

UMTA-GA-11-0014-85-1

**PROFILE AND ANALYSIS OF TRANSIT GENERAL
MANAGERS AND THEIR ASSISTANTS
INCLUDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH
THEIR GOVERNING BOARD**

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FEBRUARY 1985

FINAL REPORT

**PREPARED FOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROGRAM
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590**

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1985

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Technical Report Documentation Page

1. Report No. UMTA-GA-11-0014-85-1	2. Government Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle PROFILE AND ANALYSIS OF TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGERS AND ASSISTANTS INCLUDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR GOVERNING BOARDS		5. Report Date February 1985	6. Performing Organization Code
		8. Performing Organization Report No.	
7. Author(s) Irvin Brown, Edward L. Davis and Robert A. Holmes		10. Work Unit No. (TRAIS)	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Department of Public Administration Atlanta University Atlanta, Georgia 30314		11. Contract or Grant No. UMTA-GA-11-0014-85-1	
		13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report September 1983 - February 1985	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address U.S. Department of Transportation Urban Mass Transportation Administration 400 Seventh Street, S.W. Washington, D. C. 20590		14. Sponsoring Agency Code DOT, UMTA	
		15. Supplementary Notes	
16. Abstract The primary purpose of this study is to profile and analyze the position of the general manager in transit systems of varying sizes, types of governing boards, and forms of ownership. The research was conducted during 1983-1984 and involved two primary data collection phases, (1) the mailing out of a questionnaire to general managers and assistant general managers in 126 transit properties, and (2) the administering of one of two interview formats to general managers, assistant general managers and board members during site visits to thirty select systems. This study profiles transit general managers and their immediate assistants with emphasis on such factors as age, sex, race, salary, education and training, professional background, career advancement patterns, length of tenure, performance evaluation, span of control, degree of responsibilities, limitations/constraints, and management style.			
17. Key Words Profile, General Manager, Transit Manager, Governing Board, Participant Survey, Policy Recommendations		18. Distribution Statement Available to the Public through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161.	
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified	20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages 113	22. Price

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the following persons for the assistance which they provided to this research project:

1. Mr. Nathaniel C. Jasper (Project Manager) and Ms. Alice Royal (Project Technical Monitor), University Research and Training Program, Office of Technical Assistance, UMTA for their cooperation and helpful comments on an earlier draft of this report.
2. Dean Oliver J. Ford (College of Humanities and Social Sciences), Dean Lee H. Bowker (Graduate School), and Dr. Richard F. Heiges (Chairman, Political Science Department) of Indiana University of Pennsylvania for the support which they provided in the completion of the project while Dr. Irvin Brown (Principal Investigator) was a visiting professor during the 1984-1985 academic year.
3. The project's three research assistants: Marvin Dew, Deron King and Joseph Castellani.
4. Mrs. Esmie P. Dias for editing this report.
5. Ms. Welladean Bailey for typing the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study represents one of the few, if not the only, comprehensive attempts to profile and analyze the position of the general manager of public and private transit systems. In addition to presenting a profile, the study endeavors to characterize the environment in which the general manager operates. Due to the peculiarity of this changing environment and the critical nature of the general manager's position to the future of mass transit, foundational inquiry such as that provided by this study is very timely.

Among the most important questions which this study attempts to answer are: From where are general managers of transit systems recruited? How long do they remain in their positions? Are they generally promoted from within the transit agency or are they recruited from outside? Do the recruitment practices vary with size, age of system and method by which the board is selected? Is there any correlation between nature of board selection (appointed versus elected) and the tenure, termination and resignation of general managers? Are limitations (constraints) on the authority of the general manager related to the size of the system, age and method of board selection? Are general managers recruited based on general or technical (specialist) educational background and training? What are mutual perceptions of general managers and boards on major issues such as the roles, functions and responsibilities of the board? What criteria are used to evaluate the general manager's performance? What is the nature of the relationship of the general manager with deputy/assistant general managers. What are the responsibilities of the general manager and the board for policy making, budget, planning, staff hiring and termination, intergovernmental relations and collective bargaining.

The basic research methodology used in conducting this study was that of survey research. Secondary information sources were principally used to develop the study's theoretical framework

and refine the issues and questions to be addressed by the three survey instruments. The study's two primary data collection phases involved, (1) the mailing out of a questionnaire to general managers and assistant general managers in 126 transit systems and (2) the administering of an interview format to general managers, assistant general managers and board members during site visits to thirty select systems.

When comparing this study's profile data with profiles which were developed in 1973 and 1976, one point which is made abundantly clear is that the position of the general manager has undergone significant transition during the past decade. Some of these more significant changes are associated with profile factors such as age, sex, race, salary, education, length of tenure, and career patterns:

1. General managers and assistant general managers are considerably younger today than they were a decade ago.
2. There has been a significant but modest penetration of minorities and women into the top two levels of management within transit agencies.
3. Salaries, while still lagging behind private industry, have risen to a very competitive level when compared to that of other senior executives in the public sector.
4. Transit senior executives possess considerably more academic exposure than they did in the very recent past. Almost half of the general managers responding to this study's survey held graduate and professional degrees.
5. Transit managers of today exhibit greater professional mobility. Their tenure with a particular agency is unlikely to exceed five years.
6. General managers are more likely to have a general management education and background, as opposed to having extensive technical experience in the transit industry.

A profile and analysis such as that which this study presents only represent a starting point in efforts to better understand the nature of the position of transit general manager. The following recommendations are intended to provide direction for future efforts:

1. Professional Collaboration and Development - Agencies, such as UMTA and organizations such as APTA, are encouraged to sponsor or facilitate more career development seminars, training programs, and annual meetings specifically intended for general managers.
2. Performance Measurement - Efforts should be directed towards the development of performance indicators which are designed to assess the individual performance of general managers. These indicators would complement the organizational performance measures presently used to assess the productivity of general managers.
3. Professional Mobility - The industry should develop a more positive attitude about the professional mobility exhibited by transit managers. Contrary to many years of management inbreeding, the high turnover rate which is presently pervasive of the industry provides for the transference of knowledge and skills from one transit or non-transit agency to another.
4. Minority and Women Transit Executives - The transit industry should pursue more aggressive efforts designed to increase the number of minority and women general managers and assistant general managers.
5. Board-Staff Relations - In many transit agencies, the board, the general manager and the senior staff need to better define their respective roles, functions, and responsibilities.
6. Data Base on Transit Executives - UMTA should resume and expand its data collection efforts in the form of a national data base on transit executives.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are few research efforts which have examined the office of the general manager of either public or private transit systems. Another neglected area of study is that of individuals who occupy the next level of management -- deputy or assistant general managers. The few related studies which have been done have examined transit management or transit managers in general; they have given little attention to senior level transit executives.

The purpose of this study is to profile and analyze the position of the general manager of selected public and private transit systems of varying sizes and ages who work for appointed and elected transit boards and general purpose council and commissions. This research profiles transit general managers and their immediate assistants with emphasis on such issues as age, sex, race, salary, education and training, professional background, career advancement patterns, length of tenure, performance evaluation, span of control, degree of responsibilities, limitations/constraints, and management style.

Although boards, councils, and commissions have the responsibility for setting policies, an effective general manager is the single most important transit official within any local jurisdiction. This is dependent on the individual's ability to make an astute and professional contribution to the policy making process, as well as, to meet the challenge of effective and efficient implementation. The question which this study endeavors to begin to address is whether the general managers presently in the industry possess these capabilities, or is there necessity for a new breed of transit executive.

One point of clarification might be appropriate with respect to the use of the terms "general manager (GM)," "deputy general manager" and "assistant general manager (AGM)". The

individual occupying this position of the chief executive officer of the transit agencies is commonly referred to as the "general manager". However, there is considerable variety in the official titles assigned to this position, i.e. director of transportation, transportation administrator, resident manager (contract firms), president (private firms), transit superintendent, and executive director.

Although the focus of this research is on the position of the general manager, profile data were also collected on the individual(s) occupying the second highest level of supervision within the various transit agencies. The purpose for doing such is twofold. First, it is to provide additional career ladder insight about the GMs by surveying those persons who are most likely to inherit the position, eventually. Secondly, it is assumed that assistant/deputy general managers operate closest to the GM and would therefore be able to offer valuable insights through their perceptions about the position, as well as its environment. When there is only one individual operating at the second highest level of management, he/she is normally referred to as the "deputy general manager". When there is more than one, the term "assistant general manager" is often used. This report will use the latter in referring to both.

A study such as this significantly contributes to the analytic foundation needed to assess the effectiveness of public transit properties. The development of this evaluative capability is critical, particularly in light of the tremendous expansion of the industry and the level of federal, state and local investments made during the past two decades. Also significant is the increased attention focused on transit which resulted from energy shortages, spiraling labor costs, and decreased operating assistance from the federal government.

This study does not attempt to evaluate the performance of general managers. Its purpose is far more foundational. It endeavors to develop an industry-wide profile of transit general managers and their immediate assistants, as well as, characterize the environment in which they operate. The product of this research project should significantly contribute to the develop-

ment of a set of viable qualitative and quantitative performance measures.

Transit General Managers: The Need for Inquiry

In a provocative essay entitled, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact", Henry Mintzberg writes:

No job is more vital to our society than that of the manager. It is time to strip away the folklore about managerial work, and time to study it realistically so that we can begin the difficult task of making significant improvements in its performance.¹

There has been little substantive research which has examined the office of the general manager of public transit systems. Further research and studies are essential to enable us to better understand this vital position. With the increased importance of public transportation, concern for effective management of transit agencies is growing. Research shows that the multi-faceted roles of transit managers involve much more than the traditional functions of organizing, coordinating and controlling the use of resources devoted to mass transit. The general manager must perfect skills in negotiations, motivation, conflict management, establishing informational networks, crisis management, as well as others.

In his article entitled, "The Management of Public Transit", George Smerk emphasizes the need for what he calls the "complete manager". This concern is prompted by the fact that transit management has traditionally been dominated by an "operations" orientation. His thesis is that modern-day urban mass transit requires a general manager with a strong management aptitude as well as operations orientation.

Smerk also asserts that many transit managers "stumbled into their positions, rather than having arrived there as a result of careful recruitment or an early decision to seek out

¹Henry Mintzberg, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact: Harvard Business Review, (July/August 1975): 61.

transit as an interesting and rewarding career area." He states that public transit has traditionally been outside of the conventional mainstream of American business; therefore, it becomes difficult to attract talented career-oriented persons into management positions. Smerk says this resulted in the industry promoting persons from within to the top position(s).²

Professor Smerk adds that there is a vital need to strengthen transit management by utilizing many of the lessons learned from private businesses.³ This approach will necessitate a new breed of manager with a professional education, who is adept in applying a systematic approach to transit operations and marketing utilized by most modern business firms. UMTA's Mass Transit Management Handbook for Small Cities,⁴ points out that management is both an art and a science, and that management's effectiveness depends upon the qualities of leadership possessed by the individual manager and his team. Philip Ringo's "Transit Operations: The Manager's Perspective," identifies some of the key areas in which general managers must be knowledgeable; these include finance, marketing, maintenance, scheduling, insurance, planning personnel and labor relations and organizational behavior.⁵ Henry Mintzberg shows the complexity of the general manager's job in the following typology of roles involved in the position:⁶

²George Smerk, "The Management of Public Transit" in Public Transportation: Planning, Operations and Management, eds. G.E. Gray and L.A. Holy, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1979), pp. 422-442.

³Ibid.

⁴UMTA, Mass Transit Management: A Handbook for Small Cities Vol. 11: Management and Control, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, September 1980), p. 83.

⁵Philip Ringo, "Transit Operations: The Manager's Perspective" in Public Transportation Planning Operations and Management, ed. G.E. Gray and L.A. Holy, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1979), pp. 443-451.

⁶Op. Cit., Mintzberg.

<u>Interpersonal</u>	<u>Informational</u>	<u>Divisional</u>
Figurehead (Ceremonial)	Monitor	Entrepreneur (Strategist)
Lender	Disseminator	Disturbance Handler
Liaison	Spokesman	Resource Alloca- tor/Negotiator

The general manager's task is to perform these multiple roles simultaneously while relating to staff, board, state, local, regional and federal officials and the ridership. The question arises: Where can a person with such unique talents be found and where can he be recruited? Carl Willis in his article, "How Engineers Can Learn To Be Better Managers", says that companies apparently still look for managers with "90 percent technical competence and 10 percent people smarts". He makes two key observations: (1) large firms that have been most successful stress that the manager's ability to motivate and lead people is of equal importance; and (2) a major difference in managing private and public firms is that in the latter, it is as important how things are done as what is done because public confidence must be maintained.⁷

A major aspect of the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the general manager is his relationship to the transit's governing board. With the shift from private to public ownership of most transit systems in recent years, the composition and role of the governing boards of directors have changed and expanded. Some are appointed while others are elected. The background experience and transit knowledge of its members significantly impact upon and help to define the environment of the general manager.

The central concern with respect to the general manager and the board involves questions of power relationship (decision-making) and the appropriate level of board involvement in the management and operation of the system. Kevin Horn's article

⁷Carl Willis, "How Engineers Can Learn to be Better Managers," Passenger Transport (October 1981): 193.

"Managerial Decision Making Criteria in Urban Mass Transit" addresses the relationship between the board and executive management in a study of 37 transit systems in 17 states in 1974-1975. This portion of Horn's study viewed indices such as board involvement in the selection of executive personnel, determining compensation, evaluation of executive management and executive reporting to the board. He concluded that a variety of operational functions were performed by transit boards of directors under the umbrella of policy making. He further concluded that some form of separation between transit operation and exogenous political decision-making (by the board) was desirable.⁸

In a tongue and cheek article, Milton Laurenstein observes that any seasoned chief executive officer knows how to "avert any possibility that the directors might actually begin to have a real influence on the progress of the enterprise".⁹ He further observes that it is increasingly important that the chief executive officer develop and maintain a good working knowledge of many useful techniques for ensuring the preservation of the importance of the board. Some of these techniques include: (1) increasing the size of the board; (2) well prepared meetings; (3) selection of unimportant but excessively specific items for the agenda, and (4) structuring general policy statements for the board's approval.¹⁰

When the roles, functions and responsibilities of the board are more clearly defined, those of the GM are also defined. According to Myles Mace, in his article, "The President and the Board of Directors", there are three classic functions of boards of directors: (1) establishing basic objectives, corporate strategies, and board policies; (2) asking discerning questions;

⁸Kevin Horn, "Managerial Decision Making Criteria in Urban Mass Transit," Transportation Journal (Summer, 1978): 56-70.

⁹Milton Laurenstein, "Preserving the Importance of the Board of Directors", Harvard Business Review (July/August 1977):36.

¹⁰Ibid, pp. 37-39.

and, (3) selecting the president. However, his analysis leads him to question whether many boards have positioned themselves to accomplish these functions. Mace attempts to view the other side of the argument posed by Laurenstein. He is encouraging the president or chief executive officer to pursue strategies which enhance the responsibilities of the board, short of unwarranted operational involvement.¹¹

Another area of general manager-board relationship is that of inter-governmental relations. The concern is whether the general manager or the board is the chief negotiator in relating to federal, state or other local governments. An interesting contrast exists between the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and the Metro Dade Transportation Administration with respect to the transit system and the state legislature. In the case of MARTA, the Board is extensively involved in negotiation and programmatic relations with the state legislature. In contrast, the Metro Dade General Manager and his management team conduct most of the negotiations between the state legislature and the transit system. One reason for this might be that the Metro-Dade governing body is a general purpose government rather than a separate transit authority. The fact that the MARTA Board is appointed while the Metro-Dade Board is elected, might also be a determining factor on the nature of inter-governmental relations.

The above information raises a number of questions concerning the office of the general manager which this study will attempt to answer: From where are general managers of transit systems recruited? How long do they remain in their positions? Are they generally promoted from within the transit agency or are they recruited from outside? Do the recruitment practices vary with size, age of system and method by which the board is selected? Is there any correlation between the nature of the board's selection (appointed versus elected) and the

¹¹Myles Mace, "The President and the Board of Directors" Harvard Business Review (March/April 1972): 37-49.

tenure, termination and resignation of general managers? Are limitations (constraints) on the authority of the general manager related to the size of the system, age and method of board selection? Are general managers recruited based on general or technical (specialist) educational background and training? What are the mutual perceptions of general managers and boards on major issues such as role, functions and responsibility of board? What criteria are used to evaluate the general manager's performance? What is the nature of the relationship of the general manager with deputy/assistant general manager or division heads? Are management styles (proactive versus reactive) related to size of system, age and nature of board selection? What are the responsibilities of the general manager and the board for inter-governmental relations?

Research Methodology

The basic research methodology used in conducting this study was that of survey research. Secondary information sources were principally used to develop the study's theoretical framework and refine the issues and questions to be addressed by the three survey instruments. Due to the limited amount of research which has been done on transit GMs in particular and transit managers in general, it was necessary to review relevant non transit literature. Literature outside of transportation was examined for management theories that were transferrable to the transit general manager, particularly that which addressed public and private senior level executives. Journals such as the Harvard Business Review, Public Administration Review, The Bureaucrat, and the Journal of Management effectively complemented UMTA, APTA and TRB publications.

The study's two primary data collection phases involved, (1) the mailing out of a questionnaire to GMs and AGMs in 126 transportation properties, and (2) the administering of one of two interview formats to GMs, AGMs and board members during site visits to thirty systems. These three survey instruments are included as Appendices A, B and C. All three instruments were

designed to permit statistical inferences be drawn about the subject matter.

The total number of systems included in the sample population was 156 (126 mail-out and 30 select systems.) This represents a fairly comprehensive listing of public and private fixed route transit systems with at least fifty vehicles. There are approximately 686 fixed route transit operations in 279 urbanized areas of over 50,000 population. However, three-fourths of these systems were not included in the survey because their operating environment does not reflect the broad range of dynamics which this study attempts to address.

The mail-out survey instrument was a two-page questionnaire which solicited personal profile data as well as limited information about the respondents perceptions about his/her agency's recruitment and selection of GMs and AGMs. It was not designed with the intent of collecting data on the study's full range of concerns. The following profile information was requested: (1) age, (2) sex, (3) race, (4) salary, (5) education, (6) professional certifications, (7) training and career development seminars, (8) tenure in position, (9) tenure with the system, and (10) four most recent positions.

Questionnaires were mailed to 126 transit properties. The survey population included 126 general managers and approximately 180 deputy assistant/general managers. There was difficulty in estimating the number of AGMs making up the survey population because in many cases more than one AGM reported directly to a general manager. In most of these cases there were two or three AGMs; however, in some instances there were as many as six.

The GMs and/or AGMs of 70 (61.9%) systems responded to the survey. Questionnaires were received from 72 (57.1%) GMs and 114 (63.3%) AGMs. Table 1.1 provides a summary of respondents by size of system, form of ownership and type of governing board. Table 1.2 provides a summary characteristics of those systems participating in the study.

The second phase of primary data collection involved intensive field research interviews at selected systems. Efforts

TABLE 1.1

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

SYSTEM SIZE		General Manager			Asst. Gen. Mgr.			Board		
		Mail Out	*Sel	Total	Mail Out	*Sel	Total	Mail Out	*Sel	Total
Small	Freq	43	10	53	19	13	32	0	17	17
	%	59.7	33.3	52	37.25	23.6	30.2	0	43.6	43.6
Medium	Freq	17	10	27	13	17	30	0	12	12
	%	23.6	33.3	26.5	25.5	30.9	28.3	0	30.8	30.8
Large	Freq	12	10	22	19	25	44	0	10	10
	%	16.7	33.3	21.5	37.25	45.5	41.5	0	25.6	25.6
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non- Contract	Freq	47	14	61	39	38	77	0	24	24
	%	65.3	46.7	59.8	76.5	69	72.6	0	61.5	61.5
Public Contract	Freq	23	14	37	12	14	26	0	15	15
	%	31.9	46.7	36.3	23.5	25.5	24.5	0	38.5	38.5
Private	Freq	2	2	4	0	3	3	0	0	0
	%	2.8	6.6	3.9	0	5.5	2.8	0	0	0
TYPE OF GOV. BD.										
Appt.	Freq	59	19	78	40	42	82	0	24	24
	%	81.9	63.3	76.5	78.4	76.4	77.4	0	61.5	61.5
Elected	Freq	12	8	20	9	11	20	0	12	12
	%	16.7	26.7	19.6	17.6	20	18.9	0	30.8	30.8
Other	Freq	1	3	4	2	2	4	0	3	3
	%	1.4	10	3.9	4	3.6	3.7	0	7.7	7.7
Total Respondents	Freq	72	30	102	51	55	106	0	39	39
	%	70.6	29.4	100	48	52	100	0	100	100

*Sel - Select Systems

TABLE 1.2

SUMMARY OF TRANSIT SYSTEMS SURVEYED

	Type of System			Governing Board Selection			States	Type of Vehicles		
	Public	Contract	Private	Appt.	Elect.	Other		Bus	Rail	Multi Modal
Large										
Mail-Out	4	10	0	10	3	1	11	8	0	5
Select	1	9	0	6	3	1	8	3	1	6
Total	5	19	0	16	6	2	19	11	1	11
Medium										
Mail-Out	6	10	1	16	1	0	12	17	0	0
Select	4	5	1	7	2	1	0	8	2	0
Total	10	15	2	23	3	1	21	25	2	0
Small										
Mail-Out	19	25	2	35	10	1	24	44	1	2
Select	8	1	1	6	3	1	8	10	0	0
Total	27	26	3	41	13	2	32	54	1	2
Total	42	60	5	80	22	5	*41	90	4	13

*Total number of States with participating transit systems rather than column total.

during this phase were basically directed toward more detailed observation of the position of GM and AGM in thirty systems. One of two instruments was administered to interviewees: Transit Interview Format (Appendix B) or Board Interview Format (Appendix C). In addition to interviewing GMs and AGMs, a third category of respondent was added during this phase: board members.

The selection of the thirty systems included in this phase involved a consideration of several factors. Ten of these systems were classified as large transit systems (500 or more transit vehicles). Ten were medium-sized systems (between 120 and 500 vehicles) and ten were small transit systems (between 35 and 150 vehicles). The lower cut-off point for small systems was thirty-five vehicles rather than fifty to allow for the inclusion of two other systems (Montgomery and Duke Power-Durham Transit). This modification served two purposes: one, to include Duke Power, one of the few public transit franchises, and two, to provide for limited consideration of systems having less than fifty vehicles (See Table 1.3).

The other considerations factored into the selection process were type of systems (public non-contract, public contract, and private) method of selecting governing board (appointed transit authority, elected transit authority and elected general purpose board or commission), and geographic distribution. To the extent which time, funding, scheduling and the consideration of other selection factors permitted, an attempt was made to select systems in most of the major regions of the country.

Both of the survey instruments solicited two types of information: (1) profile, and (2) perceptions about the GMs, AGMs and the environment in which they operate. The Transit Interview Format solicited the same profile data on the respondent (age, sex, race, and education). In addition to the profile information, both of the interview formats solicited perceptions about the position of GM and AGM(s).

TABLE 1.3

SELECT TRANSIT SYSTEMS

TRANSIT AGENCY	STATE	SIZE	PUBLIC/PRIVATE	CONTRACT** MGT.	GOV. BOARD
1. Montgomery Area Transit System	AL	S	Public	ATC	Elect.
2. Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Auth.	AL	M	Public	ATE	Appt.
3. Phoenix Transit System	AR	M	Public	ATE	Elect.
4. Bay Area Rapid Transit Authority	CA	L	Public		Elect.*
5. Long Beach Transit	CA	M	Public		Appt.
6. Southern Cal. Rapid Transit Dist.	CA	L	Public		Appt.
7. Regional Transit District (Denver)	CO	L	Public		Elect.*
8. Washington Metro. Area Transit Auth.	DC	L	Public		Appt.
9. Hillsborough Tran. Auth. (Tampa)	FL	S	Public		Appt.
10. Broward County Div. of Mass. Trans.	FL	M	Public		Elect.
11. Metro Dade Trans. Admin. (Miami)	FL	L	Public		Elect.
12. Orange Seminole Osceola Trans. Auth.	FL	S	Public	ATE	Appt.
13. Metro Atlanta Rapid Trans. Auth.	GA	L	Public		Appt.
14. Burlington Northern	ILL	M	Private	ATE	Appt.
15. New Orleans Regional Transit Auth.	LA	L	Public		Appt.
16. Shreveport Transit System	LA	S	Public	NCM	Other

TRANSIT AGENCY	STATE	SIZE	PUBLIC/PRIVATE	CONTRACT** MGT.	GOV. BOARD
17. Mass Transit Admin. Of MD (Baltimore)	MD	L	Public	ATE	Other
18. Jackson Transit System	MISS	S	Public	ATC	Elect.
19. Kansas City Area Trans. Auth.	MO	M	Public		Appt.
20. Charlotte Transit System	NC	S	Public	ATE	Elect.
21. Duke Power Co.	NC	S	Private		Appt.
22. Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corp.	NY	M	Public		Appt.
23. Metro Reg. Transit (Akron)	OH	M	Public	LOCAL	Appt.
24. Southwest Ohio Reg. Trans. Auth. (Cin.)	OH	M	Public		Appt.
25. Western Reserve (Youngstown)	OH	S	Public	ATE	Appt.
26. Port Auth. of Alleg. Co. (Pitts.)	PA	L	Public		Appt.
27. Southeastern PA Trans. (Phila.)	PA	L	Public		Appt.
28. Chattanooga Area Reg. Trans. Auth.	TN	S	Public	ATE	Appt.
29. Austin Transit System	TX	S	Public	ATC	Other
30. City Transit Ser. Fort Worth	TX	M	Public	MCD	Appt.

*Indicates governing boards which are single purpose.

**Contract Management Firms:

ATE = ATE Management & Service Company, Inc.

ATC = American Transit Corporation

MCD = McDonald Transit Associates

NCM = National City Management Co.

Organization of the Study

The chapters which follow begin with the presentation of personal profile data on GMs and AGMs, followed by the consideration of key issue areas. Chapter Two presents, interprets and analyzes profile data on age, sex, race, salary and education of GMs and AGMs. Chapter Three addresses the issue of turnover. Factors such as longevity in current position and with the respective agency and turnover of the position during the past fifteen years are considered. Chapter Four addresses the specialist versus generalist issue in considering prior experience and career patterns of GMs. Chapter Five focuses on education, training and professional development trends. Chapter Six addresses the controversial issue of board-GM relations. Chapter Seven examines organizational structure and its relationship to GM performance. Finally, Chapter Eight provides summary observations of the profile and discussion of issues.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSONAL PROFILE

This chapter provides a foundation for the study by considering four basic personal profile factors: (1) age, (2) sex, (3) race, and (4) salary. The remainder of the profile factors previously mentioned will be discussed in context of broader considerations in subsequent chapters, i.e. career patterns, turnover, and organizational structure.

For the most part, survey data will be presented and analyzed using one of four types of statistics: frequencies, percentages, averages and mean scores. Caution should be exercised in reviewing the data and considering its interpretation, particularly with respect to the averages provided. Overall averages and mean scores will be heavily weighted toward the respondents from small systems because they constituted the largest portion of the mail-out sample. Ninety of the 156 which constitutes the sample population are small properties. This problem does not exist in analyzing data from the thirty select systems since there was an even distribution of small, medium and large systems.

Of the limited works which directly relate to the subject matter, two studies in particular lend themselves to providing a reference point in attempting to analyze this study's profile data. Both of these studies provide profiles on transit GMs and AGMs, as well as, lower level management, and technical and supervisory personnel in the industry. During 1972-1973, Ray A. Mundy and John Spychalski conducted a study entitled, Managerial Resources and Personnel Practices in Urban Mass Transit. The study examines thirty-one U.S. transit systems and ten Canadian systems. The purpose of this research project was to identify and evaluate policies, practices and other conditions relating to the supply of managerial personnel in the urban mass transit

industry.¹² A second study, done by David Vellenga in 1976, is entitled Management Personnel in Urban Mass Transportation Properties: A Profile and Analysis of Manpower Practices. Vellenga compared profile data which he collected on management personnel at nineteen transit systems with that of their counterparts in other transportation and private industries.¹³ By comparing this study's profile data with that of Mundy's and Vellenga's there is a basis for drawing conclusions about changes which have occurred within the transit industry during the past decade.

Age Distribution

The first profile factor considered here is that of age. A central issue which an analysis of this factor should consider is whether the transit industry is over populated with senior aged GMs and AGMs who will soon reach retirement age. Surprisingly, the average age of GMs responding to the survey was 45. Correspondingly, the average age for AGMs was also 45. Table 2.1 provides a comparison by size of system, form of ownership and method of selecting governing board. In order to utilize averages, in addition to frequencies, mid-points were established for each of the age ranges on the survey instrument (see pages 84 and 84) i.e., 35-39 = 37.5 years; 40-44 = 42.5 years; and 45-50 = 47.5 years.

As would be expected there is a positive correlation between the size of the system and the average age of GMs. Those GMs in medium size systems tend to be approximately seven years older than their counterparts in small systems. There is only a two-year increase in the average age of GMs in large systems as

¹²Ray A. Mundy and John C. Spsychalski, Managerial Resources and Personnel Practices in Urban Mass Transit. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, 1973).

¹³David B. Vellenga, Management Personnel in Urban Mass Transportation Properties: A Profile and Analysis of Manpower Practices (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1976).

TABLE 2.1

AGE DISTRIBUTION

	General Managers		Asst. General Managers	
	Frequency	Average	Frequency	Average
SIZE OF SYSTEM:				
Small	55	41	32	39
Medium	25	47	31	45
Large	22	50	43	46
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP:				
Public Non-Contract	61	46	77	44
Public Contract	37	42	26	42
Private	4	40	3	50
TYPE OF BOARD:				
Appointed	78	44	82	43
Elected	20	45	20	46
Other	4	46	4	43
ALL RESPONDENTS	102	45	106	45

compared to those in medium systems. When considering form of ownership, the average age for GMs in public non-contract systems is six years older than that of those in private systems, and four years older than those in public non-contract systems. There is only a difference of one year when comparisons are made based upon the type of governing board -- appointed, elected or other.

An interesting observation is made when comparing the average age of GMs in this study to the profile of the GMs developed by Mundy in 1973. The average age for GMs in Mundy's study was fifty-three years.¹⁴ Although the disproportionately large number of small systems having younger GMs would force the average slightly downward, there is still a significant difference in the age of GMs when comparing the two profiles.

¹⁴Op. Cit., Mundy, p. 2.

GMs within the industry are at least eight years younger today than they were a decade ago. Vellenga's profile, which was developed a couple of years later, further substantiates Mundy's findings. He found that relatively few managers (not limited to GMs and AGMs) were less than forty years of age. He further observed that a greater percentage of these managers were age fifty-five and over, when compared to other transportation groups.¹⁵

Both Mundy and Vellenga concluded that there was a shortage of middle-aged personnel at upper and middle management levels. This observation was of particular concern because many properties had considerable numbers of managers nearing retirement age and there did not appear to be sufficient replacements available within the industry. It would appear that the industry has addressed this problem. A large proportion of the GMs who were in the industry ten years ago have since retired. They have been replaced by considerably younger GMs.

Considering that ten years ago there was a drastic shortage of younger middle, and senior managers, one would obviously want to know how and where did the industry find the qualified personnel to fill the retirees vacancies. Apparently, to a great extent, younger managers were recruited from outside of the industry and trained accordingly to eventually fill these positions. This matter will be further addressed in Chapter Four in considering GM career patterns.

The overall average age for AGMs is the same as it is for GMs, which is age forty-four. Likewise, the average ages for AGMs and GMs in the nine system classifications are within one or two years of each other. Such being the case, age is not a distinguishing factor between the top two levels of management within transit agencies. According to Mundy this observation also held true a decade ago. He finds that the average age of GMs was fifty-two, a difference of one year less than that of GMs.

¹⁵Op. Cit., Vellenga, p. 39-40.

Sex Distribution

Prior to the 1980s there was little need to include sex as a factor in profiling GMs and AGMs within the industry, simply because virtually no females occupied these positions. There may have been selected instances in which females were selected for the AGM positions when there were several assistants at the second highest level of supervision within the agency. The survey results indicate that women are beginning to penetrate the "male only" ranks of executive transit management. Four of the 102 GMs surveyed were women, and nine of the AGMs were also women. Table 2.2 makes a comparison of male-female distribution in the 102 systems surveyed.

TABLE 2.2

SEX DISTRIBUTION

	GENERAL MANAGERS				ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGERS			
	MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
SIZE OF SYSTEM								
Small	52	53	3	75	30	31	2	22
Medium	25	25	0	0	30	31	1	11
Large	21	22	1	25	37	38	6	67
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP								
Public Non-Contract	58	59	3	75	70	72	7	78
Public Contract	37	37	0	0	24	25	2	22
Private	3	3	1	25	3	3.1	0	0
TYPE OF BOARD								
Appointed	74	76	4	100	74	76	8	89
Elected	20	20	0	0	19	20	1	11
Other	4	4	0	0	4	4.1	0	0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS								
	98		4		97		9	

All but one of the female GMs were in small systems. None were in medium sized systems and one was in a large system.

With respect to form of ownership, three of the female GMs were in public non-contract systems and one was in a private system. All four of the female GMs worked for appointed governing boards. Three of these GMs were white and one was black.

Having compared the size of the female GM population to that of males, we now consider other male/female comparisons. The first is salary. On the average, male GMs make approximately \$10,000 more than female GMs. The average salary for the latter is \$44,000, while the average salary for the former is \$54,000. The disparity suggested by comparing these two averages is somewhat distorted because three of the four female respondents work for small systems. The salary of the female GM employed by the large system is fairly competitive with that of her male counterparts.

The second area of comparison is that of age. The average female GM is three years younger than the average male GM. The average age for female GMs surveyed was forty-three, while the average age for male GMs was forty-six. Again it should be mentioned that the overall average is forced downward because three of the four female GMs are employed by small systems. This makes this three-year difference almost insignificant.

Racial Makeup

Traditionally there has been few instances in which minorities have occupied the AGM positions in transit agencies, and none in which they occupied the GM position. During the last decade there has been a modest but noticeable change in the pattern of exclusion. An UMTA report done by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) in 1983 observed that, "At least 14 blacks have served as general managers of transit systems throughout the country. None of these were recorded as general managers prior to 1970."¹⁶ Additionally, the report cites examples

¹⁶Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, "A Study of the History of Minority Involvement in the Development of Transit Institutions". (Washington, D.C.: Urban Mass Transportation Administration, September 1983), p. 17.

of four Hispanic and Asian GMs.

There are basically three reasons for the increase in the number of minority GMs and AGMs: (1) the "meteoric" rise in minority employment in the transit industry since World War II when minorities moved from a few jobs as drivers and motormen in transit to become the majority of employees in many large metropolitan systems; (2) Federal requirements and Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action efforts coordinated by UMTA's office of Civil Rights; and (3) increased minority membership on transit boards.¹⁷

Consistent with COMTO's findings, the survey results do reflect a modest penetration of non-whites into the top two levels of management within transit agencies. Table 2.3 provides a summary of survey results with respect to the percentage of white and non-white GMs and AGMs which responded. Four percent of the 102 GMs and 19 percent of the 106 AGMs were non-white. Of the six non-white GMs who responded to the survey, two were in small, two were in medium, and two were in large systems. All six of them worked for appointed boards. Three were in contract and three were in public non-contract systems.

Salary

The next profile factor to be analyzed is that of salary. In the past it was commonly assumed that the transit industry paid relatively low salaries compared to that of other types of private and public sector agencies. The results of this survey suggest that this is no longer the case.

During the past ten years the average salaries of GMs and AGMs have more than doubled. The average salary for GMs surveyed by Ray Mundy was \$27,123 and the average salary for AGMs was \$21,382, while, the average salary for GMs repoding to this study's survey was \$56,000 and the average salary for AGMs was \$51,000.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹⁸Op. Cit., Mundy, p. 2.

TABLE 2.3

RACIAL MAKEUP

	General Managers				Assistant Gen. Managers			
	White		Non-White		White		Non-White	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
SIZE OF SYSTEM								
Small	53	96	2	3.6	28	88	4	12.6
Medium	23	92	2	8	27	87	4	12.9
Large	20	91	2	9.1	32	74	11	25.3
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP								
Public Non-Contract	58	95	3	4.8	64	83	13	16.5
Public Contract	34	92	3	8.1	21	81	5	19.6
Private	4	100	0	0	2	67	1	33
TYPE OF BOARD								
Appointed	73	94	5	6.4	67	82	15	18.6
Elected	20	100	0	0	16	80	4	20
Other	3	75	1	25	4	100	0	0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS								
	96		6		87		19	

Table 2.4 provides comparative averages and frequencies for the salary levels of GMs and AGMs. (As in the case of the age distribution, mid-points were established for each of the salary levels on the survey instruments, i.e., \$40,000-\$44,999 = \$42,500, \$45,000-\$49,999 = \$47,500, \$50,000-\$59,000 = \$55,000.) Again, there is a positive correlation between salary level and size of system. There is approximately a \$16,000 spread between the average salary of GMs in the three sizes of systems: small \$44,000, medium \$60,000, and large \$77,000. When considering the form of ownership, GMs in public non-contract systems tend to have the highest salaries (\$59,000) public contract the second highest (\$40,000), and lastly private (\$43,000). The difference between the average salaries of general managers in systems where boards are appointed

as compared to systems in which boards are elected is marginal, \$1,000. Similar patterns are reflected when comparing the average salaries of AGMs.

TABLE 2.4

SALARY DISTRIBUTION

	General Managers		Assistant General Managers	
	Freq.	Average	Freq.	Average
SIZE OF SYSTEM				
Small	55	44,000	32	33,000
Medium	25	60,000	31	52,000
Large	22	77,000	43	61,000
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP				
Public Non-Contract	61	59,000	77	43,000
Public Contract	37	48,000	26	38,000
Private	4	43,000	3	52,000
TYPE OF BOARD				
Appointed	78	55,000	82	52,000
Elected	20	54,000	20	45,000
Other	4	48,000	4	44,000
ALL RESPONDENTS	102	56,000	106	51,000

Summary

Generally, personal profile characteristics of transit GMs and AGMs have undergone significant change during the past ten years. Individuals presently occupying the top two levels of management in transit agencies are, on the average, eight years younger than their predecessors were a decade ago. As well, their salary levels have doubled during this period of time. These changes can be principally attributed to two factors. The first of which are the successful efforts on the part of the industry to attract younger, upwardly mobile, managerial talent. The second factor is associated with broader trends, common to the

labor market in general. Public and private sector senior executives are younger and earn considerably more than they did in the recent past. The transit industry realizes that it must keep pace with the times, if it is to attract the needed managerial talent.

The gradual inclusion of minorities and women into the senior executive levels of transit management is also reflective of changes in public and private sector selection patterns. More specifically, the gains which have been realized are largely a result of the commitment of the Federal Government and a number of individuals, agencies and organizations across the country. However, the number of minorities and women in policy-making and administration does not yet reflect the public that the transit industry primarily serves.

CHAPTER THREE

TURNOVER

The general assumption is that the GM turnover rate in public transit is considerably higher than that of chief executive officers in most types of public and private organizations. An UMTA "Profile of Transit [General] Managers by Length of Service" done in 1980 observed that the average tenure for 148 general managers of publicly owned U.S. transit systems was three years and eleven months.¹⁹ This chapter will attempt to determine whether the turnover rate has increased or decreased since 1980, and assess the positive and or negative implications. The issue of turnover is only one of many which this study addresses; subsequently, it is a paramount consideration because of what it suggests about other issues to be addressed later.

UMTA addressed this issue again in 1982: "It is often said that the position of general manager in an American mass transit system is a highly vulnerable post where the incumbent is not likely to enjoy a lengthy tenure."²⁰ This study endeavors to consider the reasons for this limited tenure. The most obvious assumption is that there is an inability on the part of incumbents to respond to the expanding requirements of the position because they lack the necessary skills and experience. Much of the literature suggests the need for a new kind of manager with a professional education, who is adept in applying a systematic approach to transit management, operations and marketing. This observation further suggests that many of the seasoned general

¹⁹Urban Mass Transportation Administration, "A Profile of Transit Managers by Length of Service", (Washington, D.C., December 31, 1980), p. 1.

²⁰U.S. Urban Mass Transportation Administration, "UMTA University Research and Training Program FY 1983 Announcement", (Washington, D.C., December 1984), p. 8.

managers who are products of the "old school" may lack the skills needed to operate in a far more complex, urban service delivery environment.

Another reason given for the high turnover rate is a pattern of "system hopping" engaged in by GMs. In spite of the requirements placed on GMs, in more recent years the position has become more attractive and challenging. Additionally, because of the high turnover rate there are numerous opportunities for advancement and placement. Although many vacancies are filled by promotions from within the agency or the selection of an assistant general manager from another system, a considerable number of positions are filled by GMs exhibiting a pattern of moving from system to system.

A third explanation given for the high turnover rate is conflictual board-GM relations. The question is often posed, whether there is something about the nature of board-GM relations in the contemporary public transit environment which has a tendency to shorten the tenure of the latter? The common assumption is that the tenure of GMs tends to be shorter in instances where there is a highly political board which is either elected or appointed.

A fourth explanation relates to what Frank Davis and Lawrence Cunningham refer to as the evolving concept of the general manager. They state that public transportation has evolved through the legal regulation stage, the engineering and construction stage, the environmental impact stage, the public hearing stage, and presently, the management stage.³ In reviewing the turnover of GMs in many of the large and medium systems during these stages, there is evidence of correlation between the specialization of the incumbent and the evolving emphasis which Davis and Cunningham refer to. This point was discussed during an interview with one of the members of the

²¹Frank W. Davis, Jr., and Laurence F. Cunningham, "The Transportation Manager an Evolving Concept", Transportation Research Record 735, 1979, pp. 7-12.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

A final reason given for the high turnover rate is associated with the career patterns of transit executives employed by contract management firms. Sixty of the 102 systems which participated in the mail-out survey are managed by contract firms; likewise, fourteen of the thirty select systems are contract systems. Many of the GMs and AGMs assigned to these systems develop strong ties to a particular city and choose to remain there for a long period of time. However, the vast majority are highly mobile. They either choose to be or are expected to be mobile during a considerable portion of their career with a particular firm. In most instances, professional growth necessitates such mobility. As contract firms continue to absorb a larger portion of the industry, they will continue to be a contributing factor to high GM and AGM turnover.

Tenure in Present Position

The study's survey instruments incorporated several questions which provide the basis to analyze the following factors regarding to turnover: (1) number of years respondent has been in his or her present position (mail out and select); (2) number of years present and former GMs have occupied their positions during the last fifteen years (select); and (3) number of years respondent has been with the agency (mail-out and select); and (4) the reasons why present and former GMs and AGMs left their positions during the past fifteen years. This section will address factors one and two.

The data on Tables 3.1 and 3.2 are meant to complement each other. These two tables provide a means of viewing the tenure in position question from two perspectives. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the number of years respondents have been in their present positions. However, this data only indicate tenure up until the time the survey was conducted. Table 3.1 provides average tenure for all GMs within the past fifteen years; however, it is limited to the thirty select systems.

TABLE 3.1

AVERAGE TENURE DURING LAST FIFTEEN YEARS

Position	Size of System			Type of Ownership			Type of Board			Overall
	Sm	Med	Lrg	Pub Con.	Pub.	Pri.	Elct.	Appt.	Other	
General Manager	5.26	4.6	4.0	4.3	4.5	10	4.25	4.5	5.85	4.6

According to the data on Table 3.1 the length of tenure for GMs appears to have slightly increased since 1980 when the previously mentioned UMTA report was released. John Paul Jones, the UMTA official who compiled the profile, states that the average tenure was three years eleven months (based upon data collected over approximately five years). When compared to the overall average in Table 3.1, there appears to be an increase in tenure of approximately one-half year. However, one key factor suggests that the length of tenure may still be approximately four years. This is because the data in Table 8 reflect an average over a fifteen-year period. The length of tenure during the second half of this period is probably distorted because the average is forced upward due to disproportionately longer periods of tenure during the early 1970s. Table 3.2 tends to support these averages, as 67 percent of the GMs responding to the survey have been in their positions for less than five years.

A couple of interesting comparisons are posed when considering the size of the system and the type of board. An analysis of this group of respondents (less than 2 years, and 2-5 years) suggests a negative correlation between size of system and tenure in the position. As the size of the system increases the length of tenure decreases. Sixty-two percent of the respondents in small systems have been in their position for less than five years, 64 percent in medium and 81 percent in large. Form of ownership does not appear to be a significant factor since the length of tenure is approximately the same for all three classifications. Approximately sixty-seven percent of the GMs working for appointed, single purpose, transit boards have been in

TABLE 3.2

LENGTH OF SERVICE IN PRESENT POSITION

	Less than 2 Years		2-5 Years		6-10 Years		11-14 Years		15 Years or More	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
GENERAL MANAGERS										
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	10	19	23	43	14	26	3	5.6	4	7.4
Medium	4	16	12	48	3	12	5	20	1	4
Large	8	36	10	45	3	14	1	4.5	0	0
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Cont.	6	26	25	41	14	23	3	4.9	3	4.9
Public Contract	16	6	18	49	6	16	6	16	1	2.7
Private	0	0	2	67	0	0	0	0	1	33
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	15	19	37	48	14	18	7	9.1	4	5.2
Elected	6	30	6	30	5	25	2	10	1	5
Other	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0	0	0
ALL GMs	22	22	45	45	20	20	9	8.9	5	5
ASST. GENERAL MANAGERS										
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	8	25	13	41	10	31	0	0	1	3.1
Medium	7	23	13	42	8	26	3	9.7	0	0
Large	21	49	12	28	6	14	4	9.3	0	0
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Cont.	24	31	28	36	20	26	5	6.5	0	0
Public Contract	11	42	9	35	4	15	2	7.7	0	0
Private	1	33	1	33	0	0	0	0	1	33
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	30	37	30	37	17	21	4	4.9	1	1.2
Elected	6	30	6	30	5	25	3	15	0	0
Other	0	0	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
ALL AGMs	36	34	38	36	24	23	7	6.6	1	.99

their positions for less than five years, as opposed to sixty percent in systems with elected, general purpose boards.

Surprisingly, the data suggest that the turnover rate for GM and AGMs is approximately the same. Initially it was assumed that the average length of tenure in positions for the AGMs would be noticeably longer than that of the GMs. Although the selection of new GMs often signals a change in the second highest level of management, in many instances this is not the case. The data overwhelmingly suggests that the former is the case. This is further borne out by the fact that the length of tenure for GMs and AGMs closely parallels when six of the nine system classifications are compared. Another more obvious factor which contributes to AGM turnover is that when a GM leaves a system, in many instances the AGM is appointed to his position.

Length of Service with Agency

The second profile factor is that of total years of seniority with the agency. A common observation often made is that senior executives, as well as professionals in general, are considerably more professionally mobile than they were a decade or two ago. Respondents from both mail-out and select systems were asked about their length of service with the agency. Table 3.3 provides a summary of responses to this question.

It would appear that the preceding observation has considerable relevance to senior transit executives. Forty-two percent of the GMs have been with the agency for less than five years. Forty-four percent of the AGMs have been with the property for less than this period of time. When considering those with less than ten years of tenure, the percentages increase to 69 and 72 respectively.

Few significant patterns emerge when these data are analyzed by the system's size, the type of board or form of ownership. With regard to size of the systems surveyed, one observation which distinguishes this data from that in the preceding section is that a significantly larger percentage of the

TABLE 3.3

LENGTH OF SERVICE IN PRESENT SYSTEM

	Less than 2 Years		2-5 Years		6-10 Years		11-14 Years		15 Years or More	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
GENERAL MANAGERS										
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	7	13	19	35	17	31	7	13	4	7.4
Medium	3	12	4	16	6	24	9	36	3	12
Large	4	20	5	25	4	20	5	25	2	10
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Cont.	9	15	15	25	19	32	12	20	5	8.3
Public Contract	5	14	13	36	7	19	8	22	3	8.3
Private	0	0	0	0	1	33	1	33	1	33
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	10	13	21	28	21	28	17	23	6	8
Elected	4	20	6	30	5	25	2	10	3	15
Other	0	0	1	25	1	25	2	50	0	0
ALL Gms	14	14	28	28	27	27	21	21	9	9.1
ASST. GENERAL MANAGERS										
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	7	22	7	22	11	34	2	6.3	5	16
Medium	2	6.5	7	23	12	39	5	16	5	16
Large	13	31	10	24	6	14	8	19	5	12
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Cont.	14	18	17	22	23	30	13	17	9	12
Public Contract	8	31	7	27	6	23	2	7.7	3	12
Private	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	19	23	17	21	24	30	10	12	11	14
Elected	3	15	6	30	3	15	5	25	3	15
Other	0	0	1	25	2	50	0	0	1	25
ALL AGMs	22	21	24	23	29	28	15	14	15	14

respondents from small systems have been with the agency for less than either five or ten years. Consequently, it can be assumed that larger systems retain their executives for longer periods of time than smaller systems. This might be explained by two factors. The first is that it has become common for a younger individual, probably college trained, to join a small agency and advance to AGM or possible to GM within a ten-year period.

The second factor is associated with the large percentage of the systems within the industry which are now managed by contract firms. This is especially true in the case of small systems. More and more of these firms are hiring young, college trained, aggressive, professionally mobile persons. The tenure of these individuals rarely exceeds five years before they make a career advancement move to another system.

Reasons for Turnover

Having to a certain extent gauged the level of GM and AGM turnover, the discussion now returns to the reasons for such turnover. During site visits to the thirty select systems, respondents were asked to cite, to the best of their recollection, the reason(s) why their predecessors left their respective positions. Table 3.4 provides a summary of this information.

TABLE 3.4

REASONS FOR LEAVING POSITION

	Resignation	Terminated	Retired	Promotion	Other or Unknown
	%	%	%	%	
General Managers	51.4	7.1	17.1		17
Asst. Gen. Managers	20	8	8	36	28

According to the data, slightly more than one-half of the GMs resigned, and supposedly, only 7.1 percent were terminated. Less than one-fifth of the GMs left office due to retirement.

Seventeen percent left for other reasons. In some cases , the person responding to the survey simply did not know.

A point of caution is posed in the interpretation of the data in Table 3.4. This is that in many cases it is difficult to get accurate information on why a person leaves a position, particularly executives. Often the source from which the information is solicited does not know or is reluctant to say. The commonly used catch-all category is "resignation". In addition, allowing an executive who is about to be terminated the option of resigning is a commonly accepted practice.

The data which addresses the reasons AGMs leave their positions is considerably more accurate. More than one-third of the AGMs left their positions because they were promoted. Most of these individuals were promoted to GM positions within the same agency. The remainder which falls into this category, as well as a portion of twenty percent falling under the "resignation" category, left the agency to accept a GM position in another agency or an AGM position in larger agency.

Summary

The general observation which can be made about the data presented in this chapter is that the transit industry has experienced a relatively high GM and AGM turnover rate for at least the last five years. Two thirds of the GMs responding to the survey have been in their position for less than five years and seventy percent of the AGMs have occupied their positions for less than that period of time. This turnover rate is associated with a number of factors, i.e., professional mobility, conflictual board-GM relations, the evolving requirements of the position, and reassignment by contract firms. Correspondingly, the length of time these transit executives are employed by a particular property is also considerably shorter than it was a decade ago.

CHAPTER FOUR

CAREER PATTERNS

The next major topic to be considered are the career patterns of transit executives. Contemporary discussions of this issue focus on two major concerns. The first is associated with the common criticism that the management of the transit industry is too inbred. As recent as a decade ago, several studies confirmed the fact that the transit industry as a whole relied almost exclusively on promotion from within the agency. Other more recent observations, as well as several of the preceding findings of this study suggest that a considerable portion of the GM and AGM positions within the industry are filled by individuals who have served a considerable portion of their careers in other transit agencies as well as other types of public and private organizations. The second area of focus addresses the question of whether the GM career paths reflect that they are principally products of the operations or the management side of transit. Again, a decade ago, the former was almost exclusively the case, while contemporary discussion suggests that this pattern has been reversed. Generally, this chapter attempts to address what is commonly referred to as the specialist versus generalist controversy.

Respondents (select systems) were asked several questions which were designed to solicit information relevant to career patterns. First, GMS and AGMs were asked to identify their four most recent positions along with the number of years he or she served in that capacity and whether it was with a public or private, transit, or non-transit agency. A second set of questions asked the respondents' perception as to whether technical education and experience or general management education and background were more critical factors in selecting the GM and AGM within their agencies. Third, respondents were asked to identify any professional certifications which they have been awarded.

Management Inbreeding

In 1971 George Smerk predicted that the new breed of management for the transit industry will come from a variety of places. Some will come from other types of public and private sector organizations and some will come from the ranks of those already employed by transit enterprises.²² In order to solicit information on this issue, respondents were asked to identify the primary method used by the board in the selection of the GM (Tables 4.1 & 4.2). In addition, they were asked the primary method used by the GM and Board in the selection of the AGM (Tables 4.3 & 4.4). GMs, AGMs and board members were asked to respond to this question based upon selection patterns in the recent past, and upon their perception of the present leaning of the board. Each of the two sets of tables allow responses to be analyzed from two perspectives. The data is first presented by the system's classification, and then, by the type of respondent.

The overall percentages indicate that 39 percent of the respondents felt that the primary source of the GM recruitment and selection was "promotion from within". The second largest number of respondents cited "other transit systems" as the primary source. The two least cited sources were non-transit categories (other government agencies 9.9%, and private industry, 5.9%). However, based upon the comments made during site visits, it is felt that the majority of the responses in the "others" category (23%) should more appropriately be reclassified under one of these two non-transit categories.

Generally, the data indicate that more and more GMs are being recruited from outside the agency and outside the industry. A comparison of the percentages by type of respondent, suggests that this trend will probably be the case even moreso in the future (Table 4.2). Responses of board members exhibit greater balance when compared with the various sources of recruitment and selection. This factor is significant in light that GMs are

²² George Smerk, "The Practice of Business," Business Horizons. (December 1971) pp. 5-10.

TABLE 4.1

PRIMARY SOURCE OF GM RECRUITMENT
(By System Classification)

	Promotion Within		Recruitment Other Transit Agency		Recruitment from Govt.		Private Industry		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	11	31	6	17	1	2.8	5	14	13	36
Medium	15	50	7	23	3	10	0	0	5	17
Large	13	37	10	29	6	17	1	2.9	5	14
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Cont.	27	42	16	25	9	14	2	3.1	11	17
Public Contract	8	25	7	22	1	3.1	4	13	12	38
Private	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	27	39	16	23	6	8.6	4	5.7	17	24
Elected	9	38	7	29	4	17	1	4.2	3	13
Other	3	43	0	0	0	0	1	14	3	43
OVERALL	39	39	23	23	10	9.9	6	5.9	23	23

TABLE 4.2

PRIMARY SOURCE OF GM RECRUITMENT
(By Respondent)

RESPONDENT	Promotion Within		Recruitment Other Transit Agency		Recruitment From Govt.		Private Industry		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
General Manager	9	36	8	32	2	8	0	0	6	24
Assistant GM	19	46	6	15	5	12	2	4.9	9	22
Board Member	11	31	9	26	3	8.6	4	11	8	23
OVERALL	39	39	23	23	10	9.9	6	5.9	23	23

selected by the board.

The data in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 suggest that transit agencies are just as likely to select an AGM or a GM from outside the agency. Forty-four percent of the respondents indicated that GMs and board members were favorably disposed toward external recruitment and selection of AGMs or that in the recent past such was the actual source of selection. According to this data, the external selection of an AGM is more likely to occur in a small (57%), contract system (59%) with an elected general purpose board (52%). This observation is partially substantiated by several of the findings made earlier in this study. However, board members (62%) and GMs (58%) generally expressed a preference for promotion from within the agency, especially in cases where the GM has been recruited from outside. It was indicated that such a practice represents a motivational factor (upward mobility), as well as provides for the agency's stability.

TABLE 4.3

PRIMARY SOURCE OF AGM RECRUITMENT
(By System Classification)

	Recruitment From Outside		Promotion From Within	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
SYSTEM SIZE				
Small	42	57	32	43
Medium	12	24	38	76
Large	28	46	33	54
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP				
Public Non-Contract	46	38	76	62
Public Contract	34	59	24	41
Private	2	40	3	60
TYPE OF GOV. BOARD				
Appointed	56	41	80	59
Elected	21	52	19	47
Other	5	56	4	44
OVERALL	82	44	103	56

TABLE 4.4

PRIMARY SOURCE OF AGM RECRUITMENT
(By Respondent)

RESPONDENT	Recruitment From Outside		Promotion From Within	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
General Manager	36	50	36	50
Assistant GM	35	42	49	58
Board Member	11	38	18	62
OVERALL	82	44	103	56

Specialist vs. Generalist

Several uses of the generalist concept are discernible. One theory asserts that the generalist means an amateur administrator with, as Presthus puts it, "A liberal education augmented by certain personal qualities of character, 'poise' and leadership."²³ A second definition which is offered by the Second Hoover Commission refers to the generalists as a "...highly experienced and talented career executives, available for flexible assignments, capable of furnishing essential administrative counsel, yet easily replaceable at the discretion of the chief executive."²⁴ Robert Golembiewski provides a third definition: "The organization generalist is someone whose very job emphasizes management over his professional speciality; the generalist is anyone who prefers working with administrative content, not with professional specialist content."²⁵

²³Robert Presthus, "Decline of the Generalist Myth," Public Administration Review, Vol. 24, No. 4 (December 1964): 211.

²⁴Michael Cohen, "The Generalist and Organization Mobility," Public Administration Review (September/October 1970): 545.

²⁵Robert Golembiewski, "Specialist or Generalist?: Structure as a Crucial Factor," Public Administration Review Vol. 25, No. 2 (June 1965): 107.

When the term is used in the transportation industry it refers to executive level personnel with an administrative specialization(s) who may or may not have spent a considerable portion of his professional career in another transit agency(s) or any type of public or private organization. A transit specialist is normally considered to be a person who has spent most of his career in transit operations, engineering or maintenance activities.

The data in Table 4.5 addresses what respondents consider to be the critical factor in the selection of a GM and AGM, based upon their perception of past practices with their respective agencies, technical education, and training or general management training and experience. In the case of selecting a GM, 59 percent of the GMs, AGMs, and board members participating in the survey gave equal weight to both. Twenty-six percent felt that general management background was most important, while 12 percent converged on the side of technical education and training. The largest percent (63%) of the respondents gave equal weight to both.

Based upon the fact that the transit industry has traditionally been oriented toward the technical or specialist side of the controversy, the preceding statistics are very significant. Even though the majority of the respondents gave "equal weight to both," the implications are still very resounding. Moreover, in many instances during the site visits, board members and GMs selected "equal weight to both," but their comments suggested a leaning towards "general management training and experience."

A different pattern emerges when considering the critical background factor in selecting an AGM. Although 53 percent of the respondents gave equal weight to both, there is a clear preference for AGMs with technical experience and training. The common sentiment which was expressed during site visits was that in systems which only had one AGM, technical competence was a crucial factor. This provided the GM with the opportunity to devote a larger portion of his time to general management functions and responsibilities. This was less a factor in systems with an AGM

TABLE 4.5

CRITICAL BACKGROUND FACTOR IN GM AND AGM APPOINTMENTS

	Technical Ed. and Training		General Management		Equal Weight to Each	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
GENERAL MANAGER						
SIZE OF SYSTEM	7	14	10	20	33	66
Small	2	8.3	7	29	15	63
Medium	2	10	7	35	11	55
Large						
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP						
Public Non-Contract	4	11	8	22	24	67
Public Contract	7	13	15	27	34	61
Private	0	0	1	50	1	50
TYPE OF GOVERNING BD.						
Appointed	6	8.5	17	24	48	68
Elected	5	25	6	30	9	45
Other	0	0	1	33	2	67
OVERALL	11	12	24	26	59	63
ASST. GENERAL MANAGER						
SIZE OF SYSTEM	8	28	5	17	16	55
Small	8	31	5	19	13	50
Medium	9	27	6	18	18	55
Large						
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP						
Public Non-Contract	7	29	3	13	14	58
Public Contract	16	26	13	21	32	52
Private	2	67	0	0	1	33
TYPE OF GOVERNING BD.						
Appointed	16	24	13	20	37	56
Elected	9	50	1	5.6	8	44
Other	0	0	2	50	2	50
OVERALL	25	28	16	18	47	53

for operations and an AGM for management because the GM is provided both types of support. The critical factor in the selection of an AGM was dependent on which type of support he was to provide. Obviously, these more specialized considerations are even moreso the case in systems with three or more AGMs.

The second method which was used to assess the specialist/generalist orientation of GMs and AGMs was to ask respondents to identify their four most recent positions. Table 4.6 provides a summary of these responses by an average number of years in the four types of positions. The vast majority, or 70 percent of the years which GMs have spent in their last four positions, have been in transit related agencies. Following with a very distant second of 12 percent are years spent in transit related private agencies. The least number of years were spent in non-transit related public (10%) and non-transit related private agencies (7.7%). No significant patterns appear to emerge when comparing the average years by systems classification. The only exception is for respondents from private systems. However, it was assumed that they would have spent the majority of their years in private transit related agencies.

Generally, AGMs appear to exhibit patterns similar to those of GMs. The only slightly noticeable difference is that the second highest number of years were spent in non-transit related private agencies, rather than transit related private agencies. The fact that the second highest number of years, for both GMs and AGMs, were spent in the two categories of private agencies suggests that in the future public transit agencies may look more and more towards the private sector for management talent.

The factor which is most obvious when considering the data in Table 4.6 in conjunction with the data in Table 4.5 is that their implications appear to be in conflict. The data in Table 4.5 suggest a strong leaning towards selecting GMs and AGMs with general management education and experience. However, according to the data in Table 4.6 GMs have spent 82 percent of the last fifteen years in transit related agencies. This may be explained by the fact that the leaning toward a general management

TABLE 4.6

FOUR MOST RECENT POSITIONS AND YEARS EMPLOYED

	Transit Related Public		Transit Related Private		Non-Transit Related Public		Non-Transit Related Private	
	%	Avg. Yrs.	%	Avg. Yrs.	%	Avg. Yrs.	%	Avg. Yrs.
GENERAL MANAGER'S								
SIZE OF SYSTEM								
Small	69	3.3	14	5.3	9.2	5.6	7.2	5.3
Medium	65	4.5	10	3.8	13	7.5	12	4.8
Large	78	4.3	9	4.5	9	5	4.5	10
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP								
Public Non-Contract	71	4.2	6.7	3.6	14	6.7	8.4	6.5
Public Contract	74	3.3	15	4.4	4.7	3.2	6.6	3.9
Private	31	3.3	62	7.5	0	0	7.7	7
TYPE OF GOV. BOARD								
Appointed	70	3.6	13	5.0	8.4	7.5	8.4	5.5
Elected	75	4.1	5.1	3.7	14	3.9	6.8	6.5
Other	54	6.4	23	4.3	23	3.0	0	0
OVERALL	70	3.8	12	4.8	10	6.1	7.7	5.7
ASSISTANT GEN. MANAGER								
SIZE OF SYSTEM								
Small	65	4	17	4.8	5.1	4	13	3.4
Medium	75	4.3	7.1	4.7	8.1	5	10	4.1
Large	72	3.3	4.6	6	10	6.2	13	5.2
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP								
Public Non-Contract	68	3.9	7.5	4.8	8.8	6.1	15	4.5
Public Contract	78	2.9	12	5.4	6.8	3	2.7	4
Private	100	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
TYPE OF GOV. BOARD								
Appointed	71	4	8.3	4.8	7	4.7	14	4.2
Elected	79	3.1	0	0	15	7.1	5.7	7.7
Others	42	3.6	50	5.8	0	0	8.3	3
OVERALL	71	3.8	8.5	5	8.1	5.5	12	4.4

emphasis in public transit has only began to emerge during the last decade. Although it has been talked about for more than a decade, significant changes in selection practices are only readily identifiable during the last five years or so. The fact that AGMs have spent a slightly smaller percentage of years (79%) in transit related agencies modestly substantiates the observation.

Professional Certifications

During the preliminary inquiry phase of the study the interest of the research team was sparked by the broad range of professions which claimed GMs and AGMs as members, i.e., law, accounting, engineering, aviation, teaching, planning, etc. This factor prompted the decision to include a question which asked both mail-out and select respondents to identify any professional certifications which they have been awarded. The certifications were classified as being transit related or non-transit related and professional or non-professional.

For various reasons, the response rate for this question was much lower than that which was expected (Table 4.7). However, the responses which were received adequately addressed the purpose of this inquiry. Eighty-eight percent of the responses provided by GM and AGMs were non-transit professional certifications. These include: certified public accountants (CPA), practicing attorneys (bar), teaching certificates, pilots licences, non-transit related engineer or planning certificates, etc. The second highest number of certifications fell in the transit related professional category (7.7%). Those in this category included transit related, transit planning or engineering certifications. The frequencies and percentage for AGMs responding to this question were very similar to those of GMs. Several of the AGMs had been awarded transit-related, non-professional certifications. These AGMs were those who had been promoted through the ranks and had been awarded vehicle operator or maintenance certifications.

TABLE 4.7

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

	Transit Related Professional		Transit Related Non-Prof.		Non-Transit Professional		Non-Transit Non-Prof.	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
GENERAL MANAGER'S								
SIZE OF SYSTEM								
Small	1	11	0	0	8	89	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	9	90	1	10
Large	1	14	0	0	6	86	0	0
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP								
Public Non-Contract	0	10	0	0	17	85	1	5
Public Contract	0	0	0	0	6	100	0	0
Private	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TYPE OF GOV. BOARD								
Appointed	2	13	0	0	14	88	0	0
Elected	0	0	0	0	7	88	1	13
Other	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0
OVERALL	2	7.7	0	0	23	88	1	3.8
ASST. GENERAL MANAGER'S								
SIZE OF SYSTEM								
Small	0	0	0	0	3	100	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	8	100	0	0
Large	2	9.1	1	4.5	18	82	1	4.5
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP								
Public Non-Contract	2	6.7	1	3.3	26	87	1	3.3
Public Contract	0	0	0	0	3	100	0	0
Private	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TYPE OF GOV. BOARD								
Appointed	2	7.7	1	3.8	22	85	1	3.8
Elected	0	0	0	0	7	100	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OVERALL	2	6.1	1	3	29	88	1	3

Summary

During the past decade the transit industry has begun to reverse its traditional pattern of management inbreeding. The data indicates that more and more GMs are being recruited from outside the agency, as well as from outside the industry. Another matter which is closely associated with this new pattern of professional mobility is the generalist concept. Transit boards are more favorably disposed to selecting a GM with a strong management education and background over an applicant with extensive technical training and experience (in transportation).

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

According to the study done by David Vellenga ten years ago, transit managers were high school graduates (36 percent) or had some college training (31 percent). Only a few had college degrees (15 percent) and fewer still held graduate or professional degrees (6 percent). Transit management was portrayed as inbred with few managers having experience outside the field of urban transportation. This contrasted significantly with other industries which placed higher importance on college degrees for their managers. These other industries ranged between 57 and 87 percent of managers with college or graduate degrees. Vellenga concluded that in the future an increasing emphasis on college trained management personnel for transit is expected.²⁶

Three years prior to the Vellenga study, Ray Mundy (1973) found that of those managers possessing college degrees, engineering (29 percent), general business (20 percent) and accounting (13 percent) were the most frequent areas of concentration. At the graduate level, twenty-three percent of the respondents with graduate degrees were engineers. About nine percent of the graduate degree holders indicated transportation-oriented study programs. The relatively new area of regional planning accounted for fourteen percent of graduate degree transit personnel.²⁷

Education Level of Transit Managers

Table 5.1 supports the Vellenga contention of a change toward more highly educated transit management. Of the 102 general managers responding to the present survey, an average of

²⁶Op. Cit., Vellenga, p. 198.

²⁷Op. Cit., Mundy, p. 16.

TABLE 5.1
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF GMs and AGMs

	High School		Some College		College Degree		Some Graduate		Graduate Degree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
GENERAL MANAGERS										
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	3	5.5	8	15	11	20	9	16	24	44
Medium	3	12.0	2	8	5	20	5	20	10	40
Large	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	9.1	5	23	13	59
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Contract	4	6.6	6	9.8	13	21	10	16	28	46
Public Contract	2	5.4	4	11	4	11	9	24	18	49
Private	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0	1	25
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	5	6.4	7	9	16	21	15	19	35	45
Elected	2	10	3	15	2	10	4	20	9	45
Other	0	0	1	25	0	0	0	0	3	75
OVERALL	7	6.9	11	11	18	18	19	19	47	46
ASST. GENERAL MANAGERS										
SIZE OF SYSTEM										
Small	3	9.4	4	13	9	28	6	19	10	31
Medium	2	6.5	4	13	5	16	4	13	16	52
Large	2	4.7	3	7	11	26	7	16	20	47
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP										
Public Non-Contract	2	2.6	6	7.8	20	26	14	18	35	45
Public Contract	4	15	4	15	5	19	3	12	10	38
Private	1	33	1	33	0	0	0	0	1	33
TYPE OF BOARD										
Appointed	5	6.1	9	11	19	23	12	15	37	45
Elected	1	5	2	10	5	25	4	20	8	40
Other	1	25	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25
OVERALL	7	6.6	11	11	25	24	17	16	46	43

about forty-five percent had graduate and/or professional degrees. This average held across all sizes of system and across the types of system, whether public contract or public non-contract. Only four respondents were from private companies; hence no significant statistical trends can be reported. When combined with college and some graduate study, the percentage of college trained GMs increases to eighty for small and medium systems and about ninety-one for large systems.

It must be pointed out that the current surveys only examine the top two levels of transit management and thus skew the comparison with the Vellenga and Mundy studies. Equally dramatic shifts are observed in the educational level of assistant general managers. From 106 respondents, 32, 31, 43 respectively come from small, medium and large systems. Thirty-one percent of the AGMs from small systems hold graduate degrees; on the other hand, fifty-two and forty-seven percent of those at medium and large systems hold advanced degrees. Overall, eighty-eight (83%) of those AGMs responding had at least a college degree.

This sharp contrast in the educational level of transit managers from what existed only ten years ago has several explanations. The industry has undergone rapid change with higher technology, especially in those systems with rail. The diversity of these systems requires a higher and more sophisticated level of management. Also, during the late seventies there was a downturn in the economy, and transit careers that heretofore were not overly attractive to college graduates became not only attractive, but also a viable alternative to other challenging careers. Colleges and universities initiated programs in transportation, urban planning and public administration on a much broader scale. Often graduates of these programs had interned at transit systems and had become excited about the transportation industry. Several of the managers indicated that this was the path by which they entered the transit industry. Once there, rapid advancement was possible because of the advanced age distribution of existing management. These aggressive new

managers coming into a previously conservative industry seized the opportunity and quickly ascended to assistant and general manager levels. Other possible explanations are the increased level of compensation, motivational systems and the improved industry image. The salary, while still lagging behind private industry, became much more competitive. With the re-initiation of rail, the industry became a little more glamorous and had much wider appeal and exposure to those seeking college and graduate degrees both in the field of transportation and other related or unrelated areas of study.

The Impact of Education on Turnover

Upon closer examination of the data, one observes a trend that is widely held within the industry. General managers of the small and medium sized systems are relatively young with over sixty percent under the age of forty, whereas, the largest percentage of GMs at the large systems fall within the forty-five to sixty range. This observation holds true irrespective of their educational background. These statistics confirm the observations made by a number of those interviewed, and suggest some reasons for what is considered a high turnover rate. Many transit executives accept positions at the small and medium systems while awaiting an opportunity to move to the more lucrative and challenging position as general manager of a large system.

We believe that there is a direct correlation between educational level of the "new" transit manager and industry turnover. Previously, managers who had worked their way through the ranks to management positions developed a kinship with the agency. Today's manager is more a professional manager than a transit manager and is one who continually seeks new challenges and opportunities. The transit manager is becoming more like those in other industries. The focus of transit management has moved from engineering and operations to a new environment requiring skill in systems analysis, strategic planning, infor-

mation systems and public relations. A common comment offered by many of the GMs was a need to understand the political environment in which transit agencies must operate. As a result of this changing environment, the skills are more transferable; hence the manager is more mobile.

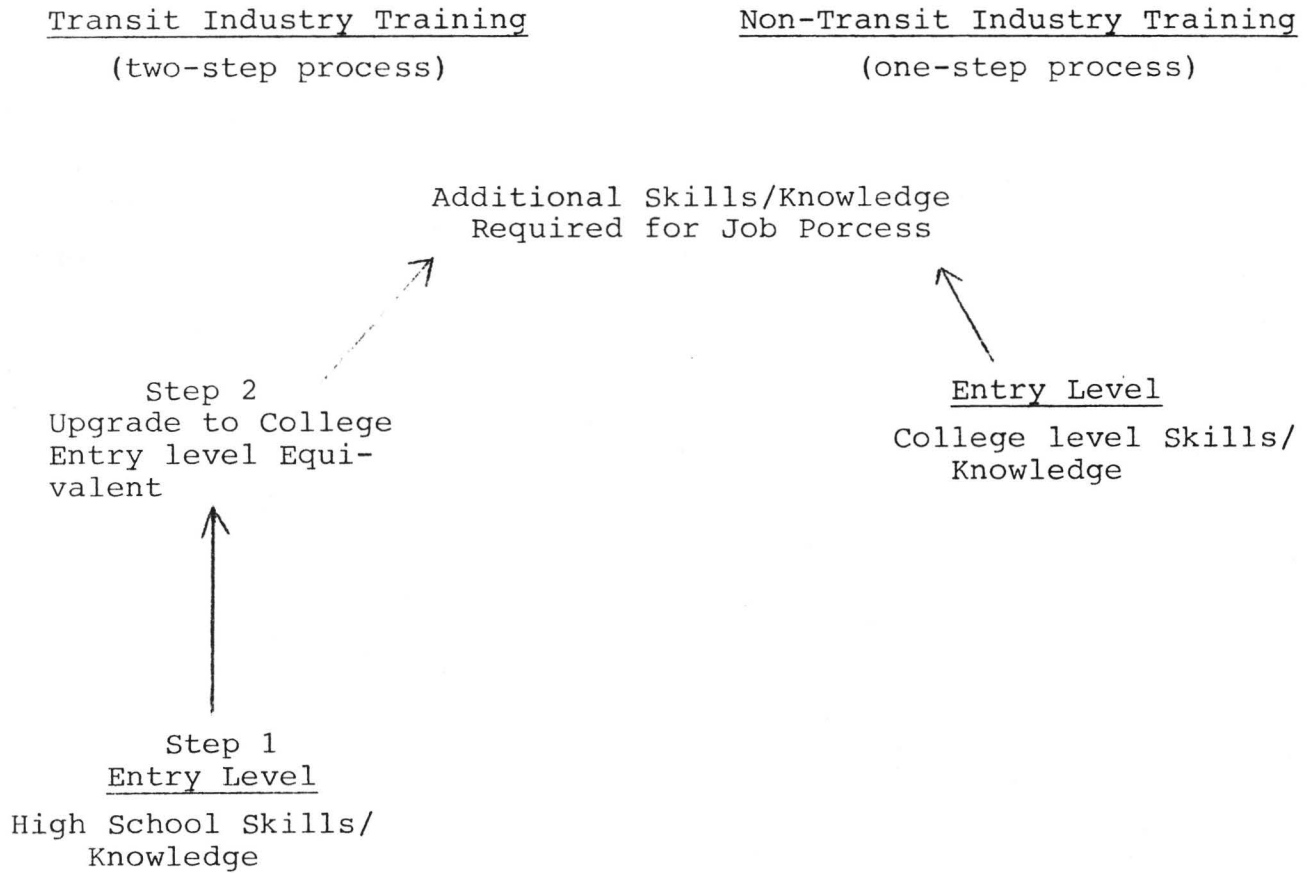
Training and Career Development

Previously the transit management career development process was considered to be a two-step process. Transit executives generally progressed through the ranks to management level while simultaneously upgrading their educational background (see Figure 5.1). Most other industries assumed a college education (entry level); thus the training and career development programs were substantially different, usually geared to some specific technique or program. First level training in the transit industry was more general, focusing on basic college level skills and general management.

A number of the early UMTA and Department of Housing and Urban Development-sponsored training courses were well received. However because of the small numbers trained, many transit managers felt that the impact would be negligible. UMTA's Managerial Training Program (Section 10) currently provides the most comprehensive vehicle for external managerial training specific to transit. Of the nearly 400 seminars attended by the 208 GM and AGM respondents during the last five years, 142 were UMTA programs. Many of the non-UMTA programs were more general in nature and not specifically oriented towards transportation. The only significant trend in the data seems to be a suggestion that GMs and AGMs favor attendance at non-UMTA sponsored courses. The survey wasn't designed to uncover secondary information that might explain this trend. One guess might be that the UMTA courses are oriented more toward middle managers.

FIGURE 5.1

TRANSIT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Source: Vellenga, p. 165.

Summary

A number of factors are responsible for the increased educational level of top transit management. Opportunity existed as a result of the advanced age distribution of transit managers during the seventies. Reinstitution of rail transit making the industry more glamorous, coupled with a downturn in the economy saw many more college trained applicants. Compensation, while still lagging behind private industry, has risen to a relatively competitive level. These factors, when combined with the challenge of being the top executive have made transit much more attractive.

Since the survey focused on the top levels of transit management, it was not able to really document training and development activities. Most of these activities are oriented towards middle managers. However, one trend suggests that top level management view non-UMTA training programs as more suitable to their needs.

CHAPTER SIX

BOARD - GM RELATIONS

A smooth, cooperative working relationship between the policy-making body and the professional staff is a sine qua non for the efficient and effective operation of a public transit system. This is a goal which is constantly being pursued. However, the lament of many general managers or public transit managers is that, generally, there is a lack of consensus and understanding regarding the proper role of the board and no precise agreement about the distinction between policy and management issues. While there is an implicit assumption that it is possible to separate policy making from administration and management, in practice, it seems the two are inextricably intertwined, and this is a major source of the controversy.

Much of the literature posits that there is a natural adversarial relationship between boards and senior staff because each tries to extend its influence and activities into the other's domain. In part this is attributable to the difficulty in defining or deciding where policy making begins and management ends and vice versa. Many general managers cite this difficulty as being the major frustration in their job and a major cause of conflict in board-staff relations.²⁸

Some scholars have made surveys of the duties and responsibilities of boards of transit authorities,²⁹ including their structure, composition, training, turnover, operating procedures

²⁸Robert A. Holmes, Edward Davis and Irvin Brown, A Comparative Analysis of the Roles, Operations and Functions of the MARTA and Dade County Boards of Directors, UMTA - GA-11-0013-84, NTIS, May 1984, and Tobe Johnson, MARTA and the Board (unpublished monograph), 1979.

²⁹Kevin H. Horn, "Transit Board Members: Who are They and What Do They Do?", Transit Journal, (November 1976): 15-32.

and relationship to management.³⁰ Concerning the latter, board members generally understood the delineation of policy making and administrative areas, but individual board members varied in their interpretation of policy and implementation activities. Consequently, they became involved on a daily basis with operating affairs, and viewed the general manager as obstructing their efforts to get more information and have closer contact with staff. One scholar notes that CEOs use various strategies to maintain "control" over their agency and keep the board "impotent."³¹

Policy Making-Management Responsibility

A major part of this research effort involved on-site interviews with 124 board members, general managers and assistant general managers of thirty large, medium and small transit systems. The questionnaires were designed, in part, to secure their views on the general question of role definition and levels of responsibility for the performance of specific organizational functions. Below we shall analyze the data derived from the interviews.

Are Policy Roles of Board and Management Responsibility of the GM Clearly Defined?

	<u>General Managers</u> (GM)	<u>Assistant GMs</u> (AGM)	<u>Board</u>
Yes	73% (22)	59% (26)	74% (28)
No	27% (8)	41% (18)	26% (10)

The data show a comparable consensus between general managers (73%) and board (74%) with the assistant general managers

³⁰Kevin H. Horn, "Transit Boards, Part Two: How Do They Work?", Transit Journal, (July-August 1977): 51-69.

³¹Milton C. Lauenstein, "Preserving the Importance of the Board", Harvard Business Review, (July-August 1977): 36-46.

showing less certainty (59%). However, there was generally no written document to clearly define or outline who was responsible for what! Among the frequent comments made were "There is a lot of overlap and the board is involved extensively in policy development in most areas and in management responsibilities"; "Some changes in the parameter of board activities have occurred with changes in the membership on the board." While many respondents doubted if the policy-management distinction could realistically ever be clearly defined, several systems had recently hired consultants to "spell out" the areas of responsibility for the board and staff. Such studies were recommended by the staff who believed the board made too many decisions. In general, most felt things were working well and the general managers often consult key board members so they will "take ownership" for decisions and cause less tension.

Are There Major Areas of Disagreement Among Groups
on Roles, Functions or Responsibilities?

	<u>General Managers</u>	<u>Assistant GMs</u>	<u>Board</u>
Yes	21% (6)	37% (16)	5% (2)
No	79% (22)	63% (27)	95% (35)

Rather surprisingly, the Board members were almost unanimous in their view that the groups were in harmony concerning their responsibilities. However, the response did not mean there was satisfaction. An oft repeated comment was that the board is so busy that it "allows the staff to run the system." The newer the system, the greater the involvement of the board. Respondents agreed that there were some misunderstandings, but no major differences. Among areas of dispute were planning, collective bargaining, route planning, and legal services. Many of the AGMs asserted that functions have been decided on a case by case basis.

Are There Major Limitations/Constraints
on the GM's Authority?

	<u>General Manager</u>	<u>Assistant GM</u>	<u>Board</u>
Yes	44% (12)	58% (26)	56% (20)
No	56% (15)	42% (19)	44% (16)

This data shows considerable division among the three groups. The responses would seem to indicate that an effort by the board to limit the GMs' management/administrative prerogatives would provoke controversy or conflict, but such was not the case. The major restrictions were provided in the by-laws or resolutions adopted by the board -- usually at the suggestion or with the concurrence of the GM. It involved such matters as limits on expenditures and contracting authority, staff size, policy setting that might have external manifestations, and salary adjustments. As funds become more scarce or where there are political implications, the board tends to restrict management's authority. Comments such as the following tend to substantiate this observation: "Constraints are not to the point where I (the GM) can't perform" and "There are some [constraints], but not overly significant."

Responsibility for Functions

In an effort to determine board and staff perceptions of their primary and shared responsibilities for functions/operations of the agency, the respondents were asked to indicate the level of responsibilities for six major functions: Policy making, budget, planning, staff hiring and termination, intergovernmental relations, and collective bargaining.

Policy Making

As expected, there was overwhelming agreement that the board had the greatest role in policy making. (Table 6.1) The data show that 93 percent (86% most important) of the GMs, 100 percent (77% most important) of the AGMs and 100 percent (95% most important) of the board members believed the board had either the most important or important responsibility for policy making. However, the source of conflict is revealed by the findings that 81 percent (42% most important) of the GMs, 95 percent (38% most important) of the AGMs, and 95 percent (24% most important) of the board members said the GM had the major role. The fact that almost half of the GMs (42%) saw themselves as having the most important policy-making role, compared to 24 percent of the board, opens the way for conflict.

TABLE 6.1

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTION: POLICY MAKING

Responsibility for Function	Type of Respondent					
	General Manager		Asst. General Manager		Board	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Board						
Most Important	25	86	33	77	35	95
Important	2	7	10	23	2	5
Little Responsibility	2	7	0		0	
No Responsibility	0		0		0	
GMs						
Most Important	14	42	16	38	8	24
Important	13	39	24	57	24	71
Little Responsibility	3	9	1	2	0	
No Responsibility	3	9	1	2	0	
AGMs						
Most Important	4	15	4	9	2	7
Important	14	52	23	53	10	34
Little Responsibility	9	33	14	33	15	52
No Responsibility	0		2	5	2	7

Budget

The data reveal a recognition by the respondents that the budgeting process is one of collective input and decision-making. (Table 6.2) The board and the GM attribute a significant role to the AGM in the preparation of the budget. Generally, this revealed a sense of shared responsibility based on the AGMs for finance preparation of the budget, the GM's recommendation/input in this process and the board's role in adopting a budget. An interesting finding is that the AGMs attribute a greater importance to their role than do the board members or GMs.

TABLE 6.2

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTION: BUDGET

Responsibility for Function	Type of Respondent					
	General Manager		Asst. General Manager		Board	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Board						
Most Important	14	48	15	35	21	62
Important	13	45	21	49	11	32
Little Responsibility	2	7	7	16	2	6
No Responsibility	0		0		0	
GMs						
Most Important	22	73	26	60	23	66
Important	8	27	13	30	12	34
Little Responsibility	0	0	3	7	0	
No Responsibility	0	1	1	2	0	
AGMs						
Most Important	9	33	18	41	4	14
Important	14	52	19	43	13	45
Little Responsibility	4	15	6	14	12	41
No Responsibility	0	0	1	2	0	

Planning

Rather surprisingly the board members attributed to themselves the greatest responsibility for this task (36% most important), and attributed considerably less responsibility to GMs (18%) and AGMs (10%). Table 6.3 Consequently, from this perspective, it would appear that the seeds of discord are once again present. While the GMs are apparently more deferential to the board in this area, the AGMs believe the board should be much less involved in this issue (19% most important) with the GM (57%) and AGMs (45%) having the primary roles.

TABLE 6.3

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTION: PLANNING

Responsibility for Function	Type of Respondent					
	General Manager		Asst. General Manager		Board	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Board						
Most Important	5	18	4	10	12	36
Important	10	36	10	24	16	48
Little Responsibility	10	36	24	59	5	15
No Responsibility	3	11	3	7	0	
GMs						
Most Important	16	53	24	57	19	56
Important	14	47	16	38	14	41
Little Responsibility	0		2	5	1	3
No Responsibility	0		0		0	
AGMs						
Most Important	16	57	19	45	5	19
Important	11	39	18	53	15	58
Little Responsibility	1	4	4	10	5	19
No Responsibility	0		1	2	1	4

Staff Hiring and Termination

The board response is very interesting in that neither they nor the top management staff is said to have any significant responsibility in this area! (Table 6.4) Perhaps while it is clear that they realize that the GM is the only staff person hired or fired by them, the board respondents gave a composite rating (most important and important) of 12 percent to the GM and 7 percent to the AGMs! Perhaps this is attributable to their assumption that the local supervisors or department heads make these decisions. The GM and AGM respondents apparently interpreted the question much differently; for their answers show a high level of responsibility for all three groups. Rather surprisingly, the GMs ranked the board as having the greatest responsibility (60% most important) while the AGMs gave the board the lowest rating (15% most important) for the performance of this task. Also the GMs rated the AGMs the least important while the AGMs rated themselves the highest (58% most important) compared to the other two actors (GMs - 39% and board - 15%)!

TABLE 6.4
RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTION: STAFF HIRING AND TERMINATION

Responsibility for Function	Type of Respondent					
	General Manager		Asst. General Manager		Board	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Board						
Most Important	1	4	0		1	3
Important	2	8	3	7	6	19
Little Responsibility	11	41	14	34	15	47
No Responsibility	13	48	24	59	10	31
GM						
Most Important	17	57	15	36	21	60
Important	10	33	31	50	13	37
Little Responsibility	2	7	4	10	1	3
No Responsibility	1	3	2	4	0	
AGMs						
Most Important	11	39	25	58	4	15
Important	10	36	13	30	13	48
Little Responsibility	6	21	4	9	8	30
No Responsibility	1	4	1	3	2	7

Intergovernmental Relations

While the responsibility for maintaining liaison/interaction with the city, state and federal officials on behalf of the agency was viewed by the board as their major responsibility, the GM sample ranked the AGM and themselves above the board (72% and 60% to 51% - most important). (Table 6.5) However, a frequent comment made was that the board should increase its activities in this area. The AGM responses indicate their belief that this area is not being handled sufficiently by any of the three groups, as the highest rating for most important is 11 percent for the board and GM and 14 percent for the AGMs. In short, they believe the intergovernmental relations functions are being neglected.

TABLE 6.5

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTION: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Responsibility for Function	Type of Respondent					
	General Manager		Asst. General Manager		Board	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Board						
Most Important	16	55	20	47	23	72
Important	9	31	17	40	8	25
Little Responsibility	3	10	5	12	1	3
No Responsibility	1	4	1	2	0	
GMs						
Most Important	18	60	31	72	18	51
Important	11	37	12	28	13	37
Little Responsibility	1	3	0		4	11
No Responsibility	0		0		0	
AGMs						
Most Important	3	11	6	14	3	11
Important	14	50	24	55	13	48
Little Responsibility	9	32	12	27	7	26
No Responsibility	2	7	2	5	4	15

Collective Bargaining

This was another area where a consensus existed in which all groups played significant roles. (Table 6.6) However, rather surprisingly 77 percent of the board members said that GMs had little or no responsibility in this area; the AGM had an important or very important role (51%), and the board had the greatest responsibility - 56 percent (most important or important). The GMs agreed with the significant role of the board (82% most important) probably because it set general policy and provided a framework for the collective bargaining process. However, the AGMs saw their role as being the greatest (53% most important) compared to 41 percent for the board and 31 percent for the GM. Despite this division it does not appear that this has caused any major conflicts among the parties.

TABLE 6.6

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTION: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Responsibility for Function	Type of Respondent					
	General Manager		Asst. General Manager		Board	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Board						
Most Important	2	8	6	14	8	25
Important	4	15	16	37	10	31
Little Responsibility	12	46	15	35	6	19
No Responsibility	8	31	6	14	8	25
GMs						
Most Important	20	71	29	67	28	82
Important	7	25	13	30	6	18
Little Responsibility	0		1	2	0	
No Responsibility	1	4	0		0	
AGMs						
Most Important	8	31	23	53	11	41
Important	17	65	12	28	8	30
Little Responsibility	0		5	12	6	22
No Responsibility	1	4	3	7	2	7

Summary

Generally, the policy makers and professional staff functioned in a cooperative manner in the performance of the above discussed roles. This was particularly the case where a strong committee structure existed in such areas as Budget/Finance, Program Development/Planning, Human Relations/Staff, etc. It was also the case that board members in such agencies were particularly active in the decision-making process. The view was expressed that the "misunderstandings" about roles have to be "flushed out" over time and cannot occur overnight. One method of expediting the resolution of this situation has been the utilization of outside consultants to outline the functions that should be performed by the board, GM and AGMs. It would appear that the holding of an annual retreat at which such matters would be addressed is critical to ensuring that an agreement or consensus is maintained as new board members and senior staff come to the agency.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Most of the indicators which have been used in the past to assess the performance of the GM are measures which were developed to assess the productivity of the transit agency as a whole. This is an entirely logical starting point or approach because the GM is in most cases the chief executive officer of the agency. The performance level of the transit property is a reflection of the performance level of the GM. However, in spite of the tremendous overlap, there is a distinction between organizational and individual performance assessment. The positive or negative assessment of the performance of a transit agency may be a product of many internal and external factors which may be outside of the GM's control, i.e., board decisions, civil service regulations and budget constraints. Consequently, if the transit industry hopes to better understand the nature of the position of the GM, future efforts must also be directed towards the development of sound performance indicators which are specifically geared to the position.

Lacking the capability referred to in the preceding paragraph, this chapter limits its discussion to several areas of consideration commonly associated with GM and organizational performance: organizational structure, professional competencies and performance evaluation procedures.

Organizational Structure and Performance

One of the more critical factors which impacts on the performance of the GM as well as the performance of the organization as a whole is organizational structure. In the latter part of the seventies Gordon Fielding and his associates studied the relationship between structural and performance variables in sixteen public transit organizations in California. Fielding found that:

Organization size, span of control, centralization, and length of managerial tenure were all associated with higher level of performance. Specialization and formalization were found to be associated with lower levels of performance on certain efficiency and effectiveness indicators.³²

With respect to selection of an appropriate organizational structure, Fielding further concludes:

One important concept that is partly rejected by the results is that there is no one best way to organize transit organizations: There are instead several, depending on the organizational context.³³

Most of the performance variables to which Fielding refers are addressed elsewhere in this study. The study will here consider span of management and organizational control.

Span of Management

Span of management (or span of control) refers to the number of persons a manager directly manages. However, when the concept is viewed from an analytical perspective, the principal consideration is the number of persons a manager can effectively manage. Classical organizational theory placed limits on the span (three to five persons), because managers have limited amounts of knowledge, energy, time, etc.³⁴ On the other hand, contemporary theory and practice view span of management as a contingency relationship. Many factors determine the number of persons that a manager can effectively manage. Some of these are capability and skill of the manager and of the persons managed, complexity of the work supervised, stability of the organization, and geographic proximity of subordinates.³⁵

³²Gordon Fielding, et al., "Organization Theory and the Structure and Performance of Transit Agencies." Transportation Research Record 761, 1980, p. 19.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Keith Davis, Human Behavior at Work: Organizational Behavior, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1977), p. 204.

³⁵Ibid., p. 205.

GMs and AGMs in select systems were asked to specify the number of persons that report directly to them. Responses were grouped into one of five categories by numbers of subordinates: 1-3; 4-7; 8-10; 11-15; or 15 or more (Table 7.1). GMs and AGMs were not asked to distinguish line, staff, and clerical subordinates. The total number of line and key staff subordinates does to a large extent reflect a GM's or AGM's span of management. However, the number of clerical personnel reporting to him/her is less of a factor unless this number exceeds one or two, i.e., secretary and/or administrative assistant. In these instances he/she must devote a significant portion of his/her time to supervising clerical functions. It can therefore be assumed that clerical subordinates are also included in the data provided in this table.

TABLE 7.1

NUMBER OF SUBORDINATES REPORTING TO GM AND AGM

	1-3		4-7		8-10		11-15		15 or more	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
General Manager										
Small	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	1	10	8	80	1	10	0	0	0	0
Large	0	0	2	20	3	30	5	50	0	0
OVERALL	6	20	15	50	4	13.3	5	16.7	0	0
Assistant GM										
Small	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	3	30	7	70	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	2	20	4	40	2	20	1	10	1	10
OVERALL	11	36.7	15	50	2	6.7	1	3.3	1	3.3

The data reflects a positive correlation between the number of persons reporting directly to the GM and system size. Almost all the GMs in small and medium systems have seven or less subordinates (small 100%; and medium 90%), while, only 20 percent of the GMs in large systems supervise as few as seven or less persons. Fifty percent of these GMs (large systems) supervise eleven to fifteen persons. In the course of interviews, a number of the GMs in large systems expressed concern about the size of their span of management. One of the GMs stated that he is in the process of reducing the number of persons that he directly supervises because he feels that his management style does not accommodate as wide a span as that of his predecessor.

An interesting observation is made when comparing the number of persons supervised by GMs and AGMs. The general notion in organization theory is that the span of management becomes narrower at higher levels within the organization hierarchy. However, the data indicates that AGMs tend to have a narrower span of management than GMs. This trend might be a direct result of the observation made in the preceding paragraph. In instances where the top level of management exercises a broad span of control, the span of the second level of management is correspondingly narrower.

Organizational Control

One of the questions which appeared on the survey instrument addressed the issue of organizational structure and the ability of the GM to exercise control: Does the present organizational structure facilitate or hinder the extent to which the GM is able to exercise control over the agency? Due to the fact that organizational performance is commonly considered to be reflective of the GM's performance, the consideration of factors which hinder or facilitate the ability of the GM to exercise control is pertinent to the discussion. The following is a summary of responses to this question by type of respondent:

	General Manager		Assistant GM		Board		Overall	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Facilitate	19	73	25	64	32	86	76	75
Hinder	7	27	14	36	5	14	26	25

Three-fourths of the respondents felt that the present organizational structure did facilitate the GM's control. Generally, respondents were satisfied with the present organizational structure. In a number of instances where the GM experienced problems in exercising control, respondents stated that these problems were associated with certain individuals rather than the organizational structure. Additionally, a number of respondents felt that the GM's control was strained when dealing with some issues (i.e., labor relations, implementation of new programs and coordination between units) but the structure could work if given a chance.

Board members (86%) were most satisfied with the present structure, and GMs were least satisfied (64%). This is understandable because board members are less intimately involved with or concerned about problems of administrative control unless circumstances elevate the problem to their attention. The fact that AGMs were less satisfied than GMs (73%) suggests that the former have a vested interest in efforts to enhance central control. This is especially true in systems where there are two or more AGMs, and occasionally problems arise in relating to organizational units outside their supervision.

When considering the responses to this question by the size of the system, one noticeable pattern does emerge. This is that the number of respondents who believe that the present organizational structure facilitates GM control decreases as the size of the system increases. This too, is understandable

	Small		Medium		Large		Overall	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Facilitate	34	88	21	70	20	63	76	75
Hinder	5	13	9	30	12	38	26	25

because of the complexity and frustrations associated with administration in larger agencies. Some of the smaller systems appear to be operating well, void of having a current organization chart. Respondents from several small and medium systems stated that the actual operation of the agency bears little resemblance to what appears on the formal organization chart.

Professional Competencies

The development of sound performance measures for the position of the GM would involve an extensive undertaking in and of itself; therefore, it is beyond the scope of this study. One of the tasks required of such an undertaking would involve the analysis of the various skills or competencies required of this position. This task is complicated because of what has been previously referred to as the "evolving concept of the general manager." The nature of this position has undergone considerable transition over the last few decades. Consequently, the skills and competencies required of persons occupying this position have also changed. This study here considers the contemporary importance of three categories of competencies: (1) managerial; (2) technical; and (3) human relations.

Managerial Competencies

Respondents were asked to select the two most important managerial competencies of the following seven: (1) finance; (2) marketing; (3) determining resource priorities; (4) planning; (5) insurance; (6) personnel; and (7) labor relations. Fifty-seven percent of the responses were distributed between two competencies, personnel and labor relations. (Table 7.2) This suggests that a majority of respondents were of the opinion that employee related managerial skills were the most essential to the position of GM. Of the remaining non-employee related competencies, planning was considered the most important (26%). Contrary to earlier assumptions, the members of the research team are at a loss in explaining why so few respondents selected "determining resource priorities" and "finance." One of the GMS interviewed indicated that the former of these two competencies might have been better termed "priority setting".

TABLE 7.2

TWO MOST IMPORTANT MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES

	By Type of Respondent							
	GM		AGM		BOARD		OVERALL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Finance	0	0	4	9	0	0	4	4
Marketing	1	3.5	3	7	0	0	4	4
Determining Resource Priorities	1	3.5	3	7	3	9	7	7
Planning	8	29	9	21	11	31	28	26
Insurance	0	0	0	0	3	9	3	3
Personnel	6	21	9	21	14	49	29	27
Lator Relations	12	43	15	35	4	11	31	29

Technical Competencies

The persons interviewed were least enthusiastic about selecting (from the three categories of competencies) what they considered to be the two most important technical competencies. (Table 7.3) This was primarily because they considered the managerial and human relations competencies to be more critical to the position of general manager. Respondents indicated that a GM would be more likely to delegate the executive responsibility for the functions in this category, than would be the case with the other two categories. The largest number of responses converged under "traffic management" (42%); followed by "fare determination" (19%).

TABLE 7.3

TWO MOST IMPORTANT TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES FOR GM

By Type of Respondent

	GM		AGM		OVERALL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Traffic Mgmt.	13	50	14	37	27	42
Fare Determination	3	12	9	24	12	19
Claims Settlement	0	0	3	7	3	4
Scheduling	4	15	4	11	8	13
Research & Devlpmt.	3	12	6	16	9	14
Real Estate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maintenance	3	12	2	5	5	8

* No Board Responses to this Question.

Human Relations Competencies

Organizations are social systems. If one wishes to manage a public or private agency effectively he/she must have a working knowledge of human dynamics. Of the three sets of competencies, respondents tended to view those listed under this category more enthusiastically. In many instances they were hesitant in selecting only two because they considered all the competencies to be critical to the position of GM. (Table 7.4) This is probably the reason why 35 percent of the respondents selected the most comprehensive option, people skills. The only significant observation which can be made in attempting to assess the comparative importance of the other more specific options is that 29 percent of the respondents selected either "conflict resolution" or "abilities as a negotiator." This suggests that a GM spends a large portion of his time dealing with, and representing competing sides over conflicting issues.

TABLE 7.4

TWO MOST IMPORTANT HUMAN RELATIONS COMPETENCIES

By Type of Respondent

	GM		AGM		BOARD		OVERALL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Abilities as a Negotiator	2	6	4	9	2	6	8	8
Motivate Subordinates	6	20	5	11	7	18	18	16
Conflict Resolution	5	17	13	29	6	16	24	21
Establish Information Network	8	27	6	13	5	13	19	17
People Skills	9	30	16	36	15	39	40	35
Other	0	0	1	2	3	8	4	4

Performance Evaluation Procedures

A central focus of any comprehensive effort to enhance the productivity of a public or private agency is the development of a substantive quantitative and qualitative performance evaluation system. This point has been increasingly emphasized in the public sector since the early 1970s. Contemporary fiscal, political and societal realities has encouraged policy makers to demand that administrators justify the continued existence of their respective agencies. This is particularly true in the case of high-dollar public services such as mass transit.

The issue which is addressed in this section are the procedures used to evaluate the performance of GMs. Persons interviewed at the thirty select systems were asked two questions relative to this issue: (1) What method/tools are used to evaluate the GM's performance/management effectiveness? and (2) How frequently is the GM evaluated? The interesting observation often made was that there was conflict in the responses given by the GM, AGM and board members from the same system. The implications were not too significant when the AGM's response conflicted with that of the GM and/or board member. In some cases AGMs simply did not know the answer to either of these questions. However, there is possible cause for concern when there is conflict between the responses given by the GM and board member. This may suggest the absence of clear understanding between the GM and his/her superiors about how and when the former's performance is to be assessed.

In cases where there was conflict in responses to either of these two questions the person conducting the interview used his discretion in determining which practices were followed at the respective system. The summary of responses for the thirty select systems are provided below.

What method/tools are used to evaluate
the GM's performance/management effectiveness?

Standard Form		Interviews		Consultant Appraisals		All of the Above		Other	
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
6	20	6	20	1	3.4	2	6.6	15	50

Fifty percent of the systems converged in the "others" category. Several factors contributed to such a large portion falling into this category. The predominant of which was the combination of procedures used by systems with contract firms. In most of these cases the board evaluates the contract as a whole rather than just the GM. The procedures for evaluating the contract vary significantly, depending on which firm has the contract and what type of services are provided under the contract.

How frequently is the GM evaluated?

Quarterly	Semi-Annually	Annually	Bi-Annually	Other					
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	3	0	0	20	67	3	10	6	20

The respondents from eighty percent of the systems stated that the GMs performance was evaluated quarterly, semi-annually, annually or bi-annually. However, in a number of these cases the evaluation does not occur in context of a formal procedure. Several of these systems follow a formal procedure but the evaluation is done in an open narrative form void of utilizing previously established criteria. Three of the GMs falling in the "others" category, simply stated that their performance was evaluated on a "daily basis".

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter speak to the complexity of the issues associated with efforts to improve and/or evaluate GM and organizational performance. Organization size, span of control, centralization, organizational control, and formalization are all factors which impact upon the performance of the GM, as well as the agency as a whole. Surprisingly, although many respondents expressed concern about certain aspects of agency operation, these concerns were generally not considered to be related to the structure of the organization. On one hand, the preceding two sentences suggest a possible conflict between organizational theory and practice. On the other hand, it suggests that many transit officials fail to recognize the relationship between formal and informal organization structure and organizational performance. In the opinion of the research team, many of the problems which were identified could be partially addressed, if modifications were made in the organizational structure. However, any such changes or refinements should be carefully studied and planned prior to implementation. Reorganization for the sake of reorganization often results in more serious problems than the reorganization was meant to solve.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Between July 15 and 18, 1984, sixty-eight general managers from around the country gathered together in Irving, Texas to attend APTA's fourth General Managers' Seminar. The agenda was built around both the personal and professional needs of transit GMs. The topics which were addressed ranged from "Organization Structure and Management Culture" to "What You Need to Know About Stress, Nutrition, Diet, and Exercise."³⁶ Many of these topics parallel the issues addressed in this study. This suggests that GMs themselves have recognized the fact that far too few resources have been devoted to examining the position of GM and the environment in which incumbents operate. As well, they are aware that GMs must constitute the nucleus of this effort. It is hoped that this profile and analysis will contribute to their efforts.

The issues associated with executive selection, training, development, compensation and promotion have long been addressed in the literature. However, the public sector in particular has only recently begun to develop comprehensive approaches and programs to address these issues and concerns as they relate to senior level executives. The situation in which the transit industry finds itself is not unlike that of the federal government. The Task Force on Personnel and Civil Service of the Hoover Commission addressed the need for a separate personnel system for the higher level civil servant in 1935. It was not until the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 that the Senior Executive Service was established. Although the provisions of the legislation only apply to a limited number of "super-grade" positions (GS 16-18) within the federal service, it does represent a significant attempt to begin to address

³⁶"General Managers Examine Needs," Passenger Transport, 30 July 1984, p. 5.

priorities such as those identified by Richard M. Paget in an address to the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the Public Personnel Association in 1957 entitled "Strengthening the Federal Career Executive Service".

1. Selection processes must be improved
2. Compensation scales must be kept realistic and competitive
3. Executive training and development must be stimulated
4. Opportunities for broader experience must be provided for federal administrators
5. Career opportunities carrying top-level responsibilities must not be limited arbitrarily by an effort to keep the civil servant out of politics
6. Pride in the federal service and concomitant recognition of status must be developed as a foundation for a program to strengthen career top management in our government³⁷

Most of these same concerns have been voiced with respect to transit senior executives. The transit industry can greatly benefit from lessons which have been learned in other segments of the public and private sectors as it attempts to better understand the nature of the position of the general manager.

One of the key issues which this study considers is GM turnover. When this topic is viewed just from the perspective of the transit industry, there appears to be a cause for concern. However, when it is considered in the broader context of career patterns exhibited by public and private sector executives, the high turnover rate (GM and AGM) which this study documents might constitute a positive rather than a negative attribute of the transit industry. On one hand, high executive turnover suggests organizational instability and employee dissatisfaction; and on the other hand, it suggests professional mobility and growth, as well as the transference of skills and knowledge from one organization to another. The architects of the legislation which

³⁷Richard M. Pagel, "Strengthening the Federal Career Executive," Public Administration Review 17 (Spring 1957): 92-93.

established the federal Senior Executive Service recognized that professional mobility must be an essential component of a personnel system for higher level executives. As transit management becomes less inbred it must also accept this reality.

This study also documents that transit management has become far less inbred than it was a decade ago when Ray Mundy and David Vellenga developed their profiles. As recent as a decade ago, most GMs had spent their entire professional careers in one organization. This is no longer the case. Forty-two percent of the GMs responding to this study's survey had been with the agency for less than five years and sixty-nine percent had a tenure of less than ten years.

Another matter which is closely associated with professional mobility and management inbreeding is the generalist versus specialist controversy. Transit boards are more favorably disposed to selecting a GM with a strong general management education and background over an applicant with extensive technical training and experience, or give equal weight to both types of background. Again, this represents a significant departure from past selection practices which gave preference to the latter. To the contrary, most GMs and board members still consider technical training and experience to be predominant criteria in the selection of an AGM.

Another recent change in the transit industry is the modest but significant penetration of minorities and women into the top two levels of management within transit agencies. Traditionally there had been few instances in which minorities or women occupied the AGM position in transit agencies and none in which they occupied the GM's position. Four percent of the 102 GMs and, 12 percent of the 106 AGMs responding to this study's survey were non-white. Three percent of the GM respondents and eight percent of the AGM respondents were women. The transit industry is not unlike other segments of our society which had previously only admitted white males. The fact that 1984 witnessed the first serious black candidate for the presidency and the first female nominee for the vice-presidency by a major party suggests

something about the possible selection of minorities and women for other more minor positions of chief executive officer in the future.

GMs and AGMs are considerably younger today than they were a decade ago. According to the profile done by Mundy in 1973, the average age for GMs was fifty-three and the average age for AGMs was fifty-two. The average age for GMs and AGMs responding to this study's survey was forty-five. The transit industry is no longer over populated with senior aged GMs and AGMs over the age of fifty-five. During the last decade, the industry has recruited younger middle managers and prepared them to eventually fill these positions.

Salaries, while still lagging behind private industry, have risen to a very competitive level when compared to that of other senior executives in the public sector, especially in the case of the larger systems. The average salary for GMs responding to the survey was \$56,000, and \$53,000 for AGMs. Several of the GMs in the larger systems have been successful in negotiating salary packages in excess of \$100,000. In many cases the transit GM is the highest paid local official. This represents a significant improvement when considering the fact that salary ceilings for federal General Schedule (GS) executives is \$68,700.

In addition to having broader professional backgrounds, transit executives possess far more extensive academic exposure than they did just eight years ago when Vellenga developed his profile. Only six percent of the transit managers who participated in his survey held graduate and professional degrees, while, forty-six percent of the GMs and forty-three percent of the AGMs responding to this study's survey held these credentials. In addition to formal academic preparation, many of these respondents participated regularly in UMTA-sponsored and non-UMTA-sponsored training programs and career development seminars. These programs and seminars address both transit-related and non transit-related topics.

This study has also attempted to address the environment in which transit GMs operate. One of the most important factors

which shape this environment is the GM's relationship with the agency's governing board. In the case of transit agencies, as well as other types of public and private enterprises, there is commonly assumed to be a natural adversarial relationship between boards and senior staff because each tries to extend its influence and activities into the other's domain. In part, this is attributable to the difficulty in defining where the policy making roles of the board begin and where management responsibilities of the senior staff ends and vice versa. Approximately one-third of the persons interviewed either directly or indirectly referred to this type of conflict as a major cause of frustration in board-staff relations. In a number of instances substantive steps are being taken to address this problem. Many other agencies fail to acknowledge the existence of the problem or accept it as the nature of board-staff relations.

When the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the board and senior staff are more clearly defined, those of the GM are also defined. By defining the responsibilities of those persons directly superior and subordinate to the GM, the foundation is established to address another serious void within the transit industry. This is the formulation of sound qualitative and quantitative indicators for assessing the performance of the GM. In recent years UMTA has funded a number of research efforts which have endeavored to develop performance indicators for various aspects of mass transit service delivery. Most of these indicators lend themselves more to assessing organizational performance, as opposed to individual performance.

A final observation which this study makes is that no transit related agency or organization collects data on transit executives on a periodic and systematic basis. One UMTA official (John Paul Jones), prior to his retirement, was engaged in a modest but valuable data collection effort. As well, APTA periodically collects some information on transit executives; however, this data is only collected from its member agencies and is not available for general distribution. It is hoped that the findings of this study encourage UMTA not only to resume but also to expand its previous data collection activities.

The preceding findings and conclusions provide the basis for this study's major policy recommendations:

1. Professional Development and collaboration - Agencies such as UMTA and organizations such as APTA, are encouraged to sponsor or facilitate more career development seminars, training programs, and annual meetings specifically intended for general managers.
2. Performance Measurement - Efforts should be directed towards the development of performance indicators which are designed to assess the individual performance of general managers. These indicators would complement the organizational performance measures presently used to assess the productivity of general managers.
3. Professional Mobility - The industry should develop a more positive attitude about the professional mobility exhibited by transit managers. Contrary to many years of management inbreeding, the high turnover rate which is presently pervasive of the industry provided for the transference of knowledge and skills from one transit or non-transit agency to another.
4. Minority and Women Transit Executives - The transit industry should pursue more aggressive efforts designed to increase the number of minority and women general managers and assistant general managers.
5. Board-Staff Relations - In many transit agencies, the board, the general manager and the senior staff need to better define their respective roles, functions and responsibilities.
6. Data Base on Transit Executives - UMTA should resume and expand its data collection efforts in the form of a national data base on transit executives.



Atlanta University

223 Chestnut Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30314
(404) 681-0251

Dear Transit Executive:

The enclosed questionnaire is being administered as part of an Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) study designed to develop a national profile on transit general managers and deputy and/or assistant general managers. Your response to these questions will assist us greatly in our understanding of the backgrounds and positions of transit managers.

Although the focus of this research is on the position of general manager, (chief executive official of the agency), we are also asking deputy and/or assistant general managers to complete a questionnaire. Our desire is to include all individuals who are in the two top levels of management; so if there are more than one deputy or assistant general manager, each is asked to fill out the questionnaire.

Your individual answers will not be shown to anyone other than myself and the other two members of the research team, Dr. Edward Davis and Robert Holmes. Only summary data will be made available and the name of specific transit properties will not be indicated. Please do not sign your name on the questionnaire. The degree to which this research will be valuable hinges on the honesty with which you answer the questions.

General Managers are asked to ensure the dissemination of questionnaires. If we have not enclosed a sufficient number of questionnaires, please feel free to have additional copies made. After the questionnaire has been completed, the individual filling it out is asked to return it to:

Dr. Irvin Brown
Public Administration Department
Atlanta University
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

We would sincerely like to thank you for the cooperation given us on behalf of this research. If you have any questions concerning the questionnaire, please call me at (404) 681-0251, ext. 261.

Sincerely yours,

Irvin Brown
Project Director



QUESTIONNAIRE: TRANSIT EXECUTIVES

I. Position

1. General Manager 2. Deputy or Assistant General Manager

II. Personal

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Age | 2. Sex | 3. Salary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Below 35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Male | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Below \$20,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 35-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Female | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. \$20,000 - 24,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 40-44 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. \$25,000 - 29,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 45-49 | 4. Race | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. \$30,000 - 34,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 50-54 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. \$35,000 - 39,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. 55-59 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. White | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. \$40,000 - 44,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. 60 and above | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Black | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. \$45,000 - 49,999 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. \$50,000 - 59,999 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. \$60,000 - 69,999 |
| | (Specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. \$70,000 and above |

5. Education

1. High school diploma
 2. Some college, years completed _____
 3. College degree, major area _____
 4. Some graduate study _____
 5. Graduate degree, major area _____

6. List any professional certifications which you have.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

7. List all training or career seminars attended in last 5 years.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

8. How long have you been in your present position?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. less than 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 11-15 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 2-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 15 years or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 6-10 years | |

9. How long have you been employed by this transit system?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. less than 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 11-15 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 2-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 15 years or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 6-10 years | |

10. Please list your four (4) most recent positions held and years employed in each, beginning with the one prior to your present position.

(check one)

Job Title Tenure/years Public or Private

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

III. Transit System Information

1. Name of System: _____

2. Age of System

- 1. less than 10 years
- 2. 10-19 years
- 3. 20-29 years
- 4. 30 years or older

3. Size of System

- 1. Small (50-149 vehicles)
- 2. Medium (150-499 vehicles)
- 3. Large (500 or more vehicles)

4. How is your governing board selected?

- 1. Appointed
- 2. Elected
- 3. Other (explain)

IV. Recruitment & Selection

5. What is the primary method used by the board in the selection of a General Manager?

- 1. Promotion from within agency
- 2. Recruitment from outside
- 3. Other (explain) _____

6. In appointment of the GM, which factor is most important concerning the background/training of the individual?

- 1. Technical education and experience
- 2. General management education and background
- 3. About equal weight to each

7. Which best characterizes the Board/GM's selection of Deputy/Assistant GM?

- 1. Recruitment from outside the agency
- 2. Promotion from lower level within the agency

8. In selection of the AGM, which factor is most important concerning the background/training of the individual?

- 1. Technical education and experience
- 2. General management education and background
- 3. About equal weight to each

APPENDIX B

Transit Interview Format

1. Position

- ___ 1. General Manager
___ 2. Deputy General Manager
___ 3. Assistant General Manager
for _____

2. Personal

a. Age

- ___ 1. Below 35
___ 2. 35-39
___ 3. 40-44
___ 4. 45-49
___ 5. 50-54
___ 6. 55-59
___ 7. 60 and above

3. Sex

- ___ 1. Male
___ 2. Female

4. Race

- ___ 1. White
___ 2. Black
___ 3. Hispanic
___ 4. Other (list)

5. Salary

- ___ 1. Below \$20,000
___ 2. \$20,000-\$24,999
___ 3. \$25,000-\$29,999
___ 4. \$30,000-\$34,999
___ 5. \$35,000-\$39,999
___ 6. \$40,000-\$44,999
___ 7. \$45,000-\$49,999
___ 8. \$50,000-\$59,999
___ 9. \$60,000-\$69,999
___ 10. \$70,000 and above

6. Education (If some graduate study, please also answer question 3.)

- ___ 1. High school diploma
___ 2. Some college, years completed ___
___ 3. College degree, major area _____
___ 4. Some graduate study
___ 5. Graduate degree, major area _____

7. List any professional certifications which you have.

1.
2.
3.

8. List all training or career seminars attended in the last 5 years.

1.
2.
3.
4.

9. How long have you been in your present position?

- ___ 1. Less than 2 years
___ 2. 2-5 years
___ 3. 6-10 years
___ 4. 11-15 years
___ 5. 15 years or more

10. How long have you been employed by this transit system?

- 1. Less than 2 years
- 2. 2-5 years
- 3. 6-10 years
- 4. 11-15 years
- 5. 15 years or more

11. Please list your four (4) most recent positions held and years employed in each, beginning with the one prior to your present position.

<u>1. Job Title</u>	<u>Tenure/years</u>	<u>(check one) Public or Private</u>
2.		
3.		
4.		

12. Transit System Information

a. Name of system:

b. Age of system (date it became publicly owned):

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Less than 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 20-29 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 10-19 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 30 years or older |

13. Was your system formerly privately owned?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

14. Size of system

- 1. Small (50-149 vehicles)
- 2. Medium (150-499 vehicles)
- 3. Large (500 or more vehicles)

15. How is your governing board selected?

- 1. Appointed
- 2. Elected
- 3. Other (explain)

16. What is the primary method used by the board in the recruitment of a General Manager?

- 1. Promotion from within agency
- 2. Recruitment from other transit agencies
- 3. Recruitment from government (non-transit agencies)
- 4. Recruitment from private industry
- 5. Other

17. In the appointment of the GM, which factor is most important concerning the background/training of the individual?
- 1. Technical education and experience
 - 2. General management education and background
 - 3. About equal weight to each
18. Which best characterizes the Board/GM's selection of Deputy/Assistant GM?
- 1. Recruitment from outside the agency
 - 2. Promotion from lower level within the agency
19. In the selection of the AGM, which factor is most important concerning the background/training of the individual?
- 1. Technical education and experience
 - 2. General management education and background
 - 3. About equal weight to each
20. What is the most important factor in the organization's decision regarding the choice of a General Manager?
- 1. Seniority or experience
 - 2. Consultant (executive search firm) recommendation
 - 3. Reference checks
 - 4. Performance evaluation
 - 5. Others (explain)
21. How important are the following managerial competencies (areas of knowledge) for the GM of your transit property? (Select the two most important).
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Personnel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Determining Resource Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Labor Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Planning | |
22. How important are the following technical competencies for the GM of your transit property? (Select the two most important)
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Traffic Management | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Research & Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Fare Determination | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Real Estate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Claims Settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Scheduling | |

23. How important are the following human relations competencies for the GM of your transit property? (Select the two most important)
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Abilities as a negotiator | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Establish information network |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Motivate subordinates | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. People skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Conflict resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Other |
24. What is the most important factor in the agency's decision concerning the selection of the Assistant General Manager?
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Seniority or experience | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Performance evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Consultant recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Tests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Reference checks | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Others (explain) |
25. What methods/tools are used to evaluate the General Manager's performance/management effectiveness?
- | |
|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Standard form |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Interviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Consultant appraisal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. All three of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Other (identify) _____ |
26. How frequently is the evaluation of the GM made?
- | |
|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Quarterly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Semi-annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Bi-annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Other _____ |
27. How would you characterize the behavior of the GM and AGM towards the Board?
- | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Cooperative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Informative and responsive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Unresponsive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Manipulative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Other (explain) |
28. What term best describes the relationship between the Board and the General Manager?
- | |
|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Very harmonious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Periodic tension |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Conflictual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Other _____ |

29. What is the nature of relations between the General Manager and Deputy/Assistant General Manager (functional, degree of responsibility, delegation of authority)?

30. Are most agency policy decisions a product of the GM, or are decisions made collectively by senior staff?

- 1. GM's determination
- 2. GM and staff
- 3. Other _____

31. Utilizing the following legend, indicate to what extent the different groups are responsible for the following functions:

- (1) Most Important
- (2) Important
- (3) Little Responsibility
- (4) No Responsibility

<u>Board</u>	<u>General Manager</u>	<u>Assistant GM</u>
--------------	------------------------	---------------------

- Policy Making
- Budget
- Planning
- Staff Hiring & Termination
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Collective Bargaining

32. Are the policy roles of the Board and management responsibilities of the GM clearly defined?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

33. Are there any major areas of disagreement among the groups over role, functions or responsibilities?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, explain

34. Are there any major limitations/constraints on the authority of the General Manager?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, list

35. Does the present organizational structure facilitate or hinder the extent to which the GM is able to exercise control over the agency?

36. How many subordinates report directly to the GM?

- 1. 1-3
- 2. 4-7
- 3. 8-10
- 4. 11-15
- 5. 15 or more

37. How many subordinates does the deputy GM supervise directly?

- 1. 1-3
- 2. 4-7
- 3. 8-10
- 4. 11-15
- 5. 15 or more

38. How many General Managers has the agency had in the last 15 years?

- 1. One
- 2. Two
- 3. Three
- 4. Four
- 5. Five or more

39. List the tenure of each General Manager. (Number of years)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

40. For each General Manager indicate the reason for leaving (resignation to accept another position, termination by Board, retirement, other).
CHECK ONE

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. Resignation to accept another position	-	-	-	-	-
2. Termination	-	-	-	-	-
3. Retirement	-	-	-	-	-
4. Other	-	-	-	-	-

41. How many different Deputy General Managers has the agency had in the last 15 years?

- 1. One
- 2. Two
- 3. Three
- 4. Four
- 5. Five or more

42. Why did each Deputy GM leave the agency?

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
1. Resignation to accept another position	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Termination	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Retirement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Promotion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

43. Are there types of special incentives used to retain the GM?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

44. If yes, what do they include?

- 1. Pay raise
- 2. Greater responsibility or authority
- 3. Fringe benefits
- 4. Performance awards
- 5. Retirement benefits
- 6. Stock options

45. What was the major factor in your decision to become a General Manager?

46. In your opinion, is there any relationship between tenure, termination, resignation and nature of Board selection?

47. It is often said the position of General Manager in an American mass transit system is a highly vulnerable post where the incumbent is not likely to enjoy a lengthy tenure. What in your opinion is the reason for this?

Board Interview Format

Personal

1. Age

- 1. Below 35
- 2. 35-39
- 3. 40-44
- 4. 45-49
- 5. 50-54
- 6. 55-59
- 7. 60 and above

2. Sex

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

3. Race

- 1. White
- 2. Black
- 3. Hispanic
- 4. Other (list)

4. Education

- 1. High school diploma
- 2. Some college
- 3. College degree, major area _____
- 4. Some graduate study _____
- 5. Graduate degree, major area _____

5. How long have you been on the board?

- 1. Less than 2 years
- 2. 2-5 years
- 3. 6-10 years
- 4. 11-15 years
- 5. 15 years or more

6. Name of System: _____

7. How is your governing board selected?

- 1. Appointed
- 2. Elected
- 3. Other (explain)

8. What is the primary method used by the board in the recruitment of a General Manager?

- 1. Promotion from within agency
- 2. Recruitment from other transit agencies
- 3. Recruitment from government (non-transit agencies)
- 4. Recruitment from private industry
- 5. Other

9. In the appointment of the GM, which factor is most important concerning the background/training of the individual?
- 1. Technical education and experience
 - 2. General management education and background
 - 3. About equal weight to each
10. Which best characterizes the Board/GM's selection of Deputy/ Assistant GM?
- 1. Recruitment from outside the agency
 - 2. Promotion from lower level within the agency
11. In the selection of the AGM, which factor is most important concerning the background/training of the individual?
- 1. Technical education and experience
 - 2. General management education and background
 - 3. About equal weight to each
12. What is the most important factor in the organization's decision regarding the choice of a General Manager?
- 1. Seniority or experience
 - 2. Consultant (executive search firm) recommendation
 - 3. Reference checks
 - 4. Performance evaluation
 - 5. Tests
 - 6. Others (explain)
13. How important are the following managerial competencies (areas of knowledge) for the GM of your transit property? (Select the two most important).
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Personnel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Determining Resource Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Labor Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Planning | |
14. How important are the following human relations competencies for the GM of your transit property? (Select the two most important)
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Abilities as a negotiator | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Establish information network |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Motivate subordinates | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. People skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Conflict resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Other |
15. What is the most important factor in the agency's decision concerning the selection of the Assistant General Manager?
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Seniority or experience | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Performance evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Consultant recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Tests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Reference checks | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Others (explain) |

16. What methods/tools are used to evaluate the General Manager's performance/management effectiveness?

- 1. Standard form
- 2. Interviews
- 3. Consultant appraisal
- 4. All three of the above
- 5. Other (identify) _____

17. How frequently is the evaluation of the GM made?

- 1. Quarterly
- 2. Semi-annually
- 3. Annually
- 4. Bi-annually
- 5. Other _____

18. How would you characterize the behavior of the GM and AGM towards the Board?

- 1. Cooperative
- 2. Informative and responsive
- 3. Unresponsive
- 4. Manipulative
- 5. Other (explain) _____

19. What term best describes the relationship between the Board and the General Manager?

- 1. Very harmonious
- 2. Good
- 3. Periodic tension
- 4. Conflictual
- 5. Other _____

20. Are most agency policy decisions a product of the GM, or are decisions made collectively by senior staff?

- 1. GM's determination
- 2. GM and staff
- 3. Other _____

21. Utilizing the following legend, indicate to what extent the different groups are responsible for the following functions:

- (1) Most Important
- (2) Important
- (3) Little Responsibility
- (4) No Responsibility

	<u>Board</u>	<u>General Manager</u>	<u>Assistant GM</u>
Policy Making	_____	_____	_____
Budget	_____	_____	_____
Planning	_____	_____	_____
Staff Hiring & Termination	_____	_____	_____
Intergovernmental Relations	_____	_____	_____
Collective Bargaining	_____	_____	_____

22. Are the policy roles of the Board and management responsibilities of the GM clearly defined?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No

23. Are there any major areas of disagreement among the groups over role, functions or responsibilities?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No.

If yes, explain

24. Are there any major limitations/constraints on the authority of the General Manager?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No

If yes, list:

25. Does the present organizational structure facilitate or hinder the extent to which the GM is able to exercise control over the agency?

26. Are there types of special incentives used to retain the GM?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

27. If yes, what do they include?

- 1. Pay raise
- 2. Greater responsibility or authority
- 3. Fringe benefits
- 4. Performance awards
- 5. Retirement benefits
- 6. Stock options

28. In your opinion, is there any relationship between tenure, termination, and resignation and nature of Board selection?

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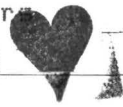
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