Diversity and Equity in the WAMPO Region

October 2021

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Transportation projects have long-lasting physical impacts on communities, and it is important to evaluate fairness and equity as part of the development of transportation policies and funding decisions. No group of people – by race, ethnicity or socio-economic status – should bear a disproportionate share of negative impacts as a result of decisions made at the federal, state, regional or local levels. Changes in demographics, lifestyles, and economic prosperity affect the success of our communities. A wide spectrum of voices and perspectives serves to enrich our culture and daily lives, and a thriving cultural scene helps to attract young talent to the region to bolster job creation and retainment. WAMPO, in partnership with our various stakeholders, KDOT, and member jurisdictions, seeks to create a transportation environment that is welcoming, attractive, and inclusive, enhances health and safety, stimulates and sustains the economy, and create a positive impact on how citizens live, work, and play. Current projects show the WAMPO region to grow by 43% by 2050, to a population of over 700,000 residents.

Our goals as an MPO for the region are to:

- Increase mobility and opportunity for diverse populations.
- Increase community engagement.
- Optimize use of regional assets.
- Strengthen partnerships with various communities within the region.
- Address stakeholder concerns regarding diversity and equity.
- Meet federal, state, and local reporting requirements.
- Ensure programs, plans, projects, and investments reduce disparities.

Transportation Accessibility Indicators

Full equity would allow for all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or ZIP code, to have the same access to resources and opportunities that allow them the full range to take part in the region's economy, politics, and social life. Increasing one's access to transportation helps low-wage workers and other jobseekers connect to more gainful employment. It is important to note that while this report splits up various diversity factors into different sections; it is the combination of these factors and existing institutions that create or perpetuate such differences.

Vehicle Access

Households with No Vehicle Available by Race/Ethnicity via the 2000 Decennial Census (Fig. 1)

Race/Ethnicity	Kansas	Wichita	Rest of WAMPO Region
White	5%	6%	3%
Black	15%	14%	4%
Hispanic	8%	9%	6%
Asian	7%	9%	5%
Native-American	8%	8%	5%
Other	8%	10%	0%

Having access to reliable and affordable transportation is essential to meet daily living needs, such as education, health, and employment. Access to a vehicle is more important in areas without a transit

system, making it even more important to make sure no part of the community is left out. Income and wealth gaps contribute to the difference in vehicle availability seen here. White households across the board are more likely to have consistent access to a vehicle.

Commute Times

Long commute times may serve as a barrier for those who try to improve their station via the chase of the traditional "American Dream." Historically discriminatory and race-driven practices such as the expropriation of land from Indigenous people, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and racially restrictive housing covenants have pushed minority populations away from typical commercial hubs and urban areas, away from their employers. The transportation system within Wichita is working to keep commute times low—the average commute is 20 minutes and is consistent across all race/ethnicity groupings.

Average Travel Time to Work (Minutes) by Race/Ethnicity in Wichita (Fig. 2)
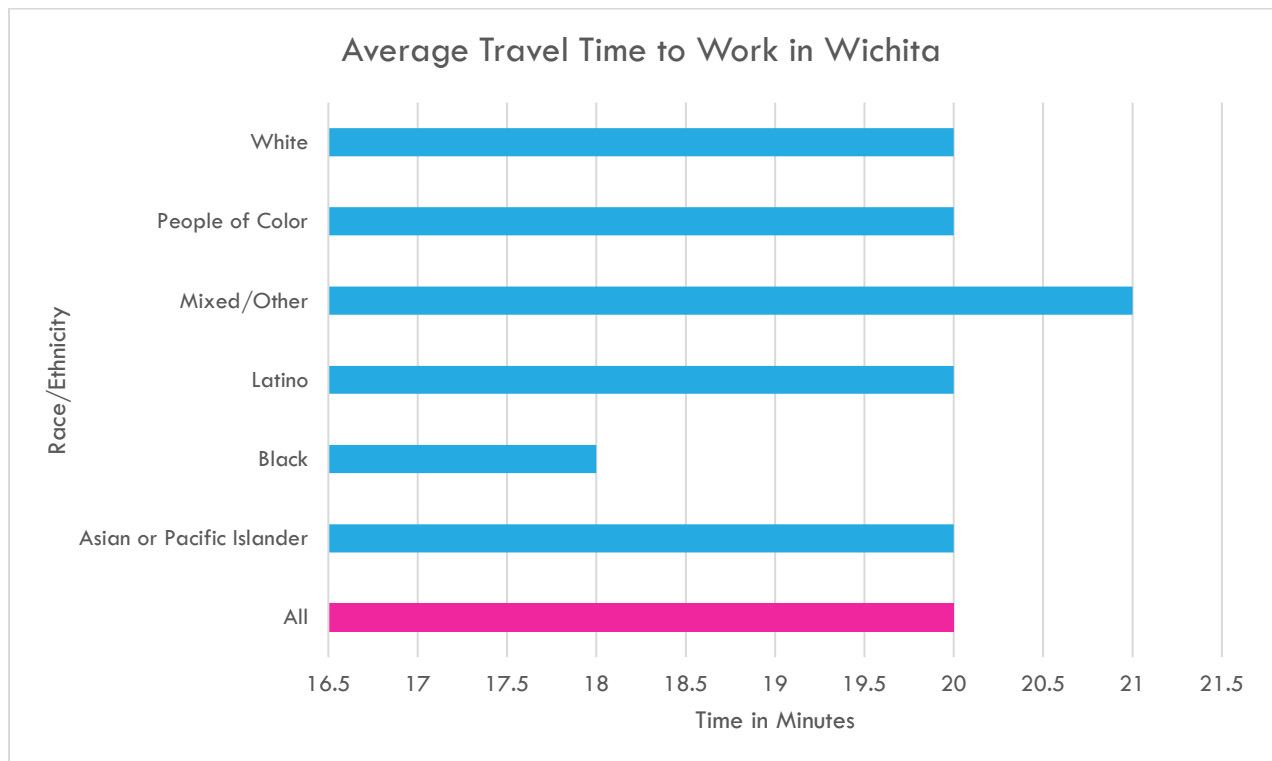
Public Transit Access

Access to public transit is essential to improve mobility and stimulate economic development. People can only contribute their unique perspectives if they have the opportunity and access to our roadways, programs, services, and regional transit system, leading to businesses that represent the communities they're meant to serve.
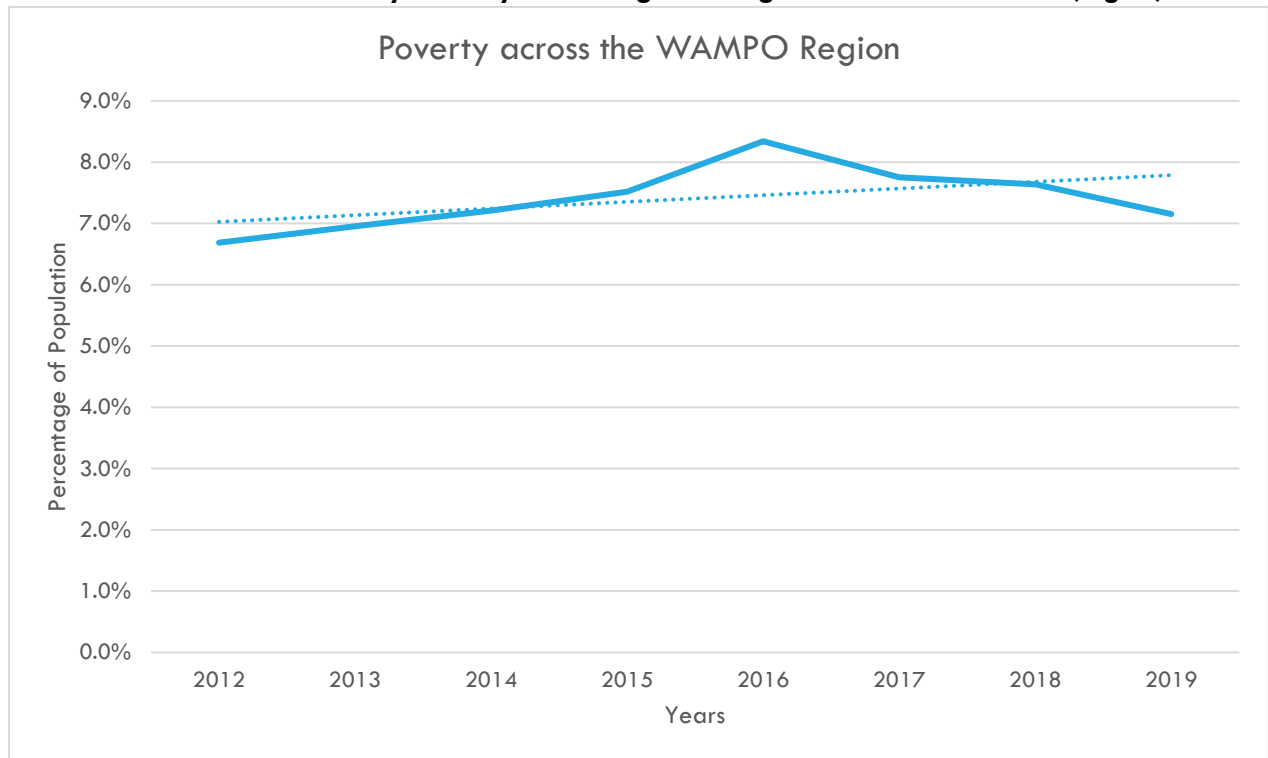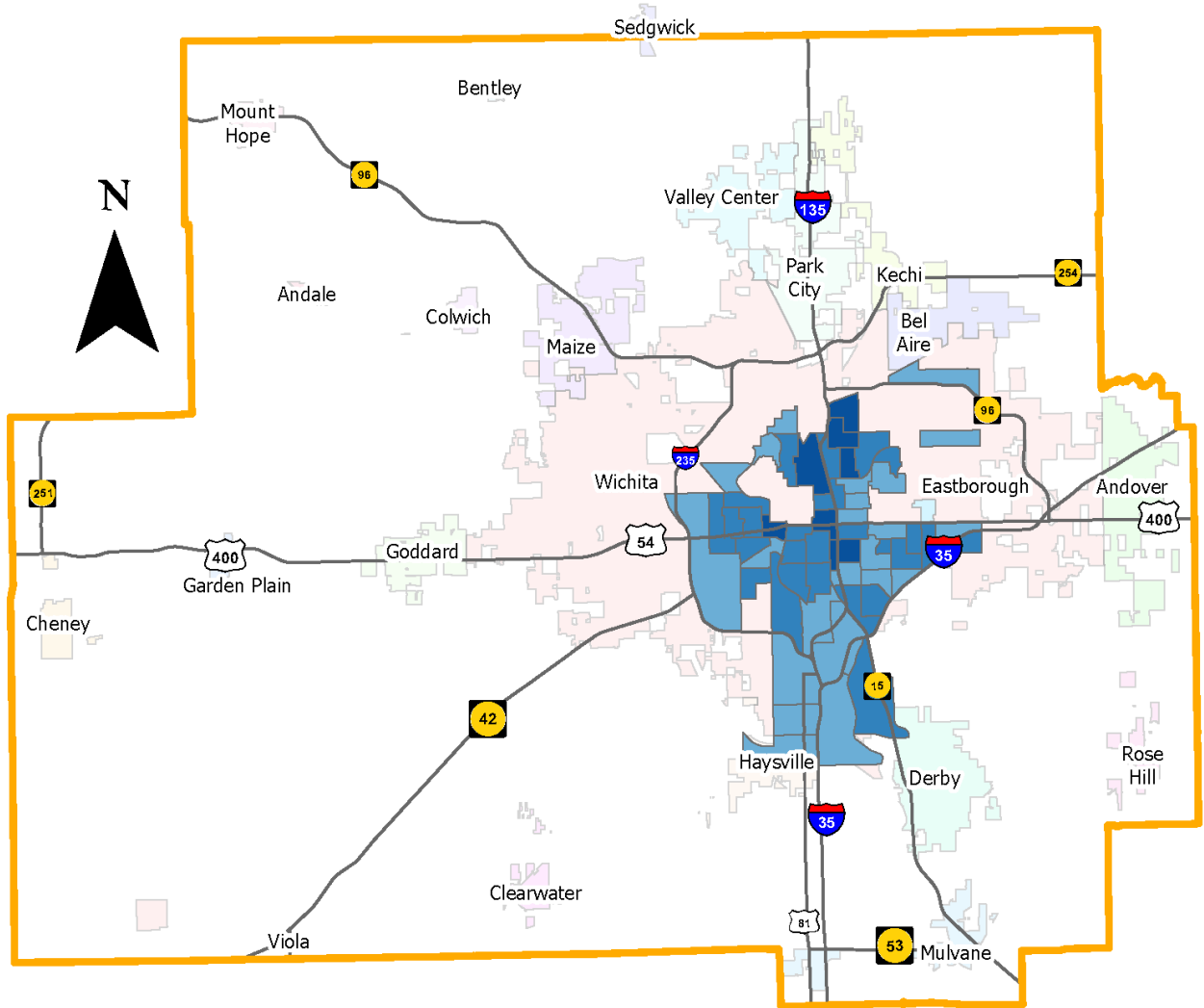
Economic Indicators

Poverty

Poverty thresholds are updated annually by the US Census Bureau and are determined by comparing one's total household income with the poverty threshold amount appropriate for their household size and composition. Historically, poverty has been associated with large metropolitan centers and rural communities. In the last decade, however, more of the WAMPO region's population that is living in poverty is focused in smaller cities and townships that are home to 25,000 residents or fewer. Wichita's most immediate suburbs—Park City, Derby, Valley Center, Maize, and Bel Aire, all see a significantly higher median household income than Wichita itself. Suburban and small-scale metropolitan areas are growing at a brisk rate nationwide.

Poverty in the WAMPO region is on a slow rise, contrary to the trends of the more populous areas of Kansas. Sedgwick County, Sumner County, the cities of Wichita, Haysville, Park City, and Valley Center, as well as the state of Kansas have seen decreases in the percentage of their population in poverty, while the smaller individual cities in the region have seen an increase.

WAMPO Member City Poverty Percentage Averages from 2012 to 2019 (Fig. 3)

Map of Poverty in the WAMPO Region in 2019 (Fig. 4)

Sedgwick

Bentley

Mount Hope

Andale

Colwich

Valley Center

Park City

Kechi

Bel Aire

Maize

Wichita

Eastborough

Andover

Goddard

Garden Plain

Cheney

Haysville

Derby

Rose Hill

Clearwater

Viola

Mulvane

Percentage of Population Living below Poverty Level

- 13.4% - 22.5% (23)
- 22.6% - 36.4% (27)
- 36.5%- 100% (6)

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Median Household Income

Average Household Median Income from 2010 to 2019 (Fig. 5)

Average Household Median Income from 2010-2019
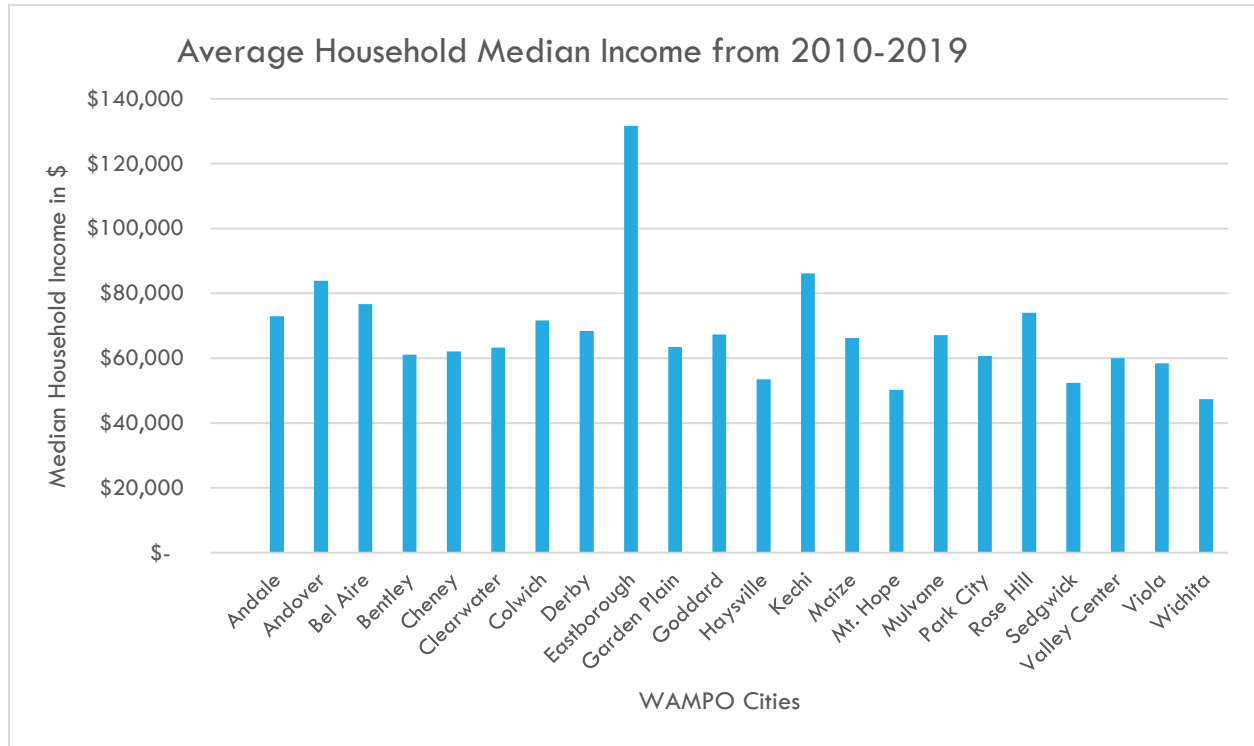
Racial and economic inclusion drive sustained economic growth by increasing productivity. If some groups only have reliable roadway access to low-wage jobs, they may lack the opportunity for upward growth.

Eastborough, a residential enclave, is an outlier of the WAMPO region, as its ten-year average median household income is significantly higher than the rest of the WAMPO region at $131,712 and 278% greater than Wichita, the city that surrounds it.

**Average Household Median Income from 2010 to 2019 (Fig. 6)**

	US	Kansas	Andale	Andover	Bel Aire	Bentley	Cheney	Clearwater
Income	$55,425	$53,277	$72,974	$83,914	$76,651	$61,112	$62,063	$63,273
	Colwich	Derby	Eastborough	Garden Plain	Goddard	Haysville	Kechi	Maize
Income	$71,655	$68,389	$131,712	$63,489	$67,294	$53,501	$86,127	$66,185
	Mount Hope	Mulvane	Park City	Rose Hill	Sedgwick	Valley Center	Viola	Wichita
Income	$50,197	$67,106	$60,689	$74,007	$52,415	$59,984	$58,444	$47,331

Demographic Indicators
Language (LEP)

Percentage of WAMPO Population with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) from 2010 to 2019 (Fig. 7)
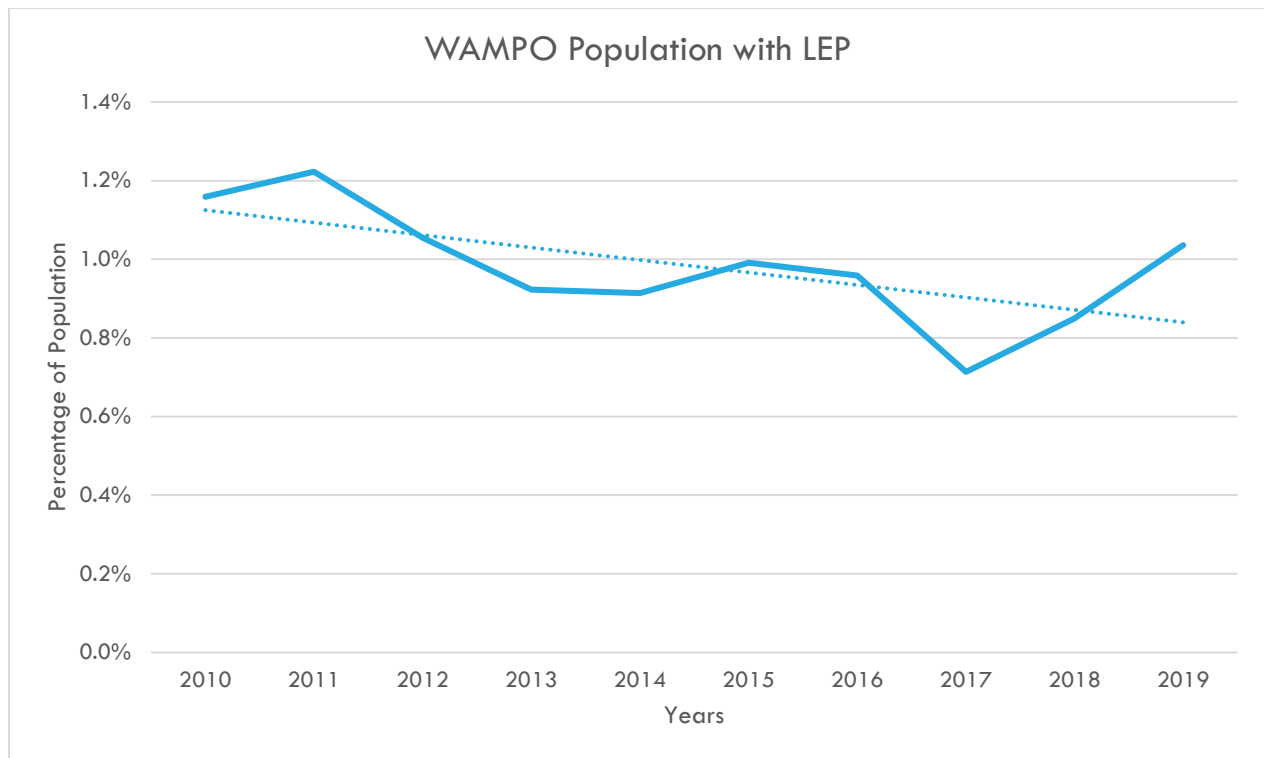
As our cities are becoming more diverse, so too are our languages. English is the language predominantly used in government functions, however, many in the US speak other tongues. This has the potential to interfere with how well they can interact with civic life. Individuals, ages five or older, with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are identified in the Census data as speaking English less than "very well."

Those who speak English less than "very well" may be assisted via translation services, education, or assistance accessing services. A major contributing factor to the decrease seen in Figure 7 is an aging population—as people get older and acclimatize to the US, it is more likely English will become their main communication. Even though that number is decreasing, that doesn't lessen the importance of providing language-inclusive materials to the WAMPO population. Larger metropolitan areas are more likely to see a greater variety of languages. The city of Wichita has a much larger population that speaks English less than "very well". In 2019, it was 6.4% of the population—the rest of the less urbanized WAMPO region averaged only 0.8%

Race and Ethnicity

Aggregated data showing race and ethnicity was organized into the following five categories (the first four of which are classified as "minority" groups):
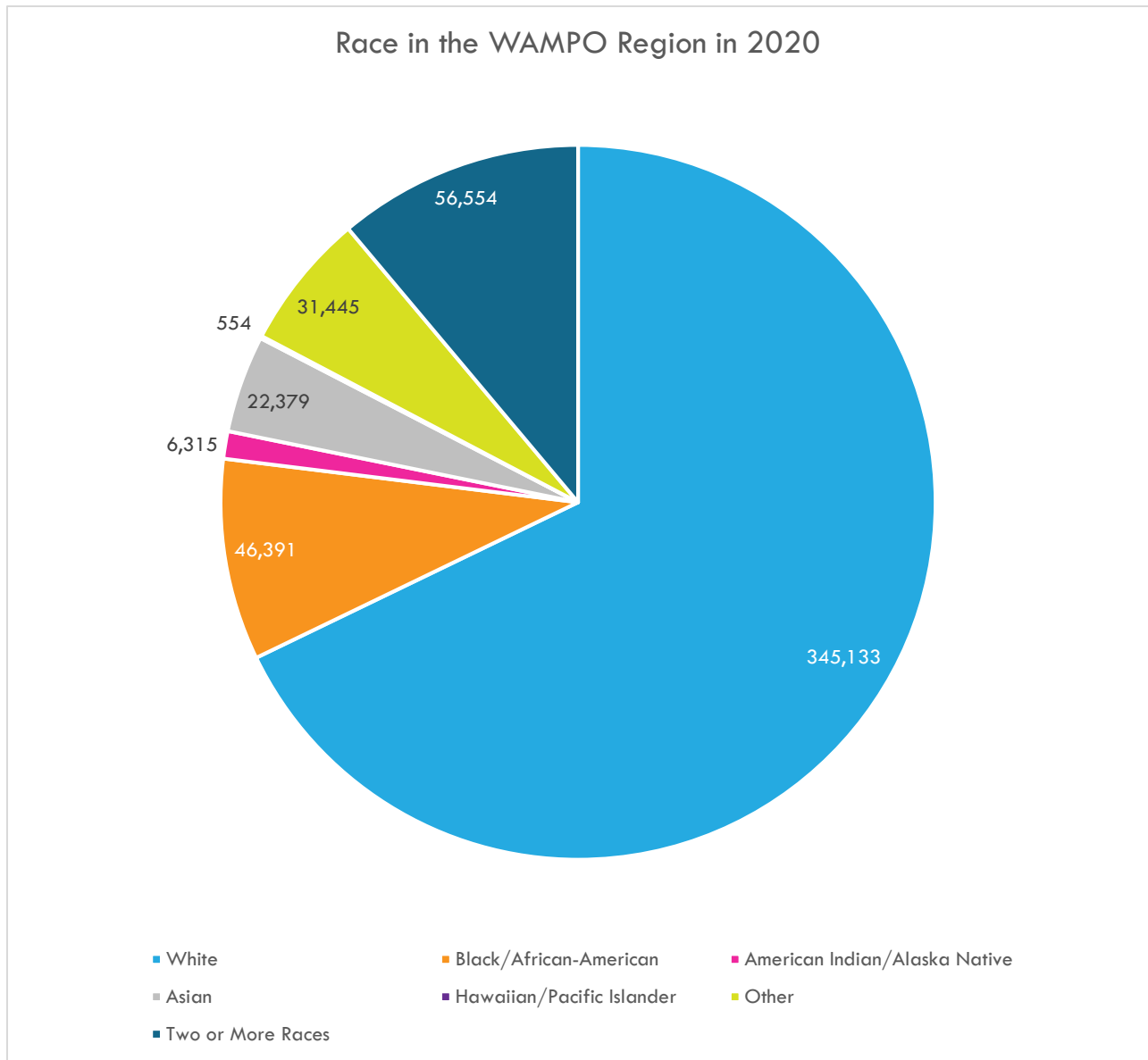
- Asian, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent - including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Black or African American, which refers to people having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- Hispanic or Latino, which includes persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- Other, which includes:
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
  - American Indian and Alaska Native, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.
  - Other Races, and those identified by two or more races.
- White or Caucasian, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.

The majority of the WAMPO region population in 2020 was white, at 68% of the total population. The largest single minority group is Black Americans at 9%, followed by Other, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native. There is a greater community of these minority groups in the more populous cities of the region—Wichita, Bel Aire, Derby, Park City, and Andover.
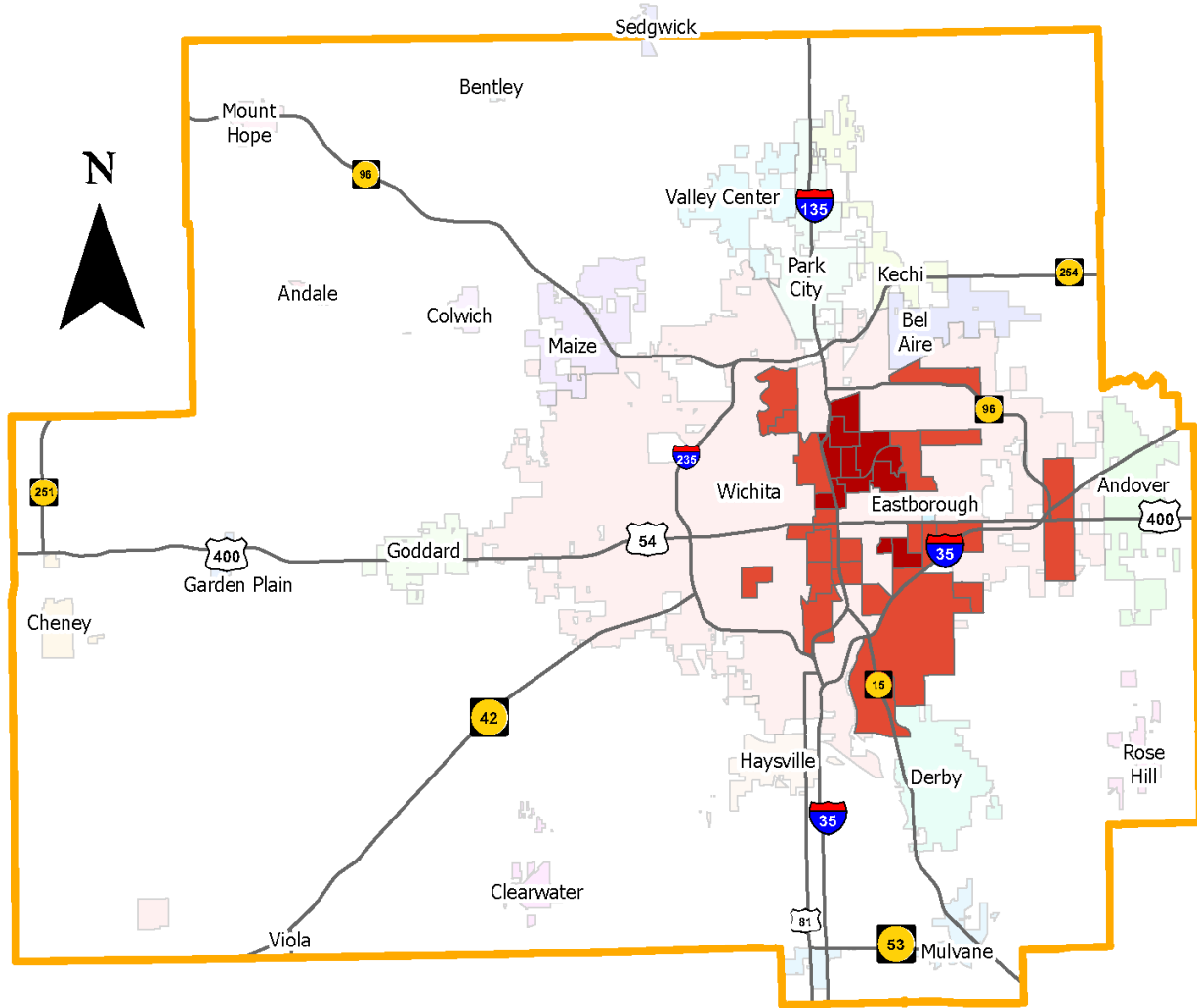
Late-shift workers are disproportionately low-income POC and face fewer options for transit and are often burned with high transportation costs and reduced opportunities. National data gathered by the Pew Research Center show that US adults that are lower income, nonwhite, immigrants, or under 50 are more likely to rely on public transportation.

Race Breakdown for the WAMPO Region in 2020 (Fig. 8)

Race in the WAMPO Region in 2020

- White
- Black/African-American
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other
- Two or More Races

Map of Percent Minority Population in the WAMPO Region in 2019 (Fig. 9)
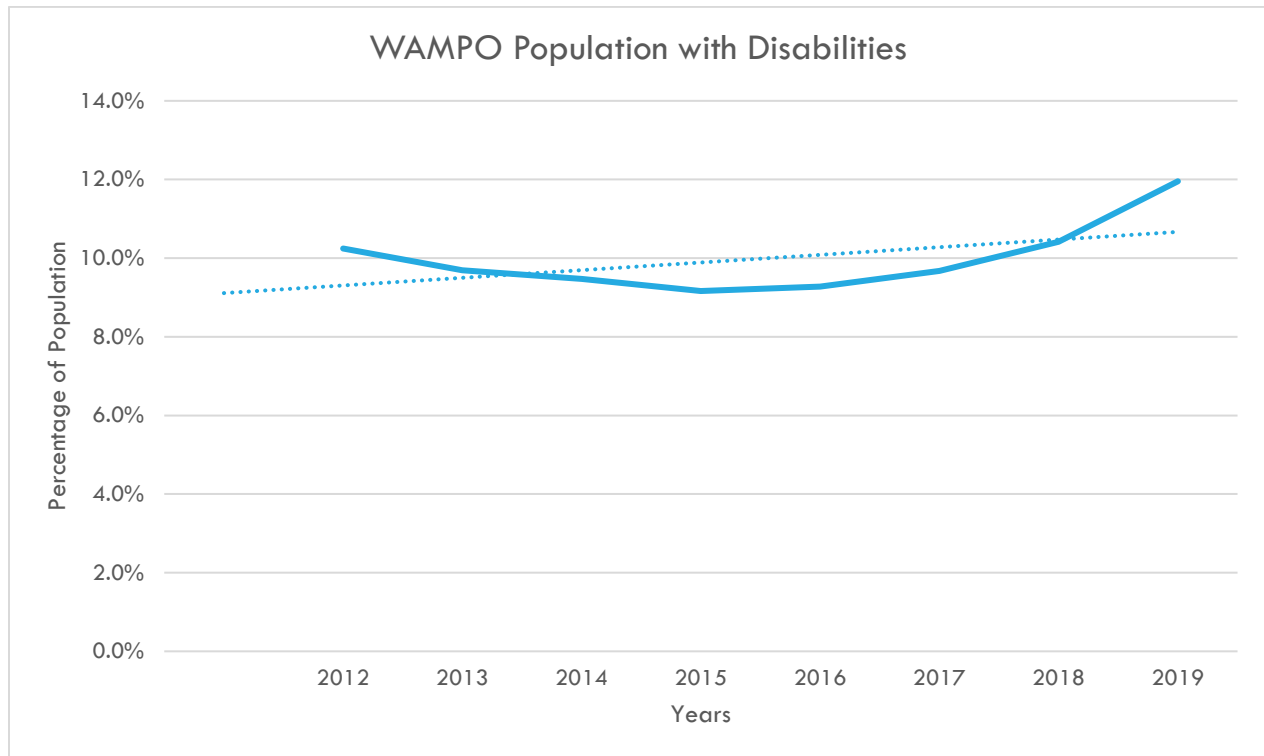

Percent Minority Population

■ 29% - 50% (24)
■ 51% - 100% (11)

Age & Disability
Percentage of WAMPO Population Living with a Disability from 2012-2019 (Fig. 10)

WAMPO Population with Disabilities

Disabilities as defined by the Census are self-reported and could include one or more of the following:

- Ambulatory difficulty
- Cognitive difficulty
- Self-care difficulty
- Hearing difficulty
- Vision difficulty
- Independent living difficulty

The percentage of the population living with disabilities is on a steady rise. This portion of the population is more likely to be dependent on public transit, and may work irregular schedules. WAMPO's *5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities* program recognizes this and grants funds to private nonprofit organizations, states or local government authorities, or operators of public transportation that serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond the traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary para-transit services.

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