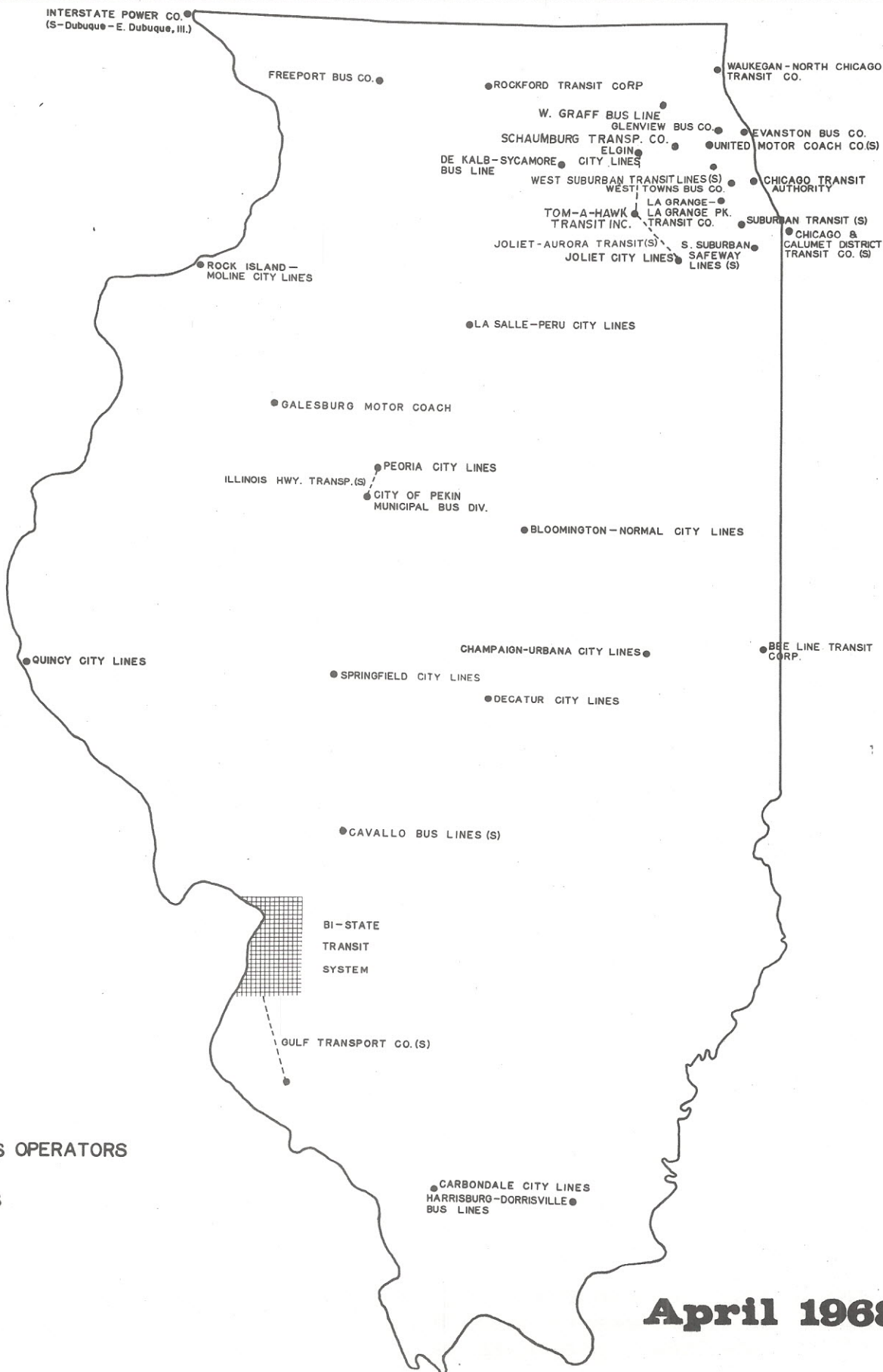


Transport



URBAN BUS OPERATORS
in ILLINOIS

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VOLUME TWO, NUMBER EIGHTEEN

Critique

Design Quarterly, published by the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis, is a publication devoted to contemporary art and design, as reflected in everything from lamps to outdoor furniture and books to pottery. In its 71st issue, out this month, the magazine "concerns itself basically with available or theoretically possible ground transportation systems and presents various solutions to an immediate problem in interurban and intra-urban transportation." Design Quarterly editorializes that "it is important that we take a new look at mass transit planning. Instead of pouring billions of dollars into programs such as the SST, whose sole purpose is getting to Paris or Istanbul faster, we have to view mass transit as a right for every individual and subsidize it accordingly. Systems engineers, industrial designers, architects and urban planners should work together with the various agencies in order to produce aesthetic and highly efficient systems for mass transit which combine the flexibility of the private automobile with increased speed and safety."

With that point of view as a basic theme, the magazine proceeds to review the progress (or lack of it) in mass transit design, and in the 30-odd pages of the issue delivers some uncompromising opinions, theories and eminently quotable quotes. Witness the following:

"For the ordinary citizen wary of local politics and unfamiliar with computer technology, the most disturbing aspect of the current uproar over mass transportation is the "reality gap"—the seeming disparity between what he is being promised at election time and what he is likely, several years later, to be riding to work every morning. The artist's rendering may be straight out of Buck Rogers, but the final design is too often Neo-Civil War."

"There is no interurban rail service in this country to rival the speed and comfort of Italy's Rapido or Japan's Tokaido line. In fact, timetables from 1861 indicate that service on some of our interurban lines was faster then than it is today. Total dependency on the private automobile also explains why only 6 out of the world's 44 urban rail systems are located in American cities (Boston, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Chicago)."

"More than one-fourth of all transit cars presently serving intraurban lines in this country were built prior to World War II. Some 60 per cent of all (railroad) passenger cars now in operation were delivered before 1930. Like the railroads, the car manufacturers have been reluctant

to invest in capital improvements, and the basic design of passenger cars has remained virtually unchanged for at least half a century. Now that renewed interest in rail rapid transit offers the prospect of a boom in the industry, builders are digging into their bottom drawers for the blueprints of that last job. Slicked up a bit, these are the designs that the manufacturers are foisting off as 'modern' rapid transit."

"It is not likely that, having been conditioned to a certain standard of comfort and convenience, Americans are about to abandon their private automobiles on the say-so of some expert who assures them that being squashed into a hot, dirty subway every morning is more efficient than riding to work in solitary, air-conditioned splendor. Nor are they likely to fall for streamlined visions of pneumatic tubes when the newest thing in rapid transit looks suspiciously like a World War I troop train. Even such a modest venture as the high-speed Washington to New York demonstration loses some of its appeal when passengers on the present run are treated to smelly cars, smeary windows, overflowing toilets and trash-strewn aisles."

"One of the reasons for the success of rapid transit in Europe is that the various local governments there do not enjoy the unassailable autonomy that they do in this country. Transportation planning in most American cities depends less on land use studies and traffic surveys than on the caprice of a handful of merchants and politicians in surrounding suburbs whose support the cities must have in order to finance a comprehensive system. Certainly everybody wants rapid transit—as long as it stops a block from the house (never on the block, you understand, because that might devalue the property)."

"While everybody is busy acquiring data, forest and farmland are disappearing under eight lanes of concrete at an alarming rate; more and more fine old buildings and lower income neighborhoods are being demolished to make way for parking lots and urban freeways; atmospheric pollution, much of it attributable to automobile exhausts, continues unabated; and more than 8 million new cars a year are being added to the 97 million already on the road. It is against this background of inadequate funding, uninspired marketing, political inertia, and public apathy that the present level of design and planning in mass transit must be evaluated."

The publication then goes on to detail progress in several of the major rail corridors in the United States, and presents a case history of the metamorphosis from the original concept to the final design of the Budd-built cars for the Washington-New York run on the Penn-Central, pointing out how the streamlined model turned into a more conventional production design. This, the author points out, "sums up the relationship of design and marketing in mass transit: slick 'publicity' vehicles are presented to dazzle the simple folk; but stock nuts-and-bolts production models are produced. The moral: you can lead a manufacturer to good design, but you can't make him produce it. Or, looking at things from the point of view of the government, the railroad and the manufacturer: even if you can't fool all of the people all of the time, it's worth a try."

Then, detailing the characteristics of the Turbo-Train, for service between New York and Boston, the author rates it a much more sophisticated vehicle than the Budd train. "While not exactly handsome, the Turbo-Train at least looks fast, and it is far more exciting than the Budd train. This may be because the designer was an aerospace company looking to expand the market for its jet engines (United Aircraft has expressed an interest in adapting the Turbo-Train to intraurban and suburban runs if interurban operations prove successful) rather than a conventional car builder bogged down in old inventory."

Design Quarterly also opines that there are at least 25 cities in the United States with populations of half a million or more (the point at which rapid transit becomes a necessity, according to the author) that have not even begun to plan for this kind of transportation (Providence, Hartford, Rochester, Buffalo, Norfolk, Richmond, Jacksonville, Tampa, Birmingham, Louisville, Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Toledo, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Phoenix, San Diego and Portland (Oregon)). Says the author, "Another 13 cities are in various stages of developing rapid transit proposals (Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Miami, Atlanta, Detroit, Kansas City, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Honolulu) but to date all are based on relatively obsolete technology and the familiar steel wheel on steel rail concept. In short, the only thing new about these 'new' systems is the construction work. Fundamentally, they are no different from the London subway built in 1863."

Positively speaking, "what is needed is a combination of low, medium and high-speed carriers, some with exclusive rights-of-way, some traveling on public thoroughfares, some automatically controlled, and some individually operated. Such a systems approach, however, will not be possible until more advanced technology is available—that is, until we apply much of our presently unused technology or transfer it from other areas to the field of mass transportation."

The magazine next moves to specific urban systems and offers a mixed bag of praise and criticism:

MONTREAL -- "The stations are clean, well lit and attractive, the trains are relatively quiet and comfortable, the signs are easy to follow, and the service is frequent—all the things that rapid transit should be but seldom is...A trip thru the Metro is a varied and exciting visual experience...The architects have exploited the design possibilities of all surfaces, partly because they wanted to build in decoration rather than allow future city administrators to come along and tack it on...The cars, however, are another story. Whatever their amenities, they are just a refined version of the standard subway car, more specifically, the Paris Metro car...The interior of the car leaves much to be desired. Stanchions are placed near the doors rather than back in the seating areas, so that standees tend to block exits...To date, the biggest problem with the cars is overheating...Ignoring the designers' recommendations, the engineers did not air-condition the cars...During the summer the trains are unbearably hot and even during the winter the forced-air heating system is unnecessary...Whatever its defects, the Metro is unquestionably the finest system in North America."

SAN FRANCISCO -- There have been charges that the (BART) system is being designed to serve the affluent middle class, that it ignores the transportation needs of the poor, and that routing of the lines cuts off predominantly Negro neighborhoods from the rest of the community...The only real innovation in car design—a detachable control pod—has been dropped because, according to BART officials, it is not 'feasible'. Curiously enough, several trains with detachable control pods were operating in this country 100 years ago. But, pod or no pod, the BART car is unique in that it is the first rapid transit vehicle ever to be designed, as opposed to redesigned...The designers rightly felt that while a train with a top speed of 80 mph should not look like a bullet, neither should it look like a cattle car...On the assumption that they are difficult to read and therefore useless, the designers have eliminated all signs from the exterior of the train. Destinations will be posted on overhead platform signs, at right angles to the track, which will light up 60 seconds before a train pulls

into a station...BART is promising that there will be seats for everybody, except for perhaps at rush hours in crowded downtown areas. Consequently the designers have made minimal provisions for standees...Should BART's traffic projections prove to be low, standees will have a hard time finding something to hold onto...One of their (the BART subway stations) most disturbing features is their low ceilings which emphasize the longness and narrowness of the tunnel structure, thus creating a gun-barrel perspective."

WASHINGTON -- "All stations will be vaulted, regardless of whether they are tunnel or cut-and-cover construction...The inner ceilings will be coffered to add visual interest and break up sound. Sight lines in the stations will be unobstructed by columns or other supports; platforms will be floated out from the walls to allow for indirect lighting and to prevent people from touching the walls...The stations will be designed so that escalators will move passengers directly up from the platform and out onto the street. Entrance enclosures will be eliminated so that people leaving the subway can see the outdoors as they emerge and those about to enter can look down and be reassured that it's not such a bad place after all."

Next, the author's attention is turned toward those existing systems which are updating their properties:

"Boston is quietly remodeling its dingy 1898 subway. Though strictly a remodeling job, the Boston project is turning up some design ideas that are as fresh and exciting as anything to be found in the newer systems...Gone is the cacophony of screeching brakes, naked light bulbs, irrational signage, uncontrolled advertising, exposed pipes and uncoordinated finishes. In its place are soft, indirect lighting, attractive fixtures, modern turnstiles, cantilevered wooden benches, and special rubber flooring that absorbs sound and is restful underfoot...The designers have introduced color coding to Boston. Each rapid transit line is designated with a different color, according to which the route is named...If all subways were as well designed as Boston's the outlook for rapid transit in this country would be considerably brighter. Unfortunately, most of the work in updating and extending existing facilities is drab and uninspired. To be sure, the opportunities for innovation are necessarily fewer in an existing system than in a new system, but the scope of these projects is further limited by a desire to "clean up" old equipment rather than invest in a thorough redesign. The emphasis is on air conditioning and cushioned seats—embellishments that the public can easily recognize and will be quick to accept. More subtle factors such as seating arrangements, hardware, lighting, finishes, graphics and traffic movement are generally ignored."

"New York's new subway car is distinguishable from the old one only in that it has borrowed a slanted front from the San Francisco prototype—a touch of streamlining that seems rather out of place since the rest of the car body remains as clumsy as ever."

"The Long Island Rail Road is purchasing 200 electrified cars from the Budd Company for its commuter service...The cars themselves will be sleek and comfortable, having what the designers like to think of as a 'living room atmosphere'. The only fallacy here is that few living rooms are long and narrow with three seats on one side of an aisle and two on the other. While this arrangement provides maximum seating capacity, it also results in narrow, cramped aisle space and a rather unpleasant degree of crowding."

"The smooth exterior (of the new PATH cars) contours are complicated by a profusion of lights, hand grips and crude detailing."

"Cleveland is now working on an extension of its rapid transit sys-

tem which will provide the first high-speed airport-to-downtown service in this country. The prototype (car) for this much needed service ought to be as up to date and appealing as the airlines which it will support. Regrettably, this is not the case. Imagine the air traveler's chagrin when he steps off the "Red Carpet Special" into an old-fashioned railroad car with rigid seats, exposed metal seaming, inefficient lighting, and lots of metal pipes dangling from the ceiling."

Some final thoughts from Design Quarterly:

"Because public taste is being molded by the seductive styling of automobiles and airplanes, there is a great temptation to make a rapid transit vehicle look like a car or plane—which it is not."

"To date, no one has had the courage to scrap all existing concepts and begin with the transit vehicle as a special problem in traffic movement and human factors."

"Another problem currently being ignored is the movement of the old and the handicapped. Since these people are often totally dependent on public transportation, it is shocking that none of our new systems provides ramps in the stations or space for wheelchairs on board the trains."

"In the area of graphic design, there is need to do away with the written language wherever possible and rely on pictographs."

"Underlying the many failures in transit planning is also the fact that the people who make the final design decisions—the directors of the various transit authorities—are not professional planners or transportation experts. They are politicians, and while they may be advised by expert consultants, their decisions invariably reflect short term political interests or mere personal preference."

(The above is adapted from Design Quarterly 71, published by the Walker Art Center, 1710 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403. Single copies are available for \$1.00 each from the Center.)

We invite your comments on this critique.

the railway report

U. S. PASSENGER TRAIN DISCONTINUANCE PETITIONS -- JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31, 1968

<u>Road</u>	<u>Trains</u>	<u>Between</u>	<u>Action</u>
ATSF	9/11-12	Chicago - Dallas/Fort Worth	PENDING
	13-14	Albuquerque - El Paso	OFF
	19-20	Chicago - Los Angeles	PENDING
	23-24	Chicago - Los Angeles	PENDING
	42-47	Williams Junction - Phoenix	*
	47-48	Kansas City - Tulsa	OFF
	66/77/75	Clovis - Fort Worth/Houston	PENDING
	76/78/65>		
	115-116	Gainesville - Dallas	PENDING
	27/190	La Junta - Denver	PENDING
	201/28>		
	211-212	Kansas City - Tulsa	1 YEAR

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B&O	31-32 51-52	Parkersburg - Cincinnati Cumberland - Washington	OFF **
CB&Q	35-36 35-36 22-23 26-27 23	Quincy - Kansas City Chicago - Quincy Kansas City - Omaha Kansas City - Omaha Chicago - Minneapolis	OFF 1 YEAR PENDING PENDING ***
C&EI	3-4 54-93	Chicago - Danville Chicago - Evansville	? OFF
C&O	3-4 43-46 46-47	Detroit and Cincinnati to Washington and Newport News	PENDING
CRI&P	3-4 11-14	Chicago - Tucumcari Chicago - Peoria	OFF PENDING
CNJ	5703-08 5707-12	Newark - Hampton, N. J. Newark - Hampton, N. J.	OFF OFF
D&RGW	9-10	Denver - Craig	DENIED ?
E - L	10-15	Hoboken - Buffalo	PENDING
GN	11-14 28	St. Paul - Fargo Via Willmar in lieu of St. Cloud	OFF OK'd
Ga RR	3-4	Atlanta - Augusta	OFF
IC	15-16 21-22 101-102 105-152 205-208	St. Louis-Carbondale Springfield - St. Louis St. Louis - Carbondale St. Louis - Carbondale Vicksburg - Shreveport	PENDING PENDING PENDING PENDING OFF
KCS	1-2 9-10 15-16	Kansas City - New Orleans Shreveport - New Orleans Kansas City - Port Arthur	PENDING PENDING PENDING
L&N	1-2 6-7 14-19 17-18	Nashville - Atlanta Cincinnati - New Orleans Bowling Green - Memphis Cincinnati - Atlanta	OFF PENDING OFF OFF
MILW	9-10 55-58 117-118	Milwaukee - Champion, Mich. Chicago - Minneapolis Chicago - Madison	OFF 1 YEAR PENDING
MP	14-15 16-17 18-19 7/27-28/8 23-24 7-8	St. Louis - Kansas City St. Louis - Kansas City St. Louis - Kansas City St. Louis - Fort Worth Longview - New Orleans Longview - San Antonio	DENIED DENIED OFF PENDING PENDING PENDING
NP	1-2 11-12	Fargo - Seattle Little Falls - International Falls	PENDING 1 YEAR ?
N&W	203-212 302-303	St. Louis - Kansas City St. Louis - Detroit	OFF PENDING
P-C (NYC)	57-96 312-341 9 TRAINS 404-405	Chicago - Kendallville/Elkhart Union City - St. Louis Boston - Worcester (commuter runs) Albany - Buffalo	OFF OFF PENDING PENDING

P-C (PRR)	3-4/30-31	Consolidate, New York - St. Louis	PENDING
	453-456	Chicago - Valparaiso (commuter runs)	1 YEAR
	74/94-95/75	Chicago (Logansport) - Louisville	PENDING
	50	Chicago - New York	PENDING
	53	Pittsburgh - Chicago	PENDING
P-RSL	1052-1063	Philadelphia - Cape May, N. J.	DENIED
	769-773	Camden - Millville, N. J.	DENIED
	756-758	Camden - Millville, N. J.	DENIED
	- - -	All weekend/hol. runs, Phila-Atl City	DENIED
SCL	3-4	Richmond - Atlanta	PENDING
	42-49	Rocky Mount - Wilmington	OFF
	36-37	Jacksonville - Chattahoochee, Fla.	OFF
	75-76	Jacksonville - Tampa	PENDING
	17-18	Portsmouth - Raleigh	OFF
	53-54	Augusta - Florence, S. C.	OFF
SOO	48-49	Champion - Calumet, Mich.	OFF
SOUTHERN	1-2	Oakdale - Atlanta	OFF
	1/28-27/2	Cincinnati - Asheville - Columbia	PENDING
	15-16	Consol w/21-22, Greensboro-Asheville	OK'd
	41/42-29/38	Washington - Monroe, Va.	CONSOL
	45-46	Chattanooga - Memphis	OFF
SP	3-4	Tucumcari - El Paso	OFF
	75-76	Los Angeles - San Francisco	OFF
	101-102	Ogden - San Francisco	PENDING
UP	5-6	Omaha - Los Angeles	PENDING
	35-36	Salt Lake City - Butte	PENDING
	11-12	Pocatello - Huntington, Ore.	OFF
	17-18	Kansas City - Portland	PENDING
	69-70	Kansas City - Salina, Kan.	OFF
	5-6/17-18	Cheyenne - Green River, Wyo.	CONSOL
WP	17-18	Salt Lake City - Oakland	PENDING

* Reinstated and repetedioned

** Allowed to discontinue; hearings may force reinstatement

*** Reinstated Friday and Sunday only for 6 months

--COMPILED BY ASSOCIATE EDITOR ROBERT I. OLIPHANT, APRIL 1, 1968

T/C Notes

Because of the length of the Design Quarterly critique, some of our regular features had to be omitted from this issue. T. C., For The Record, and Air/Lines International will resume in the May issue of TRANSPORT.

TRANSPORT's May issue will feature a status report on the current use of the trolley coach in urban transit operations in the U. S. and Canada, and a detailed look at the procedures involved in the discontinuance of a railroad passenger train, and will be distributed after May 3.

COVER -- This is the first in a continuing series of maps delineating urban and suburban transit properties in a single state. (S) denotes a property essentially suburban in operation but with some urban services. (Map by RIO)