Behavior, access concerns for youth and bus system

Thousands of urban youth are wedded to the Twin Cities bus system. Too young to drive or lacking access to a car, they depend on public buses to get them wherever they're going: to work, to friends, to entertainment, to medical appointments, to school activities and, in some cases, to school.

Several events in the past year have focused attention on youths' relationship with the region's bus system: the bus strike last October, the recent Metropolitan Council decision to end discounted off-peak fares for youths aged 13 to 17 and growing youth ridership and behavior concerns on buses to and from Bloomington's Mall of America.

Perhaps most striking were two widely reported incidents last fall on Route 80 express buses between the mall and downtown Minneapolis. In one a gun went off on a bus, which stopped along 35W, resulting in "chaos," according to Dick Loeffler, manager of street operations for the Metropolitan Council Transit Operations (MCTO). In the other a fight broke out in the back of a bus and a rider jumped or was thrown out one of the back windows while the bus was moving.

Bob Gibbons, MCTO's director of customer services, said opinion on youth behavior problems is a matter of perspective. But, he said, "On Route 80 on a Saturday night, the driver would probably say young people are a big problem."

While concern has centered on

- **Behavior, access concerns for youth and bus system**
  - by Dana Schroeder
- **Court decision overturns metro garbage strategy**
  - by Kristin J. Robbins
- **Sprawl and the MUSA**
  - Expand MUSA
    - by Karen Christofferson
  - Explore options
    - by Curt Johnson
Embrace seven lively virtues for the information age

by Lyle Wray

People have to prepare ourselves for the postindustrial age—the personal virtues, if you will, that will contribute to a better future.

Virtue, sad to say, is becoming as scarce as the Seven Deadly Sins. Here are seven your leaders are struggling to find:

1. Curiosity. Rapid technological change means yesterday’s skills won’t be good enough. We may experience five to 10 careers in a lifetime. Learning will be part of every job and essential for the next generation. We and our children should cultivate a willingness to learn and the knack for making learning fun. And we must develop the discipline to stick to it.

2. Technology literacy. Adults and children should make a habit of making technological work, rather than against us in our homes, schools and workplaces. We should do a casual personal “technology impact statement” in whether a particular gadget adds to or detracts from our life. Whatever tools we choose, however, we’ll have to consider basic computer, technology literacy instruction skills to be as essential to literacy as reading skills are now.

3. Frugality. A cushion of savings in a turbulent time of downsizings may be far more comforting than an account that appears “guaranteed” in some moral sense, and “good” in the sense that they help us do well materially in the world in which we live?

A recent hit movie reminded us of the Seven Deadly Sins. Here are some candidates for the Seven Lively Virtues for the global and information age:

6. Neighbors. Among all the economic and political virtues, community counts. The connections of trust, memories, and obligations that communities provide are probably becoming more important as capacities to think and venture or business opportunity can open up future economic possibilities for personal virtues and are comfortable holding a stock that keeps the nation healthy over the long run. And in these days of computerized and fractionated time, lifelong lengthening life expectancies, sav- ing for old age should be considered a duty.

7. Compassion. Some of us will be better able to cope with the chal- lenges of the era, and more suc- cessful in our careers or productivity, than others. It makes sense to be compassionate to those who are struggling or in distress, seeking out personally and corporately the small daily acts: reading news of events. Those to be learning a new language, enjoying the arts of other cultures, and experiencing other international cultures.

As we move into the postindustrial age, dislocation and alienation will be inevitable. Like the Puritans in Massachusetts, who were spending less than two cents on education five to 10 careers in a lifetime. Learning will be part of every job and essential for the next generation. We and our children should cultivate a willingness to learn and the knack for making learning fun. And we must develop the discipline to stick to it.

The Minnesota Journal (ISSN 0741-9449) is a paper published weekly by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, United States. The Minnesota Journal’s content is protected under the U.S. Copyright Act and may not be reproduced or distributed in any manner without the permission of the publication.

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Twin Cities (BATC) is one of many organizations the council is looking into for its study on land use, focusing on 23 development options that have been researched and thoughtfully.

The BATC study points out the need for an adequate supply of urban land for development, higher residential density and a more efficient use of land resources. The study also identifies the problems of unneeded housing development on large lots of land and leapfrog development into areas outside the Twin Cities Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) as major challenges facing the region.

To its credit, the BATC has heighten- ed the level of discussion on these issues and proposed recommenda- tions for the future. One of these is to maintain a health region and to consider as we define it, the seven counties that make up the Twin Cities region. The plan would encourage “mixed use” job land-use policies that apply to areas outside the seven counties. It would require a MUSA expansion of 210 to 225 square miles, $135 million for regional interchange projects, $2 billion for local public sewer, water and stormwater, $6.2 billion for regional highways and $800 million for local roads.

It establishes a broad framework for accommodating growth that has wide-ranging support.

The council has launched a public design process to provide infor- mation for regional interchange projects, and they have in determining how the region will look in 25 years and what those choices will be. For starters, the council developed three growth options for review and comment on regional prefer- ences and priorities.

The Current Trend development option would accommodate future growth through a transit-driven expansion of the urban area. It would require a MUSA expansion of 260 to 270 square miles, $162 million for regional interchange projects, $27 million for local public sewer, water and stormwater systems, $6.4 billion for regional highways and $1 billion for local roads.

The Concentrated Development option would direct new growth primarily to the existing urban area, focusing on existing development and increasing housing density. It would require a MUSA expansion of 170 to 180 square miles, $116 million for new regional- interconnector sewers, $13.5 million for regional stormwater, $63.5 million for local highways and $691 million for local roads.

The Growth Centers option would encourage “mixed use” job and housing centers that are pedestrian- and transit-friendly. It would require a MUSA expansion of 210 to 225 square miles, $135 million for regional interchange projects, $2 billion for local public sewer, water and stormwater, $6.2 billion for regional highways and $800 million for local roads.

There’s a lot at stake. The council welcomes public comment and feedback.

Curt Johnson is chair of the Metro- politan Council. Copies of the council’s Growth Options report are available at 291-8140. The council will hold a series of “Growth Options” public meet- ings, and from 9 to 9 p.m. on May 21 at the council chambers in St. Paul, May 22 at the Plym- outh Central Community Center, and May 23 at the Ramsey County Western Service Center in Saint Paul and May 30 at the Shoreview Community Center.

The League also raised concerns about building “vore or two large, centralized resource recovery facilities.” Instead, the League advocated creating a decentralized system that would “enable communities to shift incrementally toward resource recovery and minimize the flow of disposal, changing systems or tech- nology as demand for service changes.”

Given Judge Doty’s rulings, it appears the League’s analysis of the potential problems associated with regional interchange projects relying on flow control to ensure sufficient volume for financing their contracts.

Ramsey County facilities

Based on the agreements in place with the seven-county region, Ramsey County has been working with the county would allow us to focus on maximiz- ing planning, coordination, pro- viding information. Some of these other activities, transit and the air- port, are best handled as separate, and not a part of any regional plan that includes the Ramsey County facilities.

Given Judge Doty’s rulings, it appears the League’s analysis of the potential problems associated with regional interchange projects relying on flow control to ensure sufficient volume for financing their contracts.

In an effort to compete with less expensive out-of-state landfills, both counties graduated the hauling fees in 1989 and 1991. This has led to a processing fee that has been imposed by the county. In 1991, the council has decided to increase the tipping fee to be competitively with other disposal sites and will make up the difference by raising the waste service tax to the property tax: the general property tax. The waste service assessment is currently at nine percent (applied against a property’s capacity—that is, the value adjusted for tax purposes) for resi- dential customers and 14 percent for commercial customers.

Johnson said the county can also provide “incentives for recycling” as known as “organized collection,” under which the county would work with cities to help set the routes for garbage hauling. The lower bidder on these routes would then be again to be requested to bring the waste to a processing facility specified by the county. Local recycling programs and organics collection arrangements have been opted by the courts in several cases on the East Coast.

Assistant Ramsey County Attorney Durwin Lockingbill said Ramsey County and Washington County are look- ing at other lower tipping fees, while simultaneously raising the waste service tax to the property tax. The county can also consider negotiating long- term contracts with haulers or re- financing the bonds.

All three counties are looking to Congress for permanent relief. Legislation allowing jurisdictions with flowsensitive waste to bring their tipping fees down will be discussed in the class action suit by garbage genera- tors seeking to raise the tipping fees. Currently, Hennepin County has been constructing contracts with haulers for $45 per ton and Ramsey and Washington Counties, which do not have haulers under contract, charge $60 to $70 a ton.

In his recent ruling, Judge Doty held the limited scope of the existing portion of the counties’ ordi- nances also violated the Commerce Clause, also finding that Anoka, Sherburne, Stearns and Benton Counties. It opened in June 1989 and was financed through a $63 million bond issue by Anoka County, which has a population of about 210,000 people.

Leach noted that the two plants gen- erate enough electricity to serve 40,000 homes per year. To ensure the facilities are self-financed through tipping fees and meet their energy and fuel budgets, municipalities are generating enough revenue to be self-supporting.

Doty’s ruling indicated, however, that currently there are a limited number of environmental reasons and economic reasons that could build a processing facility in the counties. The council’s growth in capacity—production that will be fueled from the local landfill. He also advocated creating a decentralized system that would “enable communities to shift incrementally toward resource recovery and minimize the flow of disposal, changing systems or tech- nology as demand for service changes.”

In 1994, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Carbone v. Clarkston that cities can ordi- nances specifying that all processing facilities must be located within the city limits. The ruling was overturned, what options are available for the city to move forward?

The ordinance is known as “organized collection,” under which the county would work with cities to help set the routes for garbage hauling. The lower bidder on these routes would then be again to be requested to bring the waste to a processing facility specified by the county. Local recycling programs and organics collection arrangements have been opted by the courts in several cases on the East Coast.

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The builders recommend not only increasing housing in growing communities where the vast majori-
ty of growth is occurring, but also expanding urban density development in the core city.

BARTC’s Builders Outreach Director Mark Shardlow described a modest effort in St. Paul’s Frogtown neighborhood by building a five-bedroom home at 484 Edmund. This is BRT’s second home in the neighborhood, but those kinds of initiatives barely scratch the surface of what needs to be done.

Shardlow emphasizes the BARTC study underscores Met Council findings that taxpayers pay more if land is developed at lower densities—or on large lots—than at higher density levels.

“The builders are pro-density,” Shardlow states. “We want to roll up our sleeves and work with the Met Council on all aspects of these critical land-use issues.”

Karen Christoferson is director of public policy for the Builders Association of the Twin Cities. Copies of the group’s study, which was conducted by the Minneapolis Metropolitan Council of Government, are available on large lots—than at higher density levels.

“To address concerns about young people congregating in places and participating in after-school activities,” said Mark Shardlow, urban planner for BARTC. “It’s hard to imagine a better solution for the busing problem this way: ‘We’ve had a very strong 25-year commitment to regional planning in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and that planning process is out of sync with the marketplace right now.’”

MPR’s Paula Schroeder asked Shardlow about building large houses on large lots and implied that builders were contributing to urban sprawl. Shardlow responded, “If local units of government will remove barriers from builders to build at a higher density, builders are ready, willing and able to do that business.”

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Interviewed on Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) on April 26, Shardlow described the land sprawl problem this way: “We’ve had a very strong 25-year commitment to regional planning in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and that planning process is out of sync with the marketplace right now.”

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Law ties some transportation funding to performance

**Lost in the flap** over the peremptory resolution of the dual-track airport process: A little-noticed section of the airport bill, championed by Dee Long (DFL-Minneapolis) and Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), put in motion some important steps to improve life for metro-area commuters.

The Transportation Investment Act will require a performance audit of the metropolitan commuting area’s transportation system every four years, starting in 1997. The audit is to include recommendations for standards against which the highway and transit systems’ performance will be evaluated.

The law also requires that 1.5 percent of the general funds appropriated to the Metropolitan Council Transit Operations (MCTO) for fiscal 1997 be withheld until June 1997. At that time, the funds are to be released only if MCTO shows that it has increased its productivity, measured in terms of passengers per revenue hour, during the previous year.

Similarly, five percent of the funds appropriated in 1996 for trunk highway construction will be released after June 1, 1997, only if MnDOT shows that it has increased its administrative costs relative to construction costs.

Small steps, perhaps. But a big victory for an idea whose time has come: Pay for performance, not process.—Janet Dudrow.

**Victoria** city council member Jim Paulsen reports that council members have been tossing around the idea of not approving any more single-family housing until the school district has enough capacity in its schools. The Carver County community currently has a two-year moratorium on single-family housing that comes off in December. Despite the moratorium, Paulsen said about 100 previously approved new housing units have gone up in each of the two years.

Following a successful bond referendum in School District 112 several years ago, a new high school was built in Chaska. However, an excess levy referendum to raise more operating funds for the district failed, so the school board closed the old high school, which was to have been used as a middle school. Paulsen said all the elementary and middle schools are full. Looking at school capacity is equally important to looking at the traditional measures of sewer and road capacity, he said.

Victoria realizes setting limits to growth by itself doesn’t make sense, Paulsen said, noting that Chanhassen will add 300 new housing units this year and Chaska 100 units. Still, he said, the community is realizing “the more we build, the further back we go.”—Dana Schroeder.

**Privatization** is the current rage among governments looking to cut costs. But it might surprise some that in Indianapolis, bids for a number of service contracts are being won by the government.

Since winning election in 1992, Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith has required public services to be open to competitive bid. During this time, 64 competitions worth $500 million in 27 separate service areas have been sent out for bid.

Indianapolis public workers have won 16 contracts outright, while splitting another 13 contracts with private contractors. Three years ago, the Indianapolis Solid Waste Division outbid 12 private haulers for the rights to much of the city’s trash. That same group is now looking to add public buildings and parks to their routes in a new round of bidding.

An interesting tidbit to this bidding war: Competitive bids submitted by public workers and unions have won about 75 percent of the time, while bids submitted by public-sector management have won only 30 percent of the time.—Ron Wirtz.

**Casino gambling** is booming, and law enforcement agencies worry that all that cash changing hands provides the perfect conditions for money launderers to do their dirty work, according to a recent report from the U.S. General Accounting Office.

Since the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) was passed in 1970, banks have been required to report to the IRS specific currency transactions over $10,000. The paper trail helps law enforcement officials and regulators spot attempts to conceal drug smuggling and other crimes.

As cash-based businesses, casinos provide many of the same services as banks—cashing checks, placing money on deposit. In 1985, the BSA was amended to include some casinos as nonbank financial institutions. Tribal casinos, however, weren’t subject to BSA, but to a more limited set of reporting requirements.

The federal 1994 Money Laundering Suppression Act expanded the scope of BSA to include tribal casinos with gross annual gaming revenues over $1 million. (That will cover all or most of the tribal casinos in the Twin Cities area.) The Treasury Department is putting the finishing touches on the regulations now.

When the regulations take effect, tribal casinos will have to record and report all currency transactions over $10,000: chip purchases, money placed on deposit, cash payouts and slot winnings—and the names and Social Security numbers of the gamblers involved.—J.D.

**Former Gov. Elmer L. Andersen:** “Character should be more and more the fundamental test of public officials. It doesn’t matter to me where they stand on issues. It’s where they stand on integrity, public service, the process, the constitution, as compared to selling out to almost anything.”—Betty Wilson.

The Minneapolis & St. Paul Home Tour offers up a smorgasbord of urban architectural styles. But tucked behind a freeway noise barrier in the Prospect Park neighborhood of Minneapolis is an architectural gem that should serve as a lesson in the current discussions on densification and reurbanization.

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the house represents a transition from Wright’s Prairie Style to his later “sonian” houses. The 1930s usonian houses applied Wright’s organic principles to small, affordable housing appropriate for what he saw as the emergence of a new democratic society, free of the hierarchy and tyranny reflected in European architectural styles.

The house has a monumental dignity that is surprising and uncommon, considering its size and scale. When built, the house framed the panoramic view of the river valley. Unfortunately, it has been cut from its surroundings by the way noise barrier. Still, it shows that a relatively small house on a small urban lot can be functional, esthetically pleasing and relate to its surroundings. (Ironically, some of the house’s best features are not permitted under today’s zoning laws.)—Phil Jenni.

“Take Note” contributors include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members and Betty Wilson, a free-lance writer and former Star Tribune political writer.

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**Minnesota Journal**

Citizens League

Suite 500

708 S. Third St.

Minneapolis, MN 55415

SECOND CLASS

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May 14, 1996
Citizens League Networks resume

The next Citizens League Network member reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 30 (see notice below for details).

The purpose of the Networks is to provide an opportunity for members, and their guests to socialize and learn about important community issues. League members are encouraged to bring guests.

The League launched this new member program last year with eight very successful sessions. Depending on the topic (and the weather) attendance varied from a couple of dozen to over 100.

This year we expect to do four to six Networks. Each will be announced separately, unlike last year when we announced the whole series in advance.

Typically Network meetings are held at the end of the business day. There is a nominal charge to help defray part of the expense of the program. A wine and cheese reception and an update on League activities precedes the featured presentation. Call 338-0791 for more information.

"Limits to Growth"

A summary of the Builders' Association of the Twin Cities study on the availability of developable urban land, the economic impact of current growth policies and recommendations for major changes in the region's growth management system.

Presenters:

John Shardlow
Dahlgren, Shardlow & Uban, Inc.

Dan Herbst
Pemtom Land Company

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Radisson Metrodome (U of M)
615 Washington Ave SE
Minneapolis

Cost: $10

5:00 p.m. Reception
5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Program

Reservations are required. Please reserve by May 27.
Call 338-0791, Fax 337-5919, email citizen@epx.cis.umn.edu

This Network is sponsored by Norwest Banks
Mind-Openers ending in style

The recent Mind-Opener series on regional governance shattered previous attendance records. Total attendance for the five-part series was 539, with the last session, featuring David Gurin of Toronto, setting a new standard for a single session with 120 people.

For those who missed the series, the meetings will be broadcast Tuesday nights at 9:30 p.m. starting June 4 on the Metro Cable Network (CH 6). The schedule is as follows:

June 4: Phil Wichern
June 11: Ken Greenberg
June 18: Beverly Stein
June 25: John Krauss
July 2: David Gurin

Special thanks to the Metro Council, Canadian Consulate, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the U of M and MN Extension Services for their financial assistance.

The Mind-Opener series goes on its traditional summer vacation after a three-part series looking at issues surrounding work readiness.

Steve Rothschild, founder and president of Twin Cities RISE!, led off the series on May 7. David R. Johnson, director of the National Transition Network at the U of M’s Institute on Community Integration, will discuss the role of education in workforce preparation on May 14. The season concludes on May 21 with Jane Samargia, Executive Director of HIRED, talking about the Jobslink program.

Study Committee Update

The Citizens League’s study committee on the Twin Cities in the Global Economy is coming into the home stretch. About two dozen League members have persevered through nearly two years of hard work on the question: What steps should the public sector take to position the Twin Cities metropolitan region for prosperity in the global economy?

The committee, co-chaired by David Hunt and John Yngve, has met 60 times, heard from 42 resource people, conducted eight Speak Ups!, filled three five-inch ring binders with resource material and consumed nine megabytes of hard disk storage.

The committee recently approved a first draft of recommendations and will review a complete report draft within the next couple of weeks. The final version will be sent to the Citizens League board for its review in June.

The Building Livable Communities committee is at the critical stage of outlining and defining the problems of past growth and development patterns in the Twin Cities.

After months of testimony and group discussion, the committee has tentatively identified four problem areas related to Twin Cities growth and development: the decentralization of growth, inner city decline, competition for tax base, and poorly coordinated regional systems.

Staff is now in the process of defining and documenting these four problem areas. The committee will spend the next 4 to 6 weeks debating and ultimately agreeing on specific definitions and conclusions before moving into the recommendation stage.

The League Board last month selected Empowering Public School Sites to Improve Student Achievement as the next study topic. This study will answer the question: What institutional arrangements are needed to enable individual schools to improve student achievement? The committee will address nuts-and-bolts questions related to site-based management—issues such as curricular and instruction, assessment, transportation, school construction and capital expenditures.

The new study will be started when the Global Economy committee has completed its work. Recruitment for study committee members will likely begin in July. Interested League members should watch their mail for information about how to apply.

Two members recognized for civic service

Citizens League members are generally a busy, civic bunch with a high public profile quotient. But from time to time we notice when active League members are singled out for prestigious awards or recognition.

Longtime League member Allen Saeks was honored on Law Day by the Fund for the Legal Aid Society and the Hennepin County Bar Association for his legal service to the disadvantaged. Saeks has served several terms on the League’s Board of Directors and chaired several study and operational committees. League past president John Mooty was last year’s Law Day honoree.

Fred Hoisington was recipient of the Moe Dorton Award. The award, presented by the Sensible Land Use Coalition, recognizes individual leadership, accomplishment, cooperation and civility in land use planning and development. Hoisington has served on several recent League study committees and is currently a member of the Building Livable Communities study. Incidentally, Moe Dorton was also an active member of the League until his untimely death, and last year’s winner was current League president Barbara Lukermann.

Congratulations Allen and Fred! We’re proud to have you as members of the Citizens League.

The Citizens League’s Princes Charles...

Chuck Neerland, co-chair of the League’s summer short study on the state budget, was a panelist on KTCA Almanac on Friday, April 12. He discussed the Citizens League’s position on the future of the University of Minnesota’s General College.

Board member Chuck Denny spoke about the problems of poverty concentration and city-suburb income disparity at a meeting of the membership of the Woodhill Country Club on Wednesday, April 24. He spoke about the League’s 1994 housing study and its ongoing efforts to improve regional development strategies.