



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

**SEPTEMBER 2007**

**\$2.00**

Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

Visit the Omnibus Society of America website at "[www.osabus.com](http://www.osabus.com)". At [osabus.com](http://osabus.com) we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meetings information, as well as membership information.

Please visit our site when you have a chance and give us your opinions and comments.

### • SEPTEMBER MEETING

The September meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on September 7, 2007, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening "*Motor Bus Society Conventions Past*" will be a movie presentation presented by William R. Reynolds.

The hospital is on California near Foster. Winona is one half-block south of Foster. By public transportation, take the 92 Foster to California. From the Ravenswood Brown Line, take the 93 North California from Kimball, get off after it turns onto California from Foster and walk back south. Or, take the 11 Lincoln from Western; get off at Carmen (One block south of Foster) and walk west on Winona.

There is some parking on California and Winona. The parking structure is on the west side of California just south of Foster.

## HEARING SCHEDULED ON PACE NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SERVICE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2007 4:00:00 PM

Media Release Office: (847) 228-4295

Contact: Judi Kulm (847) 228-4295

On Monday, August 20, a hearing will be held to address the proposed elimination of Pace Route 426 Northwestern University, Evanston/Chicago. However, few people will be impacted by the outcome of the hearing or the Pace Board's final decision on the status of the route. The hearing takes place at the Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2200 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Route 426 operates between Northwestern's campuses in Evanston and Chicago. The school had been subsidizing the portion of the service that Pace was providing, 10 trips in each direction on weekdays. However, Pace felt their efforts were duplicative of other existing services and made the choice not to renew their contract with Northwestern. Northwestern plans on maintaining a shuttle between its campuses with at least the same level of service using a private carrier.

The primary difference in a service operated exclusively by the University is that it would not be open to the public as the Pace trips had been in the past. Part of Pace's decision to end their contract was the small amount of general public riders. Most riders were affiliated with the school, and for others there are plenty of options available for the trip between Evanston to Chicago, such as Metra and CTA lines. Additionally, by ending its role, Pace would save money at a time of transit financial uncertainty.

In addition to attending the hearing, any person who would like to comment on the proposed elimination of Route 426 can write to Pace, Government Affairs, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005 or submit comments on their website, [www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com) under Public Hearing Comments. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend the meeting and who require certain accommodations other than transportation in order to allow them to observe and/or participate at the hearing can contact Pace at 708- 339- 4065 (voice) or 847-364-5093 (TTY) prior to the meeting.



08/08/07

## **September 16 Start Date for Service Reductions and Higher Fares**

The Chicago Transit Board today approved a budget-balancing plan that will reduce bus service by 8% and raise fares on September 16 if a state funding package for transit is not approved. The plan is a modified version of a contingency plan proposed in May. Chicago Transit Authority President Ron Huberman said that positive budget results from internal belt tightening measures, labor savings through arbitration, and increased fare revenue due to higher ridership will enable the agency to offer a modified plan that incorporates feedback from a series of public hearings and impacts fewer CTA customers.

The CTA's contingency plan combines labor savings and administrative cuts and efficiencies with a fare increase and 8% reduction in bus service, and the transfer of capital funds that had been intended for renovating buses and rail cars. These measures will bridge the gap in CTA's 2007 budget that was created because the agency, under a directive from the Regional Transportation Authority, developed a 2007 budget that anticipated \$110 million in additional state funding. As of today, the General Assembly has not approved a transit funding package, so the CTA must move ahead with its contingency plan. The CTA is required by law to have a balanced budget.

"We regret that we have to move ahead with these plans. CTA has done everything it has been asked to do to get our finances in order, including reaching a significant labor agreement where our employees have agreed to fix long-term problems with the pension and health-care system. We have taken multiple steps to reduce costs to avoid impacting our riders. But transit has a structural funding problem and management efficiencies alone won't solve it. Without adequate funding from Springfield, we will be forced to reduce service and raise fares," said Huberman.

"Today is a day that we hoped would never come," said Board Chairman Carole Brown. "Although I remain optimistic that state lawmakers will provide increased transit funding, I am disappointed that we are forced today to put our employees and customers through the uncertainty of planning for service cuts and fare increases. And - here's the worst part - if Springfield doesn't act, we will be back at the end of September preparing another deeper round of cuts for 2008."

In addition to incorporating public feedback, Huberman said the revised recommendation adheres to the three guiding principles laid out by the Chicago Transit Board: maintain as much availability as possible for transit dependent customers; maintain regional connections where possible; and spread the burden of cost reductions in an equitable manner. It also is compatible with federal Title VI guidelines that ensure minority routes are not disproportionately impacted and Environmental Justice

analyses regarding impacts on populations that are below the poverty level.

The plan assumes \$18 million from previously announced administrative cuts and efficiencies. The service reductions will save \$7.5 million and the fare increase will provide \$7.5 million in revenue this year. \$57 million will come from the transfer of capital funds to operations and an additional \$20 million from lower overall labor costs due to fiscal controls; overtime reductions; fewer consulting services; income from rental properties; the sale of obsolete equipment; wage and benefit savings through contract negotiations; and higher fare revenue due to increased ridership.

Under the modified plan, 39 bus routes will be eliminated, instead of the 63 routes identified in the previous plan. The remaining 115 routes will continue to operate at their current levels. Huberman said efforts were made to identify and keep routes that provide key connections, operate seven days a week, offer late night coverage or are subsidized. Twenty-seven routes on the original list for cuts have been added back, but three other routes, #19 United Center Express, the X80 Irving Park Express and the #130 Grant Park Treasures have been identified for elimination.

Because rail service can transport people at a lower cost than bus service, no rail service will be eliminated by the new plan. But, to provide additional capacity along the Red Line, the Purple Line Express service will now stop at Sheridan.

Fare increases for individual rides range from 25 cents to \$1.00, depending on the time and mode of travel. The fare increases are generally lower than those proposed in the May contingency plan.

- Bus fares will rise to \$2.00 (using Chicago Card/Chicago Card Plus or Transit Card) or \$2.50 (using cash).
- Rail fares will rise to \$2.00 (using Chicago Card/Chicago Card Plus) or \$2.50 off-peak and \$3.00 peak (using Transit Cards or cash). Peak periods will be 6:30-9:30AM and 4:00-7:00PM.
- Transfers will remain the same at 25 cents. Transfers are available only to customers paying fares with Transit Cards or Chicago Card/Chicago Card Plus.
- Prices for unlimited ride passes will increase 11-20%, with the 1-Day Pass increasing from \$5 to \$6; the 7-Day Pass going from \$20 to \$23, and the 30-Day Pass increasing from \$75 to \$84.
- Fares for reduced fare customers, who include seniors and persons with disabilities, will not change.



- The \$5 fee for Chicago Cards and Chicago Card Plus will be waived for September and October.

Due to the service reductions, the CTA intends to layoff a commensurate number of employees. Plans call for layoffs of nearly 700 employees, including bus operators, bus servicers, mechanics and Transportation Managers. In earlier cost cutting efforts, 75 administrative jobs were eliminated.

"We have been working in good faith to show the General Assembly that the CTA has done its part to lower our costs, be more efficient, and identify solutions to our pension and health care problems. It has been our goal to avoid having to take actions that would impact the riding public," said Huberman. "It is very disappointing to be at the point where we have to begin implementing our contingency plans."

## **FUNDING SUPPORT STILL NEEDED AS PACE STARTS FARE INCREASES AND SERVICE CUTS**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 9, 2007 5:00:00 PM

Media Release Office: (847) 228-4295

Contact: Judi Kulm (847) 228-4295

Board heeds public concerns and approves staggered plan of action

With no new funding in sight, Pace Board members voted at their August 1 meeting to put the wheels in motion on their plan of action for service cuts and fare increases. Citing a need to balance their 2007 budget, Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski said, "We're moving forward, prepared for uncertainty in Springfield."

Before making their decisions, the Board acknowledged the large turnout of almost 1,000 people at the public hearings and the wide range of concerns voiced by riders. Public comment coupled with optimism about new funding from Springfield this year resulted in a different approach to cost saving and revenue raising actions. Rather than implementing them all at one time, the agency now plans to stagger fare increases and service cuts over several months beginning on or about September 1.

At about that time, the first round of fare increases will be put in place for ADA paratransit riders with a region wide fare of \$3.00. Riders on local routes and Metra feeders will see their fare go from \$1.25 to \$1.50. The Taxi Access Program available to Chicago residents increases to \$5.50. If additional funding does not materialize by the end of the year, fares climb higher starting in 2008. Tickets, passes, and reduced fares will be changed accordingly as increases are implemented. In October, Pace plans to stop accepting most CTA passes.

Also on or about September 1 the use of the ADA Monthly Pass and CTA one-ride tickets will be discontinued. Pace will expand the availability of the Pace ADA one-ride ticket to the Chicago ADA services.

Vanpool fares will also increase by no more than 10% on or about September 1, 2007.

Service cuts start in late September with the elimination of 23 routes not meeting performance standards. If new funds aren't available, Metra feeder routes get eliminated on or about December 3, 2007 and weekend service in January 2008. On or about October 1st, Pace will restrict its ADA service to federally mandated guidelines. Pace's Special Events service to Cubs and Sox games will finish out their seasons, but Pace won't be starting its Bears service in the preseason as it has in the past. The service may be reinstated if funding becomes available, but with a new \$10 fare.

Implementation dates for fare increases and service cuts are rough estimates. Pace needs to work out the behind the scene logistics, like changing work assignments, materials and computer systems. Several methods will be using to notify the public of changes before they occur; riders should be watch for notices on the buses. More details including the list of poorly performing routes can be found on Pace's website, [www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com) or by calling Customer Relations at 847-364-7223.

Kwasneski thanked the public and communities for their input and support. His sentiments were echoed by other Board members - that it's not too late to contact legislators and the Governor about the transit financial crisis.

[chicagotribune.com](http://chicagotribune.com)

## **Way cleared for work on new Pace building**

Tribune staff report August 8, 2007

### **ARLINGTON HEIGHTS**

Pace will soon begin construction on a replacement for its Arlington Heights administration center.

The two-story, 60,000-square-foot building, approved by the Village Board on Monday, will go up just east of the suburban bus agency administration center at 550 W. Algonquin Rd., according to Rosemarie Truppa of Pace.

"We're just waiting for permits," Truppa said of the project, which is expected to take about a year to complete.

The Federal Transit Administration will pay 56 percent of the \$13.7 million cost, the Regional Transportation Authority will pick up 25 percent and Pace will cover the balance, officials said.

The 45,000-square-foot administration center has outlived



its usefulness, Truppa said. "It's in dire need of major systems replacement," she said of the 45-year-old structure.

Truppa said no decision has been made on the future of the old building site. The new center will house about 240 administrative employees.

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July 2007

## **Suburb-to-Suburb Service Creates Robust Challenge for Pace**

by Steve Hirano, Editor

Serving an urban core with timely, efficient public transportation has its challenges, but delivering quality transportation services to the suburbs also has significant, and often disparate, challenges.

Pace Suburban Bus, headquartered in the Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights, is a prime example of a transit property trying to better understand the changing demographics, market segments and travel patterns in its six-county service area and, accordingly, adjusting its service levels and the makeup of its fleet.

"Over the past 100 years, transit has really focused on supply," says Michael Bolton, deputy executive director of Pace. "We go out and buy the biggest buses we can get, the biggest railcars we can get. We believe that if we build it, they will come. Because we're a suburban operation, we have to look at things in a different way."

Quite a bit differently, actually. This is partly because of the complexity of its charge: providing transportation to a population base of 5.2 million residents in six counties — suburban Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will — that encompass 284 municipalities. The service area sprawls across 3,446 square miles, nearly the size of Connecticut.

To accomplish this task, Pace operates a fleet of 680 fixed-route buses, 364 paratransit vehicles and 719 vans. By fleet size, it ranks sixth among transit systems in the U.S. and Canada, according to METRO Magazine's 2006 ranking of the largest 100 transit bus fleets in North America.

Although the number of buses it operates is high, the size of those buses is getting smaller. Bolton says the 35- and 40-foot buses that had dominated the fleet are being retired in favor of smaller vehicles.

Smaller is better fit "The big buses that we've been using don't fit the neighborhoods that we have to run through," Bolton explains. "We're going to smaller vehicles, such as 30-foot buses, to serve those satellite cities. The market conditions in the suburbs demand a very different vehicle.

For us, smaller is better." To that end, Pace is creating a family of services that includes vanpool, ridesharing and contracts with taxi providers.

Another factor in Pace's move to smaller buses, Bolton says, is that the larger buses appear "more empty" than the smaller ones when they're, say, traveling back to the suburbs from a run to an employment center in the morning. "We might want to call it excess capacity, but elected officials call it empty," he says.

"We can have a 40-foot bus running with five people on it and it's viewed as being empty, but we can have a paratransit van with one person on it and that's considered good service," Bolton says. "We'll still buy a few 40-footers and some 60-footers for our arterial rapid transit (ART)." Currently, Pace has more than 1,000 vehicles that are 30 feet or shorter, comprising nearly 60% of the fleet.

This is part of the "right-sizing" initiative that T.J. Ross, executive director of Pace, has been championing over the past few years. But Pace has done more than procure small buses to more effectively serve its constituency.

### **Market demand scrutinized**

Pace has also taken on an extensive analysis of the market segmentation of its service area. "We have to understand the transportation needs of our customers," Bolton says. "It's part of what we need to do to find innovative and reliable solutions."

For example, using market demand data, that agency was able to get a better fix on why three routes that should have been low performers based on traditional transit planning models were actually among the top 10 best-performing routes. "They don't have the jobs; they don't have the densities either," Bolton says. "So what's happening? The passengers are taking the route to the [Chicago Transit Authority's] Red Line station at 95th Street and the Dan Ryan, where they're able to get to jobs along the rail line. So, it's the connectivity, not the density."

A more intelligent system Helping Pace get a more accurate, and practicable, view of its service is a fully deployed intelligent bus system that provides data every day on the on-time performance of its buses. The system has yielded some surprising data. Last year, Ross reported to the board that the agency's on-time performance was actually 78%, not 92%, as previously reported. "That's because we were getting 15,000 observations a year before," says Bolton. "Now we're getting 5 million."

Pace also has begun to collect passenger count data. It has fitted 20% of its fleet with passenger counters. "We are getting a much better idea of what's happening in regard to our ons and offs," Bolton says.

### **Partnerships are fertile**

The numbers tell the story, and Pace is acquiring a lot of



numbers. For example, it has partnered with the Will County Center for Economic Development, as well as the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, to acquire data.

"We have engaged them and the 80-plus communities in this area as part of our planning effort," Bolton says, adding that by managing and mining that data, Pace has been able to link people with jobs and provide mobility and accessibility in moderate- to low-density suburban areas.

"The suburb-to-suburb market is going to be huge for us, so we have to prepare on how we're going to deal with it," Bolton says. One of those ways is to add an express service on major roads that will connect with services at regional and community transportation centers.

ART (arterial rapid transit, as mentioned earlier) won't feature a fixed guideway like some of the more sophisticated bus rapid transit systems, but will incorporate traffic signal priority and provide real-time bus arrival information at the stops to create "connection protection."

"A lot of fixed-route systems talk about tying one bus into another bus route," Bolton says. "We have the ability to do that, but the other piece we're looking at is being able to schedule paratransit service so it also ties in with ART stops, which are essentially one mile apart. It's a different way of looking at providing solutions to people's problems."

#### Elderly are gaining ground

Last year, much attention was given to the first wave of the baby boomers turning 60, but Bolton is not expecting a rush on Pace's buses just yet. "We believe that the boomers are not going to have a significant effect on our bus service for at least another five or 10 years, so we're not worried," he says.

Looking down the road, however, Bolton sees a critical need to address the transportation requirements of the elderly population, and not just in northeastern Illinois. "In the U.S., there were 35 million people over the age of 65 in 2000," he says. "In 2010, that's going to be 40 million. And in 2020, that's going to be 54 million. Who in transit is preparing for that?"

In the meantime, Pace's service area already includes plenty of 70-, 80- and 90-somethings, allowing its planners to gain some important real-world experience about their needs. "We have an opportunity to learn an awful lot about these people," he says. "The current longevity provides the test bed for future growth."

Pace has just completed work on a four-phased research project with the following elements. It was designed to investigate seniors' transit needs in the six-county area Pace serves. 1. Secondary research review 2. Key management interviews 3. Ethnographic research

#### 4. Transportation usage segmentation survey

Among the findings was a willingness by seniors to use regularly scheduled service over dial-a-ride service because it gave them a feeling of independence. "When we tested the concept of flex routes with residents of a few senior residential communities, we received a number of ideas on destinations, times of day and days of the week," Bolton says.

#### Funding is a dilemma

Key to Pace's success to meet the needs of its customers will be to shore up its financial health. The agency has been forced to cannibalize its capital account over the past few years to cover shortfalls in operational funding.

To help address the funding issue, a collaborative effort called Moving Beyond Congestion (MBC) was launched earlier this year. It is spearheaded by the Regional Transportation Authority, which is the planning and oversight agency for Pace, Chicago Transit Authority and Metra. In late May, MBC unveiled a funding plan that asks state legislators for \$452 million of new revenue each year to fund operating costs of the three agencies.

"It's critical that we find a way to stabilize our funding source," Bolton says. "We also have to have everyone aligned in terms of the company culture. We have to know what we want to look like in five years, what it's going to take to get there and who's going to help us get there."

#### Time for venting at Metra

By Joseph Ryan

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Posted Saturday, August 18, 2007

After sitting on a waiting list for nearly two decades, 22 deteriorating bridges on Metra's UP-North Line still need replacement, agency officials said Friday while venting frustrations about ongoing budget woes.

The bridges were pinpointed for replacement during reviews as far back as 1989 and represent a third of the 66 bridges throughout the Metra system fingered for work at the time.

Thirty-nine of those bridges, most south, have been replaced. The North Line's 22 remain in the design stage while waiting for more than \$60 million to do the job. Another five have yet to be designed.

Bill Tupper, Metra's chief operations officer, insists the bridges are safe because of repairs and modifications made in recent years. They are inspected four times a year.

"Any safety issues are repaired immediately," he said.

But continuing to make repairs on an as-needed basis is costing the agency more in the long run than building new



bridges, he said.

The detailing of the bridge repair needs comes as the agency is trying to get billions of dollars from the state for system upgrades and expansion.

Metra, along with the CTA and Pace, also is pushing lawmakers to hike the regional sales tax a quarter percentage point to bring in more than \$300 million to fill gaping budget holes that are prompting fare hikes and service cuts.

The frustration of Metra officials, who have been waiting months for lawmakers to act on the measure, spilled out during the board meeting Friday in an hour-long, round-robin rant.

Metra Director Phil Pagano, visibly angered at times, lamented the attention lavished on the CTA over its threatened fare hikes and service cuts while also blasting lawmakers who believe Metra riders can afford drastic fare hikes.

"I'm sick and tired - in blunt language - of people thinking our ridership is lily white, making \$250,000 a year," he said at the public meeting. "We provide a very wide range of service for a wide range of people."

On the CTA, he snapped: "I'm getting really tired of the CTA and their service cuts. This isn't a one-agency issue."

Metra officials sent a letter to lawmakers and the governor Friday outlining their budget problems, including a 10 percent fare hike and weekend service cuts to come next year.

Each board member also expressed disgust with the progress of the sales tax hike measure, and several said its prospects remain bleak.

"Sadly, I don't see improvement in the near future," said board member Jack Schaffer, who represents the collar counties. "I just don't see it."

This year Metra officials put off \$60 million in track upgrades and train repairs, a move they say may threaten reliability. The bridge replacements, along with major expansion projects like the suburb-to-suburb STAR Line, also will not get completed unless tax dollars are forthcoming.

"I'm getting tired of it," Pagano said at one point during the gloomy discussion.

[dailyherald.com](http://dailyherald.com)

## **More Metra riders, fewer trains on time**

By Joseph Ryan

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Posted Saturday, August 18, 2007

As ridership continues to skyrocket, more commuters hopped on Metra this June than in any other month in the agency's 22-year history, but train tardiness may be becoming a problem.

Metra officials reported Friday that about 7.3 million rides were provided in June and so far this year, ridership is up about 9 percent over the same period last year.

High gas prices, increasing road congestion and service improvements are likely reasons for the boost, Metra officials said.

Meanwhile, on-time performance is slipping. In June and July, the number of trains running on schedule dipped to a relatively low 91 percent during the weekends and 95.4 percent on the weekdays.

During those same months last year, nearly 95 percent of trains were on time on the weekends and 95.9 percent were on time on weekdays.

Bill Tupper, Metra chief operations officer, said the delays are due in part to the increased ridership, which can lengthen boarding times. Track repairs may also be playing a role, particularly on weekends, he said.

About 55 percent of all 851 delayed trains were late between 6 and 10 minutes, while 12 percent were late more than 21 minutes, Tupper said.

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## **Doubling RTA chairman's salary part of tax hike bill**

BY JOSEPH RYAN

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Posted Saturday, August 18, 2007

The transit systems chairman could have his pay doubled thanks to a provision tucked into a massive tax hike measure aimed at saving the region's train and bus system.

Critics said the perk taints the public perception of the already-controversial legislation, which will also add more members to the Metra and the Regional Transportation Authority boards.

The annual salary of the RTA chairman, who oversees Metra, Pace and the CTA, will rise from \$25,000 to \$50,000 if the current legislation is approved. The politically appointed post is normally held by those who also have high-paying outside jobs, such as lawyers or political consultants.

Chairman Jim Reilly, a consultant, former lawmaker and former aide to Gov. Jim Edgar, said he would like the pay raise but he would be happy to drop it if it helped get the legislation passed.



"I haven't spent two years of my life working on this legislation to have it fail for that," he said, adding that the increase would bring the post's salary in line with the \$50,000 annual pay of the CTA chairman.

The tax hike has yet to gain approval from key lawmakers, but supporters hope to push it through the legislature by the end of the month before CTA and Pace officials start to roll out promised fare hikes and service cuts.

The RTA chairman's pay boost drew a shot Friday from Metra Director Phil Pagano, who joked that it was the legislature's way of reducing expenses.

The legislation would also increase the Metra board from seven to 11 posts, but does not change the \$15,000 salaries for board members or \$25,000 salary for Metra's chairman.

"That is part of the cost-cutting measures," joked Metra board member Jack Schaffer, who represents the collar counties, about his board's potential increase in size.

The boards at the CTA and Pace appear to be unaffected by the legislation.

Meanwhile, the RTA board would be increased from 13 members to 16, making it one of the largest politically appointed boards in the state. Each of those new members will get a \$25,000 salary, plus transportation expenses, and health and pension benefits.

Advocates say the RTA chairman's responsibilities justify the new pay, and the Metra and RTA boards need more members to more evenly distribute regional power.

The new RTA board would have five appointees from Chicago, five from Cook County and five from the collar counties. The new Metra board would have additional appointees from individual collar counties. Both boards vote to appoint their own chairmen.

State Rep. Sid Mathias, a Buffalo Grove Republican and member of the House transit committee, said the RTA chairman's pay hike is justified by the hours required to oversee one of the nation's largest transit systems.

"The salary increase is deserved," he said.

Still, Mathias says the pay hike doesn't belong in the tax hike and transit reform measure, which has had trouble winning approval from lawmakers.

"I don't want anything to interfere with this bill," he said.

Writers of the current transit tax hike legislation debated raising salaries for the rest of the RTA board members and the boards at Metra, Pace and the CTA, Mathias said.

Apparently, the pay raise for the RTA chairman was the only one to make the final cut.

Reilly has been an instrumental force behind the transit funding legislation, traveling often to newspaper editorial boards, public meetings and the legislature to make a case for its approval.

On Friday, Reilly said his \$25,000 salary has seemed low compared to his workload and he doesn't think the pay hike would mar the overall legislation.

"I can't imagine this becomes an issue," he said.

The legislation will raise the sales tax in Cook and the collar counties a quarter-cent to bring in more than \$300 million for Metra, Pace and the CTA. The three agencies are on the verge of substantial fare hikes and service cuts to fill a combined \$240 million budget hole this year.

[dailyherald.com](http://dailyherald.com)

## Bus service promises life in the fast lane

**Nonstop trips between L.A. and six other cities are to begin next week.**

By Alana Semuels, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer  
July 31, 2007

Is this the magic bus that will pry Angelenos away from their steering wheels?

A new nonstop line will roll into Los Angeles next week, serving seven cities with a handful of fares as low as \$1. Megabus, a subsidiary of Coach USA, will carry passengers from L.A. to San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, Las Vegas, San Diego and Phoenix. The fleet will follow routes well served by airlines and Greyhound buses and well traveled by motorists.

Another express bus company based in a city that loves to drive has found it's not easy to get people on board. "We are still struggling," said Kazuhiro Nakagawa, a partner in California Shuttle Bus, a 4-year-old concern that runs buses once a day to San Francisco and charges \$45 per ticket (\$60 for "luxury" accommodations, guaranteeing the seat next to yours will be empty).

Some days, he said, there are only two or three passengers on board. "The people who are in L.A. are not accustomed to using public transportation like buses," Nakagawa said.

Megabus executives said they were undeterred. "We truly believe there's a market for this," said Dale Moser, president and chief operating officer of Coach USA/Megabus. "It's an excellent value for your money."





The Megabus service began in the United Kingdom four years ago and was rolled out in the American Midwest last year. Executives were unsure at first if they would be successful in a country where people were more accustomed than their British cousins to driving their own cars. But now Megabus is operating in 14 cities, including Chicago.

Midwesterners who try it keep coming back, Moser said, and more than half had never been on an inter-city bus before.

He predicted that Southern Californians would try a nonstop bus to escape rising gas costs and congestion, and that people concerned about the environmental effect of driving or flying would be interested in the bus alternative.

A few seats on each Megabus will sell for \$1 -- plus a 50-cent booking fee -- to customers who book the furthest in advance. Most fares will be in the range of what Greyhound charges.

The highest price for a ticket to San Francisco -- about a seven-hour ride -- will be \$38.50, while a ticket to Las Vegas -- about 4 1/2 hours -- will be \$34.50.

That isn't much less than some plane tickets. Virgin Airlines recently unveiled \$44 flights to San Francisco, and Southwest will fly you to Vegas for \$59.

Beyond that, Greyhound Lines Inc. makes 14 trips a day

from Los Angeles to San Francisco and 15 to Las Vegas.

"We always welcome competition," said Anna Folmnsbee, a Greyhound spokeswoman.

Megabus probably needs to sell about 20 tickets per trip to break even, said Bart Reed, executive director of the Transit Coalition, a Sylmar-based mass transportation advocacy group.

"If it's marketed properly and hits the right people, it could work quite well," he said.

Megabus will advertise on billboards, in bus shelters and train stations and in college newspapers and AARP publications. Tickets will be available on its website ([www.megabus.com/us](http://www.megabus.com/us)) starting Thursday. The company plans to launch a Spanish-language version of the site in the future.



Effective marketing and cheap fares have worked on the East Coast. A bevy of low-cost buses has been plying highways between Boston and Washington for years, giving bus travel a good name even in a region with plentiful train service. The same thing could happen in California, Reed said, with the right level of competition.

Caleb Epps, a Boston transplant living in L.A., said he would appreciate having the option of riding the bus.

Back home, the 26-year-old audio engineer frequently took the so-called Chinatown Bus from Boston to New



York, paying less than \$20 for the four-hour journey.

In the West, where "the spaces are so big," he said, bus travel might not have much appeal.

"It's going to be a tough sell," he said. "People are used to having their own car and using it to go wherever they want." [alana.semuels@latimes.com](mailto:alana.semuels@latimes.com)

### **Rails come 'round again Fresno looks to the past for public transportation that could enliven, spark downtown development.**

By Matt Leedy / The Fresno Bee

08/06/07 05:54:19

Fresno leaders are looking into an old idea to deliver new life downtown.

Think streetcars. That's a key element of the latest revitalization plan from Mayor Alan Autry's administration.

Officials propose spending about \$60 million for a two-mile rail line that would connect downtown with the more vibrant Tower District.

A similar strategy was used more than a century ago when electric streetcars shuttled Fresnoans between a bustling downtown and quiet Tower District suburbs to the north.

Streetcars are being used by more than two dozen cities across the United States as a way to jump-start development and reduce air pollution.

Fresno hopes to follow suit. About 30 city officials, elected leaders and local developers are traveling to Portland, Ore., this week to look at its streetcar system and the residential and commercial development that has sprung up around it. The city is picking up the group's \$20,000 airfare and lodging tab.

In Portland, they will examine a 7.2-mile streetcar loop that links downtown with several neighboring districts. It cost \$100 million, and another mile will soon be added to the route for \$14.5 million.

Since it opened in 2001, more than \$2 billion in development has occurred within two blocks of the streetcar rail line, Portland officials say. This includes about 7,200 new homes and 4.6 million square feet of offices, stores and hotels.

New buildings that hug Portland's rail line have stores, restaurants and offices at street level and condominiums above.

The city also has added new sidewalks, benches, street lights and trees along its streetcar route -- all meant to encourage people to stroll, shop and live downtown.

Parks, sculptures, fountains and murals followed Portland's streetcars downtown. And grocery stores and dry-cleaning businesses have opened as more people have chosen to live downtown.

Traffic congestion downtown has decreased and air pollution dropped, Portland officials said.

"We've used transit to stimulate development and reduce our reliance on automobiles," said Steve Iwata, a Portland transportation planning supervisor.

It's a model Fresno hopes to duplicate.

Fresno leaders envision streetcars running past condominiums, coffee shops and cafes that would fill downtown with activity during the day. They imagine new clubs, bars and restaurants lighting up the night.

But for that dream to become a reality, city officials will need to convince residential and commercial developers that it's possible.

Reza Assemi, a developer and artist who is responsible for downtown's Vagabond Lofts and is building the H Street Lofts nearby, shares some optimism.

New streetcars "could be a catalyst we need to get more people downtown and more homes downtown," said Assemi, whose residential developments on Broadway are within a block of City Hall's proposed light-rail line.

He said his next project -- which would feature row houses, apartments and commercial space near Broadway, Fulton Street and Divisadero Street -- could be finished in two years.

Tentative plans call for a streetcar rail line on Fulton Street that would run from Olive Avenue in the Tower District, through the Fulton Mall, to Kern Street next to downtown Chukchansi Park.

Eight streetcars would be powered by overhead electric lines. They would share a lane with other vehicles and travel 15 to 20 mph. It would cost \$1 to ride, and they would run from about 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.





Fresno Bee file

Bustling Fulton Street traffic in 1925 was complicated by streetcars shuttling people from the Tower District area to downtown. City officials want to spend \$60 million to do the same thing today in hopes of spurring development.

The city plans to pay for the bulk of the project with money from Measure C, the county's half-cent sales tax that Fresno County voters extended last November.

The Measure C funds officials hope to tap are reserved for new technology. They also plan to apply for state and federal transportation grants.

Construction could start in 2009 and be finished in two years, officials said.

But first it must receive City Council approval.

Council Members Blong Xiong and Cynthia Sterling say it's a plan worth considering. Xiong is making the Portland trip, and Sterling is sending her chief of staff.

Xiong says he likes the rail idea for its potential to get people out of their cars. He believes streetcars could make traveling around downtown easier, because visitors could park anywhere along the route and avoid traffic headaches. And a more leisurely downtown experience would entice more people to eat and shop in the area.

Sterling agrees and hopes Tower residents would hop on the streetcars to check out downtown. Her district includes downtown.

In 2004, she used money from her council district budget to help fund a lunchtime trolley loop from downtown to the Tower District. The trolley, which more closely resembled a small bus, was stopped because of poor ridership.

Sterling said poor promotion and little advertising were to blame for the trolley's failure.

For a streetcar to be more successful, assistant city manager Bruce Rudd concedes there must be more downtown attractions and points to planned development along Kern Street as possibilities.

A Pasadena developer recently purchased the 1922 Virginia Hotel on Kern Street and has begun remodeling it. Stores are slated for the ground floor and offices for the two upper floors.

The city has \$3.5 million budgeted to purchase the old Gottschalks building on the southeast corner of the Fulton Mall and Kern Street. The city will clean it up and hopes to sell it to a private company that would redevelop it with a sports theme.

If a Kern Street-to-Olive Avenue streetcar line is successful, it could be expanded to include stops near Fresno City College and the Fig Garden Village shopping center, Rudd said.

Before they were replaced with buses in 1939, streetcars were a common way for Fresnoans to get to work, shop and run other errands throughout the city.

The transportation system allowed businesses to locate almost anywhere, as long as they were close to the rail line so customers could get to them easily, said Catherine Rehart, a Fresno historian.

There is a resurgence of streetcars throughout the country, with more than 60 cities planning to put in new rail



lines, according to the American Public Transportation Association.

Reconnecting America, a nonprofit group pushing for streetcars, predicts that by 2030, the number of households near light rail lines will reach nearly 16 million, up from 6 million today.

Sterling said it's about time Fresno boarded the streetcar trend: "We're on the late train, but we'll get there."

The reporter can be reached at [mleedy@fresnobee.com](mailto:mleedy@fresnobee.com) or (559) 441-6208.



Bee File Photo

Trolleys wend their way on Fulton and Mariposa streets in downtown Fresno in 1938. The Fresno Traction Co. operated the system from 1903 until 1939.

## Alders' disdain helped doom trolley plan

Mary Yeater Rathbun 8/14/2007 8:38 am

Madison, Wisconsin

A consensus emerged within hours of Mayor Dave Cieslewicz's Monday afternoon decision to abandon his streetcar proposal that his action will help bring a Regional Transportation Authority, and thus commuter rail, into existence.

"There's an old saying in politics: when you've dug yourself into a hole, the first thing you do is drop the shovel. So I have decided that I will not continue to pursue the issue of streetcars in Madison. The issue is off the table," the mayor said in a press release Monday.

He said the Streetcar Study Committee would meet one more time to finalize its report and then will be disbanded. The committee had a budget of \$300,000, but it's unclear what has been spent.

The mayor also said he would not pursue streetcars as part of the RTA, which others said would help the proposal to expand transportation in the county by raising the sales tax by 0.5 percent.

"Clearly this was the largest objection to the RTA that we had heard from other communities. So, this will make it much easier to pass the RTA through the county board and the city council," Dane County Board chairman Scott McDonell said. McDonell is also chairman of Transport 2020, the joint city-county committee looking at local transit options.

Calling the mayor's decision "quite a bombshell," city council president Mike Verveer said "Mayor Dave absolutely made the right decision. It's a call that frankly should have been made sooner."

The lack of support for streetcars was even greater among council members than among the general public, according to Verveer, whose district would have gotten the first section of streetcar line.

Calling himself "a healthy skeptic of streetcars," Verveer said, "I was never able to be convinced it was the right way for us to go and my neighborhood associations never supported it."

"I was concerned streetcars would torpedo the RTA," Verveer said. "I support that. It will be wonderful for the county. It is imperative that we have more collaboration on a regional basis. I was very concerned that the streetcars would be the death knell for an RTA on a countywide referendum."

Ald. Brenda Konkell agreed saying that before the announcement, the city council "didn't have the 11 votes for the RTA. No one believed it wasn't about trolleys. The only way the RTA would pass was if the mayor did this."

County Executive Kathleen Falk also said that attitudes toward streetcars were an obstacle to expanding other transportation options.

"There was never an agreement to have trolleys here," Falk said. "I have disagreed with the mayor on trolleys since he was elected four years ago."

"I'm glad he has permanently put a nail in that coffin," Falk said of the mayor's decision.

### Future of transportation

Falk and Cieslewicz both said the city and county will now go ahead and jointly file the application to get federal funds for preliminary engineering of a commuter rail system this fall.

"It was the disagreement between the mayor and I that had kept us from filing that application," Falk said.

Cieslewicz said, "Having the city and county express support for an RTA will go a long way towards convincing the federal government that there will be local support for a commuter rail project."

When a Transport 2020 team returned from a late spring visit in Washington with federal transportation officials, it



reported that demonstrating city and county support for an RTA was necessary to make its application competitive.

"With votes coming up on the RTA, it was necessary to make a statement now to the extent that streetcars were clouding that vote," the mayor said.

There is a county board vote scheduled for Thursday and then the city council is to vote Sept. 4 on whether or not to ask the legislature to give them the authority to create an RTA.

Cieslewicz said having state legislative action was not necessary before the application was submitted. City-county agreement was enough for now.

Downtown Madison Inc. President Susan Schmitz also praised Cieslewicz's announcement.

"In terms of moving forward towards state legislation to form an RTA, we are pleased with the mayor's decision," she said. "We admire him for his leadership because we are sure this was difficult for him. But he did what he thought was right for the greater good."

Schmitz continued, "DMI thinks an RTA is vital for the future of the city but recognizes we also have safety issue to work on, many challenges to work on as a community."

### **Listening to the people**

The mayor got lots of kudos for listening to the residents of the city.

Southwest side Ald. Thuy Pham-Remmele said, "I think it will be a tremendous thing for people in my neighborhood."

Discussing residents who urged the mayor to focus on "crime not trolleys" at last Wednesday's meeting in the Meadowood neighborhood, Pham-Remmele said, "There was a standing ovation from hundreds of people when a speaker said that we don't want the trolley. People stood up chanting 'no trolley, no trolley.' The mayor may have taken this into consideration. I am thrilled. I speak for my constituents. They must feel very happy the mayor must have paid some attention to their united voice."

Schmitz said she was not at the meeting but "I would guess it could have had an effect on his decision. So, good for him. He listened to the people of the community. I hope this helps with the issues we are dealing with."

Verveer said, "It likely took the awakening of the very emotional west side meeting for the mayor to accept that the community was not supporting his vision."

He added that he only had great praise for the mayor, who he called a very smart politician, for taking bold initiatives and having bold visions. "But it helps us move on to more pressing needs by having this off the table."

Konkel said the meeting may have been "the straw that may have broken the camel's back. We've been taking

heat for some time. There was clearly no consensus for trolleys."

The mayor said that although the meeting was part of the reason he made his decision now, "It was just the period at the end of a long sentence. This has been coming for a long time. We haven't been able to build support for it and the west side meeting just encapsulated that.

Ald. Larry Palm, who was against the streetcar proposal said, "I'm pleased that the mayor has recognized the importance of basic city issues. This is what the city needs to focus on."

Palm said, "I was more supportive of light rail. This focuses us back on the right track."

Other city council members, such as Robbie Webber, a bicycling advocate who'd been an advocate of street cars, and Satya Rhodes-Conway, who serves on a planning committee for Metro buses, said that with streetcars out of the way, the RTA could focus on a broad set of transportation options, such as paths, bus routes and so on.

Cieslewicz went on to say, "Major investments like streetcars should only be undertaken when there is broad consensus in the community, and that is clearly not the case with this issue."

The initial 3-mile streetcar line was expected to cost roughly \$50 million.

"I will continue to be concerned about the challenges that our regional transportation infrastructure faces in the years to come," Cieslewicz added. "I will continue work with community and regional leaders to develop answers to those challenges that have broad public support."

Mary Yeater Rathbun 8/14/2007 8:38 am

## **Bus plan meets protests**

**\$2 fare would be tops in big cities; group calls service cuts attack on poor**

**By LARRY SANDLER**  
[lsandler@journalsentinel.com](mailto:lsandler@journalsentinel.com)

**Posted: Aug. 5, 2007**

Milwaukee County bus riders would pay the highest fares of any major U.S. transit system if the County Board approves a proposed 14% fare increase, figures show.

And if that fare increase is coupled with a proposed 13% service cut, riders would be paying more money for less service - a prospect that is drawing concerned passengers



together in a new grass-roots movement to fight for the future of the bus system.

Among the nation's 25 largest bus agencies, the Milwaukee County Transit System's \$1.75 basic cash fare is already higher than any other system that runs buses alone, according to figures from the American Public Transportation Association and individual transit systems. Only three big transit systems charge more, and all have rail networks that charge the same fares as their buses.

But if County Executive Scott Walker and supervisors raise the fare to \$2, as transit managers recommend in their 2008 county budget request, the Milwaukee County bus fare would be tied for first place with bus and train fares in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.

Of the seven biggest U.S. transit systems without light rail networks or heavy rail subway lines, the next highest fare after Milwaukee County's is \$1.50, for Chicago's suburban Pace buses and Detroit's city buses.

The transit system is seeking the fare increase and service cuts to meet Walker's goal of holding the line on property taxes.

Unlike most of its counterparts across the nation, Milwaukee County's bus system competes with other county agencies for property tax support.

Bus system spokeswoman Jacqueline Janz said the budget request demonstrates the need for a separate, dedicated source of funding for transit, something that elected officials have long debated but have yet to agree upon.

"Of course, proposing fare increases and route cuts is not what we want to do, but what we need to do in order to operate the system with the resources and funding available," Janz said.

### Public opposition

Higher fares and less service are not what the Milwaukee Transit Riders Union thinks the bus system needs. The 4-month-old group is rallying passengers against the proposals.

"We're tired of the cuts in service, we're tired of the cuts in funding, and we're tired of the increases in fares," riders union organizer Matt Nelson said. "The transit system is in a state of neglect and a state of deterioration."

Nelson, the co-owner of Brewing Grounds for Change café, and Sam Jensen, a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee freshman, helped found the riders union in April, in response to a dire prediction from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The planners warned that the transit system could face a 35% service cut by 2010 without new state or local funding.

"The idea of another 35 percent cut in service was just too much to bear," said Jensen, of Shorewood. "We view these cuts as a direct attack on the poor people (who are) trying to get to work."

In addition to rejecting the requested fare increase and service cuts, the riders union wants the County Board to freeze fares, restore services cut since 1998 and add express routes, Jensen said.

The group agrees a dedicated funding source is needed but is concerned that the latest County Board plan wouldn't produce enough money to prevent future bus cuts, because revenue from the proposed 1% sales tax would be split among transit, parks, public safety and property tax relief, Jensen said. Walker has vowed to veto the board resolution calling for a referendum on the plan.

More than 250 people have already joined the riders union, which meets at the café, 2008 N. Farwell Ave., Jensen said.

The group is trying to gather testimonials to show the impact of service cuts and fare increases on riders, he said.

A separate organization, Bay View Matters, is calling for transit riders to protest cuts proposed for routes serving the south side neighborhood. Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic and group members wearing green plan to ride a Route 15 (Oakland Ave. to Kinnickinnic Ave.) bus in morning rush hour Monday.

Although the budget request calls for slicing Route 15 and eliminating Route 11 (Vliet St.), the transit system has proposed creating a new Route 11 that would include part of the old Route 11, and extending Route 55 (Layton Ave.) to replace the discontinued part of Route 15, Janz said. Creating the new Route 11 and extending three other routes also would replace some of the other routes and pieces of routes scheduled for elimination, she said.

Even with those changes, however, the budget request would still end regular Routes 28, 64 and 68, plus four Freeway Flyer routes, three school routes and an industrial park shuttle route, along with pieces of two other Flyer routes and at least eight regular routes.

The budget request also calls for raising the Freeway Flyer fare from \$2.25 to \$2.50.

Walker is reviewing the transit system request as he prepares to submit an overall budget to the board in September.

He has said he considers raising fares preferable to cutting routes.

Final budget action by the board is set for November.



# Single-track plan moves ahead

But Jeffco leaders push for second light-rail track

By Kevin Flynn, Rocky Mountain News  
August 14, 2007

RTD is going ahead with plans to build a single-track light-rail line on the last leg of the FasTracks West Corridor line despite lack of agreement from Jefferson County officials.

"At this point, we've got to make a hard decision," RTD General Manager Cal Marsella told the elected board's planning and development committee Monday. "We are really up against it right now."

RTD has to finalize details this month for the 12.1-mile light-rail project between Denver's Union Station and the Jefferson County government center in Golden to meet a deadline for applying for a federal grant.

"If we don't get the fed grant, there would be no corridor whatsoever," Marsella said.

The project originally included two tracks on that final segment. But in 2005, faced with cost increases, RTD decided to cut service on the outer leg to trains every 15 minutes instead of every five minutes. That allowed RTD to reduce the number of train cars it had to buy, saving more than \$12 million.

Then last year, with costs still escalating sharply, RTD realized it could run 15-minute service on a single track west of the federal center by including a short passing track near Red Rocks Community College. The move saved another \$33 million.

Jefferson County planners and commissioners objected, saying if RTD's ridership estimates are wrong and more growth occurs than anticipated, RTD would be locked into having inadequate track capacity to handle it.

Jeffco had asked RTD to consider running 10-minute trains, which would have required a second passing track.

Jeffco Commissioner Kevin McCaskey said the county will push for the second passing track before the RTD board makes a final decision this month.

"We feel the voters were promised a higher level of service," -McCaskey said.

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## Poor results drive New Flyer to look for increased value

Aug 14, 2007 04:30 AM

The CEO of bus maker New Flyer Industries Inc. says the company's board is exploring ways to boost value for unit

holders after non-cash charges and income tax provisions drove the firm deep into the red in the second quarter.

"The board is currently looking at all the available options to best execute an enhanced unit value for the company and we expect that review to be concluded no later than our October board meeting," John Marinucci told analysts in a conference call yesterday.

Those choices could include paying down company debt or buying back units. Winnipeg-based New Flyer – which makes buses used for public transit, airports and park-and-ride services – posted a second-quarter loss of \$84.9 million (U.S.) on Friday, reversing a year-ago profit of \$7.2 million.

## Plan for \$35M bus hub hailed Kipling station to become inter-regional terminal – and maybe one day even have rail to the airport

Aug 14, 2007 04:30 AM  
TAMARA CHERRY  
STAFF REPORTER

Transportation authorities painted a \$35.5 million "rosy" picture for public transit riders throughout the GTA yesterday.

Sparkling new infrastructure, a cleaner environment and reduced gridlock were among the perks of a planned inter-regional bus terminal announced at Kipling Station, where TTC, GO and Mississauga buses sat outside.

With \$30 million over three years coming from the province and GO Transit and \$5.5 million from Mississauga, the western end-of-the-line for the TTC will be transformed into a 416- and 905-friendly hub for commuters.

Instead of stopping at Islington station, by 2010 Mississauga Transit will unload at Kipling station, allowing riders to access the Milton GO line directly, rather than hopping on a subway to do so.

"When you eliminate one part, you'll get to your destination faster," provincial Transportation Minister Donna Cansfield said. "You'll be able to park your car, get on a bus, get on a GO Train and the subway to go to your destination."

The announcement came on the heels of the Presto integrated fare card, being tested by commuters across regional lines. Also on Cansfield's mind was that Kipling station was built with the possibility of a light rail transit system to the airport, furthering the concept of a transportation hub.

The current congestion at Islington station will be moved to Kipling, where "there's more opportunity" to develop an inter-regional hub that works, said Peter Smith, chair of



GO Transit and vice-chair of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

It also plays into the planned Bus Rapid Transit line, which will provide bus-only lanes for GO and city buses from the Mississauga-Oakville border to Highway 427-Renforth Dr., Smith said.

"The future is rosy – very, very rosy for public transit in the Greater Toronto Area," said Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion. "The gridlock will be helped."

Responsibility for building and designing the project will fall into TTC hands.

The \$35.5 million will be spent on the new bus terminal and related work, such as the relocation and expansion of the passenger drop-off and pickup area on the east side of Kipling, a new east entrance to the station, reconfiguring entrances from Dundas St., and new parking to replace the existing spaces that will be displaced.

Planning started in June 2004, when the TTC approved the recommendations of the Kipling/Islington Bus Operations Study, which included relocating Mississauga Transit to Kipling station.

"The wish for Kipling is totally fulfilled with today's announcement," Toronto Councillor Joe Mihevc, who sits on the TTC, said yesterday afternoon. "Sooner or later, we're hoping for, expecting, fighting for an operational announcement as well because we need money for the day-to-day operations."

## Cedar Rapid's bus boondoggle

By Rick Smith  
The Gazette

[rick.smith@gazettecommunications.com](mailto:rick.smith@gazettecommunications.com)

**CEDAR RAPIDS** - In a fenced-in lot along a railroad track off B Avenue NW, nine city buses sit in a line, little worn and little wanted.

The mothballed, electric-powered buses purchased between late 1995 and late 1998 in a project that garnered \$7.5 million in federal grants and came with a \$10 million total price tag – are testaments to a promising transit experiment in renewable energy that never worked out.

Brad DeBrower, the city's transit manager, noted recently that a few of the city's workhorse diesel buses have logged a million miles before heading out to pasture.

The Federal Transit Administration standard, he added, can require a new, federally subsidized city bus weather 12 years of life and travel 500,000 miles.

In contrast, the city's nine electric buses, four all-electrics and five hybrids, have mileage totals that DeBrower admits are "scary low."

The range: 6,601, 8,794 and 9,013 miles on the low end to 24,730 miles on the high end.

Fred Rossow, senior electrical engineer at Rockwell Collins who managed the city's electric bus program from 1998 to early 2005, recalled Wednesday how the city's bus mechanics and drivers came to hate the electric buses because they broke down along bus routes so often.

"They didn't like hauling them in off the street," Rossow said. "We towed a lot of buses back to the garage."

"... It was kind of a standing joke that we could put a tow truck in front of them and run them on routes."

In a memo to the Federal Transit Administration in August 2006, Bill Hoekstra, who was then the city's transit chief, noted that the city had mothballed one of the nine buses in 2000, one in 2002, one in 2003, three in 2004 and three in 2005.

The memo came after the failure of the city's electric bus fleet raised a red flag with the Federal Transit Administration when federal officials learned the city had more buses than it should.

DeBrower explained that cities are to limit the number of spare buses to 20 percent of the number of buses it uses at peak times.

In Cedar Rapids, peak use is 28 or 29 buses, and the nine mothballed electric buses put the city "way out of whack" with the federal rule, DeBrower said.

The worst fear has been that the city might have to pay back \$2 million or so to the federal government – what amounts to 80 percent of the buses' total cost of \$2.65 million.

DeBrower, however, said the city continues to try to unload the buses in an arrangement that the Federal Transit Administration finds acceptable. One hope, he said, is that Bowling Green State University's Electric Vehicle Institute might come to the rescue.

On Wednesday, Paul Griffo, a Federal Transit Administration spokesman in Washington, D.C., took a conciliatory tone, noting that the Cedar Rapids project's use of "innovative" technology could provide an exception to some agency rules.

Griffo called the project a \$10 million one and noted that the city received two federal grants for it: one for \$3 million, another for \$4.477 million.

Back in 1993, it was all possibilities when the idea for an experimental fleet of electric buses began to take shape for Cedar Rapids.

The idea was sold to federal transit officials as an "alternative fuels" initiative that would test whether electric



batteries could fuel a fleet of buses in a place with cold winters.

Termed the Cedar Rapids Electric Transportation Consortium, the city of Cedar Rapids, IES Industries Inc., Westinghouse Electric Corp. and Blue Bird Corp. all signed on.

The initial proposal called for a \$10.685 million project, with the federal government paying \$8.361 million, the city of Cedar Rapids \$1.054 million, and the other players something less than that.



The project, which launched in late 1996, was struggling when the city brought Fred Rossow on to manage it in 1998.

Rossow, who called his seven years with the project "frustrating," said the chief problem with the program was the intricate electronic drive system in the buses that never worked correctly. Once Westinghouse sold the business and then it was sold again, it was difficult to get system support, Rossow said.

Another problem was the bus batteries. Eventually, the city found quality batteries made in Germany, only to see the United States and Germany enter a tariff war that, Rossow said, involved bananas and electric batteries. This put the cost of the German batteries out of reach for three to four years, he said.

Among other problems was the city's battery pack, which he said weighed 2 tons and couldn't be readily changed out. Other cities with electric buses or hybrids, he noted, use battery packs they can be swapped out to keep the buses on the street.

In his letter to the Federal Transit Administration last summer, Hoekstra stated that Rossow's departure in early 2005 for a job with Rockwell Collins was "the straw that broke the camel's back."

As for the future, Rossow said it would cost the city too much now to try to retrofit its nine mothballed buses with newer technology.

Rossow said hybrid electric buses have a future, noting that New York City, Miami and Seattle use them today. Hybrids cost less to operate and pollute less, though they cost about 20 percent more than a standard bus, he said.

Cedar Rapids, he said, should go slower if he ever gets the urge to go electric again.

"This (experiment) had nine vehicles. That was probably a bit much until the technology was proven," Rossow said.

**The Village of Niles** has put into service the new buses that they received from Pace.

Here we see 2642 at the CTA loop at Milwaukee and Imlay.



This order of buses replaced these 1900 series Chance models in operation.



Pages 14 through 17 list the service cuts that Pace and CTA plan to implement later this year and early next year.



# MODIFIED CONTINGENCY PLAN

Service Suspensions Proposed August 8, 2007

## 39 Bus Routes

X3 KING DR EXPRESS	90N NORTH HARLEM
X4 COTTAGE GROVE EXPRESS	93 CALIFORNIA/DODGE
17 WESTCHESTER	95 LUNT
*19 UNITED CENTER EXPRESS	120 OGILVIE/WACKER EXPRESS
X20 WASHINGTON/MADISON EXPRESS	121 UNION/WACKER EXPRESS
X28 STONY ISLAND EXPRESS	122 ILLINOIS CTR/OGILVIE EXPRESS
X40 WESTERN EXPRESS	123 ILLINOIS CENTER/UNION EXPRESS
53AL SOUTH PULASKI LIMITED	125 WATER TOWER EXPRESS
54A NORTH CICERO/SKOKIE BLVD	127 MADISON/ROOSEVELT CIRCULATOR
X54 CICERO EXPRESS	129 WEST LOOP/SOUTH LOOP
X55 GARFIELD EXPRESS	*130 GRANT PARK TREASURES
56A 65TH/AUSTIN	134 STOCKTON/LASALLE EXPRESS
55N 55TH/NARRAGANSETT	135 CLARENDON/LASALLE EXPRESS
56A NORTH MILWAUKEE	143 STOCKTON/MICHIGAN EXPRESS
62H ARCHER/HARLEM	144 MARINE/MICHIGAN EXPRESS
64 FOSTER/CANFIELD	157 STREETERVILLE
69 CUMBERLAND/EAST RIVER	165 WEST 65TH
*X80 IRVING PARK EXPRESS	200 MAIN SHUTTLE
95A NORTH CENTRAL	205 CHICAGO/GOLF
86 NARRAGANSETT/RIDGELAND	

\* Indicates new route to be suspended, not included in original proposal

## Service Restored from Original Contingency Plan

### 27 Bus Routes

1 INDIANA/HYDE PARK	108 HALSTED/95TH
2 HYDE PARK EXPRESS	132 GOOSE ISLAND EXPRESS
7 HARRISON	136 SHERIDAN/LASALLE EXPRESS
X9 ASHLAND EXPRESS	148 CLARENDON/MICHIGAN EXPRESS
24 WENTWORTH	156 LASALLE
26 SOUTH SHORE EXPRESS	166 UIC/PILSEN EXPRESS
33 MAGNIFICENT MILE EXPRESS	169 69TH/UPS EXPRESS
38 OGDEN/TAYLOR	170 U OF C - MIDWAY
39 PERSHING	173 U OF C - LAKE VIEW EXPRESS
48 SOUTH DAMEN	174 U OF C - GARFIELD STATIONS
49A SOUTH WESTERN	182 U OF CHICAGO HOSPITALS- EXPRESS
59 69TH/61ST	201 CENTRAL/RIDGE
X99 AVON EXPRESS	206 EVANSTON CIRCULATOR
100 JEFFERY MANOR EXPRESS	

### 2 Rail Routes

Yellow Line  
Purple Express



## Fixed Routes Eliminated

Route #	Route Name	Route #	Route Name
208 (su)	Golf Road	210 (wk)	Lincoln Ave
304 (sa/su)	Cicero La-Grange	320 (sa)	Madison St
348 (sa)	138th Riverdale Connection	422 (wk/sa)	Linden CTA-Glenview-Northbrook Ct
423 (sa)	Linden CTA-The Glen-Harlem CTA	528 (sa)	Aurora Tran Ctr-Rush Copley Medical
529 (sa)	Randall Road – 5th Street	616 (wk)	The Chancellory Connection
635 (wk)	Bloomington-Glendale Heights	654 (wk)	South Glen Ellyn
690 (wk)	Arlington Heights Road	696 (wk)	Woodfield-Arlington Hts-Randhurst
699 (wk)	Palatine-Woodfield-Elk Grove	706 (wk)	College Avenue – SE Wheaton
707/713 (wk)	SW Wheaton/Wheaton-Naperville	711 (sa)	Wheaton-Carol Stream
787/788 (wk)	Naperville Midday	801 (sa)	Elgin-Geneva
822 (wk)	Woodridge Lisle Feeder	831 (wk)	Joliet-Midway
835 (wk)	SW Suburban Chicago Express		

## Metra Feeder & Shuttle Routes Eliminated

Route#	Route Name	Route #	Route Name
362	Park Forest	451	Southeast Homewood
452	Northeast Homewood	460	Hazel Crest
534	Fox Valley Villages/RT 59 Metra Station	557	The Hot Line Barrington Rd
574	North Conway Park Shuttle	576	Deerfield Metra/Buffalo Grove/Lincolnshire
580	Vernon Hills Metra to Town Line Road	581	Buffalo Grove Metra to Lincolnshire
582	Buffalo Grove Metra to Discover/Baxter	622	Shuttle Bug 12
623	Glen/N. Glenview-Allstate Shuttle	624	Glen/N. Glenview-Willow/Sanders
625	South Conway Park Shuttle Bug	628	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 8
629	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 9	631	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 1
632	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 2	633	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 3
634	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 4	635	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 5
639	Lake Cook – Shuttle Bug 7	643/645	NW Elmhurst-Elmhurst Industrial
657	W. Glendale Hts/Glen Ellyn	661	Southwest Westmont
662	South Central Westmont	663	Darien-Clarendon Hills
664	Willowbrook-Clarendon Hills	665	Darien-Westmont
668	Burr Ridge-Hinsdale Feeder	669	Western Springs-Indian Head
673	Fort Hill Express	674	Southwest Lombard
675	Route 59 Express	676	Naperville-Cress Creek



## Metra Feeder & Shuttle Routes Eliminated

Route #	Route Name	Route #	Route Name
677	Naperville-West Glens	678	Naperville-Carriage Hill
680	Naperville-Knoch Knolls	681	Naperville-Saybrook
682	Naperville-Brookdale	683	Naperville-Ashbury
684	Naperville-Maplebrook	685	Naperville-West Wind Estates
686	Naperville-Old Farm	687	Naperville-Farmstead
688	Naperville-Huntington	689	Naperville-Hobson Village
694	Central Road-Mt Prospect Station	706	College Avenue-SE Wheaton
709	Carol Stream-N. Wheaton	712	Wheaton Shuttle
750	Country Club Hills	753	Matteson
781	N. Naperville Office Complex	820	University Heights/Hobson Creek-Lisle
821	Woodridge-Belmont Feeder	822	Woodridge Lisle Feeder
824	East Bolingbrook-Lisle	825	Central Bolingbrook-Lisle
826	South Lisle	827	Steeple Run-Green Trails
828	North Lisle	829	Lisle-Naperville Office
921	Mill Creek/Geneva Shuttle		

## WEEKEND SERVICE ELIMINATED

Route #	Route Name	Route #	Route Name
208	Golf Road	209	Busse Highway
213	Green Bay Road	215	Crawford-Howard
223	Elk Grove – Rosemont CTA	234	Wheeling – DesPlaines
250	Dempster Street	270	Milwaukee Avenue
272	Golf Mill – Milwaukee Avenue Corridor	290	Touhy Avenue
301	Roosevelt Road	302	Ogden/Stanley
303	Madison Street – 19th Avenue	305	Cicero-River Forest
307	Harlem	308	Medical Center
309	Lake Street	310	Madison Street – Hillside
311	Oak Park Avenue	313	St. Charles Road
315	Austin/Ridgeland	317	Westchester
318	West North Avenue	319	Grand Avenue
330	Mannheim/LaGrange Roads	331	Cumberland – 5th Avenue
332	River – York Roads	349	South Western
350	Sibley	352	Halsted



Route #	Route Name	Route #	Route Name
353	95th – Riverdale-Homewood	354	Harvey – Tinley Park
357	Lincoln Highway	358	Torrence
359	Robbins/South Kedzie Avenue	364	159th Street/Hegewishc
366	Park Forest – Chicago Heights	367	University Park
370	Harvey-Chicago Heights	379	West 79th Street
381	95th Street	383	South Cicero
384	Narragansett/Ridgeland	386	South Harlem
411	Niles Local Service	412	Niles Shopper's Special
413	Niles South End Special	471	Highland Park-Deerfield
472	Highland Park-Highwood	473	Highland Park-Northbrook Court
501	Forest Park – West Jefferson	502	Cass/Marquette Gardens
505	Rockdale-Lidice	507	Plainfield
521	East Circulator	524	West Circulator
530	Westfield Shoppingtown-Fox Valley – Naperville	532	Illinois Avenue
533	Molitor	535	Fox Valley Shuttle
541	Northeast Elgin	542	Grove
543	Dundee – Carpentersville	544	Chicago Street
546	Orange – Walnut	547	Wing Street
548	Highland Avenue	549	South Randall
552	North State – Spring Hill Mall	561	Castlecreeki via McAree
564	Jackson/14th	565	Grand Avenue
568	Lakehurst	571	Zion
572	Waukegan – Hawthorn Mall	606	Northwest Limited
715	Central DuPage	747	DuPage Connection
802	Aurora – St. Charles	803	Carpentersville Local
831	Joliet-Midway	834	Joliet-Yorktown
905	Schaumburg Trolley		

### FEDERALLY FUNDED SERVICE ELIMINATED WHEN GRANT EXPIRES

Route #	Route name	Route #	Route name
511	Joliet/Elwood/CenterPoint Intermodal Center	627	Takeda/Discover
714	College of DuPage/Naperville/Wheaton	907	Oswego Shuttle