

George Gray, Division of Mass Transportation, California Department of Transportation

There are 28 state transportation agencies that aid local communities or transit districts with planning guidance and funding. About half have definite groups that are involved in public transportation and about a fourth are involved in DRT services. In providing these services Michigan, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Florida are the most active; Michigan is far ahead of other states. Several states have some involvement, but usually on a single project. New Jersey, for example, has funded the Haddonfield project to the extent of some \$420,000.

California is not directly involved in DRT. The Transportation Development Act of 1971, better known as the 325 Program or the sales tax on gasoline, makes funds available for local use, and some of it goes to DRT services, but as local option money. Local communities may do what they wish with it.

State assistance programs are bound to proliferate as new programs of resource allocations, pollution problems, and other impacts of transportation facilities become more apparent. Almost all the states with public transportation units provide technical assistance of some kind to the agencies within the state. The California Division of Mass Transportation provides this type of technical service, but our studies are general in nature. We identify the potential for new services only after a detailed study is called for once the local decision-making body has established evidence of real interest in a public transportation program.

The DRT activities in the Orange County Transit District and the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District have no state involvement. DRT in La Mirada and El Cajon are city sponsored. The Santa Clara County DRT, which I think is going to be one of the bell ringers, is a county project with 325 Program funding.

As most other states do, California provides technical assistance to establish a variety of services where DRT may already exist, e.g., marketing, information systems, equipment specifications, and special services.

Claude J. Klug, Administrator, City of La Mirada, California

I am not a transit person and do not regard La Mirada DRT as being totally committed to transit; in fact, I consider its second objective to be transit.

We marketed DRT not as just transit but as a new innovative service in a dynamic city; it was part of the normal public relations program of the city.

When we started operation, we were overwhelmed with customers and had to back off. In fact, I still have 10,000 free tickets in my desk that we never gave out. We were one of the first cities in our area to start DRT (La Habra had started about 2 months earlier), and we really did not know what we were getting into. Basically people were concerned that it was a boondoggle because we had committed a subsidy of \$100,000 a year for 5 years; the first year was for setting up and the remaining 4 years were for operation.

After we began operation, we found that we had oversold the system not only in the volume of people we could serve but also in what the people expected. They expected that they were going to get a vehicle at 8:02—not 8:00 and not 8:05. So we found that most people turned to the taxicab service, but you do not get a cab at 8:02 either.

Our vehicles are brightly covered, and our control room is all glassed in and in a prominent place in the City Hall. Almost anyone who comes in City Hall can watch the DRT in operation.

We found a bit of irony with regard to our public relations techniques. We put packets together for TV stations and made personal visits to all the right people, but got absolutely no coverage at all. About 6 months after we were in operation, the New York Times did an article on us. It was picked up all over the world, and since then we have had tremendous coverage.

During our first year, we carried 110,000 people. We anticipated in our study that we would carry about 50,000. We have reevaluated our system because it included some things that we have not really liked, such as service for school children, which cuts into other kinds of service. Since we are a city operation, we can change the philosophy behind the system quite readily, and we do.

We use the DRT system as a patrol system. A typical monthly report will give an idea of what a DRT operator reported: "Dead animal; small garage fire; bus 16 involved in a hijack; broken glass on a street; two signals malfunctioning; illegal dumping; dead animal; small brush fire; county truck involved with a private vehicle in an accident; two dead animals; two large shepherd dogs loose in an intersection"—this kind of reporting is a worthwhile service to the community. As a matter of fact, when we started DRT, I indicated to the city council that I could justify the \$100,000 subsidy on the basis of services other than transit. We make other public facilities available. We emphasize charter service. During those times of the day when demand is low, we give free rides to the swimming pools in the summer or we have contracts with shopping centers.

We have a radio communications system that we could not have if we did not have DRT. We have a sophisticated FM paging system, and we only have that because we have DRT.

Community image is important to us because we are not a property-taxed city and we are always looking for business and industry. DRT has done a great deal in enhancing our image. Because of the publicity we got by being one of the earliest cities to have DRT, people from all over the world have visited the city. Being in Los Angeles County where there are 78 cities, La Mirada is almost unheard of. Many times a good image may help an industrialist make the location decision.

In La Mirada, we had a major train accident in which a gasoline tanker exploded and several propane cars were piled underneath. Thirty minutes after the police and firemen were there our DRT system was in operation. The vehicles were available and in use. What I am saying is that there are many other aspects to DRT than just transit. In our case, they have paid off.

John H. Davidson, Yellow Cab Company, Los Angeles

My comments are based on personal experience and the experiences of personnel in day-to-day supervision of demand-responsive services.

We have 2 forms of communication: the telephone that the patron uses and the radio that we use to and from the vehicles and the communications center and possibly between the vehicles if we use a Simplex radio frequency.

We start by getting the order. The DRT customer is quite similar to the taxicab customer. A high percentage of the people have never used this type of transportation before and many have language difficulties.

Sufficient time must be allowed to receive the orders, including recording the address, the name of the party, the number in the party, and the destination and giving the patron an estimated bus arrival time. An analysis of more than 120,000 orders indicates that a DRT order taker can handle from 2 to 2½ orders a minute. By comparison, a taxicab order taker can handle about 4 orders a minute.

Telephone equipment should be simple at the start. We started out with a simple instrument with a single incoming line without transfers or hold buttons and moved to the sophisticated Automatic Call Distribution system with a large number of incoming lines, hold buttons, and transfers. A beginning installation of 2 incoming lines, 2 instruments with both lines, and hold buttons duplicated on each instrument will handle 200 calls per hour.

Some peripheral equipment is useful and is available from the telephone system or from equipment manufacturers. We found call counters on the lines to indicate