



Minnesota Journal

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A publication of the Citizens League

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Volume 9, Number 8
August 18, 1992

Transportation planning must look at region as system, weigh low density

Editor's note: In recent years the tough decisions about transportation facilities have tended to come up out of context—as project decisions rather than as system decisions. What follows is a kind of briefing paper, intended to provide some relevant history, some of the essential facts about the region's transportation facilities and travel behavior, and some understanding of the policies that are also a part of the system.

It takes an effort now to recall what getting around was like in the Twin Cities area before, say, 1950.

Almost everything was grids and grades. Cars and streetcars could cross the city on arterial streets (mostly north/south in Minneapo-

Transp.

by Ted Kolderie

lis, east/west in St. Paul). But to go diagonally you had to zigzag your way through a street pattern laid out in blocks. All streets crossed at grade, controlled by signs and signals. Streets also crossed railroad tracks at grade. Trains always seemed to come at rush hour, delaying traffic and infuriating drivers.

Planning for diagonal routes began in the 1920s: four of them in Minneapolis—northwest along West Broadway, southeast along Hiawatha Avenue, northeast, and southwest. So did planning for bypasses, since as any city grows there is a desire to go around rather than to go through. The idea

of a "ring street" around the downtown appeared in Minneapolis thinking in the '20s.

In the 1930s the Minnesota Highway Department began the belt line—"Lilac Way"—west and south of Minneapolis partly for cattle trucks on their way to the yards in South St. Paul. The belt line featured the first grade-separations, "underpassing" Lyndale Avenue and other streets.

The depression and World War II held back implementation. A few projects (the Cedar/Franklin grade separation in Minneapolis, for example) got done in the 1950s. But grade-separated, sig-

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Effort seeks faster buses, car pools

by Dana Schroeder

Aaron Isaacs figures one of the best advertisements for riding the bus or carpooling is for drivers riding alone in their cars—creeping along a congested highway during rush hour—to see a bus whizzing by on a special shoulder bus lane. Or for drivers lined up behind a freeway ramp meter to see a car pool skirt the meter on a special high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) bypass lane.

It's Isaacs' job to help create just such scenarios in congested spots around the Twin Cities. As manager of special projects for the Metropolitan Transit commission (MTC), he manages Team Transit, a joint effort of the MTC, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Metropolitan Council, and the Regional Transit Board.

The MTC and MnDOT initiated Team Transit in 1991 to increase bus and other high-occupancy vehicle speed on MnDOT roadways by eliminating bottlenecks and improving transit access. The project has since been expanded to include city streets.

"We're not doing anything that's technologically new or unusual,"

Transp.

League urges election process reforms aimed at open, fair, competitive races

Editor's note: The following excerpts are taken from the newly released Citizens League report, Reform the Election Process, Restore the Public Trust, June 1992.

For elected office in Minnesota must become more open, fair and competitive. Power has shifted to those candidates in the best position to take advantage of large campaign contributions and well-

organized groups with parochial interests.

Races cannot be open, fair and competitive when:

- the public subsidies intended to moderate incumbents' advantages in campaign financing actually benefit those already in office;

- policymakers draw election-dis-

Govt.

trict boundaries aimed at preserving the status quo instead of giving candidates balanced opportunities to get elected;

- candidates face established incumbents with ample campaign treasuries, financed with significant contributions from special interests;

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New framework needed as old paradigms give way

Contradictory and confusing developments seem the order of the day internationally:

● Multinational corporations seem to be losing their national identities and becoming truly global in orientation.

● The former Yugoslavian republics break away from the central government and immediately apply for membership in the European Community, which itself is moving toward a single economic marketplace and a common currency.

● Ever stronger sinews of international communication—from telephone and fax to electronic mail, television, and bustling international trade and capital flows—seem to be counterweighted by aggressive pressure for ethnic distinction and autonomy.

Conventional wisdom, it seems, is ill-prepared to deal with this emerging world.

In the economic sphere, some observers now see a world of city-states competing in a globalized economy. In fact, a number of cities and counties now have overseas trade offices to push their products. They are setting up “people-to-people” exchanges to facilitate global communication and trade. Various analysts are predicting the date at which natural resource-poor Japan will overtake the United States in gross domestic product. The increasing stress on incomes in the lower third of our society may be heightened by linking the U.S., Canadian, and Mexican economies more closely.

Region needs economic, governing vision for 2015

From the draft Metro 2015 Vision and Goals, *Metropolitan Council*, June 26, 1992.

For many years the region has been a good place to live, work and establish businesses...But in recent years a number of clouds have appeared on the economic horizon. There are questions about how well we are educating our labor force; the computer industry in the region is in decline;...the Minnesota business climate has been soundly criticized by the private sector; global competition is increasing...

It is important to have a vision of what we want the regional economy to look like. (These are) goals that can help shape that vision for the 2015 economy:

● The region is recognized as a major player in the global economy, based on: A highly educated work force with skills important to the regional economy...A quality of life that attracts and keeps both businesses and a highly skilled and adaptable work force...Infrastructure (that) supports regional economic activity... ● The region's economy experiences steady

growth... ● Communities in the region are more willing to cooperate in seeking business, jobs and revenues based on regional interests... ● The region has more corporate headquarters... ● The tax burden of the region's residents and businesses ranks lower than in 1992 as compared to other metropolitan areas...

Government in the early 1990s has fallen on hard times...People and governmental units need to think of themselves as being part of one region...

Viewpoint

by Lyle Wray

In the demographic and social sphere, the recent census shows major shifts in family structure and distribution of population and income. It seems unlikely that the usual proposed remedies of more professional staff and more financial aid will be adequate for some of the social challenges we face.

Within metropolitan areas much present commuting is around the urban centers and not just to and from them. The old paradigm of central cities and residential sub-

urban organization, to name but a few. There is a danger that we will attempt to escape this discomfort with symptomatic rather than systematic solutions.

A key question we face in both metropolitan and national contexts is how to build inclusive multicultural societies within the economic and social pressures we face. We now must face this challenge within an economically interdependent global marketplace bolstered by unprecedented tele-

spectful of distinctive cultures and histories. No doubt such a third way would require significant shifts in many of our social institutions and attitudes.

It has been said that two measures of leadership are telling people what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear and the ability to win acceptance of short-term social pain fairly for long-term gain. Given the apparent corrosion of social will and trust, building a common credible framework of values and institutions for our future needs to be on a short list of leadership challenges. Such a task is surely daunting in a world of accelerating change in which appeal to difference and division may well serve in the short term to palliate insecurities and to externalize our challenges.

Citizens meeting face to face to understand and grow surely will need to be an ingredient in this quest. Fostering such dialogue is certainly a worthy effort for public-minded organizations to undertake.

Searching for common understanding and for binding ideas is a slow process. Perhaps, as one example, a common concern for our environment might serve as a base on which we might build. Building on areas of emotional and intellectual understanding that simultaneously draw on very deep cultural roots in our society and resonate around the globe might be one avenue to walk in building a multicultural society and world.

Lyle Wray is executive director of the Citizens League.

Editors urge election reform, rap public financing

On Balance

“Political campaigns are designedly made into emotional orgies which endeavor to distract attention from the real issues involved, and they actually paralyze what slight powers of cerebration man can normally muster.”—J.H. Robinson

nilly subvert the election system.”

Hibbing Tribune said (July 30) Minnesotans should “not despair” over the high expense of state prisons but should demand information on how well the state’s programs work compared to other states. **Brainerd Dispatch** asked (July 30) why Minnesota has to “be best in everything, from high taxes to the feeding and care of prison inmates.” **Republican Eagle** said (Aug. 4) the corrections department “needs to explore any and all options toward reducing the costs of incarceration.”

International Falls Daily Journal agreed (July 30) with newly appointed commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) Jim Gustafson that the IRRRB should focus on “economic development not improvements to communities’ infrastructures.” **Duluth News-Tribune** agreed (July 31) saying the Iron Range will “need another economic base” in the future when minable iron ore is gone.

Duluth News-Tribune applauded (July 20) Gov. Carlson for instructing state agencies to establish goals and measurable standards to

demonstrate that public money will be well spent. **Free Press** said (July 13) Gov. Carlson’s proposal to measure how well public money is spent “deserves the support of DFL legislators.”

Bemidji Pioneer said (July 12) implementing the University of Minnesota regents’ decision to expand the Crookston campus to a four-year college should be done carefully so the “mission of the existing colleges, including Bemidji State University, is not diminished.” **Princeton Union-Eagle** called (July 16) the U of M’s tuition increase “regrettable but necessary.” **Duluth News-Tribune** said (July 16) “political pressure to hold down (higher education) tuition” is not an answer to a higher education system in need of basic reforms.

Worthington Daily Globe said (Aug. 1) units of governments could privatize many of their operations to reduce taxpayer expense and help the private sector thrive. **St. Cloud Times** said (July 23) local governments should have more control over both raising money and spending it for “purposes their citizens want, not as legislators dictate.”

The Minnesota Journal

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The MINNESOTA JOURNAL (ISSN 0741-9449) is a publication of the Citizens League, a nonprofit nonpartisan Twin Cities area public affairs organization, 708 S. Third St., Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55415, Becky Malkerson, president. Articles and commentary are drawn from a broad range of perspectives and do not necessarily reflect League positions on policy questions. The Journal is published once a month. Second class postage paid at Minneapolis, MN.

Annual subscription rate for nonmembers for 12 issues. Orders may be placed at 612/338-0791 or by mail at the above address.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Minnesota Journal, 708 S. Third St., Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

Poor households face housing crisis

From A Place to Call Home: The Crisis in Housing for the Poor, *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, Washington, D.C., August 1992.

(M)ost poor households in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area pay extremely large portions of their limited incomes for housing costs...Under standards established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing is considered affordable for a low-income household if it consumes no more than 30 percent of the household’s income. Yet five of six poor renter households in the Twin Cities area—83 percent—paid at least 30 percent of income for housing in 1989...

Poor homeowners in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area were as hard-pressed as poor renters. Nearly 60 percent of all poor homeowners spent at least half of their income on housing, while seven of every eight—87 percent—spent at least 30 percent of income on housing...

The housing crisis facing low-income households in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area can be attributed to a decline in recent years in the number of low-cost rental units available in the private market, falling household incomes, increasing housing costs, and cutbacks in federal housing assistance...

Several state and local government

International Falls Journal said (July 23) in dealing with the financially troubled Northwest Airlines the state “should have its parachute ready to bail out if it looks like it’s headed for a crash.” **Rochester Post-Bulletin** said (Aug. 1) state officials need to “be more skeptical” about using public dollars in support of private companies. **Free Press** said (July 21) legislators should not “provide such a lavish financial package to any company” because taxpayers can end up paying the consequences. **Hibbing Tribune** hoped (July 21) airline officials will “continue using the same survival skills that brought them this far against the odds.”

Star Tribune said (July 31) efforts that resulted in opponents for most legislative races this year are evidence of the “health of Minnesota’s political parties.” **Brainerd Dispatch** said (July 27) the choice provided by competition in legislative races this year is “perhaps the saving grace of our often-criticized (two-party) system.”

Duluth News-Tribune said (July 28) the use of the property tax should be limited as long as it is “unevenly imposed and doesn’t truly measure ability to pay.”

Hibbing Tribune said (July 20) the state should take the creation of mercury pollution seriously, pinpoint the sources and eliminate them.

Report calls for broader sales tax base, local option

From Model Revenue System, Minnesota Department of Revenue, July 1992.

The sales tax, not counting excise taxes, should provide 20-25 percent of total state and local taxes... Some increase in the sales tax share would relieve pressure on the income tax and property tax, which are both at or above the 30 percent maximum...

(The sales tax) should include taxation of the following products: ● clothing (only five states exempt clothing)... The sales tax would be less regressive with clothing taxed and a revenue-neutral reduction in the tax rate), ● newspapers, ● gasoline, and ● other products, including textbooks, non-prescription analgesics and baby products...

Services that are provided primarily to consumers, not to businesses, should be subject to the sales tax, except for specifically-listed exemptions. The major category that should be exempted from the

Services that are provided primarily to businesses, not to consumers, should be exempted from sales tax... Taxation of these services provided to businesses would create "pyramiding" or multiple taxation,

ages (9.0 percent) should be eliminated.

As base-broadening steps are adopted, the current sales tax should be reduced...

A local option sales tax should be one option for local revenue diversification. The local option sales tax should have the following features: ● uniform rate applied to the state sales tax base, ● state administration of the tax, ● no separate use tax for local jurisdictions, and ● county-level tax to reduce geographic fiscal disparities in the sales tax base...

(T)ax exempt property that is not constitutionally exempt should pay a fee equal to the city or township levy for police and fire protection and streets in lieu of property taxes...

(S)ate policy should encourage a greater reliance on own-source revenue for cities and townships.

"As base-broadening steps are adopted, the current sales tax rate should be reduced."

general sales tax is health services... Some that should be taxed are: ● vehicle repair and repair contracts, ● other repair and repair services, ● barber and beauty services, and ● artistic performances by tax-exempt organizations...

with both the service and the final product taxed.

There should be only one state sales tax rate. Different rates for such products as farm machinery (2.5 percent) and alcoholic beverages...

State economic stance shifted in '80s

From Minnesota's Economic Growth 1980 to 1990, Office of the State Auditor, July 30, 1992.

The economic crisis which afflicted Minnesota's agriculture and mining industries during the 1980s and an influx of low-income families into Minnesota during that decade have combined to cause a fundamental shift in Minnesota's economic condition relative to the United States...

past decade...

Not only did the number of Minnesotans living in poverty increase during the past decade, the state's increase was significantly more pronounced than the national average. Even more alarming is the dramatic increase in the number of Minnesota children living in poverty relative to the U.S. and the 11 neighboring states in the Midwest region.

ing the same period of time...

Despite a severe recession in the early part of the decade... Minnesota experienced a healthy rate of job growth... During the 1980s, the number of nonagricultural wage and salary jobs in Minnesota increased from 1,687,398 to 2,038,425, an increase of 21 percent. Minnesota's job growth was slightly better than the 20 percent job growth for the nation as a whole...

A review of the regional disparities in Minnesota's economic indicators suggests that our state's below average growth rates in per capita income may be largely attributable to the problems of our agricultural and taconite industries during the past decade...

Minnesota's overall job growth during the past decade, especially its growth in manufacturing employment, contradicts any contention that the state's business environment is responsible for the adverse economic trends identified in this report.

The economic trends of the 1980s help explain the difficult financial circumstances facing many state and local officials. As demands for public services continue to increase, more and more Minnesotans are unwilling or unable to support the tax increases necessary to meet those demands.

Family ties

From Population Notes, Minnesota Planning, May 1992.

Although married-couple families are not as dominant as they used to be, they are still the most common household type. In 1990, 57.2 percent of Minnesota households were husband-wife families. More than half of all husband-wife families do not have any children under 18 living with them. Overall, the number of married couples grew 5 percent during the past decade, well below the increase found for other kinds of households.

One-person households are the second most common household type, accounting for a quarter of all Minnesota households.

Single-parent families with a male householder grew 83 percent during the last decade, while female single-parent families increased 34 percent. Together (these) families now make up 6.8 percent of the households in Minnesota... In 1990, four-fifths of single-parent families had a female householder.

Thirty-four Minnesota counties lost households between 1980 and 1990. The fastest growth occurred in suburbs of the Twin Cities: Dakota and Scott Counties.

Reform

Continued from Page 1

● the time needed to campaign and serve in office becomes a full-time requirement, preventing from running those people with other job and family obligations.

Recommendations

To restore real choices to the citizenry and reclaim broad participation in public service, we must change the system.

● The Legislature should place on the election ballot a proposal to establish a bipartisan redistricting commission to draw legislative district boundaries every decade. Local units of government should use redistricting commissions consisting of persons who are not themselves members of the elected body.

● The Legislature should change the rules of the Senate and the House to require the Senate Committee on Committees and the Speaker of the House, who control appointments of committee chairs, to rotate chairs of committees in their respective houses.

Veteran committee chairs tend to receive heavy support from special-interest groups and can raise campaign money relatively easily. This power base of the incumbents deters potential candidates.

● The Legislature should replace the existing check-off system for financing public subsidies of campaigns with an arrangement that equitably distributes public dollars among candidates. Candidates who apply for the public subsidy should demonstrate some threshold level of financial support from individuals residing within their own districts.

To avoid distributing uneven amounts of public financing, the state could replace the system of taxpayer check-offs to the State Elections Campaign Fund with an appropriation from the state general fund that is divided equally between the two candidates who win the primary election for a given seat. In addition, we believe candidates should demonstrate a level of support from within their own district.

● The Legislature should prohibit PAC contributions to individual candidates but continue to allow

such contributions to political parties.

For purposes of PAC contributions to party units, the legislative caucuses would be ineligible.

With the shift to the party as the recipient of PAC contributions, as we suggest, it will be necessary to change the amount parties may spend on candidates. The existing limits are inadequate. The Legislature will have to establish some limits to prevent what would otherwise be undue influence on the part of the parties over the candidates in the elective system.

● The Legislature should lower the limit on contributions from individuals to legislative candidates during election years.

Limits on contributions by individuals to Senate and House candidates should be reduced to \$1,000 and \$500, respectively.

● The Legislature should prohibit candidates who run unopposed in both the primary and general elections from receiving direct public financing for their campaigns.

Candidates who have opponents in the primary but not in the general election should remain eligible for this public subsidy.

● The Legislature should prohibit the formation of more than one campaign committee for legislative candidates.

The so-called "friends of" committees allow legislative candidates to accumulate additional campaign dollars beyond what is allowed for their principal campaign committee.

● The Legislature should require candidates to submit to the state's general fund any balance above zero remaining in the funds of their principal campaign committees at the end of the election year.

● The Legislature should prohibit transfers of funds from one campaign fund to another.

● The Legislature should change the law that prohibits contributions to any candidate for the Legislature while the Legislature is in session, to allow contributions to non-incumbents.

● The Legislature should require that any election-year mailing sent by a legislative candidate following the close of a legislative ses-



sion, or any district-wide mailing paid for by that candidate's campaign committee, be counted as a campaign expenditure.

● The Legislature should allow the expansion of a system of public subsidies to campaigns for other general-purpose elected offices, such as county boards and city councils.

A system of public subsidies could be beneficial in those jurisdictions where the costs of campaigns are high and where contribution and expenditure limits would make sense.

● The Legislature should encourage private and public employers to recognize the value of public service inherent in running for elected office and to accommodate employees seeking their party's nomination or election to office.

● Elected members of local units of government should avoid scheduling meetings at hours which preclude officials from holding other jobs.

● The Legislature should avoid heavy scheduling of meetings and other activities during normal work hours during the interim.

To help ensure that interim meetings do not require full-time legislators, we recommend that: the Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House assume responsibility for the committee schedules proposed by committee chairs in the respective houses.

● To ensure that legislators with other occupations can continue to serve, the Legislature should take steps to maximize legislators' time spent on policy-making duties and limit the amount of time spent on providing services to individual constituents. These steps include:

(1) referring constituent requests to ombudsmen or similar offices in state government as appropriate, such as the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation or the consumer division of the state attorney general's office;

(2) establishing other department ombudsmen where appropriate;

(3) declining to offer assistance for requests that involve ignoring or bending rules set by state agencies or other authorities; and

(4) establishing an office of constituent services, similar to the House of Representatives constituent services division of the DFL caucus, to allow legislators to shift the responsibility for these services elsewhere, to the extent practical, and concentrate instead on their policy-making role.

● Organizations of persons of color, women's groups and community organizations should identify, encourage and develop more candidates from the traditionally underrepresented populations to run for office.

● Civic groups, major political parties and other organizations should support opportunities to educate children and young adults, particularly girls and persons of color, about citizenship and leadership, including the process of running for office.

● Persons with authority over appointments to boards and commissions should increase the number of women and persons of color appointees.

● Minnesota's political parties should actively involve persons of color in party activities to increase their participation in the political process and empower them as citizens.

Region

Continued from Page 1

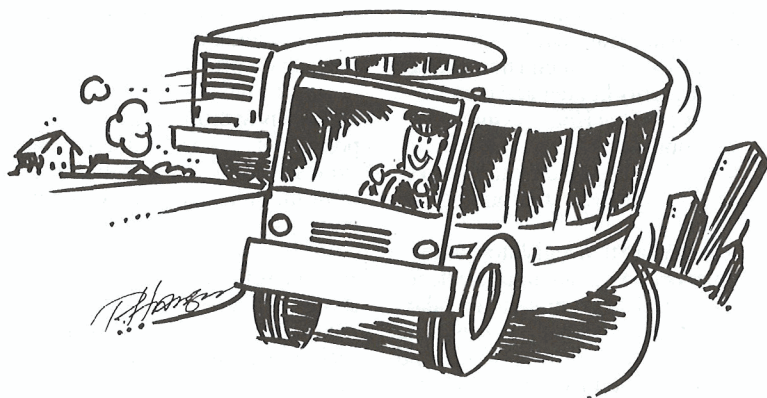
nal-free travel around the growing region came only with the Interstate program after 1956.

The Interstate routes were laid out not on the diagonal but east/west (I-94 Chicago to Seattle) and north/south (I-35 Dallas to Duluth, split so Minneapolis and St. Paul could each have a route). The radials were laid out to provide most of a ring route around central Minneapolis. And the plan included a new circumferential (I-494/694) built partly over Highway 100, except on the west side, where it was built as a new north-south route five miles further west.

The Interstate routes, however, would not be enough. Land-use and transportation studies in the late '50s showed a need still for the diagonal routes: for three more freeways, in fact, south of the Minneapolis downtown.

A late addition to the Interstate system produced a new radial (I-394) west of Minneapolis. Apart from that, and from two quasi-freeways built by Hennepin County (62 and 18), completion of the system depended on upgrading existing state routes gradually to freeway standard. The reaction against urban freeways that developed in the 1960s blocked new route locations and slowed the upgrading of existing routes.

In south Minneapolis only 35W got built. Its overloading today is a direct result of the successful opposition in the '70s to the construction of the Southwest Diagonal and a Hiawatha Avenue route. The traffic has to go somewhere.



Flexibility.

In the end the Twin Cities area developed a regional grid of relatively small freeways providing a high level of access to property and service to people regionwide, operating at quite a high level of performance compared to other major urban regions.

"Given the reluctance to restrict what creates the demand for travel, it is not unreasonable for policymakers to be cautious about what new transit facilities to supply."

Transit has felt the impact. By the late 1960s the private system was at the end of its rope, and in 1970 the public bought it. The Metropolitan Transit Commission's plan for a subway rail system, intended to shape development into higher densities, came to the Legislature in 1973. It was not approved. The Legislature decided to expand and upgrade the bus system instead.

The rail idea returned in the early 1980s as light rail (LRT), promoted conspicuously, as in other cities, by an aggressive public official. In contrast to other cities, however, the proposal was again for a regionwide system rather than for a low-cost demonstration line. That LRT proposal came to the Legislature in 1989. It was not approved.

Underneath the Legislature's reluctance to say yes to rail is essentially a concern about the feasibility of a high-capacity transit system in an increasingly low-density region.

Most of our region has been built

in the auto era—the cars and new roads both encouraging and being encouraged by the growth first of homes, then of shopping and offices, in the suburbs. As development spread out, densities fell. Vehicle ownership rose. We now have almost as many vehicles in

the region as people.

Our 875,000 households are about evenly divided: half east and half west of a line north/south through downtown Minneapolis. Most of the job growth, however, has been west of that line, to the south. The result is travel—now about 9 million person-trips a day. About two percent of these are on a public bus. Two out of three trips begin or end at home. A growing proportion of the trips both begin and end in the suburbs.

About 15 percent (1.4 million) of the trips are to work. About 10 percent of these are to the downtowns. At most 10 percent of the work trips are by public bus. The trip to work is longer now but does not take longer, as more people drive (which is faster). The average work trip takes about 20 minutes in our region.

All this is quite popular. It is what the urban consultant Anthony Downs calls the dominant American vision of the good life. It gives most workers wide access to jobs, and gives employers access to workers. For most people it broadens life choices. Service is fast, private, on-demand and nonstop.

These values are powerfully reflected in public policy: We do not tell people where to live and work or tell employers when to open and close. (Common work schedules are important for transit.) We do not require suburbs to accept low-priced housing. We are unwilling to charge vehicles the cost of peak-hour road construction or to charge drivers for parking (except downtown, which further encourages dispersal). And we have let the real price of gasoline decline over the past 25 years, from about

33 cents to about 27 cents a gallon in 1967 dollars.

Given the reluctance to restrict what creates the demand for travel, it is not unreasonable for policymakers to be cautious about what new transit facilities to supply.

This does not mean no transit facilities can be built. The Department of Transportation is now committed to moving people rather than vehicles and—in the face of much criticism—is adapting its facilities to give preference to vehicles in which people ride. There is agreement on building exclusive right-of-way for transit, in road corridors or outside. We are debating mainly what sort of vehicle is to run in the transitway.

Probably in our kind of region the future lies with vehicles that are small and flexible rather than with systems whose vehicles are large and unable to go where people want without a stop or transfer. In plain words that means more with the bus than with LRT, and in the suburbs more with the taxi than with the bus.

Fixed-rail systems could be important in and around the region's urban core—central Minneapolis. That is where trips by auto are least fun and most expensive. It is where most high-density development is occurring. If rail shapes development this is where it would seem rail ought to go. This would probably happen only if the city became really aggressive about transit planning.

At the moment, unfortunately, most of the discussion is locked into conventional ideas: that transit should only be planned regionally, that rail must be laid out only in "corridor" form and—conspicuously in the 35W debate—that the answer to congestion must be found only within the right-of-way of that particular corridor.

To the east of 35W, along Hiawatha Avenue there is right-of-way owned by the Department of Transportation. Developed as a transitway it could handle some of the movement between central Minneapolis and Dakota County (and the airport). But this possibility is entirely absent from the 35W discussion, as if transportation planners did not think in system terms any more.

Ted Kolderie is contributing editor of the Minnesota Journal.

Transit

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Isaacs said. "We're tearing down organizational barriers that make it hard to do."

Isaacs traces the change in mindset that has made the Team Transit concept fly to two milestones: MnDOT's decision a few years back to convert the shoulder on I-94 over the Mississippi River to a third freeway lane and the success of the I-394 exclusive HOV lanes. "That kind of liberated MnDOT," he said. "They were of a mind to start accepting other proposals."

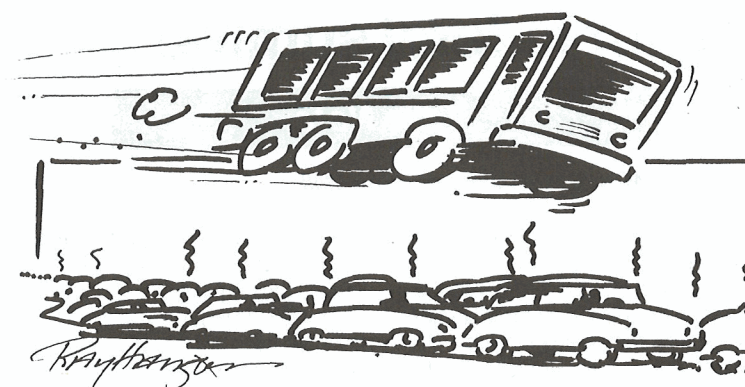
MnDOT agreed in August 1991 to contribute funds to the MTC's staffing of Team Transit and has paid for all the highway improvements made so far. The May 1992 MTC Public Facilities Plan for the next four years calls for \$7.5 million in MTC funds to be spent on Team Transit projects. The 1992 Legislature appropriated \$3 million to the MTC for MnDOT-related Team Transit projects and \$1.5 million for municipal Team Transit projects.

In October MTC street supervisors and planners met and drew up the first list of problems: 50 locations where buses get caught in traffic at rush hour. According to Isaacs, the cooperating agencies met from November to January to figure out what to do and by April there were several finished projects and a number of others in the works.

Highway bus lanes. By late fall there will be 30 miles of bus lanes—all on the shoulders of Twin Cities highways—that didn't exist a year ago:

- The 4th Street exit from I-94 into downtown Minneapolis, which often is backed up a mile in the mornings, now has a 12-foot bus lane on the shoulder that allows buses to bypass the congestion at speeds of about 40 miles per hour, shaving perhaps five to 10 minutes off the I-94 express bus trips from north Minneapolis. The 3rd Street entrance to I-94 has a similar shoulder bus lane.

Two new sets of shoulder bus lanes in both directions were just completed the first week in August: on Highway 252 in Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park—which Isaacs said will make the express bus trip from Coon Rapids



Some people just know how to fly...to work!

faster than by car—and on Highway 61 in Newport.

- Shoulder bus lanes have been approved for Highway 47 in northeast Minneapolis, Fridley, and Spring Lake Park and on I-35E in Mendota Heights. They are under study for Highway 65 in Columbia Heights.

- This fall the shoulders will be widened at bus stops on Highway 55 in Golden Valley to provide for better and safer traffic flow.

Freeway ramp meter bypasses. About three dozen HOV bypasses at freeway ramp meters have been approved in concept by MnDOT—"wherever buses get on

"We've got to wring more people-moving capacity out of what we have."

—MnDOT engineer Bill Crawford

the freeways," according to Isaacs—and the one at northbound I-35E and Broadway in downtown St. Paul will be open in the fall. Bill Crawford, metropolitan division engineer for MnDOT said the department does not yet have funding available for all the ramp meter bypasses, so it is trying to do the most cost-effective projects first. Isaacs and Crawford said a number of meter bypasses should be in operation next summer.

Special efforts during road construction. Crawford said getting commuters used to riding transit is especially important during road reconstruction projects, since just about all reconstruction has to be done under traffic now. "There's nowhere to detour the traffic," he said.

Team Transit has used several approaches to encourage carpooling and bus ridership during the I-94 and I-35E reconstruction in downtown St. Paul:

- Special rush hour express lanes for buses and car pools have been created that bypass the construction.

- Bus lanes have been created on 5th, 6th, Cedar, and Minnesota Streets.

- Two free express bus routes are running from a Target Store in West St. Paul—one to downtown St. Paul and one to downtown Minneapolis. Crawford said 100 people rode the buses the first day

they were running, and now 300 people are riding each way daily.

Traffic signals. Team Transit is also working on making traffic signals operate more efficiently to keep buses moving faster.

- At the Shady Oak Road exit from Highway 212 in Eden Prairie, for example, exiting buses have a difficult time turning left on Shady Oak Road because of the timing of two traffic signals. MnDOT, Hennepin County, and the city of Eden Prairie are planning to meet to figure out how to time the two traffic signals near the exit to allow for easier turns for buses.

- Team Transit is planning a study of technologies that give

buses a greater chance of hitting green lights. St. Paul traffic signals are equipped to allow emergency vehicles such as fire engines to turn a signal from red to green. There is a second level to the signal technology, Isaacs said, that could allow approaching buses to hold a green light or shorten a red light. Another approach is better use of actuated traffic signals, signals that keep the traffic light green on the main street if there are no cars at the intersecting side street. The group will test the effectiveness of the signal control technology versus greater traffic signal actuation in an area of St. Paul this fall.

- The project plans to help Minneapolis repair underground loop detectors that activate actuated traffic signals and upgrade some timed signals to actuated signals. Isaacs said more working actuated traffic signals could help take minutes off bus travel time, increase bus reliability, and save money. "Time is money," he said. "It's driver pay."

City street bus lanes. Isaacs would like to see some bus lanes on city streets outside of downtown, such as Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis between Franklin and Lake Street or Washington Avenue through the University of Minnesota campus. While he thinks those bus lanes are further from reality than other improvements Team Transit has sought, he said, "What this whole thing has taught me is not to be shy about asking."

Isaacs gives high marks to the cooperative efforts of other agencies. "The cooperation we've gotten from the municipalities and from MnDOT has been superb," he said. "This is an idea whose time has come."

"We have recognized that we can't build our way out of congestion," Crawford said. "We've got to wring more people-moving capacity out of what we have. These projects are really winners. They give the transit rider that extra shot."

Are the projects working?

"The ultimate test is whether ridership goes up," Isaacs said. "You're fighting a lot of societal pressure that fights against transit usage. Are the improvements we're making powerful enough to overcome those other things? I don't know. It's too early to tell."

Dana Schroeder is interim editor of the Minnesota Journal.

Cities still hiring for federal summer jobs program

Remember the federal emergency summer youth job funds that poured into cities early this summer in response to the Los Angeles riots? It appears Minneapolis and St. Paul are both doing their best to spend the extra funds they received before the program ends in early September. None of the emergency funds can be carried over to next summer.

Minneapolis received \$884,276 in emergency federal funds in addition to the \$794,197 in youth job funds previously allocated to the city under the federal Job Training Partnership Act, for a total of nearly \$1.7 million. St. Paul received \$668,963 in emergency funds in addition to \$552,493 already allocated, bringing the total to \$1.2 million.

According to Donna Harris, director of the Minneapolis Department of Neighborhood Services, as of early August the city was still "hiring kids fast and furiously" and is projecting that all the emergency funds and probably all the regular allocation will be spent. With a month to go in the program, Harris said over 1200 low-income young people had already been hired this summer, 700 to 800 more than the city planned on hiring before it received the emergency funds.

In St. Paul 780 young people had been hired as of early August with hiring still going on, according to Joe Mambu, youth planner in the city's Planning and Economic Development Department. Mambu said the city will "spend as much as we can," but was unsure whether the total emergency allocation would be spent before the program ends.

What have the young workers been doing? Clerical work, outside maintenance work, and aiding staff at city parks, city and county offices, the public schools, state and federal agencies, the University of Minnesota, and various non-profit agencies.—*Dana Schroeder.*

In an effort spearheaded by St. Paul Councilman Bob Long, several cities have endorsed a proposal for a Minnesota constitutional amendment dedicating state money now in a local government trust fund (LGTF) to property tax relief and local government aid. The LGTF, established by the 1991 Legislature as a repository for two cents of the 6.5 cent sales

Take Note

Megafacts without a trip to the Mall.

tax, was designed to pay for a variety of property tax credits and aid to local governments. However, the debate this past legislative session over how to handle the state's budget shortfall included talk of financing some property-tax relief programs at the expense of others and using the LGTF to help balance the budget.

Certain cities, including St. Cloud and Worthington, which have already endorsed the constitutional amendment proposal, want to avoid the potential for the Legislature to use the trust fund to correct state budget problems. The League of Minnesota Cities is considering the proposal but has not yet acted on it.—*Jody A. Hauer.*

Alain Enthoven, the health economist from Stanford University, was back in town in July, addressing a session sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Enthoven's prescription for health-care reform places heavy emphasis on vigorous competition of health plans on the basis of cost and quality.

He was asked his view of the proposed merger of Group Health and MedCenters. Having just come through Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport where Northwest Airlines operates about 80 percent of the flights, he noted that Minnesotans seem to love monopolies. While saying that he did not know enough of the facts to directly answer the question, he wanted to know if a merger of the two would create one strong competitor that would be able to take on the other big players in the market.—*Allan Baumgarten.*

Half of all Minnesota public school superintendents are within five years of retirement, according to a study by a Mankato State University professor. The expected turnover could pave the way for a new generation of superintendents. Currently, less than one percent of the more than 400 Minnesota superintendents are women or persons of color. The same study revealed that the supply of teachers in Minnesota is once again greater than demand.—*J.A.H.*

Readers will be comforted to

know that the U.S. Department of Justice is careful about how it spends the taxpayers' money. In early July the department's Antitrust Division contacted the Citizens League to get information about the managed health-care market in the Twin Cities area. The department was beginning its investigation of the proposed merger of Group Health and MedCenters, the second and third largest HMOs in the state. After several conversations, the attorneys ordered a copy of the data set developed by the Citizens League to produce *Minnesota Managed Care Review 1992*.

We shipped the data set promptly. A few days after it arrived, the Justice Department decided to terminate its investigation. Department staff called us and asked if they could return the data set without paying for it. We're not Nordstrom's or Dayton's, but we agreed.—*A.B.*

New Visions School, run by the nonprofit group A Chance to Grow, will open its doors as a public school housed at St. Bridget's School in North Minneapolis this fall, despite being turned down for charter school status by the Minneapolis school board last spring. The school, directed at children in first through sixth grade with reading problems and learning disabilities, received an alternative school contract with the Minneapolis Public Schools after the charter denial.

As with other alternative schools, children must be referred to New Visions by their principal or meet one of these criteria: be a year behind in reading, have failed a grade, have a treatment center or physiological referral, be expelled or referred by a Minneapolis Public School, or have siblings enrolled. As of early August, about 30 children had enrolled in the school for fall. The school hopes to serve 80 to 100 children.—*D.S.*

Almost 19 percent of all arrests in Minnesota during 1991 were for driving while intoxicated (DWI) violations, according to State Planning. This is down some from the mid-1980s when almost a quarter of all arrests were for DWI offenses.

Traffic offenders accounted for nearly one-half of all persons jailed in Minnesota in 1989. Twenty-eight percent of all adult inmates sentenced to jails were gross misdemeanor DWI offenders. For 18,689 individuals at an average cost of \$40 per day, this amounted to more than a quarter of a billion dollars last year alone.—*J.A.H.*

Olmsted County's Bar Association surveyed the county's attorneys to rank the three district judges who are up for reelection in that county. This was the first ranking of its kind in Olmsted. Unlike the Hennepin County Bar Association evaluation compiled last winter, the actual scores for each Olmsted judge were made public and the evaluation was released to coincide with the filing period for persons interested in running for a judgeship.—*J.A.H.*

**Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
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Citizens League Matters

August 18, 1992

News for Citizens League Members

Welcome new members

- Babak Armajani
- Jon Austin
- Dale Blyth
- Susan S. Boren
- Amy Bower
- Richard E. Brink
- Jean Cameron
- Lorraine Cannon
- Kathie Doty
- Louellen Essex
- Nancy Feldman
- Josh Gruber
- Barb Heideman
- Greg Hestness
- Ruth Hopperstad
- King Kearns
- Laura Kolar
- Stephen Kolar
- Laurie La Vigne
- John Leavitt
- Mary Leavitt
- Kathleen D. Mc Kown
- Nancy Moore
- Kelly Moran
- Nancy Jo Moses
- Audrey Nash
- David Newman
- Kathleen Newman
- James B. O'Rourke
- Charles Pallas
- Cynthia Schaedig
- Maureen Schenck
- Stephen Schenck
- Jane Schmidt
- Daniel Schwarz
- Thomas Spence
- Missy Thompson
- Lois Welk
- Melissa Wiklund
- Ben Withhart

League embarks on new direction

Board adds new twist to developing public policy

In a series of three retreats this summer, the board of directors carved a new direction for the future of the Citizens League. This new strategic direction embodies face-to-face dialogue on public policy and new uses of electronic technology, while retaining the core element of the Citizen League: citizen participation in innovative public-policy ideas.

The new direction will change how the League identifies and works on issues, arrives at policy proposals and implements its policy ideas.

This change will emphasize citizen participation in democratic public-policy debates. In part, this means using face-to-face issue groups in local settings. Such groups could use issue kits developed by the League to help understand the issue and participate in the discussion.

Under the new direction the League will employ greater use of existing technology to connect with interested citizens and decision makers. For instance, persons interested in a particular topic under study could use electronic bulletin boards to receive information. With computers people could dial in to the work of a study committee and use the electronic bulletin board to provide feedback.

The League will implement elements of the new direction this year, beginning with the process for the study committee already underway analyzing state spending.

Annual meeting to feature Latimer

Hamline University Law School Dean George Latimer will highlight the League's Annual Membership Meeting Thursday, September 30, 1992. The annual meeting will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Lutheran Brotherhood Auditorium, 625 4th Avenue South, Minneapolis. Cost of the event is \$20.

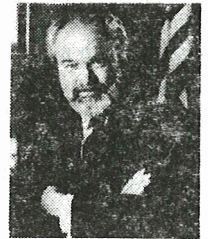
This year's annual meeting will recognize both the past and future. We will concurrently celebrate the 40th anniversary of the League's founding and the announcement of the League's new direction as adopted by the board after a series of strategic planning sessions this summer.

Besides the recognition of League leadership during the past year, this

year's meeting will feature a short presentation on League highlights from the past 40

years. Incoming League President **John Brandl** will unveil the League's new direction and also moderate a brief discussion about it. George Latimer will cap off the evening with a keynote address.

Watch for your invitation in the mail. But reserve September 30 on your calendar today and plan on joining us as the League celebrates 40 years of citizens shaping Minnesota's agenda.



George Latimer

Board revises the mission statement

In developing a new strategic direction for the League (see accompanying article *League embarks on new direction*), the board also revised the mission statement for the organization.

The revised mission statement is as follows:

The Citizens League promotes the public interest in Minnesota by involving citizens in identifying and framing critical public policy choices, forging recommendations and advocating their adoption.

Transitional meeting

The current board of directors holds its last meeting and the 1992-93 board holds its first on August 26 at the Town and Country Club in St. Paul. As its last act, the outgoing board will amend the League's bylaws to reflect the revised mission statement that resulted from the board's strategic planning sessions. (See the accompanying sidebar.)

Immediately following the adjournment of the current board, President **Becky Malkerson** will convene a meeting of the new board. At this time the eight new board members elected in June by the membership will begin their tenure. The board will vote on a recommended list of officers for the coming year and a slate of eight appointed members who will serve one-year terms.

The Citizens League at 40: A regional approach

Ed. Note: This is the fourth in a series on League history in honor of its 40th anniversary.

In its first decade, the League focused almost exclusively on Minneapolis city government, and primarily reacted to proposals. But as the League matured in the early 1960s it changed both its programmatic and geographic focus. A key change occurred in 1962 when the League began to generate its own proposals as well as critique those of others.

In a review of a Minneapolis school board proposal for the first major building program since the 1920s, the League was critical of a program basically aimed at rehabilitating old buildings. When the community, at the League's urging, rejected the proposal as deficient, the League laid out an alternative program involving closing and demolishing of whole schools, selling sites and constructing new schools at new sites. A new proposal based on the League's suggestion was prepared and passed, with the League's support.

A second major change evolved by the late 1950s and early 1960s when the League began to look beyond just Minneapolis matters. Increasingly it concentrated on Hennepin County government. By the

In the early 1960s the League changed its focus to proactive proposals and metropolitan-wide issues.

mid-1960s the League recognized the emerging interdependence of municipalities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and urged a regional approach for solving problems that were more metropolitan in nature.

The League played a major role in the creation of the Metropolitan Council and other regional

government institutions. The League also was a leading advocate of the pioneering tax-base sharing law. Known as "fiscal disparities," the nationally recognized and sometimes controversial law has endured largely unchanged for 20 years.

There was also an evolution of the organization's name. It began as the Citizens League in 1952. It later became the Citizens League of Greater Minneapolis and then the Citizens League of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. By the mid-1960s, recognizing its emerging regional focus, it became simply the Citizens League. At the same time, the League made a major push to expand its individual and corporate membership base into St. Paul and eastern suburbs.

Next Month: Regional issues of the 1970s.

End of fiscal year begins gift drive

League seeks extra support from members

Please remember: The League's fiscal year ends on August 31. This marks the time when the League must ask you, as a League member, for an extra contribution. The fiscal need has never been greater and we're appealing to members for financial help above their regular membership dues.

The League relies heavily on this annual giving campaign — nearly 20 percent of all extra contributions from members come during this campaign. In fact, last year members responded more generously than ever as more than 400 of you contributed a total \$12,500.

As the League celebrates its 40th anniversary it also stands on the threshold of an exciting new era. Reinventing the League — while remaining true

Committee relied heavily on speakers

The League extends thanks to those people who testified before the study committee that produced the report *Reform the Election Process, Restore the Public Trust*. Thirty people appeared before the committee chaired by Ann Wynia and Nancy Zingale. These people's help made the report possible:

Evie Axdahl
Paula Beugen
John Brandl
Carol Connolly
George Dahl
Carole Faricy
Chris Georgacas
Joan Anderson Growe
Sandra Harp
Jean Harris
Bob Hicks
Ruby Hunt
Richard Jefferson
Nancy Jones
Phyllis Kahn

Connie Levi
Dee Long
Carlos Mariani
Lona Minne
Christine Moore
Deb Nankivell
Shirley Nelson
Todd Otis
Paul Overgaard
Sid Pauly
Judy Schwartau
Jeff Spartz
Mark Stromwall
Bruce Willis
Angie Wozniak Smith

League research on managed health care, home property taxes

The Citizens League has two analyses in the areas of managed health care and homestead property taxes.

The *Minnesota Managed Care Review 1992* analyzes information about health maintenance organizations, preferred provider arrangements and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

Minnesota Homestead Property Tax Review 1992 presents data and analysis on property taxes for selected homesteads in cities around Minnesota.

Call 338-0791 to order.

1991's end-of-the-fiscal-year campaign made up 20 percent of all extra contributions from members.

to the core mission of involving citizens in generating innovative public policy solutions — means adjusting our strategies to meet new realities.

Your end-of-year contribution will help launch the League's new direction and send a message that the League's co-support comes from its members. Please send your contribution today.