

A Progress Report
on
Bus Planning Activities

Prepared by
Southern California Rapid Transit District
Planning Department
September 10, 1974

The work program for the bus planning section of the SCRTD Planning Department for the 1974-75 fiscal year will consist of efforts in three different areas: (1) implementation of the County-requested bus service; (2) ongoing bus planning matters; and (3) refining the near-term program. Staff efforts will be supplemented in these areas by consultant activities in: (1) route planning studies; and (2) near-term service criteria. These activities will be supervised by the planning staff. Upon completion of the planning process for the County-requested bus service, the pilot program for decentralized Surface Planning staff activities in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys will be initiated. The work flow for bus planning as described herein is also depicted in the attached work flow chart. Also attached is a copy of the current approved organization chart for the District's Planning Department.

County-Requested Bus Service

As part of the agreement with the County of Los Angeles to subsidize losses incurred from instituting the 25¢ flat fare program, it was stipulated that the District would institute pilot systems of grid bus routes in two areas of the County, and a saturated bus service program. The cost of operating the additional buses required to create or complete

the grid systems and operate the saturation service would be included in the contract.

Two geographical areas were selected for pilot bus grid operation -- the San Fernando Valley and the South Central area. It is proposed that two groups of planners be assigned to do the route planning for these projects -- one for each area -- and that development of the plans for their respective areas be their sole responsibility during this phase. Work tasks would be similar on both projects, and would be generally as indicated herein.

During the planning phase of the grid system work, planning staff will work closely with Operations Department staff to assure the operability of the plans that are devised. Route planning will be accomplished by the planning group to meet the requirements of route spacing and schedule frequency as stipulated by the County contract. Bus test trips will be operated under the auspices of the planning group and will include representatives from the operations group, including Instruction, Schedules, Stops & Zones, and Maintenance. The test trips will be designed to acquaint operations personnel with the proposed routes and to give them the opportunity to make suggestions for changes in the tentative routes and schedules to improve actual operation. The planning group will also work closely with operations staff on finding suitable temporary locations for support facilities (Divisions). Inasmuch as

all existing Divisions are currently functioning at capacity, it will be necessary to establish facilities at new locations in the two pilot areas. If the service improvements are retained, and/or if general system service improvements are instituted throughout the system, then a large number of permanent support facilities will be required. However, for the purpose of beginning operation of the grid systems at an early date, it is suggested that temporary sites be used, such as existing truck facilities, or vacant industrial land.

Once plans for bus routes, schedules and the location and operating schemes for the support facilities have been developed, the plans will be submitted to the New Services Review Board (NSRB) for approval; upon approval by NSRB, or after adjustments requested by that body, the plans will be submitted to the District's Board of Directors (BoD) for final approval, and then to the County for concurrence.

Once the grid system plans have received proper approval, the projects will be turned-over to the Operations Department for implementation. At this time work will commence on developing final schedules, tariff and route instructions, driver training, bus stop location and sign-posting, and acquisition and preparation of the temporary support facilities. The agreement with the County of Los Angeles calls for operation of the pilot grid systems for a minimum of 13 weeks during the 1974-75 fiscal year. If this demonstration period is assumed to end

at the end of June, then operation of the grids must start before the beginning of April. Because of the complexity of the San Fernando Valley grid system, it is felt that at least two months for planning and five months for preparation will be required. This implies that NSRB/BoD approval must be accomplished by the end of October, and operations commencing by the first of April. For the South Central grid, it is anticipated that one and one-half months for planning and four and one-half months for preparation will be sufficient. In this case, NSRB/BoD approval would be requested in mid-October and operation would start around March 1.

The saturation bus service program is to consist of a project to test the value of very frequent bus service in a heavy travel corridor. The test is to occur on a portion of Fairfax Avenue-Line 89 between Sunset and Wilshire Boulevards, and would improve the frequency of the existing Line 89 service in the test area daily from 12 to 5 minutes.

Ongoing Bus Planning Matters

Another group of the planning staff will be involved in ongoing bus planning matters. The main brunt of this work will be on either routine matters such as new service requests and continuing system monitorization. But an equally major effort will be spent on the New Services Development Program (NSDP). The NSDP work will consist of identifying specific route or schedule improvements that could be implemented under present funding and

vehicle availability, to prioritize the order of implementation, and to report these findings to NSRB/BoD. A report containing a recommended listing of priorities will be presented to the BoD at the second meeting in September. Another project that will receive early attention will be the saturation bus service program. The remainder of the ongoing effort included in this category will be preparation of reports for and participation in NSRB and BoD meetings, public meetings and in liaison with Community Relations staff. Included in the latter function will be preparation of and periodic updating of a handbook that will outline proposed improvements to be instituted in each of the several communities in the District; this handbook is to be used by Community Relations staff, and will be disseminated to the communities.

The final area of work under ongoing programs will be the development of the Decentralized Surface Planning program. The purpose of this program will be to create closer ties between community representatives and bus planning staff by having personnel physically located in their area of concern. It is anticipated that the decentralized planning groups will handle all service requests, participate in all public meetings, and be the main source for communication to and from the individual areas. It is proposed that two areas be selected to test the decentralized planning concept, the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. It is proposed to initiate these programs as soon as practicable by staffing these two groups with personnel that had

been involved in route planning for the San Fernando Valley and South Central grid systems. Personnel previously working on the San Fernando Valley grid would be appropriate to staff the San Fernando Valley Decentralized Planning Group; this group would work on refining the grid network and handle all routine service requests for this area. In addition, it will supervise and provide input into evaluation of the San Fernando Valley grid system operation. The San Gabriel Valley Decentralized Planning Group will be manned by personnel who had worked on route planning for the South Central grid system. This group will provide input to and work closely with consultants on the San Gabriel Route Study; they will also act upon all routine service requests for this area.

Near-Term Program

The Near-Term Program is a plan to provide improved bus transportation service throughout the County until such time as the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system can be built and placed in operation. This plan assumes passage of financing measures at the November election, and would delineate the distribution of 1,700 additional buses between 1975 and 1985.

Prior to November, the Near-Term group will develop a ten-year plan for possible deployment of 1,700 additional buses at the target goal of 1,000 during the first three years and 100 a year for the next seven years. The group will supervise and provide input for the work done by consultants in the area of service allocation criteria.

A contingency plan will also be devised that would be based on the assumptions of an unsuccessful financing election. One plan would assume continued County support, while the other would assume no such subsidy.

Subsequent to the financing election, and assuming a positive vote, the Short-Term group will commence a process of refining the Short-Term Bus Improvement Program, developed by staff and consultants under Phase III of the Rapid Transit study program, using service allocation criteria developed by a consultant. The Short-Term refinement will take place in three primary areas: (1) park-ride express services; (2) inter-community services; and (3) local circulation services. The refinement work will be done with the assistance of the consultant that developed the guidelines for service improvements.

Work on refining the near-term program will be a continuing process that will parallel actual implementation of the program. After the election, and assuming a successful vote, planning staff will intensify activity in the area of long-range bus planning, and will institute a series of community meetings to gain input into this plan. Particular attention will be given at that time to providing feeder service to areas identified by the District's Board of Directors as being the initial locations for MRT construction.

Consultant Activity

Consultant activity in bus planning activities is proposed to take place in two fields: (1) development of service allocation criteria and implementation of this service on a near-term basis; and (2) area route studies and grid system operation evaluation.

Work on allocation criteria is to be done by staff with the assistance of the firm of Alan M. Voorhees & Associates (AMV). Prior to the election, AMV will develop service allocation formula, a bus distribution formula, service level criteria, and a cost sharing formula for additional or specialized services requested. This work will be done by October 15, 1974, and will be input into the route studies to be done by the other consultants. After the election, AMV will assist the Short-Term group in refining the bus deployment program and in developing a specific implementation plan.

In the field of needed route planning, a series of planning areas were defined on the basis of need as ascertained from service requests received from the public, from planning staff's knowledge of community needs, and from a survey of the District's Board of Directors. Four specific geographical areas were found to be in the greatest need for service improvements: (1) the San Gabriel Valley; (2) the Southeast area; (3) the South Bay area; and (4) the Los Angeles Central Business District. On the basis of the criteria listed above, the

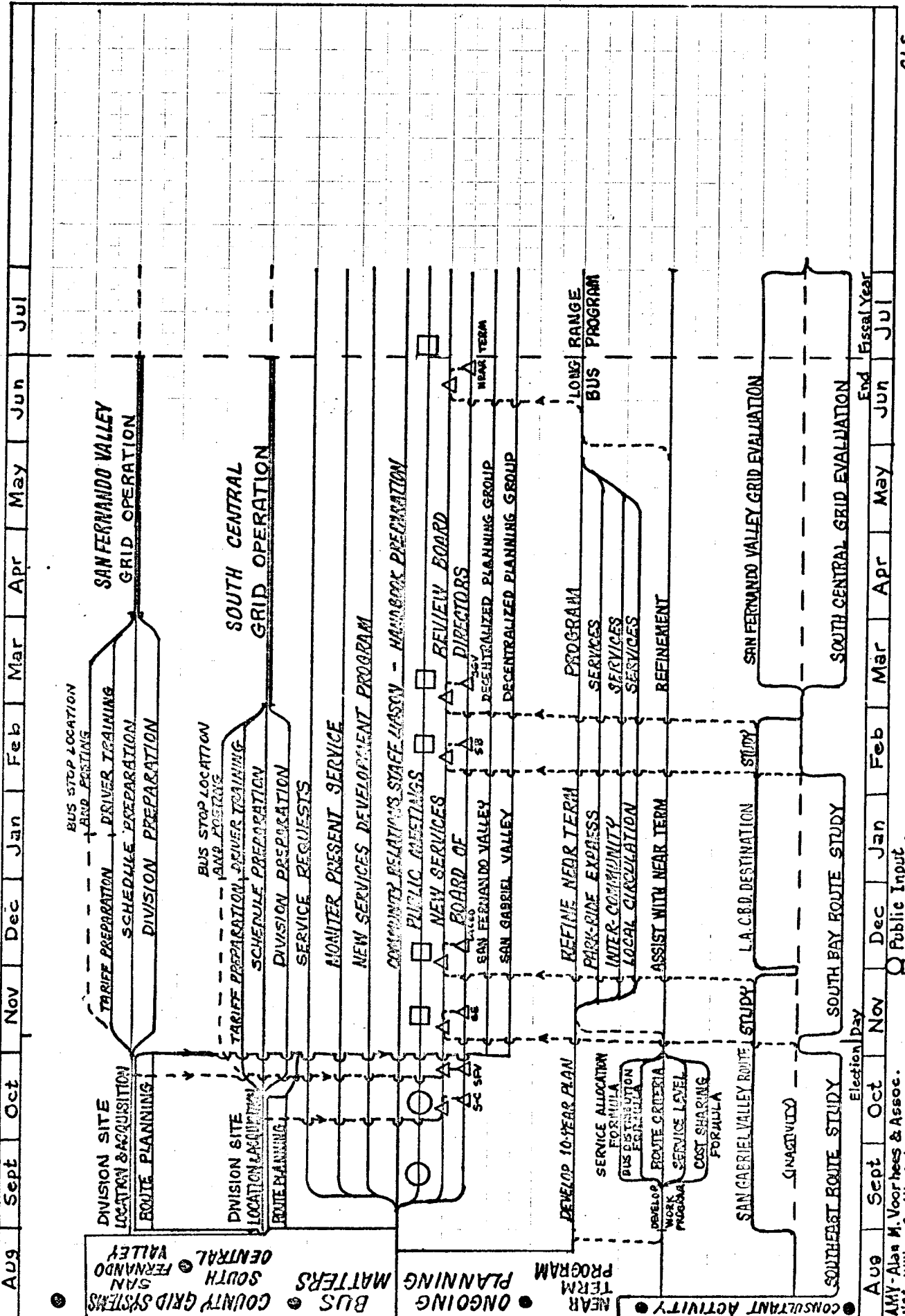
south-east area was found to be in the greatest need of attention; this was also felt to be so because the area is one of the fastest growing, and has received very little attention in recent years. The second most important area was found to be the San Gabriel Valley. Although service improvements were instituted recently with the inauguration of service on the El Monte Busway, local service in the Valley, particularly the eastern section, is very sparse, with virtually no north-south linkage. The third most important region was felt to be the South Bay area. The South Bay has also experienced a high population growth (particularly in the Palos Verdes area), and very little attention has been given to service improvements in recent years. The study of destinations in downtown Los Angeles was originally considered to be of greater importance than either the San Gabriel Valley or South Bay areas, because of the shift in the center of activity to the westside of the area. But because of the strike, it was felt that it would be better to delay the start of the study for a period of time following the resumption of service to allow travel patterns to return to normal. All four studies are scheduled to be completed in six months. A tentative schedule is given below:

<u>Study Area</u>	<u>Initiation Date</u>
Southeast	Early August
San Gabriel Valley	Early September
South Bay	Early November
LA CBD	Early December

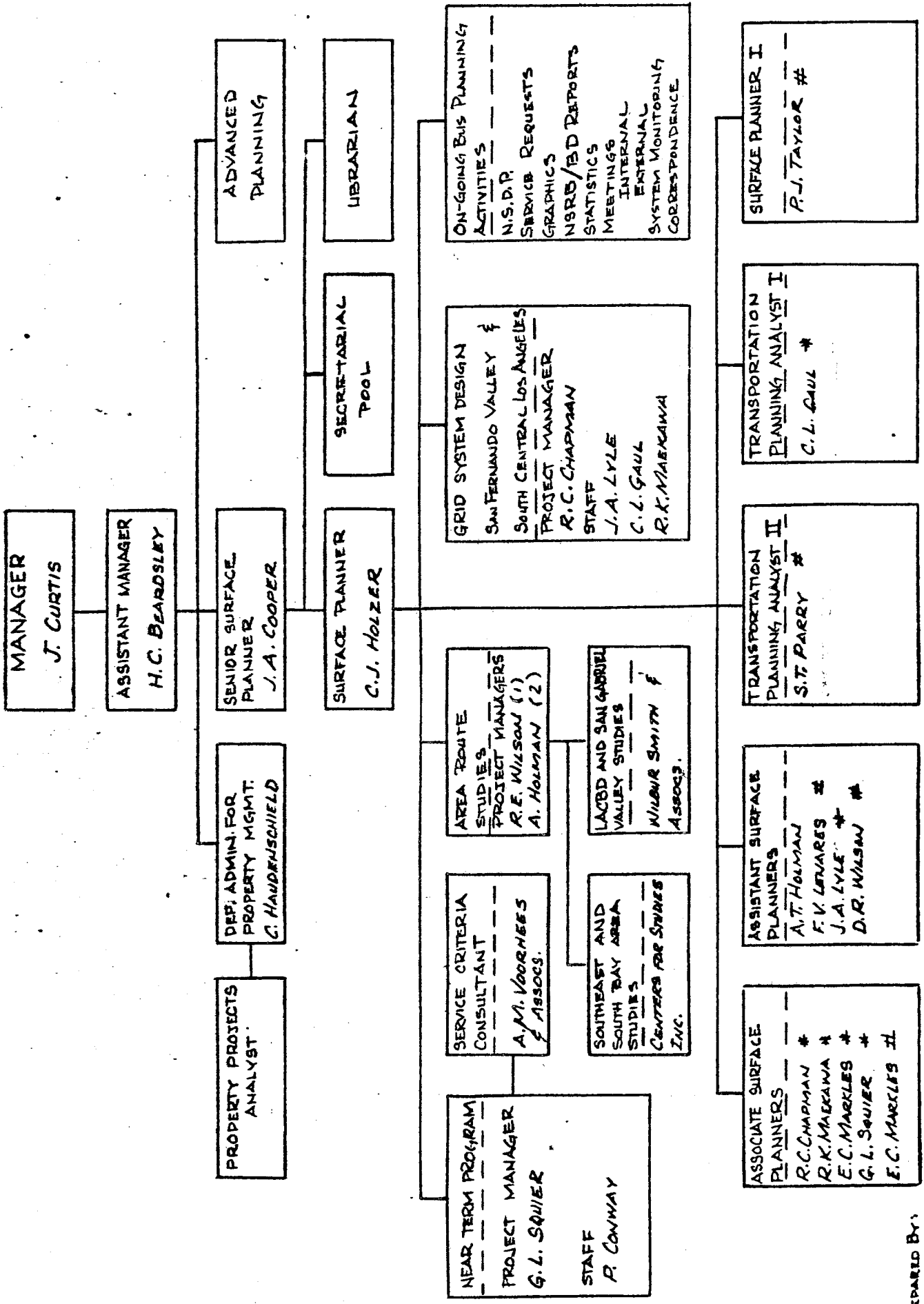
Route planning studies will be assigned on a one-for-one basis to the firms of Wilbur Smith & Associates (WSA) and Centers for Studies (CENTS). CENTS was assigned a route study in the Southeast area (this was started on August 6), and WSA will be assigned to do a route study of the San Gabriel Valley. Upon completion of the Southeast route study, CENTS will be assigned to the South Bay route study; and upon completion of the San Gabriel Valley route study, WSA will be assigned to do a study of destinations in the Los Angeles Central Business District. Each of these four route studies is expected to take three months, for a total of six months per consultant.

Upon completion of route planning studies, and following initiation of the grid systems operation, WSA and CENTS will be assigned the job of evaluating the operation of the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valley grid systems. This evaluation will consist of documenting the effect of the existence of the two grid systems upon patronage, in travel time and user satisfaction.

SCRTD BUS PLANNING FLOW CHART



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT
RAPID TRANSIT & SURFACE PLANNING DEPARTMENT 4800
PROJECT MANAGERS AND STAFF ALLOCATIONS



POSITIONS AUTHORIZED
 SURFACE PLANNING 26
 ADVANCED PLANNING 13
 TOTAL 39

* ASSIGNED TO PROJECTS SHOWN ABOVE (1) CENTERS FOR STUDIES COORDINATOR
 # AVAILABLE FOR GENERAL DUTIES (2) WILBUR SMITH & ASSOC. COORDINATOR

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 DATE: PLANNING
 5/1974