

CHAPTER 4 – FINAL PLAN SERVICE CHANGES, RESOURCE AND RIDER IMPACTS

The West Suburban Final Plan includes several improvements to the local route network, which will improve local circulation and access for transit-reliant customers. The Final Plan also outlines a consolidation of express service, which will reduce areas of route duplication and inefficiencies.

Local route improvements include adding two evening roundtrips on Route 9N to serve the Greenbrier area, extending the weekday hours of service on Route 615 and creating a new local route in Minnetonka. The local route weekday improvements will add 13.8 in-service hours and one bus. Ridership is anticipated to grow by nearly 150 rides a day; however, it is estimated that productivity will decrease by 4 percent due to an emphasis on coverage-oriented service with this Plan. The local route Saturday improvements will add 5.1 in-service hours and one bus. Ridership is anticipated to grow by almost 50 riders per Saturday; however, productivity will likely decrease by 9 percent since these changes will emphasize coverage.

The express route consolidation will blend five routes into four routes. Currently the express routes in the study area carry an average of 26 passengers per trip, which is below the regional guidelines. The express changes will improve productivity by eliminating segments of route duplication and low productivity and trips with low ridership. The express route consolidation results in a decrease of 7.7 in-service hours and requires three fewer buses. It is estimated that productivity will increase by 10 percent. However, ridership is anticipated to decrease by approximately 120 rides per weekday. It is anticipated that the majority of the 120 rides will shift to other park and ride express routes, such as Route 673 serving the County Road 73 and I-394 park and ride. The consolidation will result in longer travel times and a reduction in the number of trips for some existing riders.

Details of the West Suburban Service Changes are provided below for each route. For each route, information is provided regarding service area and transit market, number of trips, frequency of service, areas of service duplication, hours of service, ridership, productivity and the distribution of rides. This information is also available in Table 2 of Appendix A. Maps and service information for each of the routes are provided in Appendix A.

Local Route 9N – Adding Weekday Evening Trips Serving Greenbrier and Cedar Lake Road – Increasing Trips Options and Accessibility

Changes

Four weekday evening trips will change from Route 9C trips serving the Louisiana Transit Center (LTC) to Route 9N trips serving the apartments and condominiums along Greenbrier Road and Cedar Lake Road in Minnetonka.

The added service will be as follows (times are approximate):

- Westbound trips leaving downtown from 9th Street & Nicollet Mall at 7:05 p.m. and 9:05 p.m. and arriving at County Road 73 & Greenbrier at 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m.
- Eastbound trips departing County Road 73 & Greenbrier at 7:50 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. and arriving downtown at 8th Street & Nicollet Mall at 8:20 p.m. and 10:20 p.m.

These trips will supplement the current 9N service leaving downtown at 8:05 p.m. and leaving Greenbrier at 8:45 p.m.

Impacts

There is an average of two riders per trip at the LTC on each of the trips that will be rerouted to serve Greenbrier. The Greenbrier area has a higher level of residential density and is served by far fewer trips than LTC. Additionally, the productivity of the Greenbrier branch is slightly higher than the 9C. The rerouting will add five minutes per trip, or 20 minutes total. The frequency of the Route 9 trunk service, east of Park Place Boulevard to downtown and south Minneapolis, will not be impacted.

It is anticipated that the added evening service will generate an average of three rides per trip for a total of 12 rides and a productivity of 36 passengers per in-service hour. The added trips will improve connectivity and access for the Greenbrier area.

Local Route 614 – New Community Circulator between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights – Increasing Local Access and Connectivity

Changes

Route 614 will be a new demonstration route, operating between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights approximately once an hour between 5:15 a.m.-7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m.-4:20 p.m. on Saturdays.

The new route will travel between Ridgedale and Minnetonka Heights via Ridgedale Drive, Plymouth Road, Minnetonka Boulevard and County Road 101. In addition to serving the Ridgedale Shopping Center, the following activity centers and residential complexes will be served by Route 614: Ridgedale YMCA; Hennepin County Service Center; Ridgedale Library; Ridgehaven Mall; North Memorial Clinic; St. David's Center for Child & Family Development; Minnetonka City Hall; retail nodes at Minnetonka Mills, Minnetonka Boulevard and County Road 101 and at 7-Hi; and the residential units of Minnetonka Heights.

Route 614 will be scheduled to connect with express Route 675 and local Route 615 at Ridgedale to improve regional connectivity and access.

Impacts

As noted earlier, transit often needs to strike a balance between “coverage” versus “productivity.” Route 614 is an example of providing better coverage to increase connectivity and access in a lower density market. The route will provide an option for riders on the following existing express route segments scheduled for elimination due to low ridership: County Road 101 between Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard (now served by express Route 667E) and Plymouth Road between Minnetonka Boulevard and Ridgedale Drive (now served by express Route 671).

With the new local regular service, there will be less reliance on Transit Link, the regional dial-a-ride service that is provided to areas without regular-route service. Route 614 will require 9.7 weekday and 5.1 Saturday in-service hours and can be operated with one bus. The productivity for Route 614 is targeted between 7.8 and 9.5 passenger per in-service hour.

Local Route 615 – Increasing Weekday Hours of Service, Trips Options, Accessibility and Connectivity

Changes

The hours of weekday service on Route 615 will be expanded to operate 30 minutes earlier in the morning and two hours later in the evening. Currently weekday service operates between 7:15 a.m.-

5:40 p.m. With the improvement, service will operate between 6:50 a.m.-7:40 p.m. Three new eastbound trips will depart from Ridgedale at 6:50 a.m., 5:50 p.m. and 6:50 p.m. Two new westbound trips will depart from Excelsior & Grand at 5:50 p.m. and 6:50 p.m.

Additionally, Route 615 will be scheduled to connect with new local Route 614 and express Route 675 to improve regional connectivity and access.

Impacts

Extending the service hours will increase access and connectivity for area residents and employees to the numerous activity centers and residential complexes served by Route 615. The added trips will add 3.8 in-service hours. It is anticipated that the added trips will generate 40 additional rides a day, resulting in a productivity of 10 passengers per in service hour.

Express Route 664 – Improving Productivity by Reducing Areas of Low Productivity and Service Overlap

Changes – Routing

Route 664 will continue to serve Mainstreet east of 11th Avenue as well as Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) between 5th Avenue in Hopkins and Highway 100 in St. Louis Park. The route will begin at Smetana Drive & Smetana Road and cover the Opus and 11th Avenue South area now served by Route 665.

The segment of the route on County Road 101 south of Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) will be served by the new Route 667H express as well as the new local Route 614. The segment of the route on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) west of Shady Oak Road and the segment in Hopkins on Mainstreet west of 11th Avenue will be covered by a reconfigured Route 670. A small segment on Baker Road just east of I-494 (which is only served by one trip in each direction) will be discontinued. The Baker Road segment has no regular riders.

Changes – Trips Times

The current eastbound trip times to downtown will be shifted slightly, but will continue to serve downtown work start times of 7:00 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Current westbound trip times from downtown will remain unchanged.

Impacts

The productivity of the route is anticipated to increase by over 40 percent to 36 passengers per in-service hour. Route 664's in-service hours will be reduced from its current 8.6 in-service hours to 6.2 in-service hours. Bus requirements will remain at the current three peak buses.

It is anticipated that ridership will increase slightly from the current 212 to 222 rides a day. Rides lost west of 11th Avenue will be replaced by rides gained along 11th Avenue south of County Road 3 in the area now served by Route 665. Existing Route 664 customers who shift to Route 670 will save three to eight minutes in travel time.

Express Route 665 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Express Service

Changes – Routing

The Route 665 will be eliminated. Route 664 will serve the Opus and 11th Avenue South area now covered by Route 665, and Route 670 will serve the park and ride on Excelsior Boulevard (County

Road 3) at 8th Avenue, currently served by Route 665.

Changes – Trip Times

Route 665 has three inbound trips arriving downtown for work starts of 7:00 a.m., 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and three outbound trips from downtown that serve work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. These trip times will continue to be served by Route 664. Route 670 will serve all these trip times with the exception of the 7:00 a.m. work start.

Travel time will increase by four to 10 minutes for current Route 665 riders along 11th Avenue and in the Opus area. The total travel time on proposed Route 664 between Smetana Road and downtown will be approximately 40 minutes.

Impacts

Route 665 averages 137 daily rides. There are 3.8 in-service hours and it requires three peak buses. It is anticipated that over 90 percent of the riders will shift to either Route 664 or Route 670. The productivity of routes 664 and 670 are expected to increase by nearly 30 percent.

Express Route 667 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Service and Eliminating Areas of Overlap

Changes – Routing

There are no routing changes planned for the Route 667B service, but the Route 667E will be eliminated and a new branch (Route 667H) will be added. The new Route 667H branch will travel between County Road 101 at County Road 62 and Minnetonka Boulevard at Highway 100 via County Road 101, Highway 7, Highway 169 and Minnetonka Boulevard. Route 667B will continue to operate between Amherst and Minnetonka Boulevard and Highway 100 via 36th Avenue, Texas Avenue and Minnetonka Boulevard. Both the B and H branches will operate non-stop to downtown via Highway 100 and I-394. Downtown inbound trips will travel on 12th Street and the 2nd Avenue South transit lane. Outbound trips will operate on Marquette Avenue, 11th Street and Hawthorne to I-394.

Customers on Minnetonka Boulevard between Texas Avenue and Highway 100 will have service available on the existing Route 667B and the new Route 667H service, as well as Route 17 local service. Riders on Minnetonka Boulevard between Highway 169 and Texas Avenue will be served by the new Route 667H service. Customers on Minnetonka Boulevard between County Road 101 and Highway 169 will be served by Route 671.

Existing Route 667E riders on County Road 101 between Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard will instead be served by a new local route, 614, operating on County Road 101 between Minnetonka Heights and Minnetonka Boulevard. The new Route 614 will be scheduled to connect at Ridgedale to express Route 675.

The new Route 667H branch will also cover the current Route 670 service on Highway 7 between County Road 101 and Highway 169, as well as serve current Route 664 riders on County Road 101 south of Highway 7.

Changes – Trip Times

The new Route 667H service will have three trips in each direction serving downtown work start times of 7:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Route 667B

trips will increase by one inbound and two outbound trips with seven trips in each directions serving downtown work start times between 6:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. and work end times of between 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m..

Impacts

There are three downtown arrival and departure times currently served by Route 667E that will no longer have express service west of Texas Avenue: the eastbound trips arriving at 2nd Avenue South and 6th Street at 6:09 a.m. and 9:46 a.m. and a westbound trip departing from Marquette and 3rd Street at 8:07 a.m. West of Texas Avenue these trips average eight, eight and two passengers, respectively.

The County Road 101 segment of Route 667E has an average of only three riders. New local Route 614 with connections to express Route 675 at Ridgedale will provide service on this segment of County Road 101.

It is anticipated that over 90 percent of the Route 667E riders will shift to alternative service, in particular routes 667B, 667H and 671.

Travel time for the current Route 670 riders along Highway 7 will increase by approximately 10 minutes. Travel time for current Route 664 along County Road 101 will decrease by approximately three minutes.

Ridership is expected to remain steady at approximately 630 daily rides, and the productivity of the route is anticipated to increase slightly to 42 passengers per in-service hour. Route 667's in-service hours will be reduced from its current 15.9 in-service hours to 14.9 in-service hours. Bus requirements will remain at the current six peak buses.

Rides lost on the current 667E service will be replaced by existing Route 670 rides along Highway 7 that shift to the new Route 667H. In addition, the extra Route 667B service along 36th Street and Texas Avenue should result in new rides.

Express Route 670 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Service and Eliminating Low Ridership Segments

Changes – Routing

The segment of route along County Road 19 between County Road 15 and Water Street in Excelsior will be covered by Route 671 rather than Route 670.

Between County Road 19 and Water Street in Excelsior and Hutchins and County Road 101 in Minnetonka the route will not change. East of County Road 101 Route 670 will no longer serve Highway 7. Instead it will replace Route 664 on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) in Minnetonka and Shady Oak Road and Mainstreet in Hopkins. At Mainstreet and 11th Avenue, Route 670 will operate on 11th Avenue to Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) and the Hopkins Park and Ride at 8th Avenue. After serving the park and ride the route will travel on Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) to Highway 169 and then travel via Highway 169 and I-394 non-stop to downtown.

As noted earlier, the segment of Highway 7 east of County Road 101 currently served by Route 670 will instead be served by the new Route 667H.

Changes – Trips Times

Route 670 will continue to have three inbound trips arriving downtown for work starts of 7:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and three outbound trips from downtown that serve work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The County Road 19 segment which will be served by Route 671 rather than 670 will continue to have three inbound and three outbound trips serving the same downtown work start and end times.

The Highway 7 riders east of County Road 101 will continue to be served by three inbound and three outbound trips serving the same work start and end times now served.

Impacts

Travel time for riders on the County Road 19 segment will decrease by approximately two minutes.

Travel time for riders between downtown Excelsior and County Road 101 will increase by up to three minutes, whereas travel time for current Route 664 riders west of 11th Avenue will decrease by three to eight minutes. Travel time for Route 665 riders boarding at the Hopkins Park and Ride will not change.

Travel time for riders along Highway 7 east of County Road 101 will increase by 10 minutes.

Ridership is anticipated to increase from 113 to 133 rides. In-service hours will decrease slightly from 6.6 to 6.0 and productivity will increase from 17 to 22 passengers per in-service hour. Three peak buses will continue to be needed on the route.

Express Route 671 – Improving Productivity by Consolidating Service and Eliminating Areas of Low Ridership

Changes – Routing

North of downtown Excelsior Route 671 will be extended to serve the County Road 19 segment now served by Route 670. Between downtown Excelsior and the intersection of Minnetonka Boulevard and Plymouth Road the routing will not change. Route 671 express service on Plymouth Road north of Minnetonka Boulevard will be eliminated. Instead, Route 671 will continue on Minnetonka Boulevard to Highway 169, covering a segment of Minnetonka Boulevard currently served by Route 667E. At Minnetonka Boulevard and Highway 169, Route 671 will travel non-stop on Highway 169 and I-394 to downtown.

Changes – Trip Times

Route 671 will continue to have three inbound trips arriving downtown for work starts of 7:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and three outbound trips from downtown that serve work end times of 4:00 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Impacts

Travel time for current Route 671 riders west of Plymouth Road will decrease slightly by one to two minutes.

Ridership on Route 671 is expected to decrease from 166 to 154 daily rides. In-service hours will increase slightly from 6.0 to 6.1 in-service hours; as a result it is anticipated that productivity will

decrease from 28 to 25 passengers per in-service hour. Route 671 bus requirements will remain at three peak buses.

There are four riders on Plymouth Road and approximately 20 riders on Route 671 using the Plymouth Road Park and Ride. The passengers on Plymouth Road will have alternative service on the new Route 614 that will be scheduled to provide connections to express Route 675 at Ridgedale Shopping Center. Plymouth Road Park and Ride customers have alternative express service on Route 672 as well as additional park-and-ride service options at the I-394 and County Road 73 Park and Ride.