

1 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE & SCOPE

This report provides an evaluation of current transit service provided in the Central Corridor to determine its effectiveness and efficiency. It examines existing conditions as well as potential new service, transit market opportunities and facility needs.

Improvement and expansion of the public transit system is a central element of the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan's (TPP) approach to accommodating the population and employment growth forecast for the region. The TPP calls for development of a network of transitways consisting of bus-only shoulders, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, bus rapid transit, exclusive busways, Light Rail Transit (LRT) and commuter rail service.

As part of this transitway plan, the Central Corridor light-rail line is scheduled to open in 2014 between Minneapolis and St. Paul as the Green Line. The line is expected to carry an estimated 13.2 million of the annual rides by year 2030, or 9 percent of total regional annual rides. Ridership models project that 40 percent of the Green Line riders will ride bus service to reach the trains at an LRT station. That is a total of 5.3 million annual bus rides.

Metro Transit uses a sector-based approach to address the emerging transit needs within the region. As shown in **Figure 1**, the region is broken into nine transit planning sectors. Sectors 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8 have undergone prior planning studies similar to the process planned for the Central Corridor review. Pieces of the Central Corridor study area were previously included as part of the NE Minneapolis (Sector 1), NE St. Paul (Sector 2) and Central-South (Sector 5) transit studies. The Central Corridor Transit Service Study will revisit transit needs in this area as well as coordinating bus routes with the new Green Line service.

The study area for the Central Corridor Transit Service Study, shown in **Figure 2**, is bounded by the Mississippi River on the south, I-35E on the east, Larpenteur/East Hennepin avenues on the north and by Hiawatha Avenue, East Lake Street and the Mississippi River on the west. The Study Area is almost completely urban, including downtown Minneapolis, downtown Saint Paul and the University of Minnesota, and covering many neighborhoods of St. Paul, Minneapolis and the suburbs of Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and Roseville. The population of the Study Area is about 246,170, with minorities making up 35 percent. There are 113,378 housing units. In the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the Green Line, the population is about 163,790, with minorities comprising 45 percent, in 113,378 housing units. As of 2008, there were about 357,587 jobs in the Study Area, of which, 348,558 jobs were located in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Green Line or about 22 percent of the employment in the entire metropolitan area.

The routes included in the study include all those which operate a significant portion of their total service in the study area and which provide a connection to the Green Line. This includes routes 2, 3, 6, 8, 16, 21, 50, 53, 62, 63, 65, 67, 84, 87, 94, 134, and 144. These routes are indicated in bold lines on **Figure 2**. Several other routes provide a significant portion of their total service in the study area but do

not provide a connection to the Green Line. This includes routes 46, 61, 68, 70, 74, and 272. These routes are not included in the study, but they are included on maps and other materials in the study for reference. Public transit service provided by the University of Minnesota, including the Campus Connector and circulator routes are also not included in this study.

This report will address the existing conditions of the routes in the study, examining the markets and unmet opportunities that exist for the current transit service being provided. It will also document the development patterns, major attractions and destinations in the Study Area as well as current and future travel patterns.

The Central Corridor Transit Service Study will provide a review of the performance and structure of existing transit service and also examine the integration and expansion of transit service to connect with the Central Corridor Green Line that is expected to begin operating in 2014.

Figure 1 – Map of Metropolitan Area Transit Planning Sectors and Central Corridor Study Area

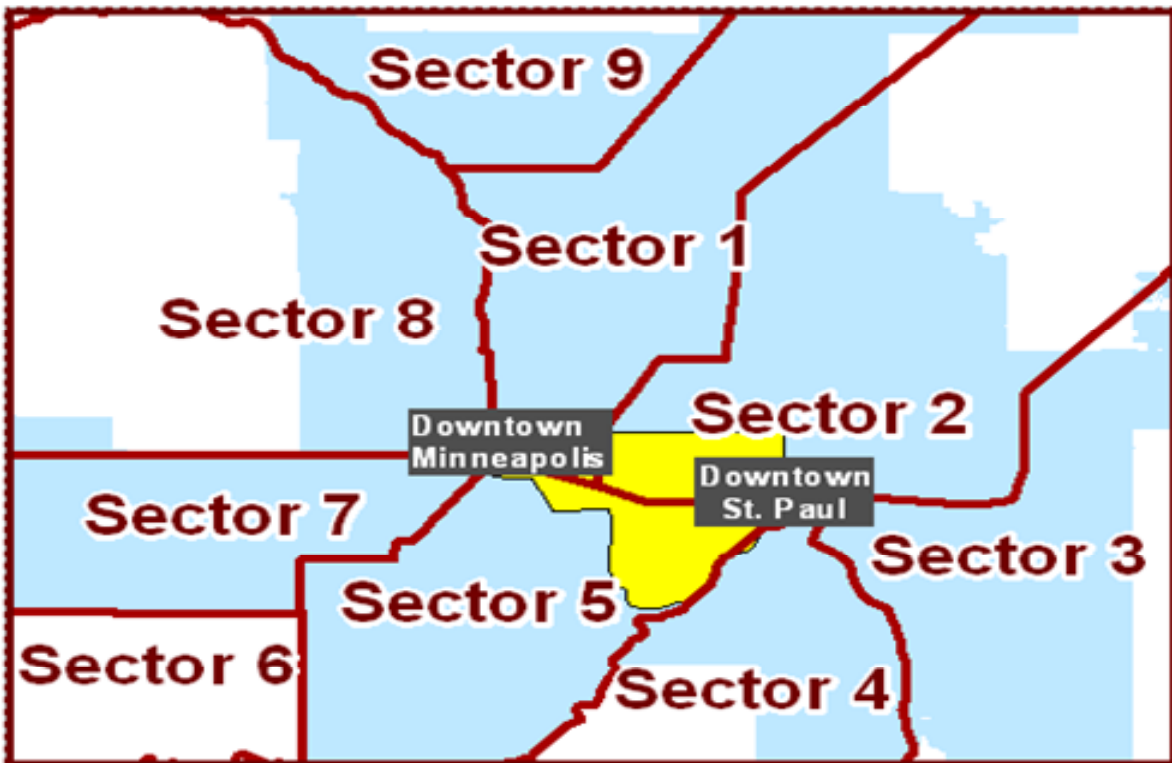


Figure 2 - Map of the Central Corridor Existing Bus Service Network and Study Area

