

May 17, 1978

STATEMENT BY CITIZENS LEAGUE TO TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY BOARD ON TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1. The portion of the Transportation Development Program dealing with roadway construction is wholly inadequate, because it fails to give preference to high-occupancy vehicles. The Development Program pays lip service to the concept but does not indicate that exclusive lanes for high occupancy vehicles are planned or even considered for specific major transportation corridors.

a. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), which prepared the roadway sections of the Development Guide, makes it clear that the sections are tentative, subject to modification when MnDOT's new statewide plan is approved this summer. A draft of the new statewide plan states that MnDOT will "review all highway development proposals for opportunities to provide preferential treatment for multi-occupancy vehicles in urban areas and for other activities which will lead to better management of Minnesota's transportation system."

b. The Program fails to implement the transportation policy plan of the Metropolitan Council which has been approved for almost two years. The Development Program is supposed to implement the policy plan of the Council, according to state law. The Council's policy plan states that "major highways should be designed to encourage people to ride rather than drive, especially during peak hours, by providing easy access to, and fast movement along, the highway for multi-passenger vehicles."

c. Several opportunities are present to design preference for multi-passenger vehicles into transportation corridors. These include:

- * The I-35E "parkway corridor from the Lexington bridge to downtown St. Paul
- * Hiawatha Avenue from Fort Snelling to downtown Minneapolis
- * Highway 12 to be reconstructed as I-394 from downtown Minneapolis west to I-494
- * I-35W to be reconstructed with an additional lane in both directions from a point south of the Minnesota River to a point north of the 62nd Street Crosstown
- * The long-controversial southwest diagonal corridor from the southwest suburbs into downtown Minneapolis.

d. We have had considerable experience with exclusive *ramps* for high occupancy vehicles to Twin Cities area freeways. Further ramp construction is contemplated. With the exception of two contra-flow bus lanes in downtown Minneapolis and the Nicollet Mall transit-way, this metropolitan area has not taken the step of providing exclusive *lanes* on freeways for high occupancy vehicles, even during rush hours.

e. Exclusive lanes for high occupancy vehicles are provided on some freeways in some other metropolitan areas in the nation, including Washington, D. C., Honolulu, New York City, and Pittsburgh. The most success with such lanes occur when they are installed as part of a major reconstruction program and are designed to be physically separated from other lanes, according to a research report by the Federal Highway Administration.

2. In light of the foregoing, the Transportation Advisory Board should delay approval of the Transportation Development Program until it contains specific plans for preferential roadways for high occupancy vehicles. As we recommended in our report, "Building Incentives for Drivers to Ride," such preference should be included routinely in major new construction programs.