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PREFACE

This report on urban transportation planning in the Los Angeles, California metropolitan area is one of nine case studies undertaken by the Office of Technology Assessment to provide an information base for an overall assessment of community planning for mass transit.

The findings of the overall study are reported in the summary document, An Assessment of Community PlantzingforA4ass **Trasit, which forms the first volume of this series. The assessment was performed at the request of the Committee on Appropriations of the U.S. Senate, on behalf of its Transportation Subcommittee.**

The study was directed by the Office of Technology Assessment's Transportation Program Staff with guidance and review provided by the OTA Urban Mass Transit Advisory Panel. The firms of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill and System Design Concepts, Inc., were contractors for the study. This assessment is a joint effort, identifying different possible points of view but not necessarily reflecting the opinion of any individual.

INTRODUCTION

This report assesses how one of nine major United States metropolitan areas made its decisions about the development or modernization of rail transit.

The assessment of the nine cities attempts to identify the factors that help communities, facing critical technological choices, make wise decisions that are consistent with local and national goals for transit. The study investigates the following issues:

- Are there major barriers to communication and cooperation among governmental agencies involved in transit planning and operating? Do these barriers interfere with making sound decisions ?
- Do transit decisions reflect the combined interests of all major public groups, including citizen organizations, trade unions, the business community, and others?
- Does the planning process provide enough information about the advantages and disadvantages of alternative courses of action to provide a solid basis for making decisions ?
- Does the availability or lack of financing, or the conditions under which financing has been provided, unnecessarily limit the range of options that are considered?

The ultimate purpose of the work has been to cast light on those prospective changes in national transit policy and administrative programs which might improve, in different ways and to different extents, the way communities plan mass transit systems. The nine cities were selected to represent the full range of issues that arise at different stages in the overall process of planning and developing a transit system.

San Francisco, for example, has the first regional rail system built in decades, while Denver is planning an automated system, and voters in Seattle have twice said “no” to rail transit funding proposals.

The assessment of transit planning in each of the nine metropolitan areas has been an inquiry into an evolving social process. Consequently, the study results more closely resemble historical analysis than classical technology assessment.

This study employs a set of evaluation guidelines to orient the investigation in the nine metropolitan areas and to provide the basis for comparative judgments about them. The guidelines were derived from issues identified during preliminary visits to the metropolitan areas, a review of Federal requirements for transit planning, and an investigation via the literature into the state-of-the-art in the field.

The evaluation guidelines cover major topics which were investigated during the case assessment process. They deal with the character of the institutional arrangements and the conduct of the technical planning process.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Some of the most significant influences on transit planning are exerted by the organizations responsible for conducting the planning and making the decisions. Three guidelines were used to evaluate the institutional arrangements in the nine metropolitan areas:

- Agencies responsible for various aspects of transit decisionmaking should cooperate effectively in a clearly designated “forum”.
- The participants in this forum should have properly designated decisionmaking authority, and the public should have formal channels for holding decisionmakers accountable for their actions.
- Citizens should participate in the transit planning process from its beginning and should have open lines of communication with decisionmakers.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT: TECHNICAL PLANNING PROCESS

The technical planning process provides the information that public officials and their constituents draw upon in making plans and decisions. Four guidelines were used to assess the technical planning process in the nine metropolitan areas:

- Broad, explicit goals and objectives should guide technical planning and decision-making.
- A range of realistic alternative solutions should be developed.
- The evaluation of these alternatives should give balanced consideration to a full range of goals and objectives.
- A practical and flexible plan for financing and implementation should be developed.

During visits to each of the nine metropolitan areas, the study team interviewed the principal representative of the transportation planning institution and other main participants in the local planning process. The visits were supplemented by interviews with UMTA officials in Washington. Pertinent documents-official plans, reports, studies, and other material—were reviewed in each case.

The information thus collected was used in compiling a history of the transit planning process in each case area, organized around key decisions such as the decision to study transit, the selection of a particular transit system, and public ratification of the decision to pay for and build the system. The main political, institutional, financial and technical characteristics affecting the conduct of the planning process were then assessed in light of the evaluation guidelines.

The same set of guidelines used in assessing each case metropolitan area was employed in making a generalized evaluation of the metropolitan experience. The results of the generalized evaluation are summarized in the report, *An Assessment of Community Planning for* Mass Trasit: *Summary Report,* issued by the Office of Technology Assessment in February 1976.

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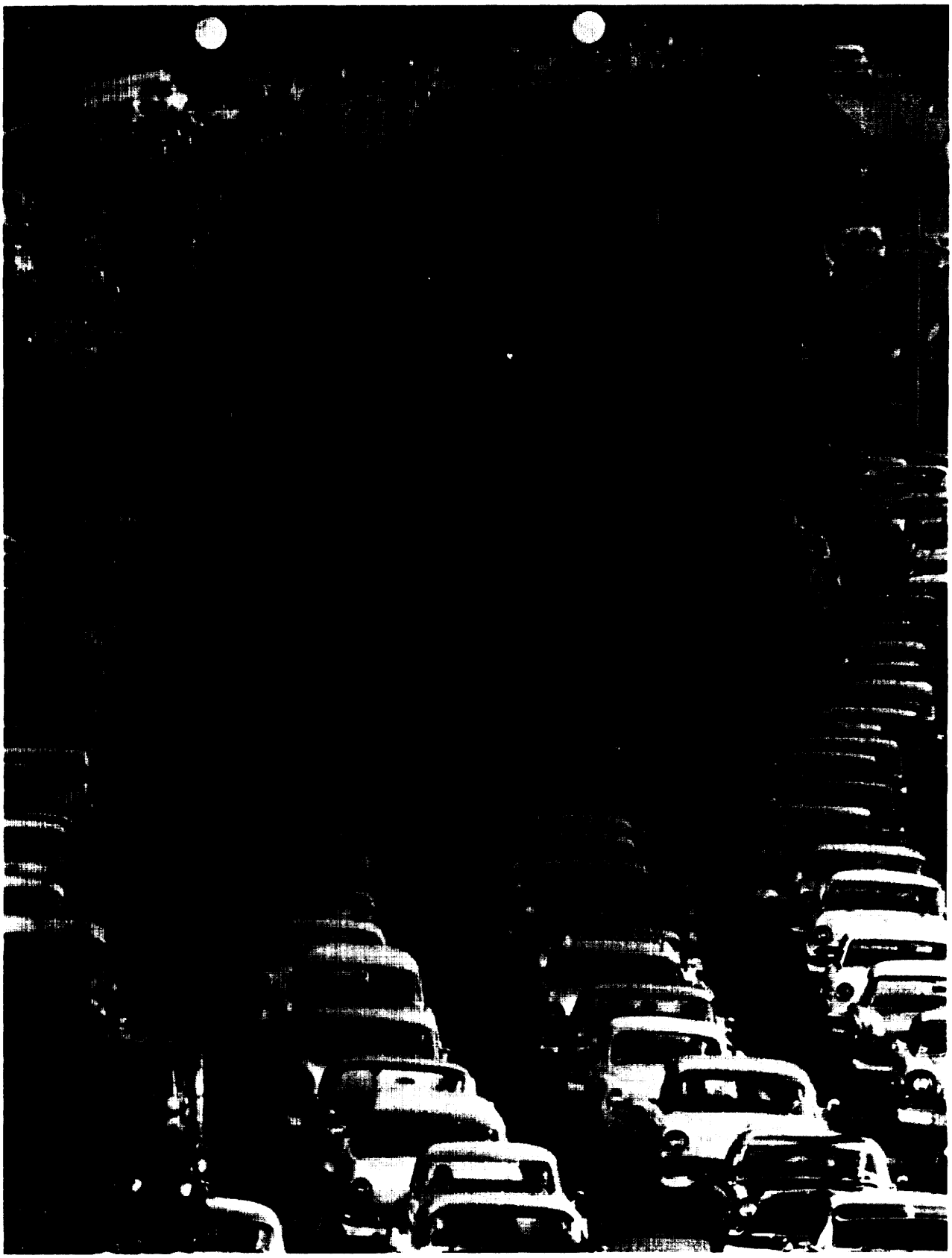
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Summary and Highlights

- Los Angeles, the second largest metropolitan area in the United States, spreads out in a distinctive style of development. Although the city's CBD is strong, major centers of employment and residential development are scattered throughout the area in a decentralized, low-density pattern.
- Planning for rapid rail in Los Angeles has been dominated since 1964 by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD). SCRTD has narrowly interpreted its mandate to develop a regional mass transit system by calling for a BART-type fixed-guideway technology.
- This preference, combined with the requirement to seek areawide financing support in regional referenda, has encouraged the design of extensive transit systems in order to provide adequate service to voters in Los Angeles suburbs.
- Ironically, the systems placed before voters in 1968 and 1974 were defeated partly because the suburbs were unwilling to bear the cost of so expensive an investment.
- With the encouragement of the State legislature, SCRTD has now taken a different approach by trying to develop a consensus on an acceptable "starter line," financed with "voter-free" State funding. This project, much more limited in scope than the previous ones, seems to have a good chance of success.
- SCRTD'S single-minded advocacy of a fixed-guideway rapid transit system has made it uneasy with the task of evaluating alternative transportation modes. UMTA has repeatedly urged SCRTD to provide a balanced view of alternative transportation options and to formulate short-term transit improvements.
- The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has not been strong enough to exert control over the activities of SCRTD. Although SCAG'S influence is growing, SCRTD until recently has operated with a considerable degree of autonomy. This situation hindered UMTA'S efforts since 1971 to ensure that the Los Angeles transit system was designed within the context of a regional transportation plan.
- SCRTD'S community involvement procedures have included public meetings and a citizens' advisory committee, as well as the two referenda. However, SCRTD has failed to structure and regularize participation at regional, corridor, and neighborhood levels.
- Planning for rapid transit in Los Angeles has become more sophisticated during the past 5 years, albeit in large part under pressure from UMTA and SCAG. SCRTD gradually has expanded the process to include an examination of regional and local objectives, more thorough analysis of alternatives, and greater consideration of short-term transit improvements.

Metropolitan Setting[1]

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Los Angeles lies at the heart of one of the most complex metropolitan regions in the United States. As a major center of commerce, finance, and industry in the West, and the Southern California region for many years has captured the imagination of those who see in the patterns of its development the shape of the American city of the future.

The Southern California region extends well beyond the Los Angeles-Long Beach metropolitan area (SMSA). As defined by the boundaries of the regional planning agency, the region covers 38,000 square miles containing a population of more than 10 million residents. Aside from Los Angeles County, the region includes the counties of Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Imperial.

The Los Angeles-Long Beach SMSA encompasses the most heavily populated area of the region. With a population of slightly over 7 million in 1970, the SMSA is the second largest in the United States. It covers 4,069 square miles and includes 76 municipalities other than the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The City of Los Angeles covers 464 square miles within the County of Los Angeles, and the boundaries of the county coincide with those of the SMSA.

Built on a vast plain surrounded by mountains on the north and east and the Pacific Ocean on the south and west, Los Angeles spreads out in a pattern of development that gives the region a distinctive style. Although the city's CBD is strong, major centers of employment and residential development are scattered throughout the area in a decentralized, low-density pattern of growth (see Figure 2).

During the past 25 years, shifts in population have reinforced this decentralized pattern. The largest change in population for the SMSA took place during the decade between 1950 and 1960, when the SMSA grew by 45.5 percent. During the 1950-60 period, the most pronounced growth took place in the suburbs. While the population of the City of Los Angeles increased by 25.8 percent and Long Beach grew by 37.2 percent—substantial increases in both cases—the population of the remainder of Los Angeles County increased by 66.6 percent.

Population growth during the next decade reflected the same pattern but indicated that the overall rate of growth had slowed. Starting with a total population of 6,038,771 in 1960, the entire SMSA increased by 16.5 percent to a total of 7,036,887. As it had the decade before, the distribution of this growth also favored the suburban areas of the county. In 1960, the City of Los Angeles held 41.1 percent of the population, Long Beach 5.7 percent, and the remainder of Los Angeles County had 53.2 percent. By 1970, the share of the two central cities had dropped to 39.9 percent and 5.1 percent respectively, and the percentage of the population living in the suburban areas of the county had increased to 55 percent.

One characteristic of this pattern of development is that the distribution of population has become relatively even throughout the county. Based on studies undertaken by the Southern California Rapid Transit District, Wilshire Boulevard in the CBD had the highest density (20 persons per acre) and percentage of population (18 percent) in 1970. The areas surrounding it were less dense but not so radically different in terms of population. In the northwest, the San Fernando Valley had 14.4 percent of the population and a density of seven persons per square acre. The areas to the southwest and south of the CBD averaged densities from 12 persons per acre to 8 persons per acre. East of the CBD, in the Santa Ana area, the figures are higher. In 1970, 17.2 percent of the population lived in the area at a density of nine persons per square acre. With 6 percent and 5.5. percent of the population respectively, Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley were considerably lower than the other areas; but their densities were comparable at seven and nine persons per acre.

This pattern of population distribution and density stimulated a considerable amount of debate

[1] See Figure 1, pages 20 and 21

LAND AREA (1970)
(square miles)

Suburban Ring	3,556.6
Los Angeles City	463.7
Long Beach City	48.7
Entire SMSA	4,069

POPULATION

	Suburban Ring	Los Angeles City	Long Beach City
1960	3,215,588	2,479,015	344,168
1970	3,868,658	2,809,596	358,633

DENSITY
(population/square mile)

	Suburban Ring	Los Angeles City	Long Beach City
1960	879	5,346	7,067
1970	1,088	6,059	7,364

POPULATION
Percent Change 1960-1970

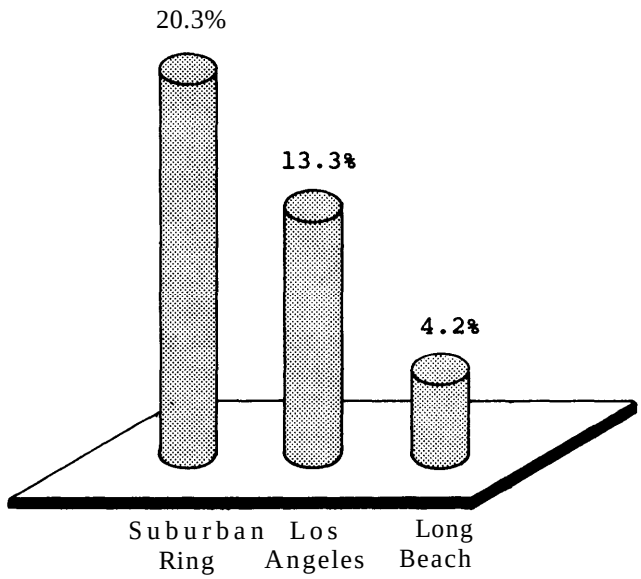


FIGURE 2:LOS **ANGELES METROPOLITAN CHARACTERISTICS**

Source: Urban Transportation Fact Book, American Institute of Planners and the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association of the U.S., Inc., 1974.

A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) includes a center city (or cities) , usually with a population of at least 50,000, plus adjacent counties or other political divisions that are economically and socially integrated with the central area.

about the type of mass transit system best suited to serve the area, Whether a high-capacity mass rapid transit system could be justified in any of these areas was a central question throughout the planning process.

EXISTING PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Los Angeles has come to be known as the freeway capital of the world. Although the region had a highly developed interurban railway network until shortly after World War II, it was replaced by an extensive system of freeways, and Los Angeles has become one of the most auto-dependent metropolises in the United States.

The total number of vehicles registered in the seven-county region was 7,095,138 in 1973. Automobiles amounted to 76 percent of this total, and Los Angeles County had 3.7 million automobiles or 69 percent of all automobiles in the region. It is estimated that 41 percent of the population owned an automobile in 1973 and that nearly 65 percent of the land area of downtown Los Angeles was devoted to the service, storage, or movement of motor vehicles.

Downtown Los Angeles lies at the center of an elaborate grid of freeways that links together the entire region. Roughly speaking, the grid is formed by four north-south freeways and several freeways running east and west, The first four are the San Diego Freeway (I-405) to the west of the CBD; the Long Beach and Harbor freeways connecting the city to Long Beach and Pasadena; and 1-605, which runs east of the city. The second group is formed by the leg of the San Diego Freeway that crosses to the east just north of Long Beach; the Santa Monica and Hollywood and Golden State freeways linking the city to the coast and San Fernando Valley on the west; and the Santa Ana, Ramona, and San Bernardino freeways that link the city to areas in the east and south. Interstate 210 and the Ventura Freeway mark the northern line of the grid.

Historically the system of interurban railways that provided public transportation to the region closely resembled this elaborate network of freeways. The Pacific Electric System, as it was called, had over 1,100 track miles connecting more than 50 communities in the region before it began to go into decline in the 1930's and was gradually replaced by buses.

The Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) is now responsible for the provision of public transit service in Los Angeles County. Although there are 13 other transit companies in the region, SCRTD is by far the largest. The number of buses it operated grew from 1,771 in 1973-74 to 2,111 in 1974-75. Although SCRTD ran a $44.6 million deficit in fiscal year 1974, the number of revenue passengers it carried had risen from 139.3 million riders in 1966 to 152.5 million in 1974 (see Figure 3). Table 1 shows the amounts of Federal assistance provided to SCRTD (and its predecessor, the Metropolitan Transit Authority) since the beginning of the UMTA program.

TABLE I.—Federal Assistance to Los Angeles Transit Programs From F.Y. 1962 to May 31, 1975

Type of Assistance	Federal Share	Total Costs
Capital Grants	$78,530,000	$110,717,000
Technical Studies	6,440,000	9,560,000
TOTAL	$84,970,000	$120,277,000

Source: Urban Mass Transportation Administration

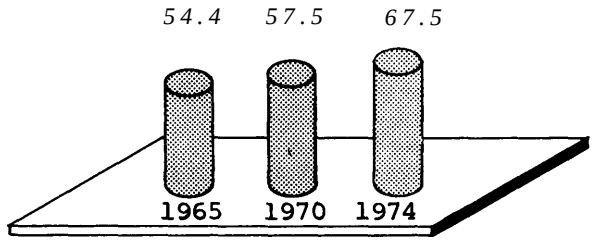
The statistical data on the mode and distribution of the journeys to work underscore the decentralized land use pattern described earlier and the predominant role the automobile plays in the county (see Figure 4). In 1960, 75 percent of the employed residents of the center cities and 86 percent of the employed residents of the suburban ring used automobiles to get to work. The figures for public transit use were 13 percent and 5 percent, respectively. In 1970, the pattern was even stronger: 82 percent of the employed residents of the center city and 89 percent of the employed residents of the suburban ring used autos to get to work, while the percentage of employed residents in each who used public transit was 9 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

The distribution of trips to work illuminates the comparative importance of trips to and within the suburbs over CBD-oriented trips. Between 1960 and 1970, the number of work trips into the center city increased by 7 percent; but the work trips from the central city into the suburban ring increased 41 percent, and work trips both beginning and ending in the suburban ring increased by 26 percent.

One other aspect of the region's travel patterns is worth noting, although it is not directly tied to the

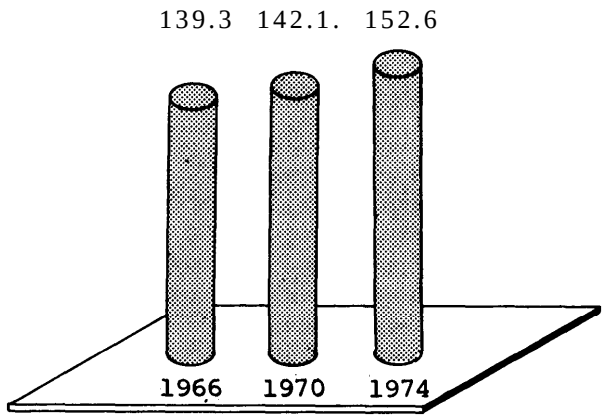
VEHICLE MILES OPERATED
(millions of miles)

Peak Year =1973 (63.8 million miles)
Low Year =1966 (53.7 million miles)



REVENUE PASSENGERS
(millions of passengers)

Peak Year:=1974 (152.6 million riders)
Low Year= 1966 (135.5 million riders)



NET OPERATING REVENUE
(millions of dollars)

Peak Year= 1968 ($4,217,534)
Low Year =F.Y. 1974 ~-$43,003,000)

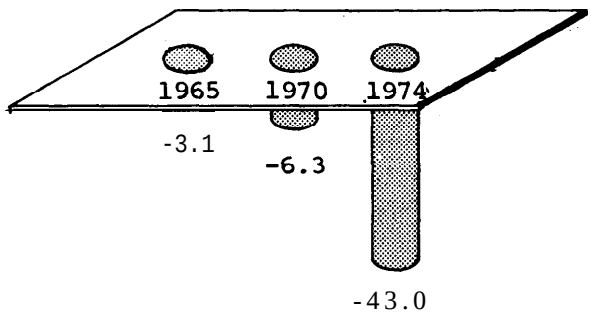
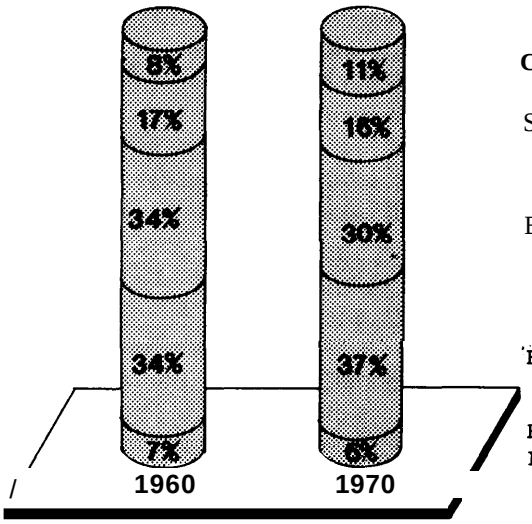


FIGURE 3 : LOS ANGELES TRANSIT OPERATIONS 1960-1974

Source: American Public Transit Association records for the Metropolitan " Transit Authority and the Southern California Rapid Transit District.

[1]**Data not** reported **for** 1965-1968.

WORK TRIP DISTRIBUTION



WORK TRIP MODE

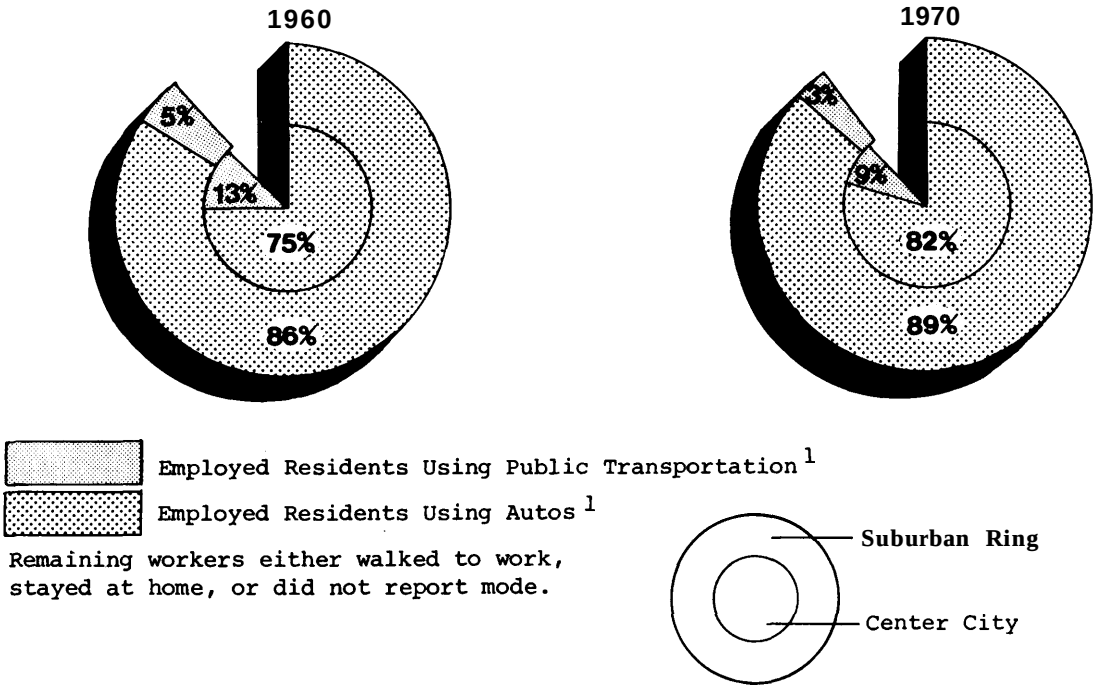


FIGURE 4: LOS ANGELES SMSA TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS 1960-1970

[1] **In both 1960 and 1970, 13% of auto work trips and 7% of public transit work trips were taken by Long Beach residents.**

Source: Urban Transportation Fact Book, **American Institute of Planners and the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association of the U.S. , Inc. , 1974.**

A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) includes a center city (or cities) , usually with a population of at least 50,000, plus adjacent counties or other political divisions that are economically and social 1 y integrated with the central area.

relationship between center city and suburban trips to work. The trips in the region tend to be short ones: approximately 50 percent of all personal trips in the seven-county region are less than 3.3 miles in length, and so percent of home-to-work trips are less than 6.4 miles in length. The fact that most of the travel is comparatively localized affected the debate about the planning of a rapid transit system for the Los Angeles area.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INSTITUTIONS

The organizations involved in the recent history of planning for rapid transit in Los Angeles represent regional and local interests. The State of California and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration also have played an important role in the process.

TABLE 2.—Federally Recognized Regional Agencies

Designation	Agency
A-95	Southern California Association of Governments
MPO	Southern California Association of Governments

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

The Southern California Association of Governments was created in 1965 to carry out comprehensive regional planning and coordination activities in the six-county region. SCAG'S membership is composed of III municipalities and the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Imperial, San Bernardino, and Riverside. SCAG'S activities are financed by an assessment on local governments and by Federal and State grants.

Since 1971, SCAG has been responsible for regional transportation planning. It functions as the A-95 review agency for the region[2] and the officially designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations

In addition to these Federally related responsibilities, SCAG also exercises a number of State functions. Under the provisions of Assembly Bill 69, SCAG must prepare the southern California regional element of the statewide transportation plan. The association also approves and allocates State transit assistance funds available under SB325.

The rapid transit planning carried out by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) is a subregional transit element of SCAG'S Regional Transportation Plan. Coordination between SCAG and SCRTD planning occurs through a series of SCAG'S existing committees, including the Comprehensive Transportation Planning Committee, which is a policy committee; the Transit Advisory Committee, which is concerned primarily with coordination of technical matters; and the Council of Planning.

Southern California Rapid Transit' District (SCRTD)

The Southern California Rapid Transit District was created by the California State Legislature in 1964 to operate bus transit service in Los Angeles County and to plan, design, and implement a mass rapid transit system. SCRTD'S jurisdiction covers over 4,080 square miles and includes bus lines extending beyond Los Angeles County into Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties.

SCRTD is governed by an Ii-man board of directors. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appoints five of the members; a special city selection committee representing 76 cities in

2 Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95 requires one agency in each region to be empowered to review all proposals for Federal funds from agencies in that region. Circular A-95 replaced Circular A-82, which was created to implement Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S. C. 3301).

3 The Urban Mass Transportation Administration and the Federal Highway Administration require Governors to designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in each area to carry out the "continuing, comprehensive transportation planning process . . . carried out cooperatively . . ." (the "3-C" process) mandated by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 and the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1974. According to joint UMTA-FHWA regulations published in September 1975, MPO'S must prepare or endorse (1) a long-range general transportation plan, including a separate plan for improvements in management of the existing transportation system; (2) an annually updated list of specific projects, called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), to implement portions of the long-range plan; and (3) a multiyear planning prospectus supplemented by annual unified planning work programs.

the county appoints four; and the mayor of the City of Los Angeles appoints two.

Aside from participating on SCAG policy and technical committees, SCRTD reviewed and coordinated work on the Study of Alternative Transit Corridors and Systems through an ad hoc technical advisory committee composed of representatives from the SCRTD, SCAG, Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, the Orange County Transit District, the CALTRANS regional office, and the League of California Cities.

Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC)

In March 1975 SCRTD established this committee to develop a consensus on an acceptable transit "starter" line. The committee has representatives from the State transportation department, SCAG, Los Angeles County, Orange County Transit District, the League of California Cities, and the City of Los Angeles. All these bodies would be responsible for providing financial support to the project in one way or another.

Los Angeles County

The Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County is responsible for land use planning in the county's unincorporated areas, transportation planning (which has meant highway planning), and health and welfare. The county's Department of Planning prepares a general plan.

City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles is a major institutional force on the regional scene. Its involvement in transit planning occurs in several ways. The Mayor of Los Angeles participates in SCAG and appoints members of SCRTD'S board of directors. In addition, the city's Department of Planning develops a general development plan that contains a transit element. All city departments concerned with transportation have representatives on a transportation technical advisory committee. SCRTD also has a representative on this committee. The City Council of Los Angeles also has an ad hoc committee on rapid transit.

League of California Cities

The League of California Cities provides a mechanism for coordination among the 78 municipalities in Los Angeles County. The League has a transportation task force made up of elected officials from several major transportation corridors in the Los Angeles County area. The League also provides a lobbying force for municipal-interests.

California State Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)

CALTRANS was established by Assembly Bill 69 in 1972. Part of the Department of Business and Transportation, CALTRANS is a multimodal agency incorporating the former Division of Highways. The bill creating CALTRANS also mandated the adoption by 1976 of a State transportation plan assembled from separate regional transportation plans.

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Critical History of Transit Planning and Decisionmaking

The recent history of planning for rapid transit in the Los Angeles metropolitan area reveals the range of issues confronting policy makers concerned with developing transit systems for today's metropolitan regions. During the past 10 years, the Southern California Rapid Transit District has presented two rapid transit proposals to the voters of Los Angeles County, and both times the proposals were voted down. Although some similarities exist between the first defeat in 1968 and the second in November 1974, the period between them witnessed the arrival on the scene of new institutional and political forces that have signaled fundamental shifts in the public perception of the role of rapid transit systems in metropolitan areas.

Between the two referenda, the context for rapid transit planning changed in the region. The Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) stuck firmly to its basic commitment to design and implement a rapid rail system for the region. But other participants in the process began to take a more active role and to raise critical questions about the advantages and disadvantages of such large-scale regional systems. Federal transit policy moved away from giving unreserved support to rail rapid transit; both the City of Los Angeles and the Southern California Association of Governments joined UMTA to urge the SCRTD to place more emphasis on community and neighborhood-level circulation and short-term transit solutions; and Los Angeles area citizens and their representatives increasingly began to raise questions about the financial feasibility, social equity, and political and technical wisdom of committing the area to the implementation of a long-term program that might become obsolete before it was finished. By the end of 1974, the planning process had not resolved the differences between all these contending policies and viewpoints, and after the failure of the transit referendum in November of that year, the major participants in the process once again began to search for a new institutional framework for rapid transit planning.

The subject of this historical narrative is the evolution of the regional planning process. After a brief review of the early history of transit in Los Angeles and a look at the failures of the SCRTD'S first attempt to finance the development of a rapid transit system in 1968, the narrative will trace the evolution of the plans that went before the voters in 1974. It will conclude with a description of the present status of rapid transit planning in the region. For some observers the story is one of a turbulent but increasingly sophisticated planning process; but for others it is nothing more than an example of the institutional struggles that for years have characterized decisionmaking in Southern California.

EARLY HISTORY

The history of transit in the Los Angeles region dates back nearly 100 years. Between the time the first interurban electric railway lines were organized in 1876 and the establishment of the Southern California Rapid Transit District in 1964, the region witnessed the growth and decline of what has been called the most complete and comprehensive system of interurban and suburban electric commuter transit in the Nation. The image of this system persists today in the pattern of the transit corridors proposed in SCRTD'S plans.

Los Angeles' rail transit system encompassed both municipal trolley lines and an interurban electric system. The Southern Pacific Railroad and Henry E. Huntington, one of its largest stockholders, figured prominently in the development of both systems. The first municipal street railway company, the Los Angeles Cable Railway Company, was organized in 1887. During the next 10 years, this company joined several other single-line companies serving the city to form the Los Angeles Railway Company. Following its failure, Huntington bought and reorganized it in 1899. The company remained a local passenger operation primarily serving the City of Los Angeles, and it made little effort to expand with the growth of the

city during the period from 1913 to 1925, when Los Angeles annexed several surrounding areas.

The growth of the region's extensive interurban electric railway system began in 1876, when four independent electric railway enterprises started serving the region. With the exception of the line connecting Long Beach and Wilmington, the routes centered on three major corridors connecting downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica, to Sawtelle and Hollywood, and to Monrovia in the San Gabriel Valley.

The several interurban railways were consolidated into the Pacific Electric Railway Company (P. E.) in 1911. The Pacific Electric Railway was owned by the Southern Pacific Company and operated both passenger and freight services. At its height the P.E. included over 1,100 track miles and formed a completely integrated system linking downtown Los Angeles with most of the cities in Los Angeles County and urbanized sections of Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties.

The Pacific Electric Company network had a definite influence on the development and eventual urbanization of the Los Angeles area. By linking the scattered cities of the county together, it provided a regional passenger and freight system that spurred suburban residential development in a number of ways. It made it possible for people to live in outlying cities and new suburban developments and work in downtown Los Angeles. And with its freight service, it provided a system for the distribution of goods throughout the region that facilitated the location of commerce and industry outside Los Angeles. The Pacific Electric's ownership of land development companies made its influence on land development even stronger. These subsidiary companies owned property in Glendale, Burbank, the San Fernando Valley, Redondo Beach, and Newport Beach.

The growth which the Pacific Electric helped promote eventually contributed to the demise of the interurban railway. These new developments of single-family dwellings on separate lots produced a pattern of settlement too dispersed to be effectively served by fixed-rail transit. The pattern was better served by more flexible modes of transportation such as private automobiles or buses. Gradually, as the growth of the metropolitan area accelerated, the P.E. began to operate more bus lines. Conversion of rail lines to bus service increased after 1930; and, as private auto ownership grew, freeway construction expanded and traffic congestion increased. The trolleys and electric interurban railway suffered ever-greater financial losses. Although World War II halted the abandonment of some of the lines, the number declined steadily after the war, until the last one stopped operating in 1961.

Los Angeles has come to be known as the freeway capital of the world, but the region's experience with the electric railways left an indelible image of a comprehensive regional rapid transit system in the minds of public transit advocates. Long before the abandonment of the electric railways, public officials and civic leaders began to make proposals to study and build subway lines or rapid transit systems. As early as 1906 twin subways were proposed from downtown Los Angeles to Fourth Street and Vermont Avenue, where the line would surface and continue to Santa Monica and Venice. A business recession stopped work on this project, but in 1924 a proposal was made to build a 4-mile subway. This proposal led to construction of the l-mile Hollywood Subway in 1925.

The Hollywood Subway was the one rapid transit proposal that was actually carried out. Two other extensive proposals were made before the war, but both were rejected because of high costs. In 1926 proposals were made to convert the Pacific Electric routes serving Santa Monica and Long Beach subway, but the projected $20 million cost of the Santa Monica extension and the $40 million cost of the Long Beach subway both were considered to be exorbitant. Again in 1933, during the depth of the Depression, proposals to extend the Hollywood Subway to Glendale and to build subways to Santa Monica and Pasadena along with an elevated railway to Long Beach also were rejected for reasons of cost.

Despite the upturn in transit usage during the Second World War, Los Angeles moved away from support for public transportation. Both the city and the county supported a freeway-building program in 1943, and by 1947 construction of California's famous freeway system was well underway.

The first major step toward revitalizing public transit and providing an alternative to the private automobile was taken by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in 1948. Representing a broad spectrum of business interests in the downtown area, the Chamber sent a Rapid Transit Action Program to the California State Legislature. This

effort led to the creation of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in 1951.

Civic leaders and public officials promoted the MTA for two reasons. They believed that an integrated public transportation system was essential to the economic health of the metropolitan area, and that a public agency should provide a system since private investment lacked the necessary capital.

In addition, there were intense rivalries between local communities over the control of transportation. MTA's supporters believed that one way to overcome these rivalries was to create an independent agency authorized by the State. The Governor of the State appointed the MTA board after consulting local officials.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority was empowered by its original enabling legislation to formulate plans for a mass transit system, but it was not empowered to develop or operate a system until that legislation was amended in 1957. Under its original mandate, it did a feasibility study and presented a plan for a monorail system connecting the San Fernando Valley to Los Angeles and Long Beach. Later on, once it obtained the power to purchase and operate existing bus lines with capital provided by the sale of revenue bonds, the MTA presented two more extensive rapid transit proposals. The one presented in **1960** was for a 75-mile, four-corridor line, and the other, presented in 1963, was a 64-mile, four-corridor line. It should be noted that during that period, in 1957, the Bay Area Rapid Transit District in San Francisco was created to plan, build, and operate a rapid transit system, and the successful referendum adopting the BART plan took place in **1962.**

The MTA revenue base was hardly sufficient to finance the implementation of a mass transit system. In an effort to establish a firmer financial basis for its activities, the MTA was abolished and replaced by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) in 1964.

The creation of SCRTD not only sheds light on the financial constraints restricting the MTA's operation but also reflects the political opposition that surrounded the MTA. The MTA's autonomy had been vigorously criticized by other municipal and county officials in the region. Many of these leaders considered the MTA to be excessively oriented to downtown Los Angeles, paying too little attention to the concerns of other local areas.

The character of SCRTD appears to reflect a response to these criticisms. The district did not extend beyond Los Angeles County, and the members of the board of directors were appointed by the county supervisors, the City of Los Angeles, and by a city selection committee representing 76 other municipalities in the district. However, many of the criticisms about MTA accountability y and lack of responsiveness are now leveled against SCRTD.

The creation of SCRTD set the stage for the 1968 referendum. Before discussing the proposal of 1968, it is important to outline several other institutional changes that occurred in 1964-65 to shape the context in which SCRTD operated. These affected the forum for transportation planning and comprehensive regional planning. Although they did not seriously hinder SCRTD'S activities in 1968, they later shaped the planning and decisionmaking process that led up to the 1974 referendum.

In 1960 and 1964, two organizations were established that immediately had bearing on the highway planning process. The first was the Los Angeles Regional Transportation Study (LARTS). Like its counterparts in other cities—such as Chicago (CATS), the San Francisco Bay area (BATS), and **Atlanta** (AATS)—the Los Angeles Regional Transportation Study was created by the State Highway Department to undertake long-range regional transportation plans. LARTS researched regional land use and travel patterns, and its population and employment forecasts provided the foundation for much of the technical analysis carried out in the planning for the 1968 and 1974 proposals by SCRTD'S consultants. LARTS issued a long-range transportation plan in 1968 that, predictably, was oriented toward highway travel and also included the proposal that led to the construction of the Ii-mile San Bernardino-El Monte busway. This busway has become an integral part of SCRTD'S transit system.

The birth of another highway-oriented institution occurred in 1964. Responding to the Federal requirements for a "continuous, coordinated, comprehensive" planning process contained in Section 134 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, the California State Highway Agreement established the Transportation Association of Southern California (TASC). Through a committee structure that included representatives of the State Highway Department and municipal and county transportation agencies, the TASC exer-

cised the required policy and technical review function for the regional transportation planning process. The Transportation Association operated as an independent institution until February 1971, when it merged with the Southern California Association of Governments (sCAG).

The Southern California Association of Governments was the third arrival on the regional planning scene in the mid-1960's. Organized in 1965 to undertake comprehensive planning for the Los Angeles region, SCAG'S membership includes the county governments of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and imperial, as well as the governments of 111 cities within these counties.

When it was created, SCAG was solely concerned with comprehensive planning for land use, open space, air and water quality, housing, and other non transportation matters. Although it is now the A-95 review agency and U.S. Department of Transportation's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, it did not take over transportation functions until it merged with the Transportation Association of Southern California in 1971.

DECISION ON SYSTEM SELECTION: THE 1968 REFERENDUM

The Southern California Rapid Transit District was given an explicit mandate by the legislature in **1964** to operate the existing public transit system as well as design, engineer, and implement a mass transit system. The enabling legislation authorized the district to submit to the electorate a plan for financing the construction of such a system

Soon after SCRTD was created, its board and staff took steps to carry out this mandate. As guardians of the transit mission in Southern California, they seem to have felt a driving obligation to follow the example of BART and to finish what the MTA had started but had been unable to complete.

Planning for the new system had begun by early 1966. SCRTD contracted Kaiser Engineers; Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall; and Coverdale and Colpitts to prepare the plans. (The first two firms later were members of the consulting team that prepared the plans for the 1974 referendum.)

Funds for the planning work came from two main sources other than revenues transferred from the MTA to SCRTD. In 1966 the State appropriated $3.6 million from State tidelands oil and dry gas revenue to complete the planning and engineering of the first stage of a rapid transit system. The following year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development gave SCRTD a $975,ooo technical study grant. This was one of the first such grants given for the development of a rapid rail transit system, and it marks the beginning of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration's financial support for this aspect of SCRTD'S work.

The rapid transit proposal was prepared in two stages. As required by the State legislature, a preliminary report was issued to the public for review in October 1967. After nearly 1,000 conferences with community leaders and public officials, SCRTD drew up a final plan that the board adopted in August 1968.

The preliminary report proposed a 62-mile rapid rail system with four corridors connecting in downtown Los Angeles. The north-south corridor ran from the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach, and the east-west corridor ran from El Monte to Fairfax Avenue. The total cost of the plan was $1.5 billion.

A final report was issued in May 1968. Reflecting the results of the period of review, the new plan contained a number of major changes. It was expanded to become a five-corridor, 89-mile rail system. According to one observer, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and other downtown business interests pushed for the adoption of the fifth corridor, which connected downtown Los Angeles to the Los Angeles international Airport.

Other major changes responded to both business interests and community demand for immediate improvements in transit service. Rather than use property taxes to finance the plan, the report recommended the use of the proceeds of a %-cent increase in the general sales tax. In order to expand transit service immediately, the report also recommended the development of 250 miles of express bus lines and **300** miles of feeder bus services.

Understandably, the total cost of this revised plan was also greater: $2.5 billion. This figure included approximately $8 million dollars for preliminary engineering for the second stage of the plan, and a cost escalation factor of 7 percent per year until **1975,** the year in which SCRTD'S consultants expected the system to be finished.

The Southern California Rapid Transit District adopted the final 89-mile, five-corridor plan on August 20, 1968. Between then and November, transit supporters campaigned for passage of Proposition A, the proposal for sales tax financing that the State legislature had authorized SCRTD to place on the ballot of the general election in November.

According to newspaper accounts, support for the sales tax approach was widespread in Los Angeles County. The Citizens' Committee for Rapid Transit, which was organized in August to promote the proposition, was directed by representatives of major businesses, civic organizations, and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Other groups supporting the proposal, listed by SCRTD board member Herbert H. Krauch in early May in an article in the L.OS *Angeles Times (May 2, 1968),* included the Los Angeles Chapter of the League of California Cities; the League of Women Voters; the L.A. Chamber of Commerce and the chambers of commerce from the Harbor District, Long Beach, and Wilshire Boulevard areas; Governor Reagan; the County Board of Supervisors; and city officials of more than 17 municipalities in the area.

Opposition to the proposal was presented by highway interests and outlying communities in the county. The Southern California Automobile Club opposed the plan and helped form the California Freeway Support Committee, which hired a public relations firm to mount a campaign against the proposal. The communities that opposed the plan generally were those that would not have been served well enough by the system to justify their participation in financing it.

The attitude of the *Los Angeles Times* also raised questions about the system. The paper's general editorial position argued that public transportation was important for the people of the region, but that citizens should make sure the system would live up to the claims of its advocates. Using information gleaned from a benefit-cost study of the proposal that the Stanford Research Institute had prepared for SCRTD, some of the advocates of the system were arguing that it would return $1.87 to the community for every dollar invested, that over 50 percent of the projected passengers would be former automobile users, and that the system would constitute a major economic boon to the region. Opponents of rapid transit questioned these claims, and their criticisms subsequently were supported by experts like Martin Wohl. The Los *Angeles Times* also unearthed a scandal involving the general manager of SCRTD during the period of the campaign.

The activities of the opposition had not produced a discernible groundswell of public reaction against the plan before the referendum. Nevertheless, when the voters of Los Angeles County went to the polls in November, they came out strongly against Proposition A. All the propositions on the ballot were defeated that year, and Proposition A, which by law had to receive 60 percent of the vote to pass, only received 44.7 percent.

Although no single reason for the proposition's defeat can be identified, two studies of the referendum cast some light on the question. SCRTD and Dorothy Corey Research did a post-election survey to analyze the reasons for the failure, and 2 years later a report prepared by a Harvard Law School group on Atlanta's 1968 transit referendum drew some interesting comparisons with the defeat in Los Angeles.[4] In general, these analyses point to the overall political and economic climate at the time of the elections, the socioeconomic background of the voters, and the technical characteristics of the proposed transit system.

The general climate in which the referendum took place did not favor a major public works project financed by a tax increase. Los Angeles was suffering from the consequences of the economic recession that hit the aerospace industry in 1968, and the residents of the area were by no means predisposed to face the possibility of both higher prices and unemployment. Both the city and the State had already raised taxes once, and the Federal Government had put a 10 percent surcharge on personal income taxes. The Presidential election campaign also had the Republican candidates blasting the Democrats for excessive government spending. It was hardly a propitious time to get the residents of the area to saddle themselves with the responsibility for financing a long-term project like the proposed transit system.

The findings of the survey taken by Dorothy Corey Research clarify how the favorable votes were distributed among different socioeconomic levels. In general, low-income center city residents

[4] Matthew A. Coogan et al., *Transportation Politics in Atlanta,* Cambridge, Mass., 1970.

and high-income suburbanites supported the proposition, while the middle-income population voted against it. Within the upper-income category—defined as people with over $20,000 a year income—56 percent voted in favor of the proposition; in the lower-income category, defined as people with less than $7,000 per year, 58 percent supported the proposition. In the middle, 42 percent of the people with incomes between $7,000 and $10,000 supported the proposition, and 47 percent of the people with incomes above $10,000 favored it. The distribution of these income groups within the metropolitan area also suggested that support for the proposition was strongest within the City of Los Angeles and weakest in outlying municipalities.

One ethnic aspect of the vote is noteworthy. The black population in the Watts-Willowbrook area strongly supported the proposition. But the Mexican-American population, which tends to be concentrated closer to the downtown area, did not favor it.

Some of the technical characteristics of the plan also raised doubts in the minds of public officials and voters. According to newspaper accounts, some residents of some of the outlying areas rejected the system not because it was too large and expensive, but because it was not large enough. These people believed that there was no point in paying for a system that would not provide their community with the service it needed,

Debate also arose about the rapid transit technology that SCRTD proposed to use. Following the lead of the Bay Area, SC RTD'S system would have used modern high-capacity fixed-rail transit cars similar to BART's. According to Coogan's comparative study, SCRTD'S critics argued against committing the region to such an inflexible technology at a time when new advanced technologies were being developed that might be better suited to the region's needs. News of cost overruns and technical difficulties with the BART system imbued this argument with special force in the minds of many critics.

The argument against adopting a large-scale, relatively inflexible system that would require a long time to build also coincided with the views of people who felt that the public transportation problem in Los Angeles needed an immediate solution. As many of SCRTD'S community review sessions showed, many people believed that the best remedy was the quick one of expanding and improving the existing bus system.

SCRTD'S proposed system was not helped by the criticism of the Regional Plan Association (RPA) of Southern California, an organization devoted to the promotion of integrated-regional planning. In its official bulletin, The Planner, this private organization sharply criticized SCRTD and its plan. The RPA's overriding concern was that the proposed system was not coordinated or integrated with other systems in adjacent areas in the region. In addition, the system was not related to other transportation modes in the corridors, failed to provide the governmental machinery that would be required to coordinate its development with environmental and land-use plans, and had not been justified on the basis of a benefit-cost analysis. s

The weight that should be given to any one of the reasons behind the defeat of the 1968 referendum is difficult to judge. Clearly, traffic congestion and smog were not onerous enough to overcome the basic attachment of area residents to their automobiles. Furthermore, SCRTD'S plan represented an expensive proposition that many people were unwilling to accept in bad economic times.

But it is worth noting that there are many parallels between the SCRTD'S defeat in 1968 and the failure in 1974. Along with the difficult economic situation in 1974, many of the questions that were raised about the plan in 1968 came up again in 1974. The record suggests that either the people of Los Angeles County have not yet reached the point where they see the need for rapid transit, or that SCRTD has not learned the lessons provided by past experience.

DECISION ON SYSTEM SELECTION: THE 1974 REFERENDUM

Three years went by before the beginning of the next period of rapid transit planning in Los Angeles. After the failure of the 1968 referendum, SCRTD concentrated on the management and improvement of its bus operations, and it was not until the latter part of 1971 that any serious new

[5] *The Planner,* **Regional Plan Association of Southern California, No. 6, August 1968.**

steps were taken to develop another plan for the region.

The round of planning that culminated in 1974 can be divided into two general historical stages. The first is the period of negotiation and preparation that preceded the official beginning of the planning effort, and the second covers the 2 years of technical planning that produced the plan underlying the proposal presented to the voters in 1974.

During the period between November of 1968 and the fall of 1971, several changes took place which influenced the transit planning process in Los Angeles. On the national level the promulgation of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969, the publication of Circular A-95 in 1969 by the Office of Management and Budget, and the passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1970, which authorized $3.1 billion dollars over 5 years for UMTA'S program, all influenced the direction of Federal policy. These changes altered the role of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). SCAG became the area A-956 agency, and by early February 1971 it was also responsible for setting policy for the regional transportation planning process when it merged with the Transportation Association of Southern California (TASC). The merger also made SCAG the 3-C agency[7] for the region. DOT already had begun to support this unified, multimodal approach in June 1970 when it extended the first of what became an annual series of technical studies grants to SCAG to support long-range transportation plans. UMTA was to support the transit element of this process by channeling funds through SCAG (see Table 2).

The prospect for funding rapid transit projects had improved during the 3-year hiatus. On the national level the passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1970 may have increased local expectation of transit funding.

At the State level in California, the passage of Senate Bill 325 (SB 325) in 1971 also made more money available for transit. The bill permitted a sales tax on gasoline for funding public transportation improvements, and in July 1972, the first year it went into effect, it made approximately $55 million available to SCRTD and the City and County of Los Angeles. The availability of this money was one of the factors that stimulated the renewed interest in rapid transit in Los Angeles.

The City of Los Angeles made the first public move that started the process leading to the 1974 proposal. In mid-November 1971, City Planning Director Calvin Hamilton presented the preliminary details of a rapid transit plan to the State, County and Federal Affairs Committee of the Los Angeles City Council. The committee was evaluating the progress that the city departments and SCRTD had made on rapid transit.

The Planning Department proposal called for the development of a $2.4 billion rapid transit program that would provide the region with a 100-mile system by 1990. The plan was part of the city's General Development Plan, and it suggested tax allocation bonds and levies on gasoline and motor vehicles as the means to secure the bonds needed to build the system. Hamilton urged the city to build the system even if the SCRTD would not.

Councilman Thomas Bradley used the committee session to underscore the lack of leadership and coordination among the agencies supposedly responsible for developing rapid transit. According to the Los *Angeles Times,* Bradley (who would succeed Sam Yorty as mayor in 1973) lamented SCRTD'S lack of progress on rapid transit and said the city's plan represented an attempt to provide some leadership in planning for a rapid transit system.

SCRTD'S General Manager Jack Gilstrap defended the district's record against these charges. He said SCRTD'S top priority had been providing mobility to the region's bus riders, and that it would take action on rapid transit in 1972.

SCRTD did not wait until 1972 to move on rapid transit, despite Gilstrap's statement. On December 7, 1971, less than 3 weeks after the City Council meeting, the district's board of directors unveiled plans for a $420 million rapid transit line linking the central city and south Los Angeles. The board billed the line as the first-stage "starter" line in the development of an overall master plan and pledged SCRTD to provide $70 million of SB 325 money to implement the plan. The pledge depended, however, on the county and the city contributing shares of the new funds they would be getting under SB 325.

~ The A-95 agency in each region is responsible for reviewing that area's requests for Federal grants.

[7] The 3-C agency is responsible for seeing that regional transportation planning is carried out in a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated process.

The plan proposed a 14-mile-long south-central line. Starting as a subway, it would serve the central city, become an elevated line near the Coliseum, proceed south through Watts, and terminate at Willow Brook at the planned Century Freeway. The system was to tie into a bus transit corridor planned for the freeway median strip, which would connect to the Los Angeles International Airport.

The battles that erupted following the publication of this plan pitted the city against SCRTD and eventually brought UMTA into the picture again. Two days after the plan came out, members of the Los Angeles City Council accused SCRTD of "grabbing for headlines" and failing to consult with the city. Although SCRTD board member Ed Macke denied the charges, saying his Advance Planning Committee had been studying the issue for 9 months prior to the announcement, the argument left no doubt that, at least as far as the city of Los Angeles was concerned, its public officials had not been consulted at all.

Shortly after the dispute began, the City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Rapid Transit began examining the role that Los Angeles should play in the new planning for rapid transit. Before the council adopted a position in early March 1972, the city's Technical Advisory Committee on Rapid Transit, a group composed of eight city department heads, presented a report to the Council's Ad Hoc Committee recommending that a rapid transit system be started in the Wilshire corridor. City Planning Director Calvin Hamilton headed the advisory committee.

The report of the city's Technical Advisory Committee argued that the Wilshire corridor was a far better place to put a starter line than the proposed south-central route. The Wilshire line, starting in subway at Union Station and running 13.1 miles to Westwood, was preferred for a number of reasons, Preliminary analysis showed it could divert more passengers from automobiles and would have a higher overall patronage. In addition, if special tax districts were created, the corridor offered the possibility of using tax increment financing schemes to help implement the plan. The report urged a thorough comparison of the two lines.

The Wilshire corridor for many years had been considered the logical location for a rapid transit lines by downtown business interests as well as city planners in Los Angeles. According to the executive director of the Committee for Central City Planning, the line was seen as the backbone of any regional system.

The Committee for Central City Planning, a private organization of downtown interests created to plan the development of a downtown urban renewal area, contracted the firms of Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, Todd; Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall; Alan M. Voorhees; and Development Research Associates to prepare plans for the large renewal area in 1969-70. These plans, which included a recommendation for a downtown PRT circulation system with a connection to the regional rapid transit system, were completed in the spring of 1972. Once approved, they were to become part of the city's General Development Plan.

Following the presentation of the Technical Advisory Committee's Wilshire corridor proposal in February, the City Council held hearings on the question of rapid transit and prepared both a majority and minority report on the course of action that the city should follow.

On March 2, 1972, the Council voted 10 to 4 in favor of the minority report of its Ad Hoc Committee on Rapid Transit. Both the majority and minority reports addressed the issues presented by SCRTD'S request that the city pledge its estimated SB 325 funds for 11 years for the development of the South-Central Line.

Although neither report accepted the SCRTD proposition, the minority report took a more cooperative position toward the district, Unlike the majority report, which recommended what amounted to a flat denial of the proposition, the minority report favored a modified version of the plan. The report's three main points were:

- "That the City Council impound all of its funds from Senate Bill 325 (sales tax on gasoline) for application toward development and construction of a mass rapid transit system for greater Los Angeles.

- "That the City Council request the County of Los Angeles and all cities within the Southern California Rapid Transit District to commit all their funds from SB 325 for the same purpose; and that SCRTD be requested to commit at least 50 percent of its funds from Senate BiIl 325.

- "That the City of Los Angeles join with SCRTD in filing a grant application to the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to conduct a study of feasibility in financing and priorities of routes for the initial stages of the system, and that this study include central, Wilshire and San Fernando Valley routes, as well as the possible use of existing rail lines."[8]

The Council's vote helped define the city's position toward future rapid transit planning. Although the prospects for getting the other 77 cities in the region to reserve SB 325 money were not bright, the adoption of the minority report indicated that the Council would go along with SCRTD'S effort to get assistance from UMTA.

During the months preceding the Council's March vote, the SCRTD staff already had taken steps to secure UMTA funds for planning studies. In December 1971, a SCRTD delegation met with Secretary of Transportation Volpe to discuss the south-central line proposal, and by February of 1972, UMTA representatives had met with SCRTD staff members to iron out the scope of the work that had to be undertaken in developing rapid transit plans.

At the time of the Council's March meeting, UMTA'S position on the impending new planning effort had become clearer. UMTA Administrator William Hurd expressed the Administration's strong support for the region's commitment to developing a rapid transit system, but he also indicated the UMTA financial assistance would be channeled through the Southern California Association of Governments, and that SCRTD'S work had to be closely coordinated with other regional transportation and comprehensive planning studies going on in the area. SCAG had become the regional transportation planning agency the year before, and UMTA wanted SC RTD'S rapid transit studies to be an integral part of the Unified Work Program for fiscal year 1973.

UMTA'S viewpoint also emphasized the need for SCRTD to vigorously maintain and improve the existing service. In addition, according to one source, UMTA also made it very clear that SCRTD could not merely resurrect the 1968 data and plans and expect to get capital assistance.

[8] *Valley News*, Durwood Scott, March 3, 1972.

The negotiations over the scope of transportation studies culminated in April 1972 at the annual meeting of the UMTA-FHWA Inter-Modal Planning Group (IPG) in Los Angeles. At that meeting UMTA insisted that all transportation activities be integrated in the Unified Work Program, and agreements were reached on the activities each agency would undertake. SCAG was to develop a long-range multimodal transportation plan for the region by June 1973. SCRTD was to carry out corridor planning studies covering the full range of possible corridors in the region and including an examination of all transportation alternatives. This work was to be phased into the development of SCAG'S long-range plan.

The IPG meeting also produced an agreement to start a transit study in Orange County which would be coordinated with both SCAG and SCRTD'S activities. This call for coordination went virtually unheeded until nearly two years later when SCRTD was sharply criticized for failing to coordinate its plan with the Orange County Transit District.

Following the IPG meeting, the final steps were taken to initiate the technical planning studies. In June UMTA approved SCAG'S application for a technical study grant of $1,025,000, out of which SCRTD was to receive some $600,000 to begin work on the first phase of its analysis of alternative transit corridors and systems.

That phase began in October 1972. Between then and the time of the 1974 referendum, UMTA, SCRTD, and SCAG were in a constant debate over the character and extent of SCRTD'S evolving plans for a rapid transit system.

Phase I

In October 1972, the Southern California Rapid Transit District began the first phase of the planning process that culminated in the referendum of 1974. During this phase a controversy erupted between UMTA and SCRTD that marked the beginning of a fundamental shift in UMTA'S policy toward fixed-guideway projects and defined the relation between UMTA and SCRTD for the remainder of the period.

The purpose of Phase I was to establish the basis for selection of the transit corridors and corresponding transportation modes that would be evaluated and developed in subsequent phases of the study. Accordingly, the phase included six basic work tasks: developing the evaluation framework for

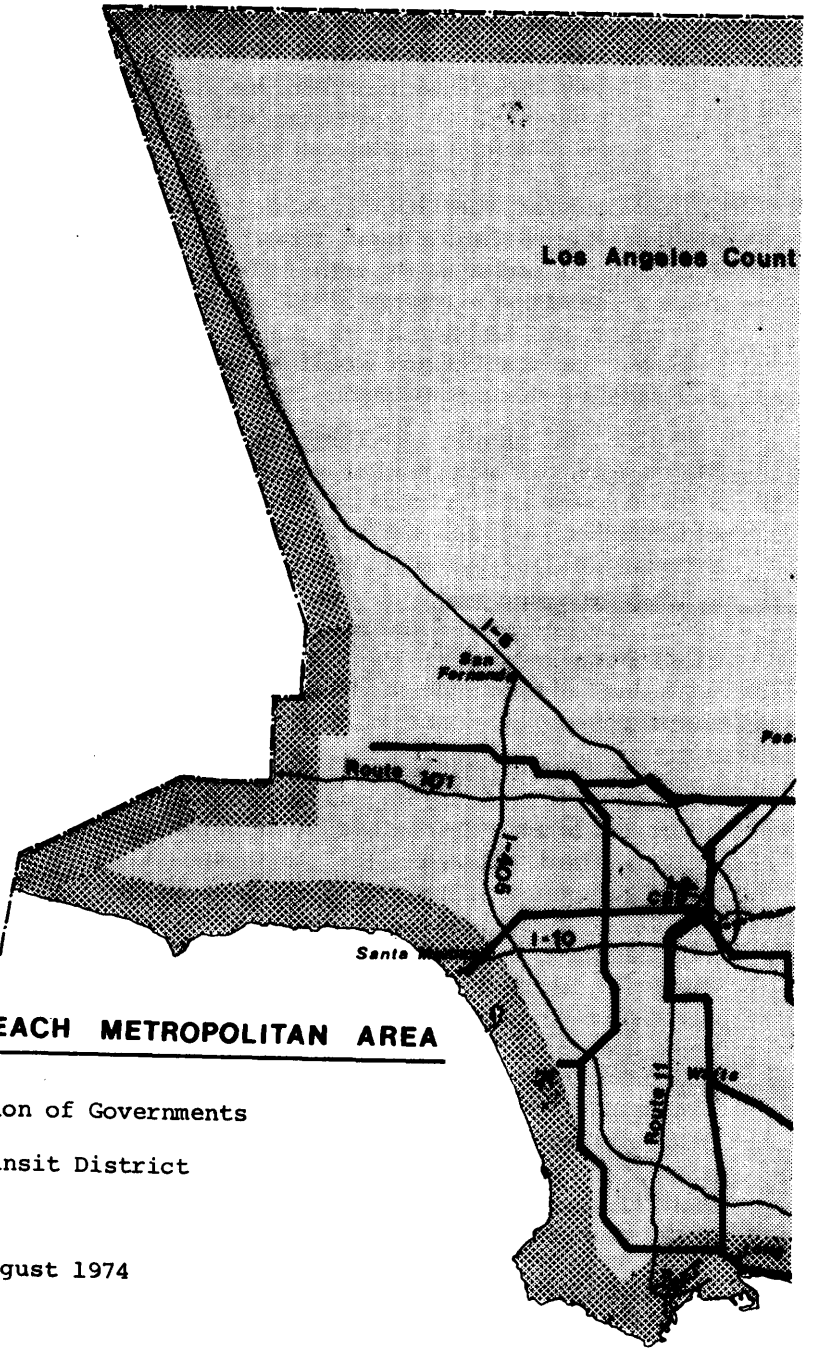


FIGURE 1 : LOS ANGELES - LONG BEACH METROPOLITAN AREA

Southern California Association of Governments

Southern California Rapid Transit District

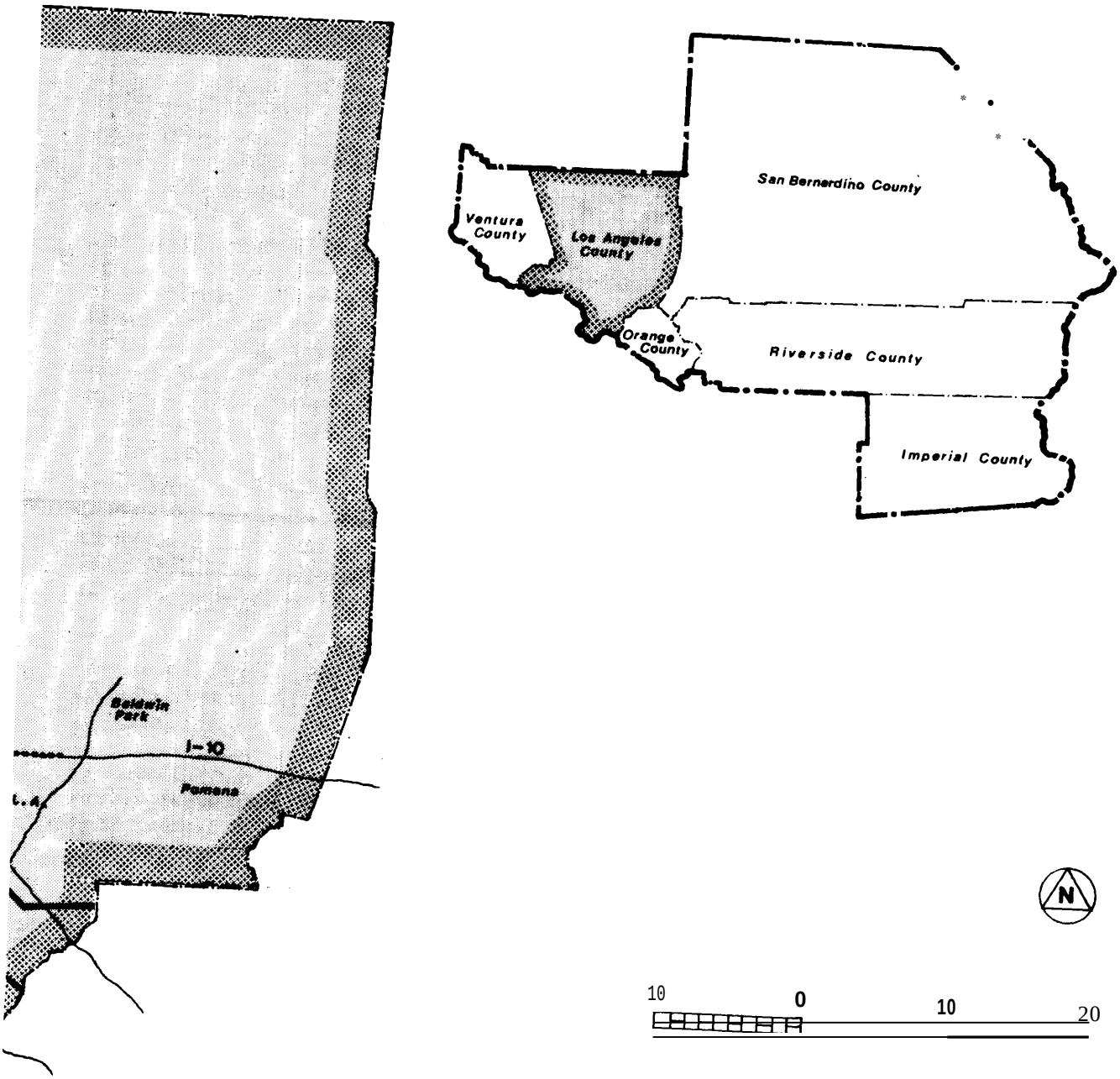
SMSA Boundary

145 Mile Guideway Program, August 1974

El Monte Busway

County Boundary

Major Highways


San Bernardino County
Ventura County
Los Angeles County
Orange County
Riverside County
Imperial County
Baldwin Park
I-10
Pomona
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corridor and system selection; identifying the alternative corridors; identifying alternative transit technologies; identifying the alternate transit technologies that could be applied to each corridor; examining the potential use of the existing railway network for interim commuter service; and, finally, analyzing the alternative methods for financing a rapid transit system. This phase of work involved an initial evaluation and ranking of alternative corridors and modes but not a full-fledged evaluation of their impacts and benefits. Such an evaluation was supposed to be undertaken in the second phase of the study.

SCRTD hired consultants who already had experience in Los Angeles to do the study. Three veterans of the 1968 planning process—Kaiser Engineers; Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall; and Stone and Youngberg—were responsible for engineering, planning, and financial studies, respectively. Three of the other firms—Alan M. Voorhees and Associates (AMV) and Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, Todd/Kennard & Silvers— had worked on the downtown renewal plan for the Committee for Central City Planning. They were in charge of patronage and revenue estimates and socioeconomic and environmental impacts, respectively. The team was managed by Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.

Less than 3 months after Phase I started, UMTA began pushing for a clearer definition of the study and its relationship to the long-range transportation plan being developed by the Southern California Association of Governments. Two events precipitated this action by UMTA.

One of these occurred in November 1972 soon after the study began. After a year of debate and revision the California State Legislature sent Assembly Bill 69 to Governor Reagan for his signature. The bill, which the Governor signed into law on December 10, 1972, established a new multimodal California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) and called for the adoption of a State transportation plan. The State plan was to be based on plans formulated at the regional level by the accredited regional planning entities.

The Southern California Association of Governments is the certified regional agency responsible for long-range transportation planning in the Los Angeles metropolitan area; area transit agencies like SCRTD and the Orange County Transit District are responsible for preparing the subregional transit elements of the long-range plan.

The provisions of Assembly Bill 69 set the deadline in completing the State plan for 1976 and required that the regional plan be finished by April 1975. Responding to this stipulation, the Southern California Association of Governments decided to postpone the completion of the long-range transportation plan it was developing with assistance from U.S. Department of Transportation/UMTA until the 1975 State deadline.

This decision was unacceptable to UMTA. As a matter of policy, UMTA insisted that a long-range transportation plan had to be developed in order to provide the framework for assessing transit proposals in the region. If adoption of such a plan were postponed, UMTA would have no basis for evaluating the relationship of SCRTD'S transit proposals to other short- and long-term regional policies and projects.

The steps UMTA took to rectify this situation are reflected in the agreement reached by UMTA, SCAG, and SCRTD at the annual Inter-Modal Planning Group meeting in April 1973. UMTA also sought to resolve its controversy with SCRTD at this meeting.

UMTA'S dispute with SCRTD began before the work on Phase I started in October 1972. UMTA'S acceptance of the work program in the study was based on the understanding that not only all alternative corridors but also the full range of transit modes would be analyzed. Such an analysis would include conventional all-bus transit operations as well as advanced technologies.

SCRTD held a different view of the matter. Convinced that its mandate required the development of a fixed-guideway system, SC RTD'S general manager told the consultants for the study that low-capital-intensive alternatives, such as buses on freeways or buses on radial arterials, were not to be considered as alternatives to a grade-separated rapid transit system. Responding to this stipulation, the consultants did not consider an all-bus system in their analysis of alternatives.

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration did not learn about this situation until January 1973. According to one source, when it did, UMTA staff immediately began to negotiate a revision of the scope of the study that included the bus alternatives. These efforts also were concluded at

the Inter-Modal Planning Group (IPG) meeting in April.

The agreement reached at that meeting involved the interrelated issues raised by UMTA'S relation with both SCAG and SCRTD. Instead of postponing its entire long-range transportation plan until the State deadline in 1975, SCAG agreed to prepare a "Critical Decision Plan" by November 1973. This plan would be used to evaluate critical highway and transit issues prior to developing a more refined regional plan by April 1975.

SCAG also agreed to develop a short-range regional transportation improvement program in order to respond to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality guidelines. According to UMTA, the transportation agencies in the region had not cooperated a great deal with EPA before the IPG meeting.

The program for SCRTD, which emerged from the IPG meeting, required a restudy of all transportation alternatives within the corridors analyzed by SCRTD'S consultants. SCRTD was informed that UMTA would not provide any funds for preliminary engineering until this analysis was complete and SCAG had finished its Critical Decision Plan.

UMTA'S insistence on a thorough study of all alternatives rested on a number of considerations that eventually filtered into the national debate about the Administration's position on rapid transit. As UMTA'S program grew and more cities began to develop plans for rapid transit systems, UMTA found itself faced with the prospect of a vast increase in the demand for capital funds to implement these projects. One effort the Administration made to stem the tide was to try to develop criteria for capital grants that would allow decisionmakers to determine which types of transit technology were most suited to different types of urban areas. Although no official criteria were adopted, this effort raised the question of whether Los Angeles had enough density to support rapid transit. Transit advocates argued that the region as a whole had sufficient density to support a rapid transit system. Skeptics, including some UMTA officials, argued that a less expensive alternative such as a bus system might provide a service more appropriate to such a dispersed metropolitan population.

Another related part of UMTA'S effort to dampen local enthusiasm for expensive large-scale fixed-guideway systems was the Administration's policy requiring the analysis of all transit alternatives. It was believed that a thorough examination of the costs and benefits of alternative systems and modes would lead local planners to examine less costly solutions. The agreement reached at the IPG meeting was designed to achieve this end.

SCRTD'S Phase I report was published in March 1973, before the IPG meeting took place. Phase 11 began shortly thereafter, and its work program was supposed to have included the results of the IPG meeting.

Phase II

The primary objective of Phase II of SCRTD'S study was to develop a final proposal for a transit system for the count y. Recommendations for short-term transit projects, as well as a long-term rapid transit system, were to be included in the proposal. After it had been reviewed at a series of public hearings and community meetings, SCRTD'S consultants were to prepare a final refined plan that would be submitted to the voters in either June or November 1974.

The consultants began work on Phase II in April 1973 and reported their recommendations in July 1973. The Phase II report recommended a regional master plan for public transit and a short-term program.

The master plan set a long-term goal for a regional system. It recommended a 250-mile system of rapid transit serving the region's most heavily traveled corridors.

The short-term program called for the immediate expansion of the bus transit system. Based on a 5-year implementation period, the program included an increased number of buses, express bus service on freeways, priority treatment of buses on arterials, and additional park-and-ride lots. This plan was to provide the basis for feeder services to the rapid transit system.

The first stage of the long-range rapid transit plan called for the construction of 116 miles of rapid rail transit facilities and 24 miles of exclusive busways. This 116 miles covered the following corridors:

- Los Angeles/CBD and Wilshire Boulevard;
- San Fernando Valley and Hollywood;
- Los Angeles International Airport and southwest;

- The south-central route from SCRTD'S 1971 plan;
- Santa Ana;
- El Segundo and Norwalk (busway); and
- San Gabriel and Pasadena (busway).

The total cost of this recommended system was $3.3 billion in 1973 dollars. Using a 9 percent escalation factor over a 12-year period of construction, the cost rose to $6.6 billion.

The financing plan for the system rested on a mixture of Federal and local sources. Over two-thirds of the capital cost was expected to come from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, and the bulk of the remaining requirements were to be financed by bonds supported by a .75 percent sales tax. SCRTD also planned to draw on its share of SB 325 funds.

The reaction by public officials to SCRTD'S Phase II recommendations raised more questions than plaudits. A number of local officials criticized it sharply, and UMTAconsidered the publication of the report an irresponsible act of defiance.

Local criticism of the plan came out at public hearings held on August 1, 1973, by the Subcommittee on Los Angeles Regional Transportation of the California State Assembly Committee on Transportation. Chairman Alan Sieroty took testimony from a number of witnesses including Los Angeles Mayor Thomas Bradley; Los Angeles County Supervisor Peter Schabarum; Ralph Clark, an Orange County Supervisor; the Executive Director of SCAG, Ray Remy; and two private citizens, Robert Profet, a consultant, and Laura Ingman, a representative of the League of Women Voters.

Mayor Bradley had taken office approximately 2 months before the hearings and his testimony reflected the program he had outlined to his own city department chiefs in June. While supporting the need for a regional transit system, Bradley said that energy shortages and EPA Air Pollution Guidelines made it imperative to develop immediate action programs for transit. An imaginative "immediate" program which used buses, carpools, jitney cabs, and "dial-a-ride" minibuses was necessary. Bradley pointed out that a well-planned program of this sort could help boost transit ridership in corridors in which rapid transit later would be introduced.

Aside from the need for an "intermediate" action program, the mayor also pointed out that the high cost of SCRTD'S regional system raised questions of social and financial equity. Sales tax financing often affected those least able to pay, and Bradley felt that some mechanism was needed to offset this burden. He suggested finding a way to guarantee a low transit fare, as had been done in Atlanta in 1971.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Pete Schabarum, who had opposed SCRTD consistently, raised questions about the purpose of the plan. After pointing out that SCRTD had not yet made any technical data available to the county, he emphasized the need for a system that served suburban as well as local community trips. He claimed that the SCRTD plan was too downtown-oriented and, moreover, that it did not adequately justify the corridors selected, the specific types of interim projects, or the ultimate benefits to be derived from the expenditure of $6.6 billion on a rapid transit system that would carry only about 4 percent of the total trips in the region. With these issues in mind, Schabarum questioned whether SCRTD should be given a "blank check" to build a transit system.

The testimony of Orange County Supervisor Ralph Clark raised an issue that was reminiscent of 1968. Clark was chairman of the board of the Orange County Transit District as well as chairman of SCAG'S Transportation Planning Committee. He voiced four main concerns about the plan. The first was that it was so exclusively concerned with Los Angeles County that it neglected to give any consideration to the connection between the county system and other regional systems, such as the plan that was being developed by the Orange County Transit District. Secondly, the SCRTD plan appeared to be based on excessively high regional population and employment projections, which SCAG and Los Angeles County were in the process of reducing. Rather than the 16 million population figure projected for the region in 1990, SCAG was considering a figure somewhere between 12 and 14 million. Thirdly, the cost of the SCRTD system was so high that it would put other communities and districts that needed funds at a severe disadvantage; and, finally, Clark pointed out that the plan made no provision for direct service to Orange County. This lack of regional coordination between systems was an excellent example of the problems of subregional transportation planning.

SCAG'S representative, Executive Director Ray Remy, did not comment directly on the plan, but he did explain that the amount of funding required for it would exceed the Federal limit of 12.5 percent of grant monies to any one State.

Both of the private citizens who testified before the State Assembly Committee supported SCRTD'S extensive series of public review meetings and expressed the belief that the region needed a rapid transit system. However, Robert Profet, a transportation consultant who had advised BARTD, pointed to the urgent need to devise a process by which the many outlying communities within SCRTD'S jurisdiction could participate in the formulation and evaluation of policies, objectives, and priorities for the transit district. This issue came to the fore later on when many communities failed to support the system because it appeared to offer them so little.

One other person who testified at the hearing is worth mentioning because his testimony reflects the efforts that were made by the aerospace industry in Los Angeles to influence the planning process. This spokesperson was Jack Irving, vice president of Aerospace Corporation, a scientific/engineering research company engaged in work for government agencies primarily involving the space and military fields. Aerospace recently had presented a PRT proposal to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. In lengthy testimony at the hearing, Irving described the basic concept of PRT and the PRT system Aerospace proposed for Los Angeles, claiming that this system would not only be less costly to construct than conventional heavy rail but also that its passenger revenues would cover operating costs. Another strong supporter of the PRT idea was Baxter Ward, a member of the Board of Supervisors, who strongly advocated rejecting RTD's proposal in favor of a PRT system. The industry's exact role is difficult to document without more investigation. But it is clear that manufacturers were out to sell their high technology products long before the planners had defined the technological requirements of the system.

The most pronounced reaction to the SCRTD Phase 11 report occurred before the subcommittee held its hearings and before the report was released to the public. This was the reaction of UMTA'S staff, who had urged SCRTD not to release the report because its recommendations did not rest on a complete and thorough analysis of alternatives.

The dispute between UMTA and SCRTD centered on the latter's apparent refusal to give serious attention to an all-bus alternative. Despite the IPG meeting, SCRTD treated the all-bus alternative in what appeared to be a perfunctory manner. Although the Phase II report does consider an all-bus alternative, the alternative is dismissed as being too costly and less effective in reducing congestion and pollution than a fixed-guideway system. The report did state that the bus alternative might be suitable to provide community transit service, if this alternative were integrated with mass transit line-haul services.

UMTA renewed its efforts to get SCRTD to analyze alternatives more thoroughly after the Phase II report was released in July. At that time, SCRTD submitted drafts to UMTA of the contracts for the work the consultants were to do on Phase III. In SCRTD'S mind, the purpose of Phase III was to refine the Phase II plan and, accordingly, the draft contracts contained no provisions for further analysis of alternative transportation modes or corridors.

UMTA seized this opportunity to revise the work program for Phase III. In mid-August, after discussions with SCAG and SCRTD, UMTA presented a revised work program that called for a full evaluation of all alternative modes, as well as a corridor-by-corridor analysis. This evaluation was to include the corridors recommended in the Phase II report. Given the emphasis of this effort, UMTA suggested that the transportation consultants (Alan M. Voorhees & Associates), rather than the management group (Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.), be made the project managers, Another objective of the revised work program was to ensure that SCAG and SCRTD integrated their efforts more thoroughly. UMTA made it clear once again that the SCRTD Phase 111 work had to be closely coordinated with SCAG'S Critical Decisions Plan.

SCRTD reacted strongly to UMTA'S action, arguing that the revised work program made it impossible for SCRTD to place a rapid transit plan on the June 1974 ballot. General Manager Jack Gilstrap emphasized SCRTD'S legislative mandate to design and implement a comprehensive mass rapid transit system, and reiterated that an all-bus system could not satisfy the requirements of the region.

Before the negotiations over the consultant's contract were completed, UMTA Administrator

Frank Herringer traveled to Los Angeles to make UMTA'S position clear. Speaking to the SCAG General Assembly in September, Herringer emphasized that UMTA would examine all the alternatives in order to determine whether fixed rail or buses on freeways were the most cost effective. With limited resources, UMTA was obliged to examine closely the way it allocated capital assistance.

The month after the UMTA administrator's speech, SCRTD submitted to UMTA the revised consultant contracts, which reflected the stipulations UMTA had laid down in August. UMTA approved the contracts and the final phase of the planning process began.

Phase III

The third phase of SCRTD'S planning work lasted roughly from October 1973 until May 1974. During the period a number of plans were debated, and both SCRTD and SCAG approved a plan to present to the voters in November. Despite their action, however, it was clear that no strong consensus on a transit plan existed in the region.

The SCRTD consultants presented a report in March 1974 that contained an entirely new approach. Rather than flatly recommending one short-term and one long-term proposal, the report coupled short-term (1- to 3-year) and intermediate-term (3- to 8-year) proposals with a number of alternative long-term proposals.

The short-term proposal contemplated immediate improvements in local and express bus service, while the intermediate-term proposal called for a continuing program to expand the bus fleet and improve service. The fleet would have been expanded to **2,700** buses in 1977 and **3,4oo** by **1984.**

The long-term plan represented a significant new departure. Recognizing the financial constraints on UMTA, the plan took an incremental approach that rested on four "building blocks," each of which represented a different-size rapid transit system requiring different levels of investment and different assumptions about the extent of Federal participation in that investment.

The least extensive plan was Level I. It covered 33 miles at a total escalated cost of $2.7 billion over an 8-year implementation period and assumed only 10 percent participation from UMTA.

The second, Level II, was 57 miles of fixed guideway costing $3.9 billion over an 8-year period of implementation. UMTA'S share of the cost would be 35 percent.

Level 111 was 77 miles. It would take 9 years to implement, for a total cost of $5.2 billion, 50 percent of which would be contributed by UMTA.

Level IV, the most extensive, covered 121 miles. It would cost $7.5 billion over a 12-year implementation period, and UMTA'S share of the cost was assumed to be **60** percent.

All these alternatives included the short- and intermediate-term programs. Level IV was a modification of the Phase II proposal of July 1973.

This "Building Block" plan, presented in March, set the stage for the debate that culminated in summer 1974 with the adoption of a plan more extensive than any of the four long-range alternatives. Although the plan seemed to offer something for everyone and UMTA regarded it as a constructive approach, it stirred up opposition from many of SCRTD'S suburban critics and touched off a round of proposals and counter-proposals that finally concluded in the adoption of a 145-mile system with no incremental features.

The suburban critique of the step-by-step, building block approach rested on the length of time it would take to provide service to outlying jurisdictions. In his article for Railway *Age* (June 1, 1974), Tom Kizzia quotes one businessman who helped kill the incremental approach: "I'm **50** years old," he said. "With these priorities I would be long gone before rapid transit ever got my way."[9]

In April and Mayseveralother voices entered the forum. Although they were not directed at the March plan as such, they illustrate the lack of consensus that existed around any one plan.

In April, in a draft of its Critical Decisions Plan, whose publication had been delayed, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) took a position on transit reflecting an approach to regional growth that ran counter to SCRTD'S rapid transit plans.

SCAG'S view was that the region should be decentralized as it grows, by developing activity centers other than the Los Angeles CBD. With this

[9] **Tom Kizzia, "Los Angeles, Will Tracks be Back?",** *Railway Age,* **June** *10, 1974,* p. 30.

in mind, the draft plan recommended reemphasizing line-haul commuter trips and improving local community transit services. Accordingly, the recommendations in the plan took a gradualistic approach to the development of transit in the region. They called for implementing immediate transit improvements and waiting until the results of their improvements were known before proceeding with investments in a fixed-guideway system. The report also suggested that an intermediate-capacity rapid transit system capable of carrying up to **25,000** passengers per hour seemed more compatible with original goals and policies than a heavy-rail, high-capacity system.

On May **16,** SCAG held public hearings on this draft. Although there was extensive criticism of SCAG'S failure to have more public participation in the preparation of the plan, the most forceful criticism of the plan came from SCRTD and its counterpart in Orange County. Both took particular issue with the recommendations regarding fixed-guideways.

The Critical Decisions Plan was revised after these hearings and a final plan was adopted by the Executive Committee of SCAG on June 13, 1974. This report established the framework for evaluating regional transportation in the *Preliminary Regional Transportation Plan* issued by SCAG in November 1974 as part of the statewide transportation planning process,

The mayor of Los Angeles stated his views on the extent of a new system in early May. Addressing the Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Rapid Transit, Mayor Bradley suggested that an intermediate capacity fixed-guideway system of **50** to **70** miles would be a suitable initial step, The mayor later reemphasized the question of the system's capacity, suggesting that it could be determined during preliminary engineering.

The State of California issued a report on May 31, 1974, on both the SCRTD and the Orange County Transit District (OCTD) plans. Prepared by CALTRANS for the California Legislature, the evaluation raised two points that echoed the criticism of others. First, the report recommended that the SCRTD board of directors strongly consider adopting an intermediate-capacity rapid transit system approximating the mileage of Level IV **(120** miles), as well as an improved feeder and local circulation system, It also suggested that this be done after making a thorough comparative evaluation of such a system in relation to a high-capacity system.

Second, CALTRANS raised a point, made less than a year before at the hearings on the Phase II report, that SCRTD and OCTD had to coordinate their planning and design work more effectively in order to achieve an integrated regional system.

All these suggestions and proposals had been raised by the time the board of directors of SCRTD moved toward a decision on the system they would select to put on the November ballot. In addition, one of SCRTD'S consultants had raised a fundamental question of whether more than **60** miles of fixed-guideway was needed for the foreseeable future.

In May 1974 Voorhees prepared an interim report indicating that there was a need for a 60-mile fixed-guideway system. Such a system would cost between **$2.4** and **$3.2** billion. AMV'S report concluded that **60** miles was clearly justifiable and that a case might be made for a system as long as **120** miles. The issue, the Voorhees interim report said, "is whether it is necessary and desirable for the region to commit to a fixed-guideway development beyond **60** miles at this time. " The report went on to say that this question was not so much a technical or financial issue, but a question of basic policy.

The issues raised in the interim report failed to reach the public forum. At a presentation to UMTA representatives, SCRTD had consultants from Kaiser rather than Voorhees explain the proposed plan. They contradicted the Voorhees team, and recommended 145 miles of fixed guideway rather than the 60-mile system.

The plan which SCRTD'S board of directors finally accepted on August 2,1974, was a modification of this 145-mile system (see Figure 5). Aside from a short-term bus improvement program, the adopted plan called for 145 miles of fixed-guideway, which included a 5-mile extension through Long Beach, and the extension of the n-mile San Bernardino busway for another **20** miles to the Ontario International Airport. The plan contained no priorities for implementation, and **it Was** described as the first stage in the achievement of an overall regional goal of a 240-mile system. The first stage would cost between $8 and **$10** billion over a 12- to 15-year implementation period.

The reaction to the adoption of this plan was by no means overwhelmingly favorable. Although

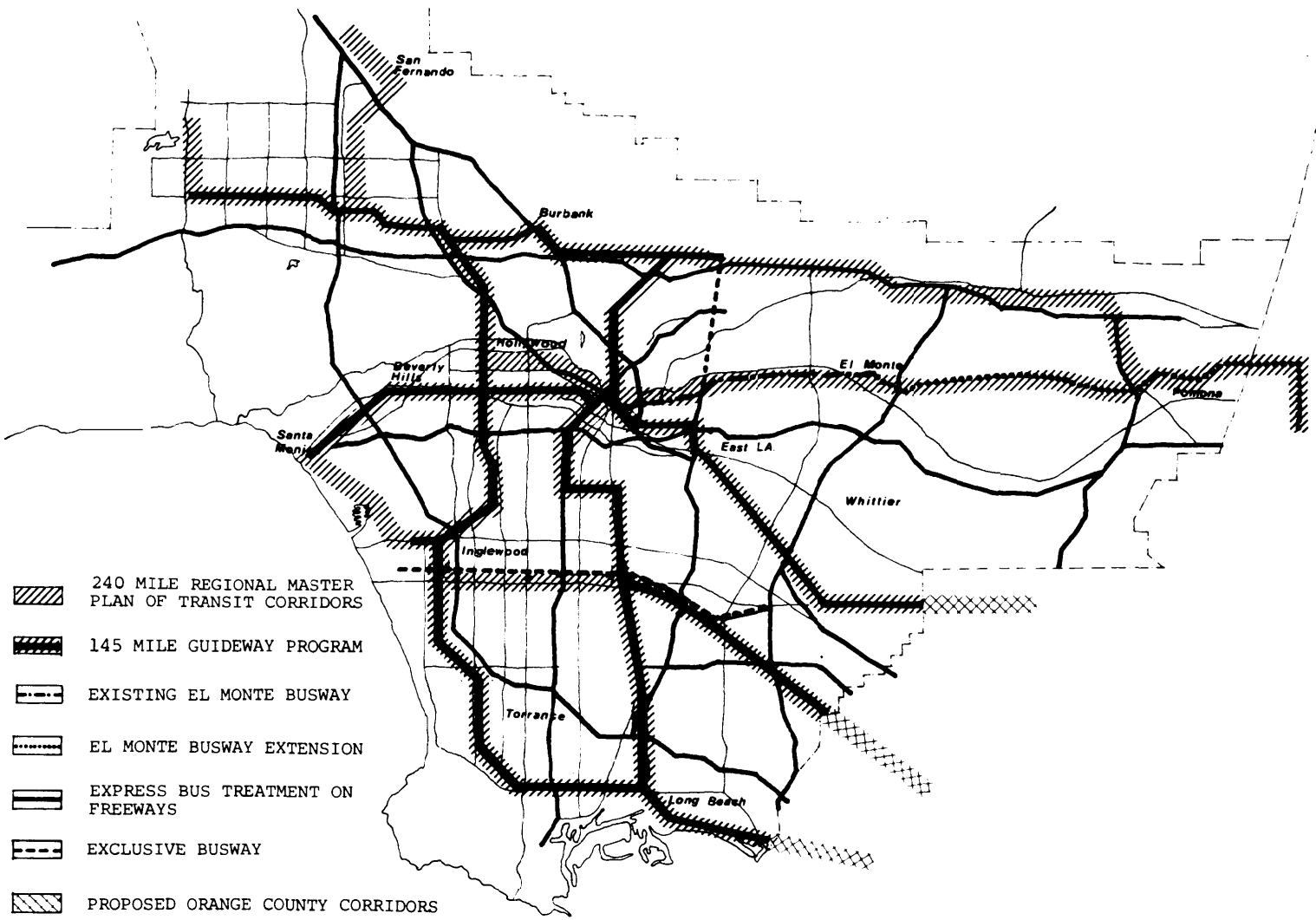


FIGURE 5 : LOS ANGELES – PROPOSED RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM (1974)

Source Transit for Los Angeles County: A Subregional Transit Element of the Transportation Plan, Prepared for the Southern California Rapid Transit District, July 1974.

SCAG had adopted it on July 11, 1974, as the subregional transit element of the regional transportation plan, and although Mayor Bradley and other transit advocates eventually stood behind it in the election campaign, the plan evoked some forceful criticism from public and private officials.

For some local municipal leaders from outlying communities, the plan was not extensive enough. One councilman from Glendora stated that the plan offered very little to the East San Gabriel Valley. "I can't see the people in may community subsidizing a transportation plan for the San Fernando Valley and the Wilshire Corridor," he said. "I'm going to work very hard against it."[10]

For others, it was unrealistically expensive. RTD board member Arthur Baldonado voted against it on these grounds, and a group of Los Angeles County mayors, which were organized in the fall to oppose the measure, called it inflationary and too much oriented to downtown Los Angeles.

Both SCAG and UMTA also stipulated a number of issues that had to be resolved. In preparing the program for the next phase of work to refine the plan, both organizations required that the plan had to be properly meshed with the plans of the Orange County Transit District.

Finally, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Rapid Transit (CACORT) viewed the sudden adoption of the 145-mile system as a unilateral breach of faith. The CACORT organization had been organized by Mayor Bradley to provide citizen input to the planning process. At the time the SCRTD board acted, the CACORT committee had been working on evaluation of the March 1974 "Building Block Plan." To them SCRTD'S sudden action appeared to obviate all the work they had put into the evaluations, and although CACORT later endorsed the ballot proposal for financing the plan, SCRTD'S action did little to dispel their distrust of the transit agency.

The Vote on Proposition A

The strategy SCRTD adopted to win the support of all the disparate groups was to leave the precise details of the transit plan as vague as possible. Following what one SCRTD official called the "Denver Strategy,"[11] the district hoped that the voters would vote their approval of Proposition A because they supported the rapid transit concept sketched out in the adopted plan. The details of the system would be" worked out in the preliminary engineering stage.

The strategy was based on the correct perception that, among public officials as well as the populace at large, there was broad support for a transit system. The disagreements that existed had to do with the specific characteristics of the system, its mileage, technology, service characteristics, and cost. According to SCRTD'S reasoning, these were all things that people would negotiate later on after voting to give SCRTD the wherewithal to accomplish the fundamental objective of building some sort of public transportation system.

Proposition A was put to the voters of Los Angeles County on November 5, 1974. Unlike the referendum in 1968, the measure required only a simple majority to pass rather than two-thirds of the vote. Despite this advantage, it only received 46.4 percent of the vote in Los Angeles County.

The outcome of the election does not necessarily discredit the basic premises of the SCRTD strategy. But it does cast doubt on the people's confidence in SCRTD, and on the prospects for developing a large-scale rapid transit system in the region. In order to succeed with such a strategy, SCRTD needed the full confidence of the voters. In many people's minds, that confidence had not only been eroded by the persistent institutional battles, but, most importantly, by the bitter and prolonged transit strike that ended only weeks before the vote. The strike exposed SCRTD to daily reporting and, regardless of the merits of its case, the constant glare made the competence and character of SCRTD a primary issue in people's minds.

Other factors also weighed heavily in the vote. The state of the economy made people reluctant to vote an increase in the sales tax; the psychological passing of the energy crisis may have made the need for mass transit less compelling; and in most

10 Mike Ward, "Leaders Cool to RTD Tax," *Los Angeles* Times, July *28, 1974.*

11 In 1973 Denver voters approved a %-cent sales tax to support the Regional Transportation District in refining and eventually constructing a rapid transit system. Technically the issue before voters was the sales tax levy, although the tax was linked closely to a promotional campaign for the personal rapid transit-type system recommended in the RTD's preliminary plan.

parts of the region there was a low voter turnout. Some people may also have felt that the passage of Proposition 5 in June 1974, which diverted State gas tax money for the development of rail transit, obviated the need for more money to build a system.

All these things may have contributed to some extent to the defeat. One thing worth noting is that Proposition A, like its predecessor in 1968, was not defeated by the lower-income residents of Los Angeles proper, the residents of Santa Monica, or the well-to-do of Beverly Hills. These cities produced 56 percent, 61 percent, and 54 percent of affirmative votes, respectively. It was the voters in the suburban areas that once again brought the measure down.

Postscript

Planning for rapid transit in the Los Angeles area has taken a new course since the defeat of Proposition A. It is a course reminiscent of the proposal for a south-central line that SCRTD put forward in late 1971. Like that proposal, it represents SCRTD'S unswerving commitment to build a rapid transit line, but unlike that proposal it seems to have a reasonable chance of succeeding.

The new approach involves exploring the development of a "starter" line project. After the defeat in November, SCRTD began to examine ways to use relatively unencumbered, "voter-free" Proposition 5 funds for initiating a segment of a rapid transit starter line (see Figure 6).

In order to establish an institutional forum for developing such a project, SCRTD established a Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC). The committee has representatives from CALTRANS, SCAG, Los Angeles County, Orange County Transit District, the League of California Cities, and the City of Los Angeles. All of these bodies would be responsible for providing financial support to the project in one way or another, and they were all brought together on the RTAC with the specific mandate to develop a consensus on an acceptable starter line. Both the State Senate and Assembly adopted resolutions urging SCRTD to adopt such a starter line.

Since the creation of this committee in March 1975, progress has been made. A consensus on a broad corridor running through the San Fernando Valley, the central business district of Los Angeles, and Long Beach-San Pedro area has been reached and approved in resolutions by the City Council of Los Angeles and the SCRTD Board. The City Council of Los Angeles had previously adopted a resolution authorizing the city to contribute its share of Proposition 5 funds for 6 years toward the financing of an acceptable starter line; in the fall of 1975, SCRTD received an initial one-half million dollars in Proposition 5 funds from California.[12] The public agencies involved in RTAC are looking currently at more detailed alternatives for an alinement within this broad corridor. This process will be followed by plan refinement and preliminary engineering, and if the local consensus holds, by an application for UMTA funding.

What makes this project more likely to succeed than the other is that it is more limited in scope, not dependent on voter approval, and assured of at least Proposition 5 money as a local share. If it succeeds, it will mark the end of a long struggle to bring rapid rail transit to Los Angeles.

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12 *Engineering News Record,* 4 September 1975.

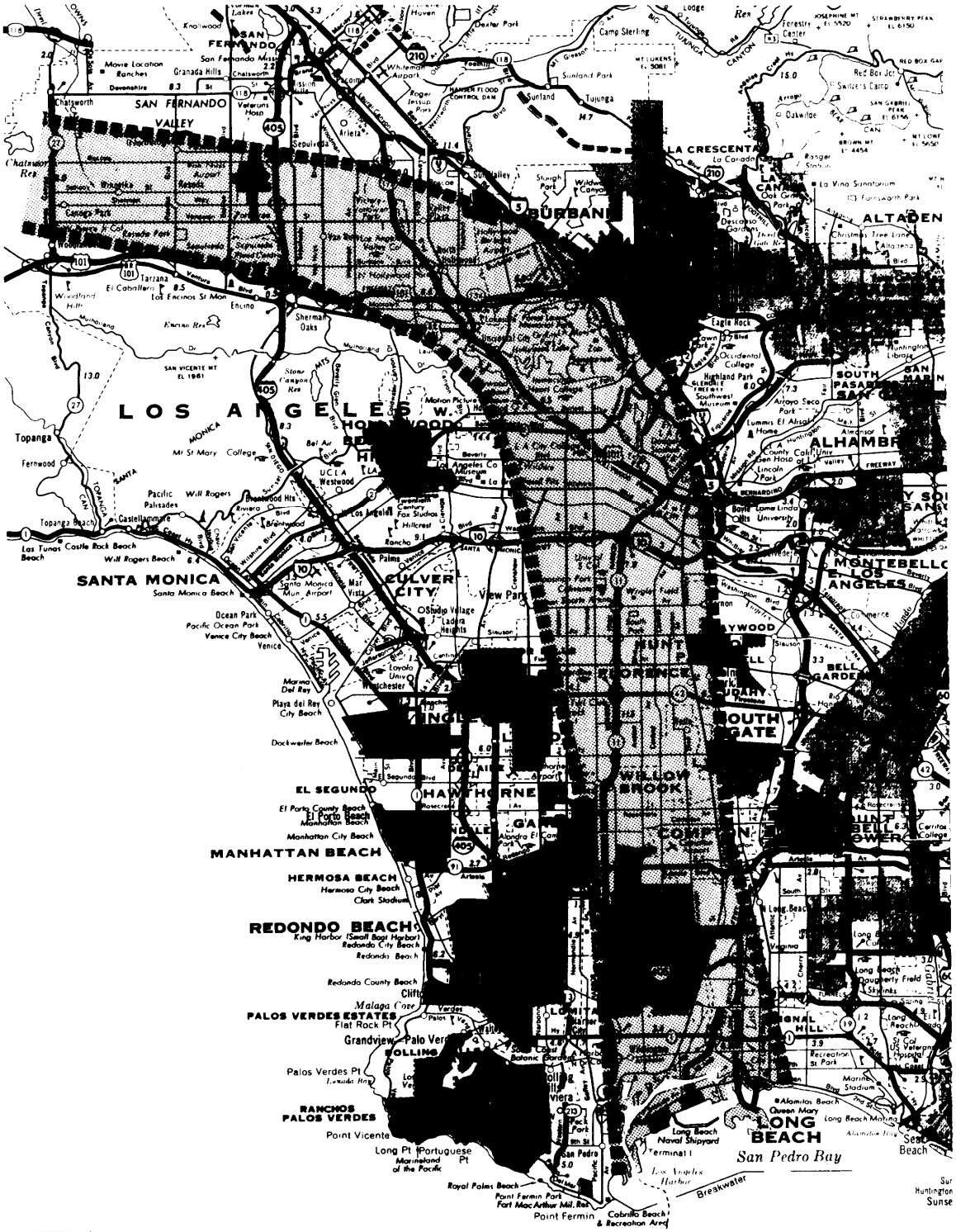


FIGURE 6: LOS ANGELES RAPID TRANSIT STARTER LINE CORRIDOR

Source: **Southern California Rapid Transit District, July** 1975

Chronology of the Transportation Planning Process

1906 Twin subways were proposed in downtown Los Angeles. A recession the **following year brought** an end to the proposal.

1911 **The Southern Pacific Railway consolidated eight interurban lines into the Pacific Electric Company.**

1925 A demonstration l-mile subway in Hollywood was opened.

1926 Proposals to convert two P.E. routes to subway were abandoned due to high costs .

1933 A proposal to extend the Hollywood Subway and build two more lines was abandoned due to high costs.

1948 The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce took the first step to revitalize public transit by submitting the Rapid Transit Action Program to the State legislature.

1951 The State legislature authorized the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to formulate plans for a mass transit system.

1957 The MTA was given the power to purchase and operate existing bus lines with capital provided by the sale of revenue bonds.

1960 The MTA presented a 75-mile, four-corridor line. The highway-oriented Los Angeles Regional Transportation Study (LARTS) was established by the California State Highway Department to undertake long-term regional transportation plans.

1961 Los Angeles' last streetcar line was abandoned.

1963 The MTA proposed a **64-mile,** four-corridor rapid transit line.

1964 The MTA was replaced by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD), which was given an explicit mandate to operate the existing public transit system as well as to design, engineer, and implement a mass rapid transit system.

The highway-oriented Transportation Association of Southern California (TASC) was formed to exercise **policy** and technical review for the regional transportation planning process.

1966 Early in the year, SCRTD contracted Kaiser Engineers; Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall; and Coverdale and Colpitts to prepare a rapid transit proposal.

1967 **1n** October, a preliminary $1.5 billion rapid transit proposal for a four-corridor, 62-mile system was issued to the public for review.

1968 In May, a final plan was issued proposing a five-corridor, **89-mile, $2.5** billion rail system to be financed by a general sales tax. In August, SCRTD adopted the final plan.

The State legislature authorized SCRTD to place Proposition A, proposing the sales tax, on the ballot.

LARTS issued a long-range transportation plan oriented toward highway travel including a proposal that led to the construction of the Ii-mile San Bernardino-El Monte busway.

In November, Proposition A was defeated.

1971 **SCAG began to assume** more formal powers over regional transportation planning. It was given responsibility for setting policy for the regional transportation planning process, merged with TASC **in February, and became the A-95 and** 3-C agency.

In mid-November, the City Planning Department made the first public move that started the process leading to the

1974 referendum. It presented to a committee of the Los Angeles City Council a $2.4 billion rapid transit program to build a 100-mile system by 1990.

On December 7, SCRTD'S board of directors unveiled an alternative plan calling for a $420 million, 14-mile "starter" line in the south-central corridor, linking the central city to southern Los Angeles.

1972 In early March, the city's Technical Advisory Committee on Rapid Transit argued that the Wilshire corridor was a far better place to put a starter line. The City Council, although it did not accept the SCRTD position, indicated that it would go along with SCRTD'S effort to get aid from UMTA.

In the spring the Committee for Central City Planning, a private organization of downtown interests created to develop a downtown urban renewal area, completed its plan, calling for a downtown PRT circulation system. This proposal became part of the city's General Development Plan.

In April, during the annual meeting of the Inter-Modal Planning Group, UMTA mandated SCAG to do long-range transportation planning for the region. SCRTD and the Orange County Transit District (OCTD) would be responsible for corridor-level planning.

In October, SCRTD hired Kaiser Engineers; Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall; and Stone and Youngsberg to do engineering, planning, and financial studies for the first phase in developing the plan presented in the 1974 referendum.

In November, the State legislature passed Assembly Bill 69, creating CALTRANS, a new multimodal California Department of Transportation. The same act mandated SCAG to prepare a regional long-range transportation plan for Los Angeles by April 1975, incorporating subregional transit elements to be prepared by OCTD and SCRTD.

1973 In March, SCRTD'S Phase I report, Study Of *Alternative Transit Corridors and Systems,* was released.

In April, at an annual meeting of the Inter-Modal Planning Group, UMTA and SCRTD negotiated their differences. An agreement was reached whereby SCAG would prepare a Critical Decisions Plan to guide transportation planning until a detailed regional plan was completed. Also, SCRTD agreed to restudy the alternatives it had examined during Phase I studies and include an evaluation of all-bus alternatives.

In July, Rapid *Transit for Los Angeles,* the Phase II report, was published. It recommended a regional master plan calling for the construction of a $3.3 billion system including 116 miles of rapid rail and 24 miles of exclusive busways. The report gave highest priority to a two-part program of transit improvements.

In mid-August, UMTA presented a revised work program calling for full evaluation of all alternative modes and corridors.

1974 In March SCRTD consultants presented *A Public Transportation Improvement Program,* which suggested an incremental "building block" approach of four alternatives of between 33 and 121 miles of fixed-guideway, with each alternative including a short- and intermediate-term program

In may, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Rapid Transit (CACORT) issued its summary report, Public *Transportation: The Citizen's View.*

On May 31, the State of California issued a report urging SCRTD to adopt the most extensive transit system and recommended that SCRTD and the Orange County Transit District coordinate their planning and design to achieve an integrated regional system.

Also in May, Alan M. Voorhees & Associates prepared an interim report that stressed the need for a 60-mile fixed-guideway system costing $2.4 to

$3.2 billion. SCRTD had consultants from Kaiser explain the proposed plan to UMTA. They recommended a 145-mile system instead of the 60-mile.

On June 13, 1974, after public hearings, the *Critical Decisions Plan* was adopted by the Executive Committee of SCAG.

On August 2, SCRTD'S board of directors accepted a modified version of the 145-mile system. The sudden adoption of the 145-mile system alienated transit advocates who had been working on the basis of the March 1974 "building block" plan.

On November 5, Proposition A was defeated at the polls.

1975 In March, SCRTD established a Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC) to develop a starter line in a broad corridor running through the San Fernando Valley, the CBD of Los Angeles, and the Long Beach-San Pedro area. This route has been approved by the City of Los Angeles and the SCRTD board.

Assessment of the Planning and Decisionmaking Process

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The institutional context for transportation policymaking, planning, and implementation in the Los Angeles metropolitan area is highly complex. Although the role of the regional planning agency has been strengthened during the past decade, a single authoritative mechanism for negotiating agreements among the public agencies concerned with mass transit within the county has not yet been clearly defined. Policymaking and implementation functions are fragmented, and decisionmaking is characterized by competition rather than coordination among the participating institutions. Within the region it is extremely difficult to formulate responsive policy and plans that rest firmly on an areawide consensus.

Forum for Decisionmaking

The institutional forum for decisionmaking in Los Angeles is not well integrated. Although the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) provides the official forum for regional policymaking, it does not have sufficient authority to establish and enforce priorities for transportation development programs in the region. One result of this is that, until recently, a subregional transit operator like the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) has operated with a considerable amount of autonomy. Fashioning an institutional mechanism that could forge effective and responsive countywide transit policy and plans has become a prime concern of regional decisionmakers.

Since SCAG was established **10 years ago, its** ability to influence and discipline the planning process has increased. Both the Federal Government and the State have taken steps to provide SCAG with the leverage to coordinate the regional transport at ion planning process. Federal designations have made SCAG the 3-C agency for the region, given it the A-95 review power, and, more recently, have made it the Metropolitan Planning Organization. While SCRTD'S rapid transit plan was being prepared, UMTA exerted external pressure to integrate the planning with SCAG'S work on the regional transportation plan.

The State of California also vested new authorit y in SCAG that has increased its influence in the region. Under the provisions of Assembly Bill 69, SCAG is responsible for developing the region's transportation plan, and as the designated administrator of SB 325 local transportation funds for the region, SCAG must evaluate and approve claims for this assistance from local transit operators.

Despite SCAG'S growing influence, it has not exerted direct control over the activities of the Southern California Rapid Transit District. Some of the reasons for this are rooted in the institutional character of SCAG itself, while others can be traced to characteristics of the SCRTD.

Although SCAG does provide a context for debate and negotiations about regional issues, it does not function as the authoritative forum for regional decisionmaking. The primary reason for this is that it does not have statutory powers to establish and enforce a set of program priorities, and it is not empowered to implement programs. Although SCAG'S Regional Development Guide Program and Regional Transportation Plan can set the framework for the evaluation and discussion of regional land-use and transportation issues, neither one is imbued with the force of law. County and municipal government still exercise control over the use of land, and the ultimate authority for transportation programs lies with the modal agencies that have the power to implement those programs.

Another reason SCAG has not provided an effective forum for transit decisionmaking is that its perspective is too broad. The size of the six-county area SCAG covers is so large that the organization's ability to concentrate resources on any one area is weakened by the demands of other areas. In effect, SCAG'S authority is too diffuse to

be applied effectively. In contrast, SCRTD is considerably more powerful.

SCRTD was created in **1964** for the specific purpose of developing a transit system in Los Angeles County. Its legislative mandate gives it full statutory powers to operate the existing bus transit system and to plan, design, construct, and operate a new mass transit system for the county. Though dependent on voter approval for financing the development of a new system, SCRTD could function with virtual autonomy once such approval or an alternative independent source of finance is obtained.

Historically, SCRTD has held a very clear idea of the objectives of its mission and has pursued them steadfastly. As the record of the years from **1968 to** the **present** shows, SCRTD regards its top priority as providing Los Angeles County with a fixed-guideway rapid transit system. Despite growing concern over the suitability and costs of such a system, SCRTD has remained committed to this view of its mission; modifying its short-term programs where necessary, and negotiating the extent of the guideway system to gain political support, it has never lost sight of the fundamental concept of its legislative mandate.

In some instances, SCRTD has pursued its mission without coordinating its activities with other regional agencies. In **1968, the Regional Plan Association criticized SCRTD for its failure to coordinate with other regional agencies, and throughout the period of planning that led up to the referendum** in November 1974, UMTA repeatedly urged SCRTD to coordinate with SCAG and the Orange County Transit District (OCTD). Finally, in March 1974, CALTRANS' evaluation of the transit planning activities being carried out by SCRTD and OCTD underscored the lack of coordination between the system being developed by SCRTD and the plans OCTD was preparing.

Like SCAG, other institutional participants in the decisionmaking forum have competed with SCRTD for policymaking and priority-setting powers. Aside from being represented on the SCRTD board, the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles also participate in the Technical Advisory Committee that was established to review SCRTD'S rapid transit plans. Although the city exerted some influence over SCRTD'S immediate action programs, SCRTD responded to a broader countywide constituency when the board approved the 145-mile system that went to the voters in 1974. The county has tended to regard SCRTD functions as ones that it should exercise itself.

The County of Los Angeles is a powerful actor on the scene. It has played a key role in the process and is a source of competition for SCRTD, County control over revenue sharing funds puts it in a key position to vote to use those funds to subsidize SCRTD'S 25-cent fare. This move pushed SCRTD toward giving a more serious look at bus transit alternatives. In addition, county supervisors have promoted the idea of using existing railroad lines for commuter service. With considerable experience in designing and maintaining the vast county highway network, the county has always felt it was the logical candidate to run the area's transit system.

Since the referendum in November 1974, the attempts that have been made to get a new "starter" line approved have not fundamentally altered the institutional forum for decisionmaking. The Rapid Transit Advisory Committee which SCRTD established in March 1975 was designed to formulate a consensus on a broad corridor for a starter line and as such it represents a positive change in the style of local transit decisionmaking. Representatives from the City of Los Angeles, Orange and Los Angeles counties, SCAG, CALTRANS, and the League of California Cities, as well as SCRTD, all sit on the Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC). Collectively they are charged with exploring alternative corridors and reaching a common agreement on a starter line in order to demonstrate to UMTA their willingness to provide local support for its construction. By July 1975 the members of the board of directors of SCRTD, the city, other members of RTAC, and the State Senate and Assembly had reached a consensus on a starter line corridor running from the San Fernando Valley, through the central business district, and south to the Long Beach-San Pedro area. Local financing for such a corridor would come from State funds provided by Proposition 5.

The institutional approach offered by the Rapid Transit Advisory Committee does not represent a permanent solution to the institutional issues posed in the area. RTAC is an ad hoc response to an immediate problem. The committee's authority is derived from a collectively perceived need for action but does not extend to a long-term arrangement for establishing policy and program priorities.

At this point no clear long-term restructuring of the institutional forum is in evidence. Like the special purpose agencies that dominate the transit field in San Francisco (BARTD) and Denver (RTD), SCRTD has guarded its autonomy jealously and has resisted attempts to create a broader-based organization.

One legislative initiative has been taken that may represent a new departure. Under a proposed bill, Assembly Bill **1246, the primary forum for decisionmaking for transportation within Los Angeles County would be a new Los Angeles County Transportation Commission. Although SCAG would retain responsibility for long-range regional transportation planning and coordination, the new commission would have specific countywide responsibilities for transit policymaking, priority setting, service coordination, short-range transportation planning, and approval of a new public mass transit system. SCRTD'S function** would be entirely restricted to operating transit service.

The future of this proposal is not clear at this time, and other alternatives have been suggested—such as the idea that the County Board of Supervisors should assume responsibility for rapid transit.

All these suggestions illustrate a central point—that the official forum provided for decisionmaking in Los Angeles is too weak to contain and direct the actions of the autonomous SCRTD. The region needs a more clearly delineated structuring of responsibilities for policymaking and transit operations in order to achieve a responsive and accountable planning process. As things stand now, conflicts between decisionmakers can be resolved only in an ad hoc manner that depends heavily on the relative distribution of power and public favor among the participants in the process. Should the State of California begin to play an even more active role in Southern California transit affairs, it might provide the outside "third party" required to structure an effective forum for conflict resolution and transit decisionmaking.

Accountability of Decisionmakers

The Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) brings into focus the issue of accountability inherent in a special purpose transit district. Although SCRTD'S legislative mandate gave the agency clear authority to develop a mass transit system, SCRTD has been unable to produce a flexible and financially feasible plan that responds to the varied demands of the several constituencies within Los Angeles County.

The problem can be traced to several interrelated factors. But one primary reason is that SCRTD'S board and staff held to such a strict interpretation of their mandate that they were caught in the untenable position of trying to apply the same technological solution to the needs of both the City of Los Angeles and the outlying suburban jurisdictions. The cost of such a single-minded vision ultimately made it impractical and led to its defeat.

SCRTD'S legislative mandate charged the agency with designing, implementing, and operating a mass transit system for the county. As we have seen, the legislation required SCRTD to seek voter approval for financing the development of such a system.

From the outset, SCRTD'S board and staff committed themselves to developing a fixed-guideway system that would provide service to the county. Pressure from UMTA and the demand for immediate transit improvements led SCRTD to formulate short-term bus transit service solutions. But SCRTD did not waver from its basic commitment to plan a regional rapid rail system. Most people expected the plan to resemble the BART system in San Francisco. It was this type of technological solution that SCRTD asked the voters to approve in November.

By trying to apply this system to the entire region, SCRTD was caught in a situation in which it could satisfy neither its own mandate nor the demands of the several jurisdictions of the region. Providing the jurisdictions beyond the central city of Los Angeles with the same rapid rail technology as the one applied to the city resulted in a system so costly that the voters of the county were unwilling to approve the mechanism for financing their share of the cost, and UMTA also was extremely reluctant to commit itself to the Federal share.

The reasons why SCRTD persisted on its course bear on the issues of accountability and responsiveness. Aside from the constraining imperatives of its own legal mandate, SCRTD also stuck to the course for a number of other reasons.

The composition of SCRTD'S appointed board lessened its ability to respond to the complexities of the region. Although the City of Los Angeles is the

jurisdiction most interested in mass transit, it is underrepresented on the board. The mayor of Los Angeles appoints only two of the members, while the County Board of Supervisors appoints five and the City Selection Committee appoints four.

As Mayor Bradley pointed out in his testimony of December 13, 1974, before the Subcommittee on Los Angeles Regional Transportation of the State Assembly Committee on Transportation, the composition of the board made SCRTD beholden to areas whose demands for equal treatment were most likely to lead to an overly extensive rapid transit system.

One reason SCRTD was caught in this vicious circle has to do with the method of financing the system. Having chosen to develop a large regional system financed in part by an increment of the sales tax, SCRTD needed to get voter approval for increasing the tax. In order to secure the support of local officials in outlying areas for the tax increase, SCRTD had to provide them with the modern service it provided to the City of Los Angeles, and doing so required extending the system beyond its justifiable limits.

The irony of this situation is that if SCRTD has been able to take a flexible, incremental approach to building a system, it might have succeeded. The record suggests that a less extensive rail rapid transit system serving the central city combined with relatively short-range express bus and local circulation improvements would have been more responsive to the requirements of the county. Both the technical justification for a rapid rail system and its primary voter support were strong in the City of Los Angeles, while the technical rationale for providing such a system to outlying suburban jurisdictions was much weaker. Suburban jurisdictions were only lukewarm about financing a system that would take such a long time to construct and provide them with service.

Had SCRTD been able to produce a flexible plan that provided the dense central city with a line and outlying areas with express bus services and innovative local transit services, the outcome of the referendum might have been different. As it was, the attempt to serve the suburban areas with the same technological solution as the center city in the end penalized the people most willing to support mass transit.

As SCRTD'S current efforts indicate, a far more realistic plan could have been developed if the district had had a stable and assured source of funding that was not subject to the vagaries of political horsetrading. By using Proposition A funds, SCRTD can put up a local share for a usable segment of a transit system to provide service to an area that has clearly expressed its support for it.

There is a potential drawback to a financing mechanism that is not dependent on voter approval. To a great extent, the referendum vote is the voter's best recourse for holding appointed officials accountable for their actions. An independent source of funding could conceivably be used by an agency in a manner which rode roughshod over the wishes of the public. This is one of the problems posed by trust fund financing for special purposes.

In the case of SCRTD, however, the use of Proposition 5 funds is not without constraints. Other jurisdictions would be contributing to a starter line, and the State legislature and the State Transportation Board are both bodies to which SCRTD can be held accountable.

One other measure of the degree of responsiveness of SCRTD should be mentioned before closing this discussion. Whether justifiably or not, the autonomous character of SCRTD was regarded with considerable wariness prior to the November 1974 referendum. In an evaluation of the Rapid Transit "Building Block Plan" issued in May 1974, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Rapid Transit (CACORT) specifically recommended taking measures prior to the November referendum to assure that strong controls would be placed on the manner in which any money approved by that referendum was spent.[13]

In another move to ensure that local jurisdictions would have control over SCRTD'S activities, the State Assembly passed HB **3896. Originally proposed by Assemblyman Lanterman of Pasadena, the bill prohibited the expenditure of SCRTD funds from the 1/2-cent sales tax for purposes other than planning and design,** such as capital development, unless approved by the affected local jurisdictions. Had the referendum succeeded, the bill would have given local municipalities strong leverage over SCRTD'S capital expenditures for mass transit.

In summary, the mandate of SCRTD and the structure of its board seriously reduced its ability to

13 CACORT, *Public Transportation: The Citizen Overview,* **May** 1974, **p.** 22.

fashion a plan that could respond to the complex requirements of such a varied area as the County of Los Angeles. The new effort to secure approval for a starter line responds more directly to a commonly felt need.

Public Involvement

The Southern California Rapid Transit District did not establish a formal and permanent structure for community participation in the planning process that led to the 1974 referendum. Following the precedent set during the **1968 campaign, the SCRTD and local transit supporters carried out a widespread public relations campaign designed to sell the idea to the voters, but their "sales pitch" was not a substitute for a truly responsive citizen participation program.** The ill-fated 1974 plan might have fared better if those potentially affected elements of the public had been involved from the beginning of the process.

Public participation in SCRTD'S planning process occurred in a number of ways. The primary approach employed by SCRTD was to conduct community meetings and presentations during different stages of the process. By its own count, SCRTD held **10** meetings during Phase I, **18** in Phase II, and over 100 meetings during Phase III of the project. These meetings and conferences were followed by formal public hearings on the rapid transit proposal.

These meetings provided a forum for SCRTD to describe alternative proposals to the public and to receive comments from the public and local officials. During Phase III these criticisms were incorporated into the evaluation of alternatives and contributed to the formulation of a more extensive short-term bus improvement program.

This type of approach has a number of drawbacks. First, it does not involve a formal period of public involvement in the setting of goals and objectives for the process. Through participation in the early stages, the public and the planners can make their values, objectives, and concerns explicit. Second, because the approach is not formalized, laymen and technicians seldom have enough time to learn each other's language and begin discussing the issues that concern local neighborhood groups. This is particularly true with systems-level planning where the technicians are dealing with regional issues that are not immediately comprehensible to locally oriented groups, For these reasons, public meetings tend to offer little more than a one-way process of providing the public with information.

A more formal approach to public involvement was initiated by Mayor Bradley in early 1974 when he established the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Rapid Transit. CACORT had two primary objectives. One was to review and comment on SCRTD'S plans, and the second was to conduct voter education and public information programs for the campaign for the November referendum. The committee was made up of civic leaders, business organizations, labor officials, and environmental groups.

Although CACORT did a commendable job on both counts, it suffered from a number of weaknesses. It was not institutionally integrated into the SCRTD process. It had difficulty getting information from SCRTD and, as CACORT was evaluating the SCRTD'S March 1974 plan, SCRTD was already considering the proposals that it later adopted in July. CACORT'S evaluation comments and recommendations were answered on July 12, 1974, after the transit plan had been adopted.

CACORT'S dual role not only created considerable friction within the organization itself but made it difficult for members to discuss publicly their criticisms of the district's plan. Although a separate committee structure was established for the campaign, it was identified closely enough with CACORT to dampen the criticisms of all but those members of CACORT who were vehemently critical of SCRTD.

Aside from the participation of the Los Angeles County voters in the referendum itself, SCRTD had no other mechanisms for public participation. According to one observer, the district has not yet established any mechanism for the public to provide input to the starter line project. Without a serious effort to structure and regularize participation at regional, corridor, and neighborhood levels, SCRTD may find itself in the very same position as the highway engineers whose projects have been stopped by community opposition.

TECHNICAL PLANNING PROCESS

The long process of technical planning leading to the proposal presented to voters in November 1974 was governed from the outset of SC RTD'S

adherence to its legislative mandate to build a comprehensive mass rapid transit system for Los Angeles County. Historically, SCRTD has interpreted that mandate to mean that the district was charged with developing a rapid rail transit system for the area, and it was that specific definition of its mandate that shaped the overall character of the technical planning process. This fundamental commitment provided the underlying goal of the process, conditioned the manner in which alternative transit systems were developed and evaluated, and, finally, influenced the course of action the district chose to follow after the defeat of Proposition A.

In retrospect, one could argue that planning for rapid transit in Los Angeles has become more sophisticated during the past 5 years. Under pressure from UMTA and SCAG, SCRTDgradually expanded the process to include an examination of regional and local objectives, more analysis of alternative transit corridors and systems, and greater consideration of short-term transit improvements and ways of staging the implementation of the proposed system. By the time the board adopted the proposed plan in July 1974, SCRTD'S consultants had generated a considerable amount of information upon which to base a preliminary decision on an overall system of transit corridors.

But to say that the process was evolving in a positive direction does not mean it was an exemplary process. SCRTD did not pursue a step-by-step process of establishing clear goals and objectives, objectively exploring and evaluating a full range of alternatives for achieving those objectives, and formulating staged implementation programs that were coordinated with other regional development programs. SCRTD'S objective was predetermined from the beginning, and the modifications it made to the process as it pursued that objective were dictated by the exigencies of negotiating with other institutional and political actors in the region and responding to pressure from the Federal Government.

Development of Goals and Objectives

SCRTD conducted the technical planning process that led to the proposal of July 1974 within the context of a set of comprehensive goals for regional development, transportation, and environmental improvement, Although these goals provided general guidelines for the conduct of the study, the original development of alternative corridors responded primarily to SCRTD'S legislative mandate to build a regional rapid transit system.

Southern California Rapid Transit District's enabling legislation directed SCRTD to provide the Southern California area with a mass rapid transit system and stated:

> There is an imperative need for a comprehensive mass rapid transit system in the Southern California area, and particularly in Los Angeles County. Diminution of congestion in streets and highways in Los Angeles will facilitate passage of all Californians motoring through the most populous area of this State and will especially benefit domiciliaries of that county who reside both within and without the rapid transit district.[14]

SCRTD has based all its major planning efforts on this fundamental legislative objective.

During the planning that led to the proposal adopted in July 1974, SCRTD developed a broad set of goals to guide the process. The goals and objectives were derived from a number of sources and provided the basis for the analysis of alternative corridors and modes that was carried out in the three main phases of the process. The general transportation goals that guided the Phase I effort were derived from the *Regional Development Guide* of the Southern California Association of Governments, the *Environmental Development* Guide of the County of Los Angeles, and the city's proposed citywide plan. In Phase II and Phase 111 of the process, these goals and objectives were elaborated upon in evaluating the selected alternative corridors.

The Summary Technical Report produced during the study of alternative transit corridors and systems and finally published in October 1974 contains a brief review of the regional goals and objectives set forth to guide the process. It cites the broad regional goals in SCAG'S *Regional* Development *Guide:*

. To develop a transportation system which will support the comprehensive goals of the region, taking into account the effect of mode selection, location, and time upon the

[14] As quoted in Southern California Rapid Transit District, *Transit for Los Angeles County: A Sub-Regional Transit Element of the Transportation Plan,* July 1974, p. i.

physical, social, **economic, and organizational environment.**

- To **create a balanced transportation system integrated with planned land use** in order to give effective mobility for all people and to provide efficient and economic movement of goods.

Ž To minimize the need for long-distance intraregional travel, particularly work trips, by guiding the development of the region in a manner as to create self-sufficient communities which have a balance of service facilities, employment and housing.

Ž To develop a transportation system for the region that will be compatible with the environment, use the available resources wisely, promote the esthetic beauty of the region, and not result in any undesirable environmental changes.

- To develop a transportation system that is financially, legally and politically feasible, has broad public support, and has **a** commitment to its. implementation by elected officials and those providing transportation services.

SCRTD'S consultant team established a number of more specific objectives to guide its planning and evaluation activities. As described in the *Summary Technical Repro+,* these included: (a) mobility needs; (b) considerations involving transit service characteristics; (c) environmental objectives such as improved air quality and energy conservation; (d) effective coordination with land-use and development policies; (e) financial feasibility; and (f) consideration of promising new technologies.

In addition to the specific objectives falling within these categories, SCRTD also set forth a number of general considerations regarding the range of travel needs that planning had to address. These included the need for improved commuter-oriented transit service; the need to include a mix of local, community-oriented, and metropolitan travel services; the need for combinations of express services for longer trips requiring separate rights-of-way; the need to develop "community-responsive" services; and the need to improve mobility within major activity centers.

All these **were** regarded as important considerations for the planning process according to the report. They provided the basis for developing more specific evaluation criteria which the consultants used to evaluate alternative corridors and systems.

While the statements of goals and objectives formulated by SCRTD were comprehensive in their coverage, critics of the SCRTD technical planning process have raised a number of points dealing with the specificity of the goal statements and the manner in which they were used in the process.

Although the goals and objectives covered a broad range of concerns, they were not stated in explicit enough terms to be useful in directing or guiding the development of specific alternatives. In its evaluation of the SCRTD planning process, CALTRANS concluded that the goals were very broad statements that did not always provide specific direction.[15] The citizens' group CACORT criticized SCRTD'S March 1974 plan on the same grounds. In its summary report, *Public Transportation; The Citizen's View* (May 1974), CACORT urged both SCAG and SCRTD to develop objectives that would be "sufficiently specific to permit judgment of the degree to which any system design contributes to these objectives."

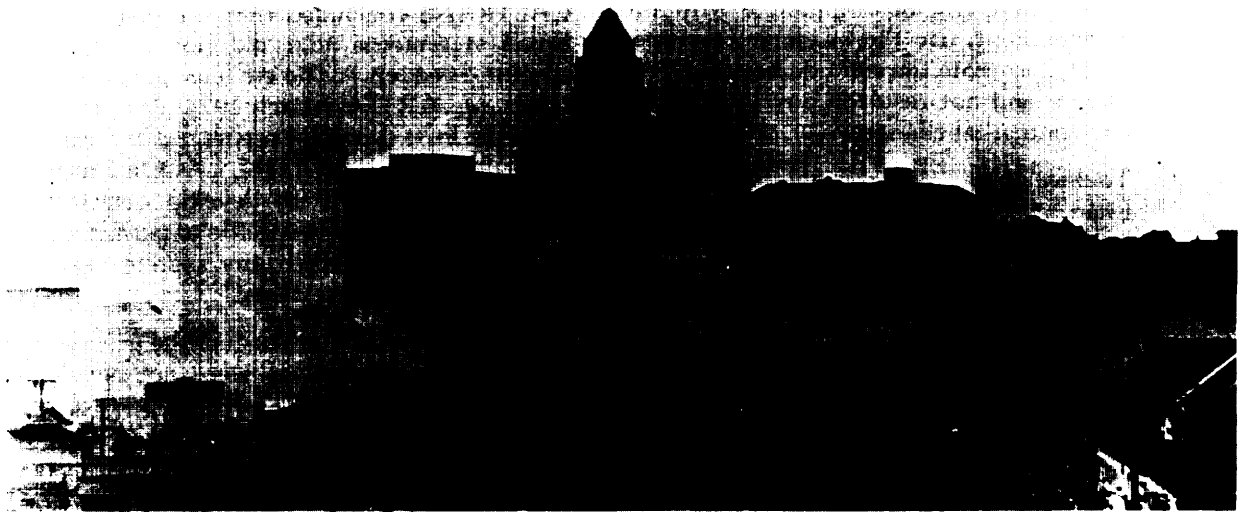
The second major criticism of the process is that, initially, the alternatives were not developed to respond to the project's goals and objectives. CALTRANS' evaluation commented directly **on** this by stating that ". . . the goals apparently **were not** used in the original development of the transportation alternatives." And UMTA'S controversy with SCRTD sprang directly from UMTA's perception that SCRTD'S approach was to develop a master plan for transit based on those corridors most likely to support a regional rapid rail system.

Judging from the Phase I and Phase II reports, the contention that the system developed was based on rapid rail transit technology appears to be justified. This seems to be the bias in both reports, and the corridors that seemed least susceptible to a rail system were ranked low by the consultants. The focus was on regional travel rather than the shorter, community-oriented travel upon which attention became focused later on in the process.

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[15] CALTRANS, *Evaluation— Transit System Proposals, Southern California Association of Governments, and Orange County Transit District,* **May 31, 1974, p. II-I.**







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The question of developing a plan that respondent to more localized community level needs came to the fore in Phase III in response to pressures from UMTA, SCAG, and the City of Los Angeles. A clear conflict existed between the regional rapid rail master plan concept repeatedly put forward by SCRTD and the goals of the citizens of the area as seen by these agencies. Aside from seeking to develop lower-cost transit alternatives, UMTA also saw the need for more immediate bus improvements to meet air-quality and energy-saving objectives.

SCAG, too, disagreed with SCRTD'S lack of interest in shorter-term proposals, since SCAG had formulated regional transportation goals which sought to reduce trip lengths. SCAG'S strategy was aimed at minimizing the need for travel in the region and improving circulation in major activity centers. SCAG also recommended a more gradual approach to improving the overall transit system by placing greater emphasis on incrementally building up transit patronage with more imaginative use of local and express bus services.

The City of Los Angeles generally agreed with both these positions but also favored providing rapid rail transit in a more limited number of the most heavily traveled corridors. One of Mayor Bradley's early objectives was to secure better circulation within the city's more transit-dependent communities, and he underlined the need for more immediate transit improvements.

All these varying objectives had been clearly enunciated by the time Phase III of the process got underway. Nevertheless, they were not able to dislodge SCRTD'S long-term commitment to a major rapid rail system. Although the July 1974 report contained a major program for immediate bus transit improvements, its basic long-term program was to develop a 145-mile system of fixed-guideway transit with express bus service as the first step toward a regional master plan of 240 miles of transit corridors.

Despite the Phase 111 summary report's explicit recognition of the objectives of providing more community-oriented services, only the first steps have been taken toward translating that recognition into action. **The end result of the work on the starter** line may be to develop a regional system which has a rapid rail "backbone" in the most heavily traveled corridors and an extensive network of community-level bus services, feeder lines, and express buses. But if such a system comes about, it will be the outcome of a long process of debate, conflict, and negotiation over transit objectives, rather than the logical outgrowth of the goals and objectives that were originally established for the process.

Development and Evaluation of Alternatives

The shortcomings of a planning process led by a special purpose transit district become most apparent in relation to the evaluation of alternatives. SCRTD'S legislative mandate to effect a mass transit system, reinforced by its commitment to a BART-like fixed-guideway system, made it uneasy with the task of evaluating a full range of alternative transportation modes.

During the debate prior to the **1968 referendum, several groups reacted against Proposition A because of shortcomings in the** SCRTD plan that stemmed from its failure to weigh alternatives to a fixed-guideway system. The high cost of the system SCRTD proposed was one such issue, related to the evaluation of alternatives in the sense that SCRTD'S commitment to very expensive fixed-guideway technology ensured that the system set before voters would be extremely expensive. Another argument, which focused on SCRTD'S commitment to BART-type technology, was that the transit district was committing Los Angeles to an inflexible technology just when more advanced technologies were being developed that might better serve the region's needs. Finally, many of the people who balked at SCRTD'S fixed-guideway proposals would have been more comfortable with an alternative that offered a more immediate if short-term solution to the need for public transportation. Paradoxically SCRTD'S commitment to BART-type heavy rail technology may have been strengthened considerably by the distorted but common public perception of the time that rail transit technology was superior to cheaper modes of transportation.

Since **1972, UMTA** has been a force urging Los Angeles towards a more balanced weighing of alternative transportation modes. The results of Phase I evaluation of alternatives did not respond to UMTA'S interpretation of the work program. The SCRTD study team examined some 15 candidate transit corridors. Specialists on the team examined development policies and the existing and forecast distribution of population and employment; concentrations of transit-dependent groups; potential

transit patronage; and the **patterns of movement within the region. These analyses led to a ranking** of **corridors based on these different factors. A range of transit technologies were then identified and the most applicable—mass rapid transit (MRT), personal rapid transit (PRT), and busways—were selected and applied to the potential transit corridors.** The eight corridorslb and modes which SCRTD and the consultants selected for future study in Phase II did not include consideration of nonexclusive busway alternatives.

According to an UMTA representative, the reason such an alternative did not appear was that SC RTD'S general manager had told the consultants not to consider it in the study. When UMTA learned of the omission in early 1973, it exerted its influence at the annual Inter-Modal Planning Group meeting in Los Angeles to have SCRTD examine an all-bus alternative.

The results of that study appeared in the report entitled *Rapid Transit for Los Angeles—Summary Reporf of Consultants' Recommendations* (July 1973).

In UMTA'S estimation, the treatment of the all-bus alternative in the July 1973 report was cursory and biased. A review of the report supports this conclusion. The overly generalized way in which the alternative was defined made it much more costly and impractical than it would have been had an all-bus system been specifically tailored for the region.

The all-bus alternative was defined as a "saturation" bus service. It involved an extensive grid system covering the entire 2,000-square-mile service area on which buses would run at 5-minute headways at peak periods. A modification of this system involved a grid network covering selected areas only.

Having defined what critics considered to be an excessively large system in the first place, SCRTD concluded that the system would: (a) be much more costly to finance; (b) attract more riders initially but cause greater congestion in high-density areas; (c) be attractive for short- and medium-distance travel only; and (d) require too great a subsidy. However, SCRTD felt that busways perhaps would be a useful component of a mixed transit system.

The treatment in the report contained no discussion of the types of all-bus facilities or service that were contemplated. Whether the buses were to run in mixed traffic, receive preferential treatment, or be used in various combinations seems to have been neglected entirely. Had these combinations and characteristics been discussed, a more exact evaluation of the alternatives could have been made.

The dispute between UMTA and SCRTD by no means abated after the July 1973 report. UMTA continued to press for a more objective analysis of bus transit options, a more detailed short-term bus program, and a means for reducing the increasingly large cost of the commitment the Federal Government would have to make to them. Although the July 1973 proposal did not represent a finished plan, its preliminary estimated cost, including an escalation allowance, was $6.6 billion over a 12-year implementation period.

The alternatives that were developed in March 1974 responded to many of these concerns, though a full-fledged bus alternative was not presented. As described in the historical narrative, the report prepared as part of the Phase III work in March contained a "building block" approach that offered different increments of development of a mass rapid transit system. Each of these increments also represented increasingly large local and Federal commitments of funds.

Between the development of the "Building Block Plan" in March 1974 and the SCRTD board's adoption of the technical planning process, the board appears to have moved closer to the political arena. Faced with studies indicating that only **60 miles of rapid transit could be definitely justified, while the difference between 60 and 120 miles was equally justifiable for fixed-guideway or bus, SCRTD opted for** the more extensive 145-mile plan.

Both CALTRANS and CACORT raised questions about the extent of the system that was finally recommended and about the evaluation process in general. CALTRANS' evaluation was that **120 miles of rapid transit was reasonable. But**

16 • **Wilshire—MRT and special analysis of PRT**
- **San Fernando—MRT**
- **San Gabriel—MRT and busway**
- **Airport-Southwest—MRT and busway**
- **South-Central—MRT and busway**
- **Santa Ana-MRT and busway**
- **El Segundo Norwalk Freeway—MRT and busway**
- **Northern "Extension of the Long Beach Freeway—busway**

(SOURCE—*Phase I Progress Report*, March 1973, p. VI-8)

it argued that greater attention needed to be paid to a medium-capacity system before a high-capacity system was decided upon CALTRANS said that the design characteristics that the consultants had been required to base their assumptions on were excessively high. More evaluation was needed of a medium -capacity system capable of carrying 25,000 passengers per hour rather than one carrying 45,000 before SCRTD proceeded with preliminary engineering of the system.

The CACORT evaluation also raised a question that appeared in the CALTRANS study: SCRTD had not conducted a detail cost-effectiveness analysis of the chosen alternative. In the *Summary Technical Report* of Phase II published in October 1974, a general evaluation of the two all-bus concepts, and limited (less than 40 miles), moderate (60 and 80 miles), and large-scale (140 miles) fixed-guideway plus bus systems does appear. **But this report indicated that a** moderate-priority bus system combined with limited **(60 to 80 miles)** fixed-guideway services probably was more cost-effective than an all-bus system. Assuming that this information was available to SCRTD board members in July, it was clear by then that the choice between bus and rail was (in certain proportions) not an economic but a policy question. On the basis of policies favoring energy conservation or a nodal pattern of development, the report said that fixed-guideway up to 140 miles could be considered as attractive as using buses alone.

This review suggests that the process of developing alternatives flowed directly from the fundamental legislative goal that governed SCRTD'S activities. In addition, it is likely that the board's selection of the 145-mile system was influenced by the political necessity of providing high-quality service to as many voters as possible.

Financing and Implementation

The proposal adopted by the SCRTD board on July 7,1974, set forth an overall plan for a 240-mile arterial transit system and recommended the initial implementation of a 145-mile system at a current cost of $4.2 billion. The manner in which such a plan would be implemented was a vital concern.

The primary source of funds for this system was UMTA. UMTA was expected to provide **80 percent of the capital cost with SCRTD providing the local share derived from the .5 percent sales tax and one-**half of its SB **325 funds (State highway-users funds). Local funds derived from the sales tax would** only be committed with assurance of a two-to-one Federal match.

SCRTD stated that the 145-mile system would be constructed as funds became available. Although the financial analysis described in the *Summary Technical Report* (October 1974) laid out the financing in terms of the "building block" approach, SCRTD went to the voters with the general impression that the additional 1/2-cent sales tax would produce the local share to get Federal funds to begin work on the entire system.

The need to secure local funding for the system through a public referendum put SCRTD'S planning process on an unstable basis. First of all, it was one of the factors that obliged SCRTD to make the system extensive enough to secure the support of enough voters to pass the referendum. Secondly, the dynamics of this process produced a system so extensive that the cost became too high for most voters to support. If a source of funding had been available to SCRTD that was stable and did not depend on direct voter approval, the district would have been in **a** much better position to begin the first increments of the "building block" approach laid out in its March report.

Ironically, the passage of Proposition 5 in June and the defeat of Proposition A in November appear to have led to a situation in which SCRTD is engaged in carrying out a staged implementation of a transit plan. The defeat of Proposition A killed the chances for approval of a large regional system, but the passage of Proposition 5 provided the steady funds required to develop a limited transit system incrementally.

One final observation should be made on the implementation plans prepared for the July 1974 plan. While the SCRTD study team concentrated a large share of its energy on exploring sources of capital funding, the team's analysis also included a review of projected maintenance and operating costs. This review indicated the rate of cost increase would necessitate a search for other Federal and local sources of assistance. Although the high projected costs apparently were due at least in part to the provisions for a 25-cent fare, SCRTD'S current projected use of UMTA Section 5 moneys suggests that mounting operating costs may be a major factor in reducing the number of new transit systems started in the Nation.

Summary Case Assessment

The purpose of this section is to summarize the transit planning and decisionmaking process in the Los Angeles region in light of the guidelines listed in the Introduction to the case assessments. The summary, therefore, is divided into two parts: (1) Assessment of the Institutional Context, and (2) Assessment of the Technical Planning Work.

1. ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

. **Forum for Decisionmaking. -The** institutional forum for decisionmaking in Los Angeles is not well integrated, and no authoritative procedure exists for resolving conflicts between decisionmakers. Although the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the official forum, in fact the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) operates with a considerable degree of autonomy. The seven organizations involved in transit in the Los Angeles area now sit on the Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC), formed to develop a "starter" line plan after the 1974 defeat of a proposed regional system. But the RTAC is only an ad hoc arrangement and does not provide a lasting resolution to the conflicts over transit policymaking and priority setting.

- **Accountability of Decisionmakers.—The composition of SCRTD'S board** has lessened its ability to respond to the complexities of the region. The City of Los Angeles appoints only two of the board's members; pressures from the suburban majority may have influenced SCRTD'S choice of extensive transit proposals in **1968 and 1974. The high cost of these systems led suburban** voters to defeat them, thus penalizing the people of the center city who were most willing to support rapid transit.

- **Public Involvement.—SCRTD's community** involvement procedures have included public meetings, a citizens' advisory committee, and two referenda. But its failure to structure ongoing participation for citizens at regional, corridor, and neighborhood levels of planning may have contributed to defeat of SCRTD'S two rapid transit proposals.

2. ASSESSMENT OF THE TECHNICAL PLANNING PROCESS

- **Goals and Objectives.—While** SCRTD'S statements of its goals were comprehensive in their coverage, they were often not explicit enough to be useful in guiding selection and evaluation of alternatives. SCRTD'S planning responded more to its interpretation of its legal mandate (to build a mass rapid transit system) than to local community goals.

- **Development and Evaluation of Alternatives.— SCRTD'S legislative mandate to effect a mass transit system combined with its commitment to a fixed-guideway system to make SCRTD uneasy about conducting an open-minded evaluation of alternative transportation** modes. Pressure from UMTA to enforce the requirement of alternatives analysis focused on the issue of whether SCRTD had given adequate attention to low-cost bus system improvements.

. **Financing and Implementation.—The** need to secure the local share of the funding through a public referendum put SCRTD'S planning process on an unstable basis. SCRTD'S interpretation of its mandate led to the design of fixed-guideway systems; its method of financing led to extending these systems for the benefit of suburban voters. Ironically, these voters were unwilling to pay the high cost of the systems designed to please them.