CHAPTER SIX: TITLE VI ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL DISPARATE IMPACT

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued Circular 4702.1A in 2007, which defines Title VI and Environmental Justice compliance procedures for recipients of FTA-administered transit program funds. Specifically, the FTA requires recipients, including Metro Transit, to "evaluate significant system-wide service changes and proposed improvements at the planning and programming stages to determine whether those changes have a discriminatory impact."

Definitions

Minority: The FTA defines a minority person as one who self-identifies as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and/or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. In other words, minority population is defined as non-white persons, or those of Hispanic origin. Minority and non-minority persons in the Central Corridor Transit Service Study Area are mapped in **Figure 12.**

Low Income: The FTA defines a low-income individual as one whose household income is at or below the poverty guidelines set by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS poverty thresholds are based on household size and income, and are nearly identical to the guidelines used to define poverty in the 2010 U.S. Census and American Community Survey (ACS), which form the basis of this review. Low-income and non-low-income persons in the Central Corridor Transit Service Study Area are mapped in **Figure 13**.

Disparate Impact: The Federal Transit Administration defines "disparate impacts" as neutral policies or practices that have the effect of disproportionately excluding or adversely affecting members of a group protected under Title VI, and the recipient's policy or practice lacks a substantial legitimate justification. If the results of this analysis indicate a potential for disparate impacts, further investigation is performed. This investigation uses qualitative assessments and/or the "four-fifths rule" to determine whether disparate impacts exist. In this analysis, if the quantitative results indicate that the Recommended Plan service changes provide benefits to minority/low-income groups at a rate less than 80 percent of the benefits provided to non-minority/non-low-income groups, there could be evidence of disparate impacts. If disparate impacts are found using this threshold, mitigation measures should be identified.

Figure 12 Minority Population in Study Area

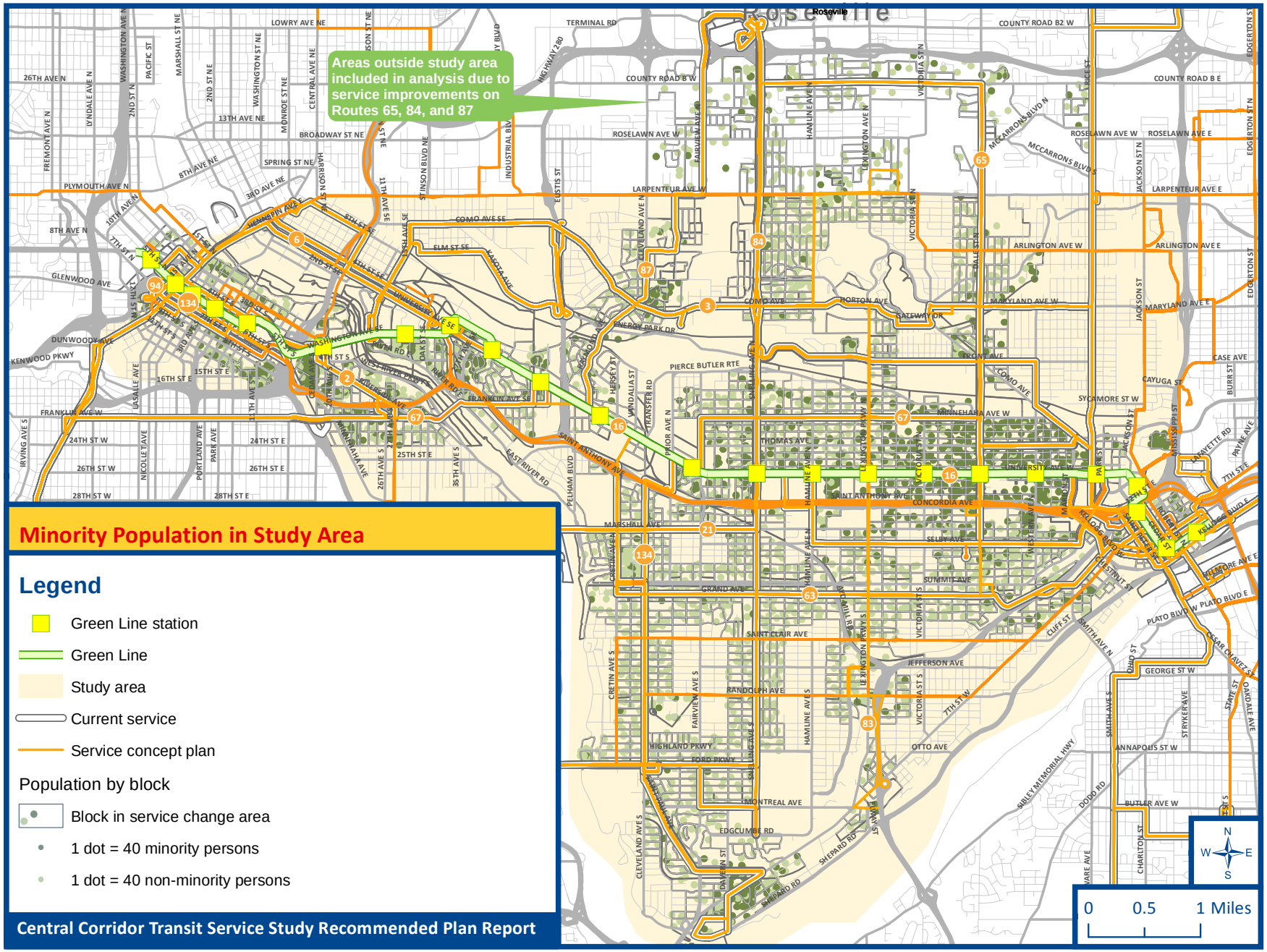
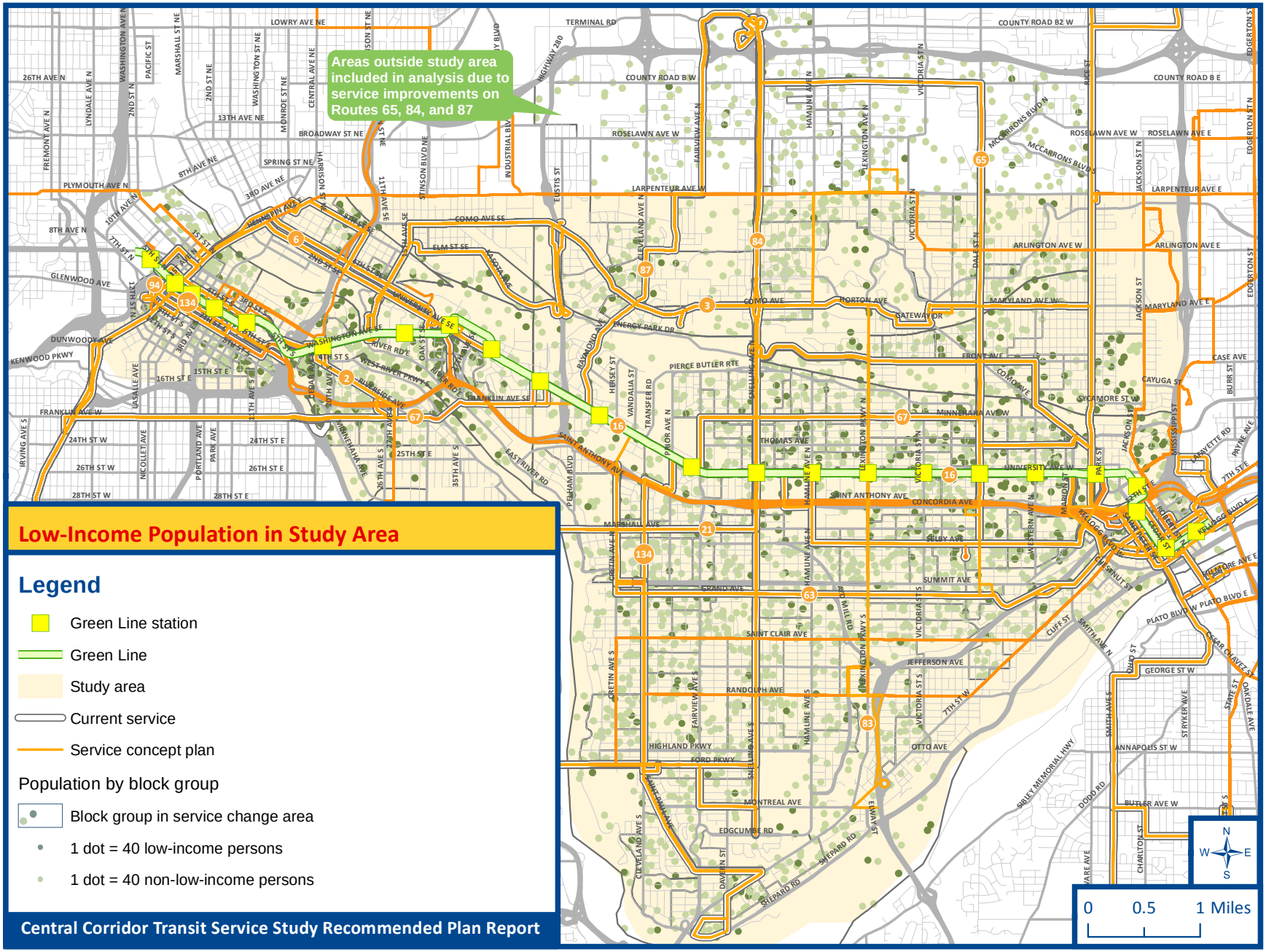


Figure 13 Low-Income Population in Study Area



Evaluation Methodology

Impacts of the proposed service changes on residents of the study area are determined based on the change in access to transit. Access to transit is measured as the number of bus trips that serve a given population. Since Census data is used for this analysis, service change impacts are determined by Census division. For minority populations, the Census "block" divisions are used. For low-income populations, the Census "block group" divisions are used. In the analysis, the number of transit trips serving each Census division is calculated for both the existing service and the proposed Recommended Plan. The change in service level is calculated for each census division by subtracting current total trips from future total trips, as shown:

Future trips available within census division (*modified/planned bus routes*)	**-**	**Current trips available within census division (*existing bus routes*)**	**=**	**Change in service by census division**

Under the population method, the average percent change in service is calculated by assigning weights to each division's individual percent change according to its population makeup. This is achieved by multiplying each division's population by the percent change in that division, summing the results for all analyzed areas, and dividing the sum by the total population of the analyzed census divisions, as shown:

$$\text{Avg } \%\Delta = \frac{\sum \text{Population}_i \times \text{Percent Change}_i}{\sum \text{Population}_i}$$

Evaluation of Impacts: Minority Population

The table below summarizes the percent change in trip count using the population-weighted method for the total population, minority population and non-minority population.

Change in Service Levels – Minority Analysis

	Total	Minority	Non-Minority
Population	167,957	58,110	109,847
Average Percent Change in Service	52.8%	51.6%	53.4%
Four-Fifths Threshold (4/5 x Non-Minority Rate of Change)			*42.7%*

On the whole, the minority population that is within the service change area experiences 99 percent of the benefits experienced by the non-minority population. While the percent change in service is very slightly lower for the minority population than the non-minority population, the minority rate of service increase is well within the four-fifths threshold of 40 percent. Therefore, no potential for disparate impact is identified.

Evaluation of Impacts: Low-Income Population

The table below summarizes the percent change in trip count using the population-weighted method for the total population, low-income population and non-low-income population.

Change in Service Levels – Low-Income Analysis

	Total	Low-Income	Non-Low-Income
Population	224,588	44,051	180,537
Average Percent Change in Service	45.2%	41.5%	46.1%
Four-Fifths Threshold (4/5 x Non-Low-Income Rate of Change)			*36.9%*

On the whole, low-income residents within the Study Area experience 86 percent of the benefits experienced by non-low-income people. While the percent change in service is lower for the low-income population than the non-low-income population, the low-income rate of service increase is well within the four-fifths threshold of 36.9 percent. Therefore, no potential for disparate impact is identified.

Under the guidance of FTA Circular 4702.1A, any service change whose benefits are distributed inequitably to Title VI-protected populations can be identified as having a disparate impact on that population and should be further reviewed for mitigating or alternative measures.

For the service changes proposed in this Recommended Plan, minority and low-income populations experience an average increase in service that is greater than 80 percent of the increase in service experienced by non-minority and non-low-income populations, respectively. Therefore, this review finds that the proposed Central Corridor Transit Plan service changes do not disproportionately and adversely affect minority or low-income populations.

Potential Adverse Effects

Notwithstanding the above finding of no disparate or discriminatory impact, there are a few areas that experience a decrease in service as a result of the Recommended Plan. These areas are represented in yellow on **Figures 14 and 15**. Specific cases and the reasons for the net loss in service are described below.

- **Downtown St. Paul/Capitol Complex/Marion Street.** The area just north of downtown St. Paul near the State Capitol experiences a loss in service due to reduction in Route 16 frequency and the discontinuation of Route 94B trips that serve the Capitol area and Marion Street directly today. Under the Concept Plan, these trips can be made with direct LRT service from the METRO Green Line. Under the Recommended Plan, this area will also have Route 16 bus service on Marion Street as an option.

- **Downtown Minneapolis.** Areas in downtown Minneapolis experience a reduction in the number of transit trips due to:
    - Discontinuation of Route 16 service to downtown
    - Discontinuation of Route 144 service to downtown
    - Reduction in Route 94 service
    - Reduction in Route 134 service

  In the Recommended Plan, each of these services is replaced with METRO Green Line service.

- **University of Minnesota.** Areas surrounding the University of Minnesota campus experience a reduction in transit trips due to the replacement of Route 16 and Route 50 service with METRO Green Line west of Oak Street/Washington Avenue.

- **Selby Avenue.** Areas surrounding Selby Avenue just west of downtown St. Paul see a reduction in transit trips due to the restructuring of Route 65 in this area. Route 65 frequency is increased and service along Selby Avenue to downtown St. Paul is discontinued. Route 21 service remains in the corridor.

- **Highland Park near St. Paul Avenue/Montreal Avenue.** A small area of the Highland Park neighborhood in St. Paul experiences a reduction in transit trips due to:
    - Restructuring of Route 84 branches. Currently, the “D” and “H” branches of Route 84 are served on two different route patterns. In the Recommended Plan, these branches are combined so that they are served by the same pattern. While this results in a net decrease in number of trips, the effective service level remains the same.
    - Discontinuation of Route 144.

While these changes are a reduction in the number of transit trips available, since there is alternate service available for most current riders within a quarter mile, these are not considered adverse impacts.

Figure 14 Service Change by Block for Minority Population Analysis

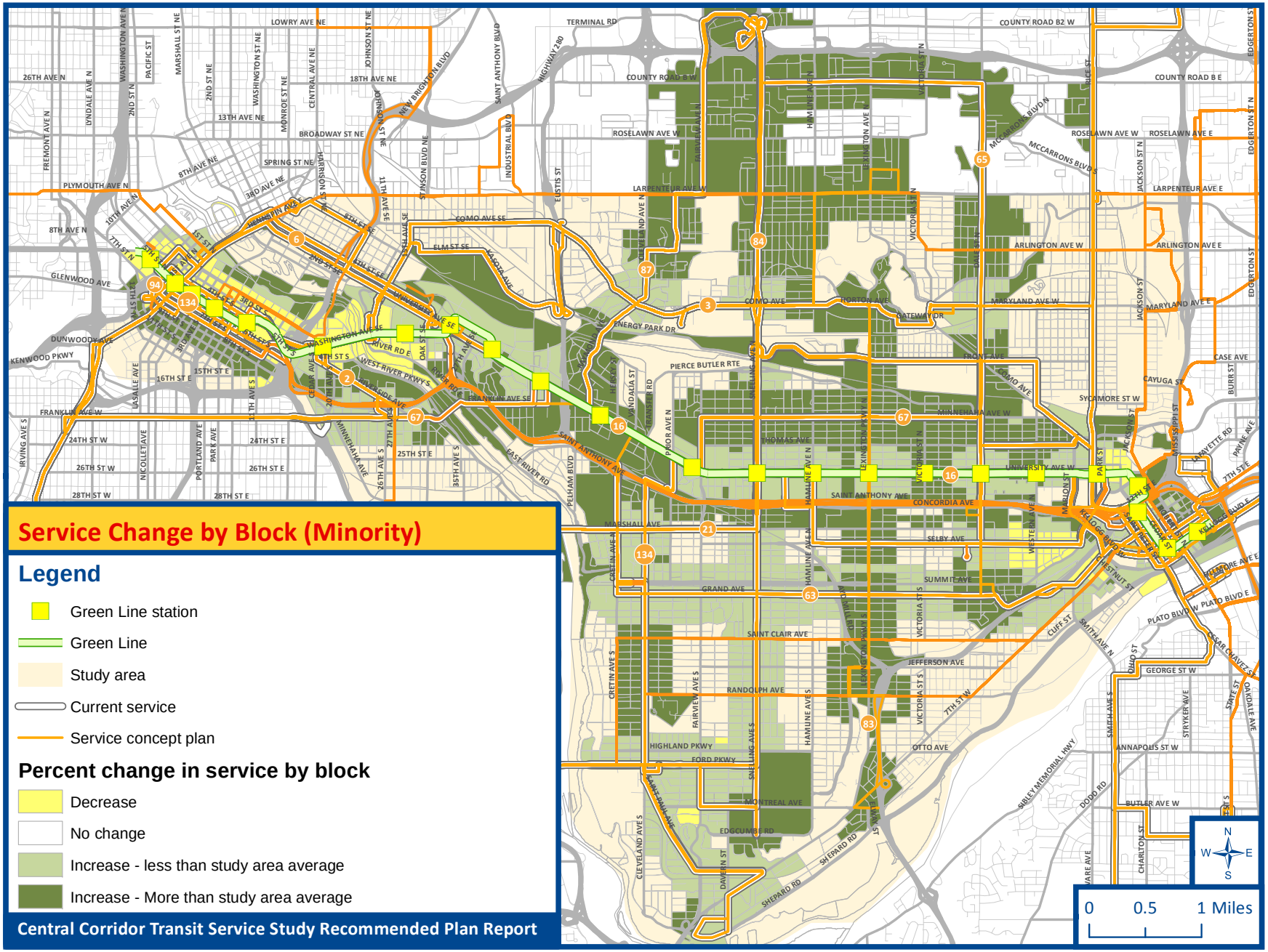


Figure 15 Service Change by Block Group for Low-Income Population Analysis

