
TOPIC

**Understanding
Metro's
Transit
Problems**



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Understanding Metro's Transit Problems

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Topic in Brief

The TTC is accepted as the organization which runs the transit system and determines transit policy. This was the original mandate given and the basis on which the TTC was to operate. Initially the Commission was to control planning and policy decisions and was to do this while maintaining financial self-sufficiency.

Many people believe that the Commission actually achieved these goals and only in recent years has lost ground. If one looks critically at history, however, it becomes clear that since the 1950's the TTC has not had control over planning nor has it maintained self-sufficiency.

The lack of clear lines of responsibility and accountability have prevented both the TTC and Metro from taking control over planning decisions. As is pointed out in this Topic, historically the TTC has lost control over planning. There is some question, however, as to who has filled the gap. Metro has in some cases, but the process and lines of accountability are diffused and as a result, planning decisions are difficult to obtain.

The argument is made that the TTC operated entirely out of the fare box, without an operating deficit, from its establishment in 1921 until 1970. This is fallacious. The TTC gave up its self-sufficiency as soon as capital subsidies were accepted in the 1950's. In fact, it has been impossible for the TTC to be self-sufficient since its inception.

These and a number of other areas are examined in this Topic and the result of the examination is the conclusion that extensive organizational changes are needed to the present transit system.

The major recommendation of the report is that the transit function should be under the direct jurisdiction of Metro and should not be independent. This should be accomplished by forming a Metro Department of Transportation which would combine the present Roads Department with the TTC. The Department would then be responsible for weighing priorities for both roads and transit. Clear accountability would be placed on Metro to delineate its transit policies and effectively co-ordinate planning decisions. The responsibility for decisions would not be ambiguous anymore, but clearly defined.

We also feel that: the Department of Transportation should undertake an active and aggressive marketing campaign to specifically assess demand as well as promote new transit schemes; Metro Council must encourage the local areas and municipalities to make decisions that not only correspond to Metro decisions, but promote transit; financial arrangements for transit must be based not on a set formula, but on the needs of the system and the objectives which both the Metro and Provincial governments expect transit to fulfil.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The recent increase in TTC fares and the debate surrounding it, have highlighted some of the dilemmas currently faced by the Toronto Transit Commission. Few people in Metropolitan Toronto have been able to escape the statistics of how many people have stopped using transit or how big this year's deficit might be. This trend in ridership and costs, in fact, has been heralded by some as indicating the downfall of the transit system as we presently know it.

The figures cited pinpoint what many feel is the problem. Ridership has fluctuated in the last 25 years. Many of these fluctuations have been identified with changes in fares or the opening of new subway lines. For example, ridership rose in 1966 by 17 million partially due to the opening of the Bloor Street subway line. It dropped again in 1969 by 5 million when fares were increased. A recent TTC study states that 358 million trips were recorded on TTC vehicles in 1975. In 1978, that figure decreased to 337 million;¹ ridership projections for 1979 do not indicate a significant increase despite the opening of the Spadina subway line.

Ridership trends cannot be explained solely by these two factors. Factors causing ridership fluctuations are often quite numerous and range from the obvious fare increase to level of service and comfort, land use planning, employment and general state of the economy.² The "solutions", therefore, must also deal with this complex range of issues - and few suggestions in the current debate have done that.

¹ Some Tough Choices, TTC, 1979.

² A detailed listing of many factors effecting ridership is given in "Midyear Review of Ridership and Revenue" by the TTC, July 28, 1978.

The other area frequently cited in the TTC debate is the question of money. The operating deficit of the TTC has been increasing, resulting in an increase in the need for operating subsidies or additional revenue. By increasing fares, revenue can be generated but this move results in a negative effect on ridership figures.¹ The alternative to increasing fares is direct subsidies.

Thus ridership and fare increases have monopolized the debate. Deeper issues, however, have been neglected. Although ridership and costs are the most obvious problem areas, they are only symptoms of a very complex situation. There is a real need to bring other factors into the analysis which go beyond statistics and figures and deal with the basic framework for decision-making.

The TTC is accepted as the organization which runs the transit system and determines transit policy. This was the original mandate given and the basis on which the TTC was to operate. Initially the Commission was to control planning and policy decisions and was to do this while maintaining financial self-sufficiency. The decision-makers, at the time, felt that this was possible by making the Commission a special purpose body operating "above" politics. Many people believe that the Commission actually achieved these goals and only in recent years has lost ground. If one looks critically at history, however, it becomes clear that since the 1950's the TTC has not had control over planning nor has it maintained self-sufficiency.

Most decisions involving transit are political and it did not take long for the policy and planning control of the TTC to erode. The decision-making responsibility now has been spread between a number of parties with the result being deficiencies in accountability and jurisdictional delineation.

The March 1979 fare increase is projected to cost 6 million rides in 1979.

In terms of self-sufficiency, it is erroneous to say the TTC has, since the 1950's, paid its operation from just the fare box. This has not been the case and the expectation that transit can be self-sufficient has been proven impossible to achieve.

How can effective decisions on improving ridership or finance be made when there are very basic questions with the structure of transit decision-making and the perception of its success over the years?

The overall questions of organization, politics and how these fit together must be examined. Only when a clear framework is established can operational problems be attacked and hopefully solved.

II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE TTC

The Toronto Transit Commission had its beginnings in 1920, when the City of Toronto passed a by-law which established the Toronto Transportation Commission. This move was part of a reform movement in local government which occurred in the early 1900's across Canada. To avoid corruption at the local level, reformers advocated the creation of various commissions and boards to take special activities such as transportation out of the political arena. These special purpose bodies were intended to improve efficiency of local government and decrease the role of the politician.¹

For this purpose the City vested the Toronto Transportation Commission with all the powers the City had or might have with respect to public transportation. The only controls it exercised were: the appointment of all Commissioners by Council on a three year basis; and all borrowing for capital expenses be done on the credit of the City with the Commission having to be self-sufficient.

By 1923, the Toronto Transportation Commission had purchased all the private transit lines within Toronto and a few routes outside the city limits. It was operating efficiently and was, in fact, self-sufficient, collecting an operating surplus over the years.

In 1953, the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act was passed by the Province of Ontario. The purpose of the Act was to establish the metropolitan level of government in the Toronto region and combine the 13 separate municipalities into 6. At the same time, the public transportation function was moved from the city level to the metropolitan level.² The structure of the TTC followed the same lines as the previous commission.

¹ C.R. Tindal, S. Nobes Tindal, Local Government in Canada, McGraw-Hill, 1979, p. 29.

² Section 100 Municipality of Metropolitan Act, outlines all the guidelines for the composition and powers of the Toronto Transit Commission.

In this Provincial statute, the TTC was given the function to "construct, maintain, operate, extend, alter, repair, control and manage a local transportation system within the Metropolitan area".¹ The area of its operation increased to 240 square miles; some well developed, but other areas very sparsely developed. The TTC was to be the "business" which organized and operated the entire mass transportation network (except railways and taxis) to all areas within the six new municipalities. This business was to be self-sufficient; it was instructed to "fix such tolls and fares....so that the revenue of the commission shall be sufficient to make all the transportation facilities under its control and management self-sustaining."²

The relationship between Metro Council and the TTC was based by the Province on the same terms as had existed between the City and the old Commission. The two bodies remain separate with little intervention in TTC operations and planning from Metro Council. Metro Council did not have any council representatives on the TTC. The only involvement between the two centred around Metro's power to borrow on behalf of the TTC and to elect TTC Commissioners. This arrangement did not result from a serious consideration of alternatives, but from historical precedent. Special purpose bodies were still considered an efficient way of delivering services at the local level, and the prevailing attitude at both the local and Provincial level was: why change something which has worked so well?³

This arrangement even initially, however, presented some problems. Certain members of Metro Council did not feel that the TTC should remain independent with TTC decisions unreviewed and uncoordinated with other Metro activities. How could Metro undertake overall transportation planning while it had no power in the field of public transportation?

¹ Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act, Section 105(a).

² Ibid.

³ This philosophy was supported by the recommendations in the 1948 report of Norman Wilson to the Toronto Planning Board entitled, A Transportation Plan For Metropolitan Toronto and the Suburban Area Adjacent.

In fact, during the first 5 years of operation, a number of attempts to reorganize the TTC and give greater control to Metro were initiated by Council members as well as interested parties.¹ Internal conflicts within the TTC and conflicts between the commissioners and the Metro Chairman brought the activities of the TTC under question and to many provided evidence of a need for greater control by Metro. The necessary political support could not be found at the Metro or Provincial level, however, and reorganization efforts were defeated. The only concession made was the appointment in 1959 of an informal liaison officer who was to keep track of the TTC activities and report to Metro.²

¹ See BMR, Civic Affairs, "The Future of the TTC", 1960.

² For an extensive review of the conflict and attempted reorganization see a paper called "Politics of Metropolitan Government" by Harold Kaplan, 1964.

III. OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE TRANSIT PLANNING

Planning Within the TTC

The TTC initially had control over transit policy and planning decisions. The old Toronto Transportation Commission had exercised complete control over such planning decisions as the Yonge subway line with only a token review and subsequent rubber stamp from the City Planning Department. The newly formed TTC assumed that the relationship defined in the statute would perpetuate this level of control.

The decisions surrounding the Bloor/Danforth line changed this, however. Since Metro was financing a portion of the subway expense, it insisted that the TTC had to deal with the Metro Planning Department to determine the most appropriate route. To the Planning Department, transit was one aspect of overall transportation needs, all of which needed to be considered when deciding upon a subway line. After extensive research, the Planning Department decided that the line should basically follow Queen Street. The TTC, however, felt that the subway should go along Bloor Street - where they had the most traffic on the streetcars. Obviously the decision of Metro Council was in favour of the TTC plan. Despite this fact, the rationale behind the decision and the implications did not give the TTC a clear mandate to pursue planning as it saw fit. Metro Council and Planning Department would be involved from this point on in many decisions.

In fact, their influence has increased with each major capital expenditure and each operating deficit encountered. The TTC could not make planning decisions in a vacuum since it needed Metro financing and Metro wanted to increase its involvement in all transportation planning to develop an overall workable scheme.

The involvement of Metro theoretically should have been positive. By co-ordinating transit with overall planning guidelines, the result would logically be an integrated transportation network. This was not the case, however. The inherent conflicts of authority and responsibility

over decisions made any co-ordination ineffective. The TTC felt it still had power and Metro felt it should have power in some areas. Neither party had a clear mandate or clear lines of responsibility. The result was one of short term decisions being made on separate transportation issues with no longer term or comprehensive analyses of problems.¹

This fact, added to the general position of transit in importance to many decision-makers, has caused fragmentation in not only the transit area but overall transportation decisions. The TTC is, in effect, one mode of transportation competing with other modes at not only the Metro level but also the Provincial. The conflict of promotion of roads versus transit has been documented for many years, with roads the usual winner. By placing the modes of transportation in competition with each other as opposed to co-ordinating and assuming control, Metro has furthered the fragmentation and conflicting decision-making.²

This conflict about who controlled transportation planning came to a head in 1976 and a separation of powers was informally agreed upon. The TTC would handle the operational planning decisions - which routes to follow, service levels, etc. Metro would be in charge of strategic planning decisions - how transit fit into the overall transportation scheme. This arrangement solved some jurisdictional problems but certainly has not ensured more integrated transit planning at all levels. Some of the existing problems are pinpointed in the following sections.

Planning - Metro's Role

Upon review of the last few years, it is obvious that there are problems with simply saying Metro is responsible for planning and TTC is responsible for operations.

¹ Royal Commission on Metro Toronto, Transportation Organization in Metropolitan Toronto, April 1974, page. 4.

² It should be noted that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan of 1966 did establish an infrastructure within which Metro could make transportation decisions.

It was mentioned previously that the separation of transportation functions within Metro has resulted in a fragmentation in decision-making. The Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan Review¹ states that the decisions in transportation have been mainly undertaken based on existing land use patterns. According to the report, however, transportation should be used to determine the growth patterns. Historically, roads have fulfilled this function to a certain degree. Transit, however, has traditionally responded to demand or land use development and not initiated it. The result is reflected in the fact that the automobile is considered the primary form of transportation and transit is being considered secondary. The problems of co-ordinating decision-making are aggravated by these attitudes and the fact that jurisdictions are separate for public transit and road construction.

At the staff level, there has been an attempt at more co-ordination. A joint committee of Metro Planning Department, Metro Roads Department, and the TTC was established in 1977. The committee effectively co-ordinates many of the technical responses to reports on planning questions. As a result, a number of staff decisions are more balanced in terms of a transportation system as opposed to a particular mode. This staff co-ordination raises two questions, however. The first is whether there is a duplication of efforts by having each review all documents. It seems inevitable that there would have to be a certain amount of duplication, which is a waste of time and resources.

The second question concerns the extent to which better staff co-ordination can improve the decision-making process. It obviously has some effect, but there are still problems both in terms of interpretation of roles and political considerations. For example, this

¹ The Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan Review was undertaken beginning in 1971. The purpose was to evaluate a number of transportation issues and oversee a review of the transportation plan approved in 1966.

co-ordination has not solved the problem of agreement on the role or purpose of transit in Toronto. The TTC perceives itself as simply providing a service while Metro and the Province view transit as providing other public needs. Which is used to decide issues? It seems both are, and the result is confusion.

What Metropolitan Toronto is faced with is no clear mandate to make decisions on transit related issues. Currently, an example of how decision-making is diffused and at times ineffectual is evident in the debate surrounding the establishment of a major commuter parking facility along the Spadina subway line. Discussions regarding such a facility have been underway for over 17 years.¹ Since 1971, an increasing number of agencies at the Provincial, Metropolitan and local level have become involved in the debates: the Premier and the Minister of Transportation and Communications at the Provincial level; Metro Council, Toronto Transit Commission, Metro Transportation Committee, Department of Roads & Traffic, and Metro Planning Department at the Metropolitan level; and Parking Authority of Toronto as well as local councils and planning departments.

The original intent was to have the commuter facility open at the same time as the Spadina line. To accomplish this, numerous studies were completed by all three levels of government as well as by private consultants. Agreement has still not been reached, however, on either the location, size or type of parking needed. In fact, few of the parties involved even agree on what the demand for a commuter parking facility is. The debate continues with no resolution in sight and no clear indication which parties are able to make the final decision and expedite the process.

¹ Commuter Parking Facilities Spadina Rapid Transit Line, The Parking Authority of Toronto, March 1977, pg. 3.

Another obstacle to effective transportation decision-making is the discrepancy between the transportation decisions made at the local versus Metro level. The Metropolitan Council has the responsibility of making decisions regarding the TTC and transportation in Metro. There are a number of cases, however, where the local level has undermined decisions made at the Metro level. This "undermining" is not necessarily by actions so much as inaction.

The most obvious and pertinent example is the Light Rail Transit line to be built in Scarborough connecting the new Kennedy-Eglinton subway stop to the Town Centre. The line as it is presently proposed will have severe operating deficits when it is finally completed. Can the TTC afford another deficit producing line? We feel that it cannot at present.

The Scarborough Town Centre Plan could help alleviate this problem by including a strong transit component. Land use policies to increase densities along the line would ensure a certain increase in travel by transit. Parking policies at the centre could encourage the use of transit and deter more automobiles.

To consider the use of transit as an integral part of the Scarborough Plan would be an improvement over the present plan proposed. Scarborough has not done this, however, and little pressure has been exerted by Metro to ensure that it is.

In this example, the Province appears to be intervening to make the line economically more viable. The intervention is in the form of a promise to subsidize the line until it reaches a desired level of ridership - instead of specifying a designated period of time. In return for this, the Province is requiring an agreement with Metro and Scarborough that certain planning measures be undertaken to promote the growth of the line.

The success of this proposal will have to be measured in the future. The one problem that it outlines, however, is that Metro and the six municipalities must take steps to make consistent pro-transit decisions to ensure that transit will remain financially stable or even grow. Threatened intervention by the Province should not be the only incentive for considering transit. The local politicians should attune their decisions not only to local needs but also to area wide transportation needs. If a local council decides to support one item at the local level and another at the Metro level, the result will be continued ineffective decision-making and TTC deficits.

Metro must also take a harder pro-transit line and exercise its authority to ensure co-ordinated decisions. The lack of clear lines of responsibility and accountability have prevented both the TTC and Metro from taking control over planning decisions. As has been pointed out, historically the TTC has lost control over planning. There is some question, however, as to who has filled the gap. Metro has in some cases, but the process and lines of accountability are diffused and as a result, planning decisions are difficult to obtain.

TTC Operations and Marketing

The TTC formally has charge of operations and operational planning. The TTC has authority over the service provided - its frequency, hours, routes, etc. This control is, in effect, more important than the provision of new lines to meet demands. Riders are gained and lost on a day to day basis depending upon the service provided to them and how well it fits their needs.

The TTC has developed a marketing division and started to analyze its market in the last few years. One of the largest efforts has been an attitude survey done in 1976 (an update will be completed shortly). The survey tried to identify who rode the TTC, and why. It also was aimed at assessing public attitudes toward the TTC and exploring opportunities to increase ridership. The results can serve as a framework for determining a marketing strategy and an active campaign.

The attempts made in marketing, however, have only dealt with certain areas and not others. One recommendation of the market report¹ was to emphasize the problems associated with using a car in Metro Toronto. This has been undertaken by a media campaign noting the cost savings which can be obtained by riding transit even part of the time.

Some of the other recommendations of the report, however, have not been implemented. It was identified that fares were not necessarily of paramount importance to individuals trying to decide whether or not to take the TTC. What did have appeal to non-riders, however, was the idea of special rates for off-peak use or even monthly passes. The TTC has investigated these areas extensively but will not make a final decision on whether they should be implemented. In fact, the TTC says that the decision is not totally theirs but must be agreed by Metro Council. The monthly passes would help the TTC ridership situation, but both TTC and Metro are proceeding with caution.

The TTC should also undertake more extensive market analysis, particularly in terms of surface routes. Many people are unhappy with the bus or streetcar portion of their rides. If it were ascertained more clearly where people wanted to go and by what route, then it would be possible to set up a system based more on demand than street patterns.²

Another suggestion which has received extensive coverage but no action at either the TTC or Metro is reserved bus lanes. The lanes have been implemented in a number of areas such as Eglinton Avenue and Pape Avenue but have not had much success. One of the reasons is local opposition to any decrease in parking areas and increase in traffic for cars.

¹ A Research Survey on Attitudes and Uses by Riders and Non-Riders of the Toronto Transit Commission, conducted by Canadian Inter-mark for the TTC, 1976.

² Standards for Evaluating Existing and Proposed Routes by the TTC, 1977 sets out the criteria for route selection presently used.

Lobbying at the Metro level is not being pursued extensively for this or other items such as: parking taxes to discourage cars in downtown areas; incentives to employers to promote transit within their staff, much the same as the present parking cost discounts given by many companies; off-peak discounts to encourage use throughout the day. All of these, however, would help transit.

Why is this not being done and why, in fact, does Metro have to agree to such proposals? The answers, although complex, relate partially back to the reoccurring problem of role definition, accountability and jurisdictions.

IV TTC FINANCES

Self-Sufficiency -- A Myth?

A review of the Toronto Transit Commission would not be complete without a look at its financial profile. This has certainly been the focus of much debate in the last few months and few people at the TTC, Metro, the Province or the public have gone beyond assuming that the TTC has only been in trouble since 1971.

No one is more aware than the Commission of the serious effect high transit fares can have on our community. Experience in other cities has proven that fares which are too high result in riders deserting public transportation in favour of the private automobile thus increasing already critical traffic congestion and slowing traffic movement.

This statement could have easily been made by either the TTC, Metro Council or the Province during the 1979 fare increase debates. In fact, individuals in each of these organizations made similar statements regarding the precarious nature of the TTC finances.

The statement, however, is from a press release issued by the TTC in June of 1956. Its inclusion here is to underline one of the conflicts in the TTC since its inception: the need to provide a municipal service and to finance it by means of user charges.

Unlike other services which are also partially user fee based, the transit system does not have total control of the market. It must rely on attracting people to use the service while not being in total control of options to optimize "profitable" aspects of the operation. Mainly for this reason, the sole reliance on user charges which was outlined in the original act, has given way to a combination of user charges and Provincial and Metro subsidies.

It is important, therefore, to pinpoint when the TTC lost its self-sufficiency, and what the contributing factors were.

While the argument is made that the TTC "operated entirely out of the fare box, without an operating deficit, from its establishment in 1921 until 1970,"¹ this is fallacious. The problem which manifested itself in 1970 was described in the TTC Annual Report as:

If allowed to continue with no change in the present policies of financial assistance, fares will have to be raised every year or two just to maintain the present level of service...the community and its citizens then face the inevitable vicious consequences of transit fares which become too high, fewer riders, curtailed service, still higher fares and again fewer riders. This ever tightening circle drives those who use transit by choice back to their automobiles in larger and larger numbers, thus increasing the need for more roads and expressways.²

In 1960-63, Metro was given the right to supply subsidies to the TTC. Not until 1971 was the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act amended to lift the ceiling and allow Metro Council to contribute unlimited ongoing subsidies to the TTC as Council assessed the need. It was also in 1971 that the Provincial Government passed a new Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act which provided for a provincial operating subsidy. With these two steps "the era of self-sufficiency for the TTC had ended."³ Operating subsidies received in 1971 were \$2.9 million, escalating to \$63 million in 1978.

¹ John Sewell, "Public Transit in Canada: A Primer"; City Magazine, May-June 1978, pg. 51.

² TTC 1970 Annual Report, pg. 12.

³ TTC Transit Revenue Policy Study, April 1977, pg. 26.

It is incorrect, however, to say that the TTC was financially self-sufficient in 1971. Two operating grants had been given by Metro to the TTC before 1971. The first was in 1955 for \$2.3 million given to cover a deficit which the TTC incurred in making the transition from serving Toronto to serving Metro. The second was in 1963 for \$2.5 million, in return for rollback of a fare increase by the TTC.

More important for consideration than these two operating grants, however, is the approximately \$500 million in subsidies the TTC received from Metro and the Province between 1958 and 1975.¹ Those subsidies were for capital expenditures such as subway construction and equipment needed. They are not usually included in the calculations of subsidies given to the TTC because they are on the capital and not the operating side.

This distinction appears to be arbitrary, however, since the TTC received the funds to increase services - something which was necessary in its operations. To separate grants into operating versus capital categories gives the false impression that to receive money for operating deficits takes away autonomy and self-sufficiency; while receiving grants for capital expenditures does not.

If the TTC had been required to be truly self-sustaining and financed the capital improvements through repayable loans, then the operating deficits would have been almost immediate and certainly needed on an annual basis from the late 1950's. In effect, this differentiation between capital and operating funds created the illusion that the TTC was continuing to be self-sufficient.

Therefore, the fare box did not pay the TTC's way before 1971. By assuming that it did, unrealistic expectations are developed and demands made which perpetuate the false assumption of the financial autonomy of the TTC.

¹ Transit Revenue Policy Study, Appendix A

Revenue/Cost Ratio

It has been established through political negotiations in the last several years that the TTC should pay 70% of its operating costs from revenues collected. The remaining 30% would then be paid by Metro and the Province through operating subsidies. This is the breakdown which has been dictated by the Province and by Metro. It is used to determine the financial subsidy formula for transit.

The determination of this level was based on the actual performance of the TTC in the last several years. The TTC stated that:

From a pragmatic point of view, it seems that any major change from the current revenue/cost ratio must have very strong reasoning behind it: the advantage of the change must considerably outweigh the inevitable disruption caused by the change. On this basis, there does not seem to be any obvious reason to move from the present revenue/cost ratio...Therefore, we shall consider the range between 70 and 80 percent to be the practicable spectrum of options, allowing small changes upward or downward from the existing situation.¹

This statement was adopted by the TTC, Metro and the Province. It is curious here, however, that the TTC could not see strong reasoning why the level should be changed; particularly since the last year of debate has centered around higher subsidy levels and freezing fares, both of which acknowledge that the 70/30 split is not working.

The setting of this level, in fact, ignores another statement in the same document: "The decision as to which subsidy level is most reasonable must remain a political one." Subsidy levels are basically political decisions. By trying to tie them to an arbitrary percentage, their usefulness is undermined. An ongoing assessment of the needs of the organization must be done and considered when determining appropriate levels. Obviously there should be some incentive for efficiency within the organization - but this does not preclude flexibility in financial requirements.

The 70% is being maintained at present. It would be an unfortunate situation, however, to have a fare increase and resultant decrease in ridership occur simply because the formula must be adhered to. The formula was developed arbitrarily and demands more of the TTC than any transit system in North America must pay.

¹ Transit Revenue Policy Study, pg. 65.

V OVERALL IMPLICATIONS

The questions and issues being faced by the Toronto Transit System are ones which are common to many transit systems around the world. A brief look at some conclusions from other studies reinforces many overall aspects we feel should be considered.

In a recent Guest Article to "Urban Transit Abroad"¹, Louis J. Gambaccini, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, pointed to a number of impressive factors he had observed concerning European public transit. They were:

1. Simplicity of transport information systems;
2. Effective co-ordination of routes and services;
3. Simplicity of passenger transfers from and between lines and systems;
4. Effective long term planning and execution of projects;
5. Stability of capital fundings; and,
6. Public support for, and pride in, public transportation.

Some of these factors are true for the TTC. For example, the simplicity of transfers and co-ordination of many routes is present in Toronto. A number of the other factors are not present, however, and these areas have been reviewed in this Topic. Mr. Gambaccini's article pinpoints the most important of these in his final statement:

It is the stability of funding and goals and continuity of policies that represent the most important lessons to be learned from Europe. We must find ways to adapt our institutions to accomplish these aims.

Similar points had been made in the very first issue of Urban Transit Abroad² by the President of the Council for International Liaison, John Garvey:

¹ Volume 3, No. 1, Spring 1979.

² "Urban Transit Abroad", Volume 1, No. 1, February 1978.

Europe can also teach us a great deal about transit marketing and integrated intermodel systems that cover entire metropolitan areas. What is called Transportation System Management (TSM) is another strong European suit. It includes a range of innovative measures including reserved bus lanes, traffic restrictions, road pricing, pedestrian zones, new parking systems, computerized traffic flow management and other techniques that have been operational for a good many years.

It is also interesting to note a summary finding of a recent study of the Hamburg mass transit experience in Hamburg, West Germany. The report was prepared by Professor Arthur Naftalin of the University of Minnesota with a grant from the German Marshal Fund, and presents several ideas which have significance for the Toronto situation.

Summary of Findings: Hamburg Transit Study:¹

1. Mass transit ridership can be increased by skillful and sustained attention to potential new markets, through research, public education and creative promotion.
2. Diverse modes of transit can be co-ordinated into a single system provided there is a central direction that is sensitive to the needs of the total system and respectful of the interests of those who operate the different modes.
3. Government fragmentation need not prevent region wide transit co-ordination, provided a mechanism is established that can effectively set policy for the total system.
4. Making private car use more expensive and more difficult in crowded centres is a key to mass transit success; this can be accomplished by eliminating parking spaces in commercial centers and giving priority wherever possible to mass transit.
5. Density of settlement is another key factor; this can be accomplished by restricting residential development to corridors served by mass transit.

¹ "Urban Transit Abroad", Volume 2, No. 1, Spring 1979.

6. Overall city design that works against auto traffic - such as done in Hamburg after World War II when the intimate scale of the medieval city was restored - will encourage use of mass transit.
7. A mass transit system that delivers efficient, quick, dependable, comfortable service will be utilized, even in the era of the automobile.
8. Co-ordinated planning on a metropolitan regional basis that relates transportation needs to settlement patterns and to commercial, industrial and residential development is essential for the success of mass transit.

Many of these items have been touched upon in this Topic, but a few should be restated. It is essential that proper planning and policy decision framework exist. This is currently not present in Metro Toronto.

It is also essential that financial stability be guaranteed to have an effective transit system. Many people in Metro, however, feel that the TTC should be self-sufficient. As pointed out, however, this is something which it has never been and according to the criteria set in a recent Canadian study, can never be.¹

The last component is an efficient transit operation. This has been the case in Toronto for many years, but certain decisions must be made to ensure that it maintains that position.

¹ The Economics of Urban Transportation, by Mark Frankena for Transport Canada, March 1979.

VI CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There seems to be a general acknowledgement that the function the TTC performs in Toronto is an important one for the health of Toronto. The transit strikes in the fall of 1974 and 1978 provide the most recent examples of what can happen without a transit system. During these periods, mobility of almost everyone in Metro was severely restricted. Even those using cars could not maintain an acceptable level of mobility around Metro due to the increase in automobile traffic on all major routes.

Despite this acknowledgement, the problems of transit provision are seen to be the problems of the TTC. Many Metro and Provincial politicians as well as citizens look to the TTC to solve its own dilemmas.

Such a perception of the functions and abilities of the TTC denies many of the factors previously presented in this Topic.

The TTC acts, in essence, as a public service. Its purpose is not limited to merely moving people from one point to another. It also has political, economic and social aspects such as aiding the process of urbanization and land development, redistributing income through rider subsidies,¹ as well as conserving energy, preserving the environment and reducing congestion. These other purposes are unofficially acknowledged at all political levels.

The TTC is expected to not only fulfil its operational and financial mandate, but also these demands. As a special purpose body it is caught in the dichotomy of being technically independent but possessing little true independence in terms of planning, financing or operations. Acknowledging this fact, it seems obvious that steps must be taken to clearly delineate lines of responsibility, jurisdiction and accountability.

¹ Students and elderly passengers do not pay full fare but are charged reduced rates which in fact are subsidies.

For reasons cited, the Bureau believes that extensive structural changes must be made to the present transit structure. We believe that the transit function should be under the direct jurisdiction of Metro and should not be independent. This should be accomplished by forming a Metro Department of Transportation which would combine the present Roads Department with the TTC. The Department would then be responsible for weighing priorities for both roads and transit. Clear accountability would be placed on Metro to delineate its transit policies and effectively co-ordinate planning decisions. The responsibility for decisions would not be ambiguous anymore, but clearly defined.

The operational arm of the TTC would still be required to operate as efficiently as possible, but would be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation. Policy decisions would be made by Metro Council and this department would be expected to carry them out. More direct accountability of decisions could result.

The Department should undertake an active and aggressive marketing campaign to specifically assess demand as well as promote new transit schemes. This would partially tackle the current problems in ridership.

Metro Council must encourage the local areas and municipalities to make decisions that not only correspond to Metro decisions, but promote transit. Two specific things that should be considered are: raising densities along major transit routes; and lower parking requirements for the commercial facilities which have direct subway access.

Financial arrangements for transit must be based not on a set formula, but on the needs of the system and the objectives which both the Metro and Provincial governments expect transit to fulfil. This is easier to accomplish when complete autonomy would be under Metro.

A Committee of the TTC and Metro Council members has been organized to provide a comprehensive look at the transit system. This is an ideal opportunity for a look at the system beyond just statistics and conflicts in policies. The discussions must deal with more than gaining additional revenue from the Province or stopping the decline in riders. Transit planning has not been effectively co-ordinated since its inception. The TTC has never been financially independent. These are facts which cannot be dismissed if the Toronto transit system is to truly be ranked as one of the best in the world.

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Charles K. Bens, Executive Director,

Mary Lynch, Senior Research Associate*

* Principal Author

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Charles E. Bane, Executive Director

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BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH
2 Toronto Street, No. 306, Toronto, Canada M5C 2B6
Telephone. (Area Code 416) 363-9265

Southwestern Regional Office,
241 Queens Avenue, Suite 6
London, Ontario N6A 1J8

