

EVALUATING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

F. Norman Hill, San Antonio Transit System

FROM the operator's perspective, the evaluation criteria for goals, objectives, and responsibilities must be designed to permit innovation in organization structure, facilities, operating procedures and practices, and service promotion, merchandising, and marketing.

The operator's perspective includes three major areas of concern: organization, facilities, and operations. These are described in Table 1.

Extensive material regarding standards for evaluating route potential and trial operation was presented at the Henniker conference on issues in public transportation (1). The reader should refer to that material for detailed information.

REFERENCE

1. Issues in Public Transportation. TRB Special Report 144, 1974, pp. 63-72.

Table 1. Evaluation criteria from the operator's perspective.

Area of Concern	Description
I. Organization	
A. Financial	Evaluation of financial position of the transit operation, its obligations, ownership (municipal or private), and impact of federal funding programs (capital grants, demonstration grants, and research grants, and the length of term of the grant), review of objectives and goals, and ultimate financial result
B. Management	Evaluation as to whether a straight-line organization is the most effective type of transit organization and assignment of responsibilities and authority to respective line organization positions
C. Personnel	Evaluation of personnel (bus operators, mechanics, and management) with particular importance given to intelligence, capabilities, and talents of management persons who will have full responsibility for key decisions and for providing first-class, acceptable service to the community
D. Relations	Evaluation of relations with transit interests, the city, the state, and the federal authorities and their respective programs
II. Facilities	
A. Buildings	Evaluation of serviceability and location of buildings in relation to their function for efficiency of administrative, maintenance, and operational units
B. Bus storage yard	Evaluation of location of bus storage yard with regard to point of entry of scheduled service into route structure to provide minimum deadhead mileage in relation to CBD for economy, efficiency, and effectiveness
C. Equipment and vehicles	Evaluation of requirements with regard to size of vehicles, seating capacity, maneuverability (length, width, power), schedule maintenance, and environmental aspects
III. Operations	
A. Promotion, merchandising, and marketing	Goals and program objectives to create an exciting image, a marketing program attractive to business people, shoppers, students, and special rider groups (e.g., senior citizens), a program to excite news media, public relations people, employees, and patrons
B. Routes and schedules	Thorough review of existing routing along with a study of schedule requirements and demands from which evaluation of operating standards may be made affecting regular services, special services, and chartered services; evaluation as to whether a 60-day minimum trial period will determine the acceptability and use of new services or routing or whether longer trial periods would be more practical
C. Fare structures	Evaluation of financial requirements of the operating system, with the end point being to establish the lowest practical and productive fare structure suitable to the community and the transit operation
D. Labor	Evaluation of employment standards, training, instruction, and follow-up training and instruction programs, especially with hourly paid employees