

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: May 13, 2013

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 22, 2013

Subject: Adopt the West Suburban Service Changes Recommended Plan and Approve Title VI Service Equity Analysis

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
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Division/Department: Metro Transit / Service Development

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the West Suburban Service Changes Recommended Plan and approve the Title VI Service Equity Analysis of the Recommended Plan.

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.

Overview of Public Input Process

Staff used the feedback received during the pre-Concept Plan outreach and a review of the performance and productivity of existing express service in the area to develop a concept service plan, which became the topic of a formal review period. Metro Transit used several different outreach strategies to ensure broad public engagement, including rider alerts and on-board announcements to current customers, two public hearings and articles in local newspapers and city newsletters. The concept plan was available on-line and at libraries throughout the study area. The public was invited to submit comments via public hearing testimony, e-mail, comment cards, Customer Relations, letter, fax, telephone, Twitter and Facebook.

Approximately 150 comments were received from 110 individuals. Routes 664, 667, and 670 were the routes that received the most feedback. The topics of greatest concern were the proposed elimination of service on Highway 7 west of County Road 73, potential overloading, the elimination of trips serving the fringe of peak period and increases in travel time.

Recommended Plan Service Changes

Major changes proposed in the Concept Plan that continue in the Recommended Plan:

- Additional 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
- New local weekday and Saturday crosstown route operating between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights in Minnetonka
- Restructure Routes 664, 665, and 670

Feedback from stakeholders identified areas that warranted modification within the plan, and the Recommended Plan addresses many of these concerns by:

- Reinstating express service on Highway 7 west of County Road 73 and on County Road 101 south of Highway 7
- Retaining existing downtown arrival and departure times on Routes 664, 670 and 671
- Operating Route 671 non-stop starting at Minnetonka Blvd and Highway 169
- Addressing areas of potential overloads

A complete list of service changes and a map of the Recommended Plan are attached.

Service Equity Analysis

These proposed changes are considered to be a major service change. Therefore, a Title VI Service Equity Analysis is required to determine if the changes create a disparate impact or disproportionate burden on minority or low-income populations. The plan is a mix of service increases and service reductions. Overall the Recommended Plan will result in a 16.9% increase in transit service, as measured by the change in number of trips, across the study area.

Minority populations will see a larger increase in transit service (18.3%) than non-minority populations (16.5%). Non-low-income populations will have a larger increase in transit service (17.1%) than low-income populations (14.5%), however this difference is within the four-fifth's threshold that the Council uses to determine whether potential for disproportionate burden exists. Therefore, the Title VI service equity review of the Recommended Plan shows no potential for disparate impacts for minority populations or disproportionate burden for low-income populations.

Rationale

The West Suburban Service Changes 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 comment on the proposed changes. In addition, staff is required to conduct a Title VI equity review for major service changes and present the results of the analysis to the Council for approval.

Funding

The Recommended Plan was developed and will be operated within existing Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council transit service resources.

Known Support / Opposition

The West Suburban Service Changes Recommended Plan has received support from many stakeholders in the study area. While some residents expressed concerns with elements of the Concept Plan 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.

**WEST SUBURBAN SERVICE CHANGES
RECOMMENDED PLAN SUMMARY
August 24, 2013 Implementation**

Background and Purpose

- Study area includes St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, Deephaven, Greenwood, Excelsior, Shorewood and Tonka Bay
 - Area west of Highway 100, south of I-394 and Lake Minnetonka and north of Excelsior Boulevard and County Road 62
- Local routes 9N, 615 and 614 (new Minnetonka community circulator) along with express routes 664, 665, 667E, 670 and 671 were focus of study
- Improve local circulation as recommended in 2012 Minnetonka Transit Study
- Improve low productivity of express services while minimizing impacts on existing riders

Public Input Process

- The Concept Plan was available on-line and at libraries in the study area. Outreach strategies to ensure broad public engagement included:
 - 75 people attended two public hearings in Hopkins and Minnetonka
 - On buses, Rider Alerts were distributed to current customers and operators made announcements
 - Local newspapers, city newsletters and KSTP-TV covered the proposed changes
- Approximately 150 comments were received from 110 individuals. Ways to provide feedback included testifying at a public hearing, e-mail, Customer Relations, phone, comment cards, letter, fax, Twitter and Facebook
- Areas of greatest concern were the proposed elimination of Highway 7 service in Minnetonka, potential overloads, elimination of trips serving fringe of peak period and increases in travel time
- Five of eight routes in the Concept Plan have been modified in the Recommended Plan

Route 9N—Improving Local Circulation & Access

Concept and Recommended Plan

- Add 2 evening outbound and 2 inbound trips serving Greenbrier & Cedar Lake Road area by rerouting existing 9C trips.

Route 614—Improving Local Circulation & Access

Concept Plan

- New local circulator operating hourly between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights weekdays 6:30 am to 6:30 pm and 9:30 am to 3:30 pm Saturdays

Recommended Plan—Modifications to Concept Plan

- Weekday service hours extended to provide additional connections to Route 675 express at Ridgedale for current 667E express riders using fringe of peak express trips

Route 615—Improving Local Circulation & Access

Concept and Recommended Plan

- Increase weekday service span from current 7:15 am-5:40 pm to 6:50 am-7:40 pm.

Route 664—Improving Express Productivity

Concept Plan

- Reroute to cover current Route 665 service in Opus and along Smetana, 11th Avenue and retain current routing east of 11th Avenue
- Section of route between County Road 101 and 11th Avenue covered by rerouted 670 express
- Section of route on County Road 101 south of Excelsior covered by new local Route 614
- Reduce trips from current 4 inbound and 5 outbound to 3 in each direction

Recommended Plan—Modifications to Concept Plan

- Retain all current trip times
- Extend new Route 667H branch to provide additional coverage on County Road 101 segment
- Metro Transit will operate route to provide additional capacity with articulated buses

Route 665—Improving Express Productivity

Concept Plan and Recommended Plan

- Eliminate route and cover current segments with rerouted 664 and 670

Route 667—Improving Express Productivity, Eliminating Service Duplication

Concept Plan

- Eliminate 667E branch and trips
- Add new 667H branch to:
 - Provide service on Highway 7 in Hopkins for rerouted Route 670
 - Provide capacity on Minnetonka Boulevard east of Texas Avenue in peak period

Recommended Plan—Modifications to Concept Plan

- Add 667B trips to cover existing fringe of peak 667E service on Minnetonka Boulevard east of Texas
- Extend new 667H branch west to cover Highway 7 in Minnetonka currently served by Route 670 and south on County Road 101 to cover segment currently served by Route 664

Route 670—Improving Express Productivity

Concept Plan

- Reroute east of County Road 101 to cover for reroute 664 and for Route 665 at Hopkins park-ride
- Retain 3 trips in each direction, but eliminate downtown arrival for 8:30 am work start and replace it with an arrival downtown for a 7:00 am work start

Recommended Plan—Modifications to Concept Plan

- Continue to serve current work start and end times
- Starts in Excelsior with Tonka Bay and Orono segment to be covered by Route 671

Route 671—Improving Express Productivity and Eliminating Service Duplication

Concept Plan

- Reroute to serve Minnetonka Boulevard between Baker Road and Highway 100 to cover for eliminated 667E service
- Retain 3 trips in each direction, but eliminate downtown arrival for 8:30 am work start and replace it with an arrival downtown for a 7:00 am work start

Recommended Plan—Modifications to Concept Plan

- Reroute to use Highway 169
- Continue to serve current work start and end times
- Extended to start in Orono to cover current Route 670 segment

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Recommended Plan—Modifications to Concept Plan

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Route 670—Improving Express Productivity

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Figure 2. West Suburban Recommended Service Changes

