

Seeing Is Believing: In Defense of Field Work

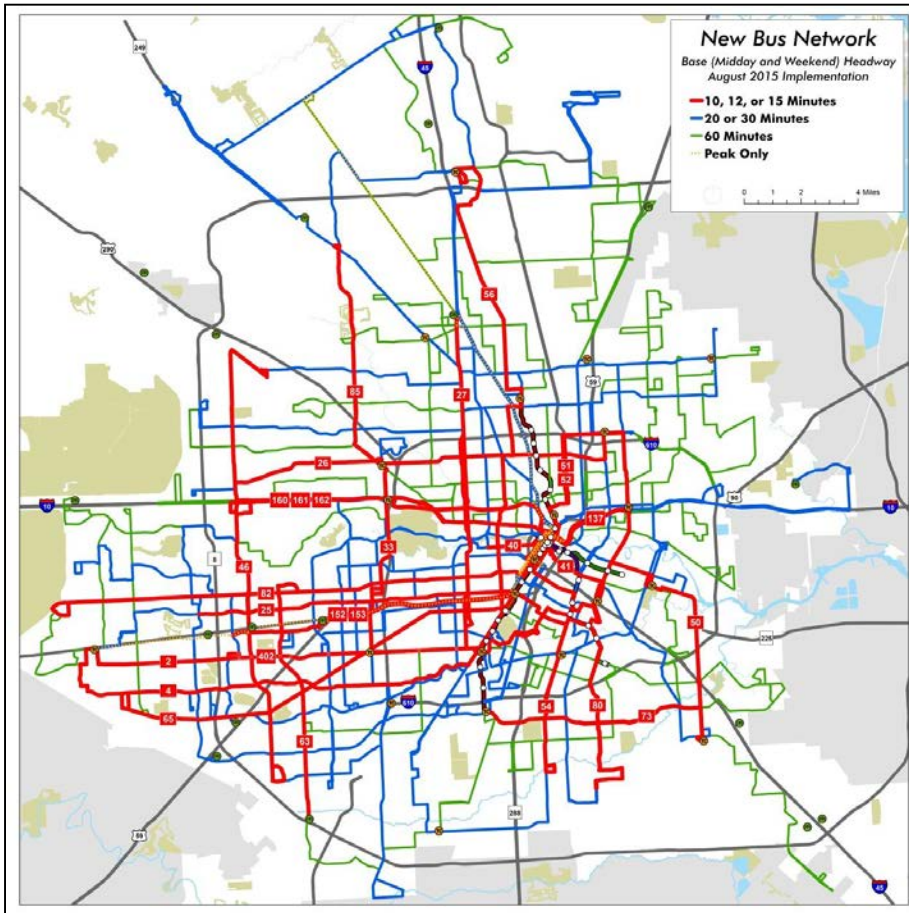


Mary Lawrence, Houston METRO
Jim Archer, Houston METRO



2018 Sustainability & Multimodal
Planning Workshop

HOUSTON



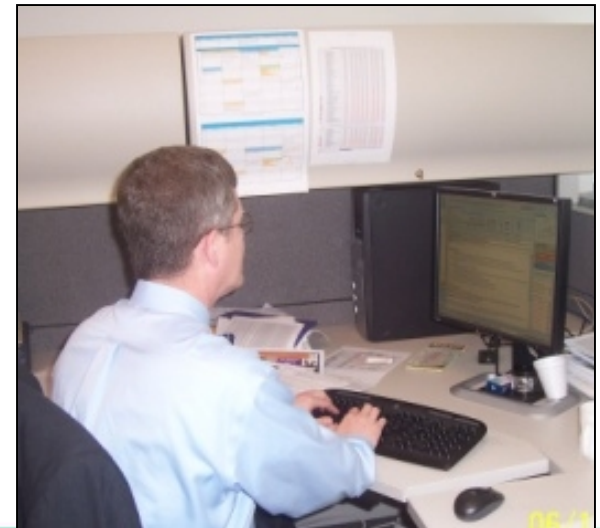
Category	By The Numbers
Service Area	1,303 sq. mi.
Boardings / Routes (FY2017)	
Local Bus	57.9M 83 routes
Park & Ride Bus	7.7M 30 routes
Light Rail	18.4M 3 lines
Paratransit	1.9M
Bus Stops	9,100
Passenger Shelters	2,200

WHAT FIELD WORK IS NOT

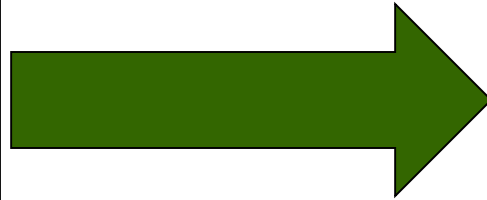
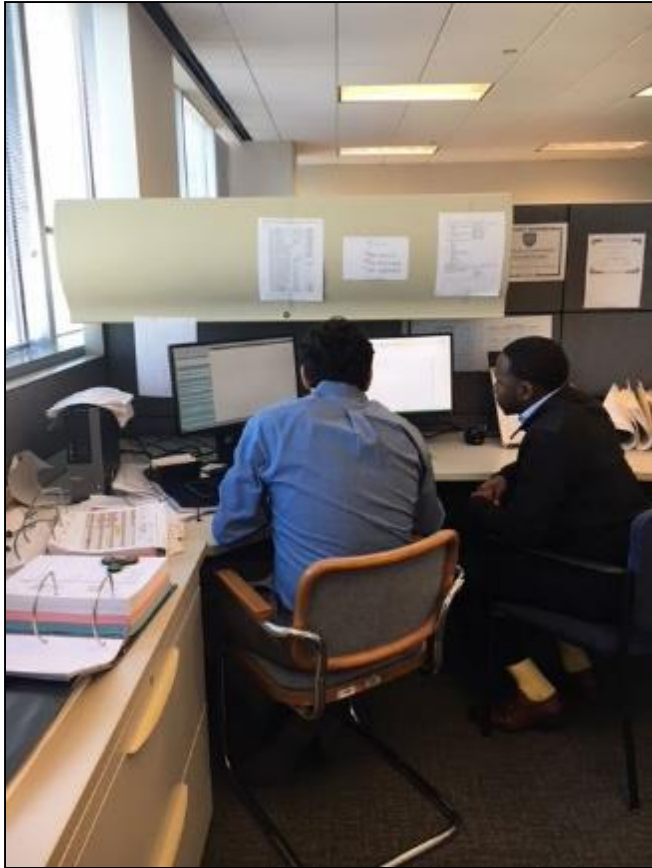
- **ADDING FIGURES**
- **TABULATING RESULTS**
- **DRAFTING REPORTS**
- **EVALUATING TABLES**
- **SENDING E-MAIL / TEXTS**
- **KIDDING YOURSELF THAT YOU'RE THE TYPICAL RIDER**



**"Get out of your.... office"
A Senior Vice President Who Shall Remain Nameless**

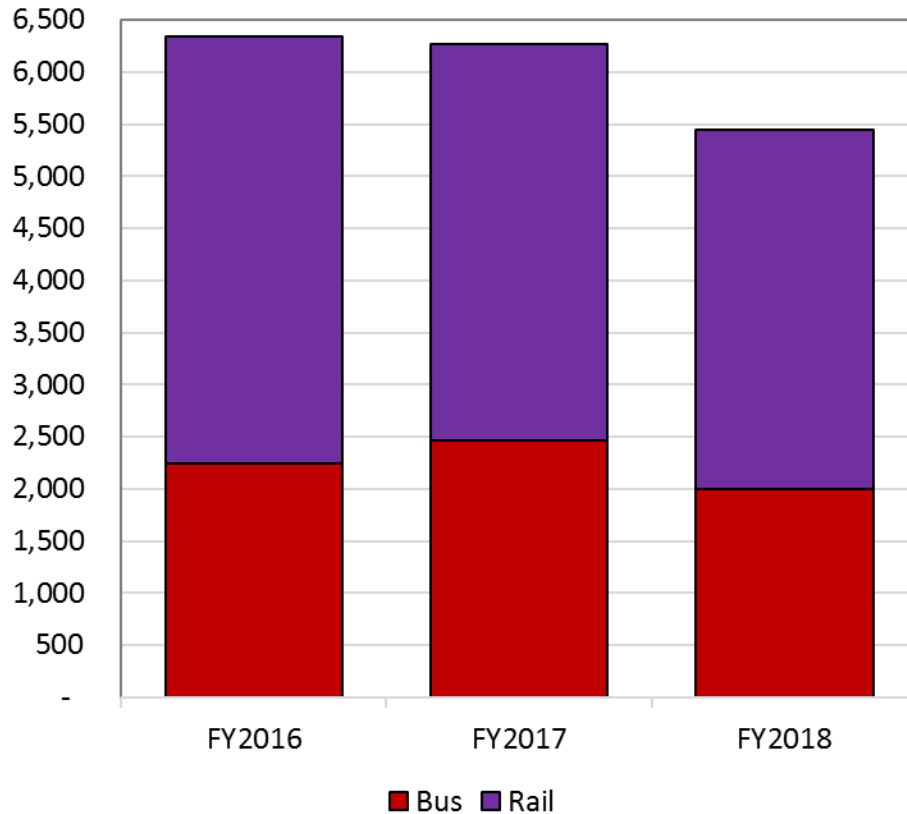


WHAT FIELD WORK IS



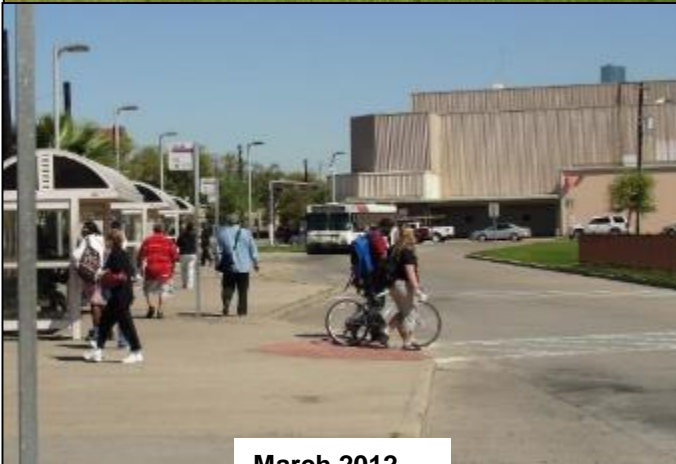
HARD TO BELIEVE

Average Weekday Boardings



- **Ridership decreased by 15% in two years**
- **Decrease blamed on increasing numbers of homeless**
- **But was that the whole story?**

SEEING IS BELIEVING, PART 1



March 2012



February 2018

SEEING IS BELIEVING, PART 2



How are we helping the customers when we offer a choice of no information or outdated information?

What message do we send the customer with the presence of a shopping cart and lack of painting?



When one of the platform entrances is under water, how do customers access either bus or rail?

WHO YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE



Question: Will METRO gain new riders from 248 El Dorado or will riders shift from one of the existing Gulf Freeway locations?

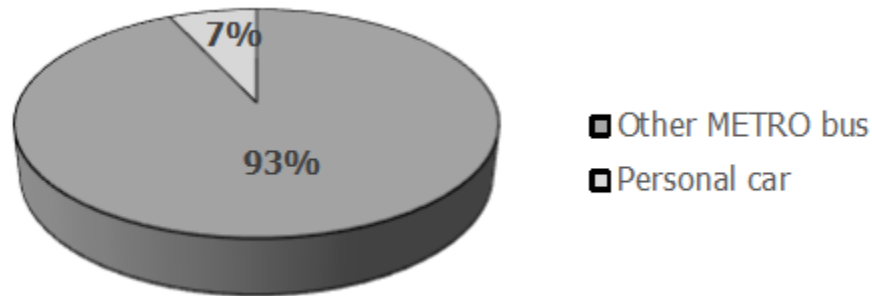
El Dorado Park & Ride Opened September 2017



WE ASKED...THEY ANSWERED

Question 1 – Prior to the start of the El Dorado Park & Ride service, how would you have made today's trip? What route?

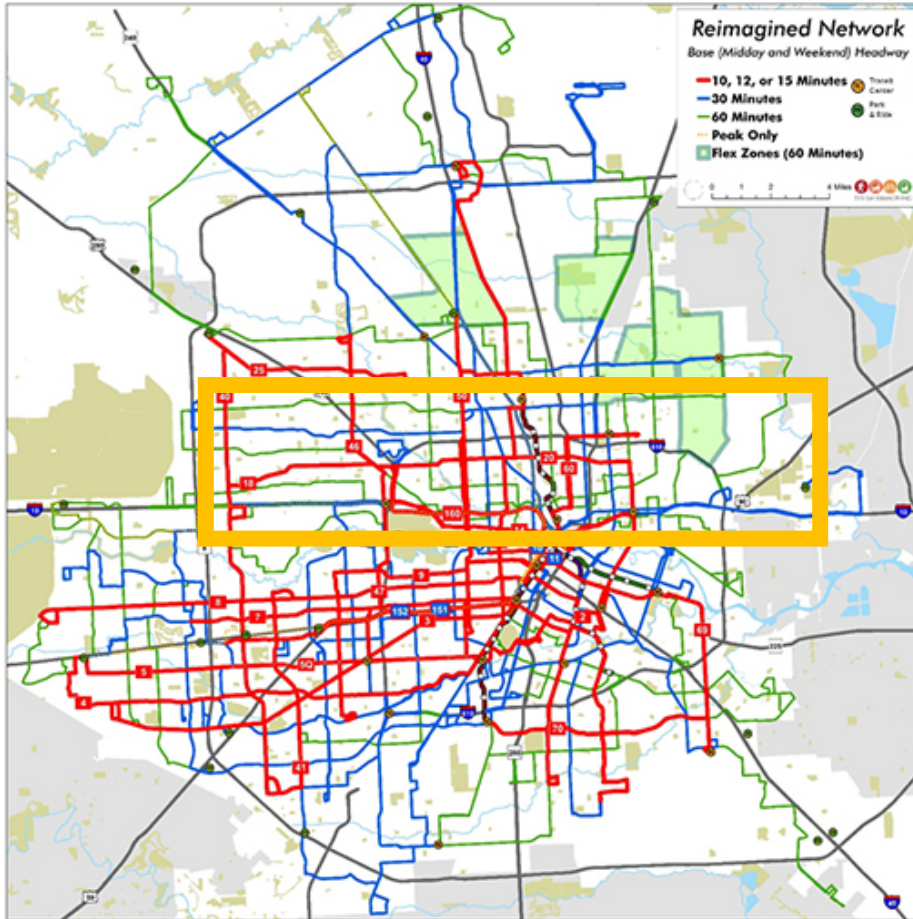
93% of respondents said that they would have used another METRO bus route for today's trip, while 7% said they would have used a personal car. The third answer choice on the questionnaire, carpooling with others, was not chosen by any of the respondents.



AND THEY WERE RIGHT!

	NEW ROUTE 248 El Dorado	CHANGE IN OTHER ROUTES IN CORRIDOR	% EXPLAINED BY NEW ROUTE
Sep. 2017	531	-611	>100%
Oct. 2017	538	-478	89%
Nov. 2017	575	-524	91%
Dec. 2017	434	-453	>100%
Jan. 2017	550	-598	>100%
Feb. 2017	571	-620	>100%
Mar. 2017	558	-558	100%
Average	537	-549	>100%

SERVICE RELIABILITY IS POOR – WHY?



You've crunched the numbers but still don't quite understand.

So let's get on the bus and see what happens...

THERE'S A SLOW TRAIN A COMIN'



WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

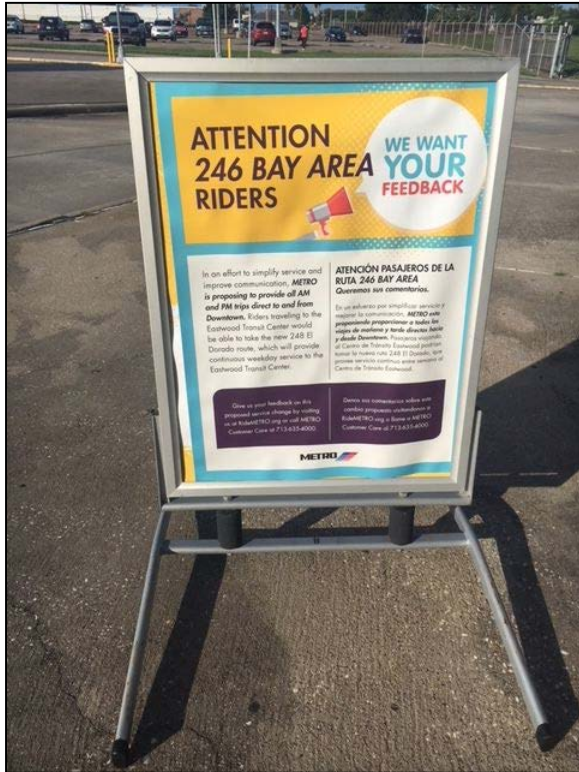


**HISPANIC
POPULATION:**
>40% of
population in
METRO Service
Area
**HISPANIC
RIDERS:**
25% of all riders
per FY2017
Origin
– Destination
Survey 9(23% of
local riders)
Houston,
tenemos
una problema.

Zero signs in Spanish at
Magnolia Park Transit Center –
March 2018

TIMELY COMMUNICATION?

JUNE 2018



Public Comments, June 2018



New Bus Network, August 2015

REMEMBER THE OPERATORS



A relief point without a passenger shelter?

OOPS!!

The assumption was that there was a shelter at this location.

The Weekday, Saturday, and Sunday ridership supported a shelter.

It took an operator request for us to know what was wrong.

CONCLUSION

- ✓ **F**IND TIME TO DO IT
- ✓ **I**NITIATE STAFF LEVEL INVESTIGATION
- ✓ **E**DUCATE MANAGEMENT & BOARD ON FINDINGS
- ✓ **L**EVERAGE DATA FOR MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES
- ✓ **D**EMONSTRATE SUCCESS