



Minnesota Regional Transit  
Board: Records.

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**REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD**  
Mears Park Centre, 230 East 5th Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101  
612/229-2700

**Meeting of the  
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD  
Mears Park Centre Chambers  
January 4, 1993  
4 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

- A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
- B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- C. REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**
  - 1. Election of Board Officers
- D. CHAIR'S REPORT**
- E. MEMBERS' REPORTS**
- F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
- G. REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**
  - 1. Selection of State and Federal Government Representatives
  - 2. Approval of 1993 Regional Transit Board Legislative Agenda
- H. OTHER BUSINESS**
- I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Michael J. Ehrlichmann  
Chair**

12/29/92  
mff



REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD  
Mears Park Centre, 230 East 5th Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD  
January 4, 1993**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael J. Ehrlichmann, Chair; Doris Caranicas; Sharon Feess; Ruth Franklin; Val M. Higgins; Sandra Hilary; Ruby Hunt; Tom Sather; Don Scheel; Tom Workman

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Maryann Campo

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Robertson, Larkin, Hoffman, Daly & Lindgren, Ltd.; Allyson Hartle, Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC); George Bentley, Arnie Entzel, Amalgamated Transit Union; Jerry Soderberg, Hessein, McKasy & Soderberg; Gregory L. Andrews, Dale Ulrich, Howard Blin, Mary Fitzgerald, RTB staff

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Hunt requested that the agenda be amended to include discussion of the board's bylaws and issues that are discussed at the board without going through the appropriate committee. She questioned whether the board's approval of additional expenses for the chair was appropriate. Sather moved and Workman seconded approval of the agenda with those amendments. The motion carried unanimously.

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Franklin presented the recommendations of the ad hoc Nomination Committee. She moved and Sather seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board elect the following slate of officers for 1993:

Ruth Franklin, Vice Chair  
Sharon Feess, Treasurer  
Mary Fitzgerald, Secretary

The motion was unanimously approved.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Andrews noted the memorandum from Mike Kuehn, dated January 4, 1993, regarding the extension of the deadline for application for appointment to the Regional Transit

Board and the schedule and process that will be followed by the Metropolitan Council in making those appointments. (Sather was excused.)

**REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Selection of State and Federal Government Representatives**

Committee Chair Workman said the task force of the Legislative Committee met before this meeting and interviewed four competing firms. It was the choice of the committee to recommend the firm of O'Connor and Hannan for state representation and delay selection of the federal representative. He moved and Ehrlichmann seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to negotiate and enter into a contract with the firm of O'Connor and Hannan for state legislative representation.

Hunt said the Statement of Interest required the firm to be capable of providing state and federal representation. Higgins moved that the motion be amended to state that the action on the federal representation will be deferred until a later date, which would tie into the Request for Proposal (RFP).

Hunt moved and Scheel seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board delay selection of the legislative representative until the appointment of the board chair.

Hunt said it is incumbent on this board to make the chair a part of this action. She urged that the new chair's point of view be taken into account. Workman said the task force discussed those questions and felt that with the amount of legislation that will be introduced and the possibility that eight new board members will be appointed in March, the decision should be made as soon as possible. The motion failed (Ehrlichmann, Caranicas; Feess, Franklin, Higgins, Hilary, Scheel, Workman voted "no.")

Responding to Caranicas' question, Ehrlichmann said the legal representation by Larkin, Hoffman, Daly, and Lindgren is a separate issue.

Feess offered a friendly amendment to Higgins' motion that the federal contract be deferred until a later date. Caranicas said that still leaves the question about initially putting out an RFP calling for the same firm to provide both federal and state representation. Workman said it is worthwhile for a public body to bid out its business. Larkin Hoffman did not bid. Hunt said she is concerned about the process, but commended Workman for trying to complete something he started. Asking for a Statement of Interest is not the same as an RFP. A Statement of Interest helps in the preparation of a formal RFP. She asked if the board is eliminating part of the process or if the Statement of Interest is the same as an RFP and, if it is, why the board did not issue an RFP.

Franklin expressed concern about voting for state but not federal representation since the RFP called for both, but she will support the selection of O'Connor and Hannan because it is important that someone be retained on the state level.

In response to Hilary's question, Robertson said in a formal contracting process there is an interim step. He is not sure what term was used but the committee thought it was seeking a Request for Proposals. Higgins said the issue of conflicts of interest was

included, and he thought it was an RFP. The respondents also thought it was an RFP because they stated their conflicts.

Hilary said this will be her last meeting, but it is important to move forward because of the questions about how the board will be constituted. She asked why the task force decided to delay selection of a federal representative. Workman said the contract with Dorsey and Whitney was cancelled last year because it was not needed. The members were comfortable with leaving it out at this time, although he prefers that the same firm provide state and federal representation.

Ehrlichmann distributed Campo's memorandum stating that in order to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, she would not participate in the interviews or vote on the selection of the legislative representative. After consulting with an attorney, she had asked to be excused from this meeting. Vote was taken on the motion to select O'Connor and Hannan. The motion carried (Hunt and Scheel voted "no." Campo and Sather were absent).

### **Approval of 1993 Regional Transit Board Legislative Agenda**

Workman moved and Caranicas seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board approve the following legislative agenda:

#### **1. Funding**

Obtaining a dedicated, growth-oriented source of transit operating revenues continues to be the board's top priority for the 1993 session:

- A. Seek extension of the general sales tax to purchase of gas at retail level and in statute dedicate proceeds to transit.
- B. Seek legislative exemption for public transit from the five-percent budget cuts in the governor's 1993 proposed budget.
- C. Support the Minnesota Public Transit Association's "Transit Initiative Fund" to implement coordinated transit and new technology demonstrations within Minnesota, with a single project limit, and administered by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

#### **2. Policy**

- A. Seek priority fuel status for all providers of public transit through state emergency set-aside program to ensure that transit operations will be able to obtain sufficient fuel to operate during periods of emergency.
- B. Restrict parking in transit loading and unloading zones to ensure access to transit by persons with disabilities at regular transit stops (80-foot zone).
- C. Grant right-of-way to buses to enter flow of traffic after loading or disembarking passengers.

### 3. Study Committees

- A. Travel Demand Management: The board will appoint an interim study committee to recommend what legislation, if any, is needed to accomplish a reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips during peak hours. A report from this committee will be presented to the board's Policy Committee in September 1993.
- B. Snow Removal: The Board will appoint a committee to study the issue of snow removal at bus stops. A report, due to the Policy Committee in September 1993, would identify the responsible party and funding necessary to remove snow. Options with pros and cons should be included with the committee recommendation.

The motion was unanimously approved.

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### Regional Transit Board Bylaws and Procedures

Hunt questioned the procedure followed at the board's December 28 meeting and asked what the board's policies are on the conduct of business. She referred to the Bylaws' requirements for the agenda and the order of business. Her concerns relate to the number of items proposed by the chair at that meeting that were not on the agenda. She asked for comment from other members. Ehrlichmann said the board operates under the Bylaws and Roberts' Rules of Order. The board can act on any motion offered by any member. Hunt said the Bylaws say the purpose of the standing committees is to give consideration to all matters coming before the board except Consent List items and the Bylaws should prevail.

Ehrlichmann suggested that a committee be appointed to review the Bylaws. Hunt said her experience serving on many boards indicates that members do not want matters dropped on them and they want background information. The Ramsey County Board's attorney does not allow anything on the agenda that has not been published in the meeting notice. When a body takes up an item that was not published it is not providing an opportunity to the public to be heard. According to the Open Meeting Law, items should be included on the published agenda unless they are emergencies. Ehrlichmann said he has been on public bodies for many years and the question comes down to how "emergency" is defined. Hilary said it was appropriate that the new issues introduced at the December 28 meeting were referred to committee, but it would not have been right to vote on policy. Hunt suggested that members look at the procedures and determine if they are appropriate.

Ehrlichmann moved that members form a committee to examine the Bylaws and bring recommended changes to the board. Hilary said there was no notice published. Hunt offered and Scheel seconded a substitute motion:

That the new Regional Transit Board chair and board consider revising and updating the Regional Transit Board Bylaws.

The Bylaws are outdated and should incorporate recent regulations concerning openness in government. Franklin said she was glad Member Hunt raised this issue. It is her understanding that issues do not come before the board unless they have gone through committee or did not need committee review. Hunt said it is the responsibility of legal counsel to ensure that the board does not get into these situations. Robertson said

he would be glad to discuss this with the board and decide how to proceed. The substitute motion was unanimously approved.

Chair's Car Allowance

Regarding the chair's additional expense allowance, Hunt asked if the board has the authority to approve it. Robertson said the Bylaws state that the expense allowance of the chair may not exceed that allowance of the chair of the Metropolitan Council. He asked for time to do a comparison and report back to the board. Ehrlichmann said in effect the previous chair was in violation because he received a car and reimbursement. Responding to Hilary's question on procedure, Robertson said the board can adopt a motion to reconsider. Higgins moved and Hilary seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board suspend its rules.

The motion carried (Ehrlichmann abstained). Hunt said the attorney should have time to study the issue; the question is not the amount, but the board's legal authority to grant the additional reimbursement.

Higgins moved and Hilary seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board confirm the automobile reimbursement granted to the chair at the December 28, 1992 meeting.

The motion carried (Ehrlichmann abstained).

Hunt distributed a summary of the meeting on December 29 of the Metropolitan Legislative Strategy Work Group, which provides insight into key issues. Hilary said it is frustrating that the board has no real authority.

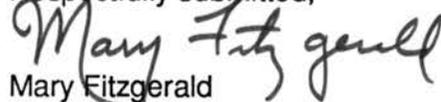
Caranicas said this is the last meeting for Members Scheel and Workman. She thanked them for their contributions and wished them success in the future.

Hilary thanked Hunt for her memo on governance. It helped focus on whether State Health and Human Services should take over responsibility for Metro Mobility. Paratransit is a social service need. Hunt said everyone should be encouraged to make any recommendations they feel are appropriate to Rep. Mariani's committee. She had heard that the disability groups plan to ask for a state-wide agency to deliver paratransit service. Ehrlichmann said the key to the future of people with disabilities is integration, not separation.

There being no other business, Workman moved and Caranicas seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and accurate record of the Regional Transit Board's meeting of January 4, 1993.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Mary Fitzgerald  
Secretary

Approved by the Regional Transit Board on this first day of February 1993.



REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD  
Mears Park Centre, 230 East 5th Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101  
229-2700

DATE: December 28, 1992  
TO: Board Members  
FROM: Mary Fitzgerald *M.F.*  
SUBJECT: Report of the Nominating Committee

Board members Ruth Franklin, Sharon Feess, and Val Higgins were appointed to the ad hoc Nominating Committee on December 7. They have conferred and made the following recommendation to the board:

That the Regional Transit Board elect the following slate of officers for 1993:

Ruth Franklin, Vice Chair  
Sharon Feess, Treasurer  
Mary Fitzgerald, Secretary

mff  
Encl.

*hml*  
*1/7*

**REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD**

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

**DATE:** December 31, 1992  
**TO:** Greg Andrews  
**FROM:** Maryann Campo

The Regional Transit Board must have a presence at the Legislature the day it convenes. The agency is in the process of arranging interviews for potential representation. An important requirement discussed at length has been that the firm selected must not have a conflict of interest.

In the past, as well as currently, I have worked as an independent contractor (lobbyist) with some of the firms being considered; as well as the firm currently holding the contract.

While I do not have present contracts with any of the bidding firms and therefore; not having a conflict of interest, in order to avoid even the appearance of a current or future conflict, it is my intention to not participate in the interviews and excuse myself from voting.

cc: Michael Erhlichmann  
Sherry Munyon  
Tom Workman

12/16/92

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

ROLL CALL AND ATTENDANCE SHEET

DATE: Jan 4, 1993

Member Name	Present	Vote							
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ISSUE

Mike Ehrlichmann

✓

Maryann Campo

Doris Caranicas

✓

Sharon Feess

✓

Ruth Franklin

✓

Val M. Higgins

✓

Sandra Hilary

✓

Ruby Hunt

✓

Tom Sather

✓

Don Scheel

✓

Tom Workman

✓

Visitors

Staff

Entzel

du, gla, hb

Bentley

A. Hartzel

J. Soderberg

M. Robertson

mff

## REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

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

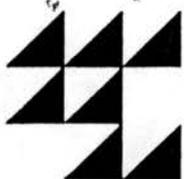
**DATE:** January 4, 1993  
**TO:** Members of the Regional Transit Board  
**FROM:** Mike Kuehn, Community Relations Coordinator *MK*  
**SUBJECT:** RTB Appointment Process

I have spoken with the Metropolitan Council and the Secretary of State's Office today regarding the RTB appointment process. The Metropolitan Council is requesting that persons seeking appointment should submit their application to the Secretary of State's Office no later than January 22, 1993 (although the Secretary of State's Office has stated that the deadline is January 26, 1993). The public meetings to interview applicants have not yet been scheduled, but they are expected to be conducted the first two weeks of February. All persons submitting applications will be notified by the Metropolitan Council as to when these interviews will be scheduled.

Applications may be obtained by contacting the Secretary of State's Office at 297-5845. The public meetings conducted by the Metropolitan Council will be coordinated by Janey Gohl at 291-6394 so questions regarding the public meetings should be directed to her.

Attached is a recent press release sent out by the Metropolitan Council to solicit applicants and information on the appointments released today by the Secretary of State's Office.

Attachments



**METROPOLITAN  
COUNCIL**

*Mears Park Centre, 230 East Fifth Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101*

# NEWS

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Members Sought for Regional  
Transit Board, Waste Control Commission

Ken Reddick  
291-6422  
Friday,  
Dec. 18, 1992

The Metropolitan Council is seeking candidates for appointment to the Regional Transit Board (RTB) and the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission (MWCC). The Council will appoint a total of 10 members to the two agencies, to serve four-year terms.

Members must live in the district or precinct they represent. Terms for outgoing members expire Jan. 1, 1993.

RTB appointments are for Precincts A, B, C, D, G and H. Precinct A is for St. Paul, excluding Highland Park. Precinct B includes northern Ramsey County, Lino Lakes and Centerville in Anoka County, and northern Washington County (from Mahtomedi, Grant Twp. and Stillwater north).

Precinct C is south Minneapolis, including downtown. Precinct D includes north Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park and Edina.

Precinct G includes all of Scott and Carver Counties, plus Burnsville, Lakeville, Bloomington and Richfield; Precinct H is made up of the rest of Dakota County and southern Washington County.

-more-

(In addition to the Council's appointments, the governor will appoint the chair and a person from the seven-county region with a disability to the RTB.)

The 11-member RTB is responsible for: short- and mid-range transit planning; coordinating and administering transit services, such as Metro Mobility and a paratransit service for elderly people and people with disabilities; reviewing budgets of transit operators; and exploring innovative transit alternatives. Six of the board's members are to be elected officials.

MWCC appointments are for districts E, F, G and H. District E is for Anoka County (except Lino Lakes and Centerville), plus Dayton, Champlin, Maple Grove and Plymouth. District F includes Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Edina, Bloomington and Richfield.

District G includes the rest of western Hennepin County, all of Scott County, plus Burnsville and Lakeville. District H includes the rest of Dakota County, plus southern Washington County (from Oakdale, Lake Elmo, Baytown and Oak Park Heights south).

The nine-member commission plans, constructs and operates the region's wastewater collection and treatment system.

The RTB and MWCC each meet twice monthly at Mears Park Centre in downtown St. Paul, in addition to committee meetings. Members receive \$50 per diem payments for official activities plus reimbursement for certain expenses.

For an application, call Paula Biever at the Minnesota

Secretary of State's Office at 297-5845. Or, write: Secretary of State, Open Appointments, 180 State Office Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55155. For more information about the agencies, call Sandi Lindstrom at the Council at 291-6390. The deadline to submit applications to the Secretary of State is Friday, Jan. 22.



Secretary of State  
Open Appointments  
180 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1299  
(612)297-5845

# OPEN APPOINTMENTS

FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE ON STATE AGENCIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 4, 1993

Secretary of State Joan Anderson Growe is seeking applications for volunteer service on state agencies. In accordance with the Minnesota Open Appointments Law, application forms may be obtained from and submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State, 180 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155-1299; (612) 297-5845, or in person at Room 174 of the State Office Building. Current vacancies are listed below. Additional information about each agency, its functions, meeting schedule, address and phone number is included later in this listing. These vacancies will remain open for application through January 26, 1993. Appointing Authorities may also choose to review applications received after that date. Applications are kept on file for a one year period.

The 1992 Annual Compilation and Statistical Report is available from the Minnesota Bookstore. This publication includes a complete listing of state boards and councils that follow the Open Appointments process, descriptions of these agencies and their memberships, and statistical information about appointments and vacancies made during the 1992 fiscal year. The 1992 Annual Compilation also indicates members with terms scheduled to end in January 1993. Many of these positions may still be open for application. The cost of the 1992 Annual Compilation is \$5.50 per copy plus sales tax. There is a \$2.00 charge for mailing per order; an order may include any number of copies. To order copies of the 1992 Annual Compilation please call the Minnesota Bookstore at 297-3000 or 1-800-657-3757.

## REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

Mears Park Centre 230 E. Fifth St., St. Paul, MN 55101. 612-292-8789.  
Minnesota Statutes 473.373.

**APPOINTING AUTHORITY:** Governor, Metropolitan Council.  
**COMPENSATION:** \$50 per diem plus expenses.

The board coordinates transit programs, conducts transit research and evaluation, and implements short to mid-range planning consistent with the long-range transit plans of the Metropolitan Council.

The board consists of eleven members, including eight members appointed by the Metropolitan Council, one from each metropolitan agency district, six of the eight members are to be elected city, town, or county officials; three members appointed by the governor, including a chair, one

person age 65 or older, and one person with a disability. Appointments are with the advice and consent of the senate.

Members must file with the Ethical Practices Board. Meetings at 4:00 every 1st and 3rd Monday at Mears Park Centre.

## REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

Two vacancies: One member from District H, must be an elected official - includes the communities of Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Eagan, Apple Valley, Rosemount, Hastings, Farmington, Woodbury, Cottage Grove, Afton, Marine on the St. Croix, Baytown, Lake Elmo, Oakdale, St. Paul Park, and all of the townships located in or around these communities. One member from District G, must be an elected official - includes the counties of Carver and Scott, excluding the city of New Prague; that part of the county of Dakota consisting of the cities of Burnsville and Lakeville; and that part of the city of Chanhassen which is in Hennepin county as well as Bloomington and Richfield in Hennepin county.

# REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

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

DATE: December 29, 1992  
TO: Michael J. Ehrlichmann, Chair & RTB Members  
FROM: Sherry Munyon, Deputy Chair  
SUBJECT: Proposed 1993 Legislative Agenda (as adopted by the Legislative Committee at its December 21 & 28, 1992 meetings)

## I. Funding

Obtaining a dedicated, growth oriented source of transit operating revenues continues to be our top priority for the '93 session.

1. Seek extension of the general sales tax to purchase of gas at retail level and statutorily dedicate proceeds to transit.
2. Seek legislative exemption for public transit from the 5% budget cuts in governor's 1993 proposed budget.
3. Support the Minnesota Public Transit Association's "Transit Initiative Fund" to implement coordinated transit and new technology demonstrations within Minnesota, with a single project limit, and administered by MnDOT.

## II. Policy

1. Seek priority fuel status for all providers of public transit through state emergency set-aside program to ensure that transit operations will be able to obtain sufficient fuel to operate during periods of emergency.
2. Restrict parking in transit loading/unloading zones to ensure access to transit by persons with disabilities at regular transit stops (80 foot zone.)
3. Grant right-of-way to buses to enter flow of traffic after loading or disembarking passengers.

## III. Study Committees

1. Travel Demand Management: The Board will appoint an interim study committee to recommend what legislation, if any, is needed to accomplish a reduction of single occupancy vehicle trips during peak hours. The RTB's '92 bill had employer mandates, another option is to require local governments to implement ordinances to obtain SOV trip reductions. A report from this committee will be presented to the RTB Policy Committee in September, 1993.
2. Snow Removal: The Board will appoint a committee to study the issue of snow removal at bus stops; a report due to the Policy Committee in September 1993 which would identify the responsible party and funding necessary to remove snow. Options with pros and cons should be included with the committee recommendation.

# THE REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD:

## BRINGING YOU DEPENDABLE AND AFFORDABLE TRANSIT SERVICE

Mention public transit, and most people think of large buses running through the central cities. But transit in the Twin Cities goes beyond that. In the metro area, transit means buses, vans, circulator service, transit hubs,

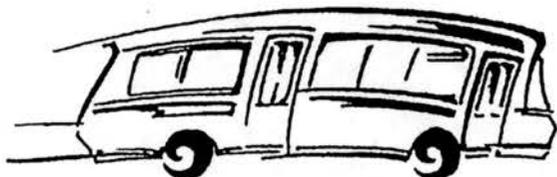


Metro Mobility service, park-and-ride lots, and ridesharing. The Regional Transit

Board coordinates more than 60 providers and community programs to create a comprehensive, efficient transit system.

### Here are some of the RTB's recent accomplishments:

- developed the "Vision for Transit" — a concept for matching a wide range of transit services and facilities to varying transportation needs; and the "Regional Transit Service and Capital Plan: 1993-1997," which is the blueprint for making the improvements planned;
- established six transit hubs, including Rosedale Center, Mall of America, downtown St. Paul, Plymouth Road, Louisiana Avenue, and downtown Minneapolis Leamington station, and added or enhanced service feeding into the hubs;
- worked with the Department of Transportation and the MTC to expand service and complete new transit stations and park-and-ride-lots along I-394;
- developed plans to make Metro Mobility more convenient and efficient;



- funded a route-by-route examination of the MTC's bus system and restructured the entire University of Minnesota Route 52 transit system;

- conducted transit needs assessments in St. Paul, Plymouth,



Dakota County and Washington County;

- secured federal funding to conduct a study that will determine the best transit alternative for the Central Corridor between Minneapolis and St. Paul;

- enhanced suburban service in the Roseville, Bloomington, Burnsville and Eden Prairie areas and restructured service to enhance successful routes and eliminate routes with a high subsidy;

- developed programs designed to reduce congestion around major work sites;

- established a Bicycle Advisory Task Force;

- developed, with the MTC, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Plan and increased accessibility on all transit services to meet ADA requirements.

The RTB would like to thank the Minnesota Department of Transportation, other metro planning agencies, local governments, community organizations and citizen advocacy groups who worked closely with us to ensure that transit services meet people's travel needs now and well into the future.

We also want to thank the great group of transit providers and their employees, who care about putting quality service on the street.



But most of all, we'd like to thank the people who ride public transit. By taking the bus or sharing a ride, they are doing their part to ease congestion and reduce pollution in the metro area.



REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD  
612/292-8789

9/29/92

SAINT PAUL

PIONEER PRESS

EDITORIALS

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

## Bus service plan deserves funding

**T**he Regional Transit Board's five-year plan for improving bus service in the Twin Cities looks great — on paper. But that's where it will remain until Gov. Arne Carlson and the Legislature provide adequate support for transit, rather than forcing it to survive on a starvation diet.

**The potential rewards from the board's plan are considerable.**

The board's "vision for transit" is a slightly enhanced version of the plan submitted to the 1992 Legislature by regional planners. It would provide for improved service organized around the two downtowns and 18 regional hubs, most of them shopping centers. These hubs would be linked by express bus lines and served by local feeder routes. All told, the plan would add 8.8 million miles of regular route service (a 20 percent increase).

The pricetag for the plan is not great — \$17.5 million in additional state money over the next two years. Even with this increased state aid, metro area residents still would be paying nearly three-fourths of the system's operating costs through bus fares and property taxes.

The potential rewards from the board's plan are considerable. It would improve bus service in the core cities and extend service to a number of growing suburbs — boosting ridership by as much as 18 percent, reducing traffic congestion and providing greater mobility for the young, the elderly and the poor.

But implementation of the plan will require the governor and lawmakers — after years of inaction — to come up with an adequate funding source for transit. Options include levying a new sales tax on gasoline, increasing the existing excise tax on motor vehicles or amending the state constitution to permit the use of gasoline tax revenues for transit as well as highways.

Unless the state policymakers solve the problem next year, the board's vision for transit will remain just that. Instead, the bus system will be in for another self-defeating round of fare increases, service reductions and ridership declines. That should not be allowed to happen.

Summary of Meeting  
Metropolitan Legislative Strategy Workgroup  
December 29, 1992

Legislators present: Mariani, Alice Johnson, Pappas, Ranum, Flynn, Wagenius, Orfield, Bergson, Riveness, Carruthers, Kelly, Hausman, Clark, Berglin

Rep. Mariani indicated that the agenda for the meeting would include (1) governance; (2) a transit funding bill; and (3) legislative strategy.

GOVERNANCE

The RTB was established to serve these functions:

1. Service planning and development
2. Financial management
3. Service broker.

Attachment 1 outlines the original functions and the changes that occurred with the formation of the RTB.

Attachment 2 is a chart illustrating metro transit governance.

Transit governance issues in the 1992 session were two: (1) abolish the RTB and (2) LRT governance.

The arguments for abolishing the RTB and placing its powers with the Metro Council were that it has failed to improve transit service, has hamstrung the MTC, and has placed too much emphasis on LRT. The arguments against abolishing the RTB are that it is making improvements and more time is needed. The Council is a planning agency and needs to be separate from implementation. One agency is needed that is a transit advocate.

The LRT governance bill, agreed to by all involved parties and passed in the House and Senate, was vetoed by the Governor because of the potential for committing state funds to match federal dollars.

Senator Pappas distributed a list of transit governance questions (Attachment 3).

She thinks that a legislative commission should be established to consider transit governance.

Sen. Riveness asked her reasons for wanting to revisit governance. Sen. Pappas said there are too many players and the RTB's responsibilities are being eroded.

Rep. Johnson said the legislature is eroding the powers of the RTB. They have interfered and impacted the ability of the agency to do its job.

Sen. Flynn said a commission may not be necessary. Time could be spent on transit governance during the session. Sen. Pappas said she would be comfortable if the subject is discussed in committees. Last session in the House the matter came up unexpectedly without full discussion. Rep. Carruthers agreed with Sen. Flynn and said he'd like to see Legislators take this issue on this session. The lack of continuity previously between the House and Senate Metro Affairs Committees needs improvement. He said this has been a tough political issue especially with the regional railroad authorities and Hennepin isn't the only county involved in the political discussions.

Sen. Pappas said Legislators created the rail authorities. Sen. Flynn said that was because the counties said let us do it and we'll pay for it all ourselves, which hasn't happened.

Rep. Orfield said Legislators need to start early and get organized. Last year the governance discussion came up at the last minute. The Commission to study the issue should be a backup position.

Sen. Flynn said Legislators should get a copy of the earlier (1987?) proposal from the Metro Council on restructuring of transit services.

Legislators discussed if they want a regional entity or Mn/DOT doing transit planning. Sen. Pappas said we in the metro area pay on our property taxes for transit. Rep. Carruthers said he is open on the issue of Mn/DOT and open on the RTB being a subset of the Metro Council, much like the Parks and Open Space Commission. He prefers increasing the power of the Metro Council and doing away with regional rail authorities.

Rep. Wagenius said the new U.S. Secretary of Transportation is the former mayor of Denver and he advocates spending 50% of transportation funds on transit and bicycles.

Rep. Carruthers said the Metro Council can give itself more power. It is reactive, asking what the Governor and Legislators want it to do. It should focus on 4 or 5 key issues, like land use planning, and not on 911 or arts

funding.

Rep. Orfield said there should be a discussion of an elected Metro Council. That would provide more continuity of members.

Sen. Riveness who had to leave at this point of the meeting said he supports taking on governance issues and supports transit funding. The bill (Attachment 4) meets with his approval except for section 3, which specifies improvements to highways.

Rep. Mariani recapped the discussion on governance: metro Legislators want discussion of transit governance during the session and are not sure if there should be a single regional planner for transit.

Sen. Pappas said there has been discussion of a joint meeting of local elected officials and legislators -- Hennepin and Ramsey, although no date has yet been set.

#### TRANSIT FUNDING BILL

Rep. Wagenius, Sen. Flynn and Ranum have worked on a bill which was distributed (Attachment 4).

The State's transportation goals are part of the bill and were ignored by Mn/DOT in the 35W EIS, Rep. Wagenius said.

Sen. Pappas asked how this bill, which specifies improvements to 35W, will interplay with Comm. Denn's decision on 35W, expected January 12. Legislators said they could override Comm. Denn's decision with this bill.

Why is 610 included in the bill? Because transportation investments have been concentrated in the southwest quadrant of the Twin Cities. Rep. Orfield said we haven't linked transportation to regional balance in economic growth. Transit decisions shouldn't be made only on the basis of congestion. That's why 610 is important.

Rep. Johnson asked how the priorities were determined, such as adding one lane on 62. That seems like transportation planners' work.

Rep. Wagenius said that transportation planners have done good work, but haven't previously considered the broader goals of the state for transportation, that transportation improvements shouldn't be focused merely on congestion. This is the time for a shift in public policy. Therefore it is a legislative responsibility. Mn/DOT never incorporated the

state's goals into their plan. They look primarily at congestion.

Rep. Johnson said when Legislators get into the specifics they will be accused of micromanaging. She isn't comfortable with a bill specifying the number of lanes on TH 62.

Rep. Orfield said that 15-20% of the region is gaining 60-70% of the economic growth. Legislators need to think about using transportation dollars to benefit more of the region.

Sen. Ranum said the State's goals are important and planning hasn't been updated to meet the goals. One of the transportation goals adopted by the state in 1992 is to increase transit use in the urban areas by giving highest priority to the transportation modes with the greatest people moving capacity.

Funding is discussed in the bill. It provides \$140 million, a 30% state match for construction of LRT in the Central Corridor. State bonding could be repaid from general funds or from a transportation mobility fund. The transportation mobility fund could consist of auto body repair sales tax and a tax on each gallon of oil. Together these two sources would provide sufficient revenue for repaying the bonds. Another option is a 6.5% sales tax on gas, with 2% to local governments to replace property taxes for transportation and the remainder for bonding for transit contained in this bill, the vision for transit, and the excess for roads.

Sen. Pappas said she prefers the sales tax on gas. There was debate about the Governor's position on the gas tax. Rep. Clark asked for inclusion of lead cleanup in the bill. Rep. Hausman said she would like to know the implications of the bill on other highway needs, such as 280. There are noise problems and Mn/DOT does not recognize its obligations to the neighbors. Rep. Johnson said others will want to address their roads too.

The group agreed to jacket the bill, and to meet again next week to discuss authors.