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April 13, 2001

Mr. Clifford A. Bailey, Chairman
Downtown Cincinnati, Inc.
617 Vine St., Suite 1200
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Re: DCI Position on Downtown Transit Initiatives

Dear Mr. Bailey:

We are not surprised by the position DCI has taken on the Central Area Loop Study, but we are disappointed.

This Study has not yet reached a point where members are asked to make a decision, and many of the facts that committee members will want have not yet been presented to it by OKI or the consultant, Parsons-Brinkerhoff. Among those facts yet to be presented are the following:

1. What would such a light rail version of the Central Area Loop Circulator (CALC) cost to build?
2. What would such a LR CALC cost to operate each year?
3. How many would ride it?
4. A serious market study, comparing LRT and PRT, has yet to be done.
5. How would an elevated system negatively impact "street life," as John Schneider has consistently asserted, but never proved?
6. PRT may be able to obtain 35,000 or more riders per day. This assumes about 20% of the 100,000 daily downtown commuters would use it, and a similar number of other daily downtown visitors. Our own survey, and those made in other cities studying PRT, indicate the percentage could be much higher, but this only demonstrates the need for a professional market study to confirm whether we are right or not.
7. The Southbank Shuttle, very similar to LRT in terms of level of service, is able to obtain 10,000- 15,000 riders per week. Do you have any reason to believe that LRT will achieve more riders than the Shuttle? If not, then a PRT version of the CALC might be able to achieve 16 times more paying customers than the proposed LRT version!
8. Doesn't it seem reasonable that such a huge difference in riders around the downtown area would do more to "enhance street life" if PRT were used? How can DCI claim otherwise, with no facts to support it?
9. DCI, or at least John Schneider, seems also to be in favor of demolishing the skywalk system. Why? Because he thinks it "negatively impacts street life." What evidence supports this conclusion? We have talked to downtown office building managers who believe the skywalk helps people get around downtown, and especially helps reach the retail area when weather is bad or time is limited.
10. The 1993 Downtown Cincinnati Retail Marketing Plan found "increasing consumer dissatisfaction with parking, convenience, retail variety" and that only 6% of broader trade area residents usually shop downtown, and 28% said they are doing less this year than last year. The Sky Loop would make getting around downtown a lot faster and more convenient, and do a lot to better utilize existing and future area parking. What would LRT do to aid either?
11. For the I-71 Corridor Study, the latest figures published by Metro Moves indicates the annual operating cost for the first 18 miles would be \$18 million, with revenues of \$8-9 million, for a \$9-10 million annual

operating loss. The closest in size to this segment might be the Dallas DART LRT line, 20 miles. In 1998 the Dallas Dart operating cost was \$27.7 million. Around the country, LRT systems generally provide about 30 cents of fare revenue for every dollar of operating cost. Applying these figures to I-71 LRT, would produce about \$8.3 million fare revenue, but a \$19 million annual operating loss. So far, no figures for the CAL Circulator using LRT have been developed. However, no matter what the final costs, it is clear that the bigger LRT becomes, the more it will cost the taxpayers every year.

12. We have given estimates for PRT. They show an annual operating PROFIT of \$2-8 million, assuming a final cost for PRT between \$70 and \$140 million, with annual CASH FLOW (excluding depreciation) \$11.4-12.8 million. These funds could be used to expand the system, without added burden on taxpayers.
13. How will LRT cross the three bridges needed for the CAL? On the Clay Wade Bailey and Licking River bridges, they would have to "share" one or two lanes with highway traffic, something KYTC does not want to do. We have just submitted our Bridge Report to OKI and KYTC, showing that PRT can run on all three bridges without taking a single lane of highway traffic.

So with all these questions unanswered, why has DCI taken such a position so early in the CALC Study, without the benefit of all the facts? Why did DCI take this position without hearing our side of the story?

We submit that the reason is abundantly clear. DCI favors light rail, even if it makes no sense for the circulator. Whether anybody will ride it that doesn't already ride the Shuttle, makes no difference to DCI. Whether it adds a burden on the taxpayers also doesn't matter to DCI.

We can only hope that the CAL Study Committee will get all the facts before making its decision.

Sincerely,

Charles S. Tappan
Chairman

c: Mike Hammons, John Vissman, Forward Quest
Wally Pagan, Southbank Partners; Jim Duane, OKI; John Salyers; Bill Scheyer