

# TriMet's Transit Equity Index

## Overview

TriMet's Department of Diversity & Transit Equity has developed a Transit Equity Index to aid in planning transit service investments. The Index evaluates potential investments across ten measures pertaining to a route's service area:

1. **Minority population**
2. **Low-income population**
3. **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population**
4. **Senior population**
5. **Youth population**
6. **People with disabilities**
7. **Limited vehicle access households**
8. **Low and medium wage jobs**
9. **Affordable housing units**
10. **Key retail/human/social services**

## FAQ

### Why develop a Transit Equity Index?

As a recipient of funds from the federal government, TriMet is required to ensure that major service decisions do not discriminate on the basis of race or income. However, TriMet aims to take this a step further by proactively incorporating equity into planning and rolling out service.

### How was the Index created?

A combination of research, collaboration with the TriMet Transit Equity Advisory Committee, internal staff review/testing, and leadership guidance have resulted in the current version of the Index.

### How is the Index being used?

TriMet's Policy & Planning Department has been working to develop long-term visions for future transit in the Portland Metropolitan region. These visions include proposals to increase service on current bus routes and create new routes where coverage is lacking. The Transit Equity Index is being used to help prioritize which service increases should be rolled out first as resources become available.

### Are there other examples of tools like this?

Applying an equity index to transit service is a relatively new concept, but there are some models. A [project](#) led by the University of Illinois-Chicago in 2009 developed an equity index to help determine where to extend the region's famed 'L' system, and in 2013 Northeastern University created an ["eTOD" rating system](#) to identify areas with high potential to encourage transit ridership, equity, and accessibility.

### What's next?

TriMet staff continue to test and refine the tool in order to ensure that the data is as reliable and accurate as possible, and to make the tool more user-friendly. Staff plan to consult with some external stakeholders (e.g., the Population Research Center at Portland State University) for technical assistance as appropriate.