##Richmond Mass Transit and Segregation

*Synopsis of Report*

#Brief background

In 2018, Richmond, Virginia enacted The Great Richmond Reroute, which was the first major update to the city’s mass transit lines in decades. Its goal was to increase route efficiency and speed up travel throughout the entire city. However, many Richmond citizens feel that the rerouting of the bus lines was done unfairly and benefited the rich, primarily white, suburbs to the detriment of the poor, mostly minority, neighborhoods. In early 2019, less than a year after the changes were implemented, a civil rights complaint was filed against the Greater Richmond Transit Company, or GRTC, which was the company behind the Great Richmond Reroute, alleging that that changes are disproportionately harming the primarily minority communities in Richmond. In this paper, we will be exploring how the changes to the transit system have affected the segregation levels in Richmond, not by a spatial measurement but by the time it takes to go from one community to the other communities in the area.

#More thorough background starting with lawsuit, then going into VCU CURA and GRTC Studies

Richmond is a starkly divided city, both in terms of income and race. The primarily upper class whites live in the west and north west parts of the city, while the east and southern parts are primarily low income minorities. According to the United States Census Bureau, just under 45% of the city’s approximately two hundred thousand citizens are white, while just over 48% are black.

Since the city is so divided, any major overhaul to the city’s transit system was going to come under scrutiny, as it would be relatively easy to shift resources away from the eastern half of the transit system over towards the more prosperous western parts of Richmond. In February, public activist Omari Al-Qadaffi filed a civil rights complaint against the GRTC. He stated that “‘public resources are being disinvested from a black neighborhood and being reappropriated to a whiter neighborhood’” (Noe-Payne). Racial tensions recently have been heightened in Richmond, and the fact that this civil rights complaint was filed only a month after the Democrat Governor Ralph Northam black face scandal serves to further illustrate the problems facing Richmond. While Al-Qadaffi officially filed the civil rights complaint after the GRTC cut service from a primarily black neighborhood and are redirecting that funds to the predominately white western end of Richmond (Noe-Payne), he is not the first to notice the problem. Sarin Adhikari of Virginia Commonwealth’s Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) also noticed the potential problems and published a report back in December 2018. CURA’s study wanted to look at how the change in bus routes affected lower income communities in two ways: how accessible the new bus stations were compared to the previous lines and how they affected the ease of commuting to work using mass transit (Adhikari 1). The study found that “jobs accessibility across the region improved, but transit accessibility for low-income households remained the same or decreased” (Adhikari 7). Al-Qadaffi cited this study as proof that his concerns regarding the unequal outcomes of the Great Richmond Reroute. On the other hand, the GRTC had conducted their own study before the changes took place that found that there was no disparate outcomes to minorities from the changes. Their study focused on whether or not the change in routes disproportionately hurt minorities more than it hurt whites and whether or not in benefited whites disproportionately more than it benefited minorities. In both cases the GRTC found that the routes were not unequal, though Al-Qadaffi and others have disputed those claims.

?#How the two studies differ

#How ours is different from those studies

-focus is on overall segregation not how close to bus stops households are

-concerned with time not distance

-similar in that there can be asymmetrical results (black -> white != white -> black etc.)

#Wasserstein Measure, how, goals, etc.

#Results

#Works Cited

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/richmondcityvirginia/PST045218>

<https://www.wvtf.org/post/bus-redesign-prompts-question-who-public-transportation#stream/0>