

## Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 22, 2019

**Subject:** Elimination of Route 614 Service

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the elimination of Route 614.

### Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Steve Mahowald, Senior Transit Planner for Metro Transit, presented this item.

Councilmember Sterner asked if there were certain times the service could be adjusted where there was a spike in riders or does each trip average two riders. Mahowald said there is only the 4:25 p.m. northbound trip from Minnetonka Heights that has a consistent spike (5 to 6 riders) but it is in the peak of the peak so there is no bus alternative. Councilmember Atlas-Ingebretson asked about the individual that would not be able to get to school if the service is eliminated. Mahowald said that call was from the mother of a student who attends an afternoon program. Councilmember Atlas-Ingebretson asked if the dial-a-ride would be an option. Mahowald said it is not guaranteed but standing orders can be made. Councilmember Cummings asked what route is closest to Route 614. Mahowald said there is peak period service from Minnetonka Heights to downtown and the closest off-peak service would be at Ridgedale or in Hopkins. Councilmember Cummings asked if those routes were secure. Mahowald said those alternatives are secure for now and noted that all of the routes in the area will be considered when the Green Line is extended.

The item was moved by Councilmember Ferguson, seconded by Councilmember Zeran. Motion carried. **Consent** to Council.

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: May 13, 2019

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 22, 2019

<b>Subject:</b>	Elimination of Route 614 Service
<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District 3, Christopher Ferguson
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Public Accountability Policy 2-1, Public Hearings Procedure 2-1b Transportation Service Changes and Restructuring 1-3a Public Involvement in the Transportation Planning Process 1-3b
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Adam Harrington, Director Service Development 612-349-7797 Cyndi Harper, Manager Route Planning 612-349-7723 Steve Mahowald, Senior Planner 612-349-7775
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Metro Transit/Service Development

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the elimination of Route 614 service.

### Background

Route 614 was implemented in August 2013 to test the feasibility of community fixed route service in a Transit Market Area III and IV environment such as Minnetonka.

Service operates between the Minnetonka Heights affordable housing complex and the Ridgedale shopping center area via Highway 101, Minnetonka Boulevard and Plymouth Boulevard. Weekday service is hourly between 5:15 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Initially, there was Saturday service as well, but it was eliminated in August 2015 due to low ridership.

Route 614 is operated by First Transit by contract to the Council. Minnetonka is an opt-out community with transit service provided by the Council under a Transit Cooperation Agreement. Service Development staff has been in communication with city staff regarding the route's performance, promotional efforts, and the proposed elimination of the route.

If Route 614 is eliminated, Transit Link service would be available to current riders as demand allows.

### Rationale

Council's policy notes staff will regularly evaluate the performance of service and redirect transportation resources to meet the changing transit needs of the region. The regional's minimum performance standard for a suburban local route, such as Route 614, is 10 passengers per in-service hour. Since its implementation Route 614 has consistency averaged below 5 passengers per in-service hour, 32 rides per weekday and less than 2 rides per trip and with a subsidy of \$24 per passenger is the highest subsidy and lowest productivity route operated by Metro Transit/MTS.

### Thrive Lens Analysis

Stewardship and responsibly managing the region's finite resources in a sustainable manner are the primary foci of the proposed elimination. The availability of Transit Link service in lieu of Route 614 supports equity by continuing to provide residents access to local destinations via transit.

## **Funding**

With the elimination of service resources will be directed to other fixed route operating expenses.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

The public was notified of the proposed elimination and invited to submit comments by attending a public meeting or via telephone, fax, e-mail and the Council website. A public hearing was held from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Monday, April 15 at Hennepin County's Ridgedale Library. Notice of the public hearing and proposed elimination of the route was distributed to riders on Route 614 as well as via electronic rider alerts and notices in local and regional newspapers.

The meeting was attended by two individuals, and an additional 18 people submitted comments expressing their concern with the proposed elimination:

- Seven customers stated that without the service they would not be able to get to work
- Two employers stated their valued employee needed it to get to work
- One individual stated her son needed it to get to school
- Eight customers noted they were regular users and the inconvenience of not having the service
- One individual recommended changing route to increase ridership



# Route 614 Proposed Elimination

**Transportation Committee**

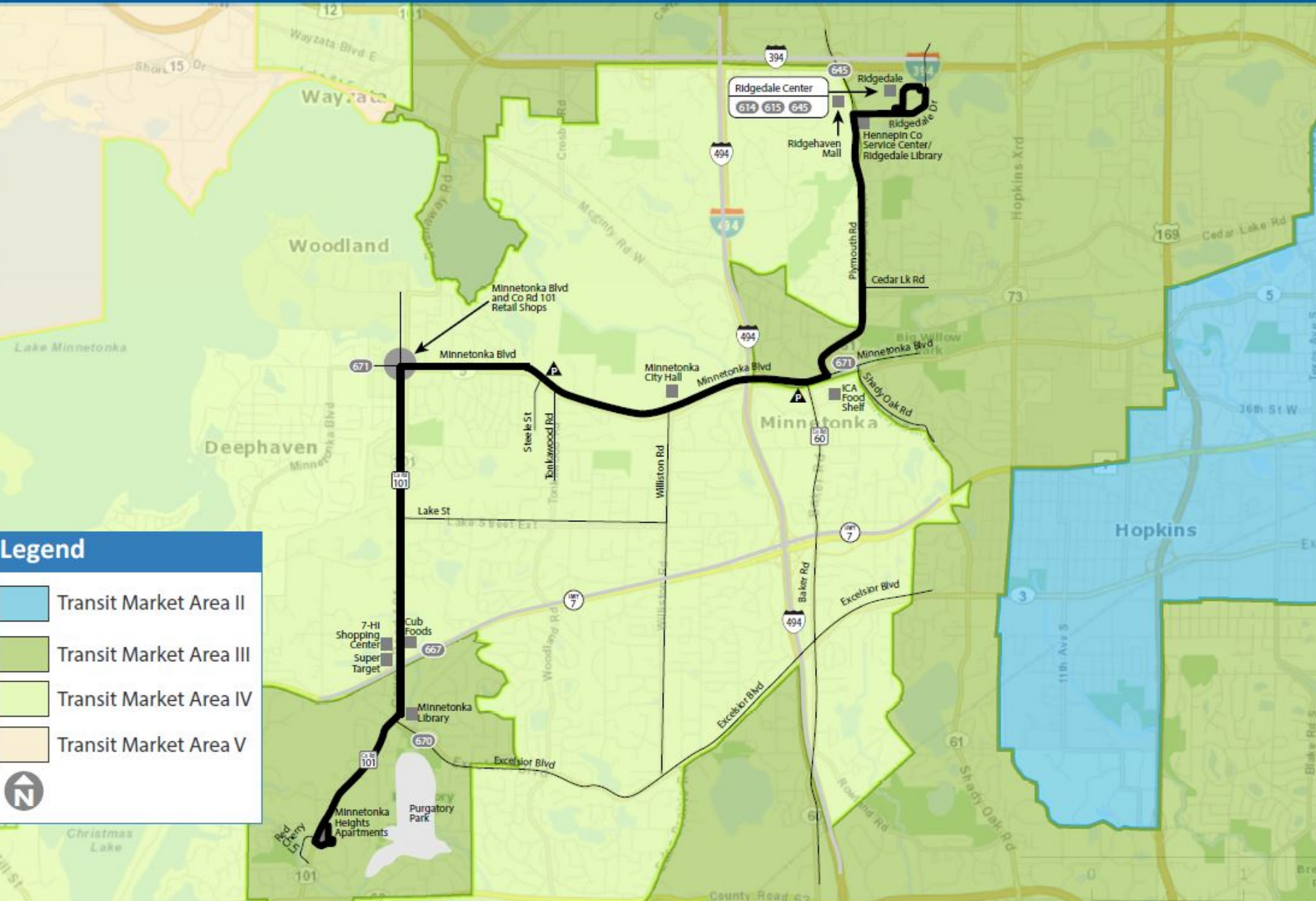
**May 13, 2019**

**Steve Mahowald, Senior Transit Planner**

# Route 614 Background

- Implemented in August 2013 as a demonstration in Transit Market Areas III and IV
- Weekday hourly service between Minnetonka Heights and Ridgedale
  - 5:15 a.m. till 6:55 p.m.
- Saturday service discontinued in 2015 due to low ridership
- Minnetonka is an opt-out community

# Route 614 and Transit Market Areas



# Route 614 Performance

- Regional minimum standard for suburban locals is 10 passengers per in-service hour (ppish)
- Route averages below 5 passengers per in-service hour
- Averages 32 rides per day and less than 2 riders per trip
- \$24 subsidy per passenger
- Highest subsidy and lowest productivity of all routes operated by Metro Transit/MTS



# Alternative Service

- Transit Link will be available 6am-7pm
- Dial-a-ride service for areas where regular route service is not available
- Peak fare \$4.50, off-peak \$3.50
  - 75 cent surcharge for trips longer than 15 miles
- Ride requests are subject to availability—they are not guaranteed





# Customer Outreach and Feedback

- Notification of proposed elimination and public hearing via rider alerts on buses, website and newspapers
- Public Hearing—2 attendees
  - Held Monday 4/15 at Ridgedale Library 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- 18 customers provided input via Customer Relations and Service Development inbox
  - 7 stated that they would not be able to get to work
  - 2 employers noted their employees would not be able to get to work
  - 1 would not be able to get to school
  - 8 regular users noted inconvenience of not having the service
  - 1 recommended route changes to increase ridership

# Next Steps

- Customers providing input will be notified of decision
- If approved, last day of service Friday, August 16
  - Rider Alerts will be distributed on buses
  - Bus stops will be posted
  - Information posted on website

# Requested Action

- That the Metropolitan Council authorize the elimination of Route 614