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.

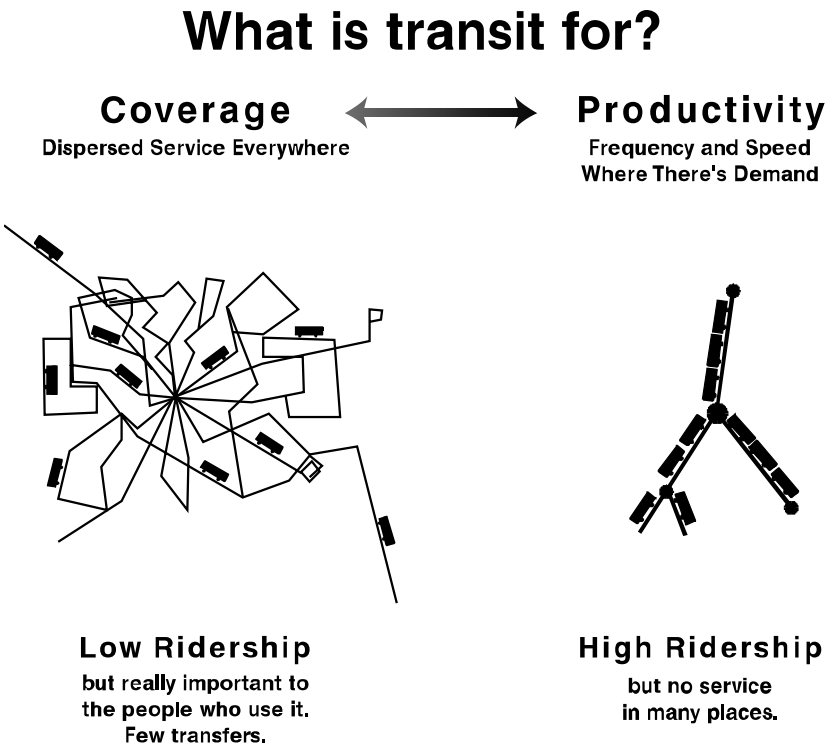
- Implement bus stop spacing in accordance with current policy (eight stops per mile, or a stop every long city block, or every two short city blocks) to improve operating speed and increase efficiency.

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.

Figure 3



4.2 2002 Public Input Process

To define productivity and coverage goals for the Central-South Sector 5 Concept Planning process, public outreach and stakeholder meetings were held. At these meetings stakeholders were asked to prioritize the value of competing transit service objectives. The public input process included the following:

- A January 2002 stakeholder meeting with more than 75 participants, representing a cross-section of interests throughout the study area
- Eight May and June 2002 community meetings sponsored by the affected cities, attended by 129 residents
- 382 online surveys
- Meetings with staff from affected cities
- I-494 Busway Advisory Task Force

Stakeholders supported improving the productivity and efficiency of transit service. Major themes included:

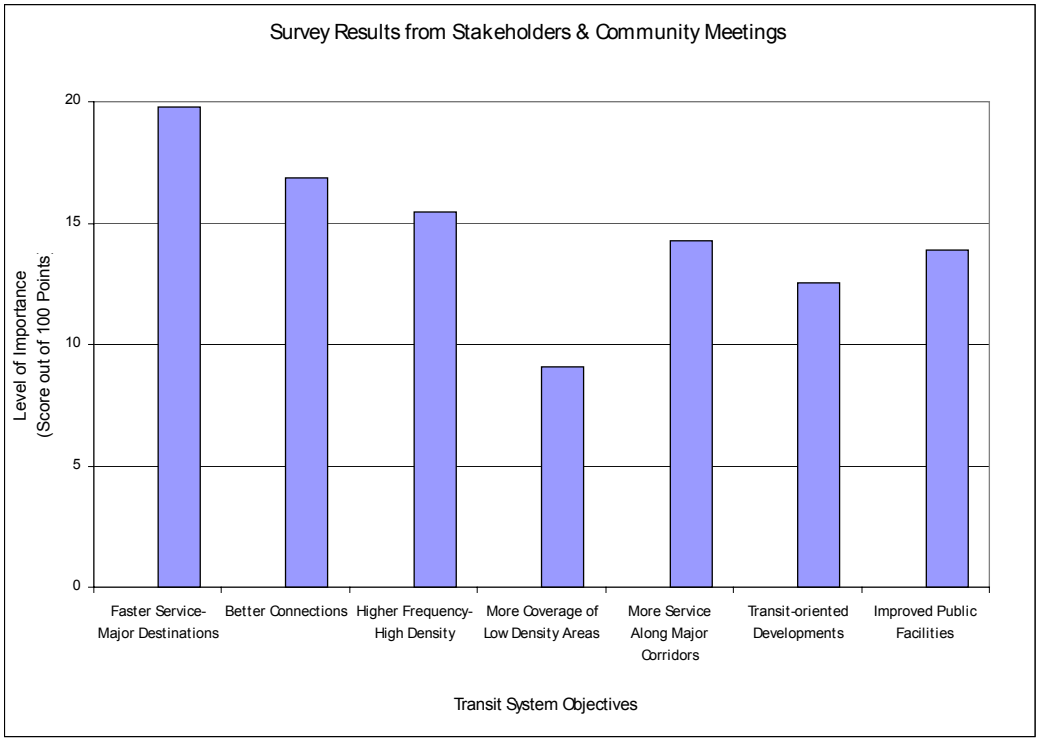
- Increase speed of service in major corridors such as I-35W, West 7th Street and I-494
- Improve span of service, especially on weekends
- Improve/add crosstown bus service in cities and suburbs

- Improve speed of service between Minneapolis and the airport
- Simplify the existing complicated route structure
- Add service for critical I-494 market, via crosstown and reverse-commute transit that is focused on major employment nodes.

The eight community meetings held throughout the study area in the spring of 2002 provided an opportunity for transit service input. Participants engaged in group dialogue facilitated by Metropolitan Council staff to describe their preferred routes and the destinations important to them. Surveys were distributed at every workshop to aid the Metropolitan Council staff's understanding of the most important traits of bus service.

The survey results from these meetings are represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4



4.3 January/February 2003 Public Input Process

The January 2003 publication Sector 5 Central-South Concept Plan initiated the public comment process of the proposed route plan. To acquaint customers with the proposal, farebox signs and interior cards were placed on every bus. Brochures and comment cards were placed on

each bus and information was included in Metro Transit's onboard customer newsletter. This effort was supplemented by advertising in community papers, news stories, cable TV and on the agency's website. The Metropolitan Council held a series of public meetings along with a public hearing to meet with residents in the affected communities to explain changes, answer questions and receive input from customers about the proposed Concept Plan. Public comments were received formally until February 14, 2003.

Monday, Jan. 27, 2003
Sabathani – 12 attendees

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2003
University of St. Thomas – 60 attendees

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2003
Macalester College – 100 attendees

Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2003
Southdale Center – 100 attendees

Thursday, Jan. 30, 2003
Richfield Community Center – 95 attendees

Monday, Feb. 3, 2003
Creekside Community Center – 40 attendees

Public Hearing

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2003
Midtown YWCA – 100 attendees

4.4 Public Input Results

Metro Transit received comments from 3,000 individuals totaling more than 4,200 comments for individual routes. Public comments included 206 e-mail messages, 789 online surveys, 600 comment cards, 25 letters, 5 petitions, 8 faxes, and 15 comments via customer relations. Figure 5 represents distribution of many of the public comments received on the Concept Plan.

4.5 Public Outreach Conclusions

Stakeholder and public comments provided guidance to improve various elements of the plan. About one fifth of the comments favored the plan. Four cities, one county and the University of Minnesota also supported the plan. Several neighborhood groups expressed concerns about specific elements of the plan.

The majority of comments (over 60 percent) were in response to the proposed route elimination or service reductions on Routes 7, 8, 18, 19, 22, 52B, 84, 538 and 539. Another frequent comment was concern regarding increased transfers and loss of direct service to key destinations. For example, the proposed elimination of some direct service to the University of Minnesota was the source of many complaints.

The Concept Plan was modified to address many of the stakeholder and customer concerns within the current operating budget and the tenants identified in the previous chapters. Of the 55 routes in the sector, 32 or 58 percent of routes were modified in response to public comment. The final plan preserves geographic coverage in all of the urban area, and most of the suburban areas, and direct service to the University of Minnesota from France Avenue/ W. 50th Street, Cedar Avenue/Portland Avenue and Snelling Avenue.

This final plan, as modified to address the concerns raised during the public outreach phase, is supported by all five cities and the two counties found in the study area.

5 Planned Transit Service Improvements

5.1 Planned Transit Service Network

The service improvement program begins with a high-to-medium frequency grid network of local service in high-density population and employment areas such as south Minneapolis and St. Paul. This is combined with a high frequency, high-capacity express and limited-stop bus and rail network. This grid will thin in less densely populated areas such as Edina, Richfield and portions of Bloomington. In low-density south and west Bloomington, community-based, shuttle services such as the BE Line will connect to the core network through timed transfer in lieu of more traditional fixed-route services operating on a grid network. At certain isolated employment sites where the regional system is not economical, employer-sponsored shuttle connections may be an effective solution. The planned transit service network is shown in Figure 6.