3 Philosophy and Strategies of Recommendations

Evaluation of service and the objectives identified as most important by stakeholders indicate four primary opportunities to improve productivity and efficiency of transit:

- Speed up the system – Service is slow due to closely spaced bus stops and slow fare collection.

- Improve service frequency – Given a choice, people will choose more frequent service within reasonable distances.

- Simplify the route structure – The current system is too complex and confusing to existing and potential new riders.

- Enhance midday and weekend service – Increasingly, people need to travel outside the traditional rush hour commute periods.

These basic observations, along with opportunities provided by new LRT service on Hiawatha, lead to eight design tenets and a bold new vision for Central-South (Sector 5).

- Improve east-west grid connections north of Highway 62 by taking advantage of opportunities to build up links to Hiawatha LRT and the University Avenue corridor. Provide faster travel along the highly productive Lake Street corridor.

- Enhance midday and weekend service from Highway 62 south to the I-494 corridor and improve timed-transfer connections at transit centers. South of the I-494 corridor, employ new transit center opportunities that allow transition from traditional transit service to more flexible and less costly options for low density suburban areas such as the BE Line.

- Add faster transit; such as express and limited-stop service with new station access options and higher frequencies. Provide more attractive and comfortable stations, including upgrades to existing facilities such as those on I-35W and Lake Street. Consider options for limited-stop services on major local bus routes like Chicago and Nicollet Avenue. Improve limited-stop service on major corridors like West 7th Street and Lake Street.

- Revise express service, using as a model the highly successful all-day express service from Foley Boulevard park-and-ride lot, which transports half of all downtown Minneapolis commuters from that area. Implement commuter express service with large suburban park-

and-ride lots along high-speed transit corridors, rather than several small lots with few trips in the Bloomington and Edina market areas.

- Reduce the complexity of individual routes and therefore the network by reducing multiple branches and short-lines. Improve "straight-lining" (e.g., staying on major corridors) as much as possible. Simplifying routes will make them more attractive to new riders and to current customers for more than just work commute trips.

- Reduce route redundancy by seeking an optimal route spacing of 1/2 mile (1/4 mile walk) in areas with high population and employment density, providing good access without unnecessary overlap.

- Consolidate to the extent practical the separate network of University of Minnesota and regular Metro Transit routes while maintaining high quality transit access to the University.

- Implement bus stop spacing in accordance with current policy (eight stops per mile, or a stop every long city block, or every two short city blocks) to improve operating speed and increase efficiency.

4 Public Involvement Process

4.1 Hard Choices

Transit faces a difficult tradeoff between pursuing ridership and minimizing subsidy per passenger (called the *Productivity goal*) and serving people who need transit wherever they are, regardless of what it costs (the *Coverage goal*). These goals imply totally different service designs, and the choice between them is purely a value judgment. Figure 3 on the following page depicts the Productivity and Coverage models.