

CHAPTER 3 – KEY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF PLAN

The two principal objectives of the West Suburban Service Changes project are to improve local circulation and access for transit-reliant communities and to improve the productivity of existing express service by eliminating segments of route duplication, low productivity and fringe of the peak-period trips with low ridership.

These objectives highlight two contrasting operational models. The first, improving local circulation and access for transit-reliant communities in lower density markets, highlights what is often referred to as the Coverage Model, where transit serves as many areas as possible. The second objective, improving the productivity of the existing express service, emphasizes efficiency in maximizing the number of people served, focusing transit resources in higher density markets. This approach is often referred to as the Productivity Model.

Another way to think of coverage versus productivity is in terms of “bringing transit to people” (the coverage model) versus “bringing people to transit” (the productivity model). When transit is brought to people by covering larger, lower density areas, productivity drops as more time is spent serving passengers in dispersed locations. As a result, productivity can decrease and subsidy per passenger can increase. On the other hand, when people are brought to transit, through park-and-ride facilities, focused boarding points, or ultimately through intensified land use, productivity increases and the subsidy per passenger decreases.

The West Suburban Service Changes Final Plan attempts to strike a balance, bringing more transit service to those living in low density areas who rely on transit while requiring more commuters in the same low density areas to come to transit. In the long term, this reduces operating costs and increases route and system productivity by eliminating low ridership segments and reducing route duplication.

Improving Local Circulation and Access for Transit-Reliant Communities

The changes to local service (adding weekday evening service on Route 9N, increasing the hours of service on Route 615 and adding a new community circulator in Minnetonka) will increase coverage, access and connectivity to transit-reliant residents in the lower density pockets of Market Area IV and III.

Improving the Productivity of Existing Express Service

The changes to express routes 664, 665, 667E, 670 and 671 will improve route productivity and reduce costs and subsidies by consolidating five express routes into four routes, reducing segments of service duplication, eliminating route segments with low ridership and eliminating low ridership trips on the fringe of the peak.