Governance of Transit in the Twin Cities Region

May 2011
Twin Cities Region Transit Overview

- Regular-route bus
  - Express
  - Local
- Light rail transit
- Commuter rail
- Bus rapid transit
- 2009 operating costs: $319 million
- 2009 riders: 81 million
Key Legislative Recommendations

• The Legislature should restructure the Metropolitan Council.

• The Legislature should extend the transit taxing district.

• The Legislature should allow consideration of the Dan Patch corridor.

• The Legislature should clarify the goals and priorities of transit in the Twin Cities region.
The Region’s Transit System Performs Relatively Well

- Compared to 11 peers, including Denver, Phoenix, Portland, and Seattle
- Performed well on “efficiency” measures
  - Operating cost per passenger
  - Fare-recovery percentage
  - Subsidy per passenger
  - Subsidy per passenger mile
## Efficiency Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Twin Cities Region</th>
<th>TC Region Rank</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Worst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating cost per passenger</td>
<td>$3.24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$2.59 (San Diego)</td>
<td>$5.36 (Dallas-Fort Worth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fare-recovery percentage</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35% (San Diego)</td>
<td>13% (Dallas-Fort Worth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy per passenger</td>
<td>$2.24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1.68 (San Diego)</td>
<td>$3.59 (Pittsburgh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy per passenger mile</td>
<td>$0.45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$0.35 (San Diego)</td>
<td>$0.82 (Dallas-Fort Worth)</td>
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The Region’s Transit System Performs Relatively Well

- Compared to 11 peers, including Denver, Phoenix, Portland, and Seattle
- Performed well on “efficiency” measures
  - Operating cost per passenger
  - Fare-recovery percentage
  - Subsidy per passenger
  - Subsidy per passenger mile
- Performed well on “service-use” and “access” measures
## Service-Use Measures

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passengers per revenue hour</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49 (Baltimore)</td>
<td>21 (Tampa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passengers per revenue mile</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2 (Portland)</td>
<td>1.5 (Tampa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger miles per revenue hour</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>315 (Baltimore)</td>
<td>104 (Tampa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger miles per revenue mile</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.7 (Baltimore)</td>
<td>7.7 (Tampa)</td>
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### But the Region’s Transit Governance Structure is Far From Ideal

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The Metropolitan Council  
- Metro Transit  
- Metropolitan Transportation Services

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<th>Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)</th>
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**Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)**
- The Metropolitan Council
  - Metro Transit
  - Metropolitan Transportation Services
- Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

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<th>Shakopee Transit</th>
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<th>Maple Grove Transit</th>
<th>SouthWest Transit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Red Rock Corridor Commission</td>
<td>I-35W Solutions Alliance</td>
<td>Gateway Corridor Commission</td>
<td>I-494 Corridor Commission</td>
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<td>The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority</td>
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Challenges Due to the Transit Governance Structure

- Fragmentation and complexity
- Distrust among some of the transit organizations
- Time-consuming coordination
- No agreed-upon set of priorities
The Composition of the Metropolitan Council Contributes to the Challenges

- Appointed by the Governor
- Limited accountability to the public
- Limited credibility with stakeholders and other transit organizations in region
- Limited stability
- Contributes to large number of transit organizations in the region
The Legislature Should Restructure the Metropolitan Council

- Mix of appointed and elected members
- Serve staggered terms
- Would improve:
  - Accountability
  - Credibility
  - Stability
- Could lead to more streamlined governance
Other Governance Recommendations

- Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)
- Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)
- Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council
- Suburban transit providers
Other Recommendations

• The Legislature should extend the transit taxing district to include all communities under the Council’s jurisdiction

• The Legislature should allow consideration of the Dan Patch corridor
Governance of Transit in the Twin Cities Region is available at:

www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us
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Funding Recommendations

• The Legislature should give the Met Council explicit authority to allocate “supplemental” MVST revenue within the Twin Cities region

• The Met Council should allocate the supplemental MVST based on regional needs

• The Legislature should extend the transit taxing district to include all communities under the Council’s jurisdiction
Transitway Planning Recommendations

• The Legislature should designate the Metropolitan Council as the lead for “New Starts” projects

• The Legislature should not commit capital funds to a transitway development project without ensuring operating revenues have been identified
Transitway Planning Recommendations

• The Metropolitan Council and stakeholders should:
  – Establish regional transit priorities
  – Prioritize potential transitways for future development

• The Legislature should allow consideration of the Dan Patch corridor
Establish Transit Goals for the Region

• The Legislature should clarify the goals and priorities of transit in the region

• The Metropolitan Council and stakeholders should:
  – Adopt a set of performance measures
  – Ensure comparable data
Jurisdictions of Various Transit Organizations in the Twin Cities Region
Service Areas of the Suburban Transit Providers

Maple Grove Transit
Plymouth Metrolink
SouthWest Transit
Shakopee Transit
Prior Lake Transit

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
Transitways in the Twin Cities Region