

The demand for adequate transport facilities in urban areas has placed a heavy financial burden on municipalities. Provincial cost-sharing programs which have contributed to the capital and operating costs of transportation systems in urban areas have until recently been strongly oriented to freeways and roads. Several provinces are now shifting the emphasis from highway construction toward transit planning and construction.

In Manitoba dial-a-bus and rapid transit systems were under study during 1973 but no provincial programs were in effect. In Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg Transit System added two new express routes to the two already operating and provided an exclusive bus lane through the city core.

In Saskatchewan the provincial government was involved in the introduction of Telebus in Regina in 1971. Telebus offers door-to-door service within individual zones of the city and door-to-connection with scheduled line service for trips between zones. Most of the vehicles are small, carrying 16-24 passengers, but during peak hours standard 42-passenger buses are added to increase capacity. About one third of Regina is now covered and the service should be extended throughout the city by 1975. Initial feasibility studies were sponsored and financed by the federal, provincial and municipal governments, but the city is responsible for operating and funding the actual system.

In 1972 Ontario introduced a specific program to counter transportation problems in its cities. The program included subsidies to municipalities covering 75% of the cost of transit equipment purchase, 50% subsidies to offset transit operating deficits, 50% subsidies for expansion of computer-controlled traffic systems, and financial assistance to promote flexible working hours.

By the end of 1973, 26 municipalities had ordered new transit equipment and facilities eligible for the 75% provincial subsidies, 50 transportation studies had been approved for the 75% reimbursement, and Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton had taken advantage of the 50% subsidy for upgrading and expanding computer-controlled traffic systems.

Efforts to co-ordinate transportation planning and operations among municipalities in Ontario began to show firm results with a series of recommendations for the formation of Ontario's first regional transit authority. The Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority (TATO), established in 1974, will serve as a model for similar transit bodies throughout the province.

One of Ontario's most successful urban transit programs is the east-west Lakeshore GO Train service between Oakville and Pickering, a distance of 42 miles. The service takes commuters into the core of Toronto from suburban areas. Serving 13 stations in the corridor, the system's focal point is Toronto's Union Station from which passengers have immediate access to the metropolitan transportation grid. The Lakeshore service effectively removes an estimated 14,000 cars from Metropolitan Toronto roads each day. It is operated by Canadian National Railways under contract to the Ontario government along CN rights-of-way.

A second GO Train system extending 30 miles northwest from Union Station serves seven more communities in an area where residents frequently travel between their homes and downtown Toronto.

Dial-a-bus, another GO Transit project, operated in Metropolitan Toronto on an experimental basis. Dial-a-bus systems were installed in three separate parts of Metro to determine whether or not this concept will work in complex urban areas.

Canada's first dial-a-bus service was inaugurated in July 1970 as an experiment in the Bay Ridges area east of Toronto. The province turned the operation over to Pickering township in early 1973 as a proven success.

If improved rapid transit is to play an effective role in moving people within urban centres, traditional rush-hour patterns must be altered to avoid overtaxing the new systems. Toward this end, the Ontario government is paying 75% of the cost of studies and programs designed to stretch rush-hours over longer periods of time. The provincial government has provided flexible working hours for 10,000 of its own employees in the downtown area of Toronto. Some 50% of these have chosen to travel to and from work outside rush-hours. In a survey taken at the end of 1973, 90% of employees polled were in favour of the program. In Metropolitan Toronto, 15 companies with 14,000 employees have moved to flexible working hours while another 24 companies representing 36,000 people are conducting experiments. A budget of \$155,000 has been set to cover the cost of the program over a one-year period.