

A Long Track: Hiawatha Avenue, Minneapolis

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Transportation corridors in many areas of the United States have been under study for many years. The Hiawatha Avenue corridor, linking downtown Minneapolis with the airport, has been studied since the late 1950s, and the current Environmental Impact Statement/Alternatives Analysis is the third major period of examination. The appointment of citizen members to a task force and agency members to a technical committee has produced unusual acceptance of the results. The roles of citizens, agencies, and the private sector are described and their impacts evaluated. This paper emphasizes the relationship of transportation design, development type, and public policies and discusses the role each played in arriving at an acceptable solution. It identifies the lessons learned and their possible adaptation to use by others.

Hiawatha Avenue (Minnesota Trunk Highway 55) is a substandard, at-grade, 40-ft-wide, arterial roadway running between downtown Minneapolis and the International Airport, a distance of 6 miles. The history of planning for the upgrading of Hiawatha Avenue extends over 20 years. Since 1963 there have been three major efforts to resolve the transportation issues, including the effort described here. The major events of this period are included in Table 1.

STUDY ORGANIZATION

The success of any project depends on its organization. Because improvements to Hiawatha Avenue could affect such a variety of areas—downtown, residential areas, neighborhood businesses, parkland, and the International Airport—careful consideration was given to the Hiawatha Avenue Study's organization and its determination process. The study's organization is shown in Figure 1.

The history of the corridor and the previous planning within the area suggested the structure of the study. The structure had to be clear to allow involvement and provide a means to receive early warning of possible misunderstandings and conflicts. There are four formal decision-making groups for the Hiawatha Avenue Location and Design Study: the City of Minneapolis Policy Board; the Study Management Team; the Hiawatha Avenue Task Force; and the Hiawatha Avenue Technical Committee. Each group is described below.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation appointed the City of Minneapolis the lead agency for the study. Final approval of the study's formal recommendations rests with the City Policy Board, comprised of the Mayor, the City Council President, and the Transportation and Property Services Committee Chairman.

The City Engineer, the City Planner, and the Project Manager manage the study, assisted by the consulting firm of BRW, Inc. Three subconsultants are also involved in the project. The Project Manager and the consultants represent the Study Management Team and work directly with the Hiawatha Avenue Task Force and the Technical Committee. The Project Manager also meets frequently with the City Engineer, the City Planner, and the Property Services Committee Chairman to inform them of the study's progress and receive their comments and recommendations. This provides a communication path for all levels of the study's participants.

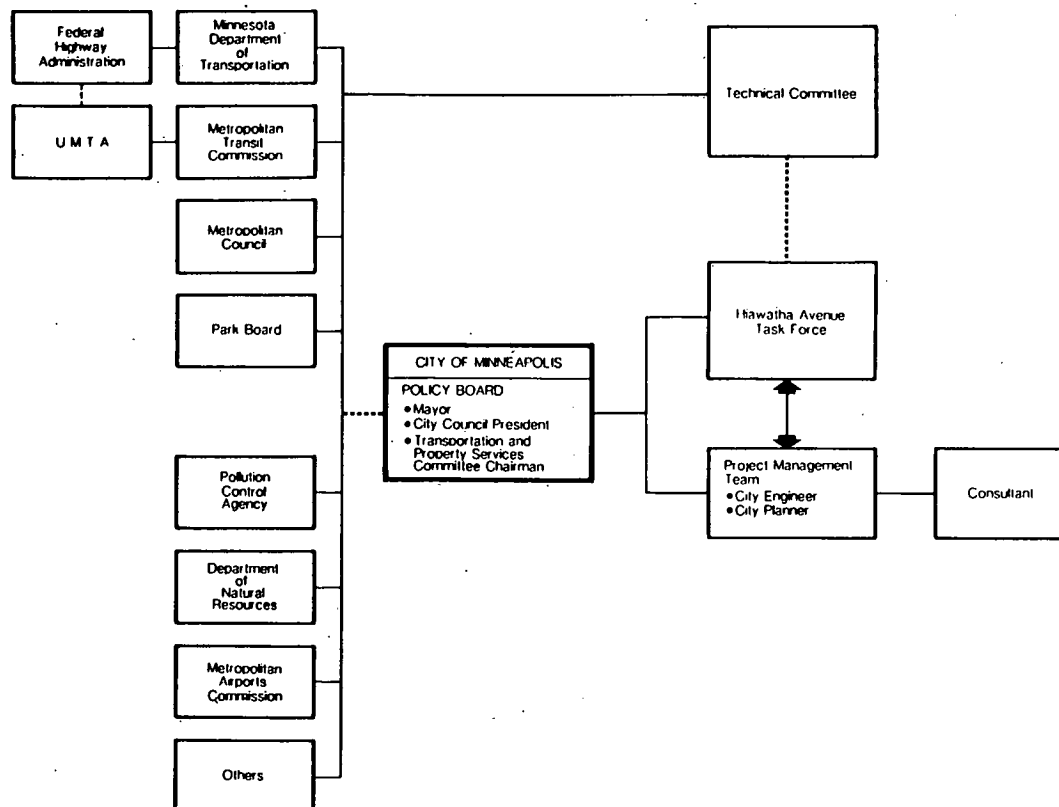
The Hiawatha Avenue Task Force (HATF) was established by a City Council resolution of September 29, 1978. HATF's purpose is to recommend to the city a transportation solution for the Hiawatha Avenue corridor. The 28 delegates, alternates, and the Chairperson all represent neighborhoods, businesses, and labor organizations in

Table 1. History of Hiawatha Avenue planning.

Year	Event
Prior to 1960	Eighteen studies performed on various locations and design alternatives for a major roadway in south Minneapolis.
1963	State legislation passed enabling city to issue bonds and advance \$10 million to the state to acquire right-of-way and for construction of TH 55 in Hiawatha corridor.
1967	State prepared Alternative Route Study Report that addressed three alternatives: route through Minnehaha Park, route west of the park, and route through the park with a tunnel between Crosby Place and 42nd Avenue. Minnesota Highway Commissioner's right of eminent domain over lands of the Park Board was upheld by the State Supreme Court.
1972	Environmental Impact Statement for TH 55 rejected by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) because it did not satisfy federal requirements.
1974	Minneapolis City Council rescinded all previous plan approvals for the Hiawatha Avenue project. U.S. Public Law 93-643 authorized \$53 million in federal funds to be appropriated for the reconstruction of Highway 55 from Franklin Avenue to CSAH 62 (Crosstown Highway) as a demonstration project. The federal share of the total project cost was specified to be 90 percent.
1975	Minneapolis City Council appointed Hiawatha Design Advisory Committee. After numerous meetings and considerations, this committee recommended building an arterial roadway with land reserved for transit. Later minority reports filed with the City Council.
1978	A total of \$2.25 million was appropriated in the 1978 Federal Appropriations Act for preliminary engineering studies for reconstruction of TH 55 between Franklin Avenue and 59th Street. Minneapolis City Council disbanded Hiawatha Design Advisory Committee and established the Hiawatha Avenue Task Force to formulate recommendations and provide advice and assistance to the City of Minneapolis in its role as lead agency for the project.

the corridor area. Nine HATF members are women, 19 are men. Their ages range from 23 to 73; their occupations include engineer, homemaker, and laborer. Over half the delegates and alternates represent their neighborhood councils; nearly one-fifth represent area businesses; and

Figure 1. Study structure.



one-fifth represent labor; the others are at-large representatives. The HATF evaluates the information and alternatives provided by the study's staff, considers proposals offered by members of the community attending task force and public meetings, and then makes recommendations and decisions regarding possible transportation improvements to Hiawatha Avenue.

The Technical Committee members represent city, metropolitan area, state, and federal agencies. The committee reviews the recommendations and decisions made by HATF with respect to each agency's policies.

The recommendations and decisions of HATF and the Technical Committee are documented and presented to the Transportation and Property Services Committee of the City Council for approval. Throughout the study, participating agencies respond to recommendations of the decisionmaking groups. The involvement of the participating agencies—Policy Board, Study Management Team, Task Force, and Technical Committee—and the approval process for the decisions has led to an acceptable recommended transportation system for the Hiawatha Avenue corridor.

COMPONENTS OF AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

During the planning process, the HATF concluded that the recommendation of a transportation solution only for the corridor did not constitute a complete implementation strategy. The task force felt that developmental impacts and public policy recommendations were required as well. Thus, the implementation strategy includes a preferred roadway, a preferred transit solution, recommended public policies, and a developmental impact statement. Each of these is discussed below.

Roadway/Transit Alternatives

Early in the study the task force and staff listed perceived roadway and transit options for Hiawatha Avenue; permutations of these options produced 120 alternatives. To

identify the preferred solution from among these, a 4-step scoping of the alternatives was used. Each of the steps, or "screens," addressed specific alternatives that could be compared at a particular level. A set of 30 goals and objectives prepared by task force members provided the major criteria for evaluating the alternatives being addressed. From the results of the scoping process, the task force selected five roadway and transit alternatives to be studied in detail in the EIS/AA. There were four recommended transit service improvement alternatives and one recommended roadway improvement alternative; when combined, they make up four separate "build" alternatives. The fifth recommendation for detailed study was the "no-build" alternative.

Listed below are the alternatives considered in the EIS/AA. Subalternatives (not shown) deal with treatment of the build alternatives through Minnehaha Park, LRT distribution in the Minneapolis central business district (CBD), and the LRT south terminus location under Alternative 4.

Alternative No. 1	Roadway: Four-lane at-grade arterial
	Transit: High occupancy vehicle lanes—at-grade
Alternative No. 2	Roadway: Four-lane at-grade arterial
	Transit: High occupancy vehicle lanes—grade separated
Alternative No. 3	Roadway: Four-lane at-grade arterial
	Transit: Improved bus service and facilities
Alternative No. 4	Roadway: Four-lane at-grade arterial
	Transit: Light rail transit (LRT) system
Alternative No. 5	Roadway: No improvement
	Transit: No improvement

Figures 2 through 5 give a conceptual illustration of each of the build alternatives.

Public Policy Options

For analysis purposes, three public policy options are defined that would result in different land use scenarios and population/employment levels within the Hiawatha corridor:

1. **No Public Sector Involvement Scenario.** This option implies that there would be no measurable local government assistance to facilitate development beyond the comprehensive planning process. The land use impact of this existing policy would be similar to the impacts previously associated with highway construction, without significant governmental assistance to facilitate development around interchanges.

2. **Limited Public Sector Involvement Scenario.** This approach refers to modest government participation in the development process in the form of limited policies to facilitate transit-oriented new construction. In this policy option the local government acts as an expeditor to facilitate development but is not directly involved in the development process; little or no capital investment is required from the government entity. This option represents the low-cost public policy option for local governments. Policy changes commonly associated with this scenario include comprehensive planning, special district and planned unit development zoning, and station area design standards and criteria. All require minimum public sector investment but create a more positive atmosphere for attracting developer interest.

3. **Active Public Sector Participation Scenario.** Substantial public sector participation involves strong governmental policies to improve and coordinate development of transportation improvement areas. These policies include, but are not limited to,

Figure 2. Alternative 1 concepts: 4-lane roadway with HOV lane at grade.

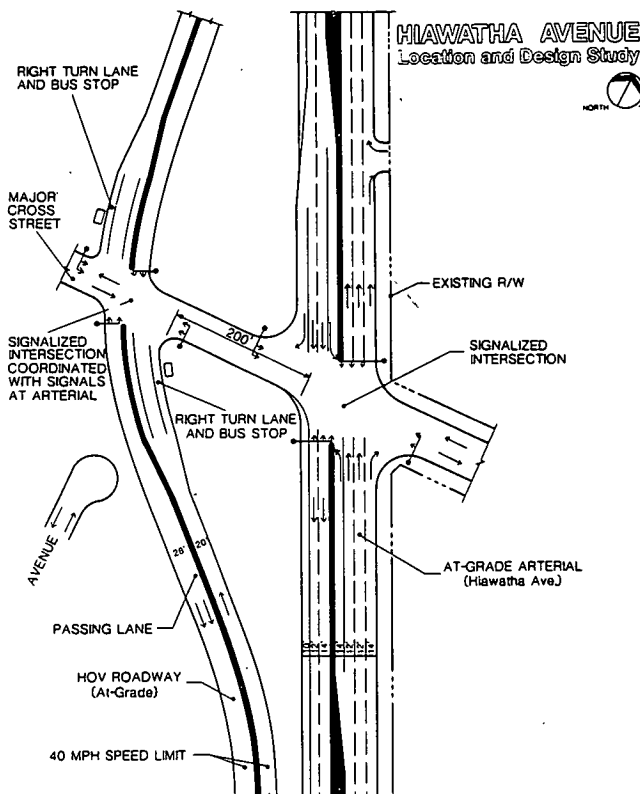


Figure 3. Alternative 2 concepts: 4-lane roadway with HOV grade-separated.

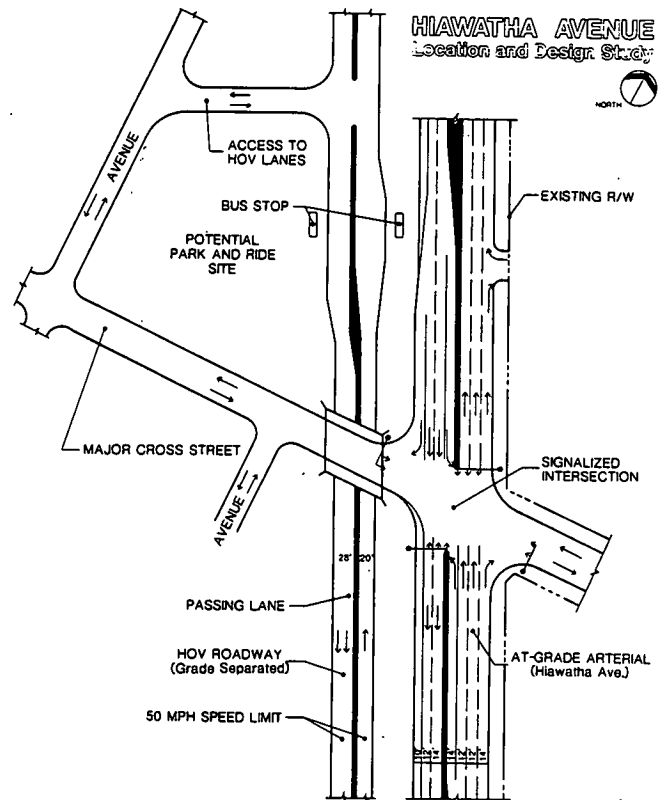
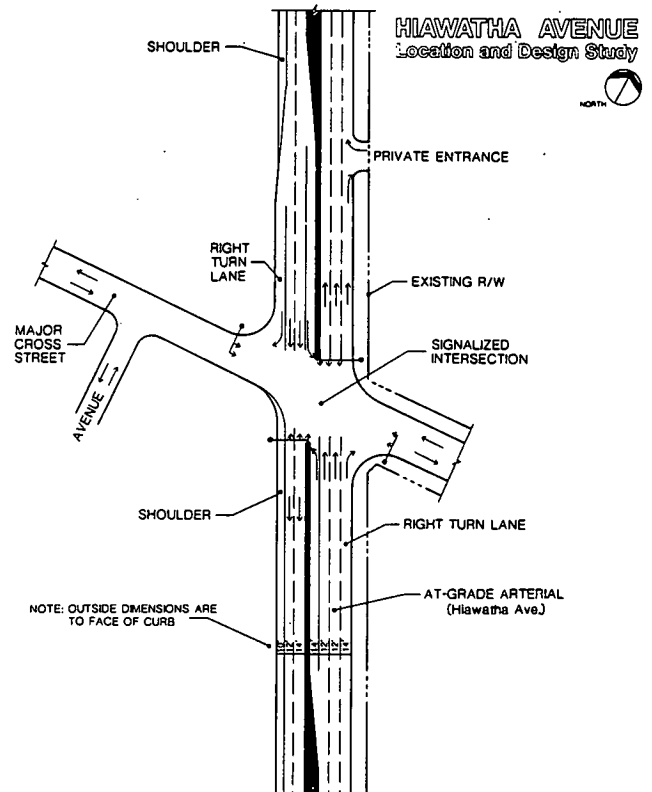


Figure 4. Alternative 3 concepts: 4-lane roadway.



- Supplementary purchase or condemnation of land;
- Tax increment financing;
- Equity participation;
- Institution of corridor development corporations;
- Property tax abatements; and
- Special assessment districts.

These policies require from the local jurisdictions financial and political commitments that provide significant incentive to potential private sector investors. Active involvement by the local government can help provide development impetus where minimal interest previously existed.

Figure 5. Alternative 4 concepts: 4-lane roadway with LRT partially at grade.

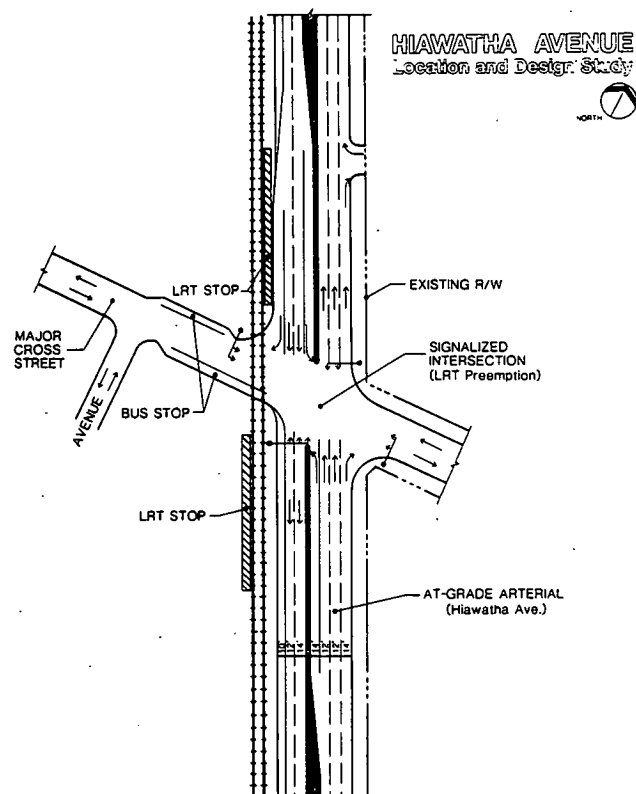


Table 2. Year 2000 employment estimates for Highway 55 watershed corridor.

Option	Alternative 5 (No Build)	Alternative 3 (Arterial)	Alternatives 1 & 2 (Arterial/HOV Lanes)	Alternative 4 (Arterial/LRT)
No public sector involvement	33 496	33 833	33 833	35 833
Percent change over no build		1.0	1.0	7.0
Limited public sector involvement	33 496	33 833	33 833	36 833
Percent change over no build		1.0	1.0	10.0
Substantial public sector involvement	33 496	33 833	35 833	39 833
Percent change over no build		1.0	7.0	18.9

Developmental Impact

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate projected impacts of the various transportation improvement and public policy options on Hiawatha corridor population and employment. Projections are provided for the year 2000.

Comparison of alternative projects shows that large incremental changes result from inclusion of major improvements in the transportation system and active governmental participation in the development around the transportation facilities. Population and employment increases estimated to result from the inclusion of these transportation improvements are typical of increases experienced or recently estimated in similar corridors in St. Louis, San Diego, Baltimore, and Portland. The increases are relatively modest and are likely to be concentrated in areas near the transit station or interchange. There are corridor locations with sufficient vacant land to facilitate this projected growth; however, development will require the public and private sectors to work together to take advantage of these potentials.

ROLE OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS IN PLANNING PROCESS

The role of each major project participant in the planning process is described in the following.

Hiawatha Avenue Task Force

The HATF has already been described. Its charge from the City Council is to develop a transportation recommendation for the corridor. It also serves as the direct link to the community.

The HATF has the highest public-interest rating of any group in the study. This is natural since the task force represents the people that live in the corridor. The attitude of the task force is that they are "tired of the lack of action for the past 20 years in the corridor, they want the roadway improved, and they want a long-range transit solution that will be a stimulant to help maintain a viable community."

Every decision of the task force has been unanimous; they have worked hard to resolve differences and to reach compromises. The chair and vice-chair have made presentations to the City Council, the Park Board, the Transportation Advisory Board, and numerous neighborhood groups. All general public meetings are run by the chairperson of the task force. The general attitude of the group is that they have worked hard, understood the issues, compro-

Table 3. Year 2000 population estimates for Highway 55 watershed corridor.

Option	Alternative 5 (No Build)	Alternative 3 (Arterial)	Alternatives 1 & 2 (Arterial/HOV Lanes)	Alternative 4 (Arterial/LRT)
No public sector involvement	71 991	72 991	72 991	77 491
Percent change over no build		1.4	1.4	7.6
Limited public sector involvement	71 991	72 991	73 891	78 491
Percent change over no build		1.4	2.6	9.0
Substantial public sector involvement	71 991	72 991	76 891	83 991
Percent change over no build		1.4	6.8	16.7

mised, and will present and lobby for the recommended transportation plan, land use plan, and public policies.

There would be no planning process without the task force; the process is designed around their needs. They have demonstrated the ability to make decisions; their remaining task is to present and "sell" their decision to the City Council and other approving bodies.

Hiawatha Avenue Technical Committee

The HATC is composed of representatives of the following public agencies: FHWA, UMTA, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council, Metropolitan Transit Commission, Metropolitan Airports Commission, Hennepin County, University of Minnesota, City of Bloomington, City of Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis Park Board.

The function of the HATC is to monitor the incremental decisions of the HTAF to ensure that they are consistent with the policies of the permitting and/or approving agencies. Thus, the focus has been to review the work of the task force and provide appropriate feedback. For example:

- Some members of the technical committee were reluctant to drop the freeway alternative but took no action, and results of the scoping process were accepted by all members of the technical committee.
- The original geometric design for the roadway portion of Hiawatha had an at-grade intersection between a county freeway (CR 62) at the southern end of the corridor and Hiawatha Avenue. The county wanted an interchange; after discussion, the design was changed to include an interchange.
- At the start of the study implementation of the LRT alternative was contrary to the policies of the Metro Council, and the staff obviously noted this condition. However, since the Council was studying LRT feasibility in the region, they did not object and, in fact, encouraged the study of LRT in the corridor.
- The UMTA representative expressed concern that no regional system plan had been completed and that funding might be a problem. This condition was recognized by the HATF.

To date the contribution of HATC members to the planning process has been positive. Suggested alterations to study results have all been incorporated. The real test of the contribution will come when the project is formally pre-

sented before each agency represented on the technical committee.

Mayor and Council of the City of Minneapolis

The majority of the elected officials of the City of Minneapolis did not participate in any of the events prior to the 1978 formation of the Hiawatha Avenue Task Force. The Mayor had limited involvement in activities before 1978.

City Council involvement was fairly low-key the past 3 years; the Mayor maintained a neutral position. Two aldermen who represent areas in the corridor showed some interest, mainly demonstrated by their monitoring of the study. The City Council viewed the study as important so that the corridor could be reconstructed and redeveloped. However, the council's discussion of LRT has not been enthusiastic. This feeling is primarily related to the cost of LRT and funding uncertainty and is reinforced by actions of the present national administration.

The involvement of the Mayor and City Council in the planning process has been controlled. They have listened, but played a limited role, predominantly reactive. They have not been specifically encouraging or discouraging.

Minneapolis Downtown Council/Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce

The Downtown Council (DTC) is an organization representing businesses located in the Minneapolis Central Business District (CBD). The greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce (C/C) represents businesses throughout the entire Minneapolis area. Each group has a committee that deals with transportation issues. In the past 2 years the C/C has increased its interest in the CBD and in its emphasis on transportation.

The DTC's stance was positive until mid-1981, when members became uneasy about LRT penetration into the CBD, and this attitude makes the possible acceptance of LRT more difficult. The DTC has been helpful in attempts to modify the fixed-guideway prohibition planning policy.

The C/C has been very helpful since it began the study of the transportation issues in 1980. It has quietly but vigorously pursued the idea of building a single LRT line to demonstrate its operational and financial capability and encouraged the Hennepin County Railroad Authority to continue its effort toward the construction of an LRT mode of transportation. It has assumed a coordinative role that should help Hiawatha and the area as it looks toward LRT.

Metropolitan Transit Commission

The MTC members are appointed by the Metro Council, which also approves the MTC budget and ensures that it is consistent with adopted regional policies. There are eight commissioners and a voting chairman appointed by the governor.

The MTC primary focus is operating the existing bus system efficiently; involvement in implementing an LRT line is not a high priority.

Federal Elected Officials

The study area is in the 5th Congressional District of Minnesota, so most interaction has been with that office. The two U.S. Senators and the representative of the 3rd Congressional District, which has the southern terminus, have also shown interest in the study.

The 5th District Congressman has given close attention to the study. He has had reservations about the value of LRT as a transit concept and concern about the costs of construction and the availability of funding. The other elected officials have expressed appreciation for the information, but await the results of the study and the community's desire before committing themselves to any action, although they all want to resolve a transportation issue that has been around for 20 years.

Federal Agencies

Several federal agencies are involved, but only UMTA and FHWA have been involved continuously.

UMTA's position reflects the federal government policy of "no new rail starts." This makes it difficult to ensure that the EIS will be acceptable, particularly the alternative analysis. When the study started, UMTA was an active participant; since the change in federal policy, however, communication has decreased. The FHWA has actively participated in the study. The local office is staffed by professionals who have helped by interpreting rules quickly and clearly. They encouraged UMTA to take

part in the study effort and helped the Minnesota DOT change a bridge design at 34th Avenue and I-494 to incorporate LRT if it became the recommended transit alternative.

The present administration's lack of clarity in the areas of alternative analysis and funding makes planning a more difficult and prolonged process.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Hiawatha Location and Design Study has taught the following valuable lessons:

- Make LRT part of the total development program. Implementing the Hiawatha corridor plan must include a land use development plan and agreement on appropriate public policies to carry out the program as well as the transportation alternative. Without them, the proposal to build LRT would not have been acceptable.
- Build a broad constituent base. Community support is needed to resolve the transportation issues in the corridor. Residents of the concerned neighborhoods, local businesses, labor, the downtown business community, and elected officials must be convinced of the value of the alternative selected.
- Let neighborhood HATF representatives present the plan. Neighborhood representatives make effective advocates. They can illustrate community understanding of the issues and give reasons for their recommendations.
- Present the plan when the right external conditions exist. Five years ago the plan would not have been accepted because of conflict with regional policies. Conditions for action are favorable now: the problem has been around "too long"; part of Minneapolis is ready for significant redevelopment; and jobs and housing are important issues in the city.

Leverage--A Proposal for the Federal Role in Public Urban Transit

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The purpose of this paper is to outline the federal government's role in transit—i.e., leverage. Federal involvement in transit dating back to the early 1900s is examined to show how earlier policies contributed to the problems faced by transit operators today. The paper suggests that the federal government change its role from grantor to investor and thus leverage its funding so that the net economic benefit to the nation is greater than the federal investment and greater than if there were no federal involvement at all.

The current administration in Washington has made drastic changes in funding for urban mass transit. Its policies are based on two major philosophies: the superiority of the free market and the decentralization of power from Washington to state and local governments. Both philosophies contradicted the current system of federal spending on mass transit.

Government subsidy to industry is contrary to the free market philosophy: businesses should be run without government intervention; the nation's transit companies once were profitable enterprises and should remain so; transit should continue to operate only on routes where a profit can still be made. Although the fundamental idea—to reduce an unwieldy, inefficient central government—is sound, we believe that this philosophy to public transit is naive and ill advised.

This paper outlines a role in transit that clearly belongs to the federal government—i.e., leverage. It discusses problems faced by transit operators today caused by federal policies and programs that interfered with financing mechanisms, devastated the supply industry, and created inflation in the cost of labor, construction, and procurement. The federal government has been involved in the transit industry since the early days of the street-railroad industry, and before its involvement ends it has a