

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 56

**City of Minneapolis  
Transit System**

**April 2, 1956**

NOT FOR RELEASE

FIRST REPORT OF TRANSIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Your sub-committee has met with Fred Ossanna, President of Twin City Lines, Ralph Sprungman, City Traffic Engineer, and reviewed by observation and reading the transit practices here and in other cities. On the basis of our work up to the time of this report we believe that there are a number of improvements in the transit service which can be readily accomplished in Minneapolis.

The recommendations of the Committee are predicated upon these basic concepts:

1. Rapid, safe, economical and convenient mass transportation is necessary for the economic well-being of the area, and it is in the public interest to foster any improvements that will prevent the decline in the use of public transportation.
2. Changes adopted must conform to the general traffic pattern with due consideration for the major portion of private vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
3. Methods must be sought to improve bus service without incurring a material increase in operating cost ratios, thus keeping bus fares at lowest possible rate. Therefore, it would seem that the ultimate objective should be to effect a faster turn-around of buses to achieve improved service without adding to the capital investment or labor costs of the transit company.

It is the consensus of the members of the Transit Sub-Committee that certain changes can be made in the immediate future that will conform to the long-range plan. Therefore, we respectfully submit the following recommendations:

A. In the Loop

1. Extend mid-block loading on 7th and 8th Streets and start it on Marquette and Second.
2. Eliminate parking in right-hand lane on loop streets which are bus routes and encourage the use of curb lane for buses only.

3. Reduce the number of right and left turns permitted in the center of the loop by buses or anyone else.

B. In the Residential Areas

1. Start shifting to skip stops on all east and west streets where blocks are short.
2. Start shifting to skip stops on north and south streets out of the densely settled areas.
3. Install far side loading zones.
4. Install more express buses, label them better as such and give them more publicity and prominence.

Our reasons for these changes are:

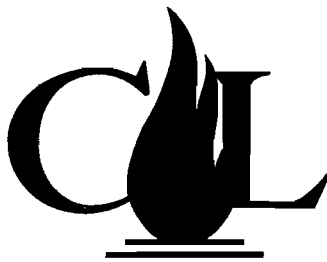
- A-1. Mid block loading has cut five minutes off the time it takes buses to cross the loop on 7th and 8th streets. It is safer for bus passengers, relieves congestion at corners and permits more buses to be loading at one time. It has worked well in many cities for some time.
- A-2. The interruption of traffic, delay and danger which results from the big buses pulling out from the curb is too great to compensate for the few parking spaces which would be lost in avoiding this. Passenger cars tend to avoid the use of this lane once they learn that they get "trapped" between buses. To encourage the use of the right-hand lane for buses only maximizes the use of the streets, ties in with mid-block loading and in general speeds traffic.
- A-3. Turns in the loop do more to slow traffic than almost anything else. To reduce such delay we suggest that turns be prohibited at all possible points

and at these hours at:

- B-1 & 2. East-west blocks are only 300 feet long so that there is no excuse for stopping every block to load or unload. Even on north-south blocks the most anyone would have to walk is 600 feet and most people would have to walk only a fraction of that because of skip stops. It can be done either by marking every other corner as the transit stop corners or developing the policy that buses load and unload going downtown on the even streets and load and unload going away from downtown on the odd streets. This should speed residential service.
- B-3. Far side loading and unloading at signal intersections in residential areas will help clear the intersection and will permit the buses to make a block with each light change except under unusual circumstances. The problems of pulling out into traffic more sharply are not as acute as they are downtown and the buses do not normally come with enough frequency to result in one having to wait at the light while the preceding one unloads. This should speed residential service.
- B-4. Express buses work well in nearly every city with or without extra fare providing they are well marked, well advertised and there are enough of them to really provide express service. We need improvement on all three counts.

TRANSIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Chairman - E. P. Ballens  
Ralph T. Boardman  
Homer Bonhiver  
Eugene Heck  
John T. Heinrich  
J. P. Kriechbaum  
Stuart Leck, Jr.  
A. C. Renne  
Fred T. Rockwell



Citizens League

# NEWS CONFERENCE

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Transit sub-committee of Citizens League  
of Minneapolis and Hennepin County

The following recommendations are predicated on these basic concepts:

That rapid, safe, economical and convenient mass transportation is necessary for the economic well-being of the area, and it is in the public interest to foster any improvements that will prevent the decline in the use of public transportation . . .

That changes must conform to the general traffic pattern with due consideration for the major portion of private vehicular and pedestrian traffic . . .

And that methods must be sought to improve bus service without material increase in operating costs so that bus fares can be kept at the lowest possible rate.

The ultimate objective, therefore, is to effect a faster turn-around of buses to achieve improved service without adding to the capital investment or labor costs of the transit company.

The recommendations of the sub-committee were approved in May by the League's Traffic and Transit Committee and by the board of directors of the League. It is recommended that these changes be made immediately.

### A. In the loop

1. Extend mid-block loading on 7th and 8th streets and start it on Marquette and Second Avenue.
2. During rush hours, eliminate parking in right-hand lane on loop streets which are bus routes and encourage the use of curb lane for buses only.
3. Reduce the number of right and left turns permitted by buses and other vehicles in the center of the loop.

### B. In the Residential Area

1. Establish skip stops on all east and west streets where blocks are short.
2. Establish skip stops on north and south streets out of densely settled areas.
3. Establish more express buses, provide better identification of them and give them more publicity and prominence.

## FACT SHEET AND HIGHLIGHTS

The recommendations of the Transit Sub-Committee of the Citizens League of Minneapolis and Hennepin County have been developed after 12 months of study, careful analysis of transit practices here and in other cities, and from several meetings with Fred Ossama, president of the Twin City Transit Company, and Ralph Sprungman, city traffic engineer.

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Purposes of the "Experimental Bus Ride" are two-fold:

1. To call attention to the committee's recommendations
2. To demonstrate the practicality of the recommendations by actual comparison of present and proposed practices under normal operating conditions.

\* \* \* \*

Members of the Transit Sub-committee of the League are E. P. Balkema, chairman, sales promotion manager of Northwestern National Life Insurance Company; Ralph T. Boardman, retired; Eugene Heck, attorney; Homer Bonhiver, Essene and Bonhiver, certified public accountants; John T. Heinrich, president of Heinrich Envelope Company; Warren Sturm, patent attorney, Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company; Stuart Leck, Jr., James Leck Company; J. P. Kriechbaum, engineer, Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company; A.C. Remne, Daytons; and Fred T. Rockwell, salesmanager, Fred Rockwell Company.

All are members of the Citizens League, an organization of citizens who strive through voluntary membership and service on sub-committees--such as the Transit sub-committee--to improve services provided by all segments of local and county government. The League seeks to accomplish these objectives (1) by recommendations to the several public bodies and (2) by increasing public awareness of the existence of problems and possible solutions thereto.

Several League members will be available to answer further questions about the organization and the recommendations of its Transit sub-committee.

The League has provided a photographer who will be happy to make special photographs for all press and television representatives.

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Invited to participate in the experimental ride are members of the Minneapolis City Council whose safety committee recently recommended mid-block loading at 26 additional loop blocks--on Marquette Avenue and

(cont'd)

Second Avenue S. between 3rd and 13th streets and extending mid-block loading on South 7th and 8th streets between Second Avenue S. and Fifth Avenue South. Recommendations of the Council's safety committee are to be voted on June 8 by the Council. If approved they would go into effect June 10, City Traffic Engineer Ralph Sprungman stated recently.

\* \* \* \*

The route will be described by the tour guide and copies of his comments will be available at the conclusion of the tour. He is Jerry LaBatt, a Transit Company driver and part-time sightseeing tour "barker." Drivers of the bus and accompanying truck are also Transit Company employees.

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A summary of the Sub-Committee's Recommendations are provided with this Fact Sheet.

Committee members have approved the following statements which support their several recommendations:

- A-1 (Mid-Block loading in loop) "Mid-block loading has cut five minutes from the time required for buses to cross the loop on 7th and 8th streets. It is safer for passengers, relieves corner congestion and permits more buses to be loaded at one time. It has worked well in other cities.
- A-2 (Right-hand lane parking ban) "The interruption of traffic and the danger which results when big buses pull away from the curb far outweighs the loss of the few parking spaces necessary to eliminate this hazard. It is believed that motorists will tend to avoid use of the right hand lane once they learn they can become "trapped" between buses. Encouraging the use of the right-hand lane for buses only will maximize the use of the streets, facilitate the flow of traffic, and facilitate accomplishment of mid-block loading.
- A-3 (Reduction of turns) "Turns in the loop do more to slow traffic than anything else. To reduce such delay we suggest that turns be minimized at all possible points in the loop, particularly during rush hours.
- B-1 & 2 (Skip stops in residential areas) "East-west blocks are only 300 feet long in most places. Even on most north-south blocks the greatest distance a person would normally be required to walk is 600 feet. It is suggested that alternate corners be clearly marked as "loading corners" or , perhaps that buses stop on even corners going downtown and uneven corners as they return from the downtown area.  
  
"Skip stops will speed residential service.
- B-3 (Express buses) "Express buses work well in nearly every city with or without extra fare if they are well marked, well advertised, and if there are enough of them to provide real express service. Improvement is needed on all three counts."