

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: June 27, 2016

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 13, 2016

Subject: Authorization for Staff to Bring West End and Route 9 Transit Study Concept Plan Out for Public Review

District(s), Member(s): District 3-Jennifer Munt, District 6-Gail Dorfman, District 7-Gary Cunningham, District 8-Cara Letofsky

Policy/Legal Reference: 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

Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian Lamb, General Manager 612-349-7510; Adam Harrington, Director Service Development 612-349-7779; Cyndi Harper, Manager Route Planning 612-349-7723; Steve Mahowald, Senior Planner 612-349-7775

Division/Department: Metro Transit/Service Development

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the West End and Route 9 Transit Study Concept Plan for public review.

Background

Metro Transit's West End and Route 9 Transit Study Concept Plan recommends improvements and efficiencies along Routes 9 (west of downtown Minneapolis), 604, 649, 675 and near the growing high-density job and residential opportunities in the West End area development near Highway 100 and I-394. Goals of the study include simplifying the structure of Route 9, improving service reliability, improving route performance by eliminating low-ridership segments and providing better connectivity between the West End and Minneapolis.

Study Area

As shown on the attached maps, the study area includes parts of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park and Minnetonka; and is bordered by I-94 to the east, Glenwood Avenue on the north, County Road 73 (Hopkins Crossroad) to the west and Cedar Lake Road/26th Street to the south.

Recommended Concept Plan

The concept plan proposes routing and frequency changes on Routes 9, 604, 649 and 675:

- Route 9 will be simplified, with fewer route variations and the elimination of service on some route segments.
- Route 604 between Louisiana Transit Center and Park Place Park & Ride will be replaced by Route 645 with a transfer.
- Route 649 is proposed for elimination and be replaced by Routes 9 and new Route 645.
- Route 675 will become a new limited-stop Route 645 serving the West End and providing a fast connection to downtown Minneapolis.

Details of proposed changes are included in the attached Executive Summary and accompanying maps.

Public Outreach and Next Steps

There will be an official public comment period in September to allow riders and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback. Community meetings will be held on Sept. 8 and Sept. 10. Information about the proposed service changes will be available online and staff will reach out to the affected cities and community-based organizations to help spread the word about the proposed service changes. Staff will also board buses to ensure that customers are aware of proposed changes and the public meetings. In addition to commenting in person, the public will be invited to submit comments via telephone, fax, email and the Metropolitan Council website.

A Final Plan with revisions based on public comment will be presented to the Council in late October/early November. Implementation of service changes are targeted for March 2017.

Rationale

Council policy requires public review of major service changes. The public outreach process allows riders and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback and staff the opportunity to revise the Concept Plan.

Funding

The service changes resulting from the project will be funded within existing Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council transit service resources.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to presenting the Concept Plan for public review.

WEST END AND ROUTE 9 TRANSIT STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West End and Route 9 Transit Study focuses on changing travel patterns in parts of north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park and Minnetonka and proposes modifications to the transit network to better match this new demand. While downtown Minneapolis is still a major regional employment center, most of the region's jobs are located at dispersed car-oriented suburban employment areas. However, recently more emphasis has been placed on creating suburban centers that integrate residential and employment development together in a pedestrian and transit friendly environment. The West End development near I-394 and Highway 100 in St. Louis Park and Golden Valley is a good example of this type of transit-oriented development.

Study Area

The project examines existing transit service and opportunities for improvements along Route 9 (west of downtown Minneapolis) and near the growing high-density job and residential opportunities in the West End development. Specifically, the study area is bordered by I-94 to the east, Glenwood Avenue on the north, County Road 73 (Hopkins Crossroad) to the west and Cedar Lake Road/26th Street to the south. Routes under review for this project include Route 9 west of downtown, Route 604, Route 649 and Route 675 east of the Louisiana Avenue Transit Center.

Project Goals

Goals of the study include simplifying route structure, providing better connectivity between the West End and other parts of the region, improving the performance and productivity of service in the study area, and ensuring that under-represented communities that rely on transit share in the benefits of service improvements:

- Route 9 currently has six branches. Simplifying the route structure to eliminate some of these variations will make the route easier for customers to understand.
- Create efficient schedules that provide more reliable and cost-effective service
- Improve the performance of these routes by reducing or eliminating service on under-utilized or duplicative route segments
- Focus on opportunities to grow ridership and increase transit market share by recognizing the demographic & development changes that are taking place. This includes providing a faster connection between downtown and the significant mixed use development at the West End as well as ensuring that under-represented communities that rely on transit share in benefits of proposed improvements.

Recommended Concept Plan

The concept plan proposes routing and frequency changes on Routes 9, 604, 649 and 675. Route 9 will be simplified, with fewer route variations and the elimination of service on some route segments. Route 604 will no longer operate between Louisiana Transit Center and Park Place Park & Ride. Route 649 is proposed for elimination and will instead be served by Routes 9 and new Route 645. Route 675 will become a new limited-stop route (Route 645) serving the West End and providing a fast connection to downtown Minneapolis.

Route 9: Route 9 will be simplified from six variations to three branches. Service is proposed to be eliminated on Cedar Lake Road between Penn and Glenwood, on the 9B branch along Xenia and Glenwood Avenue west of Penn, on the 9H branch along Ewing/France, 26th Street, Barry Street and the Highway 100 east frontage road, and on Wayzata Avenue west of Park Place. One-hundred twenty-eight one-way trips by 64 riders are affected by these changes; 43 of these riders are more than a quarter-mile from other service.

All trips will serve Glenwood and Penn avenues in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood, providing a more consistent routing and improving the frequency of service. All trips will also serve Laurel and Upton avenues and the West End via Wayzata, Utica, 16th Street and Park Place.

During rush hours, some trips will be rerouted to serve Cedar Lake Road east of Park Place (Jewish Community Center) and the other trips will serve the Louisiana Avenue Transit Center via Cedar Lake Road. Also, eastbound in the morning peak hour and westbound in the afternoon peak hour, service on the entire route east of Glenwood Avenue and Cedar Lake Road will operate every 20 minutes instead of every 15 minutes.

Service on the 9N branch on Cedar Lake Road west of Louisiana Avenue to the Greenbrier area in Minnetonka will be improved in the off-peak and will be available every 30 minutes on weekdays to match the weekend schedule. During peak periods this area will continue to be served by express routes 643 and 663.

Route 604: The portion of the route between Louisiana Transit Center and Park Place Boulevard and Wayzata Boulevard is proposed for elimination and will be replaced by new Route 645. Twenty-four one-way trips by 12 riders who currently ride between south and east of Louisiana Transit Center will instead have to transfer between routes 604 and new route 645. This route change will eliminate route duplication and allow for better timed connections.

Route 649: Route 649 is proposed for elimination and will be replaced by Route 9 and new Route 645 to avoid route duplication. Customers currently boarding on Louisiana Avenue and Cedar Lake Road will instead be served by Route 9. Service on Cedar Lake east of Park Place would be reduced from five to three trips on Route 9. Travel time for riders between the West End and downtown Minneapolis will increase by 16 minutes. Seventy-four one-way trips by 37 riders are affected by this change; 26 of them are more than quarter-mile from express service.

Riders using the Park Place Park & Ride and those using Route 649 to commute to jobs in the West End will be served by new Route 645 and have no increase in travel time. All existing Route 649 customers will continue to have a one-seat ride to downtown Minneapolis.

Route 675/new Route 645: A significant improvement proposed in this concept plan is limited-stop service between downtown Minneapolis and the West End via I-394 all days of the week, providing a 40 percent increase in service and a trip that is seven minutes faster than that currently provided on Route 9. Existing Route 675 would be modified to create this connection east of the Louisiana Avenue Transit Center by traveling on Wayzata, Zarthan Avenue, 16th Street, Park Place and I-394. Rush-hour direction trips would also serve Wayzata between Park Place and Highway 100. The route is no longer an express route, so it will be renumbered to Route 645 and a less-expensive local fare will be charged.

This reroute adds two to four minutes travel time for existing riders. Most customers board at park-and-ride lots with alternate express service, but there are 72 riders boarding east of Ridgedale during the morning rush hour that do not have an alternative and will be affected by the longer travel time.

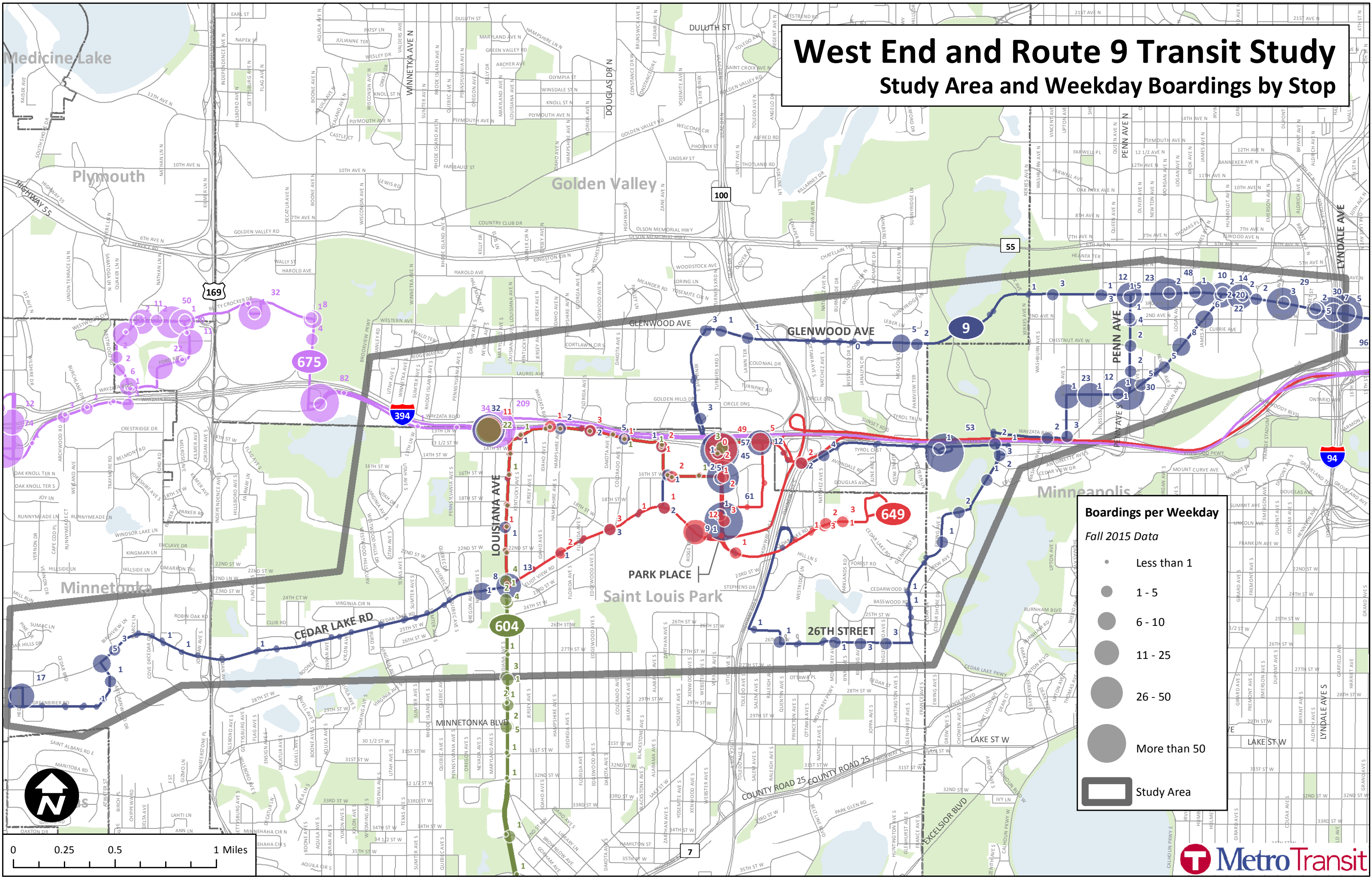
Public Outreach and Next Steps

There will be an official public comment period in September 2016 to allow riders and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback. Community meetings will be held on Sept. 8 and Sept. 10. In addition, information about the proposed service changes will be available online and staff will ride buses to talk with customers and reach out to other community-based organizations to help spread the word about the proposed service changes. In addition to commenting in person, the public will be invited to submit comments via telephone, fax, email and the Metropolitan Council website.

Please visit metrotransit.org/west-end for the latest project updates. These service changes are planned for implementation in March 2017.

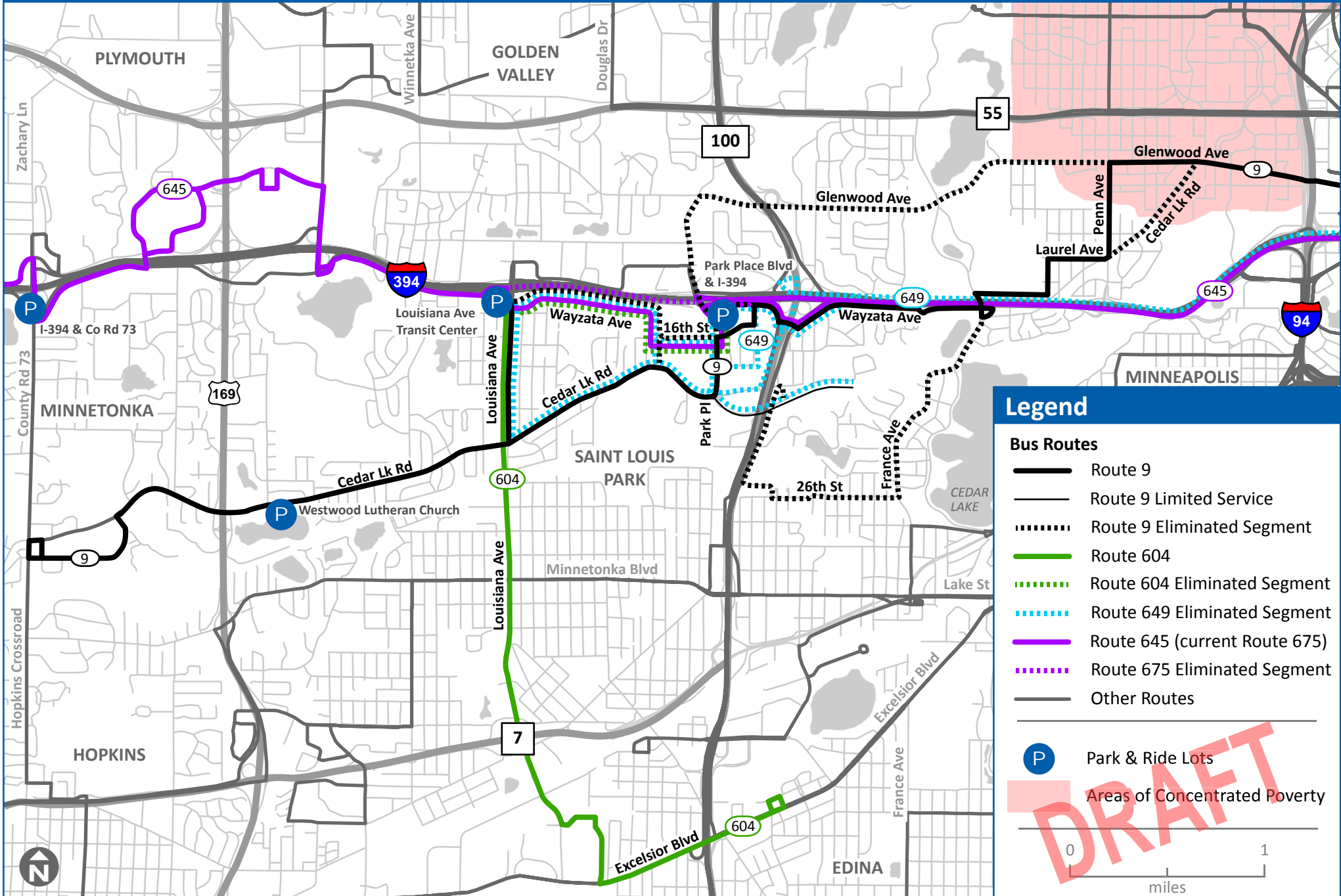
West End and Route 9 Transit Study

Study Area and Weekday Boardings by Stop



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

West End and Route 9 Transit Study - Proposed Concept Plan



Legend

Bus Routes

- Route 9
- Route 9 Limited Service
- Route 9 Eliminated Segment
- Route 604
- Route 604 Eliminated Segment
- Route 649 Eliminated Segment
- Route 645 (current Route 675)
- Route 675 Eliminated Segment
- Other Routes



Park & Ride Lots

Areas of Concentrated Poverty

