

# Green Pennant Special

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

## APRIL 2008

**\$5.00**

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.

## • APRIL MEETING

The April meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on April 4, 2008, 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, "*CLT Archives*," will be a slide presentation by long time member and transit photographer Chuck Tauscher.

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.

## Pace rolls out new vehicles in Rich Township

On Monday, January 31, Rich Township and Pace unveiled two new "mini-bus" vehicles to be used for transporting seniors and persons with disabilities throughout the community. Pace staff, along with officials and residents, gathered at the Shirley J. Green Senior Center in Park Forest to officially announce the partnership and display the vehicles.

These vehicles allow Rich Township to provide supplemental transportation in addition to fixed route bus service and Pace Dial-a-Ride to their residents. The vehicles offered in this program, which are slightly smaller than Pace's suburban paratransit vehicles, provide passengers more space than conversion vans, but are

also easier to drive and maintain than larger paratransit vehicles.

Pace and other units of local government throughout the suburbs will have another 28 vehicles on the street by the end of 2008.



Pace Board Chairman Richard Kwasneski said, "These vehicles give communities the flexibility to set up a transportation program that is the best fit for their needs, whether that means a dial-a-ride program like Rich Township or a bus route that circulates residents within their community."

Pace purchased these vehicles with a federal CMAQ grant. Units of government can partner with Pace to secure vehicles for their own transit service. The unit of local government provides the driver and all related operating expenses, and pays only a nominal administration fee to Pace.

The vehicle is a product of General Coach America, Inc. and is available in 9 and 13-passenger models. The interior height allows passengers to walk comfortably upright, as if boarding a paratransit or larger bus. Driving this particular vehicle is similar to driving a standard van.

Pace continues to implement innovative public transportation solutions to keep the suburban transit system viable and successful. Vehicles like those now operating in Rich Township offer flexibility and expanded options for community leaders that want to keep residents connected. Persons interested in more information about this vehicle program can contact Leondria Blackman.



## **Eight Car Service to Begin on Brown Line with Next Phase of Three-Track**

02/13/2008

Today CTA officials presented plans for the next phase of three-track operation at the Belmont and Fullerton stations. Beginning Sunday, March 30, 2008 southbound trains will be limited to one southbound track at the Belmont and Fullerton stations due to construction for the Brown Line capacity expansion project. To help ease the impact, the CTA will begin operating eight-car trains on the Brown Line during morning and evening rush hours. Currently, Brown Line trains consist of six cars. The introduction of eight-car service will occur nearly 18 months earlier than originally planned.

In order to safely provide eight-car trains, Paulina and Wellington stations will close for renovation on March 30. Currently, these stations can only berth six-car trains. While the stations are under construction, Brown Line trains will bypass both stations.

Also on March 30, the CTA will reopen the Southport station and open a temporary station at Diversey. Both stations had been closed for construction and will be able to accommodate eight-car trains by March 30. Using a temporary station at Diversey will make it possible to reopen for service nearly three months earlier than originally planned. Work to install elevators and complete the stationhouse at Diversey will continue throughout the spring.

"This is a major milestone in the Brown Line project. We know that reducing inbound service to one track will mean fewer trains can travel through the corridor during rush periods and that creates challenges for our riders. We explored every option we could to help ease the pain. Adding two extra cars to Brown Line trains will allow us to transport more riders per train and maintain Brown Line capacity at current levels," said CTA President Ron Huberman. "But we still will have fewer inbound trains during rush periods, so riders are still advised to allow extra travel time, consider using bus service or adjust their departure time. Our advice to 'Leave early, leave late or alternate' still applies."

Huberman said that during peak morning rush period there will be four fewer Red Line trains traveling inbound from Howard to Downtown (from 19 to 15) but that additional southbound trains will be staged south of Fullerton for use as needed. Four fewer Brown Line trains (16 to 12) will operate during the peak, however, due to the longer trains; capacity on the Brown Line will be the same as it is today. Purple Line Express service

levels will remain the same (4 trains). South Side Red Line service will also remain the same.

"Longer trains will certainly help, but we will still be limited in the number of trains we will be able to operate on one track, so customers should plan accordingly, particularly during the morning commute where the peak travel time is more concentrated," said Huberman. "We will again supplement service on bus routes that are nearby alternatives to rail service."

There are more than 40 bus routes that could be used as alternate transportation, including nine lakefront express routes that provide direct service to and from the Loop during rush periods. CTA will increase bus service on several routes: #11 Lincoln/Sedgwick, #22 Clark, #134 Stockton/LaSalle Express, #135 Clarendon/LaSalle Express, #147 Outer Drive Express, #148 Clarendon/Michigan Express and the #156 LaSalle. The CTA also recommends that riders consider other nearby bus routes or other CTA rail lines such as the Blue Line.

To the extent possible, the CTA recommends that riders plan to leave earlier or later, and allow extra travel time.

"The Brown Line project is entering the home stretch. I want to thank our customers and the elected officials who have been so cooperative and patient throughout this project. We know this complex construction project has been disruptive, but the work has been necessary to increase capacity to meet growing demand," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Carole Brown. "With eight newly renovated, accessible stations and more on the way and the early introduction of eight-car service, our riders and neighbors are now seeing tangible results. The Brown Line will be a valuable amenity for these communities for many years to come."

Southbound three-track operation is scheduled to begin on Sunday, March 30, 2008 and continue until summer 2009. The \$530 million project remains on schedule and on budget.

The first phase of three-track operation began Monday, April 2, 2007. Red, Brown and Purple Express trains shared one northbound track at Fullerton and Belmont while the platforms were rebuilt and tracks were reconfigured to allow room for the installation of elevators at both stations. Construction crews completed northbound track work at Fullerton on January 25 and the work at Belmont will be completed in early March. At that point, normal northbound operations will resume.

On an average weekday just over 108,000 rides are provided on the north branch of the Red Line, 66,000 on the Brown Line when traffic at the Belmont and Fullerton stations are added in, and 10,000 rides



provided by the Purple Express service, not including Evanston.

## **CTA to Add Weekend Service on Yellow Line**

2/13/08

Today the Chicago Transit Board approved service enhancements for the Yellow Line, and the #43 43rd and #65 Grand bus routes that will be funded through grants.

The Yellow Line will add weekend service to improve access to major employment centers in Skokie including Westfield Old Orchard and Lutheran General Hospital.

"The Yellow Line connects to other CTA rail routes and with several CTA and Pace bus routes which helps to reduce traffic congestion in the area," said CTA President Ron Huberman. "Adding weekend service will make it more convenient to take public transit to shop and to work in the area."

"These experimental service enhancements will afford riders more opportunities to use public transit," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Carole Brown. "We will evaluate the added service after a six-month test period to determine if it would make a good permanent offering for customers."

During baseball season, the Yellow Line serves as a convenient option for Cubs fans to use the Park & Ride at the Skokie Yellow Line station, just three blocks of the Edens Expressway. Fans can park for \$2 and take the Yellow Line to Howard then transfer to a Red Line train to travel to Wrigley Field.

Yellow Line trains will operate on Saturdays and Sundays from 6:10 a.m. to 11:15 p.m. at 15-minute intervals starting Sunday, March 30. Funding for the additional service is from a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) grant. Yellow Line ridership on an average weekday is just over 1,800 rides. In 2007, the Yellow Line provided 587,667 rides.

Service on two bus routes will also be increased. On the #43 43rd route, hours of operation will be expanded to midnight during weeknights, with service intervals of every 20 minutes. The #43 connects the residential area along 43rd Street with the 47th Street Red Line station and the #3 King Drive and #4 Cottage Grove bus routes. Currently no east-west service exists east of the Red Line between 39th Street/Pershing Road and 47th Street after 7 p.m. The additional service will go into effect on Sunday, March 23 and is being funded by the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. Average weekday ridership on the #43 is just over 1,500 rides.

On the #65 Grand, evening hours from Navy Pier will be extended from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. and more frequent weekend service will be added. These improvements will enhance access to jobs on Michigan Avenue and Navy Pier on the east, and to the new employment centers at Wal-Mart and the rebuilt Brickyard Mall on the west. Federal Job Access Reverse Commute funds (JARC) will subsidize the cost of the additional service. Average weekday ridership on the #65 is approximately 7,000 rides.

## **Turnstiles are needed to turn transit into a better environment for travel**

**Derek Moscato, Special to The Province**

Published: Monday, January 14, 2008

Ever since Kevin Falcon announced his desire to install turnstiles at SkyTrain stations across the Lower Mainland, the B.C. transportation minister has been on the receiving end of a predictably hot-headed response from some vocal adversaries.

Falcon's critics have trashed his proposal, arguing that securing the stations with new gates is a colossal waste of energy and money.

But the detractors should reconsider their tough stance.

It's time to get tough instead on the freeloaders who think they're entitled to ride the rails for free, at the expense of taxpayers and fellow riders.

According to TransLink, nearly five per cent of SkyTrain revenues are lost through fare evasion -- a number that both Falcon and TransLink chairman Malcolm Brodie think is even higher.

Then, there's the issue of safety and order. There's a perception out there that SkyTrain attracts more than its fair share of criminals.

Commuters who use SkyTrain at night, particularly women, the elderly and members of other vulnerable groups, would feel better using the service, knowing that lawbreakers aren't free to enter the stations at will.

Of course, these fare gates will not come cheap.

Falcon has estimated the cost of installing them to be in the range of \$80 million to \$100 million -- before paying attendants to staff them. But it's an investment that's worth making, especially from an environmental point of view.



Our civic leaders, focused on reducing automobile pollution, continue to encourage commuters to junk their car keys in favour of a transit pass.

But to get folks out of their vehicles, it's critical that the public transit to which they're switching is clean, comfortable -- and secure.

Metro Vancouver isn't alone on this issue. Los Angeles, which also relies on the honour system, is moving in the same direction. It has found that five per cent of the folks who ride its subway, light rail and rapid bus network are doing so for free.

So earlier this winter, the California city's transportation board voted to begin the process of installing 275 ticket gates on its subway and light-rail network.

Assuming that they both complete the job, Los Angeles and Vancouver will finally be bringing their stations in line with the likes of London, New York, Tokyo and Hong Kong -- cities known for first-rate transit systems and a longstanding tradition of controlled-access gates to keep the freeloaders at bay.

And the benefits go beyond security. Hong Kong's subway gates use a payment system called Octopus -- a smart card that allows riders a convenient way of paying for all forms of public transit, as well as shopping, dining and parking across the city.

Back in B.C., Falcon's proposal might be pricey, but it will pay for itself in the long-run by clamping down on pesky fare evaders and improving TransLink's service for everyone else.

It's time to end the free ride on Metro Vancouver's transit system.

dmoscato@yahoo.com © The Vancouver Province  
2008

## **SkyTrain over LRT for Evergreen**

By Diane Strandberg - The Tri-City News - February 01, 2008

It's faster and will attract more riders.

But the SkyTrain-like technology the province has chosen for the Evergreen Line to the Tri-Cities is also expensive and depends on the federal government pitching in to pay.

And it depends on residents making their voices heard on the choice of route.

B.C. Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon announced Friday that automated light rapid transit (ALRT), not light-rail transit (LRT), is the chosen technology for the Evergreen Line.

But it will be 45 days before a route will be confirmed, although a business case suggests a Port Moody option has a slight edge over a southern route along Lougheed Highway, in front of Riverview, because of development in that city.

Falcon announced the technology switch at a press conference in Vancouver where he was flanked by Tri-City mayors, MLAs and Conservative MP James Moore.

But it will be 45 days before a route will be confirmed, although a business case suggests a Port Moody option has a slight edge over a southern route along Lougheed Highway, in front of Riverview, because of development in that city.

Falcon announced the technology switch at a press conference in Vancouver where he was flanked by Tri-City mayors, MLAs and Conservative MP James Moore.

Ballooning costs for an LRT Evergreen Line, estimated at \$1.2 billion, made SkyTrain, estimated at \$1.4 billion the better choice because it would attract more than twice as many riders and be twice as fast, Falcon said.

He estimated it would take 12.6 minutes to get from Coquitlam to Burnaby with a SkyTrain-like system, which would be separated from road traffic, compared to 23.6 minutes on light rail, which would run at street level, next to traffic.

"Those are two very compelling statistics," Falcon said of the quicker time and ridership.

Community input will be sought to finalize the route and a decision should be made in 45 days to enable the project to go forward.

But Falcon admitted he still has to convince the federal government to contribute its share of the costs. A \$600-million funding gap remains even though TransLink is contributing \$400 million and the province is promising \$410 million.

He predicted the federal government will match the province's contribution and the private sector will come up with the rest with equity, likely through a



private/public partnership arranged through Partnerships BC, which is also vetting the project.

MP James Moore called the technology choice a "big step forward," and said a SkyTrain-style system was "the right technology at the right time."

"We're now looking for feedback in the next 45 days from Tri-City residents," Moore said, adding that the final route choice will "drive some of the cost questions."

Although SkyTrain immediately comes to mind in discussions about advanced or automated light rapid transit, Falcon said the Bombardier-built SkyTrain wouldn't necessarily be the technology running through the northeast by 2014.

"There are multiple technologies that will achieve the same thing," he said, noting the new system will connect to a spur at Lougheed Station in Burnaby, creating efficiencies that LRT could not match.

The transportation minister said the business case prepared by the province with the support of TransLink raised other issues as well. For example, LRT would have had to be grade-separated for nearly half (40%) of the route, including a tunnel under Clarke hill, which made it almost as expensive as a SkyTrain-like system.

Keeping the Port Moody route is dependent on that city's support.

However, Falcon said instead of running along St. Johns, an ALRT line would run at grade along the CP Rail line, an option that he said was considered some years ago and which the council of the day was comfortable with.

Providing some background to the decision, Falcon said LRT was chosen originally as a cost-saving measure because TransLink had a limited \$800-million budget.

"That pushed you into the light rail option. It didn't really allow for the SkyTrain option," he said.

TransLink CEO Pat Jacobsen said the transportation authority supports the choice of technology and will look into how the line could generate some private equity to fill in the funding gap, while fares will cover operating costs, like they do on the rest of the SkyTrain line.

As for the 2014 opening date, Falcon said it is reasonable. He expects the federal government time to

analyse the business case and make a funding commitment soon, making it possible to line up a contractor and technology provider as soon as this fall.

dstrandberg@tricitynews.com

## LRT lines will knit region together

**Fort Saskatchewan, international airport would be linked by transit system**

Susan Ruttan, The Edmonton Journal

Published: Saturday, January 12

City council got a vision Friday of an LRT system that will go to St. Albert, the international airport, Fort Saskatchewan and Beaumont.

The vision came in a private briefing session from Bob Boutilier, the city's new transportation manager, who has made light-rail transit a top priority since he arrived last summer.

Boutilier told reporters after the meeting that he'd like to see preliminary work start on the LRT line to the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology campus before the end of the year.

"If we could do something to start part of it, that would be extremely important," he said. "Then we have to look for funding for the rest of the project."

The NAIT line eventually will go to St. Albert, he said.

It will run underground north from the Churchill LRT station, coming above ground at 105th Avenue, then go west to MacEwan College, north to Royal Alexandra Hospital, and terminate at the north end of Kingsway Mall, across from NAIT.

Detailed route alignment and cost estimates for the NAIT line will go to council for approval later this month, he said.

With it will be a report on proposed LRT routes south from Century Park across Anthony Henday Drive, and north from the Clareview station to the Gorman industrial area.

"The report will basically be explaining, 'This is where we want to go, can we get permission to start acquiring the property?'" he said.

Boutilier said a proposed LRT route to the west end will come in April. There are several possible routes to West Edmonton Mall, he said, and certain technical issues -- such as crossing the North Saskatchewan River -- have to be resolved.



The west-end LRT route is rumoured to be either along 87th Avenue or along Fox Drive to the university area. The southeast route would go to Mill Woods and eventually to Beaumont.

Boutilier said a route into Sherwood Park is still uncertain.

Coun. Bryan Anderson said if the long-range LRT plan gets approval, 2008 could be a "watershed year" for Edmonton.

The plan will guide developers where and what they should build, he said, and will challenge the provincial government to help pay for an LRT network that will knit the region together.

Boutilier won't predict which line will get built after the NAIT one. Which goes ahead first is less important right now than getting an overall picture of the LRT system that will evolve in the coming decades, he said.

Also vital is getting municipalities around Edmonton involved in regional planning for the LRT system, he said, and convincing senior governments to fund it.

He said the route to St. Albert has some appeal because it's already built up, with lots of potential riders. But building the route northeast from Clareview would allow LRT stations to be integrated in the overall development of that new area, he added.

Boutilier recently scrapped city plans for a bus rapid transit system, a network of commuter buses, in favour of concentrating on LRT extension.

sruttan@thejournal.canwest.com © The Edmonton Journal 2008

## Lausanne supports east-west tram

**24 HEURES-NEWS** Reports indicate the city has come to an agreement with adjoining municipalities about a new direction for regional transit.

Lausanne Mayor Daniel Brélaz and city councilor Olivier Français traveled to Strasbourg on Friday to look at the French city's tram system. The visit followed a decision on Thursday by city council to make a tram line the next priority for Lausanne's transit system, *24 Heures* reports today. Council has agreed to a route that would connect Bussigny to the west and Lutry to the east.

The city is also looking at another transit route to link the city center with Blecherettes, to the northwest, and the Beaulieu convention center. Lausanne is required to

submit its projects to the federal government by Tuesday in order to qualify for funding for the projects. No estimated cost has been reported. Alain Gillièron, mayor of the community of Prilly, said municipalities in the Greater Lausanne area have reached a "common agreement" on the future direction for transit.



Photo: VQH archives | Strasbourg's futuristic trams: Lausanne is looking to establish a similar kind of service to link the east and west parts of the city.

Lausanne is interested in the technology used by Strasbourg tram system, which was reintroduced to the city 13 years ago and has now expanded to a network with five lines. Lausanne's decision on a tram system comes as the TL transit system prepares to open the M2 metro, a SFr750-million, six-kilometer line opening in September. The metro links Ouchy by the shores of Lake Geneva with Epalinges, a community north of the city. One of the challenges faced by the city is its location on a series of hills that rise steeply from the lake.

## Streetcar Plan Has Money and Desire

Funding Approved for N.Va. Network

By Michael Laris  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Monday, January 14, 2008; Page B01

Plans to build a Northern Virginia streetcar network, once considered fanciful, received a major boost last week, when officials unanimously voted to give the project its first big infusion of funding.

The project was among the top dollar winners in the funding package passed Thursday by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the body instituting new regional transportation taxes put in place last year.

It also was the focus of sparring in the long-running philosophical contest between advocates of mass transit and those who emphasize the need for major road construction to address the Washington region's snarled traffic.



Backers hope the initial 4.7-mile Columbia Pike line, which will connect Pentagon City in Arlington County to the Skyline area of Fairfax County, will seed a much broader streetcar network, which eventually could stretch from Alexandria to Tysons Corner.

"It is one of the most important things we can do to move people in Northern Virginia and deal with air pollution and global warming," said Authority Chairman Chris Zimmerman, who also is a member of the Arlington County Board.

The proposal also fits with the vision followed for decades by Arlington of directing development near transit, such as along the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. Development policies put in place in 2003 allow Columbia Pike landowners to build bigger projects if they follow strict rules intended to make the area more attractive.

"Having a sidewalk cafe next to buses that are pulling up, with the exhaust fumes and the noise they make, is not as inviting," Zimmerman said. The project, estimated to cost \$138.5 million, "will have effectively paid for itself" in added revenue from new development, he said.

But Bob Chase, president of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance and a proponent of the transportation taxes, said the streetcar and other projects "fail the regional significance test" given Northern Virginia's vast need for improved roads. He said that trolleys are an antiquated and unjustified solution and that too many of the projects backed by the authority are primarily local in scope.



The \$392 million spending plan approved by the authority last week covers 2 1/2 years and includes more than \$150 million for Metro, as well as a list of projects small and large, from bike trails and a municipal garage in Falls Church to an interchange at routes 7 and 659 in Loudoun County and the widening of Route 1 in Prince William County, among other projects.

"This sets a bad precedent," Chase said, adding at a public hearing before the authority's vote that members should suppress their urge "to bring home the local icon. You have to check your local hats at the door."

Fairfax Board Chairman Gerald E. Connolly (D-At Large) was among authority members who argued that the group's initial funding choices would have regional impact. "We're going to do a lot of roads," he said, but "we have to have a balanced approach."

Connolly also said the legislation giving the authority the power to raise funds says that each jurisdiction should benefit based on the amount it contributes. "This is a political coalition," Connolly said, adding that such smaller jurisdictions as Falls Church need to see results just as larger communities do.

The \$392 million spending plan approved by the authority last week covers 2 1/2 years and includes more than \$150 million for Metro, as well as a list of projects small and large, from bike trails and a municipal garage in Falls Church to an interchange at routes 7 and 659 in Loudoun County and the widening of Route 1 in Prince William County, among other projects. The authority approved \$36.9 million for the streetcar project.

The plan is contingent upon the authority prevailing in a case brought before Virginia's Supreme Court last week challenging its right to raise taxes.

Streetcars have been popularized in such communities as Portland, Ore., and are planned for the District as well, starting in Anacostia. In the Columbia Pike plan, the line will generally run along the outside lane of traffic, beside the curb. Streetcars share the lanes with other cars and can get caught in traffic snarls just like other vehicles, but there are plans to synchronize traffic lights with their travel.

Skeptics, such as Arlington Republican activist Wayne Kubicki, worry that the streetcar project will cost more than current projections and might not have the advertised development and congestion-alleviation benefits. "It sounds half-cooked," Kubicki said.

Supporters said streetcars take less time at stops, because people can prepay and quickly enter multiple doors, and they can carry more people along a route than is possible with buses. More than 14,000 people ride buses along Columbia Pike daily, and officials said the maximum number of riders that buses could carry is about 20,000. Streetcars could handle 25,000 to 30,000 riders, they said.

Backers also cite the psychological benefits of rail, saying people who would not ride buses are more likely to at least occasionally give up their sedan or sport-utility vehicle for a streetcar, just as they do for Metro. The project could also reassure those considering developing property along the tracks, especially during an economic downturn, according to Peter Owen, a



member of Arlington's transportation advisory commission.

"If you see the government is digging a huge hole and sticking in steel rails and putting wires up, you know that streetcar's going to be there, even if there's a rough patch two or three years down the road," Owen said.

## **L. Merion chooses firm for Ardmore renewal**

**Edward Lipkin proposes building an office tower and hotel over the rails.**

By Diane Mastrull Inquirer Staff Writer

The developer chosen to revive long-suffering Ardmore is a Lower Merion Township resident with a dramatic, \$300 million proposal featuring a six-story office tower and boutique hotel straddling the train tracks that divide the low-rise business district.

By spanning the rails, Edward B. Lipkin aims to create a pedestrian-friendly connection between Ardmore's successful north side - site of the thriving retail complex Suburban Square - and the south side, where Lancaster Avenue businesses are desperate for an economic revival.

"I think this plan for revitalization is our once-in-a-lifetime shot at addressing problems with the Ardmore business district that have been there for 20 or 30 years," said township Commissioner Maryam Phillips, whose district includes Ardmore.

On Thursday night, Phillips and six other commissioners selected Lipkin's Philadelphia-based EBL&S Development from a field of five contenders that submitted proposals to the board for Ardmore's redevelopment.

"It's just exciting because of what the possibilities are," Commissioners Chairman Bruce Reed said yesterday.

Along beleaguered Lancaster Avenue, business owners have long waited for a redevelopment plan that would entice passing motorists to stop and shop without destroying the corridor's village. Yesterday, they were a bundle of mixed emotions.

"It's like the tipping point for Ardmore," said Sherry Tillman, owner of Past\*Present\*Future, a shop specializing in American contemporary crafts. "I'm hoping it will go in the right direction. I'm excited and I'm scared."

Given the magnitude of the proposal by Lipkin's company, "it could be disastrous or fabulous," said Tillman, who has lived in Ardmore for 21 years.

Lipkin has expressed his willingness to adjust his proposal to meet community concerns. However, in some quarters, that created uncertainty about exactly what he might do. With additional concerns that building over the railroad tracks would complicate and delay the project, Commissioner Cheryl Gelber and two other commissioners threw their support to another developer.

They voted for Dranoff Properties, a Philadelphia developer headed by a Lower Merion resident, Carl Dranoff. His latest project is the 32-story Symphony House, a luxury condominium building anchoring the south end of the Avenue of the Arts. Dranoff could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Four other commissioners abstained from the vote, citing conflicts of interest.

Reached at home yesterday, a frazzled-sounding Gelber said she had been fielding a stream of calls from "frustrated" constituents all day.

"Nobody is quite sure what the commissioners approved," she said. "By voting for Ed Lipkin . . . nobody knows what that's going to" mean for Ardmore.

Lipkin's original plan was vetted in public in November and analyzed by an ad hoc committee of development professionals and local residents formed by the township. It called for not only a hotel but about 700 residential units ranging from affordable housing to luxury condominiums; 44,000 square feet of retail; a 11,250-square-foot community theater; and a 6,000-square-foot train station, for which a \$5.8 million federal grant has been secured. It also provides more parking, about 2,000 spaces in garages and lots.

A township resident since 1982, Lipkin said he was aware of Ardmore's contentious past in regard to redevelopment.

Three years ago, many business owners and residents mounted political and legal opposition to a township-backed plan that included the possible use of eminent domain to demolish private properties.

Leading the effort was the Save Ardmore Coalition, an activist group that succeeded in turning out of office those commissioners who backed that controversial plan.

The current board launched the search for new proposals and developers to carry them out.

Lipkin's tireless outreach - to township officials, residents, clergy, business owners and anyone else who wanted to express an opinion - was cited repeatedly yesterday by those pleased that he won the redevelopment job.



"I want to be responsive to the stakeholders and I need to be," Lipkin said. "Not being fluid at this point would be a mistake."

Among those endorsing his choice was Carla Zambelli, who as spokeswoman for the Save Ardmore Coalition grilled every developer.

"Having a developer with the apparent willingness to work with the community is huge," Zambelli said. "At the end of the day, we want to be able to say, 'OK, we can live with this.'"

While acknowledging reservations about Lipkin's proposal - Zambelli doesn't like the idea of building over train tracks, for one - she said she sees "nothing that I don't think a compromise can be reached on."

The township and Lipkin will begin negotiating a development agreement, which Reed, the commissioners chairman, said he hopes can be reached by March 19. After that begins what is expected to be a lively exchange over just what Lipkin intends to do in Ardmore.

Township officials do not have to worry about funding. Lipkin has said he has secured all the necessary financing.

In addition to jump-starting Ardmore's economy, he envisions the project as a prototype for green building, walkability, and transit-oriented development.

And he wants some bragging rights as a local boy done good.

"To do a project of this significance, which really will be considered a legacy project in my hometown, is quite truthfully emotional," Lipkin said.

At MilkBoy, a coffee shop and recording studio on Lancaster Avenue, owner Tommy Joyner, who is also president of the Ardmore Business Association, said Lipkin had not made his short list of developer choices. Nevertheless, he can't wait for him to get started.

"I woke up feeling good," Joyner said yesterday. "We're one step closer."

## Trolley expansion plan derailed

By Leigh Jones  
The Daily News

Published January 4, 2008

**GALVESTON** — The island's trolley system is what local officials describe as a money-losing operation.

Most days, the picturesque cars rattle down The Strand empty.

On Wednesday, they weren't running at all, thanks to construction work on the tracks between 20th and 21st streets.

The ongoing problems with the trolley system have prompted city council members to consider changes to its operations and its long-term plan.

Transportation consultant Barry Goodman said the city no longer wants to extend the system to run along the seawall, despite just receiving \$2 million in federal funding for the project and, later this month, Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas wants to talk about the possibility of running the trolleys on a seasonal basis only.



But no matter how much money the trolley loses or how many riders choose to walk rather than hop aboard, the city is stuck with the system unless the council is willing to repay millions in federal funding.

### Falling Apart

The trolley system was completed in 1987 for about \$10.5 million, Goodman said. He estimated the federal government has pitched in a total of about \$16 million for capital improvements during the last 20 years.

That money came with hooks — the city must continue to operate the trolley for the extent of its useful life, about 30 years.

But, with 10 years left, the trolleys and the tracks already are falling apart.

On most days, Island Transit mechanics are able to get only two of the trolley cars running. Their shiny exteriors and polished wood interiors, meticulously cared for by the two mechanics who are dedicated to the small rail operation, hide a mess of electrical wiring that



often shorts out.

Goodman said the company that initially built the cars has long been out of business. During its last meeting, Assistant City Manager Lloyd Renderer told the council each car would cost about \$1 million to replace, money the city doesn't have.

#### Extension Abandoned

Later the same day, U.S. Rep. Ron Paul announced funding in the federal omnibus spending bill for \$38.2 million in projects for Galveston County, including \$2 million to extend the trolley tracks along the seawall.

The city planned the extension in 2004, when it also decided to take the tracks to the University of Texas Medical Branch.

But Goodman now says the seawall extension is no longer part of the plan.

He hopes instead to use the funds for repair work on both the cars and the tracks.

"The trolley is in great need of renovation," he said. "The funding that has most recently been approved will do much more good if dedicated to renovating the existing system. That's a much higher priority."

#### If No One's Riding...

Goodman also said he believed that the trolley's ridership numbers would increase if the cars ran more predictably and more often.

But Thomas suggested the opposite, telling city staff to consider further reducing the trolley schedule to stop the financial bleeding. After approving a 33 percent increase to Island Transit fares, council members were anxious to trim the transit system's expenses.

Last year, 31,457 people rode the trolley for \$1.25 a trip, bringing in only about \$39,000 for the system's operation. Between 2001 and 2006, the trolley cost the city an annual average of \$270,991 to operate.

City Manager Steve LeBlanc told the council several East Beach developers were interested in bringing the trolley to the end of the island, but even their financial contribution may not be enough to persuade city leaders to put more money into the system.

"If no one's riding the trolley, I'm not sure we should continue talking about expanding it," Thomas said.

## Caltrain pins hopes on electric fleet

### Transition expected to improve service, address growing demand

By Will Oremus, MEDIANEWS STAFF

Article Last Updated: 12/29/2007 02:35:29 AM PST

Switching from diesel to electric power will help

Caltrain accommodate 52 percent more riders per day by 2017, a new report estimates.

The rail line expects to run at least 110 trains per weekday once it goes electric in 2014, according to its newly updated strategic plan. That's up from 96 trains today.

The numbers are the first published estimates of the impact of Caltrain's long-planned electrification program. While hurdles remain, the agency said it expects the transition will help it meet the Peninsula's growing demand for public transit.

"It's very exciting to see these numbers," said San Mateo County Supervisor Jerry Hill, a Caltrain board member. "To me, it looks like (electrification) will complete the perfect rollout of Caltrain service on the Peninsula."

The projections also take into account several smaller improvements planned for the San Jose-to-San Francisco railroad. Those include more tracks, better signals, and upgrades to some stations.

For instance, construction is under way at the Burlingame station to put platforms on both sides of the tracks instead of just one. That will allow the station to hold two trains at once, eliminating a bottleneck that forces trains to wait outside the station until it's clear.

Caltrain's popularity is already on the rise amid high gas prices, a recovering economy, global warming concerns and the railroad's introduction of speedy express trains. Ridership this year is up by almost 8 percent over last year.

But spokesman Jonah Weinberg said the railroad is getting close to its capacity at peak commute times. Without improvements, it wouldn't be able to keep up with demand, which should continue to grow as Peninsula cities plan housing developments near train stations.

The key, he said, is electrification. Lightweight "electric multiple unit" trains start and stop more quickly than those powered by diesel locomotives, shaving minutes from the commute and allowing them to run closer together.



Caltrain has said in the past it believes full electrification would allow it to schedule stops at every station at least every 30 minutes.

It could also save as much as \$3 million annually on fuel costs, Weinberg said, with more savings expected on maintenance. Increased ridership would also boost revenue.

Before it can make the switch, Caltrain needs more money to buy the new cars. It also needs a federal waiver to run the electric cars on the same tracks as traditional trains.

Until then, the agency expects to keep struggling with budget deficits, according to the strategic plan.

Caltrain's governing body, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, will meet at 10 a.m. Thursday at 1250 San Carlos Ave. in San Carlos.

E-mail Oremus at [woremus@dailynewsgroup.com](mailto:woremus@dailynewsgroup.com).

## **Tide already rolling in Beach plans**

The Virginian-Pilot  
© January 2, 2008

Virginia Beach has a back-to-the-future vision for the Oceanfront. A century ago, people rode a train to the beach because it was the only way to get there.

Now, city planners are incorporating rail service - light rail- into plans to bring people east from Town Center, downtown Norfolk and beyond. And not just for sun, but for food, shopping and fun.

In every scenario, a light-rail system, built along the Norfolk Southern corridor between Virginia Beach Boulevard and Interstate 264, would bring them in.

To a degree that may not be publicly appreciated, the vision shows up in new city plans and in proposals to connect the convention center and the Dome site. Light rail is envisioned as a smart alternative between offices, shopping centers and its sandy beaches.

That light rail is being baked into the blueprints for the future is a measure of how much public attitudes have flip-flopped, and nowhere more than at the Oceanfront, which stubbornly opposed it for years. In a city without a redevelopment authority, the plans also reflect the

recognition that light rail is essential for getting the private sector excited about revitalization.

For a decade, light rail has been a ticklish subject. Hampton Roads Transit originally called for a rail line between Norfolk and the Oceanfront, with a spur to the Norfolk Naval Base.

But Oceanfront business leaders didn't support it in 1999, and neither did Beach voters. The City Council pulled out of regional discussions a week after the referendum. And despite the best efforts of HRT in 2003 to negotiate on behalf of both Norfolk and the Beach for a regional rail line, the city still couldn't agree on a price. The inability to reach agreement cost the city millions.

Norfolk managed to cut through the naysayers and find enough money for its 7.4-mile starter system, now called The Tide. The system is costing \$232 million. But in little more than two years, people will be able to get from Eastern Virginia Medical Center to downtown Norfolk to Newtown Road at I-264 without their cars.

Virginia Beach has been reticent to follow Norfolk's lead. Other cities looking for ways to better manage traffic and sprawl would envy the opportunity to have rail paralleling an interstate, along a 10.6-mile commercial corridor that includes the successful Town Center complex.

The rail line is pricey, no question. But it will not be cheaper in a year or five. Last week, Virginia Beach applied to the Virginia Department of Transportation for \$15 million to pursue buying the right of way. That indicates the city is serious about expanding the light-rail system.

Next, Beach Council members should ask HRT to count them in. Formally, and finally, Virginia Beach should jump aboard.

**Coach USA Gets on Board with Low-Emission Technology; Takes First Group of 60 New MCl® J4500 Models with Clean-Diesel Engines**



**— New Technology, Equipment Make Riding a Coach both Comfortable & Green —**

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — December 27, 2007** — Coach USA, a leading schedule service and charter operator in North America, will begin the New Year operating with the first 10 of 60 new MCI J4500 models featuring clean-diesel, low emission engine technology. The first nine of 10 units, delivered at the end of 2007, are equipped with Cummins ISM engines and ZF Astronic transmissions; the other J4500 coach comes with a Detroit Diesel, ZF Astronic powertrain combination. MCI will deliver an additional 50 J4500 models equipped with Detroit Diesel and ZF Astronic powertrains to Coach USA in spring 2008.

Coach USA's new J4500s will be the first coaches in its fleet to feature the new engine technology mandated by the EPA and designed to reduce particulate matter by 90 percent.

"Clean diesel technology is key to promoting motor coach travel as an environmentally friendly transportation alternative," said Dale Moser, president and chief operating officer of Coach USA. "As a company, we're dedicated to transforming people's mindset, getting them out of their cars by emphasizing the economic and environmental advantages of coach travel. Updating our fleet with J4500 coaches featuring low-emission engines supports our strategy and helps us communicate an even greener message." These coaches also are equipped with engine fire suppressant systems and SmarTire™ monitoring systems, two features that enhance the safety of Coach USA vehicles.



Coach USA's 10 new coaches are destined for the company's US operations. In spring, 29 J4500 coaches, which are wheelchair-lift equipped, will be delivered to its East Coast and Midwest operations in the U.S. and 21 J4500 coaches will go to the company's Coach Canada operations. Coach USA selected comfortable Amaya seating and state-of-the-art entertainment systems for its new coaches along with provisions for Saucon GPS systems.

"MCI appreciates Coach USA's continued support of the J4500 model and its display of leadership by becoming one of the first larger operators to get on board with the new engine technology," said Tom Sorrells, MCI president and CEO. "Coach USA is an industry innovator dedicated to demonstrating that motor coach travel is a comfortable and environmentally friendly way to ride."

Coach USA, owned by Stagecoach Group, a United Kingdom based bus and train operator, operates about 2,000 coaches and owns more than 20 local North American companies that operate scheduled bus routes, motor coach tours, charters and city sightseeing tours. In 2006, the company launched Megabus.com, the wildly popular nonstop express-service where travelers book their trips from the website. To learn more, visit [www.coachusa.com](http://www.coachusa.com).

**Eco-Committed Southeastern Stages Expands Low-emission Coach Fleet with New Purchase from MCI**

**Takes Delivery of 2 More MCI® J4500 Coaches; Celebrates 75 Years in Business with an Ongoing Dedication to a Greener Future**

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — January 7, 2008**

Southeastern Stages, Inc., an Atlanta based operator with a unique environmentally-committed service-shop, has taken delivery of two new MCI J4500 coaches. The new coaches, equipped with clean-diesel, low emission Detroit Diesel engines and Allison transmissions, are the first in Southeastern Stages' fleet to feature the new engine technology mandated by the EPA, designed to reduce particulate matter by 90 percent. This transaction marks the second delivery of J4500 units to the company in a year. Southeastern took two J4500 coaches in February 2007.

Founded in 1933, Southeastern Stages turns 75 in 2008, and its ongoing business practices has set the stage for many more years of actively supporting green technology. Beginning in 1995, environmentally-active Southeastern Stages launched a green policy by building a new service facility in Atlanta. The 25,000 square foot building, which houses offices and a 10,320 square foot service-center, features a hard coated shop floor to eliminate oil penetration, six state-of-the-art service bays including two with lift basement design and two in-ground rotary bays, along with an energy efficient drive-through wash bay. "We researched and worked hard on the design for two years before building the shop," said Larry Cooper, director of



maintenance. "We built it with environmental practices in mind, and others in the industry have come in and duplicated it."

The company's green policy is substantial. The service shop uses oil to heat its shop, biodegradable solvents and adheres to the city of Atlanta's guidelines on environmental practices. Southeastern Stages also participates in Firestone's tire recycling program. Plus, its 40 coach fleet has been running on Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel fuel for the past year.



Southeastern Stages operates regular scheduled service between Atlanta, Georgia, via Augusta, Georgia to Columbia, South Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina and Fayetteville, North Carolina, along with a tour and charter business. Today, the third generation is represented by Michael A. Dickson, president, and William Hughes, past president, who now serves as Chairman of the Board. Both are supported by an experienced executive management staff. The company employs 70 people and provides extensive training for its technicians and drivers.

The relationship between Southeastern Stages and MCI dates back to 1969, when the company bought its first MCI model, an MC-7. For nearly 30 years, Southeastern has purchased coaches from MCI, totaling nearly 100 MCI models.

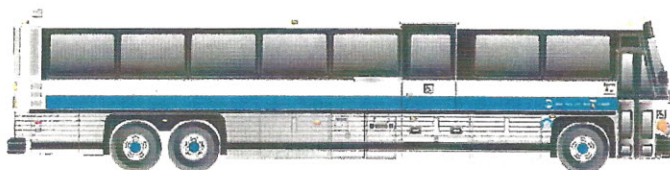
In addition to celebrating a long, successful business relationship, both MCI and Southeastern Stages commemorates 75 years of being in business in 2008.

To learn more, please visit [southeasternstages.com](http://southeasternstages.com).

## NY Metropolitan Transit Authority Orders 126 Clean-Diesel Commuter Coaches from MCI

— New coaches feature new low-emission engines, revised design and technologies —

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — January 2, 2008** — Motor Coach Industries has announced that the Metropolitan Transit Authority of New York has granted approval for the purchase of 126 clean-diesel commuter coaches from Motor Coach Industries. This purchase will increase the MTA's fleet of MCI commuter coaches to more than 1,200.



The MTA operates MCI's high-capacity, high-amenity commuter coaches on its MTA New York City Transit and MTA Bus Company fleets, providing express-service commuter routes from the outer boroughs to Manhattan. The new coaches, equipped with a CAT C-13 engine and Allison transmission powertrain, are the agency's first to feature the new engine technology mandated by the EPA in 2007. Previously, the MTA took the lead in reducing exhaust emissions by outfitting its commuter coaches with a catalyzed diesel particulate filter, and using Ultra Low Sulfur diesel fuel. Today's new engine technology combines a regeneration pollution control system with the diesel particulate filter (DPF) to reduce particulate matter by 90 percent.

The MTA's new commuter coaches will also feature several technical upgrades including MCI's redesigned front-end cap for a more modern look, all wheel disc brakes and an ultra-capacitor starting system for enhanced performance. These will also be the first MCI commuter models to feature LED interior cabin lighting for longer-life.

Additionally, the new coaches are wheelchair lift-equipped, and feature amenities commuters have come to expect from MCI, such as 57-forward facing, reclining seats; overhead LED reading lights and airflow controls; and parcel racks. MCI expects to begin delivering the new coaches in mid-2008.

Michael Melaniphy, MCI's vice president, public sector said: "We're pleased that the MTA has once again selected MCI commuter coaches for its express routes. Commuters enjoy our smooth riding model because they sit in reclining seats high above traffic, comfortably



working, reading, or resting when commuting to and from Manhattan." MCI's commuter coach is based on the dependable MCI D-Series model, the most popular intercity coach in the U.S.

All together the MTA, under its subsidiaries MTA New York City Transit, MTA Bus Company, and MTA Long Island Bus, operates 75 express routes and 290 local routes serving about 3.1 million riders daily.

## **White Knight Transportation Adds a Setra S 417 with TopSky®**

**Greensboro, N.C. (October 15, 2007)** – White Knight Transportation, a premium ground transportation company from Columbia, Mo., recently took delivery of its third Setra S 417 luxury motorcoach, complimenting the existing fleet of limousines, sedans and trolleys. The Setra S 417 is equipped with the unique TopSky® feature, a glass roof that runs the length of the aisle and enables guests to see everything from clear blue skies to majestic mountains.



"The Setra S 417 with TopSky has been a great addition to our fleet," said Ted Littell, owner and manager of White Knight Transportation. "With its leather seats, tray tables and GPS System, customers have commented that it is just like traveling in a private jet."

White Knight Transportation has been providing professional and safe ground transportation for over a decade. Providing a variety of state-of-the-art vehicles from motorcoaches to stretch limousines to sedan service to the "Limo Trolley," White Knight is able to meet any demands – whether business or pleasure. All services come with professional, courteous and knowledgeable drivers.

Introduced to the North American market in 2003, the Setra S 417 is setting the benchmark in luxury motorcoach travel by comfort and innovation to both guest and driver alike. Along with the innovative TopSky® feature, the coach also comes with such appointments as leather seats, tray tables and the GPS system. A front mounted camera allows passengers to see what the driver sees. The ultra-modern, spacious S 417 also provides guests with a state-of-the-art audio

system, which includes a DVD player and five, 15-inch monitors positioned throughout the cabin.



"White Knight Transportation is a company that focuses on quality customer service and attention to detail, and they have made a strong commitment to its customers with the addition of the Setra S 417 with TopSky®," said Tom Chezem, vice president of motorcoach sales for Daimler Buses North America. "The unique styling of the S 417 with TopSky® will compliment the objectives of White Knight, and we look forward to continuing to support their company."

## **Seattle-based Starline aims high with three new low-emission MCI® E4500 coaches**

**SEATTLE, WA — January 17, 2008** — In 10 years, Seattle's Starline Luxury Coaches, which started with just three paratransit minibuses, has rocketed to a multi-million dollar business serving three distinct transportation sectors. Now the company plans to further its charter sector, taking delivery of three new MCI E4500 coaches outfitted with upscale interior finishes including leather seating. The new E4500s, equipped with Detroit Diesel engines and Allison transmissions, are the first coaches in Starline's fleet to feature the new engine technology mandated by the EPA to reduce particulate matter by 90 percent.

"It's the right time for us to make a financial commitment to the new engine technology," said Gladys Gillis, Starline CEO. "We see great potential in the charter end of our business. It's one of our leading profit centers. Therefore, want to offer our charter customers the highest-end luxury model available. That's why we went with the E4500. It fits our strategy."





Founded in 1998 with three minibuses and a paratransit contract from Seattle's Department of Social and Health Services, Starline purchased its first motor coach, a pre-owned MC-9, in 1999, and began buying new models in 2004. Now half of Starline's 20 motor coaches, which also include MCI® J4500s, are model year 2005 or newer. All together, Starline has a fleet of 55 vehicles and serves three distinct markets: charter, corporate contract shuttle and paratransit.

Gillis and business partner Becky Pritchett, president of Starline, attribute much of their success to a solid strategy, thoughtful measurement and participation in UMA-sponsored 20 Group, where non-competing motorcoach operators share financial information and exchange ideas on how to face industry challenges.

Early on, Gillis and Pritchett designed a strategy for growth through diversification. "We determined that if we operated three distinct profit centers by adding charter and corporate shuttle, we could recover if any one of those markets experienced a downturn," said Pritchett, who worked at Grayline Seattle prior to founding Starline. Their strategy paid off. After the events of 9/11, Starline focused on paratransit and shuttle, achieving an eight-percent growth rate that year as other related businesses in the area closed up.

Subscribing to a management style of "what gets measured gets done," both Gillis and Pritchett appreciate the peer evaluation, appraisals and comparison charts provided to them as members of the UMA 20 Group. "Everyone in the group is measuring the same things, and that lets us see where we stand and where can improve our profit potential. The group has helped us be more successful," said Gillis, who is also a board member of UMA and Northwestern Motorcoach Association, serving as president in 2003.

Now the duo is looking to a bigger, greener future. In addition to its new E4500s, Starline is drawing up plans for a new state-of-art LEED (a green building rating system) facility and service center where eco-friendly practices and policies will take shape. Additionally,

Starline is a founding member of the Green Operators Motorcoach Council formed to launch a nationwide marketing campaign on the ecological benefits of travel by motorcoach.

Recently, Starline added two key people to its management staff. Robert Ferguson has joined the company as vice president of sales and marketing, a new position. Rusty Bergerson, who had been with Starline prior to his most recent post with a local Detroit Diesel dealer, has been named director of maintenance.

To mark its 10-year anniversary, Starline hosted a black-tie affair at Seattle's Grand Hyatt for its employees, customers and vendors, presenting "Star" awards to those who contributed to their success.

But perhaps it's the motorcoach industry and the community at large that is benefiting most from Starline's high-aiming enthusiasm, industry involvement and community commitment. Its paratransit division, which provides non-emergency medical transportation to the handicapped and elderly, has grown to 15 routes.

Says Gillis, "Paratransit isn't a high-margin business for us, but we're committed to it and believe it's a highly valued community service."

Starline is also the recipient of Metro Magazine's 2008 Operator of the Year award.

To learn more, visit [www.starlinetransportation.com](http://www.starlinetransportation.com).

## Casino Express puts money on 16 new MCI® J4500 coaches

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — January 17, 2008 —**

Houston-based Casino Express has taken delivery of 16 new MCI J4500 coaches, marking a major return to Motor Coach Industries. The operator, which primarily runs contract shuttles and tours to Louisiana and Oklahoma casinos, and is about to launch a new tour department, also has an option to purchase 12 additional J4500s.





"MCI is adding more value to the business," said Paul Huang, owner of Casino Express, which he says has been operating for about 14 years and has been an MCI customer in the past. "They really made an effort." Part of that effort was to offer Casino Express a full range of MCI Pro Support services, including MCI training for the operator's drivers and mechanics. Huang's team is planning a trip to MCI's National Training Center in Louisville for an intensive hands-on Technician Training session.

The new J4500s have Caterpillar C-13 engines and ZF ASTronic transmissions, and Huang says customer response has so far been positive. Casino Express now has one of the largest J4500 fleets in Houston, and Huang is proud to have one of the newest motor coach fleets in Texas as well. Casino Express' fleet totals 22 coaches, and the company employs about 60 people. In addition to its Houston headquarters, it has a facility in San Antonio and picks up casino customers in Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Temple, Waco, Beaumont, and Austin as well. The company also runs traditional tours and charters and is about to add more contract shuttle routes. "The J4500s are going to come in really handy," said Huang.

For more information about Casino Express, visit [www.casinoexpressbus.com](http://www.casinoexpressbus.com).

## KRAPF COACHES OF PENNSYLVANIA ADDS TWO NEW VAN HOOL TO FLEET

ABC recently delivered two new Van Hool C2045E coaches to Krapf Coaches of West Chester, PA. The new Van Hool C2045E's will be used to upgrade the company's executive coach transport and charter fleet and feature DVD players, a rear window, SmarTire and CAT/ZF technologies, as well as a wide range of luxury standards.



The 66 year-old company is one of the most diversified operations in the nation with services that include the largest private school bus contractor in Pennsylvania, a charter division featuring motorcoaches, an executive coach and towncar limousine service, paratransit services, and local route transit operations.

With headquarters in West Chester, Pennsylvania, the Krapf Coach operation features six maintenance bays, two wash bays and office suites. The PA-based operation runs 20 motorcoaches from the main location and their Delaware affiliate, Gregg Bus Services operates an additional 13 coaches – offering comprehensive service throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and other parts of the country, as well as daily line runs to Atlantic City Casinos.

Company management spans three generations of Krapf family members from company founder, the late George Krapf, Jr., who started with just one school bus. Today the company operates over a thousand vehicles and succeeding generations of sons, daughters and grandchildren oversee the daily operations of this highly successful firm.

The Krapf family exemplifies professionalism and dedication to their business, their community and the industry, says Dane Cornell, President and CEO, ABC Companies. We are very pleased to serve their needs today and in the future. Krapf customers love the Van Hool equipment, says Ken Carchidi, ABC Account Executive, New Jersey location. The new C-coaches we've recently delivered offer great passenger amenities and will add value to the Krapf fleet.

## Scania makes a breakthrough into the Chinese city bus market

**2007-12-2807 Scania is now delivering 25 articulated buses meeting the Euro 4 emission requirements to the public transport company in Changzhou in the Jiangsu province in eastern China. Scania won the contract on account of its emission technology, low operating cost and long service life.**

The delivery was made as a result of the agreement between Scania and Chinese bodybuilder Jiangsu Alfa Bus, signed in the presence of Sweden's prime minister and China's president in June 2007.

Scania's emission technology is based on EGR, exhaust gas recirculation, which neither requires after treatment of exhaust gases, nor extra tanks with additives on-board.





"Our convenient emission control solution appeals to Chinese customers," says Mats Harborn, Managing Director of Scania China. "Getting lower exhaust emissions without the need to store and fill additives makes it easy to take a radical step towards a cleaner transport system."

"Scania scores high on uptime, fuel economy and service support. Combined with long-lived and durable vehicles, this is fundamental to minimize the overall operating cost – the cost per passenger-kilometre."

In October this year, Scania signed a contract and is also in the process of supplying 500 city buses to Singapore, where environmental performance was a deciding factor...

China is rapidly extending its BRT systems (bus rapid transit), with many projects in the pipeline in major cities all across the country. BRT provides a quick and flexible solution to passenger transport in fast-growing regions.

Alfa Bus is a privately owned company based in Jiangsu province that manufactures buses for urban traffic as well as tourist and express coaches. With backing from Scania, the company will also be responsible for marketing the Scania buses it produces.

## New Tarrant County rail line spurs talk of development

Tarrant County: Officials warn that development can be hit and miss

12:00 AM CST on Sunday, November 11, 2007

By JEFF MOSIER / The Dallas Morning News  
jmosier@dallasnews.com

The enthusiasm for rail these days is often as much about economic development as mass transit. Cities often expect rail stations to attract high-rise residential towers, chi-chi restaurants and upscale retail along with the expected commuters.

The Fort Worth Transportation Authority is no exception. It is placing a high priority on the development potential for stops on its 40-mile, \$390 million commuter rail line scheduled to open in 2012. The possible station sites are the subject of two public hearings planned for this week.

But transit experts warned that not every station on the line from southwest Fort Worth to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport will anchor multimillion-dollar developments.

"One thing that we've always tried to do when we introduce new transit projects into urban areas is to manage expectations," said Tim Baldwin, a consultant working with the transportation authority, also known as the T. "Not every station is going to be Mockingbird Station [in Dallas]. ... We try to pull people back and say that's not appropriate for every neighborhood."

Mockingbird Station along the Dallas Area Rapid Transit light-rail line has become the local standard that all transit-oriented development is measured against – fairly or unfairly. The collection of pricey apartments and tenants has become the prize many cities want.

Mr. Baldwin said about half the estimated 14 new stations in the Tarrant County rail corridor are good candidates for transit-oriented development plans. But as with the area along the Trinity Railway Express route, which runs between Dallas and Fort Worth, economic development could be hit and miss.

The Texas & Pacific Lofts by the T&P Station have sold quickly and are part of a revival along Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth. But the Richland Hills station, sandwiched between industrial buildings and subdivisions, has brought in little new development.

Location, location

The TRE and the new Tarrant County rail line share the same benefits and drawbacks. They both use, or will use, existing railroad lines. That approach makes the project more affordable but sacrifices the flexibility to place the rail stations where they would make the biggest economic splash.

Mr. Baldwin said that not all rail stations are designed the same, and expectations should be different. Some "end-of-line" stations with large parking lots draw commuters from miles around. Other neighborhood



"walk-up" stations have little parking and tend to draw pedestrians from surrounding residential areas. And some are at destination points, such as downtowns, sports arenas or major employment centers.

The T is expected to finalize its station selections by the end of November and submit draft environmental reviews to the Federal Transit Administration in February. Federal money is expected to make up about half the cost.

The possibilities for economic development along the line vary dramatically, said Dick Ruddell, president of the T.

"By and of itself, a train station will not generate transit-oriented development," he said.

The site must have something else going for it, such as vacant land, highway access or a location in an area that's already redeveloping.

At the southern end of the line, which would be in the Sycamore School Road-Dirks-Alta Mesa area, new subdivisions are rising out of the hilly, scrub-brush terrain. There is plenty of open land but few existing businesses, aside from the odd self-storage center or gas station. That rail station is expected to draw commuters from throughout the area as a park-and-ride location but might not generate dense, urban-style developments.

Farther north, Mr. Baldwin said, a proposed station at Granbury Road and Interstate 20 looks promising. He said the nearby aging strip malls could be ripe for redevelopment.

Replacing strip malls

One proposal shows a 500-space parking lot where the Southcliff Center now sits. This and nearby shopping centers built in the 1960s are filled with businesses ranging from a police substation to a discount cigarettes store to a school for hairstylists.

Fletcher Johnson, leasing agent for the adjacent Wedgewood Village shopping center, said he wants to get excited about the project but is keeping his enthusiasm in check.

Mr. Johnson said he doubts that the rail line would open on time, and he's not sure whether the commuters will shop.

A Starbucks would be a natural fit, but he worries that commuters would just "get in their cars and scatter."

A Granbury-Seminary station to the north would probably offer fewer options. It's located in a heavily residential area with houses valued in the low \$100,000s

and served by a tiny strip center anchored by the Poop Deck bar and the Best Food Store.

A Berry Street stop could benefit from being down the road from Texas Christian University and along a redeveloping urban village, Mr. Ruddell said.

Midtown, Stockyards

Paul Paine, president of Fort Worth South Inc., said there is great potential for the medical center stop on the rail line near Rosedale Avenue. It could be adjacent to the proposed Midtown development, which is planned to include two hotels and some office and retail space.

"I don't think you could overestimate its [the rail station's] value to making Midtown viable," Mr. Paine said about the proposed \$35 million project.

Near the Stockyards, one stop proposed for a site close to the vacant Swift meatpacking plant could host a new development, Mr. Baldwin said. But another stop farther north on Beach Street is surrounded by distribution centers, warehouses and other businesses that appear to be thriving.

Grapevine officials have identified their site on the south end of downtown for a rail station.

Although the city has yet to purchase the property, the site is within walking distance of shops and restaurants along Main Street. Because downtown Grapevine has an abundance of shops and restaurants, city officials don't see the rail station as an incubator for economic development.

"We see it as another asset to Main Street," City Manager Bruno Rumbelow said.

D/FW Airport is planning to build three rail transit stations on airport land to serve the T and DART. Officials with the T said this could be one of the biggest developments on the new line.

One station will be in the terminal area, and the other two will be along each of the transit authority's lines.

The T line station is proposed on the north side of State Highway 114 on a 1,100-acre tract the airport owns.

Mr. Ruddell said each station has some potential to be more than transportation. He said that economic development follows closely behind ridership and cost when choosing rail stations.

"Sometimes an area just needs a spark to get it going," he said.

Staff writer Marice Richter contributed to this report.



## Hybrid-Biodiesel Buses: The New Breed



"RFTA, in partnership with the City of Aspen, Pitkin County and the Town of Snowmass Village, sought an alternative mass transit system that would reduce environmental impacts on the community and dependence on foreign oil by moving towards sustainable and renewable forms of energy," said Dan Blankenship, CEO of RFTA. "These buses are a positive step in that direction and a big win for everyone in and around the Roaring Fork Valley."

Other benefits of the GM hybrid system include reduced maintenance costs resulting from extended brake, engine oil and transmission oil life; superior torque; and better acceleration than conventional diesel.

The RFTA hybrid buses will operate year-round, carry up to 300 passengers per hour, and provide continuous on-service operation to visitors for up to 20 hours a day. The hybrid buses will operate under several unique conditions including operating at elevations of up to 9,000 feet above sea level, climbing grades as steep as 12 percent and regularly traveling at speeds of up to 65 mph.

The clean hybrid technology is manufactured by GM Allison Transmission, maker of transmissions and hybrid propulsion systems for commercial trucks, buses, off-highway equipment and military vehicles, headquartered in Indianapolis. The buses are manufactured by New Flyer Industries, the leading manufacturer of heavy-duty transit buses in Canada and the U.S. New Flyer is headquartered in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and has two facilities in the U.S.

### Just the ticket. City hall to roll out 3 projects

**Mayor's Priorities. Extension of métro's Blue Line, rapid bus route on Pie IX Blvd., downtown-airport link**

INDA GYULAI, The Gazette  
Published: Wednesday, January 16

MONTREAL - A short extension of the métro's Blue Line, a new uninterrupted north-end-to-downtown rapid-bus route, and building a downtown-to-airport public transit service are to be among the first big-ticket announcements out of Montreal Mayor Gérald Tremblay's 20-year, \$8.1-billion transportation plan.

City hall, which is preparing the final version of the plan Tremblay unveiled in May, as well as a financing proposal, is settling the details for those announcements, expected by the end of March, sources said.

The métro plan involves a one-kilometre extension of the Blue Line tunnel east to Pie IX Blvd. from its terminal at St. Michel Blvd. near Jean Talon St., according to the sources.

The Pie IX métro stop would go hand-in-hand with another Tremblay priority: to build a 20-kilometre Bus Rapid Transit corridor from Henri Bourassa Blvd. E. near the northern edge of Montreal Island, down Pie IX to Notre Dame St. and then to René Lévesque Blvd. and downtown, the sources said.

The route would not require bus transfers.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) refers to dedicated bus lanes that are separated from other traffic and get priority signals to allow buses to arrive at and leave intersections ahead of cars.

The stations on such corridors are elevated and feature ticket-dispensing machines and boards that offer real-time display of bus arrivals.

A third project - a shuttle service between downtown and Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport in Dorval - was in the news last week after it was revealed the Metropolitan Transit Agency and partner agencies are looking at a tram-train line to link the West Island, the airport and downtown.

A tram-train is a light-rail vehicle sturdy enough to run on both railway and tramway tracks.

A committee composed of the MTA, the Aéroports de Montréal, the city of Montreal and the federal and provincial transport departments has three studies under way.

The airport authority is spearheading those studies, as well as a call for proposals for the route's design, Montreal executive committee member André Lavallée, who represents the city on the panel, said yesterday.

The airport authority also soon will lead a cost-benefit analysis of the route for the committee, Lavallée said.



The studies are to be completed by the end of this year, he said.

"We hope it will be one of the next projects to be built," he said of the airport shuttle.

The airport receives more than 12 million passengers a year and is the source of 25,000 direct jobs, he noted.

Other airports, in Plattsburgh, N.Y., for example, are competing with Montreal for travel business, he added.

The downtown-airport link was priced at \$550 million in Tremblay's transport plan and is to be ready by 2012.

Lavallée said Montreal city hall soon will announce whether it intends to impose bridge tolls to finance the projects.

"I intend to make ambitious proposals to city council so the plan can be accomplished," he said, but refused to give details.

Lavallée confirmed Pie IX Blvd. is a vital part of the coming announcements.

Pie IX is the busiest north-south public-transit route in the east end, he explained.

The Pie IX BRT corridor would attract 50,000 passengers a day, Tremblay's transportation plan predicts.

City hall is ready to announce at least an initial phase of the BRT corridor, along Pie IX, sources said. Different scenarios of where to end the line downtown are being studied, they said.

The Tremblay administration also is said to be looking at the possibility of using electric trolley buses on the route in the short term and, later on, a tramway.

Tremblay's transportation plan called for the Pie IX BRT to be developed within five years. It also called for the route to be extended to Highway 440 in Laval within 10 years.

The project was priced at \$100 million in the plan, plus \$15 million a year to operate the route. The métro extension to Pie IX is being taken seriously by the MTA, which has set aside \$1 million to conduct studies on it this year, the agency's new capital-works program reveals.

The studies will estimate cost and potential ridership, the capital-works program says.

The MTA also has budgeted \$1 million for studies on an extension of the métro's Orange Line, as proposed in Tremblay's transport plan.

The extension, from the Côte Vertu métro terminal north to the Bois Franc commuter train station, would tap into potential new ridership from St. Laurent borough's growing Bois Franc district and the St. Laurent Technoparc industrial park.

The Tremblay administration is keen on the Orange Line project but would begin with the Blue Line work, sources said.

The transportation plan calls for the one-kilometre extension to Pie IX within five years and a further extension, to Anjou, within 10 years.

The plan forecast it would cost \$170 million to extend the Blue Line from St. Michel Blvd. to Pie IX, plus \$2.9 million a year in new operating costs. The extension to Anjou would cost \$775 million, plus \$13 million a year in operating costs.

The Orange Line extension from Côte Vertu to Bois Franc was projected to cost \$340 million, with \$5.7 million a year for operating costs. The plan called for it to be built in 10 years or more, however.

[lgyulai@thegazette.canwest.com](mailto:lgyulai@thegazette.canwest.com)

## **Port Authority UNVEILS FULL-SIZE MOCK-UP OF NEW PATH CAR**

Date: January 22, 2008

Press Release Number: 7-2008

### **New Cars are Part of Port Authority's planned \$3.3 Billion, 10-Year Investment to Overhaul the PATH System**

The Port Authority today unveiled a full-size mock-up of the new PATH car, a major milestone in its efforts to fully overhaul, modernize and increase capacity on the rail system. The new cars are a highlight of the agency's 10-year, \$3.3 billion PATH program, which includes, among other improvements, completely replacing the existing 340-car fleet, adding up to 119 new cars to the fleet, modernizing the PATH signal system and increasing capacity on the system by approximately 25 percent.

The new cars will contain customer amenities designed to attract more riders to the mass-transit system to reduce congestion and improve the environment. The system now handles approximately 242,000 passenger trips each weekday.





Each new PATH car will be equipped with video monitors that will provide news, weather and sports information from WNBC, as well as PATH service announcements. The new cars also will feature three doors on each side to allow for faster loading and unloading; on-board CCTV surveillance capability; improved lighting; pre-recorded station announcements; enhanced signage; and the capability for passengers to communicate directly with the crew. The cars also will have an environmental feature known as regenerative braking, which will allow the car to return some of the electrical power it uses to accelerate back to the power system when it goes into braking mode.

Port Authority Chairman Anthony R. Coscia said, "There's no question that PATH continues to be a critical lifeline for hundreds of thousands of daily commuters traveling between New York and New Jersey. With expected substantial increases in PATH ridership, we recently decided to make a historic investment of \$3.3 billion to completely overhaul the PATH system. These investments will increase access to the region's economic core for decades to come."

Port Authority Executive Director Anthony Shorris said, "The PATH system connects workers with jobs; it's elemental - a crucial part of the region's economic DNA. And if we want to keep both that economy and our environment vital for another generation, mass transit has to be at the top of our agenda. We've got to get people out of cars and onto trains and buses. That's why we're investing to make PATH the answer for even more riders, with clean, comfortable cars full of amenities, expanded and renovated stations, and new monthly passes to make life easier for commuters. It's all a part of the almost \$8 billion we've dedicated in our 10-year capital plan to improve and expand mass transit in our region."

Port Authority First Deputy Executive Director Susan

Bass Levin said, "Our \$3.3 billion investment in PATH is the largest investment in the system's history. New cars, modern stations, and extended trains will not only provide increased capacity, but will also ensure a safe rail transit system to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

U. S. Senator Robert Menendez said, "I am pleased that the Port Authority is able to enhance its services while keeping fares affordable for working families. Investing in mass transit reduces traffic congestion, saves energy and benefits the environment, protecting it for future generations."

New Jersey state Assemblyman Vincent Prieto said, "There's no question that one of the most difficult challenges we face in this state is reducing congestion on our local roads and highways and finding better ways for our citizens to travel to work, school or other destinations. By making multibillion dollar investments in mass transit - including these new PATH cars and a new passenger rail tunnel under the Hudson - we will go a long way to greatly improve the commute for our residents for generations to come."

Senior Vice President and General Manager of NBC Everywhere Mark French said, "We are extremely pleased to partner with PATH, and to provide relevant and entertaining content to passengers as they make their daily commute. In addition, through our sales partnership, we can work with our clients to deliver their messages to a highly engaged, targeted and captive audience. This is a fantastic addition to our existing portfolio of New York-based out-of home-platforms, which include screens in taxis, Times Square, supermarkets, sports arenas, universities and gyms."

Kawasaki Rail Car Inc. is building the 340 PATH rail cars to replace the existing fleet. The Port Authority will receive the first test train of new PATH cars this year and passengers can expect to see new trains on the tracks by the end of the year. The entire fleet will be replaced by 2011. Dates for installation of additional cars have yet to be determined.

The new PATH cars are part of the Port Authority's planned \$3.3 billion, 10-year investment in PATH, the first major overhaul of the system since the bistate agency acquired it from the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad in 1962.

Other components of the \$3.3 billion dollar capital improvement plan include:



- nearly \$390 million to replace PATH's antiquated signal system, a critical component in increasing capacity by reducing the wait time between trains;
- \$659 million to upgrade and modernize all 13 PATH stations, including the installation of 10-car platforms at the Harrison and Grove Street stations that will allow 10-car trains to operate on the congested Newark-to-World Trade Center line. Currently, seven-car trains run on the Newark-to-World Trade Center line; and
- \$549 million to maintain and upgrade existing PATH infrastructure in a state of good repair.

## New Date Set For North County Sprinter Debut

POSTED: 4:52 pm PST January 25, 2008  
 UPDATED: 5:08 pm PST January 25, 2008

**SAN DIEGO** -- Service on the 22-mile Sprinter light rail line connecting Escondido to Oceanside will begin March 9, two months later than had been envisioned, it was announced Friday.

The Sprinter was supposed to begin service early this month, but members of the state Public Utilities Commission postponed certification of the project because of safety and security issues.

North County Transit District officials said they underestimated the time it would take to complete all regulatory safety inspections and compliance approvals. "We want to begin offering service for passengers on the Sprinter as soon as possible, but safety certification of the system is our current priority," said Karen King, the NCTD's executive director.

"When passengers board the Sprinter for the first time, we know they'll be impressed with the convenience and comfort of the train, and we hope it will be worth the wait," she said.

The Sprinter is intended to alleviate traffic on Highway 78 by carrying as many as 11,600 passengers daily by the end of the year. The project cost \$477 million.

## The MAX

The Mason Corridor is a five-mile, north-south byway within the City of Fort Collins which extends from Cherry Street on the north to south of Harmony Road. The Corridor will feature the MAX, or Mason Express, Fort Collins' first Bus Rapid Transit System. The MAX is similar to light rail transit and uses environmentally-

friendly, modern rubber-tired vehicles. Mason Street and Mcclend Drive will continue to operate with existing streets as they do today. Max will not impact these existing road ways south of University Avenue. North of University Avenue, Max will operate on existing streets with traffic.

MAX will operate faster than auto travel along College Avenue and provides ten minute departures during peak hours. MAX is designed to emphasize speed and convenience with an exclusive guideway and easy boarding, MAX will get you there quickly. The new MAX stations will incorporate high-quality passenger amenities including, real-time bus arrival information and Park & Rides along the Corridor

## Meet Max

MAX is designed for convenience, comfort and speed. The design elements of the vehicles, stations, and guideway will be implemented to ensure an efficient and safe system.

## The Vehicle

Bus Rapid Transit combines the quality of rail transit with the flexibility and affordability of rubber-tired vehicles. BRT is often referred to as "rubber tired light rail". MAX is an environmentally friendly option. MAX will also offer passengers a rail-like convenience with comfortable seating, large windows and hand rails for standing as well as on-board storage for bicycles.

Precision docking and level boarding allows for passengers to board and exit the bus quickly. This feature also allows for trouble-free access for wheelchairs, strollers, and bicycles.

## The Station

Each of the transit centers, stations, and stops have been designed to fit spatially and architecturally within their existing environment. Further, they are integral aspects of future redevelopment and infill TOD projects. The intent is to ensure these access points to the Mason Corridor and MAX service are attractive, inviting, functional, and safe, for the MAX customers, transit system operators, and the surrounding land/business owners and their patrons.

The stations will all include real time bus arrival information and ticket vending machines. The off-board fare collection machines are an added benefit to MAX that makes purchasing fares convenient and hassle-free. No fare collection occurs on the vehicle itself, furthering the image of a rail system and reducing times at stations.



## **The Guideway**

MAX's system has a dedicated transit-only guideway that runs parallel to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad between the South Transit Center (south of Harmony Road) and University Avenue (CSU). The exclusive guideway is an integral part of this new service. Whether traffic gets worse, or if there's an accident, MAX's travel time will not be controlled by what is on the road; making MAX a convenient, fast, reliable and comfortable choice for our community.

## **Civic group desires streetcar system for Downtown sites**

By Vic Ryckaert  
vic.ryckaert@indystar.com

Local civic leaders are throwing their collective muscle behind a plan to bring streetcars to Downtown Indianapolis.

The nonprofit Downtown Indianapolis Streetcar Corp., formed in January, has begun a study it hopes will bring a solution to parking shortages, pollution and other Downtown problems.

"I love our city," said Stephen E. DeVoe, a lawyer at Bose McKinney & Evans and the leader of the streetcar effort. "I think it would be an incredible thing for our grandkids, and we're going to try to do it."

Streetcars bring more than a sense of nostalgia, DeVoe said. In downtown Portland, Ore., DeVoe said, streetcars spurred development, increased real estate values and replaced the noise and smog of city buses.

"This is a chance for a new kind of Downtown development," DeVoe said.

The electric vehicles would run on rails and draw power from overhead lines. The group's plan calls for cars to stop every couple of blocks at key locations throughout Downtown, connecting such locations as Circle Centre mall, the Statehouse and White River State Park. They would supplement existing transit routes and could provide feeder services to bus routes.

The nonprofit has hired a consultant to develop a streetcar circulator system and is looking at potential routes. The group is considering whether to go for nostalgia with San Francisco-style streetcars or to choose a more modern and practical European-style system.

The consultant, Jim Graebner, is a nationally recognized expert on streetcar systems who lives in Denver but grew up in Indianapolis, according to DeVoe.

DeVoe said there is no telling what a streetcar system would cost in Indianapolis. Portland paid about \$10 million per mile; Kenosha, Wis., paid about \$3 million per mile, he said.

Initially, funds would come from the private sector, DeVoe said, but the group hopes to eventually get cash from the city.

The group's board of directors is a Who's Who of Indianapolis leaders, including former Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association President Robert Bedell, Indianapolis Zoo President Michael Crowther and Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce President Roland Dorson.

Downtown Indianapolis Streetcar Corp. is independent of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, which has proposed a rapid transit system that would connect area counties with buses, light rail and monorails. It has held a series of meetings to gauge community reaction to rapid transit and to ascertain what type of technology would best fit the region.

Depending on the type of system, the number of stop stations and the route, a mass transit system connecting suburban counties and Downtown Indianapolis could cost hundreds of millions of dollars to more than \$1 billion.

Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority Director Ehren Bingaman said people tend to prefer trains to buses.

"Sometimes, unfortunately, in Central Indiana and Indianapolis in particular, there's a stigma associated with buses," Bingaman said. "A rail car or a trolley is a different experience, a quaint experience."

Call Star reporter Vic Ryckaert at (317) 444-2761.

## **Council steers LRT along old rail lines**

**Mayor sees 'great opportunities' in using abandoned corridors for city transit routes**

Susan Ruttan, Canwest News Service

Published: Wednesday, February 06

**EDMONTON** - City councillors are pressing to use old railway lines as possible routes for LRT expansion.



"We always tend to take the absolutely most expensive route" for light-rail transit, Mayor Stephen Mandel said Tuesday during discussion of abandoned rail lines.

There are "great opportunities" with the rail lines, Mandel said. "We don't have to fight with citizens and roadways, (we can) build the thing and get it done."

He and Coun. Karen Leibovici urged transportation planners to look at abandoned lines which could lead to saving millions of dollars in expropriating high-priced land.

Their idea was endorsed by council's transportation and public works committee, which voted to ask administration for a report on the proposal by June.

The city's current policy is to use abandoned rail corridors to build a multi-use trail network across the city.



However, the city is now fast-tracking plans to expand the LRT system to the northeast, northwest and south. Planners are also drafting a proposal for a west-end LRT line and a southeast line into Mill Woods.

The route of the west-end line is particular contentious. Planners have not yet announced the route, but it's likely to go through older neighbourhoods and raise objections.

Coun. Kim Krushell said use of old rail lines for LRT should be seen as a higher priority than the multi-use trail system.

Brice Stephenson, head of transportation planning, said LRT lines must first go where the prospective riders live.

If there's a rail line there to use, it will be used, said Stephenson.

Krushell countered by saying that wherever an LRT line goes, developers are likely to build around that line. "If you build it, they'll come," she said.

City manager Al Maurer said when there was first talk of the LRT line into Clareview 40 years ago, there was a belief development would follow the line. It took a long while for that to happen, he said.

Maurer is meeting next week with officials from the 24 area municipalities to talk about regional LRT planning. The city's long-range plan is to have lines going into St. Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Beaumont and other surrounding towns.

sruttan@thejournal.canwest.com

© The Edmonton Journal 2008

## **Agreement on handicapped access to Metro Rail could bring cars back to Main Street**

Transit officials hope to finalize accord with federal government

By John F. Bonfatti NEWS STAFF REPORTER  
Updated: 02/07/08 8:49 AM

The city's long-discussed project to return automobiles to Main Street downtown is behind schedule because of federal regulations that guarantee access for riders with disabilities to all train cars at every Metro Rail station.

But now local officials and federal transit authorities have worked out what may be an acceptable arrangement, according to Richard M. Tobe, the city's commissioner for economic development, inspections and permits.

"The federal government has given us a letter that I believe is a way to go forward," Tobe said.

The way forward will likely involve several stops at the same above-ground station — if passengers with disabilities need them.

City officials had hoped to begin the first segment of the project, between Tupper and Chippewa streets, last summer.

Cars, which have not been able to drive on most of Main Street downtown since the light rail rapid transit system



opened in 1985, will share a redesigned road with the trains when the project is finished.

Federal regulations requiring that people with disabilities have access to all transit cars came into place "very long in our development of the project," Tobe said.

Such access has not been a problem on the below-ground section of the transit line, but above ground on Main Street downtown, people with disabilities have access to only the front car on each train, via the ramp at each station.

Those stations, now more than 20 years old, would be torn down and replaced with newer, smaller ones under the city's Cars Sharing Main Street master plan.

If the new guidelines were followed, Tobe said, "It would have meant an 80-foot-long raised platform at each station."

In a meeting with federal Transit Administration officials, the city said fire officials stressed that a platform that long would interfere with their ability to fight fires in buildings along Main Street.

"From the perspective of fire safety, it turned out to be impossibility," Tobe said.

Tobe said the federal agency recently sent the city a letter that puts the project back on track.

"We've discussed with federal officials the way [the new regulations] would apply to our light rail system, the intent to which it was [meant] to apply to a mixed [above- and belowground] system like ours," Tobe said.

The letter sets out stipulations to accommodate riders with disabilities, stating that these stipulations "must be implemented as part of the project."

The stipulations include the allowance for trains to stop more than once at each station if a disabled person who is not in the front car wants to disembark.

The first car would stop at the station, as usual, but the train then would stop at the station again if a person with a disability in another car needed to get off.

Buzzers would be used in all cars to let operators know someone in one of the rear cars needs an additional stop.

Douglas J. Usiak, executive director of the Western New York Independent Living Project, said the delay might have been avoided had project planners been able to consult with the now-defunct Mayor's Advisory Committee for People With Disabilities.

"They probably could have gotten some good input," he said. "Not having this advisory committee, for a city the size of Buffalo, it's pretty shameful."

But Usiak said the compromise of multiple stops as needed seemed like a good one.

"It's a good compromise as long as buzzers are working," he said.

The city is satisfied the letter will allow the project to proceed, Tobe said, but the NFTA, which operates Metro Rail, is still reviewing it.

NFTA Executive Director Lawrence M. Meckler said the NFTA is still seeking clarification about it from the transit administration.

"We're just trying to understand how that would impact, in practice, the system, and traffic as well," he said.

"There will be a resolve, it's just getting to that point. Everyone just has to understand exactly how things will work when the project is complete."

While the problem is being resolved, project officials will turn their focus to the 700 block of Main Street, between Tupper and Edward streets.

Currently, cars on that block, which lies just beyond the no-car zone, can head only north. As part of the project, the block will revert to two-way traffic and be re-engineered.

[jbonfatti@buffnews.com](mailto:jbonfatti@buffnews.com)

## Ontario cuts transit red tape

Environmental reviews of proposed projects limited to six months  
Feb 08, 2008 04:30 AM  
KERRY GILLESPIE  
TESS KALINOWSKI  
STAFF REPORTERS

People who don't want new streetcars or subways running through their neighbourhoods will no longer be able to use prolonged environmental assessments to delay them.

Because the process was often used as a stalling tactic by not-in-my-backyard opponents, Premier Dalton McGuinty's cabinet has approved a six-month time limit for environmental assessments on transit projects.

The new regulation, approved on Wednesday, is expected to become law by June. It will apply to all projects receiving provincial funding, sources told the *Toronto Star*.



"I think it's going to make a real difference in terms of our ability to get public transit up," McGuinty said yesterday.

Under existing rules, environmental assessments on transit projects take, on average, two years. The TTC's Spadina subway extension assessment took three years and it was just an update of a previous assessment. Waterloo started a rapid transit assessment in 2004 that isn't expected to be completed until this fall.

The dedicated lane for Toronto's St. Clair streetcar, for example, was held up for months at the assessment stage with fights over curb heights, which had nothing to do with the environment. In the end it took two years to get through the assessment.

Under existing rules, if someone objects to a streetcar, the transit authority has to come back with a study showing the implications of a bus, train, or even a hot-air balloon servicing the corridor instead.

"If someone wanted to talk about a new idea using cable cars or catapults you would have to evaluate them," TTC chair Adam Giambrone said.

This new regulation ends those fights by limiting the scope of discussion to environmental concerns about the approved project and, for the first time, limiting public consultation to 85 days. Right now, it can go on forever.

It also limits the government's ability to delay. Once the assessment is complete, the environment minister has to decide within 35 days whether or not the project can go forward.

The six-month limit on environmental assessments applies just to transit projects, but sources said the government will consider whether a similar approach could shorten the process for projects such as highways and landfills.

It began with transit projects to ensure the province's ambitious \$11.5 billion transit plan, Move Ontario 2020 – designed to get people out of cars and on to transit – doesn't get held up in red tape.

As one provincial official put it: "An environmental assessment process being used to hold up projects that are good for the environment is kind of ironic."

As part of Move Ontario, Toronto-area transportation planners face the challenge of building 52 transit projects approved by the province. Those include extensions of the Spadina and Yonge subway lines, more GO service, enhanced regional bus service and Toronto's ambitious Transit City light rail plan.

Getting those shovels in the ground would help the Toronto area catch up with cities that have spent the past two decades investing in public transit, says Rob MacIsaac, chair of regional transportation planning agency Metrolinx.

"When people look at what a place like Madrid has accomplished in 10 years, well the (environmental assessment) process is one of the things that slows us down," he said.

Madrid, which requires significantly less public consultation for transit, has built about 150 kilometres of subway in the past 12 years at a lower cost per kilometre than Toronto's Sheppard line.

It isn't about taking away people's right to object to a project, MacIsaac said.

"There are lots of public processes that allow people to have their say and make sure their concerns are heard. When a city does its official plan, when a city does its master transportation plan, those are the times that people need to get involved. There are plenty of ways in which they can do that. At some point we have to say, 'Decisions have to be taken and projects have to move forward.'"

Toronto's \$6 billion Transit City plan, which would put streetcar lines on seven major routes stretching into the suburbs, can't afford the delays encountered by the St. Clair streetcar right-of-way, said the TTC's Giambrone, who hopes to have three light rail lines under construction by 2010.

The new regulations are "critical to advancing Transit City and getting the improvements that the people of Toronto expect and need," he said.

The Eglinton subway is a classic example of an opportunity curtailed by the environmental assessment process, he said. The Conservative Mike Harris government wouldn't have been able to kill the Eglinton subway if it had been further along in its development, Giambrone said.

Many believe that a subway would have made more sense than the Sheppard line that was eventually built instead.

The new regulation will be posted for comments before it becomes law. While there will be some who say this stifles public input, the government is expecting the feedback to be largely positive.

"Most people will realize what this is about and they'll be happy about it," a provincial official said.



With files from Rob Ferguson

## Deal on light-rail route nearer

County, U are under the gun to meet federal funds requirement  
BY DAVE ORRICK

Pioneer Press

Article Last Updated: 02/07/2008 11:52:22 PM CST

Crunch time is bringing compromise to the Central Corridor.

With a Feb. 27 deadline looming for the route of the light-rail line connecting St. Paul and Minneapolis, key concessions emerged Thursday on both ends of the line.

Ramsey County commissioners have changed their tune on the train's route through downtown St. Paul. And the University of Minnesota is scaling back its hopes for a tunnel. They are considering a century-old campus-altering vision that would ban traffic from Washington Avenue altogether.

### Ramsey County's compromise

Ramsey County commissioners next week will vote on a compromise route for the Central Corridor in downtown St. Paul.

#### What they wanted

Stations: Cedar St. LRT north, 7th St., Jackson St., 4th St., Kellogg Blvd., 2nd St., Union Depot, Mississippi River, Lafayette Freeway, Loring Freeway.

#### What they're settling for

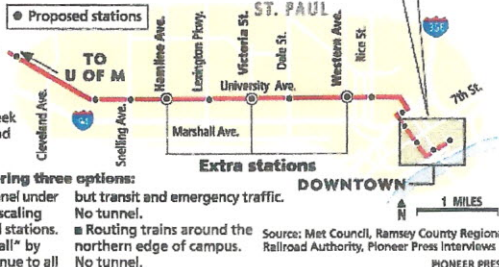
Stations: Cedar St. LRT north, 7th St., Jackson St., 4th St., Kellogg Blvd., 2nd St., Union Depot, Mississippi River, Lafayette Freeway, Loring Freeway.

#### Extra stations:

- Hamline, Victoria, and Western stations
- Cost: \$5.5 million per station
- Long sought by neighborhood leaders
- Gained support this week from Ramsey County and St. Paul City Council

#### The U of M is considering three options:

- Shortening planned tunnel under the East Bank Campus, scaling back previously planned stations.
- Creating a "Transit Mall" by closing Washington Avenue to all but transit and emergency traffic.
- No tunnel.
- Routing trains around the northern edge of campus.
- No tunnel.



On Tuesday afternoon, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Chairman Jim McDonough drafted a resolution that abandons the county's demand for the train to end with a station on the back side of Union Depot in downtown St. Paul. County commissioners, who also make up the Railroad Authority, had been demanding that the train go to the back side so the station would be at the depot's shuttered concourse, which commissioner's hope will become a hub linking buses, Amtrak and hoped-for high-speed rail lines feeding the east metro.

Instead, commissioners appear ready to concede the train can stop at the front of the depot, along Fourth Street. That change, which could take tens of millions of dollars off the cost estimates of the project, is likely to be lauded by City Hall and business leaders, who have been

huddling with various commissioners this week in a push for compromise.

"We're right in the middle of these discussions, and we're very optimistic," said Mark Mishek, chairman of the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce. "Every major issue is on the table, and we're finding solutions." Mishek refused to discuss details of the resolution or other accords being reached, but the chamber already has scheduled a news conference Tuesday afternoon at the Capitol to stand arm-in-arm with other civic and political leaders and announce "solutions."

### CONCESSION HAS CONDITIONS

But with the county's concession come several demands in the resolution, which the Railroad Authority will vote on Tuesday afternoon, shortly before the Capitol news conference. McDonough said the resolution has the support of the commissioners but stopped short of guaranteeing a unanimous vote.

Here are the county's demands:

-- Build a light-rail maintenance yard on publicly owned land south of Kellogg Boulevard near the Lafayette Bridge. Make sure the maintenance yard is set up so a spur can be built someday that will bring light rail cars to the depot concourse. Peter Bell, chairman of the Met Council, lead agency for the Central Corridor, has spoken fondly in the past of a maintenance yard generally near Union Depot.

-- Try to include three additional stations along University Avenue, at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street and Western Avenue. At the very least, the county resolution demands, "rough in" foundations for all three so they can easily be added later, and build at least one station if money allows. Commissioner Jan Parker said that if the Met Council doesn't sign off on at least roughing in the stations, she won't support the project. These stops, long sought by neighborhood groups, gained a unanimous vote of support Wednesday from the St. Paul City Council.

-- Don't delay the project.

That last idea - not falling behind - seems to be galvanizing compromise. Bell has thrown down a Feb. 27 deadline to prevent a domino of federal deadlines falling that, he has said, will jeopardize the ultimate goal of having the trains up and running by 2014. On Feb. 27, the Met Council will vote on a layout for the line, including where stations will be.

Before then, though, the cost needs to come down to about \$840 million. With all three stations, the train



going to the back of the Union Depot and the U's original tunnel, the price tag was more than \$1 billion.

## U PONDER'S PLAZA

Meanwhile, the U is looking to bring costs down where the train cuts through its East Bank Campus. University and rail officials, as well as consultants, are studying three options: shrinking the tunnel, avoiding the heart of the campus altogether by traveling along the northern edge and creating a "transit mall," or plaza, along what is now Washington Avenue, said Kathleen O'Brien, vice president for university services.

The plaza idea would ban all nontransit, nonemergency vehicles from Washington Avenue between the Mississippi River and Oak Street. It has caught the attention of many because it resurrects Twin Cities architect Cass Gilbert's original vision of the campus, currently sliced by Washington Avenue and its 29,000 vehicles a day.

Gilbert, who also designed the Capitol in St. Paul, drew up plans around 1907 for a neoclassical mall stretching across the waistline of campus from today's Northrop Auditorium to the bank of the river. O'Brien said designers haven't yet figured out exactly what to do with Washington Avenue traffic.

Among those pushing the plaza is Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, who sits on a Central Corridor advisory panel.

O'Brien said the U hasn't yet ranked the three options. The goal, she said, is to not be an obstacle to the project.

"With the analysis that we'll have in the next few weeks, we hope we can work on some language and potential action that recognizes our objectives, and allow the project to move forward," she said Thursday.

## COMPROMISING AND CRINGING

McDonough declined to discuss specifics of his resolution. "I'm excited and pleased with where we're at, and looking forward to Tuesday to being in a united position with the St. Paul mayor and the chamber," he said.

A spokesman for St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman gave a similarly optimistic but vague statement.

For some Ramsey County commissioners, the Union Depot concourse was tough turf to give up.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," Commissioner Tony Bennett said. "I'm getting pressure from people

saying this doesn't do it. I'm leaning toward supporting it, but I've got some real reservations."

Dave Orrick can be reached at [dorrick@pioneerpress.com](mailto:dorrick@pioneerpress.com) or 651-292-1159.



From horse-drawn public transportation to today's global satellite position guided network of buses, the manner in which Milwaukee County transported its growing population was as much a sign of the times as the generation that made their mark on history.

The Milwaukee County Transit System is sharing the stories that shaped our history over the years and improved our quality of life, while also sighting a few examples along the way of each generation that helped form the fabric of our society. Below is a brief look at each generation and the transportation during that time period.

### 1843-1882 — Progressive/Missionary Generation



The Progressive Generation defined our earliest days. A Bridge War between Juneautown and Kilbourntown in 1845 led to their unification and the city of Milwaukee – population 10,000, was founded in 1846 with Solomon Juneau as its first mayor. By 1860, Milwaukee was one of the nation's top 20 cities with a population of 45,246, and the country's leader in beer production. Children of the post-Civil War era, the Missionary Generation, came of age as labor anarchists, campus rioters and ambitious first graduates of black and women's colleges, giving rise to the Bible Belt, Christian socialism, Greenwich Village, the Wobblies, renewed labor and women's suffrage movements.

### Horse-Drawn Streetcar

Milwaukee's first streetcar line was as much a sign of the times as it was of great value to the city's growing population. The original route began operation on May 30, 1860, on what is now Water St. from Erie St. to Juneau Ave., by the River & Lake Shore City Railway Company. Before long there were three different horse car companies serving the west side and south side as well. By 1880, there were more than 14 miles of track



served by 32 cars, 280 horses and 250 men. Public transportation had come to Milwaukee to stay.

#### 1883-1910 — The Lost Generation



Originally used to identify a group of American literary expatriates living in Paris, the Lost Generation is now used more generally to describe the generation who came of age in the U.S. during and shortly after World War I. As Milwaukee grew and the development of electric power improved, workers of all trades and backgrounds were needed to fill the demand. By 1899, Milwaukee was a very diverse city with most ethnic groups concentrated in particular neighborhoods. For instance, the Bay View area became predominantly British, Russian Jews settled on the northeast side and the Third Ward district went from being an Irish community to an Italian neighborhood.

#### First Electric Streetcar

The first electric streetcar trip took place in April 1890, down Wells St. from 11th to 34th streets. Almost immediately, Milwaukee's horse-drawn streetcars began giving way to their electric successors. By January 29, 1896, Milwaukee became the world's first major unified and electrified mass transit system. All the street railway systems were consolidated and were part of The Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Company (TMER&L Co.). Early on it took two men to operate the maroon colored streetcars. One drove while the other collected the fares.

#### 1911-1942 — The Greatest Generation



In 1918, WWI ended, the troops returned home and it was a year of renewal and celebration. It was at that time that Milwaukee's Airport was renamed General Mitchell Field. The upswing of the social scene led to the start of the "Roaring Twenties" where bowling and beauty contests were just two of many Milwaukee pastimes. In the late 1920s to early 1930s, Bronzeville was settled by African Americans in the Sixth, Second, Ninth and Tenth wards of Milwaukee which comprised 94 percent of the city's 7,501 black population. The Greatest Generation describes the generation of Americans that fought and won World War II. They later became the "Establishment," and the

parents of the Baby Boomers. Milwaukee industry played a large role in this war effort, including the manufacturing of bomb casings and tank parts.

#### City Streetcar

The electric streetcar remained the backbone of Milwaukee's transit system through WWII. But toward the end of the 1930s, streetcars were being replaced by trackless trolleys and motor buses. The last streetcars were built by the St. Louis Car Co. in 1930. Ironically, Wells St., which was the site of the first electric streetcar line, also became the scene of the last streetcar on March 2, 1958. In a 1938 court ruling, TMER&L Co. was prohibited from owning the dual monopolies of transit and electric power generation. While it took until after WWII to be fully implemented, TMER&L Co., one of the nation's premier transport companies, was divided, and from it separate companies emerged. One was the predecessor to today's We Energies, and the other was The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Transport Co., a predecessor to today's Milwaukee County Transit System.

#### Trackless Trolleys

In the early 1920s, Milwaukee became one of the first cities in the U.S. to use double-decker buses. These original buses came with an open upper deck which was modified to be enclosed and heated. Also in the 1920s, most of the streetcars were rebuilt into one-man configurations distinguished by their orange and cream color scheme. In 1936, another transit innovation was launched with the introduction of the swift and silent trackless trolley. Closely resembling motor buses, the trackless trolleys were electrically powered from overhead wires. They quickly replaced many streetcar lines and were a prominent part of Milwaukee's transit fleet until 1965 when they finally gave way to diesel buses.

#### 1943-1958 — The Baby Boomers



Amid a worldwide increase in birthrates, the Baby Boomers were born during or just after World War II. In this generation, a record number of people attended college and obtained, perhaps in many cases, the first college degree in their families. This increase in education led to higher family incomes, allowing them the resources to produce more children.



## Post-War Trackless Trolley and Diesel Buses

With the end of WWII, Milwaukee continued to replace its aging streetcar fleet with trackless trolleys as well as gasoline powered motor buses. At their peak in 1949, there were 400 trackless trolleys in operation with 100 assigned to route 19 alone. Gasoline powered buses supplemented the streetcars and trackless trolleys on many routes.

### 1951-1971 — Generation Jones



Born between the Baby Boomers and Generation X, Generation Jones included those who were children in the 1960s and teens in the 1970s. Their name signifies a large, anonymous generation with unfulfilled expectations. During this era, The Milwaukee Braves won The World Series in 1957 and the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (The Domes) opened in 1964, formally dedicated by the first lady, Lady Bird Johnson. Milwaukee was also awarded its second professional basketball team, the Milwaukee Bucks. More than 14,000 fans participated in a contest to name the team. In 1971, three years after the Bucks formed, they won the NBA Championship.

### The New Look Bus

In the 1950s, the first generation of diesel buses came to Milwaukee replacing the remaining streetcars. Then in 1960, the transit bus got an extensive design makeover, and the New Look bus, introduced by General Motors in Milwaukee, with an orange and cream color scheme, soon became the industry standard. After the completion of the first freeway link between the west suburbs and downtown in 1964, the Freeway Flyer was initiated using these New Look buses. It was an instant success, not only catching on here, but across the country. In 1975 Milwaukee County purchased the Milwaukee & Suburban Transport Corp. and the buses were repainted in two-tone green, a combination said to be favored by then County Executive John Doyne and County Board Chair Bill O'Donnell, both Irish Americans.

### 1971-1985 — Generation X



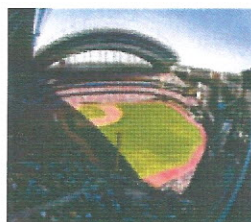
This generation was influenced by the launch of MTV, the popularization of Web technology

and the evolution of 80s glam fashions into grunge. Inspired by Summerfest — Polish Fest, Festa Italiana, German Fest, African World Festival, Irish Fest, Mexican Fiesta, Indian Summer, Asian Moon Festival and Arab World Fest were created to celebrate Milwaukee's diverse and culturally rich history. And the Milwaukee Brewers, formed in 1970, went on to play to a seventh and deciding game in the 1982 World Series. Milwaukee also witnessed history when Hank Aaron hit his record-setting 755th home run in 1976.

## Milwaukee County Takes Ownership

After Milwaukee County took over the transit system, one of the first improvements made was to order 100 new buses from the Flxible Company. These were the first Milwaukee buses equipped with air conditioning and wheelchair lifts and arrived in mid 1978. Starting in 1983, MCTS also started a program to rebuild many of the New Look buses originally purchased in the mid 1960s. Both the Flxible and rebuilt buses were painted white with a green stripe reflecting the new MCTS color scheme. That design was used until 2000 when the current MCTS colors were introduced.

### 1986-2008 — Millennial Generation



The Y2K scare fizzled as we woke up January 1, 2000, to life as usual. And Wisconsin Energy, a one-time owner of public transit in Milwaukee, acquired Wisconsin Gas in 2000 and merged it with Wisconsin Electric to form We Energies. More than a decade of planning and over four years of construction culminated on April 6, 2001, when Miller Park opened its doors, becoming the first and only fan-shaped retractable roof in Major League Baseball.

## MCTS Today

In the 1990s, service was expanded in order to connect workers to jobs in areas previously unserved by transit. Other 1990s innovations included the Commuter Value Program, offering employers an employee benefit of reduced transportation costs; and U-PASS, giving unlimited MCTS rides to students at UW-Milwaukee, Marquette University and MIAD. During the 1980s, Milwaukee County embarked on a facilities modernization program that resulted in the rebuilding or replacement of all MCTS facilities. Today MCTS operates six facilities: three garages for bus operations, downtown Transit Center, a fleet maintenance base and an administrative headquarters.



## MTA offers plans to smooth rail ties through downtown

Transit agency studies creating a rail link of Blue, Gold and Expo lines in downtown L.A. to reduce transfers.

By Cara Mia DiMassa, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer  
February 25, 2008

A battle is looming in the depths below downtown Los Angeles as transportation planners try to find a way to smooth out the commute for thousands who take rail into the city center each day.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is studying how to link the three major rail corridors that go into the city center: the Blue Line, the Gold Line and the upcoming Exposition Line.

The idea is to create a rail thoroughfare so that passengers can travel seamlessly from Pasadena to Long Beach -- and eventually from Culver City to East L.A.

There is widespread agreement that linking the rail lines would help commuters, who must switch trains at least once to get through downtown. But some downtown residents worry that part of the rail connection would be above ground, potentially clogging already crowded streets. "It would be a pox for the neighborhood," said Eric Richardson, a member of the Downtown Neighborhood Council and the editor of [www.blogdowntown.com](http://www.blogdowntown.com).

Richardson and others want a commitment from the MTA that all rail connections would be underground, which could hike the price of the project.

At two public meetings this week, the MTA is to unveil potential routes through downtown that would fill in the 1.6-mile gap between Union Station and the 7th Street/Metro Center station. Dolores Roybal Saltarelli, transportation planning manager for the MTA, said the routes and potential stops were being determined in large part by input from public meetings held last year.

This "would enable us to allow people to travel all over, depending on the operation, without a transfer. They wouldn't need to use the Red Line, for example, to go from Gold to Blue, the way it is done now."

The MTA's plan is being greeted with praise by commuters tired of transferring to two or three train systems daily.

For Craig Thompson of Altadena, creating a seamless transition through downtown would be "beautiful." Thompson, 50, takes the Gold Line -- and then the Red

Line and the Blue Line -- to attend evening classes at L.A. Trade Tech College on West Washington Boulevard.

If the MTA gets its way, he said, "I'd be able to go straight from the Gold Line to the Blue Line, and then a few stops and boom! Right in front of school."

For Tracy Mason, a paralegal, the changes can't happen fast enough. Mason, a Monrovia resident, takes the Gold Line to Union Station every day, then changes to the Red Line to get to her downtown job.

Her law firm, she said, is planning a move next year to new offices near Staples Center, close to the Blue Line's Pico station.

"That would be very helpful," Mason, 46, said of the extension proposal. "That'd be a third train I wouldn't have to take."

Dan Parker, who gave up his car after moving downtown and now relies on public transportation, said he didn't care whether the trains ran above or below ground.

"Anything would be positive if they make that connection," he said. He said he was concerned that having the rails at street level would mean they would run slower than they could below ground.

Blog editor Richardson said he worried that having rail lines running along downtown streets would cause more congestion and ruin the pedestrian feel that downtown boosters are trying to achieve.

A map of potential routes released by the MTA showed one route passing along 2nd Street from Central Avenue to Grand Avenue. That stretch of 2nd Street is fairly narrow, and Richardson wonders how it can accommodate cars, pedestrians and trains.

Downtown boosters are not opposed to all above-ground rail. Officials last month unveiled a plan for a trolley line that would run along Broadway. Backers see the trolley as a way for residents and visitors to quickly navigate the spread-out downtown area, which stretches from the Staples Center area on the south to the Civic Center and Bunker Hill on the north. Broadway, they say, is an ideal location because it is a relatively wide street that already has several major bus lines.

The downtown connection plan is one of several big-ticket rail items the MTA is considering, and it remains unclear which ones will get funding. They include the Subway to the Sea along Wilshire Boulevard, an



extension of the Gold Line from Pasadena to San Bernardino County and a new light-rail line from Southwest L.A. to El Segundo.

Roybal Saltarelli said that the MTA would conduct a more detailed technical analysis and that she expected to present several alternatives to the agency's board later this year. She said that at that point, officials would have specific cost estimates for each of several alternatives.

If the board approved moving forward, she said, the MTA would conduct an environmental impact report and begin identifying sources of funding for the project.

"It's all still very conceptual," Roybal Saltarelli said. "But it's a starting point."

cara.dimassa@latimes.com

Times staff writer Jack Leonard contributed to this report.

## Woodward rail plan considered

**Developers quietly mull prospect of \$103M transit system from downtown to midtown. Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

Oralandar Brand-Williams and Robert Snell / The Detroit News

**DETROIT** -- Plans for a light-rail system that would run along Woodward Avenue to Midtown are being floated among a private group of developers, those familiar with the proposal said Monday.

The system, estimated at \$103 million, would shuttle riders from the foot of Woodward and Jefferson north to West Grand Boulevard and Woodward.

Those close to the closely guarded project refused to comment on it Monday.

But transportation officials in the city said another mass transportation plan would be good for the city.

"We're encouraged by the opportunity of more options in public transit," said Ericka Alexander, spokeswoman for the Detroit Transportation Corp., which operates the Detroit People Mover.

"It depends on the mode of transportation they decide to go with," she said. "We're automated and light rail is a little different than what we're operating."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm applauded the prospect of a new light-rail system in the city.

"There are few single initiatives that could so palpably energize southeast Michigan's urban core as a modern, efficient light-rail system," Granholm said. "And we are

encouraged that there may be interest in establishing such a system in Detroit."

Few details of the plan have emerged from city and civic leaders.

"We heard private individuals are working on a light-rail plan. That's as detailed as I can get," said James Canning, spokesman for Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick.

"I don't want to compromise what they are working on," Canning said.

The Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) is working on its own study about transportation needs in the city, an attempt to overcome decades of failure at establishing a mass transit system.

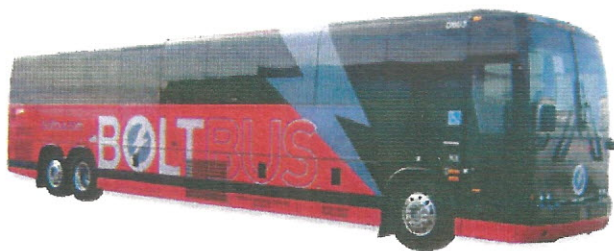
The study, known as the Detroit Transit Options for Growth is expected to be completed and released this year.

It takes a look at the "need for a viable rapid transit system that connects neighborhoods, businesses, major destinations and new development," according to DDOT officials.

You can reach Oralandar Brand-Williams at (313) 222-2027 or bwilliams@detnews.com

## Leave the NYC-D.C. driving to BoltBus

By Jayne Clark, USA TODAY



A new bus line — BoltBus, a subsidiary of Greyhound Lines — beginning service March 27 between New York and Washington will offer tickets for \$1 each way for the first four days of service (through March 30). Seats were still available Thursday.

Coaches will offer street-corner service between the two cities eight times daily on new buses equipped with Wi-Fi, power outlets and, on some, leather seats. Tickets will cost from \$1 to \$25 each way, with the lowest fares going to early bookers. (The company isn't specifying the number of cheap seats per trip.) Online bookings can be made up to six months in advance at BoltBus.com or purchased from the driver.