

CHAPTER 3: FINAL PLAN

Evaluation of existing conditions in the study area and consideration of the project's goals and objectives led to the development of the final plan outlined below. Initially several service and routing scenarios were reviewed and analyzed to determine which concept best meet these project goals:

- simplifies the route structure
- improves access to jobs in the West End
- improves the reliability and productivity of routes in the study area
- ensures that under-represented populations share in the benefits of these service improvements.

Final Plan Service Changes

The West End and Route 9 Transit Study includes the following route and service changes on Routes 9, 25, 604, 649 and 675 to be implemented in August 2017. A map showing the proposed structure of the new routes is in **Figure 13**.

Route 9 Changes

West of downtown Minneapolis, the changes simplify the route structure from six branches to three, provide a more consistent routing throughout the day seven days of the week, and redirect resources from low ridership segments to areas with a greater potential to grow ridership.

No changes are proposed to the span of service, however weekday peak period frequency will be reduced slightly and the total number of one-way trips on the main portion of the route between 46th Street Station and the West End would be reduced from 92 to 85. Peak-period frequency will be adjusted on the fringe of the AM and PM peak periods from every 20 to 30 minutes, and in the peak hour from 15 to 20 minutes.

The service changes below mean all trips, with the exception of four 9B trips, will use the same routing to travel between downtown and the West End. The number of trips between the West End and Cedar Lake Road/Louisiana will increase significantly, resulting in more consistent service in this area. Finally, time will be added to the schedule to better reflect actual traffic and travel conditions and improve schedule adherence.

Areas of Route 9 Scheduled for Elimination

There are two route segments that will be eliminated due to low ridership and will not be covered by other routes. The segments to be eliminated are shown in **Figure 14**:

9H branch between Cedar Lake Parkway/Wayzata Boulevard and France Avenue/26th Street, via Cedar Lake Parkway/Road and Ewing/France avenues

On weekdays this segment averages approximately 1.0 passenger per trip over 11 trips. There are 6 riders, of which 5 will be more than a quarter-mile from alternate service. Weekend service averages less than one passenger per trip.

Cedar Lake Road between Glenwood Avenue and Penn Avenue

On weekdays this segment averages 1.6 passengers per trip over 36 trips. There are 32 riders, of which approximately eight board at a bus stop more than a quarter-mile from an alternate bus stop. On Saturday and Sunday, this segment averages less than one passenger per trip. Most customers already walk to Penn or Glenwood, since there is a better level of service on those streets. This segment is narrow and there is not enough room for buses to pass when snow is present.

Areas of Route 9 Covered by New Routes

There are three areas of Route 9 that will instead be served by the new Route 645, with an improved level of service:

- 9D branch between Louisiana Avenue Transit Center and Zarthan/16th Street
- 9B and 9P service on 16th Street between Park Place and Zarthan
- Park Place between 16th Street and Wayzata Boulevard; Wayzata Boulevard between Park and Utica

The 26th Street segment of Route 9H will be covered by Route 25 with four weekday AM peak period trips to downtown and four PM peak period trips from downtown. There will be no weekend service. There are approximately 10 weekday riders along this segment and fewer than one average riders on the weekend service.

Morning trips will be scheduled to arrive downtown between 7:20-8:50 a.m. and afternoon trips will leave downtown between 4:15-6:15 p.m. Travel time between 26th Street and downtown will be approximately 30 minutes.

Areas of Route 9 with Changes in Frequency or Routing

In addition to the eliminated segments and areas of the route that will be served by alternate service, the Final Plan also includes the following reroutes and adjustments in level of service.

Reroute service via 16th Street and Utica Avenue

Service on Park Place between 16th Street and Wayzata Boulevard and on Wayzata Boulevard between Park Place and Utica will be rerouted via 16th Street and Utica Avenue. The new routing will better serve the core of the growing West End development.

Reduced frequency

To better reflect ridership, frequency south of downtown as well as west of downtown will be adjusted on the fringe of the AM and PM peak periods from every 20 to 30 minutes and in the peak hour from 15 to 20 minutes.

The 9B branch along Glenwood Avenue and Xenia Boulevard west of Penn Avenue will be reduced to two weekday AM peak period trips to downtown and two PM peak period trips from downtown.

Currently there are 25 riders on this segment averaging 3.8 passengers per trip over 13 trips. There is no weekend service. The reduced service will operate on a demonstration basis.

Increased service on Cedar Lake Road west of Zarthan Avenue

Weekday service on Cedar Lake Road between Zarthan and Louisiana avenues will see a threefold increase going from 27 to approximately 81 trips. Weekend service on this segment will also see a considerable increase.

Service to the low-income multi-family housing in the Greenbrier area of Minnetonka will improve to hourly throughout the midday and evening.

Route 25 Changes

The southwestern most segment of Route 25 on France Avenue between Cedar Lake Avenue and Lake Street will be eliminated. Route 25 will be rerouted to serve 26th Street and the Cedar Trails Condos on Cedar Lake Road. Route 9H currently serving 26th Street will be eliminated as would express Route 649 serving the Cedar Trails Condos.

Of the 28 passengers boarding Route 25 on the eliminated segment, 85 percent board at Lake Street which is also served by Route 17 service to downtown Minneapolis.

Six reverse-commute trips on Route 25, four coming from downtown to southwest Minneapolis in the morning peak period and two going to downtown in the PM peak period, will be eliminated. These six trips have a combined ridership of fewer than six riders beyond a quarter-mile of an alternate bus stop.

Route 604 Changes

Route 604 is a suburban local route operating weekdays only in St. Louis Park. The current schedule does not allow sufficient time to provide reliable transfer connections with Routes 12, 17, 675 and 705. To improve transfer connections, Route 604 will be shortened by eliminating the segment between Louisiana Avenue Transit Center and Park Place Park & Ride via Wayzata Boulevard, 16th Street and Park Place. The eliminated segment will be covered by new Route 645. Twelve Route 604 passengers will need to transfer to get to the West End.

Also, service will start earlier in the morning and end later in the afternoon. A southbound trip will be added to serve the 7 a.m. work start and a northbound trip will be added to serve a 5 p.m. work end at Methodist Hospital. There will be no change in frequency as Route 604 will continue to run every hour.

Route 649 Changes

Route 649 will be eliminated and will be replaced by routes 9, 25 and 645.

In the final plan, riders using the I-394 & Park Place Park & Ride, as well as reverse-commuters traveling to jobs in the West End and along Wayzata Boulevard will have a faster trip or no change in service. This represents 96 customers, which is about 75 percent of existing riders. Service to these customers will be replaced by new Route 645, which will have a similar travel time between the West End and downtown and provide service during the off-peak. Route 645 will operate through downtown on the Marquette and 2nd Avenue South exclusive transit lanes rather than the current routing of Route 649 on 6th and 9th streets.

Existing Route 649 riders along Cedar Lake Road between Louisiana Avenue and Park Place Boulevard will instead be served by Route 9. The remaining riders along Cedar Lake Road east of Highway 100 in the Cedar Trails Condos area will be served by Route 25. There are 35 passengers that will be affected by this change, which is about 25 percent of Route 649's ridership. Unfortunately, this is not enough to support separate limited-stop service. These riders will still have a one-seat ride to downtown but travel time to downtown will increase by approximately 16 minutes for those west of Highway 100 and by 20 minutes for those east of Highway 100. Of the 35 riders noted above, 23 board on Cedar Lake Road between Louisiana and Park Place, which will have a significant increase in the number of trips throughout the day.

The 12 riders currently boarding on Cedar Lake Road east of Highway 100 now served by Route 649 will be served by four Route 25 trips in each direction, which is a reduction from the current five trips in each direction provided by Route 649.

Route 645 Changes (Revised Route 675)

Route 675 will become Route 645. The changes will provide faster service seven days a week between the retail and service jobs in the West End and downtown Minneapolis and improve transfer connections to the rest of the region. There are nearly 12,000 jobs in the West End area, many of which pay less than \$40,000 annually.

Route 675 currently operates non-stop between Louisiana Avenue and downtown Minneapolis via I-394. It will be rerouted to travel on local streets between Louisiana Avenue Transit Center and Park Place & I-394 via Wayzata Boulevard, Zarthan and 16th Street. Travel time between downtown and the West End will be reduced from 24 minutes today to just eight minutes.

Since the route will no longer travel at least four miles non-stop on the highway (the threshold for a route to charge an express fare), it will become a limited-stop route charging a less-expensive local fare. This new routing

will also now provide a one-seat ride between the West End and the wide array of activity centers along I-394, such as the Ridgedale Shopping Center area.

The reroute will add two to four minutes of travel time for existing riders, most whom board east of Ridgedale Shopping Center and at park-and-ride lots that have other express routes available. Fewer than 30 percent of passengers riding during the morning peak (72 customers) will not have a faster express option available.

Trunk Service Frequencies, Projected Budget, Resources and Route Performance

Trunk service frequencies for the routes in the Recommended Plan are provided in **Table 5**. To better reflect ridership, Route 9 frequency south of downtown as well as west of downtown will be adjusted on the fringe of the AM and PM peak periods from every 20 to 30 minutes and in the peak hour from 15 to 20 minutes. This is the only trunk frequency change on the routes in the Final Plan.

The West End and Route 9 Final Plan overall is budget neutral with a very slight decrease in weekday hours and a 5 percent increase of hours on Saturdays. Ridership is expected to remain stable in the near-term; riders lost due to segments reduced or eliminated on Route 9 are expected to be offset by ridership increases with improved service focused on Route 9 and on Route 645's improved, faster connection. The West End is expected to add more than 4,000 additional jobs by 2020 and thus, Metro Transit expects an overall annual ridership increase of 50,000 in the study area. Also, on-time performance of routes 9 and 604 is expected to improve with the additional running time in the revised schedules.

Table 6 shows resource changes for the proposed changes. The changes for individual routes by day of the week are included in **Figure 15** in the report appendix.

Table 5: Frequency of Trunk Service

Route	Weekday					Saturday	Sunday	
	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Evening	Owl	All Day	Midday	Evening
9	20-30	30	20-30	30	---	30	30	60
9 (west of Louisiana Avenue)	1 trip	60	1 trip	60	---	60	60	60
25 (southwest of downtown Minneapolis)	30	--	30	--	--	--	--	--
604	60	60	60	--	--	--	--	--
675 (east of Louisiana Avenue)	30	30	30	60	---	60	60	60

Table 6: Comparison of Platform Hours and Peak Buses

	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Existing Platform Hours	294	120	106
Proposed Platform Hours	293	126	106
Change	-1	6	0
Existing Peak Buses	26	7	8
Proposed Peak Buses	26	8	8
Change	0	1	0