

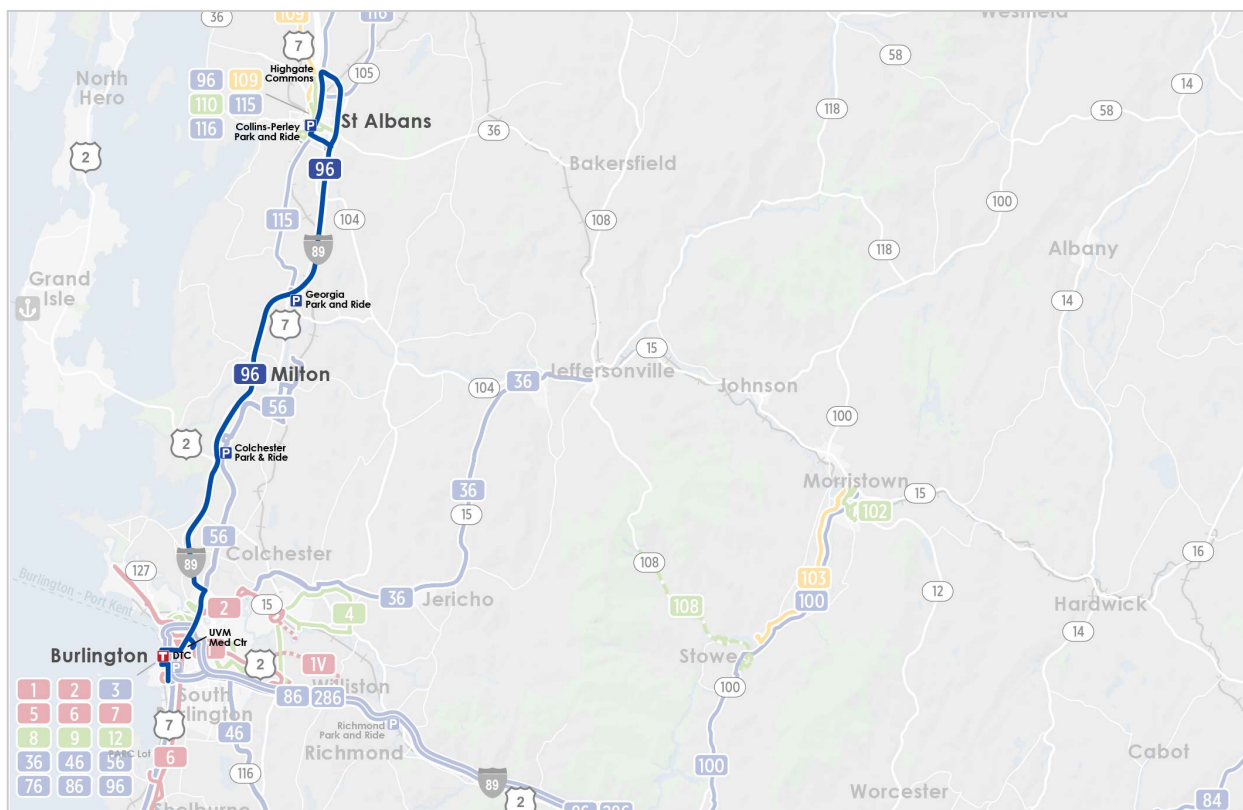
ROUTE 96

St. Albans LINK Express

ROUTE OVERVIEW

Route 96 provides weekday peak period commuter service between Saint Albans and Burlington, primarily along I-89 (see Figure 1). It serves three park and ride lots, the UVM Medical Center, downtown Burlington, and Pine Street.

Figure 1: Route Map



The route provides two round trips in the AM and PM peaks, with the schedule oriented toward inbound trips to Burlington in the morning and outbound trips to Saint Albans in the afternoon (see Table 1). The opposite direction trips are operated primarily to cycle buses for the peak direction trips. The AM inbound trips depart from Saint Albans at 6:30 and 7:30 AM and arrive at the DTC in downtown Burlington at 7:35 and 8:35 AM. The PM outbound trips depart from the DTC at 4:50 and 5:45 PM.¹

¹ The trips also serve Pine Street south of downtown, with later AM arrival times at the outer end of the route, and with earlier PM outbound times.

Table 1: Schedule Statistics

SERVICE DAY	SPAN OF SERVICE	FREQUENCY (MIN)	DAILY TRIPS (OUTBOUND/INBOUND)
Monday-Friday	5:40 AM to 6:35 PM	45-60/—/—	4/4
Saturday	—	—/—	—/—
Sunday	—	—/—	—/—

Frequencies shown are lowest frequencies during Peak/Midday/Evening service times for weekdays. Peak frequencies are calculated for service between 6:00 am – 9:00 am & 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm. Midday service is from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Evening service is for service after 6:00 pm. Saturday and Sunday frequencies are shown as AM/PM.

Route 96's eight one-way trips operate in six different ways:

Peak Direction Service

AM Inbound

- AM Inbound: Variant 96-4 is used to provide service on both AM peak inbound trips. This variant skips the Colchester (Chimney Corners) Park and Ride lot but serves the Georgia Park and Ride lot.

PM Outbound

- Variant 96-3 provides service on both PM outbound trips and operates in the reverse of Variant 96-4 AM inbound service.

Opposite Direction Service

AM Outbound

- Variant 96-2 provides service on the first AM outbound trip. This trip does not operate into the UVM Medical Center, and stops upon request for alighting passengers at the Georgia Park and Ride Lot. There is no way to request to be picked up at this lot.
- Variant 96-1 provides service on the second AM outbound trip. This trip also does not operate into the UVM Medical Center, and will stop upon request for alighting passengers at both the Chimney Corners and Georgia Park and Ride Lots. With a phone call to GMT before 5:00 PM the previous day, passengers can also request to be picked up at the Colchester Park and Ride Lot (but not the Georgia Park and Ride Lot).

PM Inbound

- Variant 96-4 provides service on the first PM inbound trip. This trip serves the Georgia and Colchester Park and Ride lots and Main Street at Platt Street in Winooski upon request.
- Variant 96-X provides service on the second PM inbound trip. This trip does not serve the Georgia or Colchester Park and Ride lots, but will serve Main Street at Platt Street upon request.

RIDERSHIP

Route 96 carries 64 passengers per weekday. By weekday ridership, it ranks fifth out of GMT's 14 Commuter Bus routes.

Table 2: Service Variants

VARIANT	ORIGIN	DESTINATION	UNIQUE FEATURE	TRIPS PER DAY		
				WKD	SAT	SUN
OUTBOUND				4	—	—
96-1	DTC	Collins-Perley Park & Ride	AM outbound service that skips UVM Medical Center but provides request service to the Georgia and Colchester P&R lots.	1	—	—
96-2	Pine St at Locust St	Collins-Perley Park & Ride	AM outbound service that skips UVM Medical Center but provides request service to the Georgia P&R lot.	1	—	—
96-3	Pine St at Locust St	Highgate Commons	PM outbound service via the Georgia P&R lot, but not the Colchester P&R lot.	2	—	—
INBOUND				4	—	—
96-4	Highgate Commons	Pine St at Lakeside Ave	AM inbound service via the Georgia P&R lot, but not the Colchester P&R lot.	2	—	—
96-5	Collins-Perley Park & Ride	DTC	PM inbound service that provides request service to the Georgia and Colchester P&R lots and Main Street at Platt St in Winooski, and skips UVM Medical Center.	1	—	—
96-X	Collins-Perley Park & Ride	DTC	PM inbound service that skips the Georgia and Colchester P&R lots, provides request service to Main Street at Platt St in Winooski, and skips UVM Medical Center.	1	—	—

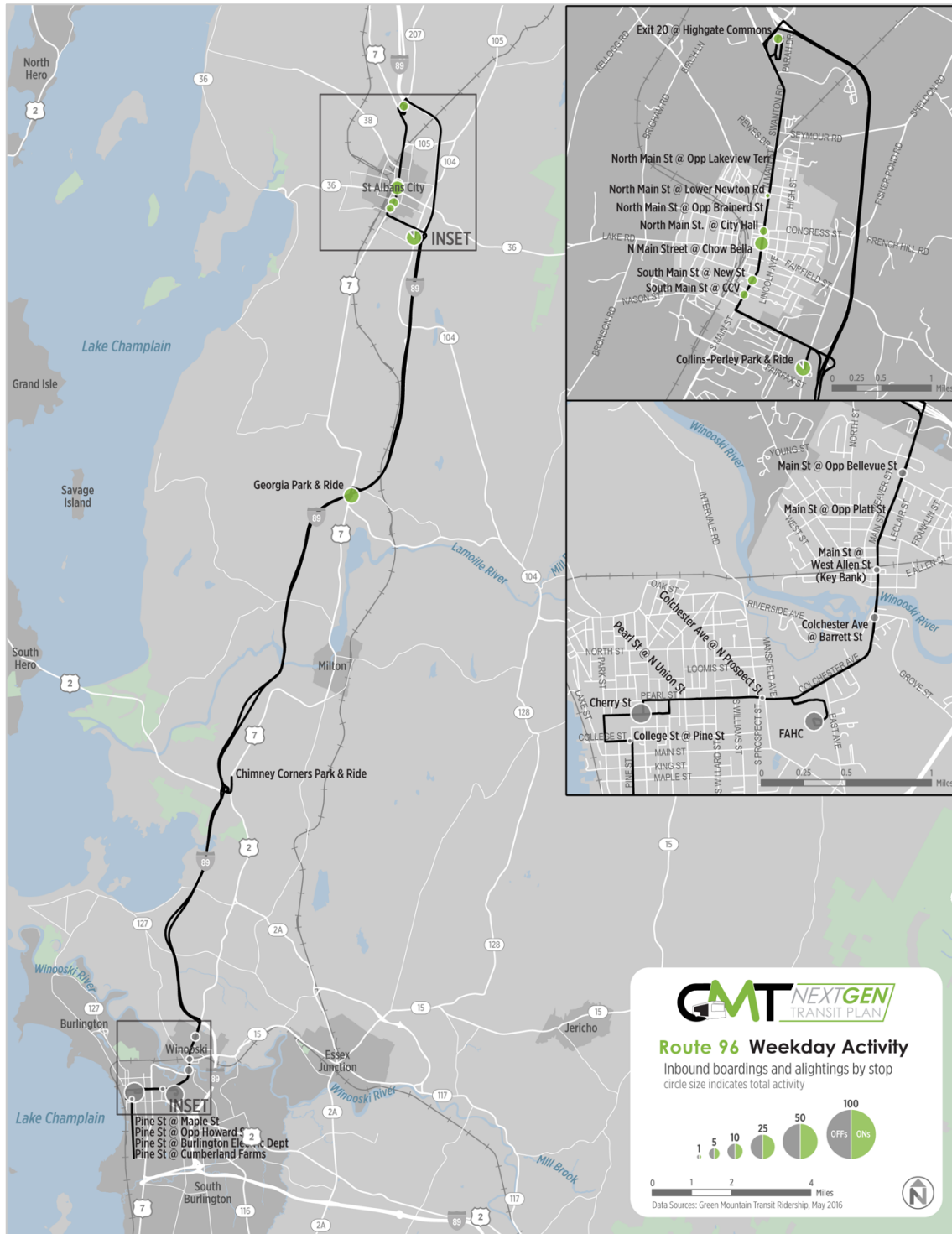
Ridership by Stop

Weekdays

As would be expected, Route 96 primarily serves commuter from Saint Albans who work in Burlington, with a secondary market of commuter who ride from the George Park and Ride Lot (see Figure 2). On inbound trips:

- 23 passengers board at local stops in Saint Albans
- Nine passengers board at the Collins-Perley Park and Ride Lot in Saint Albans
- 14 passengers travel to UVM Medical Center
- 16 passengers travel to the DTC

Figure 2: Weekday Inbound Ridership by Stop



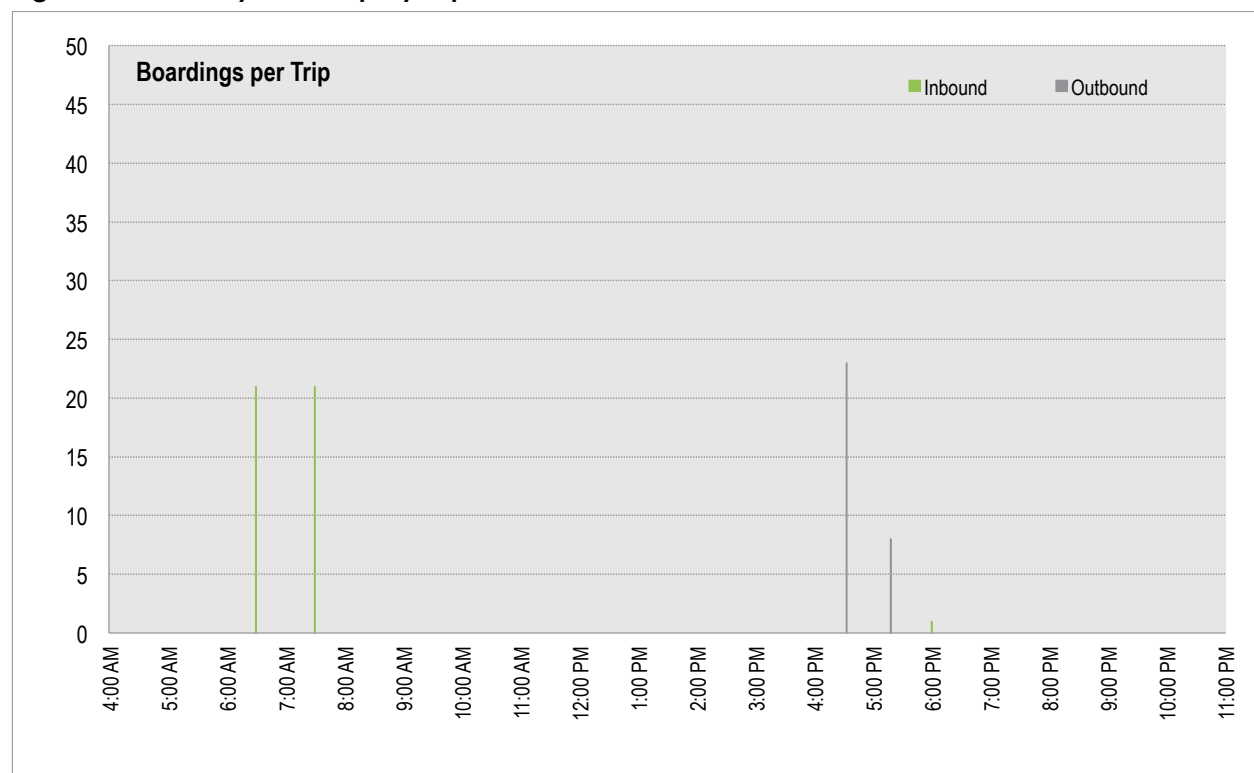
All other stops have three or fewer boardings and alightings, and some have none.. At the time that the ridership counts were conducted, no ridership was observed to Pine Street. However, three boardings were observed on outbound trips indicating that there is some ridership, albeit low.

Ridership by Trip

Weekdays

As described above, Route 96's schedule is designed to serve AM inbound and PM outbound commuters, with the reverse direction trips operated to get buses where they need to be to provide the peak direction trips. Ridership by trip reflects this, with all but one rider on the peak direction trips (see Figure 3). In the AM peak, ridership is evenly divided between the two trips, at 21 passengers on each. In the PM, there are 23 passengers on the first trip, but only eight on the second trip that departs the DTC at 5:35 PM. This indicates that some passengers only use Route 96 inbound, and that the 5:35 departure may be too late.

Figure 3: Weekday Ridership by Trip Chart



SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

Route 96 ranks 5th out of GMT's 14 Commuter routes in terms of weekday ridership (64) and passengers per trip (8.0) (see Table 3). While these numbers, in absolute terms, are low, the figures are negatively impacted by operation of what would normally be non-revenue trips that would not be counted in the statistics as revenue trips. When only the peak direction trips are considered, the figures are nearly twice as high and moderately good.

The route does not meet VTrans' ridership or productivity thresholds. However, again, this is because the reverse direction trips are counted as revenue trips. If these trips are excluded, the route does meet the thresholds.

Table 3: Productivity Statistics

	MONDAY-FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Average Daily Ridership	64	—	—
Pax/Revenue Service Hour	7.7	—	—
Commuter Average	8.8	—	—
Pax/One-Way Trip	8.0	—	—
VTrans Productivity Threshold	17.35	17.35	17.35
Pax/Revenue Mile	0.2	—	—
Commuter Average	0.4	—	—
Cost/Passenger	\$12.30	—	—
VTrans Effectiveness Threshold	\$10.59	\$10.59	\$10.59

Source: Green Mountain Transit, May 2016; VTrans Performance Reviews (2016)

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

Opportunities to strengthen Route 96 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- **Simplify Service.** As described above, Route 96's eight trips operate in six different ways. While peak period peak direction trips operate consistently, a number of request stop have been added to the reverse direction trips some of which are only for alighting passengers, and one of which is for boarding passengers if they call GMT the day before. These request stops do not service any regular passengers, and the added complexity degrades, rather than enhances, the route. The request stops could be eliminated to simplify the route.
- **Consolidate Stops in Saint Albans.** Route 96 makes several stops on Main Street between stops at Highgate Commons and the Collins-Perley Park & Ride. Serving fewer local stops and providing more direct service would save travel time for riders and maintain the integrity of the LINK brand as an express service.
- **Consolidate Stops in Burlington and Winooski.** Similarly, Route 96 makes additional stops along Pearl Street and Colchester Avenue close to the DTC and UVM Medical Center, and stops twice on Main Street in Winooski. Serving fewer local stops so close to high ridership destinations would save travel time for riders and maintain the integrity of the LINK brand as an express service.
- **Operate Non-Peak Direction Trips as Non-Revenue Trips:** The four reverse direction trips were recorded as serving only one passenger, and operating costs could be reduced by operating these trips to and from Saint Albans as non-revenue trips via I-89.
- **Reschedule PM Peak Service.** The first PM outbound trip that departs the DTC at 4:50 PM carries 23 passengers, but the second that departs at 5:35 PM carries fewer than 10. This indicates that the second trip by depart too late and that a rescheduling of PM peak service should be considered.

- **Add a Third AM Inbound/PM Outbound Trip.** Route 96's peak direction ridership is moderately good, and there may be demand for a third peak direction trip during both peaks. In the morning, a 7:00 AM trip could be added, or a longer span could be provided. A similar approach could be used in the PM peak.