CHAPTER 4 – PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGES, RESOURCE AND RIDER IMPACTS

The West Suburban Concept Plan proposes several improvements to the local route network, which will improve local circulation and access for transit-reliant customers. The Concept Plan also outlines a consolidation of express service, which will reduce areas of route duplication and inefficiencies.

Local route improvements include adding two evening roundtrips on Route 9N to serve the Greenbrier area, extending the weekday evening hours of service on Route 615 and creating a new local route in Minnetonka. The local route improvements will result in an increase in small bus service of 16 weekday and six Saturday service hours and one bus.

The express route consolidations will blend five routes into four routes. Currently the express routes in the study area carry an average of 25 passengers per trip, which is below the regional capacity guidelines. The express changes will improve productivity by eliminating segments of route duplication and low productivity and fringe-of-the–peak-period trips with low ridership. The consolidation will result in longer travel times and a reduction in the number of trips for some existing riders. The proposed changes to express service will result in a decrease in big bus service of 12 weekday service hours and three peak buses

Details of the proposed West Suburban Service Changes are provided below for each route. For each of the routes, information is provided regarding its service area and transit market, number of trips, frequency of service, areas of service duplication, hours of service, ridership, productivity and distribution of rides. This information is also available in Table 2 of Appendix B. Maps and service information for each of the proposed routes are provided in Appendix B.

Local Route 9N – Adding Weekday Evening Trips Serving Greenbrier and Cedar Lake Road – Increasing Trips Options and Accessibility

Proposed Changes

Four weekday evening trips will change from Route 9C trips serving the Louisiana Transit Center (LTC) to Route 9N trips serving the moderate residential density pocket of apartments and condos along Greenbrier Road and Cedar Lake Road in Minnetonka.

The added service will be as follows (times are approximate):

- Westbound trips leaving downtown from 9th Street & Nicollet Mall at 7:05 p.m. and 9:05 p.m. and arriving at County Road 73 & Greenbrier at 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m.
- Eastbound trips departing County Road 73 & Greenbrier at 7:50 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. and arriving downtown at 8th Street & Nicollet Mall at 8:20 p.m. and 10:20 p.m.

These trips will supplement the current 9N service leaving downtown at 8:05 p.m. and leaving Greenbrier at 8:45 p.m.

Impacts

There is an average of two riders per trip at the LTC on each of the trips that will be rerouted to serve Greenbrier. The Greenbrier area has a higher level of residential density and is served by far fewer trips than LTC. Additionally, the productivity of the Greenbrier branch is slightly higher than the 9C. The rerouting will increase in-service hours by five minutes per trip, or 20 minutes. The frequency of the Route 9 trunk service, east of Park Place Boulevard to downtown and south Minneapolis, will not be impacted.

It is anticipated that the added evening service will generate an average of three rides per trip for a total of 12 rides and a productivity of 36 passengers per in-service hour. The added trips will improve connectivity and access for the Greenbrier area.

Local Route 614 – New Community Circulator between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights – Increasing Local Access and Connectivity

Proposed Changes

Route 614 will be a new demonstration route, operating between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights once an hour between 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. on weekdays and 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

The new route will travel between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights via Ridgedale Drive, Plymouth Road, Minnetonka Boulevard and County Road 101. In addition to serving the Ridgedale Shopping Center, these activity centers and residential complexes are served by Route 614: Ridgedale YMCA; Hennepin County Service Center; Ridgedale Library; Ridgehaven Mall; North Memorial Clinic; St. David's Center for Child & Family Development; Minnetonka City Hall; retail nodes at Minnetonka Mills, Minnetonka Boulevard and County Road 101 and at 7-Hi; and the low-income residential units of Minnetonka Heights.

Route 614 will be scheduled to connect with express Route 675 and local Route 615 at Ridgedale to improve regional connectivity and access.

Impacts

As noted earlier, transit often needs to strike a balance between "coverage" versus "productivity." Route 614 is an example of providing better coverage to increase connectivity and access in a lower density market. The route will provide an option for riders on the following existing express route segments proposed for elimination due to low ridership: County Road 101 between Minnetonka Heights and Highway 7 now served by express Route 664; County Road 101 between Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard now served by express Route 667E; and Plymouth Road between Minnetonka Boulevard and Ridgedale Drive now served by express Route 671.

With the new local regular service, there will be less reliance on Transit Link, the regional dial-a-ride service that is provided to areas without regular-route service. Route 614 will require 10.4 weekday and 5.2 Saturday in-service hours and can be operated with one bus. The productivity for Route 614 is targeted between 7.8 and 9.5 passenger per in-service hour.

Local Route 615 – Increasing Weekday Hours of Service, Trips Options, Accessibility and Connectivity

Proposed Changes

The hours of weekday service on Route 615 will be expanded to operate 30 minutes earlier in the morning and two hours later in the evening. Currently weekday service operates between 7:15 a.m.-5:40 p.m. With the proposed improvement, service will operate between 6:50 a.m.-7:40 p.m. Three new eastbound trips will depart from Ridgedale at 6:50 a.m., 5:50 p.m. and 6:50 p.m. Two new westbound trips will depart from Excelsior & Grand at 5:50 p.m. and 6:50 p.m.

Additionally, Route 615 will be scheduled to connect with new local Route 614 and express Route 675 to improve regional connectivity and access.

Impacts

Extending the service hours will increase access and connectivity for area residents and employees to the numerous activity centers and residential complexes served by Route 615. The added trips will increase in-service hours by a total of 3.83 hours.

It is anticipated that the added trips will generate 40 additional rides over the five added trips for a productivity of 10 passengers per in service hour.

Express Route 664 – Improving Productivity by Reducing Areas of Low Productivity and Service Overlap

Proposed Changes – Routing

Route 664 will continue to serve Mainstreet east of 11th Avenue as well as Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) between 5th Avenue in Hopkins and Highway 100 in St. Louis Park. The route will begin at Smetana Drive & Smetana Road and cover the Opus and 11th Avenue South area now served by Route 665.

Express service on the segment of the route on County Road 101 south of Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) as well as a small segment on Baker Road just east of I-494 (which is only served by one trip in each direction) will be discontinued. The County Road 101 segment has only one regular rider and will be covered by the new local Route 614. The Baker Road segment has no regular riders. The segment of the route on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) west of Shady Oak Road and the segment in Hopkins on Mainstreet west of 11th Avenue will instead be covered by a reconfigured Route 670

Proposed Changes – Trips Times

The first two a.m. eastbound trips have a combined average of less than 20 rides per trip. These two trips will be combined into one that will arrive downtown at 6:45 a.m. The remaining two a.m. eastbound trips to downtown have a combined average of 27 rides per trip and will be rescheduled to arrive earlier at 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. to better serve common work start times.

The first westbound p.m. trip from downtown, which leaves Marquette & 3rd Street at 3:41 p.m., will be eliminated since it averages only 16 passengers. The trip that departs at 4:10 p.m., which carries 28 passengers, will be retained. The last two westbound trips from downtown have a combined average of 23 passengers per trip, and these trips will be combined into one that will leave downtown at

approximately 5:20 p.m. The revised p.m. westbound schedule will have trips serving work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Impacts

The productivity of the route is anticipated to increase by over 50 percent to 40 passengers per in-service hour. Route 664's in-service hours will be reduced by 4.1 hours from its current 8.6 in-service hours to 4.5 in-service hours. Bus requirements will remain at the current three peak buses.

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will result in a 16 percent ridership lost from the existing base of 212 rides to 178 rides. For those trip times no longer served by Route 664, alternative service is available for passengers in Hopkins and St. Louis Park on local Route 12. Existing Route 664 customers who shift to Route 670 will save three to eight minutes in travel time.

Express Route 665 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Express Service

Proposed Changes – Routing

The Route 665 is proposed for elimination. Route 664 will serve the Opus and 11th Avenue South area now covered by Route 665, and Route 670 will serve the park and ride on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) at 8th Avenue, currently served by Route 665.

Proposed Changes – Trip Times

Route 665 has three inbound trips arriving downtown for work starts of 7:00 a.m., 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and three outbound trips from downtown that serve work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. These trip times will continue to be served by routes 664 and 670.

Travel time will increase by four to 10 minutes for current Route 665 riders along 11th Avenue and in the Opus area. The total travel time on proposed Route 664 between Smetana Road and downtown will be approximately 40 minutes.

Impacts

Route 665 averages 137 daily rides. There are 3.8 in-service hours and it requires three peak buses. It is anticipated that 80 to 90 percent of the riders will shift to either Route 664 or Route 670. It is anticipated that productivity of routes 664 and 670 will increase by over 50 percent.

Express Route 667E – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Service and Eliminating Areas of Overlap

Proposed Changes – Routing

The Route 667E is proposed for elimination. Existing Route 667E customers on Minnetonka Boulevard between County Road 101 and Highway 100 will instead be served by Route 671. A new local route, 614, will serve County Road 101 between Minnetonka Heights and Minnetonka Boulevard and replace Route 667E. Alternative service on Minnetonka Boulevard between Texas Avenue and Highway 100 is also available on express Route 667B and Route 17 local service.

Proposed Changes – Trip Times

Route 671 replacement service on Minnetonka Boulevard will provide three trips in each direction serving downtown work start times of 7:00 a.m., 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

There are three downtown arrival and departure times currently served by Route 667E that will no longer have express service: the eastbound trips arriving at 2nd Avenue South and 6th Street at 6:09 a.m. and 9:46 a.m. and a westbound trip departing from Marquette and 3rd Street at 8:07 a.m. Alternative service for these trips time for riders east of Texas Avenue is provided by Route 17. These trips average 16, 21 and 5 passengers, respectively.

Impacts

The County Road 101 segment has an average of three riders. New local Route 614 will provide service on County Road 101. These customers can transfer at Ridgedale to Express Route 675 serving downtown Minneapolis. Route 667E averages 309 daily rides. It has 8.6 in-service hours and requires three peak buses. The productivity on the remaining Route 667service is discussed below in 667H/667B extension section.

It is anticipated that 90 percent of the Route 667E riders will shift to alternative service, in particular routes 667B and 671.

New Route 667H Service or Route 667B Extension – Providing Alternative Service for Route 670 Riders along Highway 7 in Hopkins

As noted below in the discussion of the Route 670 service, Route 670 will be rerouted to cover the Excelsior Boulevard and Mainstreet segments of Route 664 and will no longer serve Highway 7. The section of the route on Highway 7 in Market Area II in Hopkins is quite productive, with a total of 45 rides over six trips. As a result, it is proposed to continue service on this segment of Highway 7. Service can be provided by either a new Route 667H or by an extension of the Route 667B trips.

A new Route 667H service will start at Highway 7 and County Road 73 and travel via Highway 7, Highway 169 and Minnetonka Boulevard to Highway 100 and I-394. There will be three Route 667H trips in each direction, serving the 7:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. work starts and 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. work end times. The service will require 3.5 in-service hours to operate, and net productivity is estimated at 13 passengers per in-service hour. Travel time for the current Route 670 riders along Highway 7 in Hopkins will be approximately 35 minutes as compared to the current 25 minutes.

An extension of Route 667B service will also start at Highway 7 and County Road 73. It will travel via Highway 7, Aquila Avenue and Amhurst. At Amherst it will follow the current Route 667B pattern on 36th Street, Texas Avenue and Minnetonka Boulevard to Highway 100 and I-394. All current Route 667B trips will be extended to Highway 7 and County Road 73, providing six trips inbound in the morning and five outbound trips in the afternoon. The new trip times will be approximately the same as current Route 667B scheduled times. Extending Route 667B will require an additional 1.28 in-service hours and net productivity is estimated at 35 passengers per in-service hour. Travel time for the current Route 670 riders along Highway 7 in Hopkins will be approximately 45 minutes as compared to the current 25 minutes.

Routings for both the new Route 667H and the Route 667B extension routings are shown in Appendix B.

Express Route 670 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Service and Eliminating Low Ridership Segments

Proposed Changes – Routing

No changes on Route 670 west of Hutchins Drive and County Road 101 are proposed. For service between County Road 101 and 11th Avenue in Hopkins, Route 670 will replace Route 664, traveling on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3), Shady Oak Road and Mainstreet. At Mainstreet and 11th Avenue, Route 670 will operate on 11th Avenue and Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) and then travel non-stop on Highway 169 and I-394 non-stop to downtown. Route 670 is proposed to replace the Route 665 service on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) between 11th Avenue and Highway 169 and be the primary route serving the Hopkins Park and Ride.

Route 670 service on Highway 7 between County Road 101 and County Road 73 is proposed to be eliminated. The segment on Highway 7 between County Road 73 and Highway 169 will instead be served by either Route 667H or an extension of Route 667B.

Proposed Changes – Trips Times

Route 670 will have three inbound trips arriving downtown for work starts of 7:00 a.m., 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and three outbound trips from downtown that serve work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. There will not be an express trip serving the 8:30 a.m. work start which is averaging less than 17 passengers. Instead, the arrival for a 7:00 a.m. work start is being proposed. In addition to providing service for customers needing to arrive downtown by 7:00 a.m., this earlier trip will also better serve individuals who need to transfer to reach a 7:30 a.m. work start time outside of downtown.

Travel time for riders west of County Road 101 will increase by up to three minutes, whereas travel time for current Route 664 riders west of 11th Avenue will decrease by three to eight minutes. Travel time for Route 665 riders boarding at the Hopkins Park and Ride will not change.

Impacts

Ridership is anticipated to increase from 113 to 142 rides. Since the in-service hours will essentially remain unchanged, productivity will increase by 24 percent from 17 to 21 passengers per in-service hour. Three peak buses will continue to be needed on the route.

There are four regular riders and four occasional riders on the segment of Highway 7 between County Road 101 and County Road 73 that is proposed for elimination. Potential alternative service is available on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) and Minnetonka Boulevard. There are approximately 25 riders on Highway 7 in Hopkins who will instead be served by the new Route 667H or an extension of Route 667B.

Express Route 671 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Service and Eliminating Areas of Low Ridership

Proposed Changes – Routing

Route 671 west of Minnetonka Boulevard and Plymouth Road will not change, but service on Plymouth Road north of Minnetonka Boulevard will be eliminated. Instead, Route 671 will continue on

Minnetonka Boulevard to Highway 100, covering the segment of Minnetonka Boulevard currently served by Route 667E. Route 671 will travel non-stop on Highway 100 and I-394 to downtown.

Proposed Changes – Trip Times

Route 671 will have three inbound trips arriving downtown for work starts of 7:00 a.m., 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and three outbound trips from downtown that serve work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. It is proposed that the 8:30 a.m. work start trip, which is averaging less than 21 passengers, will be eliminated. In its place, a new trip meeting a 7:00 a.m. work start is being proposed. In addition to providing service for customers needing to arrive downtown by 7:00 a.m., this earlier trip will also better serve individuals who need to transfer to reach a 7:30 a.m. work start time outside of downtown.

Travel time for current Route 671 riders west of Plymouth Road will increase by five to eight minutes.

Impacts

Route 671 currently averages 166 rides; it is anticipated that ridership will increase to 294 one-way trips. In-service hours will increase slightly to 6.6 and productivity will increase by 60 percent from 28 to 45 passengers per in-service hour. Bus requirements will remain at three peak buses.

There are four riders on Plymouth Road and approximately 20 riders on Route 671 using the Plymouth Road Park and Ride. The passengers on Plymouth Road will have alternative service on the new Route 614, which will be scheduled to provide connections to express Route 675 at Ridgedale Shopping Center. Plymouth Road Park and Ride customers have alternative express service on Route 672 as well as additional park-and-ride service options at the I-394 and County Road 73 Park and Ride.