Project Description

With the effectiveness of the current transit governance setup becoming more of an open question at the State Capitol—as evidenced by the creation of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission to study the effectiveness and setup of the Metropolitan Council and suburban transit—SouthWest Transit seeks to document the history of transit governance and policy in the Twin Cities region since the enabling Suburban Transit legislation was introduced in the early 1980s.

This project is particularly timely, as many of the key stakeholders and staff who were involved in the setup of the suburban transit governance model have either recently retired or will be retiring soon, which will leave a significant knowledge gap. This report will help close that gap by providing current and future stakeholders with key information related to the timeline and history of transit governance in the Twin Cities region.

This project is one of two projects this year with SouthWest Transit. This first project focuses on the history and evolution of regional transit system governance. The second project focuses on assessing the effectiveness of transit system governance and planning in the Twin Cities region.
Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas to Explore

1. Who are the suburban transit providers in the Twin Cities region, and how do they differ?
2. What was the intended purpose of the original enabling Suburban Transit legislation?
3. What transit policy and transit governance changes have occurred since the original Suburban Transit legislation? How have these changes impacted suburban transit providers?
4. How has the funding for Twin Cities region transit evolved since the Suburban Transit legislation? How have these changes impacted suburban transit providers?

How Student Work Will Be Used to Build Community Resilience

- To inform future legislation related to transit governance in the Twin Cities region. In doing so, the project would increase sustainability and advance equity related to transit and transit users, not only in SouthWest Transit’s service area, but throughout the entire seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region.

Potential Community Partners or Stakeholders

- Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA)
- State legislators
- Metro Transit
- Metropolitan Council staff
- Metro-area counties: Hennepin, Carver, Scott, Anoka, Dakota, Washington, Ramsey
- Chambers of Commerce
- Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) members & staff
- Regional Transit Board (RTB) members & staff

Existing Plans & Reports

- Legislative Auditor’s report (2001)
- Blue Ribbon Commission report
- MnDOT Transit Report (statewide)

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