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SUMMARY

For the past two years the RTD has supported an active person-to-person marketing program. This is the Mobile Information Team (MIT) program, which began with four Customer Information Representatives in December, 1973 and which expanded to 29 MIT members by the summer of 1975. The MITs have been instrumental in marketing the District's rapid transit proposal and the many major sub-regional service improvement programs during this time.

The purpose of this report is to review the practices, performance and effectiveness of this MIT program as it relates to the RTD's current and future needs.

While the program's marketing concept is worthwhile and potentially beneficial to the District, the program has not reached its maximum effectiveness because of poor or neglected management at all levels.

Most of the recommendations outlined in this report address the following areas where corrective measures are needed:

- 1) direction of the program toward a hard-hitting marketing objective;
- 2) definition of the duties, responsibilities, and performance standards against which each MIT member shall be measured;
- 3) provision of strong and consistent supervision and control;
- 4) collection of data sufficient for evaluation of program effectiveness and individual performance;
- 5) broadening the scope and depth of organizational and technical training and orientation; and
- 6) much improved communications within the program and with other departments.

This report should be viewed as a catalyst to immediate improvement. These recommendations should not in any way be viewed as a substitute for aggressive, energetic and creative management.

Several other recommendations are the result of an analysis of RTD funding sources and of the need to establish reasonable priorities in the face of severe financial constraints facing the District. The optimum staffing levels recommended are correlated to the level of funding received from the County of Los Angeles.

INTRODUCTION

The Mobile Information Team (MIT) program was created by Board action of December 18, 1973. The purpose of this program as advanced to the Board was to supplement the District's efforts on the Energy Crisis Information Program by providing information to the public on available District services on an individual basis at major regional traffic generators.

At that time four Customer Information Representatives were authorized and in early 1974, the staff reached its authorized level. Two additional positions were authorized in April, 1974. The MIT program remained at this level until March, 1975, when CETA funds were identified to fund twenty-four additional positions. These additional positions were authorized by the Board on January 21, 1975. All these positions were filled by September, 1975.

The current MIT program consists of the following personnel:

6 - Customer Information Representatives (grade 6)

23 - Assistant Customer Information Representatives (grade 4)

1 - Secretary (grade 3)

1 - Community Relations Coordinator (grade 13)

Two Customer Information Assistants and two Customer Information Aides are responsible for the distribution of RTD bus schedules to Post Offices, Thrifty Drug Stores and other locations with schedule racks. This function was briefly reviewed and considered not to be a part of the MIT program for the purpose of this study.

The focus of this study is, therefore, the 29 Customer Information Representatives and Assistant Customer Information Representatives who compose the person-to-person element of the District's marketing program as the Mobile Information Teams.

The Community Youth Corps (CYC) is a parallel information distribution function which is coordinated through the Administration Department in its Community/Governmental Relations section.

The CYC program is intended to improve the RTD's relations with the community while at the same time expanding the District's person-to-person marketing efforts in promoting new services.

Approximately 60 high school age students are involved in Community Youth Corps projects at any one time on a part-time basis. Most of their work is done during the after-school hours or on weekends except during the summer when they are employed on a full-time basis.

The CYC program provides essentially the same type of information to the public in the same way as the MITs. These similarities place a premium on maximum cooperation and coordination between the two groups.

While the CYC program was not the subject of this review, its close functional proximity with the MIT program has drawn it to the periphery of this study.

The research for this study was carried out over the six-week period from the end of February to the beginning of April and included a thorough review of MIT records, procedures, practices, and field activities.

This review included several interviews with the Program Coordinator, interviews with all six of the Customer Information Representatives, all 19 active Assistant Customer Information Representatives and the section Secretary. Additional interviews with the Director of Marketing, the Coordinator of Community Relations and the Program Coordinator of the Community Youth Corps provided additional perspective.

Also reviewed were the daily Information Team Reports for a three-month period, the interoffice reading file, the weekly schedules for a six-week period, and the various forms used by the MITs. Analysis of daily reports and weekly schedules are summarized in table form in Appendices A to D.

Finally, this research project included extensive on-site field observations during the Mid-Cities implementation, the Diamond Lane, and Downtown Relocation marketing programs. Staff meetings of the individual teams, staff meetings of the Program Coordinator and the team leaders, and orientation sessions on the Downtown Relocation and the San Gabriel Valley Improvement plan were observed.

While no written statement of goals is available, the functions of the MIT program are generally as follows:

- 1) to personally distribute schedules and other RTD literature to the public;

- 2) to personally instruct the public on how to ride the bus, understand the fare system, read timetables, etc.;
- 3) to generally act as a personal liaison between the public and the RTD; and
- 4) distributing bus information schedules and special notices at public gatherings, bus stations, etc.

Less frequent assignments include:

- a) promoting the RTD at Senior Citizens' events;
- b) making presentations to school children; and
- c) performing surveys for Market Research.

In order to facilitate communication and distribution of schedules and general information to all MITs in the field, the six Customer Information Representatives are on a rotating basis designated as team leaders. Team leaders and team composition change every four to six weeks. These team leaders are responsible for on-site observations of team members and supply of literature, paychecks and general information. This practice is discussed further in the Recommendations: Discussion section.

DISCUSSION

Field observations of the MITs were made almost entirely at downtown locations during the marketing efforts on the Santa Monica Diamond Lane and the Downtown Relocation projects. Most observations were made at Civic Center locations such as the County Hall of Administration, commercial locations such as the Broadway and Arco Plazas, and at bus stop relocations assignment locations. A few additional observations were made in the Mid-Cities area. The concentration of MIT assignments in the downtown area facilitated many field observations of the MITs during a period of intense, highly focused efforts marketing controversial and important information aimed at heavy existing and potential markets for District services. Most of these observations were made during the month of March.

Altogether a total of 103 on-site observations were made. These observations, in the context of MIT member comments, were used to construct generalizations about MIT operating characteristics.

Table I illustrates a summary of on-site observations broken down by observation time and promotion. This table is essentially an attendance record made according to the MIT location assignment schedule. It does not attempt to assess location effectiveness or employee productivity as such. While it may be that the MIT members were assigned to perform other duties on his or her own these are not generally noted on program activity records. This being so, these observations are as accurate and as verified as program records will allow. This table indicates that of a total of 103 observations, MIT members were located 45% of the time.

While the result of these observations must be described as mixed, it is apparent that a highly motivated MIT member in an optimal location for contacting existing and potential markets can provide a significant benefit to the District in attracting new ridership, increasing transit use by existing ridership, and by insuring public awareness and acceptance of RTD programs. In this vein, it is important to commend one MIT member for consistently and thoroughly preparing himself and for energetically performing his duties in an excellent fashion. This MIT member, Assistant Customer Information Representative Jack Kantor, deserves special thanks and, hopefully, should continue to be productive in future marketing efforts.

Table 1

On - Site Field Observations of MITs
 During Relocation, Diamond Lane, and Mid - Cities Promotions

By Observation

	Present	Not Present	Total	% Present
Within 30 Minutes of Sign-Off	14	25	39	35%
All Other	32	32	64	50%
TOTAL	46	57	108	45%

By Promotion

	Present	Not Present	Total	% Present
Relocation	30	42	72	41%
Diamond Lane	14	13	27	52%
Mid-Cities	2	2	4	50%
TOTAL	46	57	103	45%

The following is a summary of general observations made concerning the MIT program.

- 1) There is a management control problem in respect to requiring that MITs remain at assigned locations for the entire schedule. MIT members may legitimately be away from their scheduled locations for several reasons including field location reassignment, a determination by the MIT that the location is not productive resulting in alternative work being performed, and reassignment to office work. In addition, the Program Coordinator is faced with the supervisory problem of identifying employees who are absent from or late in reporting to location assignments. While improvement has been noted during the course of this review which should be continued, in most cases in the course of this study these schedule discrepancies were not noted in MIT files.
- 2) In frequent cases MIT members are either unprepared or unwilling to make maximum use of what appears to be a "slow" location. They were observed, for example, reading non-District related material, appearing bored or uninterested and generally failing to present a professional marketing or public relations appearance. This, of course, makes the location even slower.
- 3) In some cases, MIT members are required to spend an entire day at what is by any measure a "slow" location. This tends over a period of time to encourage a lax attitude.

It may be that at least some locations such as the County Hall of Administration, the County Courthouse, and Occidental Towers are indeed slow because they are serviced so frequently by the MITs.

This is recognized as a difficult problem because, while it is impossible to assess "over-saturation" of a location during a promotion ahead of time, it is also important to avoid under-servicing an important transit generator.

- 4) MITs were observed in the office while scheduled for field work. This observation, made with reservation because of valid reasons which may require an MIT to visit the office, is necessitated by its frequency and does not apply to team leaders only. It would seem that this problem may stem from communication or literature supply requirements which necessitate a visit to the office.
- 5) Both MIT section and individual team staff meetings were scheduled during the morning "peak" hours. This necessitated, obviously, abandoning field work during that rush hour despite the magnitude of the promotions then in progress. A meeting a few hours later could have been arranged without interrupting the rush hour promotion efforts.
- 6) MIT members are generally unable to discuss institutional aspects of the RTD such as how decisions are made and how transit planning, community relations and so on are performed and are frequently unfamiliar with the reason or logic of a District policy or program. As a result, in the face of negative public reaction to a policy, MITs, being unfamiliar with the RTD's perspective, were observed to adopt the negative sentiment as their own.

As indicated earlier, on-site observations were complemented by in-depth interviews with team leaders and the Assistant Customer Information Representatives. These interviews were aimed at utilizing the expertise of the MIT members in assessing their own function and roles and covered the goals of the section, market targets, procedures and methods, orientation, communications, supervision, and any problems or suggestions the individual might care to identify. On the whole, these interviews showed the MIT members to be generally articulate, thoughtful, positive, and creative. While indicating that they felt the MITs served a needed and useful function, many members had suggestions or comments on improving the unit's operation. As an added dimension to this review, the thoughts of the 25 MIT members who were interviewed have been summarized as follows. Only the most frequently mentioned comments are listed here.

- 1) There should be more "rap sessions" or staff meetings with the entire section and the Program Coordinator.
- 2) Training in "salesmanship" would improve the quality of MIT promotions.
- 3) Assignment of increased responsibilities to the section would be welcomed by the MITs and would make the job more challenging and interesting.
- 4) There is a wide variety of work performance guidelines and standards which are applied differently by different team leaders.
- 5) Daily written reports should receive more follow-through.
- 6) The program helps both current transit users and potential users, but the current users benefit more.
- 7) Too inflexible location scheduling results in lower productivity.
- 8) Employee suggestions should receive more attention.
- 9) Team leaders should exercise more constructive supervision techniques in addition to "spot" checks.
- 10) A written, consistent, and comprehensive policy guidelines would clarify the function and its duties, and improve the personnel evaluations, and would be welcomed by the MIT members.
- 11) Several additional automobiles should be added to the MIT car pool.
- 12) Because of infrequent visits to the office, MIT members feel isolated from the rest of RTD operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: DISCUSSION

1. Program Goals

The MIT program has no written or established statement of its goal or overall purpose. Conversations with MIT members and persons connected with the program provide a variety of alternative perceptions of the goal of the program; 1) to distribute RTD schedule information; 2) to serve the public; 3) to acquaint the public with bus information and how to ride the bus; 4) to establish eye-to-eye contact with the public; or 5) to develop "p. r." for the RTD. The lack of an accepted statement results in a general inconsistency in the approach of each individual to the job and to the public they meet.

It is recommended that an overall goal be established for the MIT program as follows:

The goal of the MIT program is to develop, on a one-to-one basis, public support for RTD programs and increased market acceptance of District services.

While the immediate objectives of marketing programs necessarily vary from program to program, a clear definition of fundamental goals of the program will insure that particular marketing program objectives are consistent with the overall MIT goal.

It is recommended that the following guidelines be used in defining the MIT marketing program objectives.

- 1) to encourage and develop new ridership;
- 2) to promote public transit in general;
- 3) to teach patrons to use and understand service;
- 4) to distribute RTD information; and
- 5) to develop understanding and support for RTD programs and policies.

2. Tasks

While no formal written set of tasks has been established, current MIT tasks predominantly are to singularly man fixed-location displays, to do on-route line promotions, and on-bus ridership promotions. General tasks relating to these include knowing all bus routes that service these promotion areas and providing general RTD information to the public. These tasks unduly limit the variety of assignments undertaken by the group and therefore tend to preclude other potentially useful one-to-one marketing efforts. Further, the narrow scope of these tasks restrict MIT promotions to a smaller number of physical locations than might otherwise be available.

It is recommended that the tasks of the MIT program be formalized and expanded to most effectively meet the program goals. The following list is recommended to encompass all MIT tasks. While many of these tasks are stated to be part of the MIT activity, the infrequency of their performance makes them worthy of repetition here:

- 1) know all bus routes, important locations, traffic generators, points of interest, etc;
- 2) supply schedules to all libraries, schools, businesses, shopping centers and other traffic generators;
- 3) research bus service available to each facility before promotion visits;
- 4) conduct promotions at locations with RTD displays and literature;
- 5) conduct line promotions to businesses and other traffic generators along the route of a bus line, and maintain reports for follow-up;
- 6) conduct on-bus ridership promotions;
- 7) relay detailed comments and inputs on service and route improvements;
- 8) take name of any interested patron with a question which requires more detailed follow-through;

- 9) promote low ridership routes;
- 10) accompany Speakers' Bureau representatives when requested and arranged in advance, to presentations on RTD;
- 11) as possible, perform marketing assignments requested on a monthly basis, by Planning, Marketing, Community Relations or other departments and appraise them of results;
- 12) be familiar with all aspects of RTD operations, including organization structure, funding sources and the philosophy behind improved public transit; and
- 13) follow office procedures for clear and accurate work and for organizational needs of all departments.

The following auxiliary tasks specifically relate to team leaders:

- 1) identify and contact potential promotion locations;
- 2) recommend and implement sales promotions at all traffic generators;
- 3) evaluate marketing efforts on a monthly basis with Program Coordinator, including methods of promotion used to reach specific targets;
- 4) identify and contact elementary and junior high schools for presentations on bus services and routes;
- 5) supply MIT and CYC members with literature;
- 6) conduct on-site observations of team members;
- 7) make weekly location work assignments and authorize location shifts after telephoning main office; and
- 8) circulate job bulletins, news releases, and other such information to MITs between meetings.

It is recommended that these tasks be re-evaluated on an annual basis to insure that they continue to meet the goals of the program.

It is further recommended that these tasks be formalized in job descriptions for MIT members and team leaders as a basis for individual performance.

3. Establishment of Regional Zone Assignments

MIT members are assigned on an "at large" basis to teams which may be assigned to work locations anywhere in the RTD service area, while the Community Youth Corps members are assigned to locations on a geographic basis. County-wide assignments require that each MIT member be equally familiar with all sections of the service area without developing marketing expertise, like Community Relations or the CYC, in any major sub-region.

MIT members are currently assigned to teams on a rotating basis with the composition of the teams changing every four to six weeks. Since each team leader operates differently, standards and expectations are constantly changing and control problems are further complicated.

It is recommended that MIT assignments be made on a zone basis, that each team leader be permanently assigned to a sub-regional zone and that each team leader have a permanent team.

It is further recommended that a team leader assigned to a particular geographic zone be responsible for coordinating and planning MIT and CYC activities in the zone, and that he or she be required to develop a thorough expertise regarding all major transit destinations or generators in the region, major employment and shopping locations, schools, libraries, and all other potentially productive MIT and CYC location sites.

It will be the responsibility of the team leader, with the assistance of his or her permanent team, to identify, personally contact, and evaluate possible promotion locations and to arrange, through the Program Coordinator, for scheduling promotions.

The team leaders' responsibility for scheduling and supplying team members should be facilitated by the permanent use of an operating division or preferably, a Planning/Community Relations regional office as a meeting and supply center for MIT/CYC activities.

It is recommended, finally, despite their zone assignments, that MIT members be required to maintain a complete working knowledge of the entire RTD bus system and be prepared, when required by the demands of an intense marketing effort, to participate in targeted promotional efforts outside their geographic zone assignment.

4. Multiple Locations In One Day

MIT members generally service one location for an entire eight-hour day. This facilitates scheduling, supervision, and enables MIT members to service between three and five hours of peak traffic during the eight-hour day. During slow periods, some MIT members fill their time by reading general RTD materials, such as marketing plans or planning reports, and studying new lines or route changes. However, even these activities are frequently not sufficient to make the most effective use of MIT time and capabilities.

It is recommended that daily schedules, as a matter of course, include more than one location for each MIT member in the interest of making maximum use of MIT capabilities and time. This could mean for example, that an MIT member would be stationed at a company cafeteria from 11:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., then from 1:30 to 4:30 to promote a new bus line and from 5:30 to 8:30 be stationed at a shopping center. This would permit reaching peak crowds during each activity. While this scheduling further complicates management and supervision, it is envisioned that closer daily contact with the office, additional staff assistance and increased team leader responsibility will permit the Program Coordinator to more effectively supervise the MIT members.

5. Staff Meetings

Staff meetings of the MIT programs are infrequent and irregular for two stated reasons; 1) the 29 MIT members are dispatched on promotions throughout the District and staff meetings represent a considerable loss in time away from locations and 2) team leaders meet with each MIT member regularly to communicate new developments, news releases and to handle administrative matters. However, it was observed that MIT members are expected to stay up to date on a great deal of complex information that does not always get discussed. In addition, many MIT members feel isolated from the RTD because of their infrequent contact with other departments.

It is recommended that bi-weekly staff meetings be held for the MIT program to provide:

- 1) RTD information updates;
- 2) continuing institutional orientation and contact;
- 3) technical marketing training, as needed; and
- 4) discussion and resolution of internal administrative problems.

These bi-weekly staff meetings should be held during non-peak hours and used as opportunities for assessing MIT operations and for increasing coordination with other departments. In addition, other departments which work closely with the MITs should be invited to send representatives to these staff meetings.

6. Institutional Orientation

Field observations and discussions revealed that MIT members are predominantly experts in District-wide bus and route information. However, because of their constant public contact, they are frequently faced with many comments and questions relating to RTD organization structure, planning processes and fiscal issues that they are unable to answer.

It is recommended that the MIT members receive regular and continuing orientation on RTD organization structure, planning processes, funding sources, and public transit philosophy. This orientation could occur in staff meetings where guest speakers from other RTD departments could discuss current issues and problems.

This orientation should also occur through the constant circulation of all news releases, management newsletters, etc. By being able to express a general understanding and sensitivity to many RTD issues, MIT members should be able to more effectively utilize many opportunities to solicit understanding and support for the RTD.

7. Marketing Skills

MIT members are faced with a variety of complex marketing problems in the field with respect to, for example, methods of presentation and approach, selling techniques, and principles of communication and good listening and of person-to-person marketing techniques. Many MIT members are naturally quite adept at these matters while others are not.

It is recommended that the MIT members be provided technical marketing training on such matters as methods of presentation and approach, selling techniques and principles of communication and good listening. This training could be conducted in staff meetings and would provide a uniform level of technical understanding in the group, and generally enhance the professionalism of each employee. Much staff expertise in this area already exists in the Marketing and Community Relations departments that could be utilized in developing a training program. It is envisioned that this training would help MIT members to recognize the opportunities they have for actively winning a positive public image for the RTD.

8. Line Promotion Records

Current MIT (and CYC) tasks include the promotion of bus lines by distributing schedules and general bus information to traffic generators and businesses along the route. MIT members are expected to keep a record of businesses accepting literature, but this requirement is not enforced and information that is supplied is not referenced for later follow-up.

It is recommended that to establish uniformity and facilitate review and follow-up, the proposed Line Promotion Record form, as shown in Appendix E, be adopted for regular MIT use. This form will

serve as 1) a record of daily activity of an MIT member for the Program Coordinator to use to monitor performance, and 2) a record of contacts for later supplying of additional literature, and 3) a record of program activity that should be utilized in planning future activities. It is hoped that this continuing record will provide the necessary information to evaluate and determine the best application of this marketing approach.

9. Location Report Forms

MIT members are asked to turn in an Information Team Report on a daily basis, but submittal of these reports is not currently being required. (See Appendix F.) These reports are the major record of MIT field activity and include descriptions of problems encountered and suggestions and comments on RTD service. Appendix A shows a summary of report submittal frequency.

It is recommended that the Information Team Reports be revised to a Location Report form in order to provide more detailed information for planning future MIT visits and for identifying problems or questions which may have arisen during the day. (See Appendix G.)

It is further recommended that these reports be filed by location in order to compile Location Profiles for identifying peak hours, optimal days to visit the location and so on.

Since these report forms represent the only written means of daily communication with the office, it is recommended that the Program Coordinator incorporate all suggestions and comments in his regular communication with Planning, Community Relations, Customer Relations, Operations and other departments.

It is further recommended that MIT members be informed of the disposition of their comments at the regular staff meetings.

10. Public Inquiry Action Form

MIT members frequently encounter in their field work individuals who have questions of a complex nature beyond the range of MIT expertise or who have comments worthy of transmittal to other RTD departments.

It is recommended that to facilitate the resolution of these questions, a Public Inquiry Action form be adopted. (See Appendix H.) MIT members should always carry these forms and volunteer to follow-up on questions they cannot answer from the public. This form would serve two purposes: 1) to record the name and address of an individual for a further response, if necessary and 2) to act as a means of transmitting public input to RTD. Copies of these forms should be forwarded to other concerned departments when relevant for their action or information.

11. Saturday and Evening Work

Although MIT members are assigned Saturday and evening work, most of their assignments are for weekdays during normal business hours. This type of scheduling permits reaching the noon-time rush hour crowds and some A.M. and P.M. contact. Over the last six weeks 4% of the MIT time was on weekends, less than 1% in the evening hours after 6:30 P.M., and 3% in hours before 7:30 A.M. (See Appendix D.)

It is recommended that the MIT normal work week be shifted to Tuesday through Saturday, in order to reach Saturday shopping crowds and that more evening work at shopping centers following afternoon assignments be scheduled. This might mean that an MIT members would be assigned to the Hall of Administration from noon to 5 P.M. and to a shopping center from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M. This shift in scheduling emphasis would increase the effectiveness of the MIT members and would simplify coordination with the CYC.

12. Daily Telephone Log

While MIT members are expected to call the office twice a day, until very recently no office log was kept of these calls. This telephone contact represents the only means, other than through daily reports and team leader site visits, of daily communication between office and MIT members and of maintaining daily accountability of personnel.

It is recommended that the Daily Telephone Log be continued. It is further recommended that for each call the name, the time of the call, the location of the MIT, assignment changes or problems and any instructions conveyed to the MIT members be recorded. It may be necessary if daily assignments of MIT members become more complex to have MIT members call the office each time they change locations. More frequent calls to the office will make the telephone log even more important for personnel accountability.

13. Performance Standards

There are few written, established and well-publicized performance standards to guide the MIT members in their field work. This has resulted in a variety of standards being determined by each team leader. Because MIT members rotate to different team leaders every four to six weeks, there is some confusion regarding the elements of good or superior job performance.

It is recommended that written performance standards be published for the MIT members, and that they reflect the generally increased tasks of the program. The following recommended standards should be used as a foundation for measuring individual performance:

- 1) be completely familiar with the area, being able to isolate schools, shopping centers, large employers, recreational facilities, apartment clusters, mobile home parks, city halls, libraries, Chambers of Commerce and Post Offices,
- 2) know all routes servicing each location;
- 3) prepare and submit daily reports, stating activity, number of people served, location, the effectiveness of the promotion and problems and suggestions;
- 4) submit lists of locations accepting literature on line promotions including name and address, and service these locations on an on-going basis;
- 5) stay up-to-date on all RTD events through news releases, management newsletters and newspapers to be able to create a knowledgeable image to the public;

- 6) present a professional image to the public at all times.

The following standards apply specifically to team leaders:

- 1) initiate contact with locations through principals, managers, personnel directors, etc., for future promotions;
- 2) maintain contact with locations in the area and keep current lists of contact names and addresses;
- 3) develop and carry out creative promotion plans;
- 4) keep appraised of Location Profiles;
- 5) maintain detailed site observations records;
- 6) communicate MIT suggestions and ideas to staff assistant and Program Coordinator;
- 7) maintain contact and coordinate with Community Relations representatives in zone.

It is further recommended that these standards be re-evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that these standards are satisfactory indicators of good job performance.

14. Discipline

Wide geographic dispersion of MIT members preclude constant supervision and places a premium on initiative, responsibility, and dedication. MIT members not being constantly supervised have opportunity for displaying these traits or for developing attitudes of laxness and poor working habits.

It is recommended that MIT members be treated with the respect and consideration due skilled professionals.

It is further recommended that MIT members who are regularly tardy, absent from assignments, unprofessional in their demeanor, or who fail to meet established tasks and standards be identified, counselled, and disciplined as required.

15. Employee Suggestions

For the MITs to function as effectively and as creatively as possible, it is necessary for the employees to feel free to make suggestions on all aspects of MIT procedures, policies, practices, and general marketing goals and techniques. MIT members frequently stated that they did not feel their suggestions were considered in the planning of future MIT activities.

It is recommended that the Program Coordinator develop the MIT program by fully utilizing the thoughts and suggestions of the MIT members.

It is further recommended that all written suggestions made by MIT members be answered in writing.

16. Portable Displays

When MIT members are assigned to a location, they usually set up a small table displaying an "RTD Information Team" sign and RTD literature and schedules. The table is awkward and cumbersome to move in a small car and nearly impossible to carry on a bus. Thus, it severely limits the mobility of the MIT promotion. Further, MIT members frequently commented that these tables do not effectively attract the public and thus have a negative impact on the marketing effectiveness of the MIT program.

It is recommended that portable, collapsible displays be acquired that could easily be assembled and carried from location to location during the course of a day. A display similar to the size and attractiveness of the Diamond Lane promotion would be suitable in a light, portable frame.

17. Transfer of CYC Program to Marketing

The Community Youth Corps is identified as a "marketing program" and functionally the program is very similar to the Mobile Information Teams: to distribute information to the public on a one-to-one basis.

In order to simplify the function organizationally and provide for maximal effectiveness, coordination and communication, it is recommended that the Community Youth Corps be transferred to the Marketing Department to function in the same unit as the Mobile Information Teams.

While the CYCs provide an additional benefit to the District in terms of improved relations and contact with the community, their goals and procedures should be consistent with the recommendations in this report regarding the MIT program.

Further, it is recommended that the MIT and CYC members should be very closely coordinated in their field work. This means, for example, that an MIT team leader working in a certain area on a Saturday or weekday afternoon should supply the CYC in the area with work materials, answer last minute questions, and generally review CYC operations, while continuing to perform his or her primary MIT duties.

18. Inter-Departmental Communication

While there are many departments in the District that perform field work activities, there is little formal coordination between these departments and the MIT program. Such departments include Planning, Operations and Community Relations. In addition, each of these groups possesses expertise which should benefit the other. However, when input is received from other departments or from within the Marketing Department it is of such short notice that MIT plans must frequently be disrupted at a moment's notice.

It is recommended that other departments submit, well in advance, location requests to the MIT Program Coordinator and that the Program Coordinator report back to the requesting department on what action has been taken. For example, it is envisioned that Operations notify the MIT Program Coordinator of low patronage routes or of controversial route changes. These areas could be promoted by the MITs and results of the promotion reported to Operations.

It is also recommended that the MIT Program Coordinator forward comments and questions gathered in the field to concerned departments on a monthly basis in order to facilitate action and response.

19. Staff Assistant

A primary problem observed in the MIT program is dispatching the extensive administrative duties in addition to the necessary supervising of a large number of people located in many dispersed areas on any given day. For the MIT Program Coordinator, providing good supervision means leaving the office during normal working hours. To handle daily office problems the Secretary is almost always assisted by at least one or two MIT members. With direction from the Program Coordinator the Secretary and office-assigned members perform the advanced planning and coordinating of future MIT activities. In addition to the administrative duties, the Secretary also makes decisions on authorizing a member to change locations or to leave work early, in the absence of the Program Coordinator. While the Secretary is capable of these staff functions, she has other duties such as maintaining files which are neglected. She is also performing duties that should be carried out by a higher grade.

In recognition of the extensive supervisory and administrative work required, it is recommended that a permanent assignment be made to perform the staff assistant functions. While ultimate responsibility remains with the Program Coordinator, the following division of labor is suggested to relieve the Program Coordinator of many routine administrative duties, enabling him to supervise and evaluate the program's effectiveness from field observations:

Program Coordinator

- 1) All supervisory responsibilities of both team leaders and MIT and CYC members;
- 2) all personnel evaluations;
- 3) on-site observations and site analysis, to determine best use of MIT time and resources;
- 4) all planning for new service promotions for MIT members;
- 5) developing and maintaining the technical marketing skills program;
- 6) coordinating special projects such as fairs, public meetings, special MIT and CYC requests, school liaison, etc.

Staff Assistant

- 1) Acts as assistant to Program Coordinator;
- 2) performs reports review and follow-up of complaints and recommendations to other RTD departments;
- 3) coordinates with other departments and arranges other departments' presentations at staff meetings;
- 4) makes decisions in the office in the absence of Program Coordinator;
- 5) assists Coordinator in planning and coordinating staff meetings and agenda;
- 6) maintains Location Profiles and records of each location for future MIT promotions;

20. Uniforms

MIT members in the field are sometimes difficult to identify as District employees as their only distinguishing symbols are the "RTD is Going Places" buttons or small "RTD Information Representative" badges. This can negatively impact on the effectiveness of MITs in the field as they may easily be mistaken for voter registrars.

It is recommended that MIT members be provided with RTD uniforms, perhaps in the form of a professionally appearing blazer of a distinctive color with an RTD logo on the breast pocket. These blazers should then be required apparel for all MIT members in the field.

21. Job Titles

The job title of the MIT Program Coordinator is "Community Relations Coordinator," even though his function is marketing. Similarly, the MIT members are titled "Customer Information Representatives" and "Assistant Customer Information Representatives" although their functions are marketing.

In order to match job titles with function, it is recommended that the Program Coordinator's title be changed to Marketing Services Coordinator," that Customer Information Representatives be designated as "Marketing Services Representatives," and that Assistant Customer Information Representatives be designated "Assistant Marketing Services Representatives."

22. Optimum Staffing Levels

Several significant variables necessarily come into play in identifying an optimum MIT staffing level. The District is faced with a financial situation in which costs are rapidly increasing while critical funding remains uncertain and the revenues generated by District services continue to shrink relative to the RTD's total operating costs.

In addition to budget problems, the RTD marketing requirements are important in the allocation of the District's staff resources. In the past two years the District has marketed many new and innovative services including park and ride lots, the Spring Street Contra-flow, the El Monte Busway, the San Fernando Valley and South Central Grid systems, the sector improvements in East Los Angeles, the Mid-Cities and San Gabriel Valley, the Downtown Relocation, the Santa Monica Diamond Lane, and so on. Additionally, in 1974 District staff was heavily involved in the information efforts on the Proposition A rapid transit proposal.

In June the South Bay sector improved service will be implemented leaving only the North Los Angeles sector study to be done before the entire L. A. County service area of the RTD will have been improved, implemented, and marketed. Also in June, the public will have voted on the Sunset Coast Line proposal.

Thus the availability of resources and the shifting levels of marketing activity became the two variables in estimating optimal MIT staffing levels.

It is recommended that the following scenarios (see Table 2) correlating MIT staffing levels with the level of subsidy provided by the County of Los Angeles be designated as the optimal MIT staffing level and that the manpower levels outlined be implemented as they are scheduled. While it is recognized that 23 of the MIT employees are funded from CETA funds through contract with L. A. County, these funds are viewed as an RTD resource that will be necessary to maximize in direct service areas in the event of critical budget constraints.

Table 2

Recommended Maximum MIT Staffing Levels

County Subsidy	- 0 -	\$16 Million	\$33 Million
Current Staff:	29	29	29
May 1, 1976	no new hires	no new hires	no new hires
Aug. 1, 1976	18	29*	29*
Sept. 1, 1976	6	18	29*
Oct. 1, 1976	6	12	29*
Dec. 1, 1976	6	6	29*
Jan. 1, 1976	6	6	18
Oct. 1, 1977 (with CETA)	6	6	12
Oct. 1, 1977 (w/o CETA)	6	6	6

*are listed as ceiling staff levels, not as advisable figures in view of the projected personnel reductions.

It is also recommended that notice of staffing level reductions be given as soon as possible to identify other RTD employment opportunities of the concerned individuals.

It is further recommended that the District recognize its responsibilities toward those loyal employees who have diligently worked with the District and that these employees be provided with maximum opportunities for identifying employment in other departments, contingent upon a satisfactory record of employment.

It is, finally, recommended that no new member of the MITs be hired until the staff level drops below its foundation of six.

23. Core Concept

Because of the uncertainty of the District's funding sources and because of the reduced need for continuous and intense person-to-person marketing contact in the future, MIT staffing levels are necessarily subject to change. This possible reduction of ongoing program activity, however, does not preclude the possibility of the need for very short term, very intense and concentrated marketing efforts for future Diamond Lane type projects, for example.

It is recommended that the MITs be viewed as the core of the District's person-to-person marketing efforts.

It is further recommended, during times of high-intensity marketing campaigns, that RTD staff personnel such as Telephone Information Supervisors, Customer Relations Representatives, Service Analysts, and so on be temporarily assigned to Marketing to bolster the District's person-to-person efforts for one- to two-week "crisis" periods.

The creation of this type of pool allows the District to respond to short term marketing requirements while maintaining minimum staffing levels during time periods of less intense marketing efforts.

24. MIT Handbook

It is recognized that the foregoing recommendations are extensive and complex and will require considerable effort to communicate to MIT members and to implement.

To facilitate the communication of accepted recommendations to individual MIT members, it is recommended that an MIT handbook be assembled to include:

- 1) statement of goals of the program;
- 2) description of tasks and standards of the job;
- 3) brief statement on the structure of Board of Directors, a list of Board members and an explanation of when they meet;
- 4) brief description of other departments in RTD;
- 5) explanation and copies of forms MITs are expected to use;
- 6) statement of general policies concerning appearance, attendance, calls to the office;
- 7) any additional instructions or directions, such as for example, instructions of a technical nature generating from the marketing skills training.

Much of this material is readily available from other sources and can be easily obtained. It is envisioned that this handbook be a dynamic and growing tool in assisting MIT members in understanding and carrying out their tasks.

25. Implementation Review

The recommendations listed in this report will require extensive follow-through by the Program Coordinator and sensitivity on the part of the District to changing needs and conditions.

It is recommended that the Management Services Section review with the Program Coordinator the progress made in implementing these recommendations and assess their impact on MIT operations, to be started approximately December 1, 1976.

RECOMMENDATIONS: SUMMARY

The following list represents a summary of recommendations made in the previous section.

It is recommended that:

- 1) an overall goal be established for the MIT program as provided and that this goal be defined in the proposed five guidelines;
- 2) the tasks of the MIT program be formalized and expanded to most effectively meet the program goals. A list of tasks is provided for both MIT members and team leaders;
- 3) MIT assignments be made on a zone basis and that each team leader with a permanent team be permanently assigned to a sub-regional zone. This team leader should have coordinating and planning duties for both MIT and CYC functions;
- 4) daily schedules regularly include more than one location for each MIT member;
- 5) bi-weekly staff meetings be held;
- 6) MIT members receive regular and continuing orientation on RTD organization structure, planning processes, funding sources, and public transit philosophy;
- 7) MIT members be provided technical marketing training on such matters as methods of presentation and approach, selling techniques, and principles of good communication;
- 8) the proposed Line Promotion Record form be adopted for regular MIT and CYC use;
- 9) the proposed Location Report form be adopted for planning further MIT visits;
- 10) a proposed Public Inquiry Action form be adopted to facilitate resolution of questions arising in the field;

- 11) the MIT normal work week be shifted to Tuesday through Saturday and more evening work be scheduled;
- 12) the Daily Telephone Log be continued to facilitate management of MIT members in the field;
- 13) written performance standards be published reflecting increased tasks;
- 14) MIT members be treated with respect and consideration due skilled professionals and they be identified, counselled and disciplined for unprofessional behavior;
- 15) the Program Coordinator be encouraged to utilize thoughts and suggestions of MIT members. Written suggestions should be answered in writing;
- 16) portable, collapsible displays be acquired to facilitate MIT mobility;
- 17) the CYC program be transferred to the Marketing Department to function in the same unit as the MIT program;
- 18) other departments submit, well in advance, location requests to the MIT Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator should also forward comments and questions gathered in the field to concerned departments;
- 19) a permanent assignment be made to perform the staff assistant functions and to facilitate the Program Coordinator's field observations;
- 20) MITs be provided with RTD uniforms and this uniform be required apparel for all MIT members in the field;
- 21) the Program Coordinator's and MITs' titles be changed to "Marketing Services Coordinator, " "Marketing Services Representatives" and "Assistant Marketing Services Representatives";
- 22) the MIT future staffing level be dependent upon the level of county funding as illustrated in Table 2;

- 23) the MITs be viewed as the core of the District's person-to-person marketing efforts. The core should be bolstered by other District employees during high intensity marketing efforts;
- 24) a MIT handbook be assembled to assist MIT members in understanding and carrying out their tasks;
- 25) the Management Services Section review with the Program Coordinator the progress made in implementing these recommendations around December 1, 1976.

CONCLUSION

The research and recommendations contained in this report will have a significant impact on the policy and procedures under which the MITs operate. The intent of these recommendations is to maximize the efficiency and productivity of the unit by outlining stronger management methods.

The total cost of salaries of the program is about \$476,000, annually, based upon the number of employees in the program, plus the cost of salaries and fringe benefits. This works out to an average cost per MIT member of over \$16,500 yearly, counting salary, fringe benefits, and administrative costs. In addition to this, other costs are involved for the three team leader pool cars and incidental expenses.

These high program costs and the impending, severe, financial limitations require the development of alternative plans to lower costs. While the difficulty in reducing staffing levels cannot be lessened, the District can, at least, plan such reductions with confidence and provide employees with maximum time and opportunity for locating further employment.

APPENDICES

Summary:
 Mobile Information Team
 Report Submittal Frequency
 (January 1 to March 31, 1976)

	<u>No. MIT Members</u>	<u>No. of Assignment Reports</u>
	1	24
	1	19
	1	18
	1	17
	1	15
	1	13
	2	10
	1	8
	1	6
	1	5
	1	4
	1	3
	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	19	158

A total of 19 MIT members have submitted Information Team Reports while three team members have submitted no report of their field activity. This breakdown does not include Team Leaders.

Total reports submitted:	114
Total assignments reported:	158
Total assignments during period*	1,235
% of assignments with report	13%

* An approximate figure compiled by multiplying work days in period (61) by number of employees (21 for January and February, 19 for March.)

Mobile Information Team Assignments
Patrons Served at Fixed Locations

<u>No. of Patrons Served</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
over 600	1
151-200	3
101-150	4
76-100	9
51- 75	17
41- 50	13
31- 40	11
21- 30	13
11- 20	15
1- 10	5

This table relates location productivity to frequency of team activity, not to an individual employee work day. In most cases, locations are now being serviced by only one MIT.

Source: MIT Information Team Reports, January 1 to March 31, 1976

Mobile Information Team Assignment Analysis
March 1, 1976 to April 11, 1976 (6 weeks)

	Days	Percentage
Line Promotions (includes Park & Ride Surveys)	205	27%
Single Stationery Locations	272	35%
Bus Promotions	55	7%
Office Work	60	8%
Location / Office	55	7%
Two locations in one day	42	5%
Other	7	1%
Absences (includes 30 days for disability employee and 15 days for employee on leave.)	77	10%
Total	773 man days	

Source: MIT "Master Schedule" from March 1, 1976 to
April 11, 1976

Mobile Information Team Schedule Analysis
March 1, 1976 to April 11, 1976 (6 weeks)

	<u>Days - Hours</u>	<u>Percentage*</u>
Assigned Weekend Days	28	4%
Total Hours after 6:30 P.M.	7	21%
Total Hours Before 7:30 A.M.	172	3%

*Based on 780 total man days for period or 6,240 man hours

Source: MIT "Master Schedule" from March 1, 1976 to April 11, 1976

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

Information Team Report

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Team Members: _____

Number of Persons Served: _____

Amount of Literature Distributed: _____

Did you refer to other person in RTD? _____

If so, who? _____

Why? _____

Comments about information team from public: _____

Suggestions from public. Please be specific: _____

Evaluation of this location for followup calls:

When? _____

Fill in daily when contact completed and return to P.I. Dept.
every Friday. Would you recommend returning? _____
If so, when _____

Information Team

LOCATION REPORT FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Location _____

Assignment Hours _____ Day of Week: _____

Total Persons Served _____ Amount of Literature Distributed _____

Location Evaluation _____

Peak Hours _____ Persons Served _____

Problems or Questions _____

Suggestions _____

Other Locations Identified _____

Contact Person _____

Did you refer patrons to others at RTD? _____

Who? _____

Comments _____

Public Inquiry Action Request

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Problem or Question _____

Timetable/Literature Request _____

Remarks _____

Employee _____ Date _____

Proposed
Public Inquiry Action Request Form

Appendix H