

T Transportation Committee
Metropolitan Council meeting of August 25, 2010

Item: 2010-274

Date August 13, 2010
Prepared:
Subject: I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Plan Final Approval

Proposed Action:

Approve I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Final Plan for implementation on December 4, 2010.

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:

Cyndi Harper and John Dillery presented an overview of the I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Final Plan, including the results of the public comment process and changes to the service plan based on public input.

CM Steffen commented that Routes 146 and 152 generated the highest number of public comments. In the future she would like staff to indicate how many riders are on the routes that have comments to better understand the overall reaction. She also asked for clarification of what "a large minority of the total ridership" means in the last paragraph of the business item. Harper responded that a better way to phrase that sentence would be "a significant portion" of Route 152 riders want to keep their one-seat ride; a compromise suggested by some riders would be additional service during University of Minnesota breaks.

Brian Lamb added that future service adjustments will include baseline ridership by corridor and by route. Metro Transit is taking an incremental approach to I-35W Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) since the facilities and full service plan are not in place yet. It is a balancing act between the convenience of a one-seat ride and the increased frequency that transfers can provide. In the long-term, some customers will have to make more transfers in order to provide better access to all parts of the south metro. This is the consistent philosophy behind all of the regional transitways.

CM Scherer asked if we will be coordinating transfers at the I-35W and 46th Street Station. Lamb replied that the Service Restructuring Final Plan is based on timed transfers to eliminate delays caused by lengthy waits for transfers. Riders arriving at the station will find their connecting bus waiting or arriving very soon. Timed transfers are the main reason that these types of facilities are important.

CM Steffen said that she disliked the sentence in the business item that reads "The...Plan modifies existing bus routes to better serve the new station," noting that we serve people, not facilities. Lamb agreed and replied that staff will make sure to always emphasize our primary mission, which is serving people, not facilities.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Scherer and passed unanimously.

T Transportation Committee
Meeting date: August 9, 2010
Metropolitan Council Meeting: August 25, 2010

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: August 9, 2010
Subject: I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Final Plan Approval
District(s), Member(s): Dist 5 - Polly Bowles, Dist 7 - Annette Meeks, Dist 8 - Lynette Wittsack
Policy/Legal Reference: 1-3a Transportation Service Changes and Restructuring Procedure; 1-3b Public Involvement in the Transportation Planning Process Procedure; 2 Customer Relations and Outreach Policy
Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian Lamb, General Manager (612-349-7510)
John Levin, Director Service Development (612-349-7789)
Adam Harrington, Asst. Director, Route & System Planning (612-349-7797)
John Dillery, Senior Transit Planner (612-349-7773)
Cyndi Harper, Mgr. Route System Planning (612-349-7723)
Division/Department: Metro Transit, Service Development

Proposed Action

Approve I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Final Plan for implementation on December 4, 2010.

Background

On April 28, 2010, the Council approved the I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Concept Plan for public review. Two public informational meetings and a public hearing were held to take public comments on the plan. Staff reviewed these comments and revised the plan to address many of the issues raised. The final version of the plan is now complete and ready for approval and implementation on December 4, 2010.

The proposed Service Restructuring Plan incorporates the new online transit station now being constructed by Metro Transit in partnership with Mn/DOT at I-35W and 46th Street in south Minneapolis. This station is one of the first elements of the planned I-35W Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor scheduled to start service in 2012. Ultimately, eight stations are planned along I-35W.

The proposed Service Restructuring Plan modifies existing bus routes to better serve the new station. The plan features all-day service on the freeway in both directions linking city and suburban neighborhoods with downtown Minneapolis and connections to the University of Minnesota and south suburban reverse-commute destinations such as the Best Buy headquarters, the Golden Triangle, and Normandale Community College.

The plan changes bus service for customers riding in Edina, Richfield, and Minneapolis. The biggest impacts will be felt by customers now using routes 146, 152, 535 and 576 as these routes are combined and connecting service is arranged at the new station.

Public Review and Comment Process

These changes impact greater than 25 percent of a route or group of routes which is defined by Metropolitan Council policy as a “major service change” and required a public hearing. The following activities ensured compliance with Council policies.

- April 28 – Metropolitan Council approved public review plan and public hearing
- May-June – Flyers posted at bus stops. Information Brochures/Comment Cards placed on all buses serving the affected routes. Complete information posted on the metrotransit.org website.
- June 2 – Bloomington-Richfield Public Information meeting held. 18 attendees
- June 15 – Minneapolis Public Information meeting held. 13 attendees
- June 29 – Public Hearing at Minneapolis Central Library held. 12 attendees.

Results of Public Review and Comment Process

Metro Transit received 131 comments about the I-35W and 46th Street Restructuring Plan. The proposed replacement of routes 146 and 152 generated the most comments. Together these two routes generated 58 comments, or 44% of the total.

- Route 146 had 40 comments. Of these, 28 or 70% opposed the change.
- Route 152 had 18 comments. Of these, 15 or 83% opposed the change.
- Routes 46 and 135 had the most positive comments.
- Routes 535 and 576 together had the most customers with questions or seeking more information about the plan. There was an opportunity to e-mail responses to most of these, and with the clarifications, most comments became favorable.

Key Changes in Final Plan

Route **11** - Extend limited weekday service to serve public schools on 50th Street

Route **18** – Move the G terminal to 46th St. at Nicollet for connections from Grand Ave.

Route **46** – Do not extend service to Lincoln Dr. in Edina; service provided on Route 146

Route **135** – Reduce AM service and retime for better downtown arrival times. Extend southbound trips via Grand Ave to 48th St. for better coverage of neighborhood.

Route **146** – Maintain route, change to be non-stop between 46th/Nicollet - I-35W/ Lake. Reduce service slightly, use articulated buses.

Route **152** – Eliminate route, but improve replacement service via routes 46/579 during U of M breaks and Summer Semester over what Route 152 has provided.

Funding

The proposed Final Plan would be operated within existing Metro Transit resources.

Known Support / Opposition

The modifications incorporated into the final plan include the continuation of most Route 146 service, positively addressing most of the concerns expressed by the riders. The Route 152 replacement service does not address all of the concerns expressed by the riders, but the added service during the summer will be helpful to the U of M employees that make up a significant portion of the total ridership on this route.