

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
INTERCAMPUS TRANSITWAY PROJECT

A REPORT ON STATUS AND ISSUES

THE OFFICE OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

MAY 23, 1988

MEI  
87687R

## ORIGINS OF PROJECT

### Definition

The present concept for the University Transitway is to operate a bus system on an exclusive limited access right-of-way facilitating intercampus movement between the East Bank of the Minneapolis Campus and the St. Paul Campus. Three remote parking lots will serve as an integral part of the transit operation.

### History

The project grew out of the University Area Transit Study for the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) in 1974. The study identified the potential utilization of existing railroad right-of-way as a means of pursuing transit options for the University community. In response to the magnitude of the issues associated with developing a timely solution to transportation problems at the University, the 1976 Minneapolis Campus Long Range Development Plan adopted a strategy for building a busway along railroad right-of-way. The busway was intended to resolve transportation problems in the University area related to parking deficiencies, excessive travel distances, travel time and costs for intercampus transit service, traffic congestion, the negative impact of University traffic on neighborhood streets and vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

The long range planning process for the campuses recognized that it would take bold, cooperative efforts on the part of several agencies to affect the implementation of transportation improvements as identified in the Minneapolis and St. Paul Campus Plans. A Project Management Board was created, including representatives from the the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Metropolitan Council and the University. Administration and project staff was jointly provided by the Minnesota Department of Transportation's District 9 Office and the University of Minnesota. The board defined four major elements for the improvement program now entitled the University Area Short Range Transportation Program (UAS RTP).

### University Area Short-Range Transportation Program

The four major elements of UAS RTP included: 1) a busway to connect the University East Bank and St. Paul Campuses with an associated intercampus transit service plan, 2) three remote-intercept parking lots interspersed along the intercampus transit route, 3) roadway improvements to complement the intercampus transit service and access the remote-intercept parking facilities; and 4) the provision for an exclusive bicycle path along the right of way.

A consultant was hired to conduct a feasibility study for each of the transportation components, and the resultant transportation plan was completed in 1978. Each component was evaluated, and agency responsibility for local capital dollars and project implementation and support were identified. Responsible agencies included the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and the University of Minnesota.

### Project Funding

Funding sources were also identified for each plan component. The recommended sources included Interstate Substitution dollars, Legislative Appropriations, Maintenance Funds and Interstate Appropriations.

The major source of funding for this project (capped at \$13.5 million) is being provided by the Federal Highway Administration (F.H.W.A.) under the Interstate Substitution Program. The local share (\$4,760,000) is being provided by the University under separate agreements with MNDOT. (See Appendices 1 and 2.)

The Short Range Transportation Plan was designated by the Interstate Substitution Committee of the Metropolitan Council as the number two funding priority among the Metro Projects. The Transitway was evaluated along with other projects on the basis of whether or not it served the needs for which Substitution Funds were originally intended, and it was categorized as a major transit improvement of metropolitan importance.

### University Control

When competition for Title IX Interstate Substitution funds in the metropolitan area became severe in 1982, several elements of the Short Range Transportation Plan were eliminated. The Transitway and remote parking lots remained intact, but because MNDOT indicated an inability to provide the final design documents for the Transitway and parking elements of the project, the University assumed this function.

### Benefits

The University's involvement with the Transitway and remote parking lots as an element of the Short Range Transportation Plan was viewed as a viable project because it offers an opportunity to improve the integration of the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses into a single functional unit. As reaffirmed in the 1985 Long Range Parking Study, its construction will provide significant benefits to the University by increasing parking supply, minimizing inter-campus travel time, and reducing transit operating costs, pollutant emissions, and on-street traffic congestion. The Transitway can also serve as a catalyst for future University-related development, and has the potential to accommodate future transit options. A brief description of benefits is attached to the report as Appendix 3.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

The "U of M Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues Matrix" is attached to this report as Appendix 4. It traces the project's political, physical, and economic development from the time it was identified in 1972 to the present. The major milestones accomplished to date are:

- 1972 The Transitway project is first identified by transportation planners
- 1974 The University Area Transit Study identified the potential for utilizing railroad right-of-way to pursue transit options within the University Community.
- 1976 The Minneapolis Campus Long Range Development Plan adopted a strategy for developing a busway along railroad right-of-way.
- 1978 The University Area Short Range Transportation Plan analyzed technical feasibility of a busway, remote-intercept parking and roadway improvements and developed implementation program and financial plan.
- 1978-79 The Project Management Board was created with representatives from several political jurisdictions and public interest groups. Its function was to manage the complex issues involved with the project and to secure public funding for project implementation.
- 1981 The Metro Council approved of the Basic Transitway (project) Development Report.
- 1982 The Metro Council approved the Environmental Assessment.
- 1982 The IX Interstate Substitution Funds were made available for funding the engineering and final design needs of the University Area Transit Project.
- 1983 The Federal Highway Administration issued a finding of no significant environmental impact.
- 1984 The Board of Regents approved the project at a cost of \$18,260,000, of which the U of M would contribute \$4.76 million.
- 1986 The University of Minnesota retained three engineering consultants to design the project.

- 1987 MnDOT, acting as the U of M's agent, commenced right-of-way acquisition activities as the consultants proceeded with design.
  
- 1987 The University of Minnesota acquired a six acre parcel of land (the Schnitzer Property) for remote parking adjacent to the Transitway.
  
- 1988 Independent consultants conducted soil contamination testing and issued a report following Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Guidelines.
  
- 1988 Cost estimates were updated and the scope of the project was adjusted by eliminating all grade separated intersections on the west half of the Transitway so as to reflect established budget constraints. (See Appendices 5 and 6.)

The project design is presently 75% complete and at the stage where major funding and administrative decisions must be made in order to proceed.

## ISSUES AND UNCERTAINTY FACTORS

It is important to understand that because of the number and complexity of governmental agencies and other entities that must participate in and approve the development steps of the Transitway project, it is not possible for the University to manage the development of the Transitway within the same managerial parameters that would normally apply in a typical capital building project.

In order to progress with the Transitway, the University will have to accept certain unavoidable cost and time risks which are inherent in urban construction projects.

The primary issues that represent cost and time interrelated risks are:

### Right-of-Way Acquisition

The process of right-of-way acquisition presents uncertainties related to both time and cost. Appraisals must first be made for all properties to be acquired in order to determine their value. Offers to purchase will then be made to present landowners. If any land purchases cannot be satisfactorily negotiated in accordance with appraised values, the power of eminent domain will be exercised by MNDOT to acquire the properties and to establish their values through court action.

An important decision-making point is expected to occur by August, 1988 when all appraisals are completed. The estimated cost of land acquisition can then be assessed in relation to the project budget. The degree to which condemnation proceedings may cause deviations from those estimates will not be known until land acquisition is completed. Therefore, although both the appraisal and the land acquisition processes have been initiated, the resultant land acquisition costs cannot be accurately measured at this time.

### Soil Pollution

Based on independent testing, contaminants are present on parcels of land that must be purchased for the transitway. The test report has been turned over to the University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety which in turn notified the legal department. Comments of the Assistant Director of Environmental Health and Safety, which have also been forwarded to the legal department, are attached. (Appendix 7) A letter from the Physical Planning Office to the legal department of the University requesting assistance in this matter is also attached, (Appendix 8) After the pollutants are fully quantified and clean-up measures (if required) are established to the satisfaction of the MPCA, the cost impact of the soil contamination can be made. Time is of the essence, and a decision by the MPCA must be made very quickly.

To expedite development of the project, right-of-way acquisition could proceed, but the land would be acquired without the soil pollution issue being resolved. This action could in turn represent a future cost and time contingency of an indeterminate magnitude.

### Maintenance Cost

Maintenance cost of the Transitway has been an issue of concern. A preliminary estimate by the University's Physical Plant Operations Department set the maintenance cost at \$250,000 per year. Subsequently, information obtained from the Minnesota State Highway Maintenance Division suggests that the cost of maintenance should be on the order of \$50,000 per year. Based upon the Highway Department's experience in roadway maintenance, \$50,000 is deemed appropriate for the first year roadway maintenance cost.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this project assessment is to give the University Administration a status report and a plan that can guide the administration in the decisions necessary to proceed toward completion of the Transitway project.

Given the complexity of the project, the number of vested interests involved, the nature of its funding, and the changes in scope that have had to be made, the project is progressing, although not in accordance with the schedule needed to maintain timely utilization of available Title IX funding.

To accelerate the process, it is recommended that the following actions be taken:

1. The University, in addition to resolving current development issues, reaffirms the need for and commitment to the Transitway Project with respect to its cost effective long range academic, transportation, and physical planning benefits.
2. The University Administration, recognizing that it is not possible to assess the cost to complete the project until the cost of land acquisition and the issue of soil contamination are resolved, inform the Regents of the unique nature of the project and obtain their commitment to seek or provide additional funding if required.
3. If the University determines that it can no longer justify its continuing with the management and implementation of the Transitway Project, even though the project may be in the best interest of the University, the University should give MNDOT the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the project and reassume the responsibility it originally had for completing the project on behalf of the University.
4. If neither the University nor MNDOT can justify the cost or commit sufficient funds to complete the project, the University should abandon the project. If this occurs, the University must focus its energies on insuring that the existing University bus system be made to serve the University community in the best, most cost effective manner. The development of future roadway projects such as the Motley and Dinkytown bypass and the implementation of LRT should be to reflect the unique needs of the University and relate harmoniously with the physical environment of the campus.



INTERCAMPUS TRANSITWAY

|                              | 1984<br>August<br>Regents<br>Meeting &<br>Approved | 1988<br>January<br>R-O-W @<br>\$2.60/sq.ft.<br>W/5 Bridges | 1988<br>March<br>R-O-W @<br>\$2.60/sq.ft.<br>W/3 Bridges | 1988<br>March<br>R-O-W @<br>\$3.15/sq.ft.<br>W/3 Bridges |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Land Acquisition Cost        |  |  |  |  |
| Roadway & Bridges            | \$ 5,235,000                                       | \$ 3,900,000   | \$ 3,900,000   | \$ 4,725,000   |
| Parking Lots                 | 2,123,000  |  |  |  |
| Easterly (Schnitzer)         |  | 679,000  | 679,000  | 679,000  |
| Westerly                     |  | 975,000  | 975,000  | 1,181,250  |
| Construction Cost            |  |  |  |  |
| Roadway & Bridges            | 9,477,000  | 12,115,000   | 10,644,000   | 10,644,000   |
| Parking Lots                 | 451,000  |  |  |  |
| Easterly (Schnitzer)         |  | 540,000  | 540,000  | 540,000  |
| Westerly                     |  | 800,000  | 800,000  | 800,000  |
| Non-contract Cost            |  |  |  |  |
| Design Engineering           | 974,000  | 1,015,000  | 970,000  | 970,000  |
| Construction Engineering     |  | 500,000  | 485,000  | 485,000  |
| Environmental Cleanup        | 0  | 0  |  |  |
| Testing & Recommendations    |  |  | 100,000  | 100,000  |
| Cleanup Cost                 |  |  | ?  | ?  |
| <b>Total Project Cost</b>    | <b>\$18,260,000</b>                                | <b>\$20,524,000</b>  | <b>\$19,093,000</b>                                      | <b>\$20,124,250</b>                                      |
| <b>Total Project Funding</b> | <b>\$18,260,000</b>                                | <b>\$16,660,000</b>  | <b>\$19,210,000</b>                                      | <b>\$19,210,000</b>                                      |
| University of Minnesota      | 4,760,000  | 4,760,000  | 4,760,000  |  |
| IX Funding (Federal)         | 13,500,000   | 11,900,000   | 13,250,000   |  |
| MnDot (State)                | 0  | 0  | 1,200,000  |  |



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Physical Planning  
340 Morrill Hall  
100 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
(612) 625-7355

May 9, 1988

Mr. Fred P. Tanzer  
Interstate Substitution Task Force  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Transportation Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Mr. Tanzer:

The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge receipt of your March 23, 1988 correspondence and following your offer, to seek your further assistance. Specifically, I would like you to verify the University's assumption that approximately \$1.2 million of bond money authorized by the legislature in 1985 as "matching funds" can and will be used for the Transitway Project.

Please understand that in making this request, the University is not proposing to reduce its own \$4,760,000 contribution to the project. Our estimate of the cost of the project as of March, 1988 is \$19,093,000 with the following assumptions:

1. the average right of way cost does not exceed \$2.60 per square foot;
2. the project is accepted without the two westerly bridges; and
3. no remedial actions to clean up the environment are required.

With the additional \$1.2 million, the University estimates the total project funding to be \$19,210,000. Without this additional \$1.2 million, the project is not feasible, unless other sources of funds can be established.

Sincerely,

Clinton N. Hewitt  
Associate Vice President  
Physical Planning  
CNH/mja

cc: Larry Anderson  
Otis Anderson

Breakdown of Project Benefits

Increase in total parking supply - 2,000 spaces

- Equivalent cost to provide spaces in ramps at \$6,000/space = \$12,000,000
- Spaces would be affordable and attractive to students
- Helps free existing on-campus surface parking areas for potential development

Provides right-of-way for other uses and potential future needs

- Movement of material more efficiently
- Corridor for communication facilities and transport of energy
- Long term development reserve
- More sophisticated transit system when becomes cost effective

Reduction of travel time from the average of 22 minutes today

Reduction of operating cost thru:

- Reduction distance by 25+%
- Increase in Revenue
- Increase in operating speed
- Increase in safety

Reduction of pollutant emissions by 37% - based on a fuel consumption reduction (due to shorter distance and higher operating speeds).

Reduce congestion

- Draws substantial traffic to remote lots away from campus proper
- Removes approximately 300 bus trips/day from city streets
- Reduces parking waiting lines which is a significant cause for congestion.

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**Federal Highway Administration  
FHWA**

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**Minnesota Department of Transportation  
MnDOT**

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**University of Minnesota  
U of M**

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**Regional Agencies and Boards  
i.e.: Metropolitan Council**

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**Cities and Counties:  
Minneapolis – St. Paul – Falcon Heights – Ramsey – Hennepin**

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**Railroads and Other Property Owners:  
BNRR – C&NWRR – Soo Line RR**

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**Other State and Federal Agencies:  
MPCA – DNR – SHPO – US Fish & Wildlife – Mn State Fair**

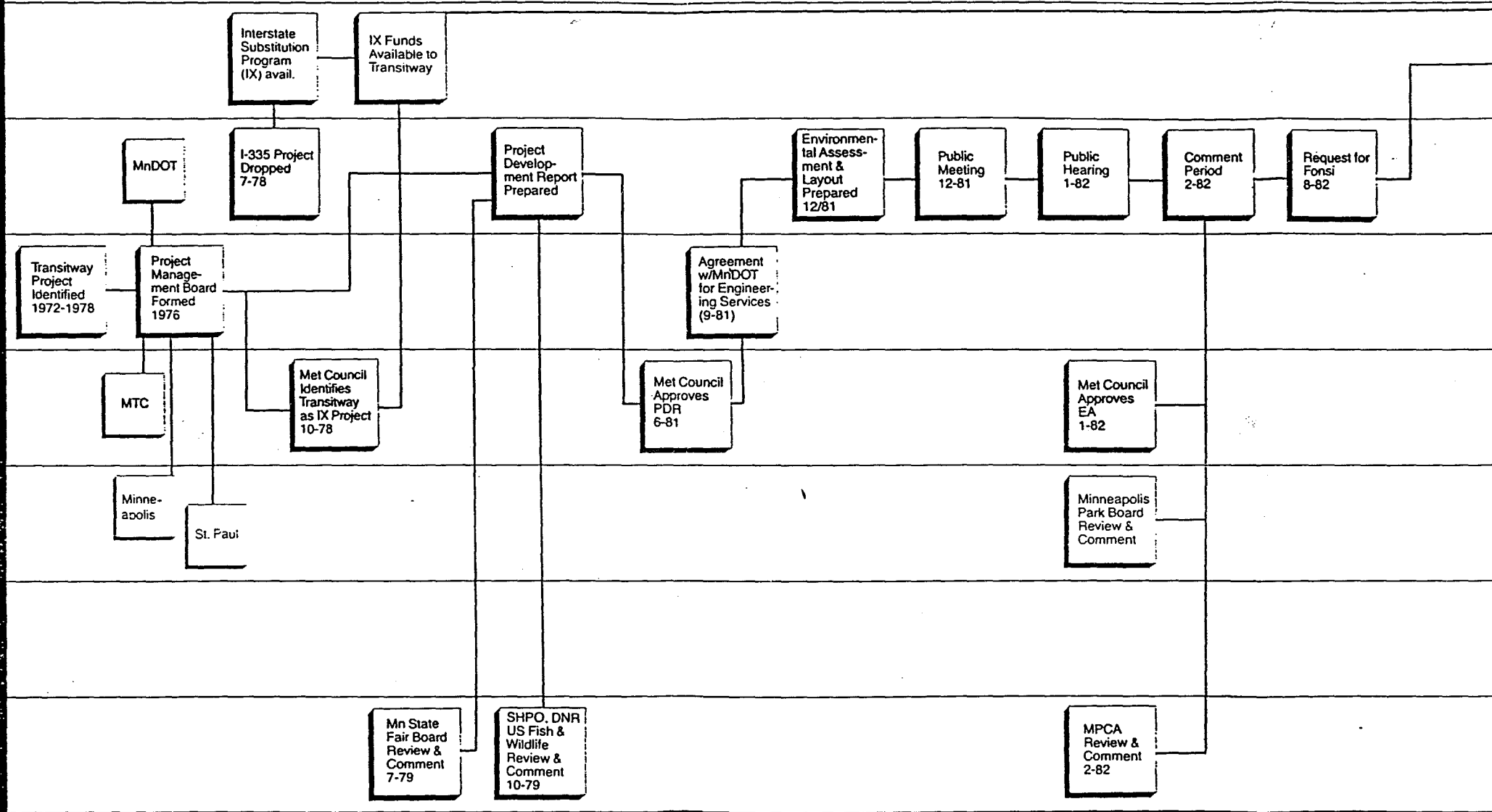
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University of Minnesota  
Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues

#1

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1972

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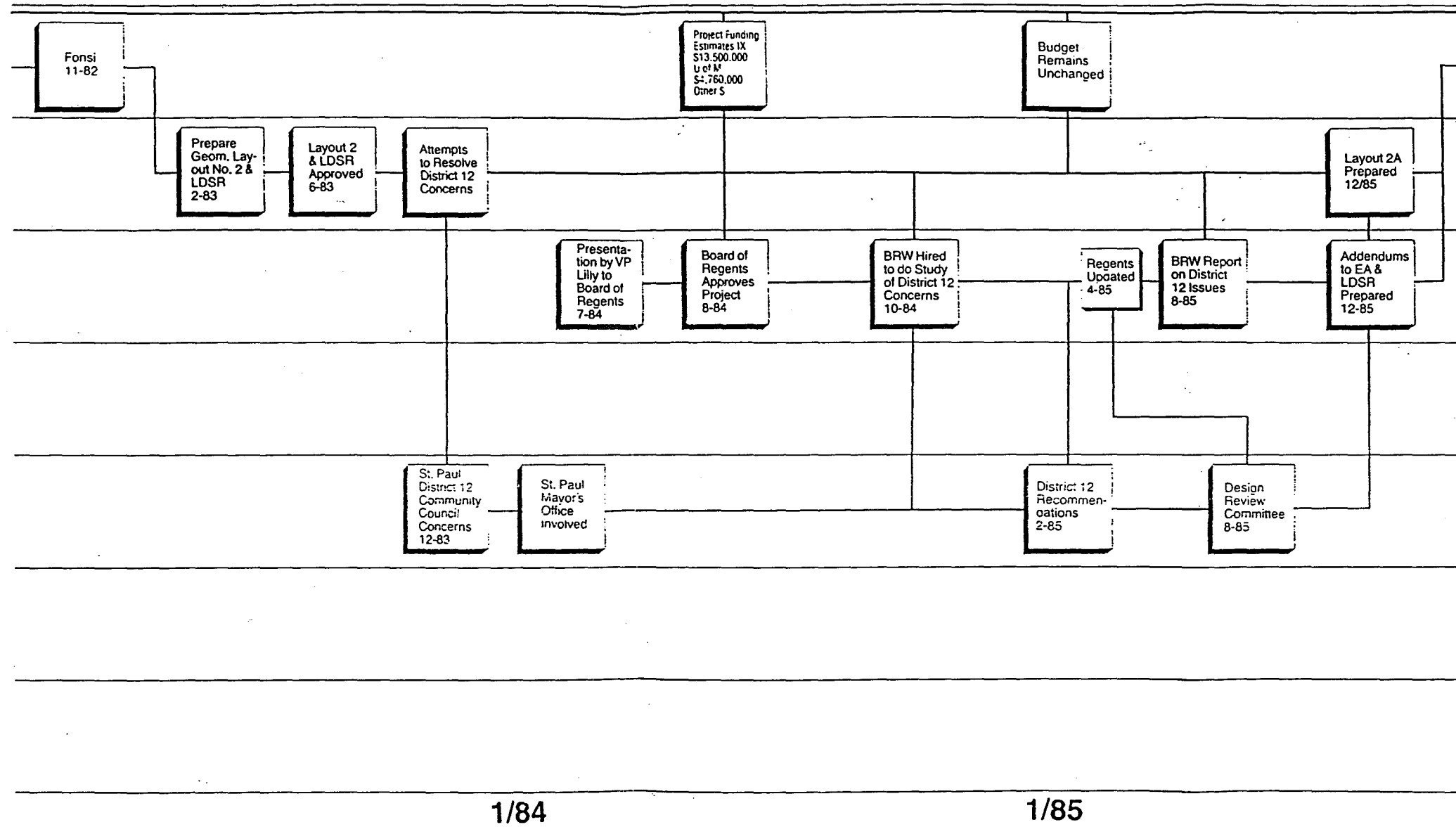
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University of Minnesota  
Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues



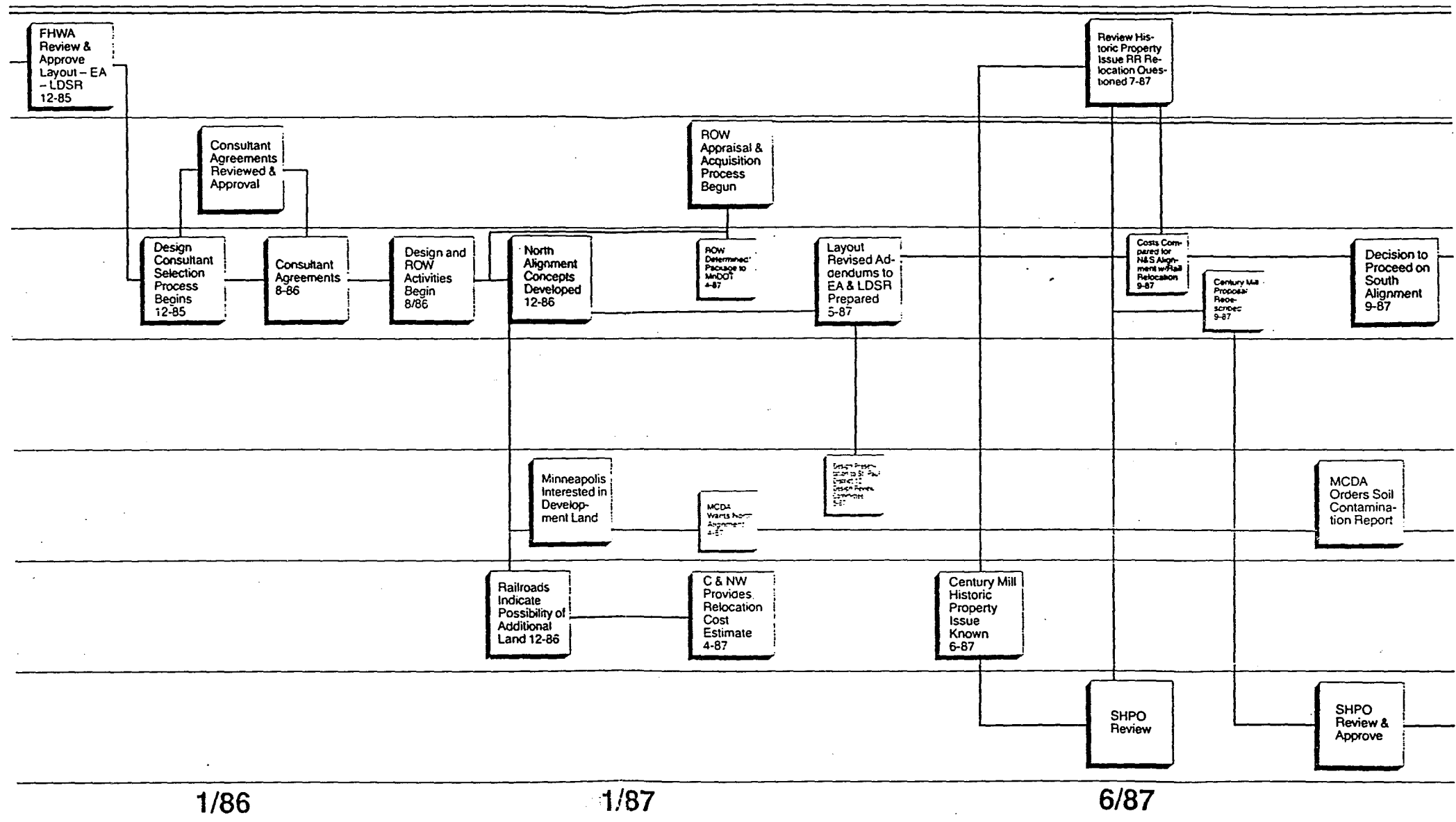
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University of Minnesota  
 Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues



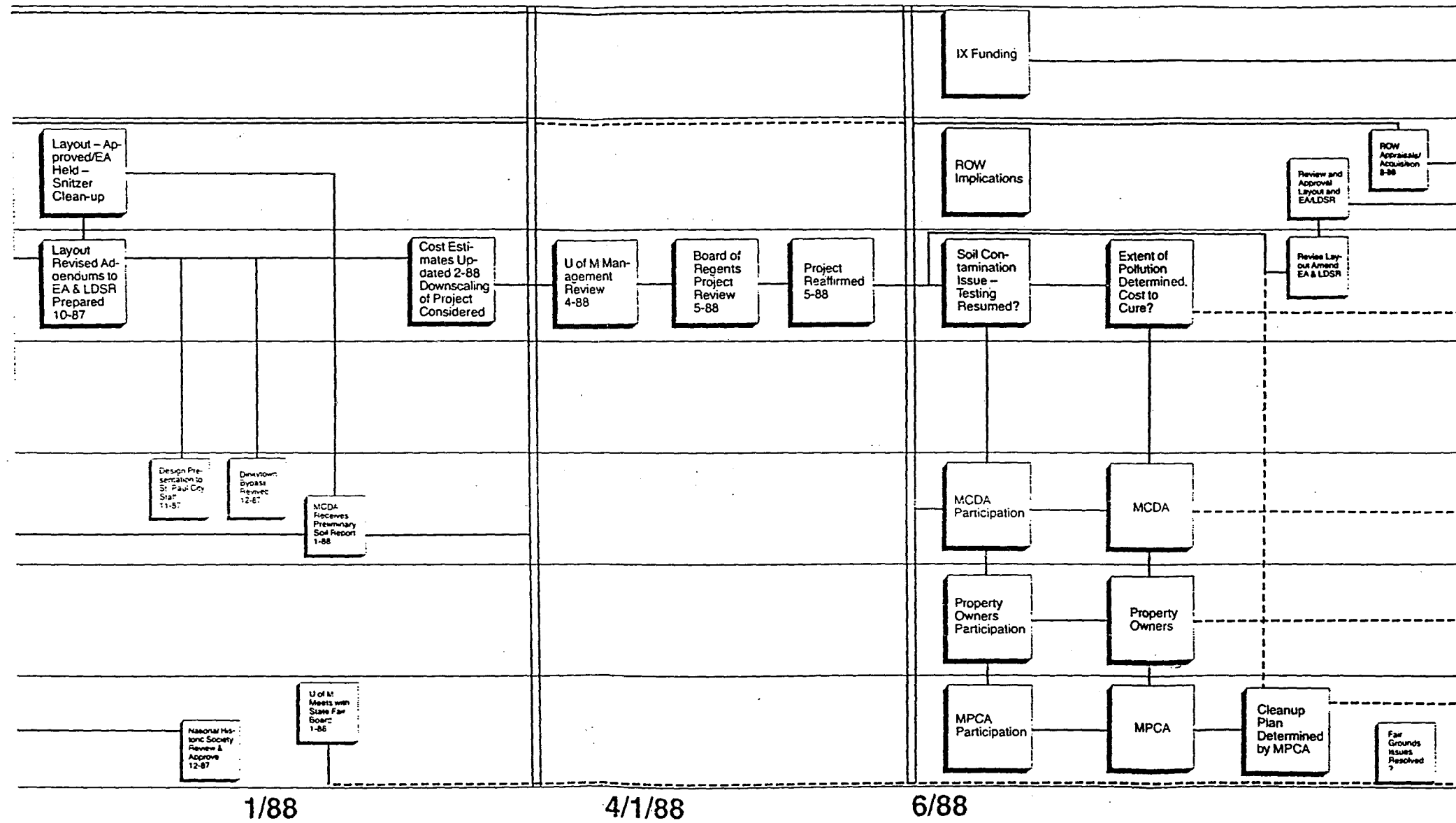
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University of Minnesota  
Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues



#4

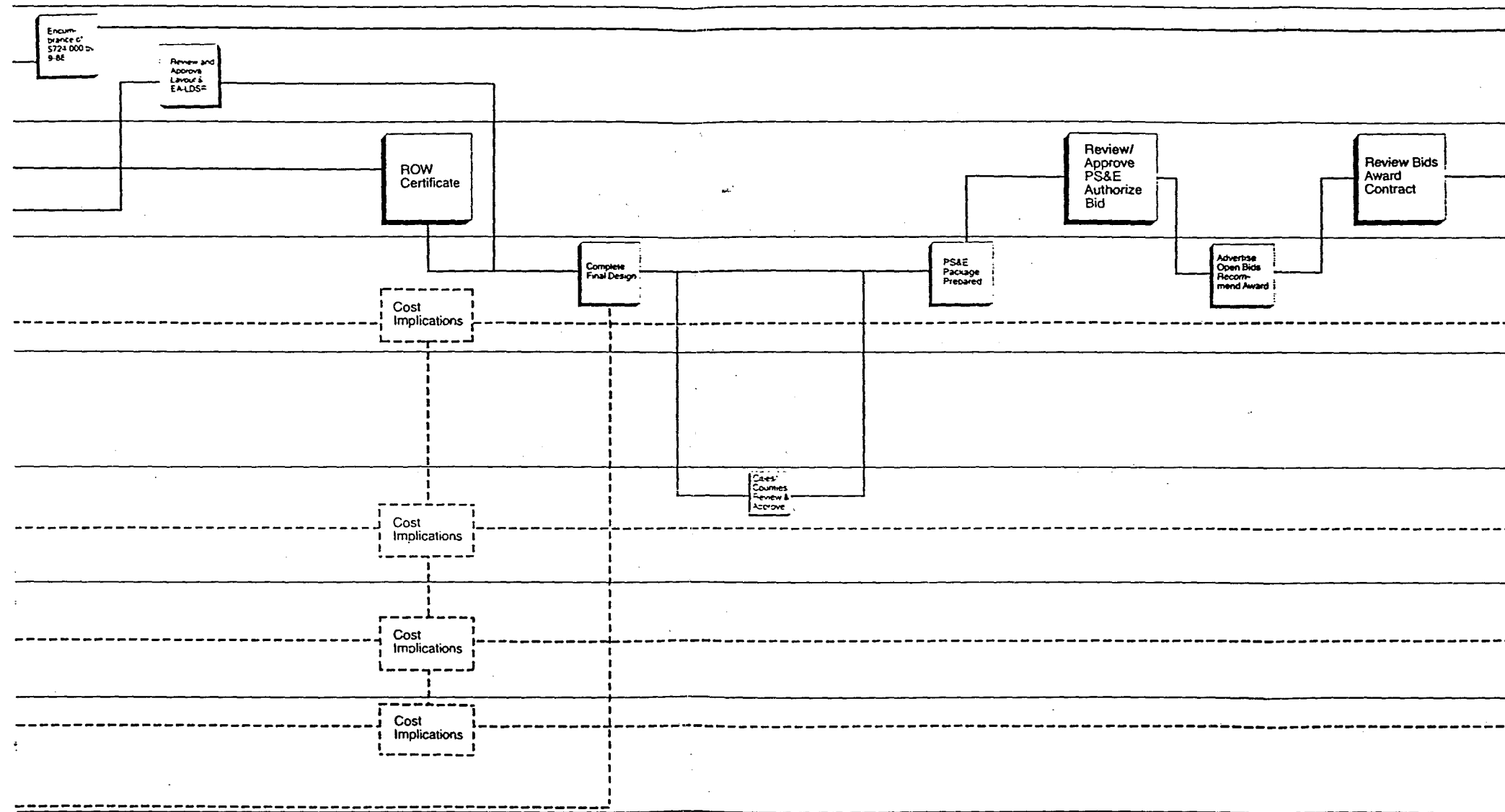


University of Minnesota  
Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues



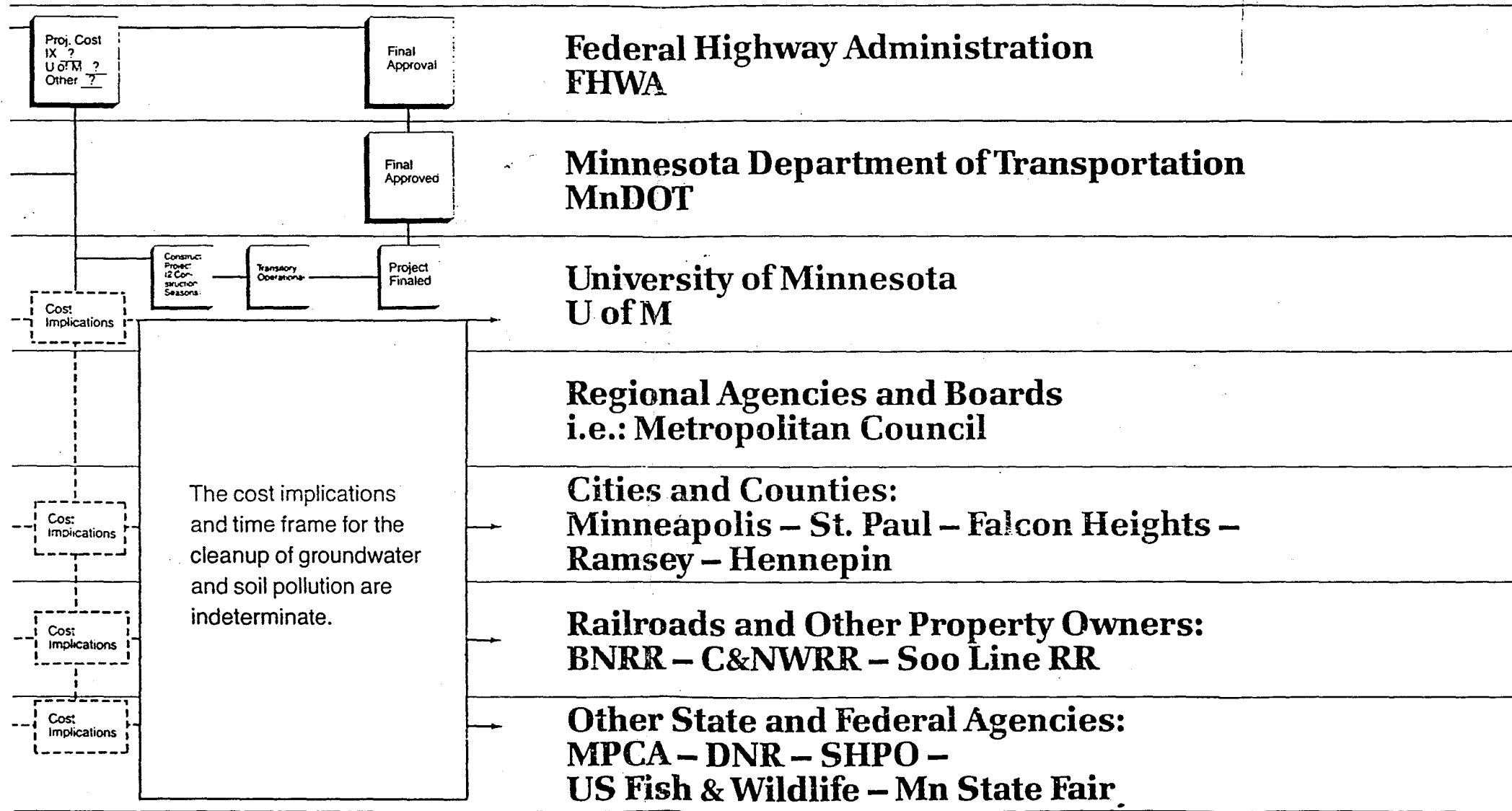
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University of Minnesota  
 Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues





University of Minnesota  
Intercampus Transitway Status and Issues





UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Physical Planning  
503 Morrill Hall  
100 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
(612) 624-5765

May 4, 1988

Mr. Richard J. Dinneen  
Director  
MNDOT  
Office of Right of Way  
Transportation Building, Room 511B  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55115

Dear Mr. Dinneen:

In response to the April 27 letter from Mr. J.P. Nail, please be advised that the University of Minnesota will need a portion of the abandoned Soo trackage for Transitway right-of-way. While the exact property needed will be shown on a plan to be forthcoming with the completed right of way package west of 25th Street, it is estimated that the project will require approximately 125 feet.

As acquisition agent for the University on this project, will you please notify Mr. Nail of this need as soon as possible. I appreciate your assistance on this matter and would be very much interested to know the cost per square foot at which Mr. Nail is willing to dispose of this property because the University may be interested in acquiring more of this abandoned right-of-way for other purposes.

Very truly yours,

Clinton N. Hewitt  
Associate Vice President  
Physical Planning

CNH/mja

cc: Larry Anderson  
Otis Anderson



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Physical Planning  
503 Morrill Hall  
100 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
(612) 624-5765

May 9, 1988

The Honorable Kathy O'Brien  
Ward 2 Council Member  
307 City Hall  
350 S. 5th Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415

Dear Council Member O'Brien:

Over the last several months, the University has struggled with the Transitway Project budget. Even with additional funding that appears to be available through MNDOT, we do not have sufficient funds to complete the Transitway as designed.

In order to facilitate the construction of the University's Intercampus Transitway within the budget, the University has no other choice but to delete the bridge over the Soo Line tracks, at approximately Oak and 5th Streets, from the project. I want to assure you that the University is sympathetic to the desires of the City of Minneapolis, as expressed by Bob Morgan. The University reached this decision reluctantly, with the utmost respect for the needs of the city and genuine support for the Dinkytown bypass.

While it is simply not possible for the University to construct this bridge over the proposed route of the bypass, I have enclosed, for your information, a drawing illustrating how we do propose to cross the alignment. It is my feeling that by choosing this alternative, the University does not preclude the city from separating the grade of the Transitway during construction of the bypass.

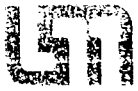
I have requested Mr. Richard J. Dinneen, Director of Right-of-Way for MNDOT and the acquisition agent for the University on the project, to inform Mr. J. P. Nail, of the Soo Line Railroad, that the University will require some of their abandoned trackage for this project.

Sincerely,

Clinton N. Hewitt  
Associate Vice President  
Physical Planning  
CNH/mja

Enclosure

cc: Larry Anderson  
Otis Anderson



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Department of Environmental Health and Safety  
Boynton Health Service, Room W-140  
410 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
(612) 626-6002

April 22, 1988

RECEIVED  
APR 26 1988  
PLANNING  
PHYSICAL PLANNING

MEMORANDUM

To: Harvey Turner, Assistant Director for Planning, 503 Morrill Hall

From: Fay Thompson, Assistant Director, Environmental Health and Safety *Fay Thompson*

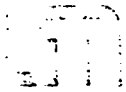
Subject: Soil Survey of Transitway

I have reviewed the Twin City Testing report, "Environmental Assessment, Intercampus Transitway, University of Minnesota." Although there is evidence of contamination in at least one of the sample locations, I do not see anything in this report that should cause unresolvable problems in the construction of the transitway. The type of solvent contamination found at sampling point B-7 is typical of situations found all along the older industrial corridors of the Twin Cities and other metropolitan areas.

I do not feel that there is any need for further sampling at this time, although we may choose to take a few very specific follow-up samples sometime during the summer. A copy of these results should be given to MPCA when they are finalized. I will arrange for that contact, rather than having the consultant take care of it.

Please keep me informed as the purchase of this property is finalized. I also will keep you up-to-date on my contacts with the MPCA.

CC: *Bill Donohue*



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Physical Planning  
340 Morrill Hall  
100 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
(612) 625-7355

May 4, 1988

TO: Bill Donohue  
FROM: Clint Hewitt *Clint*  
RE: Environmental liabilities / financial obligation inherited  
with purchase of right-of-way for Transitway project

The University must make a decision shortly as to whether to proceed with or consider other alternatives to the intercampus Transitway connection between Minneapolis and St. Paul. This decision must recognize the liabilities and obligations the University will incur with the purchase of right-of-way.

Twin City Testing was hired by the University to test for the evidence of contamination along the route. A copy of their report, "Environmental Assessment, Intercampus Transitway, University of Minnesota" was given to Fay Thompson, Assistant Director, Environmental Health and Safety. While contamination was discovered during the course of their test, Fay Thompson indicated in a letter, which she also copied to you, that on the basis of her review, she did not see anything that should cause unresolvable problems in construction. She also recommended that there is no need for further sampling.

Believing that it is better to be prudent now, than sorry later, I am writing you to get your opinion and/or advice regarding a sequence of actions that will more clearly define the magnitude of resolving environmental problems. Specifically:

1. If the University purchases the right-of-way (a tract approximately 100 feet wide by 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles long), will the University be expected or can it be forced to participate in any additional testing or in the clean-up of contamination it did not cause?
2. Could a parcel of this configuration be interpreted to be an impediment to any future clean-up that may be ordered along the right-of-way and thereby incur for the University any future financial obligation?
3. In what time frame can the MPCA be persuaded to review and give the University a decision on this project?

Bill Donohue  
May 4, 1988  
Page 2

I appreciate your assistance. I would like to present a report on the Transitway to Acting Vice President Carol Campbell on Tuesday, May 10. If I could meet with you and get a preliminary sense of your feelings about this issue prior to May 10, it would be most helpful.

CH/mja

c: Larry Anderson  
Otis Anderson



Minnesota  
Department of Transportation  
District 9  
3485 Hadley Avenue North  
Oakdale, Minnesota 55109

APPENDIX 9

Telephone 779-1167

May 6, 1988

Mr. Raymond Jackson  
University of Minnesota  
Engineering and Architecture Division  
Office of Physical Planning  
100 Shops Building  
319 15th Avenue S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Mr. Jackson:

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA INTERCAMPUS TRANSITWAY  
MINNESOTA PROJECT NO. IX - TRAN (1)  
STATE PROJECT NO. 2700-20, 6200-15  
UNIVERSITY PROJECT NO. 000-83-0163

In reply to your request for an estimate of the annual maintenance cost of the transitway, the conservative "ball park" figure of \$6,000 per lane mile could be used. This figure includes all labor, materials and equipment costs; but, does not include anything for future rebuilding of the transitway.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Wikelius".

Mark Wikelius  
District Maintenance Engineer