

# ROUTE 131

## Audubon to Norristown Transportation Center

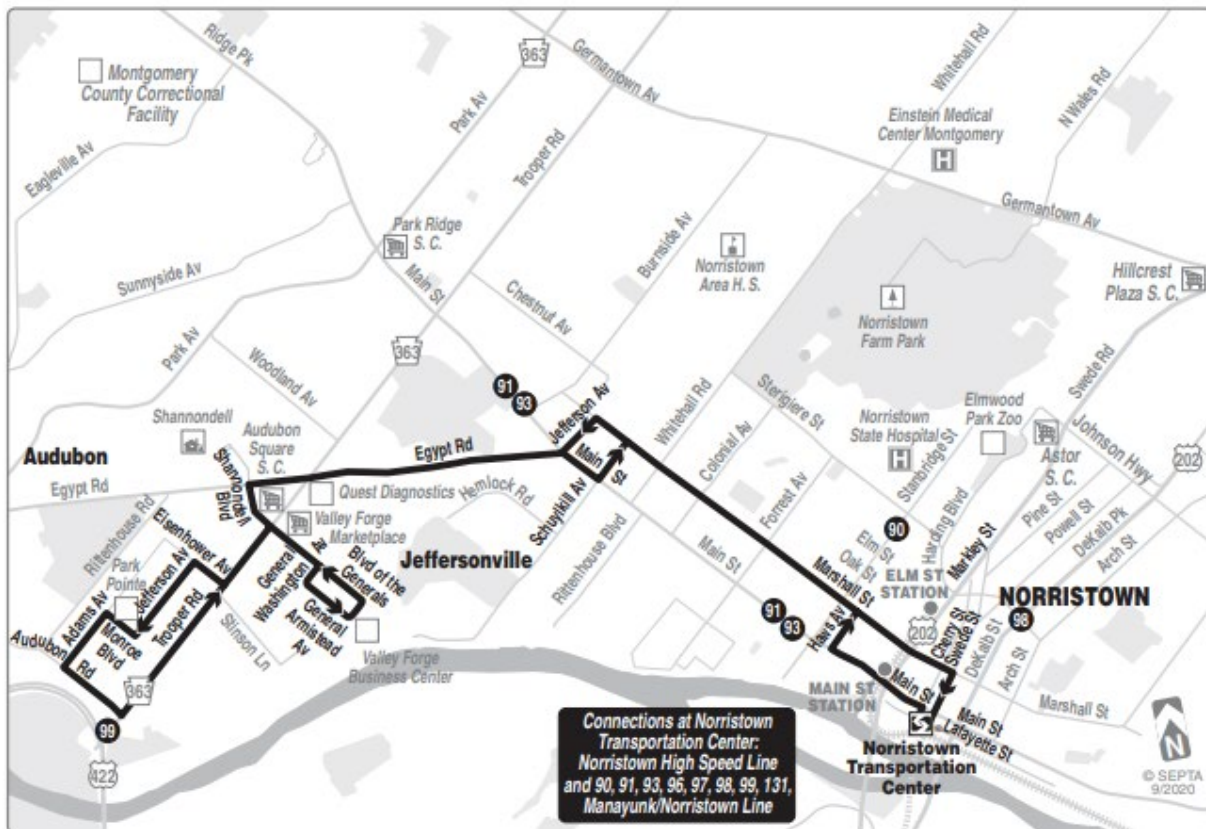
### KEY SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Route 131 connects the Norristown Transportation Center with shopping and employment in the Valley Forge Marketplace and the industrial park north of Audubon Road.*
- *Ridership on the route could potentially be strengthened by orienting the service more around traditional commute times.*

### ROUTE OVERVIEW

Route 131 connects the Norristown Transportation Center with the Valley Forge Marketplace and the employment/industrial park north of Audubon Road. Route 131 also provides local connections in Norristown (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 | Route Map



## SERVICE OVERVIEW

### Schedule

Route 131 operates seven days per week with service available between (approximately) 5:00 AM and 11:30 PM all days (see Table 1). On weekdays, average frequencies are about 35 minutes during the AM and PM peak periods, 48 minutes during the midday and between 70 and 130 minutes in the evening.

On weekend days, service is hourly during the day. After 6:00 PM, average frequencies decrease to 89 minutes.

Actual frequencies vary from the average on weekdays and weekend day evenings.

**Table 1 | Schedule Statistics**

Service Day	Span Of Service	Frequency (Range)	Frequency (Average)
<b>Weekdays</b>	4:00 AM to 12:18 AM		
Early AM	4:00 AM to 5:59 AM	-	-
AM Peak	6:00 AM to 8:59 AM	25-50	36
Midday	9:00 AM to 2:59 PM	25-62	48
PM Peak	3:00 PM to 5:59 PM	23-66	34
Evening	6:00 PM to 9:59 PM	21-154	67
Late Night	10:00 PM to 11:59 PM	120-135	128
Owl	Midnight to 3:59 AM		
<b>Saturdays</b>	8:00 AM to 7:59 AM		
Day	8:00 AM to 5:59 PM	60-60	60
Night	5:59 PM to 7:59 AM	50-137	89
<b>Sundays</b>	6:43 AM to 10:29 PM		
Day	8:00 AM to 5:59 PM	60-60	60
Night	5:59 PM to 7:59 AM	47-133	89

*Note: Span of service reflects the time the first bus begins service until the time the last bus finishes service.*

### Service Patterns

Route 131 operates with four patterns, two patterns for the westbound direction and two for the eastbound directions. The primary pattern operates between the industrial park on Audubon Road and Norristown Transportation Center. The alternative pattern terminates at the Valley Forge Market Place (see Table 2).

**Table 2 | Service Patterns**

Pattern	Origin	Destination	Unique Feature	Unique Stops	Trips Per Day		
					Wkd	Sat	Sun
<b>Westbound</b>							
230864	Norristown Transportation Center	Audubon Rd & Adams Av	Primary Pattern		21	0	0

230863	Norristown Transportation Center	Bldv of Generals & Gen Washington Av	Short-turn at Valley Forge Marketplace	0	2	16	16
<b>Eastbound</b>							
230853	Audubon Rd & Adams Av	Norristown Transportation Center	Primary Pattern		21	0	0
230848	Bldv of Generals & Gen Washington Av	Norristown Transportation Center	Short-turn at Valley Forge Marketplace	0	2	16	16

Note: Unique stops are those not served by the primary pattern

## RIDERSHIP

In the fall of 2019, Route 131 carried 733 passengers on weekdays, 230 on Saturdays, and 315 on Sundays (see Table 3).

**Table 3 | Fall 2019 Ridership and Productivity**

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
<b>Daily Ridership</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>315</b>
Rank	99	108	85
<b>Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Hour</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>28.4</b>
Rank	87	107	66

## Transfer Patterns

Most transfer activity to and from Route 131 occurs at the Norristown Transportation Center. The largest transfer volumes are to and from:

- The Norristown High Speed Line (34.3% of all trips)
- Route 99 Phoenixville to Norristown Transportation Center (5.6%)
- Route 98 Plymouth Meeting Mall to Norristown Transportation Center (3.9%)
- Route 96 Lansdale to Norristown Transportation Center (3.2%)
- Route 97 Chestnut Hill to Norristown Transportation Center (2.1%)

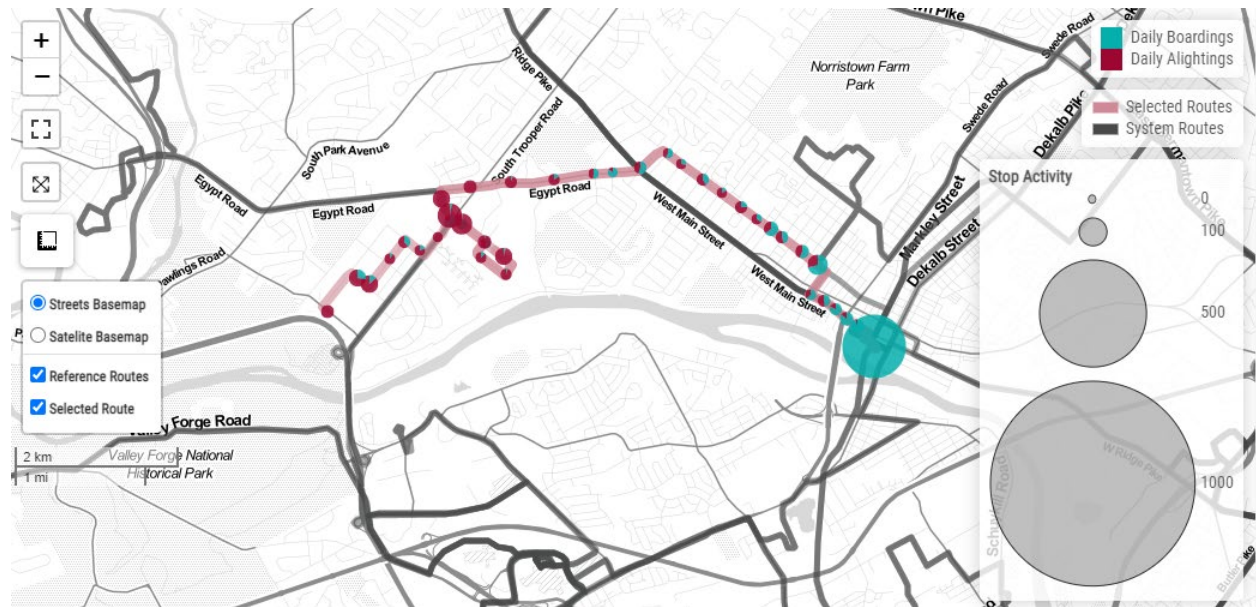
Weekend transfer volumes are similar.

## Ridership by Stop

Riders on Route 131 use the route to travel between the Norristown Transportation Center and the shopping and employment at Valley Forge Marketplace and the industrial center north of Audubon Road (see Figure 2). High ridership stops along the route (headed eastbound) include:

- 153 passengers board at the Norristown Transportation Center (26.9% of riders)
- 86 riders board and 1 alight at the stops along Shannondell Boulevard (15.3%)
- 1 rider boards and 29 alight at Marshall Street and Swede Street (5.2%)
- 70 riders board and 1 alight at the stops along the Boulevard of Generals (12.5%)

**Figure 2 | Weekday Westbound Ridership by Stop**

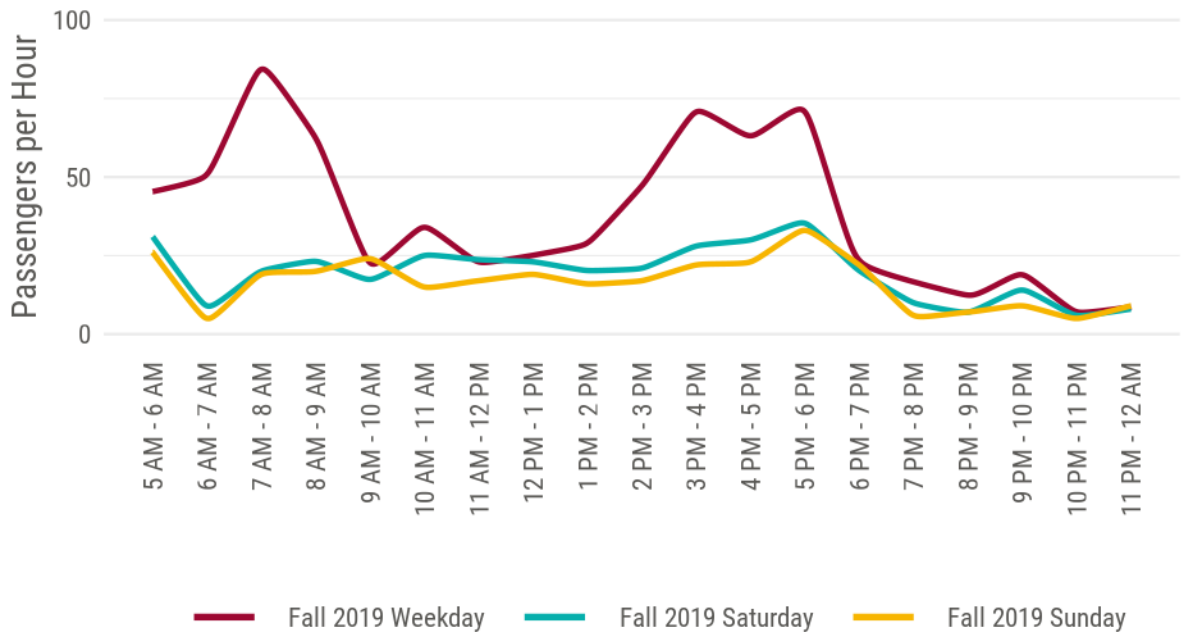


## Ridership by Time of Day

### Ridership by Hour

Pre-pandemic, Route 131 had a strong peaking pattern with demand of over 50 riders per hour during morning (7:00 AM and 8:00 AM) and afternoon peak periods (2:00 PM and 6:00 PM). Midday ridership is considerably lower, with evening service lower still. Demand was lower overall on weekend days and without periods of strong peak demand (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3 | Ridership by Hour: Pre-Pandemic; Fall 2019**



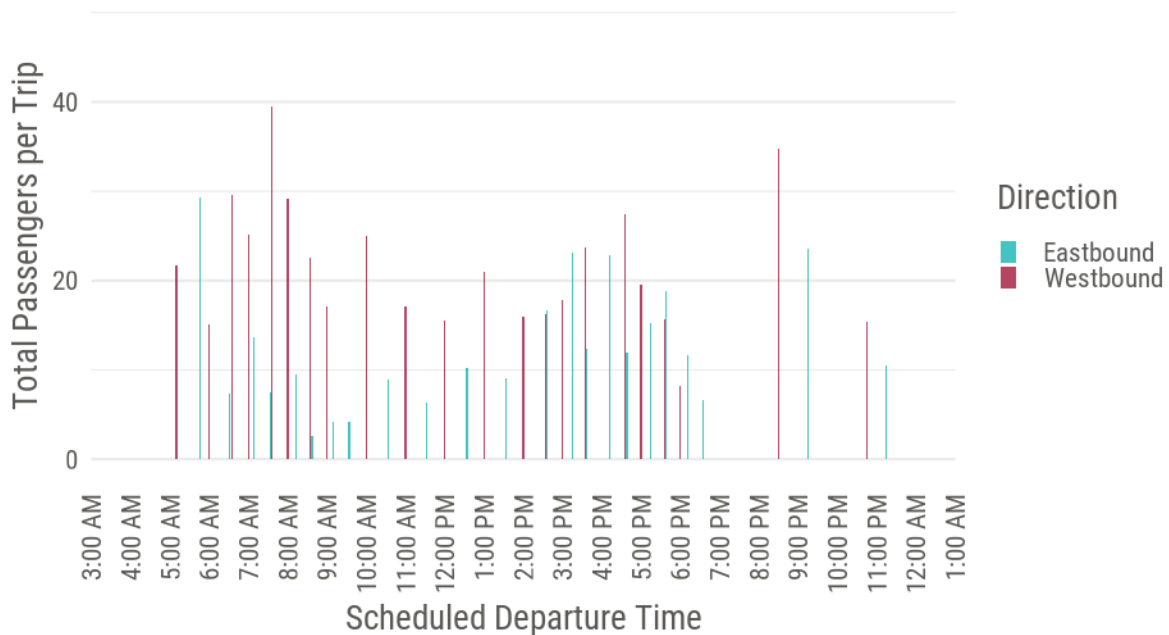
## Ridership and Maximum Loads by Trip

Pre-pandemic, ridership by trip shows both peak period and peak directional demand, stronger traveling westbound in the morning and eastbound in the afternoon (see Figure 4). Key ridership patterns include:

- After 6:00 AM, westbound trips carry nearly twice as many riders as eastbound trips
- During midday, trips carry 10 or fewer riders
- PM peak shows demand of between 10 and 20 riders
- Two evening trips have more than 20 riders.
- Ridership on all trips is below SEPTA’s seated capacity.

Weekend day demand is low with 20 or fewer riders on all trips.

**Figure 4 | Weekday Ridership by Trip**



## ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND RUNNING TIMES

### On-Time Performance

In the fall of 2019, Route 131’s on-time performance was 84% on weekdays, 75% on Saturdays, and 83% on Sundays (see Table 4). Weekday on-time performance exceeds SEPTA’s standard; however, on Saturday it is below the goal. Off-schedule performance was more often associated with early arrivals as compared with late arrivals, especially on weekend days.

Dropped trips are not a significant issue.



**Table 4 | Fall 2019 On-Time Performance**

Goal	Early	On Time	Late	Missed Trips
	(>2 Mins Early)	(<2 Mins Early to 6 Mins Late)	(>6 Mins Late)	
<b>Goal</b>		<b>80%</b>		
<b>Fall 2019 Actual</b>				
Weekday	8.6%	84.0%	7.4%	0.6%
Saturday	21.6%	75.0%	3.4%	0.0%
Sunday	13.1%	82.8%	4.2%	0.0%

Note: On-time percentages are for trips that are run (do not include dropped trips)

## AVERAGE SPEEDS AND STOP SPACING

Route 131 operates above 15MPH for much of its routing (see Figure 5) and has between five and eight stops per mile (see Figure 6). Exceptions are in Norristown, where speeds are slower, and stops are more closely spaced.

**Figure 5 | Average Speeds: PM Peak Westbound**

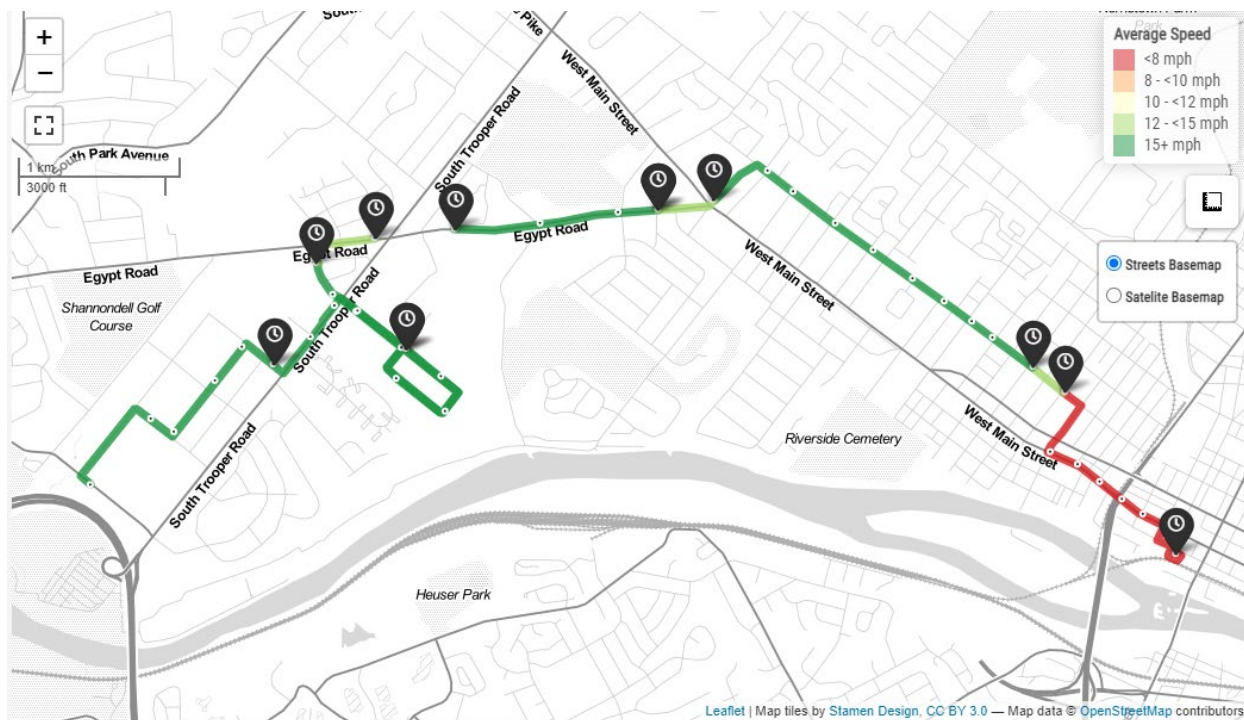
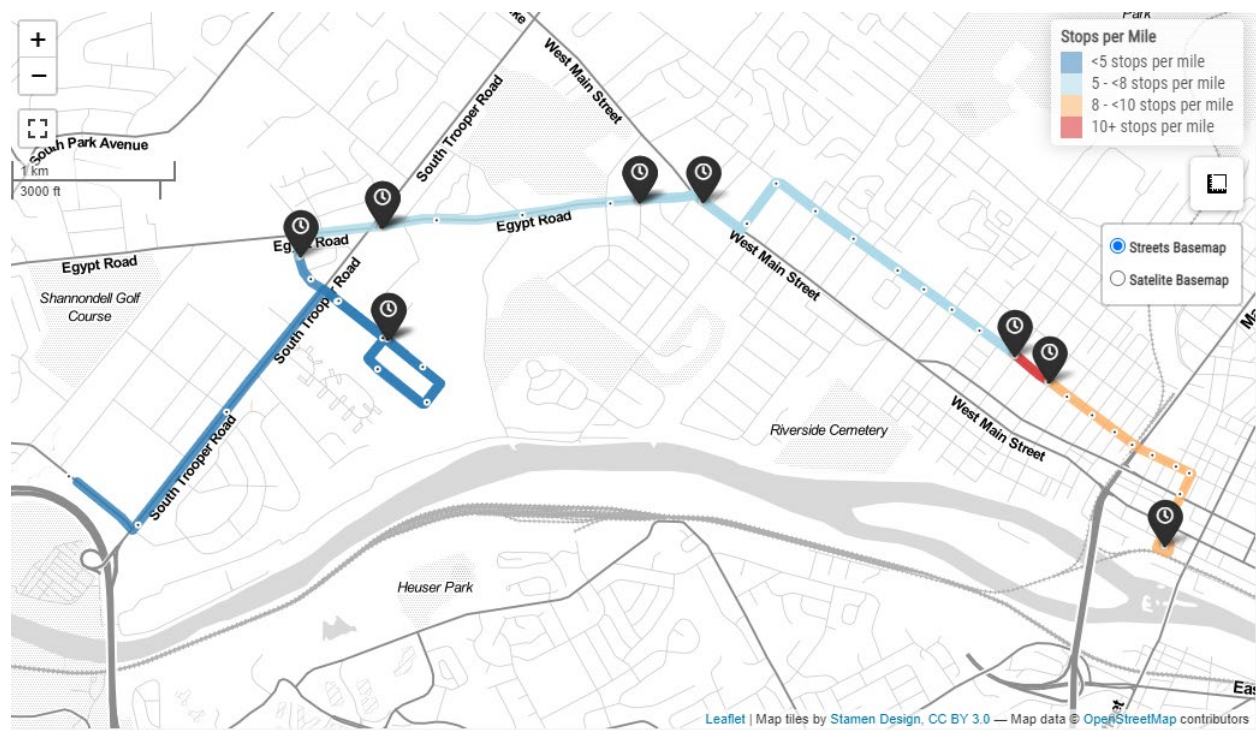


Figure 6 | Stop Spacing by Route Segment



## RIDER CHARACTERISTICS

Route 131’s service area is in line with SEPTA’s service area as a whole (see Table 5). except the service area has more Hispanic and fewer Black passengers. It also has fewer seniors.

Table 5 | Rider Characteristics

	Route 131 Riders	Systemwide Average
Median Household Income	\$31,423	\$32,713
Share in Poverty	31%	30%
Ethnicity		
White	39%	38%
Black	38%	46%
Hispanic	15%	10%
Other	-	7%
Without a Vehicle	35%	37%
Seniors	6%	15%
With a Disability	2%	2%

## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to strengthen Route 131 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- **Consolidate service (Route 131 and Route 93) on Main Street** instead of Marshall to increase service levels. Doubling up serve on Main Street would increase the frequency of service on this segment, making it easier for riders to get to/from the Norristown Transportation Center. The two corridors are closely enough spaced so that walk access for riders would be retained.
- **Extend Route 131 into Phoenixville:** Instead of turning at the Valley Forge Market Place, Route 131 Connecting Phoenixville and Norristown via Egypt Road would offer connections to shopping and employment from both Norristown and Phoenixville. This alignment could still provide access to the Marketplace at Oaks but offer faster and more direct connections.
- **Alternate service between the Valley Forge Market Place and the Audubon business park:** On weekdays, Route 131 serves both the Valley Forge Market Place and the Audubon business park with the same level of service, although ridership to the Market Place is significantly higher. One way to match service with demand would be to alternate service so every other trip travels to the Audubon business park. A slightly different approach would be to serve the Audubon business park during peak periods only.