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Mass Transit Study

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JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL INC.

MASS TRANSIT study

A Report to the Citizens of Jacksonville • Summer 1983

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was undertaken to determine whether mass transit is a necessary public service in Jacksonville. If it is, how shall it be subsidized and what strategies might increase efficiency? If not, what alternatives might be used in lieu of mass transit?

The scope of the study included a review and analysis of:

- The current mass transit system
- Current and potential consumers and their need for mass transit
- Current ridership patterns
- Fare structure
- Existing and potential sources of financial support
- Alternative modes of transportation used elsewhere
- Existing transportation policies

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) is responsible for operating a mass transportation system for the rapid transfer of large numbers of people to the various locations of residence, commerce, industry, education and services in the City of Jacksonville.

HIGHLIGHTS

MAJOR PROBLEMS

- No clear policy on future of mass transportation
- Mass transit systems not able to survive from farebox alone
  - Current federal policy to reduce financial support
  - State policy not to fund mass transit operations
- Relatively dispersed low density population difficult and expensive to serve
- Inequitable fare structure
- Elected officials' influence over operational decisions of JTA
- Plans limited to buses and "automated skyway express"

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

- Develop clear policies aimed at increasing the use of mass transit
- Seek a variety of funding sources from federal, state and local governments
- Institute zone fares
- Implement a transfer system
- Confine Council overview to annual budget review
- Develop a varied mass transit system using jitneys and vans to serve outlying areas

FINDINGS

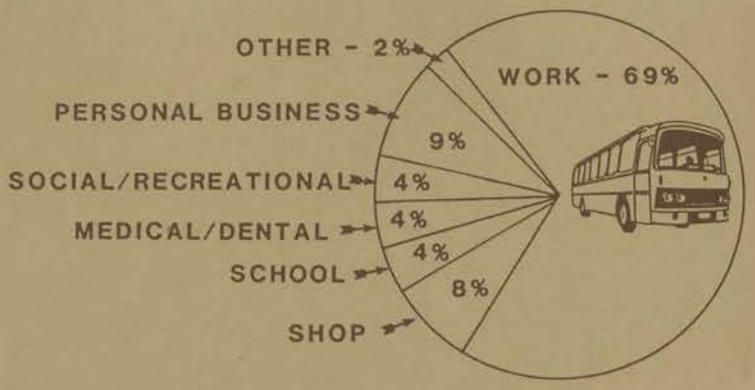
Findings represent the data base of the committee. They are derived from the published materials listed in the references, facts reported by resource persons or from a consensus of committee understanding as reported by resource persons.

IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHO USE MASS TRANSIT BY CHOICE, THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF CITIZENS IN JACKSONVILLE WHO DEPEND ON THE MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR NECESSARY MOBILITY TO JOBS, SHOPPING, SOCIAL SERVICES, MEDICAL SERVICES, ETC. THESE PERSONS EITHER CANNOT AFFORD A PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE OR CANNOT OPERATE ONE BECAUSE OF AGE OR HANDICAP. Unlike most bus systems in the United States, the JTA bus system serves socio-economically disadvantaged persons more than the middle-class commuter. The following statistics, taken from a 1982 ridership survey prepared for the JTA, outline the characteristics of the 17,669 JTA bus riders (approximately 3% of the population) making weekday trips.

- 44% do not own an auto (as opposed to 14% of the entire population)
- 71.5% are female (as opposed to 51.8% of the entire population)
- 16% are over the age of 60 (as opposed to 14% of the population)
- Only 7.3% are in the youth category, 0 to 19 years of age (as opposed to 32.6% of the entire population.)
- 56.8% report a family income of less than $10,000 (as opposed to 33% of the area population.)
- 45.6% do not have a driver's license.
- 59.6% are captive riders, without an available automobile for personal transportation. Only 18.3% of bus riders indicated that there is more than 1 automobile in their household.
- 11.1% of the riders are retired persons.

Journeys to work, which account for 68.7% of all bus trips, are the primary travel purpose for JTA passengers. The second most common reason for using bus service is personal business trips. The following graph indicates the percentages of trip purposes.

WEEKDAY TRIP PURPOSES



Two thirds of the work trips are to the downtown area. Most bus riders indicate they ride the bus daily (66%); the majority of them (78.9%) walk to and from the bus.

The bus routes with the highest rate of passengers per vehicle mile are those operating in areas with the highest densities, lowest incomes and highest percentage of minority population. These neighborhoods which are adjacent or close to the core area and to the northwest of the river consistently have more passengers per vehicle mile and return the greater part of the cost of operating the system through the farebox. The average number of passengers per vehicle mile in the total JTA bus system is 2.11. The highest rate is 5.77 passengers per vehicle mile for the Florida Avenue (#12) route which operates primarily northeast of the central business district. Only 8 other routes have passenger rates higher than 2.5 passengers per vehicle mile. These routes (Phoenix #15, Panama #17, Myrtle #18, Grand Crossing #19, Beaver #20, Sherwood Forest #28 and Moncreif #36A and #36B) are all located in the geographical area running northwest from the river.

A PUBLICLY SUPPORTED MASS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BENEFITS NOT ONLY THOSE WHO ACTUALLY USE THE SYSTEM BUT THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

Many people think mass transportation should be classified as a public sector activity like police and fire protection. However, unlike these activities, public transit service must compete with other modes of travel, primarily the automobile. The question remains as to whether transit supplies a sufficiently important service to the general public to warrant subsidizing fares.

Some think transit operating expenses should not be subsidized by taxes on those not using the system, that in economic terms it is not justifiable to continue to supply services for which customers are not willing to pay. However, in Jacksonville, as in every other large city, elected officials have supported a public policy of subsidizing bus transportation with other funds.

The main justifications offered by proponents of mass transit for transit subsidies are that transit:

- Benefits the socio-economically disadvantaged population by providing essential mobility at an affordable price. This mobility may keep persons off public assistance by allowing access to jobs.

- Provides mobility for those who are unable to drive--handicapped, elderly, or underage persons.

- Benefits residents of an area served by transit by providing mobility in emergencies when automobiles or friends are not available.

- Benefits transit workers, suppliers, and employers by direct support.

- Helps promote the development, or stem the decline, of high density urban areas, particularly central cities.

- Stimulates commercial activity for businesses directly adjacent to the routes. For example, some businesses on bus routes in Birmingham, Alabama experienced more than a 40% drop in business during the 2 month shutdown of the transit system in 1981.

- Is often considered one of the essential services expected to be provided by a city when comparisons are made for a major plant location. The availability of transit may make real estate more desirable for potential purchases.

- Reduces the space required for parking and its cost to business.

- Reduces the subsidies required for automobiles. Automobiles are subsidized by public funds for road and bridge construction and repair, parking garages, etc. Increased use of transit could eliminate the need to build additional street and bridge lanes for automobiles or to build new parking facilities.

- Generates less pollution per person than automobiles. In some cities, including Jacksonville, automobiles are the primary cause of pollution in the downtown areas.

- Benefits motorists by reducing congestion. The average transit bus removes 40 drivers from the road during peak hours, thereby relieving congestion caused by additional automobiles. At any given time the 138 peak hour buses carry approximately 5,520 passengers who might otherwise be in automobiles.

- Generates fewer accident casualties than private automobiles.

- Consumes less energy per rider than a private automobile, making more fuel available for other automobiles and helping to keep the cost of fuel lower.

MASS TRANSPORTATION CAN NO LONGER SUPPORT ITSELF IN THE PRIVATE, FOR PROFIT MARKET DUE TO THE CHANGING VALUES OF SOCIETY, URBAN SPRAWL, COMPETITION FROM THE AUTOMOBILE, AND SOARING OPERATING COSTS. THIS IS NOT UNIQUE TO JACKSONVILLE BUT IS TRUE NATIONALLY.

Jacksonville experienced a trend away from mass transit beginning with the mass production of automobiles in the early decades of this century. This trend accelerated rapidly following World War II. Jacksonville was known for its extensive trolley system at the end of the last century. Trolley lines were found to be incompatible with automobiles because they competed for street space, and the tracks were hard on tires and suspensions. As the automobile became more widespread the trolley systems were eliminated in favor of buses.

The Jacksonville Coach Company, a privately owned bus system, operated in Jacksonville until 1972 but was not able to survive as a profitable business because of a number of factors

affecting bus systems nationwide.

The decentralization of the central city population contributed to the decline of mass transit systems. The efficiency and effectiveness of transit decline as land use densities decrease, and as population and jobs move from the central cities. Automobiles proliferated as auto costs in relation to personal income decreased and the wealth of the population increased.

Transit use was sharply reduced following the 1940's, causing the industry to suffer declining profits. Postwar inflation cut into the transit industry forcing the operators to discontinue capital improvements and delay repairs. This reduced the attractiveness of mass transit and caused a further reduction in the number of passengers.

In some municipalities, local government efforts to keep fares low and routes open inadvertently contributed to the problems of the private companies by refusing to allow transit operators to cut back service on unprofitable routes or to raise farebox rates.

Many local governments came to the understanding that a mass transit system was essential to the daily functioning of their citizens, especially low income workers, the elderly and those others who could not drive or own an automobile. Many of these governments, with assistance from the federal government and some state governments, began to purchase and subsidize unprofitable private transit companies in order to continue the service. This trend toward public ownership of transit, which began early in the largest and oldest cities, accelerated in the 1960s. Initially, the subsidies were limited to capital expenditures and debt service, including the cost of acquisition of equipment from the private owners.

Jacksonville's bus system was one of the last remaining large private systems to be purchased by a municipality at the end of 1972. Under the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, the bus system has required increasing levels of public subsidy to continue operations.

Several factors have contributed to increasing operating costs. Some of these factors are related to inflation. Since the cost of labor and fringe benefits represents roughly 55.9% of the cost of transit operation, increases in these costs have had a particularly high impact on operating costs. Fuel costs, another 16.9% of the total, have risen much faster than inflation (over 100% in the three years preceding 1981). However, fuel prices have stabilized recently, and labor costs in Florida have actually decreased in relation to other cost factors. The average bus driver's salary in 1982 in Jacksonville was $16,428 per year. Fringe benefits amounted to approximately 30% with 10 paid holidays and 10 vacation days. Benefits included health insurance, and the employer matched employee pension plan contributions.

Operating costs have also increased because of the movement of residential population in the Jacksonville metropolitan area and elsewhere toward low density suburbs. This movement has been encouraged and subsidized nationwide by the availability of federal home loan mortgage insurance (FHA and VA) and by massive public highway construction projects linking the suburbs with central cities. From 1950 to 1977 transit ridership nationally declined by over 50%, and its market share declined from over 17% to 4% of all trips taken. With an increase in low density suburbs, regional shopping centers and dispersed work places, transit has become less and less efficient in serving the needs of people, because of the difficulty of providing frequent, convenient bus service to widespread locations. As a result, people tend to rely instead on their cars. Consequently, suburban buses are seldom filled, and the cost per passenger increases.

A comparison shows the difference between operating costs of inner city and suburban bus routes in Jacksonville. Routes operating with the lowest deficit (i.e. recovering the greatest percentage of costs from the farebox) are primarily those serving the inner city. Florida Avenue (#12) ranks the highest, with Beaver (#20) and Moncrief routes (#36A and B) also near the top. Conversely, the Express Flyers and other routes serving low density, outlying areas are the least cost effective with the highest deficit.

The high cost of providing transportation during rush hours, known as peaking, also increases the cost of transit. An operator is faced with the problem of supplying the majority of the fleet and labor for rush hour loads in the morning and evening, with little need in between. Unless the transit operator charges a premium fare or does not increase capacity during the rush hour, rush hour service actually costs more than the revenue it produces. This problem is further aggravated by the fact that drivers, working eight hour days, are not able to drive both peaks without splitting work shifts or working part time.

While these factors have increased costs and reduced the demand for mass transit, market

mechanisms and public social policy have joined to curtail the ability of transit operators to raise farebox rates, thus bringing about a deficit financing situation, requiring public subsidies to keep transit systems going. As ridership decreases and demand softens, it becomes financially impossible to increase rates to recover lost revenue. As a rule, when fares are increased 5¢, about 3% of the ridership is lost. At the same time, in Jacksonville, as ridership increasingly has consisted of lower income commuters who do not have and cannot afford automobiles, rate increases have been seen to be not only financially infeasible but also socially unacceptable. Given this economic and social context, most private transit systems have reverted to public ownership, and all are heavily subsidized with tax dollars to fund large operating deficits.

IN ADDITION TO BUSES, MASS TRANSIT OFTEN INCLUDES FIXED GUIDEWAY TRANSIT, AND OTHER MODES SUCH AS SHARED-RIDE TAXI, CAR/VAN/BUS POOLS, JITNEYS, VAN SERVICES, LIMOUSINE SERVICES AND SCHOOL BUSES TO PROVIDE MOBILITY FOR THE ENTIRE POPULATION. IN JACKSONVILLE, HOWEVER, THE BUS SERVES AS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

The local mass transit system consists of a bus system, taxi services, private commuter van pool systems and some specialized service systems.

BUS SYSTEM

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), charged with the responsibility for Jacksonville's mass transit and expressway systems, operates a bus system of diesel powered, multi-passenger buses traveling on 52 routes. Of these routes, 18 are Express Flyers running from outlying areas to the downtown area, primarily during peak commuting hours. During peak hours in 1982 an average of 158 buses were on the road. Since recent cutbacks, about 138 peak hour buses are operating. The 1982 ridership survey indicated that the JTA bus system handled about 17,670 passengers per day.

The JTA owns 208 standard city transit coaches, including 63 purchased in 1982 at a cost of $9,261,000. In addition, JTA has 57 older buses stored in an inactive, reserve category. Plans call for selling 40 of these old buses.

The JTA recently ordered 6 articulated buses at a cost of $1,470,000. These extra long buses have an accordion-like section in the middle with two main sections moving independently to enable the bus to turn corners more easily. The large capacity design lowers cost on heavily traveled routes by requiring only one driver for a larger number of passengers.

TAXI INDUSTRY

THE TAXI-CAB INDUSTRY IN JACKSONVILLE IS SMALL, FRAGMENTED AND A MINOR PART OF THE MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM. There are three taxi-cab companies operating in Jacksonville: Bold City Transportation, Budget Cabs, Inc., and Ebony Cabs, Inc. Each of these companies owns several subsidiary taxi-cab companies operated in Jacksonville. The companies lease cars to drivers and provide a dispatch service. They are not involved in the operation of the vehicles, the comfort of the passengers, etc. Drivers lease the cars based on a flat rate per shift (about $33.00).

A total of 282 taxi-cab permits were authorized by the City of Jacksonville as of November 1982. However, only 113 are active permits; the remaining permits are held, unused, by the taxi-cab companies. The taxi-cab companies indicate there is not enough business to operate cars on all existing permits, though other operators are trying to obtain permits to get into the business.

Jacksonville's ratio of licensed taxi-cabs per 1,000 population is well below the national average. National survey data show that Jacksonville would require over 600 taxi-cabs to attain the average of other large cities. New taxi-cab legislation starting a "medallion" system was enacted recently by the City Council. This new system will allow additional people, including single taxi cab operators, to enter the taxi business. The results of this legislation may be reduced fares and increase the number of taxi-cabs operating in the city.

Both metered and unmetered cabs operate in Jacksonville. Metered cabs are predominant with rates determined by time and distance. Unmetered cabs charge rates according to the number of zones traversed during a trip. In a zone cab, unlike a metered cab, each rider is expected to pay full fare. In a metered cab, one rider pays full fare, and each additional rider going to the same location is charged 75¢.

VAN POOLING

COMPANY-SPONSORED VAN POOLING PROVIDES WORK RELATED MASS TRANSPORTATION WITH BENEFITS TO THE PASSENGERS, COMPANIES AND COMMUNITY. A van pool is a group of commuters who ride together to and from work in a company supplied van. Prudential Insurance Company was the first company in Jacksonville to promote van pooling for its employees. Each van is driven by one commuter who rides free and has limited personal use of the van in exchange for keeping it clean and well maintained. In the operation of a van pool, the van and gas costs are divided among passengers who are usually able to ride for about 1.8¢ a mile. The company is paid a fixed rate (18¢ per mile at Prudential) for the use of the vans. The company changes the oil, supplies all maintenance and pays insurance costs on each vehicle.

The advantages of a van pool system can be divided into three categories: passenger, company and community.

Passenger benefits:

- Saving money, up to $3,000 per year.
- Perhaps eliminating the necessity of buying another automobile.
- Having door to door or almost door to door service.
- Eliminating the stress of driving and traffic.
- Reading, sleeping or socializing on the way to work.

Company benefits:

- Reducing absenteeism due to peer pressure.
- Reducing tardiness (drivers wait only one minute at each stop).
- Lowering the required number of parking places (and their cost in land and maintenance).
- Having use of the vans during the workday.
- Receiving an investment tax credit in the amount of 10% of the cost of the vans.
- Allowing mobility during fuel shortages due to van pool gas allocations.
- Boosting employee morale.
- Advertising, since the vans may have the company's name on the side.

The only loss to the company is the opportunity to use the capital for other expenditures. However, vans are depreciated and van pool users eventually pay back the company for the vans.

Community benefits:

- Relieving traffic congestion and reducing the need for additional bridges and highways.
- Reducing air pollution.
- Reducing consumption of gasoline.

IN JACKSONVILLE THERE ARE SPECIAL PURPOSE FORMS OF MASS TRANSIT WHICH ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR GENERAL USE.

School buses are a widely used form of mass transportation moving 52,000 students to public schools every day on 582 buses. School buses are privately owned and independently operated under contract to the School Board. Since school buses operate during the same peak time as the JTA buses, they cannot be used to help move commuters. When not in use for students, some of those buses are available for chartering. Church buses and private school buses also operate throughout the City.

Another specialized type of mass transportation service includes the JTA Dial-A-Ride buses and independent van services for the handicapped. These provide services on a demand-responsive basis only for those who are unable to use the regular bus service, not the general public. Demand responsive services mean that vehicles provide prearranged door-to-door service, determining new routes for each trip. The JTA Dial-A-Ride service picks up clients in front of their homes and delivers them to the entrance of their destination.

The specialized private services for the handicapped, such as the Special Transportation Service, are designed to move wheelchair bound and stretcher bound passengers to required health services. These services are subsidized by Medicaid and Medicare. Unlike the JTA Dial-A-Ride, they will take nonambulatory clients from homes or nursing homes to their destinations.

PEOPLE MOVER

GOVERNMENTAL POLICY MAKERS IN JACKSONVILLE PERCEIVE A "PEOPLE MOVER" SYSTEM TO BE A MAJOR AND DESIRABLE ADDITION TO THE CITY'S CURRENT MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM. HOWEVER, WITHOUT A MAJOR INJECTION OF FEDERAL FUNDS, THE SYSTEM IS NOT FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE. Some type of fixed rail rapid transit, capable of decreasing traffic into the downtown area and providing a system of interconnecting links between the downtown and peripheral bus routes, has been planned in Jacksonville for a number of years. As early as 1972, transportation use projections have indicated that trips to the downtown area will soon begin to cause undue congestion and inconvenience if some kind of rapid transit is not available to reduce the number of buses and automobiles on downtown streets.

In 1979 a feasibility study for a downtown "people mover" was completed by a consultant to the JTA. The study recommended construction of 4.4 miles of a completely automated transit system. Some of the benefits claimed for this system include:

- Providing operational cost savings via automation as contrasted to high labor costs in most transit systems.
- Providing faster transportation for people into, out of, and within the central business district.
- Paying for all operating costs out of the farebox, unlike the bus system, if conservative estimates of ridership are met.
- Inducing new downtown development and increasing tax revenues.
- Bolstering retail sales in the central business district.
- Stimulating the creation of approximately 6,300 new and permanent jobs over the decade following its construction.
- Establishing a hub for the regional transit system recommended in long range plans.
- Complementing the existing mass transit system by enabling some regular passengers to transfer before entering the central business district and by allowing park and ride patrons to leave their automobiles outside the central business district.
- Saving energy by reducing the inefficient use at slow speeds of high energy conventional buses and automobiles in the central business district.
- Improving the environment of the core city and increasing pedestrian safety by reducing the number of cars.
- Freeing some existing downtown parking space for more intensive and productive uses.

Developing an automated transit system has gained support from decision makers dealing with mass transportation in the downtown area, including:

The Downtown Development Authority
Jacksonville Transportation Authority
Jacksonville Planning Department
Florida Department of Transportation
City Council
Mayor's Office

After an extensive 4.6 mile "people mover" system was planned, including service from the Hospital Complex to St. John's Place via a rebuilt Acosta Bridge, changes in the federal government administration reduced the probability of obtaining federal funds. Although the project could eventually save money in operating costs, construction costs were viewed as prohibitive without massive federal funding. Nonetheless, in anticipation of further changes in federal policy that would allow new projects on a smaller scale, Jacksonville continued to prepare preliminary plans for a "people mover."

In 1982 the City Council decided to assist in the development of a convention center on the site of the old train station, Union Terminal, which is slightly removed from the downtown core city. The need for a scaled-down, start up project for the "people mover" was matched with the need for some type of transportation to link the proposed convention center to the downtown area. The result was a proposed 0.7 mile link of "automated skyway express" having 3 stations, (one at the convention center site, an intermediate one located at Jefferson Street, and one adjacent to the old Sears parking lot near Julia Street).

This initial link of "automated skyway" would cost an estimated $23.3 million. Two vehicles would operate over the elevated guideway with a one way travel time of 2.12 minutes. The capacity per hour per direction for this link would be 2,547 persons. Operating costs for the line are estimated at less than $300,000 a

year. These operating costs would be recovered solely from fares, requiring no subsidy, according to plans.

The JTA claims several advantages of this .7 mile link of "automated skyway" express:

- It would reduce the parking problem in downtown Jacksonville by providing a parking lot at the convention center site with rapid access to the downtown area.

- It would spawn new economic development along the corridor between the two sites.

- It would allow the removal of the terminus of 8 to 10 bus routes from the congested downtown area to the convention center parking lot. This would increase the speed of the entire bus system by eliminating the slowest part of the routes. An increase of speed on these routes from 12 mph to 14 mph could save several hundred thousand dollars a year in bus operating costs.

Although the new link would be a great benefit to the convention center if the latter is created, the JTA staff say the project can stand alone economically as a link between a large park-and-ride lot and downtown.

WHILE A NUMBER OF MASS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES USED IN OTHER COMMUNITIES ARE NOT SUITABLE IN JACKSONVILLE, OTHERS MIGHT BE USED TO INCREASE MOBILITY HERE.

Heavy rail systems are used in some very large, densely populated metropolitan areas. These systems are very expensive to operate and require high subsidies. Similarly, waterborne transit, including large passenger ferries and rapid hydrofoil ferries, is used in some locations. Again, these transportation modes require very high population densities and large governmental subsidies.

TROLLEY

Trolley cars or a light, electrically operated rail system could meet some mass transportation needs in Jacksonville. In a proposal under consideration by the city officials, the use of trolleys for mass transportation has been combined with a proposal to develop a museum of transportation with historic trolley era memorabilia and restored cars. The low cost promised by this proposal appears to be derived primarily from the use of donated track, donated right of way, second hand equipment, and volunteer labor by railroad enthusiasts.

Trolleys compete with automobiles for street space, must stop at street lights and signs, rely on overhead wires for a power source and require individual drivers. Although trolley cars have been recognized as an asset in many cities which have rebuilt or expanded their old trolley lines, in most cases a trolley is considered primarily a promotional tool and tourist attraction. In Jacksonville, the proposal for a transportation museum and short trolley link is advanced primarily as a tourist attraction.

VAN POOLING/LEASING

In other places, van pools similar to Prudential's operate as either owner-operated businesses (purchased or leased) or through third party leases. In some systems, such as the Golden Gate Van Pool in California and the Tidewater Transportation District Commission in the peninsular area around Norfolk, Virginia, the vans are purchased by governmental agencies who recover total costs by leasing them out to private van pool operators.

These government-sponsored van pools function similarly to company-sponsored operations. For example, the Virginia program carries about 2,000 commuters per day to and from work in fewer than 200 vans which replace over 1,000 private automobiles. This provides needed transportation, saves fuel and parking facilities and reduces pollution.

SHARED-RIDE TAXI

Shared-ride taxi service is another transit strategy used in some communities to address transportation needs. By using a shared taxi to pick up passengers door to door in low density areas and deliver them to bus lines or major destinations, communities have found they are able to serve low density areas at a reduced cost. Shared-ride taxis receive a governmental subsidy by contracting with local transit operators. In low density areas, the cost of this subsidy is less (up to 50%) than the cost of operating bus service. This has been suggested for possible use in Jacksonville on Sundays when bus ridership is extremely low. The JTA could save by not having to operate the expensive maintenance facilities and buses for the greatly reduced service required.

SUBSCRIPTION BUSES

Subscription buses have been used elsewhere and have been suggested in Jacksonville for supplying public transportation on high cost commuter

routes. Under this arrangement, passengers would prepay the amount required to operate these higher cost, peak-hour buses. Subscription services are run in some cities with private owner-operated buses and in other places with drivers leasing buses from public transit agencies.

JITNEYS

Jitneys operate in Jacksonville in the form of unmetered taxi cabs, airport buses and some illegal, unlicensed and unregulated vans and cars in low income areas. In other communities where jitneys are licensed and regulated, they form a highly organized, reliable, private segment of the overall mass transportation system.

Jitneys provide a form of taxi service that is limited to relatively fixed routes (but allows for occasional slight variations) and is open to ride sharing. Jitney services have the following characteristics:

- Semi-fixed routes
- Semi-fixed schedules (some unscheduled)
- Fixed rates (often by zone) slightly above bus fare and somewhat below taxi fare
- Relative frequency of service (every five minutes or less)
- Relatively long operating hours (some 24 hrs./day, 7 days/wk.)
- Relatively small vehicles (cars, vans, or minibuses)

Jitneys are often perceived as an economic threat by many transit and taxi services, especially if unregulated. The jitney systems may be licensed and regulated by local governments, regulated by volunteer jitney owners associations, or unregulated.

The most successful markets for jitneys are low income areas underserved by taxis and transit. Jitneys do best financially on main thoroughfares linked to downtown commercial areas or along main commercial arterials in convention/tourist centers. At best, jitneys are usually only modest money makers for the owners.

OTHER STRATEGIES

SEVERAL STRATEGIES ARE USED IN OTHER COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE FLOW OF MASS TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES OR TO PROMOTE THEIR USE. SOME OF THESE INCLUDE:

- The use of staggered work hours for employees to allow them to commute to and from work during off-peak hours.
- The use of park-and-ride lots outside of high density central business areas with less expensive parking rates and convenient bus service to and from the business areas.
- The use of priority parking for van pools or other shared ride vehicles in public or company owned parking lots.
- The use of "high occupancy vehicle" lanes reserved for shared ride vehicles and buses on expressways and through toll booths to decrease transit time over that of single passenger automobiles.

THE JTA RELIES ON LOCAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO MAKE UP ITS BUS SYSTEM OPERATING DEFICITS. STATE OF FLORIDA FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR OPERATING EXPENSES. OPERATING DEFICITS HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY SINCE THE JTA PURCHASED THE SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH FARES HAVE ALSO INCREASED. FEDERAL PROPOSALS TO REDUCE AND EVENTUALLY ELIMINATE OPERATING FUNDS THREATEN THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE BUS SYSTEM IF ALTERNATIVE SOURCES ARE NOT TAPPED.

In Jacksonville the local transit system has required a continual increase in subsidy since the purchase of the system. Jacksonville supplied operating support of $671,980 in 1973, the year of the purchase. This amount has increased yearly until in 1982 the City of Jacksonville provided about $3,685,000 for mass transit subsidy and has budgeted $5 million for FY1983.

Over the years there has been a close correlation between these increases and the overall inflationary trends in the economy. During this period, the percentage of farebox recovery remained essentially the same (averaging near 46%) and the level of service (number of bus routes, headways, etc.) remained steady. The services were reduced slightly in 1982. The approximately 10% federal subsidy reduction was absorbed by an increase in the local subsidy.

Table A

JTA Trend In Transit Operation Funding by Source
FY73 - FY83 (thousands)

Revenue Source	FY73	FY74	FY75	FY76	FY77	FY78	FY79	FY80	FY81	FY82	Budget FY83
(Fare)	(25¢)	(25¢)	(25¢)	(25¢)	(25¢)	(25¢)	(25¢)	(35¢)	(50¢)	(60¢)	(60¢)
Fare Box	$1889	3642	3699	3832	3897	$3,969	5,070	5,243	6,662	6,210	6,065
Other Revenue	88	40	100	84	90	154	209	276	210	1,364*	380
Federal Support	-0-	-0-	580	1268	1980	2,558	2,536	3,094	2,776	2,831	2,218
City Support	672	1623	2065	1948	2414	2,440	2,363	2,830	3,770	3,685	5,000
TOTAL	$2649	5305	6444	7132	8381	9,121	10,179	11,442	13,418	14,091	13,663

Source: JTA Staff January, 1983.
* Includes an unusually high carryover of funds from the previous year.

NOTES:

(1) FY73 - FY76 are July 1-June 30, FY's commencing with FY77 are October 1-September 30.

(2) JTA purchased assets of JCC on December 11, 1972 and assumed operations on that date. Revenues are for the period 12/11/72 thru 6/30/73.

(3) Operations funding under Section 5 of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended (particularly the 1974 amendments) became available in FY75.

(4) FY77 begins 10/1/76, there was no separate accounting/financial statement for the period 7/1/76 thru 9/30/76.

With the proposed reduction in federal operating assistance, Jacksonville expected only $1.4 million for FY 1983, compared with $2.8 million received in FY 1982. In FY 1983, since Congress did not pass all the budget cuts proposed by President Reagan, JTA now expects to receive up to $2.2 million in federal operating assistance. This is still a reduction of over $300,000 during a time when costs are continuing to rise. The mass transit system originally faced a $2 million budget shortfall by the end of 1982. The City Council increased the City subsidy to a total of $5 million in order to make up this shortfall.

Over the last twenty years the federal trend of increasing funding for mass transit caused Jacksonville to rely on these funds. The federal government began regularly supporting mass transit in 1964 with the passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Act. This funding steadily increased through all administrations until massive cuts were proposed by the Reagan administration.

The Urban Mass Transportation Act was passed partly to assist public take over of failing private transit systems. The act established a program of federal matching grants (on a 2/3 federal--1/3 local share basis) for planning and capital acquisition. In 1974 Congress amended a law, increasing the federal funding share to 80% of project cost. In the same year, Congress also included, for the first time, assistance for operating expenses.

In 1981, the Reagan administration announced its intention to phase out all federal operating assistance and most capital assistance to urban mass transportation. Thus far, Congress has resisted much of the administration's proposal but has approved some reductions in funding.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCING

A wide range of funding sources is used to finance mass transportation operations across the country.

Capital funding from the federal and state government continues to be available on a fairly substantial basis for 90% of the cost of capital improvements. Local government appropriations for the remaining 10% for capital improvements is usually obtained by ad valorem taxes.

The following funding sources are used in the United States to finance the operation of mass transit systems.

- Farebox revenue--This is generally the most direct funding source as there is a rela-

tionship between the payment and the service received. However, for reasons enumerated earlier, it is not possible to receive 100% of operating costs from the farebox.

- State retail sales tax--This tax can be increased by state legislation to raise substantial dollars. Florida does not contribute financially for local mass transit operations, so this funding source would require policy changes.

- Motor fuels tax (on volume)--Jacksonville may impose by referendum an add-on 1 penny tax for local use. Recent legislative changes allow the City Council to add an additional 4¢ per gallon tax. (1¢ tax generates about $2.5 million per year in Jacksonville.) However, both the federal and Florida state governments have recently increased the motor fuels tax. State motor fuels taxes vary from 9¢ to 12¢ per gallon nationwide. (Florida's tax which was 8¢ per gallon has now been reduced to 4¢ per gallon but increased by a newly enacted 5% sales tax.)

- State retail sales tax on motor fuels--This is the 5% retail sales tax on motor fuel, recently passed in Florida. It will generate additional funds, some of which are planned for capital expenditures for mass transit. However, the funds will not be available for mass transit operations under present policies.

- Local ad valorem tax--Currently this is the primary source of local government subsidies appropriated to the JTA for bus operations. With city council and voter approval, it would be possible to earmark millage for mass transit (one mill generates about 7 million dollars). The Jacksonville Port Authority recently began a campaign to obtain a dedicated mill of property tax for their operation, creating political competition for any JTA move in this direction. The City Council has the authority to increase millage, subject to certain limitations, up to the state limit--20 mills excluding school millage. (The 1982 rate in Jacksonville ranged from about 10.8 to 14.3 mills in different urban service districts.) In addition, millage can be increased by referendum beyond the limit.

- Metropolitan payroll tax--This tax on an employer's gross payroll is presently used in several metropolitan areas. The tax does not take into consideration the unequal benefits among employers from mass transit.

- State and/or local personal income tax--This tax, though currently unconstitutional in Florida, is being used increasingly around the country. Only Cincinnati, Ohio has earmarked a portion of its local income tax for transit support.

- Lottery--This is a voluntary source of revenue used in 13 states. Pennsylvania and Arizona have earmarked some lottery income for mass transit. This source could be created by state legislation.

- Local parking tax--This is a tax on public or private commercial downtown parking on either the parker or the operator. It could be instituted by the JTA with local government approval.

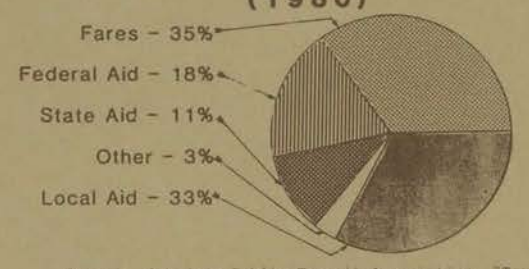
- Local motor vehicle tax--With state legislative approval, Jacksonville could collect an add-on charge on auto tags to be used for mass transit. The state of Florida recently increased motor vehicle license tag fees.

- Local tolls--According to the JTA, current toll revenues are sufficient only for bond retirement and maintenance of the existing system of toll bridges and roads. New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco use tolls to help finance local mass transit. The JTA has the authority to raise the tolls to help finance local mass transit.

Revenue Source Comparison

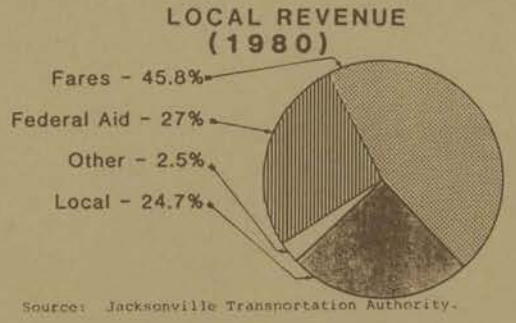
The proportion of total revenue received from the farebox, and thus the operating deficit, varies widely across the nation. The American Public Transit Association (APTA) determined that in 1980 the nationwide average revenue recovered from fares was 35% of revenue. Governmental aid (federal, state, and local) and other sources, including charter fares and advertising, finance operating deficits. The chart below indicates the percentage distribution of revenue sources for mass transit systems according to the national average.

AVERAGE REVENUE NATIONWIDE (1980)



Source: American Public Transit Association, "Transit Fact Book 1981."

In Jacksonville, the farebox produces a higher percentage of the revenue than the national average, making it one of the two highest in the state (Dade County fares produce 46% of the revenue). The chart below indicates the distribution of sources of revenue for the JTA Mass Transit Division during fiscal year 1980.



Source: Jacksonville Transportation Authority.

Locally, this distribution has changed in the FY 1983 budget with a greater percentage (36.6%) coming from city support. Farebox revenue is budgeted at 44.3% and federal aid at 16.3%.

The State of Florida does not supply any operating funds to local bus systems. Of the 10 most populous states in the nation, only Florida and Texas do not assist in operating expenses for local transit systems. However, the State does give local transit systems capital assistance for projects, including both moving and fixed facilities.

JTA USE OF OPERATING FUNDS

THE LARGEST COST ITEM IN BUS TRANSIT OPERATIONS IS SALARIES, PRIMARILY FOR BUS DRIVERS. This cost cannot be easily reduced without directly reducing services because of labor contracts and the nature of the operation.

The cost of operating the Jacksonville bus system for one year (data from year ending March 31, 1982) was about $13.9 million. This figure includes expenses incurred by both the Jacksonville Coach Company and the Mass Transit Division of JTA. Reviewing these funds by functional classification and object classification gives a clearer understanding of their use. Table B indicates how this money was spent in terms of function.

As indicated, vehicle operations absorbed nearly 2/3 of the operating expenses. Vehicle operations include driver wages and fringe benefits, fuel, tires, tubes, etc. Vehicle maintenance includes the salaries and benefits of mechanics. Non-vehicle maintenance consists of the cost of maintaining the physical plant. The general administration function includes costs for both the Coach Company and the JTA Mass Transit Division.

TABLE B
SUMMARY OF OPERATING EXPENSES
Function Class

MAJOR EXPENSE CATEGORIES	AMOUNT	PERCENT
FUNCTION CLASS		
Vehicle Operations	9,377,600	67.5
Vehicle Maintenance	2,513,600	18.1
Non-Vehicle Maintenance	270,700	1.9
General Administration	1,737,500	12.5
Total	13,899,400	100.0

When these same expenses are displayed by object classification, the major expense (nearly 50%) is for labor. The wages and salaries of the bus drivers comprise 69% of this labor category. When the fringe benefits are combined with the labor cost, the labor intensive nature of operating a bus system becomes obvious. Almost 66%, over $9 million of the JTA operating budget, goes to these two categories. Supplies, including fuel, tires, and tubes as well as materials used for servicing and maintaining vehicles take 23.7% of the total operating budget or almost $3.3 million. The remaining categories account for the remaining 10% or approximately $1.4 million.

TABLE C
SUMMARY OF OPERATING EXPENSES

Object Class

MAJOR EXPENSE CATEGORIES	AMOUNT	PERCENT
OBJECT CLASS		
Labor	6,488,900	46.7
Fringe Benefits	2,668,600	19.2
Purchased Services (includes management company fee)	870,400	6.2
Materials and Supplies	3,292,300	23.7
Utilities	162,700	1.2
Casualty and Liability	275,200	2.0
Taxes	70,400	0.5
Miscellaneous	70,900	0.5
Total	13,899,400	100.0

COST OF OPERATING A BUS

The chart below compares transit operating statistics for the JTA bus system with statewide averages as published by the Florida Transit Association for fiscal year 1982. Financially speaking, JTA compares favorably on nearly all statistics. The cost per vehicle mile for operating the bus is 37¢ lower than the state average. JTA's cost per passenger trip is 5¢ lower than the state average. On the average, the JTA recovers 5¢ more per rider than the statewide average of 42¢. The total yearly cost for operating a bus is $7,381 less than the statewide average. However, the JTA buses have a smaller ridership per vehicle mile, and thus total ridership per bus is considerably less than the state average. On the average, each JTA bus carries 3,590 fewer passengers each year than the statewide average.

BUS OPERATING COST

Statewide Average		JTA
$ 2.60	cost per vehicle mile	$ 2.23
1.10	cost per passenger trip	1.05
.42	average fare paid per rider	.47
2.36	riders per vehicle mile	2.10
95,352.00	annual cost to operate each bus	87,971.00
86,624	riders carried per bus annually	83,026

THE FLAT RATE FARE STRUCTURE USED IN JACKSONVILLE CAUSES SUBURBAN COMMUTERS TO PAY THE LEAST PROPORTION OF RIDE COSTS AND RECEIVE THE GREATEST SUBSIDY, WHILE LOWER INCOME INNER CITY PASSENGERS, WHO CAN LEAST AFFORD IT, PAY A GREATER PROPORTION OF RIDE COSTS. Jacksonville's fare structure, in effect, causes low income bus riders to subsidize middle income and upper income transit users. The inner city bus routes in low income areas come much closer to breaking even at the farebox than the suburban bus routes. It is far more costly to provide transit service to suburban, low density areas than to the high density areas in the inner city. In addition, it is more expensive to serve rush hour patrons during peak hours than off peak travelers. Thus, with a flat fare system, larger subsidies are paid for suburban transit riders than for inner city riders. The present fare structure for Jacksonville is shown below:

Jacksonville Bus Fares

• Regular fare	$ .60
• Weekly pass with ..... unlimited use throught the system	12.00
• Monthly pass with ..... restricted use for downtown commuters only	22.00
• Senior citizens' fare	.15
• Student tickets	.45
• Express flyers except ..... to the beaches	.75
• Routes from the beaches.... to Jacksonville including flyers (except for students who pay 90¢ and senior citizens who pay 15¢)	1.10
• Dial-A-Ride service for.... the handicapped base fare (zone charge of 25¢)	1.25

Bus fares in most other communities include a transfer system and some type of zone fares (used here only on the beach routes, navy base routes and Dial-A-Ride). Some cities have higher fares during peak demand, rush hour periods when the service is most expensive to provide. Buses on a flyer route usually drive out empty to pick up passengers and fill once before returning. A bus must fill and empty several times on a route to get a sufficient return from the farebox.

THE JTA BUS SYSTEM IS OPERATED BY A PRIVATE MANAGEMENT COMPANY. THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY'S EMPLOYEES ARE PRIVATE AND UNIONIZED. THEY ARE NOT SUBJECT TO FLORIDA LAW GOVERNING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. By 1972, it had become obvious that the Jacksonville Coach Company could no longer operate profitably. In an effort to secure federal subsidy funding and to maintain mass transit bus service, the City of Jacksonville purchased the assets of the Coach Company and began to operate the bus system through the JTA under management contract with the same Jacksonville Coach Company. The JTA made this decision recognizing that:

(1) If the JTA managed the bus system directly, the private transit employees would become public employees, losing

certain rights and thus jeopardizing federal funds. The Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 includes a "13(c)" clause, which requires that the working conditions of transit employees in federally assisted programs be protected. The union contract of the bus drivers in the Jacksonville bus system includes the right to strike and the right to engage in binding arbitration. If the bus drivers were to become governmental employees, they would lose these two rights under Florida law. Since this could be interpreted as a worsening of conditions not permissible under the 13(c) clause, it was not deemed feasible to establish a publicly operated bus system in Jacksonville.

(2) The Coach Company failed not because of poor management, but because of changing economic trends.

(3) The JTA did not have the expertise to operate a bus system. Transit management is specialized and does not attract a large number of new professionals. As a result, few are available. The JTA in 1972 did not have the necessary expertise to run the bus system and did not believe that it could attract the required professionals.

THE JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT MASS TRANSPORTATION PLANS FOR THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE. THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL, WHO INFLUENCE THE JTA POLICIES THROUGH APPOINTIVE AND BUDGETARY POWERS, ALSO GET INVOLVED IN OPERATIONAL DECISIONS.

The forerunner of the JTA, the Jacksonville Expressway Authority, dealt solely with the expressway system and was fiscally independent of the City. In 1972 State legislation expanded the Authority's purposes to include the operation of the bus system. Since that time, the Authority has requested yearly appropriations from the City for the cost of bus operations and administration. The City Council has begun to review the JTA's mass transportation budget carefully each year. The expressway and transit functions of the Authority are kept separate. City appropriations have been used exclusively for mass transit. The JTA submits a proposed line item budget to the City Council on all aspects of the mass transportation system. The City Council, by either granting or withholding appropriations, may actually determine which of the activities in the JTA budget will be undertaken.

As JTA requests for appropriations from the City have increased, the City Council and Mayor have involved themselves more closely in determining the use of mass transit funds. Both the City Council and the Mayor's Office have stated that they have been working with the JTA over the last year to improve efficiency in the operation of the bus system. They have made recommendations regarding better use of management and drivers and have rejected the reduction in routes, Sunday service, and fare increases recommended by JTA. Some Councilmen say that the JTA should take over the management of the bus system from the City Coach Company to reduce that expense.

The JTA, like other public authorities, is a governmental business corporation set up outside of the normal structure of traditional government so that it can have continuity and business-like efficiency in the operation of the enterprise. However, unlike public authorities fitting the traditional definition, the JTA mass transit division is not self-supporting.

The Authority structure can reduce the possibility of making short-term decisions in reaction to political pressure. The structure of the JTA consists of 7 members, 3 appointed by the Governor and 3 by the Mayor (the 7th is the District Two Florida Department of Transportation District Engineer). That structure and the required budget review by the City Council ensure that the JTA sets policies which are acceptable to elected officials.

The JTA desires to obtain a permanent, reliable funding source, such as a designated tax, so that it will not have to make requests for annual appropriations from the City to help finance its operating deficit, thus reducing City Council and Mayoral involvement in JTA operations. On the other hand, it has been suggested by some members of the City Council that the JTA is presently too independent and should be stripped of its present status as a state chartered authority and be placed under the Mayor as a department of the City.

JACKSONVILLE'S POLICIES RELATED TO MASS TRANSPORTATION ARE NOT ONLY UNCLEAR BUT ARE INCONSISTENT WITH POLICIES RELATED TO AUTOMOBILE USE.

The Mayor and City Council are supporting mass transportation by increasing financial support and by working with the JTA to address the problems facing the bus system. However, no overall decision has been reached on the level of mass transportation best suited for Jacksonville now and in the future. This lack of a clear direction has led to many governmental decisions which do not lend themselves to fully developing the use of mass transit.

For example, the City maintains charges on City owned downtown parking lots which are lower than charges on commercial lots. In addition, the City is subsidizing the building of a large parking garage and planned surface parking lot for the Southern Bell building. These parking decisions and other decisions which increase the flow of traffic and promote the use of automobiles are disincentives to the use of mass transit. Other urban areas promote mass transit by utilizing such public policies as high occupancy vehicle lanes and higher tolls and parking fees to discourage automobiles downtown.

In Jacksonville, long range goals have not been set on the type and level of service desired. Transportation plans call for a continuation of bus service or for bus services with a downtown people mover. However, no clear policy decision has been made concerning either the primary populations to be served or the extent of the system. Jacksonville's potential choices range from creating a comprehensive system providing for convenient, quick, reliable, extensive service to settling for a minimum system supplying mobility on a limited basis only for those who are unable to supply their own transportation.

A potential policy to develop a more comprehensive bus system would require discouraging automobile travel by implementing disincentives to drive such as higher tolls, higher parking rates and fewer subsidized parking spaces in the downtown area. This policy would be very expensive, requiring a greater local financial commitment than we now bear. Increasing the number of buses to serve commuters on expensive peak hour trips would require a greater subsidy. The only new riders not requiring additional subsidy would be those filling unused seats during off peak hours.

On the other hand, a decision to provide only essential mobility for the transportation disadvantaged could be implemented along with some other types of policy decisions. For example, outlying, low density areas could be served by van/bus pools or a shared-taxi, dial-a-ride system similar to that used in the Tidewater section of Virginia. These services cost less to operate and attract fewer passengers but still make transportation available for those who have no other choice. Some bus routes could then be shortened to serve only more densely populated areas where they are more cost efficient.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions express the value judgments of the committee, based on the findings.

- A mass transit system is a valuable asset to to the City of Jacksonville to enhance the quality of life and economic development as well as a necessity for many socio-economically disadvantaged persons.
- The automobile is now, and will be in the foreseeable future, the main form of transportation in Jacksonville. It will continue to be subsidized.
- To reduce congestion in the downtown area, disincentives for automobile travel must be established along with incentives for mass transit use.
- The JTA has limited its plans solely to a bus system with a proposed supplement via a downtown automated skyway express (people mover). A diversified urban transportation network with a wide range of services operated by the JTA and under private, or subsidized contracts could more efficiently (same areas serviced at less cost) provide transportation for the City.
- Mass transit benefits alone may not justify the proposed .7 mile portion of the "automated skyway express." A true determination of the cost and benefits would require analysis of alternatives in the project and all aspects of

the project including the impact of a proposed convention center, present and future parking needs, a new Interstate 95 interchange, and economic development impacts.

- In mass transit capital improvements, although local sources may have to provide only 10% of cost, the total cost to taxpayers through state and federal funding is much higher.

- Van pooling, either company-sponsored or publicly-sponsored, is a cost efficient, effective method of providing commuter transportation.

- Trolleys are not feasible as a part of the mass transportation system for Jacksonville.

- High capacity mass transit modes to suburban areas such as commuter rail and commuter ferry boats are not feasible and will not be feasible for many years, due to the dispersed, low density residential patterns and the geographical characteristics found in Jacksonville.

- It has been amply demonstrated nationwide that mass transit systems are not able to provide service based on farebox collections alone. Some type of public operating subsidy is required to provide the urban area with mass transportation. In Jacksonville, the problems are compounded by our relatively dispersed, low density residential patterns.

- With the current federal policy to reduce financial support, the JTA will have difficulty in obtaining adequate operating subsidies from the federal government to supplement the fare box revenues.

- Without major policy changes, the State of Florida will not subsidize mass transit operations. However, the state provides funding to supplement federal capital improvement grants for mass transportation.

- To provide stable, flexible funding, several funding sources need to be secured for mass transit funding rather than relying on any one major source.

- Suburban bus commuters in Jacksonville pay a disproportionately low share of ride costs when compared with inner city passengers. As the commuters from outlying suburbs are the most expensive bus riders to serve, the pricing structure for buses remains inequitable. Another factor in the cost of bus service for many passengers is the lack of a transfer system sometimes requiring the payment of two full fares.

- Mass transit in Jacksonville is and will remain labor intensive.

- The management of the JTA bus system and the status of the employees (i.e., public or private) require additional study. It is not clear whether the elimination of the private management firm or the change of employees to civil service status would increase or decrease JTA costs.

- Because the City subsidizes the bus system, elected officials exert considerable influence over JTA through their authority to approve the JTA budget. This can result in decisions based on political rather than practical, cost effectiveness considerations.

- Jacksonville doesn't know enough about the transit needs of its citizens or the benefits accrued to the community to make an informed determination concerning the level of services to provide.

- JACKSONVILLE NEEDS A CLEAR AND CONSISTENT POLICY ON THE BEST TYPE OF MASS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FOR ITS FUTURE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are the committee's specific suggestions for change, based on the findings and conclusions.

- The City of Jacksonville should develop and implement clear, consistent and comprehensive policies and make funding commitments to improve and continue the existing system of public bus transportation. The following guidelines should be used for setting these policies:

  A. The City of Jacksonville should adopt policies aimed at increasing the relative desirability of using public transportation instead of automobiles especially in the downtown area. These policies should discourage parking in the downtown area, while increasing the feasibility and desirability of riding downtown by bus. Discouraging parking could be accomplished by charging the full going

commercial rate for City-owned parking and by levying a tax on downtown parking. Higher bridge tolls during peak hours and reserved "high occupancy vehicle" lanes could also be implemented (as mass transit expands and improves) to increase the use of shared ride vehicles and mass transit.

B. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should develop and implement plans to diversify the current bus system, including possibly changing some of the bus routes; eliminating or shortening bus routes now serving low density, outlying areas; developing van and jitney routes in these outlying areas designed to feed into higher density bus routes; increasing the number of park-and-ride lots; and developing alternative modes of transportation. All planning should be based on carefully conducted need assessments with open participation of existing and potential system riders.

- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should sponsor ongoing studies exploring mass transit modes of the future, utilizing economic prognosticators and projected population growth patterns.

- Mass transit benefits alone may not justify the proposed .7 mile portion of the "automated skyway express". Therefore, City officials should press for the completion of the entire system in order for the "automated skyway express" to have substantial mass transit benefits.

- Local elected officials and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority should continue to seek federal and state funding sources for capital improvements for Jacksonville's public transit system. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should diversify its requests for funding to include development of alternative modes of public transit, and not limit itself to buying new buses and fixed guideway construction.

- A variety of mass transit operating funding sources should be secured rather than relying on any one major source. Funding should be sought from federal, state and local sources including:

  A. Jacksonville's Congressional representatives should support continued federal funding of mass transit operations.

  B. The Florida Legislature should pass legislation earmarking a portion of the state gasoline tax revenue and other funds from the recently enacted transportation package to support the operation of urban mass transportation systems within the state. This is needed to reduce the increasing mass transit subsidy load on local property taxpayers brought about by reductions in federal funding. Alternatively, new funding sources should be created by the state such as:
     - A metropolitan payroll tax
     - A state or local personal income tax
     - A lottery

  C. The City Council should use its existing authority to add a local motor fuels tax to provide funds required for mass transit operations. This will relieve the burden on ad valorem taxes used for mass transit.

- The City Council should confine its overview of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority to an annual budget review without interference on route selection, fare structure, or other day to day operational activities.

- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should place a higher priority on, and provide more resources for, marketing its public transportation services. These efforts should include providing covered bus stop shelters, marking all bus stops clearly and attractively, and providing information on bus routes and arrival times at each bus stop.

- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should take the lead in marketing the van pool concept to large employers based on the successful model used at the Prudential Insurance Company. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should also become directly involved in organizing van pools through leasing vehicles, lease purchase agreements and/or third party leases by adapting the successful models used in California and the Tidewater area of Virginia.

- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should create a comprehensive system of zone fares based on distance traveled and average ridership on various routes in order to increase the equity of the fare structure.

- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should implement a transfer system to eliminate the penalty now paid by riders required to take multiple buses to reach their destination.

- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority should carefully review its relationship with the Jacksonville Coach Company with a view toward achieving the maximum in efficiency and effectiveness in the management of Jacksonville's public transportation system.

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND WORK

The Committee met weekly from September, 1982 through April, 1983, for a total of 24 meetings. It received information from 25 knowledgeable resource persons and additional written materials researched by JCCI staff. The Conclusions and Recommendations were discussed in March and April.

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The JCCI study process relies upon information supplied by knowledgeable resource persons in addition to published reference materials. We wish to thank the following resource persons for meeting with the committee and making very valuable contributions to this report.

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THE JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL , INC.

The Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) was formed to anticipate, identify and address the complex issues of urban life. JCCI is a community-based nonpartisan, nonprofit organization providing the vehicle for in-depth, objective, citizen analysis of community problems and issues. It seeks broader community awareness and understanding of the issues and provides Jacksonville a diverse citizen forum reaching across the traditional dividing lines of a complex and diverse urban community.

The primary goal of JCCI is a better quality of life in Jacksonville through positive change. It has a short but impressive record for the quality, objectivity, clarity, and practicality of its studies of community problems, and its advocacy for the solutions it develops. Jacksonville has experienced the benefits of numerous improvements growing from these citizen studies.

Other JCCI goals grow largely from its focus on positive change. High on the list are the education and dialogue the studies themselves provide to participants. The work of JCCI strengthens citizen competence and awareness, provides for ongoing dialogue among diverse elements of the community, and serves as a catalyst for bringing together decision-makers.

JCCI is founded on a deep faith in the ability of citizens to set aside their differences and join together to learn and reason about problems of mutual concern. Its growth and success offer renewed hope for this basic democratic concept as a means of addressing the complex issues of modern urban communities.

JCCI receives funding from the United Way of Jacksonville, the City of Jacksonville, corporations, and individual members.

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*Housing	Thomas Carpenter
*Public Education (K-12)	Robert W. Schellenberg
*Public Authorities	Howard Greenstein
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A JCCI Study: Mass Transit

United Way