

7 Capital and Facility Recommendations

Each existing facility was designed to be functional for customers, and in many cases, meet community aesthetic objectives. A recommended facility enhancement program builds on these successes (Figure16).

Mall of America

Mall of America is both a destination for customers and a transfer location for services connecting the region. The Final Plan calls for the connection of Hiawatha LRT, West 7th Street limited stop service, I-494 limited-stop service and other local routes. The park-and-ride lot (relocating to the new 28th Ave Station) continues to attract customers to regional services.

Southdale Shopping Center

Park-and-ride service operating east to the I-35W corridor will be operated and may generate some transfer movements, as will the 66th Street crosstown route. However, passenger activity at Southdale will be more oriented around Mall access, rather than transfers, compared with the current situation.

I-35W Transit Facilities

New high-frequency express service on I-35W is introduced under the plan. The service will operate planned between Bloomington South Transit Center (98th Street) and downtown Minneapolis, with stops at Bloomington South Transit Center, 82nd Street, Southtown Mall, Best Buy Transit Center, 76th Street/Knox Avenue, 66th Street, Diamond Lake Road, 46th Street and Lake Street. In the long term, an added station at 38th Street is planned. Along with enhanced service, existing facilities will have to be upgraded.

Bloomington South Transit Center - The Final Plan includes a new facility at this location near 98th Street with a small transit center and major park-and-ride lot. New all-day I-35W express service will serve this facility.

Metro Transit currently owns a portion of the site and is constructing an 82-car park-and-ride lot, and will supplement this site with more than 100 spaces at St. Luke's Lutheran Church at Old Shakopee Road & Logan Avenue.

82nd Street & I-35W - Currently it takes a long time for buses to move through this facility, adding time for customers who are getting

on or off, as well as those continuing to other destinations. The I-35W and 82nd Street changes planned in the long-term Final Plan (after 2010) will allow transfers in both directions without the need for all buses to enter the Transit Center by moving the site to be over the freeway.

Best Buy Transit Center- The Final Plan calls for facilities that include a small transit center and 500 car park-and-ride lot. This site will be served by Route 576 express service direct to downtown Minneapolis during rush-hours and served by Route 535 limited-stop service along I-35W and Route 594 along I-494 during most weekday hours. Routes 538 (rush hours only), 539, 540 and 542 will also serve Best Buy.

I-494 Express Transit Facilities

Service is ultimately planned between Mall of America and Southwest Station in Eden Prairie. In the short-term, service will extend between Southwest Station and Best Buy Transit Center. Long-term plans to improve transit speed and customer convenience will be undertaken as part of I-494 corridor planning and reconstruction work. Short-term plans call for intermediate stops at Normandale (Computer Avenue) at 77th, and 76th / Parklawn, Minnesota Drive / France, 76th Street/ York Avenue and Best Buy headquarters, and use of bus-only highway shoulder lanes.

Highway 100 Express Facilities

Service is planned between downtown Minneapolis and southwest Bloomington along Normandale/Highway 100 and I-394. Stations are planned for the park-and-ride lots located at 98th & Normandale, 94th & Nesbitt, 84th & Chalet Road and at a location near Highway 100 and Vernon Avenue. Specific park-and-ride recommendations are presented below.

Normandale Village (Loehmann's) Shopping Center, St. Edward's Catholic Church at 94th Street & Nesbitt Avenue - Enhance the customer waiting area to accommodate greater demand for the planned more frequent and direct express service.

84th Street at Chalet Road – This site owned by the City of Bloomington will be expanded by Metro Transit to provide spaces for up to 300 cars.

Vernon Avenue near Highway 100 (Edina) – A new 300-500-car park-and-ride facility, developed jointly with the city and a private developer, is envisioned near Vernon Avenue and Highway 100.

Lake Street Limited-stop Facilities

Service will operate between Uptown Transit Center and Midway Shopping Center at University Avenue and Snelling Avenue via Lake Street, Marshall Avenue and Snelling Avenue. Designated stops are planned at Uptown Transit Station, Girard Avenue, Lyndale Avenue, Nicollet Avenue, 1st Avenue, I-35W, 4th Avenue, Chicago Avenue, Bloomington Avenue, Cedar Avenue, Hiawatha LRT Midtown Station, 26th Avenue, 36th Avenue, 44th Avenue, Otis Avenue, Cretin Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Fairview Avenue, Fry St., Snelling Avenue/I-94, and University Avenue/Pascal Street (Midway Shopping Center).

Hiawatha LRT Midtown Station - This will become a new major transfer location once Route 55 Hiawatha LRT begins service in April 2004 and the Lake Street limited-stop is implemented.

Chicago Avenue at Lake Street - This is a major transfer location and enhanced transit facilities/amenities are recommended for this site to accommodate the demand beyond the enhanced limited-stop station.

West 7th Limited-Stop Facilities

Service will operate between downtown St. Paul and Mall of America via West 7th Street in St. Paul. New passenger waiting facilities will be constructed in the summer of 2003 along W. 7th Street at many of the following new limited-stop locations: St. Clair Avenue, Randolph Avenue, Watson/Tuscorora Avenue, Otto Avenue, Albion Avenue, Mickey's, Rankin Street, St. Paul/Madison Street, W. Maynard Drive/Sibley Plaza, Airport/Lindbergh Terminal and 34th Avenue, American Blvd. (80th Street)/34th Ave, American Blvd./Metro Dr., 82nd St./28th Ave. and Mall of America.

West 7th Street at West Maynard Drive/Sibley Plaza/Madison Street - This is an existing transfer location, which will be enhanced with the Sector 5 plan. There are several restructured routes that will serve the area, including Routes 46, 54 limited-stop and 84. In 2003 enhanced shelter facilities and amenities will be constructed.

7.1 Other Planned Infrastructure Improvements

Directional or "trailblazer" signage - Currently, signage directing customers to Metro Transit park-and-ride lots is minimal. This plan would enhance signage to planned and existing park-and-rides to further market to the public the enhanced express services offered.