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1995 Annual Report



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Metropolitan Council

Working for the Region, Planning for the Future

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*"A new spirit
of regional
cooperation..."*

Letter from the Chair

— Curt Johnson

It was another year of growth for the Twin Cities region, although the rate of growth slowed.

In general, most Twin Citians experienced a good quality of life due to a strong regional economy. Business growth, high employment rates, steady retail sales, increased commercial and residential construction, and an abundance of arts and cultural activities all contributed to the region's overall livability. However, increasing numbers of Twin Citians experienced economic uncertainty—some losing their jobs due to corporate mergers and buyouts, and continued downsizing in both the private and public sectors.

A new spirit of regional cooperation was demonstrated. Approximately 100 communities and the Metropolitan Council pledged to work together to provide more affordable housing throughout the seven-county area. The initial results of this unique community—Council partnership will be seen when the first phase of implementation is completed in 1996.

The Council improved regional planning services and technical assistance to communities.

In response to demands for more responsive and efficient government, the Metropolitan Council work closely with communities in planning for the future while providing customer-focused, cost-effective regional service operations in transit, wastewater treatment and affordable housing.

We consolidated regional decisions linking land-use and financial investments. To better manage taxpayer dollars for the diverse requirements of regional growth and land development, the Metropolitan Council considered sewer capital and maintenance costs, and transit and roadway improvements for land-use and infrastructure investment decisions. Council policy and regional investment decisions, guided by the *Regional Blueprint*, addressed such issues as community development, airports and transportation, water quality and water treatment, and regional parks.

Our core business operations were strengthened this year through redesign and changes in work practices. The Council is in the midst of redesigning the region's transit services to best meet changing customer needs. In 1996, work rules for transit employees will undergo scrutiny and change to improve worker productivity and cost-effectiveness. Wastewater treatment work practices are also being redesigned to improve worker productivity. In addition, changes in the planning and design of capital projects are in progress, which will result in cost-efficiencies while continuing to meet rigorous public health standards. Currently, the Metropolitan Housing and Redevelopment Authority serves 135 communities and 5,000 households. To do more with limited resources, the Council formed partnerships with regional nonprofit groups and governmental agencies to help provide families with housing and counseling services for jobs and family self-sufficiency.



I ntroduction

*By the year 2020,
650,000
more people are
expected to live in
the Twin Cities
metro area.*

During 1995, the Metropolitan Council targeted four priority areas: regional strategies for growth, affordable housing and livable communities, transit redesign, and wastewater treatment redesign.

Regional strategies for growth

A number of community tours in 1995 provided a first-hand opportunity to observe development within the seven-county area. It also provided the opportunity to better understand the impact on the region from nearby communities that have a high number of residents commuting into the area to work.

With public input, the Metropolitan Council must determine how the region should be developed. By the year 2020, 650,000 more people are expected to live in the Twin Cities metro area.

The region is also experiencing “growing pains” from development outside the seven-county area.

Increased pressure on regional services and infrastructure accelerates the need to select a development strategy that will guide growth and land-use for the region’s future.

Affordable housing and livable communities

In partnership with the Metropolitan Council, communities are working to meet the need for family housing at the local level. Factors in planning more livable communities include changing demographics, the mix of types of housing design, and affordability. The aging of the baby boomers, increased life expectancy, and the “boomer” in birth rates correlate with the different types of housing needs for singles, families with young children, empty nesters and the elderly.

Predictions indicate that there will be more than 330,000 additional households in the region by the year 2020. This raises questions about increased density and designs for more compact developments that will need to be addressed.

The issue of affordability is a continuing concern. Increased job growth in the last year has occurred primarily in low-paying entry level jobs. At the same time, the number of well-paying mid-level management and professional jobs have declined. Overall, there has been a continuing decline in real income

for many workers during the past year. What types of housing will the average family of four with two wage-earners at entry level salaries be able to afford?

In 1996, the first phase of implementation for the Livable Communities program begins. The region will be able to assess the progress and continuing need in this area. Together, the Council and the communities will need to expand affordable and “life-cycle” housing to meet the changing demands of the region’s families.

Transit redesign

Redesigning transit services to best serve the region remains a huge challenge. The Council must work within the parameters of declining public dollars and the need to diversify the type of transit service that is offered to meet customer needs. For example, in many communities, employers with a

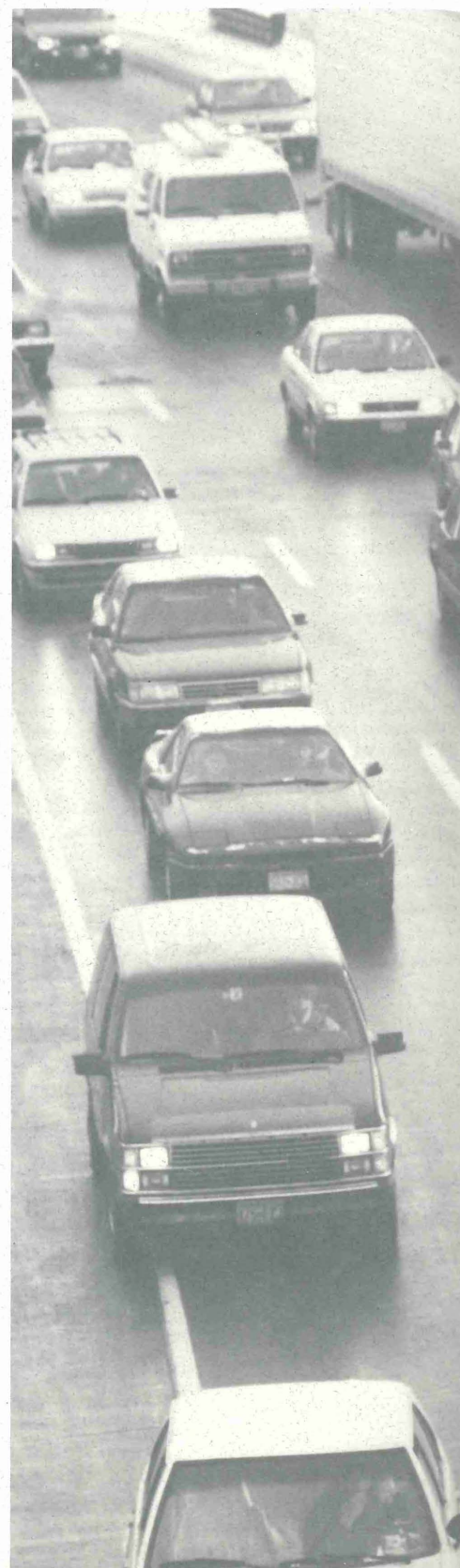


Redesigning transit services to best serve the region remains a huge challenge.

large proportion of entry level jobs have to hire outside the area because the community lacks affordable housing appropriate to entry level salaries. This necessitates providing public transportation for these workers. Even with affordable housing in the community, transportation is an important regional service.

Due to a significant loss of operating dollars, the Council will need to make painful yet necessary changes in future transit services. The Council must also improve how it works with communities, businesses, riders and other stakeholders to meet regional travel demand. The region suffered through a transit strike in 1995 that affected all commuters and transit-dependent riders, and kept transit workers off the job for nearly three weeks. Despite reforms accomplished as a result of labor negotiations between the Metropolitan Council and the Amalgamated Transit Union, and ongoing efforts to redesign transit, the next two years will be critical. Much will depend on the level of public funding available from the 1996–97 legislative sessions.

Factors that will shape regional transit service—such as changes in scheduling and routes, service cuts, fare increases, replacement of old buses with new and accessible ones, development of new park and ride lots, employee layoffs, the needs of the workforce—are hanging in the balance.



Wastewater treatment redesign

As the region grows, increasing demands for wastewater treatment need to be balanced against the costs for maintenance and for improvements in the system.

Population growth and increased development will place additional pressure on an aging sewer system. The Council will have to determine if changes need to be made in how the region pays for wastewater treatment. The core of the regional sewer system, which was built in the 1960s with federal funding, formed the basis for regionwide sharing of wastewater treatment costs.



At present, sewer treatment rates in the Twin Cities metro region are among the lowest in the United States. Any necessary cost increases are set at the same rate as inflation. With increased growth on the outer boundaries of the region and a projected population increase of 650,000, the demands for sewer system expansion and improvements to the current system may require

At present, sewer treatment rates in the Twin Cities metro region are among the lowest in the U. S.

changes in how users pay for services. It may also require a different cost-sharing system, perhaps one that assigns costs by geographic location. Recommendations from a task force composed of public officials, industry users and community interests will be presented to the Metropolitan Council for action in 1996.

The Council's work in the four priority areas discussed above will continue into 1996 in an effort to find solutions for these critical issues that are beneficial for the entire region.

Twin Cities Area

In 1995, the rate of economic growth in the Twin Cities region slowed, compared to the impressive growth experienced in 1994. In addition to job growth and employment, indicators such as housing and construction starts and retail sales as an indication of consumer spending, showed signs of a slowing economy. However, the diversity of industries and large number of Fortune 500 businesses and jobs in the region provided a stable economic base.

At mid-decade, the region's population is approaching 2,450,000 people. In 1994, the Twin Cities area ranked 16th nationally in overall population rank, with 1995 reflecting similar growth. The trend for higher birth rates for racial minority groups, compared with overall birth rates, was expected to continue. Racial minorities comprise about 10 percent of the region's population, and 17 percent of overall births in the region in 1993.

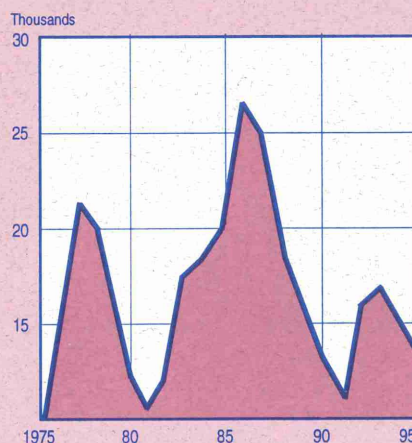
General quality of life remained strong. Business, despite increased profitability, remained cautious in hiring workers. The unemployment rate remained very low. Government, with continued public pressure to cut spending, limited tax increases. The percentage of children living in poverty in the region, though, increased.

The Twin Cities maintained its relatively high rank in residential construction among other metro areas in the United States. Residential building permits showed a modest slowdown in 1995, compared to 1994, but maintained the stable rate of growth of the 1990s. In part, this was due to market factors, but changing demographics—fewer young adults—also played a role.

Commercial-industrial construction permit value in the third quarter of 1995 increased by 35.1 percent from a year ago. In 1994, total commercial-industrial construction totaled \$341.4 million. From Jan. through Sept. 1995, commercial and industrial activity

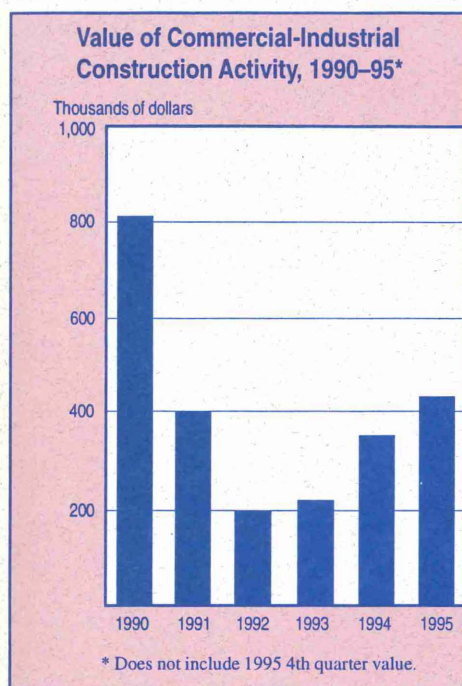
At mid-decade, the region's population is approaching 2,450,000 people.

Residential Building Permits, 1975-95*



* 1995 data based on building permit activity reported to the U.S. Commerce Dept. through October 1995. November and December have been estimated based on the 1994 share of permit activity in those two months.

Regional Profile



represented 18.6 percent of total construction value, markedly higher than last year's share of 7.4 percent.

Employment growth in the Twin Cities tracked the nation's downward trend over the past several quarters. Jobs in the metro area increased 1.8 percent in the third quarter of 1995 compared to a year ago, slightly trailing the nation's 2.0 percent rate of job growth for the same period. Regional job growth in 1990-94 exceeded national rates. In 1994, local jobs grew by 3.6 percent, compared to the national rate of 3.0 percent.



... December retail sales up 2.9 percent for the Twin Cities area, compared to 1994.

In general, the downsizing trend continued across the employment spectrum, from professional and management to the factory floor. This is reflected in continuing corporate mergers and buyouts, business and government consolidation. For many businesses, staff reductions continued despite increased earnings.

Consumers showed caution in the marketplace. Retail sales grew only slightly during the holiday season, reflecting worries about job security and increased debt, and even bad weather. The Minnesota Retail Merchants Association reported holiday sales up on average by about 3 percent from one year ago. Tele-Check Services, Inc., a Houston-based check verification company, showed December retail sales up 2.9 percent for the Twin Cities area, compared to 1994. In contrast, same-store sales were down 4.1 percent nationally and 4.6 percent in the midwest, among 17,000 stores surveyed. The difference was attributed to Twin Citians' relative affluence.

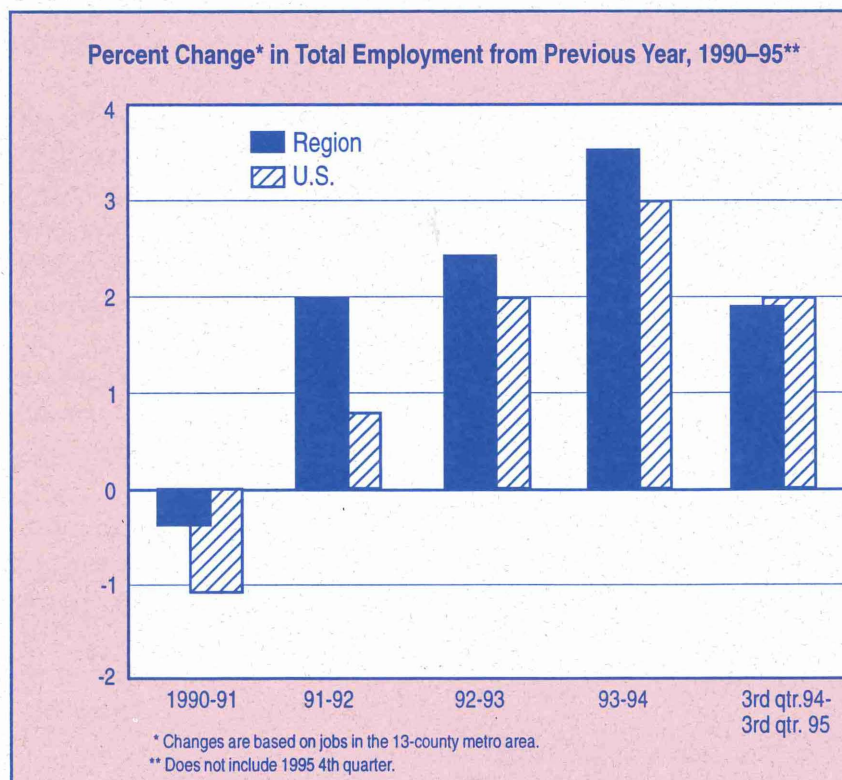
Highway traffic levels increased, but with relatively little change in the average traffic commute of between 20 to 30 minutes. However, traffic congestion levels were up on major thoroughfares. With less public dollars

for maintenance and improvement, the Legislature debated increases in transportation funding. State transportation officials solicited proposals from private firms to develop toll roads, to test if toll roads help reduce road congestion and increase transportation revenues.

The perception of crime is still a primary concern among Twin Citians, according to the most recent Twin Cities Area Survey conducted by the University of Minnesota Center for Survey Research in 1994. The survey, conducted by the university and co-sponsored by the Metropolitan Council includes questions on attitudes about regional topics and policy issues. The overall rate of violent and property crime dropped over the last two years, although there was an alarming rise in the number of murders in Minneapolis in 1995. The rate of violent crime (murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery) remained relatively stable.

Government services continued to undergo change, in response to shrinking budgets. In Minneapolis, for example, the Park Board reduced hours for public skating rinks and closed more than a dozen skating facilities. The Hennepin County Library reduced hours of operation and eliminated some services.

Major cultural institutions, ranging from the Minnesota Orchestra to the Guthrie Theater, remained relatively healthy despite worries of reduced government funding and declining ticket revenues. A variety of arts groups were part of the local arts scene, although many experienced reduced operating budgets and shortened performance or exhibit schedules.



1995

Council Achievements

Providing paths to the future: Three urban options for growth for the year 2020

Like wide rings on a growing tree trunk, the region's year-to-year growth will produce a much larger metropolitan area by the year 2020. In the last 25 years, the region grew at a healthy rate, thanks to the baby boomers who formed households and had children in the '70s and '80s. But in the next 25 years, the Metropolitan Council forecasts even faster growth:

- 650,000 more people
- 330,000 additional households, more than Minneapolis and St. Paul have today
- 380,000 more jobs

As the region's long-range planning agency and provider of transit and wastewater services, the Metropolitan Council is looking ahead and asking where all these people and jobs will locate in the region. The Council has developed three urban growth options that show how the region could accommodate expected growth:

Current Trend—One option is to continue the current development trend. During the next 25 years, new housing

and businesses would spring up at the contiguous edge of today's urban area, in effect forming a new concentric ring of suburban growth out from the region's center.

The location of housing and employment would largely be driven by market demand. However, development would be based on regional and local policies and planned, as it is today, to provide necessary regional and local infrastructure.

Concentrated Development—

A second option involves locating all urban development within the area currently planned for it—the metropolitan urban service area. The option is built around holding the urban service area in place as a public strategy to build demand for development and redevelopment within the existing urban area and, at the same time, provide infrastructure more efficiently.

Growth Centers—This option focuses on the development, expansion or redevelopment of mixed-use growth centers in the urban area. The centers would contain office, light industrial, residential and retail uses at a scale and design oriented to pedestrians and transit, not automobiles. The centers, or nodes, would be connected to transportation corridors.

*... the region grew
at a healthy rate,
thanks to the
baby boomers ...*

The public strategy would be to shape the market by encouraging the development of jobs and housing in a few select mixed-use centers during the next 25 years. Some parts of the urban service area would be expanded, but the demand at the urban fringe would be dampened somewhat by channeling a portion of the jobs and households into growth centers.

Early this year, the Council will bring the options to communities and the public for discussion.

Partnerships for more livable communities

Nearly 100 metro area communities, more than half of all cities and townships in the seven-county area, have signed on as partners with the Metropolitan Council in the Livable Communities program to help expand affordable housing opportunities, recycle polluted sites and restore neighborhoods.

Among targeted developing communities, 80 percent agreed to participate in Livable Communities. Developing communities are where job growth is highest and the need for affordable and life-cycle housing, now and in the future, is most apparent. Although there are 187 jurisdictions in the Twin Cities metro area, about one-third are outside the urban service area—where urban development is not encouraged.

Incentives in the 1995 Metropolitan Livable Communities Act legislation encourage communities throughout the region to address several key issues—a

shortage of affordable housing in the seven-county metro area, the need to redevelop declining neighborhoods, and an abundance of polluted land that thwarts economic opportunity.

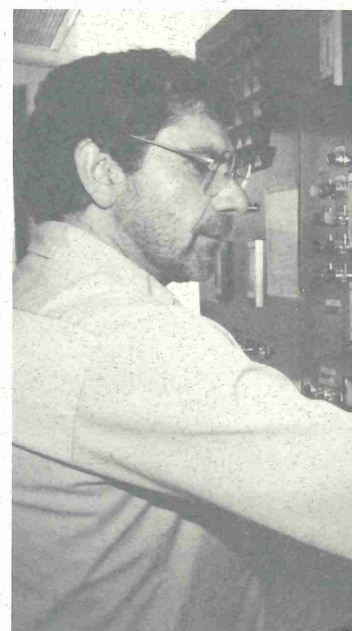
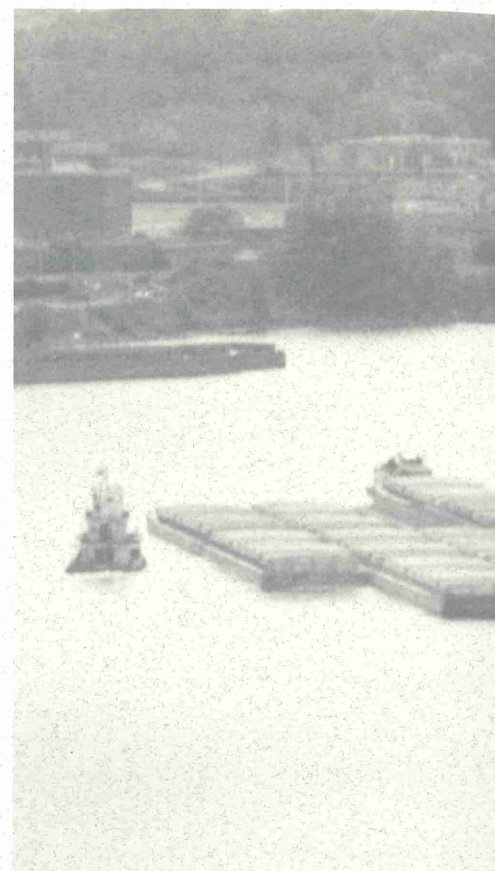
Participating communities are eligible to compete for funding incentives in the form of loans and grants for:

- 1) clean up of polluted lands for business development and job growth,
- 2) local models of compact, creative and transit-oriented development and redevelopment, as well as
- 3) affordable and life-cycle housing to meet the needs of people of all incomes and all stages of life.

Keeping the rivers clean

The region emerged the winner as the Metropolitan Council's wastewater treatment plants achieved 99.6 percent compliance with operating permits. Eight out of nine plants also earned awards for outstanding performance from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Public education programs to assist business and inform the public about reducing or preventing pollution before it enters the sewer system earned a Governor's Award for Excellence in Pollution Prevention Performance.

The last leg of a 10-year project to separate storm sewer run-off from wastewater effluent was completed in the fall.





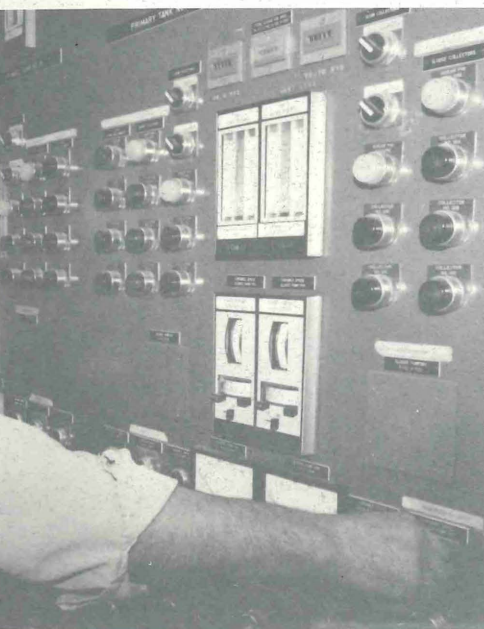
Controlling runoff pollution

The Twin Cities Water Quality Initiative, funded by the Environmental Services division of the Metropolitan Council, provided 12 grants and matching incentives for reducing runoff pollution. The program marks important progress at the halfway point of two-year grants already under way. For example:

—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service restored more than twice its original goal of wetland and grassland buffer in the Sand and Bevens Creek watersheds. Nearly 155 acres of wetlands and 185 acres of grassland on federal, state and private lands will be restored to its near-original natural habitat.

—Carver County Carver Creek project established three monitoring sites on the creek to analyze the sources and types of pollution degrading water quality. County commissioners recently voted to offer a voluntary tax incentive for qualifying landowners to help reduce pollution through buffer strips, grass waterways and other land conservation practices.

—The Friends of the Minnesota Valley Heritage Registry initiated agreements with corporations, business and individuals owning land alongside the Minnesota River. These agreements will preserve land in its natural state near the river.



Improving productivity, reducing costs in wastewater plant operations

Almost every aspect of the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant will undergo change in the next five years—in technology, in the use of labor and in the way work gets done.

Why? To improve productivity and reduce costs.

Called the “Program Management” project, the effort brings together more than 250 employees from across the agency to create new working relationships and work processes.

Financial projections indicate the intensive \$11.2 million planning investment will be paid back in 18 months. In succeeding years, improvements will save \$7 million annually through cost efficiencies.

The project fits within the agency’s larger commitment to continuous quality improvement, cost reduction and environmental sustainability. Eventually, lessons learned from Program Management will be used at the agency’s eight other treatment plants.

Among major tasks under way is developing a master plan that coordinates all aspects of plant operations for the next 40 years. Other work includes building a powerful computer system to replace the outdated version used today, and streamlining the process for making capital improvements.

Almost every aspect of the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant will undergo change in the next five years—

Increasing the “transit advantage”

Buses on shoulder lanes cruise by slow-moving cars during rush hours. Buses navigate city streets without ever catching a red light. Buses use high-tech equipment that can determine a quicker route.

These are a few transit advantages made possible by Team Transit—a joint program of Metropolitan Council Transit Operations and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

In 1995, the first Speedlight was installed in the spring at I-94 and Hemlock Lane. Lights automatically change for buses approaching I-94 at this freeway entrance. The wait for the bus is cut in half. Nineteen additional installations are planned for the next year.

The first Route-O-Matics were installed on I-94 and Plymouth Road. Another was installed at 12th St. and

*In 1995, the first
Speedlight was
installed at I-94
and Hemlock Lane.*

I-94 in St. Paul. Large monitors alert oncoming traffic to traffic problems and automatically re-route vehicles to alternate roadways.

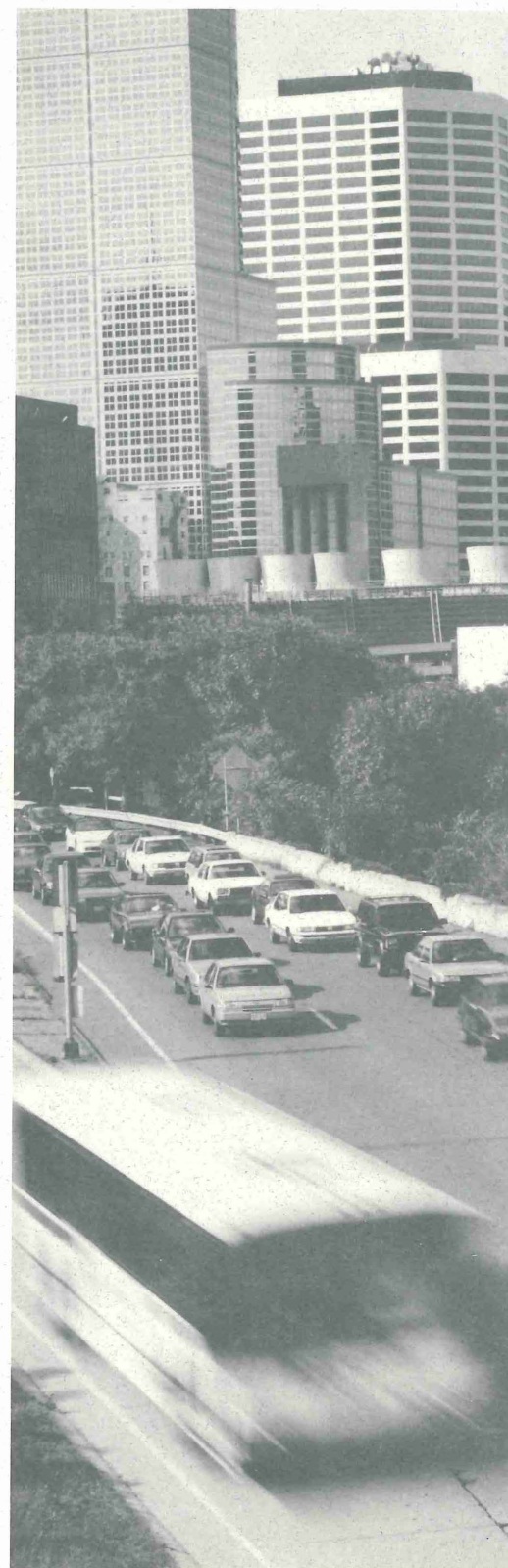
The Opticom bus traffic signal priority test was conducted at I-394 and Louisiana Ave. Buses can cut travel time by 10-20 percent, enough to allow removing one bus on some routes while maintaining consistent bus intervals.

Nine shoulder bus lanes were opened in 1995, allowing buses to bypass traffic congestion and proceed to final destinations. Two shoulder bus lanes are at Cedar Ave., Cliff Road, 6th Street in downtown Minneapolis, I-694 at Brooklyn Blvd. and Hemlock Lane, I-35E at Hwy. 110, Hwy 5 at Market Blvd. and I-494.

Improved transit customer service

Customers of Metropolitan Council Transit Operations received improved service in 1995 compared with 1994, according to Transit Operations' customer service index. The index is a marker used to chart trends in the quality of bus service. It includes performance indicators such as customer perception of on-time service, bus cleanliness, reduced complaints against drivers, and accurate information at bus shelters.

On a 100-point scale, the index recorded an average of 69.28 (January-November). This is a 17 percent increase from 1995's index baseline and a 20 percent increase over 1994 for the same period.



Expanding affordable housing choice through HomeChoiceSM

The first participating families in the HomeChoiceSM program moved from high-poverty areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul to central-city and suburban areas with low poverty.

HomeChoiceSM is an affordable housing demonstration project run by the Metropolitan Council HRA with cooperation from Minneapolis and St. Paul housing authorities. Although a handful of families moved under the program in 1995, more are preparing to move once the school year ends in June 1996. As many as 100 families will be served by the program.

Eligible families with children receive Section 8 rent assistance and live in Minneapolis or St. Paul neighborhoods where more than 30 percent of families live in poverty. The program is an effort to break the cycle of poverty—including counseling, job training, access to transportation and other support.

Serving regional information needs through the Data Center

The Data Center served a total of 15,916 clients in the 12-month period from January to December, providing information to improve decisions by governments, businesses, institutions and individuals in the region. A total of 14,691 publications were requested from the Council's Data Center in 1995. For the latest Council reports, dial the Metro Information Line: 229-3780.

HomeChoiceSM is an affordable housing demonstration project run by the Metro HRA ...



“The development of a partnership between local governments and the Council will be invaluable in future collaborative efforts ...”

The Livable Communities program fosters more affordable housing throughout the Twin Cities region and encourages community development. Especially important is expanding housing opportunities that are affordable and suited to meet the needs of people at various stages of their lives.

Working to make our communities more livable

“A high percentage of employees who live in Dakota County and work for our major employers — such as Northwest Airlines and Blue Cross/Blue Shield — need affordable housing,” noted Tom Egan, mayor of Eagan. “We want to meet a representative percentage of those housing needs.”

Karen Anderson, mayor of Minnetonka, said her city is committed to the program. “It will help us further expand affordable housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents.”

Coon Rapids already has a lot of affordable housing, but, as Mayor William Thompson pointed out, “We decided it was important for metro cities to come together and work for a

more effective division of affordable housing and relieve some of the pressure on the inner cities.”

Council members, public officials explore growth implications

Public officials gave the Council good marks this year for addressing issues of metropolitan growth and development over the next 25 years. “We appreciate your interest in learning the impact of growth on our schools, cities and the county,” said Scott County Administrator Gary Cunningham in a note to Council Chair Curt Johnson in August.

“The development of a partnership between local governments and the Council will be invaluable in future collaborative efforts to ensure a smooth transition as this growth continues,” he wrote. His note was in response to a Council bus tour in August of growth in Scott and Carver Counties.

The fact-finding tour was one of 10 that Council members took in 1995 on the region’s growing edges and in older areas needing redevelopment. The tours were part of the Council’s effort



Making a Difference



to recommend a growth option to implement the *Regional Blueprint* and to guide development over the next 25 years. Public officials from a 19-county area wanted to work with the Council on growth, economic issues, groundwater pollution, zoning and planning.

Transit redesign brings service into focus

Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center residents can now get around their communities by transit more easily and faster than ever. Service to Brookdale and Starlite Centers and North Hennepin Community College have been improved, and workers can better connect with jobs at the Brooklyn Park Industrial Park, thanks to bus improvements developed in collaboration among Metropolitan Council Transit Operations, the nonprofit Success by Six/Northwest organization, shopping center owners and the cities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center.

Route and schedule adjustments, plus a new transit hub at the Starlite Center, are all part of an initiative to improve local "circulator" service focused on transit hubs, which are served by more "timed transfers," cutting transfer time

to three to seven minutes. There's now faster all-day service to downtown Minneapolis via I-94, with connections at Brookdale, saving downtown-bound customers 10 minutes over the local service on route #5.

These improvements not only give better local service; they also carry through a vision for redesigning transit services being developed by the Council. Building on the hub-and-spoke concept, with shopping centers as the hubs and bus routes as the spokes, the Council now envisions a transit system that is smaller, more cost-effective and more tailored to local transit markets.

For example, the most frequent regular-route service would be provided along the I-94/University Avenue corridor and in core areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Less-frequent service with possible neighborhood circulators would be offered in selected parts of the central cities and the fully developed suburbs. In adjacent suburban areas with less population and employment density, big and small buses (which are cheaper to operate) would provide 30-to-60 minute regular-route service, some operating as circulators that would link riders to suburban transit hubs. In the developing, less dense suburban areas, paratransit or other nontraditional transit delivery methods would be used.

Bringing together issues and communities

"This is a challenging project," said Maple Grove City Administrator Jon Elam about the Elm Creek "cluster planning" project. "It's always difficult when you bring several communities together to accommodate each other's needs and work together. But the rewards are much greater than doing it alone."

That's exactly the idea behind a new approach — called cluster planning — that the Council is taking to resolve needs and issues affecting groups of communities. Bringing officials together from different cities has opened the door for concurrent discussions about environmental protection, transportation, housing and sewer service.

The catalyst for joint planning is a proposed wastewater interceptor that would serve parts of Maple Grove, Brooklyn Park, Plymouth and Medina. The Council is using the interceptor as a planning "magnet" to draw in discussions about a range of growth issues in that part of the region.

The Council and Maple Grove are now negotiating how costs of the interceptor will be shared.

Water quality grants pay dividends

The summer of 1995 was especially memorable for about 20 students from the Chaska schools. What began as a

pilot summer school project to reduce water runoff pollution in Carver Creek ended up at the State Capitol in August. That's where Lt. Gov. Joanne Benson presented participants with an award for outstanding achievement.

The project is one of 12 funded by the Metropolitan Council's Twin Cities Water Quality Initiative in 1994. Benson learned about the project in July when 28 counties and organizations signed the historic Minnesota River restoration partnership in Mankato.

Better ways to turn out clean water

How do you balance cost-efficiencies with the realities of fewer staff and resources, while continuing to meet rigorous public health standards? Environmental Services staff are working with the firm of Camp, Dresser & McKee to improve employee productivity, build on staff expertise and apply new technology at the Metro Plant in St. Paul.

Improvements in wastewater treatment have already resulted. Line staff helped test new centrifuges used to remove excess water from sewer sludge. Centrifuges are a more efficient way to remove moisture than the plate and frame presses or vacuum filters used previously. Lower energy consumption and cost savings in labor are the immediate benefits. Long term, there are operational savings, as the new process requires less intensive maintenance.

From the 'Boss'

At Transit Operations, the bus customer is boss. Here are a few comments from our customers:

—I inadvertently left a briefcase on the 44C bus. The driver, on the return leg of the run, stopped by my home and delivered the briefcase. He declined to give me his name, saying cheerfully he was only doing his job. What a GREAT employee for MCTO!

—G.A. Jonasson, Bloomington, commending a Route 44C driver driver, Kent Eklund

—Roxanne, Driver 31, was just wonderful. I am a wheelchair user and I got on the bus thinking it went to Brookdale, which I later learned from the driver it didn't. It was over 100 degrees and the bus was re-routed for a parade, so she ended up taking me all the way to Brookdale. How kind.

—Linda Wolford, Minneapolis

—I work for Springs Transit, the city bus company of Colorado Springs. While visiting Minneapolis, I was very impressed with MCTO service, bus cleanliness and driver concern for passengers. I will use your system as an excellent example when discussing customer relations.

—John Shults, Colorado Springs

Eden Prairie families reach out

Several young, middle-class families in Eden Prairie are helping economically struggling families turn their lives around, thanks to a program initiated by the city of Eden Prairie with the help of the Metropolitan Council. The "mentor" families have volunteered to provide friendship, encouragement and overall support to help families with low incomes move into living-wage jobs in Eden Prairie.

The match-up of 15 mentor families with 15 families with low incomes is part of the HOPE program (Housing, Opportunities, Partnerships, Employment) launched by the city of Eden Prairie in May. The Metropolitan Council, which is assessing the region's performance in affordable housing, helped get this unique pilot program under way.

"I have an education, a job, a home, children, I'm married and I'm rich in blessings. I have all this support and yet I have days when I feel without resources. Imagine the challenge for a mother with dependent children, no spouse and no livable-wage job," said Cyndie Hays. She, her husband, John, and their two children are among the volunteer families participating in the program.

The match-up of 15 mentor families with 15 families with low incomes is part of the HOPE program ...

Breaking the cycle of poverty

Encouraging positive, independent living skills is what East Metro Place seeks to do for families living in poverty. The Council's Metro HRA provided \$125,000 in federal Section 8 rental assistance in 1995 for families living at the nonprofit transitional housing program in White Bear Lake. Families may live at the 20-apartment residence for up to 24 months. They are required to do much more than just live there, however. They must sign a contract to work on turning their lives around.

The program enables parents to obtain the necessary parenting and independent living skills, including schooling or training, to work toward a living wage, said Carol Bannister, director of the East Metro Women's Council. The Women's Council provides the various family support services at the residence.

"We help families start believing in themselves," she said.

Reaching out to youth at risk

Metropolitan Council Transit Operations (MCTO) has been reaching out to youth at risk and creating a positive impact in the heart of Minneapolis' Near North Side community. The idea is to get closer to the communities the MCTO serves and, in the process, help promote an atmosphere of less violence and more respect, including toward bus drivers.

The Driver Community Rep Program sends drivers out to schools, community groups and senior citizen homes to explain how customers can fully utilize the transit system. Youth are also reached through other programs, including the Seward adopt-a-school program, in which employee volunteers participate in a job-shadowing career program. Special events, like the "Big Bus Bath," which pitted two high school teams against each other to scrub down a bus, boosted contact with youth in the community.

Educating transit customers of the future

Transit Is the Way, a new curriculum developed for 5th-through-8th graders by the interagency Metropolitan Transit Education Committee (MTEC), is sparking students' interest in the role of transit in the region.

MTEC is a partnership of governmental agencies, chaired by the Metropolitan Council, that have primary responsibility for transit in the region.

"*Transit Is the Way* is one of the most exciting curriculums I've seen," noted Paula Verstegen, a teacher at Lake Elmo Elementary School. "It is very easy to use and my students love it! It integrates well into what I am already teaching in geography and social studies."

Gail Githens, principal of Grey Cloud Elementary School in Cottage Grove, has also found the curriculum useful. "My teachers have greatly appreciated your curriculum. It provides many

*"Transit is the Way—
is one of the most
exciting curriculums
I've seen," noted
Paula Verstegen,
a teacher*



excellent ideas and resources to integrate transit into areas such as social studies, math, language arts and maps skills. We appreciate the opportunity to have the well-developed curriculum available."

In addition to the Council, MTEC includes the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Light Rail Transit Joint Powers Board, and the Hennepin, Ramsey and Dakota County Regional Rail Authorities and other transit operating agencies in the region.

Council's information services go on-line

Going "on line"—through the Twin Cities Computer Network—boosted the reach of the Metropolitan Council's information services in 1995.

The Council created a computer-network forum on regional issues that drew more than 200 electronic participants last year. They debated issues ranging from affordable housing to transit, from "congestion pricing" to a shared, high-frequency emergency radio system.

For the first time, information about recreation opportunities at area regional parks and trails is available via computer network. With a few keystrokes, users can now find out what regional parks offer picnicking, biking, fishing, swimming and more than a dozen other activities.

It's also easier to track information about the Council. Information about new Council publications, coming meetings and actions is available through TCCN.

To link up, dial into TCCN via computer at 337-5400 for free text service, or call TCCN Client Support at 332-2101 to subscribe to premium graphic service. Once you're linked up, move to the Metropolitan Council "home page."

Daytons Bluff School

The Environmental Services Division's partnership with Daytons Bluff Elementary School continues to benefit school children as well as the agency. The partners joined in 1991 through the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce's "Prepare St. Paul" program, which pairs local employers with St. Paul schools to motivate and prepare students to succeed, especially in basic science and math skills.

A major partnership project in 1995 was the continued development of an environmental education nature area in the schoolyard, which includes an arbor structure and outdoor mural created by Environmental Services employees. In addition, employees taught a special class on wetlands and nonpoint source pollution to all fifth-graders. Other activities this year included a career day; a "River Rangers" lesson on wastewater treatment, water quality; and staff serving as "guest readers" during National Read-to-Me Week and judges for spelling bees and field days.



1995

Budget Overview

Background

The Twin Cities region is the envy of other major urban areas in the country. Population in the seven-county area is nearly 2.5 million people. A mix of industries and Fortune 500 companies call the Twin Cities home. A high education rate, trained work force, arts and culture, parks and open space, relatively low crime rate, and well-planned growth culminate in a high quality of life. Leading the effort in regional planning and operations of regional services is the Metropolitan Council.

*Leading the effort
in regional planning
and operations of
services is the
Metropolitan Council.*

Regional Services

The Metropolitan Council serves you and others in the region by:

- 1) planning for the future, guiding regional development and managing growth with communities,
- 2) providing nearly 200,000 bus rides daily, with about 800 buses on the streets during peak hours, as the largest operator of regional transit,
- 3) treating 300,000,000 gallons of wastewater daily, to keep rivers clean and families healthy,
- 4) providing affordable housing to 135 communities and 5,000 households, through Section 8 housing and family help programs.
- 5) keeping the cost of financing regional projects as low as possible, with a triple-A credit rating, reflecting sound fiscal management and prudent financial investments.

As the region grows and continues to change, the Metropolitan Council is proud to be recognized nationally for innovation and improved performance. We look to our partners in 187 local communities, other regional agencies, state government, business and the non-profit sector to continue serving the region effectively and cost-efficiently.

Metropolitan Council

Restated 1995 Operating Budget — 1995 Summary Budget

	OPERATING BUDGET					
	Regional Administration and Policy			Environmental Services Division	Transportation Division	Restated Total
	GENERAL FUND	HRA	RAP Total			
REVENUES:						
Property Tax	8,325,600	—	8,325,600	—	66,570,671	74,896,271
State	—	135,300	135,300	13,000	39,164,000	39,312,300
Federal	—	3,002,300	3,002,300	56,000	9,723,684	12,781,984
Local-MAC/MSFC Chargebacks	86,700	—	86,700	—	110,300	197,000
Sewer Service Charges	—	—	—	91,708,936	—	91,708,936
Industrial Strength Charges	—	—	—	8,042,500	—	8,042,500
Fares	—	—	—	—	43,751,000	43,751,000
Special Fares	—	—	—	—	2,260,000	2,260,000
Contract Revenue/MCTO Provided Opt Out Service	—	—	—	—	4,256,000	4,256,000
Interest	147,000	29,400	176,400	600,000	827,000	1,603,400
Other	353,000	45,200	398,200	160,000	1,575,000	2,133,200
TOTAL REVENUE SOURCES	8,912,300	3,212,200	12,124,500	100,580,436	168,237,655	280,942,591
EXPENDITURES:						
Salaries & Benefits	8,500,575	1,193,554	9,694,129	56,521,209	111,854,740	178,070,078
Contracted Services	1,277,413	557,974	1,835,387	8,337,724	4,452,729	14,625,840
Materials & Supplies	—	—	—	9,750,203	14,067,404	23,817,607
Rent & Utilities	781,861	115,200	897,061	15,663,630	2,382,477	18,943,168
Transit Assistance	—	—	—	—	31,905,678	31,905,678
Other	2,202,287	974,226	3,176,513	8,406,025	6,096,571	17,679,109
Capital Expenditures	450,000	—	450,000	1,351,507	125,000	1,926,507
Organizational Expense Allocation	(2,626,731)	51,794	(2,574,937)	1,271,884	1,303,053	0
Interfund/Interdivisional Charges/Credits	(1,472,858)	345,000	(1,127,858)	(121,746)	944,493	(305,111)
	9,112,547	3,237,748	12,350,295	101,180,436	173,132,145	286,662,877
Potential Use of Reserves	—	—	—	600,000	—	600,000
Use of Fund Balance	200,247	25,548	225,795		4,894,490	5,120,286
Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0

1995

Council members and their districts:

Curt Johnson; Chair – **Roger Scherer**; northwestern Hennepin County – **Bill Schreiber**; Robbinsdale, Crystal, New Hope, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park – **Mary Hill Smith**; Edina, Hopkins, eastern Lake Minnetonka communities – **Julius C. Smith**; Lakeville, Eden Prairie, Carver County, most of Scott County – **Neil Peterson**; Shakopee, Savage, Bloomington, Richfield – **Martha M. Head**; Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, southwestern Minneapolis – **Barbara Butts Williams**; downtown and north Minneapolis, portion of south Minneapolis – **Carol A. Kummer**; eastern half of Minneapolis – **David Hartley**; Anoka County except Coon Rapids – **Richard Packer**; Coon Rapids, Fridley, Hilltop, Columbia Heights, St. Anthony, New Brighton, Mounds View – **Esther Newcome**; several communities in northern Ramsey County – **Charles Arnason**; almost all Washington County, portions of N. St. Paul, Maplewood – **Diane Z. Wolfson**; southern half of St. Paul – **Stephen B. Wellington, Jr.**; northern half of St. Paul, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights – **Kevin Howe**; Mendota, Mendota Heights, Eagan, Lilydale, Burnsville, Apple Valley – **Terrence Flower**; south Washington County, large portion of Dakota County.



Curtis (Curt)
Johnson



Roger Scherer



Bill Schreiber



Mary H. Smith



Julius C.
(Jules) Smith



Neil Peterson



Martha M.
Head



Barbara Butts
Williams



Carol A.
Kummer



David Hartley



Richard (Rick)
Packer



Esther Newcome



Charles (Chuck)
Arnason



Diane Z. (DeDe)
Wolfson



Stephen B.
Wellington, Jr.



Kevin Howe



Terrence (Terry)
Flower

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DEC 18 '96	[REDACTED]
APR 28 '97	[REDACTED]

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Metropolitan Council

Mears Park Centre,
230 East Fifth Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Curtis Johnson, chair
James Solem, regional administrator
Richard Johnson, associate regional
administrator

General offices:

Regional Administration and Planning
(612) 291-6359
Chair/Regional Administrator's Office
(612) 291-6554
Environmental Services, general offices
(612) 222-8423
Transit Operations, general offices
(612) 349-7400

Customer information:

Metro Mobility Service Center
(612) 221-1932
Transit Information Centers
(612) 373-3333
Housing & Redevelopment Authority
(612) 291-7428
Regional Information & Resource
Center (Data Center)
(612) 291-8140

The mission of the Metropolitan Council is to provide leadership in the effective planning for the orderly growth and development of the region and in the delivery of regional services.

The Metropolitan Council coordinates regional planning and guides development in the seven-county area. The Council also operates regional services including wastewater collection and treatment, transit and Metro HRA—an affordable housing service that provides assistance to low-income families in the region. Created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1967, the Council establishes policies and provides planning and technical assistance to communities in the Twin Cities region for airports, regional parks, highways and transit, sewers, air and water quality, land use and affordable housing.

