

10 PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS

INTRODUCTION

A means of managing congestion on the highway system is to increase occupancy levels in vehicles. An objective of MnDOT, and specifically District 3, is to promote park-and-ride facilities as one means of accomplishing this goal.

This chapter reviews existing and potential park-and-ride facilities, and summarizes recommended improvements. For clarity purposes, "park-and-ride facility" is defined as a location where it is possible to park cars for long periods of time, and where transit service is available and/or where carpools/vanpools form. The term park-and-pool, which was used in Chapters 4 and 5 to distinguish those lots without transit from those with transit, is not used here to allow for a consistent approach in addressing commuter needs.

DEFINING PARK-AND-RIDE PROTOTYPES FOR DISTRICT 3

The review of and recommended alternatives for park-and-ride facilities is based on potential ridership demand, discussed in Chapter 9, along with general practices for location and design of park-and-ride facilities.

For the purpose of defining park-and-ride improvements and development needs, a hierarchy for facilities was developed, along with prototype design with proposed amenities.

Figure 10-1 provides the proposed park-and-ride hierarchy for District 3.

Figure 10-1 Park-and-Ride Hierarchy

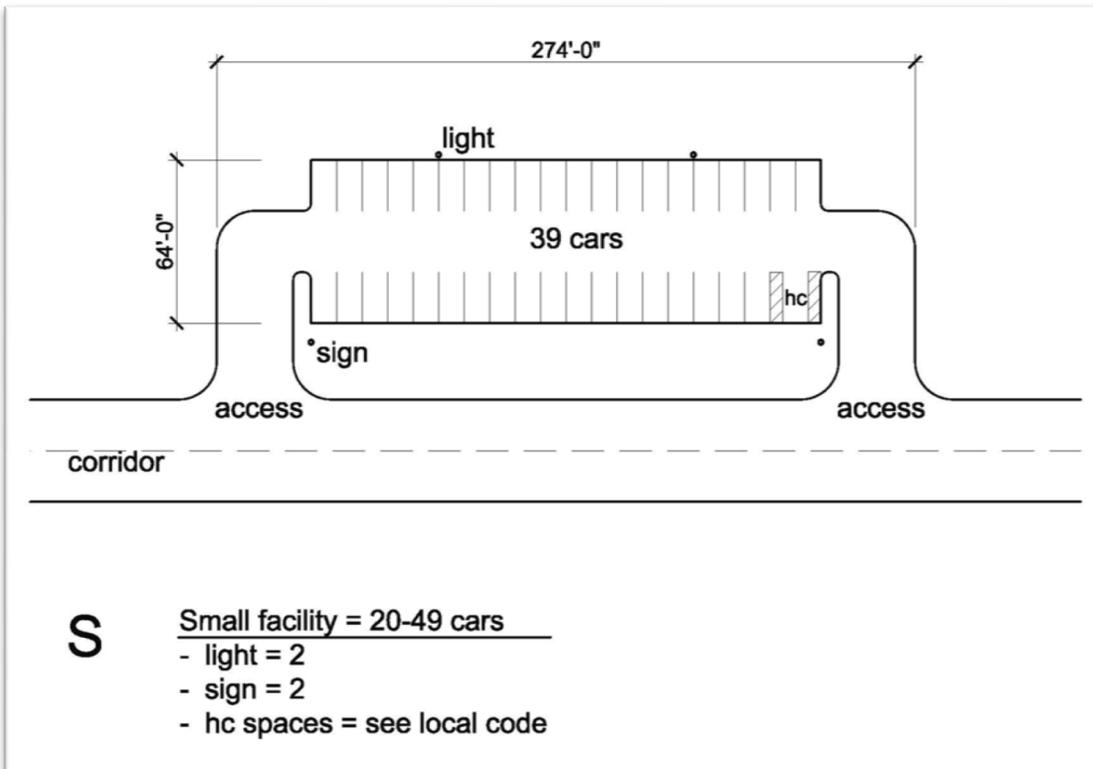
Park-and-Ride Elements	Small Facility	Medium Facility	Large Facility	Extra-Large Facility
Required Site Size (approx.)	1.0 Acre Site	2.0 Acre Site	4.0 Acre Site	# acres TBD for specific site
Transit Service	Carpool/Vanpool	Optional*	Yes	Regional Transitway
Park-and-Ride Spaces	20 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	200 +
Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes or Signal	No	Site specific	Site specific; assumed for most	Follow Metropolitan Council Regional Transitway Guidelines, adopted February 2012
Identification Signage	1 Corridor, 1 Onsite	1 Corridor, 1 Onsite	1 Corridor, 1 Onsite	
Light Poles	2	4	8	Follow Metropolitan

Park-and-Ride Elements	Small Facility	Medium Facility	Large Facility	Extra-Large Facility
Bus Shelter	No	1*	2	Council Regional Transitway Guidelines, adopted February 2012
Route Map and Schedule	No	Yes*	Yes	
ADA Accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Bus Layover Improvements	No	Yes*	Yes	
Route Sign and Post	No	Yes*	Yes	
Security	No	Yes*	Yes	
Bicycle Rack	No	Yes*	Yes	
Trash Receptacle	No	Yes*	Yes	

* Designates a site with transit service

The graphics in Figures 10-2 through 10-4 depict prototype designs for small, medium and large park-and-ride facilities for District 3. An extra-large park-and-ride facility was not drafted, because it is assumed that those facilities, which generally serve rail lines, should meet the Metropolitan Council Regional Transitway Guidelines.

Figure 10-2 Small Park-and-Ride Facility



Although in some cases, a small facility could serve a transit route, the assumption is that a medium facility would generally be the minimum size facility constructed to serve transit.

Figure 10-3 Medium Park-and-Ride Facility

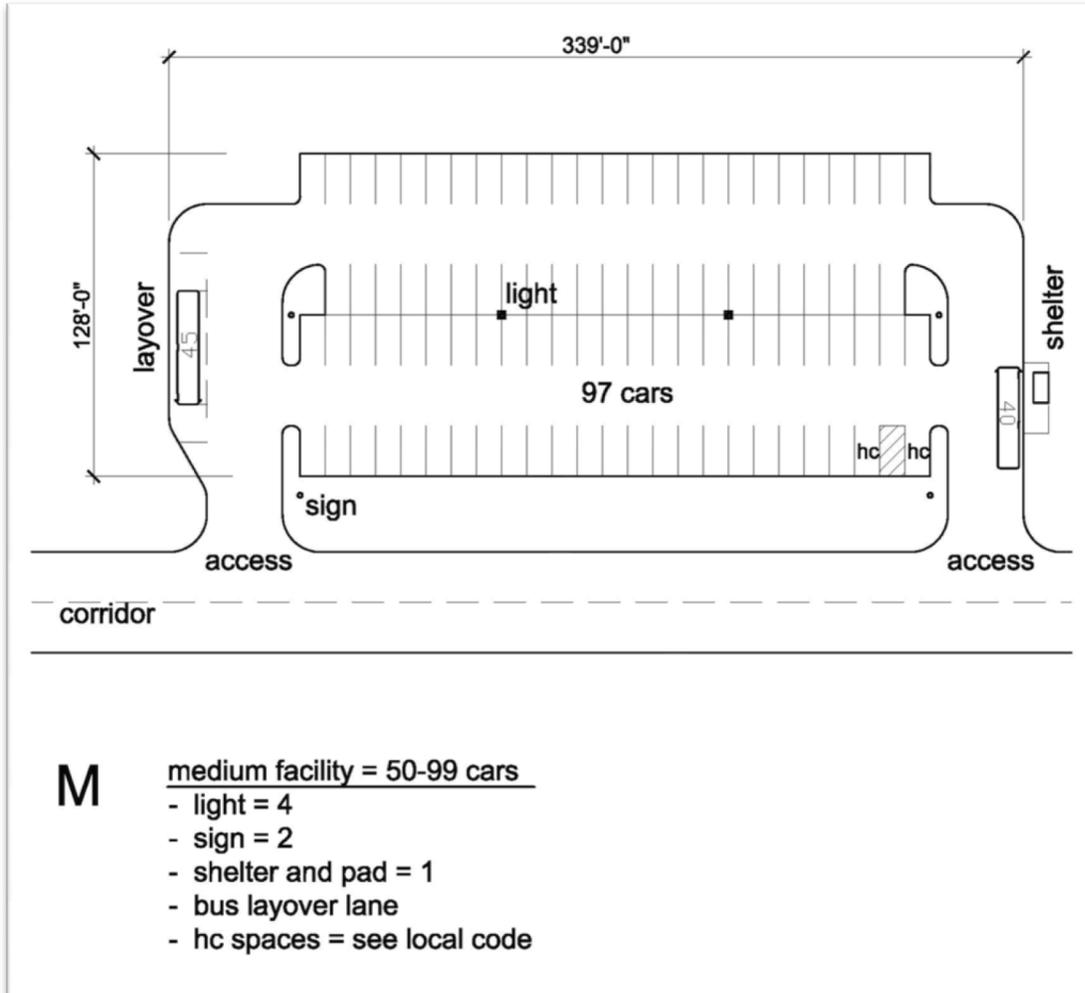


Figure 10-4 Large Park-and-Ride Facility

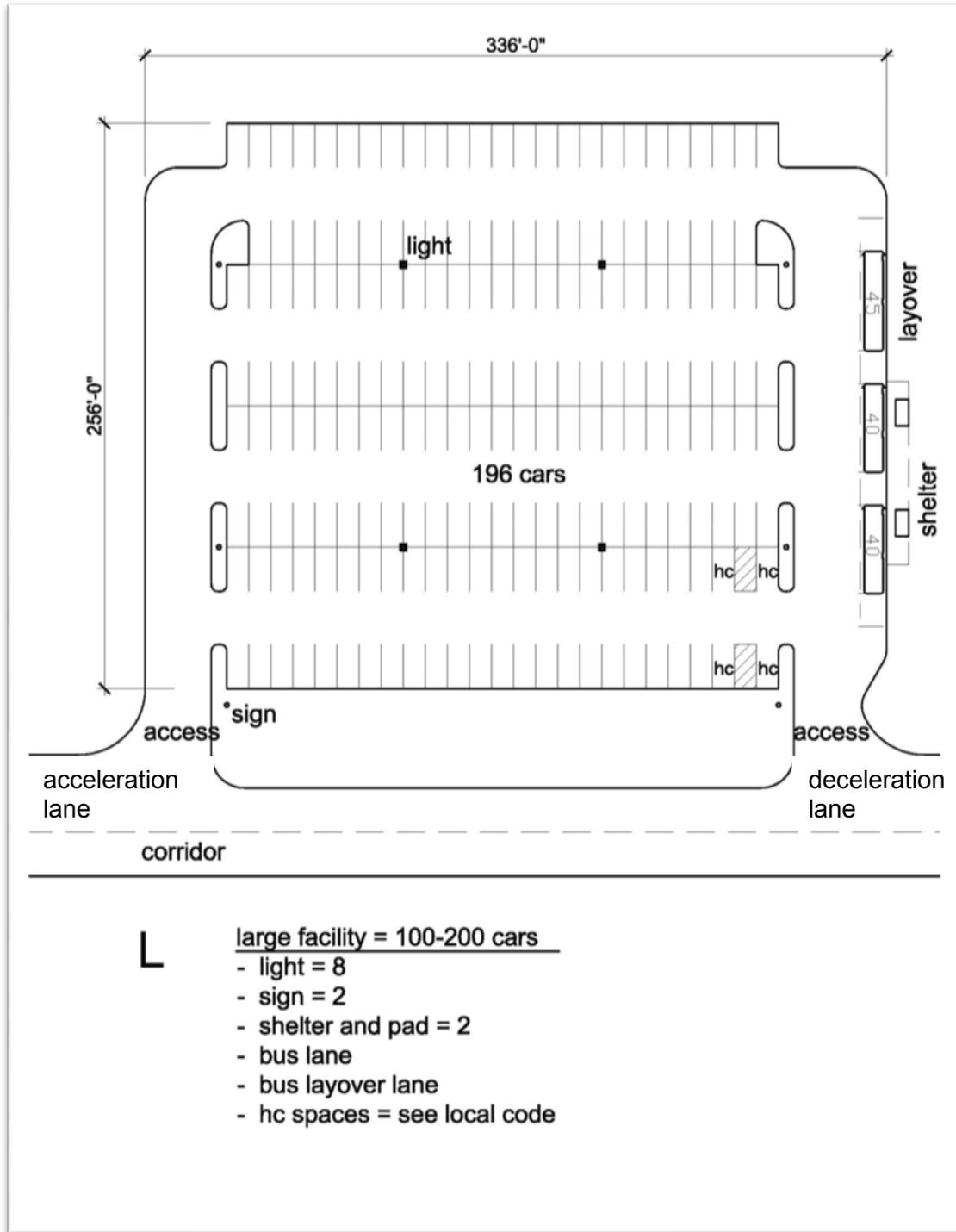


Figure 10-5 Bus Shelter Amenities



Source: LSA Design

As illustrated in Figure 10-5, adding clear bus stop signs and bus shelters would be seen as a very tangible improvement in the quality of the public transit experience and they are appropriate for regional commuter services. The cost is low, and the program can be incrementally expanded depending on resources. All key bus stops should be marked with a bus stop sign with the “brand” of the commuter transit service and basic information about schedule and contact information. They should have a bench, an accessible pad, trash receptacle, lighting and bicycle racks or lockers. In some locations, a security camera (or staff) may also be appropriate.

Bus shelters also provide a location for the installation of real-time information technologies providing up-to-date information about when the next vehicle will arrive.

FACILITY SITING GUIDELINES

In addition to the recommended amenities for each size park-and-ride facility, the following are suggested guidelines for locating new facilities:

- **Document need** (appropriate guidance is provided in the *Metropolitan Council 2030 Park-and-Ride Plan* Chapter 5: Site Location Criteria).
 - **Determine facility need and system integration.** An element of this study is to define where new facilities may be appropriate (see the next section). For potential future lots, it will be important to assess the demand for additional park-and-ride facilities.
 - **Market area analysis.** It is necessary to evaluate the demographic and land use conditions that warrant additional parking facilities.
 - **Site selection and design considerations.** A few sites in District 3, such as Monticello, have been developed as park-and-rides that have been located on

inexpensive land, making them less visible and convenient and thus, less useful for ridesharing.

- **Locate on a major travel corridor to a major regional activity center.** Facilities should be located in areas with high levels of travel demand to major activity centers. The major activity centers for District 3 are; Minneapolis, St. Cloud, and Brainerd/Baxter.
- **Opportunities for joint development and public right-of way.** Prioritize locations of new or expanded sites where there is public right-of-way available and where the construction can be included as part of roadway reconstruction or realignment.
- **Convenient vehicle access.** Facilities should be located to optimize vehicle travel into and out of the facility. In addition, connections to external bicycle and pedestrian networks should be included as design elements to provide equal access.
- **Local area factors.** Facilities should be located where they can be supported by the local governmental unit. Local area factors include community or land use compatibility, environmental constraints and economic implications.

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARK-AND-RIDE FACILITIES

The following is a summary of each corridor, existing park-and-ride facilities and recommended improvements (including cost estimates). For purposes of providing a current parking demand for each site, the number of occupied stalls observed during the inventory was rounded up to the nearest multiple of ten. For example, a site with 27 occupied spaces was defined as having occupancy of 30 park-and-ride spaces.

These recommended improvements will be dependent on whether new services are implemented, and whether there is support for facility upgrades and new construction. For purposes of providing a cost estimate for recommended improvements the following conditions apply:

- Land acquisition costs are estimated by MnDOT based on current land values and required acreage for each lot.¹ No site planning has been performed and estimated costs could vary based on site improvement requirements such as heavy-duty pavement requirements for bus accommodation and any signalization or acceleration/deceleration lanes, which are site-specific and dependent on local traffic operations requirements.
- Any expansion or new parking area is assumed to be paved with striping.
- Parking lot improvement costs include basic site work, utilities, grading, soils correction, base, paving and minor landscaping.

A. Corridors Serving the Brainerd-Baxter Area

These corridors include Highway 371 between Brainerd-Baxter and Pequot Lakes, Highway 210 between Brainerd-Baxter and Crosby, Highway 210 to Staples, and Highway 18 Grand Casino-Mille Lacs.

Existing Park-and-Ride Facilities

There are no existing facilities within this corridor.

¹ Basic land value assumptions from MnDOT District 3 (Greg Thompson)

Proposed Improvements

Based on potential demand for carpools, and possibly vanpools to Central Lakes College, a new park-and-ride facility is considered for the Nisswa area. This facility would be designated as a small park-and-ride facility with demand for 30 parking spaces and should follow the small park-and-ride prototype. In order to minimize investment, the facility could be a shared use with an existing parking lot, or utilize available public right-of-way. Ideally, the site should be located within ½ mile of the nearest intersection of Highway 371 and provide safe/convenient vehicle access.

Figure 10-6 provides a summary of improvements and a basic cost estimate. This cost estimate assumes the utilization of available public right-of-way. The proposed costs will be significantly lower if shared use of an existing parking lot is utilized (lease and maintenance agreement costs). Based on the potential limited use of this lot, a shared-use arrangement would be most appropriate in the short term to determine the potential utility of a lot in this corridor.

Figure 10-6 Nisswa Park-and-Ride Development Assumptions (Small Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Parking Lot (30 spaces)	\$79,000
Land Acquisition (if required)	\$90,000
Light Poles (2)	\$4,200
Identification Signage (2)	\$800
Total	\$174,000

In addition to the Nisswa lot, formalization of a park-and-ride lot in Brainerd or Baxter could be considered. Although the data shows little need for such a facility, consideration could be given to using a portion of the Wal-Mart lot or another facility where there is currently capacity. It could be marketed as a formal park-and-ride lot for the purposes of gauging potential use and providing an option in the area, particularly for the limited numbers of commuters traveling to Camp Ripley, or south to St. Cloud.

B. Corridors Serving Destinations in the St. Cloud Area

The corridors summarized in this section include Highway 23 between St. Cloud and Milaca, and in Cold Spring, I-94 between St. Cloud and Sauk Center, and Highway 10, north of St. Cloud. Currently, the various park-and-ride lots in these corridors have a total of 274 parking spaces.

St. Cloud Northstar Link Lot

The St. Cloud Northstar Link lot is an official park-and-ride facility with 146 parking spaces and is located on Highway 10. The facility is owned by Sherburne County, and the City of St. Cloud provides maintenance through a contract with Metro Bus. The facility is serviced by Northstar Link and has full amenities. The facility had 20 of 146 spaces occupied at the time of the inventory.

Proposed Improvements

St. Cloud's Northstar Link lot is designated as a large park-and-ride facility. The existing site provides the recommended amenities for a large park-and-ride. *No improvements are recommended for the existing facility.*

Introduction of Northstar Commuter Rail service to St. Cloud would require additional parking spaces to meet transit demand. The St. Cloud Commuter Rail Station would consist of side platforms and a pedestrian bridge between platforms. The parking would need to be expanded by at least 100 stalls. The current site is landlocked and expansion will require acquisition of property to the west or building a structured level. The final site design will be defined as an extra-large park-and-ride facility and should follow the *Metropolitan Council Regional Transitway Guidelines*, adopted February 2012. Figure 10-7 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimates. As a note, this table does not include added costs for structured parking if necessary.

Figure 10-7 St. Cloud Commuter Rail Park-and-Ride Development Assumptions (Extra-Large Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
100 to 400 Parking Spaces	\$ 223,400 - \$1,000,000
Land Acquisition	Up to \$1,050,000
Rail Station	\$6,000,000
Identification Signage (1 to 3)	\$400 - \$1,200
Light Poles (4 to 16)	\$6,300 - \$33,600
Route Map and Schedule	N/A
ADA Accessibility	Included
Security	\$4,000 - \$40,000
Route Signs and Posts	\$300 - \$900
Bicycle Rack	\$400 - \$1200
Trash Receptacles	\$300 - \$600
Total	\$6,235,000 - \$8,163,500

Albany

Albany is an official park-and-ride facility with 28 parking spaces and is located along I-94 at CR 10. The facility is owned by MnDOT and maintained by Stearns County. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had 20 of the 28 spaces occupied at time of inventory. The facility has corridor and on-site identification signage. The site does not have parking lot lighting; the parking lot has a gravel surface and there are no bus layover improvements.

Proposed Improvements

Albany is designated as a small park-and-ride facility. The site is not recommended for expansion or introduction of transit service, and will therefore remain a carpool/vanpool site. The existing

site does not provide any parking lot lighting. Figure 10-8 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimate.

Figure 10-8 Proposed Enhancements for Albany Park-and-Ride (Small Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Light Poles (2)	\$4,200
Total	\$4,200

St. Joseph

St. Joseph is an unofficial park-and-ride facility with 40 parking spaces and is located along the I-94 corridor at CR 2. The facility is owned and maintained by Stearns County. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had 30 spaces occupied at the time the inventory was conducted. The facility has corridor and onsite identification signage, but does not have parking lot lighting. The parking lot is paved without striping and there are no bus layover improvements.

Proposed Improvements

St. Joseph is currently designated as a small park-and-ride facility. Based on the evaluation in Chapter 9, St. Joseph was identified as a facility with the potential for transit service and a parking demand increase of about 50 spaces. Stearns County is realigning CR 2 and as part of the design for this, has planned for a permanent and expanded park-and-ride facility. The facility will take advantage of available public right-of-way.

The proposed design provides approximately 140 parking spaces. The current concept design does not include improvements to accommodate transit service, but should be added, and this facility would be designated as a large park-and-ride facility. Figure 10-9 provides a summary of improvements and a preliminary cost estimate for the new site, and includes amenities to accommodate transit service.

Figure 10-9 Proposed St. Joseph Park-and-Ride (Large Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
140 Parking Space Expansion	\$407,000
Land Acquisition	\$600,000
Bus Shelter (2)	\$24,000
Bus Layover Area	\$8,200
Identification Signage (2)	\$800
Light Poles (8)	\$16,800
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Accessibility	Included
Security	\$12,000
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$1,069,800

Cold Spring

Cold Spring is an official park-and-ride facility with 60 parking spaces and is located along MN 23. The facility is owned and operated by MnDOT. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had 10 spaces occupied at time of the inventory.

The facility only has onsite signage and no identification signage along the corridor. There are no parking lot lights. The parking lot is paved with striping, and does not have bus layover improvements.

Proposed Improvements

Cold Spring is designated as a medium park-and-ride facility, and has been identified as a facility with potential for transit service and a potential parking demand increase of 40 spaces. Adding 40 spaces to the current demand of 10 results in a total of 50 spaces required. The site has 60 spaces available and, based on current transit ridership assumptions, does not require expansion.

The site requires improvements to provide the recommended amenities for a medium park-and-ride facility, with transit. Figure 10-10 provides a summary of improvements and assumed costs.

Figure 10-10 Proposed Cold Spring Park-and-Ride Enhancements (Medium Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Bus Shelter (1)	\$12,000
Bus Layover Area	\$6,000
Identification Signage (1)	\$400
Light Poles (4)	\$6,300
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Landing Pad	Included
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Security	\$4,000
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$29,700

C. Corridors that Link District 3 Cities and do not Provide a Direct Connection To Brainerd or St. Cloud

For purposes of this chapter, these corridors include Highway 169 between Elk River and Milaca. Potential links between St. Michael, Buffalo, and Monticello are included in the next section describing those corridors with service into the Twin Cities. In this corridor, there are 839 park-and-ride spaces.

Elk River Station

Elk River Station is a fully developed park-and-ride facility with 754 parking spaces, is located along the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor and serviced by Northstar Commuter Rail. The facility is owned and operated by Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit. The facility had 350 spaces occupied (46% occupancy) during time of inventory, and is in good condition with all amenities provided. There is available capacity at this facility.

Proposed Improvements

Elk River Station is an extra-large park-and-ride facility. The existing site provides the recommended amenities. *No improvements are recommended.*

Zimmerman

Zimmerman is an unofficial park-and-ride facility with 30 spaces and is located along Highway 169 at Main Street and 2nd Street East. The site is designated as unofficial because MnDOT has not invested any funds in the site. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had 20 spaces occupied at the time of inventory, has corridor and onsite identification signage, and has lighting. The parking lot is paved without striping and there is not a bus layover area.

Proposed Improvements

Zimmerman is designated as a small park-and-ride facility. The site is not proposed to be expanded or provided with transit service, and will remain as a carpool/vanpool site. The existing facility provides the recommended amenities for a small park-and-ride facility. *No improvements are recommended.*

Princeton

Princeton is an official park-and-ride facility with 55 spaces and is located along Highway 169 at Le Grande. The facility is owned and operated by MnDOT. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had 20 spaces occupied at the time of the inventory. The Princeton facility has corridor and onsite identification signage, and also has lot lights. The parking lot is paved without striping and there is not a bus layover area.

Proposed Improvements

Princeton is defined as a medium park-and-ride facility. The site is not proposed to be expanded or provided with transit service, and will remain as a carpool/vanpool site. The existing facility provides the recommended amenities for a medium park-and-ride facility. *No improvements are recommended.*

D. Corridors Serving Destinations in the Twin Cities

These corridors include Highway 55, I-94 southeast of Monticello, Highway 65 south of Mora, and Highway 12. It also includes the existing Northstar commuter rail along Highway 10. These park-and-ride facilities have a total of 1,766 spaces.

Albertville

Albertville is an official park-and-ride facility with 40 spaces and is located on I-94 and CR 19. The facility is owned and operated by MnDOT. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had more than 10 spaces occupied at the time of inventory out of 34 spaces). The Albertville facility has onsite identification signage, but no corridor signage pointing potential users to the site. The facility does not have parking lot lighting, and although it is paved, it is not striped. There is not a bus layover area at this site, which would be desirable if new service were to be implemented here.

Proposed Improvements

Albertville is currently designated as a small park-and-ride facility. The site is proposed to have transit service and a potential parking demand increase of 80 additional spaces if transit service were implemented. Adding 80 spaces to the current utilization of about 10 spaces results in a total of 90 spaces required. To meet this requirement, an additional 50 spaces would need to be added to the site.

The recommended expansion changes the current designation of small park-and-ride facility to medium park-and-ride facility. The site requires improvements to provide the recommended amenities for a medium park-and-ride facility, with transit. Figure 10-11 provides a summary of proposed improvements and cost estimates.

Figure 10-11 Proposed Albertville Park-and-Ride Enhancements (Medium Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
50 Parking Space Expansion	\$169,400
Land Acquisition	\$150,000
Bus Shelter (1)	\$12,000
Bus Layover Area	\$6,000
Identification Signage (1)	\$400
Light Poles (4)	\$6,300
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Landing Pad	Included
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Security	\$4,000
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$349,100

St. Michael

No park-and-ride facilities exist in St. Michael at this time.

Proposed Improvements

A new park-and-ride facility that can accommodate transit should be considered for the Saint Michael area. If constructed, it is recommended that the facility provide at least 140 parking spaces, making its designation a large park-and-ride facility.

St. Michael currently does not have a transit facility and these recommended improvements will have to include location of an appropriate site. The size of the facility and recommended improvements do not support a shared use location. Identification of available public right-of-way or available private property with joint use potential are preferred for siting of the facility.

The site should be located within ½ mile of the nearest intersection of CO Hwy 35 and provide safe/convenient vehicle access. Depending on the site and traffic requirements, acceleration/ deceleration lanes or signalization may be considered. Figure 10-12 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimates.

Figure 10-12 Proposed St. Michael Park-and-Ride Development (Large Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
140 Parking Spaces	\$407,000
Land Acquisition	\$520,000
Bus Shelter (2)	\$22,000
Bus Layover Area	\$8,200
Directional Signage (2)	\$800
Light Poles (8)	\$12,000
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Landing Pad	Included
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Security	\$12,000
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$985,000

Monticello

Monticello is an official park-and-ride facility with 187 parking spaces and is located off Highway 25 and School Boulevard. The facility is owned and operated by the City of Monticello.

Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used exclusively as a carpool/vanpool facility. Only 20 of the parking spaces were occupied at the time of the inventory. The facility has corridor and onsite signage and parking lot lights. The parking lot is paved with striping, and has bus layover improvements (even without transit service).

Proposed Improvements

Monticello is designated as a large park-and-ride facility, and although there are no identified transit recommendations at this time, the lot could eventually serve regional transit needs, or could serve as a satellite parking lot with a shuttle to the Northstar station in Big Lake. Because the site has 187 spaces, it does not require parking expansion. Other than the provision of transit service, the facility provides the recommended amenities for a large park-and-ride facility. Although some improved road signage would be desirable, at this time *no required improvements are identified*.

Maple Lake

Maple Lake is an official park-and-ride facility with 21 spaces and is located on Highway 55 at Maple Ave N. The facility is privately owned by VFW of Maple Lake. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool site.

The inventory found the site, a gravel lot, to be in poor condition, and although the facility had 10 spaces occupied at the time of the inventory, the lot is lacking some basic amenities. The facility has no identification signage, and there is no lighting at this location.

Proposed Improvements

Maple Lake is designated as a small park-and-ride facility. Since the site is privately owned, site-specific improvements, such as paving and lighting are assumed not to be feasible. Even still, it is recommended that identification signage be installed to improve wayfinding to the site. Figure 10-13 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimates.

Figure 10-13 Proposed Maple Lake Park-and-Ride Enhancements (Small Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Identification Signage (2)	\$800
Total	\$800

Rockford

Rockford is an unofficial park-and-ride facility that shares a retail parking lot. The facility is located on Highway 55 and Walnut Street.

The Rockford facility is owned and operated by Welsh Companies, and because it is a shared use of an existing parking lot, the available capacity of the park-and-ride portion of the lot is unknown. At the time of the inventory, the whole parking lot was underutilized and there was only one assumed park-and-ride occupant.

Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used exclusively as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility, however, has corridor signage and parking lot lights.

Proposed Improvements

Rockford is defined as a small park-and-ride facility, but could be a medium lot depending on how many spaces are allocated to the lot. The site is identified as a potential transit stop for a new service between Buffalo and Minneapolis, should that service be implemented. The existing facility likely has capacity to serve a transit route, but if ridership exceeds projections, could

eventually require relocation or expansion. At this time, the facility provides the recommended amenities for a small park-and-ride, except for onsite signage, however if transit is implemented, and the site is expanded, it may warrant some additional features.

If the current site is to be maintained as a park-and-ride facility, it is recommended that onsite signage be provided and there should be a clear indication where the park-and-ride spaces are located. Figure 10-14 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimates for the site if transit is to be implemented. If transit does not use this location, then only identification signage is required.

Figure 10-14 Proposed Rockford Park-and-Ride Enhancements (Small-Medium Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Identification Signage (1)	\$300
Bus Shelter (1)	\$11,000
Directional Signage (2)	\$800
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Landing Pad	Included
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Security	\$12,000
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$26,100

Buffalo

No park-and-ride facilities exist in Buffalo at this time.

Proposed Improvements

A new park-and-ride facility is recommended for the Buffalo area, and could be served by transit if new commuter service is implemented. Even without transit, Buffalo is an existing vanpool location and has the potential for additional vanpools serving it.

A new Buffalo facility is recommended to provide 50 parking spaces, which would designate it as a medium park-and-ride facility, potentially with transit. Buffalo currently does not have a transit facility and these recommended improvements would have to include location of a site. The size of the facility and recommended improvements could potentially support a shared use location. Identification of available public right-of-way or available private property with joint use potential is preferred for siting of the facility.

The site should be located within 1/2 mile of the nearest intersection of Hwy 55 and provide safe/convenient vehicle access. Depending on the site and local control (County/City) acceleration/deceleration lanes or signalization may be considered. Figure 10-15 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimates. These figures do not include access improvements or land acquisition.

Figure 10-15 Proposed Buffalo Park-and-Ride Development (Medium Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
50 Parking Spaces	\$172,000
Land Acquisition	\$350,000
Bus Shelter (1)	\$12,000
Bus Layover Area	\$6,000
Identification Signage (2)	\$800
Light Poles (4)	\$6,200
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Landing Pad	Included
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Security	\$4,000
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$552,100

Isanti

Isanti is an informal park-and-ride facility sharing a McDonald’s parking lot. Currently there is no transit service to the site and it is used as a carpool/vanpool facility.

Proposed Improvements

Based on potential demand for carpools, and possibly vanpools to the Twin Cities, a new park-and-ride facility should be considered for the Isanti area. This facility would be designated as a small park-and-ride facility with demand for 30 parking spaces, and although it is assumed that no inter-district commuter transit service would serve this lot, it could be served by Heartland Express buses. Ideally, the site should be located within the vicinity of the current location, which is used as a transit stop location.

Figure 10-16 provides a summary of improvements and a basic cost estimate. This cost estimate assumes the utilization of available public right-of-way. The figure assumes no commuter bus services operate to the lot, but if Heartland Express were to serve it, transit amenities could be added. Because there is no publicly owned lot in Isanti, the recommended improvements would have to include location of a site.

Figure 10-16 Isanti Park-and-Ride Development Assumptions (Small Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Parking Lot (30 spaces)	\$79,000
Light Poles (2)	\$4,200
Identification Signage (2)	\$800
Total	\$84,000

Cambridge

Cambridge has an official park-and-ride facility with 80 spaces, located just off of Highway 65 at 40th Avenue SW and CR 43. The facility is owned and operated by MnDOT. Currently there is no transit service to the site, which is used as a carpool/vanpool facility. The facility had 10 spaces occupied at the time of inventory, suggesting there is significant available capacity.

The facility has corridor and onsite identification signage. The facility also has parking lot lighting, and the parking lot is paved without striping. There is not a bus layover area.

Proposed Improvements

Cambridge is defined as a medium park-and-ride facility. The site is not proposed to be expanded or provided with transit service, and would remain as a carpool/vanpool site. The existing facility provides the recommended amenities for a medium park-and-ride facility. *No improvements are recommended.*

Waverly

The City of Waverly owns and operates the official park-and-ride lot there. It is a paved, striped lot with a capacity of 30 parking spaces, including two accessible spaces marked with signs. At the time of the inventory, only four vehicles were parked here.

The facility has an accessible waiting area, and street lighting which sufficiently illuminates the lot. There is signage on the lot, but no directional signage from the main thoroughfare or MN 12.

Proposed Improvements

Waverly is defined as a small park-and-ride facility. The site is not proposed to be expanded or provided with transit service, and would remain as a carpool/vanpool site. The existing facility provides the recommended amenities for a small park-and-ride facility. Although directional signage to the lot would be advantageous, *no improvements are required.*

Elk River Station

Elk River Station is a fully developed park-and-ride facility with 754 parking spaces. It is located along the Northstar commuter rail corridor and serviced by Northstar commuter rail. The facility, in good condition with all recommended amenities except for restrooms, is owned and operated by Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit. There is available capacity at this facility.

Proposed Improvements

Elk River Station is designated as an extra-large park-and-ride facility. The facility provides all of the recommended amenities for an extra-large park-and-ride facility. *No improvements are recommended.*

Big Lake Station

Big Lake Station is an official park-and-ride facility with 518 spaces, located along the Northstar line. Big Lake Station is a stop on the rail line, and the station is also the transfer point for Northstar Link bus service. Big Lake Station is the only park-and-ride facility with these two modes of transit. The facility is owned and operated by Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit. There is available capacity at this facility.

Proposed Improvements

Big Lake Station is designated as an extra-large park-and-ride facility. The facility provides all of the recommended amenities for an extra-large park-and-ride facility. *No improvements are recommended.*

Becker

Becker Municipal Park-and-Ride is a park-and-ride facility serviced by Northstar Link bus service. The site is a temporary location with approximately 20 stalls. During the inventory only one car was using the site, but it has been documented through past surveys and from input from the transit operator (Metro Bus) that this site consistently fills to capacity. The facility is a gravel parking lot without parking lot lights. There is, however, corridor and onsite signage.

Proposed Improvements

It is recommended that the Becker Municipal Park-and-Ride be relocated to the future and permanent location alongside the Northstar commuter rail corridor. Full rail station improvements do not have to be invested into the facility at this time, but it should be designed to accommodate those improvements in the future. The proposed site plan for Becker Rail Station (as part of the required environmental documents) provides approximately 110 parking spaces and accommodates local bus service.

For this site to be improved in a phased manner requires the site to accommodate Northstar Link until Northstar commuter rail service is extended to the site. With this accommodation, the facility would be designated as a large park-and-ride facility. Figure 10-17 provides a summary of improvements and cost estimates.

Figure 10-17 Proposed Becker Park-and-Ride Development (Large Lot)

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
110 Parking Spaces	\$335,000
Land Acquisition	\$520,000
Bus Shelter (2)	\$24,000
Bus Layover Area	\$6,000

Park-and-Ride Elements	Estimated Cost
Rail Station	\$6,000,000
Identification Signage (2)	\$800
Light Poles (6)	\$12,600
Route Map and Schedule	Included
ADA Landing Pad	Included
Route Sign and Post	\$300
Security	\$40,000
Bicycle Rack	\$400
Trash Receptacle	\$300
Total	\$905,400 without rail station \$6,939,400 with rail station

St. Cloud

The St. Cloud station is described on page 10-8. No short-term improvements are recommended for the site, but the facility will require expansion and additional amenities if rail service is expanded to St. Cloud.

MANAGEMENT OF PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS

Although MnDOT develops park-and-ride facilities, the department has a relatively hands-off approach to managing park-and-ride lots. Each district is responsible for the development of its own park-and-ride policies. While some districts maintain their park-and-ride lots, others, like District 3, turn over maintenance to local jurisdictions and have a more limited role in marketing. MnDOT maintains a listing of lots on its website at dot.state.mn.us/transit/riders/park.html, but the information available is relatively limited compared with the sites maintained in other states, some of which show images of the lots, provide maps, and offer links to specific transit operators.

Minnesota's Peers

LSA Design prepared a review of how other states support park-and-ride lots, based on work by the Transportation Research Board, summarizing a small but representative sample of managers responsible for administering park-and-ride programs. The *Research Results Digest 359 (January 2012)* was used as a reference for the information (Source: National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Research Results Digest 359, TRB, January 2012).

The Research Results Digest 359 (January 2012) surveyed twelve park-and-ride/intermodal commuter programs. Sixty-two percent of the surveyed programs are managed by state DOTs. The remaining programs are managed by public transit authorities and transportation districts. The following is a short summary of the some of the state DOT programs.

Florida DOT

Florida DOT develops, maintains, and regulates state public transportation systems and services. It is composed of seven administrative districts; each district is responsible for managing

transportation within the boundaries of the district. The program represents 105 lots; only one of the lots is owned by Florida DOT. The rest are owned by public transit interests (51 percent) and private interests (49 percent). State leasing agreements, covering maintenance and management responsibilities, are used for lots with private or public agency ownership. One employee at Florida DOT headquarters, Federal Grants Manager, is responsible for overseeing the statewide program. Florida DOT headquarters administers an annual grant process where each district submits funding requests for park-and-ride expansions and improvements. These requests are evaluated based on:

- Available state funding
- Need
- Proximity to existing transit service
- Expected 60 percent or higher occupancy

No federal grants are used. The monies are from the state transportation fund. The statewide park-and-ride program is decentralized and administered primarily by districts. The following is a review of one district program:

Florida DOT District 6

District 6 is located on the southern tip of the Florida peninsula. It comprises the cities of Key West and Miami and the counties of Miami-Dad and Monroe. Two public transit systems operate within the district. The transit agencies manage and operate their own facilities, but their parking lots and garages are part of the District 6 inventory. The district program is administered by one Transit Program Administrator whose park-and-ride program responsibilities represent roughly 10 percent of his total time. There is no operating budget specific to the District 6 park-and-ride program. Its costs are comingled with other functions. For capital improvement, in addition to headquarter grant awards, District 6 receives a mix of federal, state and local funds.

California Department of Transportation (*Caltrans*)

The California Department of Transportation (*Caltrans*) is the state department responsible for managing an administering transportation services. The program represents 326 lots; 208 are owned by the state, 22 are owned by counties, 17 are owned by local jurisdictions, and 64 are owned by private interests. The program is managed by on Park-and-Ride Coordinator located at *Caltrans* headquarters. There is also one Park-and-Ride Coordinator within each of the 12 *Caltrans* districts. The state assumes 80 percent of the cost for maintaining the park-and-ride lots. This is from the department's general maintenance funds. The work is performed by district maintenance crews. Local governments assume 16 percent of the cost for their lots and private land owners, 4 percent.

Maine DOT

Maine DOT is a cabinet-level agency responsible for the regulation and maintenance of roads, highways, bridges, and other public transportation services and infrastructure. The Maine DOT Park-and-Ride Program represents 41 lots. Twenty lots (49 percent) are state owned, 12 lots (29 percent) are owned by the Maine Turnpike Authority, and nine lots (22 percent) are owned by private interests. The program is managed by on Policy Development Specialist within the Maine DOT Planning Division and represents 5 to 10 percent of her time. The Maine DOT Park-and-

Ride Program receives a CMAQ grant of \$1.2 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation. This is used as seed money for the program. The 20 percent match to the federal grant is achieved through a variety of sources. A request for funds to construct or improve a lot is prioritized by the department, based on four factors:

- Cost and available funding
- Site location (on or near a major road)
- Expected use
- Connectivity to other modes such as a fixed bus route

Virginia DOT

Virginia DOT is responsible for building, maintaining, and operating state roadways, bridges, and tunnels. It is governed and funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, which also funds state public transit services through separate agencies. The Virginia DOT Park-and-Ride Program represents 309 lots. Thirty eight percent are state owned, 27 percent are owned by private interests, 7 percent are owned by local jurisdictions, and 6 percent are owned by the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and have designated car pool and van pool spaces. The program is administered by one Policy and Planning Specialist position, located in the central office Transportation Mobility and Planning Division. Twenty-five percent of this staff member's time is dedicated to the park-and-ride program. The following is a review of Virginia DOT's Northern District (NOVA), which is the best example of park-and-ride management in the commonwealth.

Virginia DOT-Northern District (NOVA)

Virginia DOT-Northern District (NOVA) is composed of four counties: Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince Williams counties. The District Office provides transportation planning, engineering, permitting, maintenance, and construction services. The program represents 80 lots, and unlike any other programs surveyed, nearly one-half (48 percent) of the lots are privately owned. The remaining lots are owned equally by the state and counties. The program is managed by one position, a Senior Transportation Planning Engineer who dedicates 50 to 60 percent of his time to the program. Virginia DOT relies on a mix of federal, state, and local funds for its capital program.

Key Findings from Literature Review

There is limited information on the administrative, operational, management, and legal processes involved in the maintenance, care, development, and financing of park-and-ride/intermodal commuter facilities.

- One notable management practice is the use of leasing agreements that eliminate or lessen the cost of land acquisition and facility maintenance.
- One less documented but emerging area of research describes “smart card” and “smart park” technologies, such as real-time parking information systems. These technologies are either in place or being tested.
- Another emerging area examines alternative financing for public transportation services, including the leveraging of public funds, private capital, or both to maintain and modernize public infrastructure. There is limited documentation on how this may apply to park-and-ride/intermodal commuter facilities.

Key Findings and Best Practices

The need most frequently cited by the surveyed managers is funding for maintenance, staffing, and new facilities to accommodate demand. The following are other specific needs:

- Most of the managers do not have operating budgets. Basic functions such as lot maintenance, snow removal, sign repair, and shelter installations are performed by others, on an as-needed and unscheduled basis. There is no tracking or documentation of these costs.
- Most of the surveyed managers have other job responsibilities and dedicate less than 20 percent of their time to their programs. They have limited or no support staff.
- Most of the programs have no written policies or standard operating procedures for the day-to-day management of their facilities.
- Several of the surveyed managers do not actively participate in funding decisions that affect their programs. They report that their programs are low in the department's funding priorities.

It is suggested that a systematic, rational, and uniform approach to managing, staffing, and budgeting state park-and-ride/intermodal commuter programs be undertaken by state DOTs. Each aspect of this recommendation is discussed here:

- **Program Goal and Purpose.** The first step in management is to articulate the goal and purpose of a program. The stated goal of the Florida DOT park-and-ride program, for example, is to provide “a program designed to encourage the use of transit, carpools, vanpools and other high occupancy vehicle modes, by providing safe and convenient parking facilities for commuters” (Park-and-Ride Lot Program, Topic No. 725-030-002-f, 2011, p. 2).

The purpose of the Florida program is to “provide for the purchase and/or leasing of private land for the construction of park-and-ride lots, the promotion of these lots and the monitoring of their usage” (Park-and-Ride Lot Program, Topic No. 725-030-002-f, 2011, p. 1). In the Florida example, detailed policies, guidance, and procedures are developed to satisfy the intended goal and purpose. For the Virginia DOT-Northern District (NOVA), the purpose is to construct park-and-ride/intermodal commuter facilities that support the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) freeway system. All subsequent actions and activities of the program are designed to meet this objective. For example, the Stringfellow Road Park-and-Ride Lot in Fairfax County, Virginia, is located adjacent to an I-66 HOV only access ramp. This preferential treatment for park-and-ride lot users is an incentive to use the lot. It is suggested that written goal and purpose statements—and techniques for how they may be achieved—be developed for state park-and-ride/intermodal commuter programs. This will assist in their orderly growth and development.

- **Program Management Plans.** Management plans enable a systematic and rational approach to executing program activities and tasks. They assess effectiveness and determine if the program purpose is achieved. An example of a well-developed management plan is the Florida DOT planning manual, which contains instructive guidance on how to administer the program and measure its productivity. The basic elements of any management plan should include, at a minimum, guidance on:

- **Staffing Levels.** Most of the surveyed programs have limited staff with managers dedicating less than 20 percent of their time, on average. With the growing demand for and anticipated increase in park-and-ride/intermodal commuter facilities over time, more staffing will eventually be needed to manage them. It is suggested that states evaluate staffing levels for these programs. Position descriptions should be tied to role, responsibilities, tasks, and time requirements. It would be optimal to develop criteria to determine the number of staff needed to perform administrative, management, and maintenance functions as these programs grow. The most critical position description to develop is the program manager's. Ideally, the program manager should be responsible for developing and implementing the standards, procedures, and policies of the program; reporting program activities and status; marketing; and coordinating funding with other agencies and stakeholders. The manager should also be responsible for developing and administering the program's operating and capital budgets. The number of hours assigned to this position should be commensurate with its duties and responsibilities.
- **Staff Training.** Little information was offered from the surveys on how managers and staff are trained. Assuming there is little or no training, it is essential that program management plans define the type, quality, level, and frequency of staff training with modules on program history, program purpose, program functions, program operations, and program budgets, at a minimum. Ideally, training should also include asset and facility maintenance, security and fee collections, as warranted. It is optimal if training can be scheduled in annual cycles.
- **Asset Inventory.** Nearly all of the surveyed programs have inventories. Some are current; others are not. Some cover the full range of assets; others are narrow in scope. Given that state park-and-ride/ intermodal commuter facilities are defined (and valued) by their physical assets, it is suggested that state management plans contain techniques for achieving a systematic and rational approach to asset management and documentation. Ideally, the inventory should be stored in a secure electronic database and shared annually within the unit and within the department. The information may be used to support management decisions, strategic planning, program budgeting, and grant applications.
- **Maintenance.** Several of the surveyed managers reported that facility maintenance is conducted infrequently and often by others (in-agency or contracted out). According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT): "Maintenance of the physical elements of the park-and-ride facility must be planned, deliberate activity that includes an appropriate budget, designated responsibility for maintenance requirements, and an established program of maintenance that provides for normal and special needs. Negligence in maintaining a park-and-ride facility has an adverse impact on perceived and real personal security as well as the physical condition of the facility." (U.S. DOT, Park-and-Ride Facilities Guidelines for Planning, Designing and Operations, 1986, pp. 6–18.) It is suggested that management plans for these programs include guidance for achieving a systematic and rational approach to life cycle scheduling and maintenance of program assets. A strategic approach will maximize the life of the assets and minimize their replacement costs. It will also ensure that park-and-ride/intermodal commuter facilities receive the same level of care and attention as other elements of the state transportation infrastructure. Because of their importance, particular attention should be given to pavement

surfaces. Allowing neglect of pavement maintenance to go beyond a certain point will result in sub-grade failure and require significant replacement costs. The science of highway pavement management involves physical observation noting signs of deterioration; consideration of usage; and estimation of expected life. A similar method could be used to protect commuter lot pavement surfaces.

- **Customer Amenities.** Customer amenities are services that add to user comfort, convenience, and enjoyment. If placed strategically, they increase facility use. This is demonstrated by Phoenix Valley Metro’s installation of canopies at underutilized lots to increase patronage and the MTA’s provision of free ZOOM bus service for lot patrons. In both cases, the amenity increased usage. It is suggested that management plans instruct on how to achieve a systematic, rational, and uniform approach to the provision of customer amenities, ensuring an equal level of service at all facilities of similar type or classification. For example, rural lots may not require the same amenities as urban lots. A standard level of service should be developed for each facility type or classification.
- **Lot Utilization.** Nearly all of the surveyed programs have criteria for determining the under-utilization of the parking facility, which typically represented roughly 40 percent or less occupancy. Given that park-and-ride/intermodal commuter facilities are designed, cited, and intended for optimal use, it is suggested that management plans provide guidance on uniform techniques for achieving optimal utilization across all facilities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter reviews the various park-and-ride facility improvements that were identified as desirable based on the findings from the inventory and survey of park-and-ride users, and based on the recommended park-and-ride design standards for District 3. Whether or not some of the transit-specific improvements and potential construction projects are implemented will depend on which of the transit services, if any, are implemented.

Almost all of the park-and-ride facilities in Central Minnesota were designed primarily to serve autos (e.g., carpools and vanpools), not public transit buses. Some enhancements to the highway and roadway network (e.g., ramp metering, HOV lanes, queue bypasses, etc.) may be warranted if new transit services are implemented to increase bus access and promote further utilization of the park-and-ride facilities system by transit vehicles. Even without new regional bus services, some of these improvements would still benefit those who rideshare and may make ridesharing seem a more attractive option, especially if time savings are provided. Ultimately, the goals of MnDOT and this project's stakeholders are to make transit a more practical travel option, increasing system throughput, possibly reducing traffic congestion, and maximizing transportation system efficiency. Other opportunities to improve system utilization exist that, while seemingly mundane, can enhance the services available and make ridesharing and transit more attractive options for District 3 commuters. These include basic amenities at park-and-ride facilities, improved park-and-ride signage, and a better way of getting information to the public about the commuter transportation options that are available to them, including locations of park-and-ride facilities.

One of the challenges with developing rural park-and-ride lots, particularly those not served by transit, is that some people consider their costs to be high considering the benefits achieved. For example, constructing a \$90,000 parking lot for 30 cars may be perceived by some as a less

effective use of resources than putting that money into local transit service or widening a road. How MnDOT and stakeholders prioritize the development of new park-and-ride facilities will have a significant impact on whether or not they should be constructed, and whether existing facilities should be expanded. MnDOT can work with transit providers to determine the potential of adding service to any of the park-and-ride facilities. For example, Monticello park-and-ride has significant investment and amenities and could easily accommodate transit service.

MnDOT can also convene groups of providers and jurisdictions to define or coordinate park-and-ride improvements and the development of new park-and-ride sites. Prioritization of existing sites for improvements or developing a new site would best be determined through a more formalized process, based on demand/usage thresholds, deliverability, connectivity to transit or transportation corridors, levels of support, impacts on congestion, and the ability to leverage funding. Appendix J provides a set of sample checklists that could be used and further developed to guide the park-and-ride development and management process.