



Minnesota Journal

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A publication of the Citizens League

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Median tax hike nine percent on average metro homes

Property tax bills for owners of average-value homes went up by over 10 percent in 1994 in over one-third (36) of the 95 largest communities in the metropolitan area and in less than half (12) of the 27 largest nonmetropolitan cities. Fewer communities saw double-digit increases in property taxes on their average-value homes this year than in 1993, when 56 of the 95 largest metro area communities and 21 of the 27 largest nonmetro cities had increases of 10 percent or more. The median tax increase on average-value homes was 8.9 percent for the

by Lynn Reed and Dana Schroeder

metro communities and 9.7 percent for the nonmetro communities.

And 1994 taxes on hypothetical \$90,000 homes in these metro communities are highest in Waconia, which ranked second highest last year. Little Canada—last year's leader—dropped to fifth place. Duluth captures the distinction of highest tax on a \$90,000 home among the 27 largest nonmetro communities.

Those are findings of the 28th annual homestead property-tax survey, conducted jointly this year by the Citizens League and the Minnesota Taxpayers Association. The survey analyzes taxes for nonagricultural homes in the 95 cities and towns with a population of 2,500 or more in the metropolitan area and the 27 cities of 9,000 or more in nonmetropolitan Minnesota. (A primer on calculating property taxes appears on page 5.)

A word of caution: This analysis is not intended to estimate taxes for a specific property. It reports the *net* taxes after certain property tax relief measures are applied. (See the primer on page 5 for further explanation.) The survey includes only owner-occupied homes, not rental properties, businesses, or other types of property. Taxes on these types of properties will differ from taxes on homes; the results of the survey should not be used to gauge taxes on other properties.

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Congestion tolls could cut some roads' traffic 15 to 25%

Urban auto travel grows inexorably. Between 1949 and 1990, the population of the Twin Cities metropolitan area increased 2.3-fold; person-trips by all travel modes increased over five-fold. Society appears less and less willing to respond to traffic growth by increasing road capacity. Increased ratios of traffic volume to road capacity and, with them, increased road congestion are inevitable unless something is done.

"Congestion pricing" is the "something" many economists favor to solve urban traffic problems. Our knowledge of the effects of congestion tolls on travel is imperfect at best. But we roughly estimate that such tolls would reduce traffic 15

by Herbert Mohring and David Anderson

to 25 percent on the Twin Cities' most heavily congested roads and, hence, appreciably reduce present pressures to expand road capacity.

The conceptual underpinnings of congestion pricing are straightforward: Automobile operators both experience road congestion and contribute to it. The "marginal costs" of their trips—the value of the resources saved if these trips were not made—include not just the costs they experience directly but also the costs they cause by contributing to congestion. Few people consider these congestion-causing costs in deciding when, where, and by what mode to travel.

Maximizing the value of what society's resources produce in a market economy requires commodity prices to equal their marginal costs. The cost a trip imposes on other travelers through increased congestion can be a very large fraction of its marginal cost.

We estimate these imposed congestion costs on the five most heavily congested segments of the metro-area Interstate system range between 41 and 49 cents per vehicle-mile. At the other extreme, the imposed cost on 80 percent of the metro area's road network is less than two cents a vehicle-mile. The average morning-peak

imposed congestion cost in the metro area is 20.7 cents per vehicle-mile.

Currently, fuel excises—two to three cents per vehicle-mile—are the major taxes that are approximately proportional to road use. Charging anything approaching 49 cents per vehicle-mile for I-35W trips would, therefore, dramatically increase travel costs. Car pools and buses would become more popular. Many trips not requiring peak-period departures or arrivals would shift out of the peak. Pressures would build to shift business and school schedules away from the peak.

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Regional housing policy will test 'new' Metro Council

Viewpoint

by Lyle Wray

We are seeing welcome signs of a renewed discussion of our urban situation. What should be done about the troubling concentrations of poverty in central cities? About suburban sprawl? How should transportation and jobs be linked? What should be done about an aging housing stock that may lack amenities that many citizens demand?

Thoughtful proposals have been offered by the Metropolitan Council in its report *Trouble at the Core* and in legislative initiatives by Reps. Myron Orfield (DFL-Minneapolis), Tim Pawlenty (IR-Eagan) and Todd VanDellen (IR-Plymouth). The proposals differ significantly in their scope and approach.

The Metropolitan Council will soon consider, as part of its *Regional Blueprint*, whether to recommend designating housing as a regional system, just as transportation, parks and open space and sewers now are designated as metropolitan systems. Designation as a system gives the Council authority to require local governments to plan and take particular actions to conform to regional plans.

This decision—whether or not to view housing as a metropolitan system—is an important test of courage and wisdom on the part of the newly-renovated Council. The Council has the opportunity to assume strong leadership on a pivotal issue that has been at the center of attention for several years.

Some have argued that designating housing as a metropolitan system smacks of an centralist, meddlesome "command and control" agency; similar complaints were

lodge against the Metropolitan Land Use Planning Act of 1976. A case can also be made that establishing housing as a metropolitan system sets in place a mechanism for establishing a regional vision for housing and related urban development and provides an implementation mechanism to address, over the long term, many of the urban issues that have been plaguing the region. How the Council responds to this challenge will send a signal of its willingness to take on tough issues.

In the recent report *Why We Should Build Inclusive Communities: The Case for a Regional Housing Policy in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area*, the Citizens League makes a strong case that housing really does function as a regional system, with impacts and trends spilling over local boundaries. The report argues that:

- the Legislature should designate housing in the metropolitan area as a regional system;
- the Legislature should charge the Metropolitan Council with proposing regional housing policy objectives and describing how the objectives should be met and the policies enforced.
- the proposal should be developed in cooperation with local governments and should specify authority the Council will require to implement the policy.

The report says the policy should aim to increase the availability of housing opportunities affordable to low-income people throughout the

region, reduce the concentration of poverty, increase the stability of neighborhoods, foster communities that integrate housing types for people of diverse circumstances and improve the fairness of the housing market by reducing racial discrimination.

A vigorous discussion at the regional level should lead to a vision of where we want to head in this region in terms of new and renovated development. We should discuss how to reuse polluted sites, increase the number of residents very near the central business district, densify major arteries in the city to retain a mix of incomes, and improve neighborhood amenities—from off-street parking to parks.

We need strong regional leadership on housing to support and

spread innovative efforts by local governments. And we must begin immediately. The onus should be on those who oppose designation of housing as a regional system to show how this urgent agenda can be accomplished without the designation and such an aggressive process. Yet another study or blue-ribbon commission, a number of which have already been done, may not be enough to move us forward.

We urgently need action on our urban agenda. The next legislative session should be the time for the Governor and Legislature to agree on an agenda and move forward. The work of the next session should provide a foundation for a new urban agenda—of which housing is a critical part—that policymakers can build on in the coming years.

Lyle Wray is executive director of the Citizens League.



Let's see... We have transportation, parks and open space, sewers... Can't we fit housing into this Blueprint somewhere?

Met Council wants new regional library organization

From *The Role of Twin Cities Libraries in a World of Information, Metropolitan Council, July 1994.*

The metro area has four major types of libraries... public (100), academic (53), school media centers (700+), and special (300+)...

The Metropolitan Council recommends a regional library organiza-

tion, representing a new level of collaborative effort among the region's four types of libraries. This new structure, called MetroLINC, would provide users with a new plateau of service, while encouraging effective, efficient use of library resources...

MetroLINC would build on the strengths of Metronet, the multi-

type agency currently serving area libraries... For example, MetroLINC would:

- Provide users and underserved groups with a forum for their needs and concerns;
- Increase access to information through integration of new technologies...;
- Improve services through research, policy-setting and evaluation of library

systems; ● Improve effective and efficient use of public resources by avoiding unnecessary expenditures for buildings and information infrastructure; and ● Encourage collaboration among library systems to increase access to books, tapes and other materials, as well as provide system savings...

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Editors want tougher penalties for worst sex offenders

On Balance

Red Wing Republican Eagle called (July 12) for toughening the penalties for those convicted under the psychopathic personality law, forcing the state Supreme Court decision to release two convicted sex offenders being held under the law. **Rochester Post-Bulletin** said (July 30), "(I)t is a risky process to release people who have demonstrated repeatedly that they are not able to control their violent tendencies." **Mankato Free Press** characterized (July 30) the problem as a "clash between rights and doing the right thing... The long-term solution is to ensure that the most dangerous sex offenders do not get out of prison in the first place." **St. Cloud Times** said (July 27), "(T)he state needs to reorder out-of-whack sentencing priorities. The current combination of overcrowded prisons and all-too-short fixed criminal sentences for sexual predators has to end." **Star Tribune** questioned (July 29) the Supreme Court decision: "What a twisted world this is: The state can more easily kill people or put them away for life... than put them in a hospital indefinitely to protect them and society from the great possibility they will rape, m... or kill again." **St. Paul Pioneer-Press** called (July 11) for the Legislature to "return to forthright indeterminate sentencing for the most serious sex offenders."

Star Tribune said (Aug. 6) moonlighting by Minneapolis police officers gives taxpayers "more service than they pay for" and should not be abruptly ended. It endorsed recom-

"All successful newspapers are ceaselessly querulous and bellicose. They never defend anyone or anything if they can help it; if the job is forced upon them, they tackle it by denouncing someone or something else."
—H.L. Mencken

mendations of a task force giving the police department much greater control over off-duty police work. It called (July 16) for a review of the department's leadership, training that emphasizes limits on use of force, more community policing and interaction between police and city residents. **Princeton Union-Eagle** pointed (July 21) to the Sauro police brutality case and said, "Both unions and police management need to do a better job of weeding out those unfit for a critical job." **Pioneer Press** lamented (July 13) union contracts and civil service rules that "combine to make misbehaving police officers virtually fire-proof." It called for the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training to toughen its licensing standards. It supported (July 21) Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton's call for an independent management audit of the police department.

West Central Tribune (Willmar) said (July 8), "Educators must continue to focus on developing the potential of higher ability students... without jeopardizing the goal of requiring all students to achieve minimum standards." **Post-Bulletin** warned (July 7) that schools should set high expectations for their students. "They should not settle for modest standards." **Duluth News-Tribune** criticized (July 19) plans to end the

required study of literature under the new graduation rule.

Pioneer Press commented (July 26) on Peter Hutchinson's performance as Minneapolis school superintendent. "It doesn't matter whether the leader comes from the private or public sector. It only matters whether he or she can work with the community, gain the respect of employees, challenge old assumptions and help people solve their own problems." **Free Press** said (July 15), "The jury is still out on whether private business can be a helpful partner in public education." **Duluth News-Tribune** praised (July 29) the Duluth school board for reversing its policy against selling vacated school buildings to private schools. "(S)ome administrators and board members cling to the belief private schools are competition and therefore shouldn't be allowed to bid on abandoned schools. Last we heard, competition is good for any marketplace—even the marketplace of education."

Duluth News-Tribune called (July 14) a New Jersey Supreme Court decision that ordered state officials to end all local school funding disparities "misguided egalitarianism... (I)nstead of assuring a floor all students can stand on, they built a ceiling that will restrict the growth of some."

The Minnesota Journal

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Libraries

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MetroLINC would be governed by a board with two-thirds of its representatives from the general public and one-third from the four major types of libraries. Participation in MetroLINC would be voluntary, but incentives for libraries to join would include savings from cooperative activities, user access to many more resources, and opportunities to participate in region-wide systems...

In the first year of operation, ser-

vices would include:

- Borrowing privileges from all types of metro area libraries;
- After-hours reference and research services;
- Quick delivery of documents in the metro area;
- New policies on replacing lost materials, library access, etc.;
- Course outlines for information literacy for the public; and
- Library staff training...

Funds would be used primarily to provide incentives for greater collaboration and sharing, innovations in meeting user needs, and increased use of new technology.

Republican Eagle said (July 11) annexation should be near the top among issues to be addressed in a joint strategic planning effort among Goodhue County's cities, schools and county government. **St. Cloud Times** said (July 26) the city of St. Cloud's ability to annex surrounding areas is key to the future of the St. Cloud metropolitan area. "If the St. Cloud area is to join the list of successful metropolitan areas, it is necessary for the core city to expand, capture new development and maintain a broad tax base." It said (July 16) "(T)ownship government lacks the resources to deal with the problems of a growing metropolitan area." It called (July 9) for the state Environmental Policy Act to be restructured to place responsibility for environmental review and land-use planning with cities and counties with the resources "to handle the task adequately," rather than with townships. **Free Press** agreed (Aug. 1) that townships "are too small to provide the money and expertise for a planning and zoning department."

Correction

A "Take Note" item in last month's issue of the *Minnesota Journal* called attention to a little-known provision in state law that requires residents of cities having local use taxes to pay taxes on taxable items purchased outside their home city. The item incorrectly identified the City of St. Paul as having a local use tax; it does not. Minneapolis and Rochester both have local use taxes.

The item correctly pointed out that few consumers actually file and pay the use taxes on out-of-town purchases. However, Tom Ellerbe, the research analyst to whom the article referred, stressed that Minneapolis and Rochester residents should understand that they are legally liable for payment of these taxes. He also noted that local governments—not the Department of Revenue—decide whether to seek permission to enact local sales taxes. Once the Legislature grants permission, use tax requirements are part of the enabling legislation of the city, and are not administrative rules of the Department of Revenue.

Congestion

Continued from page 1

Road pricing elsewhere

Urban "road pricing" evokes visions of toll booths at every street corner—a technology that is costly in personnel, travel time, and space. Fortunately, distinctly superior alternatives are available or in advanced stages of development. A decade ago, Hong Kong successfully tested a system in which a vehicle passing over an inductive loop embedded beneath a roadway triggered the vehicle's (U.S.)\$60 transponder to send its identification to a central computer. The computer added a charge appropriate to the time and vehicle location to the owner's account. Monthly road-use bills would have been sent to vehicle owners. This system was so intensely opposed that the colonial government withdrew its proposal to institute it.

Singapore's system is simplicity itself. Entry into its central business district during peak travel periods requires a costly special license. When instituted in 1975, the predecessor of this system radically reduced central business district (CBD) traffic congestion. Singapore will soon replace its technologically primitive windshield stickers with state-of-the-art electronics. Norway's three largest cities all use electronics to impose tolls similar to Singapore's for entering their CBDs. A few other road-pricing projects are firmly planned or under active consideration around the world; many more were seriously considered in the recent past but ultimately rejected.

Why, despite (or is it because of?) its popularity among economists, has congestion pricing been so little used? In the Twin Cities and most of North America and Europe, congestion tolls would speed traffic flow, but not by enough to compensate most travelers for their toll payments. For them, the *direct*

Segment	Segment length in miles	No-toll time cost*	With-toll time cost*	Total toll*	Full price*	Percent travel decline	Critical time value*
I-35W: I-35E to I-94	8.02	\$ 2.41	\$ 1.78	\$1.37	\$3.15	23.4%	\$21.41
I-94: I-394 to I-35W	1.90	0.60	0.45	0.32	0.77	22.1	22.59
I-35E: I-694 to I-94	7.22	2.25	1.68	1.13	2.81	20.0	19.77
I-35W: I-494 to I-94	8.63	2.63	2.00	1.22	3.22	18.2	19.26
I-394: I-494 to I-94	8.52	2.60	2.05	1.25	3.30	21.2	23.08

*Per vehicle

effect of congestion pricing would be to make them worse off. (We concentrate here only on congestion and not on the environmental benefits its reduction might yield.) Most people oppose government policies that reduce their welfare—socially desirable though these policies may be.

Most peak-period travelers in the Twin Cities would support congestion tolls *only* if toll revenues were used to reimburse them for this cost. Such a plan is feasible, at least in principle. In very round numbers, optimal tolls—tolls equaling the costs each traveler imposes on all other travelers by increasing congestion—would generate roughly \$300,000 during the morning peak hour and would reduce aggregate travel-time costs by about \$100,000. Thus, if they could be identified—no trivial task—compensating all losers would eat up two-thirds of toll revenues. Exact compensation is an impossibility, of course. Earmarking revenues for transportation improvements, for reducing fuel and other user taxes, and for compensating those whom tolls would hit particularly hard would be essential parts of a publicly acceptable expenditure package.

Of the many arguments against congestion pricing, one is so common and powerful that a brief counter-argument is worth stating. The argument: Congestion pricing would inflict significant harm on the poor. The counter-argument: If we are genuinely concerned with how road pricing would affect the poor, we should reimburse them with cash—or, maybe better, with marketable road "scholarships"—for their toll costs. We should let them decide whether to maintain their travel patterns unaltered or to increase other purchases while

economizing on travel. Common though the practice is, it is folly to subsidize any commodity for all purchasers just because the poor buy it.

Twin Cities tolls

How would congestion tolls work in the Twin Cities compared with our present road-pricing system?

While some households and business firms will make some trips regardless of cost, more would mitigate the adverse effects of tolls by using less congested or unpriced routes, by switching modes, or by changing destinations or even their own locations. These changes in behavior would reduce congestion and, hence, the tolls required to force travelers, when making their travel decisions, to consider the congestion costs their trips impose.

It is roughly in the ballpark to suppose that a one percent increase in the time plus money costs of a particular trip would result in about a one percent reduction in the rate at which that trip is taken. If so, our estimates show that on the most congested segment—the one with a 49 cents imposed congestion cost without tolls—the optimal toll is 18 cents. For the system as a whole, the average optimal toll would be almost exactly seven cents a vehicle-mile.

We used this supposition about the sensitivity of travel decisions to trip costs to arrive at the optimal tolls and resulting travel declines for the five most heavily traveled Interstate segments during the morning peak. The results are presented in the accompanying table.

The top line of the table indicates a cost with no tolls of \$2.41 per vehicle (assuming time valued at \$10

per vehicle-hour) for a trip on I-35W from I-35E to I-494 that currently takes 14.5 minutes. Imposing a \$1.37 toll will result in a full price for the trip—time cost plus toll cost—equal to its \$3.15 marginal cost. This is the goal of efficient congestion pricing: to make travelers pay—and consider in their decision-making—the full costs of the resources that would be saved if these trips were not made.

This \$1.37 toll on that segment of I-35W would reduce hourly travel on the segment by 23.4 percent, shortening the travel time to 10.7 minutes. Paying the toll, then, will save each vehicle traveling on the segment 3.8 minutes—a cost of \$3.15 but 36 cents per minute saved, or \$21.41 per hour saved. If a vehicle's occupants value their collective time at more than \$21.41 per hour—the "critical time value" listed in the table—the time saved would be worth more than the cost of the toll. For those travelers, the toll is a good deal.

In round numbers, then, given our assumption about the sensitivity of travel to changes in its costs—time plus money—marginal-cost congestion tolls would reduce peak-hour vehicle flow in the Twin Cities area by 15 to 20 percent and time per trip by 10 to 15 percent. At the same time the tolls would increase an average trip's full price by 20 to 30 percent.

Herbert Mohring is emeritus professor and David Anderson a graduate student at the University of Minnesota's Economics Department. Copies of their report, Congestion Pricing for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area are available from the University's Center for Transportation Studies at 626-1077.

Property tax

Continued from page 1

Average-value homes

An analysis of taxes on the average-value homestead in each city shows that taxes increased by a median amount of \$131.50 in the metro area cities, compared to \$68 in the nonmetro cities. The tax increases in the metro cities ranged from \$3 in Blaine to \$421 in Minnetrista. (Average-value home taxes *decreased* in seven metro cities: Andover, Anoka, Brooklyn Center, Coon Rapids, Maplewood, South St. Paul, Wayzata.) Tax increases in the nonmetro cities ranged from \$10 in Albert Lea to \$136 in Northfield. (Average-value home taxes remained the same in Austin and *decreased* in Hibbing.)

On a percentage basis, the tax increases in the metro cities ranged from less than one percent in Blaine to 18 percent in Spring Lake Township in Scott County, with a median increase of 8.9 percent. In

the nonmetro cities the increases ranged from 1.8 percent in Albert Lea to 27 percent in Virginia, with a median increase of 9.7 percent.

Part of the tax increases can be explained by increases in the value of property. In all but six of the metro communities, the value of the average homes on the tax rolls increased. The median increase among the 95 communities was 2.2 percent.

The large percentage increase in Spring Lake Township was due to several factors. The tax capacity rate increased by nearly 11 percent, and voters in School District 719 approved an additional school levy that added another 4.5 percent to the tax bill. In addition to those increases, the average market value of homes in the township increased by 3.5 percent.

As a percentage of the homes' average selling price, taxes ranged from one percent to just under two percent in the metro cities and

from 0.9 percent to 1.35 percent in the nonmetro cities.

Cities in the metro area with the *highest* taxes in 1994 on their average-value homes are (school district is listed in parentheses):

North Oaks(621) \$5,397; **Orono**(278) \$4,805; **Deephaven**(276) \$4,802; **Wayzata**(284) \$4,649; **Shorewood**(276) \$4,130.

Metro area communities with the *lowest* taxes in 1994 on average-value homes are:

Linwood Township(831) \$794; **East Bethel**(15) \$809; **South St. Paul**(6) \$882; **Columbia Heights**(13) \$897; and **St. Paul Park**(833) \$902;

Cities in the nonmetro area with the *highest* 1994 taxes on their average-value homes are:

Northfield(659) \$1,306; **Rochester** (535) \$1,108; **Elk River**(728) \$1,093; **North**

Mankato(77) \$1,026; and **Hutchinson**(423) \$979.

Nonmetro communities with the *lowest* 1994 taxes on their average-value homes are:

Hibbing(701) \$411; **Virginia**(706) \$511; **Brainerd**(181) \$515; **Albert Lea**(241) \$552; and **Bemidji**(31) \$553.

These comparisons reflect both differences in home values and tax rates among communities.

\$90,000 homes

A different analysis allows a comparison of the tax bills of homes selling for the same price—\$90,000—in different communities. The \$90,000 selling price is adjusted to reflect how assessors in each community would likely value the home for taxation purposes. A danger in using such a hypothetical home is that its value might be quite different from the actual value of

Continued on page 6

How to figure 1994 homestead property taxes

Calculating homestead taxes takes four steps.

Estimated Market Value. First, one must know the market value of the home estimated by local assessors—their judgment of what the home would sell for in an arm's-length sale.

The estimated market value for the average-value home in the Citizens League/Minnesota Taxpayers Association survey is the average of all homestead property in each community. For the hypothetical \$90,000 home, market value is estimated using a "sales ratio"—a number calculated by the state Department of Revenue to show the difference between the assessors' judgment of the value of property and the price for which homes are actually selling.

In Andover, for example, the 1993 sales ratio—the most current available—is 90.4 percent. In other words, studies show that homes that have sold recently in Andover were valued for tax purposes at 90.4 percent of their actual sales price. We apply that sales ratio to our hypothetical home sales price of \$90,000 to arrive at what we call the "assessor's market value": \$90,000 x .904 = \$81,360. That is the value at which the hypothetical home would likely be valued for tax purposes in Andover, based on

recent assessment practices there.

Tax Capacity. Second, one must know the home's tax capacity, or how much of the property's value is subject to taxation. The Legislature has determined that less of a home's value should be taxed than of a business or apartment building, for example.

For taxes paid in 1994, one percent of the first \$72,000 of a home's estimated market value is taxable. For home values over \$72,000, two percent is taxable value.

As an example, the tax capacity of a home with an estimated market value of \$87,650 is determined as follows:

Step 1: Multiply the first \$72,000 by 1 percent = \$720.

Step 2: Multiply the difference between \$87,650 and \$72,000 (\$15,650) by 2 percent = \$313.

Step 3: Add \$720 + \$313 = \$1,033 = Tax Capacity.

Tax Capacity Rates. Third, one must know the tax rates, which indicate how much the local units of government have decided to tax property. The tax capacity

rates, formerly known as mill rates, are the result of dividing the amount of money local units need to raise by the value of their tax base. For every \$100 of tax capacity, a 50 percent tax rate would raise \$50, a 100 percent tax rate would raise \$100, and so on.

The total of the tax rates of each taxing jurisdiction—school, city, county, and miscellaneous jurisdictions like watershed districts—is applied to the home's tax capacity to determine the tax. In the example of a home with a tax capacity of \$1,033, assume the total tax rate for its community is 107.22 percent. Multiplying the rate against the tax capacity gives the homeowner's tax of \$1,108. If the homeowner qualifies for any of the property tax relief described below, the tax bill will be lowered.

State-Paid Property Tax Relief. Fourth, one must know how much property-tax relief, if any, one is eligible for. The state of Minnesota provides this tax relief with revenues it collects from income and sales taxes.

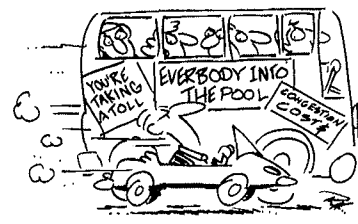
Homeowners might qualify for either of two tax refunds. They must apply for the refunds; the refunds are not automatically included on tax statements. One is known as the "circuit breaker." It is available to homeowners whose property tax bills are

high relative to their income. Renters are also eligible to receive a renters' credit to relieve the tax burden they pay through rent. The Citizens League/Minnesota Taxpayers Association survey of home taxes does not include a calculation for a circuit-breaker refund, since it is dependent on income level.

The second is called the special targeted property-tax refund. It is available to all homeowners, regardless of income, whose tax bills increased by more than 12 percent over 1993. The tax increase had to be at least \$100. The refund pays 75 percent of the increase over \$100 or 12 percent, whichever is greater, up to a maximum refund of \$1,500. However, the refund is not available to homeowners whose tax bills increased due to physical improvements to their property.

The Citizens League/Minnesota Taxpayers Association study assumes that all homeowners applied for the targeted refund and that none of the valuation increases resulted from improvements to the property.

The state provides a variety of other forms of tax relief. A taconite homestead credit is available to homeowners on the Iron Range. The analysis included this credit for the tax estimates in Hibbing and Virginia.



Property tax

Continued from page 5

the majority of homes in any given city. This is especially true in the nonmetro communities, some of which have few homes selling for \$90,000.

The five highest tax metro cities in

the \$90,000 home comparison are:

Waconia (110) \$1,451; **St. Paul** (625) \$1,391; **Osseo** (279) \$1,378; **Minneapolis** (1), \$1,368; and **Little Canada** (623) \$1,363.

The five lowest tax metro cities in the \$90,000 home comparison are:

Afton (834) \$956; **Ham Lake** (11)

\$968; **Ramsey** (11) \$982; **Corcoran** (877) \$990; and **Andover** (11) \$1,000.

Waconia, with the highest tax, has the highest 1994 total tax rate among the 95 metro communities (167.558). Its school district tax rate (83.447) also ranks first and its city tax rate (38.310) third. Although Waconia gains the dis-

inction of ranking first this year, the real change in its tax status occurred between 1992 and 1993 when it moved from 34th in the \$90,000 home tax rankings to second.

Between 1992 and 1993 taxes in Waconia jumped dramatically as

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TABLE 1: TAX ON HOME SELLING FOR \$90,000* IN 95** METROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES, 1994

Community (School District)	Assessors Market Value***	1994 Tax	Tax Rank	Percent Change in Taxes '93-94	Community (School District)	Assessors Market Value***	1994 Tax	Tax Rank	Percent Change in Taxes '93-94
Afton (834)	\$ 76,950	\$ 956	95	-4.1%	Medina (278)	\$ 78,750	\$1,041	83	-4.2%
Andover (11)	81,360	1,000	91	-6.9	Mendota Heights (197)	80,730	1,056	80	11.5
Anoka (11)	83,610	1,103	70	-5.7	Minneapolis (1)	84,330	1,368	4	2.7
Apple Valley (196)	81,450	1,073	75	3.8	Minnetonka (276)	80,190	1,255	30	0.9
Arden Hills (621)	82,260	1,223	40	-2.6	Minnetrista (277)	81,900	1,186	49	8.0
Bayport (834)	81,090	1,268	24	-2.6	Mound (277)	80,460	1,183	51	4.4
Belle Plaine (716)	79,200	1,291	19	-2.6	Mounds View (621)	83,880	1,354	6	1.6
Blaine (16)	83,970	1,068	77	-6.1	New Brighton (621)	83,340	1,256	27	-4.3
Bloomington (271)	82,080	1,172	54	9.0	New Hope (281)	82,350	1,226	39	-0.2
Brooklyn Center (286)	84,780	1,256	29	-2.4	New Scandia Twp. (831)	76,500	1,008	89	-5.1
Brooklyn Park (279)	84,240	1,317	11	3.0	Newport (833)	86,310	1,311	14	1.3
Burnsville (191)	81,090	1,159	57	5.8	North Oaks (621)	78,930	1,052	81	-9.6
Champlin (11)	81,810	1,130	64	-4.7	North St. Paul (622)	82,800	1,183	52	-1.8
Chanhassen (112)	81,270	1,248	33	3.2	Oak Grove Twp. (15)	80,190	1,233	38	1.1
Chaska (112)	85,230	1,254	31	4.0	Oak Park Heights (834)	82,890	1,141	60	-2.3
Circle Pines (12)	84,150	1,241	35	6.2	Oakdale (622)	79,470	1,067	78	-6.2
Columbia Heights (13)	85,230	1,281	20	7.2	Orono (278)	79,380	1,094	72	1.4
Columbus Twp. (831)	79,020	1,017	88	5.5	Osseo (279)	84,240	1,378	3	1.2
Coon Rapids (11)	82,620	1,031	85	-6.8	Plymouth (284)	80,820	1,076	73	-5.8
Corcoran (877)	77,310	990	92	-6.4	Prior Lake (719)	77,220	1,299	17	12.2
Cottage Grove (833)	82,620	1,260	26	4.8	Ramsey (11)	80,820	982	93	-3.4
Crystal (281)	82,890	1,265	25	1.8	Richfield (280)	83,520	1,304	15	9.3
Dayton (11)	81,450	1,170	55	-2.8	Robbinsdale (281)	83,970	1,297	18	3.0
Deephaven (276)	78,570	1,155	58	-0.0	Rosemount (196)	81,000	1,131	63	1.1
Eagan (196)	80,730	1,038	84	2.2	Roseville (623)	83,070	1,321	10	-2.7
East Bethel (15)	81,180	1,043	82	1.5	St. Anthony (282)	82,800	1,279	21	5.9
Eden Prairie (272)	81,000	1,196	47	-5.7	St. Louis Park (283)	80,640	1,190	48	-0.9
Edina (273)	81,360	1,215	42	9.7	St. Paul (625)	83,160	1,391	2	9.5
Excelsior (276)	79,110	1,256	28	11.4	St. Paul Park (833)	81,000	1,152	59	3.6
Falcon Heights (623)	84,600	1,234	37	15.5	Savage (191)	76,680	1,301	16	2.4
Farmington (193)	80,370	1,206	45	4.9	Shakopee (720)	79,380	1,271	23	0.4
Forest Lake (831)	80,460	1,064	79	8.6	Shoreview (621)	82,170	1,237	36	-3.2
Forest Lake Twp. (831)	83,340	1,005	90	13	Shorewood (276)	78,120	1,185	50	-2.9
Fridley (14)	82,980	1,167	56	-3.8	South St. Paul (6)	82,800	1,105	69	-8.1
Golden Valley (270)	81,450	1,253	32	1.2	Spring Lake Park (16)	82,530	1,071	76	-8.2
Grant Twp. (832)	80,730	1,028	86	3.2	Spring Lake Twp. (719)	79,380	1,073	74	12.3
Ham Lake (11)	82,350	968	94	-6.5	Stillwater (834)	79,560	1,110	67	-4.7
Hastings (200)	81,990	1,116	65	-0.3	Vadnais Heights (624)	85,410	1,340	7	11.2
Hopkins (270)	81,540	1,273	22	0.8	Waconia (110)	79,290	1,451	1	6.5
Hugo (624)	81,720	1,172	53	5.4	Wayzata (284)	80,370	1,114	66	-7.2
Independence (278)	83,340	1,314	13	5.0	West St. Paul (197)	81,810	1,096	71	8.9
Inver Grove Hts (199)	80,190	1,203	46	2.0	White Bear L. Twp. (624)	81,270	1,218	41	7.1
Jordan (717)	79,740	1,338	8	14.1	White Bear Lake (624)	83,430	1,333	9	5.7
Lake Elmo (834)	83,520	1,141	61	12.8	Woodbury (833)	81,630	1,212	44	0.8
Lakeville (194)	80,820	1,131	62	3.0					
Lino Lakes (12)	81,900	1,212	43	2.0					
Linwood Twp. (831)	78,750	1,022	87	-0.8					
Little Canada (623)	82,620	1,363	5	-1.4					
Mahtomedi (832)	79,740	1,105	68	-4.0					
Maple Grove (279)	81,720	1,242	34	0.9					
Maplewood (622)	85,050	1,314	12	-2.1					

*The \$90,000 selling price is adjusted for differences in assessment practices among communities, as shown in the "Assessor's Market Value" column.

**The 95 communities in the seven-county metropolitan area with populations of 2,500 or above.

***Reflects the amount at which a home that actually sold for \$90,000 would likely be valued for tax purposes by the assessor in each community, based on studies of assessment practices.

SOURCES: Citizens League and Minnesota Taxpayers Association

Property Tax

Continued from page 6

the school tax rate increased by 57 percent. According to School District 10 business manager Larry Sharratt, the increase is due partly to a new debt levy to pay for construction of a \$16 million high school set to open this fall and partly to health and safety work on the district's buildings and increases in the general education levy. At the same time, the city tax rate increased as the city decided to cut back its reliance on state aid for general purpose spending. Although the school tax rate declined slightly in 1994, increases in the city and county tax rates resulted in an increase in the total tax rate that moved Waconia's taxes to highest in the ranking.

Neither St. Paul nor Minneapolis ranked in the top five last year; Minneapolis ranked seventh last year and St. Paul 16th. The reason for the change in the two cities' relative rankings? St. Paul's total tax rate increase from 1993 to 1994—at 8.6 percent—was among the largest in the metro cities. Only nine other cities of the 95 had percentage increases as high or higher. Most of the increase in St. Paul was due to a nearly 14 percent increase in the school tax rate. The county tax rate also increased, while the city rate declined.

Part of the rate increase in St. Paul was due to an overall decline in the city's tax base, due almost entirely to a drop in the city's commercial-industrial tax base. The total tax levy also increased, mainly due to an increase in school spending.

While the total tax rate increase for Minneapolis—at 2.7 percent—was not large, it was high enough relative to other cities to push the city up three places to fourth highest in the rankings. The school, city, and county tax rates all increased in Minneapolis.

Three of the five lowest metro cities—Ham Lake, Ramsey and Andover—are located in School District 11, which has the third lowest tax rate of the school districts in which the 95 cities are located.

The five highest tax nonmetro cities in the \$90,000 home comparison are:

Duluth (709) \$1,320; **Cloquet** (94) \$1,299; **St. Peter** (508) \$1,287; **Hutchinson** (423) \$1,248; and **Hibbing** (701) \$1,243.

The five lowest tax nonmetro cities in the \$90,000 home comparison are:

Elk River (728) \$931; **Marshall** (413) \$938; **Red Wing** (256) \$956; **Owatonna** (761) \$1,033; and **Brainerd** (181) \$1,038.

Changes in property tax levels

Taxes vary from year to year for a number of reasons, including changes in the value of the property. In all but eight of the communities in the survey, the average value of a home increased from 1992 to 1993. (There is a one-year lag in the home values used for tax purposes.) Six cities showing a decline were in the metro area and two were nonmetro communities. In the metro area cities the median increase in average-home value was 2.2 percent, compared to 9.7 percent in the nonmetro cities.

Increases in the tax rates set by local units of government also help account for increases in estimated taxes. Homeowners in more than two-thirds (65) of the metro cities and over three-fourths (20) of the nonmetro cities saw increases in the cumulative tax rates in 1994. The cumulative rate is the sum of tax rates of the city, the school district, the county and other taxing jurisdictions (such as hospital or watershed districts). Tax rates increase if taxes grow at a faster rate than property value, or if taxes remain constant and property value declines. Property taxes can increase if spending increases or if there is a loss of revenue from another source, such as state aid.

Interestingly, nine of the 30 metro cities with tax rate decreases in 1994 were located in Anoka County. The tax rates decreased in three school districts in which eight of those nine communities are located. Also, Anoka County's tax rate declined slightly (by less than one percent)—the only one of the seven metro counties showing a tax rate decrease.

School districts typically account for the largest share of the property tax rates—an average of 50 percent of the total 1994 tax rate in the metro area cities and 45 percent in

the nonmetro cities. Counties' share of the 1994 tax rate averages 28 percent in the metro cities and 32 percent nonmetro. The city share averages 18 percent metro and 23 percent nonmetro. Miscellaneous taxing jurisdictions average four percent metro and less than one percent nonmetro.

(These tax-rate share figures do not include school levy referenda passed after Nov. 1, 1992, which are based on market value, rather than tax capacity, or other levy referenda based on market value. Among the 95 largest metro communities, two school districts—affecting five of the 95 communities—and two cities have such market-value referenda in place. Among the 27 largest nonmetro communities, eight school districts—affecting nine of the 27 communities—and one city have market-value referenda. These referenda levies are included in the

other tax calculations in the survey.)

Many communities have voter-approved levies to provide additional income for their school districts. St. Paul is the only one of the 95 metro communities whose school district does not have a referendum levy affecting 1994 taxes. Only five of the 27 nonmetro communities are in school districts without referendum levies.

Lynn Reed is a research associate of the Minnesota Taxpayers Association (MTA) and Dana Schroeder is editor of the Minnesota Journal. The MTA did the data preparation and analysis for the property tax survey. The complete study, Minnesota Homestead Property Tax Review 1994, is available for purchase from the Citizens League at 338-0791 or the MTA at 224-7477.

TABLE 2: TAX ON HOME SELLING FOR \$90,000* IN 27** NONMETROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES, 1994

Community (School District)	Assessors Market Value***	1994 Tax	Tax Rank	Percent Change in Taxes '93-94
Albert Lea (241)	\$ 79,470	\$1,077	21	-5.0%
Austin (493)	78,570	1,200	7	-8.2
Bemidji (31)	80,010	1,217	6	1.5
Brainerd (181)	79,560	1,038	23	-3.9
Cloquet (94)	78,660	1,299	2	5.0
Duluth (709)	81,540	1,320	1	13.5
Elk River (728)	77,130	931	27	-1.0
Fairmont (454)	87,480	1,140	14	14.4
Faribault (656)	78,300	1,129	15	-4.2
Fergus Falls (544)	80,910	1,105	18	12.2
Hibbing (701)	82,800	1,243	5	15.4
Hutchinson (423)	78,390	1,248	4	3.8
Mankato (77)	78,840	1,076	22	-3.1
Marshall (413)	78,300	938	26	0.4
Moorhead (152)	79,650	1,147	11	2.0
New Ulm (88)	80,370	1,108	17	4.7
North Mankato (77)	75,690	1,092	20	-8.1
Northfield (659)	78,480	1,145	12	4.2
Owatonna (761)	81,540	1,033	24	10.2
Red Wing (256)	81,540	956	25	1.2
Rochester (535)	81,270	1,167	8	9.8
St. Cloud (742)	81,000	1,143	13	2.5
St. Peter (508)	79,380	1,287	3	8.5
Virginia (706)	82,800	1,157	9	14.3
Willmar (347)	81,180	1,155	10	-3.3
Winona (861)	81,450	1,110	16	12.4
Worthington (518)	83,340	1,104	19	4.8

*A number of nonmetropolitan communities have few homes selling for \$90,000, but the table is included for comparative purposes. The \$90,000 selling price is adjusted for differences in assessment practices among communities, as shown in the "Assessor's Market Value" column.

**The 27 cities outside the metropolitan area with populations of 9,000 or above.

***See footnote on Table 1.

SOURCES: Citizens League and Minnesota Taxpayers Association

New enterprise sets sights on \$1 billion owed state

The State of Minnesota had more than \$1 billion in delinquent receivables in 1993—from unpaid taxes and workers' compensation premiums to child support—according to a study by Andersen Consulting. But as of July 1, state agencies can get some powerful new help collecting those past-dues from Minnesota Collection Enterprise, a state-run collection management service overseen by the Minnesota Departments of Finance, Human Services and Revenue and the Office of the Attorney General.

Minnesota Collection Enterprise uses experienced collection professionals and state-of-the-art computer systems to support existing collections efforts of state agencies, universities and county courts. The enterprise has been helping with child support collections for the Department of Human Services for about a year and is now negotiating with eight more potential customers, according to project manager Pam Dahlstrom.

The enterprise offers some unique advantages: It can consolidate debts owed by one individual to multiple agencies. It has unlimited access to state information to locate people and their money. And according to Dahlstrom, the enterprise plans to ask the Legislature to seek special administrative authority to expand its collection capability. If that authority is granted, the enterprise could capture lottery winnings or tax refunds to pay debts, or deny a professional license until the debt is paid, for example. It also will ask for permission to charge debtors for the cost of collection; now, the state pays those costs.

The multi-agency policy oversight team will make a recommendation to the Legislature by February 1996 as to Minnesota Collection Enterprise's permanent home.—*Janet Dudrow.*

Primary care? Given a perceived glut of specialty doctors in some areas and a growing appreciation for primary-care physicians, some specialists may soon try to reposition themselves. At a recent seminar, a California doctor reported this example: A Los Angeles yellow pages ad for an endocrinologist describes the physician as a "primary-care physician of the endocrine

Take Note

We felt we owed it to you to collect these important tidbits.

organs."—*Allan Baumgarten.*

Not surprisingly, some of Minnesota's new charter schools are showing problems, a year on. Sometimes the skills needed to start a school aren't the skills needed to manage it, so the board has to change people. Sometimes the standards haven't been set clearly, and the sponsor has to get tough about that. Maybe a school that doesn't perform will get closed.

Suddenly it becomes clear. In the new charter public schools, people move on problems quickly. Standards and measurement get taken seriously. And accountability is real. Regular public schools have problems, too. What if all public schools moved on their leadership problems that quickly? What if all public schools had to take standards seriously? What if any public school that didn't perform would be closed?—*Ted Kolderie.*

The same can be said about recent headlines concerning two private Minnesota companies involved in running public schools—Bloomington-based Education Alternatives, Inc., which has contracts to run schools in Baltimore and Florida and is under consideration for a contract with the Hartford, Conn., schools, and Public Strategies Group, Inc., Peter Hutchinson's firm, currently under contract to manage the Minneapolis schools.

Whether they carry through with their promised results remains to be seen. But the public scrutiny of education "results" is certainly greater than it has been under most traditional public school management arrangements.—*Dana Schroeder.*

"I believe any decision on the (ParkCenter) bridges is probably premature at this time. I'd like to know how each of you feels about this before the APA meeting." This message went from Councilwoman Anne Hausrath to fellow members of the Boise, Idaho, city council by e-mail.

It turns out members of the council have been using e-mail regularly to

discuss matters before the council, which might be a violation of the open meeting law if the same discussion were held in person. The state attorney general thinks this use of e-mail may well be a violation of that law.

Has anybody asked around here how widely e-mail may be in use among members of elected bodies subject to Minnesota's open meeting law?—*T.K.*

State aid to school districts could drop by more than \$100 million in 1994 if the local property value captured by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) were included when calculating schools' revenue capacity. House Research reported that conclusion in its July 1994 "Estimate of the State Aid Impacts of TIF." The report noted a dramatic increase in aid payments as a result of excluding TIF values—from \$20.4 million in 1986 to \$100.8 million in 1994, an annual rate of increase of 22.1 percent over the eight years.

Three factors contributed to the increase in aid payments, the report said. First, the amount of property-tax value captured in TIF districts has increased, from 2.7 percent of the state's total tax base in 1986 to 6.4 percent in 1994. Second, the general education formula provided a higher level of aid in 1994 compared to 1988. Third, the Legislature added new state education aid formulas—such as referendum equalization—that boosted the impact of excluding TIF values.

A state aid offset, enacted by the Legislature in 1990, was intended to reduce the state's cost of TIF use and increase city accountability by shifting a larger share of TIF back to the city. But according to House Research, the state aid offset applies to so few districts that it doesn't reduce the state's local-aid payments by much.—*J.D.*

What-might-have-been department: At a breakfast in the early 1970s Bill McCutcheon, then a state senator and a high-ranking police officer in St. Paul, was talking casually about press reports of trouble in the police in Minneapolis. "It would be interesting to have a chance to work on that problem," he said. "It would take five years to turn that department around. But it could be done."

A few years later McCutcheon had left the Senate and become chief in St. Paul. In Minneapolis Don Fraser had been elected mayor. He had to appoint a new chief there. The search was under way. In St. Paul, at the same time, McCutcheon was up for reappointment. The reappointment kept being delayed, for one reason or another. Nobody seemed to notice the connection.

In time, Tony Bouza was named chief in Minneapolis. St. Paul then reappointed Bill McCutcheon. He served until a year or so ago, then retired. Tony Bouza is now running for governor. The Minneapolis police is again in the news—again a troubled operation.—*T.K.*

Contributors this month include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members and Allan Baumgarten, a consultant on health-care policy and finance.

**Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
Suite 500
708 S. Third St.
Minneapolis, MN 55415**

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Citizens League Matters

August 16, 1994

News for Citizens League Members

Welcome, New Members

Clark Arneson
 William Brumfield
 Nancy Christensen
 David Feehan
 Beverly Grossman
 Roberta Megard
 Jim Nobles
 Inez Schwarzkopf
 Irving Stern
 Jack Uldrich
 Jack Wallinga

Recruiters:

N. Bud Grossman
 Lyall Schwarzkopf

Health policy seminar set for September 26

Two panels of experts will describe their views of "Health Care in Minnesota in the Year 2000" at the Citizens League's second annual health policy seminar. The program, cosponsored by the University of St. Thomas Center for Health and Medical Affairs, will be held on **Monday morning, September 26**, at the Airport Hilton in Bloomington.

Speakers, including executives from the state's integrated health systems, physician networks and hospitals, will describe their vision of what the market will look like as

well as the likely impacts of state health reform.

Employers and academics will bring their perspectives on the issues as well. Speakers confirmed include Jan Malcolm of HealthPartners and Bill Blazar of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

The meeting will also mark the release of the *Minnesota Managed Care Review 1994*, Allan Baumgarten's fifth annual report analyzing key trends and issues in Minnesota's dynamic health care marketplace. Watch your mail for registration details.

Fiscal year-end drive needs fuel

The League needs your help. Actually, the League needs its members to show their financial support. You can do that by making a contribution by the League's fiscal year-end drive. Year-end contributions are a very important part of the League's annual budget. Last year, challenged by the McKnight Foundation, League members contributed over \$75,000. We are quite a bit short of that this year going into the last few weeks of the fiscal year. In fact, the League is facing a budget shortfall

unless we have a strong finish to this campaign.

Individual members are the heart and soul of the Citizens League. Your support is the reason the League has accomplished so much over the years. But much remains to be done. The League expects to play a key role in the upcoming debates that will shape the future of our region. We can't do that without your support. Please make your contribution as soon as possible.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Global Study Committee
 Tuesday, August 16
 5 - 7 p.m.

**Board of Directors
 Transitional Meeting**
 Wednesday, August 31
 4 - 6 p.m.
 University Club
 St. Paul

Health Policy Seminar
 Monday, September 26
 Time TBA
 Airport Hilton
 Bloomington

DebtBusters 2000
 Thursday, October 6
 6:30 - 9 p.m.
 St. Paul's Church
 1719 Logan Avenue S.
 Minneapolis

**Michael Porter
 Video Seminar**
 October 11 & 18,
 5:45 p.m.
 Hamline University

League to co-host DebtBusters event

The Citizens League, together with the Third Millennium, and the Concord Coalition, will be hosting an evening event centered around the Concord Coalition's *DebtBusters 2000* group exercise.

DebtBusters 2000 is an abbreviated version of the Coalition's Exercise in Hard Choices module. Both of these group projects are designed to simulate the debate and decisionmaking processes that occur annually at the federal level as congress shapes our nation's budget.

Members of the Minnesota Young DFLers and the Minnesota Young IRs have also been invited to participate in this event scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 1994, at St. Paul's Episcopalian Church, 1917 Logan Avenue South in Minneapolis.

Judy Blaseg, Minnesota State Coordinator of the Concord Coalition, will moderate the event. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m., and the exercise will run from 7 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$5. To reserve your spot, call the Citizens League, 338-0791.

Committee will take another look at light rail transit issues

A special committee appointed by the League's Board of Directors will be meeting during the fall to discuss the future of light rail transit in our region.

Committee co-chairs **A. Scheffer Lang** and **Jim Newland** hope to begin committee meetings in September and have a final statement prepared by mid-December. The committee will draft a statement for presentation to the 1995 Legislature as state policymakers consider the next steps in building a light rail system in our region.

Historically, the League has been opposed to light rail transit, citing the high cost of building and maintaining such a system that doesn't effectively relieve traffic congestion.

This fall's committee may be considering transit systems that have been proven to be more effective than LRT in relieving traffic congestion, including telecommuting, HOV lanes, ridesharing and congestion pricing and how funding may be better spent on these alternatives.



Citizens Shaping Minnesota's Agenda for 42 Years

Keeping You Posted

The Citizens League is committed to helping its members ease into the Information Age. As part of that commitment, League staff will try to keep you apprised of the more interesting postings seen along the Information Superhighway as well as new on-line bulletin board services that may be of interest to League members.

The following electronic message was received after subscribing to a new listserve on Internet. This item should be of interest to League members who would like to follow the upcoming elections electronically.

To: heatherp@epx.cis.umn.edu
Subject: Welcome to mn-politics

... Here's the general information for the list you've subscribed to, in case you don't already have it:

Minnesota Politics and Public Policy Electronic-Mail Forum

MN-POLITICS is an unmoderated Internet electronic-mail list for the sharing of information on and discussion of Minnesota politics and public policy. Members of this forum are encouraged to contribute campaign and election information, announcements from Minnesota-focused political and civic organizations, public policy and legislative information, and presentations on issues of public interest.

The list encourages discussion from diverse political perspectives that is respectful in nature. This forum is more about the presentation of ideas and information than being right with one's ideology. As membership broadens, the forum will seek to contain informational postings that represent the diverse political scene in Minnesota.

List Manager: Mick Souder
<MASOUDER@ALEX.STKATE.EDU>

MINNESOTA E-DEMOCRACY 1994

List Facilities provided by the Minnesota Regional Network

Minnesota E-Democracy will focus on the Governor and U.S. Senate races. It will also create an information infrastructure that will allow campaigns and civic and political organizations at all levels to distribute information electronically to a wide public audience.

To subscribe to mn-politics, send an e-mail message to:
majordomo@mr.net

In the subject line type "subscribe." In the body of your message, simply type:

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For more information regarding the E-Democracy project, contact: e-democracy@free-net.mpls-stpaul.mn.us or call Heather Peterson at the League's office, 338-0791.