Appendix J.
Park-and-Ride Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended for use in planning, designing, and evaluating proposed park-and-ride facilities served by regular route bus transit. The guidelines can also be used for park-and-ride lots without bus service and at rail stations.

Park-and-Ride Development Guidelines

Locate park-and-ride facilities in congested travel corridors. Priority should be given to park-and-ride facilities concentrated along and/or serving congested metropolitan highway corridors.

Locate park-and-ride facilities in advance of areas experiencing major traffic congestion. By diverting vehicles off the roadways, the amount of congestion can be lessened in areas already experiencing congestion and slow the extension of congested corridors.

Locate park-and-ride lots in areas with high levels of travel demand to the major activity center or centers served by the facility.

Locate park-and-ride lots within one-half mile of an access point to the metropolitan highway system or a planned access point to the metropolitan highway system. Drivers do not want to travel far from a major roadway to access a park-and-ride lot. It will add too much time to their trip. In addition, park-and-rides in close proximity to the highway system allow buses quicker access and reduce travel time to and from the park-and-ride.

Locate park-and-ride lots in areas with less dense populations, where full coverage with transit service is not feasible. Priority should be given to areas categorized as Transit Market Area III. Priority should be given to locations within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA).

Locate park-and-ride lots with primary service areas that do not overlap those of other lots. Separating park-and-lots by appropriate distances will help ensure that services and facilities are not duplicated. The average spacing between park-and-ride lots in the Twin Cities metro area is three to five miles.

Locate park-and-ride facilities so commuters do not have to backtrack to reach the lot. Providing the majority of commuters with a direct route to the lot, rather than taking them in the direction opposite their ultimate destination, will enhance the potential success of the facility.

All new park-and-ride facility proposals will use the regionally accepted park-and-ride demand estimation methodology for determining the need and size of new facilities. This methodology is described in Appendix N.

The need for park-and-ride facilities at stations on dedicated transitways should be studied with each corridor. Some stations may be appropriate for park-and-ride, while others may be appropriate for denser transit-oriented development.

Park-and-Ride Design Guidelines

Give sufficient consideration to the capacity of existing roadways that provide access to the lot. Unless there is sufficient capacity of existing access roadways, heavily utilized lots could cause congestion at points that are remote from the lot itself. Traffic signals may be required at the access point of a large park-and-ride facility onto a major street to provide safe and efficient use of the facilities.

Include preferential transit service to enhance park-and-ride facility ridership levels. Priority should be given to park-and-ride lots that have peak-period express bus service consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan or locations where express bus service can be provided without a significant increase in operating costs.

Providing users with travel time savings and travel time reliability with transit advantages such as HOV and bus-only shoulder lanes makes park-and-ride services more attractive to potential customers.

Orient park-and-ride facilities to ensure good accessibility and visibility. Lots need to be highly visible to potential users to increase their awareness of the facility. The guide signs should be placed to intercept potential users on their normal travel paths and guide them directly to the facility.

Park-and-Ride Cost/Benefit Guidelines

All economic implications of implementing park-and-ride facilities should be considered even though benefit/cost ratios cannot be used as a single factor in judging the merits of proposed lots.

Economic impacts on neighborhoods and environmental constraints should be considered when comparing park-and-ride locations.

Look for opportunities for establishing compatible joint-use lots that meet these guidelines.

Amenities should be included when estimating the cost of various locations. Amenities may include lighting, passenger shelter, bench, telephone, trash receptacle, information displays, security, bicycle storage, and sidewalk or bikepath.

Balance the number of spaces in a park-and-ride lot with the number of seats available on the transit service. The Metropolitan Council's policy for transit service is a minimum of three trips per peak period. A park-and-ride lot served by express bus service should have a minimum of 150 spaces to accommodate three full buses.

Surface lots should be constructed where reasonably feasible. Structured ramps as park-and-ride facilities could be constructed in areas of high land acquisition cost, high potential park-and-ride demand, or where a complementary, shared parking joint-use venture is feasible.