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TriMet's Transportation Investment Plan (TIP): Ensuring Transit Equity with the US Census

Introduction

In 2002, TriMet adopted a strategic direction known as the Transportation Investment Plan (TIP). The primary objective of the TIP is to establish a Total Transit System by taking a more focused and comprehensive approach to planning and development. A Total Transit System not only consists of bus routes and light rail, it includes customer services and amenities.

Transit Equity, which is an important component of the TIP framework, allocates services and amenities to low-income and minority communities. The US Census data ensures that TriMet's distribution of services and amenities are fair and equitable throughout the system.

Poster Objectives

1. *What census data were used?*

The following 2000 SF3 Census Data by Block Group were utilized for Transit Equity analysis:

- P.1 Total Population
- P.7 Hispanic or Latino by Race
- P.8 Age
- P.19 Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5+ Years
- P.30 Means of Transportation to Work for Workers 16+ Years
- P.31 Travel Time to Work for Workers 16+ Years
- P.35 Private Vehicle Occupancy for Workers 16+ Years
- P.37 Education
- P.41 Sex by Age by Disabilities Status by Employment Status for the Civil Noninstitutionalized Population 5+ years
- P.44 Tenure by Vehicles Available
- P.53 Medium Household Income in 1999
- P.87 Poverty

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2. *How was the data used?*

The US Census data facilitated the establishment of target areas throughout the Portland Metro area that require transit assistance. Spatial analysis is performed at the block group level to define transit equity distribution. For example, to determine areas where low-floor buses are needed you must examine where the elderly and disabled populations are spatially distributed. This data is then analyzed to find the average and percent within a given location.

3. *What value was achieved?*

The analysis was used to prioritize the determining criteria for the following in the TIP:

- Transit service to low-income neighborhoods and communities of color
- Placement of bus stops and shelters
- Allocation of new low-floor buses
- Service for non-English speaking populations

4. *What problems or issues were encountered with the data?*

The Decennial Census is the only comprehensive data released at the block and block group level for transportation analysis. The ten-year break in data can cause problems for analysis in high growing areas. The American Community Survey is a good idea in concept but lacks data at the level needed for transportation analysis.

Conclusion

The US Census provides the data necessary to define areas that require transit assistance and to ensure transit equity throughout the Total Transit System.

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