

CHAPTER ONE: SUMMARY OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE NETWORK

CURRENT NETWORK STRUCTURE

In the Northwest Metro Transit Study area, as in most of the Metro Transit network, there are two distinct route structures, namely, one for off-peak periods (the “base” structure) and one for peak periods.

The base route structure is generally radial, focusing on downtown. In north Minneapolis, the route structure is a traditional grid system, with the majority of services being in a north-south alignment oriented to downtown Minneapolis. Most suburban routes, on the other hand, are structured around timed transfer focal points at Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Center transit centers. Metro Transit’s approach to providing productive yet convenient service in suburban areas has been to operate several short shuttle routes serving the surrounding area from transit centers strategically located throughout the suburbs, with connections between major transit centers and also with downtown Minneapolis.

During peak hours, most of the base network remains, and is overlaid by additional peak-only commuter routes, providing direct, no-transfer service between suburban residential areas and downtown Minneapolis. Many of these routes also serve one or more of the many park-and-ride lots located throughout the suburban areas. Typically, these routes use the freeway network to allow relatively quick travel times between downtown and the suburban neighborhoods that they serve.

The current route network in the study area as of April 2006 is in Figure 1.

The Northwest Metro Transit Study area can be divided in five parts: Minneapolis, Brooklyn Center Transit Center (BCTC) services, Robbinsdale Transit Center routes, Starlite Transit Center connections and commuter routes:

MINNEAPOLIS

In north Minneapolis, the route structure is a traditional grid system, with the majority of services being in a north-south alignment oriented to downtown Minneapolis. The grid is well developed, with the exception of Penn Avenue. During rush hours the area is primarily served by local routes, with the exception of limited stop service between BCTC and downtown via Osseo Road, 44th Avenue, Fremont and Dowling. Some routes, in particular Route 22, have complex multiple branches that make use of the service difficult to understand.

BROOKLYN CENTER TRANSIT CENTER

Routes from this facility serve primarily Minneapolis, Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park. Route 5 is the primary local connection to north Minneapolis. Daily connections exist with Starlite Transit Center; weekday connections exist with Robbinsdale Transit Center and across the Mississippi River into Anoka County. Bus routes are timed to facilitate transfers.

ROBBINSDALE TRANSIT CENTER

Routes from this facility serve primarily Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, New Hope and Golden Valley. Route 14 is the primary local connection to north Minneapolis. A connection

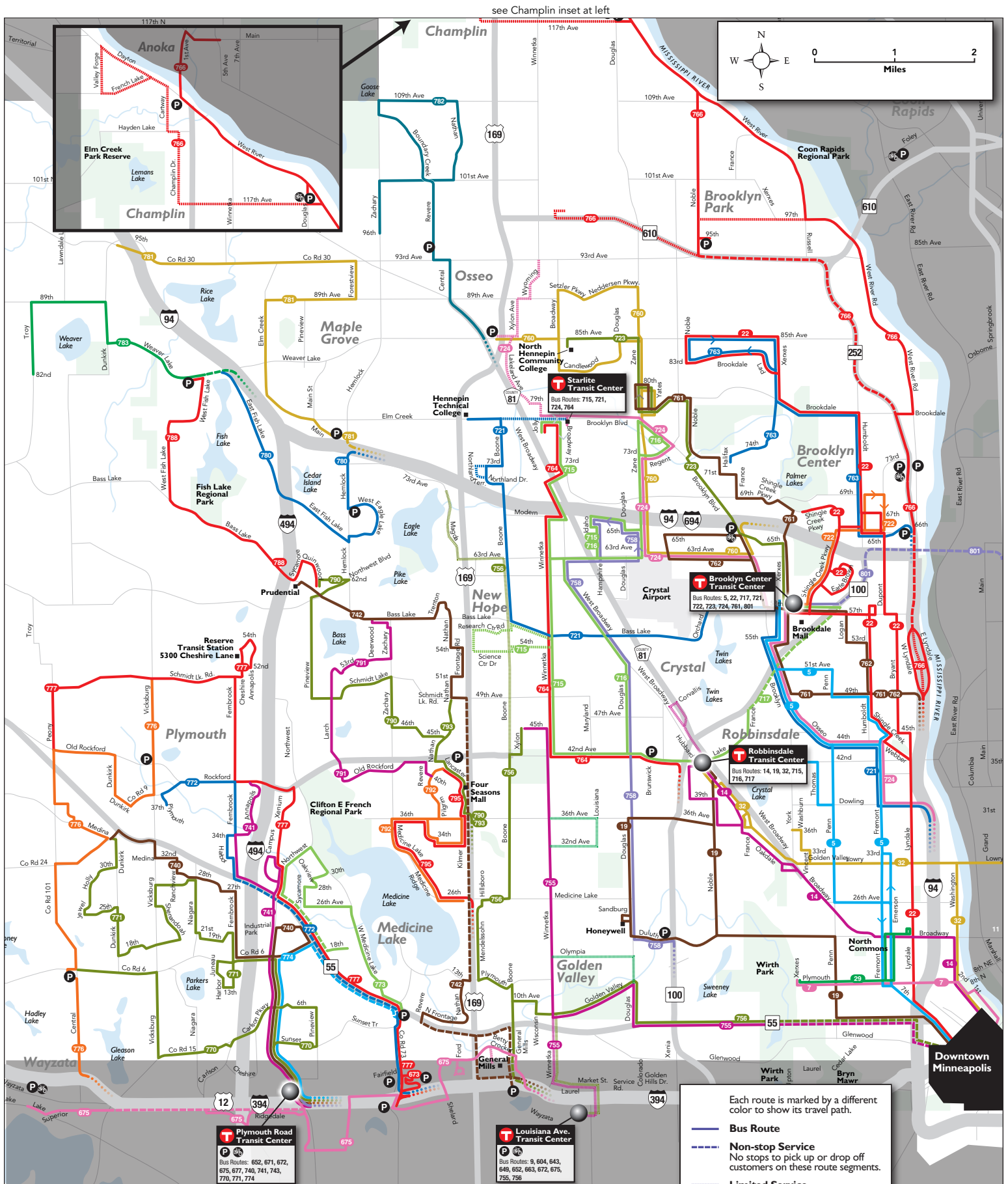


Figure 1

exists with Brooklyn Center Transit Center on weekdays and with Starlite Transit Center in the peak periods. Bus routes are less coordinated for timed transfers.

STARLITE TRANSIT CENTER

This transit center currently functions as an anchor point rather than a major transfer location. There are fewer routes serving this facility than any other transit centers and more random transfer connections. The Northwest Metro Transit Study will increase the role of this facility in serving the transit needs of the northwest suburbs.

COMMUTER ROUTES

These routes provide direct, no-transfer service between suburban residential areas and downtown Minneapolis. Many of these routes also serve one or more of the many park-and-ride lots located throughout the suburban areas. Typically, these routes use the freeway network to allow relatively quick travel time between downtown and the suburban neighborhoods that they serve. Many of these routes have a “local tail” section before serving a primary park-and-ride lot and then traveling non-stop to downtown. Express or limited-stop routes without a major park-and-ride lot are notably less productive. The majority of these routes operate only in peak periods, although Routes 755, 756 and 766 also operate in the midday.

CURRENT SERVICE FREQUENCIES AND HOURS OF SERVICE

As would be expected, the sections of the Northwest Metro Transit Study area with the most frequent service are also those with the highest residential and employment densities. In north Minneapolis the coverage and frequency is good at all times. North Minneapolis has a frequency range of every 5-7 minutes in rush hour to every 30 minutes in the late evening. Most areas in north Minneapolis are within a ¼-mile walking distance to transit. All major corridors (Lyndale Avenue, West Broadway, Emerson/Fremont and Penn Avenue) have good service at all times of the day and all days of the week. Service hours are typically between 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., with 24-hour service operating on Route 5.

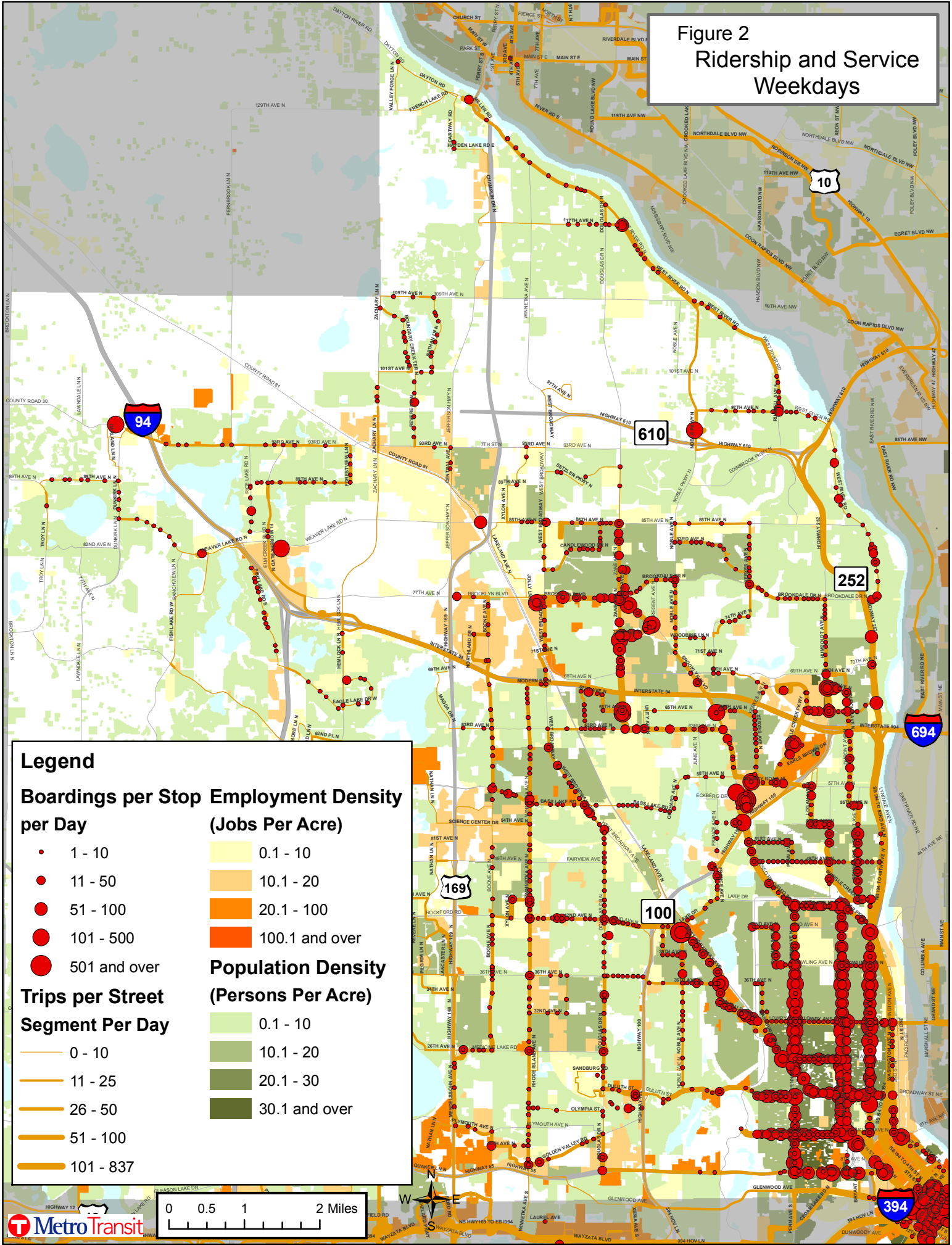
In other parts of the study area- specifically the suburban areas- route coverage varies considerably. During peak periods, coverage is quite good. During off-peak times, however, many routes do not operate. Those that do may have frequencies of 60 minutes or more.

RIDERSHIP AND ROUTE PERFORMANCE

A comprehensive analysis of existing transit ridership and route performance is provided in the Existing Conditions Report. It includes ridership by route, time of day and day of week, along with the distribution of boardings and alightings at individual bus stops. This analysis is based on extensive ride checks that were completed in November 2001-February 2002 and were rechecked as necessary in 2005 and 2006. Figure 2 illustrates the ridership activity on weekdays. Key findings from the analysis:

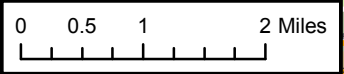
- Level of transit service throughout the day is reasonably well-matched with the distribution of current demand
- Ridership in north Minneapolis is strong at all times
- Ridership during peak periods is generally good, especially on commuter routes

Figure 2
Ridership and Service
Weekdays



Legend

Boardings per Stop per Day	Employment Density (Jobs Per Acre)
• 1 - 10	0.1 - 10
• 11 - 50	10.1 - 20
• 51 - 100	20.1 - 100
• 101 - 500	100.1 and over
• 501 and over	
Trips per Street Segment Per Day	Population Density (Persons Per Acre)
— 0 - 10	0.1 - 10
— 11 - 25	10.1 - 20
— 26 - 50	20.1 - 30
— 51 - 100	30.1 and over
— 101 - 837	



- Primary boarding locations: downtown Minneapolis; along Penn Avenue, Emerson/Fremont Avenues, and West Broadway; at the Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Center transit centers; major park-and-ride locations
- Ridership on suburban routes during the off-peak varies considerably
- Ridership levels are lower in the evenings and on weekends, as are service levels

DEMOGRAPHICS AND LAND USE

Staff analyzed, and mapped where appropriate, the various forms of demographics and land use in north Minneapolis and the northwest suburbs that would be expected to influence transit use:

- Population density
- Employment density
- Retail centers
- Youth population
- Seniors population
- Households in poverty
- Minority population
- Major trip generators

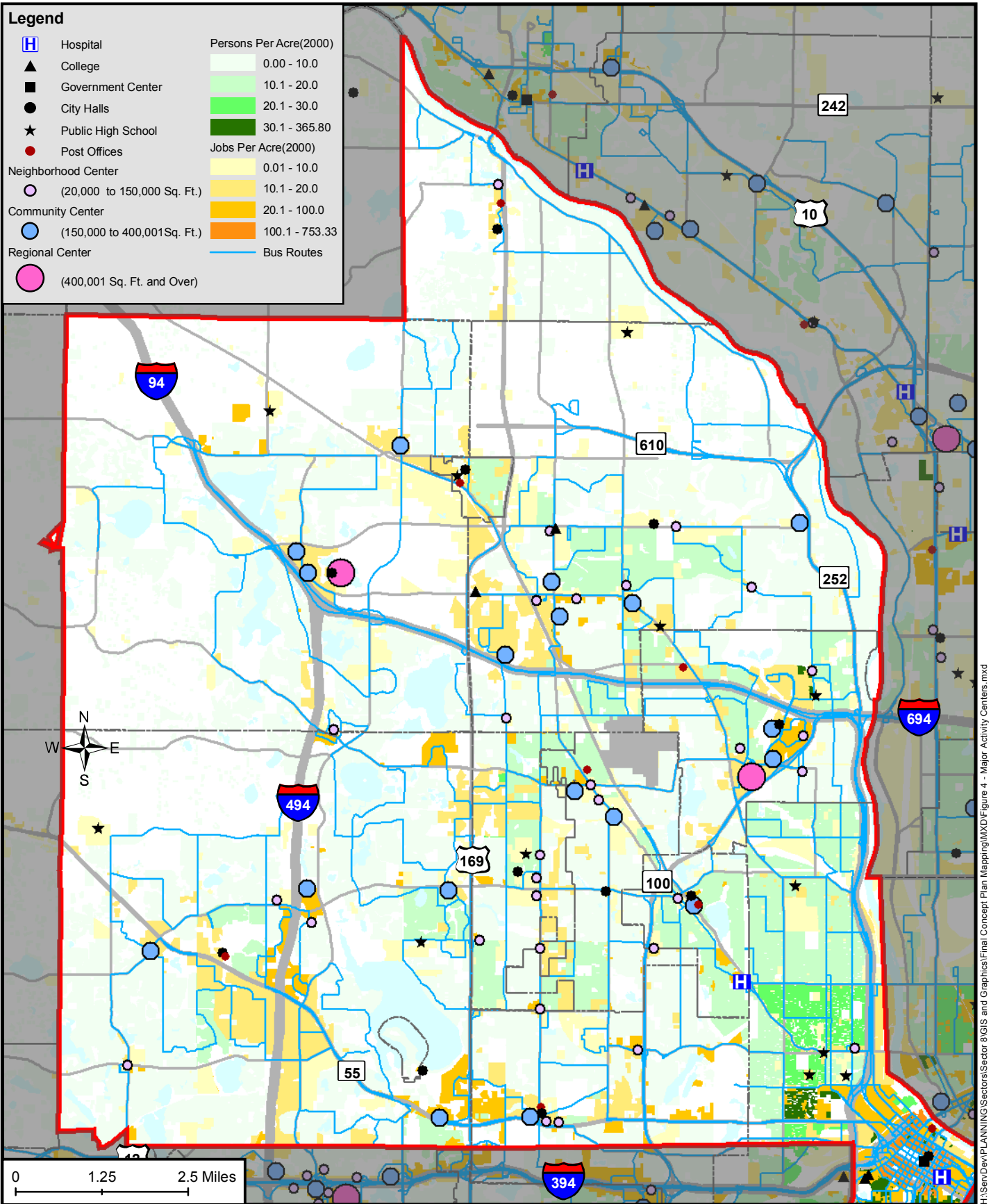
In general, the analysis showed that north Minneapolis is densely developed and has demographic characteristics that are consistent with high transit usage. In addition there are many high traffic activity centers within other parts of the study area, most of which are located on prime transportation corridors (e.g. West Broadway, Brooklyn Boulevard, Zane Avenue) as well as the two colleges and the major shopping centers. These activity centers are shown in Figure 3, along with residential and employment densities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT UPDATE

Since ridership counts were obtained in winter 2001-02, several service changes have been implemented. New ridership data has been gathered as part of this planning effort:

- Routes 94E, 712, 716 Sunday, 717 Saturday and Sunday, 755 Saturday were eliminated.
- Plymouth Avenue is now served by Routes 7 and 29 instead of Route 20.
- Route 765 was incorporated into Route 758
- Route 768 was incorporated in Route 766.
- Routes 5J, 19S, 717 and 758 were rerouted.
- All off-peak service on the Douglas and Noble branches of Route 19 was eliminated.
- New midday short-lines on Route 715 to 54th/Wisconsin were added during weekday off-peak times.
- Weekday off-peak services on Route 717, Saturday service on Routes 715 and 716 and peak service on Route 32 were eliminated.
- The Brookdale Transit Center was relocated to new Brooklyn Center Transit Center.

In addition, the Hiawatha light-rail transit line opened between downtown Minneapolis, south Minneapolis, the airport and Mall of America. The new LRT line provides new connections and mobility opportunities with bus routes throughout the system.



Major Activity Centers

Figure 3