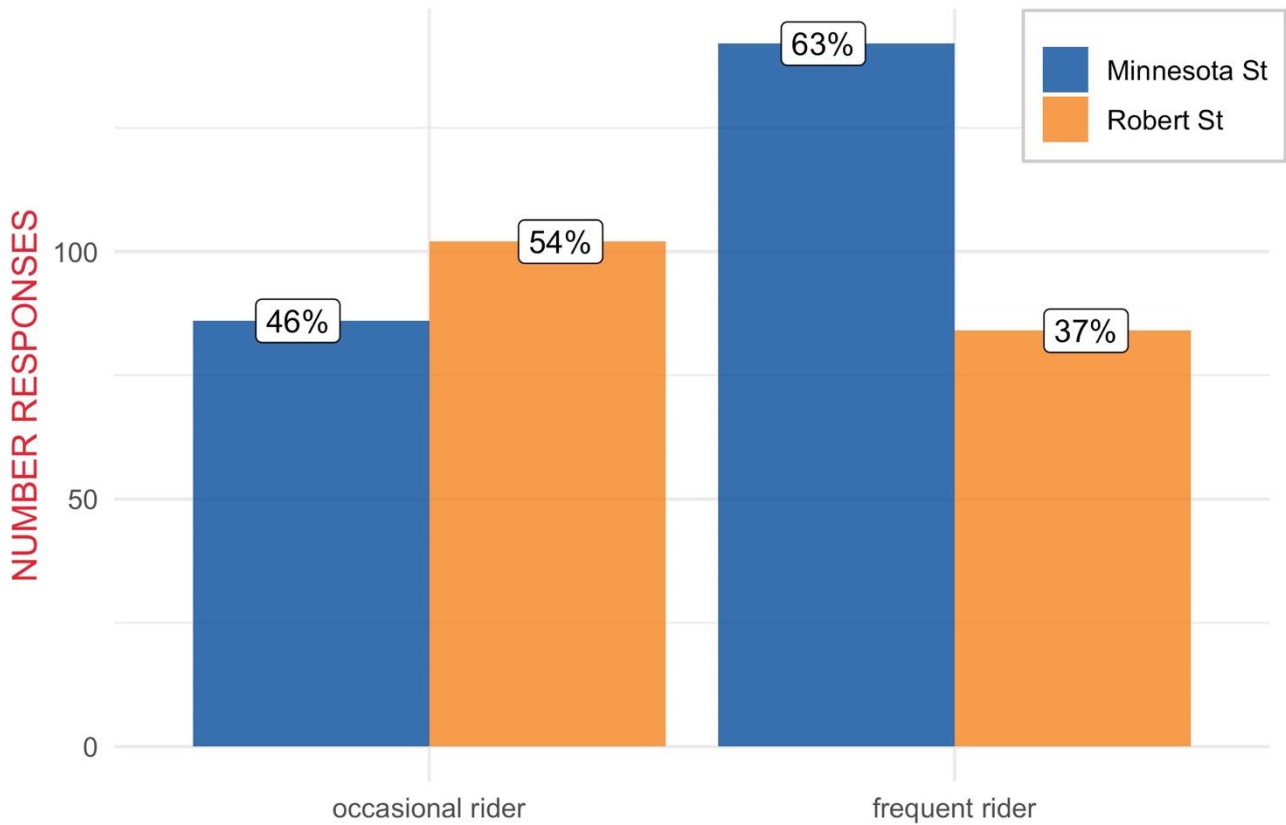
Respondents self-reported 2020 income



Corridor Preference

The overall preference among all respondents was narrowly for Minnesota St over Robert St, 53% to 47%. However, opinions differed significantly depending on whether the respondent was a regular rider (either before or during COVID-19). **Respondents that took or still take routes 3, 16, 62, 67, or 75 nearly every day, strongly preferred Minnesota 63% over Robert 37%.**

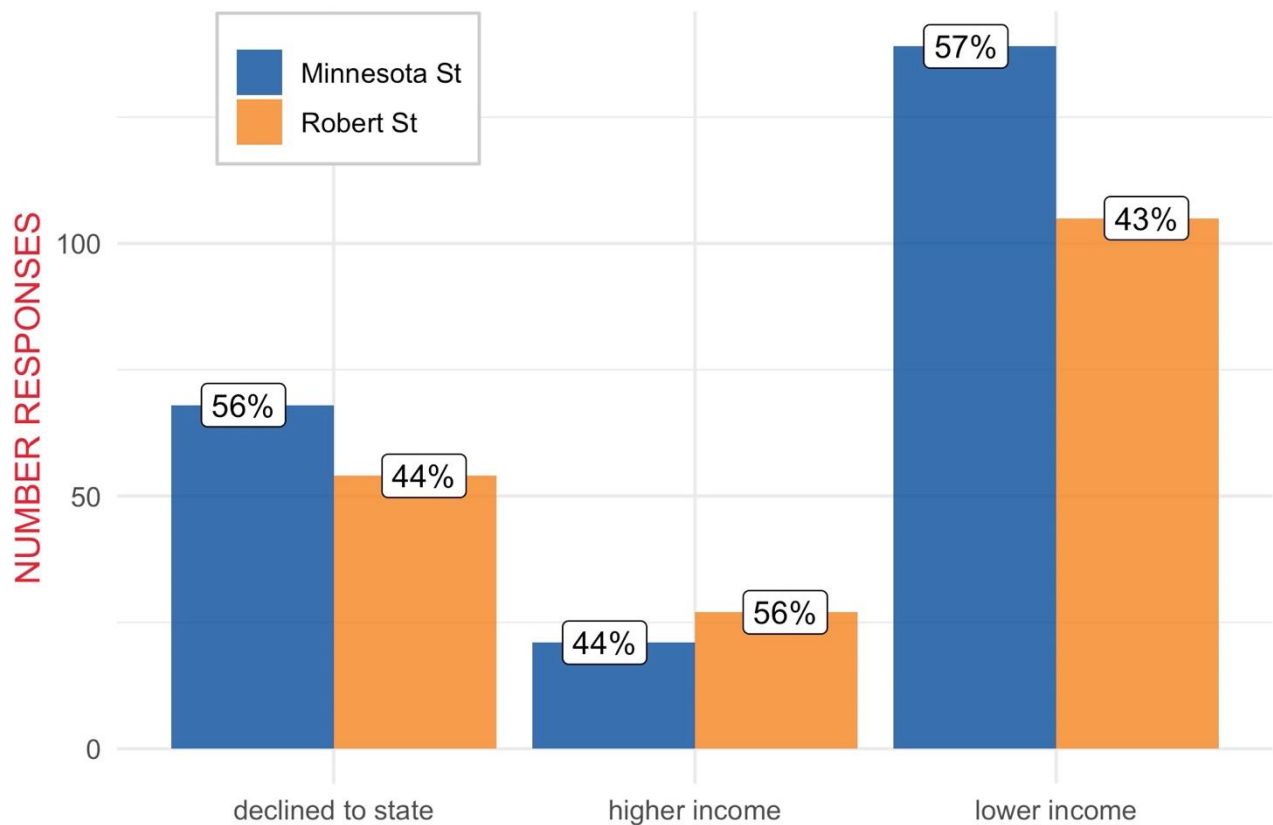
Corridor preference by rider type



We also examined preferences by self-reported household income, and by self-reported race/ethnicity. These two factors are crucial to Metro Transit’s commitment to equity in the service we provide. We also report

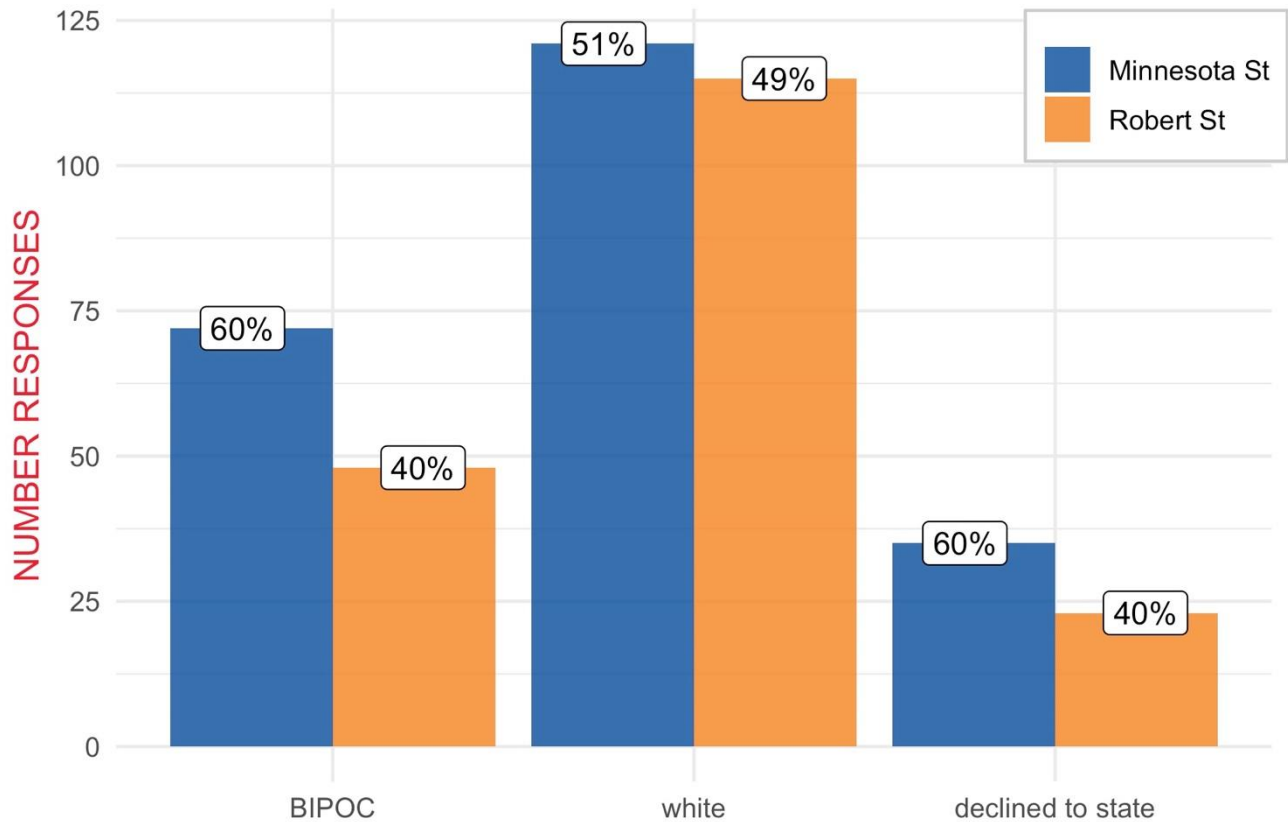
preferences from those who chose not to answer these identification questions in the survey. **For income, riders with lower than median income (around \$80,000 annual household) strongly preferred Minnesota St.**

Corridor preference by self-reported income



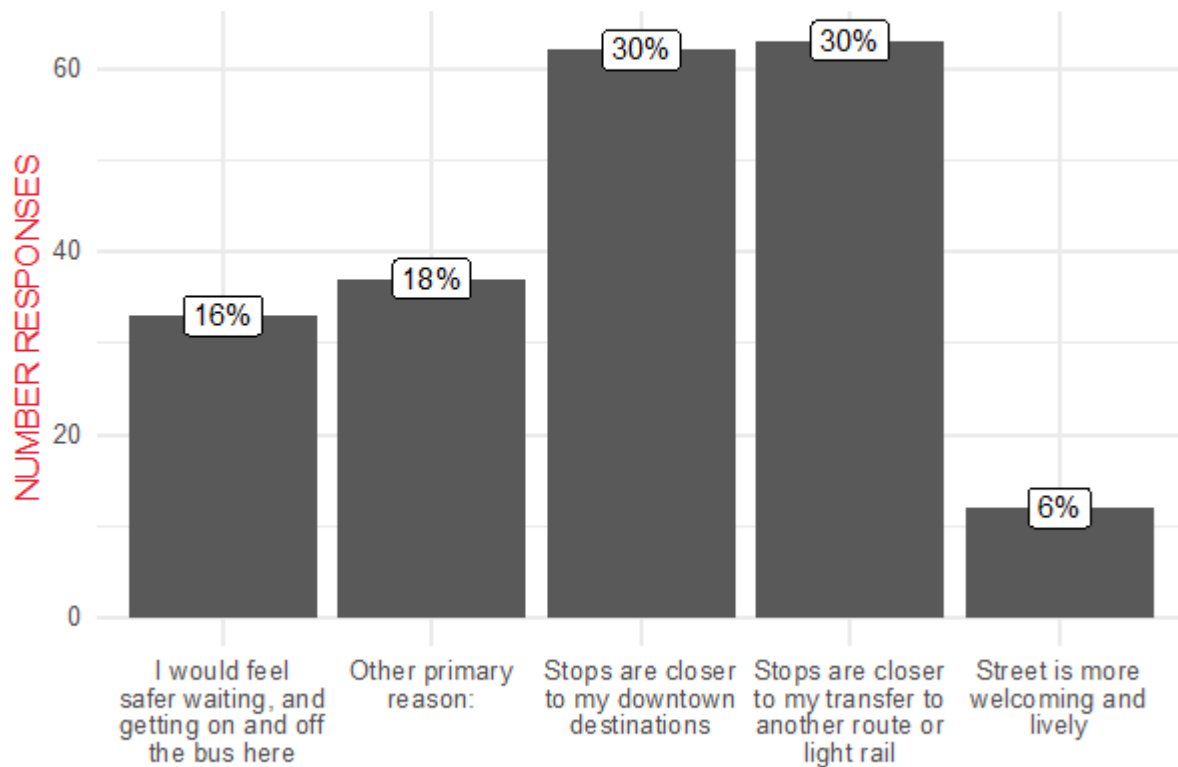
When analyzing self-identified race/ethnicity, we combined responses into BIPOC (for Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and white. Both groups prefer Minnesota St, but **BIPOC respondents strongly prefer Minnesota St.**

Corridor preference by self-reported race/ethnicity



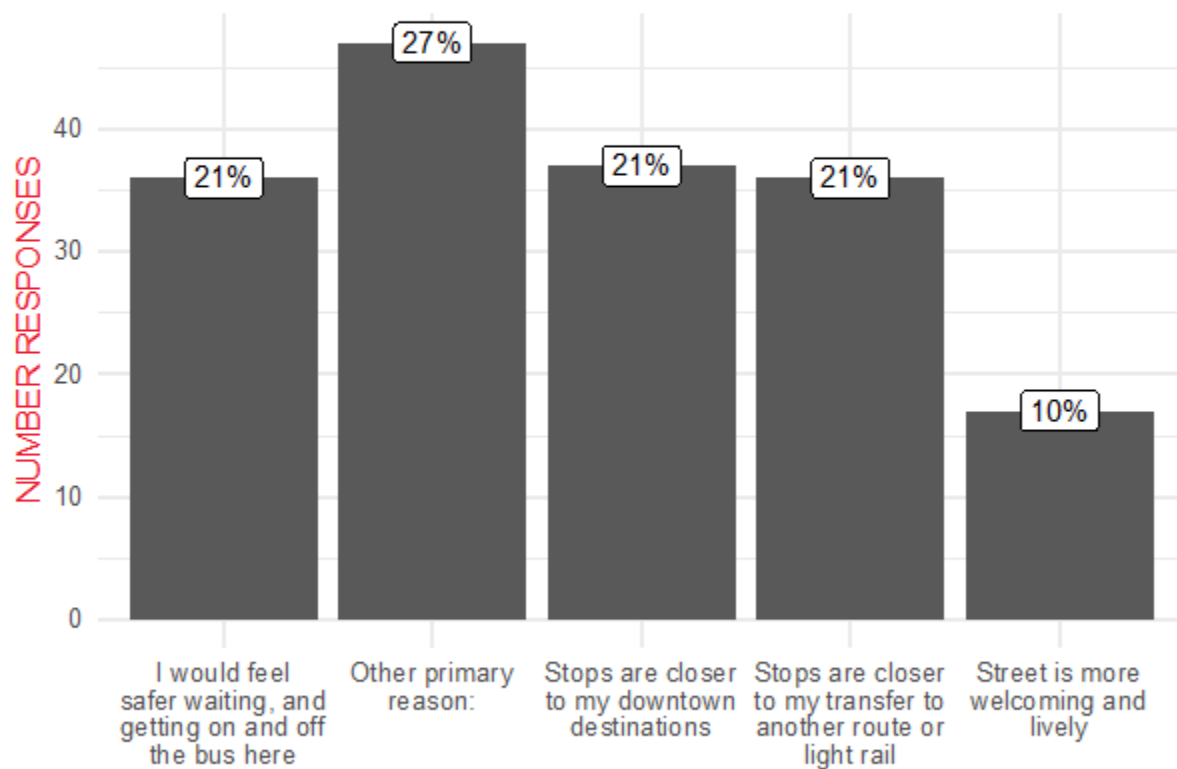
Riders who preferred Minnesota St did so because it brought them closer to their destinations and transfer points to other routes, especially the Green Line.

Reasons for preferring Minnesota St



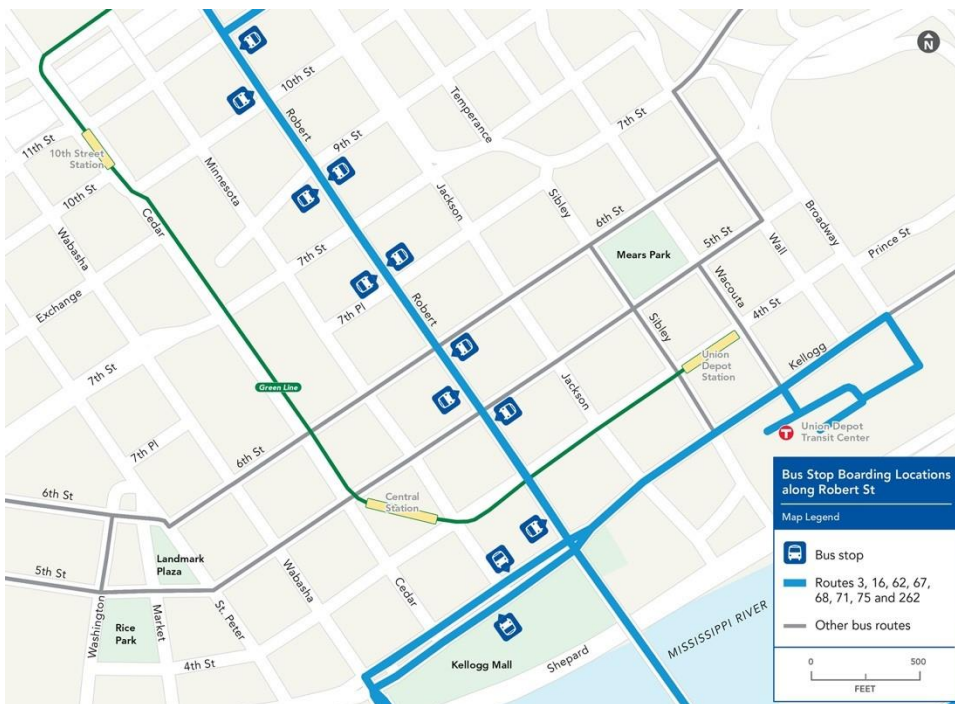
Interestingly, many respondents who preferred Robert St did not choose one of the listed justifications but supplied their own. A common theme was that the Robert St alignment was “simpler” and “easier” to navigate in terms of the buses being on one street, which was a benefit to those unfamiliar with taking transit or new riders.

Reasons for preferring Robert St





Option A: Routes 3,16,62,67,75 on Minnesota and 68,71 on Robert



Option B: Routes 3,16,62,67,75,68, 71 on Robert

Appendix A: Sample quotes from Survey Responses

- Looking forward to improved transit access, but please make sure to consider the St. Paul Bicycle Plan when making this decision. Minnesota St. is targeted for in-street separated bike lanes in the plan, and it might be difficult to do the best job possible for both projects if they're competing for limited right-of-way. Or, alternatively, remove cars from the street and give it back to buses and bikes, and create wider sidewalks for pedestrians. Thanks for asking.
- Consolidate bus service on Minnesota and thereby you will not overuse Robert Street where many good restaurants are trying to serve customers and provide outside seating and survive as businesses.
- Keep all the buses on Robert for easy connections
- In my mind, it is overall more important for the transit system to have bus stops nearer to more people to encourage more people to use the bus system.
- When deciding, please keep in mind older folks and winter walking.
- Robert street is way too far away from west-end destinations near Excel Energy Center. Keep in mind that daily commuters must deal with all kinds of weather between the bus stop and the workplace.
- Having the routes on Minnesota makes the most sense due to the concentration of routes on 5th and 6th streets along with the light rail system due to existing infrastructure. It would be more feasible to move the two Robert Street routes and consolidate them onto Minnesota and Cedar, than to move so many others to Robert St.
- I will be glad when the Wabasha Street route is no longer being used. It will probably be more difficult for mobility-impaired riders to get to the stores, theatres, and restaurants there, but Minnesota Street feels safer than Wabasha.
- I would like to have covered, lighted and heated bus stops. Also provide Metro Transit Police to patrol the stops.
- I am hoping for improved bus stop locations along Minnesota St. and a better security presence on those stops with shelters in place
- Moving 62 off of Wabasha will be very problematic for me. I strongly oppose moving it. We need more diversity of stop locations downtown, not less. Consolidating to just one, or even two north/south streets is foolish. MTA should push back against the pressure from the city.
- I don't like streets with many, many bus routes running on them. It's much harder to know when MY bus is coming, particularly since my eyes are not very good. The distance between Minnesota and Robert Streets isn't large (although I tend to prefer Minnesota for my own personal reasons), but I don't want to have to deal with half a dozen routes on one street. I deal with that in downtown Minneapolis sometimes, and it's too confusing.
- Would much prefer Minnesota St. In the case of the 67, Wabasha is so far removed from



the downtown core.

Appendix B: Bus Stops with Posted Rider Alert Signs

Site On	Site At	Location	City	Status
Wabasha	4 th St E	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Will be eliminated
Wabasha	6th St E	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Will be eliminated
Wabasha	7th PL W	Midblock NB	SAINT PAUL	Will be eliminated
Wabasha	7th St W	Far side NB	SAINT PAUL	Will be eliminated
Wabasha	10th St	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Will be eliminated
Wabasha	10 th St	Far side NB	SAINT PAUL	
Minnesota	4 th St	Near side	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Minnesota	7 th PL	Far side	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Minnesota	9 th St.	Near side	SAINT PAUL	Pending
10 th St.	Cedar St.	Near side	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Minnesota	Kellogg	Near side	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	Kellogg Blvd	Near side SB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	5 th St.	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	5 th St.	Near side SB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	6 th St.	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	7 th PL.	Far side NB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	7 th PL.	Near side SB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	9 th St.	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	9 th St.	Far side SB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	11 th St.	Near side NB	SAINT PAUL	Pending
Robert	10 th St.	Near side SB	SAINT PAUL	Pending

How We are Using what We Heard

This report will be shared with the public by posting online and presented to stakeholder groups. The data is being used by Metro Transit planners and the City of Saint Paul staff to evaluate the following:

- How the long-term proposed bus stop changes would affect our customers
- Decide between the two options that are under consideration for the permanent routing, Minnesota St. or Robert St.