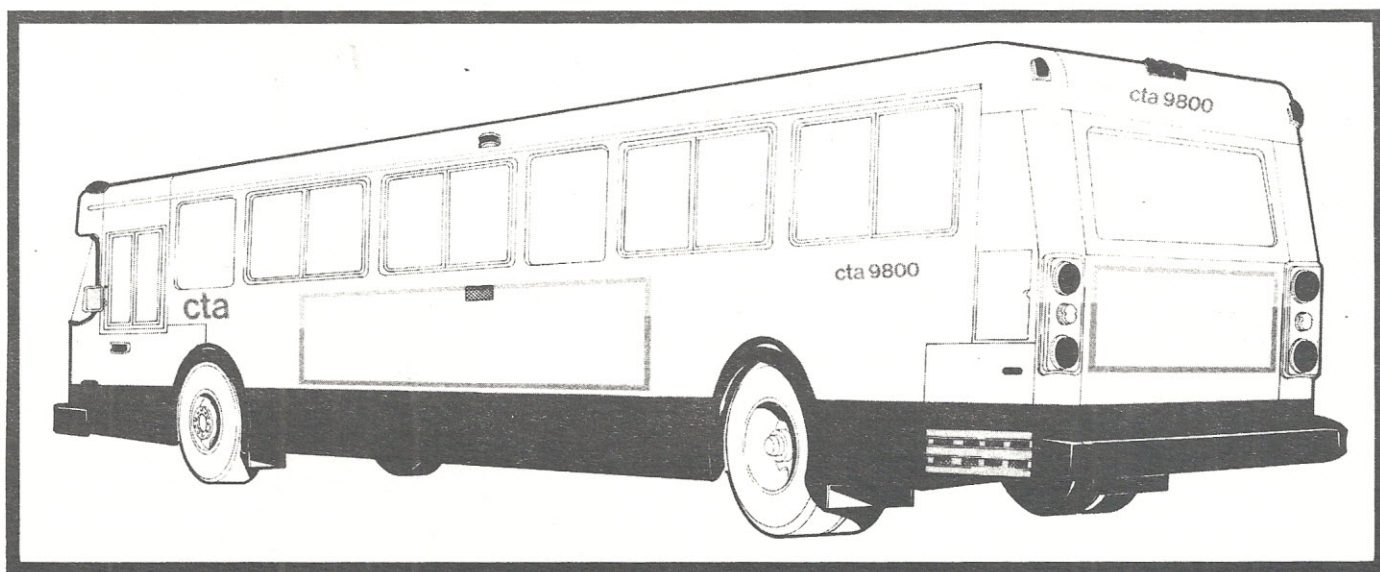
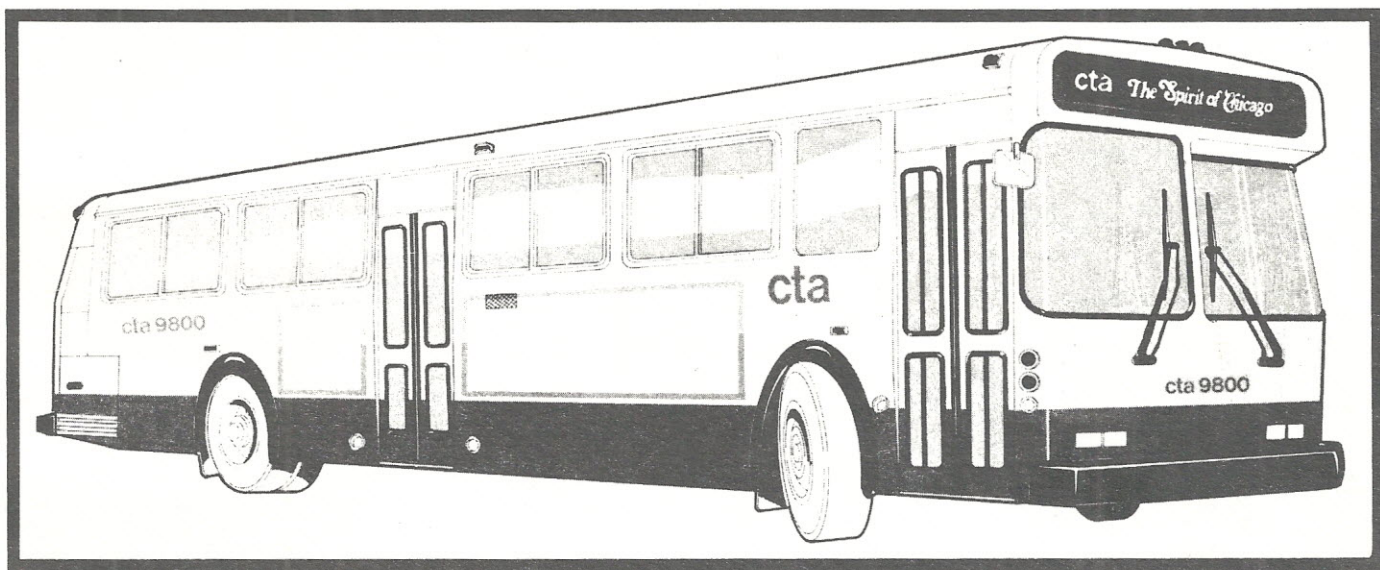


Transport Central



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Government's Wayward Bus

We never thought we'd see the day when the CTA was criticized for *saving* money.

But it happened after the transit agency decided to buy 200 buses that not only had the lowest purchase price of the three models considered, but are also cheapest to operate.

Unfortunately, the buses are manufactured by a Canadian company, Flyer Industries Ltd. So the Administrative Joint Commission, the CTA's oversight board, vetoed the sale, at least temporarily, on the ground that they should be made by American workers.

We can't blame the commissioners for trying to protect American jobs. But only one of the three bidders, Grumman Flexible Co., is American. And Grumman buses:

- Cost \$36,000 more per bus than Flyers.
- Weight 3,000 pounds more, which translates into thousands of gallons on fuel.
- Carry fewer passengers, a prime concern because of exorbitant driver salaries.
- Break down a lot (though the company claims to have licked the problems).

Only one American firm, a subsidiary of a German company, makes the bus the CTA wants: one similar to the 1950s-style vehicles that compose most of its fleet. And that company has more orders than it can handle.

Why can't you buy a good U.S. bus these days? We blame the federal government.

In the early 1970s, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration set out to design the perfect universal bus. It had to be able to climb Cincinnati hills and speed along Los Angeles freeways, so it needed a huge, fuel-guzzling engine.

The seats had to be bolted to the walls to make it easier to clean the floors, which meant heavier walls, which meant heavier fuel consumption. Other design "improvements" reduced passenger capacity.

The committee that tried to design a horse came up with a camel, the breakdown-prone "advanced design" bus used by the RTA. The CTA is glad it never bought one.

The feds didn't force anyone to buy the new buses, but they made it clear this was the bus of the future. The two major U.S. manufacturers, Grumman-Flexible and General Motors, switched their production entirely to new-style buses (though GM continued to make the '50s-style model in Canada, where the government didn't meddle in bus design).

A NOTE FROM THE STAFF: "Irregular" issue frequency during the summer, we said last June; "nonexistent" might have been a better word for it. Some 90 days have come and gone since TC last saw the light of day, and an explanation of sorts is obviously called for. Our initial summer game plan called for at least two outings in the dog days of July and August, given the dearth of real news during the hot months, but an unexpected professional opportunity was offered the Editor that proved too good to pass up, and in the resulting rearrangement of priorities TC had to be shifted to the back burner temporarily. The situation has stabilized now, however, and we are resuming twice-monthly publication with this issue. In the wake of our fifteenth anniversary, we had also planned some face-lifting to be phased in gradually over the summer months; this "rehabilitation" is currently underway, and some of the results ought to be visible this time around. Our apologies for the lengthy delay; we try not to make a habit of it.

Now that transit agencies in Chicago and other cities are clamoring for '50's-style buses, Grumman is trying to modify its model to give them what they want, rather than what the government thought they should want. We hope other American manufacturers will enter the act, though it will require

huge capital expenditures.

In the meantime, cities must buy from foreign companies or accept less suitable American buses. That could have been avoided if the government hadn't foolishly pushed bus production in the wrong direction.

— Chicago Sun-Times

A New Route For Mass Transit

The Metropolitan Planning and Housing Council has issued a study on what seems a rather limited, if interesting, trend in transportation—the growing use by commuters of private chartered buses. In fact, the closer one looks at this development the more it appears to be part of a massive, even historic shift, a change in the way people and governments think about transportation.

The council found that the so-called subscription buses are now carrying about 3,000 suburb residents downtown each day, representing a loss in fares of some \$253,000 a month (or more than \$3 million a year) to the Regional Transportation Authority.

For those who use the chartered buses the advantages are clear. The savings are substantial; a commuter in West Chicago, for example, may pay \$50 a month for a seat on a subscription bus, instead of the \$117 he'd be charged for a monthly train ticket. The bus can take him directly to his office building instead of unloading him at a station that might be across the Loop. A subscription bus is not locked into a single route; dealing with a small group of passengers, it can easily adapt to their wishes. And its overhead costs are minimal compared to those of the RTA, which must conform to union pay scales and work rules.

The marked shift to subscription buses began with the jolting increases in commuter fares last year. By now, says council director Elizabeth Hollander, it is affecting RTA finances and is "a notable factor with which policymakers must contend."

"Contending" with the change does not necessarily mean fighting it. Subscription buses can do certain things the RTA can't, but the converse is obviously true; they can never take the place of a unified, coordinated mass transit system.

What they *can* do is help shift the Chicago area, and other big metropolitan systems, away from a virtual government monopoly on mass transit—a monopoly that had good historic reasons for coming into being, and now has equally good ones for giving room to other suppliers. Recent years have shown a worsening pattern of crises in mass transit—soaring fares, dwindling services, political battles as savage as they are unproductive. It has been increasingly clear that the public sector can no longer handle the job of being the sole supplier and regulator of mass transit needs.

In an excellent study of transportation trends, former RTA chairman Milton Pikarsky argues that what looks like a breakdown in the nation's transportation system is really only "the death rattle of outdated institutions . . . and the painful birth of many new delivery systems."

We have come to think of a mass transit system provided and supervised by government as the only possible one. In fact, Mr. Pikarsky argues, such a system is just one phase in

a shifting relationship among the public sector, employers, and the private citizen; the key question in this relationship is who is chiefly responsible for getting the citizen to his job and back. The responsibility has changed hands as the distances to be covered increased; as industries have dispersed from the central city to the suburbs, it has grown harder for any agency to meet.

Over the last 40 years, the unwritten "social contract" has been that the public sector built roads and mass transit systems and heavily subsidized the latter; the employer either located near public transportation or provided parking facilities; and the worker either bought a car or lived near a transit line.

Now, says Mr. Pikarsky, all parties are finding it increasingly hard to live up to their part of the contract. Governments in particular are finding it harder to meet the costs of mass transit—ballooned by pay scales negotiated with a labor monopoly—and of maintaining a deteriorating road and highway system. Consciously or unconsciously, parties to the old "contract" are starting to renegotiate it; the result may be a much wider, less patterned choice of transportation for the rider, including car, bus and van pools, jitney cabs, shared-ride taxi systems, subsidized passes or car-leasing systems for employees, cooperative transit arrangements among companies in the same area.

In this light, the trend toward charter buses appears to be a good deal more than a fad or a temporary money-saving device. It is one signpost on the route that transportation itself is taking.

— Chicago Tribune

An Alternative to Public Transportation

Unfortunately for commuters and taxpayers, hardly anyone is looking into *why* public transit costs so much. Economist Charles Lave did that recently. He concluded that because these systems are run as government monopolies, their employees have been able to extract wages far above free-market levels. Moreover, they have prevented the use of sensible measures like employing part-time drivers to cover the rush hours. And the transit systems persist in trying to run large buses in low-density suburbs where covering costs is impossible.

Lave's prescription for cutting transit deficits was simple: 1) increase fares so that users pay more, 2) leave low-density routes to paratransit operators, 3) use part-time drivers at peak hours, and 4) let paratransit have part of the costly peak-hour business. Except for fare increases (which they've grudgingly accepted), the transit agencies and their unions fight tooth and nail whenever such measures are suggested.

In Indianapolis, for example, the transit authority opposed the Yellow Cab Company's recent bid to begin operating 15-

passenger "Jitney Express" vans. Fortunately, the city government turned a deaf ear to the protest, and the vans are now helping to relieve the peak-hour load. In Chicago, however, a similar proposal by Checker Cab has so far been stymied.

It's surprising that American transit agencies are so adamant in their opposition to private-sector paratransit, because the evidence from overseas fully supports Prof. Lave's view. Two years ago, a pair of World Bank researchers identified three major cities where public transit agencies operated side by side with large-scale private mini-bus operations: Bangkok, Istanbul and Calcutta. In all three cases, the private sector operations nicely complemented public transit.

Take Bangkok, for example. Besides the public system's 4,000 regular-sized buses, Bangkok has 10,000 private mini-buses. If the minis didn't exist, the public transit system would need 40 percent more buses to handle the peak-hour loads. The mini-buses are completely unregulated—they can serve any routes they want, charging any fares they choose. Most end up charging one *baht*—the same as the city bus. Because they are smaller, the mini-buses can traverse unpaved roads on the outskirts of town where the city buses cannot go. So the minis cover low-density routes as well as peak hours downtown. Interestingly, they manage to make a profit while the city buses—charging the same fare—cover only 70 percent of their costs.

In Istanbul and Calcutta the mini-buses are also more numerous than the city buses. But in each of those cities the government restricts the minis to serve largely outside the downtown areas and regulates their fares. Because the minis cannot relieve downtown peak-load traffic, the city systems lose more money than in Bangkok; Calcutta's covers only 60 per cent of its costs while Istanbul's covers just 37 percent. Yet, the private mini-buses turn a profit, even though restricted to lower-density routes.

It's clear that in none of these cases are the mini-buses "skimming the cream" from the public transit systems. Nor are the mini-buses poorly maintained; in Calcutta and Istanbul, studies have shown that the mini-buses are in better shape than the city buses. What is different is that the minis are operated in a businesslike fashion—they have to be or their operators would go broke! Their wage levels tend to be less than those of the government-run services, and their overhead costs are usually much less because they have no bureaucracy to support.

These Third World experiences are beginning to be duplicated in this country. In Chicago hundreds of commuter groups have discovered their own form of paratransit: charter and subscription bus service. The most common pattern is for school-bus firms to offer no-frills service in surplus school buses. Commuter Bus Systems, for example, charges \$75 a month or \$20 a week for such service. Many commuters—especially those who formerly had to ride both a train and a local bus—are saving as much as \$60 a month with the private buses. Just like overseas, private operators are able to make a profit in the same market where public agencies are losing a fortune.

Similar subscription bus services are starting up in Atlanta, Houston and Philadelphia. Typically, they've begun in the wake of large increases in transit system fares. But dissatisfaction with poor service has also been a factor.

The 46 Toms River, New Jersey commuters who formed their own bus company last spring were motivated by both concerns. Their bus costs them \$38 a week, compared with the \$46 charged by New Jersey Transit. More important, the air-conditioning and heating *work*, the bus has a rest room, the driver is courteous, and those who sit at the back can smoke, drink and play cards.

The lesson from all these cases should be clear. Private, profit-making paratransit is not a "threat" to public transit systems. In fact, it could be their salvation (if, indeed, they are to survive at all). Private buses can reduce the costly peak-hour loads on the public transit system. The vans and mini-buses can replace money-losing city buses on low-density suburban routes. And all of us—commuters and taxpayers alike—will be better off for the change.

—Dollars and Sense

Sylvia Porter:

Commuting may pave path for urban travel planners

The urban commuting picture is gloomy, and few observers see improvement ahead. But Peter B. Everett, associate professor of human-environment relations at Pennsylvania State University, sees a silver lining to commuting.

What Everett predicts is that the expense and hassle of getting to work will result in a whole new career field—the "urban travel agent".

"More money is spent on commuting than on long-distance travel," says Everett, a transportation researcher. "If the conventional travel agent can profit on the fewer dollars spent for long-distance travel, then surely there is good potential for the urban travel agent."

What might an urban travel agent do to make a profit?

- Provide metropolitan travel counseling and services to corporations, merchants and individuals.
- Match and manage car- and van-pool programs for individuals and companies. "The agents will work out special vehicle time-sharing programs for employers and get involved with incentive programs sponsored by merchants to spur bus ridership," Everett explains.
- Perform "personal transportation audits" for commuters, highlighting their best commuting options. They might even become involved in selecting home and business sites in instances where transportation to and from work is critical.
- Sell transit passes; manage transit pass programs for employers; develop and manage bus subscription programs.

Many employers consider parking an employee's responsibility. In reality, it well may be that employers would have a much more stable work force if they showed concern for this employee expense.

For firms relocating employees and realty companies selling them houses, the services of an urban travel agent actually could be a promotional lure, equal to an expensive fringe benefit.

In retrospect, urban travel is indeed complex. Which option to use—car, bus, van pool, even—if feasible—walk? But information about van pools often is not available readily. We tend to shy away from mass transit because of hard-to-understand schedules. Many urban families have different travel needs.

Resolving the problem by buying a car for each family member is hardly a solution.

"An urban travel agent could point out better solutions," stresses Everett—and he favors the private-sector rather than the public-sector approach. This allows the agent to be much more of an entrepreneur and to develop services a public agency could not.

How do you get into the field? Be able to put up enough money to hold on for at least two years before operating in the black, develop computer software that will account for all options and, eventually, to package one program for application to many cities.

Such an agent can boost energy conservation and can improve the quality of city life. In Everett's words: "Urban travel agents can make a profit while developing programs that enhance contemporary urban travel."

—Chicago Sun-Times

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER:

All subscriptions to Transport Central will be automatically extended three months to compensate for the non-publication of TC this summer. Your expiration date appears on the mailing label, and will be updated with our next issue.

Production deadlines for this issue require that coverage be limited to transit and rail (as well as our customary late-breaking news columns—now on "The Last Page"). Our next issue, dated September 30, will follow closely behind this one, and will cover the significant events of the past weeks in the airline, bus and nautical fields—as well as breaking stories. The projected target date for publication is October 8—after which the Editor will "break ranks" for a brief (working) vacation in the East.

TRANSIT

CTA Takes A Flyer

□ In keeping with its new "open window" policy, the Chicago Transit Authority has authorized the purchase of 200 standard 40-foot buses from Flyer Industries of Winnipeg, at a cost of \$25,222,400—an average of \$126,112 per bus. GM of Canada (at \$27,144,600) and Grumman Flexible (\$32,460,200) also bid, and the latter firm sought to overturn the controversial award because the units will be assembled in Canada—although U.S. content will be in excess of 60 percent. At presstime, the award is still not firm because of city objections; Chicago is attempting to persuade the Manitoba-owned firm to locate its U.S. manufacturing plant in the area. (Flyer, in the wake of tightening "Buy American" requirements, plans a U.S. facility to retain its widening foothold in the domestic market; the firm is effectively excluded from selling its coaches in Quebec by that province's "Buy Quebec" law and in Ontario by that region's preference for local firms.)

The new CTA Flyers, pictured on the cover of this issue, and to be numbered 9800-9999 by the Authority, will seat 50, and will not have air-conditioning. Instead, they will be equipped with windows that open, and there will be two roof vents for circulation. Delivery will begin next summer and is expected to end by early fall—pending a satisfactory resolution of city and legal objections.

Some data on the new 200-bus addition to the CTA roster:

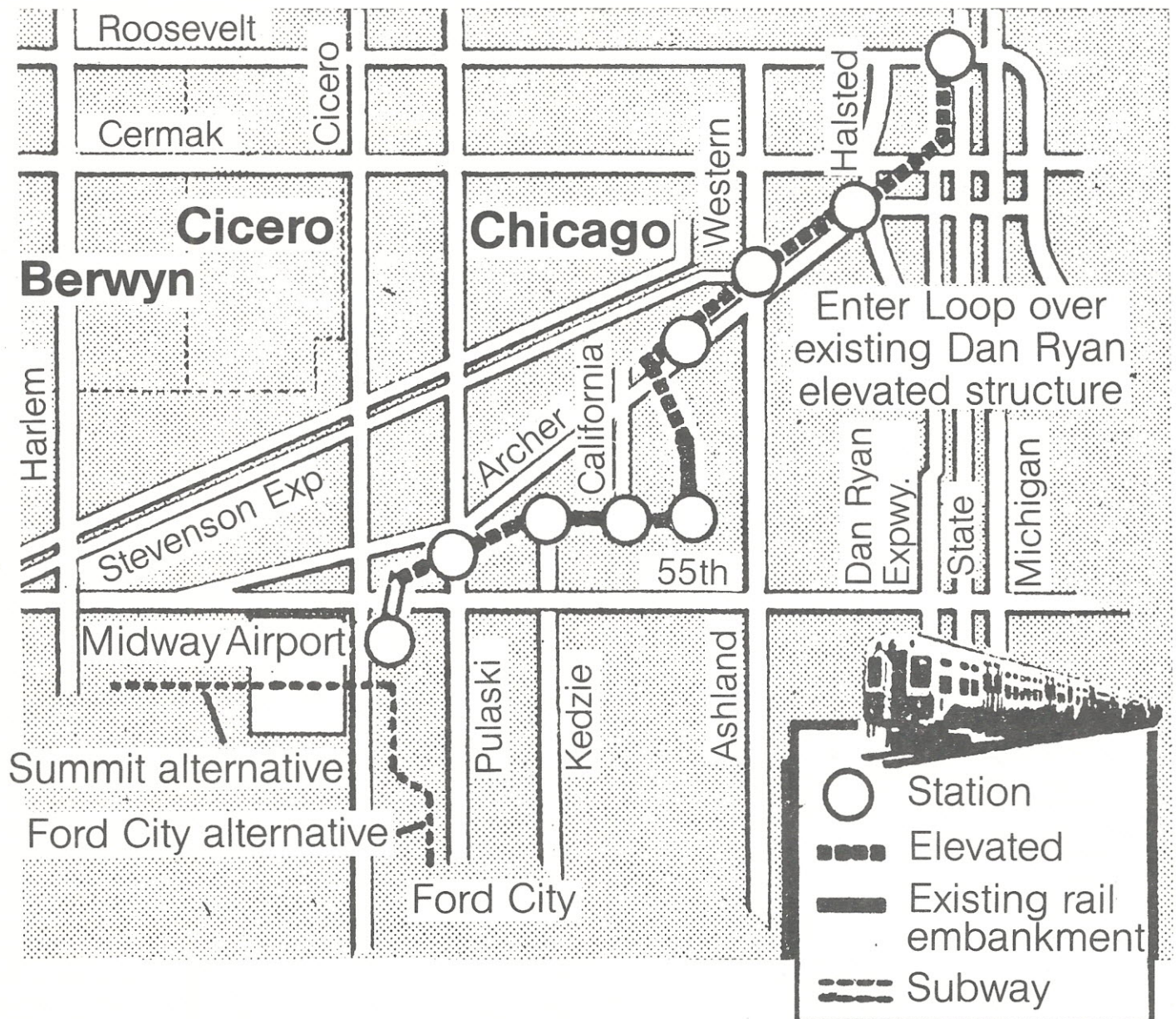
Length	40 ft.
Turning Radius	42 ft.
Height	120.5 in.
Max. Governed Speed	55 MPH
Width	102 in.

Acceleration	50 MPH in 60 sec.
Weight	38,600# gross (22,900# empty)
Construction	Steel and aluminum
Propulsion:	GMC 6V71TA, Turbocharged, V-engine, 6 cylinders, 426 cu. in., 203 SAE HP @ 2100 RPM
Transmission:	Detroit Diesel V730, 3 Forward
Speeds	
Axle Ratio:	5.375:1
Fuel Tank Capacity:	137 gal.
Alternator Output:	300 amps @ 12 volts
Tires:	Goodyear 12.00/22.5, Tubeless, Bias-ply
Interior	public address system; "Easy-Out"
Vapor touch bar	exit doors
Ventilation:	2 Roof vents/sliding sash
Energy Bumpers (Front and Rear):	Firestone "Help-S"; Stainless steel stepwells, wheel housings
Telma Focal 155 Brake Retarder;	CTA standard padded fiberglass seating

By Rail to Midway

□ As expected (and in plenty of time for the mayoral primary and election next spring), the city of Chicago has selected a route for its proposed new rapid transit line to Midway Airport on the Southwest Side. The area, developing rapidly, has always been bereft of anything resembling rapid transit, and the bus corridor along Archer Avenue and the paralleling Stevenson Expressway is the busiest in the area.

Plans call for the new route to leave the existing 18th Street 'L' line at about Clark Street, head west through an industrial area to a connection with the ICG (GM&O) rail line near Cermak and Stewart Avenues, then run above it to the Conrail (PRR) line just west of Western Avenue. There the line would turn



south (still above the railroad) to about 49th Street and the Belt Railway line, following it to just north and east of Midway Airport, where it would terminate in a subway station across Cicero Avenue from the airport terminal.

One of two extensions to the line might eventually be built, either heading south along Cicero to the Ford City shopping center at about 76th Street (where there is ample parking), or west through the airport area to suburban Summit (Argo) at 63rd-Archer. Neither extension would be "cost-effective" at the present time.

The Midway line would operate on the existing Ryan tracks to the Loop to connect with service on the Lake Street line. The city's plans call for a subway connection linking the State Street tubes at about 13th Street with the Ryan median route to the south and west, permitting a pairing of the heavy Howard and Ryan legs of the system. The Englewood and

Jackson Park branches (the latter is now planned for restoral to at least University Avenue after all) would be tied in with Ravenswood service via the Loop 'L' (using the Wells and Van Buren legs only; the Midway-Lake service would operate on the Wabash and Van Buren sides).

A total of nine stations will comprise the service to be offered on the new Midwayline. First from the Loop would be a station at Roosevelt (the North Shore Line's terminal until 1963), to be shared with the Ravenswood-Englewood route as a convenient transfer point.

Running outward toward Midway, trains would then stop at Halsted-Archer, Ashland just north of the Stevenson, Western-Archer, Western-49th, California-49th, Kedzie-49th, Pulaski-51st, and the terminal at the airport. Were the line to be extended southward to Ford City, additional stops would be located at 63rd, possibly near 67th, and at Ford City.

Stops on the projected Summit extension would most probably be located about a mile apart, at the principal north-south arteries between Cicero and the end of the line at 63-Archer.

In selecting the 49th Street alignment for the Midway route, the city rejected several other proposals that would have utilized busways in and along the Stevenson Expressway and a rail route in that highway's median. The rail alternative would have cost more to construct, and would not have touched many populated areas; the presence of "walk-in trade" is considered crucial to the success of any rapid transit line in Chicago.

The new route's ridership projection is pegged at 118,000 daily riders by the year 2000. No timetable for construction has been fixed, but it is a safe bet to assume that trains would not be running on the line much before 1990.

Official mayoral approval is expected imminently, so that the project can be submitted to Washington for a grant to help in covering the cost of design and engineering studies. The line will be financed from monies released by the cancellation of the Cross-town Expressway, so federal authorization is expected early on.

Chicago Comment:

□ Chicago's Regional Transportation Authority has been awarded a research and development grant of just under \$300,000 to develop an improved bill validator for commuter fare automation systems; the Illinois Central Gulf will coordinate the project, assisted by bill validator manufacturers.

The same carrier has shown an increase in ridership of as much as 46 percent (on the South Chicago branch) in the wake of this year's fare decrease which brought the cost of a ride on a monthly ticket to near-CTA levels. Accordingly, the RTA, which sponsored the cuts, agreed to extend the program for another six months past the original September 1 cut-off date.

□ The Regional Transportation Authority has reaffirmed its "Buy American" policy by awarding a \$30,600,000 contract to GM's Electro-Motive Division of McCook for 24 F40PH diesel locomotives. Delivery is expected to take about six months, and the new units are earmarked for service on the North Western's three commuter rail divisions, replacing some equipment in service for more than 30 years. Each locomotive will cost \$1,245,000.

□ Also on the commuter rail front, the same agency plans to add bar cars to certain of its rush-hour runs in a move to improve its financial picture. There are currently two such units in operation on the North Western to Harvard and McHenry, remnants of a larger fleet when all services were still in private hands.

If labor problems can be solved, the RTA is believed to be considering instituting similar services on the Rock Island (which it now operates), and the Milwaukee Road (whose commuter services it is set to assume on October 1. The existing C&NW cars serve beer, soda and mixed drinks during the evening rush hour, and coffee and pastry in the morning.

□ As a part of the terms of the pending sale contract providing for a takeover of the remainder of the Milwaukee Road by the Grand Trunk, the RTA is set to assume operation of the road's commuter services on October 1. The Milwaukee presently runs daily trains to Elgin on its West Line and to Fox Lake and Walworth, Wisconsin on its North Line. Service on the latter route is expected to be bobtailed at Fox Lake as a part of the takeover; ridership to Walworth and intermediate points north of Fox Lake has been declining in recent years.

As a part of the assumption of services pact, the RTA has agreed to give free passes on the commuter runs to as many as 1,750 current and retired employees of the road's freight service. Noting that union contracts require such gratuities, the RTA said any Chicago area active or retired employee of the Milwaukee hired before March 1, 1972 is entitled to free transportation, regardless of whether or not the staff member actually works in commuter service. Only about 360 workers will actually be taken on by the RTA when it acquires the commuter operations.

The agreement with the railroad calls for the RTA to pay \$620,000 per year for the use of the road's physical plant, about \$50,000 as its share of property taxes on railroad facilities, and about \$6,000,000 annually as the commuter division's share of maintenance of jointly used facilities. The totals do not include the cost of fuel, administration and wages for RTA employees.

Under the terms of the pact, the Milwaukee Road must maintain track and signals in such condition as to enable the RTA to run commuter trains at up to 60 miles per hour, and may not schedule freight trains over the lines between 5:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., and between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

The railroad has also filed a petition with the bankruptcy judge overseeing its affairs, and in turn to the Interstate Commerce Commission, to abandon its commuter service north of Fox Lake on the North Line, a remnant of passenger operations to Madison and other parts of Wisconsin. There are four stations north of Fox Lake at which the single daily round trip stops: Solon Mills, Spring Grove, Zenda and the terminal at Walworth; the last two are in Wisconsin, which does not subsidize rail commuter service.

Abandonment of the Walworth runs would reduce RTA commuter rail penetration of the Badger State to that service offered on the North Western's North Line to Kenosha (itself a remnant of a once-extensive operation to Milwaukee and beyond). C&NW once ran commuter service to Lake Geneva (it is now bobtailed at McHenry, with a bus feeder service to and from that

point). Plans currently exist for a resumption of service beyond Kenosha to Racine and ultimately to Milwaukee, spearheaded by the Wisconsin Democratic congressman Les Aspin, but they are currently stalled for budgetary reasons.

□ As noted above, the CTA, in a turnabout from earlier thinking plans to restore elevated service on its presently moribund Jackson Park line as far as University Avenue, stopping short of the condemned Dorchester bridge over the Illinois Central tracks that has halted all operations south of 61st Street since March.

The project, which is expected to be completed by December, will cost \$2,560,000, and includes construction of a new terminal at University, complete rail rehabilitation, and some upgrading of the intermediate stations at King Drive and Cottage Grove.

Service will then be operated all day between University and Howard Street, with shuttle bus operation as required between University and the former terminal at Stony Island. The 27/SOUTH DEERING bus routes will also be rerouted directly to the University stop. Coincident with service restoral will be the start of a planning study that will be used for a \$40,000,000 redevelopment of the 63rd Street transit corridor.

□ Until October 31, the South Shore is offering a \$5.00 special round-trip excursion fare between Chicago and the Tremont stop for Indiana Dunes-bound riders. The new rate offers a 40% savings over the regular tariff for the trip. The tickets are valid on weekends, and in conjunction with the special fare, the park gate near the South Shore station at Tremont has been reopened after a decade or so of disuse.

□ The CTA has applied for a \$400,000 UMTA grant to develop automatic processing machines for monthly passes at its rapid transit stations. At the same time, the Authority plans to begin using plastic rather than paper monthly passes to better thwart misuse of the discount fare.

□ In conjunction with its takeover of Milwaukee Road commuter services, the RTA is dropping fares to levels approximating those of its other subsidized rail carriers. Milwaukee tariffs were hiked 100% last year when the bankrupt road left the RTA system . . . The federal government has begun a civil rights investigation of the way Chicago-area agencies plan the region's transportation system. If certain allegations are substantiated, the probe could lead to a cutoff of federal funding awarded the region for transit projects.

□ In conjunction with the Milwaukee Road takeover, the RTA is realigning itself into two major divisions, hoping thereby to mollify some of its critics. All rail operations will be handled by the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Rail Corporation ("Nick Rick"), to become a major agency with over 1,000 operating and support employees on October 1. The other division will be a slimmed-down RTA, responsible for admini-

stering the area's bus and rail systems still under contract to the regional authority.

□ The CTA has retired the last of some \$135,000,000 in revenue bonds issued in 1947, 1952 and 1953 toward the purchase of the three predecessor companies that make up the Authority . . . The CTA has also retrofitted many of its air-conditioned buses with a device designed to hold the sealed windows open when the A/C fails. About a quarter of the fleet now have the special hooks in place, at a cost of just \$22 per coach.

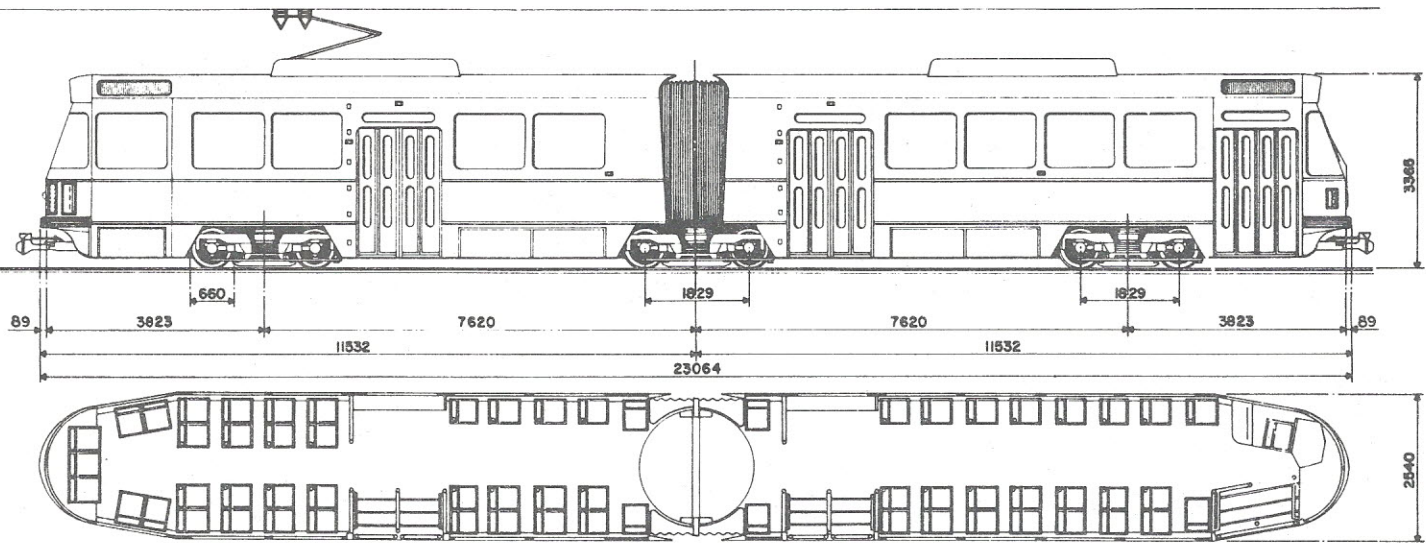
Transit Topics

□ The first two of Baltimore's new rapid transit cars, built by Budd, are now on the property . . . Although the last conventional Checker taxicab came off the Kalamazoo assembly line in July, the company still hopes to build a slimmer, front-wheel-drive successor if and when the economy improves . . . Cleveland's RTA has raised local fares to 85¢ and express tariffs to \$1.00 (transfers remain free) to ease its budgetary crisis . . . On January 1, New York's MTA will take over operation of ConRail's Harlem, Hudson and New Haven commuter rail lines; ConRail has been managing the three routes for the MTA.

□ Westchester County is suing General Motors for \$20,000,000 in damages because it believes the air-conditioning equipment installed on its new RTS-II buses is faulty . . . Amtrak will assemble the Breda-built Washington subway cars at its Beech Grove (IN) plant . . . New York's MTA is planning to issue up to \$100,000,000 in bonds (its first foray into the market) for subway improvements . . . Los Angeles' SCRTD has lowered fares from 85¢ to 50¢ with the help of local sales tax revenue. In so doing, it recaptured almost 200,000 riders lost when the tariffs were hiked last year . . . UMTA has instituted its "Bus Call" plan, freeing some \$80,000,000 in new funds for bus purchase grants, hopefully helping to break the logjam in commuter bus purchases by transit carriers . . . Want to charter a Toronto Peter Witt streetcar for a tour of the city's extensive rail system? The current two-hour rate is C\$295 (about \$225 U.S.). Regular Witt tours (\$9.95 per person) continue through October 31 . . . GO Transit, born with Transport Central in the troubled days of 1967, has also celebrated its 15th anniversary—by assuming operation of former VIA Rail Canada services from Toronto to Stouffville and Bradford.

□ The Toronto Transit Commission is currently testing the Urban Transportation Development Corporation's Articulated Light Rail Vehicle. The ALRV is similar to the 196 CLRVs now in service, but is some 25 feet longer and is articulated for continuous passenger flow and ease of turning. The ALRV can accommodate 258 (crush capacity), as opposed to 131 for its

THE ARTICULATED LIGHT RAIL VEHICLE



THE ALRV

- 23.06 metres (75.7 ft.) long
- carries over 200 passengers
- top speed 80.5 km per hour (50 mph)
- width 2.59 metres (8.5 ft.)
- height, rail to roof 3.37 metres (11 ft.)
- first step is .25 metres (10 inches) above the street
- powered by 2 DC motors
- suspended on 3-double axle trucks
- 3 braking systems: regenerative braking, disc brakes, magnetic track brakes
- doorways 1.22 metres (48 inches) wide, 2.17 metres (85 inches) high
- features UTDC's unique, patented Articulation Joint which allows the vehicle to go around sharp turns down to a minimum radius of 11 metres (36 ft.)



smaller counterpart . . . The TTC, which is in the process of accepting ten additional Orion small transit coaches for its lighter lines, has begun testing specially equipped Flyer-built "kneeling" buses on its Avenue Road line.

□ New York City has added its sixth exclusive bus lane—on Sixth Avenue from 40th to 59th Streets—joining other priority rights-of-way on First, Second, Third and Madison Avenues, as well as eastbound on 57th Street . . . Rochester (NY) has a poster available for \$5.00 with original drawings of all 36 bus models used on the streets of that city from 1922 through the present (including the obscure trackless trolleys). The poster is available at \$7.00 (including postage and handling) from Mrs. Ellen Bass, Regional Transit Service, 1372 East Main Street, Rochester NY 14609.

□ RECOMMENDED READING: "Inside Muni", Interurban Press' companion volume to "The People's Railway", by John McKane and Anthony Perles. This 277-page volume thoroughly details routes, fleet and physical plant; 445 photos illustrate the most interesting public transportation system in the country. "Inside Muni" and "The People's Railway" provide a comprehensive look at the San Francisco Municipal Railway; no serious student of the industry—or casual onlooker—should be without them. ("Inside Muni" is available at \$35.95 from Interurban Press, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, CA 91205.)

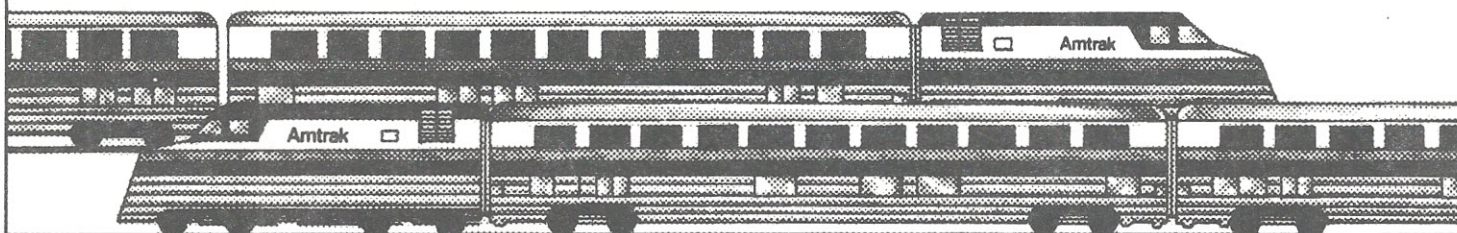
□ Grumman Flexible is "uncertain" about its future bus-building plans, and is scaling down production to combat shrinking market demand; its plant can produce up to eight buses daily, but is now turning out only two coaches each day . . . After a six-month study, ATE Management Service Corporation of Cincinnati has recommended that the Indiana University campus bus system and Bloomington Transit should not merge into one system, but should undertake some measures to coordinate operations of the two carriers.

□ The Census Bureau reports that 84 percent of all U.S. workers choose a car, truck or van to get to work, compared with 78 percent a decade ago. In that same 10-year period, public transportation usage has declined from 9 percent to 6 percent . . . VIA Metropolitan Transit of San Antonio is purchasing 20 diesel-powered "streetcars" for special downtown service in that Texas city . . . By the end of this month, the operation of older rail cars on the Red Arrow Division Media and Sharon Hill lines should be a memory, displaced by the new Kawasaki units.

□ Fort Worth also has motorized "streetcars" on a route in the downtown area . . . Rail service beyond Castle Shannon on the Drake and Library lines in Pittsburgh has been temporarily discontinued to allow for upgrading of the routes in anticipation of the arrival of new light rail cars.

RAIL

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Amtrak  AMERICA'S GETTING INTO TRAINING 

Along The Right-of-Way

The future of Canada's only electrified main line rail passenger service is now secure. The Montreal Urban Community Transit Commission has taken over the financing and management of CN's 18-mile Montreal-Deux Montagnes commuter line. New equipment may appear in the near future, but for the moment the six General Electric boxcars built between 1914 and 1917 will continue in service . . . Classic red, white and black New Haven colors are set to reappear on four FL9s being rebuilt for Danbury commuter service by the Connecticut DOT . . . Amtrak held a successful "Family Days" celebration in mid-July on the site of the old Illinois Central Station at Roosevelt Road in Chicago. Chessie and Southern sent along their exhibit cars to supplement Amtrak's own attractions; the Chicago Transit Authority offered several representatives of its rubber-tired fleet (including the first of its

new order of MAN articulateds—but the real star was the Lehigh Valley Historical Association's restored 1920s-vintage private car.

□ Adam Benjamin, the popular Indiana congressman from the Calumet area, died suddenly at his Washington home over the Labor Day weekend. Despite being a novice in the field at the time of his election not too many years ago, he quickly became a champion of transportation causes, notably the preservation of the South Shore Line as a commuter carrier. Congressman Benjamin was an outspoken champion of transit programs, hammering home often the theme that the federal benefits from the mass transit aid program far exceeded its cost. His death leaves a significant void in the ranks of pro-transportation adherents on Capitol Hill and he will be sorely missed . . . Chicago-Toronto Amtrak-VIA Rail Canada service (as an extension of the "Blue Water" via Port Huron) is set to begin Oct. 31.

THE LAST PAGE

AT DEADLINE: San Francisco's historic cable car system shut down for repairs early Wednesday, September 22, after a day of celebrations and a cable car parade. The three routes will be replaced by alternative transportation for some 20 months of renovation and repair—the longest interruption in the system's 111-year history. Also bowing out officially is the Muni's PCC fleet, which had been running on weekends on the surface of Market Street. The aging cars will be replaced on Saturdays and Sundays until November 20 by buses; after that date the Market Street light-rail subway will be in full seven-day-a-week operation with Muni's LRVs.

□ A brief rail strike called by locomotive engineers severely crippled essential transportation facilities (particularly in Chicago) from Sunday, September 19 thru the following Wednesday. Amtrak was able to operate passenger service out of Chicago to the east, but—save for the South Shore and Amtrak's Valparaiso service—Chicago's thousands of daily suburban rail riders had to find other ways to get to and from their jobs... The Federal Aviation Administration plans to give airlines substantially more flexibility in meeting its safety regulations, as part of the administration's deregulation effort. The FAA has proposed replacing present "how to do it" airline rules with shorter and more general regulations. The new rules would state broadly how airlines should operate, without giving specific instructions on how to fly safely; the FAA calls the approach "regulation by objective".



An unusual view of the first of CTA's 125 new articulated buses from MAN, photographed at Amtrak's "Family Days" in July. Upgraded versions of the present 20 CTA units, the first of the new "Big Bends" will be in service in October.

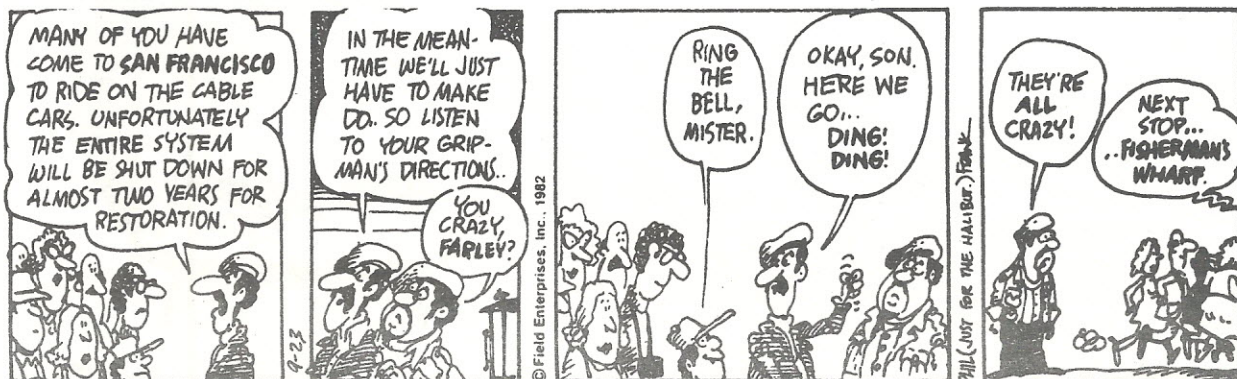
—TRANSPORT CAMERA



Former Milwaukee streetcar 978 rests under wire at WEPCO's Vulcan Street power plant in Appleton (WI). It will operate during the Festival of Light honoring the first hydroelectric plant in America, September 30-October 3.

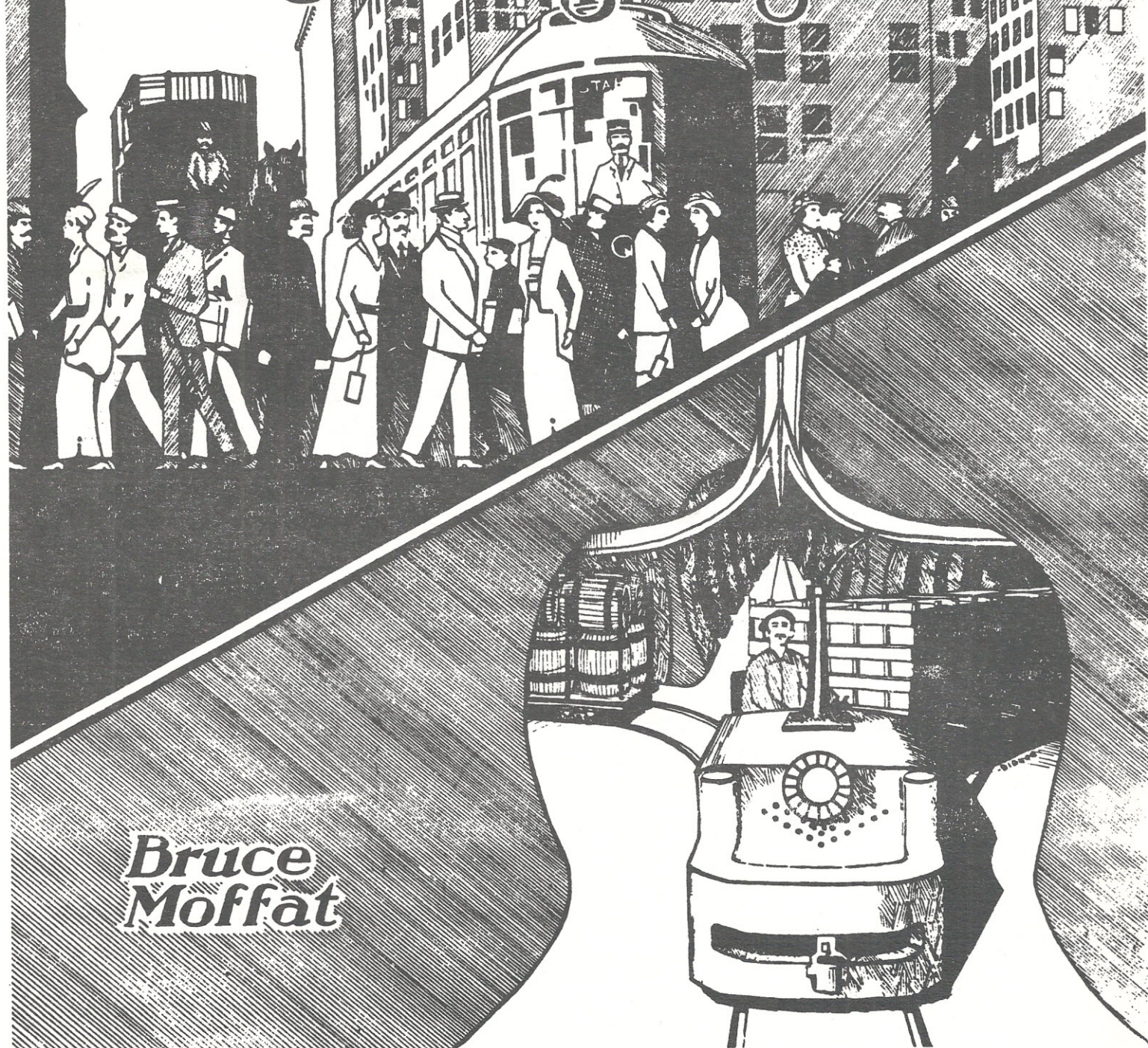
—RUSSELL SCHULTZ PHOTO

TRAVELS WITH FARLEY



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