

Advancing Transportation Equity – Key Communities

This document summarizes key communities within District 2 for potential inclusion in the Advancing Transportation Equity project. **The goal of this document is to provide a starting point for interviewee identification.** The populations were identified based on the current demographics and trends in the district and include populations with known inequities (e.g. Environmental Justice, Title VI).

The table summarizes which key populations are identified, some of the known considerations based off of existing literature and data, a proposed level of priority for District 2, and potential partners for initial interviews. Additional background and analysis about each community is included in the following paragraphs.

It is important to recognize that these groups are not discrete. The transportation concerns often overlap and a potential interviewee may represent multiple groups. Additionally, an individual may belong to more than one of the communities identified and may experience overlapping inequities.

Table 1 – Summary of identified key communities in District 2.

Key Population	Known considerations	Est. Level of priority for D2
Tribal Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Participation in decision-making processes (Tribal Government officials) • Cultural differences • Access to jobs, services and other opportunities • Access to health care services • Social isolation • Affordability • Accessibility to transportation (bus stop locations) • Communication of schedules (internet, phone hot line, hard copies at strategic locations and mail boxes) 	
Racial and Ethnic Minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to jobs, services and other opportunities • Language barriers • Cultural differences • Participation in decision-making processes • Travel time 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety 	
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Access to health care services 	
Elderly and Aging in Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to health care services • Social isolation • Affordability • Quality of transit service • Safety 	
Low-Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • Access to jobs, services and other opportunities • Quality of transit service • Lack of multimodal options 	
Zero-Vehicle Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to jobs and other opportunities • Reliant on non-driving modes • Safety • Social isolation 	
Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility constraints • Quality of transit service • Barriers to participating in decision making • Language/ communication barriers (deaf, blind and hard of hearing population) • Mental Illness (addiction/illness and have lost licenses to drive) 	
Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to health care and other veteran-based services • Affordability and mobility constraints 	
Disadvantaged Business Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for vendor deals and contracts with MnDOT • Language/ communication barriers 	

Overview of District 2

Located in Northwest Minnesota, MnDOT’s District 2 has a service areas that includes 3 Tribal Governments 11 counties, including Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Beltrami, Polk, Pennington, Red Lake, Clearwater, Norman and Hubbard. In terms of population it has the lowest population of the MnDOT districts – 3 percent of the state’s total population. In terms of land use District 2 is the second largest district.

Tribal Governments

Past treatment of American Indians contributed to the social and economic inequities American Indians experience today. How these inequities impact the transportation experience for American Indians living in District 2 should be part of the Advancing Transportation Equity project. Some known concerns include pedestrian safety on or near reservations as well as involvement in transportation planning and decision-making processes, specifically related to the projects that would impact tribal members both on and off the reservation.

In order to effectively engage, understand and improve transportation equity for people of American Indian ancestry, it is important to know the political and geographical jurisdictions of reservations and recognize the sovereignty of tribal governments. There are three reservations within District 2 – Red Lake and parts of White Earth and Leech Lake.

In total, people of American Indian descent represent the largest racial minority group in District 2, at 7 percent. In regards to total number of American Indian individuals, District 2 is second to the Metro District with 11,887 in District 2 and 17,090 in Metro District. Within District 2, Beltrami County has the largest American Indian population at 21 percent of the county's total population (overall, people of color and American Indians make up 27 percent in Beltrami County).

Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Racially biased policies and practices of the past have led to present-day inequities for people of color living in Minnesota. This includes inequities at a broad scale – employment, wealth, education – and also specific to transportation – access, safety, participation in decision-making. As such, it is important to include the concerns of these groups in the Advancing Transportation Equity project.

People of color make up 14 percent of District 2's population. As mentioned previously, people of American Indian descent are the largest racial minority group in District 2, making up 7 percent of the total population. Hispanics of any race make up 3 percent followed by Black at 1 percent. Even though people of color are not heavily represented in District 2, learning and understanding potential transportation inequities influenced by race is necessary for advancing transportation equity.

Language differences is another key consideration related to racial and ethnic minorities. 2,000 people in District 2 speak English less than very well. After English, Spanish is the most common language spoken. Polk County has the highest Hispanic or Latino population at 6 percent of the county's total population. Language barriers can make transportation harder for people who speak English less than very well and should be consider as part of this project.

Women and Girls

Women of all ages make up 50 percent of District 2's population. This is similar to the overall state. A common transportation concern for women is safety, such as walking to and waiting for public transit, especially at night. Additional, access to health care services can be an issue for women and girls, particularly in rural areas. Both safety and access to health care should be considered as part of this project.

Elderly and Aging in Place

Between 2010 and 2016, District 2 experienced an increase in its 65 and older demographic. This is true for all of Minnesota. However, District 2 has a slightly higher percentage of 65 and older residents – 20 percent compared to Minnesota’s 15 percent.

People living in the same house a year ago was 4 percent higher in District 2 (90%) than it was for the state (86%). This possibly indicates that some elderly residents are choosing to age in their homes. If this scenario is true, then concerns surrounding access to services and care providers should be taken into consideration as part of this project.

Low-Income (Persons Living in Poverty)

The primary transportation equity concern for low-income households is the ability to access jobs, services and other opportunities. At 13 percent, District 2 has the second highest percentage among all MnDOT districts of people living at or below the poverty line. Racial differences in poverty rates between white residents and people of color are very noticeable, especially pertaining to American Indian and Black populations. In Beltrami County, 37 percent of the American Indian population lives at or below the poverty line compared to 13 percent of its White population. Similarly, 34 percent of Blacks and African Americans live at or below the poverty line in Beltrami County.

Zero-Vehicle Households

Six percent of households in District 2 do not have a vehicle. Equity concerns with zero-vehicle households are related to access to jobs and other opportunities. The availability and frequency of transit service, bicycling and walking options, are important when considering the transportation needs of zero-vehicle households. For the Advancing Transportation Equity project it will be important to investigate if there are overlaps between race, income and gender with zero-vehicle households.

Disability

District 2 has the second highest disability rate in the state. As such, special focus on the transportation experience should be considered for the following disabilities: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care or independent living difficulties. Better understanding the various nuanced experiences will help to ensure the individuals experiencing these disabilities are able to travel with the same ease and access as those who do not have a disability.

Veterans

Veterans often experience disabilities at a higher rate than the population as a whole. Every county in District 2 has a higher percentage of veterans compared to the overall state (6%). In addition to mobility concerns, access to veteran’s services in District 2 should also be considered as part of this project.

Mobility concerns specific to veterans who are of American Indian ancestry will also be important for this study. American Indians have one of the highest records of military enrollment (25 percent) when compared to the general population (3 percent). Less than 50 percent of eligible American Indian veterans' access their earned benefits.

Disadvantaged Businesses Enterprises

Women, minority and small business enterprises who operate in District 2 and have transportation related services may endure equity issues related to procurement and vendor contracts. According to the Pioneer Press minority-owned companies in Minnesota ["were awarded work totaling \\$14.3 million, less than 1 percent of the state's total spending of about \\$2 billion...between July 2014 and July 2015."](#) Identifying and engaging DBEs with transportation services in District 2 will help identify opportunities to more equitably distribute the benefits from transportation spending in Minnesota.

Other Communities for Consideration

Information is not readily available for all demographic groups. In some cases data is not regularly collected and reported or in other cases individuals may not feel comfortable providing information. However, just because data is limited does not mean communities do not experience transportation inequities. The list below identifies other potential populations for consideration in the Advancing Transportation Equity project:

- Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual
- Minority Religious Groups
- Immigrants, Refugees and Migrants
- People released from Incarceration
- Amish

List of Potential Interviewees

The following is a list of groups, agencies and organizations that work with/represent many of the key communities identified previously in this document. In some instances, they work with a specific community. In other instances, they work with many key communities. This list is meant to serve as an initial brainstorm of potential interviewees for the Advancing Transportation Equity project. Some may not be selected or may end up not being applicable. More work is needed to develop the final list for interview.

- Tribal governments
 - Red Lake
 - Leech Lake
- Indian Health Service - Bemidji area office
- Tribal transit agencies
 - Leech Lake
 - White Earth
- Transit providers – consider directors, drivers and dispatch
 - Paul Bunyan

- Tri-Valley
 - East Grand Forks
 - Fosston
- Area agencies on aging
- Senior care facilities
- Local AARP
- County health and human services
- Community action agencies
- Centers for Independent Living
- Lutheran Social Services Senior Corps
- Veterans service providers
- VA outpatient clinics
- Cultural organizations for racial and ethnic minorities
- Center for Small Towns (works with a number of things that challenge small towns, including independent living and assistance for newcomers)
- U of M Crookston
- Non-profit service organizations
 - United Way
 - Salvation Army
 - Goodwill
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Northwest MN Foundation
- Homeless shelters
- Bigfork Valley Community Foundation (raising money for a non-motorized trail to connect businesses)
- Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO
- Northwest Regional Development Commission
- Headwaters Regional Development Commission
- NW MN DBE/ Procurement Technical Assistance Center's Northern Minnesota Area Manager
- Workforce- DEED's NW MN Business Development Rep and local/ county/ city workforce reps
- McKnight Rural Initiative Foundation? (if present)