

Third, the present labor contract of MTA, which would be difficult to change, guarantees drivers at least a 40-h week. School board transportation, however, requires only a 20- to 25-h week, and school board drivers work with a 20-h guarantee. Thus, using MTA drivers for the school peak could necessitate higher wage rates, plus compensation for drivers for time when they are not needed.

Fourth, while federal regulations require that MTA vehicles have an open-door policy, i.e., that they be available to all types of passengers, Florida law currently disallows state financial support for students transported on open-door vehicles. This support is important; it currently funds about 48 percent of the county's total costs for mandated pupil transportation services. If there were no other difficulties with the concept of joint use of services, this is one area in which statutory change should be sought.

Fifth, MTA's current routes are designed to meet the needs of the general public and would be of limited value to students. Bus routes on major roads are typically long and direct with a minimum of stops. By contrast, school service involves short runs of many stops, primarily in residential neighborhoods, followed by a closed-door run to the school. Given MTA's current routes, many or most students would have to transfer at least once during each trip, and students' walking distances from home to bus stop would also increase. The inherent differences between the two transit services limit the route and schedule integration that can occur.

OTHER JOINT-USE ALTERNATIVES

The alternative of having MTA rather than the school board provide field-trip transportation for class trips, athletic team trips, and band and chorus trips should not be pursued. Under federal restrictions, which are not likely to be changed in the foreseeable future, MTA is only allowed to provide this type of service to the school board at a charter rate. MTA charter rates are almost 100 percent above the corresponding rates and actual costs of the school board; thus, MTA service would not be economical. Moreover, the school board has demon-

strated responsiveness and good performance in providing field-trip services.

The alternative of having MTA provide some after-school service, such as transporting late-staying students along designated routes, represents a meaningful opportunity for joint use as long as the students can be accommodated through regularly scheduled service. Students are an attractive market for MTA. Federal regulations would allow MTA to provide service as a part of its regular schedule, and there are no state restrictions in this area.

The alternative of having MTA provide maintenance services for school board vehicles should not be pursued. Federal rules and regulations sharply restrict use of MTA's equipment and facilities for school bus purposes. In addition, MTA lacks the present and planned capacity for servicing school board vehicles. Finally, the school board has demonstrated responsiveness and good performance in its maintenance operations, and its operations are of sufficient size to achieve efficiencies.

SUMMARY

There are very limited opportunities for joint utilization of transit services in Dade County. The home-to-school transportation of students should continue to be provided by the school board's transportation unit, primarily because of (a) the inability of MTA to guarantee seats for students on its vehicles, (b) the significantly lower operating costs of the school board's vehicles, and (c) the more flexible labor contract of the school board in terms of guaranteed hours for drivers.

The school board should also continue to provide field-trip transportation for students, primarily because its cost is significantly lower than the charter rates of MTA.

MTA maintenance of school board vehicles is not feasible under federal regulations, nor is it desirable. MTA provision of after-school service for students, however, should be explored.

Publication of this paper sponsored by Committee on Public Transportation Planning and Development.

Abridgment

Assisting Small Transit Operators in California

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The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recently conducted a series of 10 workshops with transit operators throughout the state. The workshops were held to (a) identify the needs of small transit operators, (b) determine the existing expertise of transit operators and others associated with transit (universities, consultants, etc.), and (c) discuss the role Caltrans should play in a transit management assistance program.

This paper describes the workshop process and presents the workshop results.

BACKGROUND

Transit in California has followed the national historical pattern. In 1950 there were 30 transit operators providing scheduled fixed-route service in the state; 21 were private companies. By 1970 there were still about 30 transit companies, but only 3 were privately owned. In 1971 a statewide transit-assistance program was established through the Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act of 1971, better known as the Transportation Development Act.

There are now 84 transit operators in California receiving such funds.

The 84 operations provide a variety of services, such as fixed route, demand responsive, and route deviation, and are managed through a variety of institutional arrangements.

PROCESS

The 10 workshops held in late 1977 and early 1978 were conducted by Caltrans staff from the transit management assistance branch in Sacramento. Many transportation consultants and university representatives, 84 public and private operators, and 43 representatives of city and county governments, transportation commissions, and regional transportation planning agencies attended the workshops. The problems and needs identified were written down on large sheets of paper in front of the group. This usually generated additional discussion and additional needs, which varied according to several factors, five of which are given below.

1. Age of the transit system: The operator's needs tended to vary with the system age.

a. New operators' most immediate needs tend to be such things as information regarding transit laws and regulations, vehicle specifications, the availability and sources for funding, system planning, and insurance.

b. The needs of operators whose systems are between one and three years old seem to be in the areas of scheduling and run cutting, preventive maintenance, accounting, grant assistance, and insurance.

c. The needs of operators who have been operating longer than three years are focused on such items as grant assistance, accounting, driver training, and marketing.

d. It was apparent that, even considering the system age differences as noted, there is a core of information needs common to the majority of operators and that some cyclic needs, such as driver attrition, vehicle aging, route changes, and system expansion, are related to operational characteristics of the system.

2. Local political atmosphere: This was mentioned on several occasions as being a hindrance to achieving previously adopted transit goals because of diminishing or unreliable financial support.

3. Type of transit organization: There are several types of organizations. This accounts for the somewhat different attitudes and perceived needs of the responsible agencies.

a. Transit districts are legislatively formed and, because of the complicated process, do not at present include small transit operators.

b. Municipal operators (cities and counties) are allowed by the state constitution to provide transit service to their citizens.

c. Some cities and counties have elected to contract for transit service with private transportation suppliers.

d. Private nonprofit organizations are usually human service agencies that provide service to special clients.

e. Private operators are taxi or bus companies.

f. The needs of the operators vary depending on the roles they play in the overall transportation system and its operation.

4. Location of the transit system.

a. Proximity to larger operators: In many cases, large operators were able and willing to give small operators the extensive information and, in some cases, physical assistance they required.

b. Interest and ability of local transportation planning agencies: The degree of existing active assistance depends to some degree on the size, staffing, and will-

ingness of the regional transportation planning agencies as well as the Caltrans district.

5. Membership in transit associations: Three professional operator organizations are available for California transit operators to join. These are

a. American Public Transit Association (APTA), a national organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C.;

b. California Association of Publicly Owned Transit Systems (CAPOTS), a California organization viewed in the past as primarily serving operations larger than 50 vehicles; and

c. Western Public Transit Association (WPTA), a Southern California group consisting of small operators in that area primarily concerned with financial problems and issues.

RESULTS

The needs mentioned most frequently are summarized below.

Accounting systems—The federally required uniform accounting requirement (FARE) and the State Uniform System of Accounts and Records for Transit Operators are of major concern to small operators.

Grantsmanship—Many small operators said they had problems with obtaining federal and state funds because of their lack of experience and expertise in preparing project proposals and completing the required forms.

Marketing—Small operators generally are in need of assistance in learning how to develop marketing programs and need assistance specifically in the areas of market segmentation and system promotion.

Management, planning, and technical assistance—The need for management, planning, and technical assistance was universally expressed by small operators.

Scheduling and run cutting—Scheduling and run cutting for transit systems have traditionally been done by an experienced old hand. Many small operators simply do not have the knowledge or experience required to do the effective run cutting needed to make their systems operate in an optimum manner.

Information resource and information workshops—Many small operators expressed their need for an information center to act as a resource for transit operators.

Insurance—Steadily rising insurance costs are a major concern of small transit operators.

Equipment maintenance—Many small operators, particularly those most distant from larger operators, have critical needs in the area of equipment maintenance, especially when it involves diesel mechanics.

Vehicle and equipment specifications and acquisition—Due in part to the rapid turnover in small transit vehicle suppliers and changing specifications, vehicle acquisition is often a tedious matter.

Driver training—Small operators in most cases do not have access to driver training courses.

Management and supervision training and diesel mechanic training—Most small operators do not normally have access to supervision training courses and training courses for diesel mechanics, which are conducted for large organizations or taught at trade schools and colleges.

Ongoing system evaluation—Several operators expressed a need for objective evaluations or performance audits of their systems so that they could improve their operations.

Transportation Development Act information—Many operators feel that they do not fully understand or cannot keep pace with changing regulations.

Methods of assistance—The workshops were used as

a forum to discuss the best methods of providing assistance to operators. Five methods were considered.

First, on-site methods were discussed, as was assistance provided to individual operators on location by one or more persons who have specialized expertise. Then area workshops, or groups of operators brought together to share knowledge on topics of mutual interest, were suggested. The need for information pertinent to the operation of transit properties that is distributed on a regular (newsletter) or intermittent (special reports) basis was expressed. Audiovisual presentations can also present information on specific topics in a structured manner. And there is a need for university and college or night school courses.

It is not surprising that the consensus at each workshop was that the on-site method is the most preferred method for providing assistance. The other four methods did have appeal for specific problems or situations. In most cases, formal instruction programs at the university and college level were judged to be too broad in scope for transit operator's purposes.

The inventory process also elicited a surprising number of potential assistance sources. Several large operators, consultants, colleges, taxicab operators, and the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California at Irvine all indicated a willingness to be considered as possible assistance resources.

CALIFORNIA'S TRANSIT MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

California's first-year transit management assistance program will consist of six elements that fall into two general categories. These six elements are in addition to existing Caltrans transit planning assistance, information sharing, research, and training programs. The first category, statewide management assistance, revolves around the dissemination of information. The three specific elements of this category are

1. Central transit information center: A central transit information center will be established by Cal-

trans, Division of Mass Transportation (DMT), to serve as an information resource for small operators in urban and rural areas;

2. Newsletter: A newsletter will be published by Caltrans-DMT on a bimonthly basis and will be directed to small operators with emphasis on state and federal legislation, innovative activities and programs of small operators in California and elsewhere, scheduled workshops and seminars, APTA-CAPOTS activities, technical developments, etc.;

3. Workshops: Twice yearly in two locations in the state, two three-day workshops will be conducted on subjects such as grantsmanship, regulations, FARE, insurance, legal issues, joint purchasing arrangements, transit goals, financial management, productivity techniques, scheduling, marketing, maintenance, etc.

The second category, local management assistance, is directed toward providing assistance to individual operators and toward developing programs on specific topics. There are three specific elements in the first-year program for this category:

1. On-site assistance: An exchange program between transit operators and Caltrans will be initiated (travel expenses subsidized) to provide on-site assistance in areas such as diesel mechanics, preventive maintenance, scheduling, and run cutting. The function of the exchange will be to encourage Caltrans or large-operator employees to travel to small operations and provide direct on-site assistance.

2. Marketing presentation: A slide and tape presentation will be developed on marketing small transit systems. This presentation will include an educational element as well as a basic promotional package.

3. Driver training program: A basic driver training program will be prepared for transit operators to use and supplement with material they prepare to suit their particular needs or situations.

Publication of this paper sponsored by Committee on Public Transportation Planning and Development.

Abridgment

Light Rail Transit and Bus Integration in Edmonton

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Edmonton's light rail transit (LRT) started operation on April 23, 1978, to serve the northeast sector of the city. This sector of Edmonton, the area east of 97 Street and north of the North Saskatchewan River, has several major traffic barriers. The population in 1977 of 120 280 was expected to increase to 175 000 by 1985, according to the city's general plan. The transportation options considered were the following:

1. A northeast freeway option: The transit component would require 70 buses in the peaks, including express services for the corridor;

2. An all-bus option: This would require use of 150 buses in the peaks, including express services through the central area of Edmonton; and

3. An integrated bus-LRT option: This would call for 75 buses in the peaks to serve mainly as feeders and cross-city services, together with 14 LRT cars on the northeast line.

The revised 1974 estimates, allowing for capital and operating subsidies from the provincial government and for a constant deficit, showed the following annual costs to the city in 1978: \$9.7 million for the freeway option,