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# "People or Ducks?" Who Decides?

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## **Introduction**

Most environmental policy debates concern people's conflicting priorities, as embodied in the question of people or ducks, and the problem of who is to resolve the conflicts. The debate usually pits those who want to use our natural resources to support our technology against those who wish to preserve our resources in their more natural state. Conflict arises because both groups cannot use the environment as they wish. We must decide collectively how to use our natural resources and who will pay for technological advances. Such conflicts and the need for a collective decision are not unique to the environmental area. Decisions on land use planning, transportation, education and national economic policy, to name a few, all have the same characteristics. The choice of a particular policy in any of these areas may benefit one group more than another and possibly harm a third. Thus trade-offs between "people and ducks" and the need for collective decisions are characteristic of nearly all public policies.

It is the responsibility of our political process to insure that these different values and interests are taken into account when determining public policies. Problems arising from environmental concerns and from attempts to govern metropolitan areas are forcing reassessments of the

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performance of our political institutions in meeting their responsibility. We now routinely create new agencies and alter existing ones to deal with the conflicts inherent in these public policy matters. In some cases organizations are being created to deal with particular problems, while in others existing agencies are being combined into single superagencies. Similarly, there is considerable debate and experimentation with decentralization and local control over the administration of public services at the same time that several areas are moving toward highly centralized metropolitan governments. Finally, there are the perennial questions about which officials should be appointed and which ones should be elected, and whether elections should be by district or at-large. With these debates and changes going on, it is important to understand which interests get considered, and how decisions differ with different institutional arrangements. The only way to gain this understanding is by looking at specific decisions, the associated interests, and the performance of various institutions. This is a case study of one such decision.

The question of people or ducks has been troubling the people of Minneapolis and St. Paul since 1968 when the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) decided to locate a new jetport north of the Twin Cities and adjacent to a large game preserve and bird sanctuary, and the Metropolitan Council (hereafter the Council) vetoed the Airport Commission's decision. The conflict created by these vetoes still exists, in spite of several attempts to resolve it by gubernatorial committees, threatened intervention by the state legislature, and the efforts of a joint Airport Commission and Metropolitan Council committee formed to study the alternatives. This paper is an attempt to explain how two agencies serving the same region reached such different decisions. The explanation illustrates some fairly simple notions about the consideration given economic and environmental impacts of such a decision by specialized executive agencies, multi-purpose policy-making bodies, and elected and appointed officials. Given that there are a number of conflicting interests associated with selecting a site for a new airport, the important question is how each agency and each recruitment process weighs these interests, and how the outcomes differ under alternative decision structures.

### **The Organizations and Their Anticipated Behavior**

The central participants in the airport decision are the MAC commissioners, the professional staff of the MAC, the members of the Council, and Northwest Airlines. The latter organization, in addition to being a

major airline serving the Twin Cities, started operations there, has its corporate headquarters in Minneapolis, is a major employer in the Twin Cities area, and has acted as the spokesman for the other airlines during the controversy.

There are two important distinctions between the MAC and the Council. These differences are replicated in many of the governmental bodies involved in setting environmental policy and in governing metropolitan areas. The first concerns the scope of the responsibilities of the two agencies and the second is in the qualifications for membership and the methods used to select the members of the two bodies. The MAC, as its name implies, is a single function agency whose sole responsibility is operating the airport system for the metropolitan area. Its responsibilities are largely administrative and its decisions have been made predominately by the professional staff. The Council, on the other hand, is a multi-function agency established in 1967 to oversee and coordinate planning and development in the entire seven-county area. It has varying degrees of control over all existing independent agencies such as the Sewer Board, the MAC, and the Transit Authority. The Council also has the responsibility for planning some metropolitan land use activities, such as highways, parks, and public buildings. The Council's responsibilities then are solely of a policy-making variety encompassing many issues at the metropolitan level. Decisions are made by the councilors through debate and by roll call votes as in most legislatures. The other difference is in the background and selection of the members of the MAC and the Council. Five of the nine MAC members hold elective office in either Minneapolis or St. Paul and all members but the Chairman come from the two central cities, while the members of the Council are appointed by the Governor on the basis of districts which encompass the entire seven county metropolitan area. Finally the MAC staff members are chosen by the Commissioners for their prior experience and expertise in the aviation field.

### *The Metropolitan Airports Commission*

The MAC was created by the Minnesota state legislature in 1943 to end the rivalry between Minneapolis and St. Paul for the most elaborate airport facilities. In part this rivalry concerned which city's airport would be the base of operations for Northwest Airlines, and in part it stemmed from the natural rivalry of the two adjacent cities. At that time, the MAC was given jurisdiction over both cities' airports and any airports, present or future, which the MAC might want to acquire within a 25 mile radius of the two city halls. This has now been extended to a 35 mile radius.

The MAC was also instructed to provide at least one major commercial airport located as nearly equidistant to the two city halls as possible. The MAC designated Wold-Chamberlain field, which had been the Minneapolis airport, as the major commercial airport and proceeded to develop it into a major international air terminal in the succeeding thirty years. The MAC also administers five smaller airports scattered around the periphery of the metropolitan area.

The Commission is made up of nine members, most of whom are elected to municipal offices in one of the two cities. These include the mayors of both Minneapolis and St. Paul, one member of the Minneapolis city council and one member of the Minneapolis Park Board, and two city councilors from St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> Each city also has one "citizen commissioner." These citizen commissioners are appointed by the mayor and city council in each city. The ninth member of the Commission is appointed by the governor and serves as chairman. The Chairman must not be a resident of either city or of a contiguous county, meaning that he comes from outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area. There is no suburban representation on the Commission even though five of the six airports under MAC control and over 60 per cent of the metropolitan population in 1970 reside outside the two cities.

The Commission appoints a staff headed by an Executive Director who serves as the chief executive and operating officer of the Commission. The legislation that created the MAC states that the Executive Director should have business experience, preferably in the aviation field.<sup>2</sup> Both men who have held the position since 1943 have satisfied this requirement as have the other members of the staff.<sup>3</sup> The Commission has kept its administrative staff small. As of August 1970, it consisted of 17 people, including secretarial and clerical employees. This does not include about 200 other individuals employed in operating the airports. The Commission has relied to a great extent on outside consultants and attorneys as needed.<sup>4</sup>

The Commission has three main sources of revenue; charges for the use of MAC property (e.g., terminal facility rentals, landing fees, etc.),

1. The Minneapolis Park board member is included because Wold-Chamberlain is built in Minneapolis park land and prior to the MAC the airport was administered by the Park Board.

2. Minnesota Statue 360,106 (4) (1969).

3. Short biographies of several of the staff members are included in an article, "Jet Noise and Its Impact," *Airport Services Management* Vol. 12, No. 10 (October 1971): 16-26.

4. Donald V. Harper, "The Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission," *Minnesota Law Review* Vol. 55, No. 3 (January 1971): 392.

federal and state aid; and support for its operations and maintenance from the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul of up to one mill on all assessed valuation. The two cities can also be taxed to pay for the principal and interest on the first \$20,000,000 of airport bonds. After that the bonds are supposed to be self-liquidating and the cities are responsible only if the self-liquidating feature fails as the result of a default by a contractor, such as Northwest Airlines. In practice, the levy for operations has ranged between 0.05 mills and 0.465 mills, and there has been no assessment for operations since 1961. The assessment for the payment of principal and interest on MAC bonds has ranged from 0.460 to 2.445 mills and no assessment has been made since 1969. Thus the Commission is now financially independent of the two central cities.<sup>5</sup> The income from the charges and rentals at the MAC airports accounts for most of the Commission's income for both operating and capital investment purposes. As we will see, this is a crucial factor in all Commission decisions.

### *The Metropolitan Council*

The Council was created by the Minnesota state legislature in 1967 to coordinate the planning and development in the seven counties comprising the metropolitan area of Minneapolis and St. Paul.<sup>6</sup> The legislature instructed the Council to prepare a comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area which would state goals, standards, and programs for both public and private economic development in the metropolitan area. A Development Guide Committee was formed for this purpose and now has the responsibility for making recommendations to the whole Council about proposed construction or development plans by the independent boards, commissions, and municipal governments in the metropolitan area. The Council has the authority to suspend proposals that it decides do not conform to its development guide. This is the major way the Council has of influencing the decisions of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Metropolitan Sewer Board and other metropolitan agencies and governments. With the exception of the Sewer Board and Transit Commission, all the agencies have independent operating and financial authority and their budgets are outside Council control.

The Council's additional power over the other agencies and governments is limited and requires federal cooperation. Under existing legisla-

5. Harper, "Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports," pp. 434-437.

6. Minnesota Statutes, Ch. 473 B (1967).

tion, local proposals for federal aid for specific projects, like an airport or a housing project, must be reviewed by a local planning agency, in this case the Council. If the Council opposes the proposal, the local agency may still submit the proposal, but with a statement that it was opposed by the planning agency. In the case of such an appeal, it is up to the federal agency to decide if it wants to uphold or override the local planning agency. Although local agencies have seemed unwilling to challenge the Council on such questions, the Council's real power comes from its ability to suspend new construction plans of the different metropolitan organizations. This authority is not inconsiderable.

There are fourteen Councilors, each representing a single-member district. These districts are aggregates of several state legislative districts and are relatively equal in population. There is also a chairman of the Council who does not come from any of the districts. All councilors are appointed by the state governor with the advice and consent of the state senate. Although supposedly nonpartisan, these appointments have reflected the political affiliation of the governor. Councilors are appointed to six-year overlapping terms so that four or five councilors are up for reappointment every two years. The Chairman serves at the pleasure of the governor. There is continual debate over having the Councilors elected rather than appointed. This change would have to come from the state legislature which has previously opposed such an arrangement.

### *The expected behavior of the MAC and the Council*

In this section we will analyze how these two agencies came to different conclusions about the location of the airport and use this analysis to examine how different governmental structures perform at resolving the conflicts inherent in an airport location question. This analysis is based on some simple notions about organizational, electoral, and legislative behavior. The case itself is used to examine and enrich these notions, which can then be used to suggest ways of improving the structure and performance of environmental and metropolitan policymaking agencies.

The easiest participants to describe are the MAC commissioners. The elected members are usually more concerned with the jobs to which they were elected. The operations of the airport are only an ancillary function and certainly are not as important as other municipal decisions in determining their chances for reelection. For many years the mayor of St. Paul did not attend Commission meetings, but simply sent a representative. The citizen commissioners are usually active in local businesses or labor unions and are much more concerned with the operations of these

organizations than they are with MAC decisions. The commissioners normally ignore questions about the airport and concentrate on their other responsibilities. They will do so unless there is obvious concern or discontent with the operations of the airport system among their constituents. If such a concern appears, and particularly if the concern is shared by a majority of the Commissioners' constituents, we should expect the elected officials to react quite strongly and visibly. The most obvious issues over which such discontent might be raised are the costs of the airports if they begin to raise local tax rates perceptibly, poor and inconvenient service to airport users, rising noise levels, and attempts to expand the airport within the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The elected commissioners are probably more sensitive than the appointed members to these concerns if they arise. It seems obvious to expect the elected commissioners to be less sensitive to questions and problems raised by people outside the two central cities, who of course are not in their constituencies. Thus objections to a decision to expand one of the outlying airports or to a new airport location outside the two cities are not likely to evoke much response from the commissioners. In the absence of aroused constituents, the commissioners will be fairly complacent about MAC operations and decisions.

A complacent attitude and approach on the part of the MAC commissioners aids the MAC staff members in fulfilling their objectives. These men are professional aviators and airport administrators. Their likely objective will be to insulate themselves from as much external pressure as possible so as to pursue the more limited goals of building and running airports. These goals undoubtedly include accolades from professional groups in the aviation field. The staff's performance criteria would include such measures as the volume of air traffic handled, the growth in this traffic, their safety record, the absence of delays attributable to airport operations, and similar efficiency measures. Satisfying these professional objectives requires providing modern and adequate terminal and air space for expected traffic levels and minimizing externally imposed restrictions on operations. Obtaining the autonomy to pursue their goals means avoiding things like tax increases, congestion delays, and noise problems which are likely to cause the commissioners to become concerned about the staff decisions and operations. Preventing or quickly solving problems which do arouse the commissioners' concern will increase the staff's autonomy and independence and permit them to pursue their own personal and professional goals. In selecting a site for a new airport, the MAC staff will be primarily concerned with their professional concerns of available terminal and air space and the technical



feasibilities and costs of alternative locations. In the process of making a decision, they will try to limit outside involvement as much as possible so as to maintain their autonomy and their ability to follow the technical objectives. Focusing on these more narrow technical criteria and preventing external involvement means that the MAC staff will completely avoid the larger conflicts which surround the question of a new airport.

The objectives and behavior of the Council are the hardest to describe. The usual model of such a legislative type policy organization assumes that the members' responsibility is to insure that the interests and concerns of the people in their districts are represented and have a chance to influence the decisions of the agency. This responsibility is fulfilled by having councilors support proposals favored by their constituents and form coalitions with other councilors to promote programs which their constituents consider most important to the metropolitan area. Explanations of such a council's decisions are based on knowledge of the concerns of the people in each district on different issues and the coalitions and negotiations likely to take place among the members. For example, councilors from districts where the people are concerned about the environmental or economic impacts of an airport location can be counted upon to raise these issues and to make sure that the final decisions reflect these concerns. The cost to the councilors for not doing this effectively is heat from their constituents and possible loss of the job.

Such a metropolitan-wide legislative organization would have a much better chance than an administrative agency like the MAC and its staff of resolving or at least of considering the conflicts inherent in issues such as a decision to build a new airport. The sole responsibility of the representatives in such a legislative body would be to mediate the differences involved in public matters. They would not be rewarded professionally for promoting aviation and their futures as councilors would not be primarily dependent upon their performance in another job. At the same time, since they would be elected on a district basis and because the perceived benefits and costs of the airport are not spread uniformly throughout the metropolitan area, it is almost certain that the questions of the distribution of these benefits and costs will be raised, debated, and influential in the final decision of such a council.

Unfortunately this description of a metropolitan legislature and its implication for public policy decisions is not completely appropriate here. The legislative model relies on the assumption that councilors' preferences reflect the preferences of their constituents, which may not be a bad assumption if the members are elected. However, the Council members are not elected, but are appointed by the governor. Consequently the

councilors are likely to be voting their own personal views which are derived from their social and economic associations within the metropolitan area and perhaps those of the appointing individual. Only the councilors who are quite personally associated with the interests of their districts by virtue of residential associations or business contacts will act according to the representational model. Even with this qualification on the behavior of the Council, its decisions are more likely to represent concern for the conflicts associated with the airport location decision than are the decisions of the MAC. Because of its young age, the members as a group were quite concerned with establishing the Council as a strong metropolitan-wide policy making agency. They were quite conscious of their responsibilities to guide and plan metropolitan development in a positive fashion. They were also making a determined effort to establish their control over the decisions of the independent agencies which affect this development.

### History of the Airport Decision

The history of the airport location issue began in 1967 when the MAC staff determined from FAA and Air Transportation Association data that Wold-Chamberlain, the existing commercial airport, would be inadequate by 1980.<sup>7</sup> This prompted a staff study on possible alternatives to meet the expected demand. The search immediately focused on six possible sites, three north of the Twin Cities and three to the south. The original purpose of the Commission, its charter, and its composition as well as existing geography and airport locations precluded a site in either the east or the west. The Commission had already done considerable work toward a future northern site. In 1950 a secondary airport for use by general aviation was established in Anoka County, to the north of the Twin Cities. Additional land was acquired and the airport expanded in 1961. Part of the justification for the acquisition of these lands was that when a second major airport was needed, this land would be available for further expansion.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, in the succeeding years residential

7. This historical account draws heavily on an article by Donald V. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem: The Case of Minneapolis-St. Paul," *ICC Practitioners Journal* (May-June 1971): 550-582.

8. Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission, "In the Matter of the Expansion and Development of the Commission's Airport System by the Expansion of Anoka County-James Field or Acquisition of Lands and Development of a New Airport in Anoka County, Findings, Conclusions, and Order," February 24, 1969, p. 8. (Hereafter referred to as MAC, "Findings.")

development and the location of a series of television antennae made expansion of the Anoka airport unacceptable to the Commission.

Because of the potential of urban development and the distance from both downtown areas, the Commission focused on a northern site called Ham Lake. This is a 15,000 acre tract about 20 miles from each downtown area and 25 miles from Wold-Chamberlain. An additional advantage of this site according to the MAC was that it would not interfere with existing or any proposed operations at Wold-Chamberlain.<sup>9</sup> The Commission hoped to continue to use the existing airport for commercial aviation, as well as the maintenance and repair facilities which the airlines were currently leasing. Their initial statements indicated a feeling that both airports would be needed by the late 1990's, thus making it prudent to maintain Wold-Chamberlain and keep it in use.<sup>10</sup> The Ham Lake site also had the advantage that most of the land under consideration was either marginal swampland or peat bogs or was being used only for farming or sod farming. Consequently it could be assembled at a relatively low cost. At the same time, due to the marginal nature of much of the land, the Commission felt that the likelihood of future development was less than at other potential sites.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the northeast boundary of the airport site was the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, a protected wildlife preserve. The advantage to the MAC was that no development could take place on this site of the airport, and as one person put it, "Birds do not call up complaining about noise."

The decision to go with the Ham Lake site was made largely by the MAC staff. In fact one person suggested that the Commissioners may have been kept out of the decision until the staff had picked Ham Lake, but this cannot be verified.<sup>12</sup> In any event, the first public notification came when the MAC announced that it was going to hold public hearings, as required by law, on a proposal to take the necessary land at the Ham Lake site. Five hearings were held between April 1968 and December 1968, two for public testimony and cross-examination of the MAC staff and the others for the MAC staff and consultants to outline the proposal and specific hearings for other governmental agencies and for the airlines.<sup>13</sup> The opposition to the proposal came from several groups.

9. MAC, "Findings," p. 35.

10. MAC, "Findings," pp. 37-38.

11. MAC, "Findings," p. 33.

12. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," pp. 558-562. This possibility was also mentioned by several people interviewed in the course of this study.

13. Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission, "Chronological Summary MAC Consideration of Location of New Major Airport," Sept. 20, 1971. Hereafter referred to as MAC, "Chronological Summary."

One vocal opponent was Northwest Airlines, supposedly acting as the spokesman for all the airlines serving the Twin Cities. Their opposition was over costs and competition.<sup>14</sup> Northwest is tied into expensive leases for the existing terminal, overhaul, and storage facilities at Wold-Chamberlain. It feared that building a new airport would raise its costs considerably. Given MAC's usual financial objective to be self-supporting through user charges for airport space, this was a reasonable concern. In addition, Northwest pointed out that virtually all its traffic was to the south of the Twin Cities so that a northern site would measurably add to their operating costs independent of the MAC's charges. At the same time, Northwest argued that all their employees were now located on the southside in the proximity of the existing field and that a northern location would work a severe hardship on them.<sup>15</sup>

There was an additional unstated reason for Northwest's opposition—the potential of additional competition. A member of the Commission's staff said that the most profitable run for airlines serving the Twin Cities is the Chicago trip. This is how Northwest got its start and it now handles about 70 per cent of the traffic on that run. Under the MAC plan which would have kept Wold-Chamberlain open, Northwest feared that it would then be possible for a third level carrier to obtain authorization for a downtown-to-downtown run between Wold-Chamberlain and Midway in Chicago. If this happened, it would seriously undercut Northwest's advantage on the Minneapolis to Chicago run. It was also apparent that for financial reasons, the Airport Commission was not likely to agree to close Wold-Chamberlain. As a result, Northwest was basically opposed to any second airport, and all the more opposed if the new facility was going north.

The second source of opposition was the environmentalists who feared what the new airport might do to the quality of life in the Carlos Avery Refuge and to the water table and water quality in the area.<sup>16</sup> The water question was of particular concern to some people because much of St. Paul gets its water from sources which would be affected by the airport if the environmentalists' projections were correct. The environmentalists were also concerned about the effect of increased noise on the wildlife and on people's ability to enjoy the preserve. There were also several second-

14. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," p. 562.

15. Northwest Airlines has continually cited these reasons for their opposition to a new major airport and particularly to a northern site. These points formed the basis of an August 21, 1972 letter from the President of NWA, Donald Nyrob, to one of the Council members prior to the most recent Council vote.

16. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," pp. 562-563.

ary questions; the effect of increased air pollution on the local environment, the possibility of birds being drawn into the jet engines, and the likelihood of more frequent ground fog associated with the swampland and high water table.

The third and least organized opposition group consisted of southside businessmen and commercial interests.<sup>17</sup> Most of the past growth in the Metropolitan area has been in the southerly direction. This can be attributed in part to the airport, although there were other contributing factors such as the construction of Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, the opening of Interstate 494, and the presence and growth of Control Data Corporation. One consequence of this development was the growth of a large hospitality industry and other firms dependent on proximity to air transportation. These businesses faced the loss of considerable revenue or increased operating costs if a new airport were located at a northern site and the volume of traffic at Wold-Chamberlain reduced. This opposition of course was partially offset by the support generated among northern business interests and downtown interests that had been losing business to the newer hospitality and retail concerns south of the city. These downtown interests hoped that a northern site would mean increased business for them as they would now be the most proximate service area.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of this opposition, the Commission voted unanimously on February 24, 1969 to proceed with land acquisition at the Ham Lake site. Although the Commission indicated that it looked at the five other sites, these are dismissed rather quickly in their report, called a "Findings, Conclusions, and Order."<sup>19</sup> In this document, the Commission put forth its reasons for favoring the Ham Lake site as follows.

1. Sufficient available land (15,560 acres).
2. This land is suitable for airport construction in terms of slope and soil conditions and is comparatively cheap due to its unsuitability for alternative uses.
3. Noise problems will be minimal because of the presence of the Carlos Avery area to the northeast, the reduced potential for further development, and the ability to implement the proper zoning controls over potentially usable land.

17. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," p. 563.

18. There was even one proposal to establish a direct nonstop rapid transit link between the airport and downtown. This would further encourage downtown growth.

19. See footnote 8.

4. There would be minimal conflict with the airspace at Wold-Chamberlain and other general aviation fields.
5. The possibility of bird strikes was small and no worse than other areas in the vicinity of the Mississippi River.
6. "The reduction in value of the game refuge is at this point speculative and can only be determined after the airport has been in operation."<sup>20</sup>

The Commission report did not address the water quality and level questions, the problems which might be encountered in constructing runways and terminal facilities on the peat bog (although the Commission claimed that, "the predominant soil is fine sand which makes an excellent material for subgrade and subbase under pavement. . ."),<sup>21</sup> nor with the airlines' contention that they would not operate out of two airports and preferred a southern site.

The next step in the decision process was approval by the Metropolitan Council. The Council had sixty days to decide whether it would concur with the Commission, send the proposal back to the Commission for further study, or reject it outright. In the event the Council decided on this last alternative, the Commission could then go to the state legislature asking them to resolve the dispute.

On April 24, 1969 the Council voted to suspend the Airport Commission's Order to begin land acquisition at the Ham Lake site.<sup>22</sup> It contended that the Commission had not adequately considered other sites and that there were sufficient potential problems with the Ham Lake site to warrant a more detailed examination of alternative sites. The Council recognized those advantages to the Ham Lake site recommended by the Commission. However, it felt that the potential problems were such that more study of the specific questions was needed to make the appropriate comparative analysis between Ham Lake and other sites. Ham Lake might finally prove to be the most desirable site, but the Council was not yet satisfied of that on the basis of the MAC analysis and the public hearings. The Council was primarily concerned about the potential impact on the water level and quality, the future use and enjoyment of the Carlos Avery Refuge, the accessibility of a northern site to current airport users who were assumed to reside on the southern side of the two

20. MAC, "Findings," p. 34.

21. MAC, "Findings," p. 34.

22. Metropolitan Council, Minutes of the April 24, 1968 Council Meeting.

cities, and the Commission's view that two major airports were needed. The vote of the Council was ten to four in favor of suspending the Commission's order.<sup>23</sup>

At this point, Northwest Airlines entered (or was dragged into) the discussion.<sup>24</sup> In February, Northwest had proposed a 25 to 30 million dollar expansion of its facilities at Wold-Chamberlain to accommodate the new 747 jet planes it had on order. Less than two weeks after the Council vetoed the Ham Lake proposal, the MAC announced that it was not approving the Northwest expansion. The Commission said that it could not approve the expansion at Wold-Chamberlain until the question of the new airport had been settled. The airline accused the Commission of using this decision to try to coerce the airline into supporting the Ham Lake proposal. The airline in turn threatened to build the new facilities as well as move its existing operation to Seattle if the second airport were built on a northern site and if Wold-Chamberlain were left open. Since the airline employed about 6,000 people in the metropolitan area, this was not a trivial threat from the communities' standpoint. The threat, of course, brought charges that the airline was trying to blackmail and coerce the Commission into dropping the Ham Lake site and pressuring the Council into continuing to veto it if the Commission submitted the proposal again.

On May 19 the Commission voted to resubmit the Ham Lake proposal. New airport zoning ordinances had been passed by the state which gave the Council the right to regulate land use for three miles outside the boundaries of a new airport and up to five miles in certain directions if that was deemed necessary. The MAC had also conducted a new airspace survey which it hoped would satisfy the Council. This plan was submitted to the Council on May 29 and the Council again had sixty days to respond. Neither of these changes seemed to reduce the opposition to the Ham Lake site, however. The MAC was also under considerable pressure to change its mind on the Northwest expansion proposal. This was coming largely from commercial interests, political leaders, and the news media. On June 2, the MAC announced that it would approve the Northwest expansion and the use of 747s if the airline agreed to pay off the MAC bonds in ten rather than thirty years. Ten years was the MAC esti-

23. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," pp. 567-568 and references cited therein.

24. Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," pp. 567-568, recounts this part of the controversy in great detail.

mate of the time it would take to get the new airport operational. On June 4, Northwest announced that it was going ahead with an \$8,000,000 expansion at Seattle to accommodate storage and training facilities for the 747s. The airline implied that this was part of the 25 to 30 million dollar expansion earlier planned for Wold-Chamberlain. Northwest also stated that the remaining part of the expansion at Wold-Chamberlain was still contingent upon the airport location decision. In a special meeting called for later that afternoon (June 4), the Commission agreed to go ahead with the 747 facilities at Wold-Chamberlain and to ask the Council to stop further consideration of the new Ham Lake order in view of Northwest's opposition.

The President of Northwest, Donald W. Nyrop, sent a telegram to the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul saying that Northwest was withdrawing its expansion requests and stated that before they were considered again the MAC would have to withdraw the Ham Lake proposal, settle the one or two airport decision, presumably in favor of one, and come to an agreement on how any new expansion or new facilities were to be financed. Governor LeVander of Minnesota, a Republican, then called for a meeting including himself, Nyrop, and the Commission, and Council Chairmen. The result of this meeting was that the Commission agreed to withdraw the proposal and to build the new facilities at Wold-Chamberlain. At subsequent meetings between the staffs of the Commission, the Council, and the airlines, a statement was issued that called for further study of the airspace conflict between Wold-Chamberlain and a southern airport, of the fog problems at both sites, and an origins and destination study of airport users. These ignored the more basic questions of the potential environmental problems and the future use of Wold-Chamberlain.

While these studies were being conducted debate continued, although at a lower level. The debate became focused on two questions. The first issue was that of one versus two airports and the future of Wold-Chamberlain. The second was the related problem of the financing of a new airport. Put quite simply, the MAC wanted to keep Wold-Chamberlain open because of the large fixed investment in facilities there and the considerable revenue generated by leasing the facilities to the airlines. If Wold-Chamberlain were to be closed down, the airlines would be freed from their obligation to pay the leases on the facilities. The MAC would then be responsible for the debt on the existing facilities as well as the debt incurred in building the new airport. The taxpayers of Minneapolis and St. Paul would have to carry this debt through the property taxes.



The Citizens League in a special study contended that this was the major reason for the Commission's attitude toward Wold-Chamberlain.<sup>25</sup> The Commission also contended that it was senseless to close Wold-Chamberlain. They maintained that it was a well equipped airport and that at some point in the future the demand for airspace in the Twin Cities would be such that the second airport would be needed. Consequently it would be shortsighted not to maintain Wold-Chamberlain, let alone shut it down.

The airlines were taking the opposite view, particularly Northwest who had the largest investment in facilities at the existing airport. Northwest maintained that they would not operate out of two sites and were reluctant at best to move to a northern site even if Wold-Chamberlain were closed. The airline pointed out that if Wold-Chamberlain were closed, the justifications for a northern site over a southern one on the basis of potential airspace conflicts were no longer supportable. Northwest then argued that since most of the flights came from the southeast or southwest and since a vast majority of employees and passengers lived on the southern side of the Twin Cities, a southern site made much more sense.

While this debate was going on, there was mounting pressure from people residing in the vicinity of Wold-Chamberlain to do something about the noise problem created by the increased use of jets.<sup>26</sup> Their demands to reduce the noise levels resulted in the first critical involvement in airport business by elected officials from either of the Twin Cities. Minneapolis has a ward-based city council. The citizens of South Minneapolis, the area adjacent to the airport, went to their councilor, Mrs. Gladys Brooks, asking if she could get the MAC and the airlines to reduce the noise levels and limit the noise to certain hours. Mrs. Brooks sent letters and pleas to the MAC and the airlines requesting their cooperation and introduced several city ordinances which would have restricted activity at the airport. She succeeded in stopping training flights and the testing of jet engines at night, in limiting the use of certain runways,<sup>27</sup> and in establishing a noise abatement council, MASAC, which had representatives from the MAC, the airlines, and citizens groups. These restrictions and the citizen interference were seen as a severe inconvenience by the MAC.

25. Citizens League, *New Airports for the 70's and After* (Minneapolis: Citizens League, 1969).

26. Stan Olson, "MASAC's Role," *Airport Services Management* Vol. 12, No. 10 (October 1971): pp. 24-26, and interview with Councilwoman Gladys Brooks, Aug. 23, 1972.

27. William K. Matheson, "Operational Procedures," *Airport Services Management* Vol. 12, No. 10 (October 1971): pp. 19-20.

These noise problems succeeded in generating additional incentives and pressures to get on with a new facility and to close Wold-Chamberlain or at least limit it to general aviation. During this time, the Council reiterated its previous position that the new airport should be a replacement for Wold-Chamberlain at least as far as commercial traffic was concerned. In December 1969 the three parties agreed that a potential site south of the two cities located at Rosemount-Farmington would be evaluated and compared to the Ham Lake site in the studies currently under way.

During this period of the controversy the Federal government passed and began to implement two pieces of legislation which specifically affected the deliberations in the Twin Cities.<sup>28</sup> The first was the Environmental Quality Act of 1969 which stated that all federally funded projects had to consider the environmental impact of the proposal and avoid detrimental impacts whenever possible. The second was the Airport and Airway Development Act of 1970. This latter bill supplements the first by stating that the Secretary of Transportation must approve all new sites or improvements before federal aid may be provided and that such approval may be forthcoming only after consultation with the Secretaries of HEW and the Interior to determine the effects on natural resources. Supposedly the Secretary of Transportation may not approve projects which have an adverse effect on the environment if a feasible alternative exists. If no such alternative exists, the Secretary must insure that all steps will be taken to minimize such effects. The implications of these bills for the deliberations in the Twin Cities are fairly obvious. Both the Commission and the Council initiated environmental impact studies by outside consultants of both the Ham Lake and Rosemount-Farmington sites.

During the spring and summer of 1970 the reports of the different consultants on airspace, meteorological, accessibility, and environmental problems were completed and reported to the Commission. One of the consultants, R. Dixon Speas Associates, summarized these reports in a document prepared for the Airports Commission in October 1970.<sup>29</sup> In this summary the Ham Lake site is preferable to, or at least not inferior on most grounds to the Rosemount-Farmington site on all criteria except

28. Robert Jorvig, "Synopsis of Airport Planning, 1968-1971," Metropolitan Council Memorandum, August 11, 1971, p. 2, and Harper, "The Airport Location Problem," pp. 574-576.

29. R. Dixon Speas Associates, "Summary Report of Studies and Documents Related to Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Second Major Airport Site Selection," October, 1970. Hereafter referred to as Speas, "Summary Report."

for a slight difference in potential accessibility.<sup>30</sup> According to the origin and destination survey and the projections made by the consultant for the year 1985, the average trip length to Ham Lake would be 48 minutes, compared to 42 minutes at Rosemount-Farmington. In terms of airspace Ham Lake was clearly preferable because it would not interfere with operations at Wold-Chamberlain. According to the report, a new airport at the southern site could only operate at 70 to 80 per cent of the capacity at Ham Lake for similar facilities because of the airspace conflicts. The meteorological consultant said that both sites were equivalent from the standpoint of meteorological interference. The main question here was the potential incidence of ground fog. The consultants and a physics professor from the University of Minnesota argued that there was no problem in this regard and in fact the problem might be less than at Wold-Chamberlain.

On the environmental question, they concluded that the Rosemount-Farmington site would require diversion of the Vermillion River, a small feeder of the Mississippi River, but this did not involve any ecological hazard because, "This river has not in the past received much attention from conservationists and recreationists. . . ." <sup>31</sup> With reference to the Ham Lake site, the consultant claimed that the new airport "will not necessarily adversely affect the ecological balance in the game refuge." <sup>32</sup> It was further suggested that a cooperative refuge/airport system could enhance and protect Carlos Avery.

A refuge/airport system could be designed and negotiated, which would provide a new concept in airport development and a more reasonable approach to otherwise conflicting needs of transportation and environment.<sup>33</sup>

Upon receipt of these reports, the Commission met and again voted approval of the Ham Lake site. On November 9, 1970 the Commission issued a "Revised Findings, Conclusions, and Orders" specifying that land be acquired at the Ham Lake site for the construction of the new airport. The Commission stated in its conclusions as follows.

This conclusion (to acquire the Ham Lake site) is essentially a reaffirmation of the conclusion arrived at through the Commission's "Findings, Conclu-

30. Speas, "Summary Report," pp. 6-9.

31. Speas, "Summary Report," p. 9.

32. Speas, "Summary Report," p. 9.

33. Speas, "Summary Report," p. 9.

sions, and Orders" of February 24, 1969 as to the location of the new major airport within the Anoka County lands studied and the subject of public hearings, revised solely to meet the requirements to make the same compatible with its environs.<sup>34</sup>

The Commission spent about 15 pages comparing the two sites and justifying its selection of Ham Lake.<sup>35</sup> These justifications pretty much incorporated the consultants findings, as summarized in the R. Dixon Speas Associates report. The accessibility of the southern site was minimized, ". . . accessibility to the two sites would be approximately equal (favoring the southern site by five and one-half minutes)," <sup>36</sup> while pointing out that the northern site was closer to the terminal handling most of the air freight which moved through the Twin Cities in 1968. The final aspects of the comparisons were the cost and financing estimates. At each point, the Commission maintained that the southern site would be more expensive. Land acquisition costs would be twice as much at Rosemount-Farmington, site preparation would be 10 per cent more, and an additional 37 million dollars in highway construction would be needed to provide adequate access to the airport. The conclusion of these findings was that the Ham Lake site could be financed without recourse to revenues from the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Rosemount-Farmington site, however, would require revenue from these sources.<sup>37</sup>

The Council wasted no time in beginning consideration of the Commission's Order. The Council's referral committee held public hearings on November 24, 1970. The Council staff prepared a long synopsis of the current issues, the findings of the different consultants with respect to Ham Lake, and made a series of recommendations to the Council.<sup>38</sup> For the most part the Council staff agreed with the findings and conclusions of the Commission. There were two major, highly significant, differences. One was that the Council staff said that the new airport should be the only commercial airport and that if Wold-Chamberlain stayed open it should only serve general aviation.<sup>39</sup> The second was that the Council staff

34. Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission, "Revised Findings, Conclusions, and Orders," November 9, 1970. Hereafter referred to as MAC, "Revised Findings."

35. MAC, "Revised Findings," pp. 33-47.

36. MAC, "Revised Findings," p. 43.

37. MAC, "Revised Findings," pp. 44-47.

38. Metropolitan Council, "Report of the Staff (Ham Lake Referral)," December 2, 1970. Hereafter referred to as MC, "Report of the Staff."

39. MC, "Report of the Staff," p. 14.

was not as sanguine as the Commission about the environmental compatibility of the airport and the natural resources adjacent to the Ham Lake site.<sup>40</sup> The Council staff claimed that,

It is clear that noise from the aircraft would have an adverse effect on man's enjoyment of observing the wildlife in Carlos Avery and for this reason would effect man's use of Carlos Avery.<sup>41</sup>

and in the next paragraph,

. . . it is clear that certain types of urban development will have an adverse effect on the fish, waterfowl, fowl and small game habitat in this area.<sup>42</sup>

The staff ends up by concluding though that because of the Airport Zoning Act

. . . the staff concludes that the airport can be built and operated compatible with natural resources by careful airport design and through operation of the Airport Zoning Act.<sup>43</sup>

On December 10, 1970 the referral committee met to make its recommendation to the Council. In this recommendation, the committee agreed that a new airport was needed, that it should be the only airport until at least the year 2,000, and that the Ham Lake site could not be developed without some permanent damage to the environment of the Ham Lake area.<sup>44</sup> The Council followed the recommendation of its referral committee by a 9-5 vote later on the same day. This amounted to a switch of one vote from the decision made in April, 1969 when the vote was 10-4. The reason given for the switch was that one Councilor had become convinced that the new airport at Ham Lake did not pose a threat to the quality of the water supply for the city of St. Paul.<sup>45</sup>

A map of the metropolitan area showing the Council districts, the incumbent Councilors at the time of the two airport votes, and the airport locations is given in figure 1. The Councilors and their districts voting for the Ham Lake proposal on the first vote were: Craig (3), Pennock (5),

40. MC, "Report of the Staff," pp. 49-59.

41. MC, "Report of the Staff," p. 52.

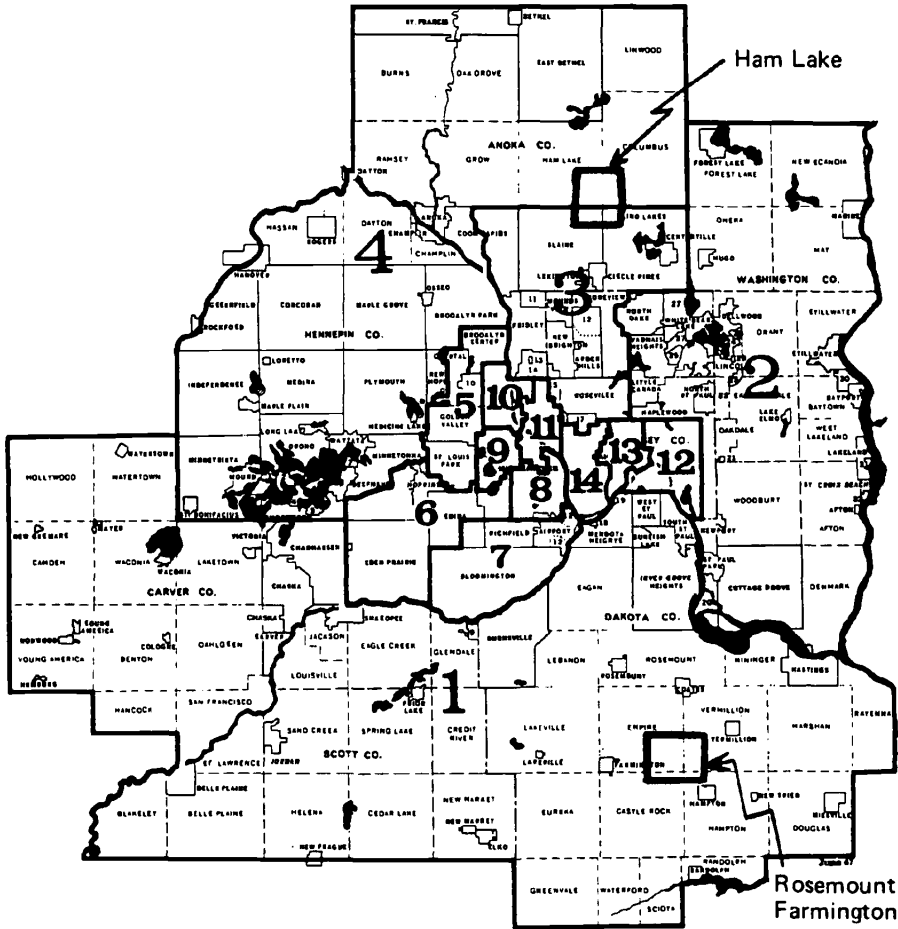
42. MC, "Report of the Staff," p. 52.

43. MC, "Report of the Staff," p. 59.

44. Metropolitan Council, "Report of the Referral Committee," December 10, 1970.

45. Statement of Mr. James Dorr to the Metropolitan Council, August 24, 1972.

Figure 1  
How the Council Represents the Area



The councilmen and their districts are as follows:  
Chairman—James L. Hetland, Jr., Minneapolis.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Marvin F. Borgelt,<br>West St. Paul.      | 6. Dennis Dunne, Edina.                    | 11. George W. Martens,<br>Minneapolis.     |
| 2. Milton L. Knoll, Jr.,<br>White Bear Lake. | 7. Clayton L. LeFevere,<br>Richfield.      | 12. The Rev. Norbert<br>Johnson, St. Paul. |
| 3. Joseph A. Craig, Coon<br>Rapids.          | 8. Glenn G. C. Olson,<br>Minneapolis.      | 13. Mrs. James L. Taylor,<br>St. Paul.     |
| 4. Donald Dayton, Way-<br>zata.              | 9. E. Peter Gillette, Jr.,<br>Minneapolis. | 14. Joseph A. Maun, St.<br>Paul.           |
| 5. George T. Pennock,<br>Golden Valley.      | 10. James L. Dorr, Minne-<br>apolis.       |  |

Dunne (6), and Maun (14). The Counselor to change his vote was Dorr (10).

When the Council transmitted its decision to the Commission, it included five suggestions for future action.<sup>46</sup> They suggested that work should begin on selecting a new site and that Rosemount-Farmington was a feasible site, but not the only one. It was also suggested that a long range plan for the future use of Wold-Chamberlain be developed, including future aviation needs, if any, and alternative uses of the land and buildings for commercial, industrial, residential or recreational purposes. This was desirable, the Commission claimed, in view of the need to eliminate the noise problem. The Council stated again that there should be only one commercial airport and that all the airlines should be in agreement on transferring to the new airport and on any future uses of Wold-Chamberlain. The Council also reiterated its position that the new site should be developed so as to have minimum effect on natural resources and allow for maximum joint airport and recreational use. Finally, the Council suggested the formation of a committee composed of representatives of the Council, the Commission, the airlines, and the environmentalists to consider potential sites and to make a recommendation to the Commission and to the Council. Included with these suggestions from the Council was a letter from the President of Northwest Airlines recommending that there be only one commercial airport, that Wold-Chamberlain should be phased out between 1978-82, that a southern site was preferred, and that NWA was willing to undertake the role as coordinator between the airlines and the MAC.<sup>47</sup>

The Airports Commission met on January 18, 1971 to consider the Council's suspension order. At this meeting, the Commission affirmed its policy that no part of the cost of the new airport or of abandonment of Wold-Chamberlain should fall on the taxpayers of Minneapolis and St. Paul. They also initiated a study assessing the financial impacts of closing Wold-Chamberlain. The essence of this report was a suggestion to accelerate the payoff period for the existing debt at Wold-Chamberlain by raising the airlines rents and usage fees and concurrently relying on the airlines to support bond financing for the development of the new airport. Predictably, the airlines strongly opposed this suggestion in a position paper sent to the Commission in March, 1971 and signed by six of the

46. Letter from Mr. James L. Hetland, Jr., Chairman of the Metropolitan Council, to Mr. Lawrence M. Hall, Chairman of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, December 23, 1970.

47. MAC, "Chronological Summary," p. 5.

eight airlines serving Wold-Chamberlain. In this paper, the airlines also stated that it was the job of the local authorities to decide on a new site and the airlines were not going to assume the power of decision in this area.<sup>48</sup>

No further formal action was taken during the remainder of the legislative session which ended in the spring of 1971. Several bills had been filed dealing with the airport question specifically and with the Airport Commission and the Metropolitan Council generally. Since both of these local bodies were created by the state legislature, the legislature has the right to alter their powers, procedures and authorities whenever it wishes. Although nothing came of these bills, their presence was enough to halt any action by the Commission.

Later in 1971 the Commission and the Council agreed to establish the Joint Committee suggested by the Council in its rejection letter in December, 1970. The only difference between the Joint Committee as established and the Council suggestion was that it did not contain airline or environmental representatives. It was constituted of eight members, four from the Commission and four from the Council. This Joint Committee had no formal powers, as people involved in the decision were quick to point out.<sup>49</sup> It was established as an ad hoc advisory body to both the Council and the Commission and neither body was in any way bound by any recommendations of the Joint Committee.

The advent of this Joint Committee instituted an important procedural change. The recommendation of this committee was not for a specific site, but for a "search area," and this recommendation then went directly to the Council for consideration. The Council then considered this recommendation in its airport systems Development Guide chapter on airport systems. In writing and approving this chapter, the Council is in a position of choosing between several areas. The decision puts the Council in the position of playing a positive decision-making role for the first time and presumably gives the Council more control over the decision. The Airport Commission does not have to go along with the Council's decision and could continue to pursue the Ham Lake site or any other alternative. However, it would be doing this in spite of a clear signal from the Council about what location is acceptable.

The Joint Committee agreed to consider four different sites. Two of these were Ham Lake and Rosemount-Farmington. The two new ones

48. MAC, "Chronological Summary," pp. 5-6.

49. Interview with Mr. Raymond G. Glumack, Director of Operations, Metropolitan Airports Commission, July 17, 1972.



were located slightly further from the downtown areas, one in the north and the other in the south and labeled the north and south search areas.

The Joint Committee met on July 24, 1972 to vote on its recommendation. This was one of the most interesting meetings of the prolonged controversy. The Committee took four votes. The first was a unanimous vote eliminating Ham Lake. Rosemount-Farmington was eliminated by a 7-1 count on the second vote. The dissenter was Marvin Borgelt, one of the Council members on the Committee. His Council district covered the entire southern tier of the metropolitan area, including the Rosemount-Farmington site. The third vote was on a motion to recommend the new southern search area. This motion did not pass on a 4-4 tie vote. The final motion was for the new north search area and this passed 4-3 with one abstention.

The interesting votes were cast by Martin Companion, a St. Paul AFL-CIO labor leader and the citizen member of the MAC appointed from St. Paul. He abstained on the vote for the north search area. Companion was a close personal and political associate of David Roe, the leader of the state AFL-CIO and former Minneapolis citizen commissioner on the MAC, who was supporting a northern site. A major concern of the unions in both cities and of the St. Paul politicians was the question of union jurisdiction at the new airport site. The Minneapolis unions had jurisdiction over any northern site while a southern site would belong to the St. Paul groups. Several people mentioned this as one of the economic considerations which had played a part in the controversy even though it was pointed out on several occasions that the MAC had always found a way to spread contracts fairly evenly between representatives of the two cities. However the unions in both cities and some politicians were concerned about this matter. Companion had previously stated however that he favored a northern site, but had not said why. At the time of the Joint Committee votes Companion had arranged with George Pennock, the Committee Chairman, to vote last on the final two motions. Pennock was a supporter of the northern site and had voted for Ham Lake both times it was considered by the Council. When it was Companion's turn to vote on the southern search area, he voted for the southern site saying he had received a telegram threatening his job if he did not vote for a southern site. This made the vote 4-4 and Pennock ruled that the motion had not passed. Companion also voted last, but then abstained on the motion to recommend the northern site. This resulted in the 4-3 vote with one abstention by which the motion passed. These two votes led to considerable bitterness among the supporters of the southern site who claimed that Pennock was not supposed to vote except in the case of a tie. They felt

Pennock had arranged this tie by letting Companion vote last so the vote was 3-3 when it was his turn to vote. Although Companion did not reveal who sent the telegram, there was considerable agreement among observers at the time that it came from the St. Pauls unions. This seems to be a case of an appointed official following his personal interests rather than those of a supposed constituency since all the elected St. Paul members voted for a southern site.<sup>50</sup>

The Joint Committee's recommendation was received by the Metropolitan Council and referred to the Development Guide Committee for inclusion in the airport systems chapter of the Guide. The Council convened on August 24, 1972 to consider and take a preliminary vote on this chapter. The only section to receive any attention was the discussion of the location for a new airport. Within the Council, debate centered on the economic questions. Environmental questions were no longer important. Several councilors who voted against Ham Lake said they now were supporting the new northern site because it did not have adverse environmental impacts. The major economic concern was the economic loss to the Bloomington-Richfield area specifically and the southern area generally. This concern was countered by an argument that the northern site would "redress the economic imbalance in the metropolitan area." Several councilors emphasized that they felt the current circumstances did not warrant proceeding with the new facility, but they were only voting for the Development Guide chapter stating where a future airport should be located. Finally, several councilors felt it was important for the Council to use this opportunity to go on record making a positive statement as to where a new airport should be to indicate they were not merely an obstructionist agency. The Council then voted 9-5 to accept the draft of the airport systems chapter specifying the northern site. The councilors casting no votes and their districts were: Borgelt (1) and Hoffman (7) from the southern areas, Johnson (12) and Reed (13) from St. Paul, and Martens (11) who was opposed to any new airport.

This will not terminate the controversy however. The Council must still hold public hearings on the airport chapter and then take a final vote. The expectations were however that the recommendation for a northern search area will stand. Then it is up to the Airports Commission to decide if they want to proceed with plans for a new airport and if they do, if they want to locate it in the northern search area. There is considerable speculation that the Commission may still come up with a plan of

50. This account was provided by Mr. David Rubin, Airports Program Manager for the Metropolitan Council, in a telephone conversation August, 5, 1972.

its own. The Executive Director of the MAC has publicly stated that he found a proposal by a St. Paul city councilor to expand Wold-Chamberlain interesting and thought it had possibilities. Furthermore, three of the St. Paul members of the Commission have indicated that they might vote against any northern site at this point. Under the rules establishing the Commission, this will be enough to block a northern site. If this happens, several people predicted that the state legislature may step in and restructure the Commission.

### **Influences on the Commission and Council Decisions**

It should be quite clear at this point that the single function agency, the MAC, gave different consideration to the issues involved in the airport location question than did the multipurpose body, the Council. Furthermore, there were indications that the appointed officials responded to different concerns and interests than did the elected officials. The question now is what have we learned about the ability of different governmental structures to handle the conflicts inherent in public policy decisions from the way these two organizations considered the issues in the airport location question. Unfortunately, given that we have only one case and several institutional differences, it is difficult to answer that question. It is not clear how much of the difference between the Commission and the Council decisions may be attributed to the fact that one is a specialized administrative agency and the other a multifunction policy body; that the Commissioners are elected officials, whereas the Councilors are appointed. However, it is possible to make some observations about these structural differences.

#### *Single function and multifunction agencies*

The overwhelming majority of the MAC decisions were the decisions of the MAC staff. The individual Commissioners seemed unconcerned about the operations and decisions of the Commission and gave the staff considerable discretion on these matters. At least until the airport location and noise questions arose, the Commissioners were continually accused of being a rubber stamp for the staff.<sup>51</sup> This lack of concern can be attrib-

51. Harper, "The Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission," pp. 381, 393 and 398.

uted both to the structuring of the Commission itself and to the actions of the staff who did a good job of avoiding problems which could arouse the Commissioners' constituents. The staff seemed solely concerned with airport operations and with avoiding problems such as tax increases which might cause the Commissioners to become involved in airport decisions. These two general objectives manifested themselves in the form of three criteria which the staff imposed on a new airport location. The MAC staff wanted to remain financially self-supporting, minimize potential air space conflicts, and avoid future urban development in the vicinity of the airport.

Staying off the tax rolls of the two major cities substantially reduced the likelihood of involvement by the Commissioners. Undoubtedly the mayors and councilors from the Twin Cities were more than happy not to have the airport operation adding to their property tax rate. The taxing arrangement of the MAC made some sense in 1943 when the Commission was established and the two cities had over 80 per cent of the metropolitan population. By 1970 this rate had fallen below 40 per cent, so that these citizens would be certain to object to financing the airport for the metropolitan area. The elected officials from each city, who comprise most of the Commission, can see this inequity and are likely to be strong supporters of the "zero-tax support" position. Thus, as long as the operations of the airport could be kept off the cities' tax rolls the Commissioners would be less motivated to participate in running the airports and the staff would have more autonomy. Maintaining "zero-tax support" necessitated keeping Wold-Chamberlain open and dictated the two airport solution favored by the MAC.

Once the MAC staff decided that Wold-Chamberlain would remain open, considerations of air space conflicts became very important. The MAC staff was continually receiving professional accolades for its efficient operations.<sup>52</sup> Widely separated air spaces, which permit easier methods of aircraft handling and the minimization of traffic delays, are certainly preferred from the standpoint of maintaining their professional reputation. Air space considerations virtually dictated a northern site, once it was decided to keep Wold-Chamberlain in operation. Any southern site which avoided a conflict with Wold-Chamberlain would have been too far from either city to be practical. However, at one of the Joint Committee meetings an FAA official said it is possible to take a three dimen-

52. Harper, "The Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission," p. 381, and John F. Judge, "The Minneapolis-St. Paul Dilemma," *Air Line Pilot* Vol. 41, No. 3 (March 1972), pp. 6-9.

sional view of the problem. This in effect means layering the approach routes rather than following the two dimensional view the Commission was taking by laying out rectangles on maps to define airspace.<sup>53</sup> This three dimensional concept provides more flexibility and airspace, but is difficult to control. It would have meant that Rosemount-Farmington might be compatible with Wold-Chamberlain. The staff was not enthusiastic about the idea and had either rejected it or had not considered it earlier.

The final consideration to which the Commission seemed to give considerable weight was the potential for future urban development. Preventing potential development near the airport minimized future difficulties from noise and pollution and the resulting demands that restrictions be placed on aircraft and airport operations. This consideration of land usage favored the Ham Lake site with the refuge to the northeast and its abundance of undevelopable wetlands, peat bogs, and marshland on the remaining sides. On this criterion, Ham Lake was preferable to any other site, north or south. This land also was available at the lowest price, but the low potential for future development and the reduced airspace problem, given that Wold-Chamberlain was to stay open, were the prime considerations in the Commission decision.

There is no question that the attributes the Commission was concerned about—the minimization of airspace conflicts and the lower potential for a noise problem—are to be valued in an airport site. But what are these advantages worth? Locating the airport next to the refuge involved some trade-off between the advantages of reduced airspace conflicts and noise pollution and the costs of uncertain risk to wildlife and some damage to the value of the refuge, even though people could reasonably disagree about the magnitude of the potential damage. The staff of the MAC minimized both the amount and extent of these damages and were clearly willing to make the trade in favor of reduced airspace and noise pollution problems.<sup>54</sup>

The objectives and decision criteria of the Metropolitan Council are not so easy to define. It would be easy to claim that the Council had the reverse view of the trade-off made by the Airports Commission since they

53. July 17, 1972 meeting of the Joint Committee.

54. One MAC staffer pointed out the relatively small amount of land involved by showing what area the refuge would cover if placed adjacent to the existing airport. In this case the refuge would extend well beyond areas currently experiencing any inconvenience from air traffic. His conclusion was that the airport would not seriously affect the preserve. Interview with Mr. William Olson, Project Engineer for the Metropolitan Airports Commission, July 17, 1972.

approved a northern site after rejecting Ham Lake. However, this is probably not the whole case. To be sure, the Council and its staff did consider the risk the Ham Lake site held for the Carlos Avery and for water quality in the area. The switch from a 9-5 vote against Ham Lake to a 9-5 vote for the new northern search area can be partly attributed to the reduced environmental risks associated with the new location. The veracity of these statements was supported by the transportation planner for the Council. In July he said several councilors had opposed Ham Lake for environmental reasons and predicted they would vote for a northern site. In addition, Mr. Dorr's stated reason for changing his vote on the Ham Lake site the second time it came up for Council consideration was that he had been convinced by various consultants that it would not endanger water quality in the area. The Council also stated that possible harm to the environment was one of the reasons for suspending the Commission's proposal each time it did so. Consequently it seems fair to conclude that the Council was giving more weight to the environmental risks than was the Airport Commission.

There were several other considerations in the Council decisions, however, which complicate the analysis. The most important of these was the question of the distribution of the economic benefits expected to be associated with the airport. The Councilors' votes in part reflected these economic impacts, particularly after the environmental questions were settled. The lengthy arguments by Mr. Hoffman against the northern search area, his and Mr. Borgelt's votes against this proposal, and the favorable votes of the councilors from northern and western areas reflect these considerations. Councilors' votes did not always reflect the expected interests of their districts on this matter, however. One councilor from a southern district, Dennis Dunne, voted for the Ham Lake site and the northern search area. He was the President of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, and a suggestion was made that he was voting the Chamber's interests. The Chamber hoped that a northern site would help the downtown area regain some of the business it had lost to southern establishments since the expansion of the airport, the construction of the stadium, and the growth of new manufacturing firms and their associated commercial interests and population. The Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce had come out strongly in favor of the Ham Lake site when it was first proposed.

The second dimension to the geographic issue was the split between Minneapolis and St. Paul. In addition to the important question of union jurisdiction, it was generally agreed that Minneapolis stood to gain more from a northern site and St. Paul more from a southern one. This was

particularly true if the new northern search area was selected, since it is further west than Ham Lake. The implications of these city differences were apparent in the three Council votes. Two of the three St. Paul members of the Council voted against both Ham Lake and the proposed northern search area. The only St. Paul councilor not to do so had been the St. Paul citizen representative on the Airports Commission until late 1967, when he was appointed to the Metropolitan Council. The Minneapolis councilors had opposed Ham Lake, but when the votes were cast for the new northern search area, three of the four Minneapolis councilors voted yes. The no vote was cast by George Martens who said he opposed building any new airport and thought the money could be put to better use elsewhere.

The Airport Commissioners did not become concerned about the Minneapolis versus St. Paul question until after the Joint Committee decision to go north, even though the two cities have equal representation on the Commission. The new concern on the part of the St. Paul commissioners is mostly attributable to a change in the membership. During the course of the controversy the citizens of St. Paul elected a much more active mayor and city council. Although these elections cannot be related strictly to the airport issue, they changed the complexion on the Commission.

There is one piece of evidence to suggest that the Council was functioning as a general legislative body trying to consider the overall distribution of the economic benefits associated with different projects within the metropolitan area. During Council deliberations on a proposal by the Metropolitan Transit Authority to build a rail rapid transit system, one of the councilors suggested deferring the vote until the airport decision came up. He then proposed to one of the other councilors that he would vote for the rapid transit if the other member would support a northern site. The offer was declined for any number of possible reasons, such as the trade would not have changed the outcome of either vote. Whatever the reason, it shows that the Council tried to relate the consequences of one decision to an outcome on a different issue, particularly with respect to the distributional question.

The final consideration which seemed to affect the Council's decision was a consideration of Northwest Airlines interests. As was pointed out, the airline was vigorously opposed to both the two-airport concept and a northern site. The Council, although it eventually adopted a northern site, consistently backed Northwest's demand for a single airport. This seems to be more important to the airlines than having a southern site. It is likely that the Council is more sensitive than the MAC to North-

west's threats to move their operations elsewhere. If Northwest did go through with this plan it could affect the local economy in a significant fashion, particularly on the southside where most of the 6,000 employees live. This may not be the only reason the Council supported the airlines, but it is in a better position than the MAC to see the economic consequences of a move by Northwest.

On balance it becomes difficult to say precisely what weight the Council gave the various factors in considering and rejecting the Ham Lake proposal and in selecting the new northern search area. They appeared to be more concerned with the environmental effects, the economic impact of the activity associated with the airport, and possibly the interest of a large local business which would be significantly affected by the location decision. It should be clear that the Council considered a much broader set of issues than did the Airport Commission and its staff who were almost solely concerned with their cash flow, airspace conflicts, and the absence of existing or potential urban development.

#### *Elected and appointed officials*

There are noticeable differences between the behavior of the elected and the appointed participants in the airport location controversy. The differences are not apparent until late in the case because the only elected officials are the MAC Commissioners who played a minor role in the early decisions to locate a new airport at Ham Lake. The Commissioners' apathy toward Commission decisions suggests that unless officials are elected directly to the decision-making agency and held responsible for agency decisions in the eyes of the voters, they are not likely to be active participants.

The first elected official to take an active role in MAC affairs was Gladys Brooks, the Minneapolis city councilwoman, whose ward adjoins the airport. In response to her constituents' complaints about the noise level at Wold-Chamberlain she was able to get the MAC to agree to participate in a sound abatement council and to restrict operations at Wold-Chamberlain. She subsequently requested and was appointed by the Minneapolis city council to a seat on the MAC and served on the Joint Committee. She has been a proponent of the new airport because it would alleviate the noise problem in her ward and voted for the southern site on the Joint Committee because it is more convenient to her district.<sup>55</sup>

55. These statements were made in an interview with Mrs. Gladys Brooks, August 23, 1972.



The other elected official to take an active role in the case was Leonard Levine, a young St. Paul city commissioner who was appointed to the MAC in 1971. Levine proposed expanding the current airport by constructing a set of detached runways in Eagan Township, across the Minnesota River from Wold-Chamberlain. He came from the Highland Park area of St. Paul, the part of that city closest to the airport. He was a leader of the Highland Park Community Council which had been protesting the increased air traffic noise. Levine first ran for one of the St. Paul city commission positions, which are elected at-large, on a platform advocating, among other things, a reduction in airport noise levels. Levine opposed all four potential sites for a new airport. He opposed Ham Lake because of its potential impact on St. Paul water quality. The reasons he gave for opposing the new sites, both north and south, and for his proposal to expand Wold-Chamberlain was that the new sites were too far from the cities, that people would not use the new airport, and that it would be another Dulles, which he pointed out was operating at a deficit.

There are several representational explanations for Levine's positions. The most important fact is that Levine must run at-large both to hold his seat or to move to higher office. One reason for his opposition to a northern site is simply that St. Paul would benefit more from a southern site. The St. Paul AFL-CIO of course was opposed to a northern site where the Minneapolis unions have jurisdiction and union support is important for any Democrat running at-large in St. Paul. Another reason is simply the cost question. The MAC staff and their financial consultant estimated that if the Council enforced the one airport requirement the new airport would require tax support which would only come from the two central cities. It is reasonable to expect that the people of St. Paul will object to paying for the new airport since most of the metropolitan population resides in the suburbs. This financial consideration may have been the motivation behind Levine's detached runway proposal, which would be considerably cheaper. Of course this would not alleviate the noise problem at Wold-Chamberlain and the citizens in its vicinity were strongly opposed to Levine's proposal, as were the people of Eagan Township—who of course do not vote in St. Paul. Several people said Levine was in trouble with his constituents in Highland Park because of the proposal and his opposition to a new airport. Presumably to counter this problem Levine had the MAC authorize a poll in areas around the airport on reactions to the noise problem. The results of the survey purport to show that people preferred to have a convenient airport, even at the cost of the noise problem, and that people felt that aircraft noise was no worse now than it

was a few years ago. However Levine's critics were quick to point out that the survey was taken while Northwest Airlines was still shut down by a pilots' strike which had been going on for several months.

The individual councilors and appointed commissioners did not exhibit the sort of constituency orientation shown by the elected officials. The discussion of the Council's consideration of the economic impacts of the airport location suggested that some of the councilors' votes, such as Hoffman, Borgelt, and the northern members, were consistent with their districts' interests. However there were also some which possibly were not, such as Dunne's which was more consistent with the interests of the Chamber of Commerce. The one versus two airport issue and the question of Northwest's interests also suggests that some councilors may have been influenced by personal considerations. Several of the councilors have personal economic interests which would be adversely affected if Northwest were to move most of its operations to another city. One councilor is an officer in a local bank, one founded the metropolitan area's largest department store, and another is a local realtor. If Northwest were to substantially reduce the size of its local payroll and transfer jobs out of the area it would seriously affect the prosperity of all three concerns. In addition, one of these people was a personal friend of the president of Northwest Airlines. The realtor voted no on all three votes and stated his opposition to any new airport. The other two men both voted against the Ham Lake site and for the northern search area. However both said they were opposed to a new airport at the present time but were voting yes because they felt the future of the Council required a positive vote. One of the people interviewed who is close to both the Council and the airport decision said these economic and personal effects were strong enough to make the councilors at least sympathetic to Northwest's interests, if not to vote on those interests on several occasions.

The most interesting behavior from the representational standpoint was Companion's votes at the last meeting of the Joint Committee which recommended the north search area. His arrangement with Pennock and his abstention on the vote for the north site were better expressions of personal interest than of supposed constituency concerns. Companion supported the north site in spite of considerable pressure from an important St. Paul constituent group, the AFL-CIO, who supposedly threatened him with the usual pressure reserved for elected officials. However in Companion's case the threat was not effective, possibly because of his tie to the state AFL-CIO leader. The fact that the elected St. Paul Commissioner on the Joint Committee voted for the southern site and that all three elected St. Paul Commissioners have subsequently stated that they

will not support a northern site should indicate the extent to which Companion deviated from the position preferred by his nominal constituency.

The votes of some of the councilors and Companion's behavior on the Joint Committee indicate that personal preferences, private loyalties, and personal objectives can play an important role in the decisions of appointed officials. Personal considerations are not absent from elected officials' decisions although they seemed less important for the few elected officials involved in the case. The major difference however is that voters, if they are so motivated, can take sanctions against elected officials who put their personal views above constituency concerns. In the case of an appointed official, the question of sanctions is left up to the appointing individual or body, or to private organizations such as the AFL-CIO or the Chamber of Commerce. These may be of limited value if sanctions are felt to be a useful or necessary control.

The decisions of the Commission and the Council and the behavior of the individuals associated with both organizations support most of the expectations about the effects of institutional structure on public decisions. The single function, executive type agency, the MAC, took a much narrower view of the problem of locating an airport and gave much greater weight to the issues of financing and operating the new facility than did the Metropolitan Council, the general purpose, multifunction body. Secondly, the elected officials, such as Brooks, seemed more sensitive to constituency concerns and less susceptible to private pressures and personal considerations than did the appointed officials, like Companion and Dunne, although this could only be examined in a limited fashion here. These differences should be important when it comes to designing and altering governmental institutions.

### **Who Decides and What Difference Does It Make?**

The characteristic of public policy decisions which sets them apart from private decisions and which presents a problem for the design of governmental structures is the need to accommodate the legitimate but conflicting interests and values associated with public activities. Conflicts arise in part because of the collective nature of the decisions. We can use the environment to support technological advances, such as air travel, or we can use it to support wildlife and recreation. However we cannot do both, at least to the degree that some people wish. Consequently there were conflicts in the Twin Cities over differences in the values attached to such things as additional airport capacity, the reduction of aircraft noise in resi-

dential areas, the presence of a large bird sanctuary and the possibility of harm to it caused by low flying planes, and avoidance of potential damage to water quality if the swamp areas were drained and the water runoff from the airport allowed to drain into the water shed.

A second source of conflict in most public decisions, and which was apparent in the airport location decision, is that attempts to improve the level, quality, or distribution of one public service invariably have significant impacts on other public activities. In this case the initial decision was to expand the capacity of the air terminal and to reduce the level of noise pollution in populated areas. The consequences of that decision were changes in the distribution of income in the region, as it is effected by the level of economic activity, decreased enjoyment of a large wildlife sanctuary, and major alterations in the accessibility of a major transportation and workplace center for many people.

The need for a collective decision on matters of land use and environmental policy and the consequences of the airport location decision for issues outside the field of air transportation were at the root of the conflicts in the decisions by the MAC and the Council. The behavior of the MAC and the Council and of the members of these organizations suggests that a multifunctional legislative type body whose purpose is to make choices among different activities and to control the various operating agencies can do a better job of mediating the conflicts generated by these different activities and their consequences than the special function agencies. An important characteristic of the Council in this regard is that it has no operating responsibilities and is not in the position of trying to sell people on the advantages of one particular activity, such as more sewers, rail transit, or an expanded airport. The Council's sole function is to insure that the decision process is sensitive to all the conflicting interests associated with each activity. Mr. James Hetland, the first Chairman of the Metropolitan Council, underscored this responsibility by saying that the Council will be much more effective once it recognizes that it is not supposed to completely agree with the different operating agencies, but is supposed to be in conflict with them on the levels of service, where activities will be located, and how they will be provided. He said the Council's job is to make these decisions and that it necessarily involves disagreeing with the special agencies because each organization has different functions to perform.<sup>56</sup>

The experiences of the Metropolitan Council also suggest that a body

56. Interview with Mr. James L. Hetland, Jr., Vice-President, First National Bank of Minneapolis, August 23, 1972.

structured to include all the legitimate conflicts of interests involved in public policy decisions and which has no administrative functions of its own makes more appropriate use of its staff and the information they provide than the executive agencies. The Council staff did not try to promote or even suggest a particular decision during the controversy. It presented its evaluations of the MAC consultant's reports and its own analysis of the various consequences of each alternative on matters which concerned the Council, such as aviation needs and economic and environmental impacts. In each of its presentations the Council staff was subjected to considerable cross-examination by the councilors. This cross-examination usually brought out additional questions and considerations relevant to the decision which the staff had not included, even though they had tried to anticipate councilors' concerns. Consequently the Council not only had control of its staff but was able to draw a considerable amount of analysis out of it.

The better experiences of the Council with respect to its staff may be accounted for by several explanations, even though we may assume that the general objectives of the Council staff were similar to those of the MAC staff in that both presumably had a strong professional orientation and wanted to maintain their autonomy. In the first place fulfilling the professional objectives of the Council staff did not require the promotion of any particular public policies such as rail transit or additional air space. Consequently the staff had less of a vested interest in the final decisions of the Council from a professional standpoint. Secondly, because the various interests involved in the decision were represented on the Council, although possibly not in the most desired fashion, the staff was subject to serious cross-examination which would have revealed biases on their part. At the same time, because there were councilors with strong interests on both sides of the issue, the best way for the staff to keep its independence in the long run was to avoid taking sides or getting drawn into the controversy in terms of promoting particular outcomes. In fact one of the staff members of the Council involved in both the airport and the transit issues said that his strategy was to stick with the analysis and avoid the appearance of taking sides. The most likely circumstance in which this strategy would break down is if one person or group came to dominate the council decisions and thus to "own" the staff. However in a multifunction body with many cross-cutting issues and interests it is unlikely that such a dominant group could emerge.

It is important that a multifunctional body be charged with the task of mediating the public policy conflicts and making sure that all the interests associated with a decision have an opportunity to influence that decision.

The most obvious reason for this requirement is that much of the conflict results because decisions in one area affect activities in other areas and special function agencies cannot take account of these relationships. Because the Airports Commission does not have any responsibility for environmental matters or for regional income distribution there is no way it can adequately arbitrate between those interests who want to get a new airport and those who want to protect the bird sanctuary or those who are concerned about the possible decline of economic activity in part of the region. A multifunction organization whose sole responsibility is to mediate the conflicts inherent in public policy decisions and whose members are tied to the participants in the conflict by some means of institutional design, such as by district constituencies, stands a better chance of at least debating the programmatic conflicts.

A second important reason for having decisions made by a multipurpose body is its ability to execute side payments among groups who have opposing interests. There were no apparent examples of this taking place in this case, however. The closest the Council came to doing this was the councilor who supposedly suggested that his vote on the rail transit question could be tied to promises to vote for the northern search area. In part the absence of visible side-payments or log-rolls may have resulted from the fact that each area wanted to get the airport rather than prevent its presence. In most cities the contrary is true; each area is fighting to block the construction of the airport in their vicinity even though they may agree in theory that a new facility is needed. We could envision a situation where the citizens in south Minneapolis, Highland Park, and Eagan Township, for example, were trying to force the construction of a new airport to get rid of the noise problem and airport users were demanding a new facility because of congested conditions at the current one but wanted to maintain the convenience of the existing location. Each time the local authority proposed a possible site the citizens of that area would get sufficiently aroused to block the proposal either through public hearings, the state legislature, or court proceedings. A multifunctional body such as the Metropolitan Council, if they had control of the various functional agencies, could then arrange a set of side-payments or log-rolls whereby any area willing to accept the airport could be promised additional positively valued services, such as mass transit, parks, etc. These types of side-payments in kind are about the only compensations possible in the public sector because it is not possible to explicitly reduce the tax rate in one area simply because it agrees to accept certain costs in the form of undesirable activities. These compensations can only be accomplished by an organization which has control over the operations of

the various specific departments or agencies. In this regard, Mr. Hetland also said that for the Council to become effective it had to have the ability to get budgetary control of the operating agencies, such as the Sewer Board, the Transit Commission, etc. so that the Council had some control over how the operations were conducted and which areas received what kind of services.<sup>57</sup>

The requirements for membership and the procedure used to select members are also important in how well different interests will be considered. One of the characteristics which made the Council more effective than the Commission was the fact that Council members represented specific geographic districts throughout the metropolitan area, even though the Councilors were not accountable to their districts and some did deviate from district concerns. Since the interests affected by most public decisions are not uniformly distributed over a metropolitan region, a geographic pattern of representation means the various groups with an interest in the decision are likely to be explicitly included in the deliberations. This is certainly not the case with the MAC or with many single-function agencies where the governing board, the commissioners, or the directors are appointed for their expertise, political connections, etc. and without regard to any systematic representational criteria. The question of apportionment is clearly important and application of the one-man, one-vote criteria would surely be a necessity. A Council of Governments in which Eagan Township or the other suburban communities had an equal voice with Minneapolis or St. Paul would distort the representational gains made by moving to a Metropolitan Council type legislature. The Council solves this problem by making Council districts coterminous with state legislative districts which by law should be apportioned equally.

The procedure used to select the members of the legislative body does have an important bearing on how various interests will influence public decisions. Elected officials seem to be more concerned with the interests and concerns of their immediate electoral constituency and less influenced by outside private organizations and personal considerations than appointed officials. Of course elected officials are not immune from these latter influences, but they presumably give relatively less weight to them, particularly if the elected office constitutes a full time occupation. Though not particularly surprising, this is an important observation when combined with the previous observation that membership on the decision

57. Interview with Mr. James L. Hetland, Jr., Vice-President, First National Bank of Minneapolis, August 23, 1972.

making body should be district based. The logic for requiring elected officials is that they are more likely to insure that various interests are represented in the decision process and have an opportunity to express themselves in an influential way. Numerous people, including several incumbent councilors, in discussing the future of the Council, said it was a necessary and hopefully an imminent step to make the council an elected body. Their reasoning was precisely the argument presented here. Since the councilors' function is to insure that the various metropolitan interests are taken into account in planning and development decisions, it is necessary to have them elected by the people who hold those interests.

The implications of this case and the conclusions of this paper are quite straightforward. The best way to insure adequate consideration of the legitimate interests associated with decisions in the public sector is by a multipurpose legislative type body which has jurisdiction and control over the various functional agencies or departments and whose members are elected from equal sized districts throughout the area affected by the decisions.

#### **COMMENT**

**Richard E. Quandt, Princeton University**

The problem of locating an airport provides an almost ideal framework for discussing some important questions that often arise in large public investment projects. These include some very general questions such as (a) how one should quantify, for purposes of a cost-benefit analysis, certain items that are generally regarded as defying quantification and (b) whether certain requirements, frequently of an environmental nature, should be regarded as inviolable constraints upon the airport location decision or whether they should be quantified and entered into the objective function. On a more specific level airport location problems force us simultaneously to deal with policy variables (land-use and regional planning targets), endogenous variables (traffic generation, modal split, air traffic control, surface access, etc.) and exogenous variables (meteorological and geographic data). John Jackson's fascinating and at the same time somewhat depressing case history of the Minneapolis airport location problem focuses on one particularly important aspect, namely on the nature of the body (or bodies) responsible for making the location decision and on the possible consequences for the ultimate decision of the composition and aims of such bodies. His basic finding is that a



multifunction legislative body with elected members representing all affected constituencies is the most suitable type of body because (a) it can do a better job of mediating conflicts that arise in connection with the airport location decision, (b) it can better execute side payments and provide compensation to those whose interests may be injured by the decision, and (c) it can be expected to be more responsive to the interests of the electorate.

These are reasonable conclusions and it is not my aim to challenge them. Rather I should like to consider further (a) some of the particular problems involved in locating a new airport, (b) the entire locational decision-making process with specific reference to what is probably the most systematic and massive effort in this regard, namely the work of the Roskill Commission on locating the third London airport.

It may be difficult to measure precisely when a process designed to produce an airport location decision was in fact initiated. In Minneapolis this process started no later than 1968 and, as far as I understand, has not terminated yet; nor is there any promise of speedy termination in the future. The mind boggles at the thought of how long the fourth New York jetport has been under discussion. In contrast, the appointment of the Roskill Commission and its terms of reference were announced in the House of Commons in May 1968; the Commission completed its inquiry and produced its report by late 1970 and a decision was made by the Government in April 1971. In spite of the fact that there had been discussions and white papers concerning a third London airport prior to 1968, the Commission appears to have been justified in its rather understated view that "The story of the fourth airport in New York is, we believe, longer than the story of the third London airport."<sup>1</sup>

What is the source of the difference? In Minneapolis at least the story appears to be one of a sequence of paralyzing strokes and counterstrokes by the Metropolitan Council or the Metropolitan Airports Commission, or by Northwest Airlines, or representatives of South Minneapolis interests or representatives of St. Paul interests, etc. It is bad enough to have the Commission and the Council, with their significantly different mandates and functional aims, both involved in the decision making process; this is compounded by blackmail by private business interests and by the conflict of interests that arises from the fact that any Minneapolis airport, as indeed many others including the New York airports,

1. Commission on the Third London Airport, "Report," HMSO, 1971, p. 6. Hereafter referred to as Commission, "Report."

would lie near the boundaries of several municipalities or jurisdictions each of which must concur in any decision.

The contrast between the decision making structure in Minneapolis and the Commission on the Third London Airport is enormous. The members of the Commission were appointed by the President of the Board of Trade for the single task of recommending a site, if any, for the third London airport. They themselves had no vested interest in the decision to be made; they were neither to be reelected by any constituency nor reappointed by any authority to a body with continuing existence. Their recommendation was to be made directly to the Government. Among their members we find a judge (the Chairman), three professors (of transport, economics, and aircraft design, respectively), a partner in an engineering firm, an inspector from the Department of the Environment and the deputy chairman of a large business firm. The terms of reference given to the Commission specifically instructed its members to consider questions of planning, noise, agriculture and environment, air traffic control, surface access, and defense and to employ cost-benefit analysis. The Commission felt, and nobody would accuse any of the participants in the Minneapolis situation of harboring similar anxieties, that "Not the least of the tasks facing the Commission upon its appointment was the need to establish public confidence that its work would be impartial, unbiased and entirely uninfluenced by anything which had gone before."<sup>2</sup>

The work of the Commission proceeded in five stages. In the first stage public and commercial organizations were invited to present evidence on problems of regional planning, noise, surface access, etc. and extensive hearings were held. Next local hearings were held at potential sites and the Commission welcomed the formation of "resistance groups" in the various localities. In the third stage the Commission's Research Team engaged in detailed investigations of all aspects of the airport location problem from traffic forecasts to questions of locating particular runways, etc. This was followed by discussion among outside experts and the Research Team. The final stage consisted of one more set of public hearings. The outcome of all these deliberations was an impressive tableau in which the Commission listed for each of the four potential sites on the short list (Cublington, Thurleigh, Nuthampstead, Foulness) some 20 categories of associated cost.<sup>3</sup> Not all costs were explicitly entered

2. Commission, "Report," p. 10.

3. One may fault the procedure because of its omission of computing explicit benefits. Given the forecast that existing airport capacity was inadequate to meet future

here. Neither the destruction of the breeding grounds of the brown bellied Brent goose that would result from locating the airport at Foulness nor the destruction of Stewkley Church, said to be the finest example of Norman architecture in England, that might occur if Cublington were selected were explicitly quantified. Yet the Commission attempted to determine all costs, whether these were actually to be incurred as in the case of airport construction costs or whether they were purely notional as the cost figures associated with noise pollution. In all this work the Commission attempted to view the matter in a general equilibrium framework. Examples of this range from purely technical matters to rather broad policy questions. Among the former we find that the construction of the airport at Foulness (but not at the other sites) would have necessitated an expansion of the relatively minor airport at Luton; the increase in noise at Luton was appropriately attributed to Foulness. Among the latter we find the attempt to coordinate with the South East Joint Planning Team, an independent government body responsible for developing and implementing regional plans for the South East region. They attempted to obtain at least qualitative indications of undesirability even in those matters where they abandoned the hope of quantification: it turned out that Stewkley Church could be moved whereas the Brent geese appeared to be resistant to persuasion to change their habitat.

The sum of all costs was a minimum for the Cublington site and this is the site that the Commission recommended.

Although the comprehensiveness and the dispatch with which the Research Team and the Commission dealt with the task at hand are impressive, these characteristics do not insure that all analyses and, indeed, the final decision itself are correct. It must be recorded that the work of the Research Team, its methodology, its data and its assumptions have come under serious fire from a number of scholars, engineers and consultants.<sup>4</sup> Nor does a decision-making structure such as the Commission's

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demand, the benefits from providing additional capacity were in fact postulated rather than demonstrated empirically. This aspect of the Roskill procedure is particularly subject to criticism in the light of the opinions that emerged during the latter part of the Commission's work to the effect that existing airport capacity at Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted, with possible additions, was adequate to meet the foreseeable demand until sometime in the 1980's. See "Who Needs Wing," *Economist* (December 26, 1970): 65-67.

4. See for example, J. Parry Lewis, "Misused Techniques of Planning: The Forecasts of Roskill," *Regional Studies* 5 (1971): 145-155; F. A. Sharman, "The Third London Airport," *Regional Studies* 5 (1971): 135-143; N. Lichfield, "Cost-Benefit Analysis in Planning: A Critique of the Roskill Commission," *Regional Studies* 5 (1971): 157-183; E. J. Mishan, "What is Wrong with Roskill," *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy* 4 (1970): 221-234 and others.

guarantee that the criteria of decision making are uniformly accepted: one need only point to Buchanan's dissent from the majority opinion in which he (a) rejects the compelling nature of an explicit cost-benefit calculus and (b) tends to treat environmental consequences as absolute constraints rather than part of the objective function. Be that as it may, the majority of the Commission accepted the principle of decision making expressed in the following:

We believe therefore that, following our refusal to accept the existence of any absolute constraint upon the choice of site, the right answer in the interests of the nation rests in a choice of site which, however damaging to some, affords on a balanced judgment of advantages and disadvantages the best opportunity of benefiting the nation as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

It seems to me that the principal differences between the cases of London and Minneapolis are three-fold. (1) The Roskill Commission explicitly adopted an overall cost-benefit calculation and the aggregate of miscellaneous participants in the Minneapolis case have not. That is not to say that the examination of issues in the case of Minneapolis did not, item by item, consider the same issues as the Roskill Commission did, such as noise, environmental factors, surface access, air traffic control, regional impact, etc. It is just that there seems to be no evidence that (a) all these items were costed out according to some reasonably objective and uniform methodology and (b) that all costs were aggregated for purposes of making a final decision. (2) A second and not unrelated difference is that in the Roskill case the principals had no vested interests, did not represent constituencies with veto powers and could be regarded as repositories of a social welfare function as much as this could ever be hoped. These two differences are responsible for the fact that a recommendation was made speedily and for the belief that it had been arrived at fairly and rationally.<sup>6</sup> (3) The ultimate decision-making body in the Roskill case was the national government, satisfying Jackson's requirement that the decision be made by a multifunction elected body, but one much broader in scope than the particular decision at hand. Although elected, many of the participants in the final decision

5. Commission, "Report," p. 137.

6. Not all observers are fully agreed on this latter point. The Commission has been severely criticized by some for being neither a fair nor an entirely rational decision-making body.

could not have had as specific a vested interest in it as did the members of the Minneapolis Metropolitan Council.

In contrast, the Minneapolis case appears to be characterized by a decision-making process in which (a) those responsible for making the decision had a strong vested interest, (b) they could effectively block action, and (c) it never became necessary to evaluate the aggregate cost-benefit. The only major advantage of such a procedure is that no decision need be made until and unless an appropriate process of compensation is agreed upon. Although the Roskill Commission was fully aware of the need to compensate the losers from any rearrangement in the social fabric, the structure of the Commission did not ensure that such compensation would actually be paid; rather this matter was left up to the Government and Parliament. These considerations must have influenced the Government to reject in April, 1971 the site recommended by the Commission and to choose Foulness instead. The principal reason for this seems to have been the persuasive nature of the arguments put forth by Buchanan who felt that the environmental damage at Foulness was less than at the other sites. Added to this was the apparently growing concern that some of the intangibles, the cost associated with noise pollution, the defacing of the Buckinghamshire countryside, etc., had not been correctly evaluated in the cost-benefit analysis. Since no adequate mechanism of compensation could be devised, the Government preferred the site with the lesser environmental damage and possibly lesser cost to the nontraveling public. In the Minneapolis case, and certainly under Jackson's preferred system, the guarantee of compensation can at least in principle be made part of the price for agreeing to a decision at all. But the need for compensation ought ideally to be ascertained by some objective criterion by objective investigators; it ought to be fixed in magnitude by a broadly constituted legislature and ought not depend on the relative bargaining strengths of a very small number of people. Consequently, although one must agree with Jackson that among the systems that are at least partially present in the Minneapolis case, a multifunction body of elected representatives for decision making is preferable to other alternatives, I find it difficult to ignore the advantages of Roskill.