



JOURNAL

Expanding the Civic Imagination



60th anniversary celebration offers a time to look back and look forward

By Bob DeBoer

The 60th anniversary of the Citizens League is upon us (February 14, 2012 is the official date), and this issue of the *Minnesota Journal* begins our year-long celebration of the Citizens League influence on policy and politics in Minnesota over the past six decades.

In this issue, long-time members take the opportunity to revisit some of our earlier work, to talk about what it was like to be a part of an authentic process and to reflect on the impact of that work over time.

People often focus on the Citizens League's high-profile successes: the Minnesota Miracle (page 5), chartered schools (page 6), the creation of Metropolitan State University (page 7) and the Metropolitan Council. But in many of the policy areas where the Citizens League has worked over the years, our state continues to struggle to produce sufficient change. Often, the early definition of the problem and the proposed solutions remain valid today—but change has become even more difficult over time as institutions become more entrenched in dense silos of expertise.

In transit and health care, the Citizens League has been a part of creating significant successes over time, but some fundamental problems have resisted policy change. (See page 10.)

In this, our kick-off issue celebrating the 60th anniversary, we address only a small segment of the policy areas in which the Citizens League has had a voice. We will write much more in these pages over the coming year about the issues that are most critical to moving Minnesota forward today and in the future.

The Citizens League approach to policymaking, based on the fundamental premise that “everyone is a policy-maker,” offers us new opportunities to develop processes and policies that can again provide Minnesota with innovative and enduring solutions to our most pressing problems. That approach—our civic policy agenda—bears restating here (and for a more detailed explanation, read our [cover article](#) in the July/August issue).

The Citizens League is a multi-partisan, member-based organization working to build civic imagination and capacity in Minnesota. The Citizens League's approach to policy—civic policymaking—results in the civic policy agenda, our case for action that is based on the belief that all people and organizations play essential roles in developing the ideas, skills and resources to govern for the common good.

What makes this approach sustainable is the application of the [Citizens League operating principles](#) in all of our work. These principles:

- build the capacity of all who participate through application of the skills necessary to govern,
- apply guidelines that help us produce authentic results, and
- find the common values that give people the framework to work together around contentious issues.

But in order to succeed the Citizens League needs you, our members, and your participation has never been more important.

Why now? Our state and our methods of governance are in turmoil. Minnesotans across ideologies and political parties are searching for ways to become part of the solution. The Citizens League's civic policy agenda will help Minnesota weather these turbulent times and emerge stronger.

Why you? Citizen participation is not just some platitude, it's essential to our state's success. Many of our essential challenges require solutions that impact all sectors of our society, and it is only through citizen participation that these solutions can be realized in various settings—homes, businesses, places of worship, community organizations, and government.

As part of our 60th anniversary, we invite you to explore and expand your own civic capacity by thinking more broadly about “policy” and what it means in your life, and by joining in our efforts to find common ground and achieve the common good for Minnesota. ●

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CONNECTIONS

Building a League of Citizens

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MATT MUSEL

Matt Musel is a development officer at the University of Minnesota Extension. He has been a member for nearly 11 years, and was most recently involved with the Immigration and Higher Education Study Committee.

Why he joined the Citizens League:

I initially joined the Citizens League through their partnership with Civics Inc., a leadership development program which taught active citizenship. At the time, I was skeptical of the Citizens League, but when I first met Sean Kershaw through Civics Inc. I was impressed by Sean's commitment to reflect on civic values and to teach others (including me) how to participate in work, life and government as active citizens.

For me, membership in the Citizens League is about humility. The Citizens League values a place for divergent voices—voices affected by policy. In joining the Citizens League you benefit from the reflection and elevation of citizens voices, including those that may challenge your beliefs.



Thanks to our newest sustaining members!

**Joseph & Julitta Dragich
Robert Nygaard & Jessica Barron-Nygaard**

Sustaining members schedule regular monthly or quarterly payments of any amount, or automatic annual donations. Become a sustaining member today at <http://www.razoo.com/story/Citizens-League>.

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Signed, Sean Kershaw, Publisher December 2, 2011

Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total number of copies (net press run)	1,890	1,760
B. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on form 3541	671	675
2. Paid in-county subscriptions	697	676
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	0	0
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
C. Total paid and/or requested circulation	1,367	1,351
D. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county as stated on form 3541	0	0
2. In-county as stated on form 3541	0	0
3. Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
4. Free distribution outside the mail	0	0
E. Total free distribution	0	0
F. Total distribution	1,367	1,351
G. Copies not distributed	523	409
H. Total	1,890	1,760
I. Percent paid and/or requested circulation	100	100

GET INVOLVED

What We're Doing and How You Can Get Involved

HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM RAMPS UP

Phase II of the Higher Education Project will commence this winter. It will focus on two objectives:

- To answer a subset of the critical questions framed in the Phase I committee statement (www.citizensleague.org/projects/highered) so as to better understand why the existing system behaves as it does.
- To design policies and/or products that begin to address the three challenges set forth in that statement.

Contact us for more information about participating in Phase II.

THE CITIZENS LEAGUE IS TURNING 60, AND YOU'RE INVITED

Our 60th anniversary is upon us, and we need your help to make it great.

We're looking for members to bring to life the plan that the Anniversary Steering Team has put together. We have three main goals:

- Celebrate and showcase the Citizens League's successes.
- Elevate the visibility of the Citizens League.
- Increase resources to support the Citizens League.

There are opportunities for members to participate in recruitment, events, media outreach, education, partnerships, campaigns and more. Contact Cat Beltmann, membership and engagement manager, at cbeltmann@citizensleague.org or 651-293-0575 ext. 15 for more information or to get involved in our 60th anniversary efforts.

TELL PEOPLE ABOUT THE CITIZENS LEAGUE

The short version:

The Citizens League involves people of all backgrounds, parties and ideologies to create and advance solutions for Minnesota. Our work has resulted in some of the state's greatest public achievements.

The longer version:

For 60 years, the Citizens League has created common ground across parties and ideologies to solve some of the biggest challenges facing Minnesota. On issues like schools, taxes, transportation, health care, and water, some of Minnesota's greatest public achievements have emerged from the Citizens League. Citizens League members connect with other Minnesotans, learn to lead on issues that matter to them and create solutions that achieve the common good.



HELP US TELL OUR STORY

We're updating our history for the 60th anniversary. If you know something about the Citizens League's history of accomplishments and want to make sure it is included, visit <http://www.citizensleague.org/who/history/> to see if it's there. Then contact Larry Schumacher, communications manager, at lschumacher@citizensleague.org or 320-492-7747 for more information or to share what you know.

The Citizens League is a multi-partisan, member-based organization working to build civic imagination and capacity in Minnesota. The Citizens League's approach to policy—civic policymaking—results in the civic policy agenda, our case for action that is based on the belief that all people and organizations play essential roles in developing the ideas, skills and resources to govern for the common good. Visit www.citizensleague.org/who/identity to find out more.



Learn more information about all of our work at www.citizensleague.org.

If you have questions about any of these projects or others, contact Policy Manager Annie Levenson-Falk at alevensonfalk@citizensleague.org or 651-293-0575 ext. 16.



It's high time for higher education reform

Minnesota needs a post-millennial strategy for post-secondary education

by Sean Kershaw

I ncreasingly, regional economic and civic success is directly tied to the region's educational and learning capacity and to the capacity of its post-secondary education options. Minnesota needs to pay attention—and to adapt. Our economic and civic health is reliant on an education infrastructure that is currently ill-equipped to meet the needs of the next generation of learners.

Our median income has fallen from seventh to 13th in the U.S. We're faced with long-term structural budget deficits and an aging population. As a quality-of-life state, we're competing with places where the weather and the geography are much better—and much more attractive to the young people we need to support this aging population.

The good news is that reform is possible if Minnesota and its leaders are willing to put aside partisan differences and engage in real, productive discussion and problem solving at every level. The Citizens League's civic policy agenda offers a successful model for transforming our system—and builds the skills and capacities that we need for this next generation.

THE FORCES OF CHANGE

There are at least five forces fundamentally changing the post-secondary education landscape and insuring that the future of education will look nothing like the past.

Different learners. The idea that post-secondary education is about 18 to 22 year olds is outdated: 73 percent of the workforce in 2030 is in the workforce *now*. The future post-secondary learner is likely to be juggling the competing demands of work, education and family. The current system is not designed to meet this population's needs on the scale that Minnesota will need.

Different skills. We like to think about post-secondary education as a spectrum, with technical and "workforce" education at one end and liberal arts and more civic

education at the (distant) other end. But if you ask employers what they need, the most important skills for all jobs are actually civic governance skills: problem solving, communicating, and the ability to work in teams, even in "technical" jobs. Our current system is designed to produce degrees and credits, not necessarily the knowledge and skills needed for our democracy and our economy.

Different—and disruptive—technology. I am willing to predict that technology will transform post-secondary education more in the next five years than it has in the past 20 years. Skeptics only need to look at the history of the recording industry over the past two decades to see what I mean. How do we harness this new technology to improve productivity and reduce costs?

Different funding. We simply won't have the financial resources to solve this problem in the ways we're used to. Even though cost is a significant barrier for many families, and the long-term payoffs of post-secondary reform will be improvements to income and GDP, the short-term pressures from health care and aging are too intense. How do we think about value, not spending, while preserving equity and access?

Finally, where and when post-secondary happens is different. Learning can and must happen everywhere (mentorships, on the job, in the community), not just in traditional ivy-covered buildings. This means all institutions have a role to play, and we all have an opportunity to become part of the solution.

WHAT WE CAN DO

Given these trends, most calls for change equate money with capacity, and put forth goals like "increase post-secondary educational attainment" without any strategy for *how* to accomplish this. This is maddening and inexcusable, and it doesn't have to be the case. Unlike so many issues where gridlock seems inevitable, on this issue we—the Citizens League and

Minnesotans—have a rare opportunity to act to improve our future.

Most of the resources we need are already here. We have leadership—potentially bold leadership—in our post-secondary institutions, and in the civic, philanthropic and business organizations necessary to reform. We have a wide variety of high-quality post-secondary institutions, from public universities and private colleges to traditional technical colleges and online institutions. Entrepreneurship is all around us and poised to take advantage of new disruptive institutional innovations.

So how do we harness all of this and move Minnesota forward? We need a civic convergence—and that is something the Citizens League can help to create. Our civic policy agenda can bring all of the stakeholders to the table for a real exchange of ideas on how we reorient our system of post-secondary institutions (including employers) to produce learners with the outcomes we need.

Additionally, the governance capacities that we need for the future are embedded into our very model. The process itself increases our civic capacity by emphasizing the democratic political skills needed to improve governance inside all institutions. Our model matches what's needed.

Finally, it would be naive to assume this change will be easy. We'll need a common purpose that is big enough to bring people together and move them through these transformations.

I can think of no other purpose more enticing than the rebuilding of our civic and democratic infrastructure. Post-secondary education reform will benefit our economy, improve the effectiveness of our citizens and strengthen democracy in Minnesota now and in the future. ●

Sean Kershaw is the executive director of the Citizens League. He can be reached at skershaw@citizensleague.org, [@seankershaw](https://twitter.com/seankershaw) (Twitter), or Facebook.



The making of a miracle

Citizens League's revenue sharing proposal produced a seismic shift in state policy

By Steven Dornfeld

The Citizens League has produced many reports that have contributed to better public policy in Minnesota, but one report that stands out carries the catchy title, “**New Formulas for Revenue Sharing in Minnesota.**”

That 62-page report led to one of the defining moments of the 1970 political campaign, the election of a new governor and a seismic shift in state fiscal policy.

This policy shift—enacted by the Legislature in 1971—increased state support for K-12 education from 43 percent to 65 percent of operating costs, reduced the schools’ dependence on local property taxes, and narrowed the disparities in per-pupil spending between rich and poor school districts.

The legislation won national acclaim as “The Minnesota Miracle” and helped land Gov. Wendell Anderson on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Pressure for change in school funding had been building for several years prior to the Citizens League study. In 1967, a report prepared for the State Board of Education by Dr. Otto Domian of the University of Minnesota called for sweeping changes in the structure and funding of schools.

About the same time, the Citizens League began its annual comparison of property taxes on average-value homes, then valued at around \$18,000. It showed that in property-poor cities and school districts, the tax levy on an average value home was as much as double the tax levy on a similar home in more affluent communities, and services were often lower quality.

“The disparities were starting to get the attention of a lot of people,” recalls Paul Gilje, then research director of the Citizens League.

More significantly, perhaps, homeowners were rebelling against the dramatic increases in local property taxes that followed the enactment in 1967 of Minnesota’s first sales tax, which was intended to do just the opposite.

That law created the homestead credit, which paid 35 percent of the property taxes on owner-occupied homes. It also provided new aid to local governments which was intended to hold down property taxes. However, this relief quickly evaporated as property taxes shot up by an average of 17 percent a year from 1969 to 1971.

In 1969, the Citizens League appointed a 35-member committee headed by attorney William Hempel to study state aid distribution to local governments and “the growing differences, or disparities,” in the resources of these governmental units to provide essential services.

The committee met 33 times between October 1969 and June 1970, most often for two to three hours at a time, to hear from policy experts. Tom Berg, a member of the committee and later a state legislator from Minneapolis, recalls “an awful lot of information coming at us, not always in the most organized fashion.”

The committee’s report recommended that the Legislature:

- Provide up to 100 percent state funding of schools, based on the average per-pupil spending by districts in each of the state’s 11 economic development regions.

- Grant additional aid to school districts based upon the number of disadvantaged students they served.
- Establish a new system of non-property tax aid to cities and counties, with the money distributed under a formula that “more accurately reflects their differential need for funds.”

The report could have been another of those tomes that gather dust on the shelf, but on Oct. 1, 1970, the Citizens League held a forum for gubernatorial candidates at the Hotel St. Paul.

During that forum and the days that followed, Anderson, the DFL candidate, embraced the report’s recommendations while Republican candidate Douglas Head warned that it would mean higher property taxes while eroding local control of schools. This became one of the defining issues of the campaign.

A subsequent poll showed that Minnesotans opposed full state funding of school operating costs 60 to 25 percent. Nonetheless, Anderson won the gubernatorial race with more than 54 percent of the vote and made his “Fair School Funding Plan” the centerpiece of his 1971 legislative agenda.

The new governor initially proposed raising just about every state tax in sight to boost state aid to 70 percent of school operating costs. The cost—\$762 million—represented a whopping 37 percent increase in the state budget from the previous biennium.

Anderson ultimately won passage of a bill raising state taxes for schools by \$580 million. But victory did not come easily. Both houses of the Legislature were then controlled by the Republican-oriented Conservatives (legislators were not elected on a partisan basis until 1974).

The governor had a few Conservative allies in the Senate—among them Sen. Wayne Popham of Minneapolis, who sponsored the Citizens League’s version of the bill and later served as its president.

To win approval of his plan, Anderson traveled the state making his case to the public, vetoed the Conservatives’ first school-funding bill and hung tough through a 157-day special session, the longest in state history.

The impact of the legislation may not have been as miraculous as some would believe. Despite regular infusions of additional state revenues, the legislature has had difficulty maintaining its two-thirds state funding formula for schools. And despite the additional aid for disadvantaged students, racial and ethnic disparities in educational achievement have persisted.

However, it’s difficult to argue with one of the central conclusions in the Citizens League’s 1970 report: The quality of education a child receives should not depend on “the accident of where a pupil resides in the state.” ●

Steven Dornfeld, a Citizens League member and journalist who worked for both of the metro dailies, covered the 1971 legislative session for the *Minneapolis Tribune*. He now writes for MinnPost, the online newspaper.



A template for chartered schools

Citizens League report on chartered schools changed thinking about education across the nation

By Ember Reichgott Junge

Twenty years ago, the Minnesota Legislature passed the nation's first chartered school law. Today, 70 percent of the American public supports the concept of chartered schools. In 2010-11, more than 1.62 million students attended some 5,200 public chartered schools in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Another 420,000 students were on waiting lists. Without the Citizens League, Curt Johnson, then its executive director, and committee volunteer Ted Kolderie, chartered schools likely would not have happened. I make that bold statement as the Senate author of Minnesota's chartered school legislation.

Without the Citizens League, Curt Johnson, then its executive director, and committee volunteer Ted Kolderie, chartered schools likely would not have happened.

In December 1988, five years after “*A Nation at Risk*” issued sobering warnings about the nation's public education system, the Citizens League released its report, “*Chartered Schools = Choices for Educators + Quality for All Students*,” urging the creation of chartered schools. The result of nine months of work by a committee made up of civic leaders and chaired by John Rollwagen, CEO of Cray Research, that report recommended that the state Legislature take several steps:

- Authorize Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts to create chartered schools by 1989 and the State Department of Education by 1992. Chartered schools would be open to students from other districts but would be located in Minneapolis or St. Paul, where educational inequities were most apparent. State funding would follow the students. Transportation aid would be provided.
- Allow school boards and teacher bargaining units in all Minnesota districts to choose between negotiating their own terms of management for individual schools, adopting cooperative management of schools or retaining the current management arrangements.

The report laid out a series of common chartered school “elements” that became cornerstones of the 1991 Minnesota chartered school law. Indeed, the report was the template for the first version of the chartered school bill, as drafted by Minnesota Senate Counsel Betsy Rice.

In reviewing the report 23 years later, I am struck by how fundamental this work was to changing the traditional thinking of the entire nation around delivery of education services. The committee's rationale included the following points:

- A chartered school is one granted a “charter” by either a school district or the state to be different in the way it delivers education

and, within broad guidelines, to be autonomous. It need not be a school building. It may result in several schools in one building. It is the *process* of schooling and *not the building itself* that will differentiate a chartered school from a conventional one.

- The chartered school concept recognizes that children learn in different ways and at different speeds, *and teachers and schools should adapt to children's needs rather than requiring children to adapt to the standard system.*
- Doing better necessarily implies the boldness to do things differently.

Key insights in the Citizens League report were actually many years in the making. That wasn't coincidental. In a project known as Public Service Options, Kolderie and the Citizens League had been thinking throughout the 1970s about “alternative arrangements” for the public sector. Alternative options for K-12 public schools were part of that effort.

The report also gives a clue as to why chartered schools appeared first in Minnesota: “Most recent efforts at education reform throughout the nation are based on requiring the same system to meet tougher new standards. Minnesota, in contrast, has taken an incentives-and-opportunities approach, giving schools a reason and a way to become better. The state should cling to this ‘Minnesota difference.’”

At a press conference announcing the report, Rollwagen focused on the urgency that Minnesota and the education community faced in responding to the challenge of improving low-performing schools. The December 16, 1988 *Star Tribune* quoted Rollwagen: “If this doesn't work, we face draconian measures...because we are facing a crisis point....We feel chartered schools have the potential to achieve change rapidly.” Rollwagen believed that chartered schools would encourage in-school camaraderie, enthusiasm and creativity that the present school organization did not allow.

The response from district administrators was as expected. Robert Ferrara, then the superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools, was also quoted in the *Star Tribune* article: “The concept of chartered schools is not something I'm opposed to if the public schools don't work. But before one says the public school system doesn't work, it has to have the resources it says it needs to fulfill the results the public says it wants. . . . There's nothing magic about chartered schools. There's nothing there that we couldn't do in public schools.”

And so began the charter school debate that has continued for the last 20 years.

In short, the Citizens League report was a key to fundamentally reforming the system of public education for the entire nation. It is no wonder that a 1991 editorial headline in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* called the Citizens League “one of the state's treasures.” ●

Ember Reichgott Junge is a Citizens League member, former state senator and author of the forthcoming book *Zero Chance of Passage, The Pioneering Charter School Story as Told by Its Senate Author*, to be published in spring of 2012 in celebration of the 20th anniversary of chartered schools.



A “college without walls”

Study committee recommendations led to the creation of Metropolitan State University

By Todd Otis

In 1971, I was a 26 year old breaking into public affairs in Minnesota after returning from the serving in the Peace Corps in West Africa and attending the Columbia School of Journalism. I worked for Jim Hetland, who had recently retired from serving as the Metropolitan Council’s first chairman. When I met him, he was the senior vice president of urban development at First Minneapolis Bank. Jim was a great teacher and leader. He led me to the Citizens League, a great place both to learn and to make a contribution.

I volunteered to serve on the committee that would investigate and develop recommendations related to what was called at the time the “college without walls.” What follows are my recollections of that remarkable experience.

We recommended the creation of a “college without walls,” what would later become Metropolitan State University. The concept was deeply democratic in the sense that it bespoke opportunity for all.

As I am sure is generally the case, the excellent Citizens League staff and some key board members had looked at the policy landscape and the unmet needs in the particular issue area being explored and decided to create a committee to develop a set of ideas and strategies to meet those needs. In this case, what was needed was to find a way to increase access to higher education for those in the population who might be considered unconventional undergraduates; people who were, for various reasons, not coming directly out of high school. They could be working adults, women who had been raising children, new Americans—a wide range of people who wanted to add to their education.

Our committee was led by Allen Sacks, a bright, fair-minded attorney with Leonard, Street and Deinard. His judicious and open temperament made it a pleasure to serve. The rest of the large committee was diverse in the sectors that were represented (including a few who were called “housewife”), and many of the members would go on to greater public prominence in the coming years. While we had the benefit of some savvy players from the world of higher education, I never felt they were driving the bus.

We followed the Citizens League format: getting to know one another; agreeing to a core work plan with witnesses bringing their ideas and perspectives to the committee; serious deliberation on the issues and ideas, and continuous rehashing; further deliberations; and then formulating recommendation with accompanying rationale.

In the report “An Urban College: New Kinds of Students on a New Kind of Campus,” we recommended the creation of a “college without walls,” what would later become Metropolitan State University. The concept was deeply democratic in the sense that it bespoke opportunity for all. It would permit learning in multiple settings and be geared to meeting students’ needs. That may not sound radical, but when you think about the predilection of major institutions to be principally concerned with meeting their own needs, it signified an appropriate refocusing on real students in the real world.

I can recall no deep divisions over the plan within the committee. The powers that be then found a way to enlist the Legislature and the governor in passing the necessary authorizing legislation and appropriations, and our recommendations became reality a few years later.

The impact Metro State has had on the state of Minnesota has been considerable. It has provided a flexible learning pathway for a wide variety of students. Like many other institutions of higher learning, Metro claims distinguished students, faculty and alumni. One aspect that I believe is noteworthy is that Metro State has demonstrated that the delivery of education can be done flexibly, closely tied to the real needs of both the students and the society in which they live.

Obviously, major credit for Metro State’s success must go to the people who provided the political leadership to make our vision a reality, Gov. Wendell Anderson and the Legislature. That a great idea could become a new reality with enlightened, bi-partisan leadership should not seem so remarkable, but 40 years later the times have changed dramatically.

I believe the atmosphere of trust and understanding that the Citizens League committee process creates is worthy of celebration. I hope that the 60th anniversary of the Citizens League celebrates the important way the organization has opened the door to meaningful citizen involvement in addressing the great issues of the day.

The fact that sincere citizens can come together and grapple with challenging issues and make sense of relevant data to formulate smart, practical ideas is a marvelous thing. The staff and committee chairs of the Citizens League over the past six decades deserve a lot of credit for that. And so do the thousands of Citizens League members who pitched in. ●

Todd Otis is founder and chief executive officer of Ready 4 K. A Citizens League member, he has been active in policymaking and advocacy throughout his career, including serving 12 years in the Minnesota Legislature



Higher education: past, present and future

Citizen League's role in guiding and reforming higher education spans more than four decades

By John Adams

The history of higher education in Minnesota is a one of various interest groups and the schools they sponsored tackling the education and job training needs of a rapidly changing society. Minnesotans and others created local schools and programs to meet pressing needs, and then regularly modified them as needs changed.

Minnesota's post-secondary educational institutions have included normal schools, which eventually became teachers colleges and state universities; religiously sponsored private colleges, some of which have evolved into non-sectarian full-fledged universities; local community and junior colleges; public vocational-technical colleges; private nonprofit and proprietary career schools; the University of Minnesota; and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU). Each was founded to meet specific societal needs, and Citizens League committees—for a half century—have supported their efforts and provided citizen guidance in shaping Minnesota's educational future.

Given Minnesota's widely varied higher education landscape, it's no surprise that the state lacks a coherent set of higher education policies. But that hasn't discouraged the Citizens League from trying to improve things. Since the late 1960s, the Citizens League has completed *five study reports* and issued *six policy statements* commenting on current higher education trends and policy issues and recommending improvements. (To read the reports online, go to <http://www.citizensleague.org/publications/reports/ed/>.)

Community Colleges for the Twin Cities Area (1967). This report addressed the fact that most of the growth in college-age populations was occurring in the Twin Cities area, but that with 40 different metro school districts it was not feasible for each district to successfully develop and manage its own vocational-technical college, a practice that had worked well in Greater Minnesota.

The report recommended that the Legislature establish comprehensive open-enrollment institutions for non-baccalaureate post-high school education in place of “the parallel and uncoordinated development of junior colleges and post-high school vocational-technical schools.” A new state board representing both academic and vo-tech interests would be established to take charge of the comprehensive institutions, which would be called “community colleges.”

Statement on Vocational Technical Education to the Minnesota Department of Education (1968). The following year, the Citizens League, responding to a report from the state Department of Education Division of Vocational-Technical Education, reiterated its conclusion that demands for vo-tech training should be handled by a new state board.

Statement to the Minnesota House of Representatives, Higher Education Subcommittee on Community Colleges (1969). In the late 1960s the Legislature determined the number and location of junior colleges and provided most of their funding, as well as funding for the area vocational-technical schools, but decisions on number and location of those schools was made by the state Board of Education. So there were two separate and uncoordinated systems trying to serve the same age group—recent high school graduates.

In a 1969 statement to the state House of Representatives Higher Education Subcommittee on Community Colleges the Citizens League supported legislation to abolish the Junior College Board, set up a new Community College Board, and permit any local school board to turn over control of its area vocational school to the new board.

Statement to the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission on the Separation of the State's Vocational-Technical Schools and the Community Colleges (1970). The following year, the Citizens League reiterated that position and argued that all junior colleges should become community colleges; that existing area vocational schools should have the option to come under the jurisdiction of the new board; and that new institutions would be combined community colleges offering programs now carried out separately by the junior colleges and area vocational schools.

legues should become community colleges; that existing area vocational schools should have the option to come under the jurisdiction of the new board; and that new institutions would be combined community colleges offering programs now carried out separately by the junior colleges and area vocational schools.

Urban College: New Kinds of Students on a New Kind of Campus (1971). This report recommended the Legislature establish a new urban college to make college education and training available close to home for thousands of primarily Twin Cities-area residents.

The new college would offer courses and study space at locations throughout the Twin Cities by making use of a variety of existing buildings. It would serve primarily individuals who had been employed, who want to work while going to college, and those who already had attended other post-high school institutions. The new college would emphasize teaching, not research, and its curriculum would be “career oriented.” It would offer courses at convenient hours during the week and on weekends, and bring the “teachers to the areas where the students live and work.”

The Legislature responded by creating Metropolitan State University in 1971.

Declining Enrollments in Higher Education: Let Consumers Make the Choices (1977). The post-war baby boom reached its peak between 1959 and 1961, so the number of Minnesotans of traditional college age approached a maximum in 1977. This report highlighted the impending surplus of school capacity in areas of the state where populations were declining, the striking impact of the 5-to-1 difference in prices between private and public institutions, and the effect of state aids to institutions, which were unrelated to the financial needs of individual students.

Given Minnesota's widely varied higher education landscape, it's no surprise that the state lacks a coherent set of higher education policies.

The committee recommended that the state increase the role of the consumer in financing post-secondary education; improve the state's financial aid programs; and abolish the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and transfer its duties to an executive department that would assume its existing responsibilities plus responsibility for higher education policy, budget and administration.

Statement to the Governor and Legislature Opposing Abolition of the Coordinating Function in Post-Secondary Education (1981). In the early 1980s there was some concern at the Legislature that the HECB might propose closing some campuses because of redundancies and what was seen as an excessive number of college campuses. The Citizens League's board argued:

"The governor and Legislature have an enormous challenge as it is in maintaining some sort of overall policy control over the systems of post-secondary education in this state without discarding the one element that is specifically designed to help them.

"Moreover, at this moment in the state, with the governor and Legislature seemingly forced to respond to crisis after crisis, they need more help in thinking ahead about what needs to be done, not less."

While not defending the HECB "as presently organized nor the size of its budget," the board opposed efforts to abolish it "without preserving the critically important policy leadership role that it has carried out."

The statement went on to say:

"We believe the policy function is needed—not because we happen to agree with the controversial position now being taken by the HECB—but because the governor and the Legislature urgently need an independent voice. If it carries out its function properly, the HECB never will be popular. It is inevitable that its recommendations often will be challenged by the various systems, which are very powerful in their own right. That is precisely why an independent voice is needed."

It might be observed that now, in 2011, the same questions and issues persist.

Statements to the Commission on the Future of Post-Secondary Education in Minnesota, Elmer L. Anderson, chair (1983). This **statement** noted approvingly the legislative actions that were in line with the 1977 report (Declining Enrollments in Higher Education). And it urged the commission both to rethink the fundamental nature of the investment the people of Minnesota have in the systems of post-secondary education and to suggest the next strategic steps for legislative policy. It concluded with the question: How many institutions, of what kind, of what type and location, are we going to need in Minnesota?

Statement to the University of Minnesota Regents on President Kenneth Keller's Commitment to Focus Policy (1987). After he became president of the University in 1985, Keller presented to the Board of Regents (with encouragement from the governor) a planning document titled "A Commitment to Focus," which

sought to clarify alignment of programs with the University's central mission, and to cut back or eliminate programs that seemed obsolete, redundant or peripheral.

The Citizens League urged the regents to support the process, but suggested the regents also make it clear that the task force report was not the last word, "that no department or college of the university would be phased out without the most careful and complete review, and reinforce their support for the planning process itself."

A Competitive Place in the Quality Race: Putting the University of Minnesota in the Nation's Top-Five Public Research Universities (1998). Mark Yudof became president of the University in 1997 and immediately began an effort to improve graduate and professional education and research programs with the aim of raising the University to the top ranks of U.S. public research universities. The Citizens League convened a committee to address questions about quality, opportunities for improving the University's stature, and the internal and external changes needed to achieve greater quality.

The committee **report** endorsed Yudof's emphasis on four areas of research: digital science, biology at molecular and cellular levels, multimedia and design. It also recommended evaluation of graduate and professional programs, elimination low-quality and low-priority programs, strengthening of graduate and professional programs that offer significant payoffs for improved quality, and improved human training and management to unleash human capital resources.

Trouble on the Horizon: Growing Demands and Competition, Limited Resources, & Changing Demographics in Higher Education (2004). Gov. Tim Pawlenty asked the Citizens League to "strategically rethink the future of higher education in Minnesota" to find out if it is "structured, managed and governed in an optimal way to meet future needs."

The task force undertook to assess the current state of higher education in Minnesota, propose a vision for higher education, and identify the strategic steps necessary to achieve this vision.

Detailed recommendations addressed the following areas: increase performance expectations in high schools and in higher education, increase accountability and innovation, promote excellence and improve institutional focus in Minnesota's 175-plus public and private higher education institutions, and improve value and financial leverage.

The report was generally received with approval, but significant action from the governor's office and the Legislature failed to follow.

As of fall 2011, another study committee is at work tackling Minnesota's higher education policy challenges.

To view the reports cited in this issue, visit <http://citizensleague.org/publications/reports/>. ●

John S. Adams is a Citizens League member and emeritus professor of geography, planning and public affairs at the University of Minnesota. He served on several Citizens League higher education committees.



Ridesharing re-examined

Center for Policy Studies looks at ridesharing's past, present and future

By Dana Schroeder

"Ridesharing: Transit Redesign," a recent case study by the St. Paul-based Center for Policy Studies published as part of a series on public-sector redesign, recalls the work on "ridesharing" in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Ridesharing was proposed as an alternate system for "getting around" during the 1970s in response to sharp increases in the price of gasoline and the threat of a petroleum shortage. After 1979 both threats receded, so the program of carpools, commuter vans, and shared-ride taxis was never implemented, and the private automobile remains the dominant mode of transportation in the metro.

But the knowledge of how to adapt the private vehicle fleet to carrying people to work (and other destinations) remains important as a back-up against the possibility of a future petroleum crisis, according to the Center. No other transit system could conceivably be implemented in time to deal with such a crisis.

"Ridesharing: Transit Redesign," written by Dana Schroeder, draws heavily on the experience of one of the principal individuals involved, Clarence Shallbetter, who worked on transit and at the Citizens League, Public Service Options, Ridesharing, Inc., the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Metropolitan Council. The following article is excerpted from the report. Read the full report online at

<http://www.centerforpolicy.org/files/Ridesharing-Transit-Redesign.pdf>.

According to Clarence Shallbetter, after World War II, with the growing affluence of families, people were acquiring "a fleet of vehicles," namely automobiles. The choices people were making for their transportation "killed off transit"—first the streetcar system and then the private bus company. In 1970, Shallbetter said, "[W]e finally decided to buy out this private [bus] company and make it a public utility... Implicitly, what the public then did was [to say], 'We will underwrite the deficits of this operation.'"

And by the late '60s, jobs were moving to the suburbs. "[W]e were clearly on the leading edge of one of the most profound changes that revolutionized the potential character of a transportation service—the suburbanization of the job market."

By 1970, only 17 percent of the jobs in the region were located in downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul. "That was kind of a shock to everybody," Shallbetter said. The downtowns were the hub of both the streetcar system and the bus system. The central cities outside of downtown accounted for 37 percent of the jobs and the suburbs for 46 percent.

RECONCEPTUALIZING "TRANSIT"

As congestion on the region's highways during peak hours came to be seen as a growing problem and expensive plans for fixed-rail systems surfaced, the Citizens League issued three reports on transit in fairly rapid succession in the early 1970s.

The first report, **"Transit: The Key Thing is to Build Usage"** (February 1971) concluded:

"Future transportation demands must be met by programs that provide more efficient use of both right-of-way and vehicles. This requires reducing reliance on the automobile, increasing the average number of persons per car used, and increasing the number of persons moving through concentrated areas on some multiple-passenger vehicle or facility."

This was the beginning of the Citizens League's thinking that resolving the congestion problem meant not only getting more people to ride traditional transit, but also, more importantly, getting more people to ride as passengers in vehicles of whatever sort.

It's important to remember that the two energy crises of the decade formed the backdrop to what was happening with ridesharing in the 1970s.

Two years later, in the 1973 report **"Building Incentives for Drivers to Ride,"** the Citizens League's thinking became more explicit, arguing the region's definition of "transit" needed to be broadened to include all ways of moving people around in vehicles. ...It means riding with others, not driving alone.

THE REDESIGN

It's important to remember that the two energy crises of the decade formed the backdrop to what was happening with ridesharing in the 1970s. The oil embargo, which lasted from October 1973 until March 1974, was a response to U.S. aid to Israel during the Yom Kippur War. The second crisis, in 1979, occurred in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. Gasoline prices rose and there was a sense of urgency that, indeed, we needed to find ways to save energy—from wearing sweaters to driving less.

In the early 1970s, the Citizens League and the Upper Midwest Council formed Public Service Options, Inc. (PSO), which looked at different ways of delivering public services in a variety of areas. Their report concluded that there could be substantial savings and benefits from a major effort at shared-ride systems for employees, for employers and for the public.

Again, Clarence Shallbetter: "The key was how do you assemble a large enough



A driver's eye view of transportation policy

By Peter Heegaard

number of employees, at one location or nearby locations, so that you could replicate the 3M vanpool model? ...Who would you get to operate this kind of thing?

"We sent [out] an RFP saying... 'Here's a new business opportunity; what do you think? If you're interested, contact us and we'll see what we can do.'"

"We didn't get practically anybody to bite [on the RFP], except—much to our shock and surprise—Chrysler Motor Company of Detroit...They said, 'We are really interested in this thing.' They sent two executives here...to understand better what we were doing and they said, 'We are ready to jump in.' They came to town and created Van Pool Services, Inc. (VPSI)... They got their service up and running."

The Metropolitan Council got some federal money for demonstration projects and PSO picked out 10 different locations where it could conceivably assemble enough people to create a vanpool market. They probed to find out how much the price of gas would have to go up in order to get people interested in a car pool or vanpool. The price of gas, at the time, was around \$2.25 a gallon.

The focus-group leader kept asking who would rideshare at increasing prices of gas. No one said they were willing to join a ridesharing arrangement until the price reached \$4 a gallon, when some people thought they'd change. At \$4.50, many more said they'd change and at \$5, it started breaking significantly. The price had to get up to \$7 a gallon before most people said they'd change. (Prices are in 1970s dollars.)

"The price sensitivity was so extraordinarily high, I was just floored," said Shallbetter. "They're willing to forego a lot of other things in their life [rather] than get into any other type of service—bus, car pool, van pool."

Although interest in ridesharing arrangements "dried up," in Shallbetter's words, after the energy crises, there was a growing awareness among transportation professionals that there was "a remarkable amount of carpooling going on...almost all

My wife, Ann, and I moved back to the Twin Cities in 1960 after graduate school and a short stint in the U.S. Army. We were typical city kids who moved out to the 'burbs to become more independent. With only one car, any form of transit made sense. At that time traffic moved quite well on Highway 12. In only a few years, the Eisenhower Highway and Defense act of the late 1950s had had the desired result of dramatically increasing the migration to the western suburbs. This daily observation of increased traffic flows caught my attention now that I was driving alone. I had become part of the problem. The area's population density was low, automobile ownership was high, general transportation costs were high, trip distances were getting longer, and the number of trips and travel time were both increasing.

I had joined the Citizens League shortly after moving back to Minnesota. My first project was serving on a study committee to consolidate the Hennepin County and Minneapolis jails. As I recall, about 10 years later politicians finally got the job done. I was also interested in transportation issues, and one of the statistics that caught my attention was from a survey that showed that for every 10 cars heading east from Wayzata in the morning, only two or three were actually headed to downtown areas in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The others were branching off to the newly developed suburbs. That meant that we had a tremendous dispersion of traffic. The survey also showed that, on average, we all liked to live about 10 miles from where we worked. For those of us in the western suburbs, it seemed obvious given those trends that the current transportation system would not be able to sustain the anticipated growth. It wasn't just the prospective cost of building more highway lanes and local roads, but rapid population growth outside the cities would require additional investment in sewer, water, communication and other infrastructure.

We completed our committee report, "Building Incentives for Drivers to Ride," in March 1973. At the time, the definition of transit was basically the 40-passenger bus. The study committee redefined the concept of transit to include any alternative to the single-passenger owner-occupied car (SPOOC). One program that caught our attention was a van pool initiated by 3M. Other businesses offered preferential parking to car pools. We concluded that public policy had to begin to influence travel behavior, not just travel by car, but also bus, van, taxi and rental car. We told the Legislature in 1973 that transportation policy must become a metropolitan function, including approval of highway and transit facilities, and that increasing the number of person riding at peak hours needed to become a policy goal. We said highway construction policies should give preference to multi-passenger vehicles of any type, including exclusive right of ways, and that transit providers should be marketing their services at the destination, where people are clustered together.

Over the years, the Citizens League has focused its efforts on road finance and transit and the overall dynamics associated with development in the Twin Cities area, including:

- Advocating early on for redirecting more property tax dollars away from roads and toward transit.
- Advocating the integration of road with our transit system to build usage of transit options.
- Urging that freeway expansion provide preferential lanes for buses, vans and transit.

The Citizens League 2005 report, "Driving Blind," represents a continuation of much of this work. The organization has been successful in ensuring that Minnesota participated in the Urban Partnership Agreement, which provided the beginnings of bus rapid transit (BRT) in the I-35W corridor and participation in the metro transit taxing district. Expanded pricing of solo driving (through MnPASS) and greatly expanded telework activity among employers were two other components of this comprehensive approach toward congestion reduction.

Peter Heegaard is a Citizens League member and was chair of the Committee on Transit Ridership which produced the 1973 report, "Building Incentives for Drivers to Ride."

The study committee redefined the concept of transit to include any alternative to the single-passenger owner-occupied car (SPOOC).

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Health care isn't what it used to be

A day in the life of a health care consumer shows things have changed, but not enough

By Charles Neerland

My wife just returned from her acupuncture session—her third one. It's her latest attempt to get some relief from chronic hip pain. Fortunately for us, the procedure is covered by a combination of private insurance and Medicare coverage.

A brochure from HealthPartners, "Support for Healthier Living is Just a Click Away," lies on the dining room table. I'll get around to it.

In the morning, my doctor's office called to say, in effect, that it wouldn't approve refills of one of my prescriptions—the one for high cholesterol—unless I come in for a check-up. Okay, okay.

I did read about one of the big insurance companies buying a small local company specializing in gathering information on various health insurance plans, the kind promoted in the Obama health care bill.

I've got a pile of material to read in my capacity as a board member of a company that designs software to facilitate the exchange of health care data, clinical and research. The company is a player in developing something called NHIN, the national health information network. The federal government has earmarked \$28 billion to underwrite the effort to wire-up the health care system.

And my point? It's this: Health care isn't your grandfather's business. We didn't "click" 30 years ago. Health care is complicated, always changing stuff, distributive in some ways, top down and centralized at the same time. And it costs a whole lot. Family health insurance, for example, increased nine percent over the past year, according to a [report](#) by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

So I'm thinking about all this because the Citizens League has asked me to write something about a [report](#) issued by a committee I chaired in 1980-81, "Paying Attention to the Differences in Prices: A Health Care Cost Strategy for the '80s," with an eye to seeing what a difference 30 years make.

That report grew out of an earlier Citizens League report that focused on a concern about excess hospital bed capacity in the Twin Cities and the use of a regulatory tool, certificate of need, as administered by the Metropolitan Health Board.

In the '70s, this attempt to regulate capacity and therefore reduce costs associated with unused beds and equipment was very contentious. Our report moved away from a regulatory approach toward a competitive model, zeroing in on the need for providers to let consumers know the actual cost of various procedures, specific outcomes, and so forth, to help consumers make informed decisions, thereby creating competition and reducing cost.

A laudable goal, certainly, but perhaps a bit naive. The health care landscape had already begun to change in dramatic ways, giving hospitals and doctors less and less control over their own destinies. The rise of the HMOs and Preferred Provider Organizations, as well as various forms of decentralized delivery entities and alternative protocols, blurred the distinction between insurer and provider. One outcome of that shift was that preferred providers got into the clinic and wellness business in a big way.

But the biggest change was the ascendancy of the insurance company as the dominant player in the burgeoning and multifac-



Citizens League health care policy history reveals successes, slow change and new challenges

By Bob DeBoer

Charles Neerland provides an impression of what it is like to look back 30 years on a piece of policy work and realize that some things haven't changed much, and other fundamental problems either persist or have created new challenges over time.

One of the fundamental conclusions of the Citizens League's 1981 policy work, which Neerland led, was that the health care industry was not operating as a rational market. The report recommended controlling health care costs by reforming the market—focusing on the demand side—rather than attempting to regulate supply. The report advocated encouraging true competition by making provider prices readily available to the public and revising the system's incentives to reward efficiency rather than consumption.

That call to create a more rational market is only one area of Citizens League's work on health care. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, the Citizens League produced study committee reports on the issues of access and universal coverage that led to the creation of the Children's Health Plan followed by MinnesotaCare, major successes that put Minnesota at the top nationally with regard to access to health care.

Our last major statement from that period, issued in 1992, called for cost and quality control and argued that "Minnesota cannot afford simply to extend

access to the current system with the uncontrolled and rapidly rising costs it produces." We also stated that "universal coverage, however, need not and should not mean a single-payer, government-dominated system" and that "variety and true competition—a mixed system with multiple payers and providers—is the most promising path to quality medical care at reasonable prices."

In 2006, 25 years after the 1981 [report](#), the Citizens League revisited the market functionality question as part of our [medical facilities study committee](#). Our finding was that a functioning market still did not exist, and that lack of a functional market had a greater impact than the demand side equation that was the focus in 1981. Lack of information and cost transparency had produced a "supplier-driven" industry. In other words, competition among suppliers was actually *increasing costs* and, in some cases, might actually be *reducing quality*.

The result has been a key shift in Citizens League thinking over that quarter of a century:

- In 1981, the Citizens League advocated that a functioning market approach along with regulation could improve health care cost, quality and access.
- In 2006, the Citizens League determined that the market for medical care remains largely non-functional for the consumer (the demand side), and that,

eted health care system, and these insurance companies created what one could call conglomerates, their own self-contained buying/paying/delivery systems.

If there is competition now it is among these conglomerates for market share. Consumers still have choice through selection of a particular plan, but any pressure on cost comes from the industry itself. The incentive, in my opinion, was weak at best to control costs, but strong to generate profits. Quality outcomes and emphasis on wellness and preventative care seemed to be pluses, on the other hand.

The Citizens League's contribution in this massive rearrangement of health care elements is to use the language of the marketplace, as I have tried to do, to push for clarity and innovation. Technology and other forces complicate its task, and the fact that health care is both business and a fundamental societal value makes analogies to the proverbial widget maker break down.

I don't recall anyone issuing an Eisenhower-like warning about the Health Care-Medical Device Complex. Interestingly, that complex announced recently that it wants to be the leading exponent of the American export program, bringing its organizational models and device inventiveness to the rest of the world. (Most of the countries that could pay for this help have national health care systems, but why quibble.) It's true that the health care system is a major job generator, even at a time when the economy is in a shambles, the cost of health care is skyrocketing and a national health care strategy itself is still up for grabs.

I am only an amateur observer, not a professional researcher, of these phenomena, and I'm trying to paint a big picture, acknowledging that "impressions" almost always obscure the details in which the devil resides. My purpose here is to stir the pot.

We all know what's good for United Health Care isn't necessarily good for America. To keep our goals of consumer choice, universal coverage and cost containment, we need to closely assess the significance of big insurers acquiring more and more of the auxiliary support mechanisms to the system, not just hospitals and clinics, but companies that assemble and move health care data electronically, companies that create information exchanges and others. The appetite for swallowing such little fish makes the overall system less distributive and less competitive.

Still, my health care pings of a typical day are also symptomatic of a system responding to need: alternative medicine coverage, good patient management and concern, convenience, and incredible, life-saving technology.

And we have too many smart people in this community not to keep trying to find better ways to reduce costs and include more and more individuals as beneficiaries of the system. They are not mutually exclusive goals. The Citizens League, after all, is really good at seeing things clearly and developing support for good ideas. ●

Charles Neerland is former president and longtime member of the Citizens League. He chaired three study committees in the 1970s and 1980s and served on others.

while there is a very active market operating on the supply side, new policies are needed to produce lower costs, better quality and greater access.

Based on this work, the Citizens League took part in the bipartisan **2007 Transformation Task Force** approved by the Legislature and assembled by Gov. Tim Pawlenty, which recommended restructuring the market through meaningful competition. The task force called for a restructured system of collaboration, coordination, and integration through the full cycle of health care. That comprehensive approach called for prices to be based on the cost of all services related to a medical condition, not individual services. Providers were to be accountable for quality, the coordination of care and the total cost of care. Consumers would then be able to more accurately compare providers because there would be no cost shifting to insurers or to other payers. The approach was also geared to reduce administrative costs by eliminating multiple fee schedules and negotiations between providers and payers on every contract.

Total cost of care is a new concept for Minnesota cost-control legislation. The Transformation Task Force argued that competition on price and quality alone would help to reduce the costs of individual services, but it would not go far enough to reduce overuse of unnecessary medical services. Holding

providers accountable for the total cost of care provides an incentive not only to reduce the unit cost of each service but also to reduce overuse.

The Transformation Task Force called for government to decide on strategy and implement new regulation; to support population health improvement programs; to support and participate in communitywide processes to develop evidence-based guidelines for care; to create greater price and quality transparency; and to introduce and support incentives to restructure the market according to goals.

The Legislature enacted a few provisions from this work in 2008, which should result in gradual improvements, but it did not adopt the most aggressive elements. As Minnesota works toward creating an insurance exchange under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and all the controversy that has created, it is clear that addressing the large components of our non-functional market for health and medical care may be well beyond our current political capacity for policy solutions. ●

Bob DeBoer is the Citizens League director of policy development. He can be reached at bdeboer@citizensleague.org.

Ridesharing

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informally organized. ...Twice as many people were riding [as passengers] in cars as were taking transit."

In the '70s, early planning for I-394 incorporated what Shallbetter called "explicit efforts at trying to encourage people to pool rather than drive alone." One lane in each direction was set aside as a preferential lane, a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane, for car pools, buses and vanpools. A separate set of buses was run up and down the freeway. Car pools were given preferential parking in parking lots.

CURRENT TRENDS

The best way to understand current travel trends is to look at the data from the Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) compiled about every 10 years (to coordinate with U.S. Census data) by the Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT). The 2010 data will not be available until spring of 2012, so the 2000 TBI offers the most recent information.

RIDESHARING TODAY

What's being done to encourage ridesharing today? According to Randy Rosvold, program manager of the Metropolitan Council's

Van-GO! program, there are a total of 85 active vanpools in the metropolitan area registered with his program—including 62 public and 23 company-run private vanpools. He estimates the total number of home-based work person-trips by all 85 registered Van-GO! vans, public and private, is approximately 251,000 per year.

About 3,000 carpools are registered for the ridesharing program at Metro Transit, according to Bruce Howard, director of customer services and marketing. That accounts for just over 6,000 people, since most are two-person car pools. He estimates that those carpools represent only 10 percent of the carpools operating in the Twin Cities area.

CRISIS PLANNING

What would happen if a major political, geological or refinery crisis disrupted the supply of gasoline to the Twin Cities? Does anyone have a plan for how to rapidly increase ridesharing in the face of such a crisis? How would people get to work and make the multitude of other necessary trips in the course of their daily lives?

It appears that little or no planning has been done to prepare for such a situation. When asked whether anyone is planning

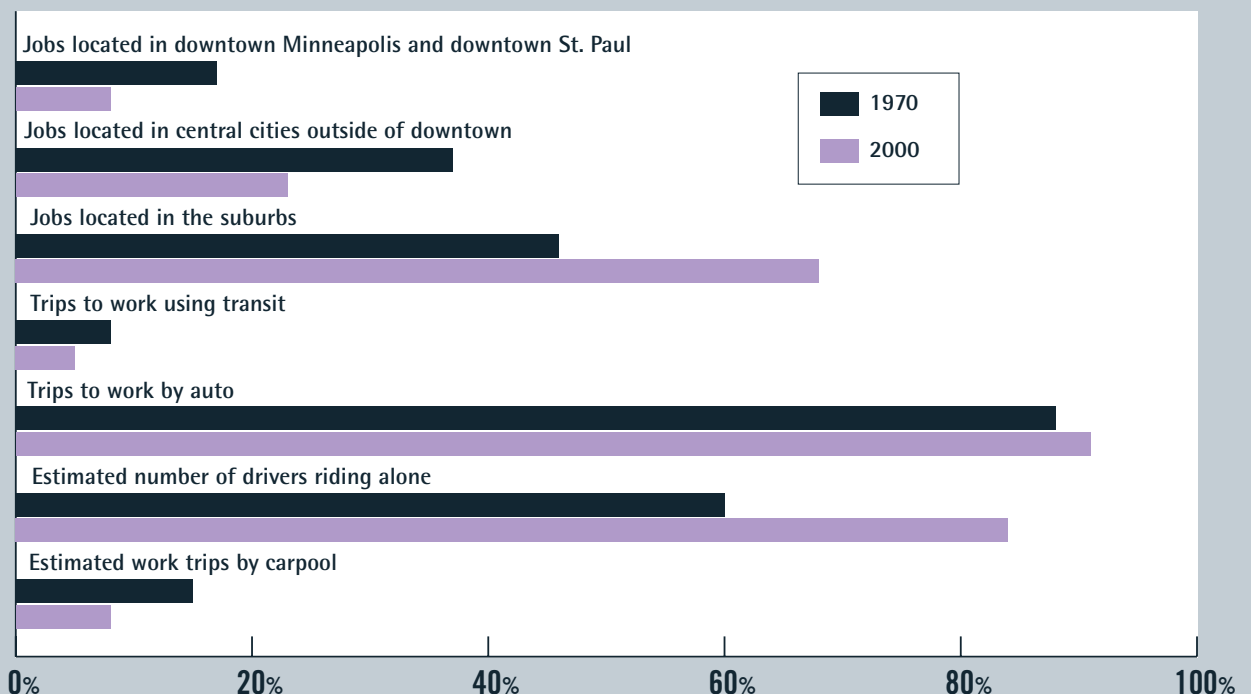
for such a crisis, Connie Kozlak of the Metropolitan Council said, "Not really. I don't think anybody is. The contingency of it is so huge—nobody knows what would happen if gas went from \$4 to \$7 [a gallon]. There are too many permutations to think about."

Shallbetter was somewhat optimistic that new technology could provide faster and easier matching for carpools and vanpools now or in the event of a crisis. "The key today is that you do have a technological breakthrough on the matching game [through social networking, like Facebook and Twitter] that would allay some of the fears [of ridesharing]. It would clearly expedite formation of car pools and vanpools in the way we couldn't readily do [in the 1970s]."

Who should be doing the crisis planning? "It's a tossup between the Met Council and Mn/DOT as public agencies," Shallbetter said. We should ask them, 'What are the major obstacles or barriers that you see in trying to roll this thing out in a crisis? Or is there another alternative... that would enable people to show up for work?'" ●

Dana Schroeder is a consultant, Citizens League member and former editor of the *Minnesota Journal*.

Changes from 1970 to 2000



PERSPECTIVES

Expanding Minnesota's Conversation

Celebrating the Citizens League's 60th anniversary

Members share recollection of how the Citizens League has changed and changed Minnesota

As a charter member of the Citizens League, the main public policy issues at that time were Minneapolis city issues. Some of the key people who were active wanted to change the city charter in a major way. The Citizens League was originally built around that fundamental idea. Although it's the single thing we've never actually accomplished, it brought together a lot of people that were hungry for more understanding of issues, who then set up committees and took positions.

During my time as executive director, everything was changing from Minneapolis to county and metropolitan control. For example, we implemented a new district court system, we supervised and got the construction of a new Minneapolis library, we were instrumental in creating a state municipal commission to oversee orderly growth throughout the metro area, and later the Metropolitan Council. We transferred the Minneapolis general hospital to Hennepin County and built a new modern facility. We established metropolitan sanitary district and transportation commission and decided the location and construction of a fully

competitive metropolitan zoo. These were examples where we led the charge from committees making recommendations to the Legislature. In the process we went across the river and became a truly metropolitan organization.

—VERNE JOHNSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
1958-67



When I came on board...there was a sense of trying to make sure to hold onto our history and continue to engage members who had been around for years helping shepherd in policies and studies that put Minnesota on the map. The Citizens League has taken that group and that work and transitioned it to the place Minnesota is headed. I've seen the organization grow to incorporate more programming like Policy and a Pint® and the Intergenerational Roundtable to bring in new audiences and people while also trying to maintain and learn from the past. It's a really great picture of how we can bring generations together in a way that really addresses what's going on in society from a vast array of perspectives.

—DIANE TRAN,
PROJECT MANAGER,
GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS



The Citizens League has been able to reposition itself, adapt to change—to survive and thrive in this new economy we find ourselves in. It's a powerful testament to civic engagement, good policy, and innovation in the state of Minnesota.

Our study group process has always been an excellent way to learn, network, and to be part of bringing forth policy change. But the way we were doing it had gotten kind of stagnant; the world had changed so that people sitting in a room together week after week wasn't as viable. So we started using new technology and events like Policy and a Pint® where vibrant conversations totally changed the dynamic and mix. You could tell something different was happening.

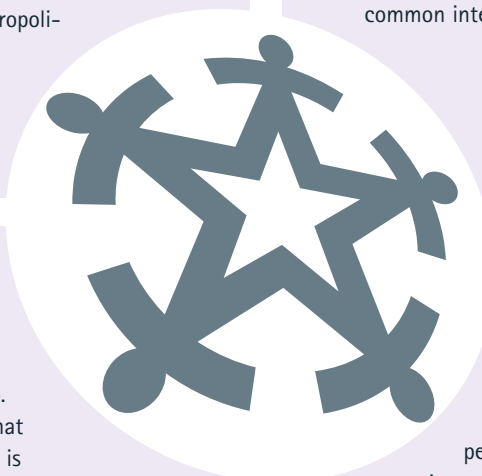
We also have become a trusted convener. One of the first convening efforts was the Minnesota Mental Health Action Group, where we actually brought together the key players in the mental health system. For three years we went through a process of crafting a different model for mental health, all the while building relationships between and with those players in the field of mental health that hadn't really known each other and had no clue what their common interests were."

—GARY CUNNINGHAM,
VICE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER,
NORTHWEST AREA FOUNDATION



The Citizens League has really been one of the few places where we can have common ground for the common good. At the capitol, however, the discussion has gotten very partisan and it has become increasingly difficult to lead these policy discussions. We are one of the few places where people can come to have real discussion on these issues. The hallmark of the Citizens League is being able to offer constructive public policy solutions and that long, storied tradition has continued. We've been involved in tremendous public policy efforts in areas of transportation, education and others in the last six or seven years that have made a real difference in people's lives.

—LEE ANDERSON,
MANAGER OF STATE AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,
GENERAL MILLS



Share your experience with the League by contacting Adam Arling at arling@citizensleague.org or 651-293-0575 ext. 11.

We're moving!

The Citizens League has outgrown its current office space. On January 1, 2012, we'll be moving to **CoCo**, a coworking space located in downtown St. Paul's Lowertown neighborhood.

We're excited to become a part of such a collaborative community!

Our new address will be:

Citizens League
213 East 4th Street
Suite 425
St. Paul, MN 55101



PERIODICALS

555 North Wabasha Street, Suite 240
Saint Paul, MN 55102

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