

## **CHAPTER THREE: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

### **HARD CHOICES**

Transit faces a difficult trade-off between pursuing most frequent service to the largest group of existing and potential riders and minimizing the subsidy per passenger (the Productivity goal) versus distributing service on as many streets as possible to minimize walk distance to people wherever they are, regardless of the cost (the Coverage goal). Another way to think of the Productivity versus Coverage goals is in terms of “bringing people to transit” versus “bringing transit to people.” Figure 5 illustrates the Productivity and Coverage models.

When we bring people to transit, through park-and-ride facilities, focused boarding points, or, ultimately, through higher density land use, productivity increases and the cost per passenger drops. When we bring people to transit by covering a larger area in a more door-to-door fashion, productivity declines as more time is spent serving passengers in dispersed locations. Transit services usually try to strike a reasonable balance between these two goals.

### **2003 AND 2004 PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS**

As part of evaluating existing service and gathering community input, Metro Transit convened stakeholders (transit riders, community groups, elected officials, and city staff) at several meetings to review how transit performs and get feedback on planning objectives for transit. In addition online surveys were used to solicit feedback from stakeholders. The purpose of the community outreach was to ask stakeholders to prioritize the value of competing transit service objectives.

The public input process included the following:

- A stakeholder meeting in October 2003 with more than 70 participants, representing a diverse cross-section of interests throughout the study area
- Seven public meetings in January and June 2004, sponsored by communities in the study area, attended by more than 100 residents
- Surveys distributed at workshops, online and by mail
- Meetings with staff from cities in the study area
- Meeting with local organizations in the study area, such as the Minneapolis Urban League and Twin West Chamber of Commerce

Stakeholders were asked to rate the importance of various transit system objectives. The survey results from these meetings are represented in Figure 6. The three highest-rated objectives focus on the Productivity goal, while the lowest-ranking objective was “increasing coverage to low density areas.” These results suggested that the productivity and efficiency of transit service in the Northwest Metro Transit Study area were highly valued and should guide the development of the concept plan. Major themes included:

- Faster service to major destinations such as downtown Minneapolis, Arbor Lakes in Maple Grove and North Memorial Medical Center
- Address gaps in the current network such as Penn Avenue in north Minneapolis
- Easier suburb-to-suburb travel without having to transfer in downtown Minneapolis

- More off-peak and weekend service in the suburbs
- Improved connections to North Hennepin Community College and Hennepin Technical College
- Better connections between transit centers
- Local connections between Plymouth, Maple Grove and the rest of the northwest suburbs

Figure 5

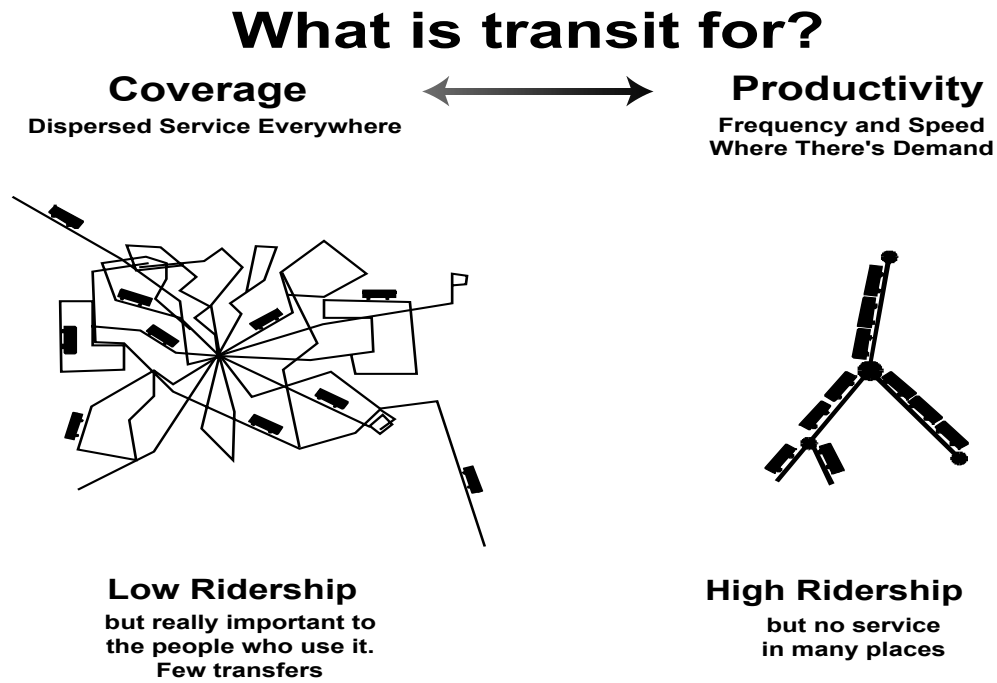
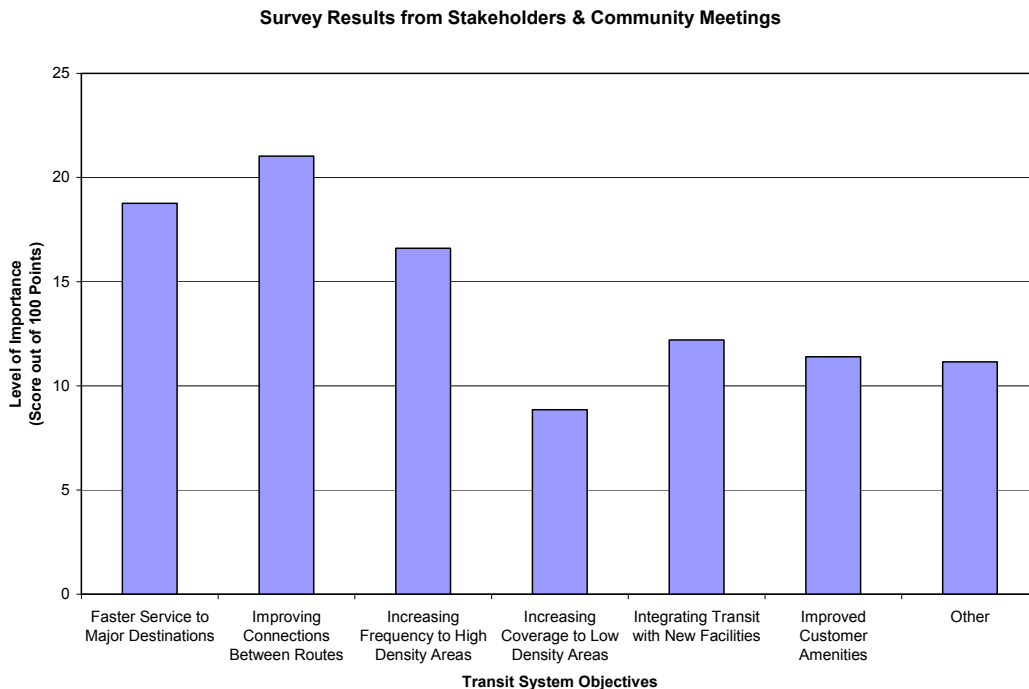


Figure 6



## 2006 PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The Northwest Metro Transit Study was shaped by the contributions of a task force and the input from more than 70 stakeholders. The Northwest Metro Transit Study Task Force included at least one representative from each of the eleven cities in the study area, plus community organizations Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH) and the Minneapolis Urban League. The task force met three times in February and March 2006.

Approximately 80 stakeholder meetings were held between late 2003 and mid-2006. Thirty internal and fifty external meetings were held with city staff members, council members, MICAH, Urban League and other community organizations.

The official public comment period for the Northwest Metro Transit Study Concept Plan began on April 27, 2006 and closed at 5 p.m. on June 23, 2006. The Metropolitan Council's approval to seek public input on the Northwest Metro Transit Study Concept Plan initiated the public comment process.

In addition, an open house was held in November 2006 to present the plan modifications that resulted from the public comment period to the public.

## INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

- All of the project reports, process, and project information were available at [metrotransit.org](http://metrotransit.org), and at the Metropolitan Council Data Center, 651-602-1464.
- Route 26 flier was developed with MICAH and Minneapolis Urban League for neighborhood distribution. MADDADS distributed 900 brochures with Route 26 flier inserts to households in north Minneapolis between Plymouth Avenue, Golden Valley Road, Xerxes Avenue and Penn Avenue.
- Media coverage resulting from a press release: two features on Cable Channel 12; a pair of stories in the Spokesman-Recorder; interviews with *North News*, *Brooklyn Center Sun Post*, *Insight News*, KMOJ radio.
- Materials Distribution (More than 100 locations)
  - Posters (1,000): bus stops and shelters, transit centers, pocket schedule outlets, MICAH/Urban League (100+), neighborhood business associations, chambers of commerce, and other community gathering places (from libraries to coffee shops).
  - Brochures (95,000): buses, pocket schedule outlets, transit stores, Metropolitan Transit Information Center, Metro Transit customer relations, neighborhood and community groups and community gathering places.
  - Reports (400): Met Council Data Center, stakeholders, available to public at all Study area libraries and meetings.
- Interior Cards (1,000): buses

- March 2006 *TAKE-OUT* – customer newsletter on all buses system wide. Reviewed Concept Plan, provided ways to learn more and comment, and notified of upcoming open house and public hearings to be scheduled.
- May 2006 *TAKE-OUT* – customer newsletter on all buses system wide. Reviewed Concept Plan, provided ways to learn more and comment, including open house and public hearing dates/locations.
- November 2006 *TAKE-OUT*– customer newsletter on all buses system wide. Notified riders that the plan modifications are available online and will be the topic of an open house on Nov. 9.

## **OPEN HOUSES**

Tuesday, May 30, 2006

Brooklyn Center Community Center – 12 attendees

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

Minneapolis City Hall – 17 attendees

Thursday, June 1, 2006

Crystal City Hall – 39 attendees

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Minneapolis Urban League – 33 attendees

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Zanewood Community Center, Brooklyn Park – 20 attendees

Thursday, November 9, 2006

Metro Transit Heywood Offices, Minneapolis-31 attendees

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Metro Transit Heywood Office – 37 attendees

## **PUBLIC INPUT RESULTS**

Metro Transit received more than 1,100 comments for individual routes. Comments received after 5 p.m. on June 23, 2006 were considered late but still included for consideration.

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>ON-TIME</b>	<b>LATE</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Email	155	20	<b>174</b>
Comment Card	292	2	<b>294</b>
Customer Feedback	11	0	<b>11</b>
Letter	14	0	<b>14</b>
Fax	12	0	<b>12</b>
Petition (4)	631	591 (dupl.)	<b>631</b>
Public Hearing Testimony	16	0	<b>16</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1131</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1152</b>

Notes:

- A repeat responder is responsible for 127 of the total comments (11%).
- There were two petitions opposing the elimination of bus service (Route 5) on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between Thomas and York (one with 576 signatures which was received before the public comment period closed and one with 591 signatures which was received late). The first 576 signatures of the late petition are the same as the earlier petition and the remaining 15 signatures appeared to match those received earlier for Route 19.
- There was one petition (15 signatures) opposing the bus service (Route 19) on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between Thomas and Penn Avenue, that was included in the late signatures received on Route 5.
- There were two petitions opposing Option A (Xerxes routing) of Route 26 (one with 38 signatures and one with 35 signatures). However there were 33 common signatures between the two petitions; therefore, there were only 40 separate signatures.
- 11 government officials, cities or organizations responded about the restructuring
  1. Representative Lyndon Carlson (District 45B)
  2. Councilmember Dan Rogan, Robbinsdale
  3. Mayor Steven E. Boynton, Champlin
  4. Transit Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC)
  5. Victory Neighborhood Association
  6. Advocacy Committee of Vision Resources
  7. Catholic Charities
  8. Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy – Kevin Reuther, Staff Attorney, on behalf of the Access Transportation Coalition (MICAH, Minneapolis Urban League, Institute on Race and Poverty)
  9. Department of Community Development, Brooklyn Park
  10. Mark W. Grimes, Director of Planning – Golden Valley
  11. Kim Riesgraf, Director of Student Services – Osseo District 279

## PUBLIC OUTREACH CONCLUSIONS

Stakeholder and public comments identified concerns and helped determine modifications to the Concept Plan. Metro Transit received more 300 comments on urban local routes, 60 comments on suburban local routes and 90 comments on express/limited stop routes. The proposal to eliminate service on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue west of Thomas Avenue, to eliminate the layover at 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and York Avenue and to implement new service on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue east of Thomas Avenue received the majority of comments. Other areas of concern included Route 26 on Xerxes Avenue, the elimination of the F branch on Route 766 in Champlin and maintaining a one-seat ride between Plymouth Avenue, the University of Minnesota, and south Minneapolis.

The Concept Plan was modified to address many of the stakeholder and customer concerns within the current operating budget and tenets identified in Chapter 2. Of the 29 routes included in the Concept Plan (does not include Maple Grove or Plymouth Metrolink routes), 15 were modified in response to public comment (52 percent).