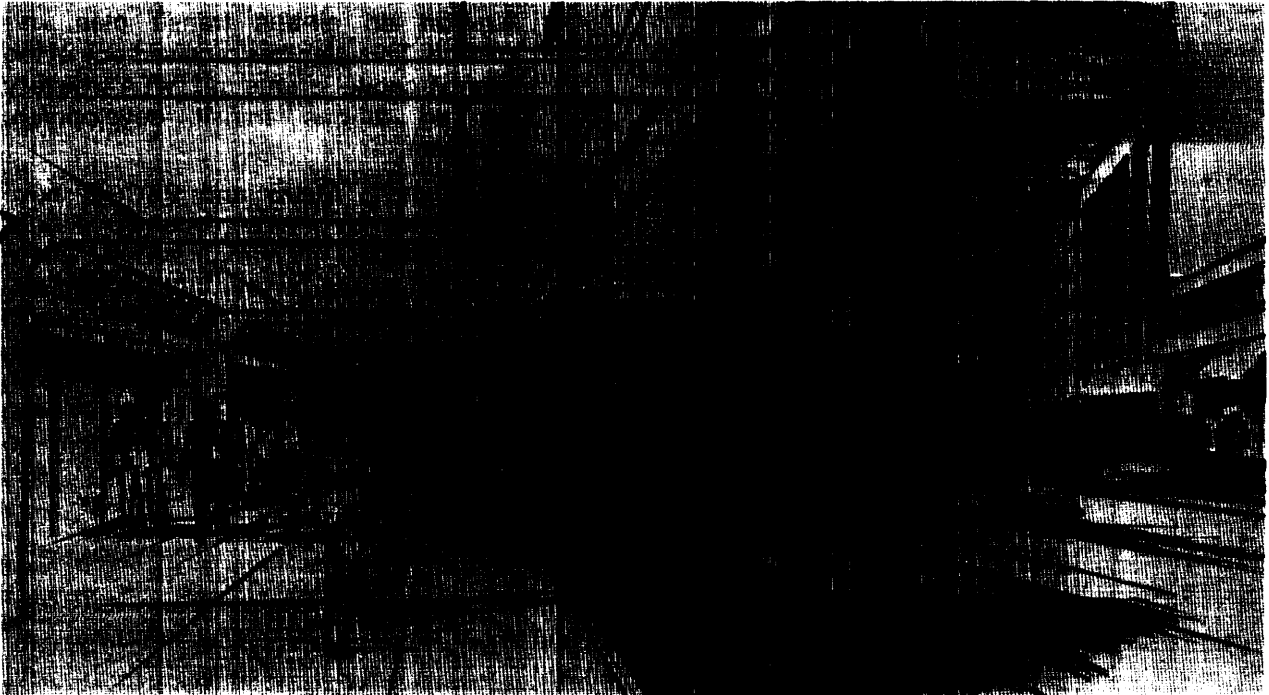


Summary and Highlights



Bond Issues to build rail transit in Seattle failed twice before a short-term bus improvement program gained voter approval in 1972

- Proposals for rail transit systems in Seattle initially were conceived during a period of economic gain (1965-68). The optimistic growth estimates of this era, combined with the expectation of large amounts of Federal funds and the perceived political necessity of providing rail transit service in several corridors, encouraged the design of extensive transit systems.
- Rapid rail transit advocates in Seattle emerged from two groups. Antifreeway forces joined the downtown business interests that had been principally responsible for creating a metropolitan umbrella organization called Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (Metro). Although Metro was established in 1957, it was not empowered to plan transit until 1967.
- Forward Thrust was the most important of a series of extra governmental committees of businessmen and civic leaders that dominated transit decisionmaking until 1970. Forward Thrust advocated rail transit as part of a plan to revitalize Seattle through a coordinated program of capital improvements that included parks, arterial highway improvements, a major league stadium, community facilities, and urban redevelopment proposals. The organization guided the preparation of the two rail transit plans taken to voters in 1968 and 1970.
- The 1968 proposal for a 47-mile, \$385 million system received 51 percent of the vote in referendum that year but failed to gain the 60 percent margin needed for passage, partly because of its high cost

with no assurance that the full Federal share would be available.

- . In 1970, a dismal economic situation caused by massive layoffs at Boeing led to the defeat of the second and even more expensive rail proposal (49 miles, \$440 million).
- Critics of Forward Thrust complained that it was an elite organization not accountable to the voters and that its transit proposals favored downtown business interests.
- Since Forward Thrust disbanded in 1970, the forum for transit planning has been dominated by Metro and the Puget Sound Council of Governments (PSCOG). How-

ever, the city of Seattle continues to exert an important influence.

- In 1972, under the threat of complete collapse of Seattle's bus system, a tax to support an all-bus transit plan was passed. This plan has received one of the largest capital grants in UMTA's history for an all-bus transit development program.
- Since 1972, Metro and PSCOG have competed for major responsibilities in area transit planning. Metro, more oriented to the central city and directly responsible for transit operations, is most concerned with choice of technology. PSCOG, whose jurisdiction is a broader, four-county region, is concerned with the relationship of a transit system to regionwide land use.