

T Transportation Committee
Meeting date: October 22, 2012
For the Council Meeting of November 14, 2012

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: October 15, 2012
Subject: Central Corridor Transit Service Study Recommended Plan
District(s), Member(s): District 8-Adam Duinck, District 10-John Doan, District 13-Richard Kramer, District 14-Jon Commers
Policy/Legal Reference: Public Accountability Policy 2-10; 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
Scott Thompson, Senior Transit Planner, 612-349-7774
Division/Department: Metro Transit

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approves the Central Corridor Transit Service Study Recommended Plan.

Background

The Central Corridor Transit Service Study project includes Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council contracted services in the area bounded by I-35E on the east, the Mississippi River on the south, downtown Minneapolis, Hiawatha Avenue and Lake Street on the west and Larpenteur Avenue / East Hennepin Avenue on the north.

Service in the study area carries over one-third of system ridership today and is expected to grow with the introduction of the METRO Green Line light rail transit service in 2014. During the pre-Concept Plan outreach in early 2012, stakeholders indicated they are mostly satisfied with the structure of the bus route network but would like to see this service run more often with longer service hours all days of the week. The Recommended Plan seeks to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of transit service in the study area and integrate the current bus service network with the new Green Line service.

Overview-Public Input Process

Staff used the feedback received during pre-Concept Plan outreach to develop a Concept Plan, which was made available for public comment in June and July 2012. Staff contacted key stakeholders in the Study Area and met with over 40 community/neighborhood groups, such as District Councils and Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. The Concept Plan public outreach process included:

- The distribution of over 12,000 Concept Plan brochures to customers on buses and schedule outlets.

- Three public meetings, two public hearings and an open house with a total of 150 attendees.
- Coordination with the District Councils Collaborative Trusted Advocate outreach project.
- The public was invited to submit comments via email, postage-paid comment cards, Customer Relations, letter, fax, telephone, US mail, Twitter, and Facebook.
- Over 800 comments were received during this period from 650 contacts.

Recommended Plan Service Changes

The major changes proposed in the Concept Plan and that continue in the Recommended Plan are:

University Avenue Corridor: The Green Line will be the primary east-west service in the corridor, supplemented by Route 16 local service along University and Route 94 express service between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul during peak periods.

East-West Connections: Routes that parallel the University Avenue corridor along Minnehaha and Grand avenues will connect with the Green Line at Raymond Station.

North-South Connections: The frequency on routes that currently intersect the Green Line at Dale Street, and Snelling and Raymond avenues will be improved, and a new route on Lexington Parkway will be introduced.

Limited-Stop/Express Routes: Route 144 on Snelling Avenue will be eliminated.

Feedback from stakeholders and public comments identified areas in the plan that warranted modification. The major changes to the Concept Plan that are included in the Recommended Plan are:

- Route 16 service is added on Marion Street, and service to Capitol area is discontinued.
- Route 83 service is extended to serve Como Park and Larpenteur Avenue, and will not travel on Lexington Parkway south of Jefferson Avenue.
- Route 94 express service is added during the midday.
- I-94 westbound morning express routes will continue to stop at Huron Station with a local bus service connection to the University of Minnesota.

Rationale

The Central Corridor Transit Service Study Recommended Plan is a major transportation service change as defined by Metropolitan Council policy. Major service changes must include public involvement in the transportation planning process and require a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed changes.

Funding

This Recommended Plan was developed within Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council existing transit service resources. Additional service enhancement concepts are identified in the Recommended Plan report as Future Considerations. The additional enhancements will be considered if additional funding becomes available.

Known Support/Opposition

The Central Corridor Transit Service Study Recommended Plan has received support from many stakeholders in the study area including individuals, community groups, district councils, the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County. Some residents also expressed concerns with elements of the Concept Plan, and many of these concerns are now addressed in the Recommended Plan. There are still some residents who are concerned about elements of the Recommended Plan, but staff believes that this plan does the best job of improving overall transit service in the study area within available transit operations resources.