



Minnesota Regional Transit
Board: Records.

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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

Monday, August 22, 1988
Mears Park Centre Chambers
4:00 p.m.

AMENDED AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of August 1 Board Meeting
4. REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
 - A. Review of Hennepin County Comprehensive Light Rail Transit System Plan
5. Mears Park Centre Lease Amendment

Doris Caranicas,
Chair

JOINT MEETING OF THE REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

and the

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

4:30 p.m.

The Regional Transit Board and Metropolitan Transit Commission will hold a joint meeting for the purpose of discussing issues of mutual concern. No action will be taken.

Elliott Perovich
Chairman



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ALL STAFF

Perovich ✓

Andrews ✓

Brechlin

Dietrick

Ecker

Fish

Fitzgerald ✓

Hinze

Hennings

Hollander ✓

Kouneski

Kuehn ✓

Mayer

Olson

Opsahl

Rosvold

Ryan

~~Smothers~~

Turnbull ✓ KC ✓

Zuniga

Blin ✓

MTC
FS
CC
GD
JC
BA
GF

Brant
Mark Kosmos
Bob Thompson
Entzel
Dio
Doug Emsel
Chuck Kemm

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
ROLL CALL AND ATTENDANCE SHEET

deVrie
McSaugher

DATE: 8/22

BOARD OR COMMITTEE: Special Bd

MEMBER NAME	PRESENT	VOTE	VOTE	VOTE	VOTE	VOTE
Chairman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Doris Caranicas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Ruth Franklin						
Carole Faricy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Alison Fuhr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Rochelle Graves						
George Isaacs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Paul Joyce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Edward Kranz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					



Mears Park Centre, 230 East Fifth Street, St. Paul, MN. 55101
612/292-8789

Minutes of the Meeting of the
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
Mears Park Centre Chambers
August 1, 1988

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Elliott Perovich, Chairman; Doris Caranicas; Ruth Franklin; Carole Faricy; Alison Fuhr; Rochelle Graves; George Isaacs; Ed Kranz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Joyce

OTHERS PRESENT: Gregory Andrews, Mary Fitzgerald, Judy Hollander, Ed Kouneski, Katie Turnbull, Gerry Brechlin, Mike Kuehn and Julie Opsahl, Regional Transit Board Staff; Dirk deVries, Metropolitan Council Liaison to RTB; Emil Brandt, Metropolitan Council; Steve Bertrand; Mary Jo Nichols, Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL); Tom Vida, Metro Mobility Administrative Center; Carolyn Cochrane, Greg Failor, and Bob Thompson, Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC); Bob Rossman, Amalgamated Transit Union; Rick Cardenas; Greg Ingraham, City of Bloomington

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE APPOINTMENT TO THE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

The chairman called the public hearing to order at 4:00 p.m. The incumbent commissioner, Carolyn Cochrane, was the only applicant for the open position on the commission representing St. Paul. Commissioner Cochrane addressed the board. In response to Isaacs' question about how the RTB can do a better job of working with the MTC, Cochrane said we continue to do a better job than in the past and continuous efforts are required. The joint RTB/MTC meetings have been beneficial; it has taken some time to learn new relationships.

No one else asked to address the board and the public hearing was adjourned. The board will take action on the appointment on August 15, 1988.

The regular meeting of the board was called to order at 4:05 p.m. An amended agenda had been distributed noting that the minutes of June 17, 1988 had also been mailed. Isaacs moved and Caranicas seconded that the amended agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

Caranicas moved and Franklin seconded that the minutes of the June 17 meeting be approved, with a correction showing that Member Graves was present. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

Caranicas moved and Franklin seconded that the minutes of the meeting of June 27 be approved with a correction on page 3, Financial Statements - January 1988. The motion should read "That the Regional Transit Board approve the January 1988 financial statements and direct that they be placed on file." The motion be approved. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

Caranicas moved and Franklin seconded that the minutes of the meeting of July 5 be approved. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

CONSENT LIST

Caranicas moved and Fuhr seconded that the Consent List dated July 25, 1988, Environmental Assessment Worksheet for Construction of the Minneapolis IBM Office Complex in Downtown Minneapolis, be approved. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Franklin reviewed the report of the committee meeting of July 19, 1988.

ACCEPTANCE OF DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD 1989 OPERATING BUDGET FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Franklin moved and Caranicas seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board accept the Draft Regional Transit Board 1989 Operating Budget, dated July 19, 1988, for purposes of public hearing to be held on August 11, 1988 at 4 p.m. in the Mears Park Centre, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Christopherson said the latest draft of the 1989 Operating Budget is dated August 1, 1988. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

Franklin reviewed the actions taken by the committee at its meeting of July 25.

MARKETING BUDGET FOR NEW ANOKA WEEKEND SERVICES

Franklin moved and Caranicas seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize up to \$20,000 for the actual marketing and advertising costs for the new Anoka weekend service from Work Activity Number 88-26, Test Marketing of New Services.

Perovich reminded members that there will be a kick-off celebration of the new service on Saturday, August 6, and urged them to attend. The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

APPROVAL TO RETAIN LRT CONSULTANTS

Franklin moved and Fuhr seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board retain the services of independent experts to assist the board in its review of regional railroad authorities' light rail transit plans in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

The motion carried unanimously (Faricy and Graves not present).

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD/METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION 1989 CAPITAL BUDGET

Franklin moved and Fuhr seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board:

1. Approve the 1989 Regional Transit Board furniture and fixture capital items in an amount not to exceed \$69,000.
2. Authorize 1989 exurban capital funding to the following providers listed in the specified amounts and that these be included in the 1989 Capital Budget:

City of Hastings	\$20,000
Scott County	9,500
Carver County	<u>11,363</u>
	\$40,863

3. Include the following transit hub projects in amounts not to exceed those listed in the 1989 RTB Capital Budget:

Rosedale Shopping Center, Roseville	\$ 500,000
Maplewood Mall, Maplewood	500,000
Mall of America, Bloomington	<u>1,125,000</u>
	\$2,125,000

Approval of the Mall of America, Bloomington, transit hub project is contingent upon provision for light rail transit, taking into consideration engineering limitations.

4. Approve the 1989 MTC Capital Budget and incorporate it into the 1989 RTB Capital Budget. In approving the budget, the RTB reaffirms the following policies:
 - a. Buses in the MTC fleet are considered regional capital assets available, where feasible, for use by other transit providers.
 - b. MTC facilities will be available for all transit providers.
5. Request bonding authorization from the Legislature for \$42.5 million to cover capital funding through the next legislative biennium.
6. Adopt this capital project for submittal to the Metropolitan Council.

Isaacs expressed concern about the Mall of America design (Item 3 above). He questioned the existing design's ability to accommodate light rail transit. Franklin indicated concern with the phrase "contingent upon" since the board originally approved the transit hub concept. A transit hub is needed at this location even if light rail does not become a reality.

Turnbull said she has discussed the board's concerns with staff of the City of Bloomington and noted that a representative from the city was present to answer questions. Bloomington has directed their consultants, BRW, Inc., to examine how LRT could be accommodated at the site (Graves arrived).

Perovich said the board needs to consider both bus and LRT use of the facility. Isaacs said the board has to take a stand because the hub has to include timed-transfer between buses and LRT. He moved to add the words "of light rail transit" to the end of the last sentence in Item 3. Fuhr seconded the motion.

The board discussed a number of suggested wording changes. Fuhr said that ideally the hub should accommodate both buses and LRT. Franklin agreed, but said the motion should not be too restrictive in case LRT is not built in the next 10 to 20 years. Isaacs noted he felt the RTB should make a point that LRT needed to be incorporated into the design.

Greg Ingraham, representing the City of Bloomington, said the center is currently designed for buses. The city and the developer want light rail connections and they are still discussing how this could be accomplished. There are a lot of alternatives and everyone will push for it, but the problem is that light rail may not be a reality for 20 years. (Faricy arrived.) Fuhr said light rail must run close enough to transfer easily. Isaacs said communities have found that timed-transfer between buses and LRT is the key to efficient service. Unless the city takes this into consideration they will waste a lot of public money. Ingraham said the city has always been committed to using this as an LRT transit stop. They will be glad to show how the connection could be made. Vote was taken on the amendment and resulted in a tie vote.

Fuhr offered an amendment to the original motion and Franklin seconded:

Approval of the Mall of America, Bloomington, transit hub project is contingent upon making provision or allowance for the eventuality of light rail transit.

Graves asked if the intent of the motion is that if the contingencies are not met the board will not approve the site. Fuhr said that is not the intent of her motion. Graves offered a friendly amendment:

That approval of the Mall of America, Bloomington, transit hub project must provide for light rail transit, taking into consideration engineering limitations.

Caranicas asked for clarification; Perovich said the motion calls for the design to make consideration for light rail transit. Franklin said she agreed with Graves and suggested "...should include provision for light rail transit." Fuhr said that is not quite as forceful. Isaacs said "must" or "should" are not mandatory, but "shall" is mandatory. Fuhr said the words "is contingent" should be deleted.

Graves said sometimes the board has not been serious in its direction from the beginning, which is confusing for others and it is important that the board be very direct on what it is seeking from others who deal with the agency. While it is tedious, each word is important and could come back to haunt us later.

Ingraham said the motion could say "...plans be submitted showing how light rail transit could be put in the mall." Bloomington can submit those plans to the board. The chairman restated the amendment to the original motion:

Approval of the Mall of America, Bloomington, transit hub project design shall include provision for LRT.

Fuhr and Franklin accepted the friendly amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

Franklin moved and Isaacs seconded approval of the original motion as amended. Kranz questioned the impact of Item 4 regarding the use of the MTC fleet and facilities by other providers. Failor said RTB and MTC staff are discussing it, but the MTC does not have a problem with it, if they have excess buses. Regarding Item 4.b., Failor said MTC agreed to set aside spaces in the garages for joint use. Perovich said MTC maintains ownership of the facility; Failor said this is also Metropolitan Council policy. MTC's position is that facilities are available when they exceed current needs.

The chairman said he is concerned about Item 5, requesting bonding authorization from the Legislature. It is a change in policy to go pay for 100 percent of the buses with local funds. The board must have a frank discussion of this issue. Property taxes are a very negative issue right now. The board should be talking about alternatives. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Caranicas reviewed the report of the July 18 committee meeting.

I-35W SCOPING DOCUMENT AND DRAFT SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT

Caranicas moved and Isaacs seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board has reviewed the I-35W Scoping Study and recommends to the Minnesota Department of Transportation:

1. That the transit alternatives recommended to be carried into the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process are appropriate and the Regional Transit Board supports further examination of these alternatives. However, given the concerns raised by the Neighborhood Transportation Network (NTN), the Minnesota Department of Transportation should add an alternative that addresses the concepts suggested in their minimum build/maximum management alternative. This should include implementation of a set of very rigorous travel demand management strategies and the potential of converting an existing lane to an high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane during the peak periods.
2. That the appropriate location for park-and-ride lots, especially those identified for the LRT alternatives, be reexamined in the EIS process. Park-and-ride lots are typically utilized in suburban areas and are not usually appropriate in densely populated urbanized areas.

3. That the Minnesota Department of Transportation examine the size and location of the timed-transfer stations associated with the HOV lane alternatives. As the experience on I-394 has shown, these facilities require a significant amount of space.
4. That the scoping report and the EIS should note that the modeling process utilized assumes no significant changes in fuel prices or fuel availability in the future. The ability of the different alternatives to respond to changes in the energy situation and the result such changes may have on ridership levels should be addressed.
5. That the scoping report and EIS should note that only the LRT alternatives have the excess capacity to handle ridership levels greater than 17,000.
6. That light rail transit on adjacent streets is unsuitable since the goal is to reduce the number of vehicles and increase the number of people using the corridor.

Isaacs said the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) criteria call for 17,000 riders per hour. Item 5 should read "...levels greater than 17,000 per hour. Caranicas agreed; vote was taken. The motion carried unanimously.

LOCAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Caranicas moved and Fuhr seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board adopt the dispute resolution process with the changes suggested by the Providers' Advisory Committee as outlined in the staff memorandum dated July 8, 1988 and the accompanying attachments.

The motion carried unanimously.

I-494 URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION SUBURBAN INITIATIVES GRANT

Caranicas moved and Fuhr seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board notify the Metropolitan Council of its support of the Council's Urban Mass Transportation Administration Suburban Mobility Initiative Grant application and the RTB's commitment to provide \$90,000 in local match over the next three years for the transit elements.

The motion carried unanimously.

CITY OF LAKEVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVISION

Caranicas moved and Fuhr seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board submit the following comments to the City of Lakeville and the Metropolitan Council concerning the updates of the Lakeville Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan:

The City of Lakeville should include in its Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan a discussion of existing transit service within the city and proposals for transit service strategies as outlined in the Regional Transit Board's Transit Service Needs Assessment.

In addition, the Regional Transit Board directs staff to explore with the City of Lakeville the potential for new services as called for in the Implementation and Financial Plan.

The motion carried unanimously.

Caranicas reviewed the report of the Special Policy Committee meeting of July 21, 1988.

METRO MOBILITY LEGISLATIVE REPORT ON COMPLAINTS

Caranicas moved and Isaacs seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board approve the Report to the Legislature on Metro Mobility Complaints, dated August 1, 1988, and submit it to the Legislature.

The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Perovich said he received a call last week from the Government Affairs person at the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) indicating they have begun activity to improve taxicab service in the airport area, St. Louis Park, Richfield, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Bloomington. The private sector supports this initiative. RTB is affected by this through the people who deliver service for Metro Mobility. The consultant study will cost \$60,000 and MAC would like to split that with everyone involved. The cab companies will pay for training and will establish a dress code. The Metropolitan Council is picking up the licensing issue and they may also decide to participate in this.

Caranicas, who had been RTB liaison to the Taxicab Advisory Committee, said the committee had worked very hard on these issues and she regrets that it stopped. Perovich said MAC has the authority to pass an ordinance. Drivers who do not cooperate could not go out. St. Paul is waiting to see what the RTB will do because they think a regional agency should be involved. The issue will be on the August 15 agenda. Fuhr said the Metropolitan Council should be involved.

Perovich said he visited the UTDC Can-Car facility in Thunder Bay, Ontario, last week. UTDC built the San Jose cars and their product may become the standard.

MEMBERS REPORTS

Caranicas said she and Rochelle Graves attended the APTA board members conference in New York and will prepare notes on the conference. The preceding week Graves said she rode on lift-equipped buses in Atlanta. Rick Cardenas' wheelchair could not be secured on the bus after the lift finally loaded it and it was obvious that regular maintenance is needed. She said she returned with a better sense of the difficulties faced by wheelchair users.

STAFF REPORTS

Andrews said the budget instructions have been received from the Department of Finance. The deadline for submitting draft narrative is this September.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bertrand and Cardenas commented on the Metro Mobility certification issue. The budget is their main concern. Cardenas questioned the hours allocated by MCIL for meeting preparation and presentations at meetings. In response to his question, Perovich said the Legislature's reduction in the appropriation from \$7.2 to \$6 million was RTB's doing because in clarifying what the social service agencies were spending, RTB could spend less by doing something with the agencies on trips to workshops. Regarding the issue of recertification, Perovich said at the Senate Transportation hearings, senators were unhappy that people were certified to ride who were never meant to be eligible.

Graves asked Cardenas if he is concerned because the contract to review certification was awarded to MCIL and whether United Handicapped Federation, Courage Center and others should have been included. She asked if he felt awarding the contract to MCIL appeared to be favoritism. Cardenas agreed, saying there are others more qualified to do the work.

In response to Fuhr's question, the chairman said RTB may participate in an open house for employees of the three agencies of Mears Park Centre.

Faricy asked if there are security problems. Andrews said the lease requires the landlord to provide adequate security. The security cards have not been received. When the system is complete, RTB employees will only be able to get to the first, second and seventh floors after hours. To date we have not received a satisfactory plan to secure the building after the restaurant opens. Faricy asked if anything has been instituted for staff when they leave the building. Andrews said a police officer talked to the staff about parking ramp security, but it is our position that it is each person's responsibility to provide for his or her own security. Staff will only work the hours the building is secure. The key is getting security on the elevators.

There being no further business, Caranicas moved and Fuhr seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Fitzgerald
Secretary

Approved by the board: _____, 1988.

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
Mears Park Centre
230 East Fifth Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101
292-8789

DATE: August 16, 1988
TO: Regional Transit Board
FROM: Howard Blin, Planner *HB KJ OK*
SUBJECT: Revised Comments on Hennepin County Comprehensive LRT System Plan

Based on the August 15 Policy Committee discussion of the proposed comments on the Hennepin County plan, the following changes and additions are proposed:

(Revise)

II. System Design

3. The system proposed by the HCRRA would utilize conventional light rail technology. Use of proven, "off the shelf" technology is likely to minimize the difficulty in designing and operating the system and is supported.

Hennepin County is likely to be the first rail authority to develop detailed standards for items such as track and roadbed, power supply systems, vehicles, stations, etc. These standards will shape the decisions of other rail authorities. To ensure a uniform regional system, coordination with the RTB, Metropolitan Council, and other rail authorities is recommended.

RTB Comment: The RTB supports the use of proven LRT technologies in developing the system. The HCRRA should provide for review of design standards developed during preliminary engineering by the RTB, Metropolitan Council, and other regional rail authorities.

(Add)

III. Alignments

Under the Stage I plan, the Hiawatha Corridor would terminate at 46th Street East and the Northwest Corridor would terminate at 63rd Avenue North, approximately 0.7 miles south of I-694. Relatively modest extensions of these corridors to the vicinity of the GAS Building in the Hiawatha Corridor and to I-694 in the Northwest Corridor may provide better locations for park-and-ride lots and integration with feeder bus networks. Further study of these extensions during preliminary engineering would allow the most cost effective terminus for each of these corridors to be determined.

RTB Comment: During preliminary engineering, the HCRRA should investigate extension of the Hiawatha Corridor to the vicinity of the GSA Building and the Northwest Corridor to I-694.



*Strategic
Plan Update*

WHY DOES THE MTC HAVE A STRATEGIC PLAN?

John Capell, Chief Administrator
Beverly Auld, Assistant Chief Administrator
John Farrell, Assistant Chief Administrator

In late 1986, MTC senior management and the commission first began to talk about the need for a Strategic Plan. Let me review with you why we felt that a Strategic Plan was important to the MTC. We were concerned about the future. We had experienced eight years of steady ridership decline. We were in a very competitive market, competing with the automobile and private carriers for the delivery of public transit services.

We needed a plan and focus that we could move forward with that would provide a clear direction for the organization. The plan needed to respond to threats to the organization and to take advantage of our strengths and opportunities.

Simply stated, strategic planning is a process of producing a clear statement of what the MTC stands for, what we want our future to be, and then making it happen.

In early 1987, we completed and implemented the first Strategic Plan. That plan was updated earlier this year. In this report, we will evaluate what the Strategic Plan has done in the last year and look ahead to the work we have to do. This report will serve as your opportunity to keep up with what's going on at the MTC.

I am pleased with the direction and progress that we have made. Strategic planning results in planned change and I believe that there has been change in how we conduct our business as a result of the Strategic Plan.

The major focus of the revised Strategic Plan is to increase ridership by effectively serving and satisfying our customers. As you review this report, you will see many programs that are designed to do just that—to make the MTC more responsive to our passengers.

Another important focus of the plan is that the MTC was and wanted to continue to be "the primary provider of transit services in the Twin Cities metro area." This means that we want to be more than a bus company. We operate Minnesota Rideshare, the van and carpool sharing system. We oversee the administration of Metro Mobility. We are participating in light rail planning and look forward to becoming the operator of light rail. That's what we meant when we said our services ranged "from operational planning to specialized service delivery."

The strategic planning process is dynamic. This year's revised Strategic Plan reordered our strategies and identified two previous strategies—communication and performance management—as critical issues. This doesn't mean those two goals are less important; it means that they're critical to the success of the plan and not a goal of the plan itself.

In this report, you'll have the opportunity to read what each division has done to bring about the changes that the Strategic Plan helped mold. I think it's important that we keep abreast of what's happening within the MTC. So take a few minutes and read up on the important changes being made. I think you'll learn something.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Metropolitan Transit Agency is the primary provider of transit services in the Twin Cities metro area, offering a variety of public transit services ranging from operational planning to specialized service delivery. The highest priority for the MTC is to increase ridership by effectively serving and satisfying its customers. The MTC operates in a competitive environment, using its vast investment in personnel, equipment and facilities to provide quality, cost-effective transit services to the public.

DRIVING FORCE

MTC makes its service decisions to increase ridership while maintaining the current service level. Therefore, re-allocation of service is the only type of service change which can be made. Given this driving force it is important for the MTC to:

- A) Eliminate unproductive service mileage from the system.
- B) Make constant efforts to improve productivity and efficiency, to minimize overhead, and to use creative methods to do more with the same resources.

STRATEGIES (listed in priority order)

#1 (#2 strategy last year). MTC will increase its customer satisfaction by improving the cleanliness and condition of equipment; improve its image regarding how drivers relate to the public; designing routes, schedules and fares to meet customer needs and improve services; and communicating and marketing them to the public.

#2 (#4 strategy last year). MTC will achieve deeper penetration of potential park-and-ride commuters from the suburbs to downtown, I-394 corridor and northwestern crescent north of I-394 and probe the transit-dependent market.

#3 (#3 strategy last year). MTC will continue to bid aggressively for transit service contracts, which include such services as Metro Mobility and Minnesota Rideshare. To do this, the agency must influence the definition of "cost-effective" so that it is not seen as just "cost". Quality, productivity and economies of scale must enter into the definition. Each of the parts of the MTC's operation must also be more efficient and the agency will continue to work with the union to adopt more competitive labor practices and costs.

#4 (modification of #7 strategy last year). MTC will aggressively position itself to become the operator of light rail transit in the Twin Cities by participating in the planning of the system.

#5 (This was not a strategy last year). MTC will become a stronger advocate in the area of public policy by having senior-level staff assume greater advocacy roles and having management seek more Commission involvement in public policy issues.

"The highest priority for the MTC is to increase ridership by effectively serving and satisfying its customers."

#6 (#5 strategy last year). MTC will increase the sales of transit support service to other companies through service planning and scheduling, driver training, contract management, transit supervision, and MTC enterprises.

(#1 strategy from last year said, "MTC will improve the management of its workforce so that it has satisfied workers who are MTC supporters, who want the MTC to succeed and whose personal work goals can be met through employment at MTC." This communication and performance management strategy is now a critical issue.)



CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT CREATED

The top strategy of this year's plan is customer satisfaction. The MTC has decided that the best way to do this is to create a department dedicated to this goal. That's why the customer service department will begin operating soon in the Fred T. Heywood Facility.

The goal of the department is to handle customer problems in a more consistent and timely fashion and to promote good customer relations with MTC employees.

A manager has been hired and three more staffers will be hired before the department is scheduled to open Aug. 29.

The need for a separate department that reports directly to Assistant Chief Administrator for Operations, John Farrell, was identified after a study analyzed the current customer relations operation and decided it was "passive" and "reactive" in that it relies exclusively on complaints as the primary customer feedback mechanism on MTC service. Further, the current procedure does not encourage feedback from customers nor does it systematically respond to those patrons who take the time to contact the MTC.



The study concluded that as many as 70 percent of the customer inquiries received could be resolved on the spot, given the authority and information to do so.

In order to improve, the MTC needed to be more "proactive" in soliciting customer service through an enhanced department. Hours will be expanded and the Lost and Found will be moved to the downtown Heywood facility from Nicollet Garage for the convenience of the customers.

In the future, the department plans to provide customer survey forms on buses and survey customers more frequently to learn more about their wants and needs. Ultimately, understanding the concerns of the customer will lead to better informed decisions on service and policy changes and strengthen the MTC's position in today's competitive market.

ENGINEERING AND FACILITIES

John Eaves,
Director

Engineering and Facilities concentrated on improving cleanliness, coordinating the MTC's fleet replacement program and planning for the replacement of Nicollet Garage as part of the Strategic Plan.

Improving cleanliness will increase customer satisfaction and according to Director John Eaves, managers of MTC facilities now have more authority to monitor janitors. Before the 1987 change, one Engineering and Facilities manager monitored the janitors in all the facilities.

"The new system is more efficient," Eaves said. "We have fewer complaints about work not being done."

Another supervisory shift is planned in the bus shelter cleaning program. There is now one supervisor for janitors and the cleaners of bus shelters. Now, each set of employees has its own supervisor. "This has given us more direct control over shelter maintenance," Eaves said.

The fleet replacement program continues to lower the average age of MTC buses. In previous years, MTC buses averaged more than 9 years of service; today that number is 8.3 years. Last year, the MTC purchased 107 M.A.N. buses and rehabilitated 140 old buses. We are in the process of purchasing an additional 125-40' buses. Later this year we will begin the purchase of an additional 100-40' and 25 articulated buses. This will bring the average fleet age down to less than 6 years.

The division also made plans to replace Nicollet Garage in south Minneapolis. After the federal government approved \$8.4 million to pay for most of the cost of a new facility, design work needed to begin. Construction on the new garage should be complete by 1991.

The first year of the strategic plan also found Engineering and Maintenance starting a preventive maintenance program for MTC buildings.

While the axiom "If it isn't broke, don't fix it" may apply to some things, buildings cannot be one of them. Eaves said Engineering and Facilities will continue its aggressive preventive maintenance program to keep MTC buildings in top condition.



EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Jerry Olson,
Director

Cleanliness is the main focus of the Strategic Plan for the MTC's Equipment Maintenance division as it tries to enhance customer satisfaction.

The division is changing the way it cleans buses. Instead of cleaning every bus from top to bottom every four to six weeks, several cleaning jobs will be done sooner, said Director Jerry Olson.

"I think we'll see cleaner equipment," said Olson. The shift in emphasis occurred during a three-month study in the fall of 1987. A cleaning supervisor has been hired and the new program is set to start in mid-May. To help in the cleaning, eight new cleaners will be hired by the end of 1988.

The movement to white buses continues as Equipment Maintenance will receive and place into service 107 new M.A.N. buses by mid-July. It also is keeping as many of the newer white buses on the street on weekends — about 95 percent of the buses that run weekends should be white, Olson said. And white buses will continue to get special attention when it comes to cosmetic repairs.



"Since the MTC has decided to allocate resources to obtaining white buses, we'll take the dings and dents out of them," Olson said.

The division has also increased the rate at which it replaces seat cushions. The seats in the back of the bus take the most beating through cuts and graffiti, Olson said. That's why all new buses from the rear door back will have fiberglass seats and insert cushions — they're tougher to tear and easier to clean.

In addition to the riding public, bus drivers are customers of the division. "We want to provide the driver with a clean work environment," Olson said.

"Our whole philosophy at Equipment Maintenance is that if you have a good product to market, it will be easier to sell rides," Olson said. "That's why it's important to maintain a nice looking fleet of buses."

HUMAN RESOURCES

Julie Johanson,
Director

In conjunction with the Strategic Plan, Human Resources continued driver training programs and managerial performance improvement.

The training programs, called the Driver Difference, Safety Keys and Stress Management, were designed to improve driver performance which would impact customer relations. Both full-time and part-time drivers can voluntarily take the classes to improve their courtesy/communications skills, safety skills and handling stress. Hundreds of drivers have participated. Through mid-April 866 drivers had completed the Driver Difference, 1,151 had finished Safety Keys and 828 had completed Stress Management.

Customer service is a goal of the plan and that's why the courtesy course Driver Difference will continue to be stressed. "We hope to have every MTC driver through the course by the end of 1988," said Julie Johanson, director of Human Resources.

Steps have been taken in an effort to improve the management of performance of MTC directors, managers and supervisors. Job descriptions were rewritten to include management responsibilities. Performance standards have been developed for directors and managers and as part of the annual review process this year, directors and managers will have their performance reviewed against those standards. The MTC has offered managers several training programs designed to improve management skills.

"We wanted to insure that all managers had clearly defined responsibilities for managing their employees," Johanson said.

"In the future, the division hopes to have performance standards developed for all of our salaried positions within the organization," Johanson said.

"We can all be better at what we do," Johanson said. "If we can each improve our performance then the MTC will be better, both for its riders and employees."

When asked why the emphasis was on managerial and supervisory positions, Johanson said, "If you want to effect positive change in an organization you have to start at the top and work down."



Robert Thompson, Director

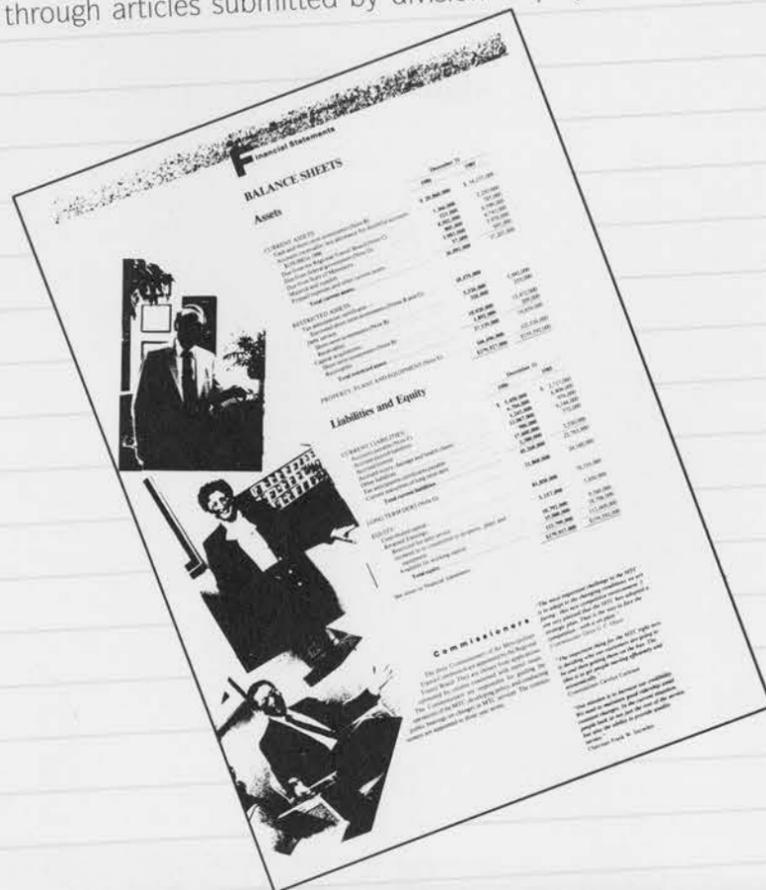
Finance took the lead in simplifying fares for MTC riders as part of its customer service contribution to the Strategic Plan.

Director Robert Thompson said the MTC has proposed a revenue neutral fare simplification plan in its 1988 budget. The agency also submitted the proposal to the Regional Transportation Board for its consideration.

There are now 16 fare denomination possibilities for riders depending on who they are and where they are going. Some folks, senior citizens and students, pay less; and some folks, those who commute through several zones, pay more. It is a complicated system and one that will be simplified to five fare denomination possibilities if Finance's plan is adopted.

"Fare simplification is long overdue," Thompson said. "It'll make our service much easier for the public to understand and for drivers to administer. If people find the MTC easier to understand, they'll be more willing to try it."

Finance also worked on bettering communications. In 1987, it started its own newsletter, "In The Red." The six to eight page publication highlights financial, employee and division news through articles submitted by division employees.



Bob Kissinger, Director

Information Services contributed to the Strategic Plan by increasing communication and cutting costs through innovation.

Installation of the new radio system is near completion as Info Services updated an antiquated system. Also, Ramcutter, a manpower allocation system, is well on its way to completion. The sophisticated system will be able to more efficiently cut blocks into driver runs, thus making MTC manpower allocation more efficient.

A new Metro Mobility computer that recently went on line will improve communications between Mobility providers and the administrative center. The MTC does not provide Mobility transportation but it does provide computer services to private providers.

The new system allows providers to maintain more passenger information, reduces the amount of data entry (and therefore the amount of time spent on the phone with providers) and it will allow the MTC to more closely monitor the number of riders who are using Metro Mobility.

Info Services is also working closely with Finance and Equipment Maintenance to implement the Materials Management System. This system should enhance the MTC's maintenance function by providing up-to-date and accurate information on parts availability and location.



PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Bob LaShomb,
Director

"Employee communications was one of the top priorities of Planning, Development and Communications Division in the first year of the strategic plan. That's why the division conducted two surveys on how to improve communications," said Director Bob LaShomb.

The first survey took advantage of changes in MTC's drug policy. Employees were asked if they understood the MTC's drug implementation policy and how they would like to receive such information about similar policies in the future. The answer: most workers would like to hear MTC news from their immediate supervisor. A second survey conducted later in the year confirmed the findings.

"We decided we needed to train managers in how to improve their communication skills," LaShomb said, "and that's a high priority in 1988".

The division also produced an informational video on the Strategic Plan (narrated by Chief Administrator John Capell) and changed the focus of *On The Line* to include more relevant information on the agency's programs and policies, LaShomb said.

External communication and customer service was enhanced as the Transit Store maintained its presence in downtown Minneapolis. Minnesota Rideshare promoted the I-394 corridor and transit information provided printed translations for four non-English speaking minorities (NESM) in the Twin Cities; Hmong, Lao, Cambodian and Vietnamese.

The Transit Store continues increasing its sales — about 16,000 convenience fares and 20,000 schedules were purchased and distributed in February 1988. That's up almost 30 percent from the same time in 1987.

As construction continues to extend Highway 12 from four lanes to the six-lane I-394 highway, use of Minnesota Rideshare's "Sane Lane" continues at a positive pace. About 2,650 people use the special lane during morning and evening rush hours.

In the NESM program, a video (dubbed in each of the languages) was produced and distributed to local government and social service organizations. Pocket schedules were also translated for the 11 most heavily used routes.



"In 1987, the service planning department made 175 service changes in an effort to improve service to the customer."

The division also continued to look outside the agency's traditional focus to sell services to the private sector. The most recent venture was leasing part of the Gateway Layover Facility in downtown Minneapolis to Trailways for use as a bus depot.

As for the future, LaShomb said he sees bus capacity as one of the major issues facing the agency. "Each bus seat that is empty costs the MTC money but generates no revenue," he said. "We need to continue to increase the number of individuals who use our system by reinvesting non-productive bus miles into productive ones."

And the division has done that. Every month, analysts review ridership data, looking for trends to see if routes are serving customers effectively. In 1987, the service planning department made 175 service changes in an effort to improve service to the customer.



Gordon Olson, Director

Risk Management has continued to cut costs and improve communications since the strategic plan started.

Gordon Olson, director of Risk Management, said the division benefited from a change in a state law pertaining to no-fault insurance.

Under the old law, passengers who were injured in school bus accidents were protected by their own insurance not the bus company's. However, passengers who were injured in MTC accidents were covered by the agency's insurance. This resulted in higher claims payments for the MTC.

The new law allows the MTC to have the same exemption as school bus companies, and thus, lower claims payments. Olson said the savings are "meaningful" but difficult to quantify.

A 1987 internal audit of MTC's present insurance confirmed that the agency could be more aggressive in marketing itself to insurers. So the agency, in cooperation with ARM-TEC, Inc., a Laguna Hills, Calif. company, began emphasizing the MTC's new facilities and modern sprinkler systems. The push resulted in property insurance savings of about \$70,000, Olson said.

The internal report also recommended an evaluation of the agency's exposure. "It confirmed the adequacy and scope of our existing risk management program," Olson said. "We don't appear to have any exposures we haven't already identified."

A variety of safety, training and management programs are now in place to lower accident frequency even more. These efforts will, hopefully, continue the progress which has been made reducing accidents 45% from 1980 to 1987.

Risk Management claim representatives started stress management and negotiating skills courses to help them in communicating with the public. "Most of our claim reps have gone through the courses," Olson said. "They need it. After all, they're in the business of delivering bad news to people."

"The MTC can't pay as much money as many accident victims would like us to pay," Olson said. "So we try to give them the news in the most user friendly manner possible."

Roger Gearhart, Director

Transportation concentrated on improving internal and external communications through the "Nicollet Project," reassigning transit supervisors by geographic areas, training drivers and formalizing driver disciplinary rules.

The "Nicollet Project" has been one of Transportation's key communications efforts, said Director Roger Gearhart. Under the plan, drivers are assigned to a particular transportation manager so that all major interactions a driver has with the MTC are handled by the same person. The plan got its name because it was piloted for a year at the Nicollet Garage before being expanded.

"This is a better way of managing the work force," Gearhart said.

On the streets, Transportation improved driver-management communications by re-turning to the district concept of supervision. Assigning transit supervisors to a particular geographic district was a method of supervision used prior to the implementation of the Transit Control radio system. Transportation returned to district supervision because it enhances the ability of drivers and supervisors to communicate with each other, Gearhart said.

Transportation knows that to the riding public, the driver is the MTC. That's why it is helping drivers be the best they can be. In cooperation with Human Resources, the division is training drivers in three courses: Safety Keys, Driver Difference (a courtesy/customer service course) and Stress Management. Through mid-April, 82 percent of the drivers had completed Safety Keys, 62 percent had finished Driver Difference and 59 percent had finished Stress Management.

"We hope to have almost everyone through Driver Difference by the end of 1988 because customer service is one of the goals of the plan," Gearhart said.

Safety was also a top priority as the division's Driver Recognition program and the Roadeo continued. Last year, the highest percentage of drivers were honored in the recognition program since it began in 1983. Of the 431 drivers recognized, 77 earned the master driver award for five years of outstanding service. The Roadeo also continued; 1988 will be the fourteenth year drivers will have a chance to show off their safety skills.

And when it comes to safety, the division is working with the MTC's Safety section to change the way it analyzes accidents. Beginning July 1, an accident will no longer be classified as chargeable or non-chargeable. Instead, it will simply be viewed as an accident. This will allow Transportation management to talk to drivers about their safety records in a less threatening manner and ultimately improve overall driver safety.



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C.F. D.C.

John Capell began with a discussion of the Strategic Plan developed by the MTC as it relates to budget development; current and proposed.

Chairman Perouch discussed the revenue picture in terms of shares from property taxes, fares, state and federal funds.

Council member DeVries asked the members of the Board and Commission to respond to the Council staff position comments relating to the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority that will be presented to the Metro Systems on August 23, 1988.
Meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

Mears Park Centre
230 East Fifth Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101
292-8789

DATE: August 9, 1988
TO: Policy Committee
FROM: Howard Blin, Planner *HB*
SUBJECT: Review of Hennepin County Comprehensive LRT System Plan *gt*

SUMMARY

This memorandum presents staff comments on the Hennepin County Comprehensive LRT System Plan. Board action to approve these comments is requested for submittal to the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the Minnesota Legislature.

BACKGROUND

The 1987 Legislature required the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) to develop a comprehensive system plan prior to any light rail implementation. Specifically, the legislature required the county to consider at least three corridors in developing the plan. In addition, the ridership potential, development costs and public benefit of LRT implementation were to be considered for each corridor. This plan was to be submitted to the legislature by July 1, 1988. Subsequent legislation also called for review of regional rail authority light rail plans by the Regional Transit Board and Metropolitan Council.

The HCRRA began work on the plan in September 1987 and submitted the adopted document by the July 1, 1988, deadline. In developing the plan, the County used a process involving extensive public participation including corridor, technical and intergovernmental advisory committees. These committees provided the County with recommendations on specific alignments within each corridor as well as land use and financing alternatives.

As required, the HCRRA submitted its plan to the RTB and Metropolitan Council for review. The RTB's review of the plan has included a presentation by HCRRA staff, a joint public meeting with the Metropolitan Council, and discussion at both the Policy and LRT Ad Hoc Committees. In addition, staff have been involved in discussion of the plan by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Transportation Advisory Board's (TAB) LRT Task Force. The recommendations of these committees are attached.

PLAN OVERVIEW

The plan, which was previously distributed to members of the board, contains the following key elements:

- o Design and Service Standards and Policies - This includes a service philosophy which focuses service on downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota and consideration of alignments providing relatively fast travel speeds to these areas so as to make LRT competitive with the private automobile. The plan also outlines system design standards and recommends implementation of conventional light rail technology. In addition, the plan discusses design and operating standards such as track, vehicles, hours and frequency of service and fare collection methods.
- o Alignments - The plan proposes implementing light rail in five corridors: Northwest, University, Hiawatha, South, and Southwest. The initial Stage I implementation plan calls for 29.1 miles of LRT to be constructed within six to eight years. Stage I would involve construction of segments in all five corridors with an estimated total cost of \$497 million in current dollars. The Twenty-Year Plan proposes an LRT system totaling 50.8 miles with an additional cost estimated at \$328 million in current dollars.

Additionally, the plan proposes a joint study with Anoka County of the Northeast Corridor for possible implementation in the 20-Year Plan.

- o Financing - Funding sources are identified for 64 percent of Stage I costs. These include a county property tax levy of 1 mill, utilization of 30 percent of MVET funding available for metropolitan area transit, and use of tax increment financing for station construction. Sources of the additional 36 percent in required funding are not identified.
- o Implementation Alternatives - Various alternatives for system construction are proposed, including traditional bid letting, design/build, turnkey, and super turnkey. All are proposed for further investigation during preliminary engineering. The plan recommends operation of the system by the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC).

DISCUSSION

The HCRRA is to be commended both for developing the plan over a relatively short period of time and for the degree of public involvement throughout the planning process. The process followed by the County has contributed greatly toward a better public understanding of LRT and a heightened awareness of light rail as an element in improving public transit throughout the region.

The plan essentially presents a generalized program for light rail implementation within the county. It is expected that more detailed analysis and recommendations will be part of the preliminary engineering phase of planning and design which is expected to commence in the near future.

In keeping with the RTB's roles and responsibilities, review of the Hennepin County Plan focuses on LRT in the regional context. The primary regional transit issues which must be considered include:

- o How the system proposed in the County plan correlates with established regional priorities for transit capital and service improvements.
- o The financial impacts of LRT capital and operating costs on the existing transit system.
- o The degree to which transit dependents are served by the system.
- o Handicapped accessibility.
- o Responsibility for regional coordination of LRT development.

Of particular importance is the issue of regional coordination, specifically coordination with planning and implementation of other regional rail authorities and integration of LRT into the existing regional transit system. Since a Hennepin County system would form the largest part of a regional LRT system, the HCRRA plan must be reviewed from a regional perspective. Failure to develop a uniform regional LRT system is not only likely to increase total implementation costs, but also long-term operating costs. Similarly, since an LRT system will be integrated into the existing bus network, the impact of LRT on bus operations and funding must be considered so as not to negatively impact the ability to provide quality transit service to all areas of the region.

For the most part, comments on the plan relate to issues requiring further study during preliminary engineering. The RTB will continue to participate in HCRRA planning efforts as preliminary engineering progresses. To assist in the continuing review of LRT planning, the RTB has formed an advisory panel consisting of individuals with experience in constructing and operating LRT systems throughout the nation. It is anticipated that the comments of this panel will be made available to the HCRRA and others throughout the preliminary engineering process.

This review covers four general areas of the plan: financing, system design, alignments, and operation. For each, a brief description of the issue involved is presented, together with a recommended comment.

I. Financing

1. The HCRRA proposes utilizing 30 percent of MVET funds allocated to metro area transit to fund LRT capital costs. As proposed, this would generate approximately \$4.2 million annually, representing 14 percent of the cost of constructing the Stage I system.

Use of MVET funding for LRT capital costs must be considered in relation to the region's ability to fund existing and future transit needs. MVET funds have previously been identified by the RTB to support transit operating costs for a range of regional transit programs including regular route service, Metro Mobility and the New Transit Services Program. When the additional burden of funding LRT operating costs is added to these existing needs, use of current levels of MVET funding for purposes other than financing transit operating costs becomes problematic.

RTB Comment: The HCRRA should continue to explore the financing plan in greater detail during preliminary engineering. Use of MVET and other federal, state and regional transit funding should be coordinated by the RTB.

2. The plan identifies financing for only 64 percent of the \$497 million cost of the Stage I system. Sources of funding for the remaining 36 percent are not identified. If MVET funds are excluded, the unfunded amount increases to 50 percent of the total cost. The HCRRA should determine from what sources it intends to seek funding for this remaining amount or, if funding is not available, the impact this would have on Phase I implementation.

RTB Comment: During preliminary engineering, the sources of funding for the total cost of Stage I implementation should be further developed and presented. It would also be appropriate for the HCRRA to discuss the impact on Stage I implementation if funding for the total cost is not available.

II. System Design

3. Hennepin County is likely to be the first rail authority to develop detailed standards for items such as track and roadbed, power supply systems, vehicles, stations, etc. These standards will shape the decisions of other rail authorities. To ensure a uniform regional system, coordination with the RTB, Metropolitan Council, and other rail authorities is recommended.

RTB Comment: The HCRRA should provide for review of design standards developed during preliminary engineering by the RTB, Metropolitan Council, and other regional rail authorities.

4. The plan does not mention the involvement of the operator in system development. Experience in other areas which have implemented LRT has shown that long-term operational problems can be minimized by involving the operator in all aspects of system design and construction.

RTB Comment: The MTC, the recommended system operator, should be involved in all aspects of preliminary engineering.

5. Various means of providing handicapped accessibility have been used in other systems. The HCRRA plan reviews three basic options for handicapped accessibility; low platforms with lifts, high platforms, and low floor vehicles. The plan calls for this issue to be resolved during preliminary engineering. As with other design standards, in order to ensure uniformity throughout the region, the means of providing handicapped accessibility should be reviewed by the RTB, Metropolitan Council, system operator, other rail authorities, and organizations representing the disabled community. The RTB's Transportation Handicapped Advisory Committee might be a forum for review of issues related to accessibility.

RTB Comment: Design of handicapped accessibility to the system should be reviewed during preliminary engineering by the RTB, Metropolitan Council, system operator, organizations representing the disabled community, and other regional rail authorities.

III. Alignments

6. The plan proposes a multiple corridor system rather than a system with fewer corridors which are longer in length. This approach appears to be the most cost effective and is likely to serve the most transit riders at the lowest cost.

RTB Comment: The RTB supports the multi-corridor approach presented in the plan.

7. Construction of a tunnel through downtown Minneapolis and along the South Corridor to 29th and Nicollet would add an estimated cost of \$70 to \$80 million to the entire system. The issue of a tunnel has been extensively debated during development of the plan. Given this, the advantages and disadvantages of this approach should be further explored during preliminary engineering. Issues which should be addressed include estimates of ridership with downtown and through-downtown destinations, and differences in travel time for both types of trips with surface and tunnel alignments.

RTB Comment: The issue of tunnel versus surface routing through downtown Minneapolis and along the South Corridor should be further explored during preliminary engineering.

8. Ridership estimates for each corridor are provided in the plan for the Stage I and the 20-year system. These estimates are presented in relatively broad ranges. The HCRRA is proposing to further refine these estimates during preliminary engineering.

RTB Comment: The HCRRA is encouraged to further refine ridership estimates during preliminary engineering for all corridors. This should include estimates of the number of passengers not

currently using transit that the LRT system will attract and the numbers of passengers transferring from the feeder buses to LRT. This data will allow more accurate projections of system operating costs.

9. The Stage I plan shows termination of the University Connector at Oak and Washington Streets in Southeast Minneapolis. Extension of this corridor to the east Hennepin County line where connection could be made to the Midway Corridor alignment selected by Ramsey County should be included in the Stage I plan. Cost estimates for this segment should be included in the plan and preliminary engineering conducted to ensure coordination with Ramsey County plans.

RTB Comment: The University Corridor has been identified in the Metropolitan Council's Long Range Transit Analysis as having top priority for LRT implementation. The University Connector alignment should, therefore, be extended to the east Hennepin County line to connect with the selected Ramsey County alignment in the Stage I implementation. Preliminary engineering should also be conducted on this segment.

10. The Hennepin County plan leaves open an alignment decision in the South Corridor pending the outcome of the I-35W environmental impact statement (EIS) currently under development by MN/DOT. In its review of the plan, the TAC recommended the active involvement of the HCRRA in coordinating alignment decisions in this corridor with MN/DOT. As it appears appropriate for Hennepin County to take an active role in examining the LRT alternative for the I-35W EIS, RTB support of this position is recommended. The need for a Nicollet Avenue tunnel should also be examined as part of this process.

RTB Comment: The HCRRA should take an active role in coordination with MN/DOT in examining LRT alternatives as part of the I-35W EIS.

11. The 20-year comprehensive system plan, as proposed, would add approximately 22 miles to the Stage I system. Most of these extensions would be located in areas which are less densely developed than areas through which the Stage I system would run, with projected ridership of far fewer passengers per mile. The TAC has recommended further study of the cost effectiveness of these extensions. Given the RTB's responsibility in funding the long-term operating costs of the system, it is recommended that such an analysis of cost effectiveness be supported.

RTB Comment: Additional study should be conducted on the cost effectiveness of system extensions beyond the Stage I plan.

12. The Northeast Corridor, which provides a connection to Anoka County, is not included in the plan pending the outcome of a joint study between Hennepin and Anoka counties. The Northeast Corridor was included in the second priority category for transit capital investment in the Metropolitan Council study. This process represents a good example of coordination on alignment decisions. If the results of this study prove favorable for implementation of LRT, the corridor should be included in the plan.

RTB Comment: The RTB supports further study of the Northeast Corridor by Hennepin and Anoka counties.

IV. Operations

13. The Stage I plan projects an annual operating deficit of \$8 million. The plan does not identify the source of this funding calling for the deficit to be funded "through the existing MTC/RTB programs and process." The funding of LRT operating costs must be examined in a regional context, particularly as it relates to funding needs for the remainder of the regional transit system.

RTB Comment: The source of additional operating subsidies required for the Hennepin County system should be clearly identified during preliminary engineering. The RTB will evaluate LRT operational funding requirements in the context of overall regional transit needs.

14. The Hennepin County plan recommends system operation by the MTC while leaving open the possibility of at least initial operation by the system contractor under the turnkey or super turnkey approach. This issue needs to be resolved early in the preliminary engineering phase to allow participation in design of the system by the operator. The RTB has supported designating the MTC as the regional LRT operator.

The plan further recommends that the MTC establish an LRT operating division which is separate from existing bus operations. While this approach may have merit, decisions regarding the management structure of LRT operations can best be made by the MTC and RTB.

RTB Comment: The RTB reaffirms its support of the MTC as the LRT operator for the region. The management structure for LRT operations should be determined by the MTC and RTB.

15. The TAC review of the Hennepin County plan cited the need to clarify issues of eventual ownership and control of the Hennepin County system. The RTB shares this concern and encourages the HCRRA to resolve this issue during preliminary engineering.

RTB Comment: Issues concerning eventual ownership and control of the system should be resolved during preliminary engineering.

16. The plan proposes construction of yards and shops at the Coach Yard site in the Hiawatha Corridor. It is unclear whether this facility would be sized to allow use by systems developed by other regional railroad authorities. The feasibility of using this facility for maintenance of the entire regional LRT system should be determined during preliminary engineering.

RTB Comment: Hennepin County should coordinate design of the yards and shops with the other regional rail authorities.

17. In developing the plan, the HCRRA, with the assistance of the MTC, identified potential feeder bus networks for all of the corridors. In each case the proposed feeder network would reduce bus mileage when compared to existing service. Feeder bus planning presents two issues, coordination with the remainder of the regional transit system and level of service to be provided.

The highest level of coordination can be achieved through the active involvement of the RTB and MTC in feeder bus planning during preliminary engineering. This will allow investigation of the impacts of developing a feeder system on total system ridership and operating costs.

Developing a feeder bus system presents an opportunity to improve the delivery of transit service to each of the corridors. This, rather than merely eliminating bus miles, should be the objective of feeder bus planning. Experience in other areas indicates that LRT provides an opportunity to enhance the overall transit system. The feeder bus system outlined in the plan does not appear to include service improvements to any area, focusing instead on savings in bus miles. In further refinement of the feeder bus network during preliminary engineering, the total range of transit needs should be considered.

RTB Comment: The RTB and MTC should be actively involved in feeder bus planning. The objective of this planning effort should be to meet transit needs in the most cost effective manner, rather than merely eliminating existing service.

18. Service standards such as hours and frequency of service are outlined in the plan. These standards will be further developed during preliminary engineering and should be coordinated at the regional level.

RTB Comment: To ensure the optimal level of coordination with the existing system, service standards should be jointly developed with the RTB and MTC.

19. Integration of fares for the LRT system into the fare structure of the remainder of the regional transit system should be clearly defined in preliminary engineering.

RTB Comment: The RTB, which has overall responsibility for transit fare structure, should be involved in discussions relating to LRT fares and will review the recommended fare level and structure for conformance to established fare policies and procedures.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- o The HCRRA has developed a Comprehensive LRT System Plan. The plan has been submitted to the RTB for review and comment.
- o RTB review of the plan has included review by the RTB's LRT Ad Hoc Committee, a public meeting held jointly with the Metropolitan Council, and participation in review of the plan by the TAC and TAB.
- o RTB has completed its review of the HCRRA Comprehensive LRT System Plan focusing primarily on issues of regional coordination.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Transit Board approve the comments on the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority Comprehensive LRT System Plan contained in this memorandum and to transmit them to the HCRRA and to the Minnesota Legislature.

HB:jmo

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
Mears Park Centre
230 East Fifth Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101
292-8789

DATE: August 16, 1988
TO: Regional Transit Board
FROM: Howard Blin, Planner
SUBJECT: Revised Comments on Hennepin County Comprehensive LRT System Plan

Based on the August 15 Policy Committee discussion of the proposed comments on the Hennepin County plan, the following changes and additions are proposed:

(Revise)

II. System Design

3. The system proposed by the HCRRA would utilize conventional light rail technology. Use of proven, "off the shelf" technology is likely to minimize the difficulty in designing and operating the system and is supported.

Hennepin County is likely to be the first rail authority to develop detailed standards for items such as track and roadbed, power supply systems, vehicles, stations, etc. These standards will shape the decisions of other rail authorities. To ensure a uniform regional system, coordination with the RTB, Metropolitan Council, and other rail authorities is recommended.

RTB Comment: The RTB supports the use of proven LRT technologies in developing the system. The HCRRA should provide for review of design standards developed during preliminary engineering by the RTB, Metropolitan Council, and other regional rail authorities.

(Add)

III. Alignments

Under the Stage I plan, the Hiawatha Corridor would terminate at 46th Street East and the Northwest Corridor would terminate at 63rd Avenue North, approximately 0.7 miles south of I-694. Relatively modest extensions of these corridors to the vicinity of the GSA Building in the Hiawatha Corridor and to I-694 in the Northwest Corridor may provide better locations for park-and-ride lots and integration with feeder bus networks. Further study of these extensions during preliminary engineering would allow the most cost effective terminus for each of these corridors to be determined.

RTB Comment: During preliminary engineering, the HCRRA should investigate extension of the Hiawatha Corridor to the vicinity of the GSA Building and the Northwest Corridor to I-694.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
Mears Park Centre, 230 East Fifth Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 Tel. 612 291-6359/TDD 291-0904

DATE: August 3, 1988
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: Proposed Comments on Hennepin County LRT Plan

The TAC focused its comments on four areas that have the greatest impact for regional system planning:

- LRT Design and Service Standards and Policies
- System Definition
- System Financing
- System Operator and Ownership

LRT DESIGN AND SERVICE STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Design and service standards that affect other regional railroad authorities should be agreed upon at a regional level during the early stages of Hennepin County's preliminary engineering

It has been frequently discussed that Hennepin County has an ultimate goal to turn ownership of the entire LRT system to a regional authority. Because of this, and because of the need to have compatibility among all potential lines of a regional LRT system, system design and operation standards should be agreed upon by all potentially affected agencies.

One example of this is the issue of handicapped accessibility. A decision to use high platform stations in Hennepin County, for example, may limit opportunities to use certain alignments in Anoka or Ramsey County.

If a truly regional system is to emerge, closer attention needs to be paid at the onset of planning to ensure compatibility. One way of accomplishing this might be for Hennepin County and the Regional Transit Board to convene an expert panel of LRT designers and operators from around the country to determine the adequacy and reasonableness of the proposed system standards.

The plan should discuss the potential expansion and use of the yards and shops by LRT lines other than those proposed in the plan

Early discussions of the LRT system in Hennepin County included consideration for using the yards and shops for all LRT vehicles in the region. This would involve some kind of cost sharing arrangement by which other regional railroad authorities would contribute to the cost of the yards and shops. The plan should discuss how this coordination would be accomplished.

Some operating standards may be premature and be better determined during preliminary engineering

While it may be necessary to define hours of operation and service frequency for the purpose of making cost estimates, such operational levels of detail may be better made in later stages of planning. Furthermore, operational decisions such as service frequency may be best left to the circumstances of individual corridors.

SYSTEM DEFINITION

The identified "20 Year System" will likely take much longer than 20 years to implement

Since resources are inadequate to bond for construction of even the first stage of the system, it is unlikely that additional funds will be found to build the remaining portions within the identified twenty year time frame. The county should be more realistic in setting expectations for a 20 year system so that other units of government can plan accordingly.

The cost-effectiveness of some of the "second stage" extensions is questionable

The Stage I plan is 29.1 miles long, will cost \$497 million, and carry a conservative estimate of 70,000 daily riders by the year 2010. The second stage will increase the length of the system by 75 percent and the cost by 66 percent, but only generate 25 percent more riders. The plan should discuss the parameters of cost effectiveness in greater detail to demonstrate how the extensions of the first stage system are warranted. Operational experience over an extended period of time should also be used to assess feasibility prior to building beyond Stage I.

Analysis of the potential for connections with other regional railroad authorities' alignments should be included

Connections with other regional railroad authorities' LRT lines needs to be carefully considered. Decisions by Hennepin County can limit the potential routing options of LRT in other counties, such as the possibility of extending the Hiawatha line into Dakota County and the connection of Anoka County's line into downtown Minneapolis. The plan should discuss how options are being maintained and discuss limitations in preliminary engineering so that other regional rail authorities can plan accordingly.

The plan should discuss the potential costs and problems of acquiring and/or using necessary railroad rights-of-way

Although use is being made of railroad alignments, the extent to which the costs and availability of those alignments are considered is unclear. Alternative alignments should be considered in case the rights-of-way are not available, prove too costly, or are found to be contaminated with hazardous wastes.

Hennepin County should coordinate with Mn/DOT on the I-35W corridor

The plan appears to leave the alignment decision in the South Corridor to the environmental impact statement being conducted by Mn/DOT for I-35W. The regional railroad authority, as the responsible agency for LRT implementation in the corridor, should be taking a more active role in that decision by participating closely with Mn/DOT in the study. Given the importance of the corridor for transit, the potential difficulty of using the I-35W right-of-way, and the need to time the transit and highway improvements, this coordination deserves a higher level of attention by the county during the EIS preparation.

FINANCING

No funding sources should be contemplated that would result in a diversion of traditional highway funding sources

The state and metropolitan area have inadequate funding available to meet highway needs. This problem should not be exacerbated by diverting highway funds to LRT development or by increasing traditional highway funding sources, such as the gasoline tax, and using the increase for LRT.

Funding for shortfalls or extensions should be generated from benefit-based sources

The recommendations of the Finance Advisory Committee (page C-29 of the plan) include consideration of several sources. The Technical Advisory Committee supports the use of benefit assessments on property or transit impact fees, and opposes the use of fiscal disparities or a share of gasoline taxes.

The plan should contain more information on operating costs and revenues

The plan contains very little information on the operating cost implications of the LRT proposal. Operating costs should include not only the LRT line itself, but the necessary feeder system as well. The financial implications of savings to the existing bus system should be included. Transit operating costs in each corridor should carefully consider the net benefits and costs to the regional transit system if the region is going to be asked to pay for operating subsidies.

Other jurisdictions should have decision-making authority reflecting their participation in system costs

If the state, region, RTB or local communities are asked to participate in the cost of the system, they should have a strong, ongoing role in making decisions for the planning, construction and operation of the system. For example, if regional transit funds are used, the region should have a significant role in determining how those funds are used.

A reduced Stage I system should be developed in case the anticipated funds are not obtained

The Stage I plan identifies \$497 million in LRT development costs and only identifies possible funding sources totalling \$320 million. A contingency plan showing lower levels of development should be identified to address the possibility that not all of the anticipated funds can be obtained.

The motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) should be available to all regional railroad authorities

The plan assumes that a so-called 30/30 LRT-dedicated transfer of MVET is given entirely to Hennepin County for an extended period of time. Current legislation, based on the 30/30 concept, does not ensure the ongoing availability of this source. It further restricts any one regional railroad authority to no more than 60 percent of those funds in recognition of the legitimate needs of other regional railroad authorities in LRT development. If this non-local funding source is to be used for LRT development, the decisions on expenditure should be made by all appropriate units of government. If the 30/30 LRT-dedicated MVET source became permanently available, and the 60 percent limitation is maintained, Hennepin County would experience an additional shortfall of at least \$28 million, about 6 percent of system costs.

SYSTEM OWNERSHIP/OPERATIONS

The issue of system ownership needs to be developed in greater detail, particularly in light of the possible "turnkey" implementation

The issue of who owns the facilities needs to be considered in greater detail. A number of questions need to be answered. If the system is to be given to the MTC, would this be accomplished by deeding real estate? Would the region be asked to purchase Hennepin County's share? If a "turnkey" implementation option is used, would the private consortium be the owner of the facilities? How would turnkey ownership affect the MTC's ability to operate the system? Would the county own a regional-level facility, much as it did with CSAH 62 and CSAH 18? Such questions need to be answered in consultation with appropriate agencies prior to system construction.

The estimated \$8 million operating deficit is significantly larger than savings in bus costs, with no existing means for the RTB to absorb the additional deficit

The plan includes an estimated \$8 million operating subsidy which, as discussed earlier, may be a low estimate. The savings in bus operating miles is stated as approximately 5200 miles per day, which would translate into about \$5 million, leaving about \$3 million in additional operating subsidy to be absorbed by the RTB. It would be impossible absorb this 5 percent increase in regular route subsidy levels without adversely affecting transit service to the remainder of the region.

In addition, it is not clear from the plan if the estimated revenues are based on the high or low end of the ridership range, or if it considers "opening day" as opposed to year 2010 forecast levels. The difference between most optimistic and most conservative scenarios could result in \$6 - \$7 million in additional operating deficits.

The issue of financing operating deficits should be resolved prior to construction through consultation with appropriate agencies.

SW250A

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
Mears Park Centre, 230 East Fifth Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

DATE: August 8, 1988
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: LRT Task Force
SUBJECT: Questions Concerning the Comprehensive LRT System Plan for Hennepin County

The LRT Task Force held two meetings to review the Comprehensive LRT Plan for Hennepin County. The Task Force found that the plan poses a number of region-wide questions which need further attention.

For the purposes of this document, they have been grouped into five categories; system definition, financial matters, operational matters, environmental, and energy. The comments follow.

System Definition

1. Does the plan provide for the logical extension of the system into adjacent counties? Is more information needed on this point?
2. What is the potential impact of the system on the metropolitan growth pattern?
3. Is the intent to primarily serve suburban commuters, high density central city development, or both?
4. Given the potential funding shortfalls identified in the Financial Plan, should tunnel construction be delayed to Stage II or possibly eliminated altogether?
5. Should an LRT alignment be considered in a freeway/interstate right-of-way? What are the implications of doing so, in terms of such items: cost, ridership, transit compatibility, neighborhood impacts, metropolitan development.
6. From the regional perspective, what will be the impact on the system if other county regional railroad authorities are unable to advance segments in their counties?
7. What is the potential impact of the system on the existing or future commercial airport facilities?

Financial Matters

1. Stage I of the Plan has a funding shortfall of \$177 million or 36 percent of the cost. Will additional state or regional funds beyond those listed in the plan be requested for some or all of these dollars?
2. A major provision of the financial plan calls for Hennepin County to receive annually, 30 percent of the metropolitan share of MVET transit funds for LRT. Is this appropriate? What will other counties get? How does it relate to overall regional transit priorities? Should funding for LRT be considered separately from other transit funding? Should the Regional Transit Board determine the allocation of the Region's MVET transit funds? Should the Metropolitan Council's role be to commit on the allocation of the MVET transit fund or should it be greater than that?
3. Should the size of the program be scaled back or the schedule extended to more closely relate to identified and available resources?
4. Would the construction of the Stage I plan over the proposed eight year period impact the regions highway and transit funding resources?

Operational Matters

1. The plan recommends the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) as the system operator. Should this be a decision of the Regional Transit Board? Should a precondition for accepting the operating responsibilities for LRT be established prior to system construction?
2. Is more information needed on the impact the LRT system will have on the existing transit system? including:
 - existing system-wide service of the MTC
 - private transit systems
 - feeder bus system needs
 - potential operating losses
 - rideshare/carpool programs
 - Metro Mobility/service to the elderly and handicapped community

Environmental

1. Are there environmental issues that need to be addressed (i.e., air quality)?

Energy

1. Are there issues relative to energy consumption that need to be addressed?