

6 PEER REVIEW

The purpose of the Minnetonka Transit Study is to further evaluate the transit market and service needs in Minnetonka and refine the service concepts that were developed in the Minnetonka-led study conducted in 2010. While extensive express service (mostly in the I-394 corridor) already exists in Minnetonka, it was clear from the 2010 study that the city values *both* local and express services and that local, midday services are lacking throughout much of the community. As such, to better understand whether a local route might be appropriate in Minnetonka, and to estimate how such service might perform, a peer review of other communities was conducted.

This peer review report is structured in a way that compares Minnetonka to other local and national communities that have similar characteristics to Minnetonka. The peer review has three basic objectives:

1. Better understand how Minnetonka compares to other communities in terms of type of transit service provided
2. Provide insight into the elements that make a local, midday transit service successful (or not successful) in comparable communities
3. Assist in the development of a local service model in Minnetonka that stands the best chance of being successful (and meet established performance standards)

The peer review approached the local peer cities differently than the national peer cities:

- **Local Peer Cities.** Because most stakeholders are familiar with local communities, this section of the peer review identifies three communities in the Twin Cities and then compares transit services in those communities to what is provided in Minnetonka (regardless of whether local service is provided). Local peer communities were selected based on a number of factors including geographic size, population and employment density, and distance from downtown Minneapolis.
- **National Peer Cities.** This section compares communities across the country that are similar to Minnetonka (and in similar metropolitan areas). In addition to comparing the level and type of transit service in the national peer communities, detailed performance data was gathered and used to estimate ridership potential on potential services in Minnetonka. A requirement of the national peer communities is that they must operate some level of locally-focused, midday transit service.

SELECTING PEER TRANSIT PROVIDERS

The first step in conducting the peer review was to identify a number of possible peer communities that could be compared with Minnetonka. The peer communities were selected based on a general understanding of the geography, urban form and operating characteristics of each potential peer and how they compare to Minnetonka.

The local peer review identified other suburban communities in the Twin Cities that are of similar size and land use to Minnetonka. The national peer review also identified potential peer cities located in metropolitan areas that are similar to Minnetonka and the Twin Cities and that have a similar downtown to Minneapolis. For example, peer communities in the Phoenix, New York or Chicago areas were not selected because the downtown areas were either much bigger or smaller than Minneapolis.

Through this process, seven potential local peers and 19 potential national peers were identified. The next step was to develop a set of evaluation criteria to select the most relevant local and national peer communities. Twelve evaluation criteria were developed, each of which were given the same weighting:

- **(1) Population and (2) Population density.** Because total population and population density correlate closely to transit demand, peer transit communities were favored that have population and population densities that are similar to Minnetonka.¹
- **(3) Employment density, (4) retail employment density, and (5) presence of a major employment center.** Similarly, employment and employment density are key indicators of transit demand. As such, communities that have a similar overall employment and retail employment density (especially like the I-394 corridor) were favored. It was also important to identify peer communities that have a major employment area like the Opus area since a significant amount of employment in Minnetonka is within the Opus area.
- **(6) Household Income.** Household income is an important indicator of where transit demand is likely to be high – demand for local, midday service is often found in areas where there is lower household income – whereas higher household incomes are not uncommon on express, commute-oriented services. Thus, it was important to identify peer communities that are relatively affluent, like Minnetonka.
- **(7) Presence of a town center and (8) town center land use.** A strong town center, even in suburban communities, can also represent an area with a disproportionate level of transit demand. Because Minnetonka does not have a town center, peer communities that also do not have a strong town center were favored.
- **(9) No major university.** Universities and colleges usually generate much higher transit demand than other land uses. As such, no potential peer community was selected if it had or was adjacent to a major university.
- **(10) Approximate distance to the central business district (CBD) and (11) percent of Minnetonka residents working in the CBD.** The closer a community is to a central business district (like downtown Minneapolis), the more likely it is to have good transit service and for residents to work, shop or recreate in that city. For this reason, peer communities were favored that are about the same distance from a major downtown as Minnetonka is to downtown Minneapolis.
- **(12) Presence of a local-serving, midday transit service.** Because a major objective of the peer review is to learn about best practices of providing local off-peak service, national peer communities were only identified that have some type of local-serving transit service. “Local-serving” was generally defined as a transit route (or routes) that cover a significant portion of the community rather than just a small portion (such as Routes 9 and 12 in Minnetonka). Communities that primarily have peak-hour express transit service, or very limited midday, local service (such as Minnetonka), were not considered as a potential national peers. As noted earlier, this criterion was only applied to the national peers and was not a factor when selecting local peer communities.

¹ Population, employment and land use are all factors used to develop the Transit Market Areas described in Appendix G of the Metropolitan Council’s Transportation Policy Plan (TPP).

Potential peer communities were then evaluated based on a qualitative review of how well they satisfy the evaluation criteria presented above. The evaluation of the local peer communities is summarized below in Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2 and selected local peers are shown graphically in Figure 6-3. Figure 6-4, Figure 6-5, and Figure 6-6 show similar results for the national peers. Based on a maximum score of 12 points, the three top scoring local peers and top six national peers were selected.

Figure 6-1 Local Peer Community Evaluation

EVALUATION DATA SUMMARY	Evaluation Metric?	Minnetonka	Plymouth	Maple Grove	Eden Prairie	Woodbury	Burnsville	Apple Valley	Blaine
Population (2010)	Yes	49,734	70,576	61,567	60,797	61,961	60,306	49,084	57,186
Population Density (persons/sq mi)	Yes	1,847	2,160	1,887	1,874	1,784	2,421	2,911	1,689
Household Income (median, 2010)	Yes	79,082	85,083	91,139	86,509	89,334	64,423	78,028	71,276
Presence of Town Center	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Town Center Land Use	Yes	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Total Employment	No	49,329	45,929	26,305	49,083	16,254	30,534	13,644	23,465
Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	Yes	1,832	1,405	806	1,513	468	1,226	809	693
Retail Employment	No	9,198	2,212	3,447	4,387	2,852	4,589	2,518	5,040
Retail Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	Yes	342	68	106	135	82	184	149	149
Presence of Large Employment Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
No Major University	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Approximate Distance to CBD (miles)	Yes	11	9	11	13	16	15	18	12
% of Residents Working in CBD (City)	Yes	19%	19%	17%	14%	12%	13%	12%	18%
Presence of Midday Transit Service	Yes	Yes	Limited	Limited	Limited	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
CBD Average All-day Parking Rate	No	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16	\$3 - \$16

Figure 6-2 Local Peer Community Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Rating Scale (in Comparison to Minnetonka)	Minnetonka	Plymouth	Maple Grove	Eden Prairie	Woodbury	Burnsville	Apple Valley	Blaine
Population	1 = +/- 30%	n/a	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Population Density (persons/sq mi)	1 = +/- 30%		1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Household Income (median, 2010)	1 = +/- 30%		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Presence of Town Center	0=Yes, 1=No		0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Town Center Land Use	1=Low,0.5=Medium,0=High		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	1 = +/- 30%		1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Retail Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	1 = +/- 30%		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Presence of Large Employment Center	1=Yes, 0=No		1	0	1	0	0	0	0
No Major University	0=Yes, 1=No		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Approximate Distance to CBD (miles)	1 = +/- 30%		1	1	1	0	0	0	1
% of Residents Working in CBD (City)	1 = +/- 30%		1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Presence of Midday Transit Service	1=Yes,0.5=Limited,0=No		0.5	1	1	0	1	1	1
Overall Score				8.5	8	11	6	6	5
		Peer?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Figure 6-3 Selected Local Peer Communities

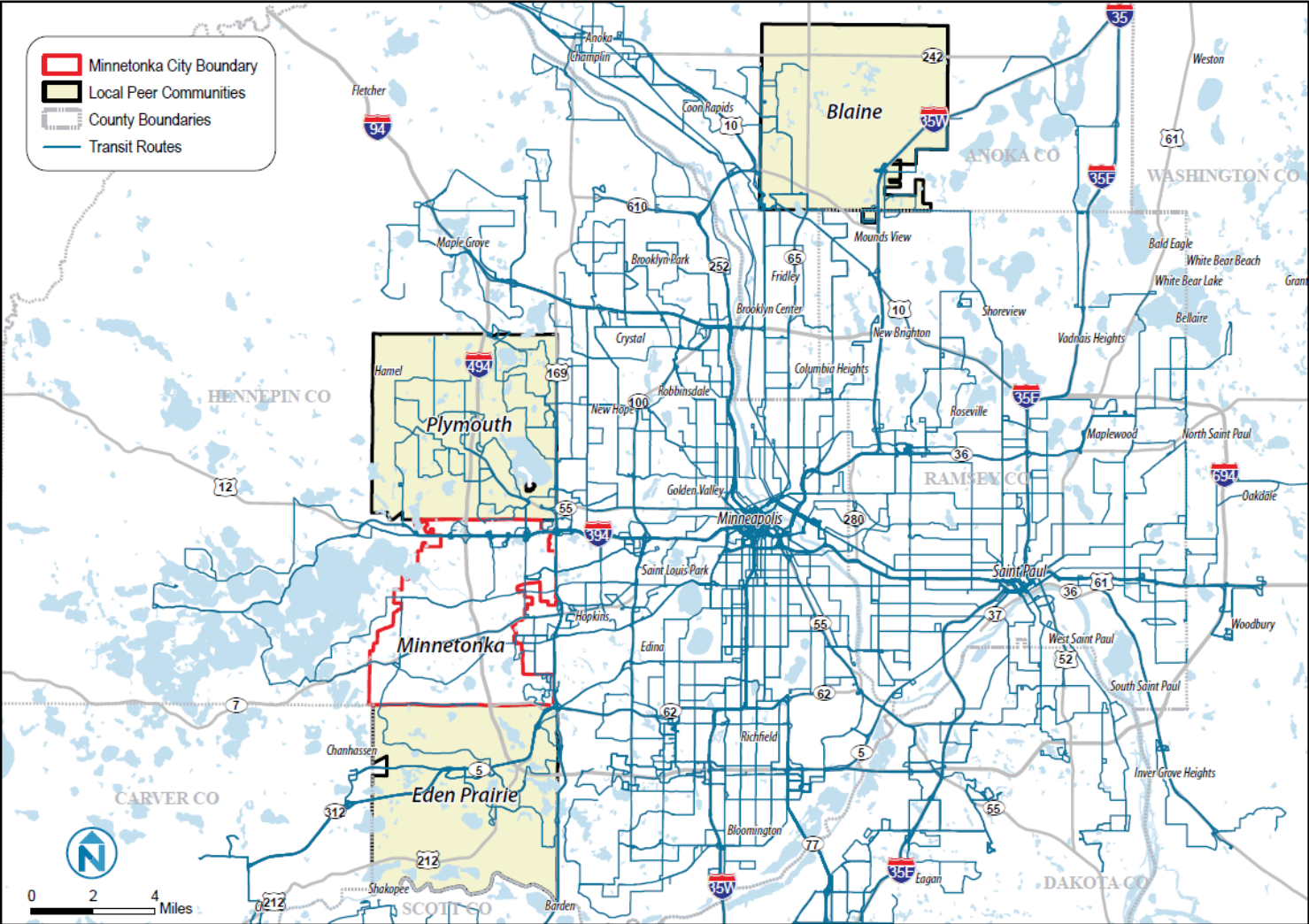


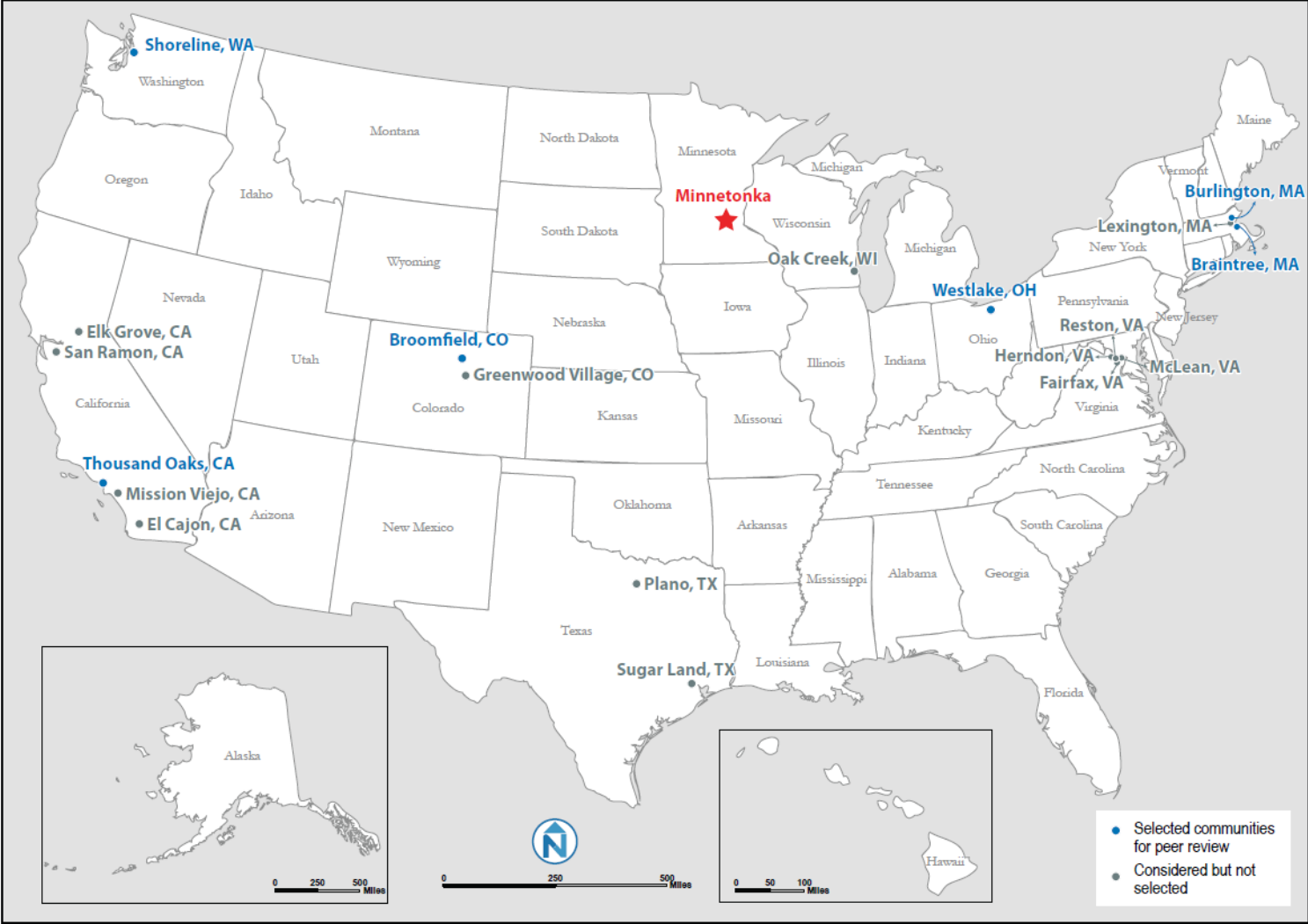
Figure 6-4 National Peer Community Evaluation Data

EVALUATION DATA SUMMARY	Evaluation Metric?	Mntka	Braintree, MA	Burlington, MA	Lexington, MA	Fairfax (City), VA	Herndon, VA	McLean, VA	Reston, VA	Oak Creek, WI	Westlake, OH	Sugar Land, TX	Plano, TX	Broomfield, CO	Greenwood Village, CO	Shoreline, WA	San Ramon, CA	Elk Grove, CA	Mission Viejo	Thousand Oaks, CA	El Cajon, CA
Population (2010)	Yes	49,734	35,744	24,498	31,394	22,565	23,292	48,115	58,404	34,451	32,729	78,817	259,841	55,889	13,925	53,007	72,148	153,015	93,305	126,683	99,478
Population Density (persons/sq mi)	Yes	1,847	2,600	2,088	1,910	3,617	5,451	1,941	3,810	1,211	2,055	2,434	3,630	1,692	1,684	4,541	3,995	3,627	5,260	2,302	6,893
Household Income (median, 2010)	Yes	79,082	78,627	86,023	127,278	89,676	83,863	167,318	101,916	68,985	69,286	101,912	80,210	73,616	112,009	66,476	117,866	76,282	92,555	99,980	44,800
Presence of Town Center	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Town Center Land Use	Yes	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Total Employment	No	49,329	26,295	39,419	19,281	23,384	16,452	12,810	60,406	17,778	21,973	50,801	154,690	31,219	48,132	17,099	35,618	24,581	33,574	58,445	37,313
Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	Yes	1,832	1,892	3,369	1,174	3,747	3,853	517	3,948	625	1,379	1,569	2,161	946	5,820	1,461	1,968	582	1,897	1,062	2,591
Retail Employment	No	9,198	5,401	5,218	1,563	3,905	863	1,218	2,571	1,799	2,646	6,460	21,540	4,567	2,215	2,896	3,170	5,087	5,661	6,860	6,911
Retail Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	Yes	342	389	446	95	626	202	49	168	63	166	200	301	138	268	248	175	121	320	125	480
Presence of Large Employment Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
No Major University	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Approximate Distance to CBD (miles)	Yes	11	10	12	10	15	20	8	18	11	12	19	16	14	9	10	24	14	45	35	13
% of Residents Working in CBD (City)	Yes	19%	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	36%	30%	54%	26%	20%	36%	48%	8%	38%	5%	18%	40%
Presence of Midday Transit Service	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CBD Average All-day Parking Rate	No	\$3 - \$16	\$34	\$34	\$34	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$0	\$9	\$15	\$10	\$16	\$16	\$24	\$26	\$15	\$30	\$30	\$26

Figure 6-5 National Peer Community Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Rating Scale (in Comparison to Minnetonka)	Braintree, MA	Burlington, MA	Lexington, MA	Fairfax (City), VA	Herndon, VA	McLean, VA	Reston, VA	Oak Creek, WI	Westlake, OH	Sugar Land, TX	Plano, TX	Broomfield, CO	Greenwood Village, CO	Shoreline, WA	San Ramon, CA	Elk Grove, CA	Mission Viejo	Thousand Oaks, CA	EI Cajon, CA
Population	1 = +/- 30%	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Population Density (persons/sq mi)	1 = +/- 30%	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Household Income (median, 2010)	1 = +/- 30%	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Presence of Town Center	0=Yes 1=No	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town Center Land Use	1=Low 0.5=Medium 0=High	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	1 = +/- 30%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Retail Employment Density (persons/sq mi)	1 = +/- 30%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Presence of Large Employment Center	1=Yes 0=No	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
No Major University	0=Yes 1=No	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Approximate Distance to CBD (miles)	1 = +/- 30%	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
% of Residents Working in CBD (City)	1 = +/- 30%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Presence of Midday Transit Service	1=Yes 0.5=Limited 0=No	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
Overall Score		10	8	6	4	5	7	5	7	8	5	6.5	10	7.5	8	5	6	7	8	5
Peer?		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No

Figure 6-6 Selected National Peer Communities



LOCAL PEERS

This section provides an overview of transit services in the three selected local peer communities (Blaine, Eden Prairie, and Plymouth). The transit services available in each local peer community are discussed generally and then compared to Minnetonka in terms of how many boardings and in-service hours (not including layover) are operated within the peer city limits.

Blaine

Blaine is located about 12 miles north of central Minneapolis, about the same distance as Minnetonka. A similar share of Blaine's population works in Minneapolis compared to Minnetonka. Blaine (2010 population of 57,000) is somewhat more populous than Minnetonka but Minnetonka has more than twice as many jobs as Blaine and nearly three times the employment density. Blaine also lacks a comparable employment center to Opus. Despite some differences in city characteristics, Blaine is nevertheless the closest peer to Minnetonka within the Metro Transit service area.

As with Minnetonka, there is a mix of local, limited, and express routes serving Blaine. Most of the express routes (250, 252, 852, and 854) serve downtown Minneapolis or the University of Minnesota, while one express route (860) serves downtown St. Paul. Most of the local service in Blaine is concentrated around the Northtown Transit Center and the more built-up areas found in the western half of the city. The eastern half of the city is much less developed and is only served by express routes in the I-35W corridor, most of which are based out of the 95th Avenue Park & Ride. While the population density of Blaine, for the city as a whole, is less than Minnetonka, the population density of the older more developed western half is greater than any similar sized segment of Minnetonka and household income is lower than any similarly sized segment of Minnetonka.

Figure 6-7 below presents service statistics for Blaine compared to Minnetonka. There are over 100 more inbound and outbound trips in Blaine, and ridership (as expressed as inbound ons and outbound offs) is nearly twice as high compared to Minnetonka. Blaine and Minnetonka have about the same number of average weekday in-service hours).

The primary difference between transit service in Blaine compared to Minnetonka is the heavy ridership on local Route 10, which serves the Northtown Transit Center and has nearly 1,000 inbound ons and outbound offs. Route 10 serves the predominately low income Central Avenue NE corridor of Minneapolis and Columbia Heights as a high frequency route connecting these markets to Northtown in Blaine. There are no similar markets connected to Ridgedale in Minnetonka.

In addition, Route 250, which provides express service to downtown Minneapolis, has over 1,800 inbound ons and outbound offs. These two routes combined account for more ridership activity than all routes in Minnetonka.

Another key difference between Blaine and Minnetonka is the amount of local or limited local service. In Blaine, over a third of the ridership activity is on local or limited stop routes (10, 25, 59, 262, 805, 824, 825 and 831), whereas less than 10% of ridership activity in Minnetonka is on local or limited stop routes (9, 12, 568, 615 and 643). Again, most of the ridership activity on local or limited routes is at Northtown Transit Center rather than throughout the community. Besides the local routes serving the Northtown Transit Center, three routes offer local, midday service in Blaine:

- **Route 25.** This route serves the southwest corner of Blaine and operates about every hour from about 8:00 am until 4:00 pm (as well as one trip at about 5:00 am). It runs approximately every 1.5 hours on Saturdays, from about 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. The main destinations in Blaine include the Anoka County Human Service Center, 89th Avenue NE, and the Northtown Mall.
- **Route 805 (Anoka Traveler).** This route runs on University Avenue along Blaine’s eastern boundary, hourly from about 6:00 am until 6:00 pm on weekdays, and from about 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Saturday. It serves Northtown Mall in Blaine and destinations in Coon Rapids and Anoka, including Anoka Station (connections to the Northstar line).
- **Route 831 (Anoka Traveler).** This route serves most of the western half of Blaine and operates hourly from about 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. Major destinations along the route include University Avenue (north of 109th Avenue NE), Polk Street, Oak Park Plaza, the Anoka County Human Service Center, and Northtown Mall.

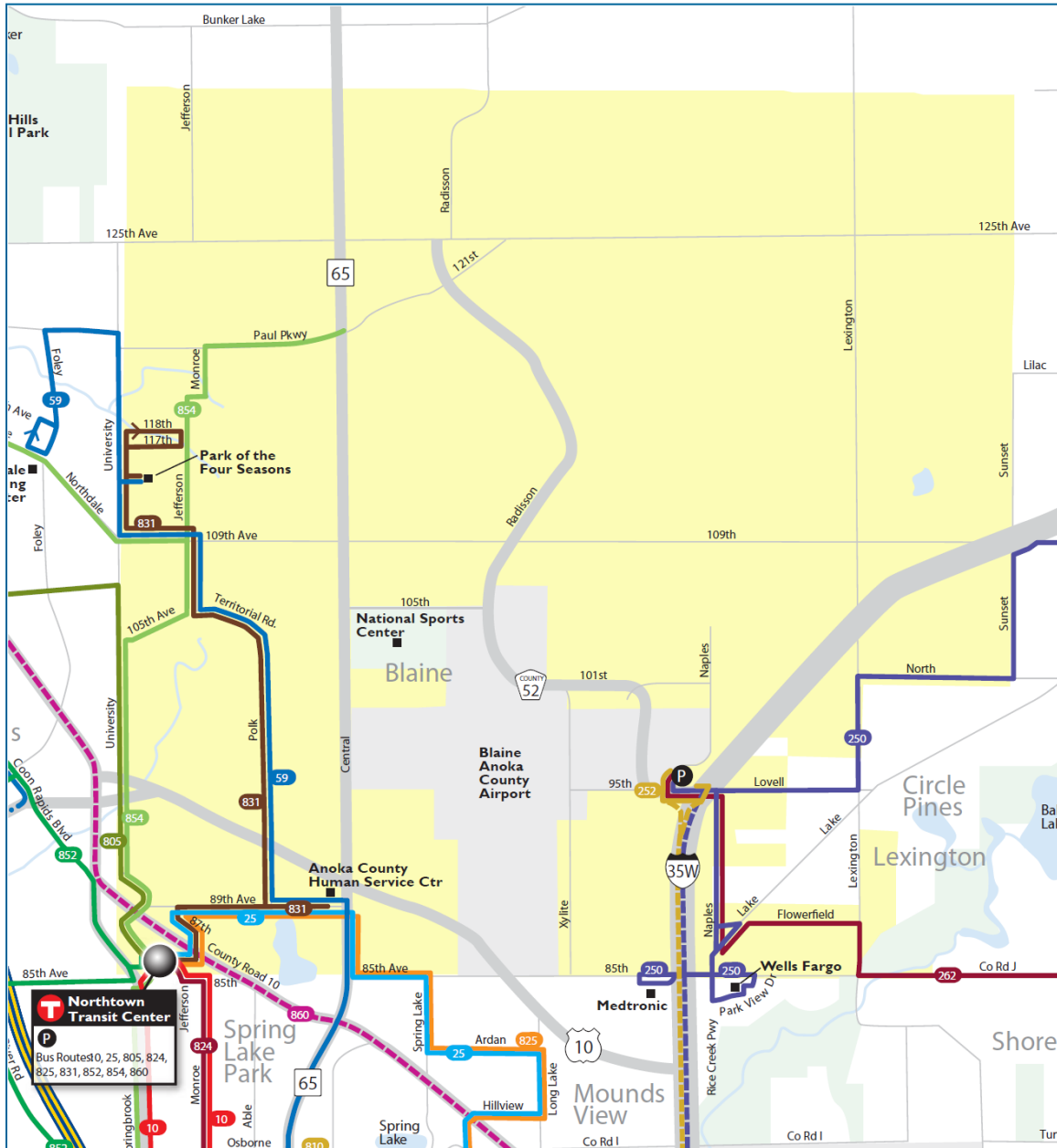
All routes serving Blaine are shown in Figure 6-8.

Figure 6-7 Weekday Trips, Riders and In-Service Hours per Day in Blaine, September 2011

Blaine				Minnetonka			
Route	Trips per Day (inbound and outbound)	Rides / Weekday	Total In-Service Hours	Route	Trips per Day (inbound and outbound)	Rides / Weekday	Total In-Service Hours
10	145	982	8.8	9	11	37	0.7
25	25	145	5.2	12	82	236	6.0
59	4	29	1.1	568	2	23	0.3
250	81	1,859	7.8	615	20	68	6.1
252	6	128	0.5	643	7	16	0.5
262	6	36	1.2	652	9	111	1.4
805	27	70	4.2	663	16	125	1.2
824	6	12	0.5	664	9	39	2.3
825	10	24	2.1	665	6	28	0.3
831	25	181	10.8	667	10	63	3.3
852	37	215	1.9	670	6	68	2.0
854	35	494	5.2	671	6	102	2.1
860	12	171	2.5	672	19	187	4.6
				673	27	912	3.9
				675	52	534	17.3
				677	1	6	0.1
				679	6	24	0.8
Weekday Total	419	4,346	51.7		289	2,579	53.0

Note: Blaine is the only local peer where weekend transit service is provided. Weekend service data for Blaine and Minnetonka is provided in Appendix C. Rides per weekday is calculated as the sum of inbound boardings (ons) and outbound alightings (offs)

Figure 6-8 Transit Service Overview (Blaine)



Eden Prairie

Eden Prairie is located just south of Minnetonka, slightly more distant from the Minneapolis CBD than Minnetonka. About 14% of Eden Prairie residents work in the Minneapolis, compared to 18% in Minnetonka. With a 2010 population of nearly 61,000 it is somewhat more populous than Minnetonka but has similar population density. Eden Prairie has same number of jobs as Minnetonka, though at slightly lower employment density. The Golden Triangle employment center in Eden Prairie is located across Hwy 62/212 from Opus.

All fixed route transit services provided in Eden Prairie are operated by Southwest Transit. Southwest Transit almost exclusively focuses on express-oriented service based out of several large park and ride facilities throughout its service area (Chaska, Chanhassen and Eden Prairie). Most service is oriented to downtown Minneapolis, but some service is also provided to the Southdale Transit Center (in Edina) and the University of Minnesota.

In Eden Prairie, all services operate as express routes and are largely concentrated at Southwest Station. Several express routes also serve two smaller park and rides in Eden Prairie, including the Shady Oak P&R and Preserve Village Mall P&R. None of the routes in Eden Prairie are designed to provide local midday service, although there are midday trips that serve Southwest Station from/to downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota (on Route 698). No weekend service is provided on Southwest Transit.

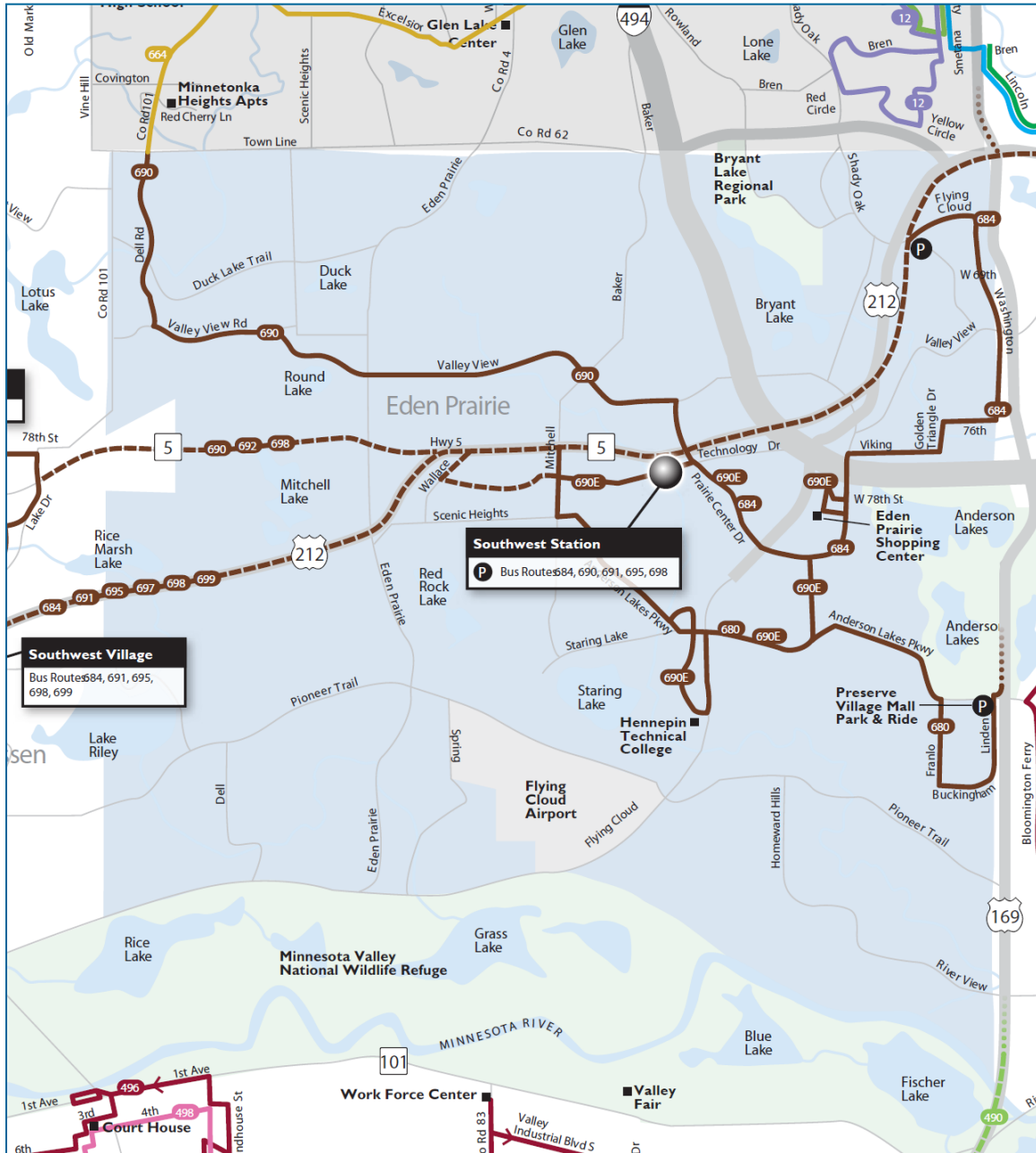
Figure 6-9 provides a summary of total inbound and outbound trips in Eden Prairie, as well as average daily boardings from September/November 2011. While there are significantly fewer trips in Eden Prairie compared to Minnetonka, ridership activity is on par with Minnetonka. Because of Southwest Transit's emphasis on park and ride based express service, the number of boardings per trip is significantly higher in Eden Prairie compared to Minnetonka, where there is a much greater mix of service and many express trips operate through the city before becoming non-stop. On the other hand, there are no midday services outside of Southwest Station, whereas a comparatively high amount of midday service exists in Minnetonka (primarily on Route 675, but also on Routes 9, 12 and 615).

Figure 6-9 Weekday Trips, Riders and In-Service Hours per Day in Eden Prairie, September-November 2011

Eden Prairie				Minnetonka			
Route	Trips per Day (inbound and outbound)	Rides / Weekday	Total In- Service Hours	Route	Trips per Day (inbound and outbound)	Rides / Weekday	Total In- Service Hours
680	4	100	2.2	9	11	37	0.7
684	6	136	2.8	12	82	236	6.0
690	41	1,372	10.5	568	2	23	0.3
691	1	28	0.15	615	20	68	6.1
695	11	233	12.8	643	7	16	0.5
698	32	672	4.0	652	9	111	1.4
				663	16	125	1.2
				664	9	39	2.3
				665	6	28	0.3
				667	10	63	3.3
				670	6	68	2.0
				671	6	102	2.1
				672	19	187	4.6
				673	27	912	3.9
				675	52	534	17.3
				677	1	6	0.1
				679	6	24	0.8
Total	95	2,541	32.5		289	2,579	53.0

Note: Rides per weekday is calculated as the sum of inbound boardings (ons) and outbound alightings (offs)

Figure 6-10 Transit Service Overview (Eden Prairie)



Plymouth

Plymouth is located just north of Minnetonka. A similar share of Plymouth residents work in Minneapolis compared to Minnetonka. With a 2010 population of nearly 70,000 it is the largest of the three local peers, as well as the densest. Plymouth employment is slightly lower than Minnetonka, as is the overall density of employment. There is a major concentration of employment along I-494 and Hwy 55.

All fixed route transit service operated in Plymouth is provided by Plymouth Metrolink. As with Southwest Transit, most service offered on Plymouth Metrolink operates during peak periods only and there is no service in Plymouth on weekends. While services are oriented towards commuters and mostly operate during peak periods, Plymouth Metrolink routes technically consist of a mix of local and express routes. The express routes largely connect the park and rides in the city (mostly the Station 73 Park & Ride—located at Highway 55 and County Road 73) to downtown Minneapolis, while a number of local routes provide coverage throughout the city and connect to the park and rides. One route, Route 795, provides two midday trips connecting downtown Minneapolis to the Station 73 Park & Ride and the Nathan Lane Park & Ride. Route 795 averages about 15 rides per trip.

Figure 6-11 below summarizes the number of fixed route trips and ridership activity in Plymouth compared to Minnetonka. Figure 6-12 illustrates the fixed routes in Plymouth. While Plymouth's ridership data is from 2010, there are significantly fewer trips and lower ridership activity in Plymouth compared to Minnetonka. Similarly, an average of 42 fixed route in-service hours are provided in Plymouth, compared to an average of 53 weekday in-service hours in Minnetonka.

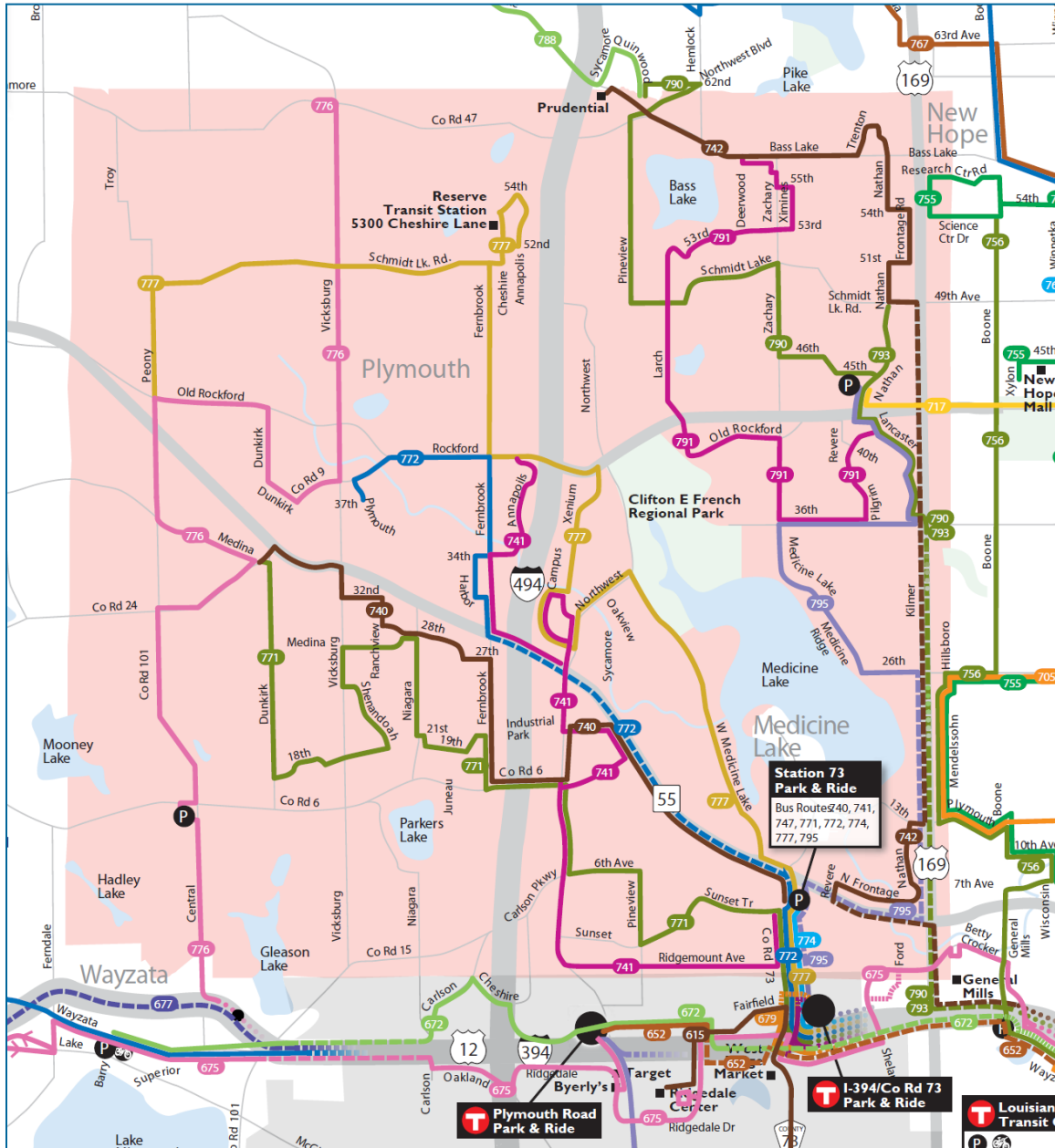
A key similarity between the transit service provided in Plymouth and Minnetonka is the Plymouth Metrolink Dial-A-Ride, which is similar to TransitLink service provided in Minnetonka (as well as throughout the metro area). This service is open to the general public and provides curb-to-curb service anywhere in the city. The Dial-A-Ride also connects to Ridgedale Mall, downtown Wayzata, Golden Valley Center and the New Hope K-Mart. (Dial-A-Ride trips to/from other locations with a trip end/start outside of Plymouth are served by TransitLink). Plymouth Metrolink Dial-A-Ride service is offered from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday and one-way fares are \$3.00. Based on 2010 data, about 150 daily rides are provided on Plymouth Metrolink Dial-A-Ride, and about 50 daily hours of service are provided. This is about three passenger trips per hour of service, which is typical of a demand-responsive service. By comparison, TransitLink provides 27 weekday service hours in Minnetonka. However, when the number of in-service hours on fixed route and Dial-A-Ride are combined (92 in-service hours), there is more service in Plymouth than in Minnetonka.

Figure 6-11 Weekday Trips, Riders and In-Service Hours per Day in Plymouth, September 2011

Plymouth				Minnetonka			
Route	Trips per Day (inbound and outbound)	Rides / Weekday	Total In- Service Hours	Route	Trips per Day (inbound and outbound)	Rides / Weekday	Total In- Service Hours
740	9	45	3.4	9	11	37	0.7
741	8	79	4.0	12	82	236	6.0
742	7	48	3.0	568	2	23	0.3
747	10	144	0.50	615	20	68	6.1
771	9	37	3.8	643	7	16	0.5
772	11	264	3.7	652	9	111	1.4
774	2	8	0.10	663	16	125	1.2
776	14	322	6.5	664	9	39	2.3
777	10	202	6.0	665	6	28	0.3
790	16	375	7.7	667	10	63	3.3
791	7	46	3.2	670	6	68	2.0
793	6	86	1.2	671	6	102	2.1
795	2	31	0.73	672	19	187	4.6
				673	27	912	3.9
				675	52	534	17.3
				677	1	6	0.1
				679	6	24	0.8
Total	111	1,687	43.8		289	2,579	53.0

Note: Rides per weekday is calculated as the sum of inbound boardings (ons) and outbound alightings (offs)

Figure 6-12 Transit Service Overview (Plymouth)



NATIONAL PEER REVIEW

This section provides an overview of transit services in the six selected national peer communities:

- Braintree, Massachusetts
- Broomfield, Colorado
- Burlington, Massachusetts
- Shoreline, Washington
- Thousand Oaks, California
- Westlake, Ohio

An overview of transit service in each national peer community is first provided to establish some context for the peer review, and then each community is compared to each other in a series of tables. One of the primary outcomes of this peer review is comparing different route types and existing productivity for those routes. This exercise will not only help inform the design of potential local routes in Minnetonka, but also help estimate ridership of these potential new services.

Overall Service Comparison

Figure 6-13 summarizes characteristics of transit service in each peer, including the provider(s) and routes that provide local midday service (the focus of this review) as well as other services that provide only peak-hour or very limited stop service within each peer.

Figure 6-13 Peer Community and General Service Characteristics

Peer	General Transit Service Description	Locally-Focused Routes with Midday Service	Other Regionally-Oriented Service (not included in review)
Minnetonka	All service provided by Metro Transit. TransitLink general public Dial-A-Ride	9, 12, 615, 675	Peak-hour express
Braintree, MA	The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), serving the Boston region, provides local, regional, and express bus service as well as Red line (subway) and commuter rail service	230, 236, 238	None (Braintree is also served by rail service)
Broomfield, CO	The Regional Transportation District (RTD), serving the Denver region, provides local, regional, and express bus service. All routes serve a park-and-ride located on US 36 in the southwest quadrant of Broomfield.	L, 51, 76, 112, 120, 128, 228	Express service limited to peak hours or does not provide local connections within Broomfield (e.g., AB, BF, DD, DM, S, T)
Burlington, MA	MBTA operates several routes while Burlington Public Transit System provides a local overlay service, operated by Joseph's Limousine Service (as of 7/2/2012), under contract with the Town of Burlington. Two buses serve 8 different local routes that operate on weekdays.	MBTA: 350, 354 Burlington Public Transit System: ¹ 10/10A, 11, 12/12A, 13, 14 – all routes connect at Center School	Peak-hour express service (351, 352)
Shoreline, WA	King County Metro provides bus service in the County, including Shoreline and Seattle	331, 345, 346, 347, 348, 358	Route 5 provides all-day service to Seattle CBD from Shoreline Community College, but does not provide significant local connections, similar to Route 9 and 12 in Minnetonka (Route 345 serves similar routing in Shoreline but terminates at Northgate TC).
Thousand Oaks, CA	The City of Thousand Oaks contracts local service to MV Transportation.	1, 2, 3, 4	Regional local (LA County Metro 161) Peak-hour express (Commuter Express 422, 423) Intercity (VISTA East County and Highway 101 & Conejo Connection)
Westlake, OH	The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) operates bus service in the Cleveland area, including Westlake	46, 49	Peak-hour express service (246) Peak-hour regional local service (55F)

Local Service Comparison

Routes that provide midday service within each peer city were identified and are the focus of this analysis. These routes include express service if it is not limited to peak hours and makes at least limited local stops within the peer city, as is the case with Metro Transit route 675 in Minnetonka. The primary measure analyzed is productivity, or the number of boardings per hour of service, within each peer city. In-city boardings refers to the number of boardings that actually occur within each peer city. Similarly, in-city service hours refers to the amount of time routes operate within each peer city. In-city productivity is compared, where the data was available, to overall route-level productivity. Service hours do not include layover unless noted as “revenue hours.”

Service within Peer Cities

Figure 6-14 summarizes in-city boardings, in-service hours, and productivity for the routes in each peer city that provide midday service. It also compares in-city boardings and service hours per capita and lists the geographic size of each peer.

Figure 6-14 In-City Route-Level Weekday Ridership and Productivity by Peer

Peer	Applicable Routes	Average In-City Daily Boardings	Daily In-City In-Service Hours	Boardings per In-Service Hour	Population	In-city Boardings per Capita	In-city In-Service Hours per Capita	Geographic Size (Square Miles)
Minnetonka	9, 12, 615, 675	454	27.1	15.2	49,734	2.2	0.15	26.9
Braintree, MA	230, 236, 238	1,077	33.5	32.2	35,744	8.1	0.25	13.9
Broomfield, CO	L, 51, 76, 112, 120, 128, 228	1,329	69.5	19.1	55,889	6.4	0.34	33.0
Burlington, MA (MTBA)	350, 354	363	24.9	14.5	24,498	5.3	0.47	11.7
Burlington, MA (Burlington Public Transit System)	10/10A (R), 11/11R, 12/12A (R), 13, 14	117	17.5	6.7				
Shoreline, WA	331, 345, 346, 347, 348, 358	3,922	125.2	31.3	53,007	20.0	0.64	11.7
Thousand Oaks, CA	1, 2, 3, 4	738	52.0	14.2	126,683	1.6	0.11	55.0
Westlake, OH	46, 49	202	19.7	10.2	32,729	1.7	0.16	15.9

Source: Boardings were determined using stop-level boarding data for stops within each city, obtained from each transit provider. In-service hours (not including layover) were determined from schedules or other data obtained from each provider.

Service by Type of Route

The routes were classified using the categories listed in Figure 6-15. A local route provides primarily local service (potentially serving an adjacent municipality) while a suburban local route connects multiple municipalities. Both types of routes may sacrifice directness to provide greater coverage. Regional and urban local routes provide broader regional connections and typically follow a more direct path with a travel corridor. An urban local route (as defined by Metro Transit—see Chapter 3) is differentiated by serving the CBD; however, such routes are not provided in most of the peers, and were not included in the review because this type of service delivery option is not the primary focus of this study. Finally, a regional express route serves only limited stops along parts of a route. This review includes only all-day express routes that provide local connections; all of the regional express routes considered serve the CBD.

Figure 6-15 Peer Route Classification

Service Type Category	Typical Service Geography	Serves CBD
Local	Within peer-municipality, potentially also serving an adjacent municipality	No
Suburban local	Locally-focused suburb-to-suburb route connecting adjacent municipalities	No
Regional local	Regionally-oriented route connecting multiple municipalities on a direct travel corridor	No
Urban local	Similar to regional route but serving the CBD	Yes
Regional express (all-day)	Similar to regional route but making limited stops along part of the route.	Yes

Figure 6-16 categorizes the type of service provided in each peer city.

Figure 6-17 provides the average productivity for the routes included in each service type category, both overall and for each peer. Figure 6-18 lists the productivity of individual routes within each category (sorted by route type and productivity).

- **Local.** Service focused exclusively or primarily within each peer, as found in Braintree, Burlington, and Thousand Oaks, has the lowest average productivity (18.5 boardings per in-service hour). Burlington’s coverage-oriented Burlington Public Transit System service has the lowest productivity overall (6.7), while productivity for Route 236 in Braintree (32.2) surpasses the average for other non-express service categories. This category of service currently does not exist in Minnetonka.
- **Suburban local.** Service that operates locally within each peer and connects it to one or more municipalities has slightly higher productivity (21.1 boardings per in-service hour), on average, than more locally-focused service. Productivity for Route 230 in Braintree (34.5) also surpasses the average for all but regional express service. In Minnetonka, Route 615 represents this service type.
- **Regional local.** Service that is more regionally focused may provide local service throughout a municipality, such as in Shoreline and Braintree, or serve specific destinations or parts of a municipality, such as Route 354 in Burlington. On average, this service category is slightly more productive than suburban local service. Routes 9 and 12 in Minnetonka, classified as urban local service (next bullet), provide the closest comparison to this category and are similar to Route 354 in that they serve only a small portion of Minnetonka.

- **Urban local.** Urban local service, which is differentiated from regional local service in that it serves the CBD, is exemplified by Routes 9 and 12 in Minnetonka. However, most peer cities do not have routes of this (and no such routes were selected as part of the review). This category is not included in Figure 6-18.
- **Regional express.** All-day express service is similar to regional local service within each peer but operate as a limited stop express to the CBD. Route 354 in Burlington and Route 358 in Shoreline are the primary examples, and compare to Route 675 in Minnetonka. Route 358 is similar to Metro Transit Route 675 in that it travels the full length of the city, but it is able to provide better service and accessibility because Highway 99 nearly bisects Shoreline, whereas Route 675 runs along I-394 (a limited access highway) on Minnetonka's northern edge. Route 354 is similar to Urban Local Routes 9 and 12 in Minnetonka in that it only serves a limited geographic area in Burlington.

Figure 6-16 Route Numbers by Route Type and Peer City

Service Type Category	Representative Routes in Peer Cities						
	Minnetonka	Braintree	Broomfield	Burlington	Shoreline	Thousand Oaks	Westlake
Local	-	236	-	Burlington Public Transit System	-	1, 2, 3, 4	-
Suburban local	615	230	112, 120, 128, 228	350	331, 347, 348	-	46
Regional local	-	238	51, 76	-	345, 346	LA Metro 116 (not included)	49
Urban local	9, 12	-	-	-	5 (not included)	-	-
Regional express	675	-	L	354	358	-	-

Figure 6-17 In-City Productivity by Route Type and Peer City

Service Type Category	Average In-city Productivity (Boardings per Service Hour ¹)	Minnetonka	Braintree	Broomfield	Burlington	Shoreline	Thousand Oaks	Westlake
Local	17.7	N/A	34.5	N/A	6.7	N/A	14.2	N/A
Suburban local	18.7	13.5	32.2	16.6	15.8	19.2	N/A	12.6
Regional local	28.4	21.8 (Urban Local) ²	28.1	31.1	6.9	35.7	N/A	8.8
Regional express	24.4	14.2	N/A	18.6	N/A	47.7	N/A	N/A

Note: (1) Service hours excluding layover for the peer routes in each category. Minnetonka / Metro Transit routes are not included in the calculation of average productivity for the peers. (2) Productivity for urban local routes 9 and 12 is provided for comparison purposes for the regional local category, since no routes of this type currently exist in Minnetonka.
Source: Local productivity calculated using stop-level data and other information provided by providers.

Figure 6-18 In-City Productivity by Route Type and Peer – Individual Routes

Provider and Route	Peer	Route Type	Productivity ¹
MBTA 236	Braintree	Local	32.2
Thousand Oaks Transit (System)	Thousand Oaks	Local	14.2
Burlington Public Transit System (System - 10/10A (R), 11/11R, 12/12A (R), 13, 14)	Burlington	Local	6.7
MBTA 230	Braintree	Suburban local	34.5
King County Metro 347	Shoreline	Suburban local	23.8
King County Metro 331	Shoreline	Suburban local	18.4
MBTA 350	Burlington	Suburban local	15.8
King County Metro 348	Shoreline	Suburban local	15.5
GCRTA 46	Westlake	Suburban local	12.6
RTD 112	Broomfield	Suburban local	15.5
RTD 120	Broomfield	Suburban local	21.7
RTD 128	Broomfield	Suburban local	12.6
RTD 228	Broomfield	Suburban local	16.7
King County Metro 346	Shoreline	Regional local	41.4
King County Metro 345	Shoreline	Regional local	30.0
MBTA 238	Braintree	Regional local	28.1
GCRTA 49	Westlake	Regional local	8.8
RTD 76	Broomfield	Regional local	40.6
King County Metro 358	Shoreline	Regional express	47.7
MBTA 354	Burlington	Regional express	6.9
RTD L	Broomfield	Regional express	18.6

Notes: (1) Productivity is defined as the number of boardings per hour of service provided within each peer city.

Peer Overview and Route Information

This section discusses the characteristics of transit service in each peer city and provides detailed performance statistics for the local routes, including comparisons to overall performance.

Braintree, MA (MBTA)

Braintree is a city of about 36,000 people located about 10 miles south of Boston. Figure 6-19 provides an overview map of all transit services offered in the city. Braintree is home to several large companies and South Shore Plaza, one of the largest shopping malls in the Boston area. The density of total and retail employment in Braintree is nearly identical to Minnetonka, but population density is about 40% greater than Minnetonka. However, like Minnetonka, there are many areas within the Braintree city limits that are completely undeveloped (lakes, preservation areas, golf courses, wetlands, etc.).

The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) provides transit service in Braintree, including Red line subway service and three bus routes, which all operate hourly during the midday. Braintree anchors one end of the Red Line and two of the bus routes (230 and 236) connect the Braintree and Quincy Red Line stations. Route 238 connects Quincy Station and the Holbrook/Randolph Commuter Rail Station via Braintree. While parking rates at the Braintree Station costs are \$7.00 per day, this is low compared to parking costs in Boston, which are \$34 per day (the highest among the peer group). Two of the bus routes (236 and 238) serve South Shore Plaza (which is very similar to Ridgedale Center). Although Route 236 serves Quincy Station outside of Braintree, it is primarily locally-focused. Route 230 connects multiple municipalities to the north and south of Braintree, providing local service through Braintree. Route 238 is more regionally oriented and boardings within Braintree comprise a relatively small share of its ridership.

Figure 6-20 summarizes the local routes serving Braintree and Figure 6-21 provides performance information about these routes. Productivity on each route exceeds the peer group average for the respective service class, and Route 230 and 236 are both more productive in Braintree than the routes as a whole. The local and regional routes serving Braintree terminate at and/or connect major rail stations, contributing to high productivity.

Figure 6-19 Braintree Overview Map

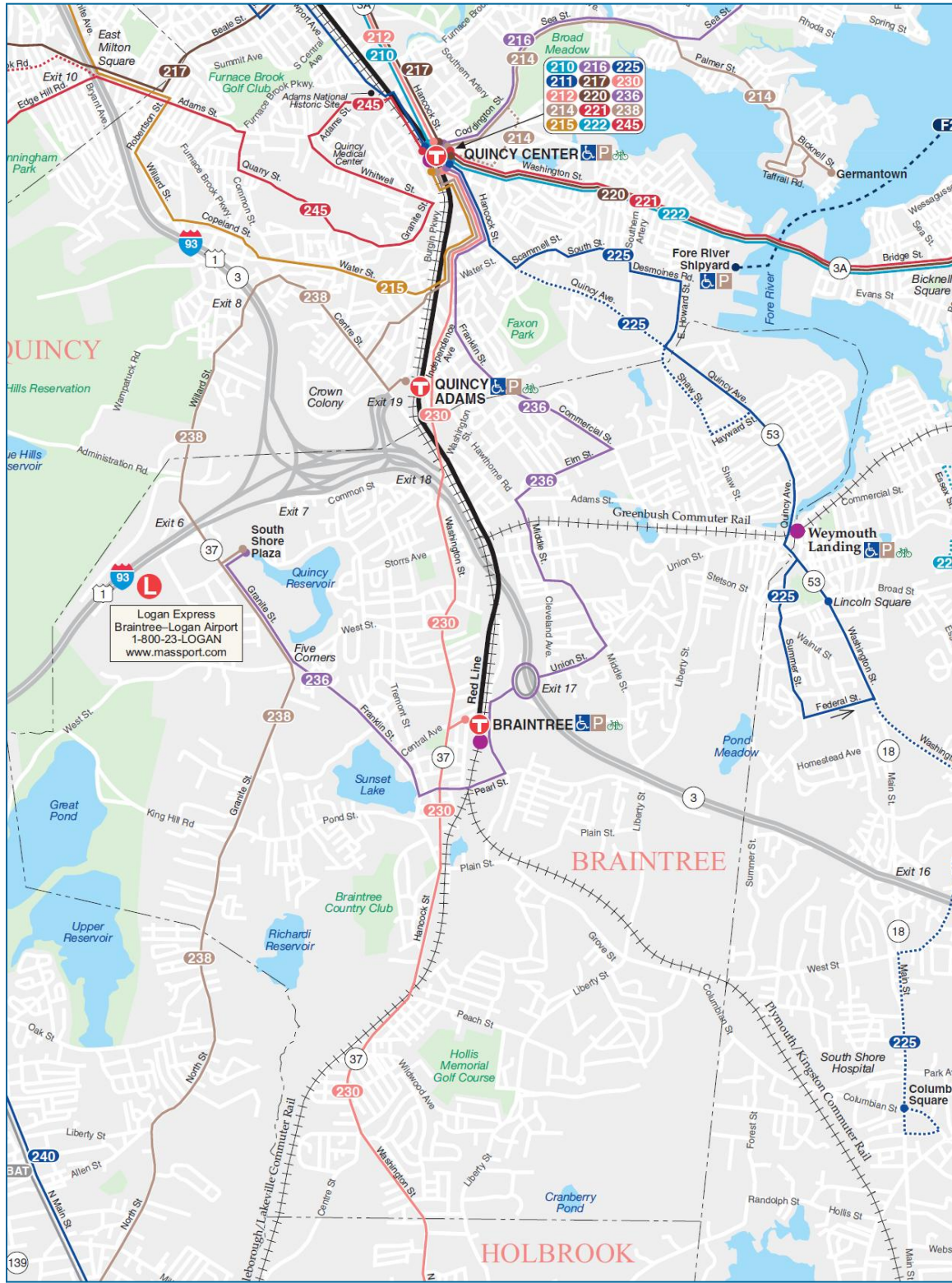


Figure 6-20 Braintree Local Route Overview

Route #	Description	Type of Route	Key Anchors/ Destinations	Rail Connections	Frequency			Hours of Service		
					Weekday Midday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
230	Quincy Center Station - Montello Commuter Rail Station via Holbrook & Braintree Station	Suburban local – linear route (north- south)	Rail stations	Red Line & Commuter Rail	60-70	60	90	5:40 AM - 11:40 PM	6:50 AM - 11:40 PM	7:45 AM - 12:55 AM
236	Quincy Center Sta. - South Shore Plaza via E. Braintree & Braintree Station	Local – cross-town circulation and adjacent municipality to the north (Quincy)	Rail stations, Quincy Center, South Shore Plaza	Red Line & Commuter Rail	60	80	60	7:10 AM - 8:50 PM	7:30 AM - 10:20 PM	10:35 AM - 7:30 PM
238	Holbrook/Randolph Commuter Rail Station - Quincy Center Station	Regional local – linear route serving adjacent municipality to north and several municipalities to south	Rail stations, South Shore mall and employment areas on west side of town	Red Line / Mattapan High Speed Line	60	60	75	5:15 AM - 11:30 PM	5:15 AM - 11:30 PM	6:30 AM - 11:30 PM

Figure 6-21 Braintree Local Route-Level Performance Indicators

Route No	Route Type	Within City		Overall Route		
		Daily Boardings	Daily In-Service Hours w/o Layover	Boardings per In-Service Hour	Overall Daily Boardings	Overall Productivity ¹
230	Suburban local	536	15.5	34.5	1,308	35.5
236	Local	290	9.0	32.2	488	31.3
238	Regional local	251	8.9	28.1	1,541	47.0
TOTAL		1,077	33.5	32.2	3,337	N/A

Notes: (1) Per revenue hour. (2) MTBA cost per passenger is incremental cost from MBTA analysis.
Source: In-City data based on stop-level data and other information provided by MBTA.

Broomfield, CO

Broomfield is a city of about 56,000 people located about 14 miles north of Denver and southeast of Boulder. While employment and retail employment density is lower than in Minnetonka, population density is very similar. However, Broomfield is a geographically large city with significant areas of the city that are completely undeveloped; the City's comprehensive plan projects growth to a buildout population of 83,000. Broomfield has also developed more recently than Minnetonka, with much of the housing development occurring in the past two decades.² Figure 6-22 provides an overview map of transit services offered in the city.

Broomfield is home to several major employers, with many concentrated in the southwest quadrant of the city including the Interlocken high-tech hub near the Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport (west of US-36). Major retail areas include Flatiron Crossing (similar in scale to Ridgedale Center but much more transit and pedestrian oriented), also located in the Interlocken area, and Broomfield Plaza malls.³ About 20% of residents work in the Denver CBD, which is comparable to Minnetonka. While Boulder is a major destination in this part of the metro area, only about 4% of Broomfield workers commute to Boulder for their jobs.

One potential caution about Broomfield as a peer city is the presence of the University of Colorado, Boulder about 13 miles to the northwest. Because of the limited and expensive housing market in Boulder, some students, faculty and staff are choosing to live outside of Boulder, some of which are in Broomfield. As such, the local market for transit is somewhat different from Minnetonka.

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) provides transit service in Broomfield and is the major transit provider for the Denver region. Five local bus routes provide midday service in Broomfield (76, 112, 120, 128, and 228). These are all fairly linear in design, connecting Broomfield and several adjacent municipalities (primarily Westminster). Route 76 provides longer-haul regional crosstown service (running north-south through Westminster, Arvada, Wheat Ridge, Lakewood and Littleton), with higher frequency and longer service hours. In addition, Route L provides all-day express service to Denver. All routes serve a park-and-ride facility located along US-36 (at Wadsworth). Other regional and express routes also serve the park-and-ride, and there is significant transfer activity between local and regional/express routes. The park-and-ride was completed in 2010 in the first phase of a BRT project along US-36.⁴

In addition RTD provides general public call-n-ride service in Broomfield. Reservations must be made at least two hours in advance, with subscription trips two weeks in advance. One call-n-ride service area includes the portion of the city east of US-36 while the other covers the Interlocken area west of US-36. Both call-n-ride services stop at the Broomfield park-and-ride every 30 minutes.⁵

Figure 6-20 summarizes the routes serving Broomfield and Figure 6-21 provides performance information about the routes.

² According to the American Community Survey (2008-2010 3-year average), over half of Broomfield's housing stock was built after 1990, compared to just 18% for Minnetonka. About 43% of Broomfield housing units were built between 1960 and 1989, compared to 60% for Minnetonka. Just 6% of Broomfield housing units were built before 1960, compared to 22% in Minnetonka.

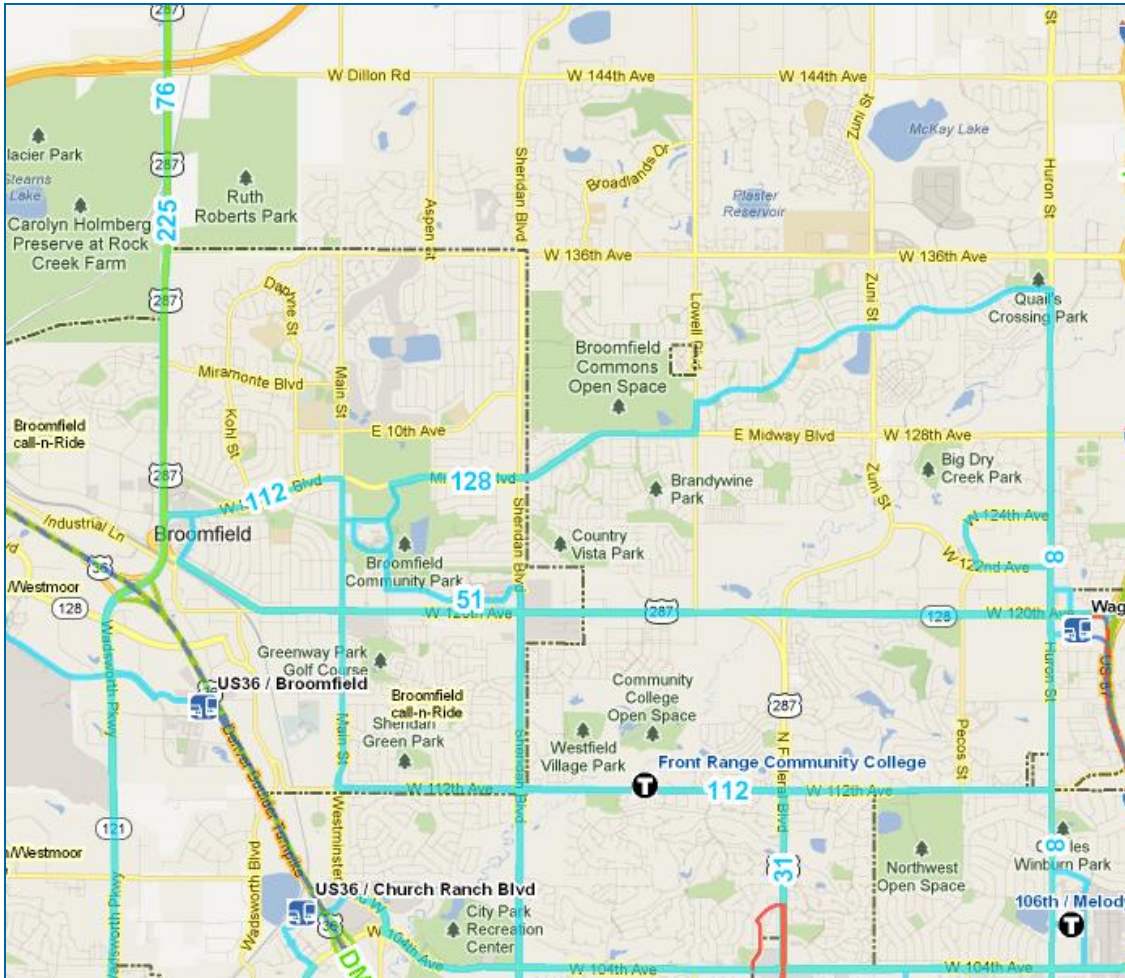
³ Broomfield Economic Development Corporation, <http://broomfieldedc.com/economic-profile/employers/>

⁴ RTD, US-36 Bus Rapid Transit Project Website, http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/us36_1

⁵ http://www.rtd-denver.com/PDF_Files/cnR/US36_callnRide.pdf

Note: Appendix C provides a breakdown of Broomfield boardings by time period and route.

Figure 6-22 Broomfield Overview (Map)



Source: RTD

Minnetonka Transit Study | Peer Review
Metropolitan Council

Figure 6-23 Broomfield Local Route Overview

Route #	Description	Type of Route	Key Anchors/ Destinations	Rail Connections	Frequency			Hours of Service		
					Weekday Midday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
51	Sheridan	Regional local	Englewood Station, Westminster Mall, Front Range Community College	C & D Lines	30	30	30	4:45 AM – 11:45 PM	5:30 AM – 11:30 PM	6:30 AM – 11:30 PM
76	Wadsworth Crosstown	Regional local	Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center, Arvada Center, Belmar	No	30	30	60	4:40 AM - 1:00 AM	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM	6:00 AM - 9:00 PM
112	West 112th Avenue Crosstown	Suburban local	Front Range Community College, Northglenn marketplace	No	60	60	60	6:00 AM - 11:00 PM	8:00 AM - 8:00 PM	8:00 AM - 8:00 PM
120	120th Avenue / Brighton	Suburban local	Platte Valley Medical Center	No	60	None	None	5:00 AM - 10:30 PM	None	None
128	Broomfield / Wagon Road	Suburban local	Target, Broomfield Municipal Center, Broomfield Recreation Center	No	60	None	None	5:30 AM - 7:00 PM	None	None
228	Louisville / Broomfield	Suburban local	Flatiron Crossing Mall, Louisville Recreation Center	No	60	30 / 60	30 / 60	6:00 AM - 9:30 PM	8:00 AM - 10:00 PM	7:20 AM - 8:10 PM
L	Longmont / Denver	Regional express	Union Station, Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center	C & D Lines	60	180 (2 trips)	None	5:00 AM - 9:40 PM	10:30 AM - 7:20 PM	None

Figure 6-24 Broomfield Local Route-Level Performance Indicators

Route #	Route Type	Within City			Overall Route	
		Daily Boardings ¹	Daily In-Service Hours w/o Layover	Boardings per In-Service Hour	Overall Daily Boardings ²	Overall Productivity ³
51	Regional local	103	4.77	21.6	3,608	27.8
112	Suburban local	176	11.35	15.5	342	14.5
120	Suburban local	205	9.45	21.7	532	12.7
128	Suburban local	198	15.73	12.6	245	11.5
228	Suburban local	271	16.18	16.7	354	10.8
76	Regional local	281	6.92	40.6	4,403	27.1
L	Regional express	95	5.12	18.6	1,147	18.5
TOTAL		1,329	69.5	19.1	7,022	20.4

Notes: (1) Average daily boardings for January 2012 from stop-level data. (2) Estimated from annual boardings based on an assumed annualization factor of 270. (3) Service hours including layover.

Source: Overall data from RTD 2010 service performance report. In-City data based on stop-level data and other information provided by RTD.

Burlington, MA (MBTA and City of Burlington Public Transit System)

Burlington is a city of about 25,000 people located 12 miles northwest of Boston. The Town of Burlington recently rebranded its system from the B-Line to Burlington Public Transit System, including a new look for its buses, in an effort to attract new riders and a younger demographic. The system has seen increased ridership following the change.

Figure 6-26 provides an overview map of transit services offered in the city. Business parks (primarily high-tech) are located along the Route 128 ring road and office development is clustered along Route 3. Burlington Mall, located in the southwestern quadrant of the city, is one of the largest shopping malls in the Boston area and is comparable in size to Ridgedale Mall in Minnetonka.⁶ Total employment density is lower than in Minnetonka, while retail employment density is higher. While the total population in Burlington is about half of Minnetonka, population density between the two cities is very similar. Burlington also has a similar mix of parkland and nature preserves as Minnetonka.

The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) provides bus service in Burlington, including Routes 350 (suburban local) and 354 (Regional express) that provide local midday service with approximately hourly frequency. Route 350 follows a linear route through Burlington, with a deviation to serve Burlington Mall after approximately 8:30 AM, and connect to the MBTA Red Line subway at Alewife Station. Route 354 provides express service from Burlington Mall to Boston (with several rail connections), but does not provide significant circulation through Burlington. The Burlington Public Transit System (recently rebranded from the “B-Line”), a service operated by the Town of Burlington, with MBTA financial support, provides transit coverage throughout Burlington. Two buses operate five primary route variations from about 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM on weekdays, with Center School as a hub. Route schedules and headways are variable, with some routes operating throughout the day and others only making morning and afternoon trips (e.g., Route 12). Most service is focused on the midday time period. Figure 6-27 summarizes the MBTA and Burlington Public Transit System routes serving Burlington.

Figure 6-28 provides performance information about the routes. Route 350 is moderately productive within Burlington (about 16 boardings per hour), although less so than its overall productivity of nearly 35 boardings per hour. Route 354 is relatively unproductive in Burlington (about seven boardings per hour), but provides limited local circulation; in fact, midday service on Route 354 will be discontinued in Summer 2012. Burlington Public Transit System service, which is more focused on providing coverage throughout the community, is only slightly less productive (6.7 boardings per hour) than Route 354.

⁶ Burlington Mall has four anchor tenants and 1.32 million leasable square feet, compared to four anchor tenants and 1.04 million leasable square feet for Ridgedale Mall (source: <http://www.ggp.com/properties/mall-properties/ridgedale-center>).

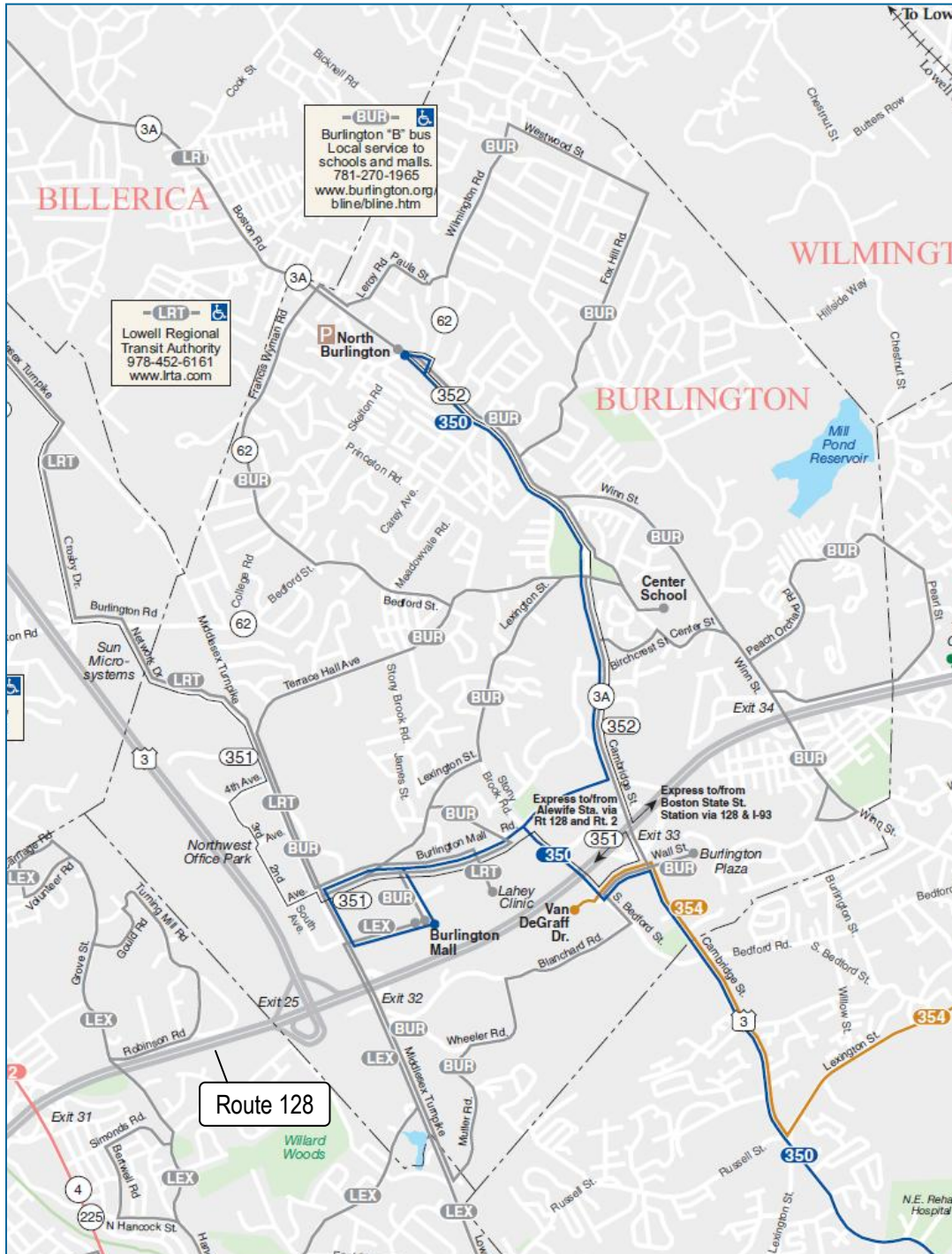
Figure 6-25 Burlington Public Transit System Bus



The Town of Burlington recently rebranded its system from the B-Line to Burlington Public Transit System, including a new look for its buses, in an effort to attract new riders and a younger demographic. The system has seen increased ridership following the change.

Source: Burlington Public Transit

Figure 6-26 Burlington Overview (Map)



Source: MBTA

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Metropolitan Council

Figure 6-27 Burlington Local Route Overview

Route #	Description	Type of Route	Key Destinations and Anchors	Rail Connections	Weekday Midday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
MBTA										
350	North Burlington - Alewife Station via Burlington Mall	Suburban local	Rail Stations, Burlington Mall	Red Line	60	60	55-80	6:15 AM - 11:00 PM	7:10 AM - 11:05 PM	7:50 AM - 7:20 PM
354	Woburn Express - Boston	Regional express	Rail Stations, Burlington Mall	Green, Blue, Orange Lines	90	N/A	N/A	5:30 AM - 9:00 PM	N/A	N/A
Burlington Public Transit System (Town of Burlington)										
10/10A (R)	Beacon Street/Malls Hour Long Route	Local	Burlington Mall, Superior Court, High School		90-120	N/A	N/A	7:30 AM - 6:00 PM	N/A	N/A
11/11R	Burlington Mall Rd/Lahey Clinic Half Hour Route	Local	Lahey Clinic, Burlington Mall		90-210	N/A	N/A	9:30 AM - 4:00 PM	N/A	N/A
12/12A (R)	Wilmington Rd/Burlington Mall Rd Hour Long Route	Local	Lahey Clinic, Burlington Mall, High School		N/A	N/A	N/A	8:00 AM - 6:30 PM	N/A	N/A
13	Francis Wyman Road/Wilmington Road Half Hour Route	Local	Francis Wyman School, Shaw's Market, CVS Pharmacy		60-120	N/A	N/A	10:00 AM - 4:30 PM	N/A	N/A
14	Winn Street Half Hour Route	Local	Shaw's Market, Superior Court		120	N/A	N/A	10:30 AM - 4:00 PM	N/A	N/A

Figure 6-28 Burlington Local Route-Level Performance Indicators

Route #	Route Type	Within City			Overall Route	
		Daily Boardings	Daily In-Service Hours w/o Layover	Boardings per In-Service Hour	Overall Daily Boardings	Overall Productivity ¹
MBTA						
350	Suburban local	339	21.5	15.8	1,345	34.6
354	Regional express	24	3.5	6.9	812	20.4
TOTAL		363	25.0	14.5	2,157	N/A
Burlington Public Transit System (Town of Burlington)						
AI ³	Local	117	17.5	6.7	N/A	N/A

Notes: (1) Per revenue hour. (2) MTBA cost per passenger is incremental cost from MBTA analysis. (3) Burlington Public Transit System does not track ridership separately by route

Source: MBTA: In-City data based on stop-level data and other information provided by MBTA. Burlington Public Transit System: Town of Burlington.

Shoreline, WA (King County Metro Transit)

Shoreline is a city of over 53,000 people located just north of Seattle (about 10 miles). Figure 6-29 provides an overview map of transit services in the city. Although it lacks major employment centers that characterize several of the other peers, a variety of retail uses are clustered along Highway 99, including Aurora Village at the northern edge of the city. Aurora Village Shopping Center, anchored primarily by two big box stores, is significantly smaller than Ridgedale Mall in Minnetonka. It includes a major transit center location served by King County Metro (transit provider for Shoreline, Seattle, and other parts of King County) and Community Transit (service provider in Snohomish County to the north). Total and retail employment are significantly lower than in Minnetonka, however both total and retail employment density are with 30% of Minnetonka. About 48% of residents commute to the Seattle CBD, which has an average parking rate of \$34 per day. While Shoreline was determined as the best peer in the Seattle region, a key difference between Shoreline and Minnetonka is population density, which is about 250% more dense than Minnetonka. Also, Shoreline is more integrated into the Seattle metropolitan area than Minnetonka. Shoreline borders Seattle on the south and other suburban communities to the north. For these reasons, productivity of routes in Shoreline is considerably higher than in Minnetonka and among the highest of the peer communities.

King County Metro operates bus service in Shoreline, including six routes that provide local midday service with 30 minute midday headways. Aurora Village, located at the northern edge of the city, is a major anchor for transit service. Community Transit's Swift BRT service in Snohomish County to the north terminates at Aurora Village. Shoreline Community College, located further south in the city, is another major anchor for routes serving Shoreline and Seattle. Route 331 runs east-west in Shoreline, connecting the municipalities of Lake Forest Park and Kenmore to Aurora Village and Shoreline Community College. Routes 345, 346, 347, and 348 all terminate at Northgate in the northern part of Seattle, which is currently a major bus transportation center and a future "North Link" light rail station. Routes 331 and 345 are interlined at Shoreline Community College. Route 358 provides express service along Highway 99 / Aurora Avenue to the Seattle CBD, with 15-minute headways. It operates as a local route within Shoreline but makes limited stops after it enters Seattle. Figure 6-30 summarizes the characteristics of the King County Metro routes serving Shoreline.

Figure 6-31 provides performance information about the routes. Most operate with moderate to high productivity. Route 348, which serves the northwestern corner of the city, and Route 331 are the least productive routes (about 15 and 18 boardings per hour, respectively). It is important to consider that bus service in Shoreline operates into the late nights, even on weekends. All routes operate with strong productivity even during off-peak (including midday) periods.

Note: Appendix C provides a breakdown of Shoreline boardings by time period.

Figure 6-29 Shoreline Overview (Map)

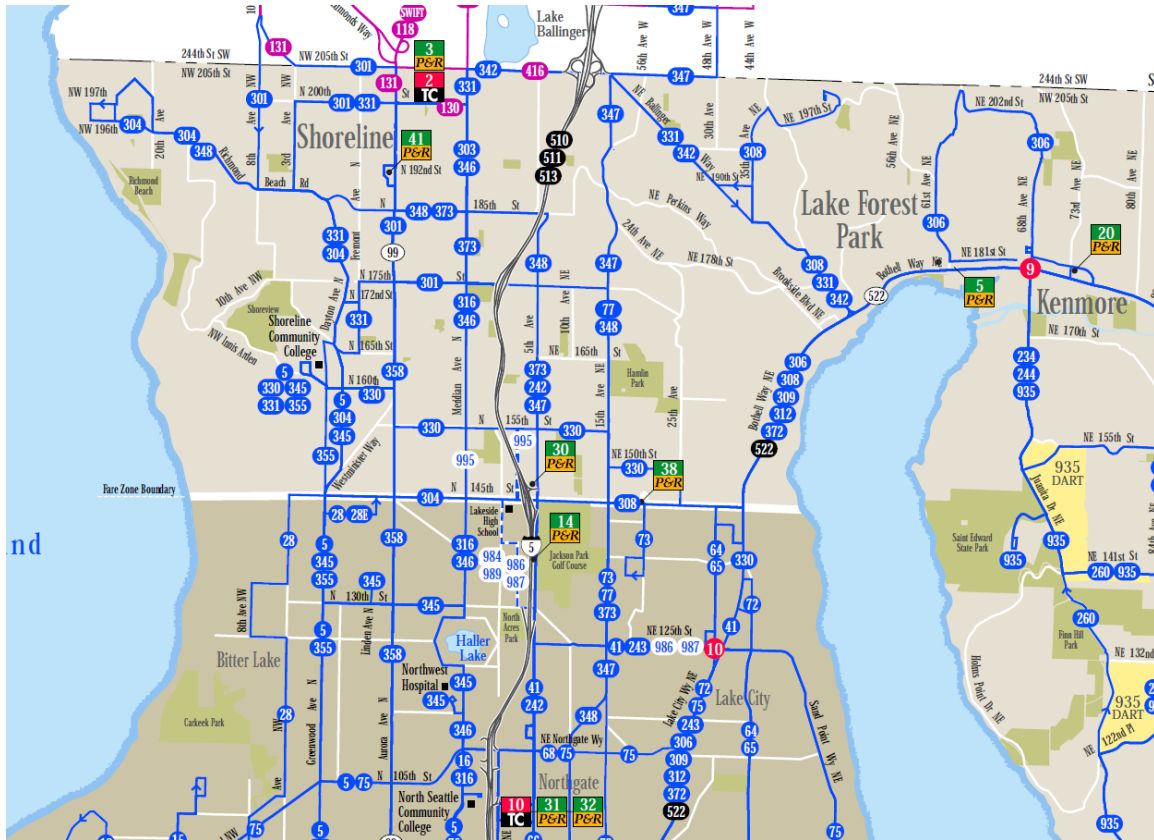


Figure 6-30 Shoreline Local Route Overview

Route #	Description	Type of Route	Key Anchors/ Destinations	Rail Connections	Frequency			Hours of Service		
					Weekday Midday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
331	Kenmore-Aurora Village-Shoreline CC	Suburban Local	Shoreline Community College	None	30	30-60	30-60	6:20 AM - 12:10 AM	8:00 AM - 10:45 PM	7:50 AM - 10:40 PM
345	Shoreline CC- Haller Lake-North Seattle CC- Northgate	Regional Local	Shoreline Community College, Northwest Hospital, Northgate Mall, North Seattle Community College	Future "North Link" Light Rail (Northgate)	30	30-60	60	7:10 AM - 10:50 PM	7:20:AM - 10:30 PM	7:15 AM - 10:30 PM
346	Aurora Village- Haller Lake-North Seattle CC- Northgate	Regional Local	Northgate Mall, Seattle Community College	Future "North Link" Light Rail (Northgate)	30	30-60	60	5:20 AM - 11:30 PM	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM	6:40 AM - 12:10 AM
347	Mountlake Terrace-North City-Northgate	Regional Local	Mountlake Terrace Transit Center	Future "North Link" Light Rail (Northgate)	30	30-60	60	5:20 AM - 12:10 AM	7:00 AM - 11:00 PM	6:40 AM - 10:30 PM
348	Richmond Beach- Jackson Park- Northgate	Regional Local	Shoreline Center, Hamlin Park	Future "North Link" Light Rail (Northgate)	30	30-60	60	5:30 AM - 11:40 PM	6:00 AM - 12:10 AM	6:00 AM - 12:15 AM
358	Aurora Village- Bitter Lake-Aurora Ave-Downtown Seattle	Regional Express	Aurora Village Transit Center	Link Light Rail, Seattle Streetcar	15	15-30	20-30	4:30 AM - 2:00 AM	5:10 AM - 2:00 AM	5:10 AM - 2:00 AM

Figure 6-31 Shoreline Local Route-Level Performance Indicators

Route #	Route Type	Within City				Overall Route
		Daily Boardings	Daily In-Service Hours w/o Layover	Boardings per In-Service Hour	% of Total Service Hours	Overall Productivity ²
331	Suburban local	488	26.6	18.4	65.8%	25.2
345	Regional local	114	3.8	30.0	12.1%	42.2
346	Regional local	442	10.7	41.4	38.2%	33.4
347	Suburban local	355	14.9	23.8	37.9%	28.0
348	Suburban local	375	24.2	15.5	61.2%	28.4
358	Regional express	2,148	45.0	47.7	27.0%	50.0
TOTAL		3,922	125	31.3	--	-

Notes: (1) Estimated from annual boardings based on an assumed annualization factor of 270. (2) Riders per Platform Hour, defined as “the number of hours that a vehicle operates (from leaving the base until it returns.” Listed for the off-peak period.

Source: In-City data based on stop-level data and other information provided by King County Metro. Overall Productivity from 2010 Route Performance Report.

Thousand Oaks, CA (City of Thousand Oaks Transit)

Thousand Oaks is a city of nearly 127,000 people, covering 55 square miles. It is located about 35 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. While these characteristics are different than Minnetonka, Thousand Oaks has a similar level of population density and thus provides a valuable example of a self-contained locally-oriented transit system. Thousand Oaks is home to several corporate headquarters, other major employers, and three significant malls. On the other hand, Minnetonka has nearly as many total jobs and more total retail jobs than Thousand Oaks. About 19% of residents commute to the CBD, which is similar to Minnetonka.

The City of Thousand Oaks contracts with MV Transportation to operate Thousand Oaks Transit. As illustrated in Figure 6-32 (map) and Figure 6-34 (table), the service consists of four local bus routes that run on an approximately hourly basis within city limits, between 5:00 AM and 8:00 PM on weekdays only. The service is organized around a Transportation Center located in the south-central part of the city and three of the routes (Red, Blue, and Gold) run primarily east-west along the US-101 corridor. The fourth route (Green) runs north to California Lutheran University.

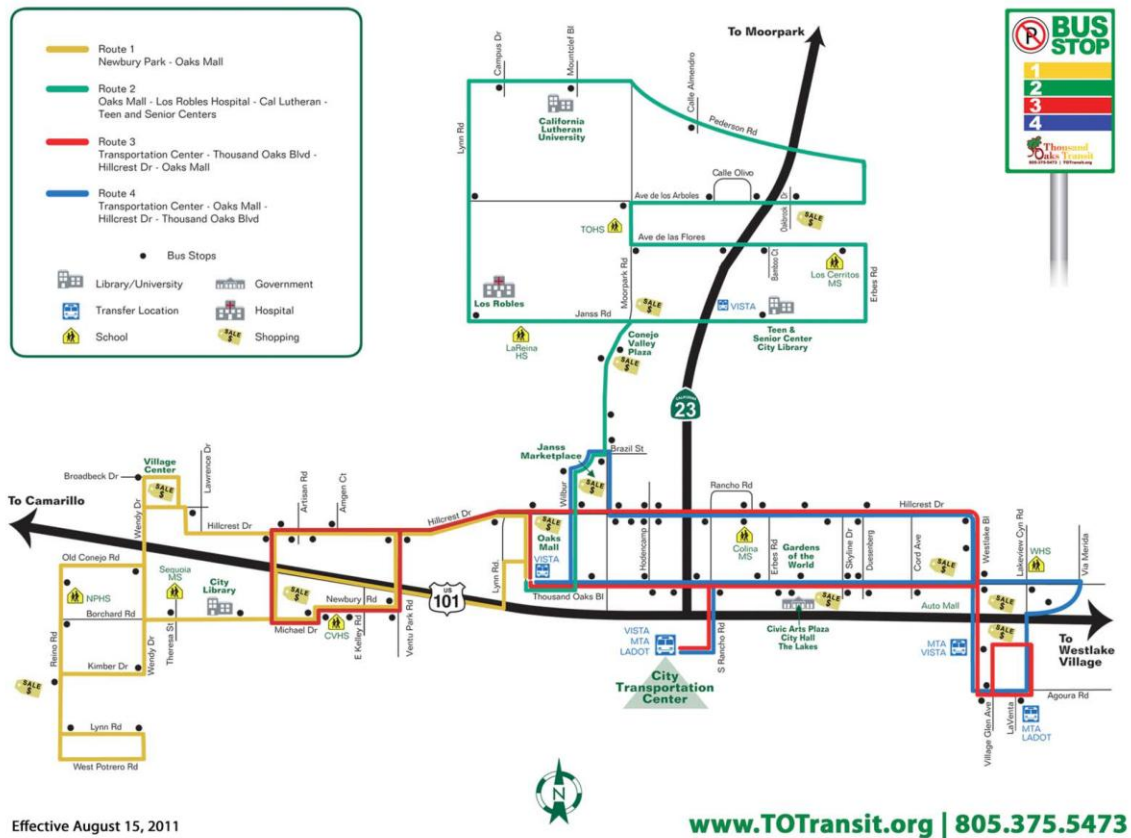
There is no rail service directly to Thousand Oaks, however there are a number of different providers that provide additional regionally-oriented service in Thousand Oaks with connections to rail or BRT service. These include:

- **Los Angeles County Metro Route 161**, which connects to Thousand Oaks Transit at the city's Transportation Center, provides a regional bus connection to the Orange Line BRT service / busway at Warner Center.
- **Ventura County VISTA** operates two intercity routes making limited stops. Its East County service provides service every 60-90 minutes to Moorpark (about 11 miles away), where there is a Metrolink commuter rail station, and its Highway 101 & Conejo Connection route runs east-west along US-101 serving Oaks Mall and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center.
- **The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LA DOT)** provides two peak-hour Commuter Express routes (422 and 423) serving downtown Los Angeles.

The Thousand Oaks Transit system design is clear, with routes easily identified by color and relatively straightforward routing. The system map identifies key destinations and marketing materials, bus stop signs (see map), and vehicles (see Figure 6-33) all have consistent branding.

Figure 6-35 provides performance information for Thousand Oaks Transit routes. In spite of its marketing and branding efforts, the system achieves a low-to-moderate overall productivity of about 14 boardings per service hour.

Figure 6-32 Thousand Oaks Overview (Map)



Source: Thousand Oaks Transit

Figure 6-33 Thousand Oaks Transit Bus



Source: City of Thousand Oaks

Minnetonka Transit Study | Peer Review
Metropolitan Council

Figure 6-34 Thousand Oaks Local Route Overview

Route #	Description	Type of Route	Key Anchors/ Destinations	Rail Connections	Frequency			Hours of Service		
					Weekday Midday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Thousand Oaks Transit										
1 Gold	Newbury Park - Oaks Mall	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oaks Shopping Center 	N/A	55-75	N/A	N/A	5:00 AM – 8:00 PM	N/A	N/A
2 Green	Oaks Mall - Los Robles Hospital - California Lutheran University - Teen and Senior Centers	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Library ▪ Teen and Senior Centers ▪ Oaks Shopping Center ▪ Janss Marketplace ▪ Los Robles Hospital ▪ California Lutheran University 	N/A	55-80	N/A	N/A	5:00 AM – 8:00 PM	N/A	N/A
3 Red	Transportation Center - Thousand Oaks Blvd - Hillcrest Dr - Oaks Mall	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City Hall ▪ Oaks Shopping Center 	N/A	70-90	N/A	N/A	5:00 AM – 8:00 PM	N/A	N/A
4 Blue	Transportation Center - Janss Marketplace - Oaks Mall - City Hall	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City Hall ▪ Oaks Shopping Center ▪ Janss Marketplace 	N/A	70-85	N/A	N/A	5:00 AM – 8:00 PM	N/A	N/A

Figure 6-35 Thousand Oaks Local Route-Level Performance Indicators

Route No	Route Type	Within City		
		Daily Boardings	Daily In-Service Hours w/o Layover	Boardings per In-Service Hour
1 Gold	Local	207	12.7	16.3
2 Green	Local	176	12.8	13.7
3 Red	Local	217	13.3	16.3
4 Blue	Local	139	13.3	10.4
TOTAL		738	52.0	14.2

Source: Data provided by Thousand Oaks Transit, from April 2012. Cost per passenger from National Transit Database, 2010.

Westlake, OH (GCRTA)

Westlake is a city of about 33,000 people, covering nearly 16 square miles. It is located about 12 miles west of downtown Cleveland. Unlike Minnetonka, Westlake does not have a major employment center. Its total employment density is somewhat lower than Minnetonka, and retail employment density is significantly lower. And while Westlake has a lower population than Minnetonka (about 35,000 residents), its population density is very similar. About 30% of residents commute to the CBD, which is about 10% higher than Minnetonka.

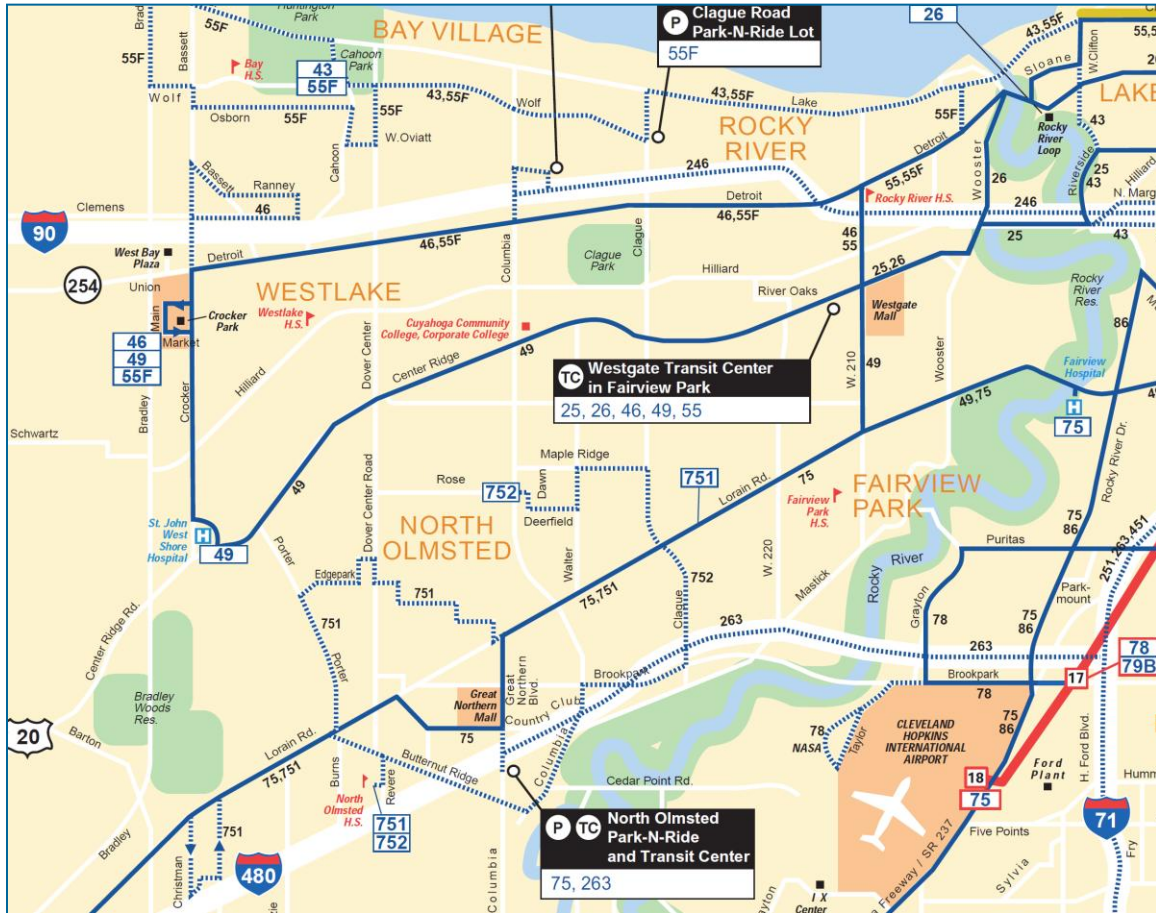
The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) operates two transit routes that provide local midday service in Westlake (46, Suburban Local and 49, Regional Local) as illustrated in Figure 6-36 (map) and listed in Figure 6-37 (table). Both routes provide hourly east-west service and have their western terminus in Westlake at Crocker Park and West Bay Plaza. Route 46 operates during weekday daytimes only. It serves Westlake park-and-ride on some trips and terminates at Westgate Transit Center, which functions as a transfer point to other routes. A GCRTA planner describes Route 46 as “a coverage route in a very suburban/car-dominated part of town” that is used mostly by transit dependent persons. Route 49 serves the hospital in the southwest area of the city and Cuyahoga Community College, justifying evening and weekend service, but generally lacks destinations to attract strong demand along its route in Westlake. Route 49 also serves Westgate Transit Center east of Westlake but extends further east than Route 46 to West Park Rapid Station on weekdays. On weekends, it also terminates at Westgate Transit Center.

Figure 6-38 provides performance information for GCRTA routes serving Westlake. Both Route 46 and Route 49 are in the bottom tier productivity among the GCRTA “crosstown/feeder” route category, and have lower productivity in Westlake than the route as a whole. On average, productivity is about 10 boardings per service hour in Westlake, compared to nearly 17 boardings per service hour overall.

A GCRTA planner indicated that both routes are below the system-wide farebox recovery average. Until 2009/2010, both routes extended to Triskett Rapid Station but due to funding shortfalls frequency and the eastern extent on both routes were curtailed in order to maintain service hours.

- **Route 46.** Route 46 was cut back to its current eastern terminus at Westgate. Whereas service is now hourly all-day, the route used to run only in the morning and evening (until about 10 pm), however evening ridership was low; there was no midday service.
- **Route 49.** Route 49 was cut back to West Park Rapid Station on weekdays and Westgate Transit Center on weekends. Weekday service on Route 49 is now generally hourly all-day, whereas it previously had higher service levels during peak hours.

Figure 6-36 Westlake Overview (Map)



Source: GCRTA

Figure 6-37 Westlake Local Route Overview

Route #	Description	Type of Route	Key Anchors/ Destinations	Rail Connections	Frequency			Hours of Service		
					Weekday Midday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
46	Detroit-Wagar	Suburban local – serves adjacent municipality to the east (GCRTA defines this route as a Crosstown/Feeder)	Crocker Park, West Bay Plaza, Promenade Westgate TC, Westgate Shopping Center, Westlake Park-and-Ride (some trips)	No	60	-	-	5:30 AM - 6:30 PM	None	None
49	Center Ridge	Regional local – penetrates further east than route 46 and makes an intermodal connection at West Park (GCRTA defines this route as a Crosstown/Feeder)	Crocker Park, St. John West Shore Hospital, Westwood Town Center, Westgate TC, Westgate Shopping Center, Fairview Hospital	Red Line	60	60	60	5:30 AM - 11:00 PM	6:30 AM - 10:30 PM	7:30 AM - 6:30 PM

Figure 6-38 Westlake Local Route-Level Performance Indicators

Route #	Route Type	Within City			Overall Route	
		Daily Boardings	Daily In-Service Hours w/o Layover	Boardings per In-Service Hour	Overall Daily Boardings ¹	Overall Productivity (Boardings per In-Service Hour, excluding layover)
46	Suburban local	91 ^a	7.2	12.6	145 ^a	14.5
49	Regional local	111	12.5	8.8	397	17.5
TOTAL		202	19.7	10.2	542	16.6

Notes: (a) Stop-level data for route 46 is incomplete. Daily boardings estimated by applying the in-city and overall productivity for trips with data to in-city or overall in-service hours (without layover). As a check, overall boardings from stop-level data (145) compare to an average of 144 daily boardings from GCRTA annual boarding data for route 46 (36,717 boardings divided by 255 days). (1) Riders per Revenue Hour (includes layover). As an additional check, calculated overall productivity was compared to published overall productivity statistics of 10.9 and 14.9 boardings *per vehicle revenue hour*.

Source: Stop-level data and other information provided by GCRTA. Overall boardings from 2011 Route Performance spreadsheet provided by GCRTA.

Fares

Figure 6-39 provides an overview of fares for each of the peers. Metro Transit adult, off-peak, one-way fares (\$1.75) are on the low-end of the peer range among regional transit providers in the peer group, while discounted fares are on the low-end of the peer range overall. The two local-only systems, Burlington Public Transit System and Thousand Oaks Transit, have the lowest one-way adult fares.

Figure 6-39 One-Way Fare for Local Midday Service

Peer	Adult	Discount
Minnetonka	\$1.75 (off-peak)	\$0.75 (Senior/Disabled/Youth 6-12 during off-peak)
Braintree and Burlington, MA – MBTA Service ⁷	\$2.00 Ticket or cash-on-board	\$1.50 Adult with pre-paid fare card \$0.75 (Senior/Disabled/Jr. High or High School Student)
Burlington, MA – Burlington Public Transit System Local Overlay	\$1.50	\$1.00 (Senior/Student)
6Broomfield, CO	\$2.25	\$1.10 (Senior/Disabled/Youth 6-19)
Shoreline, WA	\$2.25 (off-peak)	\$0.75 (Senior/Disabled) \$1.25 Youth 6-18
Thousand Oaks, CA	\$1.50	\$0.75 (Senior/Disabled) FREE (ADA cardholder)
Westlake, OH	\$2.25	\$1.00 (Senior/Disabled)

⁷ As of July 1, 2012

Regional and Local Operating Funding

Figure 6-40 summarizes the primary sources of operating funding for each peer and highlights particular funding programs or issues.

Figure 6-40 Summary of Operating Funding Sources

Peer	Overview of Funding Sources
Minnetonka	In addition to funding from the state's general fund, a Motor Vehicle Sales Tax is the largest source of funding for transit operations in the Twin Cities (36% of revenues in 2012). Counties are also allowed to establish sales taxes of up to 0.25 cents and a \$20 per motor vehicle excise tax to fund transit operating and capital improvements. ⁸ In 2002, Minnetonka opted out of regional transit service provided by Metro Transit, but elected to have Metro Transit continue to provide service for the city through July 2008. Minnetonka also has the option to contract service to an alternate provider.
Braintree, MA – MBTA Service	MBTA's primary funding source is state sales taxes. It receives 16% of state-wide sales tax receipts (set at a 6.25%), with a minimum funding floor. As described below for Burlington, MBTA has reduced subsidies for local transit programs such as the Burlington Public Transit System.
Broomfield, CO	RTD is primarily funded by a 1% sales tax within service area counties.
Burlington, MA – MBTA and Burlington Public Transit System Local Overlay	See Braintree for MBTA funding overview. Burlington Public Transit is funded by the Town of Burlington and the MBTA, although MBTA recently announced plans to reduce funding, initially by \$80,000 and later reduced to \$40,000. The town approved filling the \$40,000 funding gap. In 2011, Burlington Mall funded the cost of operating the buses for the five Saturdays between Thanksgiving and Christmas.
Shoreline, WA	King County Metro's primary funding source is a county-wide sales tax, which is authorized for Public Transportation Benefit Districts (PTBA) with voter approval. Voters have approved increases to the sales tax level as well as passed the Transit Now ⁹ initiative, which funds additional service through a 0.01% sales tax increase. For example, Transit Now has funded increased service on route 358 through Shoreline. The City of Seattle has partnered with King County Metro to fund additional service frequency, although Shoreline has not done so.
Thousand Oaks, CA	Funding is allocated by the Ventura County Transportation Commission based on gas sales tax receipts, through the State of California Transportation Development Act (TDA). The City of Thousand Oaks receives funding of \$4 million for bus and Dial-A-Ride service.
Westlake, OH	RTA receives a portion of its operating funds from a 1% countywide sales tax and therefore does not ask for local operating contributions for existing service. However, RTA is pursuing public-private partnerships for new or more specialized service opportunities, such as new trolley service in downtown Cleveland. Prior to September 2009, Westlake had a Community Circulator route, which was discontinued due to lack of funding. RTA offered communities who had lost Circulator service to partner to fund a once-a-week shuttle, however Westlake did not participate. This shuttle was discontinued after a year in the two communities that took advantage of the program due to low ridership.

Data sources: Individual transit providers, personal communication.

⁸ State of Minnesota, *Governance of Transit in the Twin Cities Region, 2011*.

<http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedrep/transit.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/MetroTransit/TransitNow.aspx>

KEY FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of the key findings from both the national and local peer review. Based on the key findings, a set of best practices is presented in the next section.

Key Findings (Local Peers)

- **Transit service in Minnetonka is somewhat unique.** The transit services in both of Minnetonka's closest neighbors (Eden Prairie and Plymouth) are exclusively (or almost exclusively) focused on express, commute-oriented service. While transit service in Minnetonka is also heavily focused on express service, services are more mixed with some local routes and midday service in the strongest transit markets (I-394 corridor, the Opus area, and the far eastern edge of the city). Transit services in Blaine more closely resemble the service model in Minnetonka, but Blaine has higher ridership as a result of a few local routes connecting Northtown to Transit Market Area 1
- **Minnetonka has more service and ridership than its closest neighbors.** Compared to Eden Prairie and Plymouth, Minnetonka has a higher level of ridership and in-service hours. While productivity (passengers per in-service hour) is not an accurate metric unless evaluating the entire route, it is assumed that the services in Plymouth and Eden Prairie are more productive since they are largely express and operate only during peak periods.
- **Minnetonka has some midday and weekend service.** Transit services in both Eden Prairie and Plymouth are not available on weekends or during the week in the middle of the day (with the exception of two midday trips on one Plymouth Metrolink route and some midday service to Southwest Station). Blaine, on the other hand, has several routes that offer midday local service.
- **Local Dial-A-Ride in Plymouth provides local coverage.** Plymouth is the only peer city that offers a general public demand responsive service in addition to the fixed routes (and as a replacement for TransitLink). Blaine and Eden Prairie have TransitLink service, like Minnetonka (though weekday service hours are extended in Minnetonka and Saturday service is provided).

Key Findings (National Peers)

- **National peers are less focused on express service.** While express service is provided in all peer communities, all national peers also had higher levels of local or regional service (that also provided service locally). Two of the peers (Thousand Oaks and Burlington) offer local services as an overlay to the regional transit services, and Thousand Oaks has somewhat limited regional service. Shoreline, Broomfield and Braintree (not unlike the I-394 corridor in Minnetonka) all have a significant amount of regional service that provides local service in the respective cities. Two other factors influencing the level express versus local service is the average central business district (CBD) all-day parking rate and the distance from the CBD. The CBD for Burlington and Braintree (Boston) has the highest average all-day parking rates of any peer city, followed closely by Thousand Oaks (Los Angeles) and Shoreline (Seattle). While the average all-day parking rates in downtown Minneapolis are lower than in peer regions, express service in Minnetonka is much more extensive than the peer cities. Therefore, a key finding is that it's the combination of distance from the CBD *and* average all-day parking rates that influences the level of express versus local service.
- **Local-serving systems are less productive.** The two peer communities that have local-serving service (Burlington and Thousand Oaks) have the lowest overall route productivity compared to the peers that provide local service as part of a larger regional

network. However, Thousand Oaks has higher productivity than the local portions of service in Westlake and the local portion of Route 354 express service in Burlington.

- **Routes that serve regional connections and serve rail stations are most productive.** The local and regional routes serving Braintree connect major rail stations. As a result, the Braintree routes are some of the most productive routes overall. Highly productive routes in Shoreline indicate that connecting major transit hubs (including a future rail station) can have a similar effect.
- **Serving a rail station or transit hub is not a substitute for strong anchors.** Regional routes that terminate at a rail station (350 in Burlington or 49 in Westlake) are more productive than routes without such an anchor. However, the local (tail) portions of these routes have a significantly lower productivity than the routes as a whole (15.8 boardings per hour vs. 34.6 and 8.8 boardings per hour vs. 17.5).
- **Midday service headways vary.** The local transit routes operated in most of the peer cities operate about every hour during the midday, but some routes (such as in Shoreline and Route 76 in Broomfield) operate more frequently (every 30 minutes). Thousand Oaks Transit and Burlington Public Transit System, on the other hand, operate midday services every 45 to 90 minutes and every 60-210 minutes, respectively.
- **Weekend service is more common on regional routes.** The two local-serving services in Burlington and Thousand Oaks, and the shorter route in Westlake (46) do not provide any weekend service, whereas the regional routes provided in Burlington (350), Broomfield, Braintree, Shoreline, and Westlake (49 only) provide service on weekends (both Saturday and Sunday). Some routes, such as Route 76 in Broomfield only operates a portion of its route on the weekends.
- **No local Dial-A-Ride.** With the exception of Broomfield, none of the national peer communities operate a local, general public dial-a-ride.

BEST PRACTICES

Based on the peer review, this section provides an initial set of “best practices” for how local service in Minnetonka might be designed and operated. The best practices are based on the peer route information related to route design, service characteristics, funding, and marketing/branding.

Routes should have strong anchors, ideally at both ends

Local peer routes are most productive if they terminate at a strong destination. Ideally, this would occur at both ends of the route. Strong destinations include park and rides and transit centers with all-day service, major employment centers, shopping centers, etc. Perhaps the best example of this is Shoreline, where the most productive routes terminate at a park and ride or transit center on both ends, while the least productive routes do not have strong anchors. The more productive routes in other peer cities, like Broomfield and Braintree, also follow a similar rule where they terminate at either at a transit station, park and ride, or rail station.

Regional routes connecting communities are most productive

By far the most productive local routes are those that directly serve a major downtown or other regional center. For example, the routes that serve Shoreline and directly serve downtown Seattle have the highest overall productivity. While the local segments of the routes that serve a downtown or other regional center are not as productive as the route overall, the connection to the more productive segments enables less productive “tails” to be provided. This design is common in the Twin Cities as many urban local routes have tails that serve less productive areas

(e.g., Routes 9 and 12 are good examples). Low productivity on route 49 in Westlake exemplifies the need for not only a strong anchor at both ends but destinations to generate bidirectional demand along the length of the route.

Routes should not be designed exclusively around political boundaries

Routes that travel beyond the boundaries of the peer cities are significantly more productive than those that stay just within the city limits. For example, the local services in Burlington have the lowest overall productivity of any other peer, but the regional routes that connect destinations outside of the city limits are more on par with other peer cities (or higher). Similarly, Thousand Oaks, which operates mostly local services, also has relatively low productivity compared to other peer cities that do not. The two local peer communities (Plymouth and Eden Prairie) both operate services that respond to political boundaries, rather than to how people travel. Partly for this reason, Plymouth and Eden Prairie have limited or no local, midday service and have decided that express services are the primary means to sustain transit service.

Transit is most productive if it serves a rail station

There are strong incentives to use local transit services when they connect to a rail station. This is especially true when parking costs in the urban core are high and/or traffic congestion is an issue. The most successful routes in the Boston area peer cities (Burlington and Braintree) also serve a commuter rail or “T” heavy rail station. Serving a rail station also gets local passengers into the primary transit network where connections to most other places in the region can be made. The rail stations in the Boston area (e.g., Braintree) also charge for parking, which is a major reason why the local services are so productive.

Saturday (and ideally Sunday) service is preferred

While most express services operate on weekdays only, many of the regional and suburban routes in national peer cities operate service on weekends (while local serving routes in Thousand Oaks and Burlington do not operate on weekends). Saturday service is generally more frequent than Sunday frequencies. In Braintree, for example, service operates every hour on Saturday and every 90 minutes on Sunday. While weekend service comes at an additional cost, it is preferable, especially for local services where it is important to serve a market that does need service just during weekday, commute periods.

Local-serving transit requires strong political support

Several of the peers (Burlington and Thousand Oaks) have local or state financial support to provide local-serving transit services. In Burlington, some of the funding is provided by MBTA (the regional provider), so presumably MBTA has transferred some of the local service needs to Burlington while MBTA focuses on the regional services. MBTA has proposed cuts to funding for local overlay services, such as in Burlington, so the Burlington City Council is considering a proposal to provide local funding that would allow the local services to be maintained at the same level. Burlington is a somewhat cautionary example, as they now have the obligation to provide local funding for a service that is identified with the city.

Marketing and Branding

Clear and well-designed marketing materials, as well as unique or contextual branding, can make using transit easier and more dignified. Most of peer communities rely on the regional provider

(such as Metro Transit in Minnetonka) to develop and produce marketing materials, and brands for transit service is well established. While this arrangement is not expected to change in Minnetonka, it is important for any local service to reflect local needs and desires. Of the national peers, Thousand Oaks has perhaps the most easy-to-use marketing materials and is branded most uniquely to the community (although the name is somewhat generic). Similarly, Burlington Transit has a somewhat unique brand, but the on-line marketing materials are not very well designed.

