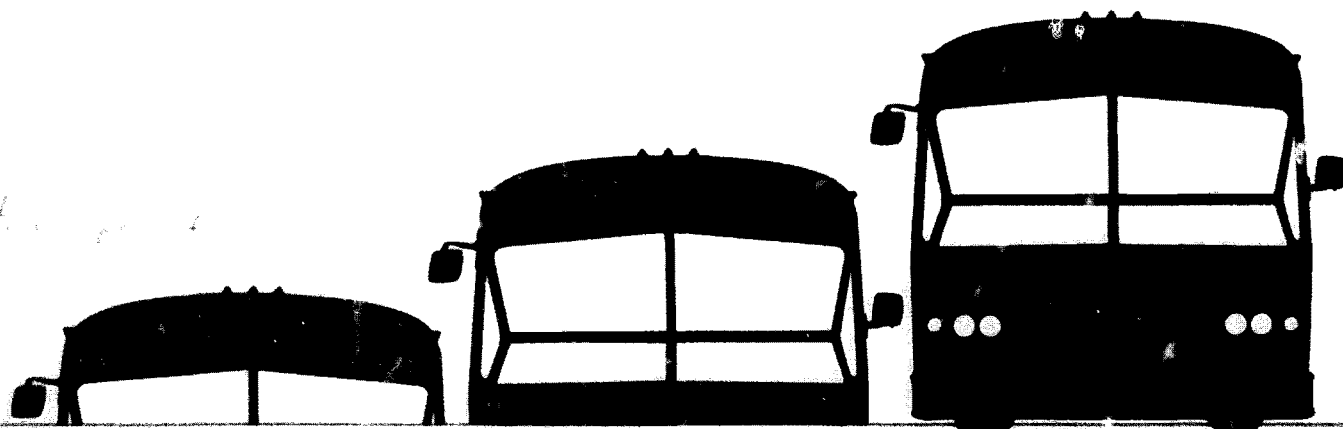


# The Cughta - Biography

1970-1980 



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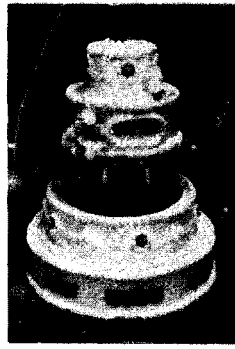
**Chief Administrator**

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**Director of Community Relations**

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**Assistant Director of Community Relations**



# *The Anniversary Oughta Mobile*

1970-1980



In the late 1960's, the transit system in the Twin Cities was an ailing remnant of the streetcar era. Ridership had declined substantially through the post-war years. Service had been reduced and fares had been raised. Transit riders were left with a substandard system so sparse that it was a chore to use.

To reverse this decline, the 1967 session of the Minnesota Legislature created a nine-member board to study and develop the transit system of the seven-county metropolitan area. That board was named the Metropolitan Transit Commission.

During the next two years, the MTC investigated the status of transit in the area, and in July 1969, it declared its intent to purchase Twin City Lines, Inc., which carried more than 95 percent of the area's transit riders. The acquisition was considered imperative to improving public transportation in the metropolitan area. Following long negotiations and condemnation proceedings, the acquisition occurred literally overnight on September 18, 1970, when MTC "T" logos were applied to the sides of the former Twin City Lines buses.

The MTC immediately began improving the system's operating policies, services and equipment using the promotional slogan "We're Getting There." In 10 years of operation, the MTC has successfully transformed the area's transit service into a competitive alternative to the automobile and restored the public's trust and interest in transit. The OughtaBiography is a look at how the MTC went from "getting there" to "being there."





## Increasing Ridership

When the MTC took over operation of the bus system from Twin Cities Lines, Inc., in 1970, the major goal was to reverse the trend of declining ridership that had started after World War II.

To increase ridership, service had to be expanded and improved. Since 1970, route mileage has more than doubled with the addition of 867 miles of service, mostly in suburban areas where little or no transit service had existed. Ridership, in turn, has grown 47 percent from 64 million in 1969, the last full year Twin City Lines owned the system, to a projected 94 million in 1980.

Beginning in 1967, the MTC worked with suburban carriers to improve and expand service in areas not served by Twin City Lines. After its acquisition of the bus system, it made an even greater push toward expanding service to the suburbs. In 1970, the MTC adopted an eight-point policy statement defining its relationship with suburban carriers. The major goals were to assist and promote ridership in suburban areas in the public interest.

Following adoption of this plan, the MTC began to provide funding and equipment to many suburban lines. In fact, it had already extensively funded Dickenson Lines, Inc., which served suburbs in Anoka and Hennepin Counties, and the company had increased its ridership by 45 percent.

Bus service to the suburbs expanded and ridership increased. The MTC and the suburban carriers discussed how to make the entire transit system operate more efficiently in order to reduce scheduling and route planning problems. Some of the suburban carriers agreed that it would be more efficient for the MTC to acquire their transit operations.

The MTC acquired the operating rights of North Hennepin Transit Co. in 1971 and those of Dickenson Lines in 1973. By 1975, it had also purchased rights to the operations of Bloomington Bus Co. and the South and West St. Paul Transit Co. These acquisitions resulted in an integrated transit system that could better serve riders. More recently, the MTC began operating service formerly provided by the Richfield Bus Co. after that carrier discontinued transit operations in 1979.

In addition to increasing the amount of service, it was necessary to improve the quality. Commuters wanted faster, more direct service. In December 1972, the MTC met this need by beginning express bus service on I-35W. The new service provided several new routes on which buses made local stops in south Minneapolis and suburban communities in Hennepin and Dakota Counties and then entered the freeway, where they carried riders to downtown Minneapolis as quickly as private automobiles.

The freeway express service was immediately successful. In the first six months of operation, ridership grew 70 percent to 20,000 per week. In 1974, freeway express service was expanded to include all-day service on I-94 and I-35W. The I-35W service was further improved in 1974 with the construction of metered ramps that give buses preferential access to the freeway.





Special bus routes now take passengers to classes at the University of Minnesota, to sports events at Metropolitan Stadium and to the Minnesota Zoological Garden, and special mini-buses carry passengers on the Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis.

The service expansion peaked in 1975, when 4 million miles of service were added. There were smaller service expansions in 1976 and 1977, when the number of service miles reached 30.1 million compared to 18.6 million in 1971. The number of buses operating during rush hours peaked at 891 in 1976 compared to 520 in 1970.

This major expansion of service met the goal of increasing ridership. Ridership topped 80 million in 1975, a dramatic reversal of the downward trend that existed when the MTC began operating the system. However, continued expansion was becoming very expensive. New routes extended farther into the suburbs where population density was low and travel distances were great. Although ridership was growing rapidly, it did not keep pace with the amount of new service, and the number of passengers per mile steadily declined from 1972 through 1976.

By 1976, transit service was available to nearly every part of the metropolitan area that could be economically served by buses. After this period of rapid growth, the MTC became a more stable system. In 1977 and 1978, the MTC eliminated

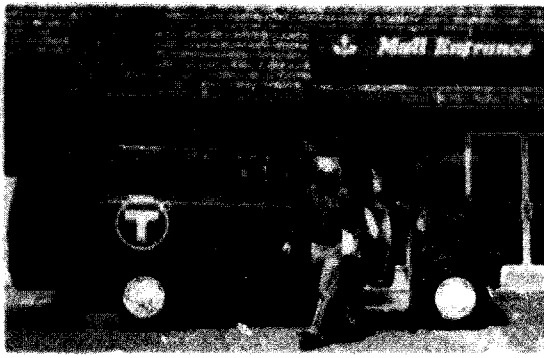
some service that was poorly patronized and began fine-tuning the system to better serve the needs of bus riders.

The small reduction in service did not mean an end of ridership growth. Riders had formerly been attracted to the system by new service, but they were now drawn to it by improved convenience. Ridership continued to grow, and the system became increasingly efficient by using techniques such as computerized schedule-making.

Gasoline shortages and increasing prices in 1979 caused the MTC to once again expand service. The number of rush hour buses grew from 817 in 1978 to 855 in 1979 as the MTC worked to relieve overcrowding caused by rapidly increasing ridership. Plans call for increasing this number to 888 by the end of 1980. Unlike the service expansion of the early 1970's, the new service in 1979 and 1980 was added to existing routes within an established service area.

After a year of rapid increases in both gasoline prices and ridership in 1979, trends moderated in 1980. It appears that ridership will return to the pattern of steady growth that has characterized the 10 years of MTC operations. The contrast between this decade of growing ridership and the 25-year downward trend that preceded it clearly shows the success of public ownership of the area's transit system.





## Special Services

In 1970, Twin City Lines was a bus company. But 10 years later the MTC is a full-service transit agency.

Soon after it acquired Twin City Lines, the MTC realized that not all transportation needs could be served by buses running on regular routes and schedules. It began experimenting with other forms of transit to serve people with special needs. After a decade of experiments and studies, the Twin Cities is now a national leader in providing special services.

The most successful of these services is wheelchair-accessible transportation for handicapped people. In 1976, the MTC started Project Mobility, which provided door-to-door transportation in fully accessible vehicles to residents of part of Minneapolis. Twelve small buses with wheelchair lifts were acquired for the one-year demonstration project. The demonstration was extremely successful, and the service carried 57,000 riders during the trial period.

Due to the success of Project Mobility and the community's need for this service, the MTC set goals for expanding handicapped transportation programs. As a first step in the expansion, the MTC enlarged the service area of Project Mobility in 1978 to serve a larger portion of Minneapolis. Then in 1979, the MTC worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the Metropolitan Council to form Metro Mobility, a program that provides a variety of services in a greatly enlarged area.

Metro Mobility includes Project Mobility service, which the MTC now operates throughout Minneapolis, St. Paul and many first ring suburbs. Shared-ride taxi cabs serve people in Minneapolis who cannot ride a regular bus but do not require a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, and nonprofit organizations offer service using accessible vans in several suburban areas. All of these services are coordinated through a special transportation center in St. Paul. As the service area has expanded, Metro Mobility ridership has grown quickly. In 1979, the program carried 177,000 passengers.



## Metro Mobility Ridership:

1977 — 55,937

1979 — 177,008



The MTC has also responded to the financial needs of senior citizens, youths and people with limited mobility. In 1971, senior citizens could ride for a special 10-cent fare during off-peak hours on Thursday. The program was expanded the next year to provide free fares for seniors during all off-peak hours. Due to rising costs, the fare was raised to 10 cents in 1979, but free rides became available again for low-income seniors in 1980. Through May 1980, the MTC had provided rides at free or reduced fares to more than 86 million senior citizens.

Special fares have also reduced transportation costs for youths under the age of 18 and people with limited mobility. In 1975, there was a brief experiment with free fares for youths, but the program was terminated following numerous complaints about the behavior of youths on the buses.

The MTC has tried several approaches to serving those people whose travel needs cannot economically be met with a regular bus. In 1971, it began a dial-a-ride service in South Minneapolis. The service used small buses to provide door-to-door transportation within the service area. The Commission decided, however, that service of this type would be more suitable in a lower density area that did not have a large amount of regular bus service.

To see whether a van service could work in a suburban setting, the MTC began the Community Centered Transit Service in White Bear Lake in 1977. At first the vans ran on regular routes and schedules, but the system later changed to dial-a-ride service. The service was terminated in 1980 due to very high subsidy levels.

Although the service in White Bear was not financially successful, it provided a substantial amount of information on the problems of operating a van service in the suburbs. The MTC put this information to use in 1980, when it started a van service in the Lake Minnetonka area. The service, which is known as the TonkaMobile, provides subscription service for commuters and circulation service during off-peak hours.

The MTC has also promoted the use of carpools and vanpools for people who cannot commute to work by bus. In 1977, the MTC developed the Share-A-Ride program. Share-A-Ride works with local employers to present their employees with the alternatives of bus riding, carpooling and vanpooling. The program became particularly popular during the fuel shortages in 1979, when the number of Share-A-Ride vanpools increased from 30 to 106 and the number of carpool references tripled. Although at first the program was partially operated under contract by a nonprofit organization, it has now become an integral part of the MTC.

Special services will continue to play an important role in the future of the MTC. As fuel supplies grow smaller it will become increasingly vital to serve the community's full range of transportation needs whether with buses, vans, sharing rides in the private automobile or perhaps some form of light rail transit.



## Capital Program

When the MTC acquired Twin City Lines, it inherited a fleet of aging buses and three turn-of-the-century garages. When the MTC began operating the old buses on September 19, 1970, new logos were the only indication that the area's transit system had come under public ownership. But plans had already been made to replace this worn-out equipment with modern buses and to expand the fleet so that transit service could be extended to new areas.

The first priority was to replace the existing bus fleet, which had an average age of 15 years. In December 1970, only three months after it had acquired the system, the MTC awarded a contract for the purchase of 93 new air-conditioned buses. Within five years, it purchased more than 600 buses, which made it possible both to provide existing riders with modern equipment and to attract new riders by extending service into the suburbs.

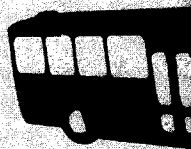
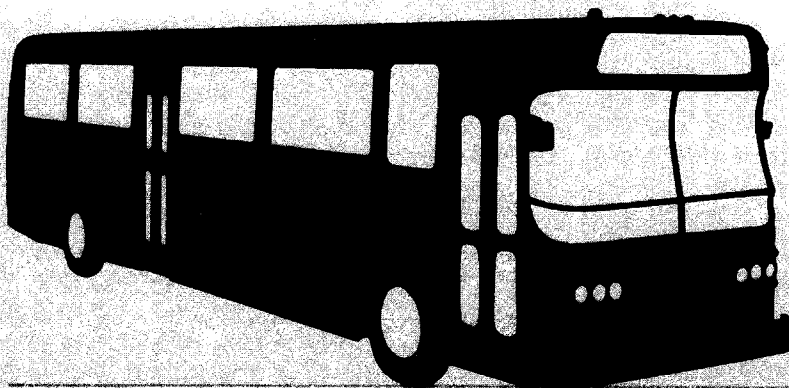
In the last decade, a total of 949 new full-sized buses have been purchased. In addition, the MTC has bought 11 vans for use in dial-a-ride demonstrations, 16 small buses for downtown circulation service, 30 fully-accessible small buses for providing service to handicapped people and 20 large articulated buses to increase capacity on heavily traveled routes. As a result of these purchases, the average age of the MTC fleet has been reduced from 15 years in 1970 to only six years in 1980.

Although most of the old buses were sold as the MTC replaced the fleet, more than 100 of them were stored to meet future needs. When ridership began to grow very quickly in 1979 and buses became overcrowded, the MTC's storage fleet helped it meet the demand for transit service. The MTC took 60 buses out of storage, restored them to operating condition and placed them into service.

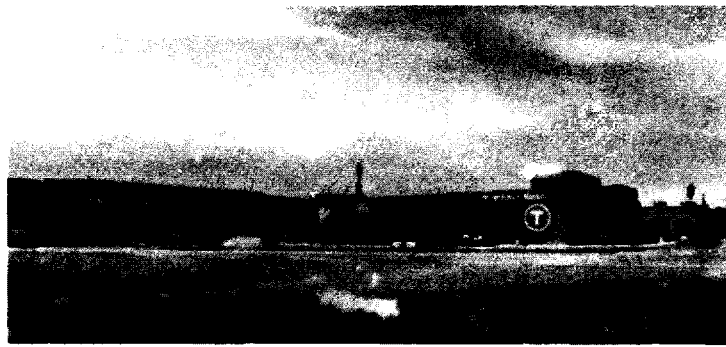
In addition to providing passengers with more buses, the MTC has tried to make it more comfortable to wait for the bus. Less than one month after acquiring Twin City Lines, the first prototype passenger waiting shelter was installed in Columbia Heights. In the last 10 years, more than 600 shelters have been built throughout the metropolitan area.

Protecting its fleet from the severe Minnesota winters has also been a concern of the MTC. The garages obtained from Twin City Lines were inadequate to house the rapidly expanding bus fleet. In 1975, the MTC acquired Shingle Creek Garage in Brooklyn Center, its first suburban facility. The garage was originally built to be a warehouse, and in 1979, the MTC began remodeling the facility to make it an efficient bus garage.

In 1976, the MTC began planning for a new garage in the south suburban area to help ease space problems. After neighborhood opposition developed to a proposed garage site in Bloomington, the MTC decided to build the facility on land owned by the Metropolitan Airports Commission.







near Cedar Avenue and I-494. Construction of the 200-bus garage began in 1979 and it will be dedicated September 18, 1980, the 10th anniversary of public ownership of the bus system. It is the first building that the MTC has designed and constructed.

Planning is now being conducted for additional garages that will be needed in the 1980's as well as renovation of the existing facilities.

In addition to needing storage space for its larger bus fleet, the MTC needed a facility to properly maintain the buses. Overhaul facilities were located at the Snelling Garage in St. Paul, but the equipment was becoming obsolete and the space was designed for a bus fleet about half the size of the current fleet. In 1979, construction began on a modern central shops facility that will handle major maintenance on the growing fleet. The facility, which is located in the Midway area of St. Paul, will begin operation in 1981.

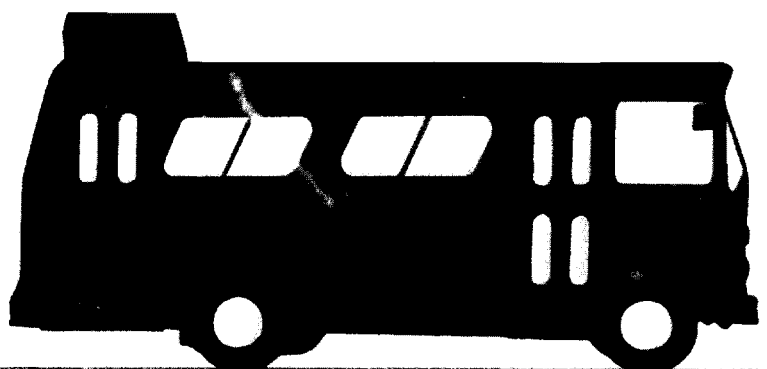
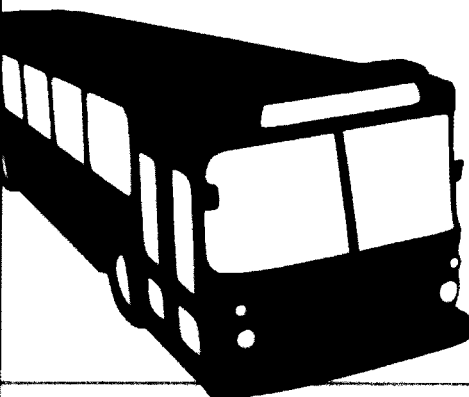
The MTC is also working with the City of Minneapolis on plans for a layover facility in downtown. The facility will remove buses from downtown streets during layover and thus reduce traffic congestion and air and noise pollution. It will be connected to the skyway system, which will allow passengers to catch afternoon buses without waiting on cold and windy street corners.

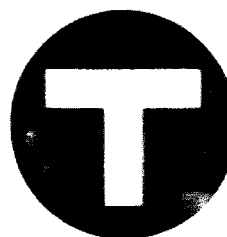
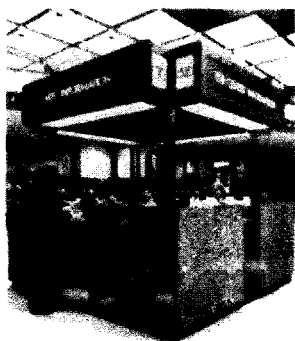
Another part of the capital program has made a significant contribution to improving bus operations. A computer-assisted radio system links all of the MTC's vehicles and garages to a control center at the Nicollet Garage. The system, which is one of the most sophisticated of its kind, enables the MTC to respond quickly to scheduling problems, detours, accidents, breakdowns and medical emergencies. Installation of the system was completed in 1978, and it now handles about 1,000 transactions each day.

Other parts of the capital program have helped make bus riding easier and more convenient. One of these is park-and-ride lots. The MTC has improved the three lots that it inherited from Twin City Lines and is working on four new lots. It has also contracted with more than 100 churches, shopping centers, schools and other facilities so that people who do not live near a route may park their cars free during the day and use buses, carpools or vanpools.

The MTC has also made bus riding easier by purchasing more than 14,000 of the familiar red bus stop signs. The signs have helped riders find the nearest bus stop and informed potential riders that service is available in their area.

These capital expenditures have been vital to improving the quality and quantity of transit service in the Twin Cities. In the 1980's the MTC will continue to make the investment that is needed to maintain and upgrade the system that it has built during the last decade.





**METROPOLITAN  
TRANSIT  
COMMISSION**

**We're getting there.**

## Marketing

**"We're Getting There."**

That was the first advertising campaign that the MTC employed after it acquired Twin City Lines 10 years ago. The theme was growth and change. The MTC looked at the condition of the area's transit system and concluded that it wasn't what it should be. The future was in sight, but it would take some time and understanding from the community while the changes took place.

Since then the MTC has not only greatly improved transit service but has become an industry leader in consumer marketing. The marketing program has contributed to increasing ridership by providing information to riders and developing programs that afford the utmost in rider comfort, convenience and economy.

In the early years when the MTC was still "getting there," the emphasis was on informing the public about the new service that was becoming available. Advertising told about the substantial improvements being made in the transit system and encouraged people to try the new service in their neighborhood.

By 1974, the MTC was able to say that service was improved enough to compete with the automobile and dubbed its new marketing campaign "The Greater Metropolitan Carpool." Stressing the idea that mass transit is first class in affordability and efficiency, an MTC bus was painted to resemble a Duesenberg.

As the transit system matured and the emphasis changed from service expansion to service refinement, the comparison with the automobile was carried one step further. "The OughtaMobile" campaign, which began in 1976, placed the bus in direct competition with the automobile and emphasized the growing convenience of transit service.

An important part of making transit service convenient has been providing information to bus riders. After the acquisition of Twin City Lines, the MTC acted quickly to improve the Transit Information Center, and the number of operators has almost quadrupled since 1970. It is estimated that since 1974, when records of incoming calls were first kept, 9 million callers have received help from the center. The center will soon install a computer system that will enable it to handle a much larger volume of calls.





Information on routes, schedules and fares is also available from the MTC Information and Sales booths in the IDS Crystal Court in Minneapolis and the Northwestern Skyway Building in St. Paul. The St. Paul booth will move to Town Square in October 1980. A traveling information booth is furnished on request to area education and employment centers where large groups of riders need specialized details about commuting to and from their given locations.

Rider reference materials have also been improved over the decade. Handy, color-coded pocket schedules displaying maps of individual bus routes are available at hundreds of business, recreation and shopping locations. A complete system map and route guide is also available.

Making transit convenient also meant changing the way in which fares were paid. The problems of exact change can now be completely avoided by using one of a wide range of prepaid fare items. The MTC offers tokens, 10-ride commuter tickets, monthly All You Can Ride cards and weekend passes.

The monthly pass has been particularly successful, and about 33,000 are sold each month. About 15,000 pass buyers have the ultimate in convenience; they buy their passes through a payroll deduction program named The Company OughtaMobile. Other bus riders can buy their passes at more than 90 area stores, banks and other outlets.

The OughtaMobile campaign has been particularly adaptable to special circumstances. In 1979, it was used as part of a "Welcome to the Energy Crunch" campaign that told riders what the MTC was doing to relieve over-crowding and asked them to help the situation by traveling during the less crowded off-peak hours. For the van service in the Lake Minnetonka area, The OughtaMobile became The TonkaMobile and showed the family tie between the small vans and the MTC's large buses. The OughtaMobile theme has also been used for target marketing of routes that have extra capacity.

Marketing programs have also successfully reached special groups. An intensive marketing effort for the expanded Metro Mobility service helped produce ridership gains far beyond projections. The program used newspaper advertising, public service announcements on radio and television and a speakers bureau.

MTC marketing campaigns have won numerous national awards. In 1976, "The Greater Metropolitan Car Pool" was designated as a Horizons on Display project by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission. The Horizons program recognized 200 programs and projects developed to improve community life. More recent campaigns have been recognized by the New York Chapter of the American Marketing Association, the Advertising Federation of Minnesota and Bus Ride magazine.

The success of the MTC's marketing program can be measured not only by ridership growth and awards but also by the satisfaction of bus riders. A recent consumer study found that 86 percent of MTC riders said they were either mostly or completely satisfied with the service while only 2.6 percent said they were not at all satisfied. To maintain this high level of satisfaction during the next decade the MTC will continue to refine its services to better satisfy the needs of its passengers.





**"I liked your program that you put on about the MTC. I learned a whole bunch. I think the most important part was telling us about the rules on the bus and that buses don't waste gas."**

## Community Outreach

A major priority of the MTC has been to involve the community in planning transit service and to promote public awareness of transit.

Advisory committees have played a key role in the community outreach program. Hundreds of citizens have volunteered to study transit issues and offer recommendations to the MTC. Advisory committee members offer a wide range of expertise ranging from years of bus-riding experience to technical knowledge in areas related to transit.

Since 1970, the MTC has been one of the few transit systems in the country with a permanent citizens advisory committee. The Advisory Committee on Transit (ACT) has members from all parts of the metropolitan area who provide diverse viewpoints and varied backgrounds, which result in a good environment for an open exchange of ideas.

The monthly ACT meetings are more than brainstorming sessions. While the committee does discuss and analyze current transit issues, it also makes important recommendations many of which are subsequently adopted by the MTC.

ACT recommendations in the past 10 years have included ways to increase ridership and efficiency, Transit Thursday — a one-day large-scale promotion of public use of the buses in 1977, Downtown People Mover proposals, monthly and weekend passes, and new pocket schedules.

The Metropolitan Transit Committee for Elderly and Handicapped (MTC E&H) has made valuable contributions toward developing plans for handicapped transportation. Based on requirements of Section 504 regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that require the MTC to make its services accessible to handicapped and elderly persons, the MTC E&H has been reorganized and renamed the 504 Advisory Committee. While the name is different, the committee still has the responsibility to develop standards for evaluating the current system for accessibility and to set standards and help implement a transition plan to phase in more handicapped-accessible transportation.





The MTC has also used advisory committees for guidance on special projects. The largest of these was a series of 11 route ridership studies that began in 1973. The purpose of the studies was to identify ways to improve and upgrade bus operations within specific geographical areas. Citizens from each of the areas volunteered their time to work on the project, and a high percentage of the studies' recommendations were implemented during the next several years.

Other MTC advisory committees have included those that helped plan and implement the van service demonstrations in the White Bear Lake and Lake Minnetonka areas.

The MTC speakers bureau has been another method of reaching out to the community. Transit commissioners, ACT members and the MTC staff have discussed transit issues with neighborhood groups, service clubs, schools and colleges throughout the metropolitan area. Thousands of citizens have heard presentations outlining the present and future of transit in the Twin Cities. Many others have heard MTC officials discuss transit issues on radio and television programs.

In 1979, the MTC expanded its outreach program to include fifth and sixth grade students. A transit education program named Operation Adventure acquaints the students with transit and bus safety through an educational slide program and lecture. It was so popular that a similar program was developed for adult groups who have special needs, such as refugees with a limited knowledge of English.

Other outreach programs, including magazines, newsletters and information in the local news media, have helped keep the public informed about transit issues in the community.

The MTC has also made a special effort to work with minority communities in the Twin Cities through an affirmative action program and a Minority Owned Business Enterprises (MOBE) program. The affirmative action program has worked to ensure that minorities and women have opportunities for employment and career advancement at the MTC. The MOBE program has been successful in increasing the amount of goods and services purchased from minority businesses.

The MTC will continue planning for its future, placing a high priority on involving citizens of the metropolitan area, who are the real owners of the transit system.





## Finances

The financial problems of providing transit service were one of the major factors that led to public ownership of the bus system.

As people moved to suburbs and bought more cars during the 1950's, transit ridership declined. But the cost of providing service increased. Since Twin City Lines was a private company with no subsidies, it increased fares and reduced service to cope with rising costs. This, in turn, further reduced ridership and revenue. The cycle reached bottom in 1969, when wage increases granted as part of a strike settlement required expenditures of nearly three times the company's profit margin. Within a year, the MTC acquired the system through condemnation proceedings.

The major goal of the MTC was to break the downward ridership trend. To do this, it reversed the old cycle; it expanded service and stabilized fares. The result was a decade of increasing ridership. To accomplish this growth, the region and the state had to change their attitude toward transit service. Transit could no longer be viewed as a profit-making enterprise. Instead, it was a public service that would require an increasing public financial commitment.

Even before the MTC acquired Twin City Lines, the federal government had made a substantial commitment to the system. In June 1970, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration awarded the MTC a capital grant of up to \$9.7 million to purchase and improve the bus operation. This grant enabled the MTC to acquire the system and begin replacing the aging bus fleet.

Although the federal grant made some capital funds available, it was apparent that more money was needed for bus operations and for the local share of capital expenditures. Other than fares, the only major source of operating funds was a \$1 wheelage tax on each car in the metropolitan area. In 1971, the MTC concluded in its annual report that if it were forced to operate entirely from the farebox and other existing revenues, "the impact on ridership, and on transit for the Twin Cities as a whole, would be disastrous."

The wheelage tax was ruled unconstitutional, and the 1971 session of the Minnesota Legislature authorized the MTC to levy a property tax in the newly-established transit taxing district, which was defined as the incorporated urbanized municipalities in the metropolitan area. The tax yielded about \$5 million per year, which was a substantial increase over the wheelage tax. At the same time, the MTC was authorized to levy up to an additional \$3 million to fund its capital program.

As service expanded and the base fare remained at 30 cents, the gap between operating costs and farebox revenue grew. By 1974, when fuel prices first increased greatly, the farebox provided only 53 percent of the operating cost. The property tax was the only significant source of outside revenue. However, the Legislature made an important change in MTC financing when it provided a \$4.5 million block grant for 1974.

The 1975 legislative session decided to reduce the MTC's reliance on the property tax. It reduced the maximum property tax levy and the size of the transit taxing district but made up the difference through an appropriation from state revenues. The state block grant from the 1975-1977 biennium was \$24 million.

At the same time, federal operating assistance became a major source of outside revenue. The federal government provided the MTC with more than \$9 million in operating grants in 1975, and these annual grants continue to play an important role in financing bus operations.



## Source of funds for operating regular transit service — 1980:

Operating revenues	44%
Property tax	21%
State performance funding	19%
Federal operating assistance	16%

By 1977, the farebox provided only one-third of the operating costs, and the Legislature became increasingly concerned about the efficiency and growing cost of the bus system. It devised a new funding system that was intended to reward the MTC for improving its efficiency. The system is called performance funding, and it pays the MTC a set total subsidy for each passenger it carries.

Performance funding went into effect in 1978. Because the MTC had been operating a higher per passenger subsidy than that provided by the program, it eliminated about six percent of its least productive service in late 1977 and early 1978.

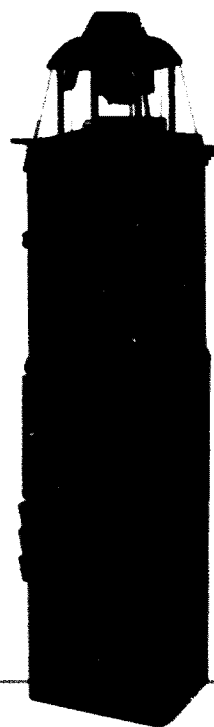
When it developed the performance funding system, the Legislature eliminated block grants for the MTC. In addition to performance funding, the Legislature set up a social fares program to reimburse the MTC for carrying senior citizens, youths and people with limited mobility at reduced fares. It also provided money for Project Mobility, other paratransit programs and administration. The state appropriations for all MTC programs for the 1977-1979 biennium totaled \$30.5 million.

In 1979, it became apparent that bus riders would have to share in the increasing costs of operating the transit system. The base fare had remained at 30 cents for almost 10 years, while the price of almost all other goods and services — and particularly the cost of operating an automobile — had increased substantially. On July 1, 1979, the MTC implemented a 10-cent fare increase, the first general increase in its history.

In the last half of 1979, costs escalated much faster than had been projected. Gasoline shortages and price increases caused more people to become bus riders. The new riders generated increased fare revenue, but they also forced the MTC to add service to relieve overcrowding. The cost of the new service, increased diesel fuel prices and effects of inflation combined to cause the MTC financial difficulties.

The MTC considered a second fare increase in late 1979 but decided to postpone it until the 1980 legislative session had a chance to review the situation. The Commission also decided to develop a fare policy that would provide guidelines for considering future increases. In February 1980, it adopted a policy that calls for bus revenues to pay 40 to 45 percent of the cost of providing bus service and for these revenues plus the property tax to pay 60 to 65 percent of the costs. For the purpose of this policy, bus revenues consist primarily of farebox revenue and social fare reimbursements.

Following its new fare policy, the Commission increased the base fare to 50 cents on April 1, 1980. The 1980 session of the Legislature provided the MTC with an additional \$11.5 million, which brought the total state appropriation for the 1979-1981 biennium to \$45 million. Based on current cost projections, this additional appropriation should be sufficient to finance operations until the end of the biennium in June 1981.





## Planning

Even before the MTC began to operate the area's bus system, it was planning for the transit system of the future.

The agency's long-range planning program began in 1968 with a study that led to the family of vehicles concept for providing transit service. The concept, which was part of a policy statement called *Transit in Transportation*, included four elements for meeting different transportation needs: fixed guideway service in high demand corridors, express bus service, local and feeder bus service and circulation systems within major centers.

The plans for expanded express and local bus service were extremely successful as evidenced by the substantial service improvements made in the last 10 years. However, the proposals for fixed guideway and circulation systems have been the subjects of transit debates for almost a decade.

In 1972, the MTC adopted a Transit Development Program that mapped a strategy for the development of transit facilities in the area. The program identified short-range, intermediate and long-range actions required to provide a high level of transit service, and it was intended to serve as a guide in implementing the family of vehicles concept.

The short-range and intermediate plans produced many of the amenities now enjoyed by MTC riders, e.g. shelters, signs and park-and-ride lots. But the focus of the long-range program was an electrified fixed guideway system of intermediate capacity. It featured full automation, off-line stations and short intervals between vehicles carrying up to 40 passengers.

The fixed guideway system proposed by the MTC became the subject of a regional debate on the future of transit in the Twin Cities. The Metropolitan Council stated that the MTC's proposed system was not suited to the Twin Cities and instead the area should develop a system of exclusive busways. State statutes on the planning roles of the two agencies were not clearly defined until passage of the Metropolitan Reorganization Act in 1974. That legislation gave the Council several important responsibilities, including the development of a general description of transit facilities and their service areas.

The 1974 session of the Minnesota Legislature also asked for a study of small-vehicle systems. The MTC completed that study in 1975 and recommended that a fixed guideway system be the basic element of a transit system in the metropolitan area and that an alternatives analysis be conducted on the best type of guideway system to meet regional transportation needs.

The Legislature took no action on the small vehicle study, and the Metropolitan Council adopted policies that restricted fixed guideway transit in the area. As a result, planning for this type of system ceased.

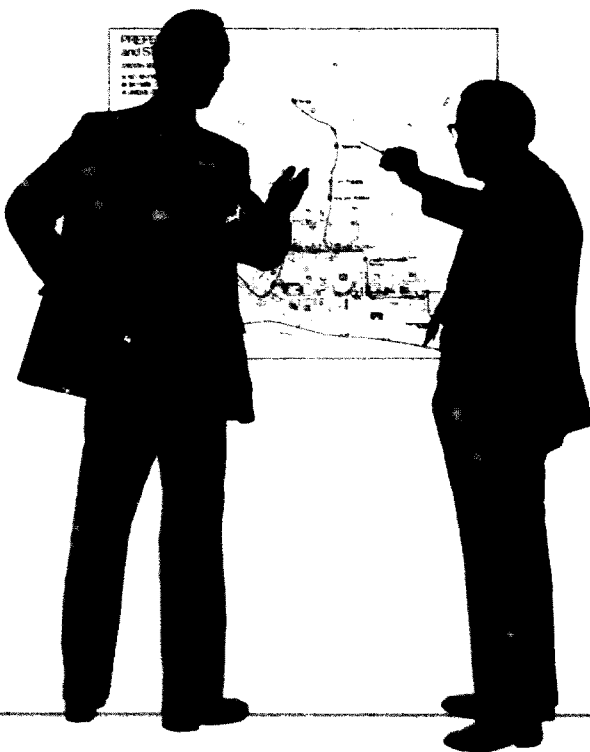
In 1978, however, interest in a fixed guideway system began to grow again. The Advisory Committee on Transit recommended that the region seriously consider whether a light rail transit (LRT) system would be feasible. In 1980, the Legislature directed the Metropolitan Council to conduct a feasibility study of LRT, and the MTC is one of several agencies participating in this study. The Council is also reassessing its Transportation Policy Plan and will soon determine whether its policies on fixed guideway systems should be revised.





Since 1976, the MTC has also been involved in planning for a different type of transit system — a downtown people mover (DPM) in St. Paul. The federal government selected St. Paul as one of four sites for a DPM demonstration. The system, which is often described as a horizontal elevator, would have small automated vehicles circulating within the downtown and to adjoining activity centers such as the Capitol complex.

The results of a feasibility study of the DPM were approved by the MTC, the City of St. Paul, the Metropolitan Council and an interagency steering committee in 1978. However, the 1979 session of the Legislature did not approve the project, which precluded the MTC's participation in funding the DPM construction, and the proposal appeared dead. Later, alternative funding proposals developed, and the City of St. Paul is now deciding whether to build the DPM without a financial contribution from the MTC.



Not all MTC planning efforts have been directed toward non-bus transit. An example of planning for improved bus service is the 11 route ridership studies that identified the transit needs of geographical areas and made recommendations for meeting them. The studies were completed in 1977 and resulted in substantial service improvements. Another recent example is the Transportation Development Program, which was adopted in 1978. The TDP is a five-year plan that describes how the MTC intends to implement the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan. It calls for continued improvements in bus service and forecasts increased ridership.

The MTC received national attention in 1978 as one of the first transit agencies to prepare a contingency plan for petroleum emergencies. The plan details steps to gain transit and paratransit capacity in the event of a sudden petroleum emergency.

The MTC is also actively involved in an inter-agency transportation planning program. This involvement, as well as review of highway and land development plans and proposals, helps the MTC coordinate its planning and engineering activities with those of Mn/DOT, the Metropolitan Council, the seven metropolitan counties and the municipalities.

These plans for the future are a recognition that although the MTC "got there" in the last 10 years, it must keep moving ahead during the next decade to provide the Twin Cities with even better transit service. That is why the theme for this 10th anniversary celebration is "Grow on with MTC. The best is yet to be."

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