



Minnesota Regional Transit
Board: Records.

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

Meeting of the
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
Mears Park Centre Chambers
May 2, 1994
4:00 p.m.

AGENDA

- ✓ 1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
- ✓ 2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
- ✓ 3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. Regional Transit Board Meeting, April 18, 1994
- ✓ 4. **CHAIR'S REPORT**
 - A. Update on Metro Mobility
 - B. Legislative Update
- ✓ 5. **MEMBERS' REPORTS**
- ✓ 6. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
- ✓ 7. **REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE**
(Val Higgins, Chair)
 - A. Metro Ride, Inc. and Handicabs, Inc. Letter Agreements to Begin Expending Metro Mobility Transition Money
- ✓ 8. **OTHER BUSINESS**
- ✓ 9. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sally Evert
Chair



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

**Minutes of the
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
May 2, 1994**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Evert, Chair; Michael Beard; Ruth Franklin; Morgan Grant; Val Higgins; James Hovland; Gary Humphrey; Ruby Hunt; Harry Mares

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sharon Feess

OTHERS PRESENT: DeDe Wolfson and Esther Newcome, Metropolitan Council Members; Dan Hibberts, ATE; Arnie Entzel, Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1005; Gregory L. Andrews, Judy Hollander, Mark Fuhrmann, Howard Blin, Clarence Shallbetter, Debra Nelles, Dave Jacobson, Mary Fitzgerald, RTB staff

CALL TO ORDER

The chair called the board meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Chambers at the above address. Roll was taken.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The chair noted that a revised agenda had been distributed, adding the Report of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC). Grant moved and Beard seconded that the amended agenda be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hunt moved and Franklin seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board approve the minutes of its April 18, 1994 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Update on Metro Mobility

The chair said some changes have been made to the Selection Advisory Committee. Grant has asked to attend the meetings of the advisory committee as a passive observer. He will take no part in the deliberations of the committee and make no effort to influence the process. The chair has added Hollander to the committee as a voting member to provide the historical perspective and serve

as liaison to the board. She stressed the need to protect the integrity of the process. The deadline for receipt of proposals is today at 5:00 p.m.,

MEMBERS' REPORTS

Grant reported on the Job Fair held on April 27 by ATE and the three providers. The follow-up comments indicate that everyone was pleased with the process. The existing staff was excited about the transition to the three providers. It is hoped that the knowledge and experience of the Metro Mobility Service Center (MMSC) staff will be transferred to the providers. There will be a draft of equipment at MMSC to supply the providers with the equipment they will need to meet their expanded responsibilities.

Evert noted that the members have received copies of the letters from three companies that decided not to submit proposals. Grant said one of the firms that sent a representative to the pre-proposal conference told him that they will not submit a proposal because of the uncertainty surrounding the metro governancet issue. Interim Report 2, dated April 21, 1994, from the Management Analysis Division of the Minnesota Department of Administration, was distributed to the board. The final payment for the National Guard's service provided in October 1993 was made by ATE last week.

Responding to Wolfson's question, Fuhrmann said some of the equipment at the MMSC will be needed by the new service coordinator, but the providers will get the first opportunity since they must assume their new responsibilities immediately. Allocating this equipment will reduce the \$953,000 cost. Evert cautioned that the reduction will probably not be significant.

Legislative Update

Andrews briefed the board on legislative activity. On the House floor the elected provision of the Metro Governance Bill failed, but without that provision, it passed today on a 118 to 18 vote. The bill abolishes the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission, the Metropolitan Transit Commission, and the Regional Transit Board, effective July 1. This version of the bill is silent on the structure of the new Metro Council and allows them to structure themselves as they deem best.

On the funding side, the House will take up the funding bill which calls for a constitutional amendment dedicating 40-percent of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) to transit. The other piece requests that the gas tax monies in the Metropolitan Area be "undedicated" so transit projects may also be funded with those monies.

Hunt asked when the council could be expected to hire the executive director who will manage the day-to-day functions. Andrews said there are differences in the bills; the Senate version calls for a 16-member council with a regional administrator and the House verison calls for a 17-member council. That version continues the executive director's position at the Metropolitan Council and adds a

policy assistant to the council to be appointed by the 16-members. The House bill no longer deals with the transition.

Members discussed the new structure of the Metropolitan Council. Evert said that when she joined the board in January the public, the newspapers, legislative direction and the governor's office indicated something like this would happen. This staff and board should feel proud that they kept focused on the responsibilities of the agency.. This has been difficult for staff. ATE has been asked to stay on-line to keep Metro Mobility viable so it can be transitioned appropriately and that the RTB board and staff now has the same charge.

MEMBERS' REPORTS

Grant asked members to consider calling conferees to make a strong statement on the transition. July 1 is not acceptable and it would be unfair to the Metropolitan Council and to the riders to transfer the responsibility for Metro Mobility during this critical period. . The Senate conferees are expected to be Pariseau, Flynn and Mondale. House conferees will be Orfield, Carruthers and Weaver.

REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Higgins reviewed the report of the committee's April 25 meeting.

METRO RIDE AND HANDICABS LETTER AGREEMENTS TO BEGIN EXPENDING METRO MOBILITY TRANSITION MONEY

Higgins moved and Hovland seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to negotiate and execute a letter agreement with Metro Ride, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$227,301; and a letter agreement with Handicabs, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$151,182 toward the implementation of a paratransit reservation, scheduling and dispatching system prior to execution of an amended contract.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Higgins said the staff also updated the committee on the Five-Year Plan and pointed out that two major opt-out representatives appeared at the meeting and stated that they wish to provide input into the implementation of the plan.

REPORT OF THE TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAAC)

Evert said Grant has asked that the reports of the TAAC committee be presented to the board. TAAC Chair Krogstad had hoped to make the report but had a

schedule conflict. Jacobson reviewed the report of the March 2 and April 6 meetings.

Deployment of Accessible Vehicles

Jacobson said this was also an issue in the Five-Year Transit Plan. No action is needed.

Stress Test for Lift Doors of Vans

Grant said he is very concerned about safety of the doors in the event a bolt fails. He strongly urged that staff be directed to explore the situation. Grant moved and Higgins seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board direct staff to look at viable options to ensure the safety of the lift doors on vans and investigate a possible back-up system or other safety measure.

Hunt said that these vehicles were approved by the federal government to meet the ADA standards. Has this problem been encountered in other parts of the country where these vans are in use? Jacobson said the Minnesota Department of Transportation inspects the vehicles for safety and to ensure they meet state standards.

Hovland said the issue is operational in nature and questioned whether it is the type of thing that the board should become involved in. It seems staff can do this independently. They should begin an immediate investigation and report to the board. Jacobson said that under the current process all the recommendations from advisory committees must be presented to the board, which can then agree or disagree.

Higgins said that when he joined tghe TAAC their strongest complaint was that no one would listen to them. He would resist anything that would destroy two years of real effort to get people to believe the board will listen to them. Grant said the board may not wish to accept the recommendations in their entirety and will have to sort out what process it wishes to follow. The motion was unanimously approved. Evert said issues of safety must be dealt with expeditiously and staff has the authority to move forward without board action.

Standing Orders

In response to Evert's question, Jacobson said ATE is aware of the committee's recommendations. Hovland moved and Grant seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board direct that standing orders be granted on a first come-first served basis and be implemented as the system capacity allows within the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Metro Mobility Service Center

(MMSC) may not discontinue an existing individual standing order solely because of capacity problems.

The MMSC is directed to provide a monthly standing order management report to the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. These recommendations are to be implemented no later than July 31, 1994.

The motion was unanimously reviewed.

Appeals Committee

Jacobson said TAAC has an Appeals Committee to deal with suspensions of services. MMSC may suspend service for a variety of reasons. This proposed action would expand the committee's role and change its composition. Hovland asked under what power would the committee be able to determine eligibility since they are advisory in nature. Should the committee make recommendations to the board? Grant said it is supposed to be a group of peers. In the past TAAC accepted MMAC's recommendations and there was no further dispute. Hovland said he does not see a mechanism that can give the committee the power to make those determinations. He asked what the board would do if someone challenged their authority. Hovland moved and Grant seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board table discussion on the issue of an Appeals Committee until a legal opinion can be obtained.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Higgins agreed with Hovland on the concept of TAAC's function. The committee does not have the authority to discontinue a rider's service. Hunt said the board needs clarification. The idea of the peer group is very important and the board should find a way to delegate this to them. Humphrey noted that this is an advisory committee and the board needs to listen to it; however, some issues have additional ramifications. Evert said TAAC does not progress everything to the board, but when they make recommendations they feel strongly the board should react. In some situations, Humphrey said, the information is put into a broader picture.

Evert said staff will begin sending minutes or summaries which give early warning of the advisory committees' concerns. Humphrey said TAAC feels strongly about vehicles with lift equipment being used where they are most effective. If the opt-outs require new equipment, the buses with lifts may be deployed in areas where there are no riders using them. Evert said that issue was appropriately directed by staff to the Policy Committee.

Grant said he is happy to see the board going through this process; otherwise, in the future there may be complaints that recommendations never make it to the board. Whoever takes over should continue that process. Higgins said two

years ago he was very critical of TAAC, but today he is proud of them, mainly due to the efforts of the new chair, Diana Krogstad, who does an excellent job, and to Dave Jacobson as staff support to the group.

Strap Cutters

Hunt moved and Mares seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board direct staff to request the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Office of Motor Carrier Services include the matter of affixing strap cutters to the Velcro on the driver-side visors of Metro Mobility vehicles.

The motion was unanimously approved. Evert added that some of these items, particularly those related to safety, can be handled immediately by staff. Those items fall into a different category. Higgins said someone must carry the ball so that these items do not get overlooked.

Grant said he would like the board to receive minutes of the Providers Advisory Committee meetings and some of the other advisory committees as well. As a board member he has never seen the PAC minutes and asked how the board knows what the committees are doing since no updates are given at the board or Policy Committee meetings. The board should know in advance of board action what the concerns are of those committees.

Jacobson said the summaries will show recommendations, but they will not be full minutes. There will be an audio tape of the meetings and staff will summarize discussion. Evert said there will need to be more discussion.

Mares said these matters should come to the board. There has to be communication on what we are dealing with. Grant moved and Higgins seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board receive minutes or summaries of all the meetings of its advisory committees.

The motion was unanimously approved.

There was a brief discussion of the process of selecting the new service coordinator.

There being no other business, Franklin moved and Hovland seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and accurate record of the Regional Transit Board's meeting of May 2, 1994.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Fitzgerald
Secretary of the Board

Approved by the Regional Transit Board on this 16th day of May 1994.



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

REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

At its meeting of April 25, 1994, the committee approved the following recommendations:

METRO RIDE AND HANDICABS LETTER AGREEMENTS TO BEGIN EXPENDING METRO MOBILITY TRANSITION MONEY

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to negotiate and execute a letter agreement with Metro Ride, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$227,301; and a letter agreement with Handicabs, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$151,182 toward the implementation of a paratransit reservation, scheduling and dispatching system prior to execution of an amended contract.

OTHER BUSINESS

The committee discussed the staff report, dated April 19, 1994, on the Five-Year Transit Plan - Chapter 3, Transit Policies.

The next meeting of the Policy Committee will be May 23, 1994.

Val Higgins
Chair

mff
3/29/94

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

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

DATE: April 25, 1994
TO: Chair and Members of the Policy Committee
FROM: Mark W. Fuhrmann, Manager of Programs *MF*
SUBJECT: Metro Ride and Handicabs Letter Agreements to Begin Expending
Metro Mobility Transition Money *gh*

SUMMARY

This memorandum requests Policy Committee action to approve expending funds to implement the Metro Mobility transition in an amount not to exceed \$227,300 for Metro Ride, Inc. and in an amount not to exceed \$151,200 for Handicabs, Inc.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Transit Board, at its meeting April 4, 1994, authorized its executive director to negotiate contract amendments with each of the three core Metro Mobility providers. As transition discussions have proceeded in the ensuing three weeks with providers, it has become evident that providers will need to begin expending funds primarily for computer software and hardware and telephone system procurement this week to meet installation and implementation deadlines. Final negotiations for provider contract amendments are not expected to be concluded until mid-May.

DISCUSSION

In a continuing effort to meet the prescribed transition deadlines, providers are seeking authorization from the Regional Transit Board to begin expending funds prior to final approval of each provider's contract amendment.

All three providers have submitted their transition budgets. They include all computer related software, hardware, training, telephones, equipment, and labor costs projected to be expended between now and July 4, 1994. The transition expenditure budgets appear below:

Mayflower Contract Services, Inc.	\$587,012
Metro Ride, Inc.	227,301
Handicabs, Inc.	151,182
Total	<u>\$965,495</u>

The Regional Transit Board approved \$250,000 for initial transition expenditures for Mayflower Contract Services, Inc. at its meeting April 18, 1994. This amount is included in the Mayflower line item above.

The majority of these expenditures are software and hardware equipment related that are one-time expenditures directly attributable to transition requirements for each provider. These expenditures were not anticipated during the 1994-1995 biennium; therefore, not budgeted in this biennium. Funds are currently available to pay these expenditures from the Metro Mobility budget account. Policy Committee and Board approval of these expenditures will require seeking legislative approval during the 1995 session to appropriate supplemental funding for Metro Mobility or to waive the expenditure cap imposed on Metro Mobility which would enable tapping the working capital balance to fund Metro Mobility service through the remainder of the 94-95 biennium.

ALTERNATIVES

The primary alternative to authorizing transition expenditures for each provider is to competitively procure the services of providers. This may increase competition and decrease costs somewhat.

The negatives of this alternative are extending the time required to implement new provider responsibilities under the semi-centralized system, the likelihood to extend ATE's contract beyond July 4 to assist with the transition and the potential of introducing a new provider who is not familiar with the Metro Mobility system. For the reasons stated, staff does not recommend pursuing the provider competitive procurement alternative stated.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to negotiate and execute a letter agreement with Metro Ride, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$227,301, and a letter agreement with Handicabs, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$151,182 toward the implementation of a paratransit reservation, scheduling and dispatching system prior to execution of an amended contract.

MF:jmo



REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

Mears Park Centre
230 East 5th Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
612/292-8789

TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

At its regularly scheduled March 2, 1994 the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) approved the following motions:

- **TAAC recommends** that the Regional Transit Board monitor deployment of new Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) accessible vehicles so they are committed to the MTC core area and deployed only in the MTC core service area.

Staff recommends that there be further research on this item and report back to the Policy Committee with a recommendation at a later date.

At its regularly scheduled April 6, 1994 the TAAC approved the following motions:

- **TAAC recommends** that the Regional Transit Board notify ATE Management Company that the lift doors are presently constructed with no back-up for the two bolts, and the board accepts no responsibility for any accidents from the lift door collapsing.

Staff recommends that ATE Management Company or the new Metro Mobility Service Center (MMSC) do a stress test for the lift doors ensuring that the current configuration is safe and will not collapse on any one during use.

- **TAAC recommends** that the MMSC is responsible for administering Metro Mobility standing orders. Requests for standing orders will be granted on a first-come-first-serve basis, and will be implemented as the system capacity allows within the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The MMSC may not discontinue an existing individual standing order solely because of capacity problems. The MMSC will provide a standing order management report to TAAC on a monthly basis.

Staff recommends that this motion be accepted and implemented as quickly as possible, but no later than July 31, 1994.

- **TAAC recommends** that the Metro Mobility appeals committee will be composed of five members of the TAAC including the Chair plus four members. Appeals can only be heard when all five committee members are together to discuss the following issues:

- • **ADA eligibility** - an applicant may appeal a decision of conditional certification or ADA ineligibility.

TAAC Recommendations

April 26, 1994

Page 2

- • "No Shows" - a rider may be suspended for 30 days of service after receiving a letter of warning for three trip "no-shows."
- • Personal Care Attendants (PCA) - MMSC may require a PCA to accompany a rider on all trips if the rider is determined to be abusive, disruptive, or dangerous.
- • Other/General as it relates to policy implementation.

Staff recommends that this motion be accepted and implemented as quickly as possible, but no later than May 31, 1994.

- **TAAC recommends** that all strap cutters on the vehicles be on the ignition key rings so as to be immediately available to the drivers.

Staff follow-up shows that this item has been resolved when the MMSC and the providers came to a mutual agreement as outlined in the attached memorandum from the MMSC to the providers dated April 4, 1994.

- **TAAC recommends** that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) inspectors who inspect Metro Mobility vehicles need to site those vehicles that do not have the strap cutter affixed to the velcro on the driver side visor.

Staff recommends that this motion be forward to the MnDOT Office of Motor Carrier Services, who inspects the Metro Mobility vehicles, requesting that this item be included as part of their vehicle inspection check list.

METRO

MOBILITY

April 4, 1994

TO: Metro Mobility Service Providers
FROM: Keith Sutherland, Maintenance Director
RE: Emergency Strap Cutters

In response to the request of the Regional Transit Board (RTB) and to make consistent the location within the vehicles of the emergency strap cutters, I propose the following:

Effective April 4, 1994 all strap cutters in Metro Mobility vehicles will be located in the center most portion of the drivers sun visor. They will be visible when the visor is in the parked, or up position. They will be affixed to the visor utilizing velcro, so as to assure ease of access, in any given situation.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation in the above matter.


cc: Dan Hibbert
Dave Jacobson/RTB
Provider file

245 East Sixth Street
Suite #200
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Administration: 612-221-1932
Reservations: 612-221-1928
FAX: 612-221-9015
TTY: 612-221-0014



REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

Mears Park Centre
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TAAC Recommendations
April 26, 1994
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April 4, 1994

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I thank you in advance for your cooperation in the above matter.



cc: Dan Hibbert
Dave Jacobson/RTB
Provider file

245 East Sixth Street
Suite #200
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Administration: 612-221-1932
Reservations: 612-221-1928
FAX: 612-221-9015
TTY: 612-221-0014



M E T R O P O L I T A N T R A N S I T C O M M I S S I O N

560-6th Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411-4398 612/349-7400

April 29, 1994

Ms. Sally Evert, Chair
Regional Transit Board
Mears Park Centre Building
230 East Fifth Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Ms. Evert:

The Metropolitan Transit Commission has been dedicated to the provision of transit services to the disabled community since the inception of Project Mobility in 1976. Under MTC's care and management, the system grew to the Metro Mobility system of 1986 with MTC managing, administering and providing the service from certification to door-to-door transit delivery.

The MTC reluctantly had its role reduced to Metro Mobility Service Administrator in 1986, but remained dedicated to supporting the service to the disabled community in excellent fashion. At the very time the Regional Transit Board was making the decision to again "revamp" the entire provision of service to the disabled, the MMAC was reporting to its Commission and to the RTB that based on survey results, 87% of the rides provided were on time and that 93% of the riders were satisfied with their Metro Mobility service.

MTC remains dedicated to the management and provision of transit services for the disabled. The direction that the RTB is now taking is the direction MTC supported during the system review undertaken in 1992.

At this time, the MTC would see an added "customer service" need that has developed over the past few months. If MTC were to manage this paratransit system, both "in-house" and "on-the-street" customer advocates would be a part of the structure. Most importantly, the region must regain the confidence of our transit users, be they able-bodied or disabled.

MTC is the foremost transit provider in the region. We are fully capable of managing, administering and/or providing excellent paratransit services (Metro Mobility) to the residents of the Twin Cities. It is our position that excellence in

Ms. Sally Evert
April 29, 1994
Page 2

service must be the next step. The resources needed to provide paratransit service and support for the consumer at the level of excellence, cannot and would not be provided in the low cost environment sought in the RTB's current request. For that reason, the MTC declines, at this time, to submit a proposal to serve as Metro Mobility Service Coordinator. We look forward to future opportunities to service the region's transit community.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Sather
Chief Administrator

TRS/dmk

cc: RTB Board Members
MTC Commissioners
B. Auld
J. Olson
G. Andrews
J. Hollander

**Other States' Interview Results
and Recommendations for Consideration
in Selection of a Management Company**

Metro Mobility Consumer Evaluation

**Interim Report 2
April 21, 1994**

**Tom Helgesen
(612) 282-2407
Management Analysis Division
Minnesota Department of Administration
203 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55155**

To obtain these materials in Braille, audiotape,
large print or other forms, call

Caroline Wisniewski

Voice (612) 296-7058 or TTY/TDD Twin Cities relay (612) 297-5353

The Management Analysis Division is a management consulting organization serving state, regional, and local governments. This report documents the consulting work performed by the division for a client. Comments made during the data collection process and printed in this document express perceptions and feelings of the people involved, as well as facts. These comments are part of the documentation because it is important for people undergoing change to know what their stakeholders think.

OTHER STATES' INTERVIEW RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION IN SELECTION OF A MANAGEMENT COMPANY

The Regional Transit Board hired the Management Analysis Division in March 1994 to collect information to use in establishing criteria in a request for proposals and the subsequent selection of a management company for Metro Mobility. The division was engaged to perform three tasks: (1) Interview members of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee, (2) interview other states' metropolitan area organizations that operate paratransit services, and (3) conduct Metro Mobility customer focus groups and interviews. This interim report addresses the second task.

The paratransit directors of six metropolitan area organizations in other states were interviewed. Their services all have lift capability meeting requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. They served the following cities: Houston, Dallas, Portland, Boston, Milwaukee, and Chicago. Most of the organizations have characteristics that fall within the following ranges:

CHARACTERISTIC	RANGE
Service area	443 - 925 square miles (Chicago - 2,400)
Number of eligible passengers	16,000 - 26,000 clients
Annual ridership	400,000 - 925,000 trips per year
Daily trips	1,200 - 3,500 trips per day
Standing orders/subscriber trips	50 - 70%
Customer type: ambulatory	70 - 80%
Customer type: wheelchair	20 - 30%

The organizations have two other characteristics that make them helpful sources for comparison:

- Four of the six are northern cities (two are in the Upper Midwest)
- Four of the six have tried centralized and automated scheduling

PARATRANSIT EXPERIENCES WITH CENTRALIZED AND AUTOMATED SCHEDULING

Of the four organizations that have tried centralized scheduling — Houston, Dallas, Portland, and Boston, Houston reported a good experience from the beginning and the other three reported bad experiences; Boston and Dallas used the terms “nightmare” and “disaster” to refer to their experiences. Dallas and Portland are in the process of correcting their systems and Boston abandoned its program to return to decentralized operations.

Houston, which uses ATE Rider software, changed only one facet of its operations at a time — in this case, the computerized scheduling system. All other facets were unchanged immediately before and after introduction of the new system. Other characteristics contributing to the success of the experience cited by the director included:

- The scheduling and dispatching functions were kept in-house, so the agency had direct accountability and control over the new operations.
- The agency already had seven years' experience with automated and centralized scheduling. Its only conversion was from a mainframe- to a PC-based system.
- The computer software was custom designed for complex scheduling operations.
- An adequate number of schedulers were provided. Sixteen people were on duty every morning to take calls for scheduling. Houston has up to 3,500 trips per day, about half of them demand trips (individually scheduled) and half subscriber trips.
- The computer program was personal-computer-based, so it was faster than mainframe systems.
- The centralization of trip operations did not change. There were the same number of providers before and after.
- The drivers did not change. They were all familiar with the program and the geography of the area.

The three organizations with bad experiences in changing to automated and centralized scheduling operations shared one or more characteristics:

- They centralized providers and trip scheduling simultaneously. This meant having new providers and/or drivers at the same time they were starting a new scheduling system.
- They had only indirect accountability and control by contracting out the scheduling and dispatching functions.
- They had no experience with either automated or centralized scheduling.
- They had too few scheduling personnel. Dallas tried to handle 2,000 demand calls a day with four staff; it found it needed 20 to do the job.
- They used "off-the-shelf" computer systems that couldn't handle complex scheduling tasks.
- They used computer systems that did not allow manipulation of scheduling parameters or did not have reporting capability.

The organizations that are retaining centralized operations — Houston, Dallas, and Portland — aggressively control and supervise operations and intervene as necessary to change routes and trip schedules to facilitate smooth operation. Portland reported that, to improve the efficiency of its system, dispatchers must know the location of vehicles in the field and must adjust schedules for no-shows, cancellations, and drivers who are running late. It is also important when dispatchers intervene in scheduling for them to know such details about the scheduled trips as whether they are adjustable. Portland and Dallas have concluded that combination scheduling and dispatching functions are important to system efficiency.

SOFTWARE AND COMPUTERIZED SCHEDULING SYSTEMS

Computer software plays an important part in the experiences agencies have with centralized scheduling.

Interviewees reported that the one critical area of software performance is its ability to handle high-volume, complex scheduling tasks. Even problem systems received good marks for performance in other areas, such as data collection, eligibility determination, mapping systems, client data bases, and billing and manifest functions.

One organization warned against off-the-shelf computer programs that might be very good with many functions and light scheduling, but poor with heavy, complicated scheduling. Its director likened the scheduling task to filling a pail with sand: The first few grains of sand have all sorts of places to go, but as the pail gets full, the options are fewer and fewer. With scheduling systems, the first few trips are easy to schedule, but the task gets much more difficult as the schedule fills up with trips and choices become limited.

This director said that most off-the-shelf systems were developed for applications in other industries, such as trucking, where scheduling tasks are not as complex. He said that paratransit operations need customized scheduling systems.

Other interviewees noted initial software problems of not being able to set parameters for trip length and time on board or not being able to get reports from the system.

Factors contributing to success with a computerized scheduling system were cited by interviewees as:

- The system is capable of setting variable parameters.
- It is PC- rather than mainframe-based, because PC systems are much faster.
- It eliminates client call-backs to get trip times.
- It reduces operator decisions or interventions (computer should do the scheduling). ^{HOUSTON}
- Scheduling and dispatching are kept together under close control and accountability.

Two organizations reported that it is essential to observe successfully functioning systems on site before making decisions.

It is also important to note that the two organizations with bad experiences that have chosen to stay with centralized operations found it necessary to make major adjustments to their software. Although Dallas reported that its scheduling software worked well, it spent another \$200,000 to increase software capability and debug the system. Portland, after being unable to locate another metropolitan area with a successful scheduling application of its software, decided to replace its software.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF PROVIDERS OR COORDINATORS

Interviewees reported several methods of enforcing accountability with providers or coordinators. Most organizations used more than one:

- Monitoring: This involved visits by agency staff to transit providers. They examined paperwork to see if the providers had reported all problems and information required by contracts.
- Independent auditing of providers: This is similar to monitoring but is done by independent auditing firms.
- * • Field liaisons/street supervisors: Two organizations assign personnel to circulate daily in the field. They carry trip manifests, spotcheck operator performance, respond to customer complaints, and are in frequent radio communication with the dispatchers.
- * • Supervising daily operations: Some organizations supervise the daily operations by constant communication with drivers and customers. They handle complaints and problems on the spot and reschedule as necessary.
- Keeping operations in-house so an agency knows operations firsthand and has its own personnel in charge.
- Scheduling fines or liquidated damages in contracts: Examples of fine schedules reported by interviewees are:

MEASURE	DEFINITION	FINE PER INSTANCE
Late pickup	Houston: 20 minutes late Dallas: 15 minutes late Boston: complaints Chicago: 15 minutes late	Houston: \$25 - 50 Dallas: \$40 - 60 Boston: see notes Chicago: 40% X hourly rate
Missed trip	Dallas: over 60 minutes late Boston: over 60 minutes late Chicago: over 60 minutes late	Dallas: \$60 Boston: \$25 Chicago: 2 X hourly rate

NOTES:

- Dallas: Also assesses a \$50 fine for failing to report a late trip at the time the driver knows the trip will be late.
- Boston: After three months without missed trips or an excessive number of late pickups, Boston pays an incentive of \$100 per month to providers for continuing good performance.
- Portland: Does not have a schedule of fines. Because providers don't schedule their own trips, they don't think responsibility or fault can be easily determined.
- Milwaukee: Can fine providers \$150 for establishing a pattern of late pickups or excessive ride times.

Additional performance measures written into contracts that may involve fines include the number of passenger trips per hour, the number of accidents per mile, dirty uniforms, and absence of a valid driver's license.

Some interviewees reported that establishing responsibility is a problem with assessing fines. This is the reason Portland, which contracts with a local firm for centralized scheduling for its providers, does not have a schedule of fines. The Chicago representative said it is essential not to carve up tasks so that one party can blame another for a problem or cause another to be late.

However, Houston and Dallas, which both have centralized scheduling, reported no problem with establishing responsibility. Both organizations have dispatchers in constant radio communication with drivers and require drivers to call in pickup problems as they occur. They also have supervisors in the field, enabling them to resolve problems on the spot or determine easily when a provider is at fault.

A variation of in-house dispatching and scheduling is used by Portland, which physically houses its staff in the same location as its contract management firm. The employees work side-by-side and have constant interaction. Several interviewees said that any outside firm hired to manage services should be a local firm or at least should hire local staff who are familiar with the area. In addition, the firm should have successful experience in comparable centralized paratransit operations and the firm's previous customers should be contacted to verify their experience.

DRIVER TRAINING

Driver training requirements varied widely among those interviewed. In Portland, Chicago, and Milwaukee, training requirements are not specified. It is the responsibility of the providers, in their bid proposals, to propose training plans that are acceptable to the agency.

Boston does not specify the number of training hours needed, but does require that drivers be trained in passenger assistance, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, vehicle operation, and dealing with alcohol and drug abuse by passengers.

Houston and Dallas have more formal requirements. Houston specifies that drivers receive 40 hours of defensive driving, passenger assistance and technology, and policies and procedures, and 10 hours of on-street driving. Dallas requires 120 hours of training: 45 hours of service orientation and map reading; 8 hours of defensive driving; 8 hours of certified passenger assistance training; 8 hours of sensitivity training; and 51 hours in trip manifests and vehicle communication equipment.

CUSTOMER INPUT, COMPLAINTS, AND SERVICE STANDARDS

The organizations contacted for this study use several different means of collecting customer input and feedback, including customer advisory boards, community meetings, surveys, and complaint systems.

Dallas, Boston, Portland and Houston all have customer input groups or advisory committees. The table on the next page shows their characteristics.

	DALLAS	BOSTON	PORTLAND	HOUSTON
TITLE	Mobility-impaired Advisory Panel	Customer Service Committee; also seven subcommittees	Paratransit Subcommittee of the Citizens Committee	Metro Lift Advisory Committee
SIZE and MEMBERSHIP	21 members appointed and elected from providers, social service agencies, and users	100 members; 35-40 show up for joint meetings with the MBTA; open to everyone	8 members on the subcommittee	22 members from patrons and providers, plus Metro Lift staff members
MEETINGS	Meets monthly	Meets monthly with the MBTA for 3 hours; subcommittees meet 2 hours per month	Meets monthly	Meets every other month

Two of the six organizations in this study use community meetings to give out information and receive feedback from customers: Dallas holds quarterly meetings in the communities it serves and Chicago holds two or more ADA community meetings a year.

Chicago and Houston conduct telephone surveys to gauge customer satisfaction. Chicago conducts short telephone surveys two days per quarter in each of its service areas. Houston hires a firm to conduct 450 random telephone interviews.

All interviewees have customer-complaint telephone lines. Most organizations try to resolve complaints over the telephone. The most aggressive organizations — those with street supervisors, dispatchers, drivers, and good communications systems — often resolve complaints on the spot, in part by rescheduling trips and routes as necessary. Portland fills out a form for each complaint that comes in and notes the disposition of it on the form. It does not routinely notify a customer of the complaint status unless it will take more than several days to address.

Customer-service standards can be determined from the schedule of fines in provider contracts shown on Page 4. Most organizations have penalties for late pickups and missed trips, with "late pickups" defined usually as occurring 15 to 20 minutes after the scheduled time and "missed trips" being more than 60 minutes late.

Milwaukee implemented a schedule of fines and then suspended it until providers could make their own proposal for achieving a 75 percent or greater on-time schedule. Dallas has a penalty for failure to call in a late pickup and Houston waives part or all of a late pickup fine if the driver informs the dispatcher in time to notify the affected customer.

Several organizations have standards for the amount of time passengers spend on board vehicles. Boston uses a standard of one hour. Portland has a policy that customers need to be ready for pickup one hour

before arrival at their destination (effectively limiting ride time to no more than one hour) and Milwaukee may fine providers for a pattern of excessive ride times.

ADVERSE-WEATHER OPERATIONS

Several interviewees provided information on adverse-weather operations. Milwaukee finds that trip demand drops off when the weather is bad. Even so, service response time slows down and drivers get behind in their schedules, but no special adjustments are made to the system. Dallas has no special plans for adverse weather and finds that normal operations just slow down.

Portland has two levels of weather emergency service. Level 1 includes high-priority trips, which are trips to work, school, or medical care; entertainment and shopping trips are not included. Level 2 includes only necessary trips — usually for such needs as kidney dialysis. Customers are notified by radio announcements when emergency-weather service is put into effect. The announcements indicate the trip level that will be provided. Customers are told the level of their trip when they make reservations.

Portland also reports a need to work with destinations that may shut down in adverse weather, in order to avoid taking customers to closed locations. Staff at frequently visited destinations telephone the transit service when they plan to shut down.

PASSENGER TRANSFERS

All interviewees spoke of customer transfers between modes of transportation as being difficult and time-consuming. Some do not participate in transfers; the others typically limit them in some way.

Three types of transfers were reported: within service areas, outside service areas, and from paratransit to regular transit lines.

Only Boston and Portland assist customers in setting up the transfers. Boston's service area has six internal geographic regions, with a provider assigned to each region. The customer must call a provider in his or her region for a pickup. The provider then calls the provider in the destination region to arrange the transfer. Customers are responsible for transfers outside the service area.

Portland assists with arranging transfers, but only for standing-order trips. Because of the time it takes to set up transfers, Portland limits them to recurring or standing-order trips. Portland also limits transfers to customers able to handle the demands of the transfer.

Dallas, Milwaukee, and to some extent Houston report transferring customers only rarely. The fact that providers will deliver customers anywhere within their entire service area reduces the need for internal transfers. Transfers outside the service area are the responsibility of the customer.

Chicago must provide transfers because it has between 10 and 52 regions (depending on the program) served by different providers. Customers must call both providers to arrange the transfer.

Participants in the study have different ways of making transfer connections. Dallas, Portland, Houston,

and Milwaukee either don't make transfers or drop off customers and leave them on their own. Houston, however, is considering establishing transfer points or stations. Chicago already uses established transfer points. Boston drivers wait until the second vehicle arrives before leaving customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *To the extent possible, change only one major part of the paratransit system at a time.*

Paratransit operations in general, and centralized, automated scheduling in particular, are systems of highly complex, interdependent parts. Whenever one part is changed, other parts are affected. Using interviewee responses, it is clear that making simultaneous changes offers greater opportunity for things to go wrong and makes it harder to identify the causes.

2. *Evaluate the adequacy of system staffing levels, communications equipment, and training of all personnel who operate communication equipment. Answer such questions as:*

"How many telephone lines and people do we need to handle the daily volume of calls without having clients on hold more than X minutes?"

"Do we need additional temporary telephone capacity until the system is debugged?"

"How many dispatchers and radios do we need so that drivers can get through without unreasonable delays?"

Make aggressive field supervision and intervention a priority of the system. One way to learn how to do this and to answer the questions above would be to visit successful centralized paratransit programs to observe operations and communication systems that are functioning well.

The most aggressive systems in this study exercised close supervision and control over all aspects of operations, whether dispatching, scheduling, or providing trips. They also intervened frequently with daily trip operations to address problems and reschedule routes and trips when necessary and feasible.

Close supervision and intervention depend on a well-functioning communication system. The ingredients for communication systems to function well include adequate equipment, staffing, and training of personnel in the use of the system. Without a competent communication system, intervention is difficult if not impossible, and responsibility cannot be determined easily or quickly if at all. Keeping dispatching and scheduling together is important to system efficiency.

3. *If an outside firm is hired to manage services, select a local firm if possible, or a firm that will hire local people who are familiar with the area. Choose a firm with previous successful experience with centralized and automated scheduling, and verify the experience by checking with customers who have been served by the firm elsewhere. RTB staff should be knowledgeable about all facets of the system and should work closely with management service personnel on daily operations.*

All organizations in this study that continued with centralized and automated scheduling either ran the system themselves or had their own employees work physically alongside the service coordinator with continuous interaction. Even Boston, which returned to decentralized operations, moved the program management back in-house. It was important that the paratransit organizations themselves have considerable knowledge of and input into daily operations.

Alternatively, interviewees said that any service management firm hired must have successful centralized paratransit experience and must be familiar with the geographic area.

In either event, it is important that RTB staff have a working knowledge of the whole system.

4. *Accept the need for software debugging or redesign, and create a plan to review software problems and to phase in changes. Use at least these three means to determine system changes:*

- *RTB staff should visit an organization to observe successful software applications. Houston and Dallas would be primary considerations — Houston because it claims to have a successful system similar to the RTB's, and Dallas because its scheduling software is performing well.*
- *Trip schedulers and dispatchers should keep notepads or forms at their work stations to note problems that need software changes or solutions.*
- *Client input should be summarized or more client input should be solicited to identify problems that need software changes or solutions.*

All organizations in this study that continued with centralized and automated scheduling had considerable experience prior to designing the software (Houston) or needed considerable debugging or redesigning after the system started up. Comments made by interviewees indicated that this is not unusual and the same type of software system that the RTB has appears to be working successfully in Houston.

5. *Once the system is working well enough to reasonably determine performance responsibility, create a schedule of incentives and/or fines for system performance standards. These would include standards for on-time pickups, prompt call-ins of late trips, missed trips, and other measures determined by the RTB and customers to be important.*

Supervision and intervention are means of achieving accountability that have been discussed above. It is necessary to get the system functioning to the point where RTB staff can reasonably determine who is responsible for meeting or not meeting performance standards. This would involve realistic trip schedules and reasonably functioning communication systems.

6. *Develop a training plan so that all drivers are trained to adequately perform their jobs. This would involve the identification of curricula, instructors, and a calendar that would provide training as soon as possible without jeopardizing operations by taking too many drivers off duty at one time.*

A number of topics have been identified by interviewees as important for driver training. At a minimum, these include safety procedures, knowledge of communication equipment, and geographic familiarity with routes and locations. These are a priority for immediate consideration.

7. *Consider models and plans in this study for handling complaints in the field and consider using the customer advisory board for input and reviewing adverse-weather operations.*

8. *If provider service regions are established within the service area, allow or require continuous trips throughout the service area when necessary to avoid passenger transfers, and designate transfer points to facilitate transfers out of the service area.*

Passenger transfers are given little assistance by most of the organizations participating in this study. The tendency is to leave most transfer responsibilities with the customers. The paratransit organizations that assist transfers designate transfer points, in some cases have drivers wait until the transfer pickup vehicle arrives, arrange transfers only for standing orders, or have providers arrange transfers within a service area. The ability of providers to travel throughout a service area reduces or eliminates the need for intra-service area transfers.

Organizations did not show any established patterns of roles or expectations in passenger transfer assistance.



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

Meeting of the
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
Mears Park Centre Chambers
May 2, 1994
4:00 p.m.

AMENDED AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. Regional Transit Board Meeting, April 18, 1994
4. CHAIR'S REPORT
 - A. Update on Metro Mobility
 - B. Legislative Update
5. MEMBERS' REPORTS
6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
7. REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
(Val Higgins, Chair)
 - A. Metro Ride, Inc. and Handicabs, Inc. Letter Agreements to Begin Expending Metro Mobility Transition Money
8. REPORT OF THE TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(Diana Krogstad, Chair)
9. OTHER BUSINESS
10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sally Evert
Chair

**REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
ROLL CALL AND ATTENDANCE SHEET**

DATE: May 2

Member Name Present Vote Vote Vote Vote Vote Vote Vote Vote

ISSUE

Michael Beard - A	✓								
Sharon Feess - A	<i>excused</i>								
Ruth Franklin, Chair - A	✓								
Morgan Grant - P	✓								
Val M. Higgins, Chair - P	✓								
James Hovland - P	✓								
Gary Humphrey - P	✓								
Ruby Hunt - P	✓								
Harry Mares A	✓								
District D - A	.								
Sally Evert	✓								

Visitors

Entzel
DD Wolfson
Erika Newcome
N. Dig
D. Hibbert

Staff

jk *ga* *cs* *dj*
hl *mfi* *da*

mff



Mears Park Centre
230 East 5th Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
612/292-8789

TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

At its regularly scheduled March 2, 1994 the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) approved the following motions:

TAAC recommends that the Regional Transit Board monitor deployment of new Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) accessible vehicles so they are committed to the MTC core area and deployed only in the MTC core service area.

Staff recommends that there be further research on this item and report back to the Policy Committee with a recommendation at a later date.

At its regularly scheduled April 6, 1994 the TAAC approved the following motions:

TAAC recommends that the Regional Transit Board notify ATE Management Company that the lift doors are presently constructed with no back-up for the two bolts, and the board accepts no responsibility for any accidents from the lift door collapsing.

Staff recommends that ATE Management Company or the new Metro Mobility Service Center (MMSA) do a stress test for the lift doors ensuring that the current configuration is safe and will not collapse on any one during use.

TAAC recommends that the MMSA is responsible for administering Metro Mobility standing orders. Requests for standing orders will be granted on a first-come-first-serve basis, and will be implemented as the system capacity allows within the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The MMSA may not discontinue an existing individual standing order solely because of capacity problems. The MMSA will provide a standing order management report to TAAC on a monthly basis.

Staff recommends that this motion be accepted and implemented as quickly as possible, but no later than July 31, 1994.

TAAC recommends that the Metro Mobility appeals committee will be composed of five members of the TAAC including the Chair plus four members. Appeals can only be heard when all five committee members are together to discuss the following issues:

- ADA eligibility - an applicant may appeal a decision of conditional certification or ADA ineligibility.

TAAC Recommendations

April 26, 1994

Page 2

- "No Shows" - a rider may be suspended for 30 days of service after receiving a letter of warning for three trip "no-shows."
- Personal Care Attendants (PCA) - MMSC may require a PCA to accompany a rider on all trips if the rider is determined to be abusive, disruptive, or dangerous.
- Other/General as it relates to policy implementation.

Staff recommends that this motion be accepted and implemented as quickly as possible, but no later than May 31, 1994.

TAAC recommends that all strap cutters on the vehicles be on the ignition key rings so as to be immediately available to the drivers.

Staff follow-up shows that this item has been resolved when the MMSC and the providers came to a mutual agreement as outlined in the attached memorandum from the MMSC to the providers dated April 4, 1994.

TAAC recommends that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) inspectors who inspect Metro Mobility vehicles need to site those vehicles that do not have the strap cutter affixed to the velcro on the driver side visor.

Staff recommends that this motion be forward to the MnDOT Office of Motor Carrier Services, who inspects the Metro Mobility vehicles, requesting that this item be included as part of their vehicle inspection check list.

METRO

MOBILITY

April 4, 1994

TO: Metro Mobility Service Providers
FROM: Keith Sutherland, Maintenance Director
RE: Emergency Strap Cutters

In response to the request of the Regional Transit Board (RTB) and to make consistent the location within the vehicles of the emergency strap cutters, I propose the following:

Effective April 4, 1994 all strap cutters in Metro Mobility vehicles will be located in the center most portion of the drivers sun visor. They will be visible when the visor is in the parked, or up position. They will be affixed to the visor utilizing velcro, so as to assure ease of access, in any given situation.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation in the above matter.


cc: Dan Hibbert
Dave Jacobson/RTB
Provider file

245 East Sixth Street
Suite #200
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Administration: 612-221-1932
Reservations: 612-221-1928
FAX: 612-221-9015
TTY: 612-221-0014



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

**Minutes of the
REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD
April 18, 1994**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Evert, Chair; Michael Beard; Sharon Feess; Ruth Franklin; Morgan Grant; Val Higgins; James Hovland; Gary Humphrey; Ruby Hunt; Harry Mares

OTHERS PRESENT: DeDe Wolfson, Metropolitan Council Member; Tom Sather, Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC); Emil Brandt and Karen Lyons, Metropolitan Council; Bill Blom, Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC); Diane Harberts, Southwest Metro Transit Commission (SWMT); Mark Ryan; Beverley Miller, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority; Arnie Entzel, Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1005; Mark Hoisser, DARTS; Gregory L. Andrews, Judy Hollander, Mark Fuhrmann, Dale Ulrich, Howard Blin, Clarence Shallbetter, Robert LaShomb, Barb Quade, Debra Nelles, Dave Jacobson, Suzanne Hanson, Jan Rosenthal, Dave Jacobson, Mary Fitzgerald, RTB staff

CALL TO ORDER

The chair called the board meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Chambers at the above address. Roll was taken.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The chair said the board will be asked for action under the "Metro Mobility Update." Members were alerted earlier that it may be necessary to ask for action on paratransit issues on very short notice because of the very tight time frame for converting the system. Grant moved and Hovland seconded approval of the agenda with that amendment. The motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hovland moved and Feess seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board approve the following minutes:

Policy Committee Meeting, March 28, 1994
Regional Transit Board Meeting, April 4, 1994
Administration and Finance Committee Meeting, April 11, 1994

The motion was unanimously approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Metro Mobility

Fuhrmann said things are moving very quickly in a positive direction. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the service coordinator was mailed April 6 to approximately 325 interested organizations. This morning the RTB held a pre-proposal conference for potential responders to the RFP.

Regarding the Selection Advisory Committee, which is charged to make a recommendation next month on the award of the contract for the service coordinator, will be composed of representatives from each of the following stakeholders:

- RTB staff (Mark Fuhrmann)
- Metro Council staff
- Metropolitan Center for Independent Living
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), Office of Transit
- State Department of Administration
- County program staff
- RTB's Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (two representatives)

With respect to the transition planning, frequent meetings are being held to assure that the transition is as smooth as possible. Higgins expressed reservations about the inclusion of a Mn/DOT representative on the selection committee.

Mayflower Letter Agreement to Begin Expending Metro Mobility Transition Money

Evert distributed a memorandum dated April 18, 1994. Hunt asked how the \$250,000 for computer software and hardware to be used in the reservation, scheduling and dispatching function relates to the new coordinator and what will happen to the ATE system. Fuhrmann said the existing software is owned by ATE. Because we are moving in the direction of a decentralized system, the providers will have to spend those dollars for the hardware and software. The Metro Mobility Service Center's (MMSC) responsibility will not entail day-to-day functions. Staff hopes the proposals for the MMSC will reflect that reduced scope of responsibility and, therefore, lower costs. Hunt asked if RTB will also fund another scheduler for trips that cross zones. Fuhrmann said RTB will fund Mayflower to schedule and dispatch those trips. The other providers' pre-transition costs would be less Mayflower's because they are smaller, but the cost of computer software is fixed regardless of the provider's size. Hunt asked if it will be mandatory that the systems be compatible. Fuhrmann said that is a key component in discussions with the three providers; that is the direction we are moving. The contracts have not been executed and negotiations of that area are continuing.

Hunt asked, since there is urgency to completing Mayflower's contract, if the other providers have their systems operational in time. Fuhrmann said their contracts are not as critical because Metro Ride and Handicabs are small enough to do it primarily by hand during the change-over with the backup system in place today.

In response to Hovland's question about how the dollar figure was developed, Fuhrmann said it was developed in discussions with Mayflower Contract Services. It reflects the projected cost of software, the necessary hardware, staff training, and contains a ten-percent contingency factor. Mayflower generated the numbers and Fuhrmann reviewed them. Since most of the figures are related to the computer, he was able to compare the reasonableness of the those costs with the costs incurred recently by Southwest Metro Transit and determined that they are comparable.

Hovland asked who will own the equipment. After some discussion, Fuhrmann said since the software is not proprietary, those licenses should be in the name of the Regional Transit Board. Should a provider terminate service those licenses and the hardware will be in RTB's name. The documents will be drafted to stipulate that RTB will own the equipment. Fuhrmann said it will be absolutely imperative that the MMSC be able to hook into any of the three systems. All three providers arrived at consensus on that point.

Evert said RTB thought it had the most efficient system with one provider. This will not be as efficient and we will probably have more dollars out there when we do three systems rather than one. Responding to Grant, Fuhrmann said it will take another \$250,000 to outfit the remaining providers. Mares said staff should provide the board with an estimate of how much will be requested later in addition to the \$250,000. Fuhrmann said the \$250,000 is targeted only for the computer portion. The Mayflower's preliminary budget indicates amount they will expend a like amount to take on those new responsibilities. Staff is in the process now of going through that item line-by-line item because their budget projection unrealistically assumes nothing exists today at the MMSC and that they will have to purchase a new system. Staff will identify what materials and support equipment can be passed on at little or no cost. Since the new MMSC will not dispatch, Wolfson asked if some of the hardware can be distributed among the other providers. Fuhrmann said that is staff's intent.

Beard asked where in the budget these funds will come from and where the board can expect a shortfall later. Fuhrmann said at this time the savings incurred in the new proposal should fund the start-up. It is not known what the results will be of breaking this system into component pieces. Hovland moved and Hunt seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to negotiate and execute a letter agreement with Mayflower Contract Services, Inc. to expend an amount not to exceed \$250,000 toward the implementation of a paratransit reservation, scheduling and dispatching system prior to execution of an amended contract.

The motion was unanimously approved. Andrews said the judge approved the settlement agreement on April 15. The final approval is expected shortly.

Legislative Update

LaShomb reviewed his April 18 staff report that was distributed before the meeting. On Wednesday, April 20, the conference committee is expected to resolve the governance issues. He reviewed the status of the high speed bus proposal. Funding for operations will be very difficult. If the "Vision" is approved the High Speed Bus Coalition will come to RTB for operating money because they did not get it from the Legislature.

Hunt asked Sather about the retroactive payments from Congress on I-394 that were discussed several months ago. Sather said MTC received those funds for 1993 and \$2.4 million was applied to the final settlement.

MEMBERS' REPORTS

Transit Signage

Evert said this issue arose at the April 4 board meeting and at that time staff was not prepared to speak to it. After reviewing the history and after all the meetings, it appears there has been some miscommunication and the board must now decide how to move forward. Blin reviewed the April 12 staff report. MTC has initiated another market research study on the bus stop logo.

Evert said the board could pass a motion that:

1. Approves the single logo and lets the MTC complete the survey; or
2. Adopts the bus face logo today.

Originally she did not endorse the survey since it polls current riders but since MTC is running a marketing campaign with the theme that they listen to their customers it may be better to complete the survey. That survey will not be the deciding factor. There might be other alternatives as well. Franklin said it was stated earlier in board discussion that there are two phases of the survey; one is complete and one is starting. In that case, if the board agrees there should be a consistent type of logo on all bus stops, would it be necessary to complete the survey and what would it cost to discontinue it? Sather said the \$14,950 was signed in January 1994 and is one-third complete. If this body is pre-disposed to the bus front there is no need for further surveying work. There is a question of whether the "T" represents MTC or is a regional symbol for transit. A number of other providers, including Southwest Metro Transit, Medicine Lake Lines and the Roseville Circulator, use it. In the metropolitan area, the "T" represents transit.

Humphrey said surveys often turn out the way the contractor chooses; \$14,000 could buy a lot of signs. He asked if customers are surveyed on what brand of bus is purchased and recommended that the international logo be adopted for transit as it has been for highway signage. Higgins said he had thought the issue

was settled and asked if the "T" is the only symbol available to the opt-out communities. As liaison to the Providers Advisory Committee (PAC), he attended every meeting in the last two years and found there was fairly universal acceptance of the bus front logo. MTC has consistently resisted it. He had asked Blin to find the pertinent meeting minutes. Blin said this was first brought up at in 1992 and twice since then. The 1992 RTB's Marketing Committee decided to use the international bus symbol and MTC proceeded in that direction. It was only recently that MTC went back to proposing the "T." Higgins recommended that the other providers also have an opportunity to address the board. MTC is the largest provider, but this is a regional system.

Evert said the process should have been moved back to the board when the request changed to a regional logo rather than replacement of MTC signs. Sather said that when the bus front logos were used on the street they were difficult for drivers and riders.

Grant noted that the wheelchair logo was not included on either logo to designate accessible vehicles. He strongly favors the international symbol but people with visual impairments might find it difficult to identify. The "T" is bolder. The color was always red and that may also be a problem. The chair said the color questions do not have to be resolved today. (Grant was excused to attend a legislative meeting.)

Entzel spoke in support of the "T" logo. The union's concern is with the drivers' responsibility to educate the public. It will create problems for people with visual impairments and people with mental illnesses. For many years people have associated transit and the white "T." Visitors have seen hundreds of "Ts" and know what they represent.

The chair said the board has not yet taken any action. In response to members' questions, Sather said MTC is dealing with this because the board brought it up. As they went back to work with the graphics people, it was still viewed as an MTC project that could be taken regionally as stated in RTB's October 18 letter. As the scope of the work changed, the project should not have resided at the MTC. The reality is that MTC believed they were on the course laid out by the RTB. RTB had different expectations of the end product. The Illium Study recommended regional signage and MTC went ahead with some of the signs, but they did not work and MTC went back to the drawing board. The consulting firm asked what was important and the "T" began to be perceived as a Goliath to dominate the Davids. He does not believe MTC should withdraw the "T" before the customer is asked what to do. Beard said he would prefer to err in the direction of having too much information, but a survey depends on how the questions are framed. He is concerned about the proposal for a sign beneath the regional, rectangular sign with the names of the other providers. He asked if existing signs provide a means of identifying route number.

The chair said a question of privilege had been raised. Higgins asked for an opportunity for the opt-out communities to respond as an issue of fairness. The chair ruled that the board would continue to work through the list of people who indicated they wish to speak.

Mares agreed with Sather about the importance of communicating with the public; however, this board is responsible for looking at the regional goals of promoting a uniform image. The American Public Transit Association (APTA) wishes to develop a uniform stop sign throughout North America. Feess, who is the RTB liaison to the MTC, said MTC believes this is their money to use as they choose. At their meeting last week there was some resentment expressed because RTB is "meddling" in their affairs. RTB should respond to that. When the budget allocation was passed no direction accompanied it. As a board RTB must be more specific when we do some of these things. She suggested waiting until APTA comes forward with their recommendation and not put the money into all new signs at this time. (Feess was excused to attend another meeting.)

Hovland suggested that the matter be tabled. He asked if there is any immediacy to the matter since two-thirds of the stops have never had signs. Franklin asked what the deadline is for using the ISTEA funds. As the regional transit authority, RTB should make a decision and move forward. Responding to Hovland's questions, Blin said the bus logo is used in Europe and on several transit systems in this country. APTA appears to be moving toward it. Hovland said there has been no mention of cost. He asked if the plan is to replace all the bus stop signs. Sather said this issue developed because MTC came to RTB for approval of the ISTEA grant application. Approximately 12,000 signs would be replaced. In response to Hovland's question about people being confused by the temporary signs, Sather said they were used on sample routes. There were different sizes and shapes to test recognition. None of them made the cut. There was discussion of the variety of trips people take. Hovland said it is hard to believe people would get confused about where they are standing, regardless of which logo is on the sign. If two-thirds of the bus stops don't have any signs at all, it doesn't matter what you put up because people will go to the same place. Sather said that assumes people are creatures of habit. If their street is dug up, they will look for a bus stop sign. Hovland asked if MTC objects to the use of the international logo. Sather said their concern is to get customer input. In a project this size, a small study to gauge customer reaction is probably appropriate. By the time APTA adopts anything, these signs will be old and ready for removal.

Miller said the suburban areas are devoid of signage and have applied annually for it. This has been an uphill battle. The RTB's Providers Advisory Committee has been meeting over the past two years and have made their recommendation. They could not continue waiting for the region so they used the bus face on the sign and it worked. She takes issue with the study because Southwest Metro's experience was very positive. If this is delayed a time limit should be imposed on it.

Harberts said Minnesota Valley Transit supported the international symbol. In January 1994 the providers were shown the "T" and questioned where it came from. The question is what we are trying to accomplish? She has 30 non-English-speaking riders who will use the reverse commute service. The international symbol is easier to describe on the phone. This region is becoming more international, in part because of the Mall of America. MTC representatives have said strangers think the "T" stands for taxicabs. One element of increasing

usage is a certain level of comfort. The region is changing and this is a metropolitan regional service with 39 providers. According to the regional policy, we will remove one hurdle by creating a regional identity. She has severe reservations about the survey because of the way the questions were posed and how it is being conducted. The opt-outs have been written and spoken to Sather about it. Part of the survey is of drivers, but only MTC drivers were included. She encouraged the board to take its leadership role.

Returning to Hovland's remarks, Humphrey said if General Mills put Cheerios on the table they would sell without an effort to introduce and market them. This is a matter of picking something that is more universally recognized and going with a marketing plan that introduces it. Beard said the provider's logo on the sign indicates roughly where the bus is going. There was discussion of whether it would be workable to use two signs. Beard said the goal is to make transit as user friendly as possible, which will become more important in the next few years. Speaking as a member of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau in Scott County, the impact of the Mall of America visitors on that area has been very great.

Hunt said she does not have confidence in the survey. There is great reluctance to change and it is up to people in leadership positions to make those changes. There is enough information available and, while the process may have been flawed in assigning the responsibility, a process was followed. She moved and Humphrey seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board direct the Metropolitan Transit Commission to develop the "bus logo" as the regional sign for the Twin Cities metropolitan area with the understanding that the size, color, symbols and text remain uniform on the 16-inch by 16-inch sign, regardless of the service area.

The motion was unanimously approved.

New Service

Humphrey noted that he met with the Minnesota State Zoo and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority. Hourly bus service will start from the Burnsville Center, Apple Valley, the Minnesota Zoo, and the Mall of America. The service will run from May 28 through Labor Day.

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Franklin reported on the recommendations approved at the committee's April 11 meeting.

January and February 1994 Financial Statements

Franklin moved and Mares seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board receive the January and February 1994 financial statements and direct that they be placed on file.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Metropolitan Transit Education Plan Implementation

Franklin moved and Beard seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to expend \$94,400 from the Metropolitan Transit Education Program for the production and airing of radio spots, as well as the production and display of billboards.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Requests for Capital Funding from DARTS and the City of Shorewood

Franklin moved and Beard seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to execute capital funding agreements for the following projects:

1. Provide an amount not to exceed \$160,000 to DARTS, Inc., for the purchase of five buses; and
2. Provide an amount not to exceed \$28,150 to the City of Shorewood for park-and-ride spaces.

Regarding the Shorewood recommendation, Higgins said he empathizes with the city's problem, but the board should look deeper. In effect, this is a 17-space park and ride lot. The others are far bigger and filled to capacity. RTB's contribution of \$28,150 is not a great amount, but this is a totally inadequate park-and-ride facility. Franklin said it is an 80-car lot and in the evening and on weekends RTB will have the use of it. Blin said the spaces can be used for park-and-ride during work hours. The city came to RTB last fall asking for a reduction of their property tax feathering and were told RTB cannot lower their levy. They then asked that ridership be increased. This and this is one technique for doing that. Higgins moved to table the motion. There was no second. The motion was approved. (Higgins opposed.)

Approval of Amendments to 1993 Minnesota Department of Transportation 1993 Contracts for Minnesota Rideshare and Travel Demand Management

Franklin moved and Mares seconded:

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to amend contracts for the Minnesota Rideshare, Contract No. 69480; and Travel Demand Management, Contract No. 69481, to receive federal funds for an eight-month period from October 1, 1993

through May 31, 1994. These amendments would increase the total cost for Contract No. 69480 by \$541,000 and the federal share by \$433,000; and the total cost for Contract No. 69481 by \$167,000 and the federal share by \$133,000; and

That the Regional Transit Board authorize the executive director to amend Contract No. 69481 for Travel Demand Management to receive \$49,000 in federal funds for a five-month period from January 1, 1994 to May 31, 1994 for the Downtown Transportation Management Organization (DTMO) and agree to pass through the funds to the City of Minneapolis for DTMO expenses. The total of federal funds in the amendment to contract No. 69481, including Travel Demand Management funds and DTMO funds, is \$182,000.

The motion was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

On a point of order, Higgins raised questions about DARTS' request for larger buses. At the hearings, Metro Mobility users said they want smaller vehicles, not larger. Vehicles on the street rarely have more than one passenger. There being no other business, Beard moved and Humphrey seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and accurate record of the Regional Transit Board's meeting of April 18, 1994.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Fitzgerald
Secretary of the Board

Approved by the Regional Transit Board on the second day of May 1994.