SUMMARY

The decades of the 1970's will be remembered for many things, not the least of which is the fact that this was the period when the country adopted a public transportation system, based entirely on roads, following the closure of the railways. The 1970's were also marked by unprecedented industrial and commercial growth (based on or as a result of increased oil prices) and relatively high levels of income, resulting in a substantial increase in vehicular population. *(approximately one vehicle/six persons)*. The high levels of income in Trinidad and Tobago are reflected in a 1978 per capita C.N.P. of U.S. $2,910. Based on this figure, Trinidad and Tobago exceeded all other Latin American countries except Venezuela, which it equalled *(1)*.

*Approximately 200,000 registered vehicles with an estimated value of TT$2,400 Million giving an average value of $12,000.*

In Trinidad, the major settlement zone is in the so-called East-West Corridor about 4km wide and 30km long situated along the foothills of the Northern Range. It includes the capital city of Port of Spain. Approximately 60% of the total population lives in the area, which because of its elongated configuration and location of the capital (largest city and employment centre) near one end, is the scene of severe traffic congestion at peak morning and evening periods. *(2)*

The situation is further aggravated by the following factors:-

(a) Large vehicular population *(growth from 84,300 to 216,300 between 1967 and 1980).* *(3)*

(b) Low cost of fuel $0.28 per litre 1982 price
    $0.55 per litre 1983 price

(c) New Housing Developments along East-West Corridor e.g.
    (i) Santa Rosa Heights
    (ii) La Horquetta
    (iii) Bon Air Gardens

(d) An inadequate public transportation system, composed mainly of buses and taxis.

Certain Road construction projects have been initiated within the last decade e.g.

(i) Improvements to Churchill Roosevelt and Beethan Highway
(ii) Dualling of Princess Margaret Highway
(iii) Construction of Mucurapo Foreshore
(iv) " Priority Bus Route from Port of Spain to Tunapuna.  

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This programme of road construction is based on a 1974 National Transportation study done by a firm of Consultants. This study is now subject to review by another firm, this report, the author understands has just been completed and sent to the Client (The Government of Trinidad & Tobago).

The situation however, remains very grave. Countless man hours are daily lost as a result, and its consequent effect on productivity cannot be over-emphasized (over 1.2 million man hours per year are lost along E/W Corridor). (3)

Providing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods is the aim of all traffic engineering. Planning is as essential as proper design, operation, maintenance and administration in achieving this mission. It means anticipating needs, recommending programs of investment to provide necessary facilities, and lastly, monitoring developments either to confirm adequacy of past planning or to modify plans as conditions change.

This paper seeks to analyse the public transportation system in Trinidad in the context of all related factors which affect proper transportation planning and make necessary recommendations.