

TRANSPORTATION Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of March 6, 2013

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: February 28, 2013

Subject: Accept West Suburban Service Changes Concept Plan for Public Review

Proposed Action:

That the Metropolitan Council accept the West Suburban Service Changes for public review.

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:

Steve Mahowald, Senior Planner, presented the concept plan.

Council Member Elkins asked if this project was a dry run for the draft disparate impact review standards. John Levin, Director of Service Development, addressed this issue by stating that the draft Title VI policies that have been presented to the Committee are very similar to the standard used in the past for determining disparate impact or disproportionate burden. Staff is using the same standard, the "four-fifth's rule" in this analysis, which is why Mr. Mahowald has included information about the impacts of the proposed service changes on low-income populations in his presentation. Staff will continue to study where these impacts may exist and mitigate them or avoid disparate impacts on low-income populations in the Recommended Plan that will be presented in late April.

Council Member Schreiber asked about the public hearing process and how riders are informed. She commented that attending evening meetings is a hardship for people who rely on transit and wanted to know about other avenues for submitting comments. Mr. Mahowald responded that a news release about the upcoming meetings and proposed changes will be distributed on-board buses. Once the notices have been distributed, staff will get on express buses in downtown to make an announcement about the concept plan and upcoming meeting. There are other avenues to provide comments. The changes proposed for local routes are service improvements. Mr. Mahowald will specifically be talking with riders along Hwy 7 to seek their input.

The item was moved by Council Member Elkins and was seconded by Council Member Smith. It passed unanimously. It will be on the consent agenda for the Metropolitan Council meeting.

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: February 25, 2013

For the Council Meeting of March 13, 2013

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	February 20, 2013
Subject:	Accept West Suburban Service Changes Concept Plan for Public Review
District(s), Member(s):	District 3-Jennifer Munt, District 6-James Brimeyer
Policy/Legal Reference:	Public Accountability Policy 2-1, Public Hearings Procedure 2-1b; Transportation Service Changes and Restructuring 1-3a; 1-3b Public Involvement in the Transportation Planning Process
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Brian Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510 John Levin, Director Service Development, 612-349-7789 Adam Harrington, Assistant Director, Route & System Planning, 612-349-7797 Cyndi Harper, Manager, Route Planning, 612-349-7723 Steve Mahowald, Senior Transit Planner, 612-349-7775
Division/Department:	Metro Transit

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council accept the West Suburban Service Changes Concept Plan for public review.

Background

The West Suburban Service Changes Concept Plan carries forward the recommendations contained in the 2012 Minnetonka Transit Study to improve local circulation and access for transit-reliant communities. Additionally, it proposes a consolidation of express services, eliminating segments of route duplication and addressing issues of low productivity.

The plan's study area includes the communities of Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Deephaven, Greenwood, Excelsior, Shorewood and Tonka Bay.

Local service improvements include: added weekday evening trips on Route 9N serving the Greenbrier residential complex on Cedar Lake Road west of Highway 169; extended weekday service hours on the Route 615 crosstown service operating between Excelsior & Grand in St. Louis Park and Ridgedale in Minnetonka; a new local weekday and Saturday crosstown route operating between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights in Minnetonka.

Express routes 664, 665, 667E, 670 and 671 are proposed to be consolidated into four express routes to improve productivity and eliminate areas of service overlap. Segments of low ridership will be eliminated, area of service duplication will be reduced and fringe trips with low ridership will be eliminated.

A Title VI service equity analysis was done to review the impacts of the proposed changes on minority and low-income populations. The Concept Plan will result in an overall increase in the transit service across the study area. The Title VI review showed no equity concerns for minority

populations, but there is potential of disparate impacts for low-income populations. The number of total transit trips increases by 12 percent for low-income populations compared to 17 percent for non-low-income populations. This exceeds the Council’s threshold for potential disparate impact. To address this, staff will review the specific impacts of the Concept Plan on low-income populations and identify any changes needed to address those impacts.

Rationale

These route changes impact greater than 25 percent of a route or group of routes which is defined by Metropolitan Council policy as a “major service change” and requires a public hearing.

The following activities ensure compliance with Council policies.

**West Suburban Service Change Concept Plan
Public Outreach and Approval Schedule**

March 13	Metropolitan Council accepts West Suburban Concept Plan for public review & input)
April 01	Public Hearing, 6:30 PM at Hopkins Library – 22 11 th Avenue North, Hopkins
April 03	Public Hearing, 7:00 PM at Ridgedale Library – 12601 Ridgedale Drive, Minnetonka
April 14	5:00 pm Public comment period closes (10 days after hearings end – state requirement)
April 22	Transportation Committee adopts final plan
May 08	Metropolitan Council adopts final plan
August 24	Service Implementation

Funding

The outreach and public meetings will be funded through existing operating budgets. The service changes resulting from the Concept Plan will be operated within existing Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council transit service resources.

Known Support / Opposition

None know at this time, but public input on the plan is anticipated through April 2013.